

# “We Won’t Bow Down”

Race Relations and Civil Rights in post-Katrina New Orleans

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## **Prelude – Indian Red**

Madi cu defio, en dans dey, end dans day [I am going into the wilderness]

Madi cu defio, en dans dey, end dans day [I am going into the wilderness]

We are the Indians, Indians, Indians of the nation

The wild, wild creation

We won't bow down

Down on the ground

Oh how I love to hear him call Indian Red

I've got a Big Chief, Big Chief, Big Chief of the Nation

The wild, wild creation

He won't bow down

Down on the ground

Oh how I love to hear him call Indian Red

## Workshop Agenda

### 1) New Orleans History : *A pre-/while-/post-Katrina Reading*

- A Spatial History of New Orleans
- A Hurricane of Social Inequalities
- Reconsidering the 'Natural Disaster' Narrative

### 2) Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

- Oral Histories
- Visual Media Traces
- Audio Documents

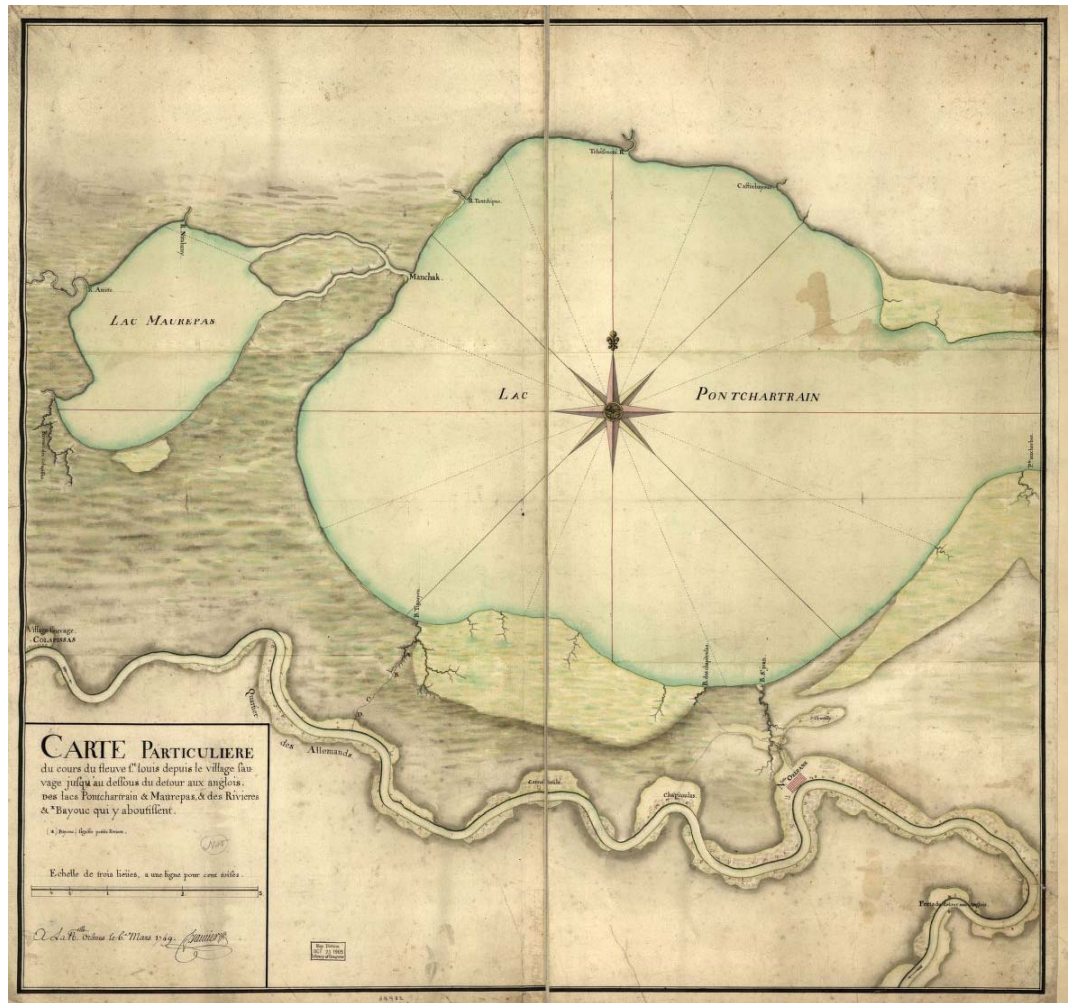
### 3) Discussion and Wrap-Up

- Teaching Perspectives
- Finding Material

**Le Page du Pratz, The History of Louisiana, or of the Western Parts of Virginia and Carolina [...]. New Orleans: Harmanson, [1774].**

