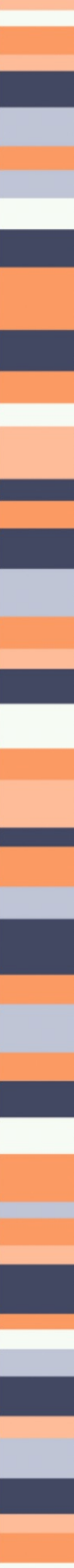


Beyond Boundaries

MASTERING
THE
LIBERAL
ARTS

Volume 3, Fall 2023



Beyond Boundaries: Mastering the Liberal Arts

Issue 3, Fall 2023

Editors:

D'Ago Morales-Ferrari & Carolina Solis (Fall 2023)

Founders:

Cindy Chavez

Catarina Garza

Cristóbal López

Bryan Morales

We would like to give special thanks to all our reviewers who donated their time to reading and selecting works for publication.

Reviewers:

Josie Barret-Silguero

Stephen Logan

Gabriel Rios

Mark Snyder

Special thanks to the University of Texas – San Antonio College of Liberal and Fine Arts for their support of this journal.

Beyond Boundaries would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our faculty liaison, Professor Catherine Clinton. We are greatly appreciative of all her support and tireless efforts.

Beyond Boundaries would also not be possible without the support of Dr. Jason Yaeger. The founders want to express our sincerest thanks to Dr. Yaeger for allowing *Beyond Boundaries* to come to life and for the continued support throughout this year.

Letter from the Editors

We are thrilled to present *Beyond Boundaries: Mastering the Liberal Arts Volume III*. This third volume showcases the continued capabilities of graduate students at the University of Texas San Antonio. As we continue to learn and move forward from the lasting effects of the pandemic, we are proud to have created a journal that allows the phenomenal work of graduate students from the College of Liberal Arts to be displayed. We thank our continued supporters who helped bring together another successful volume of *Beyond Boundaries*.

Special thanks to our faculty advisor, Professor Catherine Clinton, Dr. Yaeger, and Dean Martinez. To our contributors, we appreciate all the effort you have placed into these pieces and thank you for allowing us to publish your hard work.

We are excited to see a continued interest in *Beyond Boundaries* and hope we have created a lasting space for COLFA graduate students to share their achievements. We foresee *Beyond Boundaries* to continue to expand and reach a wider audience. To our readers, enjoy reading Volume III and thank you for your continued support.

D'Ago Morales-Ferrari
Carolina Solis

Table of Contents

- 4 *Decoloniality in Angeline Boulley’s Firekeeper’s Daughter* By: Paulina Hernandez-Trejo
- 14 *Documenting Ancient Maya Incised Graffiti* By: Lauren Nowakowski
- 26 *Review of The Lessons of Terror: A History of Warfare Against Civilians: Why It Has Always Failed, and Why It Will Fail Again* by Caleb Carr By: Grey Miller
- 30 *Cash Crop, Fast Fashion: The Rise and Fall of Flax and Cotton Production on the Global Economy* By: Sia N. Paulsen
- 41 *The Rohingya Refugee Crisis and the Future of the Stateless* By: Afsana Tuly
- 54 *Review of The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson By: Madeline Johnson
- 58 *Patriot, Scholar, Wetback* By: Andrew Alan Klehban
- 60 *RGV RAZA: Mapping Memories & Nosotros la Gente/We the People* By: Imelda Mendoza

Decoloniality in Angeline Boulley's *Firekeeper's Daughter*

By: Paulina Hernandez-Trejo

Department of English, University of Texas at San Antonio

Abstract

Amid the systemic oppression against Indigenous communities in the past centuries, Indigenous authors have been actively decolonizing Western literary paradigms. The nature of decolonization is not a total rejection of Western theory and research, but rather a powerful delinking, reclaiming, and recentering of Indigenous epistemologies and stories. This analysis examines how *Firekeeper's Daughter* becomes a literary force and representation for Indigenous decolonial healing, love, and representation. Angeline Boulley's protagonist, Daunis Fontaine is constantly bridging her maternal white identity with her paternal Ojibwe identity, illuminating the complexity of Indigenous identities. Daunis and her community face generational trauma, femicide, and drug abuse, but Boulley does not leave the reader or Daunis's community in the hopeless "reckoning of current and historical injustices," rather Boulley explores decolonial healing and love through Daunis's actions against these injustices. Additionally, Daunis employs her biracial identity to navigate between studying both Anishinaabe cultural medicinal practices and Western medical practices. Boulley answers Frantz Fanon's call for Indigenous intellectuals to create a new literature, one that accurately represents Indigenous identity and centers decolonial healing, love, and representation.

Introduction

Western epistemologies have been systemically used to justify devastation, genocide, and white supremacy in Indigenous spaces for centuries. Amid genocide and forced displacement, American culture fomented a romanticized nostalgia for “Indianness” starting in the early to mid-1900s (Conley 175). In creating the romanticized “vanishing Indian” trope, fueled by Edward Curtis’ photography, Western films, and the many white-dominated media spaces, genuine Indigenous representation was essentially sabotaged by the white gaze, marred by colonial nostalgia and American exceptionalism.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies* advocates for the telling of counter-stories, which are powerful forms of resistance through the “eyes of the colonized,” providing a space for testimony and restoring spirit to “bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying” (1). The nature of decoloniality is not a total rejection of Western theory and research, but rather a powerful reclaiming and recentering of Indigenous epistemologies. Curtis’ photography perpetrated myths and stereotypes, perverting Native American representation (Katakis 3). Fortunately, many Indigenous artists have used the colonizer’s camera to reclaim their identity. Leslie Marmon Silko’s chapter “The Indian with a Camera” famously states that the “Indian with a camera,” one who reclaims their self-representative image, “is an omen of a time in the future that all Euro-Americans unconsciously dread: the time when the indigenous people of the Americas will retake their land” (178). Hence, using the colonizer’s tools, such as the camera, is decolonial because it provides space for testimony and restores spirit.

Repurposing the camera as a tool for Indigenous empowerment and decoloniality is reminiscent of Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird’s introduction in *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language*, an anthology of native women’s writing. Harjo and Bird both reflect on the implications of writing in non-Native American languages, illuminating the empowerment in “‘reinventing’ in the colonizer’s tongue” and using stories to turn these images around “to mirror an image of the colonized to the colonizers as a process of decolonization” (22). The decolonial act of ‘reinventing’ and writing Indigenous stories “indicates that something is happening...[and] will politicize as well as transform literary expression” (22). Angeline Boulley’s young adult (YA) novel, *Firekeeper’s Daughter*, is one of the many YA novels that are transforming literary expression. *Firekeeper’s Daughter* follows Daunis Fontaine, a half-white, half-Ojibwe young adult through a powerful coming-of-age journey in the Sault Ste. Marie and Sugar Island regions of Michigan. Daunis’ story is complex, illuminating nuances of an Anishinaabe identity with the intersectional nature of being a young woman—all while solving a mystery. The novel is described by Angeline Boulley as an “Indigenous ‘Nancy Drew’ novel” (Bates 20:14). After witnessing a murder, Daunis becomes entangled with a drug-trafficking Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigation that is threatening to split apart her Sugar Island Ojibwe community and family. In addition to being involved in the investigation, Daunis’ uncle recently passed away and her grandmother suffered a stroke shortly after, prompting Daunis to change her college plans and stay close to support her mother.

Daunis and her community face generational trauma, femicide, and drug abuse, but Boulley does not leave the reader or Daunis’ community in the hopeless “reckoning of current and historical injustices” (Boulley), rather the novel explores decolonial healing and love through Daunis taking control and fighting back against these injustices. Thus, this analysis

examines how *Firekeeper's Daughter* becomes a literary force and expression for Indigenous decolonial healing, love, and representation. Daunis' story is powerful because of its elements of decoloniality, echoing Smith's call for testimony and restoring spirit.

Decolonizing Literary Structure & Conventions

Decoloniality does not entirely reject Western standards, and in this case, *Firekeeper's Daughter* does not reject all Western novel standards, in fact, it was categorized as a YA novel when it was published, abiding by mainstream genre categorization. However, just because it doesn't overtly reject all Western conventions does not disqualify its structure from being decolonial, in fact, *Firekeeper's Daughter's* structure reclaims and recenters Indigenous storytelling practices.

For one, *Firekeeper's Daughter* does not translate Ojibwe words, phrases, or conversations for non-Ojibwe speakers, as also noted by Code Switch's host, Karen Bates who interviewed author Angeline Boulley for the episode "The Characters Are the Light." But Boulley is not gatekeeping or excluding non-Ojibwe readers in choosing to not translate Ojibwe in her novel, rather she intended to center her people and community in the story. Often the labor of translating and explaining different cultural practices falls onto BIPOC authors, potentially limiting the style they choose to write in or risk making their text inaccessible to some readers—but the onus of researching cultural practices and the Ojibwe language should fall onto the reader, not the author.

Additionally, for decades, Indigenous children were forced to assimilate to English/French, forcibly removing their native tongue, while also assimilating to American/Canadian cultural practices in residential boarding schools that attempted to "kill the Indian, save the man" (Churchill 14). Indigenous languages themselves are survivors of cultural genocide, as the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians' official website states similarly, "to lose our language would be to lose a part of ourselves...Anishinaabeg communities are working hard to regain what was lost to so many." Thus, Boulley choosing to write in Ojibwe unapologetically and without translations is a celebration of survival, resilience, and a form of decolonial healing.

Firekeeper's Daughter's narrative structure uses the Ojibwe medicine wheel, rather than the classical/Western form of the hero's journey in three acts. The medicine wheel is usually physically configured as a circle with four quadrants (see Fig. 1), but it is also a "process (healing), a ceremony (sweats, sharing circles) and teachings (a code for living)," so it can be a place and simultaneously an action and a presence (McCabe 144). Each of the novel's four parts are labeled by their cardinal directions: Waabanong (East), Zhaawanong (South), Ningaabii' An (West), and Kewaadin (North). Using the Ojibwe medicine wheel in lieu of the hero's journey is decolonial because it centers the Indigenous oral and experiential storytelling format, prioritizing cultural values over stylistic conventions. The medicine wheel, unlike the hero's journey, is deeply spiritual and a cyclical representation of a life-long journey, and the day-to-day journeys. As Karen Bates echoes, Boulley "straight-up Indigenized the structure" (25:36).



Figure 1: The flag of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, based on the medicine wheel.

Waabanong – Daunis’ Differential Consciousness

In addition to shaping the novel’s structure, the medicine wheel also shines a light on Daunis’ internal and external journeys. Each quadrant in the medicine wheel is a cardinal direction, embedded as a guide, and is connected to a part of the person. I am mainly referencing knowledge of the medicine wheel from the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians' official website since both Daunis and Boulley are a part of this community. According to the Sault Tribe’s website, east “is the direction of the physical body...the time of change” (“Our Tribal Flag”). Part of Daunis’ generational trauma is embodying both Ojibwe and French colonial lineages, and engaging a differential consciousness helps her and the readers understand how the different parts of her identity are in conversation with each other, illuminating the complexity of Indigenous identities. Differential consciousness requires enough strength to “confidently commit to a well-defined structure of identity,” enough flexibility to “self-consciously transform that identity” as the circumstances require, and enough grace to “recognize alliance with others committed to egalitarian social relations” (Sandoval 60).

Part I of *Firekeeper’s Daughter* is labeled as Waabanong (East) because “all journeys begin in the eastern direction” (Boulley 3). Waabanong introduces the readers to Daunis’ delicate balance between her Fontaine side and her Firekeeper side. She would begin her mornings by offering semaa at the “eastern base of a tree, where sunlight will touch the tobacco first,” praying to the Creator, and asking for one of the seven grandfathers to guide her through the day—essentially starting her days by connecting with her Firekeeper spirituality (Boulley 5). But she recognizes that her Fontaine side, specifically her grandmother GrandMary, does not agree with her Ojibwe spiritual or healing practices. Daunis recalls GrandMary telling her, “Indian superstitions are not facts, Daunis” (Boulley 10). Meanwhile, Gramma Pearl, her paternal grandmother, “saw connections and teachings that run deeper than our known world”—Daunis’ grandmothers’ “push and pull” on her have been a “tug-of-war [her] entire life” (Boulley 11). Based on Daunis’ description of Gramma Pearl’s ontology, we see Daunis values Gramma

Pearl's ways of seeing the world. Daunis mainly resided with her maternal side, since her parents were unmarried; and even while living with GrandMary devaluing Ojibwe beliefs, Daunis still grew up adopting Ojibwe spiritual practices—showing the strength and flexibility in her differential consciousness. In showing strength and flexibility, she committed to understanding her Firekeeper side and had the flexibility of transforming herself even while residing with her GrandMary's prejudiced beliefs.

Daunis also has enough grace to recognize that she was white and benefited from white privileged as a result. Some of her fellow Ojibwe family members, like her Uncle Art and nieces, are Afro-Indigenous, which affects the way some people speak to them. Daunis' best friend Lily also has a darker skin tone and was often told by her white father and stepmother to not go out in the sun during the summer (Boulley 13). Both Lily and Daunis would joke about the "Acceptable Anishinaabe Skin Tone Continuum," where they both analyze how the Anishinaabe "who land on its outer edges have to put up with different versions of the same bullshit" referring to how Daunis' whiteness is not "Indian enough" and Lily's skin tone is darker than the standard skin tone in their community (Boulley 13). Daunis' differential consciousness helps her understand how she is both privileged by her proximity to whiteness yet also expected to shun her Ojibwe side.

Daunis' identity struggle does not perpetuate the "vanishing Indian" trope nor does it fall into the trope of the "tragic mixed-bloods who most often end up dead" in problematic representations of young adult Indigenous characters (Perez 286). It is because Daunis engages in differential consciousness that her struggle is decolonial and liberating. Boulley's inclusion of these struggles—both the tug-of-war between her Fontaine and Firekeeper ontologies and Daunis' awareness of the "Acceptable Anishinaabe Skin Tone"—show how Indigenous characters, like Daunis, navigate these injustices through a decolonial framework. This powerful literary representation gives hope toward decolonial healing.

