

# INTERRUPTED SILENCE



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Actively Engaged Intellectuals - Intellectually Engaged Activists

## A Letter from Your Editors

While putting together this quarter's newsletter, we thought a lot about political awareness. On the one hand, the knowledge that we have acquired through our studies has made us acutely aware of injustice. Moreover, the critical frameworks that we have gained through our classes forms the lens through which we view the world, allowing us to recognize injustice everywhere from our own interpersonal relationships to university politics to discourses on globalization. International Studies has politicized our minds. On the other hand, our studies are often a practical impediment to political action. Just as nights out, hours of sleep, and the idea of exercising are drowned out by hundreds of pages of readings, so too is action. This was all too apparent this past quarter. When Dr. McQuade published his letter to President Holtschneider, how many of us talked about organizing amongst students on behalf of the faculty but never did? When the university was abuzz about Dean Koocher and his role in aiding and abetting torture, how many of us actively demanded his deposition? With all our talk about police brutality, how many of us actually affirmed the value of black lives through action?

This is not to say that we have to be actively involved in every movement we support. That is clearly impossible. Nor is it to say that knowledge production is not valuable. It is crucial to the transformation of society. Rather, we seek to demand, What *more* can be done? As they say, "With great knowledge, comes great responsibility." *Responsibility* is a big word to throw around. Nonetheless, we at *Interrupted Silence* sense that all of us in the major share this sentiment. For many of us, it may be the reason why we chose to study international studies in the first place. Thus, we find it ironic that the impediment to fulfilling such responsibilities would be the source itself.

With that being said, there is no easy solution. We simply want to suggest a repositioning of responsibility. While we are still responsible for our academic pursuits, we are responsible for so much more.

Sincerely,  
*Interrupted Silence*

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# The League of Revolutionary Black Workers

Jordan Scott

The emancipation of man is the emancipation of labor, and the emancipation of labor is the freeing of that basic majority of workers who are yellow, brown and black.

W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*



With reference to the compelling letter from the editors on the front page of the fall 2015 edition of *Interrupted Silence* which passionately urged its students to “resolve to fight” the “practical depoliticization of the most theoretically politicized student body at DePaul,” I would like to take these pages to tell you a story about a group of young people, some students, some industrial workers, who actively took on racism, capitalism, and imperialism simultaneously. As a master’s student at DePaul working on my thesis, this topic has been the source of continuous intellectual enrichment and personal growth but, perhaps above all else, it has been the cause of demoralizing self-doubt. Beyond the intent of telling you the story of a brave group of radicals, I hope that I am able to help you struggle slightly less on your own research projects. I say this not from a position of authority but rather as someone who still struggles everyday with the grueling tasks of academic research. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) arose out of a volatile political climate in Detroit during the late 1960s. On the national level, the first Civil Rights Act (prohibiting employment discrimination) had been passed in 1964, Malcolm X had been assassinated in 1965, and blacks were becoming more and more disillusioned with liberalism, searching for alternate outlets to combat oppression (i.e. the rise of the Black Panther Party and black nationalism). Meanwhile, frightened white liberals were trying to salvage a liberalism that was becoming increasingly apparent in its failures. In Detroit, a damning critique of white liberalism and conservatism occurred with the racialized (read: black working class vs. a primarily white police force) rebellion or riot (depending on who you ask) of July 1967. The material damage caused by this rebellion was the most to occur in the United States in half a century.

Conditions in the auto industry in Detroit weren’t much better, particularly for black workers. Despite its promises to fight for black workers in the 1940s and the racial egalitarian line it espoused, the United Auto Workers’ Union (UAW), did little to improve the lot of its black members. Black workers still held the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs, and made up a substantially smaller portion of the skilled and white-collar jobs in comparison to their white counterparts.

By 1968 many workers were fed-up with waiting on the UAW to make good on its promises. Revolutionary Union Movements (RUM), willing to combat the company and the UAW simultaneously, working outside of the union confines rather than within them, were springing up. The two most active groups - although certainly not the only ones - were DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) located in Chrysler’s Dodge Main plant in Hamtramck and ELRUM (Eldon Avenue Revolutionary Union Movement) in the Eldon Avenue Gear and Axle plant, importantly Chrysler’s sole gear and axle plant. Furthermore, the majority of workers in both of these plants were black. These groups were moving to produce literature to shed light on the material conditions of black workers and the power that they wielded in changing those conditions via wildcat strikes.

A second element of the LRBW arose out of a revolutionary newspaper called the *Inner City Voice* (ICV), which began publishing in October of 1967. It was published monthly for a year, appealing to a black working class readership. The writers were inspired by V.I. Lenin’s 1901 piece “Where to Begin”, in which Lenin claims that a lasting and conscious movement must ground itself in journalistic literature by and for the people. By the beginning of 1969, the editors of ICV and the leaders of some of the RUM movements began discussing a way to more closely link the existing movements in the

“Our black community is virtually a black working class, because of our relationship to the basic means of production... The racist subordination of black people and black workers creates a privileged status for white people and white workers... The white labor movement has turned its back on the black workers’ problems such as less job security, speed-up, less pay, bad health (silicosis, in particular), the worst kind of jobs, and in most cases exclusion from skilled trades.”

Of course, the companies, the union, and the municipal government did not welcome a group espousing such a radical ideology with open arms. The LRBW met obstacles at every turn. In the cases of two major wildcat strikes headed by League constituents (in one case DRUM and in the other ELRUM) the black workers associated with the organizations took the brunt of the punishment from their employers. This, of course, was not a surprising reaction by Chrysler. What does raise questions, though, is the reaction (or lack of action) of the UAW, whose responsibility it is to defend workers from abuses by the companies. Yet the UAW saw fit to come to the defense of Chrysler rather than the workers they were avowed to defend. A leader of the UAW, Emil Mazey, penned a letter to all 350,000 union members denouncing “black militant violence” while simultaneously trumpeting the idea that the UAW “has done more to further the black man’s cause than any other [union] in the nation.”

In another instance, DRUM ran a candidate, Ron March, for Trustee of UAW Local 3 in which heavy repression was faced. All candidates were permitted to put up posters or pass out leaflets except for March, cars with paraphernalia supporting March or DRUM at the polls were given tickets, and after March won the initial election local police officers went to a bar across the street to harass black workers, which resulted in a physical altercation between workers and cops. A runoff election was scheduled between March and his closest competitor, and the union Local took action. They sent a strongly worded letter to retired workers from the plant encouraging them to exercise their right to vote in this election, a legal but unprecedented move that brought out hundreds of voters who maintained significant racial prejudices. March would ultimately be defeated in the runoff election.

The League wouldn't last long and by mid-1971 was in shambles, mostly due to severe and continued repression, and lack of resources. Still, the LRBW forced the UAW to at least implicitly address the persisting racism within both its leadership and its rank-and-file. Both Douglas Fraser (who would go on to become president of the UAW in 1977) and Mike Hamlin have agreed that much of the racial progress made in the UAW in the 1970s would not have occurred without the LRBW's interjection. Modest as it may have been, the auto industry would see noticeable increases in black foremen and black union stewards that would have been unlikely to occur had a militant separatist movement not occurred specifically to raise awareness of black grievances on the shop floor and within the union. Anyone that is involved in struggle will tell you that the defeats heavily (in quantity and in breadth) outweigh the victories. The LRBW, too, was aware of this as they exclaimed in Maoist fashion "Fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight again... fight on to victory."

## Spring Quarter Electives

Race, Sex, & Difference (INT 307)  
Heidi Nast

Critical Development Theory (INT 309)  
Maureen Sioh

Surveillance & the State (INT 315)  
Brendan McQuade

Society, Politics, & Culture in the Middle East  
(INT 318 Kaveh Ehsani

Law of Intl. Orgs., NGOs, & Global Governance  
(INT 325) Gil Gott

Gender & International Studies (INT 326)  
Shiera Malik

Postcolonialism & Intl. Studies (INT 327)  
Shiera Malik

Revolutions & Peasant Rebellions (INT 360)  
Jose Soltero

The State & Economic Growth in East Asia (INT 364)  
Maureen Sioh

Literature of War in the 20th Century (INT 365)  
Eugene Beiriger

International Environmental Politics (INT 371)  
Cecil Brownlow

Sustainable Urban Development (INT 396)  
Cecil Brownlow

## Rick Snyder's Morning Routine

A cartoon by Rebecca Ansorge



"Keys, lights off, wallet. . . what am I forgetting?"

# Faculty Spotlight: *Elizabeth Fagan*

An interview by Elizabeth Hampson

**Elizabeth Hampson:** So, you're here for a quarter, you're here part-time, what class are you teaching currently?

**Dr. Elizabeth Fagan:** I'm teaching INT 206, which is the identities and boundaries class. The person that they had at the last minute wasn't able to, and it actually connects with my research interests.

