

UC Santa Cruz

UC Santa Cruz Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Doing Good, Behaving Badly: Fictions of Philanthropy in the Americas

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6q19j29m>

Author

Papazoglakis, Sarah

Publication Date

2018

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

**Doing Good, Behaving Badly:
Fictions of Philanthropy in the Americas**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

LITERATURE

with designated emphases in CRITICAL RACE AND ETHNIC STUDIES
and LATIN AMERICAN AND LATINX STUDIES

by

Sarah Papazoglakis

June 2018

The Dissertation of Sarah Papazoglakis
is approved:

Professor Susan Gillman, chair

Professor Christine Hong, chair

Professor Kirsten Silva-Gruesz

Professor Eric Porter

Professor Cecilia Rivas

Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Copyright © by
Sarah Papazoglakis
2018

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Funding Insurgency: Black Feminist Counternarratives of American Philanthropy..	26
Chapter 2: “Aggressive Altruism” in the Global Ghetto: Black and Guatemalan Critiques of U.S. Racial Capitalism	73
Chapter 3: Afterlives of Sentimentality: Philanthropy in the Cold War Imagination of Latin America.....	121
Epilogue	173
Bibliography	185

Abstract

Sarah Papazoglakis

Doing Good, Behaving Badly: Fictions of Philanthropy in the Americas

This dissertation sheds light on an under-considered counterhistory of American philanthropy within a twentieth-century hemispheric American literary archive produced in the foreign and the domestic peripheries of U.S. empire. Drawing on a body of feminist and African American, Latinx, Central American, and Caribbean literatures to narrate the “fictions” of American philanthropy from the margins, I read American philanthropy’s global development as a neutralizing response to antislavery and anti-imperialist movements in the Americas that threaten a U.S.-dominated racial-capitalist world order. By framing charity as a modality of U.S. imperial power that produces racial and gender inequality, I examine how fiction serves as a vehicle of critique, one that questions the asymmetry of wealth both within and outside the United States.

Considering American philanthropy from a hemispheric perspective, I contend that twentieth-century writers of color inverted traditional conceptions of philanthropy associated with turn-of-the-century white male industrialists and white female reformers. The traditional account of American philanthropy redemptively frames the exploitative nature of extreme wealth accumulation by white male robber barons is redemptively framed as a necessary evil that ultimately serves the common good. In this top-down narrative, American philanthropy is figured as the charitable side of U.S. industrial capitalism. By contrast, the texts I examine expose the ways in

which the United States has veiled its often violent policies under philanthropy's kinder, gentler cover. These texts revise American philanthropy along radical lines both by exposing it as a secret weapon for oppression and by reimagining it as a tool for liberation. *Doing Good, Behaving Badly* also looks at how these texts tap into philanthropy's untapped liberatory potential by situating minority subjects as agents rather than objects of philanthropy. This archive further denaturalizes the ideology of "doing good" in the twentieth century, a conception of *noblesse oblige* inherited from Gilded Age gendered distinctions of public/private, masculine/feminine, and wealth/charity, and deployed to rationalize American dispossession both at home and abroad.

Acknowledgements

Doing Good, Behaving Badly is the product of many years of work under the instruction, support, and encouragement of my mentors, friends, and family. I thank my dissertation advisors, Susan Gillman and Christine Hong, for their guidance throughout this six-year journey. I am especially grateful to Christine for her unfailingly high standards of scholarship and her dissertation writing group, for always challenging me to drill deeper into my analysis and to write with greater sophistication. Susan has shepherded this project through every major step of the way, helping me to finish within a strict timeline while opening up many professional opportunities along the way. I thank my dissertation readers for enriching this project with their subject-area expertise and critical feedback: Kirsten Silva Gruesz for posing questions on sentimentality and the Americas, Eric Porter for his insights on historical methods and black history and culture, and Cecilia Rivas for introducing me to a wide variety of perspectives on Central American culture and literature. I am also thankful for Despina Kakoudaki's continued mentorship.

This dissertation was completed with the generous support of the Graduate Division at the University of California Santa Cruz in the form of a Chancellor's Dissertation Quarter Fellowship and the Chancellor's Graduate Internship Program. I am thankful for two quarter-long fellowships and research and travel funds from the UCSC Literature Department. The Humanities Institute and California Humanities (CH) jointly sponsored a public fellowship that allowed me to work with the incredible folks at CH on their 40th anniversary history project, a stimulating

experience that came at a pivotal moment in my graduate career for which I am incredibly grateful. A Harry Ransom Center Dissertation Fellowship at the University of Texas, Austin allowed me to conduct research in the Julia Alvarez Collection. Big thanks to the women of Chapter E of the P.E.O. Sisterhood who provided constant support and encouragement throughout my studies.

I simply could not have completed this dissertation without the support of my writing group, my bondhus Kara Hisatake, Katie Trostel, and Tsering Wangmo. Together, we have created an amazingly supportive intellectual and social community, one that has made me a better thinker, writer, and friend. Kara inspires me with the focus and stamina she brings to her teaching, her scholarship, and her mentorship of both undergraduate and graduate students. Getting to co-author a publication together was the best! Katie has been leading the way for our group; she has done everything first and used her experience to help me chart a path forward, from exams to dissertation completion and beyond. Tsering nourishes me with her unconditional friendship, her poetry, and her incomparable ability to see specific details and broad context at the same time. She continually opens up new ways for me to think about my work and my positionality. She has also given me a warm home away from home in Santa Cruz.

I have relied upon the support of friends and family to sustain me through such solitary work, a challenge for an extrovert like me. I am grateful for Sophie Pappenheim showing up nearly every weekday for the past year to write together. I cannot thank her enough for serving as my editor-in-chief, coaching me to write more

clearly, critically, and, on occasion, even beautifully. Meagan Smith has been a generous reader and commenter, from the master's program at American University to guiding me through my first revise-and resubmit publication opportunity. Joanna Meadvin helped me fight off the gerund monsters that plagued my early drafts and has been a real mentor to me throughout. Thank you to Matthew Gervase, Ruth O'Donnell (Ruthy Baby), and Karla Cativo for dance parties, karaoke, trivia, and all around fun times together.

Thank you to my parents, Elizabeth and Tom, who are my biggest cheerleaders and supporters; to my sister Erika, the funny one, who always sees the best in me and has listened to me talk about my dissertation so much that she originated the hashtag #lilsisbigwords; to my sister Niki, my partner in crime, who sends me on adventures near and far to explore a world beyond the confines of studying and writing.

I dedicate this work to Boris Melnikov. He has been everything to me: loving spouse, masterful copyeditor, thought partner, patient listener, and my refuge in the best and worst of times.

Introduction

It was claimed that white men were "helping" black men by enslaving them; it finally became right to treat black men wrong, and wrong to treat them right. Richard Wright, "Introduction," *Black Metropolis* (1945)

Fictions of Philanthropy

W.E.B. Du Bois employs the figure of the philanthropist to trace "the history of the development of the race concept in the world and particularly in America" (95) in his famous chapter on "The Concept of Race" from his autobiography *Dusk of Dawn* (1940). "In the elementary school," he writes, "the races of the world were pictured: Indians, Negroes and Chinese, by their most uncivilized and bizarre representatives; the whites by some kindly distinguished-looking philanthropist" (95). By looking back to the images of nineteenth-century colonizers pictured in his grade school textbook, Du Bois emphasizes the function of philanthropy as a racial formation of white masculinity, a global signifier of virtue that contrasts sharply against less virtuous, "uncivilized and bizarre" signifiers attached to non-white races. Such images, Du Bois suggests, helped to justify the civilizing mission of colonial empires. His formulation reflects how commentaries on philanthropy saturate twentieth-century black literature and culture, something critics have long noted in the literature, art, and criticism of the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts movement. Yet Du Bois's global framing demands a fuller reckoning of philanthropy's role in shaping racial difference throughout the world, not just in the United States. He uses philanthropy to look beyond the black-white binary that has

traditionally dominated discussions of race in the United States and served as a model for thinking about race relations the world over.

Twentieth-century writers of color across the Americas attest to Du Bois's articulation of philanthropy as an imperial process of racialization insofar as they regularly take up the problem of philanthropy in their work, implicitly and explicitly. The white supremacy campaigns of the 1890s defined by race wars at home in the United States and resurgent campaigns for imperial expansion abroad coincided with an economic war waged by the new Gilded Age millionaires, who portrayed their unprecedented concentrations of wealth as a moral justification for their rightful positions of influence in the social order. This new order was born out of what Du Bois called the "counter-revolution of 1876" (*Black Reconstruction* 667) that put an end to efforts aimed at "reconstruct[ing] the basis of American democracy" (xix) to include more than just white men. After the end of Reconstruction, according to Du Bois, an "empire of finance" (377) arose in the 1880s in a time marked by a "new freedom of corporations" (686). Philanthropy served as a foundational fiction of "doing good" that re-cast titans of industry as social reformers.

By detaching philanthropists from their corporate roles in widespread labor upheaval and social unrest caused by corporate monopolies and emergent transnational corporations behaving badly, "doing good" took on multiple meanings. Corporations "did good" by bringing jobs, "progress," and economic prosperity to previously less profitable or less developed neighborhoods, regions, or countries. At the same time that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was

under assault for non-white races in the United States, the amendment was being used to assert corporate personhood. Philanthropists took it upon themselves to describe their charitable work as serving the common good. They even fought significant legal battles to ensure that “open-ended philanthropy for the good of mankind [became] the law of the land” (Zunz 11). Since the Gilded Age, corporations and philanthropists have been rendered distinct and yet both have been portrayed as “doing good” in their own ways. What each iteration of doing good has in common is its insularity, defined by those in power rather than by a democratically determined articulation of collective interests. These narratives spin philanthropy into the charitable side of U.S. industrial capitalism. In these accounts, the exploitative nature of extreme wealth accumulation by white male robber barons is redemptively framed as a necessary evil that ultimately serves the common good. The rise and spread of philanthropy from the Gilded Age through today animates a transnational corpus of U.S., Caribbean, and Central American literature. The works I consider in this project produce counterhistories of philanthropy that dismantle common sense notions of doing good, often altogether reimagining fictions of philanthropy.

Considering philanthropy from a hemispheric perspective of the Americas, I contend that twentieth-century writers of color inverted traditional conceptions of philanthropy associated with turn-of-the-century white male industrialists and white female reformers. Centering literature primarily by and about women of color, the innovative archive I assemble crosses racial and national lines, much as philanthropy historically has done but with the critical difference of using philanthropy to build

transnational solidarity among the very people philanthropists typically target with their aid.

By reframing philanthropy in this way, these texts expose the complicated role of white women, in particular, in softening the image of philanthropists as do-gooders rather than exploitative businessmen. These women helped to institutionalize American philanthropy and to shape its reformist goals in the public sphere at the same time that this new institution sanctioned their unpaid labor and reinforced their place in the private sphere. While passing money down to sons was thought to do more harm than good, the first priority of American philanthropy was “providing for the wife and daughters moderate sources of income,” according to Andrew Carnegie’s 1889 “Gospel of Wealth” (658). Philanthropists turned their largesse outward only after providing for the women in their family first. Carnegie saw women as the original charity cases. The philanthropic model of the Gilded Age positioned the wives and daughters of philanthropists to play important roles in this new social model: they were both heiresses to the patriarch’s excess wealth and helped to distribute these fortunes philanthropically. While women were systematically barred from the business world and excluded from the corporate boardroom, they could, however, sit on the foundation’s board, where they often functioned as their husbands’ surrogates in administering philanthropic funds. Philanthropy offered elite white women, in particular, an opportunity to work outside of their so-called separate, private sphere to address a range of social issues from education to public health. These reformers—intentionally or not—helped to

legitimate philanthropy by drawing upon stereotypes of women as moral compasses of society, thereby obscuring the cutthroat, often violent, masculine business practices that created surplus wealth at the expense of the working class. In the twentieth century, the “kindly distinguished-looking philanthropist” that Du Bois recognized in the white male colonizer of the nineteenth century would expand to include elite white women.

Doing Good, Behaving Badly exposes the major contradiction of the culture of American philanthropy: namely, the fruits of racial capitalism as the solution to the worst symptoms of the selfsame system. Throughout this study, I use the term “racial capitalism” theorized by Cedric Robinson in *Black Marxism* to denote the racial—and gendered—structure of capitalism. Capitalism, as Robinson, Robin D.G. Kelley, Jodi Melamed and many others have argued, is a racial regime. Therefore, using the term racial capitalism throughout this dissertation is not to make a distinction between two types of capitalism; it is, rather, to emphasize the racial character of the global capitalist order. Similarly, I frame many of the works throughout this study within the Black Radical tradition, which Robinson argued is defined by “a single historical identity which is in opposition to the systemic privations of racial capitalism” (451). Philanthropy, in many respects, is the systemic privatization of a common good in which “the same social system that fosters the accumulation of private wealth for many whites denies it to black, thus forging an intimate connection between white

wealth accumulation and black poverty" (Oliver and Shapiro 5).¹ Philanthropy helps to reproduce the racial hierarchies and gendered divisions required to justify the perverse social, political, and economic order that makes it "right to treat black men wrong, and wrong to treat them right," as stated in the epigraph (*Black Metropolis* lxiii). This literary archive indexes the racial, gender, and ideological dimensions of a culture of philanthropy thereby linking excess wealth, even in its purportedly most benevolent forms, to the violence of racial dispossession the world over. Furthermore, the texts I examine probe the ways in which the United States has veiled its often-violent policies under American philanthropy's kinder, gentler cover. Building upon Du Bois's genealogy that connects nineteenth-century colonization to the philanthropists of his day, my primary texts emphasize encounters with philanthropy, tensions between philanthropy and exploitation, and alternatives to philanthropy as it is commonly construed. These works tap into American philanthropy's untapped liberatory potential by situating minority subjects as agents rather than objects of philanthropy. They further denaturalize the ideology of "doing good" in the twentieth century, a conception of *noblesse oblige* inherited from Gilded Age gendered distinctions of public/private, masculine/feminine, and wealth/charity, and deployed to rationalize American dispossession both at home and abroad.

¹ In the introduction to *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*, Jodi Melamed offers a detailed yet concise sketch of the genealogy of racial capitalism from Cedric Robinson to Lisa Lowe.

Counternarratives of American Philanthropy

I use the term “American philanthropy” throughout this study to signal my hemispheric framing and to expand the definitions of “American” *and* “philanthropy” to capaciously represent, respectively, the geographic scope and the open-endedness attached to these terms. Beginning with “philanthropy,” it is a broad, even vague term. While there is broad consensus among scholars that it is necessary to distinguish philanthropy from charity because of differences in scale and structure, there tends to be an overemphasis on segregating specific subsets of philanthropy from one another by distinguishing corporate philanthropy from large-scale individual philanthropy, for example. Historians have noted the significance of the division between charity and philanthropy by studying how in the United States these two modes of altruism “stand at opposite poles: the one concrete and individual, the other abstract and institutional” (Gross 31). The nature of philanthropy as “abstract and institutional” ensures that when something is called philanthropy, it must be of a certain scale to be called philanthropy rather than charity. The problem with the current emphasis on specific segmentations of corporate philanthropy, foundation philanthropy, individual philanthropy, etc. is that it makes it difficult to study the larger system of philanthropy as a whole and to see the ways in which philanthropy proliferates in a number of overlapping modes. For example, individual philanthropists often blur the lines between philanthropy that is “individual” and philanthropy that is strictly part of the work of their charitable foundations or corporate philanthropic work. Some scholars question the division of public and

private philanthropy when they suggest that “the very existence of the tax incentive means that charitable expenditures are not purely private” (Ahn 65). My work shows how such attempts to narrow the scope of philanthropy fail to see what a huge operation philanthropy is and how it refuses to remain contained within these boundaries. Precisely because scale is what sets philanthropy apart, sub-categories of philanthropy are often arbitrary and contradict the enormous scope of this “new open-ended philanthropy...that broke away from centuries of targeted giving” (Zunz 76). In contrast to charity’s individual orientation and palliative aims, philanthropy is characterized as “largesse, open-ended” (Zunz 12). In other words, whether it comes from a corporate entity or an individual, it is the size and scope that creates philanthropy, not the identity of the philanthropist. While acknowledging the need for a definition, I seek to leave this definition as open-ended as possible, given the open-ended nature of philanthropic acts that demand broad interpretations.

The term “American philanthropy” correlates with historian Olivier Zunz’s argument that philanthropy is a uniquely American development. He details the nuances of philanthropy by showing its specificity to be tied to geography, emerging in the United States as a result of unprecedented wealth accumulation in the years after the Civil War. Until the late nineteenth century, Zunz notes, charity in the United States had long followed British norms of giving directly to those in need. Furthermore, until the late nineteenth century, “it had been unimaginable that some Americans could be wealthy enough” to undertake huge philanthropic projects “on a scale never before entertained” (Zunz 8). After a series of legal challenges in the

1880s, the Tilden Act of 1893 upended laws “limiting bequests to narrowly defined causes” (11) and helped codify “large-scale open-ended philanthropy” into law (15). While my concept of American philanthropy is grounded in Zunz’s geographic framing, my definition of “American philanthropy” is also in tension with his. I use “American philanthropy” in an effort to undo the “imperial arrogation” (Gruesz 25) of “American” as code for the United States rather than the hemisphere, such as is found in Zunz’s usage. While it is important to recognize the geographic particularity of this significant shift to philanthropy, the use of “American” to refer only to the United States is a problem that ignores the “taking” throughout the hemisphere that makes such “giving” in the United States possible. “American philanthropy” in my work refuses this synecdoche while seeking to show how the boundless parameters of open-ended philanthropy have been foreclosed to radical forms of philanthropy, similar to the ways in which “American” has excluded less powerful countries and communities. My use of “American philanthropy” intends to push the boundaries of traditional categories of benevolence, generosity, or altruism signified within the concept of American philanthropy.

I read philanthropy as a part of the sentimental tradition in which giving money, and other forms of philanthropy that I will detail throughout each chapter, are tied to a *feeling* of righting social, political, and economic wrongs. In the sentimental and countersentimental texts I study, philanthropy functions as a paradox, a secret weapon for both oppression *and* liberation. As part and parcel of its historical production alongside slavery, corporate expansion, and imperialism, philanthropy

became an integral part of American identity and culture, “a vital expression of the democratic way of life” (Proskauer 26). *Doing Good, Behaving Badly: Fictions of Philanthropy in the Americas* examines the culture of philanthropy in the Americas produced and contested in literary texts set in three critical moments of economic crisis centered in the United States that, successively, have defined philanthropy in the hemisphere and spurred the development of philanthropy as a sentimental culture: Radical Reconstruction, the Great Depression, and the Cold War. From the failure to pay reparations during Reconstruction and the exclusionary policies of the New Deal under Jim Crow to interventionism in Central America and the Caribbean from the Spanish American War through the Cold War, these specific moments of racialized dispossession coincided with the emergence of narratives of philanthropy that simultaneously justified such dispossession within the context of each economic crisis and presented philanthropy as an answer to it. As a consequence, philanthropy came to be seen as a necessary palliative for seemingly intractable problems, a permanent fixture of the hemispheric American economy embraced culturally and ideologically in a relation of “cruel optimism” (Berlant). Beloved for its visible rendering of the *possibility* of democratic equality, philanthropy’s role in the maintenance of oppressive conditions has been continually disregarded. After thoroughly entrenching domestic institutions of philanthropy via the “system of white patronage” (Du Bois, *Souls* 125) that arose in the place of legal redress for slavery and the lasting legacy of Jim Crow, the United States began to fashion itself as the philanthropic “Good Neighbor,” a benevolent protector of the hemisphere. U.S. philanthropic foundations

tripled their wealth during the most intensive periods of the Cold War, between the 1950s and the early 1970s, emerging as one of the most influential purveyors of soft power throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. Philanthropy, as a structuring concept for my study, represents a transnational economy in which discrete acts of charity by individuals (through foundations or corporate giving, for example) and the state (through foreign aid, funding of NGOs, or multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations) came to mediate human rights issues throughout the hemisphere by the end of the twentieth century.

My work builds upon recent American studies scholarship on philanthropy as a driver of cultural production in the United States by expanding beyond Anglo-American and transatlantic framings in order to center a hemispheric perspective instead. Francesca Sawaya's study of "philanthropic interventionism" in American realism and the turn-of-the-century literary marketplace in *The Difficult Art of Giving* (2014) helps me to situate philanthropy as a literary and cultural concern. Sawaya "insist[s] that philanthropy is a transatlantic phenomenon" even though she "primarily analyze[s] U.S. literary texts" (10). This common transatlantic framing acknowledges the transnational nature of these reformist projects, but it does so from the perspective of largely white nations and mostly white perspectives. Shifting the focus to the American hemisphere de-emphasizes the symmetry between Western, English-speaking world powers of the twentieth century in order to stress the ways in which philanthropy functions politically, socially, and culturally within the asymmetrical context of the United States' regional hegemony. I also draw upon Jodi Melamed's

theorization of post-World War II racial liberalism and its presentation of the United States “as the universal model for a racially integrated nation” (25) as a formation regulated, in part, by the African American “race novel” that “defined racism as primarily a problem of attitude or prejudice” (54) rather than a system structured on racial inequality that benefits white people at the expense of people of color. I use Melamed’s examination of “race relations philanthropy” (52) and its relationship to literary production to show how the culture of philanthropy extends processes of racialization throughout formal and informal outposts of U.S empire that marginalize Latina/o communities, the Caribbean, and Central America as well as black America.

Philanthropy in the Americas took on a slightly different character than it did in the Atlantic world. In the Americas, philanthropy might be characterized as unidirectional. If, in the Atlantic world, antislavery and subsequent reform movements circulated throughout the white, English-speaking world and came to inform one another through such circulation, then in the American hemisphere, philanthropy was brought from the United States into Latin American and Caribbean countries as a tool of imperialism. This rarely, if ever, happened in reverse. No Latin American or Caribbean countries sent philanthropy into the United States. This relationship developed at individual, institutional, and state levels. From the first foreign appropriations of the newly-formed U.S. congress to white planters fleeing the Haitian Revolution to individual volunteers who showed up in Haiti in 2010 after the earthquake, this philanthropy is and has almost always been unidirectional. These acts of “giving” time or money help to validate and authenticate the United States’

position of power in the hemisphere. Philanthropy functions in the Atlantic world context in similar and parallel ways that, by contrast, assume fairly equal power positions and shared goals in a way that bilateral U.S.-Latin American and U.S.-Caribbean relations do not. They are profoundly unequal in the hemispheric context.

By grouping texts according to their temporal setting and using their publication dates as secondary, my archive generates an alternate chronology. Crucial to this alternate chronology is a retrospective re-examination of claims that place the origins of American philanthropy in the Gilded Age; both the historical studies and fictional representations in my archive question this genealogy. The philanthropic legacy of historical and fictional Mary Ellen Pleasant (d. 1904), who used her wealth to end slavery and to fight segregationist and sexist laws from the 1850s through the 1890s, helps me to redefine the parameters of American philanthropy's openness to include radical acts of sedition in the service of freedom. I draw upon the insights of historians Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie, who study how "American government became an instrument of philanthropy" during the U.S. Civil War, in part, as a result of a "reconceptualization of government" in which "individual rights were subordinated to the public good" (156). "Public-sector philanthropy" (157), as they call it, developed through Radical Reconstruction policies that leveraged government funds to redistribute wealth, property, and power after emancipation. Too often divorced from its overlap with the Reconstruction Era, the Gilded Age's unprecedented wealth inequality must be understood within the context of the abandonment of Radical Reconstruction. Drawing from the work of

W.E.B. Du Bois, I argue that philanthropy's expansion in the 1870s and 1880s normalized the strict inequalities of slavery that had yet to be overcome and expanded them in a more palatable structure of wage labor throughout the hemisphere in the Gilded Age. Part of what Saidiya Hartman describes as the "racist retrenchment of the postwar period" (5), American philanthropy emerges, I argue, as a profoundly reactionary form of distribution aimed at maintaining the status quo. By thinking about how American philanthropy fits into what Du Bois called the "counter-revolution of 1876" (*Black Reconstruction* 667), it becomes clear that industrial capitalists of the Gilded Age stood to gain the most from Reconstruction's failure to materialize comprehensive reparations for the newly emancipated.²

Instead of a redistribution of wealth and power in the aftermath of the Civil War, sharecropping, vagrancy laws, white supremacist violence, and the foreclosure of the radical promise of black Reconstruction by and large kept former slaves in conditions of slavery in all but name while robber barons who presided over transnational corporate empires emerged with unprecedented amounts of wealth that they were able to convert into influential charitable foundations administered under the guise of *noblesse oblige*.³ These business leaders, based in the United States—such as the president of United Fruit Company, Samuel Zemurray (popularly known

² The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* declares philanthropy an ideology of "Conservative or Bourgeois Socialism" that functions as a barrier to revolution. "To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind. This form of Socialism has, moreover, been worked out into complete systems" (Chap. 3, Sec. 2).

³ Olivier Zunz cites a multiplication of millionaires from 100 to 4,047 in just 20 years from the 1870s to 1892.

in his time as “the Banana Man”)—used philanthropy to influence everything from education to politics, both at home and in the countries where their corporations operated. Formed at the turn of the century, these untaxed charitable foundations exacerbated longstanding inequalities by providing the infrastructure for intergenerational transfers of wealth concentrated within and controlled by circles of elite white northern capitalists and their descendants. Corporate and state expansion went hand in hand as the United States accumulated lands through the Spanish-American War, and newly born multinational corporations moved into newly acquired lands to consolidate power, land, and resources for profit.⁴ Land grabs continued for the next thirty years facilitated by the collusion between the U.S. government, the U.S. military, and American businesses, leading to the private ownership of nearly all of Puerto Rico’s sugar industry, the building of the Panama Canal, and the United Fruit Company’s expansion throughout the Caribbean and Central America. Workers suffered so many grievances throughout this time that the U.S. Congress began investigating the exploitation of workers and its relationship to philanthropy through the Commission on Industrial Relations (1912-1916). In this regard, the story of multinational corporate expansionism and the rise of American philanthropy are one and the same.

In the post-World War II era with the advent of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United States’ emergence as an economic

⁴ In the documentary *Harvest of Empire*, poet Martín Espada reports, “when the United States took over Puerto Rico, so did four North American sugar companies.”

superpower was facilitated by a more concentrated relationship between philanthropy and the state. In many ways, the state saw itself as humanitarian. Philanthropic institutions used their resources and their purported distance from the government to advance the cause of democracy as an objective issue that supported but was unrelated to U.S. foreign policy interests. This era gave birth to the Organization of American States, the Peace Corps, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), agencies that blurred the lines between philanthropy and the state in myriad ways and represented a new kind of colonization, just as the breakdown of European colonizer relationships generated widespread decolonization movements across the world.⁵ Aimé Césaire called development efforts in the so-called Third World “aid to the disinherited” (76). Arundhati Roy blames philanthropy for breaking up otherwise cohesive social movements, such as the “deradicalizing of the Black civil rights movement” (38), and argues that “funding has fragmented solidarity in ways that repression never could” (37). Major philanthropists and foundations in the United States enjoyed a new level of political influence by driving policy decisions and providing funding for arts and culture that not only supported the interests of the wealthy elite, as it did at the turn of the century, but now was able to change the public’s thinking by funding studies and cultural production that supported the ideology of philanthropic institutions.⁶ The state turned to

⁵ Aimé Césaire makes this connection in *Discourse on Colonialism* when he insists President Truman’s Point Four Program “means American high finance considers that the time has come to raid every colony in the world” (76).

⁶ Arundhati Roy’s *Capitalism: A Ghost Story* and Joel Fleishman’s *The Foundation: A Great American Secret; How Private Wealth is Changing the World* both outline this process.

philanthropic organizations for support in the ideological battles of the Cold War as leaders from the state, philanthropy, and business rotated seamlessly in and out of leadership positions in these arenas.⁷ Foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller have been studied by historians for their role in the cultural Cold War. However, these influential foundations—prominent funders and promoters of Western ideology—have been little-studied or regulated by the government. Even investigations into their activities, such as the Filer Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs of 1973, have been led and funded by the foundations themselves.⁸ Recognizing the deep and lasting impact of foundations on our contemporary geopolitical landscape in the aftermath of the Cold War, postcolonial authors and theorists, in particular, connect philanthropy to efforts at tempering decolonization movements.

From the 1980s through today, as a consequence of neoliberalism and the collapse of the welfare state, American philanthropy has grown into a form of consumer philanthropy that has integrated itself into nearly every aspect of American culture. What these contemporary forms of American giving do not necessarily disclose is that today's philanthrocapitalism, with long roots in the robber baron phenomenon, has gained traction as a result of neoliberal policies and the growing wealth gap in which the richest one percent in the United States own more than a

⁷ The publisher of *Philanthropy and Imperialism* edited by Robert Arnove calls it “a source book on the origins, workings, and consequences of modern general-purpose foundations” (Cover copy).

⁸ Among these studies, *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad* edited by Robert Arnove and *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: the Ideology of Philanthropy* by Edward H. Berman are among the most comprehensive.

quarter of the nation's income.⁹ As the wealthiest people in the world, philanthrocapitalists have formed what they call “the Good Club,” an elite coterie of primarily Global North givers who take a business approach to major social issues that they can influence, ranging from birth control to economic crises.¹⁰ No longer primarily concerned with building universities, public libraries, or other forms of quasi-public infrastructure like their predecessors, the philanthrocapitalists of today are primarily concerned with humanitarian issues around public health and human development.¹¹

Philanthropy and Sentimental Literature of Human Rights, Protest, and Reform

This study looks at how philanthropic, human rights, and humanitarian discourses play a cultural—and what Wendy Brown has highlighted as a supposedly “antipolitical” (453)—role in the international social and political order. Historically, in the United States, philanthropy has mediated human rights issues, such as the rights to employment, standard of living, and education outlined in articles 23-26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. People who donate to human rights causes and issues in the United States are called “philanthropists” while those who

⁹ In the aftermath of the Great Recession of 2008, *Vanity Fair* was one of the first to report this number in its May 2011 article by Joseph Stiglitz titled “Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%.”

¹⁰ *The Guardian* first reported on the “Good Club” in a 2009 article by Paul Harris entitled “They're called the Good Club - and they want to save the world.”

¹¹ In the midst of the 2008 world financial crisis, editor of *The Economist* Matthew Bishop and economist Michael Green published *Philanthrocapitalism: How the Rich Can Save the World* (2008) about what they called “a movement...focused on tackling the world's toughest problems through effective giving” (ix). Philanthrocapitalism describes how “the world's most successful wealth creators...apply business techniques and ways of thinking to their philanthropy” (x). This so-called “philanthrocapitalist turn” has been given increasing attention from sociologists, such as Linsey McGoey, and political scientists, such as Michael Moran. Its principles of fashioning philanthropy as a business seeking returns on investments has come under scrutiny.

donate to similar issues and causes across U.S. borders are called “humanitarians,” denoting a larger scale of efforts than institutionalized philanthropy, even though they are part of the same structures. Humanitarianism also serves as a kind of bridge between human rights and philanthropy when it is thought of as a feeling. Joseph Slaughter talks about a “democratic, humanitarian sensibility” (42), which harkens back to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “concluding remarks” in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* that tells us that she hopes one outcome of her book is “feeling right” (624). Some would even go so far as to call the American state itself “humanitarian,” as Amy Kaplan points out when she critiques the conservative narrative of American Empire that claims “the United States never sought an empire and may even be constitutionally unsuited to rule one, but it had the burden thrust upon it by the fall of earlier empires and the failures of modern states, which abuse the human rights of their own people and spawn terrorism” (“Address to American Studies” 2003). Aimé Césaire provides an example of this in his conclusion to *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), where he summarizes Harry Truman’s Point Four Program in five words—“aid to the disinherited countries”—and explicates: “Which means that American high finance considers that the time has come to raid every colony in the world” (76). This “American hour,” as Césaire calls it, is characterized by big money and big government couched in the language of philanthropy and benevolence. In today’s terms, we might call this a form of philanthrocapitalism born out of the corporatist state.

Human rights as a focus of literary theory and critique is a fairly recent field that appears to be responding, in a specific way, to ethical claims about literature and its capacity to effect social change, a conversation that has been ongoing since the advent of the novel. Lynn Hunt and Joseph Slaughter both published their influential books in 2007: *Inventing Human Rights: A History* and *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law*. These theorists respond to scholars like philosopher Martha Nussbaum who believe that literature is a primary place where ethics are developed and that developing ethical reading practices can lead to real social change. As James Dawes argues in “Human Rights and Literary Study” (2009), storytelling is central not only to human rights discourse, but to the on-the-ground human rights work: “the most important act of rescue for them is not delivering supplies but asking questions, evaluating answers, and pleading with those of us who observe from a distance” (394). In fact, human rights organizations such as the UN and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) originated from hearing the stories of survivors and witnesses of human rights abuses. The IACHR became an official, independent branch of the OAS after visiting the famous Mirabal Sisters during their political imprisonment in 1960 in the Dominican Republic. The important visit is marked in the Julia Alvarez’s *In the Time of the Butterflies*, which fictionalizes the sisters’ story of resistance against the violent dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961).

As the dominant paradigm through which social justice claims are made, human rights forms part of a genealogy that traces back to reformist discourses of

philanthropy and the sentimental tradition. Legal scholar Costas Douzinas says that “the ‘humanity’ of rights is not just an empty signifier; it carries an enormous symbolic capital, a surplus of value and dignity endowed by the revolutions and the declarations and augmented by every new struggle that adopts the rhetoric of human rights” (4). As Douzinas suggests, global politics is saturated in the discourse of human rights such that it comes to be meaningless as a result of being overdetermined and abstracted to an extent that it can be adapted and molded to support just about anything. His argument suggests that the privileging of rights-based claims and appeals accounts for the repudiation of other types of claims of injustice rooted in economics and sexual discrimination. This leads to the paradox of the present that Joseph Slaughter describes when claiming that “the discursive victory of human rights means that ours is at once the Age of Human Rights and the Age of Human Rights Abuse” (2). Wendy Brown’s critique of human rights as apolitical or antipolitical is particularly useful when thinking about its use. Her argument turns on the idea that human rights is invoked in a monopolizing, universalizing manner that is situated as being beyond reproach—in other words, as a universal value. This is problematic, according to Brown, because human rights is a politics that has a history of being rooted in liberalism and therefore promotes liberal agendas. However, by purporting to be beyond politics or outside of politics, that agenda is often obscured in the name of human suffering, and it often justifies interventionist politics.

The literary economy of human rights represents both the commodification of narratives of suffering, as Sidonie Smith and Kathy Schaefer have argued, and where

the most sustained critiques of philanthropy and human rights emerge. James Dawes called this “the paradox of representing suffering: that is, to stop people from being injured, we have to tell the story of what’s happening; but in telling the story, we often end up injuring people in unexpected ways” (Dawes 401). In her study of literatures of social reform, Amanda Claybaugh notes that “While charity takes place between donor and recipient, reform takes place within an individual’s own heart and mind. For this reason, its central locus is the scene of reading” (25). Claybaugh also notes that reform is an Anglo-American discourse with continuities across British and American reformist movements. Indeed, she claims, “The transatlantic has come to be a predominant paradigm” (14) for such study. By shifting the focus from a transatlantic paradigm to a hemispheric one, I focus on the continuity across literature that both critiques and celebrates myriad forms of American philanthropy.

