

Sample CHA Fellowship Proposal #1

Spectral Children and Haunted Modernity in Turn-of-the-Century Mexico (1880-1910)

The spectral presence of dead children haunts our imaginations, our dreams, our lives. As mute symbols of a foreclosed future, they mark our failure to nurture and protect our progeny. As spirits watching over us from beyond the grave, they hold out the possibility of intercession, redemption, and transcendence. Sociologist Avery Gordon argues that the appearance of ghost and spirits in everyday life exposes a “domain of turmoil and trouble ... when something else, something different from before, seems like it must be done” (*Ghostly Matters*, xvi). *Spectral Children* explores three instances in the cultural history of turn-of-the-century Mexico when the “haunted domain of turmoil and trouble” took the shape of spectral children: the literary revival of one of Mexico’s oldest and most famous ghost stories about a malevolent “wailing woman” condemned to haunt riverbanks and crossroads to atone for the murder of her young children; the common practice of taking studio photographs of dead infants for use in mortuary rituals; and the mediumistic channeling of a dead infant brother by revolutionary leader and future president Francisco Madero as spiritual preparation for political action. Academic studies on haunting generally present ghosts as unbidden visitors bearing uncomfortable truths. In this haunted history, the spirits of dead children take center stage and their sought-out and often active *presence* across a range of media offers a necessary corrective to a field obsessed with erasures and hidden secrets.

The period known as the Porfiriato (1876-1911), after Madero’s political nemesis Porfirio Díaz, brought new technologies, industries, institutions, and unprecedented foreign investment to Mexico. Birth rates rose significantly, but so did infant mortality. For example, despite major improvements in public health, the 1910 mortality rate for infants (0-1) in the State of Mexico was 254 deaths per 1,000 births or one in four. And more than half of all recorded deaths were children five and under, most of them from lung diseases or smallpox (Santana et al. “Atlas de mortalidad infantil”). In this era of great promise and greater uncertainty, Mexicans from all walks of life would come to embrace spectral children as symbols of the high price they paid for the country’s uneven, incomplete transition into modernity—and for their collective loss of innocence.

Mexican popular culture’s death-inflected responses to social upheaval, especially the *calaveras* of master printmaker José Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913) with their cavorting skeletons and mocking reminders of human mortality, have become a source of national pride. Anthropologist Claudio Lomnitz observes that: “In the face of Western discomfort with death, the elements of Mexico’s elaborate mortuary rituals ... the decorated sugar skull, the papier-mâché skeleton, and the Days of the Dead *ofrenda* [offerings] are highly visible, internationally recognized signs” (*Death and the Idea of Mexico*, 467). Whether celebratory and humorous as in the examples above, or macabre and threatening as in the contemporary cult of Santa Muerte (Our Lady of Holy Death), these internationally recognized signs of Mexican deathways rarely include representations of dead children, even though their images have a long history in Mexico itself. Indeed, Lomnitz cautions that: “the polyvalence of Mexican death imagery, the question of its multiple referents and origins, haunts every attempt to develop a historical account of Mexican sentiments toward death” (271). With this in mind, *Spectral Children* teases out the multiple referents and origins of the death imagery in the three cases noted above, reveals as yet unexplained connections between them, and analyzes them for the first time as a collective response. Each case focuses on a specific text, photographer, and prominent man, but each also reflects a much larger phenomenon: the appearance of multiple *La Llorona* texts, post-mortem photographs of dead children from all over Mexico, the broad dissemination of Spiritist ideas among anti-clerical Mexican liberals in search of spiritual alternatives in a material world. And, all three phenomena have persisted in some form up to the present day.

Spectral Children makes three notable contributions to the humanities: First, it combines careful archival work with close readings of published texts, photographic images, and automatic writing to deepen our understanding of the cultural meanings ascribed to the death of children in Mexico and beyond. Second, it examines the role of different media—literature, studio photography, spirit writing—in shaping cultural responses to child death and relates these mediated responses to the social disruptions of modernity. Third, it analyzes the distinct ways that different media express the spectral “presence” of dead children: as melancholy ghosts, protective guardian angels, self-aware spirit mentors. Most contemporary scholarship interprets haunting as an unwelcome manifestation of suppressed trauma (Gordon), sometimes in the form of an incomprehensible “Other” with whom we nonetheless have a moral obligation to engage (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*). In contrast, *Spectral Children* argues that haunting encompasses a broad spectrum of cultural responses to child death, from politically-charged literary representations of repressed historical trauma to the deliberate appropriation of studio photographs and the “spiritual telegraph” to open direct lines of communication with loved ones in the afterlife.

