

FILM OUTLINE: This is a 102-minute feature film, but it is composed of five unique short films about taco trucks in Columbus, Ohio. The sum of the parts is greater than the whole, as the shorts build upon one another to create dynamic contrasts between ethnic urban environments and transnational livelihoods.

Prologue: (3 minutes)- The opening to the film introduces the viewer to the general immigration issues of Hispanics in Columbus, Ohio.

Part I: Jucio a un Taco (18 minutes)- Part one of the film explores racial tensions and aesthetic issues associated with the emergence and social performance of taco truck landscapes on West Side of Columbus, Ohio.

Suggested Readings:

Cresswell, Tim. "Chapter 2: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression: A Relational Ontology." pgs.11-27 in *In Place/out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Mitchell, Don. "The Circulation of Meaning: Landscape as a System of Social Reproduction." pgs. 139-142 in *Cultural Geography: a Critical Introduction*. Oxford; Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

Rojas, James. "The Enacted Environment: Examining the Streets and Yards of East Los Angeles" - from Wilson, Chris, and Paul Groth, ed. 2003. *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J. B. Jackson*. 1st ed. University of California Press.

Sibley, David. "Chapter 3: Border Crossings." pgs. 32-48 in *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West*. London. Routledge, 1995.

Questions:

From the film "Transfusion" and the readings on Latino culture, what are three examples of how cultural performance takes and shapes space? What social meanings develop around these spaces? How do divergent community groups define those meanings?

In the Greater Hilltop Area of Columbus, Ohio, how do aspects of Mexican cultural practices become negative attributes of a business practice? How do existing neighborhood brick and mortar businesses perceive the food trucks?

Geographers often define landscape to mean the performances of people within their environment. How are the taco trucks in the film "Transfusion" both symbolic objects in the landscape as well as a cultural performance? Give an example from the film by how space is taken in the landscape to create a sense of place.

Give three examples from the film "Transfusion" and from the readings about how Latino practices take space in the landscape to create a sense of place for Latino cultural groups.

What are two aspects of environmental discrimination from “Part I: Jucio de un Taco” in the film “Transfusion”?

In “Part I: Jucio de un Taco” in the film “Transfusion,” how is the City of Columbus established as a character in the film? Does the City of Columbus have a responsibility for the well being of its residents, its infrastructure, and resolving community conflict?

James Rojas states in “The Enacted Environment” that: “While life on the street may have looked chaotic to outsiders, to us it was orderly because we understood it. We found fun, adventure, and comfort outside our homes.” Discuss.

From the film “Transfusion,” how and why are Mexican immigrants ascribed with negative attributes in the Greater Hilltop Area of Columbus, Ohio?

How do the City of Columbus and the residents of the Greater Hilltop Area perceive the manifestation of the Mexican taco truck?

Zoning ordinances can only be enforced where people can afford to behave a particular way and maintain their property in a particular way. It discriminates against one’s cultural values and social behavior. Comment

Comment on the aesthetics of urban space and the human performances within urban space. Is there a paradox of visibility and invisibility? What is supposed to be visible in the city? What is supposed to be invisible in the city? How is the built environment constructed to represent this? How are people managed to represent this? Consider the Mexican taco truck, if the taco truck is zoned out of the American city, how might the invisible aspect of NOT having taco trucks represent the city’s image? What do you think would happen to the Mexican cultural performance of food and space if the taco truck were zoned-out of the city?

How does the body project its class, social, and cultural identity (or struggles) onto the built environment?

“Transfusion” is about crossing boundaries... Boundaries are about one’s identity as well as social and urban spaces. Comment.

Part II: Whites Only (20 minutes)- Part two examines urban infrastructure as racial discrimination in the King-Lincoln District of Columbus, Ohio. Through this visual and narrative exploration, the film interweaves the presence of a Mexican food truck, Los Potosinos, from San Luis Potosi, SLP, Mexico. This segment elucidates how the truck has become a celebrated food establishment in the spatially segregated, black inner-city community.

