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New Australia, Un Nuevo Mundo

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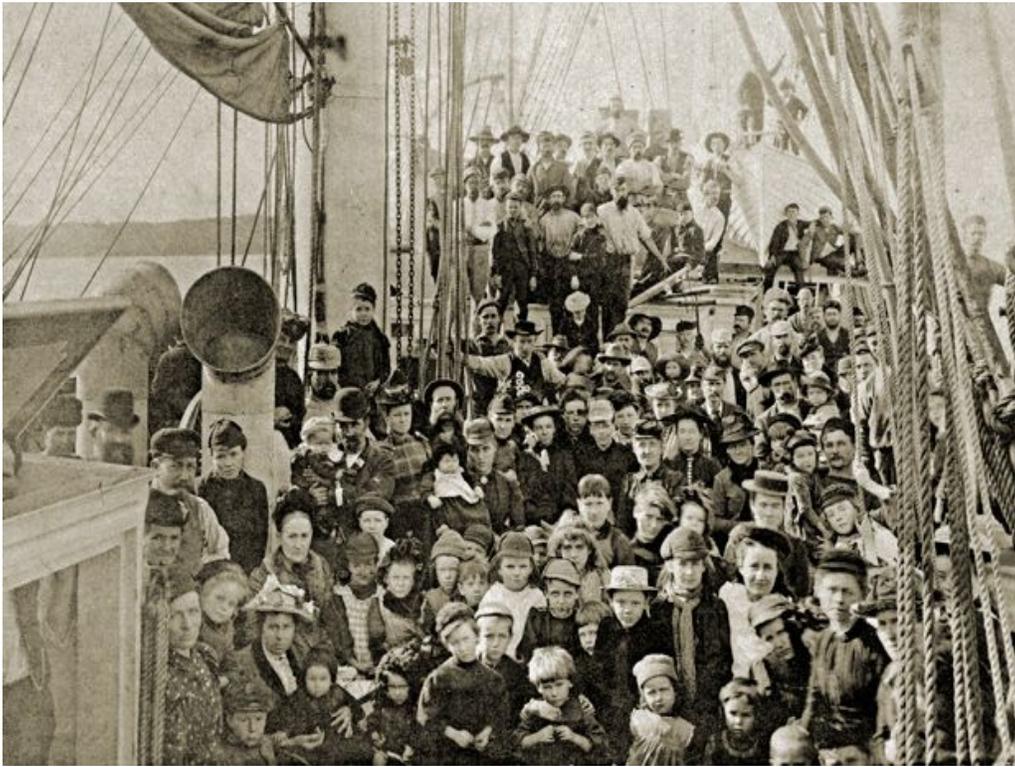
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New Australia, Un Nuevo Mundo



