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The Descent of Nature: Constructing the “Other” in Historical Newspapers

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Abstract

Newspapers served as a primary site of mainstream media and public thought in the mid-1800s and represented powerful mechanisms to construct natural realities and political identities. Emancipation led to the previously faceless and voiceless black identity, to now having the opportunity to carve out political identities. However, we propose that during this time following emancipation, that the public narrative was used to reestablish social order. The current study uses content analysis to examine the extent and nature of using natural language in the process of othering in the public narrative from 1865-1870 in newspapers from Pennsylvania and South Carolina. Results revealed substantial support for the use of natural language for the purpose of othering and results also highlighted several significant differences in the ways natural language was used in the North versus the South.

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Introduction

I contend also that they are acting contrary to nature, and that they have violated her laws. If you were to wake up some morning and find the trees standing upon their tops instead of their roots, and the whole order of nature reversed, would you not say these things must be changed? And now I ask you if this is not an analogous state of affairs in the political world, to that I have described in the natural world? Ignorance ruling intelligence; wealth dethroned from its natural position and influence, and poverty triumphant; the white man trodden under foot, and the ignorant negro placed above him. This is an unnatural state of affairs and must pass away.
(Yorkville Enquirer, September 03, 1868)

In order to understand the extent of historical racial domination in the postbellum United States, it is necessary to explore every day modes of oppression. After the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the media was a site of transition in which new modes of oppression and social control were sought. Wasting no time, mainstream media spoke from the public narrative, attempting to validate and legitimize police force, weaponry and draconian criminal justice responses (Gaines, 1996; Hall, Clarke, Critcher, Jefferson & Roberts, 1978; Monkkonen, 2004; Rousey, 1996). The years following emancipation represent the first attempt to modernize racial language; or rather, to neutralize blatantly racial language into mechanical, legalistic language (Alexander, 2010). Hence, this study explores the site of mainstream media as marked by contestations of criminality that come to terms with racial domination.

Newspapers, as the main site of mainstream media and public thought in the mid-1800s, represented powerful mechanisms to construct natural realities and political identities. The United States was distraught by the sudden emergence of political visibility bestowed upon black bodies. Suddenly, emancipation had resulted in the disappearance of the faceless, voiceless slave, and instead, black bodies carved out identities within the political world: "The North has given us the political negro" (Edgefield Advertiser. July, 03, 1866). Newly established visibilities of black individuals resulted in extreme epistemological dissonance for mainstream society.

In effect, natural reality was turned upside-down. Black bodies were no longer visibly seen to be located at a distinctively and naturally inferior position, and rather, had been implicated into the political realm. In effect, black individuals could now be visualized from a similar political perspective as "masters" who previously occupied and controlled the logics of political visibility alone.

Previous to the emancipation, black bodies were faceless entities when visualized through a political lens. However, new developments in modern society created a disappearance of the faceless slave and an appearance of the political individual. Much of the epistemological dissonance of white society came as a result of this movement of existences: "Now, this labor and all this might production of wealth is abolished, for the time being, as absolutely so as if the negro himself was stricken from existence" (Edgefield Advertiser. May, 23, 1866). This is not to mean that black bodies had physically disappeared, but rather that black individuals no longer maintained the same political sub-position they had previously.

This complex visualization of different strains of existence for political bodies was mitigated and processed through the logics of rational and natural discourses in mainstream media. Despite the sudden emergence of political identity and visibility of black bodies, mainstream media used discourse mechanisms to reorient the upside-down feeling of epistemological damage (Wagner, 2001). Natural language, such as animalistic metaphors and biological descriptions, served as discourse tools to reconstruct the broken epistemological and political order. Further, natural language served as implicative objective and commonsense truths that served to neutralize the sudden existences and visible emergence of political black bodies.

Objectivity, as natural language, served as the main mechanism by which mainstream media could utilize newspapers as a site of criminal identity. Newspapers were able to construct the new, political existence of black bodies as a threat of criminality with natural language mechanisms. Hence, objectivity was used as a weapon to blur the lines between new political identity and criminal dispositions.

Rational and objective truths about criminality were main methods by which new racial social control was established and legitimized. In fact, natural language is the sole avenue and foundational point of departure by which political identities could be blurred with criminal dispositions as a method of devaluing and disappearing individuals from political visibility. Newspapers as sites of the relationship between objectivity and constructing criminal identities, lends understanding to that manner by which criminality is a political tool that erases groups from political contention. That is, historical newspapers reveal the close and inextricable relationship between natural language and criminal discourse – where criminal identities are the material vehicle by which othering – a mental classification that separates “us” from “them” –comes to fruition.

Yet, criminological discourse was importantly interwoven with objective language from the start. Lombroso and positivists rendered criminological language as a natural science of individual predisposition (Shichor, 2014; Wolfgang, 1973). Newspapers, although attempting to repair epistemological damages, simply fell in line with the origins of scientific thought from a rationalistic, positivistic perspective. In effect, interpretive understandings of criminality fell to the wayside, and in turn, failed to challenge assumptions that black bodies were “more than what this science said they were” (Said, 1985, p.93). Hence, natural languages used to construct new black political positioning channeled validation from the origins of the criminological sciences, which in effect, limited black individuals to singular existences and caused the reemergence of faceless entities through criminal avenues.

