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Self Exposures: The Political Arts of Ethnoracial Identification in Latin America and the Caribbean

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ABSTRACT

The papers for this special issue summon the concept of “exposure,” or the act of revealing something hidden before an audience, to understand the performances that animate ethnicity-based social movements across Latin America and the Caribbean. We introduce the phrase “arts of exposure” in order to articulate how social movements big and small are drawing a new politics out of enacting the representations of racial, ethnic, and class identities that have historically been used as tools of repression. The papers in this special issue explore how people use performance to reveal and transform their ethnoracial selves through the categories of difference that have been applied to them. With examples drawn from diverse scenes and encounters across the region, we track the arts of exposure that people mobilize to assert ethnoracial identity and engage reappraisals of their alterity and subjugation. The articles collected here illustrate the ways people are tactically appropriating and recomposing once-constraining norms, formerly othering processes, and seemingly essentialized identities as they face a multitude of governing agents, oppositional forces, and other audiences. Close ethnographic attention reveals the nuanced ways in which these struggles are experienced, contested, and rethought by people on the ground. As we reflect on the implications of studying arts of exposure as topics of analysis, we also ask how thinking about performance across lines of ethnoracial difference can help us reshape our ethnographic practices and writing.

KEYWORDS

ethnoracial identity;
performance; exposure;
social movements

What does it mean when a Peruvian villager must perform an apparently lost indigeneity to access a development project; when Haitian protesters adopt the figure of the militant that has long been used to marginalize poor, Black citizens; when poor, urban Venezuelans master classical music in order to demonstrate their right to inhabit dominant, Western cultural spaces; when convicted prisoners in Nicaragua use theater to perform a ‘reformed’ self to wash away their delinquent ‘color’; when Brazilian activists of color march through a shopping mall to refigure the relationship between Black fugitivity and elite privilege; when artists, activists, and Indigenous movements seek political change by disrupting our hegemonic understandings of the quotidian

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experiences that shape our affective environments? In exploring these cases, we find a unifying thread in the ways that people use performance to reveal and transform their ethnoracial selves through the manipulation of categories of difference that have been applied to them. With examples drawn from seven scenes of Latin American and Caribbean marginalization, this special issue traces the 'arts of exposure,' or the creative, expressive ways that people perform ethnoracial identities in order to engage reappraisals of their alterity and subjugation.

People may find comfort, power, and community in relating themselves to an essentialized identity. It may offer, for example, a strategic means of accessing resources, a subversion of repressive forces, or a claim to a desired sense of self or belonging. How can this act of ethnoracial self-representation, which sometimes means inhabiting deeply rooted stereotypes, be politically useful or transformative? We call attention to the 'arts of exposure' in which social movements big and small are drawing new politics and new potentials out of their creative enactments of long-standing representations of racial, ethnic, and class identities. In particular, we highlight how people use performance and expressive culture to create spaces of powerful counter-hegemonic mobilization even when constrained within imposed categories of ethnoracial difference. Looking below the surface of dominant readings and hegemonic narratives, we analyze the power of embodied action and gatherings to produce artistic re-imaginings of selves and collectivities.

In the process, we engage a key concern of ethnic studies as it has emerged in the pages of LACES: the dialectic between imposed identifications of ethnonormativity and creative resistance to those structures (Eiss 2016; Gaitán Barrera and Azeez 2018; Postero 2013). Our aim is not to contest a performative or constructivist understanding of racial or ethnic categories, but rather to show how people are appropriating and reworking socially grounded self-representations and the long histories of attempts to silence and subjugate them. How do dominant forms become subaltern tools? We explore how presentations of self that may appear at first glance to be misguided essentialisms are in fact conscious acts of engaging with and repositioning dominant categories – although not without risk or consequence. In other words, this special issue is concerned with identity-making as a response to identity-fixing; not ethnicity as an absolute or static category, but ethnicization and the tensions around its active composition. At the same time, we use our terms of analysis with care, remaining attentive to their power to reproduce the very realities they describe (Brubaker and Cooper 2000).

This compilation of ethnographically informed analyses brings into dialogue the terms *arts* and *exposure* in order to grasp the aesthetic politics of these performances. To begin, we develop the term *arts* in two ways. On the one hand, we see art as the work of creating an aesthetic product collectively; the collaborative agency and creative labor that goes into making performative art. Arts are a form of poiesis, a composition, an act of making something new. Following Deborah Thomas (2002), we see performance as a way 'to view complex and shifting relations of power and inequality, and to delight in the myriad creative ways people make sense of (and change) their lives.' Artistic expression, however, is polyvocal and ambiguous, inviting different interpretations and assigned meanings, allowing space for play and parody (Rahier 2013). This openness allows us to study how, even when certain stereotypical, and potentially disparaging representations are

mobilized by dominant classes or historically powerful social groups, the people to whom they refer may tactically reframe and recode such representations and attribute to them a distinct experiential significance (see Fanon 2008; Grillo Fernandez 1998; Kivland 2020; Ramos 1994; Roseberry 1994; Rosello 1998; Scott 1990).

