



Remix: Damage, Shame and Resistance

Fall 2007

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Introduction

Michelle Fine & Bill Cross

In the fall of 2007, Michelle Fine and William Cross invited students to a seminar on damage, coping, and resistance. Our objective was to mind-bend, mind-stretch, and go “deep” in the interrogation of words, labels, and processes that facilitate the marginalization of stigmatized groups and individual members of such groups. The seminar centered on a psychological discourse, but students from other disciplines and other doctoral programs were encouraged to register. The course description stressed the following:

The social sciences in general and psychology in particular play a vital role in providing “scientific” support linking membership in stigmatized groups and a wide range of negative outcomes such as psychopathology, family structure, cultural implosion, low academic achievement, criminality, hypersensitivity to stigma status, learned helplessness, poor performance on high-risk tests, etc. This seminar will conduct critical conversations about the history of theory and methods in psychology dedicated to stigma and damage (black psychology, women's psychology, disability studies, queer/lesbian/gay psychology). Once a group has been stigmatized, individual members become the object of social policies and special treatment/services that the society would hesitate to apply to other citizens. It is as if stigmatization provides a rationale for *social license*. This is the point by Rickie Solinger in *Wake up little Suzie* regarding society's differentiate treatment of pregnant and out-of-wedlock black and white women before *Roe v. Wade*. Otherwise “pure” white women became ensnarled in “predicaments” and were whisked away to very private places. In exchange for immediately giving-up the newborn infant for adoption, the white women faced redemption, forgiveness, and a second chance at purity. On the other hand, black women, whose pregnancy was linked to sexual licentiousness, were “left” on their own, with few social supports provided during pregnancy or after birthing. During WWII, black, Native American, and other men of color were often denied mental health benefits and disability services because such men were imagined not to have the complex mental capacity needed to respond positively to psychological treatment (i.e., psychotherapy).

We want to interrogate the “damage/stigma” discourse and explore alternative theoretical and methodological positions. Although damage will be explored at the level of the individual (the black woman who is almost forced to carry her baby to term or man of color who did not receive care for his Post-Traumatic-Stress), we will introduce the concept of “group-damage” wherein evidence of damage to individuals may be called into question at the same time certain forms of internalized oppression diminish the capacity of the social group to which “undamaged” persons belong.

What follows is a cluster of papers stimulated by the ubiquitous “required final assignment.” As we graded these papers - one at a time - we became aware of an unintended privilege. As

“graders” and professors, we were experiencing the voices, messages, theorizing, and analysis embedded in each work even though sharing, revealing, witnessing, and public denuding was a constant dynamic of the seminar. Almost in the same instance, we realized the need to create an e-journal so that all the classmates, as well as our distinguished quest speakers, could share the intellectual energy, insight, and voicing generated by the sessions.

Interspersed throughout the seminar were quest speakers: Anderson Franklin, [Boston College] explored the consequences of everyday racial microaggressions and the pitfalls, failures, and triumphs of coping, resistance, and resilience. Sandy Silverman, New York City-based analyst, brought the brilliance of her analytic training and writings to the room, reflecting on where in the body shame lives and how it festers or transforms in relation with others. We were privy to a rising star in the voice of Rhea Combs as she took us deep into the mind of Marlon Briggs and his cinematic deconstruction of homophobic forces aimed squarely at black gays. Rita Hardiman denuded the subjectivities of “unintended” racists – and the struggle of everyday white-folk to emerge from their immersion in a racist world that seems natural, normal, and beyond the pale of critique. Professor Susan Opotow, faculty at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, mesmerized us with an historic analysis of shame and damage, and national amnesia, in the post-Civil War South.

The papers.

The collection thus revealed is not exhaustive; some students chose not to include their work, other could not find the time to re-shape and revise their productions. We can say without hesitation that all the gems, rubies, and diamonds are not here and will forever be locked in notebooks, folders, and flash-drives; in memories of the class, notes taken and destroyed; tears shed and laughter that exploded. But what we have are truly representative. It is not so much the case that the papers included are the “best,” rather they are representative of the mind-bending exploration, daring, curiosity, and courage so commonplace to the discourse that bounced off the walls of the seminar room each week.

A critical moment occurred in the class when students insisted that not only people and groups carry shame and stigma, but imputations of damage and shame attach geographically, across time and space. Indeed, the Environmental Psychology students almost immediately helped us move beyond the “person” as the unit of analysis to discover how *space and place* are

recruited as objects of stigmatization. Such insights are captured in the papers by Autumn Beckman, Desiree Fields, and Eva Tessa Udvarhelyi who trace, respectively, the ravaged – if resilient – communities scarred by Hurricane Katrina, the ideological and material devastation wrought by gentrification, and the neo-liberal insistence that divides bodies, sorts for those who are deserving and separates the “clean” from the impure.

Other papers forced our attention onto *relationships* where shame can metabolize and resistance can fester. Powerfully, each of these three papers incites in readers a provocative discomfort, uncovering political territories typically sidestepped in theory and politics. To begin this section, Rachel Verni offers a bold analysis of ‘passing’ as a strategic move of power that may, at once, capitulate to oppression and refuse the assignments that power tries to tattoo on marginalized bodies. Verni escorts readers into material typically side-stepped by those on the Left, those in critical circles, those who seek to “celebrate” identity politics. Insisting that we enter the social psychological dynamics of passing, she elegantly reveals the complex relational maneuvers engaged in the decision/activity of passing. Next, LaToya Tavernier pries open another relatively submerged social issue – intra-group racism. She presents psychohistory as a way of comprehending intra-group racism and privilege, as played out by the “light-skinned” Dominicans and their loathing and exploitation of the dusky peoples of Haiti. Finally, Jessica Van Denend provokes angst, anxiety, and ripples of unending perturbation by revealing the buffering role prison guards play in helping the “good” members of society remain totally comfortable in denial and indifference toward prisoners. Van Denend offers a brilliant psychoanalytic analysis of the ways in which correction officers absorb, in their bodies and in their ideological subjectivities, the illusory sharp edge separating those who are “good” from those who are “dangerous.”

The last triplet in our e-journal takes up the question of indulging and “embracing” shame, to borrow a term from Michelle Billies. These last three essays lift up varied spaces, identities and bodies of shame, but then toss critique back onto the very institutions – including the academy – that produce shaming complexes and practices. Thus, the essential dehumanization of naming, labeling, and categorizing occupies the center of Michelle Billies’ complex, delicate, and profoundly insightful essay. While she carefully interrogates the ways in which language inscribes shame on some bodies, she analyzes how binaries and hierarchies insinuate worth and its absence. With a thrilling turn-about, at the end of the essay Billies invites

researchers and activists to “embrace the excess;” that is, to swim in the pool of shame, rather than fleeing the contamination. In a similar vein Ja’Walker’s analysis of Black lesbians begins with a call and response cadence found in black spirituals and ends with the roar of Hip-Hop. Throughout the text we are reminded that persons who have been stigmatized do not simply engorge the stain. Instead, in the words of Walker, they *Remix. Resist. Gender Fuck*. To say the least, Ja’ has a way with words and the reader will notice that her significations inspired the naming of our e-journal. Liza Pappas’s essay concludes the volume, by pointing to the ways in which progressive scholarship can inadvertently reproduce the gaze of deficit onto the bodies of those already denied. In an effort to undertake critical justice research, as Pappas suggests, many critical scholars, advocates, and lawyers meticulously document the multiple “deficits” and “damages” imposed onto the lives of poor youth of color. By so doing, Pappas registers a concern that representational damage can result when progressive [and conservative] academics configure research on the uneven geography of opportunities. Pappas’ critical eye and tendency to turn things up side down seems a fitting exit.

These papers dig deep, explore fully, and leave few stones unturned, as they dare to interrogate the practices, the bodies, the consequences and the refusals of shame, stigma and damage. With pride, we invite you to read these provocative essays.

Urban Legends and the American Dream: Homeownership and the Production of Stigmatized Urban Neighborhoods

Desiree Fields

I. Introduction

Urban legends may be thought of as modern folklore, “depicting a clash between modern conditions and some aspect of a traditional lifestyle” (Brunvard, 1981, in Best & Horiuchi, 1985, pp. 492). As such they are “grounded in human baseness” (Fine, 1980, in Best & Horiuchi, 1985, pp. 492). These tales are passed on through storytelling (Best & Horiuchi, 1985) and collective memory, and reinforced by newspaper accounts, film, and social science. The nature of urban legends is that they are infamous, known to all but experienced by few. They are often cautionary tales, laden with warnings about the dangers of cities and the people in them. The homicidal tow truck driver. The razor blade in the Halloween candy (Best & Horiuchi, 1985). The South Bronx, Compton, Chicago’s South Side, Bayview-Hunter’s Point in San Francisco, and the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans are city neighborhoods that have taken on the status of urban legends. When people speak of these places, specific images associated with exclusion, with poverty, with crime come to mind. Rules about where to walk and which street corners to avoid are discussed. We think perhaps of towering public housing and burnt out shells of buildings, perhaps of drug dealers loitering on street corners.

While urban legends often have a kernel of truth we tend to know little about their context and how they arose. In the case of inner-city neighborhoods, the stories and images that communicate baseness and danger can often be connected to specific federal homeownership policies and actions by socio-spatial agents in the housing and finance markets. The mythology of the American Dream of homeownership is intricately intertwined with the creation of stigmatized urban neighborhoods, the “urban legends” referred to in the title of this paper. This paper will integrate structural interpretations of racism (Bonillo-Silva, 1997), moral exclusion theory (Opatow, 2007), and a critique of biological metaphors like the neighborhood life cycle concept with a historical perspective on federal homeownership policy and actions like blockbusting and predatory lending in order to shed light on negative reputations of city neighborhoods. After reviewing the conceptual framework for this “spatial stigma” formed by work on the significance of space and place, place identity, and moral exclusion, I will explore

how federal housing policy has produced space along racial lines, the role of socio-spatial agents in shaping neighborhood reputations from blockbusting to subprime mortgage lending, and how applying biological metaphors to urban neighborhoods serves to naturalize spatial exclusion.

II. Conceptual Framework¹

A. Significance of Space and Place

The theory of the production of space theory argues that space is a commodity, as well as “a means of production...control...of domination, of power” (Lefebvre, 1974, pp. 26). Space is used to express and maintain power relations (Lefebvre, 1974). It is within these power relationships that our own personal and social background, history and social discourses and narratives shape the way we think and talk about our physical surroundings, the way we relate to them and the way we imagine them. As such, the physical environment is not simply a container of social processes and actions but an active element in the creation, maintenance, management and subversion of social relations.

Places exist in a physical and a social sense. Their physical existence is inseparable from the ways they are socially produced and constructed. Social production describes all the social, economic and ideological factors that create a material setting, while social construction refers to the ways people experience, use and interpret a place. Social production of space is the domain of urban planners, of government housing agencies, of architects (Lefebvre, 1974). It might be said that these entities produce *kinds* of places, while *particular* places come into being through the way specific actors move through, alter, and make use of space. It’s important to keep in mind that stigmatized urban neighborhoods are the result of processes of social production and construction.

The socially produced and constructed nature of places means that the stories they tell are not neutral, natural or innate. The story a particular place “tells” is collectively evoked, shaped and manipulated by people. The imaginary geographies we carry with us are based not only on our personal experiences in and of these places, but also on cultural and social narratives about, and representations of, space and place. Power relations are embedded in a running dialogue

¹ Parts of this paper, particularly the conceptual framework, were presented on December 10, 2007 with Autumn Beckman and Eva Tessza Udvarhelyi in a talk called “Spatial Stigma: Producing, Understanding, and Negotiating Stigmatized Urban Neighborhoods” at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York (CUNY).

between our personal experiences of and socio-cultural narratives about places. Thus our personal experiences of places do not exist in a vacuum--rather they are informed by our own histories and by socio-cultural narratives. This ongoing dialogue contributes to the relational, dynamic, and emergent quality of space and place, allowing the meaning of places to change over time or from person to person.

B. Place Identity

We use space and place in various ways to construct or reflect our personal or group identity, and to understand and define other people and groups. Place identity is part of self identity and refers to the process of how our experiences *with* places develop our values, feelings, and beliefs *about* places (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983), and ourselves in relation to places. Place identity is constructed not only by our own individual experiences and interactions with a place; because we share spaces and places with other people, our understandings of places are socially constructed. Places are represented by neighborhood organizations, newspaper articles, local myths and stories, and even television shows and movies about the places we live or similar ones. Place identity is also relational, in that we come to understand ourselves in relation to our neighborhood *through* our understanding of other places. All of these factors affect the extent to which a person comes to identify with the community, culture, and values of their neighborhood, and the extent to which they see themselves reflected in the neighborhood.

Some aspects of place identity are positive. For example, place attachment to a new neighborhood can develop through spending time in places in the area, forming relationships with other residents, and creating fond memories there. At the same time the social, relational nature of place identity means that it can also manifest itself negatively, through distancing from places and spaces linked to negative characteristics. Thus place identity entails the use of space and place to define both who and what we are, and who and what we are *not*. In the process of forming our own place identity then, we are also actively producing the identities of other places and the people that live there.

Rather than being individualistic, mentalistic, uncontested and apolitical, places (and the identities we construct for them) are contested sites of being and belonging that are shaped both collectively and through individual experiences (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). Given the power

relations expressed and maintained through the use of space, we can assume that the collective construction of place identity will reflect these power relations. It is within the context of uneven power relationships that the differences between places are marked and assigned superior or inferior status. This facilitates the moral exclusion and stigmatization of “inferior” neighborhoods and the people within them.

C. Moral Exclusion

Susan Opatow’s notion of moral exclusion is a useful starting point for thinking about stigmatized places. Moral exclusion serves to bar people from the scope of justice, from considerations of fairness and other shared moral rules and norms on the grounds that they constitute a threat (Opatow, 1990). When people are morally excluded they often face disparate access to resources and measures to improve well-being (Opatow, 2007). Moral exclusion fosters distance and disconnection from others (Opatow, 2007).

The conditions of moral exclusion assist in the process of stigmatization because once people are placed outside our scope of fairness and justice they may be understood as fundamentally different from others. Link and Phelan note that once this difference is established the path to loss of status and discrimination opens and stigmatization is realized (Link & Phelan, 2001). At the same time, stigma reinforces moral exclusion. The labeling, stereotyping, and discrimination that characterize stigma may help to extend moral exclusion as characterizations and expectations of people and groups become ever-more generalized. We come to apply practices of inclusion and exclusion in compliance with representations of stigmatized people and groups.

Moral exclusion encompasses inclusionary and exclusionary practices that take place within economic, social, legal, political and technical spheres (Opatow, 2007). For the purposes of understanding stigmatized places, it is useful to recognize that such practices also have spatial implications. When we understand certain neighborhoods as different from others we become disconnected from them. This facilitates a range of inclusionary and exclusionary practices that interlock across societal institutions, including housing laws and banking policies. Such practices are also carried out by actors within social space, including landlords, social workers, employers, and real estate agents.

Applying the concept of moral exclusion to place allows us to see that while people bear the stigma of difference that comes with existing outside the boundaries of justice, lines are also drawn around the places and spaces they occupy. Difference is constructed not just at the level of people but at the level of place. Thus it becomes important to consider the role played by practices of exclusion in the production of stigmatized urban neighborhoods.

III. Federal Housing Policy: Producing Space Along Racial Lines

The production of stigmatized places is carried out in particular historical, social, economic and political contexts. In America the production of stigmatized urban neighborhoods has unfolded over time, and federal housing and economic policy, and banking, lending and real estate industry practices have played a large role not only in how *certain* neighborhoods (place), but certain *kinds* of neighborhoods (space) become synonymous with pathology and decline. The stigmatization of neighborhoods in urban America is deeply intertwined with race. The effects of our history of slavery, of segregation and discrimination, and our ongoing legacy of racism are reasserted every day on our city streets, as exemplified by the extent of residential segregation of African-Americans and whites in New York City. From 1980 to 2000 residential segregation in New York City did not decrease but actually increased slightly, making it the third most segregated city after Detroit and Chicago (Logan, Stults, & Farley, 2004). In 2000 New York City's index of dissimilarity between whites and African-Americans was 81.8; the elimination of this residential segregation by race would require 82% of whites or African-Americans to move their place of residence.

In their work on privileged places Gregory Squires and Charis Kubrin note that neighborhood racial composition "has long been at the centre of public policy and private practice in the creation and destruction of communities and at determining access to the elements of the good life" (Squires & Kubrin, 2005, pp. 47). Urban sprawl, the concentration of poverty in urban neighborhoods, and racial segregation all shape the uneven distribution of life chances, or lack thereof, for African-Americans (Squires & Kubrin, 2005). In other words, the uneven impact of policy and practice on life chances for African-Americans happens through space (among other mediums and means), making structural racism a key element in the production of stigmatized urban neighborhoods in the U.S.

Eduardo Bonillo-Silva's structural interpretation of racism is a valuable basis for thinking about stigmatized urban neighborhoods. He argues that racialized societies are created through the dominant group's use of racial categories to organize society in their best interests (Bonillo-Silva, 1997), a notion that has much relevance in political context where federal housing policy has produced space, and allocated opportunity through space, along racial lines. Urban neighborhoods have borne the brunt of spatial exclusion by federal policy. One example of this kind of exclusion, redlining, can be traced in part to policies of the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), both created by the US government in the 1930s. HOLC was created to refinance loans that went into default during the Great Depression, introducing fixed-rate, long-term, self-amortizing mortgage loans and uniform national property appraisal standards rating city districts in terms of potential default risk (Schill & Wachter, 1995). FHA had the authority to guarantee home loan mortgages (Schill & Wachter, 1995). With the government guaranteeing home loan mortgages through FHA, lenders could extend loans to prospective homeowners without risk of loss should the borrower go into default, which set off a wave of homeownership in the U.S.

Sarah Ludwig of the Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project (NEDAP) argues that, in essence, FHA and HOLC policies created a template for redlining (Ludwig, 2007). Indeed, under the property and risk appraisal standards used by HOLC and FHA places where minorities lived, crowded neighborhoods, and older property were considered high risk (Schill & Wachter, 1995). Of course, racial and ethnic minorities living in overcrowded and substandard housing were (and are) much more common in urban places than suburban ones. The rating system developed by HOLC color-coded neighborhood real estate values with neighborhoods shaded in red having the lowest property values (Grade D) (Squires, 1992). In neighborhoods dominated by racial minorities, homes were "of little or no value...due to the colored element" (Jackson, 1985, quoted in Squires, 1992, pp. 4).

In a 1937 HOLC "security map" of Philadelphia, the desirability of areas "infiltrated" by foreign-born and Negro families and families receiving relief funds was deemed diminished ("Home Owners Loan Corporation Residential Security Map for Philadelphia," 1937). HOLC appraisers and brokers collaborated with local realtors to create the "security map" and recommended that mortgage funds in grade D areas, represented in red in Figure 1, be made available and serviced on different terms than other, more desirable areas ("Home Owners Loan

Corporation Residential Security Map for Philadelphia," 1937). This recommendation effectively authorized discriminatory lending practices. People trying to access mortgage credit in grade D areas were likely to either be denied a loan or receive a loan with punitive terms, e.g. high interest rates, to offset the "risk" of lending in such an area. Redlining provides a clear and still-painful example of how dominant groups were able to organize space along racial lines, and to do so in ways that would serve their own interests.

In the case of redlining, lines were *literally* drawn around urban neighborhoods of color. By barring residents of these areas from access to wealth accumulation through homeownership redlining achieved spatial exclusion of urban neighborhoods where minorities lived. The lack of FHA loan guarantees meant that lenders were unlikely to extend loans in these urban neighborhoods, leading white and middle-income households to leave the city for the suburbs, where they could get mortgage loans. In many ways, HOLC and FHA practices "simply reflected what their counterparts in the real estate industry were doing" (Squires, 1992, pp. 4). For example, in the 1920s National Association of Real Estate Boards adopted Article 34, which barred realtors from moving African-Americans to white neighborhoods, into their Code of Ethics (Metzger, 2000). However it is critical to note that redlining was no simple reflection; in mirroring the racist practices of the private sector federal agencies *institutionalized* such practices.

Though the specific landscape of neighborhood decline varied from place to place, the lack of mortgage capital in urban neighborhoods led to abandoned, run down, and dilapidated housing stock through disinvestment.

IV. Blockbusting to Subprime Lending: the Role of Socio-Spatial Agents in Shaping Neighborhood Reputations

By institutionalizing the production of space along racial lines, federal housing policy shaped how certain *kinds* of neighborhoods become synonymous with decline—with boarded up windows, overcrowded houses, and burnt out buildings. Such policies shaped a context where places that foreigners and minorities live are the kinds of places that are characterized as deteriorated and undesirable. It is in this context that specific social actors—what Manuel Aalbers (2006) calls socio-spatial agents (e.g. loan officers, landlords, developers, and realtors)—influence the landscape of stigma in *particular* ways and places. Institutionalized

spatial exclusion of low-income, minority neighborhoods by federal housing policy provided a set of guidelines within which socio-spatial agents have acted to “determine the shape of the environment” (Aalbers, 2006: 1072). Socio-spatial agents participate in the production of stigma through their responses to a neighborhood’s reputation—for example by not making loans in areas deemed “high risk” for mortgage default—and by actively shaping images of particular neighborhoods, for example by discouraging families from buying homes in neighborhoods considered “dangerous” (Hastings, 2004). The actions of socio-spatial agents are not neutral; rather the interests served by a neighborhood that comes to be known as blighted drive the ways they respond to and shape neighborhood reputations (Hastings, 2004). In the context of a racialized society this will happen along racial lines and serve the interests of the dominant group. Certainly the spatial exclusion set up by HOLC and FHA policies gave socio-spatial agents incentive to reinforce the stigmatization of urban neighborhoods through their actions, policies, and practices.

Because socio-spatial agents are in fact people, they may choose to act, in their specific domains, in ways that undermine structural realities of law and policy. The practice of blockbusting by realtors in the wake of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the Section 235 Homeownership Assistance Program demonstrates how these socio-spatial agents were able to maintain exclusion despite the inclusion of individuals and groups residing in stigmatized urban neighborhoods in the domain of law. In 1968, toward the end of the Civil Rights movement and in the wake of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Congress enacted the Fair Housing Act and the Section 235 Homeownership Assistance Program (Hossain, 2004; Schill & Wachter, 1995). The Fair Housing Act prohibited making housing unavailable on the basis of race, and other discrimination in the sale or rental of homes based on race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin (Hossain, 2004). Section 235 was targeted at making homeownership a reality for low-income households by providing mortgage insurance for home purchases, authorizing very small down payments, and subsidizing mortgage loan interest rates (Schill & Wachter, 1995). Opatow (2007) has cast instrumental inclusion as a practice that may accomplish inclusion of excluded individuals and groups, but which is motivated by other factors, frequently economic or political ones. While the aim of Section 235 may have been “*in part* to undo the damage created by FHA mortgage redlining in many urban neighborhoods” (Schill & Wachter, 1995: 1312, emphasis added), it is likely that Congress also had other motivations for passing this legislation,

perhaps the gain of political capital at a time when many Americans were mobilized on behalf of the Civil Rights movement.

In the ten years after it was passed, 500,000 homes were purchased under Section 235 (Schill & Wachter, 1995). In this context of instrumental inclusion, “blockbusting” emerged. Blockbusting describes a process where “realtors would sell a few homes to minority purchasers and spread the rumor that the neighborhood would soon become entirely black to set off a wave of panic selling. Whites would sell their homes at artificially low prices, frequently to the real estate agents themselves, who would turn around and sell them to nonwhites at inflated values” (Schill & Wachter, 1995: 1285).

Blockbusting promoted rapid transition in neighborhood racial composition, transforming many areas to ones with a majority African-American residents where before mainly whites lived. Blockbusting realtors bribed FHA appraisers to inflate the value of structurally flawed homes, leaving their African-American buyers with structurally defective homes worth less than their mortgage balance (Schill & Wachter, 1995). Because these low-income households were unable to afford repairs, a wave of abandonment and foreclosure in such neighborhoods ensued, and by 1979 around 18% of the 500,000 homes purchased under Section 235 were foreclosed on (Schill & Wachter, 1995).

The example of blockbusting demonstrates the role socio-spatial agents like realtors play in shaping neighborhood reputations along racial lines. Section 235 was targeted at low-income, urban homebuyers (Schill & Wachter, 1995), allowing African-Americans to get into homeownership. In cities like Detroit, Chicago, and St. Louis, blockbusting in majority white urban neighborhoods contributed to white flight to the suburbs. In combination with forces like suburbanization and widespread unrest and rioting in urban areas in the 1960s, redlining and blockbusting left cities across the U.S. with swaths of abandoned housing; by 1970 New York City had 100,000 abandoned housing units (Metzger, 2000). The legacy of redlining practices and the associated devaluing of neighborhoods where minorities lived led white homeowners to connect low-income and minority residents with decrements to their neighborhood’s reputation. Thus despite the instrumental inclusion offered by the Fair Housing Act and Section 235, realtors and white homeowners reinforced and extended the moral exclusion of racially and economically integrated neighborhoods that had been institutionalized by earlier federal housing policy.

Practices like blockbusting demonstrate how urban neighborhoods in places like Detroit, Chicago, and New York City come to acquire stigmatized identities. In line with Bonillo-Silva's concept of racialized societies, blockbusting also served to benefit the socio-spatial agents involved. Whites fleeing their urban neighborhoods for the suburbs likely enjoyed the advantages associated with the "good life" there, such as better schools and amenities as well as newer and larger homes with yards. Blockbusting realtors profited through buying homes at cut-rate prices and then selling them for more than they were worth. Because the government insured mortgages on homes bought under Section 235, lenders faced no risk of loss on their investment. Meanwhile in the wake of widespread abandonment and foreclosure on homes bought under Section 235, "entire neighborhoods were blighted" (Schill & Wachter, 1995:1313).

A more current example of the role played by socio-spatial agents in shaping neighborhood reputations deals again with the expansion of homeownership to low-income and minority households, this time through subprime mortgage lending. As the work of economist Rezaul Hossain (2004) demonstrates, even the instrumental inclusion achieved by urban neighborhoods under the Fair Housing Act was suboptimal because the legislation only applied to discrimination in the sale or rental of homes. While this legislation sought to prevent redlining (e.g. refusing access to housing, discriminatory terms of sale or rental transactions) by *individuals* in the housing market it did little to address similar discriminatory practices in the domain of finance or credit (Hossain, 2004).

In Chicago, a community organizing movement began to emerge in response to ongoing redlining, and blockbusting, and property abandonment in urban neighborhoods (Metzger, 2000). Eventually groups that were part of the Chicago movement formed coalitions with similar groups across the nation, holding a national housing conference in 1972 (Metzger, 2000). Subsequently several pieces of legislation were passed to address discrimination in housing, credit, and lending markets (Hossain, 2004). The Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) of 1974 sought to "prohibit wider credit availability by prohibiting the use of stereotypes in credit decisions" (Hossain, 2004: 7) by financial institutions. The ECOA was an inadequate way to address redlining because while it prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, and receipt of public assistance, it did not bar discrimination against a neighborhood (Hossain, 2004). The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) of 1975 set in place reporting standards for depository institutions that required them to provide

information about the number and value of mortgages they originated and purchased at the census tract level; a later amendment to HMDA required reporting race, gender, income, and lending decisions at the individual loan level (Hossain, 2004). These reporting requirements were designed to “monitor and detect patterns of lending behaviors”, information that may be used to support complaints of discrimination and redlining (Hossain, 2004, pp. 8).

The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) was passed in 1977 with the goal of lenders meeting “the credit needs of the *entire* community, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods” (Housing and Community Development Act of 1977, in Hossain, 2004: 11, emphasis original). The regulations put in place by CRA required lenders to have a CRA statement delineating the community they served and listing the specific programs offered there; other suggested components included descriptions of efforts to meet to meet community credit needs and periodic reports on success in meeting community credit needs (Hossain, 2004). CRA applies to state member banks, state nonmember banks, national banks, and savings and loan associations, while mortgage companies, trust companies, credit unions, correspondent banks and clearing agents are exempt (Hossain, 2004).

These three pieces of legislation, resulting at least in part from community organizing movements, illustrate the (sometimes, subtle, sometimes overt) changes in social organization made possible by racial contestation: “the struggle of racial groups for systemic changes regarding their position at one or more levels” (Bonillo-Silva, 1997 pp. 473). In racialized societies this contestation drives transformations over time in manifestations of racism (Bonillo-Silva, 1997). Bonillo-Silva’s insistence on “historically situated racisms” (Hall, 1980, in Bonillo-Silva, 1997, pp. 475) is useful in considering the evolution of the mortgage market after the passage of ECOA, HMDA, and CRA.