“New Orleans, the capital of the colony, is situated to the East, on the banks of the Mississippi, in 30 degrees of North Latitude. At my first arrival in Louisiana, it existed only in name; for on my landing I understood M. de Bienville, commandant general, was only gone to mark out the spot; whence he returned three days after our arrival at Isle Dauphine. He pitched upon this spot in preference to many others, more agreeable and commodious; but for that time this was a place proper enough [...].”

**Saucier, F. Carte particulière du cours du fleuve St. Louis depuis le village sauvage jusqu'au dessous du Detour aux Anglois, des lacs Pontchartrain & Maurepas & des rivières & bayouc qui y aboutissent. 1749. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003623383/>. (Accessed November 14, 2016.)**



## SUBSIDENCE IN THE NEW ORLEANS METRO AREA



Source: Tulane geographer Richard Campanella

Dan Swenson, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

Source: Campanella, Richard. *Bienville's Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans*. Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2008.

## **A Spatial History of New Orleans**

*The Historic Settlement Patterns Reflect \_\_*

- \_\_ the city's century-old Franco-Hispanic-Afro-Caribbean heritage
- \_\_ the history of urban slavery and emancipation
- \_\_ a chronology of racial discrimination and social vulnerability
- \_\_ the politics of systematic, long-term bureaucratic and administrative racism

## **\_ the city's century-old Franco-Hispanic-Afro-Caribbean heritage**

1718 – 1763	French Dominion	
1763 – 1803	Spanish Dominion – French Interlude	
1803	Louisiana Purchase	
	3.948 “whites” / 4.108 Africans	
	Slaves / Free People of Color – 2.1 / 1	
1808	Impact of the Domestic Slave Trade	
	Anglo African Americans	French African Americans
	‘American’	‘French,’ ‘Spanish,’ ‘Circum-Caribbean’
	English	Creole, French, Spanish
	Protestant	Catholic



## **\_ the history of urban slavery and emancipation**

\_domestic slaves

slant-roof quarters appended behind townhouses & cottages

\_skilled craftsmen, artisans, hired-out laborers

group quarters on adjacent lots & alleys close to slave owners

spatial proximity meant to secure monitoring and promptness of service

('black-alley' settlement pattern imparted spatial integration)

## **\_ the history of urban slavery and emancipation**

\_ free people of color (francophone, locally-descended, Catholic)

'Old City' – Lower French Quarter, Bayou Road, Treme, Marigny, Franklin, Bywater

['Uptown Avoidance']

Hydrology:

downriver from the urban core as a place of polluted water sources and environ

Depositional Geology:

white caste monopolized high grounds, the “front of the town”, FCP gravitated to the  
“back of town”

## **\_ the history of urban slavery and emancipation**

1860 – 1870      increase of 110 percent in black population

1900              further increase of 54 percent in black population

urban migration in hope for better opportunities than in the cane and cotton fields

newly-emancipated families move into the “back of town”, with its shanty towns and low-lying swamps [present-day Central City]

blacks residing in the “front of town” are pushed out into the “back-of-town” due to the waning of the black-alley pattern

## **\_ the history of urban slavery and emancipation**

Creoles of Color choose neighborhoods based on tradition, family, religion, culture, economics, and real estate

Dockworkers and riverfront residents live on elevated ground but within industrial environments [wharves, docks, railroads, warehouses, cotton presses]

“superblock pattern” / grand avenues inhabited by upper-white class surrounded by working-class blacks and whites, who were employed in domestic jobs in the mansions