**EH:** And you're at U Chicago typically, correct?

**EF:** I finished my degree at U Chicago last summer and right now I'm essentially living the adjunct dream- I'm teaching at the University of Chicago in their core classes so I teach social science theory pretty much, we read Marx and Hegel and stuff like that. And then I also work as a conference coordinator.

**EH:** What are your research interests? I looked a little bit and Armenia is a large part of it, right?

**EF:** So my degree is a dual degree in history and archaeological archeology. What that really meant was that I did an ancient history degree with archaeology, and I looked at the late-Hellenistic, early Roman periods, so about 200 BCE to 200 CE in the South Caucasus. It's this area that is very dynamic and it's at the edges of the Roman Empire, which I think is really interesting in terms of issues like identities and borders.

**EH:** So how the power flows out from the center of the Empire versus how the people on the edges feel.

**EF:** Exactly, yes. Especially because right there, that particular edge of the Roman Empire abutted the Parthian Empire as well, so the Romans and the Parthians kind of fought for control over Armenia, but they mostly didn't succeed. It's that story of the resistance I found fascinating.

**EH:** So you've done archeological expeditions there as well?

**EF:** Yes, yes I have. My dissertation involved coins and inscriptions, and historical evidence more than anything that I've dug, but I've dug at everything from early Bronze Age material sites to late Hellenistic Early Roman sites.

**EH:** Are you still working on that?

**EF:** I'm developing a project to do some survey around what was a really famous Roman city where the Romans in the second century CE tried to move the capital of Armenia. The Armenians were being sort of restive and rebellious, and so to control the population, they deliberately depopulated a major city and moved the capital to this other city. There was a garrison there, which we know because there were inscriptions, but we don't know very much about things like what the impact was of the Roman influence on the ground or even where the garrison was, because Romans set up pretty substantial camps wherever they plopped down their armies. There's been a debate for years about whether the Roman garrison at Vagharshapat was circular or square... Answering that debate is not necessarily my goal, but I think it's time to do survey around the city of Vagharshapat and try to understand the history of that area.

**EH:** That's fascinating - depopulating a city, that's an interesting technology of power.

**EF:** Yes, and it wasn't a matter of totally depopulating the city, but it was a matter of moving the principal city to this other city



for really only about thirty years - that's what we have evidence for so far, in terms of what the material has told us. We actually know how long they were there because there's this inscription there where the Roman emperor's name is scratched out and there were only a few Roman emperors who were so bad that after they died, people defaced their monuments. And one of

**EH:** Oh, was it Gladiator?

**EF:** Yeah, it's Gladiator - that's Commodus in the second century CE.

**EH:** Fun fact to know! So is that the project that you're working on right now that is the most interesting for you?

**EF:** It's what I'm hoping to develop - so I'll be going back to Armenia this summer and reconnect with colleagues, and then next year in the grant cycle, I'll put together grant applications to get funding to do that project.

**EH:** So you have colleagues there - is there a university or a research institute you partner with?

**EF:** It's a research institute. So Armenia was a Soviet republic and the Soviet academic system is a little different from ours. It involves research institutes which have the equivalent of grad students in them. So they go up through college and get the equivalent of a masters, and then they become junior researchers in these institutes. So I have colleagues in the Ancient Archaeology Department there.

**EH:** You just finished your PhD in the summer- do you have any advice for undergraduates who are thinking about going for a PhD, or is it too soon to think about it?

**EF:** I would say make sure you have a clear project, and you already have an advisor relationship in mind. You don't necessarily have to have that advisor relationship created, but you have to have an idea of who you want to work with because having someone in your corner the whole time and having a set project is going to help propel you through. The big danger with grad school is languishing and running out of funding and that

EH: Finally, about DePaul.. I'm just curious because you're here for a quarter, and you probably have a different perspective on the department. Is there some mindset of INT students that could be improved upon?

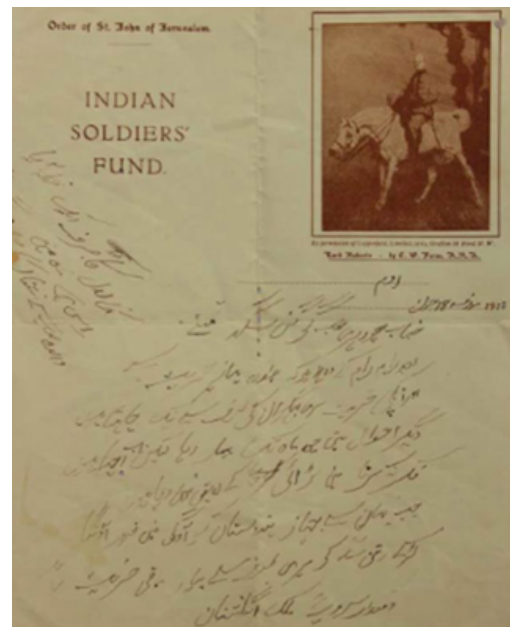
EF: We actually had a really interesting conversation about DePaul identity last week. Because I was kind of curious, our class is about identities and borders, and there's a significant difference for me in teaching first and second-year undergrads at the University of Chicago and teaching majors here. So there's a difference in focus and maturity in some ways, and so I was curious whether that was really a matter of age and the fact that these are majors. And I think in conversation, we discussed how a lot of people have a pragmatic attitude towards college and the classes here, because they have a goal in mind. The classes that I teach at the University of Chicago are liberal arts core courses. They're meant to help the students learn how to analyze texts and how to write about them, and how to think. And here, obviously some of those pedagogical goals are similar, but just the attitude of professionalism is really interesting, and I kind of appreciate it - I feel like students come in and they are ready to go.

## India, Letter-writing, and Intervening in the History of the Great War

Scott Jones

Almost one hundred years ago today, a woman in Rawalpindi, Punjab wrote to her son, a soldier in the Indian Corps of the British Imperial

You write about the family. Well, during the day-time I can watch well over them, but who is to watch over them at night? I have no father or brother, and there is no male relative of yours old enough to protect us. Two of your daughters have no grown up, and God alone is their protector. [...]You say 'I sent you money – spend it and be happy'. My reply is that I have no need of money and clothes. I want you.



This translated excerpt is from one of many thousands of letters sent between correspondents in South Asia and Europe during the First World War. These excerpts exist within reports from British censors who intended to keep close watch on both the morale of the soldiers as well as any potentially seditious rhetoric within letters sent from British India. Western Europe was only one of several regions where colonial armies of the British served between 1914 and 1918. In the case of British India and the Indian Army, some historians have attempted to recover the voices that have, until the last 20 years, been absent from the historical narratives of the First World War.

While my own research into these letters is limited, I have argued elsewhere that the content and more importantly the inflections in these letters reveal a great deal about the individual and "collective" relationships between people writing and sending letters under the gaze of the British administration of India. To me, this framework is an intervention into the many histories which compartmentalize Great War experiences into the categories of "soldier" and "civilian" or "combatant" and "non-combatant." The very existence of the tens of thousands of letters sent to and from South Asia during the war is a testament to the depth of the relationships between soldiers and the "home-front," but greater research into sources such as these letters has and will hopefully continue to complicate historically dominant frameworks for understanding the First World War.

Further, while I feel that the inclusion of South Asian stories from the Great War is severely limited, credit must be given to the scholars that have particularly over the last 20 years dedicated much of their research to historically recovering the Indian Army. As my impatience persists, I must remind myself and others that recovering and reconstructing the past can be a long and difficult process. However, I urge everyone to ask, where, if at all, can "Indian voices of the Great War" be accessed, and by whom? Certainly as DePaul students and faculty, we can use the library and various databases to dig into more recent interventions into Great War history. Yet, when you go onto pbs.org and enter the "Maps & Battles" page on their World War I site, you will find a map of Europe at the top with tabs on the side that lead you to maps or battles strictly limited to the Western front with the Battle of Gallipoli in the margins.

Where is the map of the European colonies in Africa and South Asia; and where is the Ottoman Empire? My point is that the work isn't done when academic history starts recovering lost stories and experiences; rather, it's only just started. Mainstream sources of information such as PBS need to incorporate "new" histories into their narratives; and it is our duty not only to continue to challenge dominant historical narratives but to also make new emerging narratives more accessible outside of academic institutions.



Home

"Recently, I traveled back to my hometown [Karachi, Pakistan] for the winter break to celebrate my brother's wedding. Not only was this a joyous family moment, but it was an opportunity for me to bring back to Pakistan a fresh perspective I had just recently acquired. It had been a year since I picked up a digital camera and since then I have gradually progressed, cultivating a keen interest for portraits and most importantly, street photography. I had been taking pictures in Chicago up until then and I wanted to explore my home city with an attitude of optimism and curiosity. I wanted to see it in a new light. Having a camera in your hands opens up so many different perspectives and makes you see things in a way you never thought possible. There are an endless number of amazing stories waiting to be told and just having a camera on you at all times, lets you capture them and share them with the rest of the world. Most of the pictures I took were an attempt to share a little bit about moments that take place in every day situations while trying to create interesting compositions that contain a painterly feel to them. I went to specific parts of the city that I had never explored properly in order to learn more about my city and maintain that spirit of adventure while being on this journey. I hope to go back soon and explore more and carry out my own signature style of photography that hopefully continues to highlight the resilient nature of Pakistanis."

