

i s r f   b u l l e t i n

Issue XXIII

# Race and Markets



Edited by Francesca Sobande, Alice Schoonejans,  
Guillaume D. Johnson, Kevin D. Thomas,  
Anthony Kwame Harrison and Sonya A. Grier



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>EDITORIAL</b>	<b>5</b>
LARS CORNELISSEN	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>11</b>
FRANCESCA SOBANDE, ALICE SCHOONEJANS, GUILLAUME D. JOHNSON, KEVIN D. THOMAS, ANTHONY KWAME HARRISON, AND SONYA A. GRIER	
<b>STROLLING WITH A QUESTION</b>	<b>13</b>
FRANCESCA SOBANDE, ALICE SCHOONEJANS, GUILLAUME D. JOHNSON, KEVIN D. THOMAS, AND ANTHONY KWAME HARRISON	
<b>BROWN GIRL IN THE LENS</b>	<b>27</b>
ZULEKA RANDELL WOODS AND ANTHONY KWAME HARRISON	
<b>THE FORBIDDEN PICTURE</b>	<b>33</b>
GUILLAUME D. JOHNSON	
<b>FAST FOOD RELICS</b>	<b>41</b>
NAA OYO A. KWATE	
<b>THE WRITING ON THE WALL</b>	<b>43</b>
SONYA A. GRIER	
<b>ASKING IMMIGRANTS FOR MONEY</b>	<b>47</b>
ERNESTO CASTAÑEDA	

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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EDITING AS ANTI-RACISM	63
BEL PARNELL-BERRY AND NOÉMI MICHEL	
MIDCENTURY DANCE RECORDS AND REPRESENTATIONS OF IDENTITY	71
JANET BORGERSON AND JONATHAN SCHROEDER	
VISUAL INCARCERATION AND THE 'OTHER' PRISONER	79
HILARY DOWNEY	
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	83

# EDITORIAL

**Dr. Lars Cornelissen**

ISRF Academic Editor

It is a great pleasure to open this special issue of the ISRF Bulletin, which has been guest edited by Francesca Sobande, Alice Schoonejans, Guillaume D. Johnson, Kevin D. Thomas, Anthony Kwame Harrison, and Sonya A. Grier. Structured around the theme of 'Race and Markets,' the content of this issue comes in part out of a workshop held in Paris in 2019, which was supported by the ISRF, but it also draws nourishment from a broader international research network called 'Race in the Marketplace' (RIM).<sup>1</sup> Bringing together scholars, artists, activists, and practitioners, RIM invites us to trace and question the manifold ways in which markets and racial identities are mutually constitutive.<sup>2</sup>

In taking this approach, RIM explicitly distances itself from the widespread myth that the marketplace is 'colourblind.' Developed and popularised by neoliberal economists like Milton Friedman and Thomas Sowell (who was Friedman's student and friend), this myth has it that in a truly competitive market, issues of race are irrelevant. It claims

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1. See <https://www.rimnetwork.net/>. For a clearer discussion of the relation between RIM, the 2019 workshop, and this issue, see the editors' Introduction.

2. For a more detailed discussion of the theoretical foundations of this approach, see for instance Guillaume D. Johnson, Kevin D. Thomas, Anthony Kwame Harrison & Sonya A. Grier (eds.), *Race in the Marketplace: Crossing Critical Boundaries* (Cham 2019: Palgrave Macmillan) or Sonja Martin Poole, Sonya A. Grier, Kevin D. Thomas, Francesca Sobande, Akon E. Ekpo, Lez Trujillo Torres, Lynn A. Addington, Melinda Weekes-Laidlow & Geraldine Rosa Henderson, "Operationalizing Critical Race Theory in the Marketplace," *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 40, no. 2 (2021): 126–142.

that in a system based solely on competitive exchange, where supply and demand rather than identity determine economic success, racial belonging is, formally speaking, trivial. For Friedman and Sowell, what matters to your customers is not the colour of your skin, your dietary practices, or your ancestors' nationality, but your ability to provide the commodity they want as cheaply and efficiently as possible. "Where there is free competition," as Friedman put it, "only performance counts. The market is colorblind."<sup>3</sup>

It almost goes without saying that this argument rests on a profoundly jejune understanding of discrimination, racism, and indeed markets themselves. Not only does it present a superficial account of racial belonging, but it also conveniently papers over the fact that there exist ample markets *for* discrimination. If acts of discrimination incur costs or dampen profit, then what are we to make of the prevalence today (and always) of endless racist paraphernalia, which have no doubt made some entrepreneurs very wealthy, or indeed the highly profitable industries of racialised exclusion and policing, bordering and discipline, on which the day-to-day existence of racial capitalism relies? Contrary to that stubborn neoliberal shibboleth, then, free markets work not to diminish racial othering but to render it profitable, exploitable, just another commodity.

What has always fascinated me about the trope of the colourblind marketplace is that the very economists who most enthusiastically supported it tended themselves to believe that racial belonging bears heavily on one's capacity for economic performance. Friedman, for example, claimed controversially that their religious and ethnic heritage rendered Jewish people more suitable for jobs in banking, accountancy, or law.<sup>4</sup> Sowell, for his part, loudly celebrated the colourblindness of the free market whilst arguing, practically in the same breath, that a person's racial background determines their

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3. Milton Friedman, "Capitalism and the Jews" (1972), online at <https://fee.org/articles/capitalism-and-the-jews/>. The idea that capitalism can be able to end racial inequality is of course not exclusive to economists or intellectuals. One interesting tradition to come out of the United States pivots on the notion of 'Black capitalism,' or the idea that by embracing free-market capitalism, minority communities can overcome these disparities. On this topic see also Sonya A. Grier's contribution to this issue.

4. See again Friedman, "Capitalism and the Jews."

cultural attitudes, which in turn impacts their ability (or inability) to thrive in the free market.<sup>5</sup>

Yet by claiming that racial heritage conditions economic ability, neoliberal economics committed itself to the view that it had to study the former if it was to understand the latter. To its most fervent ideological champions, the free market may be colourblind, but the economist cannot afford to be. Seen in this light, it is unsurprising that many of the works of these economists are awash with racialised tropes and stereotypes, such as the claim that persistent poverty is above all a result of idleness, spendthrift, broken families, or indifference to formal education.

What is so pernicious about the neoliberal myth of the colourblind marketplace is that it forcibly separates the study of (what it takes to be) racial heritage from the study of 'free' markets. It is calculated to foreclose any scholarly agendas that would see markets as sites that are deeply entwined with myriad forms of racial signification and formation, exclusion and resistance, othering and solidarity. It deliberately muddies the waters of any thorough analysis either of the racialised nature of markets or of the persistent marketisation of race under conditions of racial capitalism.

Against this ideological background, which still looms large over much of what passes for orthodox economics, the intervention the RIM network is making is not only refreshing but positively necessary. It presents an understanding of race's relation to the market that is not just an alternative to the neoliberal paradigm but its polar opposite: instead of seeing markets as 'colourblind,' it holds out that markets are inherently raced; instead of placing racial identity outside of market relations, it situates the racial at their centre; instead of reproducing racial (and racist) stereotypes, it advances a resolutely anti-racist praxis.

To ask what such an anti-racist praxis ought to look like, or by what method it proceeds, is to miss the point. As the pieces of this issue

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5. For stark examples of this dynamic, read Thomas Sowell's *The Economics and Politics of Race: An International Perspective* (New York 1983: William Morrow) or his *Ethnic America: A History* (New York 1981: Basic Books) alongside his *Markets and Minorities* (Oxford 1981: Basil Blackwell).

show wonderfully, there is not one unitary method or voice at work here. There are multiple methods, multiple voices, which do not sound the same but which do sing in harmony. This is scholarship as an invitation, scholarship which opens up rather than closes down and which makes of poetic uncertainty an analytical virtue rather than a vice.

Consider the first article in this line-up, by Francesca Sobande, Alice Schoonejans, Guillaume D. Johnson, Kevin D. Thomas, and Anthony Kwame Harrison, which offers us a peek behind the curtain of co-authorship in the form of an email chain in which the authors discuss a manuscript they are preparing for print. Which discussions go into co-produced scholarship? How do snippets of knowledge and freshly remembered references get shared and enjoyed amongst friends and colleagues? Too often, such moments are rendered invisible by the very nature of academic publishing, hidden behind the façade of academic authority and certainty we are all encouraged to adopt. What is lost along the way is the very blending of voices to which all knowledge owes a debt.

This blending of voices is also centred and indeed practiced by other contributors. In their wonderful piece, Zuleka Randell Woods and Anthony Kwame Harrison invite us to reflect on a photograph of a little girl standing in a street in Uganda. They unpack and question the photographer's gaze, but before long, his gaze is abandoned in favour of the little girl's. As we start to see things from her perspective, the authors' voice and the girl's slip into each other and become impossible to tease apart.

Guillaume D. Johnson's piece riffs on similar themes, likewise centring the question of the photographic gaze and bringing together multiple voices. Here, we are treated to fragments of a conversation between him, his father, and two merchants selling used clothes in a Togolese market, which was originally sparked by Johnson taking a picture. The ensuing exchange addresses the European gaze and the afterlives of colonialism, which one of the merchants finely teases apart, and draws out attention to the ways market relations, as well as their racial dynamics, stretch across and between continents.

From the question of photography the issue segues into a new thematic area: what can urban sites, and storefronts in particular, tell us about the ways markets are raced? In their respective pieces, both Naa Oyo A. Kwate and Sonya A. Grier ask what (the remains of) local businesses can tell us about the wider socio-economic dynamics of which they are a part. Focusing on a 1981 picture of a derelict McDonald's in Compton, California, Kwate deftly weaves the visual markers of a shuttered franchise into broader processes of White flight, deindustrialisation, and racialised stereotyping. Grier's contribution similarly locates the fortunes of a Black-owned cannabis store based in Washington, D.C. in the broader political, economic, and cultural landscape in which it sits, using it to reflect on the racialised tropes and policing that surround drug use in the United States. The businesses centred in both these short pieces are less synecdoches for a kind of nebulous 'spirit of the age' than they are complex sites that offer a glimpse of the myriad ways the racial and the economic have intersected in recent U.S. history.

Ernesto Castañeda's contribution draws our attention to the means by which racial identity sometimes comes to be marketised. In a detailed analysis of remittance agencies, where immigrant populations can turn to send money to their families back home, he reflects on the way such agencies profile themselves in their effort to attract custom. He finds that key to their advertising is a certain language of belonging and heritage, using complexly layered imagery to market themselves. Consisting of flags, headshots of people of colour, or more metaphorical depictions of their clientele, this imagery seeks to navigate a raced market by itself adopting, precisely, the grammar of race.

In their contribution, Bel Parnell-Berry and Noémi Michel invite us into the realm of lived experience. At the heart of their piece sit two anecdotes, personal encounters with racist representation, which highlight not only the pervasiveness but also the stubbornness of contemporary forms of racism. In the face of this racism, Parnell-Berry and Michel advocate a form of anti-racist work that pivots on the practice of bearing witness; of, as they put it, "accounting for, connecting and transmitting" stories. For this practice to be effective, however, suitable spaces first need to be carved out and curated,

## EDITORIAL

spaces where it is possible to open oneself up, vulnerably, to others. This, they say, is where anti-racist editing comes in.

Janet Borgerson and Jonathan Schroeder's piece looks at the covers of midcentury dance records in the United States, asking how they narrate the complex histories of the dance styles they represent. Crucially, Borgerson and Schroeder draw our attention to the many clues these covers contain about midcentury attitudes towards race and ethnicity. They hold out that deciphering these more or less coded clues helps us see that the dance floor was always a fiercely contested and indeed markedly racialised cultural space.

Closing this issue, Hilary Downey treats us to a splendid poetic inquiry into African American women's experiences of incarceration. Like some of the earlier pieces, hers proceeds by weaving several voices together, letting prisoner, citizen, and poet speak in turn. Marrying this multivocal layering with other themes that run through the issue, such as the racialised gaze, the violence of stereotypes, and the question of poetic reflexivity, Downey's contribution makes for a very fitting conclusion to this short volume.

Taken together, the pieces collected here make for an issue that is equal parts inspiring, moving, and exciting. It has been a true pleasure to help make this issue possible and I want to close by thanking the guest editors for their time and effort and each of the authors for their wonderful contributions.

# INTRODUCTION

## *Crossing Visionary Boundaries*

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Dr. Francesca Sobande,  
Alice Schoonejans,  
Dr. Guillaume D. Johnson,  
Dr. Kevin D. Thomas,  
Professor Anthony Kwame Harrison,  
and Professor Sonya A. Grier

**C**rossing Visionary Boundaries: A Transdisciplinary Photovoice Project of Race and Markets was funded by the Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF) from 2019–2020. The project stemmed from the wider work of the Race in the Marketplace (RIM) Research Network,<sup>1</sup> which is an international transdisciplinary research network dedicated to knowledge production on the historic, contemporary, and future interactions of race in the marketplace through scholarship and practice.

RIM was co-organised by founding members Professor Sonya A. Grier (American University), Dr. Guillaume D. Johnson (Université Paris-Dauphine), and Professor Kevin D. Thomas (Marquette University). Since the Inaugural RIM Forum at the Kogod School of Business (American University) in 2017 there have been numerous international RIM events, initiatives, and projects that address issues related to race, racism, and interconnected inequalities in the marketplace.

