Jontel Armstead

California's Water Crisis: Failed Human Right to Water

Environmental crises are increasingly occurring because of the delayed impact of previous environmental degradation. The resulting climate change cannot be reversed, so people have to adapt and innovate for the present while working to decrease their impact on the future. In California's public facing statements regarding the ongoing water crisis, the state claims to uphold a human right to water, however, data on drought conditions shows an uneven distribution of access and need. I argue that the uneven distribution is the result of racial and economic discrimination and is an issue of environmental injustice.

In the first chapter, I describe how California is dealing with its other prominent environmental disasters: wildfires and earthquakes to establish a baseline of care from the state government. Wildfires share a similar cause with drought conditions as they are both worsened by climate change and decreased precipitation. However, the destruction associated with wildfires is much more visibly apparent as it impacts physical structures, so it was the recipient of rapid action from the government for the devotion of resources. I chose earthquakes as the other measure of comparison as it is an ongoing issue for the state, but there has not been ongoing dedication to improving preparation for earthquakes due to the low incidence of large-scale damage and inability to stop tectonic plate movement. The water crisis falls in between these issues as it will inevitably get worse due to climate change and has periods of waxing and waning severity.

My second chapter investigates the state's reactions to the water crisis and assess their fulfillment of their role as it pertains to defining and enforcing the human right to water. In this section I look at the sectors for water use: urban, environmental, and agricultural and the subsequent regulations put on each. I also analyze the language used in the Water Code and public facing documents that define the work being done by the government and compare it to data about the water quality and affordability in different regions of California.

Chapter three analyzes the ways race, class, and citizenship impact how people experience the water crisis. I expand on the relationship between income and environmental intensity of lifestyles in terms of consumption. I use Cushing's discussion of the power-weighted decision rule to show the undue influence that wealthy people have in the political sphere and their enhanced ability to protect themselves from the environmental harms that they are involved in. In looking at citizenship, I illustrate impacts on undocumented farm workers and touch on the history of the relationship between California, the federal government, and Indigenous peoples.

To conclude, I discuss theories of justice and how they can map on to the water crisis with

potential policy additions. I also incorporate examples of grassroots activism to highlight the agency of low-income and people of color instead of just portraying them as victims of environmental disaster.

Max Barte
    Willing Principals and Agents: The Diffusion of Agency Theory from the Ivory Tower to Wall Street

In 1976, financial economists Michael Jensen and William Meckling published a journal article that applied the notion of principal-agent relationships to shareholders and executives in the corporation. The paper garnered thousands of citations and kickstarted research in several disciplines. But its ideas soon spread to the world of corporate governance. In the 1980s and 1990s, agency theory prescriptions became policy through the work of activists championing shareholder value. This thesis investigates the diffusion of agency theory and shareholder value from academia to business to develop an understanding of why it diffused so effectively. In doing so, it locates agency theory's role in the development of a new stage of modern American capitalism.

In chapter one, I reconstruct in outline form Jensen and Meckling's argument for agency theory in their seminal 1976 paper. Using this reconstruction, I argue that agency theory presumed the core tenets of shareholder value theory in its use of a new definition of the firm. I subject Jensen's 1980s arguments for shareholder value to the same proof-style logical argument. Shareholder value is primarily based on an efficiency argument for the control of the corporation by shareholders over managers. Agency theory and the efficient markets hypothesis (EMH) gave specificity to shareholder demands.

In chapter two, I describe the state of corporate governance prior to agency and trace the theory's early diffusion through academia and its inroads into business through a number of professional and institutional channels. At both steps in the early history of agency theory's career, I emphasize the key factors that account for the idea's rapid diffusion. At the earliest stages of diffusion through academia, the institutional characteristics of the University of Chicago and its relationship with the University of Rochester were crucial. In the transition out of academia, the lacunae in economic perspectives on corporate governance, the practical nature of agency theory, and the missionary spirit of Michael Jensen were key factors.

Chapter three first explores the hostile takeover movement of the 1980s. It addresses the contention that agency theory had a cultural impact that contributed to the entrenchment of shareholder value ideology. To do so, it develops a cultural historical approach to evaluate the presentation of the takeover movement to the public. I examine news coverage of raider T. Boone Pickens and three films featuring takeovers—*Wall Street* (1987), *Working Girl* (1988), and *Pretty Woman* (1990)—concluding that these representations were deeply ambivalent about their moral status. I argue that Michael Jensen played a rhetorical role in legitimating the takeover movement using the scientific and professional authority of academic economists in American society.

The second part of chapter three recounts the spread of agency theory's corporate governance policy recommendations into America's large corporations. I place corporate raiders in the early phase, and institutional investors in the later phase, as central actors in the push for shareholder value and agency theory prescriptions. The institutionalization of these policies involved both intersecting and conflicting interests between institutional investors, securities analysts, and corporate executives.

Janie Huang Cai
Theoretical Skins: Autotheory as Ontology in The Argonauts, Citizen, *and* I Love Dick

"Theory can do more the closer it gets to the skin," writes Sara Ahmed in *Living a Feminist Life*. For Ahmed and many others, theory is a way of life and a mode of being. Still, the notion of theory as embodied and lived has not always been as widely known or regularly practiced as it is today. Surely, the imperative of the second-wave feminist mantra "the personal is political" as well as Ahmed's amendment "the personal is theoretical" points to as much.

The body of autotheory, then, arrives at a crucial point in the history of both feminism and theory. As a genre of literature that unites autobiography and theory, it attests to precisely Ahmed's credo of the personal as theoretical and the theoretical as personal. Stacey Young first coined the term in 1997 to describe a kind of explicitly political feminist literature, the likes of which include bell hooks' 1984 *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* and Gloria Anzaldúa's 1987 *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. It was not, however, until the publication of Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* in 2015 that the term and genre autotheory gained significant traction. The "genre-bending memoir" propelled autotheory into popular and scholarly discourses alike in the late 2010s, so much so that it has become what Robyn Wiegman begrudgingly calls "autotheory's north star." In the following thesis, I investigate how three contemporary texts oft associated with the genre of autotheory engage with, in different ways and to different extents, an autotheoretical practice and project. My goal is not so much to define autotheory as it is to elucidate a general autotheoretical impulse and method at work in the three books, especially as they consider different narratologies, subject positions and pronouns, and formal devices such as annotation, illustration, and epistolary.

Chapter One explores Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* (2015, Graywolf Press). *The Argonauts*, I argue, defamiliarizes what constitutes capital-T Theory vis-à-vis its familiarization within the personal. Moreover, it does so by way of a narrative of inter-becoming—that is, one of Nelson and her partner Harry Dodge's intertwined and respective becomings as a mother and butch on T, respectively. Crucial to this inter-becoming is a debate on language, whether words are good enough (Nelson) or not (Dodge). It is precisely in the sense that theoretical discourse shapes both their conversations and lives that we see this (de)familiarization of Theory, a reconfiguration of Theory as autotheory.