Literature Review

Wagner’s (2009) *Disturbing the Peace* conflates themes of criminality, police legitimizing, natural language and public discourse. After emancipation, Wagner (2009) locates a transition from slavery to criminal justice as a source of social control. Yet, central to maintaining everyday modes of oppression is the production of the “black vernacular” (Wagner, 2009). Crystallizing black mythologies and the production of black bodies as allegorical legends was integral to the transition to a modern form of social control that could work to erase black bodies from the logics of political visibility.

Othering is a constant process of reaching towards a colonial explanation where sovereign power is able to place individuals outside of legal protection and the social structure (Jamieson & McEvoy, 2005; Todd, 2001); and where “in some way, let it be a small way, a tiny way” they are “special, different, unlike us” (Bauman, 1989, p. 151). In addition, othering involves constructing individuals as faceless and dehumanized – nobodies that may take on any potential role. It is through the disappearance of the individual that the “other” is ascribed a weakness that comes to delineate the individual as the hermetic opposite to imperial or colonial power (Said, 1985).

Othering though natural language is a marked phenomenon used to establish and validate harsh forms of social control throughout history (Alexander, 2010; Fanon, 1963; Wagner, 2009). Alexander (2010) argues that natural language was integral to the formation of Jim Crow and caste systems forged through selective utilization of the criminal justice system: “Faith in the idea that people of the African race were bestial, that whites were inherently superior, and that slavery was, in fact for blacks’ own good” (Alexander, 2010, p. 26). Wagner (2009) claims that natural language used othering terms in the context of crime reporting: “the news coverage of the riot: ‘monster,’ ‘desperado,’ ‘desperate darky,’ ‘fiend,’ ‘beast,’ ‘outlaw’” (Wagner, 2009, p.50).

Thus, newspapers are sites of paramount importance in the process of othering bodies. Natural language constructed in the media involves producing the other in “zoological terms”

(Fanon, 1963). Fanon (1963) discusses the process by which colonial rule utilizes natural discourses to construct minorities as animalistic, less-evolved and barbarous. That is, the “other” is inextricably linked to those beings that are lower on the continuum of the evolutionary “descent of man” (Darwin, 2003/1871).

Othering, as a process of establishing symbolic difference between groups, rests on a logic of difference (Fanon, 1963) – constructed as “us” versus “them” or as belonging/not belonging: “Sometimes this Manicheanism reaches its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the colonized subject. In plain talk, he is reduced to the state of an animal” (Fanon, 1963, p.7). Oppressed individuals are constantly related to a natural descent lower on an evolutionary scale in order to produce social distance in colonial rule: “Allusion is made to the slithery movement of the yellow race, the odors from the ‘native’ quarters, to the hordes, the stink, the swarming, the seething, and the gesticulations” (Fanon, 1963, p.7). It is the natural “bestiary” (Fanon, 1963, p.7) that provides a lexicon for the foundation of othering in modern societies.

Natural language consists of metaphors that maintain a claim to objective and scientific truths about the world. Natural metaphors make some claim to the disposition and biological science of oppressed individuals and “contribute to understanding only by making us see objective similarities” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008, p.209). Thus, essential to othering is that “a theory of meaning for natural language is based on a theory of truth” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008, p.196). Despite biological explanations of criminality, individual identity cannot be ascribed to biological explanations alone. Yet, through othering biological explanations and similarities force obfuscation of the fact that oppressed individuals are “more than what this science said they were” (Said, 1985, p.93).

Othering through natural language is a denial of a political existence through the use of constructing truth, scientific discourse and objective similarities. The oppressed individual is denied a voice, a perspective and even a face inside the visualization of the political field. Despite being disappeared from the political realm, the individual still maintains a physical presence. Thus, they are experienced as invisible and make no impediments upon the epistemological construction of the natural world.

In effect, this paper seeks to explore natural language as a mechanism of othering that validated and legitimized criminal justice response as a new method of racial social control. In addition, this paper encourages an examination of objective, rational and positivistic frameworks as effective sites of blurring criminological or scientific discourses with the establishment of knowledge and power within sites of media (Foucault, 1995/1977). Last, the paper argues that it is no accident that the sample of newspapers found in this research yielded natural language results. Rather, this article claims that objective languages are fundamentally entangled with the categorization, division and production of political visibilities and identities between colonized and colonizer.

Methods

Research questions for this project were centered on claims by scholars that natural language was a fundamental mechanism by which minorities were othered (Alexander, 2010; Fanon, 1963; Wagner, 2009). Hence, the objective of this research was to investigate the manner in which historic newspapers displayed forms of natural othering. Therefore, this research focused predominantly on the multiple uses of natural language in historical newspapers.

