The Lucky Leaf Casino: A Retroscape in Cynthia Shearer's *The Celestial Jukebox*

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> Memory recalls mind to place—takes it decisively there and not to its mere representation. We revisit places in remembering . . . , and in so doing our minds reach out to touch the things themselves, which are to be found in the very places they inhabit.
>
> (Edward S. Casey)

Set in the fictional twenty-first-century town of Madagascar, Mississippi, *The Celestial Jukebox* (2005) by Cynthia Shearer depicts the changing face of servicescapes, demographics, and dynamics in a rural southern town. The novel envisions a global and hybrid southern landscape dependent on immigrant labor and the casino business, which paradoxically prolongs the legacy of exploitation. Madagascar, a microcosm of the new US South, mirrors changes that have come to the American South as a whole. The fictitious setting refers to a combination of imaginative and actual local and global stories that appeal to readers' awareness of global connections and possibilities. This amalgamation also fosters a global sense of belonging to a place on which self-reflections about "identities and values seem to have a powerful influence" (Erdem Mete 150). Thus, the setting implies both a global and a specific, unique, and exceptional local place. By including diverse ethnic characters—a Mauritanian young boy called Boubacar and his relatives, Honduran farm and construction workers, as well as Angus Chien, the Chinese proprietor of a grocery store—*The Celestial Jukebox* enlivens this southern town by constructing a truly hybrid social space open to outside influences. In connecting characters of myriad origins, "Shearer successfully deconstructs and complicates previous visions of the US South as a site dominated by a black-white dynamic to present the Mississippi Delta as a more complex ethnoscape" (Anderson 215). The text foregrounds in this hybrid environment cultural, sociological, and political agendas that contest the ill logic of exploitative investments and tackle these issues through the changing role of space.

Neoplantation, servicescape, and retroscape

A central locus of Shearer's novel, Lucky Leaf Casino with its many allusions to plantation life and the "good" days of the Old South, calls into mind Merle Purty's concept of the "neoplantation" proposed in "The

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Renaissance of Southern Plantation," referring to the "adaptation of the plantation model for the mid-twentieth century" (459). In the Casino, the sense of "neoplantation" is evoked through the images of plantocracy such as the plantation house, slaves working in the cotton fields, and the overseers watching them. The symbolic markers, including slaves, overseers, and a plantation house, trigger nostalgia and position the subjects within an exploitative ideology of white supremacy. Through these symbols the reader soon realizes that the strange and contradictory possibilities that slavery released into modern day spaces still "shape social spaces, including the re-imagined plantation" (Adams 4-5). The Mauritian employees wearing fine uniforms, the murals inside the casino building and the fountain outside it produce an atmosphere of nostalgia which, according to Janelle Wilson, "typically conjures up images of [a] previous time when life was 'good'" (21) but clearly only for the rich white southerners. As Wilson succinctly adds, "nostalgia is a form of ideologizing or mystifying the past" (19), well illustrated by the novel's employment of the above mentioned collective symbols of plantation, which force characters into an existence under the shadow of a dominant ideology. By exploring the casino business and immigrant labor, Shearer draws up a chain of cause and effect relations not only between the commodification of space and the exploitation of immigrant labor, but also the use of the past, economic success, and the casino business.

Stephen Brown and John F. Sherry, Jr. in *Time, Space, and the Market: Retroscapes Rising* claim that the market economy and consumerism create new servicescapes, defined as a "landscape created to serve the economic aims of the service, retail, and tourism industries," in which consumers are "witnessing a renewed interest in place" (3). The casino is a chief target for global tourism and a highly valued asset of the recreation sector, but, as Shearer's novel illustrates, it is also a setting filled with tangible and intangible elements from the past: a retroscape.[1] This term refers to sites of public memory, displaying—in several distinctive ways—the relation between servicescapes, place, the present, and the past. Considering the role of retroscapes and servicescapes in the novel and drawing on the aesthetics of space, memory, and nostalgia, any discussion of Lucky Leaf Casino needs to address the network of connections between plantation nostalgia, labor exploitation, and associated power structures continuing to restrict, disrupt, and capitalize on space, people, and history. Deeply embedded in the heritage of slavery, troubled race relations, the Lost Cause, and labor exploitation, Shearer's novel explores the New South as a place both haunted and fascinated by the past, in Tara McPherson's description, "at once the site of trauma of slavery and also the mythic location of a vast nostalgia" (6).