- Hamza Quadri -



Dust



Crossing



Instinct



Arte



Steel



Bubble



Hangman



Three is a Crowd



Daydream

# Welcome to the Anthropocene

Crystal Bryson

*Man is a complex being: he makes deserts bloom—and lakes die.*

Gil Scott-Heron

As a new arrival in Chicagoland, it took me about seven and a half months to start feeling homesick. I was standing in the Field Museum, staring at a display of different types of rocks, and had a sudden pang of longing to be near the mountains again. Chicago can boast many things, but a vista of stunning sandstone cliffs is not one of them. Popular for overnight backpacking, rock climbing, and—for people like me—finding a nice place to just sit and look at things, the Red River Gorge in Stanton, Kentucky is a canyon system with geological beginnings over 300 million years ago. The Red is famous with the adventurous types for the infinite climbing routes it offers, but those of us with asthma can still appreciate the unique rock formations and waterfalls that are visible from the paths that are easier to tread. I have spent hours following the walls of cliffs, running my hands over the curving rock strata that formed over hundreds of millions of years. Modern humans have been present on the planet for a fraction of the time it took the Gorge to reach its present state—a mere 200,000 years of bumbling around, figuring out agriculture and space flight and progressivism.

I'm a casual nature lover—I just like to splash around in the creeks and look at the pretty vistas and cool rocks. For atmospheric chemists or climate scientists, however, an entirely different meaning can be read in the stratigraphy of a cliff wall. Armed with tools that can measure atmospheric and geological changes across millennia, scientists have posited that human activity has so drastically affected Earth's geology and ecosystems that it has brought on a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene. Formally introduced in a 2008 proposal to the Geological Society of London, the term was introduced in the 1960s, and has since been popularized by the Nobel-winning atmospheric chemist Dr. Paul Crutzen.

In their 2007 article, “The Anthropocene: Are humans now overwhelming the great forces of nature?” Paul Crutzen, Will Steffen, and John McNeill posit that the Anthropocene began with the Industrial Era in 1800-1945, in which industrial societies began to use four to five times as much energy as agrarian societies. Next came the Great Acceleration (1945-present), during which time the human population doubled and the world economy grew fifteen-fold, and there was a vast increase in the number of motor vehicles and spikes in petroleum consumption. The trend of population and consumption growth has continued, with urban areas seeing the greatest leaps. These stages, they argue, could potentially be followed by a third stage, which they tentatively term “Stewards of the Earth System.” This stage may involve one of several ways forward: the business-as-usual approach, mitigation, or geo-engineering. Mitigation would involve improved technology and management, wiser use of resources, control of both human and animal populations, and restoring the natural environment. Geo-engineering involves serious normative ethical questions surrounding the extent to which humans may interfere with and manipulate Earth Systems processes at a global scale.

Several social-critical theorists have criticized the Anthropocene narrative for its species-level indictment of human activity. Members of this camp include Andreas Malm, whose research focuses on the origins of economic dependence on fossil fuels; and Alf Hornborg, a professor whose research interests include the cultural and political dimensions of human environmental relations. The Anthropocene narrative, emerging from the natural sciences, they argue, fails to identify the highly stratified use and abuse of natural resources. Their article poignantly identifies the “infinitesimal fraction of the population of *Homo sapiens*” whose control of the means of production allowed them to begin commissioning and utilizing the tools of the Industrial Revolution that would cause global-scale effects on the Earth system. Driven by profit, only a small group of humans had the power to make decisions that might destroy ecosystems or damage land and seas. Therefore, it is imprecise and misleading to see an epochal change as a product of the human species, as the Anthropocene narrative seems inclined to label it. This critique raises important points as humans—to use the broad brushstrokes of the Anthropocene school—begin to consider energy transitions and various solutions to the harm wrought in earlier generations. The courses of action will, once again, be set not by the entire human species, but by the small group in power. Any solution or radical change is bound to be expensive, and it is unlikely that the cost will be spread equally across the whole of the human species. Critics of the Anthropocene narrative argue against the equal sharing of blame implied by the species-level analysis of the natural sciences, and thus against a species-level reckoning in which the powerful may do their best to insulate themselves from any fallout of their abuse of the earth.

Anyone who has spent a day perched on the side of a cliff looking over a river and trees as far as the eye can see is tempted to think they've found a respite from the messiness of social debate. Unfortunately for those who spent an afternoon huffing and puffing up a mountain in search of that perch, the debate is written into the walls of the cliffs themselves. The International Commission on Stratigraphy is set to review a proposal on the Anthropocene later this year. Pending their approval, it will be sent on for ratification by the International Union of Geological Sciences before the term's formal adoption and use. The backing of these institutional giants may usher in the third Anthropocene stage of Earth Stewardship proposed by Crutzen; while this may seem a victory against climate change deniers, the debate must expand and address these issues of disproportionate blame and responsibility. If there is a species-level responsibility that we all share, it is to prevent further abuse and exploitation not only of our planet but of the vulnerable groups that share it with us.

# Admission of Failure or Declaration of Independence?

## *Understanding the Paris Agreement*

David Purucker

On December 12, 2015, the member countries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) announced the final draft of the "Paris Agreement", an international accord to limit the emissions of greenhouse gases. It is the first international agreement governing climate change to be established since the de facto death of the Kyoto Protocol, and the first truly international climate change agreement, with consensus approval of all 195 member states. Ban-Ki Moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations, called the agreement "a historic moment", and Barack Obama said that the UNFCCC has "shown that the world has both the will and the ability to take on this challenge." After a quarter-century of half-measures and false starts, it appears that the international climate change regime may have finally produced a meaningful response to the climate crisis. But can the Paris Agreement meet its goals? What are its goals?



As a document, the Paris Agreement is a stellar piece of diplomatic craftsmanship. It needed to be, because international action to confront climate change is a highly politicized project. The structure of the agreement was shaped profoundly by a foundational dispute among global economic and political elites: the principle of "common but differentiated" responsibilities. This idea holds that all countries are in some way historically responsible for climate change (and thus obligated to confront it), but that this collective responsibility is unevenly distributed in the world-system. Put simply, the principle maintains that developed countries, who industrialized early and have massively exploited fossil fuels for at least 120 years, bear a much larger climate debt than currently developing countries, and should therefore carry out the bulk of emissions cuts. Such a system has clear moral appeal, but has been politically difficult to enact.

The Paris Agreement abandons the common but differentiated mitigation principle. Unlike past UNFCCC accords (namely Kyoto), the Agreement has a bottom-up structure: there are no collectively-decided emissions cuts for any country. Before the drafting process, countries submitted to the UNFCCC declared mitigation contributions - the emissions cuts they plan to achieve by the first "stock-take" conference in 2023. The specific level of cuts were self-determined by countries, rather than by the UNFCCC. The ultimate effectiveness of the Agreement is thus dependent on emissions regimes voluntarily adopted by countries, rather than policies imposed by a nominally independent scientific body such as the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Unlike, say, trade policies or development loans, emissions policy (read: industrial policy) frameworks are subject to weak international enforcement. Countries are required by the Agreement to measure and report progress towards their mitigation and adaptation goals, and to meet to discuss their efforts every five years, beginning in 2018. Enforcement will, in theory, occur through peer pressure: if all member states (and their publics) can see how every other state is doing, then underperforming states will have an incentive to meet their goals and avoid international censure. This "name and shame" system supposedly will ensure full compliance with the voluntary contributions put forward by each country. Importantly, the stock-take conferences are also opportunities to "ratchet up" the effectiveness of the Agreement. The idea here is that countries will present new, more aggressive goals, persistently revising their climate commitments upwards over time.



The Paris Agreement sets a major long-term goal for international climate action: holding global temperatures at or below 2° Celsius above the average temperature prevailing in the preindustrial era. Since the 2010 UNFCCC conference in Cancun, 2° has been the red-line for global climate policymakers. According to the IPCC, a temperature increase beyond 2° risks very serious effects on natural and human systems, including intolerable sea level rise, human displacement, and degradation of agriculture. The accord's drafters also acknowledge the need for a more ambitious target of 1.5°, the "stretch goal" of the Agreement. To reach either goal, the Agreement proposes that countries (here meaning all countries in a general sense, rather than specific states) should peak their greenhouse gas emissions "as soon as possible".