A fundamental aspect of the present research is to examine the extent to which these stories were built within newspapers. Hence, we completed a qualitative, thematic content analysis of 90 newspapers between the years 1865-1870 in two distinct locations. Newspapers were located from completing a comprehensive search through the Library of Congress online database of historical periodicals, *Chronicling America*. The years 1865-1870 were chosen in light of the historical period. Emancipation had taken place in 1863, and these five years represented a transitory time period in which it is likely that a new form of social control would be actively, perhaps even desperately,

sought. In addition, a central inquiry of this paper involved the different forms by which natural language was utilized in different locales – specifically, the North and South. We decided to explore Pennsylvania and South Carolina because these two states were politically active areas that would be integrally and seminally involved in the future of racial issues and criminal justice matters.

We used the search terms “negro crime” in order to compile the data. Originally it was set to search for “black crime;” however, in short time it became clear that “black” was not commonplace in conventional vernacular to describe an individual at this point in history. Rather, “black” was often utilized when describing color, such as the night sky. Hence, “negro” was the common vernacular and returned the most fruitful results.

Throughout the sample of 90 newspapers we identified and we were able to capture excerpts from the newspapers that directly related to the process of constructing an individual as the “other.” Newspaper clippings ranged from one sentence to entire articles and we collected samples separated due to location, such as Pennsylvania (N=162) and South Carolina (N=75). In turn, transcribing the selections from the newspaper articles resulted in a fifty page transcript.

We used three steps of thematic content analysis: thematic coding, organizational coding, and a second organizational coding. The original thematic coding involved excavating various uses of natural language which resulted in major themes. These major themes constituted the reference list of coding themes. Throughout the process coding themes evolved and were added, and in effect, the coding list grew in length. The first organizational coding involved sifting themes into large and widespread categories based on the function of the natural language (i.e. description, implicate danger, etc). We further identified conceptual similarities and refined categories by conducting another level of organizational coding which involved finding patterns within major themes, affording us the opportunity to separate major themes into subthemes. Last, we solidified conceptual categories through a process of comparison and identification of parallel lines of interpretation.

Overall, this paper represents only one interpretation of the information presented by newspapers at this time. Of course, it is the case that different researchers could retrieve alternative results. However, as Bogazianos (2012, p.153) reminds us “all sources...are the products of complicated social practices that say something, but not everything, about the contexts from which they emerged.” Following Bogazianos (2012), it is argued that this research presents something about the construction of the other in historical newspapers, but not everything.

Results

Historical newspapers between 1865 and 1870 represented active sites of contested epistemological security and political visibilities. More aptly, newspapers were active sites in which white epistemology could be effectively repaired through the control and policing of political visibility. It is through natural language that crime stories constructed in newspapers were able to reestablish natural parameters of visibility and invisibility. That is, recently emerging black bodies could be “de-naturalized” – or delegitimized based on rationalistic principles – by demonstrating the manner in which the individual’s presence or visibility was in conflict with truth, scientific discourse and biological descriptions. In conjunction, against the current progressive political actions of the time, natural language evoked the power to disappear black bodies to the faceless existence that had been previously constructed during slavery – prior to emancipation. Extreme epistemological dissonance was provoked due to the fickle manner in which black bodies transcended political boundaries through emancipation and contests over suffrage – which may well have been perceived as natural parameters from the start.

Throughout the sample of newspapers, numerous sub-thematic categories were evident of the multiple ways natural language was mobilized to erase the existence of the new political black individual. In particular, themes of an imaginary, visualized evolutionary continuum were seminal and widespread. Newspapers were able to display stories of black individuals committing crime

which were levied as correlating with scientific and objective aphorisms. Oppositely, white crime was rarely, if ever, situated within objective, natural or scientific frameworks.

Newspapers additionally used "zoological terms" (Fanon, 1963) to reaffirm or crystallize natural aphorisms that situated current events in a context of colonial power. Through the reduction of the person to the state of their biology, natural vernacular often dehumanized the individual beyond a point of existence. That is to say, the individual was reduced beyond the point at which they could be considered from any other perspective. Once it was impossible to visualize the individual from a perspective distinct from biology, the individual was rendered to become nobody. It was the rendering of the individual to nobody – a faceless entity – that was the main objective of epistemological reconciliation. In the remainder of this section, we explore the multiple methods by which individuals were othered – or brought to non-existence – through the vehicle of natural language. This next section discusses each of the five major themes we found throughout the newspapers including: descent, animal descriptions, unnatural/supernatural being, internal/external causes of crime, and moral language.

Descent

Throughout the sample, newspapers regularly framed the alternative positions of descent on an evolutionary continuum. At times, newspapers constructed black political identities as unnatural because individuals were seen to exist as a less evolved or subaltern form of the white being. The crux of the descent theme involved an imagined evolutionary line by which different groups could be visually placed as higher or lower on a continuum. Hence, black bodies could be traced to a lower level of physical descent by reaching to explanations of crime within nature.

By positioning black individuals as lower on the evolutionary continuum, newspapers were able to effectively draw a distance between two distinct groups: "...one necessarily marching back to Africanism, and the other forward to a still higher civilization..." (Clearfield Republican. August 31, 1870. PA). Indeed, the only manner in which the two could be confused or misplaced was by an aversion to natural principles or by losing "their natural instincts" (Clearfield Republican. August 31, 1870. PA). Thus, a continual fear was that white individuals would topple down from their place atop the evolutionary continuum of descent by losing "natural instincts."