Suggested Readings:

Bayor, Ronald H. "Chapter 3: City Building and Racial Patterns." *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-century Atlanta*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Bell, David, and Gill Valentine. "Community." in *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat*. London; New York: Routledge, 1997.

Questions:

Are there cultural preferences and differences in understanding urban life through urban forms and aesthetics? Do American architects and planners tend to overlook human behavior by fixating on maps, architectural blueprints, and economic master plans rather than experiencing the city through the richness of social practices?

"Transfusion" is about crossing boundaries... Boundaries are about one's identity as well as social, community, and urban spaces. Comment.

How does the city become "coded" and "recoded" through social behavior? Give example of some of these "codes" from "Transfusion."

How does the black community perceive the taco truck in the King-Lincoln District of Columbus, OH? Why is the taco truck accepted in the community and why is it described as positive destination for "the hood"?

From "Part II: Whites Only" of Transfusion, how does food activate the urban landscape, how does food (re)shape the community?

From "Part II: Whites Only" of Transfusion, how is Lidia's Mexican food augmented for the taste preferences of her new location in the King-Lincoln District?

What are the four things: "that have plagued the black community, as far as health is concerned"?

John Waddy states, "Every time you see a car go down that freeway, you can imagine there were homes from the width of the freeway to the other side of the freeway. And those were mostly homes lived in, owned by, black people. And businesses that were owned and operated by black people that are no longer part of the community, because this freeway took it all away." Discuss.

“Pickle” states about the taco truck: “This is needed, that’s something that’s needed, totally needed... And it’s an asset that we have something like that within the community, where we can get better communication together amongst all races.” Discuss.

Compare and contrast the migration issues of blacks during an era of slavery to Mexican migration today during an era of neo-liberalism.

John Waddy states: “Buildings come and go, you can build a building but you can’t build a person.” Discuss in terms of people (demographics and community) and their built environment.

Part III: Transfusión (28 minutes)- Part three is the climax of the film. We travel to San Luis Potosi, SLP, Mexico, and trace immigrant life issues of Lidia, the owner of Los Potosinos. This part of the film explores food-ways and other personal immigration issues for Mexicans in the United States who have left their families behind.

Suggested Readings:

Massey, Doreen. “A Global Sense of Place.” *Marxism Today* (1991): 24-29.

Imbruce, Valerie. “From the Bottom Up: The Global Expansion of Chinese Vegetable Trade for New York City Markets.” in Wilk, Richard R. “Fast Food/slow Food: The Cultural Economy of the Global Food System.” Altamira Press, 2006.

Pilcher, Jefferey M. “Taco Bell, Maseca, and Slow Food: A Postmodern Apocalypse for Mexico’s Peasant Cuisine?” in Wilk, Richard R. “Fast Food/slow Food: The Cultural Economy of the Global Food System.” Altamira Press, 2006.

Questions:

Compare and contrast the social relationships and foodstuffs between the Mexican market and food shops in San Luis Potosi, SLP, Mexico to the Mexican market in Columbus, OH. How are they alike, how are they different?

Lidia says in the market: “Whatever product from Mexico, it is possible to find it here.” What do you believe are the economic and cultural demands that shaped the trade processes of food and gave rise to a Mexican market, “Plaza Tapatia,” in Columbus, OH?

The name of the Mexican market in Columbus, OH is “Plaza Tapatia.” How does the term “plaza” in the name of the market reference a particular type of urban space in Mexico? Describe the social life of the plazas, streets, and markets in Mexico to the social life of “public” or street space in Columbus, OH.

How does Lidia relate to Mexican food as part of her cultural identity and past memories of Mexico? Why is her relationship to Mexican food so important to her life, and her new life in Columbus, OH?

Compare and contrast the cultural landscape of San Luis Potosi, SLP, Mexico to Columbus, OH.

Compare and contrast Lidia's social and family life in Columbus, Ohio to the family life she left behind in Mexico. How have her social relationships and family structure changed? What does this suggest about the family social structure of Mexican immigrants throughout the United States?

