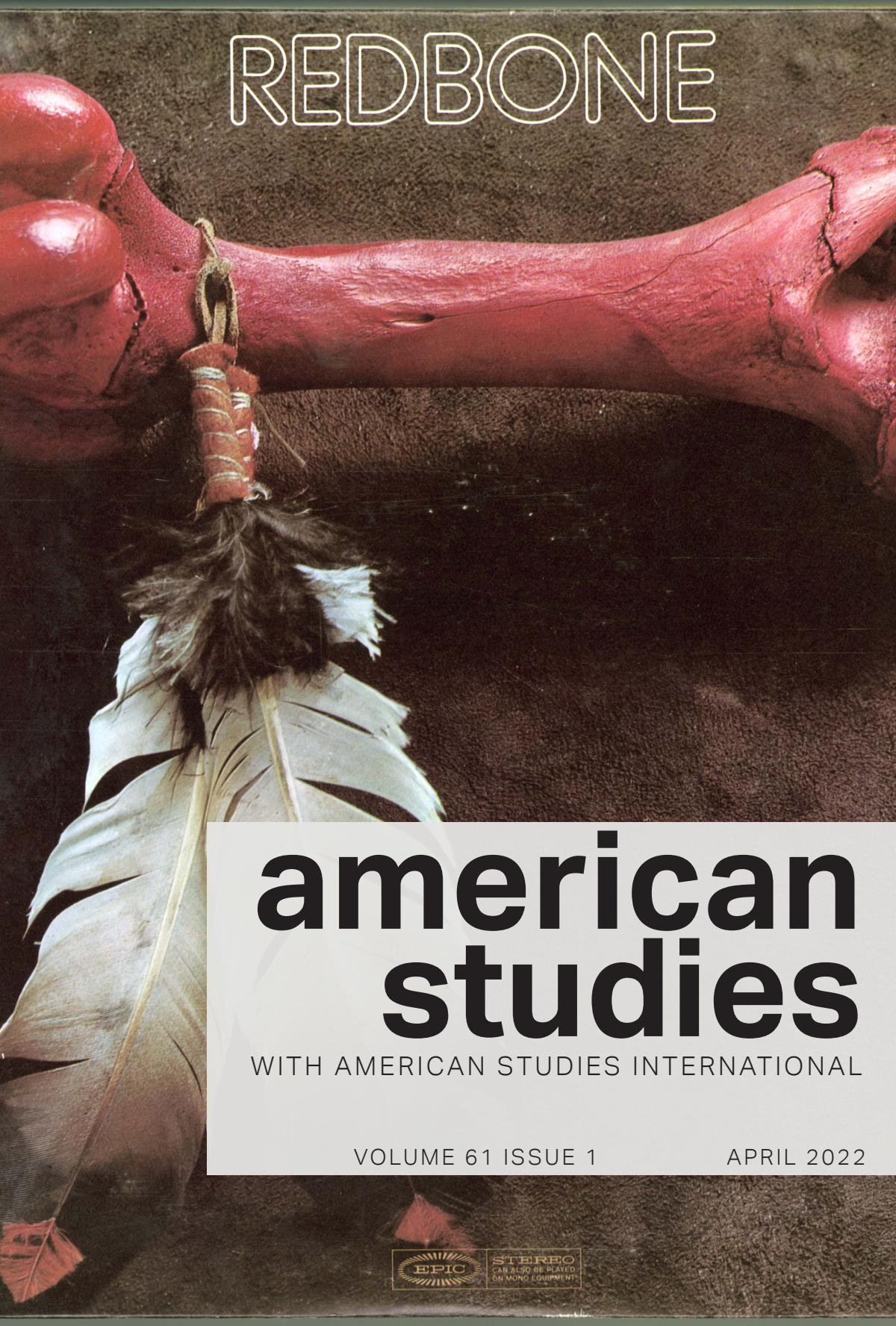

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On the cover: Redbone. *Redbone* (1970) cover. Courtesy of Sony Music Entertainment. Photography by Yoram Kohana.

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Articles

2022 VOL. 61, NO. 1

Book Reviews

Editor Letter to Randal Jelks

from Sherrie Tucker

Randal Jelks

Thank you for your service to *AMSJ*.

Co-editing with you for the past 13 years has been a joy. I thank you for each and every one of those 13 years you have devoted to *AMSJ*, especially this last one, as you were ready to cycle off at 12 and I begged you to stay for one more year and you did. *Don't worry, this isn't another plea for just one more year (four more issues and a webinar!!!!)* I won't push my luck! I am writing this letter because I want to thank you—out loud and in print—for everything you have given to this journal that has made it what it is today, and all you have done to point it toward its bright future. I thank you for all of the creativity, vision, generosity, brilliance, and kindness that you brought to the journal, and to our partnership, as we worked together across these many years.

You already know everything that follows, but these are some of the things I want people to know about your contributions to the journal:

When you agreed to join me and David Katzman as co-editor, you didn't know I would get a fellowship and disappear for a year and David would go on a boating trip without communication equipment. Now, this is your story, and you tell it well. I only retell it here, because what I want people to know on top of that, is that you held off telling it until it was a funny story, and that before it could possibly have been very amusing, you jumped into the fray and edited beautiful issues. You just did it. I hereby symbolically scrub my by-line from those mastheads when I left my new co-editor in the lurch!

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You came on as co-editor in 2009. We were running behind in those years, though, so first issue in which your name appears in the masthead is Spring/Summer 2008, the gorgeous Aaron Douglas Special Issue, guest-edited by William J. Harris—still one of my very favorite issues.

When I got back from my research year, and David returned from sea, you and I worked for a while in a kind of apprenticeship to David, trying to learn all the things that he did that were only recorded in his head (after "retiring" in 2010, he continued to give us notes---*AMSJ* is hard to quit). Then one day, I think we were in a car, probably headed for a MAASA board meeting, you said you felt like the journal was ours. I felt it too. We were hitting our stride and it was starting to look like something else. Literally, it *looked* different. You brought design and branding sense—with the "AMSJ" tagline, and soliciting Carla Tilghman's color splash in the logo, starting with issue 52.1. We liked each other's ideas. The whole "it's a quarterly, let's do 4 issues a year!" was a revelation and we made it happen. The OMG, what can we do about being a year behind—let's skip a year—got us up to date! The "Summer Reading Issue" helped us stay there. You got us on social media back when I still thought Instagram was a breakfast cereal. Webinars, for Pete's sake. You instituted the blog, now so beautifully curated by Chris Perreira, and soon to be edited by Nishani Frazier.

Sometimes when I think about what I have treasured about working with you, I think about this kid in high school, who always had these ideas that I liked but I didn't back him up. Like once, a bunch of us were standing in front of Arcata High, bored as hell. This kid said, "Let's have a parade!" And he marched off. None of us joined him, but my heart ached. I identified with him and felt guilty at the same time. I wanted to be the kind of person who would join the parade, or even start one. What I am trying to say is, Randal, you and I have joined each other's parades. I said, "Let's ask the editorial board to submit photos of themselves for the summer reading issue." You said, "Yes!" You said, "Let's do a special issue every Fall," and I said, "Um, that sounds really hard, but, um, okay…" And we did it, and those annual special issues, with the fanfare of ASA launches, webinars, panels, is my favorite thing. Space does not permit me to list all my favorite things for which you are responsible, so just one more:

"The Funk Issue"—guest edited by Tony Bolden—and the "Funk Issue" reception at Busboys and Poets!