*Crossing Visionary Boundaries: A Transdisciplinary Photovoice Project of Race and Markets* was developed to specifically explore how

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1. See <https://www.rimnetwork.net/>.

## INTRODUCTION

manifestations of race and racism impact, and have been impacted by, market relations in the context of Paris, France, where the dominant Republican Model constrains discussions on race and racism. Combining critical race theory and photo-elicitation methodology, the project involved us assembling a cross-national and cross-disciplinary team of scholars interested in race-based marketplace issues and local community stakeholders (community activists, artists, practitioners, policy actors) to discuss, compare, and contrast their views on “race and markets” as part of a two-day workshop. The workshop took place in Paris in June 2019 immediately prior to the RIM Forum.

As we discuss in a co-authored article on “Enacting anti-racist visualities through photo-dialogues<sup>2</sup> on race in Paris”, this project involved us exploring the potentials of photography to enact and reinforce anti-racist archetypes. As such, “we advance the photo-dialogue method: a collaborative and dialogic photographic process that is reflexive, pluralized and facilitates the analysis of quotidian yet insightful everyday moments... Overall, we explore how photo-dialogues, paired with critical reflection on who and what constitutes the photographic gaze, can contribute to anti-racist research, pedagogy and praxis, by documenting and facilitating discussions of mobility, gentrification, White supremacy and the daily lives of racialized people.”<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, this ISRF Bulletin focuses on questions, research, and reflections on race, visual culture, and the marketplace. The work within it includes contributions by those who were involved in the workshop, as well as writing by other scholars, activists, and creatives whose work addresses matters regarding race, racism, visual culture, and the marketplace.

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2. Due to the specificities of our workshop, we drew on photovoice work but moved in a slightly different direction and we found ourselves conceptualising and exploring the praxis of photo-dialoguing.

3. Francesca Sobande, Alice Schoonejans, Guillaume D. Johnson, Kevin D. Thomas & Anthony Kwame Harrison, “Enacting anti-racist visualities through photo-dialogues on race in Paris,” *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 40, no. 2 (2021): 165–179, 165–166. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-01-2020-0019>.

# STROLLING WITH A QUESTION

*Is it Possible to Be a Black Flâneur?*

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Dr. Francesca Sobande,  
Alice Schoonejans,  
Dr. Guillaume D. Johnson,  
Dr. Kevin D. Thomas, and  
Professor Anthony Kwame Harrison

While revising our paper reflecting on the organisation of the ISRF-supported Photographic Workshop on Race and Markets in Paris,<sup>1</sup> one reviewer suggested that we draw on the notion of the *flâneur*. The reviewer recommended we look at the traditional White figure of the *flâneur* and at how the figure appears in the collective imagination—foregrounding the blatant divide between the freedoms awarded to White bodies in city spaces versus the violent disciplining of Black and Brown people in the same contexts.

The figure of the *flâneur* occupies a central place in the history of Parisian urban life. *Flâner* consists of walking alone at an overtly leisurely pace while observing urban sights and places.<sup>2</sup> Commonly

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1. Francesca Sobande, Alice Schoonejans, Guillaume D. Johnson, Kevin D. Thomas & Anthony Kwame Harrison, "Enacting anti-racist visualities through photo-dialogues on race in Paris," *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 40, no. 2 (2021): 165–179, 165–166. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-01-2020-0019>.

2. Rob Shields, "Fancy footwork: Walter Benjamin's notes on *flânerie*," in K. Tester (ed.), *The Flâneur* (London 1994: Routledge): 61–80.

## STROLLING WITH A QUESTION



translated as “strolling,” *flâner* tends to be more specific than its English equivalent as it refers to an individual and spatial practice within limited urban sites, namely the interior and exterior marketspaces of the city.<sup>3</sup> Charles Baudelaire, in his essay, “The Painter of Modern Life” (first published in 1863), offers a vivid description of the *flâneur*:

The crowd is his domain, just as the air is the bird’s, and water that of the fish. His passion and his profession is to merge with the crowd.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, without financial or emotional expenditure, the *flâneur* puts himself at the center of a social world he has created. Walter Benjamin proposes that:

The *flâneur* is someone abandoned in the crowd. In this he shares the situation of the commodity... The intoxication to which the *flâneur* surrenders is the intoxication of the commodity around which surges the stream of customers.<sup>5</sup>

Reflecting on the archetype of the *flâneur*, we progressively engaged in a vibrant discussion about whether it made sense to talk about non-White *flâneurs*, and the ways we could envision renewed figures of the *flâneur*.

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3. Ibid.

4. Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life* (New York 1972: Viking), 399.

5. Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London 1983: Verso), 55.

**From:** Guillaume  
**To:** Francesca, Alice, Kwame, Kevin,  
**Subject:** "You Can't be a Black Flâneur"?

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I just came across this quote from Teju Cole, written after two Black men got arrested in a Starbucks in April 2018:

This is why I always say you can't be a black flâneur. Flânerie is for whites. For blacks in white terrain, all spaces are charged. Cafes, restaurants, museums, shops. Your own front door. This is why we are compelled, instead, to practice psychogeography. We wander alert, and pay a heavy psychic toll for that vigilance. Can't relax, black.<sup>6</sup>



This is an interesting stance because Cole's book characters have often been described as flâneurs:

Julius, the **flâneur-narrator** of Teju Cole's novel *Open City*, who is a half-Nigerian, half-German psychiatrist living in New York.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Teju Cole, "The Starbucks thing hit me harder than expected," Facebook, 18 April 2018, <https://m.facebook.com/walkingartistsnetwork/posts/1066870813450882/>.

7. Pankaj Mishra, "Open City," *Financial Times*, 22 July 2011, <https://www.ft.com/content/8fc671da-b129-11e0-a43e-00144feab49a>.

Teju Cole has made his novel as close to a diary as a novel can get, and his narrator is both spectator and *flâneur*.<sup>8</sup>

It's not surprising that these 21st-century *flâneurs* are different creatures from their 19th-century predecessors. It is evident that [...] Cole [has] been influenced by a multitude of contemporary factors, from the insights of postmodernism and postcolonialism and the ease of travel, to the dislocation of living in a globalized age and the instant gratifications of technology.<sup>9</sup>

Cole himself has been described as a global *flâneur*:

The images in 'Blind Spot,' paired together, form a travelogue of a **global flâneur**, as Cole strolls through Tivoli, Brooklyn and Brazzaville, his camera capturing glimpses and fleeting impressions.<sup>10</sup>

I would take some distance from Cole's statement, to avoid any essentialisation of blackness.

I would note the importance of context. He's obviously talking about the U.S., but I would argue that in other contexts Black people can be *flâneurs*. In the post-World War II Parisian context, some African-American artists (notably Richard Wright) could have been described as "Black" *flâneurs*.<sup>11</sup> Here, a powerful piece in the *New Yorker*:

[James] Baldwin recalled that when an African joked to him that [Richard] Wright mistook himself for a white man, he had

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8. James Wood, "The Arrival of Enigmas," *The New Yorker*, 28 February 2011, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/02/28/the-arrival-of-enigmas>.

9. Albert Wu & Michelle Kuo, "Imperfect Strollers," *LA Review of Books*, 2 February 2013, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/imperfect-strollers-teju-cole-ben-lerner-w-g-sebald-and-the-alienated-cosmopolitan/>.

10. Colin Dickey "Teju Cole uses his camera and his writing to pry open the cities he visits in 'Blind Spot,'" *LA Times*, 15 June 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-ca-jc-teju-cole-20170615-htmstory.html>.

11. See Tyler Stovall, "The fire this time: black American expatriates and the Algerian War," *Yale French Studies* 98 (2000): 182–200.

risen to Wright's defense. But the remark led him to 'wonder about the uses and hazards of expatriation':

'I did not think I was white, either, or I did not think I thought so. But the Africans might think I did, and who could blame them?... When the African said to me, I believe he thinks he's white, he meant that Richard cared more about his safety and comfort than he cared about the black condition... **Richard was able, at last, to live in Paris exactly as he would have lived, had he been a white man, here, in America.** This may seem desirable, but I wonder if it is. Richard paid the price such an illusion of safety demands. The price is a turning away from, ignorance of, all of the powers of darkness.'<sup>12</sup>

To some extent, Cole's broad travel across the world, as documented in his book *Blind Spot*, seems to make him a (Black) flâneur.

**From:** Francesca

**To:** Guillaume, Alice, Kwame, Kevin,

**Subject:** Complicating the flâneur at many intersections

---

What you say, Guillaume, seem to connect to key issues to do with the intersections of race and class which we can address in the paper. Here are some other related sources that might be helpful as part of our writing on this:

**Edwin Hill, *Black Flânerie, or Wandering while Black in the City of Light*:**

This quote seems to capture some of what we've all been discussing:

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12. Adam Shatz, "How Does It Feel To Be a White Man?": William Gardner Smith's Exile in Paris," *The New Yorker*, 11 August 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/how-does-it-feel-to-be-a-white-man-william-gardner-smiths-exile-in-paris>.

For while these black *flâneurs* cast a lingering gaze onto the fleeting beauty of the post/colonial city, they must also navigate the racialized dynamics of the gaze, i.e. the performative and normative regulation of space through the violent policing of who can look at whom, who can be seen and who remain invisible, who must look down and who cannot look away.<sup>13</sup>

### **Doreen St. Félix, *The Peril of Black Mobility*:**

A topography invents a literary type. Out of the modern Western city comes the *flâneur* and his complicated behavior, *flânerie*. When the French poet Charles Baudelaire drew up the *flâneur's* proclivities, the character was as much a result of Enlightenment thought as civil engineering. He observed indiscriminately, both because such was the call of scientism and because the mall's windows were wide and clear. He walked aimlessly, because rationalism demanded an understanding of the world, and because parallel boulevards spared his puny body from traffic. He was French and white. He could always observe because no one was observing him, his purposelessness safeguarded by the warming city streetlights.

Who is the black *flâneur*? He or she is a loiterer. The roving that permits white fancy, white whim, white walking in our modern American cities, when observed in us and our children, reads criminal.<sup>14</sup>

### **Black Outdoors, A Black Flâneur in the 'Hood:**

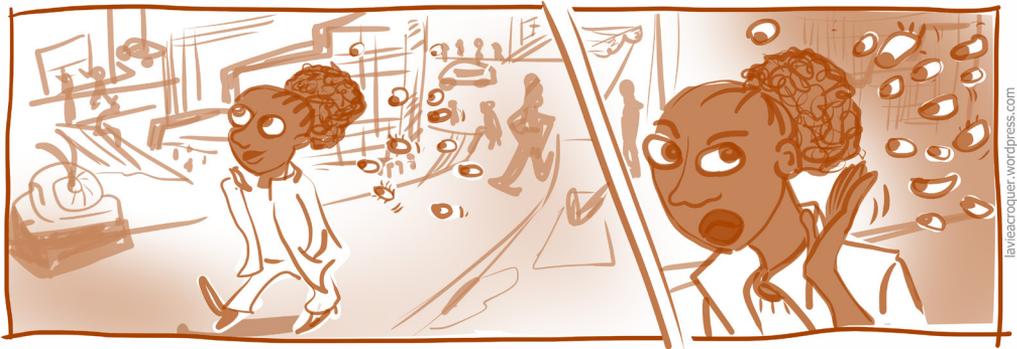
A Black woman flâneur may have a different experience exploring the city streets than the classic flâneur. Race. Gender. These two words shape how I am perceived on the road. Walking along Yonge Street, the main artery of Toronto,

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13. Edwin Hill, "Black Flânerie, or Wandering while Black in the City of Light," <https://frit.osu.edu/interdisciplinarity-directions/hill>.

14. Doreen St. Félix, "The Peril of Black Mobility," *Good*, 29 March 2016, <https://www.good.is/features/issue-36-flanerie>.

I blend right into the multicultural crowd. It is a different world when away from the main thoroughfares. I stand out. The proverbial hairs on the back on my head invariable rise to attention. On alert for a glance, a comment, a looking over the shoulder. Or a sudden crossing to the other side of the street.<sup>15</sup>



The different experiences of Black people and the social capital that is attributed to them is very much shaped by factors such as class, globalisation and perceptions of so-called “cosmopolitan” Black people who travel and study internationally. In *Thick: And Other Essays* by Dr Tressie McMillan Cottom, there is a chapter entitled “Black Is Over (Or, Special Black),” which is really great in identifying intra-racial differences in terms of Black people’s access to certain spaces and their (in)ability to move within them relatively freely, and otherwise.<sup>16</sup>

I have been thinking about the recent experience of Chris Cooper while birdwatching in Central Park, New York City.<sup>17</sup> Some people have been quick to list his professional qualifications and education in an effort to call out the racism that he experienced. However, others have rightly pointed out that regardless of their background and

15. Black Outdoors, “A Black Flaneur in the ‘Hood,” <https://blackoutdoors.wordpress.com/2019/03/29/a-black-flaneur-in-the-hood/>.

16. Tressie McMillan Cottom, *Thick: And Other Essays* (New York, 2019: The New Press).

17. See Joanna Walters, “Video of white woman calling police on black man in Central Park draws outrage,” *The Guardian*, 26 May 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/may/26/central-park-new-york-white-woman-black-birdwatcher>.

socio-economic status, no Black person should have to endure what he did, and the fact that Chris Cooper was profiled and encountered such racism reflects that anti-Black racism cannot be outrun via socio-economic mobility.