## **\_ a chronology of racial discrimination and social vulnerability**

\_Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

transformation of New Orleans into an American-style two-tiered structure

\_Progressive Era Municipal Reforms

technologically advanced drainage apparatus

modern development of the “back of town”

lakeside urbanization by middle-class white families

racial and spatial segregation

efforts to denote residential areas for whites and blacks

racist deed covenants

civic noncooperation

de facto racism of Jim Crow South

## **\_ a chronology of racial discrimination and social vulnerability**

\_Brown v. Topeka Board of Education (1954)

desegregation in terms of working, shopping, and dining

further segregation of living

Middle-Class African Americans

White-Middle Class

East of City Park and

White Flight into suburbs

Eastern New Orleans

1980s withdrawal from New Orleans East

## **\_ the politics of systematic, long-term bureaucratic and administrative racism**

\_Public Housing Projects / Housing Act of 1937

racial segregation of the housing projects from the very beginning

1960s – 1970s spatial consolidation of the city's poorest African Americans

isolation of housing projects from the street grid and adjacent neighborhoods

\_ Project HOPE [“Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere”]

development of mixed-income communities by subsidizing rental units and offering affordable homes

## **\_ the politics of systematic, long-term bureaucratic and administrative racism**

### **\_administrative racism**

racism is as much systemic as it is individual and administrative practices can be infected with racism even though individual administrators do not bear conscious animus toward African Americans

- (1) prevailing beliefs about the poor, such as the deep conviction that poor people at some level are responsible for the conditions in which they find themselves
- (2) racism affects the extent to which public employees regard clients as worthy
- (3) American ideology relies on the belief that people who are at the bottom are there because of some character flaw or inherent inability
- (4) dozens of documented examples of strict adherence to bureaucratic rules that have a disproportionate impact on African Americans who lived in the most vulnerable areas of New Orleans



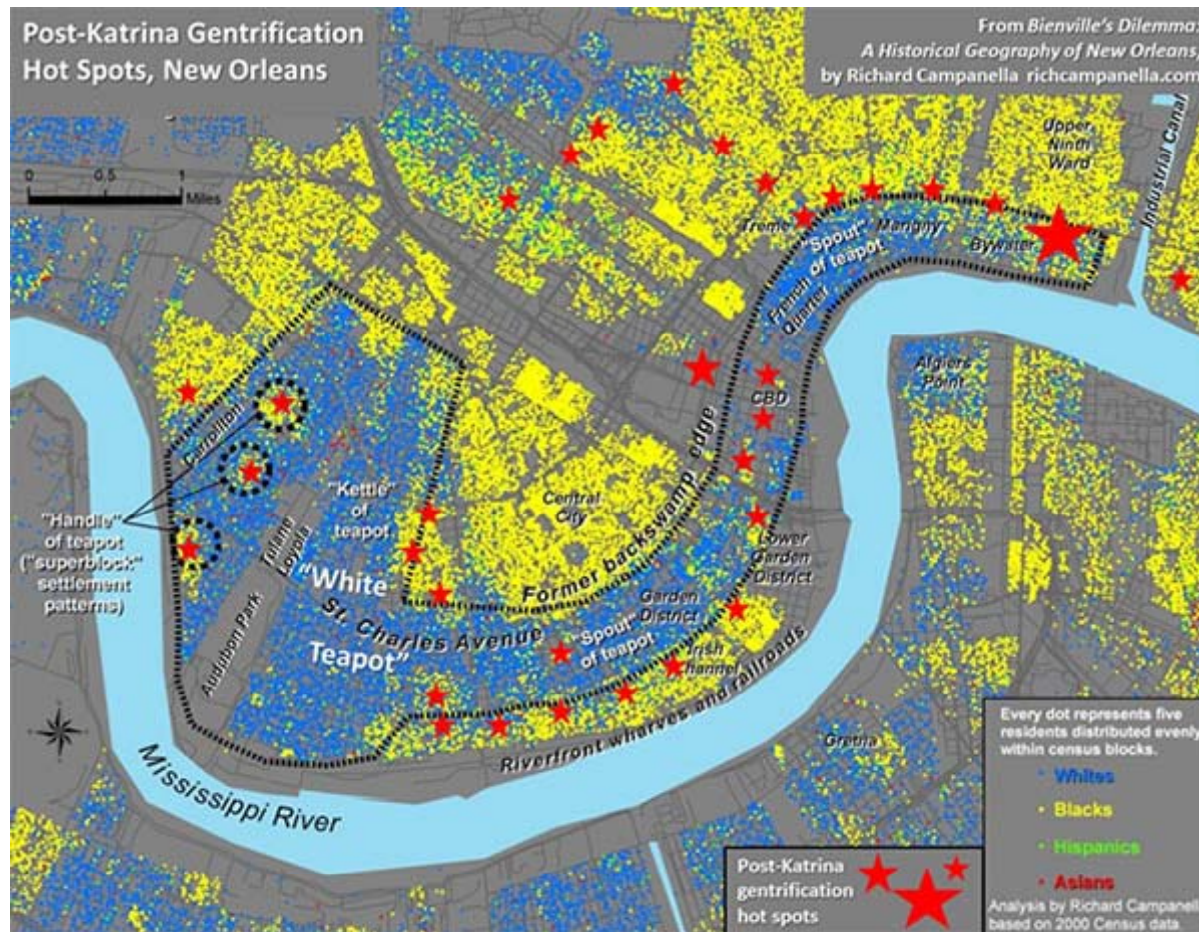
## **\_ the politics of systematic, long-term bureaucratic and administrative racism**