An evolutionary continuum, backed by scientific discourse, was seen to be an unbreakable natural principle: "...and the Abolitionists are forcing four millions of negroes from their natural subordination to an impious and forever forbidden level with the former. Of course society cannot exist on such a basis, for God having made the whites superior and the negroes inferior, no human power can change the eternal order, and force them to a level" (Edgefield Advertiser. August 23, 1865. SC). As a subaltern race subordination was similar to laws of gravity, and to break them was simultaneously a crime against physics, God and humanity.

The evolutionary continuum was so commonplace it was not only a mechanism to monopolize epistemological control from black individuals. Instead, descent was a widespread mechanism by which modern societies established rights among an array of different groups: "Some assert that the Negro is an inferior being. This we readily admit; and so also the German and the Irish is inferior to the Anglo Saxon; so is the man who wallows in the gutter inferior to the one who walks by him; erect in manhood of intemperance" (The Waynesburg Republican. March 17, 1869. PA).

Thus, natural language was integral to the comprehension of social mapping during conceptualizations of ranking groups in modern society. Each group was constructed as having a natural placement of descent upon the continuum. Hence, criminality and immoral behaviors were intrinsic and genetic qualities of the process of evolution. Where Anglo-Saxon's had evolved past crime as an internal response, black individuals were predisposed. In effect, crime was always a cerebral or external event for white individuals (e.g. solving a problem; giving in to temptations) and a lack of intelligence for black individuals (e.g. succumbing to instincts).

Descent was fundamental to understanding the criminal predisposition of an individual. Often, religion was intertwined to endow naturalness with further authority: "God Almighty has given white and negro widely different natures and widely different wants" (Clearfield Republican. August

31, 1870. PA). At times in which nature was not enough, religion was mobilized to lend further evidence to the natural. In fact, religion was presumed to exist in a more natural state than nature itself. When religion and nature came into play, they were often used in interchangeable roles; where Satan was unnatural or supernatural and "God Almighty" identified as the normal or natural. Hence, it was common to describe black individuals as following an evolutionary path as "submerged in the meshes of Satan" or as the "fiends of hell" (Clearfield Republican. August 31, 1870. PA; Edgefield Advertiser. August 23, 1865. SC). This established a theological authority, with its symbolism of good and evil, which provided an excellent site to merge discussions of evolution and criminality. That is, "Satan" served as a perfect amalgam of evil deeds through nature.

The visibility of an evolutionary continuum was constantly at play in constructing natural identities. In fact, a potential collapse into a similar evolutionary position was used to instill fear within white society. It was commonly expressed that allowing the presence of a black political identity would impose a racial amalgamation that would cause irreparable damage to white existence: "We admit they are principles of equality, but to establish that equality white race must degrade itself to the level of the negroes" (The Star of the North. February 07, 1866. PA). Hence, establishing "positionality" on the continuum was a regular mechanism of validating political and social distance by making visible the physical differences that already existed. Any conflation of races, as an unnatural combination, would result in a catastrophe of chemistry, cataclysmic reactions – as claimed to happen in other areas of the world already: "...as in Brazil and South America, they would all rot out and die in a few generations, and the State would be abandoned to the wild animals" (Clearfield Republican. August 31, 1870. PA). Thus, a sudden political presence of black bodies validated a distinct form of relationship. It was not that a conflation of races was not already possible, but that its terms were no longer controlled in the same manner. Before the emergence of a black political presence, any relation was an only an extension of white epistemology – an object used by the subject. Yet, with equal political presence visible black bodies represented a new relationship by which dangerous biological compounds could result in calamity. As a natural disaster, death in brutal form was a certainty.

Descent was a fundamental concept by which modern society could visualize the epistemic underpinnings of the political world. The emergence of the visible black subject flipped the logics of political visibility on its head, creating an upside-down feeling: "And none of these oppressed nations ever had thrust upon them by their conquerors degradation half as infamous as negro rule,—the filthy, polluting, barbarous supremacy of an inferior and despised race" (Clearfield Republican. February 13, 1868. PA). After emancipation, understandings of the epistemological world were experienced as backwards or upside down due to the betrayal of descent as a framework of objective and scientific authority. In an obvious manner, the presence of black political bodies was constructed as an affront to natural laws.

Black identities could also be constructed as originating from a different evolutionary pathway altogether. That is, it was contended that the "Negro is not a human being at all" (The Waynesburg Republican. March 17, 1869. PA). This assertion of existing on a different evolutionary pathway was an automatic method by which the black individual could be stricken from political existence. It was implied that the "negro," in this context, lacked a natural right to play a part in constructing epistemic foundations.

Animal Comparisons

In order to construct an individual or group at a specific "positionality" on the evolutionary continuum, animal comparisons and biological explanations were employed to establish an individual's identity. Animal and biological constructions helped validate the specific position given to an individual on the evolutionary continuum. For instance, as previously noted, it was a great fear that if a conflation of races took place current society would enter a dystopic, post-apocalyptic period that was "abandoned to wild animals" (Clearfield Republican. August 31, 1870, PA).