Chapter Two examines Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014, Graywolf Press). Following artist Nick Cave and historian Robin D. G. Kelley, Rankine proposes "the form of a jump" as the only way out of systemic racism. This chapter takes up this notion as a means by which we as readers might approach the intermedial and intertextual work of prose poetry. This jump, then, takes a tripartite form: one, we must jump from paragraph to blank space to image; two, from referred text to referring text; and three, between various and purposefully ambiguous instances of the second-person address "you," that which may be either racialized or racist. All three jumps require us to relate multiply and differently to the text or other at hand. Such a readerly activity is one of the many calls to action that *Citizen* proposes in the face of systemic racism.

Chapter Three studies Chris Kraus' *I Love Dick* (1997, Semiotext(e)). At worst, a common reading of the autobiographical or autofictional novel regards it as a love story or memoir. At best, a common reading sees it as a love story or memoir that incorporates Theory into its plot, may even view it as autotheoretical insofar that its protagonist Chris Kraus is married to French theorist Sylvère Lotringer and besotted with cultural critic Dick ___. In this chapter, I trace a narrative of how Chris comes to be an autotheorist in her own right vis-à-vis the book's development of a third-person

narrator into Chris' first-person one. It is, then, precisely her uptake of the "I" that generates and proliferates autotheoretical thinking and writing.

Caroline "Caro" Campos
Race, Place, Debility: The Politics of U.S. Citizenship and Nation-Building in The Irwin County Detention Center

Pauline Binam moved to the United States from Cameroon in 1992 when she was two years old. In 2017, then a mother in her early thirties, was detained and sent to the rural Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Georgia, about 200 miles south of Atlanta. Within one year of being in the detention center, Binam went to see Dr. Mahendra Amin, a local gynecologist contracted to the ICDC by ICE. After examination, she signed a consent form for cyst removal surgery without any details about the procedure. Upon waking up from surgery, Binam was notified Amin had removed her fallopian tubes without her consent, leaving her unable to naturally conceive children. She is one of 57 women in the ICDC who allege medical abuse and forced sterilization while detained between 2018-2020. On September 16th, 2020, a coalition of legal and human rights groups released a report detailing the abuse. This thesis offers a critical race, disability, and legal analysis of the atrocities within the ICDC toward a more nuanced understanding of US citizenship and nation-building politics. What does the case of the atrocities within the Irwin County Detention Center reveal about U.S. citizenship? What can it tell us about the attendant processes of racialized nation-building?

In Chapter One, I examine the initial response to the whistleblower testimony and allegations from within the ICDC. I employ critical race and legal theorist Denise Ferreira da Silva to suggest an understanding of the women's capacity to consent to procedures within the ICDC as illegible. I conclude by analyzing how the women resist these conditions through their own theorizing and mobilization of the center itself as a site of politics.

In Chapter Two, I begin with the local history of Irwin County, Georgia to trace a genealogy of white nation-building projects. In particular, I show how in moments of national crisis, the state intervenes and returns to white nation-building projects, therefore creating a cycle of crisis production and crisis response rooted in white supremacy and racial capitalism. I discuss the period of the early 20th century, FDR's New Deal projects in Irwin County, and Ronald Reagan's creation of the migrant crisis and rural detention apparatus to expose the ideological and material grounds upon which the contemporary migrant detention center arises.

My focus in the third and final chapter is how the atrocities in the ICDC, as a practice of debilitation, constitute a form of racial naturalization that reinforces the nation and exposes US citizenship as a racialized/racializing technology. I borrow from critical legal, race, and disability studies and mobilize Jasbir Puar's conception of the right to maim, rather than the right to kill, to suggest that what occurred within the ICDC, the legal aftermath, and the migrant detention center itself are sites of racial naturalization that incorporate non-citizen women into the American body via their debilitation. Through their debilitation, the women are incorporated into the American national body *via* their illegibility as citizens. I conclude by discussing the possibilities for other forms of the political community as refusing practicality and envisioning otherwise forms of justice.

Alice C. Deters

Cemeteries and Utopia: A Harmonious Pair

Cemeteries are not what they used to be. A far cry from casual spaces in city centers, most cemeteries today exist on the fringes of communities, walls and leafy vegetation obscuring them from the street. The spatial camouflage, and at times outright evacuation, of cemeteries in well-trafficked areas reflects the evolving American deathscape. As advancements in medicine and technology have committed death to the professional sphere, reckoning with mortality has become an infrequent occurrence. Muscle memory for grieving having weakened considerably over the past two-hundred years, Americans are ill-equipped to confront humanity s temporality, much less their own impermanence. The lack of accessible and public spaces where visible mourning is appropriate" constitutes an enormous social problem. Even in an ideal dimension, humans would have to take care of their dead and experience grief. *The best way* of doing so is a question that, at the very least, merits asking in the design profession.

The beginning chapter tells the story of the death-denial thesis. It examines, first, how current deathways have changed from pre-Industrial Revolution and mass-urbanization norms and, second, how this transition has manifested itself in cemetery design over time. This chapter also introduces the psychological and sociological idea of collective memory, which lends itself, in the context of this thesis, to the derivatives "collective suffering" and "collective healing."

The second chapter uses pivotal trends in American history — the City Beautiful Movement, the rise of nationalism, and the medicalization of grief — to frame in-depth case studies of burial sites in Chicago, New York, and New Orleans. The City Beautiful Movement gave rise to parks that would challenge the cemetery's necessity as a public space; the intense nationalism of the turn of the twentieth century has since boiled down to a modern-day preoccupation with the self as well as with privatization and pureness; and, finally, bereavement "disorders" have relegated the process of grief to stigmatization and expulsion from the public realm. Each site-specific case study allows for a more thorough investigation into these trends while also grounding the first chapter's discussion of space and psychology. This chapter identifies the crucial relationship between metropolitan spatial decisions involving cemeteries and widespread social norms surrounding death.

The third and final chapter reveals ways in which planners of actual cities and imagined ones have historically exacerbated the cemetery's lousy reputation. Cemeteries defy categorization and standardization in zoning regulations across the country, clearly afterthoughts and points of contention for reluctant communities. Even more, utopian narratives have declined to comment on the ideal way to incorporate corpses, much less cemeteries, into the good life. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, William Morris 'News From Nowhere*, and H.G. Wells 'A Modern Utopia*, prove to be useful literary studies, with Ebenezer Howard's "Garden City," Frank Lloyd Wright's "Broadacre City," and Le Corbusier's "Radiant City" serving as their spatial counterparts. The thesis concludes with an analysis of utopia as a sociological tool, drawing on the foundational writings of Ruth Levitas and Krishan Kumar to argue that the cemetery's role in utopic visions could determine its place in urban, and other, futures.

Elizabeth Cara Duncan

Kinship Matters: Troubling and Re-Imagining Kin Relations through Asian American Literature

Asian American writers like Ocean Vuong, Chang-rae Lee, and Monique Truong are trying to disrupt our investments in normative kinship. Making public "the private," their works expose the harms integrated into the nuclear family, heteronormative marriage, and the home. But they don't abandon kinship altogether. This thesis turns to Asian American novels to analyze contemporary issues in Asian American kinship. I problematize different domestic relationships that further disempower Asian American subjects while also considering how marginalized subjects negotiate attachments that counter their racial exclusion. Identifying affirming alternatives to normative kinship within these novels, I argue that kinship is a site for remaking and reimagining our social and political relations.