It isn't all parades. It can't be, when the work entails biweekly meetings, 11 months a year, over a 13-year (I'm not great at math, but I think that's like 286 meetings). We have co-edited 33 journal issues (as of January, 2022). Anyone thinking, that's not so much work, I want to remind you that we have a 25% acceptance rate and that we read and respond to all of those submissions! Not complaining, just wanting to say, that I am grateful and humbled for the times when the parade would get a little wobbly and we didn't walk away. We worked on it. That's something that hasn't come easy to me in life, and I've learned so much from you about balance, about respect, about when to reach out, when to leave space, about trying to stay tuned to what matters. I have learned from you the

many times you have checked in with me and the wonderful graduate student members of the editorial staff. I'd be ready to dive into the agenda, and you'd say something holistic and caring, and I would be like, jeeze, I suck. No I don't. Breathe. Of all the things we have done together, I am most proud, and most grateful, of the collaborative journal editing culture that has provided such humane and creative space in a profession that should be better at this overall. I am so grateful for all of our years of working together on the journal, treasure your friendship, and wish you all the best with your new books and film!

With respect, friendship, and love,
Sherrie Tucker, co-editor with Randal M. Jelks since 2009.

A (Mexican) Native American Rock Band: Redbone, Racial Legibility, and Native-Chicanx Intimacy

Jedediah Kuhn

Redbone is one of the most successful Native American bands in the history of rock 'n' roll. They emerged onto the U.S. music scene in 1970 with music that spoke directly to the burgeoning Red Power movement.[1] Hits such as "Come and Get Your Love" and "The Witch-Queen of New Orleans" topped the charts in the United States, Canada, and Europe and still receive regular airplay today.[2] Brothers Patrick (Pat) and Candido (Lolly) Vegas founded the band and served as its core members. In his memoir, *Come and Get Your Love: A Celebratory Ode to Redbone (1939-Present)*, Pat Vegas traces his and Lolly's ascent to rock stardom. Vegas also reveals something perhaps unexpected in the memoir of a Native American musician: in addition to being Native, Pat Vegas is Mexican American. In fact, several of the band's members are both Native and Mexican American, and Vegas's memoir as well as the band's music, albums, and performances point to continual intimacies between Native Americans and Mexican Americans.[3]

Pat Vegas's Mexican American heritage as well as that of Redbone's other band members rub against both popular and scholarly notions of "authentic" Native American and Indigenous identity and presents a new vantage point from which to think about Native American-Chicanx relationality. Whereas scholars have examined the numerous overlaps between these groups in the nineteenth century and earlier, work examining the twentieth century often focuses on one group or the other. Further, in the few places where scholars do examine relations between these groups, they focus on analyzing the Chicano Movement's claim of Indigenous status, a claim many scholars, especially those

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working under the rubric of critical Latinx indigeneities and critical ethnic studies, have problematized as perpetuating the marginalization of Indigenous peoples on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Indeed, in the interest of supporting Indigenous rights in the United States and Mexico, this study agrees with this emerging scholarship that it is important not to conflate Indigenous status—which pertains to a political category designating the first peoples within settler states—and Indigenous descent in the way that the Chicano Movement has done in the past. What this study problematizes, however, is the collapsing of all discussion of Native-Chicanx relationality into the question of the Chicano Movement's (mis)uses of indigeneity. Instead, this essay turns to intimacy as a framework to rethink Native American-Chicanx relations. I argue that the case of Redbone reveals glimpses of a long, continual history of intimacy between Native Americans and Mexican Americans as well as the oppressive demands for authenticity that delimit Native American identity and render such intimacies illegible.

This study explores traces of intimacy between Native Americans and Chicanxs through an analysis of a sampling of cultural texts produced by Redbone and Pat Vegas during the band's 1970s heyday, including music, lyrics, performances, and visual representation on album covers as well as Pat Vegas's 2017 self-published memoir *Come and Get Your Love: A Celebratory Ode to Redbone (1939-Present)*. Vegas's memoir moves chronologically, tracing his and Lolly's early years and family life, their time as backing musicians in Los Angeles, and their rise (and fall) as members of Redbone. The memoir emphasizes these early years, covering the post-1970s period, including Lolly's passing in 2010, in one brief chapter. The final portion of the book includes appendices written by friends and former band members, such as Pete DePoe and Butch Rillera, and argues explicitly for the band's induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Scholars have long turned to popular culture, popular music in particular, as a critical site where marginalized groups articulate difference to resist the dominant national culture's attempts to assimilate them.[4] Redbone is particularly appropriate for this study because, as a prominent Native American band emerging at the height of the Red Power movement, they can easily be read as articulating Native American resistance to U.S. oppression; however, they also gesture to something more. They gesture to an intimate messiness of identity and experience that nationalist and racializing logics render illegible. I read Redbone's and Pat Vegas's self-presentation across these cultural texts as a curatorial practice. Much in the same way that a museum curates its collections, with curators making strategic decisions about what pieces to display, what to highlight, and what to leave in storage unshown in order to create a cohesive exhibit, the members of Redbone curate their public image by displaying, spotlighting, or omitting certain aspects of themselves to produce a desired narrative.[5] They curate their identities through these texts to strategically fit or resist fitting normative expectations of Native Americanness.[6] Thus, I read these texts as marking Vegas and the band's continual efforts to make sense of

experiences rendered illegible within dominant discourses of Native American identity in American culture.[7] I begin by detailing how intimacy challenges the paradigms of both Native and Chicanx studies and offers an alternative way of approaching Native-Chicanx relationality. Next, I turn to an analysis of Redbone's rise to fame to examine how oppressive demands for racial legibility pushed Vegas and the band to curate their public image as performing Native American racial authenticity necessarily entailed downplaying their Mexican American heritages. Finally, I analyze the numerous Native–Mexican American intimacies present in Pat Vegas's personal and musical inspirations and family history.

Nation, Race, Intimacy

One reason why both Native American and Indigenous and Chicanx studies fail to note Native-Chicanx intimacies is that both emerged out of nationalist movements and continue to operate largely in nationalist modes. In many ways, this is explicit. Native studies scholarship, for example, often focuses on an Indigenous nation and its pursuit of sovereignty, a practice that even extends to analysis of cultural texts through frameworks, such as American Indian literary nationalism.[8] Similarly, Chicanx studies emerged out of the nationalistic Chicano Movement, which sought to expand Mexican Americans' political influence over their own communities, and the cultural nationalist analysis of Chicanx history and cultural production remain central to the field.[9] Whereas nationalism can be a powerful source of resistance to domination, it also carries certain inherent limitations. For one, nationalist projects are invested primarily—perhaps solely—in benefitting the members of that nation; thus, there is little incentive to approach other groups relationally.[10] For another, nationalist projects privilege an imagined and idealized citizen-subject, thus creating a normative set of identity markers and experiences. This means that people whose identities and experiences fall outside of the norm—due to racial or sexual otherness, for example—find themselves marginalized within the nation.[11] Indeed, cultural nationalism is enmeshed with race.