Despite the media fanfare surrounding the conclusion of

Agreement isn't in force. In fact, it hasn't even been ratified. The ratification period will begin on April 22. The Agreement will only enter into force (that is, mitigation monitoring requirements will begin) 30 days after 55 countries representing at least 55% of total global greenhouse gas emissions ratify the agreement.

Those who are invested in the international climate change regime of the UNFCCC - that is, economic and political elites, the media, and many average people - have convinced themselves of two things, and work hard to banish a third thing from their minds. The first is that the politics represented by the international negotiations is the only possible way to confront climate change, and that the international negotiations, by virtue of their multilateral character, represent the collective efforts of all humans everywhere. The second is that the Paris Agreement (achieved through this politics) is a pragmatic and and serious response to the climate crisis that will eventually succeed in blunting the worst effects of changes to natural systems.



It must be acknowledged that the Agreement is indeed a major achievement, viewed from within the logic that produced it. It is an international accord drafted with the input of all 195 negotiating parties. It includes mechanisms that may legitimately slow emissions growth and help the poor adjust to a drastically less hospitable climate. And, most importantly, it seems like it will indeed be ratified and brought into force. These are the most important things the Agreement's architects needed it to achieve. That is, they needed it to achieve something. And it does. Given that in 24 years the UNFCCC has never achieved a workable global agreement to slow climate change, ratification of the Paris Agreement is actually quite remarkable. Thus the celebration and inspirational rhetoric.

But we can't forget the third thing. The thing world leaders don't explicitly say, and in fact discourage us from acknowledging, is that the Paris Agreement is a colossal admission of political and moral failure. When we step out of the bloodless world of international climate negotiations, we see this truth quite clearly. In the many decades which have passed since we've first known about climate change - the increasing concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was noted as early as 1938, and Exxon-Mobil understood the climatic implications of oil extraction and consumption by 1981 - nothing has been accomplished to even slow the growth of emissions increase. Moreover, scientists today have some understanding of just how hot the world may get without immediate mitigation - estimates of the increase consistently run between four and five degrees Celsius by 2100. We know what this will mean: death and immiseration for billions, and mass extinction for non-human life. But the Paris Agreement openly admits that the measures announced by its member parties aren't consistent with the UNFCCC rhetoric of changing the climate's deadly trajectory. Rather, they will lead to a temperature increase between three and four degrees Celsius.

Global elites have sought at every turn to avoid the problem, to continue investing in the construction of an unsustainable world inimical to human survival and well-being. After decades of delay and entrenchment, the climate crisis is now exponentially more dangerous and difficult to resolve. Had the Paris Agreement been ratified in 1985, perhaps it would've had a good chance of limiting warming. But at this point, a full half-century after we first recognized the problem, an "Agreement" to voluntarily slow emissions growth, to be enforced by peer pressure, is not merely inadequate, but a smug declaration of surrender, wrapped in the language of triumph. It's a thinly-veiled admission by the powerful that they will not meaningfully respond to climate change.

Economic and political elites confidently seized the mantle of salvaging a livable future for humans, but the tragedy is - has always been - that they never intended to ensure a future for all humans (let alone non-human life). Rather, as per the prerogatives of capitalism, the world's wealthy will be insulated from climate change, while the rest of the world is left with meager "adaptation". Gallingly, the architects of environmental and social collapse are quite transparent about this. The contradiction between the 2° goal and the emissions policies announced by the largest polluters (China, the United States, the European Union, and Russia) has been openly acknowledged, both in the text of the agreement and in statements from the negotiators. These are always accompanied by a stated faith in the ratchet process to eventually induce more stringent emissions cuts. But don't be fooled: the agreement is comprehensively feeble in comparison to the climate crisis it seeks to address, and is proof that salvation-by-bureaucracy is a dead end.

This is perhaps the most useful thing to come from the Paris Agreement: clarity. The climate justice movement - people everywhere who are fighting for a livable earth-system - should view the Agreement as a clear sign to push forward, because the mantle has finally been given up. Paris should disabuse us, once and for all, of the hope that economic and political elites will swoop in to rescue the world. They will not. They are trying to sell us out, so it is our responsibility to save ourselves and build a better future. Viewed from this lucid position, we should regard the Agreement not as a failure (because it was not really the responsibility of the negotiators to meaningfully succeed), but as a charter for democratic political action, a moral license to do what we need to do. Of course, the authors of the Agreement and their plutocratic allies in business and government don't realize this. They will continue to believe that they have the sole mandate to define a response to climate crisis, and they will undoubtedly increase efforts to repress the climate justice movement. We must not be deterred. The Paris Agreement should be the mark of our separation from the political and economic system which manufactured this crisis. It is our Declaration of Independence, a reminder that climate justice can only be a project of democratic struggle, removed from, and opposed to, the forces of the status quo.

## Third Cultured

A poem by Yvette Mushimiyimana

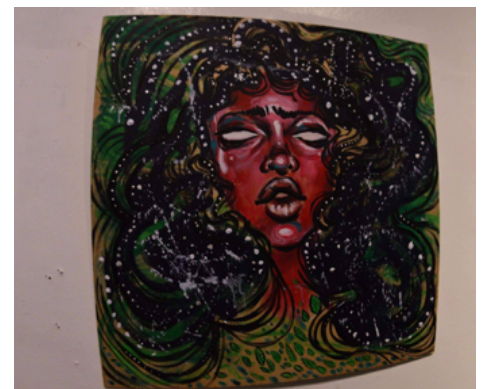
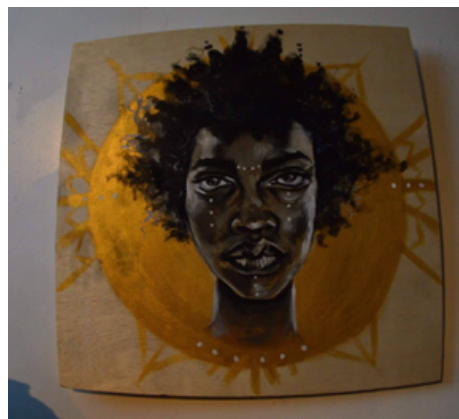
This is for my people who lost their story  
When our parents migrated and couldn't carry no more.  
This is for the tongues that can't fully grasp the language that our skin says we should know  
This is for the citizens born in a country which refused to accept them as their own  
We are nomads  
We've been given no space to be mad  
Told to be grateful for what we have as if we don't see what we have.  
We feel displaced and unsure if we've ever had a place  
We are chased from both sides of our worlds  
To a point that we don't even realize we have a culture, a presence, and value in this world.  
We just haven't been prescribed the words to give us a sense of structure  
We see know base like the ones found in our fathers  
Found under the ground where our mothers planted us  
in this new world.  
So as we swim for our families stories lost at sea  
Let's not drown in these oceans.  
Or even tread just to stay alive  
Let's fly and breathe  
See our electricity  
In I  
Not they  
For our authenticity.

## Women and the Earth

a series by Sylwia Kusiak

"A few words about my recent series... I believe in building an enriching space for women to redefine, explore and share our experience with femininity and womanhood. My art seeks to fuel the constant movement of power, love and tenderness that reconnects us all with the raw strength of nature. Where masculinity and femininity simultaneously intertwine, burning through our blood and setting fields ablaze with wild flowers and nourishment for all creatures on earth.

Women and the earth share a similar history. Conquered, claimed, commodified, controlled, militarized, used and abused. Depleted of resources ...causing dangerous shifts of change, disillusionment and pain. Stories of colonization, war, migration now blanketed by the impatient hopes of the American Dream. In a world that feeds off our insecurities and bombards us with empty materialism... Artists exist to resist, inspired by resistance and inspiring resistance. I honor the women who resist with their ancient knowledge of herbs, plants, harvests, politics, spirituality and compassion. And I hope to inspire all to cherish and continue this knowledge."



# Punching a Monet Painting

A poem by Taylor Soto

Always craving more unable to give voice to the dissatisfaction stewing like warm spit sitting in the penultimate sip of a forgotten beer bottle

Words fall from behind teeth frivolity staining purposiveness as they lay unmoving on the ground an imitation of planted dollar-store silk flowers

A mannequin might feel more its lacquered shell substituting synthetic petal skin a simulacrum of humanity decked out in this spring's latest fashion

At a glance I may be a sunflower but the recollection of my last sensation slips through spaces between gray-matter wrinkles

Self-medicating creative destruction through even more inspired bodily economics left hallowed ground hollowed out in forced experience

Scorched-earth ultimatums leading to stripped-down dirt exposed vulnerabilities could not incite reverberations underneath

Numb nakedness becomes an unnatural state to where irises cannot bear to connect the harsh bareness startlingly blinding

Even in expression fingers march as if attached to an automaton created by scientists attempting to sculpt emotion out of mud

In ancient Hebrew Adam means both man and earth Eve is the source of life dear god why can I not breathe anymore as unalive as artificial blooms?