I begin by addressing why kinship matters for Asian Americans and draw on Lisa Lowe and Kandice Chuh to advocate for Asian American novels' cultural and theoretical importance. In Chapter One, I employ Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* to discuss what constitutes kinship. The neoliberal nation-state forces marginalized subjects like Little Dog, his mother Hong, and his grandmother Lan to depend on each other for survival. I argue that biological ties do not bind Little Dog and his kin so much as precarity, trauma, death, and grief do. Using Elizabeth Freeman's notions of corporeal dependency and renewal, I recover these non-normative groundings for kinship and the vital acts of bodily care practiced in his relationships.

Chapter Two focuses on the failures of Henry and Lelia's interracial union in Lee's *Native Speaker*. Building on Grace Cho's arguments about the yanggongju and the repressed traumas of the Korean War, I show how Asian-white heterosexual marriages produce an illusion of interracial harmony that perpetuates historical forgettings. As he retreats into their romance, Henry becomes further removed from community and "forgets" them, too. Instead of locating progress in Asian-white interracial marriages, I suggest that its multicultural ideal forecloses the possibility of multiracial coalition—to the nation's benefit and at the expense of immigrants of color.

In Chapter Three, I look to Truong's *The Book of Salt* for possibilities of belonging that lie beyond the imperial nation-state and home. A queer exile and domestic servant, Binh is alienated from and within the domestic. I suggest that much like the metropole, the modern white home rests on this alienation—on the exploitation and exclusion of racial others like Binh. His desires ultimately take him to the margins of space and time, where I see Binh forming transgressive, diasporic connections that affirm his presence and gesture towards a network of queer, anti-colonial kin relations.

I conclude my thesis by offering a vision of political community based on the three novels' lessons in kinship before briefly reflecting on why these networks of care matter in our present moment.

Emma Ellsworth

Give Me Liberty at My Death: The Right to Die in Supreme Court Jurisprudence

No matter which god one prays to, death remains a mystery. Advances in medical technology have transformed the end-of-life landscape, meaning more Americans are experiencing the ailments of chronic and degenerative illness than ever before. While some applaud these advances, others have recognized that physicians have assumed an overly paternalistic role in medical decision-making and are keeping patients alive past the natural point. The Hippocratic Oath's promise of physicians to "do no harm" is more often a compulsion to make individuals live, even when they do not want to. Choices

about life and death are intimate and profound, and an individual ought to have the right to decide whether they will continue to live. However, in its right-to-die cases, the Supreme Court has prevented terminally ill patients from making the choice to die with dignity. In this thesis, I argue that the right of competent and consenting individuals to choose how and when to die is fundamental and deserves heightened constitutional protection.

Chapter One begins with a definition of death with dignity, or physician-assisted death (PAD), which is a strictly regulated process that allows certain terminally ill individuals to end their lives prematurely. I differentiate physician-assisted death from other end-of-life procedures, such as euthanasia or withdrawing treatment, which differ legally from physician-assisted death. I then summarize the history of assisted suicide in the United States, as the Supreme Court often turns to American history when determining if certain unenumerated rights are fundamental.

Chapter Two offers readers a thorough summary of the constitutional concepts and case law that the Court references in their right-to-die cases. I discuss popular constitutional interpretations on the Court, such as originalism and living constitutionalism, because they can help explain why the Justices made the decisions they did in the right-to-die cases. I also explore the history of concepts like substantive due process, personal autonomy, and strict scrutiny to demonstrate the evolution of these concepts and to help readers better understand the Court's arguments in Chapter Three.

In Chapter Three, I summarize the Court's decisions in its four right-to-die cases, *Cruzan, Glucksberg, Quill,* and *Gonzales.* The Court has not found a fundamental right to die under due process or equal protection, but they were relying on the statistics of 1997 and attitudes toward physician-assisted death at the founding. Much has changed since then, and it is time the Court reexamine the right to die in the 21st century.

Chapter Four examines the social, ethical, and statistical debates and data about PAD in the United States to refute some of the Supreme Court's key arguments against the right to die. I include more recent studies of PAD that show that there has been no evidence of widespread abuse in the two decades states have allowed the practice. Against this backdrop, the Court's arguments about potential abuse and medical ethics become less compelling.

My final chapter argues that the right to die should be a fundamental right under the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause and receive federal protection. The Court's reasoning is outdated, and its history and "slippery slope" arguments are not enough to withhold such a profound and personal right from competent Americans. Informed and consenting patients ought to be allowed to choose whether to live or die.

Sophia Gibson

What Does It Mean to Be an Episcopal School? Case Studies of National Cathedral School, St. Albans School, St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School, and Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys

Episcopal schooling has been a mode of education in the United States since before the nation's founding. More than one thousand Episcopal schools are in operation currently, yet only twenty-five percent of their students identify as Episcopal. This thesis probes the central tension between educating children in a single tradition while preparing them to live in a cooperative, pluralistic world. This thesis seeks to answer the central question: What do the websites of four Episcopal schools tell us about their understandings of the relationship between religious education and participation in pluralistic society as

an Episcopal school? This project focuses on the links between theory, aspiration, and practice, interrogating motives of education, and exploring experiences at National Cathedral School, St. Albans School, St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School, and Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys as presented on their websites.

In Chapter One, I explore the history of Episcopal schooling. I outline a general history that focuses on the legacy of Muhlenberg-type schools and demographic shifts in the twentieth century. This context is important, because respective founding moments and missions determine of each school's understanding of Episcopal identity. I describe the founding of each school to situate them in distinct periods of Episcopal schooling.

In Chapter Two, I use Mary Boys' historically rooted typology of religious education and relevant educational philosophies to explore the four schools' educational goals, primary values, and the role of religion in shaping those goals and values. Mary Boys' Religious Education and Christian Education types offer applicable models to understand each school's broad educational project. National Cathedral School and St. Albans School fit the Religious Education type; St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School and Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys fit the Christian Education type.

In Chapter Three, I locate the four schools in H. Richard Niebuhr's typology of Christ and culture by interrogating who belongs in their community and who has access to their institutions. National Cathedral School and St. Albans School fit the Christ of Culture type. St. Patrick's straddles Christ above Culture and Christ and Culture in paradox. Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys exemplifies Christ Transforming Culture. This chapter illuminates the schools' commitments, or lack thereof, to building inclusive community as a reflection of their Episcopal identity. Distinct positions of religious institutions toward culture display different understandings the interaction of theology with societal systems.

In Chapter Four, Charles Marsh's lived theology approach to religious inquiry offers a methodology to explore theology beyond written documents. Lived theology encapsulates all motivations and actions to realize the Kingdom of God and bring God's love and justice into the human realm. I explore locations of religious education and whether the schools push beyond lived religion as ritualistic practice to live out their theology in systemic change.

Spencer Goldberg

Placing the Individual in Solidarity: Effective Altruism and Social Movements in a Neoliberal World

How can individuals do the most good in the best possible way? That's the question effective altruism seeks to answer. The new and highly influential movement—spearheaded by Philosophers at Oxford— uses evidence and careful reasoning to sort through the dizzying number of problems in the world and offer guidance on how individuals with a surplus of resources should act to address them. The movement highlights the urgent nature of problems like existential risk, large-scale poverty, and factory farming. In this thesis, I use effective altruism as a starting point to explore whether its approach is the right way to guide individual action or whether there is a more responsible way.