While the spatial exclusion of low-income minority neighborhoods was as clear as the red lines on HOLC “security maps”, the techniques of exclusion in the era of subprime lending are less obvious.

Subprime loans target low-income or credit-impaired borrowers, making mortgage credit available to these individuals, though typically with higher interest rates and other terms that make subprime products less favorable than traditional prime loan products (Apgar & Calder, 2005). Many argue that subprime loans have opened up access to home ownership and renovation to lower-income, minority households and communities; indeed home purchase

lending to Hispanics increased by 150%, and to African-Americans by 93% between 1993 and 2001 (Apgar & Calder, 2005). At the same time the landscape of the mortgage lending industry has changed dramatically over the last 25 years. Where the socio-spatial agents in home purchase lending used to be local banks, now they are more often mortgage brokers or other actors not subject to CRA regulations (Apgar & Calder, 2005).

Indications abound that these socio-spatial agents are targeting African-American and other low-income communities with predatory subprime loans that push new homeowners into foreclosure, or strip the equity accumulated by longtime homeowners, particularly senior citizens (Apgar & Calder, 2005; Howell, 2006; Wyly, Atia, Foxcroft, Hammel, & Phillips-Watts, 2006; Wyly & Newman, 2004). Such indications have prompted some researchers to conclude that a dual mortgage market is in effect, where lower-income and minority borrowers are served with different products and by different lenders than higher-income borrowers (Apgar & Calder, 2005). Indeed, in the 1990s subprime lending in minority neighborhoods increased far more than it did in nonminority neighborhoods (Immergluck, 2004). Apgar and Calder note that “subprime refinancing loans are three times as likely to be made in low-income neighborhoods than in upper-income neighborhoods, and five times more likely to be made in African-American than white neighborhoods” (2005, pp. 13).

The consequences of subprime lending for neighborhoods mirror the fallout of blockbusting decades ago. In Chicago, work by Dan Immergluck and Geoff Smith indicates that subprime lending is a strong determinant of neighborhood foreclosure levels, leading to foreclosure much more often than prime loans even after controlling for neighborhood demographics and economic conditions (Immergluck & Smith, 2005). The advent of mapping technologies like geographic information systems (GIS) provides compelling visual evidence of the relationship between subprime refinance loans and foreclosures in Brooklyn, New York:

As Schill and Wachter (1995) point out in their discussion of blockbusting, widespread foreclosure concentrated in minority neighborhoods is often followed by blight as homes are abandoned and boarded up. Immergluck and Smith show how the stigma of neighborhood foreclosure is reflected in the impact of mortgage foreclosures on property values. For each foreclosure in Chicago occurring within an eighth of a mile of a single family home, property values declined by 1.1% (a decline in value of around \$2000 for a \$165,000 home) (Immergluck & Smith, 2006a). This effect was more pronounced in low- and moderate-income census tracts,

where property values declined by 1.8% per foreclosure within an eighth of a mile (Immergluck & Smith, 2006a). The implications for low-income minority neighborhoods are frightening, given that such areas shoulder the dual burden of lower property values and higher rates of foreclosure more affluent or white areas. Neighborhoods affected by foreclosure face not just economic consequences but social ones, with an increase of one percentage point in foreclosure at the census tract level leading to a 2.33% increase in the number of violent crimes within the tract (Immergluck & Smith, 2006b).

Tracing the effects of subprime lending on neighborhoods allows us to see that the declining property values and violent crime that are the hallmark of stigmatized urban neighborhoods are the result of specific actions by socio-spatial agents, and that this process is not natural, or neutral. In the following section I explore how the use of biological metaphor, e.g. neighborhood life cycles, serves to naturalize the production and construction of neighborhood stigma.

V. The Naturalization of Spatial Exclusion

The goal of this paper has been to demonstrate that federal policies like redlining, and actions of socio-spatial agents, e.g. blockbusting and subprime lending, have shaped neighborhood reputations and material conditions in low-income urban neighborhoods where people of color live. An important mechanism in the spatial exclusion and ensuing stigmatization of African-American neighborhoods has been the use of naturalized explanations that cast processes of neighborhood change in terms of life cycles that are both inevitable and oriented toward decline. Such explanations neatly obscure the contribution of policy, practice, and action to neighborhood change while tacitly endorsing policies, practices, and actions that hasten said decline precisely because it is inevitable.

Understanding the role that the life cycle concept and other naturalized explanations in the stigmatization of urban neighborhoods depends on recognizing that the power relations expressed and maintained through space (Lefebvre, 1974) embody and reproduce “an unjust status quo” (Opatow, 2007, pp. 3, on moral exclusion), but also that in the context of a racialized society, power inequalities along racial lines are normalized, becoming “common sense” (Omi & Winant, 1994, in Bonillo-Silva, 1997, pp. 474). Policies that naturalize practices of spatial

exclusion (along racial lines) illustrate Lefbevre's (1974) notion that dominant groups produce space to serve their interests while appearing objective.

One way of normalizing spatial exclusion of urban neighborhoods populated by low-income people of color has been to base urban planning and policy decisions on life cycle theories of cities and neighborhoods. Understanding the city through biological metaphor has a long history in urban studies, sociology, and geography. Biological metaphors of the city are rooted in functionalist sociological theory, which casts the persistence of social practices as a means of maintaining equilibrium, or homeostasis, of the social body (Baert, 1998). Functionalist theory also holds in order to survive societies must fulfill certain functional prerequisites, operating in such a way as to fulfill these needs (Baert, 1998). An early example of the use of biological metaphor comes from Chicago School sociologist Robert Park, who relied on Darwin's theory of natural selection to rationalize social inequality in American cities of the 1930s and 1940s (Lin & Mele, 2005).

The life-cycle perspective conceptualizes neighborhoods as "organisms which grow, mature, age, and die" (Wallace & Wallace, 1998, pp. 26). A five-stage model of neighborhood development developed by urban economists in 1959 for the Regional Plan Association of New York characterized neighborhood change as a process moving from single family residential development to higher density housing, spread of ethnic and minority residents, then population loss and decline in number of housing units, and finally urban renewal (Metzger, 2000). Later, another model of neighborhood life cycles was developed by the Real Estate Research Corporation for HUD. This model started with "healthy" neighborhoods, defined by homogenous housing, middle class residents, and availability of mortgage financing and proceeded to abandoned neighborhoods; increases in minority and lower-income residents, lack of mortgage and insurance financing, and higher density housing were the forces that drove decline (Metzger, 2000). Thus the life-cycle concept of neighborhoods was based on the same principles as the "security maps" used by HOLC and naturalized the decline engendered by redlining and blockbusting. Furthermore, the neighborhood life-cycle concept rationalized policies like planned shrinkage (Wallace and Wallace, 1998).

Planned shrinkage, a policy developed by Roger Starr, New York City's former Commissioner of Housing Preservation and Development, was based on the neighborhood life-cycle concept. Planned shrinkage proposed that rather than initiating low-level but widespread

cutbacks throughout the city, steeper reductions in vital public services like fire companies and public transportation should take place in “sick communities”. Sick communities, of course, were the very neighborhoods that had been devastated by redlining, blockbusting, and other techniques of spatial exclusion: low-income, minority neighborhoods. The population decline apparent in these areas was taken as evidence of such neighborhoods being “unable to survive or undeserving of survival” (Wallace & Wallace, 1998, pp. 24), rather than the result of specific policies and practices. Hence planned shrinkage would serve as one of the new, more effective “means of withdrawing economic support from housing units that ought to be demolished” called for by Anthony Downs of HUD and the National Urban Coalition to “comprehensively manage entire inner-city neighborhoods” (Downs, 1973, in Metzger, 2000, pp. 15). Rather than rehabilitating or replacing housing in New York City neighborhoods like the South Bronx and Brooklyn’s Brownsville, Roger Starr hoped that planned shrinkage would hasten population decline in these areas so that the land could simply lie vacant until it could be used for something better, like industry.

Starr’s policy was effective at hastening the decline of “sick communities” it targeted: after the closing of seven fire companies in the South Bronx alone, fires ravaged the neighborhood. By 1980, cops in the 41st Precinct in the South Bronx were calling the area “Little House on the Prairie” because so few buildings—and families—were left (Conanson & Newfield, June 2, 1980). Public health researchers Deborah and Rodrick Wallace trace the spread of fires in communities hit hardest by planned shrinkage, noting that as fire services were cut back, the number, intensity, and damage caused by fires grew in these areas (Wallace & Wallace, 1998). After maximizing rental income through avoiding expenditures on maintenance, property taxes, and mortgage payments by renting to those with limited housing options (low-income individuals, minorities), it is likely that inadequate fire services emboldened slum landlords to set fire to their own buildings to collect insurance money, serving as a final means for these socio-spatial agents to profit from neighborhood decline (Conanson & Newfield, June 2, 1980).

In the aftermath of planned shrinkage, rates of homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, tuberculosis, and homicide rose to epidemic levels in the “sick”-turned -dying communities, and spread throughout the city and metropolitan region (Wallace & Wallace, 1998). The example of planned shrinkage demonstrates the problems with using biological metaphor as a heuristic for

understanding a city's processes. When we understand urban neighborhoods in terms of life cycles, we do not take into account the role of federal policy and socio-spatial agents in shaping the social, economic and material conditions that contribute to the stigmatization of urban neighborhoods. If we see neighborhood decline as "natural and inevitable, no one seems responsible and nothing can be done to reverse it" (Wallace & Wallace, 1998, pp. 26).

VI. Conclusion

This paper has sought to examine how the context of federal homeownership policy, actions of socio-spatial agents, and the use of naturalized explanations like the neighborhood life cycle concept have worked to construct stigmatized neighborhood reputations. The popularization of the "American Dream" of homeownership sets up expectations about what neighborhoods should be like, while redlining, blockbusting, predatory lending, and planned shrinkage have produced conditions in many cities that clash with the imagery of this dream. In effect the structural racism and moral exclusion inherent in these policies and practices have created urban legends of city neighborhoods that become cautionary tales for the masses. Perhaps exploring the historical context in which these urban legends developed will provide some insight for thinking about the causes and consequences of, and efforts to resolve, the current widespread foreclosure crisis in America.

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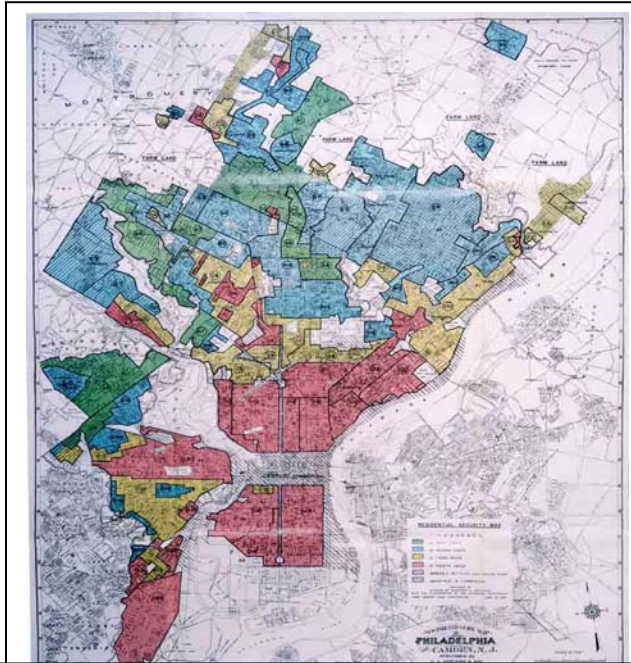


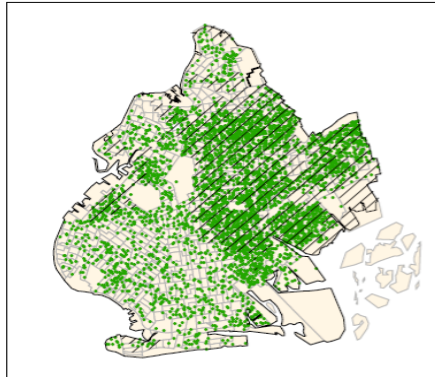
Figure 1: 1937 HOLC "Security Map" of Philadelphia



Figure 2: Abandoned housing in New York City

BROOKLYN, NY

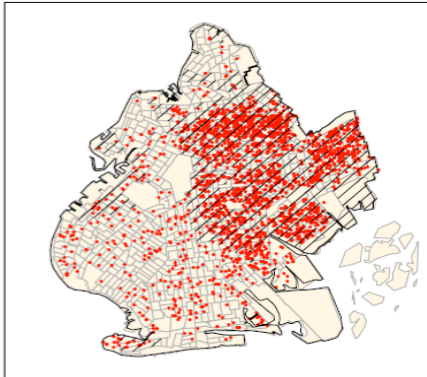
SUBPRIME REFINANCING LOANS - 2002



● 1 Dot = 1 Refinancing Loan Made by a Subprime (High Cost) Lender
(4,198 Total in Brooklyn in 2002)

/// Population > 50% Black or Hispanic

FORECLOSURE PATTERNS
JUNE 2003 TO MAY 2004



● 1 Dot = 1 Mortgage Default*
(2,470 Total in Brooklyn for Period Shown)

/// Population > 50% Black or Hispanic

* based on his profiles of mortgage default filings on 1-4 family homes (6/2/03 - 5/24/04)



Prepared by the Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project (NEDAP)
73 Spring Street, Suite 506, New York, NY 10012 / 212-680-5100 / www.nedap.org

Sources: U.S. Census (2000); HUD data (2002);
HUD List of Subprime and Manufactured Home Lenders;
Profilier Publications

Figure 3: Patterns of subprime refinance loans and foreclosure patterns in minority neighborhoods in Brooklyn. Source: Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project (NEDAP)

Figure 4: Image of burnt out building in the South Bronx. Source: Village Voice (Sylvia Plachy)



Spatial Stigma in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina

Autumn Beckman

The stigmatization of places, people from places, and places with certain populations of people develops through personal and social experiences with those places and their residents. Concepts of social production and social construction of place, place identity, and moral exclusion are used to explain the stigmatization of New Orleans and its residents following Hurricane Katrina. Interviews with twelve survivors in New Orleans and Houston, as well as quotes taken from Katrina-related internet forums, engage and illustrate concepts and work to both support and dispute the spatial stigmatization of the city and its people.

The physical environment is not just a container of social processes and actions. Rather it is an active element in creating, maintaining, managing and challenging social relations. A conceptual difference between space and place can be made by defining 'place' as space filled and transformed by meaning. This is not to imply that space, as opposed to place, is neutral. On the contrary, space is used to express and maintain power relations (Lefebvre, 1974) and it is within these that our personal and social backgrounds, histories, discourses, and narratives shape the way we think and talk about our physical surroundings, the way we relate to them, and the way we imagine them.

We use space and place to construct and reflect our individual and group identities and to understand and define other people and groups. The psychological geographies we carry with us, be they social hierarchies of countries or a social map of the city where we live (such as disliked and loved places or safe and dangerous places), are based on both personal experiences and social narratives about those places. Our experiences in and responses to places are colored by preconceived ideas about places.

Social Production and Construction of Place. The physical existence of places is inseparable from the ways they are socially produced and constructed. Social production describes the social, economic, and ideological factors that create place; social construction describes the ways people experience, use, and interpret place. Understanding the socially produced and constructed natures of places allows us to understand that the stories they tell are not neutral or innate but are collectively evoked, shaped and manipulated by people. It is here

that issues of power, stigma, and moral exclusion come into play. When particular places come to tell particular stories about their residents, those stories have a long-lasting impact on the social image and status of both those who tell the story and those about whom the story is told.

Place Identity. I will describe the concept of place identity using post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans as an example. Place identity is part of self identity and refers to the process of how our experiences with places affect our values, feelings, and beliefs about places (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983) and ourselves in relation to places. It is constructed both by individual experiences and interactions with a place and through social construction. Places are represented by history (for example, New Orleans was a large slave port so Black/White race relations are salient), local myths and legends (such as voodoo dolls), films (such as *The Big Easy*, *Easy Rider*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Interview With a Vampire*), television (recent shows representing post-Katrina New Orleans include *K-Ville* and *Heroes*), and television news and newspapers (both of which provided constructions of the aftermath of the storm for the rest of the country and the world).

Place identity is also relational in that we come to understand ourselves in relation to our neighborhood and through our understanding of other places. All these factors affect the extent to which a person comes to identify with the community, culture, and values of their neighborhood and the extent to which they see themselves reflected in a neighborhood. Some aspects of place identity are positive (for example, place attachment to a new neighborhood can develop through spending time in an area, forming relationships with other residents there, and creating fond memories). Simultaneously, place identity can also manifest negatively through personal distancing from places and spaces that we link to negative characteristics (such as distancing one's self from a "dirty" or "dangerous" neighborhood). Thus place identity entails the use of space and place to define both who and what we are and who and what we are not.

In the process of forming our own place identity we also actively produce the identities of other places, people from places, and places with certain populations of people. Dixon and Durrheim (2000) argue that places and the identities we construct for them are contested sites of collective being and belonging shaped through collective and individual experiences. Given the power relations expressed and maintained through the use of space, we can assume that the collective construction of place identity will reflect these power relations. It is within the context of uneven power relationships that the differences between places are marked and places are thus

assigned superior or inferior status. This facilitates the moral exclusion and stigmatization of “inferior” neighborhoods and the people within them.

Moral Exclusion. Opotow’s notion of moral exclusion is useful for understanding how some urban neighborhoods become stigmatized and exist on the margins. When people are excluded from the scope of justice, from considerations of fairness and other shared moral rules and norms, they are morally excluded and frequently face disparate access to resources and measures to improve well-being. Moral exclusion fosters distance and disconnection from others (Opotow, in press).

The conditions of moral exclusion assist in the process of stigmatization because, once people are placed outside our scope of fairness and justice, they may be understood as fundamentally different from others. Link and Phelan (2001) note that, when this difference is established, the path is open to loss of status and discrimination. It is then that stigmatization occurs and simultaneously reinforces moral exclusion. The labeling, stereotyping, and discrimination that characterize stigma may help to “spread moral exclusion around” (Opotow, in press) as characterizations and expectations of people and groups become ever-more generalized. We come to apply practices of inclusion and exclusion in compliance with representations of stigmatized people and groups.

Moral exclusion encompasses inclusionary and exclusionary practices that take place within economic, social, legal, political and technical spheres (Opotow, in press). For the purposes of understanding stigmatized places, it is useful to recognize that practices of inclusion and exclusion within each of these domains have spatial implications.

When we understand certain neighborhoods as different from others we become disconnected from them. This facilitates a range of inclusionary and exclusionary practices that interlock across societal institutions (like housing laws and banking policies). Such practices are carried out by actors within social spaces (such as landlords, social workers, employers, and real estate agents). When practices of exclusion are used by those in power to undermine urban neighborhoods, those neighborhoods lose status as places to live and are stigmatized. This sets in motion processes like disinvestment, which result in deterioration of housing, increased crime, emotional distress and poor health.

Negative consequences of disinvestment are often used to justify further moral exclusion of stigmatized neighborhoods and their residents. A pathological and devalued place is created

and residents come to be identified with the undesirable characteristics of their neighborhood. Urban renewal plans are a good example of a social policy which institutionalizes the exclusion of low-income people and ravages entire neighborhoods and the social networks they contain.

While people bear the stigma of difference that accompanies existence outside boundaries of justice, lines are drawn around the places and spaces they occupy, constructing difference at the level of place, not just at the level of people. Now I will shift again to the example of New Orleans to illustrate the above concepts and processes. While I do so, it is important to keep practices of exclusion in mind.

METHODS

Twelve participants were interviewed. Two were recruited through Hurricane Katrina-related internet forums, two by walking up to them in New Orleans and striking up a conversation, and the remainder were recruited via the snowball method. Eleven lived in New Orleans prior to Hurricane Katrina and one moved to New Orleans after the storm. At the time of the interviews, nine currently lived in New Orleans and three lived in Houston, none of whom planned to return. The sample consists of three Black females, two Black males, three White females, three White males and one Hispanic male; in their 20s-50s. Prior to Katrina there were seven homeowners and five renters. The numbers are the same post-Katrina with the exception of one homeowner who now rents in Houston, though he still owns his New Orleans home. Participants work as a housewife, a student, a construction worker, a fast food manager, a cook, and seven are self-employed entrepreneurs (a musician, a lawyer, a comedian, a tax office owner, a candy shop owner, a gift shop/gallery owner, and a criminal justice business owner).

HURRICANE KATRINA AND NEW ORLEANS

Most of us experienced Hurricane Katrina through the media so I will begin by refreshing your memory a bit about some of the imagery we were shown and how the stigmatization of New Orleans and its specific neighborhoods as “other” were created in large part through media representations of these places and their inhabitants. The hurricane, a category 5, spanned about half the width of the Gulf of Mexico and reached the coast of Mississippi on August 29, 2005, contributing to six breaches (or an excuse for the *intentional* breaching, some would say) of already inadequate New Orleans levees that flooded 80% of the city. The Times-Picayune, New

Orleans' major newspaper, read "Katrina: The Storm We've Always Feared" and, like other papers around the country, featured images of poor, haggard-looking Black people doing such things as wandering the streets in varying depths of water, screaming "uncontrollably" in mobs at the Superdome, and being arrested for "looting." We heard about how they had to be rescued from rooftops because they didn't bother to evacuate, how they were going hungry because they didn't think to bring food or water to the Dome, and how they went out of control and looted, raped, and murdered. As a week passed and we wondered why our government had not rescued them or provided them with sustenance (while they *were* able to send people to arrest and shoot at them), we saw images such as the one of poor Black residents on the roof of their apartment building trying to remind us that they're American too by waving American flags.

Since New Orleans dominated the media's attention, we mostly forgot that Hurricane Katrina actually struck ground in Mississippi and flattened entire cities there, like Pass Christian (one of my New Orleans participants, Becker, had a second home there which was reduced to a slab). The place we heard the most about was one particular poor Black neighborhood in New Orleans: the Ninth Ward.

The Ninth Ward was the first to flood. Two of three separate breaches of the Industrial Canal sent portions of Lake Ponchartrain into the neighborhood, washing some houses off their foundations and covering others with as much as twenty feet of water. When I visited New Orleans in January 2007 to conduct the study I was informed that a breach of the 17th Street Canal did the same to Lakeview, a wealthier White neighborhood. It was news to me.

Being there with a video camera I figured out that one of the reasons for the skewed media attention on the Ninth Ward is that the houses there looked worse before the storm and were less structurally sound so, consequently, they also looked worse after. The houses in Lakeview received just as much water damage but many were larger and "better" looking from the outside before Katrina (even if the insides were stripped to the studs) so the damage was less obvious on camera. This (mis)representation of place, due in part to the visual effect that would be relayed to television news viewers, is one way the Ninth Ward has become socially constructed as an "othered" place. In our interview, Jedda (Black female, 53, entertainer/comedian, lives in Uptown neighborhood) said:

"I know the face of Katrina is not the face that the media showed because I know the areas of the city that were affected and it wasn't just the black guys in their

wife beaters and flip flops walking around or the black women in housecoats with hair rollers in their head. Those weren't the only people that were affected but those were the faces that you saw on television.”

The media also focused on the criminal behavior of residents from both the Ninth Ward and New Orleans in general. These residents are, not coincidentally, mostly Black and poor: a population to whom criminality has been (mis)associated for decades. These representations were and are presented repeatedly in the media (crime was the first thing I heard about when I got to New Orleans) and work to construct and perpetuate the stigmatization of residents. People living within and without New Orleans buy into these associations and, through “horror” stories and warnings, create and perpetuate stigma. This particular example of criminal stigmatization is very clearly associated not only with certain people but also with certain places (neighborhoods and the city itself). Not only are certain people dangerous, but the places where they are located are dangerous as well. For example, I was just about to turn into the Ninth Ward for my first look around when a White woman pulled up next to me (I am a White woman, too) and asked, “Are you lost?” When I told her no she warned me to “be careful.”

What follows are examples of the creation and perpetuation of stigma onto New Orleanians based on criminality and connected to place. They are from the interviews I conducted and from a post-Katrina New Orleans internet forum. You will hear a strong connection between place and race both with New Orleans as a city and with particular neighborhoods within it. You will also hear the criminalization of people from New Orleans, especially those from “bad”/“poor black” neighborhoods. And you will hear the perspectives of people who are creating and perpetuating the stigma, as well as from those who are stigmatized themselves and are living with the results of it. Implications on lives and rebuilding efforts are discussed.

RESULTS

While attempting to recruit New Orleanians who had been displaced to Houston I posted an ad on an internet forum. These are the two responses I received: 1) “just follow the wave of crime” (from OBSERVING in Waban, MA) and 2) “Why not interview the Houstonians that have been victims of their crimes? ... Houstonians are the real victims of Katrina. Where's that story?” (from Chief Diversity Officer in San Antonio, TX). At the time, and perhaps still today,

there was media attention in Houston on a supposed spike in crime there, a spike that was blamed on the large influx of New Orleanians who had relocated since the storm. One of my participants, Becker (White female, 55, accountant, lives in MidCity neighborhood), said, “the crime, ...you’re from Houston, you can remember what...happened when a lot of the refugees ended up over there.” I said, “I wasn’t there actually.” To which she responded, “There were bumper stickers here in New Orleans that said “Thanks Houston,”” because much of the criminal element had relocated from New Orleans.

Another participant, Juan (Hispanic male, 20, college student, from Houston, attending college in New Orleans’ Garden District neighborhood), said, “I noticed that the crime rate in Houston has gone up significantly since this (relocation of New Orleanians to Houston) occurred.” The effect of the criminal representation of New Orleanians on the displaced residents themselves is seen in Curtis’ (Black male, 39, chef in New Orleans, lived in Tremé neighborhood, now unemployed in Houston,) statement. He evacuated to the Superdome and was bussed to Houston about a week later. He has remained there and plans to stay. He said:

“When I got here...we met some...wonderful Texans who actually took me in. A lot of rumors were going around that people from New Orleans had happened to kill some family so it kind of made my situation a little bad being in a stranger’s house who took me in and they’re looking at me kind of funny.”

Jerome (Black male, 33, teacher in New Orleans, lived in Ninth Ward, now unemployed in Houston) also relocated to Houston and speaks of the effects of criminal and place stigmatization on his life:

“My house is done already in the Lower Ninth Ward. I mean it’s tiled out, it’s sheetrocked out, marbled, it’s nice. But, like I told my dad, man, I can’t go down there cause...being a Black male it’s like we’re...targets, you know. We’re getting pulled over, we getting chased, I mean it’s just a lot of stuff going on down there.”

Jedda contemplated about the children survivors of the storm who have been displaced (she is related to a few) and the long-lasting effects of stigmatization on them:

“I think those children will be scarred forever, children still separated from their parents today, in communities around the country where children are being put in schools and assigned to the schools, they’re being stigmatized and called, “You

(are) Katrina! You (are) Katrina!” like they had something to do with it, like they caused it. How is this gonna help a child do anything but doubt himself and eventually learn to dislike himself and eventually make that person self destructive? We don’t need another group of people, another group of young people, being self destructive and we’ve created that by that nonchalance and that neglect. In a country that could respond to the tsunami in a day and that could drop bails of hay on cattle in Denver when it was snowing, bless the poor bovines all, they couldn’t give food and water to people who were drowning in New Orleans and as long as I live I will never understand why.”

Brendan (White male, 41, business manager, lives in Lakeview neighborhood) speculates that the reasons have to do with place and race: “I think that New Orleans is largely an African American city and it’s a Southern city and I think that if this were Evanston, Illinois, if this were Westchester County, I don’t think the reaction would have been the same.”

The results of the criminal stigmatization of places also manifests in rebuilding efforts. Like Brendan points out that, “The city won’t get rebuilt if people don’t think it’s safe to live here.” Specific neighborhoods are targeted by residents and by policy makers as worthy of being rebuilt or worthy of being demolished. John (White male, 60, attorney, lives in suburb of New Orleans) said:

“A lot of people that left need to stay where they are. They’re doing a lot better in Houston and Dallas and Atlanta than they were doing here. We can’t afford to have people coming here who aren’t going to do positive things. I think there’s a lot of parts of the city, and God forbid, but my son’s neighborhood where he was (the neighborhood of MidCity) needs to go.”