Although grounded in cultural history and historical methods, *Spectral Children* is an interdisciplinary study that borrows subject matter and research questions from several fields: anthropology, sociology, religious studies, cultural studies, gender studies, media studies, and the emerging sub-field of spectralities studies (Blanco & Peeren, *The Spectralities Reader*). It is especially interested in how different media produce distinct cultural understandings of spectral children and how these “mediated” understandings work intertextually to complement, sustain, and contradict each other. This line of inquiry engages with and contributes to media studies scholarship on “haunted media,” which includes only a few historical studies of Latin America (Sconce, *Haunted Media*). Its theoretical framing puts interdisciplinary scholars such as Avery Gordon, Jacques Derrida, and others who have taken the “spectral turn” in conversation with religious studies scholars such as Robert Orsi who have theorized the notion of spiritual “presence” as the bridge *Between Heaven and Earth*. From the beginning, spectralities studies scholars have worried that contemporary uses of haunting as a metaphor for the “return of the repressed” (after Freud) or theoretical exegeses of texts as “always already” haunted (after Derrida) too often downplay significant historical and cultural variations in the lived experience and textual representation of specters. In most accounts, ghosts and spirits manifest as fleeting images, hermetic references, or uncanny sensations: more absent than present, more suppressed than acknowledged, more denied than accepted. The spectral children in this study are very much present despite their corporeal immateriality and their presence is not just acknowledged but actively solicited.

This project represents a new direction in my work on the cultural history of turn-of-the-century Mexico. Previous book projects focused on elite attitudes towards crime and punishment (*Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico*) and changing notions of masculinity among working-class men (*A Sentimental Education for the Working Man*). *Spectral Children* shares interdisciplinary methodologies with these projects—close reading of texts, interpretation of images, intertextual analysis, attention to social constructions of gender and sexuality, etc.—but most of the source materials and some of the theoretical frameworks are new. While previous projects centered the perspective of distinct social groups (educated elites, working-class men), the new project examines the cultural meanings of spectral children across Mexican society more generally. This presents unique and exciting interpretive challenges that build on my previous work as a cultural historian.

Most primary source material for this project is available either through the University of Colorado Library or interlibrary loan. I have visited archives in Guanajuato and Oaxaca, but supplementary material may require brief (post-COVID) repeat visits to these archives and to the Francisco Madero archive in Mexico City. During my sabbatical spring 2021 sabbatical and the following summer, I will draft chapter four (see outline) and a spin-off journal article on representations of

revolutionary masculinity in Madero's spiritual writings. A semester-long CHA Faculty Fellowship would provide additional time to draft the first chapter and a spin-off article on "La Llorona's Missing Children," which will form the basis of the conclusion.

Sample CHA Fellowship Proposal #2

Race Radicals: Civil Rights and Immigration Reform during the Cold War, 1946-1968

During the 1950s, some of the country's most prominent African American and Asian American musicians, intellectuals, and politicians traversed the decolonizing world on journeys orchestrated by the U.S. government. Alongside figures like Dizzy Gillespie and Louis Armstrong, Dalip Singh Saund—the first Asian American, South Asian American, and Sikh American to be elected to the U.S. Congress and a representative of the 29th District of California—journeyed across Asia at the height of the Cold War. He traveled on behalf of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee and was expected to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to racial equality at home and also to urge the decolonizing world to follow an American-led world order. Prior to touching down in India, Saund made stops in Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, where he presented himself as a "living example of American democracy in action," an immigrant who had "made it" and whose story was proof of America's triumph over its own history of racism. The story of race in America at that time, however, was far more complicated. Everywhere Saund spoke he encountered audiences deeply critical of U.S. race relations, who questioned Saund about events in Little Rock, Arkansas in the fall of 1957, when Governor Orval Faubus ordered the National Guard to block African American students from entering a high school, and thus defied federally ordered desegregation policies. Less than two years after Saund's journey to India, in 1959, Martin Luther King traveled to India to pay homage to the life and legacy of Mohandas Gandhi, who had inspired King's own philosophy and practice of civil disobedience. Unlike Saund, King maintained that the historical and structural dimensions of racism in America were far from overcome. In juxtaposing Saund and King's differing interpretations of race relations in America, my book *Race Radicals: Civil Rights and Immigration Reform during the Cold War, 1946-1968* reveals the important role that narratives of immigration reform and immigrant "success stories" played in U.S. state efforts to demonstrate the country's triumph over histories of racism, a key concern of U.S. policymakers seeking to legitimate America's global ascendancy during the Cold War.

In response to the demands of Black activists for change and to counter Soviet propaganda that pointed to the persistence of racism in the U.S., the U.S. Congress passed a series of race reforms (Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, and Immigration Act of 1965) in the 1960s. By the latter part of the decade, however, the country had exploded in racial uprisings that rocked dozens of cities and resulted in the deaths of 43 people in Detroit and 26 in Newark in 1967. In the aftermath of the violence of the summer of 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to investigate the causes of the uprisings. Contrary to Johnson's expectations, the Commission's report, known as the Kerner Report, did not praise Johnson's Great Society—his ambitious agenda to end poverty and racial inequality through policy initiatives, legislation, and educational and job development programs. Instead, the Kerner Report proposed additional government spending to provide equal opportunities to Black Americans. Johnson shelved the report, furious over the matter of how the Committee expected his Administration to pay for these proposed investments. Johnson knew that some on the Commission were making a veiled critique of his investment in the Vietnam War, which was diverting funds from