Chapter One serves as an overview of effective altruism: its foundations, practice, and critics. After looking at effective altruism's definition and philosophical influences, I argue that effective altruism should be seen as consequentialist in character. Then, by tracing the history of its most

influential constituent organizations, I paint a picture of what effective altruism looks like in practice. Finally, after reviewing some of its most prominent critiques, I argue that Alice Crary's Composite Critique gets at the heart of where effective altruism goes wrong, namely that its moral epistemology precludes it from dealing responsibly in social assessments.

Chapter Two turns to Benjamin McKean's 2020 book *Disorienting Neoliberalism,* in which he explores a different framework for theorizing about large-scale diffuse problems. McKean looks at global injustice through the lenses of neoliberalism and supply chains and argues that individuals should become involved in solidaristic social movements that aim to rectify the injustices of the neoliberal economy. I argue that McKean offers a compelling alternative to effective altruism both in its moral epistemology and its solidarity framework. However, McKean provides insufficient insight into how to sort between social movements, which is a demand that effective altruism answers.

Chapter Three attempts to build on McKean's work by offering an account of how individuals—especially those who are detached from personal connections and have a surplus of resources—can sort through the messiness of social movements. After reviewing the academic literature on the political and cultural outcomes of social movements, I argue that social movements should engage in contextual solutions and abandon outcome maximization. I suggest that these insights can offer practical guidance for individuals looking to responsibly decide *which* social movements to contribute to and *how* to contribute to them.

Finally, I discuss Jodi Dean's *Crowds and Party* to engage with a potential preliminary criticism of this thesis: what if the individual isn't the correct starting point for moral theorizing? I argue that the individual can't be removed from even the most robust form of collective politics, and that Dean's argument makes more sense in the long-term future than in the short term.

Pinay Jones

When Chains and Whips Excite: De-Pathologizing BDSM Pleasures in Black Feminism

Black women and femmes face forms of sexual policing which are simultaneously gender and race motivated; our bodies and sexualities, often associated with pathology and excess, are particularly policed when engaged in "perverse," pathologized sexual practices such as BDSM. Hence, guiding and motivating this thesis are two interrelated questions: *(1) How and why did BDSM come to be associated with pathology in general and for Black women in particular; and (2) how have some Black feminist and queer theorists and Black women/femme BDSM practitioners aided in BDSM's de-pathologization, making room for the rearticulation of its practice in relation to Black feminism as a political project?*

To begin answering these questions, I use Chapter One of this thesis to interweave an analysis of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* film franchise into an investigation of early scholarship on sexual perversions to demonstrate how this scholarship, which engages BDSM-related desires and practices as psychopathological, continues to find manifestation in contemporary media and discourse. Toward the end of this chapter, I engage in the process of "race-ing" these films in order to transition into an understanding of how the centrality of whiteness in the franchise necessitates the erasure of Black people in general and instantiates the problematic presumption that Black people do not, or cannot, *do* BDSM as white elites can.

Chapter Two, then, dives into vanguard Black feminist theory to understand and revere the critical aims and uses of foundational Black feminist theories and grammars pertaining to Black female sexuality. However, I highlight how, ultimately, some within this era of Black feminism utilize and

extend the early sexologist scholarship outlined in Chapter One to pathologize the practice of "deviant" sexual behaviors including BDSM; here, I underscore how these thinkers also specifically engage a "Black feminist respectability politics" which centers injury – and recovery from injury – in order to uncouple BDSM practice (and other "harmful" sexual practices) from the spirit and aims of Black feminism.

From there, Chapter Three operates as a direct challenge to some of the claims laid out by vanguard Black feminists in Chapter Two regarding BDSM, drawing on contemporary Black feminist and queer theory, in addition to the testimonies of two actual Black femme – and feminist – BDSMers (Mistress Velvet and Sara Elise), to demonstrate how BDSM can be practiced in tandem with a (queer) Black feminist politics and vision. To do this, I introduce here a "queer Black feminist politics of perversion" which operates in contradistinction to a "Black feminist respectability politics" by studying, in terms of their potential, perverse practices (such as BDSM) among those who exist on the margins of society and Black (feminist) archives – namely queer Black femmes.

In Chapter Four, I explore more broadly the points of coalescence and collision between race and BDSM, endeavoring to reveal how race (read: Blackness) and BDSM inform, exploit, and destabilize one another in meaningful ways; in some instances, this will serve as a space to critically examine BDSM subculture by reading it from a racial lens. The conclusion, then, functions as a space wherein I consider how the preceding chapters allow for nuanced meditations on the relationship between BDSM and notions of Black pleasure, subjectivity/self-making, and Black feminist futurity and liberation.

Taken together, I argue across the breadth of this paper that the practice of BDSM is not antithetical, or pathological, to a (queer) Black feminist agenda. Rather, BDSM is a useful, unique site that allows us to witness the synchronicity of Black women and femmes' pain and pleasure in addition to the attempts of these marginalized, "deviant" subjects to exercise power, assert agency, and imagine futures within the limits of their social circumstances.

Revati Joshi

A New "Jane Crow": How the Foster System Polices and Punishes Black Families

As of September 2020, over 400,000 children in the U.S. live in a state-appointed household that is not their parents', i.e., foster care. This figure does not account for the children whose parents are investigated, temporarily separated, and eventually reunited through a traumatic process. Black parents are systematically targeted for investigations of alleged child maltreatment and Black children are disproportionately represented in the foster system. The system bears a striking and frightening resemblance to the criminal legal system. This paper investigates how the system evolved, the current state of it, and the reflections and reforms suggested by parents involved in it.

I begin with a brief overview of the development of New York City's foster care system. Starting with the latter half of the 19th century when the Orphan Trains were formed, to the reform efforts of the 90s and early 21st century, I attempt to answer the basic question: *How did we get here?* I critically analyze the shift from exclusion from state social support to surveillance by way of "welfare" and the creation of a new system: family policing.

In Chapter Two, I go through the life of a present-day child welfare case. I begin with the point of entry into the system: the visit from Child Protective Services. Starting with the "knock" on the door, the "arrest" of the child, and subsequent entry of both parent and child into the system, I paint a picture of how the current system functions. I dissect what *child maltreatment* exactly is, how it holds poor

parents guilty until proven innocent, and the traumatic impact on parents and children. I demonstrate through this chapter that the War on Families through so-called child welfare is waged with *neglect* at its helm, a vague and nebulous term that keeps poor parents trapped in the family policing system simply for being poor.

In my third and final chapter, I delve into the literature on Black women's reproductive rights, mass incarceration, and the impact of the War on Drugs on the foster care/family policing system. I draw heavily on the work of Professor Dorothy Roberts, the leading scholar on reproductive justice and family policing, as well as the scholarship of Michelle Alexander, Patricia Hill Collins, and grassroots activists, leaders, thinkers, abolitionists, and Black feminists. I investigate how the current family policing system resonates with the strategies of surveillance and punishment used during enslavement, Jim Crow, and in the present-day criminal legal system. I break up the chapter into a few themes: labor, kinship, punishment, stereotypes and controlling images, incarceration and the War on Drugs, and trauma.

