

Final Praxis Project Dialectical Journal

Feminist US Experience Praxis Activity • WGQS 201-02

Gavin Ruane • December 9, 2022

Table of Contents

1 Dialectical Journal.....	2
1.1 'We the People' – the three most misunderstood words in US history.....	2
1.2 Turntables.....	3
1.3 "US".....	4
1.4 "Reframing Reproductive Rights: Going Beyond Pro-Choice vs Pro Life".....	4
1.5 "Body Sovereignty and Kids: How we can cultivate a culture of consent".....	6
1.6 "To The Indigenous Woman Long Format, Poem by 1491s".....	7
1.7 "Kids tell the Herstory of Grace Lee Boggs, Detroit Activist".....	8
1.8 AAPF: Say Her Name.....	9
1.9 Truth & Conciliation.....	9
1.10 Care Can't Wait.....	10
2 Works Cited/Consulted.....	10

My mixtape will be submitted to this assignment but as a separate file, per Dr. Ednie's instructions.

1 Dialectical Journal

This section, displayed on the following pages, includes my Dialectical Journal for some of the sources I selected from the list of options, as well as some sources I found on my own. Each table includes three columns: the quote column, which shows the passage from the source and the language on which I'm commenting; the place column, which shows where (timestamp, page number, etc.) the passage is located in the resource; and the analysis column, which includes a brief explanation and my comprehension and application of the passage from the resource.

1.1 'We the People' – the three most misunderstood words in US history

Quote	Place	Analysis
"I've read our founding documents, I've studied our history, I see the current political environment, and I had to question, when did we decide as a nation that 'we the people' actually means 'all the people?'"	2:19	This is absolutely a true and important statement to recognize. Even people who see this country as unjust and in need of reform or reconstruction do not argue with the words 'we the people.' That's concerning to me, because as Charles remarks in his speech, the Constitution is inherently a document that upholds and protects the rights of white male land-owners and no one else.
"You cannot discover lands already inhabited."	3:33	I picked this quote out even though I'm already aware of what it conveys just to emphasize its importance. Children in schools really need to learn that the explorers did not discover any land at all, but instead, they conquered and invaded land of various groups of people. For the longest time, I saw the explorers as people that discovered new lands, but they discovered absolutely nothing!
"The purpose of our constitution is to protect the interests of white, land-owning men. So today, we act shocked that women earn \$0.70 to the dollar. This shouldn't shock us; our Constitution's working."	6:42	Charles uses very powerful, persuasive, and truthful language here to remind us that we cannot be shocked by the injustices in this country because they are protected under the Constitution. I wish that more people were able to hear this statement because it highlights that many of the large issues within this nation today are approved by the Constitution.
"And it was written and delivered by Ruth Bader Ginsburg. See, white supremacy is a bipartisan value."	11:58	This is important to include because it shows how white supremacy is not just a product of white people, although much of the time it

		actually is; it's rooted within each and every American, even those who are nonwhite, and unless we take steps to unlearn and deemphasize it, it will continue to permeate through everyone.
"They both agreed our past, our history, which included the enslavement of African people and the genocide of Native peoples, and our foundations which are based on the Doctrine of Discovery and the lie of white supremacy, they both agreed those things were great."	12:48	Mark Charles' words in this passage are especially important, and for me, very concerning. He reminds us that saying things like "America is already great," or "Make America great again!" are erasing as well as supporting the atrocities that have built and contributed to the United States' success as a major world power. I like living in the United States, and I am very grateful for my opportunities as an American, but I recognize that this nation is not something to be seen as a perfect power. I wish more Americans would question what they've learned and what they've been taught and understand that they can be patriotic while questioning and criticizing their country.