his domestic programs and was seen by some of the Commissioners as the reason for the unmet promises of his Great Society programs. Eight months before the publication of Kerner Report, Martin Luther King had said the same thing: that the failure of federal policymakers to make substantive advances in the cause of racial justice and equity was due, in part, to the U.S. commitment to the Cold War through militarization across Asia and that the massive expenditures this generated occurred at the expense of investment in underserved and under resourced communities in the United States. In choosing to shelve a report that was so honest in its assessment of American racism and bold in its recommendations for how to remedy centuries of racial oppression and injustice, Johnson stifled critical policy recommendations on police brutality, racial inequities, and poverty, all of which would resurface again and again in the decades that followed.

Race Radicals makes two key arguments that will change the way we understand the history of race reform during this period. First, it argues that the unmet promises of the Civil Rights movement cannot be understood outside of the geopolitical context of the Cold War, global decolonization, U.S. militarization across the Asia Pacific region, and the matter of where and how the United States distributed its resources. The imperative to win the Cold War generated massive investments in infrastructure, education, and economic development not in Detroit, Newark, and Baltimore, but in Japan, India, Pakistan, Germany and other countries deemed critical to the Cold War. Second, I demonstrate how official discourses of Civil Rights, immigration reform, and militarization were critical sites of race-making that were deeply intertwined. By the end of the 1960s, Black Americans participating in racial uprisings were not seen as Americans fighting for justice but “enemies within,” engaged in “guerilla warfare” in America’s cities. At the same time, Asian American inclusion in the nation was now determined through the creation of a new racial stereotype, the “model minority,” which heralded Asian Americans as hard working and politically non-threatening by explicitly condoning Black American demands for racial justice. Historians like Mary Dudziak and Penny Von Eschen have written of “Cold War Civil Rights,” the passage of civil rights in the United States as a strategy to win the hearts and minds of the decolonized world. This important scholarship, however, assumes the fixity of racial categories. In contrast, my book analyzes how race *was produced* through discourses of civil rights, immigration, and militarization during the Cold War. Ultimately, I argue that immigration reform and the “model minority” allowed the United States to claim a commitment to racial equality with little material investment.

I have spent the last few years doing archival research in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and College Park, Maryland and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City. This year, I am one of the two nominees from CU Boulder for the National Endowment of the Humanities Summer Stipend. If awarded the NEH Summer Stipend, and if the pandemic has passed, I will go to the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri, which holds the Records of the President's Committee on Civil Rights and the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, Texas, which holds the Records pertaining to the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission) next summer. I have recently met Dalip Singh Saund’s grandson, who will soon be giving Saund’s archival materials to the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) to digitize. I was the former President of SAADA’s Board of Directors and helped secure this collection and will be able to access these materials before they are made available to the public.

I am uniquely qualified to write this book because of my requisite experience as an archival historian and Ethnic Studies scholar and I see this project as the next step in advancing my career trajectory as a scholar who brings critical race and ethnic studies scholarship to bear on civil rights

and immigration histories. This project builds on the expertise in anticolonial and antiracist struggles that I developed in my first book, *Echoes of Mutiny*. With its focus on civil rights and immigration history, this book will appeal to a wide audience. This is a scholarly work but I will make it accessible to a general audience through a number of collaborations I am involved in with SAADA, which have already given me the opportunity to make my research available and accessible to audiences outside of the academy. I am speaking at an event next month in commemoration of the 55th anniversary of signing of the 1965 Immigration Act. This event will be of particular interest with the Vice-Presidential nomination of Kamala Harris, and I look forward to drawing parallels between Saund's historic election and Harris's historic nomination as a way to begin sharing my current book project. I have spoken with editors at Oxford University Press and University of California Press, and both have expressed interest in this project. I am seeking the CHA Faculty Fellowship to begin writing my manuscript in the Fall of 2021. The two-course release will provide me with invaluable time to focus on my writing.

Sample CHA Fellowship Proposal #3

Why Hadith Matter: The Evidentiary Value of Hadith in Shii Law (7th/13th to 11th/17th Centuries)

In 2012, an Iranian rapper based in Germany named Shahin Najafi released a song on YouTube in which he referenced Ali al-Hadi, the tenth divine guide of Shiism. Drawing upon on a well-known *hadith*, Iranian clerics interpreted Najafi's satirical song as a direct insult to the divine guide and declared him an apostate, which led to calls for his execution. Lying at the heart of this tragic episode and many others just like it is the seemingly academic question of the evidentiary value of *hadith*.

Hadith are reports about the Sunnah, which comprises the statements, deeds, and tacit consent of Muhammad, his daughter Fatimah, and the twelve divine guides of Shiism. Of the four main sources of Shii law—the Quran, the Sunnah, consensus, and reason—the Sunnah is paramount because without it, there simply would not be enough information for a body of substantive law. *Why Hadith Matter: The Evidentiary Value of Hadith In Shii Law (7th/13th to 11th/17th Centuries)*—which covers the most significant Shii jurists of Iraq, Syria, and Iran—is the first study of Muslim discussions about the evidentiary value of *hadith*.