In effect, establishing such a fear resulted in drawing out the direct relations between animal traits and the predispositions of black individuals: "He cares no more for the negro than he does a 'dirty dog'" (The Charleston Daily News. December 02, 1869. SC). By equating the "negro" to the "dirty dog" the newspaper is able to convey the manner in which, like a dog, black individuals are dependent, incapable, unsophisticated and lack intellect. Thus, the black population was constructed as relying upon others to care for themselves. In addition, this was imagined to be specifically a "dirty" dog. This resembles a common theme of natural traits by which black individuals were predisposed to odors and lacking hygiene: "A large dirty, greasy negro..." (Edgefield Advertiser. July 03, 1867, SC).

Indeed, hygiene was a reminder of a lower evolutionary descent and of a particular likeness to an animalistic nature: "Of course, negroes in the Five Points are dirty – very dirty – but so are the whites in the same locality, and to a greater degree. In certain portions of the Fifth and Eighth Wards, in Thomson Street and Laurens Street, and in other sections of the city, great filth accompanies great poverty" (Lewistown Gazette. April 24, 1867. PA). It was not simply that filth and poverty were equal, but rather, that both were indicative of a lower descent; both associating traits of an animal being. Hygiene was evidence not of social status, but of white paupers and black criminals that had a lineage back to a less evolved origin of the descent of man.

In many situations the animal descriptions validated the position established on the evolutionary continuum. Thus, animal comparisons and assertions of descent often came packaged together. Take for example this animal comparison that simultaneously validates the unnatural identity constructed for black individuals: "...the 'freed negro'... would watch him as he lazily plants his little squatting; would see him, as he proudly rejects agricultural or domestic service, or accepts it only at wages, ludicrously disproportionate to the value of his work.... with a hide thicker than that of a hippopotamus, and a body, to which fervid heat is a comfort rather than an annoyance, he droningly lounges over the prescribed task... uninjured to the burning sun... and too often sacrifices his life" (Edgefield Advertiser. August 23, 1865, SC).

Each construction of the "negro" as unnatural is followed by animal comparisons. "A hide thicker than a hippopotamus" follows claims that the negro is incapable to care for himself. Similarly, comparisons that the Negro is uninjured by the burning sun follows claims that black individuals are predisposed to laziness. It is perhaps the case that "thicker hide" and "uninjured to the burning sun" are representative of powers that should enable black individuals to be more productive in such labor-intensive positions, if not for the predisposed intellectual inferiority claimed through descent.

Animal metaphors were used to display that black individuals had no ability to comprehend and intellectually analyze events in a wider context. Hence, animal comparisons had the power to symbolize a lack of capability to be involved in important matters and remove black politics from justice issues. Even as black individuals viewed a court in action, they were presented as not being able to truly understand the events unfolding in front of their eyes: "The proceedings seem to have a horrible attraction for the blacks. They watch the grand balancing of the scales of justice with open mouths and wildly staring eyes... there they sit, cheek by jowl, and for the most part silent as Quakers.." (Edgefield Advertiser. January 16, 1867, SC).

It should also be noted that this is one of the rare times a newspaper referred to African-American individuals as "black," rather than "negro." This perhaps marks an interesting moment, where being in the presence of a court demands a more formal language. This language, while devoid of the blatant disrespect of the term "negro," carries the same weight as it simply reproduces the same animal metaphors. This phenomenon may lend credence to Alexander's (2010) testament that racial language is simply transmuted into more formal, legalistic language. It makes no difference whether one says "negro" or "black" when it is followed with animal comparisons, but it nonetheless gives the impression that the courtroom represents a distinctly unbiased and fair space.

Similarly, the intersectionality of race and gender validated the use of vivid animalistic imagery that presupposed immoral acts: "Then there are at the least calculation five hundred black, yellow and gingerbread harlots in Richmond, who sleep in their dens by day and walk the streets all

night. Every policeman will testify to this fact, and that they invariably rob their victims" (The Charleston Daily News. June 09, 1866. SC). Such as nocturnal animals, harlots live in dens and prowl about in the shadows. It is not only an animalistic predisposition but the affinity for shadows and darkness that conflate to insinuate a constant animalistic threat of criminality.

Biological language was also used to establish black individuals as inclined to not only automated actions devoid of intellectual capacity, but of a constant and ultimate threat to white society. A common theme throughout the newspapers involved constructing black individuals and black political identity in viral terms: "Wherever they are, that place is deeply and damnably accursed. The contagion of their influence extends not only to persons of their own color, but also too many white people..." (Edgefield Advertiser. January 03, 1867. S.C.).

Black presence represented a virus that could spread, infect and result in terminal consequences. However, this assertion was symbolic as well as physical. While it was the case that white individuals physically feared the black individual, the virus metaphor was often employed when discussing "miscegenation"; or rather, white purity and the mixing of races. A regularly discussed issue was to consider the implications of giving equality to black individuals, in the manner it would make physical intimacy appropriate between races. Returning to descent, the virus metaphor presented the implications of white society losing their place atop the evolutionary continuum and what should be done to counteract a spreading virus: "the negro, if not demoralized beyond restoration of social order, must and will be exterminated, of course, for with his natural inferiority, he is in the minority" (Edgefield Advertiser. August 23, 1865. S.C.).