### **\_administrative racism**

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) insisted that all evacuees and their luggage be screened before planes would be allowed to take off. After it became clear that x-ray machines were inoperable because of lack of electricity, the TSA agreed to allow hand searches. Emergency food rations in metal cans were confiscated because they might contain explosives. An eight-hour delay ensued while screening teams flew in from Orlando and Houston. There was another prolonged delay while the TSA rounded up 50 federal air marshals to ride the planes.

At Charity Hospital on Thursday, a National Guardsman told Dr. Kiersta Kurtz-Burke that the area was too violent to evacuate her patients and that the National Guard would return the next day. Meanwhile, critically ill patients were being transported by helicopter away from Tulane University Hospital across the street.

Hot spots (marked with red stars) of post-Katrina gentrification in New Orleans, shown with circa-2000 demographic data and a delineation of the “white teapot.”



Source: Campanella, Richard. *Bienville's Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans*. Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2008.

## **A Hurricane of Social Inequalities**

*Impact and Influences of Katrina* \_\_

\_\_ elevation zones and sources of risk

\_\_ flooding and space

\_\_ post-Katrina racial geographies

## \_\_ elevation zones and sources of risk

Table 1.1. Elevation zones according to race or ethnicity, 2000

<i>Elevation zone</i>	<i>Total 2000 Population</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>Asian</i>
Higher than 13 feet above sea level	74	41	18	8	6
10 to 12 feet above sea level	3,136	2,389	594	128	40
8 to 10 feet above sea level	11,255	5,302	5,571	390	106
6 to 8 feet above sea level	20,105	10,028	9,379	769	178
4 to 6 feet above sea level	33,183	19,807	11,851	1,482	431
2 to 4 feet above sea level	44,451	17,452	25,325	1,639	488
0 to 2 feet above sea level	72,530	17,976	52,263	1,801	754
0 to 2 feet below sea level	83,571	15,868	64,661	2,410	1,035
2 to 4 feet below sea level	99,634	17,444	75,560	3,317	4,066
4 to 6 feet below sea level	54,884	15,080	35,808	1,522	2,688
6 to 8 feet below sea level	51,639	13,760	35,811	1,411	905
8 to 10 feet below sea level	7,377	564	6,405	131	292
10 to 12 feet below sea level	790	124	615	12	28
12 to 14 feet below sea level	2,041	114	1,862	25	31
14 to 16 feet below sea level	1,047	91	940	10	14

*Note:* Total population figures differ from sum of groups because a small percentage of respondents identified themselves as being members of other racial groups, or of combinations of groups. Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau treats Hispanicism as an ethnicity regardless of race.

Source: Campanella, Richard, "Two Centuries of Paradox': The Geography of New Orleans's African American Population from Antebellum to Postdiluvian Times," in: Hurricane Katrina in Transatlantic Perspective, eds. Romain Huret and Randy J. Sparks. Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 2014. 8-37.

## **\_ elevation zones and sources of risk**

Eastern half of greater New Orleans

\_surrounded by three major manmade navigation canals – the Industrial Canal, the Intracoastal Waterway, and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Canal

\_close to the highly degraded and eroded wetlands where storm-driven Gulf of Mexico surges incur minimum friction

\_low elevation

Western half of greater New Orleans

\_no major gulf-access navigation canals

\_greater terrestrial buffer

\_slightly higher elevation

## **\_ flooding and space**

### Metropolitan Area

\_40 percent of the total population of 988,182 resided in areas that were underwater on September 8, 2005