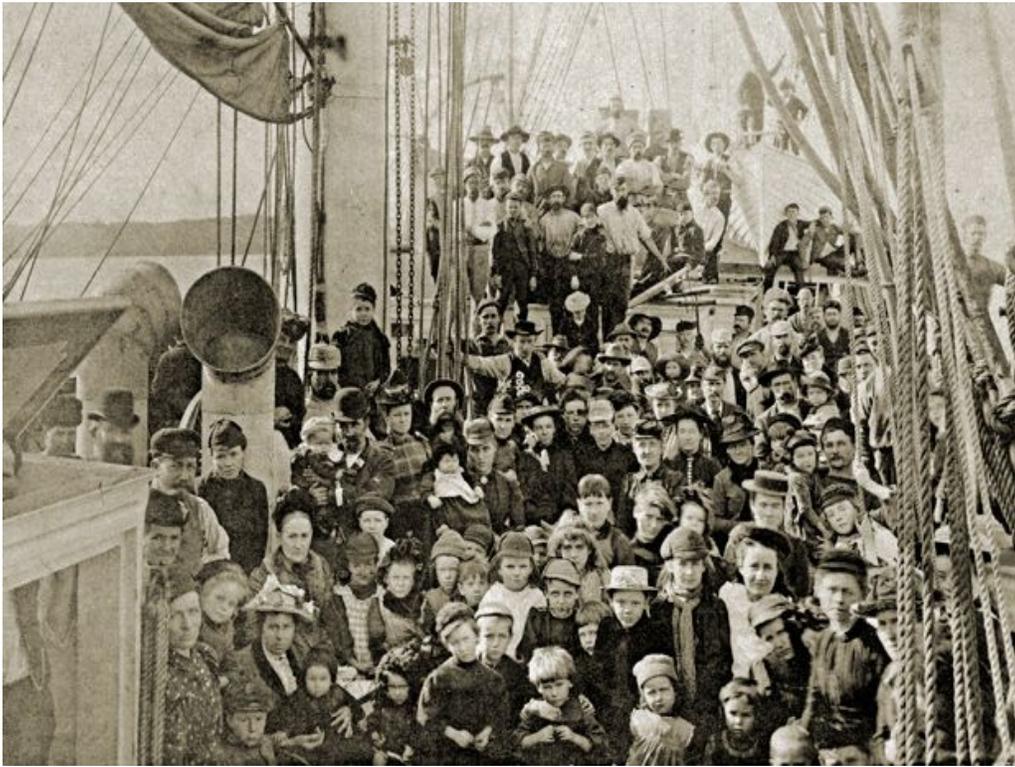
Elizabeth Christensen

Senior Capstone

School of Humanities and Communication

Fall 2018

New Australia, Un Nuevo Mundo



Colonists on the deck of the ship setting sail for South America in 1893. (Credit: State Library of NSW)

Elizabeth Christensen

Senior Capstone

Literary and Film Studies

Research Essay

Professor Umi Vaughan

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Capstone Project Proposal-Research essay

1. Liz Christensen, concentration in literary and film studies.
2. I will focus on the diaspora of the Australian migration to the South American colony known as New Australia. My project will address the question of identity. I want to know: how much do the surviving descendants of the New Australia colony identify with the homeland of Australia or the hostland of South America? How has their identities influenced the way they raise their children?
3. I have never considered that my family's history could be identified with diaspora. After reading Kim Butler's thorough examination of diaspora in her piece *Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse*, I came to understand that there are many different ways we can identify this complex idea. Through Butler's analysis, I've identified a few key features within my family's history that make me want to understand their journey on a deeper level. One of these features, for example, is that my great-great grandparents left their homeland of Australia because of "intolerable economic conditions" which Butler identifies under the category of emigration on page 201. This, among other key factors, has helped me connect my own family history to the idea of diaspora. It is through this connection, that I have been able to align my focus to my capstone's theme of inquiry.
4. My primary purpose is to help me connect with my family and our history. I have always been distant from my roots, and I hope that this project will give me a better understanding of them. I also hope to bring awareness of this small piece of history that might have otherwise, gone unnoticed and been forgotten.
5. My project's working title is "New Australia, Old Identities".
6. In the late 1800s, the Australian labour movement inspired a group of people to create a utopian settlement in Paraguay, South America. They did this in order to escape the the oppressive labor issues in the time of a recession and to start a

new life for themselves and their families. Unfortunately, their utopia was not all that the settlers had hope it to be, and New Australia dissolved. Disagreements among the people and leaders amongst other issues, led to the collapse of the settlement. Many of the settlers moved elsewhere, which then created an even larger dispersal of the Australian people. Those on my grandmother's side of the family, are some of only about 2,000 descendants who remain of this small part of history. The migration from Australia to South America and later dispersal into other parts of the world, has given these descendants a blended sense of identity. Through research, interviews and family stories, I hope to gain a detailed understanding of how the descendants of New Australia have come to view their own identities. I will focus on a few specific people and their own personal journeys as they pertain to customs, daily activities and overall culture.

7. I currently have a very limited knowledge of this history. I only know what my dad has told me over the years and what I have come to understand about the basic history from a few websites. I will need to gain a lot more knowledge which I plan to obtain from interviews with family members, from other sources such as websites and books, and from a documentary on the subject which features a few of my family members from decades ago. Many members of my family who still live in South America or otherwise are growing very old. I plan to interview a few of them, but I do not know which ones as their age and memory may be an issue. This is something that I need to discuss with my dad further. There are also many reputable websites that detail this history that I have not thoroughly investigated and would like to use. I also plan to use the documentary to supply more information about those members of the group and my family who are no longer alive. My aunt is going to send me a copy of this documentary and I believe it is called "And Their Ghosts May be Heard" which is based on the book by Robert Gerritsen.

8. The most important next step I need to take is to get my hands on the documentary and watch it. I think that this will help give me more of a foundation for my basic understanding of the project. I will then need to figure out which family members are ones that I will be able to interview and then get in touch with them. From there, I will just need to fill in any gaps with information that I can find online or in books from the library if there are any. Doing all of these things will give me what I need in order to create my rough draft ready by October 22.
9. I plan to get my hands on the documentary sometime this week, no later than 9/28/18. I will then plan to watch the film before the week is out and to take detailed notes on it. This will be completed by 9/30/18. I also plan to ask my dad to get me in contact with the relatives that he think would be the best interviewees by 9/28/18. Then, pending the schedules of my relatives and considering the time difference, I would hope to complete my interviews 10/8 which would then give me 2 whole weeks to write my rough draft. From this point, it would just be a matter of feedback both from my rough draft and me peer critique in order to create the finalized version of my essay in time for 11/28.