Zhaawanong – Decolonial Medicinal Healing

Part II is Zhaawanong (South), denoted as "a time for wandering and wondering" in the journey (Boulley 121), and "represents maturing life...the direction of full understanding" ("Our Tribal Flag"). By this part, Daunis has already experienced the death of her best friend Lily, learned about Jamie's (her love interest) real identity as an undercover agent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the FBI, and also learns that her uncle was a confidential informant for the FBI who died while investigating Sugar Island's inner drug trafficking ring. She has decided to become Ron and Jamie's new confidential informant, investigating who in the tribe is responsible for the new methamphetamine in the region.

Daunis is certainly "wandering and wondering" and maturing during this part of the journey, as she constantly has to go back and forth between deciding how much of her Ojibwe medicinal knowledge she should share with the FBI. Daunis aspires to be a scientist, specifically a doctor, and prides herself on bridging her traditional Ojibwe medicine with Western science and medicine. Daunis recalls during this part of the journey that Gramma Pearl would pour pee into her ears to cure earaches, and later "discovering what [Gramma Pearl] had known: urine is sterile and a substitute for hydrogen peroxide" (Boulley 148). Daunis' ability to see through Western medicine's domineering over non-Western healing practices is key. She understands

that decoloniality means holding her own culture's medicinal practices to the same (or higher) regard as Western medicine.

When the FBI lab informs her that the new strain of methamphetamine could be laced with traditional medicine, Daunis reflects that “this feels wrong” and how she always wanted to show “people that our traditional healers are—and always have been—scientists who use plants as medicine. But this? Looking for traditional medicines to experiment with meth at the request of the FBI? It’s not right. In [her] heart, [she knows] this” (Boulley 130). In decolonizing Western medicinal practices by including her own Ojibwe traditions in her practice, Daunis also understands that decoloniality entails defending her Ojibwe culture. The FBI may see the benefits of this research as “serving a greater good ‘for mankind’ or serving a specific emancipatory goal” for this oppressed community, but historically, “research is not innocent” within Indigenous communities (Smith 2, 5). In agreeing to research traditional Ojibwe medicine for the FBI, Daunis understands the colonial implications. The FBI is trying to eradicate a dangerous drug at whatever cost, even if it means taking a precious medicine away from a community at the slight suspicion that it could be the ingredient laced in the meth. Daunis feels that it is not right in her heart, showing that she is resolute in defending her Ojibwe culture against outsiders with non-innocent intents, a truly decolonial notion. As it later turned out in the novel, Daunis was right—traditional medicines were not used to make methamphetamine.

Ningaabii’ An – Windigo Footprints

Part III is *Ningaabii’ An* (West) and is the part of the journey that focuses on “a time for constant change” (Boulley 405), it is the “direction of the emotional part of ourselves” (“Our Tribal Flag”). Part III is full of change and emotions—Daunis finds out that her stepmom Dana, her half-brother Levi, and other trusted members of the Ojibwe community are responsible for the production and distribution of methamphetamine.

Robin Wall Kimmerer writes a chapter toward the end of her book titled, “Windigo Footprints,” which follows the folklore and beliefs behind the Windigo, which is “a human being who has become a cannibal monster” and “its bite will transform victims into cannibals too” (Kimmerer 304). Starvation was a prominent issue within Indigenous American communities, even during the pre-colonial years, so cultivating the story of the Windigo reinforced the taboo against cannibalism to dissuade community members from succumbing to such an awful and dehumanizing practice. The Windigo has an insatiable hunger, which becomes more ravenous the more it consumes. Kimmerer takes us beyond the folklore of the Windigo and shows us how the Windigo walks among us through the form of an individual in the community that prioritizes their own needs over their community’s needs, and oftentimes at the expense of their community’s wellbeing. Dana, Levi, and the others involved in the methamphetamine operation were Windigos through their selfishness. This selfishness “overpowered their self-control to the point that satisfaction is no longer possible” until they became Windigos (Kimmerer 306). Travis, Heather, Robin, and Lily’s deaths represent the consequences of this insatiable greed.

What do you do when members of your community are responsible for the downfall and deaths of many lives? Where does decoloniality fit when it’s members of the community, not outsiders, that are hurting the whole community? Daunis remembers the Elders, “I’m reminded that our Elders are the greatest resource, embodying our culture and community. Their stories

connect us to our language, medicines, land, clans, songs, and traditions. They are a bridge between the Before and the Now, guiding those of us who will carry on in the Future” (Boulley 453). When Daunis is being kidnapped, it’s the Elders who help her escape. The Elders were not just present to save her life, but they have been present throughout the entire book, helping Daunis learn more stories and traditions. Native and Indigenous Americans have traditionally used oral storytelling and family stories to learn and deal with terrible incidents that happen within one’s family (Silko, “Language” 52). The tragic Native American family stories serve a useful purpose, they bring incidents “down to a level we can deal with,” promoting the idea that if “others have done it before, it cannot be so terrible” and “if others have endured, so can we”—one does not heal by oneself but rather within a community (Silko, “Language” 52). A strong community, one rooted in prioritizing the community’s needs and wellbeing over their individual needs will survive. Indigenous people have survived cultural genocide because of the Elders passing down knowledge through these stories. Firekeeper’s Daughter does not leave the reader or Daunis’ community in a hopeless abyss, rather the novel explores decolonial healing and love through Daunis and her community taking control and fighting back against these injustices.

Kewaadin – Decolonial Healing & Love

Lastly, Part IV is Kewaadin (North) and is a “time for resting and reflecting in the place of dreams, stories, and truth” (Boulley 457), a “time of wisdom...representative of those things that are positive” (“Our Tribal Flag”). Kewaadin encompasses decolonial love and healing. Decolonial healing for Daunis entails healing from the novel’s traumatic events through traditional ceremonial remedies. On Lily’s death anniversary, Daunis prays for “Zaagidiwin. Love” (Boulley 483). To celebrate this love and the end of the mourning period, she’ll also be dancing at a powwow for the first time since her Uncle David died. She partakes in braiding her nieces’ hair, using this time with her family and her people to heal communally from the year’s traumatic events.

Daunis also experiences decolonial healing and love when she participates in another communal healing ceremony, helping her and other women heal after experiencing sexual violence. After Grant Edwards raped her, Daunis felt shame, but she never had a proper time to heal from this trauma until the end of the novel. She is at her Aunt Teddie’s house with other women in her Ojibwe community, and after hearing a story, they all pass a basket with pansies around, picking one up. All the women line up to burn their pansy in the sacred fire, and Daunis reflects on how she feels “comfort in watching the smoke rise to the full moon” (Boulley 481). This is the first time Daunis has felt relief after the traumatic rape.

Daunis engaging in these different forms of decolonial healing are representative of Gerald Vizenor’s term “survivance,” which is active resistance against ongoing oppressive forces (Perez 287). Many YA novel protagonists fight against systems of oppression, much like Katniss Everdeen from the Hunger Games, but unlike many fictional YA protagonists, Indigenous young adults are still experiencing ongoing oppression because there is not a sole enemy. These forces of ongoing oppression are complex, and it’s up to these YA Indigenous novel protagonists like Daunis to seek decolonial healing through their culture to provide hope and examples of “survivance” during these times.

Conclusion

Firekeeper's Daughter also answers Frantz Fanon's call for an accurate representation of Indigenous identity that centers decolonial healing and love. It is a counter-story, showing resistance through the "eyes of the colonized," providing a space for testimony and restoring spirit (Smith 1). Firekeeper's Daughter reinvents the colonizer's tools (and the enemy's language, like Harjo and Bird did in their anthology) by utilizing the "Young Adult" novel framework and then restructuring its pages using the medicine wheel. Bouley's medicine wheel structure provides a beautiful foundation for decoloniality, which is empowering and centers on the Indigenous experience. Each of the four parts aligns with Daunis' journey as processes for healing, incorporating ceremony, and teachings—all entailed within the medicine wheel as actions and presence (McCabe 144). Part I, Waabanong (east), explored the beginning of Daunis' journey and her body (identity) within her white and Indigenous communities, engaging in differential consciousness. Part II, Zhaawanong (south), illustrated how Daunis bridges traditional medicinal practices with Western scientific forms of healing and methodology—a deeply decolonial practice. Part III, Ningaabii' An (west), showed how Windigos perpetuate prioritizing the individual over the community, and how Daunis and her community fight against their own Windigos. Lastly, Part IV, Kewaadin (north), ends the book through Vizenor's idea of survivance, enabled by decolonial healing through community and ceremony.

Daunis and her community experience a variety of injustices through the meth trafficking ring, drug abuse, femicide, and generational trauma; which is common among many books with Native and Indigenous American characters, reminiscent of Sherman Alexie's quote, "I write in blood because I remember what it felt like to bleed" (Perez 290). And like other Native and Indigenous authors, Bouley also arms Indigenous readers with hope within her novel, while realistically depicting the pain and struggle that birth hope. In the Code Switch episode, Bouley reflects that "when you tell a story about your community and you make everyone perfect, that does a disservice. And likewise, if you all that you focus on is trauma then you do a disservice" (26:50). Decolonial love is rooted in the hope for a better tomorrow for people of color, and in this case, decolonial love represents hope for Firekeeper's Indigenous readers amid the liberatory fights against injustice.

Works Cited

- Bates, Karen G, host. "The Characters Are the Light." *Code Switch*, NPR, 17 November 2021, <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1056349778>.
- Boulley, Angeline. *Firekeeper's Daughter*. Henry Holt and Company, 2021. Print.
- Churchill, Ward. *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools*. City Lights Publishers, 2004. Print.
- Conley, Paige A., et al. "8. Strategically Negotiating Essence: Zitkala-Sa's Ethos as Activist." *Rethinking Ethos: A Feminist Ecological Approach to Rhetoric*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2016. Print.
- Harjo, Joy, and Gloria Bird. "Introduction." *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writing of North America*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1998. Print.
- Katakis, Michael. *Excavating Voices: Listening to Photographs of Native Americans*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated, 1998. Print.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Milkweed, 2020. Print.
- McCabe, Glen. "Mind, Body, Emotions and Spirit: Reaching to the Ancestors for Healing." *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* 21.2 (2008): 143-52. Print.
- "Ojibwe Language." *The Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians Official Web Site*, 13 Jun. 2019, <https://www.saulttribe.com/history-a-culture/our-culture/103-ojibwe-language>.
- "Our Tribal Flag." *The Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians Official Web Site*, 28 Jan. 2017, <https://www.saulttribe.com/history-a-culture/our-culture/1334-our-tribal-flag>.
- Perez, Domino Renee. "Not Another Dead Indian: Young Adult Fiction, Survivance, and Sherman Alexie's Flight." *The Lion and the Unicorn*. 41.3 (2017): 285-306. *Project MUSE*. Web.
- Sandoval, Chela. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. 2000. Web
<<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utsa/detail.action?docID=310494>>.
- Silko, Leslie M. "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective." *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. Simon & Schuster, 1997. 48-59. Print.
- . "The Indian with a Camera." *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. Simon & Schuster, 1997. 175-79. Print.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed

Books, 1999. Print.

Documenting Ancient Maya Incised Graffiti

By: Lauren Nowakowski

Department of Anthropology, University of Texas at San Antonio

Introduction

Graffiti is an art form that can be found in various contexts and cultures all around the world, beginning in the ancient past and continuing into the present. Graffiti is broadly defined as an “artistic expression conducted as secondary additions to surfaces in which it did not initially belong” (Lovata and Olton 2016:13; Nowakowski 2023:15). The ancient Maya are one of these cultures who produced graffiti. Ancient Maya graffiti is found in a variety of contexts with highly variable content, making its study rich in providing insights into Maya life. Historically, ancient Maya graffiti has been an understudied topic within Maya archaeology, but with new discoveries, re-analysis of previously encountered instances, and technological advancements in documentation methods there is a constant growth in the ancient graffiti scholarship. The focus of this paper is on different documentation methods, through a case study of Structure A-5-2nd which is located in the main acropolis of El Castillo at Xunantunich in Belize. The techniques examined include Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), hand mapping, Mylar tracing, and the conversion of these methods into digital line drawings. These methods are analyzed by identifying the advantages and disadvantages of each technique, and how these differences impact researchers in variable field settings. This article is a condensed version of the author’s MA thesis (Nowakowski 2023).

Structure A-5-2nd

Xunantunich is an archaeological site located within the Mopan River valley of Belize, and contains numerous instances of ancient Maya graffiti located within a variety of contexts. Structure A-5-2nd contains two vaulted galleries with the southern facing gallery the focus of this study. The southern facing gallery of Structure A-5-2nd contains two rooms with large benches (referred to as Room 1 and Room 2) and a connecting exterior wall (Figure 1). Together these two rooms and exterior wall contain over 500 graffiti elements that were incised and painted into the plastered walls, doorjambs, and benches. The graffiti analyzed in this study are all incised into the walls of Room 2 in Structure A-5-2nd. The graffiti have previously been organized into seventeen different categories of imagery that include: zoomorphic features, anthropomorphic features, architectural features, deity figure, hieroglyphs, markings, unknown imagery, ritual scenes, decorated shapes, line-based elements, and simple shapes (Brown et. al. In Press; McCurdy et al. 2018:188). Due to a variety of factors including the large clustering of graffiti, repeated designs, skill of execution and location within the site’s main acropolis, the graffiti assemblage from Structure A-5-2nd has been interpreted by Brown and colleagues to have performed as a space of specialized instruction for young acolytes (Brown et. al. In Press; McCurdy et al. 2018). The large quantity of graffiti within Structure A-5-2nd is unusual. This makes the space unique when compared to spaces containing Maya graffiti found in other locations, but perfect for providing systematic observations about documentation methodology that can still be useful to other areas.