I think that by exploring the concept of the flâneur and/or the Black flâneur from an intersectional perspective, we can yield some interesting thoughts and insights regarding how the flâneur is complicated by the intersections of racism, sexism, ableism, classism, colourism and the like.

**From:** Kevin

**To:** Francesca, Guillaume, Alice, Kwame,

**Subject:** Antiracism as the default position

---

Taking an intersectional approach to our discussion of the (Black) flâneur seems really important. That said, I hope we are also able to emphasise the potentiality of race to be totalising.

My experience with “wandering” in and outside of the U.S. places antiracism in the default position—at first glance I am considered a threat or at minimum out of place within White spaces. It is only when my social status (professor) or my nationality (when outside the U.S.) is made manifest that the antiracist behaviour subsides.

While Black folks with the “right” level of notoriety may be able to leverage it in their pursuit of flânerie, I think such a strategy can only be effective if the “proper” signals are sent and accurately received. And the signal that must be carefully encoded and correctly decoded is that “I am not THAT kind of Black”—I am an artist, intellectual, conservative, or anything else hegemonically aligned or deemed “safe” with Whiteness. But if/when those signals get crossed, the strategy fails and the default of anti-racism comes roaring back.

**From:** Guillaume

**To:** Kevin, Francesca, Alice, Kwame,

**Subject:** What makes flânerie different?

---

I agree 100% with the quotes and experiences you shared, no doubt about this. As pointed out in one of the quotes shared by Francesca:

[flânerie involves] the racialized dynamics of the gaze, i.e. the performative and normative regulation of space through the violent policing of who can look at whom, who can be seen and who remain invisible, who must look down and who cannot look away.<sup>18</sup>

My question, though, is: what differentiates flânerie from other social practices historically racialised as White?

For instance, what differentiates flânerie from shopping, researching, and skiing? The shopper figure, the researcher figure and the skier figure have also been socially constructed based on race (as well as gender and class).

Black shopping, researching, and skiing also involve the racialised dynamics of the gaze—but I am not sure that someone will claim after a controversy involving shopping, researching, or skiing: “I have always said you can’t be a Black shopper/researcher/skier.” Or if someone tries to say so, they may get into trouble. For instance, Joe Biden had to apologise after he said, during the 2020 election campaign:

If you have a problem figuring out whether you’re for me or Trump, then you ain’t black.<sup>19</sup>

If we cannot deny the existence of Black Trump voters, why can we deny the existence of Black flâneurs?

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18. Edwin Hill, “Black Flânerie, or Wandering while Black in the City of Light.”

19. Annie Linskey & Colby Itkowitz, “Black Trump voters ‘ain’t black,’ Biden says, later apologizing,” *The Seattle Times*, 22 May 2020, <https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/biden-says-black-voters-who-arent-already-supporting-him-aint-black/>.

## STROLLING WITH A QUESTION

Could we not argue that, similar to other social practices historically racialised as White, [Black] *flânerie* has the potential to reinforce (e.g. Richard Wright) or challenge White supremacy (the way Black shopping, researching, and skiing may also do)? And then we can work from there to say what would be a “disruptive *flâneur*.”

**From:** Kwame

**To:** Guillaume, Kevin, Francesca, Alice,

**Subject:** Practices vs. Embodied way of being in the world

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Coming out of a disability studies framework, several years ago when I did a workshop on teaching and stuttering, I learned the difference between referring to myself as a “stutterer” or “someone who stutters.” While people may refer to themselves as shoppers, researchers, or skiers, in truth, these are just practices people engage in. The *flâneur*, as I understand it, is not a practice but an embodied way of being in the world. So I don’t think you can simply equate the *flâneur* with the skier. I guess we could talk about “*flânerie*” as a practice. But even then I see it as a practice that’s rooted in an identity-based disposition. Like “acting White” or, even more to the point, “being White.” Of course, this doesn’t resolve everything you are thinking through, Guillaume. But I think it’s part of the answer.

**From:** Alice

**To:** Kwame, Guillaume, Kevin, Francesca,

**Subject:** Can the *flâneur* be disruptive?

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I agree with Kwame’s comments. I think the *flâneur* is more about one’s relationship to reality than the skier, although strolling and skiing are two practices.

Also, I feel like the *flâneur* is essentially characterised by his feeling of belonging to the crowd. He even feels like he is at the centre of the crowd. I feel like a disruptive *flâneur* never feels like she completely belongs and is self-aware of the disruption. She knows that she is

not invisible because she does not “look” alike. As such, although she may claim to be free, she knows that embodying freedom is an act of disruption. Therefore, I feel like the disruptive flâneur is at odds with the essential traits of the flâneur (not just in the sense that the fictional archetype is not a reality, but in the sense that some traits of the disruptive flâneur are opposite to the essential characteristics of the flâneur). Therefore, I don’t think the disruptive flâneur is really a flâneur, although she may engage in the practice of strolling.

Also, is there such a thing as “flânerie” in poor racialised districts?

1. When you are a White person born in the 5th district, you don’t stroll in the Seine Saint Denis. It’s telling that the only times I have heard of White people from the centre of Paris going into the Seine Saint Denis, it would be for sociological purposes, not just for being there and observing in a leisurely way.

2. When you are a Black person born in the Seine Saint Denis, you may feel like you belong when you stroll in the Seine Saint Denis, but the flâneur is so closely associated to the “*beaux quartiers*” that I don’t feel like it would really be easy to identify with the flâneur. What do you think?

**From:** Kwame

**To:** Alice, Guillaume, Kevin, Francesca,

**Subject:** *On Being*

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These are excellent points, Alice. I really like the point you made about White people only visiting in the Seine Saint Denis for “sociological purposes.” While thinking about the sources you referenced, a few tensions I noticed are, first, nationality, inspired by Baldwin’s comments about Richard Wright getting it wrong in what Guillaume originally mentioned. So African-Americans may be okay in Paris but Black colonial subjects are not. Similarly, there are a lot of accounts of Black internationals being given “honorary White passes” during Jim Crow. Second, we should consider the differences between identities and subcultures. What identities can we choose and what identities are

imposed on us? I would say race and gender tend to be the latter. Social class is more or less imposed but people can also learn how to temporarily conceal it.

Finally, I want to share a wonderful piece by Ross Gay.<sup>20</sup> I heard him recite it on the National Public Radio podcast *On Being* a few weeks ago and immediately ordered his book. I think it adds a capitalist, market-based dimension to some of the things we are talking about. I cannot believe I didn't think to mention this earlier. I think it's notable that when I looked up the piece, I found it in the *Paris Review*.

**From:** Guillaume

**To:** Kwame, Alice, Kevin, Francesca,

**Subject:** *No Loitering*—Violators will be prosecuted

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Ross Gay's piece is indeed very nice:

It occurs to me that laughter and loitering are kissing cousins, as both bespeak an interruption of production and consumption.<sup>21</sup>

And, there may be my missing piece... If *flâner* is associated with White bodies, loitering is associated with Black and Brown bodies... The former is praised whereas the latter is criminalised.

What I liked with *flâner* was that it gives a sense of the "individualised right to the city." And so, inhabiting a "flâneur position" could be a (deliberate or not) strategy for some Black artists to inhabit spaces racialised as White. I am thinking notably of the *Smarteez* of South Africa:

The *Smarteez* are a four-strong DIY design collective. They epitomise the possibilities that are open to South Africa's young post apartheid generation. Soweto's style tribe refuse

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20. Ross Gay, "Loitering Is Delightful," *The Paris Review*, 11 February 2019, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/02/11/loitering-is-delightful/>.

21. Ibid.

to be defined by their roots or race, are bold and original in their approach to fashion, and have turned the art of looking good into a fully fledged fashion label and scene.<sup>22</sup>

The Smarteez are a small youth group of fashion designers who dress in bright and mismatching colours and patterns to make their statement. Their belief is that they're born to be free and so they will express that by wearing what they want and drawing attention to themselves in the meantime. Their style may be a bit too vibrant for some, but it makes the Smarteez instantly recognisable when wandering around Soweto—and they even won an award for the most stylish subculture in Johannesburg!<sup>23</sup>



That said, maybe flâner cannot/shouldn't be "appropriated"... But should we give loitering a chance instead?

22. Guardian Fashion, "Street fashion in South Africa," *The Guardian*, 2 November 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/gallery/2011/nov/02/south-african-fashion>.

23. House of York, "South Africans and their Subcultures," 26 September 2014, <https://www.houseofyork.co.za/article/south-africans-and-their-subcultures>.

**From:** Francesca

**To:** Guillaume, Kwame, Alice, Kevin,

**Subject:** Offering fragile alternative positions

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Although certain Black people and racialised people may experience and have access to degrees of “privilege,” power, and socio-economic advantage related to class and the like, which means that they may feel/be able to move in ways that can resemble flânerie... ultimately, such an ability to do so is fragile and highly constrained and context dependent.

Therefore, I find the concept of the “Black flâneur” a useful one to think about but I feel that it is even more mythic and fictive than the original concept of the flâneur, as the “Black flâneur” experiences such significant risks and social disciplining which leaves me questioning whether they can ever fully occupy this transient position of the “flâneur.”

I am also now reflecting on the great Black walking tour in Paris that my group went on. Interestingly, at one point a couple of tourists joined us. I think that at least one of them was Black and I believe that they ended up paying Kévi [one of the tour guides], unprompted. Perhaps such a moment may speak to the concept of the “Black flâneur,” as clearly there was a level of comfort and ease that meant both tourists felt that they could join our group without their presence being policed by the group itself. Then again, such a moment may have been less about the tourists feeling comfortable in the city of Paris itself, and may have been more about a fleeting moment of Black diasporic visibility and connection, given that our group was predominantly Black (I think).

To acknowledge racialised flânerie is to acknowledge the ways in which modes of reading the city can be expanded to account for alternative visual literacies linked to distinct subjective, and sometimes fragile, positions.

The illustrations included in this article were made by Mathilde (see <https://lavieacroquer.wordpress.com/>).

# BROWN GIRL IN THE LENS

Zuleka Randell Woods and  
Professor Anthony Kwame Harrison

In June 2019, when members of the Race in the Marketplace (RIM) research network first implemented the photo-dialogue research methodology in a project focusing on race in Paris, the decision of whether and how to photograph people weighed heavily on the minds of the organisers.<sup>1</sup> We would be photographing the other side of Paris—its historic and recent Black and Brown communities—and were conscious of the critiques against social scientists venturing into such spaces.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, the decision not to photograph people was more or less made for us by the logistical difficulties and extended timeframe involved with gaining cross-institutional research board review. Nevertheless, the prospect always felt clumsy and morally tenuous. An important dimension of the photo-dialogue process surrounds its different subjective perspectives. We envisioned that one

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1. Francesca Sobande, Alice Schoonejans, Guillaume D. Johnson, Kevin D. Thomas & Anthony Kwame Harrison, "Enacting anti-racist visualities through photo-dialogues on race in Paris," *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 40, no. 2 (2021): 165–179, 165–166. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-01-2020-0019>.

2. See, for example, Robin D. G. Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston 1997: Beacon Press); Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, second edition (New York 2012 [1999]: Zed Books).

of the most productive distinctions would be between Parisians and people who had never traveled to Paris, let alone France. Naturally, this included many non-French speakers. One idea was to hand out notecards, written in French, explaining who we were and asking for permission to take someone's photo. But who were we, really? A group of international researchers attempting a new model of photography-based research that we hoped would contribute to the development of more racially just markets and societies? This was certainly the organising mission that brought participants together. But who were we as individuals and what paths would have brought us to that decisive moment of thinking that photographing the person we were handing the notecard to would be valuable?

Admittedly, these are highly subjective and situational questions. But learning more about the person behind the lens and getting some sense of who they recognise (and don't recognise) as a worthy subject of the photographic gaze enhances our understanding of the relationship between visibility and race. Obviously, race is largely (though not exclusively) recognised through the visual field.<sup>3</sup> But understanding the terms of this recognition—what is seen and how it is interpreted—tells us a good deal about the differing meanings we attach to race.

The photograph of a girl might appeal to anyone as a valuable image to capture.<sup>4</sup> She is young (almost a baby). She is Black. She is outside in what appears to be a roadside village (in Africa or the Caribbean?). She looks like a sugar in a plum. Piled charcoal and people are behind her, but she appears to be alone. Children are often appealing photographic subjects. The little girl, in what appears to be a moment of tranquility amidst a modestly busy scene, seems wonderfully poised. She appears

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3. The perceptual distinctions people make about races are also made on the bases of sounds, tastes, smells, and feels.

4. Our decision to remove the little girl's image from the below photo, which is accessible through the website [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) ("The internet's source of freely usable images"), was made in the interest of NOT participating in the very practice we critique. That is, using a Black child's image without her consent. Accordingly, this creative, speculative essay projects how such a girl may have responded to the photographer photographing her. Readers interested in viewing the original image can find it at: <https://unsplash.com/photos/I8kBC-qz-P3o>.

to be curious about the photographer's gaze, but not overly confident or overly concerned. Is the photographer familiar? Perhaps family? Or is the photographer a stranger? Is the little girl's Blackness *incidental*—for instance, is the photographer a Ghanaian shooting street scenes in Ayigya for a national news outlet? Or is Blackness *instrumental* to what makes an image of this scene and situation valued by the photographer?

