

Missing Miami: Anti-Blackness and the Making of the South Florida Myth

by

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I write to and for colleagues and committees, and, for the family, the friends, and the city that made me. May this project help those whose labor, experiences of violence, and continued degradation are addressed herein. May it further our work to make and remake Miami into the haven tour guides describe.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
Chapter	
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Overtown Going Under: Black Miami, Civil Rights, and the Caribbean Collision in <i>Freedom in the Family</i>	24
Rewriting Miami in the Civil Rights Movement.....	35
Black Spaces in Miami: Sites of Restricted Liberation.....	42
Black Women’s Leadership, Strategy, and Erasure in the Early 1960s.....	57
Expanding the Civil Rights Movement: Afro-Diasporic Solidarity in Miami.....	64
Defamation and Police Brutality in Miami.....	68
Civil Rights Afterlives: The Gathering in Miami.....	79
Conclusion & Reflection.....	84
III. The Anti-Haitian Hydra: Remapping Haitian Spaces in Miami.....	89
Overture.....	90
Geography of a Non-Place: Unmappable Miami in “Children of the Sea”.....	96
The Immigrant in Public Space: Mapping Krome Detention Center in <i>Brother, I’m Dying</i>	106
Where’s Little Haiti?: The Cultural Enclave within and beyond <i>Brother, I’m Dying</i>	119
The Destruction of an Enclave: Gentrification, Reproduction, and Space in MJ Fievre’s “Sinkhole”.....	125
Conclusion.....	133
IV. Becoming Whiteness, Rejecting Blackness: Genre, Castro, and Transnational Identity in Carlos Moore’s <i>Pichón</i> and Carlos Eire’s <i>Learning to Die in Miami</i>	135
Some Questions for & Statements to the Afro-Latinx in Miami.....	136
Context.....	142
Entering the U.S. Canon: Moore and the Form of the U.S. Slave Narrative.....	145
Race and Revolution in Carlos Moore’s Cuban America.....	151
Ní de Aquí, Ní de Alla: The Luxury of Postmodern Play in <i>Learning to Die in Miami</i>	165
Slavery, Segregation, and White Cubanidad in Eire’s Miami.....	171
Conclusion.....	181
V. Who Speaks for Miami?: The White Lens in the Tropical Metropole.....	186
<i>Scarface</i> & <i>Miami Vice</i> Production Histories.....	194
Mariel Boatlift.....	200
Miami and the War on Drugs.....	216

Dangerous Bodies: Queerness and the Boatlift.....	219
<i>Scarface</i> 's Grandiosity.....	225
<i>Miami Vice</i>	229
Tubbs & Crockett: "Jamaican" New Yorker and "Southern Cracker".....	230
Paradise Lost: Crockett and Tubbs Leave the Force.....	239
Conclusion.....	242
VI. Coda.....	245
REFERENCES.....	250

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Black Lives Matter Miami artwork by author.....	25
2. Scan of Freedom in the Family dedication.....	32
3. Sir John Hotel Welcome Newsletter (1959).....	45
4. Photograph of Woolworth Sit-in (March 1960).....	58
5. CORE (Miami Chapter) Members photo.....	59
6. Pamphlet for The Gathering.....	79
7. Photograph of The Gathering attendees.....	83
8. Map of location of Krome Detention Center.....	110
9. Photograph of Krome Detention Center entrance by Karina McInnis.....	111
10. Photo of Mache Ayisyen, Little Haiti by Karina McInnis.....	123
11. Photo of Little Haiti Cultural Center by Karina McInnis.....	123
12. Photo of Little Haiti storefronts by Karina McInnis.....	123
13. Foreword of Carlos Moore’s <i>Píchon</i>	147
14. Photo of Miami skyline by Karina McInnis.....	187
15. Screenshots of <i>Scarface</i> introduction	188
16. Screenshot of <i>Miami Vice</i> pilot episode.....	190
17. Fidel Castro “Mariel Boatlift Announcement” speech excerpt.....	202
18. Screenshot of <i>Scarface</i> interrogation.....	206
19. Picture of Freedomtown, Miami (1980).....	214
20. Screenshot of <i>Miami Vice</i> episode 6.....	219
21. Screenshot of <i>Miami Vice</i> pilot.....	220
22. <i>Scarface</i> screenshot.....	223
23. <i>Scarface</i> screenshot.....	226

INTRODUCTION

“That is **so** Miami,” my friend, who had recently moved to suburban Georgia, declared repeatedly as a group of us walked around our hometown of Miami, Florida. She would look at Caribbean-themed storefronts, overhear a bachata cover of a Beatles’ song at *The Cheesecake Factory*, or sigh upon realizing that a cashier at ZooMiami only spoke Spanish (my friend does not) and turn to us dramatically and declare that these incidents were representative embodiments of the city. Of course, “that is *so* Miami” raises more questions than it answers: What, or maybe, **who** is so Miami? Caribbean influences and cultural collision? Spanish speakers? Linguistic and cultural diversity more generally? When I asked for clarification, my friend simply offered that she now lived in the proper South and “Miami is geographically, but not culturally, Southern.”

This and similar exchanges, and the questions they inspired, have been foundational to the development of this project that investigates Miami’s categorization and exclusion from the “proper” South. In what follows, I identify, historicize, and challenge prominent (mis)conceptions about Miami. Throughout, I use “Miami” as a metonym for various cities and neighborhoods within and beyond Miami proper that massive waves of immigration from the Caribbean, and Central and South America have variously shaped. In many ways, South Florida’s tourist industry has similarly relied on “Miami” as a loaded signifier, indexed best by the renaming of Dade County to Miami-Dade in 1997. This renaming was a promotional effort fostered by former Mayor Alex Penelas to market a larger geospatial area as the lush, tropical paradise most often associated with “Miami” (Bush 2). With regards to Miami’s non-Southernness: I have heard this assessment elsewhere, and there are many reasons why it may appear to be true; many of which are contingent on the maintenance of the mythical South as a

site of rigid racial hierarchies, backwardness, and cultural homogeneity.¹ Perhaps the most notable difference between Miami and other cities in the US South that “justifies” its alienation from the Southern region is that more than half of the city’s residents (51.7%) were born outside of the US, primarily in the Caribbean, and in Central and South America. This demographic is the consequence of widespread political unrest in the Caribbean, Central, and South America that triggered mass emigration to the US. For comparison, only 5.9% of inhabitants of New Orleans, another major port city in the US South, and 9.7% of inhabitants in Atlanta, were born outside the US (US Census 2013).

Given its demographic, it is perhaps unsurprising that Miami is often lauded for its diversity, and has even been nicknamed a “global” or “international” city, the “Capital of the Caribbean,” and the “Gateway to Latin America.” This reputation might initially provide an optimistic outlook on the US’s destiny as a cosmopolitan site of cultural exchange; by 2060, the US, especially its major cities will closely resemble Miami’s demographic, with the majority of US residents with a birthplace outside of the US. Analyzing the city thus provides imperative understanding of the political, social, and economic regulation of cultural difference in the US as a whole. This insight will help us interpret cultural transformations on a national scale, especially with respect to assimilation and the reconstruction of racial hierarchies.

Scholars, tourists, city representatives, beneficiaries of the Miami tourist industry, and city officials implicitly reference this data to support claims of the city’s Caribbeanness, cultural diversity, and/or internationality. Given the history of tourism in Miami, and its legacy as the nation’s winter playground, this demographic, and its widespread usage as a marketing tool, is

¹ Many Southern scholars trace the development of the myth of the abject South, in particular, I am most compelled by Leigh Anne Duck’s formulation of this dynamic in *The Nation’s Region: Southern Modernism, Segregation, and U.S. Nationalism*

imperative to considerations of Miami literary representations. Indeed, I often joke that readers can interpret my project as a response to the representations of Miami found on tourist websites: an anti-tourist guide. For example, Miami's official tourist guide markets the city as an "international hub of cultural diversity and world-class offerings." Google's description of Miami reads, "Miami is an international city at Florida's southeastern tip. Its Cuban influence is reflected in the cafes and cigar shops that line Calle Ocho in Little Havana." This description is striking in its implicit conflation of "international" with "Cuban," which references massive waves of immigration from Cuba to Miami in the latter half of the 20th century. The travel-booking website, Trip Advisor, boasts "scorching" nightlife "thanks to a strong Latin influence and spicy salsa culture." Sociologist Saskia Sassen, examining both Miami's residential demographic and the representation of international industries in the port city has dubbed Miami a "global city," while Colin Woodard recently included Miami in the Spanish Caribbean region in his book, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*. As these various assessments of Miami might reflect, "international," "global," "Caribbean," and "Cuban" are variously used, in some cases interchangeably, to describe Miami's cultural topography.

The malleability of these descriptors as they are applied to Miami, in conjunction with the only vaguely informative Census data reveal both a constellation of assumptions and omissions about Miami's cultural shift and cross-cultural interactions. Namely, while there is documentation to assert that the majority of Miami's residents were not born in the US, there is no metric to assess the differences within those populations. Put differently, there is no indication of the nation of origin, race, class, language, religion, or other ethnic and cultural markers within the foreign-born population, and it follows, no indication of how various identity markers might

open up, alter, or inhibit access to various resources, many of which radically alter the quality and duration of life of Miami's residents.

While criticisms of the Census are not my primary investment, the gaps in this data gesture towards the larger problem of what celebrations of diversity, internationality, and globality hide, or rather, to reference the title of this project: what, or who, is missing from prominent considerations of the global city? ² In particular, in my research, I have found that these celebratory monikers often obfuscate anti-black prejudice and other oppressive ideologies in favor of representing places like Miami as sites of harmonious cultural mixture. I posit that these myth-making monikers thus disguise the evolutionary, adaptive nature of white supremacy and anti-blackness in diverse locales that renders darker-complected people vulnerable to premature death while providing lighter-complected people disproportionate access to various resources that prolong and enhance their quality of life, regardless of nation of origin.

In Miami, local journalist Nathaniel Sandler refers to this phenomenon as the “melting pot myth” and notes that it dangerously erases cultural difference, hiding the effects of regional and international politics, particularly US immigration policy, on diasporic subjectivity and immigrant experiences. The melting pot myth also obfuscates residential segregation, violent, and at times deadly, detention of émigrés, other instances of racialized violence, and increasing wealth gaps among Miami inhabitants, most of which occur across racial/cultural lines. In short, it belies the complexities, tensions, and the violence that constitute the city and that underlie any diverse, but not inclusive or equal, society. Further, my project identifies a challenge within pro-immigration discourse through my suggestion that class and racial stratification in and beyond

² Although far afield from my project in content, Michael Soto's introduction to *Measuring the Harlem Renaissance: The U.S. Census, African American Identity, and Literary Form* (2016) provides a history of the U.S. Census, with attention to its failure to capture cultural complexity, and the relationship of the state-sanctioned demographic measure and literary production.

the US can fundamentally alter the immigrant experience for émigrés, and that the arrival of new people in a rigidly stratified locale can disproportionately burden and displace already marginalized communities.

Missing Miami: Anti-Blackness and the Making of the South Florida Myth offers an investigation of these complexities through its sustained attention to Miami's cultural topography. In this dissertation, I analyze how representations of Miami address the aforementioned cultural tensions to problematize narratives of Miami as a diverse, global city. To refine the question raised in my earlier anecdote (what is Miami?), I have structured this dissertation around the following questions: What circumstances, issues, and cultures shape the city, its inhabitants, and representations? What is at stake in the overabundance of descriptions of Miami as "diverse," "not Southern," "Caribbean," "Latin American"? What do these descriptors reveal about the city's racial politics and cultural climate? What do they hide?

Drawing on and departing from work in literary and cultural studies, cultural geography, critical race theory, migrant studies, and Afro-Diasporic studies, the answers to these questions will shore up my argument that the construction of Miami as a diverse extension of the Caribbean validates narratives of the US as an inclusive nation. This myth of inclusivity is necessarily dependent on the erasure of historical and ongoing violent legacies of anti-blackness within Caribbean histories that inform Miami's émigré populations. For the purposes of this project, I thus focus on representations of Afro-Diasporic populations set in Miami ranging from the 1950s to the 2000s. In turn, these assessments of Miami's diversity displace widespread iterations of racism, xenophobia, and other similarly repressive ideologies onto other allegedly "racist," "backward," and "unsafe" regions, i.e., the mythic South. Rather than seeking to define, or categorize, Miami as either Southern or Caribbean, my project aims to investigate how

authors, journalists, and filmmakers both reify and write against claims of Miami's diversity. More broadly, my methodological approach, which uses Miami as a microcosm to discuss transnational racial hierarchies, facilitates an intersectional analysis of cross cultural interaction, and tension, and treats antiblackness as not only a global phenomenon, but also a transnational problem.

Throughout this dissertation, I move away from the use of "racism," and rely instead on "anti-blackness" to refer to what Ruth Wilson Gilmore succinctly defines as "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (Gilmore 28). I rely on "anti-blackness" as it allows me to name specifically how individuals of Afro-descent are disproportionately vulnerable to premature death. Further, as time in the classroom has taught me, "racism" has been co-opted and problematically deployed as oppression that anyone can experience based on their race. Perhaps most unsettlingly, I have seen "racism" used in such a way that allows white supremacists to portray themselves as victims in the US's cultural shift, even while white supremacy evolves and maintains lighter-complected people as its beneficiaries. I use "white supremacy" to connote the global interconnection of cultural, economic, political, and religious systems that disproportionately benefits lighter-complected individuals and affords them "the power to distribute or deny resources," even in an increasingly globalized economy (Moore, *The Root*).

I treat white supremacy and anti-blackness as different, yet intimately related ideologies and systemic realities. I focus specifically on complexion and appearances because I believe this is a necessary part of comparing immigrant experiences in both nations of origin and host-nations. Considerations of privilege in marginalized communities provide insight into social, political, and economic hierarchies in the US. Studying white supremacy and anti-blackness as

separate, though interrelated systems, disrupts a tendency to discuss race only as it relates to blackness, or racialized oppression, without concurrent consideration of whiteness and privilege. Understanding race and the formation of racialized hierarchies as a complex multi-directional process is imperative to the analysis of transnational movements, perhaps especially when inflected by considerations of assimilation and rejection in the US.

Within this project, my comparative analysis of selected 20th and 21st century literary and cinematic works enables the dismantling of homogenizing myths of globality and diversity. I have chosen literature as my primary archive for this study for a number of reasons. First, it is a vastly understudied collection in any examination of Miami; this project is the first comparative analysis of literary representations of Miami. Indeed, the majority of foundational works that analyze Miami's cultural demographic emerge from scholars in History, Anthropology, and Sociology, samples of which I will review in further detail shortly. John Lowe gestures towards why scholars have neglected parts of the U.S. that do not fit neatly within regional parameters, focusing on the U.S. South. He writes: "The U.S. academy, fixated on a strictly defined literary canon of white, native-born, male writers, for the most part ignored circum-Caribbean texts, even in the U.S. South itself" (4). Miami, which I tenuously situate as a Southern city within the circum-Caribbean, a categorization I will expound upon in more detail throughout this project, constitutes a notable gap that reveals problems within and between disciplinary delineations.

Second, my focus on literature enables an imperative consideration of representation, especially when we consider distributions of power in an ever-shifting cultural topography, and who gets to represent the city, its residents, and **how** they represent them. Finally, as my project's focus on memoirs might suggest, literature enables examination of **self**-representations. I center memoirs published by authors who live or have lived in Miami, and justify this focus by

asserting the ethical imperative of learning about the most obfuscated populations within Miami's mythic diversity **from** these populations.

I focus, in particular, on how the creators of the cultural artifacts I examine identify and respond to this erasure, with specific attention to their rhetorical strategies and concurrent address of contemporary sociopolitical issues. Here I am reminded of Junot Díaz's frequently cited speech at Bergen Community College in 2009, where the Dominican-American author outlined why he felt it imperative to represent himself in literature:

You know, vampires have no reflections in a mirror? There's this idea that monsters don't have reflections in a mirror. And what I've always thought isn't that monsters don't have reflections in a mirror. It's that if you want to make a human being into a monster, deny them, at the cultural level, any reflection of themselves. And growing up, I felt like a monster in some ways. I didn't see myself reflected at all. I was like, 'Yo, is something wrong with me? That the whole society seems to think that people like me don't exist?' And part of what inspired me, was this deep desire that before I died, I would make a couple of mirrors. That I would make some mirrors so that kids like me might see themselves reflected back and might not feel so monstrous for it.

Díaz argues that a dearth of representations of himself: an immigrant of Afro-descent who loves to read, particularly comics, fantasy, and science fiction, resulted in a kind of ontological violence that first makes those made invisible think less of themselves, and then ultimately renders its victims monstrous. Díaz implicitly gestures toward the overabundant representations of lighter-complected, English-speaking people in US media, and suggests that white-controlled media is responsible for denying Díaz and others representations of themselves. Considering

Díaz's oeuvre, identifying this absence motivated him to write, and likely influenced **how** he writes, perhaps especially with his incorporation of popular culture into his work, and his attention to polyvocality and intertextuality to illustrate the dangers of a single and thus necessarily exclusionary story.³

Díaz gestures towards what many of the works I analyze in this project identify as the consequences of a single story of Miami and the corresponding erasure of certain voices. The creators of the cultural artifacts analyzed herein equate this erasure with ontological violence. The texts I have chosen to engage for this project have generated book-length responses to being told in any number of ways that they do not exist, that they do not matter. Devoting scholarly attention to these works is perhaps especially important to me as a Black woman from Miami, who grew up without learning about the contributions and complexities of Black life in my hometown. In many ways, working through this project has helped me grapple with my own experiences of anti-blackness in Miami, and begin to reconcile those traumas with recollections of growing up in what others celebrated as a culturally rich environment.

As my argument suggests, my project investigates this paradox, and attempts to hold the rich culture inspired by Miami's position as a transnational contact zone in tandem with the violent and virulent anti-blackness that constitutes the city. The creators of the cultural artifacts I analyze in this work tell histories of neighborhoods I frequented, recalling the contradictory benefits of segregation in protecting Black economies in Colored Town, now Overtown, and providing rich, experiential descriptions of the effects of urban renewal ordinances and gentrification on majority-Black neighborhoods, like Overtown, Liberty City, and Little Haiti.

³ I borrow this language from Chimamanda Adichie's TED talk, "The Danger of a Single Story."

Indeed, while responding to their erasure in cultural representations, they identify how this erasure manifests “on the ground” through their address of material realities.

The authors and filmmakers I engage in my project grapple with this erasure in a number of ways: some with concerted efforts to reclaim and document lost voices, and add their own to master narratives of local and national history in acts of literary resistance, some attempting to appropriate these stories with superficial attention to their original sources. These storytellers invite readers to sit with uncomfortable questions about Miami’s cultural diversity:

What does it mean, how does it feel, and how does one represent living in an increasingly diverse Miami during the 1950s and 1960s as a Black woman civil rights activist, fighting for racial equity, while your contributions are elided in favor of Black male voices? What does it mean, how does it feel, and how does one represent living in a “diverse” city after your uncle is subjected to premature death for, it would seem, the crimes of being Black and Haitian and seeking asylum in Miami? What does it mean, how does it feel, and how does one represent being told that Miami is a “Cuban” city, only to arrive as an Afro-Cuban and be persecuted for your observation of continuities of anti-Blackness from Cuba to Miami? And perhaps finally, and more ominously, what does it mean to produce and disseminate narratives that demonize and criminalize émigrés as US born white Americans? What do these representations say about white fragility and the perceived dismantlement of white supremacy in an ever shifting cultural demographic?

Each chapter of my dissertation is devoted to one of these questions. It follows that each chapter is devoted to a prominent cultural group in Miami in an effort to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced engagement with individual cultural groups and challenge the homogeneity implicit in descriptors like “global city” or “melting pot.” Put more simply, I hold

apart and treat these groups separately to more clearly highlight how mechanisms of anti-blackness distinctly affect each group. The dissertation moves from uncovering what I view as the most understudied, or missing, narratives of Miami, to problematizing the prominent narratives disseminated in and about the city. *Missing Miami* thus formally replicates the project's goal of sifting through the layers in the palimpsest of Miami narratives, beginning with the overwritten, faint, and faded text and concluding with the bold, highlighted, more easily legible layers of text to help readers see how analysis of the former is imperative to the interpretation of the latter.

I begin with what until recently, with Chanelle N. Rose's *The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America's Tourist Paradise, 1896-1968* (2015), was an egregiously underrepresented history of Miami: its role during the Civil Rights Movement.⁴ In my first chapter, "Overtown Going Under: Black Miami, Civil Rights, and the Caribbean Collision in *Freedom in the Family*," I explore this history, relying on the recollections of civil rights activist and Florida native, Patricia Stephens Due, and her daughter, speculative fiction author, Tananarive Due, in their collaboratively authored memoir, *Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights*. In this chapter, I focus on the form of the memoir, and argue that its alternating chapters signal a cyclical chronology that metaphorizes the perpetuity of the struggle for Black equality. I contextualize the memoir within local, national, and international histories, expounding on its address of police brutality, residential segregation, urban renewal, and Overtown as a center for Black organizers and its ultimate destruction with the construction of the I-95 through the Black enclave. I further trace Stephens

⁴ While there is a fair amount of work on Florida during the Civil Rights movement, these works seldom devote substantial attention, if any attention to Miami, with the exception of Marvin Dunn's work, especially *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*, which makes no reference to Patricia Stephens Due.

Due's and Due's reflections of the influx of émigrés of Cuban descent during the early 1960s, and émigrés of Haitian descent in the early 1970s to illustrate how Black American activists variously supported recent émigrés, and adjusted their tactics to address racial differences within émigré communities.

In the second chapter, I discuss a cultural group for which Patricia Stephens Due and Tananarive Due advocate in Miami: Haitian émigrés. In “The Anti-Haitian Hydra: Remapping Haitian Spaces in Miami,” I argue that literary works by Haitian Americans who live or have lived in Miami present alternate cartographies of the city that map methods of repelling/repatriating, containing, and even killing Haitians across economic and political strata. Though the procedures differ, these mechanized strategies of subjugation all share the objective of rendering the Haitian body unseen in a supposedly “diverse” city. I focus on national and international policies that make Miami inaccessible to Haitian émigrés through an analysis of Edwidge Danticat's short story, “Children of the Sea” (1995). I analyze “Children of the Sea” alongside her later work, *Brother, I'm Dying* (2007), which details the use of the detention center as a site of population control that disproportionately prosecutes and contains Haitian émigrés, and MJ Fievre's short story, “Sinkhole” (2014), which metaphorizes gentrification through its depiction of a sinkhole swallowing up a prominent Haitian enclave in Miami.

The third chapter offers a comparative analysis of racial and ethnic differences within Miami's Cuban-American populations. In “Becoming Whiteness, Rejecting Blackness: Genre, Castro, and Transnational Identity in Carlos Moore's *Pichón* and Carlos Eire's *Learning to Die in Miami*,” I compare the experiences of Carlos Moore and Carlos Eire as represented in their respective memoirs. I use the insights from both authors to trace the various assimilation routes available to lighter-complected émigrés as compared to those available to émigrés with darker

skin. I argue that Moore and Eire represent these different routes through the form of their memoirs; Eire, a white-passing émigré embraces the fluidity of the postmodern, which emblemizes his “life on the hyphen” wherein he can variously embrace and reject his Cubanness to pass as white-American because of his light skin. Moore, on the other hand, replicates prominent tropes from the slave narrative to situate his experiences as an Afro-Cuban within a longer history of violence against Afro-Diasporic peoples.

In the final chapter, I depart from my attention to self-representation and transition to the most prominent representations of Miami, the majority of which are white authored, white produced spectacles of immigration into Miami, often conflated with an influx of drugs and criminals. In “Who Speaks for Miami?: The White Lens in the Tropical Metropole,” I tackle representations of xenophobia through an engagement with the most widely circulated and consumed representations of the city. I observe popular filmic and television representations of Miami that display non-white and/or non-English speaking people engaging in criminal behavior, especially drug distribution. Through an examination of *Scarface* (1983), and select episodes of *Miami Vice* (1984-1989), I argue that the hyperbolic representation of violence, immigration, drugs, and illicit economic ascent exemplified in these cultural artifacts codify Miami as an Anglo-American nightmare. Further, these texts reveal substantially more about white Americans’ anxieties than the cultural groups they purport themselves to be representing. These representations characterize Miami as a site of transmission where unwanted substances and bodies could corrupt the broader American sphere. Beyond characterizing Miami as an unstable and potentially violent site of corrupt cultural and economic (non)assimilation, these representations expose the violence and greed inherent to US capitalism and the inaccessibility

of the normative “American dream” for immigrants who do not, or cannot, abide by the rules of assimilation.

As the aforementioned chapter overviews might suggest, my methodology is contingent on a concurrent consideration of localized cultures and surroundings that shape, limit, and contain these cultures, be they statewide, national, or international debates, discourses, and desires. Therefore, my archive extends beyond literary works to include the language of immigration policies, the policies, and corresponding operations of detention centers, and municipal ordinances that structure the topography of the city. My project thus lies within and investigates the tension between material realities and the representations of such realities put forth in the works I analyze throughout my dissertation.

Within literary studies, I most easily categorize my approach as New Historicist, relying on the premise that “every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices,” and that it is thus impossible, and at worst, irresponsible, to undertake literary analysis, especially on work by marginalized authors, without attention to the material conditions within which these works were produced. I bolster my close readings with concurrent attention to the various mechanisms of white supremacy and anti-blackness to which the authors I have selected are responding. I further use strategies of close reading on all of the texts I engage, operating under the principle “that literary and ‘non-literary texts’ circulate inseparably” and are mutually illuminating. To provide an example, in my second chapter, “The Anti-Haitian Hydra,” I analyze municipal ordinances alongside the fictional and non-fictional literary texts. This joint analysis reveals colorblind language in state documents that informs the erasure documented in the literature.

Given this methodology, and the various contexts and cultural groups that anchor this project, *Missing Miami* contributes to various fields of study. I imagine these interventions in expanding, concentric circles that metaphorize my treatment of Miami within local, regional, national, and transnational frameworks. Primarily as my earlier paragraphs suggest, the project intervenes on earlier studies of Miami through its treatment of literature as a primary archive. This focus enables a thick description of cross-cultural interactions and thus complements previously published foundational historical, anthropological, and sociological research that analyzes Miami's demographic. This project is thus indebted to and builds upon work by Alex Stepick, Alejandro Portes, Guillermo Grenier, and Marvin Dunn. Their work on Miami in the late 1990s and early 2000s prioritized interethnic relations and power in Miami to illuminate how racial and ethnic diversity often did very little to shift sociopolitical and economic hierarchies that privileged lighter-complected people in the city.

Recent work has revealed renewed interest in questions of racial inequity in Miami, perhaps especially work by Chanelle Rose, whose project on the Civil Rights Movement in Miami I mentioned earlier. N.D.B. Connolly addresses the overt and insidious ways real estate practices inhibited Black people from accruing property and capital in Miami in *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (2014), and Greg Bush explores the segregation of Miami's beaches in *White Sand, Black Beach: Civil Rights, Public Space, and Miami's Virginia Key* (2016). In many cases, the literature I analyze corroborates the findings of systemic anti-blackness, but provide additional insight into how authors adapt the form and style of their writing to reflect their various responses to these material realities.

Beyond my contribution to "Miami Studies," *Missing Miami: Anti-Blackness and the Making of the South Florida Myth* engages and furthers conversations within the

interdisciplinary fields of American Studies, Southern Studies, Caribbean Studies, Transnational Studies, and Global South Studies through my metonymic treatment of Miami. This treatment emphasizes the intersections between local and global contexts, and provides a comparative, cross-cultural, and international analysis that centers transnational racial hierarchies.

Recent work at the intersections of these fields of study has advocated for the blurring, or dismantlement of regional, and it follows disciplinary parameters to enable more holistic and comparative work. We might take as example reflections on the “transnational turn” within American Studies.⁵ Sophia McClennan dubbed North American scholars who have expanded their research beyond the US as “the latest variation on the Monroe Doctrine of patronizing Latin America... Latin Americanists might see such a move signaling a transition from covert to overt invasion of the rich Latin American canon” (402). Immanuel Wallerstein, in his analysis of the plantation system in the U.S., South America, and the Caribbean, names parts of the U.S. the “extended Caribbean” to illustrate continuities in the reimagined region’s history. Recently, and more relevant to my project, John Lowe’s *Calypso Magnolia: The Crosscurrents of Caribbean and Southern Culture* makes a specific case for blurring the boundary between the US South and the Caribbean through a focus on regional and transregional literature.

Lowe makes the case for the inclusion of Miami authors within the Southern canon. He focuses on light-skinned, or “white Cuban,” Cuban-American authors. I rely on “white Cuban” to address how racial signification enables assimilation into US white supremacy for émigrés from different nations; I expound on this categorization in further detail in my third chapter. Lowe argues that the inclusion of these voices within a reimagined US South problematizes the

⁵ See *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies*.

canon. While I take seriously Lowe's effort to problematize the South, his selected archive of white Cuban voices as evidence of the need to diversify and expand Southern studies, gestures towards an issue I have identified in my project; the emblematic uplifting of one ethnic group to constitute diversity. Put differently, in focusing on white Cuban voices to problematize the white, navel-gazing South, Lowe neglects the hegemonic structures that provide white Cubans disproportionate sociopolitical power in Miami, the majority of which transnational structures of white supremacy enable. Lowe's analysis thus implicitly, and unintentionally, pinpoints a concerning series of omissions enabled by a problematic deployment of diversity, blurred borders, and fluidity; namely the blurring of important inter- and intra-ethnic power dynamics and differences that necessitate sustained attention to anti-blackness and white supremacy transnationally.

In bolstering my implicit response to Lowe, I rely on a wide range of theoretical work on diversity, multiracialism, and anti-racism in conjunction with theories of spatial formation and urban planning in and beyond the US to enhance my readings of my primary texts. In particular, Jared Sexton's work has been formative to my thinking on this project. Sexton's work on multiracialism, antiblackness, and whiteness, analyzes the celebrated "browning of America," which he asserts is a post-racial mechanism to continuously obfuscate persistent, evolutionary, and at-times insidious manifestations of systemic anti-blackness. Relatedly, Devyn Spence Benson explores a similar phenomenon in Cuba with her investigation of the perpetuity of systemic racism within Cuba's allegedly raceless revolution. I specifically rely on Benson's investigation of how anti-blackness in Cuba shapes the Cuban émigré population in Miami. I further engage George Lipsitz's work in *How Racism Takes Place*, wherein he traces the formation of US space, property ownership, and the accrual and inheritance of capital amongst

white Americans to illustrate their privilege in the US. He compares this data to the historical disenfranchisement of Black Americans to historicize the development of Black majority neighborhoods and their vulnerability to gentrification. While Lipsitz's work is indispensable to considerations of spatial formations and race, I problematize his monolithic focus on Black Americans and suggest that an analysis of Blackness transnationally is imperative for the US's Black émigré populations.

Since my project takes up issues of race, gender identity, citizenship status, class, and sexual orientation as intersecting phenomena, it is perhaps unsurprising that I rely on Kimberlé Crenshaw's foundational theory of intersectionality as it is outlined in "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" (1991). Crenshaw suggests that antiracist and feminist activists make women of color the center of any analysis and strategy at resistance, asserting that women of color's experiences illuminate the intersections of racialized and gendered forms of domination. In particular, she suggests that this methodology throws into relief intragroup differences within "women" and "people of color," asserting that "ignoring differences within groups contributes to tension among groups" (1242). However, and as has been taken up by both scholars and activists, Crenshaw invites continual consideration of the infinite intersections of identity, writing: "my focus on the intersections of race and gender only highlights the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed" (1244). In particular, my examination of Floridian Black women's experiences within the male-centric narratives of the Civil Rights movement and consideration of Afro-Cubans in the whitewashed histories of Cuban emigration to Miami in my first and third chapters respectively, interrogate the "multilayered and routinized forms of domination" Crenshaw outlines in "Mapping the Margins" (1245).

The renewed attention to intersectionality during the 2016 presidential campaign and after the election has thrown the stakes of this project into relief for me in ways that I could not have foreseen when I first began this research in 2012. Within my master's thesis (completed in 2013), I made a claim similar to that which I make at the beginning of this introduction: Miami is a metonym for the remainder of the U.S., and that we thus must take seriously the ways diversity rhetoric obfuscates anti-blackness in transnational, diverse environments. At the time, this felt like a bold gesture that I could hardly prove; an aspirational, self-esteem boost as I navigated the new world of graduate school. Now, however, having witnessed the seemingly paradoxical concurrent rise of national celebrations of diversity and white nationalism, I am simultaneously horrified and invigorated by the timeliness of renewed interest in Miami.

Between 2012 and now, as I write the first of many drafts of the introduction for this book project in 2017, I viewed headlines in left-leaning publications celebrating increased diversity with suspicion. These headlines are widespread, including the Census's projection, released on December 12, 2012: "U.S. Census Bureau Projections Show a Slower Growing, Older, More Diverse Nation a Half Century from Now." The U.S. News echoed this celebration in 2015, declaring that "It's Official: The U.S. is becoming a Minority-Majority Nation." In 2015, the Huffington Post focused on U.S. classrooms, asserting that "In 10 Years, America's Classrooms Are Going To Be Much More Diverse Than They Are Now," while demographer William H. Frey boldly claimed in a 2014 Newsweek publication that "America's Getting Less White, and That Will Save It." Neither of these titles addresses the persistence of anti-blackness, xenophobia, and other forms of identity-based violence in spite of the increases in diversity, an amorphous term that is mostly unqualified in these pieces.

This dearth of critical analysis of diversity spurred my research, which in turn prepared me to better understand Donald Trump's ascent to power and challenge an unfortunate thread of liberal shock at his ability to harness xenophobia, misogyny, and anti-blackness to arrive in the Oval office. My work taught me two important things: 1) in spite of the importance of immigration in the US's history, successful advocacy for open borders alone cannot dismantle white supremacy. To assume that the arrival of émigrés or population increase of non-white Americans will necessarily result in a more equitable society belies the complex collusion of capitalism, anti-blackness, and other forms of identity-based violence that persist in increasingly diverse environments. Indeed, this is how a President who relied heavily on white supremacist rhetoric during his campaign can come to govern an increasingly diverse nation, in many ways problematically emblemized by President Barack Obama's earlier administration. 2) Relatedly, white supremacists, and white liberals guilty of investing in and perpetuating anti-blackness often operate under a false belief that the U.S.'s alleged shift to a "minority-majority" demographic is a simultaneous dismantlement of white supremacy. It follows that these groups mistakenly perceive that the privileges that have provided lighter-complected people with disproportionate access to resources that prolong, sustain, and enhance life will be threatened or taken away in this cultural shift.

This dangerous misapprehension inspires the dehumanizing representations of both white/white-passing and non-white émigrés, Black Americans, and other marginalized groups. These representations legitimize the legal, socioeconomic, and judicial persecution and oppression of these groups; put simply, these narratives keep these populations down in an effort to maintain white supremacy. I analyze samples of this dehumanization, and their revelation of white fragility and anxiety that inspires the almost vengeful attack on marginalized communities,

in my final chapter. We might compare these representations of Miami during the 1980s with Donald Trump's fear mongering of Mexican émigrés and public declaration that Mexican people who cross the U.S. border are "bringing problems...they're bringing crime. They're rapists" (Trump, "Candidacy Announcement"). Indeed, the only difference between the cultural moments I analyze in Miami and the current political and cultural climate is time.

Since Donald Trump's inauguration, I have observed a complex, and importantly interdependent network of scholars, activists, and organizers strategize how to resist the state-sanctioned attacks on various marginalized communities, and even the attack on the planet itself. As a humanist, and as a scholar trained to protect human stories, I have often reflected on my contribution to this movement, sometimes with more than a bit of criticism about the elitism and navel-gazing within academia that variously inhibits publicly engaged scholarship through the prioritization of certain kinds of labor. Yet, in spite of my pessimism, I am emboldened by the need to teach, and unpack human stories in the interest of challenging the detrimental stereotypes that further mechanisms of oppression.

Here I am reminded of a particularly striking passage in James Clifford's introduction to *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), wherein Clifford asserts, "it is more than ever crucial for different peoples to form complex concrete images of one another, as well as of the relationships of knowledge and power that connect them" (Clifford 23). For me, as a literary scholar, there is no better archive to enable complex, concrete images of the world and its inhabitants than our stories, and attention to the material conditions in which they were produced. I have labored over this dissertation with this ethical imperative driving me forward, while also minding Clifford's conclusory, cautionary note about the truthfulness of the images we create and accept of one another: "no sovereign scientific method or ethical stance can guarantee the truth of such images.

They are constituted—the critique of colonial modes of representation has shown at least this much—in specific historical relations of dominance and dialogue” (23). I take Clifford’s words as a firm reminder of my own privileged positionality as the curator of this dissertation, and further, my accountability as a scholar for the blind spots that necessarily punctuate this project in spite of my work to comprehensively map out the historical relations of dominance that have rendered parts of Miami invisible. I am hopeful that scholars will continuously engage the topic of this project in and beyond Miami to name and cast light on its blind spots and further dismantle diversity myths.

OVERTOWN GOING UNDER:

BLACK MIAMI, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND THE CARIBBEAN
COLLISION IN *FREEDOM IN THE FAMILY*

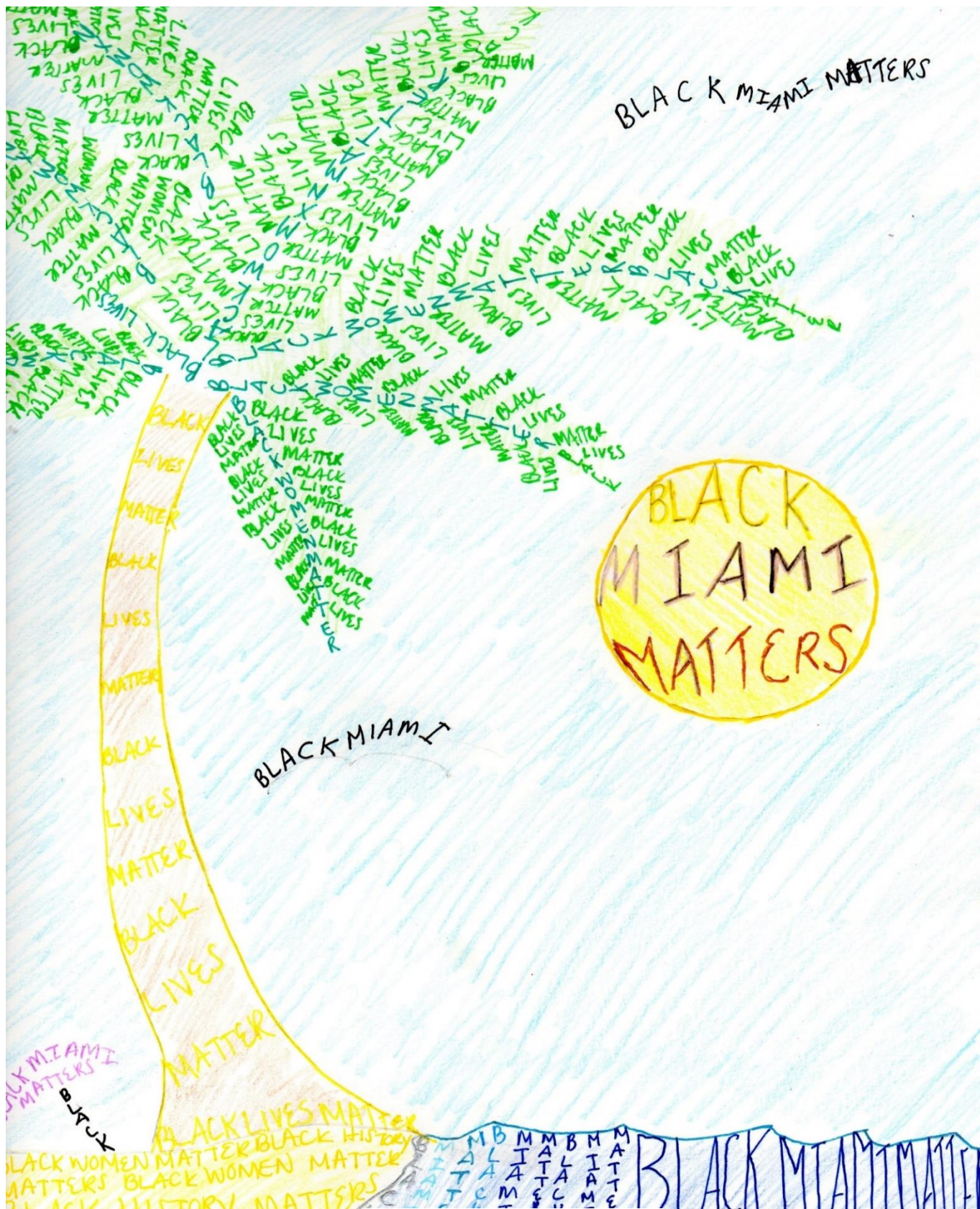


Figure 1

“I was *there!*”

--Patricia Stephens Due, *Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of Fight for Civil Rights*

Patricia Stephens Due’s introductory declaration encapsulates this chapter’s investigation of Black women’s exclusion from Civil Rights narratives, especially in South Florida.⁶ During a meeting with a “textbook committee for schoolchildren in Miami-Dade County,” Stephens Due recalls asking other members of the committee “why the social studies books under consideration mentioned nothing about Tallahassee’s civil rights struggle” (1). Stephens Due played a critical role as an activist in this struggle; although she received training in nonviolent, direct action in Overtown, a Black neighborhood in Miami, Stephens Due most famously used this training in Tallahassee, where local authorities arrested and jailed her and her sister, Priscilla Stephens, for forty-nine days after a sit-in. One can then imagine Stephens Due’s exasperation when the other committee members try to convince her that “nothing of note happened in Florida” (1). Stephens Due’s opening anecdote details her response to a two-fold erasure of Florida’s civil rights history: first, the committee’s efforts to silence Stephens Due buttressed by their ignorance of her participation in sit-ins and jail-ins that expedited desegregation in Florida, and second, the possibility of school-aged children’s curriculums excluding any reference to the Civil Rights Movement in their state.

Stephens Due and her daughter Tananarive Due, a renowned speculative fiction novelist and former reporter for the *Miami Herald*, cite this possibility of erasure as the primary motivator for the composition of their family memoir, *Freedom in the Family: A Mother-*

⁶ As recently as September 2016, former civil rights activist and Georgia Congressman John Lewis interrogated the exclusion of Black women from prominent Civil Rights narratives: “There were some women like Ella Baker, Diane Nash... and others, you had Gloria Richardson. But I truly think and believe women were discriminated against. They did all of the work, they did the heavy lifting.”

Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights (2003). In particular, Stephens Due emphasizes the importance of **writing** about the Civil Rights Movement. Referencing her aforementioned time on the textbook committee, she explains:

A living witness didn't matter to [the committee members]. Without written documentation, I was told, the forty-nine days my sister and I spent in jail, the tear gas that burned my eyes, and the people I knew could not be included. As if we had never existed....*History belongs to those who write it*. I have to write ours (1).

Stephens Due suggests that the other committee members devalue her physical presence, role as a living witness, and spoken testimony in lieu of the imagined authority of the written word. Her visceral imagery of her eyes burning stands in stark contrast to the feared erasure of Stephens Due and the people she knew, emblemizing the importance of her experiences. Given the setting, Stephens Due links the written word to the dissemination of histories to educate young children in the Miami-Dade school system and suggests that her testimony as a Black woman civil rights activist will never circulate unless she writes and publishes it. By describing the written word and the concurrent devaluation of other mediums of preservation, Due implicitly references the historical interrogation of Black experience and authenticity, an especially prominent debate within studies of Black literature.⁷

The dismissal of her recollections, and her physical presence, is especially striking, since Stephens Due later describes physical scars from her time in the movement. After being shot in the face at point-blank range with a tear-gas canister during a demonstration in 1960, Stephens Due is plagued by a lifetime of light sensitivity and “she has to wear darkened glasses even in a

⁷In particular, Frances Smith Foster's *Witnessing Slavery* (1994), Deborah E. McDowell's and Arnold Rampersad's *Slavery and the Literary Imagination*, William Andrews' *To Tell a Free Story* (1988), and Henry Louis Gates' *The Signifying Monkey* (1989) tackle the role of authenticity and truth in Black literature, especially autobiography/memoir.

movie theater” (55). Although Stephens Due’s body bears traces of trauma endured during her work in the struggle for Black freedom, it is not “admissible” in the textbook about Florida history. The dismissal of her embodied experiences signals the devaluation of Black women’s testimony, especially in recollections of the Civil Rights Movement. Stephens Due asserts that this devaluation cements her imperative for posterity through the written word, delivered through the memoir itself.

Written in thirty-three alternating chapters, Patricia Stephens Due’s and Tananarive Due’s memoir historicizes approximately fifty years of personal narratives, seamlessly blending personal recollections with historical information. Footnotes to historical records punctuate the memoir, and authenticate the authors’ experiences, posturing the memoir defensively against onslaughts of Black women’s subjectivity and testimony. The memoir thus engages in what I am calling **resistant self-representative documentation**, or the production of literature and other media that muddies boundaries between “objective” history, or truth, and recollections of personal experience by individuals often kept in societal, political, and cultural margins. This theorization builds on a well-developed field that focuses on Black women’s writing, often highlighting the limited outlets Black women have for self-expression in a white- and male-dominated world.⁸

With this generic categorization in mind, in this chapter I contextualize analysis of *Freedom in the Family* within Civil Rights and Miami histories. In so doing, I argue that the collaborative memoir complicates national and local narratives of progress towards racial

⁸ Work by Hazel Carby (*Reconstructing Womanhood*, 1989), Joanne Braxton (*Black Women Writing Autobiography*, 1991), Frances Smith Foster (*Written by Herself*, 1993) has challenged restrictive definitions of truth, and instead focuses on autobiography as a composite text that reflects cultural phenomenon, especially authors’ subject positions. More recently, my theorization builds off Johnnie M. Stover’s *Rhetoric and Resistance in Black Women’s Autobiography* (2009), in which she argues that Black women’s voices took on a subversive tone and techniques, the “mother tongue” in response to white- and male domination.

equality during and after the Civil Rights Movement by presenting this history 1) using an alternating, achronological format and 2) by presenting this history from an understudied locale and from Black women's perspective(s). The achronological format metaphorizes the struggle for Black freedom as cyclical, rather than progressive, and links, to provide a concrete example, Stephens Due's activism in the 1960s to Due's recollection of racialized violence in the 1980s. Further, the memoir's structure resists singularity, instead presenting the settings and cultural phenomena discussed within as palimpsests of intimately connected histories. Indeed, the memoir concurrently documents the Civil Rights Movement in Miami and the Caribbeanization and/or Latinization of the city during and after the 1960s and 1970s. This joint address reveals anti-blackness as an integral thread of Miami's cultural fabric and an ongoing political, economic, and social problem even after immigration increased the city's diversity.