From the very beginning of Islamic history, *hadith* posed significant challenges for Shii scholars. In order to contest the claims of their Sunni rivals, the earliest Shiis did not accept the vast majority of *hadith*. When Sunnis adduced *hadith* to justify their religious and political views, Shiis countered by noting that such *hadith* are unacceptable as evidence. By contrast, Shiis claimed that they could justify their own views on the basis of reason and only the most widespread historical reports. The early denial of *hadith*, therefore, undergirded an important counterargument against Sunni claims. As early controversies developed into distinct religiopolitical identities, other concerns became paramount. Ultimately, Shii jurists had to revisit the issue because *hadith* are the engine for creativity in law. As time passed and new cases arose, the need for creative legal reasoning (*ijtihad*) was felt even more strongly. The early rejection of *hadith* created difficulties for Shii jurists. Later jurists understood that if Shiism was to be an Islamic legal school alongside the great Sunni schools of law, then Shiis could not afford to reject *hadith* outright. By reclaiming the evidentiary value of *hadith*, Shii scholars were able to put Shii law on an equal footing with Sunni law.

Another reason why early Shiis were skeptical of *hadith* is because *hadith* do not ultimately give rise to certitude and Shii jurists believed that God could only hold humanity accountable for

obligations about which they were sure. Furthermore, even if it could be established that *hadith* are theoretically acceptable, Shii jurists had a difficult time establishing that God had actually endorsed the use of *hadith*. In the end, the best they could do was to cite the practice of the early community as evidence for the notion that *hadith* are acceptable, but this claim conflicted with standard accounts of early Islamic history.

The story of Shii jurists' engagement with the question of the evidentiary value of *hadith* is the story of the formation of Shiism as an independent school of law. And given the centrality of law to premodern Muslim identities, it is no exaggeration to say that this is the story of the formation of Shiism itself. There has never been a more important time to tell this story. The 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran forged the lens through which scholars have viewed the history of Shiism for nearly forty years. What resulted is a scholarly discourse focused on two interconnected issues that speak directly to that experience: the authority of jurists and political theology. In light of this emphasis, the history of Shiism has been written from the top down as a history of great men. By contrast, I view the historical development of Shiism as the unfolding of a conversation across time and space, and I focus on the nexus of problems that drove this conversation. I argue that the development of Shiism as we know it today can be traced back to discussions in the thirteenth century of the role that *hadith* should play in the elaboration of law. Given how successful the Iranian state has been in shaping a narrative in which the essence of Shiism is political theology, *Why Hadith Matter* represents a major intervention in the academic literature.

Despite the significance of law, the question of *hadith* is not simply a question of jurisprudence. Discussions of *hadith* raised a range of questions about history, textuality, and ultimately epistemology. I argue that the evaluation of *hadith* is what led to the rise of historicism in Shii centers of learning. The rise of historicism is one indicator of modernity so the fact that it arose from within discussions about *hadith* rather than through intellectual exchanges with Europe lends support to the idea that modernity emerged organically in Muslim societies. With respect to textuality, discussions of *hadith*, in the final analysis, either anticipate or explicitly address many of the questions taken up in contemporary literary theory. It is, therefore, not surprising that contemporary Shii scholars have been quick to integrate modern literary theory into their discussions of scripture. Finally, with regard to epistemology, discussions of *hadith* culminated in the position, put forth by al-Mirza al-Qummi in the nineteenth century, that knowledge of law is no longer possible so it must be grounded in supposition. Contemporary Shiism revolves around discussions of history, textuality, and epistemology, and all three fields of knowledge developed out of discussions of *hadith*. *Why Hadith Matter* traces the history of these developments from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

Finally, the history of the question of the evidentiary value of *hadith* has far-reaching implications beyond the walls of academia. As I noted at the outset, *hadith* lie at the heart of so many tragic stories in the contemporary Muslim world. Most efforts to address these problems have focused on casting doubt on the authenticity of the entire *hadith* corpus or developing new theological paradigms. On the first count, recent scholarship has actually resulted in the marginalization of skepticism, emboldening extremist groups who strive to implement every single *hadith*. Regarding new theological paradigms, while these efforts are useful, they fail to address the centrality of law to historical Muslim identities. Ironically, the best way to address these problems is to engage the history of jurisprudence, particularly the question of the evidentiary value of *hadith*. Because the texts comprising this history are often only accessible to specialists with a high degree of technical skill, this resource has remained largely untapped. Therefore, in addition to making a necessary and

long overdue intervention in the academic literature, *Why Hadith Matter* will contribute to a new, more effective approach toward reform. It represents an instance where careful historical scholarship and public engagement find common cause.