The overlapping discourses of philanthropy, humanitarianism, and human rights are protean, especially in a literary context, and often undergo some form of revision with each use. Current scholarship illustrates such mutability as these terms are constantly defined in accordance with specific projects, such as Joseph Slaughter’s use of human rights (2007) and Francesca Sawaya’s framing of corporate philanthropy (2014). The collaborators of *Humanitarianism and Suffering* (2009) situate contemporary humanitarian narratives and “the use of humanitarianism as a cloak for imperial hypocrisy and aggression” (Wilson and Brown 17) within the context of ideological projects of the nineteenth century and their afterlives. My project draws attention to and engages the context-dependent meanings and uses of

these terms without arguing for imposing narrow definitions. It also expands upon several fields within Cultural Studies and American studies. Historian Lynn Hunt demonstrates how “inventing human rights” may be traced to representations of human relationships in fiction and art, especially through letters and epistolary novels. Similarly, we know from literary critics Joseph Slaughter and John Beverly how important the *Bildungsromane* and *testimonio* have been historically to making rights-based political claims. My geopolitical framing is informed by the “transnational turn” in American studies, which interrogates old and new narratives of American Empire that claim “the United States never sought an empire and may even be constitutionally unsuited to rule one, but it had the burden thrust upon it by the fall of earlier empires and the failures of modern states, which abuse the human rights of their own people and spawn terrorism” (Kaplan, “Address” 4). Theories of affect centered on empathy, compassion, and pity found in the work of Lauren Berlant and Lilie Chouliaraki, cultural economic histories by George Lipsitz and Francesca Sawaya, and “the new economic criticism” articulated by Mark Osteen and Martha Woodmansee serve as backdrops for much of my analysis. James Baldwin’s critique of white sentimentality in “Everybody’s Protest Novel” (1955) and Amanda Claybaugh’s *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World* (2007), which traces how the nineteenth century novel “was now understood to be actively working for the social good” (Claybaugh 6), help me to theorize philanthropy as a sentimental attachment and a reformist discourse.

Chapter Structure

The first chapter, “Funding Insurgency: Black Feminist Counternarratives of American Philanthropy,” examines insurgency as a black feminist mode of philanthropy in two historical fiction novels: Michelle Cliff’s *Free Enterprise: A Story of Mary Ellen Pleasant* (1993) and Marie Vieux-Chauvet’s *Love (Amour)* (1968). By comparing narratives that respectively take place during the 1865-1877 military occupation of the U.S. South during Reconstruction and the 1915-1934 military occupation of Haiti, I show how the black feminist funding of insurgency not only exposes the links between American philanthropy and unredressed legacies of slavery in the hemisphere but also models a radical alternative to implicitly and explicitly white philanthropic paradigms.

The second chapter, entitled “‘Aggressive Altruism’ in the Global Ghetto: Black and Guatemalan Critiques of U.S. Racial Capitalism,” turns to representations of the global ghetto in Richard Wright’s *Native Son* (1940) and Miguel Ángel Asturias’s *The Green Pope (El Papa Verde)* (1954) during and after the Great Depression. Taken together, these novels offer a critical hemispheric account of 1930s-to-1940s Chicago as the financial engine of the United States and a center of transnational corporate expansion. My reading highlights the female counterparts of white male philanthropists who traverse racial and national lines as coconspirators in the scheme of “aggressive altruism,” as Asturias calls it.

My final chapter, “Regime Change from Below: Philanthropic Interventionism in Cold War Latin America,” argues that American philanthropy, U.S. foreign policy, and human rights developed together along imperial lines as part

of a Cold War-era alliance that continues to shape the twenty-first century world order. Looking to feminist accounts of American philanthropy—namely, Claribel Alegria’s *Ashes of Izalco* (*Cenizas de Izalco* 1966) and Julia Alvarez’s *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994)—that critique U.S. regime-change policies of the 1950s and 1960s, I argue that these novels reimagine national traumas and hemispheric geopolitics as intimate stories. Yet it is precisely their deployment of gendered genres—romance and epistolary novel—that enables readers to probe philanthropy’s complicity in global violence.

The epilogue analyzes the ways in which philanthropy structures postcolonial and neocolonial relationships in the rapidly gentrifying New York City of the 1990s described in Ernesto Quiñonez’s *Bodega Dreams* (2000). By tracing Bodega’s transformation from Young Lord to humanitarian drug lord, this conclusion contends with the legacies of dispossession and humanitarianism that shaped the struggles for political and economic power in el barrio from the 1960s through 1990s.

Chapter 1

Neither the individual nor the race is improved by almsgiving.
Andrew Carnegie, “Gospel of Wealth” (1889)

Dammit, our people knew capitalism intimately, historically.
Albeit from the wrong end—at least in the New World.
Michelle Cliff, *Free Enterprise* (1993)

Funding Insurgency: Black Feminist Counternarratives of American Philanthropy

In 1900, Andrew Carnegie, one of the richest robber barons in U.S. history and a celebrated American philanthropist, donated \$20,000 to build the Carnegie Library at Tuskegee Institute. The institute’s founder, Booker T. Washington, praised the donation in his autobiography, *Up From Slavery* (1901). Washington uses the story of pursuing Carnegie’s donation between 1890 and 1900 as an instructive example of “the science of what is called begging” (Washington 180). As the autobiography shows, American philanthropy, defined by historian Olivier Zunz as the “direct conversion of massive capitalist wealth into public assets” (9), was foundational to racial uplift efforts. Yet American philanthropy’s origins in racial dispossession are rarely considered a part of the history of racial uplift philanthropy. While his rival W.E.B. Du Bois took pains to make these connections in *The Souls of Black* (1903) and *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), Washington only hints at the ways in which American philanthropy kept the black community down while attempting to lift it up. He writes: “it required ten years of work before I was able to secure Mr. Carnegie’s interest and help. The first time I saw him, ten years ago, he seemed to take but little interest in our school, but I was determined to show him that

we were worthy of his help” (Washington 191). Washington’s explanation of investing years in proving the school’s worthiness to Carnegie describes a hallmark of racial uplift philanthropy in which, in Carnegie’s own words, the philanthropist acts as a “trustee for the poor” (664). The donor/recipient relationship between Carnegie and Washington illustrates the fundamentally racialized and male-dominated structure of American philanthropy that originated in the Gilded Age and was embraced by an entire generation of new millionaires. Journalistic and historical accounts of millionaires and titans of industry, like Carnegie, bind their legacies to racial uplift and to Progressive Era reform movements. However, the stories that might contextualize this brand of American philanthropy and its founding fathers—the Gilded Age’s robber barons—within the histories of race and gender exploitation, dispossession, and imperial aggression are not accounted for.

Michelle Cliff’s novel *Free Enterprise: A Story of Mary Ellen Pleasant*, about a little-known black female philanthropist of the nineteenth century, makes visible the racial and gendered dimensions of the distinctive style of American philanthropy developed by men like Carnegie. The novel uses fiction to fill in the gaps of the mostly-forgotten history of abolitionist and entrepreneur Mary Ellen Pleasant, who gave \$30,000 to fund the raid on Harper’s Ferry in 1859. In the novel, philanthropy functions as a secret weapon for both liberation and oppression. On the one hand, Pleasant, a black radical female, is—against all economic odds—the funder of an insurgency against the slave state, an act of subversion that places the raid on Harper’s Ferry in the lineage of the Haitian Revolution. On the other hand, Cliff

exposes philanthropy's important role in colonization and westward imperial expansion.

Pleasant's radical mode of philanthropy is a dramatic antidote to Carnegie's trusteeship model of wealth administration and the kind of racial uplift philanthropy described by Washington. Carnegie's \$20,000 donation to Tuskegee in 1900 appears tokenistic against Pleasant's \$30,000 in support of the revolutionary acts of 1859, an incredible sum and symbol of resistance. Indeed, her philanthropic legacy is antithetical to the segregationist and expansionist aims of philanthropists of the Gilded Age. In light of the multiple alternative modes of philanthropy Pleasant employed, the enduring legacy of Gilded Age millionaires as the founders of contemporary American philanthropy proves to be a problematic one. Pleasant's funding was designed to bring down the institution of slavery and to fight the Chatham Convention's "war of independence" (Cliff 16). Aimed at revolution rather than the reformatory goals typical of American philanthropy, her \$30,000 would likely not even register as philanthropy at the time or, perhaps, even today. Many might even consider Pleasant a traitor rather than a philanthropist. By reading Pleasant as part of a history of American philanthropy, a counter-narrative of radical philanthropy in the United States emerges. Her story disrupts the pervasive "Great Man" history of American philanthropy, presenting an alternative to the common sense understanding of American philanthropy as we know it. This chapter shows how little affinity her philanthropic legacy was antithetical to the expansionist aims of philanthropists of the Gilded Age who concocted notions of a common good that had

little to do with common people. In fact, her contributions might best be called an example of “Americas philanthropy” instead of American philanthropy in order to distinguish the hemispheric history her story reveals.

Love (Amour 1968), by Haitian author Marie Vieux-Chauvet, also provocatively engages with the question of American philanthropy by examining it as a critical mode of U.S. intervention and occupation in Haiti.¹² Central to my analysis of *Love* is understanding the historical continuity between the U.S. Civil War and the U.S. occupation of Haiti at the turn of the twentieth century, the historical conditions out of which American philanthropy emerges. I examine how Marie Vieux-Chauvet’s *Love* frames philanthropy as a structure of U.S. foreign policy and military and economic intervention that shapes the life of a small Haitian town and penetrates the protagonist Claire Clamont’s personal life. The eldest and blackest of the white-mulatto Henri Clamont’s three daughters, Claire, writing in 1939, details a “resurrected past” (Vieux-Chauvet 118) of the 1915-1934 U.S. occupation. Appealing to the kind of double-consciousness that W.E.B. Du Bois famously theorized in *The Souls of Black Folk*, she claims this history “appeared to [her] as through a thick veil” (118), a vantage familiar to her because she was born in 1900 “when prejudice was at its height” and, as a result, “suffered from an early age because of the dark color of [her] skin” (4). Through journal entries, the central plot of three sisters in love with one man, Jean Luze, detours into the story of Claire’s ascent to “the head of a family

¹² The English language citations from *Love* included in this chapter come from the excellent 2009 translation of *Love, Anger, Madness: A Haitian Triptych* by Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokur.

with about sixty acres” (111). Family history and national history are concatenated as this all unfolds during the U.S. Marine invasion from the shores of Haiti and the subsequent U.S. occupation of the country. Claire observes the crisis that the U.S. occupation of Haiti causes for the bourgeois class who resented the American interference but despised the idea of banding together with former slaves and peasants even more. After making a fateful business decision, Claire instigates an eruption of violence in the region, and, as a result, her “father’s farmers paid with their lives for [her] brilliant idea” (112). She is haunted by what she witnesses and the consequences of her business dealings for the next twenty years. Through a sustained reflection on past events and her current solitude, Claire ultimately kills the violent U.S.-sponsored Commandant Calédu and helps to bring down their despotic rule. Her act of love is nothing resembling American philanthropy’s “love of mankind” (“Philanthropy”). Rather, I read Claire’s action as an act of America’s philanthropy in which she subverts her bourgeois interests and invests in transformative action out of a love for the Haitian people.

These Black feminist critiques of white American philanthropy, therefore, interrogate commonly held assumptions about philanthropy as a noble—if imperfect—attempt to respond to the acknowledged inequality between men and women, white and black people, and between white and black nations. *Free Enterprise* and *Love* narrate racial capitalism from sites steeped in the histories of slave insurgencies, thereby exposing the violence of taking required for philanthropic giving. Wealth accumulation and philanthropic disbursement are redeployed within

the system of racial capitalism to ensure its destruction. A comparison of these two texts articulates a more expansive definition of philanthropy to include radical forms of hemispheric philanthropy that emphasize systemic change over moderate reform and have been placed under erasure, rendered illegible as philanthropy.

This argument proceeds by first situating the emergence of Gilded Age philanthropy against alternative modes of philanthropy from the nineteenth century that it overshadowed and within the context of the formal end of Radical Reconstruction, the broadly conceived government-led effort to redistribute wealth and power to the newly emancipated in the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War. Having established how Gilded Age philanthropy fits into the dispossession of the newly emancipated, I examine the role of philanthropy in U.S. imperialism. By examining the culture of philanthropy from the social and hemispheric peripheries of U.S. empire in these two texts, I trace a counter-narrative of Americas philanthropy that emerges. This counter-narrative makes visible the central contradictions of American philanthropy as an often-violent form of U.S. expansion abroad that proliferates based on a problematic notion that imperialism functions in the service of its victims.

Free Enterprise: Americas Philanthropy and the Enterprise of Freedom

Free Enterprise tells a revisionist history of U.S. empire from 1858 to 1920. Serving as a thorough re-examination of colonization and imperialism from below, the narrative begins with the protagonist Annie Christmas symbolically “turn[ing] her back on her people” (Cliff 9). After meeting Mary Ellen Pleasant, who tells her about the eponymous African American folk hero, Annie Christmas “discard[s] her

Christian, given name” of Regina and gives herself that name. While Annie's mother and family fought for recognition as one of the "better class: *les gens inconnus*" ("the unknown people") in the Jamaican church—for it was better to be “unknown” than known to have any African tinge in the family's "carefully inbred skin" (9)—Annie repudiates this bourgeois legacy and even "applies Mr. Bone's Liquid Blackener" (9) to darken her skin in an effort to reclaim her African heritage against her family's whitening.

In his study *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Haitian historian and anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues that “cycles of silences” define the production of history and are produced at “four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance” (26). Gesturing toward each of these moments in various ways, *Free Enterprise* disrupts the cycle of silencing by retelling and reclaiming histories of the “unknown” masses who have receded into the background of history and have, therefore, been placed under erasure. In so doing, Cliff looks beyond what Trouillot called the “storage model” of history premised on “knowledge as recollection” (Trouillot 14), and instead creates an unofficial version of history that is, according to her, full of as much fact and fiction as official histories. She breathes new life into the peoples, cultures, and histories ignored, misrepresented, or entirely left out of official versions. This counter-history emerges once Annie rejects her family's aspirations to whiteness

and her class position. Like Pleasant, Annie becomes a “traitor to [her] class” (Cliff 78), a critical ideological position that engenders revolutionary notions of race, gender, and class central to the enterprise of freedom.

Annie and Pleasant come to symbolize the unknown masses and common people who have been overshadowed by well-known historical figures. Pleasant’s narrative is framed within the story of Annie Christmas; their intergenerational friendship provides continuity across time in the novel. When Mary Ellen Pleasant enters the novel, it is to invite Annie to dinner after Annie questions Frances Ellen Watkins Harper for “advocating a Talented Tenth” (11). With “her back turned on *gens inconnu*,” Annie acts “as one of the nine tenths” (11) in speaking against Harper’s formulation. Pleasant is the only one in the crowd who shares the criticism of Harper when Annie inveighs, “I do not understand how you can advocate a concept which eliminates the vast majority of our people” (11). Annie’s critique goes against the grain of popular nineteenth century notions of racial uplift espoused by many black intellectuals. Such exclusionary notions of racial uplift were common at the time. Known more commonly today as “the politics of respectability,” historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham explains that this middle-class ideology espoused by many black scholars, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, “emphasized reform of individual behavior and attitudes both as a goal in itself and as a strategy for reform of the entire structural system of American race relations” (187). Booker T. Washington drew from nineteenth century notions of worthiness and racial uplift to formulate the separate but equal philosophy he famously put forth in the Atlanta Compromise

Speech (1895). As he cultivated Andrew Carnegie's gift for Tuskegee Library for ten long years, Washington had to work against an assumption of general black unworthiness by demonstrating racial exceptionalism to Carnegie. Washington's representation of the donor-recipient relationship validates the philanthropist's role as gatekeeper and exposes how racial stereotypes might be exploited—rather than exploded—when he calls on freedmen and “the white race” to “cast down your bucket where you are” (220). For the black audience, Washington connects self-improvement with an appeal to seek aid from “Northern philanthropists, who have made their gifts a constant stream of blessing and encouragement” to “uplift the race” (223).

Recognizing that appealing for recognition and worthiness participates in the dehumanizing logic of racial oppression, Pleasant rejects Washington's “science of begging” (Washington 180). In her first letter to Annie, she declares, “supplication [is] not our mode” (Cliff 69). For Pleasant, systemic change requires collective action, not rational debate. She sets herself apart from conservatives like Washington and even from the rhetorical mode of Sojourner Truth's “Ain't I A Woman?” Pleasant separates herself from these figures, telling Annie that “divergence was inevitable” (69) between black liberal and black radical abolitionists, between those who believed that the end of racial and gendered oppression required revolution, like Harriet Tubman and Mary Ellen Pleasant, and those who believed it required persuasion, like Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Sojourner Truth. In the novel, speeches and discussions with reformatory aims are contained in lecture halls and

dining rooms while revolutionary action is represented by protest, opposition, and, ultimately, insurrection.

Addressing Annie as “comrade-in-arms” (132) in a letter dated August 6, 1874, sixteen years after they first met, Mary Ellen Pleasant implies that they were radical operatives together in the Civil War. Her letter re-centers women in the resistance movements against slavery. Pleasant tells Annie of her \$30,000 gift for the insurrection, what has gone down in history as one man’s crusade, namely, John Brown’s Raid on Harper’s Ferry.¹³ While Annie is a “comrade,” a fellow fighter in the enterprise of freedom along with Harriet Tubman and others, Pleasant describes John Brown as simply “a splendid ally; no more, no less” (141). Although Brown’s name is nearly synonymous with the raid on Harper’s Ferry, Pleasant’s role in the raid problematizes Brown insofar as she critiques his premature action as a possible reason for defeat and because her sizeable financial support of the attack de-emphasizes his role as leader. Her story comments on the persistent erasure of women of color in U.S. history, while also challenging the very meaning of American philanthropy mostly closely associated with the names of white men, such as Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Cornelius Vanderbilt. That Pleasant reveals herself in 1874 to be the major donor behind the raid is significant because it coincides with the emergence of “the great cause of philanthropy” (chap. 30), as

¹³It is often called John Brown’s Raid on Harper’s Ferry, a misnomer that represents the Raid as an individual act rather than a strategic, well-organized attack. Jonathan Earle’s *John Brown’s Raid on Harpers Ferry: A Brief History with Documents* (2008) is one recent work that perpetuates this myth. Cliff’s novel and Steven Lubet’s *The ‘Colored Hero’ of Harper’s Ferry: John Anthony Copeland and the War against Slavery* (2015) form part of a body of work that undoes this myth by telling stories of people of color who helped to plan and implement the Raid.

Mark Twain called it, during the Reconstruction Era. In 1873, Mark Twain's and Charles Dudley Warner's novel, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, christened the era that overlapped with the Reconstruction Era. Written decades before the nation's first philanthropic institutions were formally established by robber barons of the oil and railroad industries, Twain's novel anticipates the ugly underbelly of racial uplift philanthropy that would define the Gilded Age (roughly 1873-1898). Twain ties philanthropy to the era's corrupt "machine politics" in which public policy proposals and government projects masqueraded as "benevolent schemes" (chap. 31) purportedly aimed at racial uplift yet lacked real substance. Such policies concealed the real beneficiaries of government welfare programs: corrupt politicians and greedy industrialists who worked in collusion to get rich at the expense of the nation's poor and disenfranchised.

Twain's *Gilded Age* describes the political and social subtext of Pleasant's letter to Annie about her role as the major funder of the Raid at Harper's Ferry. This critical historical juncture necessitates her revelation, I argue, because American philanthropy emerges at precisely this moment as a perverse answer to racial (and gendered) inequality following the "abandonment of Reconstruction" (Riddleberger). Pleasant's \$30,000 is a significant philanthropic gift invested in the cause of collective liberation. She is part of a long line of radical black feminists who, as Robin Kelley argues in *Freedom Dreams* (2002), "have never confined their vision to just the emancipation of black women or women in general, or all black people for that matter. Rather, they are the theorists and proponents of a radical humanism

committed to liberating humanity and reconstructing social relations across the board” (137). Her mode of philanthropy advances the enterprise of freedom without promoting the act of giving itself as a “great cause.” According to Pleasant, “generosity has absolutely nothing to do with it” (Cliff 147). The novel represents an oppositional mode of philanthropy that resists notions of largesse or benevolence and in fact, finds the mission of liberation compromised by the “abstract and institutional” (Gross 31) nature of philanthropy born out of the Gilded Age. Philanthropy, for Pleasant, is the economic weapon of a women-led insurgency against oppression. In other words, Pleasant’s mode of America’s philanthropy can be read as part of a “freedom dream” in which freedom *for everybody* is achieved—and inherited—by women of color.

In its account of a radical philanthropic act, *Free Enterprise* probes the very concept of freedom while exploiting the irony of the capitalist concept of “free” enterprise for its origins in race-based chattel slavery.¹⁴ While the story of Mary Ellen Pleasant holds the fragmented four-part novel together, her interactions with the novel’s fictionalized and fictional characters center on each character’s relationship to the transatlantic slave trade, simply called “the trade” in the novel. The trade leaves no one untouched. The novel’s characters are defined by their positions, complicit or oppositional, relative to the trade. Although the novel is set in the post-emancipation period, the trade continues to shape Pleasant’s daily life. In letters to Annie, she

¹⁴ Eric Williams’s classic text, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), provides a materialist history of how “the origin of Negro slavery... was economic, not racial; it had to do not with the color of the laborer, but the cheapness of the labor enslavement” (18).

contemplates how nineteenth-century institutions and family wealth in the United States are all explicitly linked to slavery. While Pleasant writes of Alice Hooper's family investment in Joseph Mallord William Turner's 1840 painting *The Slave Ship*, Annie is the "missing link" (37) who ties global histories of colonization and counternarratives of resistance in the modern world together—from the Spanish Inquisition to lynch law in the 1920s United States. Moving seamlessly between stories from Europe to the Pacific and West Africa to New England, the novel situates turn-of-the-century American imperialism and its racial violence within a legacy of the trade. In tracing the origins of America's wealthiest Northern families—even abolitionist families—and most revered cultural and educational institutions to the slave trade, the novel also ties American wealth and privilege to the brutality of colonization, both historically and structurally. These counter-histories are in and of themselves a kind of freedom from the archives that have long rendered lives like hers invisible. But for Cliff, there is also an important material dimension to full freedom. In the novel, Pleasant's philanthropy exploits the contradictions of the free enterprise marketplace while re-envisioning freedom itself as an enterprise in which the tools of the marketplace can be appropriated to free those enslaved by it.

A frequently cited definition of philanthropy comes from historian Robert A. Gross, who defines it as "a second mode of social service" beyond traditional charity that seeks to "apply reason to the solution of social ills and needs" in an effort to "reform society" (31). More recently, historian Olivier Zunz has described American philanthropy as "long-term solutions to social problems" with the ultimate goal of

“search[ing] for root causes” (9). Above all, American philanthropy is “largesse as open-ended” (12), according to Zunz. While these broad definitions invite capacious interpretations, philanthropy like that of the “feminist, gun-toting abolitionist with a bankroll” (Hudson 115) found in Cliff’s novel does not appear in discussions of American philanthropists. The historical Mary Ellen Pleasant should be considered an important figure within the history of philanthropy in the United States, not only because of her \$30,000 but also because she invested her wealth in civil rights lawsuits, challenging discrimination against black women, in particular, throughout her lifetime. One of the few facts about Pleasant’s enigmatic life that journalists and historians have agreed upon is that she died penniless in 1904. Her biographer, Lynn Hudson, provides the most detailed account of her dwindling empire, explaining, “Pleasant had lost most of her property and capital to creditors, lawyers, and competitors” (97). In fact, she earned the title “Mother of Civil Rights in California” because she devoted her life—and her wealth—to civil rights activism. While many have suggested that her wealth was squandered, I argue that Pleasant’s legal investments can be read as a philanthropic dispensation of her wealth targeting the root causes of legally sanctioned and de facto discrimination based on race and gender. By placing the historical Mary Ellen Pleasant as a philanthropist with a wide-ranging vision of investments in revolutionary social change, from the \$30,000 investment in insurgency to the dispensation of her wealth as a civil rights litigant, the hegemony of philanthropy as articulated by recognizable American philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie is called into question. Next to Pleasant, their vision of

philanthropy appears tokenistic, exclusionary, and invested in the status quo rather than revolutionary change.

Histories of philanthropy struggle to recognize black women as philanthropists, in general. In *Uplifting a People: African American Philanthropy and Education* (2005), Marybeth Gasman and Katherine Sedgwick have noted that “there is a dearth of scholarship on women philanthropists, and the literature becomes even more sparse when narrowed to African American women philanthropists” (102). Even this text, however, never mentions Mary Ellen Pleasant. Instead, it centers figures like Thomy LaFon, “often described as the first ‘Negro philanthropist’” (15), whose philanthropy helped to build black educational institutions, such as Dillard University in New Orleans. While it is important to recognize the work of black philanthropists—male and female—in traditional histories of the subject, my aim is to understand Pleasant—the historical and fictional figure—as a black radical philanthropist whose very mode of giving is an act of resistance that defies traditional categories of philanthropy altogether. Cliff’s Mary Ellen Pleasant, in particular, represents the “radical black subject” (5) as conceived by Carole Boyce Davies. For Davies, this figure “challenges the normalizing of state oppression, constructs an alternative discourse, and articulates these both theoretically and in practice” (5). Pleasant used her wealth to challenge not only slavery but the de facto and de jure segregation that followed. Dying penniless, she invested everything in dismantling structures of oppression. Rejecting the “notion of black uplift embedded in bourgeois ideals (and illusions)” (James 30) that undergirds American philanthropy writ large,

Mary Ellen Pleasant models a black radical feminist version of Americas philanthropy in which wealth accumulation is mobilized toward a material vision of freedom that flies in the face of state violence.

Throughout the 1880s, while Pleasant was pursuing lawsuits against race and gender discrimination in San Francisco that “disrupted dominant assumptions about the place of African Americans in post-Reconstruction America” (Hudson 63), Andrew Carnegie was inventing a paternalistic doctrine of “wealth administration” that turned on racial and gendered stereotypes. Published just one year prior to his first meeting with Booker T. Washington, Carnegie’s “Gospel of Wealth” advances a theory of philanthropy as a legitimate power structure in which “the millionaire will be but a trustee for the poor, intrusted [sic] for a season with a great part of the increased wealth of the community, but administering it for the community far better than it could or would have done for itself” (664). A reflection of a resurgent white paternalism at the turn of the century, his entire philosophy of philanthropy is built upon an exclusionary logic mobilized to secure the position of the ascendant white male industrialist in turn-of-the-century U.S. society. A major departure from what he calls “indiscriminate charity,” Carnegie envisioned philanthropy as “calculated to do [the masses] lasting good” (663).

Although Carnegie made no explicit mention of race in his redemptive account of the millionaire as “a trustee for the poor,” the racial logic of his trusteeship model is evident in the primary agreed-upon aims among philanthropists to “help...African American communities help themselves” (Zunz 37). Joy James

theorizes the relationship between white and black notions of racial uplift and Booker T. Washington's "ideology of vocational education for race advancement" (17) as an undemocratic elitism shaped by "masculinism," a milder—but still potent—form of sexism that "share[s] patriarchy's presupposition of the male as normative without its antifemale politics and rhetoric" (36). While the story of American philanthropy's large scale transformation of private wealth to benefit the public gives the appearance of a shift to a more benevolent wealthy class than that of the past, the story of Booker T. Washington persisting for ten long years to secure \$20,000 for black higher education—at a time when Carnegie's wealth grew into the hundreds of millions—exposes philanthropy's role in perpetuating inequality rather than redressing it.¹⁵ While black men, like Washington, could spend years proving their worthiness to these gatekeeping philanthropists in order to secure funds for their communities, black women remained perennially marginalized figures confined within stereotypes held over from slavery as sexually promiscuous, mummies, or dangerous figures who threatened the stability of an otherwise strong community.

Despite her wealth and stature in San Francisco, Mary Ellen Pleasant was known—oddly affectionately—as "Mammy Pleasant" for her entire life (Hudson). White women, by contrast, became the handmaidens of this new American philanthropy. Just as they performed an important function in regulating race relations during slavery, the cultivated image of "her superior Christian morality, her

¹⁵ According to *Forbes Magazine's* "Richest Americans in History," Carnegie's wealth was equal to 60% of the entire U.S. economy when he died in 1919.

unflinching maternal instincts, her gentleness and fragility” (Davis 27) distinguished white women from common stereotypes of black women at the time as “the heroic slave, the devoted mammy, [or] the two-bit floozy” (Hudson 116).

Du Bois, speaking from “within the veil,” made visible the color line in emergent philanthropic practices at the turn of the century, lamenting the “revival of the old Roman idea of the patron under whose protection the new-made freedman was put” (*Souls* 125). As the moral obligation of those with wealth, power, and authority in society, Carnegie’s “Gospel of Wealth” was influenced by Social Darwinism, a popular philosophy of the time that informed individualist notions of meritocracy to which American philanthropists subscribed. According to Carnegie’s gospel, economic inequality was a product of natural selection rather than the outcome of structures of inequality rooted in legacies of slavery and industrial labor exploitation. Carnegie’s account of the wealthy as benevolent doers of social good falls right in the middle of a decade in which Ida B. Wells reported that “1,115 Negro men, women and children [were] hanged, shot and roasted alive from January 1, 1882, to January 1, 1894” (chap. 6). An important moment in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Historian C. Vann Woodward argues, “the evidence of race conflict and violence, brutality and exploitation in this very period is overwhelming” (25). Despite Carnegie’s assertions to the contrary, philanthropy did very little to moderate social problems exacerbated, in part, by “the regular recurrence of economic crises” (Gatewood 2). Furthermore, unprecedented concentrations of wealth and poverty were growing at this time and would continue into the early twentieth century as the

number of millionaires passed 40,000 by 1916 while labor strikes and unrest peaked.¹⁶ Against this backdrop of rampant racial violence and labor unrest, Carnegie's trusteeship model, "calculated to do [the masses] lasting good" (Carnegie, "Wealth" 663), perverted the victims of exploitation and even lynching into social villains that his brand of "intense Individualism" (656) promised to remediate. In its most sinister form, Carnegie's trusteeship model of philanthropy framed social ills as behavioral abnormalities and implicitly sanctioned vigilante justice targeting the victims of such violence, thus serving as a powerful endorsement of stratified social relations that found its full expression in Jim Crow segregation.

In the transitional years between the Reconstruction Era and the Gilded Age, from 1870 to 1900, the number of (mostly white, mostly male) millionaires in the United States grew exponentially from an estimated 100 in the 1870s to more than 4,000 during the 1890s (Zunz 8). As greater fortunes were concentrated in the hands of a growing elite, "inequality in the New World seemed to be catching up with inequality in old Europe," Thomas Piketty explains in *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014), a change that "greatly worried US economists at the time" (348). Studies of the Gilded Age's uneven development are often divorced from studies of the Reconstruction Era, even though these historical periods overlap in the 1870s (see Calhoun and Du Bois).¹⁷ The lack of comprehensive redistribution during the

¹⁶ The Ludlow Massacre, an attack on the United Mine Workers striking against Rockefeller in 1914, was the most violent example.

¹⁷ While the periodization for Radical Reconstruction is often given as 1865-1876, W.E.B. Du Bois argues for an alternative periodization of 1860-1880 in his groundbreaking work, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880* (1935).

Reconstruction Era is an important context for understanding the uneven development of The Gilded Age. If the nation's wealth was built on the backs of slaves in the antebellum period, it was built at the expense of the newly-emancipated in the Gilded Age, according to some.

Du Bois looks back to the Reconstruction Era to retrieve what otherwise might have gone unnoticed: the racial dimensions of the unprecedented wealth accumulation of the Gilded Age. Exposing it as an “unwritten history,” he laments that “where all the blame should rest...perhaps even time will never reveal” (*Souls* 32). What Du Bois does claim to reveal, however, is that the Panic of 1873—the global financial crisis that was called the “Great Depression” until the 1929 crash eclipsed it—was a watershed moment for the recently emancipated, once *again* dispossessed after the promises of forty acres and a mule failed to materialize during Radical Reconstruction. He writes in *The Souls of Black Folk*:

Then in one sad day came the crash,—all the hard-earned dollars of the freedmen disappeared; but that was the least of the loss,—all the faith in saving went too, and much of the faith in men; and that was a loss that a Nation which to-day sneers at Negro shiftlessness has never yet made good. (32)

Du Bois rightfully lays the blame on the nation for failing to make good on the structural changes required to fulfill its promises of democratic equality and multiracial inclusion, condemning, in *Black Reconstruction in America*, the failure to redress “the robbery of slavery” (337). He writes again about the “seven mystic years” between the end of the Civil War and the Panic of 1873 in which “the majority of thinking Americans of the North believed in the equal manhood of Negroes” (319)

until “a new and tremendous dictatorship of capital” (239) arose and contributed to the abandonment of Reconstruction’s policies of political inclusion and material redistribution. While thousands were striking it rich, millions were being thrust into poverty, with minority groups representing a disproportionate number of the poor. This racial legacy binds American philanthropy—“a system of white patronage” (Du Bois, *Souls* 125)—to the suffering and dispossession of black America, in particular. By setting much of the novel in 1874 with a frame narrative of the 1920s, *Free Enterprise* draws upon this historical context to comment on the possibilities for alternative modes of radical social change foreclosed by the rise of Gilded Age philanthropy as *the* answer to social ills plaguing the nation, a reformist ideology that would soon dominate the subsequent Progressive Era (1890-1920).

In an era defined by the “cumulative weakening of resistance to racism” (Woodward 53), Mary Ellen Pleasant exploited racial and gendered stereotypes of the mammy as part of her entrepreneurship. She made much of her wealth through her hotel business in San Francisco, where she served investors of the western railroads. According to biographer Lynn Hudson, she “did business with the city’s power brokers and robber barons (many of whom stayed in her establishments)” (55). Just like the robber barons Andrew Carnegie and Leland Stanford, Pleasant got rich from the rail industry. However, Pleasant did so in the guise of a servant of the industry rather than a master of it. Pleasant capitalized on various lucrative business and investment opportunities through her hotel, but never fully aligned with the “evil genius of the robber barons” (Calhoun 12) who cheated and schemed to build their

wealth. In fact, Pleasant had few allegiances to the people she did business with, for she was known to “distribute money among strikers—people who were down on the railroad builders” (William Willmore Jr. qtd. in Hudson 42-43). She also frequently used her business as a refuge for fugitives escaping slavery through the Underground Railroad. Her ability to shapeshift and perform in a multitude of roles was a critical part of her success and her subversion.

In *Free Enterprise*, Cliff develops the characteristic of shapeshifting to suggest that Pleasant’s ability to disguise herself enabled her radical Americas philanthropy:

She began her empire building by embodying Mammydom, as much as she grated against the word, the notion, taking care of the guests in her hotels, washing their linen in her laundries, satisfying them in her restaurants.

To further quell any unease that she was stepping across, over, and through, Mary Ellen Pleasant dressed as a dignified, unobtrusive houseservant, no handkerchief head, but black alpaca dress, white apron, lace cap.

So she could move among them easily, in and out of any station they required. Disguised.

‘How can I help you, Mammy?’ a stockbroker solicitously inquired. The year was 1858.