The second meaning that we read out of *arts* is the sense of an artful, or skilled and strategic, quality in terms of what and how one decides to expose or reveal. The multiple meanings attached to the notion of art have allowed this group of researchers to think about how people mobilize imposed representations of themselves and redeploy them in political activism and for specific political investments. This issue's articles illustrate the ways subordinated communities are tactically appropriating and recomposing once-constraining norms, formerly othering processes, and seemingly essentialized identities. They may do so to confront, challenge, or interface with a range of governing agents, oppositional forces, and other audiences. It is crucial to acknowledge what W.E.B. DuBois called 'second sight' (1994, 2–3), or how people see themselves as being seen by others, and how they may mobilize that in performance. While there have been many studies, mostly from the angles of political science, history, and sociology, that discuss how people who are members of ethnoracially and economically marginalized groups are portrayed in political discourse and in the media (Samet 2019), we want to draw attention here to how these same subjects perceive the dominant gaze of the powerful, in terms of social class or the West.

While art invests its makers in an act of composition, *exposure* would seem to be the opposite: a revelation of that which already exists, something present in need of a simple capture that more directly lends itself to an association with the camera than the canvas. But exposing also requires composition. This tension between the ordinarily apparent and extraordinarily produced proves generative in the performances that fill the pages of this special issue. Exposure, we suggest, captures the common tactic that spans these performances: politicizing and dramatizing the revelation and remaking of selves and collectivities. By focusing on the intersecting tactics of composition and revelation, the articles in this issue summon the concept of exposure as a means of opening a space between the old and the new. We want to highlight politicized acts of symbolic recombination that draw on rooted intersectional discourses of race, class, gender, space, and temporality.

Exposure is also a synonym for vulnerability, or being permeable, open to influence, predisposed to being moved, available to harm, bare. Tactical revelations of aspects of an identity can pose new risks and dangers. This analytical angle reveals exposure as 'a state of total unprotectedness' as in the case of catastrophes such as Chernobyl (Petryna 2013, 216). But we can also read the act of being exposed as an alternative to the 'impermeable Western human subject' who is rational, disembodied, and presumably detached from the world—the alternative Stacey Alaimo has called a 'trans-corporeal subjectivity' (2016, 5). The state of being moved or exposed can be a strength rather than a vulnerability or a weakness (see Hardt 2015, 215).

Moving beyond studying arts of exposure as topics of analysis, we also ask how these concepts can help us reshape our own ethnographic practices and writing. The method and writing of ethnography oblige us to choose which parts of our fieldwork to reveal and which to leave out. These choices are political, laden with the responsibility of accurately representing the lives and ideas of our interlocutors, some of whom belong to the most vulnerable sectors of society. Many of the performances discussed in this issue involve the

act of being moved or seeking to move others, what some scholars have embraced as a form of ethnographic methodology (Favret-Saada 2012; Stainova 2019). As a way to preserve and convey the power of these performances, how can we think of our own scholarship as one that seeks to move the reader? What are the strategies, or arts, behind crafting such scholarly texts?

One important element of this approach to ethnography is the acknowledgement of our own identities as scholars based in North American and Western European institutions writing about performance in Latin America. This self-reflexivity about our own positionality runs through a few of the papers. Weegels trained for theater together with her interlocutors and witnessed the conscious transformation of the self for audiences. Haynes, who enters the ring with her wrestler interlocutors, reflects on her own complicity in being commodified as a gringa. Kivland, on the other hand, reflects on how she was perceived as a 'white foreigner' in Haiti, a positionality that inspired her analysis of how representations of Black militancy are mis-used to further racist agendas. Their work invites us to explore what shared agendas and embodied forms of being together in community coalesce between scholars and people on the ground, as well as how those are mediated by our differences. This discussion itself reflects the dialectic that frames the entire issue: how performances can simultaneously reproduce stereotypes and allow people to choose to inhabit them in new and creative ways, producing ephemeral breaks and openings that could congeal into new forms of politics.

The papers in this issue look beneath the scale of 'revolutions, complete transformations in social order,' in order to attend to the 'ongoing forms of self-making and social change work that are occurring within the realms of everyday life' (Thomas 2011, 234). These processes of individual and collective self-making are frequently expressed through artistic forms. How do we think about subjugated knowledges, which can be embodied and articulated in response to the dominant gaze? How do we create conceptual, academic, and theoretical space for such forms of knowing, being, and doing politics? What vocabularies and forms of writing would best do that?