I would like to thank my father Eric Christensen, my mother Rebecca Slaton, my grandfather Jack Christensen, my Tía Florence White and my Aunt, Lane Hayes for their contributions to this project. Without them, none of this would have been possible.

Research Essay

Growing up, I was a bit confused about my ethnic identity. When people asked me about my heritage I would proudly tell them that I was one-quarter Paraguayan. This is not at all true. I would later learn from my father that although his mother was from South America, we were not ethnically Paraguayan. This confused me. I knew that my grandma and grandpa spoke Spanish and that my dad had moved from Peru when he was a baby. Didn't that mean that we were partially Hispanic? My dad explained to me that although he and grandma had been born in South America, it was only because my great grandparents had immigrated there from Australia. I was deeply disappointed. Part of me really didn't want to accept my white identity because it wasn't something I was proud of. I had lived my life under the assumption that, although I looked white, I wasn't completely and I felt happy about that.

After gaining this information, I left the issue alone. I never took it upon myself to find out anything about my family or their past. That is until last summer when I got the chance to go with my dad to Paraguay and Peru to visit our family and my curiosity was sparked. Unfortunately, circumstances prevented me from going with him on the trip. I was deeply disappointed by the missed opportunity to meet my family and visit their homeland. However, this did provoke my interest once again in my family history and how it is that we ended up with this cultural identity. This exploration has lead me to the discovery of a small and almost forgotten piece of history. The members of my family remain as some of only about 2,000 descendants who can trace their lineage back to

the South American colony known as New Australia.

In this essay I will explore the concept of diaspora and how it pertains to my family's history. I will also discuss how this concept relates to identity and to my own personal confusion towards my heritage. I will include interviews held with my Tía Abuela Florence and my father Eric Christensen regarding their own personal identities. A film I discovered called *And Their Ghosts May be Heard*, which details the history of New Australia and features several of my family members, will also be a focus of this essay. I hope to examine several questions concerning identity and diaspora, such as how the descendants view the difference between their ethnic and cultural identity. I will also discuss the idea of the homeland and whether or not it can change from generation to generation and through the several phases of emigration.

These ideas are not easy to pin down and are as complicated as they are vast. In her novel *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Isabel Wilkerson says this about the diaspora known as the great migration. She writes, "The facts of their lives unfurled over the generations like an over-wrapped present, a secret told in syllables." (Wilkerson, 46) Just as Wilkerson describes it, the illusive concept of diaspora will prove to be a more of a process than a single action or event and is one that continues to develop the more we explore it.

It is first important to understand the convoluted term of diaspora. Depending on who you ask, the term may have a different definition or association with a place or people. In her piece *Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse*, Kim D. Butler discusses

this very issue. She analyzes the many lenses through which different scholars, cultures and communities define the term, and shows us that this definition is not so easily pinned down. She even goes as far as to say that “..we have actually become less clear about what defines diasporas and makes them a distinct category” (Butler, 189).

Through this undetermined distinction, she attempts to piece together the many understandings of what diaspora really means. With this lack of clarity, one can gather that diaspora is to each their own. Those who have found themselves, their families or ancestors before them displaced, seeking identity or even otherwise marginalized, may have the authority to define their own diaspora for themselves. I have found myself questioning and analyzing my own ancestral past in order to understand this concept within the framework of our family history. I believe that the term, although muddled, can be applied to my family in their migration from Australia to South America in the late 1800s.

To put it simply, Butler temporarily defines diaspora “..at its simplest, as the dispersal of a people from its original homeland.” (Butler, 189) I feel comfortable categorizing the move that my great-great grandparents made from Australia to South America and the subsequent moves their children made thereafter to fall within this definition. Butler highlights the many ways in which diasporic dispersals have been commonly initiated which include but are not limited to various forms of exile, captivity and emigration. My family’s diaspora can be understood through the categorization of immigration. They made the decision, along with dozens of other families, to emigrate

from Australia in order to escape the failing lower class economic conditions at the time. Like many other groups identified by Butler who needed to leave their homeland for better work opportunities, the members of this group known as the New Australia movement, left their home to do the same.

In order to better understand this connection, a brief history of New Australia is necessary. Australia was hit by an economic recession in the 1890s during which the Australian Labor Movement was born. This plight involved many types of hard working people including sheep shearers, carpenters, blacksmiths and even many white collar workers. In the film *And Their Ghosts May be Heard*, narrator Caroline Jones describes the conditions in Australia as “almost to the point of civil war.” There were riots, mass fires and police brutality towards the working people of Australia. Displeased with poor job opportunities, unfair labor conditions and violence, laborers were ready for a change. Of this kind of situation, Wilkerson speaks to the movement of the great migration in which she says “What binds these stories together was the back-against the wall, reluctant yet hopeful search for something better, any place but where they were. They did what human beings looking for freedom, throughout history, have often done. They left.” (Wilkerson,15) These laborers soon decided, that they too must leave in order to find peace and freedom. And so they did.

