HUMANITIES.

THE RACIST HISTORY OF GUN CONTROL POLICY AND RHETORIC IN THE UNITED STATES: FROM THE COLONIES TO THE PRESENT, HOW AFRICAN AMERICANS' RIGHT TO OWN AND USE FIREARMS HAS BEEN RESTRICTED BY THE WHITE POPULATION

Alexandra Lanzetta

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INTRODUCTION

"The stranglehold of oppression cannot be loosened by a plea to the oppressor's conscious. Social change in something as fundamental as racist oppression involves violence."[1]

Say their names: George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Ahmaud Arbury. Philandro Castile. Treyvon Martin. Eric Garner. Elijah McClain. Rayshard Brooks. Daniel Prude. Attatiana Jefferson. Aura Rosser. Stephon Clark. Botham Jean. Alton Sterling. Michelle Cusseaux. Freddy Grey. Janisha Fonville. Akai Gurley. Tamir Rice. Gabriella Nevarez. Michael Brown.

Above are just a sample of the hundreds of innocent Black men and women killed by police officers in the recent past. The nationwide grief their deaths have produced make it, at times, hard to stand by a country you so desperately want to love but are ashamed of at the same time. The United States labels itself as the land of the free and the brave, but, in actuality, it is plagued by systemic racism which has been perpetuated for centuries by the white population. This has ultimately cost the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands annually. The hypocrisy is astounding. While, as a nation, we would like to think our racist past is simply that—our past—this is not the case. Black people today may no longer be physically bound by metal shackles, but they are still controlled, in a sense, by the state and public alike. This paradox is especially evident when examining the history of gun control policy and rhetoric in the United States and Colonies which predated it. The Second Amendment is considered to be a fundamental right of Americans, yet in reality, this right has only freely been applied to the white population. This is not a coincidence. In fact, the history of gun control is thoroughly entangled with systemic racism. This includes policy that both explicitly and implicitly targets the African American population, as well as rhetoric and attitudes that essentially bar Blacks from owning or using guns out of fear of imprisonment, injury, or death.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that it is immoral, if not impossible, to understand the issue of gun control policy, rhetoric, and

attitudes without fully acknowledging the issue of race, specifically the Black race. Starting in 1680 with the passage of one of the first weapon control laws in the Colonies, Blacks, whether free or enslaved, were barred from carrying a weapon or weapon-like object.[2] The motivation behind this is clear. The white population had a strong desire to keep African Americans weakened and subservient and accomplished this by taking away the object which would most support Blacks' ability to resist this system and defend themselves as human beings, not as property.… This is seen in the passage of the Black Codes, the installation of Jim Crow laws, the solidification of police brutality, biased policing and prosecutorial practices, mass incarceration in the criminal justice system, and most recently with the passive attitude of politicians, the media, and the general public alike towards the thousands of Black male lives lost to gun violence annually.

[...]

How has gun control policy and rhetoric in the United States been shaped by race?... Race has always played a role in the motivation and formulation of gun control laws and attitudes; however, over time its methods have changed. In early American history, it was not only acceptable, but encouraged to create and defend racist policy.… However, as the country progressed and African Americans were both given and demanded for themselves more rights, explicitly biased rhetoric and laws were no longer publicly tolerable. This resulted in the creation and proliferation of subtle racism. This new kind of hatred continued the trend of treating African Americans as lesser members of society, yet did so in a way that did not violate anti-discriminatory laws. This is evident in the stark difference between the colonial laws explicitly banning Blacks from owning or wielding anything from a stick to a gun, to today's laws which prevent most people with a felony or drug addiction (people who are more likely to be Black because of the biased criminal justice system) from owning a gun.

[...]

1. Robert F. Williams, Martin Luther King Jr., and Truman Nelson, Negroes with Guns (New York: Marzani & Munsell, 1962), 107.

2 Charles E. Cobb, Jr., This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns made the Civil Rights Movement Possible (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 33.