Perhaps the photographer has travelled to Uganda to photograph the people. Maybe they have travelled there for other reasons but would not think of returning home without photographing the country and its people. Perhaps this photograph was taken for an intended purpose—to be used in study abroad flyers or possibly charity campaigns. Perhaps it is to be shared with family, as evidence that the photographer was really there: not in the hotel or on an organised tour, but there walking around Jinja in Eastern Uganda. More than ever, people are sharing photographs with family through social media, which usually means they are shared with more than just family.

How does Blackness—in the at-home context of what might very well be the Continent or the Caribbean—as an *instrumental* (not an *incidental*) factor in this photograph come to take on meaning? Was the girl selected, targeted even, for her Blackness? For her African-ness? For the surrounding scene which could easily be (mis)read as symbolising poverty and victimhood (but not so bad as to destroy the photo's beauty and pleasantness)? Will the photograph be framed as an illustration of Black cultural deficiency or will it generate discussions of the colonialism, imperialism, neoliberalism, and anti-Black racism that underlie what it is presumed to depict? Will it lead to critical conversations about why Westerners are so at ease accepting it as an image of poverty and receiving it as a statement either in support of a cause (i.e. "save the children") or about the virtues of the photographer? What personal, organisational, and/or virtual networks will this little girl's image travel across? And would any photographer think to get her informed consent?



Stand still. Do not smile. Be poised and he might pass on by. It is the evening hours. I can tell because of how the sun hits my dark skin. There is nothing here out of the ordinary besides this White man and his camera. He is what we call *Mzungu*. The name comes from Kiswahili meaning spinning around or being dizzy. It is quite fitting considering how much they seem to constantly be moving. I wonder if they ever get dizzy. Here I am, just standing by the road enjoying the sun going down when he stopped. Is he intrigued by my Blackness or is it the charcoal? Wait, is that a camera? Of course, it is. *Mzungus*<sup>5</sup> always have cameras. Why would anyone want to take a photo of everyday things? Perhaps he wants to buy some of the charcoal lying on the road. Or is it the collar of my bright red dress that caught his eye? He seems to be staring directly at me or behind me. I cannot tell but his camera is facing this way. I can only hope he wants the charcoal image and not me. After all, why would a stranger be taking a photo of just a little Black girl standing by the roadside? Is this what people from his country do? Do they not have children where he comes from? That would explain why they often appear lost. If there are no children in his country, maybe he is here looking for them. He must ask someone to help before taking photos.

5. *Mzungu* plural varies by location (aBazungu, Bazungu, Azungu, etc). For the sake of clarity in this work, we consistently used *Mzungus*.

The Mzungu with the camera is not the first or the last to stop for a photo. Mzungus are constantly fascinated by everyday things around here. Just the other day, they stopped to take photos of my mother and her sisters walking home. My mother was carrying me on her back and my cousin was on my aunt's. They were merely talking about everyday happenings on our farm. This intrigued the Mzungus so much, so they stopped their vehicle to take pictures of us. I remembered smiling at my cousin, gossiping with our eyes about how easily these people were amazed carrying their water bottles and cameras. I bet our smiles made for a better story for their friends. Sometimes Mzungus smile at us from behind their cameras in hopes that we will smile back. I often wonder about how they can smile on cue and whether it is genuine or just meant to get their photo. They like photographs with and of children. Something tells me we make appealing subjects!

John Berger, writing about photographs, said, "The thrill found in a photograph comes from the onrush of memory. This is obvious when the picture is something we once knew."<sup>6</sup> What if any facts does this image bring to the memory of the one who captures it or to their audience? I wonder if they sit around analysing what is missing in the photographs they take. They have this 'poor, but happy' theme across their photographs. The idea of poverty or who is considered poor is so subjective. Mzungus like to say that we make them appreciate all that they have simply by our lack thereof. Maybe if they do not come looking for what we are lacking, they might find more than the bliss they frame. To their naive eyes, our smiles in photographs are happiness. Somehow my Blackness on this side of our red dirt road is poverty. Mzungus create their scene and situation. We just sit here in the frame.

In this frame, I stand in serenity watching as this Mzungu takes a photo of me. If you look closely, you will see the wooden bench where my mother was sitting. She walked away to get more bags for the charcoal. This photo only captures me standing here alone. Why didn't he wait for my mother to return? How would this photo be any different? Perhaps if I looked like the Mzungu, the framing would not be the same. I watch Mzungus walk around here with cameras glued to their

6. John Berger, *Keeping a Rendezvous* (New York 1992: Vintage International), 192.

hands. I wonder if they have some sort of memory problem. That will explain documenting everyday happenings.

Cheryl Harris and Devon Carbado, in analysing photographs following hurricane Katrina, postulate that people come to see facts by their interpretations of those facts, which contribute to how the story gets framed.<sup>7</sup> This photograph, perhaps, represents authentic African village life. That is the thing about authenticity, it relies on others for validation. Who determines what's authentic? How is it interpreted? This single moment in time, captured, can become the story of an entire place and its people. That is the magic of framing.

Often, the White man with the camera, outside of the race of his subjects, is motivated with capturing moments in photographs that he (mis)reads from his side of his lens. In the still, with an interest in capturing supposed authenticity, there is often no interaction. The framing of this photograph caters to the gaze of the photographer and the audience he will share it with. John Urry posits that real-life experiences are often hidden away so that the tourist gaze can find what they expect to see and that becomes authentic.<sup>8</sup> The gaze captured in this frame, in its one-sidedness, plays to the notion of African deficiency or, perhaps, the image of this little Black girl fits the western narrative of the continent. How different will this be if the roadside was somewhere in Iowa and the skin of the girl was not brown?

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7. Cheryl I. Harris and Devon W. Carbado, "Loot or Find: Fact or Frame?" in David Dante Troutt (ed.) *After the Storm: Black Intellectuals Explore the Meaning of Hurricane Katrina* (New York 2006: The New Press), 87–110.

8. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London 1990: Sage Publications).

# THE FORBIDDEN PICTURE

Dr. Guillaume D. Johnson

In May 2016, I was in Lomé for a field and family trip. My goal was to investigate the second-hand markets that are scattered everywhere in the Togolese capital city, which is one of the most important entrance ports to Western Africa. At the time, my research project examined how the African diaspora in France transferred objects to their country of origin.<sup>1</sup> I had run a few interviews in France, and I wanted to see how these objects were received, perceived, and used in the country of destination. The idea for this project stemmed from an encounter with a colleague who worked on objects' circulation in France, but also from the practice of my own father who since I was a child was sending all sorts of objects to Togo. He had moved back to Togo the year before for retirement (after more than 40 years in France) and this trip was a great opportunity for me to see how he had settled "back" and to explore these second-hand markets.

So, for about ten days, I visited all sorts of astonishing open-air markets with him as my fixer, translator, and co-investigator. Under the harsh Lomé sun, we thoroughly explored the infamous TP3, which is a generalist second-hand market located in the duty-free zone of the port where everything can be found: trucks, fridges, cell phones, bicycles, etc. Next to it, we delved into the market for second-hand

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1. V. Guillard & G.D. Johnson, "There Will Always Be Someone Who Will Need it': African Diasporic Households and the Circulation of Second-Hand Objects", paper presented at 2017 Marketing & Public Policy Conference, Washington D.C., U.S.A.

cars. Nicknamed “Venues de France,”<sup>2</sup> these cars originate from all over Europe and even North America. In between TP3 and the “auto parks” runs an avenue on which second-hand tyres are sold. We also visited the more traditional Grand Marché of Lomé (Assigame), the Akodessewa market which focuses on spare parts for cars, and the market in Hédzranawoé, which specialises in Abloni.

Abloni is the name for used clothing that generally comes from Europe. It is believed that the term “Abloni” is a distortion of the word “Obroni,” which in the Twi language of Ghana means “White person” (or more broadly, foreigner). In fact, used-clothes markets in Ghana are called “Obroni Wawu,” which translate as “dead White man’s clothes.” Thus, while this project was meant to offer me a small break from the study of “race and markets,” those terms brought me back to it. A short encounter with an Igbo merchant<sup>3</sup> in the Hédzranawoé market further reinforced this, questioning my positionality as researcher and individual. It happened as my father and I were finishing our visit of the market and stopped at one last stand which sold ties, among other things. Here is an approximate transcription of the conversation (recalled in my field notes):

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**Me:** Ah oui il y a des cravates aussi. Tu veux acheter des cravates, papa?  
*[Oh yes there are ties too. (Teasing) Do you want to buy some ties, dad?]*

**My father (DJ):** Combien? *[How much?]*

**Merchant #1:** Papa, 500 francs.

*[I take a picture of my father with the ties.]*

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2. As in fact any objects coming from overseas.

3. The business of Abloni in Lomé is mostly run by Igbo traders originally from Nigeria.



*Image by Guillaume D. Johnson.*

**Merchant #2 (M2 – in English):** Hey my friend, I don't like that.

**GJ:** I didn't take a picture of you, just him.

**M2:** No I don't like that, I don't like that.

**GJ:** Ok, Ok.

*M2 talks to other clients, I could only hear: Africa suffering...*

**DJ (in French):** Pourquoi il ne veut pas qu'on prenne de photos? [*Why doesn't he want us to take pictures?*]

**M2:** Je n'aime pas ça. [*I don't like this.*]

**DJ:** Ah bon? [*Really?*]

**M2:** Vous venez d'Europe, vous allez leur montrer ça. Ils vont dire que

les gens ici souffrent et tout ça. Non non non. Moi je n'aime pas ça. *[You come from Europe; you are going to show them this. They are going to say that the people here are suffering and all that. No no no. I don't like it.]*

**DJ:** Parce que vous n'aimez pas souffrir, c'est ça? *[Because you do not like to suffer, is that it?]*

**M2:** Oui c'est pas bon. Si on arrive en Europe, le blanc va nous arrêter et nous renvoyer ici. Si ces photos sont mises sur internet les gens vont dire que nous souffrons. Les blancs vont dire: "Tu souffres là-bas et tu viens ici, et tu es bien ici. Ici c'est la liberté." Si on va là-bas ils nous mettent dans l'avion pour nous renvoyer ici.

*[Yes, it is not good. If we arrive in Europe, the White man will stop us and send us back here. If these photos are put on the internet people will say that we are suffering. White people will say, "You are suffering over there, and you come here, and you are fine here. Here there is freedom". If we go to Europe, they will put us in the plane to come back here.]*

**GJ:** Ce n'est pas clair. Parlons, parlons. *[It's not clear. Let's talk, let's talk.]*

**M2 gets closer (in English):** Now, let me tell you one thing. When the White man comes from Europe, they take picture of all these things. They put it on the internet.

**GJ:** No I won't put it on the Internet.

**M2:** My problem is this. When they take the picture, they put it on the Internet and then they say this is how Africans are suffering.

**GJ:** You think this is suffering then.

**M2:** They say this is suffering.

**GJ:** You think this is suffering.

**M2:** No no they put it on the Internet, and they say this is suffering.

**GJ:** Why would I say this is suffering?

**M2:** They put it on the internet...

**GJ:** No no no. My question is about me. Why would I say this is suffering?

**M2:** THEY say that. I don't know about YOU.

**GJ:** This is not suffering. Are you suffering?

**M2:** They say this is how we are suffering in Africa. They are making fun of us. Are you getting me?

**GJ:** Do you think I would say you are suffering?

**M2:** I don't know you. You can do this to make money. To write about it. To sell your paper.

**GJ:** But do you think this is suffering?

**M2:** Of course this is suffering my friend. I am happy to sell those things. But in Europe there, they only see poverty. Are you getting me? They say we are suffering. The White man cannot wear this, and now I am here selling this all day. Are you getting me? They take a picture, they write about it, they put it on the Internet. Now, if we want to marry a White lady, you see, she will say: "Toi, tu souffrais en Afrique, mais maintenant tu as la liberté ici. Tu as l'argent. Tu es libre. Tout ça. N'oublie pas qu'avant tout ça, c'est moi qui t'ai..."

*["You used to suffer in Africa, but now you have freedom here. You have money. You are free. All that. Do not forget that before all this, it is me who made you..."]*

**DJ:** Civilisé. *[Civilised.]*

**M2:** Fait devenir blanc. Ce n'est pas bon. Si le blanc vient ici... *[turn*

*White. It is not good. If the White man comes here...]*

**DJ:** Mais nous, on n'est pas blancs. *[But we are not White.]*

**M2:** Are you getting me? It is not against you! It is against making fun of Africans in Europe. In these countries they are saying we are suffering too much. You get my point, papa?