Race, which is always already imbricated with cultural nationalism, is a second, related force inhibiting the exploration of Native-Chicanx intimacies. *Native* and *Chicanx/Mexican American* are not merely cultural nationalist categories; both operate as racial categories in U.S. society.[12] As Michael Omi and Howard Winant theorize, race is the socially constructed categorization of human beings into hierarchically ordered "types," a process that frequently serves the interests of the white ruling class.[13] In organizing nationalist projects around racial identity categories, the cultural nationalist boundaries of Native and Chicanx studies are simultaneously racial boundaries. This nationalist/racial orientation structures both fields as Native American and Indigenous studies takes Native people as its proper objects of study and Chicanx studies takes Chicanxs as its proper objects of study. Each field largely speaks "for and about itself" with separate faculty, training, bodies of literature, and professional organizations.[14] This is even evident in the small amount of scholarly work on Redbone. For example,

Jan Johnson's chapter on the band in *Indigenous Pop*, an edited collection focused exclusively on Indigenous musicians, does not mention the Vegas brothers' Mexican American ancestry.[15] On the other end, David Reyes and Tom Waldman's *Land of a Thousand Dances*, a book focused exclusively on Chicanx contributions to rock 'n' roll, presents the Vegas brothers as Chicanos in Indian attire.[16] Redbone appears in one project because they are Native American and the other because they are Chicano; the fact that band members are both Native American and Chicano goes unremarked because it falls outside of the racial/nationalist investments of both scholarly projects. This reluctance to see, read, or think across national/racial boundaries is exactly what this article challenges.

Discourses of race and nationalism undergird the often-contentious scholarly discussion about Native-Chicanx relationality. Though an earlier generation of scholars mobilized the mestizo origins of Mexican-Americans to claim Chicanxs as Indigenous to the U.S. Southwest and emphasized links between Chicanxs and Native Americans, a more recent group of scholars such as Maria Josephina Saldaña-Portillo, Sheila Contreras, Laura Pulido, and Lourdes Alberto have problematized that claim.[17] These scholars detail how this use of *mestizaje* replicates the same logic that Mexican nationalists used throughout the twentieth century to celebrate a mythologized Aztec past while attempting to assimilate its Indigenous peoples.[18] Moreover, Chicanx claims of the U.S. Southwest as their indigenous homeland, *Aztlán*, directly contradict the land claims of the Indigenous peoples already living there.[19] These critiques are well-founded, and this study acknowledges the numerous problems in claiming Chicanxs as an Indigenous people according to simplistic biologistic understandings of indigeneity.

This shift in the discourse around Native-Chicanx relationality reflects a larger tension between borderlands studies and settler colonial studies. Borderlands studies emerged in conversation with other postcolonial critiques that emphasized hybridity, overlap, and mixedness in the late 1980s and 1990s, a shift that also impacted American Indian studies.[20] As American Indian studies reconfigured itself as Native American and Indigenous studies in the mid-2000s, however, scholars such as Robert Warrior and Clara Sue Kidwell explicitly moved away from the postcolonial engagement with hybridity to instead reemphasize Indigenous national sovereignty as the primary concern of the field.[21] During this same period, settler colonial studies, specifically the oft-cited work of Patrick Wolfe, emerged. Despite tensions between these fields, both Native studies and settler colonial studies share an investment in delimiting Indigenous identity.[22] The settler colonial studies framework locates all people as either Indigenous or settler with *Indigenous* referring to Indigenous national members. Drawing on this framework, many scholars interrogating Chicanx–Indigenous relations have recast Chicanxs as settlers implicated in the ongoing structure of settler colonialism. Recently, however, scholars such as Saldaña-Portillo have troubled this perspective as it presumes that Indigenous peoples are fixed in place and accepts a "U.S. biopolitics of hypo- and hyperdescent" that renders

the interstitial space of mestizaje impossible.[23] This essay contributes to this discussion by contending that, whereas work employing this indigenous/settler binary contributes much to our understanding and whereas the question of Chicanx indigeneity is important, they also reduce Native–Chicanx relationality to a relationship between Indigenous tribal and Chicanx nationalist projects and their imagined citizen-subjects, strategically ignoring the history of intimacy implicit in Chicanx identity as well as the continual intimacies between members of these groups.

In this essay, I use intimacy as a framework for rethinking relationships between Native Americans and Chicanxs as well as Native and Chicanx studies. I draw my notion of intimacy from scholars such as Ann Laura Stoler, Nayan Shah, Lisa Lowe, and Victor Román Mendoza.[24] As often employed in this scholarship, intimacy is connection between individuals and groups that regimes of colonial governance—and even our own national imaginaries—have regulated and/or separated. In addition to approaching intimacy as connection, I contribute to this work by approaching the intimate as pertaining to the innermost self: one's inspirations, aspirations, fears, and fantasies. As with one's intimate connection to others, one's intimate sense of self is also a target for colonial regulation; however, the intimate, both individual and relational, can also serve as a space to resist or circumvent control. Moreover, intimacy is a particularly apt framework for approaching the study of popular music. As scholar Josh Kun writes, when one listens to music, "something outside of you is entering your body—alien sounds emitted from strangers…enter, via vibration and frequency, the very bones and tissue of your being."[25] One enters "sonic and social spaces where disparate identity formations, cultures, and geographies historically kept and mapped separately…enter into relationships whose consequences for cultural identification are never predetermined."[26] In other words, as one creates, performs, or enjoys music, one enters an intimate space of connection that crosses racial, cultural, and national boundaries. Whether enjoying a live band at a venue in close proximity to others or a record in the private space of one's home, the act of listening to music is intimate.