Jedda said:

“City wise and city wide we have not had much change. The change has been cosmetic in the places where it’s important for popular opinion, in the French Quarter, in the central Business District, in the Magazine shopping district, well they actually didn’t sustain much damage, but wherever where they did have damage that needed to be done and repaired in a hurry for the sake of the cameras, it was. That Superdome is an example. With millions of people still starving and FEMA saying they can’t afford to pay their rent anymore...FEMA

rebuilt that Superdome fast enough. I'm a Saints fan, I'm happy they have the Dome to play in but let's face it, people are more important. So I think the rebuilding effort has been largely for the cameras. I don't understand why the country and the media is so concerned about not letting people see the real New Orleans."

Sometimes participants challenged the criminal stigmatization; in a way justifying the crime that happens in New Orleans (or at least justifying the city) by recognizing that crime happens everywhere. In doing this, they were attempting to dislocate the stigma from the place. Loretta (Black female, founder/owner/operator of "first Black-owned candy shop in...New Orleans", lives in New Orleans East neighborhood) said:

"Now we know you're, you're hearing a lot about the crime but there are very, very good people that live here. Very good people. And you can find them all over the United States and we have our share of problems with crime but you guys, Houston do, New York, California, any place that you decide to live."

The criminal stigmatization of New Orleanians is still a salient topic in current internet forums. In November of 2007 I retrieved the following online posts. In response to a question about how many looters were in the city after the storm (and currently), Pygmalion connected criminality to Section 8 housing residents, responding, "there were 10's of thousands. Where are they? Many are here continuing to steal. The ones that aren't are far away waiting for more section 8 housing or projects to open." In response to a question about New Orleans neighborhoods and criminality, CityLimtBand wrote:

"You guys really don't know why the crime rate is so predominately in all black neighborhoods ... seriously ... you can't be that blind ... ALL .. the murders .. the robbery ... ITS ALL REALATED TO ONE WORD (((CRACK))) ... there all killing each other over turf wars .. addicts robbing people to feed there addiction lower coast algiers .. even like a little town of Vacherie louisiana .. its a black neighborhood..."

CONCLUSION

The stigmatization of New Orleans and its neighborhoods involves more than just criminality, though that is a large and very salient chunk of the puzzle (in fact, the morning of the

day I arrived there had been a march against crime in the city which the manager of my guest house organized. Unfortunately she declined to grant me an interview). Obviously, in a city saturated with strong race-based stigma located in a country with the same, race and place are intricately woven together and difficult, maybe impossible, to untangle. The racism adds an extra element to the ugliness of stigma and contributes to the damage of the lives and sometimes the spirits of those on the receiving end. Throughout the interviews, many participants consciously represented strong place identity with New Orleans and, sometimes, their neighborhoods of residence. They actively engaged in challenging the stigmatization they knew was occurring and they knew I was hearing in order to give me alternate voices from which to represent their city, their neighbors, and themselves. I conclude with a few of these voices.

“New Orleans was a beautiful city, you know. It was my city. It was a place that I was proud to say that I grew up in.” - Curtis

“I think New Orleans is unique in that the people that live here love, I mean completely love the city and anyone, I don’t want to make generalizations but pretty much most everyone who’s here right now is here because they want to be.” - Juan

“We will rise again, now. We are from New Orleans.” – Ashley (White female, 34, stay-at-home mom, New Orleans suburb)

“If we allow injustice to happen to anyone then sooner or later that same injustice will happen to us. So it exposed everything that needed to be so that we would no longer put a bandage over it but to do what needs to be done to take care of that wound and make sure that it’s cleaned up and that it would never infect that city again. And that’s gonna take some work. But it can be done.” – Loretta

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Remix: Negotiating Shame and Resistance Among Black Lesbians

Ja’Nina Walker

Naive. Black. Seeking. Impressionable. American. Woman. Blank Slate. Growing. Young.

Growing up she never saw herself as anything except a young Black girl who enjoyed music and school. Her life was not dependent on any attraction to any gender. All she knew was that boys were fun to play with, and that she **really** loved being around her friends who were girls. Yet, she didn’t have an identity surrounding sexual orientation or gender presentation. During her first year of college, like most, her mind was open to new experiences, and through gained knowledge, was able to challenge all things she had previously “known” as fact. Upon arriving at her university she jumped right into the Black Student Union, attending meetings and building strong bonds with other Black students on campus. It was not until she truly developed her own sense of self around sexual orientation that she was able to really see how one marginalized community is capable of marginalizing another. It was not until her 18th year of life that she realized how dichotomies of social constructions regulate ones means of living life.

Patriarchy. Hegemony. Dichotomy. Framework. Socially Constructed.

american² culture has done a wonderful job of constructing what it means to be a “normal” citizen. It has developed a method for determining who can and will have power as well as determining who will be shunned because of their individual representation of self. Our patriarchal society has dichotomized everything that we believe to be status quo, with little variation or room for personal expression: Wrong. Right. Black. White. Night. Day. Gay. Straight. Poor. Rich. Not only has america dichotomized social statuses, it has also placed stigma upon those who do not fit into the traditional compartments that america has bestowed upon us (Goffman, 2006). One must ask, how do individuals who do not abide by such constructions go about their lives within such a rigid society? How do they negotiate their interactions with those who constantly try to overpower them and fit them into society’s boxes? How do they take what america has given them as “normal” and then use it against those who do not want them to feel empowered? These questions become ever important when an individual “fails” to adhere to multiple socially acceptable identities. What happens when someone is a woman? Black? Queer?

² america(n) is strategically de-capitalized throughout this paper.

How then does she fight against the institutions of patriarchy, racism and heterosexism? To explore these questions, one must take a historical look at gender construction in society, investigate the intersection of being Black in the queer community and being queer in the Black community, and how shame and resilience are often on a constant battlefield.

Female. Roles. Institutions. Assumptions. Binary. Presentation. Male.

Girl...Sit with your legs crossed. Don't talk like that. Do you have a boyfriend yet? Walk like a lady. Don't you want this dress? You're just too pretty. You need to learn how to cook. Do this laundry. Do you have a boyfriend yet? Come sew this with me. Take those jeans and sneakers off. Do you have a boyfriend yet?

Challenge. Rebel. Challenge. Rebel. Challenge. Rebel. Challenge. Rebel.

To fully understand how Black lesbians understand themselves within three marginalized groups (being a woman, black, and queer) we must first take a look at how the institutionalization of patriarchy has constructed meaning surrounding gender and sex. Gender (social set of traits and characteristics) and sex (biological characteristics) have predominately been seen as one in the same in many cultures. However the pairing of these two separate units has created a closed binary. Female. Male. While sex cannot be altered except through surgical procedures, gender can and has varied through time and across cultures (Butler, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Since gender and sex have been so closely grouped, it is now virtually impossible to disconnect the two entities. Feminist theory claims that one only becomes a woman through repeated actions within a strict social framework. These actions come together over time to build a mold for what it is "to be" a woman. Such actions have been the scaffold of assumptions that all women are the same. That all women must act, dress, and talk, in the same manner to be considered a true woman (Butler, 1990). However, these actions and definitions have been framed through a male dominated discourse. This has allowed popular understandings of masculinity to be equated with maleness and femininity to be equated with femaleness. Yet, who is to say, that femininity cannot be seen in a male body and masculinity in a female body (Butler, 1990)? If gender is a culturally constructed complexity which is separate from sex, then why has gender been seen in only two forms as if it is synonymous with sex? Gender should be a neutral plane which shouldn't use the body (one's sex) as a passive means to present one's fluid

identity over time (Butler, 1990). One's identity should not be forcefully tied to one's gender, sexual orientation, sex or any other patriarchal hegemonic framework. By keeping gender and sex tied together, patriarchal ideology fuses the oppositional dynamic between the sexes thus conforming to the historical principles of what it means to be female or male (Butler, 1990). Gender should be one's natural expression of the self, able to present as much masculinity and femininity as one feels natural. Since one is not born a certain gender, there is no "gender" that a person must ascribe to. One's gender is an essential part of who they are which gives them the ability to express their gender as they feel suitable (Butler, 1990). Anyone who challenges this historical notion of gender is challenging institutionalized patriarchy.

Sex. Rigid. Strict. Constructed. Female. Male. Constructed. Fluid. Varied. Gender.

She likes to laugh and giggle. Get manicures and pedicures. But doesn't mind getting under the hood of a car. Baggy jeans and polo shirts. Authoritative. Dominant. Sensitive. Passive. Sports are her pleasure. Music is her soul. She likes to cook. But also loves to be served. She hates dresses and high heels. She loves a clean and tidy house. She's a nurturer. Her best subject is math.

Feminine. Male. Girly. Guy. Woman. Androgynous. Man. Gal. Masculine. Female. Boyish.

With so much discussion around gender and sex it is no surprise that a majority of americans constantly make it their duty to adhere to society's gender norms. But what does it mean to be a man or a woman in america? To be a man or a woman means to fall into societies arrangements solely based on sex. These arrangements have been utilized to organize the social world in which we live. The differences between men and women have been created in order to place power in "fundamentally natural" ways of being (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Is there some "natural fact" of being a woman? Or is it the negotiation of cultural performances and the "doing" of gender (Butler, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1987)?

To be a woman is to act and play into the perceptual guide of what society has set in place to be a women. To really understand the guidelines for what it means to be a women we must look at the work of West and Zimmerman (1987) and their definitions of *sex category*, *gender role*, and *gender display* and how all these interact together on a daily basis to mold one's gender. As we all know, one's sex is determined by an agreement on a set of biological

determinants (anatomy, hormones, chromosomes, etc). However, ones sex does not have to be the same as ones *sex category*. The categorization of an individual's sex comes from identifying with the socially acceptable displays of membership in such a category (West & Zimmerman, 1987). For example, a woman who wears "male" clothing on a regular basis would have her sex and her *sex category* acting independently of one another. While she may be a woman (biologically) her choice of clothing would place her in the male sex category according to america's standard of being socially accepted. Does this make her less of a woman because she does not wear the clothing that society has prescribed to be the norm for women? What is it about her gender display that makes her stand out? What gender role does she take on?

One's *gender role* and *display* of gender are functions of their behavior and the way in which they act on the notions of gender. Common notions of what it means to be a woman (e.g. cleaning, cooking, nurturing, vanity) are all patriarchal regulations to divide the two sexes into separate hemispheres to keep men in power. One's *gender role* is developed on the basis of learned behavior through this socially dynamic construction of such role enactment (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Roles, such as stay at home dads, have been seen as anomalies because the *role* of what it means to be a *man* assumes that men cannot stay at home while their wives go and work. While ones sex is unmoving, ones role is fluid across situations and context. *Roles* have become the epitome of social constructions. However these roles are simply the optional enactment of organized activities deemed suitable for the sexes (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Yet, when someone fails to follow what it socially means to be a woman, based on this institutional organization of gender, it is not the institution that is challenged but the individual's character and ability to be a reliable citizen (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The institutional injustice is not shamed. It is the person who feels shame.

Dishonor. Pride. Shame. Humiliate. Resilience. Stigma. Resistance. Embarrassment

She walked with her head down. Averting eyes. Eyes she had known her whole life. But now that everyone knew who she was. What she was. Her eyes could not meet their hateful gaze. Water swelling up in her eyes. Silently shedding a tear. Shame engulfed her. Pain resided within her. Stigma was bestowed upon her.

Heterosexism. Shame. Religion. Society. Rules. Emotions. Family. Homophobia.

The main sources of shame that fuel all others is the culture in which we live. Like many other cultures, American culture does not fully accept those who engage in same-sex relationships or embrace a queer identity. Many Americans do not believe that lesbians should have children or hold positions of power (Crawford, Allison, Zamboni, & Soto, 2002). Society has dictated an imperative aspect of our lives ruling what relationships and lifestyles are to be validated. The media is the main method through which society builds the model of what it means to be a quality citizen. Media portrays heterosexuality as if it is the only script to be followed (Kaufman & Raphael, 1996). In popular media and advertising, you mostly see heterosexual couples being depicted. These scripts which the media presents lead to the concepts of *heterosexism* and *homophobia*. Heterosexism is an institutionalized system that privileges heterosexuality. It has led to the assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual. This system places heterosexual identity as the norm in which all should abide. Anyone who does not follow this “fundamentally” fixed rule must feel shame for they do not ascribe to the ideology of what it means to be “normal” (Kaufman & Raphael, 1996; Thompson, Bryson, & Castell, 2001). In turn, homophobia is a complex term that refers to a myriad of affects usually resulting in strong discontent for homosexuality. Thus homophobia can be played out in many ways (Kaufman & Raphael, 1996; Thompson, Bryson, & Castell, 2001). While it would take an extensive list and detailed paper to fully exhaust all the ways in which heterosexism and homophobia are played out, I want to highlight two areas where heterosexism and homophobia tend to be the most shameful for Black lesbians: religion and the Black community.

Since the notion of homosexuality has been around, religion has been a main source of shame for homosexuals. America was founded on religious doctrine and has used religion to construct society's views around sexuality. Religion has given homosexuality one of the vilest labels: *abomination*. Religion has stated the claim that homosexuality is against God and nature thus forming a society which condemns all who engage in such behavior (Kaufman & Raphael, 1996). Condemning homosexual behavior to the level of abomination shames those who have a queer identity. Religion, and even those who do not adhere to religious practices, use religious doctrine to place stigma on those in the queer community, constantly affirming that homosexuality is an unnatural act. While religion has historically been a haven for those encumbered by shame, most traditional religions fail to offer any support for such free expression of desire. Actually, religion has done nothing more than add to the already imposed

silence and shame surrounding homosexuality (Kaufman & Raphael, 1996). While religions influence can be seen from a broad American perspective, a look into the intersection of religion and race is also imperative when looking at shame surrounding homosexuality within ethnic minority communities.

Religion has made a lasting impact on social policy while also structuring individual attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, behaviors and relationships (Holden, 2001). Particularly in the Black and Latino communities, spirituality and religiosity are seen in very high levels molding the perspective of individuals in those cultures (Dyson, 2004; Baez, 1996). Michael Eric Dyson presents many arguments about the Black church and sexuality. Dyson explains how religion has been the backbone of the Black community since slavery in fighting social, political and moral injustices (Dyson, 2004). Even if Blacks no longer attend church services, religion is still embedded within the beliefs, attitudes and the ideologies that they hold (Dyson, 2004). Religion, presenting pervasive negative images of homosexuality along with the social constructions of what women are “supposed” to be makes it very difficult for Blacks in the queer community to accept their sexual identity and merge it with their ethnic identity (Dube & Savin-Williams, 1999).

Push. Identity. Black. Religion. Hegemony. Failure. Queer. Pull

If everything in your life fail, you will know why. You're too pretty to be a bull dagger. You're an embarrassment to me. You're just doing what those white people do. It must be a phase cause this is not who you are.

Queer. Black. Queer. Black. Queer. Black. Queer. Black. Queer. Black.

For decades, the Black community has worked under strong religious homophobic ideologies stating that homosexuality within the Black community threatens the continued success and upliftment of people of African descent. The notion that being gay is a “white disease” and a ploy devised by the “white man” to sabotage the coming together of the Black community has been central to the Black Nationalist movement (Lester, 2002). Such ideologies are closely linked to the patriarchal foundations of America which the Black community was modeled after. Just as in the general population, being queer in the Black community implies a sinful or unnatural lifestyle and many Black lesbians are encouraged by their families to stop

engaging in such behaviors because such a lifestyle is not tolerated within the Black community (Crawford, Allison, Zamboni, & Soto, 2002). With such shame and silence surrounding being queer and Black, it makes it difficult for Black lesbians to develop a strong Black identity within a predominately white, racist, queer community and a positive queer identity within a straight, homophobic, Black community. Both identities are constantly contradicting the other making it difficult to resolve the stigma placed on both groups. This push and pull between feeling the need to embrace both identities places much shame on Black lesbians (Kaufman & Raphael, 1996). Sometimes, Black lesbians feel the need to choose between their ethnic or sexual identities in fear of rejection from family. Because of this lack of acceptance, and to avoid being disowned by ones cultural group, many Black lesbians stay in the closet, silenced, in order to maintain their connection with their ethnic community (Crawford, Allison, Zamboni, & Soto, 2002). The shame that is incurred often becomes central to the individual's perception of the self (Goffman, 2006; Kaufman & Raphael, 1996). However, where there is shame, there is resistance. Black lesbians, constantly in conflict between their sexual and ethnic identities, have dealt with the shame that looms over their merged Black and lesbian identity through resistance. Resistance in the mere acceptance of a queer identity as lesbian, resistance for those who refuse to take on shame but project it onto others and resistance for those who take the hierarchy constructions, flip them, and give them new meaning.

Dress. Request. Parents. Revolt. Please. Holiday. Refuse. Pants.

“Can you wear a dress for me this one time, please?” her mother asked as they went shopping for Easter clothes. Unbeknownst to her mother, she had taken a stand against the social constructions of what it meant to be a woman. She refused to put on a dress, even this one time, just to please her mother. By doing so, she would be falling back into what society thinks it means to be a woman. She would be conforming to the standards that have been set in place by the historical hierarchy of men.

Butch. Fake Woman. Complexities. Lesbian. Categories. Fake Man. Femme.

Throughout time, lesbians have been on the forefront of challenging the patriarchal institution of male dominated gender norms. Lesbians have taken the term gender, and developed their own set of traits and qualities to represent the lesbian community. With this, lesbians can be

one of the most influential forms of resistance in this “male-supremacist, capitalist, misogynist, racist, homophobic, imperialist culture” (Clarke, pp. 128, 1981). Lesbians, whether they are cognizant of it or not, are rebelling against the institution of patriarchy. Refusing to be the object of male desire, lesbians challenge the male dominated institution of gender norms. By removing themselves from the servitude of men, they resist the heteronormativity that is imposed upon all in this society (Clarke, 1981). When lesbians break out of the silence surrounding sexuality, which has been constructed around heterosexual cultural principles, they only further breakdown the power dynamic that men have set in place to control social order (Butler, 1990; Clarke, 1981). Lesbians become a type of “third gender” (Butler, pp. 19, 1990). Not adhering to any of the social constructions regarding gender, lesbians transcend the categories of sex, splitting the binary regulations thus adding to the multifaceted complexities of gender and sexuality (Butler, 1990). While the realization of a queer identity can be a conscious or unconscious form of resistance, other forms of resistance are deliberate and intentional efforts of keeping shame away from oneself and projecting it onto others.

Many Black lesbians, like any person of a marginalized group, refuse to take on the shame or labels of shame that others impose on them. Some Black lesbians shift the shame onto those who confront them about their sexuality. In a qualitative study conducted by Hall & Fine (2005), Dorthea, an older Black lesbian expressed how she did not feel the need to come out to anyone. She felt that if someone did not know of her sexual orientation then the shame should be placed on that individual; “[Do you think I] put a sign on my back? If you think I am, I didn’t...Why you gotta tell? If you don’t know, shame on you.” (Hall & Fine, pp. 181, 2005). Dorthea would not allow the loaded words or connotations surrounding being a Black lesbian determine her way of moving through stigma. For Dorthea, she enjoyed being an enigma in her interactions with the world and others. She was not ashamed of who she was, she just refused to take on the negative views that can come from other’s knowing that she was a lesbian, whether she told them or not (Hall & Fine, 2005). It is acts of resistance like Dorthea’s that show how contextual and negotiable shame can be for each individual. The refusal to stay silenced by the injustices that are imposed only helps to strengthen the resistance that one has while shame is left behind for the oppressor to face.

Gender Fucking (gender non-conforming) is a deliberate way in which Black lesbians have been a part of taking the shame away from the individual and placing it out in a space for

the majority to face. Gender fucking is a means in which shame has been “remixed”. The term remix is taken from the musical notion to change or rearrange an original version of a song. Here, it is used broadly to gain an understanding of how Black lesbians can take institutionalized injustices and rearrange (remix) them to fit their own lifestyles, leaving shame for the dominant culture to bear. Gender non-conforming lesbians (any lesbian who does not prescribe to traditional gender displays for women; butch, stud, androgynous, tomboy, aggressive, futch, stemme) have remixed gender and made it fit for them. Often gender non-conformers take on both traditional male and female characteristics. And while some may proclaim that gender non-conforming is a way of mimicking the same patriarchy that has oppressed homosexuality, this form of remixing takes the power within a new autonomous means of expression (Nestle, 1987 as cited in Cartier, 2003). Gender non-conformers have taken the rules surrounding gender *roles* and *display* and have applied them to their own existence; to their own power and expression of self not confined by any reified standards. It is this exact remixing that moves the shame of non-conforming into resistance. While America imposes shame on gender non-conformers, for not adhering to the female standard, gender non-conformers freely express their gender, deliberately challenging the “fixed” rules surrounding gender. Gender non-conformers move through the world with their clothing, behaviors, and mannerisms making political statements against the “rules” (Gomez, 1998). Gender-fuckers refuse to conform and refuse to take on the shame that is presented. Gender-fucking is a personal remix of shame.

While gender-fucking may be a personal act of resistance others have taken resistance to another level by remixing the institutions which have been the sources of shame. Traditionally, religion has been used to push normative heterosexual lifestyles not only into the religious community, but also into politics and social order. Religion, as stated previously, has been used to reinforce the “rules” surrounding sexual orientation and gender (Althaus-Reid, 2007). However, liberation theology is a religious viewpoint in which the teachings and supporters seek to re-interpret the bible away from its historical patriarchal and heterosexist understanding of the bible. Liberation theology is not only a new look into the teachings of religion, but it is also a social movement “which focuses on freedom of oppression from racial, sexual, religious and social-economics” (Unity Fellowship Church-NYC) to break down the injustices imposed on members society. Liberation theology has challenged the traditional religious doctrines while relieving the oppressed from repressive religious doctrine (Bardella, 2001). This remixing of

religion takes the shame away from the oppressive doctrine by finding a new interpretation, which adds to the resistance of those who follow and respect such a theology. For Black religious lesbians, liberation theology is one of the ultimate forms of resistance. Not only are they able to still hold true to their sexual identity, they are also able to hold true to their religious/Black identity. Churches such as Unity Fellowship Church-NYC in Brooklyn (UFCNYC) have become the safe haven and crux of social change for many Black queers. UFCNYC has remixed the shame for Black queers that they have previously gotten from the Black, religious, and queer communities individually. UFCNYC has successfully merged all three communities together into a shame free safe place. UFCNYC is the remix of the institutionalization of oppressive religious doctrine.

Resistance. Remix. Gender Fuck. Transcend. Liberation Theology. Subvert

She has felt shame. For she is gender non-conforming. She has dealt with shame. For she transcends boundaries. Stigma has been imposed on her. For she challenges injustices. Shame surrounds her. But I resist. For she is me. And I am her. I am the remix. I am a woman. I am Black. I am a Lesbian. I have *no* shame.

Resistance. Remix. Gender Fuck. Transcend. Liberation Theology. Subvert.

While shame is ever present, Black lesbians have found means to transcend the dominant discourse and “remix” the injustices to place a new meaning around shame. Lesbians, as an entity, challenge and go beyond the binaries that the institutionalized systems of patriarchy and heterosexism place upon all in American society. Many Black lesbians have learned to block out the injustices presented to them while using the imposed injustices against those in power. Black lesbians are a triple threat because they resist all of the categories and hierarchies that are the foundation of American culture (patriarchy, racism, heterosexism) (Hall & Fine, 2005). While lesbians have found their own ways of dealing with the institutionalized injustices and shame, American culture needs a new means of interacting with those who challenge these injustices. America, as a whole, needs to focus more on social movements around “race, gender, [and] sexuality” (Kelly, pp. 11, 1997) so that we can all be freed of the shame that surrounds our differences. We must move beyond the binaries of injustice in order to freely express ourselves. We should not be confined by the social constructions and repressive social order that is forced

onto all of us by the heterosexist, patriarchal, racist america in which we dwell. We must subvert all that is known as “fact” and continue to challenge all injustices. We must remix shame and build up our resistance so that we can move throughout this world as autonomous human beings not ruled by this domineering political bias.

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Queering Passing: Exploring Notions of Shame within Passing

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Introduction

Some members of socially marginalized groups include passing as one of their identity-enactment strategies. Much of the theoretical and empirical literature exploring passing points to shame as possible damage that can result from the practice of “passing”. Missing from the discourse are the myriad ways passing may be used as an agentic tool by individuals marked as deviant in society.

It is useful to first explore the overarching framework by which passing is elucidated in the literature, before exploring the specific empirical approaches that have been adopted within psychology and related disciplines. Finally, a rigorous examination of the ways in which shame has served to outline much of the existing research as well as novel attempts to incorporate it into the passing discourse will be discussed. This analysis offers a starting point to broaden psychological interpretations of passing and future directions for exploring its utilization.

What is passing?

Among a spectrum of populations, passing is an identity enactment strategy used by stigmatized individuals for the purpose of receiving particular benefits otherwise unavailable to them. The literature points to examples of both intentional and unintentional passing based on an array of identity markers, such as race, sexual identity, gender, physical ability, and academics (Barreto, Elmers & Banal, 2006; Ginsberg, 1996; Land & Kitzinger, 2005; Miller, unpublished; Ong, 2005; Parks, Hughes, & Matthews, 2004; Phelan, 1993; Reid, 1993; Stewart & Dottolo, 2005; Torres, 2007). In one pilot questionnaire study exploring passing, more than 100 students anonymously reported passing in a number of contexts: sexual orientation (22%), a profession or study major that was considered to be devalued (12%), religious affiliations (16%), birth country or ethnic identity (14%), age (8%), and gender (6%) (Barreto et al., 2006).

The phenomenon of passing is an intriguing topic because of its inherent ability to challenge social boundaries around identity and group membership (Ginsberg, 1996; Phelan, 1993). By enabling individuals to assume supposedly essentialized and more “legitimate”

identities not their own, passing undermines social categories, inciting cultural anxiety among protectors of existing power systems. Assuming the identity of a “privileged-other” necessarily confuses the visibility statuses of commonly stigmatized identity markers, blurring the lines between those who society chooses to see and those who are strategically ignored and devalued (Ginsberg, 1996; Ong, 2005; Phelan, 1993; Sherry, 2004; Torres, 2007). Indeed, passing illustrates the ways in which the borders of acceptability are constantly shifting and subject to manipulation (Torres, 2007).

Researchers have documented a plethora of reasons for passing, including its use as a way of avoiding discrimination and ensuring basic safety through concealment (Barreto, et al., 2006; Ginsberg, 1996; Land & Kitzinger, 2005; Miller, unpublished; Ong, 2005; Parks, et al., 2004; Phelan, 1993; Reid, 1993; Stewart & Dottolo, 2005; Torres, 2007). Some researchers claim that passing involves deception because the act of self-presentation forces individuals to lie about who they are (Barreto, et al., 2006). Indeed, passing has been described as a form of self-presentation that effectively entails assuming a false identity in social interaction with others (Ong, 2005). Sometimes in circumventing perceived instances of prejudice, those who pass do so to gain benefits commonly afforded to dominant group members (Barreto et al., 2006; Ginsberg, 1996; Ong, 2005; Parks, et al., 2004). Barreto et al. (2006) explain that individuals often choose to pass specifically because it affords the chance to be more valued and accepted by others. Though these experiences of passing suggest conscious efforts to manipulate situations by enacting or silencing one’s identity, passing is also discussed as an unconscious act by which individuals stifle a piece of themselves. This aspect of passing can manifest itself into crafting a personal reality that disowns personal histories, feelings, or physical attributes associated with stigma (Linton, 2006).

Passing has been shown to evoke a mixture of consequences, many negative, such as emotional distress over feeling, or being accused of, assuming an inauthentic self (Hoyt, 1999; Miller, unpublished; Ong, 2005). Moreover, feelings of anxiety and self-doubt as well as a sense of disconnect from one’s chosen community may surface as a result of passing, with the extreme being self-hatred (Linton, 2006). Passing can create tensions within marginalized groups, such as anger or resentment toward in-group others who do not present themselves in alignment with dominant group norms; electing not to pass can be seen as the inevitable perpetuation of negative group stereotypes (Hoyt, 1999).

Past research

The discourse on passing thrives within a number of disciplines including literature, history, and psychology, among others. An honest exploration of its engagement demands an in-depth look at the ways in which researchers have conceptualized and interpreted the practice throughout the literature.