In what follows, we introduce this special issue by delving into the relationship between art and exposure in expressive performances that are manifesting themselves across Latin America and the Caribbean. First, we proceed with a discussion of self-representation and identity that builds on contemporary theories of performativity in order to highlight the nature of exposure in the context of negotiating ethnoracial differences. In the politics of social movements, conflicts, and communities that function as the constitutive outsiders of late liberalism, exposure is both a form of vulnerability to hostile elements and a tactical revelation. The subsequent section engages contemporary scholarship on identity categories and the governance of difference in Latin America and the Caribbean as its regional leftward trend or so-called 'pink tide' recedes (Gómez-Barris 2017, 2018). We then ground these conversations in the specific material stages and zones of encounter featured in this special issue. Our final section reflects on the significance of ethnography itself as a potential key component to a politics of performativity.

Performance, performativity, and the construction of essentialism

The essays in this collection demonstrate the profound role that art and performance play in the representation and contestation of ethnoracial categorizations of the self. Since

Judith Butler's publication of *Gender Trouble* in 1990, the conversation about identity construction has largely centered on the notion of performativity, or the iterative presentation of the self in social life. Theorizing a model of gender construction derived from speech act theory, Butler (1990, 140) argued that 'the effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.' This model of identity formation challenged long-held 'representationalist' beliefs that posited performances of gender as representing underlying ontologies or essences. In other words, performativity theory shifted the emphasis from *being* to *doing*, while arguing that *doing* can in itself be a way of *being*. Performativity theory has proven immensely fruitful for theorizing the social construction of not only gender and sexuality but all kinds of self-representation, especially race and ethnicity. Yet despite (or perhaps because of) its immense influence, critiques have also abounded – two of which are central to our reopening of the concept to analyze emergent arts of exposure in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Scholars of race and ethnicity have long questioned whether situating social identities as performatively constructed misconstrued them as a choice, something one could choose as freely as one selects clothes for the day from the closet. The concern was that performativity theory, with its focus on discursive citationality, missed how the materiality of the body – its corporeal features, such as skin color, hair texture, or facial features – can restrict the kinds of performances of identity that are possible (Alaimo and Hekman 2008). As Catherine Rotenberg, writing of 'passing' in the United States, has argued, Black subjects 'are encouraged to privilege and thus desire attributes associated with whiteness, but concurrently those same subjects are *forced* to identify as Black (which has gained its specific significance due to white supremacist discourse such as the one-drop rule)' (2003, 442). To be fair, Butler responded to early critiques by contending that the subject and its representation were co-constituted: 'there is no subject who is "free" to stand outside these norms or to negotiate them at a distance.' Still, there remained a need to develop the way in which social hierarchies of race and ethnicity shape the degree of freedom that differently marked people's experience in representing the self. As Kath Weston further argued, this entails grappling with both bodily materiality and also 'historical materialism' – with the 'histories of economic dislocation and racial oppression' that limit who and what one can perform in the world (2002, 72). The essays that follow focus attention on the full historical-political-material context of self-making, bringing to the fore the constraints within which people work to present versions of their ethnoracial selves in public.

While grappling with these constraints, however, we also seek to articulate the range of resources that people mine in order to creatively manipulate ethnoracial categorizations. For this, we take inspiration from 'new materialist' critiques of performativity. Karen Barad, for example, has sought not only to bring the material body into a theory of performativity, but also to broaden the category of the material to include human bodies and the non-human bodies, things, substances, spirits, stories, and environments with and through which bodies act. Here performativity is not understood as 'iterative citationality' (Butler) but rather 'iterative intra-activity' (Barad 2003, 828), with the 'intra' referring to the ongoing interactions of material and discursive phenomena that produce locally determinate worlds. We glean important insights from this work.

One is the need to pay attention to how performance enables forms of signification beyond the verbal. In her more recent work, Butler has shifted the emphasis from speech acts to the political effects of displaying the body and bodies united: 'Silent gatherings, including vigils or funerals, often signify in excess of any particular written or vocalized account of what they are about' (2015, 8). In a similar vein, performance studies scholars have been increasingly concerned with embodiment and the multi-sensorial ways in which people use the body to present who they are and what they are doing. As Diana Taylor writes, 'Artists have used their bodies to challenge regimes of power and social norms, placing the body front and center in artistic practice – no longer the object depicted in paintings, or sculpture, or film, or photography but the living flesh and breath of the act itself' (2016, 1). In following the sounds of classical musicians who travel from Caracas barrios to European concert halls and the sights of Black Brazilian activists in elite shopping malls, the essays here bear witness to the multi-sensorial dimensions of bodily presentation and the ethnoracial solidarities and disruptions that punctuate these presentations.

