Migration, Disruption, and the Changing Contours of Home

Foreign – Memory – Presencing – Futurism – Place – Asina – Return – Useful

Útiles – Movement – Asina – Time – Tradition – Language – Floods – Familiar

Michelle Banks and Sojin Kim, Guest Editors

Útiles – Tumaini – Asina – Urban – Decolonizing – History – Floods – Familiar

Foreign – Memory – Future – Reawakening – Rural – Asina – Hope – Useful

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Places, Words, Stories: Tracing Migration Pathways

by Michelle Banks and Sojin Kim, Guest Editors

Migration and its disruptions define our experiences of home—and probably yours, too.

It shapes a great deal of our personal and professional attentions.

We were both born in D.C., extensions of the circuitous migrations of our respective families. We grew up in a city that is itself characterized by a special kind of transience powered by the cyclical turnover of political administrations. But we also know it for the resilience of generations of people who call the city home, and whose connections to it challenge the idea of a place solely populated by people in flux. In our own adult lives, we ventured far beyond the city before our paths finally crossed here, "back home," but also in a place much changed from our youths. We recognize that *making home* or *being at home* here in D.C. now requires near constant reconsideration of this place and its ongoing physical, cultural, and demographic transformations.

For the last decade, we have both worked at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in Washington, D.C., where the impact of migration is inherent in much of the work we do. For instance, our signature event is the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Established in 1967, it features cultural performances and cross-generational conversations that inevitably address the interplay of migration, creativity, and heritage. This has been the case whether we are

About the photo: Visitor contributions to a sticker wall at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival program, *On the Move: Migration Across Generations*, 2017.

working on domestic U.S. programs or on international programs and their diasporas. For example, we have foregrounded migration and displacement in such programs as Migration to Metropolitan Washington (1988), Tibetan Culture Beyond the Land of Snows (2000), and the Silk Road (2002), as well as explored it more implicitly in programs such as Black Urban Expressive Culture from Philadelphia (1984) or Creative Encounters: Living Religions in the U.S. (2023). Smithsonian Folkways, a record label and catalog of music and sound from around the world, produces albums and educational resources, many of which embody the role of music in documenting migration stories. See for instance, Cajun and Zydeco: Flavors of Southwest Louisiana: A Smithsonian Folkways Music Pathway for students in Grades 6-8. Since 2016, we have partnered with the American Anthropological Association on their education initiative World on the Move: 250,000 Years of Human Migration. And the Center's ongoing Cultural Vitality initiatives support efforts to sustain cultural heritage through migration, displacement, and other destabilizing forces.

Left: Ronald Moten, an activist who helped mobilize #DontMuteDC, a 2019 protest responding to gentrification and concerns over cultural and racial equity in the city. Right: A banner displayed from a building housing immigrant-serving organizations in D.C., 2017.

In fact, the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage was on the vanguard of Smithsonian Institution work that directly addresses migration/immigration. The core themes that resonated back in the earliest days of the Folklife Festival—as the U.S. grappled with defining its identity during the tumult of the 1960s—are still salient today in 2024, when immigration is a fraught and divisive issue. These themes generally articulate the value of heritage as a resource for people on the move and in the aftermath of major life disruptions and recognize the ways tradition and culture necessarily transform as a result of new exigencies and interactions.

The articles in this JFE volume also explore these ideas in a range of contexts. But as a corpus, they pry deeper and in varied ways into what transpires through and after the disruptions that set people in motion. They reflect how migration is not a straightforward, singular, linear process of leaving one place and arriving in another. Being on the move involves infinite motivations and circumstances. It always involves interaction, adaptation, creativity; it is multifaceted, multi-routed, sometimes circular or cyclical. And what we find resoundingly essential to recognize—whether we work in the classroom, at museums, or directly in community—is that all of us live and produce our senses of community, and by extension home, on shifting ground.

A march in D.C. protesting new immigration restrictions and anti-immigrant rhetoric, 2017.

While planning for this volume, we conversed with the JFE Editorial Board and convened an Advisory Group of colleagues whose work engages the topic of migration/immigration. A number of people proposed that the idea of "disruption," so naturally coupled with the experience of "migration," should be understood as a generative, productive force, too. This sent us on a path to invite explorations that also suggest disruptions to conventional folklore disciplinary practices as well.

The articles compiled here demonstrate how folklore and other traditional expressive forms offer tools, strategies, and resources for both responding to and catalyzing change. Whether adapting traditional expressive behavior to meet new circumstances during and after migration or asserting them to challenge the status quo, people productively leverage the durability and dynamic nature of culture to strengthen community life through changes of many sorts—whether political, social, environmental, or cultural. To that end, we have included pieces that depict what the tools that folklore gives us can look like in action.

We appreciate the way these contributions of articles, curricula, media, and case studies represent praxes that:

- Value collaboration, reciprocity, dialogue, and the prioritization of first-person stories and explanations;
- Account for multiple vantages, perspectives, and relationships as inherent to community;
- Focus on untangling webs of relationships and intersecting experiences;
- Endeavor to center experiences that have been overlooked or marginalized in conventional texts or reporting; and
- Explore varied modes of research and interpretation, with many articles including links to videos, audio streams (including playlists and podcasts), websites, and other online educational resources.

These may be read in any order, but here we present them in three sections to suggest some principles critical to how we are inclined toward approaching the topic of migration, and the many vantages that can illuminate and interpret it. The section titles also outline what we consider the basic work underlying the translation of migration experiences into meaningful, accessible expressions of community resilience and creativity:

1. Re-Envisioning Place
2. Finding the Words
3. Telling the Story

1. RE-ENVISIONING PLACE

We begin with PLACE—from which the very notion of migration hinges: the ground upon which people settle and are unsettled. The pieces organized under this theme zoom in and out—centering not so much the movement across national borders as offering case studies and deep dives that unpack the complexity of human connections to places and the forces that compel their movement across them. These each suggest that the "where" of migration is not simply a sequence of geographic coordinates—from here-to-there or there-to-here—but also a vast topography of human relationships, transactions, interactions, and imaginaries.

"These stories are steeped in the deep collective memory that land and water hold."

The pieces by Maya Castranovo ("*Flood of Memory*: Navigating Environmental Precarity Through Folklore and Filmmaking") and Ann Kaneko ("*Manzanar, Diverted*: Confluences of Memory and Place") put us immediately on shifting ground, considering the interplay between the movement of people on and off the land and its dramatic geology. Each shares a film project addressing the history of the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans at Manzanar, a confinement site built at the base of the Eastern Sierras. In the aftermath of the flooding wrought by Hurricane Hilary in 2023, Castranovo in her eight-minute video reflects on the precarity of both individual memory and the land literally shaped by this WWII history. Kaneko's feature-length documentary takes in Manzanar as part of a wide landscape of overlapping histories and offers educational resources that explore the connections among multiple populations moving around, in concert and conflict, with one another in the same place.

"How can we as teachers and folklorists be equipped to research the narratives of fuller, more multicultural histories of regions, accounting for diverse migrations?"

Phyllis M. May-Machunda's "Teaching to Disrupt the Narrative of Presence: Multicultural Migrations to the Great Plains" confronts a prevailing perception of the region as undifferentiated, racially homogenous "flyover country." A longtime professor of multicultural education, she emphasizes that migration is not a recent force or "disruption," but rather an ongoing, constant state, and she describes the local regional research she has assigned to her students. May-Machunda highlights histories of African Americans in the Great Plains as a way to model how interdisciplinary methods—from folklore to literature to oral history, from geology to archeology—can contribute to more accurate representations of the dynamic complexity of places as home to many, diverse populations.

"The ways Manitos forged new understandings of their old and new locales is significant, and they have participated in preservation of their cultural traditions through storytelling; marking the landscape; and the production of cultural arts."

Vanessa Fonseca-Chávez and Patricia Perea's article, "Son Útiles: Learning from Manito Sheep Culture," describes the K-12 learning opportunities offered through an exhibition documenting the migration of New Mexican Hispanos from Taos County to regions across the Southwest U.S.

Featuring personal histories and expressive culture, the exhibition represented a sense of identity and heritage firmly rooted in physical place and in certain sectors of work, such as sheepherding. It traced how these were sustained in the diaspora—and how the expressive culture and labor of these populations contributed to shaping the broader region. The authors, who were among the collaborative team that produced the exhibition, describe how its content aligned with recently implemented state social studies standards calling for curriculum that better reflects the cultural heritage of the state's student population. The exhibition provided opportunities through which students could explore shaping moments in regional history in relation to their own migration experiences and senses of local place.

"…the 'rural renaissance' of this community . . . . is a growing collaborative, and sometimes contentious effort between a variety of actors"

Sarah Craycraft and Petya V. Dimitrova's article, "Educating from Scratch: Toward a Revitalized Bulgarian Village" focuses on how contemporary urban-to-rural migrants endeavor to remake the places they are settling through activities that enact a form of "futurism"—rather than based in a nostalgia for the places they have left behind. The authors specifically explore discrete cultural and educational initiatives as spaces through which old residents and new migrants disrupt and negotiate the social dynamics and expectations associated with village life in a changing present. With its focus on "lifestyle migrants," this article reminds how the varied causes and consequences of being on the move are reshaping the contours of community.

2. FINDING THE WORDS

For people who are migrants or have been minoritized, WORDS can have power beyond their literal meaning. They can support people who are searching for a sense of identity but can also be a source of "linguistic trauma" (Foulis). The works in this second section explore the intersections of language, migration, and place. They express how disruption can serve as a conduit for the claiming of place (belonging) or a reclaiming of language and identity. Relationality, "honoring the primacy of direct experience" (Cajete 2004, 46), ties these pieces together. Each author invites us to listen to their stories as they work through some of the multilayered meanings and implications of language and how it grounds their identities and conveys their search for belonging.

"If we are committed to linguistic transformation and decolonial practices in education, we must center authors and content that privilege the experiences of minoritized communities…"

Although Spanish has a long history in what is now the United States, it continues to be linked to "otherness" and those who speak it regularly experience "scrutiny and profiling." In "I did not write this for you! Using Translanguaging in Pages and in the Classroom," Elena Foulis aims to challenge "unidimensional" perceptions of Latinidad through a discussion of "translanguaging," which is both the ability to move between languages and a pedagogical approach to teaching bilingual and biliterate students. Drawing from the poetry of San Antonio poet laureate Eddie

Vega, whose writing she employs in her work as an educator, Foulis discusses how Vega uses translanguaging to "interrupt[s] monolingual sensibilities" and create a space for Latina/o/e communities to assert and reclaim their multidimensional identities.

"I have been eager and anxious to find a place in the United States where I am allowed to belong."

Xinhang Hermione Hu's article "Finding a Second Jia (Home): Language, Culture, Identity, and Belongingness from an International Student's Perspective" also discusses translanguaging, but while Foulis explores it as a pedagogical tool, Hu's contribution takes the shape of a personal reflection on her search for a sense of place given her use of multiple languages. The voice Hu brings to the essay is made richer by her multilayered discussion of the idea of home in English, her second language, and Chinese, her mother tongue. Describing "home," as a "single word with a superficial meaning of where one lives" and jia (home) which for her, embraces "country, family, house, and hometown," the journey to belonging that she takes in this article is guided by her ability to communicate the complexities of finding her place in both languages.

"She was the link between my culture and this new culture that I was introduced to when I first came here."

Language is central to the ESL classroom, but as Natasha Agrawal and Tzuyi Meh Bae make clear in "Teaching and Learning with Migrant and Refugee Students: A Conversation," communication also requires other instincts and sensitivities that have nothing to do with the mastery of English grammar. In this transcribed conversation, Agrawal, a 4th-grade teacher, and Tzuyi Meh Bae, one of her former students, reflect on their two years of working together, revealing how their classroom became a space for a shared process of teaching and learning.

3. TELLING THE STORY

Finally, we organized this last grouping of articles together because they represent a range of dialogic formats—built upon collaboration and interaction—for storytelling. These explore dance and music performance, provide curriculum examples, describe a community documentation project, and introduce a podcast series. They offer resources that can be directly adapted for use in the classroom as curriculum guides or as primary source material.

"It [the United States] holds many dancing stories, migration stories, and stories of diasporas dancing back to their homeland."

In "Embracing the Choque: Pedagogical Disruptors in Folk Dance Instruction," by Kiri Avelar and Roxanne Gray, the rhythm of el choque, the striking together of castanets in Spanish folk dance, serves as a metaphor for disrupting paradigms in classical dance (e.g., ballet, modern) instruction. The authors, who are dancers and dance educators, describe their journey teaching Spanish folk dance to classically trained dancers in a university program that aims to provide more "diverse offerings" to their students. Weaving culturally relevant and liberatory approaches such as Chicana/Latina feminism and emergent strategy into their dance practice, Avelar and Gray discuss

how they embraced and addressed the "tensions between the familiar and the foreign," among a group of dancers from divergent backgrounds who felt uneasy about exploring genres of dance that did not reflect their Western concert dance training. In addition to discussing how the class unfolded, the authors share strategies for how their work might be replicated; the article concludes with recommendations for folk dance practitioners who are working to disrupt conventional academic spaces.

"...we lifted up undertold immigration stories and, specifically, stories with clear contemporary connections."

In "From the Printed Page to the Concert Stage: Migrant Poetry and Labor Songs as Public Folklore," B. Marcus Cederström describes the development of a bi-national project that connects migrant experiences across generations and geography, working both in the classroom but also in community spaces. This artist-driven project was organized around poetry penned in the 1910s by a young woman who worked in Minnesota for several years before returning to her native Sweden in 1920. Set to music by contemporary musicians, these verses document migration experiences of a century ago. Live performances of this repertoire have found resonance among contemporary audiences in the diaspora—who are moved to imagine what their immigrant ancestors experienced—as well as in Sweden, including by new refugees to the country.

"It is truly miraculous that technology allows people in very different places living in different circumstances to share something about their lives despite distance, linguistic and cultural diversity, and restrictions in mobility."

Lisa Gilman's article, "The Dzaleka Art Project: A Community-Based Documentation Project in a Malawian Refugee Camp," also describes an international collaboration. In 2022-23, Gilman and her students at George Mason University in Northern Virginia worked with a team of six young people living in a refugee camp in Malawi, in southeastern Africa, to document the artists and arts activities there. The book and website they produced underline the significant role of art and creativity in the lives of people who have been displaced from their homes—presenting the stories of almost one hundred different people or ensembles. The project provided a platform for making their experiences and artistry accessible to a larger public. And, pedagogically, it offered an opportunity for young people in two countries to connect virtually, learn directly from one another, and build something together.

"A singular focus on the music—a reverence for the expression alone—has often obscured the creators, the everyday people and their collective culture..."

Lamont Jack Pearley's contribution to this issue, "Blues People, Music, and Folklore," is a curriculum that traces the migration of Black people and their cultural traditions through the U.S. Adaptable to a range of classroom settings, the curriculum units and accompanying music playlist explore the historical forces and contexts that gave birth to the Blues and considers genres such as Hip-Hop, which were, in turn, "birthed by the Blues." Based in Pearley's work as a musician,

music scholar, folklorist, and educator, the curriculum offers opportunities for students to apply their learning in exercises involving documentation and/or composition and performance.

"We have created a space for connecting, sharing stories, and finding a sense of home through discussions of foodways, music, and migration journeys."

The final piece in this issue is also sonically oriented. In "Hearing Home Through a Podcast of Asian American Tales," Fariha Khan, Margaret Magat, Nancy Yan, and Juwen Zhang introduce the series "Yellow and Brown Tales: Asian American Folklife Today," which they created during the days of the Covid-19 pandemic shutdown. This project represents their collective concern from their different vantages as applied, independent, and academic-affiliated folklorists that Asian American folklore has not been well represented in the field. Here, they introduce and link to some of the stories and issues they have produced thus far, ranging from interviews about culinary nationalism, lunar new year celebrations, K-Pop, and sex education.

Artwork by MISS CHELOVE at the 2017 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program *On the Move: Migration Across Generations.*

As we conclude, we consider:

What questions do we need to ask ourselves as we continue to work through our own senses of place and belonging?

And how do these shape the work we do, whether it's in the classroom or out in the public?

How can we better identify and access a wide range of resources so that our efforts and these stories of community-making on shifting ground are meaningful where we work and/or call home?

Whether you read these articles as we ordered them or trace an alternate pathway through them, we hope you find content applicable to your own work. These pieces offer varied insights into how we might all better connect the dots. And not just in terms of recognizing how the theme of migration is inherent to so many social and cultural contexts, but also in how we can identify productive avenues for collaboration, find unexpected resonances across sectors and topics, place ourselves in the bigger picture, and challenge our assumptions about the possibilities of scholarship.

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Flood of Memory: Navigating Environmental Precarity Through Folklore and Filmmaking

by Maya Castronovo

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the forced removal and imprisonment of all Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. Maya Castronovo's documentary short, Flood of Memory*, explores the role of memory and community storytelling in connection to a changing landscape at Manzanar, site of one of ten concentration camps that incarcerated over 100,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. The film's voiceover narration consists of stories, memories, and reflections culled from seven oral history interviews with formerly incarcerated individuals. Castronovo filmed and completed the documentary while serving as a Great Basin Institute Research Associate at the Manzanar National Historic Site.* ***Watch the film here.***

2024

Last August, the rain came down at Manzanar. Hurricane Hilary swept across Mexico and the Southwestern United States, bringing gusty winds and torrential rain to Inyo County, California, a place that typically receives only six inches of annual precipitation. I wasn't there for the storm, but I witnessed what came afterward: flooded roads, mudflow, dust, and cracked earth. Layers of silt and sediment buried several of the site's historic ponds and gardens, delaying community efforts to preserve Manzanar's cultural and natural resources.

About the image: Movie still and quote from *Flood of Memory*. (Castronovo 2024, 5:20 min mark) All images below are movie stills, © Maya Castronovo, 2024.

In the wake of such destruction, one feels the vanishing of human history, and the shifting contours of the land itself. As the unfolding climate crisis threatens to erode our ties to the past, **how will we continue to remember?**

My documentary film, *Flood of Memory*, explores this question through a variety of media. By weaving together oral history interviews, archived home movie footage, and present-day visuals, I attempt to situate histories of racial exclusion and displacement within broader frameworks of ecological disaster.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Hilary, a historic weather event where a tropical storm made landfall in the California desert, I began documenting environmental devastation at Manzanar through a series of static shots. For me, the act of filming was a way to process the impacts of climate change and interpret an increasingly unstable world. Within our current moment of environmental precarity, my film urges us to consider how folk sources and community storytelling not only connect us to the past, but may also help us reckon with an uncertain future.
Flood of Memory resists "official" accounts of history. Instead, the film highlights fragmented memories and gaps within the archive by raising the following questions:

- How can landscapes and the natural world contain histories of racial exclusion, removal, and displacement?
- In what ways can living culture and stories help us cope with the change and loss associated with environmental crises?
- Who gets to tell history? How can community storytelling and place-based knowledge shape our understanding of intergenerational trauma?

Maya Castronovo *is a filmmaker and MFA candidate at Northwestern University's Documentary Media program. She has a Film and Media Studies degree from Columbia University.*

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Manzanar, Diverted: Confluences of Memory and Place

by Ann Kaneko

At the foot of the majestic snow-capped Sierras, the site of Manzanar, the World War II concentration camp, is the confluence for memories of Payahuunadü, the now-parched "land of flowing water." Intergenerational women from Native American, Japanese American, and rancher communities have formed an alliance to defend their land and water from Los Angeles.

My paternal grandfather, Koki Kaneko, traveled from Fukushima, Japan, landed in British Columbia in 1906, then made his way to San Francisco and finally to Los Angeles. My paternal grandmother, Michi Tanabatake Kaneko, was a picture bride, who disembarked in San Francisco in 1914 and married my grandfather upon arrival. She came to Los Angeles, only to return to Japan because of health issues in 1933. During 19 years in Los Angeles, she gave birth to three children, the second of whom was my father, Takeo Kaneko, born in 1920. Michi took her two younger children, Takeo and Kimiko, to Japan. Takeo returned to Los Angeles in 1939 because of poor health and to avoid being drafted into the Japanese Army. While Michi and Kimiko remained in Japan, my father Takeo, his brother Michio, and their father Koki were imprisoned in Jerome and then Rohwer, Arkansas, World War II concentration camps, from 1942 to 1944. They left the camp for Chicago, and my father returned to Los Angeles in 1953. This is what I have gleaned from government records and family stories.

Based on these records, my family has been in Los Angeles for almost 110 years. In the grand scheme of things, this is not long—a blink of an eye considering how this has been the homeland of the Tongva and other Indigenous people for millennia. But when transplants claim Tinseltown as their home after a mere 10 years, 100 years plus over four generations is not a short time, either. This great city was built on water, which was integral to its growth and formation; and, in turn, I realize that my own family's story is also entwined with the ebb and flow of water.

About the photo: Kaneko family, 1933, probably just before Michi, Takeo, and Kimiko departed for Japan. From left to right: Takeo, Michi, Koki, Kimiko, and Michio. Courtesy of Ann Kaneko.

Descendants of incarcerees carry banners from other Japanese American concentration camps at the 50th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage in 2019. Photo by Julio Martinez.

In 2015, I attended the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage with a group of humanities scholars, examining interfaith and intercultural connections. This gathering, which started with a couple of Buddhist priests who came to pay respects to those still buried at Manzanar, became a communitywide event in 1969. The Manzanar Committee organizes this annual event and fought for recognition of Manzanar as a national historic site. This pilgrimage, as do other pilgrimages to former WWII concentration camp sites, continues to bring together a wide array of sympathetic community allies, descendants, and former Japanese American incarcerees. They gather to remember the 1940s concentration camp and its legacy of racial and social injustice when the U.S. Government violated the constitutional rights of Japanese American citizens.

Reverend Alfred Tsuyuki of the Konko Church of Los Angeles opens a Shinto purification rite during the interfaith service at the Manzanar cemetery the 50th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage, April 27, 2019.

Former National Park Ranger Rose Masters leads a presentation at a Council for Islamic American Relations gathering at Manzanar.

Photos by Julio Martinez.

This trip and the work I did accompanying it spurred me to unpack connections to Manzanar and embark on a five-year journey to create *Manzanar, Diverted: When Water Becomes Dust*. This documentary examines how water meanders through the histories of Nüümü (Paiute) and Newe (Shoshone), who were forced by the U.S. Army from their homeland Payahüünadü, "the land of flowing water," in 1863; ranchers and farmers who colonized what they named the Owens River Valley but were ultimately bought out by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LA DWP) in the early 1900s; and Japanese Americans who were forcibly brought to the Manzanar concentration camp on leased LA DWP lands in the 1940s.

Koki Kaneko with lawnmower in Los Angeles, ca. 1941. Courtesy of Ann Kaneko.

Water is at the center of this story, and I realized that water also flowed through my own family's story, pushing and pulling us from place to place. Water provided my grandfather Koki with his livelihood since he was a gardener in Los Angeles. Family lore tells me that he slung a lawnmower over his shoulder and bicycled from client to client since Michi didn't want him to drive. No doubt he clipped and watered lawns in a city where maintaining a lush lawn seemed like the ultimate sign of decadence, more in line with American standards in other places where water was more plentiful. When Takeo, my father, returned from Japan, he worked in produce markets, helping to sell fruits and vegetables that water had allowed Japanese American truck farmers to cultivate in the Central Valley.

Takeo (left) and Michio (right) Kaneko in front of the Jerome, Arkansas, concentration camp barracks, ca. 1944. Courtesy of Ann Kaneko.

Although my family was not incarcerated at Manzanar, my parents and grandparents were uprooted from their homes in Los Angeles and San Diego and sent to distant camps in swampy Arkansas to keep the coasts "safe" from potential "enemy" Japanese Americans. My mother's family was from San Diego, and while most of the San Diego community went to Manzanar, my mother's family chose to go to the Jerome camp, the easternmost of the concentration camps, since they hoped to be able to visit my grandfather, who was imprisoned as an "enemy alien" at Camp Livingston, Louisiana. (See the National Map here to access information about the many confinement sites across the U.S., and their overlap with Native American history.)

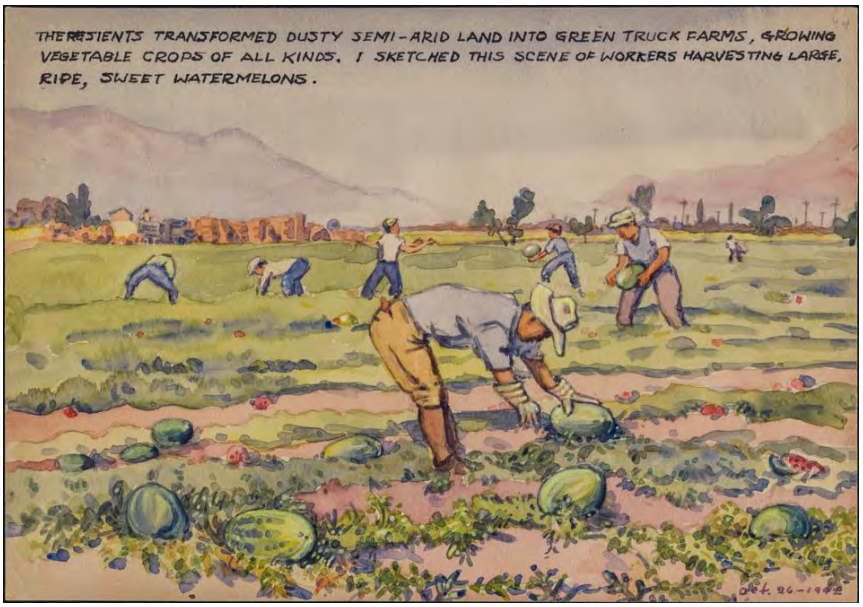
As I researched this film, I marveled at the U.S. Government's consistent pattern of removing vulnerable communities who stood in the way of government projects, which supported the interests of those in power. Native Americans were an inconvenience to settler colonialists, who stole Native lands and created and expanded this nation. Japanese Americans were a threat to safety after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and became the victims of a kind of coastal ethnic

cleansing for the national war effort. The war also provided a convenient excuse to break up Japanese American dominance of truck farming and fishing on the West Coast.

Tom Jefferson spreads irrigation water at his reservation home in Lone Pine, which is near Manzanar, the former concentration camp. He was the father of Kathy Jefferson Bancroft, who is the current Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribal Preservation Officer. Kathy tells her community's story in *Manzanar, Diverted: When Water Becomes Dust*.
Courtesy of Kathy Jefferson Bancroft.

Situated at the foot of the Eastern Sierras, abundant water is why Nüümü and Newe made these lands their homes for millennia and what brought outsiders to it in search of gold and fortune in the 1800s. Native Americans and outsiders made Manzanar bloom, growing apples and pears before William Mulholland stole the water for Los Angeles, causing outsiders to abandon this place and sell it to the LA DWP. Despite the agency's claim that Japanese Americans would sabotage LA's water since the LA Aqueduct was only a mile from the proposed camp, the federal government overruled the LA DWP, which had to lease the land. Then Japanese Americans were forced here and ironically made the desert bloom, once again.

Because one of the main prerequisites for Japanese American concentration camps was plentiful water for agricultural self-sufficiency, controlling water was embedded in the story of these camps. The government expected incarcerated Japanese Americans to produce their own food so that the government could keep expenses down while they imprisoned this population. And what better community to do this than the many Japanese Americans who were known to be experts in agriculture and horticulture.



Watercolor by Kango Takamura shows the large watermelons harvested at Manzanar. Courtesy of Christine A. Tanaka.

Incarcerees resisted their imprisonment by transforming Manzanar into a place with beautiful gardens, at the same time mitigating dust and providing shade and respite in a harsh environment. Victory Gardens also sprouted between barracks as a way to supplement the food supply and enrich diets. LA DWP balked at the amount of water being diverted for this federal project, but they could do little but wait until the war ended and Manzanar would be returned to them.

My mother, Masako, who was born in San Diego and resettled in Los Angeles, by way of concentration camps in Jerome, Arkansas, and Grenada, Colorado, and then Denver, impressed upon us the importance of water conservation during the drought years of the 1970s. We used gray water to flush toilets and water lawns. At a young age, I learned how precious water was, but I had no idea that the place where Japanese Americans like my family had been incarcerated was also where we got our water.

Left: Masako in front of her Granada, Colorado, concentration camp barracks, 1944.

Right: Masako showing off her bounty of Elberta peaches in Chino, California, 1977. Courtesy of Ann Kaneko.

The landscape designer Kuichiro Nishi, who created the park at Manzanar in 1943, poses for the camera in this Ralph Merritt home movie footage, ca 1944. Ralph Merritt was the Manzanar concentration camp director from November 1942 until its closing three years later.

Courtesy of Merritt Collection, Manzanar National Historic Site.

During early research for this film, I was dumbfounded when I learned that LA DWP had owned almost 90 percent of Payahuunadü/Owens Valley. This was confounding since the Valley is more than 200 miles away. I knew that our water came from the Sierras, but it was a vague concept. I didn't fully understand that LA held title to the land and water rights of the watershed that fed the LA Aqueduct. What had made this a rich homeland for Native Americans was also the reason it was desirable to the LA DWP. And now since it is drying up, the toxic dust from Patsiata/Owens Lake is wreaking havoc with the health of Valley residents. Tribal nations in the region were especially vulnerable to Covid-19 during the pandemic. Today, the land continues to be a crucial source of water for Los Angeles, where pumping is now regulated based on groundwater levels. LA DWP has also sought to use the Valley as a site for renewable energy. They proposed a solar ranch across from the Manzanar National Historic Site, and Native Americans, Japanese Americans, and environmentalists came together and successfully halted this project, which would have interfered with the viewshed of this sacred site.

I connected this history and these experiences to the work I was doing in Manzanar. And so it is that *Manzanar, Diverted* transformed me into a person with more than a passing interest in hydrology and intersectional politics. I discovered so much more than what is encompassed in the film, and I wanted to make sure that students and scholars had tools and curriculum to understand the broad backdrop of these overlapping histories. Highlighted below are some resources, including the film's website, www.manzanardiverted.com.

Left to right: Ceiba Kaneko, Ann's daughter; Kathy Jefferson Bancroft, Lone Pine Paiute Tribal Preservation Officer who appears in *Manzanar, Diverted*; and Ann Kaneko come together at the 2019 Manzanar Pilgrimage. Photo by Julio Martinez.

Along with the *Manzanar, Diverted* film team, I hope that these materials and links enrich viewers and scholars of our film, who seek a broader understanding of the connections of these histories beyond Manzanar as well as a more detailed exploration of the human experiences referenced or mentioned. We seek to share stories that are rooted in community relationships that have been generously transmitted to us. We try to unpack the complex intricacies of settler colonialism and how its legacy has affected multiple generations and communities. These stories are steeped in the deep collective memory that land and water hold, and we encourage students to ponder their own connections to place and the mounting challenges that we face as we are forced into taking climate refuge, fleeing rising waters, pollution, or drought.

Ann Kaneko *is known for personal films that weave her poetic aesthetic with political reality. An Emmy winner, credits include* Manzanar, Diverted: When Water Becomes Dust *(POV, 2022),* A Flicker in Eternity; Against the Grain: An Artist's Survival Guide to Peru; *and* Overstay. *She is developing* Land, Labor and Logistics *(18SAC California Creative Corps Fellowship) and* 45/45 *about multigenerational families. She was a Fulbright, Japan Foundation, Film Independent Doc Lab, and Jackson Wild Fellow. Funders include JustFilms/Ford, Doc Society, Redford Center, CAAM, Vision Maker Media, Firelight Media, Chicken and Egg, and Hoso Bunka Foundation. She teaches at the Claremont colleges.*

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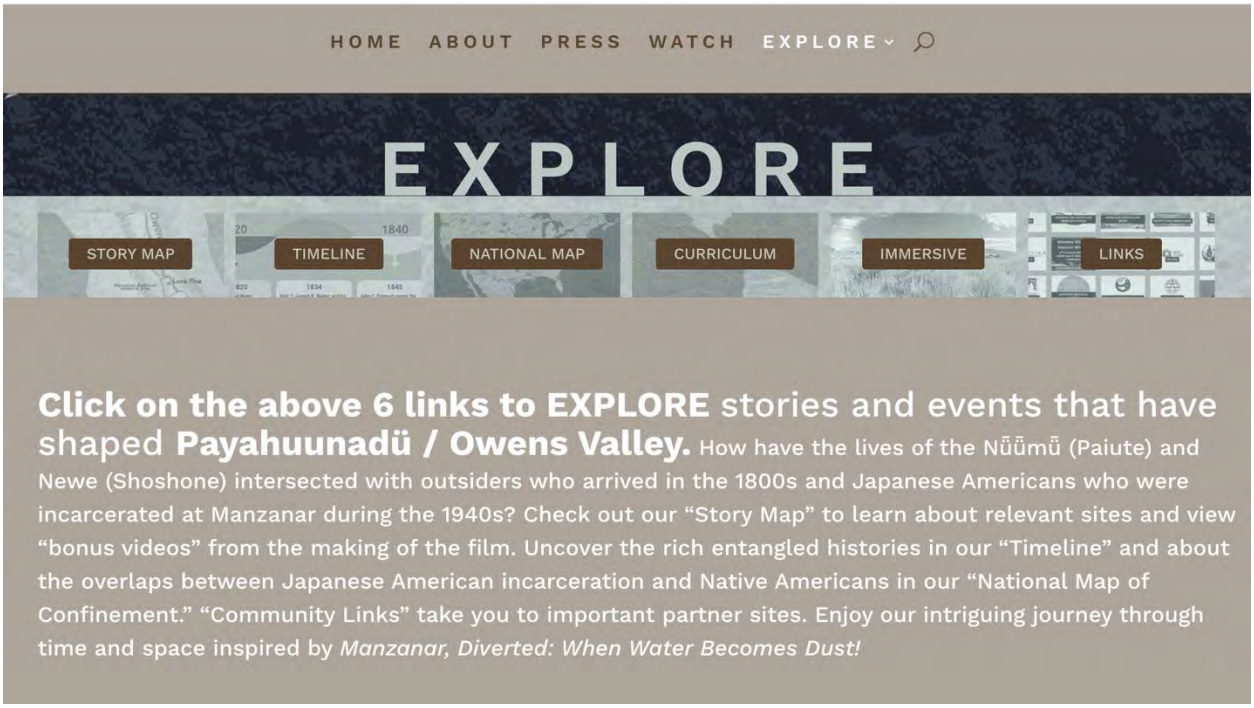
URLs
Manzanar Diverted website https://manzanardiverted.com
National Map https://www.pbssocal.org/news-community/manzanar-divided-mapping-convergence-and-dislocation

Classroom Connections: Exploring the *Manzanar, Diverted* Resources

Manzanar, Diverted **Website**



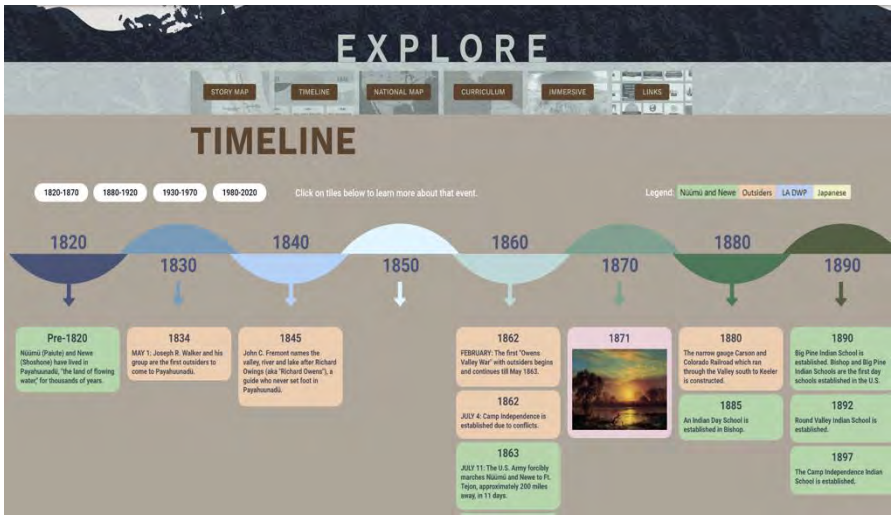
The EXPLORE button is a portal into understanding the intersecting histories of Native Americans, Japanese Americans, outsiders, and the LA DWP.

Below we annotate for teachers and other users what you will find in each section of "Explore," following the menu buttons from left to right.

STORY MAP: Explore the stories and events that have shaped Payahuunadü/Owens Valley

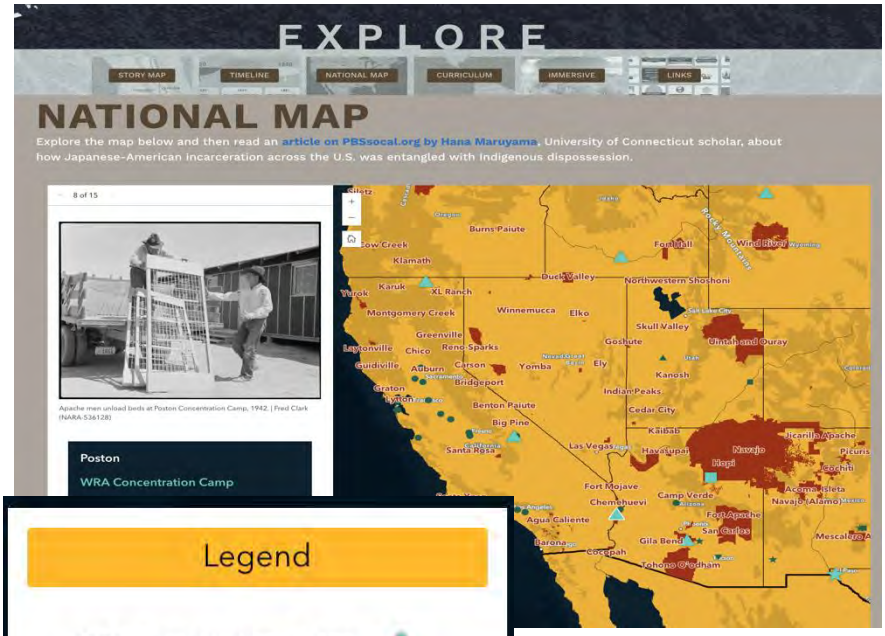
The STORY MAP has several short bonus videos that geographically orient viewers to the sites referenced in the film.

TIMELINE: Explore the historical events that have shaped Payahuunadü/Owens Valley



The TIMELINE is an extensive thumbnail history of the highlighted communities, which are color-coded by community for easy reference. Clicking on each event also links to important reference sites and images that deepen the experience of the timeline.

NATIONAL MAP: Remapping Community Histories and Connections to Place



The NATIONAL MAP, originally included on the *PBS SoCal* site, is accompanied by an article by Hana Maruyama, an assistant professor of history at the University of Connecticut. It looks at entwined histories of Native Americans and Japanese Americans. Japanese American confinement sites in the continental U. S. overlay all the nationally recognized Native American reservations.