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Through describing spatial changes in the region and the establishment of Lucky Leaf Casino, *The Celestial Jukebox* unfolds as a contemporary history of immigration, labor, and land exploitation. In this sense, Madagascar as a location is not just a dot on a map or a digitized coordinate from a circling satellite but a significant space with historical and social connotations that emphasize that "geography matters" (Brown and Sherry 4). The Casino illustrates a deeper meaning of space and generates its own spontaneous memorial. In the novel, the gambling company *Futuristics* sends letters of offer to people located around the casino, informing them about plans for "buying everybody out" (Shearer 37). According to Katryn Anderson, such ventures "threaten to disrupt the fabric of the region" exactly because "corporate-run casinos lure local farmers into wagering their property" (208). The purchase gestures to the historical transactions and their "*auspicious meanings*" to Americans (17). Among the most notable of these meanings is the purchase of Native Americans' land, which had led to their removal from the Mississippi region.

Apart from purchasing lands to create the casino business, other dealings render legible a close link between retroscapes and servicescapes, such as the employment of immigrants and the depiction of plantation life in murals and by the fountain outside the casino. While encouraging the shift of the work force from agriculture to service businesses, the casino offers incentives to immigrants they cannot refuse. Aubrey Allerbee, an African American farmer with a gambling problem, rebukes the new immigrants because he "*can't get 'em*" to work in his field because they prefer being inside and making good money (35, emphasis in original). The casino aspires to the economic logic of plantation life, including the exploitation of cheap immigrant labor, and its subjection to the ruling capitalist ideology. As such it reconstitutes the racial and racist politics of the past and links it with the exploitative practices of the contemporary casino business. In so doing, the reader is reminded of the close resemblance between capitalist interest and colonial contact not to mention the destructive effects of these on labor and land.

The internal and external depictions of the Casino seems to emphasize that nostalgia is a longing for a place and "yearning for a different time" (Boym xv). However, since time is irreversible and cannot be returned to, "nostalgia becomes the reaction to that sad fact" (Hutcheon 194). The text complicates the yearning and longing for the past associated with plantation life as the following passage suggests:

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> The casino always seemed to Dean like some vaguely pornographic piece of cardboard left behind on the horizon to fool tasteless Americans who could not afford the *real* Europe. Up close it was even more pornographic, a Roman palazzo grafted on to the front side of Versailles, a painted Disney-fied puke-green. His heart felt violated as he looked at it. It occupied what once had been Israel Abide's main cotton field, which had been so large it had taken six cotton pickers at a time to work it. Now most of the field was covered in asphalt. (181)

In this description casino-space reflects an undeniable attempt to rise to the grandeur of European architecture, yet such attempts are wasted at the hands of bad taste, the "Disney-fied puke-green." Space becomes an excessive imitation, something artificial and lacking real-ness. Nostalgia is already present in this pornographic servicescape, it is yearning for another "European" space. In this context nostalgia should be regarded as a spatial longing, a wish to reunite with the roots of culture and civilization. In the second part of the passage, calling into mind Israel Abide's cotton field, nostalgia transforms into a temporal agency with its referent being a lost world, one buried beneath tons of asphalt as the former agricultural land was transformed into a car park. This act of covering up might also call to mind the psychoanalytical process of repression, yet in the novel's specific servicescape, the past will not present itself as the return of the repressed but the something willfully evoked. Unsuccessful with the integration of Europe into its space, Lucky Leaf Casino only succeeds in the spatialization and integration of the past into its architecture and image. This process is mirrored by the murals and the fountain in front of the Casino representing the ideological aspect of nostalgia and serving as both symbolic markers of casino capitalism and reminders of the romantic myths of the plantation period. The vivacity of the depiction of the fountain and its visual design articulates the collective histories and ideologies as they are invested in individual and public memory. The sparkling fountain in front of the Casino is depicted:

> Concrete cherubs cavorted, while concrete angels with the bodies of whores watched over them. Then he saw the cotton-pickers and combines, arranged in a circle around the fountain. Each one had a *For Sale* sign on it. He wondered for a confused moment why the gaming company would be going into the farm implement business, and then the answer rose in his heart and sickened him. This was a cemetery for farmers' dreams. (186)

The meanings attached to the figures are "embedded in an environment actively molded and achieved" through the text (Harvey 175). The figure