**GJ:** Yes, I understand your point.

**M2:** If you don't understand, I will talk again. Je peux parler en Français? Là-bas on se moque des Africains. "Ils souffrent beaucoup. On jette ici, ils vendent là-bas." Ce n'est pas bon. Le blanc veut parler "Liberté" "Liberté" et en Europe, ils renvoient les Africains ici. *[Africans are laughed at over there. "They are suffering a lot. We throw it out here, they sell it over there." It's not good. The White person wants to talk about "Liberty" "Liberty" and in Europe, they send the Africans back here.]*

**GJ:** Je comprends. *[I understand.]*

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In *Clothing Poverty: The Hidden World of Fast Fashion and Second-Hand Clothing*,<sup>4</sup> geographer Andrew Brooks argues that the flow of used clothing illuminates how the Global South has been locked into yet another relationship of dependency with the Global North. Although this trade reverses the traditional flow of commodities (where clothes are mainly manufactured from the poor to the rich), it still relies on the same unequal socio-spatial division of labour. Yet labelling "poverty" his business is precisely what the Igbo merchant did not want me to do. An economic approach, even though essential, is not enough to fully grasp the phenomenon. Like any commodities, Abloni are not just "things," they hold a symbolic value which determines a set of social relations and dynamics.

4. Andrew Brooks, *Clothing Poverty: The Hidden World of Fast Fashion and Second-Hand Clothes* (London 2019: Zed Books).

Beyond the altercation, our discussion highlights the ambivalence towards Abloni I encountered throughout my fieldwork. On the one hand, the Abloni are appreciated as they give access to consumer markets and global brands while developing local economy and jobs. On the other hand, Abloni are hated as they are perceived as further evidence of Africa's social, environmental, and political inferiority. As one interviewee bluntly put it, "There are wastes. And who like to consume the waste of someone else?"

Nevertheless, here the merchant seemed less concerned with the practice itself than with the gaze of a possible European audience. The picture and its diffusion represent a threat for the image of "Africa" and Africans. Interestingly, the threat does not seem to be against him directly, but rather upon Africans who are emigrating to Europe (his own experience?), where they could be denigrated and rejected based on the stereotypical image of a poverty-stricken Africa.

Ironically, while he correctly identifies us as from Europe, he does not see myself or my father as potential direct victims of the phenomenon he describes. Why? Did we embody a certain Europeaness and Whiteness which were not at risk of being stereotyped and rejected? How did he know that I wanted to write a paper?

While walking to pick up my daughter at school one day, I ponder my own embodiment of the *flâneur*<sup>5</sup> during my visit of the Abloni market, trying to find a way to conclude this piece on a reflexive and critical note. I need to stop by a donation box on the way to drop off two bags of old clothes which my partner has prepared. As I open the donation box, a voice calls out. A Black lady, about 100m away, asks me whether I am planning to "throw away" those bags. When I confirm that I am planning to put them in the donation box, she offers to take them so that she could "send them to Africa." "Here, people throw too many things away, while people in Africa have nothing. They are very poor." The coincidence leaves me speechless. Can this lady be the person the Igbo merchant had warned me about? Yet, she had not seen my picture...

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5. See the piece by Sobande et al. in this issue.



# FAST FOOD RELICS

Dr. Naa Oyo A. Kwate



*John Margolies, McDonald's, Compton, California (1981). John Margolies Roadside America archive. Image in public domain, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017709080/>.*

Compton, California, a town whose name almost immediately elicits “Straight Outta,” was a postwar suburban haven for blue-collar Black households who worked in a thriving industrial corridor. They enjoyed recently built, spacious homes, and they maintained them fastidiously. It was a hard-won achievement, as the White residents who preceded them reacted to new Black neighbours

with pickets, violence, and eventually panic selling. Then came industrial flight—manufacturers of furniture, textiles, automobiles, tires, steel, and more—beginning in the early 1960s and continuing to the early 1980s. Some 70,000 jobs evaporated between 1978 and 1982 alone. The economic, social, and physical shocks to Compton residents and the city’s infrastructure were severe.<sup>1</sup>

This photograph, taken by John Margolies in 1981, portrays the calamity that Compton’s economic inversion left in its wake—the kind of commercial decline caused by the downstream effects of racial segregation. Places like Compton are stereotyped with the racial shorthand of a “bad neighbourhood,” an analysis (or lack thereof) that ignores how and why Black communities are disproportionately saddled with suffering. Still, it’s not entirely clear what happened to this particular apparently defunct restaurant. When did it close and what has been the impact on the community? On the one hand, a shuttered order window, posters, graffiti, and an empty lot devoid of any evidence of recent or frequent customers are clear markers that this former McDonald’s outlet has been closed for some time. That it remains as relic suggests that neither public nor private investment is forthcoming. On the other hand, the plantings, oddly evocative of a wreath against the red backdrop, give observers perhaps vain hope that there might still be life in the establishment, that a crew might still return to the kitchen to serve up the menu items advertised on the facade. Then again, maybe they are just very hardy plants.

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1. Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley, CA 2003: University of California Press).

# THE WRITING ON THE WALL

Professor Sonya A. Grier

In April 2020, in the aftermath of protests following the televised murder of George Floyd by a policeman, *Cannabliss*, the District of Columbia's (DC) first "100% black owned" medical marijuana dispensary, faced vandalism attempts. The owner, Mr. Pickett, wrote on the front of the building:

*Cannabiss*  
*100% black owned and black operated*  
*Please don't destroy black jobs*

Mr. Pickett claims that he aims for the dispensary to increase access to medical marijuana in an underserved market, create jobs, and support economic justice.<sup>1</sup> In the recent Covid-19 pandemic, marijuana businesses were deemed "essential" businesses.<sup>2</sup> The dispensary employs 22 people, most from the surrounding area. The owner is proud to present his dispensary as the "first fully unionized cannabis

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1. See [www.dcholisticwellness.com/press](http://www.dcholisticwellness.com/press).

2. John Schroyer, "US markets that have allowed marijuana businesses to remain open during coronavirus pandemic stay-at-home orders," April 2 2020, <https://mjbizdaily.com/states-that-have-allowed-marijuana-businesses-to-remain-open-during-coronavirus-pandemic/>.

THE WRITING ON THE WALL



*Photo by Author, Washington, D.C. (March 2021).*

shop in the District offering employees greater pay, paid time off, and paid holidays, as well as retirement plans, additional accredited training and health care insurance”.<sup>3</sup> The dispensary is located in the former home of a 50+ year Black-owned liquor store that served the predominately Black, historically low-income and slowly gentrifying Deanwood neighbourhood.

In gentrifying areas, new businesses may be viewed suspiciously as long-term residents perceive that new businesses are targeted to incoming residents.<sup>4</sup> A cannabis dispensary faces particular scrutiny given the “War on drugs,” which has subjected Black Americans to decades of over-policing, arrest, prosecution and incarceration for non-violent offences with dire consequences for Black communities.<sup>5</sup>

Although the push for legalisation repositioned marijuana as a mainstream drug, Black Americans remain the face of illegal cannabis. Despite similar rates of use across racial groups, Blacks are almost 4 times as likely as Whites to be arrested for possession of cannabis.<sup>6</sup> In Washington, D.C., Black people comprise 84% of people arrested for public consumption, although they are only 45% of the D.C. population.<sup>7</sup> Black communities are understandably skeptical regarding a legal business for a product they see continue to criminalise their friends and family. Community members may also wonder about the types of products sold by their local businesses given the 50-year tenure of the liquor store that preceded *Cannabliss*. The “green rush”

3. UFCW, “Workers at First Solely Black-Owned Cannabis Dispensary in DC Unionize,” The United Food & Commercial Workers Local 400 (2019).

4. Sonya A. Grier & Vanessa G. Perry, “Dog parks and coffee shops: Faux diversity and consumption in gentrifying neighborhoods,” *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 37, no. 1 (2018): 23–38.

5. Benjamin P. Sheppard (2020), “Going for the Green: Social Equity in the Recreational Cannabis Industry,” *Lincoln Memorial University Law Review Archive*, 8, no. 1 (2020), 280.

6. American Civil Liberties Union, *A Tale of Two Countries: Racially Targeted Arrests in The Era Of Marijuana Reform* (2020), available at: <https://www.aclu.org/report/tale-two-countries-racially-targeted-arrests-era-marijuana-reform>.

7. Rose Hackman, “A billion-dollar industry, a racist legacy: being black and growing pot in America,” *The Guardian*, 15 June 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jun/15/legal-marijuana-industry-racism-portland-jesce-horton>.

may start a new conversation in the public health debate over the adverse effects of targeted marketing to Black communities.<sup>8</sup>

White Americans have become the face of the \$61 billion-dollar fast-growing legalised cannabis industry where fewer than 5% of dispensary owners are Black.<sup>9</sup> Significant structural, economic and other barriers exclude Black Americans from reaping the economic benefits of cannabis legalisation.<sup>10</sup> Social equity programmes have been designed as a form of reparations that redistribute wealth, power, and resources within the existing capitalist system as payback for structural oppression.<sup>11</sup> Will state sponsored Black capitalism be the solution? The writing is on the wall.

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8. Sonya A. Grier & Shiriki Kumanyika, "Targeted Marketing and Public Health," *Annual Review of Public Health*, 31 (2010): 349–369.

9. Flowhub, Cannabis Industry Statistics 2021, Flowhub consulting, available at: <https://flowhub.com/cannabis-industry-statistics>, accessed March 2, 2021. Marijuana Business Daily, Percentage of cannabis business owners and founders by race (2017), available at: <https://mjbizdaily.com/chart-19-cannabis-businesses-owned-founded-racial-minorities/>.

10. See Sheppard, "Going for the Green."

11. Ibid.

# ASKING IMMIGRANTS FOR MONEY

## *Marketing Remittances Services around the World*

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Dr. Ernesto Castañeda

Remittances are the money that international migrants send to their families in their home countries. Most remittance senders are immigrants who left with the explicit plan to earn foreign currency to support their children and spouses in their hometowns. They tend to work low-earning jobs, and they often remit over 30% of their income. While remittances are expatriated wages, immigrant-receiving local economies need not worry because most of the expenses are made in the place of settlement, and most of the profits are made by the employers there. Remittances are essential income that makes ends meet at home, allows families to buy medicine for elderly parents, or supports someone's schooling expenses, for example.

Therefore, making sure that the money consistently makes it home is of utmost importance for these transnational families divided by borders. Multiple business models have appeared to help broker these transactions. Businesses through which people can send remittances often pop up in immigrant neighbourhoods, themselves becoming markers of immigration and ethno-racial diversity in some urban spaces. Why is this? International migration accelerates and

compounds in certain areas because of the nature of social networks.<sup>1</sup> People with neighbours and family members working in a particular place abroad are likely to share partial information, resources, and opportunities that attract others. Additionally, through chain migration, we see some families reunifying in the global north. All the while, neighbourhoods that host immigrant populations adopt a particular ethnic character, which often includes blocks peppered with places where one can send money abroad. Transnational activities such as communications, people, and money traveling across borders connect the places immigrants are from and the neighbourhoods they move to after arrival. Seeing a need in the community, members who have the necessary capital often open businesses—corner stores, small supermarkets, and remittance kiosks, often blurred into one.<sup>2</sup>

While large multinational banks or Western Union often come to mind when one thinks about remittances, community-based businesses make up a large portion of the market share. Initially, these businesses tend to be self-financed and owned by a family. The smaller businesses have the upper hand in being engrained in their communities and often have offices in the immigrant-sending towns and thus, local knowledge. The entrepreneurs who are first movers in this sector have lucrative businesses that help compatriots send and receive money, and sometimes packages, at both ends of specific transnational sites. They also often work as foreign exchange businesses. However, large banks and communication businesses have also entered this market in the last twenty years and compete aggressively to attract customers. Western Union and Ria also offer their system to small businesses. Businesses' naming, branding, and marketing started as very local and location-specific because of their embeddedness in specific transnational networks. As multinational banks, mobile services, and

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1. Douglas S. Massey, "Social Structure, Household Strategies, and the Cumulative Causation of Migration," *Population Index* 56, no. 1 (1990): 3–26; Ernesto Castañeda, "Understanding Inequality, Migration, Race, and Ethnicity from a Relational Perspective," in E. Castañeda (ed.), *Immigration and Categorical Inequality: Migration to the City and the Birth of Race and Ethnicity* (New York 2018: Routledge).

2. Ernesto Castañeda, "Comparative Notes on the Contexts of Reception and Immigrant Entrepreneurship in New York, Washington, D.C., El Paso, Barcelona, and Paris," in C. Y. Liu (ed.), *Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Cities* (Cham 2021: Springer): 97–122.

cryptocurrencies encroach on the remittances market, however, identity-related marketing from small businesses that offer remittance services has become even more important for keeping their customers.

This visual essay presents pictures of posters advertising remittance services to different parts of the world. I took the pictures as part of a photovoice workshop organised by the **Race in the Marketplace** (RIM) Forum in Paris in 2019,<sup>3</sup> which was partly financed by the Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF), as well as from other fieldwork conducted from 2008 onwards for my book *A Place to Call Home*.<sup>4</sup>

### Money Is not All the Same

Money is money. In theory, it is fungible and exchangeable and thus can cross borders much more easily than people can. It does not need passports or visas. Most borders are open and welcoming to capital but not always to people. Nevertheless, migrants have traditionally been constrained from sending money from accounts in country A to country B. This is for several reasons. One is the lack of banks in rural areas in the developing world. Another is because governments and banks in cities in the global north may have high account fees or many requirements to open bank accounts. As I discovered when I lived in Paris as a student in 2007, banks in Paris require many documents, including immigration papers, work permits, and letters documenting minimum guaranteed salaries. Thus, for decades there was a demand for personal courriers to constantly travel back and forth, bringing cash, photos, and gifts with them to deliver to an immigrant's relatives abroad.