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TIBETAN FOLKTALES FOR CHINESE CHILDREN:
ISSUES OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, TRANSLATION, AND CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY

Elizabeth Palmer

For the full text, please see the QR code at the bottom of the page

ABSTRACT

A children's book of folktales is a deceptively simple thing. How much academic exploration can you do on a book made for children? For this project, I analyzed three Tibetan folktales from *Paoma shanxia de chuanshuo 马山下的传说* (*Legends from Under the Happy Horse Mountain*) by Cheng Shengmin 程圣民 Legends from Under the Happy Horse Mountain is a 2004 collection of Tibetan folktales for a Chinese audience, written by a non-Tibetan author. The three specific stories from this collection that I looked at are "The Golden Gourd," "Demon Takes a Wife," and "Unsalted Tea." This paper required broad interdisciplinary research. This included translating Chinese, researching Chinese and Tibetan cultures, and learning about the wider field of education and education theory. Moreover, it often ventured into previously unexplored territory, topics that have not been written about extensively by English-speaking scholars. For example, what cultural values are common in Tibet and how are they similar and different from cultural values held by wider China? How might traditional folktales, translated into children's literature, work as part of multicultural education and representation? Lastly, how might Tibetan children be affected when they read a book about their culture, written by someone outside it? Though I am not yet able to answer that final question, the first two proved extremely thought provoking, establishing how complex even a simple-seeming book for children really is.

THE POLICY GAP: ARGENTINA'S CURRENT MIGRATION LAW AND REALITIES FOR BOLIVIAN MIGRANTS
Emma Seidler

For the full text, please see the QR code at the bottom of the page

ABSTRACT

Policymaking intentions compared to law in practice are inevitably varied. One of the purposes of gap studies is to examine the breach between policy and reality. This research adopts the structure of a gap study to understand exactly how Argentina's 2004 New Migration Law is different in practice than it is written in law. The law grants social services, including health care, to all migrants within the country, regardless of migratory status. However, in reality, this law does not function ideally. The research identifies how the gap in policy and practice exists and explores a specific example of how the rift affects immigrants' access to the health care system. Bolivian migrants in Argentina are specifically subject to the effects of the policy gap due to social and political discrimination and racism. To complete the study, a qualitative data analysis method was employed. News sources published in Argentina before and after the implementation of the New Law were utilized as primary sources. Through diligent application of codes, a structure was applied to the textual data that allowed for a cohesive and comparative analysis. The findings show that discrimination has persisted in several ways despite the implementation of the anti-discriminatory New Migration Law: first, stigmatization of immigrants by the government through words, actions, and policymaking; second, the attitudes represented by policymakers are mirrored in society, with racism and the use of derogatory language serving as examples of informal discrimination that persists. Continued discrimination represents the gap in policy, and the health care system is one area where immigrants contend with the effects of the gap. Stigmas act not only as social challenges, but also as barriers to the health care system for Bolivian migrants.

[...]

INTRODUCTION

Immigration policy has historically been, and continues to be, a highly contested issue within the political spheres of many countries. It is centered around the debate of foreign populations within a country and the rights that they are to receive. The dispute over these policies and the discrimination that results from them often distracts from the fact that each immigrant is an individual, likely in a vulnerable situation due to their migratory status.… In a similar way that the United States oversimplifies its past of colonization and domination of non-white cultures, Argentina considers its population to be a "melting pot" of people—el crisol de razas. However, with the amalgamation of cultures comes more likelihood for discrimination and inequality.

[...]

CHAPTER IV: METHADOLOGY

This project was not at all meant to generate or perpetuate the notion that Bolivian immigrants in Argentina are a monolith.… Instead, it is meant to understand the way that having the unique identity combination of Bolivian and migrant affects an individual's experience. This research is important because it emphasizes and denounces forms of discrimination that are not often discussed. Hopefully calling attention to and criticizing discrimination will create a safer space for migrants to live.

[...]

CONCLUSION

[...]