Another insight we mobilize is the appreciation of forms of agency beyond the human. Scholars working in Latin America and the Caribbean have been attuned to how plants, animals, spirits, and the landscape can figure as agents in the constitution of self, community, and other (de la Cadena 2015; Kohn 2013). Part of the reason these non-human actors have been good to think with is the way they straddle the realist and mythical, the literal and metaphorical, the material and figurative, and complicate any reductive or singular meaning. Tinsley (2018, 9), in her work on Vodou spirituality and Black Atlantic sexuality, argues that the spirits of the New World should not be seen as merely retentions of indigenous or racial pasts, but as an 'epistemology,' or way of knowing, that pries open the terms, symbols, and codes used to differentiate and order people in the world. As we track the role of 'hot' gods in Haitian protest or the place of the mountain in Quechua legal claims, we are concerned with illustrating how, as multivalent figures, non-human agents open up a space for both asserting and complicating what it means to be racialized.

We likewise pay attention to the material agency of space and place in shaping politicized presentations of ethnoracial selves. Several scholars have brought renewed focus to the role of space in defining ethnoracial identities, not only exploring how race is mapped onto particular spaces (e.g., Black and white neighborhoods; indigenous countryside and European city), but also how the spaces people occupy or move through are constitutive of their racialization (Garner 2012; Wirtz 2017). We not only follow bodies as they traverse the urban barrio, the shopping mall, the development fair, and the concert hall, but also trace how these spaces act on bodies to transform them into aspirational citizens or social threats, or both. To be sure, any move toward the post-human must not presume where the human ends and the non-human begins (Bessire and Bond 2014). Indeed, in putting new materialism in conversation with historical materialism – or, more specifically, with critical ethnic studies – we hope to reorient the construction of the self from the point of view of those who have been historically misrecognized as less than human.

Another line of critique in performativity theory that we extend in this issue concerns the relationship between performativity and performance. In speech act theory, the literature from which performativity theory derived, there was both an explicit denial of

performance (performatives are ‘hollow or void if said by an actor on stage’ [Austin 1975, 22]) and an explicit concern with how ritual and spectacular contexts lend performatives their authority (e.g., the wedding ceremony enables the classic performative ‘I do’ to be effective) (Parker and Sedgwick 1995). This juxtaposition also surfaced in original theorizations of performativity. At the same time that Butler articulated her theory of everyday presentations of self, she also chronicled the centrality of spectacular presentations of self to queer politics. The kiss-ins, pride parades, and AIDS die-ins of the American 1990s, she argued, relied on an ‘acting out’ of the queer self in hyperbolic fashion in order to question and dismantle homophobic law (Butler 1993, 233). The irony, then, was that just as identity was being theorized as constructed through performative iteration, the subjects of the theory were using capital-p Performance to expose and highlight the ‘true self’ that had been silenced, stigmatized, and marginalized.

A similar trend is apparent in the arts of exposure occurring across Latin America and the Caribbean, where there has been a political turn toward essentialism among ethnoracially marked populations who use the politics of ‘identity’ to seek political recognition, inclusion, and advancement (Babb 2018; Callirgos 2018; García 2017; Hale 2004; Jackson 2019; Rahier 2019; Thomas 2011). As Deborah Thomas has shown in Jamaica, ‘citizenship’ should be viewed as ‘a set of performances and practices directed at various state and non-state institutions or extraterritorial or extralegal networks’ (2011, 6). In tracing the politics of exposure, we aim to extend the conversation on strategic essentialism (Spivak 1988) – that is, to interpret people’s efforts to ground the collective in ethnoracial essentialisms as a political strategy rather than an acceptance of primordial truth. We seek to focus attention on the question of *how* people are crafting and deploying essentialisms through forms of creative expression that have a way of highlighting the constructed nature of the ‘essence.’ In this way, the essays take up Charles Hale’s suggestion to ‘challenge the very dichotomy between essentialism and “constructivism”’ (1996, 578) by focusing instead on how essentialisms are experienced, interpreted, reworked, and deployed in surprising and unexpected ways – especially through artistic or creative practice and performance. Hale (2004) would later go on to detail the phenomenon of the ‘*indio permitido*’ (‘authorized Indian’) at the center of Guatemalan multiculturalism. Ethnographers have since been preoccupied by questions of how (or even whether) to attempt to enter and exit that narrow space of ‘permission’ in diverse scenes of encounter.