Freedom in the Family revisits an often-discussed period in Miami with unprecedented, detailed attention to the Civil Rights Movement, and it follows, to Black American oppression and resistance. Attention to increased immigration often overshadows examinations of the Civil Rights Movement in Miami. Although by no means a comprehensive list, Fidel Castro's communist revolution in Cuba (beginning in 1959-present), François Duvalier's regime (1957-1971), and his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier's succession (1971-1986), and the overthrow of the Somoza dynasty by the Sandinistas in Nicaragua (late 1960s-1970s) each triggered massive waves of emigration that radically altered Miami's racial and ethnic demographic. In spite of this alteration, the Dues' memoir suggests that this shift only expanded categories of whiteness and blackness in the city; it did not alter fundamental hierarchies that privilege lighter-complected people, regardless of citizenship status. Beyond the implications of the memoir's focus on Miami

history, the content, and form of the memoir indexes and challenges multiple assumptions and misconceptions of the Civil Rights Movement:

First, more than discussing Miami during the Civil Rights Movement at all, the authors present South Florida as an integral site in negotiating difference in the struggle for equality during the 1950s and 1960s. They thus problematize Miami's reputation as a diverse paradise through their focus on residential and commercial segregation, police brutality, and the historical erasure of Black contributions to Miami history. Florida generally, but South Florida in particular, is rarely included in Civil Rights discourse. In *The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami*, Chanelle N. Rose observes that "Miami has been almost completely left out of the larger civil rights narrative" (3). She notes a preponderance of investigations of immigration into the city during the 1960s and 1970s without concurrent, comprehensive considerations of the movement.⁹

While Rose's detailed history of Miami during the Civil Rights Movement is foundational to this chapter, there has been no comprehensive investigation of how literary representations contribute to scholarly investigations of the Civil Rights Movement in Miami. Building off Rose's work and that of other scholars within the "Miami school" of anthropologists, sociologists, and historians, I contend that Miami literature constitutes an integral, though overlooked, archive that provides insight into the politics of representation and self-fashioning in an increasingly diverse city.¹⁰ I thus analyze *Freedom in the Family* as a cultural artifact that reflects the tenuous racial, economic, and political hierarchies of Miami as

⁹ Rose situates her work in Miami more comprehensively within the Civil Rights Movement, differentiating her book from earlier scholarship by Raymond Mohl, Marvin Dunn, Alex Stepick, and Lisandro Perez who investigate interethnic tensions in the city. In July 2016, Gregory Bush continued an investigation of Civil Rights in Miami, focusing on how racial tensions and hierarchies are reflected in the use of public space.

¹⁰ Held in opposition to the Chicago School's focus on assimilation and accommodation, or how immigrants change to adapt to their environment, sociologists, anthropologists, and less often, historians, in the Miami school observed how immigrants to Miami changed their environment.

an international contact zone, or “social [space] where cultures, meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt 34). The memoir is especially important given the contemporary immigrant influx that expanded the potential clashing and grappling sites for different cultural groups.

In particular, and as my second point, the memoir politicizes and historicizes the Dues’ personal experiences as members of one of the US’s most disenfranchised groups, presenting a well-known history in an understudied locale, and from a historically devalued Black women’s perspective. The memoir challenges the prominent deification of (mostly male) Civil Rights figures, including Martin Luther King Jr., Stokely Carmichael, and Malcolm X, who are mentioned only briefly within the text. Instead, the memoir embraces multiplicity and polyvocality in its overall structure. Within the alternating chapters, each beginning with an epigraph from other pieces of Black literature, the memoir at times repeats, providing perspectives of the same historical events from the authors’ unique and sometimes contradictory viewpoints. Further, in recalling Florida history, Stephens Due and Due rely on interviews (including direct quotes) from local, lesser-known activists. The interviews signal the authors’ imperative of including other voices in their documentation of anti-black violence during the movement, and within its afterlives.

The Dues foreground their focus on multiplicity through their prefatory dedication/memorial, and the insistence on decentering Martin Luther King Jr. as a central symbol during the movement. Continuing the Dues’ efforts of naming unknown “foot soldiers” of the Civil Rights Movement, I am including a scan of the dedication:

Dedication

To Mother and Daddy Marion, without whom this story would never have been.

Not all warriors fight on foreign soil. This book is also dedicated to the foot soldiers who told us their stories, but who died before this book was published:

George Calvin Bess II
Judy Benninger Brown
Rev. Witt Campbell
Mary Ola Gaines
Marion M. Hamilton

Lottie Sears Houston
Kwame Turé (Stokely Carmichael)
Daisy O. Young
Shirley Zoloth

And to the foot soldiers who died before they could tell us their stories:

Neal Adams
Nancy Adams
Rev. Herbert Alexander
Susan Ausley
George Calvin Bess III
Father David Brooks
Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry
James Farmer
Father Theodore Gibson
Rev. R. N. Goodon
Rev. Edward Graham
Grattan E. Graves Jr.
Richard Haley
James Harmeling
Dr. William Howard
Rev. James Hudson
Odell Johns

Steve Jones
William Larkins
George Lewis II
William Miles
James Parrott
Carrie Patterson
Jackie Robinson
James Shaw
Earl Shinnhoster
Tobias Simon
Rev. Charles Kenzie Steele
Rev. Charles Kenzie Steele Jr.
Lois Steele
Leroy Thompson
Probyn Thompson
James Van Matre

And to those foot soldiers whose names are not included, but who also have stories to be told. Stories can live forever, but storytellers do not. Ask, and they will tell. But ask soon.

Figure 2

I have also included the scan to highlight the format of the dedication. The Dues categorize the dedicatees, now deceased, into four groups, with their names presented in clear columns that emphasize the length of the lists and collaborative nature of the memoir, and by extension, the movement. She begins with her mother and stepfather, and then describes her fellow activists as “warrior” and “foot soldiers,” who fight domestically for equal rights. She thus categorizes her work and the labor of those listed in the dedication as a service to the country, that is, as she outlines, often unrecognized. Underneath the listed names is a reminder of the many untold stories from unnamed storytellers of the movement, and encouragement from readers to “ask”

about these stories so that this history is not lost. It is striking, and perhaps intentional on Stephens Due's part, that the list of storytellers "who died before they could tell us their stories" far exceeds those who the Dues were able to consult while constructing the memoir. This visual reminder of how many activists have died before their stories were preserved symbolizes the urgent need to document Civil Rights stories from a diverse pool of storytellers before they die.

Stephens Due then transitions into her discussion of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy on the first page of the memoir, criticizing popular and scholarly hyper-focus on King without inclusive investigation of other activists in the movement: "Dr. Martin Luther King wasn't the only one lighting the fire. He had a lot of influence, but he was only one man. It concerns me when I hear people say *If only we had Martin Luther King today*, as if we are helpless without him" (1). Stephens Due, while noting Dr. King's renowned influence, contrasts the singular focus on him with the plural "we" to emphasize the collaborative work of Civil Rights activists, which she outlines in detail in later chapters. The remainder of the memoir outlines the efforts of these other fire starters of the Civil Rights Movement, positioning her introductory focus on Dr. King as a point of departure from which she presents a more holistic and inclusive narrative of the movement.

While the memoir explicitly pinpoints omissions in the re-telling of civil rights history, it has itself been omitted from literary study of Miami.¹¹ This irony, along with the historical breadth and unique form of *Freedom in the Family*, has inspired my focus on this text. However, Black Miami literature and film necessitates further investigation that space will not afford me here. Most critical for future study are memoirs and autobiographies that document the authors'

¹¹ While the memoir has been reviewed in *Library Journal* (Ann Burns), *Scholastic Scope*, the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, *Black Issues*, and various others, and both Tananarive Due and Patricia Stephens Due have been interviewed about the memoir, it has not been the focus of sustained critical attention.

lives alongside critical socio-political shifts in the still-segregated city, such as Richard J. Strachan's *Dade County: Schools, Students, Communities, A True Story* (1993), Thelma Vernell Anderson's *Forbearance: The Life of a Coconut Grove Native* (2003), and DC Clark's *Lessons from the Other Side* (2004). Beyond memoirs, Black Miami has been the topic of interest for crime fiction authors, including JB Turner and Thomas Barr.¹² Perhaps most interestingly is Timothy Hodges' film, *East of Overtown*, inspired by the state-sanctioned murder of Arthur McDuffie by Miami police officers in 1979. As the official synopsis of the film, authored by Hodges asserts, "it all starts when a virulously [sic] racist cop, Díaz, brutally murders an innocent black kid in Overtown" (Hodges). When Black Miamians protest Díaz's acquittal, the film suggests that there is a plot in Washington D.C. to use nuclear weapons to eliminate Miami's Black communities altogether. The film's producers encountered local resistance to the making of the film, which delayed production and ultimately inhibited its release. While *East of Overtown* provides an extreme example of censorship of Black media in Miami, all of the aforementioned texts address and/or respond to the historical erasure of Black Miamians within cultural narratives. In response, one can observe trends of resistant self-representative documentation in Miami, a result of the rigid racial stratification in the city, even in the wake of massive immigration.

In what follows, I continue by analyzing the concern for posterity that opens this memoir both in Stephens Due's and Tananarive Due's first chapter (the second in the memoir). I then transition into presenting Miami as a critical training site for civil rights activists whose strategies ultimately influenced desegregation efforts across Florida. In so doing, I provide a brief history of Overtown, formerly known as "Colored Town," that contextualizes what I deem

¹² See JB Turner's *Deborah Jones Crime Thriller Series*, and Thomas Barr's *Overlords Karma; Miami's Urban Chronicles*.

as its natural operation as a site for Black resistance in Miami. Stephens Due's description of her training in Overtown, Miami chronicles the height of the neighborhood as a center for Black life during the 1960s and its swift decline after concerted efforts by various government officials and private actors. I then observe Stephens Due's Overtown as both haven and prison, examining how the neighborhood reflects white supremacist segregation strategies, but still enabled community building that facilitated Stephens Due's objectives during the movement.

Comparatively, Tananarive Due describes her experiences in "integrated" Miami, and details the propagation of anti-black sentiment within post-racial discourse. Contextualizing Stephens Due's and Due's experiences, I then focus on the collision of Miami's Caribbeanization and Latinization with the Civil Rights Movement, unpacking Miami's interethnic tensions to reveal how the prominent diversification of Miami was, and is, contingent on anti-black practices. I conclude by reading the cyclical history presented in the memoir onto the present day with an analysis of contemporary police brutality discourse.

Rewriting Miami in the Civil Rights Movement

The memoir immediately introduces the importance of civil rights histories with Patricia Stephens Due's selected epigraph for her introductory chapter: "The American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future" (1). Historian, collector, writer, and activist Arthur Schomburg's first sentence in his 1925 essay, "The Negro Digs Up His Past," introduces the memoir, implicitly designating the memoir proper as a fulfillment of Schomburg's mission and work as a collector of Black cultural artifacts in the interest of racial progress. We may go further and treat *Freedom in the Family* as a supplement to Schomburg's essay, perhaps especially given his gendered language, and specifically, his exclusive reliance on masculine pronouns in the title and first sentence of his famous essay. To the contrary, Stephens Due and Due's memoir's

centers Black women's perspectives. Later in the essay, Schomburg explicitly asserts that collecting Black histories, and books, will help enable the "rewriting of many important paragraphs of our common American history" (Schomburg 1). This imperative recalls Stephens Due's experience on the textbook committee and her insistence on expanding conceptions of the Civil Rights Movement, a common American history, through the inclusion of the Florida chapter of the movement. Arthur A. Schomburg's prescription thus shores up Patricia Stephens Due's argument introduced in the first sentence concerning the many "misconceptions today about the Civil Rights Movement" and the need for diverse documentation of lived experiences of civil rights activists (1). She criticizes assumptions of Black solidarity during the movement, writing instead that it is "not true...that blacks were a unified front," but instead "there were always a select few who lit the fires and went to the meetings—and, eventually, others followed" (1). To borrow Schomburg's language, Stephens Due and Due's memoir excavates untold stories to dismantle myths and misconceptions about the movement, and to shine light on the unnamed fire starters.

In her introductory chapter, the second of the memoir, Tananarive Due continues her mother's focus on the need to preserve and circulate stories of the Civil Rights Movement. She notes that her parents immersed her and her siblings in this history and activist culture from a young age. She recalls that they learned freedom songs and stories from her mother's past, including that Stephens Due "wore dark glasses even indoors and that her eyes had never been right since she was teargassed during a peaceful march" (3). Echoing her mother's description of being tear-gassed while recalling the transmitted stories, Due suggests that her mother's body carries her trauma and corresponding legacy of resistance. She continues, recalling that her father legally represented families challenging segregation of Miami-Dade County schools.

In spite of her familiarity with this history, Due reiterates the memoir's dedication, lamenting, "so few people remember. So few of the storytellers remain" (4). She recalls that her understanding of the need for posterity concretized while visiting the Holocaust Memorial on Miami Beach in 1996 where she witnessed a survivor urgently telling young Jewish children of her time in a concentration camp. Due describes the "fervor of a survivor's voice," which she recognizes from her mother's stories, and notes that the woman described the dehumanizing experiences in detail, "anything to help the children understand. To help them remember" (4). Due's use of "remember" is striking, as the children cannot remember what they did not experience, but her language gestures towards an empathetic, collective memory imperative to cultural progress. Both Stephens Due and Due describe the imagined, or more accurately, needed posterity of their stories in the context of transmitting this knowledge to children. This emphasizes the recollection and preservation of history in the interest of recreating the future indexed in Stephens Due's first epigraph. Due then ponders, "*She is such an old woman...Soon, she will be gone and all of her stories will go with her*" (5). She continues by referencing *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which "helped [her] understand the importance of simply telling a personal story," and thus, the importance of writing (and reading) her memoir (5). By referencing the old woman's inevitable death and Anne Frank's during the Holocaust from her contemporary moment in 1996, Due suggests that the past informs the present and emphasizes the imperative of preserving these histories.

Due's reference to the Holocaust Memorial implicitly indexes public commemorations of violence against historically marginalized groups; in this case, it may further reference the difficulty in erecting such commemorations. Although tourism advertises now lists the Holocaust Memorial as a prominent tourist attraction, locals and government officials initially rejected and

delayed the memorial's establishment, lamenting that "Miami Beach was a place for 'sun and fun' and the memorial would be too somber for the vacation destination" (Holocaust Memorial).¹³ This phrasing suggests that recollections of the Holocaust necessarily conflict with Miami's reputation as a vacation destination, and further signal a prioritization of "fun" over the imperative work of historical commemoration and preservation. A member of the Miami Beach Garden Club (devoted to the beautification of Miami through the cultivation of plants and flowers), commented that the erection of the memorial would turn "one of this city's few bright spots into a cemetery" (Holocaust Memorial). The Garden Club member similarly contrasts light with the perceived darkness of the memorial, linked with death. Unlike Due, who links the memorial and the stories that circulate around the site as represented by the old woman, the unnamed gardener overlooks the important and ultimately rewarding work these commemorations inspire. The resistance to the Holocaust Memorial demonstrates that Miami's reputation as a vacation spot contradicts the commemorative practice Due identifies as integral to social progress.¹⁴

Stephens Due suggests that there have been similar difficulties in commemorating Black history through her recollections of Overtown, Miami. Specifically, Stephens Due compares her reflections of Overtown in the summer of 1959 with her observation of declining conditions during the contemporary moment. She writes that the summer before she "began college, [she] lived with [her] biological father in Miami and worked as a waitress at an Overtown restaurant called the Third Avenue Dining Room" (35). She then transitions from her own experiences to

¹³ www.miamiandbeaches.com, the most prominent tourist guide to Miami, lists the memorial of one of Miami's most prominent attractions.

¹⁴ Other scholars have placed the resistance to the establishment of the Holocaust Memorial within a longer legacy of anti-Semitism in Miami: see Rose and Raymond Mohl's *South of South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960*.

provide historical context of Overtown, writing: “In the 1960s, Overtown was a thriving Negro community. (Despite the black community’s recent efforts at improvement, such as the renovation of the historical Lyric Theater, and other proposed changes, Overtown today is one of the poorest areas in Miami-Dade County” (35). Stephens Due’s parenthetical inclusion marks a temporal shift, a microcosmic example of the memoir’s structure that inextricably links past and present. The transition between her recollection of waitressing in Overtown and documentary description of the neighborhood is a notable trope of resistant self-representative documentation wherein her personal narrative relies on, and thus necessarily incorporates a reflection on the material circumstances that shaped her life as a Black woman. In particular, her temporal transition illustrates Overtown’s boom and swift decline after state-sanctioned urban renewal, slum clearance, and the related construction of interstate highways through the neighborhood.

Overtown’s, or “Colored Town’s,” long history, as referenced by Stephens Due, chronicles its paradoxical role as a Black haven and symbol of racialized oppression. Chanelle Rose explains that Henry Flagler’s expansion of the railroad system into Miami during the late 1880s led to the establishment of the city’s first Black neighborhood. She writes “The Flagler administration purchased a tract of land on the west side of the railroad tracks, which housed the early southern blacks who came as laborers to work on the Florida East Coast railroad” (17). Overtown’s history thus indexes the exploitation of Black labor, and the need to house Black laborers while still keeping them away from white-majority communities. N.D.B. Connolly observes that Black Miamians “took full advantage of the opportunity to accumulate as many lots as possible, and they labored with great haste to build the homes that would provide many colored people with their first semblance of economic security,” though many of Overtown’s properties were still white owned (27). Beyond the immeasurable value of property ownership,

Connolly emphasizes that Miami's earliest Black inhabitants strategized on how to build Black business in the area (30-31).

However, as Miami grew during the early 20th century, Overtown's population boomed, leading to unsanitary and unsafe living conditions that white property owners exacerbated by refusing to meet the needs of their Black tenants.¹⁵ The declining conditions in Overtown, and lobbying by the prominent Black Reverend John Culmer, resulted in Frank Stoneman's publication of an exposé in 1934 "on the plight of families living in the congested areas of Colored Town" (Rose 52). City officials thus built and funneled Black inhabitants into the first housing development in the Southern United States, Liberty Square (established 1937); the developers of the housing project built a 6-foot wall to separate Black inhabitants from surrounding white neighbors. Remnants of this wall are still visible today in Liberty City (Rose 52). The congestion of Overtown and resulting development, and segregation, of Liberty Square demonstrate how state-sanctioned segregation, displacement, and more recently, gentrification interconnect Miami's Black communities.

While Stephens Due's description rightfully records Overtown's partial recovery during the economic boom of the 1950s and early 1960s, historians pinpoint the construction of the I-95 through Overtown's Central District as the community's death-dealing blow. An offset of President Eisenhower's 1956 Federal Aid Highway Act, Miami's interstate system experienced a long period of flux during the late 1950s and 1960s, during which city planners worked to determine the best placement for legs of the interstate. Connolly identifies both governmental

¹⁵ An architect of the Public Works Administration described Overtown as "one of the most congested slum districts" in the country, and reports documented "alarming rates of disease that disproportionately affected Miami's Black community" (Rose 53). N.D.B. Connolly analyzes how battles for property rights enabled these slum conditions, and facilitated the displacement of Overtown's residents with the construction of the I-95 through the neighborhood.

disregard for Black life and, more maliciously, intentional dismantlement of Black communities in plans for the interstate's construction, noting: "every proposal included some version of interstate 95 connecting to one or two east - west expressways running right through the Central Negro District" (214). Recapping the devastating impact of interstate construction in Miami, Connolly writes: "When interstate 95 opened its southernmost leg in 1968, the highway had caused the direct expulsion of eighty-five hundred households from Miami's Central Negro District, and encouraged the flight of thousands more" (282). Through eminent domain, the construction of the interstate divested many of Overtown's Black inhabitants of the property that they had so eagerly purchased to establish economic security. In a cruel irony, city officials sanctioned the construction of a playground for Overtown's "poorer Black children" underneath the interstate in 1969. The interstate, which had so blighted the area less than a decade before, effectively "rendered these kids invisible to travelers whisking above between the region's airports, beaches, and suburbs" (2). Connolly's investigation highlights how the interstate hides the contemporary poverty of Overtown from the gaze of visitors to Miami.

Stephens Due's description of the Lyric Theatre is emblematic of contemporary efforts to preserve Miami's Black history in the wake of the community's systematic destruction. The theater, built in 1913, played a central role in Black Miami social life, and "anchored the district known as 'Little Broadway,' an area alive with hotels, restaurants, and nightclubs frequented by black and white tourists and residents" (The Black Archives, Lyric Theatre). City boosters described the theatre as "probably the most beautiful and costly playhouse owned by (Colored) people in all the Southland" (Rose 26). The theater operated as a movie and vaudeville theater before closing during the aforementioned deterioration of Overtown. The Black Archives History and Research Foundation Of South Florida, Inc., a non-profit organization started by Dr.

Dorothy Jenkins Field, acquired the theater in 1989 and gradually undertook its rehabilitation; Lyric Theater officially reopened in February 2014, and now houses the Black Archives of South Florida Collection. Though the theater's restoration is reflective of efforts to preserve Miami's Black history, it stands in stark contrast to the dilapidated buildings, both residential and commercial, that surround it.

Black Spaces in Miami: Sites of Restricted Liberation

Building off the aforementioned comparative recollection of the past, in the fifth chapter, Stephens Due asserts that segregation benefitted the Black community in Miami; perhaps especially in its enablement of her nonviolent, direct action training. She writes:

Because of segregation, Overtown... [provided] a full spectrum of Negro life; educated and uneducated, professional class and working class, well-to-do and struggling. They all had their skin color and discrimination in common, and they lived side by side. Overtown also boasted several renowned Negro-owned hotels, where celebrities like Billie Holiday and Dizzie Gillespie stayed... because they were not permitted to live in the segregated hotels in Miami Beach, ... But Overtown benefitted from segregation, because that was *the* place to be in black Miami (35).

Stephens Due's description of Overtown suggests that the shared experiences of being Black and experiencing anti-Black discrimination facilitated community building in Overtown. These similarities, as Stephens Due suggests, enabled the overlooking of class differences. Further, segregation paradoxically enabled economic empowerment as Overtown's Black inhabitants created their own popular enclave. Connolly notes that during the 1950s, local zoning laws increased business in Overtown especially in hotels, clubs, and bars: "Ironically, much of the

neighborhood's popularity had to do with zoning laws that made 'whites only' Miami Beach such an exclusive city. Whereas white hotels on the beach had to stop selling alcohol at 1:00a.m., City of Miami officials allowed black tavern owners to continue selling booze until 5:00 in the morning" (131). Overtown thus became the site of Miami Beach's after parties, a position enabled by its exclusive ability to distribute a desirable commodity.

Stephens Due emphasizes Overtown's popularity and class diversity; however, her celebration of Overtown belies the historical class tensions in the neighborhood that ultimately facilitated the displacement of its poorer inhabitants. Chanelle Rose pinpoints the position papers written by Richard Toomey, Miami's first Black lawyer, as a reflection of class tension in Overtown, citing them as evidence of middle-class Black people's leverage of political power over impoverished Black Overtownians, or "Townners." Toomey, writing on behalf of other Black business leaders in 1933, criticized the deplorable living conditions in Miami, and implored government officials to remove low-income families so "wealthier black families and their businesses could continue to thrive near downtown" (Stuart 193). Rather than advocate for the allocation of resources to assist lower-income families with skill development, and job placement, Toomey endorses the capitalist project of displacing people to promote business.

In spite, or perhaps because of the intra-communal tensions indexed by Toomey's letters, Overtown's Black economy made Overtown an ideal site for Black political resistance. As Stephens Due asserts, "Overtown had its own tempo and rhythm back then, and I was excited to be part of it" (35). She becomes a part of the Overtown rhythm by beginning her training at one of the aforementioned Black owned hotels after a mutual friend recruits Stephens Due and her sister, Priscilla Stephens, to Miami's Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) chapter. National CORE had only recently (early 1959) "targeted Miami as the testing ground for its first

nonviolent direct-action project below the Mason-Dixon line,” after “primarily focusing on school desegregation and voter registration in the Upper South” (Rose 173). As part of their CORE training, the sisters attend the Miami Interracial Action Institute, a workshop “designed to teach the principles of nonviolent direct action” (39). Stephens Due recalls, “the workshop was held at Overtown’s Sir John Hotel (now long gone, like so much in Overtown) which had nicknamed itself ‘Resort of the Stars’ and was best known for its luxuries: a saltwater pool, barber shop, beauty parlor, health center, and shopping center” (39). Like before, Stephens Due’s parenthetical phrase highlights the decline of Overtown; while her description of the hotel’s disappearance indexes the homogenization of the previously economically diverse area as middle- and upper-middle class Black inhabitants left the area when the central district was destroyed with I-95’s construction. In describing the luxurious hotel and its disappearance, she suggests that Towners now have limited access to the world-class amenities, implicitly signaling the devaluation of Black life, and more precisely, Black people’s pleasure in the wake of the neighborhood’s deterioration.



Figure 3. Replicated with permission from the Florida State Archives.

Stephens Due saved the welcome newsletter from the Sir John Hotel, pictured above; her family donated her papers to the Florida State Archives in Tallahassee after her death in early 2012. The image welcomes CORE members, and features a uniquely stylized outline of a head, half black, and half white, to represent the harmonious coexistence of Black and white people. The image closely resembles one of many Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's emblems that featured a handshake with one black hand and one white. The overlap of these symbols as captured in the newsletter suggests a multi-faceted collaboration in pursuit of racial justice. Most strikingly about the welcome is the reference to efforts at racial equity alongside an illustrated image of a leisurely beach scene. The image thus, perhaps unintentionally, highlights the paradoxical coexistence of Miami's beach reputation with Black oppression, a tension Stephens Due explores in further detail later in the memoir.

Stephens Due provides a detailed description of the training she receives at the Sir John Hotel, situating Overtown as a central location from which efforts to desegregate South Florida began. Describing her training, Stephens Due writes:

First, we were told, we would receive instruction. Then, we would be sent into Miami's community for real-life desegregation efforts. In some ways, the CORE workshop was like an Army boot camp. After we had been taught the Gandhian principles of nonviolent protest, the organizers were subjected to verbal abuse, grabbed us, and shoved us hard—exactly what we might expect in a real-life protest situation (42).

In the relative safety of a Black-majority neighborhood, participants learned how to advocate for their inclusion in segregated Miami. Stephens Due signposts the chronological progression of her training by using transition phrases, and thus presents protest as a honed skill rather than a thoughtless disruption. As in the aforementioned introduction, Stephens Due again compares Civil Rights activists to soldiers through her reference to the boot camp, expressly encapsulating the rigor of the training institute. Further, she implicitly encourages reverence and support for those serving the country domestically. This training is foundational to Stephens Due's experiences of identifying businesses that would not serve Black people in Miami: "The CORE workshop was not only theoretical—it was designed to put thought into action—so we took part in lunch-counter testing at Miami department stores and restaurants to see if Negroes would be served" (42). Stephens Due links the theory behind non-violent direct action, described above in discernable steps, to Miami's topography. While using these skills, she reveals prevalent discrimination and resistance to desegregation in Miami, which challenges the city's prevalent reputation as a melting pot.

In particular, she narrates an instance of lunch-counter testing at Royal Castle, a burger restaurant still open today, in which her perceived racial ambiguity unveils local businesses' dependence on tourism, and resulting willingness to selectively problematize, or temporarily overlook racial hierarchies. She writes: "When I sat at the counter and asked for food with a group of several Negroes, the manager looked at us closely... I noticed that the manager looked nervous, with his jaw tight, but to my surprise, he actually took my order and served me a hamburger. None of the other Negroes were served" (42-43). Another observing activist provides an explanation for why Stephens Due was served while others were not: "After they left, a white guy got up and went to the counter. He was just red with fury, and he said, 'Why did you serve her?' And the manager kind of gently pushed the cashier aside and said, **If they pay taxes, I can't serve them—, but if they come in and speak Spanish, I have to serve them by law.**" (43; my emphasis). Stephens Due's experience reveals a collision of overlapping cultural phenomena. First, the manager's assumption/rationalization of Stephens Due's taxpayer status reinforces Miami's historical position as a vacation spot that encouraged local business owners to challenge, however tenuously and temporarily, the color line.

Originally founded with the goal of generating revenue from winter tourism, by the late 1920s, "Florida boosters viewed the success of tourism in Miami as a barometer for the progress of industry in the rest of the state" and welcomed, at least nominally, tourists from all over the world (Rose 43). N.D.B. Connolly traces shifts in policies to recession years during the early 1950s, wherein white hotels, restaurants, etc. struggled and were thus more willing to serve or accept people of color, and their resources (206). In spite of these recent shifts, the manager's rationale as presented to the angry patron suggests that even in a less-Manichean interpretation of white supremacy, Black Americans occupy the lowest social standing and the manager

paradoxically denies service because they are tax-paying citizens. Stephens Due expresses befuddlement at this explanation:

Now I had spoken nothing but my usual Southern accent—and I certainly hadn't said a single word in Spanish---but I was wearing large hoop earrings and had long hair and olive-colored skin, so the manager had apparently decided to pretend he thought I was Hispanic rather than an American Negro. He then had an excuse to treat me like a human being (43).

As Stephens Due recalls the manager closely examining the group in the excerpt above, her later reflections on her appearance suggest that he was identifying the lightest-complected individual to serve. Stephens Due thus suggests that in this context, service for Black people was contingent on their proximity to whiteness; she thus illustrates her own privilege founded on her complexion. She identifies and reinscribes stereotypes of “Hispanic,” or Latinx women, and does so to gesture towards a racial, or more accurately, colorist or complexion-based hierarchy that privileges lighter skin tones, regardless of ethnic background. Indeed, both the manager's assumptions and Stephens Due's stereotypes of lighter-skinned Latinx people indexes misconceptions of “Hispanic” as lighter complected, thus belying the racial diversity of Hispanic and/or Latinx people. Stephens Due also reveals other assumptions about Latinx people through her emphasis on her citizenship as an **American** Negro. Implicitly, this contrast reveals Stephens Due's association of “Hispanic” with foreign-born, and bolsters Stephens Due's attention to a hierarchy wherein darker-complected people are disproportionately oppressed.

What is perhaps most notable about this exchange goes unmentioned by Stephens Due: the likelihood that the manager may have been responding in part to the recent surge of Cuban immigration following Castro's consolidation of power in February of the same year (1959).

Castro's self-declared position of prime minister after Fulgencio Batista's overthrow triggered a mass exodus from Cuba to the U.S., especially Miami, from 1959 to approximately 1963.

Scholars have dubbed this first major wave of emigration during the Castro family's rule the "Golden Exiles," a moniker reflective of the class, racial, and political leanings of the mostly white, upper-middle class professionals who fled Cuba in response to Castro's direct challenge to capitalism and white supremacy.¹⁶ Although there are documented cases of "No Cubans Allowed" signs and other indications of anti-Cuban discrimination, historian Maria Cristina Garcia notes that a combination of white privilege, familiarity with English, and class standing enabled swift Cuban assimilation into Miami's socio-political and economic spheres.

In particular, Black Miamians condemned local and federal governments' facilitation of Cuban assimilation. They did so by calling attention to how racialized socioeconomic hierarchies in the U.S. rendered Black communities particularly vulnerable to any influx of émigrés. Garcia writes that Black locals criticized "the federal government's early assistance to the refugees," including grants, loans, remedial education, job training, and health benefits. She asserts, "these benefits helped the Cubans assert their economic and political power. By 1990, three of the five members of the Miami City Commission, including the mayor, were Cuban; by contrast, only one member was African American" (211). She continues, noting that some Black Americans argued that the arrival of Cuban émigrés changed the course of the Civil Rights Movement and disrupted Black American progress. Summarizing letters to Miami City Hall, and even the White House, Garcia writes:

¹⁶ As Carlos Moore outlines in his memoir, *Pichón Race and Revolution in Castro's Cuba*, Castro's regime claimed to have eliminated racism, even while Afro-Cubans were disproportionately imprisoned for critiquing Castro, and there were reported instances of "private" racism across the island. See next chapter, and Devyn Spence Benson's *Antiracism in Cuba: The Unfinished Revolution* for more on Castro's postracial revolution.

Many letters came from the black community in south Florida. African Americans, disproportionately poor, uneducated, and semiskilled, had suffered the most from Cuban migration, since the two groups competed for the menial service jobs that required a minimum of education or training. Blacks watched in anger and amazement as the ‘temporary guests’ became the beneficiaries of social and educational programs that the Civil Rights Movement had long fought for. For most blacks, the refugee crisis proved yet again that they were second-class citizens in their own society (40).

Garcia’s explanation provides important context for Black American anti-immigrant sentiment, which cannot, or at least, should not be easily co-opted into (often)-conservative arguments about policing national borders. Rather, these criticisms suggest that both public and private actors should couple their assistance and acceptance of émigrés with attention to existing cultural topographies. More precisely, given her reference to the Civil Rights movement, Garcia surmises that immigrant policy should be mindful of earlier efforts for social justice and equity, and it follows, who comes to benefit from those efforts.

Stephens Due’s experience highlights shifts in Miami’s racial and corresponding socio-economic hierarchies in the wake of massive migration.¹⁷ Even CORE’s field secretary, Gordon Carey identified the need for the organizations sustained presence in the city, asserting, “Miami is a city of changing racial practices where there is no lack of potential action projects” (1). Carey’s report highlights the strategic shifts Civil Rights organizations undertook to address Miami’s particular needs. The arrival of white Cuban émigrés, as Garcia’s earlier excerpt suggests, expanded categories of whiteness in Miami, disproportionately affecting an already

¹⁷ See also N.D.B. Connolly, 221.

beleaguered population. Stephens Due frequently uses the phrase “second class citizens” throughout her portions of the memoir, and the sentiment behind this phrase is implicit in her observation that being read as Hispanic spares her the dehumanization of rejection at the lunch counter. Her experience suggests that the increasing Latinization of Miami provided an additional, and perhaps unforeseen, challenge to her objectives as a civil rights activist advocating for the uplift of marginalized people. As CORE’s Gordon Carey’s focus on Miami suggests, the city’s cultural climate necessitates constant re-evaluation of degrees and categories of identity-based violence.

Likely a result of navigating these complexities, Stephens Due suggests that her time in Overtown, an exclusive Black space, galvanized her Civil Rights efforts, and prepares her for interactions in white-dominated spaces in her pursuit of desegregation across the state, especially in Northern Florida. To better describe her point about the benefits of Black-only spaces, she refers to an interview with fellow organizer, Benjamin Cowins, who similarly moved from Miami to Tallahassee and realized how Miami’s Black enclaves protected him:

In Miami, he recalls, he had everything he needed at his fingertips: a movie theater, a shopping center, everything. There was no need to venture into white neighborhoods to be subjected to the insult of a WHITE ONLY sign, so he’d been very sheltered, except he’d noticed how his grandmother corrected anyone, Negro or white, who tried to call her ‘girl.’ Tallahassee was different, he says, Negroes had to patronize the white downtown area because Frenchtown, the hub of Negro life in Tallahassee, did not offer nearly the same range of goods and services.

(132)

The presence of entertainment services and resources in Overtown reflects a Black-controlled economy that afforded Black Miamians a safe space free of markers of discrimination, such as “WHITE ONLY” signs. Beyond focusing on the various consequences of commercial and residential segregation, Cowins’s mention of his grandmother’s experiences with both Black and white people suggest a shared experience of infantilizing treatment of women, emphasizing the compounding and multilayered experiences of oppression that Black women endure. Rather than describing direct, physical violence or aggressive verbal assaults against Black people in Tallahassee, Cowins instead references the casual, mundane, and normalized degradation of Black people that characterized the contemporary cultural moment. In his literary cartography of Miami and Tallahassee, Cowins suggests that efforts to integrate or access white spaces rendered Black people particularly vulnerable. Cowins’s testimony presents a paradoxical tension: segregation enabled Black community building and protection, while desegregation challenged Black business and increased the likelihood of white violence, and yet Black activists in Miami were advocating for desegregation, treating its achievement as an integral gain in the struggle for equal rights.

Others have identified this paradox, with some criticizing the desegregation movement altogether, including John Due, Stephens Due’s husband, and civil rights lawyer. John Due, reflecting in 2004 on desegregation efforts asserts, “The desegregation movement had benefitted some, just not the Black community,” and continues, noting that the “Brown decision was not for the benefit of Black people. It benefitted Americans who felt at risk because of the Cold War ... They were worried that Communism would have an effect on Black nationalists” (Due). John Due cites international politics, encouraging readers to look beyond the US to understand political decisions within the US. These considerations, especially given Due’s citation of

Communism, come to bear heavily on Miami given its proximity to Communist Cuba. Due suggests that desegregation operated as an appeasement of the US's Black communities, motivated by the perceived threat of more radical resistance as opposed to any shift in public opinion about the value of Black lives.

Florida author Zora Neale Hurston provides a controversial example of a Black integration detractor. In her 1955 letter to the editor of the *Orlando Sentinel*, Hurston wrote: "The whole matter revolves around the self-respect of my people. How much satisfaction can I get from a court order for somebody to associate with me who does not wish me near them?" (Hurston). She continues, commenting on the specific situation in her chosen home of Florida:¹⁸

If there are not adequate Negro schools in Florida...and there is some... unchangeable quality in white schools, impossible to duplicate anywhere else, then I am the first to insist that Negro Children of Florida be allowed to share this boon. But if there are adequate Negro schools and prepared instructors and instruction, then there is nothing different except the presence of white people (Hurston).

Relying on the assumption of equality within the separation mandated by the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision, Hurston advocates for segregation for the protection of Black children. While Hurston's contemporaries, and even more recent scholars, heavily criticized Hurston's public condemnation of the Brown v. Board of Education decision (1954) as an affront to national efforts towards racial harmony, evidence suggests that desegregation negatively affected Black communities, especially in Miami. As N.D.B. Connolly asserts, focusing primarily on school desegregation: "when formal school desegregation finally got under way, white flight, the

¹⁸ Although Hurston proclaimed Eatonville, Florida as her home, historical investigation has revealed her birthplace as Notasulga, Alabama.

demotion and transfer of black school principals, and teacher-imposed segregation within classrooms routinely resulted” (210). Connolly suggests that the re-zoning caused by white flight, the demotion and devaluation of Black educators, and social segregation within schools likely reified the systemic anti-Blackness and exposed Black students to white antagonism. He thus suggests that in the wake of desegregation, structures of white supremacy shifted, but remained mostly intact.

While Stephens Due’s initial sentiments echo John Due’s and Zora Neale Hurston’s, she elsewhere problematizes the aforementioned sanctity of Black spaces, elucidating the porous borders between white and Black neighborhoods, which Stephens Due attributes to white supremacy. In particular, she describes returning to Miami in 1961 for CORE’s Interracial Action Institute in the ninth chapter, noting that in spite of earlier work, the city was “still far from integrated” (98). In response, local activists continued their efforts, testing more lunch counters to suss out continued discrimination:

We tested forty eating places and were served in only twenty three. One place that steadfastly refused to serve Negroes in its dining room despite a high number of Negro patrons was Shell’s City Supermarket, billed as the ‘World’s Largest Supermarket.’ It was right on Seventh Avenue in Liberty City, in the heart of one of Miami’s ironically named Negro neighborhoods, so it became a focal point for picketing and sit-in demonstrations (98)

The irony is striking, and stems past Stephens Due’s focus on the restriction of liberties in Liberty City. While she had previously suggested that Negro neighborhoods protected their inhabitants, Shell’s City Supermarket exemplifies how white property and business ownership in Black-majority neighborhoods maintained conventional racial hierarchies. Local authorities

arrest her after this sit-in and hold her in jail for approximately five days. Stephens Due's descriptions of Black community, desegregation, and nonviolent resistance reveal the fraught, complex negotiations undertaken by civil rights activists nationwide.

While Stephens Due illustrates the complexities of Black space in Miami, Tananarive Due describes a directly oppositional experience of growing up in white neighborhoods, expounding on her father's and Hurston's criticisms of integration in the fourth chapter of the memoir. Recalling how her family ended up in a white neighborhood in 1968, Due describes her parents', and Black people in general's, investment in property ownership, writing:

While my parents didn't set out on purpose to raise us in a nearly all-white setting when we were very young, that was the end result... [when] my parents were ready to buy a house...they found themselves stymied. Black families have always cherished property because it was denied us for so long, and my parents were unable to find families willing to sell their homes in the mostly black neighborhoods that appealed to them. Instead, they took their home search to suburbia, and we ended up in the land of whites (20).

Due's explication elucidates the rigid segregation of Miami's neighborhoods, contrasting Black neighborhoods to the implicitly vast land of whites. Given the neighborhood delineations and determined property ownership by Black inhabitants, the Dues undertake a coerced form of integration by buying a house in a predominantly white neighborhood. Given their earlier criticisms of desegregation, this arrangement is quite ironic. Due continues noting that living in the white suburbs introduced her to direct discrimination and anti-Black violence from which she had been sheltered in Black neighborhoods, reinforcing her mother's description of Overtown as

a haven for Black life and resistance. Writing about her reception in white suburbia, Due explains:

We did not feel welcome there. My parents shielded us from the direct threats some of our neighbors made---like one in particular who dumped his garbage in our backyard and vowed to shoot me or my sisters if he saw us walking on his grass...I was also subjected to the pain of the word “nigger,” for which I never had a comeback. That was a word that had been used by slaveholders and murderous mobs. ‘Nigger’ was not a word I took lightly (21).

The property that is so highly sought by Black people in the area becomes the most vulnerable front in the “land of whites,” that is treated with no more respect than a dumping ground. Due’s explication suggests additional vulnerability through her exposure to the epistemic violence of racial hate speech seems particularly jarring to Due given the slur’s perceived anachronism. By linking the term to slave holding and murderous mobs (likely recalling violence inflicted upon Black Americans by the Ku Klux Klan), Due suggests a temporal stalling in white Miami that undermines the progress implicit in Stephens Due’s earlier descriptions of movement building in Black Miami.

Due’s movements between white and Black Miami initially persuade her to believe stereotypes of Black poverty. Tracing these movements continuously demonstrates blatant racial delineations between neighborhoods and corresponding class stratification. While traveling between Miami’s neighborhoods, including Overtown and Liberty City, Due writes that she “noticed the stark contrast between those neighborhoods and the ones where my more affluent friends from the Horizon School lived. I saw black children playing barefoot in the street and it troubled me. ‘Are all black people poor?’ I asked my parents” (23). Due’s observations are

contextualized by her parents, who explain, “because of discrimination there has always been more poverty in the black community. In fact, I remember my parents specifically taking me to black neighborhoods in disrepair to show me how many blacks live (“The *real* Miami,” my mother always called it), so I would know how fortunate we were” (23). Although the Dues ostensibly introduce Tananarive to systemic anti-Blackness and its consequences, they engage in an unsettling voyeurism, wherein impoverished Black people become a spectacle that reinforces their middle class positionality and reinscribes the class tension that was historically so detrimental to impoverished Black communities. Beyond operating as a lesson to practice gratitude for middle-class status, Stephens Due’s description of the real Miami highlights the tension between Miami’s paradisaical, pseudo-Caribbean reputation and the reality of poverty that disproportionately impacts Black Miamians, as implicitly referenced in the aforementioned CORE newsletter.

Black Women’s Leadership, Strategy, and Erasure in the Early 1960s

Although Stephens Due maintains her criticism and rejection of Miami’s paradisaical reputation, she also presents the city as the epicenter of nonviolent direct action training. She recalls returning to Tallahassee, where she was studying at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), and used her training to found Tallahassee’s CORE chapter. As she writes, “Priscilla and I went back to school for the fall term as two young women with a mission. As soon as our classmates began to trickle back to campus, we knocked on door after door...encouraging them to come to the first CORE meeting in Tallahassee” (44). During one of their demonstrations, the new Tallahassee CORE chapter takes on a segregated lunch counter. When recruiting for the sit in, Stephens Due reflects that she “[used] [her] experience from the first sit-in, as well as the tactics I’d learned at the CORE workshop in Miami” to teach “potential

sit-in volunteers about how to react in the face of taunts or violence that might ensue in the next sit-in” (48). Her iteration suggests that her training in Miami initiates and enables the spread of nonviolent methods statewide.

Her training in Miami and subsequent mobilization of students in Tallahassee leads to the pioneering of innovative non-violent strategies. After another sit-in, this time at Woolworth’s lunch counter in March of 1960, Stephens Due is arrested and “charged with ‘disturbing the peace,’ among other charges, because we tried to order food” (69). By contrasting her arrest and the multiple charges levied against her with the asinine offense of ordering food, Stephens Due highlights the injustice exemplified in state-sanctioned police responses to Civil Rights activism.



Figure 4. Photograph of Woolworth’s lunch counter in Tallahassee, March 1960. Source: Florida Memory.



Figure 5. CORE members during sit-in at Woolworth's lunch counter in Tallahassee. Patricia Stephens Due is the second person from the camera, wearing dark glasses.

She continues, explaining why she and others when given the choice between paying a \$300 fine and serving a sixty-day jail sentence, asserting that she “would not pay a fine to support a system that did not treat us as equal human beings” (68-69). Beyond the punitive implications of the fine, Stephens Due describes the fine as a monetary enablement of further prosecution. She asserts that were it not for segregation, they “would have been served without incident” (68). Stephens Due reframes her arrest, rejecting any notion of illegality in her behavior and highlighting the unjust policy of the lunch counter.

Emboldened by her observation of systemic racism, and the criminalization of resistance to it, Stephens Due and seven other protestors decide to stay in jail, pioneering the “jail-in” strategy. As Stephens Due notes, “not only was this the first time we had been jailed, but it was the first time any activists in the student sit-in movement had chosen jail rather than pay their fine. We pioneered a tactic, becoming the first ‘jail-in’ of the student protest movement of the

1960s” (70). Stephens Due’s and the other activists’ determination was a critical part of highlighting segregation in the South, and violence in Southern jails. The jail-in received national attention and as a result, the students received letters from many sympathetic to their cause. Notably, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote the students on March 19, 1960, explaining, “I have just learned of your courageous willingness to go to jail instead of paying fines for your righteous protest against segregated eating facilities” (75). He encourages the students, asserting that “going to jail for a righteous cause is a badge of honor and a symbol of dignity” (76). Like Stephens Due’s earlier language explaining her rationale behind refusing to pay the fine, Dr. King’s languages challenges negative connotations of going to jail by emphasizing the righteousness of resisting oppression.

CORE, capitalizing on the revelatory power of the Tallahassee chapter’s jail-in sends its members on a national tour to “bring attention to what happened in Tallahassee” (95). During this time, Stephens Due gave testimony of her experiences across the country, visiting Chicago, Washington D.C., St. Louis, Philadelphia, New York, and Ann Arbor. CORE thus provides a platform for student activists, especially Black female activists, to become authoritative voices on oppression and resistance in the South. In spite of the attention afforded to Tallahassee CORE, and specifically Priscilla Stephens and Patricia Stephens Due, the latter activist’s reflections highlight the omission of women from more widely publicized Civil Rights moments. In particular, Stephens Due cites the 1963 March on Washington as a prime example of how Civil Rights leaders privileged the voices of Black men, and white allies, over the contributions of Black women. Stephens Due recalls that after arriving in Washington, D.C.: “I was told that there had been some discussion that Priscilla and I, and some of the others who had spent forty-nine days in jail, should be permitted to speak at the march. In the end, though, we were not

given a spotlighted role, as were John Lewis and Dr. King, not to mention Hollywood celebrities like Marlon Brando and Charlton Heston” (181). Stephens Due writes that she and her sister needed permission to speak, rendering themselves passive and subject to the will of the organizers who privileged other insights over those the Stephens sisters. Repeating that they had spent forty-nine traumatizing days in jail, Stephens Due imperatively outlines her contributions to the movement, implicitly criticizing her and her sister’s omission from the national stage and citing both male-domination and celebrity culture.

Undeterred by the lack of attention and blatant sexism within the Civil Rights Movement, Stephens Due continues her activism for the rest of her life, documenting its evolution through the memoir. Just one year later, and in the nineteenth chapter, Stephens Due describes taking

part in an April demonstration at the 1964 World’s Fair in New York. Our voter registration workers were suffering daily harassment and intimidation, but the governor of Florida, C. Farris Bryant was planning to tout Florida as a ‘paradise’ at the World’s Fair, hoping to drum up tourism. *Paradise?* Florida might have been a paradise to whites on vacation, but it was hell to the Negroes who lived there (226).

Relying heavily on juxtapositions that contrast the experiences of white and Black people, Stephens Due explicitly pinpoints the state’s paradisaical reputation, an integral image to maintain the state-wide reliance on tourism, perhaps especially in Miami. Staging a protest at a world fair is emblematic of her efforts to take the Civil Rights Movement in Florida to a global scale. Reading this demonstration as a notable benchmark in Stephens Due’s career, her early training in Miami ultimately enables her global critique of racism in the U.S. South.