\_Whites outnumbered African Americans metropolis-wide, 500,672 to 429,902

\_but African Americans outnumbered whites within that flooded area by a over two-to-one ratio, 257,375 to 126,262

one in every four whites' homes

one in every four Hispanics' homes

one in every three Asians' homes

close to two of every three African Americans' homes

## **\_ flooding and space**

New Orleans proper

\_61 percent of the total population of 480,256 resided in areas that were flooded on September 8, 2005

\_African Americans outnumbered whites citywide before the storm by a 2.4-to-1.0 ratio (323,868 to 134,012)

\_African Americans outnumbered whites within that flooded area by over a 3.8-to-1.0 ration (220,970 to 57,469)

43 percent of whites

53 percent of Hispanics

68 percent of African Americans

72 percent of Asians saw they homes flooded

## **\_ post-Katrina racial geographies**

Katrina's flood shattered centuries-old geographies of African Americans in New Orleans

\_overall population fell to 343,829 in 2010 (New Orleans proper)

\_African American population dropped to 204,866

\_percentage of African American residents dropped to 60 percent (from roughly 67 percent)

\_still earlier settlement patterns have survived, although many persist only in visibly thinned dispersions (Gentilly, Pontchartrain Park, New Orleans East) and one remains largely contested (Upper/Lower Ninth Ward)

\_public housing projects have experienced demolition and reconstruction under mixed-income designs





## Reconsidering the 'Natural Disaster' Narrative

*Lessons from Environmental and Cultural Studies\_*

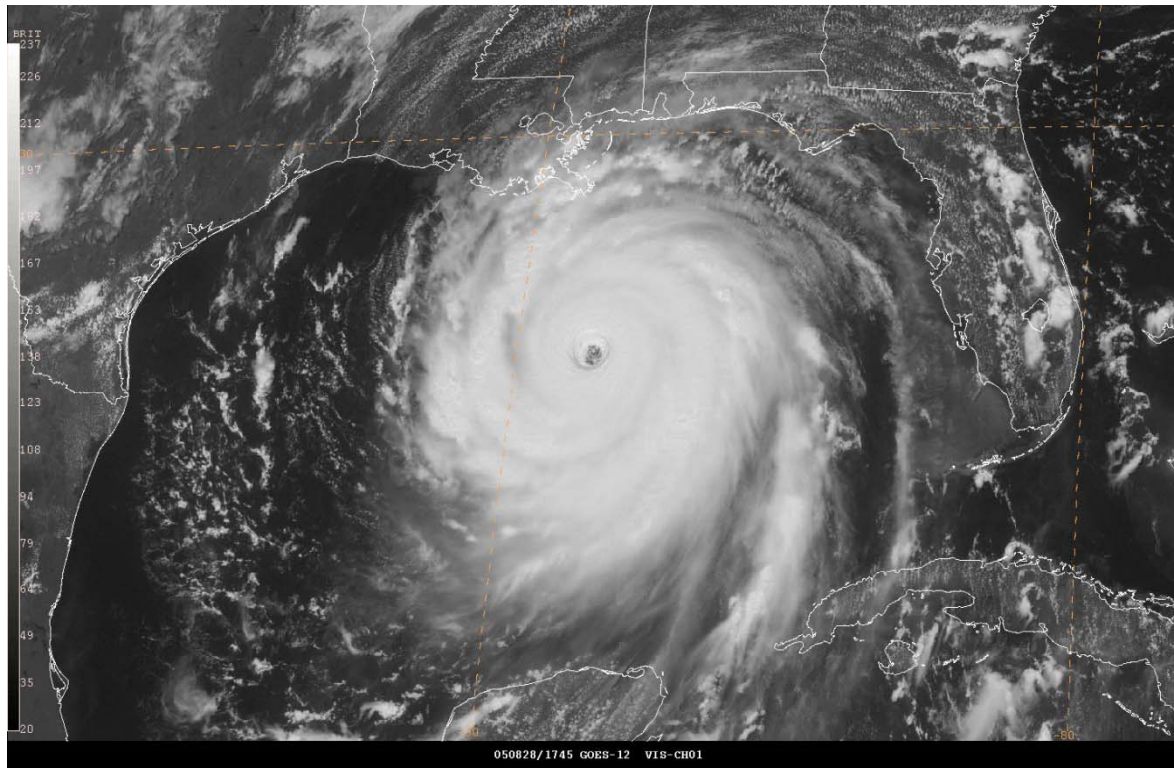
*\_interrelation of nature and culture in a globalized world*

Smith, Neil. "There is no such Thing as a Natural Disaster;" Understanding Katrina: Perspectives from the Social Sciences, June 11 2006, <http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Smith/>.