Finally, I conclude by placing this critique of the foster system in the context of ongoing protest, activism, and organizing around racial justice. I emphasize the importance of public discourse and critique of the foster system in the present moment.

Ara Love Lee

(Y)our Body as Resistance: Contemporary Visual Art in the Fourth and Fifth Republics of Korea

In this thesis, I seek to identify how artists operating under the authoritarian Fourth and Fifth Republics of Korea established agency through their depictions of the body. While Pak Chŏng-hǔi's regime co-opted tradition as a form of economic developmentalism that perpetuated hypermasculine colonialist regimes, I argue that these artists imbued the body with a revolutionary ethos, transforming the figure into a potential site for radical resistance. Through their depictions of the everyday and appropriation of folk iconography, these artists worked antithetically to the state—refiguring tradition and the body as a way to ground the subversive power of art in the individual rather than in nationhood.

In Chapter One, I discuss Lee Kun-yŏng's performance art, which he described as 'events,' under the *Yushin* restoration. Lee's events used the body not as a physical entity but as a dematerialized, corporeal process by which the body could be understood as an epistemic tool. In doing so, Lee produced the sense of body despite its absence, using processes that informed the artistic creation of the corporeal while also leaving its traces behind. By working under this dialectic, Lee presented the body as a site of pedagogical processes that resisted state authoritarianism by virtue of its existence.

Chapter Two explores Hong Sŏng-dam's woodcut series depicting the Kwangju Democratic Uprising. As a participant in the Uprising, Hong sought to create works that encouraged an open discourse about an otherwise undocumented and misrepresented event. For Hong, the body was a political agent capable of resistance through the performativity of memory. By re-living and re-presenting his experiences through woodcut prints, Hong affectively depicted a discursive framework of the grim repercussions of trauma alongside the visceral moments of celebration. I identify how Hong depicted the body as retroactively invigorated by the victories of activism and democratic struggles of the Uprising's participants.

In Chapter Three, I use the works of No Won-hǔi and Yun Sŏk-nam in order to describe the exclusion of women's issues from the *minjung* movement. Although minjung was premised on

providing subjectivity to the most oppressed, minjung practitioners often silenced working class women, arguably the most marginalized individuals at this time. Minjung practitioners thus prioritized labor struggles over all else, believing that discussions of gender derailed the path towards class liberation. Through these two artists, I analyze how women, despite working under these discriminatory and oppressive conditions, established agency and made space for themselves by destabilizing conceptions of reality as presented by the patriarchal state and fellow male minjung artists.

   The final chapter analyzes the works of O Yun and the minjung art collective *Turŏng i*n order to discuss how the two appropriated folk iconography. In doing so, both O and Turŏng used the body not to convey a nationalist traditionalism but rather to counter the non-figurative, institutionalized art that was otherwise popular during this time, re-instilling narratives into art and establishing subjecthood in the common people.

Joelle Miller

   Anti-Speciesism is Liberation: Objectification of the Non-Human and Veganism's Intersections with Issues of Gender, Anti-Blackness, and Abolition

The oversimplification of veganism as merely an elitist diet misconstrues the ethical liberatory principles at veganism's core. Many people already believe that compassion and justice are their guiding values, yet they fall short of extending compassion and justice to non-human animals. Rather than being a mere diet, veganism is an ethical decision and a liberation movement that shines a light on the fact that the belief that humans possess authority to determine whose life matters over others is at the root of all forms of oppression. As such, liberation movements—including feminism, anti-racism, and abolition—require reconsidering our relationship to non-human animals and our apathy towards their continual abuse and systemic oppression. This apathy to mass suffering reflects a tolerance of violence and subjugation in our sociopolitical world that is apparent in not only the plight of non-human animals, but oppressed humans as well. The task of this thesis is exploring these intersections between veganism and the anti-speciesist framework that grounds it, and other social justice causes, as an introduction to veganism as a liberation movement.

   In my first chapter, I explore the process of objectification that forms the basis of many forms of oppression, including that of non-human animals. To do so, I utilize Fred Moten's analysis of the subject versus object distinction from "Resistance of the Object," but extend it to include non-human animals in the discussion. Furthermore, I lay an important foundation for the rest of the thesis that because non-human animals are understood to be objects, non-humanness is a tool of oppression and objectification of all. I also emphasize that the very concept of 'the human' is a political category that has been deprived from groups we now consider human, and the dangers of viewing only those who fall under the label "human" as deserving of self-determination and full freedom.

   Following this, in my second chapter I analyze the relationship between the anti-speciesism and feminism movements. Utilizing Carol Adams's work as an early pinnacle feminist-vegan scholar as well as others exploring the relationship between traditional conceptions of masculinity and animal consumption, I outline and argue that much of our perception of eating animals is based in patriarchal thinking and ideals of behavior. I highlight the ways that our treatment of animals reinforces patriarchal ideas and mirrors the treatment of women.

   In the third chapter, I move on to discuss how our notions of animality and the "animal" as opposed to the "human" are often drenched in anti-Blackness. I outline the relationship between

speciesism and violence against Black people, and how Blackness and animality were both constructed in opposition to the white human. I begin by outlining how speciesism and anti-Blackness are often rooted in a hyper-focus on the oppressed victim's supposed lack of rationality. Then, building on ideas from the first chapter, I discuss the benefit of speciesism for anti-Blackness in the period of African/African American enslavement and beyond.

Finally, in Chapter Four, I touch briefly on anti-carceral veganism as a natural continuation of the values of anti-speciesism against control and dominance over another living being. Using Justin Marceau's *Beyond Cages* and highlighting the harm of captivity and incarceration for both non-human and human animals, I argue that abolition requires standing against the forced caging of anyone, regardless of species.

Denzel Mitchell

Running While Black: What the History of African American Distance Running Can Teach Us About Racism

There are many exceptional African American sprinters and Black distance runners from East African countries, but Black people born in America are underrepresented in distance running. This thesis aims to explain why this is the case and show how this phenomenon is connected to larger problems with racism in the United States.

Chapter One begins by defining African American and distance running as they will be used in the thesis. I then explain how African Americans are underrepresented in distance running. From there, I discuss the success of East Africans in distance running and African Americans in sprinting, along with the reasons for this success. In doing this, I delegitimize pseudoscientific theories about people of certain racial and ethnic backgrounds being predisposed for success in specific sports and explain how success in running has to do with a mix of cultural and socioeconomic factors.

Chapter Two recounts the history of African American distance runners from the late-19th century to the mid-1970s. I begin by recounting the history of distance running from early humans to the Victorian era when organized running competition was deliberately limited to wealthy white males. As was the case with other sports, this did not stop African Americans from competing. In addition to chronicling African Americans' success in and contributions to the sport of distance running, this chapter discusses some of the racism that these runners faced and the consequences of forgetting this history.

Chapter Three evaluates the way in which, since the running boom of the 1970s, the media has perpetuated the idea that distance running is exclusively for Whites. Whether it has been advertisements for the New York City Marathon or advertisements for running apparel for companies such as Nike, the organizations and companies that make up the running industry have seen it as beneficial to deliberately target the White population. This chapter ends by reviewing some of progress made in diversifying running-related media.