‘I’m fixin’ to sell my shares in the Baltimore and Ohio; decided I don’t trust money that don’t look like money.’ He chuckled as he was meant to, and handed over \$30,000 in cash, and when she pressed him, converted it to gold, before her very eyes. (105)

Pleasant’s performance with the stockbroker in the bank is a metaphor for the implicit “requirements” of “free enterprise.” Exposing the irony of her participation in a capitalist market dependent upon race-based slavery, Pleasant strategically assumes the position of the “Mammy”—with all of its trappings—in order to participate in the so-called free market. This scene suggests that “free enterprise” has two connotations:

the free market and the “enterprise” of black liberation, a subversion of the conventional meaning that turns the idea of the free market on its head.

Regularly disguised in the novel, Pleasant conceals her shrewdness and business acumen, aware that her very presence poses a threat to the elite circles in which she circulates. W.E.B. Du Bois described the historical Mary Ellen Pleasant as “strangely effective and influential” (qtd. in Hudson 1). She “hid money in accounts,” biographer Lynn Hudson writes, “controlled capital that was probably invested under someone else’s name and left little record of how she acquired her thousands if not millions of dollars” (9). In the novel, she covertly operates within a market meant to exclude her. She appropriates it for the enterprise of freeing people. Under the cover of “Mammydom,” Pleasant converts her wealth into an economic weapon against slavery that strikes at the heart of the marketplace. Cliff’s novel exposes slavery to be the foundation of racial capitalism, and in so doing, she unveils the ugly genealogy behind what constitutes primitive accumulation in American society. In this sense, Pleasant’s \$30,000 funds a rebellion against U.S. empire and the power and wealth produced through slavery and the trade. Her investment in a revolutionary act targets the core of this rotten structure. In this context, Pleasant’s philanthropy is an act of revolt that reverberates far beyond the Raid on Harper’s Ferry. It is an investment in an anti-racist, anti-imperial world order, one in which the reformatory aims of American philanthropy are subsumed under a revolutionary new order of Americas philanthropy that decenters the United States and offers a transnational vision of redistribution and equality.

The representation of “free enterprise” as an inversion of market norms cuts a number of ways. On the one hand, Pleasant’s participation in the market might seem to affirm the free market’s purported lack of restrictions or exclusions; on the other, it attests to the contradictions of “free enterprise” in which Pleasant is only afforded entry because she transgresses social and institutional boundaries of race, gender, and class while subversively doing all that “they require” in order to participate. The role of “mammy” as an entrepreneur and investor in 1858 does not simply subvert the stereotype of “African American women serving as wet nurses and caretakers of white children” (Wallace-Sanders 4). It retells the history of capitalism by bringing the black working class woman out of the shadows to reveal an insurrectionary politics. Far from a simpleton who doesn’t understand the abstraction of capital—“money that don’t look like money”—Pleasant represents a people who “knew capitalism intimately, historically. Albeit from the wrong end” (Cliff 143). At the wrong end of capitalism and at the wrong end of philanthropy, black people, Pleasant suggests, understand both as structures of oppression designed to keep them down. Pleasant subverts these structures in a dual maneuver by both resisting dispossession by virtue of accumulating wealth in a marketplace structured on her exclusion and by investing that wealth in the dismantling of those structures. Her \$30,000 gift is part of a genealogy of slave revolts and transnational movements that trace back to the Haitian Revolution, the largest and most successful slave rebellion in the hemisphere.

Pleasant’s Americas philanthropy is oppositional. Her investments work against the structures of racial capitalism and expose their roots in the transatlantic

slave trade. In *Free Enterprise*, Pleasant's legacy links the abolitionist struggle leading up to the U.S. Civil War with the fight for civil rights during and after Reconstruction and the struggle against de jure segregation. Against "the political success of the doctrine of racial separation" (Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* 700), the new brand of philanthropy promoted by Gilded Age robber barons proves to be a counterrevolutionary tool of exclusion that helped to rationalize inequality after the abandonment of Reconstruction. Inventing a narrative in which private wealth would be put to public use in the interest of rich white male industrialists, "the new rich felt free to both envision and fashion the common good" (Zunz 8). American philanthropy emerged as an institution built upon the strategic administration of wealth for the public "under the guidance of the wealthy themselves and their wise advisors" (Zunz 9). Other historians have also noted the significance of this shift, indicating that in the United States, "charity and philanthropy stand at opposite poles: the one concrete and individual, the other abstract and institutional" (Gross 31). Charity in the United States had long followed British norms of generally giving directly to those in need. After a series of legal challenges in the 1880s, the Tilden Act of 1893 helped to make "open-ended philanthropy for the good of mankind the law of the land" (Zunz 11). Placing this history in the context of the formal end of Radical Reconstruction policies in 1877 suggests that the breakdown of "the reintegration of public and private sectors to pursue a conceived public good" (Friedman and McGarvie 157) through redress paved the way for Gilded Age philanthropists to step in to create their own privatized version of a post-emancipation

social order that participated in the rise of Jim Crow.¹⁸ White philanthropy often came with stipulations that placed restrictions on what could be achieved for the black people their donations were meant to “help.” Nowhere is this more evident than in the case with black education in which “donations were often contingent upon the college’s endorsement of the “Hampton-Tuskegee” model of education rather than a classical-liberal curriculum” (Gasman and Sedgwick 19). In other words, that Gilded Age philanthropy took the place of a national anti-racist experiment further implicates it in what W.E.B. Du Bois called the “counter-revolution of 1876” (*Black Reconstruction* 667) that ushered in the resurgence of white supremacy.

When Radical Reconstruction’s policies of redistribution of wealth and power were abandoned, a combination of sharecropping, vagrancy laws, white supremacist violence, and the foreclosure of the radical promise of “Black Reconstruction,” as W.E.B. Du Bois called it, functioned to keep the newly emancipated in conditions of slavery in all but name. Meanwhile, robber barons presided over transnational corporate empires and extracted unprecedented amounts of wealth that they were able to convert into influential charitable foundations, a key function of U.S. empire building. These foundations followed the Carnegie Foundation’s lead (as one of the first to receive its charter in the United States) and were built upon the tenets outlined in Andrew Carnegie’s “Gospel of Wealth,” a distinctly American creed of *noblesse oblige* rooted in meritocratic notions of worthiness rather than aristocratic notions of

¹⁸ Historians Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie go so far as to call Radical Reconstruction “public-sector philanthropy” (qtd. in Gross 157), thereby framing the government experiment in redistribution after the Civil War as a counterpoint to Gilded Age philanthropy that emerged at around the same time.

duty. *Free Enterprise* registers the oppression of white male philanthropy by critiquing the common good discourse of twentieth century philanthropy as a form of bondage, as noted above, and denouncing Booker T. Washington's version of racial uplift as "supplication," which Pleasant says in the novel "was not [her] mode" (69). She sets herself apart from the Talented Tenth's "spectator's view of politics" (James 157). Pleasant delivering a bag of gold to John Brown, her "splendid ally" (Cliff 141), revises the Washington-Carnegie style relationship by turning the racialized subject into the agent rather than the object of philanthropy (as is so often the case). Using the very tools of racial capitalism—Pleasant's accumulation and Brown's white privilege—they redeploy the fruits of the system to ensure its destruction.

Free Enterprise, therefore, offers a counternarrative to the official versions of history that have been "printed, bound, and gagged" in the service of "the common good" (Cliff 16) by detailing an alternative mode of America's philanthropy invested in destroying slavery through radical action toward a truly inclusive, equal, democratic society. Cliff exposes the very notion of the common good as an ideological construct that turns on exclusion. The common good constructed by American philanthropists also serves to further marginalize the oppressed by naturalizing their subjection. The common good "envisioned and fashioned" by American philanthropists of the Gilded Age hinges on incremental social reforms that further mask rather than reveal the root causes of inequality they purport to address. Pleasant's black radical feminist philanthropy represents multiple forms of investments in causes of freedom. She does not seek to envision a common

worldview; she seeks freedom and justice. As the major donor of the Raid on Harper's Ferry or as the litigant in the "streetcar cases of 1866-68" (Hudson 63), Pleasant put her money toward common causes in resisting multiple forms of oppression.

For Cliff, the difference between Pleasant's brand of Americas philanthropy and Carnegie's Americas philanthropy can be described as "the difference between being an American liberal and being an American radical" (Cliff 15). The distinction between radical and liberal is not the only political identity challenged here. Cliff also frames "American" in a hemispheric context. In the novel, Mary Shadd Carey speaks at the Chatham Convention in Ontario, Canada, a critical site of resistance during the U.S. Civil War. She addresses an audience from throughout the Americas, including Annie Christmas, whose family origins in Jamaica are recounted in the chapter before, and Mary Ellen Pleasant, who is suspected of being a "voodoo queen" from Haiti (18). Cliff's expansive formulation of America is differentiated from what Kirsten Silva Gruesz describes as the "imperial arrogation of the name of the hemisphere by the most powerful nation in it" (25). Pleasant's philanthropic contributions to the abolition movement have never been situated in a continuum with the narrative of American philanthropy associated with the Gilded Age, in part, because they very likely would be considered un-American, acts of treason aimed at bringing down the U.S. slave state.

The U.S.-centric narrative of American philanthropy serving the common good erodes in the face of Mary Ellen Pleasant's story. Her radical version of

Americas philanthropy as a material redistribution of power and wealth provides a concrete critique of the dominant national ideology of American philanthropy rooted in abstract notions of doing good. Pleasant's materialist vision of revolutionary equality forms part of the genealogy of slave rebellions led from the bottom up throughout the Americas, the most successful of which was the Haitian Revolution. By refusing the synecdoche of "American" as a referent for the United States, Cliff connects Pleasant's philanthropy to key events in racial and political struggles throughout the history of the Americas, which, in turn, pluralizes the very concept of American philanthropy to include the funding of insurgency against oppressors as one of its modes. In doing so, it exposes the Gilded Age origin story of American philanthropy as a counterrevolutionary one that provides a blueprint for maintaining the social status quo, including racial segregation and separate gendered spheres. In the novel, American philanthropy functions as a secret weapon for both liberation in the hands of minority subjects and oppression in the hands of the wealthy elite. On the one hand, Pleasant, a black radical female, is—against all economic odds—the subversive funder of an insurgency against the slave state. On the other, Cliff connects philanthropy to colonization and westward imperial expansion by noting the instrumental role that patronage systems played in the colonial economy when she includes the specific details of Captain James Cook naming the Sandwich Islands "in homage to his patron" (49). Furthermore, in letters to her confidante and protégé, Annie Christmas, Pleasant connects the abstract ideas of free enterprise to the material conditions of the slave trade. Discussions in the novel such as this one offer

Pleasant an opportunity to both mentor Annie and to share her feelings on the legacies of the trade, the violent origin of much inherited *and* self-made wealth accumulation in the nineteenth century.

Love: A Counternarrative of the Philanthropic “American” State

The protagonist of Marie Vieux-Chauvet’s *Love (Amour 1968)*, Claire Clamont, has much in common with Mary Ellen Pleasant and her “comrade-in-arms,” Annie Christmas. Like them, Claire is a traitor to her class who turns to the “constructive use of violence in the cause of liberation” (Cliff 79). A 34-year-old “old maid” (5) from an aristocratic Creole family in rural Haiti, Claire explains that her “cozy bourgeois upbringing is like a tattoo on [her] skin” (17). The novella, set in 1939, looks back as far as 1914 to follow Claire through the 25-year journey to shed her repressive “aristocratic composure” (142). It tells two parallel stories: “the town of X...emancipating itself” (4) and Claire’s emancipation from bourgeois repression. By the novella’s climax, Claire’s inner revolt against an identity inscribed upon her turns outward. An unlikely revolutionary, she kills the local military official, Commandant Calédu, who has terrorized the community for decades under the aegis of the foreign U.S. occupation. I read this concluding moment of *Love* as an act of philanthropy, one that further expands what can be called philanthropy because it does not include an exchange of money. By reading the novella through philanthropy’s most basic and expansive definition, Claire appears to act out of a “love of mankind” (*OED*), for her decisive blow to the ruling authority frees the town from the tyrant who has terrorized the town “for about eight years now” (8). The

name of the novel allows for this reading by framing the killing of Commandant Calédu as an act of love for the Haitian people made possible through a personal transformation from a self-interested member of the elite ruling class to what can be described as a “comrade-in-arms” fighting alongside the local peasants she once despised.

Reading Claire’s attack on Commandant Calédu as a form of philanthropy runs counter to the normative portrayals rendered by historians, such as Olivier Zunz. Yet her actions fit into Zunz’s broad definitions of philanthropy as a “search for root causes” (9) and “largesse as open-ended” (12). The novel juxtaposes two modes of philanthropy: one is based on a capitalist logic of exchange affiliated with political and cultural hegemony, the local elite, and the United States; the other comes from below and is rooted in acts of solidarity across race, gender, and class lines oriented toward freedom. Claire either models or reacts to these different forms of philanthropy and reflects on them in her journal. As a member of the local elite, Claire’s personal transformation is intertwined with the town’s grassroots revolt against oppressive, foreign rule. Written in 1967—“a time when what would end up as a thirty-year dictatorship run by François ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier and Jean-Claude ‘Baby Doc’ Duvalier was becoming more and more severe” (Danticat xi)—and set in 1939 amidst the residual U.S. occupation that officially ended five years earlier, *Love* explores philanthropy as a contested site of power that shapes political alliances as well as civic and social relationships.

In the novella, philanthropy in its most recognizable form is portrayed as a power play, a complete takeover of infrastructure and politics resulting in the dissolution of local sovereignty. In her journal, Claire writes of an episode from her past in which she tried to save her family's coffee plantation by assuming the role of a philanthropist with her father's farmers. In 1919, as the eldest daughter, she inherited her father's sixty-acre Lion Mountain coffee farm and became the head of the household. Through self-reflection in her journal, Claire finds herself "evolved separate from [her] real self" (118) and sees her unsavory business dealings of the past in a new light. She tells of how she tried to run the family farm like her "despotic and merciless" (113) father, which led to the massacre of her farmers and their families. As a result of undercutting local planters, Claire's workers were "all hacked to pieces" (111) by planters retaliating against her. The precipitating event of the massacre is when Claire attempts to transform herself into the likeness of a Gilded Age philanthropist in an effort to win the loyalty and trust of the peasants of Lion Mountain. Acting with his despotism, but "neither feared nor respected" (111) as her father had been, Claire is perceived to be an extortionist rather than a philanthropist. It proves disastrous. "I tried to win them over," she explains, "I brought clothing for their wives, rum for the men, I went to their homes with candy for the children, cleverly trying to buy their devotion by spoiling them. I learned the hard way that it wasn't enough" (111). The scene plays on gendered stereotypes of women who struggle to achieve respect, especially when they exhibit traditionally masculine traits and behaviors. Yet it also connects philanthropy to an aggressive, masculine business

model in which donations are dispensed in order to keep excessive profits. When performed by a woman who is expected to be nurturing and caring by nature, the ruse of philanthropy as selfless benevolence is exposed as mere appeasement in exchange for exploiting her workers. The peasants who harvest the coffee on Lion Mountain see right through Claire's strategy to buy their subservience. And it backfires. They see her "generosity" as an attempt on the part of the Creole planter's daughter to maintain plantation relations characteristic of her father's generation, despite the changing conditions in Haiti and in the global coffee market.

Just as her farmworkers saw right through her bribes, Claire has a political awakening only once she is on the receiving end of a philanthropic relationship. It is the United States' benevolent posturing during its military occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) that allows her to see the problematic nature of such relationships. She ultimately renounces power over her workers and embraces the power of the people. This new awareness is also part of a love story between Claire and Frantz Camuse, her high school sweetheart whom she had intended to marry. During the U.S. invasion and occupation, Frantz is in medical school in France. He only returns to Haiti as part of a humanitarian aid coalition formed between France and the United States in the aftermath of a devastating hurricane. Representing the old and new colonizers, the French doctors and U.S. diplomats arrive together under the guise of helping Haiti recover from the disaster while also opportunistically wedging a foothold of soft power in the country amidst the ruin. Commenting on the situation to Frantz, Claire remarks: "the State Department, without any bitterness, played its

philanthropic role, for the Americans had left our country four years ago” (115). If philanthropy at Lion Mountain forms part of a business strategy for maintaining power, property, and wealth, here we see philanthropy as a U.S. foreign policy strategy intended to exert its hegemony in the hemisphere through political coercion and territorial expansion under the cover of humanitarianism.

Critiques of philanthropy often focus on its dimension of soft power, but in *Love*, philanthropy is merely a cover for foreign aggression, a form of hard power. After speaking so cynically about the aid mission, Claire alienates Frantz who, “astonished by [her] self-assurance” (111), turns cold. He becomes “indifferent but friendly” (111) toward her. Frantz’s role as an aid worker transforms his relationship with Claire. Alienated by her cynicism at nineteen, Frantz no longer sees Claire as marriageable, an identity that defines her and turns her into an “old maid” (4). Their relationship ends as a casualty of the geopolitical relations between the United States—whose power and interests dominate the hemisphere—and Haiti, impoverished by its indebtedness to France, a legacy of the Haitian revolution perpetuated by the United States as a French ally and regional power.¹⁹ Her self-awakening—made possible by de-colonizing her mind through journaling — represents a newfound independence from the trappings of bourgeois marriage and society; it also foreshadows the country’s fight for self-determination against foreign occupation.

¹⁹ Haiti was forced to make an indemnity payment of 150 million francs to recompense the French for their loss of property—the treaty was signed by Haiti’s President Jean Pierre Boyer (Dillon and Drexler 12).

The United States runs all of the local infrastructure and institutions in Claire's town—"the police station, the Customs House, the Public Works and the Sanitation Department"—and fosters "all of the humiliations and benefits an occupation brings" (110). A puppet government serves U.S. interests, granting the U.S. state itself plausible deniability. Under the pretense of what might best be characterized as a form of "benevolent assimilation," the United States lurks behind every façade and every relationship, as Haiti, like many other Caribbean nations, was targeted by a new phase of U.S. expansionism at the turn of the twentieth century. When President McKinley delivered the "Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation" days after the Treaty of Paris of 1898 dissolved the Spanish Empire and ceded Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the United States, he represented the United States' role in the Philippines "not as invaders or conquerors but as friends, to protect the natives in their homes, in their employments, and in their personal and religious rights" (McKinley). While the policy was specific to the Philippines as a U.S. territory, it reflects a "common imperial trope," as Amy Kaplan calls it, used by the United States "that posits anarchy abroad as the prime cause of imperial intervention" (12). In the case of Haiti, though not a U.S. territory, the assassination of President Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam offered the premise for the U.S. invasion. On July 28, 1915, the U.S. government "cit[ed] widespread violence, anarchy, and imminent danger to foreigners' lives and property" (Plummer 241) as its justification for broad-reaching control in the country. Framing itself as a benevolent invader, the United States purported an altruistic mission of restoring order for the Haitian people, even

though its “efforts to profit from Haiti” (Sepinwall 217) were evident from the outset. The discourse of benevolence may not have been new when McKinley proclaimed it in 1898; indeed, antebellum Jacksonian discourses specific to American moral reform societies referred to a Christianized United States and world at large as “the Benevolent Empire.” However, McKinley’s imperial ideology of benevolent assimilation drew, I argue, from a historically distinctive discourse around American philanthropy in which white wealthy men—and white wealthy nations—fashioned themselves as friends, protectors, and “trustees of the poor” (Carnegie “Wealth”), an ideology most famously articulated in popular culture by Rudyard Kipling as “The White Man’s Burden” (1899).

In *Love*, the United States “played its philanthropic role” (115) from afar in the aftermath of its violent military intervention. American philanthropy is merely a performance of benevolence or good will in the novel, one in which the United States presents itself as what it will later call a “good neighbor,” aiding a poor country in the service of promoting democracy and freedom while exploiting the country’s resources and people for its own gain. The United States’ disavowal of aggression is exposed in the novel through the actions of businessman M. Long, who plays the part of a detached interloper only concerned with commerce and not with politics. His role in the novel evokes the familiar character of Alden Pyle from *The Quiet American* (Greene 1955), another story of collusion between old French colonizers and new U.S. aggressors, but in France’s eastern holding of Indochina instead of Haiti. Pyle, who “was determined...to do good, not to any individual person but to a country, a

continent, a world” (Greene 18), symbolizes the irony of U.S. interventionism as a form of doing good, as the book describes it. Another “quiet American,” M. Long appears behind a submachine gun, killing twenty people at once in order to quell the peasant-led rebellion at the end of *Love*. The American businessman abroad—like the CEO at home and Greene’s CIA agent in Indochina—performs an outwardly economic mission of doing good that masks interventionist political motivations that enact violence on the local people and threaten local sovereignty. In fact, according to the CIA’s *World Factbook*, “the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has experienced political instability for most of its history” (“Haiti”). The structure of the sentence alone is suggestive of how economics, in this case poverty, functions as a self-evident explanation for the country’s political conditions without any hint of irony regarding the United States’ role in contributing to underdevelopment or in fostering political instability there. In Vieux-Chauvet’s Haiti, the United States frames itself as a trustee of the world’s poor, much like Carnegie’s trusteeship model of a philanthropist. As early as 1919, Claire saw clearly through the State Department’s “philanthropic role” as the solution to the problem of hemispheric inequalities. By the end of *Love*, in 1939, the chorus of peasants “hollering ‘Down with Mister Long’” (155)—twenty of whom are shot down by him at once—reveals his role as proxy for the violent U.S. mission of imperialist expansion justified by thinly veiled promises to bring jobs and political order to Haiti.

Vieux-Chauvet’s work speaks to a historic tradition of transnational black radicalism. One of the most vocal critiques of American “benevolence” as a veil for

violent interventionism was W.E.B. Du Bois, who denounced the United States' paternalistic treatment of "weaker and darker peoples" (*Souls* 45) and linked imperialism abroad to racism at home. Writing in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, he established a critical genealogy between the U.S. occupations of the West Indies, Hawai'i, and the Philippines in *The Souls of Black Folk*. "The crime of this happy-go-lucky nation," he wrote, "which goes blundering along with its Reconstruction tragedies, its Spanish war interludes and Philippine matinees.... Once in debt, it is no easy matter for a whole race to emerge" (122). By placing the withdrawal of National Guard troops stationed in the U.S. South to enforce the policies of Reconstruction alongside U.S. occupation of foreign territories in its theaters of war in the Pacific and the Caribbean, Du Bois exposed how race and nation were at the heart of transnational dramas acted out at the turn of the century. He finds the United States guilty not only of oppression of black folks in the United States, but of people of color everywhere subject to U.S. power.

In *Love*, we are told "that in this black nation, color prejudice is as subtle and dangerous as in the United States" (118). Claire experiences this first-hand as a dark-skinned white-mulatto. As she tells it, the "mahogany color [she] had inherited...went off like a small bomb in the tight circle of whites and white-mulattoes with whom [her] parents socialized" (4). Anxieties about her skin color within the family and the Haitian bourgeois class hint at the shared histories of race-based slavery in the hemisphere, a legacy that continues to haunt the "philanthropic" relationship between the United States and Haiti. The novella explicitly aligns these histories when Jean

Luze declares: “In the middle of the twentieth century your little town is going through what France went through during the time of Louis XVI” (17). By comparing the growing dissent among the middle classes that culminated in the French Revolution to the condition of terror and repression the town of X experiences under U.S. occupation, Luze compares the people of Claire’s town to the Haitians who helped to overthrow the monarchy in the French Revolution. In *The Black Jacobins* (1938), the famous Trinidadian radical critic and historian C.L.R. James—who theorized Haiti as “the market of the new world” (50) and therefore, the economic center of the French and Haitian Revolutions—made a similar comparison, but in reverse. Using his present moment to look backward, he drew a historical lineage between eighteenth century slavery and contemporary forms of enslavement when he wrote: “well-meaning persons talked of the iniquity of slavery and the slave-trade [in the eighteenth century], as well-meaning persons in 1938 talked about the native question in Africa or the misery of the Indian peasant” (51).

In fact, the specter of slave revolt in Haiti produced anxiety amongst the planter class in the United States, which wanted to aid white Haitian planters who fled to the United States to seek protection from the newly formed U.S. government. As a result, the Haitian Revolution played a formative role in the development of U.S. foreign policy within the hemisphere. In 1794, James Madison, a representative of Virginia at the time, set a precedent for U.S. international aid as the head of a committee that appropriated congressional funds for "refugees" fleeing the Haitian Revolution. Not at all befitting the image of penniless displaced people fleeing

oppression, as noted by historian Merle Curti, they were mostly "well-to-do planters and, as monarchists and conservatives, looked with horror on the republicanism and racial egalitarianism of the French Revolution" (Curti 9). As he argued in his seminal work *American Philanthropy Abroad* (1963), "in providing relief for the Santo Domingan refugees on the ground of the general welfare clause of the Constitution, Congress set a precedent for another step in international philanthropy" (9). That the Haitian Revolution spurred the United States to develop its foreign policy and foreign aid along racial doctrines and interventionist lines is useful for understanding how the United States has cloaked its interventions under the guise of philanthropy, even as such interventions ultimately "provide[d] for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States" (U.S. Const. Art. I sec. 8). The Haitian Revolution and its ideals of a free black nation were a nightmarish cautionary tale as far as the United States was concerned.

When the complete trilogy, *Amour, Colère et Folie* (*Love, Anger, Madness*), was published in 1968, it was such a powerful critique of the corrupt Haitian government and its collusion with the United States that Vieux-Chauvet was forced into exile, ironically, in the United States. Of the "new era of feminine letters" in Haiti in the second half of the 20th century, according to Haitian literary critics Louis-Philippe Dalembert and Lyonel Trouillot, Vieux-Chauvet stands out for her "subversive approach to the themes of color prejudice through the old mulatto/black

conflict...[and] female sexual freedom” (71-72).²⁰ Haitian author and translator of the trilogy Edwidge Danticat explains in her introduction that Vieux-Chauvet “was a member of the ‘occupation generation’” that witnessed and suffered under U.S. rule (x). Danticat cites W.E.B. Du Bois’s condemnation of the U.S. occupation as a war with Haiti that produced instability in the nation. Danticat, through Du Bois, finds the “open rebellion” in 1920s Haiti to be a consequence of rather than a justification for U.S. intervention (x). Vieux-Chauvet’s novella offers a complex critique of the U.S. occupation (1915-1934) and its subsequent “economic control of the country until 1947” (Danticat x). Writing of how “life bent us under a degrading dictatorship” (154) in 1968, Vieux-Chauvet uses Claire’s “resurrected past” (118) to draw parallels between Claire’s struggles in the town of X and the Haitian people’s struggle under the Duvalier dictatorship, which was “becoming more and more severe” (xi). It’s not the only parallel. M. Long’s lurking in the novel evokes the multiple CIA attempts to overthrow the Duvalier dictatorship 1957-1971 in order to promote “democracy,” the same premise for intervention used more than fifty years earlier to justify the U.S. Marine invasion on July 28, 1915. The novella also looks back to the Haitian Revolution and finds the spirit of its leader, Toussaint L’Ouverture, in Claire, an unlikely heroine. C.L.R. James reminds us when speaking of L’Ouverture: “the leaders of a revolution are usually those who have been able to profit by the cultural advantages of the system they are attacking” (19). As a member of the Creole

²⁰ Translations mine. Original: “une nouvelle ère pour les lettres féminines” (71). “Ce livre d’une rare modernité est tout autant subversif quant aux thèmes abordés: le préjugé de couleur à travers le vieux conflit Noir/Mulâtre; les exactions des tontons-macoutes; la libre sexualité de la femme....” (71-72).

bourgeoisie, Claire, too, is perfectly situated to use her knowledge and privilege to subvert the system from the inside.

Claire prospers financially from U.S. rule. She tells us from the start, “thanks to them I am gathering a fortune” (5). Yet by the end of the novella, Claire is no longer the obstinate heiress of Lion Mountain focused on consolidating her power. She is an assassin. Attacking the local surrogate of U.S. aggression, Claire kills Commandant Calédu to avenge the torture and disappearance of her friend, Jane, and to free her town. Killing Commandant Calédu is an expression of self-assertion and female liberation that opens up a space for a feminist articulation of Haitian self-rule. Her personal liberation represents “the constructive use of violence in the cause of liberation” (Cliff 79) born out of reclaiming control over her own desires that had been repressed under bourgeois norms. As such, she models a form of sovereignty and self-determination for the Haitian people. Running through both *Love* and *Free Enterprise*, this philosophy of emancipation and freedom is at the heart of what I have been calling radical Americas philanthropy. When Claire “plunge[s] the dagger into his back once, twice, three times” (155) she brings down the local terrorist Calédu and demonstrates the power of the Haitian people to rise up—as a collective—against their oppressors. Determined to liberate herself from bourgeois repression, Claire betrays her class and acts in solidarity with her race. Loving instead of hating her blackness, she commits this act of violence as a member of the “black country” and within a tradition of Black Jacobins who dared to demand the same freedoms that the French Revolution of 1789 marked for the peasantry in France. She participates in the

rebellion that ends the U.S. occupation by acting *with* rather than *on behalf of* her community, a distinctly different kind of “love for mankind” born out of a commonly articulated “good.”

Conclusion

Both *Free Enterprise* and *Love* create narratives about resisting the violence—past and present—of racial capitalism by participating in female-centered armed revolution. That they do so through a provocative engagement with American philanthropy is, in part, what makes them valuable for comparison. The fictionalized Mary Ellen Pleasant and the imaginary character Claire Clamont prosper financially under these regimes, but they suffer mightily because of their race and gender. Using their class privilege, they redeploy their wealth to transform the very structures of capital that they profit from. Acting in solidarity with their race and subverting gendered norms, the two characters’ radical “largesse, open-ended” (Zunz 12) characterizes their radical Americas philanthropy. While *Free Enterprise* models philanthropy that decenters the history of robber barons, thereby tracing an alternative trajectory that sees philanthropy as means for transformative change rather than tokenistic reform, *Love* tests the limits of the very idea of American philanthropy by construing philanthropy without any exchange of money. Ultimately, Claire and Mary Ellen Pleasant oppose oppression by using Americas philanthropy as a means of achieving freedom, tracing their revolutionary lineage to the Haitian Revolution.

Radicalized, in part, by the State Department’s purportedly “philanthropic role” during the U.S. occupation of Haiti, Claire Clamont targets the philanthropic

state through its surrogate, Commandant Calédu, a trained Haitian agent operating in the service of the United States in an effort to “tame this little town famous for its arrogance and prejudices” (14). Individually and collectively, Claire and her town revolt against this civilizing mission. Claire sheds her class identity and emancipates herself by appropriating one of its repressive mechanisms: journaling. Discovering herself as a silent observer of her family and her town, Claire is emboldened to act in solidarity with the townspeople who have taken up arms against M. Long and Calédu. She delivers the decisive blow that ends the reign of terror in her community.

Revolution and its radical modes, such as Americas philanthropy, emerge out of a specifically feminist subjectivity articulated through the feminist genre of the journal. The first words of *Love* introduce Claire as she “quietly, like a shadow” (3) watches the outside world play out on the streets, peaking from behind the blinds of her bedroom window. Travelling through history and her “resurrected past” (118), Claire’s vantage is one of interiority, but not the bourgeois interiority of individualism; rather, it is an interiority through which Claire garners agency and, in first person narration, writes of her life in relation to her family, her community, and her country. Through the journal, she combats the kind of erasure that, as Carole Boyce Davies has argued, is regularly imposed upon radical black female subjects. Journaling blurs the bourgeois notion of separate public and private spheres by helping her to see her very identity as political. With her consciousness raised through self-reflection, Claire prepares herself to act differently than she had in the past. Rejecting tokenistic forms of philanthropy that she tried at Lion Mountain and that

the United States has tried in Haiti, which imbue the giver with the upper hand of power, Claire recasts philanthropy as a radical act with hemispheric consequences done out of a love for herself and her people—and her people’s history of revolution—when she kills Calédu.

Like Claire, Mary Ellen Pleasant fights erasure using a traditionally feminine genre, but instead of keeping a journal, she writes letters to Annie Christmas and forges a deep comradeship through these exchanges. As Erica L. Johnson notes, Pleasant’s “conversations and letters of the 1880s continue to be shaped by her struggle against ‘the trade’ in its transnational significance—with the corollary that resistance is most forceful when mounted from multiple geopolitical sites” (118). Pleasant’s letters themselves travel across space and time. In an attempt to write to the diplomat Henry Adams, she receives returned letters postmarked from “Fiji. East Timor. Tonga. Bougainville. Java” (Cliff 175). The only response that Pleasant receives from Adams as her letter travels in search of him is “exotic postmarks” with “imprimatur[s] of a mother state” (175).

The circulation of the returned letter alone speaks volumes about the United States’ role in colonization and anticipates its future role as the imperial power that will overshadow all nineteenth century colonizers in the mid- and late twentieth century. Her letters to Annie are written from San Francisco, Boston, New Bedford, and Martha’s Vineyard, marking locations of wealth, abolitionism, and political power— Pleasant’s letter from Martha’s Vineyard in August 1874 coincides with a famous historical visit there by President Ulysses S. Grant. Annie keeps Pleasant’s

letters and reads from them as she tells her friend's story to another female friend, thereby keeping her friendship with Pleasant alive by finding the same spirit of friendship with other women long after Pleasant's death. Even Pleasant's \$30,000 gift to the Raid on Harper's Ferry is first noted in the novel through a letter to John Brown. With a "carpetbag full of gold," Pleasant wires a telegram to Brown notifying him: "YOU WILL FIND I AM AS GOOD AS MY WORD STOP...THE PURSE IS YOURS STOP AS PROMISED M.E.P." (106). She hands the money over to Brown without gatekeeping, with no strings attached; she simply writes, "the purse is yours." Written in code, Pleasant's American philanthropy is covert, done without an announcement of her generosity like the American philanthropy of the Gilded Age. Letters offer Pleasant the shield of secrecy through their enclosures and the freedom of disclosure to conspire, share her secrets, and express her views, conditions that are foreclosed in the spaces of the abolitionist lecture hall or high society dinner parties. Therefore, the genre itself is central to the enterprise of freedom representing a mode of black radical female consciousness and a means for her philanthropy.

In any other context, Claire's and Pleasant's actions would be considered seditious because they conspire against state authority. By contrast, this chapter suggests that reading these texts as fictions of philanthropy questions the historical genealogy of American philanthropy that is said to begin in the Gilded Age United States. Throughout this chapter, I have been foregrounding the historical and geopolitical conditions that shape American philanthropy as a mode of power within and on behalf of U.S. imperialism and racial capitalism. Lurking in the background of

my analysis has been the central role the Caribbean plays in these texts as a primary place of revolutionary possibility. In both texts, liberation is linked to the Caribbean, whether out of the revolutionary “nostalgia for Toussaint” (Cliff 6) in *Free Enterprise* or as the site of “the first black republic in the Western Hemisphere, home to the only slave revolt that succeeded in producing a nation” (Danticat ix) in *Love*. This “confused universe, this Caribbean, with no center and no outward edge” (6), as Cliff calls it, has served as the United States’ strategic outpost of U.S. empire since the Spanish-American War, a legacy that persists today in the failure to close Guantanamo. Reading Pleasant’s \$30,000 and Claire’s dagger as revolutionary symbols of philanthropy that reverberate throughout the hemisphere invites us to reorient American philanthropy’s reformist aims against the expansive, revolutionary aims of Americas philanthropy imagined by Cliff and Vieux-Chauvet.