In my formulation, intimacy entails two components: 1) reading across archives, paradigms, and scholarly fields and 2) focusing on and theorizing from the intimate, inclusive of both intimate connections and one's intimate, innermost self. First, Lisa Lowe speaks to the importance of "reading across" in *The Intimacy of Four Continents*, writing, "In pursuing particular intimacies and contemporaneities that traverse distinct and separately studied 'areas,' the practice of reading across archives unsettles the discretely bounded objects, methods, and temporal frameworks canonized by a national history invested in isolated origins and independent progressive development."[27] Whereas Lowe's work is concerned with the global scope of the emergence of Western liberalism, I apply the practice of "reading across" to the nationalist boundaries within ethnic studies as it enables us to see how groups of color relate to one another, how the methods and paradigms of one field can shed new light on the "proper

objects" of another, and how a group's nationalist pursuit of self-determination can unwittingly result in the devaluation of another marginalized group. Thus, intimacy engages comparative and relational ethnic studies and critical Latinx Indigeneities scholarship, resonating with what María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo calls a "paradigm drift," the act of reading across the "compartmentaliz[ed] study of race and ethnicity."[28]

Second, I position the intimate as a messy, fecund site for rethinking race, relationality, and identity. Intimacy is simultaneously relational—pertaining to intimate contact with others—and interior—pertaining to how individuals, Pat Vegas in particular, construct their intimate senses of self. Rather than distinct, these relational and interior intimacies are connected as one's interiority often reflects one's negotiation of the relational and is, as Victor Román Mendoza writes, "determined from without."[29] Simply put, people, experiences, and creative works often fail to fit neatly into the categories that American culture (and scholarly fields) have prescribed for them. Examining and theorizing from the messiness of the intimate reveals the limitations of nationalist-oriented ethnic studies projects. As the case of Pat Vegas and Redbone reveals, sometimes people are not solely Native or Chicanx. Sometimes they are both. Sometimes they shift from one to the other and back again over the course of a single lifetime. And sometimes these prescribed categories are too narrow to contain all one's inspirations, creations, and imaginings. Intimacy enables us to locate and make sense of experiences that confound the logics and mandates of the nation. Bringing Native studies and Chicana/o studies together and looking for traces of intimacy outside of the usual paradigms helps reveal how race and white supremacy operate, structure relationships between these groups, and impact individual negotiations of identity.

Curating a Native Identity

In the very first paragraph of his memoir, *Come and Get Your Love*, Pat Vegas begins by identifying himself as a "Mexican Native American."[30] *Mexican Native American* is not a legible racial identity in the United States. It is not immediately legible because American dominant culture, as glimpsed through decades of antimiscegenation legislation and blood quantum restrictions, prefers clear racial boundaries and simple identity categories: Native American or Mexican American, not both. *Mexican Native American* is Vegas's own creation, an identity formed through the combination of *Mexican American*, which he claims from his father, and *Native American*, which he claims from his Shoshone mother. In the pages of his memoir, and perhaps in the intimate space of his home, Vegas does not privilege a tribal affiliation or fold his Indianness into a Chicano identity, tactics that would render his racial identity more legible by locating it within nationalist logics; instead, he has created an identity irreducible to its component parts. As he and his brother Lolly entered the public sphere, however, they had to negotiate increasing pressure to present themselves in a way that made racial sense to others. They did so by curating a Native American racial identity.

For the Vegas brothers, rising to rock stardom and claiming a legible Native American identity involved numerous acts of curation. This was necessary because, whereas mixed-race identities are illegible in general, Native Americans have the added weight of meeting oppressive standards of authenticity. Anthropologist Jeffrey Sissons explains oppressive authenticity as the idea that one must demonstrate cultural and racial purity in order to count as authentically Indian.[31] Approaching the same idea from the context of the U.S., Lenape scholar Joanne Barker writes, "Natives must be able to demonstrably look and act like the Natives of national narrations in order to secure their legal rights and standing as Natives within the United States."[32] Extending from U.S. projects of settlement bent on disappearing the Indian through genocide, removal, and assimilation, this insistence on purity guides dominant U.S. perspectives on Native Americanness.[33] One can see oppressive authenticity at work in the logics of blood quantum and the way that Native identities seem to operate by a "reverse one-drop rule," by which any amount of racial mixture casts doubt on one's racial authenticity as an Indian.[34] Thus, the Vegas brothers' identity as *Mexican Native American* is not legible within the United States because any racial mixture or addendum to the identity *Native American* throws Native racial authenticity into doubt. The brothers became Native American in the public eye by attempting to fit themselves into American cultural ideas of Indian authenticity.

Pat Vegas recounts that he and Lolly began negotiating these demands for authenticity and legibility early in their career. They began working as studio musicians, often playing surf music, while they were still teenagers in the 1950s. Vegas states that Lolly was known around Los Angeles as the "Mexican Elvis Presley" because of the way he danced. He writes, "Nobody knew he was also Native American. Back then and perhaps to some degree today, when you were brown-skinned—everybody thought you were Mexican. They didn't look further."[35] When the brothers met people who read their brown skin as Mexican Americanness and not as Native Americanness, the brothers were encountering a racial construction of Native Americanness as always disappearing, nonmodern, and/or located in specific geographies such as the rural reservation.[36] The Vegas brothers were two brown-skinned young men with clean-cut hair playing surf music around Los Angeles; they did not register to others as Native American because they did not look, act, or sound anything like Indians should according to stereotypes in dominant American culture. To insist on the Native aspect of their identities and resist the assumption that they were only Mexican, the brothers would have to explicitly display aspects of themselves to render their Native Americanness legible. This also entailed deemphasizing aspects that signaled Mexican Americanness.

The first step of curation the brothers took was to distance themselves from Mexican Americanness by changing their last name. *Vegas* is a stage name. Pat and Lolly were born with the surname Vasquez and were known for several years professionally as the Vasquez Brothers. Pat Vegas writes, "By 1963 or so, it became apparent that a Mexican sounding stage name and rock 'n' roll just didn't

necessarily go together."[37] They found that booking agents were hesitant to hire acts with Spanish surnames because of anti-Mexican racism.[38] On the advice of a musician mentor, the brothers changed their surname to Vegas to "sound as lily white as Elvis himself and look and smell as green as the money comes."[39] At this stage, their move away from Mexican Americanness was both a move toward racial ambiguity and increased marketability. This was not unusual for the time. Chicano rock legend Ritchie Valens, after all, started as Ritchie Valenzuela.[40] However, they would not be content remaining ambiguous for long.

Next, the brothers began insisting that others recognize their Native Americanness. In addition to changing his name, by the late 1960s, Pat Vegas began telling friends and professional contacts about his Native roots to dispel the notion that he and Lolly were only Mexican.[41] One of these professional contacts was black rock legend Jimi Hendrix, who claimed Cherokee ancestry.[42] Vegas writes that, while playing together at a festival in Monterey in 1967, Hendrix suggested that the brothers start an all-Native American band, something the brothers had already been considering. Encouraged, the brothers began working toward making that idea a reality.[43] It took a few years for them to recruit the band's other founding members, lead guitarist Tony Bellamy and drummer Pete DePoe. During these same years, the band developed their Cajun and Native-inspired signature sound through singles such as "Niki Hoeky" (1967).[44] Pat Vegas has since dubbed this sound "Native American Swamp Rock."[45] By the end of the decade, all the major pieces were set. The band had four Native American members and a Native American-inspired sound. They capped it off by choosing a Native American–themed name for themselves: Redbone. Redbone signed with CBS subsidiary Epic Records in 1969.[46] This experience reveals the multiple acts of curation involved in claiming a public Native American identity as each step worked together to present the brothers as racially Native American to the exclusion of their Mexican American heritage.