Through a series of narratives provided by ten undergraduate and graduate-level physics students, Ong (2005) reveals a rich opportunity to understand the ways in which passing occurs among students who encounter academic communities infused with strict social expectations around race and gender. The ten participating students self-identify as Chicana, Latina, Filipina-American, and African-American and share stories about the ways in which they strive to be accepted in their respective academic networks, while maintaining a sense of their personal identities that do not match that of their peers. Because of their multiple positions as women with unique racial and ethnic identities, these women contend with social situations in which they feel they must strategically alter their daily performances in order to receive acceptance in the scientific community. Specifically, many of the students claim that accentuating their gender only hinders their recognition within the community; thus, engaging in seemingly masculine behaviors such as asking numerous questions and appearing intellectually aggressive, in addition to dressing in non-feminized clothing, leads them to achieve scientific identities. As one student explains,

“All the women I found in the sciences...are not quote-unquote very feminine...The ones that ask a lot of questions and are really out there and being seen seem to be very forceful, have very masculine tendencies...It’s almost like we have become more quote-unquote masculine in order to make it.” (Ong, 2005:604).

Similarly, many of the women report feeling compelled to act “white” and effectively stifle their cultural backgrounds in order to render themselves unmarked as “other” within the scientific community. These patterns come to life in the following quotation by one student:

“I definitely know that if I had been brown-skinned and [given] the typical skewed view that the United States has about Latin America, then it would’ve

been a lot harder. I have pale skin, people are interested in me until they find out I'm from Central America" (Ong, 2005:604).

This example demonstrates the ways in which students of color often feel obligated to approximate racially acceptable behaviors and appearances to be seen as legitimate colleagues in their scientific circles.

In her discussion of passing, Ong (2005) distinguishes between two processes of identity enactment. One mode is fragmentation, which involves splitting oneself to downplay cultural differences between oneself and a dominant social group. The alternative, and more favored, process is labeled multiplicity, which entails openly exhibiting the numerous identities one holds all at once. Based on their stories, Ong deems the female physics students as engaging in the process of fragmentation; rather than display multiple identities that likely clash with those of professional peers, the students tend to consciously manipulate self-performances within professional scientific settings, performing whiteness and masculinity in an effort to be made visible as deserving members of the local scientific community. In effect, the students elect to pass as crafted versions of themselves, without being marked by race or gender differences.

Hoyt (1999) also describes the phenomenon of passing within academic settings based on personal experience, yet her stance centers on stigmatized markings around social class. Entering the academy from a working-class background, Hoyt describes the challenges in accounting for her personal background and simultaneously employing prescribed patterns of communication, speech, and self-presentation that are accepted within academic circles. Adhering the rules of conduct around academic presentation serve as a prerequisite for avoiding class stereotypes around laziness and lack of education. Thus, Hoyt claims that many students feel compelled to suppress language accents and dress in ways that match their academic peers as a strategy for negotiating the discord between one's working-class background and increased educational status. Much of Hoyt's argument echoes Ong's (2005) notion of fragmentation, in that working-class students express the need to fulfill two lives based on their working-class histories and academic identities.

In another psychological investigation of passing, Parks, et al. (2004) approach the topic with a focus on sexual identity. Utilizing a sample of 450 self-identified lesbians, the authors explore the complexities of individuals' self-disclosure around sexual orientation across different

social contexts. In particular, participants reported that most lesbians of color had disclosed their sexual identity to friends and at least one family member (most often sisters), but often silenced their lesbian identity with schoolmates, fellow co-workers, and some professional supervisors. It is important to note that Parks et al. also found that the lesbians of color reported patterns significantly distinct from white lesbians in that the former claimed to disclose their identities to non-family members much less often than white lesbians, suggesting that socio-historical changes regarding the acceptance of lesbians and gays in society may have differentially affected lesbians of different colors. More specifically, the authors posit that historical shifts may have eased the burden for white lesbians to openly identify as such, in comparison to lesbians of color who simultaneously contend with social obstacles around race in addition to sexual identity (Parks et al, 2004). These findings point to the importance of attending to multiple identity markers in exploring passing enactment, rather than isolating only one identity that may be silenced. In reality, individuals harboring a number of unique personal identities may face decisions around self-performance that shift based on social context and broader cultural cues.

Land and Kitzinger (2005) further elucidate the complexity of sexual identity passing. In their observations of self-identified lesbians enacting their identities via telephone conversations, the authors provide a discursive analysis of the various ways in which passing may occur. Land and Kitzinger claim that lesbian speakers in their sample often relied on specific conversational cues to negotiate instances of assumed heterosexuality. The three possible classifications for enacting identity are described as 1) choosing not to openly identify as lesbian by passing up an opportunity to correct a false assumption by the social other, 2) explicitly coming out as lesbian by correcting the false assumption, or 3) choosing to disclose one's sexual identity in a covert way by embedding the correction in subsequent conversation. Discursive analysis illustrated that the latter strategy (embedded correction) was most commonly employed by lesbian speakers. These findings exhibit the ways individuals navigate the grey area between explicitly asserting a (commonly marginalized) identity and striving to deny it. This work, more importantly, touches on the complexity of traversing that space across diverse contexts. Additionally, it is worth highlighting the fact that lesbians often openly discussed their homosexuality in ways comparable to heterosexuals with family and close friends. It was the telephone conversations with strangers, however, that prompted unintentional passing when others falsely assumed

heterosexual identities in participants, illustrating the significance of audience in shaping instances of passing (Land & Kitzinger, 2005).

An extension of this theme surfaces in Miller's (unpublished) exploration of passing as an identity performance among bisexual men and women. Through a series of open-ended interviews with forty-eight individuals, Miller finds that most instances of passing were not intentional; rather, individuals claimed that the passing occurred as a result of audience perception. Limited to binary conceptions of sexual orientation (gay and lesbian or heterosexual), bisexual men and women constantly feel forced to aggressively assert their bisexual identity or be accused of inauthenticity (Miller, unpublished).

Clearly, social rules provide the broader backdrop to experiences of passing that are aptly demonstrated in the current tensions felt by young Muslim-American women discussed by Zaal, Salah, and Fine (2007). In exploring the lives of young Muslim-American women, Fine et al. powerfully illuminate the ways in which passing surfaces as a response to immediately personal, as well as broader, social pressures around Muslim identities in post-9/11 America. In particular, many young women report feeling demands to either stifle or fragment pieces of their identities across contexts. Some individuals describe familial messages encouraging them to conceal personal identities as a means of protection against prejudice and discrimination. Yet, other women explain that their dilemmas over revealing identity markers actually revolve around fears of being seen as too "American" around family members. Themes of anxiety and risk consistently permeate the discussions among young Muslim-American women, drawing attention to the murky spatial boundaries which can prompt decisions to pass (Zaal et al., 2007).

Remixing³ shame in passing discourse

Infused throughout the aforementioned discourse on passing lurks the presence of shame in identity performance. For example, Barreto et al. (2006) directly rely on feelings of shame and guilt as mediators in the potential for passing to diminish self-confidence. As well, individuals who have reported passing supposedly encounter more negative feelings about themselves when compared to those who do not pass. Research suggests that feelings of discomfort, shame, and insecurity account for nearly 85% of individuals' passing experiences,

³ Jaye Walker, Class Presentation, December 3, 2007

and 11% also claim that other negative outcomes can result from passing, such as the inability to create honest relationships with social others (Barreto et al., 2006).

Although the research suggests that passing can be emotionally and psychologically draining, it also promises to be empowering in certain situations by enabling the passer to determine their own identity performance (Torres, 2007). The current literature, especially the empirical work, seems to enter the discussion with an agenda pursuing evidence of damage. Instead, perhaps the complex phenomenon of passing warrants a perspective that equally accounts for its role as an expression of both the internalization of, and resistance to, stigma.

Considering the argument among queer theorists (e.g. Sherry, 2004; Stockton, 2006) that shame poses a significant obstacle in moving toward sexual freedom and expression, it is conceivable that one strategy for overcoming this obstacle is to directly address shame and, perhaps, even embrace it. As Stockton (2006) asserts, shame can evoke interest and serves as a form of communication in itself among marginalized individuals; in its ability to do so, shame may be a mechanism for igniting creative strategies for negotiating social stigma. Progressing beyond simplistic interpretations of passing to embrace the role of shame may elucidate the ways it serves to empower individuals by allowing them to choose when and how to be marked by social others.

Rejected members of society are deemed such because of their defiance of prescribed borders and social rules. In essence, shame is both personal, as an individual process of enacting identity, but also relational in its dependence on audience perception and contextual cues (Stockton, 2006). One tactic for negotiating this stamp of “other” may be what Stockton labels “disidentification”, namely a mode of facing social stigma that does not involve assimilation, but does not strictly oppose it either. By definition, passing seems to fall into this category; individuals who pass may describe their experiences as somewhere in the unmarked territory between claiming a stigmatized status and outright denying their identity.

As Franklin and Boyd-Franklin (2000) argue, the paradox of invisibility for marginalized members of society restricts the ways in which they may be perceived: if stigmatized individuals are seen, they may be realized only in terms of given stereotypes, or as representative of their entire group, but the alternative is to remain invisible. A broader conception of passing allows for its construal as a means for addressing this paradox. More specifically, passing may enable individuals to determine personal visibility on their own terms, depending on social context.

Those who pass may be resisting the expected stereotypical behaviors or the anticipated invisibility of their stigmatized status by electing if, and how, to disclose their personal identity.

The overemphasis on damage in the literature eclipses the agency that may subsist within instances of passing, even if alongside shame or other traditionally negative emotional byproducts. In contrast, these strategies underscore the agency employed by marginalized individuals in the face of oppression, which exists as an “antidote to damage” (Solinger, Class session, November 19, 2007). Over time, passing as a course of resistance perpetually challenges social boundaries, consequently weakening power structures that serve to stigmatize particular members of society. Even without explicitly asserting a stigmatized identity, individuals may infuse dominant discourse with their unique perspectives in a more covert way, potentially changing the landscape of acceptable social identities over time.

A secondary, but equally important, aspect of the discussion on passing is the role of multiple identities. Scholars have criticized traditional identity theories that have focused on single-identity models in framing interpretations of identity enactment, often highlighting particular outcomes as markers of psychological health (e.g. Meyer & Ouellette, 2007; Parks, et al., 2004; Warner, 1999). A prime example of this stems from the research on sexual identity formation, much of which has historically declared public disclosure (“outing”) of one’s sexual identity as symbolic of psychological well-being. Implicit in this approach is the suggestion that passing as other (e.g. heterosexual, when one is gay/lesbian/bisexual) is indicative of shame and even pathology (Warner, 1999). However, because most people host a number of cultural and social identities, the unique influence of multiple marginalized statuses likely influence if, when, where, and how, individuals choose to pass in their daily lives. The reality of these factors comes to life, as Parks, et al. (2004) point out, when one considers the combined effects of racism and homophobia that seep into the lives of queer people of color. Pockets of racism within gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities and homophobia within communities of color compel these individuals to rank their various identities; consequently, lower-ranked identities can lead to feelings of betrayal towards a group with which one affiliates. Meyer and Ouellette (2007) show that individuals often feel compelled to choose primary identities and may be mistakenly classified as self-hating or dubbed traitors if they cannot simultaneously claim multiple identities or group affiliations.

A deeper examination of individual identities demonstrates the complexity behind passing, which goes beyond discussions of pathology and damage, to expose the larger social contexts and multiple roles that individuals enact in their daily lives. Because variation in identity development is realistically more common than that posited by traditional models, passing deserves more attention as a nuanced phenomenon stemming from distinctive life experiences. Ong (2005) illustrates this prospect by explaining that some women of color actively manage their identities, strategically engaging their gendered, racial/ethnic, and scientific identities within their local academic spheres.

Related to this idea of multiple identities is the obligation to shift the focus away from the individual to social environment, which dictates acceptable and marginalized identities. Current modes of thinking that emphasize individual psychological damage as the origin of passing neglects to account for the social rules that call for identity negotiation processes at the outset (Warner, 1999). As mentioned earlier, passing invokes a societal discomfort because it reveals the fragility of social markings; it is this anxiety that motivates the need to politically shame marginalized others, including those who pass. As one bisexual woman in Miller's (unpublished) study explains,

“It's never passing or hiding to the person who is actually doing it because they don't view their sexuality as one side or the other (straight/gay). So to them, it's not passing. It is people who are seeing them as passing...The concept of passing is the whole outer appearance – what someone sees from the outside. But inside, even if I was with a guy, I would never really pass as straight because inside I still have the ability (to be intimate with) or even (have) feelings for other women.”
(Miller, unpublished: 12).

Limited to binary notions of sexual orientation, bisexual men and women claim that, in the absence of an announcement of their sexual orientation, the audience inevitably views their behavior as an effort to pass as heterosexual. Participants explained that, if anything, they passed as lesbian or gay to avoid being seen as passing for straight. This pattern begins to show that starting at the individual, especially with an agenda pursuing damage or self-negativity, fails to capture the complexity of passing. Instead, the audience plays a critical role by imposing identities on marginalized others that are rooted in limited, binary social categories. Further,

these findings highlight the ways in which passing may be a tactic for playing with the rules around acceptable identities in social others.

Conclusion

In sum, the present analysis provides the impetus for widening the lens through which passing is viewed. While it is evident that shame can play a genuine role in passing practices, its automatic classification as internalized stigma has been short-sighted. As Torres (2007) eloquently points out, passing may reach far beyond issues of self-denial to allow marginalized members of society to defy ascribed labels and maintain agency over their self-presentation. Moreover, everyday acts of passing may signify creative efforts to construct novel representations of sexual identity. Whereby the focus has often been on the individual who passes, research needs to attend to the social structures that frame its occurrence. Future research must deviate from dominant discourse and move towards explorations of passing that acknowledge shame, but also consider its role as a spark for creatively negotiating stigmatized identities.

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The Prison Officer as Moral Buffer

Jessica Van Denend

“Seeing a woman cry doesn’t even affect me anymore.” I was sitting outside a station during some down-time at the women’s prison where we both worked, and the officer was giving me a lengthy retrospective about his many years at the facility. I was listening with predisposed ears. Doesn’t even affect him, I scoffed to myself in my head. And this compassionless person is whom these women interact countless times on a daily basis – not only when they wake up, need to use the shower, need to leave the unit, or are locked in for the night, but also when they suffer a hardship or death, when they need an emergency call home or have come back from a difficult visit. Perfect, I thought.

I began my work in women’s prisons, with the intent to be advocate, ally, and friend to the women that were held there. I was tied very narrowly to a two-sided narrative of what the prison system: the prisoners, the oppressed, the suffering vrs. the outside, the oppressors, the imprisoning. In many ways, I came into the prison to “liberate”, to assuage my guilt, and to be part of the “inside.” As a result, I resisted spending time or energy with the security staff. I wanted to be associated with them as little as possible. I did not want to listen to the officer venting to me about his prison life, or entertain for a moment his full humanity.

Holding these views, I fell directly into line with the larger trends within prison discourse and its tendency to polarize into one of two positions. In general, prisons are either seen as vitally important safeguards to contain and control evil and delinquent individuals, or as violent and unnecessary institutions which continue a history of oppression against hapless and even pitiful victims. Either of these views preserves a binary, and it was the same for myself: I knew what the “good” and the “bad” both were, and I intended to be on the side of the good.

Later that week, I mentioned this conversation I had had with the officer to the prison chaplain, a very justice-oriented and empathetic woman, thinking she would share my feelings of indignation. She turned to me, and much to my surprise, her face and words showed not anger but compassion toward the officer that had lost his ability to be affected by tears. What a great loss, she said. At that moment something shifted in my head.

The paper examines the process of moral exclusion (of prisons and prisoners) not as it relates to those it directly excludes, but rather as it creates subsidiary effects for a group of people on whom it relies (prison officers). I posit that our need to distance and alienate criminals has a series of detrimental effects on those who are required to guard and maintain that distance and alienation. More specifically, I want to suggest that this phenomenon is not accidental – that the continuation of moral exclusion relies on the creation of a group of people to function as what I will term as a “moral buffer.” I suggest that folks like myself who would like to alter and even tear down this system of moral exclusion, cannot do so without factoring in the function of the role given to these moral buffers, and without truly granting credence to their selves and their stories.

Moral Exclusion

The prison is one of the geographical and psychic territories in our society that starkly and profoundly actualizes the process that Susan Opatow calls “moral exclusion” (2001). Our human functioning, Opatow tells us, includes the tendency to draw lines around those to whom we “grant justice,” or, in her words, the group of people that we see as deserving of considerations of fairness, entitlement to resources, and sacrifices on their behalf. “When we exclude people from the scope of justice,” she writes, “shared moral rules and norms do not apply. Instead we can withhold resources from them and oppose efforts that could foster their well-being” (2007).

In 1871 a Virginia court issued that the prisoner “has, as a consequence of his crime, not only forfeited his liberty, but all his personal rights except those which the law in its humanity accords to him. He is for the time being the slave of the state” (Ruffin v. Commonwealth). Granted, this statement never became the law of the land; it is not in fact true that “all” rights are constitutionally taken away (amounting to a very murky and fought over battlefield for the remaining or questionable rights). However, it is a practical and legislative fact that prisoners do not have the civil and constitutional rights of other citizens.⁴ Nor does the public perceive that prisoners “deserve” the same resources as the non-incarcerated citizen – here also taking away rights by categorizing them as privileges. In 1996 Pell Grants, were revoked on this rationale –

⁴ Devin McComb discusses the 1995 Prison Litigation Reform Act which the civil rights of those incarcerated by requiring them to “exhaust all administrative remedies” before filing a lawsuit.

education is a privilege hard working tax-paying citizens have to struggle for - why should we give them to prisoner for free? “We should reward the working families and not the felons,” said a U.S. Representative’s legislative director, who worked to pass the revocation (Johnston & Radziewich, 1994).

By definition then and without pretense, prisons are constructed and created to be outside of what Opatow call our “moral scope.” This excluded space takes on even more insidious meaning and usage within our particular historical legacies. As Loïc Wacquant writes, “just as the dismantling of welfare programs was accelerated by the conflation of blackness and undeservingness in national culture and politics, the ‘great confinement’ of the rejects of market society, the poor, the mentally ill, the homeless, the jobless, and the useless, can be painted as a welcome ‘crackdown’ on *them*, those dark-skinned criminals issued from a pariah group still considered alien to the national body” (2001). Ruth Wilson Gilmore describes the outsourcing in economic and geographical terms, revealing prison construction as a (never-delivered) promise to revitalize devalued rural land and nearby small towns (2007).

Thus the inevitable concomitant feature of moral exclusion is what Ruth Lister calls “othering” (2004). As Opatow says, “moral exclusion gives rise to the view that others are psychologically distant, unconnected with oneself, and unworthy of constructive obligations” (2007). In other words, those performing the othering are relieved of responsibility. As Angela Davis writes, the prison “functions ideologically as an abstract sight into which undesirables are deposited, relieving us of the responsibility of thinking about the real issues afflicting those communities from which prisoners are drawn in such disproportionate numbers” (2003).

Another way to say this, is that prisons and criminals are our shame.⁵ The psychologist Sandy Silverman points out that shame, once in existence, continues to snowball and grow (2006). We feel caught in a repetitive cycle, a oscillating and growing infection – from 380,000 incarcerated in 1975 to over 2 million today, from \$9 billion spent on 1982 on ‘corrections’ to \$160 spent on ‘crime control’ today, from, for the first time in modern American history, more

⁵ Using the work of Kathryn Bond Stockton, it is also important to look at the fascination with and generative power of shame. The lyrics and life of Tupac Shakur are a good exemplar of both problematizing and asserting some of the power of criminality, an example being the lyrics in “Holla if You Hear Me”: “I make rhyme pay / others make crime pay / Whatever it takes to live and stand / Cause nobody else’ll give a damn / So we live like caged beasts / Waitin for the day to let the rage free / Still me, till they kill me / I love it when they fear me” (1993).

money spent by local governments on criminal justice than on education. Member of a subjugated group are denied fully credible selves because they are othered; they are othered because they are denied fully credible selves. The prisoner is locked away and apart because he or she is considered dangerous, and is considered dangerous because he/she is kept apart and away.⁶

Those Who Keep the Criminal Away

A good friend of mine who worked as a hospital chaplain once visited a hospitalized and incarcerated individual. Also present was the officer who had been assigned to accompany the patient from the correctional facility, and sat watching from the corner of the room. Talking to the patient just felt completely awkward, I remember my friend saying. I never relaxed; I didn't know what to say. Perhaps, someone else suggested, it was because you were trying to have a two-person conversation in a three-person space.

There is much more that could be said about this process in and to the lives of the incarcerated, and their responses / resistances / defiances / re-mixes⁷. But here I'd like to, as my chaplain-friend was advised, widen the 2-person conversation and include the shadow in the room: the person who is assigned to stand guard, whose function and job assignment it is to keep the criminal away.

If the prisoner is an object to be shamed, feared, and locked away, if the prison is an environment designed to quarantine corruption and delimit a moral boundary, then how much more fascinating and appalling are those persons who *voluntarily* choose to work with such people and in such a place? George Jackson writes in his prison letters, "If the inmates are failures, at least they were reaching—most in small ways, but some reach is certainly preferable to no reach at all. The cop, as I've stated before, is a guy who can do no other type of work, who can feed himself only by feeding upon this garbage dump" (Jackson, 1970).

⁶ Scholars like Loic Wacquant and Diane Gartland remind us how the researcher, especially the social scientist has reinforced this process. Gartland writes: "The human is broken down into constituent parts and then re-created, I would hold perversely, from the pieces into a "kind." The vanquished of the very powerful are vanquished to pieces and then to flatline. The prisoner is classified, not only by levels of assaultiveness and manageability but also by typologies and brands that are supposed to represent "modern" penology. He or she becomes, for us, a specimen, less than human and not us. We remain on the outside looking in through the meshed barrier of denial. We cannot experience him nor he us" (Gartland).

⁷ Ja'Nina (Jaye) Walker raises for us the use of the words "defiance" and "re-mixing" to describe more accurately the agency and vitality folks being stigmatized bring to their stigma. Monday, December 3, 2007.

Whether they choose the job because of an inherently flawed character, or ultimately are corroded by the environment, officers are often portrayed as having the same deficient “make,” the same basic character and composition as the folks they guard. On the popular show *Prison Break*, the main character, upon his arrival to prison, is escorted around the premises by his new bunkie. After pointing to various prison gangs and their “turf”, the bunkie point to the officer’s tower, where removed, stern-faced, uniformed men hold their sniper rifles and survey the prison yard. He says, “the guards are the dirtiest gang in this whole place – the only difference between them and us is the badge.” Portrayals of officers are then put in the same bind as portrayals of those who commit crime: either they do so because they are cruel or because they are stupid. As Han Toch writes, a prison officer, by and large, is depicted as “an unintelligent, brutal, and insensitive individual who, although urged to be ‘professional’ in his dealing with prisoners, was generally perceived as too under-educated, unsophisticated and biased to rise to the challenge” (cited in Crawley 2004).

This perception of officers is particularly insidious because it generates a harsh reaction that ends up reinforcing the original stereotype. I want to be clear here that in giving a larger context for it, I do not mean to excuse brutal or bigoted behavior. However, it is helpful to understand potentially harsh or forceful behavior often exhibited by prison officers as protective measure against the stereotype of being of the “same quality” of the prisoner. That is their overly defensive need to “prove” the differences between themselves and the prisoners, even through ridicule, dehumanization, and violence, needs to be seen in the face of society’s insistence on their corruption and sameness.⁸ So too, the apparent apathy and lack of concern other officers exhibit might be a different type of defense.⁹

⁸ Many officers, left with the near-impossible task of dealing with our dirty laundry, employ what Crawley calls “strategies of depersonalization.” As she writes of the prisons she did field-work in in England, “officers speak routinely about the number of ‘bodies’ that must be fed, brought from reception, got ready for court and so on; arguably this language of ‘emotional distancing’ enables officers to deal with large numbers of prisoners with the minimum of emotional involvement. This Othering makes brutality possible, or even inevitable” (Crawley, 2004). Kauffman looking at prisons in Massachusetts also notes the perception of prisoners as a breed apart – “those people are the scum of the earth and there is not even a slight resemblance to me” (1988). Again, without condoning such brutal and violence-provoking mental treatment of another human being, it is important to see this division as a reflection and reproduction of the “othering” of larger society, and thus a symptom of a desperate attempt to identify with “society at large” and to disidentify with prisoners. One might compare this process, with the way poor or immigrant groups are pitted against one another.

⁹ Another interesting topic that this paper does not pick up, is the consciousness and levels of distance that different officers might or might not have to the “roles” they decide to play. Once when I arrived at the front gate at the prison which I work, the most stony-faced officer looked at me and, without cracking a smile, told me “we’ve closed.” Seeing my taken-aback look, she finally broke down and laughed, and continued processing me. That

As Ruth Wilson Gilmore talks about, no matter how one comes into contact with it prison wears one out. I remember one day that I arrived early for a program in the prison chapel. I entered the chapel, which was in fact a leaky and dark basement room under a cell unit, and found an officer sitting in the back pew, alone in the unlighted room. You look tired, I told him. Yes, he said and added: you know, we're doing time in here too. We may get to go home at night, but the 8 hours we're here, we're locked in. Why do you stay, I asked him. I have kids, he said back.

There is much work to be done in investigating and understanding these complexities and difficulties of guarding persons and spaces, and also the way the situation may differ for different officers depending on how the way class, race, personality, gender, age, time worked in a facility, proximity to incarceration in their personal life, neighborhood hailed from, and countless other factors create different ripples and effects as officers "carry out their duties" and "perform their role".¹⁰ I am not equipped to do that work here. Instead, I want to ask a question that pertains to us not to the officers. That is: what stakes do we have in this manner? In what way does the officer being seen as is too angry, too defensive, too worn out, too apathetic, too cynical, too stupid or exhibiting any variety of these adjectives, help feed into the contaminated and less-than-human quality of the prison officer? And how does the process of moral exclusion depend on this contaminated quality of the officer?

I would like to suggest that the prison officer serves as a "barrier" around the incarcerated individual, protecting us from "badness" of the criminal. The officer holds the place, literally separates and stands in the divide, between our hate and disdain for the criminal, and our view of ourselves as civilized and humane. Foucault writes in his *Discipline and Punish*, "the publicity has shifted to the trial, and to the sentence; the execution itself is like an additional shame that justice is ashamed to impose on the condemned man; so that it keeps its distance from the act, tending always to entrust it to others, under the seal of secrecy... Those who carry out the penalty tend to become an autonomous sector [which] relieves the magistrates of the demeaning task of punishing. In modern justice and on the part of those who dispense it there is a shame in

interaction, though, made me think of how that the stony-faced, stoic mode might be one voluntarily and consciously turned on and off, given the situation at hand or, of course, the opportunity to play a joke on a naïve volunteer.

¹⁰ I hope that his paper might serve as a call for more ethnographic projects focusing in or factoring in the prison officer experience, similar to that which Elaine Crawley undertook in England.

punishing, which does not always preclude zeal” (1977). The officers cushion us from our shame.

As a result, from this distanced place, we place on the lap of the officer many contradictory realities and responsibilities, without having to think them through, without having to be consistent or systematic. Our courts lock folks away for decades, and also pass bills and award settlements bewailing the conditions of prisons and the brutality and racism of prison guards. State legislature can issue directives to hire more chaplains and counselors, to provide more rehabilitative programming, without giving corresponding funding implement such changed. We can express sympathy for specific individuals that are “wrongly imprisoned with the rest”¹¹ without making an overall critique of the system. We can do this, because we have distanced ourselves from the ground level, where these contradiction play out. It is the officer that must figure out how to run more programs with the same staff, how to diminish bigoted behavior, through improved training that must magically be added into a packed schedule, how to trend the line of not being inhumane, while also not being too kind or coddling.

And if these initiatives fail, it is the fault of the officers, not us. As a moral buffer, the corrupted officer becomes our placeholder for blame. If something goes “wrong” (or better to say if a “wrongness” is exposed) it is placed in the lap of the officer’s performance of their job, of the training procedures designed, or at best the need for more officers. On multiple occasions in the different women’s facilities where I have worked, sexual misconduct between an officer and an inmate has occurred. Each time, the results have been (if DOCS does not contain it) a media frenzy detailing the uncontainable lust of the officer, and related internal DOCS disciplinary measures against him or her. In addition, countless memos were sent to all state employees, and for a really drastic change, changes potentially made in the training procedures for officers (which due to the paperwork needed to be filed, might not go into effect for months or years). Again this is not to condone the behavior of any officers who have misused of their power. But because the fault and the corresponding corrective measure all falls on the individual officer, larger questions – what is it about the situation of men and women cut off from friends

¹¹ It is an interesting question whether the flip side of the moral buffering - a group sacrificed to corruption and contamination, might be tokenism – a model minority or person individually “saved” from the wreckage. Both, in different ways, slow down the process of actually achieving systematic change.

and family, often in the prime of their youth, alone, isolated, bored, not allowed physical contact, or for that matter – what is the deal with sex in this country!?! – cannot be asked.¹²

Lastly, it is important to note that officers – their conduct, character, and effective functioning – become the way to contain to what de Certeau calls “tactics of the weak” (1984) or what Ruth Lister calls “getting at” (2004) -- forms of “personal resistance” (as discussed by Aptheker 1989) that take place in the everyday realm. They may be, according to Lister “foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth.” Or in the prison, as Sykes notes, it may be unissued orders, deliberately ignored disobediences and duties left unperformed which become “cracks in the monolith” of institutional power (1958). Many scholars, in the line of de Certeau, hold these “tactics of resistance” as elements that may ultimately plant the seeds of wider social change.