Chapter 2

What this boy has done will not influence my relations with the Negro people. Why, only today I sent a dozen ping-pong tables to the South Side Boys' Club.

—*Native Son*

Chicago: on one side the grandeur of marble, the facade of the great avenue, and on the other side the miserable world where poor people are not people but trash.²¹

—*The Green Pope (El papa verde)*

“Aggressive Altruism” in the Global Ghetto: Black and Guatemalan Critiques of U.S. Racial Capitalism

In the introduction to *Black Metropolis* (1945), St. Clair Drake’s famous anthropological and sociological study of Chicago's South Side, Richard Wright emphasized the significance of Chicago as a microcosm of U.S. society, a model for understanding the entire country, when he wrote that “scientists have relied upon [this] city for their basic truth of America’s social life” (xviii). “In no other place,” according to Wright, “has the differentiation between groups and races been so clearly shown” (xix). In *Native Son* (1940), Wright focuses in on a roughly two-mile stretch of Chicago to illustrate this stark division by showing the proximity of black poverty to white wealth, thereby linking the two spatially and materially. Bigger Thomas lives just “over across the ‘line’” (21) of Cottage Grove Avenue that segregates the South Side ghetto from the white neighborhoods of Kenwood and Hyde Park, where his employer Mr. Dalton lives. The novel examines how black people, in particular, are contained within these geographic boundaries through often-violent means while white money circulates free of such restrictions through business

²¹ Chicago: de un lado, la grandiosidad de los mármoles, el frente de la gran avenida, y de otro, el mundo miserable, donde la gente pobre no es gente, sino basura.

ownership, property investments, and philanthropic donations. By the end of the novel, the origins of Chicago's black ghetto are traced directly to Mr. Dalton's South Side Real Estate Company. The ghetto emerges as a space defined by the exploitation of white landlords and the fractional returns on those investments being put back into the community through tokenistic philanthropy, mocked most thoroughly by the donation of ping-pong tables described in the epigraph. Philanthropy, in particular, regulates Chicago's ghetto by legitimating the crossing of the color line for philanthropic purposes while criminalizing others. As part of the fabric of Chicago's social life in *Native Son*, philanthropy proves to function as a structure of racial inequality in "America's social life" and social life across the Americas.

The Chicago ghetto is the prototype for the banana villages of Guatemala established by a multinational fruit corporation headquartered in Chicago in Nobel Prize-winning Guatemalan author Miguel Ángel Asturias's *The Green Pope (El papa verde 1954)*.²² Tropical Platanera, the thinly-veiled, fictionalized United Fruit Company, exports practices of racial segregation, labor exploitation, and land ownership to the villages surrounding Puerto Barrios, Guatemala as part of its business importing bananas. Asturias juxtaposes the banana republic with Chicago's "grandiose marble facades of Michigan Avenue," where ornate corporate headquarters prove to be mere façades for "the miserable world, where the people aren't people, but trash" (139) that lies behind them.²³ Chicago functions as an

²² All translations from Spanish to English are mine.

²³ "la grandiosidad de los mármoles," and "el mundo miserable, donde la gente pobre no es gente, sino basura"

important site for the representation of oppression and power for both writers. Dependency theorists in the 1970s called the urban U.S. ghetto an “internal colony” (Carlos Muñoz and Charles Ornelas). They theorized that conditions of the black ghetto inside the United States were produced by processes of colonization and underdevelopment similar to those that many Latin American countries were subject to. Central America, in particular, was often referred to in political circles as “America’s Backyard” (Livingstone) a discursive framing of the region that emphasizes the United States’ sphere of influence and further links the two sites by their “otherness,” their shared marginalization by the U.S. government and attachment to it. Additionally, the novels’ comparative dimensions of economic power and racialized violence and oppression portray prosperity in the United States as the byproduct of imperial aggression and destruction across local and national borders, a condition made manifest in the segregated U.S. city and the banana republic. Philanthropy furnishes a crucial transnational link across the divide between the marginalized working classes throughout the hemisphere and the white businessmen of Chicago. As the intimate, virtuous side of a corrupt and exploitative corporate world of business, American philanthropy emerges in these novels as the handmaiden of racial capitalism.

In *Native Son* and *The Green Pope*, philanthropy’s notion of “doing good” is saturated in gendered tropes of white liberal femininity and its implied center of morality that reinforces the idea of a separate, private female sphere—a rationale for the exclusion of women from political activity formally and informally. These novels

show how philanthropy draws upon a feminized “grammar of good intentions” (Ryan) to give credence to its moral authority. Philanthropy, reliant on multiple systems of oppression, derives its moral power, in part, from articulating a masculine version of femininity that functions to obscure the business of “taking” that is needed for philanthropic “giving.” By comparing philanthropy in *Native Son* and *The Green Pope*, this chapter reveals a masculinized discourse of altruism that reproduces hierarchies of gender, race, and class in the United States and throughout the hemisphere. The first section traces how philanthropy functions in *Native Son* as a form of dispossession that connects oppressed peoples across national, linguistic, and other borders. The second section theorizes the philanthropic dimensions of Asturias’ concept of aggressive altruism, an imperialist philosophy of U.S. expansion, corporate warfare, and international interventionism. For both authors, philanthropy is part of the “trans-American imaginary” (Moya and Saldívar), a mode of thought and social interaction that ties together the entire American continent—North America and Latin America—giving a single predominant American identity, rather than bifurcating it into separate societies. Together, *Native Son* and *The Green Pope* reveal the structures of privilege at the heart of American philanthropy; far from its supposed aims of racial uplift and international development, racial capitalism—the condition of possibility for philanthropy—enriches white Anglophone capitalists in the Anglophone United States through the creation of “internal colonies” and the exploitation of the so-called Third World. Far from modeling multiracial democratic pluralism, American philanthropy in *Native Son* and *The Green Pope* portends

massive inequality, typical of the U.S. society, being exported across the continent as yet another *yanqui*-style modernization.

Philanthropy as the Handmaiden of Racial Capitalism

Native Son offers a sociological account of race relations in the American justice system. Wright's novel invites an analysis of the role of philanthropy in consolidating racial divisions along economic lines. By highlighting the economic violence central to urban segregation in the North, Wright exposes the predatory nature of racial capitalism as the underside of American corporate philanthropy. What the novel demonstrates is that the welfare state has no legal grammar to even attempt to redress the impersonal and systemic crimes that Dalton has committed against Bigger and his community. The preoccupation in literary criticism with Bigger's status as a problematic antihero has obscured the novel's critique of white paternalism and the collusion between propertied citizenship and the justice system that maintains the status quo of white privilege.

Native Son opens with the famous "BRRRIIIIIINNNNNGGGGG!": the alarm that jolts Bigger and his family members awake in their one room apartment in Chicago's South Side. The alarm sets a chaotic scene into motion that details the poverty of Bigger's family's one-room apartment, culminating with Bigger beating an invading rat to death with a frying pan. The novel traces the origins of Bigger's poverty to a nearby wealthy white neighborhood and more specifically to the home of Mr. Dalton, Bigger's new employer, a well-known Chicago philanthropist and, as we later find out, the owner of the South Side Real Estate company. The moment at

which Bigger realizes the depth of Mr. Dalton's hypocrisy, he declares vengeance on "them," Mr. Dalton *and* his ilk. Bigger resolves to "jar them out of their senses" (174) in an attempt to exercise a level of control over the owners of the ghetto whose conditions of poverty are imposed upon him and his family, as described in the opening scene. The primary site of crisis in the novel, Bigger's "corner of the city tumbling down from rot" (174), is, paradoxically, the hallmark of Mr. Dalton's philanthropy.

Native Son maps the social hierarchy of urban America in order to implicate white corporate wealth in the immiseration of the black ghetto. For Bigger, Mr. Dalton "was somewhere far away, high up, distant, like a god," lording over Chicago real estate and, therefore, much of Chicago society (174). Wright portrays Mr. Dalton's neighborhood, "a world of white secrets carefully guarded" (45) in the historic Hyde Park-Kenwood area, as the visible opposite of the black slums, where "many empty buildings with black windows, like blind eyes, buildings like skeletons standing with snow on their bones in the winter winds" stand exposed and vulnerable (173). Shielded from prying eyes that might expose the roots of such wealth, the wealthy enclaves of Chicago are made possible by the underdevelopment of the ghetto. The two sides of the segregated city bear a structural relationship to each other. Philanthropy is the key to this exposure. With one hand Mr. Dalton collects exorbitant rents for one-room apartments and with the other he hands out ping-pong tables. *Native Son* mocks the social conditions that celebrate Mr. Dalton's

philanthropy and enable insidious business practices. You can't have one without the other.²⁴

On the other side of economic segregation, philanthropy emerges as the altruistic side of discrimination and exploitation. The two sides are bound together; altruism is rendered meaningless in the absence of discrimination and exploitation and vice versa. Mr. Dalton's role as a philanthropist helps to secure his fortune. When asked, "Mr. Dalton, you give millions to help Negroes. May I ask why you don't charge them less rent for fire-traps and check that against your charity budget?" he responds that doing so would be "unethical," a violation of the "code of ethics of business" (328). He is so morally bankrupt that he is more principled in his negotiations in the "ruthless and impersonal commodity-profit machine" (441) than in his dealings with people. The law, of course, is shown to be just as corrupt. The court rules in Mr. Dalton's favor, upholding these perverse ethics as the law of the land. Integral to this (un)ethical economy, philanthropy functions to salve not only Mr. Dalton's but the nation's conscience too.

Native Son situates Mr. Dalton's philanthropic presence in Bigger's ghetto against the larger history of global dispossession of the black community in which the

²⁴ Richard Wright complained of the historical relationship between black subjects and white philanthropists in his 1937 "Blueprint for Negro Writing" when he wrote: "Generally speaking, Negro writing in the past has been confined to humble novels, poems, and plays, prim, and decorous ambassadors who went abegging to white America" (1403). Philanthropy has long been critiqued by black authors for the inequality between the races that it represents and maintains, a dynamic that penetrates down to the relationship between black writers and white patrons.²⁴ In fact, the term "Negrotarian," attributed to Zora Neale Hurston, appeared during the Harlem Renaissance "to denote white humanitarians and philanthropists who aesthetically and financially supported young black artists" (Carreiro 47). Joining this chorus, Wright bemoaned the racialized economy of patronage and philanthropy that motored the production of the Harlem and Chicago Renaissances.

concrete material advantages gained by wealthy whites through institutionalized slavery and its successor, de facto and formalized segregation, prevented black folks from accumulating wealth and property at the same rate as white folks. In the 1930s, the United States' role in the hemisphere was changing as a result of the Great Depression, among other factors. President Franklin D. Roosevelt unveiled two major policy shifts in his 1933 inaugural speech, one domestic and the other foreign. Integral to both was the projection of the U.S. government itself as philanthropic, as the benevolent savior and protector of a suffering people. In his inaugural address now famous for delivering the line “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself,” Roosevelt also unveiled the Good Neighbor Policy. He described the “policy of the good neighbor” as give-and-take, a policy of equal exchanges in which “we cannot merely take but we must give as well.” The New Deal’s 3 Rs policy of relief, recovery, and reform aimed to uplift the American people from the enduring economic devastation of the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and ensuing economic depression at home. Abroad, the Good Neighbor Policy ushered in a new foreign policy of isolationism in the hemisphere that recast the United States—the foreign occupier of more than five Central American and Caribbean countries between 1898 and 1934—as a respectful neighbor and an equal partner in the Americas.²⁵ In Roosevelt’s speech, the citizen and the state alike were therefore transformed into “good neighbors” by giving something back to their local and global communities,

²⁵ Following the Spanish-American War, the United States took possession of Puerto Rico and Marines assumed control of the following Central American and Caribbean countries between 1898 and 1934: Honduras (1907 and 1911-12), Dominican Republic (1916-1924), Haiti (1915-1934), Cuba (1917-1933), Nicaragua (1912-1933), and the Panama Canal Zone (1903-1979).

even if they never stopped taking. A self-styled Good Neighbor, the United States considered itself philanthropic, a benevolent protector of equality and freedom and the patron of the American Dream. Even the formal name for FDR's "Good Neighbor Policy" exposed the militaristic aggressions that the name hoped to blot out by implicitly noting a transition from its past behavior as a bad neighbor. The popular moniker "Beggars-Thy-Neighbor" speaks to the perception that such policies enriched the United States at the expense of its neighboring countries while also commenting on the fact that, in the 1930s, the United States sought to recover from the Great Depression through trade policies that worsened the economic conditions of the countries it traded with.

Philanthropy became a part of American identity and an articulation of democratic values in the 1930s. Historian Olivier Zunz explains that American philanthropy came into its own during the Depression Era. After withstanding "the worst of the depression," American philanthropy "had become a routine part of American life" (75). In its Christmas Day 1935 edition, the *New York Times* claimed: "American foundations are one of democracy's agencies for doing what she is herself prevented by more immediate compulsions from undertaking" (26). Outsourcing the social justice imperatives of the democratic state to private philanthropy suited a citizenry perennially concerned with the size and reach of its government, a turn-of-the-century notion that came to define twentieth century U.S. politics, even in President Roosevelt's New Deal welfare state. Regarded in the interwar era as a democratic institution, as opposed to a tax shelter for the rich (as it was before World

War I), American philanthropy in its many forms—charitable foundations, mass giving, etc.—became closely aligned with the state. This kinship fed into conservative arguments for “small government” in which the government is framed as an inefficient provide of public services that can be more efficiently provided by non-state actors, such as philanthropists, churches, or volunteer organizations. By 1940, philanthropy was declared “a vital expression of the democratic way of life” in a *New York Times* op-ed by New York philanthropist and judge Joseph M. Proskauer (26). Despite this overwhelmingly positive image of the United States’ philanthropic goals, *Native Son* tells a different story of American philanthropy during this era, portraying it as a white institution that aids and abets Jim Crow and acts in the service of oppressing people of color the world over.

The contradictions of philanthropy are explored throughout *Native Son*. The story of the transformation from Bigger’s original crime of involuntary manslaughter to murder and then to a second murder, when he claims Bessie’s life, is often told in philanthropic terms. After Mary’s death, Mr. Dalton’s reputation as a philanthropist is key to Bigger’s realization of his deep-seated hypocrisy: “though Mr. Dalton gave millions of dollars for Negro education, he would rent houses to Negroes only in this prescribed area, this corner of the city tumbling down from rot” (174). Bigger begins to see his entire community—“this prescribed area”—as an economic prison founded upon philanthropy. The logic of philanthropy is that the “good” of Mr. Dalton’s philanthropic work absolves him of his “bad” predatory business practices. By the end of the novel, Bigger reproduces this philosophy of doing good purveyed by Mr.

Dalton when he offers his own philanthropic defense: “What I killed for must’ve been good” (429). Using the logic of philanthropy in which one act of “doing good” effectively places a previous act of “behaving badly” under erasure, Bigger interprets the guilty verdict as vindication for taking Mary’s life. In a “frenzied anguish,” he tells his lawyer Boris Max: “when a man kills, it’s for something.... I didn’t know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for ’em” (429). The heinous act of murder becomes justifiable in Bigger’s mind because it has made him feel and act human in a world in which he has been thoroughly dehumanized. His guilt, his life sentence, makes Bigger a man rather than a victim whose actions were the result of conditions out of his control, the outcome of an impossible situation. What Bigger knows of philanthropy is that it functions as an oppressive mechanism that grants greater stature to Mr. Dalton in his own community while also giving him control over the lives of those who live in the ghetto that generates his wealth.

Bigger’s version of doing good is modeled on Mr. Dalton’s philanthropy insofar as he sees the “good” of killing Mary as what is selfishly good for him. He finds that the awakening of his own brutal humanity is worth the price of Mary’s life while ignoring the ways in which the murders he commits only serve to further dehumanize him, as James Baldwin has so powerfully argued. This is exactly the kind of “doing good” that Mr. Dalton models through his philanthropic investments that enrich and empower him through modes of racial injustice and segregation while refusing to see how this degrades him and his family as much as it degrades Bigger and his family. In the novel, the court does not administer justice. It functions to

justify an inverted, racialized logic that protects the white propertied man by criminalizing his impoverished black counterpart. Philanthropy inflects the discourse of justice in ways that help to reproduce the hierarchies of power produced by the cityscape, the courts, the interracial relationships, and other structures of power in the novel. The court sides with Mr. Dalton when he is questioned for his unethical business practices and treatment of the black community, and he argues that “there’s a code of ethics in business” (328) that justifies his rapacious exploitation. The ethics of business and the ethics of social life all appear to protect Mr. Dalton’s worst behaviors—even turning many of them into good works—while those same ethics are a trap for Bigger. It is widely accepted by the judge and jury that Mr. Dalton’s actions purport to benefit other people, while Bigger’s violence is only seen to fuel stereotypes about black male violence without ever being understood as an act of rebellion against white supremacy.

Native Son ultimately puts philanthropy itself—and its self-styled idea of “doing good”—on trial by implicating Mr. Dalton in the creation of the segregated ghetto and denouncing his donations as pretexts for profiting from structures of racial oppression. The figure of the generous white male philanthropist giving “millions to help Negroes” (328) is transformed into a sinister symbol of avarice whose philanthropy is built upon the rotten foundation of Jim Crow segregation. In the trial, Bigger’s attorney Boris Max makes much of Mr. Dalton’s ownership of the South Side Real Estate company and, therefore, of Bigger’s family’s apartment. The novel critiques Mr. Dalton for being the ultimate beneficiary of segregated slum housing

when Max asks: “Now, Mr. Dalton, it has been said that you donate millions of dollars to educate Negroes. Why is it that you exact an exorbitant rent of eight dollars per week from the Thomas family for one unventilated, rat-infested room in which four people eat and sleep?” (326). *Native Son*, therefore, questions the common sense understanding of the presumed democratic spirit of philanthropy in the novel’s exploration of how Chicago’s racially divided terrain enables white corporate capitalists to remain inoculated from the black urban poverty they profit from.

This critique is particularly powerful in the context of the Great Depression, a time when economic inequality between the races was exacerbated by government programs that benefitted whites far more than any other group. This was true to such an extent that President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s National Recovery Administration became known popularly as “Negroes Robbed Again” in the African American press because of significant differences in the wages and working conditions between white and black workers. Against this backdrop, *Native Son* foregrounds philanthropy as a menacing white institution central to the system of racial capitalism. Bigger’s attorney, Boris Max, who works *pro bono* on behalf of the Communist Party, interrogates Mr. Dalton during Bigger’s murder trial: “Isn’t it true you *refuse* to rent houses to Negroes if those houses are in other sections of the city?” Dalton responds with the vague, “It’s an old custom,” to which Max digs deeper: “Mr. Dalton, doesn’t this policy of your company tend to keep Negroes on the South Side, in one area?” (327). Max makes visible the “custom” of redlining and restrictive covenants in real estate that would not become illegal until the 1960s (and sometimes later). Bigger is

rendered incapable of answering for his own actions in the courtroom. Yet Max's interrogation mimics Bigger's own awareness of the connection between Mr. Dalton's wealth and his own poverty in the first half of the novel. Through this repetition, the novel exposes the workings of a system of structural racism whose brutalizing effects demand far-reaching analysis. In Max's reformulation, Mr. Dalton is a criminal whose business practices bear the ultimate moral responsibility for Bigger Thomas's murder of Dalton's daughter, Mary, and his own girlfriend, Bessie. The criminals of racial capitalism—those who stand to gain from entrenched structural inequality—are not, or so the novel implies, the Biggers of Chicago who have been victimized by such a system. The repetition also highlights the ways in which Max—and by extension, the Communist Party—silences Bigger.²⁶ Speaking for him, Max tells the courtroom, "I'd like to state that [Bigger] does not wish to testify here" (328). Max's plea of powerlessness is both powerful and problematic because it appeals to the root causes of inner city violence that Bigger's actions represent while also positioning Bigger as agentless, "controlled, defined by his hatred and his fear" (22) according to James Baldwin. In the courtroom, he becomes a victim of "fate," as this section of the novel is named.

This dualistic Henry Dalton/Bigger Thomas relationship constructed in the courtroom as plaintiff/defendant has already been established in the novel in a

²⁶ The Communist Party's growing influence in black America during the 1930s after the 1928 and 1930 Comintern Resolutions on the so-called "Negro Question" has been the subject of much study, including Minkah Makalani's recent *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939*. After joining the party in the 1930s, Richard Wright left it in 1944, having detailed his experience in an *Atlantic Monthly* article "I Tried to Be a Communist."

number of other contexts, namely in the asymmetries of donor/recipient, wealthy/impooverished, landlord/renter, employer/employee, and, of course, white/black. Furthermore, the institutionalization of these paternalistic relationships is alluded to in Bigger's job interview with Mr. Dalton. He is institutionalized before he ever enters a prison cell. "The relief people" (49) of the aid agency that recommends him to Mr. Dalton structure the power relations between him and Mr. Dalton as donor/receiver, powerful/powerless. This racialized process of institutionalization continues as Mr. Dalton helps to govern them, telling Bigger: "I'm a supporter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Did you ever hear of that organization?" (53). When Bigger responds simply "Nawsuh," Mr. Dalton replies "Well, it doesn't matter" (53). This exchange in the novel that places the white oppressor in the position of supporting the NAACP, a racial uplift organization that is as much a part of Mr. Dalton's community as it is a part of Bigger's community, suggests that the organization's dependence upon the philanthropic economy hinders, at least on some level, its mission to fight discrimination. The subtext of this exchange is that the NAACP is unable to effectively dismantle racial inequality. In Bigger's interview with Dalton it is made clear that Dalton is Bigger's landlord, and thus, they already have a financial relationship with one another. However, multiple layers of institutional organization—both corporate and nonprofit—keep the two men utterly alienated from one another.

Whatever the noble intention of philanthropic organizations meant to uplift the race, in the novel, they ultimately promote segregation and maintain the division

between blacks and whites by mediating the encounter between Dalton and Bigger so fully that the two men can only interact within the confines of their roles as representatives within each organizational structure: Mr. Dalton as service provider; Bigger as supplicant. Almost immediately upon entering the Dalton home, Bigger “wanted to wave his hand and blot out the white man who was making him feel this. If not that, he wanted to blot himself out” (47). This passage foreshadows not only Bigger’s crimes but also his execution. Bigger’s death sentence stems from institutionalization within a social system that robs him of his agency. In this particular moment, Bigger has not “accepted a theology that denies him life” (23), as James Baldwin complains; rather, he finds his desire to assert himself suppressed by the very circumstances in which he finds himself. His relationship to Dalton is contingent on multiple levels of racial, economic, and social power. The novel makes a powerful critique of the dehumanizing role of Jim Crow and the multiple layers of the social order that reduce Bigger to a stereotype, a tokenistic representation of his entire race.

The patronage system is a closed economy that produces its own ethic of a common good. Philanthropists not only give money in order to promote the so-called common good but they then decide what the most pressing social problems are *and* how to solve them. As historian Olivier Zunz claims: “the new rich felt free to both envision and fashion the common good, and they did so” (8). According to this logic, economic power is equal to moral power; wealth gives one the right to determine what is “good” and what is “bad.” Mr. Dalton is made in the image of Chicago

philanthropists of Richard Wright's day, men like Julius Rosenwald, "the man who built Sears, Roebuck and advanced the cause of black education in the American South" (Ascoli). He would become a defining figure in American philanthropy after "a personal encounter with Booker T. Washington, which took place in Chicago in 1911, inspired [Rosenwald] to become actively involved" in promoting "Negro education" (Bone 458). He established "Rosenwald schools" in the rural South, funded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), erected black YMCAs in Chicago, and sat on the board of trustees of Tuskegee Institute. A defining patron of the Chicago Renaissance in the 1920s, Rosenwald created the nation's first "program related investments" in 1929 when he built The Rosenwald Apartments on Chicago's South Side, a large complex inhabited by famous black cultural figures such as Gwendolyn Brooks, Nat King Cole, and Quincy Jones. Officially named the Michigan Boulevard Garden Apartments, Peter Ascoli, Rosenwald's biographer and grandson, describes them as "innovative investments that were expected to yield a low rate of return and were designed to make a philanthropic point, even if they were not, strictly speaking, philanthropies" (351). The building helped to address Chicago's urban housing crisis stemming from the Great Migration and segregated housing in the city while its owner also profited handsomely from the city's discriminatory housing practices and the substantial \$35-\$65 rent from the black middle-class (Aizuss). Rosenwald's investments—philanthropic and otherwise—gave him enormous authority over the institutions and politics of the city.

Rosenwald embodied the deep irony and hypocrisy of the American Dream's promises of freedom and prosperity for all. Rosenwald even worked with the era's most celebrated humanitarian reformer, Jane Addams (of Hull House fame), to create the world's first Juvenile Court in Chicago at the turn of the century (Ascoli 55). He served on the Juvenile Court Committee where he was "involved in a number of cases, including a young unnamed employee of Sears" (Ascoli 57). Rosenwald's story places philanthropy in the context of a history in which "we remain haunted by a legacy of white men of property who adjudicated the "fitness" for self-government of their social inferiors" (Singh 37). Although Rosenwald, whose philanthropic legacy was built on his contributions to the black community, devoted the entirety of his life to addressing the "Negro problem" through philanthropic means, he never really believed in social or racial equality. According to Robert Bone, not only Richard Wright but the entire "Wright generation enjoyed the patronage of the Julius Rosenwald Fund" (460). Much like Carnegie, Rosenwald's motivations for giving were divorced from a politics of social change. In fact, scholar Jodi Melamed has recently studied the Julius Rosenwald Fund for its role as "the richest philanthropy dedicated to race relations and the most influential" (63-64). She traces the invention of the race novel to this philanthropic organization and credits it with promulgating "the idea of literature's unique capacity to instigate personal growth and social reform [that] solidified and took on the character of common sense" (64). According to Melamed, the race novel performed a key function in institutionalizing the narrative of racial liberalism in which "African American integration within U.S. society and

advancement toward equality, defined through a liberal framework of legal rights and racially inclusive nationalism, would establish the moral legitimacy of U.S. global leadership” (53). The Julius Rosenwald Fund therefore provides critical context for understanding how philanthropy shapes entire ideological framings of race in addition to the material conditions of race that it shapes through the exchange of funds.

Wright articulated the problems of philanthropy through Mr. Dalton’s narrative and by showing the ways in which his “doing good” offered no real solution to social ills. Mr. Dalton’s vision of complex social problems seems to be tied to a singular, uncomplicated notion of poverty divorced from undemocratic conditions of the Jim Crow racial order. The position of Mr. Dalton’s daughter Mary, the heir apparent to his real estate and philanthropic empire, illustrates the complex dynamics of race, gender, and class in the business of philanthropy. Bigger is first introduced to Mary through a movie preview at the Regal cinema where he sees her in a newsreel “accepting the attentions of a well-known radical” and “kissing the man, who lifted her up and swung her round from the camera” (32). Bigger is so mesmerized by the footage of “over fifty of America’s leading families” (31) that he is uninterested in the feature film that he originally went to see (33). He imagines himself in his new chauffeur position to be Mary’s confidant or co-conspirator, and at one point he even suggests that “maybe she’d like to come to the South Side and see the sights sometimes” (34). Bigger’s fantasizing foreshadows his encounter with Mary as he drives her and her Communist boyfriend, Jan, around town. Mary convinces Bigger to let Jan drive the car and he ends up sandwiched in the front seat between them.

Trapped between the two “white looming walls” (68), Bigger is required to drive them to “one of those places where colored people eat, not one of those show places” (69). Whiteness permeates Bigger’s world, from the architecture to the people he chauffeurs. At every turn, he is confronted with the multiple ways that the world around him is constructed by and for white folks, not for him. As they turn into the South Side neighborhood on their way to Ernie’s Kitchen Shack, Mary remarks,

“You know, Bigger, I’ve long wanted to go into these houses,” she said, pointing to the tall, dark apartment buildings looming to either side of them, “and just *see* how your people live. You know what I mean? I’ve been to England, France and Mexico, but I don’t know how people live ten blocks from me. We know so *little* about each other. I just want to *see*. I want to *know* these people. Never in my life have I been inside of a Negro home. Yet they *must* live like we live. They’re *human*.... There are twelve million of them.... They live in our country.... In the same city with us.... (69-70)

Looming, threatening, encroaching on Bigger, Mary and Jan embody the walls that segregate Bigger and his community. The relationship between racism, gender, and philanthropy becomes most clear in Mary’s articulation of interracial voyeurism and fetishizing rather than cross-racial solidarity that might bring people together. While Bigger would be committing the crime of trespassing on the territory of an alien white world if he didn’t have a job that authorized his entry (14), Mary enters the ghetto as a tourist. While slumming it, she finds the South Side to be as foreign as Mexico or France and yet, less accessible. For she is part of the world’s elite, just as Bigger is part of what Wright calls the “world’s dispossessed” (*Black Metropolis* lxvii). Her emphasis on “just seeing” in order to “know these people” reflects a dangerous disavowal of her family’s relation to the ghetto by speaking as if she were barred

from entry by black families rather than by the Jim Crow business practices from which her family profits.

Of course, as a white woman, those restrictions go far beyond the physical boundaries of Bigger's neighborhood. Unable to see her role in the segregation machine and insistent that she wants to "work among Negroes. That's where people are needed" (76), Mary's good intentions evokes the legacy of Progressive Era reformers from Chicago, such as Jane Addams whose famous Hull House remained segregated in Mary's lifetime. Mary Dalton's philanthropic lens is, at least in part, to blame for her inability to *see* how Bigger and "these people" live. Her desire to be useful and to follow the archetype of the white female "'civilizer' of racial and class inferiors" (Newman 30) prevents her from introspection that might help her to see that she must look inside – inside of her own home, her family, herself—in order to understand how "[Negroes] been pushed out of everything" (76). Mary is framed as a danger to Bigger and to the black community because she doesn't comprehend her part in the so-called Negro problem, what Wright famously dismissed as merely a white problem. She rebels against the social order, but she does so without the politics to inform or support such a position. She gives money to the Communist Party without challenging her own class position; she is intrigued by the idea of equality that she learns from communism and speaks as if the barriers to entry to "Negro homes" have nothing to do with systems and structures of inequality. But, at the end of the day, she follows in her father's footsteps, writing checks for Jan and viewing black people as a mass rather than as a community and as stereotypes rather than as

individuals. For Wright, “the inner landscape of American Negro life, born of repression, is so little known that when whites see it they brand it ‘emotionally running amuck’ or ‘psychopathic manifestations’” (*Black Metropolis* xxiii). By trying to look into these homes and to “look inside of him” (*Native Son* 81), Mary reveals a pathology of white alienation, a condition that manifests in her desire to “go into these houses...and just *see* how your people live” as a racial tourist (69). Her father suffers from a similar pathological alienation when he refuses to be incriminated in his company’s policy “to keep Negroes on the South Side” (327). Just as her father’s buildings loom over Bigger and threaten his community, Mary’s desire to “do good” looms large. Her disavowal of the politics of race, gender, and class ultimately puts Bigger into the impossible position that leads to her death—and therefore, to his own. “The ethics of Jim Crow” (Wright) means that he is guilty of a crime just by being in the presence of an unaccompanied white woman, something Mary is no doubt aware of. Yet she does not take care to understand how she might be setting Bigger up. Mary takes no ownership of her role in this social equation and acts as though her individual desire to help those in poverty surmounts the social systems that regulate that economy. In other words, Mary’s philanthropic values compel her to want to “work among Negroes” where she is “needed,” but those values exist in a world devoid of ethics. Her model of “doing good,” informed by her father’s philanthropy, forecloses the possibilities for radical social change and reaffirms the divisions of the status quo.

Mary and Bigger both ultimately lose their lives as a result of this profound alienation. After Bigger kills her, “he did not feel sorry for Mary; she was not real to him, not a human being; he had not known her long or well enough for that” (114). Just as Mary wanted to “just *see*” Bigger’s world, Bigger is also compelled by a desire to see how the other half lives. Part of his rationale for going to work for the Daltons in the first place is expressed as an opportunity to see how the rich live. He recognizes the job as “something big” and begins to speculate on what the work of being a chauffeur for a millionaire might entail: “Maybe he had a daughter who was a hot kind of girl; maybe she spent lots of money; maybe she'd like to come to the South Side and see the sights sometimes” (36). Mary, in this way, is the stereotype of white womanhood of the 1930s familiar to him from the movies. In fact, the impetus for this reflection happens in the Regal cinema where he watches films with rich white female protagonists. The desire to *see* and objectify without a desire to *know* and develop relationships makes it impossible for Mary or Bigger to see each other as real people.

As the family chauffeur hired through an aid agency, Bigger’s relationship to Mary is structured by generations of philanthropy and intergenerational transfers of wealth and power. Mary’s mother, Mrs. Dalton, was from a moneyed family and inherited millions. Given Chicago’s history of urban growth arising out of real estate speculation and Mr. Dalton’s current ventures, it is likely that her wealth originated from a family real estate empire dating back to the nineteenth century. The Daltons’ housekeeper, Peggy, tells Bigger that “if it wasn’t for [Mrs. Dalton], [Mr. Dalton]

would not be doing what he does. She made him rich” (56). Mrs. Dalton’s wealth was compounded by her husband’s enterprise. Each generation continues to benefit from land holdings from the previous generations that multiply exponentially with each generation. Mary is a beneficiary of her family’s pedigree; she can even afford to contribute thousands of dollars each month to the Communist Party. Her thousands are pennies compared to the contributions of her father, who “had given five million dollars to colored people” (59). Mary now writes checks to her boyfriend, Jan, to support his activism. Mary represents a new generation of women, one who writes checks directly, unlike her mother who advises her husband’s philanthropic investments. Yet both Mrs. and Miss Dalton remain on the giving side of the philanthropic, capitalist give-and-take equation, only peripherally connected to the evils of capitalistic pursuits. Their participation in the philanthropic economy also helps to soften Mr. Dalton’s corporate image not only as a philanthropist but as a family man. In turn, their participation in philanthropy gives them “work” that reinforces the stereotypical role of women as only having a place in the private sphere. This masculine version of femininity serves to keep political and economic power in the hands of men by giving women a greater role in participating in social issues, but only insofar as they are volunteers, unpaid laborers, and heiresses whose power is comparatively restricted.

Peggy tells Bigger that “Mrs. Dalton’s always trying to help somebody” (55). Mary seems to have learned her mother’s trade. While Mr. Dalton is the philanthropist in the family, the women provide the sympathetic attitudes toward

those less fortunate that drive the philanthropic impulse. Late nineteenth century ideals of the separate gendered spheres remained intact even after women's suffrage as philanthropy provided an opportunity for public and social engagement without demanding power and representation in traditionally male spaces like the corporation or politics. Philanthropy helped to keep women in their place by giving them an opportunity to direct "spending" capitalist gains without having to offer them a seat at the table in business or other affairs. Like wealth and the family's legacy of philanthropy, these gendered divisions also get passed down through the generations.