Supernatural/Unnatural Beings

While most of the sample involved a combination of natural language and the discussion of crime instances or criminal justice issues, the entire sample faced the problem of constructing the unique traits of the black individual. Typically the individual was constructed as being predisposed to either supernatural or unnatural traits; while at other times, newspapers employed both in the same article, or even the same paragraph.

Supernatural construction involved black individuals garnering supernatural traits from their animalistic predisposition. In effect, the individual was endowed with superpowers that white society, and more specifically law enforcement, was unequipped to contain. While a higher position of descent gave white society intellectual prowess, black individuals were bestowed with animalistic traits. Take for instance this account of a "negro desperado" from the Charleston Daily News (February, 25, 1869. S.C.) "A negro desperado named Jerry Hamilton... for several months has defied the whole police department...Within the past few months several efforts have been made to arrest Jerry but he was shrewd enough to escape at every instance... We learn that not less than twenty shots had been fired at him at different times... prowling around the city perpetuating acts of villainy..."

The newspaper constructs the individual as possessing abilities beyond the capacity of the current police force. The "negro desperado" has not simply escaped police efforts but has "defied" the entire department. In addition, the individual seems nearly impervious to normal weaponry as the newspaper claims that despite numerous shots fired no damage has been done to the individual. Such claims validate the use of increasingly powerful weaponry and criminal justice responses to the presence of black individuals. Indeed, such supernatural powers necessitate preemptive policing responses to the potential of similar devastation and destruction.

Notice how the newspaper not only constructs the individual as capable of immense destruction, but that animal instincts imply the individual is always on the hunt: "prowling around the city perpetuating acts of villainy" (The Charleston Daily News. February, 25, 1869. SC). In fact, description language typically focused the animal instincts of the black individual as always potentially dangerous. Black individuals, in any context, could be casted as desperadoes, wretches, miscreants, fiends and monsters; indicating the black individual could be set off, unleashed, or could lash out without provocation.

In contrast, and perhaps in paradox, newspapers attempted to establish that black individuals were unnatural in that they lacked an ability to survive in the world without a caretaker. As Alexander (2010, p.26) mentions this type of newspaper construction was integral in establishing that "slavery was, in fact, for blacks' own good." Typically, such a point was mobilized in two distinct manners; first, that the supernatural predisposition of black individuals would result in a threat and eventually the end of modern society, or second, that without white society the unnatural predisposition of black individuals would result in extinction of the African race. Hence, this point of contention was often utilized within discussions of negro suffrage.

As discussed earlier, often both supernatural and unnatural constructions could be employed simultaneously, such as: "the unnatural and barbarous claim" (The Anderson Intelligencer. December 25, 1867. SC). However, when unnatural was deployed by itself articles displayed a fear of negroes being taken advantage of by opposing political parties: "The worthy but simple-minded negro will believe...whatever the well-dressed carpet baggers tell him" (The Anderson Intelligencer. December 25, 1867. SC). Without any legal recourse to demand fealty from black populations, a major concern became which political party could manipulate black individuals to fulfill political goals: "A large assemblage of negroes gathered from surrounding counties, led by these white men, and all armed, and to be excited by inflammatory speeches..." (The Charleston Daily News. September, 29, 1868. SC).

Dependence was a key indication of an unnatural being: "...the labor of the negro without the control and guidance of the white man – might as well be talking of reversing the law of gravitation" (Edgefield Advertiser. August 23, 1865. SC). Due to evolutionary limitations, black individuals could only excel at particular subservient acts: "It is an incontrovertible fact, however, that their capacity for improvement, as a race, is limited. They will be likely to excel in music or dancing, and will progress greatly in aesthetics; but no sophistry or partial reasoning can make it appear that culture alone is necessary to bring them up to the standard of the Anglo-Saxon race" (Edgefield Advertiser. July 03, 1867. SC).

Internal and External Constructions of Crime

In addition to constructing the individual as coming from natural positions on an evolutionary continuum, criminal acts themselves were constructed in alternative forms depending on the racial disposition of the criminal. Throughout the sample crimes were packaged as coming from within an individual, being mediated by internal mechanisms such as biology, malfunctioning genetics and traits. In contrast, crime could be constructed as coming from outside the individual, compelled by external forces such as social pressures or other potential vehicles that propel criminal acts.

Across the board, this separation of packaging crime in internal or external origins was divided by racial lines. Black crime was typically constructed as coming from one's biology or genetic make-up, whereas white crime was packaged as coming from external forces. These internal and external lines were often subtle ways of changing the manner in which crime was reported. For instance, while both white and black altercations could be attributed to alcohol, a subtle difference located the origins of black crime within the individual while the other focused white crime solely on the alcohol itself. As a white individual is involved in an altercation a newspaper notes that "Colonel Green was...in a state of intoxication" (The Daily Phoenix. June 13, 1869. SC). In contrast, describing a black individual committing crime due to alcohol consumption a newspaper notes "He is forty three years old, and ascribes all his crimes to habits of intemperance" (Yorkville Enquirer. November, 02, 1870. SC).