1.2 Turntables

Quote	Place	Analysis
"America, you a lie. But the whole world 'bout to testify."	1:00	I really enjoyed this line because, in typical Monáe fashion, it has some fun with its listeners while also conveying an important and accurate message. Monáe is absolutely correct here in that so much of the story of this nation is a white supremacist fictional story designed to favor some characters and demonize others, like the <i>Columbus in America</i> documentary shows. The claim that the United States will "testify" is important as it shows that the future of this nation will no longer submit to the fiction in our history books but the truths and realities of the real people in this country instead.
"We can't wait for it to, turn, turn, turn. Yeah, the table 'bout to turn."	1:26	This line quickly and simply expresses the idea that the way this nation works is going to change, and those who crave that change can't wait for it to happen. I also can't wait for it to

		happen. I see small bits of progress, but I, like Monáe, want that moment of liberation when people of all identities and groups aren't trapped by the atrocities committed against their ancestors and themselves.
"We kickin' out the old regime. Liberation, elevation, education."	2:01	Here, Janelle Monáe describes how she envisions changes throughout the United States should and will occur. She emphasizes freedom and new heights for people while also noting that education is key. I completely agree with her in that education is one of the strongest powers we have to remove unjust systems and create new ones, and the power of it is just not being harnessed currently.

1.3 "US"

Quote	Place	Analysis
"Yo fuck a story arc if it don't involve no matriarchs / Our mothers work from the ground up, they craftin' air like ATR"	Verse 1	I loved this line from "US." Ruby Ibarra calls upon her audience to recognize women's involvement in Filipino culture and history, and she rightfully rejects stories that ignore this very real and true fact. We should be angry if the truth is not expressed, just like Davis says to her audience about the history of enslavement and immigration in the United States.
"We don't fight for the money, for the greedy, for the white man All we want is our freedom And the right to live on on our motherland."	Verse 2	Ibarra's words in this line from her song explain that her anger and drive as someone striving for freedom comes from the fact that she just wants freedom! She's dedicated to her cause, which I respect.

1.4 "Reframing Reproductive Rights: Going Beyond Pro-Choice vs Pro Life"

Quote	Place	Analysis
"Why were these women going to the clinics they so strongly disagreed with? Was there more to their story then what the 'pro-life' label was offering them?"	2:45	I think that this is a great question to ask in context of the current issues surrounding Roe v. Wade in the United States today. Like the speaker Asha Dahya says, thoughts on abortion cannot be categorized into two binary options,

		even though we are made to believe that they can be. I agree with Dahya because she reminds us that, like so many other aspects of our society, having two categories for one's position does not mean that everyone fits into one of those.
"She actually felt sad about her abortion, even though she knew it was the right decision, but felt she couldn't tell anyone that. It was becoming clear to me that women in both camps whose lives and experiences didn't fit into a political categories."	4:39	I resonated with this quote for two reasons: first, it highlights the idea that even though abortion should be a necessary and completely supported procedure, we cannot dismiss the emotions that come along with it or label people who feel sad about their abortions as pro-life. Second, abortion should not be a political concept, because it really is not. The concept of abortion is misused by politicians to serve as an easily-demonized or celebrated aspect of a political agenda, ignoring the real meaning and purpose of it.
"Many women go silently from the church pew to the abortion clinic, convinced that the church would rather gossip than help."	5:23	This quote in particular struck me because it underlines the very real attitudes shown to women who have undergone abortions, and more generally, people who choose not to hide their imperfections or differences from the Christian church.
"Whose life are we really saving, and at what cost?...What are we saying about who we value? Are we telling women that living in silence is better than being supported?"	7:37	This is a good observation on the "question" of abortion in this country. I think that at the core of this issue, the right questions and focuses are not considered. Again, abortion is politicized to the point that the truths of the procedure itself are not considered and disregarded, leaving the women of this country to be maneuvered within this political battle.
"But as long as we continue to only focus on abortion, other important reproductive health issues like maternal mortality will keep getting ignored."	10:04	This is very true, and honestly very disheartening. Like so many other "political" issues, abortion has become a discussion that doesn't even consider the woman anymore but a discussion that is used to divide and sway voters. Because of this, other issues like maternal mortality are ignored and never receive the support they deserve.
"Instead, what if it was thought of as a medical and a social issue as it	10:54	Exactly. We cannot keep allowing abortion to be this issue that's devoid of any meaning and

used to be decades ago.”		instead is used for political benefits and campaigns. Abortion is a medical and personal decision, not a political one.
--------------------------	--	---