Mary does her parents' bidding. Mary and Bigger are bound together by the family's commitment to hiring young black men who have been caught up in the criminal justice system. Bigger is only ever an object of aid, someone to help, in Mary's eyes. Like her mother, she too is "always trying to help *somebody*" (56; emphasis mine), but never an entire community. The irony of this "politics of pity" (Chouliaraki), a disingenuous approach to race relations, is most painfully obvious when Mary asks about Bigger's childhood and learns that his father was "killed in a riot...in the South" (74) when Bigger was just a child. Jan and Mary immediately abstract Bigger's pain into a generalized condition. They dominate the conversation by asking Bigger pointed questions meant to elicit specific answers about racial violence, leading them to tell him how the Communist Party is the answer to racism, even in the face of his own deeply tragic personal revelation. When asked, Bigger suggests that he is skeptical of this approach because "there's a lot of white people in the world" (75). Jan and Mary immediately turn the conversation to focus on how

white people have come to the rescue of black people through the example of the Scottsboro Boys. The assumption is that even though racial violence has profoundly shaped Bigger's life, Jan and Mary are somehow more knowledgeable on the subject than he is. Their questions in response to his revelation are yes/no traps that rob Bigger—and his father—of their humanity, turning them both into evidence of the merits of the communist political struggle, casualties of racial capitalism. They use his story strictly as an endorsement of their investments, such as Mary's \$3,000 check to the party and Jan's time in organizing work.

This exchange between him and them illustrates how Bigger's experience or point of view is rendered unremarkable except as a means to justify their own actions as philanthropic do-gooders fighting the class struggle. Jan and Mary quickly veer off into their own private discussion, excluding Bigger entirely. He hears Mary ask: "Say, Jan, do you know many Negroes?" (76). In response, Bigger becomes contemptuous. The conversation ends with the two of them singing the wrong tune for "Swing low, sweet chariot," to which "Bigger smiled derisively" (77). The irony is lost on them, but not on Bigger. At the risk of stating the obvious, they are riding in a car that Bigger is driving, talking about the black community and how much they are there to help put a stop to racial violence while dominating the space so thoroughly that Bigger is rendered invisible and silenced. Through their singing, in particular, they go so far as to place themselves in the position of the oppressed without any self-awareness that they are acting as oppressors. Mary and Bigger continually see past one another, failing to see eye to eye, person to person. She sees

him as a passport to soul food and perhaps as a black acquaintance who might lend authenticity to her encounters with other black people. It never occurs to her that she could actually develop a relationship with Bigger or somehow be in solidarity with him. The car ride suggests that she can't even imagine what that might look like. Targeting Bigger as the object of her charity, Mary interacts with Bigger insofar as it produces meaning for her as a philanthropist.

Mary's character serves to illustrate an important link between her father's old school form of philanthropy and the ways in which philanthropy adapts and attaches itself to social justice movements as they evolve. If funding black education was in fashion for her father's generation, funding communism is in fashion for hers. Mary sees both her check writing for Jan and her interest in Bigger as articulations of a singular commitment to social justice. Her own death reflects philanthropy's limitations in the extreme insofar as her lazy attempts to be more casual and familiar with Bigger than might be deemed appropriate for the "somebody" that she is helping today crosses a threshold that spells death for them both. Mary's arrogance and individualistic approach to systems of oppression not only fails to effect change, it even intensifies the criminalization of Bigger. American philanthropy, although it sees itself as a form of social justice, is cut from the same cloth as other racialized structures of power. Even the sympathetic historian, Olivier Zunz, notes the intersection of philanthropy and racial capitalism as a critical part of the history of philanthropy:

A harbinger of things to come, post-Reconstruction philanthropy in the U.S. South would serve as a pattern for lifting parts of Latin America, Asia, and

Africa out of poverty, disease, and ignorance and bringing relief to wartorn Europe. ...[I]t became in some instances easier to export modernizing ideas abroad (or to accept failure) than to operate in the Southern United States in opposition to Jim Crow.... (Zunz 11)

By situating this history within the system of what Asturias refers to as “aggressive altruism” (21), it becomes clear that the logic of philanthropy is tied to the logic of imperialism. Philanthropy provides an easy alibi for economic (and other) expansion into new markets, a necessary prerequisite for racial capitalism. While the American state describes itself as humanitarian—as a Good Neighbor, to name one example—the transnational linkages that Zunz points out show how its corporate philanthropists and humanitarians form part of the logic and structure of U.S. empire in the hemisphere. And if you follow Zunz’s argument, it’s a project of supporting empire facilitated by the limits of racial justice work on the domestic front.²⁷

The novel concludes with Bigger in a jail cell awaiting his execution. The scene confirms and highlights the disorder of contemporary American society as Bigger’s moral failing, namely his utter lack of remorse—which even his attorney, Max, cannot condone—maps onto Bigger’s confinement in the ghetto. The conditions of his incarceration evoke his “imprisonment” at home in the ghetto. Often understood as a metaphor for Bigger, the rat he kills with the frying pan at the

²⁷ Scholarship such as Lars Schoultz’s “Latin America and the United States” (2007) historicizes U.S.-Latin American relations as far back as the eighteenth century in an attempt to disentangle the “interests” (49) driving the integration of the two powers. Schoultz identifies trade dependencies, (changing) U.S. security interests, and the convergence of U.S. domestic policies with its foreign policy as the major drivers of this relationship. He also makes a provocative comparison between U.S. law enforcement’s discourse of Latin America as a security threat and the discourse of violence in urban America (58). Claudia Milian also draws from this discourse in her discussion of “DuBoisian double consciousness, but with different and shifting problems” in her article on “Central American Americanness, Latino/a Studies, and the Global South” (145).

opening of the novel foretells of Bigger's execution by the state at the novel's end. The novel suggests that by daring to crossover into the rich, white neighborhood, a space from which he is excluded except for employment, he threatens the racial order. His actual crimes notwithstanding, his crossing of urban boundaries itself invites being read as an act of social violence. Indeed, his "crime" of crossing into white terrain foreshadows his murderous actions and imprisonment by the state. The spatial order of the novel indicts the oppressive social order—with Dalton at it highest rung—built on "three long centuries" of exploitation of the black community (*Native Son* 391). Bigger suffocates Mary in Dalton's house and rapes and kills Bessie in an abandoned property that the novel implies is also owned by Dalton. Bigger's actions indict Dalton and interrogate his place as philanthropist—lover of humankind—whose paltry "gifts" to the community, paid for by means of the community's own exploitation, are understood as the highest form of hypocrisy.

While the displacement of moral agency in *Native Son* has often been the target of critiques of "everybody's protest novel" (Baldwin), critics seldom focus on the economic powerlessness portrayed in the novel as a realistic portrayal of the wealth gap produced by de jure segregation foreclosing the opportunities available to Bigger and his family. At the start of the novel, Bigger is confronted with two equally debasing ways of getting money: 1) robbing the white owner of Blum's or 2) accepting the position as Mr. Dalton's chauffeur. For Bigger, the economics of poverty are explained simply: "they got things and we ain't. They do things and we can't. It's just like living in jail" (20). The black/white divisions of the world are a

form of economic, social, and political imprisonment in which Bigger and his friends are trapped in a world void of real choices. Their options are predetermined by systemic racial inequality and lead to the same outcomes. Mr. Dalton operates under a condescending “theory that [Bigger] was a poor boy who needed *protection*” (413). As long as Bigger is a victim, a powerless young man, Mr. Dalton is sympathetic to his plight and to the black community more generally. He cannot see Bigger as an equal or even as fully human. For Dalton, the black community is a thing apart, a “problem” he can throw money at. Bigger’s attorney Max contextualizes Bigger’s violence within the history and legacies of transatlantic slavery when he says, “Taken collectively, they are not simply twelve million people; in reality they constitute a separate nation, stunted, stripped, and held captive within this nation, devoid of political, social, economic, and property rights” (397).²⁸ Together, Bigger and Max express the conditions of what 30 years later Mario Barrera, Carlos Muñoz and Charles Ornelas would call the “internal colony,” defined as the manifestation of “a lack of control over the institutions of the barrio, and as a lack of influence over those broader political institutions that affect the barrio” (481). By thinking about the black ghetto in Chicago as an internal colony as theorized in Latino Studies, I am opening a space for thinking about how parallel articulations of powerlessness in black and brown communities in the United States might, together, be powerful.

²⁸ To some degree, this is an iteration of the 1928 and 1930 Comintern resolutions that promulgated the Black Belt “nation within a nation” thesis.

In the opening lines of his introduction to *Black Metropolis*, Wright brims with pride when he says, “I...feel personally identified with the material in this book” (lix). Asking the reader to prepare “to wrench your mind rather violently out of your accustomed ways of thinking” (lxi), he frames the book’s study of segregated Chicago as one important dimension of a multidimensional “Sargasso of racial subjugation” (lxvii). Wright’s allusion to a black Atlantic (P. Gilroy) places Chicago in a transnational context, characteristic of a transnational black radical tradition. Wright is “one of the most widely discussed writers in the Third World” (Dissanayake 481), an example of the power the black condition in the United States holds over understandings of racialized oppression—and agency—across the world. For Wright, the social processes laid bare in *Black Metropolis* vindicate his bleak fictional portrayals of the conditions in the urban American slums that produced Bigger Thomas in *Native Son*. He cautions against dismissing the slums as unimportant, for “Chicago could be the Vienna of American Fascism! Out of these mucky slums can come ideas quickening life or hastening death, giving us peace or carrying us toward another war” (*Black Metropolis* lxii). Richard Wright warned of the link between the threat of fascism in Europe and the conditions of racial capitalism that produced the South Side ghetto. *Native Son* can, therefore, be understood as a central drama that plays out “in the innermost heart of America” (*Black Metropolis* lxiii) between Bigger Thomas and his patron-employer, Mr. Henry Dalton, and as a geopolitical crisis with worldwide implications.

Aggressive Altruism

The irony for both Asturias and Wright is that the ghetto is the defining space of American life, a space that lies behind the dazzling headquarters that line Michigan Avenue and of American corporate properties around the world. In *The Green Pope*, the Chicago ghetto functions as a powerful juxtaposition against the wealth of Tropical Platanera's headquarters on Michigan Avenue, "where the wealth of the world has its meeting place" (139). Behind it, Asturias describes "a labyrinth of neighborhoods where the streets smell of large intestines and the street corners are like square anuses where the pedestrians appear, not sufficiently digested by the misery of life, for they can be seen disappearing in the intestinal alleyways and emerging into other streets" (139). Part of the world's dispossessed, the chewed up and spit out pedestrians in the ghetto, the people on the "other side" of Michigan Avenue are the casualties of multinational U.S. corporations. Dependency theorist Robert Blauner has argued that the U.S. ghetto is an "internal colony" that reflects "the experience of colonization that Afro-Americans share with many of the nonwhite people of the world" (393). The urban ghetto, therefore, is an important space for critiquing U.S. imperialism. This "internal colony" emerged as a result of Jim Crow segregation and exposes the paradoxes of American claims of democratic equality. The parasitic relationship between the impoverished slums of Chicago and the wealth and prosperity that define Mr. Dalton's Hyde Park and Geo Maker Thompson's Michigan Avenue headquarters highlights the process of what Andre Gunder Frank would later call "the development of underdevelopment" (14). *The Green Pope* traces transnational flows of capital: no place is left untouched by imperialism from the

Guatemalan periphery to the North American metropolis, Asturias' "Porkopolis" (139).²⁹

Though not often recognized for their role in U.S. interventionist politics in Latin America, philanthropists were prominent players in the struggle for power in the region among states, corporations, and the local people at the end of the Banana Wars. As such, they form an important part of the story of *The Green Pope*. The United Fruit Company, which "had for years been the largest employer in Guatemala as well as the largest landowner and exporter," held enormous economic power and influence under Jorge Ubico, Guatemala's authoritarian ruler from 1931 to 1944 (Schlesinger et al. 71). Helping to locate Guatemala in Wright's "Sargasso of racial subjugation" (*Black Metropolis* lxxiv) *The Green Pope* reveals that Tropical Platanera's "American overseers" operated much like United Fruit Company's, who "were from the Deep South and brought their racial attitudes with them; company policy required 'all persons of color to give right of way to whites and remove their hats while talking to them'" (Schlesinger et al. 71). Tropical Platanera's presence in Guatemala represents a form of "aggressive altruism" (*altruismo agresivo*). Its corporate expansion is comparable to the civilizing mission, one that operates under the guise of "progress" and economic development as a geopolitical strategy of force whose real beneficiaries are the provocateurs, not the recipients, of aid. *The Green Pope* invokes this history of empire-building when Junger Kind, Thompson's business partner, says, "[W]e'll go beyond the Aristotelian concept of force as long as

²⁹ "Porcópolis"

people like you accept the middle ground, which has been called ‘aggressive altruism’ and has already been tried out in Manila” (22).³⁰ Later in the novel, the American ambassador is called a “prototype of a carpetbagger” (*prototipo del carpetbagger*) (308). Historian Ted Tunnell explains that the term “carpetbagger” was “crucial to the political language of Reconstruction” and was used to articulate southern disdain for the “archetypal Yankee” meddling in the affairs of former Confederate states (792-793). Thus, by deploying the popular Reconstruction era epithet to refer to a diplomat, Asturias examines the “worldwide implications” of the end of Reconstruction (Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* 708) and imagines Guatemala as a new frontier of American racial, economic, and political oppression.

The Green Pope opens with two American businessmen—Junger Kind and Geo Maker Thompson—meeting on the docks of Puerto Barrios, Guatemala. Yet, from the moment the two greet one another, Chicago is the focus of their business together because it is the headquarters of Tropical Platanera. Chicago is the primary site of global wealth and the center of multinational corporate expansion in the novel, even though the majority of the novel actually takes place in Guatemala. Kind welcomes Thompson with, “[H]ow good! I recommended you very highly in Chicago, even though I disagreed with your annexationist point of view and your use of force” (12). The scene evokes parallels between the early interventions of U.S. corporations into the region in the decades following the Spanish-American War and

³⁰ “Por fortuna, ya hemos superado la mentalidad del *Cuatropartito* y superaremos la concepción aristotélica de la fuerza, siempre que personas como usted acepten el término medio, lo que se ha dado en llamar el «altruismo agresivo», que ya se experimentó en Manila.”

the conditions of the 1950s in which the novel was published. Writing in the midst of a revolutionary period in Guatemala from 1944-1954, a period described by Luis Cardoz y Aragón as “ten years of spring in the country of eternal tyranny” (147), Asturias produced the Banana trilogy (1950-1960) to protest foreign corporate ownership of Guatemalan lands. He warned the public of the informal control the banana industry continued to play in the country despite radical social reforms and political upheaval during that time, such as major land reform efforts led by President Jacobo Arbenz (1951-1954) until the U.S.-sponsored coup that violently removed him from power.³¹ *The Green Pope* follows the struggle of the people along the Motagua River valley to resist the American corporation’s takeover of their land. It thus expresses anxieties around Guatemala being remade in the American imperialist’s image as Chicago becomes a kind of seat of government for all local infrastructure, from control over the railroads to the telegraph through the company’s agents in Central America.

The Green Pope exposes what Asturias calls “aggressive altruism” as corporate warfare in Central America, supported by U.S. diplomacy. If, in the national sphere, corporate philanthropy in the 1930s appropriated the trappings of democratic discourse in order to solidify the private sector at the very moment that the government expanded to a welfare state system, across the hemisphere, U.S. corporate expansion, the source of philanthropic wealth, took on an increasingly authoritarian role in the Banana Wars’ exploitation of Central American land and

³¹ “diez años de primavera en el país de la eterna tiranía”

people. The language of philanthropy permeated representations of hemispheric relationships of the period. American visions of imperialism as a form of giving carried within them the prospect of philanthropy as a means of enabling the restoration of order in the aftermath of hemispheric financial collapse and turmoil. Likewise, popular fiction about the Great Depression focused on the domestic scene, portraying white Americans responding to the loss of family inheritance and often including political debate over economic recovery that was implicitly geopolitical and transnational in nature. These formulations hinged on an understanding of the United States as benefactor and protector of the region with a focus on protecting financial interests in Latin America while withdrawing military forces from occupied zones. As counternarratives of local and global dominance told from the perspective of the oppressed, Wright and Asturias both theorize philanthropy as a discourse and geopolitical tool of U.S. empire that participates in the creation of the “world’s dispossessed” (*Black Metropolis* lxvii). Caribbean and Central American literature has long used narrative as a form of resistance against U.S. aggression, providing an important antidote to U.S. attempts at reinventing and downplaying its history of violence exemplified in fashioning itself a “good neighbor” in the hemisphere. Mexican scholar Carlos Bosch-García explains, the policy of “the good neighbor...tried to strengthen the bonds of Latin American nations towards the system of the United States” (261) while despotic leaders such as Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, and Jorge Ubico in

Guatemala, for their part, nurtured U.S. dominance.³² Anti-imperialism in Central American produced a genre of literature unto itself, what scholars refer to as “anti-imperialist literature” (*literatura antiimperialista*) said to originate with Máximo Soto Hall’s “El Problema” of 1899.

In May 1897, in a precedent-setting act of what historian Merle Curti calls “American Philanthropy Abroad,” U.S. Congress “appropriated \$50,000 for food, clothing, and medicine for distressed Americans in Cuba” (199) in its war for independence from Spain. Of course, such an act was bound up in U.S. interventionist politics that ultimately led to the Spanish-American War, the result of which was the United States taking control of Guam, Hawai‘i, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and, for a short time, Cuba (with lasting consequences vis-à-vis Guantanamo). Aggressive altruism is the guiding principal of political and economic expansion, a theory of force that authorizes interventions on behalf of progress. It was in the midst of the Spanish-American War that American philanthropy became intimately tied to foreign policy. The work of the Red Cross in aiding Cuban refugees as well as American servicemen went on, with few interruptions, through 1899. The role of American philanthropy helped to establish a new paradigm for hemispheric relations in which government and non-government actors were often indistinguishable. Curti contends that “[t]he chief American efforts to improve conditions in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines were those of government officials associated with the occupation” (208).

³² “la buena vecindad... trató de fortalecer los lazos de las naciones latinoamericanas hacia el sistema de los Estados Unidos”

Yet he admits that such organizations as the Red Cross, which were closely tied to the government, along with “nonofficial American overseas philanthropies” (208) all anticipated such future philanthropically oriented government policies as President Truman’s 1949 Point Four program. Even Curti recognizes U.S. modernization efforts (like the Point Four program) as a form of philanthropy, albeit not the particular kind he is studying. Aimé Césaire picks up on this in his *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950) when he characterizes Truman’s Point Four program as “aid to the disinherited,” a sign that “American high finance considers that the time has come to raid every colony in the world” (76).

In the early twentieth-century iteration of conquest, the “American” corporation is the dominant mechanism, a neocolonialist institution that replaces the Spanish church as the institution authorizing and necessitating domination and dispossession in the hemisphere. In addition to being called “The Green Pope,” Thompson is called “the pope of piracy” (21), “blonde priest of progress” (43), “the antichrist” (81), “Pontiff of the divine Caribbean sea” (144), and “*Banana’s King*” (319). Just as the missionaries of the conquest imagined inhabitants of the New World as “savages” in need of salvation through Christianity, the infallible leader of the American corporation, in Asturias’s novel, seeks to “save” people from underdevelopment through progress. Referencing a patriarchal corporate empire, the metaphor of the pope registers the missionary zeal of the purveyors of progress and profit while commenting on the sinister morality of the corporation, which concerns itself with financial gain and instrumentalizes people toward those ends. The first

name “Geo” animates the geopolitics of capital as a global referent while the middle name “Maker” places Thompson in both the role of God/Creator and controller of the modes of production of the banana industry. Thompson is an unsavory protagonist, serving both as a fictionalized version of the historical president of United Fruit and Cuyamel Fruit before that, Samuel Zemurray (also known as the “Banana King” and “Sam the Banana Man,” according to Cohen). He also functions as Asturias’s archetype of the powerful American businessman. Asturias takes pains to remind us that beyond the threat he poses to Guatemala or even Central America more broadly, Geo Maker Thompson is a menace to local and global communities. His presence marks the dispossession of communities in Chicago just as in Bananera.

Lester Mead, a former agent of Tropicalterna whose time in Guatemala provoked him to change his name and redistribute his wealth to his workers, provides a counterpoint to Thompson as an example of someone who is “anti-charitable” (*anticaritativo*) (253). One worker, Lino Lucero, explains: “the money we inherit is anti-charitable because it comes from the hands of a very generous person who never offended us by giving us something empty or reducing us to a hand-out” (253).³³ Mead’s actions are placed squarely against the kind of “blessed charity,” defined as “this charity of distributing money in the form of a hand-out to the needy” (253), which robs people of their dignity in the novel. When he dies, Mead leaves his fortune to the banana plantation families that collectively worked the fields in tandem

³³ “El dinero que heredamos es anticaritativo porque viene de manos de una persona generosísima que jamás nos hizo la offense de regalarnos nada, de rebajarnos con la limosna.”

with Mead and his wife. While this represents a significant redistribution of wealth among the people whose work helped to build his fortune—for which he is repeatedly called “half crazy” or “half sane” (198)—the effect of his philanthropy is to maintain the status quo; the majority of people who inherit Mead’s wealth move to the United States, thereby breaking up the community and leaving the land vulnerable to takeover by Tropicalterna.

Lester Mead’s radical act of redistribution is a counterexample to the Mr. Daltons and Thompsons of the world, for he goes beyond the typical reformist model of tokenistic philanthropy. Mead is “the good Yankee, the Yankee with a different view of things and with different criterion,” as literary critic Jaime Peralta explains (95).³⁴ Mead does not create a foundation with his money and his will in no way resembles the traditional philanthropy that dehumanizes people by reducing them into beggars. Yet Mead’s will still suffers some of the same faults or shortcomings in how it fails to create change insofar as the terms of distribution do not fundamentally challenge the legitimacy of the corporation itself. He does not radically change the structure of the corporation with his bequest, however unusual and refreshingly “anti-charitable” it might be. For one of the new millionaire families, the Luceros, “the triumph of Lester Mead and his wife...[is] to use passive means to resist the immense Company, because it is all powerful”³⁵ (347). Therefore, his philanthropy is meaningful and represents an alternative to the status quo, but as an individual act, it

³⁴ “el yanqui bueno, el yanqui con otra vision de las cosas y con otro criterio”

³⁵ “el triunfo de Lester Mead y su esposa, resistir por medios pacíficos a la inmensa Compañía, porque es todopoderosa...”

lacks the kind of revolutionary possibility that could potentially change the system itself.

The limitations of individual radicalism are felt most acutely in the fact that Mead's fortune also paves the way for many of the newly rich villagers to leave their land. Their move to the north for educational and other opportunities reduces the community's collective power. By moving to the north with their new windfalls to take advantage of the opportunities not available in the banana villages, the villagers' upward mobility transports them outside of their communities. The novel therefore comments upon a world-system in which isolation is not possible. Wealth is portrayed as a system. It is not just about who has the wealth because even the villagers change their priorities—their class interests and geographic positions—once they enter into a new class. The only holdout is the radical individual, Lino Lucero, who is increasingly marginalized by the encroachment of *Tropicaltanera*—the name of which alone invokes the company's arrogance—and isolated by the flight of his fellow millionaire villagers. It's unclear at the end of the novel how successful his individual resistance will prove to be against the “all powerful” (“*todopoderoso*”) corporate giant, but the ending suggests that he will be standing alone.

Philanthropy is, therefore, a structure through which we should consider the racial and other hierarchies of power that define “Americanity,” which according to Anibal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, “reproduces itself over time” (550) and is defined by four distinct characteristics: coloniality, ethnicity, racism, and the concept of newness (550). The language of benevolence has long been employed to justify

what Quijano and Wallerstein call the “ideological slogan” (555) of Manifest Destiny and its tenets of expansionism. Diana Taylor discusses Manifest Destiny as a subtle “ideology that justifies (‘our’) annihilating ‘evil’ under the banner of righteousness” (263). This morphs from an argument about westward expansion into a hemispheric ideology of moral authority, in part through the policy of benevolent assimilation proclaimed at the end of the Spanish-American War. Amy Kaplan has made an argument similar to Taylor’s about the dominant narrative of the United States as a “reluctant imperialist,” a version of history that suggests “the United States never sought an empire...but it had the burden thrust upon it by the fall of earlier empires and the failures of modern states, which abuse the human rights of their own people and spawn terrorism” (4). U.S. philanthropy isn’t just similar to Manifest Destiny but rather is historically connected to it; the ideology of philanthropy developed as it did in part because of this ideology of Manifest Destiny. Through the philanthropy of their CEOs, corporations, in particular, position themselves as the saviors of the world’s poor by generating low-wage jobs and “progress,” while exploiting laborers and dispossessing communities of their land and resources. Philanthropy, I argue, represents the “doing good” side of corporate expansion as the beneficiaries of corporate excesses regularly position themselves as benevolent overlords of the people.

Narratives of philanthropy isolate these forms of giving from the capitalistic evils of corporate greed and modes of extraction. As the handmaiden of racial capitalism, philanthropy in *The Green Pope*, like that in *Native Son*, is also a highly

gendered institution. Not unlike Mrs. Dalton who advises Mr. Dalton's philanthropic investments, Doña Flora, the mother of Thompson's fiancé Mayarí who marries Thompson after her daughter's death, conspires with her husband to ensure Tropical Platanera's takeover of the surrounding villages. Her daughter, Mayarí, is different. She is the antidote to—rather than the handmaiden of—racial capitalism. Mayarí, the “beautiful pale coastal woman” (27) grows disenchanted with her fiancé Thompson after she learns of his plans to buy out all of the banana villagers and run them from their homes.³⁶ Unable to see Mayarí's perspective, Thompson plows ahead with offers to buy area lands while he thinks Mayarí is at home sulking. Little does he know that she is not only not at home but has been spending her time organizing the villagers and their mayors to protest Thompson's attempts on the land. She models a kind of communitarianism and resistance to power that demonstrates a real love of her people and a counter to masculine philanthropy. She resists the land grab and she resists philanthropic models of resistance to achieve her ends.

Mayarí's language is also a tool of resistance. She uses a traditionally--even stereotypically--feminine poetic language that disrupts the language of economic, political, and physical dominance used by Geo Maker Thompson.³⁷ By contrast, Thompson's language is utilitarian and staccato. As he follows Mayarí through the islet in a critical scene, he becomes aware of the limits of his language to

³⁶ “la guapa costeña pálida”

³⁷ Thompson's nearly superhuman physique is repeatedly referred to and, at times, equated with bestial qualities. He is described as having a “pecho de hércules blanco” (32) and as a “muchachón gigante” (38). In the opening lines of the novel when Geo Maker Thompson first arrives on the docks of Cabo Tres Puntas his ears are said to be “friéndose en aceite,” comparing him to a pig being feasted on (11).

communicate with her: “I thought of calling her, but later said to myself: Don’t call her. Follow her. What I want is to call her. Don’t call her. Follow her. This point of land will end and she will fall into the water, unless I call her, unless I give up. The time has come to swim and rescue her” (32).³⁸ Thompson’s repetition of words and rhyme reflects his utilitarianism. The shift from simple past tense to the future perfect foreshadows the complex power shift resulting from Mayarí’s suicide later in the novel. Thompson drops his pursuit of Mayarí in favor of his business interests instead. The only way he could rescue Mayarí would be to sacrifice his business. With their two lives interlocked in this irreconcilable tension, the only resolution is death for one or the other. “A calculating machine” (34), as she calls him, Thompson’s ruthlessness impels Mayarí to organize the village mayors against him. She ultimately commits suicide after reaching all of the neighboring villages. It is her only out. *The Green Pope* traces transnational flows of capital that leave no place impervious to imperial expansion, from the rural to the urban in Central America through North America (banana villages of Guatemala to Guatemala City, New Orleans, Chicago).

Mayarí’s actions also gesture to the potential for transnational solidarity hinted at in the novel’s locations throughout the hemisphere. The social stratification of Chicago detailed outside of Tropicalterna’s headquarters imagines a community of people united by their shared oppression rather than divided and destroyed by it.

³⁸ “Pensó llamarla, pero luego se dijo: No la llamo. La sigo. Lo que quiere es que la llame. No la llamo. La sigo. Esta punta de tierra se va a cortar y caerá al agua, sin que yo la llame, sin que yo me dé por vencido. Tiempo habrá para nadir y rescatarla.”

Asturias maps the wealth of Michigan Avenue at the Tropicaltamera's headquarters onto the underdevelopment of the barrios and the South Side ghettos that surround it when he writes that Thompson

went into the maze of neighborhoods where the streets smell of large intestines and the street corners are like square anuses where the pedestrians appear, not sufficiently digested by the misery of life, for they can be seen disappearing into the intestinal alleyways and emerging into other streets. Chicago: on one side the grandeur of marble, the facade of the great avenue, and on the other side the miserable world where poor people are not people but trash.³⁹ (139)

Wealth accumulation and dispossession are bound together. For Asturias, the dispossession of the workers in the banana towns of Guatemala is inextricably linked with the plight of the world's poor inside the United States as well. Both are rendered "trash" by the voracious appetite of wealth accumulation that consumes the lives of those who live "on the other side." Writing during the height of modernization discourse, Asturias details the ways in which conditions of the "Third World" are found within the very financial mecca that represents the height of "First World" prosperity. By describing the city in such terms, he locates underdevelopment and powerlessness inside the financial capital, not outside the United States. In this scene, Chicago is both metropole *and* colony, with only the façade of the great avenue barely covering the expendable refuse of its conscripts. Wright and Asturias critically engage these conditions of U.S. imperialism—inside and outside the United States—

³⁹ Dejó *Michigan-avenue*, donde se da cita la riqueza del mundo, e internóse en el dédalo de los barrios en que las calles hieden a intestinos largos y las bocacalles son como anos cuadrados adonde asoman los transeúnes no suficientemente digeridos por la miseria de la vida, pues se les ve desaparecer por otro callejones intestinales y salir a otras calles. Chicago: de un lado, la grandiosidad de los mármoles, el frente de la gran avenida, y de otro, el mundo miserable, donde la gente pobre no es gente, sino basura.

by taking aim at the corporate wealth accumulated through U.S. imperialism in the Black Metropolis of 1930s Chicago and the Guatemalan banana plantation.

The Green Pope engages with the multiple dimensions and effects of U.S. imperialism's "aggressive altruism" from the inside out and the outside in. It has been noted that "the axis of Asturias' writing" is his ability to "transcend national boundaries" (Peralta xlvi). The most symbolic critique of U.S. imperialism is located inside of the United States, for the Chicago ghetto reveals the truth of "American" life and culture. The novel's representation of the Chicago ghetto and of the banana villages of Central America furnishes a critique of the social, political, and ideological circumstances that produce such conditions. Even in a novel about Guatemala, the Chicago ghetto emerges as a symbol of underdevelopment and the discontents of U.S. empire in the hemisphere. Asturias probes the depths of philanthropy as a central logic underpinning the logic of imperialism. Altruism is the guiding principle of expansion—a "theory of force" (Asturias 28)—that authorizes aggression under the guise of a benevolent pursuit.⁴⁰ Promulgated as a corrective measure to purportedly anomalous inequalities within capitalist society, philanthropy, in Asturias's formulation, registers as a threatening ideology that authorizes imperialism throughout the hemisphere. Asturias' characterization highlights the inherent contradiction of the idea of corporate altruism because to act "rationally" in the market is defined as acting in one's own self-interest. It also registers the inherent violence in such acts because they thrive on interventions into new markets (Asturias

⁴⁰ "teoría de la fuerza"

28). Aggressive altruism is a “middle term,” a neutral ground, “already tested in Manila”⁴¹ (22). Evoking benevolent assimilation policy in the Philippines at the turn of the century, aggressive altruism emerges as a kindred form of “humanitarian” or philanthropic imperialism that disavows its own violence. Under the guise of liberating Filipinos from Spanish rule, the United States massacred hundreds of thousands in the Philippine-American War in order to possess the Philippines as a colony after the Spanish-American War. Aggressive altruism, therefore, exposes the myth of U.S. neutrality and isolation by showing its heavy-handed role in “moderating” world affairs and satirizing its claims as a benevolent intervener.

Conclusion

Richard Wright and Miguel Angel Asturias both figure philanthropy in their novels as an inherently interventionist logic that provides the moral support—the “doing good”—necessary to present “progress,” “development,” and other ideologically cloaked forms of U.S. dominance as ultimately humanitarian acts. The American businessman (figuratively Mr. Dalton and Geo Maker Thompson in this chapter) embodies this logic for both authors and represents U.S. empire, its motivations and its ultimate priorities in which accumulations of wealth are achieved through underdevelopment and dispossession of people according to a racial hierarchy. For Wright, Mr. Dalton represents the producer and profiteer of the internal colony; for Asturias, Maker Thompson represents the corporate power behind empire, the de facto owner of a country in the capitalist world system in which “only

⁴¹ “término medio “; “ya se experimentó en Manila”

money grants authority”⁴² (Asturias 154). Asturias’s critique matches up with black radical critiques that examine the ways in which racial injustice and inequality in the United States grossly undermine popular “conception[s] of America as the world’s exemplary nation-state” (Singh 17). Yet that does not stop philanthropists from colluding with the government to combine individual wealth with the power of the state to fashion the very concept of justice in this country and abroad.

It is no coincidence that philanthropy emerges in both of these texts as a hemispheric problem of the twentieth century. The narrative of philanthropy implies that the ends of “doing good”—bringing “progress” to Guatemala or educating and employing black communities in the segregated United States—justify the means of exploitation and generally “bad behavior” by the U.S. state and its corporations.

⁴² “sólo el dinero da autoridad”

Chapter 3

Colonization is not a philanthropic enterprise.
Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950)

The transformation of the idea of justice into the industry of human rights has been a conceptual coup in which NGOs and foundations have played a crucial part.
Arundhati Roy, *Capitalism: A Ghost Story* (2014)

Afterlives of Sentimentality: Philanthropy in the Cold War Imagination of Latin America

Reflecting on the historical conditions that made her groundbreaking 1967 novel *Ashes of Izalco* (*Cenizas de Izalco*) possible, Nicaraguan-Salvadoran author Claribel Alegría, in a 1997 interview, credited the Cuban Revolution. After living for years under multiple dictatorships, she explained: “I grew up believing that it was impossible for the dictatorships to change. I thought that this was a Central American plague and that with the help North Americans gave to the dictatorships, we were never going to change” (Velásquez 331).⁴³ The political possibilities opened up by Cuba’s asymmetrical face off with the hemispheric hegemon unlocked an artistic flourishing that expanded the horizons of what she thought was possible for Central American peace and equality. Inspired by the revolution and its potential for radical change, Alegría, an established poet, turned to fiction to tell the suppressed, undocumented history of violence in her hometown of Santa Ana, El Salvador. Now writing as a self-described “narrator” (Velásquez 327), she changed the course of

⁴³ All translations mine

Central American literature in the process.⁴⁴ *Ashes of Izalco* represents politics from a different perspective than that of social realism, a genre focused on everyday working-class conditions that culturally dominated the region at the time. In *Ashes of Izalco*, Alegría sees beyond aggressive, dominant articulations of power and takes notice of the “soft power” enveloping the region long before there was an official term for it.⁴⁵ It is through this lens that philanthropy takes shape in the novel as a relatively low-profile yet highly influential power structure of the Cold War Era in Latin America.