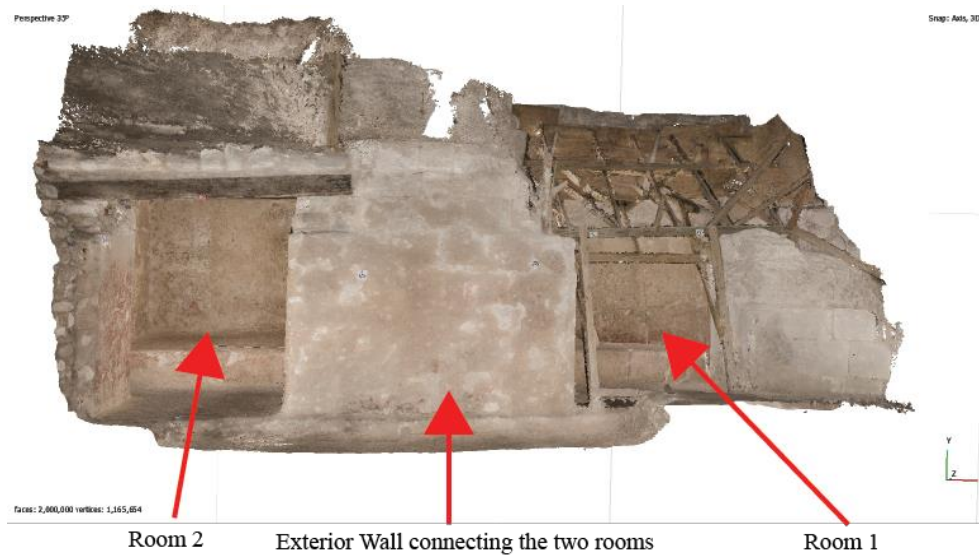


Figure 1: Photogrammetry model of Room 1, Room 2, and the Exterior Wall from the southern gallery of Structure A-5-2nd (model by Neil Dixon)

Documenting Ancient Maya Graffiti

The documentation techniques used to record ancient Maya graffiti have been ever evolving. Some of the techniques that have been incorporated include rubbing, photography, laser scanning, photogrammetry, Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), Mylar tracing, and hand mapping. The growing technological advances along with the broad array of applicable techniques are what underscores the need for researchers to be able to identify and compare different recording methods in order to choose the best approach for documenting graffiti in their specific setting. When documenting the graffiti in Room 2 from Structure A-5-2nd, three techniques were chosen that differ in terms of equipment needed, skills required, funds, and site-specific restraints and requirements. The techniques applied to Structure A-5-2nd are RTI, hand mapping, and Mylar tracing. These three techniques were chosen for this comparative study as they are three common techniques used when documenting graffiti, but they each require vastly different skills and equipment. Their unique differences thus allow for conclusions to be drawn as to how one technique might meet the situational needs of a researcher documenting ancient Maya graffiti better than others.

Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI)

RTI is a digital modeling technique conducted with a DSLR camera that captures ideally 48 images of an object with the light source in each image taken at various oblique angles (Earl et al. 2010; Malzbender et al. 2001). This process requires a DSLR camera, a strong moveable light source, string, scale, tripod, remote flash trigger, two reflective spheres, and a computer. The photographs are processed through the RTI modeling software Relight, which results in the creation of an RTI model that can be manipulated to study the surface texture of an object with a moveable light source, similar to a raking light effect in photography. All of the RTI models of the graffiti from Structure A-5-2nd were done by Neil Dixon (Dixon et al. 2019). Once the model is created it can be analyzed away from the field. In order to digitize the graffiti from the model

screenshots can be taken of specific graffiti which can then be brought into Adobe Illustrator. The researcher can then trace the incised graffiti lines on Illustrator while also accessing the model to study the lines by manipulating the light source, thus creating a digital line drawing.

Hand Mapping

Hand mapping is a technique that involves the creation of scaled maps on graph paper done in the field. The tools required include graph paper, pencils, and a plastic grid or string lines attached to the wall to measure from. For this study, I attached a piece of clear plastic to the plastered walls that included a 1 cm by 1 cm grid drawn on with Sharpie (Figure 2). The graffiti was then drawn at a scale of 1 cm to 1 cm on the corresponding graph paper. Each square on the graph paper corresponded with the same 1 cm by 1 cm square on the plastic grid attached to the wall. The resulting line drawing on the graph paper would later be scanned and brought in to Adobe Illustrator where it would be digitized to create a digital line drawing.

Figure 2: Image of the plastic grid that was placed over the graffiti element being recorded



Figure 3: Image of author conducting Mylar tracing



Mylar Tracing

Mylar tracing involves tracing by hand on the surface being recorded. This method requires a transparent material attached to the wall with small nails, the incised graffiti lines beneath are then traced with a sharpie (Figure 3). For this study a plastic material called Mylar was attached to the plastered walls. Once the graffiti is traced, a to-scale line drawing of the graffiti has been created, which can then later be scanned on to the computer. Once scanned, the line drawing can be digitized in Adobe Illustrator.

Applying the Techniques

Only certain graffiti were chosen for documentation in this comparative analysis. The graffiti chosen came from Room 2 of Structure A-5-2nd, as Room 1 had already been extensively documented during the 2016 field season when it was first exposed (McCurdy et al. 2018). For

this study, I chose 14 areas on the walls of Room 2 based on their level of complexity, location within the rooms, and different densities of graffiti elements ranging from 1 to 17 graffiti total. For each of the 14 areas, I began by conducting hand mapping and then repeating the documentation process with Mylar tracing and RTI mapping. The resulting data from each method was then placed into Adobe Illustrator in order to create digital line drawings (Figure 4). It is necessary to note how my skill as an illustrator is reflected in my results, and that other researchers with distinct strengths and weaknesses may take more or less time to do the same tasks. By mapping these 14 areas I was able to observe the complexity of the graffiti, its location relative to other surfaces within the space, equipment required, time required to document in the field and in subsequent digitization, problems encountered with the techniques, researcher biases that may impact documentation, and situations in which specific techniques might be more effective or ineffective. Through collecting these observations for RTI, hand mapping, and mylar tracing, I was able to clearly compare the techniques across a wide variety of factors.

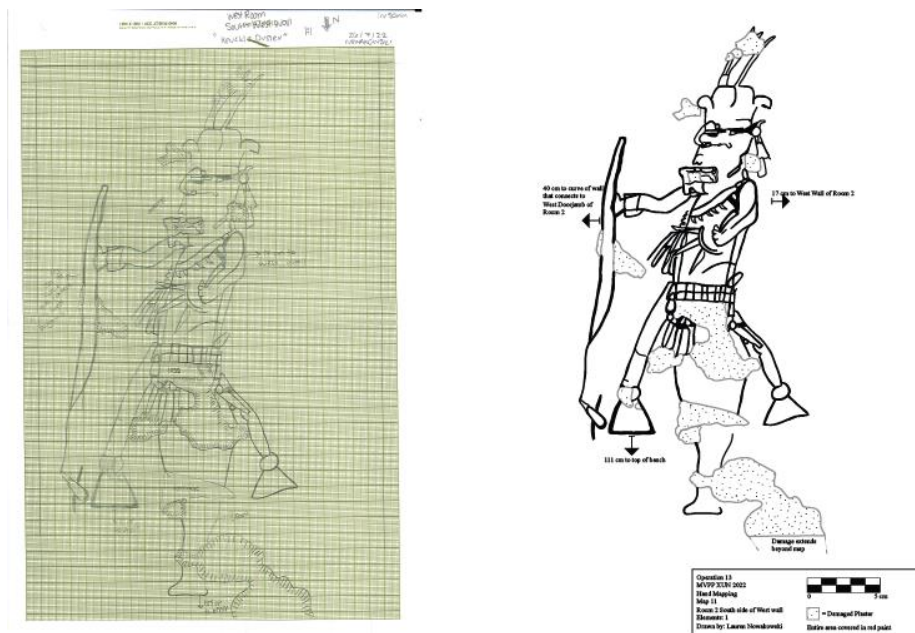


Figure 4: Visualization of the digitization process. The image on the left is the hand drawn map done on graph paper. The image on the right is the digital illustration created in Adobe Illustrator from the hand drawn graph paper map.

Results

Each of the three documentation techniques proved to have certain advantages and disadvantages when applying them to the 14 mapped areas. In order to clearly articulate the strengths and weaknesses of each technique in regard to how they might benefit researchers in different contexts I will compare them within the following domains: preservation concerns, logistical considerations, efficiency, accuracy, applicability in small spaces, and degree of engagement with the graffiti. The results of the time taken to document each method is displayed in Table 1, and the total number of graffiti elements recorded through each technique is displayed in Table 2.

Table 1: Comparison of the time taken to document each method

Map Label	Time taken to document through hand mapping (in minutes)			Time taken to document through RTI (in minutes)			Time taken to document through Mylar tracing (in minutes)		
	In Field	Digitized	Total	In Field	Digitized	Total	In Field	Digitized	Total
Map 1	60	32	92	62	44	106	7	25	32
Map 2	120	57	177	62	65	127	20	29	49
Map 3	80	60	140	62	110	172	25	38	63
Map 4	95	90	185	62	146	208	27	87	114
Map 5	90	80	170	62	96	158	X	X	X
Map 6	100	87	187	62	240	302	X	X	X
Map 7	20	13	33	62	23	85	4	17	21
Map 8	38	38	76	62	61	123	15	28	43
Map 9	51	70	121	62	109	171	18	30	48
Map 10	9	12	21	62	17	79	3	6	9
Map 11	110	107	217	62	91	153	70	62	132
Map 12	26	28	54	62	48	110	14	14	28
Map 13	65	45	110	62	70	132	26	25	51
Map 14	51	80	131	62	90	152	20	40	60
Total	915	799	1,719	868	1,210	2,078	249	401	650

Table 2: Comparison of the number of graffiti elements recorded through the 3 documentation methodologies

Map Label	Hand mapping Elements Recorded		RTI Mapping Elements Recorded		Mylar tracing Elements Recorded	
	#'s of Elements Recorded	Total Elements Recorded	#'s of Elements Recorded	Total Elements Recorded	#'s of Elements Recorded	Total Elements Recorded
Map 1	1, 12, 21	3	1, 12, 19, 21	4	1, 19, 21	3
Map 2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Map 3	1, 2, 3, 8	4	1, 2, 3, 27, 8, 26	6	1, 2, 3, 8	4
Map 4	13, 62,	13	13, 62,	16	13, 62,	12

	63, 79, 60, 59, 58, 14, 53, 55, 56, 52, 93		63, 79, 61, 60, 59, 58, 14, 56, 52, 93, 57, 53, 55, 54		63, 79, 61, 60, 59, 14, 58, 56, 52, 93	
Map 5	1	1	1	1	X	X
Map 6	7, 8, 14, 6, 24, 13, 11, 10, 12, 27	10	5, 29, 7, 8, 14, 25, 6, 27, 24, 13, 32, 30, 10, 11, 9, 12	16	X	X
Map 7	2, 13	2	2, 13	2	2, 13	2
Map 8	6	1	6	1	6	1
Map 9	17, 12, 13, 14	4	12, 13, 14, 15, 17	5	17, 12, 13, 14	4
Map 10	9	1	9	1	9	1
Map 11	1	1	1	1	1	1
Map 12	25, 21, 24, 29, 89	5	25, 21, 22, 24, 29, 89	6	21, 25, 24, 89, 29	5
Map 13	44, 46, 47, 49, 90, 48, 45, 50, 51, 91	10	44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 90, 91, 51, 100	11	44, 45, 46, 48, 47, 49, 50, 51, 90, 91	10
Map 14	7, 9, 10, 77, 64, 65, 76	7	64, 76, 7, 10, 9, 77, 65	7	64, 76, 7, 65, 9, 77, 10	7
Total:		63		78		51

Logistical Considerations and Efficiency

Each of the methods required documentation in the field and later processing away from the field. Once exposed, graffiti should be documented during the field season as the longer the plaster is exposed the more likely that the plaster will degrade. Meaning that time taken, and experience required, are both necessary concerns for a researcher determining their desired documentation technique. Mylar requires the least amount of set up, training, and time, as one

only needs to attach the Mylar to the surface being recorded and then trace the incised lines. Mylar took the least amount of time, totaling only 650 minutes, with both RTI and Hand mapping taking nearly double the time (Table 1). While this method is easy and quick, the researcher may not have the Mylar material readily available in their field setting if they unexpectedly uncover graffiti. Hand mapping is the most accessible method, along with photography, as researchers at field sites would have all of the tools required to conduct it. Hand mapping though is more time consuming than Mylar, and would take a considerable amount of time if the researcher is recording a large amount of graffiti. RTI, requires the most amount of training and additional tools in order to accurately conduct it. While the processing software is free, the in-field documentation process would require a camera, laptop, moveable light source, and small reflective spheres, making this a much costlier endeavor. While RTI requires the most training and tools it is the most accurate of the methods, making it the highly advisable choice for researchers. If RTI is not possible upon first exposure, then it is best to conduct Hand mapping and Mylar tracing, with RTI done at a later date if possible.

Preservation concerns

Of the techniques, RTI was the least invasive, as it required minimal contact with the surfaces being documented. Hand mapping and Mylar tracing both required significantly more contact with the surface, as the hand mapping required the attachment of a clear plastic grid and the Mylar mapping required the Mylar to be attached to the wall. When attaching these plastic pieces to the surfaces of the wall they were attached with small nails to areas that had damaged plaster and/or did not have graffiti present. Therefore, if a researcher is documenting graffiti located on a delicate surface a less invasive technique such as RTI would be preferred above Mylar tracing or hand mapping.

Accuracy

Accurately depicting the graffiti during recording is a necessary consideration when deciding which method is most appropriate for documentation. While Mylar took the least amount of time, this meant a tradeoff in terms of quality when compared to RTI and hand mapping. The lines from Mylar were the thickest and least accurate due to the use of Sharpie and difficulties in seeing the incised lines when tracing through the Mylar plastic. Mylar also recorded the least amount of elements and details when compared to RTI and hand Mapping. In the comparison of graffiti elements recorded across the three techniques RTI resulted in the most detailed depiction with Mylar the least detailed (Table 2). Hand mapping was the second most accurate method, as it resulted in high quality line drawings of graffiti elements that was easy to digitize. The results of this study indicate that the line drawings made using RTI resulted in the highest level of detail and accuracy (Figure 5). RTI was able to record the highest level of detail, and allowed for continual inspection due to the digital availability of the RTI models. Both Mylar tracing and hand mapping can only be inspected in the field, or through use of another technique such as RTI, Photogrammetry, or photography.