This work entails accepting that essentialisms, especially when artfully rendered, do not presuppose or entail essences, since the meanings of any one representation of the self are multiple, a multiplicity that grows with the complexity of the creative presentation, the various scenes of deployment, and the diverse perspectives of onlookers. In the context of artistic renderings of ethnoracial representations, such as indigeneity, what may at first appear as an essentialization is upon closer analysis ‘an act of revision within prevailing, iconic performances of indigeneity’ (Elia et al. 2016, 22). Laura Graham and H. Glenn Penny, in a volume on indigenous performances, argue that performance can be a means of ‘showing while withholding’ (2014, 12). They demonstrate various cases in which indigenous representatives make strategic choices and determine what is permissible to display as they prepare to reveal select aspects of their lives and their struggles to translocal and globalized audiences. Like a Bakhtinian dialogic utterance, every staging of the indigenous body entails recalling prior meanings in order to

reinforce, revise, or redefine them. Bigenho (2006) has made a similar point about the 1955 staged musical *Bolivian Fantasy*; she argues that the native-inspired art form 'required its participants to temporarily act, dress, dance, and sound like Indians,' but 'the embodied participations defied simplistic ethnic categorization,' using art and humor to challenge dichotomies of rural/urban, traditional/modern, and Indian/mestizo.

In analyzing contemporary arts of exposure ethnographically, the essays here likewise put the focus on the slippages and complexities that result as people perform essentialisms on stage, for international development agents, or in the sports arena. For example, in analyzing (formerly) incarcerated Nicaraguans' theater productions about their changed selves, , or a Bolivian wrestling match that pits the 'white' anthropologist against the 'indigenous' woman, we explore the structural conditions and life circumstances that lead people to perform the self in ways that are constraining but also politically efficacious. In so doing, we foreground the questions that arise for ethnoracially marked and subjugated people as they bring their complicated positionalities to bear in politics: how can people recognize one another and act collectively if we do not perform our ethnoraciality in prescribed ways? How can one perform ethnoracial identities while acknowledging that these very performances are deeply intertwined with legacies of colonialism, racism, and inequality?

Staging ethnoracial difference

How is ethnoracial identity and difference staged in Latin America and the Caribbean? Performance is a tactic for grounding claims to specific forms of difference. Performing, as articulated by the ethnographically informed studies that comprise this special issue, means taking control of that difference. It also means occasionally utilizing difference as an instrument of concealment even when difference categories are elaborately regulated, micro-managed, and infinitesimally structured. Peruvian sociologist Juan Carlos Callirgos suggests that in Latin America, 'it is undeniable that identity has emerged as a rhetoric to channel new and old agendas, and that a new common sense of recognition of and respect for differences has become dominant' (2018, 479–480). One of the consequences of this emerging common sense, Callirgos writes, has been a new 'ethnonormativity,' a conceptual framework for categorizing, administering, authorizing, recognizing, and governing along lines of mainstream expectations for identity differences. The way ethnonormativities are projected and performed has material consequences for the ways rights are recognized and state resources distributed.

Throughout Latin America, states have found power in their purportedly inclusive embrace of democratized multicultural difference by defining what, exactly, constitutes an 'ethnic' subject, and deploying that definition as a means of distributing and withholding the material benefits of that inclusion. These material benefits are diverse, and range from development aid to corporate social responsibility projects, to highly selective promotion in lucrative tourism and gastronomy markets, to the basic welfare guarantees that were once a fundamental function of the state. States are broadly able to administer, confer, and frequently co-opt subaltern ethnoracial differences, as tracked by scholars working throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (Calderon 2015; Dávila 2012; García 2013; García and Lucero 2008; Hale 2004; Martinez Novo 2006; Thomas 2011) and around

the world (Byrd 2011; Comaroff and Comaroff 2009; Povinelli 2011). The ability of states to govern through difference creates specific forms and spaces of legibility through which communities that do not hold state power must articulate themselves in order to advance their agendas when those agendas require something from the state. Attention to protecting ethnic minorities has crossed political lines and cut through distinct political waves as parts of Latin America's shift leftward over the last two decades, and then rightward more recently. In Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil (Anthias 2018; Cepek 2018; de la Cadena 2010; Graeter 2020; Gómez-Barris 2017; Hirsch 2017; Penfield 2019; Salas Carreño 2020), nods to safeguarding indigenous livelihoods are frequently belied by market pressures to extract oil and ore.

Articulations of ethnoracial difference are not merely instances of voicing the disempowered or sympathetic suffering subject, which the state might desire as a criterion of their dispensation of goods, resources, rights, and other forms of 'inclusion.' Nor does a community's strategic availability to structures of cooptation mean that they are subjects of false consciousness, or that they have decided to compromise their group's sovereignty by caving to the state (cf. Simpson 2014). We are also not, in this collection, writing about cynical masterminds, elite subaltern performers who simply work to game the system out of their own self-interest (although we cannot discount the role of self-interest for communities marked by ethnoracial difference more than we might for any other community). We are engaged, instead, in understanding how the task of composing public roles within an externally imposed ethnonormative governance framework can become a means of challenging and resisting power through an art of exposing ethnoracial difference.