At the same time that Alegría began to envision a new future for Central America, the Cuban Revolution was also inspiring many other feminists in the hemisphere to fight for radical political change. In the Dominican Republic, the famous Mirabal sisters organized the leftist Fourteenth of June Movement, an underground resistance group intent on overthrowing the brutal dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930-1961). The sisters’ legacy played a significant role in unifying the movement for women’s liberation across Latin America in spite of “sometimes acrimonious debates” (Sternbach et al. 410) about the level and type of political action required to free women from oppression. Assassinated under direct orders from Trujillo on November 25, 1960, the sisters were honored for their heroism by the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean held in

⁴⁴ Alegría started publishing poetry in the 1950s and primarily identifies as a poet. In the essay “Claribel Alegría’s Recollections of Things to Come” (1994), Guatemalan literary Arturo Arias argued that *Ashes of Izalco* “opened the way for a transition in narrative mode and led towards the creation of a new Central American novel” (38).

⁴⁵ The term “soft power” is attributed to political scientist Joseph S. Nye Jr. who theorized it in 1990.

Bogota, Colombia in 1981 when participants overwhelmingly supported the resolution to designate November 25 the “International Day of Nonviolence against Women” (Sternbach et al. 409). Nearly twenty years later, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly followed suit, designating November 25 an International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (Resolution 54/134).

In their records, the UN Division for the Advancement of Women noted the importance of Julia Alvarez’s bestselling novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994) for depicting the “suffering and martyrdom [of the Mirabal sisters] in the last days of the Trujillo dictatorship” in such a way that would convert the “Unforgettable Butterflies” (as they have long been known) from regional into global “symbol[s] of both popular and feminist resistance” (Resolution 54/134). Alvarez’s novel performs an important function in the post-Cold War ascension of human rights discourse, as recognition from the UN attests to the dramatic transformation of the Mirabal sisters from leftist activists fighting for the other side of the iron curtain into literary representatives of a 1990s Western human rights agenda.

Anchored in the 1960s, *Ashes of Izalco* and *In the Time of the Butterflies* look backward and forward, before and after the Cold War to reveal the cultural importance of philanthropy in providing a benevolent alibi for U.S. foreign aggression, on the one hand, and its key role in shaping an ascendant post-Cold War human rights discourse, on the other. In this chapter, I trace philanthropy’s cultural development in Latin America, a region President John F. Kennedy identified as “the most critical area in the world” (Rabe 7), through a comparative study of these two

examples of historical fiction. Along the way I examine Cold War U.S. philanthropy as a racialized and gendered cultural formation that demands contextualization within the *longue durée* of sentimentality as a genre. I read philanthropy as a hemispheric tradition that connects the U.S. sentimental novel to the Latin American romance. A comparison of these texts reveals the limits of sentimentality to adequately represent the revolutionary politics of the 1960s. *Ashes of Izalco*, steeped in the subversive spirit of the 1960s, signals a backlash against genres of sentimentality—including the “foundational fiction” (Doris Sommer) of Latin American romance. By contrast, against the backdrop of 1990s neoliberalism, *In the Time of the Butterflies*’s sentimentality helps to consolidate the narrative of the U.S. as legitimate global superpower, indeed furnishing cultural foundations for asserting the “U.S. as the universal model for a racially integrated nation” (Melamed 25). The first section of this chapter theorizes philanthropy in *Ashes of Izalco* as a form of economic interventionism that forms part of the global U.S. strategy to contain the spread of communism, a strategy typically defined by foreign military interventionism. U.S. philanthropic institutions, in particular, played a leading role by funding studies that rationalized U.S. policies while also supplying and training technocrats to design the architecture of military and political interventions. I study the relationship between U.S. philanthropy and interventionism in order to tease out *Alegría*’s critique of the sentimental genre. I argue that this feminist backlash against sentimentality locates it as a “countersentimental” text, which Lauren Berlant theorizes as a genre that critiques sentimentality as a brand of elite white feminism implicated in U.S. racial

capitalism even as it appears to denounce it. This oppositional stance is juxtaposed against Alvarez's post-Cold War return to sentimentality, an affirmation of liberal white feminism and the morality of human rights that renders more radical possibilities of the 1960s outmoded. I conclude with an analysis of *In the Time of the Butterflies*'s appeal to humanitarian interventionism as a symptom of U.S. hegemony, part of the dominant discourse of human rights that would come to define the 1990s as "the decade of human rights" (Schaffer and Smith 1).

By comparing the philanthropic appeal of *In the Time of the Butterflies* to the philanthropic structures represented in the transnational, interracial, transcultural romance in *Ashes of Izalco*, the historical co-constitution of philanthropy and human rights during the Cold War becomes clear. These transnational feminist accounts of U.S. philanthropy are framed within the context of violent U.S. regime-change policies of the 1950s and 1960s rooted in structures of white male supremacy. Both texts deploy gendered genres—romance, sentimental, epistolary—to re-imagine national traumas and hemispheric geopolitics as intimate stories told from the so-called women's "private sphere."

"Models of Philanthropy"

Ashes of Izalco is one of the first works published in El Salvador to tell the previously silenced story of *La Matanza* (The Massacre), the violent suppression of a peasant-led revolt in 1932 near Izalco Volcano in which an estimated 30,000 people were killed. Alegría's first novel, co-written with her American husband Darwin J. Flakoll, is set in 1966 against the backdrop of U.S. military interventions

throughout the hemisphere during the Cold War. It opens with Carmen Rojas Pierson, the protagonist, arriving within hours of her mother's death in her hometown of Santa Ana after a long flight from Washington, D.C. The narrative is framed around Carmen's discovery of an affair her mother, Isabel, had in the lead up to *La Matanza* with an American man, Frank Wolff, when Carmen was just a child. Carmen learns of the affair through Frank's diary, bequeathed to her by her mother. In the diary, the story of Frank and Isabel's secret and illicit romance unfolds alongside the story of *La Matanza*, an episode under persistent erasure in El Salvador through the 1960s. As she discovers these hidden familial and national histories, Carmen sees her own life anew in the context of unreconciled personal and political histories. Frank's journal transports Carmen through time, space, and language, offering her a vicarious perch as he travels as a tourist in El Salvador. Carmen examines the reasons for her unhappy marriage and growing anger at U.S. politics in her home region as she reads about her mother's discontent, offering commentary on the diary and filling in narrative gaps while coming to terms with the ways in which her bourgeois family in both Washington, D.C. and Santa Ana perpetuate women's confinement in domestic roles. She evaluates her marriage to an American man, Paul Pierson, a poor comparison to the kind of the kind of deep, emotional intimacy Frank and Isabel enjoyed with one another during their brief affair, cut short by Frank's hurried departure from El Salvador as one of *La Matanza's* only surviving witnesses.

By juxtaposing the lives of Carmen and Isabel, the novel traces a genealogy of the political upheavals of the 1960s, looking back to the 1930s as a pivotal time in the

shaping of the hemisphere's future: a time when Salvadorans were rising up against "the fourteen families of El Salvador" and the United States was redefining its relationship to Latin America via Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy."⁴⁶ More particularly, Alegría uses her generational portraits of these two women and their struggles in (and outside of) their marriages to show the deep and tightly knit interrelationships between patriarchal masculinity and imperialist "soft power." Isabel's lover, Frank, and Carmen's husband, Paul, serve as allegories of U.S. power in the region in the 1930s and 1960s, respectively. Frank's openness and willing vulnerability in his relationship with Isabel correspond with the United States' attempt at rolling back its political and military interventions in the 1930s by pulling Marines out of Latin American and Caribbean countries, in a philanthropic posturing toward Latin America in which President Roosevelt declared, "we cannot merely take but we must give as well." By contrast, Carmen's husband Paul Pierson is rigid and sterile, allying him with the intensive iteration of interventionist policies ushered in during the Cold War, when the United States shirked negotiation in favor of asserting its own will and interests. Paul is a career diplomat with the U.S. State Department and a proud representative of U.S. imperial power in Latin America. His transnational marriage to Carmen, far from being a symbol of international unity, in fact works as another instrument of U.S. dominance, as the asymmetrical articulations of power in the patriarchal institution of marriage provide the structural basis for his

⁴⁶ "The fourteen families of El Salvador" (*las catorce familias de El Salvador*) is a commonly used reference to the Salvadoran oligarchy's richest families who own the vast majority of the country's industry and wealth.

implementation of aggressive U.S. foreign policies. For *Alegría*, the novel and the history it narrates are reciprocal in the sense that one cannot be told without the other: details of the 1960s come into focus only in response to the revelations Frank's diary contains about the 1930s.

Most studies of *Ashes of Izalco* focus on its account of *La Matanza*, forming part of what *Alegría* describes as “a [more] complete history” (Velásquez 331) of this significant national trauma that had yet to be told in full when the novel was published in 1966, part of a second wave of documentation and writing about the event, according to Brandt G. Peterson's article “Remains out of place: Race, trauma and nationalism in El Salvador.” My aim is not to de-emphasize the novel's noteworthy intervention into historical and cultural representations of the fratricidal violence of *La Matanza*; rather, it is to more thoroughly examine the context of the 1960s civil rights, feminist, and decolonization movements that animate the work. The novel links hemispheric instability to both the complex history of asymmetrical U.S. power in the region and to an unreconciled national trauma of the past. The silences and suppression of historical events that shaped Isabel's generation fractured the nation and the entire region, leaving El Salvador weakened and vulnerable to dictatorship in the 1940s and subject to foreign intervention in the future. *Alegría* exposes the “hard” and “soft” dimensions of U.S. interventionism, singling out philanthropy as a crucial function of Cold War era U.S. foreign policies. Her critical representation of Paul's white supremacist, toxic masculinity reveals the sinister and

covert ways that philanthropic interventionism does violence to those it “loves” under the guise of a rational benevolence.

Philanthropy, I argue, emerges in the novel as one of the most problematic U.S. institutions because of its ability to rationalize economic, ideological, and political violence as doing good, as serving the best interests of those it harms. Alegría’s insertion of philanthropy as a foundational institution of U.S. imperialism alongside more obvious instruments like the media and multinational corporations provides an expanded dimension to the novel’s concerns about the structures of power in the United States that get exported abroad under the guise of “the benevolence of U.S. global ascendancy” (Melamed 1). A “flowering of the American capitalistic system” (Kiger qtd. in Arnove 4), U.S. philanthropic foundations are estimated to have tripled their wealth during the most intensive periods of the Cold War, between the 1950s and the early 1970s. Along with their increased wealth, they also emerged as one of the most influential purveyors of U.S. soft power throughout the world. Philanthropy and other uses of soft power proved to be powerful ideological tools. From Carnegie and Ford Foundations’ overseas studies programs of the 1940s and 1950s that included the “training of the indigenous reform leader who would eschew revolutionary nationalism in favor of more moderate development goals” (Berman 48) to the government and foundation funding of area studies in U.S. universities speak to the range of forms that soft power took. Carmen’s American husband, Paul Pierson, figures as both object and subject of the U.S. ideological apparatus, both fully indoctrinated and an implement of U.S. imperialism. As a U.S.

diplomat, Paul enforces U.S. hegemony in Latin America while claiming to be too busy to learn Spanish. He supports “the politics of Washington toward Latino countries” (Alegría 69) and Jim Crow segregation.⁴⁷ In short, he is fully indoctrinated into his country’s mythologies, a product of the nation’s iconic institutions: the military, the state department, the university, the media, and philanthropy. Alegría highlights the prominence of philanthropy in this cadre of institutions through Carmen’s complaint that Paul believes “newspapers never lie, [and] all the large monopolies are models of philanthropy” (69).⁴⁸ Philanthropy, for Carmen, is propaganda. It functions as a weapon of warfare to reinforce U.S. ideals. Carmen worries about the impact of these institutions on her children in an introspective moment of reflection in the middle of a conversation with family members who dream of sending their children to school in the United States. “I am terrified,” she says, “that my children are being formed there, that they will become ‘regular fellows’” (68).⁴⁹ This thought leads directly into commentary on Paul, the quintessential regular fellow, a product of these institutions. Made in the image of the ideological structures that formed him, Paul becomes a “model of philanthropy” who puts a positive spin on his actions that erode his marriage and harm the people of Latin America through his foreign policy work.

Philanthropy shapes Paul’s skewed worldview and is included among the “marvelous democratic institutions” (69) that Paul promotes abroad. Ironically, he is

⁴⁷ “la política de Washington hacia los países latinos”

⁴⁸ “sus periódicos nunca mienten, todos los grandes monopolies son modelos de filantropía”

⁴⁹ “Tengo terror de que mis hijos se formen allá, que se conviertan en ‘regular fellows.’”

the only character in the novel who does not seek some form of escape to a foreign country.⁵⁰ Far from trapped in undesirable circumstances, Paul is free to go anywhere in the world under the cover of U.S. diplomacy and its philanthropic aims. But he is by no means free; his mind is thoroughly colonized. Paul's individuality is subordinated to the government agency he works for. He, therefore, embodies his country's values of efficiency, corporatism and militarism. He even plans the few vacations they take "like a military operation" (67), part of a rote routine. If he could see the undemocratic nature of his country's institutions, his entire "little world would come crumbling down, and for him it would be very difficult to find himself alone, without support" (69).⁵¹ Without them, as Carmen notes, he would be utterly alone. But these institutions isolate him emotionally and prioritize his institutional affiliation working toward a supposed greater good at his own individual peril. The United States garnered its power through such notions of a greater good at home and abroad. A "metanarrative of the United States as the antiracist savior of the free world" (Melamed 26) gained currency as a result of Allied victory in World War II, a position the United States leveraged to justify its aggressive actions in spreading capitalism, power, and influence throughout the world, and especially in the American hemisphere, under the guise of doing good. In addition to military might, the civil sector was called upon to wage a soft-power war against communism. At home philanthropic institutions, such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, helped

⁵⁰ "maravillosas instituciones democráticas"

⁵¹ "su mundito se le vendría abajo y para él sería muy difícil encontrarse solo, sin apoyo"

to wage war against insurgent black communities while domestic espionage efforts, such as the FBI's COINTELPRO and the CIA's Operation CHAOS, targeted black communities seeking distributive forms of justice. Robert L. Allen tells one such history about the Ford Foundation's work to change the course of the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) in the 1960s by funding "programs [that], far from aiding in the achievement of black liberation and freedom from exploitation, would instead weld the black communities more firmly into the structure of American corporate capitalism" (Allen 62). Peace Corps volunteers, often suspected of working hand-in-glove with the CIA, began arriving in El Salvador within a year of the program's founding in 1961. Philanthropy proved to be more than an ideological position, as institutions like the Ford Foundation influenced foreign policy by stepping in to "fill a gap between what the State Department would like to do and what Congress would have [the State Department] do" (Walter Ashley qtd. in Arnove 308). In his recent book on the history of philanthropy in the United States, Olivier Zunz explains that "the ways in which Americans combined government and philanthropic resources made humanitarianism an important part of the Pax Americana" (137). Operating behind the scenes, including through covert channels, U.S. financial and military might during the Cold War created hostile conditions for the people living within its reach. Philanthropy provided an alibi.

It is well known that philanthropists' "humanitarianism was shaped by their ethnocentrism, their class interests, and their support for the imperialist objectives of their own country" (Arnove 10). But they were also complicit with the aggressive

foreign interventionism in Latin America. Francesca Sawaya has argued for reading twentieth-century corporate philanthropy as an intervention in the market, “an expression of the turn-of-the-[twentieth]-century crisis in liberal economics” (13). Recognizing philanthropy as a corrective action that intervened into the so-called free market economy required the development of “techniques of rationalization that justified interventionism—even as the fundamental fiction of markets was maintained” (Sawaya 13). Drawing from Sawaya’s analysis, I analyze the ways in which the United States mobilized philanthropy to provide a “soft” cover for its often-brutal Cold War interventionist policies in Latin America. As an ideological tool of domestic U.S. racial capitalism, philanthropy promoted fictions of individual agency and upward mobility—as evident in its credo of “intense individualism” (Carnegie, “Wealth” 656) and its racial uplift campaigns at home—against leftist critiques of capitalism. Translated into U.S. foreign policy, philanthropic ideology was critical to U.S. soft power strategies that aimed to convert hearts and minds to the cause of American democracy as a global common good while disavowing the “systemic inadequacies and injustices of global capitalism” (Sawaya 4). In her study of the Carnegie Corporation’s interventionism to uphold apartheid in South Africa, Tiffany Willoughby-Herard theorizes philanthropy as a segregationist institution, part of a “complex global racial contract” (128) with an agenda to underdevelop non-white nations and communities and promote white supremacy. *Ashes of Izalco* traces the entwined modes of U.S. soft and hard power through the figure of Paul, whose conception of philanthropy links his misogyny to his imperialist views. He derives his

authority in large part from his traditionally masculine role as a “good provider” (Alegría 68) for the family and from the prestige he earns through his well-respected position in Washington, the makings of a “solid, respectable citizen” (69). All of these attitudes come together to embody a toxic white masculinity.

Following the “models of philanthropy” he believes in so fervently, Paul can be read as a type of self-fashioned philanthropist who puts a positive spin on all that he does and uses paternalism to defend his country’s violence. Blinded by a religious-like devotion to his country, he overlooks the immorality of racial and ethnic discrimination, military imperialism, and rampant consumerism that undermine the purported ideals of U.S. democracy. As a devoted representative of his country, he reproduces the racism and power of white male privilege at home and abroad, confident in the belief that he is sanctified to do the work of God in spreading U.S. power and influence throughout the hemisphere. In so doing, he follows a longstanding philanthropic precedent.

The early twentieth century iteration of the interventionist policies employed in Central America were, in fact, led by corporate missionaries, “models of philanthropy” doing good by bringing jobs and progress to underdeveloped countries in “America’s backyard,” a term used during the Cold War to refer to Latin America in U.S. foreign policy circles. Samuel Zemurray, a former CEO of United Fruit, orchestrated the 1911 overthrow of Honduran President Miguel Dávila and installed former president Manuel Bonilla in office, who, in turn, gave Zemurray \$500,000 and 24,700 acres of Honduran land. Zemurray “deployed many tactics [in the 1911 coup]

that would become standard procedure for clandestine operations” in his “overthrow of the Honduran government,” which many experts believe became a blueprint for all future CIA missions (Cohen 196), including the 1954 overthrow of democratically-elected Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz. In El Salvador, the strategy was employed for the U.S.-orchestrated coup in 1960. Indeed, during the Cold War it was “hard to distinguish United Fruit from the CIA in those years. The organizations shared personnel as well as equipment and intelligence” (Cohen 196). Zemurray repaid these favors to Central American countries through massive philanthropy projects, often in secret. His biographer, Rich Cohen, notes that he “found[ed] the Zamorano, the Panamerican Agricultural School” in Honduras and made it “tuition free,” just one example of his “passion for giving money on the isthmus” to major infrastructure, healthcare, and education projects, in particular (130). Paul, like other “models of philanthropy,” functions as a symbol of the repressive power of the United States and its “marvelous democratic institutions” (Alegría 69) that strengthen the nation, orchestrating tensions that impress upon and shape the people and places it touches, often behind the scenes, out of public view. For Carmen, Paul’s articulations of philanthropy are structural positions rather than specific forms of philanthropy, such as donating money or time.

Carmen experiences Paul’s indifference to his country’s racism and imperialism as an intimate betrayal. The cultural and political confrontations that define U.S.-Latin American relations are replicated in the home through their divergent political views and orientations toward cultural exchange. His “smug sense

of [the United States'] superiority to the rest of the world" (67) is an affront to her. Carmen connects the local signposts of Jim Crow in Washington, D.C. with the global conditions of U.S. imperialism in places like El Salvador. She expresses solidarity with the marginalized Jewish and Black communities in the United States. Through her Salvadoran heritage, she orients herself toward a political community of the oppressed who denounce segregation and its practices of assimilation. Connecting the dots between the segregated spaces of Washington, D.C. and the aggressive military, political, and corporate strategies that target black and brown people throughout the hemisphere, Carmen begins to see how their differing political views are an insurmountable challenge to her marriage. His moral approval of Jim Crow in "God's Country" (67) causes her to reckon with the effects of U.S. expansionism abroad. Unconvinced that moralizing racism is a contradiction, Paul believes the United States' model of "freedom" should be spread throughout the world, thereby affirming the imperial role in Latin America as ordained by God. As such, the United States mission in Latin America echoes the *mission civilisatrice* that characterized French colonialism. It also hearkens back to Christian rationalizations for slavery that turned on the popular notion that slavery had been a civilizing institution. *Ashes of Izalco* shows how racism is a part of a culture, a set of practices that transcends individual relationships, disputing common conceptions of racism as an individual attitude rather than a complex system. While Paul, by virtue of falling in love with Carmen, marrying her, and producing a family with her, would seem to be an example of tolerance and openness, his character nonetheless reinforces closed modes

of thinking about divisions of color, gender, and nation embodied in the worst forms of American jingoism and reproduces those divisions within his family relationships.

Oppressive gendered and racialized ideologies sprung from colonialist paternalism are deployed and reproduced transnationally in the novel, a symptom of soft power in which no place, household, or relationship is left untouched. Confined within the barriers of bourgeois society in both countries, Carmen's cultural and linguistic assimilation in Washington, D.C. forms the foundation for a marriage that requires her to absorb her husband's desires as her own and to subordinate herself to serve him. The oppressive conditions of marriage come into view through the social and political structures of U.S. racism. Even as a member of the Salvadoran elite, the signs of Jim Crow in Washington, D.C. alert Carmen to the fact that without Paul, she could fall on the other side of the line dividing black and brown people from whites. Such is the arbitrary nature of racial segregation that as a woman of Latin American origin she is able to "pass" because of her light skin, class position, and conformity to normative gender roles. Residing below the Mason-Dixon line during the twilight of Jim Crow, Carmen is confronted with the reality of racial prejudice as a condition of life in the 1960s United States where she sees "Negroes treated like animals" and "Gentiles only" signs that make her "hair go straight up" (67). Far from finding a so-called first-world cosmopolitan counterpoint to the "unhappy town" (110) of her childhood in the so-called third-world, she encounters the worst kind of racial provincialism replicated inside her home. What used to seem like a peripheral debate that would end in persuading Paul to come around to her point of view becomes a

central battle in which Paul's sphere of influence continually expands and overwhelms. Carmen mourns, "every day I die a little more at Paul's side" (74). Although Carmen attributes their marital problems to the fact that "neither one of us realized how difficult it is to build a bridge between two cultures, two backgrounds as different as ours" (66), this explanation does not fully account for their differing responses to the local and global struggles of the 1960s, especially in the global context of decolonization in which the novel is written. A "bridge" suggests two equal, even sides, but of course what is really causing a problem between Carmen and Paul is a severe inequality. Confrontations with racial violence expose the fissures in their marriage as Carmen chafes at the disingenuousness of a country that uses the moral high ground it gained at the end of World War II to evangelize democracy, freedom, and equality throughout the world while de jure and de facto Jim Crow conditions created a separate and unequal society at home. It is impossible for her to critique segregation without seeing the private gendered sphere as oppressive as well.

The patriarchal nature of their marriage offers a larger critique of the institution of marriage as an institution of state power. Paul is aggressive and coldly calculating in all of his relationships, both professional and personal. He fulfills his duties at home by furnishing material comforts, leaving Carmen emotionally isolated and "rudderless" (48). Paul's power emanates throughout the home without even saying a word. Described as "silent and irritable," he "weave[s] pockets of tension in the air with nervous fingers" (9). Whatever he is feeling creates a force field of emotion that dominates the entire household. Tensions rise because Paul insists that

emotion be bottled up; they are never able to talk through or negotiate problems together. Paul blames Carmen for being “too emotional...impossible to talk to” (74). Reducing her to a stereotype of the hysterical female, Paul uses tired tropes to dehumanize Carmen. Yet it becomes clear that Paul, in fact, is the irrational one insofar as he expects his marriage to be run like a hierarchical bureaucracy complete with top-down channels of communication. Implied in this formulation is that as a breadwinner he is absolved of emotional responsibility to the family. For Carmen, such a clear division of productive and reproductive labor is absurd, even if it is upheld by normative forms of rationality. Carmen explains that life itself is fueled by emotion, not “Aristotelian syllogisms, nor triangles or parallelograms” (75), the foundations of Western logic. His insistence on logically-organized arguments, engaging with Carmen only in “monosyllables” (75), offers a familiar picture of 1960s domesticity that was being challenged by Alegría’s generation of feminists. Paul allegorically represents philanthropy’s ideological roots in patriarchal masculinity: how it presents itself as rational, logical, and reasonable, disavowing its very real “irrational” sides and the impacts it forces everyone it touches to absorb. Alegría not only exposes silence and withholding as forms of passive violence, but also shows how Paul’s supposed dispassion is in fact explosive. When he is anxious or angry, Carmen is forced to “absorb his sullen outbursts” (9) behind closed doors. Their marriage is driven by power struggles that, over time, have become the norms of all relationships, personal and political. The coercive geopolitical relations between

the two countries help to expose divisions of public/private and personal/political as binary oppositions that Alegría deconstructs.

Alegría makes visible the structural similarities between the patriarchal order of marriage and the male-dominated family home by tying them to systems of racism and imperialism in the novel. The center of the family home, the Rojas courtyard, is a critical site of U.S. imperialism. In Santa Ana, the Salvadoran elite convene in the courtyard eager to hear news from Washington, D.C. Women, in particular, come together to hear about the Pierson family in hopes of emulating them. In *The Anarchy of Empire*, Amy Kaplan suggests that “the representation of the home as an empire” is a familiar trope in women’s domestic literature in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, part of the paradox of “imperial domesticity” in which the interior function of the home turns outward as a “potent agent for national expansion” (29). In this case, the bourgeois home is the engine of transnational expansion.

Recalling that her mother never asked about Paul but often brought up Washington, D.C., where she always hoped her daughter would end up, Carmen begins to tease out her mother’s desires as expressions of cultural imperialism that led her to believe in the United States as a place where her daughter could find a kind of freedom not found in El Salvador. In this way, Isabel’s indoctrination into master narratives of the United States as a superior nation is not so different from Paul’s. Her mother was enamored with Western cultural institutions, in general, numbering the Pantheon and Palais-Royal in Paris and the National Gallery of Art and The Phillips Collection in Washington among her favorites. Ultimately, Carmen traces Isabel’s fascination with

Western culture back to her grandmother's obsession with *Gone With the Wind*, a fixture on Mamita María's nightstand. These are the stereotypically feminine institutional counterparts of Paul's "marvelous democratic institutions." They form a parallel, separate sphere of social and cultural institutions that colonize female desire: the patriarchal family structure that places women as the center of the heart and home, Western art, sentimental literature and romance, and Western women's culture, in general. The idea of a perfectly rational masculinity is upheld by the sentimental tradition's reification of female emotion, feeling, and morality, symbolized in the relationship between Scarlett and Rhett.

These "softer" cultural institutions seem harmless, but cultural escapism proves to be a harbinger of political and social violence throughout the novel, producing passive subjects impotent to enact changes in their own lives or in the life of their country. A diary entry from November 1931 depicts a dinner party in Santa Ana in which Isabel, Frank, and Alfonso, Isabel's husband, "looked for escape from reality" (49) in stories of Paris, conversing in French while drinking St. Emilion wine from Bordeaux.⁵² By comparison, Carmen says that in 1966 "the United States is in style" (68), the go-to place to escape reality.⁵³ El Salvador rarely factors into these conversations. The Salvadoran elite prefer foreign fads, always looking outward for intellectual and cultural stimulation rather than inward. Alegría implicates the elite and their indifference to conditions within their own country in helping to make El

⁵² "busca escaparse de la realidad"

⁵³ "Ahora la moda es Estados Unidos."

Salvador vulnerable to foreign interventions. When Carmen returns to Santa Ana, her friends obsessively talk about U.S. schools, decorate their homes with its luxury goods, and bring her gladiolas grown from U.S.-imported seeds to express sympathy for her mother's death. Carmen describes the former mayor of Santa Ana, Dicky Duran, as a U.S. government puppet who fashions himself a hero of the Vietnam War. Dicky welcomes ambassadors by singing the Marines' Hymn and flies lobsters in from Maine to honor local dignitaries. The reference to the Vietnam War also links U.S. militarized responses to the growth of communism in the 1960s with El Salvador's violent suppression of a peasant-led rebellion in 1932, whose leader, Farabundo Martí, inspired the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front that would later merge with the communist party to form a massive resistance movement against the U.S.-trained and -backed military during the Salvadoran Civil War in the 1980s. If Paris figures as the cultural metropolis of the pre-World War II era for her parents' generation, then Washington, D.C. plays an even bigger role for Carmen's generation, one that goes far beyond the type of cultural imperialism represented by French culture. Cultural alliances make it easier for the United States to project itself as a positive influence, providing a crucial transition from soft power to hard power.

Women's culture that endorses the gendered roles of women as moral compasses and bearers of emotional labor for men is part of the fabric of this culture of toxic masculinity. There are no damsels in distress held in the clutches of an outwardly abusive and domineering husband in the novel. Instead, like Rhett in *Gone With the Wind* and the other men in *Ashes of Izalco*, Paul simply doesn't give a damn.

He is emotionally abusive in a less visible, less empirically verifiable way, in a way that the abused themselves often struggle to recognize as abuse. Carmen finds her foremothers complicit in this arrangement, even as they suffered because from it. In their aspirations to bourgeois motherhood and wifedom, her mother and grandmother helped to reproduce and reinforce the conditions of white male supremacy. Frank's journal offers Carmen the insight that "endemic prejudices...are transmitted in one's blood," passed down and "absorb[ed] from the **mother's milk**" (147; emphasis mine). She sees her own role in upholding this hierarchy and looks for ways out. For generations, the Rojas women dreamed of the United States, in particular, as a place to mentally and physically escape from boredom characteristic of elite, mostly-white housewives like Betty Friedan described in *The Feminine Mystique*. Unlike her mother, Carmen didn't dream of living abroad. She notes, "in the United States everything seemed artificial to me" (70).⁵⁴ She is, therefore, not surprised to find that same boredom as a housewife in Washington, D.C., the same conditions of female oppression that her mother had hoped she would escape by leaving Santa Ana. She is, however, surprised at the challenge of imagining an alternative way of being. Ending her marriage seems inevitable, but the novel is left open-ended without a clear path ahead.

The Countersentimental Novel

Ashes of Izalco can be read as a countersentimental narrative that tells an alternative history of U.S.-Latin American relations through Carmen's reading of

⁵⁴ "en los Estados Unidos todo me parece artificial"

Frank Wolff's diary. As inset texts, Frank's diary and his letters to Isabel play to the conventions of the sentimental novel while ultimately critiquing the latter's racial politics. Frank's journal and the novel itself are countersentimental texts, "lacerated by ambivalence" (Berlant 55) toward the promises of intimacy and belonging proffered by sentimentality. Countersentimental texts, according to Berlant, "struggle with their own attachment to the promise of a sense of unconflictedness, intimacy, and collective belonging with which the U.S. sentimental tradition gifts its citizens and occupants" (Berlant 55). As such, *Ashes of Izalco* reverses the typical appeal of the sentimental novel by refusing to cast the brown woman as the object of suffering. Lauren Berlant has argued that "women's culture" and "sentimentality" are built upon a "central fantasy" in which the "desire of a complex person to rework the details of her history [is] to become a vague or simpler version of herself, usually in the vicinity of a love plot" (7). *Alegría* takes the epistolary genre, historically a feminine literary form, and uses it as a vehicle for the expression of male interiority, allowing Frank to show a level of intimacy and introspection repressed by the other silent, monosyllabic male figures in the text. Frank, therefore, crosses gendered lines to articulate an alternative form of masculinity.

An observant but "timid sort," Frank writes his journal in Spanish, and "open[s] the door on another possible world" for Carmen (*Alegría* 127, 140). Expanding her horizons rather than closing them down, Frank stands in contrast not only to Paul but also to Alfonso, who is stuck in the past without a vision for the future. Frank imagines Alfonso as a mighty Inter-American philanthropist, a

“ferocious individualist” obsessed with “Central American unity” (Alegria 145, 57), who is always tuned in to the daily news on the radio and tuned out to the world around him. He even goes so far as to call Alfonso “a captain of industry” (116). Carmen laments her father’s armchair philanthropy when she recalls her mother’s anger over Alfonso’s “mismanaging money” by “continuing to give money” to Nicaraguan revolutionaries and “making empty plans to return to the land of his childhood” (58) without actually participating in the struggle. Alfonso exhibits what renowned Central American sociologist Edelberto Torres Rivas describes as “typical national-reformist expressions of the middle class” in Central America (66). Frank represents an alternative kind of masculinity. An aspiring writer, Frank details daily conversations in his journal and documents his reflections on each encounter. He only reverts to English to note a few terms that are inextricably tied to the English-speaking United States and might otherwise get lost in translation, such as “home,” “Volstead Act,” and “boy scout,” or when citing his friend Virgil’s English-language Christian book titles “The Little Brown Church in the Vale” or “Pilgrim’s Progress” (Alegria 39, 40, 158, 103, 154). He functions as a humble pre-World War II U.S. presence in El Salvador whose transnational solidarity with the laboring class would be almost unimaginable under the conditions of the Cold War thirty years later. His experience with the working classes in revolt allows Carmen to encounter a stratum of Salvadoran society from which she is otherwise alienated. Indeed, *Ashes of Izalco* resembles a recovery project by imagining a kind of transnational working-class

solidarity predicated on Carmen's encounter with Frank that transcends historical, national, racial, and gendered borders.

Alegria feminizes the Salvadoran struggle by envisioning the uncertainty of the future and a necessary reckoning with the past through a revisionist history of the mother figure. Frank's role in mediating the mother-daughter relationship proves critical as Carmen looks back without being tied to a nostalgic sense of a past that never was, i.e. a past free of foreign intervention. Frank's presence is a crucial reminder that freedom from Spain helped to open the door for the United States' entry into Latin America. Contending with the impossibility of returning to an imagined past free of colonial or imperial interference, Frank's reflections on Isabel invite Carmen to see her own present and future in her mother's past. Her "reading" of Frank suggests that the key to self-determination in the future lies in transnational alliances modeled on the kind of equality Frank and Isabel achieved with one another. In the pages of Frank's journal, Carmen finds a portrait of her mother that leaves her feeling "as if [she] had never known [her] mother" (15). His journal, especially his reflections on Alfonso, exposes misogyny as a competition among men striving to be the alpha male in a way that degrades men as much as women. His language politics reflect a certain level of humility as he speaks and writes in Spanish, making communication and reflection more difficult than using his mother tongue. In doing so, his diary makes an intergenerational mother-daughter bond possible by speaking their shared language, a consequence of the diary that he surely never intended. The diary becomes much bigger than him. Portraying Isabel differently from the public

face she puts on for others, Frank offers an alternative to Paul's domineering arrogant superiority and models humility by listening, reflecting, writing, and feeling. As an outsider, he functions as a participant-observer, offering critical insights from a position unavailable to Salvadorans. His perspective complicates other portraits of Isabel. Frank's intimate portrait of Isabel enriches Carmen's understanding of her mother and her mother country; it represents an alternative to toxic white masculinity. The integration of his point of view through a traditionally feminized genre (i.e. the diary) suggests that a cultural shift driven by feminist perspectives must redefine male roles in ways that help to bring down the patriarchy.