The results show that both social and governmental factors continue to play a role in how implications of the law are or are not carried out. Governmental factors include the reinforcement of stigmas surrounding Bolivian migrants and implementation of hostile policies carried out by political figures. Social factors consist of expressions of racism through derogatory language and informal discrimination. Together, these factors contribute to the hostile environment that Bolivian migrants experience in Argentina. This population has been subject to discrimination since the establishment of Argentina as a country with European ideals and influences. The white, European nature of the desired national identity created hostility toward indigenous and Latin American groups that has yet to be overcome completely. Even with a progressive anti-discriminatory law in place, the lasting effects of constitutional European migration promotion can be observed in policymaking and public opinion.

[...]

VIOLENT OR VICTIMIZED: A HISTORIC ANALYSIS OF THE STEREOTYPE ASSOCIATING MENTAL ILLNESS WITH VIOLENCE

Hannah Hagens

For the full text, please see the QR code at the bottom of the page

ABSTRACT

The goal of this thesis is to demonstrate the origins and falsity behind the stereotype associating mental illness with violence. By understanding that not all people with mental illness are violent, one becomes aware of the inaccuracy of this popular stereotype. So where did they come from? This thesis will track a shift in the media's depiction of mental illness, from what appeared to be moving in a more positive direction in the 1940s and 1950s to a sharp turn towards the negative and damaging in the 1960s and after. This thesis will argue that, starting in the 1960s, the media fostered an environment for the stereotype associating mental illness with violence, and as a result created a society that feared those with mental illness—a lingering effect to this day. This thesis will provide an explanation for how the stereotype associating mental illness with violence contributed to the rise of those with mental illness in the criminal justice system and homeless populations.

TRUE HAVEN: NUANCED 'SAFE' SPACES FROM MORRISON'S TRILOGY
Emma Purcell

For the full text, please see the QR code at the end of the excerpt

Hard circumstances beckon eventual reprieve, and in Toni Morrison's novels, the exhausting grievances, desires, and missions are no exception. Agitated lives necessitate refuge. Safe spaces exist and are found; however, the permanence of any 'secure' safety remains infinitely conditional as character relations develop, passion unveils, and accusatory convictions find target. Beloved, Jazz, and Paradise each reveal the violence that festers in the fringe of presumed safe spaces. In evaluating the separate purpose of each temporary haven and each terminal downfall, the fragility of refuge necessitates a continued search for safety beyond place.

Morrison constructs the premise of Beloved as an exploration surrounding the multifaceted layers that haunt Sethe, an escaped slave's, found 'safety.' Sethe's story begins at Sweet Home, the slave plantation that "[isn't] sweet and it sure [isn't] home" (Morrison 16). The horrors at Sweet Home stir up Sethe's desire to escape and find freedom and safety, which she does, at least for a short while. Sethe's intense mother-love registers as the driving force that leads her journey away from Sweet Home. She must leave so that she can provide for her children who have already set off in a wagon to escape a future of enslavement. After an excruciating escapade away from Sweet Home, Sethe arrives at her mother-in-law Baby Sugg's home called 124—a place she associates with safety for herself and her children.

The safety sought versus the reality met at 124 reveals the unfortunate presence of violence in safe spaces. 124's shifting dynamics—from a welcoming way station, to haunted, spiteful, loud, and quiet, to empty—complicate the house's characterization. The instability of 124 instigates several interpretations of what role it holds in the story, at separate times harboring both protection and danger for the inhabitants. 124 initially presents as the destination holding refuge from Sweet Home for Sethe and her children. This assumption seems reasonable given that Baby Suggs resides free and safe prior to Sethe's arrival. The reputation devolves as Sethe arrives: "Sethe knew the grief at 124 started when she jumped down off the wagon…" (Morrison 105). 124 had previously carried a reputation as "a cheerful buzzing house where Baby Suggs, holy, loved, cautioned, fed, chastised and soothed" (Morrison 103). But soon after Sethe's arrival, violence taints 124's capacity for true refuge.

Sweet Home's cruelest slave owner, Schoolteacher, tracks Sethe to 124. Schoolteacher's presence represents evil entering 124's yard and requires Sethe to find a quick solution to the encroaching danger.