1.5 “Body Sovereignty and Kids: How we can cultivate a culture of consent”

Quote	Place	Analysis
“In many ways, the women in my class come back from this activity somewhat shaken. They report out that, ‘I get touched all day long.’”	1:28	This doesn’t surprise me, but it does shock me. When the speaker talked about how women are constantly violated but feel too scared to say anything about such actions out of being perceived as too difficult or too demanding.
“The closer the relationship, the more defensive people get...These are the very same people who should be honoring and respecting our bodies.”	2:54	Oh, that is so interesting. I guess that this really explains and leads to why most domestic or sexual violence incidents occur from someone that is close to the victim. On another note, this is really sad that the people we trust and connect to the most are the ones who are most likely to try and disrespect our personal boundaries.
“98% of the time, those survivors [of sexual violence] on [college] campuses are harmed by someone they know and trust.”	4:11	This confirms my thoughts from above! Also, it confirms for me that people are just so uneducated about what it means to give and receive consent. I think that some people like to write off these sexual assaults among young people as mistakes or young men’s typical actions, which is disgusting and untrue. At the same time, I blame the parents and education systems for not teaching people—young men in particular—about their responsibility to respect others.
“I think that we need to be starting earlier, specifically this early” (young youth)	5:08	At first, the image of her young child surprised me; however, I quickly recognized that the speaker is <i>absolutely</i> correct. Why is consent an adult topic? Sure, maybe a three year old doesn’t need to know about sexual consent, but they <i>absolutely</i> need to understand the concept of general consent.
“The first one is to avoid ‘the talk’...One of the missteps we make	6:30	Wow, this is revolutionary! My experience with “the talk” is so minimal, and when it did occur,

when talking about consent is that we attach it to the concept of sex, which means that we're uncomfortable talking about it..."		it felt demeaning and awkward. I love this idea because it makes topics like consent part of the natural fabric of life. It also makes sex seem like less of a taboo and inappropriate topic, because it isn't!
"Teaching age-appropriate anatomically correct terms to our kids, it increases confidence...it opens parent-child dialogue."	9:32	I also thought that this idea was incredibly important because it removes the idea that body parts are inappropriate or unnatural. This doesn't mean that one's genitals should be shown to the public at all times, but it <i>does</i> mean that one shouldn't feel afraid of the body they're given. We shouldn't use ridiculous words for real body parts like penis, vagina, or anus because these are real, natural parts!
"We don't undermine what our kids say about their bodies. I want my kids to be the expert on the sensations they're having in their body."	9:59	I really like this idea because it gives children the chance to grow into and learn about their personal bodies. I wish I was able to feel this when I was younger because I think I would have avoided many of the issues I've faced with my body.
"Reading facial cues is really important...What a lot of students don't know is that things like 'I don't know,' 'I'm not sure', or silence should be interpreted as no."	11:30	Absolutely. I think that this speaker's idea that consent needs to be taught at a young age would really help with this issue. Most people, especially young boys, are conditioned to think that feeling unsure means that someone really means to say yes, but this is not true. Understanding this as a young child would help people understand the truth behind these feelings.
"Setting boundaries doesn't need to be a big deal, but it also shouldn't have an impact on the feelings of the people that you're engaged with."	12:45	By instilling this idea in young children, maybe we can craft a future in which setting boundaries really is not something that should be seen as shameful. I know that personally I've always struggled to set boundaries out of coming off as too difficult or annoying. I would like our future children to have the agency and confidence to say no.

1.6 "To The Indigenous Woman Long Format, Poem by 1491s"