In the preceding chapter, set in 1992, Tananarive Due further reflects on the evolution of her mother's activism in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew. She explains how her mother used her training throughout her life implicitly highlighting the continual disenfranchisement of Black people. The storm wrought utter devastation on the Southernmost parts of Miami-Dade County, especially Homestead, Cutler Ridge, and Cutler Bay. Although Due explains that the storm destroys nearly everything, and "all that remained was splintered plywood, crumbling concrete, littered streets, billows of smoke, uprooted trees, twisted street signs, and the silent anguish of collective loss" (210). Due's list moves from the destruction of the material world into the abstract, disorienting grief of losing all indications of civilization. Although Due suggests this feeling is collective, she suggests that the racial structures of South Florida society remain untouched, and that the storm revealed ongoing disparities that render Black people particularly vulnerable to natural disasters:

The hurricane itself had already brought its own injustices. My parents and NAACP observers believed white neighborhoods like affluent Country Walk were receiving more attention than equally battered poor black areas in Goulds, Naranja, West Perrine, and Richmond Heights. It was already painfully clear to my parents while insurance claims could repair damage to their waterfront home, there were so many uninsured and under-insured poorer families—often *black* families—who would never fully recover (214).

Stephens Due personifies the hurricane, highlighting its ability to unveil pre-existing social injustices. She specifically asserts that the hurricane revealed a racialized cartography of post-Andrew Miami that clearly traced the remnants of residential segregation and criticizes the media's attention to white neighborhoods. This segregation

makes it easy for media outlets to ignore Black areas, with inhabitants who the storm permanently displaced. Due emphasizes her parents' vulnerability to the storm as Black people, but also as waterfront property owners, but implicitly indexes their class privilege as insured property owners, as compared to disenfranchised, uninsured Black people made particularly vulnerable to the storm.

The knowledge of these disparities galvanizes Stephens Due when the police shine a bright light into her home, having mistakenly traced a tip to the Due household. They surround the house, clothed in riot gear. For Stephens Due, the police presence added threatening insult to calamitous injury:

After all of the outrages suffered by blacks in... Dade County for so many years, this intrusion was the final outrage, the last indecency. ... All that fueled the anger and indignation my mother battered those police officers with at her front gate that night. Here, in the midst of this chaos, in a city with a history like Miami's, a pack of police would descend upon her home simply because of a vague coincidence (214).

A culmination of the many years Stephens Due fought racial injustice in and beyond Miami, Due stresses the flagrancy of this violation of the family's home space by a "pack" of police, using dehumanizing language to accentuate the aggressive approach of the police who, although at the wrong house, arrived armed and in large numbers. This assault is perhaps especially jarring after the onslaught of the storm, finding the Due family already anguished at the destruction of their home. Due's language also empowers her mother; although Stephens Due, relying on her training concerning interactions with police, approaches them with her hands raised, and keeps her hands visible to avoid any escalation of violence, she "batters" them with her words,

reminding them of the history of Black disenfranchisement and state sanctioned violence in Miami. Although the circumstances and time had changed, Stephens Due's reliance on civil rights training highlights perpetual threats to Black life in Miami.

Expanding the Civil Rights Movement: Afro-Diasporic Solidarity in Miami

Tananarive Due's recollection of Hurricane Andrew implies a temporal expansion of the Civil Rights movement, and she continually expands the parameters of the movement to include advocacy for Black émigrés in Miami. Specifically, Due recalls how both she and her mother challenged Miami's reputation as a hospitable location for Caribbean immigrants by pinpointing anti-Blackness in immigration policy and its implication for Haitian émigrés to Miami. In this chapter, she addresses Haitian Diaspora during Jean-Claude Duvalier's regime, centering discrimination against Haitians in U.S. immigration policy. This chapter, the sixth of the memoir, immediately follows her mother's description of her use of tactics learned in Miami to further the objectives of the Civil Rights Movement in Tallahassee. This transition, from the U.S. Black American Civil Rights Movement (1950s-1960s) to Black immigration in the 1970s, suggests a continuation and expansion of traditional conceptions of the Civil Rights Movement, especially during a period of increased Caribbeanization in Miami.

Due's selected epigraph for the chapter, an excerpt from Zora Neale Hurston's *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942), another Black woman-authored autobiography that subtly introduces the chapter's theme of transnational Blackness and Afro-Diasporic solidarity given Hurston's groundbreaking anthropological research in the Caribbean, especially Haiti.¹⁹ The quote reads: "Mama exhorted her children at every opportunity to 'jump at de sun.' We might not land on the

¹⁹ Beyond her research on the Caribbean, which culminated in her 1938 study *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*, Hurston wrote her canonical *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) while in Haiti conducting research funded by a Guggenheim Fellowship.

sun, but at least we would get off the ground” (56). This passage introduces prominent themes in the chapter, which focuses on Stephens Due encouraging her children to continuously strive for social equality, even in the face of compounding adversity in the form of the U.S.’s discriminatory immigration policy.

The chapter opens with a chant: “hey, U.S.A.— *Stop supporting Duvalier!* Hey, hey, U.S.A...” and Due’s description of the setting:

It was the 1970s, and my sisters and I walked in a purposeful circle with a handful of other protesters with hand-written placards in front of the Dade County federal building in Miami, chanting loudly in opposition to U.S.-backed Haitian dictator Jean Claude Duvalier...It was just another day in the Due family (56).

Due illustrates the scene, linking federal spaces in Miami to international geopolitics. In particular, given Haiti’s history, the protest epitomizes transnational Afro-solidarity. The “purposeful” movements illuminate the normalization of Black resistance in the Due family, reference to which concludes the passage. The final sentence, especially considering this chapter’s context after Stephens Due’s preceding description of nonviolence training, presents the Dues’ advocacy for Haitian émigrés as a continuation of the Civil Rights movement.

Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier succeeded his father, François Duvalier, in April of 1971 until 1986. Jean-Claude Duvalier’s staunch anti-communist policy garnered him support from Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford when the perceived threat of “communist penetration” was at its height. This support continued until President Jimmy Carter’s election, in spite of well-documented human rights violations, including the mobilization of the Tonton Macoutes, an extralegal agency tasked with maintaining the Duvalier regime and silencing

dissenters by any means necessary. Duvalier's egregious human rights violations triggered massive waves of emigration from Haiti to the United States (especially New York City and Miami). While Due describes her purposeful involvement, she had just learned a bit more about the cause from her parents on her way to the protest:

During the forty-five minute drive to that protest from our home in Southwest Dade, our parents explained to us that Haiti was a very poor country, that most of its inhabitants were black, and that the United States government discriminated against Haitian refugees who tried to come here for a better life while refugees from Cuba were welcomed. Worse, we were told, the United States was supporting a terrible Haitian dictator names Jean-Claude Duvalier, who was corrupt and violent. That was all we needed to hear (56).

Due's focus on the racial composition in Haiti highlights the discriminatory creation and enforcement of the U.S.'s immigration policies. Due indirectly cites the informally titled "wet-foot/dry-foot" policy, that allowed Cuban emigres immediate access to asylum processes on account of the U.S.'s anti-communist platform, and corresponding belief that all Cuban exiles/refugees were necessarily fleeing political persecution. Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) officials often categorized Haitian émigrés as economic refugees, which barred or severely restricted their access to asylum processes. The U.S.'s support of Duvalier (which waned during President Reagan's administration) justified the almost unanimous repatriation of Haitian exiles/refugees; to accept and accommodate Haitian refugees would implicitly condemn Duvalier's regime.

Due's immediate reaction to injustice reflects widespread Black American support for Haitian asylum in the U.S.²⁰ Most prominently, Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, called for equal treatment for Haitian refugees during a subcommittee hearing held on October 24, 1979 (likely around the same time Due was protesting in Miami). During this hearing, Chisholm attacked the ambiguous distinctions used to categorize refugees, declaring that she and other members of the Congressional Black Caucus

do not accept the contention that Haitian refugees are merely 'economic refugees.' Since the arrival of the first refugees in 1972, the State Department has constantly stated that the Haitian "boat people" are not entitled to asylum in the United States, because they are economic refugees and not political refugees. We call for an end to the invidious distinction between refugees, which is somehow applied to mean that certain categories of people fleeing oppression are not as welcome as others (Chisholm).

Chisholm reinforces the selective treatment of immigrant groups initially introduced by Due to criticize the treatment of Haitian refugees. She continues by focusing specifically on discriminatory practices in Miami, asserting that the INS office in Miami had "substantially undermined the due process rights of Haitians seeking political asylum in the United States." She continues, asserting that "Haitian cases processed since July, 1978...have been handled under "special procedures" which are not applied to any other group of refugees" (Chisholm).²¹ Due's and Chisholm's respective political resistance to white supremacist immigration policy reveals

²⁰ See Michel Laguerre's *Diasporic Citizenship: Haitian Americans in Transnational America* and Flore Zephir's *Haitian Immigrants in Black America: A Sociological and Sociolinguistic Portrait*.

²¹ For more on anti-Haitian discrimination in Miami, see the third chapter of this project, as well as Alex Stepick's *Pride Against Prejudice: Haitians in the United States*.

local and national challenges to anti-black mistreatment that, as both women suggest, was international in scope. I devote more sustained attention to discriminatory treatment of Haitians in Miami in the following chapter.

Defamation and Police Brutality in Miami

While Due focuses on expansion and diversification of Miami's Black communities by advocating for the admission of Haitian emigres into the U.S., in the same chapter she also contextualizes the ongoing oppression of the local Black community, focusing specifically on the persecution of Dr. Johnny L. Jones and charges of abuse against Miami's police force. As Due writes, anti-Black treatment in Miami seemed to culminate in the widely publicized indictment of Dr. Jones in February of 1980, the "first black schools superintendent in [Miami-Dade] county's history" (64). Jones had been indicted for grand theft after allegedly using school funds to buy gold-plated plumbing for his home, and Due recalls that Jones' treatment was "just another attempt to discredit a black man in power, something that happened with curious frequency in Miami" (65). Harkening back to Garcia's detailing of the 1990 City Council's demographic, Stephens Due's implicit reference to the intentional and perpetual persecution of Black men in power, reflects both the difficulties of achieving and keeping these positions.

Beyond the persecution of prominent Black Miamians, Due also cites the infamous cases of police brutality against Black Americans, especially the murder of Arthur McDuffie by three white American and one white Cuban police officer. She writes that the public takedown of Jones "could not have come at a worse time" given recent allegations made against Miami's police force (65). She continues describing reported abuses by the Miami Police Department:

Based on a series of bad events, Miami's black community was already in a slow, churning boil. A black insurance executive named Arthur McDuffie was in the

news. He'd died after a police chase in December [1979], and the police had claimed he'd died from injuries sustained when his motorcycle crashed... He'd actually been beaten to death. In another debacle, police had charged into a black schoolteacher's home and beaten everyone present, only to discover later that they had raided the wrong house. The *Miami Herald* also reported that a white Florida Highway Patrol officer had molested an eleven-year-old Black girl and received virtually no punishment for his crime, not even a notation in his personnel record. Was it open season on black people in Miami?" (65)

In this passage, Due outlines several instances of police incompetency and brutality that seemed to have disproportionately affected Black Miamians. Her description of police mistakenly raiding the Black teacher's house, in conjunction with the aforementioned mistaken raid of her mother's house after Hurricane Andrew compounds with this list to offer a transhistorical critique of the Miami police force. Due inundates the reader with these cases in quick succession, providing overwhelming evidence to affirmatively answer her closing rhetorical question. She footnotes former Miami Herald police reporter Edna Buchanan's *The Corpse Had a Familiar Face: Covering Miami, America's Hottest Beat* (1987). The inclusion of footnotes and external references within the memoir reflects a stylistic marker of resistant self-representative documentation; Tananarive Due bolsters her recollections of police brutality with the objective, or at least, performatively objective, insights of a renowned reporter. This citation thus muddies the delineation between personal narrative and historical documentation. Buchanan's book is a narrative summation of her time as a reporter, during which she reported on upwards of 5,000 murders in Miami, most during the city's increased drug influx during the 1980s; I discuss this influx in more detail in the final chapter of this project. In a chapter titled "McDuffie,"

symbolizing the metonymic import of this case, Buchanan recalls how Carol King Guralnick was defending the unnamed schoolteacher who had been beaten by members of the narcotic division before they realized they had the wrong address (342).

Due's concluding emphasis on the molestation of an eleven-year-old by a policeman with impunity highlights the particular vulnerabilities Black children, especially Black girls, experience in their interactions with police in Miami. Her citation of Buchanan, who provides more details on the case, elucidates this point. Buchanan, recalling former Officer Willie Thomas Jones' assault of the unnamed 11-year-old, writes:

The little girl had been stopped by the trooper as she walked home from elementary school. **On duty, in uniform**, he told her she was suspected of stealing candy and would have to be searched. He **ordered** her into the backseat of his patrol car and took her to a desolate area for the search. The little black girl, sexually molested by a white policeman, was never taken to the rape center and was questioned only by white policemen (349; my emphasis).

Mental health professionals later deemed Willie Thomas Jones as a "borderline psychotic;" a psychiatrist recorded that he "strongly suspected that other such crimes had taken place...[and] four doctors agreed that [Jones] was a mentally disordered sex offender" (348). Buchanan emphasizes the abuse of authority through reiterating that Jones was on the clock during the assault through her description of his uniform and patrol car, and highlighting that he had the power, both physical and symbolic, to order the victim into his patrol car. She further illustrates that white men surrounded the young, Black victim, both during her assault, and while having to relive the assault through questioning.

Buchanan thus outlines the continuous trauma experienced by the victim, and her family, through the officers' implicit refusal to provide appropriate medical care and to follow legal procedures. The efforts to hide the incident, and protect a fellow officer, are further indexed through Buchanan's interview with the victim's mother, wherein she recalled that investigating officers informed her "the disgraced trooper had been fired and would never be allowed to wear a badge again," and would even be sent to a mental institution. She was encouraged by both the investigators and attorneys to keep quiet about the case to protect her daughter. Buchanan concludes by noting that the officers' proposed course of action was another fabrication and that "the little girl was not the one who had been protected" (348). Buchanan's conclusion on the case suggests that the law enforcement and criminal justice system prioritized the protection of Officer Jones, as opposed to his victim.

Due's inclusion of these cases, and reference to Buchanan, demonstrates that both public and private spaces were, and are, unsafe for Black people in Miami during the late 1970s and 1980s. Whether on the street, in one's own home, or walking between home and school, Black people of all ages were vulnerable to violence and violation. Due largely credits Buchanan's local reporting for bringing these cases to the public eye, perhaps especially the Arthur McDuffie murder and subsequent acquittal; Buchanan's coverage received national attention and it consistently contextualized the case with attention to systemic anti-Blackness in Miami.

ARTHUR MCDUFFIE, IMMIGRANT INFLUX, AND CULTURAL COLLISION IN MIAMI

Although Due introduces the McDuffie case in the sixth chapter, she devotes nearly the entire eighth chapter to his murder, demonstrating its significance in her own life, and to "all of the black people in Dade County...[and] everywhere" (84). Due presents the impact of Arthur McDuffie's murder in expanding, concentric circles, beginning with herself and then refracting

outwards to include Black people everywhere. Due introduces the chapter with an epigraph from Langston Hughes' *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1951):" "Or does it explode?" This quote introduces the explosive impact McDuffie's death had on Miami's Black communities, especially after destructive and violent protests erupted in Black neighborhoods (namely Overtown and Liberty City), resulting in nearly \$100 million in property damage (Smiley). In many ways, the circumscribed location of the protests reiterated Miami's segregation. Further, when considering the entirety of the poem, which thematizes the limitations of the "American Dream" for Black Americans, Due's inclusion of Hughes highlights the systemic barring of opportunities for Black Americans that render these communities more vulnerable to state-sanctioned violence, as demonstrated by the McDuffie case.

For her part, Due describes the publicized act of state violence as an end to her childhood innocence, writing, "I was fourteen years old...at the precise moment my childhood ended. It was May 17, 1980, and the local television station began scrolling a silent announcement across the bottom of the screen "AFTER DELIBERATING FOR LESS THAN THREE HOURS, A TAMPA JURY..." (83). The trial had been moved to Tampa from Miami by Circuit Judge Lenore Nesbitt on March 3rd, 1980—nearly two months after McDuffie's death in late December 1979. The judge claimed that the case was "a time bomb," and hoped that moving it out of Miami might increase the chances of an unbiased trial; an all-white jury ultimately tried, and acquitted, the police officers on charges ranging from manslaughter to second-degree murder (Smiley).

By introducing the acquittal of the officers first, before delving into the circumstances of McDuffie's death and the criminalization of Black protest in Miami, she encourages primary attention to the failures of the criminal justice system to prosecute officers of the law. After

recalling the acquittal of the officers in the first page of the chapter, Due explains the circumstances of McDuffie's death in painstaking, and painful, detail:

The thirty-three-year old insurance executive had been beaten to death by Dade County police after he had led them on an eight-minute high-speed chase on his motorcycle. His beating was so severe, his skull had been cracked in half, from front to back...Realizing they'd killed McDuffie, police had tried to cover up the crime by bashing the motorcycle with "Kel-lites," heavy police-issue iron flashlights, to make it appear that it had crashed. Officially his death had been called an accident: He'd cracked his head open after flying off his motorcycle, police lied, just as they had for generations from Mississippi swamps to Florida back roads. Such lies have a long history (83).²²

Due places the gruesome circumstances of McDuffie's death, including the destruction of his body, and the deceitful efforts of the police officers, Ira Diggs, Michael Watts, William Hanlon, and Alex Marrero, to disguise their crimes, in a longer legacy of anti-Black police violence in the U.S. South. She implicitly writes Miami, a city often held apart from the Deep South, into a region disproportionately characterized as being inhospitable and unsafe for Black people.

Due's description of the officers elucidates Miami's cultural shift during the latter half of the 20th century. She writes almost ambiguously, "Arthur McDuffie was black. The four police officers on trial **were not**" (83; my emphasis). Rather than specify the racial identities of the officers, she oppositionally defines them against McDuffie's clear labelling, highlighting the

²² Due references Edna Buchanan's December 21, 1979 article in the Miami Herald, "Cops Role in in Death Probed," to explain how the reporter examined McDuffie's motorcycle to counter the police narrative of McDuffie's alleged accidental death.

perceived immovable racial, economic, and social position of being Black as opposed to the ambiguous quality of unnamed whiteness, an expanding category given Miami's recent cultural shifts that often aligns white Cubanness, or Cubanidad, with Anglo whiteness. The cultural ambiguity modeled by Due's gesture references controversy surrounding one of the officers, Alex Marrero, a white-Cuban American, who in local media, was frequently labeled as white, or "Anglo." Marrero's role in McDuffie's death, and the other officers' willingness to testify against him which resulted in a second-degree murder charge, was a source of much ire amongst Miami's Cuban community.

Antonio Lopez offers a succinct criticism of reporters', including Edna Buchanan's, hesitation to expound on Marrero's Cuban background:

The crux...is that Marrero's Cuban American whiteness was aligned with the Anglo whiteness of his fellow officers in a physical expression of state sponsored, white-supremacist violence; and that over and over in the historical record, this Anglo-Latino alignment is elided, reappearing simply as "white." It is also, of course, a matter of Cuban-American implication: that a Cuban American man was responsible for the death of McDuffie and that, in a more general way, pre-1980 Cuban Americans benefitted from the unjust conditions of African Americans in Miami, given that... Cuban Americans had received the "the lion's share of public dollars" [and] after McDuffie's murder...Cubans, along with Anglo whites, were among those to receive "most of the federal money to deal with the riot. Merely to cite "four white cops" in the greater narrative of Miami around 1979 is to waste the specific, troubling Cuban American value of that time (157).

Lopez pinpoints the troubling alignment of white Cubans in Miami with white supremacy in the U.S. by identifying how public assistance enabled Cuban assimilation in Miami, especially for émigrés who arrived before the infamous Mariel Boatlift. The McDuffie case became emblematic of the asymmetrical distribution of resources between recent white émigrés and Black Americans **and** Black émigrés as shown by the aforementioned discriminatory treatment of Black Haitian émigrés. Describing criticisms of Marrero’s upgraded charge (to second-degree murder, as opposed to manslaughter), Lopez surmises that the public discourse “included a mockery of minority-rights discourses in the insistence of his friends and family who had raised money and printed fliers on his behalf, that Marrero was a victim of anti-Latino discrimination as the only officer to receive upgraded charges” (162). While Lopez is critical of the discourse that arose in defense of Marrero, his dismissal of potential anti-Latino discrimination suggests that he also too easily folds Marrero into whiteness, a gesture of which he is initially critical. Moreover, Lopez’s dismissal suggests that the McDuffie case can be emblematic of white violence against Black people **or** an instance wherein Marrero’s alleged othering by his fellow officers demonstrates anti-Cuban sentiment. In creating this binary, Lopez simplifies the consequences of racial and ethnic collision in Miami that swiftly altered racial hierarchies.

Due implicitly addresses this cultural collision while contextualizing the McDuffie case, situating it as a challenge to Miami’s popular image. She writes, after describing the circumstances of McDuffie’s death: “Meanwhile, more and more Cubans were welcomed when they came to make Miami their home—thousands upon thousands in the Mariel Boatlift—while Haitians were still sent away. Arthur McDuffie was still dead. His killers were still free” (88). Due links the welcome afforded to Cuban émigrés to the rejection of Haitian nationals, and the

virulent anti-blackness indexed by McDuffie's murder, and thus provides an aerial, comparative view of how systemic anti-blackness impacted Miami's Black communities.

In the 28th chapter, Due asserts that cultural shifts and political assimilation of white émigrés in Miami would later have a much more direct impact on the Due family. In particular, Due recalls that her father, attorney John Due, received a layoff notice in 1997, ending his tenure as the director of the Office of Black Affairs in Miami-Dade County. Even though John Due had committed nearly twenty-five years of service to local government (seven years in the Office of Black Affairs, seventeen years as program officer of the Community Relations Board of Miami-Dade County), John Due "was among 158 people who received pink slips. No new job had been offered to him. Two years before retirement, it seemed, my father was being put out to pasture" (316). Due recalls her father's contributions to the city, contrasting this with his dismissive treatment, writing "he'd been on the streets trying to ease the lives of people in the county since I could remember, braving riots, frustration, and bureaucracy...he'd spent twenty-five years trying to keep a lid on such an emotionally volatile place" (316). Although John Due plays a marginal role in the memoir, Due's emphasis on his dismissal at the conclusion of the book and recollection of his work history in Miami suggests that he has dealt with each of the explosive events she and her mother describe in their earlier chapters. Her concurrent mention of riots and bureaucracy is striking, and traces white supremacy's effects on intentionally disruptive outcries and mundane bureaucracy.

In spite of the work Due had done in Miami, Due notes that the contemporary Cuban-American mayor, Alex Penelas, "was cutting jobs," and attempting to address shifts in Miami's cultural needs; as Due notes, "newer voices from different communities were vying for recognition" (316). While the immersion of new voices might exemplify inclusive civic

engagement, Due suggests that these voices overrode the input of Black Americans. In her telling, Due highlights how immigrant influx into Miami, and the corresponding diversification of Miami comes at the expense of Black Americans, especially those employed by local government. Describing the members of these new communities, Due asserts that some had not lived in Miami during the 1980 riots and had no memory of a time some years earlier, when black people had to carry passes to work on Miami Beach—or, like my father, were constantly followed by police when they crossed the causeway. Miami is a city of newcomers who bring memories of their histories from other places, which gives the region both its amazing vitality and a kind of collective community amnesia (316).

Due recaps the history of Black oppression in Miami, situating her father's firing within this history. In so doing, Due asserts that the influx of people, cultures, and histories that the city's tourism boosters often celebrate comes at the expense of the city's Black communities, usually through the forgetting and erasure of their experiences, contributions, and histories. Indeed, although historian Marvin Dunn has devoted his career to researching Black Miami, only recently have multiple scholars turned their attention to the disproportionately high rates of poverty, unemployment, and limited access to health care experienced by Miami's Black communities.

John Due's firing triggers a flood of support from Miami's Black community, demonstrated during a community meeting at the Joseph Caleb Center. The center is named after Black union labor leader, Joseph Caleb, who is known for spearheading projects that nearly quadrupled wages for union members between 1963 and 1972 (Caleb, "Father's Day: In memory of my dad, Joseph Caleb"). The center is thus a fitting location for a meeting to protest the

widespread job cuts within Miami-Dade’s government. With the mayor in attendance, attention turned specifically to the loss of John Due’s position. While Mayor Penelas declares that the “meeting should not become about particular people”—indexing his intention to dehumanize the recently unemployed into a generalized mass-- Bishop Victor T. Curry, pastor of the Newbirth Baptist Church in Opa-Locka, Miami (a Black majority neighborhood) interrupts, declaring:

Mr. Mayor, I think you miss the point of why it’s personalized... see, this is part of the problem with many of our Hispanic brothers and sisters. You all don’t know the history. You all don’t know the history of the black community. You don’t know and you don’t care...that’s what many of our wonderful Cuban brothers and sisters are missing. You have no respect. You’ve got to respect us, Mr. Mayor...People are upset because we’re not being respected *as a people* (321).

Bishop Curry, protecting himself with complimentary language, reiterates Due’s description of collective community amnesia, criticizing Latinx ignorance to these histories and conflating this ignorance with disrespect. He pinpoints Cuban ignorance in particular, once again highlighting the privileged position of Cubans, especially white Cubans, in relation to Black Americans. While Curry does not explicitly accuse Penelas and other Cuban officials of racism or anti-blackness, his appeal for John Due highlights the erasure of Black history in Miami, and the power differential between white Latinxs and Black Miamians that empowers the former group to further disenfranchise the latter. About a week after the forum, and the community’s impassioned defense, John Due is given a new job with Miami-Dade County (Due 322).

Civil Rights Afterlives: The Gathering in Miami

The community forum and successful protest in defense of John Due at the Joseph Caleb center exemplifies ongoing Black resistance in Miami in response to the city's ever changing cultural demographic. The penultimate chapters of the memoir continue this theme, focusing on reflection of the Florida leg of the Civil Rights movement from its various actors during The Gathering. Capitalized by the Dues to emphasize its importance, the Dues host The Gathering at Patricia Stephens Due's Miami home in 1997. Stephens Due, witnessing increased rates of illness and death amongst other movement leaders, declares to her daughter "it's time to have a

A Gathering...

John Due and Patricia Stephens Due are looking forward to hosting an informal get-together of foot soldiers in Florida's civil rights movement.

We will share a day of fellowship and remembrances while we get reacquainted.

Please bring any photographs, articles, music, or other items you would like to share.

We are looking forward to seeing you August 23.

"Florida's Foot Soldiers"

August 23, 1997
8 a.m. until--?

19620 Bel Aire Drive
Miami, Florida 33157
(305) 235-9205

Take the Turnpike (874) to Eureka Drive and turn left to get to South Dixie Hwy. (US1) Turn right (south) and drive a half-mile to Marlin Road. Turn left and cross bridge--first street after bridge is Bel Aire Drive--make left--house is first house on the left.

Please RSVP as soon as possible. Deadline: Aug. 10.

• Accommodations

Guests are responsible for their own accommodations. Group-rate rooms have been reserved at a nearby Budgetel Inn, but call the hotel as soon as possible to confirm with a credit card if you will be arriving after 6 p.m. on Friday, August 22.

Room rate: \$44.95 per night (King-sized beds or double-bed rooms available.) Free continental breakfast. Call (305) 278-0001. Ask for rooms reserved for "Due Reunion." Hotel will provide directions.

Double rooms sleep up to four. If you would like to share a room, please let us know as soon as possible.

Figure 6. Replicated with permission from the Florida State Archives.

civil rights reunion" (276). The Due family successfully contacts as many willing former civil rights activists as possible, ultimately hosting the event on August 23, 1997. The Gathering, as detailed by the invitation pictured below, was an "informal get-together of foot soldiers in Florida's civil rights movement," and helped the Dues in their composition of the memoir. The

Dues encouraged those invited to bring “photographs, articles, music, or other items” to facilitate the communal remembrance of the movement.

While Stephens Due’s beginning chapters introduce Miami as an integral site in the germination and dissemination of civil rights training and efforts, the conclusion sets Miami as a site of critical reflection, and corresponding exhaustion, of the work accomplished, the harm experienced, and the remaining work to be done. The Dues conducted interviews during The Gathering; many of the histories and recollections form the backbone of the memoir. As Tananarive Due recalls:

My mother envisioned a reunion where they could share the stories behind the stories: what had the personal price of their activism been? What did their children and grandchildren know about what they had done during the Civil Rights Movement? What did they think of present day race-relations? She wanted to follow through, even if it meant she and my father had to host it in their home (277).

The questions that structured the interviews/oral histories conducted with The Gathering’s attendees model the memoir’s overarching themes and structure: recalling the past and using these reflections to analyze the present day. The second question is most striking as it suggests that these activists may not have told their family members about their involvement in the movement. Even with intimate familial ties, these stories are at risk of disappearing.

Attendees’ testimonies reflect on various aspects of the movement, including the anxiety-inducing experience of watching family members demonstrate, experiencing physical and psychological violence, and realizing their work has not been memorialized. In so doing, The Gathering chapters highlights the shockwaves of the movement, resonating outward from

sometimes devastating points of impact. Patricia Stephens Due encourages her mother, Lottie Sears Houston, to open *The Gathering* with her experience, reflecting her desire to have an elders' testimony introduce early memories of anti-black oppression, and resistance. Although Houston did not participate in the civil rights demonstrations, she asserts that knowing about her daughters' involvement induced its own kind of trauma. Due, paraphrasing Houston's memories as they were presented at *The Gathering*, writes:

Even all these years later, if her telephone rang late at night, she still felt a quickening of her heart, leftover anxiety from the era when a phone call at such an hour was likely to bring tragic news about her two daughters. All over the South, parents regularly received heartbreaking calls that their children had been jailed, beaten, killed, or that they'd simply vanished (282).

Events that might otherwise be mundane rehash memories of state-sanctioned terrorism that physically affect Houston, even in 1997. Her description also highlights the widespread effects of the movement, and reactionary violence towards activists all over the South. One can deduce that police officers were jailing activists, however, Houston does not specify the actors who may be beating, killing, or disappearing these freedom fighters and this vague referent highlights the various vulnerabilities for Civil Rights activists. While Houston discusses the murder and literal disappearance of Black and white activists in the South, Tananarive Due highlights the equally grave disappearance of stories when recalling her mother's urgency in planning the event:

'unsung heroes' is a term my mother uses often, and was most of the reason she'd planned *The Gathering* in the first place. Telling and retelling the stories of heroes, she must have reasoned, would help ensure that the next generations

would not forget. I heard her fear echoed time and again that day. In fact, many of the activists said they could already see their fears coming to pass (285).

Due highlights how re-affirming the group is to the presentation of civil rights related-traumas, motivated in part by the fear of these stories disappearing. Indeed, the Dues depict The Gathering as an almost necessary trauma—picking at scabs so that future generations can know how past generations have bled.

Others describe how residual trauma from their activism lingers. As Stephens Due surmises, “life was not kind to many of the people I knew from the Movement” (288). She recalls high rates of suicide, mental illness, and other ailments that seem to disproportionately affect the movement’s survivors. Tananarive Due, who attends The Gathering as a willing observer, notes that “just as her eyes were injured by tear gas in 1960, every single person my mother had invited to The Gathering had scars of their own, whether visible or not” (280). Due makes an important distinction between embodied and invisible traces of the violence of the Civil Rights movement, by citing the injuries to her mother’s eyes. While this scar is visible, the prevalence of invisible, emotional, and psychological injuries further exemplifies why many of these stories have been lost. Due continues by noting that daily, mundane interactions and experiences exposed her parents’ trauma-related paranoia:

Over the years, my sisters and I have seen the toll civil rights has had on our parents, too. To this day, both my father and mother have a distrust of the telephone. Important names and information like bank account numbers are never revealed on the phone, and during any given conversation my mother is likely to lapse into incomprehensible code...but then again, why shouldn’t they be paranoid? Our family discovered that my mother and father each have FBI files

400 pages long, presumably from the civil rights era, when they could hear the clicking of wiretaps on their telephones (279).

Due details the intense surveillance of her family, highlighting a national agency's criminalization of civil rights activists, allegedly in the interest of national security. The discussion of residual trauma problematizes the two-dimensional, hero worship of Civil Rights activists. Instead, the testimony presented, and welcomed, at The Gathering focuses on the aftermath of the movement, highlighting the remaining work towards social progress. Other participants cry during The Gathering: Dr. Robert Hayling struggles to discuss "his severe beating at a Ku Klux Klan rally," and Priscilla Due, Patricia's sister, explains that the trauma of the movement drove her into exile and she spent several years in Ghana to recover (282-283).



Figure 7. Photograph of The Gathering attendees. First row, left to right: Miles McCray, Mrs. Athea Hayling, Doris Rutledge Hart, Patricia Stephens Due, Mrs. Lottie Hamilton Sears Houston, and Priscilla Stephens Kruize. Second row, left to right: Johnita Patricia Due, Jeff Greenup, Clarence Edwards, Ulysses Baety, John D. Due Jr., Dan Harmeling, Tananarive Priscilla Due, Mrs. Vivian Kelly, and Dr. Robert Hayling.

Although several people came to The Gathering, as documented in the above photograph, others refused to come, unwilling to relive the trauma of their experiences. As Due notes, "my mother has not been able to reach one woman on her list in several tries over the years...she wanted nothing to do with those memories" (278). This inclusion reflects the memoir's overall

point, about the need to work to preserve these stories. Yet, it also highlights a paradox that implicitly structures The Gathering chapters, and the overall memoir; the recollection of Black trauma is itself an induction of trauma, a harm the Dues willingly undertake in hopes, as they say in their introduction, of changing the present day.

Conclusion & Reflection

Producing this chapter has been traumatic in its own ways; I have had to take long breaks after reading about the points of impact on Arthur McDuffie's body; I have had to put the memoir down when reading about frequent, violent Ku Klux Klan attacks; I have had to meditate after realizing that the version of Miami history, my hometown, that prominently features people who look like me has been intentionally elided. Most significantly, however, I have had to write this chapter in an age of rampant, highly publicized police brutality, where I have had to avoid social media for fear of seeing another video of state-sanctioned murder, shared ad infinitum, and remind myself that Arthur McDuffie could have died the same way yesterday. That if Patricia Stephens Due were still alive, she could have been blinded by tear gas today. And if that had happened, she still would have been on the front lines with Black Lives Matter (BLM) activists tomorrow. Though she might be disappointed with media coverage of the movement; even now, as during the peak of Stephens Due's civil rights activism, BLM's three women founders, Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors, are seldom named in discussion of the group, suggesting an ongoing elision of Black women's contributions to social movements. Relatedly, young Black men murdered by police are more likely to receive mainstream attention as opposed to young Black women, who are disproportionately vulnerable to police violence compared to their white counterparts ("Say Her Name Brief").

In many ways, some quite explicit, the memoir envisages BLM. When discussing McDuffie's death, and the corresponding acquittal of the four officers who killed him, Tananarive Due asserts:

McDuffie doesn't *matter*, I remember thinking. White people don't think he *matters*. My mind could barely comprehend it... "Yes, my parents were civil rights activists, and I'd been brought up on a steady diet of black history lessons. I'd known all too well that there was a time, *long ago*, when such trials were commonplace. Lynchings didn't matter. Beatings didn't matter. Rapes didn't matter... Black people didn't matter in the 1960s. But in 1980? In the world I live in? (85-86)

While she poses these questions rhetorically, and expresses disbelief in the perpetual anti-Black violence she observes, her memoir centers these continuities, and even speak to the contemporary cultural moment, long after the memoir's original publication. Her words eerily foreshadow BLM's platform, which works to ensure that Black lives matter, too, not more than, others. How could she have anticipated the political battle cry of the contemporary movement? A prophetess, maybe? Certainly the kind Due might write about in her speculative fiction. Yet, I view Tananarive Due's prediction as an extension of the memoir's purpose—to reveal the connections between the past, the authors' present (in the late 1990s- early 2000s when the memoir was being written), and the future. And, it follows, to reveal the devastating predictability of perpetual anti-Black violence.

Perhaps the most notable takeaway for Due in *The Gathering* is how the project of equality and dismantling structures of Black oppression is unfinished. Due specifically highlights instances of police brutality:

Just because today's world shakers and social pioneers aren't all carrying picket signs doesn't mean the struggle is over and we know this. We know that there are horrible discrepancies in school resources and test scores between black and white children. And in arrests and jail time. And in the imposition of the death penalty. And income. And AIDS statistics. We know that police in New York shot Amadou Diallo forty-one times, fueled by a raving fear of black men. There's plenty left to do (355).

She lists each iteration, writing in short, choppy fragments that call attention to the weightiness of these issues. Due names systemic anti-blackness on a variety of levels: in schools, an issue exacerbated by the rise of private schools, in prisons, how the prison-industrial machine runs off Black and brown people, made bodies in the eye of the criminal (in)justice system, in health care, where almost all diseases have higher mortality rates for people of color. Finally, with police brutality and the violent murder of unarmed Amadou Diallo in February of 1999. Diallo was reaching for his wallet after officers approached him outside of his apartment. An undocumented immigrant from Guinea, Diallo was likely looking for some form of identification to stop further questioning; Due's reference of Diallo's further reiterates the memoir's attention to Afro-Diasporic solidarity and the particular vulnerabilities of Black émigrés. Like in the Arthur McDuffie case, a jury in Albany acquitted all four officers who killed Diallo.

I began this chapter during the summer of 2016, in the long aftermath of the murders of Trayvon Martin (2012) and Michael Brown (2014) and subsequent acquittal of George Zimmerman and Darren Wilson that once again made police brutality a top concern and spurred the creation of Black Lives Matter and the Movement for Black Lives. I had come home to Miami to conduct archival research, the fruits of which are reflected at moments in this chapter.

While dining with my family in front of the TV, a local anchor briefly mentioned the recent murder of Philando Castile: On July 6, 2016, Officer Jeronimo Yanez pulled Castile over during a routine traffic stop. Castile informed Yanez that he was a licensed gun owner, and that the weapon was in the car. As Castile raised his hands, Officer Yanez shot into the vehicle, hitting Castile four times. Castile's four year-old stepdaughter and girlfriend were in the car. He died twenty minutes later.

Moments after the brief news segment, my grandfather called. In a reflection of generational trauma akin to that which structures *Freedom in the Family*, he asked to speak to my father, who after a short conversation turned the phone to me to receive the same message: "stay safe. Do not leave the house unless you have to; the police are acting crazy." Had he seen a similar segment on his local six o'clock news? I don't know, but I know that he understood, having grown up in Virginia as a Black man, and raising Black children, that these men could have been my father, that the women killed by the state, Shelly Frey (2012), Tanisha Anderson (2014), Korryn Gaines (2016), could have been me or my sister.

My mother, a white Latina, nodded upon hearing this, but added, "Well, at least in Miami we're okay, don't you think? Since there's a little more diversity?" My father scoffed; I reminded her of the McDuffie case, and how the diversification of Miami had not saved him, that some argued that it had helped kill him. The following day, news broke of a police-involved shooting in North Miami. On July 18, 2016, Charles Kinsey, a Black mental health therapist, was consulting his patient, who had wandered away from a group home when police approached the pair. Without explanation, while Kinsey laid on the ground with his arms up, Officer Johnathan Aledda, a Latino man, shot him in the leg. Officers handcuffed Kinsey, allowing him to bleed on

the asphalt for twenty minutes before requesting medical services. Kinsey survived, and is suing the police department.

Kinsey's case rehashes critical questions about how interethnic tensions in Miami disproportionately harm Black Miamians. Indeed, Patricia Stephens Due's experience of being served as a perceived Latina, the McDuffie case, along with Kinsey's recent experience, further contextualizes the Black American opposition to immigration Maria Cristina Garcia outlines in her work, and illustrates why Miami's informal title as an immigrant city, or the Capital of the Caribbean, might not be embraced universally. Rather than joining the chorus of Black Miamians who opposed, and oppose, immigration into the city, I suggest that these moments of cultural clashing highlight a need for pro-immigration sects to devote equal attention to hierarchies within the category of "American citizen" to anticipate the reception of émigrés, and to concurrently study the racial composition of immigrant groups. I undertake intra-immigrant group analyses in the forthcoming chapters. Such examination, I think, will reveal the necessity of advocacy for the preservation of Black space, and Black life, and work to create economic opportunities for historically disenfranchised Black communities. As I told my mother, diversity myths, perhaps especially the idea of an immigrant nation, will not, and do not protect vulnerable populations from state-sanctioned violence. Only rigorous, intersectional policy and efforts will change the reality of so many Black Americans. May the work, and movement, continue.

THE ANTI-HAITIAN HYDRA:

REMAPPING HAITIAN SPACES IN MIAMI

Overture

“They are having a lot of problems with the Haitians.”

The words hung heavily in the air in the sunlit Miami kitchen as the two sisters, aged 14 and 17, gaped at each other, then turned to their mother. She had uttered the words offhand as she peeled plantains for tostones, taking long breaks to watch the family’s oversized flat-screen TV. Her comment had been in response to the screen, where Anthony Bourdain was touring the Dominican Republic’s best kitchens and talking about the must-have empanadas at a prominent restaurant.

“What?” the younger sister asked, her laptop still open in front of her on the kitchen bar.

She prized herself on having over a thousand followers on Tumblr, checking her dash regularly, and responding promptly to messages. At fourteen, her followers and followees had given her a healthy dose of social justice education that her parents and Miami’s overworked middle school and high school teachers had not yet provided. Her parents, both born in Nicaragua, had raised her and her sister not to see race, that gay people were “born that way,” and that working hard is always rewarded with positive outcomes, though this advice was usually in reference to PhD-seekers and lawyers. Countless hours on the website, perhaps too many, had done well to disrupt these ideas in her mind as she listened to her mother utter the same phrase.

“They are having a lot of problems with the Haitians.”

Before she could formulate a response, her older sister who had introduced her to Tumblr, asked, “How can a human being be a problem?”

The youngest sister turned to her mother expectantly, her lips pursed.

“Well, when they come into a country illegally and become a strain on resources, bring crime, use food from the state, I think that that’s a problem.”

“Can you prove that that’s what is happening?” the older sister retorted.

“I don’t have the statistics,” the mother replied, now focusing her attention on dicing onions, “but that tends to be what happens when countries get a lot of immigrants at one time.”

“Like you and Papi?” the younger daughter interjected. Her parents had both left Nicaragua in the 1970s amidst political upheaval and had since ascended to the heights of the US middle class; it was hard to be surprised by the mother’s condescension in their four bedroom, three bathroom house.

“That was different,” the mother replied tersely.

“Maybe the US should offer refuge,” the younger sister suggested.

The mother then turned to her eldest daughter, who had just recently taken a part time job as a receptionist at a nearby doctor’s office, and asked, “Do you want that? The little money you make from your job to take care of people who bring crime?”

“They could have said the same about you. They probably did,” the younger sister replied, knowing immediately that she had overstepped.

Her parents prided themselves on coming to Miami with pennies and turning those into the substantial wealth they had today. She could see the hurt in her mother’s expression and braced herself for a lecture, likely in Spanish, about gratitude and how her father had washed dishes when he first came to the US. **He was a lawyer in Managua, necia! A LAWYER!**

Instead, her mother sighed deeply and turned to her children. They could not tell if the tears in her eyes were from the onions or their words. “No quiero hablar de política ni religión. Poner la mesa” she said, wringing her hands on her coral-colored apron.

The sisters rose immediately, opened the cabinets for plates, forks, knives, and spoons, and began to set the table in silence while Anthony Bourdain joked about Dominican politicians and artists sharing a meal.

A composite of experiences from my life and those of family and friends in Miami, this short anecdote indexes cultural phenomena that shape and reshape the city's cultural and geospatial landscapes: hierarchal treatment of immigrant groups based primarily on nation of origin, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other factors.²³ In particular, prevalent anti-Black and anti-Haitian sentiments and stereotypes, codified through Haiti's representation in the global imaginary, shape perceptions and receptions of Haitians in Miami, which boasts the largest population of people of Haitian descent in the US (2010 Census). Closer examination of the treatment and experiences of Haitian-Americans in Miami, including high rates of repatriation, detention, poverty, and limited access to affordable housing and economic opportunities, challenge Miami's "diverse melting pot" reputation.²⁴ Instead, centering the state-sanctioned disenfranchisement of Haitian-Americans in Miami reveals the city as contested territory, characterized by cross-cultural conflicts for space and other resources.

To reiterate language employed in the DuBoisian question posed in the pre-chapter, the stigmatization of Haitian people renders these individuals a problem to be dealt with and disappeared through a variety of methods.²⁵ Primarily, US immigration officials use detention centers and hospitals to facilitate social removal, and their usage is justified by concerns of criminality and illness. Such methods result in a reconfiguration of the US cultural landscape, as US policies and institutions relegate particular bodies to predetermined areas. While both detention centers and hospitals are obvious and well-studied modes of social separation in

²³ Throughout the chapter, I use Miami (city), Miami-Dade (county), and South Florida (region) interchangeably to denote areas that have been similarly influenced by massive waves of immigration, especially from Haiti.

²⁴ As Laurent Dubois concludes, "when Haiti appears at all in the media, it registers largely as a place of disaster, poverty, and suffering, populated by desperate people trying to escape" (DuBois 3).

²⁵ In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), W.E.B. Du Bois describes this unspoken question posed by his white acquaintances in an effort to assess the psychological impacts of racism on Black people. This project seeks to analyze the ways people of Haitian descent are problematized and the structures that have arisen to deal with those problems.

discussions of Haitian/Haitian-American mistreatment, less work has put these modes of separation in dialogue with the insidiously mundane ways discriminatory treatment towards Haitians shapes Haitian spaces, such as cultural enclaves, community centers, neighborhoods, and individual homes.²⁶ Such neglect occurs particularly in literary studies, and I have designed this project to redress this imbalance.

I argue that literary works by Haitian Americans who live or have lived in Miami present alternate cartographies of the city that make visible methods of repelling/repatriating, containing, and even killing Haitians across economic and political strata.²⁷ These methods include, but are not limited to, the establishment of immigration policies that resulted in the immediate repatriation of Haitian refugees, urban renewal ordinances that lead to the erasure of established cultural enclaves, and state-sanctioned murder enabled through the withholding of medical care and the violent, unhealthy conditions of detention centers. The title of this chapter originates from this multiplicity of approaches to disappearing people of Haitian descent; in this chapter, I treat the discrimination of Haitian Americans as a tireless machine that reproduces, repeats, and evolves. With this metaphor of mechanized strategies of subjugation, I borrow and expand on Antonio Benítez-Rojo's theorization of the Caribbean as the "machine of machines," or a

²⁶ Here I am thinking specifically of Mark Dow's *American Gulag: Inside US Immigration Prisons* (2004) which details the experiences of violence against Haitian refugees through a focus on the prosecution of abusive guards at Krome Detention Center. However, we might think more generally of work on the prison-industrial complex put forth by Angela Davis (*Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 2003, *Abolition Democracy*, 2005), Joy James (*The New Abolitionists: (Neo) Slave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writings*, 2005) and Caleb Smith (*The Prison and the American Imagination*, 2009).

²⁷ I rely on conceptions of cartography developed in cultural geography. Specifically as Brian Jarvis continues, "space/place/landscape is always represented in relation to cultural codes that are embedded in social power structures. The three most significant power structures in contemporary American society are capitalism, patriarchy, and white racial hegemony. Accordingly, the subjects of class and capital, gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, whilst by no mean exclusive of all other interests, are of critical significance to any study of the working of the geographical imagination" (7). His focus on power suggests that the ability to map, or put differently to organize space, is generally afforded to wealthy, white, heterosexual males. While the cultural composition of Miami complicates these hierarchies, Haitians as a disempowered group, are limited in their ability to take up, and to use Jarvis's phrasing, make space. As such, the cartographies presented in the works I engage here present counterhegemonic, or alternative cartographies of Miami.

compounding of mechanisms, including colonization, designated also as “Columbus’s machine,” used to exploit and subjugate Caribbean people (Benítez-Rojo 6). He argues that the Caribbean machine “exists today, that is, it repeats itself continuously. It’s called: the plantation machine... [that] in its essential features keeps on operating as oppressively as before” (73). Although Benítez-Rojo focuses on the Caribbean plantation and its afterlives, I suggest that the strategies of oppression I analyze in this chapter repeat and compound colonial and neocolonial modes of oppression and implicate the US in ongoing violence against Haitians.