Challenging frameworks from within means harnessing certain potentials and coming up against certain limits. Indigenous scholars from throughout the Americas ethnographically corroborate the insight that difference does not mean deficit. They have argued that difference should cease to be narrated only in contexts of painful endurance, basic bare-life survival, and 'all the terrible things that happened to us' (Teves 2018, 13; see also Denning 2010; Golash-Boza 2011; Hoover 2017; Kivland 2020; Radcliffe 2015; Tuck 2009). Extending the insights of this recent work on creative public engagements with subaltern difference and visibility, the articles in this issue bring to life moments of simultaneous exposure and concealment that change political equations and question the state. Stephanie Nohelani Teves (2018) makes clear that indigenous performances can do this in their multiple contexts and iterations, from clearly demarcated and extraordinary spaces like stages, to the intimate scenes of daily life. Bringing Butlerian pragmatics into sites of indigenous defiance in Hawaii, Teves reminds us that 'performance itself does not merely reflect social realities; it also creates them' (13).

The articles in this volume contain scenes from across Latin America and the Caribbean where these processes of reflection and creation play out simultaneously. In each, we see 'showing while withholding' (Graham and Glenn Penny 2014, 12) as a potentiating tactic that relies on specific material affordances for deliberate concealment. The economies of visibility surrounding the stage of a protest or a gathering are vital to the politics of performances of difference. The urban or otherwise population-dense settings of many of our contributions engage an economy of sight and visibility. In the scenes these articles describe, plazas, boulevards, government buildings, neighborhood divisions, the waxed linoleum floor of a shopping center, the plywood boards that make up a temporary stage,

and other material assemblages that comprise the built environment become part of the collection of materials that constitute the dramas that ethnoracially marked communities let unfold before the eyes of state actors, regional elites, and diverse publics. The materiality of staging scenes of exposure, from elevated wooden platforms to streets cleared for a parade to elegant concert halls, take on new life as they ground new genres of play. The costumes and props that accompany these scenes are similarly revived, like the colonial gala attire that has been recast as a form of dress unique to the Andean Cabana community of Huanca in Peru and worn in miniature by Barbie dolls at the Huanca village booth in a development contest. So, too, does a politics of distance between related nodes of performance such as Pétion-ville and Bel Air in Port-au-Prince trace intersectional lines of class, race, and gendered critique.

The art of doing ethnography

How can we think about the processes of conducting fieldwork and writing ethnography as arts of exposure? In this issue, we consider the ethnographic text as a key component of a politics of performativity, one that engages the delicate balance between revelation and concealment. We think of ethnography itself as a force in the world which, much like the subjects and objects of our studies, holds political and social potential. We investigate how ethnography can become a form of performance that seeks creative ways of moving audiences – of generating awe, wonder, fear, and humor – and of posing urgent new questions for an affective anthropology that resists what Max Weber (1958) ominously described as the ‘disenchantment of the world.’

Thinking about ethnography as an art of exposure means acknowledging how it is intersubjectively conjured in the interaction between anthropologist and interlocutors, a collective theorizing and embodied knowledge-production that begins when doing fieldwork and continues into the act of academic writing and publishing. The choices of *which* parts of our ethnographic encounters to reveal and *how* to reveal them from a positionality of comparative privilege become even more delicate questions when we consider the ways fieldwork entails making ourselves, as scholars, vulnerable to another while also becoming the witnesses of another’s vulnerability. Haynes engaged in the vulnerability inherent in the act of performing. By joining the protests, Kivland took part in the collective vulnerability that her interlocutors assumed. We see the revelation of this vulnerability as desirable rather than threatening, making palpable the embodied presence of the researcher in the field. Emphasizing the intersubjective dimensions of ethnography casts light on the dynamism of ethnographic fieldwork and writing, revealing them as open-ended and unpredictable in a way that reflects the fluidity and volatility of the social and political contexts we study, as well as the multiplicity of worldviews and perspectives that populate our fieldsites.

Many of the authors respond to the challenge of studying non-verbal performances by participating in them. Haynes, for example, decided to take part in wrestling in order to access ‘corporeal ways of knowing and the solidarity formed through shared movement.’ If, through fieldwork, we gain access to embodied practices beyond the verbal, then we face the responsibility of choosing how to translate these subjugated knowledges into the dominant language of academic writing, which is governed by its own conventions and regulations and is subject to its own form of gate-keeping. Scholars have responded to this challenge by

experimenting with writing beyond traditional academic conventions (Narayan 2012; Pandian and McLean 2017; Tinsley 2018), seeing the writing style as inseparable from the reality it describes. The authors of the edited volume *Crumpled Paper Boat* represent writing as ‘a generative practice, a tangible presence, part of the stuff of the world it seeks to engage, working with power and potentialities always present in language, always at work in the world’ (Pandian and McLean 2017, 13; see also Chen 2012). Other scholars have chosen mediums outside the traditional form of the academic text, namely ethnographic film (Castaing-Taylor and Paravel 2014; Povinelli 2015; Razsa 2010).