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## Parasites and Politics

Alexis Stein

When a close friend invited me to travel around her home country of Brazil for the month of December, I didn't think twice. The trip itself was enlightening. Not only was I immersed in a completely new culture, but I was also lucky enough to travel with friends who had never before left the continental United States. I witnessed with delight as an ethnocentric fog cleared from around them. Their anxieties dissipated and left them with a new affinity for questioning cultural stereotypes.

Despite the eye-opening nature of my travels, it was what I brought home with me that aroused my critical, international studies-trained mind: a parasitic hookworm. Yes, the larva in my foot is disgusting and quite itchy. However, its existence changed the way I think about intercultural interactions. My ailment provoked comments from others that alerted of me of a dominant U.S. worldview and made me question its origins and its flaws.

When I first visited my doctor to receive the anti-parasitic medication, he reassured me of how treatable and harmless my hookworm was, yet stated that he "would never risk setting foot in Latin America."

It is true that the tropical climates of these nations breed more disease-carrying insects and parasites. Poverty and improper healthcare can exacerbate the problem in some cases. But, that hardly warrants the sweeping generalizations that led him to dismiss – and refuse to interact with – the 627 million people that reside in Latin America.

My doctor's mindless small talk ignited my anger is because I have heard similar comments dozens of times. I have listened to the generalizations people make about groups, cultures,

and nations, as well as the promises made to never interact with that which is foreign, different, or dangerous. After all, I was warned I might be murdered in Brazil. Yet, here I am, with no more than an innocuous hookworm.

Maybe some of you travelers have heard similar statements, attesting to the utter danger of your next destination. And maybe, like me, you realized that the city in which you arrived was easily navigable with a bit of respect, common sense, and the realization that people are quite similar wherever you go. So, then, why do fellow U.S. Americans often express a fear "foreign" countries and the unknown?

I realize that the attitudes I often experience may be the product of a collective consciousness shaped by historical contingencies. The most recent could be the perceived threat of ISIS or the Recession and the idea that U.S. citizens must cling to their jobs and their values. Regardless of its origins, this worldview functions through fear and a lack of critical thought. We are all beginning to see how dangerous these attitudes can be when they permeate throughout all rungs of society.

My anti-parasitic medication finally arrived in the mail last week, but for some reason I have yet to take the plunge and get rid of my hookworm forever. It is nice to look at it and realize how little harm it has actually caused me in exchange for a month's worth of actual reality. When I see (or feel) it, I wonder about the validity of others' fears and generalizations. I consider the dangers of clinging to these beliefs. But mostly, I hope that critical thinking will open the door to beneficial and considerate interactions at the national and global scale.

# Philosophy's Recoil

Alec Fironini

"No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of society."

Edward Said, *Orientalism*, page 10

The idea for this piece began out of a personal desire to reflect upon my own educational experience within DePaul's philosophy department. A great deal of ink has already been spilt regarding the department and its problematic dismissal of several faculty members. One of these incidents has made its way into a court hearing (*Namita Goswami v. DePaul University*, Peg Birmingham, and Elizabeth Rottenberg). My intention is not to just rehash these contentious legal arguments. What interests me is how these departmental decisions speak to the question of 'what is philosophy' and what, if any, political concerns can be broached within its disciplinary contours. What is immediately obvious is that all of the faculty members who have been fired or forced out were politically motivated thinkers: Tina Chanter (feminism), Namita Goswami (post-colonialism & feminism), and Darrell Moore (critical race theory) to name only a few. Without wanting to downplay the legal dimension of these exclusionary tactics, it is evident that what is being expelled from the department is not just women and men of color but the ideas and critical discourses they were developing and advocating. It is ideas, and not people, that the department found threatening. This was the principal justification for denying Professor Goswami tenure. Professor Goswami's work was criticized for not being sufficiently grounded in continental European theory, and her inability to speak German, despite the fact that she is fluent in five other languages, was used as justification for her dismissal. The interdisciplinary connections and critical input of postcolonial theory, critical race theory, and feminist theory have been effectively forced outside of the discipline's rigid and ossified boundaries.

Philosophy has always had a tenuous relationship with power and politics. In Greek Antiquity the derisive approach to politics was established both in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*. Both Plato and Aristotle grounded philosophical inquiry in the search for absolute Truth and found politics to be of tertiary interest. The central takeaway in Plato's *Republic* is that statecraft should be the task of the enlightened philosopher-kings, whose acquisition of Truth makes them uniquely qualified to structure and order society effectively. Centuries later we find Hegel adopting this Idealist methodology to his reading of history. It was not until Karl Marx's materialist intervention that philosophy found itself capable of properly addressing political economy and history. All of the clichés about Marx flipping Hegel upside down, or putting him back on his feet, are quite prescient. Not only did Marx open a new field of philosophical investigation – historical materialism – but he also supplied it with a revolutionary call to action: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."

Marx's influence transformed the landscape of Western philosophy in the 20th century. Almost every major school of thought would confront or adopt Marxism in some way: phenomenology and existentialism (Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty), the Frankfurt School (Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse), Structuralism (Louis Althusser), Post-Structuralism (Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze), etc. Although Marx influenced this whole generation of thinkers, very few of them were ever directly engaged in revolutionary class politics. Their contributions were theoretical and their innovations were almost exclusively directed at the level of the superstructure – culture, political institutions, ideology, and hegemony. Although they were uninvolved politically their theoretical innovations helped shed light on the ways in which bourgeois liberal democracy maintains its power (hegemony) and interpolates its cultural values in the subject-formation of its citizenry (ideology). At a certain point these debates within Marxism had become both stale and politically suffocating. For example, in the lead-up to May 1968, Althusser had absorbed the entirety of Marxism and historical materialism into theory itself.

The aftermath of '68 is best defined by the splintering of the revolutionary Left, the destruction of class politics, and the emergence of neo-liberalism. Both philosophy and critical theory responded to this shift by disavowing revolutionary theory in favor of the micro-politics of identity and difference. Michel Foucault's critical history of modernity was the groundbreaking shift in critical perspective. The publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) popularized Foucault's method of discourse analysis as a means of addressing the relationship between power and knowledge, or epistemic power. Both Said and Foucault were seminal figures in the burgeoning field of cultural studies. Their legacy is two-fold. On the one hand, they forever destabilized the notion that knowledge-production, however recondite it may appear, can neutrally observe its object of inquiry. In the particular case of Said, he powerfully revealed the ways in which Western knowledge-production about the Orient was complicit with colonialism. This methodological shift expanded the scope of critical theory to include race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, and ability. As marginalized groups were finally making their way into academia they were able to seize upon these discourses of oppression that were no longer limited solely to class exploitation. Many theorists in the Anglo-American academy began producing intersectional critiques (i.e. University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) that shed light on the connective tissue between capitalist exploitation and racial oppression.

Around the turn of this century DePaul became a welcoming home for these intersectional approaches to critical theory. Professors with diverse expertise in postcolonial theory, critical race theory, and intersectional feminism were introduced into the department. In the past decade almost every one of those faculty members has been dismissed or made to feel unwelcome. Although the department maintains that they "affirm Postcolonial Theory as an essential and vital part of contemporary philosophy," they have acted to the contrary. Any attempt to include it within the core curriculum has been a flimsy gesture. The effect is that complex issues of class, race, gender, nationality, or ability are conceived of as secondary interests that students

might find intellectually stimulating but are in no way essential to serious philosophical thought. The question that I would ask the department is how anyone is expected to produce rigorous scholarship without also reflecting on their positionality? Or, to use more philosophically friendly parlance, are we to suddenly dismiss the epistemic power that knowledge-production is intrinsically bound together with? There is a frightening tendency to think of post-structural critique as mere navel-gazing, or as if it was philosophy's self-conscious moment that has since been played out.

This regressive and exclusionary turn has had a profound effect on the type of philosophy that is found within the department. On the one hand there is the reemergence of metaphysics, especially amongst the Heidegger scholars, who stubbornly maintain the antiquated practice of speaking Truth qua Truth. On the other hand, when the theoretical contributions of the last century are given its due diligence, it is through a distorted and magnified Nietzschean influence, so that discourse analysis is inflated to such extremes that all truth-content is thought to be unintelligible and indecipherable due to the very nature of language itself. The Derrida scholars sustain this linguistic turn and their toxic handling of textuality has long since lost any connection to even an imagined outside world.

It is important to emphasize that the department is not monolithic. Despite the many successful attempts by certain department members to silence these active, critical discourses, there will always be room to maneuver in the margins. Repression of this sort is never totalizing. There are several active faculty members and plenty of graduate students whose work evades the problematic, predominant, and regressive trends. It would not be possible for me to list everyone but I would like to thank the many professors and graduate students who I've had the pleasure of getting to know over these past four years. Their unparalleled brilliance and intellectual passion has been both stimulating and inspiring. I can only hope that someday the department will realize that these individuals are the defibrillators that they are so desperately in need of.