Though these procedures differ, these mechanized strategies of subjugation all share the objective of rendering the Haitian body unseen in a supposedly “diverse” city. The literary works and the cultural geographies they contain, demonstrate, as Brian Jarvis asserts, that “relations to the land... [are] shaped by the ideological climate within which [these] specific cartographies [are] produced” (Jarvis 2). In this context, I suggest that anti-Haitian and anti-Black policies and sentiments shape and reshape Miami’s cartographies. I therefore situate this project at the intersections of cultural geography, critical race theory, and migrant studies to demonstrate that constructions and representations of space are contingent on power, race, class, gender, and nationality, among various other factors that influence how Black Haitian immigrants choose to or, are allowed to, interact with certain places in Miami.

Specifically, in addition to work by Brian Jarvis, I rely on Robert Stepto’s foundational theory of symbolic geography, or “the idea that a landscape becomes symbolic in literature when it is a region in time and space offering spatial expressions of social structures” to foreground how literature set in Miami symbolizes racialized oppression in the city (Stepto 67). More recently, George Lipsitz expounded on Stepto’s theory by analyzing ongoing spatial segregation maintained through zoning laws, restricted access to education, and other systemic upholders of

white supremacy by concentrating on the wealth and housing discrepancies between white and Black Americans. He explains that he “[focuses] on the Black/white binary ... because a focus on Black spaces reveals particular dynamics that have been central to the general construction of racialized space for everyone” (12). I take Lipsitz’s rationale in treating Black space as foundational, but his emphasis on the Black/white binary implies that these categories are in themselves homogenous and thusly flattens important differences in the experiences of those who were born in the US as compared to those who have emigrated from other nations (223). This chapter thus offers an intersectional analysis that complicates Lipsitz’s deployment of “Black” as a monolithic category. By examining the experiences of people of Haitian descent, and traversing complexities resulting from the intersection of politics, economics, gender, and reproduction, I suggest that these considerations address the unique cultural diversity of Miami and other regions wherein Black and white have a multiplicity of meanings.

Throughout the chapter, I move between material contexts and analyses of media disseminated during the late 20th and early 21st century, as these works demonstrate the ongoing and evolving persecution of people of Haitian descent. I analyze memoirs, creative fiction, local media, international policies, municipal ordinances, and publications by community-based organizations that document the ongoing spatial manifestations of Haitian discrimination in Miami. Beyond the perpetuity of oppression metaphorized in these literary cartographies, their address of childbirth, and often the loss of a child, further allegorizes the reproduction of oppressive mechanisms that subjugate people of Haitian descent in Miami. I read these concurrent foci as symbolizations of endless persecution. In an effort to demonstrate the widespread and interrelated effects of this discrimination across socio-political and economic strata, I have selected literary works that represent the experiences of members of Miami’s

Haitian communities regardless of class status. To address the experiences of Haitian refugees, I will focus on national and international policies that make Miami inaccessible to Haitian émigrés through an analysis of Edwidge Danticat’s short story, “Children of the Sea” (1995). While “Children of the Sea” presents a non-arrival to Miami, Danticat’s later work, *Brother, I’m Dying* (2007), details the limited movement of Haitian refugees in Miami through her focus on airports, detention centers, and hospitals. More recently, MJ Fievre’s short story, “Sinkhole” (2014) illustrates the figurative and literal destruction of parts of Little Haiti, Miami as witnessed by an upper-middle class couple living in the enclave. Read together, these narratives demonstrate the wide range of governmental mandates that shape experiences of Miami for people of Haitian descent, both before they arrive and even after they have assimilated into the hierarchal economic structure of the city.

Geography of a Non-Place: Unmappable Miami in “Children of the Sea”

In Edwidge Danticat’s “Children of the Sea,” Miami is a vaguely described and ultimately unattainable space for a young man seeking refuge in the US via boat after experiencing political persecution under the regime that ousted Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He leaves behind his girlfriend, and the epistolary story follows imagined letters written between the couple detailing the young man’s experience at sea and the young woman’s experience of violent persecution in Haiti. Although Miami is the young man’s destination, the imprecise descriptions of the city in the story reflect both the grueling, seafaring journey and the web of US international policies that entrap and repel Haitian refugees. These policies render the city inaccessible and legitimize the devaluation of Haitian lives. The story details not only the violence individuals experience in Haiti, but also the US’s complicity in said violence that make Miami unmappable.

Published first in 1993 and then reprinted as part of Edwidge Danticat's short story collection *Krik? Krak!* (1995), "Children of the Sea" takes place following the overthrow of Haiti's first democratically elected president Jean Bertrand-Aristide by the military in September 1991. During and immediately after the overthrow, "the army and other repressive groups attacked many of...Aristide's supporters" rendering the nation a site of political violence and persecution and sparking waves of emigration (Mitchell 73). As Christopher Mitchell notes further, in "October [of 1991], a massive outflow of boat people began, and by November 18th the Coast Guard had intercepted at least 1,800 [refugees]" (74). The unnamed male protagonist in "Children of the Sea" is part of this outflow. The young man ran a pro-Aristide radio show on which he and others "could talk about what [they] wanted from government [sic], what [they wanted] for the future of [their] country" (Danticat 6). His well-publicized disapproval of the military overthrow makes him a target, and he departs before he is captured, taking with him money, some food, and a notebook to write to the unnamed, female protagonist about his experiences at sea.

Through this structure, Danticat's story suggests that while men are active in the political sphere and thus mobile during dangerous mass exoduses, women remain and bear witness to violence in their homelands. While this can be read as a commentary on masculine mobility and freedom seeking, Danticat's concurrent address of the tempestuous sea and political violence emphasizes continuing violence in and beyond Haiti. As Jenny Sharpe explains, "'Children of the Sea' exposes the male gendering of black Atlantic narratives by extending the uncertainty of undocumented travel to the presumed sanctity of domestic space. The two lovers are not only linked by the unmailed letters they write to each other but also by the parallel circumstances in which they find themselves"(105). The letters detail instability both on land and at sea, as the

young man describes seasickness, sunstroke, and running out of food, and the young woman describes violence, including attacks against those opposed to the military coup, and wayward bullets. As the young woman notes “haiti [sic] est comme to l’as laisse. yes, just the way you left it. bullets day and night” (4). Although written primarily in English, the translation via repetition in the letters emblemizes the transnational scope of the short story. She continues, detailing the threatening presence of the militia group, the Tonton Makout.²⁸ They mock her neighbor who carries her son’s head “to show what’s been done” after he is murdered for propagating pro-Aristide sentiments on the radio (7). This graphic and frightening display of violence and the brutalized Haitian body at the hands of the state highlight the political violence from which refugees were fleeing while the young man’s experiences document the political quagmire that limits access to the US.

The young man’s departure is concurrent with, and thus shaped by, debates amongst US policymakers about how to manage the high rates of emigration from Haiti. Prior to the post-Aristide surge, the US maintained a rigid interception and repatriation policy that had been formally established in the 1981 US-Haiti Interdiction Agreement between the Reagan Administration (1981-1989), and Haiti’s repressive dictator, Jean-Claude Duvalier (1971-1986), whose rule was characterized by repression and violence.²⁹ The arrangement between the contemporary Haitian and US governments of the 1980s outlines the US’s complicity in the

²⁸ Laurent Dubois explains that the Tonton Makouts were established as a “new civil militia...deployed by Duvalier to assert complete control over all political activity” (328-329). Dubois continues, noting that the Makouts were notorious for violent tactics and the repression of anti-Duvalier sentiment in Haiti. Luckner Cambronne led this militia and was exiled to Miami in 1972 and died there in 2006. His move to Miami highlights a continuation of violence on the island in the US

²⁹ Laurent DuBois asserts that throughout his dictatorship, Duvalier ordered arrests and maintained power through torture and by ordering the murder of those who opposed his attacking those who had spoken against his regime over the previous years (355).

violence of the Duvalier regime, as it severely limited one's ability to escape.³⁰ The Bush administration (1989-1993) largely upheld Reagan's policies until Aristide's removal. Christopher Mitchell observes that the resulting "political violence in Haiti seemed palpable enough that the policy of quick return might draw great public criticism in the United States" (74). As a result, instead of immediate repatriation, in September of 1991, the Bush administration established "a tent camp... at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba to house as many as 12,000 Haitian emigrants" (74). The use of Guantánamo to detain Haitian refugees signals a refusal to allow those fleeing Haiti to set foot on US soil, a policy that shaped most of the Bush administration's management of emigration crises in Haiti. Further, in this case, Guantánamo as a U.S.-operated site in Cuba indexes an imperial re-mapping of U.S. borders in the interest of repelling Haitians from the U.S. proper. Guantánamo's subsequent use as a prison camp for those suspected of terrorism in the serial Gulf and Afghan wars delegate the space for those marked as criminal and dangerous. Initially presidential aspirant Bill Clinton (who was elected the year Danticat's short story was originally published) described immediate repatriation as a "cruel policy," however, once elected, Clinton declared he would uphold the Bush policy, explaining, "leaving by boat is not the route to freedom" (Sciolino). This route,

³⁰ Ruth Ellen Wasem writes in her summary of US immigration policy on Haitian immigrants that the Interdiction Agreement "authorized the U.S. Coast Guard to board and inspect private Haitian vessels on the high seas and to interrogate the passengers...[and] return those passengers deemed to be undocumented Haitians...From 1981 through 1990, 22,940 Haitians were interdicted at sea. Of this number, INS considered 11 Haitians qualified to apply for asylum in the United States" (Wasem 2). The astonishingly low number of applicants who qualified for asylum sheds light on the high rates of repatriation to Haiti and reveals the objective of US immigration policy to inhibit the arrival of Haitian refugees on US soil. *Sale v. Haitian Centers Council* upheld the policies of the Reagan administration by formally establishing that the President could give an executive order that all aliens intercepted on the high seas could be repatriated.

incidentally, was one of the few options available to economically disenfranchised Haitians that resulted in skyrocketing rates of sea interception.³¹

The young man's letters in Danticat's story become synecdochic of the large groups of Haitian refugees. While the story describes individual differences among those escaping Haiti, the epistolary form of the short story, coupled with the anonymity of the characters contributes to the story's applicability to the experiences of Haitian refugees following the military overthrow. As the male protagonist writes, "there are thirty-six other deserting souls on this little boat with me," and he devotes substantial attention to their experiences in Haiti that have motivated their departure throughout the story. The man thus becomes a vehicle through which Danticat can describe the variegated experience of seafaring travel from those fleeing political repression in Haiti. The letters both protagonists write and imagine sending are undated and unaddressed, which contributes to the timelessness and geographical boundlessness of their story: oppression in Haiti is perpetual and expands beyond the nation's borders, which casts uncertainty on the arrival to Miami.

The story's limited descriptions of Miami and the implied non-arrival to the city highlight uncertainty. The young man reveals his ignorance of the city, as he wonders: "I am trying to think, to see if I read anything more about Miami. It is sunny. It doesn't snow there like other parts of America" (Danticat 6). The man's description relies on touristic representations of Miami, and Florida generally, as the sunshine state, the foundation for its role as a prominent winter vacation site. Danticat may even be satirizing this reputation by referencing it from the perspective of a Haitian émigré who will never arrive in the city. Indeed, the representation of Miami is marked by delays, uncertainty, and a sense of impending doom: the protagonist notes

³¹ Christopher Mitchell provides an example of the high rates of emigration from Haiti, noting, "The number of intercepted Haitians surged to more than 10,000 during... May 1992" (75).

after three days on the boat that he “can’t tell exactly how far [they] are from [Miami]. [They] might be barely out of [their] own shores” (Danticat 6). This is the extent of the description of Miami, the imagined future home, which presents the city as desirable enough to be a destination, yet unapproachable, both through young man’s lack of knowledge of the city and the dangerous method of escape. The young man foreshadows his own demise in the first few lines of the story, explaining, “I don’t know how long we’ll be at sea...**if** you see me again, I’ll be so dark” (4; my emphasis). Indeed, the boat never arrives in Miami, and the young woman learns via radio broadcast that because of many “crack[s] at the bottom of the boat,” it sinks off the coast of the Bahamas (20). Throughout the story, Miami remains unknown and the boat’s non-arrival signals the inaccessibility of the city.

Miami’s inaccessibility indicates the hopelessness of a future for the people on the boat, which the narrator emphasizes through his focus on children and pregnancy. The young man is particularly dismayed to realize that a fifteen year old girl, Célianne, on the boat is pregnant and that her unborn child was violently conceived after soldiers “burst into [her] house [and] ... took turns raping [her]” (23). Célianne’s pregnancy thus becomes a symbol of the violent military takeover of the nation that represents the hopelessness of Haiti. He notes that though Célianne is pregnant, he is grateful that there are “no young children on board” as it would “break [his] heart watching some little boy or girl every single day on this sea, looking into their empty faces to remind [him] of the hopelessness of the future in our country” (Danticat 5). Although the narrator specifies that there is no hope in Haiti, his phrasing and efforts to escape imply that there may have been a hopeful future beyond the borders of the nation. Here I will turn to Lee Edelman’s concept of reproductive futurism that he anchors in the Child, capitalized as a symbol of “the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmic beneficiary of every

political intervention” (3).³² While Edelman focuses on queer resistance through non-reproductive and thus “futureless” sex, “Children of the Sea” details the impossibility of a future through reproduction for those oppressed by global forces including anti-Blackness and anti-Haitian sentiments. The story therefore complicates Edelman’s theory by offering an intersectional consideration of material contexts. Célianne’s baby, a girl, is stillborn and the young mother decides to throw the dead infant overboard. The narrator recounts, “it fell in a splash, floated for a while, and then sank. And quickly after that [Célianne] jumped in too. And just as the baby’s head sank, so did hers” (26). If the baby is cast as a symbol for the future of Haitian people outside of the nation’s borders (specifically in Miami), her death, as well as that of her mother, a child herself, suggests the impossibility of a future for the people on the boat.

The woman and child’s deaths further highlight the political dependence on reproduction and harkens back to tropes of violence and resistance during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. This inclusion thus situates seafaring immigration from Haiti as part of a never-ending middle passage. As Jenny Sharpe observes in “The Middle Passages of Black Migration,”

Behind the drowning of Célianne and her baby flit the ghosts of African women who were victims of rape and who drowned themselves or their mixed race babies. But Célianne’s situation both is and is not the same as that of raped slave women, for her body was violated in her homeland at the hands of fellow Haitians. The story alludes to the middle passage in order to acknowledge Haitian

³² Lee Edelman expounds on his definition of reproductive futurism, asserting that it is constituted by “terms that impose an ideological limit on political discourses as such, preserving in the process the absolute privilege of heteronormativity by rendering unthinkable, by casting outside the political domain, the possibility of a queer resistance to this organizing principle of communal relations” (Edelman 2).

soldiers' engagement in a violence that repeats the criminal acts of European slave traders (104).

Elizabeth DeLoughrey relatedly suggests in her analysis of "Children of the Sea" that "the middle passage must be 'charted' by contemporary migrants, but without a recognition of the ways in which state sanctioned violence (either in European slaving or Haitian autocracy) is repeated, Caribbean peoples are destined to reproduce the same violent diaspora" (24).

While Sharpe and Danticat implicate Haitian (male) soldiers in the permanency of the middle passage, by suggesting that soldiers replicate, or even, stand in for European slave-owners, they neglect the complexity of the gender dynamics that render Black women vulnerable, even within Black communities. Danticat's work indexes this dynamic, showcasing Black female vulnerability and Black patriarchy, even through her characterization of the story's protagonists.

The sea in Danticat's short story therefore functions as both a spatial and temporal interstice where the passengers recall and re-enact racialized, gendered violence and tragedy from the historical middle passage and contemporary Haiti. To pass the time and to "appease the vomiting," those on the boat begin to tell stories, often recounting the terror of Haiti (9).

Célianne describes being raped and witnessing the soldiers force her brother "to lie down and become intimate with [their] mother" and subsequently "[cutting] her face with a razor so that no one would know who she was" (Danticat 23-24). Célianne's recollection of this state-sanctioned assault on her family reflects direct and indirect violence. The soldiers directly force her brother to rape their mother, and in so doing violate her brother in this coercive act. Célianne's shame-induced self-harm after witnessing this direct assault marks her effort at self-erasure, indirectly caused by the soldiers' onslaught. Indeed, even her euphemistic description of the rape reflects her ongoing shame. Another man on the boat similarly describes state-sanctioned violence,

asserting, “he had a broken leg” after being pursued by the police in Haiti (Danticat 23, 8). Célianne and the unnamed man’s physical reminders (her scarred face and his broken leg) operate as embodied traces of political repression in Haiti.

Sharpe and DeLoughrey rightfully analyze the violence in Haiti as a continuation of the middle passage; however, their analysis overlooks Danticat’s pointed implication of the US’s international and immigration policies in the experience of violence in and beyond Haiti. The man with the broken leg explains that this is his second attempt to take refuge in Miami, and his initial repatriation further details the political efforts and strategies used to repel Haitian refugees from the US. The distance between Haiti and Miami is physical, but also, as the man’s story suggests, political. After noting that the faces of those on the boat “are showing their first charcoal layer of sunburn,” the man bemoans that “now we will never be mistaken for Cubans... Even though some of the Cubans are black, too” (Danticat 8). His description reflects the comparative treatment of Haitians and Cubans that he links to skin color. Doing so reveals the tendency to code Cubans as white and Haitians as Black, which I explore in the third chapter of this dissertation. This categorization also results in an overlooking of racial differences among Cubans and enables the binary between Black Haitians and Cubans that informs the US’s process of screening Caribbean refugees.

Beyond the racialized differences that inform the man’s treatment by the US Coast Guard, his repatriation exemplifies how US policy differently constitutes the subjectivity of Cuban and Haitian refugees that influences their access to Miami. The man expounds on his comment about passing for Cuban, explaining that:

He was once on a boat with a group of Cubans. His boat had stopped to pick up the Cubans on an island off the Bahamas. When the Coast Guard came for them,

they took the Cubans to Miami and sent him back to Haiti. Now he was back on the boat with some papers and documents to show that the police in Haiti were after him (Danticat 8).

His mention of the documentation signals a need to **prove** persecution in Haiti that is simply assumed of those fleeing communism in Cuba. While Miami is an attainable destination for Cubans, border policy enforcement perpetually rejects Haitians. It follows that potential life in the US for Cubans corresponds with harm, and even death, for repatriated Haitians. As Jenny Sharpe explains, “Children of the Sea” is set during “an era when the US government distinguished Haitian from Cuban boat people by defining the former as economic rather than political refugees, a distinction that allowed the Coast Guard to return Haitians to the civil war they were escaping” (Sharpe 104). Alex Stepick expounds on such disparate treatment of Cuban and Haitian refugees by drawing attention to the US’s perception and treatment of Communism compared to right-wing authoritarian regimes:

Historically, [the US’s] practice has been to grant a blanket presumption of persecution to those fleeing Communist states while maintaining a far stricter standard for those fleeing rightist authoritarian regimes. This dichotomous policy and the inherent tension between the policy and the general humanitarian principles of the UN Protocol is one of the underlying issues in the controversy involving the Haitian boat people (Stepick 168).

Stepick observes that the pervasive US anti-communist sentiment played a major role in setting up immigration policies throughout the 20th century.

The categorization and assessment of political persecution as compared to economic strife details how the US constructs varying subjectivities during emigration crises. The

distinction between political and economic migrants is tenuous at best, as political instability in Haiti contributed to the economic trouble the nation's inhabitants experienced. Danticat demonstrates the relationship between political persecution and economic strife through the young woman's letters. The young woman's father discovers that the soldiers were "going to come get [her]... [and] peg her as a member of the youth federation and then take [her] away" (24). In response, her father "went to the post and paid them money, all the money he had. [their] house in port-au-prince [sic] and all the land his father had left him, he gave it all away to save [her] life" (24). The military overthrow results in bankruptcy, leaving the family with no economic resources or home in Haiti. Danticat describes a causal relationship between limited economic resources and political turmoil, and corruption, in Haiti. Danticat's representation of the lived experiences of terror and violence reveal the US's policy of accepting political refugees while rejecting economic refugees as a semantic distinction used to weed out undesirable refugees and prevent them from taking up space in the US.

The Immigrant in Public Space: Mapping Krome Detention Center in *Brother, I'm Dying*

Edwidge Danticat's later work, *Brother, I'm Dying*, continues an analysis of the inhibited access to Miami through her depiction of her uncle's detention and eventual death while attempting to acquire asylum in the US. Unlike the young male protagonist in "Children of the Sea," Joseph Danticat is able to fly to Miami, but upon arrival immigration authorities take him from the airport, to the detention center, and ultimately to the hospital. Joseph Danticat's movements chart a terrain of publicly sanctioned violence against Haitian refugees and reveals publicly operated spaces as sites where the stratification of access to particular social spheres is

constructed.³³ Put differently, the memoir challenges delineations between public and private space through its depiction of Haitian refugees' limited access.

Danticat depicts the airport as a site where immigrant/refugee subjectivity is determined and categorized, initiating the process of separating desirable visitors from undesirable threats. Joseph Danticat leaves Haiti on October 29, 2004 by plane after increasing political unrest and violence in the aftermath of Jean-Bertrand Aristide's second ousting by powerful local gangs earlier that year.³⁴ When his plane lands at Miami International Airport, the Customs and Border Patrol Officer (CBP) at Miami International Airport asks him and his son, Maxo, how long they intend to stay in the United States. Joseph Danticat, "not understanding the full implication of that choice, said that he wanted to apply for temporary asylum" (215). Danticat foreshadows her uncle's eventual death, and simultaneously highlights the role language plays in interactions with border patrol officers in the U.S., an especially unfair barometer for émigrés who do not speak English. Because of those two words ("temporary asylum"), He and Maxo are immediately "taken aside and placed in a customs waiting area" (215). The movement of father and son away from the "large groups of visitors [and] long Customs and Border Protection lines" is a microcosmic foreshadowing of the efforts to spatially separate undesirable visitors (long-term) from acceptable or tolerable visitors (short-term). The former group is taken deeper into the airport and thus further away from access to the less regulated spaces of the city, while the latter is moved closer. Indeed, in spite of their valid passports and tourist visas (which would have

³³ See *Urban Commons: Rethinking the City* for more on false binary between private/public spaces. *The Politics of Public Space*, particularly Setha Low's essay, "How Private Interests Take Over Public Space: Zoning, Taxes, and Incorporation of Gated Communities" offers an analysis of how private interests influence access to public space through the physical restructuring of public areas and increased surveillance and legally sanctioned segregation based on nationality, immigration status, race, and other factors reshape and ultimately eliminate public space.

³⁴ Though it is beyond the scope of this project, it is worth mentioning that Edwidge Danticat's oeuvre provide a literary history of Haiti during the latter half of the 20th century, as evidenced through the rich descriptions of Aristide's removals and their aftermaths in "Children of the Sea" and *Brother, I'm Dying*. In particular, the memoir details the violent ousting of Jean-Bertrand Aristide because of gang violence, particularly in Bel Air (Dubois 337).

allowed them to stay in the US for no more than 30 days), the verbal indication of a desire for asylum immediately results in Joseph Danticat's re-categorization as "alien 27041999," signaling his dehumanization in the interest of bureaucratic operations (214).

Joseph Danticat's intake interview evinces the continual dehumanization of Haitian refugees. He explains that he has entered the US because a "group that is causing trouble in Haiti wants to kill [him]" (217).³⁵ When asked more specifically why he left his "home country of residence," Danticat replies, "because I fear for my life in Haiti. And they burned down my church" (219). In spite of this explanation, Danticat notes that the transcripts of the interview indicate that the intake officer did not request further explanation or details to confirm that the violence Danticat experienced was the result of political upheaval; such a confirmation would have expedited asylum procedures. Instead, when Edwidge Danticat arrives at the airport to pick up her uncle and cousin, an airport employee informs her that the men are going to Krome Detention Center, initiating a frantic effort to have the two men released. When asked by Franck Danticat, Joseph's brother, why Maxo and Joseph have been detained since they have valid travel documents, the CBP officer explains that an earlier medical procedure performed on Joseph Danticat in New York resulted in the creation of "an immigration 'alien' file...[that Joseph] was never aware of" (Danticat 220). The officer cites the file as the main cause for the determination of his inadmissibility: "the central index system revealed that the subject had an

³⁵ Although about "three hundred United Nations soldiers and Haitian riot police...[were ordered] to root out the most violent gangs in Bel Air," Joseph Danticat observed that "more often it seemed as if they were attacking [all Haitian nationals]" (171, 173). In fact, the efforts of the UN and Haitian police further endanger Joseph Danticat and his family after they raid Danticat's church in search of gang members and discover a hideout on the roof of the church of which Danticat was unaware. A shootout ensues and the surviving gang members believe Danticat informed the officers of their location and threaten to decapitate Danticat if he does not pay for the funerals of the gang members killed by the UN/Haitian police forces (178). In response, Joseph's son, Maxo, attempts to contact the police and the UN, "to tell them that their operation had doomed them, possibly condemned them to death. He wanted them to send in the cavalry and rescue them, but quickly realized he and his family were on their own" (179). The non-responsiveness of national and international forces demonstrates their mismanagement of the strife in Haiti, even after exacerbating living situations for Haitian nationals.

existing number which revealed negative results to him being a resident” (220). Although the officer provides this formal rationalization, Danticat expresses suspicion and instead attributes the treatment of her uncle to anti-Haitian policies:

Still, I suspect that my uncle was treated according to a biased immigration policy dating back from the early 1980s when Haitians began arriving in Florida in large numbers by boat. In Florida, where Cuban refugees are, as long as they're able to step foot on dry land, immediately processed and released to their families, Haitian asylum seekers are disproportionately detained, then deported.... Was my uncle going to jail because he was Haitian? ... Was he going to jail because he was black? If he were white, Cuban, anything other than Haitian, would he have been going to Krome? (222-223)

As in “Children of the Sea,” Danticat pinpoints the comparative treatment of refugee groups in Florida by reiterating how refugees’ nation of origin and skin tone influence the construction of immigrant subjectivity, and it follows, the varying degrees of admissibility into the US sphere. Danticat explicitly cites the 1995 revision to the Cuban Adjustment Act (initially enacted in 1966), informally known as the “wet-foot, dry-foot” policy. While the original act afforded Cuban refugees access to residency after two years of living in the US, the revision allowed Cuban refugees immediate access to asylum processes with no risk of repatriation unless the “aliens [had been] apprehended at sea...[or] encountered seaward of the territorial sea by officers of the United States” (CAA 1995). Beyond referencing this policy, Danticat’s serialized questions about her uncle’s race and nation of origin emphasize the extremity of Haitian oppression in US immigration policy; although Cuban refugees who made it to Miami or other

places in the US were granted asylum, Joseph Danticat was sent to the infamously violent and inhumane Krome Detention Center.

Danticat describes Krome’s isolated location, highlighting the center’s distance from the metropole, and it follows, the constructed and vigilantly maintained distance between detained Haitian refugees and the city proper. As she outlines, “a series of gray concrete buildings and trailers, Krome was in what seemed like the middle of nowhere, in southwest Miami” (211). In fact, as the image below demonstrates, Krome is located on the edge of the Florida Everglades National Park (green space on the left), about twenty-three miles from downtown Miami.

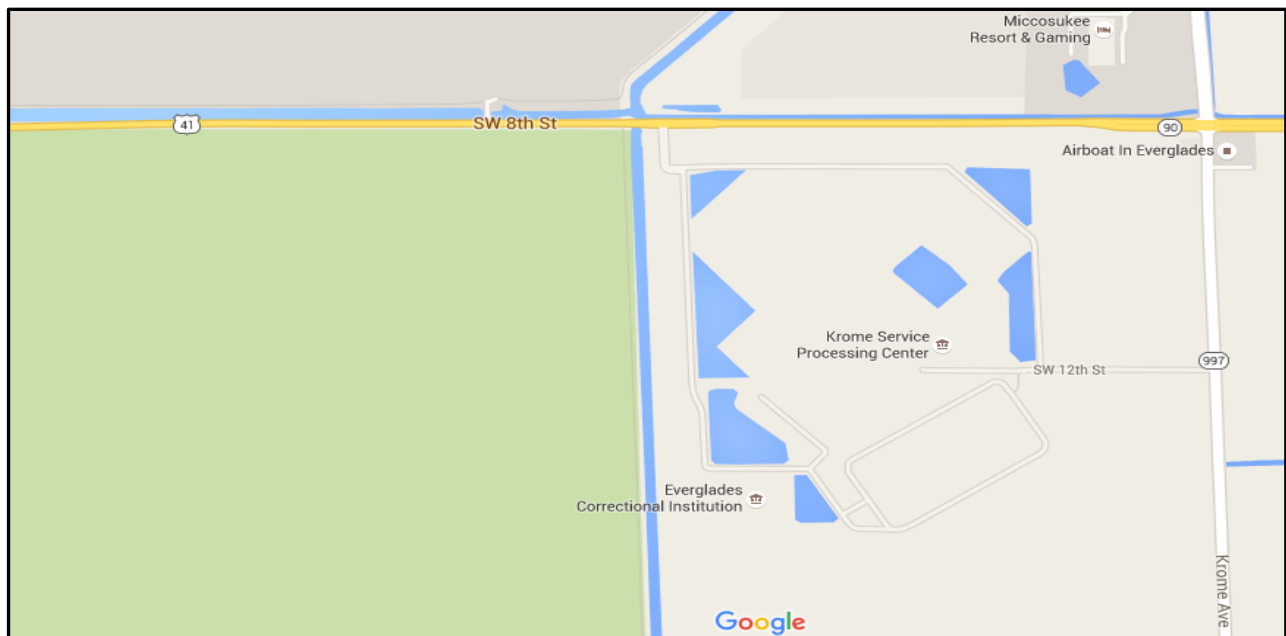


Figure 8.

The proximity to the Everglades, advertised as a “subtropical wilderness,” highlights the detention center’s intentional distance from other developed parts of South Florida. The image also illustrates the center’s proximity to the Everglades Correctional Institution. The presence of both institutions reserves the area for undesirable, threatening people, whether refugees or

citizens, who have been removed from the public and intentionally kept out of sight.³⁶ Shown below is the nearest point of visibility to the buildings that constitute Krome, my sister noted when she took the photograph that you would not be able to find the center unless you were explicitly looking for it. Indeed, as the photograph illustrates, the center is unmarked and nearly



Figure 9.

invisible from Krome Avenue, the narrow, poorly lit, forty-mile road that provides an eerily quiet juxtaposition to the remainder of the city.³⁷ Nicole Waller suggests this juxtaposition is intentional and reflects the legal interstice the detention center and its inmates occupy. As she writes, the inmates “are...disappeared into a void... [and] are neither fully charted in national nor in international territory and jurisdiction” (359). The detention center thus functions as a

³⁶ This location is perfectly suited for Krome’s initial use as a military base that housed defense guided missiles during the Cold War in the event of an attack from Cuba (Waller 361). Nicole Waller explains: “before it was taken over by the INS in 1982, Krome detention center was a US air defense guided missiles base built during the cold war to protect the southern United States against an attack from Cuba’s Fidel Castro” (Waller 361). The repurposing of Krome to house mostly Haitian and some Cuban and other Caribbean and Central American refugees illustrates the utilization of the area to neutralize perceived threats.

³⁷ The road has been the site of much controversy recently because of its isolation and dearth of streetlights which locals argue leads to high rates of accidents and deaths on the narrow road (Chardy).

liminal space between nations and as an abject site of rejection that operates as a constitutive “outside” so the US can still represent itself as a liberal and inclusive nation.

Danticat’s description of violence against Haitian refugees suggests that the center’s political, legal, and geospatial liminality inform the treatment experienced therein. She expounds on this description by recalling an earlier visit to the center on behalf of the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center.³⁸ The men detained at Krome “spoke of other guards who told them they smelled, who taunted them while telling them that unlike the Cuban rafters, who were guaranteed refuge, they would never get asylum, that few Haitians ever get asylum” (212). These experiences reinforce the aforementioned biased treatment of Cuban refugees as compared to Haitian refugees in the US. The men also relate the physical ailments, abuse, and withholding of medical care they experienced, which ultimately kills her uncle. For example, the men describe the food in the detention center asserting, “that rather than nourish them, [it] punished them, gave them diarrhea and made them vomit” (Danticat 212). The quality of the food might be read as a metaphor for the men’s disillusionment with the U.S.—although they likely left Haiti in search of a better, promise-filled life, they were greeted with state-sanctioned punishment and consequential illness. Beyond the poor quality of the food, the men described bearing witness to physical beatings, one man “asked us to tell the world the detainees were beaten sometimes. He told of a friend who’d had his back broken by a guard and was deported before he could get medical attention” (Danticat 212). In many ways, this earlier encounter with detainees in Krome,

³⁸ During the visit, she notes how similar the center is to a prison: “a group of men in identical dark blue overalls had been escorted into a covered, chain-link fenced, concrete patio rimmed by rows of barbed wire. The men walked in two straight lines, sat at the long cafeteria style table and told our delegation their stories” (Danticat 211). The description of barbed wire and use of uniforms highlights the criminalization of those who are only guilty of being born outside of the US’s borders.

and their experience of physical violence and withholding of medical care foreshadows her uncle's death.

When Danticat transitions from discussing the detainees' experiences in Krome to detailing her uncle's experiences in the detention center preceding his death, she adopts a documentary tone, as opposed to the anecdotal tone used throughout, signaling the institutional language and procedures that lead to her uncle's death. For example, Edwidge Danticat presents Joseph Danticat's interview as a transcript, where Danticat even notes grammatical errors in the intake officer's line of questioning: "Have you had [sic] applied for political asylum before in the United States or any other country?" (219). The invocation of institutional, sanitized language continues, as Danticat traces her uncle's movements while at Krome. She notes that at "7:40p.m., he was given some soda and chips" and notes a phone call to another family member, Franck, at 10:03pm in which Franck was "asked...whether Uncle Joseph had filed an application to become a US resident in 1984" (Danticat 220). Danticat's reliance on these transcripts demonstrates the physical distance between herself and her uncle, and, it follows, the social separation Krome has successfully accomplished.

Danticat's reliance on state documents is most notable in her reconstruction of the medical neglect that caused her uncle's death. In Edwidge Danticat's telling, Joseph Danticat's death is the result of an enactment of what Michel Foucault calls "biopower," or the "numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations" (140). Danticat illustrates her uncle's subjugation by detailing the ongoing weaponization of his physical ailments after his medicine is confiscated. Although the interviewer asks about Joseph's prescription medication during the intake interview, Danticat notes that "the transcript has neither my uncle nor the interviewer mentioning two rum bottles filled with herbal medicine...as

well as the smaller bottles of prescription pills he was taking for his blood pressure and inflamed prostate” (Danticat 218). Instead, the transcriber notes parenthetically that Joseph Danticat took “ibuprofen... for back and chest pain” (218). Neither Danticat nor the audience can verify the exchange between the CBP officer and Joseph, but the annotations suggest that the officer summarily determined that a common, over-the-counter drug could comprehensively address Joseph Danticat’s multiple physical ailments. Later, Krome officials confiscate Joseph Danticat’s belongings, including money and medicine, after he goes through the property inventory at Krome Detention Center. In her overview of the catalog of Joseph’s possessions, Danticat remarks, “again there’s no mention of the herbal medicine or the pills he was taking for his blood pressure and inflamed prostate (226). She then explains that an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer “later derogatorily [referred] to [Joseph’s] traditional medicine as ‘a voodoo-like potion’” (226). A simplistic, reductive perception of Haitian spirituality leads to the dismissal of Joseph’s medical needs and the confiscation of his medicine. By the end of the day Joseph’s “blood pressure was so high that he was assigned to the Short Stay Unit, a medical facility inside the prison,” where his condition continually declines (Danticat 227).

Danticat’s description of her uncle’s deterioration and the poor quality of medical attention he receives implicates officials at the detention center in disallowing the lives of Haitian refugees.³⁹ Edwidge Danticat recalls the record of his death, which states that during a meeting with an immigration attorney that is supervised by a detention officer at Krome, Joseph “appeared to be having a seizure. His body stiffened. His legs jerked forward...he began to vomit...out of his mouth, his nose, as well as the tracheotomy hole in his neck” (232). In spite of the obvious signs of Danticat’s illness, when the medic arrives, they assert that they believe “he

³⁹ I borrow this phrasing from Foucault and the language he uses to define biopower: “a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (138). See *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*.

is faking” (234). This nonsensical assessment demonstrates the medic’s callous approach to Danticat’s illness and exemplifies the medical treatment given to Danticat while at Krome. The immigration attorney explains to the medic “that right before he became sick [Joseph] had told him his medication had been taken away” (233). In response, the medic states that “the medications were indeed taken away,” a process that the medic explains was “in accordance with the facility’s regulations” (234). The medic goes on to note that Joseph Danticat’s medications “were substituted” (234). The medic’s routinized citation of institutional policy, even as Joseph Danticat vomited before them, indicates the enforcement of Krome’s policies even if they endanger the lives of the detainees.

The medic’s skepticism of Joseph Danticat’s illness delays his transport to a local, yet distant, hospital highlighting his limited access to medical care in Miami. Joseph Danticat’s condition continually worsens and he is transported to Jackson Memorial Hospital “with shackles on his feet” (236). This description demonstrates the criminalization of Haitian refugees: even though Joseph Danticat was violently ill, the medics/detention center guards deem him a flight risk, and the need to keep him away from the public sphere ultimately trumped his urgent need for medical care. Although Jackson Memorial Hospital is located approximately 30 minutes and 20 miles from Krome Detention Center, the medical transport chooses this hospital as opposed to one of the closer medical centers, such as Kendall Regional Medical Center (approximately 20 minutes and 9 miles away from Krome). Krome’s isolated location was on average about half an hour away from the nearest hospital, illustrating that the very geography of the city enables neglect and/or the intentional postponement of medical care.⁴⁰ The fastest route from Krome to

⁴⁰ I am mapping this location based on the hospitals in operation in 2004, when Joseph Danticat would have been at Krome. In 2011, West Kendall Baptist (12 minutes and 7 miles away from Krome) opened its doors. Although, given the decision to take Joseph to Jackson Memorial, the convenient location of the new hospital may not have made a difference.

Jackson Memorial is the Florida State Road 836 (an expressway), from which Miami International Airport is visible. The trip from the detention center to the hospital, assuming the ambulance took the fastest route, would chart a path between the spaces Joseph occupied during his brief time in Miami.

Edwidge Danticat provides a time-stamped recreation of Joseph's time at the hospital that highlights the routinized institutional treatment and neglect. Upon his arrival at the hospital, she details the (lack of) care provided to her uncle by outlining chronologically the events that precede his death:

My uncle's medical records indicate that he arrived in the emergency room at Jackson Memorial Hospital around 1:00pm with an intravenous drip in progress from Krome. He was evaluated by a nurse practitioner at 1:10pm...At 3:24pm, blood and urine samples were taken [and]...his CBC, or complete blood count test, displayed a higher than normal number of white blood cells, which hinted a possible infection...At 4:00pm, during a more thorough evaluation by the nurse practitioner, he complained of acute abdominal pain, nausea, and loss of appetite...his vital signs were checked again at midnight, then at 1:00am and 7:00am...By 11:00am his heart rate had decreased to 102 beats per minute, still distressingly high for an eighty-one-year-old man with his symptoms...The records indicate that he was seen for the first time by a physician at 1:00pm, exactly twenty-four hours after he'd been brought to the emergency room (237-239).

Once again, Danticat's necessary reliance on official records signals her uncle's isolation from loved ones during his painful death. She even omits sentimental or empathetic language, relying

on brusque, time-stamped, and institutional descriptions and her own speculation as to what ailed her uncle. Her focus on the medical procedures and speculation as to what may have been ailing her uncle, including a potential infection or his alarming heart rate, calls further attention to the medical neglect; had the medical professionals engaged in similar speculation, perhaps Joseph Danticat would have received appropriate, timely medical care. Even though Joseph Danticat's case is critical, he goes an entire day without seeing a doctor. This fact is more jarring given Danticat's reconstruction of events and detail of her uncle's condition.

Danticat's objective description of his passing exemplifies the spatial separation and neglect that characterized and caused her uncle's death. She notes that an immigration guard reports Joseph's death to medical professionals:

At 7:00pm, after more than twenty hours of no food and sugarless IV fluids, my uncle was sweating profusely and complained of weakness...at 7:55pm, his heart rate rose again, this time to 110 beats per minute. An electrocardiogram (EKG) was performed at 8:16pm. The next note on the chart shows that he was found pulseless and unresponsive by an immigration guard at 8:30pm (238-239)

With this description, Danticat continuously underscores the neglect of Joseph Danticat's medical needs, including the deprivation of food that likely contributed to his death. As she suggests, the management of the hospital mirrors the management of Krome: "while [the immigration lawyer] pleaded with the higher ups at Krome to let us visit, I pleaded with the nurse to let me speak to my uncle. But neither one of us got anywhere, not even after my uncle died" (241). The presence of the immigration guard further demonstrates the persistent and pervasive violence of the US's immigration mechanisms against Haitian refugees.

Even in death, questions about Joseph Danticat's ability to occupy space in the US sphere continue. Danticat explains that returning Joseph's body to Haiti was not an option, since "news of [his] detention and death had already spread in Bel Air and the gangs had rejoiced" and declared that they did not "want him back in Haiti...neither alive nor dead" (244). However, Joseph's son is reluctant to lay his father to rest in the US and cites the potential paradox of "[burying] his father... where he had been so brutally rejected" (244). Danticat does not detail any legal obstruction to burying her uncle in the US, suggesting that while Joseph was forbidden admission during his life, it was easily granted to him in death. Rather than refuge, Joseph can only use the U.S. as a cemetery. The family ultimately decides on cremation, and although Maximo applies for asylum, he is deported and ultimately dies during the 2010 Haitian earthquake ("A Little While"). Danticat's later address of her cousin's death suggests that had Maxo received asylum, he may have not been in Haiti during the earthquake. Maxo's biography as it appears in Danticat's oeuvre illustrates the ongoing consequences of the US's refusal to grant asylum to Haitian émigrés.

Danticat's concern for her unborn daughter similarly highlights the enduring effects of her uncle's deadly interaction with US immigration officials. As in "Children of the Sea," the address of reproduction in *Brother, I'm Dying* represents both potential hope for the future and a site of transmission for state-sanctioned violence. Danticat's pregnancy is revealed early in the memoir after she learns of her father's diagnosis with emphysema, and reflects that "[her] father was dying and [she] was pregnant" (14). Although her pregnancy is scarcely mentioned beyond the identification of this painful paradox, Danticat expresses concern that her uncle's death will impact her unborn daughter: "I worried for my daughter...How would this stress, my sleeping so little, my lifting and lowering things and stooping in and out of closets in the middle of the night

affect her?” (242). Through this description, Danticat suggests that her uncle’s death can potentially harm the future generation of Haitian Americans, signaling a repetitive and cyclical trauma among Haitian American families. Danticat had been moving things around to find immigration documents before her uncle’s death, and then after he dies, “reorganized the room in which [her] uncle was to have stayed, removing the paintings from the walls and stripping the bed of the sheets he was supposed to have slept on” (242). Joseph Danticat’s death results in the reorganization of private space, which Danticat devotes limited attention to throughout the memoir.

Where’s Little Haiti?: The Cultural Enclave within and beyond *Brother, I’m Dying*

The dearth of private spaces described in Danticat’s memoir enhances the work’s detail of anti-Haitian mechanisms in public spaces. However, the brief mention of private spaces documents continual economic disenfranchisement among Miami’s Haitian communities. Danticat explains in the first pages of the memoir that she left her parents in New York to move to Miami where she and her husband had been “renovating... [a house] in the Little Haiti section...for the past two years” (5). Though her description of private space is limited to this passing line, Danticat’s mention of the lengthy renovation process implies substantial repairs and is indicative of the housing and economic climates in Little Haiti and across South Florida’s Haitian communities. Data generated as early as 1999 indicates that “Little Haiti’s poverty rate of 45.6 percent [was] significantly higher than Miami’s citywide average of 31.2 percent and is roughly four times the rate for Florida as a whole” (Listokin 322). The case study details corresponding decreased homeownership, and in times of financial crisis, high rates of foreclosure with homes left in disrepair. This data reflects decreased economic opportunities resulting from discriminatory hiring practices that limit access to economic resources, which

Alex Stepick documents in *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (1993), explaining that the economic opportunity structure in Miami was not welcoming to people of Haitian descent and that even minimum wage jobs remained unavailable to them (56). Recent instances of job discrimination demonstrate that anti-Haitian hiring practices persist in Miami.⁴¹

Demographic information generated by *Social Explorer* reveal that in 2007 (the year the memoir was published), 65% of households in Little Haiti had an annual income below \$40,000. These conditions have continued in Little Haiti as indicated by the Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center's "Progress and Unmet Challenges: Sant La's Profile of The Haitian Community of Miami-Dade, 2010-2015." The report reveals that "in 2013 the unemployment rate increased to 10.4% and remained higher than the 7.1% unemployment rate reported for the county" and the median household income, \$32,973, is 21% lower than the county's (Sant La 10, 12).

Furthermore, the report outlines the effect of inhabitants' low-income rates on Haitian households:

Unsurprisingly, given the lower income levels of Haitian households, the 2013 data also shows that Haitian homeowners are significantly cost-burdened. The conventional public policy indicator of housing affordability in the United States is the percentage of income spent on housing. Housing expenditures that exceed 30% of household income have historically been viewed as an indicator of a housing affordability problem... There were 11,664 Haitian-occupied housing units with a mortgage in 2013, and 58.5% of households residing in those units paid more than 30% of their income on housing costs (Sant La).

⁴¹ A recent case of job discrimination suggests ongoing bias against Haitian job seekers in Miami. South Florida-based Interim Healthcare placed an ad for a registered nurse, and requested that "no Haitians" apply for the job (Campbell).

The high rates of cost-burdened households result in an increased inability to repair and maintain homes and higher rates of foreclosure. Persistent increased rates of unemployment, poverty, and consequential limited access to affordable housing results in the decreased value of Haitian spaces in the city.

Little Haiti, along with other Black-majority neighborhoods, has been made particularly and persistently vulnerable to gentrification because of its economic climate. Danticat explains that this climate influenced the acquisition of her home in the fall of 2002 during “the early onset of the real estate boom where you had a lot of gentrification here, a lot of shifts, a lot of turnovers.” Her descriptions of the radical changes in Little Haiti exemplify its vulnerability. Danticat continues, explaining that she and her husband “sort of joked that [they were] part of the gentrification” as they were able to purchase their home well below market value (“From Little Haiti”). While Danticat does not provide specific details of the cost of her house, its acquisition below market value highlights the devaluation of Haitian space in Miami.

The gentrification of Little Haiti is still a pressing issue today: in July of 2015, Jeffrey Pierre of the *Miami Herald* summarized Little Haiti’s current predicament by asserting that “Little Haiti is the next downtown neighborhood in place for a revival—or gentrification, depending on who [sic] you ask” (Pierre). Indeed, Pierre’s claim corresponds with recent municipal ordinance Sec. 30A-128, entitled “Creation of the task force on urban economic revitalization” (September 2015). The ordinance established the “Task Force on Urban Economic Revitalization ...[charged with] implementing comprehensive economic development strategies to create jobs, cause an increase in the tax base, and promote business activity in Targeted Urban Areas located in Miami-Dade County” (Sec. 30A-129). The ordinance goes on to list the Black majority areas targeted by this new initiative including “Liberty City, Model

City/Brownsville, Carol City, Goulds, Overtown, Little Haiti, [and] Opa-locka.” In spite of the commonality between the targeted areas, there is no mention of race in the ordinance. This absence highlights the colorblind rhetoric that informs city planning in Miami and is ultimately detrimental to disenfranchised populations. Christopher Mele suggests this is a common example of the intersection of neoliberal urban policies and colorblind racial discourse: “The regeneration of inner-city areas achieves wide support when promises of quality-of-life improvements... appear socially inclusive and appeal across racial, ethnic, and class boundaries” (600). The impetus of the initiative may seem to be the creation of jobs as an effort to enhance economic access to Black communities. The results, however, are often to increase the value of the property (and thus the amount of property taxes) at a rate that does not correspond to the economic opportunities available to working-class, low-income people residing in the areas resulting in their displacement.⁴²

The aforementioned statute groups and targets neighborhoods primarily occupied by Black Americans and Black Haitians, and thus homogenize these two groups. Gemima M. Remy outlines the tendency to homogenize Blackness in the US in “Haitian Immigrants and African-American Relations: Ethnic Dilemmas in a Racially-Stratified Society.” Remy explains, “due to the racial stratification inherent in the American society... Haitian immigrants are not only categorized as "blacks," but they are likely to be subjected to similar discriminatory practices as African Americans and other blacks from the West Indies” (15). The homogenized grouping of

⁴² Paradoxically, the low cost of houses in the Little Haiti area has enabled local organizations, such as the Haitian American Community Development Corporation to acquire, flip, and sell affordably to Haitian community members. As the HACDC’s website outlines, the organization “has rigorously undertaken the acquisition of distressed single family homes leveraging approximately \$1,400,000... HACDC has successfully secured an \$800,000 revolving line of credit from Neighborhood Lending Partners, Inc. for the acquisition of up to 20 single family homes and the City of North Miami has also generously awarded significant funding to HACDC in CHDO funds for the financing of homes located within the city” (HACDC).