The subtle difference is the spot of focus that the alcohol inhabits in the news story. While reporting the altercation with the white individual, it was the intoxication that maintains the origin point of the event. However in the story with the black individual, the origin of alcohol is supplanted by an origin of "intemperance." Intemperance shifts the focus from substance to a lack of

moderation, restraint and control by the black individual. Hence, we see an important differentiation of locating the source of white (external) and black (internal) crime.

Another example of contrasting newspaper crime reporting instances involved reporting homicide. The black individual committing murder was attributed to the natural position of race, and the murder involving the white individual was explained through being compelled by external forces. The black individual murders the daughter of a plantation owner and the newspaper explains the event as being "by means of those arts peculiar to the half-savage race" (Yorkville Enquirer. May 09, 1867, SC). The white individual is a woman who murders her husband due to neglect and the newspaper reports as such: "Mrs. Swentz shot her husband at a ball; cause – jealousy and neglect" (The Charleston Daily News. February 25, 1869, SC). For Mrs. Swentz, the act itself is not excused or made appropriate but it is bypassed as an act perpetuated by race. Rather, it is not packaged as being due to natural circumstances or the evolutionary origin of white people. For the black individual, it is distinctly the race that makes the act.

Moral Language

The sample of newspapers included tacit and explicit acknowledgement that individuals with a nature towards crime were immoral creatures. A main vehicle by which black bodies were stricken from the moral world involved the claim that their natural dispositions were averse to the existence of civilization: "In the wide world there is not a single road of ground, nor has there been a single chapter in history from the creation of the earth down to the day in which we live, which presents a respectable claim of the African to be trusted with the administration of government, or with participation therein....He was, beyond question, unfit for the trust. Nothing but the selfishness of party feeling, stimulated by a reckless disregard of the public safety and the public welfare, could have led to his being trusted with this important and responsible privilege" (Edgefield Advertiser. December 16, 1868. SC). That is, civilization was only for those beings that had intellectually advanced beyond the limitations of their own biology. In contrast, black bodies were situated in a context of being pre-modern and without an understanding of creating and maintaining an ordered society.

With a nature lower on the continuum, black bodies were constructed as having no capacity to understand the processes of modern orders. This argument was taken further by claiming evidence: "The negro had never civilized a country – not even his own – had ever invented anything – had never improved anything – but had only distinguished himself for destroying a civilized country that had, through untoward circumstances, fallen into his hands" (Edgefield Advertiser. December 16, 1868. SC). As constructed through newspapers, black populations were unable to create or sustain civilization due to a devolved biological make-up. Resting on principles of hedonism, seeking pleasure was a higher priority than the welfare of human life.

It was the animal nature of black bodies that became a symbol as the antithesis to civilization, and by extension, the protection of the public. Animal nature exists outside the intellect and influences the individual to lash out in an uncontrollable fashion: "This exhibits an alarming state of immorality and demoralization among the F.B's (freedman's bureau), and suggests at once the pertinent inquiries. 'What is the cause, and where is the remedy?' We think we can answer the first inquiry. The negroes, ever since the evacuation, have been running wild, truants from the school of correction, petted and protected by the guardian angel of the Freedman's Bureau. Those of them who cannot find employment, or if they can, and won't work, must steal for support" (The Charleston Daily News. June 09, 1866. SC). Once again, we can witness the amalgam of nature and crime. It is only the force of the "school of correction" that has the power to keep animals under control. Otherwise, they will "run wild" and commit crime to feed hedonistic tendencies.

North and South: Regional Differences

As expected, throughout the sample there were widespread regional differences in the construction of crime and political identity within newspapers. Returning to the supernatural and unnatural subtheme, there were considerable differences between the manner in which

Pennsylvania and South Carolina media constructed individuals in these terms. For instance, Pennsylvania media more commonly discussed black individuals and crime in terms of a result of lacking intelligence or an inability to discipline or restrain one's self. Hence, a subaltern evolution inevitably resulted in a lack of self-control.

In addition, Pennsylvania media framed the unnatural lack of sophistication and intelligence in terms of extinction. That is, Pennsylvania media was concerned that an inability to care for one's self would lead to an extinction of the African race altogether, and in turn, some type of bondage was actually in benefit to black individuals as white society metaphorically pulled them up the evolutionary continuum.

In contrast, South Carolina media more commonly discussed criminality and black individuals in terms of supernatural traits. Black individuals were mythologized by imbuing their characters with animalistic traits that white human beings lacked. A black individual could be constructed as a monster, a mad dog, a rattlesnake, or other terms of threat and endangerment. Also, black individuals could be constructed in "supernatural" terms as lacking restraints to violence. For instance, a black criminal could be framed as "inhuman" or "barbarous," perpetuating the idea that no empathy, humanity, or emotional response would cause them to refrain from terrible acts.

Separate from the individual, there were differences between the discussions of the context of contemporary crime issues. For instance, Pennsylvania newspapers more commonly discussed crimes in terms of issues of justice. Discussions of the unnatural and the context of crime were often interwoven. Indeed, a common topic involved weighing the effects of justice issues, such as whether black individuals that lacked restraint and intelligence could care for themselves, or whether they could be trusted to vote, or should some type of bondage be instituted for their protection.