The Center for Humanities & the Arts fellowship would enable me to complete *Why Hadith Matter* before my tenure case is heard. I have written all seven chapters (see Outline) and I am confident that I can write the introduction and conclusion by the fall semester of 2020, which is the first semester in which I would request a course release. Therefore, throughout the duration of the fellowship, I plan to revise the manuscript, secure a contract, and submit the book for publication. By the spring semester of 2021, I hope to be addressing reviewers' comments. I do not foresee needing any additional time to complete this project.

Outline

Leaving the introduction and conclusion aside, *Why Hadith Matter* comprises seven chapters arranged chronologically.

In the first chapter (“al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli and the Problem with ‘Righteousness’”), I show that al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli (d. 1277) interpreted passages in his predecessor’s work on jurisprudence in a way that addressed the fundamental problem of uncertainty by foregrounding the ethical qualities of transmitters of *hadith*, particularly “righteousness.” This created inconsistencies in the law because early scholars had evaluated *hadith* on the basis of source criticism and communal practice.

In chapter two (“From Hillah to Jabal ‘Amil: The Development of the Methodology of the Later-Scholars”), I demonstrate that al-‘Allamah al-Hilli (d. 1325) tried to iron out these inconsistencies by embracing uncertainty and developing methods to assess the probity of narrators of *hadith*.

Al-‘Allamah al-Hilli’s ideas became so authoritative that subsequent jurists—such as Ibn Abi Jumhur al-Ahsa’i (d. after 1501)—nearly abandoned the primary sources to facilitate creative legal thinking, which is the subject of chapter three (“The Revival of *Hadith* and *Ijtihad* in the Early Safavid Period”).

In chapter four (“From Jabal ‘Amil to Najaf: The Methodology of the Later-Scholars Revisited”), I demonstrate that al-Shahid al-Thani (d. 1559) and his son Sahib al-Ma‘alim (d. 1602) identified underlying problems in the approach to *hadith* that was developed by al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli and al-‘Allamah al-Hilli, and used the rich libraries of Syria to rebuild this method from the ground up.

Ironically, this led to a revival of the early approach to *hadith* and its emphasis on certitude, which is the subject of chapter five (“The Return to the Methodology of the Early-Scholars”).

Chapter six (“The *Fiqh* of *Hadith* in Practice”) locates this revival within the context of a broader scripturalist movement in the seventeenth century—led by Muhammad Amin al-Astarabadi (1626–27)—that amplified the tension between scholars who demanded certitude in matters of law (Akhbaris) and those who accepted uncertainty (Usulis).

In chapter seven (“Between Usulism and Akhbarism”), I turn to the backlash against the scripturalist movement, which took up the question of the evidentiary value of *hadith* in order to address the fundamental question of uncertainty and its role in human responsibility.

Sample CHA Fellowship Proposal #4

Sickness and Power: The Great North American Epizootic Flu of 1872

I am applying for a CHA Faculty Fellowship to support *Sickness and Power: The Great North American Epizootic Flu of 1872*. This book tells the story of a continental-scale eruption of influenza whose causes, course, and consequences anticipated and contributed to the resurgence in recent decades of zoonotic diseases including H1N1 flu, AIDS, Zika, dengue, and Ebola. Between September 1872 and August 1873, more than 90% of North America's horses, donkeys, and mules fell ill with a complaint that experts readily identified as “influenza.” Marked by a hacking cough, running nose, fever, chills, and prostration, this virulent outbreak began on Toronto's expanding fringe, then spread along rail-lines, canals, turnpikes, and steamship routes. Within a month, the malady had engulfed all of northeastern North America. Just six weeks later, the Great Epizootic Flu had pushed south from Virginia to Georgia and west to the Lower Mississippi Valley, reaching Missouri in late November, east Texas in early December, and Cuba later that same month.

With winter's descent, the contagion seemed to slow. As temperatures plummeted and snow began to fly, the diverse human inhabitants of the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains expressed a common impulse to hunker down and cut back on travel. Cultural responses to seasonal cycles, though, only partly explain the epizootic's slow-down. Incessant evolution among the swarm of closely-related influenza A genotypes that composed the outbreak's vanguard insured that epizootic's virulence varied over time. The flu's progress was further hampered by the decimation of Indigenous American populations, which brought attendant declines in native horse wealth and geographic mobility. March

nonetheless brought news of one salient of the horse disease pushing through the Sierra Nevadas into California, a second invading the Valley of Mexico, and a third pushing toward Los Angeles via Arizona. April witnessed San Francisco's horses “prostrate with the strange equine malady, and all of Central America and the West Indies ... now suffering from this alarming visitation.” The Great Epizootic Flu reached its outermost limits in summer 1873, convulsing British Columbia, Mexico's Pacific Coast, and San Salvador. Already, the aftershocks of this unprecedented outbreak were being felt back in the Northeast, where fresh swarms of the virus raised fears (mostly unrealized) that a second wave of horse flu might again paralyze travel, production, and exchange in North America, Central America, and the Caribbean.