124 is not secure enough to shelter Sethe and her children from their former enslavement, so she strives to reach the only place that could form a strong enough separation from themselves and worldly danger: death. Sethe only succeeds in 'saving' one of her children, the one later called Beloved. Morrison explains, "[the] plan was always that they would all be together on the other side, forever" (Morrison 284). Schoolteacher's arrival strips 124 of its expected safety. Sethe's act of love and violence, regardless of its intention, transposes 124 from a safe house to a place of isolation and haunting sorrow.

Beloved's 'salvation' from the danger of re-enslavement results in her ghost haunting 124, first in spirit and eventually in flesh. The surrounding community rejects the remaining inhabitance of 124 because the "baby ghost fill[s] the house" (Morrison 113). 124 no longer represents a place of safety and welcome; rather, it "shut[s] down and put[s] up with the venom of its ghost" (Morrison 105). As the women of 124 deliberately isolate themselves from their community, readers learn that 124 is not only related to the destruction of the living, but also as the unrest of the "black and angry dead" (Morrison 234). 124 is haunted. Place itself cannot provide an escape from danger, yet once Beloved returns in flesh, Sethe still attempts to find safety, nevertheless. She closes everything out beyond the walls of 124 that could possibly assemble harm: "Whatever is going on outside my door ain't for me. The world is in this room. This here's all there is and all there needs to be" (Morrison 215). The isolation in and of itself becomes dangerous. As the women are "left to their own devices" (Morrison 235) in 124's isolation, Beloved terrorizes Sethe from the inside: "Beloved ate up her life…And [Sethe] yielded it without a murmur" (Morrison 295). Danger prevails even within safety's shelter and isolation, inflicted by the very person Sethe hopes most to protect: "She wanted for her children…exactly what was missing in 124: safety" (Morrison 193). She yearns for 124 to be secure enough to keep her family safe, but all places fall short in providing refuge for characters in Beloved; the possibility of suffering is relentless.

The idea of safety is convoluted throughout Beloved due to the life position slaves are victim to. Spaces, further, are never entirely safe. There is always the chance that the wrong step could relapse into enslavement: "Slave life; freed life—every day was a test and a trial. Nothing could be counted on in a world where even when you were a solution you were a problem" (Morrison 302). Place is not enough; no place can keep former slaves "uncaught" (Morrison 316). Every-

one is fugitive, imprisoned by the imminent danger of oppressive lives, an existence of hopeless desolation. How are characters to seek refuge if place cannot provide?

Morrison answers with an exorcism. But it is not the exorcism itself that provides newfound safety; instead, Morrison suggests that it is the community of women instigating 124's reintegration with their supportive network. In witnessing Sethe's slow decline under Beloved's toll, Sethe's other daughter, Denver, realizes 124 needs saving. But asking for community support is incrementally difficult because of the 124 women's reclusive mindsets. Because Sethe implanted such fear of the outside world in her children, Denver finds herself fearing anything beyond the world within 124's walls. Denver recites that she has been taught that "there [is] no defense" (Morrison 288) in the outside world. Baby Suggs, whether in sentiment or actuality, speaks to Denver with words to inspire courage: "There ain't…Know it, and go out the yard. Go on" (Morrison 288). And as she ventures, Denver slowly gathers community support. First as food offerings, and eventually as "rescue" (Morrison 301).

Thirty women from the community congregate and release 124 from its haint by performing not only the removal of Beloved, but also a "baptism" (Morrison 308) of sorts for Sethe. Support from the community provides strength and courage enough for Sethe to learn how to exist in a world where there aren't any permanently safe places for herself or the people she loves most dearly. Paul D, an embodiment of a slave's continually troubled existence, knew there was no absolute safety to be found from the very moment he arrived at 124: "I knew it wasn't the place I was heading toward; it was you" (Morrison 55). The places within Beloved, though indisputably personified in some ways, truly don't hold the power. Without Beloved's haunting and Sethe's fear, "124 is just another weathered house needing repair" (Morrison 311). All along it was the people crafting the course of the story. While place can determine life circumstance, it is people that manifest these circumstances. People enslave, people are enslaved; ghosts haunt, places are haunted. Beloved teaches that it is not place that establishes safety, it is the people within and surrounding the places that forge opportunities for safety through support and community; safety in Beloved is connection.