- The map highlights particular sites where there are intersections between Japanese American, Native American, and water histories. It is by no means exhaustive, but it does reference key stories and gives insights into the various federal agencies that had a hand in Japanese American incarceration. There is a legend showing the array of agencies involved, and the summary helps readers understand why these agencies were involved.
- Most camps were administered by the War Relocations Authority, which, like the Office of Indian Affairs, became part of the Department of Interior. Today, it's ironic that sites like Manzanar, a national historic site, is administered by the National Park Service, which is also part of the Department of Interior.
- Because many Issei or first-generation Japanese immigrant community leaders were detained for potential prisoner of war trades, they were administered by the Immigration and Naturalization Services and the U.S. Army.
- Since the Poston and Gila River concentration camps were established on Native American reservations, the Office of Indian Affairs was also involved, as was the Bureau of Reclamation.

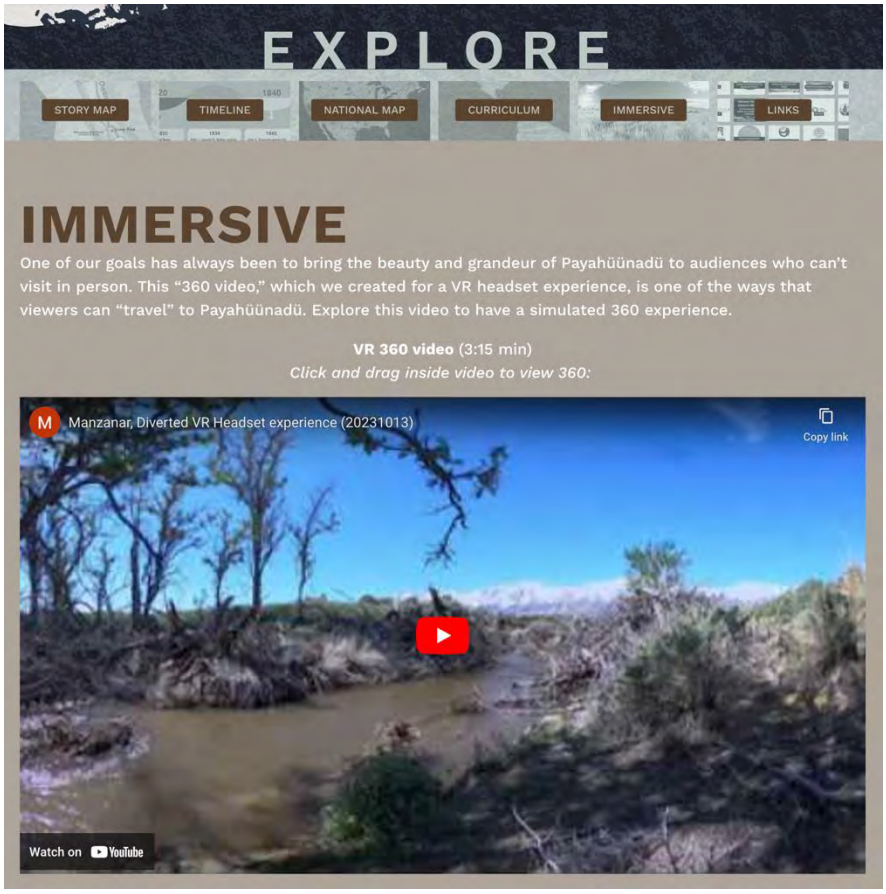
CURRICULUM: Resistance and Coalition Building for Environmental Justice

In the CURRICULUM section, find links to a lesson plan on the PBS POV website for teachers, as well as other resources.

Links include a Screening Guide, POV Community Engagement and Education Tools for Facilitation Guide, a Delve Deeper Reading List, and a PBS Lesson Plan: Resistance and Coalition Building for Environmental Justice.

- All these were developed for the PBS 52-min. broadcast version of the film, but the Screening Guide offers additional material that references the 84-min. feature version.
- On the *Manzanar, Diverted* website, look for a link (forthcoming, June 2025) to a chapter on Intersectionality that will be included in *Foundations and Futures: Asian American and Pacific Islander Multimedia Textbook*, produced by UCLA Asian American Studies, forthcoming June 2025. This chapter highlights the Manzanar coalition building that occurred when communities came together to fight off a proposed LA DWP solar ranch across from the former camp.

IMMERSIVE



IMMERSIVE leads viewers to a 360-degree video and information about a visual sound bath experience that help audiences enjoy the beauty of the landscape and have a deeper connection to Payahuunadü.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES/LINKS

LINKS leads to about three dozen organizational websites or initiatives help viewers navigate to other community groups, tribes, and resources so that they can get involved and learn more.

Teaching to Disrupt the Narrative of Presence: Multicultural Migrations to the Great Plains

by Phyllis M. May-Machunda

Migrations are processes that disrupt, reshape, and reconceptualize places and cultures through the movement of people. Who have been migrants and what are their stories as they journey from the regions they leave and into the regions they travel to and through? What does it mean to tell stories of migration at the intersections of history, geographic landscapes, and movements of peoples in a particular region? How can we as teachers and folklorists be equipped to research the narratives of fuller, more multicultural histories of regions, accounting for diverse migrations? I have a personal and professional interest in reclaiming the multicultural histories of the Great Plains: I am a folklorist of color and a scholar of American multicultural studies born and raised in the Midwest and currently living in northwestern Minnesota on its border between the Midwest with the northern Great Plains. I contend that folklorists' interdisciplinary methodologies offer important tools that can help us find and assemble more complex stories of the multiple multicultural migrations that have shaped the region.

About the photo: African American homesteaders in Wyoming, near the border of Nebraska. Fair use image from https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/empire-wyoming-1908-1930.

Figure 1. Map of Great Plains, Center for Great Plains Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Geographically, the Great Plains is a region distinguished by its vegetation, landscapes, and topography and also shaped by a history of persistent migrations to and through it. With its blend of characteristics of the cultures of the Midwest, South, and West with those of immigrant settlers, the boundaries stretch from Canada to the Texas/Mexico border and from the Red and Missouri Rivers to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, with a topography that transitions from fertile farmlands to rockier and more arid ranchlands. As with any physical, social, and cultural region, its boundaries are fluid, flexible, and contested across time, weather, and purpose (see map in Figure 1).

The Narrative of Presence

The Great Plains region, as part of the American Heartland, has been sometimes referred to as "flyover country," a place that is pastoral, idyllic, and racially homogenous, where relatively few want to visit or live because of the impression that little of significance ever happens there. Anthropologists Britt E. Halvorson and Joshua O. Reno in *Imagining the Heartland* (2022) argue that the tropes for the Heartland—verdant fields, homogeneous small towns, and flat terrain—have long been associated with an image of whiteness representing "the best of America" (14). This romanticized portrayal of life promotes a nostalgic worldview based in virtues of racial purity, provinciality, hard work, "traditional" Christian moral values, cleanliness, self-governance, and entitlement in contrast to urban, cosmopolitan, complex, messy, sinful, industrialized cities whose populations, some argue, are composed of irresponsible, racially diverse, and immoral people who are unworthy of citizenship and therefore should be disenfranchised. Such a bucolic image masks the diversity that has always been part of the region and sets up a perception that people and communities that do not match the idealized trope cannot have a home or a place in the region. I contend that the Great Plains as a place that projects little visible diversity is a region that carries this discourse most intensely.

I label this mythic discourse that erases its multicultural history and present, *the narrative of presence*. The narrative of presence, a discourse of belonging that perpetually relays notions of who is living and has lived in a particular place, may or may not align with historical evidence. This persistent discourse communicates through selective imagery that suggests that this region does not have—and actually, *never* had—a history of culturally diverse residents. According to Halverson and Reno (2022), this discourse has been among the tools for constructing, implementing, and maintaining a fabricated reality that works to promote and project a fictive perception of white dominance and of the U.S. as a white Christian nation. It

has been formulated upon white supremacy and empire and normalized into a set of representations and values. This cultural place-making discourse emphasizes European immigrant settlements, agricultural productivity, white middle-class values based on industriousness, and pious Christianity as the core of American identity (11).

By projecting the region as a place of, for, and by white residents, the narrative of presence promotes exclusive notions of freedom and the possibility of fresh starts for whites, while simultaneously erasing centuries of multicultural history. The narrative of presence is a tool of colonization that constructs and normalizes new hierarchies of power that privilege the dominant group and obscure, replace, and erase personal and cultural identities, histories, and ways of being for those colonized. Through this lens, freedom and full citizenship are for white males only, while BIPOC people are mostly defined as intruders, tokens, exceptions to their race, outsiders to the community, or racial stereotypes.[1] Such perspectives have contributed to and justified a distorted worldview that sustains an absence of knowledge about the lives and cultures of BIPOC peoples in the region and in its history. Further reinforcing this narrative of presence is the exclusive binary framing of the stories of white settler/Native encounters that happened during 19th-century settlement, implying that few other peoples existed on the Great Plains until, perhaps, the late 20th or 21st centuries.

The actual history of the region runs contrary to imagery projected by the narrative of presence. Since the arrival of the first Western settlers, people of color have lived and worked throughout the Great Plains. A lens of migration allows for the examinations of the region as an aggregation of contested, layered, and multifaceted sites by the diverse circumstances of the people moving to and through them. Each migration process and cultural community has contributed significant strands to the narratives of this region, shaping it into a dynamic borderland—a place of deep contradictions that generate both complicated identity formations and political resistances within multifaceted contexts of domination (Anzaldúa 1987).

Interdisciplinary Tools of Disruption

Among the interdisciplinary perspectives that folklorists can use to disrupt the narrative of presence include history and geography. Disruption of home and rootedness, family, friends, and safety have been central aspects of the migration stories of those who have come to the Great Plains. History offers the framework for asking the questions of who has been present and what has happened here. What were the forces precipitating migrations to the area and have also caused migrations from it?

Culturally, the Great Plains is a region undergirded by more than 350 generations of distinct Indigenous populations, who waged wars against removal but were eventually displaced from these lands by the U.S. Government to make room for white settlers in the 19th century (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014). Their forced removal violently disrupted regional ecologies, with the massacre of buffalo herds, and gold and silver mining on sacred lands. Beginning in the mid-1500s, Spanish and African men explored parts of the region preceding Spanish colonists who later settled there and intermarried with Indigenous peoples, transforming into Mexican communities who have lived in the southern portion of the Plains for centuries (Katz 1987, Taylor 1999). These migrations transformed the region into a crossroads for settlers who, through forced and voluntary migrations, from across the country and the globe, have sought opportunities for better lives.

Through the 19th century, Indigenous peoples from the southeastern U.S. and the Midwest east of the Mississippi River were forcibly removed to Indian Territory on the Great Plains. For centuries, thousands of Black people migrated to the Great Plains to establish new homes and seek safety from the violence of enslavement and racial oppression. In addition, tens of thousands more Black people traveled on the multiple trails carved through its landscapes to go further west (Moore 2016). Chinese men migrated to the Great Plains to work on the railroads in the 1870s. Some Mexicans worked as migrant farmworkers harvesting sugar beets and other crops, while others, along with African American men, worked on ranches and cattle trails as cowhands, cooks, and wranglers. During World War II, Japanese Americans were incarcerated in internment camps such as Fort Lincoln near Bismarck, North Dakota, and Fort Stanton in New Mexico (Burton et al. 2000). In the late 20th and 21st centuries, refugees from Asia and Africa have settled in these communities seeking to restart their lives after surviving wars, disease, and violence in their homelands.

Migration has been a constant dynamic in the region; there is no single story that can represent the spectrum of experiences. Older narratives have been fragmented or erased from memory. Some stories are buried in community, county, regional, and state archives, museums, and historical societies. Historians and literary scholars of the West have done most of the existing research on migrants to the Great Plains. This work could be extended and deepened with oral histories, folklore interviews, and archival research about family and community migration stories, place settlement histories, documentation of the traditions and celebrations related to civic and labor organizations, as well as narratives of exclusion and expulsion because of differing values, morality, ethnicity, gender, and social class from those cultural communities.

African American homesteaders in Nicodemus, Graham County, Kansas. Historic American Buildings Survey, Engineering Record, Landscapes Survey, Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ks0077.photos.069503p.

African American Presences

Examining the migrations of African Americans on the Great Plains illuminates the dynamic complexity of the region and offers a glimpse of the insights that interdisciplinary methods can reveal. Although migrations to and through the Great Plains have been a small sector of the multi-layered and multi-branched African American migratory history, historians Howard Dodson and Sylvaine A. Diouf contend that migration has been a fundamental feature of the experiences of African-descended peoples in the U. S. for over 500 years (2004, 7, 9). Some African Americans were forced to migrate in enslavement and through sale; others sought self-determination and refuge from violence, war, precarity, and exploitation. Still others migrated to the Great Plains by choice, seeking freedom in "the Promised Land." African Americans were documented as explorers, fur trappers, traders, translators, interpreters, and frontiersmen during the 17th to 19th centuries in the region (Katz 1987). Some, gaining fluency in Native languages, joined Native American communities and served as translators and negotiators for Native communities in the Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming Territories (Taylor 1999, 48-50; Porter 1934).

As African American populations grew in the Great Plains, they settled along the Missouri and other rivers, along railroad lines, and in urban areas. Thousands more lived dispersed in small communities across the plains—in small numbers and sometimes as the sole Black people in their communities. Low numbers have not meant absence. These migrants built a range of relationships within communities that were not allowed to develop in other parts of the country.

Within both small and large communities, African Americans constructed institutions to serve community needs. They built neighborhood churches that provided and continue to offer religious, political, educational, and community services for African American residents as the center and backbone of their communities. During Reconstruction, African American churches served as the offices of the Freedman's Bureau, and later, during the 20th-century Civil Rights Movement, churches became community service centers and hubs of justice activities (Taylor 1999). They built public and religious educational institutions throughout the region, including several historically Black colleges and universities, to ensure educational access for all ages and counter the limitations of segregated educational practices.[2] Of particular benefit to migrants were African American newspapers (although many are now defunct). *The Kansas City Call* (1919-present), *The Tulsa Star* (1913-1921), and *The Dallas Express* (1893-1970) are three among scores of Black Great Plains newspapers developed to address the concerns and carry the views, news, events, and ads of particular interest to thriving African American communities by promoting migration through job opportunities and educating subscribers about their legal rights. These communities also established recreational institutions and activities. Baseball teams, such as the Nicodemus Blues, a local Kansas team, or the acclaimed Kansas City Monarchs, a Negro League professional team, traveled throughout the region to play other Black, integrated—and occasionally even white—professional, semi-professional, and local teams.

Geography offers other illuminating frameworks. By mapping locations and tracing the routes of migration and events over time, one can begin to see the region as contested, connected, and rich with layered and overlapping histories and events that resonate with the migrations that shape the region. For example, in the 1830s and 1840s, the U.S. Government forced hundreds of thousands of Indigenous members of the southeastern tribes to migrate from east of the Mississippi River on the Trail of Tears to Indian country in Oklahoma to make room for white settlers (Frank

2010). As part of these Indigenous communities, thousands of Black people were also forced to make this tortuous trek. Some were enslaved by Native Americans while others were intermarried with and descendants of Native American families (Miles 2019, Roberts 2021).

As a result of this migration, thousands of Freedmen settled in at least two dozen small towns in Indian Territory. With later migrations, Oklahoma hosted over 50 all-Black communities, with the largest concentration founded between 1865 and 1920 by people seeking to build communities free of racial oppression. One of the largest of these towns was Boley, Oklahoma, founded in the Creek Nation in 1903. Built on the dream of Black self-sufficiency, the community still exists. Some of these smalltown settlers, dismayed with diminishing opportunities for Blacks and the establishment of racial segregation as Oklahoma moved toward statehood, migrated again by the thousands to Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada (Franklin 2010). For those who remained in the new state of Oklahoma, after a period of thriving, many Freedmen's settlements declined with the droughts and economic hardships of the late 1920s through 1940s. Additionally, some all-Black towns died when the railroads chose to bypass them. Today, 13 Black farming communities, made up of the descendants of people enslaved by the Five Civilized Tribes, continue to exist. Relationships between these descendants and the Five Civilized Tribes continue to be fraught with challenges of identity, citizenship rights, and land rights as African Americans have sought to homestead in freedom (O'Dell 2010, Wolters 2015, Miles 2019, *Tulsa World* 2021). Investigating the routes, settlements, and remigrations of these settlers would highlight the relationships of freed people to the Native Nations to which they have been affiliated and related by blood, and to Black settlers who settled in Oklahoma through later migrations.

With a geography disciplinary lens, we might also focus on ecology and land use. Significant numbers of African American men worked the Plains making their living as cowboys. Scholars estimate that African Americans composed at least 25 percent of cowboys, or 5,000 to 6,000, in a multicultural workforce that crisscrossed the Great Plains from 1865 to the 1880s (Hardaway 2006; Patton and Schedlock 2011, 510). Most Black cowboys had worked as enslaved ranch hands in Texas before gaining freedom, and many had previously served as Buffalo Soldiers. As cattle work lessened, many began working for the railroads (Lorenz 2020.) A map overlaying the locations of forts that stationed Buffalo Soldiers, cowboy cattle herding trails, and railroad routes that reshaped settlements where people lived and conducted business would reveal more important details about African American migrations and settlements.

Acquiring and owning land was an important driver of African American migration. Many African Americans homesteaded and farmed in parts of the Great Plains. A remarkable example was Civil War veteran William Thornton Montgomery (1843-1909), who successfully ran a bonanza farm of more than 1,000 acres south of Fargo, North Dakota, in the late 1880s (Newgard 1994; Library of Congress Manuscript Div. 2021, 3).[3] For most African American homesteaders, however, the challenges were formidable, and many failed because of drought, economic hardship, and the rise of racial violence. Even fewer African Americans had opportunities to own ranches. However, some of the few who did were Black cowboys who had been mentored by white ranchers (Earnest and Sance 2017, Moulton 2023).

Archaeology also offers valuable insights. First, archaeological findings indicate that Fulani herders from Cameroon/northern Nigeria, enslaved to tend African cattle during the Spanish slave

trade, were the first cattle handlers in Mexico and the U.S. In enslavement, these men developed, mastered, and taught skills of herding from horseback and lasso techniques used by generations of vaqueros and cowboys, laying many of the foundations for cattle ranching in the Great Plains and the rest of the U.S. (Curry 2023; Fischer 2022, 609-22; Sluyter 2012).

Hector Bazy Herding Horses ca. 1890–1910. Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum.

Second, Roseann Bacha-Garza, a historian and program manager for the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools, is researching a southern Underground Railroad system running from Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas through the Great Plains and across the Rio Grande River into northern Mexico. The El Camino Real de los Tejas Trail is surmised to be part of this hidden freedom network. Through the oral histories and community archaeology of two interracial families who settled in Texas, the Nathaniel Jackson-Matilda Hicks and John Ferdinand Webber-Silvia Hector families, Bacha-Garza and other scholars are uncovering this hidden route to freedom used by thousands of southern African Americans to escape to freedom during enslavement (UTRGV 2019).

Oral history, autobiography, and literature illuminate the experiences of migrants by uplifting their voices through personal or witness testimonies, interviews, or their creation of experience-informed literary figures. The stories of African Americans who experienced the mass expulsion of the Trail of Tears, the brutality of the 1921 Tulsa Massacre, the service of the Buffalo Soldiers, or the chronicles of single women migrants have been kept alive primarily through oral history in African American families and communities. African American women were half the new Black settlers migrating to the Great Plains. Mostly as members of families or communities, these women migrants worked as domestic workers, cooks, laundresses, housekeepers, nursemaids, and nannies for white settlers, and as teachers and entrepreneurs such as seamstresses, milliners, hairdressers, and midwives in their own communities (Riley 1998). Less often, some women sought to build

new, and more independent lives on the Great Plains. For example, at least two single women managed to stake claims and homestead successfully in Montana (Behan 2006). Agnes "Annie" Morgan (ca. 1844-1914) was born in Maryland and came west to the Dakota Territory as a domestic servant to a white family. During the 1880s, after being widowed, she was hired to help a county attorney in Montana care for his uncle who was ill with a severe drinking problem on an abandoned farm. After curing the uncle, possibly with rootwork, she stayed on the farm, staked a claim, and continued to help heal others, including a Civil War veteran who had typhoid.[4] Bertie Brown (ca.1870s-1933), born in Missouri, was in her 20s when she settled in the Lewistown, Montana, area in 1898. While keeping a garden, raising chickens, and planting wheat, oats, and barley on her 25-acre homestead, she was known as a manufacturer of some of the best and safest moonshine in the region during Prohibition (Baumler 2014). By migrating to this region, these Black women entrepreneurs were able to defy gender and racial societal constraints to achieve greater self-determination and financial independence than most Black, and even white, women of their day.

Migrants wrote literature about their migrations and lives in the Great Plains, too. Nat Love (1854-1921), who lived some of his life in Deadwood, South Dakota, wrote the *Life and Adventures of Nat Love*, *Better Known in Cattle Country as "Deadwood Dick," by Himself* (1995 [1907]). Incorporating tall tales and exaggeration, both aesthetic characteristics sometimes used in African American oral tradition, Love relayed stories about his life as a cowboy. Journalist Era Bell Thompson (1905-1986) wrote an autobiography, *American Daughter* (1946), about her family's migration from Iowa to North Dakota as a child. Langston Hughes (1901-1967) incorporated his childhood experiences in Lawrence, Kansas, into *Not Without Laughter* (1930); and Gordon Parks (1912-2006), born and raised in Fort Scott, Kansas, wrote the semiautobiographical novel, *The Learning Tree* (1963). There are few stories in African American children's words about their experiences of migrating and growing up in the Great Plains. In 1905, Oscar Micheaux, a novelist and recognized as the first African American filmmaker of feature-length films, homesteaded near Gregory, South Dakota. A practitioner of Booker T. Washington's industrial philosophy for Black advancement, Micheaux drew on his experience in the Dakotas for his first novels and films (Bernson and Eggers 1977).

Folklore and artistic expressivity also illuminate the vitality and vibrancy of the beliefs, creativity, and cultural practices of migrating communities. African American neighborhoods and small towns hosted church and anniversary events to mark their community's migration history. As descendants from those communities migrated to other places, these neighborhoods and towns hosted homecoming celebrations to lure descendants to make return visits and to commemorate the original

Snapshot from homecoming events in Nicodemus, Kansas, 2006.
Collection of Nicodemus Historical Society

community's migration and settlement history. Like family reunions, these recurrent celebrations reaffirm bonds of belonging and reinvigorate community oral histories and traditions.

African American musicians also created regional forms of jazz rooted in the diverse music traditions brought to and mixed in each city. Emanating from larger cities such as Kansas City, Omaha, Topeka, Dallas, and San Antonio arose Blues-influenced territory jazz bands performing Jump music and Western Swing dance music.[5] Among the Big Band leaders were Alphonso Trent (Dallas); Andy Kirk and the Clouds of Joy (Oklahoma City); Walter Page and the Blue Devils (Oklahoma City and Kansas City); Troy Floyd (San Antonio); and Bennie Moten, George E. Lee, Jay McShann, and William "Count" Basie (Kansas City). Other influential musicians from the Great Plains include Charlie Christian (Texas), who developed the electric guitar as a jazz solo instrument; Ornette Coleman (Fort Worth), the jazz saxophonist, trumpeter, and violinist who was a primary creator of free jazz; Ada Brown (Kansas City), a jazz vocalist; Jimmy Rushing (Oklahoma City), a Blues vocalist; and Wynonie Harris (Omaha), a Rhythm and Blues vocalist. The confluence of military bands and multiple cultures—European, Native American, and African American from the South—imbued these music traditions with distinctive sounds and danceable energies as a marker of the cultural presence of African American life on the Great Plains.

Rodeo, a multi-genre performance tradition, also emerged from the cultural synergies of migration. With the demise of cattle drives and the rise of rodeo as a commemoration of cowboy culture, African American cowboys and cowgirls have sought to participate and competitively showcase their traditional skills of cattle handling, horse riding, and roping in rodeo events.[6] Celebrating cowboy cultural traditions, skills, and ways of life, African American participation in rodeo has challenged the narrative of presence by uplifting Black history, creativity, and practice of cowboy life. Their practice of this tradition challenges the American popular culture image of the cowboy as an exclusive heroic symbol of white masculinity. This mythic image fortifies the message of white dominance conveyed by the narrative of presence while distorting and erasing the multicultural history of the tradition. After consistently being either excluded from participation in white rodeos or facing discriminatory judging when they did participate, African Americans during segregation created a network of Black rodeos on the Soul Circuit throughout the Great Plains that continues to this day. This circuit nurtures an African American performance aesthetic, despite access to less funding and prestigious prizes than white rodeos have (Patton and Schedlock 2011, 513). Boley, Oklahoma hosts the oldest Black rodeo on Memorial Day Weekend.

Opening ceremony of the 100th Birthday Rodeo and Bar-B-Q Festival at the Boley Rodeo Arena in Boley, Oklahoma, 2003. Photograph by Steven M. Cummings. Jubilee Research Collection, Anacostia Community Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

African Americans, in each of the migrations to and through the Great Plains since the 16th century, have required and demonstrated stamina and resilience in the face of varying degrees of racial oppression, such as de facto segregation, housing and job discrimination, lynchings, and mob violence. The efforts to stamp out and control Black prosperity through the 1921 Tulsa Massacre was only one of several violent incidents attempting to re-subordinate Black people. Tulsa's Black community rebuilt stronger within five years, only to be damaged by urban removal when U.S. Interstate I-244 was built through the community (Ellsworth 2009, Goble 2001). However, African Americans have continued to pursue social justice, leading resistance against the constraints of segregation, limited citizenship, and educational and economic rights since the end of Reconstruction. Lawsuits against school segregation in Oklahoma and Texas set precedents for the 1954 Kansas case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (Franklin 2010, Glasrud and Wintz 2019).

This poster features African American rodeo showman Bill Pickett (1870-1932). "The Bull-dogger"/Ritchey Lith. Corp., 1923. [Ritchey Lith. Corp] Photograph, https://www.loc.gov/item/92500459.

Engaging in Interdisciplinary Research with Students

The interdisciplinary tools of Folklore Studies helped undergraduate students majoring and minoring in American Multicultural Studies where I taught in Minnesota to reveal a fuller story of BIPOC migrations to the Great Plains. In one of my intermediate classes, I assigned a unit in which my students conducted research at the Clay County Historical Society to investigate the local history of BIPOC individuals living in Moorhead, Minnesota, a small city across the Red River from Fargo, North Dakota. In the 2000s, the Black population was less than 1 percent in the town, and although several reservations were within a short drive, the Indigenous presence in Moorhead was barely visible to most residents. My students' assumption was BIPOC people were a recent presence in the city. Learning to search through interviews; read censuses; use city directories and maps; and peruse school, community, government, and other archival records, my students discovered that African Americans had migrated to Moorhead in the late 19th century and established a presence in the community that waxed and waned in size over decades. One Native American student even discovered where her Chinese grandfather had migrated when he left the family. Shocked and inspired by their discoveries, some became so excited at the transformation of their knowledge that they located where these residents had lived, researched their lives, and visited the cemetery where they were buried. Although this unit really engaged the students, we could only spend three weeks on this aspect of research, so it became a project that different classes contributed to over several years. Students noted that both individuals and families migrated and built businesses and institutions that are no longer extant. Families often lived together or in neighboring housing. While there is much more research to be done, the assignment effectively disrupted the narratives of presence for the region and revealed new questions, contexts, and knowledge about our regional community to the students.

Conclusion

Disrupting the narrative of presence on the Great Plains reveals substantive multicultural histories of migration to and through lands originally inhabited by Native peoples. Through the lenses of the diverse cultures residing in the region over the past four centuries, these histories expose the hard truths of colonialism and racism in the Great Plains alongside narratives of BIPOC people seeking to make real dreams of survival, hope, and opportunity.

While enslavement brought some African Americans to the region, hundreds of thousands more over hundreds of years migrated voluntarily, pursuing their fundamental beliefs in the possibilities of full citizenship that the region promised. Although the numbers of African Americans in some parts of the Great Plains may be small, they have not been absent. In part, the impression of absence has been an intentional creation of white settlers through legacies of hostility, violence, limited rights and opportunities, and forced removal from the region. While some individuals were "accepted" into their local communities, the majority, especially in larger population centers, experienced lukewarm acceptance and second-class citizenship. Some even faced outright rejection. A disrupted narrative must also tell the stories of African American dreams, persistence, resilience, perseverance, and diversity as they pursued opportunities not attainable or sustainable in the South. It must draw on interdisciplinary approaches to unearth the vivid buried histories to counter monocultural discourses of the American Heartland, the Great Plains, and other regions—and provide the dynamic narratives of how African Americans and other people of color migrated to new places, such as the Great Plains, to realize their dreams of working and creating homes in freedom.

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Endnotes

[1] BIPOC is a term of coalition among racial groups, arising from youth of color on the East Coast around 2013. It is designed to recognize differential experiences of the implementation of systemic racism in the U.S. across racial groups and foregrounds the fundamental racial constructs that have particularly harmed Black and Indigenous communities and individuals over centuries. Cultural racism, a key facet of systemic racism, has included the banning of languages; erasure and trivialization of cultural traditions, history, and community knowledge; criminalization of religious practices; and distortion of cultural imagery—strategies that all uphold the narrative of presence (May-Machunda 2022, 46).

[2] Among the extant religious and public historically Black colleges and universities in the Great Plains are Wiley College (1873), Prairie View A & M University (1876), Texas College (1894), St. Philip's College (1898), Texas Southern University (1927) and Southwestern Christian College (1948) in Texas and Langston University (1897) in Oklahoma (The Hundred-Seven 2018).

[3] William T. Montgomery was a subscriber to the principles of Booker T. Washington. Montgomery's family had been enslaved on the plantations of Jefferson Davis' brother who especially valued the skills of Montgomery's father,

Ben, and built a relationship with the Montgomery family. William T. Montgomery's brother Isaiah T. Montgomery was the founder of one of the most prosperous Black Freedom Settlements in Mound Bayou, Mississippi.

[4] Territory jazz bands are local and regional dance bands that played before local and regional segregated audiences in the period between the World Wars (1920s-1940s), primarily in the days before radio. These bands blended a variety of musical styles in their communities to create regional sounds. African American communities in the Great Plains hosted a preponderance of these bands that travelled between small and medium-sized towns throughout the region. During the Great Depression, some of the best African American musicians in these groups migrated to the larger cities of the region (Berg 2011). Scholars note that these bands provided critically important training grounds for some of the most consequential jazz innovators to contribute to the development of jazz in the 1930s and 1940s (Schuller 1991, 772).

[5] Rootwork is an African American traditional healing and protection practice drawn from conjure or Hoodoo (Chireau 2006, 4). Anchored in African traditional religious practices brought and used during enslavement, rootwork synthesized knowledge from Indigenous and European communities as well. It is a technique that requires knowledge of plants, their uses in medicinal formulas, and their corresponding spiritual incantations. In the U.S. many traditional practitioners have been African American women.

[6] Wild West and rodeo showman Bill Pickett (1870-1932) was one of the most famous African American cowboys to make a living performing in this sport and, later, in movies (Patton and Schedlock 2011). He is credited with inventing the technique of "bulldogging," by which he wrestled steers to the ground in rodeo.

URLs

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools https://www.utrgv.edu/chaps

El Camino Real de los Tejas Trail https://www.nps.gov/elte/index.htm

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Classroom Connections

Additional Teaching Resources About African Americans on the Great Plains

Homesteading

- https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/black-homesteaders-on-the-great-plains-life-liberty-and-the-pursuit-of-happiness.htm
- https://www.nps.gov/subjects/africanamericanheritage/teachers.htm
- https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/exodusters-african-american-migration-to-the-great-plains/teaching-guide
- Lucas, Decoursey Clayton. 2005. African American Homesteading on the Central Plains. *OAH Magazine of History*. 19.6: 34-9, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25161997. (Lesson plan)
- https://www.wyohistory.org/education/toolkit/black-14
- Great Plains Black History Museum, Omaha, NE https://gpblackhistorymuseum.org/#OnExhibit
- https://www.ops.org/Page/1823
- https://www.cilc.org/ContentProvider/ViewContentProvider.aspx?id=387
- https://www.unl.edu/plains/oklahoma-black-homesteader-project
- https://www.unl.edu/plains/black-homesteader-project
- https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/nicodemus-town-company-founded
- https://www.archives.gov/education
- https://www.archives.gov/news/topics/african-american-histo
- https://www.okhistory.org/blackhistory
- https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/westward-expansion-encounters-at-a-cultural-crossroads
- https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/pioneers.pdf
- https://prairiepublic.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/ush22-soc-nicodemus/nicodemus-and-black-settlements-in-the-west-interactive-lesson
- https://oercommons.org/authoring/36817-lesson-3-1850-1874-african-american-settlers/view
- https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/ranchhouse/1867_essay6.html

Buffalo Soldiers

- https://prairiepublic.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/great-states-idaho-10.2/activity
- https://prairiepublic.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/49e8d07f-313d-44af-924a-591b0c96aeea/buffalo-soldiers-in-new-mexico
- https://www.nps.gov/foda/learn/education/upload/buffalosoldiers.pdf
- https://legacy.education.texashistory.unt.edu/lessons/psa/Buffalo_Soldiers

Black Cowboys

- https://www.socialstudies.com/blog/teaching-about-the-american-west-black-cowboys
- Childs, David. 2023. How the West Was Really Won: The History of Black Cowboys in the West (with Classroom Teaching Resources*). Oregon Journal of Social Studies*. 11.1: 25-60, https://sites.google.com/site/oregoncouncilforsocialstudies/O-J-S-S/o-j-s-s-issues.
- https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/History/2016/Teaching-and-learning-materials/HTOTM-2110-black-cowboys-worksheet-final.pdf
- https://texancultures.utsa.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Cowboys-and-Cattle-Drives-Lessons-Grade-4REVISED.pdf
- https://www.nps.gov/articles/series.htm?id=B2C78EF4-E6BD-2683-F3C10A5112A391E5&utm_source=article&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=experience_more&utm_content=large

Migration History Charts

- https://www.archives.gov/education/family-history

Montana Historical Society

- https://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ForTeachers
- https://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans

North Dakota Studies

- https://www.ndstudies.gov/sites/default/files/PDF/newsletter_fall_2015_web.pdf

Books for Children

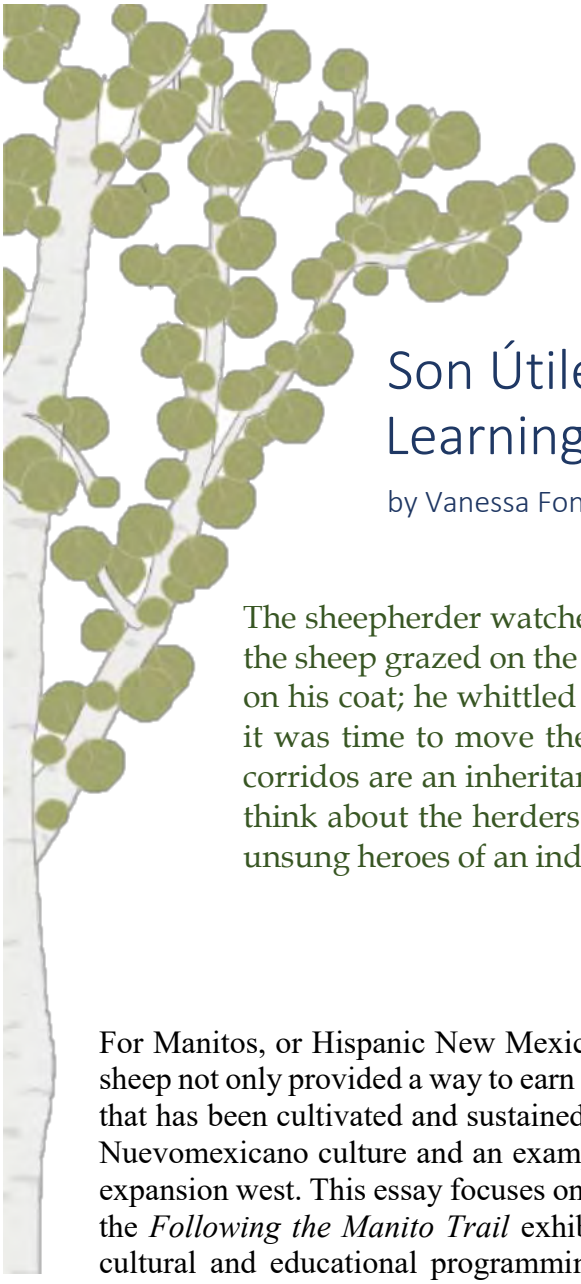
- https://www.readingrockets.org/books-and-authors/booklists/biographies/celebration-and-remembrance-childrens-books-about-black

Oklahoma Historical Society

- https://www.okhistory.org/blackhistory

Immigration

- https://www.ilctr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Teaching-Immigration-with-the-Immigrant-Stories-Project-FINAL_opt.pdf
- https://www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education/teaching-about-refugees
- https://pulitzercenter.org/builder/lesson/migration-and-refugees-lesson-plans
- https://kasc.ku.edu/educator-resources
- https://www.lostboysfilm.com/learn.html



Son Útiles:
Learning from Manito Sheep Culture

by Vanessa Fonseca-Chávez and Patricia Perea

> The sheepherder watched his flock by day, traveling many miles while the sheep grazed on the range. As his flock pastured, he sat on a rock or on his coat; he whittled some object or composed songs of poetry until it was time to move the flock to water or better pasture. Many of the corridos are an inheritance from the unlettered sheepherder. . . When I think about the herders on the endless Llano, I know that they are the unsung heroes of an industry which was our livelihood for generations.
>
> —Fabiola Cabeza de Baca, 1994 (8)

For Manitos, or Hispanic New Mexicans, sheep symbolized a way of life. Working with sheep not only provided a way to earn a living, but it also contributed to a fiber arts tradition that has been cultivated and sustained over many generations. Sheep became a symbol of Nuevomexicano culture and an example of affirmation and resistance in the face of U.S. expansion west. This essay focuses on two sides of sheep culture, both illuminated through the *Following the Manito Trail* exhibit (March 26-July 31, 2022) and its corresponding cultural and educational programming at the Millicent Rogers Museum in Taos, New Mexico. The migration narratives of sheepherders and the cultural expressions of fiber artists are important, but undervalued, aspects of the overall cultural contributions of sheep in New Mexico.

This essay asks what it meant for Manitos to practice sheepherding or to create art from sheep. Additionally, it reveals that the lessons gleaned from this work must be passed on to future generations. As Fabiola Cabeza de Baca writes above, sheepherding culture is our livelihood and our inheritance. We demonstrate the utility in learning about migration and cultural arts that arose from Manito sheep culture and link this to culturally and linguistically relevant educational programs for K-12 students in New Mexico.

About the image: New Mexico Highlands University students Lily Padilla and Natasha Vásquez created the Aspen designs that adorned each of the exhibit panels and the website.

Following the Manito Trail Exhibit

In 2015, scholars from the University of Wyoming and the University of New Mexico formalized a collaborative project titled Following the Manito Trail (FMT).[1] The words "Manito" and "Manita" come from the Spanish words "hermanito" (little brother) and "hermanita" (little sister). They are terms of endearment used among many Hispano communities in New Mexico for generations.[2] The project focuses on Manito migration from the territory/state of New Mexico to other parts of the U.S. West from the 19th century to the present. Manito movement through the 1940s-1950s was fluid as Manitos found work in sugar beet fields and as sheepherders, railroad workers, miners, and agricultural workers in Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and California (Martínez and Fonseca-Chávez 2021). As many of them shifted from seasonal work to more permanent jobs in their new locales, the culture, folklore, and language traditions of their Manito homelands traveled with them. They created Manito enclaves outside New Mexico and maintained their connections to the families they left behind.