Oppositely, South Carolina newspapers more commonly discussed the context of crime in terms of potential bodily harm. There was a great concern over increased street crime as a result of recent emancipation efforts of the North. Each instance of bodily harm affected by black bodies was attributed as evidence in the devastation caused by emancipation. In effect, street crime was directly connected in media to the presence of minorities.

Conclusions

This analysis rendered three major conclusions. First, as we expected, we found substantial support for using natural language as a mechanism to maintain social order immediately following emancipation. Second, this created distance between whites and blacks through the process of othering. This process occurred by using natural language in 5 main ways—descent, descriptive animal comparisons, super natural or unnatural language, internal versus external cause of criminality, and moral language. Third, the present analysis revealed some important differences in which natural language was used in the North versus the South.

Discussion: Telling Crime Stories

Newspapers were used as sites of social control in which the logics of political visibility were controlled in order to repair epistemological damage imposed by emancipation. As the newspapers display, these media outlets represent an attempt to come to terms with the emergence of a political identity that had not previously existed. In turn, newspaper reporting served as a potent mechanism by which media could effectively "other" black individuals by framing political identities within a context of scientific discourse and authority.

Natural language exhibited a site at which scientific discourse and criminality could become blurred together. Hence, bodies were "stricken from existence"; or black political identity was transmogrified from the political to the natural realm. In effect, black bodies were eradicated from social and political life through nature which resulted in a political death: "Slave life, in many ways, is a form of death-in-life" (Mbembe, 2003, p.21). Thus the use of natural language worked to naturalize black political absence, while at the same time neutralizing racial language within frameworks of scientific authority.

As the newspapers in this study illuminate, natural language disappears the individual by making a claim to a scientific paradigm. White society was able to police the logics and optics of political identity by neutralizing the voice (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2013), perspective and presence of black bodies in the political realm. Hence by appealing to science and nature, constructions of crime in newspapers could establish a legitimized distance between subjects of separate evolutionary origins. By placing a natural distance between groups, black bodies could not make claim to constructing political identities and having impact upon the political landscape.

This project serves as an exemplary scene to represent the entanglement of scientific paradigms and identity. The entanglement of nature and identity serves not simply as a mechanism to claim control to constructing identities, but to constructing the realities of identity-space behind them through a "politics of dispossession" (Said, 2012). A claim to the authority of nature and the ability to control who tells stories, prescribes an ability to naturalize the dispossession of identity. In the mid-1800's, newspapers represented the center of constructing political reality through telling stories. The blur between telling stories in newspapers and the latest scientific discourse, yielded a valuable, almost lone site at which reality and identity could be created.

A claim to science within the political realm, allowed the state and media to dispossess minorities by supplanting them from the socio-political space of identity construction altogether – or rather, from newspapers as the main vehicle of constructing stories of crime. By objectifying individuals, the media could mobilize "objectivity as a weapon" in which inanimate objects require no voice to claim or possess their own identity-space (Fanon, 1963; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2013). It was the control of stories that allowed a transformation of black bodies to inanimate objects through natural language. Thus, the admonishment of such a project is the extent to which mainstream narratives – from government, media, or academics – dispossess individuals from identity-spaces.

This paper encourages a critique of dominant criminological perspectives that are based on a foundation of objective, natural or positivistic frameworks, and that avoid the voice of "othered" individuals. The erosion of identity-space produces a political death that acts as a colonial method of violence and denies the potential for the absent to speak for themselves. By filtering identity through an objective lens minorities are removed from the territory of identity construction completely; condemned to a realm of science and defined in inanimate terms.

In newspapers, black individuals were criminalized in that they were dispossessed from identity-space and produced as criminal by nature. The method of constructing crime stories within newspapers afforded the media to *criminalize* individuals by placing their criminal identity within a scientific framework of laws and principles. Origins of criminological science – such as Lombroso and the Italian school – blurred the lines between forms of criminalization in modernity; by which laws by the State may be enacted to sanction specific acts, and in turn, individuals may be dispossessed to a criminal state of (non)existence. Through dispossession, criminality becomes the natural state of personhood for the individual that has been criminalized.

In effect, the power to reformulate epistemological contexts through stories illuminates that manner by which the colonizer sustains order through domination. That is, the colonizer maintains the capacity to legitimize the story-teller of crime – such as the origins of criminality – through a scientific authority. Control over telling stories, perpetuates the silencing of criminalized voices as a "strategy of silence" (Hallsworth & Young, 2008).

Thus, the importance of crime stories can be witnessed when criminalization is reshaped and repackaged in terms of dispossession through natural discourses. As crime stories are detached from their respective individual they maintain the potential to "haunt" the criminalized victim (Gordon, 2008). In this case, the black body is forced to walk the world bereft of a political identity as the "zombification" of the "walking dead" (Holland, 2000; Linnemann, Wall & Green, 2014). Academia has the opportunity to partake in a counter-narrative that resurrects a politics of repossession, where the haunting effect is aimed back at powers that seek to criminalize and invisibilize the oppressed. By resurrecting the disappeared victim through telling the other side of the

story, "bottom-up" knowledge can resurrect silenced voices that have been naturalized, dispossessed and criminalized.

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