This is the final way in which officers serve as a “moral buffer” then – they prevent any wider effects of these actions by dealing with them on an individual and local level. The maintenance of order and cleanliness in the prison, the compliance with orders, the minimization of behavioral infractions – these are fully contained within the responsibility of the prison officer, and hinge on the officer’s success or failure to “manage” these situations. No wonder the fatigue, the overwhelming feeling of the “undoableness” of their job: prison officers are assigned to bodily barricade the discontent of millions of Americans.

Corrections Today, a publication of the American Correctional Association¹³ issues an editorial lamenting the publicity given to corrections in general and officers in particular:

With today’s media outlets, you never hear about the Texas correctional officer who spent 20 to 30 years serving his state and community by administering a secure, humane, and safe facility. You hear about an escape. You do not read about the California doctor who works day in and day out for less pay, under difficult conditions in a juvenile detention center to make sure the children are healthy and stable. You read about a juvenile suicide. You do not hear about the Connecticut correctional training officer who

¹² Bedford Hills Correctional Facility is generally known for the number of therapeutic and education programs it offers to its inmates. When talking about implement similar programs in a different facility with the administrative staff there, I was highly shocked when the reason they were unwilling to proceed was the lack of prison officers. Bedford, apparently, has twice as many officers as other facilities. It was strange for me to think that the program I so valued was deemed dependent on the presence of prison officers.

¹³ Part of the ACA’s mission statement is developed as a response to the stigma I have been discussing in this paper – and it seeks to provide increased visibility and positive publicity to the work of prison officers and other correctional staff.

spends her entire career raising the level of professional education to insulate the staff from lawsuits and bad practices. You hear about an employee who crosses over and brings contraband into a prison. You will not catch the evening news covering a story about the overwhelming caseload a probation officer faces every day in New York City. Nor will you hear about the successes he has achieved throughout his career.” (Gondles 2002).

I would suggest that the interests of moral exclusion are not served without the stories of escapes, suicides, contraband, or parole violations. I would suggest that our interests lie in a bureaucracy that is inefficient, slow, and broken. For if it worked, where would be place the blame? I would say that those working to “clear the name of the officer” are fighting an uphill battle, not because of the officers are hopelessly corrupted or corruptible, but because we want to see them that way.¹⁴

A Story

In 2003, a thirteen year old girl entered the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. She was diagnosed with many mental health illnesses, including bipolar, personality, mood, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. She spoke and often acted on the impulse to do self-harm. According to the officers that worked on her unit, guarding her was a constant struggle, often physically and psychically exhausting, to prevent her from hurting herself. According to both them and the legal records (Kim 2006), she tried almost on a daily basis to hurt herself, swallowing pens and other objects, going on hunger strikes, trying to put her head in the cell door as it closed. She was, for a time, transferred to an (overcrowded) mental health facility, the staff of which, after a matter of months, determined they could do nothing to help her. As a result, she was sent to a maximum security prison, where she was kept in solitary confinement, stripped of all her clothing and possessions and anything else that she could possibly use to hurt or kill herself.

¹⁴ I would also add here that we can apply the use of the term of “moral buffers” to people or groups of people beyond prison officers, and that today’s society at large depends on multiple groups serving in this capacity. I would hold up city social workers and other officials, foster care services, the department of the homeless, the da and public defenders, police officers, soldiers as similar to prison officers in their capacity to be “moral buffers.” Like prison officers, these folks must also deal with the reality of our alientation and hatred on the ground, are stigmatized through contamination of their interactions, and also need to function in inefficient and broken ways in order that they might be able to be blamed and to contain tactics of resistance.

In 2005, her determination and (as awful as it is to say it) creativity defeated even these extreme measures; she tore the seams from the pillow, tied them together, and used the strand to strangle herself.

As I heard the story, grief among the women in the facility was palpable. Grief counseling was made available, and a special memorial service was held. Women offered one another support, and letters, cards, prayers, scripture verses were written and saved. Yet for the officers, the routine went on as usual. In fact, because the facility at that moment was so understaffed, the officers on shift who discovered her body were not even able to leave early or take time off. It was not until two years later that the event was processed in any official manner – during a mid-day, hour long training session on “secondary stress.” Moreover, the family of the deceased girl filed a law-suit against the facility in general, naming specific officers as defendants. What frustrated many of the officers was that, according to their perspective, the family had abandoned the child during her time in prison, and only resurfaced with the possibility of financial gains. “We were the ones trying to keep her alive,” one mentioned bitterly to me.

Nothing about this situation is not horrible, gut-wrenching, tragic beyond words. It speaks to the confluence of mental illness and incarceration, poverty and neglect, broken school systems and lost childhood, patronization and womanhood, powerlessness and hopelessness, all bearing down on and out in the body of a teenage girl. There are so many question that need to be asked, not the least of all being – why was a 13 year old girl confined to the adult penal system in the first place (and what about other children in adult facilities all over the country). Yet the tragedy is augmented by the fact that all of the bigger questions are not being asked. Instead, the energy, examination, and prosecution of this event, is subsumed in a lawsuit which basically boils down to an examination of whether the officers have “done their jobs.”

And whichever way the suit turns out, what then? Where do the guilt, the shame, the angst of feelings all go?¹⁵ Elaine Crawley quotes an officer responding to a suicide on his unit as

¹⁵ And also, as the lack of time and space for the officers in the story I mentioned illustrates, at the same time as we saddle these men and woman with huge amounts of guilt and blame, we also deem them unworthy to unpack and process the ensuing complicated emotions. This is yet another symptom of their flattening. “For example, some assume that certain emotions not shared with other animals, which are referred to as secondary emotions and include guilt, embarrassment, delight, disillusion, and sensitivity, are not experiences among members of out-groups” (Lott, 2002).

saying that the shock of it all, the worst feeling that continually grappled with is a “sense of failure” (2004). We have let this situation, and others like it, simply be the officer’s failure. As a result, we never have to acknowledge it, in any broader sense, as also our own.

What then?

Uncovering and looking at the complexities and multiple injuries issued by a system of moral exclusion is frightening, horrifying and depressing. We start to truly realize how complicated and sophisticated are the apparatuses in place that protect those who have power in the current system. Yet this discussion of officers as moral buffers can, as I alluded to before, clarify a new task for those interested in dismantling this system of fear and harm.

Changing our penal system necessarily includes giving humanity back to the officers. This is more than just saying we should treat the officers well for the officer’s sake. It is also more than doing it for the prisoner’s sake, although it is true that, as Crawley point out “officers who *as a group* feel unvalued and uncared-for, and who often have more prisoners than cells, are likely to deny and minimize prisoners’ problems and to express frustration and other negative attitudes towards prisoners requesting attention” (2004).

Rather, we must remember to notice the humanity of the officers in order to limit the amount that they are allowed to be a sponge that soaks all blame and fault. The producers of the Frontline documentary about prisons and the mentally ill do an excellent job of depicting Ohio correctional officers as thoughtful, genuine, hard-working, and also extremely frustrated (Navasky and O’Conner 2005). They are doing all they legally, logistically, and emotionally can to house and help those with severe mental illnesses that have come into their correctional system. And even this, as the documentary heartbreakingly shows, isn’t enough. Whether we are doing research on the officers, the prisoners, the prison system, or really, any other type of social ill, vilifying other humans in the process will not affect the overall problem. All we will be doing is throwing the damage and blame around.

Lastly, for ourselves, I ultimately hope that “seeing the good” in officers help us come to terms with our own “bad”. That we will move further from a split good-evil world, and into a more complicated reality where life is hard, where we are all implicated, where we cannot choose to be “oppressor” or “liberator”, but must constantly sort out the multiplicitous ways in which we are both, in which, as Stockton tells us, there is no such thing as purity, we’re all

corrupted by this mess. It is sitting with the man, in the back of the prison chapel that day, and lamenting with him that albeit in different ways, we're doing time too. It's a more difficult and depressing place to sit. But at least it does not leave him or us alone.

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**The Stigma of Blackness:
Haitians, Dominicans, and Antihaitianismo in the Dominican Republic**

LaToya Tavernier

Not long after arriving in the Dominican Republic, Gérard married a Haitian woman whom he had known in Port-au-Prince. They rented an apartment in the capital, and soon afterward his wife gave birth to a son. Since Dominican authorities did not issue birth certificates to children of Haitian parents, Hassim was stateless. To resolve this problem, Gérard paid a Civil Registry official US \$500 for a false birth certificate for himself, which he then used to obtain a cédula, a driver's license, and other documents in support of his identity as Máximo Gómez. On the basis of this Dominican identity, Gérard petitioned for the issuance of a late birth certificate for Hassim, which made it possible for him to attend public school and qualify for other public services. (Gregory 2007: 170)

Excerpted from Steven Gregory's book, *The Devil Behind the Mirror*, the story of the Haitian-born Gérard and his Dominican-born son Hassim is one of many examples of the experiences of Haitians in the Dominican Republic. Their stories are ones of people living with stigma. Based on the color of their skin and their African heritage, Haitians, and more generally people of African-descent, have been stigmatized in the Dominican Republic, and other countries in the Western Hemisphere, since the arrival of African slaves in the 16th century. Haitians have endured centuries of exploitation, hate, racism, statelessness, prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, murder, and injustice within Dominican society. This historical prejudice, racism, and stigmatization experienced by Haitians in the Dominican Republic has manifested as an anti-Haitian ideology called antihaitianismo (Ságas 1993; Ságas 2000). "Antihaitianismo ideology combines a legacy of racist Spanish colonial mentality, nineteenth-century racial theories and twentieth-century cultural neoracism into a web of anti-Haitian attitudes, racial stereotypes, and historical distortions. Not only does this hegemonic ideology affect Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic, but it has also traditionally been employed as an ideological weapon to subdue the black and mulatto Dominican lower classes and maintain their political quiescence" (Ságas 2000: ix). Therefore, similar to the way Blacks and Whites have been represented as polar opposites in US racial ideology, Dominicans and Haitians have been presented as polar racial and cultural opposites in antihaitianismo ideology; thus, to be Dominican means to be not Haitian, and especially not Black.

This past summer, during a trip to Santo Domingo, DR, I saw firsthand how antihaitianismo ideology has infiltrated Dominican culture and identity, particularly the thoughts of some dark-skinned Dominicans. While my friend and I were vacationing in the Dominican Republic, we met a dark-skinned Dominican waiter, who spoke English. He served as a useful resource guide for us, telling us about good places to eat and shop, about the history of the city, and about the racial identity of Dominicans. Although he was very dark-skinned, with skin darker than mine (a self-identified brown-skinned Black person), this Dominican waiter self-identified as indio. Knowing that the Dominican Republic did participate in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which brought millions of African slaves to the Western Hemisphere, we asked him whether or not he believed Dominicans had African ancestry. And, he explained that Dominicans are mix of the Spanish, African slaves, and the Taino Indians; however, despite this, Dominicans are indios and not Black. His statement is a good example of how antihaitianismo has influenced the thoughts of dark-skinned Dominicans on the island. Our visit to El Museo del Hombre Dominicano demonstrated how the idea of being indio has been emphasized in Dominican culture and history. In the exhibit showcasing the origins of the Dominican people, it was filled with information on and images of Taino Indians. Though there was some information on the Spanish, there was no mention of African slaves and the country's African heritage.

As easy as it would be to focus only on Dominicans' role in the stigmatization of the Haitians, I have to admit my own guilt in the stigmatization of this group. I have grown up having stereotypes and prejudices of Haitians. Growing up in Boston, a city which has a large Haitian immigrant population, I was often asked if I was Haitian because I was of a person of Afro-Caribbean descent and had a French last name. When I was asked this question, I would immediately reply no. I was offended that people would identify me as Haitian, since, as a child, I learned from my family and a few of my friends that I didn't want to be identified as Haitian. I learned that Haitians were bad; they dressed badly, they smelled badly, and they acted badly. I spent a lot of time trying to distance myself from Haitians, so I could avoid the stigma associated with them, similar to the social distancing, described by Mary Waters, as a method used by West Indian immigrants to navigate the stigma associated with African Americans in the US

(Waters 2001). I made sure that everyone who made a comment about the French origins of my last name knew that I was not Haitian.

This paper, however, is a means for me to deal with my role in the continued stigmatization of Haitians. In it, I will interrogate the origins of antihaitianismo and the stigmatization of Haitians in the Dominican Republic and their effects on Haitians economically, socially, and psychically, and I will discuss steps taken by Dominicans, Haitians, and others to repair the damage between the two peoples caused by stigma and antihaitianismo.

Stigma & Antihaitianismo

The most commonly used definition of stigma in social sciences comes from Erving Goffman's work on stigma. According to Goffman (2006), stigma is an attribute that discredits an individual or group and reduces them from whole and normal persons to discounted and tainted ones (Link & Phelan 2001). He contends that stigma can be broken into three categories. The first is stigma associated with deformities of the body (i.e., missing limbs). The second is stigma associated with character flaws (i.e. drug addiction). And, the third is "the tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion," described as "stigma that can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family" (Goffman 2006: 132). This third type of stigma best describes the stigma experienced by Haitians in the Dominican Republic. In their development of a Dominican national identity, Dominican elites combined race, nation, and religion, creating a marker of difference between Haitians and Dominicans that would pass from generation to generation. They created a Dominican national identity that considered being Dominican to mean being White, Catholic, and having a Hispanic culture, which was in opposition to the idea of being Haitians to mean being Black, voodoo practitioners, and having an African (and slightly French) culture (Ságas 1993; Ságas 2000). The tribal stigma of Haitians being Black, voodoo practitioners, and culturally African has remained a marker of Haitian difference from Dominicans and has been used as justification for the denial of Dominican citizenship for Dominican-born people of Haitian descent. The sociologist Erving Goffman argues that stigma allows us to dehumanize people and makes it easier for us to discriminate against them. "We construct a stigma-theory, an

ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity based on other differences, such as those of social class” (132-33). The stigma-theory Goffman describes is manifested in antihaitianismo in the Dominican Republic. Antihaitianismo has allowed for Dominicans to exploit Haitian labor, through quasi-slavery working conditions on sugar cane plantations, to deport tens of thousands of Haitians without a court hearing, to kill Haitians, and to deny Dominican-born children of Haitian parentage citizenship and access to public services.

Link and Phelan (2001) expand upon Goffman’s definition of stigma to include the role of power relations in the process of stigmatization. They state that “stigma is entirely dependent on social, economic, and political power---it takes power to stigmatize” (375). Dominican elites have used their social, economic, and political power to discriminate against Haitians and poor, dark-skinned Dominicans, using the stigma created by antihaitianismo as a way to keep them in a subordinate and vulnerable position. Link and Phelan (2001) conclude that “stigma exists when elements of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination occur together in a power situation that allows them” (377). And, this can be seen clearly in antihaitianismo.

Antihaitianismo has allowed Dominican elites, and to an extent the Dominican working class, to label and stereotype Haitians as inferior, barbaric, and foreign and to separate Haitians from Dominican identity and culture, through the development of a Dominican national identity that is opposition to Haiti and Haitian culture, as a means to keep Haitians in a perpetual subordinate and stigmatized position in Dominican society. “As an ideology, antihaitianismo treats Haitians as the scapegoats of a society that considers them racially and culturally inferior aliens who are barbaric and undesirable. Thus antihaitianismo is a deliberate creation: it is an authoritarian, dominant ideology, with the objective of defending a narrow status quo” (Ságas 2000: 4). The status quo required keeping the white Dominican elites on the top of society and the dark-skinned Dominicans and Haitians migrants on the bottom.

Antihaitianismo has a long history on the island of Hispaniola. Its development began with the 1804 Haitian Independence. “The independence of Haiti in 1804 represented a terrifying prospect for white nations: the massacre of most whites, the destruction of European civilization, and their replacement by a black republic lead by

ex-slaves themselves” (Ságas 2000: 4). Haiti’s existence as the first Black republic automatically placed it into a pariah status among the countries in the Western Hemisphere. “Haitians experienced international hostility in several forms, including most notably, political isolation and the threat of a French attempt to retake the island nation” (Renda 2001: 50). Their political isolation was caused by countries refusing to recognize Haiti as a sovereign nation until France recognized it. However, French recognition of Haiti didn’t occur until 1825, 21 years after Haitian independence, and it came at the cost of 150 million francs, as restitution for the property the French former plantation owners lost after the slave rebellion. Trying to separate itself from the pariah status of its island neighbor, the Dominican elites developed a cultural and racial identity for themselves that was in opposition to their Haitian neighbor. “Therefore, “whiteness” (racially and culturally) came to be identified with “Dominicanness,” while “blackness” was rejected as alien, Haitian and barbaric. In this (re)definition of “race,” the black and the mulatto masses had but two choices: to “lighten” themselves by assuming the indio identity and Hispanic culture, or to be ostracized and excluded from the national mainstream” (Ságas 2000: 66)

The development of antihaitianismo was strengthened by the Haitian occupation of the Dominican Republic, from 1822-1844. Afraid that the French would use the Dominican Republic as a base to try to reoccupy them, the Haiti government decided to occupy the Dominican Republic, unifying the island and placing the power in Port-au-Prince. Though Haiti’s occupation of the Dominican Republic was supported by a significant number of Dominican from the lower classes and from the border towns, the Dominican elites didn’t like being ruled by a people they considered as inferior to them. In their fight for independence, Dominicans developed anti-Haitian attitudes and beliefs and perpetuated myths about their history and culture in order to distance themselves from Haitians. “One of the most important myths developed in the late 19th century that remains influential to this day is that of the Dominican indio. In their search for a new national identity, Dominican elites looked at their Amerindian past, as some other Latin American nations had already done” (Ságas 1993: 2). Despite the fact that the dying out of the Taino Indians in less than a century, after the arrival of the Spanish, caused the Spanish to bring African slaves to the island to support their sugar plantation economy,

Dominican elites strongly argued that Dominicans were descendents of Taino Indians and the Spanish. Torres-Saillant (1998) argues that “ethnically, the Indians represented a category typified by nonwhiteness as well as nonblackness which could be easily accommodate the racial in-betweenness of the Dominican mulatto. Thus, the regime gave currency to the term indio (Indian) to describe the complexion of people of mixed ancestry” (139). The country went from being considered 90% mulatto to 90% indio, since the term mulatto implied African-ancestry, along with the term Black, came to be associated with Haitians, “who were considered the real blacks” (Ságas 1993: 3).

Antihaitianismo took a greater role politically and intellectually, during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, from 1930-1961. In 1937, during his first decade in power, he demonstrated his antipathy for Haitians and killed tens of thousands of Haitians living in Dominican, who didn't leave when he ordered. “In the wake of the massacre, the Trujillo dictatorship embarked on a renewed negrophobic, anti-Haitian campaign that infiltrated public education and other Dominican institutions” (Gregory 2007: 181). Trujillo enlisted the country's best intellectual, especially Manuel A. Peña Batlle and Joaquín Balaguer, who would later serve as president 6 different times, to create and produce literature and propaganda to support his anti-Haitian ideology. “Manuel A. Peña Batlle embarked on the task of distorting Haitian-Dominican history to portray Haitians as hostile foreigners who were culturally and racially inferior to the Dominican people” (Ságas 1993: 3). Dominican history books in an effort to demonize Haitians concentrated heavily on the Haitian occupation of the Dominican Republic and overemphasized instances of Haitian violence against Dominicans. Trujillo's regime was successful at proliferating antihaitianismo among the Dominican masses and post-Trujillo anti-Haitian policies and attitudes, although not as blatant as during his regime, still exist in the modern Dominican state, such as the en masse deportations of Haitians.

Consequences of Stigma and Anti-Haitianismo

What have been the consequences of stigmatization and anti-haitianismo for Haitians and Dominicans in the Dominican Republic? For Haitians, antihaitianismo has had many consequences. One consequence has been the threat of mass deportations. “The modern Dominican state has institutionalized the practice of en masse deportations using

skin color as a primary indicator. The 1990s began with a wave of collective deportations and expulsions in which an estimated 35,000 Haitians and Dominican-Haitians were expelled from the Dominican Republic. A second wave of deportations, this time an estimated 25,000+ people, took place in 1996 and 1997” (Reynoso and Roberts 2006: 2). Antihaitianismo marks Haitians and dark-skinned Dominicans as perpetually other and foreign in Dominican society, based on a biological blackness tied to the color of their skin (Reynoso and Roberts 2006). Their status as a stigmatized people places them in a vulnerable position and allows for their mobility---the ability to move between Haiti and the Dominican Republic at their own will--- to be controlled by the whims of those in power.

Another consequence of their stigmatization has been the denial of citizenship for Dominican-born people of Haitian-descent. “The Dominican state’s systematic denial of citizenship is another example of the state’s antipathy to all things Haitian” (Reynoso and Roberts 2006: 2). Although the Dominican Constitution grants citizenship to all people born on Dominican soil, “the Dominican government has used an article of the Dominican Constitution which makes an exception to the rule for those people who are “in transit” at the time of birth” (Reynoso and Roberts 2006: 2). The story of Gérard and his son Hassim, mentioned at the beginning of the paper, provides a good example of how antihaitianismo has infiltrated the Dominican legal system. Although Hassim was born in the Dominican Republic, he was initially denied a birth certificate and thus his citizenship because his parents were Haitians and thus considered “in transit”. Gérard had to obtain a Dominican alias and pay for documents to support his alias in order for his son to receive a birth certificate and access to public services, things he should have been entitled to as person born on Dominican soil.

Antihaitianismo has resulted in the exploitation of Haitians in the Dominican labor market, especially on Dominican sugarcane plantations. Haitian migrants have been used as cheap labor on Dominican sugarcane plantations, since the early 1900s. Haitian sugarcane workers in the Dominican Republic have received much attention in the media and academic world because of the quasi-slavery conditions they are forced to work in on these plantations---working long hours for very low pay and being forced to live in “concentration-camp-like barracks” (Holden 2007) ---and the lack of resources-- schools

and birth certificates and opportunities for upward mobility--- available to them and their Dominican-born children living in the Dominican bateyes (Wilhelms 1994; Wucker 1999; Holden 2007; *International Herald Tribune* 2006; Lacey 2007). The use of Haitian migrant workers in the Dominican sugar economy was initially advocated by the United States as way to satisfy labor shortages on US-owned sugar factories, despite the disapproval of Dominican elites (Gregory 2007; Ságas 2000). Recently, a documentary film, titled *The Price of Sugar*, was made about Haitian sugarcane workers in the Dominican Republic. The film follows Spanish priest Father Hartley, who spent 10 years trying to help the Haitian sugar workers organize and improve their condition on the plantations in the town of San José de los Llanos (Holden 2007). The Holden article in the *New York Times* on the film actually first informed me about the exploitation of Haitian sugarcane workers in the Dominican Republic.

Antihaitianismo has also resulted in the placement of Haitians on the periphery of Dominican society. According to Lave and Wenger's theory (1991) of legitimate peripheral participation, in regards to learning, "peripherality suggests that there are multiple, varied, more-or-less engaged and -inclusive ways of being located in fields of participation defined by a community" (36). Thus, participation in learning can occur from both the periphery and the center of the community group (i.e., the classroom). They argue that legitimate participation from the periphery will eventually lead to move from the subject's movement from the peripheral participation to full participation. When taken out of the classroom, Lave and Wenger's theory of legitimate peripheral participation is applicable to the power relations between Haitians and Dominicans in Dominican society. As a stigmatized group, Haitians are positioned at the periphery of Dominican society. However, Haitians still play a significant role in Dominican society. With their labor, they make legitimate contributions to the Dominican economy. The Dominican sugar economy would most likely suffer without the (exploited) labor of Haitian workers. Yet, despite the significant contributions they make to Dominican society, they are relegated to a position on the periphery of the society, excluded from the rights and privileges allowed Dominican citizens, supported by the racist and discriminatory ideology of antihaitianismo. Because they are represented as foreign,

alien, and other, based on their blackness and their Haitian-heritage, they are denied the tools for full participation in Dominican society.

The experience of antihaitianismo has also had negative psychological effects on Haitians in the Dominican Republic. “Microaggressions are subtle acts or attitudes that are experienced as hostile, and that fit a history and pattern of personal racial slights and disregard. They act as status reminders by their implicit suggestions of unworthiness, and have a leveling effect on the recipient (i.e., “Stay in your place!”)” (Franklin and Boyd-Franklin 2000: 36). Feelings of unworthiness, statelessness, and vulnerability caused by the discrimination, prejudice, and stigmatization Haitians can be stressful.

Antihaitianismo may also have negative consequences for Dominicans. In his paper, “The Impact of Racism on Whites in Corporate America,” John Fernandez (1996) contends that “racism produces false fears in Whites and allows these fears to control where they live, where they go to school, where they travel, where they work, with whom they socialize, where they play, and whom they love and marry” (164). Although he is talking about Whites, the restrictions racism places on the lives of Whites can be used to describe how antihaitianismo places restrictions on the lives of Dominicans, especially dark-skinned Dominicans. Antihaitianismo places dark-skinned Dominicans in a vulnerable position because any actions they make against the status quo can be taken as un-Dominican and therefore a sign of blackness and Haitian heritage. They are also vulnerable to deportation and discrimination based on their darkness of their skin. In the en masse deportations of Haitians, dark-skinned Dominican citizens have been identified as Haitian, based on the color of their skin, deported to Haiti without being given a chance to prove citizenship. Antihaitianismo serves light-skinned Dominican elites’ interests by allowing them to control the dark-skinned Dominican masses with threats of being identified as Haitian or Black and subject to the stigma, prejudice, and discrimination that comes with being identified as such in Dominican society.

The discriminatory practices influenced by antihaitianismo have brought the Dominican Republic negative press. Various labor and human rights organizations, such as AFL-CIO, International Labor Organization, and the Anti-Slavery Society, have started to look into the labor practices of Dominican sugar businesses (Ságas 2000). Films, like *The Price of Sugar*, showcasing to the labor conditions of Dominican sugar

plantations, does not present a positive image of the country to the world. The Dominican government's systematic denial of citizenship to Dominican-born children of Haitian parentage has also caught the attention of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In October 2005, it "held that the Dominican state violated basic notions of equality and ruled that Dominican-born children of Haitian ancestry had the right to Dominican nationality. The Inter-American Court concluded that the Dominican Republic had violated the rights of children of Haitian ancestry and rendered them stateless by refusing to issue their birth certificates" (Reynoso and Roberts 2006: 2).

De-stigmatizing: The Conclusion to Antihaitianismo

So, how do you repair the damage caused by antihaitianismo? There are several ways to repair the damage. One way is through activism and coalition-building between Haitians and Dominicans. Various organizations, like Fundacion Zile in the Dominican Republic, Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees in Brooklyn, and Dominican Coalition of Solidarity with the Haitian Community in the Dominican Republic in New York City, are working to address the issues between the two groups, caused by antihaitianismo. These organizations may be the most effective because they work at the grassroots-level trying to get the local and diasporic communities involved in the repairing the damage and making a change for the better. Another way to repair the damage may be through the writings of scholars and advocates. Various Haitian-born and Dominican-born advocates have reached out to the newspaper media, such as the *New York Times*, to spread the word about the discrimination, racism, and exploitation experienced by Haitians in the Dominican Republic (*International Herald Tribune* 2006; Lacey 2007; Mindlin 2005). Also the efforts of academics may help spread the word about this injustice to a global audience. Ernesto Ságas' work and the other works I have cited in this paper have really informed me about this social injustice occurring in the Dominican Republic and my connections to it. Writing this paper has truly helped me feel the guilt and shame that I feel for the prejudices and stereotypes I have held of Haitians and for my role in their continued stigmatization. By writing about this topic, I believe that I am helping to break this cycle of stigmatization and start the process of destigmatization. I think that the efforts of academics, journalists, advocates, and grassroots organizations are a start of the

destigmatization process, emphasizing the moral inclusion of Haitians into Dominican society. In her work on moral inclusion and exclusion, Susan Opatow states “the extension of social justice to groups that had formerly been oppressed, marginalized, and excluded from the scope of justice is the process of moral inclusion” (3). “Inclusionary justice is particularly relevant in social conflict because our moral values, beliefs, rules, and norms apply to people we include within our scope of justice (also called the moral community) such as family members, friends, neighbors, compatriots, or co-religionists. When we include people in our scope of justice, we see considerations of fairness as applying to them, we see them as entitled to resources, and we are willing to make sacrifices to foster their well-being” (4). Thus, I truly believe that inclusionary justice for Haitians in the Dominican Republic can start with one paper, one person, and one word speaking out against antihaitianismo and breaking the cycle of stigmatization.