As members of the FMT team, we collaborated with the Millicent Rogers Museum to co-curate an exhibit that highlighted ten families from Taos County who left the state to work in various economies. Some returned to Taos County, while others made homes in other parts of New Mexico and throughout the U.S. West. This exhibit was created in partnership with various funding agencies, institutions, and community collaborators and in 2022 and 2023 traveled to two additional sites.[3]

Exhibit Design: Cultivating Forests and Pathways

Many members of the FMT team have direct experience with outward migration. We approached the exhibit with an understanding that our personal stories could exist alongside our scholarly expertise to provide educational opportunities to multiple audiences. As authors of this essay and as FMT team members, we bring knowledge of both sides of sheep culture to the table. Vanessa Fonseca-Chávez is from northwestern New Mexico and her great-grandfather, Juan "Chavitos" Chávez, worked as a sheepherder in that part of the state. Patricia Perea is a colchera whose family

Colcha is a Spanish term for "bed covering," and, here, it refers to a Hispanic New Mexican art form mainly made by women since the mid-1700s. Colcha refers to a method of embroidering wool yarn to a fabric backing cloth.

(From *Following the Manito Trail K-4 Educator Packet*, 6)

Image Detail: Sophie Varos Graves Carson Colcha – Rio Grande Hispanic Revival. 1930s wool embroidery on monk's cloth. Gift of Paul Peralta-Ramos, MRM 1988.011.002. Image from *Following the Manito Trail K-4 Educator Packet*, 8.

roots are in eastern New Mexico and west Texas. She wrote the poem "Manita Ritual" for the exhibit to honor her migration story.

The exhibit was designed around the seasonal changes of Aspen trees, mimicking the work that many Manito sheepherders undertook during their travels to nearby states. The exhibit featured the following elements:

- Family trees, photos, stories, and cultural heritage items from ten families
- Colchas, religious art, and other materials from the museum
- Poetry by Patricia Perea and Alfonso Archuleta
- Oral history listening booth
- Photographs of arborglyphs and sheep
- Gallery Guide
- K-12 Educator Packets
- Humanities Dialogue Panel Series
- Listening Booth static website at https://www.manitotrail.com

Undergraduate and graduate students were valued co-producers of knowledge and vital to the success of the exhibit. New Mexico Highlands University students Lily Padilla and Natasha Vásquez served as cultural technology interns and created the Aspen designs that adorned each of the exhibit panels, as well as the website. As Manitas, they understood the significance of these trees and worked closely with the larger exhibit team to bring the vision to fruition. Arizona State University (ASU) PhD student Jesús Villa, also a Manito hailing from La Villita, New Mexico, translated the English materials into Spanish, ensuring that the language reflected a regional New Mexican dialect. He conducted oral history interviews with some of the families who were highlighted. Jesús worked with ASU masters students Vanessa Reynaga and Trevonte "Tre" McClain, who served as graduate student interns. Vanessa and Trevonte used the Aspen motif created by Natasha and Lily and co-designed the website that functioned as a listening booth showcasing excerpts from the oral history interviews. Student scholars are part of a lineage of educators, both formal and informal, who have created the pathways to undertake this exhibit. It was important for us to listen to the voices of the community and to create educational opportunities for our current students, as well as New Mexico K-12 students who were not receiving the kind of culturally and linguistically relevant education that they deserve.

Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico

The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) implemented new Social Studies standards for the 2023-24 academic school year,[4] following the 2018 *Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico* decision. The PED was charged with creating standards that reflect the diverse experiences of New Mexico's student population and provide equal access to career opportunities to all students. It was ruled that New Mexico:

> had failed to comply with state and federal laws regarding the education of Native American and ELL students, including the New Mexico Indian Education Act, Bilingual Multicultural Education Act, and the Hispanic Education Act . . . [and] had failed to provide students with the programs and services that it acknowledges prepare them for college and career. (New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty)

The new Social Studies standards provide cultural engagement and critical thinking skills to help New Mexico students process their histories and their experiences. As we were working on the educational materials for the exhibit, we found that the methodology of FMT perfectly complemented the new standards for our exhibit educator packets for Grades K-4, Grades 5-8, and Grades 9-12.

"Leaving Home:" Grades K-4 Educator Packet

A key theme throughout the K-4 standards includes understanding one's place within a community. The title for this unit was "Leaving Home" and its purpose was to teach students about migration in New Mexico history and how those migrations relate to the overall stories of Manitos.

Selected questions generated for Grades K-4:

- Why would people migrate?
- Where did New Mexicans go?
- What happened when New Mexicans came back home?
- What kinds of stories did they take with them?

Activities ask students to reflect on what it means to be Manito both locally and nationally. Manitos were primarily migrating within the U.S. Southwest and often were motivated by family and economics. Sometimes they were moving to places where family had already relocated and where job opportunities were more abundant. K-4 students are provided with a map of the U.S., a family tree, and a colcha detail page and coloring page to relate to family, the Manito Trail, and the cultural arts produced from sheep wool for more than two centuries. The practice of colcha lends itself to multigenerational learning opportunities. By bringing generations together to engage in colcha, they are also passing down and receiving stories. By connecting with these stories and traditions, students can better understand their cultural inheritances and find ways to engage in them as well.

Colchera Traditions and Inheritances

As part of the exhibit, we curated cultural programming that ties our education goals to larger learning opportunities for educators and communities. As the K-4 students were preparing to color in colchas, museum attendees were learning about colcha embroidery and weaving—two of the most visible byproducts of sheep culture in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Each has a methodology and style particular to this region. For example, the colcha stitch maximizes the use of yarn. Rather than distributing the design evenly on the front and back of the cloth as you would see with other styles of embroidery, the colcha stitch keeps much of the design on the front, leaving little more than an outline on the back. There is also a distinction between two of the most well-known weaving traditions of New Mexico: northern Río Grande and Diné. Aside from the obvious difference in design motifs, the other distinction is methodological. Diné weavers do not tie their rugs and blankets off with fringe as Nuevomexicana or Manita weavers do. There are also similarities in the traditions. Both communities prefer the long-haired churro sheep's wool, and it is also common for northern New Mexican weavers to use what is called a "Navajo spindle" to spin their wool into yarn.

Many weavers and colcheras attribute the resourcefulness of their techniques to the long journeys of the past. It took a long time to transport the necessary sheep and then shear their wool. The roads were arduous and the weather often bad, so they saved what they could and only used what was necessary and readily available. This is part of the story of how the tradition was passed across

the generations. While these stories are undoubtedly part of a long history of the fiber arts in New Mexico, another key component was the arrival of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and its explicit purpose—bolstering the Depression-Era economy, including through the preservation of fiber art traditions.

The WPA recorded fiber art processes thoroughly in documents such as press releases and official reports. Tey Marianna Nunn writes: "The explicit detail describing the techniques recovers 'lost' knowledge and provides important information about both the Spanish-inspired weaving process from beginning to end, and sources for the natural dyes" (Nunn 2001, 105). Nunn argues that this attention to detail in the creation of fiber art pieces prioritized formal descriptions of the material culture rather than recording information about the artists/makers. While that is true, the written accounts provided a means to preserve the tradition and informed our reintroduction of the long history of fiber arts within the exhibit.

Cultural Fibers: Preservation and Heritage in Northern New Mexican Fiber Arts

In April 2022, the Millicent Rogers Museum hosted the third panel in the five-part Humanities Dialogue Panel Series, "Cultural Fibers: Preservation and Heritage in Northern New Mexican Fiber Arts." The featured speaker was the weaver, colchera, storyteller, and bilingual education teacher Juanita Jaramillo Lavadie. This programming was an opportunity for educators and community members to expand their understanding of this important fiber tradition in New Mexico's history and diaspora.

As a practicing colchera, Lavadie is aware of the history of fiber arts in New Mexico. She began her talk by situating herself within her family, her community, and her landscape. Throughout the FMT exhibit, the museum displayed colchas and weavings that were part of its collection—beautiful pieces of art meant to be admired from afar. In her talk, however, Lavadie articulated a critical perspective that counteracts the collection and display process of the museum:

> The earliest memory I have are of the frazadas that were at my grandmother's house and my sister and I would spend nights . . . My grandmother would spread multiple frazadas on the floor, quilts and blankets so that was kind of like a special bedding. I grew up with these blankets. I grew up with them intimately. I mean just putting my head on them and dreaming on them. (Lavadie 2022)

For Lavadie, these blankets are not only beautiful, but her storytelling reflects that they are also meant to be used and loved closely. The spoken words are not exact: The blankets are comforting; they signify family and safety. The unspoken is the critique that takes them out of homes and into spaces that offer little contextualization. At the museum, the blankets can remain beautiful, but not necessarily useful. For Lavadie, the worst thing a person could be was "inútil" or "useless."

Sheep and the ways sheep culture worked within Manito communities serve as testimony to the large skill set sheepherders and their families possessed. They cared for sheep and used their wool to create blankets, clothing, and rugs–all requiring a variety of practical skills. At the Millicent Rogers Museum, these are words of contestation. The material objects hanging from walls or displayed in cases are not "useless." Their true worth, for Lavadie, is in their utility. In other words, they are to be dreamed on.

Grades 5-8 Educator Packet

Manito migration patterns were highly influenced by U.S. colonization—a topic that Grades 5-8 are introduced to via the FMT educator packet. The unit title, again, is "Leaving Home," and students are asked to explore the importance of Manito voices and experiences in New Mexico and how those inform other narratives around them.

Selected questions for Grades 5-8 :

- What geographic, economic, and cultural factors impacted Manito migration?
- What challenges did Manitos face?
- What is the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo? How is this treaty important in the stories of Manito families?
- How do governments make decisions? How do people make decisions? How are people influenced?

The activities ask students to create posters for companies that might have attracted workers in the sheepherding, sugar beet, or mining industry—all important economic opportunities for Manitos in the mid-1800s—following the Mexican American War and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Students learn about treaties and their place in U.S. history. Lastly, they are encouraged to engage with the family panels from the exhibit and to write a newspaper article about these families' lives or to assume the life of a sheepherder and document it via social media. These activities prepare students for understanding how belonging works through moments of change, and it lays the groundwork for them to participate in their civics and government courses that will come later in their educational journey. Addressing these themes in the exhibit empowers students to learn both where they came from and to be proud of the contributions of their Manito ancestors to the overall history and economy of the U.S.

Manito Migrations

The second of the Humanities Dialogue Panel Series took place in March 2022. "Manito Migrations and Mountain Memories" featured presentations by Troy Lovata and Mathew Sandoval and relates to the learning goals for Grades 5-8. Lovata's grandfather was from Hernández, New Mexico, and left in the 1920s to work in Wyoming. Lovata's research includes the study of graffiti, especially regarding Aspen trees, and what those carvings communicate about people, place, and time. His presentation revealed the importance of migration paths that Manitos traveled for work, as well as the U.S. colonial era policies that prompted these migrations.

In his panel presentation, "Using the Trees to Mark Mountains Trails: Using the Mountains to Define Manitos," Lovata noted that "Manitos, whether they're in New Mexico or went somewhere else to work, from the mid-1800s to the mid-20th century, were working on sheep and they were going there to be laborers, sometimes they were herding sheep and sometimes they were shearing sheep" (Lovata 2022). Sheepherders often traveled, traversing the landscape and marking their presence. Gulliford (2018) frames these as "sheepscapes," or sheepherder landscapes that bridge a past practice to the present. Among these sheepscapes are arborglyphs, a type of "ephemeral art…that would fall and be forgotten, yet herders wanted to leave their marks" (14). Aspen trees were the chosen canvas for these arborglyphs, and sheepherders took full advantage of that canvas to communicate that "I was here…This is who I was, this is who I am" (Lovata 2022).

An arborglyph from the Sierra Madre Range in southern Wyoming. Photo by Adam Herrera.

The recurring motif of the lonely sheepherder is often carved on Aspens and invokes the solitude of this type of work as well as the emotion that emerged to express the sentiments of their chosen profession. Among the most popular images are carvings of women accompanied by "poetry about the women who have wronged them or the women they hope to go back home to" (Lovata 2022). While many of these poems and verses found their way into early Spanish-language newspapers, words and symbols were also carved on trees by sheepherders.

As Grades 5-8 become familiar with this content, they can envision what it must have been like for their own families to leave home, to create livelihoods for themselves in the diaspora, and to find ways to connect, via folklore, to the homes they left behind. Students also can use this history to understand better their sense of place and the important role that Manitos had in moving forward the economy of the U.S. Southwest in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Grades 9-12 Educator Packet: Oral History and Family Research Methodology

For Grades 9-12, the Social Studies standards ask students to analyze and engage critically with historical narratives. The exhibit demonstrates a methodology upon which students can model their own projects. The family panels in the exhibit and the listening booth rely on oral histories and primary and secondary source data, offering materials for critical inquiry. In academia, this is a basic practice; however, it is something students struggle with well into their college careers. Thus, it was important that we include questions asking students to identify their sources and how they would use them in their own work. This fulfills one of the most vital components of the *Yazzie/Martinez* decision—making New Mexico's students career and college ready.

The activities for this unit, like those of K-4, involved mapping and creating family trees. However, the engagement included original research of family histories and stories and listening to the oral histories in the exhibit to identify best practices for oral history research. Additionally, students are asked to map industries, company towns, and the structures that sustain them. Finally, students engage with public records and research population data to understand the connections between their own families and larger systems of migration.

In continuing with the theme "Leaving Home," Grades 9-12 are asked to expand upon Manito migration narratives and their relationship to various structures, including family, community, the nation, and the world. Questions include:

- What role did Manito migration contribute to the changing demographics of traditional communities both in New Mexico and nationally?
- How do the oral histories of Manito families contribute to the 20th century historical analysis of social, political, geographic, and economic issues? How can this analysis apply to understanding current issues?
- What role do the Aspen trees play in the Manito migration narrative?
- How did Manito migration patterns interact with the physical processes of earth's biosphere?

Mountain Memories

For many Manitos in the diaspora, the Aspen trees are a connecting theme, one of the central questions in the unit for Grades 9-12. This, in turn, connects to the mountain memories of one of our Humanities Dialogue Panel Series presentations by Mathew Sandoval. Sandoval's family is from Taos and Río Arriba Counties in New Mexico and his grandfather worked as a sheepherder. As a performance artist, Sandoval employs spoken word to explore personal histories and stories tied to mountain landscapes in New Mexico and throughout the diaspora.

Aspen trees begin to grow at an altitude of 6,500 feet and are found in mountain landscapes throughout the U.S. West. The trees invoked an intense connection for Sandoval. As one of the oral histories that 9-12 graders can explore, Sandoval shared: "I could see exactly why they [Sandoval's family] moved to eastern Nevada because eastern Nevada looks exactly like northern New Mexico… the same kind of foliage, really, I mean Aspen trees everywhere… There's this overwhelming familiarity that happened when I first visited the Taos area and Río Arriba…that olfactory sense when you can smell home" (Sandoval 2021). Although Sandoval never lived in New Mexico, he is transported back to the home of his ancestors through the cultural and folk traditions they carried with them. They ate tortillas in Nevada, foraged for piñón, and were campfire storytellers who reveled in all opportunities to be in the mountains.

Sandoval's family migrated to McGill, Nevada, a copper mining town run by Kennecott Copper Company and built atop a mountain. But before his grandfather was a copper miner, he was a sheepherder for the Doyle Robinson Ranch at the age of 11 when living outside Taos. These tidbits of information offer students a place to start their own research, looking into mining companies and ranches as sites of employment for Manitos.

Sandoval's story also highlights another important area of research for Grade 9-12 students–the social and economic challenges Manito families faced. Although Sandoval's great-grandfather

Lucas Sandoval would not have the opportunity to travel as the generations after him did, his labor as a lumberman was part of the railroad system that connected the U.S. West in the late 19th century. Lucas worked in what is known today as the Carson National Forest near Taos, constructing railroad ties from trees, "using his broad ax to trim timber with precision" (Sandoval and Lovata 2024, 61). When Lucas passed away, Sandoval returned to the homeland of his grandfather to pay tribute to his ancestor who "died deep in the forest…in a grove of Aspens…whose bark was carved with memories…whose leaves shook like tambourines" (Sandoval and Lovata 2024, 61-2). For Sandoval, the legacy of Manitos, their labor, and their families are inscribed onto the landscape, heard through the trees, and remembered by the stories we tell.

Sandoval's presentation masterfully wove together the ways Manitos are deeply tied to New Mexico and the states where they find themselves. The understanding of how Manitos were connected to sheep and other wage economies offered a grounding for Grade 9-12 students to comprehend some of the larger questions posed by this unit.

Conclusion: Community Education and Legacies of Learning

The *Following the Manito Trail* exhibit at the Millicent Rogers Museum presented an opportune moment to address some of the most pressing questions and complexities of Manito sheep culture. The exhibit used the landscape as a design element to explore Manito migration, the stories that families carried with them, and the ways Manitos felt included and excluded in the formation of the U.S. West economies.

We were grateful to have been able to offer to the community a collaborative and scholarly perspective rooted in migration, diaspora, and culture bearing over many centuries. This kind of education exists in community, and the FMT project team carefully curated presentations by regional community members and scholarly experts who also experienced that migration, and those who bore witness to the migrations of their own family over time. As Lovata and Sandoval demonstrate, mountain memories and trees marking the pathways of sheepherders are ways to keep Manitos from being written out of history.

Likewise, Lavadie's discussion about the utility of fiber arts adds significant knowledge to a cultural tradition that often finds itself hung on walls of museums, outside its practical use. These perspectives challenge museum spaces and ask what can be done to further the histories and stories of sheep culture in New Mexico through an education grounded in community knowledge, storytelling, and culture bearing. The ways Manitos forged new understandings of their old and new locales is significant, and they have participated in preservation of their cultural traditions through storytelling; marking the landscape; and the production of cultural arts such as embroidery, textile weavings, and more. They teach us what it was like to travel those trails and impart wisdom upon future generations of storytellers and culture bearers. Each of the K-12 packets ended with questions about futurity–prompting students to think about future migration pathways and how their understanding of the past can inform future decision making in their home state. The *Yazzie/Martinez v. New Mexico* ruling has shown that the state has failed to fully integrate bilingual and bicultural experiences into the curriculum. This exhibit prepares our students to delve into their past and to be active participants in the formation of their future stories and selves.

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Endnotes

[1] The FMT project team consists of Co-Directors Levi Romero and Vanessa Fonseca-Chávez, Research Scholars Trisha Martínez and Patricia Perea, Graduate Student Scholar Jesús Villa, and Research Consultant Troy Lovata.

[2] This definition is taken from an exhibit panel titled "Being Manito."

[3] The *Following the Manito Trail* exhibit and programming were sponsored by the Millicent Rogers Museum, the Following the Manito Trail project, the Northern Río Grande National Heritage Area, the New Mexico Humanities Council, New Mexico Highlands University, the Manitos Community Memory Project, New Mexico Historic Sites, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, Los Luceros Historic Site, and Santa Fe Community College. The exhibit project team included Levi Romero, Vanessa Fonseca-Chávez, Patricia Perea, Trisha Venisa-Alicia Martínez, Jesús Villa, Michelle Lanteri, Karen Chertok, Lily Padilla, Natasha Vásquez, Trevonte "Tre" McClain, and Vanessa Reynaga. The static website for the exhibit can be found here http://www.manitotrail.com.

[4] https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NM-Standards-508.pdf

URLs

Millicent Rogers Museum https://www.millicentrogers.org

NM Social Studies standards https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NM-Standards-508.pdf

Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico https://www.nmpovertylaw.org/subissues/yazzie-martinez-v-state-of-new-mexico/#:~:text=The%20court%20ordered%20the%20state,learners%20and%20students%20with%20disabilities.

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Educating From Scratch: Toward a Revitalized Bulgarian Village

by Sarah Craycraft and Petya V. Dimitrova

How might the absence of appropriate resources be a barrier to migration?

How do migrants enact futurism in difficult situations, and with what consequences?

Often, migrants relocate because of acute disruption: war, disaster, or persecution. Slower forms of violence, however, can lead to lifestyle migration, at once a response to nostalgia and an unsatisfying present. Some young urbanites in Bulgaria seek new possibilities in heavily depopulated rural settings. While rural revitalization is generally viewed across the country as desirable, most rural communities are ill-equipped to receive new arrivals. As a result, urban-rural migrants turn to local and foreign models to remake village life in accordance with their needs, drawing on a mix of traditional lifeways, New Age spirituality, and Western project models to facilitate educational opportunities nearly from scratch.

This article investigates village revitalization efforts in Oslen Krivodol, Bulgaria, a village of fewer than 150 residents. We seek to understand how young newcomers use cultural exchange, heritage, and alternative educational programming to initiate change in rural spaces, and with what impacts. We closely describe two events in Oslen—"Oslen Fest" and "Oslen Weekend – Education in Nature"—whose focus on culture and education are exemplary of broader ideological threads present in revitalization initiatives. Through these prisms, we explore the role of immersive participatory events alongside the slower efforts of young families who make homes in this heavily depopulated community.

About the photo: Bass Naroden play Oslen Fest in the rain on the improvised stage. All photos and captions courtesy of the authors.

We suggest that such events perform an important sort of futurism, implemented through continuous, collaborative learning: a simultaneous reaction to out-migration and a hope to lay the foundation for in-migration. We also point out that in such situations, educators are not only mediators of or responders to social change; they can also be agents of social change, in which transformation involves layers of learning, teaching, and collaborative exchange, for newcomers and receiver communities alike. We gesture to links between these village projects and others like them in Western European and American contexts (such as settlement schools, folk schools, and Waldorf schools), nodding to the complicated realities and "politics of culture" (Whisnant 1983) produced by outsiders who bring new models to local problems.

As culture workers—an American folklorist and a Bulgarian anthropologist—we are cautiously supportive of this work. Petya attended Oslen Weekend in Fall 2023[1], we both attended Oslen Fest in Summer 2023, and we have both collaborated with one of the partner organizations that supports revitalization efforts for more than five years. We want to see villages thrive, but we're also conscious of the negative impacts of similar historical and contemporaneous "helpers" in other locales (Whisnant 1983, Robie 1991, Borland and Adams 2013). We note in our work (Craycraft 2022b, Dimitrova 2022a, Dimitrova 2022b) that rural revitalization in Bulgaria is occurring on many different fronts, toward many different goals, and with a wide array of impacts. At the same time, certain factors hinder villages and would-be migrants from (re)building community. A central factor in this regard is education, referring both to the presence of adequate or merely functioning schools and access to broader and/or alternative types of education that might facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge in ways that are additive, rather than disruptive, for both receiving community members and newcomers alike. Rather than approach these conversations from a stance of distanced critique, we encourage scholars and culture workers to become involved in similar efforts as thought partners, asking how our distanced perspectives might afford space for reflexivity that would otherwise be lost through "boots to the ground" efforts. In this way, we advocate for the continued involvement of scholar-activists (when invited) in any context in which locals and migrant-newcomers work to build new futures together.

Urban-Rural Migration in Bulgaria

For decades, media and everyday discourse have constructed the rural as a symbol of timelessness, silence, and idyll, a stronghold of tradition and life close to nature in opposition to urbanity (Williams 1973, Creed and Ching 1997, Caldwell 2010). Folkloristic conversations have, at times, contributed to these dialogues (Abrahams 1993, Bendix 1997). Coining the term "lifestyle migration," sociologists Benson and O'Reilly describe such migrants as "relatively affluent individuals, moving either part-time or full-time, permanently or temporarily, to places which, for various reasons, signify for the migrants something loosely defined as quality of life" (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, 621), often in pursuit of a "rural idyll" (Bunce 2003, Bell 2006, Halfacree 2014). Lifestyle migrants generally aren't nostalgic for the places they have left, as these places symbolize a life of stress and obligation, deprived of community spirit and freedom. In contrast, they characterize receiving environments with a slower pace of life, lower expenses, climatic and health advantages, and a sense of community (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, 609-10). The power of the term "lifestyle migration" lies in its ability to shift the focus from the mobility of individuals to their agency to make choices: to start anew, to build new identities, to reinvent oneself, and to be aware of what one is consuming and producing (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, Hoey 2014).

It is perhaps easy to write off urban-rural migrants as hipsters, back-to-the-landers, or rural gentrifiers. In the Bulgarian case, though, urbanites and villagers alike are observing rapid rural depopulation take place before their eyes. Their motivations often align with the lifestyle migrants described above while also containing a sense that the fate of rural Bulgaria hangs in the balance. Nevertheless, the imagined possibility of diving into romanticized rural traditionalism is something of an illusion, as such lifeways are simply no longer present in Bulgarian villages, or at least not in the ways they are sometimes presumed to exist. The story of rural transformation in Bulgaria is long and beyond the scope of this paper, but it is worth mentioning a few key factors.[2]

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria experienced waves of nation-building and identity formation throughout the early 20th century as artists, intellectuals, leaders, and everyday people alike sought to find their place alongside their European counterparts. Experimental cooperatives and visions of a prospering agrarian nation gave way to full-scale collectivization and industrialization of the countryside during the Communist period (Yancheva 2015), complete with the nationalization of folklife and top-down ideological efforts to transform peasants into workers. The Communist regime essentially seeded the first waves of contemporary rural depopulation, exacerbated during the transformations of the early 1990s. As Bulgaria found its footing as a postsocialist, democratic, capitalist nation, villages experienced devastating levels of depopulation as well as the immediate closure and gradual decay of key infrastructures like schools, shops, and cultural centers. Urban hubs absorbed massive waves of migrants as young families moved to cities or abroad, seeking work and viable living conditions. Bulgaria's incorporation into the European Union in 2007 carried hopes of much-needed change for the better, but the unfulfilled promises of EU membership instead left a bitter taste in the mouths of many. Bulgaria is currently projected as one of the fastest-depopulating countries worldwide.[3]

One effect of this history is the production of a generational gap, in which many young urbanites are dissatisfied with contemporary city life *and* curious about traditional practices perceived to be lost because of socialist and postsocialist transformation, in opposition to older generations. This leads some to seek village life as an alternative path in the face of a disappointing present. Consciously or unconsciously, they become a vehicle or medium of the civic. Urban-rural migrants often claim that they've escaped a pointless lifestyle—office jobs, consumerism—which was suppressing their individual needs and talents. Paradoxically, because of such lifestyles they've assembled the resources (education, entrepreneurial skills, access to like-minded networks) to attempt the transition to a new environment and to influence their new communities significantly. Thus, access to educational resources enables lifestyle migration and positions successful newcomers to serve as links for those following in their footsteps. These efforts sometimes draw on neoliberal tactics of intervention, such as grants and project competitions. Such tactics require intrepid young newcomers to adhere to project cycles and sometimes reify narratives of place (see Craycraft 2022a, Bendix et al. 2017, Gavrailov 2019). Migrants might combine such resources with lifeways based in New Age spiritualities and alternative educational philosophies, both of which have seen a resurgence in postsocialist Bulgaria (Creed 2024, Manova 2022, Stancheva 2023). To sustain the cultural heritage of rural Bulgaria, then, is to find ways to meld the old and the new, salvaging a foundation for new lifeways to simultaneously mix with and depart from the old.

Education From Scratch in Oslen Krivodol

The story of rural transformation and the role of newcomers differs from village to village, based on a variety of factors including nationality, ethnicity, class, gender, and age of migrants. We focus here on Oslen Krivodol, where the "rural renaissance" of this community, as those in the village call it, is a growing, collaborative, and sometimes contentious effort between a variety of actors: newcomers with and without ancestral roots in the village, the village mayor, NGO project initiatives, and local residents.

In 2017, Roman and Diana, a couple in their early 50s, sold their ceramic tile business, paid off their bank debts, and relocated to Diana's ancestral home in Oslen, in the northwestern foothills of the Balkan Mountains. They devoted three years to renovating the house, and Roman's positive reputation and handyman skills caught the attention of locals. In 2019, he was offered the role of mayor. Over the next four years, aided by local municipal funds and plenty of volunteers, Roman took on the mission of revitalizing the infrastructures and community life of the neglected village. Meanwhile, Kiril, a local man in his late 20s, had been residing in the capital and regularly visiting his grandmother in Oslen. He took notice of the ongoing positive changes and launched his own initiatives in the village. With his partner, Nevena, he moved into his grandmother's house in 2022, and the two soon became social entrepreneurs. They secured international funding, attracted media attention to Oslen's transformation, and co-organized an alternative local festival (Oslen Fest) with the mayor's eldest daughter, B.[4]

Inspired by Nevena and Kiril's social media updates about Oslen, St. and C. (a Bulgarian and an American who has been living in Europe for over a decade) visited Oslen in search of a quaint and idyllic community where they could settle down and raise their child. As of 2024, they are still living in a rental property with their baby while waiting to repair an old house they recently acquired. Another international couple in their early 40s (Welsh and Bulgarian) have been living in Oslen for almost a decade, raising and homeschooling their two children. Encouraged by the influx of many active newcomers, two more families in their late 30s recently bought second homes: the mayor's youngest daughter, M., and another family inspired by a publicized interview with Nevena and Kiril.

This emerging community of newcomers largely follow the teachings of Peter Deunov (1864-1944), a renowned spiritual leader who taught "parallel spirituality based on Orthodox Christianity and on the culture of new-age," as described by the anthropologist Anelia Manova (2022, 55). As with other village revitalization efforts (collective and individual), shared ideologies and spiritual practices unite this group and draw fellow practitioners into their circle.

We now discuss two events that demonstrate how education of various sorts is used by lifestyle migrants as both motive and tactic for cultural, social, and spiritual revitalization.

"Oslen Fest: Village Renaissance," June 15-19, 2023

It's rare to see a 100 percent weather forecast for rain, but on the weekend of "Oslen Fest 2023" in Oslen-Krivodol, it was absolutely accurate. Running for the second year, "Oslen Fest: Village Renaissance" gathered artists, homesteaders, urban progressives, alternative lifestyle advocates, and local villagers to foster the cohesion and skill-sharing that urban-rural migrants seek. Oslen Fest is "a festival with a cultural, ecological, and educational mission for social transformation…

supporting conscious and sustainable living… close to nature" (Rural Renaissance), one aspect of a broader international initiative, "Rural Renaissance."[5] As such, the festival aims to foster development of the self *and* (re)development of the village as the best place for self-development and conscious living.

Oslen Fest is not *of* the village, but rather adds a new layer to village life. Neither a commemoration nor a celebration of a singular event, custom, or person, the festival might best be understood through the lens of cultural display (Abrahams 1981, Bendix 1989), in which an aspirational version of Oslen is staged for locals and visitors alike. It is a project in development that draws on the traditional and the alternative. What's more, it is not a unique phenomenon for Bulgaria; we might think of Oslen Fest as one of many "village projects" that can be understood through a folkloristic lens, as genres employed to communicate particular visions of revitalization and particular performances of "rural."[6]

Although the festival was physically dampened by unrelenting rains, organizers Kiril and Nevena managed to facilitate a weekend of festivities in the meadowed foothills of the Balkan Mountains. In 2023, the program featured several bands, workshops, and activities for those who stuck around in spite of the mud and mess. Musical groups such as Bass Naroden, a musical project combining electronic vibrations with folk music, brought soundscapes to the village that exemplified the spirit and fusion aesthetics of revitalization projects. A pre-festival volunteer camp of domestic and international volunteers constructed facilities to host the workshops and musicians, building benches, "geospheres," pop-up compost toilets, open-air sinks, and other DIY infrastructures necessary for a fully outdoors, eco-friendly festival. These new structures, built specifically for the festival, remain in the meadows for other seasonal gatherings and complement efforts to repair the local cultural center and crumbling homes.

Through display, cultural education, and exchange, three layers of communication gave shape to the festival: local-to-outsider, local-to-local, and outsider-to-outsider. Attention to these different layers points out how newcomers switch between different positionalities as village hosts, village newcomers, and village network nodes.

DIY structures at the festival.

"Let's Build with Hemp" workshop.

Local-to-local exchange

On one level, the festival curated exchange between people who already call the village home. The pre-festival mediation work done by Roman in his role as mayor, for example, helped ease the balance between newcomers and long-time residents. This bridge work and other relational work manifested in at least two festival performances: a folk choir from the neighboring village, and a children's puppet show. The puppet show, *Male Male,* orchestrated by Roman and Diana's daughter and stepson, Mila and Kole, featured five local children who performed oral histories collected from village elders. The show is an example of intergenerational bridge work. As a local organic farmer put it, "The theater workshop is a wonderful example [of a bridge between generations], because the grandmothers and those whose stories were performed, they were very happy. [It was] for the 'local market,' as they say, for the locals." Such performances within the performative frame of the festival played a double role: entertaining visitors while also communicating to locals how the slow, intentional efforts of newer villagers, although somewhat unfamiliar, can lay the groundwork for meaningful intergenerational exchange.

Local-to-outsider exchange

In their roles as hosts, Nevena and Kiril built programming that showcased the village. Outside of festival time, Roman and other younger, able-bodied locals have maintained beloved, sacred sites in and around the village. Guided festival hikes to a nearby megalith sanctuary and natural springs invite visitors to learn about the history and environment of this particular community. Local hospitality, too, is on display. As Diana explained, "Last year, at the festival, every morning we got together and the grandmothers made some mekitsi [fried dough], some banitsi [cheese pastry], some cakes, sweets. And in the morning they waited for us and we drive around to them, each one has made something. We come with the trays and that was the breakfast. We sold it and then gave the money to them—they didn't want to take it, they said 'No.'" Refusing the money, local women also fulfilled the role of host to welcome visitors but declined the commodification of their lifeways. In this way, they also claim a stake in the success of the festival.

Outsider-to-outsider exchange

Perhaps the most prominent layer of exchange took place between "outsiders" through cultural practices not local to the village, aimed primarily at the urban-rural migrant network. Because newcomers straddle a line between "local" and "outsider," we discuss the practices they brought to the village as outsider-to-outsider exchange. At its simplest level, impromptu exchange was an unplanned, although hoped-for, outcome of the festival. Over meals, during breaks, and while sheltering in place from the heavy rains, festival goers exchanged life stories. While seated on damp benches one morning, for example, Sarah engaged in a lively conversation between homesteaders regarding the limits and potentials of permaculture gardening, and they continued to deepen their relationships throughout the festival.

Structured sessions created opportunities for skill-building and life-building. Each morning started with spiritual, embodied exercises following Peter Deunov's paneurhythmia method. As such, the workshops fit within a broader framework of spiritual, interconnected living, training both the body and the mind for a revitalized way of life. Practical sessions equipped visitors with new skills inspired by traditional lifeways. For example, Dimitur Mihailov's "Let's Build with Hemp" taught participants how to mix mud, hemp, sand, and other elements to reconstruct old homes, as an energy efficient twist on the more common mud-straw kirpich often found as a covering for brick

and/or wooden structures. Participants were able to troubleshoot attempts at working with vernacular building techniques while sampling ideas they might incorporate back home.

As a whole, the festival programming was open to locals, and certain activities (in particular, the concerts and staged performances) offered cultural immersion for guests of all sorts. Oslen Fest displayed a sampling of aspirational village dwelling: tactics for living a presumably cleaner, healthier life, in community with others who are trying to initiate such lifestyle changes in other locales. At the same time, it offered locals an opportunity to see the breadth of people interested in new rural living beyond those who had already made Oslen their home.

"Oslen Weekend: Education in Nature," September 31-October 2, 2023

If the festival was a celebration of community and possibilities offered by village life, Oslen Weekend served as a direct promise to provide high-quality education for newcomers' children and as an invitation and call to action to build educational systems not provided through state support. Anthropologist Atanaska Stancheva (2023, 218 and 223) argues that urban-rural migrants view the education of children as an opportunity to change the status quo by teaching them commitment to nature and appreciation for life on the edge of "the system" through a variety of methods such as Lozanov's Suggestopedia and Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf pedagogy.[7]

For more than two decades, urban-rural migrants in Bulgaria have labored to implement these beliefs in the communities they join (or plan to establish). Such is the case in Oslen, where proactive newcomers are working to create a children's cooperative. As of Spring 2024, they are revitalizing one more hall in the abandoned, decaying village school for this purpose. A "children's cooperative" requires intensive participation of parents in daily activities and shared views on the "right way" to raise young

children. Hence, a cooperative is a mix of the values of freedom and control, in which *freedom* conveys the sense of the parent being free to educate their child(ren) almost outside the system and the sense of the child being encouraged to develop their individual talents and characteristics. *Control* conveys putting one's children in an alternative environment that the parent believes is suitable, although distanced from both urban opportunities and challenges (Koleva 2022, 273).

Children's cooperatives are usually located in urban areas, with financially stable, time-rich parents. In contrast, cooperatives in rural areas promise lower or nonexistent expenses and presume that the educational quality will exceed that of the nearest town school. Most importantly, newcomers presume that cooperatives strengthen community, as they enable both parents and children to build friendships and regularly exchange experiences with one another. Assigning one's children to a cooperative is a protest against contemporary mainstream education as well as the system that prevailed in late socialist and early postsocialist Bulgaria. As summarized by the Welsh resident of Oslen, "What we're trying to do is to create the best environment we can to maybe make a better job of parenting than our parents did." Paradoxically, these parents are nostalgic for the same past they critique and generally "depict their childhood as more free and 'natural' than what they feel able to offer their own children" (Clemensen 2020, 483).

These exemplify the issues and values discussed during the Oslen Weekend in Autumn 2023. According to the Facebook event description, the event was for "families and future parents; teachers wishing to teach close to nature; people ready to share their experience in organizing educational spaces; children; just curious people" interested in the topic of "…*human pedagogy* which places the individual as a whole person at the center. The teacher supports the child and their needs, talents, choices, self-esteem development, and active learning through experience." Thus, the event points directly at a certain type of person who is welcomed not only for this weekend but also to stay in Oslen as thought partners/future actors. The event attracted roughly 20 parents, plus their children.

The weekend's primary organizer, Nevena, has a strong background in alternative education, having trained in pedagogy, arts, and Waldorf education and having worked in urban-based children's cooperatives. During the first day, two renowned founders of such cooperatives in Bulgaria shared their experiences. The creator of "Sweet Honey" children's center explained the main methods of Peter Deunov's "sun education" and how they teach it in his center, followed by the creator of "SunRay" suggestopedia school in Plovdiv, an eco-school for one hundred children (1st through 7th grade) consisting of five decares of a school yard, open-air classrooms, and greenhouses where children raise food and eat it for breakfast and lunch.[8]

Most noteworthy for this article is the practical session on the second day of the retreat. Together, participants first discussed and then mapped the values they wish to bring to alternative educational experiences for their children, planned or already present. The small groups summarized their highest priorities for a children's cooperative, writing these values in shiny colors on big sheets of paper. Their question "What shall there be in the Oslen cooperative?" transformed to become "How do I imagine everyday life going on for my child in a cooperative?" Six points were outlined on a list titled "DAILY SCHEDULE": 1) time spent in nature–there should be a garden where children grow food and have their breakfast and lunch; 2) they should also spend time with animals; 3) physical activity; 4) high-quality food; 5) free play–including games for recognizing emotions,

mixed-aged groups; 6) creativity–creating objects with natural materials with a focus on the process and not so much on the perfection of the results.