"It is generally accepted among environmental geographers that there is no such thing as a natural disaster. In every phase and aspect of a disaster – causes, vulnerability, preparedness, results and response, and reconstruction – the contours of disaster and the difference between who lives and who dies is to a greater or lesser extent a social calculus."

## interrelation of nature and culture in a globalized world

the denial of the naturalness of disasters is in no way a denial of natural processes



Source: National Hurricane Center, [www.national-hurricane-center.org](http://www.national-hurricane-center.org).  
(Last accessed November 14, 2016).

## **interrelation of nature and culture in a globalized world**

but whether a natural event is a disaster or not depends ultimately on its location

*Vulnerability:* in New Orleans, topographic gradients doubled as class and race gradients – some people were much more vulnerable than others

*Preparedness:* in New Orleans, preparations for Katrina, on all levels but especially at the federal level, were hardly existent and suffering from incompetence

*Disaster Reconstruction:* in New Orleans, reconstruction cut deeper the ruts and grooves of social oppression and exploitation

disasters deepen and erode the ruts of social difference they encounter

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

### *Curriculum Orientation*

#### *\_Living in a Multi-Faceted Society/World*

- Diversity and Challenges: Race Relations
- Cultural Aspects of Life: Visual Representations of Life

#### *\_Environment, Science and Technology*

- Environmental Awareness: Natural Disasters and Vulnerability
- Politics of Environment: Geography of Racism

#### *\_Media*

- Opportunities and Risks: Documenting Disaster
- Media Politics: Challenging Media Language and Narratives



## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Oral Histories\_*

Voices Rising – Stories from the Katrina Narrative Project

\_Guiding Questions

? How did the eyewitness experience the events ?

? What problems did the eyewitness encounter during and after the hurricane?

? From the eyewitness's point of view, when and why did Hurricane Katrina turn into a disaster ?

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

### *Oral Histories*

Voices Rising – Stories from the Katrina Narrative Project

#### \_Introduction

“There is no such thing as a natural disaster.”

#### \_Work Process

- a) Students learn about the evolution of Hurricane Katrina
- b) Students study different oral histories of the events
- c) Students prepare a talk show featuring different perspective

#### \_Closing Stage

- Students distinguish between *Vulnerability, Preparedness* and *Reconstruction*
- Students reflect factors of social difference

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Visual Media Traces\_*

Katrina's Kids Project Artwork

*\_Guiding Questions*

? How do children experience disaster and release emotion ?

? What can fear, pain and, most of all, their hopes be displayed?

? From the children's point of view, when and why did Hurricane Katrina turn into a disaster ?



## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Visual Media Traces\_*

Katrina's Kids Project Artwork

Introduction

"Help Us"

Source: Hurricane Digital  
Memory Bank, Katrina's  
Kids Project Artwork,  
<http://hurricanearchive.org/collections/show/21>.  
(Last accessed Nov. 14,  
2016).



## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

### *Visual Media Traces\_*

#### Katrina's Kids Project Artwork

#### \_Work Process

- a) Students learn about the evolution of Hurricane Katrina
- b) Students study various sketches and learn about ways to express experiences and emotions of fear, pain, and hope

Several of the boys drew alligators, I think it was Jaleel that told following story. After the hurricane, they were looking down from the balcony of their home and spotted a huge gator. All the neighbors were watching and people were throwing things down off the balcony. The next day or two, Rescue Helicopters came and took Jaleel, two younger children and a pregnant woman. When they were air lifting one of the boys (also sitting at table) up, something happened with the harness and he almost fell. When they reattached the harness, he was saying blessings because he would have fallen right where that big gator was and right into those big teeth: "He had me for supper. I was sooo brave in the basket. But my momma, she got real scared."