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Spatial Stigma and the Discourses of Order and Cleanliness

Éva Tessa Udvarhelyi

Introduction

Everybody had zones. Addicts, prostitutes, poor merchants, derelicts. Even people who were black and poor had a zone. Everybody was granted the right to lie in the bed they'd made for themselves. As long as they didn't contaminate good citizens who disapproved. ... You could get wasted out there and lots did. His job was sleaze control. Bright lights, beautiful people, intrigue, romance. The city couldn't offer those rushes without toilets, sewers, head busters and garbage dumps. Needed folks on the other side of the fast track and needed a tough cookie to keep them scared and keep them where they belong. The fast movers would pay well for that service. Let you sample the goodies once in a while. Just enough to spoil you. Not enough to dull the edge you required to do their spadework, to get down where it was down and dirty" (Wideman, 1990, p. 45-46).

Having moved to New York City from abroad, one feels the tremendous power of the geographies of exclusion and inclusion. The maps of prestige and abjection New York City residents carry in their minds about the city have a very powerful impact on our everyday lives, behavior and trajectories. Certain neighborhoods and places are synonymous with privilege, high status, wealth and an abundance of services. Others represent the other end of the spectrum: places of avoidance whose names equal urban decline, fear and poverty. The power of these maps and of the images they are built upon dissolves neighborhoods into their representations. After a certain time, representations stop being "just" representations; they become reality and start living their own independent lives. As a result, a strictly enforced hierarchy of a moral, physical, social, political and economic geography is created and maintained over the complex and power-laden social realities of the city. As anthropologist Talmadge Wright (1997) puts it,

“ . . . social imaginary significations are the specific crystallizations of a wide variety of symbolic concepts available at any one time within a given society, concepts that order the world along very defined trajectories, that guide our understandings of race, class, gender and natural phenomena. These imaginary significations are conveyed through symbolic devices ... that work to normalize a

particular vision and thereby justify particular social practices and discourages others (p. 5).

Stigmatization, or the labeling of certain individuals, groups and spaces as deficient, different and “abnormal,” is one of the “imaginary significations” that serve to keep certain groups of people “in their place.” At the same time as creating the identities of “others,” stigmatization also gives birth to and reinforces “normal” or rather, privileged identities.

This is true for spatial identities, too: “a place is nothing by itself, but depends on other places and practices to imbue it with meaning” (Shields, 1991, p. 14). Attaching shame to residence in public housing, for example, is a way to boost the value of housing “privately” constructed and owned no matter the actual amount of direct and indirect public subsidies that go into the building, lending and mortgaging of those residences. Thus in American society the social production and construction (see Low, 1996) of “nice” places such as suburbs and other imagined places of privilege depend heavily upon the production and construction of “other” kinds of places: ghettos, slums, public housing complexes, ill-famed neighborhoods etc.

Just how powerfully the dual process of creating privileged and stigmatized places is intertwined with issues of race, ethnicity, gender and class, among others, is illustrated by the following statement posted on a popular New York City blog: “Yo Harlem is from 96 st. to 155 both on east and west side but white rich people have taken harlem over and most of harlem is considered the upperwestside. Notice how the upperwestside is a made up name for the neighborhood to make the whites feel safe.”¹⁶ However, there are some other elements of delineation that cut through many of these relatively well-articulated categories and, as a result, are more elusive and difficult to pin down. One of these is the ideology of cleanliness, which will be the focal point of this paper and which plays an essential role in creating “spoiled” (see Goffman, 1968) as well as privileged personal and place identities. Creating and maintaining “cleanliness” and “order” in the physical, social and moral sense is a very commonly used strategy in American cities to create and maintain the (good) reputation of a neighborhood. Declaring a neighborhood dirty and untidy on the other hand inevitably creates a sense of inferiority and abandonment.

¹⁶ Posted by Uptown Boy, August 23, 2007. <http://uptownflavor.wordpress.com/2006/09/22/boundaries-above-96th-or-below-125th/#comment-20802>

In the following, I will first give an overview of the relationship between stigma and place identity. Then, I will look at the ways stigmatized places are socially constructed and produced. Third, I will present a brief overview of the social and cultural construction of cleanliness as we understand it today as well as the ways physical cleanliness is used as a powerful metaphor. Finally, I will look at the ways cleanliness as an ideology and material practice is used as either a strategy by dominant groups to keep “others” in place or as a tactic by the powerless to navigate and negotiate their way in the maze of power relations.

Stigma and place-identity

The stigma of certain people can be transferred to a place they occupy; alternately, people can be stigmatized for their free choice of, or especially their involuntary residence. ... In the ghetto, “those” people living there make it bad; or the people are somehow less because of their neighborhood. In the fancy neighborhood, the prestigious residents add to its class; similarly, these residents acquire something of the glamour of the neighborhood. Self-image and community-image are interrelated. Our home is part of our identity. ... We can be stigmatized or celebrated for our address (Krase, 1979, p. 252)

The concept of stigma was elaborated by sociologist Erving Goffman (1968), who defined stigma as something socially constructed whereby the stigmatized person “is ... reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. ... [W]e believe that the person with a stigma is not quite human” (Goffman, 2006, p. 131-132). Moreover, even though using stigma “to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting” (p. 132) he acknowledges that “a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed” (p. 132).

Although Goffman’s conceptualization of stigma was undeniably groundbreaking in social psychology, it can be critiqued from a number of perspectives. First of all, Goffman paid much more attention to the feelings, actions and reactions of stigmatized individuals and groups rather to those of the stigmatizers. In this way, he perpetuated the notion that “stigma” is a problem of the stigmatized rather than of the stigmatizers. Second, even though he calls for a “language of relationships” when talking about stigma, he himself engages in a language that places stigma inside stigmatized individuals, as is evident in phrases like “individuals known or

perceived *to have a stigma*” (Goffman, 2006, p. 138, emphasis added). As a result, even though extremely inspiring and revealing, his work does not completely avoid the notion so comfortable for the “normals” i.e. stigmatizers, that stigma primarily belongs to those being stigmatized rather than to those who stigmatize.

In response to these shortcomings of Goffman’s work, a number of studies have advanced theories of stigma that define it more as a “shaming tool” in the hands of stigmatizers rather than an attribute of the stigmatized. Sociologists Bruce G. Link and Jo C. Phelan (2001) define stigma as “the co-concurrence of ... labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination. ... [F]or stigmatization to occur, power must be exercised” (p. 363). In other words, one of the major roles of stigmatization is to reinforce our own sanity and identity by denying the ‘normality’ of others, their identity as complete and perfect human beings – just like ourselves.

In their discussion of how social scientists themselves reproduce social stereotypes about people with disabilities, Michelle Fine and Adrienne Asch (1988) promote a research agenda that shifts our attention from disability as located in the disabled person onto disability as a consequence of the (disabling) social and physical environment. Fine and Asch strongly critique social scientists working in the area of disability studies for an uncritical acceptance of “common-sense” assumptions such as the notions that disability is solely located in biology; that whenever a disabled person faces problems it is because of their disability; that disabled people are always victims; that disability is central to the disabled person’s self-definition and finally, that disability is synonymous with needing help (Fine and Asch, 1988, p. 8-15). All these assumptions help advance the taken-for-granted notion that the stigma of disability belongs to the stigmatized rather than to their human and physical environment.

Along with aspects such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation and ability, place is also an essential element in the construction of self and group identity. We use space and place in various ways to construct or reflect our identity as a person or as a group. We also use “place” to understand and define other people and groups. The stigmatization of certain places and the people living there and vice versa is a pervasive, powerful and damaging tool to carve out and maintain legitimate places of oppression and exclusion on the one hand and unquestionably privileged places on the other.

Psychologist Harold M. Proshansky (1978) was among the first to bring attention to the significance of place in the formation of identity. He defined place-identity as

those dimensions of the self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals, and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to his environment (p. 155).

For Proshansky et al. (1983) place-identity is both a personal and a social construction. As a personal construction, place identity is "a substructure of the self-identity of the person consisting of broadly conceived cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives" (p. 59) and is made up of a collection of memories, ideas and interpretations about physical settings. The properties of a person's place-identity change with other aspects of identity such as gender, age and social class.

As for the social construction of place-identity, the authors point out that places and spaces are used and experienced differently according to the diverging values and norms of different groups and according to the norms and values that each society and culture has about privacy, personal space, crowding and territoriality (Proshansky et al., 1983, p. 64).

Although Proshansky's approach to self-identity is useful as a first step towards understanding the role of place in the construction of personal identity, it leaves out many important dimensions such as the role of power dynamics or the negative association between places and people. Psychologists John Dixon and Kevin Durrheim (2000) address some of these issues as well as the gap between the individual and collective construction of place-identity. The authors' strongest critique of current approaches to place-identity is their overall individualistic, mentalistic, uncontested, and apolitical foci (p. 31).

By contrast, Dixon and Durrheim (2000) propose an alternative approach to place-identity that regards places as contested areas of collective being and belonging. As a result, place-identity is not only self-created but also collectively determined (p. 32). Dixon and Durrheim (2000) define place-identity as a rhetorical construction created through talk. In other words, talking about place is a symbolic way of talking about society and social relations (p. 32-33). Importantly, the authors emphasize that place-identity does not necessarily mean a positive attachment to the environment but can also be manifested through dis-identification with the

spaces of “others” (p. 34). Finally, in talking about research on places, they call attention to the fact that researchers tend to ignore the politics of their own place identification. As a result, they are prone to reinforcing certain place representations as natural or neutral without taking alternative understandings or representations into account (p. 40). This last point is particularly relevant when it comes to research about stigmatized places.

Place-stigmatization and the social sciences

By studying the professional literature on cities in the United States, a naive foreigner would be justified in assuming that a necessary characteristic of nonwhite neighborhoods is accentuated problems in the form of crime, drug addiction, poverty, family disorganization, and political apathy (Krase, 1979, p. 253).

Anthropologist Setha Low (1996) defines the social production of space as a sum of all the social, economic, ideological and technical factors that go into the physical creation of material setting, while the social construction of space as entailing the lived as well as symbolic experiences of a given space (p. 861). Stigmatized places come into being as a result of these two intertwining processes. The complex workings of social, cultural, political and economic forces create and reinforce segregated, isolated excluded and stigmatized places such as ghettos, skid rows, and public housing developments.

In a study on social housing estates with a “problem reputation” in the U.K., urban policy scholar Annette Hastings (2004) identifies three main strands in social scientific explanations of neighborhood decline. Pathological explanations hold that neighborhood decline is the result of the spatial and social concentration of the underclass (“culture of poverty” argument) (p. 236). Structural explanations attribute neighborhood decline to socio-spatial inequalities and economic change (p. 236). Finally, according to the ‘area affects’ argument, neighborhood decline is the result of an interaction between internal forces (e.g. low self-esteem) and external forces (e.g. poor services) (p. 237). The author points out that scholarly analyses of stigma are particularly controversial as often even those with a more critical approach to neighborhood decline in general tend to explain stigma itself with overwhelmingly pathological arguments (p. 238). Social scientists are often unable to get rid of the “common sense” notion that “there must be

something to the reputation; there must be something wrong with the people living there.” As a result, discourses of “ghetto-consciousness” are reinforced over and over again in the academic literature on “declining” neighborhoods (p. 241). In an effort to go against this engrained pathologizing approach, Hastings points out the role of external agencies and actors such as real estate developers, real estate agents, journalists, insurance companies, banks, the police, and social service agents in contributing to the process of stigmatization (p. 249). Seeing characteristics deemed pathological as consequences rather than causes of stigma (p. 245), she proposes an understanding of stigma (or problem reputation, as she calls it) as a mixture of several elements including mythology, local history, policies and media representations (p. 249) instead of something rooted in and inherent to the neighborhood or its residents.

Among the agents shaping the image of stigmatized neighborhoods – and often taking an active part in the production and construction of stigma – are social scientist. In an article published in *Phylon*, a journal of the traditionally Black Atlanta University in 1968, at the height of American desegregation and urban renewal efforts, Karl R. Rasmussen (1968) points quite poignantly to the fact that stigma does not originate so much in the residents of ghettos, but in those who have a vested interest in creating and maintaining the tainted image of these communities. “The ghetto is colonized, policed by outside forces, and exploited. It is pictured as a socially sick area in need of renovation and remediation” (p. 283). According to Rasmussen (1968), among the outside forces creating and perpetuating this image are professionals such as law enforcement personnel, educators, social workers, screen writers, popular authors and social scientists:

[t]he projection of this singular image, by parading social pathology for personal, political or economic gain, has fed into an overall social system which helps to reinforce the isolation of the ghetto and to maintain its existence. Higher education has fed into the system by too often looking upon the ghetto as its private social laboratory (p. 283-284).

Rasmussen’s observations resonate well with Talmadge Wright’s (1997) warning for social scientists thirty years later about the use of particularly loaded terms such as “pleasure spaces” and “refuse spaces” to “describe” certain places. As he warns, the use of these terms might play a role in reinforcing “a spatial hierarchy that considers some spaces more worthy than others” (p. 98).

In an undated paper on the themes of othering and social distancing, Israeli social scientists Michal Krumer-Nevo and Orly Benjamin (n.d.) lay out a four-fold taxonomy of social scientific approaches to poverty that resonates well both with Hasting's (2004) and Rasmussen's (1968) observations. First, the conservative, hegemonic narrative focuses on the responsibility of the individual for both sinking into and alleviating poverty and advocates a laissez-faire attitude towards social inequalities; the so-called structural approach focuses on the structural causes of poverty and advocates intensive policy interventions; the agency/resistance narrative concentrates on how people negotiate their lives in limited conditions; and fourth, the voice/action approach builds on poor people's knowledge and understanding as sources of social criticism. Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin define othering as something that protects people from the shame that they would experience if there was no difference between 'us' and 'them.' In this context, stigmatization is one form of othering and as Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin warn their readers, due to the nature of research itself, none of the above approaches to understanding/explaining poverty and poor neighborhoods are free from engaging in some form and degree of othering. Still, the authors insist that scholars have to strive towards reducing othering in research projects by taking as many different "parameters" as possible into account such as structural and individual circumstances, personal and collective experiences as well as people's knowledge and partnership. "Creating texts may not be enough to reduce poverty or social distancing but creating conscious texts, and involving action in the creation of knowledge has the potential of facilitating change" (Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin, n.d.).

Although it is impossible (and not even desirable) to treat the above categories rigidly, they are helpful for putting the work of social scientists working on stigmatized neighborhoods into perspective. Sociologist Loic Wacquant, one of the most influential contemporary authors on urban ghettos, offers heavily structural explanations of stigmatization. Writing about urban ghettos in the United States and France, Wacquant (1993) defines poverty in terms of both material and symbolic dispossession where the latter indicates an almost total lack of control over the representations of a neighborhood's collective identity. As a result of this dual dispossession, Wacquant (1993) says, territorial stigma turns people into urban outcasts (p. 368). In fact, Wacquant identifies territorial stigma as the single most powerful experience of the "new urban poor" in advanced societies such as France and the United States (p. 369).

Echoing Rasmussen, Wacquant blames both journalism and the academia for the concept of the “ghetto” as a symbol of urban pathology (p. 371). At the same time, he adds, the consciousness of social inferiority in residents of stigmatized neighborhoods is reproduced not only through the inferior state of social and public institutions within these neighborhoods but also in residents’ interactions with a diverse range of outside institutions such as banks, insurance companies, employers and taxis (p. 371). In fact, Wacquant (2007) highlights the relationship between stigmatization and public policy and the way stigma legitimizes unequal and unjust treatment: bad reputation legitimates continued displacement, unjustified police raids, and a complete lack of respect for people’s rights and dignity, actions that would be completely unacceptable outside of the ghetto (p. 3). In all, while ghettos have become synonymous with “social purgatories” and “leprous badlands” whose actual conditions do not matter anymore, living in these neighborhoods evokes extreme guilt and shame in their residents (p. 1-3).

In line with a structuralist approach, Wacquant (2007) refuses the idea that places are inherently stigmatized because of the way their residents are and points to economic restructuring as the major reason behind creating “hopeless” places. In his analysis, stigmatized places are the product of a new regime of marginality that results in the fragmentation of wage labor, the disconnection of dispossessed neighborhoods from the national economy, and the reconfiguration of the welfare state into an instrument for enforcing wage labor (p. 1). Similarly to Hastings (2004), Wacquant (1993) considers the existence of “pathologies” as an outcome and not a source of stigma (p. 372). Among these “pathologies,” or detrimental effects of stigmatization are internal social differentiation, distancing and decreased solidarity among residents; the reaffirmation of individual value and further devaluation of the neighborhood; and mutual avoidance exemplified by infra-differences, micro-hierarchies and scape-goating (p. 374). In these conditions, social cohesion is undermined and the creation of community is almost impossible: according to Wacquant (1993), residents of stigmatized neighborhoods are perpetually divided against themselves (p. 374). As a result, not only are the conditions claimed by stigma actually (re)produced in people’s daily practice, but resistance, organization and opposition are also nearly impossible (Wacquant, 1993, p. 375). In all, while vividly describing the “hopeless” situation these urban “dumping grounds” have become, Wacquant seems to deny almost any agency to residents of stigmatized neighborhoods and describes them as almost total victims of their predicament.

By contrast, sociologists Kevin Fox Gotham and Krista Brumley (2002) exemplify a different, more agency-oriented approach to stigmatized neighborhoods in their case study of the Clara Court public housing complex. The authors use the concept of “using space” to refer to a “range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain a personal identity tied to place and to contest alternative meanings, degradations, and stigma of residential life and space” (p. 269).

In their case study, the authors identify three strategies of “using space.” Among these is the creation of safe spaces where residents of a stigmatized neighborhood can “live as valued individuals in a publicly devalued urban space” (Gotham and Brumley, 2002, p. 277). Safe spaces include the homes of certain individuals (most often women) who provide protection and community space for other residents. The identification of so-called hot spaces is also a way for residents to create “cognitive boundary markers to guide daily movement and distinguish particular areas as sites of criminality and drug trafficking” (p. 277). Finally, the authors define the contestation of spaces through either “embracement” or “distancing” talk and behavior to accept or deny “project identity” as positive efforts by residents to re-establish their identity – the same attitudes that Wacquant (1993) blamed for disrupting solidarity and group cohesion.

Wacquant’s structural approach portraying ghettos as almost total prisons on the one hand and Gotham and Brumley’s (2002) approach that almost completely ignores structural forces on the other represent the two extreme ends of examining stigmatized places. Even though they both challenge the conventional pathological approach towards “bad neighborhoods,” neither of them manages to pose a real alternative to it.

By contrast, geographer Kay J. Anderson’s (1987) historical study on the social construction and production of Vancouver’s Chinatown – a prime example of a socially, ethnically, culturally and physically stigmatized place – seems to be a more viable and balanced approach by taking material and discursive processes as well as a multiplicity of different actors into consideration. Describing how Chinese settlers in the 1850s were forced by the hostile social environment to settle in concentrated quarters in Vancouver that later emerged as “Chinatown,” Anderson is also at pains not to present the residents of Chinatown as victims of outside forces by emphasizing that “Chinese residents were active agents in their own ‘place making’” (Anderson, 1987, p. 583).

However, as Anderson (1987) points out, Chinatown played an essential role in solidifying and concretizing racial hierarchies in Vancouver:

“Chinatown” is not “Chinatown” only because the “Chinese,” whether by choice or constraint live there. Rather ... Chinatown is a social construction with a cultural history and a tradition of imagery and institutional practice that has given it a cognitive and material reality in and for the West. ... [A]s a Western idea and a concrete form, Chinatown has been a critical nexus through which a system of racial classification has been continuously constructed. Racial ideology has been materially embedded in space ... and it is through “place” that it has been given a local referent, become a social fact, and aided its own reproduction (p. 581-584).

The construction of the idea and material reality of Chinatown – of which stigmatization was one aspect - was also closely intertwined with the concept of cleanliness. One of the ways in which Chinatown was established as the place of the “other” was its portrayal by both the popular media and public officials as a “celestial cesspool,” a place where an unclean people lived in constant defiance of all the sanitary rules of “civilization” (p. 586). Cleanliness as a racial category (“Chinese are generally dirtier than whites” – said a commentators in a local newspaper in 1902 [Anderson, 1987, p. 587]) was projected onto all the aspects of the neighborhood and its residents. Ironically, Chinese laundries (that presumably served a large non-Chinese public) were seen as especially dangerous and efforts were made to keep them concentrated in Chinatown as opposed to being scattered all over the city. The wooden shacks of Chinese working people were targeted as sources of disease, contamination and degeneration and often razed (Anderson, 1987, p. 587). According to Anderson, among Vancouver’s ethnic enclaves, only Chinatown received this heightened sanitary attention and officials never failed to connect and justify their calls for greater regulation and control with deeply held and universally accepted racial (and racist) beliefs about the Chinese.

Anderson’s examination of Chinatown is similar to Hastings’s (2004) approach to the study of stigmatized housing estates in its attention to the construction of places by different “image makers” (Anderson, 1987, p. 587). From this perspective, the image of a neighborhood reflects more the ideas (and ideals) of the people creating the image than any of the social reality and experiences of its residents. A telling example from Hastings’s (2004) research about a stigmatized neighborhood in Britain is that of someone living outside the neighborhood talking about its residents: “They’ve got rubbish from one end of the garden to the other. And if they

don't work all day there's nothing stopping them tidying the garden up a little. To me they lack the basic skills of parenting and cleanliness" (quoted in Hastings, 2004, p. 245). Apparently, this statement is intended to say more about the cleanliness and parenting practices of the speaker than of those about whom it is said. Still, the result is a devastating image of the "other." In Anderson's examination, the disjunction of reality from rhetoric becomes obvious when she describes a group of Chinese merchants who were so dissatisfied with the city's maintenance and cleaning of Chinatown's streets that they decided to take cleaning and garbage collection into their own hands (p. 587).

In all, Anderson's approach to the construction of "Chinatown" as a stigmatized neighborhood reveals how stigma is born "in the eyes of the beholder." A stigmatized neighborhood and the stories it tells say as much as, if not more about the people making opinions about it than about the people actually living there. Stigmatized neighborhoods are thus constructed and produced through various institutional practices and racial ideologies. However, through this construction, they also play a role in embodying and thus justifying and reinforcing dominant ideologies of social hierarchy.

Cleanliness as a social construction

[T]here are cultures today where people seldom bathe ... they don't seem to be bothered, even though the rest of us can sure tell. It must be something you get used to (quoted in Stuller, 1991, p. 133).

Clearly, cleanliness as an ideology plays a crucial role in the perpetuation and justification of the stigma attached to certain urban areas. The ideal of a clean city is pervasive in contemporary urban discourses. Dirt, garbage, and bad odors in public spaces as well as in private and public housing are a primary concern in today's cities. Although over history, overall improvement in hygiene did lead to real overall improvements in public health (see Duffy 1990; Rosner 1995), at the same time notions of cleanliness were and are used by residents, developers, and reformers to define urban social space. Cleanliness is much more than a physical state. It has become the yardstick to measure the desirability of a living environment: clean streets indicate good and decent neighbors, safety and stability. By contrast, streets full of garbage and litter are

seen as places of “the other,” of unknown dangers, social transience, poor morality and a general disinterest in the social and physical environment.

Studies of changes in ideas of cleanliness over space and time reveal that practices and ideas of cleanliness are a historical and cultural construction (see, for example, Bushman and Bushman, 1988; Alley, 1994; Classen, 1993). Anthropologist Mary Douglas was among the first to articulate the idea of “secular defilement” as opposed to “ritual pollution.” Before her groundbreaking work, the concepts of purity and pollution had mostly been discussed in a religious context, as standards of spiritual morality and immorality. Douglas (1993), by contrast, defines dirt as “matter out of place” (p. 40). She insists that ideas about dirt reflect ideas about social structures and symbolic boundaries (p. 99). More specifically, by defining something as dirty or impure society relegates it to the realm of the dangerous and unwanted. Removing “matter out place” and (re)-introducing purity reinforces existing cultural categories and social boundaries. While dirt represents danger, purity and cleanliness stand for power and express a desire for order and group unity. Consequently, ideas about dirt are neither universal nor neutral. Rather, they are culture-specific and informed by existing power relations. As such, dirt is a vehicle to make sense of both society and us as members of society, as well as a basis to judge “other” spaces and people(s). As Palmer (1989) puts it, “dirt is not a scientific fact but a principal means to arrange cultures” (p. 139). Processes and ideas related to the existence, removal and handling of urban dirt and cleanliness are thus reflections of specific social ideals of morality, sociability, as well as civility and group cohesion.

Place stigmatization and the strategies of cleanliness

Clean streets make clean people. The cleanliness will creep back from the streets into the halls, and from there into the houses, until the East Side is as clean as the parts of the city where people are not obliged to work so hard for cleanliness (quoted in Bernstein, 1992, p. 91).

Michel de Certeau’s (1984) concepts about tactics of resistance and strategies of power are helpful in framing many of the practices of place stigmatization. “Strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose ... spaces ... whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert

these spaces” (p. 30). Authoritative strategies are used to create and enforce the “proper” use of space. These strategies are usually guided by certain visions of what space (and society) should look like (Wright, 1997, p. 180-181). While those in power use strategies to keep others in place, the powerless have to invent other means – termed tactics – to navigate the spaces created and controlled by the powerful. A tactic, which de Certeau (1984) calls the “art of the weak” (p. 37)

must play on and with the terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep to itself, at a distance, on a position of withdrawal, foresight, self-collection: it is a maneuver within the enemy’s field of vision ... and within enemy territory (p. 37).

Tactics are a form of “making do” in an environment that one does not have control over. Tactics are tricks, the taking of sudden opportunities, or just ways of negotiating and navigating one’s way. In this framework, stigmatization is a strategy not only to keep others in place but also to establish and reinforce power; and the ideology of cleanliness is one of its important tools.

Although cleanliness has always been an important organizing principle in human societies, it was in the course of the eighteenth century with the arrival of large-scale industrialization and urbanization in Western Europe and North America that questions of community sanitation were brought into the limelight and a new sensitivity toward urban dirt and industrial pollution emerged. The first attempts to establish standards of public hygiene such as regular street cleaning and street washing as well as the relocation of cemeteries away from city centers date back to this period (Vigarello, 1988, p. 146). The main source of this new attention to public cleanliness was the miasma theory, which held that bad odors and exhalations caused epidemics. By the middle of the nineteenth century these notions developed into the sanitation movement and led to the great “water mania” (Reid, 1991, p. 27) in both Europe and the United States. Gradually, new sewage and water distribution systems were developed and codified standards of public cleanliness enacted.

It is fairly common to explain the sanitation movement and its historical predecessors from a purely scientific point of view and describe changes in communal sanitation as inevitable reactions to the problems of the rapidly growing cities of both the Old and the New World. At the same time, the changes in public cleaning practices and attitudes can also be interpreted as cultural rather than logical-scientific responses to the changing social and physical conditions of

cities. The disgust of the emerging middle classes with urban dirt translated into administrative and civic efforts to “clean up the city.” New methods of washing and deodorizing the city emerged such as drains and trash collecting and processing techniques. These urban networks also “became ‘urban fetishes’ during early modernity, ‘compulsively’ admired and marveled at, materially and culturally supporting and enacting the ideology of progress (Kaika and Swyngedouw, 2000, p. 122).

Industrialization and urbanization brought not only massive environmental changes, but social ones, too, with emergence and strengthening of both the urban middle class on the one hand and the urban industrial working class on the other. The middle class felt an ever greater need to both differentiate itself from the working class and to keep it under control. In this context, cleanliness served as a useful tool to achieve both of these objectives. Although technological advances were implemented all over the cityscape, a large part of this new sanitary consciousness was rooted in a growing middle-class anxiety over the living conditions of the “others:” the poor, immigrants and minority ethnic groups summed up in the powerful metaphor of the “great unwashed,” which was meant to distinguish the clean bourgeoisie from the dirty urban poor (Stallybrass and White, 1986, p. 135). To sanitarians, dirt was not only a source of disease but also the source of social pathologies such as chaos and barbarism (Holy, 1995, p. 20). Progressives and civic leaders worked hard at cleansing slums, tenements and other poor areas of the city of physical, moral as well as social dirt.