The *hawala* is used in the Muslim world to make transfers based on traditional accounting and bookkeeping methods across long

3. Francesca Sobande, Alice Schoonejans, Guillaume D. Johnson, Kevin D. Thomas & Anthony Kwame Harrison, "Enacting anti-racist visualities through photo-dialogues on race in Paris," *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 40, no. 2 (2021): 165–179, 165–166. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-01-2020-0019>.

4. Ernesto Castañeda, *A Place to Call Home: Immigrant Exclusion and Urban Belonging in New York, Paris, and Barcelona* (Stanford, CA 2018: Stanford University Press).

distances without charging interests to comply with Islamic practice. However, after September 11, 2001, the United States and international bodies cracked down on the use of the hawala for international transfers, overclaiming that it could be used to finance terrorism. Instead, since the early 2000s, the World Bank, the IMF, the Inter-American Development Bank, and other regional banking bodies have preferred to *bankarise* immigrants. This means encouraging migrants to open bank accounts and remit through large transnational banks with headquarters in the global north. Similar to hawala, banks and remittance businesses do not physically send money. Instead, they transmit information about the money received in point A to match a withdrawal at point B. Remittance businesses can profit from high fees, exchange rate brokerage, arbitrage, and investing the money in financial markets in the time between when they receive and disburse the money.

Since analysts realised that combined, these transactions add up to billions of dollars, the remittances market has become highly competitive. Nevertheless, each remittance company must capture one remitter at a time. Most immigrants who remit send approximately 300 dollars per month.<sup>5</sup> They do so from the neighbourhood where they live or work. Far from being a global system, the actual delivery of remittances to particular towns in the global south is unique. The most important consideration of which service to use is which one delivers to his or her hometown. Many small immigrant-sending hometowns in the developing world do not have bank branches where a remittance service or bank could send money. Therefore, there has to be an agreement between the business sending the money and the one receiving it. Western Union probably has the widest net, but it is not universal. Fees also vary between services. Therefore, while neoclassical economics would assume that customers would use the best and cheaper service, in reality, remittance services are highly tailored and tied to local networks, identity, nationality, race and ethnicity. Thus, marketing campaigns for remittance services are heavily "racialised." This photo essay shows how storefronts present themselves to appeal to the profile of the likely local customer.

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5. Ernesto Castañeda, "Living in Limbo: Transnational Households, Remittances and Development," *International Migration*, 51 (2013): e13-e35.



Image 1: Envios El Paraiso, E116th St, New York City  
©Ernesto Castañeda, May 11, 2013.

### Storefronts and Targeted Marketing

East Harlem in New York City has a concentration of Puerto Rican and Mexican businesses.<sup>6</sup> A business that works simultaneously as remittances, package, and travel agency advertises its services by calling itself “Paradise” (Image 1). Maybe going there connects those in “paradise” to those outside of it. Whether paradise is in New York City or a small hometown in Mexico depends on the eye of the beholder, some of whom may overlook the struggles afar and think that the

6. Ernesto Castañeda, Kevin Beck & Josué Lachica, “Place, Poverty, Ethnicity, and Culture: Walking through Hispanic Neighborhoods in New York, San Diego, and El Paso,” in: E. Brown & T. Shortell (eds.), *Walking in Cities: Quotidian Mobility as Urban Theory, Method, and Practice* (Philadelphia, PA 2015: Temple University Press): 60–82.

grass is greener on the other side. Migration becomes self-propelled because of imperfect information about the challenging work and living conditions abroad.<sup>7</sup>



Image 2: Mexico Travel. Source: <https://www.paqueterias.us/paqueteria-mexico-travel>

A similar business (Image 2), a couple blocks away also on E116th St in New York City, at one point used the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a sacred symbol for many Mexicans, to advertise its services and attract customers.

It is crucial to remember that immigrants can only send remittances because they left their homes and family members. Thus, they become what Robert Smith calls *ausentes siempre presentes*, ever-present

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7. Abdelmalek Sayad, *The Suffering of the Immigrant* (New York 2018: John Wiley & Sons).



*Image 3: Migrant passing in front of a Western Union office in an immigrant neighbourhood in Barcelona ©Ernesto Castañeda. February 19, 2008.*

missing people.<sup>8</sup> They become solely breadwinners; *padres de cheque*, parents in check only.<sup>9</sup> These metaphors are graphically represented by the picture above (Image 3), contrasting the silhouette of a rural

8. Robert Smith, *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants* (Berkeley, CA 2005: University of California Press).

9. Ernesto Castañeda & Lesley Buck, "Remittances, Transnational Parenting, and the Children Left Behind: Economic and Psychological Implications," *The Latin Americanist*, 55 (2011): 85–110.

resident painted on the window of a remittance storefront with an actual immigrant living in Barcelona passing by.

In the Goutte d'Or, a diverse neighbourhood in Paris, an immigrant-owned business storefront caters to African immigrants sending money to sub-Saharan Africa. The signs and marketing posters used Black people to market themselves and attract clients (Image 4).



Image 4: A miscellaneous store including Western Union services in an immigrant neighbourhood in Paris. ©Ernesto Castañeda, June 24, 2019.



Image 5: Société Générale bank branch Goutte d'Or.  
©Ernesto Castañeda, June 24, 2019.

Very close by to the storefront above, the French bank Société Générale has a poster (Image 5) featuring what appears to be a mixed-race young woman, suggesting that the world and the future (*avenir*) are hers. It advertises an account service that for a monthly fee of two euros waives bank fees when making payments and withdrawals abroad. The two ads close by may make the case that immigrants, especially the undocumented or those working in the informal economy (and who are therefore not able to open a bank account easily), must pay dearly to send money home, while more middle-class French

## ASKING IMMIGRANTS FOR MONEY

citizens can cheaply access their accounts while traveling, studying, and living abroad. Indeed, most Americans or British people visiting Paris or traveling abroad need not worry about receiving remittances. They can use their ATM or credit cards with the best terms for foreign transactions.

A few storefronts down the street from Société Générale, one side of a remittance business shows an internationalist or at least pan-African approach. The other side and the inside display more country-specific marketing in an effort to expand the customer pool while customising the appeal (Image 6). An advertising poster, *affiche*, posted outside shows how the Ria remittances company has partnered with many African banks and post offices to deliver money economically in Senegal. Inside the same store, a poster focuses on sending money to Congo Brazzaville.



Image 6: Ria branch Goutte d'Or. ©Ernesto Castañeda, June 24, 2019.

Further along Rue de la Goutte d'Or, a store that sells food products from Thailand and Cambodia offers remittance services and cellphone plans for cheaper international calls (Image 7).



Image 7: Storefront selling South East Asian food, Goutte d'Or.  
 ©Ernesto Castañeda, June 24, 2019.

## ASKING IMMIGRANTS FOR MONEY

Some storefronts use the faces of people of colour to attract clients, as in the example below (Image 8), on a street close to the train station in Lausanne, Switzerland.



*Image 8: Remittances office in Lausanne, Switzerland.  
©Ernesto Castañeda, July 4, 2019.*

Most remittance offices use national flags for advertising the countries where people can receive remittances. While some use faces of colour, other marketing relies more on languages to communicate to their foreign-born customers, as the two images from Switzerland show below (Images 9 and 10).



Image 9: Remittances office targeting South Asians and other immigrants in Lausanne, Switzerland.  
©Ernesto Castañeda, July 2, 2019.



Image 10. Advertisements for remittance services in Geneva, Switzerland. ©Ernesto Castañeda, August 2020.

## Conclusion

While \$1,000 is technically the exact same as a different \$1,000, we do not attribute the same value to the thousand dollars we use to buy food or pay rent, as the same thousand dollars obtained in a scholarship or a stimulus check, as the thousand dollars we owe the bank, earned in the lottery, or gained in an inheritance.<sup>10</sup> As the literature in economic sociology has shown, money is not just money. Money has social value.

10. Viviana Zelizer, "How Do We Know Whether a Monetary Transaction Is a Gift, an Entitlement, or Compensation?," in Ben-Ner and L. Putterman (eds.), *Economics, Values, and Organization* (Cambridge 1998: Cambridge University Press): 329–334.

Remittances are a form of showing love and commitment to a family physically left behind but still cared for financially and emotionally.<sup>11</sup>

So, while sending money today seems like a simple technical task done through information technology services online, with mobile apps, or even potentially with cryptocurrencies, immigrants have historically relied on trusted community members to manage their cross-border lives and transactions.<sup>12</sup> Today, in a context of intense competition, remittances businesses put to use ethno-racial symbols to communicate local knowledge and create trust among customers. Money is not just a cold means of exchange. It also conveys social meaning and moral connotations such as ethnic solidarity and commitment to family. Some money is given national, racial, local, and moral characteristics, particularly when the money in question—as in the case of remittances—comes from sacrifice, leaving children and spouses behind, and often living in a clandestine status. Remittances are not just about savings, investment, or profit, but they are vital to feed family members and build a house.<sup>13</sup> Remittance businesses do not only sell their services but to succeed, they must also sell identity and familial and national duty.

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11. Viviana Zelizer & Charles Tilly, "Relations and Categories," in: A. Markman and B. Ross (eds.), *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation* (San Diego, CA 2006: Elsevier): 1–31; Jason DeParle, *A Good Provider Is One Who Leaves: One Family and Migration in the 21st Century* (New York 2019: Viking).

12. Charles Tilly, "Trust Networks in Transnational Migration," *Sociological Forum* 22, no. 1 (2007):1–25; Charles Tilly, *Trust and Rule* (Cambridge 2005: Cambridge University Press); Nadia Y. Flores-Yeffal, "Migration-Trust Networks: Unveiling the Social Networks of International Migration," in E. Castañeda (ed.), *Immigration and Categorical Inequality: Migration to the City and the Birth of Race and Ethnicity* (New York 2018: Routledge).

13. Castañeda, "Living in Limbo."



# EDITING AS ANTI-RACISM

Dr. Bel Parnell-Berry and  
Dr. Noémi Michel

Our organisation, the European Race and Imagery Foundation (ERIF), has been committed since its inception in 2013 to educate and organise campaigns against racist imagery in Europe, with a strong focus on anti-Black racist artefacts—such as the blackface character of *Zwarte Piet* in the Netherlands. We operate as part of a long-standing tradition of struggle, inspired by multiple, small Black and POC-led organisations, in Europe and elsewhere, that came before us. Throughout our years of activism, we have learnt that Black-led anti-racist discourses and initiatives are marked by endurance. We have also learnt that this longevity often gets lost in our public cultures and dominant collective memories.

Last spring we witnessed the re-intensifying of the global Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in response to the murders of Black people at the hands of US police. On this side of the Atlantic, we were inspired, energised and galvanised. However, we also witnessed a significant gap between our understanding of anti-racism’s history in terms of its longevity and multiplicity, and the white dominant public’s apprehension of anti-racism, considered as an often homogenised “new discovery”. Trendy magazines multiplied portraits of anti-racist leaders and devoted short articles to the struggle against anti-Black

racism, without putting those into the context of the decades-long and multifaceted struggle within Europe.

Consequently, Spring and Summer 2020 were exhausting and draining for many campaigners who had already been actively engaged with anti-racism work for many years, as we found ourselves suddenly over-exposed and pulled in numerous directions by the rest of the world, at once interested in our ongoing efforts. Moreover, as the BLM protests spread and evolved from the US to Europe, our communities—from Bristol, to the Hague, to Geneva and beyond—were forced to grapple more than ever before with localised, institutional racial discrimination.

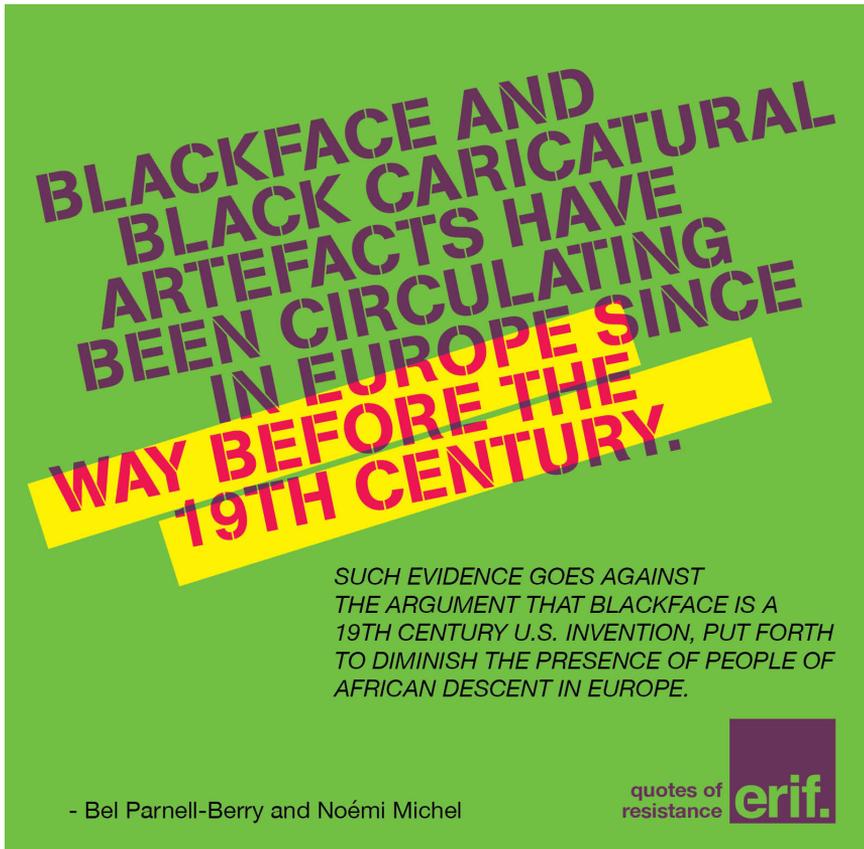
It was under such intense circumstances that we published our open-access special issue for *darkmatter* journal in November 2020.<sup>1</sup> This special issue is based on content from ERIF's first conference, *Returning the Gaze: Blackface in Europe*, which took place six years prior in Amsterdam, bringing together various artists, scholars and activists to discuss the practice of and resistance to blackface and other racist modes of representation, specifically within the European context. The special issue gave an opportunity to bring the dialogues and strategies exchanged at the conference full circle, at a poignant and needed time of healing and reckoning within anti-racism circles. We also worked towards the amplification and the accessibility of its content via our social media project *Quotes of Resistance*, by displaying excerpts of each article on digital and printed cards.<sup>2</sup>

Below, we display two of these cards as well as an excerpt of the editorial we wrote for the special issue. By offering these snapshots, we want to reflect on two ways our special issue exemplifies our commitment to channel anti-racist expressions that refuse the marketisation, compartmentalisation and trendisation of the "race issue." The first way is to do with *the emphasis on history and context*.