Fractured geopolitical relationships in the hemisphere are at the heart of broken marriages in the novel. Political disruption is the barrier to authentic relationships, not the other way around, as the traditional romance would have it. In her classic *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991), Doris Sommer describes the typical romance in nineteenth-century Latin American fiction as the story of "star-crossed lovers who represent particular regions, races, parties, economic interests, and the like" (5). Setting itself apart from regional classics that "show how a variety of novel national ideals are all ostensibly grounded in 'natural' heterosexual love and in the marriages that provided a figure for apparently nonviolent consolidation" (Sommer 5), *Ashes of Izalco* presents marriage as the locus of domination and betrayal. Alegría reverses the generic codes by turning transnational conflict into an allegory for interpersonal relationships.

Both Carmen's and her mother's intimate relationships shape and are shaped by the geopolitical conditions of this time and place, the Santa Ana region of El Salvador, producing a revolutionized Central American literary aesthetics that "signal[ed] the end of social realism" in Central American fiction (Arias 9-10). The novel attests to a time of political and aesthetic revolution in Central America. In *Taking Their Word*, Central American literary critic Arturo Arias explains that "*Ashes of Izalco* was the first in a series of narratives from the younger generation to express the cultural transformation of the 1960s in literary form" (7). Alegría uses what Arias calls an "introspective mode" (9) to reveal Carmen's story through her reflections on Frank's journal entries. By commenting on her own circumstances, she finds that they are not so different from her mother's. One critical difference, however, is that Frank embraced Isabel's language even though he was just a tourist, while Paul refuses to learn Spanish in spite of working in Latin America and marrying into a Spanish-speaking family. Focusing on the significance of language in the novel, Arias explains that for the generation of pre-civil war writers like Alegría, "the dizzying series of political events and hidden agendas...could be framed only by literary language" (8). In contrast to Western literature, Central American literature provided *the* forum for social and political critique until the 1960s, when social scientific scholarship took over this role. Even within such a politically engaged, literary landscape, *Ashes of Izalco* stands out for how its politicization of gender informs its novelistic aesthetics. According to Arias, "this novel displaced the centrality of a masculine gaze in favor of a feminine one, which was unheard of in Central

American fiction, particularly in narratives with a political focus” (10). Alegría foregrounds gender and language politics in her literary-political critique of national and hemispheric power relations. She comments on the ways in which Latin America is often feminized against a dominant North America through the proliferation of English and the penetration of the United States into local political structures throughout the hemisphere. The mother-daughter story told through the common characteristics of their romantic relationships reorients typical geopolitics predicated on male dominance and English monolingualism toward traditionally marginalized feminist and multilingual perspectives.

Bringing her heritage, her mother’s indiscretions, and hidden episodes in El Salvador’s national history all out of obscurity opens up personal wounds that help Carmen see how little intimacy she shares with Paul. In the midst of these revelations, Carmen recalls that *Gone With the Wind* (1936) was her great-grandmother’s favorite book. Mamita María’s sympathetic identification with the Old South establishes a narrative link between Carmen’s upbringing in Santa Ana and her later disavowal of the white middle class values that led her to become a housewife in Washington, D.C. One of “Scarlett’s women,” as Helen Taylor calls the female fans of Margaret Mitchell’s “international soap opera” (4), Mamita María read chapters of the novel to Carmen at night after her tennis lessons. Carmen remembers vividly how her great-grandmother’s “eyes would sparkle” as she read about “Scarlett O’Hara’s mischievousness” (H. Taylor 72). Like many of the book’s female fans, Mamita María likely read the book with hazy notions of the U.S. Civil War and

Reconstruction and, therefore, may have “accepted the historical context uncritically and found [her] sympathies locked unerringly into the fate of the white families of the defeated Confederacy” (H. Taylor 11). Carmen’s family fashions their own family history after the O’Haras in *Gone With the Wind* in which her great-grandmother played the role of Scarlett. Mamita María tells Carmen that her great-grandfather, Papa Jorge, “was just like Rhett Butler” (Alegría 72). Alegría emphasizes these connections, describing Papa Jorge as a gambler and all.

The parallels run even deeper. Scarlett’s grandparents were part of the slave-owning French planter class who “fled Haiti in the Revolution of 1791” (Mitchell 54), the slave-led revolt that established the first black nation in the Americas. So too Carmen’s Spanish ancestors arrived in El Salvador from the Canary Islands, a testing ground for Spain to “practice enslaving a group of previously undiscovered peoples” (Soule 17) and the location from which one of the largest groups to colonize Latin America departed. Their social distinction was memorialized by a bell imported from Spain that the family donated to the church in Santa Ana. Unearthing her family’s past from her perspective as a dual U.S.-Salvadoran citizen, Carmen draws parallels between Spanish colonization and American imperialism in which El Salvador, a Spanish colony from the sixteenth through the early-nineteenth centuries, is at risk of becoming a virtual colony of the United States in the twentieth century. From her memories of reading *Gone with the Wind* to her experiences of living under Jim Crow, the afterlife of slavery in the Americas haunts Carmen. The racial violence that unsettles her in the United States rings all too familiar when she reads Frank’s report

of *La Matanza* in his journal. His account impels her to see her own family history within the context of past and present geopolitical conditions. Her father Alfonso is nostalgic for “the union of Central America,” pining for the short-lived federations of the nineteenth century. He represents a form of escapism that leads Frank to describe him as a quixotic buffoon, “a knight-errant of the medieval era” (44). Carmen even remembers that her father used to “recite long passages from *Don Quixote*,” interspersing them with “memories of when he fought with Sandino against the *yanquis*” (130). Alfonso’s delusions are implicitly compared to *Gone With the Wind*’s sentimental, revisionist narrative of the Old South, the feminine equivalent of a counter-revolutionary patriarchal imaginary of a mythological past that never really existed. Alegría uses these foundational texts of Western literature to argue for the need for radically new stories and revolutionary aesthetics in order to imagine and enact a different future.

The countersentimental novel explodes the insularity of the domestic realm by granting Carmen an imaginative “out.” Reflecting on how “Frank opened the door to another possible world” for her mother, Carmen, by translating Frank’s experiences into her family history, realizes that “there are other doors in the world beyond Washington and Paul” (141). “I could open them” (141), she reckons. Carmen’s encounter with an alternative model for a relationship between someone from the United States and someone from El Salvador allows her to imagine “another possible world” in which she is not hemmed in by Paul’s “pockets of tension” or oppressed by his “superior attitude.” Such a vision also opens possibilities for a different

relationship between the United States and Central American nations, one that requires reciprocity and solidarity. The two voices and languages of Frank and Carmen in the novel model—in content and form—the kind of multilingual dialogue and equality missing in her marriage and, by way of analogy, her country’s relationship to the United States. Carmen’s mother makes this solidarity possible. It’s not only Frank’s testimony to the events of *La Matanza* and to a different version of Isabel that make his diary important; the preservation of his diary is a significant event as well. Alegría says she writes “urgent literature” (Boschetto-Sandoval xi). The novel’s urgency is derived, in part, from forewarning of the dissolution of the U.S.-El Salvador relationship, eroded by U.S. dominance and the conditions of imperialism. In so doing, *Ashes of Izalco* ultimately imagines U.S. aggression as an invisible expression of masculine power whose dominance manifests in the ways in which people who live in its periphery are forced to “absorb” its powerful “outbursts” (9). It thrives on silence.

At the intersection of Salvadoran and U.S. history, Carmen inherits Frank’s story and uses it to map out an alternative future for herself than the one foretold. Reading Frank’s diary, Carmen peels back the layers of ideology that color her marriage, her life in the United States, her parents’ marriage, and, of course, Frank—was he a lying communist who pretended to be a novelist as María Luisa claimed? Or the “harmless drunk” (30) her brother Alfredo remembered? The journal makes possible a transhistorical intimacy between Carmen and Frank that points to the limits of the romance genre in resolving or overcoming historical or political conflicts.

Frank's story of loving and then leaving Isabel exposes how deeply romance is determined by (trans)national, racial, gendered, and class politics. Carmen learns about her present circumstances by looking to the past and to the life of her mother. She enters into this other temporal world through the travels of a Jewish-American man who once spent Christmas with the family. Frank's diary turns out to be exactly the kind of novel that he had planned to write, a "parable about a modern man who finds himself spiritually sick, unsure of his values in a busy atmosphere, a *parenthesis* in another calmer society, more respectful of traditions, where perhaps it's possible to re-discover oneself, depict a new direction for the future" (Alegria 46; emphasis mine). Together, Carmen and Frank make a pair of parentheses. They cross tightly regulated borders in order to deepen their understanding and build relationships, not to expand their power.

A Return to Sentimentality

Part of the problem with the sentimental genre—a feminine genre—is that it “performs a desire for change lubricated by emotional compliance” (Douglass qtd. in Berlant 46). In other words, outrage at the pain that one observes (and enjoys) in the sentimental novel is channeled into an affective politics driven by feeling rather than action, leading Berlant to conclude that “sentimentality, after all, is the only vehicle for social change that neither produces more pain nor requires much courage” (65). Philanthropy, too, advocates for social change that is relatively “easy” and painless: giving money is equated with social action. Sentimental fiction has been critiqued at length for its white, bourgeois, Christian values that turn racialized bodies, in

particular, into objects of suffering for a reader's consumption and for its critical role in the U.S. imperial project.⁵⁵ To think of American philanthropy as a genre that shares much in common with sentimentality is to consider the ways in which American philanthropy's affective politics draw upon the tradition of sentimentality, especially in its representations of pain and suffering and its counterrevolutionary outcomes.

The aesthetic and affective structures of philanthropy are most recognizable in the form of the philanthropic appeal. In addition to doing the affective work of "lubricating emotional worlds" (Berlant 5) as sentimentality does, the philanthropic appeal's "structure of conventional expectation" (Berlant 4) both provokes a feeling of responsibility and promises to assuage the guilt associated with that responsibility.⁵⁶ A problem that is felt to be too big—or too small—will likely fail to meet the conventional expectations of the genre. As a sentimental vehicle of feeling-as-action, philanthropy provides a resolution through the resolution of guilt in the process of giving money, not through processes of social change. While philanthropic organizations, such as the Ford Foundation, draw upon a revolutionary rhetoric to tout their work, as their tagline goes, on "the frontlines of social change," their very durability and longevity suggest that such institutions cannot "fix" these social problems. Indeed, much evidence suggests that they are part of the problem.

⁵⁵ Laura Wexler theorizes sentimentality as an "expansive, imperial project." In this respect, "sentimentalization was an externalized aggression that was sadistic, . . . a tool for the control of others," she writes (101).

⁵⁶ The kind of problem set up by philanthropy is the antithesis of the kind of metaphysical problem posed by W.E.B. Du Bois' question: "how does it feel to be a problem?" (3) in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).

Julia Alvarez employs sentimentality *In the Time of the Butterflies* through the fictionalized representation of the Mirabal sisters' appeals to state power and through direct appeals to her readership. Constructed as a series of fictional, imagined journal entries by Patria, Minerva, and Maria Teresa, called MaTe, from 1938-1960—with a few entries from 1994 representing the fictionalized author's interviews with the sole surviving sister, Dede—*In the Time of the Butterflies* seeks to reconstruct the sisters' attitudes, thoughts, and feelings as they organized a grassroots resistance movement against the Trujillo Dictatorship—what Alvarez calls “our tragedy” (312)—in the Dominican Republic. If the novel's success within the UN community is due, in part, to its mimetic qualities that so effectively reproduced the “suffering and martyrdom” of the Mirabal sisters, it is also worth noting that the UN's recognition of the novel might be considered a case of life imitating art. After all, it was the Mirabal sisters who, while incarcerated at La Victoria Penitentiary in 1960, inspired the regional Organization of American States (OAS)—a multilateral organization that collaborates tightly with the United Nations organization—to establish the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) after an observational visit. That first on-site visit was a historic moment in bolstering the institutional power of the OAS. Used as justification for its existence, the OAS championed the Mirabal sisters' story to shore up faith in its mission and to legitimate its work.⁵⁷ The sisters' appeals to the OAS

⁵⁷ Their story is still used to reinforce the OAS's mission. As recently as March 30, 2009, the OAS' newly formed Inter-American Commission for Women premiered a new and little-known documentary on the Mirabal sisters by filmmaker Cecilia Domeyko called *Nombre Secreto: Mariposa* as part of the Executive Committee's first official session. The film was introduced by Minerva Mirabal's daughter, Dominican Congresswoman Minerva (Minou) Tavárez Mirabal.

offer an early example of the proliferation of “life narratives” (Smith and Schaffer) that would come to define human rights discourse in the 1990s, no doubt one of the reasons Alvarez’s novel was celebrated by the organization known for providing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). If the Mirabal sisters captured the attention of regional leaders in their appeals to put an end to Trujillo’s violence in 1960, Alvarez’s novelistic rendition of their lives captured the attention of global leaders in “the decade of human rights.”

UN representatives constituted part of the Anglophone audience to which Alvarez appealed in her novel’s postscript: “I would hope that through this fictionalized story I will bring acquaintance of these famous sisters to English speaking readers” (324). In order to reach a global audience, Alvarez suggested it was imperative to write in English, and the Anglophone world responded to Alvarez’s appeal by making the book a bestseller. The novel’s multiple textual and paratextual appeals place *In the Time of the Butterflies* squarely within the category of what has become known as “human rights literature.”⁵⁸ The affirmative responses to those appeals from a global readership *and* from the highest rungs of the United Nations reveal the power of the philanthropic appeal, which developed from nineteenth-century American discourses of domesticity into one of the primary modes of humanitarian and human rights discourse in the aftermath of the Cold War. Thus,

⁵⁸ In his well-known 2007 work, *Human Rights, Inc. The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law*, Joseph Slaughter establishes a connection between literature and human rights law by asserting that “human rights law shares with the Bildungsroman in their cooperative efforts to imagine, normalize, and realize what the Universal Declaration and early theorists of the novel call ‘the free and full development of the human personality’” (4).

Alvarez's bilingual butterflies morphed from regional to global "symbol[s] of both popular and feminist resistance" (Resolution 54/134).

The postscript also appeals to critics who might take issue with Alvarez's anglicization of the Mirabal sisters' story. Somewhat apologetically, she beseeches "Dominicans separated by language from the world I have created [in the novel]" to see the merits of anglicizing the Mirabal sisters' native Spanish for a higher purpose, in order to "deepen North Americans' understanding of the nightmare you endured and the heavy losses you suffered—of which this story tells only a few" (324).

Recognizing that the Anglophone audience is largely ignorant about Latin American history in general, Alvarez defines Dominican history as one of deep suffering that distinguishes it from the history of North Americans, just as the Spanish language itself is a linguistic border that the English-speaking world does not easily traverse. She must cross into English to tell the story to this audience. Her use of Spanish is reserved for the sign-off in which she adapts a universal rallying cry in Spanish, "¡Viva la Revolución!" into a universal political cry for the martyrs: "¡Vivan las Mariposas!" Imploring North Americans to join the cause of condemning gendered violence, Alvarez's appeal is cast in the universalizing language of human rights. Beyond rendering the Mirabal sisters' story in English, she universalizes their story by casting it in a deracinated language of human rights that whitewashes their "Dominican-ness." The sisters' story—and all of Dominican history—is framed around "a moral discourse centered on pain and suffering" (Brown 453) of human rights that de-politicizes the communist undercurrent of the rallying cry used by Fidel

Castro in the time of the Mirabal sisters' political insurgency. The UN affirms this reformulation of revolution-as-commemoration through its International Day of Observance. Meanwhile, Alvarez's appeal to North Americans to join in this observance draws upon the discourse of exceptionalism in which the United States is characterized as a uniquely free and open society untouched by political oppression.

This depoliticized cry punctuates the postscript that had opened with Alvarez's own story of immigration to the United States, where her family found refuge from Trujillo just months before the Mirabal sisters were murdered. The postscript links the fates of the two countries and, by extension, the two regions by reaffirming the United States as a beacon of freedom and democracy that Latin American countries should aspire to replicate. Alvarez assumes U.S. readers will be compelled by foreign female suffering and will use their privileged political position to *act* on behalf of their less fortunate neighbors. In this way, Alvarez's postscript can be read as a philanthropic appeal in which all Dominicans are cast as sufferers of "heavy losses" and "North Americans" are cast as their saviors. That the Alvarez family found safety in the United States provides living proof of this (al)truism.

Alvarez's fictional version of MaTe Mirabal's appeal to the Organization for American States is also characteristic of the genre of philanthropic appeal that I have argued is central to post-Cold War human rights discourse. It begins: "This is a journal entry of what occurred at La 40 on Monday, April 11th, 1960, to me, a female political prisoner" (254). Alvarez takes pains to show the process through which the sisters construct their appeal to the OAS. "Afraid of getting innocent people in

trouble” (254), MaTe, along with her sisters, heavily redacts the journal entry to transform it into an effective appeal. The visual rendering of the redacted letter is strikingly different from the rest of the novel. Unlike the journal entries in the rest of the novel, the journal entries from this period are partly blacked out and peppered with holes marked “[pages torn out]” that we later learn were the pages provided to the OAS for the requisite written testimonial because excerpts from a journal register as more authentic than telling your personal story in an interview with an observer. Maria Teresa’s journal entry details the abuses she received at La 40 prison. The appeal stems from Minerva, who “read what [Maria Teresa] wrote and...wants [her] to tell the OAS (when and if they ever come) about what happened at La 40” (243). MaTe’s letter is rife with gendered humiliation, most sharply represented by the imprisoned men forced to see her stripped naked and beaten in front of her. It is no wonder that the historical letter that Alvarez fictionalizes is said to have led directly to sanctions being imposed by the OAS the same month that the journal entry was received, for MaTe’s treatment reflects what men are imagined to receive but not women.

It’s crucial for the women to draw out the specifically gendered forms of violence they are exposed to in order to compel urgent action. Without playing to the gendered politics, they run the risk of their plight being categorized as expected casualties of warfare. In the novel, patriarchal notions of protecting women are portrayed as central to garnering international attention against a well-known tyrant. The threats of rape and other specifically gendered forms of violence form part of the

gross violations that finally push the OAS to impose sanctions against the Dominican Republic. MaTe's journal entry sent to the OAS observers in April 1960 reports, "They stripped me down to my slip and brassiere and made me lie down on this long metal table" (254). The threat of rape looms large. The guard forces her prostrate in order to witness the beating of her boyfriend. Jolted off the table by her lover's emaciated frame, she is thrust back down and ordered to "lay down nice like you're in bed waiting for him" (255). Foreshadowing the "gentlemen murderers" (303) who beat the *mariposas* to death, the guards do not sexually violate Maria Teresa, but they orchestrate the encounter so as to simulate the positions of a sex act and to arouse the fear of sexual violence throughout the ordeal. The appeals to the OAS sent by the imprisoned women inspires rumors within the prison for several months, until finally, in August, MaTe notes, "The OAS Peace Committee comes this Friday. Only one prisoner from each pavilion will be interviewed. The head guards were given the choice. And they picked me" (250).

Alvarez was writing in a particularly important moment for testimonials, just a few years after Stanford University sparked the so-called "Cultural Wars" by replacing Dante's *Inferno* with Rigoberta Menchu's Nobel Prize-winning *testimonio*⁵⁹ in its core curriculum and right about the same time that Menchu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and appointed Goodwill Ambassador for the UN-sponsored International Year of Indigenous Peoples (1992). Alvarez's handwritten research

⁵⁹ See Herbert Lindenberger's essay recounting the episode, published in 1990 and excerpted by PBS as part of a companion website for their 1997 program *Shattering the Silences: Minority Professors Break Into the Ivory Tower*: <http://www.pbs.org/shattering/lindenberger.html>

notes on *In the Time of the Butterflies* in the Alvarez archive at the Harry Ransom Center list *A Young Girl's Diary* (1921) by Gretchen Lainer, described as an ordinary story of a young girl, and Benazir Bhutto's political memoir from 1988, *Daughter of the East*, among the models for imagining the years of journal entries from each of the Mirabal sisters' points of view. Evoking the "unfinished business of sentimentality" (Berlant), the novel makes an affective appeal through a narrative of suffering. In this case, MaTe, the youngest Mirabal sister, becomes the voice of all of the women imprisoned at La 40. The journal entry describes her experiencing "exquisite pain" as she is whipped with a switch. The entry reproduces a fetishized image of sexual violence and servitude linked to historical representations of slavery.⁶⁰ In MaTe's journal-entry-turned-appeal-for-aid, in particular, "pain provides the common language of humanity" (Hartman 18). The OAS's response to the call-to-action to protect the women results in "an American warship on the horizon" (Alvarez 264). But in the novel, sanctions don't go far enough and aren't immediate enough in their effects. Minerva's calls for revolution fly in the face of diplomatic channels that fail to respond quickly enough to prevent the deaths of the Mirabal sisters.

In Alvarez's novel, U.S. interventionism becomes, paradoxically, the last ray of hope under Trujillo's weak dictatorship. This political stance has little affinity with the historical Mirabal sisters, who found inspiration in Fidel Castro and worked to

⁶⁰ Cite Saidiya Hartman's critique and theorization of this from *Scenes of Subjection* (1997). Saidiya Hartman addresses this in *Scenes of Subjection* (1997) when she writes... [Don't forget to add this citation!]

organize an underground resistance movement. The novel's interventionist politics do resonate, however, with the Alvarez family's experience of finding refuge in the United States. In the novel, all hope of rescue lies in being saved by an OAS intervention led by the United States. The involvement of the OAS in the Dominican Republic began because of Trujillo's attempted assassination of Venezuelan president Romulo Betancourt who denounced Trujillo publicly, a detail alluded to in the novel. MaTe's testimony to the OAS forms part of a paper trail of diplomatic action that shows action on behalf of the victimized while covert top-down actions remain concealed through their lack of documentation. In this performative fashion, the novel documents the process of producing human rights testimonies to be reviewed, authenticated, and evaluated by observers in order to present decision-making bodies with policy recommendations. MaTe conveys the persistence of rumor to show the uncertainty and lack of access to information characteristic of the power tactics of the prison system. On June 10, Maria Teresa complains: "No OAS yet, but lots *more* rumors" (247). Imagined but not yet arrived, the OAS does not actually show up in the novel for another two months. Meanwhile, the prisoners diligently document the abuses of each day in preparation for the observers' visit. Just as the sisters prepare their testimony, the Dominican government also prepares itself to be observed. "We now have two new women guards," Maria Teresa writes on Friday, June 24. "Minerva thinks they've been assigned to us to impress the OAS with the prison system's delicacy towards women prisoners.... She's nice enough to us politicals but

a real witch to the others, seeing as the OAS won't be investigating their treatment" (243).

Cheering "an American warship on the horizon," Minerva sees the U.S. military as part of a powerful regional alliance organized by the OAS, thereby transforming the United States from a historically hostile neighbor into an unquestionable ally, a hemispheric symbol of protection for the Mirabal sisters and their comrades. As the military representative of the OAS, the United States also anticipates regime change. Minerva warns her sisters and fellow prisoners to "*not fall prey to petty divisions, but concentrate on our next point of attack—the OAS members when they come. If sanctions are imposed, the goat will fall*" (245; emphasis in original). Alvarez is writing in a post-Cold War moment in which human rights is emerging as an interventionist discourse. Imprisoned for organizing the Fourteenth of June Movement that sought to overthrow Trujillo, Minerva now laments that the report of the warship was only a rumor and is alarmed that it may take up to a year for an intervention. "By then, who knows what can happen," writes Minerva in a September 1960 entry just two months before her murder (264). Minerva wavers between being inspired by "Fidel's fiery rhetoric" (262) and flirting with the virtues of U.S. aggression. But ultimately, the United States—those "Yanqui invaders" (57) her mother decried at the beginning of the novel for the violent 1916-1924 U.S. invasion and occupation of the Dominican Republic—is reconstructed as a legitimate would-be savior.

That the pageantry of human rights site visits outperforms the interventions and protections that ensue from them is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the fate of the Mirabal sisters. The novel presents the human rights site visit as a performance by key actors: victims, perpetrators, and observers all play a part. As a fictional mirroring of the production of the life narrative essential to global human rights campaigns, the novel opens itself to Joseph Slaughter's charge that "the field of literature is itself implicated in the discursive regime of human rights" (43). This OAS visit set a precedent for the newly formed IACHR in 1960. Sanctions were imposed based on its recommendations, but it was unable to prevent further human rights abuses that were known to be taking place. One has to wonder if the sisters were murdered just a few months after the site visit precisely because their suffering at the hands of Trujillo was being heard internationally and the despot only had one way to permanently silence them.

The Sentimental Human Rights Novel

With the benefit of more than thirty years' hindsight, *In the Time of the Butterflies* offers a perspective on 1960s interventionism characteristic of an ascendant, hemispheric human rights discourse specific to the time in which the novel was written. Gender here is markedly important because three women were killed all at once with a level of brutality that many, mistakenly, thought was reserved for male resisters, especially in 1960. Yet rather than reading the Mirabal sisters as leaders of the resistance who were killed for their power, influence, and belief in the possibility of socialist revolution, Alvarez insists on emphasizing their femininity through their

roles as wives and mothers and on their victimization and martyrdom. Framed by UN-based human rights efforts on behalf of women, the repeated retellings of the Mirabal sisters' story reveal not only the gendering of human rights claims as an element of their international appeal but also how such narratives draw from the affective politics of the nineteenth-century sentimental novel. Journals and personal testimonies are examples of a genre coded as female because these forms represent interiority and emotion, the industry standard for human rights groups to evaluate oppressive conditions and determine human rights violations. Using these testimonies, the masculine, supranational power of the interventionist body—in this case the OAS, which is made up of US-allied member states—is invoked in order to rescue victims of human rights violations. These gendered roles not only reduce victims to their injuries but also through that distortion can lead to military responses to human rights crises that risk replacing one tyrannical power with another.

Alvarez recasts the story of the Mirabal sisters in a way, I argue, only possible after the end of the Cold War. Rather than focus on the ideologies of communism that inspire Minerva Mirabal, in particular, Alvarez portrays Minerva's flirtation with communism as just that. The novel portrays U.S. intervention as the only form of rescue for the sisters, the only thing that could have prevented their deaths. The novel's human rights politics emphasize that the Mirabal sisters could have lived. If we consider the postscript as the novel's final scene, the United States ultimately becomes not only a symbol of hope but a place of refuge that protected Alvarez's own father from the same tragic fate as the Mirabal sisters. What is perhaps most

surprising about this characterization of conditions in 1960 is that it happens in the context of the Cold War in Latin America, a time when diplomats from the era, such as former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Robert White, claim “U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America went terribly wrong” (*Harvest of Empire* 11:40). Alvarez’s redemptive framing of U.S. military might and regime change foreign policy is a stark reminder that the novel was published in 1994, at the end of the Cold War, when the United States emerged as the world’s only superpower and at the same time was engaging in so-called “humanitarian interventions” in Haiti and elsewhere.

In the Time of the Butterflies seems to affirm interventionism as a means for political change. Yet, at times, Alvarez also appears ambivalent about humanitarian intervention. After all, the sisters were not saved by it. By contrast, Alvarez’s family was saved by colluding with the CIA, events that were fictionalized in her first novel, *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991). Alvarez’s ambivalence about humanitarian interventionism can be seen as a reflection of the U.S.’s successful use of soft power during the Cold War—made possible, at least in part, by the ideological support provided by U.S. philanthropic institutions. Taking cues from the U.S. government priorities at the time, a major priority of foundations in the aftermath of World War II was to focus “on how they could further the interests of U.S.-style democracy domestically and abroad” (Smith 5).⁶¹ In *American Foundations: An*

⁶¹ The collection of essays entitled *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*—in which Smith’s work appears—interrogates the impact of philanthropy on recent and past political movements throughout the United States. An essay by Robert L. Allen, in particular, details “how the Ford Foundation’s support of certain Black civil rights and Black Power organizations such as CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) actually helped shift the movement’s emphasis—through the recruitment of key movement leaders—from liberation to Black capitalism” (Smith 7).

Investigative History (2001), Mark Dowie suggests that at the end of World War II a second wave of philanthropy emerged in which “foundations began to see themselves as mediators in the formulation of public policy” (2). Alvarez confirms and deepens this notion by endorsing the intervention that never materialized to save the Mirabals on philanthropic—or what would later be called humanitarian—grounds. While condemning the 1916 Marine invasion, she leaves the 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic unremarked. Cold War philanthropy forecasted post-Cold War humanitarian intervention through the growing entanglement between philanthropy and foreign policy.

The history of U.S. interventionism invoked in the novel’s representation of a devastating invasion in 1916 and the desire for humanitarian intervention in 1960 (in spite of that violent precedent) speaks to the effective collusion between philanthropy and foreign policy in the Cold War era that helped to transform interventionism into a moral imperative for the United States. The powerful narrative of philanthropy as an irreproachable act of doing good, selflessly intervening into the market in order to serve the best interests of others, emerges as a governing logic of Cold War era U.S. foreign policy. Merle Curti’s *American Philanthropy Abroad* (1963) concludes that after World War II, “While government support was given to the relief and health agencies of the United Nations, the precedent of providing public and private aid within the context of national policy was carried further than ever before” (622). Historian Robert Arnove, writing in 1982, argues that throughout the Cold War “giant philanthropic foundations” such as Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie were “the

principal architects of international networks of scholars and agencies involved in the production and dissemination of knowledge.... Through these institutions and networks, they have been in a unique position to influence cultural and social policies on an international scale” (5). Edward H. Berman went even further in his contemporaneous book, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of Philanthropy* (1983), in which he studied “the foundations’ role as silent partners in United States foreign policy determination and as vital cogs in the ideological support system of state capitalism” and argued that “these two major functions have been inseparable” (3). As these studies have shown, philanthropy provided an important ideological foundation for U.S. foreign policy, especially in the Cold War when the United States projected its intentions as benevolent. These narratives proved effective even in the face of the United States’ often-violent interventions against democratically elected officials, such as supporting a proxy insurgency against the democratically elected president Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic in 1963 after the fall of Trujillo.

U.S. foreign policy and the violence of its human rights record serve as important, if somewhat muted, context for the story of the Mirabal family in Alvarez’s novel. Gesturing toward a critique of U.S. interventionism and the United States as a violator of human rights, the novel reminds North American readers of their own oft-forgotten hemispheric history. Most U.S. readers are likely unaware of the U.S. interventions and occupations of the Dominican Republic from 1916-1924 and its neighbor Haiti from 1915-1934. *In the Time of the Butterflies* first introduces

the United States as a belligerent nation whose legacy of violence stemming from its invasion and occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1916 is passed down through the generations when Patria, born just months before the Marines withdrew from the island in 1924, has a nightmare that “the Yanquis were back” (51). This history comes into view through a conversation between the sisters and their mother. Mamá tells the girls about the brutality of the occupation on a family trip to the countryside, near Higuey, an area whose difficult terrain supported resistance fighters and never fully succumbed to Marine control. When asked by Minerva if she supported the “*gavilleros*” (56), Mamá explains: “Of course, I sympathized with our patriots.... The [Yanquis] killed anyone who stood in their way. They burned our house down and called it a mistake. They weren’t in their own country so they didn’t have to answer to anyone” (57). The United States is described in much the same language used to describe the Trujillo regime under the duress of diplomatic isolation. While the United States “didn’t have to answer to anyone” (57), Trujillo “didn’t have to hold himself back” (267). The novel points to asymmetrical power relations in the hemisphere that buffer North Americans from personally feeling the effects of the United States exercising its hegemony, even in the face of widespread political condemnation of its actions. By comparison, the Dominican people directly suffer from both oppression under a foreign power *and* the resulting tyranny of a U.S.-trained general whose rise to power coincided with the end of the U.S. occupation. He was supported by the United States up until the final few years of his dictatorship.

Though the United States officially withdrew the Marines from the island in 1924, the United States in 1930 supported the military takeover of Trujillo, who had been trained by U.S. troops during the occupation. In fact, Secretary of State Cordell Hull (1933-1944), who led the implementation of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy" in the hemisphere, famously said of Trujillo, "He may be a son-of-a-bitch, but he is our son-of-a-bitch" (Mann 96-97).⁶² While the novel places some blame on the United States for its original support of Trujillo, by contrast, it ultimately endorses, or at least ignores, controversial U.S.-sponsored interventions in Latin America against leftist governments throughout the Cold War. Separated from the United States by Cuba to the west and less than 100 miles from Puerto Rico to the east, the Dominican Republic and the United States, according to Alvarez, are "separated by language" and culture (324). However, she suggests that North Americans feel the separation far more than the Dominicans, whose lives have been dominated by the country's proximity to and relationship with the United States. The book therefore implicates the United States in Trujillo's brutal regime by suggesting that it turned a blind eye to his tyranny. While the novel offers mild critiques of the failures of the United States and the OAS, these are always contained and deferred against the greater evil: Trujillo.

⁶² Historians like Michael Mann have noted that such leaders were interchangeable in the eyes of the U.S. government as the phrase, originally applied to Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, "was also applicable to Anastasio Somoza Garcia in Nicaragua, Juan Vicente Gomez followed by Marcos Perez Jimenez in Venezuela, Fulgenica Batista in Cuba, and Francois ("Papa Doc") Duvalier in Haiti" (97). Ironically, Secretary of State Cordell Hull won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1945 for "his desire to counteract autarchic tendencies both in the U.S.A. and abroad" (http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1945/press.html) and was called the "Father of the United Nations" by FDR, a controversial legacy at best (see Carol Anderson).

CONCLUSION

A comparison of the ways in which philanthropy operates in *Ashes of Izalco* and *In the Time of the Butterflies* reveals a cultural shift from philanthropy at the beginning of the Cold War to human rights after the Cold War's end. Alegría addresses philanthropy directly as a problem related to imperialism, racism, and sexism. By 1994, Alvarez's text is saturated in human rights discourse with no mention of philanthropy or acknowledgement of its role in rationalizing interventionism. Through the testimonies of Frank Wolff in *Ashes of Izalco* and María Teresa in *In the Time of the Butterflies*, we can see this discursive shift most clearly. Frank's testimony is documented in a personal journal that is passed down through generations, kept in the care of women, in particular. For María Teresa, her testimony is also documented through a journal entry, but one that that is ripped out of the journal and circulated as part of a narrative intended for the OAS observers, providing proof of the threat to life—and womanhood—that the Trujillo regime posed. Both national tragedies end with significant loss and death. In lieu of salvation, the act of witnessing itself performs a double function of redemption and call to arms in both narratives. Likewise, in both cases the critical moment of witnessing happens at the end of the story, with readers set up for the act of witnessing at the climax. Frank's witnessing serves as a counterpoint to Paul's imposition into places and "weaving pockets of tension." As a witness, he is an ally to Salvadoran peasants. MaTe is a representative of the women in the prison.

The formal question of the genre of the appeal and its audience helps to think through the disjointedness of that history. Histories of philanthropy often focus on the philanthropists themselves and subordinate the recipients or objects of philanthropy as secondary actors; histories of humanitarianism acknowledge the important role funders play in setting agendas and making their work possible but tend to think in specific time periods, without seeing how this works across time. While Alvarez—writing for a U.S. audience—generally ignores the broader hemispheric context of U.S. interventions during the Cold War, Claribel Alegría, writing in Spanish, reflects upon and responds to these political conditions in *Ashes of Izalco*. Taken together, these texts reveal an afterlife of the sentimental tradition in narratives of American philanthropy and human rights that developed together along imperial lines, a Cold War-era cultural alliance that continues to shape the 21st century world order.