Another list titled "OBJECTIVES (what skills do we want the children to develop?)" outlined musical intelligence, creativity, independence but also understanding of boundaries and rules, balance between mind, heart and will; reasoning and cause-and-effect relationship, motor skills; love for nature, emotional intelligence, healthy self-esteem and tolerance to making mistakes; healthy habits. The third list, "VALUES," emphasized respect, love, health, living in nature, community, joy, play, peace, security, independence, freedom while respecting boundaries, selflessness, honesty, determination. As a conclusion, participants outlined the importance of "environment as a teacher," meaning that education should follow a rhythm related to the seasons and natural cycles; "the triangle formed by a child, a teacher and a parent"; and "the relationship of the child with its internal world." Interestingly, no one mentioned academic achievements in typical subjects like math, writing, reading, English language, etc.

Like many traditional forms, these lifestyle migrants carry the educational pedagogies (often alternative but institutionalized) they learned from origin communities into new locales, either as teachers or parents-to-be. The values outlined above are reflective of meanings steeped in Bulgaria but also shaped by models beyond its borders. By collaboratively adapting these models to the needs and capacities of receiver communities, they implement educational programs quite literally in the ruins of schools abandoned and left to rot, aimed toward future communities they imagine together.

Conclusion

As we have heard time and again in our work, schools are the heartbeat of small communities, an issue facing communities beyond Bulgaria. The idea of cultural education in Oslen extends beyond the two events described here. Weekends with similar topics (healthy lifestyle, singing/dancing together, etc.) are organized regularly and serve as continued points of engagement. As Nevena explained to a woman who asked in the village Facebook page whether any houses are for sale, "Usually we first meet face to face, invite you to some event, spend time together, volunteer together, the family gets to know the community, and then we enter the topic of buying a property." The advocates for urban-rural lifestyle migration use education and culture to facilitate and mediate the attraction and arrival of newcomers, and they also use these events to intentionally rebuild their community.

While this article has focused primarily on the short-term events hosted by newcomers, their experiences, and their goals, the above statement makes clear that more work remains. A deeper inquiry into the perspectives of the receiver community, in addition to the stakes of selective repopulation (especially in terms of who is excluded and why, a topic that points potentially toward issues of race, ethnicity, and class dynamics at play), are necessary next steps to understand better the ways that newcomer tactics interact with already-existing lifeways. What's more, ongoing conversations with newcomers in Oslen Krivodol, as well as with village activists in other places and projects, should consider the consequences of viewing and building community through the lens of projects.

Festive forms, display, and educational training are intricately enmeshed in Bulgarian village revitalization, as are spirituality and aesthetics. Other models of and values for village living exist, of course, but these entanglements are especially common throughout the homesteader network. Whereas custom and top-down transformation heavily shaped the village culture of their predecessors, young urban-rural migrants encounter the complex opportunity to fashion different ways of life within, around, and apart from the piecemeal traditions they're inheriting.

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Endnotes

[1] Petya Dimitrova's study on Oslen is part of the ongoing research project "The Neighbour from Sofia, the New Villager from Germany: Counterurbanisation, Sociocultural Interactions and Local Transformations" funded by the National Science Fund of Bulgaria (КП-06-Н70/10).

[2] For a more detailed overview of these histories, we recommend Silverman (1983), Creed (1998), Duijzings (2013), and Pileva et al. (2023).

[3] https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-with-declining-population

[4] Some names are shortened to first initials, as preferred by interviewees.

[5] See report by Nevena Yovcheva: Rural Renaissance—A Tool for Revitalising Villages, https://creativeimpact.eu/wp-content/uploads/231122_yovcheva_nevena_public_version.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2XTkAeEKI_S5dBf0y4ODKoeB2bGi8VdBu5bxXbZKVn6yFZ2ClHplMZEu4_aem_AUHfATcBi9KjkcU_obUbEp6XkWfX7lmyTM9cu5Ps7TX7MN6ZesOW71Von44jd2uC5Fg4b4hH1g7Nv3iqQTETOy0D

[6] Projects like Residencia Baba, Selo Nazaem, the Goat Milk Festival of Memories, Beglika Free Fest, and Staro Zhelezare offer similar, but distinct, peeks at attempts to revitalize or reimagine rural life in Bulgaria.

[7] Suggestopedia is an approach developed by the Bulgarian psychiatrist Georgi Lozanov to teaching a foreign language that helps pupils pick up new skills rapidly by making them feel at ease, motivated, curious, and happy. The strategy is based on the notion that pupils naturally experience psychological impediments to learning. The learning process in a Waldorf school involves the use of the mind, heart, and hands, in other words: thinking, feeling, and doing, based on the philosophy of Austrian esotericist Rudolf Steiner.

[8] One decare is a metric unit roughly equivalent to 0.2471 acres.

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Finding a Second Jia (Home)
Language, Culture, Identity, and Belongingness from an International Student's Perspective

by Xinhang Hermione Hu

So bright a gleam on the foot of my bed 床前明月光 chuáng qián míng yuè guāng
Could there have been a frost already 疑是地上霜 yí shì dì shàng shuāng
Lifting my head to look / I found that it was moonlight 举头望明月 jǔ tóu wàng míng yuè
Sinking back again / I thought suddenly of home 低头思故乡dī tóu sī gù xiāng
—"In the Quiet Night" 静夜思
Poem by Li Bai, Translated by Witter Bynner (Shih 2020)

"Boston is my second home."
Tracing back the memories, I could not remember how I first came to this statement. When Boston, the city, is mentioned, I am always excited and repeatedly express how much I would like to live in Boston again. The statement has the same grammatical structure as its translation in Chinese: 波士顿Boston/是is/我的my/第二个second/家home. I was thinking about it in Chinese and then translating it into English to explain to others how I feel about the city and what it means to me.

Home in Chinese is 家(jiā). While these words are equivalent in meaning, I use them in different ways and settings. The images and memories of jia are always my mother country, family, house, and hometown. To me, *home* is just a vocabulary word I learned, pronounced as /hoʊm/ in American English. It is a single word with a superficial meaning of where one lives.

I did not realize that home or hometown mean different things across languages until I was questioned about how I drafted an English version of an interview protocol for Chinese-speaking participants. An English native speaker found the question "Where is your hometown?" vague and confusing and offered an alternative, "Where are you from?" The cross-cultural understanding of *home(town)* intrigued me. From my perspective as a native Chinese speaker and a second-language speaker of English, the question would be crystal clear in the Chinese version: 你的家乡在哪里? (nǐ de jiā xiāng zaì nǎ lǐ). This question emphasizes the origin of the family more, and similar questions can be phrased as 你老家是哪里的 (nǐ lǎo jiā shì nǎ lǐ de) or 你是哪里人(nǐ shì nǎ lǐ rén). The expected answer would include the ancestral home (the origin of the father's side), birthplace (if different from the former), and current residence city (if different from the previous two). My answer to the question consists of all three different places as my family and I have been migrating within Shaanxi Province in China.

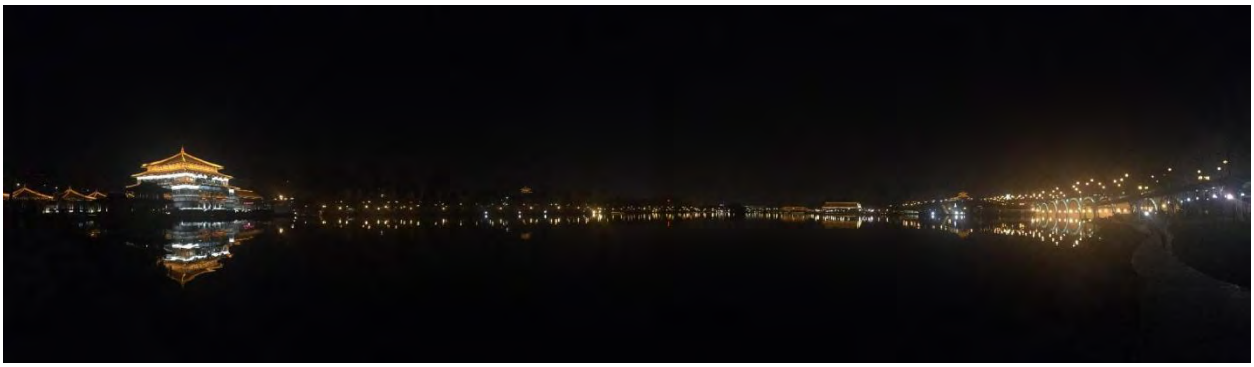

Figure 1. Night scene at Xi'an Qujiangchi Site Park, January 8, 2017. Photo by author.

My parents are first-generation college graduates and are the first in their families to migrate from rural to urban areas for postsecondary education. I became the first in my family to earn a graduate degree and to be an international student. I not only spent my first 18 years living in different cities and counties of relatives' homes, but I also crossed borders and became a voluntary transnational migrant for eight years as an international student in the U.S. I believe Xi'an (the capital city of Shaanxi Province, see Figure 1) is my home, it is where I grew up and where I belong. My roots are deeply embedded in the culture and people I am engaged with. I continue disseminating the core of a Xianese (Xi'an people)–kindness, hospitality, resilience, and adaptability. Running into Xianeses in my life abroad is always uplifting, and our connections are inseverable. Growing up in the same home city, we can communicate in Mandarin and Shaanxi dialects about the shared memories of the place we cherish with no need to provide additional contexts. Especially with Chinese international students from Xi'an, we are always amazed by how much the city has changed every time we go home during breaks. "I don't even recognize my own home!" we say. The "home" usually refers to the city, while sometimes I mean the actual house, although I have not visited the new one my family moved to after I returned to the States for graduate school.

Looking for a new location to take root again as a foreigner is a path of thorns. The fear and trouble of unsettlement caused me to live a minimalist lifestyle with no decorations in my rented room, only essentials. Even today, whenever I want to buy beautiful things, I must consider how much they weigh and how much space they take in a moving box, which is also why I do not buy books or large instruments. I do not feel like I belong if I always have to look around and check how *insiders* behave, dress, and talk. If I can only imitate others and do not dare to present myself the way I want, I feel oppressed and uncomfortable. I ask: Is it possible for me to have a second home there, or anywhere, as an international student from China?

Eager and anxious to find a place in the States where I felt I belonged and had the initiative to develop and enjoy being a full person who can just be myself, this essay is a reflection on what contributed to my sense that after four years could I regard Boston as a place that fulfilled the criteria of "home." Through personal narrative centering my migration and identity, I retrospectively engage in self-reflection on transnational and multilingual experiences, which reshaped my understanding of home beyond a singular or physical space. I also delve into the question of whether an international student can have a second home. In my conclusion, I note implications for higher education faculty and administrators that include emphasizing the need for ongoing support for international students.

"I do have a home back in China."

The term "homeplace" coined by bell hooks (1990) references how Black women cultivate homeplace for resistance and renewal, but the idea resonates with my own quest for groundedness and belongingness—albeit in different ways. Swarts (2018) analyzes that "homeplace" and "home-making" allow for narratives of healing power to take place. This positions home as a societal narrative that reflects oppression, spirit, and resistance (81). Homeplace has been applied and extended to explore diverse populations and fields. Player et al. (2022) examine Black, Latina, and Asian identities of Girls and Femmes of Color (GFoC) in literacy studies by constructing a homeplace. Brant (2023) employs an Indigenous perspective of the homeplace in Indigenous women's literature to call for safer communities. James Robertson (2023) studies Black and Asian women's refuges as a homeplace of safety and healing from abuse and racism in the late 1970s. Recognizing that the concept was applied to the experiences and agency of Black women who were displaced during the period of enslavement (hooks 1990), I questioned my application of homeplace to me as a Chinese international student. After all, using homeplace is not comparable to describing my own quest or that of any group of people who cross borders to study, work, live, and go back and forth between their home and host countries. Yet notions of homeplace and, specifically, the word "home" haunted me in my self-reflection about transnational migration.

Compared with the domestic migration experience (Cuba and Hummon 1993), the transnational migration experience is far more complicated because of linguistic and cultural differences (Yao 2016) and detachment from traditional social networks (Zhao 2019). Communication with my family and social networks back in China became online and less frequent. Translating and explaining my progress and struggles with my studies to my parents and friends in Chinese is difficult and frustrating. It is not because I cannot use Chinese to express my feelings; instead, certain vocabulary and phrases are hard for my parents to understand, along with cultural differences. For instance, there is no equivalent word for presentation (e.g., in-class presentation) in Chinese. I have to replace it with a more complicated expression, "a speech with slides." In addition, colleges in China still divide students into fixed groups based on their majors, where the same faculty and administrators supervise them. In contrast, undergraduate students in the U.S. choose and build their schedules and are assigned different academic advisors. Most of my friends in China do not have study-abroad experience, and my parents are not proficient in English. They are unfamiliar with U.S. higher education and my major, linguistics. Being grateful for their selfless and continual support, I am reluctant to admit that the physical distance partially detaches me emotionally from my close personal connections back in China. I find myself considering that home can be multiple places. Still, at the same time, I struggle with whether having a second home means uprooting from my original home.

Independence and Self-awareness

When I landed at Boston Logan International Airport in 2016, I was nervous and scared waiting in lines at customs, holding my passport, arrival card, and a bag of all my paperwork. It was not only because of the excitement and fright of starting a new life in a foreign country but also because my ears were clogged by air pressure on the airplane. I was afraid that I could not hear or understand the customs officers. There was no one I could turn to, and I had to be my sole spokesperson from now on.

Long-term study abroad challenges the adaptation to differences in cultures, languages, and values, and it drives the transition to independence and self-awareness. Growing up, I heard families and teachers reassuring middle and high school students who are pressured and burdened with test-oriented studies that "when you enter college, you can play whatever you want." The Gaokao, college entrance exam, symbolizes a watershed between struggle and freedom for Chinese young people. On the other hand, Chinese international students face increased insecurity and uncertainty when they arrive in the host country. Usually just reaching adulthood, with two large suitcases in hand and a backpack on the back, Chinese international students start the journey of emotional and physical independence.

Living in another country can equal putting down roots and building an entirely new life. As a Chinese international student, my sense of security and belonging in the U.S. is based on my immigration status and academic excellence. To be legally allowed in the U.S., I checked in at the International Students & Scholars Office. I also applied for phone and bank cards, which I did not need to care about when I was in China—my parents were responsible for everything, and I was only asked to stay well and study hard. Despite having good grades in TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and my previous short-term study-abroad experiences in the U.S. and U.K., using a second language to survive and study in a real environment every day was tough and stressful at the beginning. Additionally, critical-thinking and discussion-based curriculum design were not the focus of my K-12 education, and it proved difficult to adapt to this pedagogy and develop needed learning skills in the short academic terms. Retrospectively, my first semester's comparatively low GPA reflects the start of the adjustment process that continued throughout the first three years of my study-abroad experience.

Leaving my home country provided the opportunity for me to understand myself better–who I really am. Identity was not a topic that was commonly discussed when I was younger. Collectivism was valued and taught in society and schools, and little time was left for self-reflection and self-awareness. In my region and city, one would less commonly meet and socialize with people from different races or countries. While I had several English teachers from other countries in an after-school program, the setting was limited and did not apply to daily life. Being around people of the same race, ethnicity, and nationality, I had not consciously considered myself as Asian or East Asian. Racial issues are discussed daily in the U.S., and you often have to check the box indicating your race when filling out background information. As a minority on campus and in society here, I am constantly aware of my own existence and perceive myself as a representation of a Chinese international student. Against the stereotypes, I am not good at math, and I do speak up in class. Moreover, I not only ponder my status as an "other" and minority in the U.S. but also reflect on the privileges that I have that uplifted me to my current position. Independence and critical self-awareness acquired in studying abroad in Boston highlight my multifaceted coming-of-age as a person and a Chinese international student in the U.S. The growth and enlightenment are vividly stamped on my identity and memories of Boston. By relying on myself, I built an entirely new life here using the English name Hermione. It is a new piece of my identity in U.S. academic settings, which started in Boston. Having all family members living overseas, I learned to depend on myself. The study-abroad experience extends beyond academics. I began to realize that a sense of belonging and being at home stems from resilience and adaptability. As a second home, Boston witnessed the first four years of my transnational migration life, where I overcame complicated barriers and refined self-understanding.

Multilingualism and Multiculturalism

Apart from self-growth, Boston offered the nutritional soil for me to flourish in developing multilingualism and multiculturalism. Language has always been my endless passion, and it is a critical part of who I am.

Before the second year of high school, I could only speak Mandarin and English, or I had only been exposed to these two in school. English was my favorite subject, and I excelled in it. English is my first foreign language, but my enthusiasm for language learning did not stop at the second. K-pop and K-dramas invited me to appreciate and study Korean language and culture.

Attending college in Boston allowed me to engage in constant intercultural communication using different languages. The more languages I learned, the more fulfilled my life and connection to the world became. Acquiring one new language equals developing another piece of identity on top of the others I already have. In both Korean and Spanish language classes, I made good friends who share and understand my multiple identities. I felt inner joy when I connected the West and East through language and culture as a foreigner in the space. The meaningful moments of sharing personal interests with peers provided a sense of belonging and acceptance. Home is not just a physical place but also a network of relationships and shared moments.

Reflecting on this experience, I have always been actively engaging in translanguaging (García and Li Wei 2014), which refers to one using their entire linguistic repertoire instead of narrowly focusing on one named language. Thinking about the interlocutors, I would adjust my words and languages. We would code-switch in all the languages we knew in conversation. We would text multilingual jokes that others could not understand, such as when "soy milk" amusingly translates to "I am milk" in Spanish, playing on the bilingual homophone. I enjoyed the progress of broadening my perspectives and world through learning languages. Boston has become more than just a city to me; it is a space where I can fully embrace and express my linguistic repertoire. Initially, home was synonymous with a physical place, but through my journey in Boston, I have come to see it as more fluid—a state of being where I feel comfortable, accepted, and able to thrive. This understanding of home is deeply intertwined with my multilayered, transnational identities as I navigate different cultures, languages, and experiences. In Boston, I have found a sense of belonging that transcends geographical boundaries, shaping my concept of home into something more profound and inclusive.

The foreign languages and cultures I encountered and practiced in Boston were only one side of the numerous experiences contributing to building a sense of home. My Chinese heritage found deep roots in Boston. When applying to undergraduate schools, I did not know much about Boston besides its history and great universities. After spending time on campus and in the city, I realized that the Chinese language and culture are part of the city. Boston's Chinatown is one of the city's most densely populated neighborhoods and ranks third largest in the U.S. (*BU Today* 2008). While I recognized the many ways this Chinatown does not represent the current China, the simple actions of eating the food, reading the Chinese characters on the signs, listening to various accents of Chinese, and seeing Chinese faces were all calling from home. The variety of Chinese food from different regions offered great comfort and relieved my nostalgia for my home in Xi'an.

Figure 2. First time in Boston's Chinatown.

← ***Caption translated:*** *「Remembering the first time I went to Chinatown」 Didn't get to eat at the Xi'an food place, which closes in five minutes (Must eat the Oily Noodles next time!)- Sweet and Sour pork+Braised Beef Ribs+Mapo tofu-Mooncakes, need no more explanation- The "sweet and sour fish" in the cafeteria+the chicken I thought was tofu. Thanks XX and XX~ Next time will be my treat.*

Figure 3. First time performing Xiangsheng at Boston University. Photo by Jessica Zhou.

The first time I went to Chinatown was September 13, 2016, less than a month after I came to the U.S. I documented the experience in WeChat (see Figure 2). I was not as homesick as later in my study-abroad life. The food and store signs in Chinese took me back to China. Besides being outdated and appearing shabby to me, Chinatown represented the Cantonese-speaking community and culture more than the Mandarin-speaking ones, making the connection between the place and me weaker than expected. However, as I trace back the memories, I realize the same-ethnic friends I made in Boston, most of whom were also Chinese international students, were one critical reason I feel like I belong to the city. They were the ones who made me feel at home there. Regardless of our different "home" languages and dialects, we talked about missing Chinese food and our families and friends in Mandarin together.

In my senior year I joined the Xianshang (crosstalk) Club, Fuyun. Xiangsheng is a Chinese traditional duo stand-up comedy show. When I performed Xiangsheng using my mother tongue Chinese, I also wore a Da Gua (Chinese traditional gown) (see Figure 3). This cherished experience of joining the club and performing made me feel at home, deepening my bond with the Chinese language, culture, clothing, and fellow international students. Being immersed in a group of Chinese students with the same interests allowed me to experience a sense of belonging and acceptance in a foreign city. This group became more than friends; being *in group* made me feel embraced and gave me a comforting sense of familiarity in Boston. The space and people within

this community nurtured an environment where I could find echoes of my own culture while exploring new horizons.

Finale

I am a native speaker of Chinese, a fluent speaker of English and Korean, and a conversational speaker of Spanish. Recently, I have started learning Japanese and Indonesian. I am grateful for my previous language learning experiences, which laid a strong foundation, enhancing my ability to embrace new languages and cultures with confidence and passion. Along with my academic identity in U.S. higher education, my multilingual and multicultural identity blossomed in Boston. My time in Boston reshaped my notion of home, transitioning it from a sole physical location to a dynamic space and fluid state defined by resilience and adaptability, comfort, acceptance, and thriving. This evolved perception underscores my multilayered identities and the fluidity of the understanding of home, shaped not only by physical environments but also by emotional and social connections that transcend geographical boundaries.

Now, all the languages I speak add to an invaluable piece of who I am as a person, Chinese, and an international student in the U.S. International students like myself may often face doubts: May I declare that Boston is my second home, a home away from home? Who has the say in this decision? Do I need confirmation from someone local? Can I simply make this statement because of my residency status? These questions are amplified because of my immigration status as an international student: With no family or relatives in the country, my only attachment is to the school that admitted me. Having good academic standing and building up my academic identity was the sole goal of my life, especially in the first two years of studying abroad.

While drafting this manuscript, I initially divided the stories of the Chinese language and culture into a separate section. I may have unconsciously wanted to show readers and myself that China is still my root, which can never be eradicated, even if I have another home here. Upon revising, I realized that my Chinese heritage is the foundation of my multilingual and multicultural identity. Speaking Chinese makes it possible for me to learn other languages. For the same reason, having my home in Xi'an makes it possible for me to have a second home in Boston. I did not just develop and practice foreign languages and cultures, but I also had the opportunity to continue nurturing my mother tongue and native cultures at my home away from home.

The unique blend of the familiar and the novel found in Boston gradually made it my second home. Surrounded by individuals who understand my cultural background and are equally eager to share my experiences, I have discovered the elements of my original home that are also contained in this new one. This mixture of cultures, interests, and shared experiences has enriched my understanding of belonging, demonstrating that home is not just a place but also a feeling created by connections and shared understanding. I recognize that the stories I share here are limited to my own migration experiences. Reflecting on my study-abroad journey, I want to call for continued academic and emotional support from faculty members, administrators, programs, and institutions specifically for international students who may face unique cultural adjustments, language barriers, and feelings of isolation, often struggling to feel at home in their new environment. Our narratives and stories should be told and heard because they carry the essence of home, connecting us to a sense of belonging and understanding that resonates deeply within us all.

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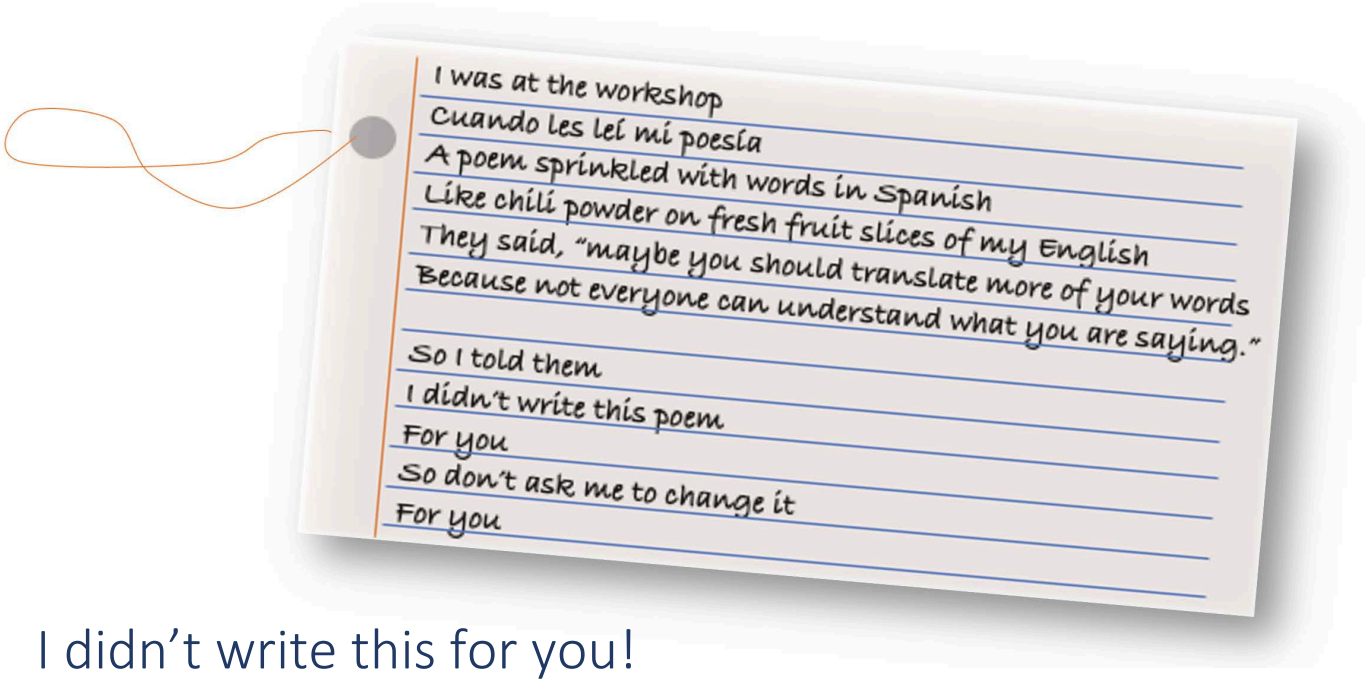


I didn't write this for you!
Using Translanguaging in Pages and in the Classroom

by Elena Foulis

In 2023, the Pew Research Center published information about how Latinas/os/es in the United States view Spanish language in their lives.[1] The study found that Latinas/os/es commonly use Spanglish–understood as the practice of using words from both Spanish and English interchangeably in speech and writing. The study also found that Latinas/os/es often experience ridicule and shame[2] for not speaking Spanish, and people wrongfully associate their ability to speak Spanish as a measure of Latinidad. These findings, although not surprising, are very troubling to a generation that fights for inclusivity and antiracism and to erase social inequities. Yet it is important to consider how assimilation and the pressure to fit in prevent and have prevented many Latine generations from using and speaking Spanish. Despite studies and recovery efforts that point to the origins of Spanish as an American language (Lozano 2018, Baeza et al. 2019, Gruesz 2020) Spanish in the U.S. has always been seen by the media and within educational systems as foreign, as other. Whether Spanish has been removed or denied in educational practices that demand English-only in schools as scholars have noted (Valdés 1996, Zentella 1997, Santa Ana 2004, Delgado Bernal, Alemán 2017, and Dávila-Montes et al. 2019), or whether people have been discriminated against for speaking Spanish in public (Zentella 2004), language inclusiveness in the U.S. has shown us that speaking Spanish or languages other than English is linked to otherness. In this article, I analyze poetry collections by Eddie Vega, the poet laureate of San Antonio, *Chicharra Chorus* (2019) and *Asina is How We Talk: A Collection of Tejano Poetry Written En La Lengua de La Gente* (2023), as works that disrupt standard language ideologies of English and Spanish by using translaguaging in his poetry to represent and uplift the Latina/o/e community's local cultural and linguistic practices.

About the image: Excerpt from Eddie Vega's poem, "I didn't write this poem for you," (2019, 76), illustrated by Lisa Rathje.

Too often those who speak Spanish in the U.S. have experienced scrutiny and profiling, regularly linked with ideas of citizenship and belonging. John Baugh offers a description of linguistic profiling as when someone "make[s] inferences about the speech they hear, and then they act upon those inferences by denying goods or services to the speaker based on negative stereotypes about her or his speech" (65). While he is primarily talking about (standard) English speakers, those who speak languages other than English are always and already perceived as unbelonging. Furthermore, Mena and García (2021) use "converse racialization" to define an "on-going constitution as the social and political norm that maintains the domination of minoritized groups." When applied to stigmatized groups such as speakers of Spanish in the U.S., educational institutions and educators can fall into the trap of erasing the experiences of these groups and end up creating, as the authors emphasize "a re-racialization that becomes more acceptable or less subversive from a historically legitimated institutional positionality" (348-49). While their study focuses on one university in the Rio Grande Valley, we can extend this to many other institutional contexts, including our K-12 system, that seek to avoid discussing how U.S. Latinas/os/es have been subject to oppressive measures to erase their language practices. This process can take a variety of forms, from encouragement to adopt a "better," more privileged variety of Spanish to forgetting Spanish and speaking English only. Using the theoretical framework of soft linguistic terrorism, Mena (2023) assertively and compellingly illustrates that although U.S. Spanish speakers are no longer being physically or verbally punished for using their language, instead they are incentivized to adopt a "standard" Spanish to compete in a global economy. Problematically, this ideologically serves to recruit them to assert English dominance and/or accept Spanish "correctness," often from a linguistic variety that comes from elsewhere, not their own local communities.

As we can see, the problem is not only about the language that is spoken but also who speaks it and hears it. Nelson Flores and Jonathan Rosa identify this as raciolinguistic ideologies (2015), which "produce racialized speaking subjects who are constructed as linguistically deviant even when engaging in linguistic practices positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects" (150). As such, to understand how U.S. Spanish speakers[3] are racialized within a raciolinguistic perspective is "to understand how the white gaze is attached both to a speaking subject who engages in the idealized linguistic practices of whiteness and to a listening subject who hears and interprets the linguistic practices of language-minoritized populations as deviant based on their racial positioning in society as opposed to any objective characteristics of their language use" (150-51). For U.S. Spanish speakers, in addition to being objects of the white gaze, educators unfamiliar with U.S. Spanish or holding language ideologies of standard[4] Spanish (García and Solorza 2020) often create learning environments that further stigmatize U.S. Latinas/os/es' linguistic practices, including those of their entire families and local communities. Even well-meaning educators who acknowledge the value of students' home and community language practices (Alim 2010) often fall into the trap of devaluing a speaker's usage. For example, an educator saying that a student's Spanish is "inappropriate in academia or professional environments naturalizes the unequal treatment of language varieties and their speakers by disguising linguistic prescription as 'innocent' description" (Leeman 2005, 38). As a Latina scholar who is bilingual, an educator and mother of two U.S. Spanish speakers, I often reflect on the ways I became aware of my own linguist prejudice as a norteña fronteriza who grew up hearing and repeating that those on the U.S. side of the border did not speak Spanish properly, that they somehow spoke a broken Spanish, not correct Mexican Spanish. I also tell my students how my Mexican Spanish is full of derogatory expressions, which sometimes appear in my mind, and I

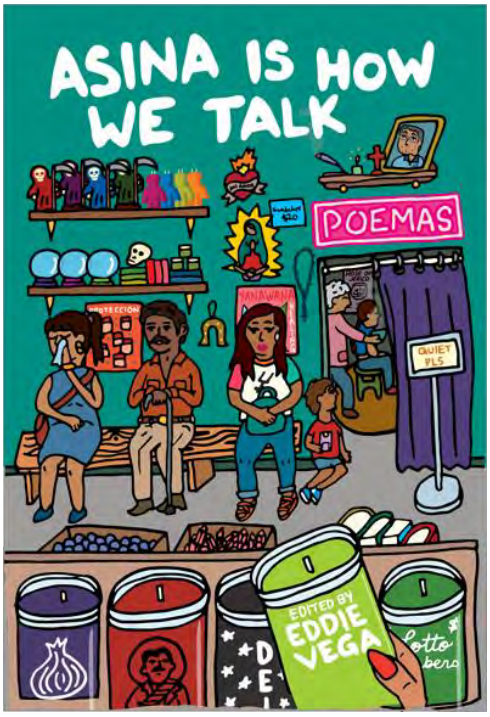
find myself erasing them from my own language practices, while fully aware that many Mexican Spanish speakers continue to use them and defend them as innocent expressions. These expressions are never innocent if they harm others individually and/or collectively.

In a class I teach focused on the Latina/o/e experiences of growing up bilingual and biliterate, we use the book *Words Were All We Had: Becoming Biliterate Against All Odds* (Reyes et al. 2011) to learn about the experiences of Latines in the 50s and 60s in U.S. schools. In this collection of essays, we learn from experiences in different states and authors from different backgrounds. Although it is illuminating to read about how they navigated policies and school culture that often saw them as "less than" for being Latina/o/e and for speaking Spanish, we also read about their resilience and tenacity in keeping their language and, as the book notes, becoming biliterate and bilingual against all odds. Importantly, these authors' experiences are not far removed from those of my students. Many of the students, mostly Latine, in my classes have heard these stories in their own families and faced similar challenges. Indeed, the colonial legacy of English in U.S. society has resulted in language loss, and devaluing people's language practices has affected generations for centuries (Cohen 1974, Fairclough 1989). In the U.S., Anglo norms continue to inflict linguistic violence and racism that insist on devaluing BIPOC communities' identities and language and cultural practices.

The poems that I analyze here reclaim language practices of bilingual communities that assert their bicultural and biliterate ways of knowing and being. More specifically, the poems use translanguaging. García and Otheguy describe translanguaging as a practice that:

> ...interrogates named languages, pointing to an answer that includes their being constructed by nation-states as a tool for the domination of language minoritized communities. The named language tool excludes these communities from social, political and economic opportunities by authorizing, legitimating, naturalizing and opening paths only to those who speak what is constructed as the common, autonomous and whole, national language. (2020, 25)

Certainly, the use of translanguaging in Eddie Vega's poetry collections intentionally interrupts dominant monolingual sensibilities, while at the same time demonstrating mastery of languages in their bilingual wordplay. In the foreword of Vega's edited collection, *Asina is How We Talk: A Collection of Tejano Poetry Written En La Lengua de La Gente*, Carmen Tafolla, an educator and poet herself, writes, "*Asina is How We Talk* is an instrument of cultural survival, pride, and understanding, and a celebration of a dynamic translanguaging that brings laughter, growth, and healing. More importantly, it is a reflection of who we are, because *Asina* IS how we talk!" (xv) Indeed, language is central to identity. Yet it was often taken from our communities and in educational institutions so that Latinas/os/es spoke one way at home and another in school. Those of us who are educators can engage in critical language awareness, understood to be a critical pedagogy practice that must be "locally situated and constantly negotiated" (Alim 2010, 213) to reclaim the language as spoken by many of our Latina/o/e bilingual students and their communities–one that mixes español and inglés as a reflection of the history and resilience of this community. Although *Asina* represents bilingual practices in the South Texas region, language mixing happens in border regions and among immigrant populations everywhere because language



is dynamic and integral to cross-cultural understanding and necessary for economic, social, political, and everyday life. In my review of this collection, I write that:

> *Asina* represents what many of us are doing with our Latina/o/e students in the classroom, whether in K-12 or college: We want to provide curriculum that is culturally and linguistically relevant and that problematizes the way mainstream culture has commodified and sometimes censored our community's way of speaking. As educators, we want students to feel validated in their use of U.S. Spanish—which is diverse, rich, and an American language—and speak freely using their full linguistic repertoire, which includes allowing translanguaging in the classroom. As importantly in *Asina*, neither words in English nor Spanish are italicized, which signals the fluidity of uninterrupted language and the often otherized marking of languages that are not English. (2023, 68)

Ochoa in her analysis of Mexican and Mexican American women's resistance and collaboration in Los Angeles County's La Puente community notes that, "In a white supremacist society where emphasis is placed on assimilating to Anglo norms, practices, and values, claiming an identity, maintaining one's language, and affirming one's culture are all individual acts of resistance" (1999, 4). In this sense using translanguaging becomes a tool that disrupts ideas of correctness or standard language practices. Crucially, Eddie Vega, through his poetry, opens a valuable discussion of linguistic trauma as he questions and reclaims Spanish into his life and as a reflection of how Spanish in the U.S. is spoken. Yet he does not shy away from naming the community's own complicity in ascribing and desiring linguistic practices they deem pure. In doing so, he calls for our own self-reflection on language ideologies that have continued to inflict soft linguistic terrorism by expressing shame of our own language varieties. Indeed, in Vega's use of translanguaging in his poetry, he "incorporates an understanding of how different modes, including our bodies, our gestures, our lives, etc., add to the semiotic meaning-making repertoire that is involved in the act of communication" (García and Otheguy, 24), which makes his poetry, an inherently performative creative exercise, able to embody language in the pages we read and in the classroom as we discuss and analyze its meaning.

In Vega's *Chicharra Chorus* (2019), his first full-length poetry collection, his poem "Don Emiliano" tells the story of coming and going to Mexico, of reconnecting with his family, and of time spent with Don Emiliano, an Indigenous man who had valiantly rescued his wife and daughter from Chiapas after a volcano erupted. Through storytelling, he begins to understand a complicated relationship between belonging and unbelonging and of deep-seated colonial ideals that exist in this town, in his childhood memories.

The last two stanzas illustrate a moment of deep self-reflection that, in my view, invite the reader to think about the ways our own language practices have oppressed others. He writes:

> I am not sure if he was telling me a story
> Or teaching me a lesson
> I have not since referred to anyone as "indio"
> I have trouble with "indian" too
>
> I look in the mirror for non-European features
> My skin got darker the longer I stayed in Mexico
> I contemplate the parts of my self
> That I have been denying (2019, 33)

Vega, fully aware of how Spanish occupies a nonprivileged position in the U.S., points out how Spanish, too, can be used to oppress others who have often been excluded from dominant discourse, such as women and Indigenous communities. Yet through his poem and his exploration of the colonized mind and body, we witness how he deconstructs and constructs his racialized identity by focusing on the features of his complexion that speak of whiteness and the ones that highlight his, likely, Indigenous ancestry. An important poem for comparison here is Nicolás Guillén's "Baladas de los dos abuelos,"[5] in which Guillén takes us through his white and Black lineage as he embodies both.

