A Note From the Editors

Volume 44 of *Perspectives* reflects how our current political climate has influenced scholarly research, and reminds us that notions of power exist in a dichotomy between administrative structures and the People. The articles in this issue reveal humanity's capacity to manipulate physical and ideological spaces to create identity and forms of resistance, which offer a beacon of hope in an uncertain world. *Perspectives*, an award-winning journal, is written and produced by undergraduate and graduate students from Cal State LA's History Department who are enrolled in History 4970. This journal acknowledges the diversity and talent of Cal State LA's researchers, writers, and editors and their ability to synthesize their work into responsible pieces of scholarship. The editors are pleased to present articles that are both familiar and distinctive, reminding us that historical research and the quest for knowledge is infinite.

Instead of the traditional format of arranging articles in the alphabetical order of author's last name, Volume 44 is structured to enhance the understanding of non-conventional interpretations of power through the reclaiming of space, community creation, and forms of agency. The authors in this issue add new insight by taking refreshing approaches that specifically focus on the frameworks of power within society. Through the use of new methods, sources, and concepts, the authors show an understanding of the different ways in which power is performed in society. In order to capture the nuances present within these diverse topics, we have arranged the articles to illustrate that notions of power are at times more subversive than they appear.

When thinking about reclaiming physical space, author Michelle Vásquez-Ruiz explores how the *Los Angeles Times* portrayed Indigenous communities and their migration in mid-century Los Angeles. By studying how Indigenous migrants identified and created spaces of their own, the author explains how Indigenous peoples challenged stereotypical ideas of indigeneity in the United States. Her study also takes into consideration how an urban landscape can alter the ways migrants constructed their own sense of community.

Similarly, Joann Medrano examines the Whittier Boulevard Merchants Association (WBMA) during the 1970s and 80s to highlight how an unconventional influence has as much credibility and impact in creating communities as the people who live in them. Medrano's use of the association's former president's own private collection allows her to explore how the organization revitalized Whittier Boulevard in ways that resonated with the East Los Angeles community. These two articles specifically indicate how physical space can be manipulated to reflect the needs of marginalized communities, and consequently promote the creation of a unique identity.

Gender often plays an important role in influencing spaces and control within communities, and Megan Lange uses a gendered lens to apply this to the career of César Chávez. Lange studies how Chávez harnessed conceptions of masculinity and femininity to influence his historic United Farm Workers movement, and argues that in order to be accepted as a leader, Chávez needed to employ socially acceptable characteristics of manhood. While masculinity was an important political tool for Chávez, he also embodied distinct feminine attributes, such as his famous stance of non-violent resistance and the image of a sacrificial male leader. Through these tactics, Chávez balanced two specific notions of gender, indicating that to create a successful movement, it is necessary to take into consideration the intricacies of power.

Also using a gendered lens, Nancy Escalante examines the politicization of Nicaraguan women during the 1970s, leading to the 1979 Sandinista revolutionary victory. Escalante shows how women's demands in areas such as reproductive health, sexual liberation, and education served as tools for politicization, radicalization, and gender consciousness. She argues that these women strategically navigate traditional gender roles to overcome an imbalance of gender relations. Likewise, Katherine (Hye Ryun) Yang investigates how South Korean women took control of their own narratives after the 1950s Korean War. She argues how state sponsored prostitution can not only personally affect the women participating in sex work, but how these women were able to reconstruct their own narratives. Whether victim or willing participant, Yang uses oral interviews and personal

memoirs to reconstruct the stories of individual sex workers, and discovers the agency women possessed in constructing not only their individual identity, but a communal identity that aligned with their own political agenda. Escalante and Yang both use the narratives of women to shed light on how it is possible to use social stigma to one's advantage when creating space, reclaiming identity, and finding empowerment.

Perspectives, Volume 44 is also pleased to inaugurate extended online content in our two intriguing special features. The first special feature commemorates the 25th anniversary of the 1992 Los Angeles "Riot," arguing that by remembering it as an "Uprising," historical analysis can move past negative connotations and focus on what actually happened. Our second special feature includes interviews with History Department alumni who work in academia and museums, highlighting a small sample of the dynamic careers within the field. Please visit us online at: www.calstatela.edu/centers/perspectives.

This volume ends with a broad spectrum of editor-written book and film reviews. These book reviews are meant to inform readers of recent historical scholarship surrounding a wide variety of geographical, temporal, theoretical and methodological developments. Topics range from nation-state creation, economics, labor, popular culture, gender, globalization, and sexuality. The reviews are a small selection that reveals the diverse topics that students in the History Department engage with. For the first time, this volume of *Perspectives* includes two film reviews: *13th* (2016) and *The Birth of a Nation* (2016). Academy Award nominated *13th* focuses on the historical implications of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, and how its language reverberates into the present day. *The Birth of a Nation* chronicles the life and contributions of Nat Turner, framing the 1831 slave rebellion as an act of personal revenge. Both films explore critical events in our nation's history, and analyze the historical memory of slavery in the United States and their connection to the present.

As the articles in this issue demonstrate, historical analysis is continually reinterpreted. New approaches and sources creatively add to how we tell stories of power, resistance, and memory. These concepts of unconventional interpretations of power through the reclaiming of space, community creation, and forms of agency show that the authors in Volume 44 have worked tirelessly to piece together the different ways in which power can take form. The editorial team would like to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Birte Pfleger, whose unwavering support and guidance have been instrumental in the conception of this journal. Historical research and the quest for knowledge are infinite; it is in this vein that we invite you to begin your journey with us. We hope you enjoy this issue of *Perspectives: A Journal of Historical Inquiry*.


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