Black Americans and people of Haitian descent belies conflicts between Haitian and Black people in the city. Remy notes that in spite of similar treatment because of state-sanctioned anti-Blackness, Haitian immigrants “cannot easily assimilate into the black American culture due to linguistic and cultural barriers” (15). Additionally, Remy continues, “many African Americans are apt to view Haitian immigrants as taking away the gains they have accrued in this country, Haitians have been put on the defensive, thus making it harder for African Americans to open up their arms and welcome Haitians into their existing communities” (15). Although the targeted language of ordinance 30A-129 suggests similar treatment of Black Americans and Haitians in Miami, other legislation highlights the discrete efforts to subject both groups.

Contemporary city mandates reveal South Florida’s concurrent yet contradictory investment in preserving Little Haiti as a culturally rich enclave while devaluing and pushing out the area’s inhabitants. Read together, these disparate ordinances reveal the enclave as a site of cultural celebration devoid of the celebration and preservation of Haitian people and their access to necessary resources. According to the City of Miami Planning Department’s “Historic Lemon City/Little Haiti Creole District Design Guidelines” which were promulgated in October 2008, the district “shall include all properties along NE 2nd Avenue between 52nd and 71st Streets.” The guidelines go on to state that edifices in the area “shall be designed with the Caribbean climate in mind and [complement] the Caribbean-French Creole designed facades reminiscent of the Haitian culture and community’s desired appearance” (“Little Haiti Creole District Design Guidelines”). The image on the following page of the Mache Ayisyen (Haitian market) is a classically cited example of the “Caribbean-French Creole” architecture that characterizes the area. In a recent interview, Danticat explains that the recreation of aspects of Haiti informed her decision to move to Miami: “it has all this flavor, this charm...all these colorful things...all my



Figure 10.

family members when they visit they say ‘it’s Haiti’” (“From Little Haiti”). Reflections of Danticat’s descriptions are visible in the area today in the bright colors of the Little Haiti Cultural center mural, depicting a Haitian street fair (see photo below) and the storefront of the local gift shop (right).



Figures 11-12.

The aesthetic Caribbeanization of the neighborhood reflects the city planning ordinance to replicate Caribbean climate and culture in Miami, signaling a valuation and celebration of Haitian culture. This valuation is strikingly ironic, given the treatment people of Haitian descent experience in the city, indexed by Danticat’s recollection of her uncle’s experiences. Glenn

Ligon comments on the concurrent marketability of cultural artifacts and the devaluation of their producers: “perhaps it is just a feeling that cultural products are used as substitutes for sustained and meaningful contact between people. It's like, ‘Send me something from where you are, but don't come here’” (Ligon). Joann Milord casts caution toward the superficial preservation and valuation of Haitian culture in Miami as part of her work on behalf of the Northeast Second Avenue Partnership, an organization striving to stop the displacement of Little Haiti’s residents. Milord asserts that while revitalizing the area is important, municipal ordinances should work to preserve “authentic Haitian culture, art, and history—and *the people who produce them*” (Milord). Milord’s language outlines the overwhelming devaluation of Haitian space, so long as Haitian people make up the majority of its inhabitants.

The Destruction of an Enclave: Gentrification, Reproduction, and Space in MJ Fievre’s “Sinkhole”

MJ Fievre thematizes the devaluation and potential disappearance of Little Haiti in the eponymous metaphor of her short story, “Sinkhole,” where a sinkhole opens up and swallows parts of the enclave. The short story addresses the experiences of both affluent and disenfranchised groups in Little Haiti and provides an omen that hyperbolizes the effects of gentrification on the area. Through its focus on a married couple in the wake of a miscarriage, the story similarly thematizes inheritance and reveals that the transfer of space, and maintenance of capital, including property, is contingent on conceptions of heteronormativity especially reproduction and futurity.⁴³ Fievre suggests that reproductive spatialization in particular

⁴³ I will return here to George Lipsitz’s racial-spatial analysis in *How Racism Takes Place* (2011) wherein Lipsitz attributes segregation and corresponding wealth disparities between white and Black people to the inheritance of land and other sources of capital. He explains that wealth among white people “accumulated during eras when direct and overt discrimination in government policies, home sales, mortgage lending, education, and employment systematically channeled assets to whites” (Lipsitz 2). He provides an example in the Homestead Act of 1862, which “gave away valuable acres of land for free to white families but expressly precluded participation by Blacks” and concludes that this has contributed to the family wealth of at least “forty-six million white adults today” (Lipsitz 2).

influences Black Haitians whose wealth and ownership manmade and natural disasters perpetually threaten.

Fievre's story is part of a collection titled *15 Views of Miami* (2014) which as a whole presents a literary cartography of Miami. In her introduction, Editor Jaquira Díaz explains that her intention was to provide a “diverse” collection that includes “fifteen different voices” whose stories represent “characters from different...neighborhoods” (7).⁴⁴ Each story details the lived experiences of a wide swath of Miami's inhabitants across racial, political, and economic spectrums and reveals how subjectivity influences how and more significantly, **where** people in the city live. Set in Little Haiti, “Sinkhole” provides a glimpse of how the devaluation of Haitian space affects the lives of upper-middle class people of Haitian descent. The story follows Pica and her husband Jonah, in the events that follow Pica's miscarriage. Both Pica and Jonah had begun affairs with Bruno and Simonise, respectively, to cope with their loss when, unexpectedly, a sinkhole mysteriously opens up beneath Pica and Jonah's house in Little Haiti, killing Jonah instantly and obliterating substantial parts of the home. This disaster leaves Pica alone to manage the remainder of Jonah's affairs, which include Jonah's disapproving mother and a child he fathered with Simonise.

The short story immediately demonstrates the prevalent anti-Haitian sentiment that influences the representation and construction of Haitian space in Miami. The narrator describes Jonah as an investor who “loved showing off his young and beautiful wife at banquets and fundraising galas” (83). At one such fundraiser or gala, Pica notes that “other investors drank martinis and referred to the neighborhood as Buena Vista, *not* Little Haiti, a name that brought

The capital through land as it was outlined in this act, Lipsitz explains, is a prime example of how the US's contemporary spatial organization is directly impacted by the racialized distribution of wealth.

images of dark-skinned boat people” (83). To Pica, the investors conflate “Haitian” with Blackness and poverty, associations the wealthy viewers would rather not see represented in Miami’s geospatial configuration or acknowledged in the language they use to describe, or rather, name, parts of the city. This erasure indexes contemporary debates about the naming of Little Haiti. A 2013 *Miami Herald* article, “Where’s Little Haiti? It’s a Big Question,” reports the ongoing debates to name Little Haiti that have “sparked a backlash and reignited old ethnic tensions and cultural divisions” (Green). Marleine Bastien, a local Haitian-American activist, explains, “every day you hear of a new group encroaching into what we know as Little Haiti” (Green). Bastien is likely responding to local Miami real estate investors like Peter Ehrlich who in the same article stresses that the area “is not Little Haiti, but historic Lemon City” (Green). Ehrlich continues, explaining that officially naming the neighborhood “Little Haiti” “will endanger the character of neighborhoods encompassed by the area known as Little Haiti... and could make the area less attractive to potential investors” (Green). Like the fictional investors in “Sinkhole” who refuse to acknowledge “Little Haiti,” Miami’s real estate marketers work to make Haitians invisible in the city. Green implicitly links any association to Haiti to a devaluation of the area and a related deterrent to investors. In “Sinkhole,” Jonah and other investors similarly discuss investing in the space of Little Haiti and make clear that referring to the region as a cultural enclave results in a potential devaluation.

“Sinkhole” suggests that wealth affords individuals, especially men, the power to manipulate and control space. Although the narrator does not specify the source of Jonah’s income, he has “money in trust funds—lots of it” that enables his interaction with investors who have deemed the reminders of a Haitian presence in Miami unprofitable (83). Pica, on the other hand, explains that “while she’d considered leaving [Jonah]...quite frankly [she] enjoyed being

kept...and didn't want to go back to waitressing at Le Bébé, the Haitian diner" (83). Pica does not have access to wealth and the corresponding spatial control afforded to Jonah, and would be dependent on a service job to generate income. Beyond Jonah's unspecified role in shaping Haitian space in the city, his large, privately owned house reflects his power in manipulating space in the neighborhood. As Pica notes, "Jonah had "built her [the house that] used to tower above palm trees and bougainvillea and hibiscus trees" (89). Wealth therefore corresponds with an ability to own and manipulate large properties that surpass the natural ecological features that surround the home. Inversely, the destruction of the home in an unforeseeable natural disaster suggests that Jonah is still vulnerable in spite of his wealth.

Given his prominent role in Little Haiti, Jonah's death in the sinkhole becomes symbolic of the disappearance and destruction of Haitian space chronicled in the *Miami Herald* stories about gentrification and real estate marketing. In her initial description of her husband, Pica imagines him as a "man of immovable solidity...solid granite" (85). Through this descriptor, the story links Jonah to building materials metaphorizing his formative role in Little Haiti as a real estate investor. Fictional reporters from the *Miami Herald* and the *Sun Sentinel* also refer to Jonah as "the Little Haiti man" which further connects him to the space of the neighborhood (85). The detailed description of Jonah's luxurious possessions suggests that Jonah's death reads as a commentary on the spatial organization of Little Haiti. Returning to her bedroom to find the aftermath of the sinkhole, Pica recounts that "she'd returned home just in time to hear the deafening noise and find Jonah's room gone—his king-sized bed, his mahogany dresser, his wide-screen TV" (84). The catalog of the objects, which emphasizes quality and luxury, foregrounds Jonah's material wealth and his capacity to contribute quite literally to the Haitian neighborhood. In this way, Jonah's death is an expansion on the figurative subsumption

described earlier in the story as a valuable and value-filled Haitian American space is obliterated. When compared to Joseph Danticat's death in *Brother, I'm Dying*, Jonah's death, although he is complicit in the devaluation of Haitian space as an investor, indexes the perpetual elimination of Haitian-Americans in Miami, whether they are downtrodden, or wealthy.

The explanations of Jonah's wealth, privilege, death, and the couple's inability to have children correspond with an inability to pass along wealth and valuables and thereby maintain Haitian spaces. The story's concurrent address of miscarriage and the destruction of space link marriage and childbearing to the transmission of cultural capital and the maintenance of value within Little Haiti. Pica recalls that "even though she hadn't wanted it," after the miscarriage, she "become[s] cold and distant, toxic even. When she didn't withdraw completely, she screamed, **banged doors shut**, threw things" (87; my emphasis). Pica's mourning over the loss of her child manifests spatially, as she takes out her grief on the house itself, which foreshadows its swift and total destruction in the sinkhole. I will return here to my aforementioned engagement with Lee Edelman and his suggestion that the Child informs all political decisions and thus, the social order of any given political system. I suggest that Jonah and Pica's miscarriage may be read both as a **refusal** to fulfill the mandate of the Child and an inability to do so, which makes visible the restrictive social order that privileges reproductive heterosex and informs the transfer of resources in the story.

With this suggestion, the sinkhole is both a literal representation of the devaluation of Haitian space and a disruption of the inheritance process that would perpetuate Haitian property in the area. As the story notes, the sinkhole takes place on a Thursday afternoon and "by Monday afternoon, all the walls of the house were gone" and Pica is reluctantly taken in by her disapproving mother-in-law, Philomena, who accuses her of being a "bruja" (witch), exclaiming

to Pica: “you don’t want a baby—and the baby dies. You don’t want my son—and the earth swallows him whole” (84). Philomena shames Pica for not desiring a child, and perceives her initial resistance to childbearing, the culmination of heteronormative marriage, as reflective of Pica’s supposed supernatural, malicious powers.

In spite of Philomena’s perception, the loss of her child haunts Pica, who she imagines as a son, which provides a further commentary on the transfer of wealth between males. In Pica’s grief, she begins hearing a baby’s cry that is only audible to her. In the first instance, Pica recalls while in her mother-in-law’s home, “a baby was crying somewhere, and Pica thought about the soft lavender color they’d planned to paint their baby’s room. She imagined the baby lying asleep on his bed, one fist clenched and raised over his head” (85). Although it is made clear that Pica has “no idea whether it was a boy or a girl,” the use of masculine pronouns suggests that the disrupted transmission of wealth was contingent on having a son and further elucidates the delineation of commerce to the masculine sphere. Jonah, having fathered a son with Simonise in an extramarital affair stops her from “getting rid of it... [begging] her not to” (89). Simonise ultimately explains that Jonah “said he would bring his son home once [Pica] [was] ready” (89). The son’s arrival within the house would have potentially reinforced the inheritance process, even though the child was conceived out of wedlock and Pica was involved with Bruno, to whom she returns in effort to escape the pressures to conform to a heteronormative lifestyle imposed on Pica by her mother-in-law’s verbal assaults.

Throughout the story, descriptions of Bruno, including his lifestyle, income/ class status, and housing situation in an impoverished area are juxtaposed with Jonah’s wealth. Bruno’s rented apartment is a “bare, little flat” with “uneven wooden floor[s]...on 59th Terrace” (84). Pica also notes that she never showers at Bruno’s apartment because “the water was brown no

matter how long you ran it” (84). This depiction suggests a smaller, worn down apartment that corresponds with Bruno’s limited budget as a local artist, reflecting the aforementioned valuation of cultural products but not their producers. Bruno’s apartment is also located in an area with high crime rates. While mourning the death of her husband and finding Bruno unsupportive, Pica departs angrily and is “swallowed by the Miami shadows, invisible to the Little Haiti hookers, the unshaven men making drug deals beside a dumpster” (89). While we might simplistically deem Little Haiti a low-income, “bad neighborhood,” the focus on prostitution and drug dealing suggests a predominance of alternate economies because of widespread socioeconomic disenfranchisement recorded by organizations like Sant La.

Fievre’s descriptions of cultural centers near Bruno’s apartment in Little Haiti anchor the geography of the story and characterize the setting as a distinctly Haitian space. Beyond the aforementioned Le Bébé (Chez Le Bébé, a prominent Haitian restaurant in Little Haiti), Pica explains that Bruno lives “behind the Little Haiti Cultural Center,” which defines its mission as “[providing] a space that brings together people and ideas to promote, showcase, and support Afro-Caribbean culture in South Florida” (LHCC). The center is thus committed to disseminating and supporting iterations of Afro-Caribbean culture across ages, educational levels, and provides a space for the creation, discussion, and transmission of Haitian culture in Miami. The cultural center and restaurant are approximately half a mile apart, each located off Northeast 2nd Avenue. Upon leaving Bruno’s apartment, Pica “stop[s] by Simonise’s apartment,” intending to inform her husband’s mistress about his death. Simonise lives “not too far from the Libreri Mapou bookstore” which the *Miami New Times* describes as the center of Haitian literary culture in Miami since 1986” (87; “Best Haitian Bookstore: Libreri Mapou”). According to the bookstore’s website, the owners make a conscious effort to collect “newspapers from Port-au-

Prince, Paris, Miami, and New York City to keep readers up to date on the latest news from the island and across the Haitian diaspora” (“Best Haitian Bookstore: Libreri Mapou”). The bookstore, and its mention within the story, link people of Haitian descent in Miami to the global Haitian Diaspora and imbue Pica’s walk with transnational implications. Further, Pica’s movements throughout the neighborhood move across a wide range of class experiences, from her mother in law’s nice house to Bruno’s dodgy apartment, and are punctuated by epicenters of Haitian culture in Miami. Read with the stories introductory reference to the gentrification of Little Haiti in mind, the description of Creole business names, street numbers, and cultural centers intensifies the gravity of real estate investors’ efforts to erase the city, both fictively and materially.

The open-ended conclusion of the story signals Pica’s potential inheritance of a child while reflecting on the destruction of her home. During a later visit to Bruno, where she accuses him of not being supportive in the wake of her loss, Pica continuously hears the sound of a baby crying which ultimately, and inexplicably, leads her back to her destroyed home, where she finds Simonise, holding the crying baby and “looking at the hole in the ground” (89). In this sequence of events, the story suggests that it is Jonah’s child crying that she hears and that draws her back to her ruined home. Simonise then offers the child to Pica, saying that it is either “[her] or the firehouse” and that the child is “[Pica’s] responsibility now.” The story concludes with Pica reflecting that “she was a mother now...her heart pumping a passion that caused both pleasure and pain” (90). The unusual exchange, wherein Pica acquires her husband’s child, born to another woman, occurs in front of the destroyed, sunken-in house. This proximity highlights the disruption of inheritance demonstrated by Pica’s adoption of a child and her inability to transfer the valuable house to the child in the wake of its destruction. While the story concludes by

inspiring questions, rather than providing answers, the image of Pica left with a new child in front of her destroyed house calls attention to the perpetual plight of even the most privileged portion of Miami's Haitian communities.

Conclusion

I have structured this chapter by separately analyzing three distinct, yet related, methods used to control and disappear Haitian people and space. While Edwidge Danticat's "Children of the Sea" reveals the political quagmire that inhibits access to the city for Haitian refugees escaping political unrest, violence, *Brother, I'm Dying*, details the construction of liminal spaces (and resulting liminal subjectivities) within US territory to enact violence and kill Haitian refugees by withholding medical care. MJ Fievre suggests that economic assimilation does not protect people of Haitian descent from anti-Haitian policies and hyperbolizes the destruction of Haitian space denoted by state-sanctioned gentrification. This examination reveals the different levels of oppression, both extreme and explicit like the detention center, and insidious, like the colorblind language evidenced in the aforementioned municipal ordinance that seeks to "rejuvenate" by targeting Black American and Black immigrant majority areas in Miami.

While the structure of the chapter enhances its legibility and appropriately denotes the evolution of strategies used to repel, entrap, and kill people of Haitian descent in the US, these systems and experiences are a cumulative, repetitive palimpsest, rather than discrete parts that can be easily placed in a chronological narrative. As recently as 2002, a boat full of approximately 200 Haitian refugees ran aground on Biscayne Bay and one contemporary article described the men, women, and children "swarming the highway leading into Miami" (Potter). Potter describes Haitian refugees as an infestation that must be contained. As a later article reports, "the refugees were put on buses and taken to detention centers," including Krome (Canedy). Krome Detention

Center continually publicizes its purpose in detaining Haitian nationals. After Akima, a private corporation, secured a ten-year contract to control the facility in 2014, it released an overview of the facility that explains: “Since 2009, the majority of Krome detainees are Haitians, followed by large numbers of Mexican, Guatemalan...and El Salvadoran nationals” (Akima). This catalog suggests a hyper-focus on Haitian detainees, a target population for both immigration policies and citywide ordinances. These issues are concurrent with recent efforts to gentrify Little Haiti and persistent economic disenfranchisement that reflects discriminatory hiring practices, resulting prevalent low-income rates, and the devaluation of Haitian-owned properties in the city.

Although I focus on Miami throughout this dissertation, I suggest that the landscape of the city is a reflection of anti-Haitian national and international policies that challenge conceptions of inclusivity in even the most diverse areas of the US. These sentiments are more visible given the large population of people of Haitian descent in South Florida, but can be extrapolated and modified to explore the experiences of Haitians in New York, which houses the second largest Haitian population in the US, and other Haitian communities. The metaphor of the hydra with which I began and structured the chapter might provide a pessimistic outlook on the cumulative and continuing history of discriminatory treatment of Haitian refugees in the US that Edwidge Danticat, MJ Fievre, and local community advocates make visible in their work. However, these works pinpoint particular policies, tendencies, and sentiments, including contemporary immigration policies, urban renewal ordinances, and operations of local detention centers, which shape the experiences of people of Haitian descent in Miami. They therefore provide points of entry to potentially, and hopefully, make and remake space that celebrates, protects, and values Haitian lives.

BECOMING WHITENESS, REJECTING BLACKNESS:

GENRE, CASTRO, AND TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY IN
CARLOS MOORE'S *PICHÓN* AND CARLOS EIRE'S *LEARNING
TO DIE IN MIAMI*

Some Questions for & Statements to the Afro-Latinx in Miami

“Oh, you speak Spanish?”

“Where are you from?”

“Are you Haitian?”

“Are you (voice drops to a whisper) *Black*?”

“You can’t be Nicaraguan/Cuban/Colombian!”

“You *must* be Dominican!”

“I have never seen a Nicaraguan who looks like you!”

“I thought all Cubans were white!”

“My family won’t like it if I bring home a Black guy/girl/human.”

“Oh, there are no Black people in Mexico.”

“But you’re not *Black Black*.”

In her 2003 article “‘Ser De Aqui’: Beyond the Cuban Exile Model,” Nancy Mirabal pinpoints a problematic dearth of attention to intra-ethnic differences in examinations of Cuban exile identity. Gesturing toward a larger problem within migrant studies, she writes: “Often an ‘unspoken’ in the process of Cuban exile identity formation, race is often subsumed under the theoretical rubric of ‘culture,’ both fostering and reinforcing the belief that all Cubans in the United States share the same experiences, regardless of race” (373). Mirabal advocates for a more inclusive model to analyze U.S. Cuban populations by encouraging attention to the complex interplay of race, ethnicity, and political affiliation that determines, and in some cases, **over** determines the experiences of Cuban émigrés in the U.S., and reveals a diverse Cuban- U.S. experience. In attempting to reframe Cuban Studies discourse, Mirabal along with other scholars have critiqued the prevalent focus on Cuban-Americans in Miami, Florida and advocates that discourse move away from the Miami Cuban Exile myth. In exploring this Cuban exile model myth in more detail Cheris Brewer Current asserts that this model “presents Cubans as overtly political, highly educated, universally white, economically successful, residents of Miami, and martyrs of Castro’s revolution” (ix). This typecasting, Current concludes, inhibits comprehensive consideration of how race, gender, sexuality, and other differences influence the formation of exile/migrant communities.

While I take seriously Mirabal’s observation of a myopic focus on Cuban assimilation in Miami, her suggestion to move away from the white-Cuban-exile-in-Miami myth obfuscates the presence of Afro-Cubans and corresponding challenges to the myth Mirabal describes. Further, while Mirabal’s investigation recalls and synthesizes historical context with immigration policy and public opinion, her work neglects the important, and understudied archive of Miami literature, which throws into relief various modes of assimilation and access to political,

economic, and cultural resources available to Cuban émigrés in Miami based on their subject positions. By making these differences visible, these works directly challenge colorblind narratives of pre and post-revolutionary Cuba.⁴⁵

In response to Mirabal's early call to diversify Cuban studies, this chapter joins recent work on the intersections of race, class, and gender within Cuban émigré communities.⁴⁶ Through a comparative analysis of two contemporary self-representations that reflect various, necessarily contradictory facets of the Cuban émigré experience in and beyond Miami: Carlos Moore's *Pichón: Race and Revolution in Castro's Cuba* (2008) and Carlos Eire's *Learning to Die in Miami: Confessions of a Refugee Boy* (2010). Carlos Moore, a sociologist, anthropologist, and anti-racist activist was born in 1942 in Camagüey, Cuba to Afro-Jamaican immigrants. Moore spends the majority of his youth in Cuba, but during political unrest with the dismantlement of Fulgencio Batista's regime, he and his family moved from Camagüey, Cuba to Harlem, New York in 1957. In the years thereafter, Moore returned to Cuba, he then lived in parts of Europe, before moving to Miami, and ultimately settling in Bahia, Brazil. He documents his life and his various movements with specific attention to the local and global racial politics in each location.

Carlos Eire is currently a Professor of History at Yale University where he studies Early Modern Europe. He was born in 1950 in Havana, Cuba, to an upper-middle class white family. He emigrated to the U.S. during Operation Pedro (or Peter) Pan in 1962. Operation Pedro Pan, as the title might suggest, was the coordinated removal of approximately 15,000 Cuban children

⁴⁵ In *Antiracism in Cuba: The Unfinished Revolution*, Devyn Spence Benson traces this colorblind rhetoric to "nineteenth century discourses that imagined Cuba as a raceless space of 'not blacks, not whites, only Cubans'" (Benson 3).

⁴⁶ In particular, Antonio J. Lopez's *Unbecoming Blackness: The Diaspora Cultures of Afro-Cuban America*, Frank Guridy's *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow*, and Devyn Spence Benson's *Anti-Racism in Cuba: The Unfinished Revolution* have addressed the intersections of citizenship status, class, and race in examinations of Cuban émigré communities in the U.S.

from Communist Cuba; the operation began almost immediately after Fidel Castro rose to power. Eire lived in Miami until the mid/late 1960s, at which point he moved to Chicago to live with extended family before moving to New Haven to undertake work for his PhD in History.

While my introduction of the texts gestures towards the differences between Moore's and Eire's lives, their biographies reveal several commonalities (beyond their first names). In addition to these similarities, I have chosen these works for a number of reasons: set from the authors' departures from Cuba in the late 1950s/early 1960s to the early 2000s, they enable a longitudinal examination of the intersections of immigration and race during global political upheaval, especially within and between the U.S. and Cuba. While the authors occupy different subject positions, and their lives follow vastly different trajectories, the memoirs overlap in their detailed description of time in Miami, Florida. The distinct forms of each memoir, which I will describe in further detail shortly, enable a consideration of how these authors fashion themselves and their narratives to reflect their various experiences of non-assimilation and passing because of language barriers, racial oppression, and class stratification. Finally, read together, these transnational texts reveal fissures and deep-seated conflicts within Cuban-American communities across racial, cultural, socioeconomic, political, and religious lines that expose how systems of anti-blackness and white supremacy shape experiences both in Cuba and in the U.S. These texts throw into stark relief rigid racial stratification in and between Cuba and the U.S. that affects the trajectories of these authors' lives.

Through this examination, I argue that Moore's and Eire's memoirs illustrate that their experiences of racialization as Cuban émigrés influence both what the authors write about their traversal of geopolitical borders, and **how** they write. In particular, the authors' respective descriptions of time spent in Miami reveal how locales enable or disable particular kinds of

political activity. In so doing, these texts problematize conceptions of Miami as an illustrative site of Cuban enterprise by outlining racialized obstacles to success. While I undertake an overall comparison and analysis of the memoirs as my attention to form suggests, I compare the authors' descriptions of their time in Miami because the works provide starkly different descriptions of the city. Through this comparison, I posit that these memoirs present Miami as a site of differentiation for Cuban-American assimilation. In this latter focus on form, I suggest that the comparative analysis of these works reveals what I am calling **raced forms**, or, how one's racial subject position influences their engagement with generic conventions of literature. I thus treat these texts separately, focusing on their unique engagement with distinct conventions of literature and posit that these engagements illuminate broader sociopolitical and cultural phenomena.

In the case of Moore's memoir, I consider how the form of the memoir emblemizes Moore's precarious navigation of Afro-Diasporic subjectivity in and between different contexts. In particular, I focus on Moore's replication of prominent tropes of the slave narrative. Moore's memoir features an authenticating preface, a depiction of northward movement that corresponds with a shift in political subjectivity, the symbolic representation of space to illuminate racial hierarchies, and an emphasis on literacy. I argue that his engagement with these tropes relates his experiences of immigration as an Afro-Cuban to legacies of racialized violence in and beyond his temporary host-nation. By utilizing this form to describe experiences of both the U.S. and Cuba, Moore highlights legacies of transnational racialized oppression. I thus categorize Moore's memoir as a neo-slave narrative that situates his experiences on a continuum stemming from the enslavement of Afro-descended people in the Western hemisphere. While there is much debate about the category of the neo-slave narrative, I depart from definitions of the genre that

necessitate explicit reference to slavery, or contemporary retellings of narratives of enslavement from the 19th century.⁴⁷ Instead, I suggest that by using the formal elements of the slave narrative in the telling of his experiences of immigration, Moore demonstrates a connection between enslavement, colonialism, and international politics during the latter half of the 20th century.

To the contrary, Eire's postmodern memoir thematizes hyphenated existence and fragmentation in an achronological narrative that exemplifies the disorienting experience of exile. I refer to hyphenation with Gustavo Perez Firmat's *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban American Way* in mind as perhaps the most popularized discussion of hyphenated experience in the Cuban American community. Firmat describes the experience of being Cuban and American as a challenging but ultimately beneficial experience, asserting:

The 1.5 individual [a person born in Cuba but who leaves before adulthood] is unique in that, unlike younger and older compatriots, he or she may actually find it possible to circulate within and through both the old and the new cultures. While one-and-a-halfers may never feel entirely at ease in either one, they are capable of availing themselves of the resources—linguistic, artistic, commercial—that both cultures have to offer (4).

Firmat's attention to circulation and resources, access to which is circumscribed by the collusion of capitalism and anti-blackness for Afro-Cuban émigrés, reveals a notable blind spot in Firmat's formulation of the 1.5 Cuban émigré as one who benefits from cross-cultural interaction. In many ways, the resourceful fluidity Firmat describes anticipates Eire's form. I suggest that the

⁴⁷ See Bernard Bell's *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition* for the first usage of "neo-slave narrative." More recently, Ashraf Rushdy's *Neo-slave Narratives: Studies in the Social Logic of a Literary Form* and Joy James' *The New Abolitionists: (Neo)Slave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writings* explore and expand the parameters of the genre.

fluidity typified in the structure of *Learning to Die in Miami* reflects the privilege afforded to Eire in both the U.S. and Cuba as a white man. I read Eire's frequent deployment of metaphors of slavery to illustrate the gravity of life in communist Cuba and concurrent disregard for racial/economic stratification amongst Cuban émigré populations as a series of colorblind gestures that reflect Eire's privilege. In so doing, I suggest that Eire provides insight into how he, as a white man, is racialized, and how he interprets this racialization. As part of this process of becoming white American, he uses raced metaphors of oppression to describe his experiences of assimilation.

Context

Both memoirs are set in a variety of contexts reflecting the authors' moves throughout their lives, but overlap in their focus on childhoods in Cuba and time spent in Miami, Florida. While Eire's memoir begins in Miami and features sporadic recollections of Cuba, Moore describes his time in Miami towards the end of his memoir, after spending most of his adolescence in New York City and returning to Cuba. The structure of the memoirs reflects the historical circumstances surrounding the authors' respective dates of departure: Moore leaves Cuba with his father before Fidel Castro took power in Cuba, while Eire departs in the early years of Castro's presidency.

In *Pichón*, Moore describes his birth and childhood in Central Lugareño, a town in Camagüey Cuba, which Moore describes as highly segregated by race and class. As Moore notes, his family, Black immigrants from Jamaica, lived in a "working class area, with dirt-floor, thatch-roofed houses" while the white elite lived "in a neighborhood of tall, shady trees, asphalt streets, and elegant concrete homes" (Moore 1). This opening description immediately introduces the prevalent themes of racialized segregation that Moore analyzes both in Cuba and

in the U.S. Moore's memoir covers a vast period, beginning with his birth and childhood in Central Lugareño in 1942 and his departure from Cuba during the political upheaval in 1957. The memoir concludes with his eventual inhabitation in Brazil in 2008.

In *Learning to Die in Miami*, Carlos Eire explains that he was born in Havana, Cuba in 1950 to a white upper-middle class family. The memoir is set primarily in Miami after Eire arrives in 1962 during the controversial Pedro Pan Operation wherein U.S. officials and sects of the Catholic Church evacuated thousands of Cuban children from the perceived threat of a communist government. This operation took place in collaboration with local and national governments in the U.S., as Yvonne Conde writes:

The Federal Children's Bureau negotiated a contact with the state of Florida's Department of Public Welfare on March 1, 1961 and signed an agreement to provide temporary aid for Cuban refugees, including care and protecting of unaccompanied children. This agreement provides for federal funds to carry out the plan. At that time, reimbursement rates were \$5.50 a day in individual homes or \$6.50 a day in group settings (five dollars and fifty cents in 1961 equals \$29.72 a day, or \$891.60 a month in 1997. Six dollars and fifty cents equals \$35.13 or \$1,054 a month). This reimbursement was allotted for food, shelter, and clothing (Conde 52).

As Conde's detailed description suggests, local institutions directed resources toward the children of the operation, facilitating their assimilation into U.S. culture. Eire describes being fostered by a Jewish couple, Louis and Norma Chait, whom Eire describes as "Chosen People, eternal exiles," and thus anticipates a particular kinship with his host family on the basis of their religious persecution—though there is no description of their persecution in the memoir (26).

Born about eight years apart, Eire and Moore occupy different political, racial, and economic positions that influence their experience of Fidel Castro's Revolution; while Eire consistently opposes Castro's policies, Moore supports Castro until realizing that his policies ultimately did very little to change the oppressed conditions of Afro-Cubans on the island. Moore thus provides experiential evidence of the pervasive colorblindness and corresponding anti-black violence in post-revolutionary Cuba Antonio Lopez describes in *Unbecoming Blackness: The Diaspora Cultures of Afro-Cuban America*. As Lopez asserts, "over the twentieth century, Cuban racial injustice continued despite (indeed, because of) postracial and mestizaje nationalisms, which, while providing room for Afro-Cuban mobility, often failed to alter the nation's de facto white privilege, a social legacy the 1959 revolution inherited and revised as raceless" (7). Pinpointing the rhetorical, but not systemic, erasure of anti-blackness in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Cuba, Lopez suggests that this erasure bred a renewed Cuban nationalism that was, and is, ultimately detrimental to Afro-Cubans.

In many ways, the myth of racial equality and reality of pervasive and persistent anti-blackness in Cuba reveal a striking paradox in Moore's and Eire's respective criticisms of the revolution: while both authors are disillusioned and disavow Castro's revolution, they do so for different reasons that are almost entirely informed by their subject positions. Eire is perhaps most critical of the revolution because of the seizure of property in efforts to redistribute wealth in Cuba, a plan that was intended to benefit, and in some cases, **did** benefit Afro-Cubans. Moore, while initially thrilled at the prospect of a more equitable society in Cuba, finds evidence of perpetual anti-blackness and thus concludes that the revolution is incomplete, and, more ominously, is as detrimental to Afro-Cuban life as pre-revolutionary politics. Moore represents his frustration with the revolution through his replication of tropes from the slave narrative.

Entering the U.S. Canon: Moore and the Form of the U.S. Slave Narrative

Moore notably adopts features of the U.S. slave narrative, including an authenticating preface, northward movement that corresponds with a shift in political subjectivity, and the role of literacy in political participation and self-advancement. I argue that his engagement with these tropes marks his effort to relate his experiences as an Afro-Cuban in the U.S. to legacies of racialized violence in his temporary host-nation, and the site of publication for his memoir. By utilizing this form to describe experiences of both the U.S. and Cuba, Moore spotlights and writes himself into legacies of racialized oppression on a global scale. I thus posit that Moore's engagement with the tropes of slave narratives, in formation of a neo-slave narrative, exemplifies a raced form to represent the Afro-Diasporic experience.

Maya Angelou, a prominent Black American author whose work thematizes racial and gender violence, wrote the foreword of *Pichón: Race and Revolution in Castro's Cuba*. Moore and Angelou met in Harlem during the 1960s, and Moore explains that after meeting Angelou he "sensed that this imposing woman was not about to vanish from [his] life just like that. Indeed, she was to change it" (108). In her foreword, Angelou writes, "Moore has written an astounding book about revolution, resistance, passion, and compassion. The plot could have been set in Ireland, in China, in Mississippi, or in Algeria. It is an irresistibly human tale" (ix). Beyond the praise of Moore's writing, her suggestion of the universal legibility of the memoir in a variety of contexts validates its Diasporic scope. Further, the specific reference to Mississippi implicitly invokes Southern legacies of racialized violence that form the backbone of Moore's memoir.

Given Angelou's prominence, both in Moore's life, and as an internationally renowned poet, memoirist, and activist, her introduction operates as an introduction to a U.S. audience, and exemplifies the complex stratification of Afro-Diasporic peoples by symbolically affording

Angelou more power to validate Moore's voice. In his groundbreaking work on the U.S. slave narrative, Robert Stepto provides a bit more insight into the purpose of the authenticating preface, explaining that "their primary function is, of course, to authenticate the former slave's account; in doing so, they are at least partially responsible for the narrative's acceptance as historical evidence" (Stepto 3). Moore's memoir repurposes this feature and in so doing, highlights Moore's efforts to reach U.S. literary circles. Moore's decision to write and publish the memoir in English perhaps more obviously indexes an effort to reach a U.S. audience.

Angelou's authenticating preface is paired with an image of the National Memorial African Bookstore, a critical locale in Moore's narrative, and I argue, another modification of a prominent trope in the U.S. slave narrative: literacy. Rather than focusing on learning to read, an integral feature of the slave narrative that scholars have treated as a critical step in the movement towards freedom, Moore discusses his development of political literacy that motivates him to participate in social justice movements.⁴⁸ The inclusion of the image of the bookstore on the same page as Angelou's authenticating foreword makes obvious the memoir's invocation of prominent tropes from the slave narrative from the outset.

⁴⁸ Many scholars, perhaps most prominently, Robert Stepto, Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Houston Baker have discussed the importance of literacy in the slave narrative genre. To summarize analyses provided by these and other scholars, most assert that for enslaved Black people, literacy was a significant marker of intelligence within the dominant Western intellectual tradition. Black literacy, then, directly rebuked claims of Black inferiority, and accomplished an additional, and equally important objective of enabling Black people, especially those who had been formally enslaved, to write themselves into existence and to share their experiences with multiple publics, which ultimately contributed to the abolition of slavery.

FOREWORD

Maya Angelou

Carlos Moore the Cuban, Carlos Moore the rebel, Carlos Moore the brother, and Carlos Moore the world citizen, are the same person.

In *Picbón*, the word in his country that is more negative than the *N* word in the United States, and the name he was called by his fellow citizens, Carlos Moore reveals himself as a human being who is better than the world that rejected him, and stronger than the world that wanted to see him dead, any way possible.

Moore has written an astounding book about revolution, resistance, passion, and compassion. The plot could have been set in Ireland, in China, in Mississippi, or in Algeria. It is an irresistibly human tale.



The National Memorial African Bookstore, headquarters of Harlem's black nationalists during the 1960s, where Carlos Moore had his fateful encounter with Maya Angelou.

ix

Figure 13

In the body of the memoir, Moore describes the importance of the bookstore in his understanding of global racial discrimination. He asserts that reading books about the U.S.'s and Cuba's histories, and Congo's history of Belgium domination "eroded my boyhood illusions

about the United States. The civil rights movement had been brought to my attention, and I followed the situation in the Southern states as eagerly as I did events in Cuba and the Congo. Those three realities became enmeshed in my consciousness as the entangled roots of a tree” (131). After educating himself on these global issues at the Memorial Bookstore, Moore determinedly protests the U.S.’s treatment of Cuba, and becomes intimately acquainted with methods of political repression in the U.S. The bookstore, and Moore’s development of political literacy, enables his resistance to oppressive structures, while simultaneously increasing his understanding of those structures. Indeed, by metaphorizing the realities of Cuba, the Southern U.S., and parts of Africa as the roots of a tree, Moore highlights the interconnected realities of white supremacy in a variety of contexts. Further, he suggests that knowing about these events enhances his personal growth and sparks his commitment to anti-racist activism, which I will return to in a moment.

Beyond the introductory reference to these tropes of the slave narrative, the linear chronology of the memoir corresponds with Moore’s northward movement and acquisition of political agency and thus follows the structure of the slave narrative as described by Robert Stepto. Stepto writes: “the classic ascent narrative launches an ‘enslaved’ and semi-literate figure on a ritualized journey...charted [through]... systems of signs that the questing figure must read in order to be both increasingly literate and increasingly free” (167). As Stepto suggests, the slave narrative traditionally follows a movement northward that corresponds with the acquisition of freedom and personhood, often in limited form(s). Initially, Moore’s memoir seems to emulate this structure, as is demonstrated by his description of racialized violence and oppression in Cuba and subsequent idealization of the U.S.

Moore opens his memoir with an outline of cultural and racial diversity and corresponding social hierarchies in Cuba, promptly dispelling misconceptions of homogeneity among Cubans and situating himself in Cuba's political landscape. He writes that among Cuba's demographic, "*guajiros*," or "white cane cutters" were "particularly despised" (2). He continues: "*Criollos*, native Cuban whites were at the top of the racial pecking order alongside the Americans and the Spanish born *Gallegos*." Moore immediately characterizes Cuba's racial landscape by highlighting white supremacy and histories of colonialism and ongoing imperialism by the U.S. He continues, describing his position in the pecking order as the son of Jamaican immigrants: "Last in descending order, came native Cuban blacks, known as *Negroes*, headed by the fair-skinned *Mulattoes*, then West Indians with Haitians closing the pack" (2). Moore thus outlines what Edward E. Telles describes as a pigmentocratic social organization, wherein skin tone determines social status, and asserts that foreign-born Black people occupy the lowest rung of society. He continues: "Whites grumbled, 'these foreign Negroes are taking jobs away from true Cubans!'" (2). Moore highlights the perception of Afro-Cubans and the disparaging reputation of Black immigrants in Cuba, situating Cuba as a site of arrival for diasporic people that has shifted Cuba's racial and cultural demographic for centuries.

The title of Moore's memoir indexes the dehumanizing treatment of Afro-Cubans and immigrants of Afro-descent in Cuba. Moore recalls bullies calling him "pichón," a term that Moore explains means "a bald-headed, curved-beaked, carrion-eating buzzard...vicious, repulsive birds" as a form of epistemic violence (9). Moore explains that beyond learning Afro-Cubans were relegated to lower-income neighborhoods and that white teachers "inculcated [disdain] in black kids against [their] own color," he had grown accustomed to "being called *negrito bizco*, cross-eyed nigger... [and] *negrito de mierda*" (6; 7). Moore thus outlines systemic

racism, through his focus on segregation and institutionalization of racist ideologies in Cuba's educational system during the 1940s and 50s, as well as the epistemic violence Moore experienced through his persistent experiences of hate speech.

Moore ultimately contrasts these experiences in Cuba with his initial interpretation of the U.S., and specifically the opportunities afforded to Black people there: "My image of black Americans conformed to my overblown view of America: they were the richest, handsomest, most powerful blacks on the planet!" (70). Moore implicitly links the power of Black Americans to the opportunistic qualities of the U.S. as a whole, writing "everything I had heard seemed true: America was a veritable land of opportunity. No one could have made me think otherwise" (73). Through this description, Moore suggests that new opportunities for self-advancement unavailable to him in Cuba were now available in the U.S.

Moore's description of moving to the U.S. also thematizes the aforementioned shifts in subjectivity characteristic of the U.S. slave narrative, especially as it relates to his adoption of an "American" identity. After exploring his new apartment with his family and imagining the opportunities available to him in the U.S., Moore asserts that:

I did not feel the blind commitment to my homeland expected of someone brought up in the ultra-nationalistic Cuban school system. I was not sure I was even Cuban. I no longer cared. Henceforth, I would do everything to be an *American*. I was through with my wretched native island and anxious to put my painful childhood memories behind me (72).

Moore's declared indifference to his de-raced Cuban identity, and determination to become American signals a shift in Moore's economic, political, and social positionality that is akin to similar shifts described in the U.S. slave narrative. I do not equate Moore's

experiences in Cuba with slavery in either a U.S. or Cuban context, nor do I believe that Moore is convinced of such an equation. Instead, I suggest that Moore situates his experiences on a continuum that stems from the enslavement of Black people in the Western hemisphere to demonstrate how international politics during the 1950s emulate these systems of violence globally.

Moore's comparative assessment of Cuba and the U.S. suggests implicitly that the violence of systemic racism is contingent on location, mimicking the construction of the mythic North in slave narratives. In this, Moore once again references a trope of the U.S. slave narrative by conveying "the idea that a landscape becomes symbolic in literature when it is a region in time and space offering spatial expressions of social structures" (Step 67). He ultimately complicates this symbolism after becoming more intimately equated with the political and cultural landscapes of the U.S., which is best exemplified through his comparison of New York City and Miami.

Race and Revolution in Carlos Moore's Cuban America

After his arrival in the U.S. in 1958, Moore provides contrasting descriptions of Harlem, New York City and Miami, Florida, suggesting that delineations in the Cuban émigré communities influence the experiences of each locale. Put differently, Moore's comparative descriptions of a bustling Northern and a burgeoning Southern city reveal Harlem as a site that enables political protest and involvement with leftist organizations, including Moore's interaction with Castro and his entourage, while Miami disables such involvement and becomes a site of persistent persecution for Moore.

Moore suggests that his inhabitation in New York during the summer of 1960 was imperative for his commitment to a leftist revolution. He writes: "in that summer of 1960...many

things converged: the situation in the Congo, the Revolution in Cuba, the fire-and-brimstone speeches of Malcolm X, and Marxism” (138). Moore describes prominent social and political events that specifically addressed racial and class-based violence globally. He continues, noting that these social phenomena seemed to cohere during Fidel Castro’s visit to New York “to address the United Nations General Assembly,” an event that Moore explains “would completely change the course of [his] life” (139). Castro’s arrival thrusts him into the local pro-Castro movements, and ultimately onto watch lists of prominent U.S. organizations.

In contrast to revolution in Harlem, Moore declares that Miami became a right wing stronghold for white Cubans. In September of 1960, at seventeen years old, Moore had become invested enough in Fidel Castro’s Revolution to be asked to “work the crowds” when Castro visited New York (144). Moore explains that he “spoke to the crowds about those Cubans who were running to Miami to flee the Revolution,” during his speech. He recalls declaring: ““They are the most corrupt, racist white people of Cuba.”” (144). Moore references the first major wave of emigration from Cuba, often colloquially referred to as the Golden Exiles who arrived in Miami roughly between 1959 and 1965. María Cristina García provides an explanation for this moniker: “Cubans of the upper class were the first to leave” (García 13). While “golden” is linked to economic status, it may also be an implicit commentary on the racial makeup of this group as García notes, the earliest arrivals were “disproportionately white” and generally held rigid anti-communist views suggesting that these exiles were “exemplary” in multiple categories (García xi). In this, Moore suggests that the revolution revealed the asymmetrical class system that disproportionately benefitted white people who sought to maintain their wealth in Miami. He continues, explaining that “Once they arrived in Miami, whites were saying that communism had taken over Cuba and that the Revolution was red and black. That convinced me that the

Revolution was **our** thing...All blacks with any self-respect must support the Revolution” (144; my emphasis). Moore takes ownership of the revolution, suggesting that Castro and his supporters enacted the Revolution specifically to benefit Afro-Cubans. Moore continuously contrasts New York, his current inhabitation with Miami, and presents the latter city as a barricade to the transmission of revolutionary information. Moore focuses specifically on Miami’s proximal location to Cuba, and the fact that, as a port city, Miami becomes an integral location in filtering what enters the U.S. from the Caribbean. As Moore explains, the FBI seized documents confirming his involvement in revolutionary activity in New York in Miami (164).