It is clear that Vega uses his bilingual and bicultural identity to assert his right to write using his full linguistic repertoire. In his poem, "I didn't write this poem for you," in the same collection, Vega reclaims the freedom to navigate between languages and the right to let the poem be written in the language that is created. In the first two stanzas Vega writes:

> I was at the workshop
> Cuando les leí mi poesía
> A poem sprinkled with words in Spanish
> Like chili powder on fresh fruit slices of my English
> They said, "maybe you should translate more of your words
> Because not everyone can understand what you are saying."
>
> So I told them
> I didn't write this poem
> For you
> So don't ask me to change it
> For you (2019, 76)

In its content, Vega recovers and emphasizes the use of Spanish and translanguaging as an inherent feature of Tejano speech and culture, as one that does not need to adapt to a monolingual audience. Indeed, language is part of a person's identity, and linguistic practices do more than just demonstrate bilingual or multilingual ability. They are attached to local cultural systems, regional variations of language, and in Vega's poem, U.S. Spanish in Texas. However, reclaiming the right to translenguar in creative writing here, serves as vehicle to revisit the author's parents' generation

who experienced educational environments that denied them the right to speak Spanish as the poem shows:

> I wrote it for my mom
> And her generation, punished in school
> Made to kneel in corners
> Their mouths washed out with soap
> For speaking their mothers' tongue (2019, 76)

And Vega's own growing up language journey includes shame for having kinship with the people in his school—janitors and lunch ladies—because the cool kids simply did not do that, as well as experiences of his own children, who struggle to learn Spanish and blame him for it. The poem is filled with popular cultural references like El chavo del ocho, Tejana singer Selena's songs, and social and political concerns that affect the Mexican and Mexican American communities such as Hollywood typecasting of Latino/a/e actors, border patrols, and the 43 disappeared and murdered students from Ayotzinapa, Mexico, signaling transborder sensitivities of pain and solidarity. The last two stanzas also critically address that speaking English does not guarantee acceptance because, as Rosa and Nelson contend, language and those who speak it have already been racialized. More specifically, they say, "raciolinguistic ideologies produce racialized speaking subjects who are constructed as linguistically deviant even when engaging in linguistic practices positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects" (2015, 150). Vega writes:

> It's for anyone that's ever been laughed at for saying
> *Sangwich* or *liberry* or *picza* or
> Ever had their name butchered
> By some gringo that didn't even want to try
> Because there's no escoos for that
>
> It's for being told to speak American
> On this soil
> Where we rolled tortillas
> Before we broke bread
> And there was a Santa Fe before a Plymouth Rock
> There was an El Paso before a Philadelphia
> There was a San Antonio before there was ever a Washington DC
>
> And I did not write this poem for you!
>
> I wrote it for me (2019, 78-9)

The poem's final verse reminds us that poets, as much as those who engage in translanguaging, have the right to write in the way that is most organic to them.

San Antonio mayor puts a medal on Eddie Vega during his investiture as San Antonio poet laureate, April 2024. Photo courtesy City of San Antonio - Department of Arts & Culture.

Vega's edited collection, *Asina is How We Talk: A Collection of Tejano Poetry Written En La Lengua de La Gente,* brings together local South Texas talent to write in the local language, often using code switching in more than one way. He says, "I offer this collection of poetry as a celebration of the pocho, mocho, Spanglish, Tejano, Tex-Mex lengua that the gente actually speaks" (xvii). Although the mixing of language is not new, its acceptance in the contemporary context has been difficult and slow moving, for many of the reasons addressed earlier in this article. Yet using this collection in the classroom integrates culturally responsive learning and teaching environments (Ladson-Billings 2021) by incorporating texts that speak of students' experiences and those of their families. Doing so is crucial to creating a classroom that is culturally and linguistically sustaining (Paris and Alim 2017) while pushing for language inclusion, dismantling ideas of privilege and prestige in Tejano Spanish, or U.S. Spanish. When we teach this collection, it will be important to unpack how the poems found here write about belonging and placemaking in their accounts of everyday life. For example, how much do the descriptions of local stores, food practices, music, and landmarks invite the reader to connect and/or explore Tejana/o/e identity? Vega's own poem in this collection plays with the smells and sounds that document his life in San Antonio. For example, in "Y Empieza La Cumbia," Vega takes us to his visit to the grocery store to capture the unique experience of visiting a Latino supermarket. He writes:

> It doesn't matter
> It can be lunes o martes
> Sábado o a veces en el Sunday

Pero cada vez que entro al
Culebra Meat Market

N'ombre pos,
Empieza la cumbia!

Pero for real
Se abren las puertas
I walk in
Y puro menea de mis hips
Y mis hands go up
Como asina (2022,10)

The poem offers an opportunity not only to decipher the Spanish words included but also the musical rhythms he describes. Overall, this collection is validation of linguistic practices and the embodiment of júbilo desafiante, the unapologetic expression of joy despite hardships.

If we are committed to linguistic transformation and decolonial practices in education, we must center authors and content that privilege the experiences of minoritized communities, as they express it and write it. Exploring the experience of Latinidad in the classroom invites us to discover the complexity of a community that is often considered unidimensional. This is far from true. Our experiences are marked by colonization, immigration, racial difference, and often the forceful erasure of our languages. Yet by building brave spaces of learning and engaging in diverse perspectives we can help our students see themselves in the texts we choose to study and expand their understanding of communities different from their own. In doing so, we provide them with the tools to face and confront social inequities and injustices in our world.

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Suggested Reading for Educators

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Endnotes

[1] https://www.pewresearch.org/race-ethnicity/2023/09/20/latinos-views-of-and-experiences-with-the-spanish-language

[2] https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/09/20/latinos-in-us-spanish-language-skills-identity/70868753007

[3] I use U..S Spanish speaker specifically to refer to those who speak the language variety of U.S. Spanish, which can include borrowings from English, Spanglish, code switching, and translaguaging. Indeed, U.S. Spanish is often spoken by bilingual speakers.

[4] Standard Spanish refers to a language register in speaking and writing that is academic, schooled, and also used by those of upper social classes. For some, it also signals prescriptivist language ideologies of what is correct or incorrect use, which often implies that language is "pure." In the U.S., Spanish does not hold the same privilege as Spanish spoken elsewhere, such as Mexico, Spain, and other countries where Spanish is the most spoken language.

[5] See full poem here: https://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/escritores/guillen/poemas/poema_11.htm.

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Teaching and Learning with Migrant and Refugee Students: A Conversation

by Natasha Agrawal and Tzuyi Meh Bae with Michelle Banks

JFE Guest Editor Michelle Banks (MB) facilitated this conversation between a teacher and her former student, both of whom came to the United States from other countries.

Teachers are often on the frontline of creating spaces for migrant and refugee children to find community and construct a sense of place. Tzuyi Meh Bae (TMB) arrived in New Jersey in 2009 from one of the refugee camps in Thailand where thousands of Karenni people who were pushed out of Myanmar were living. There she met her first teacher in the U.S., Natasha Agrawal (NA) who was born in India. In this conversation, recorded and edited for length and clarity, they discuss and reflect on the time they spent working together.

About the photo: Natasha Agrawal (center) and Tzuyi Mah Bae (left) showing the correspondence they received back from the White House.

MB: Let's start with introductions.

TMB: My name is Bae and I am 24 years old. I came to the U.S. when I was ten years old in 2009. We [my family] were Karenni refugees from Myanmar, but I was born in Thailand, in a refugee camp. Right now, I am living in Indiana and my family is in Minnesota. I just got done with my nursing program at Ivy Tech, so now I'm studying for my NCLEX [nursing licensure exam].

NA: I am Natasha Agrawal, I am a teacher in New Jersey. I have been teaching at Robbins Elementary in Trenton for almost 16 years. Bae Meh was one of my first students. I remember you so clearly, because I think my interaction with you was so intense. And the background that you brought with you and the tons of knowledge you brought with you were just so amazing for me, that a child had experienced the kind of things that you talked about. As a teacher, I didn't know where to start. You were one of those kids who had seen so much and who had been through so many hardships already, that I just wanted to connect with you. And in my motherly teacher heart, I just wanted to give you the best thing ever and have you heal from whatever traumatic experiences you had gone through, your whole family.

MB: Why did you choose your respective professions?

TMB: I was born in a refugee camp in Thailand, and we didn't have any hospitals. It's like, you don't go to the hospital until you're dying—so, if you're sick and you can still move, you just kind of sleep it off. My family, my mom, my grandma, they would get sick, but they never go to the hospital. As a little girl, I wanted to do something for my grandma, for my mom, but there was nothing to do for them. When I came here, I wanted to be somebody that can help somebody when they're sick. I wanted to be able to do something because as a kid, I felt so useless. That's why I wanted to be a nurse.

NA: I grew up in India and I went through the Indian education system. When I came here, my own kids were young, and they went to school. The kind of things they would tell me and the kind of relationships they had with their teachers—I was very surprised and wanted to explore this education system. I also felt like while my kids are young, this is the time I can be a teacher and I can still be with them when they're home from school and have summers with them. But once I became a teacher, I found it to be such an intense experience. Teaching is actually learning; you're learning from your students all the time. That for me is a constant challenge and I enjoy that a lot. When I met students like Bae Meh, I felt like if I can even give them a little something that helps them heal or teaches them something, gives them a little more confidence in their own identity, then my job is done. I think that's very important for me.

MB: What are some of your memories of working together?

TMB: Mrs. A and Mrs. Fitts were my first teachers. I would have them one at a time. I would be pulled for ESL class to go learn English. I think that was my favorite time of the day because I felt like I wasn't judged. In the classroom, I couldn't speak in English so I felt so out of place. I couldn't understand anybody, and there wasn't anybody next to me talking to me because everybody was

just doing their own thing. In ESL class, there were other students speaking the same language as me. I was talking and I was hearing what they're saying to me.

NA: When you came, you joined with your younger sister, who was I think about seven at that time. And they just about knew how to write their names. I think you had learned a little bit of English though, right? You did know some things.

TMB: Before I came to America? I just learned ABC, but that was about it. I didn't know how to write my name yet.

NA: Oh, you didn't. Ok. One of my first memories is you are just writing your name. But you learned so quickly. By the time you left me in two years, you were writing me long letters—really good grammar and everything. So, it's shocking how much you absorbed, because writing is very hard. You pick up the language first, and you're listening a lot, you're speaking.

TBM: I remember writing a letter to the President of the U.S.

NA: Yes, we got a response three times. I still have all of Obama's letters. (Laughs).

MB: What were some of the challenges you faced in your work as a teacher?

NA: The first challenge was that we didn't even know where these children had come from. On the registration, it just said Thailand. So, I thought they were Thai, and I'm trying to look up Thai words and how to say hello. That's not who they were. I was with one of the other kids reading a book about coming to America and how different people come and the reasons they come. One page talked about refugees and this little boy said, "Refugee, refugee, I refugee," and I was like, "Oh, you guys are refugees." I didn't know. None of us understood that because we only knew about the Guatemalan students or the other Central American students. For me, it was a whole new world. I was like, "Oh, what is life like for them now?" As I dug deeper, I found articles, I found the word Karen. We didn't know what Karen meant. "Oh, these children are Karenni." I remember one of the kids, Hsar Reh, coming to the classroom and I had a big world map with country flags on it. He stood there for the longest time looking for a Karenni flag. And he kept saying, "Karenni, Karenni." I didn't know what flag he was looking for. Then he started to draw it. I Googled it and found what that was. Karenni is a minority.

Not having background enough to reach the children was a challenge because I like to know where my kids have come from. What have they experienced? Who are they? What's their context? That was something we had to figure out. Also not having any language resources was hard. When they said Karen or Karenni it's like, "Okay, how do you say hello?" What beliefs are they coming with? For Spanish or for Guatemalan, we have so much available, so that's easier to figure out. Additionally, they came from a very tropical climate, unprepared for winter. I used to see their moms coming in flip-flops, to drop the kids off. It would just break my heart. They don't have jackets or coats or something to keep them warm. There were lots of gaps in our knowledge of how to reach them.

MB: What kind of support, if any, did the school have for parents and families?

TMB: As soon as I learned English, we had to be the one translating all the government documents. I've always remembered me and my sister trying to read and translating to my parents, but we didn't know how important these documents were. We had bags of mail because we didn't know if it was important or not. Our parents could rely on us because we knew some English.

NA: Much later we started a parent class. I did find a Burmese translator who was very willing to come and help out, but Karenni is a minority language, so they didn't know Karenni, they knew Burmese.

MB: Mrs. A, you talked about learning from your students. Can you say a little bit more about that? What does that mean?

NA: Well, resilience. Things that they've been through and things that they've shared. I would come home thinking, "Wow, this family has been through so much and is surviving and has come here for a new life." If they're going to walk into my classroom, I need to give them whatever I can, as much confidence building as I can do before they leave me and go off to middle school. I had those two very precious years with you. And it was a joy.

MB: Bae, have you ever heard a teacher say that they learned from their students? What are your thoughts on that?

TMB: No, this is the first time I'm hearing it from Mrs. A. I haven't heard any of my teachers coming up to me say, "I learned a lot from my students." I feel like you gave me more than I can ever give you. I'm always forever going to be grateful to you because you provided me the foundation that I needed when I first came here. She was the link between my culture and this new culture that I was introduced to when I first came here. I feel if I didn't have you, I wouldn't know how to even begin because everything was foreign to me.

NA: That's what I felt when these children came. They were my kids who needed guidance, who already had the strength, confidence, and everything. They just needed a bit of guidance. That's all. Everything else was already there. I just wanted to hold them all and say, "Okay, I'm going to just take care of you until you can take care of yourself."

MB: How did you manage to stay in touch with each other?

TMB: First of all, I just want to say, I don't remember all my teachers. The reason I remember you, Mrs. A, was because you had a special place in my heart when I was thrown into this land. I was struggling back then, and you were there for me, so that's why I remember you even after 14 years. I don't remember who my teacher was from last semester. I always wanted to be in touch with you, but when I left I didn't have a cell phone. I got to know one of my classmates and asked "Hey, do you know Mrs. A? Do you still have a contact? Give me her email. I want to say thank you."

NA: I remember the email. I think at one point you emailed me your report card. You were in Denver, weren't you?

TMB: Yeah, I was in Denver.

NA: And then we met. I came to Denver for a conference. I'm staying at this hotel and I invited you and your sister for a meal. I thought, I'll take them to the restaurant at the hotel, it'll be fun and we'll catch up. And you and you sister came with bags of food. (Laughs)

TMB: Yeah, we hadn't seen you in a long time. We were excited. We were like, "Yeah, we're going to feed Mrs. A! This time it's our turn." (Laughs)

NA: That must have been almost ten years ago, you were in high school then, right?

TMB: Yeah, I was in high school.

NA: So that was quite coincidental that where they were staying at that time was very close to my hotel. That was wonderful.

MB: What keeps you going, Mrs. A? What are some things that you have to do to be able to continue in this work?

NA: It's very heartwarming when they post something beautiful, something fun that's happening in their lives. Or when I read the English that they write—beautiful, well put together sentences. I teach a graduate class and sometimes they come as guest speakers to talk about their experiences. But I think the most important thing, both for me and for the children, is just to be there, just to be a presence in their lives, just like they are in my life. And to cultivate that relationship we don't really need a lot of books or computers or anything because cultivating relationships is an intangible thing. We just need to be able to be there, to listen, to communicate, and really as a teacher for me to read body language: What does a child need at this time?

MB: Bae, what is the most important lesson you think you learned in this classroom?

TMB: Mrs. A was like the second mother guiding me in the school outside of my family. I learned that I could learn something with the support of others. I don't need to know everything in the beginning. Even if I started from the bottom, even though I have nothing in the beginning, I can learn things because of the good people around me.

MB: You realized you didn't have to do it by yourself.

TMB: Right. I have support outside of my family. And just the fact that we went to ESL classes every day, that's how I improved my English. Spending time with my teachers and the other Karenni kids, I felt I was a part of something.

MB: Is there anything you'd like to say to each other?

NA: You're gonna make me cry.

TMB: I just want to say thank you so much for everything. I really mean it when I say you were like my second mother. I had my little sister, but I was supposed to be her guide. So, I'm really grateful for you. Even if it's 30 years or 40 years I'm still going to talk about you. I'm still going to remember all the things you've done for me.

NA: I want to say thank you to you because you brightened up my life. You made my life so meaningful when you all came. I was like, oh, I'm useful now. I was just looking at this letter that you wrote to President Obama, "I want to help people that are sick. I want to be a doctor or a nurse." Things that you projected so many years ago you made happen. You can see how smart you are and what an amazing student you were.

TMB: Thank you for not giving up on us. Thank you for having patience with me. Like everything I have accomplished in life. I feel like it's all thanks to you because that's where I built my foundation. That's where I was able to grow some wings and now I'm flying.

NA: Actually, that's what I should say to Bae Meh. You make it worth it. We see you all very little and then we don't see you after that. We don't know what's happened and how you've grown your wings but to meet you and see you. You're talking so beautifully. I remember you would just always have your eyes up and down. You taught me how to hula-hoop. I will never forget that. During the summer program we used to be outside a lot in the playground. "Hey, Mrs. A, this is how you do it."

TMB: I could do that for hours.

NA: See. I remember everything about you because you're just one of those shining star students that you just don't forget. Thank you for being who you are and how you push yourself. You're going to do amazing things with your life, and I want to read all about it one day.

Pedagogical Disruptors in Folk Dance Instruction

by Kiri Avelar and Roxanne Gray

Un choque.

Choque pi ta pom ta ria.

Choque pom.

Pi ta. Pi pi pi ta. Ta ria.

Choque pom.

Ta ria ria pi ta ria ria pi ta ria ria pi ta choque pom.

Pom pom.

The onomatopoeia of the castañuelas speaks out. They are the disruptive force in the colonially induced quiet of the ivory tower.

This ivory tower contains dance studios with floor-to-ceiling mirrors and ballet barres framing the perimeter.

These studios hold our dancing bodies.

We sense a tension between the familiar and the foreign. These spaces call to our Western concert dance training. Yet as many post-secondary dance programs eagerly seek more "diverse" offerings today, we are now invited to bring our communal dances as well.[1] For us, this has meant embracing the dances and rhythms of our youth, such as the castanets, cante, and palmas that enrich the Sevillanas tradition, a partner folk dance from southern Spain.

We hold space with our rhythms echoing off the mirrors. The sound bounces back, and we insist on being heard. The clashing, the choque, questions what these dance spaces are made for. The university's architectural colonial imposition on the Indigenous lands (now known as the United States) holds memory. It holds many dancing stories, migration stories, and stories of diasporas dancing back to their homeland. This is our dancing story.

Un Choque

The choque is where the heart and the flesh of our story lives. We look to the choque, the literal crashing of the castanets together, as a metaphor for the collision of cultures, histories, practices, and values when concert dance and folk dance traditions coexist within the changing contours of an academic studio.[2] We embrace this choque in our current faculty assignment, teaching Spanish Dance through the Special Topics course series within a predominantly ballet and modern dance university program. This leads us to ask—how do we ethically, respectfully, and responsibly teach communal folk dances in post-secondary dance spaces, often saturated with inherited Euro-American values of concert dance? To consider the complexities of such negotiations, teaching between the familiar and the foreign, we begin by tracing the lineage of our Sevillanas experiences through an autoethnographic reflection of our own dancing migrations.

Our Sevillanas Stories

Roxanne's Sevillanas Story

My Sevillanas tradition is rooted in my childhood in San Antonio, Texas. I learned the Spanish folk dance through my Flamenco and Folklórico dance classes at the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department. This city program provided accessible and affordable learning and performance opportunities for youth. Many of my childhood weekends were spent performing at fiestas, quinceañeras, parades, and city functions at El Mercado or The Riverwalk. I have happy memories of sweating in the Texas heat with lipstick-stained stage smiles and brightly colored raspa rewards at the end of every performance. My instructor, Marisol Flores Millican, eventually started her own performing group outside the Parks and Rec program, where I continued studying dance. The learning of these various Spanish and Mexican dance traditions was inextricably entwined in San Antonio, a way for diasporic Tejanx subjects to reconnect with their multiple cultural roots through migratory dances. At performances, I would seamlessly change costumes in a "backstage" vinyl tent—removing a colorful Jalisco dress and slipping into a polka-dot, ruffled skirt to dance the Sevillanas. These dance forms were the foundation of my borderland identity and provided me with a direct connection to my ancestors through embodied communion.

Left: Roxanne and her younger sister, Danielle, posing in Sevillanas costume.
Right: Roxanne performing Sevillanas with the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department.
Photos courtesy of the authors.

My Flamenco and Folklórico classes included a variety of regional dances from Spain and Mexico. We always had a Sevillanas folk dance in our performance lineup. While our classes were divided into age groups and technique levels, every class learned the Sevillanas and often performed them together. This dance was the common connection between the classes, from age four to adult. It provided a bridge between generations that dissolved hierarchies of age and technique. No matter which class you were in, you had a polka-dot dress.

While I spent my weekends performing on the West side of San Antonio, my family lived in the predominantly white suburbs of North San Antonio. When I reached middle school, I opted for a change, studying ballet and jazz at the San Antonio School for the Performing Arts. It wasn't until later in life that I recognized this decision's assimilative impact on my dance journey. While attending graduate school in Salt Lake City, I reencountered the Sevillanas in a local class taught by Solange Gomes. Although my days were filled with taking and teaching modern dance classes on campus, I yearned for an outside community outlet. I found that the zapateado and rhythms came naturally to me in these classes, recalled from my youth. As we danced the Sevillanas, I recognized the patterning immediately. But when we were asked to turn toward a partner and initiate that flow of pasadas around each other, I was thrown. I realized it had been a while since I was asked to connect with another body in such a way, having worked in proscenium performance for so many years. The social aspect of dance was a distant enough memory in my embodied practice that it took effort to recall the approach. Adding castanets tipped me over the edge, asking me to engage in a polyrhythmic, polycentric technique that had apparently gone latent in my body. Dancing the Sevillanas was comforting and frustrating—a familiar muscle memory I couldn't execute because those muscles had atrophied.

I am currently completing my thesis research for graduate school and teaching in the university program. My creative practice explores borderland identities through modern and Folklórico dance, and I employ Chicana feminist methodologies in my teaching practice. I have noticed similarities between teaching Spanish Dance in our Special Topics course and teaching Folklórico faldeo and zapateado techniques in my rehearsals. The students in my cast are approaching this new technique from various dance backgrounds and experiences. Adding the unfamiliar skirt, rhythms, and cultural context allows everyone to arrive at our creative process at the same level, and we have built a community of learning in the space.

A work-in-progress performance of Roxanne's thesis choreography, "Faldeo." Photos courtesy of the authors.

Recently, I went home to San Antonio to visit my family and take a class with my mother, who is still dancing in her 60s. Her class is taught by my childhood maestra, Marisol Flores, who drills the zapateado with a sharp eye and a booming laugh. I was pleased to discover that the group was also working on the Sevillanas. After reconnecting with the dance during my classes in Salt Lake City, I could easily jump in and partner with my mother. With every turn, I could feel the intergenerational pull of the coplas drawing me into the dance like an invitation. It was an invitation to remember—a cultural memory embodied by both my youth and my ancestors.

Kiri's Sevillanas Story

I carry the Sevillanas tradition from the Boston Ballet School, Southern and Northern New Mexico teachers and their dance groups, the local dance studios and community college in the U.S./Mexico border town of El Paso, and the American Bolero Dance Company and Ballet Hispánico School of Dance in New York City. In both the Southwestern and the Northeastern U.S., the Sevillanas were an integral tradition—building community, connecting to heritage, and blossoming intergenerational and cross-cultural understandings. As I studied, performed, and taught the Sevillanas over the past three decades, I developed an appreciation for the malleability of the dance as a catalyst for personal expression, exploration of self and others, individual and collective identity-making, and a way of knowing and asserting through the body. I continue to learn new lessons as I dance, sing, play the castanets, and pass on the tradition of Sevillanas today in Salt Lake City.

My first encounter with this Spanish folk dance was at the Boston Ballet School in Massachusetts one hot summer in 1996 as a young teen under the instruction of Ramón de los Reyes. I remember needing to be fully engaged with the class (I was not) and feeling overwhelmed by the rhythmic phrasing and the necessary partner work. In reflection, growing up as a "bunhead" with a tunnel vision for ballet, my training did not instill values of appreciating anything other than ballet. Being

Left: Ballet Hispánico students waiting backstage to perform their Sevillanas for the end-of-year dance recital. Right: Kiri performing Sevillanas with her colega Franchesca Marisol Cabrera at a restaurant in Lower Manhattan, NYC. Photos courtesy of the authors.

forced to learn the Sevillanas in his Danza Española class didn't feel good. I wasn't invested. Nonetheless, I participated, as it meant I could progress in the program and move on with my professional trajectory in dance, one I thought would continue with a focus on ballet.

As a young adult, following my early career as a professional ballet dancer, I made a sharp shift in direction. I returned home to El Paso, Texas/Cd. Juárez, Chihuahua, left ballet, and wondered where dance would take me next and if it would be with me at all. Once home, I was most welcomed in the El Paso Community College dance classes at the Valle Verde campus in the Lower Valley by Rita Vega de Triana, the wife of late Flamenco artist Antonio Triana. They relocated to the border town, and following his death she continued his legacy, teaching Clásico Español, castanets, zarzuelas, and the Sevillanas to the young college students. Her immaculate castanets would purr through the studios every Saturday morning. Her introduction of the Sevillanas brought me back to my closed-minded, silo-visioned teenage self. However, with more maturity, I was more appreciative of the Sevillanas. It felt good in my body, it felt fun, and it gave me a relationship with my classmates with whom I would have otherwise had no interaction. The Sevillanas brought common ground to our diverse group of students with varying degrees of dance experience and levels of coordination and rhythm. The communal aspect of dancing the Sevillanas brought joy back to my dancing, something I had lost along the way as I pursued the highly competitive and personally demanding world of professional ballet.

I noticed the contours of home had changed as I returned from the East Coast. Home felt different now, reshaped through the diasporic dances I began to study in new and meaningful ways. Being back in my homeland, reconnecting to the communal spirit of dance through the Sevillanas would ultimately facilitate a return and the remembrance of my cultural roots as an artist in diaspora, something that ballet had negated in my formative years of training.

I would continue my studies of the Sevillanas at a local dance studio on the West side of El Paso that taught Ballet Folklórico and Flamenco. I also learned the castanets, studying at New Mexico State University, the National Institute of Flamenco's Flamenco Festival Alburquerque every

Kiri performing the Sevillanas with her American Bolero Dance Company colegas at their Friday night tablaos in Queens, NYC. Photos courtesy of the authors.

summer, and the University of New Mexico. My intensified training in Flamenco, Spanish folk dance, and Clásico Español throughout the borderlands region would become my second career, performing with regional dance companies and artists. The Sevillanas would remain a staple in our repertory—at theaters, local venues, small restaurants, city plazas, and fiestas. This path would continue leading me to new spaces, and I eventually moved back to the Northeast to dance with the American Bolero Dance Company (ABDC) and Ballet Hispánico (BH) in New York City. Moving back and forth between the East Coast and the Southwest, the immersion in folk dance facilitated my understanding and appreciation of my rich cultural heritage as a diasporic participant. My dancing migrations helped me "find" my culture in new ways by connecting me to new dancing communities in diaspora.

My 11-year tenure in New York City performing and teaching with these companies would build on my foundational experiences in Boston, New Mexico, and El Paso. My maturation as a Spanish dance performer in the tablaos and my pedagogical curiosities for this dance form would be nurtured by working with and learning from many colegas in the city. I began to work intentionally with other teachers to center the Sevillanas in our dance curriculum at BH. This move would build a sense of convivencia as teachers and músicos, within and across our classes, amongst the student body, and with the families and school administration.[3]

As a new ABDC company member, dancing the Sevillanas with my colegas at the Friday night tablaos forced intimacy. It gave us an equal footing as performers, regardless of our ranking or seniority in the company.

At BH, the Sevillanas was an invitation for our classes across age groups and divisional programs (pre-professional and "open" classes) to collaborate, admire, encourage, and be together, celebrating across differences. It became a rite of passage for the students and something unique they would bring to citywide dance festivals with The Ailey School, Dance Theatre of Harlem School, Limón Professional Studies Program, Martha Graham School, and Peridance Center. These cross-city collaborative encounters through shared performances brought a sense of orgullo to the students of BH. By performing the Sevillanas, which stemmed from their BH dance lineage, and for some students, also connected to cultural heritage, they realized they had something special to share with their peers.


Ballet Hispánico students performing the Sevillanas at the West Side Community Garden in Manhattan, NYC.
Photos courtesy of the authors.

Our Stories Today

In reflecting upon our shared Sevillanas stories, we have found overlaps in our learning, performing, teaching, and revisiting of this Spanish folk dance—for example, the impact of working intergenerationally, easing hierarchical norms, and emphasizing socialization, something that Western concert dance spaces often negate. At separate times in our lives, we revisited this dance and discovered the joy and communal feel we thirsted for in academic dance spaces. At the same time, our experiences were rooted in different geographic regions and migrations, types of dance environments, and instructional approaches.

As we continue building a diasporic Spanish folk dance lineage in our classroom today, our embodied teaching genealogies encourage a pedagogy that ethically, respectfully, and responsibly teaches communal folk dances in post-secondary dance spaces.[4] As dance forms migrate to new spaces, communities, and bodies, we acknowledge the process of pedagogic acculturation (Medina and Mabingo 2022). To illustrate such pedagogical negotiations, we offer insight from our class.

Folk Dance Considerations: Plática, Emergent Strategy, and Care Through Chicana/Latina Feminist Pedagogies as Culturally Relevant and Responsive Strategies

Although our Spanish Dance course was offered to the entire dance program, the students enrolled were from the undergraduate modern dance major and minor. This small and diverse group included female-identifying students and one genderqueer student. The students identified as Mexican American, African American, Asian American, Irish American, and Euro American, hailing from Illinois, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. At the university, these students train in modern dance and hold prior experience with high school dance, drill, and cheer teams; competition dance studios focusing on lyrical, jazz, tap, and ballet; and Latin and European social dance through ballroom dance competitions. In addition, a few have vocal training and have studied Spanish as a second or third language.

We started with castanet training on day one to allow students an entire 16-week semester with the musical instruments.[5] Introducing castanets through Danza Estilizada—a stylized Spanish dance that draws on elements of folk, Flamenco, and Escuela Bolera—allowed students to simultaneously use their concert dance technique and familiar movement vocabularies such as abrir y cerrar (tendus), paso de vascos (waltzes), and vueltas (turns).[6] Following this first unit on Danza Estilizada, we introduced students to Spanish/Andalusian folk dance through the Sevillanas. This is where our Sevillanas stories were enacted, and we began to draw upon the intersection of our migratory dance lineages.

Going into the course, we knew that we would need to till the ground in culturally relevant and responsive ways to honor the historical context and migrations of these dance forms and the specific demographic of students who made up the class.[7] We centered critical conversations, introducing the practice of plática as a Chicana/Latina feminist pedagogy in every class.[8] Through these intentional class pláticas, we first asked, "What do you think Spanish dance is?" This initial plática helped everyone assess their understanding of the art form. It disrupted any assumed definitions of the tradition, ensuring that diasporic experiences and contributions to the form were recognized and an acknowledgment of its evolution through ongoing migration was underscored. As this was a new form for everyone in the room, we wanted to provide different avenues of

learning to support the embodied practice and class pláticas, using PowerPoints, videos, articles, and resource books that further contextualized and underscored the complexity of the art form.[9]

Prioritizing Chicana/Latina feminist pedagogies as culturally relevant and responsive strategies honors the cultural and historical context of the dance, respects the students' backgrounds and experiences, and centers an ethic of care in our teaching.[10] One example of this work was co-creating community class agreements so that everyone had a say in how our class would flow and how we would work together. We noticed that students were most concerned with respect for the art form as well as respect for each other in a new learning process:

COMMUNITY CLASS AGREEMENTS
Taking the time you need, asking for help when needed Supporting each other in a vulnerable environment Valuing cultural context Acknowledging and respecting our differences Be curious and inquisitive

The second example was asking students to fill out an index card with information about themselves. Our hope with this exercise was to gain insight into students' interests and career trajectories so that we could bridge their prior experiences to the current class material and support what they wanted to do with it. This acknowledgment of students' prior knowledge honored them as co-constructors of learning in the class and resisted the banking model of education (Freire 1970).

PERSONALIZED INDEX CARDS
Preferred Name and Personal Pronouns Year in School and Major/Minor of Study Previous Dance Experience What Do You Hope to Get Out of the Class?

As the class progressed over the weeks, our pláticas continued, and the class gave itself permission to stop when questions or concerns arose. For example, when we introduced the social-participatory layers of Sevillanas, such as jaleos (shouts of encouragement), one student was concerned that using vocalization in a language she didn't know would be considered appropriation. We followed her lead, paused the class, and engaged in plática to think through previous experiences in other classes. The students discovered similarities between dances they have studied, such as the call and response used in some West African dances or the communal freestyle nature of Hip-Hop cyphers. From our pláticas on these communal dance practices, we acknowledged that to participate responsibly and respectfully in our study of the Sevillanas, engaging in these layers, such as the jaleos, palmas, and, at times, singing, is essential. Some students felt more like "outsiders" because they did not know the Spanish language primarily used in jaleos, while some knew the language, yet it wasn't part of their cultural heritage. In addition,

because of their concert dance training, they generally did not have the experience of vocalizing *and* dancing. This student-initiated plática on appropriation and unfamiliar experiences stemmed from the realities of migratory dances embodied in Western concert dance spaces.[11]

Embracing the Choque: A Need for Disruption

The migrations of folk dances into Western academic spaces disrupt concert dance expectations and invite new pedagogical negotiations. As illustrated, we used class community agreements, personalized index cards, and class pláticas to anticipate the choque. While teaching Sevillanas, we discovered that the choque, the collision of cultures, histories, practices, and values (Anzaldúa 1987), was not something to be resolved but embraced. By working to respond to the emerging needs of our class and trusting our embodied teaching genealogies, our classroom became a fertile ground for strategies to emerge.[12] We would like to name these strategies as disruptors—pedagogical tools to navigate the choque.

For example, the early introduction of castanets was a newfound challenge to dancers at an advanced level in other genres (e.g., ballet and modern) yet new to folk dance. This brought everyone to the same level of new learning through the "universal unfamiliar[13]" (castanets), negotiating between the familiar and the foreign. As Boricua Spanish dance artist, educator, choreographer, and writer Sandra Rivera details in her essay, "Spanish Dance in New York City's Puerto Rican Community" (2021), the implementation of castanets as a layer in Spanish dance studies provides a challenging complexity that keeps students engaged, demands heightened attention to the rhythm and instrumentation of the song, and requires a nuanced interpretation of the music in playing alongside the musical score. We embraced the choque of students' various techniques, experiences, and interests and realized the castanets became a pedagogical disruptor. In conclusion, we offer seven potential interdependent disruptors for folk dance practitioners to consider when teaching concert-trained dancers in Western academic spaces.

DISRUPTOR	APPLICATION
A "Universal Unfamiliar"	❖ Introduce something unfamiliar early in the semester (e.g., a way of moving or a material element such as castanets, the falda, an abanico, etc.) to bring everyone to the same level of new learning through the "universal unfamiliar." ❖ Acknowledge this newfound challenge and encourage an attitude of discovery, an environment of support and respect for the technique and/ or material element.
Address Hierarchies	❖ Be deliberate in naming and addressing the hierarchies present in your dance environment, some of which may include: ➢ Teacher/Student power differentials and generational differences ➢ Varied student levels, experiences, and techniques ➢ Modern/Ballet binary ➢ Prioritization of Eurocentric concert dance forms in academic spaces

	➢ (Re)Prioritization of discipline collaboration (e.g., how the baile, toque, and cante work together redistributes concert dance students' ideas of who is responsible for making the performance happen) ➢ Use of the space and where/how dancers move in the space (e.g., who is going first and last, where dancers are positioned in relation to one another, and their proximity to the teacher or musicians)
Socialization	❖ Partner work encourages a connection between students to dance and see across differences—negotiating eye contact, careful listening, and responding to one another's bodies for the dance to actualize. ❖ Socialization challenges Western concert dance values, causing a shift: ➢ competitive→ collaborative ➢ independent→ interdependent ➢ product→ process
Visibility	❖ Raise awareness and share the value of folk dance in academia by encouraging the institution to engage and acknowledge the community practice that is being developed in the classroom: ➢ Invite colleagues and peers for open studio showings. ➢ Organize a performance (e.g., flash mob) that permeates the dance building hallways, corridors, and lobbies. ➢ Collaborate with local practitioners and dance groups, visiting, learning, and performing in one another's spaces. ❖ Recognize the pride that students feel when sharing their learning experiences with others.
Context/ Connection	❖ Make time in every class for the historical and cultural context of the folk dance. ❖ Use multimodal resources to diversify how students consider the contexts (e.g., visuals, videos, texts, pláticas, etc.). ❖ Connect students' prior (dance) experience and contemporary (dance) studies to folk dance practice.
Agency/ Autonomy	❖ Provide moments in the dance for students to explore the contribution of their unique voices and movement expression. ❖ Underscore the value in students' personal interpretation of and contribution to the work. ❖ Invite students to make choices within the dance through improvisational practices (e.g., in Sevillanas, which copla they want to dance and with whom they will partner).

Structure/ Space	❖ Acknowledge how the space has been built and what it has been built for (e.g., land acknowledgments, pláticas on the significance of dances' geopolitical and sociocultural emergence and migrations, etc.). ❖ Consider how the use of space will encourage community and dissolve hierarchies (e.g., circles, facing away from the mirror, facing partners, and rotating line leaders). ❖ Build a series of rituals in the class structure that prioritize: ➢ The participants as human (e.g., check in on how folks are doing at the top of the class and make intentional check-in/reflection moments throughout the class). ➢ Time for practice and repetition of class material (e.g., castanet drills, zapateado, and pasos básicos). ➢ Social and improvisation practice of the dance (e.g., dancing, singing, and performing palmas for the Sevillanas with a partner and/or with the class as a whole).

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Endnotes

[1] For reading on decolonizing dance curriculum and pedagogy in higher education and transforming the academy, see Delgado Bernal1998; Monroe2011; McCarthy-Brown 2014; Mabingo 2015; Amin 2016; Delgado Bernal and Alemán 2017; Delgado Bernal 2020.

[2] See Gloria Anzaldúa's conceptualization of the choque as cultural collision in *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza*, 1987.

[3] My Ballet Hispánico teaching colegas in the Spanish Dance program included Mary Baird, Franchesca Marisol Cabrera, Maria Gabriela Estrada, Gabriela Granados, Yvonne Gutierrez, Liliana Morales, Jared Newman, Sandra Rivera, JoDe Romano, and Bernard Schaller.

[4] Our notion of embodied teaching genealogies builds on Natalie Cisneros' conceptualization of "embodied genealogies" in *Embodied Genealogies: Anzaldúa, Nietzsche, and Diverse Epistemic Practice*, 2019.

[5] Our units were based off the Ballet Hispánico pre-professional curriculum, which introduces students to Spanish Dance through the study of Folklore (including the Sevillanas), Flamenco, Danza Estilizada, and Escuela Bolera.

[6] For further reading on Danza Estilizada see García Morillo 1997 and Rivera 2021.

[7] For reading on culturally relevant and responsive teaching see Ladson-Billings 1995; Gay 2000; Hammond 2015; McCarthy-Brown 2017.

[8] Pláticas loosely translated can mean "informal conversations." It is also a progressive academic methodology that contributes to personal and community healing and serves as a crucial space of theorization. For further reading see Hartley 2010; Guajardo and Guajardo 2013; Fierros and Delgado Bernal 2016; Morales et. al. 2023.

[9] Our class sources included García Morillo 1997; Huidobro and Palacios 2016; Vitucci and Gioia 2003; Murga Castro 2022; Rivera 2021; Ballet Hispánico, www.ballethispanico.org.