These people were soon taken in by a prominent leader of the movement, William Lane. Lane wanted to form a group of people who would move away from these issues in order to form a community of their own and to start a new life. Lane was able

to gather hundreds of followers and purchased land in the jungles of Paraguay for this mission. He wanted New Australia to be a utopia for those who had been previously part of a lower working class. The Paraguayan government was eager to sell Lane this land as the offer came shortly after the end of a six-year long civil war which had left the country diminished. The War of Triple Alliance had taken the lives of many men from the country, leaving it very short of skilled workers. Unfortunately, the utopia of New Australia did not become all that the settlers had hoped it to be. Their quality of life was poor, and Lane had instituted strict rules that made the settlers unhappy. The settlement took only a few years to fall apart, leaving the settlers with the question of what to do next. While many of the families moved just kilometers away in order to form their own collective known as Cosme, many others left Paraguay all together. Some of these families returned to Australia while others moved to England and Argentina. In the end only eight families remained in Cosme, including my own.

From this broader history, the story of my family can be further traced. My great grandparents, William and Laura Sophia Wood, had nine children. Sadly, a baby girl named Elsie died at only the age of two. This left eight children from the Wood family including my grandmother Olive June Wood. Each child carried on with their lives, and as they grew up, each found their own place to call home. Three of the five girls married and eventually moved to the United States while the other two stayed in Paraguay. Two of the three brothers also remained in Paraguay while the third brother moved back to Australia.



The Wood family, 1948 (Standing, top from left: Willie, Charles, Nellie, Olive June, Diana, Florence, and Johnny. Sitting, bottom from left: Daisy, William and Laura Sophia. Credit: Christensen family photo collection.)

From these various moves, we can see that one of the defining characteristics of diaspora described in Butler's essay as the "dispersal to two or more locations" is present. This sort of dispersal is what can greatly affect identity in each person. My family is of European and Australian blood, but for both my great-great grandparents and their children, the only life they ever knew was in Paraguay. This provides the circumstance of contrast in identity between nationality and ethnicity.

However, according to my Tía Abuela Florence, she has always considered herself to be a Paraguayan. In our interview, Florence never seemed to feel confusion or frustration concerning her identity. In a separate interview with *The Argentina Independent* when asked about her identity, she said, “I think Australia is lovely, but Paraguay is my home.” It would then appear that although I had experienced confusion as a child, Florence has always felt a distinct connection to Paraguay and clearly identifies with it.

This sense of belonging is another characteristic that Butler identifies with diasporas. She says “..there must be some relationship to an actual or imagined homeland. Whatever the form of this bond, it provides the foundation from which diasporan identity may develop.” (Butler, 192) Florence has visited what her grandparents would consider to be their homeland: Australia. And although she would identify her homeland as Paraguay, she does feel lovingly towards Australia. It is the place that many of her ancestors loved and called home. In our interview she told me “I enjoyed my visit (to Australia) and was so glad to see where my grandad was born and to know that many of the Wood family members still live there.” In his journal simply titled *Diaspora*, sociologist Eliezer Ben-Rafael says “Diasporics as a whole, however, always wish to insert themselves into their new environment, even though they are also often motivated to retain a degree of loyalty to their singular legacy and original milieu.” (Ben-Rafael, 842-843) From this we gather that while Florence’s loyalty lies with Paraguay, her heart does feel for the place that her grandparents called home. This

identification becomes even more complicated upon learning of my tía abuela's dual-citizenship between Paraguay and the United States. Like my grandmother, Florence met, fell in love with and married an American. It is because of this union that she moved to the United States and lived in Saint Louis, MO for many years. She obtained citizenship and through her years in both countries, now identifies as both an American and as a Paraguayan. She explained to me,

I always enjoyed being a South American and always admired their lifestyle, and culture, and of course as I was born here. I consider it my home now and I have a North American citizenship, and loved living in the USA and being married to a North American man and therefore love both culture(s) and countries. (White)

After her husband passed away, she decided to go back to her homeland of Paraguay and has now been there for over thirty years. Florence was born in Paraguay, and despite years of living elsewhere, now at the age of 83 resides in her homeland where she lives a happy life.