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depicts the continuity of labor exploitation. In addition, the "cotton-pickers" and "*For Sale*" signs bring historical traumas, labor economies, and human commodification into the light.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the plantation system collapsed and landowning southerners were compelled to transform their vision of the region. They would either mourn for the Lost Cause or try to reinvent their future. In their attempts to forge their future they embraced an idealized and idyllic past—the Old South, or what Paul Gaston calls the New South, creed (167). One notable representative of this shift, Thomas Nelson Page, "the perpetuator of the plantation myth" (Martin 18) and one of the writers of the post-antebellum period, aimed to restore the plantation paradise in his New South. The illusion that the past can be relived through memory coupled with the remediation of the Old South through mythmaking increased the concerns and anxieties about the present and future. In this context, the murals in the casino serve as the perpetuation of the plantation myth: "[Dean] wandered the aisles of the slot machines, the blackjack tables, . . . looking at the cheap pilastered accoutrements of legalized theft, at the mindless murals of the old moss-draped *trompe l'oeil* plantations on the walls, while uniformed overseers stood stationed like sentinels at discreet intervals" (183).

Such descriptions are abundant with symbolic references to plantocracy and slavery such as slaves, overseers, and cotton fields. In its architecture and interior design, the casino "performs selective gestures to the old South" (Bone 71), and the transaction between the casino manager and the guests is presented as a "legalized theft." The inclusion of the expression *trompe l'oeil* is also significant and emphasizes the illusionary nature of the summoned-up past. The effect these murals create in their spectator may be compared to what David Lowenthal describes as the illusion nostalgia carries and uprooted people willfully embrace: "long uprooted and newly unsure of the future, Americans en masse found comfort in looking back; historic villages and districts become surrogate home towns that contain a familiar and reassuring landscape for people whose points of reference elsewhere had been altered beyond recognition" (xv).

While the Casino aims to keep historical memory alive with its material discourse, *The Celestial Jukebox* complicates this notion as the nostalgia called forth contributes to the fragmentation of the community. As Boym aptly states, "the moment we try to repair longing with belonging, . . . loss with a rediscovery of identity, we often part ways and put an end to mutual understanding" (xv). The visual construct—the murals and the fountain—in this sense encourages the subconscious mind of the community, mostly the customer's, to participate in a longing for the past and the values it represents

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by initiating what Kant calls "reproductive imagination" (191). The plantation imagined in the murals creates a receptive sensitivity in a dialectic of the active and passive, through which capitalist enterprises ensure that workers as well as guests accept the control of a dominant power. This function of nostalgia and the imagination it creates through the visual design of space, another possible interpretation of servicescape, reproduce "submission to the rules of the established order" (Bernstein 31).

Submission to the established order is maintained by employing immigrant labor in the casino. There are several incentives behind employing immigrant labor, which the casino industry, along with other industries, takes advantage of. As Wayne Cornelius et al. explain, "immigrants are willing to do low-pay work that is boring, dirty, or dangerous with little or no prospects for upward mobility and . . . even in firms involving highly advanced technologies such work is critical" (102). Employers perceive immigrant labor quite favorably—as reliable, flexible, punctual, willing to work overtime and all for low wages. James Cobb points out that "although wages in the South . . . are well below the US average . . . , in the broader global context the South has become a high-wage region" (4). When the protagonist, Boubacar, admits, "*casino money is very good in* [his] *village*" (23, emphasis in original), he acknowledges the economic relationship between immigration and labor, especially if we understand labor "as historically changing through forms of bondage to waged 'freedom'" (Godden 3).

Lucky Leaf Casino as a retroscape

Casino business in Mississippi dates back to colonial times. In *People of Chance*, John M. Findlay describes why colonial Mississippi became an attractive place for gambling. He notes that the Mississippi River and "the connected waterways were major avenues of trade for farmers and merchants and the river boats carried passengers who had a lot of cash" (4). Findlay further notes that "taverns and roadhouses would allow dice and card games." The increase in the population led to the opening of "lavish casinos by the early 1800s" (51). After the Great Depression, especially after the stock market crash of 1929, gambling became a legalized business looked upon as a way to stimulate the economy. Edward J. Clynch et al. note that today casino gaming for cities such as Biloxi is "a way out of the financial morass in which they have been mired for a number of years" (80). Casinos contribute heavily to regional economies as "twenty-nine Mississippi casinos employ around 300,000 people and generate $885 million annual payroll" (84).