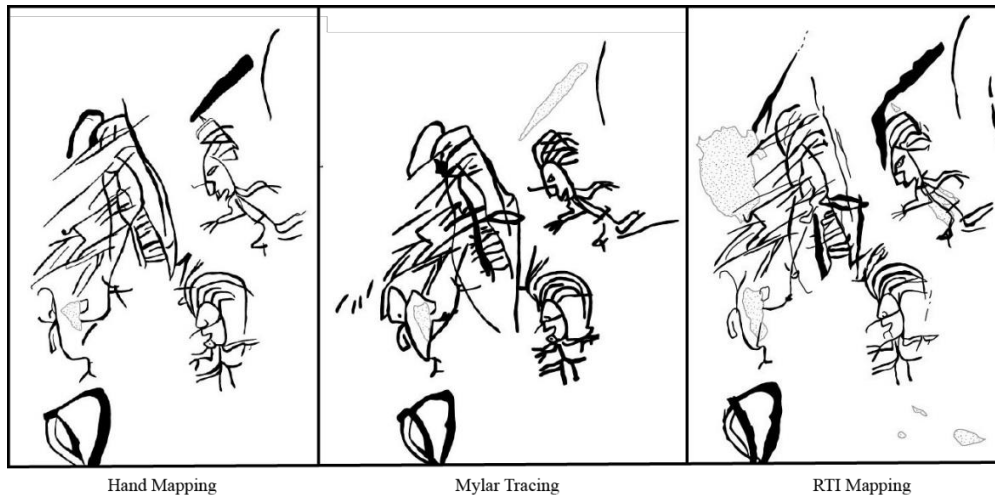


Figure 5: Comparison of a close-up section of line drawn graffiti elements 92, 59, 58, 60, 14, and 56 from map 4 done across the three techniques demonstrating differences in detail

Availability in Small Spaces

Which technique will work for researchers also depends on the size of the space in which one is recording. Depending on space, only one researcher may fit, meaning that limited materials can be brought in. This could prolong the time required for recording, or limit the possibility of incorporating techniques that require large tools. In terms of RTI, recording in spatially confined areas or areas where the graffiti is near a wall or unexcavated area can be difficult, this is due to the inability of the light source to conduct a full rotation during the photo capturing process before building the model. Hand mapping and Mylar tracing can both be conducted in confined spaces as they only require one individual and a few small materials.

Creating Maps to Scale

In regards to scale, hand mapping and Mylar tracing are both inherently scaled. RTI data can be scaled, but it requires a scale placed in the models or added in at a later date. Hand mapping and Mylar tracing, as hand documented techniques, do not have to worry about visual warping, which is one of the major concerns with photography conducted in tight spaces or at extreme angles. The inherent scale of hand mapping and Mylar tracing makes it highly appealing to researchers.

Degree of engagement with Graffiti

While each of these three techniques begin in the field, they require different levels of engagement. Hand mapping and Mylar tracing both require in depth examination of the graffiti element when recording them. This is due to the researcher needing to determine which of the incised lines are a part of the graffiti when creating the map. Close inspection also allows for researchers to engage with other aspects of the graffiti such as the spatial arrangements and height from the floor surfaces. While RTI also requires in field examination it does not require in depth engagement with the graffiti by the researcher. The semi objective quality of RTI is what

can limit the engagement, as the researcher recording in the field does not need to determine which lines are a part of the graffiti as the RTI records everything on the surface in totality. Also, the person engaging with the RTI models may not have been the person recording the graffiti in the field. Deeply engaging with the graffiti in context allows a researcher a more holistic understanding of the space and more nuanced interpretations of the artist working in that space.

Conclusions

When documenting ancient Maya graffiti, it is important to recognize the advantages and disadvantages each technique contains, and how the resulting digital line drawings will be used in future studies. The technique chosen for recording will impact how the data is collected, interpretations, and how the data is displayed. As studies surrounding ancient Maya graffiti continue to grow, the need for accurate and effective documentation will only increase. In order to ensure graffiti is documented to the best of its abilities it needs to be documented accurately while also containing key information regarding spatial analysis and context. By seeking out the best documentation method for each researcher's specific situation, the accuracy of ancient Maya graffiti will be ensured, helping to preserve graffiti for future researchers and broader publics interested in these remarkable artistic works and the ancient artists who created them.

References

Brown, M. Kathryn, Leah McCurdy, and Jason Yaeger

In Press Chamber of Secrets in Xunantunich. In *Maya Materialization of Time: Mythic History and Ritual Order in the Ancient Maya World*, edited by David Friedel, Arlen Chase, Anne Dowd, and Jerry Murdock. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Dixon, Neil, M. Kathryn Brown, and Leah McCurdy

2019 RTI Photography Part of a Greater Whole in Archaeological Documentation Methodology. In *Archaeological Method and Theory in Practice, Part II*.

Earl, Graeme, Kirk Martinez, and Tom Malzbender

2010 Archaeological applications of polynomial texture mapping: analysis, conservation and representation. *Journal of archaeological science* 37(8):2040–2050.
DOI:10.1016/j.jas.2010.03.009.

Lovata, Troy R., and Elizabeth Olton (editors)

2016 *Understanding Graffiti: Multidisciplinary Studies from Prehistory to the Present*. Routledge, New York.

McCurdy, Leah, M. Kathryn Brown, and Neil Dixon

2018 Tagged Walls: The Discovery of Ancient Maya Graffiti at El Castillo, Xunantunich. *Research Reports in Belizean Archaeology* 15:181–193.

Malzbender, Tom, Dan Gelb, and Hans Wolters

2001 Polynomial texture maps. pp. 519–528. SIGGRAPH '01. ACM.

Nowakowski, Lauren

2023 Methodological Approaches to Recording Ancient Maya Incised Graffiti: A Case Study From Structure A-5-2nd at Xunantunich. Available from Dissertations & Theses @ University of Texas - San Antonio; ProQuest One Academic. (2819907456).
<https://login.libweb.lib.utsa.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/methodological-approaches-recording-ancient-maya/docview/2819907456/se-2>

Review of *The Lessons of Terror: A History of Warfare
Against Civilians: Why It Has Always Failed, and Why It
Will Fail Again* by Caleb Carr

By: Grey Miller

Department of History, University of Texas at San Antonio

On September 11, 2001, a group of terrorists hijacked commercial aircraft planes and crashed them into the World Trade Center in New York, causing a great upheaval in the United States. The attack resulted in mass casualties of civilians and a change in domestic policies not seen since the Cold War era. The United States proceeded to rectify the situation by enacting war against the enemy. This horrific incident provoked immediate retaliation by Americans and new contemplation on the moral ethics of a just war. In ancient times, governments protective of their civilians sometimes needed to enact war to maintain their republic. A contentious issue, the use of civilians in warfare raises concern pertaining to individuals' human rights and how revenge as a moral imperative can become easily unjust. Reflections not only to discern who our enemy is, but also to define terrorism as a unique form of warfare.

Caleb Carr's *The Lessons of Terror: A History of Warfare Against Civilians: Why It Has Always Failed, and Why It Will Fail Again* explores the dilemmas associated with civilians in warfare and the tactics used against them. The author takes the reader through battles set in ancient times where Romans and Middle Eastern groups utilize terrorism and civilian casualties to enact religious conquests in the name of Empire, Christianity, and Islam. Carr ponders justification of war thinking through the legal works of Grotius and Vattel, as well as examining the philosophies of great thinkers like Locke, Hobbes, and Voltaire, bringing Britain and France to the center of his attention. Carr then cites examples from the Civil War where military initiatives were often contrary to just war ethos, yet leaders saw opportunities to bend the rules for the sake of a greater moral good. For Carr, this bending of the rules of warfare always backfired, and, in the end, evidence concludes that fear and violence against civilians never functions to achieve peace.

Carr's work tries to balance the philosophies that changed battle and helped minimize civilian casualties while citing examples of militaries violating this fundamental way of thinking worldwide. Carr makes two distinct points that lead into the discussion about Augustine of Hippo's treaty on just war theory. Carr argues that the failure of Rome was the empire's ability to escalate the use of power without justification. Civilians not participating in warfare felt the effects of these wars, just like soldiers with convictions to win the war. Roman warfare was a struggle for power that may or may not have moral justifications related to that battle. However, the implications of war did not depend solely upon moral justifications.

To Carr, this type of warfare resulted in eventual defeat one way or another. For the Romans, it was a failure to recognize civilians from soldiers. Their strategy of battle lacking moral safeguards for non-combatant citizens always backfired, as citizens took revenge against the Romans, establishing a moral incentive to crush the enemy. In the case of the Germanic tribes, Carr speculates on whether tales of barbaric warfare provided enough ammunition for the Germans to seek out conquest against the Romans. Regardless, Carr blames the Romans for perpetuating this extreme cruelty. The author argues that the Romans turned to outside sources for help in times of war, seeking barbarians to take over the Rhine. These same soldiers, in turn, later sought revenge against the Romans for their extreme cruelty. A better argument might connect the American Government's assistance with Afghan troops during the Cold War era of the 1980s. Americans supplied the Afghans with weapons to fight against the invading Russian troops, resulting in continuing wars in the Middle East. A chronological history of warfare does

not necessarily help explain more current events clearly, and Carr's work tends stray from this format, referencing both past and current events interchangeably. Carr has made similar arguments to Chomsky's discussion on just warfare, providing the example of the United States supplying weapons to Saddam Hussein in the 1980s. Carr conveys that training people for ulterior motives creates the ability for them to become enemies.

In addition to Carr's non-fiction work, he is also a popular fiction writer. *The Lessons of Terror*, although non-academic in structure, captures the attention of both academics and the casual reader who is interested in military history. However, the author uses few examples of non-Western philosophy, predominantly positioning his work with Western Europeans at the forefront of helping to solve the dilemma of civilians in military conflict. This Euro-Centric position does not diminish Carr's work but limits his use of sources. At times, the author's parallel to current-day civilian casualties is somewhat confusing. Carr also tries to compare the etymology and linguistic structure of such terms as warrior and terrorist, believing that the terms cannot adapt or change. This argument, at times, contradicts Carr's position on just warfare. Can Terrorists be fighting for a just or moral cause? Carr's views on just warfare are complicated if we assume that most nations would not consider themselves terrorists while actively at war. A native New Yorker himself, Carr's inherent politicization and unbalanced psychology of the events surrounding September 11, along with his tough childhood fraught with abuse, seems to overwhelm the prominent ambiguity of proving Carr's argument.¹ Carr's ability as a writer to effectively convey his argument against civilians in combat is not as strong as it could be. However, good works often ask more questions than they provide answers to the reader. Carr's work does just that, contributing to the moral narratives of war and trying to find the justifications behind terrifying actions.

Bibliography

Foley, Dylan. "Caleb Carr Lives in a Very Dark Place: On Growing Up with the Beats, Living on Mount Misery, and Vanishing Children." *Literary Hub*, August 23, 2016.

<https://lithub.com/caleb-carr-lives-in-a-very-dark-place/>.

Cash Crop, Fast Fashion: The Rise and Fall of Flax and Cotton Production on the Global Economy

By: Sia N. Paulsen

Department of History, University of Texas at San Antonio

The naked truth: flaxseed and cotton have tried to hide all our ugly scars. Behind sheets of woven bliss, organic materials have been exchanged for faster, plastic materials. Now, factory systems are under a new name, a new social game, and a push for economic gain. The expansion of easily accessible crops has always created slave labor. Though in a different name and time, the rise of “fast fashion” has created economic and adverse environmental disasters in the factory system. The early connotation of slavery ended the cotton trade, yet connotations with synthetic materials and slave wages are not investigated. Synthetic materials such as nylon and polyester have taken shape in the fashion industry under the guise of recycled material, yet billions of tons of clothing are dispersed into landfills. Workers' rights in East Asia with the decline of cotton and flax materials in clothing, companies have opted for cheaper, synthetic materials, causing pollution and the violation of women workers' rights in East Asian countries. The rise and fall of cotton and flax have directly led to environmental degradation synthetic materials and created increased slave labor jobs for Asian women in the fast fashion industry.

Flax is one of the oldest natural worn materials, pulling the threads of early material. Flax is the sheep of the plant world: flax seeds are edible, and the stalks are weaved to create textiles. Originating in Georgia in the Fertile Crescent, flax was woven into linens. It thrived in the temperate climate and continued to produce. The need for baskets, linens, seeds, and oil production sustained flax's existence Trade into Egypt, then Flanders spread flax into further fields. Flax was cultivated in the Middle East and North Africa and even in the Pacific. New Zealand has a variety of flax used for clothing and basket weaving. Flax takes around 90-110 days to bloom fully. The three months that flax allowed for an abundance of materials. Since flax was primarily utilized in early history, basic clothing was weaved and stitched together. Even though it was a hot commodity, cheap cotton replaced flax for large-scale production.

Cotton also originated near the fertile crescent. Cotton's history has led it to find itself on the back burner of resources used. Though at its peak during the 19th century, the dark connotation associated with it made it less desirable. Without slave labor to continue its need, there was a turn to other fabrics. Tying cotton to slavery, England looked at American cotton in disgust, since it was connected to blood money. England imported cotton and flax products from the Middle East and Asia, as their practices were less demonic. Even though cotton is environmentally friendly, especially when imported from a closer nation, the cotton trade became even more volatile, and even shocked the global economy with significant price drops.

Cotton is one of the most natural substances. Being made up of 99% cellulose, cotton is an easy material to break down.¹ Cotton also has five layers to protect itself, making the cellulose structure makes it durable and soft. Flax, too, is a natural cellulose structure, yet hardier. Not only can flax stems be made into linen, but it is also used for weaving baskets. Growing it and then manufacturing the cotton into fabric is the most environmentally challenging it gets. Cotton takes roughly 160 days to produce its fibers. Though it was sought after more, there were challenges with pests and its history.

European industrialization facilitated innovations with its accessibility and transferability of items. The Industrial Revolution, as a spatial process, spread by diffusion from England eastward. This inspired the Scientific Revolution, which contributed to urbanization, steel mills, imported technology, and skilled workers. Because the demand for more tertiary items was high,

the only skilled laborers were men, as they had the education to back up their experience. Experience and education pushed them forward in the job market, allowing them to increase pay and mobilizing them up the corporate ladder. Though this was for more heavy material and machinery, the bias for more skilled workers left a dip in the production system. Men left lower-skilled factory jobs to attain the skills needed for more industrial jobs. With smaller hands, women and children came to fill the empty positions in the textile factories.

The European Industrial Revolution simplified production, mass-producing goods, pollution, and starvation wages. Coal-powered factories loomed with excitement for corporate stakeholders. More production meant more revenue, which was not shared with the most vulnerable of populations: women and children. Women who had to work the factory systems automatically meant they were poor. Men were the breadwinners of society. They enjoyed higher wages and more socio-economic advances. Women were to stay at home as there were fewer opportunities to make a life for themselves. Women were vulnerable to wage work and still had a home to take care for. Working over 10 hours a day, women would walk out with little to their name. Employing their children to help, families could pay to survive on living costs but could not enjoy a proper livelihood. Women and children were used and overworked in poor conditions in such factories as they were viewed as lesser, unskilled laborers.