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## The Big Short: The "Feel-Bad" Movie of 2015

Taylor Soto

Adam McKay, known for *Funny or Die* and directing movies engineered to get audience laughs, such as *Anchorman* and *Stepbrothers*, now wants us to get angry. In *The Big Short*, based on the book *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine* by Michael Lewis, McKay pulls no punches in telling the story leading up to the financial meltdown. The audience watches as the main characters realize the housing bubble is about to burst—and then we watch them make money after nobody believes them. In this movie, there are no winners. In interviews about the film, McKay mentioned that he was angry that people stopped talking about what happened during the financial crisis. In this film, he uses an all-star cast (Ryan Gosling, Steve Carell, Brad Pitt, and Christian Bale, to name just a few) to tell the stories of the real main figures involved in the crisis, such as Dr. Michael Burry and Steve Eisman. While a topic such as the financial crisis may seem filled with unfamiliar terms such as “credit default swaps” and “derivatives”, the film chooses to pause and break the fourth wall by using celebrities to demystify financial jargon (made to be intentionally confusing in order to avoid regulation) in order to make the crisis more accessible to a wider audience.

The target audience is the key to this movie. McKay uses star power and entertainment in order to pull in a wide general audience and breaks down opaque terms for them to understand what really happened in the mid-2000s to cause such a devastating financial crisis. He is pointing fingers at the people who allowed it to happen, unhappy with the fact that one person went to jail while so many perpetuated a system they knew would come tumbling down. McKay is pulling back the curtain and showing his audience the human element behind the financial crisis, a human element that is very much still unchecked almost ten years after the crisis. While there are some humorous and entertaining moments within this film, it mostly leaves the viewer angry and horrified. The worst part is that those who became rich out of manipulating the devastation were never punished. How could we, as a society, allow this to happen? Even worse, after going through such a terrible financial crisis, how can we not have done anything afterwards to prevent it from happening again? This movie, despite the previous comedies of its director, is not meant to make you feel good. It is meant to inform and to make you angry. However, I would recommend this “feel-bad” movie to everyone, but especially to people who are unfamiliar with what happened during 2008. While the film in itself is not hopeful, especially with its eerie warning about water resources at the end, one can hope that its information and anger can inspire real political change. Its release was timed almost perfectly during a heated, touchstone Presidential race—and it is especially relevant with the message of certain candidates, such as Bernie Sanders.

While the *Big Short* is a good introduction to the events of the financial crisis, it tends to focus more on its characters while painting a general picture. If you would like to learn more about this topic, this is a short list of good documentaries and books on the subject:

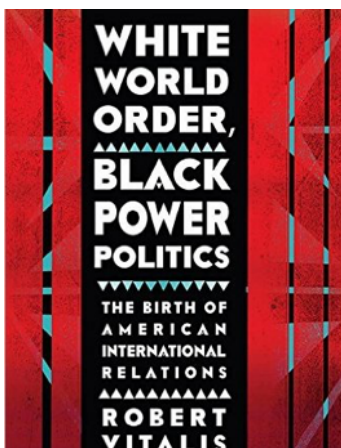
*The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine* (2010) by Michael Lewis (the novel on which the film was based)

*Inside Job* (2010) a documentary directed by Charles Ferguson (bonus: narrated by Matt Damon and my personal recommendation)

*Lost Decades: The Making of America's Debt Crisis and the Long Recovery* (2011) by Jeffry Frieden and Menzie Chinn

*Too Big to Fail: The Inside Story of How Wall Street and Washington Fought to Save the Financial System—and Themselves* (2009) by Andrew Ross Sorkin (this one tells the story from the perspective from the point of view of the CEOs and U.S. government regulators and was also made into a movie by HBO)

# Music, Movies, and Must-Reads



Join the INT book club next quarter in reading *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations*. In the book Robert Vitalis harshly criticizes the foundations of the discipline of IR in the US, which he argues was originally constituted by "biological racism and resource imperialism." Importantly, Vitalis gives voice to those who have been systematically written out of the discipline, demanding his readers to call into question a canon that has for so long ignored its racist and imperial history.

You will also have the opportunity to hear Vitalis speak about the book at an International Studies event this coming quarter!

Mashrou' Leila's most recent album, *Ibn El Leil*, beautifully captures the paradoxes of Beirut nightlife: While one song relates the all at once thrilling and shameful experience of a romantic encounter between two men at a club, another presents the irony of a birthday celebration cut short by a deadly shooting. Meanwhile, the juxtaposition of these haunting lyrics with rhythmic, intoxicating electric melodies seems to depict the bizarre anomaly of life as a young Beirutis.

If you like what you hear, the band will be in Chicago in the beginning of June.



It's not every day that you hear environmentalists challenging GreenPeace and the Sierra Club. Nonetheless, that is exactly what Kip Andersen and Keegen Kuhn do in *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret*. This infuriating documentary seeks to answer a baffling question: why aren't environmentalists talking about the biggest driver of climate change - animal agriculture? which is (surprise) animal agriculture. Not only is the film extremely informative, but it also sheds light on the less conspicuous political, corporate, and cultural impediments to environmental justice. A definite must-watch and it's on Netflix!



For those of us who are taking Dr. Malik's course on "Culture and Inequality," *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* has not only been a refreshingly accessible text, but it has also been one of the most enlightening. Through a series of essays, James Ferguson discusses the troubling paradox faced by academics when discussing "Africa." On the one hand, the very category of "Africa" is problematic insofar as it is a colonial construction that fails to acknowledge the heterogeneity and complexity of the continent. On the other hand, it is "also a category that is 'real'" and "imposed with force." It is a category "within which, and according to which people must live" and therefore requires attention. This is a definite must-read for anyone interested in the intersections of neoliberalism, anthropology, race, and global inequality.



# Student Spotlight: *Dina Abdalla*

An interview by Maha Abdelwahab

**Maha Abdelwahab:** So you just came back from Egypt, how does it feel to be back in the US after studying abroad?

**Dina Abdalla:** At first, there was a lot of culture shock. It's getting better, I am re-adjusting and I'm starting to get used to the same routine. Everything feels the same but at the same time it sort of doesn't. In essence, I feel like a foreigner here. But my family has been back and forth for the past twenty years. Egypt is not something foreign to me. So going to Egypt was not studying abroad for me. I felt like I was going home in a sense.

**MA:** Talk about the culture shock.

**DA:** I got culture shock because I forgot about all of these consumer products that we have. So I came back and I was like oh my god, twenty different types of coffees you can order, different types of food, fifty sushi joints on one street. It's hard to explain after being away for so long. I was staying by the American University in Cairo which is in the newly developed part of Cairo and it's very nice, and it's where the elite live. The consumerism is there but it still feels different. Because it's like, you're in the middle of the desert and then you see Starbucks and you're like "Oh, this is cool", and you appreciate it for what it is - something cute. But you don't really think about how it got there and how it really doesn't belong there. And then you come here and you see where it actually belongs, it's a totally different feeling. It's weird, I can't describe it.

I also forgot about how people interact with each other here. People make meetings to sit down and have coffee. Friends will say "Oh, I'll pencil you in at this time for 20 minutes, because the rest of my day is filled." That doesn't happen in Egypt. Over there we can go sit and have coffee for like 4 hours and everyone is okay with that. People take their time. It gets to the point where you can finish an entire pack of cigarettes and have to go buy another pack from how long the sitting is. Time is not a concept there. Time here is different... every second matters. People never want to waste time. It's a concept that I understood when I was here but when I came back, it was kind of foreign to me.

**MA:** So describe your experience there overall - what were the worst and best parts?

**DA:** I guess the best part is that, being back here I realize that, timing is everything, pace is everything. There's no spontaneity. But there, there's no concept of time, everyone is spontaneous, and me being a spontaneous person, being there made me feel so alive. Cairo is really the city that never sleeps. If I was up at 3 AM working on something with my roommates and if we get hungry, we go have dinner at 3 AM. Nothing ever closes because there's no concept of time. It's beautiful.

It's a good and a bad thing I guess because when there's no concept of time in a purely bureaucratic country which is what Egypt is, things don't get done. That's what's bad about it. In the political sense and all other senses. Doing basic things can get very difficult sometimes.

The worst thing was that it can get pretty harsh over there. In the sense that, it's a very classist society. Cairo is 30



million people and over half of them are living in slums. The 1% is a very obvious group.

There are a few instances that made me realize this.

One time I was in Zamalek which is an upper-class district. There's streets right in front of the Nile, and the Nile towers and all these restaurants. And we see this couple that we can tell are poor. He smacks her in the face really hard, and no one says anything or does anything. I guess because domestic violence is apparent and evident in every society but in places like the US it's behind closed doors, but there...

One of my friends yelled at the husband and the husband responded by saying "That's my wife, I can do whatever I want with her."