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1. Bel Parnell-Berry and Noémi Michel (eds.), *(De-)Facing the dark face of Europe; the on-going struggle against blackface and anti-Black racist imagery*, *Darkmatter*, issue 15 (2020), available at: <https://darkmatter-hub.pubpub.org/issue-15>.

2. See <https://quotesofresistance.wordpress.com/> and <https://www.instagram.com/raceandimagery/> for more content and context about this social media campaign.



*Figure 1: Digital postcard staging an excerpt of Bel Parnell-Berry's and Noémi Michel's editorial as a Quote of Resistance. Design by Burobraak @ERIF*

As exemplified by this card, ERIF's special issue provides a historical as well as contemporary context for systemic racism in numerous cultural and national conditions. Each article of our special issue inscribes the struggle against blackface and other racist artefacts within a specific context and history. For instance, Vanessa Eileen Thompson situates her study of a recent Black-led campaign against a racist image in a Parisian storefront within the long history of spatial containment in the French Republic, whereas Patricia Shor links Dutch mobilisation against *Zwarte Piet* to a colonial archive of the Dutch desire to contain

Black voices. By being oriented towards detailed historicisation and contextualisation, the special issue offers much needed information to apprehend the 2020 BLM moment as part of a long and complex translocal history of resistance.

A second way our special issue disrupts the danger of racism being reduced to an ineffective trendy discourse, is to do with highlighting the importance of experiential knowledge.

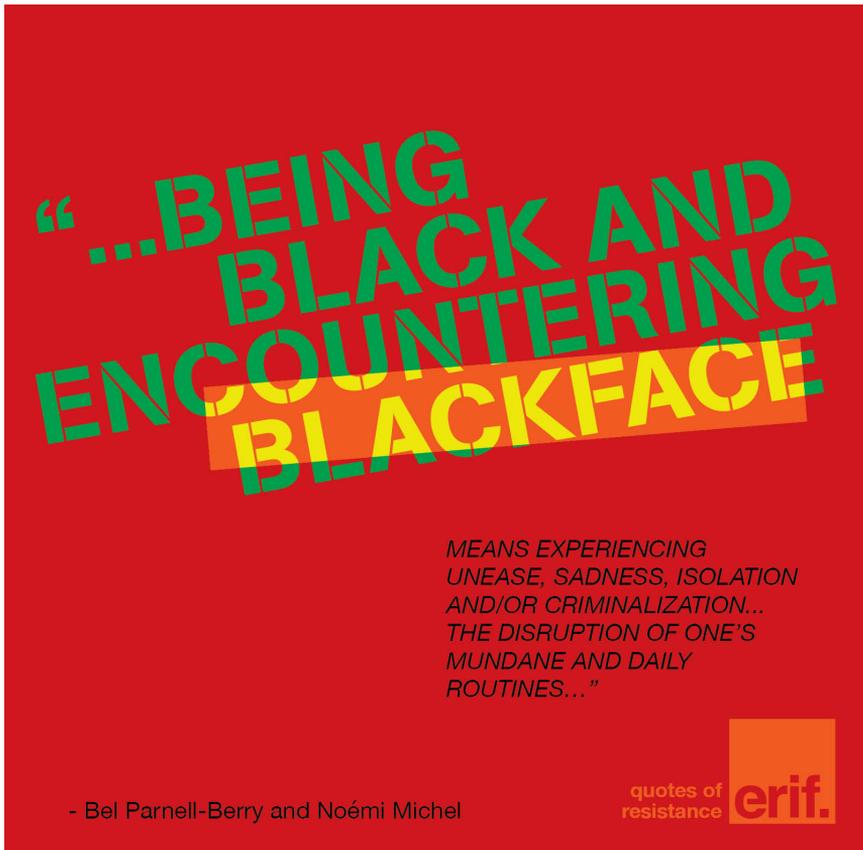


Figure 2: Digital postcard staging an excerpt of Bel Parnell-Berry's and Noémi Michel's editorial as a Quote of Resistance. Design by Burobraak @ERIF

Many pieces of our special issue are written by Black artists, academics and activists, bringing to the fore the costs and specificities of engaging against racist imagery while—at the same time—being targeted by this very imagery. For instance, the filmmaker and thinker Karina Griffith recalls what it means for her camera to film occurrences of blackface during the festival of Cologne. Anchored in the Black feminist tradition of *accounting for, connecting and transmitting*, we ourselves open the special issue by vulnerably and reflexively sharing an autobiographical account each, to demonstrate the tangible link between our analysis as scholars and lives as Black women. Let us here recall those accounts.

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**Bel:**

It was November—always a difficult time to be Black in the Netherlands—and I was going to the local post office to mail a package back to the UK, where I am from. The post office is about a five-minute walk from my house, which is very convenient considering all of the international mail we handle as a family. On that day, I walked into the shop and found myself surrounded by *Zwarte Piet* dolls and decorations. I know this image well—growing up the similar *gollywog* was familiar to me and gave the same unsettled feeling at each encounter. There is no way to grow out of, or get used to, this feeling when faced with an image meant to dehumanise oneself.

My face flushed and my hands trembled. My voice quivered slightly as I made the necessary arrangements for the package. On any other day, I would have contained my discomfort and left, or perhaps taken a discreet photo of the offensive display for ERIF's *Sinterklaas Brand and Product* study.<sup>3</sup> However, for some reason, this time, I could not remain polite, docile, happy. If I was uncomfortable then the shop assistant was going to feel that way too. The fear of a potentially violent reaction in response to me

3. Find out more about the latest report from this study here: <https://erifonline.org/2020/06/05/identity-crisis-as-part-of-a-new-beginning/>.

calling out the injustice of this imagery and its message melted away, and I suddenly found myself sternly engaging the shop assistant in why she believed such products were still appropriate, even after so much discussion in the Netherlands regarding their racist heritage.

The confrontation ended with the assistant chasing me out of the shop, yelling that it was discrimination against her for me to call the decorations racist—such a typical and unoriginal response when being reminded of one’s own privilege. Despite me maintaining my composure and not raising my voice at all, she was shaking and red just from the mere suggestion that she might be doing something wrong. She was joined by a colleague and began explaining frantically what *I* had done to *her*. I shouted at them: “You know this is racism!”, before hurrying away, allowing their panicked discussion to fade into the noise of the traffic around me. However uncomfortable and momentarily out of place the assistant might have felt in that moment, it cannot compare to a lifetime of being assumed to be out of place. It cannot compare to the subtle as well as explicit manifestations of afrophobia I’ve had to tolerate in numerous scenarios throughout my life—often politely, calmly, cherrily. But not on that day. Not today. Never again.

### **Noémi:**

It was the end of the year, and I was hanging out at the famous “*course de l’escalade*”—one of the most popular races that take place in Geneva, in Switzerland. At this day-long event, the last race is the funniest. Everyone can take part regardless of age, gender and running ability, and most of the people wear costumes. The usually ascetic, old city of Geneva becomes invaded by a big fancy dress party. Thousands of children, teenagers and adults demonstrate their creative skills and imagination in the art of dressing up. One can see running Christmas trees, comic book characters, giant boats made up of six people... One will also encounter white people dressed up as “Africans,” “Indians,”

"primitives"... At that very moment, one sees one's simple joy to be part of a collective festivity killed. The sudden encounter with blackface reminds one that joy and lightness are always provisory when one does not belong to the white majority.

Once, I was fed up with such killjoy encounters, and I decided that I would talk to the couple in blackface, dressed up as "savage Africans," who were resting after the race not far away from me. But, the white people I attended the race with prevented me from doing so: "It is a festivity, it's for laughing, please let it go!" To this day, I regret that I listened to them and prioritised their comfort over my own unease. If I could go back to that moment, I would say to them and to the couple in blackface: "If expressing my sadness kills your joy, that means that your joy is built upon the suppression of mine. Do you really need to disregard or consume my dehumanisation to have a good time?"

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Revisiting those experiences provided us with an analytical vocabulary, anchored in our lives, in order to write the editorial and frame the special issue. It furthermore gave us the opportunity to repair, through writing, the violent effects on our bodies and souls of the moments recalled. Accounting for, transmitting and connecting our stories was a way to heal, while at the same time, by relieving those past wounds we could propose strategies for talking back, refusing and resisting in everyday situations. Lived experience can risk being extracted for sensationalist and uncaring mediatic treatments, oriented towards the rapid consumption of a white audience. In contrast, our special issue is concerned with providing spaces for the experiential to become both a source of knowledge and of (past and future) repair.

By presenting excerpts of our special issue and social media campaign *Quotes of Resistance*, we hope to have highlighted some strategies and modes of writing and editing that go against the impoverishment of anti-racism within the current wave of attention towards the "race issue" from mainstream media and institutions. Historicising and

contextualising on the one hand, and accounting for, connecting and transmitting experiences on the other constitute anti-racist gestures that require a lot of (very often unpaid) labour. Such labour, in our case, was pursued with hope and passion, as we know that our traditions of resistance will continue to thrive within our own, alternative and subaltern economy of attention.

# MIDCENTURY DANCE RECORDS AND REPRESENTATIONS OF IDENTITY

Dr. Janet Borgerson and  
Professor Jonathan Schroeder

**C**ommunities come into being in the midst of dancing. Bodies move together, respond to and address other bodies: It's a way of getting to know each other, flirt, and embrace. In this sense, the social emerges from relations formed through dancing. Dance halls, and other spaces for dance, become sites of meaningful and productive social relations. What happens on the dance floor, happens in society, including broader social mixing; and social dance as an engine of various forms of integration was not lost on those who have worked to keep dance venues and dance floors segregated.

During the midcentury period—roughly from the 1940s to the 1960s—social dancing underwent a powerful transformation in the United States. Earlier forms like the Waltz, Lindy, and Polka made way for popular Latin dances, including the Mambo and the Rhumba, which were in turn eclipsed by rock and roll dances like the Twist and the Frug in the 1960s. Midcentury dance records from a wide array of record companies and labels reached out to a panoply of listeners, providing dance lessons, as well as lessons in how to dress, date, and discover diverse musical styles, opening spaces for fashion, romance, and cultural understanding. Records also helped open the horizons of dancing, including new ways of engaging friends and family, as well as wider communities in one's home town and in countries around the globe.

Records for dancing oscillate between modernity—dancing the latest steps—and tradition—dancing ancestral steps—as they narrate a history of cultural influences, popular styles, and trends. Thus, midcentury dance records address broad cultural themes, often in surprising ways, and tell a story of American identity. Dance records can also be seen as important material objects of assimilation: American products that nevertheless portray homelands left behind, commemorate national (and ethnic) identities, and preserve memories and aspects of another life.

American history and dance are inextricably intertwined: Christopher Columbus was greeted with dance by indigenous tribes;<sup>1</sup> European immigrants introduced their social dance traditions; and African people captured and held as slaves preserved dance practices from their homelands. Multiple influences and mixtures laid foundations for dance in the so-called New World. As rhythms and steps were adapted and adopted, some dances maintained recognisable elements, while others merged and developed into something new entirely.

Dance records communicate clues about race and ethnicity, as well as proper and improper protocol, creating markers for who the dancers are, where they come from, and why they dance. One genre of dance records focuses on “American” dances, including square dancing and Native American dances. Then, there is “ethnic” dancing, such as belly dancing, the Hula, and the Polka. Belly dance records often feature musicians—some Syrian, some Turkish, for example—who played the burgeoning nightclub circuit that promised “an evening in the exotic orient” with your “ethnic” dinner. Such records were often simply a way to introduce music unfamiliar to most Americans through a veil of exotic dance.

Other dance LPs feature “hot” Latin rhythms. What was “Latin” about them? Why were they “hot”? And, how did United States dancers start dancing “Latin” dances? Such questions tend to lead back to this: Many Latin dance records feature Afro-Cuban rhythms and dances, and their liner notes often include condensed histories of slavery.