While making countless references to the historical, economic, and political impact of casino business in the US South, *The Celestial Jukebox* can

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be read as an elaborate account of the region's economic drive and labor economies. To emphasize the exploitative logic of this type of business venture, Shearer uses the name "Madagascar" for the casino referring to a geographic location closely linked to the Middle Passage of slave labor from Africa to the US South. Bearing in mind that "the earth itself is a fact of labor, whose meaning is inseparable from the dominant form of work in the South" (Godden 61), the novel's many references to the plantation economy and the name "Madagascar" capture the dynamic of how place is "received and made and remade" (Harvey 169). Pointing to the restorative element of retroscape, the Casino of *The Celestial Jukebox*—as an example of "*the past kept in things*" (Casey 85, emphasis in original)—summons a past capable of "inflicting new wounds and reopening old ones" (Adams 5).

In *Disturbing Calculations*, Melanie Benson Taylor contends that "delivered from slavery, Reconstruction, and segregation, the twentieth-century South finds itself at least nominally integrated into an American capitalist economy of limitless opportunity, but increasingly attached to slavery's prescriptive calculations of worth, value, certainty, and hierarchy" (2). The worth and value dichotomy prescribed through the devaluation of human labor and the focusing on surplus reinforces the plantation logic of exploitation. In addition, *The Celestial Jukebox* portrays immigrants mostly from Africa dominating casino labor, which resonates with plantation labor history. The novel describes the conditions of casino employees through Dean's perspective:

> Liveried valets from Africa and Arkansas loitered in purple coats with golden epaulets under a splendid fringed purple awning. The Africans spoke English with French accents, murmuring in exaggerated politeness to squinting senior citizens debarking from buses that could double as ambulances. Mississippi had not seen such tasteless excess since before the Civil War. Everybody knew the sad outcome of *that*. (181, emphasis in original)

Mauritanian immigrant workers symbolize the modern form of human commodification and labor exploitation while making global and historical connections. The Western feel of uniforms with epaulets, a distinctive ornamental piece of military uniforms since the late 17th century, and, furthermore, the color purple, which implies wealth and royalty and symbolizes bravery and honor as in the US military (Purple Heart), offer a "tasteless" romanticization of material signifiers of power. Nostalgia here becomes retro, "a self-conscious fetish for period stylization (in music, clothes, design) expressed creatively through pastiche and citation" (Reynolds

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xii-xiii); however, its tastelessness does not simply arise from excessiveness but also from the fact that people in a state of socioeconomic deprivation are forced to wear purple. African and Afro-American employees are degraded to showroom dummies, accessories to display the majesty of the retroscape, while casino owners reinforce their position as modern-day "big daddies."

The "fictitious commodities" of Lucky Leaf Casino

Exploring the logic of commodification, social theorist Karl Polanyi in *The Great Transformation* argues that with the advent of modern capitalism, the three key concepts of "land, money, and labor" become "fictitious commodities" (71), which means that for these the market mechanism applying to true commodities is not valid. Land and money cannot be considered competitive market goods because of their limited supply. Thus investors in land and financial products follow the strategy of increasing demand for these assets, driving prices up and enjoying capital gains until bubbles burst and prices crash. Unfortunately this latter comes with decreased social welfare and ruined lives. Polanyi also claims that labor is likewise a fictitious or false commodity since there is a conflict between the commodity function of labor (consumers demanding low labor cost for the sake of low prices) and the economic function of labor (workers demanding higher wages to increase their purchasing power). Taking into consideration only the first aspect amounts to saying that not only labor may be for sale but the laborer, too. This is a horrendous prospect for Polanyi, who contends that "to allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment indeed, even of the amount and use of purchasing power, would result in the demolition of society" (167).