As a result of these practices and ideologies, by the turn of the nineteenth century a particularly strong association emerged between urban dirt and social ideals. Public cleanliness, in the particular sense of a lack of scattered and defiling objects and substances on streets and in buildings, became an entrenched social model expressing progress, order, hard work and decency. Its opposite was public dirt, which reflected degeneration, chaos, laziness and moral indecency. Thus stigmatizing the poor and minorities as “dirty” created a context where their regulation through purification seemed inevitable, justifiable and desirable. While destroying dirty and filthy places left an altogether cleaner city with cleaner and better residents, hence the similar arguments for “slum clearance,” reforming an environment into a “clean” and ordered place was thought to turn people into good, decent, self-respecting and responsible citizens.

However, the ideology of cleanliness as a strategy to put down the poor and minorities is not a thing of the past: many contemporary examples show how cleanliness serves not only to

draw social boundaries and stigmatize people through the stigmatization of places but also to legitimize tight social control over them. The images publicized by the media about public housing complexes, ethnic neighborhoods and “urban blight” all conjure up images of dirt and disorder in the form of broken glasses, piles of garbage and shabby houses. Signs of physical dirt and disorder are readily associated with social disorder. The well-entrenched assumption that dirty places mean dirty people is certainly at work in today’s popular images of specific urban neighborhoods.

However, the physical state of a built environment and the meanings that particular physical states carry are not natural or self-evident. The image of dirt and disorder in particular urban neighborhoods as well as what this image means to society is the result of complex processes of social production and social construction. A widely accepted ideological underpinning of the association between physical and social disorder is the so-called “broken windows” theory developed by policy theorists James Q. Wilson and George E. Kelling (1982). The crux of the theory is that “visual cues such as graffiti, public intoxication, garbage, and abandoned cars are thought to attract criminal offenders, who assume from these cues that residents are indifferent to what goes on in the neighborhood” (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004, p. 319).

This approach seems to almost completely ignore the fact that physical signs do not just naturally appear but are the result of certain processes that often have nothing to do with the people living in the neighborhood, but rather with other socio-spatial agents such as landlords and banks (see Aalbers 2006). According to Don Mitchell (2003), the key to this theory is that “broken windows are only a metaphor – and not for urban disinvestment. Rather, they are a metaphor for ‘disorderly behavior’” (p. 200). And what constitutes disorderly behavior according to the theory is the following:

aggressive panhandling, street prostitution, drunkenness and public drinking, menacing behavior, harassment, obstruction of streets and public spaces, vandalism and graffiti, public urination and defecation, unlicensed vending and peddling, unsolicited window washing of cars ... and other such acts (quoted in Mitchell, 2003, p. 200).

The fact that certain physical signs come to mean certain problems while others are completely ignored is the result of specific cultural, political, social and historical processes. In

an effort to challenge the objectivity that the broken windows theory claims, sociologists Sampson and Raudenbush conducted a study in a number of Chicago neighborhood to find out how disorder is perceived by residents. The study was based on the following questions:

Is “seeing” disorder only a matter of the objective level of cues in the environment? Or is disorder filtered through a reasoning based on stigmatized groups and disreputable areas? Simply put, what makes disorder a problem? (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004, p. 319).

In order to answer these questions, Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) put together an initial list of the “objective” markers of physical disorder (e.g. litter/trash, graffiti, vacant housing) and social disorder (drinking in public, drug activity, troublesome teenagers) and then asked people how big of a problem they thought each marker was in their neighborhoods (p. 324). One of the most significant findings is that “race” plays a central role in the perception of disorder. On the one hand, this means that “blacks perceive less disorder than do whites living in the same block group” (p. 329) as a result of previous experiences of living in poorly maintained neighborhoods and a higher tolerance of disorder. On the other hand, Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) conclude that “concentrated poverty, proportion of black, and proportion Latino are related positively and significantly to perceived disorder” (p. 330) confirming the existence of a strong implicit bias against ethnic minorities, people of color and poor people in American society. In short, the study implies that when people talk about the seemingly “natural” and “objective” phenomenon of disorder they are actually talking about something more elusive and sensitive such as race, class and ethnic differences.

Despite the fact Sampson and Raudenbush’s (2004) study makes important points about the cultural and social construction of disorder, some of their initial assumptions might challenge the overall validity of their findings. First of all, the authors presume that “an independent assessment of disorder that [is] reliable and ecologically valid” (p. 324) is possible. Thus they seem to claim that disorder can be an objective category. However, as I argued above, disorder is not “there,” but something that we learn to see and interpret as we grow into a society and culture. In this respect, it is similar to other naturalized categories such as “intelligence” and “beauty.” At best, disorder (or order for that matter) means a certain level of consensus in a community (or culture) about a certain interpretation of the state of the physical environment.

Secondly, by using the categories most commonly accepted to denote disorder such as graffiti, litter, broken windows, abandoned housing and abandoned cars (the same markers used by the broken windows theory) the authors do not undermine but reinforce and in some way even legitimize these as the “true” manifestations of disorder. By using such markers for the categories of both physical and social disorder as meaningful in themselves, Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) completely detach them from the complex structural, social, historical and cultural contexts of how and why they came about.

What constitutes disorder and how spatial and physical clues are read all depend on the social and cultural context – and this is very well illustrated by anthropologist Melissa Johnson’s following vignette:

In 1995, Elrick [the author’s Belizean husband] and I were living together in a nice 2-bedroom cement block house in Ladyville. Our yard was full of lush green grass that grew quickly, and that Elrick always kept trimmed short. Our yard also contained a tree which seemed to always be shedding leaves, and after windy storms, lots of small branches and other detritus were inevitably strewn across the yard. We also often had family and friends over to visit and on the mornings after these impromptu gatherings, there would be candy-wrappers, cigarette boxes and butts, and beer, rum and soda bottles in the yard. One morning, when the tree had shed and after a group of family had been over, Elrick and I were sitting outside, surveying our yard. Noticing all the paper, plastic and glass, I said: “boy we really need to clean up the yard.” Elrick replied “yeah, I am going to go borrow a rake and rake up these leaves and sticks.” I hadn’t even *noticed* the leaves and twigs, my eyes focused only on the pints and candy wrappers. I said “I meant the paper and glass.” He said, “Oh yeah”... as if seeing that for the first time. Elrick was very bothered by all of this tree litter in the yard, and would always want to clean up this; I was bothered by the plastic, glass and paper, and would always want to clean that up. Although we agreed that the yard looked best when both kinds of ‘dirt’ were removed, we each cared most about one particular kind (Johnson, 2007, emphasis in original).

In this example, completely different physical cues prompt the feelings of disorder and the impetus to “clean up.” While both protagonists are concerned with keeping the yard clean and tidy, their totally different perceptions of what disorder is and what needs to be cleaned up depend on their socialization: the American anthropologist has learnt to see disorder in “candy-wrappers, cigarette boxes and butts, and beer, rum and soda bottles” while for her Belizean husband the “bush,” or untamed, out-of-control nature means disorder.

In general, trying to measure actual levels of disorder seems a futile attempt. It reminds me of the continued attempts by anthropologists following in Franz Boas’s footsteps to measure skull sizes and connect them to ideas of ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’ or ‘intelligence’ or for that matter the pursuit of the “perfect human genome” (see Wilson 2006) or a quest for “racially appropriate medicine” (see Duster, 2005). All of these are examples of attempts at objectifying and standardizing something that is impossible to pin down with a ruler. As a result, even though Sampson and Raudenbush’s study (2004) is obviously intended as a serious challenge to the assumptions of the “broken windows” theory, in my interpretation it unfortunately does not advance but rather solidify the common and popular assumptions about both physical and social disorder and their skewed relationship to racial and ethnic minorities.

When it comes to an examination of discourses of dirt, disorder and neighborhood stigmatization, I find Talmadge Wright’s (1997) definition of refuse places as “spaces in which one is refused – refused services, refused dignity, refused human rights, refused the basic food, clothing, and shelter and refused medical care” (p. 106) a more useful path to embark on. An examination of the role played by processes like landlord abandonment, benign neglect, planned shrinkage, and redlining in the creation of the abandoned, disorderly, and dirty look of stigmatized neighborhoods reveals another way of conceptualizing neighborhood stigma (see Aalbers, 2006; Schill and Wachter, 1995; Squires and Kubrin, 2005; and Wallace and Wallace, 1998, p. 18-19). Taking the decent maintenance of building or a neighborhood as a case in point, there is a vicious circle of stigmatization and victimization played out along the lines of dirt and disorder. First, by failing to properly maintain houses, landlords can rent their units relatively cheap to immigrants and poor people. Then, while they are the only viable option of residence for low-income people, the shabby look and often terrible conditions of these buildings (and neighborhoods) feeds into and justifies social prejudices about the residents. However, as soon as tenants start pushing for better services and better maintenance, landlords raise the rents, thereby

pushing current residents out and attracting higher class residents. An implicit message embedded in these processes is that stigmatized groups can only move into stigmatized places. As soon as the physical signs of stigma might be removed, the “other” is not allowed to stay there. As a result, stigmatization justifies the application of different social and moral standards to certain groups even in a society that proclaims equality and freedom to be its core values.

Tactical navigations in the maze of stigmatization and cleanliness

In my experience, most people are not aware of the difference between the concepts of ‘bum’ and ‘homeless’. Well, we call those people homeless who do not have half an inch of a room at their disposal and have no property, or rather, they had one but they lost everything as a result of a bad step. Home, children, furniture. ... I call bums the individuals who do not want to or were never willing to work, only beg and bum and thus have not been able to pay the rent or the utilities, or they simply sold their homes and spent the money in a second. The homeless is always making an effort to have a clean and decent body and clothes. ... The bum does not give a damn about the hygiene of his or her body or clothes, he or she does not care if his or her clothes are stiff with filth. ... So what is the basis for children and adults alike to label a clean homeless a dirty bum? You’d better learn to make a distinction! (Elzer, 2004).¹⁷

According to geographer Tim Cresswell (1996), “the unintended consequence of making space a means of control is to simultaneously make it a site of meaningful resistance” (p. 163). Analogously, making cleanliness an important element in the stigmatization of people and places also makes it a useful tool for resisting that very control and stigmatization. Oppressed groups use cleanliness in a tactical way to address power relations: to resist them, speak to them, subvert them or even reinforce them.

One tactical way of using cleanliness is to reinforce the notion that dirty places mean dirty people and carve out separate spaces of recognition through an overemphasis on cleanliness. In a study on Prospect-Lefferts Gardens, sociologist Jerome Kruse (1979) maps out residents’ different attitudes towards being part of a stigmatized neighborhood and identifies “the activists” who accept the stigma of the area but try to fight it by proving that its “inaccurate and

¹⁷ Translation from the Hungarian original by the author.

unjustified” (p. 257). A typical “activist” is highly concerned with the beauty and cleanliness of the neighborhood and wants to make sure that visual cues tell a good story about the place:

They seek to beautify their community. They are extremely concerned with cleanliness, orderliness and neatness. They like to plant trees, flowers, and gardens – and to “rustify” their city homes and streets. ... They do all these things, and more, with dedication and fervor in hope, that by doing so, the stigma on their community will be removed and the community will be allowed to survive. These are their rituals; and thus their ”calling” (p. 259-260).

The activists’ is an example of the tactical uses of cleanliness in an effort to get as close as possible to the “normal” side of society.

Steven Gregory’s study on the Lefrak City public housing development in 1980s Corona, Queens presents another example in which cleanliness served as a way to re-valorize a “spoiled” local identity. In Lefrak City, a local African American woman organized the local residents to counter the development’s negative and damaging reputation as a welfare and crime haven. Among other initiatives, she organized a group of local African American youth to take part in a community clean-up contest. As Gregory (1993) writes, the image of black Lefrak City youth removing rubbish from the streets surrounding the complex undermined the construction of Lefrak City as a site of danger, decay, and dirt – images linked symbolically with disorder (p. 35). The community clean-up served as a tactic that brought recognition to the African-American community in Lefrak City and helped a new image of Lefrak City to emerge.

However, tactics like the obsessive cleaning of one’s neighborhood and the highly symbolic performance of community clean-ups are not unproblematic. The power of these actions is due to their reliance on the metaphor of physical cleanliness and purity as representing moral purity and social order. Even if they attempt to challenge dominant negative images of a group or a neighborhood, they continue to feed on the same discourses that are used to oppress racial and other minorities. As a result, they reinforce the notion that dirty places mean dirty people and clean places mean clean people. Even if well-intended, such tactics do not even begin to undermine the powerful and oppressive associations that cleanliness and order carry in today’s American society.

Nevertheless, there are other, more subversive tactics of using cleanliness as illustrated by the following quote from Luis T. Rodriguez’s 1993 novel, *Always Running* where he, a

Mexican immigrant, visits a “nice, American white-people’s” home in which his mother worked as a maid:

As Mama scrubbed and vacuumed, we played in the corner, my sisters and I, *afraid to touch anything*. The odor of these houses was different: full of fragrances, *sweet and nauseating*. [By contrasts,] on 105th street [where we lived] the smells were of fried lard, of beans and car fumes, of factory smoke and home-made brew out of backyard stills. ... These were the *familiar aromas*: the funky earth, animal and mechanical smells, which were absent from the homes my mother *cleaned*” (Rodriguez, 1993, p. 23, emphasis added).

This passage contains most of the key elements in the perception of cleanliness or, rather, the lack of it: unfamiliar people, unknown odors, the fear of touching, and a general sense of discomfort and undesirability. The force of this statement comes from its socially twisted nature: it represents a rarely publicized perspective, the voice of someone who finds the suburban home an undesirable place to be at. This goes against the dominant American myth of the suburb as the embodiment of social order, safety and cleanliness for everybody.

As the above examples show, cleanliness is a very important tool not only of domination, but also of resistance. However, because of the strong associations that cleanliness carries, it is extremely difficult to escape its oppressive discourse. The stigma of being dirty is much more powerful than something that can be simply be washed off or swept up. In challenging this stigma, maybe it is time that we turn our gaze from the “dirt” in stigmatized neighborhoods to that in other places. In other words, as Rodriguez’s example illustrates, one way of challenging stigmatization is through the exposure of radically different perspectives on entrenched symbols and vehicles of the discourse such as suburbs and other privileged places.

Conclusion

In this paper I set out to explore the role of the ideology of cleanliness in the social production and construction of stigmatized neighborhoods. First, I addressed the significance of place in forming one’s personal and social identity. Then, I went on to give a critical analysis of some of the literature on stigmatized places and the processes surrounding neighborhood stigmatization. Finally, after a short outline of the socially and culturally constructed nature of

ideas about cleanliness, dirt, order and disorder, I reviewed examples of how cleanliness as a powerful metaphor has been used as a strategy to stigmatize certain neighborhoods and even legitimize this stigmatization as well as how this very same ideology has been used by residents of such neighborhoods as a tactic to speak back to stigmatization.

Obviously, with all its political, social and cultural implications purity is a central metaphor in thinking about cities in the United States. Moral and social notions of purity are embodied through the physical experience of cleanliness. Also, unspoken transcripts of cleanliness have an essential role in the creation and perpetuation of neighborhood stigma and are thus a major tool for disfranchisement and oppression. For this vicious circle to be brought to light, its tropes must be unveiled and decoded. As social scientists, it is our obligation to reveal and undermine these discourses. We constantly have to ask the question: what do people mean when they engage in metaphors of cleanliness? As long as these meanings are not exposed, the ideology of cleanliness will continue to be used as a way to justify and naturalize social and spatial exclusion in our cities and in our society.

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Critiquing Damage by Understanding Shame: Powerful Ties between Shame and Language

Michelle Billies

“It’s not that I’m afraid of being judged. I’m tired of being judged.”
–Risa¹⁸, psychotherapy client

Throughout her twenties, Risa’s fear of what people thought of her kept her from speaking to anyone outside of her co-workers, her family, and her partner. A 30 year old, white Jewish lesbian in a polyamorous relationship (her partner had two lovers), she was proud of being a dominatrix¹⁹ but felt she needed to hide what she did because of the sexualized and judgmental responses she encountered and anticipated. Straight men tended to assume she was sexually available to them and her family, who she was close to, never knew.

Risa presented a complex mix of strong emotions: pride in her skill as a sex worker, anger at men who sexually objectified her, distrust toward acquaintances, and unnamed feelings that kept her silent in her family.

Amidst this complexity, Risa felt deep shame. She hated seeing herself as out of control, and the evidence she used most strongly against herself was her weight. She feared others perceived her size as scornfully as she did; so much so that for years she left the assumption unquestioned. In this way, she faced shame in the eyes of others and in her own, like a set of mirrors facing each other.

Risa stepped outside the glass when she began reflecting on her childhood and realized how caustically her mother had shamed her for her weight from a very young age. She found herself angry, coming into a new relationship with the shame she felt. Armed with the insight that she felt tired rather than afraid of being judged, she began moving out of shame and into a social relational critique of it. What her shame could tell her and how she understood herself began to shift.

In research and thinking that challenges the idea that people are unavoidably damaged by the traumas they suffer, I think it is helpful to think about shame as a clue (Fox, 2007) to the

¹⁸ not her real name

¹⁹ a form of sex work in which a woman performs the dominant role in sado-masochistic sex play

social order. Risa's silence is compounded by a societal milieu that shames and ostracizes her work, her relationship, her sexual identity, her body. How are these layers of shaming - the use of negative judgment to assert power - made evident by her self-silencing? Rather than focusing on shame as evidence of damage that has been done, a radical critique of shame can view it as evidence of systems of power at work.

The question of how shame - a cognitive-emotional experience of isolation, disorientation, loss of self-respect, and perception of being judged (Lynd, 1958) - can be read as a clue to systems of power can be considered from a number of important angles. There are feminist and queer ethical approaches to shame (Woodward, 2000; Warner, 1999), cultural theory's embracing of shame (Stockton, 2006), a side-stepping of shame in order to pursue social change (Locke, 2007), and a praxis from the margins of shaming the shamers. Psychoanalysts engage shame as a signal to a relational dynamic, sometimes intrafamilial, sometimes societal, often both, intertwined (Silverman, 2006). However, Locke (2007) and Warner (1999) critique many of these approaches as politically limited. Locke (2007) argues that ethical approaches to shame are inadequate to the task of addressing the systems of power that back shaming at the social level. She asks, "Shame may inspire ethical action, but how much should freedom depend on it?" (158).

A theoretical and political challenge, therefore, is to develop approaches to shame that can hold the complexities of shame and shaming. This includes the need to respect, accept, and challenge the shame people experience and the need for freedom from oppression in order to undermine dynamics of shaming. A potential piece of this puzzle, shown in Risa's verbal revision of how she feels about being judged, is how shame works in language.

In this paper I explore how shaming collaborates with language to determine who counts and who doesn't, what is speakable and what isn't. In particular, after a brief look at the importance how words evoke reactions, I focus primarily on two ways shame derives its power by mapping on top of language. First, given that words by their nature have the power to evoke reactions, shaming deploys particular words and phrasings to evoke revulsion and rejection. These functions are core to the power of shame. Second, shame couples with language to control access to a sense of self-worth. Language names and defines what and who *is*; shaming declares what and who is *worthy*. Third, language identifies what has meaning, what has significance, thereby creating a shadow of what does not, what, in essence, *is not*. Similarly, shaming

identifies what and who has significance, meaning and what and who does not. Both language and shame create conceptual spaces that lay outside that which is understood, accepted, known within the dominant system of meaning. Through shaming, this “excess” is made to play an enormous role in relegating certain people to inhumane treatment. In the end, a posit “embracing the excess” as a way of responding to this outcome.

Exploring shame’s close ties to the way language itself operates complicates the problem of addressing shame. However, considering language can lead to important theoretical and methodological possibilities that are politically relevant. For example, if language, no less shaming, claims our right to worth, the issue of voice becomes imperative. Whether and how those targeted by shaming speak with each other and to systems of power become focal. The final section of the paper will speculate on such possibilities. Rogers (2006) and McClelland and Fine (2007) offer methods of critical listening and Locke (2007) proposes the creation of counterpublics that foster dialogue, expression and social activism.

Shame is everywhere used as a form of social control.

-Woodward, 2000,235

In order to talk about shame and language, it is helpful to distinguish between two sides of shame are used in the processes of social control; shame on the one hand and shaming on the other. According to Lynd (1958) shame is a deeply isolating loss of self-respect and sense of worth, of not living up to one’s own ideal and of being disgraced in the eyes of others (25, 33). Shame is a deeply painful personal experience.

Lynd further describes shame as an “incongruity,” (33) “...the experience of having acted on the assumption of being one kind of person living in one kind of surroundings and...discovering these assumptions are false (33). Shame “results in the shattering of trust in oneself, in one own body, and skill and identity, and in the trusted boundaries of the society and the world one has known” (46). Shame is a deep disorientation related to one’s place and identity amidst the social conditions in which one is embedded.

Shaming on the other hand, asserts the right to call one’s identity and surroundings into question. Fine (2007) thinks about this in terms of shaming complexes – interlocking policies, practices, and ideologies that reach across the bodies and inside the emotional lives of those

selected for denigration. Shaming complexes draw particular power from calling assumptions about fundamental humanity into question. Who is and is not human? What experiences and behaviors are human and which are not? Shaming asserts answers that result in distinctions between the kinds of treatment people are subject to.

Understanding how shaming works with language to determine what and who goes on which side of the line of 'human' is a critical question which will be explored in the next section.

“Whenever someone calls me black or queer I (recoil), never quite sure if they are politely calling me a nigger and a faggot.”

- Robert Reid-Pharr (Stockton, 2006, 21)

Being on the lookout for shaming means being on the lookout for what the person really means. Are they speaking with warmth and affection? Or judgment and hostility? What does indicate about where they may be coming from, what ideas and agendas motivate what they say? For Reid-Pharr, caution makes far more sense. The words “Black” and “queer” may have been reclaimed as terms of pride, but lurking behind are their long histories of use for derogation. Which backdrop they are being compared against matters for how Reid-Pharr may be treated and how he responds.

What things mean is the territory of both language and shaming. The effect “Black” and “queer” as words have on Reid-Pharr, how their meanings are policed, and how they indicate what does and what does not have meaning are the relationships between language and shaming being explored in this paper.

Understanding how words come to evoke reactions is related in part to how words come to have certain meanings. In linguistics, “signification” is the process of meaning-making. The word “horse,” for example, can signify an animal. Spoken aloud, it can also mean a scratchy throat. Signifiers, or words, can be associated with a variety of things that become signified, creating a signification. Lacan (2006/1966) describes this as the process of the signified moving under the signifier. A signifier, then, combines with a signified to create meaning and different significations evoke different responses.

Shaming uses this aspect of language to its advantage, seeking signifier/signified combinations that will evoke feelings of revulsion, hostility, and rejection of that which is

shamed. For example, in the 1996 House debates over the federal entitlement to public assistance, Representative John Mica (R-Fl), made a comparison with women on welfare, holding up a sign that read, “Do Not Feed the Alligators.” This reflected and reimposed an image of less-than-human status on low income women that “served as an ideological justification for a piece of legislation” (Hancock, 2004, 120). A shaming complex of welfare ideology and policy took the signifier “alligator” and slid it over the signified “women on welfare.” The intended effect of the association was to evoke a feeling in the general public of being repulsed and therefore reject women as a class who could or even should expect public support. Shaming produces significations intended to induce feelings that lead to rejection.

At the same time, what Lacan (2006/1966) calls “the symbolic order” limits the flexibility of meaning making. The symbolic order describes the hold language has over meanings, the patterns that dictate which symbols align with which objects or experiences. Watch a young child call a cow a horse; she will be readily “corrected” and “taught” the “right” word. The symbolic order may be functional, it may even be somewhat flexible, but it is also policed.

Women on welfare, for example, are not as easily associated with the signifier “expert” on welfare and poverty as they are with “alligators” in the dominant system of meaning. In 1995, The Committee of 100, a group of women academics fighting to save the welfare entitlement, initiated the Campaign for Media Fairness on Welfare (CMFW) whose goal was to get talk shows to host women on welfare to speak about their experiences and knowledge of the system. After a year of intense public debate over welfare, no talk shows, from cable to the networks, was willing to invite anyone from CMFW’s speaker’s bureau. The idea of women on welfare as legitimate, informed speakers did not stick.

According to the symbolic order there are meanings that go with some things and not others, there is a right and wrong way to identify things. Lacan (2006/1966) calls these patterns “signifying chains,” strings of signifiers whose meanings are linked to one another. The meaning of horse as an animal exists in a signifying chain of animals; the meaning of hoarse as a scratchy throat exists in a signifying chain of physical ailments. Because shame relates to the sense of right and wrong people carry, the policing function of shaming maps directly on top of the policing function of language.

Shaming couples with this aspect of language to police the boundaries of various meanings. A U.S. symbolic order exists in which women on welfare are in a signifying chain with alligators. The policing function of shame directs the flow of meaning between signifying chains: certain people are kept in association with animals and kept out of association with those who have a right to public resources.

In addition to acting as a corrective to what things are allowed to mean, the symbolic order is at the ready to make new claims on reality. In their research on listening for the silenced sexual desire of adolescent girls, McClelland and Fine (2007) forewarn that the moment teenage girls' desire is spoken it can be taken over by discourses of prevention, victimization, disease, and pregnancy. It is likely that shaming is intertwined in these discourses as well, also waiting to police how girls express themselves. McClelland and Fine (2007) argue for a bit of "space" before familiar, confining discourses take over (12).

The ways in which shaming is able to call fundamental humanity into question are strengthened by a number of characteristics of the way language functions. An additional feature of language plays an especially important role in this. Language, according to Lacan (2006/1966), can never fully represent experience and always leaves a remainder, something left over, an excess. By naming some things and not others, language creates spaces of meaning and nonmeaning.

Boswell (1999) sees this lived out in the lives of people who have been "situated in a realm of nonsignification and nonsignificance" by "segregation practices" (Boswell, 1999, 119). She states, "there is no place to be human outside of signification" (119).

The short leap from a lack of significance to worthlessness lays the groundwork, in language, for the power of shame. As a way of sorting, of deciding who goes where, shaming is used to decide who counts and who doesn't. The ranking imposed by shaming tells some people they are not only worth less, but often that they are worthless.

Because of the importance of the excess in understanding the intersections between marginalization, shaming, and language, the rest of this section will examine this territory more closely.

Two thinkers analyze Toni Morrison's novel *Sula* in ways that document how "the excess" functions in relationship to dominant systems of meaning and what happens to those considered excess. Boswell (1999) thinks about how Black people and blackness more generally

are considered “excess.” Woodward (2000) considers how shaming and violence of Black children can lead to a traumatic shame in which language, and therefore important forms of resistance, becomes submerged and unavailable.

In her analysis, Boswell (1999) examines the racial other in language and finds two outcomes of being determined to be “excess”. On the one hand, those considered excessive are rendered invisible. In Morrison’s novel, set in the first half of the 20th century, the character Nel is travelling south on a train and needs to go to the bathroom. As they finally pull into a train station, she looks for the “colored” bathroom but none exists. The doors marked “Ladies” and “Gentlemen” are for whites. Her identity does not exist in the symbolic order. She is “constitutively ‘beyond’ the margins of the official system of meaning” and therefore “becomes associated with excess” (123-4).

On the other hand, those outside the bounds of official meaning are rendered hypervisible or with an overdetermined visibility. That is, the only *way* Nel might exist in the symbolic order is to be signified as colored, not a signification she might choose for herself, a signification that has significance for the symbolic - and social - order.

Nel eventually follows other African American train riders to relieve themselves in the fields beyond the station. Boswell (1999) conceives of this “yonder” as a space containing the unequally distributed subjectivities of white America, blackness, and “the excremental” (124). According to the symbolic order, signifiers and signifieds in the excess hang loosely without being latched to each other, whereas inside the dominant meaning system, the binary of significations “ladies” and “gentlemen” remain intact.

Importantly, blackness is not just the opposite or other; “it is the other of the binary system as such...giving lie to the entire metaphors of the interior” (Boswell, 1999, 127). The metaphors of the interior, the binary systems of meaning, work to keep the excess out. Binaries by definition represent unequal power relations. The tension between the sides this creates and maintains the binary system while defining the terms of who is in the system and on which side. Boswell (1999) cites Gates, “binary oppositions produce, through separation, the most inflexible of barriers: that of meaning” (125). Binaries function to *manage* that which is considered excess, meaningless, or waste.