In 1833, England proposed the Factory act that barred children younger than nine from being unemployed by the factories and set a limit on how many hours 9-13-year-olds would work.² Like most laws of the time, various loopholes were taken in place. Loopholes further exploited the worker solely for the benefit of the industry. Since the Industrial Revolution in England became the spotlight for other factory systems, the increase in the exportation of goods made it imperative for factory managers to keep employing cheap laborers. The Factory Act of 1833 was one of the first labor laws aimed at cutting loopholes out, yet had to be amended and expanded upon.

As the Industrial Revolution became the new norm, another Factory Act in 1878 prohibited children under 10 years old from working in factories or in any trade. The act also made education mandatory until the age of 10, then 12 years of age, making sure the children knew the fundamentals of reading and writing. In the late 19th century, this change projected Britain forward, bringing up its literacy rates, creating a more humane factory system, and protecting children's futures. Poverty rates continued to rise as there were fewer hands to help feed the families; however, children going to school learned more tertiary skills to find better jobs, letting them escape cyclical, generational poverty. Weaving their futures in the past, the fabric of society was sturdy yet would start to tether at its ends.

England's industrial revolution sparked contemporary economic globalization going into the 20th century. The increasing interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and cultural change standardized the production of goods. The homogenization of consumer markets has influenced labor mobility, contributing to immigration and the appearance of transnational corporations. Though flexible production of niche products, such as textiles, has allowed for disorganized capitalism, meaning there are fewer restrictions on environmental limitations and labor laws.

Textiles and fabric are slowly moving into more *industrial* materials. Synthetic materials such as polyester were created to be more durable in the 1970s. The chemical bonding of both acid (benzene-1, 4-dicarboxylic acid) and alcohol (ethane-1, 2-diol) creates an almost indestructible double bond.³ Since this is not a naturally occurring substance, double bonds take more energy to break and break down. Environmentally speaking, this leads to the long-term breakdown of synthetic materials if it ever does. To make polyester, tons of water and fossil fuels are manufactured. Durable material is material that can last long in any condition. Synthetic materials are durable, however, are not adequate for decomposing. Landfills now contain 6% textile material that is not biodegradable.⁴

When comparing the molecular structures of polyester, cotton, and flax, it is evident that more natural fibers should be used; however, it is more expensive to have natural resources in everyday items. Why was there such a significant shift from natural fibers to synthetic ones? Synthetic materials can be mass-produced on demand. Factory systems have made it easier to create and distribute goods. Virtually indestructible, polymer-based products are effective, reusable products. Due to their nature, plastic products are cheap to produce and are less volatile in their production (when compared to cotton and flax and their susceptibility to droughts and or pests). Plastics are made on demand, serving a multitude of purposes. Flexibility in connotation, design, and polymer-based materials are a treat for factory systems. Factory systems have an option, more so than natural materials, to hire cheaper labor. With polymer-based materials, only need a few steps to make it, coupled with an expansive workforce.

There are similar patterns from Europe's Industrial Revolution to today's globalization. Linguistic use of "durable material" and "synthetic material" have been used interchangeably, which they should not. Durable materials like cotton and flax can sustain the wear and tear of everyday life. Used for thousands of years, these materials have been through it all. Now, plastics will be through it all, outliving us by those thousands of years after us. Humans have always viewed the living as something to dominate, while nonliving objects are respected, multiplied, and used in more ways than intended.⁵

Every year, 32 billion pounds of fabric end up in our landfills. 95% of this can be recycled into other clothes, given to Goodwill, or even up-cycled. An astounding 88% of the material in clothing is now plastic, making it less breathable and less likely to break down in landfills.⁶ These landfills are rapidly expanding, creating havoc in the oceans. Though companies have promised to create more environmentally friendly conditions in their factories, their products say otherwise. Less than 10% of the fabric is made from recycled material; these companies are creating synthetic materials for cheaper products. Fast fashion is "inexpensive clothing produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends". This fashion style was trending even more during the COVID-19 Pandemic, as these outlets were advertised on social media like TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and Facebook. Predominantly on TikTok and Instagram, "reels" (miniature videos) were created to show clothing hauls, where people would order over ten articles of clothing and show their followers what they were purchasing. When unboxing the haul, each article of clothing is caked in "SHEIN" plastic.

Society has influenced the environment through its consumer spending. Zara and Shein are two of the most marketed companies on the internet. Zara's market strategy is to promote fast

fashion by creating a finite product availability. Because of this, consumers are flocking to their stores and fast fashion. Like all trends, they become old and outdated. When the trends are over, people throw them away if they do not donate them. Consumer spending strategies target younger audiences with more disposable income. The clothes from Zara and Shein are cheap and competitive. Fast fashion has made clothing more affordable, increasing wardrobe size, and representing the fast-paced lifestyle of today. Options for clothing and the ease of online shipping have made clothing a globalized commodity.

Recycling plastic is too much for these companies such as H&M, Shein, Zara, and Uniqlo, yet the environmental cost is even greater. Fabrics that are breaking down are leaving microplastic in the oceans. At this rate, there are more microplastics in the ocean than stars in the galaxy. A sad truth that is far beyond repair. Because synthetic materials are treated the same as regular fabrics, the same mentality applies to them when sewn into clothes. Plastics have been used in hooded sweaters and shoes, both of which are centered around the places where sweat persists the most. Not only does this polymer-based plastic trap in sweat, but they are also part of a broader consumer range. Since plastic is readily made and easily accessible, it is cheaper to mass-produce or even “recycle” it into something new. The guise of fast fashion is that it is economically sound. Cheaper products for consumers mean the companies provide the bare minimum to their workers and product output. 12% of any modern garment now is cotton or flax-based.⁷ The wear and tear of pure cotton clothing should be an attractive option for companies since consumers would have to replace their garments frequently. However, companies are looking for faster outputs, and waiting three months or five months for the natural fibers to grow is too unstable. Natural material has too many negatives attached to it. Drought, disease, and pests are the big deterrents large companies such as Shein see. Volatility with natural materials slows production, or even makes the fashion industry vulnerable. Cotton and flax are not vulnerabilities, though. Women are the only ones who are vulnerable in the fast fashion industry.

The aforementioned fast fashion brands are in East Asia. Not only is there fast fashion but a faster output of products. Another website, Ali Baba, allows consumers to buy in bulk and resell on Amazon Turk, marking up over 1,000% of the original value. But how are sellers able to buy these products for so little? Ali Baba employs their workers under inhumane conditions in the same line as fast fashion. China is fourth in the world for flaxseed production, and Russia is the second, only to Kazakhstan. With the amount of flaxseed produced in the Eurasian/ Asian region of the world, there is plenty to choose from. However, China takes most of the percentage of pollution. Since synthetic materials are the easiest to produce, the product is more accessible and cheaper for export to other countries. Using the typical factory model, keeping prices low means creating an abundance of products and lowering all workers' wages. With that, the people (mostly women and children) working in these factories are suffering in the same capacity as those in Industrial Revolution England and with worse conditions. Since there have been numerous international laws preventing such strenuous working conditions, the ethical breakdown of keeping modern-day slavery makes the conditions worse than before.

Women working in the Asian factory systems are subject to working 60 to 70 hours a week. This is almost double what other countries work for their factory workers. Even when searching “women in factories in India”, the first searches are of women in hard hats, safety gear,

and a smile, not those who are forced to work all day to make a living. The average wage these women make is two to six cents a garment. Garments consist of obtaining the fabric, cutting the desired lengths, following a template, adding buttons, rethreading, and cleaning as you go. This alone can be a lengthy process, but these slave wages are engineered to make the women work faster and harder to create these garments. On average, these factory workers earn \$15,600 USD a year.⁸ Countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Thailand⁹, are prime candidates for outsourcing cheap labor. Economically speaking, these countries are not as industrialized as the rest of the world. The socio-economic conditions associated with these countries make women dependent on hostile working conditions. Corporations are looking for cheaper output, and placing East Asian and Asia Minor women makes it more palatable to pressure them into unsafe, inhumane working conditions. Contrastingly, in the United States, there is a push to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and lessen plastic usage. Yet consumer purchasing actions do not mimic what is preached. Inequality of income is the immediate impact of outsourcing labor. Working conditions inside the transnational corporations violate basic human rights; no healthcare, living on less than \$3 a day, and 12+ hours of work. Benjamin Barber effectively argues, "Eat fast and serve the business world's god of efficiency."¹⁰ In his monograph *Jihad Vs. McWorld* shows how the globalization of American/ Western companies has driven the immediacy of food, goods, media, life. The corporate structure is more focused on money than it is on the well-being of its employees. From this corporate structure, we see the influence of international advertising. Companies are brainwashing customers for a consumptive splurge, an instantaneous reaction to a new instantaneous society. Fast fashion exemplifies how globalization encroaches on more than social media; it desecrates every place it touches.

Competition in the industry is healthy to promote innovation that excites, yet it breeds the prioritization of products over people. Jeremy Zallen recounts in his 2019 monograph *American Lucifers: The Dark History of Artificial Light* that some people working in the American garment system in 1858 made 4 to 12 cents a garment.¹¹ Zallen continues to say that "these were starvation wages, but their families desperately needed the money."¹² Looking at Zallen's analysis that 4-12 cents a garment were "starvation wages", women making 2-6 cents a garment are barely surviving. England's bill, which passed in 1868, ten years after the garment system was fully implemented in America, explains more on how garment workers were exploited.

The 2006 Labor Acts in Bangladesh limited the number of hours women could work during the day. The working hours are only from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., everything after that is the woman's choice.¹³ Daily working hours should be 8 hours, but workers can work, on average, for 56 hours a week. This labor code, under section 108 seems reasonable. Everything is under the "woman worker's consent", making this seem as this is the woman's choice to work longer hours. However, this law is a loophole to globalization. Though this law does not investigate female wages, it dismisses the reason that women are working long hours: there is no money in their domain. The thought behind working outside the home as a woman, single or married, is to provide for herself and or her family. Typically, if the woman is working outside of the home, there is a huge financial burden she is supplementing. East Asian news sources do not have any of these groundbreaking stories, it is almost all located in the European news. Concealing the truth about outsourcing markets to Asian and Eastern European countries allow for stricter conditions, increasing output and decreasing wages. Of course, East Asian countries would shun

their inadequacies in the workplace. Seeing that Bangladesh has started to implement labor laws within the past 16 years, shows not just the pervasiveness of western industrialization, but the lack of support for women.

Though companies are the ones in charge, there are steps taken by everyday people. Parallels between 19th-century work and modern, 21st-century work are astounding. Women who were sewing had “a fair chance of being defrauded”¹⁴. This 1857 *New York Times* article shows the factory progression that England was thinking of in their factory laws, yet they are still not an international standard. Because only national laws exist for these factory workers, it creates a loophole that more giant corporations are perpetually exploiting. Even if it were a British or American brand, they could still produce items for slave wages. This appalling practice is not illegal in China, Bangladesh, or even Taiwan, yet this still begs how moral the practice of fast fashion or even the forgoing of cotton/ flax is. There are questions about environmental sustainability, seeing that the second largest contributor to landfill waste is clothing.

Continuing the parallel, there is still a vulnerability women have in the workforce. Even today, the Eastern Hemisphere looks down on its women. Even though there have been great strides in the global women's suffrage movements, bodily autonomy, and extensive labor laws for equal pay, this does not create a global standard. This standard, instead, is still hosted in Western ideology. To forcibly impose these practices onto another country would not be legal but would be moral. Legislature has since evolved for a more unified standard of practice in the factory systems for environmental sustainability as “it is a global world” however, should these women not have a higher priority than plastic? Through these practices, lawmakers are treating corporations with economic incentives. Eastern ideology shows that women are still vulnerable. Like in England, East Asian women go outside of the home to support their families. They are put in a position where they must work. Again, employers know this vulnerability and will do their best to retain a worker and as much profit as possible.

Now, the environment has bounced back to influence society. There are movements now that are pushing for more cotton and flax products. This is to bring back softer, more sensitive materials. There was a stark jump from 2000 to 2010 in cotton production, as the call for more sustainable products was the initial cause of this. Instead of producing five million bales of cotton, a whopping 40 million bales of cotton were produced annually after 10 years. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, farming practices have been shut down to ensure worker safety. Now in 2022, there a gentle rise back to producing 35 million bales of cotton.¹⁵ Shifting from the 1970s approach for polyester outfits to more clean, simple materials, cotton is on center stage again. Flax production has been rampant in Russia and China, as they have the land and means for production. But these environmental changes are more than just a comfortable look. People are willing to spend money on more environmentally friendly labels. All in the marketing,

So far, England and the European Union are cracking down on fast fashion. “The Commission seeks to put a halt on fast fashion by introducing rules on textiles to be used in the European market,” says Ioana Popescu of the Environmental Coalition on Standards.¹⁶ Popescu is taking an environmental approach to fast fashion’s impact on global landfills. Globalization is more of a one-sided effort, taking advantage of other countries’ resources of monetary and political gain. Transnational corporations, through globalization, have forced a monoculture on

society through their corporate structure, advertising, homogenous mindset, and forced migration. Globalization is not the perfect idea for increasing interconnectivity and integration. This “interconnectivity” is a trend of the core, not the peripheral. Core countries such as China, the United States, and England political, social, and economic unification. Peripheral countries, such as those found at the bottom of the “flying geese” model of Aisa, bear the brunt of the forced unification. Smaller parts of the world are exploited in other countries to benefit the core. Implementing more cotton and flax into the ecosystem promotes more economically sound clothing in cost and environmental breakdown. With England voicing concerns about the environmental degradation caused by fast fashion, having its positive correlation with humanitarian rights is a win for all involved in this immoral industry.

This environmental approach to fast fashion from simple crops such as flax and cotton has deep roots in history. No matter the industrialization period, there is a cyclical approach to environmental destruction and inequality shown in the factories. Throughout this history, there is a shift between the environment affecting how people’s actions (cultivation of cash crops), how people have affected the environment (pollution), and back to the environment affecting the morality of a person’s choice. The rise and fall of cotton and flax have played with the global economy. It is now not out of fashion to wear a hand-me-down, nor is it out of fashion to be cautious of a silent boycott. Putting our money where our mouth is, and purchasing items with a more sustainable fabric creates a new, sustainable life. Advocacy pages on social media are combatting the fast fashion epidemic. Sustainable websites are taking force now to inform the public of the negative effects of fast fashion on the environment.