Although *The Celestial Jukebox* does not undertake a thorough economic investigation of fictitious commodities, it offers a diagnosis of the social dimension of commodification. One could hardly think of a better example of the commodification of money than the casino. In the novel, for instance, the casino manager "pulled something out of his pocket . . . pseudo-money, something resembling old plantation scrip" (185). Like all casinos, Lucky Leaf uses plastic tokens which serve the purpose of functioning as a commodity. Although tokens resemble money, yet they are not, as is made emphatic by their size, weight, and material. Nevertheless, within the casino-economy it is exactly these features that carry a surplus value. Perceiving them as toy money, visitors gamble more freely and without the psychological constraints of risking the loss of real cash. Were these chips to be replaced by real currencies, the modern-day servicescape of the casino would find it more difficult to attract people and enslave them in a vicious cycle of addictive

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gambling. The guests of the casino are described through Dean's eyes as people under a spell, as sleepwalkers: "the noise first, hypnotic drone, an electronic beckoning like thousands of dreamy false coins falling, a way of wooing fools" (182). This passage strikingly emphasizes the exploitation of people in a hypnotic trance, controlled by the noise just as galley slaves were instructed to move according to the beat of a drum. The customers in many cases end up losing all their money and even their property, as Aubrey does in the novel.

To increase their profits, the casino owners utilize several marketing strategies of servicescapes to seduce and entice potential customers. Music and, more importantly, sexual attraction are among such strategies which are widely applied by the casino management in *The Celestial Jukebox*. Modern consumerist and marketing strategies use sexual codes and images to create consumer desire. In the novel, the casino uses sexuality as an alluring and hypnotic commodity in order to seduce customers, which further illustrates the ties of the casino business to servicescapes and to plantation economies. The relation between the theory of sexual economies and the casino business is well portrayed through a billboard on which a waitress in a sexually attractive costume beckons: "Spend the night with me" (Shearer 139).[2] This message is repeated when Dean enters the casino for the first time and encounters waitresses who wear the costume seen on the billboard, with its sexual message "SPEND THE NIGHT WITH ME" (emphasis in original). The waitresses serve alcohol to the customers to "get [them] in there drunken enough to lose everything" (187).

Through sexual imagery, the casino business transforms symbolic capital into economic capital. In this sense, the servicescapes of the *The Celestial Jukebox* conceptualize modern space as a "political field which improves upon theories of the state implicit in both economic sociology and Marxist accounts" (Sallaz 269). The casino with its sexual elements, which, according to Dean, are "more pornographic" than the billboard, portrays the convertibility of space economies. The casino is physically designed to appropriate and control both workers and gamblers at the same time. In this sense, it is reminiscent of a cavern with "a big bunker with no windows" (182). This structure would terminate any relationship with the outside world, so people inside "will lose track of time" (182) and can be easily turned into controlled customers whom the casino owners can easily manipulate and use as commodities.

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Labor commodified

The commodification of labor is Shearer's central concern. Upon the arrival of Boubacar, a 15-year-old boy from Africa visiting his Mauritanian relatives already living in Madagascar, the narrative voice explains why there is no one to meet him at the Memphis airport: "A worker had taken time off for his wife to give birth, so his uncle had said, and found himself replaced that very day by another Mauritanian" (Shearer 17). The fear of punishment makes the immigrant labor in the casino more profitable for the employers not because they are more efficient than black or white American labor but because their labor costs less. Through the Mauritanian immigrant workforce, Shearer demonstrates how in the new millennium the South continues to be "at least nominally integrated into an American capitalist economy of limitless opportunity, but [also] increasingly attached to slavery's prescriptive calculations of worth, value, certainty, and hierarchy" (Taylor 2). Modern-day slavery, as the symptom of the ongoing crisis of the South, is a result of the very subjugation Polanyi criticizes: the subjugation of personhood to property. Although it might be tempting to describe it as self-subjugation, since it is the workers' own free choice to participate in the system of subjugation, as the Marxist critique of capitalism and commodity production emphasizes, the fear of losing one's job forces employees to give up their free agency of choice. As such, they are *forced* to sell their labor and accept that corporate capitalism feeds on their vulnerability. The perception of the casino among members of the community supports this view: Angus, for example, thinks of the place as "a fat, money-sucking larval *colony* on the landscape across the field" (129, emphasis added).