[...]

Morrison's trilogy recognizes safety's fragile nature through each haven's impending, inevitable downfall. Characters seek refuge for family, for love, for peace, and they are met, time and time again, with means of destruction and violence in many forms. As the safe spaces fall, it takes an expanded definition of what constitutes haven in order to find peace. Morrison stretches haven beyond place. Place is not enough, could never be strong enough to maintain constant

harmony because peace is not place; peace is people. Haven is community support and established connections; it is in connection with others that one can find refuge. Haven is not a place; it is and has always been people. Yet people are also simultaneously the instigators of violated refuge. Morrison's selection of the epigraph in Jazz best represents human nature's duality: "I am the name of the sound / and the sound of the name. / I am the sign of the letter / and the designation of the division" (Funk). We are both. We are violence and peace, danger and haven, pain and reprieve. We represent all forces that construct and deconstruct safe spaces, as well as the very embodiment of harnessed refuge itself. True haven is us.

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SEX BEYOND CONSENT IN J.M. COETZEE'S DISGRACE AND NGŨGĨ WA THIONG'O'S PETALS OF BLOOD

Malia Wright

For the full text, please see the QR code at the end of the excerpt

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the episodes of rape, prostitution, and consensually ambiguous sex in the postcolonial African novels Disgrace by J.M. Coetzee and Petals of Blood by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Drawing on scholarship on sexual consent, it argues that the liberal theories of sexual consent are rigid and offers an alternative way to consider sex that recognizes the complexities of human nature, the connection between identity and sexuality, the limits of autonomy, and the roles of male dominance and female subordination ingrained in patriarchy. The analysis also takes into account the distinct social environments of postcolonial Kenya and post-apartheid South Africa and the ways that racial identities and colonialism complicate sexual consent.

This thesis engages with existing critical work on the novels and liberal theories of consent. There is little scholarship about sexual consent for either primary text or among postcolonialists in general. For this reason, the thesis reads the sexual relationships in the novels through consent theories that, like liberalism, were created in the United States and Europe. In their work, scholars like Ann Cahill, Carole Pateman, David Archard, and Catherine MacKinnon critique the dependence of theories of consent on the liberal democratic values of individualism and autonomy, and challenge the understanding that humans have possessive ownership of themselves and are abstractly equal in society. This thesis extends their arguments that this notion of sexual consent is reductive and does not consider the intensities of human desires and the limited agency of marginalized groups from patriarchal societies to the postcolonial context. Central to the plot of Disgrace is a student-professor relationship and the rape of a white woman by Black men. These events present ideal locations to explore the nuances of rape and intercourse and the ways that social constructions of race and gender infiltrate sex. Petals of Blood follows four protagonists, one of whom is a woman, Wanja, who is sexually promiscuous and has spent many years as a prostitute. Her beauty and sexuality led her to attract many men who feel powerless with desire. Her time as a sex worker and her mobility in her sexual relationships provide complex circumstances for an analysis of possible female agency.

In exploring the ways that sex is a private and personal action but also a socially and politically constructed human behavior, this thesis analyzes what is right or wrong about episodes of sex that go beyond only consent. In doing so, it finds ways that women can

have sexual agency beyond consent as a form of contract. This thesis ultimately pushes for sexuality to be understood as fluid and for social constructions of sexuality to be recognized to allow both women and men to find ways that sex can be safe, equal, and fulfilling.

INTRODUCTION

Sexuality and sex are complex topics. Tied up in sex are some of the most intense and uncontrollable emotions of human nature: love, lust, passion, and desire. Sometimes, the feelings and actions that lead up to, during, and after sex can be inexplicable. Yet, discourses of human sexuality can often be rigid, leaving little room to explore and understand human nature and motivations. This inflexibility can transfer to perceptions of sexual consent.

[...]

It is crucial to continue examining and discussing cases of sexual assault, rape, and the #MeToo movement, but it is also important to keep in mind the limitations of the Western discourse of consent. One way to do this is by investigating how these discussions are complicated in the Global South, specifically in postcolonial contexts.… Consent doesn't effectively define sex in Western spaces, where the theory was created and shaped by Western sexualities and sexual norms, so its flaws are perhaps even more obvious in non-Western, postcolonial societies.