Quote	Place	Analysis
"To doctors without clues, for say-	1:10	When I first listened to this, I felt a bit of

nothing neighbors, for do nothing attorneys and quiet parents with no memories, thank you: you make all of this possible; we couldn't fail these women without all your help."		disbelief; the irony in this passage was really just so disheartening to hear. I think the idea that so many institutions and groups in this country choose to and actively ignore the plights of indigenous women. These are institutions that could contribute important and drastic changes to the neglect of indigenous women, and yet, they are choosing to ignore their power.
"To the restraining order as strong as the paper it's made from..."	1:40	Oh, wow! That's really terrible, but fantastic imagery. It exposes the idea that legal protections exist but fail to protect those that really need them most.
"I dare you to protect them, Mr. President; I dare you to make laws for them, senator and representatives; I dare you to try to stop me, tribal leaders; I dare you to go look for me, police officer."	2:21	I liked the language used in this passage because it mocks the idea that governmental recognition and support for indigenous women's protection and rights is a daring or outlandish claim, when it really is something that should be recognized because such rights are afforded to other American women.
"I am your wife, I am your sister, I am your mother, I am your daughter. You're supposed to protect me. You're supposed to be a warrior. Protect me from you, from him, from all of them."	3:32	I think that it's important to understand that the violence women face is not an example of an isolated incident or unfortunate, rare mishap but a very real and common action. A lot of men do not understand the spread of violence that affects women because it just doesn't affect them in the same way.
"Tell me you won't joke about this with your friends."	3:55	This line from the spoken poem really stood out to me because it exposes the all-too-common phenomenon that men <i>laugh</i> about the killing, rape, and abuse of women. It's not a joke, but a real experience.

1.7 "Kids tell the Herstory of Grace Lee Boggs, Detroit Activist"

Quote	Place	Analysis
"Grace and Jimmy's writing was so influential that people would say, 'Wow, I'm going to fight for civil rights!'"	2:35	I think that this highlights an important idea: writing and other creations from people can lead to and inspire others to act on social injustices in their world. On that note, it's important to keep introducing people to writings that challenge their ideas and push

		them to take action on their beliefs and thoughts.
“Brownfields are places that the auto company has abandoned. When people are not happy where they live, lots of crime happens... ‘Let’s build some casinos over these brownfields.’”	3:34	I enjoyed this part of the children’s telling of Grace Lee Boggs’ story. They really detailed how Boggs was able to work towards improving her community and cultivating a place in which she and her neighbors could enjoy their lives. I appreciate the children’s telling of the failure of the auto industry in Detroit because it shows that really the effects of the collapse are not difficult to comprehend at their core.

1.8 AAPF: Say Her Name

Quote	Analysis
“Black women and girls as young as 7 and as old as 93 have been killed by the police, though we rarely hear their names. Knowing their names is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for lifting up their stories which in turn provides a much clearer view of the wide-ranging circumstances.”	This first sentence stood out to me in particular. Why is it that we never hear the names of Black women killed by police, but we hear about some of the Black men who have been killed? Neither one is worse, so why is it that the women are ignored? There are reasons that we all know of course, but it is especially concerning when people advocating for racial justice and criticizing the police’s actions neglect or actively ignore the women affected by these policies and actions.
“Atatiana Jefferson was killed in her home while playing video games with her eight-year-old nephew. Police had entered her property concealed and unannounced on a wellness check.”	Like so many of the other topics we’ve studied in this course, this presents such a jarring situation. Women are expected to care for children because of their predefined gender standards, but when they carry out these duties, they are constantly interrupted, and in this case, killed. Anything a woman does, and here, a Black woman, can be criticized or ruined by her oppressor, and she is expected to deal with or allow it.

1.9 Truth & Conciliation

Quote	Analysis
“For too long we have ignored the calluses, medicated the pain and barely triaged wounds while the disease of	This use of language in this passage is beautiful, but at the same time, haunting. I think that this passage is absolutely correct: we keep patching wounds, but the

racism metastasizes within us like an all-consuming cancer. But the scabs of the sores have burst open again and pus from the wound is running over.”	solutions we’ve implemented have not done enough to actually make changes to the racism (and other issues) that persist in our American society.
---	--

1.10 Care Can’t Wait

Quote	Analysis
“Care was thrust into the spotlight during the Covid-19 pandemic, but so many Americans have quietly been struggling — often painfully and in isolation — with the pressures and impossible choices related to caring for our families.”	This is such an interesting project! I think that the project’s understanding that care means different things for all families, especially families of color and lower-income families, is really meaningful and presents a realistic, equitable, and appropriate policy for care in the United States.

2 Works Cited/Consulted

My Works Cited/Consulted for this project is available on