Florence's story is her own. This is something that I have come to understand about diasporas: that they can be identified down to the individual story. The sense of identity can change from place to place, migration to migration, and generation to generation. For example, the child of migrant parents, although second generation, is the product of diaspora but might not necessarily identify themselves in the same way as their parents. In the film *And Their Ghosts May be Heard*, my family members, along with the many other settlers had their own versions of identity and saw their lives in very

different ways from one another. My featured family members including my distant cousin, Peter Wood, mostly felt connections to their homeland of Australia. The film follows Peter's journey to visit his parents who continue to live on the old colony, decades after almost all others had left. Peter grew up in Paraguay, but had decided as an adult to move back to Australia because he had never felt a strong connection to it. Ben-Rafael discusses this ever present connection for the homeland when he says,

The resettling of people who in the past left it for the diaspora but decided – perhaps after some years, decades, or even generations – whether for ideological or instrumental reasons, to 'return' to the place they always considered their 'real home.'" (Ben-Rafael, 844-845)

We also gather from my other distant relatives in the film, that they too identify with Australia. Despite the New Australian colony's dependence on Paraguay, there were many people who did not like their lives in the jungle. Many were so disappointed in the failings of the community that they moved back to Australia or very often considered to do so. The narrator, Jones, speaks of the homesick sentiments felt by many of the settlers such as the yearning for tea or for the poems from Australian Poet Henry Lawson. It is hard to say whether this disconnect from Paraguay was felt because the colony failed or because these settlers weren't the type to give up their connection to the homeland. The colonists were distraught with hunger, back-breaking labor that often consisted of 16 hour days and from discriminatory sentiments aimed at them from the native Guaraní people. For many of this generation, something about this existence

did not resonate with them. For these people, Australia was home and they missed it.

This was not the story that all of the colonists would tell, however. Each one had their experience. Ben-Rafael discusses this in his journal as well. He says,

Whatever the terms and concepts utilized, the issue of identity remains a crucial aspect of the diasporic endeavor. Defining a collective identity, however, is by no means easy – either for researchers, or for the individuals concerned... Its formulation may greatly vary among members of the same community, as well as in different places or times. And in parallel, the basic elements that compose identities also vary, from one case of diaspora to another. (Rafael, 847)

This is something that we see in the difference between the original members of the colony and even in the differences between generations. In the film we also meet Peter's parents who still live on what use to be Colonia Cosme. Peter and his other relatives take the long and difficult journey through the wilds of Paraguay to get to them. The journey includes taking a train, riding on the back of a mule, traveling through thick jungle brush and trudging through slippery muddy terrain. Peter finally makes it to the old colony and we find his parents living a happy life with only a handful of people. Somehow, this small scale version of New Australia found a way to function and survive the mass exodus of the other colonists. These people, like my grandmother and my Tía Abuela Florence, speak English, Spanish and Guarani. They live off of the land and engage in South American cooking as well as some traditional Australian cooking. They love many things from their homeland but also love the dance, music and other

traditions of Paraguay. From Peter's parents, I observed in them a very different sense of identity than his own. They, unfortunately, did not comment on this matter, but did express contentedness with their lives. They very clearly found a way to work harmoniously with the land and had adapted nicely to their lives as Paraguayans.

I learned from my tía abuela that her parents were of a similar mindset. Even after most everyone else had abandoned the colony, they stayed with the intention of making their life in Paraguay work. Although they did identify with their homeland, they were loyal to their new home and did not simply want to give up on it. Florence expressed that in a sense, both countries could be called home by her parents. She told me,

My father always felt English/Australian and was practically an ambassador taking care of many visitors who came to Paraguay to get to know the country. He had no problem as he spoke perfect English/Spanish/Guarani (the Indian local language). Mom was a perfect little English lady even though she too could talk other languages. They never showed differences concerning countries.

(White)

By observing the differences in perspective as displayed by Peter, his parents and Florence, we can see the divergence in identity that can depend on several factors. In his journal, Ben-Rafael mentions that "Allegiances are constructed and reconstructed over time in different contexts, and fluctuate according to individual interests and social claims." (Ben-Rafael, 843) We can see through each individual lies a story, a difference

in generation and difference in circumstance. All of these account for the contrast in identity and make each member of a diaspora unique.

My discovery of these different histories made me even more curious about my father and his story. He was born in Lima, Peru in 1954 and moved to the United States when he was only two years old. I was interested in his story and wondered about how his identity had developed. He first told me about my grandparents and how their transnational relationship came to be. He tells me that,

Dad and Mom were married in January 27, 1954. He was teaching at a school in Lima. Mom had managed to become a stewardess for Pan Agra Airlines. Her pilot who was Dad's roommate, Gus Machado, introduced them and I came along shortly afterwards. Two years later, they moved onto a farming property belonging to my Grandpa Chris. We spent two and a half years in Palo Alto while Dad went to Stanford for his Ph.D.. Been in Fresno since '68. Dad became a professor at CSUF and Mom a legal secretary. The reason for the moves was always economic opportunity. Also, Mom became a U.S. citizen in the early 70s and took the oath in Federal Court with lots of family watching. (Christensen)

My father explained that although he can claim multiple citizenships, he identifies as American. Much like how Florence felt fond of Australia because of her relatives, my father feels an attachment to South America because of his mother and various other relatives that still live in the country. In fact, it would seem that most of my Father's ties to South America are so because of my grandmother and the traditions that she

shared with him. And although many details have been lost because of my grandmother's death, much has been retained through the memories and stories that have been passed down through the years. In Andrew Lam's book *Perfume Dreams* in which he shares essays about the Vietnamese diaspora, he says "Precious things lost are transmutable. They refuse oblivion. They simply wait to be rendered into testimonies, into stories and songs." (Lam, 2) This expresses how legacies remain and how identities are shaped, shared and passed down onto other generations.