Becoming a Native American band was a strategic choice as the brothers could have let people continue to assume they were only Mexican or even attempted to remain racially ambiguous. I infer two reasons why the brothers chose to curate a public Native identity. The first is that Pat Vegas seems more personally invested in claiming a Native American identity than a Mexican American one. He writes, "My mom took time to tell us about her family…she inherently, instinctively instilled in Lolly and me our love of our culture, particularly our Native American culture."[47] His Native American cultural heritage, fostered in the intimate space of his home through a caring relationship with his mother, forms a central component of his identity. Additionally, his comment that the people who read him and his brother as only Mexican had failed to "look further" indicates a degree of discomfort with being identified as only Mexican. Claiming a simplified Native American identity may have been the best option he had to craft a public racial identity that felt true to his experience, but it was not the only reason.

A second reason the Vegas brothers curated a public Native identity is that their Native identity could be a marketable asset. Between 1963, when the brothers changed their name to distance themselves from Mexican Americanness, and 1969, when the brothers signed to Epic records as a Native American band, there was a monumental shift in the racial discourse in the United States. Noting that the band's first, self-titled album was double-sized, making it unusually expensive to produce, Vegas writes, "The executives were so excited about the material, our band and the Native American theme that they felt they needed to introduce us in a big way. You have to remember the times. This was 1969-1970 and to have a Native American band that played rock 'n' roll the right way was highly unusual."[48] Vegas adds, "Redbone fit into this important period in American History: The Civil Rights Movement."[49] CBS executives were so excited about Redbone because they represented a unique financial opportunity: They were seasoned musicians who tapped into the cultural zeitgeist of the moment. They were the first-ever Native American rock band, and they were ready to release their first album at the exact moment Native civil rights movements were gaining popular support. Whereas being Mexican was a liability in 1963, displaying an overt, nonwhite racial identity was an asset by 1969. Although it is possible that they could have achieved success as an explicitly Chicano band at this time—and other bands, such as Tierra and El Chicano, did just that—the Vegas brothers chose to develop a Native American band.[50] In doing so, they became part of an emerging discourse about Native Americans.

The late 1960s and early 1970s was a period of high-profile Native activism and blossoming Native cultural production as well as popular deployments of Native Americanness that brought Native America to the fore of American popular discourse. 1969 marks the beginning of the Native activist group Indians of All Nations' 19-month occupation of Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay.[51] It is also the year Vine Deloria, Jr.'s landmark book *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* was published and M. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, the first such honor for a Native American–authored novel.[52] This sudden surge in the popularity of Native Americans in the United States speaks to a broader commodification of Native culture and identity. The counterculture movement of the 1960s and 70s fetishized Native Americanness.[53] Hippies wore Native-inspired clothing and embraced (often generic) Native philosophies. Popular works of counterculture literature, such as Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, made Native Americans main characters, and publications such as *The Whole Earth Catalog* promoted and sold works such as *Black Elk Speaks* (reprinted in 1961 and 1972) to counterculturalists across the nation.[54] Americans turned to a stereotyped figure of the Native American in the 1960s and 70s to critique the excesses of American consumerism.[55] Equating Native Americanness with New Age spirituality, environmental consciousness, living "close to the land," and communal ownership, hippies presented a generic Native American–inspired

lifestyle as the antidote to the ills of modern society. As a Native American rock band, Redbone presented executives with the opportunity to capitalize on the market's hunger for all things Indian.

One can see traces of this marketing strategy in the liner notes for the band's second album, *Potlatch.* The Indians of All Nations' takeover of Alcatraz began in November of 1969—too late for the band to explicitly reference in their first album, *Redbone,* released in January of 1970.[56] The band prominently features the takeover, however, on their second album, *Potlatch*, released in October of the same year. On the back cover's liner notes, author Morgan Ames begins, "Last weekend in San Francisco, I stood by the bay at Sausalito and looked out at the quiet trap out there, Alcatraz, thinking how cold they all must be on their island. The Indians standing vigil."[57] By beginning his liner notes with a reference to Alcatraz, Ames is explicitly linking the band to the occupation. Ames continues by explaining that he knows "shamefully little about the American Indian," especially "about the people as a now-living culture." He then turns to discuss Redbone and their music. In addition to referencing the Pat Vegas–written track "Alcatraz" on the album, Ames's introduction also serves to catch the interest of consumers supportive of the occupation and other Native issues. The subtext of Ames's liner notes is that, even though no member of Redbone was directly involved in the occupation of Alcatraz, by purchasing the album, consumers could show their support for that and other Native American issues.

That a record label offered the brothers a contract and invested in Redbone at this stage is significant. Pat and Lolly Vegas had been working as successful professional musicians in Los Angeles for years. As the Mexican Vasquez Brothers or racially ambiguous Vegas Brothers, they had toured with Jimmy Clanton as part of his backing band, played as part of the house band for the television dance show *Shindig*, and headlined as the house band for the Hollywood club The Haunted House.[58] They had released a few singles, and their song "Nicky Hoeky" had been covered by artists such as Aretha Franklin and Bobbie Gentry.[59] However, it was only after the Vegas brothers embraced the Native American rock band concept that they finally transitioned from Los Angeles–area musicians to international rock stars. Presenting themselves publicly as a Native American rock band—and, thus, maintaining their stardom—would entail numerous acts of curation as the band negotiated U.S. cultural notions of authentic Indianness.

Maintaining a Native Identity

After emerging onto the music scene, Pat and Lolly Vegas spent the next decade maintaining their carefully curated public Native American identity. The band's name is an important component of this. As Pat Vegas defines it, *redbone* means "someone who has Indian blood in them. Mind you, this could mean anybody: half-Black, half-White, whatever."[60] The name *Redbone* references Indianness in two ways, marrying the band's explicit Native American identity with their Cajun-inspired swamp rock sound, which would likely not immediately signify Native Americanness to audiences. First, the *red* in *Redbone* references

the burgeoning Red Power activist movement as well as red as a popular referent to Native American racial classification. Second, Vegas's definition hints at a specific Southern genealogy of the term as *redbone* can also refer to a specific Louisiana community of mixed-Native and Black people as well as to light-skinned Black women.[61] It signifies a Native–Black intimacy that helps connect the band's Cajun/rock/funk-tinged swamp rock sound to popular understandings of Native Americanness. Whereas the mixedness in Vegas's definition immediately calls to mind the band members' mixed Native and Mexican heritage, in defining *redbone* as a mixture of Native heritage and "whatever," however, Pat Vegas positions Native identity as the more important part of the racial admixture. In interviews the band gave at the height of their fame, they would similarly explain their name in a way that emphasizes the Native aspect of their mixed backgrounds. For instance, one interview article in *Circus* magazine mentions "Three members of the group are half-Mexican" as incidental to a story in which "four American Indians found each other."[62] Thus, their name simultaneously references some degree of mixture at the same time that it emphasizes Native Americanness, an act of curation that simplifies the band's racial identity in the public eye.

Beyond their name, the band emphasized their Native Americanness through numerous aspects of their public engagement. Vegas writes, "Though I always had [a] vision that our music…would primarily represent our Native American culture…it was implicit that we would also dress and dance likewise in the Native American spirit."[63] Dressing and dancing in the Native American spirit meant choosing specific symbols to signify their Native Americanness in their song lyrics, on album covers, and in public performances. For example, their first album, 1970's *Redbone*, features a literal red bone with feathers attached by leather on the front cover (Figure 1).[64] The feathers would immediately signify Indianness to consumers as feathers are a ubiquitous sight across Indian

Figure 1: Redbone. *Redbone* (1970). Courtesy of Sony Music Entertainment.