Moore’s derision of Miami continues, as he characterizes the city as a hotbed for counterrevolutionary activities and links white Cubans in Miami to white supremacist organizations in the U.S. South. Shortly after resolving to return to Cuba in early 1961, Moore learns of the Bay of Pigs invasion, a U.S.-based effort to overthrow Castro, from a headline in an unnamed newspaper: “‘CUBA INVADED BY MIAMI-BASED CUBAN EXILES.’ The headlines on April 17, 1961 were like thunderbolts. CIA-trained white Cubans supported by President John F. Kennedy had invaded Cuba...The same white Cubans who had helped Fidel Castro take power over two years before were now doing everything possible to topple the Revolution he had created against their narrow interests and racist whims” (158). Moore casts counterrevolutionary efforts as a struggle to re-establish white supremacy and a return to the “pecking order” Moore outlines in the beginning of his memoir.

U.S. officials and media prominently rendered The Bay of Pigs invasion as a political attack on Communism, widely represented as an affront to personal liberties. Contemporary U.S. President John F. Kennedy Jr. frequently contrasted communism with an elusive “freedom” throughout his short tenure as president. For example, during his presidential campaign October

6, 1960 Democratic Dinner in Cincinnati, Ohio, he declared that efforts “to halt the advance of Latin communism” would help to “create a Latin America where freedom can flourish” (Kennedy). Kennedy’s language, which presents the U.S. as an actor in halting or creating political systems in passive Latin America exemplifies U.S. paternalism and Kennedy’s implicit disregard for Latin American sovereignty. He continues, asserting that Castro had “transformed the island of Cuba into a hostile and militant Communist satellite -a base from which to carry Communist infiltration and subversion throughout the Americas” (Kennedy). He explained that Cuba’s proximity to the U.S. rendered it particularly vulnerable to what he elsewhere described as “Communist penetration,” and noted, “This is a critical situation - to find so dangerous an enemy on our very doorstep” (Kennedy). As Kennedy’s focus on Cuba’s proximity suggests, Miami, and South Florida in general, became an imperative site in this global debate.

Moore, critical of the U.S. paternalism demonstrated by John F. Kennedy Jr.’s speech, and convinced that anti-communist strategies were white supremacist, continued his leftist activism in New York. During a mass demonstration in front of the United Nations building on the first day of the Bay of Pigs Invasion (April 17, 1961), Moore “rall[ies] people in Harlem” (158). During the rally, Moore shouts “The Revolution that brought dignity to black people is endangered by the ‘Ku-Klux-Kubans’ in Miami, the lynchers of Mississippi, and the white imperialists in Washington who murdered [Patrice] Lumumba” (159). With this assertion, Moore alliteratively links southern legacies of anti-blackness and global imperialism to white Cuban émigrés and their effort to thwart Castro’s revolution. In so doing, the role of white Cubans in Miami becomes metonymic for national efforts to destroy Castro’s administration, and international efforts to thwart anti-racist resistance.

Moore continues this metonym after the announcement of the failure of the invasion, and problematizes his engagement with the mythic North trope of the slave narrative to bolster his criticism of U.S. imperialism. As he writes, “Two days after the invasion, the news took an altogether different slant; the tables were turned. ‘ANTI-CASTRO FORCES ROUTED!’, read the headlines. The Miami forces had been crushed...Fidel had come out on top in his clash with El Monstruo del Norte—the Monster of the North. But we feared the failure of the Miami exiles would lead to a full-scale retaliation” (164). Moore’s citation of Castro’s dubbing of the U.S. as the monstrous North relies on intentionally abstract phrasing that can reference anti-Castro supporters in the U.S. and the U.S. as a political body that sanctioned and financially supported the Bay of Pigs invasion. Further, his explicit reference to the North, while citing Castro, also directly counters his earlier idealization of the U.S. as a site that enabled advancement for people of Afro-descent. Once again, international debate is linked to Miami, which is represented as a base for anti-Castro strategy, and based on Moore’s description, anti-Black politics. Notably, Moore diminishes the involvement of the U.S. government in the Bay of Pigs invasion, thus exaggerating the role white Cubans from Miami had in actively opposing Castro’s rule.

His adamant support for Castro inspires him to return to Cuba in August of 1961, where he ultimately becomes disillusioned with the Revolution after discovering that anti-blackness had persisted during Castro’s foment of power. By recalling this revelation, Moore asserts that anti-blackness undergirds both communism in Cuba and capitalism in the U.S. Moore attributes his return to Cuba to his love for Castro, as he writes, “my love for Fidel Castro was genuine, profound. The Revolution he ushered into Cuba was changing the face of our country. In a flicker of a second, I’d decided on my next big step in life: I would return to my country” (146). In spite of his enthusiasm for Castro, he harbors some suspicion of Castro when observing the

entourage traveling with him to New York, Moore asks: “why had no blacks come from Cuba with Castro or the other Cuban delegations? Why were all Cuba’s UN diplomats white? Why were all government ministers white?” (148). Ignoring his better judgment, Moore maintains his faith in Castro’s Revolution, but his suspicions are confirmed upon returning to Cuba and discussing race in Cuba with prominent Afro-Cuban intellectuals. When Moore meets with Black Marxist historian Walterio Carbonell, he makes unambiguous claims “that the Revolution not only had not eradicated racism, but that the regime was scuttling the issue under the rug” (176).⁴⁹ Moore witnesses further evidence of discrimination in Cuba, including the disproportionate imprisonment of Afro-Cuban men and women. Confronting an authority figure in Castro’s administration, Moore asks: “What do you intend to do about the disproportionate number of black men and women in Cuban prisons? Why are 85 percent of prisoners black? Why do so many blacks live in ghettos?” (286). Through this interrogation, Moore highlights the use of imprisonment as a form of racialized population control and ongoing segregation of Cuba’s population.⁵⁰ Moore also witnesses Castro’s associates drive another prominent Afro-Cuban representative into exile after he advocated for racial justice, Moore decides to leave Cuba and study sociology and anthropology, fields of study no longer permitted in Cuba. After earning his PhD from the University of Paris, Moore decides not to return to Cuba and explores the academic job market, an exploration that leads him to Miami.

⁴⁹ Moore retrospectively realizes that the Castro had largely ignored issues of race, explaining: “Castro’s limitations on the question of race were glaring from the start. Two months after seizing power he announced the end of discrimination in public but said that private racism was a personal matter with which the government had no business interfering” (179).

⁵⁰ The high imprisonment rates of Afro-Cubans are particularly telling given the demographic of Cubans given permission to leave Cuba during the Mariel Boatlift. This population included, among others, individuals who had been incarcerated in Cuban prisons and housed in mental asylums. Scholars have remarked that of the waves of emigration from Cuba, the Boatlift was unique in that a majority of the emigres were Black or mulatto. Of the boatlift, Castro said that he had “flushed the toilets” of Cuba onto the U.S., implying that beyond ridding the island of some political dissidents, the Boatlift operated as a form of ethnic/racial cleansing of the island.

While searching for an academic job, Moore finds his reputation of supporting the Revolution follows him in spite of his recent rejection of Castro's methods. As Moore notes, his applications for teaching positions at American universities "were turned down," until 1986 when he received "an offer from Miami, of all places, stronghold of the rabidly right-wing Cuban exiles" (301). Moore receives an offer for a visiting position in the joint Sociology and Anthropology Department at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami. According to the contemporary department Chair, Lisandro Peres, he recruited Moore to FIU as a visiting professor to provide a unique, and challenging, perspective to the majority white/white-Cuban department. As Peres asserts, "I knew Carlos would bring in a refreshing and different point of view on Cuban history...He represented a challenge to the traditional perspective of Cuba" (Chardy). By focusing on Cuba's Black history, Moore challenged the white-dominated Cuban history that characterized the department until his arrival. Unfortunately, members of the Cuban community in Miami ultimately persecuted Moore for doing precisely what Peres hired him to do.

After accepting the position at Florida International University, Moore asserts that his courses were:

denounced [by]...the local Spanish-speaking radio stations...as Communist propaganda. I could only be a Communist provocateur and a Castro undercover agent since I talked about the racial oppression and segregation that prevailed in Cuba well before Castro took power. Apparently I had come to Miami to sow racial antagonism within the ranks of the exile community...The conflict with the anti-Castro Cubans became so fevered that *The Miami Herald* later devoted three pages to the controversy. Examining the content of my university courses, the

newspaper concluded that the charges against me were baseless. Simply put, I clashed with a segment of the white Cuban community whose entrenched pre-Castro racism I had exposed. These people paraded as democratic freedom fighters and I had unmasked them as disgruntled racial oppressors in search of a comeback. My courses delegitimized them politically (301).

In detailing his experiences of persecution by the white Cuban community in Miami, Moore suggests that even teaching about racialized oppression was an affront and thus details the virulent racism and pervasive colorblindness that characterizes the Cuban community in Miami. He once again suggests that efforts to overthrow Castro's administration were an effort to re-establish white supremacy on the island. In the aforementioned newspaper article, "Heresy or History Teachings on Cuban Racism Still Outrage Exile Community," for which Moore was interviewed, he outlines in further detail how white Cubans in Miami surveilled him during his tenure at Florida International University. He explains that WAQI-Radio Mambi directly quoted his lectures, and he soon realized "the daughter of one of the station owners was secretly taping his lectures" (Chardy). In these lectures, Moore summarizes, he argued that Cuban icons such as

José Martí... [and] Carlos Manuel de Cespedes ...were racists or slave owners who exploited Black Nationalism for political or economic purposes and to ensure that blacks never took power. Further, traditional histories of the island deliberately overlook the contribution of such significant black leaders as Antonio Maceo -- an independence war leader -- or Jose Antonio Aponte -- a pioneer of the anti-slavery struggle (Chardy).

By challenging prominent narratives of Cuban heroes, Moore's course disrupted whitewashed narratives of Cuban history and made Moore a target for university officials as well as local

community members. When interviewed by *Miami Herald* journalist Alfonso Chardy, Jose Rodriguez, one of the owners of Radio Mambi asserted that he “believe[s] [Moore] is an individual who is resentful of whites” (Chardy). Rodriguez interprets Moore’s efforts to expand prevalent (mis)understandings of Cuban history resentfully, and he assumes that Moore is attempting to stir up and fabricate racial antagonisms.

Beyond the aforementioned amateur espionage in Moore’s classroom, university records indicate that Moore experienced acts of racist violence while living on campus, an arrangement that was typical for visiting professors during the 1980s at FIU. On January 26, 1987, Moore filed a campus police report, wherein Moore reported verbal abuse from an undergraduate student. The report reads:

At 8:17 am, 26 January 1987, Dr. Carlos Moore, Professor in the Sociology and Anthropology Dept. responded to the Public Safety Tower to report a disturbance. According to Dr. Moore, on 25 January 1987 at 10:30 pm he returned to his residence and heard loud and excessive noise and the sound of chairs being thrown around in Dorm “J” room 209. His wife stated the noise had been going on for a long period of time. Dr. Moore responded to room 209 and asked the occupants to lower the noise. One of the occupants, Mr. Tony Mallek, stated to the victim, ‘we have the right to make noise and if you don’t like it go get the police; we don’t give a fuck.’ Dr. Moore, the victim, stated, “I don’t have to take this abusive language. I will contact the police.” As Dr. Moore was leaving the area, one of the occupants shouted ‘That God damn nigger.’ The victim contacted the Head Resident, Mr. Robert Barragan, and FIU Public Safety (FIU).

To protect the students' anonymity, records do not indicate the consequences of Mr. Mallek's actions, but the exchange provides insight into FIU's culture of racialized violence. Another record of the incident describes the perspective of the officer who reported to the scene, Officer E.J. Nichols. Nichols admits that although he encouraged Mr. Mallek to avoid using hate speech, he accused Moore of causing an additional disturbance to that which Moore originally intended to report. Although Nichols apologized to Moore, the incident as it is recreated in the police records suggest that Moore was criminalized for "causing a scene" after experiencing a verbal assault. This interaction indexes both the officer's indifference to the trauma Moore experienced, and victim-blaming that both diminishes Moore's experience and makes light of racial violence on FIU's campus.

In spite, or perhaps because of the violence and persecution Moore experienced, he managed to plan the 1987 "Negritude, Ethnicity and Afro Cultures in the Americas" conference at FIU that featured, amongst others, lectures from Leopold Senghor, Alex Haley, and Aimé Césaire, and showcased Moore's commitment to investigating and teaching about race in the Caribbean. The conference was widely reported in U.S. national media as a momentous occasion. In the *New York Times*, Jon Nordheimer reported that "Florida International University, a 22-year-old state school" was hosting/sponsoring "the largest international meeting on negritude since a conference was held in Rome in 1959" (Nordheimer). FIU's sponsorship of the event, and Moore's description of FIU as a site of racist persecution, reveals the at-times tenuous, and contradictory ground of support and violence within neoliberal institutions. Perhaps the most unsettling description of Moore's experiences comes from the contemporary President of FIU, Modesto A. Maidique. In discussing Moore's involvement in the convening of the conference to potential donor, Commissioner of Miami, Miller J. Dawkins, Maidique writes:

The University is fortunate to have Dr. Carlos Moore, a Visiting Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Dr. Moore, as you know, is the conference convener. He captures the essence of this conference and its significance for our community; he is an Afro-Cuban with an Anglo name and a French education. He brings together the best of many cultural and ethnic heritages. We hope that the City of Miami and Dade County will help the university to do the same (Maidique 1986).

While Maidique's factual descriptions are celebratory of Moore's diasporic experiences, when considered alongside both Maidique's and other officials investments in putting Florida International University "on the map," these descriptions seem exploitative and afford Moore symbolic status in institutional affairs, especially when considering Moore's vexed interactions at FIU. In other correspondence between the conference organizers and potential donors, organizers noted that Florida International University must play "an increasingly larger role...in [Miami's] community" and that the conference would "help the University to become recognized as a key player in the cross-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-ethnic process that we are evolving in South Florida" (Corbelle 1986). While these interactions celebrate Miami's cultural climate, Moore addresses the tension between diversity and racialized hierarchies in Miami, explaining:

Miami is a place that is multiracial and multiethnic, but the relations between the groups are not satisfying...People need to understand that what is different is not threatening... There is friction among the white Cuban exiles who dominate Miami and black Cubans, with non-Latin whites, or Anglos, with blacks, and with Haitian exiles. Miami's black community, torn by violent racial disturbances in

1980 and 1982, is likely to benefit from the conference because of the collection of prestigious black thinkers (Sewell).

Moore continues to pinpoint racial hierarchies in Miami that favor white Cubans, and suggests that these hierarchies pervade even multiethnic and multiracial societies. In particular, he focuses on riots in Overtown and Liberty City, Black-majority neighborhoods in Miami, in response to police brutality. I discuss these events in more detail in the first chapter of this project. More optimistically, Moore also gestures toward Miami as a location that now enables connections between different Afro-Diasporic communities, perhaps because of the aforementioned pervasive tensions that constitute Miami's cultural landscape.

While the conference was a huge success, Moore ultimately decides to leave FIU, citing the persistent persecution he experienced. Moore recalls that "FIU expressed interest in [him] staying, but [he] felt [he] couldn't stay and teach in the university in those conditions...[he] had no desire whatsoever to stay there [and] wanted to leave as soon as possible" (Chardy). Because of this serious curtailment of Moore's intellectual freedom, Moore's departure reveals how Florida International University, one of the nation's Latino-majority institutions, participated in the whitewashing of Cuban history. Moore's experiences revealed that prominent celebrations of Cuban-American contributions were likely only referring to white Cubans. The same year, President George H.W. Bush gave a speech to the Cuban American National Foundation in Miami, Florida. During this speech, Bush assessed that Cuban-Americans were "the most eloquent testimony [he] [knew] to the basic strength and success of America, as well as to the basic weakness and failure of Communism and Fidel Castro." At once, Bush suggests that successful Cuban Americans who have made "Miami...one of America's most vibrant cities," symbolize the U.S.'s opportunistic nature and thus highlight the discontents of

communism. Although Bush's speech exemplifies the positive reputation Cubans have garnered, Moore's experiences at FIU suggest that only certain contributions are worth celebration. After Moore's departure from Miami, he travels across South America, ultimately settling in Brazil to research Brazilian culture.

Although Moore has yet to return, he has remained an outspoken critic of anti-blackness in Cuba. In 2008, for example, Moore published an open letter to Raul Castro in *The Miami Herald*. In choosing a Miami-based publication, Moore pinpoints the Miami Cuban community as a target audience within the U.S. Writing from Bahia, Brazil, Moore declares that he "will not beat around the bush to express my strong conviction that racism is our country's most serious and tenacious problem." He goes on to explicitly critique the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the resulting regime:

Notwithstanding the grandiose but vacuous speeches, or bombastic but no less deceitful declarations on the alleged elimination of racism and racial discrimination, wherever we look in socialist Cuba our eyes are confronted with a cobweb of social and racial inequities and racial hatred against black people. No doubt, these issues were bequeathed to us through centuries of oppression. The Revolution that empowered itself in 1959 merely inherited them...Rather than destroy the legacy of white supremacy and its concomitant racism, the Revolutionary government contributed to the solidification and expansion of it. It did so when it declared the nonexistence of racism, the eradication of racial discrimination, and the advent of a "post-racial" socialist democracy in Cuba (Moore).

Moore's scathing criticism of socialist Cuba's failure to rectify systemic racism, which he metaphorizes as a complex, sticky cobweb, foils the grandiosity of Fidel and Raul Castro's speeches with the even larger problem of racism's expansion in post-revolutionary Cuba. More recently, Moore was a collaborative composer and signatory of the public "Declaration of African American Support for the Civil Rights Struggle in Cuba." The declaration advocated for the release of unjustly imprisoned Dr. Darsi Ferrer, who criticized racism in Cuba and was consequently arrested, and called on President Raul Castro to "stop the unwarranted and brutal harassment of black citizens in Cuba who are defending their civil rights" ("Declaration"). Moore's public condemnations of racism in Cuba counter prominent narratives of Cuban racial equality.

These more recent involvements expand on the ideas Moore presents in his memoir, and provide critical insight into how his embodiment, particularly his racial identity as a Black immigrant, shapes his experiences in a variety of locations. He draws from a prominent genre within Black American literary traditions to link contemporary racial violence to historical legacies of enslavement across the Americas, and to reach a U.S. audience, and likely Black American scholars to encourage wider and more inclusive Afro-Diasporic discourse. In particular, his comparative descriptions of New York City and Miami reveal regional fractures within Cuban-American communities, and demonstrate how immigrant populations transform their host-nations, and even, as Moore's experiences in Miami illustrate, how immigrant populations can make a region inhospitable to other immigrants. His descriptions of white Cubans reflect his experiences of discrimination, surveillance, and violence, across national borders, but belies the complex experience of "becoming white" and the resulting

transformations of what might similarly be described as the acquisition of economic, political, and cultural power, that many Cuban American authors, like Carlos Eire, explore in their work.

Ni de Aquí, Ni de Allá: The Luxury of Postmodern Play in *Learning to Die in Miami*

Carlos Eire, a professor of Religion at Yale University, has written two memoirs about his experiences of leaving Cuba for the United States during Operation Pedro Pan, including *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy*, and the second anchor text of this chapter, *Learning to Die in Miami: Confessions of a Refugee Boy*. Both memoirs describe Eire's time in Miami, which Eire describes as the place he experienced the most discrimination because of his Cuban background. As he notes in an interview with *NPR* entitled "Carlos Eire: A Cuban-American Searches for Roots," "I've never really, ever since I moved out of Miami, experienced any kind of discrimination. It was only there, and I think it's because so many of us had come at once and changed the city so completely that there was a lot of resentment on the part of the natives" (Eire). In Eire's recollection of his experience, Miami's cultural climate paradoxically introduces him to ethnic discrimination, and forces him to both acknowledge and deny his privilege in his effort to assimilate into the upper echelons of U.S. society.

To explore the tenuous relationship between marginalization and privilege, Eire relies on narrative techniques characteristic of postmodern literature, including fragmentation, and the troubling of the narrative voice and chronological storytelling. Chapters in Eire's memoir operate as self-contained episodes punctuated by disorienting shifts in time and location. For example, Eire describes "Black outs" that operate as intermissions that precede transitions in time and/or locale. At one point, Eire transitions from a description of a Christmas dinner, his first away from home in Cuba, then writes, "fade to black again. It's springtime. . . ." and later indicates to the reader that he is "flash[ing] forward a few months" (172; 173). When discussing the form of

the memoir in an interview with Silvana Paternostro for *BOMB magazine*, Eire acknowledges and explains the unique, and at times convoluted structure of the memoir, asserting, “I wrote this book from some other part of my brain, a part I’ve never used before” (Eire). He continues, comparing *Learning to Die in Miami* to other works, including his scholarship, which he describes as “very logical, very linear, very well planned.” On the contrary, Eire notes that when writing his latest memoir,

The images drove my writing. In a purely intuitive sense, I picked details that I thought would get across the universal nature of childhood and therefore also something about the universal nature of being human. I realized later that if there is anything human beings can relate to across cultural differences, it’s childhood. It’s a period of life that has certain set qualities regardless of culture. And it’s a special time in life that we all in very important ways still relate to. It’s who we are (Eire).

Through these techniques, Eire illustrates the fragmented, or hyphenated, experience of exile, which, as he suggests, is a universal experience that transcends cultural specificity. In the same interview, however, Eire confesses that the memoir is meant not just to illustrate his experiences, but also to educate non-Cuban readers of Castro’s rise to power and its discontents. He explains to Birnbaum that he “was conscious as [he] was writing it that [he] was writing for non-Cubans. To explain pre-Castro Cuba and what happened” (Eire). His engagement with the tropes of postmodern literature implies fluidity across racial/ethnic categories that move him closer to the upper echelons of U.S. society. I argue that while this strategy clearly demonstrates the disorienting experience of exile for Eire, it also communicates the privilege afforded to Eire as a white-passing Cuban man. Additionally, Eire’s deployment of metaphors of slavery and

simultaneous neglect of histories of Black enslavement in Cuba, reveal a simultaneous invocation and distancing from legacies of violence that are integral to Eire's process of assimilation.

While Maya Angelou's foreword frames Moore's memoir, Eire includes two epigraphs: "Time and Eternity" by Emily Dickinson, and his own poetic "Preamble." These poems introduce the major themes of his memoir: death, rebirth, Operation Peter Pan, communism as slavery, and freedom. Throughout the memoir, as its title suggests, Eire equates exile as a complex negotiation with death as thematized in Dickinson's poem, wherein she writes:

Death is a dialogue between
The spirit and the dust
"Dissolve," says Death. The Spirit, "Sir,
I have another trust."

Death doubts it, argues from the ground.
The spirit turns away,
Just laying off, for evidence,
An overcoat of clay (Dickinson as qtd. in Eire)

Eire continues this metaphor in the first lines of the memoir proper, writing, "Having just died, I shouldn't be starting my afterlife with a chicken sandwich, no matter what, especially one served up by nuns" (1). In his death as an exile, Eire continuously describes the death of his former Cuban self and subsequent rebirth as an American, and ultimately suggests this process consistently repeats itself as he adapts to life in the U.S. The replication of this process contrasts with Moore's irreversible disillusionment with the U.S.; while Eire continuously adapts and redefines himself, Moore suggests that being Black fixes him to a particular, oppressed identity.

Beyond the thematic continuities Dickinson's poem introduces, her biography, specifically her noted history of self-exile, reflect Eire's interpretation of exile from his Cuban heritage. Dickinson's self-isolation has long been a topic of discussion amongst literary

scholars, with some, including Amy Powell and Vivian Pollak speculating that Dickinson may have struggled with agoraphobia (Pollak 25). Pollak also speculates that Dickinson may have believed that isolation enhanced her writing, asserting: “She wanted to believe that there was value in deprivation and that her imagination of freedom was intensified by her physical confinement, in what toward the end of her life she described as a “magic Prison...” (Pollak 25).

Eire’s work discusses his involuntary alienation from Cuba after his parents sent him to the U.S., but also addresses ways in which he voluntarily distanced himself from Cuban culture to more easily, and more quickly, assimilate into U.S. culture.

In an interview with *NPR*’s Terry Gross, Eire recalls that his desire to distance himself from his Cuban heritage informed his passion for writing, asserting that he “loved to write because there was no accent on the page... I also practiced like hell to get rid of my accent” (Eire). When Gross says that she cannot hear any accent, Eire replies: “I can hear it...It’s funny, especially now, I’m wearing headphones: Boy, do I hear my accent.” Eire’s persistent distancing from Cuban culture was apparent to a *BOMB* magazine interviewer, who refers to Eire as “the only non-Cuban Cuban in the world, in the most non-Cuban setting possible: the graduate studies center of Yale University, where he teaches religion and history” (Paternostro). Eire revisits this comment in another interview, noting that the description did not insult him, but rather he “know[s] what she means. At some levels regarding certain things, I am Cuban, but concerning others, I am not... I like many things about Cuban culture, but I like many other things too. And whatever is good from anywhere in the world is good, so” (Eire). Eire adopts an almost cosmopolitan relationship to his own Cuban heritage, choosing to dabble and enjoy parts of it as he would any other “goods” linked to other cultural backgrounds, while divesting from other

attachments to “Cubanness.” In his self-exile from his Cuban background, then, Eire embraces a cultural versatility enabled by his subject position.

Dickinson’s poem precedes Eire’s “Preamble,” a titular gesture that justifies the content of the memoir, operating as a self-authentication, but also draws from the legalistic language of national constitutions, a commentary on his own transnational movement and the ambiguous state of exile. Eire also began his earlier memoir, *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy* (2004), which focuses more on his time in Cuba and the details of his departure, with a “Preámbulo” (Spanish for preamble). His continuous use of this introductory mechanism might read as a derivative gesture of the prominent U.S. Constitution, but more significantly, it is a commentary on the tenuous state of the Cuban Constitution during the period about which Eire writes. Before Castro overthrew contemporary dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959, Batista had suspended parts of the Constitution of 1940 in 1952 when he gained control of Cuba during a coup d’etat (Lopez 78). In 1953, during a four-hour speech titled “La Historia Me Absolverá,” or, “History Will Absolve Me,” Castro vowed to reinstate the Constitution, but did not do so until 1976. At this point, the Constitution was modified to declare Cuba as a one-party (Communist) state, replacing the position of Prime Minister with that of President, a role filled by Castro. Eire’s departure from Cuba thus transpired during a time of notable instability for the nation, reflected in the management of national documents. Eire in turn reclaims the genre that had become so emblematic of political shifts in Cuba and transforms it to address his experiences in exile.

The content of the poem reinforces Eire’s criticism of Cuban government instability and the instantiation of Communism by comparing it to slavery. Beginning with the bold first lines:

Fearing that we’d be enslaved

Our parents sent us away, so many of us,
to a land across the turquoise sea (Eire, “Preamble)

Eire automatically equates communism to enslavement. Indeed, even the description of traveling “across the turquoise sea” to an unnamed, and/or unknown land, invokes legacies of seafaring travel within the Middle Passage and thus implicitly, and likely unintentionally, references the oppression of Afro-descended people. While comparing the institution of slavery to Communism is an ultimately fruitless undertaking for me as a critic, Eire’s use of this comparison given his position as a middle-class, white male imply the gravity with which he viewed Castro’s ascent to power, even from a young age. Of course, the Castro family and administration’s human rights violations are well recorded, especially his use of prisons/mental asylums to contain political dissidents.⁵¹ However, Eire’s consistent, and often decontextualized/dehistoricized deployment of slavery as a metaphor demonstrates that the historical enslavement of Africans that marks the Americas is the barometer by which Eire measures political repression as a de-raced phenomenon (x).

In the preamble, Eire continues his metaphorization of slavery, describing himself and other children as “willing, clueless fugitives,” highlighting both Castro’s criminalization of people fleeing the island and legacies of formerly enslaved people/maroons fleeing slavery in a variety of locales. Providing a bit more context about the Pedro Pan Operation, Eire writes:

Fourteen thousand of us, boys and girls

--A children’s crusade—

Exiled, orphaned, for what?

⁵¹ Reinaldo Arenas, Mirta Ojito, and Bernardo Benes have each addressed these violations in their memoirs/nonfiction. While Devyn Spence Benson has tackled the precarity of Castro’s emphasis on equity with persistent anti-blackness, anti-LGBTQIA policy, and abuses against the mentally ill.

Freedom

For us who flew away, our families, and our captive brethren

Freedom is no abstraction

It's as real as the marrow in our bones

Or the words on this page (Eire, "Preamble")

Eire suggests that in the U.S. the children émigrés will enjoy freedom—a concept that is emphasized in a singular line in his poetic introduction. Yet, as the poem foretells, while Eire is insistent on the reality of freedom, he does not provide detail of what this freedom entails, rendering the concept the abstracted idea he refutes. The poem is thus an example of many rhetorical contradictions that punctuate the text and emblemize Eire's negotiation of his identity with the privilege of a white man, and the vulnerabilities of an émigré. Eire continues his anti-communist and pro-capitalist sentiment by using metaphors of slavery to describe his imagined experience of Communist Cuba.

Slavery, Segregation, and White Cubanidad in Eire's Miami

While this introductory description of Eire's departure from Cuba might seem akin to Moore's move toward freedom, the achronological structure of the memoir ultimately suggests that Eire seeks to travel through time to the capitalist Cuba that preceded Castro and searches for (and finds) this imaginary locale in South Florida. Eire initially staunchly refuses to return to Cuba, explaining: "I, for one, would have rather killed myself than gone back. I'd even have jumped into a sea full of sharks in a feeding frenzy before I'd set foot again in Cuba" (116). Through this violent, graphic description, Eire once again emphasizes his disdain for the contemporary political situation in Cuba. However, just a few pages before, Eire marveled at finding a place in Miami that reminded him of home:

We're in Coral Gables, the only part of Miami that reminds me of Havana. I'm staring at the giant trees on the median strip of this wide boulevard. Their branches reach over the roadway, making a natural canopy so thick that the sun is denied entrance. Their trunks are a tangled sinewy mass, a jumble of hundreds of smaller trunks all woven together, each shouting out its age, boasting of superior longevity, laughing at me and every other human being. Each and every one of those trees is a mirror image of those ancient ones in the park that was four blocks from my house in Havana (113)

By comparing Coral Gables, one of the oldest and wealthiest cities in Miami-Dade County to Havana, Eire provides a commentary on the racialized center-periphery both in Cuba and in South Florida. In Eire's description, Miami becomes a replica of Havana in the 1950s. This description is not altogether surprising given the preponderance of U.S. influence in Cuba, especially Havana as the nation's capital and one of its major port cities.⁵² While Eire provides detailed description of the ecological similarities between the Gables and Havana, it is perhaps telling that Coral Gables is historically one of the wealthiest and whitest areas in South Florida. Eire's comparison then provides insight into his position in the Cuban middle class during the Revolution, which largely informs his descriptions of Miami.

While Moore interweaves his telling of pre- and postrevolutionary Cuba with legacies of racialized violence and resulting, or related, socio-economic stratification, Carlos Eire adopts an entirely different position throughout his memoir. He declares:

⁵² As Natasha Del Toro writes: "By the late '50s, U.S. financial interests included 90 percent of Cuban mines, 80 percent of its public utilities, 50 percent of its railways, 40 percent of its sugar production and 25 percent of its bank deposits—some \$1 billion in total. American influence extended into the cultural realm, as well. Cubans grew accustomed to the luxuries of American life. They drove American cars, owned TVs, watched Hollywood movies, and shopped at Woolworth's department store. The youth listened to rock and roll, learned English in school, adopted American baseball and sported American fashions."

If you've ever thought that all Cuban exiles were rich or middle class, forget about it. The Cuban exodus was not driven by class tension, but by political repression, and all of the unresolved class issues went into exile too, along with all of us who left... Poor Cubans could hate Fidel as much as rich Cubans, and often did. No one liked to be told what to think, or to be permanently gagged, or to be promised nothing but poverty and struggle forever. No one does, save for those who are out for revenge against perceived oppressors, or those who think they can switch roles with the so-called oppressors and take all of their stuff from them (178).

Charges of political repression are indisputable, given Castro's documented use of imprisonment and torture for political dissidents, which Moore also acknowledges when returning to Cuba. Eire suggests that the economic stratification carried over to exile communities, but suggests that experiences of oppression cannot be linked to individuals who perpetrate or benefit from asymmetrical distributions of wealth and political power. Further, Eire's explication marks a refusal to link political repression, or any kind of political gesture or structure, to economic, racial, and other forms of social organization. Eire's criticism of Castro, and the Communist political system of which he is representative, is specifically linked to property ownership. Though he does not discuss racial differences or gesture to the inextricable relationship between race and class, he dismisses the naming of property owners and implicitly, wealthy, individuals as oppressors. He thus shuts down any possibility of racial or comprehensive class analysis that highlights the asymmetrical distribution of resources and power.

In spite of this explicit refusal to explore other causes for the revolution, Eire relies on class delineations to describe his experiences in Cuba as they compare to those in Miami. As was

typical for most unaccompanied minors rescued from Communist Cuba during the Pedro Pan Operation, foster parents in Miami temporarily adopt Eire. During his time with the Chaites, he observes both similarities and differences between the U.S.'s and Cuba's class structures. When learning that he is responsible for taking out the trash, Eire reflects:

Back where I came from, only servants handled the trash. The fact that I was being asked to sink to the level of a servant was shocking at first, even though I knew that the Chaites had no maids, nannies, or gardeners...The Chaites didn't have any servants of any kind. They were a middle-class American family, and in this respect, they were very different from their Cuban counterparts. In Cuba, even lower-middle class families often had servants...at least until Fidel came along. I caught on to that right away and chalked it all up as yet one more indication that this was a more advanced country. Everyone must do their own work (52).

Eire suggests a rigid class structure, wherein particular tasks, such as managing trash, are reserved for particular individuals. He further compares the middle-class in Cuba to that which he experiences in the U.S., ultimately reaffirming individualized labor for self-benefit, the opposite of the communal structure of communism. However, in another contradiction, radical autonomy does not align with his memory of Havana, and thus problematizes his earlier nostalgia for his home city. Later in the text, he provides specific criticisms of communism, describing the nation's adaptation of the one-party system as transforming "the entire island...into a slave plantation" (144). He continues, discussing the potential consequences if he and his brother had remained in Cuba. As he writes, "had we stayed in Cuba, where everyone works for the government and everyone gets paid exactly the same salary regardless of what kind of work they do or how well or poorly they do their job, Tony and I would be nothing more than

glorified slaves” (197). However, his address of slavery, a pervasive institution in Cuba until its formal eradication in 1886 belies the racial elements of slavery in Cuba that continually inform how Afro-Cubans, who Eire does not mention at any point in his memoir, experienced the Revolution. Eire thus co-opts racialized oppression as a metaphor through which he interprets his own experience.

Though Eire references legacies of slavery as a point of comparison, these references are detached from the experiences of Afro-Cubans and Black Americans and Eire celebrates his whiteness, while simultaneously denying that it affords him any privilege. Eire, describing the cultural landscape of Miami writes:

It was 1962, after all, and we were in South Florida. Racial segregation was still legal. And we Cubans tended to be viewed by the locals as non-white intruders, even if we had blond hair and blue eyes. The lower you were on the social scale, the stronger the biases against us tended to be, but prejudices against Hispanics permeated the entire culture, from top to bottom, in a much more open way than nowadays (17).

Eire specifically names his light features as a reason why he should not be treated as an intruder, and suggests that his appearance even confounded people in the U.S. As he writes: “My blond hair fooled most Americans, though, confusing the hell out of them” (34). This confusion reflects Eire’s ability to pass, which Eire inadvertently addresses when outlining his experience in public schools: “Prejudice dogs me, everywhere I go. It’s inescapable. There aren’t any Negro kids to pick on at this school. It’s 1962, and Florida schools are still segregated. Why we Cubans weren’t sent to the Negro schools still puzzles me to this day. After all, we weren’t considered white then, same as now” (100). Eire suggests that the presence of Black students

would somehow ease his own prejudicial experience, inadvertently detailing the social hierarchy that Moore explores explicitly in his memoir. Further, in spite of his aforementioned acknowledgement of how his appearance enables assimilation, he does not acknowledge how racialized segregation reveals his proximity to whiteness.

Eire further details how segregation impacted his other social interactions. While describing a fishing trip at a local canal, he explains that two Black men join him, his brother, and other presumably white amateur fishermen. Eire explains that “they’ve obviously come from some other part of town, for this is 1963 and Miami is still segregated. As the local elites would say, there’s nothing but spics and poor white trash in our neighborhood” (199). Eire’s description of Miami’s neighborhood delineation in Miami complicate racial categories and indicate a pervasive anti-Black hierarchy. He expounds on this more in an interview, where he explains that:

There were two cultures in Miami that I experienced. There was a large Jewish presence and there was the South American culture. There was very little in between: Cubans, and of course the invisible people, the African Americans, who had no place in the schools. I never encountered them in the schools, which were still segregated. Coming as a Cuban to Miami at a time when the city was being flooded by Cubans and transformed on a day-to-day basis was very different from my experience as soon as I moved to central Illinois (Eire).

Eire’s description does not acknowledge intra-ethnic diversity, but suggests that African Americans were invisible even when compared to Jewish and South American people. Again, his recollection of segregation is not coupled with a consideration of how his

complexion and hair color facilitated his assimilation as a white man, even as he elsewhere explicitly names his desire to pass as white.

In his pursuit to pass as white, Eire undertakes a near-obsessive focus on learning English, which he explicitly links to the acquisition of more economic and socio-political power in Miami. This focus, according to Eire, developed after an experience of discrimination on a public bus. Eire explains that the bus driver attempted to “send [Eire and his brother] to the back of the bus when he hears us speaking Spanish” (74). While this experience is in line with documented anti-Cuban sentiments in Miami, Eire’s assessment reveals phenotypical similarities between himself and white Americans that later afford him notable privilege once he learns English. In a flash forward earlier in the text, Eire remarks that

There’s no better way of keeping Hispanics down in the United States than to tell them that they don’t have to learn English. No better way of creating an underclass. No better way of making everyone else think that Hispanics are too dumb to learn another language, or maybe even the dumbest people of earth...I’m especially struck by the way in which English gives so much more agency to the self, so much more choice and responsibility (55; 57).

Eire thus links the acquisition of English to assessments of intelligence and agency in the U.S. Later in the text, when reflecting on the difficulties he has encountered in assimilating even after improving his English, he ponders: “Do I look different than any other white American? No. Have I ever been branded on the forehead like a slave? No. But I’m branded on the tongue. I still speak with an accent” (160). Here Eire’s articulation explicitly illustrates that his proximity to whiteness, and distance from racialized legacies of slavery, is contingent on the eradication of his accented English. His rhetorical questions suggest a regression of violence, in which he

situates his experiences of accented English on the same continuum of practices of branding the enslaved people's flesh.

Eire, like Moore, also emphasizes the role of literacy in his assimilation to the U.S. However, while Moore links political literacy to his enhanced understanding of global anti-blackness, Eire suggests the public library enables his escape:

The next thing you know we're in [the Miami Public Library] just about every single evening during the week, right after we're done with our kitchen chores... Our library cards become our new passports, and replace our useless Cuban ones. Mine actually works as a passport to the past and the future, and eventually it gains me admittance to my chosen profession...the world that opens up to me in that library has no boundaries whatsoever. It's infinite and eternal (150).

Eire juxtaposes the boundlessness of the library to travel restrictions in Cuba to condemn the latter in its inhibition of his intellectual growth. His metaphorical invocation of library cards as passports, however, rather than, for example, a visa, or green card, connotes leisurely travel and implies grounded and comfortable citizenship in his host-nation. He further links the library, a public space in Miami to his own private, capitalistic gain in its enablement of his professorial position at Yale—gesturing to a kind of academic elitism. In this, Eire additionally slights Cuban politics through emphasizing his success in a capitalistic society.

Eire also links his racial signification to particular spaces in Miami. For example, in contrast to his aforementioned description of Coral Gables, Eire describes Miami Gardens, a predominantly lower-income, Black neighborhood, as “very, very bad” and continues, explaining, “we're just a few blocks away from the Orange Bowl... The sun beats down on us as it does only in bad neighborhoods, in a foul mood” (113). Describing the Black majority area as

“very bad,” before living there reveals the racialized frames through which Eire interprets Miami’s cultural landscape. Eire continuously describes the relationship between Cuban emigres and “bad neighborhoods”:

We become intimately acquainted with seediness and many of the down-and-out non-Cuban residents of Miami. We Cuban exiles had nothing and we filled up these crummy neighborhoods because all we could afford was at the absolute bottom of the heap. But these neighborhoods hadn’t been built with us in mind, and they had become slums long before we showed up, penniless. Before we came, these neighborhoods were full of American bottom-dwellers, men and women who had flocked down here to the absolute south from somewhere up North (195).

Eire without explicitly naming racial differences, references Black migration from more Northern parts of the South into Miami and works to distance himself from these populations, using dehumanizing language, like “bottom-dwellers,” to describe the neighborhood’s inhabitants. He also suggests that he and other Cuban émigrés arrived penniless, and are not responsible for the condition of the neighborhoods. Eire seems to implicitly identify anti-immigrant rhetoric, and displace “blame” for the condition of these “slums” onto a more vulnerable population, Black Americans.

Although Eire cursorily addresses anti-blackness in his memoir, in an interview with Robert Birnbaum of *The Morning News*, Eire provides a much more critical and comprehensive analysis of race relations in Cuba:

In a Caribbean country like Cuba where they had slavery until 1888, I realized that the really old, black people I had seen as a child were probably born as

slaves...the so-called Revolution has made it worse rather than better for African Cubans. As a matter of fact, most of the soldiers who were sent to Angola and Ethiopia were poor black people. Sadly, there was a long tradition in Cuba before independence of freed slaves who had a fair degree of social standing—they had property. Some were very well off and actually some of the leaders of the fight against Spain were blacks. But then this huge wave of immigration came in and the island became very white. And the most twisted irony in all this for Cuba is that Cuban culture is very African—the food, the music. What people call Cuban music, take away the African element and there is no such thing. Even the way Cubans talk, the Cuban Spanish accent has an African component to it. It is the sloppiest of all Spanish accents and it has a kind of African lilt to it. I hear African languages especially from West Africa and I don't understand what is being said. But it sounds very familiar to me—the cadence and the way things are pronounced. And yet these are the people who are excluded from rulership and ownership even to this day—that's the saddest thing (Eire).

Eire's overview of Cuban history recalls Moore's disillusionment with the revolution and its effect, or non-effect, on systemic anti-blackness in Cuba. He further notes how waves of immigration into Cuba have disproportionately displaced Afro-Cubans as exemplary property owners and citizens in high social standing. His emphasis on Afro-Cubans in decent social standing belies legacies of systemic racism in Cuba, and reveals Eire's assumption that some successful Afro-Cubans challenge the ever-presence of anti-blackness in Cuban history. While he positions himself as a sympathetic and celebratory ally to Afro-Cubans and of Afro-Cuban

culture through his use of sentimental language to bemoan systemic oppression, Eire devalues these influences by suggesting that African influence makes Cuban Spanish sloppy.

Conclusion

In the same interview, Eire recalls a conversation with Carlos Moore, who he describes as a “black Cuban with Jamaican parents [who] was part of the early years of the Revolution, very much in favor of it. He was very dark skinned.” Eire’s description of Moore’s skin immediately after describing his support for the revolution reveals an implicit conflation of the revolution with Afro-Cubans. Eire continues to describe his conversation with Moore, focusing primarily on anti-blackness in Cuba and the U.S.:

[Moore] detailed to me how in Cuba as in Louisiana and other places in the South, the darker you were, the farther down in your social class—and he, being the son of Jamaican parents, was at the absolute bottom. . . . I asked him, just in general, “Do you think there will ever be an end to racism—will the human race ever be able to overcome this?” He said, ‘No.’ And then we hugged (Eire).

Moore’s explanation reiterates the racial hierarchies he explicates on the first page of his memoir. While Moore has never reflected on his interaction with Eire, at least not in any preserved medium, Eire’s recollection of this interaction encapsulates the major ideas this chapter has tackled through its engagement with *Pichón* and *Learning to Die in Miami*. It contrasts Moore’s certain understanding of anti-blackness as a series of evolutionary structures in and beyond Cuba, and Eire’s privilege that enables a question about racism’s perpetuity as a system that only positively affects his life. His description of racism as a system that humans can overcome, rather than one that humans actively maintain to continuously benefit lighter-

complexed people worldwide rhetorically absolves him as a beneficiary of anti-blackness and white supremacy. Both his unifying appeal to the “human race” and conclusory description of the hug symbolizes an imagined racial reconciliation; while, to Eire, their interaction surpasses the racial antagonism Moore outlines, Moore remains steadfast in his belief that such reconciliation is impossible, and I hesitantly imagine that Moore’s recollection of his time with Eire would be described quite differently. Indeed, the memoirs, which both document the authors’ lived experiences of exile from Cuba and movements within and beyond the U.S. exemplify the various engagements of literary conventions to address processes of racialization for Cuban émigrés.

This intra-ethnic comparison, and the investigation of processes of racialization Eire and Moore implicitly invite, is particularly timely given recent conversations about Latinx in the U.S. These conversations are perfectly exemplified by a roundtable on the February 22, 2016 episode of *The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore*, featuring the show’s namesake, contributor Grace Parra, contributor Jordan Carlos, and guest Jose Antonio Vargas, a Filipino immigrant immigration rights activist and founder of *Define American*. The episode thematized the 2016 U.S. Presidential election and specifically focused on candidates’ proposed management of immigration, which, as the participants noted, is often a key issue when attempting to get “the Latino vote.” Parra, a self-identified Mexican-American, succinctly challenged the tendency to homogenize “Latinx” as a monolithic category, asserting that Latinxs constitute a “huge diverse community that candidates can’t seem to figure out.” Parra continued by listing differences amongst cultural groups who have immigrated to the U.S. She focused specifically on Cuban émigrés, explaining: “the way people emigrate from Cuba is very different...if you are Cuban and you set foot on American soil, you get expedited status because you are considered a

refugee.” Citing the informally titled “Wet-Foot Dry-Foot” policy (recently overturned by President Obama), Parra implicitly indexes decades of U.S. anti-communist policy that have resulted in the unique treatment of Cuban emigres and thus outlines the hierarchical treatment of immigrants in the U.S.

While Parra advocates for a more complex consideration of difference, the roundtable’s shift in focus to Cuban-American candidates Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz provides a concrete example of how both national media and policy makers often erase or overlook whiteness in conversations about Latinxs. Addressing the two candidates, Wilmore posed the provocative, if simplistic question, “why don’t Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio embrace their Hispanic heritage?” Of course, there is no barometer of what embracing one’s heritage might look like, but Parra responds that the erasure of Rubio’s and Cruz’s heritage is an effort to appeal to white American voters. She concludes: “race is important to talk about...because it feels like in an attempt to get voters, Rubio and Cruz have alienated Latinxs to the point where we don’t trust them.” In Parra’s assessment, whiteness is at once invisible in an analysis of the candidates, and hyper visible in their efforts to appeal to a white voting population.

The members of the roundtable express a willingness to link Cruz and Rubio to some nebulous “Hispanic” heritage, but there is no declaration of how they **look**, and “Latinx” or “Hispanic” as descriptors override other identity markers.⁵³ Parra holds Rubio and Cruz apart from the Latinx “we” of which Parra considers herself a part, but does not entertain the

⁵³ Throughout this dissertation, I cite scholars and public commentators who use “Latino/Latina/Latinx” interchangeably with “Hispanic.” This has been a contested topic taken up by scholars such as Walter Dignolo, Diana Taylor, William Luis, and countless others. In particular, I utilize Angel Oquendo’s explanation as outlined in “Re-Imagining the Latino/a Race”: *‘Latino’ . . . ‘is more inclusive and descriptive’ than Hispanic. ‘‘Latino’ is short for ‘latinoamericano,’ which of course means Latin American in Spanish. Like its English counterpart, the term ‘latinoamericano’ strictly refers to the people who come from the territory in the Americas colonized by Latin nations, such as Portugal, Spain, and France, whose languages are derived from Latin. People from Brazil, Mexico, and even Haiti are thus all ‘latinoamericanos.... Finally, ‘hispanoamericanos’ are persons from the former colonies of Spain in the ‘New World.’ The expression ‘Hispanic’ probably derives from ‘hispanoamericanos.’*

possibility of overlap between white and Latinx voters, thus simplifying the complexity of the Latinx population for which she initially advocated. This erasure is particularly pressing given the presidential candidates' platforms, as they suggest that rather than transforming into a more inclusive "nation of immigrants," the nation should anticipate an alteration and expansion of white supremacy and categories of whiteness.