Stockton (2006) and others see managing waste, as a major occupation of the social order: civilizing the excess, restricting it, confining it, separating it, obfuscating its history,

preventing it from having meaning, or sanitizing it into a respectability, which Warner (1999) says, requires soap. Shaming seems to be another effort to prevent the excess from “contaminating” binaries, from having an impact on the dominant system of meaning. There is power in the excess.

Boswell (1999) implies a critical blackness, a historical and social structural critique of the ways in which blackness has been used to relegate people and experiences to the “excess,” that reveals the limitations and exclusions of the symbolic order. For Boswell (1999), blackness is a place of possibility where “language awareness” is “central...to overcom(ing) traumas based on race” (125). The importance of language in relationship to the excess will be discussed further in the final section.

Being inside and outside the binaries is a tangible issue today in the lives of those whose gender does not conform to expectations. *The Advocate*, the nation’s largest gay magazine, recently displayed the question “Gay v. Trans?” on its cover after the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) (*The Advocate*, Dec. 2007). ENDA, which is pending in the Senate, protects workers from job discrimination based on sexual orientation but not on gender identity or the way one’s gender is perceived. *The Advocate* rightly calls attention to the divisive nature of the bill, sponsored by a gay member of the House, in which some in the LGBT community gain rights while others do not. At the same time, the construction leaves out the much larger straight community that continues to have public rights and resources well beyond those of either gay or transgender people. By restricting employment protection to gay and straight people, the unequal binary Straight/Gay is reaffirmed, and an “excess” of people discriminated against based on gender identity is articulated in law.

A final problem of shame and language to be considered here is when language becomes inaccessible due to shame. In a fictionalized, yet all too real account of how those who are deemed excessive can be treated, Woodward (2000) reads Morrison’s *Sula* for the traumatic shame that besieges two characters, Cholly and Pecola. She shows how “traumatic shame” powerfully inhibits the ability to reflect in language. In traumatic shame thoughts and connections about shame, anger, the self, and society are fundamentally disturbed (Woodward).

Cholly and Pecola are each subjected to sexual violence. In the confusion that normally follows shame there is often a loss of words and comprehension; in traumatic shame, comprehension does not return and the story is not able to be told (Woodward, 2000).

Woodward interprets Morrison as conveying that because of their youth and because of the context of white supremacy, neither child is able to speak of their experience or do anything more with the intense shame and anger they feel than have it unfold in them.

Cholly is threatened by whites at gunpoint as a child when he is in the woods, kissing a classmate for the first time. The men force him to rape the Black girl, and internally he moves from shame to anger to hatred of her. His hatred becomes a defining factor in his life; and as an adult he rapes his daughter, Pecola.

Pecola's journey is marked by the catalytic moment after this when she is not served by a white storekeeper and experiences her invisibility to him. She moves from shame to anger and back to shame then into depression and lifelong madness.

Woodward (2000) proposes that the violence of white supremacy and the the dailiness of invisibility makes it impossible for Cholly or Pecola convert shame into anger and something like resistance. Their words have been eclipsed and their feelings remain underground and acted out painfully over and over.

By looking at the excess, that which is left out of language or pushed into unwanted meanings, we can support a radical critique of shame that recognizes the power and possibility in the excess as well as the systems of power behind shaming that attempts to keep the excess out. The final section speculates on potential responses to shame as it relates to language.

Gaze upon me. Gaze upon this deviant, defiant, diseased Other.

-Marlon Riggs, 1992, 105.

Building upon the work of others, I propose "embracing the excess" as a way to think about potential responses to how shame works with language to relegate people to a conceptual and material outside. Warner (1999) and Stockton (2006) recognize the possibility in the excess, the human in the excess, the orgasm in the excess, McClellan and Fine (2007) see female sexuality in the excess, and Boswell (1999) recognizes the racial other in the excess. Embracing the excess unites and builds upon these perspectives with method.

Riggs (1992) demonstrates the power of language in the excess. He pulls the power to name and direct, to deflect and resignify toward himself. He accepts, though does not submit to, the multiple shamings that have designated his excess status. He demonstrates how shame can

be reconfigured: “The forms taken by shame are not distinct, ‘toxic’ parts of a group or individual identity that can be excised; they are instead integral to and residual in the process in which identity is formed. They are available for the work of metamorphosis, reframing, refiguration, affective and symbolic loading and deformation” (Muñoz, 1999, 12). Riggs directs the gaze of those who look at him to see him the way he sees himself, undoing the “less-than” status by reclaiming “deviant” and claiming “defiance.” He goes on not to shame the gazers but instead to inviting them to unite with him by acknowledging their “mutuality” in sickness, boundedness, and trappedness (Riggs, 1992, 105). This is an embodied, creative embrace of the excess in and through language.

In this last section I speculate about theoretical and methodological approaches for embracing the excess: critical listening and support for speaking, and fostering counterpublics and social justice. Each of these are complicated by challenges worth exploring in further research.

Critical listening

McClelland and Fine (2007) explore the crucial territory of adolescent girls’ sexuality, a realm dominated by “discourses of protection, victimization, heteronormativity, and absence” (6). In their focus groups with teens, girls seem to have little knowledge of their bodies, of sex and desire, which seems both true and the result of having so few words. Niqua, one of the girls, says, “Sex is everywhere. They have to teach us about it!” (8). Eventually the girls demand a conversation rather than a lecture, a sign that they want to talk and have the right to reject messages they know are harmful to them. At the same time, their talk remains burdened by danger and morality, although “questions about sexual desire” eventually “leak into the room” (8)

McClelland and Fine find a way to sneak under the heavy, scratchy blankets of society’s shame and restriction to a secret place with flashlights on a girl’s slumber party bed. As researchers they challenge themselves to hear girls’ desire, assuming it is there, assuming it is wonderful and healthy, assuming it has been colonized. By first opening up the conversation and pursuing it in focus groups, they also analyze girls talk for how they negotiate the border between acceptable sex talk and “excessive,” unnamed or shamed feelings of desire and wanting. They promote a methodology of where to look, to hear girls questions in the statements they

make, to hear partial knowledge seeking new language and more celebration. As a means of embracing the excess, McClelland and Fine offer a powerful, opinionated template for other people and experiences left out of the mainstream discussion.

Their work couples interestingly with the approach of Rogers (2006), a psychoanalyst whose keen specialization is a way of listening to children, mostly girls, who have been traumatized by sexual violence. Her book, *The Unsayable*, traces her own story and the unfolding stories of her analysis with patients.

Like Morrison's Cholly and Pecola, trauma has silenced the girls Rogers sees although signs of what they have experienced - their acting out, their self-destructiveness - flash with terrible strength. Unlike Woodward (2000), however, Rogers does not see this as an irreparable state. Instead, she assumes that girls' unconscious *is* speaking, through their actions and their words. Lacan's description of the unconscious as "structured like a language" undergirds Rogers work (Rogers, 2006). She finds, that by listening to repetitions in the stories girls tell - whether about their abuse or not - she begins to "hear" what the unconscious is "saying." When Ellen, an adolescent, says in therapy that she has a "head ache," Rogers plays with the sound she hears, reflecting back to Ellen "Ed aches," Ed being the name of the babysitter who abused Ellen. Ellen hears herself in a new way and begins a slow journey of making sense of not only her own but her family's history of trauma and silences, reaching back to the Holocaust. Rather than a Freudian "gotcha," Rogers' associations are a way of deeply listening to a girl's symbolic universe, for the stories her unconscious is trying to tell. "Sounds (and words) begin to connect with one another and with life events, and they surprise us with new logic" (93). This new logic, verbalized and expressed, allows the unconscious to be free from having to speak through so much acting out and self-destruction.

Roger's psychoanalytic work can be joined with a research method of critical listening to the excess. For if shame seems to sometimes "permanently" silence, Rogers, like McClelland and Fine, demonstrates that it may be more a matter of how one hears rather than the shamed person's inability to speak. Critical listening attempts to hear discourses and histories, feelings and thoughts that have been silenced through shaming. In this way, shame can be a window to comprehensive understanding.

As a method, critical listening may walk into a challenge that can arise when people begin giving voice to their shame, that it often "gets bigger" at first, and the person who feels

their shame more intensely and the person who seems to have invited that expanded shame can feel self-recrimination or fear (Silverman, 2006). At the same time, Silverman (2006) suggests that being curious about shame, to make room for it and seek to understand it can lead to the transformation of shame into a clearer, less shamed sense of self and place in the world.

Counterpublics and Social Justice

Finally, addressing shame in language can only be effective in a context where multiple forms of speaking and expression can be heard and accepted; where discourses support discussion of shamed and denigrated topics toward critical awareness; and where the social structural changes needed to create these conditions are prioritized. Locke (2007) suggests we create “counterpublics,” that we “make films, tell stories, tend parks, paint murals, open farmer’s markets, ...foster misfit salons” (159). She also offers the example of Balfour’s alternative to focusing on shame: to refocus instead on racial reparations, to acknowledge collective responsibility for enduring harms (158). Instead of taking the focus off shame entirely, embracing the excess attempts to hold and understand shame as well as foster the conditions that allow it to be expressed and dissipate. Counterpublics and social justice are fundamental for such listening and being able to be heard.

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Did You Clock It? - Stigma Travels Through Research

Liza Pappas

Mapping Stigma

The Social Stigma and Damage course held in the fall of 2007 at the Graduate Center afforded graduate students varied opportunities to study the concept of stigma and a sample of the associated social psychology literature. As a trainee in the language of the academy, and one who holds personal experiences with stigma, this paper is a meditation, a chance to think out loud, on the role that research plays in the process of stigmatization. My intent is for this reflection to be a contribution to the feminist, queer, and critical race theory and practice that has raised and continues to raise questions about representation in research.

I use an etymology of the term “stigma” to explore how three definitions of stigma play out in the research process. Referencing some of the literature we read as a class, I ask what lessons exist for emerging researchers, like myself, to counter the effect of research’s tendency to reproduce “othering,” and the very stigma it seeks to interrupt. Here I also ask if there are points of contention in this discussion. I reflect on my own personal experience in a research project grappling with the complexities of representation. Lastly, I consider whether research can be directed to rechannel the flow of stigma.

Stigma, Language, and Identity

Stigma and language have an important affiliation (Linton, 2006). The Greeks originated the word stigma to refer to bodily signs which exposed something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier (Goffman, 2006). Etymology may give clues for how we explore stigma and its travel. “A mark or token of infamy, disgrace, or reproach,” its Indo-European root word “Steig” means to prick, or to sting. The old French derivative “estiquier” draws a similar meaning “to tattoo.” The Germanic “stikkn” literally means “to be stuck.” It struck me how closely these definitions aligned with our course study of the concept of stigma.

Stigma is used as a form of social control (Woodward, 2000), identifying certain behaviors, characteristics, and viewpoints as problematic and then pricking, tattooing, or sticking

individuals and groups who carry these characteristics, and also those who are believed to carry them. Once stigmatized, individuals and groups “become the object of social policies and special treatment/services that society would hesitate to apply to others...” (syllabus, PSYC 80103, Fall 2007). Stigmas have long histories (Cross, class notes, September 10, 2007) and might also be regarded as sites for what Fine (2007) calls “shaming complexes”—interlocking policies, practices, laws, and ideologies that target certain bodies. What is important to also underline in etymological study is the slight distinction made by the Germanic derivative: “stikkn,” which means to “be stuck.” The object of stigma, those stigmatized are repeatedly punished not just by the stigma itself but also by the personal and institutional responses to it, including those efforts intending to counter its potency.

I found other derivatives to align with some of the authors our class reviewed, and I will explore their work briefly in this paper. The Latin root of stigma “stingere” means to separate, which recalls Opatow’s ideas (2007) for how moral exclusion is used to both justify and to enact damage, Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin’s (2007) theories on social distancing, as well as Silverman’s (2006) reflection on her own psychoanalytic practice. In my research of the word stigma, the most provocative results emerged during a corollary search of its synonyms, “stain” and “blot,” which mean to “discolor, spot, or spoil” and most interestingly to “hide and make obscure.” A further exploration of stain also uncovers this definition: “to treat with a reagent or dye that makes visible certain structures without affecting others.” Here I was reminded of Cross (1991) who emphasized that research, while it can illuminate, can also mask some of its unintended consequences, like stereotypes.

“A Crisis of Representation”

In the next section I explore how a “crisis of representation” sets the stage for researchers to reproduce stigma. Then addressing a small section of the literature on stigma, I theorize how each of the three definitions of stigma (to sting; to separate; and to obscure) identified by etymology can play out through the research process. Social science research focused on stigma has grown dramatically in the past quarter century, particularly in social psychology, where researchers have explicated the assorted manners in which cognitive categories are constructed and linked to stereotypes (Link and Phelan, 2001). Link and Phelan note that many social

scientists who study stigma do so from theoretical frameworks that are uninformed by the lived experiences of the people they study. Studying the phenomena of stigma from an outsider position inevitably entails a risk of perpetuating unsubstantiated assumptions (Fine and Asch, 1988).

Link and Phelan's (2001) analysis that stigma is entirely dependent on power relations is useful for an examination of its travel through research. Contending that the role of power is often overlooked because power differences can be taken for granted and even seen as unproblematic, Link and Phelan offer many questions for detecting if a "co-occurrence" of stigma's elements, "labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination" is operating. For instance, they ask us to consider if the people who confer designations yield power to ensure those designation stick as well as "have access to major life domains...which put really consequential teeth into the distinctions they draw" (p. 376). And they argue that to the extent that the answer is 'yes', we can expect stigma to occur.

What if we accepted Link and Phelan's challenge to look at power differentials as an invitation to explore the impact that power relations specific to and within social science research has on stigma travel? Certainly this would not be the first time that the role of the researcher²⁰ and the relationship between researcher and research subjects were scrutinized. Fine and colleagues (2001) note that a great deal of qualitative research has produced a colonizing discourse of the "other," interpreted through the words and beliefs of the researcher. In fact a "crisis of representation" begs a renewed attention to empirical research's hegemony and potential to other (Fine and Weis, 2003). In this next section, I will visit a sampling of the articles we read this semester in our social psychology course and attempt to elucidate some of the lessons these authors shared with respect to contending with the risks of "othering." Specifically, I will explore several authors' insights into how research can prick, separate, and make certain structures visible while obscuring others.

The Research Process Can Prick

² I'm defining the researcher as the person who conceives, designs, conducts, and evaluates the research and the researchee as the person about whom the research is conceived, designed, conducted, and evaluated.

Several authors reviewed in the Stigma course (Eng, 2003; Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin, 2007) provide a window into how research can prick as well as exacerbate the sting of stigma. Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin (2007) critique not just traditional research but alternative research for reproducing the dominant representations it seeks to undermine. In support of developing a critical poverty knowledge, these authors interrogate research that postulates people impacted by poverty are victims. Their critique targets both conservative hegemonic narratives and liberal structural narratives for representing people living in poverty as fundamentally different.

Traditionally, research has defined and often maintained the boundaries between the categories of “normality” and “abnormality.” Researchers across disciplines (eg. Kelly, 1996, writing about teen pregnancy and welfare; Darling-Hammond, 1997, writing about youth of color in public schools) argue that research discourses can reinforce false stereotypes and even ascribe deviance to the bodies of individuals and communities perceived as different. Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin suggest that theories of difference are popular in much the same way that Phelan and Link describe—they are familiar and comfortable in that they do not upset the larger societal economic and social arrangements.

What seems important for us developing researchers to recognize is that Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin’s insistence that the tendency for these dynamics to mark subjects as different, damaged, and even as worthy of blame is not exclusive to conservative study. In fact, these authors extend their argument to the realm of counter-hegemonic research whose very purpose is recognize the agency, expertise, and voice among, in the case of poverty research, those living in poverty. Here Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin argue that despite the intention to generate alternative images of poverty, many alternative research studies also fall into the trap of responding to the paradigm of “good and bad,” what we might also recognize as the “deserving poor” and “undeserving poor.” They attest that difference can be overemphasized at the risk of not acknowledging the power structures which fundamentally shape action.

Similarly, Stacey and Biblarz (2001) issue important cautions for those of us working to erect counter-narratives. Writing about gay parenting, these researchers point out that the danger of replicating heterosexism, ironically, lies “where it is least apparent...in the literature that is

largely sympathetic to its subject [lesbigay research]” (p. 162). In contrast with Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin’s warning about accentuating difference, Stacey and Biblarz contend that not appreciating difference is a defensive conceptual framework that falls prey to, in the realm of sexuality and families, the acceptance of heterosexual parenting as the gold standard. Although these authors acknowledge the sensitivity scholars are apt to grant in recognition of the rampant discrimination against lesbigay parenting, they challenge researchers’ decisions not to explore differences. Differences as evidenced in their study result in meaningful parental approaches worth highlighting.

Additionally, although Stacey and Biblarz agree that obstacles to lesbigay parenthood deserve vigilant consideration, they advocate that this kind of research should “supplement not supplant the opportunities lesbigay parenthood provides for the exploration of the interactions of gender, sexual orientation, and biosocial family structures on parenting and child development” (p. 164). As such, they advise researchers to overcome the hetero-normative presumption that interprets sexual difference as deficits (p. 179). Stacey and Biblarz layer Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin’s concern by demonstrating that alternative research can unwittingly produce a fuzzy humanism and a dangerous “we are all alike” discourse by under-exploring difference.

Both over-emphasizing and under-exploring difference can compromise the aims of social justice research and negatively impact those for whom social justice research is directed. But perhaps the contention that both sets of authors have in approaches to difference is not what we as researchers in training should be solely focused. After considering what Stacey and Biblarz and Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin wrote, I found myself returning to Link and Phelan’s analysis that those who have the power to have their designations stick can facilitate stigma travel. Reflecting on Stacey and Biblarz and Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin’s work also highlights the systematic power differentials in research. In this next section, I look more closely at the separation dynamics in the research process.

Separation Dynamics in the Research Process

Opotow (1995, 2007) writing about the theme of separation (what she calls “moral exclusion”) notes that when we exclude people from the scope of justice, shared moral rules do not apply.

Opatow's work helped me to scrutinize unexamined separation within the research process for its potential to cause harm to all involved. Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin note that traditionally research is conducted as an adhering to the production of ruling relationships. An adverse effect of this paradigm holds the researcher and the research subject in their familiar roles (as expert and subject respectfully) and in a familiar uni-directional relationship (the expert who directs the subject's participation). Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin's observation prompted me to think about how an adhering to a hierarchical relationship served the researcher-subject relationship itself, ensuring separation between the two parties. More specifically the researcher's ability to designate the thoughts and actions of the research subject actually protects researchers from an awareness that there is no inherent difference between them and the research subjects. Interestingly, this contradicts another concern often articulated when considering separation in the research process: that a profound difference between researchers and subjects exists.

Silverman (2006) helps us to understand how both can be possible. In her recounting of a "complementary two-ness of enactment" she had experienced with a client working through sibling conflict, Silverman divulges that initially she avoided confronting her personal experience and shame with sibling pain. Ultimately, while giving her patient treatment, Silverman asked herself if she was extruding her "own fear, shame, and overwhelmed feelings of contending with the family into which I was born so that I could be the healthy healing the sick?" (p. 539). Silverman's experience taught her that recognizing her own shame in this area was important for her own growth as well as for that of her client. This realization did not evaporate the power differential which exists between her role as an analyst and her client, but it complicated the ways in which both the relationship and the treatment is conceived to work. The implications are that problematizing separation in the research relationship can have positive results for both parties and the work of disrupting stigma.

The Power of Research to Obscure

While research can illuminate, it can also obscure. Some of the authors we read pointed out that the researcher can both exacerbate the sting of stigma as well as produce "othering" in obfuscating certain facts. Cross's (1991) careful excavation of the work of Eugene and Ruth Horowitz and Mamie and Kenneth Clark revealed half-truths in their representation of racial

attitudes, personality dynamics, and self-hatred among Black children. Cross persuasively argues that because Ruth Horowitz's work on children's self-image, for example "did not gain historical significance" by demonstrating self-hatred in Whites, she did not fully confront the validity and reliability problems of her findings. Obscurity also emerged when Cross points out that the Clarks interpreted their study findings on self-identification and racial preference based on what they thought was needed: evidence of damage. Cross writes that the Clarks,

...provided extraordinary insight into what happens when racism cripples the mind and spirit, but they offered no explanation for, and even came close to denying, the existence of Negro identities that effected reasonable-to-average levels of self-self-esteem in the face of everyday negotiations with poverty and racism" (p. 37).

As nascent researchers we are left perplexed with Cross's note that the research may have contributed positively to the Brown vs. Board of Education case outcome (Cross details that the Supreme Court May 1954 decision cited Clark's work) but also helped "distort the social scientific analysis of Black life" (p. 38).

Kelly (1996) writing on discourses about teen motherhood supports that researchers are not always explicit about what they think should be defended or advocated. Her work echoes Cross's warning that researchers be transparent about the politics of need interpretation. Provocatively Kelly also builds on the warnings that Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin, Stacey and Biblarz, Opatow, and Silverman issue about the researcher's tendency to not consider their own power and privilege in the research process, as well as their potential to perpetuate stigma. Kelly writes that instead of representing stigma as an entity itself, we might consider the mechanisms by which its travel is facilitated: "perhaps it would be fruitful to bear in mind...a 'cycle of stigma' helped along by experts and advocates who enforce negative stereotypes to attract funding and support; a cycle given a spin by politicians who ignore their own studies in seeking scapegoats; a cycle reinforced by mainstream media..." (p. 428), and we may want to underscore after reviewing Cross' work, a cycle fueled by researchers who even with good intentions, enable stereotypes.

The responsibilities within social justice research beg serious scrutiny of its design, methodology, and analysis, for all bear significant weight for representation. Next, I consider my own struggle with the complexity of representation in research. Like Cross, I will argue that the goal for social justice is not an ethical solution.

On Representing High School Students' Experiences With Standardized Testing

Witnessing the authors' warnings in a practical experience has been extremely valuable to me as a developing researcher; I can contextualize my questions in the larger tradition of social justice research.

After two short rings, the phone is answered. Once I have given my request, the guidance counselor on the other line explains that there isn't a need to look at the impact of standardized testing in her district. The words slip off her tongue; students who are struggling to pass the high school proficiency exam are quite simply not their "typical students." (Pappas, field notes, 2007)

According to the New Jersey Department of Education, in 2006, 13,288 students graduated via the Special Review Assessment (SRA) protocol (Fine et al, 2007). The growing use of the SRA has incited a state policy debate about its appropriateness as an alternative exit exam. Critics have challenged its reliability and level of rigor. Concerned that students of color, low-income students, and immigrant students already carry an unfair, unnecessary, and unequal share of the educational system's burdens and more accurately a "diploma penalty" if they fail the exit exam, the research team that I worked with last year designed a study to assess the ramifications by race/ethnicity/class for students and school districts if the SRA pathway were eliminated. Ironically, it is within this methodology design that the concern for re-stigmatizing students resurfaced.

Speaking with students in under-resourced schools reveals evidence that is critical to consider for high-stakes policy decisions, especially when the policy process often neglects such evidence. However, it can also conceal equally important data, with respect to the politics of representation embedded within the high-stakes testing debate. One of the questions that our team struggled with was this: What does it mean to collect and represent evidence primarily or solely in the

state's most economically disadvantaged municipalities? We worried about the implications of relying on disadvantaged students' testimony to advocate for the SRA's usefulness. Specifically we asked, isn't this another form of burden?

In our research, we found that the largest percentile growth in SRA graduates were in non-special needs districts (Fine et al, 2007, p. 15), but the challenge of collecting qualitative evidence in these more economically privileged communities and school systems compounded the complexity of representation. Certainly, it required the willingness of advantaged students and educators to speak out. Within the SRA project research, these allies were difficult to come by. In one district, the Superintendent explained that speaking to students who have participated in the SRA process would violate confidentiality laws. And in another, the guidance counselor questioned the need to speak with students pursuing the SRA track in their school, explicating, "these students are not our typical students." How do we as researchers contend with the challenges of methodology and representation when privilege protects itself?

Contributing to a reshaping of social analysis and action is the critical question of place—that is where to look for evidence. As a developing educational researcher, critical feminist scholar, and social justice activist, one of the lessons I took from this study is that I must consider the inherent contradictions of focusing surveillance on the bodies of under-resourced educational communities who may seem more illustrative in constructing an ideological argument. It is key to remember that collecting data in less-suspecting and profitable spaces such as advantaged school systems and perceived high-performing districts has potentially important political significance. It begs examining how these school districts actually achieve as well as hide substandard work, problematizing how the accountability debate is framed and issues of performance are represented. Inevitably, it would mean investigating how privilege in communities and school systems serves to protect itself and burden others.

Research conducted under sociological auspices without examining institutional behavior excuses the responsibility appointed officials, school district administrators, and researchers have in how research, legislation and policy is drawn and implemented. Such interventions may replicate what they seeks to interrupt as well as relocate the onus of responsibility on student

bodies rather than on systems. Engaging in social justice research does not excuse one from the complexities of representation nor from the danger of replicating dominant ideologies. Nor does it preclude resistance. In this next section, I look to the possibilities for resistance through research.

Redirecting Research

Stockton (2006) writing on the beauty of shame uses the term “switchpoints” as a “point of connection between two signs (or two rather separate connotative fields) where something from one flows toward (is diverted in the direction of) the other, lending its connotative spread and signifying force to the other, illuminating it and intensifying it, but also sometimes shifting it or adulterating it” (p. 3). I wonder if I could use this term “switchpoints” to explore how the currents in the research process (eg, questions, design, methods) can switch to serve the operation of resistance.

In the field of urban education of which I am a student, theorists and researchers continue to debate whether forces of domination or resistance are operating in schools. More recently, neo-Marxist educational studies have rejected an agency structure dualism (see Giroux, 2006) and provided a new framework for understanding schools as sites for contestation for power, ideology, and interests. If the research process can also be understood as a site for conflict, one question we may ask then is where does the social scientist, the researcher choose to sit?

Returning to Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin again is useful in this regard. These authors write that the “idea of research as a representation that contributes to formation of power relations puts a great deal of responsibility on social scientists”(p. 11). They advise that researchers make strategic decisions regarding the “meta-narrative the research will take” including the questions, methodology, and ethics, which each can combat the deleterious effects of “othering.” Fine’s (2003) guidance is also significant for us as emerging researchers: “we have a responsibility to talk about our identities, why we interrogate what we do, what we chose not to report, how to frame our data, on whom we shed our scholarly gaze, who is protected, and not protected as we do our work” (p. 195).

The work of contesting “othering,” however, is not just the responsibility of the researcher. To say so would disregard the decision-making power of those not necessarily in official decision-making seats. Anthropologist Aihwa Ong offers support: “If one considers power as a decentralized, shifting and productive force, animated in networks of relations rather than possessed by individuals, then ethnographic subjects can exercise power in the production of ethnographic knowledges.” An important task then in ethnographic research is to honor the decision making power of all participants, as well as to create spaces that invite dissonance rather than symphony.

Moreover, we as researchers can critically examine research methodologies that reify the researcher as expert, and instead look to the expertise of those most impacted by the research, encouraging collective action and advocacy. Through Participatory Action Research (PAR), participants critically employ social science tools, trouble data, as well as create new and innovative ways of collecting and analyzing information. In these ways, PAR draws back the curtain for disenfranchised populations to have control over the subject/object dichotomies in research.

Lastly, it would behoove us to pursue an “intersectionality” analysis. Crenshaw (1989) articulated the concept of intersectionality similar to Stockton’s definition of switchpoints in exploring discrimination. She writes, “discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction and it may flow in another. If an accident happens, it can be caused by cars traveling in any number of directions, and sometimes, from all of them.” As researchers we must give credence to how moving systems, like research, and relations of power redefine categories of race, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, position, and class in flexible and contradictory ways.

Conclusion

By simply looking at the meaning of the word stigma I was able to track its movement through research. Research can exacerbate the sting of stigma, intensify separation between researcher and research subject, and obscure complexities in representation.. But when interrogated, research can also generate a powerful shift in movement. Of course, the three strategies I have named at the end of this paper: pursuing Participatory Action Research, history as methods, and

intersectionality analysis, are not solutions, but I hope they will provide me and my fellow researchers with critical tools to dismantle or at least be aware of the switchpoints within the research process. The ethical dilemmas at the heart of research are significant, but their exploration seems vital to actualizing a vision for a more just world.

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