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1. Robert Krulwich, “How Columbus Said Hello: He Tried Dancing,” *National Geographic* 4 February 2016, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/how-to-greet-an-alien-true-case-studies>.

Not unrelated to that story's context—and the “primitiveness” and “passion” attributed to Latin dances—Afro-Cuban and Latin drumming and dancing sometimes were presented as a threat to order, on the dance floor and in society at large. Historically, conservative religious groups, government officials, and owners of enslaved people tended to perceive such dances and accompanying instruments as signaling liberatory movement, unwelcome for a number of reasons. The dances and drums were often banned—lending the beat a certain rebellious racialised tone.

Embedded in national and international struggles over narrative control, dances and their album liner note origin stories reveal political positioning. Some narratives approach accuracy; some speculate; and others are based on misunderstandings, deceptions, even calculated lies. To be sure, governments, rulers, and politicians have played roles in strategically disrupting cultural elements—forbidding all speech in a native language, taking away musical instruments, and banning dance—that provide community continuity, worth, and resistance to unwelcome change or devastating erasure. Governing bodies and overseers have also worked to promote so-called folk traditions that work in tandem with their own particular visions of political malleability and expedient group identity. What does it mean to claim affiliation and identities in such a context? Midcentury record album covers express these struggles.

### **Dancing Other People's Steps**

Movements and meanings emerging directly from social dance communities traveled beyond their local origins, sometimes becoming popular dances at the national and even international level. Depending upon the ways in which dances moved out into the wider world, and who was credited—and perhaps more subtly, the racial, ethnic, or class differences between the dancing populations—there was plenty of room for accusations of appropriation, disrespect, and stealing. White dance floors became infamous spaces for appropriation, as “adapted” dance steps from the Spanish countryside or Trinidadian religious rituals found their way to country clubs and middle-class rec rooms. Altered rural dance traditions moved into ballrooms; and

Manhattan's "high society" legendarily high-jacked the Twist. Dance appropriation occurs between traditionally oppressed groups, as well, as the so-called Mardi Gras Indians demonstrate, with long-standing African-American traditions of dressing and dancing as Native Americans during Mardi Gras festival ceremonies and parades. A key issue remains—who is able to benefit from such appropriation, whether financially or reputationally.

Dancing other people's steps creates the space and occasion for a variety of relations: honour, respect, desire, appropriation, subordination, or mimicry—sometimes insulting—among them. All of these relations stem from a recognition of difference between the Other whose steps these are, and a Self who mimics or imitates, enacting a difference in doing steps that are not the Self's own. This cements identities— notions of who one is and who one is not—and even in the closeness of embodying the dance, places the Other at an exotic distance, characterised by the Self, and frozen as such. In this process, the Self becomes something, someone, not possible otherwise. Dancing other people's steps produces a variety of identity formations, often informed by colonialism, made visible on midcentury dance record covers.

What do people mean when they say other people's dances were adapted for the White dance floor? One answer suggests that White dancers wanted other people's steps, but tailored for them. In other words, Black, Latin, or native dances for White dancers. Similar processes occurred again and again over the decades, and rock and roll served up another example, with a debt to rhythm and blues and dance moves linked to Lindy Hop, deeply steeped in African-American traditions.

### **The Limbo**

The transformation of the Limbo from a Trinidadian ritual concerned with death and rebirth to the next in a long line of US dance fads offers lessons in cultural appropriation—how rituals shake off deeper social significance as they gain in popularity and make the shift from a community-based tradition to a mass media phenomenon, tourist

attraction, and dance floor fad. The Limbo story offers reminders of the difficulties in dancing others' steps—what gets lost in the quest to move the way others do, and how dances change in the popularisation process. Thus, the lyrics of what came to be known as the Limbo Song that urge listeners to “Limbo, Limbo, Limbo like me” form a complex and contested demand.

The Limbo, as featured on midcentury dance records, generally stresses “fun,” yet liner notes often include details about slavery, mourning, and death. Along with popular versions of Calypso, the



Limbo from Trinidad, RCA Victor LPB 3013; design by Lee-Myles Assoc., cover photograph of the Julia Edwards Dance Group by Paul Rupp, 1963..

space between Limbo the dance fad and Limbo the cultural ritual is wide. Limbo records that mention links to slavery generally adopt a matter-of-fact tone, arguably minimising the human impact. The offhand way that liner notes present slavery, as a context for dance innovation, as just one detail in the story of Limbo, normalises and trivialises the institution of slavery and the situation of enslaved people. However, given the erasure and marginalisation of enslaved peoples' existence in popular culture—and textbooks—of the time, the mere mention of slavery on Limbo records seems noteworthy.

The flaming limbo bar and handheld bottle torches fire up the atmosphere around the Julia Edwards Dance Group on *Limbo from Trinidad*.<sup>2</sup> Julia Edwards is credited with bringing the Limbo to the world. She apparently also invented the burning limbo bar. Working with carnival costume designer Helen Humphrey to shift the “mournful black and white” attire to something more vibrant—the bold red and black seen here—Edwards and her troupe moved what in recent memory had been a multi-day funerary ritual into realms of mainstream dance and high-energy entertainment. The theatrical costumes impacted visions of Limbo attire worldwide. Chains around the female dancers' necks evoke a history of slavery that contributes explanations of Limbo movement. The rough skin drum head, the outdoor setting, and associations of flame with unsettling rituals, puts this cover scenario into the realm of the primitive.

### The Home of Happy Feet

*The Home of Happy Feet* features an illustrated montage of images linked to the renowned Savoy Ballroom in New York City.<sup>3</sup> A smiley Lindy Hopping couple dominates the image, surrounded by a band's horn section, more dancers, and a line of patrons waiting to get in. In the background, the Savoy's illuminated marquee announces Van Alexander and His Orchestra, who provide the music for the album, “a swinging salute to the great bands and tunes featured in New York's legendary Savoy Ballroom.” The Savoy Ballroom, which was sadly

2. For more information on the Julia Edwards Dance Group see <https://www.aspiringmindstandt.com/julia-edwards>.

3. See <http://www.welcometothsavoy.com/>.



*"The Home of Happy Feet", Capitol Records, ST 1243, 1959.*

demolished in 1958 during a fit of urban renewal, was located on Lenox Avenue between 140th and 141st streets in Harlem. During its heyday, it was *the* place for creative, interrelated Black musical and dance forms.

### Visualising Identity

Bought at a local supermarket, department store, or specialty record shop and brought into the home, midcentury dance records visualised the fashions, environments, and accoutrements of dancing. These vinyl

artifacts reveal untold stories of US identity, and offer a compelling, colourful catalog of the dances, music, and entertainers that inspired postwar America.

Our work at the intersections of consumption, identity, and representation has led us to write about advertising, brands, photography, and the commodification of skin. We've focused on gender and race primarily, in both historical and contemporary contexts. We draw upon critical race theory, feminist theory, and social psychology to develop what we have called an ethics of representation. A recurring theme in our research has been to critically examine record album covers for their representational power and insights into identity, framing vinyl as midcentury media.

In 2017, we published a book, *Designed for Hi-Fi Living: The Vinyl LP in Midcentury America*, that discussed record album design and its contribution to postwar American consumer culture.<sup>4</sup> We argued that album covers are not just decorated cardboard that protected the vinyl disks within; rather, record album covers in the 1950s and 1960s served ideological, pedagogical, and rhetorical purposes. In our forthcoming book, *Designed for Dancing: How Midcentury Records Taught America to Dance*, we reflect on the role of dance records and their covers in the midcentury imagination.<sup>5</sup>

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4. Janet Borgerson & Jonathan Schroeder, *Designed for Hi-Fi Living: The Vinyl LP in Midcentury America* (Cambridge, MA 2017: MIT Press).

5. Janet Borgerson & Jonathan Schroeder, *Designed for Dancing: How Midcentury Records Taught America to Dance* (Cambridge, MA 2021: MIT Press).

# VISUAL INCARCERATION AND THE 'OTHER' PRISONER

*A Poetic Inquiry*

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Dr. Hilary Downey

What hours, O what black hours we have spent  
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!  
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.  
With witness I speak this. But where I say  
Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament  
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent  
To dearest him that lives alas! Away.  
—Gerald Manley Hopkins<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

This poetic inquiry incorporates visual and textual data from YouTube documentaries (produced by National Geographic and Journeyman) to capture African American women's incarceration experiences, where the label prisoner generally remains the preserve of the man felon. The themes of distancing, silencing and masculinisation recount prisoners, citizens and poet researcher's reflections. Gender, race and vulnerability explored here to capture critical moments. Building

1. Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Poems of Gerald Manley Hopkins*, 4th edition (London 1967: Oxford University Press), 101.

on critical poetic experiences,<sup>2</sup> the poetic expressions delivered here marry key voices of poet (researcher) with discreet prose of seer (citizens) and seen (prisoners) which seeks to capture the emotionality evoked by African American woman prisoners' documented lived experiences, in order to elicit richer understandings of vulnerability.

### **African American Women Visual Chains of Incarceration**

#### *Distancing of self*

Your institution regimentalized my body  
Unable to find fit, struggling against  
Structures historically put in place. If I don't  
Conform, I am labelled deviant; when all I seek  
Is a quiet corner to reflect, to mourn, the passing  
Of a former life. Deemed risky, my non-conformist  
Stance, withdrawing not an option when understood  
As agency and empowerment. Powerless words,  
Negatives not positives, in masculinized incarceration space

Distancing of self from confinement norms  
Called out in cornered spaces, 'I don't decorate  
my cell, it is not my home,' cuts crisply the inmate code,  
Moral fibre, which checks and grates each fearful breath.  
Choosing to dwell the eight by five foot cell, remembering  
Living as mother, addict, locked up for murder; preferring  
The isolated self. Emptiness, fear, fragility, a means to  
Cope. Ongoing therapy aggravates anger, anxiety, angst  
When, 'talking to me like I was a piece of shit,' hanging  
Humourlessly in the bedlam that passes for being. Wellness  
Programmes on offer for the conformist; throwing lifelines

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2. Hilary Downey, "Poetic Inquiry, Consumer Vulnerability: Realities of Quadriplegia," *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32, no. 3-4 (2016): 357-364, DOI: 10.1080/0267257X.2015.1103301; Hilary Downey, "Elucidating Ethnographic Expressions: Progressing Ethnographic Poetics of Vulnerability," *European Journal of Marketing* 54, no. 11 (2019): 2651-2674. DOI: 10.1108/EJM-02-2019-0141.

Down, a carrot worth grasping. The chance to change, stakes  
High, even the sanctuary of birth, 'officers rather than family,'  
Tend your side. The need to, 'stay positive...be clean, do the  
Right thing,' aloft the moral cry, 'a good mum doesn't get high'

For lifers, daily struggles overwhelm, relationships bounded,  
Barriered from outside gaze, inability to cope gains further  
Time in the Lock. Leading to distancing, 'unstable, on edge'  
Close friendships frowned on, emotional support slipping  
Problems resolved in isolation, the mythical community

### *Silenced Bodies*

Conform for rewards unknown, willingness to engage  
Achieve parole, gain employment, life delights now  
Silenced, brutalized, drowned in medical discourse  
Not of one's making, yet life changing. Tubal ligation  
Languages sterility, reproductive rights off the menu,  
When housed in surgical whites, delivered exclusively  
To cells, where, 'you do what you are told in prison to  
get out,' the barter system of the penalized, 'society's  
trash' tied-in to obligations couched in opportunity.  
The sunny state, California, where all freedom exists  
and citizens cry, 'it's wrong to Sterilize criminals why  
??? They should be machine gunned.' 'So many dark  
Secrets in the Land of the Free'. Stereotypical responses,  
Run rampant on the World Wide Web, inmate narratives  
Not a normalized discourse, where male narrators  
As curators, serve up desserts for citizen consumption  
HIV, the constant companion for those who, 'ran in the  
streets, did drugs in the street, lived the streets, loved  
the streets,' now silenced, sanctioned in jails bursting  
With 'out of control' narratives, pedalled by the triptych voices  
That serve another helping of harsh incarceration practice

### *The Masculinization of Women*

What does the seer see? Safe behind the screen  
When lives laid bare crowd thoughts and demand

## VISUAL INCARCERATION AND THE 'OTHER' PRISONER

From its citizens, the right to declare, to voice the plight  
Of the prisoner without name. The visual, lifts the lid on  
Life, colouring and staining as it rolls; leaving seeds to grow  
Tangled, twisted, tongued in tight-traits, 'those are females  
they look like men in drag. What man would have relations  
with these beasts?' Cast in the main role, the dominate  
Discourse plays out, clothing the African-American woman  
Prisoner in suits, not of their making, 'They want to act  
like men. The way they talk and walk and have such a violent  
attitude.' Stereotypical voices relentlessly spew and spill  
Poison on the online page, drizzling, dripping old clichés long  
Forgotten, yet evoked for the moment, quelling embedded  
Traits longing to escape. 'There is a much more straight forward  
Solution and its called ELECTRIC CHAIR.' Cast in metal music,  
Tattooed, gang-affiliated; mimic-made male counterparts,  
The hero who can return home, when penal time is spent.  
Not so, the unexpected prisoner, welcome nowhere when  
Gates are pushed aside. Destined to return to an eight by  
Five-foot concrete cell, awash with songs of societal distain.

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## This issue features:

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