Thinking about ethnography as an art of exposure implies a sensitivity to multiple perspectives, an awareness that affects representation and self-representation. Ethnography has classically been about imagining ourselves in the shoes of another – our interlocutor – and writing in such a way as to allow the reader to imagine herself in the place of people from different cultural, class, and ethnic backgrounds. Building on W.E.B. DuBois’s notion of ‘second sight’ (1994, 2–3) and Frantz Fanon’s famous description of experiencing the horrified white gaze (2008, 92–95), we offer an ethnographic study of how people see themselves as being seen by others. These classic analyses of the constant awareness of multiple perspectives and how this is cultivated resonates with Brazilian philosopher Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s notion of ‘perspectivism,’ or the idea that the point of view ‘creates the subject’ (the essence of existence) (1998, 476). The subject is thus simultaneously constituted by the gaze of the other based on socially constructed categories, while finding ways to creatively inhabit those categories, to craft and express a sense of self that spills beyond them. The Venezuelan musicians in Stainova’s ethnography, for example, do this by voicing a self through collective music practice that simultaneously reproduces and transcends stereotypes about ‘passionate’ Latin Americans. One way of holding multiple, sometimes irreconcilable, worldviews together is through ethnographies that contain and preserve ambiguity.

In portraying ethnographic writing as an art of exposure, we draw attention to how choosing our terms of analysis and representation is a political act (Denning 2010; Millar 2018), because the language we use to describe people reinforces certain ways of seeing them. Choosing the vocabulary of the dominant gaze, or the dominant academic vocabulary, even if it is done in a gesture of critique, may have the effect of reproducing the very realities we oppose. For example, writing about people using the terms of disposability, bare life, or what they lack ‘can lead us to imagine that there are really disposable people, not simply that they are disposable in the eyes of state and market’ (Denning 2010, 80). We heed Brubaker and Cooper’s (2000, 5) warning that a concept like ‘identity’ as ‘a category of practice does not require its use as a category of analysis’ lest this uncritical adoption reproduces reification. Like language, the ethnographic text is performative and has ‘the power to name, to identify, to categorize, to state what is what and who is who’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 15). This casts light on the materiality of the ethnographic text as a social force in the world, one that shapes how people are seen by others.

Seeing ethnography as an art of exposure exposes us – the anthropologists – and our own self-representation and its impact on our interactions in the field and in our writing. Here, we are inspired by the work of Berry et al. (2017), who bring attention to the ways in which the body of the researcher is gendered and racialized during fieldwork, shaping ethnographic encounters. Even as we think about ethnography as a collaborative act, we

remain cognizant of the power dynamics between anthropologists and interlocutors, an inequality that can take place along the lines of racial, class, and gender privilege. In the papers that follow, we reflect on our own positionality as gringo/a/x anthropologists writing on issues of race and ethnicity in Latin America and the Caribbean, an issue explored by Kivland and Haynes. 'We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because "we" are of the world,' Karen Barad reminds us (2003, 829). Tracing the links between the worlds we describe and our own participation in them means recognizing how our presence in the field may reproduce structures of power. Moreover, it implies an awareness of how our writing influences people and bodies, how it shapes and reshapes realities.

In the face of environmental catastrophe and the political crises arising from the decline of left-wing governments in Latin America, as well as the social movements that are forming in their wake, what is the place of art and ethnography? Arjun Appadurai draws our attention to the role of the imagination, and specifically the academic imagination as 'a force in social life' (2000, 6). José Muñoz urges us to 'see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present' (2009, 1), to use performativity to nurture the 'critical imagination' and the impulse to imagine society differently. In a lecture at Dartmouth College, anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli advocated for summoning art and ethnography, but also ethnography as art, in order to intervene in places, 'to use art to terraform a place' (2018). We hope this issue's main contribution will be to create ethnographic spaces for expressing how people imagine themselves and their worlds otherwise, and in the process inspire the critical academic imagination.

Contributions to this collection

The contributions to *Arts of Exposure* examine how seemingly strong constraints on the expression of ethnoracial difference become the starting point in an argument about how best to pursue 'another world' (Escobar 2010; 2018). The first article, from Chelsey Kivland, takes us to Port-au-Prince. There, she analyzes protest repertoires in the context of the anti-government mobilizations that rocked the presidency of Michel Martelly. Through a ritualized protest repertoire, this movement appropriated, extended, and reworked racial ideologies surrounding *pèp la* (the people) in Haiti, and therefore, provides a useful forum for theorizing the race-based nature of popular sovereignty in this and other post-slavery societies. Kivland situates this protest movement within longstanding race/class conflicts about who constitutes 'the people' in Haiti, while also developing the increasingly significant role of the space of the *geto* in the articulation of *pèp la* as heirs to the revolution and nation. In so doing, she also elaborates the potential and consequences of rooting *pèp la* in the guise of the *cho* (hot) militant, which, although an effective tool of empowerment, can reproduce racist tropes that have long been used to further the marginalization of poor Black people in Haiti.