Bibliography

- Barber, Benjamin R., 1939-2017. 1996. *Jihad Vs. McWorld*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Briggs, Helen. "Fast Fashion: European Union Reveals Fast Fashion Crackdown." BBC News. BBC, March 30, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-60913226>.
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia. "flax." Encyclopedia Britannica, March 12, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/plant/flax>.
- Chowdhury, Anika Mardiah. "Employee's Rights at Workplace in Bangladesh." September 2, 2021. <https://www.irglobal.com/article/employees-rights-at-workplace-in-bangladesh-2/#:~:text=The%20daily%20working%20hours%20shall,without%20the%20woman%20worker's%20consent>.
- Center for EcoTechnology, CET. "The Monster in Our Closet: Fast Fashion & Textile Waste on the Rise." Center for EcoTechnology, July 19, 2021. <https://www.centerforecotechnology.org/fast-fashion-textile-waste/>.
- Curley, Robert. "Linen." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/technology/linen>.
- Demuth, Bathsheba. 2019. *Floating coast: an environmental history of the Bering Strait*.
- Department of Chemistry, University of York. Polyesters, 2016. <https://www.essentialchemicalindustry.org/polymers/polyesters.html>.
- Gonzalez, Daisy. "Get Informed." The Garment Worker Center, 2010. <https://garmentworkercenter.org/get-informed/#:~:text=Approximately%2085%25%20of%20garment%20workers,dirty%2C%20and%20poorly%20ventilated%20factories>.
- Griffin, Emma. "Child Labour." British Library, May 15, 2014. <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/child-labour#:~:text=Legislation,nine%20and%2013%20could%20work>.
- Kojima, Kiyoshi. "The "flying geese" model of Asian economic development: origin, theoretical extensions, and regional policy implications", Journal of Asian Economics, Volume 11, Issue 4,2000, Pages 375-401.
- McCosker, Jaclyn. "The Impact of Fast Fashion on Garment Workers." Good On You, April 19, 2021. <https://goodonyou.eco/impact-fast-fashion-garment-workers/>.
- Ray, Mrinmoy. "Figure 2: Cotton Production (million bales)" October 2021. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Time-series-plot-of-cotton-production_fig2_355498811
- Royal Society for Arts. "Fast Fashion's Plastic Problem - the RSA." FAST FASHION'S

PLASTIC PROBLEM, June 11, 2021.

<https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/reports/2021/fast-fashions-plastic-problem.pdf>.

“Sewing Women,” *NYT*, March 27, 1857.

Virtue, Robert. “World Cotton History.” Cotton Australia, 2022.

<https://cottonaustralia.com.au/world-cotton-history>.

Yousef, Samy, Maksym Tatariants, Martynas Tichonovas, Zahid Sarwar, Ilona Jonuškienė, and Linas Kliucininkas. “A New Strategy for Using Textile Waste as a Sustainable Source of Recovered Cotton.” *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*. Elsevier, March 19, 2019. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0921344919300941>.

Zallen, Jeremy. *American Lucifers: The Dark History of Artificial Light, 1750-1865*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2019.

Matar, Rania. (2016). *L'Enfant Femme*. Damiani Editore.

Matar, Rania. (2009). *Ordinary Lives*. Quantuck Lane Press.

Shafiei, Mehrnoush. (2013). Book Review: A Girl and Her Room. *al-raida*, 141-142, 79-80

Toman, Cheryl. (2009). Women, Activism, and the Arts. *al-raida*, 124, 2-4
Williamson, Jenni T. (2006). Rania Matar: A Forgotten Population. *Art New England*, 27-2, 28

The Rohingya Refugee Crisis and the Future of the Stateless

By: Afsana Tuly

Department of Political Science and Geography, University of Texas at San Antonio

Abstract

The Rohingya refugee crisis has been termed a textbook example of ethnic cleansing and since 2017 has caused around 880,000 Rohingyas to flee from Myanmar to the neighboring country, Bangladesh. Throughout history, it is evident that refugee crises have pushed the world towards violence, instability, and economic downturn. It also creates an extensive pressure on the host countries and international community to help the displaced and stateless population. Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, however, they agreed to accept the Rohingya refugees fleeing from the military persecution of Myanmar. This paper will employ the constructivist approach to understand how the influx of Rohingya refugees may threaten Bangladesh's national security and increase Islamic extremism in the southeastern part of Bangladesh. It will be followed by a policy brief and recommendations for the government of Bangladesh to mitigate and control the mismanagement in Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

Keywords:

Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees, human rights violations, national security, Islamic extremism

Introduction

Who are the Rohingyas and why will the influx of Rohingya refugees affect the economy of Bangladesh? Why should the influx be a course of concern for the bilateral relations between Myanmar and Bangladesh? Can there be a long-term solution for the existing displaced and stateless individuals? It is essential to raise these questions in order to get a profound understanding of what caused the displacement of thousands of Rohingyas and its aftermath on the host country Bangladesh. The Rohingyas are an ethnic group of people with a majority of the Muslim population residing in Rakhine State, Myanmar (Banerjee, 2021). Historically, their roots can be traced back to the British occupation of Myanmar in 1886 when a large number of Rohingyas were brought from southeastern Bangladesh by the British army to work in different sectors of the economy (Anwary, 2018). One of the major clashes between the Burmese Buddhist nationalists and Rohingyas remained religion (Lewis, 2021) and identity (Acharya, 2008). The Rohingyas were perceived as outsiders, and residents, including internationally renowned politician and diplomat Aung Suu Kyi refused to use the term Rohingya while addressing them publicly (Barany, 2019). Essentially, the Rohingyas are racially, culturally and physically more like Indians and Bengalis; they are locally called 'Bangali' to show that they are not included in Myanmar's ethnic Bamar majority (Farzana, 2015). The term 'Rohingya' gives a sense of recognition to them since they do not identify as Bengalis and many view the denial of their name as denying them basic human rights. The hatred for Rohingyas and constant human rights abuse and torture have been prevalent since Myanmar's independence in 1948 (Faye, 2021). Rohingyas were legally omitted from the 1982 Citizenship Act of Myanmar, escalating the ongoing problems between Rohingyas and Myanmar authorities.

It is gathered from the existing literature that the Rohingyas have been subject to mass killings, rape, injustice and often denied civil and political rights. In an effort to bring changes in the treatment of Rohingyas, a rebellious group called Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) was formed to offer support to Rohingya villagers who were barbarously beaten by the Myanmar army (Ibrahim and Yunus, 2016). In 2017, ARSA coordinated attacks on Myanmar police and army which incited a national riot resulting in destruction of property, violence, rape and killing of thousands of Rohingyas. By the end of 2017, most Rohingyas fled to Cox's Bazar in its neighboring country, Bangladesh. The present scholarship on Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh focus on how the influx may cause overall economic downturn for the country (Malkki, 1995), human rights violations in camps (Parnini, 2018), current living conditions of refugees (Ty, 2019), types of aid from international organizations (Guhathakurta, 2017) and personal stories (Mohajan, 2018). It is also essential to see the overall impact these influxes of refugees would have on the host country's internal stability and national security. Drawing from the existing work of scholars, we will look at how the influx of refugees would pose a national security threat to Bangladesh and increase Islamic extremism in the southeastern area of Bangladesh.

Why would the Rohingya refugees pose a national security threat to Bangladesh?

Since the Cold War, national security has become a rigorously and frequently studied topic or issue. Ullman (1983) mentioned that the concept broadened from limiting itself to military terms and foreign policy to protect energy security, environment security, economic prosperity, reducing crimes, cyber security, etc. Overall, it is considered a theme contributing to the defense and security of a nation-state and its citizens. In the case of Bangladesh, the

country itself struggles with poverty, corruption, overpopulation and lack of facilities for its citizens (Yasmin and Akhter, 2019). Although a large number of aid has come from local organizations and international institutions, there have been questions regarding how well that money has been utilized in mitigating the persistent problems in Rohingya refugee camps. Bangladesh and the United Nations raised \$624,240,418 out of the \$943 million requested in the Joint Response Plan (JRP) to build camps and offer basic necessities for Rohingyas (UNHCR, 2021). However, it is seen that the living conditions and lack of long-run plans are still ongoing. To raise tensions and concerns, there are continuous problems in the refugee camps due to overcrowding, lack of facilities and sense of belonging. The following section will discuss four grounds to show how the national security of Bangladesh might be compromised.

Increase in Criminal Activities:

Years of uncertainty and hardships have forced Rohingyas to turn to crime. Rahman (2010) discussed how the selling and buying of illegal arms have become a common source of earnings for many Rohingyas. In 2020, eighty-nine men were killed during gang fights and conflicts within the camps were at its peak. Currently, three different gangs are fighting to gain control over the camps with bribes, threats and violence. Pickering (2008) in the book *The Critical Criminology Companion* mentions that refugees are always considered as a problem for the arriving states. Unjustified policies and practices, exclusion, lack of effective protection, and lesser opportunities force them to not respect national law. The refugee history of Tanzania and Kenya in the 1990s, for example, can be seen that the governments had to change their policies from open-door refugee policies to not accepting them anymore to safeguard their national interests (Mogire, 2009). The large number of refugees meant there were various issues with money laundering, setting up of illegal businesses and other criminal activities in the areas where they were settled.

Manhica et. al (2016) explains that young refugees in Scandinavia are highly involved in criminal activities and their low socio-economic position leads them to partake in criminal activities in adult life too. Evidence and repo young children's involvement in the Rohingya refugee camp fights or assisting gang members are seen as risky behaviors for local residents and those living in camps. Many locals have shown concern and raised objections to these frequent breakouts of clashes and fights as it hinders peace and harmony in that region. The local authorities and police are currently struggling to keep these physical altercations and issues under control while fearing for the safety of locals.

Human Trafficking and Drug Abuse:

Human rights activists in the Cox's Bazar area have monitored and reported regarding the security situation in Rohingya refugee camps and nearby cities (The Daily Star, 2021). A large number of Rohingya refugees are involved in human trafficking, abduction, and drug trafficking. Many women and young girls who are already rape survivors from the atrocities of the Myanmar army have been sold to Thailand and Indonesia as well as forced to prostitution in local areas (Parnini, 2021). There is no proper protection for women and young children who already suffered mental and health issues while fleeing from Myanmar. The tourism in Cox's Bazar area, particularly where the refugee camps are located, has decreased over the years as tourists fear their safety and keep witnessing these stories of human trafficking and abduction in local

newspapers. Another issue that concerns tourists and local residents is the availability of illegal drugs in these areas.

The excessive production and distribution of a drug called 'yaba' are sold in Rohingya refugee camps which are believed to increase inappropriate behavior and violence (Karim, 2021). Research has shown that it is a highly-produced drug in Myanmar and low-wage workers such as the Rohingyas were used to manufacture it. Since then, most Rohingya men in camps lack jobs or earning resources they resorted to producing these drugs in abundance and supplying to different parts of Bangladesh. In 2017, there were reports of 22 drug cases which increased up to 95 in 2018 (Banerjee, 2021). In 2019, the number rose to 152.

Economic and Social Barriers:

Many scholars argued that host countries can focus on nation-building and utilize the excessive population in the workforce to increase productivity in the labor force and overall economy. Babu (2020) also discussed how aid can be used to create long-term plans for the refugees and eventually involve them in education and training to generate self-sufficiency for the refugees. They also mention that skilled labor can impact the economy positively and add more monetary returns for governments. Although the government of Bangladesh arranged some schools for Rohingya children under 14 years old, the schools lack essential resources and teachers to accommodate students and function properly (The Daily Star, 2021). Men and women who have migrated from Myanmar do not have much training or skills to be utilized in the workforce. Therefore, it is presumed that the surplus of the population is not able to positively contribute to the economy. On the other hand, Cox's Bazar is a small city without much development, as the areas have been kept to preserve natural beauty and serve as a tourism-oriented place. Mallick (2020) discussed how the area of Cox's Bazar has been negatively impacted economically and the overpopulation will only worsen the situation.

The locals of Cox's Bazar do not relate to the Rohingya refugees as they are largely influenced by the Burmese culture. Ironically, they are considered as outsiders by the locals of Bangladesh—a treatment that they have encountered in Myanmar. Yasmin and Akhter (2019) discusses how Rohingyas outnumbered the locals by a ratio of 1:3 and as a result increased insecurity among people. Due to the influx, prices of essential food have also increased heavily making it unaffordable for the locals. Many locals, through interviews also emphasized that their children might have an influence of Burmese culture and not Bangladeshi culture as the Rohingyas are growing in number and their culture and language is taking over. Simultaneously, they do not want to be welcoming to the refugees fearing that they will eventually take the jobs at lower prices and make locals unemployed. It is seen that the Rohingyas are going to face this exclusionary politics in Bangladesh too as they cannot become permanent citizens of Bangladesh.

Environmental Impact:

Shaw (1996) argued that environmental scarcity can cause national security threats as it is beheld as an asset for a nation. The environment along with social and economic factors can generate instability and conflict. There has been a large scale of deforestation in the Ukhia and Teknaf areas of Bangladesh. A total forest area of 793 ha out of 1592 ha has been encroached to

accommodate the incoming community, build habitation, and meet requirements of fuel needs (Fearon, 2021). Therefore, the hill train no longer holds its natural setting while exposing the land surface to flooding during monsoons. There has been underground water level depletion due to the excessive extraction of tube wells in these areas. A lack of proper recycling system has also caused plastic bottles and polythene bags to pile up, creating a threat to the underwater species.

Cox's Bazar is a fishing port and the Rohingyas' arrival caused excessive fishing. Exporting fish is also a large income contributor to the Gross Domestic Product of Bangladesh. Many locals fear that excessive fishing may imbalance the food web and lead to a loss of other important marine life. Hammer and Ahmed (2020) discussed that 2250 tons of firewood are burned every day for cooking in various camps and due to high demand of it, locals are also cutting trees and selling it to the Rohingyas creating a highly negative impact in these areas. Overall, it is seen that the area of Cox's Bazar will be at environmental risks in the years to come and may cause the city irrecoverable costs. The following section will look at the identity crisis of Rohingya refugees and how this influx may cause more political tensions in the country.