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

### Visual Media Traces\_

### Katrina's Kids Project Artwork

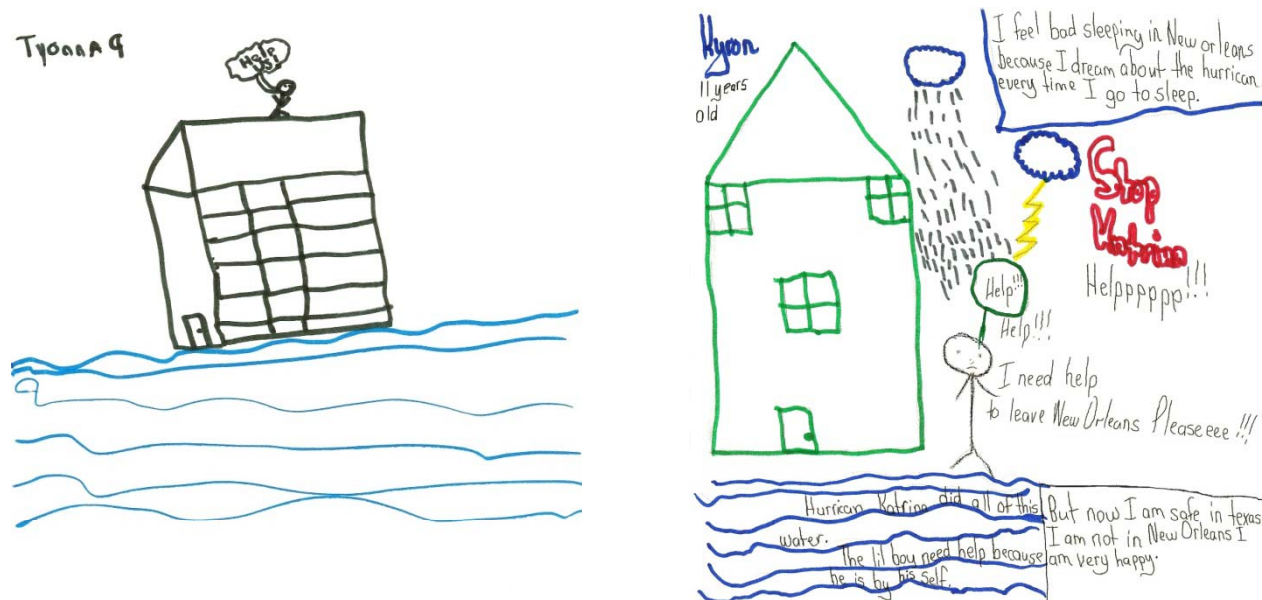
### \_Work Process

Source: Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, Katrina's Kids Project Artwork,

<http://hurricanearchive.org/collections/show/21>.

(Last accessed Nov. 14, 2016).

c) Students prepare a gallery walk featuring different perspectives and stories



## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Visual Media Traces\_*

Katrina's Kids Project Artwork

\_Closing Stage

- Students distinguish different ways of coping with experiences and emotions of fear, pain, and hope
- Students discuss and reflect factors of social difference

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Visual Media Traces\_*

“Finding” and “Looting”

\_Guiding Questions

? How does the media stage events of disaster ?

? How does media coverage reinforce racism and social inequalities ?

? How does media language influence perceptions of Hurricane Katrina ?

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Visual Media Traces\_*

“Finding” and “Looting”

\_Introduction

“Finding”

Source: Chris Graythen  
for AFP/Getty Images.



## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Visual Media Traces\_*

Source: Associated Press , Aug 30, 2005, 11:31 AM ET.

“Finding” and “Looting”

\_Introduction

“Looting”