[10] For reading on pedagogies and ethics of care see Noddings 1984; Owens and Ennis 2005; Assmann et al. 2016; Motta and Bennett 2018.

[11] To see another teaching approach that prioritizes cultural contextualization of Hispanic dance and music, see Espino-Bravo and English 2023.

[12] Our evolving teaching practice is greatly inspired by liberatory and justice frameworks, including Emergent Strategy. For reading on Emergent Strategy see brown 2017; Buono and Davis 2022.

[13] We recognize that this term "universal unfamiliar" is not perfect, it is only our first attempt at putting language to something we have explored in our pedagogy. We are trying to get to the idea of students connecting over a shared new experience together. We continue to think about this terminology as our pedagogy develops while teaching folk dance to concert-trained dancers.

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From the Printed Page to the Concert Stage

Migrant Poetry and Labor Songs as Public Folklore

by B. Marcus Cederström

Signe Aurell standing in front of one of the Minneapolis homes where she lived circa 1919 (Bokstugan 1921, 26).

Following a 2019 performance in Sweden, the singer and musician Maja Heurling was approached by an audience member and recent migrant. "This is the first time I've heard a Swede telling the story that I carry inside," they told her (Heurling 2022). The Swede who originally told the story, however, was not Heurling, but Signe Aurell, a Swedish immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1913. The grateful audience member had just seen a performance of "Irrbloss: Tonsatta dikter av Signe Aurell" ["Irrbloss: Songs from the Poetry of Signe Aurell"], based on a several-years long research project about Aurell, her poetry, and Swedish American working women in the U.S. Through a collaboration with folklorists at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, this performance became part of a multimodal, artist-driven public folklore project to draw connections between historical and contemporary issues of immigration and challenge our understanding of migration by relying heavily on folkloristic research.

A Swedish American Will-of-the-Wisp

Signe Aurell was born on February 14, 1889, in Gryt, Sweden. She was one of six children of Anna and Andreas Aurell. Until her move to the U.S., she spent her life in northern Skåne (a region in southern Sweden), where her father worked as a schoolteacher. In 1913, Aurell began the lengthy journey across the Atlantic. After several weeks of travel in third class, she stepped off the SS *Franconia* in Boston, Massachusetts, on May 7, 1913. Settling in Minneapolis, Minnesota, she worked various jobs, including as a laundress and a seamstress. Between 1913 and 1920, Aurell had at least 12 addresses, many in and around the Franklin-Seward neighborhood, home to a large population of Swedes. Her frequent address changes are an indication of the unstable living conditions of the Swedish American working class (Cederström 2016b).

During her time in Minneapolis, Aurell began publishing poetry in the radical Swedish American press. Writing exclusively in Swedish, she began to make a name for herself as a lyrical poet

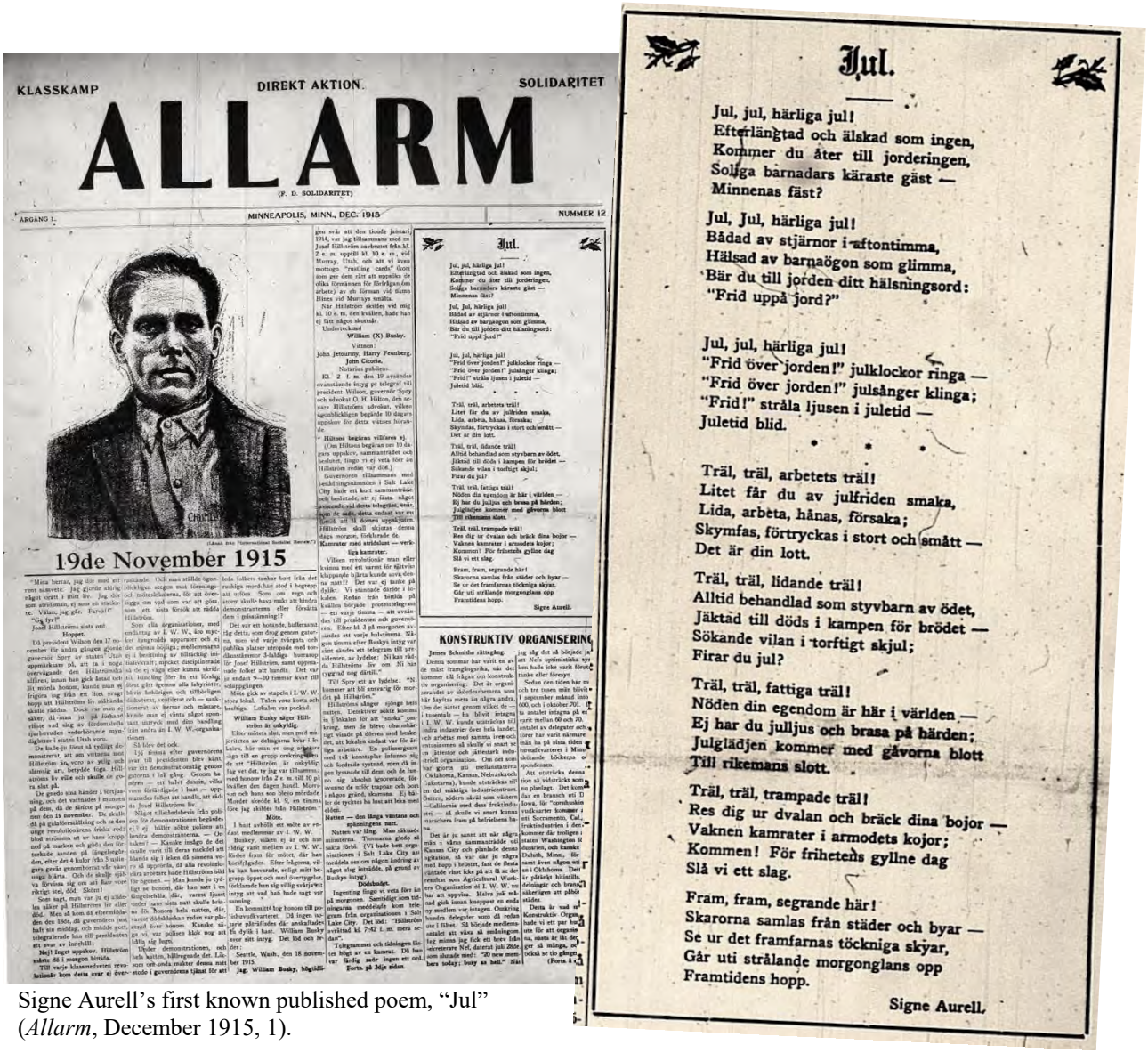
capturing the lived experiences of Swedish working women. Writing not just about love and loss and a longing for home, but also about labor, she spoke to the working-class immigrant experience of many women like her (Cederström 2016a). And there were many women like her: Aurell was one of about 250,000 single Swedish women who traveled to the U.S. between 1881 and 1920 (Lintelman 2009).

In 1919, Signe Aurell self-published a book of poetry titled *Irrbloss* [*Will-of-the-Wisp*] that she sold for $0.25 from her apartment in Minneapolis. Featuring poems previously published in the Swedish American labor press, as well as new poetry, the collection was well received, garnering positive reviews in Swedish and Swedish American newspapers (Cederström 2016b). But praise doesn't pay the rent. A year later, in 1920, Signe Aurell moved back to Sweden. Exactly why is unclear, but a farewell written in *Bokstugan*, a Swedish-language newspaper published out of Chicago, Illinois, where she was a frequent contributor, placed the blame on economic troubles (Bokstugan 1920, 17). She would spend the rest of her life in or near her hometown in Sweden, publishing occasionally, but seemingly stepping back from her days as an activist, instead taking care of her parents in their old age. Aurell died on April 29, 1975.

Like so many other immigrants, Aurell came to the U.S. as a single woman and experienced unstable living and working conditions. And while hundreds of thousands of immigrants stayed, many, just like Aurell, eventually moved home; approximately 20 percent of Swedish migrants to the U.S. moved back to Sweden (Wyman 1993, 80). Yet the return of so many migrants is missing from not just the popular telling of Nordic migration, but also in the scholarly literature. In the popular imagination of Swedish America, Swedish migrants farmed the land, made lives for themselves, and lived the American dream. Stories of difficulties and failure, predatory employers, or crippling homesickness, on the other hand, are less common. Jennifer Eastman Attebery documents this scarcity by examining historical legends in local histories. Noting that while these histories are more nuanced today, if still imperfect, there has long been a palliative approach to telling the history of Swedish America that excused or downplayed the negative aspects and experiences of migration (2023, 54–5).

Aurell's poetry, written by a Swedish immigrant for Swedish immigrants, deals with many of these difficulties head-on. She had direct experience, after all. While living in the U.S., one of her friends recalled that an employer refused to pay Aurell after she had washed all the clothes she had been assigned. In response, Aurell dumped the clothes back in the dirty water, walked out, and never returned (Engdahl 1961, 8). It should come as no surprise, then, that Aurell advocated for women to organize and unionize. Her poetry presented a vision for a better future based on direct action and a strong and just labor movement. But her experiences as a migrant weren't limited to activism. She also wrote about missing home, missing her mother, and the difficulties of being an immigrant. All these themes were expressed in *Irrbloss* and were explored in a research project I conducted for several years, culminating in my dissertation, *In Search of Signe: The Life and Times of a Swedish Immigrant* (Cederström 2016b).

Since then, in collaboration with musicians like Maja Heurling and Ola Sandström in Sweden as well as folklorists here in the U.S., we developed a multimodal public folklore project to reconfigure and share that research with a broader audience. That story, Aurell's story, the story that many audience members carry inside, is a story shared by immigrants in different times and in different places. It's a story that challenges assumptions about historically "successful" immigration from Sweden to the U.S. and even challenges assumptions of contemporary migration from other countries to Sweden.



KLASSKAMP DIREKT AKTION SOLIDARITET

ALLARM

(F. D. SOLIDARITET)

ARGANG 1. MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., DEC. 1915 NUMMER 12

19de November 1915

Jul.

Jul, jul, härliga jul!
Efterlängtad och älskad som ingen,
Kommer du åter till jorderingen,
Soliga barnadars käraste gäst —
Minnenas fäst?

Jul, Jul, härliga jul!
Bådad av stjärnor i aftontimma,
Hälsad av barnaögon som glimma,
Bär du till jorden ditt hälsningsord:
"Frid uppå jord?"

Jul, jul, härliga jul!
"Frid över jorden!" julklockor ringa —
"Frid över jorden!" julsånger klinga;
"Frid!" stråla ljusen i juletid —
Juletid blid.

Träl, träl, arbetets träl!
Litet får du av julfriden smaka,
Lida, arbeta, hånas, försaka;
Skymfas, förtryckas i stort och smått —
Det är din lott.

Träl, träl, lidande träl!
Alltid behandlad som styvbarn av ödet,
Jäktad till döds i kampen för brödet —
Sökande vilan i torftigt skjul;
Firar du jul?

Träl, träl, fattiga träl!
Nöden din egendom är här i världen —
Ej har du julljus och brasa på härden;
Julglädjen kommer med gåvorna blott
Till rikemans slott.

Träl, träl, trampade träl!
Res dig ur dvalan och bräck dina bojor —
Vaknen kamrater i armodets kojor;
Kommen! För frihetens gyllne dag
Slå vi ett slag.

Fram, fram, segrande här!
Skarorna samlas från städer och byar —
Se ur det framfarnas täckniga skyar,
Går uti strålande morgonglans opp
Framtidens hopp.

Signe Aurell.

Signe Aurell's first known published poem, "Jul" (*Allarm*, December 1915, 1).

From the Page to the Stage

In 2019, 100 years after the initial publication of *Irrbloss*, the folk singers Maja Heurling and Ola Sandström released their own *Irrbloss*, to quite a bit of acclaim in the Swedish press. The album features 12 of Aurell's original 23 poems set to music and includes a 13th track, an instrumental piece also titled "Irrbloss," written by Sandström. The liner notes include my short biography of Aurell in Swedish and English.

That album was years in the making. While conducting research about Signe Aurell in Sweden in 2015, I went to a Joe Hill memorial concert where Maja Heurling was performing songs from the album *Påtår hos Moa Martinson* [*Refill at Moa Martinson's*], a collaborative work based on the life and work of Moa Martinson, famous for her working-class literature. I loved it. A few days later, I emailed Heurling to tell her a little about Signe Aurell. As a contemporary of Martinson, the parallels were clear, although Aurell was basically unknown in both Sweden and the U.S. compared with Martinson. Heurling, to her credit, responded to the out-of-the-blue email and suggested meeting up to talk. So we did. I sent her Aurell's book of poetry and talked more about the work I did as a folklorist.

Later, she would say "Det var som att få en skatt i händerna. Jag kände direkt en stark samhörighet med Signe och hennes brinnande sätt att skriva. Hon förtjänade helt enkelt en plats inom svensk lyrik" ["It was like a treasure landed in my lap. I immediately felt a strong connection with Signe and her passionate way of writing. I felt that she deserved recognition within Sweden's poetic tradition."] (Kakafon 2019). Together, as we thought through different avenues of potential collaboration, we sought to amplify the story of a young immigrant woman whose story resonated with contemporary issues of immigrant rights, labor rights, and women's rights. Relying on Aurell's poetry, we could draw on both Swedish American immigrant and labor poetry traditions along with the Swedish visa tradition. A visa is often characterized as a type of stylistically simple, storytelling folk song (Jonsson 2001 [1974], 5). In this tradition, Aurell's labor and migrant poems could be put to music and re-presented to help audiences understand migration and labor history from a Swedish American perspective.

In 2018, together with my fellow Wisconsin-based folklorists Anna Rue and Nathan Gibson, we hosted a symposium in Madison that brought together musicians from the Nordic region and Nordic America, including Heurling. Artists, academics, culture workers, and community members discussed Nordic folk music and how and by whom it was being documented, preserved, revitalized, and reimagined on both sides of the Atlantic. Heurling performed a couple of Aurell's poems as songs for the first time.

That symposium lit a fire. Heurling had already begun putting music to the poems and also teamed up with Ola Sandström, another accomplished musician who had experience putting poetry to music and who had been recognized by Sveriges kompositörer och textförfattare [Sweden's composers and lyric writers] for his contribution to the Swedish visa tradition (Skap 2017). Together, they put Aurell's *Irrbloss* to music, formed a band, and recorded *Irrbloss,* the album.

With the 2019 release of the album, Aurell's life, experiences, immigration, and activism were suddenly being discussed in Swedish newspapers and on Swedish radio. Heurling and Sandström, along with Livet Nord and Daniel Wejdin, began performing throughout Sweden.

Their "informance,"[1] a performance that also informs, focuses on telling a complicated story of Swedish immigration and emigration and the challenges faced by working-class women through the experiences of Signe Aurell in her new home. Based on scholarly research, it also contextualizes the experiences of immigrants to the U.S., such as traveling conditions, living conditions, and working conditions.

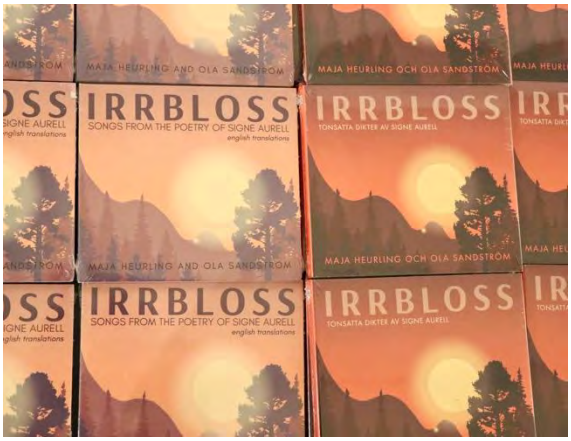
From left to right: Live Nord, Maja Heurling, Ola Sandström, and Nate Gibson prior to a performance at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Photo by Marcus Cederström.

Developed almost like a stage play, *Irrbloss* the informance includes a script, performance attire (all black), a backdrop, and props (like printouts of a 1915 newspaper featuring Aurell's poetry). Heurling and Sandström also sought the advice of a director. The two had designed similar shows in the past, so they weren't completely unfamiliar with the process. Heurling previously studied as a drama teacher, working especially with children. Their collective experiences helped shape the show as a work of both art and education. They designed a teacher's guide about *Irrbloss* to be used in classrooms in Sweden that featured discussion questions as well as various activities, including a poem-writing exercise to connect with the visa tradition. Supplemental efforts like these, in addition to the informance itself, the album, and its continued life on digital platforms like YouTube, extend the reach of the research far beyond a single dissertation, or even one collaborative informance.

But to boil down an entire life, the complicated history of Swedish migration to the U.S., and issues of labor activism and gender equality into an hour is no small task. Heurling notes that, in some ways, choosing which stories to include was made easier by Aurell's obscurity. In an interview ethnomusicologist Carrie Danielson and I conducted with her, she explained that they didn't have too many hard choices to make simply because there was so little known about her (Heurling 2022). My job as a researcher was to fill in those gaps as best I could, to piece together a story of a life lived. Heurling and Sandström used Aurell's poems and my research to create an easily accessible, moving, and beautiful piece of educational art. The result—a contemporary expression of the visa song tradition and reinterpretation of labor and migration history—is a great example of how collaboration between researchers and artists can lead to rich and meaningful programming.

In describing the informance, Heurling says, “Jag hoppas vi kan förmedla det tidlösa i Signes dikter, det finns så tydliga paralleller till idag, om flykt och kampen om rättvisa. Något som alltid pågått och kommer pågå” [“I hope that we can communicate the timelessness of Signe’s poems, there are such clear parallels to today, about flight and the fight for justice. Something that has always happened and will continue to happen”] (Nilsson 2019). In other words, the history represented both by Aurell’s poetry and the visa tradition is translated to contemporary relevance. This type of informance becomes one obvious way that research can support public programming, amplify the work of artists and musicians, and make direct connections between historical and contemporary issues.

From left to right: Livet Nord, Maja Heurling, Ola Sandström, and Nate Gibson perform at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.



English EPs and Swedish full-length albums of *Irrbloss* available for sale.

Photos by Marcus Cederström.

Crossing the Atlantic: *Irrbloss* in English

First developed in Swedish, the one-hour informance was translated into English for the *Irrbloss: Songs from the Poetry of Signe Aurell* tour in 2022, which brought *Irrbloss* back to the U.S. Four songs, originally written in Swedish, were translated into English by Heurling, Anne-Charlotte Harvey, and me. We prepared a handout for audience members with lyrics in Swedish and English. The informance is meant to be beautiful. It is also meant to be emotional and challenging and encourage audience members to reflect on longing and loss, to challenge assumptions about Swedish migration to the U.S., and to educate audience members about the lived experiences of Swedish working-class immigrant women—all through a contemporary approach to the Swedish visa tradition that relies on poetry, written in Swedish but in the U.S., from over 100 years ago.

With the informance ready to go, from September 29 until October 9, 2022, I played the role of roadie for Maja Heurling, Ola Sandström, and Livet Nord—folk musicians from Sweden—and Nate Gibson, an American upright bass player. We drove 1,241 miles over ten days. We visited three states and four cities and the band performed at four different venues. We presented to hundreds of students in four classes at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and one youth group in Minnesota. We debuted six music videos and a full-length set of six songs on YouTube. The band released an English-version EP with four songs based on their full-length record release from back in 2019. We met with professors, museum presidents, nonprofit directors, and radio hosts and had conversations with scores of community members and students. Together, these different modes of performance—CDs (both physical and downloadable), music videos, live concerts, in-

class presentations, individual conversations—allowed audiences to interact with Aurell's poetry in a variety of ways and long after the ephemeral live informances ended. This poetry had nearly been forgotten but represents many experiences of Nordic migration. These experiences challenge the migration histories of the U.S. and Sweden and ask audiences to reflect on their own preconceived notions of historical migration while drawing connections to contemporary migration.

Audience members react differently to the show. In Sweden, the group has performed at cultural centers, libraries, museums, concert venues, and on a host of other stages, including at refugee and new migrant centers. In the 2010s, Sweden saw an influx of refugees and other migrants with over 200,000 refugees coming to the country. In 2016 alone, over 70,000 refugees were granted residency in Sweden. As Danielson writes, this equated to over two percent of the country's population and Sweden accepted refugees and asylum seekers at one of the highest per capita rates in Europe during 2015 and 2016 (2021, 2–3). Sweden's longstanding support of humanitarian causes has been eroded, to some extent, by a backlash to migration through increasingly onerous laws and regulations.

At the same time, as Danielson explains, there is a "historical understanding among Swedes that the arts and arts education provide meaningful pathways to global citizenship, community, and selfhood" (2021, 3). In line with this mode of thinking, Heurling and Sandström often performed at refugee and new migrant centers. Heurling and Sandström report having recent immigrants to Sweden come up to them after the show commenting on the echoes of their own migration stories that they heard in Aurell's songs. One person told Sandström, "Back home I felt happy, but I wasn't safe. Here I am safe, but I'm not happy." Heurling notes that these reactions are common: "All the time, people come up to us to share something that is really personal" (Heurling 2022). The contemporary connections were clear in various reviews of the album as well: "Fråga den flykting som korsar ditt spår och du ska med all sannolikhet få höra liknande beskrivningar av längtan till de kända stigarna" ["Ask any refugee that you cross paths with and you'll almost certainly hear similar stories of longing for familiar paths"] (Östnäs 2019).

In the U.S., people also reported personal reactions, but with a different valence. In an interview with Danielson and me, Heurling said, "The ones I hear are very moved. Very moved. Almost every time there is someone coming up with tears in their eyes" (Heurling 2022). In Minnesota, one person told her, "I've been wondering so much about my great-grandmother. She came from Sweden and I've been trying to write her story. Now, I've got a witness" (Heurling 2022). An audience member in Minneapolis told Heurling about her grandmother, who moved to the U.S. just a few years before Aurell. A few weeks after the show, that same person sent me an email, writing that this project "helped me to make additional connections to the worlds of my immigrant ancestors—especially the women."[2] In Madison, Wisconsin, Heurling reported that a woman in her 70s came to her after the performance ended and said, "Jag grät genom hela konserten. Jag har hela tiden undrat hur det skulle varit om jag åkt tillbaka till Sverige" ["I cried throughout the entire concert. I've always wondered what it would have been like if I had moved back to Sweden"].[3] Student reactions were more diverse. Some commented on the migration story and contemporary connections, others spoke to the sustainability of traditions, but many focused on the performative experience itself. One student mentioned how they were brought to tears, moved not just by the

content and music, but by the fact that it was their first in-person musical experience since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

We see a clear distinction here based on the makeup of the audience. In Sweden, reactions are sometimes immediate, speaking to the lived migration experiences of audience members who have immigrated to Sweden in the last few years. In the U.S., where the band performed mainly for crowds who had not themselves migrated, these reactions often related to their ethnic and family heritage. These two reactions, slightly different even if both highlight *Irrbloss's* emotive power, speak to the ties between historical and contemporary migration and the importance of public programming like this one. In fact, the strong reactions are part of the point, as the informance sought to make clear that the experiences of Swedish immigrants to the U.S. 100 years ago are not so different, unfortunately, from the experiences of migrants today.

Traveling Informances

These projects are not easy. This multiyear, multiperson, multimodal effort to enhance and complicate our understanding of Swedish migration and bring academic research to the public sphere by coordinating with community partners in several cities, had several challenges. For one thing, we planned this program three separate times. Twice we canceled the tour because of the Covid-19 pandemic. There were visa issues. There were the standard bureaucratic challenges of working at a large institution. There were financial challenges, as costs increased significantly over the three years.

No matter the delay, projects like this are expensive. There's no way around that. Of course, part of why it was so expensive was because it was international. The tour itself cost just over $22,000. As part of a large grant project at UW–Madison, we paid for nearly everything: all travel costs, lodging, per diem, and a generous honorarium. We did this to make it easier for our three partner institutions to organize an event that was not guaranteed to draw a large crowd. And it worked. Contributing food or lodging or a small honorarium, rather than an entire tour, helped mitigate potential losses and redistributed the funds that we had to benefit audience members and our community partners by helping them to expand their programming.

And people loved it. At the same time, our partners were wary. They expressed two main concerns about the event:

- People aren't coming to cultural events or performances as much as they used to before the pandemic began.
- People are especially not coming to cultural events or performances by people or groups that they do not know or have not heard of.

This was a risk we were willing to take. And it was a risk that we could afford to take because of the large grant we have to fund these types of programs. To be successful—and ethical and representative—projects like this should be artist-driven and community-driven, which helps to ensure, but cannot guarantee, relevance and interest and representation. But artists and audiences do not always overlap. In this case, we had very strong artist buy-in. However, the Swedish visa tradition, not to mention traditions of migrant and labor poetry, is not well known in the Swedish American community. One of our community partners told me they had no problem filling a room

when a Swedish nyckelharpa player came to town because so many people in the Swedish American community are familiar with the instrument (a traditional keyed string instrument). But labor songs in the visa tradition? That was a harder sell. In the end, though, thanks to tireless outreach and educational efforts, the group performed in front of over 200 people and presented to nearly 500 college students.

Our work in the classroom was an important aspect of that success. In speaking with so many different students, we tailored our presentations. In an Intro to World Music course, students were asked to read articles about Aurell and Nordic and Nordic American folk music in advance of the visit. In addition, they were provided a set list and English translations, and, finally, they received links to the music videos we had produced prior to the tour. Doing so ensured a richer discussion and allowed us to talk more deeply, specifically, about the Swedish visa tradition. In an Intro to Folklore course, students were similarly provided some readings about Aurell and the music videos, but here we focused more on the public folklore aspect of the project to meet the learning objectives of a specific unit. In a class on music learning and teaching, Heurling, Sandström, and Nord, all of whom have extensive teaching experiences, discussed the pedagogy of teaching folk music, as well as the challenges of setting poetry to music. By tailoring our presentations and discussions, we were able to meet the learning objectives of the host instructors and make for a more meaningful student experience than a simple guest lecture. While an imperfect measure, the number of students who stayed after class to speak directly with Heurling, Sandström, and Nord indicated a connection with both the music and the context that we presented.

From left to right: Ola Sandström, Maja Heurling, and Livet Nord during a class visit at the School of Music at UW–Madison.
Photo by Marcus Cederström.

Maja Heurling authored a curriculum guide in Swedish, *IRRBLOSS Lärarhandledning*. Find suggestions for discussion questions, prompts, activities, as well as a copy of one of Aurell's poems for classroom prep.
[Note: No translated guide available, eds.]

Projects like this one can be altered to meet the needs and wants of the community or classroom. By focusing on the connection to community and introducing a nuanced understanding of history and heritage, educators can lift up various aspects of traditional arts to meet their learning objectives. Naturally, doing so means that each iteration of such a multi-audience experience may differ based on community needs, funding availability, and classroom learning objectives.

The success of this project is a reminder of the role that public folklorists can play in co-creating programming. We had engaged, highly motivated artists. We had several local community partners and audience members connected to the stories they carry in themselves, to their families' migrant histories, to contemporary folk traditions. While the band and Signe Aurell's work may have been unknown to audiences prior to the tour, by hosting such an event at several venues, we lifted up undertold immigration stories and, specifically, stories with clear contemporary connections. While the specifics depend on individual situations, partnerships between public folklorists, traditional artists, and educators that combine traditional arts with deeply researched historical and contemporary issues regularly produce similar success stories. This project reiterated how good public work is strengthened by good research and that good research is strengthened by good public work (Frandy and Cederström 2022, 8). That's one crucial place where folklorists have a role to play in educating audiences—through the contextualization and amplification of various artists. Living and dead.

Irrbloss was Heurling and Sandström's show. But with an assist from me and the team at UW–Madison, especially Anna Rue, Carrie Danielson, and Erin Teksten from the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures and Nate Gibson from the Mills Music Library, we made sure that this project was easily accessible while being based on deeply researched scholarship. This public production helped us amplify both Signe Aurell's voice from 100 years ago and the work of musicians in the Swedish visa tradition. Because of the public aspect, a much wider audience has had their assumptions about Swedish migration challenged and, in turn, learned about Signe Aurell and the understudied history of Swedish immigrant women.

Reverberations

In an interview in 2022, Heurling said, "It's not about me. It's about someone else and it's about leaving something behind, leaving something behind for the future, maybe. I feel my mission is not completed because I want these songs to be in songbooks. I really want that. I'm going to make that happen. Somehow. Because there are no women in the songbooks, in the old songbooks, almost no women. There should be" (Heurling 2022).

Seven months later, in May of 2023, I received an email from Heurling in which she wrote, "För övrigt kan vi berätta att 'Till mitt hem' har blivit utvald att vara med i en visbok i Svenska Akademiens klassikerserie! Den kommer ut nästa år. Vi är så otroligt glada över detta." ["By the way, we can tell you that 'Till mitt hem' (To my home) has been chosen for inclusion in a visa book from the Swedish Academy's classics series. It will be published next year. We are so unbelievably happy about this."].[4]

As Signe Aurell's work continues to reverberate on both sides of the Atlantic, it is being taken up, performed, recited, and used by a variety of people and artists in different contexts. Covers of Heurling's version of Aurell's poems can already be found online. Joe Alfano, a member of the

Swedish American folk group Tjärnblom in Minneapolis, has used Signe Aurell's stories in his own informances, including one performed at Story Swap, a collaboration between the American Swedish Institute and Minneapolis Public Schools that partners immigrant high school students with Swedish American elders to build relationships and share their cultures across generations—another example of how a project like this can be tailored to meet the needs of specific communities and classrooms.

The *Irrbloss* story is about history, of course. But it is also about heritage and how we relate to it; about the continuation of a song tradition; about the labor movement and women's place in it; and, importantly, about migration then and now. As I've written elsewhere, "...heritage is created by community members through their interpretation of history, memory, and lived experiences and can tell us what a community values, what a community hopes to preserve, and how a community hopes to present itself to the future" (Cederström 2018, 396). *Irrbloss* sought to amplify a specific tradition, while preserving and presenting the undertold histories of Swedish immigrant women for future generations. In doing so, our partners and our audiences demonstrated how they value these stories now and how they aim to reclaim them, relearn them, and re-present them in the future. As a public folklore project, *Irrbloss* brings a variety of public programs and productions to audiences in various contexts, working to educate and challenge these audiences to continue to re-think and re-present Nordic and Nordic American immigrant history as we all work to amplify underrepresented histories.

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Endnotes

[1] A portmanteau of the words "inform" and "performance," an informance is an educational performance. In use since around the 1970s, music educators and other performers have used this style of presentation to perform and educate while on stage. Informances, as Mary Pautz uses the term, can also inform audiences of student learning in elementary school music programs, for example (2010, 20).

[2] Kay Myhrman-Toso, email message to author, October 20, 2022.

[3] Maja Heurling, "Svenskt poesiprojekt mottogs med starka känslor i USA" message to author, October 21, 2022.

[4] Maja Heurling, email message to author, May 10, 2023.

Related Resources and URLs

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CSUMC *Irrbloss* Playlist on YouTube https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwChImUyWQ_o1n8kmikUzcTwpKVfPDPg0&feature=shared

Maja Heurling *Irrbloss* Trailer https://youtu.be/ikeySZvfW4g?feature=shared

Spotify *Irrbloss* https://open.spotify.com/album/3zDLluunVIMDnNUqkT8TRO?si=kd9H09-0TX2o03BoiUlxGw

Spotify *Irrbloss* English EP https://open.spotify.com/album/1fII90Pk7bVO1t5BQJVrKJ?si=LYSWsCO8R5mccPvdjscqPQ

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The Dzaleka Art Project: A Community-Based Documentation Project in a Malawian Refugee Camp

by Lisa Gilman

The Dzaleka Art Project is a collaboration between youth living in the Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi, undergraduate and graduate students at George Mason University (GMU), and me, a GMU Professor of Folklore and English. Six youth who live in the camp documented arts and artists that contribute to the camp's vibrant creativity. The youth, my students, and I then collaborated to produce a website and a book manuscript.[1] The project aims to augment opportunities for the artists, all of whom are refugees or asylum seekers, to share their work, bring visibility to the talent in the camp, raise awareness about their lives as refugees in Malawi, and educate people about the role of arts in migrants' lives.

Malawi is a small country in southern Africa where I have done research and lived on and off since 1995. While I knew that there was a refugee camp near the capital city of Lilongwe, I did not know much about it until I attended the Tumaini Festival in November 2022. Tumaini, meaning "hope" in Kiswahili, is a lively three-day annual event held within the refugee camp. It typically features two stages for music and dance performances, a designated space for traditional dances, pavilions for poetry and theater, booths for visual artists and craft vendors, and kiosks selling food and drinks.[2]

About the photo: Congolese band performing on the Main Stage of the Tumaini Festival during a relatively quiet time on Friday, November 5, 2021. Photo by Lisa Gilman.

The Dzaleka refugee camp was created in 1994 during a civil war in the neighboring country of Mozambique. People fleeing the war came to Malawi for a secure place to stay until they could safely return to their home country. Asylum seekers from other conflicts in the region have since been coming to Malawi seeking security. Although it was originally built for fewer than 10,000 people, in 2024 it is home to around 52,000 residents. The largest number at this time come from the Democratic Republic of Congo where there is ongoing conflict in the eastern region. There are also many people from Burundi and Rwanda, many of whom fled during the wars in those countries in 1994, often called the Rwandan and Burundian genocides. Burundians and Rwandans continue to arrive on a regular basis. Smaller numbers from Ethiopia and Somalia are currently a less prominent presence.[3]

Photo of the Dzaleka refugee camp from surrounding hill. Photo by Giresse Ino.

Dzaleka is a thriving medium-sized town, and daily life is similar to that of other Malawian towns and cities. Residents live in houses of different sizes and do the types of things that people do living anywhere else. There are schools, health centers, government offices, nongovernmental organizations, churches, and mosques. There are all sorts of businesses: markets with vendors selling fresh produce, meats, and other goods; small shops selling dry goods; tailor shops that sew fashionable wear; shoe repair businesses; restaurants; phone battery charging stations; photography studios; and community centers, to name a few.

Intersection in the center of the Dzaleka camp. November 5, 2021. Photo by Lisa Gilman.

Life in the camp is hard. Each person has their own reasons, often violent and tragic, for leaving their home countries. The journey to Malawi for most was treacherous and risky. All have experienced trauma and significant losses: homes, livelihoods, family members, and friends. Malawi's refugee laws are restrictive. Refugees are required to live within the camp, and they cannot legally work in the country.[4] Some camp residents have been refugees for as long as 28 years. There are thousands of youth living in the camp. Many arrive each year, and others are born in Dzaleka or other refugee camps in the region. Children born to refugees in Malawi are born into refugee status with the same restrictions. Malawi does not grant them citizenship; many are stateless because they have no official status in the home countries of their parents.

The future for people living in the camp varies. Some eventually return to their home countries. Some are resettled each year to countries like the United States, Canada, or Australia. Many, however, continue to live year after year in Dzaleka not knowing whether their futures will ever change. The camp is thus a place in which people who were forced to migrate are doing what they can to survive in the present while trying to maintain hope for better futures.

Arts and culture are important for all migrants in any part of the world, especially for those who are displaced from their homes because of war, other types of conflict, or weather crises. When people are forced to suddenly leave both their physical and social environments, they often become isolated and disconnected from everything that made them feel associated with a place and other people. Their sense of being and connection along with feelings of safety are stripped from them. They struggle to establish a sense of who they are as individuals, to connect with others, and to

establish feelings of emotional and physical well-being in a new location where they are often not welcome. Parents often struggle to raise their children to know their languages and culture while living in foreign linguistic and cultural environments.

I was intrigued when I read about the Tumaini Festival in a social media post sometime around 2018. While I had known that there was a refugee camp in Malawi, I knew nothing about who lived there and had never thought about it as a place with a thriving art scene. I was interested at the time in developing a new global project, which is now in full swing, on arts initiatives by refugees for refugees.[5]

Slowed down by the freeze in international travel caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, I finally reached out in October 2021 to Trésor Nzengu Mpauni. Widely known by the pen name Menes La Plume, Mpauni is a poet, musician, and refugee originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is credited as being the mastermind behind the Tumaini Festival. Mpauni and other young artists in the camp and volunteers from Malawi and European countries founded the first festival in 2014. Tumaini is now heralded as the only arts and cultural festival of its kind to be held in a refugee camp and has become one of the biggest arts festivals in Malawi. Mpauni has been honored with multiple international awards for his vision.[6] During our conversation via WhatsApp that October, he suggested that I would learn more by being at the festival than talking to him.

Immediately after hanging up, I scurried to get university approval for travel to Malawi, which was made complicated because we were still in the throes of the pandemic. The next month, I happily found myself at the festival on November 4, 2021. I took advantage of the homestay program and was hosted by a Burundian family who welcomed me into their home, provided me a room to sleep, fed me, and, most importantly, shared with me their stories and friendship.

Left: Host family with author and guests during August 2022 visit.
Right: The host family mother Catherine Nzeyimana and son Jean-Claude taking a break from working on a school project. November 2021.

Photos by Lisa Gilman.

The 2021 festival ran from noon on Thursday, November 4, through late Saturday, November 6. I spent my days moving from festival venue to venue, listening to poetry, watching theater, admiring paintings, buying crafts, listening to many different types of music, enjoying dance performances, and, most importantly, walking around the camp and listening to the many stories of the people I met. During my down time, I spent time with my host family, learning about their stories and chatting about our lives.

Meet the Dzaleka Art Project Artist
Primo Luanda Bauma

More artist profiles available at
https://dzalekaartproject.com

"I'm an artist photographer and one of the people who participated in Dzaleka Art Project. Dzaleka Art Project for me is a platform which brought us artists together, giving an aspect of visibility by showcasing the hard work of creative refugees living in the Dzaleka camp to the world despite living in an environment which brings almost no opportunities. The project is a source of inspiration and a sharing of knowledge which helps me a lot to develop my profession as a future photojournalist. Lack of enough important equipment doesn't keep me from working freely. It's just a camera, a vision, and a big dream!"

—Primo Luanda Bauma,
Team Leader for Photography

I was not surprised that there were artists in the camp. Through the arts, people express difficult emotions, communicate with one another, pass the time, process trauma, pray, make money, flirt, remember, forget, educate, have fun, organize, participate in ritual, create community, and do all sorts of other things. Yet I was struck by just how dynamic and varied the art scene in the camp is.

Late on Saturday night as I leaned against a tree tired and happy from a long day full of arts, culture, and stories, the young Congolese guitar player Elisha Beya came over and introduced himself. We chatted late into the night as we listened to the headliner bands on the nearby stage. Thousands of people—Malawians who had come into the camp to enjoy the festival side by side with camp residents—swayed to the music or danced more boisterously. At some point while we were talking, some of Elisha's friends joined us. I learned that Giresse is a gospel singer in the band that Elisha had performed with early in the evening. Victor is a poet, Serge a painter whose painting I had admired earlier in the day, and Richesse a graphic designer. Getting to know these young men, all talented artists, all from the Democratic Republic of Congo, all living in a refugee camp in Malawi, inspired the Dzaleka Art Project.

Each of these men was eager for me to experience their art and asked me whether I would spread the word about how much creative talent exists in the camp. They craved more opportunities to share their art along with the stories of their lives and struggles. They explained that they needed resources to do their art, but also to survive. They asked me what I could do to help.