So that was one situation that made me reflect and think - what would have happened if that occurred in Chicago? I've seen instances of domestic violence on the CTA before and things like that, but they aren't that extreme. Because the thing is, Egypt is third-world at the end of the day, so it gets brutal in the sense that these things are normalized. They're normalized in Egypt but here they aren't, even though they happen.

One time there was someone threatening my roommates and I so we called the Embassy and they told us to call the police. The police didn't do anything so I had to call a family member and that was the only way I got any help. There's this system in Egypt called the Wasta, you know? Anything you want in Egypt, regardless of what it is, you have to have a connection.

**MA:** So in the topic of overt violence, how do you think the situation and conversations on sexual harassment has changed in Egypt since the revolution?

**DA:** Yeah, so that was my first time going back to Egypt since their revolution and one thing that has changed is that, well... By chance, I've never had any physical assaults happen to me - just your basic cat calls and verbal harassment, which happens here all the time.

But what's changed a lot is that women are more active about it. I noticed that women were not afraid to publicly

shame their harassers if they were being harassed.

Another thing I saw which was revolutionary for me was that in several districts in Cairo, I would see harassment happen and it would be the men who called out the harassers, which is something that almost never happens.

But yes, sexual assault in Egypt is being talked about so much to the point that the accusation of being a sexual harasser now is awful. And now it's changing the way the conversation on sexual harassment occurs.

I didn't focus so much on that during my time there though. There are structural issues in society that need to be addressed. Sure, sexual assault is an important thing to consider, but that's just the face of the struggle. There are deeper aspects of it that need to be addressed. For example, there is severe patriarchy that isn't being addressed, the degradation of morals, the degradation of society. All of those come from economic issues. These are the roots of the issues and what we need to talk about.

MA: Talk about the political climate in Egypt now.

DA: There is no political climate. It's nonexistent. The deep state has, in essence, squelched all dissidence and destroyed all protests. Protests happen, I guess, but not at the same level as we saw in 2011, 2012. The military was strategic in the way that it destroyed its opposition.

And its opposition came in a few different forms. The first is the Muslim Brotherhood, and it's very obvious what they did to them: instituted a coup d'état to overthrow them. They actually judicially killed a lot of the Muslim Brothers that are left over in Egypt. Liberals are constantly being arrested and put in jail. Liberal activists, leftists, Marxists, politicians, journalists. Especially journalists. Egypt is the second-highest country with the number of jailed journalists. The first is China. We currently have 24 jailed journalists in Egypt, which obviously speaks to how there is no freedom of press or expression in civil society.

We also have a huge population of "ultras", who are the

football hooligans. In Egypt, it's the soccer teams Zamalek and Ahly who are notorious for street battles with the police. You can see their graffiti everywhere in Cairo. They have their ASAB - "all cops are bastards" - slogans. They were a force to be reckoned with during the revolution. Their numbers are huge - they are in the hundreds of thousands. But the military has strategically alienated them with several massacres. One of them - I was in Egypt when it happened - was the Zamalek massacre in late January or February of last year. They killed 25 Zamalek fans at a football game. And they do this because it's a strategy to squash dissent. And you see there has been little opposition from Egypt's largest minority which are the Coptic Christians, something like 15 to 20 million people, since the Maspero massacre in 2012 when Christians were protesting the demolition of a church in southern Egypt. They were protesting in downtown Cairo and the military and police responded very violently and killed somewhere from 25-30 Christians. Since then, you haven't really seen major opposition, actually you see Christians gravitating towards the military and Sisi due to the threat they feel, especially with the rising Islamist parties and things like this.

MA: So why do you think that the overthrow of Mubarak wasn't the proper way to revolutionize Egypt?

DA: I don't think I can comment on what was the right way to overthrow Mubarak because I wasn't a part of the revolution. I didn't go to Tahrir during the 18 days, but I have many friends who were there and who were big leaders during the protests. The only thing I want to say is that overthrowing Mubarak was basically like cutting off the head of the Hydra of Lema, you know? Every time you cut off one head and it grows two more. You didn't get it at the root, you know? And the root of Egypt's problems in my opinion is the military gents and the security apparatus and the police. When the revolution happened, there was a lot of talk around protesting police brutality, which is certainly a huge issue in Egypt, but what flew over a lot of our heads was the bigger issue we were protesting, which was the neoliberal crony capitalist state in which more than 80% of the country lives on less than \$2 a day. This is what we are protesting. This is the real issue. And this is why the revolution failed in my opinion, it failed because we didn't get it at its core.

MA: But don't you think that the overthrow of Mubarak was revolutionary in itself?

DA: Of course. Of course. This is the first time that this has happened in the modern Arab world after Tunisia. Hosni Mubarak was the father figure of the country. The rhetoric around Egyptian politics is very paternalistic. When speeches were being made, we were referred to as his children and this is how he had been talking to the country for the past thirty years. So it's revolutionary for us to undermine his image and then overthrow him. It shows you how Egypt's revolution was organic and homegrown. It was a grassroots movement and you see that because the opposition didn't know how to move afterwards. There was very little planning, it was very spontaneous, which shows you its authenticity.

MA: How do you think Egyptians can reclaim the revolution? Or is that even possible at this point?

DA: The state of affairs is so bleak right now that a question like this is hard for me to comprehend because of what I've



seen in the past year. In the past year, I've seen rapid militarization of Cairo's capital. I've never seen so many checkpoints in the city. And police brutality, I saw so much. I've never seen so much brainwashing in my life, and people are loving it, they're eating it up. Sisi has the facade of being the savior of the Egyptian nation. We are talking about a society that has a bad illiteracy rate, it's something like 30 or 40%, so I don't know a society gets revolutionized when basic things like reading or writing are taken away from them. The current public education system is one of the worst in the world. In essence we don't even have schools. Families currently spend 1/5 of their income on private tutoring because there is no education system. SO, I think for Egypt to be revolutionized I think that the public education sector needs to be revolutionized and they don't want that.

**MA:** The call for re- distribution of wealth was one of the main issues talked about in 2011 and 2012, how do you think that this topic can be re-addressed?

**DA:** I think re-distributing wealth in Egypt is almost impossible because there's the system of the Wasta - getting where you need to get in terms of getting a job, building a house, doing anything. Because society is so classist, I don't know how it would work. I mean, we had a revolution to do that but it turned on its head. It was honestly a source of depression for me when I was there for the past year. Egyptians have been struggling so much for basic rights.

These are basic rights we are talking about. We aren't talking about anything extra. People just want to be able to send their kids to school and get a decent education from a teacher that is actually educated. Egyptians already deal with so much psychological stress and trauma and then on top of it the issue of police brutality. Not to mention the issue of bribery, there's constant bribery and corruption everywhere. How many times have I seen at a checkpoint someone having to bribe the officer? How many stories from taxi drivers have I heard for getting a 200 pound ticket for not wearing their seat belt, which is ridiculous. No one in Egypt wears their seat belts, they actually import cars that don't have seat belts. How are you going to wear a seat belt in a car that doesn't have a seat belt?

**MA:** Well, what about the people's spirit? Has the Egyptian spirit been squashed or re-directed somehow?

**DA:** The spirit is definitely still there. Egyptians are one of the friendliest, warmest, most hospitable people I've ever seen in my life. You'll never go to a country like Egypt and get the warm welcome from its citizens anywhere else. There are places that I've traveled to for example, Costa Rica, and people there who are also very poor, but they had such a friendly nature towards foreigners that reminded me of Egyptians. But yes, the spirit is there. Egypt has always been a place in the imaginations of almost everyone. Everyone wants to go see it and experience it. Both white Western people who do it for tourist reasons, but also Western people of color who want to go discover it for themselves. It becomes a society that you go to and you discover yourself. As cliché as it sounds, it's true. Because it's a place where you are tested and you have to see how strong your personality is - what you're able to handle and what you can't handle. For me, I kind of threw myself in the middle of it. I was there without family, without a support system, so I kind of took it all in- the good and the bad. And when I took in



in the bad, it affected me in a big way. It created a lot of anxiety that I haven't had before in my life.

**MA:** I recall a few days ago you called America an "uncultured wasteland", and said that your heart will always be in Egypt - can you talk about this more?

**DA:** Oh yeah, I did call it an uncultured wasteland but I think that was coming from a place of frustration when I was still first adjusting.

Sure, my heart's in Egypt but I still don't quite completely fit in there. It's hard to. I don't know how to explain it. Here doesn't feel like home and Egypt doesn't feel like home so where do I create a home? And towards the end of my stay, there was a lot of things that happened to me that made me feel like the society had rejected me. So much so to the point that in the end I felt like Egypt had rejected me. It was really disheartening.

**MA:** Can you give an example?

**DA:** Simply feeling out of place in certain spaces. I attended a semester at the University of Cairo which is where the elite send their kids to school. Their way of thinking didn't really fit in with my way of thinking. I could make friends there, but I didn't really feel like I belonged with them.