Together with pneumonia and other secondary infections that followed in its wake, the Great Epizootic Flu killed 3-5% of the equines it struck. The deaths of 300,000-600,000 horses, mules, and donkeys caused financial loss and emotional distress. Although most equines recovered, the outbreak nonetheless constituted a calamity for the inextricably equine-powered societies of the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and the West's Indigenous nations. Commerce stalled, economic production slowed, and everyday life assumed a carnivalesque character, like a blackout or snow day that lasted for weeks on end.

Mocking human-constructed boundaries of nation, region, race, class, community, and gender, the disease raised fundamental questions: How to maintain economic growth and everyday life without equine labor? How to square existing theories of disease with the puzzling behavior of a disorder diagnosed as “influenza,” but which exhibited an

unprecedentedly high infection rate as well as other novel qualities? And how to rethink the tangles of dominion and interdependence laid bare by a malady that denied humans of all sorts recourse to the motive power, transportation, entertainment, profit, status, and sense of identity that horses and their kin ordinarily provided?

Historians have largely treated the Great Epizootic Flu as a one-off curiosity. Recent scientific studies, though, suggest that the outbreak actually marked an important watershed. The closely-related strains responsible for the outbreak, evolutionary biologists and infectious disease specialists now argue, were progenitors of the pandemic influenza strains that killed 50-100 million people between 1918-'20. Integrating a range of methodologies and sources, *Sickness and Power* presents the first full-length investigation of this unacknowledged pivot in influenza's metamorphosis from relatively unobjectionable complaint one of the deadliest scourges in all of human history. In the process, it explores how the 1872 epizootic anticipated the rise of emergent zoonotic diseases (infections shared by human and other-than-human hosts) into major threats to public health in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Sickness and Power, like my *Coyote Valley* and Bancroft-prize-winning *Killing for Coal*, is aggressively interdisciplinary, bringing together approaches from environmental history, the history of medicine, multispecies ethnography, science and technology studies, social and cultural history, animal studies, Critical Indigenous Studies, influenza virology, evolutionary ecology, spatial epidemiology, and equine cognition and social behavior. The book's evidentiary foundation is similarly expansive. Digitized newspapers and periodicals from throughout the U.S. and Canada, as well as Havana and select Mexican cities, have yielded

thousands of articles. I also draw upon eighteenth- and nineteenth-century medical and veterinary research, government reports and records, and numerous manuscript collections.

Epidemic disease outbreaks, as historian of medicine Charles Rosenberg once noted, possess “a dramaturgic form.” The Great Epizootic Flu was no exception: It “commence[d] at a moment in time, proceed[ed] on a stage limited in space and duration, follow[ed] a plot line of increasing and revelatory tension, move[d] to a crisis of individual and collective character, then drift[ed] toward closure.” *Sickness and Power* casts the flu as protagonist. The malady's emergence, spread, and subsidence form the spine of a narrative and analysis that synthesizes human, equine, and viral histories into a unified but sometimes discordant account.

Using a pair of complementary strategies, this book uses the story of the Great Epizootic Flu to tell a larger story about the history of the northern Americas during a ten-month period of convulsive conflict and momentous change. In the course of examining major episodes in the horse flu's transit (see the Project Outline for details), *Sickness and Power* takes maximum advantage of the horse flu's quality as a “natural experiment”: a phenomenon heedless of the divides of nation, region, species, and sub-discipline that too often limit our historical vision. The result is a study that offers fresh insights about the history of disease, human-animal relations, settler colonialism, racial politics, and animal-industrial capitalism at a crucial historical juncture that witnessed the end of Congressional Reconstruction, the dawn of the Gilded Age, railroad-related corruption scandals in all of the continent's republics, and the advent of a global depression.

I have already completed most secondary research, roughly half of the requisite newspaper research, and archival trips to Boston, Chicago, and Denver. I have also drafted portions of several chapters. By spring 2020, I plan to finish drafting chapters 1 and 3. Next summer, I will finish drafting chapter 2. A CHA Faculty Fellowship would enable me to wrap up my research in AY 2020-'21; draft chapters 4 through 6 as well as my epilogue. I plan to send the manuscript out for peer review in summer or fall, 2021.

On publication, *Sickness and Power* will provide scholars across the academy with a compelling reminder of the enduring, even intensifying entanglements through which humans, other-than-human animals, and microbes have together shaped the past and present.