The commodification of land, just like money, is achieved by creating demand for it. Amongst the many strategies to achieve this goal, *The Celestial Jukebox* describes how nostalgia celebrating the grandeur of bygone days creates the unique atmosphere of a historic retroscape. Not only do owners of Lucky Leaf Casino ride the boom brought about by the nostalgia industry, but also design a space that successfully commodifies both the material and the ideological heritage of the past. This space is in demand mainly by those individuals who seek personal empowerment by symbolically entering the colonial narrative of physical and psychic violence, where they can experience power without caring about, or being aware of its destructiveness. Taking into consideration Antonio Benitez-Rojo's definition of the plantation as a machine that facilitates the destructive work of colonialism from its "mercantilist laboratory" (5), this narrative or plantation machine is never limited to agricultural products, "it also manufactures political structures, violent conflict, and repression" (Russ 98). Reminiscent of the plantation

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economy, the Casino business, as a proliferating and insatiable machine that is highly adaptable to changing economic and social circumstances and attempts "systematically to shape, to suit to its own convenience" (Benitez-Rojo 27), mirrors economic and spiritual destruction. In *The Celestial Jukebox*, the plantation machine metamorphoses into the "casino machine," which is a symbolic representation of capitalist nostalgia in the creation of a retroscape. The vivid depiction of the plantation and the overseers in a wall mural of the casino creates a quality of retroscape and functions as a historical document that portrays how the exploitative mode of the plantation is romanticized and perpetuated in the South. The cultural production of a tourist attraction in Lucky Leaf Casino, both inside with the murals and outside with the fountain, depicting the old plantation, are excellent examples of a retroscape filled with historical and public memory creating an illusion of time travel.[3]

The casino embodies the idea of free market capitalism, industrialization, globalization, and economic expansion, which consider employees as mechanized objects. From this point of view, the references to the exploitative logic of the plantation and its perpetuation through the modern-day casino business are not limited to the murals on the walls. When Dean enters the casino to look for Aubrey and save him from its vampire economy, the narrator describes the manager of the casino as "a white man" whose chest is a "massive expanse [of] elegant pinstripes" (184), who holds Dean's hand and squeezes it with increasing force. The manager's behavior reinforces the plantation's power and portrays the side of capitalism that "has the ability to enslave consumer culture and has the capacity to commodify everything" it encounters (Adams 8).

Dean brings subtle nervousness to the place. The management sees him as a threat to their business since Dean wants to warn Aubrey against and take him out of the casino. Acting as a philanthropist and savior, Dean acts like an abolitionist who wants to unshackle the invisible chains of the exploitative logic of capitalist investment. His description of the bodyguards associates the plantation management with the casino management as they behave like overseers. When Dean attempts to take Aubrey out of the casino, the bodyguards who surround him are described as "muscled overseers standing on what once had been all cotton fields" (Shearer 185). By relating the casino business to the plantation and the bodyguards to overseers, the text metaphorically connects exploitation of body and land—both equally trampled and battered by the masculine power of the colonizer.

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Conclusion

In *The Celestial Jukebox*, significant components of retroscapes and servicescapes, place and the memory of a place, become highly functional and recuperative. The novel illustrates that a specific place may derive its haunting power from its distinct history and characteristics which actively influence modern-day visitors to such places. The novel conceptualizes and complicates the postmodern condition of labor and plantation nostalgia through a plethora of ethnic and racial identities and images; the text succeeds in observing the ways in which the South imbricates in a network of globalism that ties its residents together. The novel invites readers to explore this Global South as it reinvents and revives the meaning of space by creating opportunities for immigrant labor but also by subscribing to the exploitative logic of servicescapes and market economies. By merging African American, Native American, African, Honduran, and Chinese cultures with their colliding myths and histories in the fictitious space of Madagascar, Shearer portrays how the South transforms the biracial and bicultural landscape of the US South into a hybrid space. Although the region, too, acquires a more global and influential role in the twenty-first century via this transformation, it comes with the strengthening of plantation nostalgia, human commodification, and exploitation. In her accounts of the casino, Shearer renders legible the rich correspondences between economic and historical abuses. The concepts of servicescape and retroscape not only acknowledge this link but contribute to a better understanding of the commodification of people and of capitalist nostalgia, topics which are likely to remain in the focus of literature about the US South.

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Notes

[1] There is a dynamic relation between servicescape and retroscape. While servicescape refers to tangible topographies and a physical environment that influence behaviors and the creation of an image, retroscape brings personal connections into the discussion in the form of memories, nostalgia, and the past.

[2] According to Darren W. Dahl et al., sexual economies theory "marries gender in sexual attitudes with social exchange theory, which conceptualizes interpersonal interactions as two or more parties that each give up something with the aim of getting back something of greater value" (217).

[3] The retroscape is the entry point to time travel, but—bearing in mind Frederic Jameson's definition of nostalgia as an attempt to "think the present historically in an age that has forgotten how to think historically in the first place" (ix)—it is a time travel without actually leaving the present

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