This thesis will explore how consent is complicated through representations of rape and prostitution in J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace and Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's Petals of Blood, two postcolonial African novels. Both novels challenge liberal theories of consent and human rights through their portrayal of the complexities of human nature and gender relations that influence the sex that their characters engage in. By applying the work of consent theorists to the already complicated sexual relationships depicted by Ngũgĩ and Coetzee, this thesis imagines new ways to understand the rights and wrongs of sex outside the inflexible constraints of consent and identifies ways that women can act with agency in sexual relationships. The discussion of sexual consent, rape, and prostitution will focus on heterosexual relationships between cisgender individuals. This is not to say that consent, rape, and prostitution are not or cannot be problems within other kinds of sexual and gendered relationships. They can, but this thesis

will be dealing with the power dynamics between cisgender men and women within patriarchal societies that are often reflected in sexual relations and that make the matter of consent especially complicated.

[...]

POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY, AND PATRIARCHY IN THE REIGN OF EMPRESS WU

Ashley Howard

For the full text, please see the QR code at the bottom of the page

ABSTRACT

The topic of how women in societies with patriarchal ideologies and systems can break through the social hierarchy to establish power and influence and what role religion plays in these types of political issues has been relevant for millennia and is still relevant today. In China and much of ancient East Asia, traditional structures of belief and power tended to be patriarchal, which made it difficult for female leaders to rise to positions of authority. Despite this social system, some women in imperial Chinese history rose above the system to become authority figures. One of these women was Empress Wu Zetian (624-705) of the Tang dynasty, who rose to power to become the sole emperor of China in 690 CE. This thesis examines iconography in Mogao Caves 96 and 321 in Dunhuang, Gansu, two caves constructed by the elite Yin family of Dunhuang under Empress Wu's reign. Using iconographic and archaeological methods, I analyze the murals and statues within the two Yin family caves to understand how Empress Wu and powerful families of this period leveraged popular Buddhist stories and imagery to assert and legitimize authority. These two caves both featured imagery of several Buddhist teachings supporting female authority, suggesting that Buddhist concepts and infrastructure, as well as the ambitions of elite families, were utilized to demonstrate and cultivate political authority throughout her empire.

EPISTEMOLOGY OF COLOR: KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURES IN THE DYE INDUSTRY OF COLONIAL INDIA
Emily Ray

For the full text, please see the QR code at the bottom of the page

INTRODUCTION

What is knowledge? It is a question philosophers have been trying to answer for millennia. The history of science seeks to answer a similar question. How is knowledge developed and how do societies throughout time and space define science? European scientists and historians have come up with very specific guidelines for how scientific knowledge is defined, but knowledge has existed in many forms, and we are only just beginning to investigate alternative, non-written forms of knowledge. One industry that provides a very interesting cross section between science, traditional, and practical knowledge, is dye, especially natural vegetable dyes. For the entirety of Indian civilization, the people of the Asian subcontinent have been known for their fabulously dyed cloth. As the native home of the indigo plant, India has long been involved in the domestic and international textile trade. When the British established a colony in India, they introduced new knowledge structures to the dye industry. In pre-colonial India, the dye industry was extremely regionally specific and dye knowledge was generated through family and village networks and transmitted through the practice of the craft. When British naturalists and botanists came to India, they sought to catalog information in writing for the purpose of finding a universal indigo processing method. These knowledge structures were different both in their transmission and their goals. The native Indian strategy for dye knowledge was transmitted orally and practically and was highly specific and localized in nature. The British sought empirical knowledge that could be recorded in writing for the purposes of collecting, storing, and comparing. Knowledge in the dye industry transitioned from generational craft to empirical science with the invasion of British colonialists.

[...]

This essay aims to explore the production and transmission of knowledge in the Indian dye industry during the colonial period. By providing a contrast between medieval and early colonial dye methods and the later British imperial perspectives, I hope to illustrate the fluidity of knowledge structures within this industry.

[...]