The Congolese artists performed a song for me the day I went to purchase a painting at Serge's house and gallery. Paintings lean against the wall in the background. November 2021. From left to right: Giresse Ino, Serge Kasongo, Elisha Beya, Richesse Kabamba, Victor Balmeda.

These conversations repeated themselves in my mind during my long plane ride home. I was especially moved by these young people because I was born and spent my early childhood in the Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaire). I have not been back since the late 1970s because of the ongoing conflicts. Spending time with Congolese youth, listening and dancing to live Rumba bands, and talking about Congolese food during the festival evoked intense childhood memories and emotions. After I returned home, I reached out to Mpauni and raised the idea of working with youth artists in the camp to document the arts to spread their stories and bring more visibility to their talents.

I learned from Mpauni that the festival is mostly run by volunteers from within and outside the camp. Getting people who are not refugees to help with the festival is a strategy for building refugee advocates. When people come into the camp and work firsthand with camp residents, they often leave with a deep respect for and better understanding of their refugee counterparts. Inspired by this idea, I decided to invite students from George Mason University where I teach to work remotely alongside the Dzaleka team to bring the project to fruition. Perhaps more importantly, I hoped they would contribute to the festival organizers' objective of building refugee advocates across the world. I anticipated that the GMU students would learn a great deal from the Dzaleka

team and the featured artists at the same time that the Dzaleka team would benefit from relationships with university students in the U.S.

The Team Leader for Music is Congolese gospel singer Giresse Ino, Visual Arts and Crafts is Congolese painter Serge Kasongo, Dance is Congolese popular dancer Nellyson_Deo, Poetry is Rwandan poet Angela Azibera, Photography is Congolese photographer Primo Luanda Bauma, and Inspirational Stories is Burundian Divine Irakoze. Divine is the daughter in the Burundian family who hosted me on my visits to the camp. When I invited her to be part of the project, she declined saying that she was not an artist. I knew she would be a great addition because she is an active writer of essays and a youth leader. Eventually, she offered to write stories of inspiring youth, many of whom are also engaged in the arts. Remy Gakwaya, the founder and director of the technology and resource center Takeno LAB just outside the camp, helped supervise the Dzaleka Team, and Mpauni served as an advisor. The U.S. team included the undergraduate students Solomon Tejan Kanu,[7] Audrie Bernard, and Brendan West with some help from graduate students Asa Sutton and Amanda Ellard.

Each member of the Dzaleka team gathered examples of artists' work, interviewed them, wrote their bios, and took photographs of them. They uploaded these materials on a shared Google drive. The U.S. team worked with me to collect materials from the Malawian team, edit the texts, format images, and organize the content for both the website and the book. I made one additional short visit to the camp in August 2022 to work with the Dzaleka team. My husband John Fenn and friends Elizabeth Langran and Bruce Miller joined me and helped with documentation.

Left: Giresse Ino and Serge Kasongo work on transferring photos while Primo Luanda Bauma, Elizabeth Langran, and Bruce Miller sit in the background. Right: The Dzaleka team celebrating their hard work. August 2022.
Photos by Lisa Gilman.

This project was challenging. I had anticipated that we would have regular Zoom meetings with everyone together, but the combination of the almost daily power outages in the camp, lack of good internet connections, and everyone's busy schedules made this almost impossible. The camp team struggled with lack of adequate documentation equipment, the reluctance of some people to participate, and their own time and resource limitations. The U.S. team struggled with busy schedules, trying to understand circumstances in the camp, and the technical challenges of the project. Through a great deal of patience, trial and error, time, and determination, we pulled it off.

Collage of Dzaleka and U.S. team. From left to right: Giresse Ino, Primo Luanda Bauma, Audrie Bernard, Lisa Gilman, Asa Sutton, Serge Kasongo, Amanda Ellard, Brendan West, Divine Irakoze, Solomon Tejan Kanu, Nellyson_Deo, Angela Azibera.

Working with GMU students on the project was a different pedagogical experience for me than what I typically do in the classroom. The teaching and learning happened organically (for everyone involved, including me) through the process of putting together the project, rather than through a curricular plan. I served as a project manager, but we worked together collaboratively as a team. We met weekly and discussed the materials, how to organize them, and problems as they arose. Each of the undergrads interviewed youth team leaders in the camp and produced written biographies, as did graduate student Asa Sutton. We talked a great deal about ethics and how to deal with agency and authority when our collaborators were vulnerable and at risk. We navigated differences in quality and quantity in the documentation given inconsistent access to documentation equipment, English language skills, and time. We embraced the inconsistency to include as many artists as possible and because it is expressive of the experiences of camp residents.

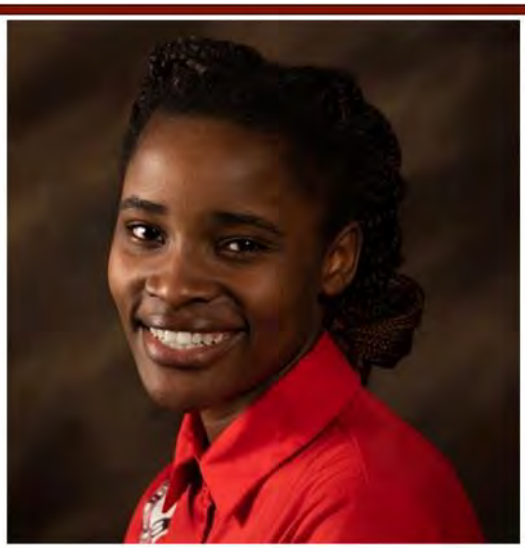
In August 2022, Serge sent with me paintings to give to the GMU undergraduates who had worked on the project from beginning to end. From left to right: Solomon Tejan Kanu, Audrie Bernard, and Brendan West. Photo by Emma Bussard.

In my initial conceptualization, I envisioned a coffee table style book for a general audience. Part way through the project, the undergraduate Solomon, who came to the U.S. as a refugee from Sierra Leone when he was a young child and was studying web development at GMU, offered to build a website to go along with the book. I was reluctant because I knew it would require a lot more work and time. Yet, I respected his motivation to use and further build the skills he was developing as a student to bring greater visibility to his peers across the world. I also knew the website would add value to the project. Solomon took the lead in designing and developing the website with input and involvement from me and the U.S. team. Graphic designer and camp resident Richesse Kabamba contributed the main graphic and color scheme and gave us feedback on early versions of the website.

The Dzaleka Art Project is ultimately an educational tool where young refugees living in a highly restricted environment are the teachers. Anyone visiting the website will learn something. Instructors can direct their students to explore the website, or they can create structured pedagogic activities to guide student learning. Students can interact directly with those artists who shared their social media handles or contact information on the website. And the project could inspire instructors to encourage students to engage with other online materials (for example, on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook) produced by Dzaleka camp residents and other refugees and migrants in different parts of the world. It is truly miraculous that technology allows people in very different places living in different circumstances to share something about their lives despite distance, linguistic and cultural diversity, and restrictions on mobility.

It is too soon to tell what this project's impact will be. Everyone who participated gained skills and expanded their networks. Each one of us has expressed that the project was fulfilling personally. I also know that those still in the camp wish for more, that this project and other efforts could bring real change: improve their access to basic human rights, audiences, money, resources, and, ultimately, a country to call home. Unfortunately, my/our power is limited. I hope that in some small way, the website and book (when it is published) will assist the artists who asked me what I could do to help late that Saturday night at the 2021 Tumaini Festival and all the other talent in the camp, to gain a bit more visibility and attract more resources as a result of our efforts. And I hope the project extends Tumaini Letu's goal of increasing refugee advocates, through the U.S.-based students who worked on the project and the people who encounter the website and book.

Meet the Dzaleka Art Project Artist
Divine Irakoze
More artist profiles available at https://dzalekaartproject.com



What do you think the value of the project is:

1. **Visibility and Awareness**: The project highlights the talents and creativity of artists living in the Dzaleka refugee camp, bringing their stories and art to a global audience.
2. **Empowerment**: It empowers refugees by providing them with a platform to showcase their skills and express themselves through various art forms.
3. **Advocacy and Support**: It aims to increase the number of refugee advocates around the world by humanizing the refugee experience through art and personal stories.
4. **Hope and Resilience**: It serves as a testament to the resilience and hope of refugees, demonstrating how art can thrive even in challenging conditions.

What, if anything, did you get out of the project personally?

1. **Inspiration**: I was so inspired on how the creativity and resilience of the artists can serve as a powerful source of inspiration.
2. **Learning and Growth**: I learned about different art forms and creative expressions, contributing to personal and artistic growth.
3. **Connection**: I was able to make connections with talented individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
4. **Community Contribution**: The fact that I was able to contribute to a cause that aims to improve the lives of refugees, reinforcing the importance of community and collaboration.

—Divine Irakoze, Team Leader for Inspirational Stories

In the end, I am proud of what we produced and the work we did as a team. I learned as much as anyone about arts, migration, refugee policies, project design, teamwork, and web design and development. The Dzaleka team leaders along with each artist who shared their story and creative works for this project impart knowledge about what it means to be a refugee, what role art and culture have in refugee lives, and what impact restrictive laws have on migrants. Perhaps, more importantly, through their art, stories, and reflections, they teach about hope, strength, beauty, and the need for humans to always treat one another as humans.

Lisa Gilman *is Professor of Folklore at George Mason University and Editor-in-Chief of the* Journal of American Folklore. *In addition to articles and book chapters, her monographs include*

The Dance of Politics: Performance, Gender, and Democratization in Malawi; My Music, My War: The Listening Habits of U.S. Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan; *the co-authored* Folklore and Ethnomusicology Fieldwork Methods Handbook; *the co-edited* Africa Every Day: Fun, Leisure, and Expressive Culture on the Continent; *and* UNESCO on the Ground: Local Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage. *She produced the documentary* Grounds for Resistance *and the Dzaleka Art Project www.dzalekaartproject.com. She is currently working on "My Culture, My Survival: Arts Initiatives by Refugees for Refugees," a global multi-site project about displaced people, agency, and art. Orcid 0000-0002-2380-1076.*

Endnotes

[1] The book manuscript by the same title is currently under review. The link for the website is www.dzalekaartproject.com.

[2] For more information about the Tumaini Festival, see Tumaini Letu (https://tumainiletu.org), Makhumula 2019, Copeland 2022, Gilman 2024.

[3] For more about the Dzaleka refugee camp, see Baker 2011, Chima and Horner 2023.

[4] For more about Malawi's restrictive refugee laws, see Mvula 2010.

[5] The project documents examples of refugees using arts to do something positive for themselves or the communities in which they find themselves in four countries: Uyghurs in France; Syrians in Türkiye; Congolese, Burundians, and Rwandans in Malawi; and people from diverse backgrounds in the United States, Washington, D.C., area.

[6] Mpauni has received numerous awards and international recognition for his work with Tumaini and refugee advocacy, including the 2020 Sharjah International Award for Refugee Advocacy & Support and the 2018 World Bank Africa Region's Social Inclusion Hero Award. He was a finalist for the 2020 Ockenden International Prize, the 2020 Elevate Prize, and the 2021 Global Pluralism Award. He was a refugee co-sponsor of the first United Nations' World Refugee Forum in 2019. He is an inspiring speaker, and his work has been featured in *Al-Jazeera, The Guardian,* and *National Geographic*," https://www.segalfamilyfoundation.org/portfolio-items/tresor-nzengu-mpauni. For a more detailed account of Mpauni's story and the founding of the Festival see Copeland (2022, 161-72). There are several short and long documentaries available on YouTube, including *Menes la Plume,* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOAw_HfG_X0&t=962s.

[7] Solomon changed his name while we were working on the project. His previous name was Sulaiman Fofanah.

URLs

Dzaleka Art Project https://dzalekaartproject.com
Tumaini Festival https://tumainiletu.org/our_work/tumaini-festival
About Giresse Ino https://dzalekaartproject.com/individual%20musicians/Giresse%20Ino.html
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Jack Dappa Blues Heritage Preservation Foundation: Blues People, Music, and Folklore

by Lamont Jack Pearley

Jack Dappa Blues' mission focuses on traditional Black expression, folklore, community, and cultural engagement. The root of the work stems from the folks I refer to as Blues People. I use the term Blues People to describe a particular population of Black folk, which I adopted and was informed by LeRoi Jones, known to most as Amiri Baraka (Jones 1963). His scholarship, and that of James Cones (1972) and John Wesley Work, III (1940), inform my research and concept in using the descriptor Blues People to refer to the descendants of the Great Migration, Children of the Reconstruction Era, and those born into the Jim Crow South. Ultimately, the Blues People are the folk of the Southern Black experience and those from Southern Black traditions who may have lived in northern, midwestern, or western regions—a specific, unique Black experience

Jack Dappa Blues Heritage Preservation Foundation (JDBHPF) is a nonprofit organization based in Bowling Green, Kentucky. It was established in 2011, officially becoming a 501(c)3 in 2016 to create public programs that raise cultural and ethnic awareness of Black traditional music, traditional art, folklore, oral histories, and the experiences of Black people in the United States. Standing on the foundation of the Blues People's legacy, JDBHPF works to celebrate, preserve, and conserve Blues music and culture while highlighting the many events in American history that have cultivated our communities and musical expressions.

resulting from land grabs, reclassifications, secret worship, and spiritual practices. The people who derive from the field hollers, slave seculars (non-religious songs), sorrow songs, backwoods hoopin' hollerin' pastors, and work songs, all culminate in "Blues People, Music, and Culture."

"Blues People, Music, and Culture" is the first phase of a multilevel curriculum designed for students learning in a variety of environments. It is developed for teaching artists and other educators to adapt to conventional classroom settings and for homeschool, library, museum, and community educational programs. It is intended to be accessible to teachers or instructors with no music or broadcast training; they can use the curriculum with minor adjustments. However, it specifically targets teaching artists and educators with experience in, but not limited to, traditional Black music—the Blues—and folklore, Folk Studies, and cultural work.

I developed this curriculum to (re)introduce young Blues People to music that predates and birthed the genres that are part of their generation's soundscape. As a practitioner of Country Blues performance and someone who documents the tradition, it has been troublesome for me to witness the disproportionate participation of artists who are not Black in the Blues; I wanted to connect communities through art and create a safe space to celebrate Black Blues. The units and modules take students on a brief yet compelling journey of the Blues, the people with whom the Blues originate, their history and culture. Rather than focusing solely on musical progressions and guitar licks, the main objective is to foreground the human experiences and connections that shaped the Blues. Through the curriculum, the students journey through time and geography. They learn that the Blues People, Black American descendants of enslavement in some cases and Free Southern Black farmers and others, had and have a culture that is often erased and overlooked. A singular focus on the music—a reverence for the expression alone—has often obscured the creators, the everyday people and their collective culture, which includes belief systems and codes of conduct. In short, the lessons put the Blues into social, cultural, and historical contexts. They introduce students to the concepts of folklore, tradition, and the significance of storytelling and oral tradition, encouraging them to pay attention to patterns of behavior, as well as the interactions and relationships between people that give meaning to our shared expressions. Furthermore, this curriculum gives context to the exchange of audiences from Black to white and how Folk Studies, folklorists, and the discipline positioned themselves in Black folk expression as experts.

The slide presentation accompanying this document provides a walk-through visual of the curriculum.

Listen to a sample of the Blues People Spotify Playlist here.

The curriculum is organized into seven units, each composed of four modules with one to four lessons per module. Four exercises in each lesson drive home the methods and functions of the curriculum, as well as introduce the idea of reflective and reflexive writing. Students are introduced to basic folkloristic methods and terminologies. The curriculum culminates with participants creating performances, exhibitions, and narrative stages for public programming whether a festival thrown by schools, a presentation at local organizations, or a workshop in collaboration with any particular Blues or folklife festival. Time is set aside in each unit for playing and listening to examples of music. In addition to introducing students to music and Folk Studies, the curriculum is adaptable to social studies, history, geography, and other subject areas.

Unit One starts the curriculum with an introduction to the culture and traditions of the Blues People. The curriculum defines who the Blues People are, where they are from, and where the name comes from. It briefly introduces how we could document and create Blues songs. This unit also introduces foodways and family folklore—and the ways these are connected.

Unit Two focuses on the music and beliefs of the Blues People. Here, the course introduces the evolution of Blues from field hollers, slave seculars, prison songs, Black spirituals, and early concepts and ideas of the Blues. Discussion of church and secular beliefs can be incorporated into the lesson, exploring how these systems reflect and affect the expression of the Blues, varyingly

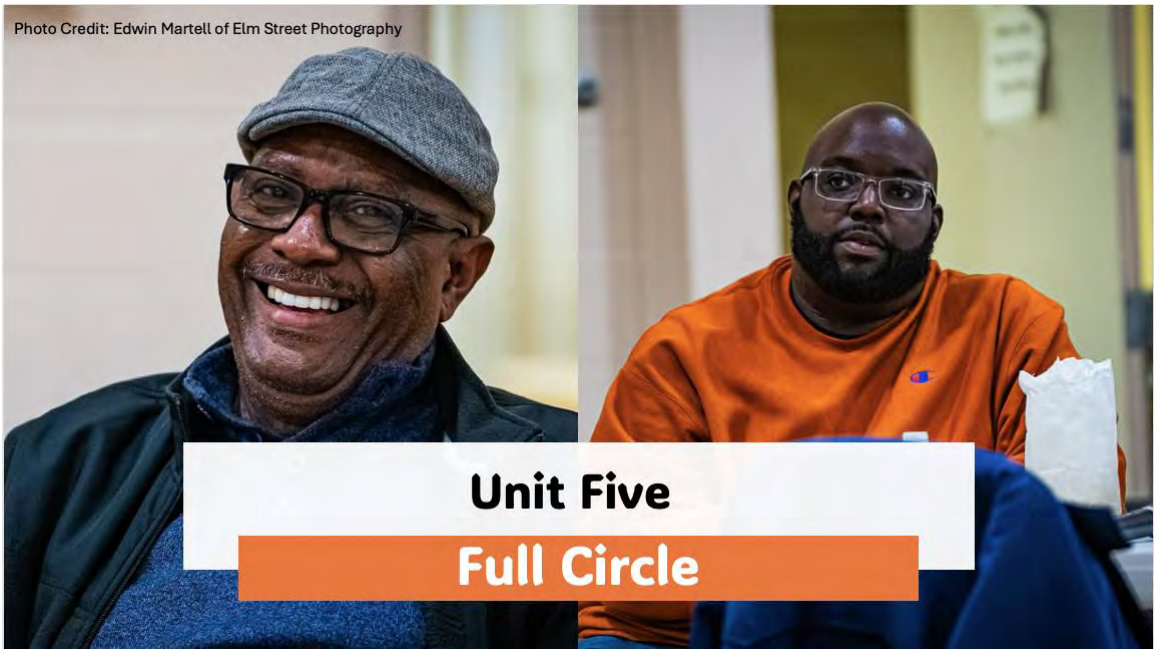
embracing or frowning upon them. Here is a notable opportunity to engage students in a discussion about how the different generations in their families relate to one another's musical preferences. Teachers can show the connection of rhythmic vocal styles between old-school pastors, Blues singers, and rappers.

Unit Two introduces some music theory and addresses styles of traditional Black music. Students learn about the I, IV, and V chord progression, a defining element of the Blues, as well as the characteristics of Blues vocal phrasing. They learn about the connections of related musical expressions to the daily life on plantations, farms, and other community contexts across the South.

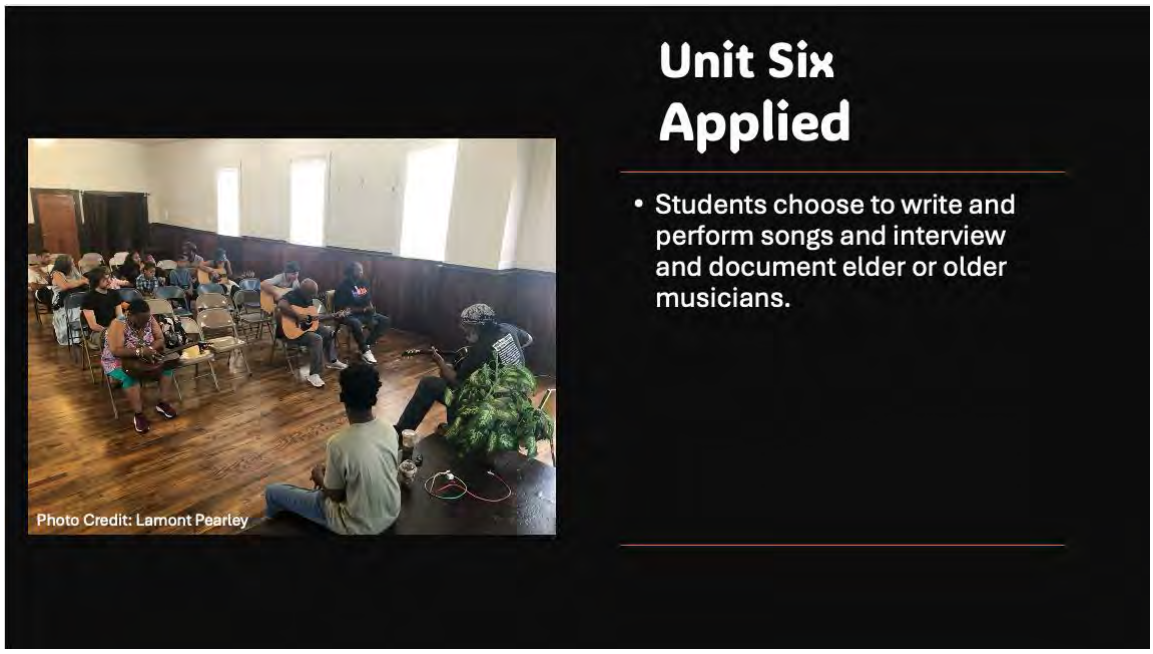
Here, we also dive into motifs, legends, legend tripping, and ostension of the blues. A motif in a Blues song would be Muddy Waters talking about going to Louisiana to get a "Mojo" hand. It is a theme of the era for wooing women and an object of meaning. Students also learn about the symbolism of the crossroads and how this connects to the Blues via the legend of how Blues icon Robert Johnson acquired his musical prowess, the bizarre story of a man waiting at a highway intersection taking contracts for souls. Is it true? Well, many stories have been shared. Legend tripping and ostension in blues happen when enthusiasts look to experience the crossroads legend or act out stories of the blues, which include discussing the pilgrimages aspiring musicians take to see Bluesmen's graves. (Depending on the age and depth of understanding of Black Southern spirituality, the lesson can discuss deeper connections to objects, magic, and Black Southern folk belief.)

Unit Three focuses on The Great Migration and provides the historical framework for exploring the movement of Black folklore and folklife throughout the U.S. Here, students learn about the movement of people and culture (including music and food traditions) from rural communities to urban regions, and the transformations that ensued. The lessons elaborate on the causes of this movement and how it sparked new musical styles that changed the trajectory of the American and global music business.

Unit Four discusses the music business, including how, historically, the industry racialized and commodified Black musical expressions. The lessons discuss the significance of women in Blues and the emergence of the Vaudeville and Minstrel industries, how they affected Black America, and how they inspired a new group of musicians.



Unit Five brings the first four units together, synthesizing what we've learned, and considers the generations and genres influenced and birthed by Blues, including Hip-Hop. We also begin comparing songs as we prepare to create original songs.



Unit Six brings everything together methodologically. Here, students choose to write and perform an original song, interview and document an elder or older musician, or both. The object is to apply everything learned in the earlier units to the fundamentals of song, performance, and field ethnography.

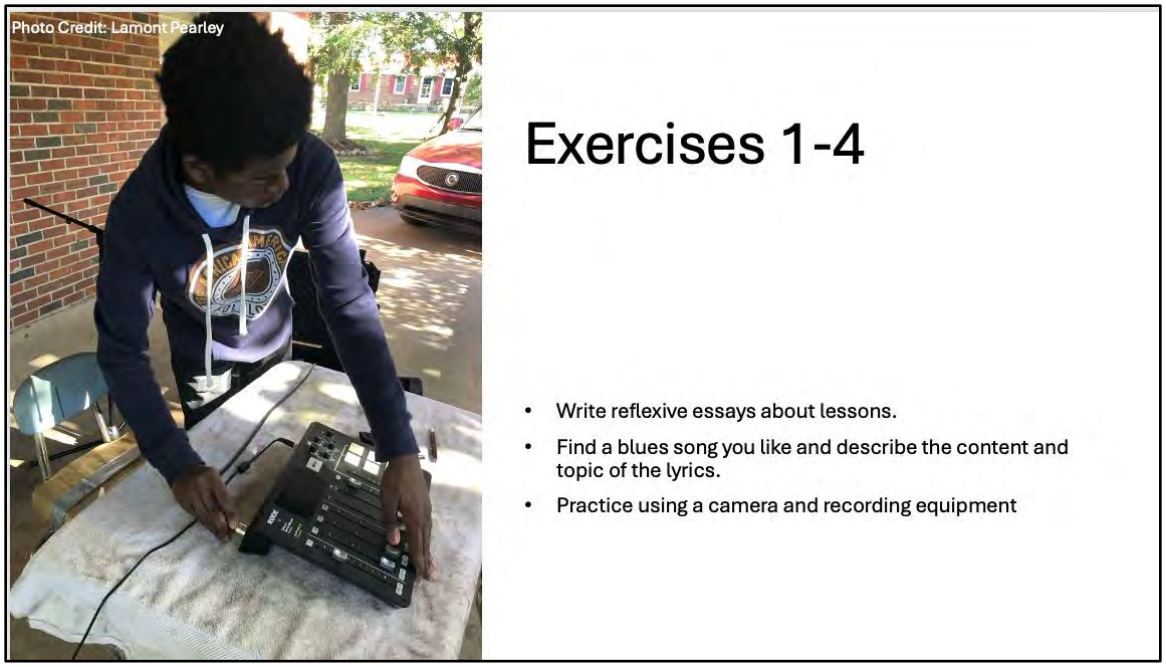
For those students opting to write a song, their lessons are organized as:

Lesson 1: Blues Music Basics
Lesson 2: The Feeling of the Blues
Lesson 3: Singing and Playing
Lesson 4: Writing a Blues Song

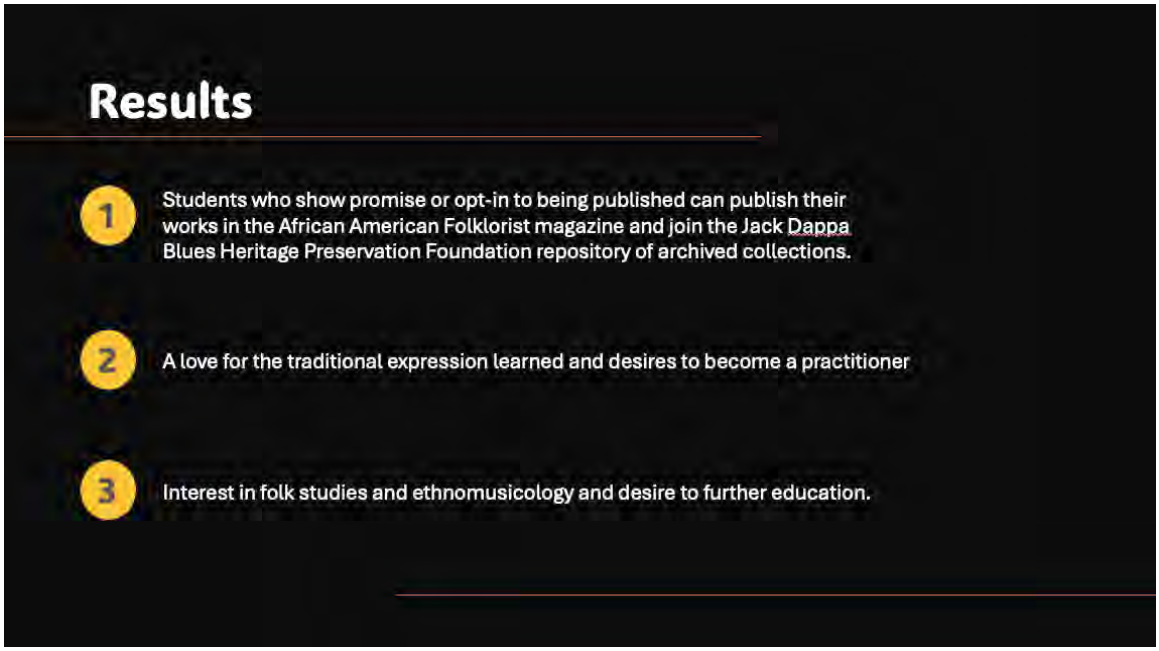
For those opting to document an elder, their lessons are organized as:

Lesson 1: Selecting a narrator: Who are you going to interview, and what do you want to know
Lesson 2: Planning your interview: Creating questions, being ready to pivot
Lesson 3: Preparing your equipment: Using the camera
Lesson 4: Preparing your equipment: Using recording equipment, including your phone

During Unit Seven, students come together to design a public program. This involves, for example, planning how a presentation during a festival would look, flow, and be produced. These can be scaled according to student level and time, as well as resources. Students could plan a mini festival for their school, classroom, or community organization. Or they could design sessions for a larger festival. The main objective is to provide students the opportunity to share the work they have completed during the course through publicly presenting performances and/or narrative sessions. Students learn the moving parts of preparing and producing public programs and presentations—and how to work in and interpret content in various formats.



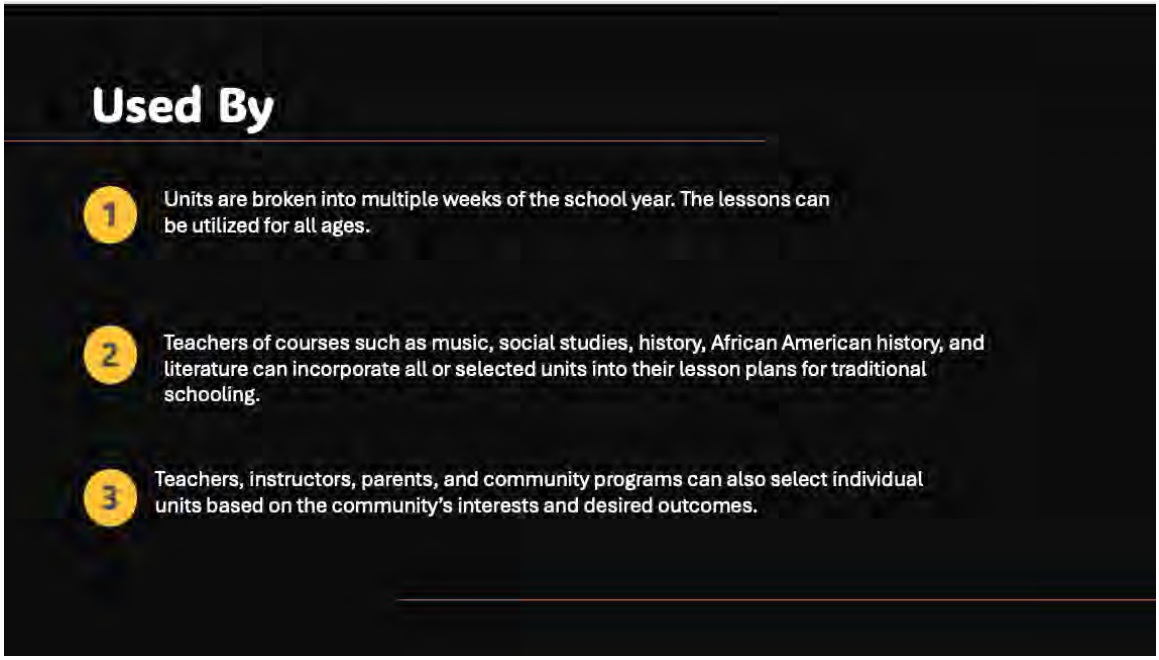
Teachers can spread the accompanying exercises throughout the seven units and the modules that are part of the units. In the exercises, students apply skills related to English, writing as a discipline, creative writing, language arts, history, social studies, and various subjects where writing is at the core. The exercises introduce and engage students and participants in reflexive and reflective essay writing, using recording equipment during interviews, and making connections between the content of the lessons and their own experiences and family/community heritage. The primary functions are to see what the student has understood thus far, help students develop basic field interview methods, and provide opportunities to workshop song ideas.



As fun as the curriculum may be, it should be results-driven. There are three significant results we are working toward:

- Students produce work that contributes to public knowledge. They may opt to publish their work in the *African American Folklorist* magazine and/or submit it to the Jack Dappa Blues Heritage Preservation Foundation repository of archived collections.
- Students have a love for the music they have learned about. Some may express a wish to become a practitioner.
- Students express interest in continuing to build their knowledge—through further Folk Studies and Ethnomusicology.

Along with the primary three, the development of the interest in research and writing, documenting and archiving, communication, problem solving, critical analysis, and conflict resolution are all assessments made at the end of every completed cycle.



As a bring-it-home and clarification moment, we let folks know who can use this curriculum and for which age groups it is most appropriate. For example, teachers of courses such as music, social studies, history, African American history, and literature can incorporate all or selected units into their lesson plans for conventional schooling. However, as stated above, this has been designed for a range of educational settings, including homeschooled students and in programs at museums, libraries, or cultural organizations.

Lastly, if used in a conventional school setting, the lessons are based on the Kentucky Standards KRS 156.160 and 704 KAR 3:305.

The result of the year-long program curriculum is that students develop the communication skills necessary to function in a complex and changing world. From this deep dive into music—and its various contexts and meanings, we hope that students will:

- Have the knowledge to make economic, social, and political choices.
- Understand governmental processes as they affect the community, the state, and the nation, and how they affect them, their culture, and their community's culture.
- Deepen self-knowledge and knowledge of shared traditions and expressions.
- Learn to work with others and make connections between aspects of their own traditions and heritage and those of their classmates.
- Learn and employ the methods of folklore and folklife.

Lamont Jack Pearley *is the Executive Director/ Founder of Jack Dappa Blues Heritage Preservation Foundation and the* African American Folklorist *magazine. He's an applied folklorist, African American traditional music historian, Western Kentucky University Folk Studies Master's Graduate, and traditional Country Blues practitioner inducted into the New York Blues Hall of Fame as a Great Blues Historian and TV/Radio Producer, and Great Blues Artist. Pearley works to conserve and sustain Blues and Black traditions through performance, documentation, and a repository of ethnographic interviews. He also works with communities to create sustainable cultural experiences and programming.*

For more on the "Blues People, Music, and Folklore" program contact Lamont Jack Pearley at lamontjackpearley@jackdappabluesradio.tv.

URLs

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Hearing Home Through a Podcast of Asian American Tales

by Fariha Khan, Margaret Magat, Nancy Yan, and Juwen Zhang

As folklorists and colleagues working inside and beyond academia, we are dedicated to building the field of Asian American folklore. In late 2021, we launched "Yellow and Brown Tales: Asian American Folklife Today," a podcast that highlights the longstanding and rich diversity of Asian American experiences. Our venture was born from our growing awareness of the dearth of scholarship on Asian American folklore and the marginalization faced by Asian American folklorists both in the academy and in public sector work. With this podcast, we have created a space for connecting, sharing stories, and finding a sense of home through discussions of foodways, music, and migration journeys. We are fortunate to have established a supportive base for the podcast within the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania, in partnership with the Department of Global Cultural Studies at Willamette University in Oregon.

Getting Started: Why an Asian American Podcast?

Despite the long history of people of Asian ancestry in the United States, Asian Americans have struggled for visibility and access. Starting in the 19th century, Asian immigrants were enlisted to provide the labor through many different periods of U.S. growth while at the same time being subjected to racist violence and exclusionary legislation that limited their social, cultural, and physical mobility. Across most of the 20th century, their experiences were often not recognized—they were overlooked and even erased by the U.S.'s prevailing Black-White racial binary. In the 1960s, during the Civil Rights Movement, the emergent field of Asian American Studies, and a coalitional pan-ethnic identity, began to emerge. This was inspired and shaped by the work of students of color—Asian, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous—working in solidarity on college campuses in California to call for representation of their communities in the curriculum.

Grounded in this history and heritage of protest, Asian American Studies continues to grow not only as an academic discipline, but also as a social justice movement. We are encouraged by this, but we also recognize that there is yet much work to do to develop and strengthen the concerted

study of the folklife and the folklore of Asian Americans. The "Yellow and Brown Tales" podcast brings together Asian American Studies and folklore in a multidisciplinary approach to uplift diverse experiences and identities. It centers people's personal stories and makes their voices audible, literally. In the podcast, Asian Americans reframe the perceptions of their communities. Through their words, we hear the merging of different historical threads–the heritage of activism and the persistence of Asian American invisibility. Their diverse voices point us toward new paths that more dynamically account for Asian American folklife and folklore.

The stories we have featured cover a wide range of experiences—reflecting our varied areas of research as well as our different social networks. But all address how people expressively showcase heritage and sustain cultural practices and how these forms of knowledge are shared in person through face-to-face interaction as well as via forms of media, including emergent digital platforms. Over the years, "Yellow and Brown Tales" has evolved into a unique gathering space for those who identify as Asian American. And as we have embarked on this critical endeavor—learning along the way—we have discovered a multitude of purposes for the podcast: It evokes personal nostalgia, fosters a sense of group identity, showcases collective Asian American experiences, and contributes to convening listeners with related interests. We also see the educational opportunities this resource offers teachers looking for an alternative to text-based study, with first-person narratives centering diverse Asian American experiences. The podcast is about the stories of many different people, and it is simultaneously the story of four folklore friends and our efforts to highlight the place and significance of Asian American expressions and experiences in American folklore studies.

Themes and Stories

As of September 2024, we have published 22 episodes. A full list can be accessed here. In our inaugural Episode 1, we emphasize that there is vast diversity among Asian Americans and how they inhabit the U.S. landscape. People take different types of agencies and make different choices. And these prompt challenging questions, for example, Who takes the agency to continue a practice? Who has accessibility to language, to food products, to vital cultural resources? How do people make decisions about how to practice and showcase their cultures? Below, we highlight a selection of the themes explored in some of our episodes.

In Episode 16, we explicitly address what we mean by "hearing home" through the comedy of Frankie Marcos, who blends his Mexican and Filipino heritage into "Mexipino" culture. Interviewed by Margaret Magat, he explains, "It's a strong part of my identity...that represents both sides." As a comedian, Marcos selectively highlights his Filipino heritage during some of his performances. One of the jokes he tells involves his grandmother. He recounts, "My grandma described a car accident by saying, 'He banged me in the parking lot!' What!? 'He banged me from the back in the parking lot. I got his phone number, we're going to bang again.'"*

*Watch the original performance of the joke (Note from Editors: Includes adult content.)

Image 1. Frankie Marcos's Instagram feed.

Podcast producer Margaret Magat, who spent her first years in Manila, Philippines, and her teenage years in Los Angeles, laughed in recognition when she first heard Marcos's piece. It evoked the voices of elder women she has known and longed to hear again. The comedian's performance of his grandmother's accent brought the past and bridged the present for Magat, and hopefully the podcast audience, too.