My grandmother died when I was only twelve, and suffered through illness for several years previous, so many of the traditions that I remember as a child diminished long ago as a result. I think that when she passed away, the lively and vibrant environment I once knew faded away with her. There was a time when Spanish was spoken regularly in my grandparents' home, but that is no longer the case. I will always feel sorry for the loss of my grandmother and the opportunity that I will never have to know her better. I wish I could say that I speak Spanish, which is a skill I yearn to have had throughout my life. But I cannot. I also wish that I could have learned from her, how to cook many of the dishes she made like paella or milanesa. I think that this gap in practicing South American traditions may show why it is that both my father and I mostly claim and understand an American identity.

Although my father does still feel fondly for his homeland, he says that he identifies as American. And although he is often distraught with the current state of our country, he still hopes to work hard and to help it become a better place. He says that,

“I do think America has the potential to be the greatest country in the world (it is not doing so well under the current regime) and hope to do my part to make it better.” He is much like my great grandfather William, who despite fighting for Australia and the British Empire at Gallipoli, refused offers of repatriation in Australia after the war. He chose to return to and live in South America. Both my great grandfather and my father have chosen devotion to countries that are not necessarily their homeland. Much of this complicated sense of identity comes from where you chose to show loyalty and identification, rather than from where you were born.

It turns out that, like me, my dad takes pride in our heritage. Although I am ethnically white, I do have a lot of respect for our family history and am so happy to be a part of such a rich and interesting legacy. I resonate with something that he said about his mother and his identity from the conclusion of our interview. He told me,

I feel pride in being able to say I was born in an interesting environment elsewhere. Along with Mom’s history (and Dad’s) we have as rich a story as anyone else I know. Mom grew up surrounded by dense jungle, jaguars, howler monkeys, piranha and snakes. She became an educated, cosmopolitan woman and pal’d around with folks like John Wayne’s future wife and met celebrities on her flights. Although she married a hick from Kingsburg, it turned out alright. She was considered the best legal secretary in town; fluent in both English and Spanish. I figure, any country or continent that can raise a gal like her is enough for me to be very proud of my heritage. (Christensen)

I conclude that, especially when we consider the aspect of diaspora, no person's story will be the same as another's. Within this framework, there are so many details to consider when pointing to the idea of identity: no two are the same. There are so many moving pieces to these stories. The way we think about ourselves and the ways in which we interact with the world are constantly changing. Kim Butler upholds this statement when she says,

Diasporan status is not necessarily conferred automatically based on the location of a specific community outside the homeland, or on the fact that most of its individual members were born in dispersal. Rather, they differentiate between a symbolic, ethnic identity of "being" and a more active, "diasporan" identity requiring involvement. Such a concept of diaspora calls attention to the relationship between identity and active participation in the politics of hostland and homeland." (Butler, 191)

For me, this participation is seen in my grandmother's cooking and in my dad's concern for the politics both in South America and in the U.S.. It is seen in my yearning to learn the traditions celebrated by my grandmother and in my tía abuela's identification with both her South American and U.S. citizenship. It is seen in the lives of those who have both a host and a homeland and for those who have a variety of traditions they practice. The discourse of diaspora is constantly changing, just like those identities that are being shaped by it. Author Claire Alexander perfectly describes this evolving framework when she says,

Diaspora is, perhaps by its very nature, a moving target, both as social and historical process, and as concept. It is inherently dispersed, heterogeneous and fragmented, with uncertain contours and incommensurable meanings. At the same time, however, it necessitates an engagement with both “roots” and “routes”, with the places where movement ceases and where identities and explanations cohere – however momentarily.”

For me, this description expresses that much like the people influenced by diaspora, the study itself is uncertain, imperfect and developing. For those people who have been forgotten, cast aside or forced to assimilate, this study is working to help bring definition and understanding to our communities and our identities. The discourse of diaspora shines a light on our evolving sense of self in a constantly changing world.