Figure 2: Redbone. *Redbone* (1970) back cover. Courtesy of Sony Music Entertainment. Photography by Yoram Kohana.

Country, used often for ceremonial or honorific purposes, as well as a constant in popular representations of Native Americans. Attaching the feathers to the bone turns the bone also into a signifier of Indianness. The red of the bone could signify "red to the bone," claiming an Indianness that reaches down into the deepest, most essential part of oneself. The back cover has two layered images. A black silhouette of the band on a ridge frames the bottom of a medium shot of the band grouped together. Standing in front of the band at a point where the black border silhouette comes to a "V," Lolly Vegas is the focal point of the image and the only band member whose upper body is completely visible. Lolly is wearing a fringed buckskin shirt that emphasizes his broad chest and shoulders as well as a necklace of shell or beads. His stance and his expression—a closed-mouth half smile—exude confidence and visually mark him as the leader. The other band members have more serious expressions, with drummer Pete DePoe gazing intensely back at the camera. The band's direct gaze and collective expressions confront the viewer. The image also emphasizes features that visually mark the band as Native American according to popular expectations. For instance, Lolly Vegas's and Pete DePoe's long, straight black hair, a feature heavily associated with Native Americans, is on full display in the image. The black image that frames the bottom features a wide shot silhouette of the band members standing far apart in a single line on a ridge amid bushes and a tree. Though their features are not visible, each member stands facing the camera, gazing back at the viewer. This calls to mind the Western trope of settlers looking up and suddenly realizing there are Indians at some distance observing them. Both layers of this image present the band as confident and formidable, challenging the viewer with an attitude that would resonate with that of Red Power and other activist groups contesting racial discrimination. Thus, the images across the album jacket curate an image of the band as authentically Native American and aligned with the broader cultural nationalist movements of the time. In these images and their personal styling, the band drew on a motley assortment of tribal inspirations, pairing plains imagery with southwest turquoise jewelry and references to Pacific Northwest cultural practices such as the potlatch, for example. This "many Nations" aesthetic could both be referencing the multiple tribal lineages embodied in each member as well as the multitribal and pan-tribal political organizations of the time, such as Indians of All Nations and the American Indian Movement.[65]

The band continued their overt display of Indianness in their live performances. Their appearance on a 1974 episode of *Burt Sugarman's the Midnight Special* provides an excellent example. The band's introduction on the show begins with a close-up shot of a rock 'n' roll drumkit. Rather than the usual rock beat, however, Redbone's drummer Butch Rillera (who joined the band in 1973) is thumping the even, rhythmic cadence of a powwow song. Lead guitarist Tony Bellamy, dressed in an electric blue-ribbon shirt and fringed maroon breech cloth and wearing two bustles of radiating orange, yellow, white, and blue on his

back, dances as Pat and Lolly Vegas shake rattles and sing vocables. They finish their powwow-style intro as Rillera transitions the drum beat to a rock groove and the band launches into their hit song "Come and Get Your Love."[66] By starting their performance with the music, clothing, and dancing of a powwow, the band emphasizes their Indianness and draws a connection between powwow music and their hit rock single. It was important that they made this explicit display of their Indianness because, without it, there is little in the song itself that would strike listeners as Native American. If oppressive authenticity is the societal demand that Native people look and sound like the Indians of settler imaginations, one can see that Redbone did everything in their power to look and sound as Indian as possible. The overall effect of the band's self-presentation is a firm declaration that this is an Indian band.

Morgan Ames's liner notes for *Potlatch* also reveal elements of the band's careful curation of their Native American identity according to the demands of oppressive authenticity. Discussing the band members, Ames begins with drummer Pete DePoe and explicitly mentions that DePoe is responsible for the Native chants heard on the track "Chant: 13th Hour." He writes "It's some powerful, and he has a right. He was born on the reservation at Neah Bay, Washington."[67] DePoe's link to a reservation community makes him appear to potential buyers as the most authentically Indian of the band and gives him a "right" to perform Native music. Perhaps coincidentally, DePoe was also the only member of the band who was not Mexican American. Ames then turns to the rest of the band, whom Lolly Vegas describes as "city Indians" in a quote. Ames writes, "Drummer DePoe heard them one night in a club. 'Their music blew my mind,' he says, 'and man, they all look like *Indians!*'" So, after establishing Pete DePoe's Native authenticity, Ames uses a quote from DePoe to vouch for the authenticity of the other band members in part by invoking the visual register: they are Indian because they look Indian. Thus, the entire introduction to the band is dedicated to establishing their authenticity. Ames makes only one oblique reference to the band members' Mexican ancestry, writing, "Between them, they sport every [Native] ancestry from Aztec on down." As with the Chicano Movement of the era, the band presents their Mexican ancestry as Aztec, a move that emphasizes the indigenous portion of a mestizo identity. By curating their identities, they create a simplified and "authentic" identity for themselves as a solely Native American band.[68]

The Vegas brother's careful curation of their American Indian identity at the height of their fame speaks to the operation of oppressive authenticity on Native identity as well as to demands for racial legibility. Simply put, to render themselves racially legible, Pat and Lolly Vegas could not be *Mexican Native American*. They had to choose one: Mexican American or Native American. They chose to be Native. However, despite this choice and despite the brothers' public performance of Native identity, Pat Vegas's memoir details how other aspects of their lives were not so clearly marked and instead spoke to continual intimacies.

Intimate Inspirations

Though Pat Vegas curated a Native American image publicly, in the intimate space of his private life, he embraced both his Native and his Mexican American heritage, especially for inspiration. Vegas's unruly assortment of musical and personal inspirations defy easy nationalist analysis and point to continual intimacies between Native Americans and Mexican Americans. For example, of the many Native influences on Vegas's life and music, the one he discusses most is the late nineteenth-century Paiute prophet Wovoka. Wovoka founded the Ghost Dance, a spiritual movement intended to restore the world to its condition presettlement that spread throughout Native communities across the United States in 1889 and 1890.[69] The Ghost Dance is an important reference point Native history, as the U.S. Cavalry massacred hundreds of unarmed Ghost Dance practitioners at Wounded Knee, South Dakota—an event that, for many, has come to epitomize U.S. settler aggression.[70] Vegas writes that the Ghost Dance inspired his approach to playing the bass guitar as he pioneered the playing of what he calls "ghost-notes." He writes, "I'll hit a note and in between that note there will be three more notes before I go to the next note….it creates harmonic, invisible tones that you can't write down."[71] He adds that many bassists in popular music today emulate his ghost-note style. Second, Wovoka and the Ghost Dance inspired the names and content of some of Redbone's work, specifically the 1973 album *Wovoka* and its title track of the same name. The chorus of the title track encourages listeners: "Our people must dance/Keep on dancing, keep on dancing/Our people must sing/Keep on singing, keep on singing for the good times to come."[72] Vegas writes that Wovoka's influence on him extend far beyond mere song content. He writes, "I wholeheartedly took to Wovoka's story and legacy" and "When I look at Wovoka…I see me." These comments demonstrate the extent to which Wovoka impacts Vegas's intimate sense of self. He identifies so strongly with Wovoka that he even sees himself when looking at images of the prophet. In a way, Vegas's artistry can be read as a continuation of Wovoka's legacy. The song's admonition for Native people to "keep on dancing" and "keep on singing" in anticipation of a better future adapts the 1890s religious practice to the cultural revolution and civil rights movements of the 1970s. Vegas saw music as entwined with the activism of the era with dancing and singing being an integral part of the work of striving for social equity. The message of the song is for people, especially Native peoples, to keep doing that work because social change is quickly approaching. Thus, Wovoka inspires Vegas's intimate self—his music, the way he plays the guitar, his sense of purpose, and even his self-image.