The joke plays on the divide between generations, an older immigrant and a third-generation young person—and the more conventional meaning of the verb "to be banged [into]" versus an obscene slang meaning. Writing about bad English, whether it involves memes of Asian children wearing T-shirts full of profanities or the specific accents of Asian immigrants, Cathy Park Hong in her groundbreaking work *Minor Feelings* states that "bad English" inspires her poetry, because "unmastering of English" is to "make audible the imperial power sewn into the language, to slit open so its dark histories slide out" (2020, 97). Whether it is an accent or the use of words that the mainstream considers inappropriate, such cultural examples bring up the everyday experiences of diasporic immigrants. Filipino immigrants, for example, must master the reality of living in an adopted country, complete with understanding the multiple contexts of the English language's usage while remaining attuned to the homeland as well as carrying the cultural and historic burdens of colonialism.

Building a new life is a balancing act of holding on to the past and negotiating identity in the present. There is a cultural dissonance resulting from being an Asian American immigrant in the U.S., and people try to resolve this through the performance of folklore whether jokes, or beliefs or foodways—all topics that the podcasts explore.

For Magat, the agency Marcos took in representing his heritage and his use of accent in the delivery of his story was powerful. Furthermore, its circulation through social media, and the reactions it elicits, brings their Filipino background and upbringing to a greater audience. In a similar way to which the circulation of Marcos's jokes through his social media platforms brings his Filipino heritage to a broader audience, Magat hopes the "Yellow and Brown Tales" podcast can do the same: Introduce people to the different voices and experiences of Asian American immigrants like Frankie's grandmother.

Listen to the episode: "Comedian Frankie Follows His Heart to Mexipino Humor"

> Mexicans and Filipinos—we both love fried food. I think it's both cardiac cuisines that are great for the soul and feel so warm and homey, a lot of our dishes.
>
> —Frankie Marcos

"Culinary Nationalism" Foodways

Foodways is a prominent means through which diasporic communities strengthen and represent their cultural identity. Episode 2 focuses on Margaret Magat's book *Bahut: Fertilized Eggs and the Making of Culinary Capital* (2019, Image 2). It explores the continued practice and value placed on an example of Filipino foodways that may be considered unfavorably by mainstream culture in the U.S. Specifically, it examines the consumption of balut, fertilized duck eggs, in Filipino American festivals and how this strengthens the participants' sense of Filipino identity. Magat explains how this intentional performance of expressive culture constitutes an act of culinary nationalism. It reflects how in new contexts (as in the community festivals in the U.S.), people are assigning new meanings to otherwise familiar elements of culture—and demonstrates the necessity of addressing such performances with terms that can speak to the new contexts (25:42 to 26:40). Magat explains to Juwen Zhang, co-host of this podcast:

> . . . . when you came up with this idea, "folkloric identity," it was absolutely essential for me to discuss it and to use it in my work, because here, we're a group of people using this food in [a] non-traditional context. And we need a new term to describe it, because you can't just say this is the authentic way of eating it or whatever. But the fact of the matter is, they're doing this, online, in the new setting, with no one traditional necessarily guiding them except what they've seen others doing it, right? And so folkloric identity allowed me to be able to understand it better, because no longer do you have to be based on ethnicity. But it's the focus on the cultural practice that's being created in that particular context, right?

Listen to the episode: "Conversation with Margaret Magat, Author of Balut: Fertilized Eggs and the Making of Culinary Capital in the Filipino Diaspora."

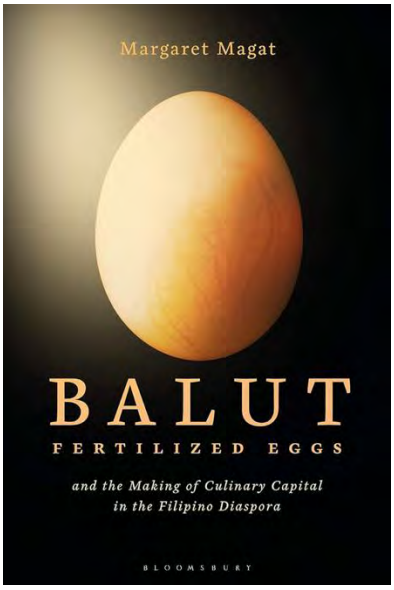


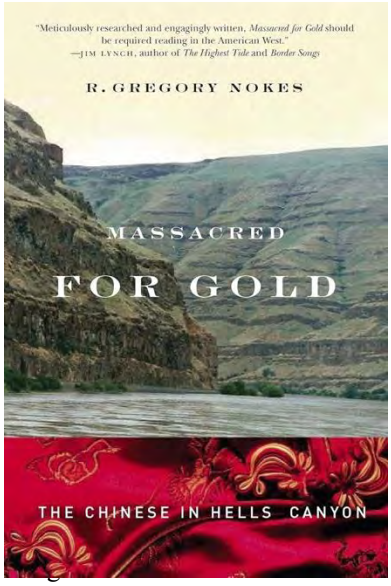
Image 2. The cover of *Balut: Fertilized Eggs and the Making of Culinary Capital in the Filipino Diaspora* (Magat 2019).

> First and foremost, it's a social food that's eaten with others.
>
> —Margaret Magat

Hearing the Place of Asian Americans

All the podcast episodes fundamentally represent the many *places* of Asian Americans historically, metaphorically, physically, and culturally in U.S. history and culture. A series of episodes produced by Juwen Zhang explore this through celebration, memorialization, and music making.

For example, Episode 9 recounts the earliest public celebration of Lunar New Year in the U.S. in the 1870s: "The Beginning of the Public Celebration of Chinese New Year in the US."



for Gold: The Chinese in Hells Canyon (Nokes 2009).

Episode 14 reveals the story behind the public recognition of the 1887 Hells Canyon massacre of the Chinese miners (see Image 3): "Massacred for Gold: A Conversation with Greg Nokes."

Episode 17 is a portrait of George Lai Sun, a popular businessman recognized as the unofficial "mayor" in Salem, Oregon, at the turn of the 20th century, for whom a downtown alley was named in 2023 (see Image 4): "From Underground Chinaman to Downtown Alley Name: The Story of George Lai Sun."

Episode 19 shares the stories of how a group of individuals rallied together to have U.S. President Biden issue a statement in 2023 in observance of the 80th anniversary of the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act (which began in 1882 and was repealed in 1943): "The 80th Anniversary of the Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act."

Episode 20 features a contemporary college student reflecting on the powerful 1889 essay by Yan Phou Lee, "Chinese Must Stay," which was written in the aftermath of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act: "'The Chinese Must Stay': Yan Phou Lee's Denunciation of the Chinese Exclusion Rhetoric."

Episode 21 features a retired doctor who traces his Chinese roots to Guangdong, China, and American roots to Salem, Oregon, and shares his four-generation-family stories with the public, particularly to children, through books and images: "A Bright Spot in a Dark History of Chinese Exclusion: Dr. Russ Low Sharing Family Stories of Becoming American."

Episode 22 explores the role of music as an expression of heritage. It features an interview by Juwen Zhang with a member of the band The Slants, who addresses how they named themselves using a racial slur to reclaim and fashion their Asian American identity: "Telling the Story of 'The Slants' through Music: A Conversation with Joe X. Jiang."

> "American Democracy, my observation, is more like playing Go, every piece is equal but we're together to focus on one whole…."
>
> —Xiaoyan Zhang

Image 4. Sign for the recently dedicated George Lai Sun Alley, Salem, Oregon. Photograph by Juwen Zhang, 2023.

Listening Together—Communities of Practice

Episode 6 focuses on music from the vantage point of the listeners. It features Grace Kao from Yale University, who discusses the impact of BTS, the Korean boy band, on Asian American culture. This interview with podcast producer Nancy Yan was recorded in 2020, early in the Covid-19 pandemic, as many people were staying home and limiting in-person contact to avoid spreading the virus. Meanwhile, BTS created an abundance of online content, ripe for socially isolated home viewers who increasingly turned to online entertainment. With new songs and several staged video performances of songs that appeared on YouTube and late-night talk shows, BTS's popularity grew. K-pop was making a mark in the U.S.

In this discussion, Kao remarks on the impact of positive images of Asian Americans in such unconventional roles as musicians, as boy band members, and as influencers who participate in and shape popular culture worldwide. BTS has contributed to mainstreaming Asian faces and culture into American popular culture in unprecedented ways. Kao explains:

> I think for Asian Americans, for us, it's just a complete absence. We haven't seen people in the media, right? BTS was the first to perform not just on SNL, but all of these award ceremonies—Grammys, American Music Award, Billboard, and so forth. And so, I think just seeing people has been a new thing. (Episode 6, 21:02-21:24)

This new visibility (and audibility) of Korean culture is regarded with interest by Korean Americans, who are struck by the seemingly sudden interest by thousands of non-Korean BTS fans in learning the Korean language and adopting other aspects of culture, including foodways.

Listen to the episode: "K-Pop Scholar Dr. Grace Kao Talks BTS and Their Rise to Popularity."

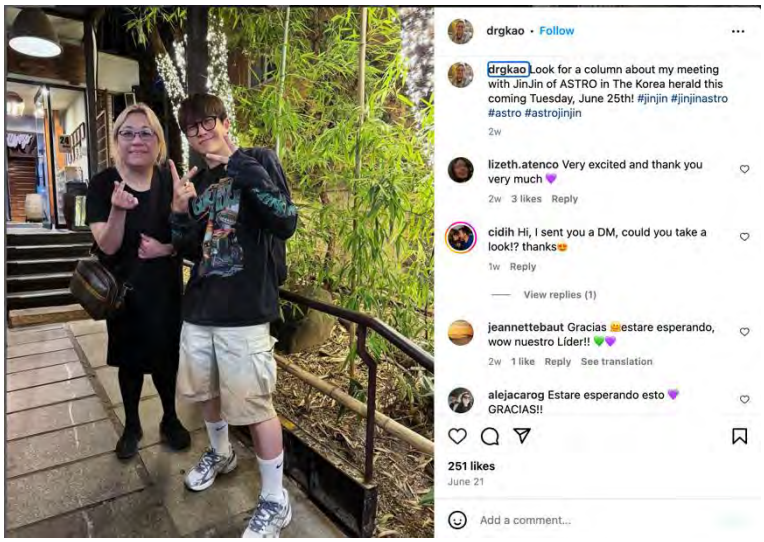


Image 5. Instagram post of Grace Kao with JinJin of the K-pop group ASTRO.

Praxis
Deep Listening and Intersectional Frameworks

Episode 3 explores the experiences of South Asian Americans, who have often been marginalized within the category "Asian American"—sometimes excluded, often not accounted for in curricula or in public programs. Produced by Fariha Khan, it focuses on the process of researching and interpreting personal experience narratives. It features an interview with a South Asian American college student, Simran Chand, whose senior thesis researched parent-child conversations on sexual health. Chand's work deals with South Asian American families and their particular values around sex, sexual health, and sex education. Conducting fieldwork during the Covid-19 pandemic, the student worked thoughtfully and sensitively to record the conversations from her fieldwork while the world was forced into isolation in their homes. While this was a difficult moment to overcome and manage, the enthusiasm, the desire to share stories, and the need to be heard connected people. These are stories that people want to talk about but may not know how to share. In the hardship of the pandemic, there is still an excitement in being heard and seen that is palpable in this young researcher's words.

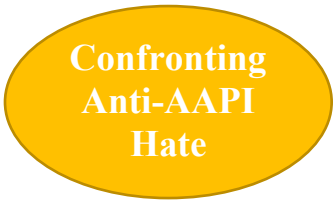
The student describes her research framework as involving an interdisciplinary, transnational, intersectional gender studies lens informed by folklore studies. She explains, for example:

> When we're talking about these South Asian parents, we need to look at their immigration history, their experiences growing up in their home country, and then what their immigration experiences taught them, how they assimilated and settled in the U.S., and then how that influenced their parenting policies . . . and with folklore, it allowed me to center the parents' narratives, so when I was asking students about their experiences, it wasn't what actually happened, it was what was your perception of what happened. So that allowed me to look at what was the second-generation South Asian American immigrant experience and how did their parents' experiences inform their choices to then inform their learning and their experiences to then inform their own actions in the future and their expressions. (Episode 3, 3:30)

As much as the podcast addresses challenging content, this episode is also notable for its focus on research praxis, including how Chand had to adapt her methodology to online forms of engagement during the pandemic. In terms of teaching and developing a course curriculum, this discussion between researchers demonstrates how fundamental folklore methodology is for engaging in deep listening and prioritizing attention on the voices of those that have purposely been erased or marginalized.

Listen to the episode: "South Asian Americans and Sex Education: A Conversation with University of Pennsylvania Senior Simran Chand."

> When I came to Penn and started studying gender, sexuality, and women's studies, I started noticing there were cultural differences between how people experienced sexuality—not only sexuality, but their understanding of the world at large.
>
> —Simran Chand



Confronting Anti-AAPI Hate

Launched during the Covid-19 lockdown and the resurgence of anti-AAPI hate, this podcast enabled us to share our stories and hear home through the many accents and diverse experiences of our narrators. These stories evoked the smell of food, the sound of music, and migration experiences, representing how Asian American identities continue to be reconstructed.

Some episodes specifically focused on pandemics and how to consider them historically with respect to Asian American experiences as well as to Asian folklore.

Episode 7 is a recording of a session presented on Zoom at the American Folklore Society meeting in 2021 on the urgency of Asian American folklore studies during the time of a pandemic in which Asians were often scapegoated as the source of the crises. Listen to the episode: "Asians and the Global Pandemic: Race, Invisibility, and the Urgency of Asian American Folklore Studies."

Episode 18 focuses on Juwen Zhang's recent book *Epidemics in Folk Memory: Tales and Poems from Chinese History* (2022), which reminds us that pandemics have been well recorded in Chinese tales and poems in oral and written forms, providing clues and traditional knowledge applicable to our present experiences (see Image 6). Among the stories that Zhang shares from his book is one recorded in the 14th century as "The Doctor from the Qin State," which warns of how political leaders who fail to heed knowledge from the past might make major decisions that harm the health of the common people. In this excerpt from the original text, a prime minister and a king are cautioned about a mandate they make when an epidemic hits their state:

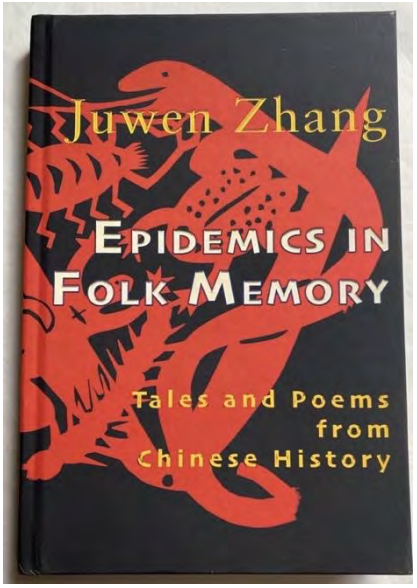


Image 6. The cover of *Epidemics in Folk Memory: Tales and Poems from Chinese History.* (Zhang 2022).

> Nowadays the Qin doctors use prescriptions without learning from the ancients, but create their own prescription. They even say that the ancient masters were not good enough to learn from. As a result, what they use are nothing but those laxatives to clean the stomach, and those hard-to-swallow and dry-throat medicines, causing body-burn and head-dizzying pains. Those things enter the mouth like blades scraping the chest and intestines. Within a day, the liver and gallbladder would burst, and the body would die, and of course the sickness would be gone. This is even worse than a quick death. Now when you as the prime minister do not seek advice from the older wise people, but seek to benefit from what you like and trust. Is that the Way of the Heavenly Mandate? (Zhang, 2022, 64)

Listen to the episode: "Conversation with Dr. Juwen Zhang, Author of *Epidemics in Folklore Memory: Memory, Tales, and Poems from Chinese History*"

> We see the rise in AAPI hate because people are not educated about this part of American history, and we return to this model of second-class citizenry for Asian Americans and we lose the lessons of Ethnic Studies. And it becomes watered down as plurality or diversity and not really thinking about the revolutionary purpose of education that the Third World Liberation Front wanted to put forth for us.
>
> —Nancy Yan

What's Next?

"Yellow and Brown Tales" is a volunteer effort—with production taking place between the deadlines and commitments of our working lives and family responsibilities. We remain committed to continuing this podcast, and we value the gift of each speaker's contribution knowing that their stories are culturally and historically meaningful.

We will continue to emphasize tales shared by individuals about their upbringing and Asian American consciousness; their personal insights into such themes as history, generational identity, gender, family, foodways, and public display; as well as their stories about the varied places that they call home. For instance, a future episode will highlight the organization of the North American Chinese Volleyball Invitational Tournament (NACVIT), now in its 79th year, a major event connecting the U.S.'s historical, urban Chinatowns. Other forthcoming episodes will explore labor, gender, legacies of colonialism, and how individuals perform and express their senses of culture and identity.

In addition to being a gathering space for cultural producers and culture bearers, we hope that the podcast can also provide a resource for students and educators—by offering tangible examples of the complexity of identity, community, and how it is expressed.

We endeavor to create a sense of connection—when people listen to or talk with us—and we welcome anyone who is interested in collaborating. We hope that through the lives represented in the podcast, listeners will hear the resonance of how they may or may not feel at home in the spaces and interactions that make up their lives.

> These tales were created to give hope to humans, make sense of what they do, and maintain their relations with other beings in the universe.
>
> —Juwen Zhang

Fariha Khan *is Co-Director of the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania. She received a Master's degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Yale University and a PhD in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania. She teaches courses on South Asians in the U.S., Asian American communities, and American concepts of race. Her current research focuses on South Asian American Muslims, race and ethnicity, as well as Asian American folklore. Dr. Khan has published in the* Journal of American Folklore *and the* Oxford Handbook of American Folklore and Folklife Studies.

Margaret Magat *is an independent scholar and writer. She has a doctorate in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania and an MA in Folklore, University of California, Berkeley. She has published on foodways, historic preservation, women and transnational migration, and Asian American cultural practices. Her book,* Balut: Fertilized Eggs and the Making of Culinary Capital *(New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), reveals how traditional foods are used in the performance of identity and ethnicity and looks at the impact globalization and migration are having on cultural practices and food consumption across the world.*

Nancy Yan *received her PhD in Folklore from The Ohio State University and taught First and Second-Year Writing, Comparative Studies, and Asian American Studies classes for several years before returning to organizing work. She served on the Cultural Diversity Committee of the American Folklore Society from 2017-2019 and is a member of the Board of Directors of New Faculty Majority, an advocacy organization for non-tenure-track faculty. She is also a host on New Books in Folklore, part of New Books Network. Currently, Dr. Yan works for the American Federation of Teachers-Maryland as an organizer.*

Juwen Zhang *is Professor of Chinese and Folklore, Global Cultural Studies, at Willamette University. He has a PhD in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania. His recent publications on Asian American folklore include "Folklore in the Making of Chinese American Identity" (In* Routledge Handbook of Asian Transnationalism*, 2022); "Where Were/Are Asian American Folklorists?" (*Journal of American Folklore*, 2023); "Making Sense of the Pandemic of Racism: From the Asian Exclusion Act in 1924 to the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act in 2021" (*Cultural Analysis*, 2023);* Translating, Interpreting, and Decolonizing Chinese Fairy Tales: A Case Study and Ideological Approach *(Landham, MD: Lexington Books, 2024).*

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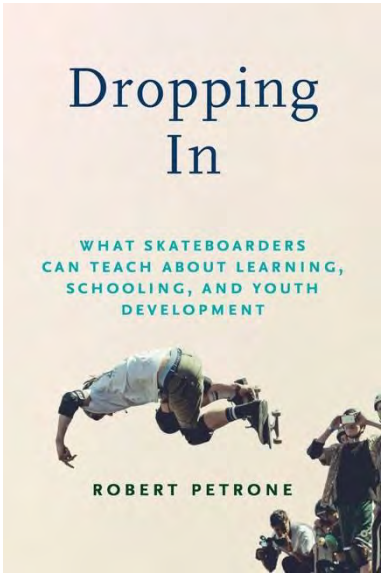

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(Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2023, 272 pp.)

Matt Fitzpatrick *is an artist, an art teacher, and the Visual Arts Department Head, Castle High School, Newburgh, Indiana.*

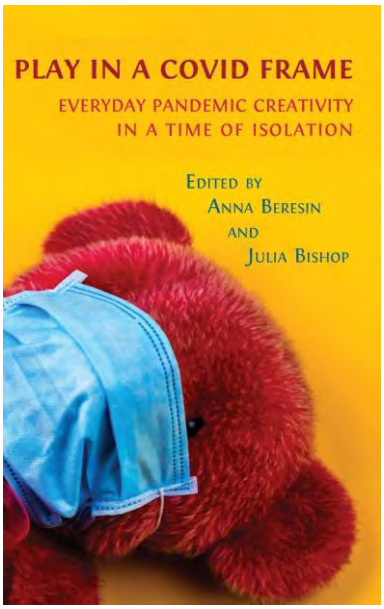
Dropping In is a comprehensive academic exploration of the life and learning processes of skateboarders. Robert Petrone, a former English teacher with admittingly little interest in skateboarding at the start of the book, dedicated three years to researching, observing, and analyzing a group of five skateboarders at a local skatepark. His aim was to examine how individuals labeled as "poor students" or "at risk" engage in learning outside the traditional academic environments.

Petrone begins the book by outlining the framework of his research, including the methodologies and ideas he plans to explore in subsequent chapters. He focuses on observing individuals in the skatepark who fit traditional at-risk criteria and looks for academic learning patterns within this unconventional setting. Central to his analysis is the concept of Learning by Observing and Pitching In (LOPI), which he demonstrates can be seen in the behaviors and interactions within the skatepark. Petrone meticulously details his observational methods, including his attire, participant selection, and the location of the study, ensuring clarity and transparency in his research process.

The narrative expands in Chapter Four, leading into Part Two, where Petrone shifts his writing style to include more dialogue and interviews, subtly moving away from a more academic tone established earlier. This change enriches the readers' engagement as they are introduced to the five participants. The detailed examination of these individuals includes how they skateboard, learn, teach, dress, speak, and interact socially within the skatepark.

While Petrone's academic writing style can be challenging to navigate at times, the book's core message is compelling, particularly for educators working with students who have a passion for skateboarding. He effectively presents the lifestyle and characteristics of skateboarders from an outsider's perspective, offering an analytical view that highlights the educational potential within this subculture. The research participants, who struggled in traditional school settings, exemplify how understanding an individual's learning style, passions, and personal context can lead to more effective differentiation in the classroom.

As someone who grew up skateboarding, I appreciate how Petrone captures the essence of this world and systematically presents it to foster understanding. Petrone also draws interesting conclusions and suggestions for a reframing of the pedagogy based on observations from the skatepark. *Dropping In* is a valuable contribution to educational literature, demonstrating that meaningful learning can occur in diverse and unexpected environments, while also drawing inspiration into the overall repositioning of the framework of pedagogy.



Play in a Covid Frame: Everyday Pandemic Creativity in a Time of Isolation, by Anna Beresin and Julia Bishop, eds
(Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2023, x + 486 pp. List of Illustrations and Recordings, Introduction, Conclusion, Author Biographies, Postscript, Acknowledgements, Index)

Camille Maria Acosta *is a Folklife Specialist with the Kentucky Folklife Program at Western Kentucky University.*

Anna Beresin and Julia Bishop's collected work *Play in a Covid Frame: Everyday Pandemic Creativity in a Time of Isolation* exemplifies what makes folklore and cultural ethnography so powerful: the beautiful hardships of the human condition. This amalgamation of essays explores the concept of "play" during the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. Every human being experienced loss in some form during this complex time–the loss of a loved one, the loss of time, the loss of connectivity, or possibly the loss of control. *Play in a Covid Frame* explores how participation in play helps both children and adults cope with a world that feels truly out of reach by grounding them in a space of comfort, regained autonomy, and the brilliance that is to be silly. Composed by 38 folklorists, ethnographers, and researchers, the essays are organized into three separate segments: Landscapes, Portraits, and Shifting Frames, with the common anatomical thread of ethnographic research. One of my favorite aspects of the composition was the plethora of diverse cultures, economic backgrounds, and social standings represented, including researchers, families, and communities from 12 countries. While the incorporation of non-English-speaking and underrepresented communities would have given us a more honest scope of the world at large, I appreciated the awareness of the work's shortcomings that Beresin and Bishop acknowledge.

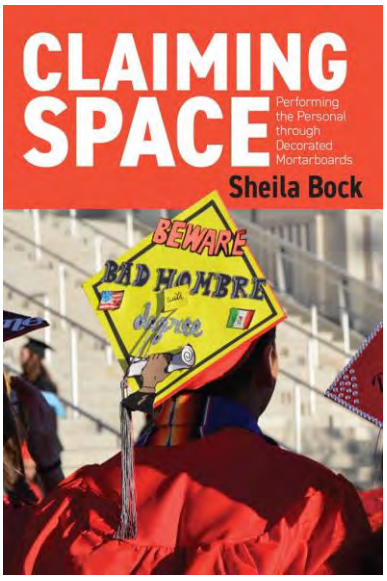
The first section unravels the changing landscapes that individuals both experienced and created through playing during the pandemic. From coronavirus chase games to poor mental states, the spaces affected by Covid-19 were reflected in the games we played. "Up, Down, Stop, Go, and Everything in Between: Promoting a Resident-Driven Play-Based Agenda during a Global Pandemic in Rochester, New York" illuminated the increased shutdowns in Rochester, paired with a lack of resources and an abundance of race-based violence that made play virtually impossible. This chapter illustrated how local organizations made playtime achievable by "distribut[ing] play kits, partn[ering] with the city to support Covid-friendly programming and infrastructure that prioritizes unstructured, resident driven play…" (62). To see individuals move mountains for

BIPOC families to seek solace through play reminds you that play is not just for children—it's for individuals seeking a sense of normalcy in a place of constant devaluing.

The Portraits section takes a snapshot of the physical forms of nuanced play that took place during the worldwide shutdown. There were multiple inclusions of fieldwork interviews with parents and guardians within this section that brought the humanity of the situation to life. Weaving together research in teddy bear challenges, the elevation of friendships, and images of the unique ways familial play was carried out illuminated the time capsule that this book truly is. "Digital Heroes of the Imagination: An Exploration of Disabled-Led Play in England during the Covid-19 Pandemic" spoke of the othering often apparent with disabled communities and the right to play. This piece of research highlighted the ableist system that play often falls into, and the "Digital Heroes of the Imagination" that shine a light on a brighter, more inclusive world. Upon reading Landscapes I hope to see more incorporation of the disabled communities' experiences in play-based research, because it is long overdue.

Lastly, Shifting Frames displayed a cultural shift in both the way we play and the ways we think about play. The house float creations during "Yardi Gras" or the online forms that play evolved into were fascinating reads that pushed the boundaries of our definition of play, both in meaning and in participators. However, the emphasis on the seriousness of play as an activity that aids in community survival was what moved me most. Using the creativity and connectedness that play ultimately produces as a medium to get through difficult times is a revolutionary concept, whether you are 10 or 76.

"Brian Sutton-Smith called play 'dialudic'...'ludic' (Latin for 'play') and 'dialectic', a process of attempting to find truth through conflict and disagreement" (441). This compilation of research-based essays, emotional explorations, and frozen moments in time further emphasized how play not only teaches you how to smile but also reminds you what's worth smiling for. *Play in a Covid Frame* is an excellent representation of the future of play-based research, and I am excited to see its impact on works to come. All in all, whether a folklorist, cultural organizer, teacher, or parent, this book will speak to you, much like a child and their teddy bear.



Claiming Space: Performing the Personal through Decorated Mortarboards, by Sheila Bock
(Logan: Utah State University Press, 2023, 160 pp.)

Kathryn M. Holmes *is an Associate Teaching Professor at The Pennsylvania State University.*

This interesting and relevant book by Sheila Bock is an in-depth look at how students use the decorating of mortarboards to communicate how they have negotiated their own identities within the realm of higher education. Juxtaposing the formality of the graduation ceremony and higher education in general, Bock shows how students take the "blank canvas" to show not only their

personal traits and experiences, but also their "sentiments of appreciation, pride, optimism, relief, uncertainty, or frustration" (5). Her research is couched in a performance-centered approach to material culture that borders on bodylore (although Bock does not use this term). She collected a copious amount of ethnographic data through interviews and surveys from graduating seniors from 26 universities around the country, including the University of Las Vegas, Boston University, The Ohio State University, and San Francisco State University. The vast number of students Bock documented allowed for diverse responses, which was key to the book's central theme: Higher education is often based on Western European traditions that can clash with the eclectic lived experiences of modern students. Mortarboards then can become a way for students to express some of their frustrations to both the audience at the graduation and to a larger audience via social media. Thus, *Claiming Space* can be a valuable asset to educators looking to support students, especially minority students, as they negotiate their sense of self through the formality of education.

In Chapter 2, Bock sets up the performative element of mortarboards by including vignettes that outline how ten students used their decorations to communicate who they are in relation to the university and/or larger social narratives. The vignettes are referenced throughout the book and corroborate Bock's points about how student lives contrast with traditional perceptions of university life. This is expanded on in Chapter 3 as Bock looks at Native American and Black students whose traditions have clashed with graduation guidelines and highlights a "presumption of assimilation" (71). For these students, the mortarboard becomes an even more important space to reclaim identity. Chapter 4 builds on this by looking at national debates about identity and how Latinx students use their mortarboards to claim a space within the Western European dominant culture. She brings in the #latinxgradcaps trend to show how students are using the ceremony to project their pride in their own identities. Chapter 5 looks at how students play with the linear structure of the graduation ceremony and Western culture in general. Bock looks at Queer identities to show how the timelines of many students often differ from the expectations of high school, college, job, marriage, and children. She also shows how mortarboards can often be playful, using SpongeBob SquarePants iconography to demonstrate fears about "adulting." All this comes together to bring an understanding of mortarboards and students' views about their education.

What impressed me is how Bock took something that could seemingly be viewed as a playful tradition and broke through the "triviality barrier" to show how much can be learned about students' lived experiences through an ethnographic lens. I would recommend this book to educators as a way to think outside the pedagogical norms to discover ways students are negotiating the nuances of formal educational expectations with their sense of self.

Cultural Frameworks for Transformative Documenting and Learning

Guest Editors: Naomi Sturm-Wijesinghe and Mauricio Bayona

A Call for Submissions, Vol. 12 (2025) | Submissions due April 1, 2025

Keywords: identity, documentation, art, folklife, representation, memory, transformation, justice, ethnography, filmmaking, media making, social impact, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, transmedia, multimedia, community archiving

The 2025 *Journal of Folklore and Education* seeks submissions that amplify and demonstrate the power and the promise of multimodal storytelling to educate. Developing and analyzing the findings of ethnographic documentation also involves creation of transmedia products, from podcasts to poetry, comics to videos. Ethnography provides opportunities for engaging culturally responsive pedagogy and diverse texts that reflect multiple perspectives. Examining community narratives and cultural practices in the classroom and beyond prompts students and audiences to explore the concept of cultural identity, both their own and that of others, in ways that are immediate and nuanced, and contest common misconceptions. The products of media production from the past century can also be found in archives around the world. We welcome submissions that share strategies for local research, offer scaffolding to teach technical skills in a variety of digital media, support the analysis of primary sources, sharpen artistic presentations, and connect learning standards to the lifeworld of students and their communities.

We seek submissions that present case studies, programs, lesson plans, teaching modules, and research on media, tradition, and arts that are based in community cultural life, for example:

- Interdisciplinary approaches to media literacy and production in education, including topics of social media, artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), social media, hybrid presentations, and other forms of media-driven representation;
- Media technology and STEM education;
- Stories or examples of how people use media in community settings to advance cultural well-being or engage resilience, agency, transformation, generative practices;
- Artist-driven projects and grassroots archives that reflect the transformative nature of community and tradition.

We want submissions from: Educators, artists, folklorists, documentarians, and culture bearers. Our audiences include:

- Educators in diverse settings across subject areas;
- Curators, archivists, and program managers at museums, community centers, and cultural institutions addressing issues of representation and access in content creation and program development;
- Administrators addressing the need for tools that engage the multiple senses and perspectives of diverse learners;
- Students and community members who want to see their cultural knowledge valued in educational practices, curricula, and policy.

This JFE considers documentation and media through a cultural framework.
Questions you might consider to inspire a proposal include:

- In what ways can the study of ethnography and documentation help learners of all ages connect their lives and cultures with those of others? Between literature and social studies? Between the arts and social studies?
- How can folk arts in education approaches share content, value, and insights about human relations, creativity, and problem solving?
- What frameworks and models productively examine the role of media in dismantling stereotypes or bias about cultural groups and their movements, understanding and addressing cultural appropriation, and trauma-informed pedagogy?
- Culturally responsive teaching asks educators to recognize students' cultural displays of learning and meaning making. Culturally sustaining teaching sees culture more deeply as an asset that should be explicitly supported. How can educators engage traditions—narratives, arts, and meaningful lifeways shared within families and groups—through media to foster learning and understanding across subject areas?
- How can educators from multiple disciplines such as English language arts (including composition and literacy), ELL, art, music, science, or social studies use inquiry through media-rich folk arts education to create inclusive learning environments?

About the Guest Editors

A public folklorist and ethnomusicologist by training, **Naomi Sturm-Wijesinghe** is the founding Executive Director of Los Herederos, a media arts nonprofit dedicated to inheriting culture in the digital age. She is also the Creative Traditions Program Director for City Lore and an adjunct professor at the New School. Her practice centers around interdisciplinary ethnography and working collaboratively in communities to encourage meaningful social transformation through the folk and traditional arts. It is her deeply held belief that local knowledge both sustains communities and advances the quality of everyday life. Her public folklore work, media publications, and writing deal extensively with issues of ethnic identity, political economy and cultural sustainability, transmedia storytelling and documentation, and exploring new models for holistic economic development through folklife-centered cultural tourism. Naomi holds an MA in Ethnomusicology from Columbia University and a BA from Bowdoin College. She sits on the Board of the Mencius Society and currently serves as the co-chair of the Cultural Diversity Committee and on the Nominating Committee of the American Folklore Society.

Born in Bogota, Colombia, **Mauricio Bayona** has lived in Queens, NY, since 1999. His work as a videographer, editor, art director and producer are both informed and inspired by his immigrant experience of more than two decades. He is known for his work documenting New York City's immigrant communities and their contributions to individual neighborhoods' collective consciousness/social history. He has worked with the Center for Traditional Music and Dance, the World Music Institute, Cabrini Immigrant Services of NY, and Make the Road NY to build their digital archives around local musical activity and dissemination in migrant communities. As the Los Herederos' founding Artistic Director, Mauricio oversees the organization's media projects and overall creative direction. He also runs a small production house called 32A.

We are grateful for our Advisory Committee for their input on this special issue:
Benjamin Bean - Social Studies Teacher, Mount Pleasant High School (Wilmington, Delaware)
Sarah Bryan - Director, Association for Cultural Equity (New York and North Carolina)
Katy Clune - Director, Virginia Folklife Program, Virginia Humanities (Charlottesville)
Barry Dornfeld - Principal, CFAR and Part-time lecturer, Goucher College (Philadelphia)
Raienkonnis Edwards - Mohawk Filmmaker (New York)
chloē Fourte – MA Ethnomusicology Graduate Assistant, Indiana University Archive for African American Music and Culture (Bloomington)
Pauline Fan - Creative Director, Pusaka (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
Javier Gaston-Greenberg - Curriculum Designer, Educurious (New York)
Bradley Hanson - Director of Folklife, Tennessee Arts Commission (Nashville)
T.C. Owens - Folk Arts Coordinator, ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes (Corning, NY)
Vivian Poey - Professor, Lesley College of Art + Design (Cambridge, MA)

More About Submissions: *We seek submissions of articles, model projects, multimedia products, teaching applications, and student work accompanied by critical writing that connects to the larger frameworks of this theme.* We particularly welcome submissions inclusive of perspectives and voices from underrepresented communities. Co-authored articles that include teachers, students, administrators, artists, or community members offer opportunities for multiple points of view on an educational program or a curriculum. We publish articles that share best practices, offer specific guides or plans for implementing folklore in education, and articulate theoretical and critical frameworks. We invite educators to share shorter pieces for "Notes from the Field." Nonconventional formats are also welcomed, such as lesson plans, worksheets, classroom exercises, and media submissions, including short video and audio clips. When considering a submission, we highly recommend reviewing previous issues of JFE. We encourage authors to contact the editors to learn more and explore whether their concept might be a good fit.

Research-based writing that theorizes, evaluates, or assesses programs that use folklore in education tools and practice are also welcomed. These research articles may intersect with the theme, but all submissions with a research component will be considered. We expect that, regardless of the format, all projects presented in submissions will have appropriate institutional permissions for public dissemination before submission to JFE, including approval from Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and/or data licensing for the acquisition of existing data, as may be required. See the protocol for publishing a study used by ArtsEdSearch for guidance.

Format: Articles should be 1,500-4,500 words, submitted as a Word document. We use a modified Chicago style (not APA) and parenthetical citations. All URL links hyperlinked in the document should also be referenced, in order, at the end of the article in a URL list for offline readers. Images should have a dpi of at least 300. Be in touch with the editors to discuss submission and media ideas and to learn formatting, technical specifications, and citation style.

The *Journal of Folklore and Education* (ISSN 2573-2072) is a publication of Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education.

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Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

Local Learning connects folklorists, artists, and educators across the nation and advocates for the full inclusion of folklife and folk arts in education to transform learning, build intercultural understanding, and create stronger communities.

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DONATE — Please support *The Journal of Folklore and Education* so that we can continue to provide this free resource.

We are grateful to our Advisory Committee for their input on this special issue:
Sarah Craycraft, Head Tutor and Lecturer of Harvard's Folklore and Mythology Program
Quetzal Flores, Alliance for California Traditional Arts
Jean Tokuda Irwin, Utah Division of Arts & Museums and Local Learning Board
Fariha Khan, University of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Folklore Project
Brandie MacDonald, Executive Director, IU Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
Hector Morales, Percussionist and Teaching Artist
Karen "Queen Nur" Abdul-Malik, Independent Folklorist, Storyteller, and Teaching Artist
Maida Owens, Bayou Culture Collaborative and Louisiana Folklife Program Director
Lamont Jack Pearley, editor of the *African American Folklorist*
Nelda Ruiz, Southwest Folklife Alliance
Kate Schramm, Connecticut Museum of Culture and History

About the Guest Editors

Michelle Banks is a cultural worker from Washington, DC, and was co-curator for the 2023 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program *Creative Encounters: Living Religions in the U.S.* She takes a transdisciplinary approach to work that explores the intersections of language, culture, and sustainability.

Sojin Kim is a curator at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, where she works on projects focusing on migration, music, and public history. She was co-curator of the following Smithsonian Folklife Festival programs: *D.C.: The Social Power of Music* (2019), *On the Move: Migration Across Generations* (2017), *Sounds of California* (2016), and *China: Tradition and the Art of Living* (2014).

About the Editors

Paddy Bowman is Founding Director of Local Learning and creator of numerous folklore and education resources. She co-edited *Through the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, Curriculum* (2011) and taught for Lesley University's Integrated Teaching through the Arts masters program for a decade. She was awarded the Benjamin A. Botkin Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Public Folklore and is a Fellow of the American Folklore Society. pbbowman@gmail.com

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