Annotated Bibliography

- Alexander, C. (2017) Beyond the “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora”: A Response to Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40:9, 1544-1555, DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2017.1300302](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1300302)
This journal was written in response to a piece on the same issue by Rogers Brubaker. It reflects on Brubaker’s writing and expands upon his ideas. I selected this article simply because I really liked something this author said and I quoted it in my paper. The quote really helped to sum up my idea.
- Ben-Rafael, E. (2013). Diaspora. *Current Sociology*, 61(5-6). DOI:10.1177/0011392113480371.
This piece touches on many different diasporas throughout history and speaks to their sociological impacts throughout the world. I chose to use this journal because this author offers a scholarly opinion on diaspora and provided many useful quotes to help solidify my ideas.
- Britannica, T. E. (2014, June 06). War of the Triple Alliance. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/event/War-of-the-Triple-Alliance>
This article details the history of the War of Triple Alliance and its impacts on South America. I chose to use this article because it gave me a very detailed account of the historical basis of my essay.
- Butler, K. D. (2001). Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 10(2). DOI:10.1353/dsp.2011.0014
In this journal Butler discusses the ever changing concept of diaspora by discussing how to identify and understand it. I chose this journal because it helped to give me my foundational understanding of diaspora as a whole.
- Christensen, E. C. (2018, October 18). [E-mail interview].
In this interview, I collected stories and information about my father’s identity and past history. I chose to interview my father in order to get a differing opinion from my Tía’s, and to get stories from someone from a different generation.
- Gow, K. (Director). (1975). *And Their Ghosts May be Heard* [Motion picture on DVD]. Sydney: Film Australia.
This film breaks down the history of the New Australian colony and its descendants. This film was also very foundational to my essay. I chose to use it because it specifically details my own personal family history.

- Lam, A. (2005). *Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books.
 This book features a series of essays in which the speaker reflects on the Vietnam War, his identity and diaspora. I selected this book for my essay because it provided me with quotes that were both beautifully written and poignant.
- Wilkerson, I. (2016). *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*.
 This book details the history of the great migration as well as the individual stories of three people affected by it. I also selected this book for the beautifully written and concise quotes that it contributed to my essay.
- New Australia: The Australian Colony in Paraguay. (2008, January 25). Retrieved from <http://www.argentinaindependent.com/life-style/travel-life-style/new-australia-the-australian-colony-in-paraguay/>
 This article talks about the history of the New Australia colony and why it failed. I chose to use this article because it gave a different perspective on the New Australia colony, one that was a bit more critical than my other sources.
- White, F. C. (2018, October 16). [E-mail interview].
 In this interview, I collected stories and information about her identity and past history. I decided to interview my Tía Flo because she has always been the family member I talk to the most in South America and she was able to lend her unique perspective and life experiences to my essay.

Final Synthesis Essay

Through my experiences in HCOM 475, I have gained new insights about myself, others and the world as a whole. The course theme of diaspora provided me with the push I needed to explore more about myself and the world. It has provided me with new outlooks on life, and also with the skills and knowledge necessary to move forward with my life and education. Our class seminars have brought about both relative and important discussions to the forefront and provided important information essential to the success of my project. My contributions to class discussions, along with the contributions given by my classmates, have added to the overall understanding of the course theme and have provided multiple points of view on the subject. I have found that working collaboratively with my professor and fellow classmates gave me the tools I needed to work independently. The result was a concise and comprehensive demonstration of my work throughout the semester. My project not only adheres to the anticipated standards of the capstone criteria but also demonstrates my deepened understanding of the discourse of diaspora.

One of the most important aspects of this course was class discussion. Diaspora is very much viewed and interpreted through personal experiences, stories and opinions. Therefore, hearing the differing opinions of my classmates was crucial to my deepened understanding of this topic. Because I began this semester with little to no knowledge of my own family history, I originally thought I had very little to contribute to our discussions. However, through class exercises and exploration of my own family

history, I found out that I am part of a legacy of diaspora as well. This gave the contributions in class discussion more substance and ultimately made my experience better. Even when my own stories weren't relevant, my own experiences proved to be helpful in developing our conversations. For example, in one of our class meetings in which we discussed Junot Díaz's book *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, I was able to share an experience that I had in another class. In this portion of our discussion, we talked about the use of different languages in his book. Although I am only fluent in English and could not connect with those in class who were bilingual, I was able to share the knowledge I had gained from another class.

Additionally, and almost more importantly, I contributed to our discussions by listening to others and learning from what they had to say. It is not enough to simply add my own opinions. It was extremely beneficial to understand different points of view and to therefore get outside of myself and my own experiences. We all provided our own unique insights and formed our discussions more as conversations. This greatly contributed to our collective understanding of our course's shared theme of diaspora.

Our class discussions were also beneficial as a way to work collaboratively, which ultimately gave me the tools to be successful independently. The insights I gained from my classmates helped to spark my own thinking process. Working collaboratively on a smaller scale was also incredibly helpful. One of our assignments was to work with a partner to peer review our project rough drafts. Looking over my classmates body of work, and having discussions with them about it gave me new ideas for my own project.