Then, Eric Hirsch, whose ethnography is situated in rural Andean Peru, offers a reading of three different stages in which neoliberal development projects mobilize the figure of the indigenous entrepreneur to discursively enact project success. Each tableau offers readers a development project instantiating its ability to extend national inclusion, expand autonomy and capitalist economic independence, establish practices of environmental and economic sustainability, and celebrate Peruvian multicultural and multiracial

difference. Across these performative platforms, Hirsch suggests, indigenous-identified project participants code distinct messages to state and nongovernmental actors: they are best aided in their development not as independent entrepreneurs but by ongoing mutual obligation, reciprocity, and interdependence.

Yana Stainova builds on the topic of racialized performances by exploring how Venezuelan musicians who face ethnoracial and class discrimination inhabit the dominant category of classical music (frequently associated with European high culture) by making it their own. She traces how musicians perceive themselves as being both seen and heard by their elite global audiences. What musicians describe as their own passionate playing, the author argues, simultaneously reproduces European stereotypes about Latin American musicians while also voicing the musicians' everyday experiences of life in the urban barrios. Collective music practice gives rise to fluid and embodied forms of self-making.

Nell Haynes studies Bolivian *cholas*, indigenous women wrestlers who perform in traditional costumes, simultaneously reproducing stereotypes of indigenous women as backward or violent and offering transformative possibilities for the participants. What is unique about Haynes' approach is her own participation in wrestling, which also hovers at the border between reproducing stereotypes of whiteness and foreignness and allowing for connections and solidarity articulated in shared movement. Thus, Haynes adds nuance to the notion of performance explored in this issue by turning the mirror of this concept towards the anthropologist herself.

Julienne Weegels, working on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua, shows how convicted prisoners participating in a prison theatre initiative draw on particular gendered, classed, and racialized notions of being a 'good man' in their attempts to convince both institutional and public audiences of their 'change of attitude' (an institutional requirement for their release). There, they face gendered, classed, and racialized stigmas, which are intimately related to the prevalent delinquent stigma surrounding the urban *pinta* (literally 'painted one') and the rural *indio* (literally 'indian'). While Nicaraguan society is imagined to be divided more along class than race or ethnic lines, its popular identifications of class remain full of references to color. Drawing on extensive ethnographic research conducted with (former) prisoner-actors at two different prison facilities, Weegels analyzes how these performances of change are entangled with state projections of moral inclusion through 'reeducation.' In doing so, she stresses not only how prisoners engage in an art of exposure, but also how authorities seek to expose the prisoners, and most importantly what these exposures seek to conceal.

Joseph Jay Sosa provides a close reading of an anti-eviction protest in an upscale São Paulo mall, with particular attention to how the protest performatively rearticulated relationships of race and space in the Brazilian capital. Apropos of this special issue on exposure, Sosa calls attention to the ways activists exposed relationships of neocolonial power and structural violence that linked São Paulo and São José dos Campos through racialized bodies, state bureaucracies, and land. He contextualizes the protest within larger political, epistemic, and aesthetic debates on race in Brazil. Finally, Sosa suggests a shared repertoire of performance practices between the 2012 protest and the later *rolezinhos* (group hangs) of poor Black and brown Brazilian youth in elite shopping malls during the 2013 uprisings.

Grant Gutierrez's review essay zooms out for a broader comparative analysis of the complex politics of crystallizing difference through co-labored ethnography and visual arts that disrupt hegemonic understandings of the quotidian experiences that shape our affective environments. Gutierrez takes up the possibilities of affective reorganization by exploring three works: *Beyond the Pink Tide* (2018) by Macarena Gómez-Barris, *Earth Beings* (2015) by Marisol de la Cadena, and *Zama* (2017), a film by director Lucrecia Martel. He traces how exposure to difference can operate as a catalyst for political change by unhinging the senses at the scale of the individual, collective action, and the larger ethnographic imagination. Gómez-Barris offers a critical exploration of theory and praxis in Latin American movements and beyond, while de la Cadena recounts her ethnographic engagement with two *runakuna*, or Quechua people, living amidst mining and earth beings in the Andes. Finally, Martel's film on the dystopic period illuminates the violence of colonial difference-making.

Due to space constraints, a vital contribution will be appearing in the next issue of the journal (LACES V15 N4 2020). That contribution is a commentary by Deborah Thomas that critically engages with the collection as a whole. The piece will be featured in the journal's "Comments and Replies" section.

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