The role of identity and rise of Islamic extremism in Southeastern Bangladesh

Constructivists see identity as a major role in building the status of a group of people in a society. Palmer (2011) discussed that the only common factor between Rohingyas and local Bangladeshis is their identification as Muslims, although they are culturally more predisposed towards the Burmese traditions. Religion is viewed as a point of vulnerability by many terrorist organizations and religious extremists. Al-Qaeda has continuously targeted and recruited people from the Rohingya refugee community to participate in the adoption of Shah'riah Law in Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 2021). Reportedly, most aid towards the Rohingya refugees had come from Muslim-based organizations where some local donors have tried to propose the importance of Madrasa education. They have built more madrasas and mosques for religious participation and suggested the demolition of secularism in Bangladesh. The Rohingyas have been drawn towards these suggestions as fewer local schools are available and they want their children to get religious education.

Jamat-I-Islam, an active extremist Islamic group have recruited Rohingyas to participate in hate speeches against the Prime Minister of Bangladesh based on gender as well openly advocated the departure of Hindu population in Bangladesh (Asiquzzaman, 2019). Studies by Horgan (2008) and Kavanagh (2011) show that the vulnerable population lacking basic necessities are more prone to join terrorist organizations. It is also possible to influence their minds and make them believe that they should cause violence and injustice as revenge for suffering. This evidence raises concern for Bangladesh as many Hindu populations reside in the country, and there has been strong emphasis on tolerance of other religions and respecting the constitution. However, present data and evidence suggest that the Southeastern part of Bangladesh may transform into an extremist Islamic region. Looking at the internal instability and future risks of Bangladesh, one needs to look at how Myanmar have responded to these collateral damages and whether their bilateral relations have been affected after the Rohingya crisis or not. The next section will address whether Myanmar is willing to accept the Rohingya refugees or not, international response to Myanmar and future prospects of the stateless people.

An overview of Myanmar's response and current political relationship with Bangladesh

Myanmar did not receive much criticism or condemnation from the international community. Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), World Trade Organization (WTO) and other powerful trading organizations and member countries did not speak up against the human rights abuses caused to the Rohingyas (Parnini, 2021). Reportedly, China is investing \$7.3 billion deep sea project in Rakhine state, where the Rohingyas resided (Times of India, 2021). Many have argued that the abuse of Rohingyas and forceful migration was created to clear paths for China as the country plans to build a special economic zone and industrial park in that region. Myanmar government was trying to build a more powerful relationship with China by offering them Rakhine state as it would create large economic gains as well as a strong standing in the international platform. China have continuously used its veto power in the UN Security Council to avoid questions on Rohingyas and Myanmar (Asiquzzaman, 2019). Simultaneously, India have overlooked and remained silent regarding the Rohingya crisis as they share a strong economic relationship with Myanmar. Indian companies hold stakes in the Shwe gas field of the Rakhine state, and both India and Myanmar share a connected interest in the northeastern region of Bay of Bengal. There are joint ventures to build a port at Sittewe, road construction etc. to connect it with the northeastern part of India. Therefore, India and China have political and economic agendas forcing them to maintain a strong relationship with Myanmar and ignore the Rohingya refugee crisis ingenuously.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Bangladesh and Myanmar in 2017 to take back the refugees in phases (Babu, 2020). However, Myanmar so far have not shown any actions regarding it, nor did they rebuild Rakhine state to ensure safe returns of the Rohingyas. The bilateral trade between Myanmar and Bangladesh have been negatively impacted. Trade between the two countries was estimated to value approximately \$84 million in 2011-2012 but it dropped to \$44 million in the 2016-2017 period (Ansar, 2020). Meetings between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries did not garner many positive results. Myanmar's protection from two economic superpowers have immobilized other countries to order economic sanctions. From ASEAN, Malaysia responded addressing the issues tactfully but others such as Thailand and Indonesia have maintained complete silence. It is essential for Bangladesh and Myanmar to work together to maintain bilateral trade relations as well as physical connectivity. Moreover, Bangladesh as a host country need to implement strong economic policies and planning to deal with the influx of people. The next section will offer an overview on some long-term plans that might be useful for Bangladesh.

Policy Brief and Recommendations

It is important for the government of Bangladesh and international organizations to create strong policies and rules to ensure better living conditions for the Rohingyas as evidence suggest that they will remain as stateless people for an uncertain amount of time. Much of the responsibilities lie on the shoulders of the Bangladeshi government to ensure safety of the Rohingyas as well as the local residents of Cox's Bazar. International organizations with strict rules and cooperation with local authority can manage the influx and overpopulated camps. The following recommendations should be considered by international organizations and the Bangladeshi government to build stability in the ongoing chaotic system and mismanagement in the camps:

1. Strong rules and support from Bangladesh government and authority: There are no proper authority or organizations monitoring the well-being of the Rohingya refugees located in different camps in the Cox's Bazar area. The current living conditions in the refugee camps show that the people residing there are somehow surviving and not living. Local authorities and police force do not offer much help to the Rohingyas as they are looked at as outsiders. Bangladeshi government should impose better rules and authority to ensure safety and all complaints against crimes should have instant consequences irrespective of their status as a Rohingya or Bangladeshi citizen. This will help mitigate the ongoing crimes and create a safer environment for the refugees.

2. Better healthcare and facilities for women and children in Rohingya refugee camps: Approximately 108,037 children were born between 2018 and 2020 in the Rohingya refugee camps (Banerjee, 2021). However, there are no proper medical care or assistance for newborns or childbearing mothers. Most women are also rape survivors and live under the fear of forced sex trafficking, debt bondage and becoming involuntary maids/servers for the locals of Cox's Bazar. It is important for the Bangladeshi government to ensure that proper medical facilities and social workers are available to guide the vulnerable population.

3. Transparency and authentic reporting of aid: Bangladesh and the UN raised around \$650 million out of the \$921 million requested as part of the JRP plan. Recent articles and research have shown that many refugees are struggling to have access to the basic necessities such as food, shelter and water. It is mostly seen that five to six Rohingya family members live in one room. Some of them are getting one meal per day and drinking shallow groundwater contaminated with fecal matter. Local newspapers cannot write transparently regarding the conditions of the Rohingya refugees nor can they raise questions against the authoritarian government of Bangladesh. International organizations who are helping to collect this aid should employ a better system to monitor that the money is utilized properly for ensuring the well being of the refugees and that the financial assistance is not trapped in political corruption of the local government.

4. A stronger stance from ASEAN and economic sanctions to Myanmar: Most Rohingya refugees are moving to members of ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia for better opportunities. Myanmar has been a part of ASEAN since 1997 but the member countries have failed to respond or address the human rights abuses in Myanmar during ASEAN conferences and conventions. Myanmar and the three mentioned member states share a strong trade interdependence and each of them respects Myanmar's rights as a sovereign state. However, addressing these issues and imposing specific trade sanctions would allow Myanmar to take up more responsibility and help protect its international image. European Union and its member states should also withdraw from continuing its trading relations and ensure that Myanmar has no duty-free access to the European common market. Economic pressure and sanctions would cause Myanmar to accept the refugees and help them rebuild their lives in their place of familiarity.

Conclusion

It is important to recognize that Bangladesh is comparatively a new nation in South Asia who

are identified as a developing economy with its own set of problems. Although they still do not advocate an open-door policy for refugees, its geographical proximity with Myanmar causes more influx of refugees every year. Myanmar's reluctance to accept the Rohingyas put an uncertainty on the staying time of refugees in Bangladesh with no systematic way to support the large number of people. It is imperative for the international community to realize that aid alone may not solve these issues in the long-run and there needs to be more openness from other countries to convince Myanmar or share the responsibility of accepting the Rohingya refugees. Bangladesh with its over-population and no proper infrastructure in the Cox's Bazar area will have many hardships for years to come. Moreover, the ongoing situation will menace the future possibility of prosperity for Bangladesh as well as the vulnerable refugees who will only be known as stateless people.

Bibliography

- Anwary, A. (2018). Atrocities against the Rohingya Community of Myanmar. *Indian Journal Of Asian Affairs*, 31(1), 91-102. Retrieved 17 September 2021
- Anthony, T., & Cunneen, C. (2008). *The critical criminology companion*. Hawkins Press.
- Acharya, A. (2008). *The Limitations of Mainstream International Relations Theories for Understanding the Politics of Forced Migration*. Lecture, University of Oxford.
- Ansar, A. (2020). The Unfolding of Belonging, Exclusion and Exile: A Reflection on the History of Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Southeast Asia. *Journal Of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 40(3), 441-456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2020.1819126>
- Ashraf, A. (2021). Humanitarianism, National Security, and the Rohingya Refugee Policy of Bangladesh. *Strategic Analysis*, 45(3), 184-206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2021.1918953>
- Asiquzzaman, M. (2019). Rohingya Refugees Crisis between Bangladesh and Myanmar: Search for Permanent Solutions. *International Journal For Empirical Education And Research*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.35935/edr/35.191>
- (Babu), K. (2020). The impacts and challenges to host country Bangladesh due to sheltering the Rohingya refugees. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 6(1), 1770943.
- Banerjee, S. (2021). *The Rohingya Crisis and its Impact on Bangladesh-Myanmar Relations*. Orfonline.org. Retrieved 23 October 2021, from https://orfonline.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/08/ORF_IssueBrief_396_Bangladesh-Myanmar.pdf.
- Bangladesh: 2020 Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis (January-December) | Financial Tracking Service. *Fts.unocha.org*. (2021). Retrieved 25 October 2021, from <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/906/flows>.
- Desperate Rohingyas turning to crimes. *The Daily Star*. (2021). Retrieved 3 December 2021, from <https://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/news/desperate-rohingyas-turning-crimes1952077>.
- Farzana, K. (2015). Boundaries in Shaping the Rohingya Identity and the Shifting Context of Borderland Politics. *Studies In Ethnicity And Nationalism*, 15(2), 292-314. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12142>
- Farzana, K. (2018). *Memories of Burmese Rohingya Refugees*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Faye, M. (2021). *A forced migration from Myanmar to Bangladesh and beyond: humanitarian*

- response to Rohingya refugee crisis. *Journal Of International Humanitarian Action*, 6(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-021-00098-4>
- Fearon, E. (2021). The Rohingya Crisis: Climate Change Continues To Threaten The Most Marginalised And The Most Vulnerable — Human Rights Pulse. *Human Rights Pulse*. Retrieved 3 December 2021, from <https://www.humanrightspulse.com/mastercontentblog/the-rohingyacrisis-climate-change-continues-to-threaten-the-most-marginalised-and-the-most-vulnerable>.
- Guhathakurta, M. (2017). Understanding Violence, Strategising Protection. *Asian Journal Of Social Science*, 45(6), 639-665. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-04506003>
- Horgan, J. (2008). From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism. *The ANNALS Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science*, 618(1), 80-94.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716208317539>
- Hammer, L., & Ahmed, S. (2020). Environmental responsibility and Rohingya refugees: potential grounds for justice. *Local Environment*, 25(11-12), 1021-1031.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2020.1849078>
- Ibrahim, A., & Yunus, M. (2016). The Rohingyas.
- Kavanagh, J. (2011). Selection, Availability, and Opportunity: The Conditional Effect of Poverty on Terrorist Group Participation. *The Journal Of Conflict Resolution*, 55(1), 106-132.
Retrieved 22 October 2021
- Karim, N. (2021). Drugs, violence threaten Rohingya men in world's largest refugee camp. U.S. Retrieved 3 December 2021, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bangladesh-rohingyaboys-feature/drugs-violence-threaten-rohingya-men-in-worlds-largest-refugee-campidUSKCN1PX03J>.
- Leffler, M. (1990). National Security. *The Journal Of American History*, 77(1), 143-152.
Retrieved 22 October 2021
- Lewis, D. (2019). Humanitarianism, civil society and the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh. *Third World Quarterly*, 40(10), 1884-1902.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1652897>
- MacMillan, C. (1986). Social versus Political Rights. *Canadian Journal Of Political Science*, 19(2), 283-304. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0008423900054020>
- Malkki, L. (1995). Refugees and Exile: From "Refugee Studies" to the National Order of Things. *Annual Review Of Anthropology*, 24(1), 495-523.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.002431>

- Horgan, J. (2008). From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism. *The ANNALS Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science*, 618(1), 80-94.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716208317539>
- Hammer, L., & Ahmed, S. (2020). Environmental responsibility and Rohingya refugees: potential grounds for justice. *Local Environment*, 25(11-12), 1021-1031.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2020.1849078>
- Ibrahim, A., & Yunus, M. (2016). The Rohingyas.
- Kavanagh, J. (2011). Selection, Availability, and Opportunity: The Conditional Effect of Poverty on Terrorist Group Participation. *The Journal Of Conflict Resolution*, 55(1), 106-132.
 Retrieved 22 October 2021
- Karim, N. (2021). Drugs, violence threaten Rohingya men in world's largest refugee camp. U.S. Retrieved 3 December 2021, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bangladesh-rohingyaboys-feature/drugs-violence-threaten-rohingya-men-in-worlds-largest-refugee-campidUSKCN1PX03J>.
- Leffler, M. (1990). National Security. *The Journal Of American History*, 77(1), 143-152.
 Retrieved 22 October 2021
- Lewis, D. (2019). Humanitarianism, civil society and the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh. *Third World Quarterly*, 40(10), 1884-1902.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1652897>
- MacMillan, C. (1986). Social versus Political Rights. *Canadian Journal Of Political Science*, 19(2), 283-304. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0008423900054020>
- Malkki, L. (1995). Refugees and Exile: From "Refugee Studies" to the National Order of Things. *Annual Review Of Anthropology*, 24(1), 495-523.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.002431>
- Mallick, A. (2020). Rohingya Refugee Repatriation from Bangladesh: A Far Cry from Reality. *Journal Of Asian Security And International Affairs*, 7(2), 202-226.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2347797020938983>
- Mogire, E. (2009). Refugee Realities: Refugee Rights versus State Security in Kenya and Tanzania. *Transformation: An International Journal Of Holistic Mission Studies*, 26(1), 15-29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378809102173>
- Mohajan, H. (2018). History of Rakhine State and the Origin of the Rohingya Muslims. *IKAT : The Indonesian Journal Of Southeast Asian Studies*, 2(1), 19.
<https://doi.org/10.22146/ikat.v2i1.37391>
- Mostofa, S. (2019). A Study of Al-Qaeda's Propaganda Narratives in Bangladesh. *International*