In Chapter Four, I connect the dangers of running while black to the larger history of restricting the freedoms of Black Americans. The God-given right to move freely – something required for distance running – is not something to which all Black Americans are privy. Though there has been much progress since the 19th and 20th centuries, some of the laws and practices which paint a Black pedestrian as a danger remain.

Finally, Chapter Five discusses the work that has been done to diversify the sport of distance

running. This includes recent efforts to amplify African American distance running history, efforts to push the running industry to help make the running community more inclusive, and groups that have formed to help runners of color begin to take up the sport in a welcoming setting. Attention is also given to the African American distance runners who have had success in recent years.

Emma Nargi
Beyond Italian Debt: Why did Italy sign onto China's Belt and Road Initiative?

When Italy signed a Memorandum of Understanding with China's Belt and Road Initiative much of the world was left to ask why. Italy, a seemingly wealthy European nation, had just traded some of its international reputation for the chance to partake in what was considered a risky project. So why did Italy sign? This thesis will move beyond Italian debt to answer that question and to analyze what Italy and China gained from Italy's decision to sign.

In Chapter One, I lay out the background of the Belt and Road Initiative starting with Xi's announcement. I analyze the Vision and Actions published by the People's Republic of China and how Chinese geopolitics have influenced the BRI. Next, laying out concerns by Western nations and experts I judge their merit. Some concerns are noteworthy, particularly those concerned about Chinese exportation of surveillance technology, others, like climate change, seem more superficial especially as the West still pollutes heavily. This chapter lays the foundation for the BRI as a whole.

Chapter Two explores the Italian case with a focus on the domestic and situational factors that brought Italy to the decision to sign the MOU for the BRI. These factors started during Italian unification but carried on throughout more recent Italian history including the Fascist period, *partitocrazia*, Euroscepticism, and the rise of the *Movimento 5 Stelle* to power. All of these factors influenced one another to exacerbate governmental and economic issues within Italy that pushed Italy to seek help beyond the West.

The Port of Trieste in Italy provides a perfect case study—Chapter Three—of how China's BRI would interact with a complicated and intricate government initiative. Ultimately the investment fell through, showing that the BRI was looking for projects to dive into and move quickly – quite the opposite of the Italian government. After the case of Trieste, statements from Italian politicians and experts are analyzed to understand what Italy hoped to gain from joining the BRI. Examining the data, particularly of imports v. exports, FDI, and a comparison of other EU nations that have joined the BRI shows what Italy actually gained.

In Chapter Four, the historical relevance of the Silk Road is again addressed to better understand the heritage diplomacy that China heavily relied on while courting Italy for the project. This shows that the BRI gained legitimacy on the international stage when Italy signed. The Italian case's importance is addressed as an example of the "in between" nations and of the geopolitical strategy surrounding the BRI.

Maya Nir

Institutionalizing Revolution in the Middle East: Transitional Justice in Post-Arab Spring Tunisia

The 2010 and 2011 uprisings in the Middle East were dramatic in their scope and intensity, and inspirational in their rejection of autocratic rule and systemic human rights violations. This thesis focuses on the process of national reckoning and restructuring that immediately followed the Arab Spring. It considers what can be learned from Tunisia's unique approach to transitional justice, the effort to address systemic and large-scale human rights abuses through political reforms and judicial redress, and how those efforts were shaped by Tunisia's colonial history, civil society and legal landscape.

Chapter One introduces the historical context of the Tunisian legal system, which was shaped under the French Protectorate from 1881 to 1956. Pre-existing legal pluralism in Tunisia was exacerbated under colonial rule, and this chapter explains how Tunisian citizens utilized overlapping jurisdictions and incongruous legal imaginaries to seek their own forms of justice. This chapter also explicates the pervasive ways in which France established judicial superiority in Tunisia, penetrating the Tunisian legal system with Western ideals and practices. From here, my thesis progresses chronologically.

In Chapter Two, I explain Tunisian governance and judicial landscape from liberation in 1956 to the early aftermath of the Arab Spring in 2011. The first half of this Chapter chronicles Tunisia's post-Protectorate, autocratic leaders: Habib Bourguiba (r. 1956-1987) and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (r. 1957-2011). One shared feature of both regimes was the prevalence of French influence in their governance. The second half of the chapter explains how the Arab Spring started in Tunisia, the subsequent ouster of Ben Ali, and Tunisia's primary attempts at transitional justice. In focusing on just the immediate aftermath of the Arab Spring, this chapter examines indicators of the priorities of the subsequent institutionalized transitional justice project.

Chapter Three tells the stories of two triggers of the Arab Spring, and why one, rather than the other, shaped Tunisia's approach to post-revolutionary transitional justice. The first is about Zoulaika Gharbi, a young woman who was detained and tortured in a Tunisian police station in 1996, and her ensuing pursuit of justice through French criminal court. This is contrasted with the story of Mohamed Bouazizi, the well-known Tunisian fruit-vendor-turned-martyr who publicly set himself on fire to protest his repressive government, and who became the universal symbol of the Arab Spring. Gharbi's case was centered around human rights abuses, dominated by French courts and international influence, and removed from the lives of everyday Tunisians. Conversely, Bouazizi's case was anchored on economic strife, and his suffering was showcased on the streets of a Tunisian city. Tunisians were mobilized by the Bouazizi case, but not the Gharbi case. The responses to each case foreshadowed Tunisia's prioritization of socio-economic grievances over all other grievances in their post-revolution transitional justice process.

Ultimately, the fourth and final chapter presents the findings that, because of both colonial legal legacy and drivers of the revolution, the transitional justice process in Tunisia was over-institutionalized. Tunisia's focus on socio-economic grievances, although somewhat successful in facilitating a national reckoning with corruption and inequality, led to blindspots in reforms in other arenas. From these findings, I suggest that revolution cannot be adequately institutionalized through transitional justice, but that transitional justice should be seen as a tool that can address specific needs of post-conflict societies rather than promoting a complete overhaul.

Lauren Prince

"With a Vengeance": An Examination of How Black Women of the U.S. Virgin Islands Weather Disasters

Situated in the northeastern Caribbean, an often-forgotten site of the U.S. empire, the unincorporated island territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) and its predominantly Afro-Caribbean (Black) population is particularly vulnerable to environmental disasters spurred by climate change. In 2017, two category five storms, Hurricanes Irma and Maria, ravaged the islands within two weeks, revealing the disparities in federal government disaster response and the particular ways the USVI operates as an erased spaced within the American imagination.

This thesis is a preliminary examination of the ways ongoing American colonialism impacts disaster response in the context of Hurricanes Irma and Maria and how Black women navigate the lack of care, attention, and resources therein. I seek to center the voices of Black women to highlight the gaps within disaster response and connect these gaps to broader histories of exploitation, invisibility, and erasure of colonized populations on island territories. Thus, the thesis considers how American empire functions vis a vis the USVI, specifically how it creates subjects that are "out of sight, out of mind." In this work, I make Black women's voices visible by highlighting how they themselves make sense of and respond to disasters within a society that has not recognized or cared for them and spur conversations around the disparate impact of hurricanes and the gaps in relief efforts. Ultimately, I argue that the insights of Black women in the USVI, a site of Black ecologies, allow us to historicize vulnerabilities to disasters in new ways while also envisioning the futurity of Black communities in the USVI as outside the logics of colonialism, white supremacy, and sexism.