CHAPTER OUTLINE: *Sickness and Power: The Great North American Epizootic Flu of 1872*

Chapter 1: Outbreak: Toronto and the Coming Plague

Sickness and Power begins microscopically—within a single cell of an individual somewhere on Toronto’s market-farming outskirts in the late summer or early fall of 1872. This chapter then proceeds to track the swarm of closely-related viral variants that caused the Great Epizootic Flu as they burst outward to infect other cells within this equine “patient zero.” Minutes or hours later, the besieged horse expelled some of these viral particles from its mouth and nose, thereby enabling this powerful new form of flu, which was many times more infectious than any previously recorded influenza outbreak in global history, to pass into the bodies of other hosts and hijack their systems of cellular reproduction to produce thousands, then millions, and eventually trillions of individual viruses. The chapter next follows this swarm of closely-related pathogens as it flowed into the equine-powered circulation systems linking Toronto’s hinterlands to the metropolitan center. Within days or weeks, more than 90% of horses, mules, and donkeys in Ontario’s bustling capital were suffering from fevers, running noses, tell-tale coughing fits, and prostration so severe that all but the most heartless or desperate owners recognized that animals sickened by the malady had to be given a protracted rest if they were to be saved from pneumonia and other deadly secondary infections. By late September, the Great Epizootic flu had paralyzed commerce, hobbled production, and constrained the wide spectrum of horse-powered activities—shopping downtown, catching a show at the theater, joining funeral corteges to bury the dead amid bucolic splendor, placing one’s fortune and manhood on the line by betting on harness races, and so forth—on which North American social and cultural life hinged. As the horse flu clutched Torontonians in its grasp, veterinary surgeons, physicians,

and other experts struggled to diagnose and treat the malady. Meanwhile, people in other parts of northeastern North America read wire-service reports of Toronto's ills and wondered: What could possibly account for the virulence of the "Canadian horse disease," and could it be stopped before it sickened the equines on whom they relied for motive power, transportation, employment, diversion, a sense of identity, and so much else?

Chapter 2: Emergence: Making a New Flu

A perplexing riddle stands at the core of this chapter: What accounted for the astounding infectiousness of the Great Epizootic Flu? From the disease's early weeks in Toronto through its subsidence a year later, most knowledgeable authorities identified the illness as a form of "influenza." Beneath this superficial agreement, though, profound disagreements roiled. North Americans of the early 1870s held very different ideas about influenza's etiology (its underlying cause[s]) and epidemiology (its means of transmission and progression). , with some attributing the disease to atmospheric influences (a venerable idea captured in the name that Renaissance Italians applied to the sickness—*influenza*) while others claimed that it was a contagious disease spread through by the direct transmission of sort of "germ," "virus," or "poison." The chapter then turns to the puzzlement that the Great Epizootic Flu's severity and point of origin caused, placing these in a longer and broader historical context. Influenza had first infected human populations in the Americas by the 1500s, and possibly even on Columbus's Second Voyage in 1493; when the equines first introduced to the Americas by the Spanish initially began to contract the disease is unclear, but North Americans of the early 1870s were very familiar with equine influenza. Never in recorded history, though, had epizootic influenza achieved infection rates anywhere near as high as those first noted around Toronto in late September 1872. While most nineteenth-century contagions resulted from the transmission of existing pathogens through burgeoning global transportation networks, the Great Epizootic Flu first appeared many miles inland from Toronto's booming waterfront. It therefore must have resulted from the evolution of a new family of influenza variants—a hypothesis supported by several recent scientific studies. The final section of this chapter explores the suite of economic and ecological transformations that help to explain why this landmark event in the history of human disease unfolded in this time and place. The rise of commercial agriculture on lands only recently taken from Indigenous peoples, in short, offered a perfect storm of conditions; residual wetlands continued to attract the wild avians that constitute the primary reservoir for novel influenza genomes, mixed market farming placed multiple species of flu-prone creatures (including chickens, ducks, equines, humans, and possibly dogs and hogs) in close proximity to each other and to wild waterfowl, and horse-powered transportation networks insured that any viable strain of influenza that evolved on the farms surrounding Toronto could rapidly spread throughout the city and its hinterlands.

Chapter 3: Proliferation: How the Great Epizootic Flu Took Hold

Chapter 4: Catastrophe: The Great Boston Fire

One of the most dramatic episodes in the Great Epizootic Flu erupted in downtown Boston in early November. During the mid-1800s, fire departments throughout North America had

grown to rely on horse-drawn fire engines that could hurtle through the streets at full gallop and swiftly douse out small blazes before they metastasized into larger conflagrations. In Boston, though, the Great Epizootic Flu had felled nearly all of the city's fire horses. Although the creatures were recovering in early November, the fire chief heeded the widespread belief that equines stricken by the epizootic needed protracted rest before returning to work to avoid heightened risks of pneumonia and other secondary infections. When a fire broke out in a four-story granite edifice at the corner of Summer and Kingston Streets, then, the alarm compelled Boston firemen to propel engines to the blaze under their own steam. The consequent delay gave the fire the time it needed to tear through the structure where it began, then spread from one Mansard-roofed stone warehouse and commercial building to the next. By the time firemen from throughout New England finally controlled the conflagration several days later, New England's biggest metropolis had suffered the second-worst urban fire of the late nineteenth century, superseded only by the Great Chicago Fire of the previous year.