- Centre For Political Violence And Terrorism Research, 11(2), 1-5. Retrieved 22 October 2021, Mostofa, S. (2021). Retrieved 22 October 2021
- News, W., & News, C. (2021). myanmar: China's huge Rakhine investment behind its tacit backing of Myanmar on Rohingyas - Times of India. The Times of India. Retrieved 3 December 2021, from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/china-will-back-myanmar-onrohingya-crisis-because-it-is-investing-in-rakhine/articleshow/60845089.cms>.
- Palmer, V. (2011). Analysing cultural proximity: Islamic Relief Worldwide and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. *Development In Practice*, 21(1), 96-108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2011.530226>
- Parnini, S. (2013). The Crisis of the Rohingya as a Muslim Minority in Myanmar and Bilateral Relations with Bangladesh. *Journal Of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 33(2), 281-297. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2013.826453>
- Parnini, S. (2021). The Rohingya crisis a test for Bangladesh–Myanmar relations | East Asia Forum. East Asia Forum. Retrieved 3 December 2021, from <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/03/24/the-rohingya-crisis-a-test-for-bangladeshmyanmar-relations/>.
- Reporting.unhcr.org. (2021). Retrieved 25 October 2021, from https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2020%20JRP%20-%20March%202020_0.pdf.
- Roy Chowdhury, A. (2020). An 'un-imagined community': the entangled genealogy of an exclusivist nationalism in Myanmar and the Rohingya refugee crisis. *Social Identities*, 26(5), 590-607. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2020.1782731>
- Storai, Y. (2018). Systematic Ethnic Cleansing: The Case Study of Rohingya. *Arts And Social Sciences Journal*, 09(04). <https://doi.org/10.4172/2151-6200.1000357>
- Simmons, P. (1996). Environmental Change and Security Project Report. The Woodrow Wilson Center.
- Ty, R. (2019). The Rohingya Refugee Crisis. *International Journal On Human Rights*, 16(29), 49-62. Retrieved 25 October 2021
- Weber, K., & Stanford, A. (2017). Myanmar: Promoting Reconciliation between the Rohingya Muslims and Buddhists of Rakhine State. *Social Justice*, 44(4), 55-82. Retrieved 25 October 2021
- Weissbrodt, D., & Collins, C. (2006). The Human Rights of Stateless Persons. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 28(1), 245-276. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2006.0013>
- Yasmin, L., & Akther, S. (2019). The locals and the Rohingyas: Trapped with an uncertain

future. Asian Journal Of Comparative Politics, 5(2), 104-120.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2057891119865021>

Review of *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson

By: Madeline Johnson

Department of History, University of Texas at San Antonio

Isabel Wilkerson offers us a Pulitzer Prize-winning narrative history in *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. The Great Migration was the flight of six million African Americans from the South into the North and West over six decades, from the time shortly after World War I to the end of the Civil Rights Movement. Journalist, professor, and daughter of African American migrants who made their way North from Georgia and South Virginia, Wilkerson also won a Pulitzer Prize in 1994. She was the first Black woman to win the category of journalism. It was a portent of her skill as a writer and documenter of social issues only a few years before she sat down to interview the three main characters of *The Warmth of Other Suns*.

The core of Wilkerson's book is the life stories of three African Americans who moved North and West from the segregated South: Ida Mae Brandon Gladney left Mississippi for Chicago in the late 1930s; George Swanson Starling left Florida for New York in the 1940s; and Robert Joseph Pershing Foster left Louisiana for California in the 1950s. Ida Mae, George, and Robert's stories read like parallel threads of a time-traveling historical novel, interspersed with sections rooted in secondary sources and newspaper accounts providing historical context to their personal journeys. Wilkerson traces their lives from childhood, where abuse they witnessed and experienced in the South fired their young minds with the seeming pipe dream to find a better life elsewhere. She takes us through their adolescence, adulthood, marriages and births of their children into the tortures they underwent at the hands of white Southerners that triggered their final decision to leave the South for good.

They discover that the North is no fairytale. Though African Americans can exercise voting rights, make more money, and say "yes" instead of "yes, sir" without fear of corporal punishment, they continue to face racism. Whites don't want them as neighbors, coworkers, union members, friends or partners. Nevertheless, these Dixieland refugees stake their claim and prove themselves better educated on average than even working-class Northern whites, more likely to live in two-parent households, and supporting themselves in greater frequency than Blacks already living in the North.

Wilkerson points out that the familial stability of Black migrants from the South runs contrary to the popular belief that Southerners ruined Northern cities. While academia has known these demographic details and statistics for some time, Wilkerson hopes her book will vindicate Southern migrants for the wider public. But she neglects to provide an alternative cause of the gangs, prostitution, and drug addiction rampant in Northern cities. She describes this underclass as "the hooded and disheveled descendants of the least able of the migrants" (p. 493). One wonders what Wilkerson has in mind with the phrase "least able." Perhaps she means to honor the diligence and steady work ethic of migrants who chose an "honest" path. Perhaps she means to provide the perspective of Ida Mae and George's generation, who have little sympathy for the criminal way of life. Whatever her reasoning, Wilkerson never satisfactorily explains the social evils associated with abject poverty. In a book as lengthy as *The Warmth of Other Suns*, she could have found room to link systemic oppression, trauma, and crime. She instead implies that gangs and drug addiction stem from laziness and ignorance. Whoever these "least able" migrants are, Wilkerson leaves their stories untold.

Speaking of trauma and systemic oppression, Wilkerson has no shortage of evidence for these twin evils binding African Americans in the first half of the 20th century. Reminders of

white supremacist violence, discrimination, and dominance splatter almost every single one of her first 440 pages. From the drowning and shooting of Black children, the murder of interracial lovers, and KKK robes stashed in a benevolent white employer's office desk, Wilkerson deluges us with nearly nonstop white-on-Black cruelty. We might ourselves drown if she didn't sprinkle anecdotes of Black defiance throughout, which bubble up like gasps of air before she drags us back down to the horror of African American life in the segregated South. Some of these resistance stories are humorous: Blacks throw used condoms on the lawn of a newly-built white high school, dribble soft drinks and popcorn on white moviegoers occupying the seats underneath the colored section, and pee in bags of freshly-picked cotton. Other stories lift us up in timid hope: George occasionally pressures his employer into paying Black workers more. But these stories often end in disappointment, as when George discovers his boss's plan to lynch him for stirring up demands for a raise, and he flees Florida to New York. In this dizzying sway of death, desperation, and possibility that Wilkerson weaves page after page, she engenders within us an echo of the psychological discombobulation plaguing African Americans for centuries.

In the book's last section, "Aftermath," Wilkerson finally releases us from the incessant anguished grip of white hatred. Here, she follows the lives of her three characters from the 1970s onwards. White people fade from center stage, and we get to accompany Ida Mae, George, and Robert in an increasingly desegregated world. They can book rooms in hotels that used to reject them, pose for Thanksgiving photos meant for mainstream magazine ads, and sit wherever they want on the train. Wilkerson literally and metaphorically holds the hands of her aging interviewees as they endure the deaths of relatives and friends, and finally their own. From the beginning to the end of their lives, they carried the South in their cuisine, their accents, and their hearts, and Wilkerson touches our hearts with the remembrance that whatever the color of our skin, we all must face the passing of time and build a better world for those who will be here long after we are gone.

Bibliography

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns : the Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. New York :Vintage Books, 2011.

Patriot, Scholar, Wetback

By Andrew Alan Klebahn

Department of English, University of Texas at San Antonio

My journey to becoming a writer began just before Christmas in 2008 in Mosul, Iraq. During a special mail call, my platoon received a bag of mail from a group of students asking, “What is life as a soldier like?” I didn’t want to describe the ineffable tsunami of fear. Responding to the letters, I said, life for me in Iraq is about liberation from tyranny, in the words of Edmund Burk, “for evil to prevail, good men need but to do nothing.”

Furthermore, the life of a soldier is far more interesting than the lugubrious motivations for escaping abysmal poverty. My grandmother was a colorful storyteller with her way with words that cordon fear and inspire bravery. My favorite childhood memories are of my grandmother feeding me home-cooked Mexican food and sharing stories with her photo album books. The first photo is an old monochromatic family photo of a young couple adorned with fur coats holding an opulently dressed baby. “This photo was taken just before [we] moved to Texas without papers,” she says. Her parents and herself were undocumented. The next page is my grandfather when he was a young man dressed in uniform, she tells me, “He earned his citizenship by serving in World War II as an artillery soldier.” War must put enormous stress on the human heart because he returned home with a heart condition, just like I did when I returned from the Iraq war. My grandmother’s storytelling is the progenitor of our family legacy. Every story of tragedy and triumph inspired me to become a patriot and scholar. The most powerful story shared with me was of her young adult experience with local police and Border Patrol officer who stopped her while she was walking to work to de-shell pecans. “Times were different back then, the era of Operation Wetback” she explained. I didn’t understand why a police officer called me a “wetback”, but my grandmother explained our people were labeled as “desperate criminals” according to the 1964 doctrine Operation Wetback.

Writing to students became my therapy because I didn’t think about the lugubrious reality of war. I wrote to students about my favorite book, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The great American dream of a boy who rose above from abysmal poverty was very relatable. However, one fatal flaw about *Gatsby* sends a resonating personal message to me—earn a college degree or end up like the main protagonist who suffers from imposter syndrome. Enlisting in the U.S. Army during a time of war was the most noble experience of my life that earned me an early retirement with honorable discharge for service-connected injuries. Now, my second greatest achievement is graduating with a bachelor’s degree and becoming a graduate student on the precipice of earning a Ph.D. Fear of death is more than a malaise of ineffable emotion. My love of writing is the progenitor of earning my Ph.D. so that I may cordon my fear of living an unfulfilled life and becoming fungible. Christmas 2008 in Iraq is perhaps my defining moment of becoming a writer by challenging myself to anthropomorphize my life into words on paper and posthumously honoring my family.

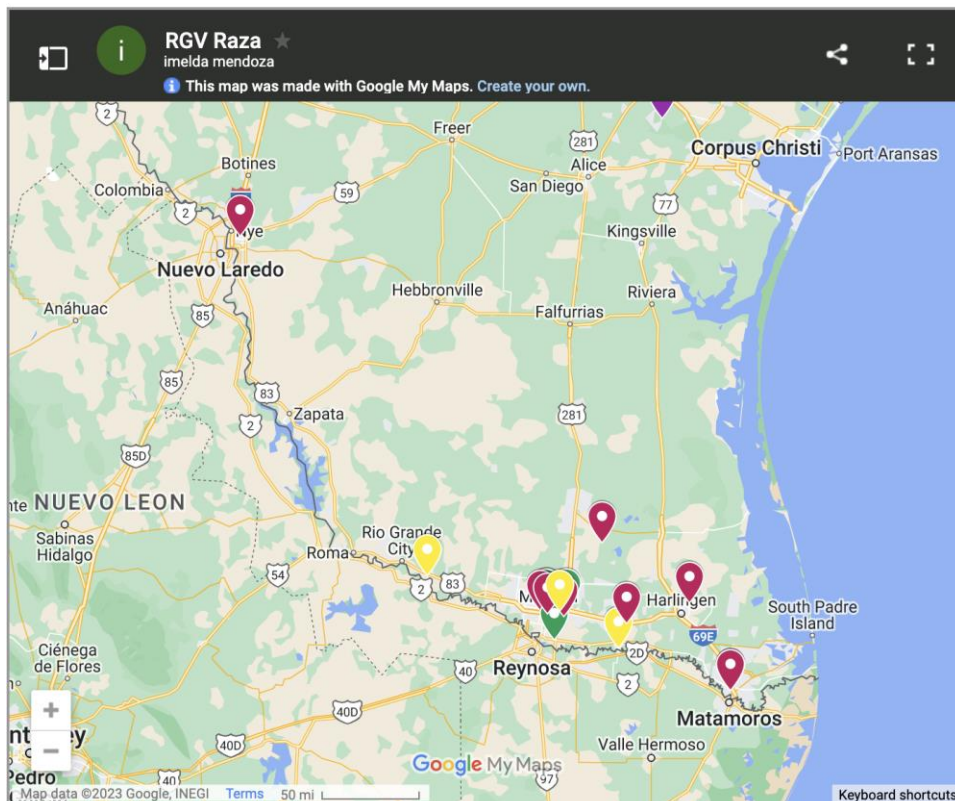
RGV Raza: Mapping Memories & Nosotros la Gente/ We the People

By: Imelda Mendoza

Department of English, University of Texas at San Antonio

RGV RAZA: Mapping Memories

The Rio Grande Valley is still very much the RGV that my great-grandmother grew up. However, over the recent years, American expansion has reached the southern border in myriad of ways. Food chains, clothing stores, and current events have resulted in many changes to the border towns of South Texas. Much of the region's historical architecture is being torn down to make way for new and modern shopping centers and historical landmarks are at risk of having its rich history in Mexican-American roots be stripped away and murals depicting Raza pride and current events are being painted over. The art of RGV is the heart of the region, where both Mexican and American roots represent the voice of the people. This website aims to track many of the political, historical and social parts of the Rio Grande Valley before they are torn down and lost to American expansion. Areas are marked and classified on google maps; once an area is torn down/replaced, it will be colored black and will have what has replaced it. The areas documented begin with the La Marcha in 1966 that ignited the Civil Rights Movement in Texas and will continue to current day.



Murals were selected based on female depictions of women that represent the culture, female artist that depict border culture, and political art that impacts the raza of the RGV. If a mural becomes erased, torn down, or painted over, the marker color will be coded to black. The following is the color coding for the map:

Yellow: protests

Red: Art/murals

Green: historical landmarks

Black: Murals that have been painted over/destroyed.

This map will continue to grow with time. View interactive map [here](#).

Nosotros la Gente/We the People

The research involves cases across the country where Americans of the Latinx community were wrongfully charged and convicted of crimes they did not commit. The cases I have chosen are prior to our modern-day society. I wanted to look for cases that have influenced or carried over into our present day to showcase the origins of what we see in our court system today. After researching how our courts have a shortage of translators, I was angered that not a single elected official or government agency has broadcasted this to the country, as there are many bilingual people who could fulfill these roles. Most of the research posited are from newspapers and court documents.

My framework and theory revolves around language and it's power, and how it stems from the founding principles of our country. We continue this idea that because we are in America, we must speak English. While I do not deny that speaking English is crucial to survival, I do not agree that our native language should hold us in contempt in the United States Judicial System.

View full archive and additional work [here](#).