Epilogue

Bodega Dreams is Ernesto Quiñonez's first novel, published in 2000 and set in 1990s Spanish Harlem. "It was always about [Willie] Bodega," Chino, our half-Puerto Rican, half-Ecuadoran narrator, tells us in the beginning of the novel. "We were all insignificant, dwarfed by what [Bodega's] dream meant to Spanish Harlem" (19). Willie Bodega is the ambitious drug lord of *el barrio*, who aspires to be the wealthiest, most generous benefactor Spanish Harlem has ever seen. In Joe Kennedy, whose fortune can be traced back to early days in bootlegging and stock market speculation, and in John D. Rockefeller, whose wealth was accumulated through conspiracy and corrupt business practices, Bodega finds what he calls a "blueprint" (37) for converting money made in an underground economy into legitimate wealth. Not your stereotypical drug lord, Bodega is a student of American Experience documentaries and a regular donor to PBS. A former Young Lord, he calls himself a "street activist" (46) and holds meetings in the neighborhood Art Museum whose reopening he funded with the profits of his drug empire. Yet housing is the ultimate focus of Bodega's vision. He runs what he calls the "most humanitarian housing management company in New York City" (35), a Nuyorican "Great Society" (31) for *el barrio* modeled on President Lyndon B. Johnson's programs of the mid-1960s.⁶³ Bodega's social order is one in which he is—in his own words—"in charge of [the community's] well being" (37). In exchange for his investments, "families would riot

⁶³ Published in 2000, the novel, of course, is written in the time after these programs were fully dismantled by President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

for Bodega” and “take a bullet for Bodega” (29). Framing his drug empire as a necessary evil for the greater good of the community, he tells Chino: “Willie Bodega don’t sell rocks. Willie Bodega sells dreams” (33).

In this critical scene of the novel, Bodega places himself in a long line of U.S. capitalists and philanthropists, thereby fashioning himself into what I call the benefactor of *el barrio*. He invests in real estate and supports local arts and culture by reopening the long-shuttered Museo del Barrio. He steps in to take care of a community reeling from the effects of Reaganomics that disproportionately affected economically depressed communities of color, like East Harlem. Bodega explains to Chino that he gives out money “Just like IBM issues grants, like Mobil issues grants. Do those places really want to give money away? I don’t think so. But it helps their image, it’s tax deductible, and the government backs off some. In order for me to keep my slice, I also got to issue grants” (30). Bodega’s grants include housing discounts for the community in exchange for the community’s loyalty. Ultimately, however, Bodega finds that philanthropy does not offer him a pathway to reinvent himself and legitimize his wealth in the same way that real estate moguls and multinational companies are able to transform their public image. Bodega is ultimately unable to fully implement his philanthropic vision because of a racialized economy of the United States in which economic inequality depends upon racial hierarchies that impoverish communities of color and ensure that white communities are the ultimate beneficiaries of the nation’s prosperity. A structure of racial capitalism, racial economic inequality is, in fact, a founding economic principle of the

country, beginning with its origins in race-based chattel slavery. Bodega's inability to reinvent himself as a legitimate philanthropist thus illustrates how philanthropy itself operates as a form of white privilege that maintains racial hierarchies and provides the narrative that rationalizes inequality.

In modeling his patronage on John D. Rockefeller and his real estate empire on Joe Kennedy, Bodega fashions himself in the image of self-made white men of bygone eras whose stories seem to confirm that the American Dream is possible with enough hard work. In the novel, the only significant difference between Bodega and these men is his Puerto Rican heritage. Kennedy's ascent into the powerful national political elite in the 1930s coincided with a time in which "whiteness was arguably solidified as a structure of privilege" (Singh 31). For Bodega, the American Dream of upward mobility is a story about pulling oneself up by the bootstraps. It is a story about "men from the street" (Quiñonez 25) who, like him, accumulate wealth through the often-illicit means available to them and sanitize those earnings through legitimate investments and philanthropic donations that serve to clean up their image. Comparing himself to the power elite, he says, "[M]en that made this country, men that built this country were men from the street. . . . Men that used whatever moneymakin' scheme they could, and made enough money to clean their names by sending their kids to Harvard" (25). This is the pathway to the American Dream that he imagines for himself and his community in Spanish Harlem. Yet, in part because of the history of legal and extralegal exclusions that define racialized hierarchies in the United States, it comes as no real surprise to the reader that Bodega is unable to

legitimize his wealth in the same way that Kennedy and Rockefeller were able to legalize theirs. The ability to clean one's name is a form of power, a legacy of segregation and racial hierarchies in which the privilege of whiteness becomes the privilege to be defined by the fact of your wealth rather than by the means through which that fortune was made. The privilege of whiteness is made visible in Bodega's attempts to follow the well-trodden paths of these famous businessmen. What is a privilege for them is another form of oppression for Bodega, as the formula for success operates in reverse for men of color from the street, like Bodega, who is defined by his drug dealing as well as by narrowly defined markers of race and culture that render his wealth illegitimate, no matter how much money he makes or how much he gives away.

Fiercely nationalist in his dream of "Ricans helping Ricans" (36), Bodega reminds Chino and his friends that "this country is ours as much as it is theirs" (26). While using white male philanthropists as blueprints for wealth and power, Bodega is clear that "ours" and "theirs" is a struggle between Latinos, who often have to "*prove their deservingness of US citizenship*" (Ramos-Zayas 36; emphasis original), and the white men who monopolize the country's power and wealth. Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas calls Puerto Rican citizenship "delinquent citizenship" (28), meaning that Puerto Ricans have to militate against "the condition of illegality" (28) and fight for the full benefits of U.S. citizenship regularly foreclosed to them. Nikhil Pal Singh describes the status of Puerto Rican citizenship as "'foreign in the domestic sense,'" a "legal fiction" (37) referring to the *Downes v. Bidwell* Supreme Court case of 1901 that

created Puerto Rico's liminal status as "foreign to the United States in a domestic sense, because the island had not been incorporated into the United States" (qtd. In Kaplan 2). Part of the Puerto Rican diaspora born and raised in *el barrio*, Bodega not only understands but has *lived* the racism and prejudice that limit mobility for Puerto Ricans, in particular, and for Latinos from his East Harlem community in general.

Bodega is depicted as a veteran activist and former member of the Young Lords Party. In the 1960s, student activists formed a branch of the Young Lords Party in New York to organize community action against racist oppression. The Lords are featured in the novel as community organizers who trained Bodega in grassroots activism and Serve the People programs. He recounts fighting against an oppressive social reality by participating in the "East Harlem garbage riots of 1969" (33) and distributing *Pa'lante* newspapers that "sent a strong and defiant message that [Puerto Ricans] were very much upset at the way the American Dream had turned out for them" (Ayala and Bernabe 242). As part of his street activism with the Lords, Bodega was steeped in Puerto Rican Nationalism. The movement was fueled originally by student activism emanating from the City University of New York system and Hunter College, where the demands of activists led to the opening of the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueño. The Young Lords Party moved the organization to Puerto Rico in 1971 as part of the fight for independence and fell into factionalism because of the FBI's Cointelpro, leaving the community without the services and programs it had come to rely on. He tells our narrator, Chino, that the disbanding of the Young Lords in the 1970s left him broken. The text invites us to read his brokenness not only as

despair but also as a fragmented or divided consciousness that leads him to hustle drugs that contribute to the despair of the ghetto community. “Still in love with the past” (50), Bodega’s vision of the future is doomed, in part, because he doesn’t learn from the Young Lords disbanding and apply those lessons to his own empire. Instead, he continually reproduces divisions within the community. This organizational history is found in the subtext of Bodega’s move into what he calls “the eternal hustle” (33) as he morphs from “street activist” (46) to philanthropic overseer of the “community’s well being” (37). In the absence of a strong community movement, he turns to rugged individualism. The novel critiques this neoliberal response to systemic poverty in Spanish Harlem by showing how trying to simply appropriate dominant, white forms of wealth and power into a model for Latino empowerment is doomed to failure because it relies on inequality, oppression, and an intractable racial hierarchy that ultimately break communities down rather than lift them up, no matter how well-intentioned those philanthropic aims might be.

Bodega’s transformation from Young Lord of the 1960s and 70s to humanitarian drug lord of the 1990s parallels the struggle for political and economic power in Spanish Harlem through the second half of the twentieth century. I read Bodega’s failed dreams as part of what George Lipsitz calls the “possessive investment in whiteness” or the “cash value” (vii) of whiteness in which whiteness and its privileges are constructed as the condition of benefitting from the material benefits of race-based inequalities in employment, housing, education, and intergenerational wealth. The economy of *Bodega Dreams* exposes the contradictions

of the United States' promise of prosperity and its exclusionary practices that privilege white communities at the expense of communities of color. Bodega is a contradictory character whose contradictions mirror those of philanthropy, which I have been outlining throughout this dissertation. On the one hand, he inspires a dramatic reimagining of *el barrio* as a place defined by stable affordable housing, high quality educational and arts institutions that celebrate Latino culture, and a professional class of white collar workers. On the other hand, his drug empire, whose profits make these dreams possible, relies on coercion and violence that threatens the entire neighborhood, as every institution marked by his benevolence becomes a target for gang-related violence. Ultimately, his dreams are dashed because of "street politics" (47), as they are called in the novel, and because he is unable to legitimate his wealth despite political connections in City Hall. Bodega is simply not granted the opportunity to reinvent himself and clean his money, despite his uplifting philanthropic vision.

The text suggests that the limitations of both the American Dream and Bodega's Dream lie in the various forms of economic and physical violence required to maintain structures of commerce, patriarchy, and nationalism. Just as Joe Kennedy used relationships with mobsters and bribes to advance his family's political dynasty, Bodega's empire produces drug addicts and victims of gang-related violence that contradict his dreams of community empowerment, as evidenced by the murder of the fictional journalist Alberto Salazar, "a reporter for *El Diario/La Prensa* working on an investigation of Bodega" (82) in the novel. Bodega becomes one of the people

whom the Young Lords spoke out against in their 13-point program when they decried capitalists in point 7 along with “the street workers who keep gangs divided and blowing each other away” (Young Lords Party). The methods of wealth accumulation for both Bodega and his legitimized blueprints are shown to be two sides of the same coin. The novel shows the inherent contradictions of Bodega’s desire for a kind of economic assimilation that aspires to the privileges of whiteness while basing those newly-earned privileges on a reformist, individualist logic of racial uplift. The presence of Joe Kennedy in the novel reminds us that Irish Americans like the Kennedys were part of what Mathew Frye Jacobson calls the “probationary white races” and therefore, experienced a comparatively easy assimilation into the privileges of whiteness that other ethnic groups still struggle to attain. Bodega refuses the imperative of cultural assimilation and is therefore unable to benefit from a position of whiteness.

While Bodega seeks a kind of economic assimilation into the privileges of whiteness while retaining a nationalist view of Latino identity, our narrator Chino supports a more culturally and community-based ethnic identity as he draws upon references to the *generación del treinta*, the poetry of the Julia de Burgos, and stories of Young Lords activism. Drawing from these literary and activist traditions, the novel emerges as part of a struggle against the imperatives of racial, cultural, and linguistic assimilation, preferring to raise up cultural heroes of Puerto Rico’s past and to celebrate the aspirations of a narrator who wants to learn about the past and become an artist himself. Chino is critical of Bodega’s business tactics and his

ideological investments, but he also believes that “it was paradoxical people like Bodega who started revolutions” (38). Bodega’s dreams *are* revolutionary, for they envision an alternative future for *el barrio* and its people that would de-marginalize Puerto Ricans in New York and elsewhere by granting them the full material benefits of U.S. citizenship promised by the American dream. His vision for the local community expands to include an anticolonial revolution in which ““we’ll free our island, without bloodshed”” (107). In the documentary *Harvest of Empire: the Untold Story of Latinos in America* (2013), journalist (and former Young Lord) Juan Gonzalez historicizes Puerto Rico’s position as a U.S. territory, in part, as a land grab for multinational corporations. “When the United States took over Puerto Rico,” he explains, “so did four North American sugar companies. That’s what it was all about: sugar” (05:00-05:29). Eventually this relationship between U.S. business and Puerto Rican labor led to “one of the greatest airborne migrations in history” (06:00) when more than one million Puerto Ricans arrived in the United States to work for factories and sweatshops as part of the post-World War II boom economy. Scholars have long noted that Puerto Rico’s liminal status has actually functioned to “legitimate[e] the project of American imperialism” (Kaplan 11).

Bodega cannot make his dreams a reality without making millions. Yet the novel warns that “behind every great wealth...there’s a great crime,” that “every time someone makes a million dollars, he kills some part of the world” (159). The parallels the novel draws between organized crime and the culture of philanthropy that legitimates the rapacious accumulation and concentration of wealth exposes the

paradigm of “granting” as a problematic one that relies on inherently violent power relationships of asymmetrical taking and tokenistic giving. Bodega’s dream to transform *el barrio* through philanthropy is a paradoxical reinforcement of racial and economic hierarchy that relies on top-down structures of inequality rather than bottom-up forms of redistribution. Bodega’s contradictory approach to community uplift as a drug lord points to the conditions of neoliberalism and the collapse of the welfare state in which philanthropy is required to fill the gaps between basic need and diminished domestic government services. Lisa Duggan explains that the neoliberal order is defined by “the creation of a new vision of national and world order, a vision of competition, inequality, market ‘discipline,’ public austerity, and ‘law and order’” (x). Under this order, the kind of philanthropy that became integral to American identity in the early half of the twentieth century is required in order to provide basic services and subsidies to the nation’s neediest people and communities. According to Duggan, “neoliberalism developed over many decades as a mode of polemic aimed at dismantling the limited U.S. welfare state, in order to enhance corporate profit rates. The raising of profit rates required that money be diverted from other social uses, thus increasing overall economic inequality” (xi). As government was pared down, nonprofits and NGOs proliferated to the point of becoming “the major mechanisms of world governance” (Renz 25) and the Urban Institute’s National Center for Charitable Statistics. Bodega’s dream responds directly to this kind of austerity and envisions a world in which economic power and development decisions are put in the hands of the community rather than the government. But his insistence on the centralized

ownership of the community's wealth is problematic because it disempowers the community by limiting self-determination.

In *Bodega Dreams*, Puerto Rico's colonial status paradoxically persists in a postcolonial present that shapes the mainland metropolis of New York City. Philanthropy structures these postcolonial and neocolonial relationships in a rapidly gentrifying 1990s New York City. Philanthropy in the 1990s became its own "third sector," after government and private industries: an entire economic sphere built on insider networks of privilege that aimed to define and shape the so-called common good through grants, donations, and the proliferation of nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations. Bodega's philanthropic dreams index the ways in which the robber-baron phenomenon of the nineteenth century gained traction at the end of the twentieth century. Bodega responds, in part, to neoliberal policies that make social ills an individual issue—or even pathology—that demands acts of philanthropy rather than comprehensive economic justice, policies that have helped to increase the division between rich and poor, with the richest one percent in the United States owning more than a quarter of the nation's income.

Bodega's philanthropic vision also anticipates a new era of what has been called "philanthrocapitalism" that defines philanthropy in the twenty-first century. Philanthrocapitalism is a new term introduced around 2006 by New York Bureau Chief of *The Economist*, Matthew Bishop, that refers to a supposed shift by the richest business moguls into the global humanitarian sphere to conduct their philanthropy. This is seen as a shift away from old-school philanthropists whose

names adorn the nation's most prominent institutions of art and culture. However, as I have shown, philanthropy in the United States has not only recently turned toward philanthrocapitalism; rather, it has always been capitalist. In this dissertation, I have studied American philanthropy as a product of racial capitalism used to justify economic inequalities rooted in race-based discrimination and exploitation. Literature continues to be a critical space in which the culture of philanthropy is both produced and critiqued. From the practice of donating royalties from book sales in order to raise money for nonprofit organizations to Arundhati Roy's complaint that the neoliberal "Privatization of Everything has also meant the NGOization of Everything" (33), including literature, the culture of philanthropy continues to adapt to the conditions of the twenty-first century.

Bibliography

- Ahn, Christine E. "Democratizing American Philanthropy." *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*, ed. INCITE! Duke UP, 2017, pp. 63-78.
- Aizuss, Julia. "Renewing the Rosenwald." *South Side Weekly*, 3 Feb. 2015, southsideweekly.com/renewing-the-rosenwald/. Accessed 26 Feb. 2016.
- Alegría, Claribel, and D. J. Flakoll. *Cenizas de Izalco*. San Salvador, UCA Editores, 2014.
- Allen, Robert L. "Black Awakening in Capitalist America." *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*. ed. INCITE! Duke UP, 2017, pp. 53-62.
- Alvarez, Julia. *In the Time of the Butterflies*. Chapel Hill, NC, Algonquin of Chapel Hill, 1994.
- "American Foundations." *The New York Times*. 25 December 1935, pp. 26, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*. Accessed 15 December 2015.
- Anderson, Carol. *Eyes off the Prize: African Americans, the United Nations, and the Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Arias, Arturo. *Taking Their Word: Literature and the Signs of Central America*. University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Arnove, Robert F. *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad*. Boston, MA, G.K. Hall, 1980.
- Ascoli, Peter. *Julius Rosenwald: the Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the Cause of Black Education in the American South*. Indiana UP, 2006.
- Asturias, Miguel Angel. *El Papa Verde*. Madrid, Alianza, 1982.
- Ayala, César J., and Rafael Bernabe. *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History Since 1898*. University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Baldwin, James. "Everybody's Protest Novel." *Notes of a Native Son*. Boston, Beacon, 1955, pp. 13-23.
- Barrera, Mario, Carlos Muñoz Jr., and Charles Ornelas. "The Barrio as an Internal Colony." *People and Politics in Urban Society*. Los Angeles, Sage Publications, 1972, pp. 465-496.

- Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*. Duke UP, 2011.
- . *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*. Duke UP, 2008.
- Berman, Edward H. *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of Philanthropy*. SUNY Press, 1983.
- Bishop, Matthew and Michael Green. *Philanthrocapitalism: How the Rich Can Save the World*. New York, Bloomsbury Press, 2008.
- Blauner, Robert. "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt." *Social Problems*, vol. 16, no. 4, 1969, pp. 393-408. *JSTOR*. Accessed 15 Nov. 2015.
- Bone, Robert. *The Muse in Bronzeville: African American Creative Expression in Chicago, 1932-1950*. Rutgers UP, 2011.
- Bosch-García, Carlos. "Las Ideologías Europeístas." *América Latina En Sus Ideas*. Edited by Leopoldo Zea. Medellín, Siglo XXI Editores, 1986, pp. 239-69.
- Boschetto-Sandoval, Sandra M. and Marcia Phillips McGowan. *Claribel Alegría and Central American Literature: Critical Essays*. Athens, OH, Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1994.
- Brown, Wendy. "'The Most We Can Hope For...': Human Rights and the Politics of Fatalism." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103.2-3 (2004): 451-63. *JSTOR*. Accessed 30 July 2015.
- Calhoun, Charles W. *The Gilded Age: Perspectives on the Origins of Modern America*. Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.
- Cardoza y Aragón, Luis. *Miguel Angel Asturias: casi novela*. México, D.F., Ediciones Era, 1991.
- Carnegie, Andrew. "Distant Possessions: The Parting of the Ways." *The North American Review*, vol. 167, no. 501, 1 Aug. 1898, pp. 239-248. *JSTOR*. Accessed 29 Feb. 2017.
- . "Wealth." *The North American Review*, vol. 148, No. 391, June 1889, pp. 653-664. *JSTOR*. Accessed 1 April 2016.

- Carreiro, Amy E. "Ghosts of the Harlem Renaissance: 'Negrotarians' in Richard Wright's *Native Son*." *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 84, No. 3, Summer 1999, pp. 247-259. *JSTOR*. Accessed 21 March 2016.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham, New York, Monthly Review, 2000.
- Chouliaraki, Lilie. "Post-Humanitarianism: Humanitarian Communication Beyond a Politics of Pity." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. Vol 13.2, pp. 107-126. *SAGE Complete*. Accessed 24 Feb. 2014.
- Claybaugh, Amanda. *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World*. Cornell UP, 2007.
- Cliff, Michelle. *Free Enterprise: A Story of Mary Ellen Pleasant*. New York, Penguin, 1993.
- Cohen, Rich. *The Fish That Ate the Whale: The Life and Times of America's Banana King*. New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.
- Craft, Linda J. "Development of the Novel and Testimony in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador." *Novels of Testimony and Resistance from Central America*. University of Florida Press, 1997, pp. 33-71.
- Curti, Merle. *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History*. Rutgers UP, 1963.
- Dalembert, Louis-Philippe and Lyonel Trouillot. *Haiti: Une Traversée Littéraire*. Port-au-Prince, Presses nationales d'Haiti, 2010.
- Danticat, Edwidge. Foreword. *Love, Anger, Madness: A Haitian Triptych*, by Marie Vieux-Chauvet, New York, Modern Library, 2010.
- Davies, Carole Boyce. *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*. Duke UP, 2007.
- Davis, Angela. *Women, Race, & Class*. New York, Vintage, 1981.
- Dawes, James. "Human Rights in Literary Study." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2009, pp. 394-409.
- Dillon, Elizabeth Maddock and Michael J. Drexler. Introduction. *The Haitian Revolution and the Early United States*, by Dillon and Drexler, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. *JSTOR*. Accessed 20 March 2017.

- Dissanayake, Wimal. "Richard Wright: A View From The Third World." *Richard Wright: A Special Issue*, special issue of *Callaloo*, No. 28, 1986, pp. 481-89. *JSTOR*. Accessed 26 Feb. 2016.
- Douzinas, Costas. *Human Rights and Empire: The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*. New York, Routledge, 2007.
- Dowie, Mark. *American Foundations: An Investigative History*. MIT Press, 2001.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880*. New York, The Free Press, 1998.
- . "Criteria of Negro Art." *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Henry Louis Gates and Nellie Y. McKay. W.W. Norton, 2003, pp. 777-784.
- . *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York, Penguin, 1996.
- Duggan, Lisa. *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston, Beacon, 2003.
- Earle, Jonathan. *John Brown's Raid on Harpers Ferry: A Brief History with Documents*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.
- Feagin, Joe R. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*. New York, Routledge, 2000.
- Frank, Andre Gunder. *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America; Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil*. New York, Monthly Review, 1967.
- Friedman, Lawrence Jacob and Mark Dr. McGarvie, editors. *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*. Cambridge UP, 2003.
- Gasman, Marybeth and Katherine V. Sedgwick. *Uplifting a People: African American Philanthropy and Education*. New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2005.
- Gatewood Jr., Willard B. *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden 1898-1903*. University of Illinois Press, 1975.
- Gilroy, Amanda and W. M. Verhoeven. *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture*. University of Virginia Press, 2000.

- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Harvard UP, 1993.
- Greene, Graham. *The Quiet American*. New York, Penguin, 1973.
- Gross, Robert A. "Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy." *Philanthropy in America: Historicism and Its Discontents*, edited by Lawrence J. Friedman. New York, Cambridge UP, 2003, pp. 29-48.
- Gruesz, Kirsten Silva. "America." *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, edited by Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, NYU Press, 2014, pp. 21-25.
- "Haiti." *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>
 Accessed 29 Mar. 2017.
- Harvest of Empire*. Directed by Peter Getzels and Eduardo López. Written and narrated by Juan Gonzalez. EVS Communications, 2012.
- Hammock, David Clair. "Philanthropic Reconstructions, 1930-2001." *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*. Edited by Lawrence Jacob Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie, Cambridge UP, 2003, pp. 259-80.
- Harris, Paul. "They're called the Good Club – and they want to save the world." *The Guardian*, 30 May 2009, www.theguardian.com/world/2009/may/31/new-york-billionaire-philanthropists. Accessed 5 May 2018.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Scenes of Subjection*. New York, Oxford UP, 1997.
- Harvest of Empire*. Dir. Peter Getzels and Eduardo López. By Juan Gonzalez. EVS Communications, 2012. DVD.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: the Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Harvard UP, 1993.
- Hudson, Lynn. *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant": A Black Entrepreneur in Nineteenth Century San Francisco*. University of Illinois Press, 2003.
- Hunt, Lynn. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York, Norton, 2007.
- Isbister, John. "Explanations of Underdevelopment." *Promises Not Kept: The Betrayal of Social Change in the Third World*. Bloomfield, Kumarian Press, 2003, pp. 32-67.

- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Harvard UP, 1998.
- James, C.L.R. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York, Vintage, 1989.
- James, Joy. *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals*. New York, Routledge, 2013.
- Johnson, Erica L. "Ghostwriting Transnational Histories in Michelle Cliff's *Free Enterprise*." *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, vol. 9, no.1, 2008, pp. 114-139. *Project MUSE*. Accessed 27 July 2015.
- Kaplan, Amy. *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. Harvard UP, 2005.
- . "Violent Belongings and the Question of Empire Today Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, Hartford, Connecticut, October 17, 2003." *American Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2004, pp. 1-18. *Project MUSE*. Accessed 1 Dec. 2014.
- Kelley, Robin D. G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston, Beacon, 2002.
- "Latin American Literature." *Latin American Writers*, edited by Carlos A. Solé, Vol. 1, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989, pp. xix-lx. *Scribner Writers on GVRL*. Accessed 26 Feb. 2016.
- Lindenberger, Herbert. "On the Sacrality of Reading Lists: The Western Culture Debate at Stanford University." *The History in Literature: On Value, Genre, Institutions*. Columbia UP, 1990. Rpt. in *Shattering the Silences: Minority Professors Break Into the Ivory Tower*. PBS, 1997, <http://www.pbs.org/shattering/lindenberger.html>. Accessed 14 May 2018.
- Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia, Temple UP, 1998.
- Livingstone, Grace. *America's Backyard: The United States & Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror*. New York, Zed Books, 2009.
- Loerzel, Robert. "An Illinois History of Juvenile Court." *WBEZ91.5*, 16 June 2010, www.wbez.org/shows/eight-fortyeight/an-illinois-history-of-juvenile-court/68cc998f-033a-45f2-9087-5030bbf342cb. Accessed 15 Feb. 2016.

- Lubet, Steven. *The "Colored Hero" of Harper's Ferry: John Anthony Copeland and the War against Slavery*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2015.
- Lugones, Maria. "The Coloniality of Gender." *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise*, vol. 2, 2008, pp. 1-17.
- McKinley, William. "Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation." *The American Occupation of the Philippines 1898-1912* by James H. Blount. Rpt. in "Philippine Culture," *Filipino.biz.ph*, <http://www.msc.edu.ph/centennial/benevolent.html>.
- Makalani, Minkah. *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939*. North Carolina University Press, 2011.
- Mann, Michael. *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 3, Global Empires and Revolution, 1890-1945*. New York, Cambridge UP, 2012.
- Marable, Manning. *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society*. Boston, South End Press, 1983.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. 1848. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch03.htm>
- Melamed, Jodi. *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Milian, Claudia. "Central American Americanness, Latino/a Studies, and the Global South." *The Global South*. Vol. 5, No. 1, *Special Issue: The Global South and World Dis/Order*, Spring 2011, pp. 137-152. *JSTOR*. Accessed 27 Jan. 2016.
- Mitchell, Margaret. *Gone With the Wind*. Oxford, UK, Macmillan, 1936.
- Moya, Paula and Ramón Saldivar. "Fictions of the Trans-American Imaginary." *Modern Fiction Studies*. Vol. 49, No. 1, Spring 2003. *Project MUSE*. Accessed 25 April 2016.
- "The Nobel Peace Prize 1945 - Presentation Speech." *Nobelprize.org*, Nobel Media AB, 2014, www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1945/press.html. Accessed 14 May 2018.
- Oliver, Melvin L. and Thomas M. Shapiro. *Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Equality*. New York, Routledge, 1995.

- Osteen, Mark and Martha Woodmansee. *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics*. New York, Routledge, 1999.
- Paredes, Jorge Alcides. *El Popol Vuh y la Trilogía Bananera*. Cranbury, NJ, Associated University Presses, 2002.
- Peralta, Jaime. "La protesta hispanoamericana en Miguel Angel Asturias." *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico*, 1967, pp. 87-97.
- Peterson, Brandt G. "Remains out of place: Race, trauma and nationalism in El Salvador." *Anthropological Theory*, vol. 7, March 2007, pp. 59-77. *SAGE Complete*. Accessed 7 Jan. 2015.
- "philanthropy, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017. Accessed 15 May 2017.
- Piketty, Thomas. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press, 2014.
- Plummer, Brenda Gayle. "Under the Gun." *Haitian History: New Perspectives*. Edited by Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, New York, Routledge, 2013, pp. 241-255.
- Proskauer, Joseph M. "Federation Opens Drive for Funds: Proskauer Calls Philanthropy a Vital Expression of the Democratic Way of Life." *The New York Times*, 14 Oct. 1940, p. 26. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*. Accessed 25 October 2016.
- Quijano, Aníbal and Immanuel Wallerstein. "Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world-system." *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 134, Feb. 1992, pp. 549-557.
- Quiñonez, Ernesto. *Bodega Dreams*. New York, Vintage, 2000.
- Rabe, Stephen G. *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America*. University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Ramos-Zayas, Ana Y. "Delinquent Citizenship, National Performances: Racialization, Surveillance, and the Politics of 'Worthiness' in Puerto Rican Chicago." *Latino Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2004, pp. 26-44.

- Renz, David O., and Robert D. Herman. *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management*. Hoboken, NJ, Jossey-Bass & Pfeiffer Imprints, Wiley, 2016.
- "Richest Americans in History." *Forbes.com*, 24 Aug. 1998, www.forbes.com/asap/1998/0824/032.html. Accessed 14 May 2018.
- Riddleberger, Patrick W. "The Radicals' Abandonment of the Negro During Reconstruction." *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 45, no. 2, 1960, pp. 88-102. *JSTOR*. Accessed 17 Sept. 2015.
- Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. London, Zed Books, 1983.
- Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. "'Only Thing We Have to Fear Is Fear Itself': FDR's First Inaugural Address." Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, 06 Apr. 2016, historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5057/.
- Roy, Arundhati. *Capitalism: A Ghost Story*. Chicago, Haymarket, 2014.
- Ryan, Susan M. *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence*. Cornell UP, 2003.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York, Knopf, 1993.
- Sawaya, Francesca. *The Difficult Art of Giving: Patronage, Philanthropy and the American Literary Market*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.
- Schaffer, Kay and Sidonie Smith. *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: the Ethics of Recognition*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Schlesinger, Stephen C., Stephen Kinzer, and John H. Coatsworth. *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2005.
- Schoultz, Lars. "Latin America and the United States." *The Macroeconomics of Populism in Latin America*. University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 49-71.
- Sekora, John. "Black Message/White Envelope: Genre, Authenticity, and Authority in the Antebellum Slave Narrative." *Callaloo*, vol. 32, 1987, pp. 482-515. *JSTOR*. Accessed 11 Feb. 2016.
- Sepinwall, Alyssa Goldstein. *Haitian History: New Perspectives*. New York, Routledge, 2013.

- Singh, Nikil Pal. *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy*. Harvard UP, 2005.
- Slaughter, Joseph R. *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law*. Fordham UP, 2007.
- Smith, Andrea. "Introduction." *INCITE! The Revolution Will Not be Funded*. Duke UP, 2017, pp. 1-18.
- Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. University of California Press, 1991.
- Soule, Emily Berquist. "From Africa to the Ocean Sea: Atlantic slavery in the origins of the Spanish Empire." *Atlantic Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 16-39. *JSTOR*. Accessed 15 March 2018.
- Sternbach, Nancy Saporta, Marysa Navarro-Aranguren, Patricia Chuchryk and Sonia E. Alvarez. "Feminisms in Latin America: From Bogotá to San Bernardo." *Signs*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1992, pp. 393-434. *JSTOR*. Accessed 24 Jan. 2018.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E. "Of the 1%, By the 1%, For the 1%." *Vanity Fair*, May 2011, www.vanityfair.com/news/2011/05/top-one-percent-201105. Accessed 5 May 2018.
- Taylor, Diana. "Lost in the Field of Vision: Witnessing September 11." *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Duke UP, 2003, pp. 237-265.
- Taylor, Helen. *Scarlett's Women: Gone With the Wind and Its Female Fans*. Rutgers UP, 1989.
- Tocqueville, Alexis De. *Democracy In America*. Champaign, IL, Project Gutenberg, 1999.
- Torres Rivas, Edelberto. *History and Society in Central America*. Trans. Douglass Sullivan-González. University of Texas Press, 1993.
- Trodd, Zoe. *American Protest Literature*. Belknap of Harvard UP, 2006.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1995.

- Tunnell, Ted. *Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism, and Race in Louisiana, 1862-1877*. Louisiana State University Press, 1984.
- Turner, J.M.W. *The Slave Ship*. 1840, oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- Twain, Mark and Charles Dudley Warner. *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*. 1873. *Project Gutenberg*, www.gutenberg.org/files/3178/3178-h/3178-h.htm.
- United Nations General Assembly Resolution 54/134, "International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women," <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/news/vawd.html>
- U.S. Constitution*. Art. I, Sec. 8.
- Velásquez, Tony. "Claribel Alegría: Entrevista. (Managua, 29 de abril de 1997)." *Anales de Literatura Hispanoamericana*, vol. 29, 2000, pp. 327-346. *JSTOR*. Accessed 19 April 2017.
- Vieux-Chauvet, Marie. *Love, Anger, Madness: A Haitian Triptych*. Translated by Rose-Myriam Rejouis and Val Vinokur. New York, Modern Library, 2010.
- Wallace-Sanders, Kimberly. *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender and Southern Memory*. University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- Washington, Booker T. *Up From Slavery An Autobiography: Electronic Edition*. UNC. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/washington/washing.html>
- Wells, Ida B. *The Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States*. 1895. *Project Gutenberg*, www.gutenberg.org/files/14977/14977-h/14977-h.htm.
- Wexler, Laura. *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism*. University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Williams, Eric. *Capitalism and Slavery*. New York, Capricorn Books, 1966.
- Williams, Randall. *The Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- Willoughby-Herard, Tiffany. *Waste of a White Skin: The Carnegie Corporation and the Racial Logic of White Vulnerability*. University of California Press, 2015.
- Wilson, Richard Ashby and Richard D. Brown. *Humanitarianism and Suffering: the Mobilization of Empathy*. New York, Cambridge UP, 2009.

- Woodward, C. Vann. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. Oxford UP, 1962.
- Wright, Richard. "Blueprint for Negro Writing." *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Henry Louis Gates and Nellie Y. McKay. W.W. Norton, 2003, pp. 1403-1410.
- . "The Ethics of Jim Crow." *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Henry Louis Gates and Nellie Y. McKay. W.W. Norton, 2003, pp. 1411-1419.
- . "Introduction." *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, by St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, University of Chicago Press, 1945, pp. xvii-xxxiv.
- . *Native Son*. New York, Perennial Classics/HarperCollins, 1998.
- . "I Tried to Be a Communist." *The Atlantic Monthly, The Unz Review: An Alternative Media Selection*, <https://www.unz.com/print/AtlanticMonthly-1944sep-00048/>.
- Young Lords Party. "Young Lords Party 13-Point Platform and Program." First 13-Point Program, *The Latino/a Education Network Service*, palante.org/13%20Pt%20Program-1st.htm. Accessed 27 Apr. 2016.
- Zunz, Olivier. *Philanthropy in America: A History*. Princeton UP, 2012.