How does the experience of eating on the street affect the flavor of the food?

Part IV: ICE (12 minutes)- Part four examines Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Columbus, Ohio, and how it is affecting business and social interactions throughout the city for taco truck owners and other immigrants.

Suggested Readings:

Cresswell, Tim. "Towards a Politics of Mobility." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28, no. 1 (2010): 17–31.

Questions:

Maps are static representations of boundaries. Consider the movement of an individual. How would you map a city that has thousands if not millions of different lives moving by means of different personal pathways throughout the city?

What does ICE stand for? What do people who work for ICE do? How do they shape the "ways" in which Mexicans navigate around the city of Columbus, OH?

Drawing from "Transfusion" and Cresswell's journal article on "mobility," how is movement both a social and political issue?

Compare and contrast the migration patterns and issues of blacks during an era of slavery, to that of Mexican migration today during an era of neo-liberalism.

How does the dinner table and food at end of "Part IV: ICE" change social relationships and a sense of place between Lidia and her new community?

Compare and contrast the social relationships and food during the dinner Lidia's family has in Mexico with the dinner Lidia serves to her new neighbors in Columbus, OH.

John Waddy states: "Once you're tied to a particular location, there's no escape... You always have to come home, whether figuratively or literally, you must always come home!" Discuss in terms of the body and in relationship to its spatial pathways and

experience of place. How does one's memory of place shape their movements in new places?

Do you believe that our life experiences are mapped onto our body; that our body is also a personal map that can at times also convey our identity to others? How does our body take on meaning through our experiences of space and place?

Epilogue: (18 minutes)- The final part of the film concludes the previous four segments. It reveals how Mexican food trucks have become accepted in most parts of the city and ends with Lidia meeting with an immigration lawyer.

Suggested Readings:

Logan, John R. and Molotch, Harvey L. "Urban Fortunes: The Political economy of Place." In Bridge, Gary. *The Blackwell City Reader*. Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Zukin, Sharon, "Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World." in Bridge, Gary. *The Blackwell City Reader*. Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Questions:

How does the Columbus Dispatch depict food trucks? What kind of food trucks are they reporting on? What types of issues do they have as compared to Lidia's food truck issues?

How does Lidia's difficulty with English and understanding of American culture affect her business?

How does the process of acculturation affect the relationship between Mexican immigrant food practices and residents of the Greater Hilltop Area of Columbus, OH?

How is the City of Columbus trying to "establish an identity for itself"? In what ways is the City trying to brand itself to be more open? How do food trucks play into this image?

In reference to the "City's Image," how has the symbolic capital of the taco trucks, and food trucks in general, changed from "Part I" of the film to the "Epilogue" of the film?

How are the new "trendier" or non-Mexican food trucks changing the perception of Mexican food trucks in Columbus, OH?

What are "brick and mortar" restaurants in Columbus, Ohio doing to compete with the increase presence of food trucks throughout the city?

Who is now the majority of clientele at the Mexican taco trucks? What cultural and economic factors changed this demographic use of space?

What is Lidia's current "legal status" in the United States? How does this "status" affect where she can go and what she can do in the United States? What would Lidia have to do to change this status?

Lidia and other Mexican immigrants are paying taxes through their tax ID numbers, sales taxes, and other fees passed down to the consumer. So, why doesn't Lidia or other "illegal immigrants" have any sort of legal representation in the United States?

John Waddy states: "These folks have contributed to the community and society all these years, and to use technicalities to take what they've earned away from them makes no sense to me." Discuss.

How are issues of race over different periods of time in the United States alike, but yet different? How is John Waddy able to relate to Lidia's social struggles?

The African art and African American art on the walls of John Waddy's office reference a cultural, social, and ethnic past. How are these artistic representations of past times and foreign places used to link space and time to the present? How do they imbue social meaning and value to current circumstances or to John Waddy's philosophy of human rights?

Although John Waddy has never lived in Africa, why does he have African art on his walls? What do they symbolize? How are the issues of his African heritage similar to those of Lidia's relationship to Mexico? How are they different?