Vegas and Redbone also turned to Chicanx and Latinx influences for musical and personal inspiration. Pat and Lolly Vegas injected Latin American rhythms into the music they played at clubs around Los Angeles in the late 1960s. Pat Vegas writes that they learned many of these rhythms from their sister and her husband, both of whom had played with Tito Puente, the Puerto Rican "King of Latin Music."[73] Pat Vegas writes of this experience, "[It] gave me an opportunity to play music reflective of my roots, my culture" and that it later inspired his journey

as a Native American musician.[74] Beyond this direct tutelage, as musicians in Los Angeles, the Vegas brothers would have been inundated with a host of Latin American, Black, and other musical influences as the Los Angeles music scene has long been a point of confluence of musical cultures.[75] For example, Pat Vegas cites 1950s Chicano rocker Ritchie Valens as a major influence. Though Valens's biggest hit, "La Bamba," is based on a traditional Mexican wedding *huapango,* the song is grounded in a Cuban cha-cha beat.[76] Moreover, Valens thought of himself as an R&B musician, and the track features Black R&B session players Earl Palmer, René Hall, and Ernie Freeman. In listening to "La Bamba," Vegas was exposing himself to a multiplicity of musical intimacies. The Vegas Brothers, in turn, inspired others. Even before making a name for themselves as Redbone, musicians from Chicano bands Thee Midniters and Cannibal and the Headhunters would go to Hollywood to watch the brothers perform with Roy Marquez of Thee Midniters noting he would go specifically to observe Lolly Vegas play the guitar.[77] So, from their family home to their professional work in Hollywood, the brothers were intimately connected to the Chicano music scene, both drawing on it as a source of inspiration and serving as a source of inspiration to others.

Pat Vegas also writes that he feels a profound connection to Chicano rock legend Ritchie Valens, who died tragically in a plane crash in 1959. In one passage, Vegas fantasizes about meeting him in 1957 when Valens, Pat, and Lolly were all aspiring musicians. He writes, "We three future rock stars had an immediate almost spiritual bond and discussed what music meant to us as minorities. 'It's a ticket out of poverty,' said Lolly. 'No—it's a ticket to the stars,' said Ritchie. Though younger than my brother, I was usually a bit wiser: 'I just want some scratch in my pocket.'"[78] In this fantasy scene, Vegas positions Valens as simultaneously an aspirational figure—later calling him "everybody's idol"—and as a brother, someone with whom he is on equal footing and with whom he shares struggles and an "almost spiritual" connection.[79] As Victor Román Mendoza writes, fantasy, like intimacy, entails a negotiation with the broader social world. Fantasy serves two purposes: It protects one from a "potentially traumatic scene, thought, or condition," and it "enables one to locate one's desire."[80] I read this fantasy scene as expressing Vegas's desire to reconcile himself with the Chicano heritage from which he distanced himself in the public sphere, protecting him from the fear that this connection has been severed. As Vegas spent much of his career curating a simplified Native identity, his memoir, especially this fantasy scenario, serves as a space to acknowledge the impact of his Chicanx heritage. In imagining himself as a brother and friend to one of the most iconic Mexican American rock musicians, he is positioning himself as part of that Chicano rock legacy. Like his Native heritage and the prophet Wovoka, Vegas's Mexican American heritage and Ritchie Valens inspire his intimate sense of self.

Though Redbone's songs display numerous Native and Latin American musical influences, their signature sound gestures to a more complex assortment of musical inspirations. Vegas terms this sound "Native American Swamp Rock" and describes their first song in this style, "Niki Hoeky," as a "fusion of jazz, funk,

blues, and rock…rolled into a groovy ditty about a Louisiana Cajun kid."[81] The brothers wrote the song in collaboration with Jim Ford in 1967 at a time when they were calling themselves the Crazy Cajun Cakewalk Band. Because Native American contributions to popular music have often gone unacknowledged, there is little about "Niki Hoeky" sonically that would immediately register to listeners as Native American–inspired.[82] Instead, it fits within a larger trend of Southern-inspired "swamp rock" records released at the time, such as Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Susie Q"; notably, however, Vegas contends that "Niki Hoeky" is the first of this genre.[83] Like much of American popular music, it draws heavily on African American musical influences, serving as a bit of Native–Black intimacy also referenced in the name Redbone. As Vegas explains, this mobilization of Blackness was sometimes calculated. In his discussion of the band's 1972 song "Fais-Do," for instance, Vegas defines *fais-do* as a Cajun term used to describe "a White person who plays the Blues *but sounds Black*." He adds, "Elvis Presley became who he was in part because he was a White person but sounded like a Black person."[84] This comment gestures to an uncomfortable, and arguably appropriative, use of Blackness by both the band and American popular music writ large. At the same time, however, it also gestures to the intimate, boundless nature inherent to popular music.

Vegas locates the band's Native American swamp rock sound as emerging from a family history that speaks to a multiplicity of intimacies. As part of his claim to having originated the sound, Vegas traces its genesis to his maternal grandfather, Antonio Betran Morales, a man who played guitar in a Mariachi band in Texas. Vegas writes that Morales "would go to Louisiana to gig. As a kid, I remember him always playing this strange sounding music…he used to show me all of these little licks, notes and beats."[85] Thus, it is Vegas's Shoshone grandfather who introduces him to both Mariachi music, a typically Mexican musical form, as well as the Black, Creole, and Cajun sounds of Louisiana. Rather than unique, Morales's mix of musical influences may have been part of a broader pattern of cultural mixing in the South and Southwest. As historian Tyina L. Steptoe relates, Texas was a hotbed of musical and cultural mixing and innovation from the 1920s onward as African American, Mexican, and Louisiana Creole migrants converged in cities such as Houston.[86] Thus, this most intimate of experiences—playing guitar as a child with his grandfather—serves as a site where Vegas learned both the Shoshone and Chicano musical forms one might expect in a "Mexican Native American" household as well as the Cajun and African American–inspired bluesy "swamp rock" sound that would later characterize Redbone's music. American popular music itself speaks to the intimacies of peoples and cultures, of individuals and communities that overlap and influence one another. The Vegas brothers' musical genealogy is no different. The Vegas brothers drew on a broad range of personal and musical inspirations, each of which point to numerous and ongoing intimacies that cross cultures, communities, and racial categories.

