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Lynching Notes

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Dr. Bory + Dr. Boyer Lecture

Ken Gonzales-Day: Context

- Gonzales considering **lynching** in a **broader context** than what is generally considered lynching
 - considering **interconnectedness of American violence**
- **Monroe doctrine**: US' declaration that it would maintain **control** over western hemisphere, in response to Latin American independence movements
 - not non-**empirical** - US' is+ tagline was "Empire for Justice" or smth, thanks TJ
- **manifest destiny** - term coined in US magazine & Democratic Review
 - originally understood as "**disease**" - uncontrollable, form of democracy will spread across continent
 - then came to be "**we** have the **right** to expand" following Mexican-American war
- **Mexican-American war** (1846-48) → US **took** most of west
 - however US did not magically become a unified nation - composed of **territories**
 - **borders** = modern concepts

Frontier Justice & Lynching

- differences btwn how US **thought of itself** & how it was
- **Frontier justice** emerges from **conflicting** legal **forms/cultural legal traditions**: Mexican v. Anglophone
 - F.J. = another cultural form trying to **reconcile** these concepts
- G-D recognizes ^{reconciliation} Frontier justice as **historical phenomenon**
 - we understand history as having beginnings & ends, need **forms/definitions** (ex. lynching) to express history - but things don't start & stop neatly
 - G-D also considers lynching as a **social phenomenon**: created white community, for example, via postcards
 - "**formal categories**" produce different kinds of cultural meaning - therefore these definitions/formal considerations = critical
- G-D explores lynching as contingent on "**racial identification**" - how to read foreignness?
 - ex. "**greaser**" calls out physical characteristics as a way to ID race
 - Irish, Italian ppl weren't considered white until they became "useful"
 - ↳ **definitions of race are always** tied to the **idw**

Dances

- relationship to **representation**

- mourner's bench: black masculinity? vulnerable, hurt, delicate - in contrast to tropes about black men, especially as promoted through lynchings

- Dr. Pyle says we're in the "semantic field" of black worship and using the Bible to emphasize narratives

- Strange Fruit: witnessing E.K.P.R. to lynching; adding another focal point to viewers' relationship w/ dancer (the lynched body); dancer sometimes parallels text exactly, sometimes not - movement overpowers text? text = context for dancer's raw, emotional reaction?

- Primus acting/dancing out white woman's reaction to lynching

- how do dances memorialize/reflect on/express history differently from Incognegro?

- more emotion in dance's physicality?

incognegro

- relationship b/w lynching/passing?

- "white ppl will see what they want to see" - both concepts police the color line
- both speak to complicated intersection of appearance & race

- form, as always, is significant - the larger scenes = more significant, for example

- the kids dancing at the lynchings - are they innocent? Mar Johnson points out their inherent, raw cruelty, which is evil, self or society? "ridiculous & horrifying in their pure honesty"

- focus in on mouth on panel 73: suggestion both of disgust and of erotic nature of violence -

• "that there's pleasure in the brutalization of black ppl," enslavement & rape inextricable