For example, my classmate Krysta and I had a conversation about our difficulties with finding good titles for our projects. Through our conversation, we were able to bounce ideas off of one another and brainstorm some solutions. It is because of this conversation that I found the perfect title for my essay!

I remember the dread that I felt at the beginning of the semester with a fifteen page research project looming over my head. I was very surprised when I finally sat down to write my essay that I was able to do so with ease. The books we read in class, as well as the collaborations and class discussions provided me with an abundant foundation on which to write. The class seminars had given me everything I needed to start writing.

My project displays my deepened understanding of diaspora in many important ways. One example is that through research about my own family history, I was able to connect to this topic on a personal level rather than just as an outsider on the surface. I think that being able to connect to the topic in this way made it so that I too am a part of this phenomenon. I was able to further my knowledge by questioning my own identity and observe my history more closely. This deeper understanding is demonstrated in my essay through the journey I take to discovery. I begin the essay describing my confusion towards my identity. The body of my work exhibits my thought process and I answer my own questions through the research I provide. This research can be seen in the form of books, journals, a film and even two interviews with family members. The essay concludes with my expression of understanding towards my identity. My research

helped me to see diaspora through the eyes of other people thus ultimately helping me to understand my own.

I believe that my capstone perfectly reflects the published criteria and standards for this project. I did so by following the guidelines provided by my professor and CSUMB. I began first by selecting one of the approved projects: the research essay. I then made sure to attend each class for instruction and completed the necessary assignments given to us by our professor. Throughout this time, I was also doing research on my own time which helped me to meet the deadlines for each assignment. This research along with the assignments helped me to complete my final project. From there I simply needed to be thorough in following the specific details concerning format, final deliverables and more. The final version of my project aligns with the course topic, asserts a thesis, and supports my claims through cited research. I did my best to participate, ask questions, work with others and carefully read instructions in order to adhere to the published criteria and standards.

Overall, my experience in this capstone class has proved to be not only educational but also life changing. I have come to understand myself and my family in ways that I never thought possible. This class pushed me to investigate parts of my life that I would have never done otherwise. It has also given me the opportunity to hear stories from my fellow classmates and to help me understand them better. I took this class with many people that I have had in my classes over the years. It was heartwarming to complete the final leg of this journey here at CSUMB with familiar faces

and to get to know my peers better. I believe that the knowledge we gained here will help us to make change in the world and to understand one another better.

Elizabeth Christensen

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EDUCATION

California State University Monterey Bay / 2016-2018

- Bachelor's degree in Humanities and Communication
Concentration in Literary and Film Studies
- Minor in Cinematic Arts and Technology

Cabrillo College / 2012-2016

- Associate's degree in Liberal Arts
- Associates degree in Social Sciences

WORK EXPERIENCE

Brand Educator- Kikoko

October 2018 - current

I currently represent Kikoko in the South Bay as Brand Educator in which I promote sales and communication to the accounts in my territory. I run product demonstrations, engage in sales analysis and address both customer and account concerns or questions.

Brand Ambassador-Mirth Provisions

September 2017- current

I currently represent Mirth Provisions in the Santa Cruz and Monterey territory. I work closely with accounts in my territory to promote sales through vendor days in which I sample unmedicated products, offer promotions and educate both staff and customers. In the absence of our Northern California sales manager, I have taken over the responsibility of taking further care of the territory by handling account questions, ordering and other communications.

Brand Ambassador-CannaCraft

February 2017-September 2017

Represented the Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay area for THC, CBD and edible products in which I provided product demonstrations for patients offering product information and other promotions. In the absence of the territory representative, I placed orders, offered samples and handled patient returns etc.

Sales Representative-Herbal Answers Aloe

July 2016 - February 2017

Represented Herbal Answers Aloe as their Northern California territory sales rep. I provided support for accounts through scheduled visits, phone calls, handling orders and performing demos when needed.

Staff of Life-Vitamin Dept. Assistant Manager

March 2016 - August 2016

In charge of overseeing employees, assigning tasks and ensuring overall productivity of department. In charge of processing returns and customer concerns, both in addition to buyer duties.

Marshalls/TJX Corp. - Store manager and department supervisor

2012 - 2014

Supervised employees at the front end registers while processing returns and handling customer concerns. In the absence of other managers, I acted as the “manager on duty” and supervised the whole store team, handling the end of the night money from sales, running end of day reports, and locking up and alarming the store for closing. I attended business meetings, and handled sales and sales reports in addition to merchandising products and displays.

REFERENCES

Contact information available upon request.

- Dr. Rebecca Slaton- Professor of Psychology at Fresno State University
- Linda Dekruif- Professor of Women’s Studies at Fresno City College
- Yohan Lee- Northern California Sales Director for Mirth Provisions