In addition to archival research, I conducted eight semi-structured interviews with Black women from the USVI over three months. Given the lack of scholarship on Black women's experiences in the USVI, the interviews serve as an essential source of theory.

The first chapter briefly traces the history of the USVI to discuss systems of oppression, notably colonialism, race, and gender, with specific attention to the Danish (1671-1916) and American (1917-present) colonial periods. I also provide a case study of Hurricane Hugo to situate Hurricanes Irma and Maria in broader conversations surrounding disasters and response in the USVI. In the second chapter, I discuss the 2017 hurricanes and delve into the effects of Hurricanes Irma and Maria on USVI communities, focusing on Black women's experiences during and after the storms. The third chapter explores strategies and networks of care present during and following the hurricanes. It posits Black women's ways of knowing (traditional and embodied) as insurgent knowledge, the second aspect of the field of Black Ecologies, which imagines alternative futures organized around the well-being of self and community. In the fourth chapter, I examine the effects of colonialism, racism, and gender inequality on Virgin Islanders' ability to prepare and respond to disasters. I consider the failures in governmental response and explore the concept of erasure as an operative mechanism of necropolitics when it comes to disaster response. I conclude by drawing upon my interlocutors' proposals to yield to nature as a pathway to imagine forms of sovereignty that go beyond the traditional nation-state in the USVI.

Benjamin Trombetta

From Enslavement to Emancipation: The African American Struggle for Education in Charlottesville, Virginia

In 1965, just one hundred years after the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, the city of Charlottesville demolished Vinegar Hill, a thriving Black mecca comprised of vibrant households, churches, and thirty Black-owned businesses. Six years earlier, in 1959, the Charlottesville Twelve – a group of twelve African American children who broke barriers by becoming the first students to attend the previously all-white Venable Elementary School and Lane High School – challenged Governor J. Lindsay Almond's stance on massive resistance and transferred out of their all-Black schools to force the hand of integration. These situations are deeply embedded in the fabric of Charlottesville, a city with roots in enslavement and segregation that is no stranger to halting Black progress, specifically in the realm of education.

Over the course of the introduction, I explain how the United States has consistently failed Black Americans in their fight for equitable public education through an analysis of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, which overturned the prior 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* and determined that separated facilities are inherently unequal, standing in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Rather than leading to immediate desegregation, *Brown* further radicalized southern whites, prompting widespread massive resistance and school closures in cities like Charlottesville. With this background in mind, I turn the clock backwards to focus on various individuals who offer compelling perspectives on African American education during two periods in the 1800s: enslavement (pre-1865) and emancipation (post-1865).

Through a review of Scott Nesbit's "The Education of William Gibbons," chapter one discusses the informal education of William Gibbons, an enslaved laborer who toiled at the University of Virginia and later rose to prominence as a captivating preacher at both the Charlottesville Baptist Church and Washington, D.C. Zion Baptist Church. The first half of the chapter focuses on William's life under enslavement, and the strategies he followed in order to learn to read and gain a social education in hierarchal etiquette. Tracing Gibbons' work, I watch as he becomes a respected member of both the Black and white communities in Charlottesville, a status that propels him towards ministry. "Eloquent, charismatic, and deeply religious," Gibbons inspires countless churchgoers of color through the scripture, but ultimately leaves Charlottesville for D.C. when he refuses to take a political stance during the constitutional debates of 1867.

Chapter Two gleans biographical information from Barbara White's 2005 paper "Anna Gardner: Teacher of Freedmen" and follows the life of Anna Gardner, a Quaker abolitionist from Nantucket who established the first iteration of Charlottesville's Jefferson School. Bringing White's words into conversation with first-hand journal entries from fellow freedmen's teacher Philena Carkin, this chapter explores the immense challenges that African Americans faced in obtaining a formal education, ranging from white defiance to a sheer lack of educational infrastructure, and is followed by a conclusion that assesses Gibbons', Gardner's, and Carkin's contributions to racial uplift in Charlottesville's Black community.

Howe Whitman

A New-English Israel: The American Puritans' Founding Myth

Near the beginning of *Democracy in America,* Alexis de Tocqueville asserts that America's national character was profoundly shaped by the worldview of the New England Puritans. He presents the Puritan project as a first founding, which undergirds (and inevitably diminishes) the 18th-century founding. If this interpretation is true, then it behooves Americans to understand the Puritan political vision. This thesis examines the content of that vision by tracing a grand story, or founding 'myth,' that the Puritans told to themselves about themselves. Cotton Mather, a great Puritan minister, best encapsulated this narrative: a New-English Israel. This self-conception drew inspiration from Old Testament Israel and centered on the idea of a conditional national covenant with God.

Chapter One seeks to understand how the first generation of Puritan settlers viewed their endeavor. I show that leading men such as John Winthrop and John Cotton viewed New England as a new, distinct political entity, notwithstanding the endurance of deep cultural kinship and political deference to England. This was, in fact, a founding. This chapter highlights the themes of conditional covenantal identity, newness amid continuity, the symbolic and practical importance of the wilderness, and the transmission of the community's mores to posterity.

Chapter Two delineates the Puritans' providentialist, apocalyptic conception of history, which collapsed the wall between sacred and profane time. I briefly summarize the concept of millennialism and its history within Christianity before showing how the Puritans used the interpretive tool of typology to wed myth and history, symbols and facts. I demonstrate how the Puritans' brand of providentialism permitted them to analogize their polity to Israel, and their leaders to biblical heroes.

In Chapter Three I trace the increasing dismay of New England's second and third generations at their perceived betrayal of the founding purpose. While examining the passionate jeremiad sermons of this era's great ministers, I underline the conditional nature of the political covenant, the complexity of providential judgement upon a chosen people, the role of individual leaders in communal righteousness (including the prophetic role of the ministers), and the intergenerational nature of the covenant.

Chapter Four endeavors to more precisely pin down the Puritan conception of founding, particularly their stance *vis-à-vis* tradition and innovation. After surveying three general schools of thought about founding—here termed organic, radical, and classical conceptions of founding—I seek to determine which label best fits the Puritans, or at any rate to identify points of kinship between elements of Puritan thought and each of the camps. The Puritan view, I argue, featured a classical view of heroic founding figures and a narrative about falling from the golden age, each of which breaks with both organic and radical theories.

The conclusion briefly broaches the question of whether the Puritan outlook continued to exert influence on America after the founding, and whether Puritan attitudes still endure. I conclude that the Puritan legacy has been abandoned in many ways, but that their ambivalent exceptionalism, their synthesis of hope and despair, still powerfully affects the American psyche.

Keith Yacko

A Class in Conflict: Worker-Party Relations in 20th Century Shanghai

The start of the 20th century was both the beginning of the modern Chinese labor movement and the beginning of the Chinese Communist Party; only two years after the May 4th Movement of 1919, a pivotal moment for organized labor, the Chinese Communist Party was founded. But despite close connection between these two developments, the Communist Party would maintain a tenuous relationship with labor from the very start. The Party made multiple attempts to control labor, before and after the Communist rise to power and the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The Party's efforts to lead labor would, however, repeatedly break down and result in crises in which labor would make demands against the Party's wishes.