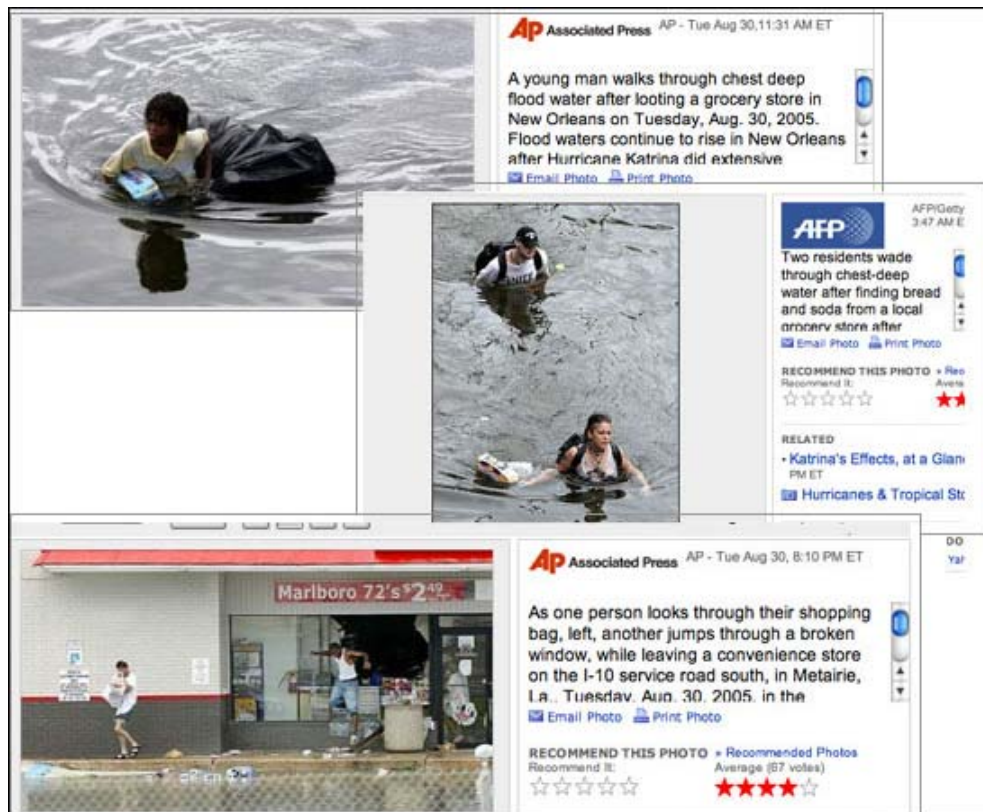
## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

### Visual Media Traces\_

“Finding” and “Looting”

\_Introduction

Source: Screenshots of AP and AFP press releases, [http://www.salon.com/2005/09/02/photo\\_controversy/](http://www.salon.com/2005/09/02/photo_controversy/). (Last accessed Nov. 14, 2016).



“A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005.”

“Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana.”



## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

### *Visual Media Traces\_*

“Finding” and “Looting”

### *\_Work Process*

- a) Students learn about the evolution of Hurricane Katrina
- b) Students focus on case studies regarding the media coverage of Hurricane Katrina
  - Photographic Documents
  - TV Coverage:
    - CNN, FOX News, NBC
    - Weather Channels
  - Radio Programs: NPR
  - Newspaper Coverage

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Visual Media Traces\_*

“Finding” and “Looting”

\_Closing Stage

- Students understand how the media stages disaster
- Students discuss how the media constructs and enforces social inequalities and racism

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Audio Documents\_*

Katrina and Beyond

*\_Guiding Questions*

? How does Hurricane Katrina still influence daily routines in New Orleans ?

? How did reconstruction after Katrina cut deeper the ruts and grooves of social oppression and exploitation in New Orleans ?

? What lessons are to be learned from the aftermath of the Hurricane concerning social inequalities ?

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

### *Audio Documents\_*

#### Katrina and Beyond

#### \_Introduction – Coming Back: New Orleans Resurgent

Photographer Mario Tama documented the horror and destruction of New Orleans in the aftermath of Katrina, making heartbreaking images of struggle and survival. But his coverage didn't end there. He returned to New Orleans more than 15 times in between 2005 and 2010 to show the rebounding spirit of the Crescent City.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/pictureshow/2010/08/25/129424166/coming-back>

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

### *Audio Documents\_*

### Katrina and Beyond

### \_Work Process

- a) Students learn about the evolution of Hurricane Katrina, its aftermath, and the reconstruction efforts
- b) Based on NPR radio reports, Students explore different experiences of return
  - New Orleans Public Housing
  - “Reconstructing” and Privatizing Education in the City
  - Surprising Riches?: Food and Music
  - Still Waiting: Longings to Return

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Audio Documents\_*

Katrina and Beyond

\_Work Process

- c) Students further research the experiences of return and produce short podcasts of their own
- d) Students present their podcasts and discuss lasting patterns of social inequalities and racism

## Teaching (Post-)Katrina New Orleans

*Audio Documents\_*

Katrina and Beyond

\_Closing Stage

- Students critically assess different reconstruction efforts such as the various housing and urban development programs or the introduction of charter schools

## **Discussion and Wrap-Up**

### \_Teaching Perspectives

Audio-Visual Competences

Reading Competences

Communicative and Social Competences

Enhancing Methods of Analysis

### \_Finding Material

Searching the Web

Looking for Lessons Plans