Chapter 5: Crossings: The Flu Strikes the Reconstruction South, Latin America, and the West's Indigenous Nations

Once the Great Epizootic Flu exhausted the supply of immunologically naïve hosts in northeastern North America, it began to penetrate a succession of three very different regions. It hit the U.S. South at the height of what historian Douglas Egerton has aptly called "the Wars of Reconstruction," hampering the transportation of cotton, laying low the mules on whom sharecroppers and big planters alike relied, and suspending the horse races which constituted one of the most popular diversions throughout the urban South. While newly arrived European immigrants had sometimes seen profits to be made by taking the stead of sick horses in the North, no inducement—and no level of coercion—could impel African Americans in the South to pull wagons or carts. The ships that ferried horses and humans between Cuba and mainland North America also brought the epizootic to the island colony; there, as in the cities of the South, the flu's arrival froze commerce and complicated the horse- and mule-powered systems of production, circulation, and exchange on which everyday life depended. As the Great Epizootic Flu began to hop through most of the West Indies, it also began to reach the Great Plains. Intriguingly, its progress slowed on reaching the West's Indigenous Nations. This chapter concludes by examining how the intersection of the virus's continuing evolution, the decimation and fragmentation of human and equine populations in Indigenous America, and the growing isolation of native nations from one another combined to hamper the flu's progress across the West's plains, mountains, and deserts.

Chapter 6: Expansion: Modocs, Apaches, Chinese, and Racial Power

The Great Epizootic Flu coursed toward California along two primary routes: one leading through the Sierra Nevadas toward San Francisco, and the other running westward from Texas toward Los Angeles. This chapter analyzes the impact of these infectious currents on racialized conflict and violence in the Far West. Because flu tended to circulate among American-owned animals rather than via the region's hard-pressed Indigenous exchange networks, it almost always struck horses and mules owned by settlers and the U.S. Army

before reaching the creatures on whom native communities throughout the region continued to rely. In the Apache Wars of the Arizona-Sonora borderlands, and in the Modoc War in northern California and southern Oregon, the Great Epizootic Flu thus afforded resistant Indian peoples temporary relief from American incursions. Once the worst effects of the flu had passed, though, both Apaches and Modocs would reap the whirlwind. When the flu virus finally reached San Francisco in April, 1873, the city's merchants struggled with the same problems that their counterparts in most other parts of North America and the Caribbean had already encountered. Retailers who depended on horses or mules to make deliveries faced especially dramatic challenges. Many imported oxen from adjoining agricultural areas, but some arranged for Chinese contract laborers to haul wagons using their own muscle power. The Central Pacific Railway helped to broker these deals, but a Chinese entrepreneur also played an instrumental role. Newspaper accounts describe the harassment the Chinese workers faced as they strained against the harnesses to pull wagons carrying groceries and other goods to customers in San Francisco's steep streets. Gangs of street urchins threw rotten food at them while bystanders hurled epithets. Chinese community leaders worried that the use of their as human draft animals undermined their efforts to resist the increasingly strident calls of the Workingmen's Party of California and other anti-Chinese groups.

Epilogue: The Panic of 1873, the Fate of Animals in the Industrial Age, and the Future of Infectious Disease

Between March and July 1873, the Great Epizootic Flu completed its conquest of the northern Americas, bringing its peculiar brand of havoc to British Columbia, Mexico, and parts of Central America. By that point, mutant forms of the virus had also sparked more localized, less serious outbreaks of equine influenza in parts of eastern and central North America. In most respects, however, the epizootic seemed to recede with nearly as much swiftness and totality as it had first appeared a year earlier. In this epilogue, though, I turn to its longer-term impacts. Many contemporary observers believed that the outbreak helped to unleash the Panic of 1873, a wrenching continental and global economic crisis. While historians of finance are prone to discount this claim, I argue that the paralysis of production and commerce in entire regions for periods lasting from two to four weeks combined with the impact of the Great Boston Fire to produce a recession that pre-dated the fall of Jay Cooke's banking house in fall 1873. The epilogue then turns to investigate the tangle of conundrums that this disease event provoked regarding the interactions between humans, other-than-human animals, and microbes in modernizing North America. Although the epizootic prompted prescient experiments in replacing equine labor with machines, these substitutions had little lasting impact; streetcars driven by electricity and cables only began to replace horsecars in the late 1880s, while the large-scale replacement of wagons, drays, carriages, and other smaller equine-powered conveyances awaited the popularization of internal combustion engines in the 1910s. While newly formed humane associations had attributed the Great Epizootic Flu at least in part to the mistreatment of animals, the outbreak yielded little discernible improvement in the treatment of the 10+ million equines who labored in the northern Americas. The outbreak's near-total infection rate, meanwhile, made it a poor pretext for increased government involvement in the surveillance and

control of animal diseases. By the time the U.S. established the Bureau of Animal Industry in 1884 (headed by Daniel Salmon, who earned his doctorate under the aegis of James Law, who authored one of two full-length reports on the Great Epizootic Flu), the new variant of influenza that had first evolved outside of Toronto in 1872, then spread throughout the northern Americas was quietly continuing to seek out new hosts, to mutate into novel forms, and—as the Great Pandemic of 1918-'20 would eventually reveal—to attain the power to infect unprecedented numbers of humans.