I conclude with this overview of the *Nightly Show* segment to demonstrate how pressing issues of race, ethnicity, and nationhood in discourses about Latinxs in the U.S. are continuously shaping national and international politics during our nation's ongoing cultural transformation. As the U.S. Census' "Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060" report asserts "The Hispanic population is projected to increase from 55 million in 2014 to 119 million in 2060, an increase of 115 percent. In 2014, the Census projects that Hispanics are to account for 17 percent of the U.S. population. By 2060, 29 percent of the United States is projected to be Hispanic—more than one-quarter of the total population" (8). A growth this large necessitates renewed intersectional investigations of migration, assimilation, cross-cultural conflict, distribution of resources, and most importantly to this chapter socioeconomic, cultural, and racial hierarchies as they manifest **within** and **between** Latinx populations to predict the consequences of this demographic transformation.⁵⁴

In sussing out these complex differences, literature remains an important archive in documenting highly complex social processes like cross-cultural interactions and assimilation intersectionally. These investigations are critical in anticipating the shifts, however large or small, in the U.S. through an examination of racial hierarchies in émigré populations' nations of

⁵⁴ The boom in the Hispanic/Latino population contributes to another projection: "by 2044, more than half of all Americans are projected to belong to a minority group (any group other than non-Hispanic White alone)" (1). The paradoxical language of a "more than half" minority reveals an effort to minimize the population even as it constitutes an overwhelming proportion of the nation.

origin. As Moore's and Eire's memoirs suggest, scholars across disciplines can make important deductions about how people understand and represent themselves and others in preparation for clashes and accords in an increasingly connected world. These memoirs, along with countless others, raise important questions that resist the facile typologies of race and citizenship status that plague contemporary discourses about the U.S., and instead present emigration and immigration as complex, and at-times contradictory experiences.

WHO SPEAKS FOR MIAMI?

THE WHITE LENS IN THE TROPICAL METROPOLE



Figure 14.

“Nothing exceeds like excess”

—*Scarface* (1983)

In this final chapter, I turn my attention to the most popular, recognizable representations of Miami, the majority of which are white-authored, white-produced, and white-starring spectacles of immigration, the drug trade, and related crime in the city. In this almost exclusionary focus, exemplified in titles like *Cocaine Cowboys*, *Scarface*, *Bad Boys*, *Miami Vice* (both the TV series and film), *CSI: Miami*, and others, I identify tropes that position these productions as realistic documentations of Miami’s cultural topography and in many cases, are used by the white production teams to justify the baroque fantasies of Miami’s vices. For example, *Scarface* (1983), one of the most prominent cinematic representations of Miami, begins with a prefatory, contextualizing scroll and intercut footage of Cubans arriving in Key West from Mariel Harbor during the 1980 Mariel Boatlift.



Figure 15.

The film focuses on fictional Mariel émigré, Tony Montana’s, evolution from a refugee who murders a communist in exchange for quick access to a green card, to a major drug kingpin

whose boundless ambition results in an early, violent murder at the hands of competitors in the drug game. Select scenes from the introduction illustrate the criminalization of the Mariel émigrés, and the volume of the exodus. The introductory scroll, pictured in its entirety in the left hand column, provides a brief overview of the boatlift, including Fidel Castro's complicity in the exodus and contrasts his apparent benevolence with his manipulation of the boatlift to empty Cuban prisons and mental asylums. The scroll concludes ominously with a vague reference to the high number of émigrés with criminal records to introduce the film's protagonist Antonio "Tony" Montana's emigration from Cuba and illicit ascent into Miami's drug world.

These images are interspersed with the credits, and Al Pacino's name is presented amidst the images of the immigrants, codifying the film's efforts at contextualizing his character's story within a real historical moment. The filmmakers intentionally criminalize émigrés omitting that during this period, representatives of the Cuban state used prisons as a mechanism of group-differentiated population control. The scroll thus negates the complex composition of the previously incarcerated demographic. The images in the right column capture the volume of the exodus, both through the documentation of multiple boats (in the first image) and a subsequent, aerial shot to demonstrate that the boats were mostly filled to capacity. The introduction's reference to crime in high numbers incites fear in the viewer regarding this massive wave of emigration.

Miami Vice (1984-1989) similarly references the Mariel Boatlift in the first episode, "Brother's Keeper," reflecting the widespread criminalization of the Mariel émigrés. The series followed two Metro-Dade Police Department detectives, Ricardo Tubbs (portrayed by Philip Michael Thomas) and Sonny Crockett (portrayed by Don Johnson) in their undercover investigations and pursuits in Miami, primarily thematizing immigration, the influx of drugs, and

various violent and non-violent crimes. The series referenced the Mariel Boatlift in its first episode as demonstrated by the image below, which shows a suspected murderer with ties to the drug trade, Trini DeSoto, portrayed by Martin Ferrero. DeSoto sits with undercover, Miami vice detectives Sonny Crockett and Ricardo Tubbs. In introducing himself, DeSoto reveals that he is a



Figure 16.

Mariel émigré, and refers to the émigrés as riffraff, or undesirable people, who were detained by U.S. officials. In the remainder of the interaction, however, he works to distance himself from this reputation, stating that unlike other émigrés who watched TV while in detention, he sought to read, and prepare himself for his entry into the U.S. proper: “Not me, man...you could be stuck in this place six months, man, waiting for your papers. Use the time, man. Improve your mind” (“Brother’s Keeper”). DeSoto’s mention and subsequent self-distancing from this reputation indicates his awareness of how it variously entraps him, and limits his access to resources in the U.S.

Unlike *Scarface*, the crime drama series deviates from its attention to the Mariel Boatlift émigrés, and instead uses its primary focus on Crockett and Tubbs to explore crime in Miami within and beyond various immigrant populations, in some cases referencing real cases in Miami and focusing on police corruption. Remarking on DeSoto’s characterization as a Mariel émigré and a series of similar documentary gestures, *Miami Vice*’s (1984-1989) executive producer

Michael Mann notes that in creating the show, the production team “takes like one-tenth of one percent of the objective reality of Miami and that’s what we render” (Sonsky). In both *Scarface* and *Miami Vice*, Miami’s “objective reality” as interpreted by the media’s creators, is foundational to their overblown representation of Miami’s role in the transnational drug trade, cross-cultural collision, and violence.

In what follows, I both expand upon and challenge the implied, aspirational documentary status in these productions. Through an examination of *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* and a consideration of cultural events that preceded and informed their production, I argue that Miami media’s hyperbolic representation of drug use/dealing, violence, and illicit economic ascent alongside representations of immigration codified Miami as an Anglo-American nightmare. Put differently, I examine how these media present Miami as a fearful and permeable site of cultural transmission that allegedly threatened a white supremacist cultural order through either their depictions of an émigré’s illicit wealth (*Scarface*), or the corruption of white police officers because of their proximity to criminalized émigrés (*Miami Vice*). Paradoxically then, while these productions are often structured around émigré, non-white American protagonists, they reveal more about the white-dominated U.S. contexts that frame them than the populations they purport themselves to be representing.

I focus on *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* as two prominent representations of Miami released almost immediately after the infamous Mariel Boatlift, a significant moment in Miami’s history as a primary destination for Cuban émigrés. The boatlift is particularly striking within histories of Cuba-to-U.S. immigration for several reasons that reveal prominent cultural shifts in both countries: First, the boatlift uniquely displayed Fidel Castro’s temporary willingness to open the harbor for ex-patriates leaving the island. However, as described above, this temporary

“benevolence” barely obfuscated Castro’s manipulation of the boatlift population to include imprisoned individuals and those detained in Cuba’s mental asylums, which at the time included LGBTQIA Cubans (López 24). I treat this manipulation as integral to interpreting the reception of the Mariel émigrés because it illuminates anti-LGBTQIA sentiment and policy in the U.S. Secondly, and relatedly, the racial demographic of the boatlift population deviated radically from earlier waves of emigration from Cuba; the “Marielitos,” as they were pejoratively named, included a large percentage of Afro- and mixed race Cubans unlike the white-majority waves that preceded the Boatlift.

This chapter thus investigates Cuban histories of Afro-Cuban and/or LGBTQIA repression transnationally through a focus on representations of Miami, and situates this investigation with a concurrent consideration of the U.S.’s sociopolitical moment, namely the War on Drugs. Through this transnational, intersectional examination, I detail how demonizing narratives of queerness, Blackness, non-Americanness and drug use multiply entrapped the Mariel émigrés and dominated the U.S. imagination for decades after the boatlift. Both *Miami Vice* and *Scarface* throw these stereotypes into relief, and my analysis illustrates that these mass media representations compounded non-white, LGBTQIA, and “criminal” identities, rendering Mariel émigrés, and ultimately, as *Miami Vice* shows, immigrants more generally, a threat to imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks 17).⁵⁵ As an explanation for the intersectional methodology that structures this chapter, I will here say that I am invested in the extent to which various marginalized identities are compounded to render immigration, and more specifically immigrants, the ultimate threat to the U.S. republic in mass media set in Miami. Put

⁵⁵ I borrow this phrase from bell hooks, which she coins in *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* “I often use the phrase ‘imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy’ to describe the interlocking political systems that are the foundation of our nation’s politics.” In my analysis, I expand on her theorization to think about transnational movements.

differently, in merging their address of non-whiteness, non-nativeness, non-heteronormativity, and criminality, often through the representation of singular characters, *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* represent difference as a violation of identity-hierarchies, almost ubiquitously. I work within this chapter to separately address these issues as distinct, though interrelated phenomena, but do not claim to offer holistic representation of these populations given my attention to the white gaze; in this, this chapter is unique from those preceding it.

While my focus on mass media rests primarily on how they reference a post-Mariel cultural moment, they also address this era quite differently. *Scarface* addresses crime from the perspective of a Cuban refugee-turned-millionaire after his involvement with transnational drug schemes, while *Miami Vice* addresses widespread crime and violence from law enforcement's perspective, and specifically through a multicultural ensemble cast dedicated to keeping Miami's streets clean. *Scarface* offers a sustained focus on one fictionalized Mariel émigré, while the serialized nature of *Miami Vice* enables widespread representations of Miami's different cultural groups, both from and beyond the Boatlift.

Beyond characterizing Miami as an unstable and potentially violent site of corrupt cultural and economic assimilation, *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* expose the violence and greed inherent in US capitalism and the inaccessibility of the normative "American Dream" for immigrants who do not, or cannot, abide by the rules of assimilation. I read this failure to abide in the representations of excess through the illicit acquisition of lavish luxuries, explosive tempers, and exaggerated accents that persistently mark émigré protagonists as socially deviant. Interviews with directors and producers reveal the intentional exaggeration of these aspects, without concurrent considerations of the complexity of immigration from Cuba to the U.S. (and Miami in particular) during the 1980s.

In approaching my analysis of two popular representations of popular media intersectionally, I introduce a series of overlapping cultural phenomena that contextualize my analysis of *Scarface* and select episodes of *Miami Vice*. These context sections provide imperative insight into the re-Cubanization (a term I will outline in more detail in the forthcoming sections) of Miami after the Mariel Boatlift, anti-Blackness and anti-LGBTQIA policy transnationally, and the War on Drugs in the U.S. While both *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* are iconographic representations of Miami that have scholars with investments in popular culture have variously analyzed, none have done so with transnational attention to these productions' representations of marginalized communities.⁵⁶ Further, scholars have not analyzed these representations together; a pairing that I assert illuminates continuities in mass media in the post-Mariel cultural moment. I posit that understanding these contexts in conjunction with analyzing the primary texts illuminates the reflection of widespread social phenomena in Miami media.

Scarface & Miami Vice Production Histories

Scarface's December 9, 1983 release date, nearly three years after the Mariel Boatlift and a little over a year after Reagan's declaration of a War on Drugs reflects an impulse in the film's production crew to capitalize on this important moment in international history. De Palma's adaptation of the film is thematically true to Howard Hawks' 1932 original, which follows the rise and fall of a gangster, though the earlier version of the film addresses Italian immigration in Chicago, and similarly criminalizes Italian immigrants through its focus on mafia/gangster violence. The film came out after Italians were beginning to identify and be identified as white, a shift historian Andrew G. Vellon traces to the post World War I era. Vellon asserts that Italian Americans began to publicly align themselves with whiteness to assure that they were afforded

⁵⁶ See Steven Sanders's *Miami Vice* (2010) and *Film Noir Reader* (1996), and the essay collection, *Crime Fiction and film in the Sunshine State* (1997) for more on the intersections of crime and immigration in Miami.

“viable route[s] toward full inclusion” (Vellon 81). This alignment worked to challenge anti-Italian discrimination, predicated on the belief Italians were of a “swarthy, inferior race,” and corresponding stereotypes that emphasized criminal, socially-deviant behavior (Vellon 2).

The remaking of the film seems to have necessitated a similar cultural moment—it required the arrival of immigrants who would or could be criminalized and transformed into a source of fear that destabilized notions of American opportunity for all. The creators of the 1983 adaptation transpose the themes of “The American Dream,” and relatedly, the stakes of inclusion, onto interethnic, interracial, post-Mariel Boatlift Miami. The marketing of the film introduced Tony Montana as a Mariel émigré who “wanted the American Dream. With a vengeance,” which emphasizes what the film presents as an illicit pursuit of the money, power, and women that are otherwise inaccessible to Tony as a low-income laborer. As Al Pacino notes, the idea of recreating *Scarface* had been in the air long before its production: “Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro had *Scarface* in their repertoire of things they wanted to do [but] it was a difficult thing to do to in today’s world” (*Creating Scarface*). From Pacino’s commentary, it is clear that the Boatlift, and the pervasive representations of certain factions of the boatlift population, provided a prime opportunity to recycle the fearful and tragic immigrant tale.

The film was written by Oliver Stone and directed by Brian De Palma, with Al Pacino starring as the lead title, and secondary roles played by Michelle Pfeiffer, Steven Bauer, and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio. In spite of the content of the film, almost none of the cast and principal crewmembers of *Scarface* were Cuban American. Only Steven Bauer, who plays Manny, Tony’s loyal friend and associate is Cuban American. Bauer immigrated to the US from Cuba at the age of four in 1960 (*Creating Scarface*). Bauer asserts that when interviewing/auditioning for his role in the film with director Brian De Palma, De Palma asked if he was

“really Cuban” and whether or not he spoke Spanish. Bauer’s treatment throughout the casting process of the film is reflective of the production team’s engagement with Cuban Americans and Cuban exiles in Miami—they were interested in the experiences of this population in so much as they would help in the construction of a convincing, marketable film.

The voyeurism that informed Bauer’s interactions with the casting crew and Stone’s sense of ownership of the immigrant tale also informed the reception of the film in Miami. Pacino describes Italian-American Oliver Stone’s process of writing the film, asserting, “Oliver captured this world and made it his own” (*Creating Scarface*). Pacino’s words are spoken in admiration of the film and Stone’s involvement in its production, but his comments also address the appropriation of the film’s content and the corresponding voyeuristic, essentializing perspective which informed all aspects of the film’s production. Organizations such as Facts about Cuban Exiles (FACE) boycotted the film because of its negative, essentializing representation of Cubans in Miami (García 68). They were partly successful, as noted by Martin Bregman, the film’s producer: “there was an element of the Cuban community that was convinced that this was a Castro-financed film, which was obviously not true...[but] there were a number of threats made and we thought it would be best to move production to California” (Bregman). The accusation of Castro’s involvement in the making of the film, as farfetched as Bregman believes it to be, suggests that the representation of Cubans within the film was an affront to Cubans who opposed Castro’s administration. Such a representation would have served Castro’s interests in vilifying the U.S. and Cubans who abandoned Cuba in pursuit of U.S. capitalism and democracy.

In spite of the vocal denouncement of the film by the Cuban community in Miami, Cuban American consultants, as well as local officials in Miami facilitated its production on many fronts. Stone notes that he began “research[ing] Miami [and] went to Miami extensively. [He]

got to know the law enforcement, the Cuban gangster elements through the lawyers, the ex-gangsters... [He] wanted more and went to the Caribbean... [He] struck up conversations with a lot of playboy types” (*Creating Scarface*). The research methodology Stone alludes to suggests that most of his insight into the drug world came from authorities charged with prosecuting drug dealers as opposed to the drug dealers themselves. He makes no indication of trying to understand what drove some of these men into lives of crime and, given his focus on archetypical “playboys,” his research seems to have been informed by an ethnographic practice as opposed to a genuine interest in understanding the groups the film purports itself to be depicting. While it is clear that Stone’s research was more cursory than comprehensive, his strategies speak to an interest in exaggerating, rather than depicting the truth.

Pacino confirms this push for hyperbole, remarking that in constructing Tony’s persona, he relied on the input of Cuban Americans: “the Cuban people who I met and spoke with were helpful...I wasn’t trying to be authentic...but I thought that if I could take the mannerisms and heighten them that would fit with De Palma’s larger-than-life perspective” (*Creating Scarface*). Pacino’s and De Palma’s attention to exaggeration and magnification throughout the production of the film reveals that while it was grounded in the experiences of an existing socioeconomic and ethnic group, the film was less about those experiences than an outside, grotesque interpretation of those experiences.

Unlike *Scarface*, *Miami Vice* featured a racially and ethnically diverse cast that simultaneously challenged and reified the demonization of émigrés. Among others, the cast included as mentioned above, Philip Michael Thomas as Tubbs, Don Johnson as Sonny Crockett, and Edward James Olmos as Martin Castillo, Sandra Santiago as Gina Calebrese, Olivia Brown as Trudy Joplin, Michael Talbott as Stanley Switek, and John Diehl as Larry Zito. The show

offers an opportunity to examine relationships between race and ethnicity, immigration, local and national law enforcement, and regional permeability. The show's association of immigration, or more aptly, non-white and/or non-English speaking immigrants and "foreignness" with crime and linkage of whiteness to "Southern law enforcement" through the series' primary focus on Detective Sonny Crockett, a white Miami native. As Steve Sanders notes, while the show's plot primarily relies on the interactions between Crockett and Tubbs,

Don Johnson is clearly the center of dramatic interest. This is shown not only in the way the framing consistently privilege Johnson over Philip Michael Thomas and Edward James Olmos, but also in the way the camera movement focuses on Johnson, following him when he enters or leaves a room with the other vice squad members (Sanders 27).

The focus on Johnson as Crockett, even through the minute detail of camera work, emphasizes the show's white focus. Through this focus, *Miami Vice* constructs a tenuous binary between white, law-enforcing Miamians and non-white/non-native law-breaking immigrants that the show troubles through its persistent representation of police corruption, particularly the corruption of local, and eventually national, white law enforcement officers through their illicit connections and relationships with immigrants.

Although Michael Mann took over executive production of the show after its sixth episode, Anthony Yerkovich had the original idea for the series. Steve Sanders writes that Yerkovich was inspired to create the show after learning that "nearly one-third of unreported income in the United States originated in or was funneled through South Florida" (10). Beyond his interest in the amount of money circulating in Miami, especially through illicit channels, he, like the creators of *Scarface*, expresses interest in the corrupt elements of the American Dream:

“I wanted a city in which the American dream had been distilled into something perverse. . . I wanted to use the city figuratively and metaphorically. I wanted to place an existential hero in a city based on greed” (Schmalz 1989, A1). The greed and unchecked ambition implicit in this manipulation of the American Dream is metaphorized in the unprecedented, enormous 1.3 million dollar-per-episode budget, which, as Sanders claims, “brought feature film values to primetime television” (Sanders 7). While Yerkovich does not mention the high rates of immigration to Miami, the perversion of the American dream is contingent on their criminalization as exaggerated throughout the show.

Miami Vice indexes a wide array of cultural groups, dramatizing Miami’s shifting racial and ethnic demographic. As Steve Sanders notes:

Long a bilingual city, Miami’s rapid multiculturalization is due largely to immigration from Cuba, Haiti, and Central America, and so it is woven into the program’s storylines... Storylines in episodes like the following give but a hint of the show’s use of Caribbean, southeast Asian, Chinese, and South American cultural backgrounds: a Haitian crime boss... convinces his followers he has returned from the dead (“Tale of the Goat”), a Santería priestess... is consulted to develop evidence of the connection between the ritualistic killings of police officers and drug traffickers (“Whatever Works”), a Chilean police officer... buys cluster bombs from an arms dealer referred by a renegade DEA official (“Baseballs of Death”), a Central American poet (Byrne Piven) is sought by assassins (“Free Verse”), a Chinese drug lord (Keye Luke) comes to Miami to taunt Castillo (“Golden Triangle, Part 2”), an Argentine assassin (Jim Zubiena) has Crockett on his hit list (Sanders 27).

As Sanders' brief overview suggests, the serialized nature of the sitcom allowed the producers of the show to tackle a different immigrant group within each episode as well as political strife more globally. In this effort, the show presents an at-times voyeuristic representation of these groups and reveals anxieties surrounding non-Judeo Christian spirituality as well as the possibility of socio-political conflicts in South America (and other regions) spilling out onto Miami's streets.

Although the list of cultural groups makes up a significant population in Miami, the show does not achieve documentary status because of its hyperbolic representations of these groups. Rather than attempting to document the events that contributed to Miami's notorious reputation during the 1980s, the show intended to exaggerate and exploit this reputation while simultaneously capitalizing on Miami's position as "a global city" (Croucher 234). Sheila L. Croucher links Miami's globality to its diversity, noting that the city's "international commerce...and demographic makeup" have resulted in its characterization as a "City of the Future" (Croucher 234). *Miami Vice* suggests, through its characterization of its white male protagonist, secondary characters, and ephemeral antagonists, that the tension between Southernness and the varying racial, ethnic, and religious groups entering the city during this period informs globalization in Miami. With its sustained engagement with immigration and related police corruption, the show provides an alternate, and indeed more violent and pessimistic, representation of the diversity so often celebrated in Miami.

Mariel Boatlift

An analysis of *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* necessitates an overview of the circumstances that informed their productions, the most significant being the 1980 Mariel Boatlift which was preceded by a nearly two-decade long tension between US capitalism and democracy and Cuban

communism.⁵⁷ The Boatlift began after six Cuban citizens crashed a bus into the Peruvian embassy in Havana, Cuba on April 1, 1980. The men and women on the bus demanded asylum, and vocalized their disapproval of President Fidel Castro's policies. In a matter of days, some 10,000 Cuban citizens joined in, crowding the grounds of the embassy and requesting political asylum. The sheer number of dissenters and the inability of the Cuban guard to control the situation put immense pressure on Castro. In an unprecedented diplomatic gesture, he announced that those who wished to leave Cuba could do so through the port of Mariel (187). Castro's announcement spurred many Cuban Americans in Miami to commandeer boats and head to Cuba and pick up friends and relatives and to put political pressure on the Carter administration to address Castro's announcement (and implicit invitation) on a federal level. While there had been no official policy put in place regarding the boatlift, President Jimmy Carter addressed the situation on May 5, 1980, some two weeks after Castro had opened the port of Mariel, and the first boat of émigrés had docked at Key West, Florida. Carter stated, "we, as a nation, have always had our arms open to receiving refugees in accordance with American law. We'll continue to provide an open heart and open arms to refugees seeking freedom from communist domination and economic deprivation brought about primarily by Fidel Castro and his government" (Carter). Carter's statement alludes to the U.S.'s ideological imperative to provide safe harbor for those fleeing a communist government and thus serves as a condemnation of Fidel Castro and a simultaneous reinscription of U.S. ideals of freedom and democracy.

57 There are a number of works that explore legacies of U.S.-Cuban tension, cooperation, and exchange. See, for example, the anthology *Fifty years of revolution : perspectives on Cuba, the United States, and the world*, more recently Aviva Chomsky provides an overview of the Cuban Revolution and the international events that inspired it in *A History of the Cuban Revolution*, and Jonathan Colman provides a more focused history on Cold War politics in *The Cuban Missile Crisis : Origins, Course and Aftermath*.

Beyond reinscribing the anti-communist principles of his predecessors, Carter's condoning of the Boatlift paved the way for a more inclusive émigré population. I return to a term I introduced earlier: Miami's "re-Cubanization," which I use to describe the progressive replication of Cuban racial hierarchies and general diversification of Miami's Cuban population. Earlier waves of immigration from Cuba to Miami after Fidel Castro's ascent to power were not representative of Cuba's population; as an example, the earliest wave of immigration (usually dated between 1959 and 1965) included mostly Cubans of European-descent, or what I will from now on call white, or white passing Cubans of the upper middle class. The Mariel Boatlift signaled a radical departure from this demographic, with an almost 75% increase in mulatto and Afro-Cubans represented during the Boatlift.

The shift in the racial demographic, or a move towards a more holistic representation of Cubans in Miami, corresponded with Castro's political endeavors to defame any and all who left Cuba as their departures implicitly condemned Castro's administration. Castro strategically included inmates from Cuba's prisons and patients from mental asylums to purge Cuba of undesirable populations, including LGBTQIA Cubans, criminals, the mentally ill, and political dissenters.



Figure 17.

Given the population of the Mariel Boatlift, Castro's celebration of the émigrés' departure, excerpted above, indexes a rejection of marginalized populations. Castro's speech associates stagnation with those who are unwilling or unable to adjust, or perhaps more aptly, contribute to the revolution. Castro works to bolster faith in the revolution, implying a particular strength of those who stayed in Cuba while rejecting those who did not fit the new vision of Cuban nationalism (López 31). This particular portion of Castro's speech is excerpted in the introduction to *Scarface*, where it was, as the images demonstrate, subtitled in English. The inclusion of Castro's speech signals a rejection of the émigrés who were in turn rejected and criminalized in the U.S. Indeed, though the introduction of the film endeavors to present a dichotomous relationship between communism and capitalism, the treatment of the émigrés reveals similar priorities within both nations that exclude the welfare of those deemed socially undesirable.

The introduction thus foreshadows Tony Montana's multiple rejections as depicted in the film. As Miami news anchor, Ralph Renick asserted: "for Fidel Castro, it was tantamount to an act of genocide. With one fell swoop, he rid Cuba of thousands and thousands of undesirables. He emptied his prisons, he cleared the bums off the streets of Havana. Murderers, thieves, perverts, prostitutes, the retarded, crippled, [and] the winos" (WTVJ). Renick uses his public platform to criminalize the entirety of the Boatlift population, relying on dehumanizing, insulting language to characterize the émigrés. For Renick, other representatives of local and national media outlets, and likely, their consumers, the arrival of the Mariel immigrants posed a substantial threat to the well-being of the U.S.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The contemporary economic status of the US during the late 1970s and 1980s likely affected the reception of the Mariel immigrants. While the "Golden Exiles" arrived during a period of relative prosperity within the US, which was still in a period of post-World War II economic boom, the Mariel Boatlift came during a period of national financial strife. As Steven Sanders notes, "long known as a vacation resort, by the 1970s economic collapse made

This local response deviated vastly from that of President Carter's administration and many noted that the issue of accommodating the new arrivals was a local problem (*Cocaine Cowboys*). The management of the influx by the national government is indicative of a desire to separate Miami from the rest of the nation to contain the "Mariel problem." Perhaps especially because the arrival of the 1980 Cuban émigrés corresponded with an increase in Miami crime, which was, as Renick's broadcast suggests, maliciously linked to the entirety of the Mariel boatlift population. María Cristina García notes that though there was a recorded sixty-six percent increase in crime in 1980, with "over a third of those convicted of murder [being] Mariel Cubans...the troublemakers were a small fraction of the camp population" (70). Further, the criminalization of all Mariel émigrés focused more on individuals and individual behaviors; one *New York Times* headline, published on May 11, 1980 read: "Retarded People and Criminals are included in Cuban Exodus," making clear that the socially undesirable came to represent of the larger group. The sensationalized criminalization of the Mariel Boatlift refugees may also be related to the racial demographic of the group. As García notes, "there were more blacks and mulattoes among them (from 15 to 40 percent, compared with 3 percent of the 1959-1973 migration)" (García 68). Those within and beyond members of the Cuban community compared the 1980 émigrés to the earlier arrivals, observing the Mariel émigrés as darker, criminal, less affluent, and less educated.

The 1980 émigrés were also distinct from earlier waves of immigration from Cuba immigration policies categorized them not as refugees, but as "entrants" searching for economic

the cities of Miami and Miami Beach vulnerable to urban degeneration and cultural stasis" (Sanders 21). Given the state of economic crisis that plagued greater Miami throughout the 1970s, locals viewed this most recent wave of immigrants as a potential challenge and competition for jobs during a period of increased unemployment (García 73).

opportunities in the U.S., as opposed to fleeing political persecution. Under the 1980 Refugee Act, the Carter administration asserted that the 1980 émigrés did not qualify for refugee status, but rather were viewed as “entrants,” an ambiguous categorization that allowed them to stay in the US temporarily until a more permanent status was defined (García 69). This categorization, in the context of the group’s demographic, and the concurrent rise of drug distribution and violent crime, coded 1980 Cuban émigrés as a threat to Miami and the U.S. more broadly. Indeed, *TIME* magazine devoted the November 2, 1981 cover page to Miami, posing the rhetorical question “Paradise Lost?” The question addresses both Miami’s booming industry as a winter tourist escape, or paradise, and the potentially cataclysmic blow an assessment of Miami as an unsafe, drug-ridden metropolis could, and did, have on Florida’s economy. The corresponding editorial is quick to point fingers at the latest wave of immigration into Miami: “Marielitos are believed to be responsible for half of all violent crime in Miami” (*TIME*). While the drug scene, specifically the distribution and use of cocaine, and corresponding violence preceded their arrival, the 1980 émigrés were scapegoated, likely because of the reputation perpetuated by the US media.⁵⁹

Scarface, more than *Miami Vice*, highlights how the fear of Mariel émigrés manifested in tense clashes between émigrés and border patrol agents through the introductory interrogation scene that immediately follows the aforementioned introductory scroll. Upon arriving in Miami, three white American Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officers interrogate Montana. The scene features a series of close ups of Pacino, in which the scar on his face is prominently displayed and he speaks with a pronounced accent. Throughout the film, Montana

⁵⁹ See *Cocaine Cowboys* (2006) for a more detailed exploration of the crime scene in Miami. The documentary situates the cocaine trade in relation to the 1960s marijuana trade, suggesting that the cocaine trade was more profitable and overtook the importation of marijuana.

speaks only minimal amounts of Spanish, yet continues to speak English with a distinct accent that marks his liminal position in the US sphere and poses a prominent obstacle in any potential effort he might make to assimilate. During the interrogation, the INS officers are standing over Tony in a physical enactment of their hierarchal power over him and his fate in the U.S.

In the image below, Montana sits, looking up defiantly as three border patrol agents. The scar on his face, which Montana explains is a reminder of a childhood fight, is on prominent display. The agents surround him, as though concerned that Montana can escape the confined room, and alternate asking him questions about his life in Cuba. Perhaps typically, INS officials interrogate Tony about his proficiency in English, his family, his drug habits, and his



Figure 18.

employment history in Cuba. Observing his scar, and even grabbing Montana's chin to tilt his head upwards, rendering the scar more easily visible, one of the agents asks, "how'd you get the beauty scar, tough guy? Eating pussy?" Montana points out how unusual this question is ("how am I gonna get a scar like that eating pussy, meng?"), and in so doing highlights the invasive nature of the interview that interrogates his sex life. Susana Pena's investigation into what she coins the **papi** discourse that circulated in Miami after the Mariel Boatlift helps to contextualize

the bizarre conflation of sex and violence as it manifests in the agent's question: "The papi discourse draws on racialized assumptions that depict Latino urban male youths as street-tough and somewhat dangerous even as it eroticizes this danger" (142). The question, and physicality with which it is asked, gesture to this eroticization of Montana's dangerous difference as a Mariel émigré.

The agents proceed to ask Montana if he spent any time in jail, before noticing a tattoo on his hand. The agent notes that he has seen many of the same tattoos, asserting, "pitchfork means assassin, or something," before asking if Tony wants "to take a trip to the detention center" (*Scarface*). In the case of both questions, permanent marks on Tony's body metaphorize his marginalization as a Mariel émigré. Within the interrogation, Tony also explains that he learned English in school and that his father "was a Yankee [and] used to take [him] a lot to the movies [where he] watched the guys like Humphrey Bogart...they teach me to talk" (*Scarface*). His experience of learning English through the dissemination of US popular culture preceding Castro's rise to power is reflective of the cultural permeability that facilitated the assimilation of earlier waves of emigration from Cuba to the U.S. When asked about his family, Tony asserts that both his father and mother are dead, though later in the film we see Tony reuniting with his mother and younger sister, Gina. Given the stakes of the interrogation, which could result in Tony's repatriation to Cuba, his responses to the interrogators can be read as ambiguous at best. In spite of his efforts to trick the interrogators, they focus on the physical markings on his body, including the scar on his face and the prison gang tattoo on his hand.

Tony finally confesses that he spent time in jail after attempting to purchase US dollars. While the officers drag him away, Tony asks them if they are communists. He continues, asking how they would enjoy a communist regime with "People telling you what to think, what to say,"

and asks the men if they would “want to work eight, ten fucking hours, man, own[ing] nothing, [having] nothing?” Here, Tony expresses the appeal to capitalism where work is rewarded with property and wages that allow citizens to assert economic autonomy. He continues, explaining that in spite of the prejudices of the officers, he is not a criminal: “I’m Tony Montana, a political prisoner from Cuba and I want my fucking human rights, just like Jimmy Carter said.” By citing Carter, Montana reiterates the ideological promise the President made to him that entitles him to asylum in the US. In spite of his brief, yet detailed, explanation of his experiences in Cuba, which included eating octopus three times a day, the interrogators remain unmoved, asserting they “don’t believe a word” of Tony’s speech. They conclude that “that son of a bitch Castro is shitting all over us.” Though the film eventually reveals that Tony has a history of crime in Cuba, consisting primarily of robbing banks and bodegas, his criminality is legible on his body as opposed to any criminal record or his own testimony. Because of his physical markings and pronounced accent, the interrogators immediately deem him as violent, foreign, and dangerous; his tattoos are affirmation of Castro’s malice in an exaggerated representation of the immigrant body.

Montana’s violent acquisition of a green card that allows him to leave the camp, Freedomtown, further hyperbolizes the ill-reputed arrival of the Cuban émigrés. I will describe the camp in further detail shortly. He and his friend Manny are offered expedited access to green cards in exchange for murdering an alleged Castro informant/collaborator. Tony responds to the proposition, boasting: “I kill a communist for fun, but for a green card, I’m gonna carve him up real nice.” By murdering Emilio Rebenga, Montana kills off the vestiges of Cuban communism and marks his inauguration into US capitalism in which a service is recompensed with a material payoff. Throughout the remainder of the film, Montana refuses to engage any conversations

about communism and his experiences in a Cuban prison—shortly after Tony and Manny begin to work for Frank López, a local drug lord, Tony voices his desire to overtake Frank and have an affair with his mistress, Elvira Hancock. Manny encourages him to keep his ambition in check: “just remember last year this time we were in a fucking cage in Cuba.” Tony quickly replies, “You remember. I’d like to forget that.” By killing Rebenga, a representative of Cuban communism and refusing to recall his experiences in Cuba, Montana attempts to erase his abuses within a communist regime, that, as he implies, have no bearing on his future in the U.S. His efforts at erasure counter the immediate judgments from the INS officers during the interrogation, which suggest that Tony’s past is permanently imprinted on his body. Initially marked as an outsider by the INS officers, Tony achieves a somewhat liminal status with the murderous acquisition of the green card—he is not yet an American citizen in spite of his insistence that his experiences in Cuba be forgotten, but he is able to move beyond the physically restrictive tent camp and into the broader US sphere.

Although the Mariel émigrés were able to move beyond the camp, likely through less violent means than those utilized by Montana, the Mariel émigrés encountered many more difficulties than earlier waves of Cuban emigration to the U.S. The national government provided less financial support to the 1980 Cuban émigrés and the latter group provided a challenge to the already-established Cuban-American community in Miami. Heike Alberts notes that the Cuban community in Miami was initially enthusiastic about the boatlift and the opportunity to reunite with members of their families and other social groups, but

Their enthusiasm quickly decreased...as it became clear that the Marielitos included criminals and mental-health patients... [and] because of the United States' attempt to end the preferential treatment of Cubans, it did not make

extensive aid programs available to the newcomers, placing a high burden on the Cuban community (Alberts 237).

Aid programs, which previously facilitated the assimilation of earlier waves of emigration, were not available to the newcomers, likely a result of their widespread notorious reputation. The Mariel émigrés were thus both a financial burden, and potentially, a reputational burden on the Miami Cuban community.

Earlier Cuban arrivals worried that the pejoratively reputed 1980 Cuban émigrés would jeopardize the high standing and political sway the established Cuban American community held in Miami and Washington DC. María Cristina García notes that the earlier émigrés, known as the Golden Exiles who arrived between 1959 and 1965, were members of the Cuban upper class who were likely familiar with US culture and practices “because of the pervasive American economic and cultural presence in post-revolutionary Cuba” (García 15). In addition to their familiarity with U.S. culture, the Golden Exiles were “disproportionately white and middle class...including doctors, lawyers, and businessmen” (García xi).⁶⁰ The Golden Exiles were thus at an enormous advantage in their assimilation into the U.S. economic, cultural, and political sphere when compared to the newer arrivals who occupied a lower class position in Cuba and tended to hold positions in unskilled labor (García 67). Coupled with the criminal reputation outlined earlier, the established Cuban community pinpointed representational politics that allowed negative stereotypes of the Mariel émigrés to over determine the perception of Cubans in the U.S. overall.

⁶⁰ These émigrés also experienced discrimination from Miami locals including but not limited to housing segregation by way of “No Cubans Allowed” signs, but, given their class position in Cuba and corresponding higher levels of education, Cuban-Americans who arrived after 1959 but before 1980 (generally between 1961-1973) were able to integrate into Miami’s economic infrastructure quickly and established the strong Cuban cultural enclave that still thrives in contemporary Miami.

Both *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* reference these intra-community tensions among Miami's Cuban/Cuban-American populations. Further, these shows exaggerate these tensions by aligning white, well-to-do Cubans with law enforcement who use their power to arrest, and sometimes kill Mariel émigrés. In a general example, the show represents many white Latinx in positions of power within the show, emblemized by Lieutenant Castillo's role as the head of the department. His position speaks to the shifting economic and socio-political hierarchy in Miami that eventually came to favor white Latinxs. More specifically, in "Heroes of the Revolution," the 24th episode in *Miami Vice*'s third season, the audience learns that Gina Calebrese, a high-ranking detective within the Miami Vice department portrayed by Saundra Santiago, is a Golden Exile. The episode opens with the detectives of the Miami Vice department pursuing a major drug lord Orrestes Pedrosa, who is later revealed to have murdered Gina's mother in Cuba in the early years of the Revolution. In reviewing the file on Pedrosa, Detective Tubbs asks: "was he a Marielito?" The question was likely inspired by the date of Pedrosa's arrival in Miami in February 1980. Another detective responds, "he grew up in Cuba, but he has a Belizean passport" ("Heroes of the Revolution"). This is neither a yes nor a no response to the question Tubbs posed, and suggests that Cubans, especially those involved in criminal networks, who entered came to Miami were implicitly linked to the Boatlift. Gina both before and after learning Pedrosa's role in her own life, contributes to the state-sanctioned pursuit and persecution of Pedrosa. Her position as a police officer reflects a hyperbolic form of assimilation, as she has the authority to enforce US laws, oftentimes against people who have recently immigrated to Miami. Her successful assimilation is reflective of the favorable treatment of white Cubans from earlier waves of emigration, especially when compared to the Mariel émigrés.

Scarface similarly includes a tense interaction between a Cuban-American police officer and Mariel émigré, Tony Montana. When local, undercover police officers bust Tony for fraudulently converting money he has earned from selling drugs, one of the arresting officers identifies himself as Cuban. After revealing his identity as an officer to Tony, the unnamed man expresses disdain: “Cabrón, you call yourself a real Cuban? You make a real Cuban throw up.” In referring to Tony as “cabrón” (a slang term that means coward or cuckold, depending on the context), the officer endeavors to emasculate him, conflating a definition of Cubanness with masculinity. The officer interrogates Tony’s Cubanness from his position as a representative of U.S. authority, a heightened form of assimilation that is juxtaposed with Tony’s position as a drug dealer. The interaction with the Cuban police officer reinscribes Tony’s exclusion from ideals of Cuban respectability and successful assimilation.

This exclusion even alienates Tony from his own family, interactions with whom continuously reify the intra-communal tensions in post-Mariel Miami. After establishing some financial success working with drug lord Frank López, he finds his mother and sister, and attempts to retire his mother and support both women financially. Tony asserts, “My kid sister don’t have to work in no beauty parlor and Mamá don’t have to sew in no factory. Your son made it, Mamá” (*Scarface*). Montana uses language to suggest he has fulfilled the American Dream. In this context, Montana’s imagined fulfillment necessitates a corresponding inscription of gendered norms wherein men provide for women financially. Tony’s mother is immediately skeptical, asking Tony who he killed to earn the thousand dollars he has presented to confirm his promise of financial support. Tony fictitiously explains that he is an organizer for an Anti-Castro group that receives many donations. In offering this story, Montana appeals to the widespread anti-Communist sentiment among Miami’s Cuban communities. His mother sees through his

façade and accuses him of violently taking the money from someone, asserting, “All we hear about in the papers is animals like you and the killings...it’s Cubans like you who are giving a bad name to our people, people who come here and work hard and make a good name for themselves. People who send their children to school” (*Scarface*). Montana’s mother reiterates the aforementioned pervasiveness of negative broadcasting about the Mariel population. She further argues that these “animals,” to use her dehumanizing language, both mis- and over-represent hard-working individuals who strive to fulfill middle class values of good reputation and education. Tony’s methods of “making it” are frowned upon by his mother. Before kicking Tony out of her house, she firmly asserts, “I don’t need your money. Gracias. I work for my living.” It is clear that Tony’s acquisition of money is not the problem, but rather how his mother assumes he earned so much money so quickly. His illicit methodology in achieving an aspect of the American dream, economic success, is a commentary on the characteristics of the 1980 émigrés that ostracizes him from the remainder of the Cuban community.

Montana’s illegal moneymaking endeavors demonstrably alienate him from his community, yet earlier parts of the film suggest that he has limited options to help him achieve economic success. First, for example, the film depicts the inhumane, impromptu housing offered to Mariel émigrés, including Tony, in Freedomtown where they are unable to make their own money and further, unable to leave until INS processes them and gives them their green cards—this process is expedited for both Manny and Tony after Rebenga’s murder.



Figure 19.

The real “Freedomtown” did not differ widely from that recreated in the film, as pictured above. The encampment was composed of several large tents behind high, barbed-wire fences and was located under one of the overpasses in downtown Miami. While the fences implied an effort to quarantine the recent arrivals from the broader Miami population, the highly visible placement of the camps (in one of the most populous and frequently traveled areas of Miami) suggests an effort at making the émigrés a spectacle, which reinforces the sensationalizing representation of the émigrés in the U.S. media. The representation of the camps is historically accurate; because of the massive amounts of émigrés who lacked sponsorship in Miami, many were processed and housed in churches, recreation centers, hotels, dog kennels, and eventually in “tent cities,” the largest of which was close to Little Havana, a predominantly Cuban neighborhood (García 63). The management of the arrival of the 1980 Cuban émigrés indicates both a lack of resources to deal with the massive influx, but also a dehumanization of the émigrés as indexed by their housing in dog kennels. The film’s inclusion of the tent city also reiterates the 1980 Cuban émigrés’ exclusion from ideals of acceptability, and gives credence to the ostracization Montana experiences throughout the film.

Montana's transition from the camp into Miami proper indexes his limited access to well-paying jobs. Unsurprisingly, when Tony Montana and Manny Ribera, his trusted associate, leave the camp they have limited opportunities for employment and end up working as dishwashers in a food truck. While working, the pair enviously watches wealthy white Americans valeting their cars at a nightclub across the street. Tony complains, hunched over a sink full of dishes, that "[he] did not come to the United States to break [his] fuckin' back," making clear that he expects to make money without engaging in physical and/or minimum wage labor that will not propel him into the world of elite nightclubs. While they are working, Manny informs Tony that he has arranged a meeting with local drug dealers and during a break, the two men negotiate a deal in which they will move two kilos of cocaine for \$5,000. The payment is substantially higher than what Tony and Manny combined could make working a minimum wage job as dishwashers, highlighting the appeal of drug dealing for a Mariel émigré with limited "marketable" skills. After they make the deal, Tony throws his apron at the owner of the food truck and declares, "I'm retired!" Quitting the job marks Tony's voluntary departure from a normative and unsubstantial form of employment in lieu of quick, illicit, and bountiful cash. Although getting the green card is enough to move him away from a site that is excluded from broader US society, it is clear that Tony's legibility as a violent immigrant limits him to forms of employment that are unlikely to lead to speedy economic prosperity. The film's attention to the limited access to stable employment experienced by the 1980 Cuban émigrés is indicative of the production crew's efforts at accurately contextualizing the film. Further, both *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* differently reflect the increased policing of drug dealers and users during this period that corresponded with the U.S.'s War on Drugs, which I contextualize in more detail in the next

section. These representations thus index a dilemma for émigrés who create and rely on alternate, though highly policed, economies.

Miami and the War on Drugs

The Nixon administration coined the term “War on Drugs” in 1971, but the announcement proved largely rhetorical, as there were no corresponding alterations in US drug policy apart from the founding of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in 1973. The administration established the DEA to deal with all aspects of the nation’s drug problem (Alexander 48). However, 11 years later, the Reagan administration re-launched the War on Drugs with, as many scholars have noted, an almost vengeful attack on drug users. President Reagan declared his War on Drugs on October 14, 1982 and throughout the remainder of his presidency, the Reagan administration exerted immense resources to address what he viewed as a pressing cultural problem. As noted by Bruce Michael Bagley, “to accomplish this urgent ‘national security’ objective, the federal government rapidly increased expenditures for narcotics control programs ... reaching \$4.3 billion annually in 1988” (Bagley 189). The administration directed this increased budget toward agencies that would penalize drug use, including sects of the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Department of Defense, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Meanwhile, the budget of agencies that were tasked with providing rehabilitative treatment for users was cut dramatically—the budget of the National Institute on Drug Abuse dropped from \$274 million in 1981 to \$57 million in 1984 (Alexander 50). It was clear that Reagan’s War on Drugs was not a beneficent effort to rehabilitate drug users and dealers, but rather an effort to eradicate drug use through the increased penalization and prosecution of both users and dealers.

Though the War on Drugs was considered a national problem, the consequences of the increased policing of drug use in the US affected certain populations substantially more than others. Michelle Alexander asserts that inner-city communities, populated mostly by minorities, saw significant declines in employment throughout the 1980s as a result of deindustrialization and globalization, and argues that a “decline in legitimate employment opportunities among inner-city residents increased incentives to sell drugs” (Alexander 51). Given Miami’s depressed economy in the 1980s, the corresponding growth in illicit drug sales also affected the incarceration rates of recent immigrants (Grenier 9). It is clear from the skyrocketing rates of imprisonment of Black men including some 1980 Cuban émigrés in Miami, that there were clear biases in the enforcement of drug policies (Dunn 42).

In addition to the national policies and increase of domestic anti-drug organizations, the Reagan administration endeavored to “intensify interdiction efforts along US borders and law enforcement programs in foreign source and transit countries” (Bagley 190). The consumption and movement of drugs evolved from a national problem into a hemispheric witch-hunt; the 1980s saw increased policing of Caribbean, Central, and South American countries, perhaps especially Mexico, Jamaica, Colombia, and Peru. The U.S.’s focus on these nations as major drug producers culminated in the formation of organizations such as the South Florida Drug Task Force in 1982, which combined agents from the DEA, Customs, the FBI, IRS, U.S. Army, and U.S. Navy in efforts to take down drug traffickers.