I didn't value the way that they wanted to live their lives. They were the type of people that were soaking in their money and wanting to leave Egypt as fast as possible. I was the type of person that was paying attention to everything that is structurally wrong with Egypt, and I wanted to talk about it and do something about it. But they didn't think that way because why would they want to change Egypt? They are the ones benefitting from the way things are now. They are the elite. I met so many people who would see the taxi driver or the doorman as subhuman because that's how classist that society is. And it scared me, it made me be like 'I don't want to be like that'. So i was rejected from the society that I come from - the upper middle class of Egyptian society. I'm not interested in what they are doing or what they want to do. At the same time, I don't fit in with any other type of class or group in Egypt. So where am I? Where do I go from here?

MA: Would you call this an identity crisis?

DA: yeah, of course. I mean, I'm in the process of embracing it. I never did before. I always used to whine about it and want to know where I belong. Now I'm just like, look at the world, globalization is at its peak. The world has never been this global before and I guess I'm just an example of it.

MA: So would you say that a lot of people have this sort of identity crisis?

DA: I don't think that everyone deals with this, no. To understand your identity, to speak about your identity, comes from a place of massive crisis, and I don't think a lot of people think that way. I feel like a lot of people lack critical thinking. It's an issue that requires deeper thought. For me, for example: it hurts to come from a place that is in constant political turmoil and to come from a region that is suffering the worst refugee crisis of the century and to see that the Arab people are being scattered across the world with no true home and no true identity. Palestine and the Golan Heights are being massively colonized by settlers, and every type of Western nation is dropping an air strike on Syria and Iraq. So you're watching the Middle East completely destabilize and from the comfort of your own home, which are these nations that are doing all this war mongering. To know that the tax dollars I pay go to destroy this region really bothers me. It's an uncomfortable and helpless feeling.

MA: How do you feel about the possibility of returning to Egypt now, considering everything that's happened?

DA: Egyptians who leave Egypt are in a self-imposed exile. We leave for many different reasons. We are a very large diaspora. We leave because we have to become economic migrants because the system does not support us. We leave because of brain drain. We are suffering a huge brain drain right now. Professors leave to teach abroad and doctors go to work in the Gulf or Europe. There aren't options in Egypt, and the options that are there are only for the elite. This is what makes me so uncomfortable - if I wanted to go back to Egypt, I could, but I don't want to. It's everything that I stand against. The society that I fit into in Egypt - the upper-middle class - is everything that I personally don't believe in.

People also leave because of political stress. Christians leave because of religious persecution. Everyone leaves for different reasons. The Muslim brotherhood has left because of their persecution. I have friends in Sweden and Germany who had to leave because they were members of the April 6th movement, and now they can't go back. And they leave because they're sick of living in such a brutal society. In essence, it can come down to life or death for many of these people.

MA: You interned in several places during your stay. Talk about these experiences.

DA: So my big internship was with UNHCR. I did a big research project with UN women and then a project with the American University in Cairo's forced migration and refugee studies program. They were all good working experiences but I guess the one that left the largest impact on me was UNHCR.

I worked in RSD, which was the Refugee Status Determination Unit, and I worked with the Appeals, Re-

openings and Unaccompanied Minors division. I worked during the summer and the fall and I basically saw the refugee crisis unraveling before my eyes. I was like, "Oh my God." God put me right in the middle of all of this. While everyone else was reading it on the news, we interns were in it.

The biggest shock for me was seeing all of these cases for re-openings and appeals for the refugees. Because the system is so bureaucratic and the process is so long, so many of them give up and jump ship and take these flimsy ships to Europe. I remember we were scheduling interviews for a few Eritrean refugees that had been left over in the database. Since 2009 they haven't gotten an interview for RSD and I was trying to reach out to them, but most of their phone numbers were unreachable and I thought to myself, they are probably on a boat on their way to Europe, or who knows where they are. They could be dead in the bottom of the Mediterranean because that's what this is.

MA: How do you think this experience affected you personally?

DA: Ok, I'll put it into one thought I had over the summer.

So the get-away for the Egyptian elite is El-Sahel el Shimaly, the North Coast. It's past Alexandria and it's all these resort towns on the Mediterranean and it's so beautiful. One of my cousins brought an apartment in one of these resort towns. It's so nice. It doesn't even look like Egypt, it looks like Los Angeles or something. We went for a weekend and I was sitting and enjoying the Mediterranean. I love the ocean, I'm big on that. So I was sitting and thinking, "Wow, I'm on one side of the Mediterranean enjoying this water and soaking the sun while on the other side of the Mediterranean, my fellow Arabs are dying and drowning in it."

It gave me such an unsettling feeling. To be Arab in the 21st century - it's a situation where either you're lucky as hell or your life is a disaster. You're either living it up in London or you're displaced.

MA: So has that thought been a recurring one for you?

DA: Yeah. I've been following the refugee crisis closely. If you saw last month, 76 thousand people crossed over to Europe which is crazy compared to the 10 thousand from last year. Look at the dramatic surge. As long as the Middle East keeps destabilizing, this will keep happening. What I'm interested in is why refugees haven't come here or why there hasn't been a public demand or support for it like in Canada. They just took 25 thousand and the US numbers are dismal, shameful actually. We need to rally more public support to take more refugees. The US has a share in the responsibility. We are engaging in these air strikes. We are helping destabilize this region. We did this. So we need to own up to this and do what's right. We did this in Vietnam when we took refugees. Sure the Atlantic is big or whatever, but at one point, Europe will overflow.

We are also seeing the rise of extremist parties in Europe that are making it a hellhole for refugees. Last week in Sweden there was a masked mob of men parading around Stockholm's train stations and beating refugees.

MA: So what do you see in your future after graduating DePaul?

DA: Well, if I graduate, first of all (laughs).

In Egypt, I learned that structure and planning isn't always a good thing. Planning doesn't really guarantee anything. But currently I'm interning at Cherif Bassiouni's office doing research on legislation in Egypt, tracking past laws and new legislation being pushed through by the regime. I'm actually doing a lot of research on journalists and their imprisonment which is something I'm very interested in.

I'm interested in research honestly. It's been a strong suit of mine. I would hope to do it but the situation now is that, the death of Giulio last week deterred me. He was the Cambridge student that was killed in Cairo. He was an international student at AUC, I knew him and used to see him all the time which is scary. He was researching independent trade unions in Egypt. They found his body washed up on the side of a ditch in Cairo and it's evident that there was police torture. Cigarette burnings and stab wounds. We know it's the police because in Egypt we have this joke that cigarette burns is the favorite pastime of the police. They like to put their cigarettes out on people.

I would be interested in studying anthropology. I remember when I took 204 with Dr. Kurtovic. It was one of the best classes I've taken at DePaul and she was one of the best professors I've had. I was able to take my research and do it the way that I wanted to do it. I was able to do fieldwork and ethnographic research which is stuff I really like. As a big extrovert, I think this could work to my advantage if I wanted to do anthropology. I'm thinking about doing political anthropology.

I could do it in Egypt. Right now the Fulbright Program in Egypt is suspended, but I'm aware of the advantages I have in the region. I know the language, I know the country and it's people. So I know that I would be capable of doing good work there.

MA: What would you say to anyone who wants to study abroad in Egypt or visit Egypt, or just people who want to do work in the Middle East?

DA: I would say be careful. Recognize your intentions and your privilege. Recognize that you have power and you have rights that people there don't have and will never dream of having. Don't take advantage of the system. Don't make the place what it already is. That pisses me off. There's this thing my friend used to say about foreigners - that they came here to take my job just so that they can have a little bit of fun and be entertained in a new country.

So don't make it an adventure because it shouldn't be. You're in a society where you can be in the position to radically change people's lives. Take advantage of that. So do it for good. Don't do it for egotistical purposes or a white savior complex type of thing. Because I came across too many of those people in Egypt and it really bothered me.

For example, I came across so many Western women who complained about being harassed because they had blonde hair. But you know that every single day there's a housemaid or a waitress getting on a bus and getting physically and sexually harassed and they don't have the ability to do anything about it. And they know that if anything happens to them, there are almost never consequences for the attacker.

And they need to be aware of that. I feel like people here have such a problem admitting their privilege it's so weird. I admit that I have a privilege. It's not evil to admit that. People need to understand this. For me, as a white passing racially ambiguous person, being upper class in both the US and Egypt, of never being stopped by a police officer.. anything, these are a lot of privileges. We need to admit that we have them because when we do, the human brain takes the step of thinking like "Oh I have this good thing, what can I do to make sure that this can happen for other people? That everyone can have this?"

That's what I want, I want everyone to have the privileges that I have. That's what I want to work for. It may be idealistic or naive but it's the world that I want to live in. Which is why I believe in things like redistribution of wealth. I as a person would be more comfortable living in this world if I knew other people had the things that I have.

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