In Chapter One, I provide an overview of the Shanghai working class and labor movement as they existed around the turn of the century. I focus on the demographics of the working class, and the forms of organizations that existed before the arrival of the Communist Party. I then follow a number of important events of the early 20th century which contributed to the development of the working-class movement and analyze how the Chinese Communist Party played a role in each case. I argue that the Communist Party, although important in organizing labor, was unable to fully gain control of the labor movement due to preexisting organizations which hindered the development of class consciousness, and due to a difference in goals for both workers and the Communists.

In Chapter Two, I discuss the Communists' transition to be the ruling power in China, and how this impacted the ways in which they related to the labor movement. The Communist Party was no longer a political outsider but instead the body directly responsible for resolving problems that the workers might have had. As the Party was the primary political representative of the working class, the role of unions as class representatives was challenged. The Communist Party's new privileged position also meant that it could take steps to directly eliminate union autonomy, which is successfully did over a drawn-out political struggle between union leaders and workers. Chapter Two ends with the growing issues with the Communist Party resulting in a strike wave in 1957, which shocked Party leadership and elicited a conservative reaction to what effectively was a challenge to the Party's management of the economy.

In Chapter Three, I go over the reaction to the 1957 strike-wave, and the Communists' unsuccessful attempts to resolve issues that the workers had with management. I then tie in the accumulating demands and concerns of many Shanghai workers with the explosive role that labor played during the opening phases of the Cultural Revolution. Labor's willingness to participate in the Revolution was in part due to a deep insecurity with the economic situation of the day. The critical role that workers played in the power seizure during the January Storm, and the following efforts by the Party to move away from the proposed commune style of government, show a significant tension in between the two groups. The establishment of a decentralized commune would challenge the Party's continued rule of China. The members of the working class who supported the commune and who fought for their own economic interests during the Cultural Revolution represent a radical critique of Communist rule, and of the extent to which the Party was committed to revolution.

Juan Zazueta
House of Abolition: Ballroom as Resistance to Policing

This thesis explores Ballroom culture's relationship to policing and incarceration and I make the argument that its members embody a direct antagonism against the police and carceral state. I do not aim to detail an extensive history of Ballroom culture. Rather, my goal is to locate iterations of abolition being practiced and engaged with by Ballroom members. To preface, Ballroom culture is primarily made up of Black and Latinx queer people and its origins are directly credited to Black trans women located in New York City. Through this exploration, I highlight how Ballroom culture is in alignment with the larger goals of queer liberation and abolition and I draw upon various examples and case studies to bring this argument to light.

In Chapter One, various facets of Ballroom culture are explored to establish its relationship to the larger project of abolition. To achieve this, I give a brief history of two major figures in the community and highlight their contributions and commitment to queer liberation. The political education work and radicalization of Miss Major Griffin-Gracy and Stevie Wilson are detailed to demonstrate how abolition is a communal process that has the potential to be shared with the larger Ballroom community. Then, I discuss how the political origins of Ballroom culture have been relegated to the margins in exchange for a more entertaining spectacle to be consumed and I suggests ways that this can be pushed back against. To conclude, I engage with a quote from Angela Davis to argue that trans and queer people are already enacting various modes of liberation through the frameworks of abolition.

Chapter Two considers how the criminal punishment system attempts to dispose and negate the possibility of queer life by presenting a case study that explores the experiences of Layleen Xtravaganza Cubilette-Polanco's incarceration and her unfortunate death in solitary confinement at a facility on Rikers Island. She was a twenty-seven-year-old Afro-Latina trans woman from Yonkers, New York and a prominent member of the legendary House of Xtravaganza, which is one of the oldest active houses in the Ballroom scene, founded by house father Hector Valle in 1982. Through this case, I examine how carceral systems necessitate queer and trans death and argue that the only viable solution to ensure one's safety from these regimes of violence is to abolish prisons. Furthermore, I highlight how Layleen's biological and Ballroom family both organized against the conditions of her death to advance the goals of abolition on their own accord.

In Chapter Three, I utilize interview segments and scenes from video clips to highlight how Ballroom participants theorize their social conditions. I engage with Cathy Cohen's and José Muñoz's articulations of resistance to argue that Ballroom culture is indeed invested in an antagonism against the police state, and I focus on the importance of *intent*. Then, I discuss the Latex Ball and use its framework to advocate for the creation of an Abolition Ball. In the final section, I detail how Ballroom participants engage in the process of theorization through the act of voguing at protest. I also engage with the literary criticisms of Barbara Christian to highlight how there is a lack of attention given to Ballroom participant's iterations of theorization.

To conclude, I meditate on José Muñoz's *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* and explore how Ballroom participants engage in the act of world-making through their performances to enact the possibility of abolition.

William Zeng

Visions of Care in a Posthuman Era: Posthumanism in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go *and* Klara and the Sun

In this thesis, I place contemporary theories of posthumanism in conversation with two novels by Kazuo Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and *Klara and the Sun* (2021). In doing so, I hope to attain a clearer understanding of what is at stake in both posthumanism and the act of reading, more broadly. Both novels, I suggest, point to a touching, communal dimension of care that persists despite their bleak portrayals of an increasingly rational and technologically mediated society.

In Chapter One, I provide an overview of contemporary theories surrounding posthumanism. I begin with Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto*, which raises questions that occupy later theorists of posthumanism. Drawing upon the works of Rosi Braidotti and N. Katherine Hayles, I define posthumanism with reference to a descriptive and a normative dimension. Posthumanism first describes a state of affairs, characterized by technological change and a dissolution of the boundaries between human and non-human. Posthumanism then proposes an affirmative approach to this state of affairs, rather than an approach that rejects new technologies entirely. I explicate two key terms for these theorists, subjectivity and embodiment, to further illustrate what posthumanism demands of us. Finally, I analyze the role of creativity and narrative in posthumanism and touch upon the related field of science fiction.

Chapter Two offers a close reading of *Never Let Me Go.* Instead of focusing immediately on how the novel depicts technological change, I first look to how the characters in the novel deal with the awareness of their coming mortality. In doing so, I uncover a number of consolations to which the characters cling. This notion of consolation, I argue, complicates our understandings of posthumanism by highlighting the imaginative work that goes into affirming the existential conditions brought about by technological change.

In Chapter Three, I perform a close reading of *Klara and the Sun*. I first attempt to answer the question of what, if anything, prevents artificial intelligence from perfectly simulating human behavior. I suggest that human distinctiveness does not reside inside someone; rather, it arises from the encounters between individuals. I then draw upon posthumanism in order to expand upon this notion of encounter, so that it may include the recognition of non-human entities. I focus on two distinct qualities of Klara's narration: the way she perceives the world and the beliefs about the world that she constructs. I argue that reading through these initially jarring qualities constitutes this encounter between human and non-human; it prompts us to question our own understandings of what it means to be human.

Ultimately, in analyzing these two novels, I suggest a conception of literature more closely aligned with the concerns of posthumanism. This conception of literature does not work to confirm the already-existing subject position of the human, but instead evokes encounters between the human and the non-human that unsettle our pre-conceived notions regarding the two categories.