This coalitional organization served as a model for other regional task forces within the U.S., such as Operation Alliance (DEA 48). Bagley describes Operation Alliance as a “multi-agency task force created in 1986... designed to curtail the flow of drugs across the U.S.-Mexican border” (Bagley 166). Both the South Florida Drug Task Force and Operation Alliance

reveal that certain regions of the U.S., because of their proximity to foreign countries, were more vulnerable than others. Miami, as a major port city, was an area of concern, especially given the city's history as a site where cocaine was smuggled into the U.S.⁶¹ In *Scarface*, Tony Montana remarks on the corresponding increase of policing of Florida's waters when trying to smuggle cocaine in from Bolivia: "you got the fuckin' Navy; you got frogmen; you got EC-25 with the satellite tracking shit; you got the fuckin' Bell 209 assault choppers up the ass. We're losing one out of every nine loads" (*Scarface*). Montana's assessment of the increased policing of Miami and nearby waters addresses the contemporary militarized prevention of drug transmission into the U.S. As indicated here, in spite of the collaborative efforts of many law enforcement industries, drugs were still entering the US through south Florida, though in limited amounts that affected Montana's income.

Given its central focus on law enforcement, *Miami Vice* more explicitly addresses the collaborative efforts of law enforcement agencies. The show represents these collaborations in a variety of ways, sometimes through the mention of the limited jurisdiction of the Miami Vice police department and resulting collaboration with the FBI (a frequent occurrence in the series, and related crime dramas), and elsewhere through the violation of jurisdictional parameters indexed by Crockett and Tubbs' multiple trips to the Caribbean for police work. In particular, in the fifth episode of the first season, Crockett and Tubbs follow international criminal, Esteban Calderone, to the Bahamas, and although they have "absolutely no jurisdiction" in the Bahamas, as their supervisor who discourages "any vigilante stuff" reminds them, they illustrate an undercover operation to get at Calderone by tracking down his daughter. Their interaction with their supervisor details how international travel for police should work, asserting that they are

⁶¹ Bagley asserts, "in the late 1960s a relatively small cocaine-smuggling network had developed largely under the control of exile Cuban criminal organizations based in Miami" (Bagley 74)



Figure 20.

“just there for surveillance, and, as the image below demonstrates, that they will inform the Bahamian authorities of Calderone’s presence and anticipate his extradition. This interaction suggests international collaborations in the pursuit of drug dealers, expanding on Bagley’s mention of the South Florida Task Force.

The policing of the drug trade more internationally exposes similarities between the invasion and spread of drugs and the xenophobic rhetoric surrounding the policies to address increased immigration into the US. Namely, both the influx of drugs and immigrants manifested in a fear that the admission of “undesirables” compromised the overall health of the nation; the influx of drugs corresponded with an increase in street crime, transmission of diseases (Bagley 118). While the drug epidemic was and is a domestic issue resulting from fluctuations in employment and limited access to rehabilitative services, the arrival of foreign bodies provided an opportunity for officials to project these systemic issues onto outsiders in a xenophobic effort to vindicate the U.S.

Dangerous Bodies: Queerness and the Boatlift

Other identity-markers and negative stereotypes frequently associated with the Mariel émigrés facilitated these projections. In particular, with their respective address of homosexuality and deviation from normative gender roles, *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* gesture towards the

perception and corresponding persecution of the Mariel Boatlift's LGBTQIA population. While the representations of non-heteronormativity are given only cursory attention within *Miami Vice* and *Scarface*, often in quick flashes either at the beginning of the film or in a sub-plotline of the first episode, these glimpses provide insight into the infamous criminalization of queerness during the Boatlift. These representations, coupled with the raced perceptions of the Mariel Boatlift and the contemporary condemnations of LGBTQIA people in Cuba created a "perfect storm" that variously entrapped Mariel émigrés with overwhelmingly pejorative stereotypes about crime, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and status as refugees.

In *Miami Vice*, Trini Desoto, the antagonist of the pilot episode who, as described earlier, works to distance himself from Mariel riffraff, collaborates with Esteban Calderone (an antagonist with a recurring role in the series). Although he met with Tubbs and Crockett while they were both undercover, once DeSoto learns that they are police officers, he dresses in women's clothing to disguise himself and follows Tubbs, intent on killing him before Tubbs has a chance to shut down his and Calderone's extensive drug ring. As a Mariel immigrant dressed in



Figure 21.

drag with the intent of committing a crime, DeSoto becomes an exaggerated representation of the perceptions of the Mariel boatlift, or, more accurately, a representation of the anxieties expressed in reports that resemble Ralph Renick's, mentioned above. In particular, this shot of DeSoto pointing a gun at Tubbs while wearing a thick, brown-haired wig, large hoop earrings, lipstick, and eyeshadow conflates the threat of direct violence from a criminal émigré with the perceived threat of a challenge, or deviation from cis-hetero gender performance. DeSoto's death, after Crockett runs him over with a car to protect Tubbs, metaphorizes law enforcement's resistance to corruption, a complex phenomenon that, in the world of *Miami Vice*, combines criminal behavior with non-traditional gender identities as a compounded threat to the U.S.

Recently, scholars have investigated the intersections of migrant studies, Caribbean studies, and queer theory, with some devoting specific attention to the perceived threat and corresponding persecution of LGBTQIA communities during the Cuban Revolution and the various waves of emigration therein. Maria Encarnación López asserts that during the Cuban Revolution, "homosexuals were seen as a destabilizing threat to the system, so the government launched an institutionalized homophobic system whose purpose was to keep them under control" (2-3). These strategies included the disproportionate imprisonment and institutionalization of LGBTQIA individuals; when Castro boasted emptying the prisons and asylums onto the U.S. during the Boatlift, his claims betrayed the anti-blackness and virulent homophobic underpinnings of his regime. As Susana Peña asserts:

The Cuban government developed a selective process to facilitate the exit of people whom the revolution had already identified as undesirable. By prioritizing "undesirables," Cuban officials hoped to eliminate what they defined as problem populations from the country and reinforce the official story that disparaged all those who wanted to leave.

When Cuban Americans arrived in Cuba with empty boats, hopeful that they would be reunited with family members, they were required to transport not only their relatives but also other people the Cuban government had approved for departure, among them, homosexuals, criminals, and the mentally ill (484).

Peña suggests that a particularly potent thread of Cuban nationalism emerged during the Revolution, and its success was contingent on the abjection, and ultimate ejection, of those who deviated from a prescriptive definition of Cuban citizenship. In this, any non-heteronormative identification and/or performance, or **perception** of non-heteronormativity was immediately conflated with criminality and mental illness.

DeSoto's representation in *Miami Vice*, along with the interrogation scene in *Scarface*, reveals that the persecution of LGBTQIA Cubans persisted in the U.S. One of the three agents interrogating Tony asks, "You like men? You like to dress up as a woman?" (*Scarface*). The agent asks these two questions in quick succession, implicitly disallowing Montana's response to them as distinct ideas, and indicating that a positive answer to either question will result in his persecution, perhaps even his deportation to Cuba. In conflating these questions, the agent indexes tendencies to homogenize LGBTQIA communities; the first question attempts to get at Montana's sexual orientation, while the latter interrogates his gender performance/identity. Tony answers defensively, "No, okay? Fuck no." Montana's assertive rejection of non-heteronormativity implicitly indexes how intersections of immigrant identity and masculinity entrapped Montana in both pejorative, exclusionary assumptions of queerness and the fetishized hypermasculinity of Cuban men. There is no further explicit reference to LGBTQIA Mariel émigrés in *Scarface*. This exchange, and the (non)representation of queerness within the film metaphorizes the paradoxical non-/hypervisibility of LGBTQIA Mariel émigrés during the

boatlift. Further, the series of questions reveals a tendency to problematically link sexuality with gender performance, and indicates an uninformed discriminatory gaze used to assess Mariel émigrés upon entry into the U.S.

The fetishized machismo is an integral part of both Tony and Manny's characterizations within the film, perhaps especially through their objectifying, dominating treatment of women. As a specific example, the trajectory of Tony and Elvira's relationship, and his own reflection on their courtship, illustrates how both men viewed women as acquisitions. The pair's views on women is perhaps most apparent during an oft-cited scene, shot near a hotel pool, in which Tony lectures Manny on how to pursue women just after Manny has, after Tony's jestful encouragement, flicked his tongue seductively (he thinks) at a bikini-clad blonde woman. In this scene, Manny leans into the woman's space emphasized in the shot through the excess negative



Figure 22.

space on the right side of the screen; the camera angle almost traps the woman in the corner of the shot, emphasizing Manny's role as a sexual aggressor. The scene also sharply contrasts Manny's dark, stiffly-gelled hair, a stereotypical marker of playboy masculinity with the woman's loose blonde waves. She looks befuddled, then repulsed, before slapping Manny across the face. Manny turns away to rejoin Tony, declaring that if he were not a nice person, he would

strike her in return, and yelling out “Bitch...lesbian!” His insulting farewell marks an arrogance in his own appeal; if the woman is not attracted to him, then she must not be attracted to men. Montana lectures Manny: “In this country, you gotta make the money first. Then when you get the money, you get the power. Then when you get the power, then you get the women” (*Scarface*). Montana’s progressive explanation asserts that power and money are prerequisites to women. Further, it suggests that Montana will use money and power to “get,” through either coercion or purchase, women, exemplifying a mode of domination and control in any romantic prospect.

While this exchange between Manny, Tony, and the unnamed woman exemplifies a certain masculine, playboy stereotype, it is necessarily shaped by the men’s positions as “foreigners.” Peña dismantles this stereotype, focusing specifically on Cuban-American masculinity. She writes, “In the United States the macho is a racial inferior whose particular type of patriarchal power is criticized. In part, the macho works to deflect attention from how middle-class Anglo patriarchy operates across national and class boundaries” (145). Peña pinpoints how criticisms of Cuban masculinity, inflected in both Tony and Manny’s objective treatment of women, and immigrant masculinity generally, as she emphasizes in a later section of her book, are a projection that distracts from, and disables criticism of, white patriarchy.

In her attention to the intersections of gender identity and performance and race, Pena gestures toward the insidious implications of Pacino’s “brownface” performance. As she implies, the representation of the virile, uncontrolled Latin man is contingent on a certain brownness, or selective distance from both whiteness and Blackness that enables alienation, but in some ways neutralizes threats of Blackness:

The danger and allure of the Latin lover are related to stereotypical historical depictions of a hypersexual and uncontrolled temperament characteristic of Latin

Americans, especially those of Caribbean descent...Latin lovers always phenotypically depicted as brown-skinned, that is, somewhere between black and white. Second, they are portrayed as only slightly dangerous; thus they pose less of a threat than black males (143)

In this sense, we might assume that an actor of African descent **could not** have played Tony Montana's character, as this characterization, while more representative of the Mariel demographic, might have made the film too threatening for U.S. audiences. Although the film relies on compounding representations of marginalized communities, Al Pacino's olive skin tone thus neutralizes a threat that might have detracted from the film's profitability.

Scarface's Grandiosity

The neutralization implicit in the decision not to cast a Black lead to represent a majority Black/mulatto emigration wave contrasts with the otherwise grandiose representations of Tony. All elements of the film are indicative of the grandiose image De Palma wished to construct, especially Tony's boundless ambition; as Tony notes in the film before establishing his footing in the drug game, he wants "the world...and everything in it." Tony's ambition is an individual characteristic that inspires his self-motivation and upward mobility, but he is drawn to the United States because it will enable the quick acquisition of private wealth. Tony's danger as an ambitious, manipulative immigrant is dispersed to include a fear of what capitalism encourages and enables. Tony's ambition and greed are observable in his extravagant purchases once he becomes a major player in the drug game: he purchases a large house, equipped with a tiger, a painting of him and his wife, lush red carpets, gold fixings, and a Jacuzzi bathtub, shown below.

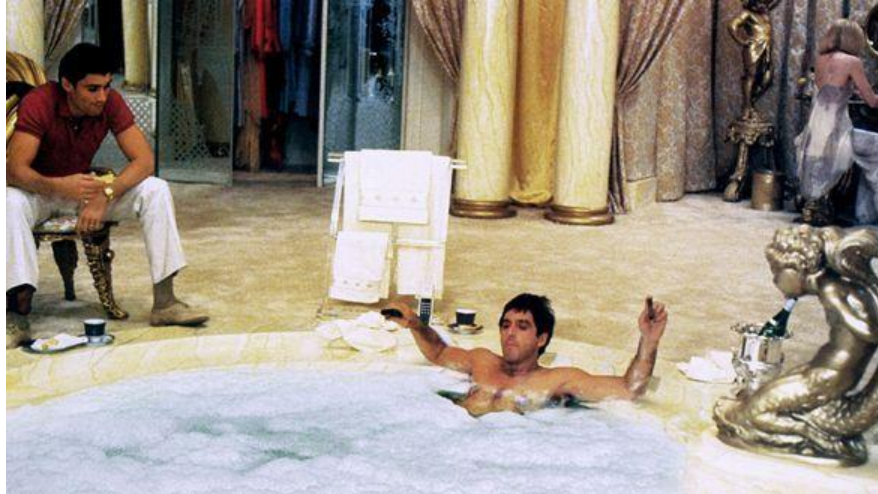


Figure 23.

The film frequently shows Montana with wads of cash and amidst mountains of cocaine; these casual scenes normalize the excess Montana seeks and fulfills within US capitalism. His wife, Elvira, is also treated as an acquisition—in his move to overpower Frank López, another drug dealer, Tony woos Elvira by asserting that because he now has more power, Elvira will be safer and better provided for with him. The acquisition of the objectified woman is the culmination of his success within a capitalist landscape; his marriage to Elvira, given his own hypermasculinist framework indexed in his earlier discussions of “money, power, then women,” indicates that he has enough money and power to stake a claim in a woman.⁶² Tony’s seemingly endless acquisition of material objects and objectified white women is indicative of a more detailed critique of capitalism.

De Palma confirms the film’s condemnation of US capitalism when addressing criticisms of the film’s hyperbolic violence, profanity, and drug use:

I’ve been accused of pandering to the worst aspects of the human character in order to make more and more money...now we’re all in a capitalistic society and

⁶² The machismo depicted in the film is particularly interesting especially when considering the major contemporary drug lord was a woman, Griselda Blanco, who is believed to have been responsible for 200 murders and whose enterprise brought in approximately \$80 million a month (*Cocaine Cowboys*).

one of the reasons we're able to continue doing what we do is that we make money...accusing someone of a profit motive from one sector of society to another is basically nonsense because we're all involved in a profit motive

(Creating Scarface)

In many ways, De Palma's address of these criticisms mirrors the treatment of Montana throughout the film. Though Tony's demeanor is a hyperbolic enactment of capitalist greed, various audiences scapegoat him for revealing the corruption and greed all U.S. citizens are either actively pursuing or complicit in perpetuating. Of course, the stakes of this projection of blame onto Montana are inextricable from his position as a Mariel émigré. As De Palma notes, the film depicts "the American dream gone crazy...the capitalist dream gone bizarre and berserk." Within the world of the film, the mania of American capitalism is projected onto an immigrant whose corruption by ruthless of capitalism is exaggerated. As De Palma argues, "because he is honest [about his interests and modes of acquisition] he's the obvious bad guy, but they're all bad guys." De Palma asserts, then, that the film functions as a broader critique of capitalism as opposed to a focus on this particular individual, or, given his representative status within the film, the entire group of Cuban émigrés.

In calling Tony "the obvious bad guy," De Palma is referencing a specific and notable scene in the film. In the beginning indications of his calamitous downfall, a clearly inebriated Tony has dinner with Elvira and Manny, and reveals that Elvira is unable to bear children. Tony explains to Manny that his wife's "womb is so polluted that [he] can't even have a fuckin' little baby with her" (*Scarface*). Elvira responds by throwing her drink in Tony's face and asserts that Tony "doesn't even know how to be a husband," let alone a father to a child. She further asserts that he likely would not be alive by the time the child went to school. By diffusing the blame of

her inability to bear children to include Tony, Elvira rejects his misogynistic attack and makes clear that their lifestyle has no posterity. She concludes solemnly, explaining to Tony that because they are not contributing anything “good” to society, they are “losers, not winners.” The exchange between Elvira and Tony draws notable attention from the predominantly white patrons of the restaurant and as he rises to leave, Tony calls them “a bunch of fuckin’ assholes” because they do not “have the guts to be who they want to be.” He continues, regarding his own position as the disruptive patron:

You need people like me so you can point your fuckin’ fingers and say that’s the bad guy. What does that make you? Good? You’re not good. You just know how to hide. How to lie. Me, I don’t have that problem. Me. I always tell the truth, even when I lie (*Scarface*).

The patrons’ presence at a clearly expensive restaurant suggests that they, like Tony, are the beneficiaries of capitalism, and are indulging in a luxurious meal and outing. However, because of his outsider status as an émigré, public declarations of ambition, and refusal to participate in insidious bribery in favor of brute, honest force, Tony is an anomaly as opposed to a representation of a larger intrinsic problem to capitalism in the U.S.

Tony’s interactions with figures of authority throughout the film bring other problems in the U.S. to the fore. Once he has made a name for himself and broken away from other major drug dealers, Mel Bernstein, the Chief Detective of the Miami Narcotics Unit, proposes that Montana pay the department an undisclosed amount of money monthly. In exchange, Bernstein promises that “[they will] tell [Tony] who’s moving against [him] and... shake down who [Tony] wants shaken down.” With this offer, Bernstein affords Montana authoritative power in controlling part of Miami’s law enforcement. Bernstein is a metonymic representation of a larger

phenomenon of authorities turning a profit on the local importation and distribution of drugs; in 1987, four years after the release of *Scarface*, fifteen Miami Dade County police officers were charged with running a drug distribution business (Dombrink 202). *Miami Vice* thematizes the collusion of Miami law enforcement with drug dealers, which I examine in more detail shortly. Although Bernstein's offer makes clear that the local authorities are complicit in the distribution of drugs and violence, they are able to maintain their authority and legality while Montana's unauthorized, criminal, immigrant status marginalizes him.

Montana voices a related critique against politicians who profit from the drug trade while watching a news broadcast about the potential legalization of illicit drugs to eradicate organized crime: "politicians...want coke to be legal so they can tax it and get money and they can get votes." Manny responds that "[politicians have] been around a thousand years, they got all the angles figured out." Once again, the film calls attention to a complicity in the management of drugs that glorifies politicians, depicted in the news clip as predominantly white, and vilifies non-white men who are involved in the same system, though at differing levels and to differing degrees.

Miami Vice

Miami Vice takes several cues from *Scarface*, perhaps especially with its attention to corruption in law enforcement. The show links immigration, or more aptly, non-white and/or non-English speaking immigrants and "foreignness" with crime and whiteness to what is described as "Southern law enforcement" through the series' primary focus on Detective Sonny Crockett, a white Miami native portrayed by Don Johnson. Through these associations, *Miami Vice* constructs a tenuous binary between white, law-enforcing Miamians and non-white/non-native law-breaking immigrants. However, as in *Scarface*, there are several integral moments

wherein this binary is troubled by the show's persistent representation of police corruption, particularly the corruption of local, and eventually national, white law enforcement officers through their illicit connections and relationships with immigrants. Because of these illicit collaborations, immigrants yield substantial economic and political power to influence the city. Unlike *Scarface*, however, *Miami Vice* does not offer a sustained engagement with the Mariel Boatlift. Instead, the themes of the show suggest that in a post-Mariel boatlift cultural moment, all manner of vice, especially that carried out by Caribbean and South American émigrés happens in Miami. The show thus positions the Mariel boatlift as a watershed moment wherein crime is linked to Caribbean and South American émigrés.

Through its depictions of police corruption, and the nature of these depictions, I argue that *Miami Vice* presents the fictionalized department and Miami generally, as a permeable and vulnerable contact zone that challenges and redefines southern, and thus U.S. authority. As such, beyond the criminality attributed to their involvement in cocaine smuggling, the transgressive infiltration of nonnative drug dealers in the Miami Vice department suggests another more pressing degree of criminality. Indeed, it suggests that non-white immigrants challenge the authority of the police department, the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the city, and the corresponding imperative to defend borders.

Tubbs and Crockett: “Jamaican” New Yorker & “Southern Cracker”

The pilot of *Miami Vice* introduces the show's recurring themes of highlighting and troubling international and regional borders. The contrasting characterizations of and relationship between Detectives James “Sonny” Crockett and Ricardo “Rico” Tubbs reflect both tension and reconciliation across racial and regional lines. While Crockett is from Miami and lives on a houseboat with his pet alligator, Elvis, Tubbs is a black American native New Yorker, with

conceptions of Miami as “slow” and “backwards” especially when compared to the fast-paced lifestyle he led in New York (“Heart of Darkness”). Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, the pair butt heads in their initial encounters, but eventually work together in their shared interest in keeping Miami’s streets clean.

Although the show depicts, and exploits, the at-times violent diversity that forms the setting of the show, the central focus is still a white, heterosexual, male police officer who commits to protecting the streets of Miami from an outside threat.⁶³ The show positions Crockett, as a native Southerner against “foreigners” and embodies white-American racism, fears, and efforts to resist changes manifested by immigration into the city. Crockett’s initial interaction with Tubbs, who is undercover as a Jamaican drug peddler (alias: Teddy Prentiss) in efforts to get closer to international drug dealer Esteban Calderone, reflects particular assumptions about people who have immigrated to Miami. Hearing Tubbs’ (fake) Jamaican accent and assuming him a drug peddler, Crockett refers to Tubbs as “Mr. Voodoo” in a simplistic conflation of non-Judeo-Christian spiritualities practiced within and beyond the Caribbean.

Tubbs’ adoption of a Jamaican accent and his “in-migration” to Miami from New York link his arrival to Miami’s cultural transformation and reveals that he occupies a somewhat liminal position as a black police officer; to Crockett, Tubbs is just another foreign criminal. His performed accent is also a further representation of his ethnic fluidity that allows him to blend in with nonwhite criminals in Miami. RL Rutsky notes *Miami Vice* inextricably links ethnic fluidity and criminality: “The international flavor of Miami and the mixing of language and cultures that this involves are major parts of the show’s style. And this international

⁶³ Crockett is one of only three white Americans represented within the department, including Stan Switek and Larry Zito.

circulation is also very strongly connected to the notion of vice” (Rutsky 78). As Rutsky suggests, the show links movement of people and the increased contact between different cultures with the threat of crime, particularly the influx of illicit substances as demonstrated in my discussion of *Scarface*. While Tubbs’ green eyes, light brown skin, and softly curled hair facilitate his interactions with drug dealers while undercover, they also, as his initial interaction with Crockett suggests, link him with crime and potentially undermine his authority.

The first episode’s plot interrogates Tubbs’ authority; though the show opens with Tubbs, the show later reveals that he is a police officer after Crockett, whose role as a police officer is presented approximately twelve minutes into the episode when his undercover interaction with a local drug peddler results in the death of his partner, Eddie Rivera. Crockett’s engagement with drug dealers is legitimated in a way Tubbs’ violent behavior towards Calderone is not. The audience is not formally introduced to Tubbs until approximately twenty minutes into the second half of the pilot (approximately an hour into the series). Although Tubbs and Crockett first meet earlier in the episode, Tubbs introduces himself (after it is revealed that “Teddy Prentiss” is an undercover identity) using his deceased brother’s badge. Rafael Tubbs was a detective in the narcotics/vice unit within the New York Police Department, while Ricardo Tubbs worked in the armed burglary unit; the use of his brother’s badge justified his presence in Miami and involvement in the Calderone case. Until Crockett confronts Ricardo Tubbs, having discovered that Rafael Tubbs is dead, the viewer is unclear as to Tubbs’ role within the show, while Crockett’s role as an authority figure is presented immediately. Though Tubbs ultimately achieves a similar form of authority through his partnership with Crockett, his introduction invites the audience to perceive him as an unreliable and untrustworthy character for the majority of the first two-hour episode.

Tubbs's and Crockett's interactions also draw on Southern stereotypes of anti-Blackness. When Crockett confronts Tubbs, explaining that he knows the latter officer has lied about his identity; Tubbs explains that he is attempting to avenge his brother's death. Pulling out Rafael's badge, Tubbs draws Crockett's attention to the physical resemblance between him and his brother, trying to convince Crockett that he has ties to law enforcement: "I know we all look alike to you Southern crackers but not this much! Look at the picture, man!" In this retort, Tubbs expresses an understanding of Southern stereotypes of Blackness, evoking a history of white supremacy and violence against Black people that he associates with contemporary law enforcement in Miami. In so doing, Tubbs vocalizes his perception of Crockett's racial politics, and reiterates his perception of Miami as a historically Southern city.

In spite of this conflict, Crockett agrees to help Tubbs capture Calderone and the pair's first collaboration, and continued partnership, emblemizes a kind of racial reconciliation to collaboratively resist international crime. Though the pair arrests Calderone, he escapes and flees on a plane to the Bahamas. Calderone's destination accentuates connections between Miami and the Caribbean, especially in relation to drug trafficking. After Calderone's escape, Crockett, in a conciliatory gesture, asks Tubbs if he has "ever consider[ed] a career in Southern law enforcement" to which Tubbs replies, "maybe," marking his eventual transfer to the Miami Vice department ("My Brother's Keeper Pt. II"). By agreeing to work together in spite of their initial conflicts and distrust, the conclusion of the pilot suggests that distinctions between white, male, Southern, and Black, male, Northern are dismissible in efforts to address the threat of international crime. Indeed, it is only as a united front that Crockett and Tubbs kill Calderone in the sixth episode of the series ("Calderone's Return").

Of course, their partnership, when not immediately threatened by violent crime in Miami, is not entirely free of conflict and metaphorizes regional differences within the U.S. Tubbs and Crockett frequently banter, contrasting Miami and New York throughout the first season. In the third episode of the series, when Tubbs inquires about the delayed receipt of lab results, Crockett replies, “this is Miami, things move a little bit slower here” (“Heart of Darkness”). While both Crockett’s and Tubbs’ earlier descriptions depict Miami as a slow-paced, overgrown, Southern town, the fast-paced plots of the episodes (centered predominantly on high speed chases and frequent shoot-outs), the show’s incorporation of contemporary music, and its address of immigration and corresponding influx of cocaine and drug money into the city suggest otherwise. The introductory focus on Southernness serves as a contrast to the violently diverse city that characterizes the show throughout the remainder of the series.

Alex Stepick and Guillermo Grenier echo Sonny Crockett’s and Ricardo Tubbs’ assessment of Miami’s former Southernness, specifically calling attention to the city’s demographics and corresponding socio-political and economic hierarchies:

Before the 1960s, Miami’s population consisted largely of Black and white southern *in-migrants* and their descendants... Bahamian immigrants provided the local, unskilled labor, and they outnumbered Black Americans, who came to Miami primarily from northern Florida and Georgia. But neither Bahamian Blacks nor Black Americans had significant political or economic power in early Miami. It was a southern city, one in which Blacks were denied most basic rights: whites, including the police and the Ku Klux Klan, could harass and even kill Blacks with impunity (Stepick and Grenier 3-4).

Their explication conflates Southernness with the economic and political oppression of Black Americans and other Black people. This description of the treatment of Black Bahamians and Black Americans contrasts with the treatment of recent immigrants to the city between 1959 and 1980: “In Miami, these groups are not powerless in any general sense. Rather, immigrants in Miami exert power over significant aspects of the social structure, including city politics and some sectors of the economy” (Stepick 5). Through this comparison, Stepick and Grenier describe a complex hierarchy that privileged recent arrivals over disenfranchised groups with a longer history in the city.

Miami Vice took a unique approach in depicting the social position of Black Americans, both through its casting of a Black American as Tubbs and its depiction of a Black informant, Nugart Neville Lamont, portrayed by Charlie Barnett, a recurring secondary character throughout the first season of the series. These representations position Black Americans in a secondary role to the show’s white protagonist, yet afford their characters authority over non-white, non-American antagonists. Though Stepick and Grenier suggest a hierarchy that privileges immigrants and exiles, Lamont’s favorable treatment by Crockett and Tubbs reveals *Miami Vice*’s specific interest in vilifying Miami’s immigrant population. Lamont’s character is debuted in “Cool Runnin’” when Crockett and Tubbs are attempting to arrest a group of Jamaican drug dealers. Lamont, recently arrested by the two officers, finds out about the duo’s efforts to bring down the Jamaican crime ring and convincingly lies to Crockett explaining that he is familiar with a prominent Black Jamaican drug dealer, Desmond Maxwell, in order to avoid jail time. Crockett catches on and ultimately demands that Lamont use his street connections to “set up a drug deal between Desmond and [Crockett and Tubbs]” assuring Lamont that he will be protected by the police (“Cool Runnin’”). The *Miami Vice* department’s utilization of a Black

informant with a criminal past to detain a Black immigrant criminal presents that crime committed by émigrés are ultimately more threatening offenses.

Lamont's ongoing collaboration with the Miami Vice department suggests an impulse to overlook natives' status as criminals in effort to present a united front or impassable border between the more pressing threat in immigrant criminality and Miami's native population. When Crockett and Tubbs visit Lamont at the hospital after he sustains injuries in a shoot-out with Desmond Maxwell, they offer him chocolates as a token of gratitude for his assistance in the case; he replies angrily, "You know what? You guys are something else. You try to get me bumped [killed] by three crazed Jamaicans and you buy me a box of candy?" Lamont pinpoints his exploitation in this interaction. He continues, explaining that he understands the nature of his relationship with the two police officers: "you use me one time, I'll use you the next time." Tubbs and Crockett laugh off this suggestion, making clear that Lamont is only worth the information he has supplied and the officers would likely arrest him should he continue committing crime and cease to be helpful to Crockett and Tubbs in closing their cases. Though Lamont's arrangement with Crockett and Tubbs can hardly be equated to power, the Vice department temporarily protects him, and his criminality and engagement with criminals is legitimated in a way Maxwell's is not. Foreignness, then, especially when conflated with blackness and the use and/or distribution of drugs, is more threatening to the well-being of Miami than criminal acts committed by Black Americans.

In addition to presenting a hierarchy within Afro-Diasporic communities in Miami, Miami Vice suggests that proximity to immigrant communities (of whichever race and/or ethnicity) potentially corrupts white law enforcement officers. In the pilot, while Tubbs and Crockett are undercover in efforts to link Trini DeSoto to Calderone, they learn of a leak in the

Miami Vice department. When Crockett confronts Detective Leon, the leak, he explains: “all they [DeSoto and Calderone] wanted was information...and me clearing a lousy thirty [thousand] a year getting shot at by guys who blow that much in a restaurant in a month...” Leon trails off suggesting he simply could not resist getting involved with Calderone (“My Brother’s Keeper”). He further implicitly suggest that it is unfair that he makes so little money as a police officer while others, involved in illicit activities, make much more. Leon’s description of how he became involved with Desoto and Calderone links the Miami drug scene with immigration, as Leon explains that he was accosted by “a guy [Trini Desoto] outside a club in Little Havana,” a notable ethnic enclave historically home to Cubans as well as other immigrant groups in Miami. In describing Desoto’s initiation of the relationship, Leon renders himself the passive, submissive party, suggesting that Desoto and Calderone held more power in Miami than a police officer with “fifteen years as a stand-up cop and two medals of valor” (“My Brother’s Keeper”). Upon confirming Leon’s involvement with Calderone and DeSoto, Crockett attempts to strangle Leon, expressing his rage at his former partner’s betrayal and his own investment in working with “clean” cops, especially, given the nature of Leon’s trespasses, in the wake of potentially threatening immigration.

Although Crockett’s rage emblemizes his investment in clean policing, his character ultimately violates many of the ethics of good policing he initially espoused. Indeed, the final season links Crockett’s eventual corruption to U.S.-Caribbean crime rings. After the murder of Crockett’s second wife, Caitlin, at the hands of a vengeful criminal whom Crockett had encountered and arrested earlier in the series, he uses his skills and resources as a police officer to track down the murderer, Frank Hackman, on Caicos Island and murders him. As Crockett commits the murder in the Caribbean, his police skills enabled the extralegal persecution and

execution of criminals. Before Crockett fires the fatal shot, Hackman taunts him referring to Crockett's pride in being a clean cop and his otherwise spotless history. As Hackman explains, "you can't shoot an unarmed man" to which Crockett replies, after killing him, "wrong" ("Deliver Us from Evil"). Hackman's murder marks an important transition point in Crockett's character as before this episode he explained that though "he cut corners," it was always in the interest of "getting the bad guys" and keeping others safe. Murdering Hackman (who is lounging on a beach chair with a book), who posed no immediate threat, reflects an interest in vengeance, as opposed to public safety ("Cool Runnin").

Hackman's murder seems to be a tipping point that foreshadows Crockett's complete immersion into criminal life. Though Crockett returns to undercover work after his wife's death, with the illegal execution of Hackman unacknowledged (and likely unknown) by members of his department, he is notably depressed and encouraged by Tubbs to take some time off ("Mirror Image Part 2"). Later in the same episode, Crockett boards a boat as his alias, Sonny Burnett, to attend a meeting between two notable rival gangs. An unknown person detonates a bomb on the boat and though Crockett survives the blast, he endures head trauma that leads to severe amnesia causing him to forget all aspects of his identity, including his position as a police officer. Members of one of the aforementioned gangs take him to the hospital, and convince him that he is Sonny Burnett, prompting him to adopt his undercover, drug-dealing alias, as his full-time identity.

In a complete inversion, Crockett becomes the most pressing threat to the Miami Vice department by aligning himself with a Colombian drug dealer. Throughout his time as Sonny Burnett (a three-episode arc spanning from the end of the fourth season to the beginning of the fifth), Crockett infiltrates the ranks of Miguel Manolo's cocaine cartel and shoots two police

officers: a white cop who is working with Manolo (who is killed), and Tubbs (who is saved by his bulletproof vest). Crockett's complete immersion into street crime, especially when considering the murder of a white police officer, is a hyperbolic reflection of the corruptive capacity of his surroundings. Crockett eventually remembers who he is after Tubbs meets with him one-on-one and poses leading questions in an effort to jog his memory: "You from around here, from Florida? You've been married?" ("Hostile Takeover"). Though not immediately convinced, Crockett decides to visit the police department and his memory is sparked while looking at his locker in the police locker room. Crockett's coworkers express distrust in him upon his return, and interrogate him, which likely contributes to Crockett's ultimate decision to leave the department in the series' final, two-part episode.

Paradise Lost: Crockett and Tubbs Leave the Force ⁶⁴

The series finale criminalizes the entirety of the Caribbean through its metonymic construction of a fictional island's dictator and ominously presents corruption within the U.S. national government. Tubbs and Crockett are tracking a major drug figure and violent, dictatorial leader of the fictional Caribbean island of Costa Morada, General Manuel Borbon. Tubbs explains that Borbon's "regime is banked by drug dealers" and that he is responsible for "most of the drug flow into Miami" ("Freefall Part 1"). While the show's earlier seasons link the cocaine trade and general political strife to real nations in South America (mostly Colombia) or the Caribbean (mostly Cuba), Costa Morada acts as a flexible symbol, encouraging the audience to

⁶⁴ *TIME* magazine devoted the November 2, 1981 cover page to Miami, posing the rhetorical question "Paradise Lost?" The question addresses both Miami's booming industry as a winter tourist escape and the potentially cataclysmic blow an assessment of Miami as an unsafe, drug-ridden metropolis can have on Florida's economy. The corresponding editorial is quick to point fingers at the latest wave of immigration into Miami: "Marielitos are believed to be responsible for half of all violent crime in Miami" (*TIME*).

project their conceptions of strife in Latin America onto this fictional island. The island could be Cuba or an intentionally distorted representation of Colombia, but it could also be a composite of the different nations represented in the series' earlier seasons. Given the international stakes of taking down Borbon, Crockett is understandably reluctant, but Tubbs explains that they have many leads to the drug lord. Crockett replies sardonically "for once we can really make a difference," revealing his disillusionment towards the department's ability to keep Miami's streets clean ("Freefall Part 1"). Though they eventually catch Borbon and turn him in to federal agents expecting him to be prosecuted, they discover that "the Feds are protecting Borbon," because he has potentially harmful information on a high-ranking official in the U.S. government who is profiting from international drug trade.

Upon discovering the high-level corruption that has resulted in Borbon's protection, and thus facilitates the influx of drugs into Miami, Crockett and Tubbs continue to track down Borbon, discovering him boarding a plane with several federal agents. As the plane ascends, Tubbs and Crockett shoot at it causing it to explode while in air, presumably killing all passengers. In this dramatic conclusion, the Miami Vice officers take a stand against Caribbean drug lords, but also against corrupt federal agents. Agent Baker, a representative of the federal government, chastises Crockett and Tubbs, asserting that he "will have [their] badges" for interfering with federal affairs and adding that "[their] brand of law and order went out with Wyatt Earp" ("Freefall Part 2"). By asserting that Crockett's and Tubbs' mode of policing is antiquated, the agent suggests that contemporary law enforcement of Miami is characterized by negotiating with and even protecting the criminals Crockett and Tubbs frequently arrested, or, as the Wyatt Earp reference suggests, shot and killed. By linking Earp's loud and confrontational mode of law enforcement with Crockett and Tubbs' methods, Baker provides a contrast between

fighting crime and an allegedly new mode of clandestine policing that protects monetary interests as opposed to public good. Rather than fighting crime, then, this new mode of negotiatory law enforcement is contingent on the redistribution of power, through illicit venues, across and within international borders. In an acknowledgement of burnout and the pervasive corruption within local and national government, Crockett and Tubbs throw their badges on the ground in front of Baker.

Later in the episode, Tubbs arrives at Crockett's houseboat, explaining that he will be returning to the "big bad Bronx," though it is unclear if he intends to continue his career in law enforcement. Crockett explains that he will head "somewhere further south... where the water's warm, the drinks are cold and [he] [doesn't] know the names of the players" ("Freefall Part 2). While there is ambiguity about Tubbs' career in law enforcement, Crockett suggests an escape from law enforcement altogether—while he may very well be heading to the Caribbean or South America, the regions frequently attributed to the challenges he experienced as a police officer, he hopes to be ignorant of the perpetrators of violent and/or drug related crime. Crockett then offers Tubbs a ride to the airport and asks, reiterating the question that sparked their partnership: "you ever consider a career in Southern law enforcement?" to which Tubbs replies, laughing, "maybe, maybe" as the pair drives away. The show's introductory and conclusory evocation of Southernness is striking as it suggests, given Tubbs' and Crockett's departure, that Southern law enforcement must now be found (and enacted) elsewhere. Their departure, coming on the tail end of Crockett's complete immersion into crime, suggests that representatives of southern law enforcement are vulnerable because of their proximity to criminal lifestyles, especially those demonstrated by people who recently immigrated to Miami. While Baker seems to embrace this phenomenon, encouraging transnational arrangements with nonnative drug dealers, Crockett and

Tubbs choose to abandon the city that has enabled and encouraged such corruption. With their abandonment of Miami, the finale suggests that corruption, consistently conflated with immigration, has made way for a unique hierarchy in the city in which “clean cops” like Crockett and Tubbs are now obsolete.

Conclusion

Miami Vice and *Scarface* are likely the most iconographic representations of Miami across various media. Beyond sharing their setting and post-Mariel Boatlift context, these productions reflect white-dominated media’s tendency to exploit the Mariel Boatlift and other waves of immigration to Miami and project derogatory myths about various marginalized identities. Public officials have used these myths, especially when compounded within the overblown representations of Miami, to entrap and persecute Mariel émigrés for decades. These myths and the widespread dissemination and preservation of them reflected in the iconoclasts of Miami media reveal how anti-blackness, homophobia, transphobia, and related persecution of other marginalized identities compounded to represent immigration as a threat to white supremacy; even while white film producers, news broadcasters, and immigration officials were controlling the narrative that spread about the Mariel Boatlift.

Scarface embellishes the violent, alienating, and ultimately tragic greeting that awaited the 1980 Cuban émigrés and capitalizes on the manufactured fear that surrounded their arrival. The film’s efforts to capitalize on fear are twofold; it reinforces biased reports that suggested the 1980 émigrés were dangerous, yet also encourages a fear of the urges US capitalism allows Tony to satiate. Though *Scarface* is a sensationalized film, its grounding in reality documents a moment of xenophobia that fundamentally altered the experiences and treatment of the 1980 Cuban émigrés in Miami. Tony’s characterization as 1980 Cuban émigré and a drug lord

pinpoints two overlapping discourses that resulted in enormous expenditures and shifts in international policy that affected regions of the US that are close to Latin America and the waters that link the contiguous US to the rest of the hemisphere. While the film is an Anglocentric representation of the Boatlift and its consequences, it successfully, if inadvertently, exposes the way government agencies and local communities scapegoated the émigrés in lieu of addressing inherent, preexisting problems within the law enforcement and within the structures of U.S. capitalism more broadly.

Miami Vice presents the Mariel Boatlift as a watershed moment that enables violent, often-drug related crime and targets various marginalized groups in its focus on law enforcement. Similar to *Scarface*, the series pinpoints widespread corruption and the various, illicit temptations enabled by capitalism. Further, the series raises interesting questions about the violence and conflict in the breaching of regional boundaries and encourages an interrogation of the cultural diversity of the city, by simultaneously representing marginalized groups as criminals and as police with various degrees of political and cultural power. As such, *Miami Vice* and *Scarface* are fertile ground for ongoing topics and debates in subfields of literary/cultural studies such as southern studies, Caribbean studies, transarea studies, and hemispheric studies.

Other television shows and films, such as *CSI: Miami*, *Bad Boys*, and *Bad Boys II*, similarly engage ideas of immigration, violence, crime, law enforcement, and corruption that demand we continually reevaluate disciplinary delineations with cautious attention to conflict and resistance to blurring and challenging borders. To return to an example that I explore at length in this chapter, Fidel Castro's intentional, boastful manipulation of the boatlift population to include criminals and the insane, which was too easily translated into the Black and the queer, indexes a transnational collusion in repressing Black and queer people. Contextualizing analyses

of *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* with these phenomena at the forefront reveals how these major productions represent a tenuous transnational negotiation of difference.

CODA

Literature reflects, resists, and maps anti-Blackness among Miami's various Black communities, and has the capacity to counter, or complicate, the prominent erasure enabled by white supremacist deployments of diversity that are contingent on the erasure of difference, rather than its celebration. My examination of Miami also demonstrates that literature captures white supremacy as an evolving series of systems that benefit white émigrés, as indexed by Carlos Eire. My study of Eire, Moore, the Dues, Danticat, Fievre, and the various creators of *Scarface* and *Miami Vice* helped me anticipate several contemporary, sociopolitical events. For example, I was not surprised when the current, Republican Mayor of Miami, Carlos A. Giménez, a Cuban-American citizen who was naturalized at the age of 21, was the first to order local jails to fully cooperate when Donald Trump executively ordered local government to honor federal authority's detentions of "illegal immigrants," at the risk of losing federal grant money.

Miami Herald reporter, Fabiola Santiago, condemns Giménez's swift submission, highlighting the city's "immigrant soul" and describing "Miami's place as a unique, multilingual city, where immigrant is not necessarily synonymous with poverty, but with the best outcomes of the quintessential pursuit of the American Dream" (Santiago). Of course, Santiago relies on the immigrant-friendly rhetoric I dismantle in this project through my attention to the treatment of Black émigrés. However, what I find most interesting about the article is that she implicitly accuses Giménez of aiding and abetting Donald Trump's and his supporters' efforts to "Make America White Again," and thus treats Giménez as an accessory, rather than as an independent author and actor in tracking down and persecuting members of Miami's various immigrant communities. Rhetorically, Santiago thus holds Giménez apart, or at some distance from the white supremacist project of the 45th President's administration, even by suggesting that he could have been persecuted by these policies through her sardonic reminder that Giménez, "too, was

born elsewhere.” Yet in marking Giménez’s difference from Trump and his (white) supporters, she fails to acknowledge intra-community differences that variously impact the experiences of white and Black Cubans in Miami. Put differently, Giménez’s swift acceptance of a decree that has largely been debated, and challenged, as unconstitutional is not the aiding and abetting of white supremacy—it is an enactment of white supremacy, and one that requires that we deepen our understanding of immigrant communities in an increasingly interconnected world.

Santiago’s reliance on “immigrant city” rhetoric and other references to the U.S. as a nation of immigrants erases, or more aptly, **further** erases the presence, cultural histories, and violent eradication of indigenous communities in Miami, and in the U.S. more broadly. When I began this project, I made a conscious decision to omit analyses of cultural artifacts from indigenous populations, namely the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida, both for the sake of organization, the chronological scope of the project, and my attention to anti-Blackness, and it follows, specific attention to the representations of and/or from Afro-Diasporic communities. However, in hindsight, this omission, which I intend to rectify in revising this manuscript for publication, commits similar violence to that which I am so critical of in the widespread omissions and devaluation of Black life in South Florida. I look forward to thinking about indigenous displacement, the space of the reservation, and the role of the casino as they manifest in representations of Miami. Examples of these representations are included in Jaiquira Díaz’s short story collection, *15 Views of Miami*, and the *Miami Noir* collections. I am especially thrilled by recent conversations, in part inspired by multiracial solidarity in the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, about Black-American and Native American solidarities, that advocate for an understanding for an analysis of Black indigeneity to link various social movements. In particular, M. Shadee Malaklou argues that the struggle to make Black lives matter, and that of

the water protectors in South Dakota are necessarily related. As she writes, “Black Americans are especially susceptible to the kind of slow-motion genocide enacted by the ecological racism infringing on indigenous rights at Standing Rock” (Malaklou). She further dictates that the various relationships to the land, and to the planet on which we live, are informed by man-made power dynamics of race, gender, and class.

Malaklou’s assessment comes to bear on not only the DAPL pipelines and the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, but on areas that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change; her work will theoretically frame my examinations of indigenous representations of Miami. Considerations of environmental justice, and ecological racism, are imperative for imagining the future of Miami: who is most vulnerable to the rising sea level and the other detrimental changes that are the consequences of climate change? What will Miami’s diversity look like when parts of the city are underwater in 2025? How and where will we remake the simultaneously sacred and vexed space of the reservation when parts of Miami are underwater? What will impending natural disasters reveal about the oppressive world white supremacy and supremacists have constructed? How will émigré communities address the vulnerability of their nations of origin? I do not treat the answers to these questions as tangential to my current project, but as investigations that will enhance the work I have thus far undertaken to problematize the violent homogenization of difference in a global city with a glib future.

Beyond my non-address of environmental justice and ecological racism, time restrictions have precluded my address of various contemporary events relevant to the topic of this project: Fidel Castro’s death and polarized responses to his passing, the delineations of which occurred across racial lines. In my attention to transnational affairs in revising this project, I will discuss President Obama’s lifting of the embargo on Cuba, and his subsequent elimination of an

immigration policy that privileged Cuban émigrés in greater detail. Both political decisions sparked uproar in many of Miami's Cuban communities, including responses from some of the authors I engage in this project.

Finally, and most excitingly, the release and critical acclaim of *Moonlight*, a film about gay Black love set in Liberty City, Miami, has shone a spotlight on Afro-Cuban and Black American connections in ways that are very specific to Miami's and Cuba's legacies of racialized oppression. The film subtly details the erasure of Afro-Cubans within Miami's Cuban communities, especially embodied through Mahershala Ali's characterization of Juan, an Afro-Cuban man and his explication to a young Chiron, the film's protagonist, that there are a "lotta black folks in Cuba but you wouldn't know it from being here." The Academy-Award winning film tackled the complexities of transnational Blackness, anti-Blackness, Black poverty, the circulation, and devastating effects of the spread of drugs in Black communities, Black masculinity, and Black sexuality while resisting the voyeurism I discuss in my final chapter in texts that present Blackness and queerness as threatening to a white supremacist cultural order. Instead, the film prioritizes tenderness, vulnerability, and intimacy as characters navigate the various hurdles of Black life.

These recent cultural events, be they political decisions and ordinances, or the release of films that privilege telling stories about Miami from understudied perspectives, demonstrate the ongoing need to analyze Miami that makes this project necessarily incomplete. Regardless of my personal frustrations in not fitting everything I know and have seen about Miami in a comprehensive cultural study, these events highlight Miami's importance and rich archive of cultural artifacts that variously reflect the shifts in an ever-changing world.

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