Intimate Histories

In addition to his musical and personal inspirations, Pat Vegas's family history points to ongoing intimacies between Native Americans and Mexican Americans. Though his identity as a *Mexican Native American* points to his father's Mexican Americanness and his mother's Native Americanness, the intimacies he describes go far beyond the single instance in his parents' relationship. For example, Vegas describes his father, Ramon "Raymond" Mason Vasquez, as having Yaqui, Tohono O'odham, and Navajo "roots."[87] Despite these multiple indigenous roots, Vegas describes his father's experience in other ways as typically Mexican American. His father was one of "tens of thousands of Mexican-American youths" who joined the U.S. military during World War II.[88] He was also a first-generation immigrant who worked picking cotton and apricots alongside his family in the agricultural fields of Fresno, California.[89] So, whereas Ramon Mason Vasquez had a distinctive tribal heritage, his experience is also representative of that of many Mexican Americans in the mid-twentieth century. Vegas's account of his Mexican American father's Indigenous roots unsettles the assumption of a normative, imagined Chicanx subject whose Indigenous origins are located solely in a distant Aztec past and instead speak to a continual history of Indigenous-mestizo intermarriage.

Vegas's mother's racial identity is also more complicated than it appears at first glance. Whereas Vegas describes his mother, Eloise "Eloisa" Morales Vasquez, as a "direct descendant of the great Shoshone Tribe" and "full-blooded Native American (Shoshone)," he also makes several statements that complicate the racial and cultural purity implied by the term "full-blooded."[90] For one, his mother's maiden name is Spanish—Morales. Vegas also records his Shoshone family members referring to one another in Spanish as *mijo* (my son) and *abuela* (grandmother). And, once again, Vegas states that his grandfather played guitar in a mariachi band in Texas, which is a typically Mexican musical form.[91] This in no way challenges the family's legitimacy as Shoshones, as Shoshones are as perfectly capable of speaking Spanish and playing Mariachi music as Mexican Americans; rather, it demonstrates that just as Vegas claims some degree of Native American heritage on his Mexican American father's side, his Native American mother's side also bears the imprint of Mexican intimacies.

This imprint of Native–Chicanx intimacy on his "full-blooded" Shoshone mother's side is most strikingly revealed in a scene in which Vegas recounts what he claims is his oldest memory, a fantasy scenario that simultaneously invokes and upends notions of racial and cultural purity. Vegas recalls sitting on his mother's lap at age three, gazing up at her. He writes, "Her Mu Mu—perhaps in the colors of the Mexican flag—seemed brighter than the sun itself. Dark brown with a touch of green eyes, a hint of Irish blood viz-à-viz a distant relative—*I like to think he was an Irishman who fought for Santa Ana against the invaders back in the Mexican-American War*."[92] In this fantasy of his earliest recollection, Vegas clothes his full-blooded Shoshone mother in the Mexican flag and speculates

about an Irish forebearer aligned with Mexico. Radiating like the sun, seated with a baby in her lap, and clothed with the Mexican flag, Vegas's mother becomes a Madonna figure in his imagination. Specifically, this image bears a striking resemblance to *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, an incarnation of Mary that some have hailed as a syncretic, Catholicized version of the Aztec goddess Tonantzin.[93] Vegas's vision of his mother as *La Virgen*/Tonantzin corresponds with his first description of his mother in the memoir in which she is wearing a "petite gold cross" and Native dress. He writes that his mother's clothing "symbolized that my brother and I had not one but two powerful spiritual forces, Catholicism and Native American beliefs, working in our favor."[94] Though stating his mother is full-blooded Shoshone, Vegas simultaneously positions her as Mexican and Irish and a bastion of Indigenous and Catholic faiths, complicating overly simple narratives of racial and cultural purity.

The image of full-blooded Shoshone Eloise Morales Vasquez as *La Virgen*, a simultaneous embodiment of Catholicism and Indigenous spirituality, presses against oppressive notions of authenticity that privilege "pure" expressions of Indigenous culture. Scholars operating in an Indigenous nationalist mode may offer a solution to this tension. In his landmark article, "Towards a National Indian Literature," Simon J. Ortiz describes a seemingly Catholic celebration practiced by the Acqumeh community, arguing that it demonstrates how Native peoples can repurpose oppressive colonial culture "to make these forms meaningful in their own terms."[95] In a similar vein, Scott Richard Lyons writes, "When a Native religious movement that has existed for nearly five centuries is deemed unauthentic or nontraditional because its name is Christianity—even though it might well enhance the lives of the Indians who follow it—then we require a discussion about what we mean by 'traditional.'"[96] If we take serious the notion that all cultures change and if we define Indigenous by what Indigenous people do rather than by setter demands for Indigenous "authenticity" and purity, one can see that there is no contradiction in the image of a "full-blooded" Indian woman wearing a Christian cross.

The portion of Vegas's fantasy that is harder to reconcile within nationalist frameworks is the image of his full-blooded Shoshone mother clothed in the Mexican flag. A Chicanx nationalist reading might point to this combination as emblematic of Chicanx indigeneity; however, remembering that such a promotion of Chicanx/Mexican indigeneity has been used to ignore the ongoing marginalization of Indigenous peoples in Mexico and the United States, I shift away from such a reading. Eloise Morales Vazquez was Shoshone, not Chicana. Instead, recalling Mendoza's formulation that fantasy both protects and expresses desire, I read this fantasy as allowing Vegas to ameliorate the fear of *not being Indian enough*—a fear he had long managed through the curation of his public identity—by giving him the space to express desire for an intimate connection with Mexicanness—to be comfortably and legibly Mexican Native American. In positioning this image of his mother as his earliest memory, Vegas is positioning this fantasy as a point of origin. As geographer Yi-

Fu Tuan writes, "Mother may well be the first enduring and independent object in the infant's world of fleeting impressions…[the child's] essential shelter and dependable source of physical and psychological comfort…she is his familiar environment and haven."[97] In Vegas's fantasy, which he positions as his earliest memory, he envisions his mother—his point of origin, his place of comfort—as simultaneously Indian and Mexican and even containing a "hint of Irish blood." This fantasy image exists in a place outside and defiant of the racial-nationalist logics within which he has long worked to locate himself. In this fantasy in which his full-blooded Shoshone mother is clothed in the Mexican flag, Vegas can embrace his Mexicanness without fear of threatening the authenticity of his Indianness because his Mexicanness is inextricably bound to his Indianness and vice versa. This fantasy image is an expression of Pat Vegas's desire to be Mexican Native American—to be legible and authentic without curation. It is an image that speaks to ongoing intimacies between Native American and Mexican American individuals, communities, and identities.

The Promise of Intimacy

What we can conclude from this exploration of Native-Chicanx intimacies must necessarily begin with what we cannot conclude. A project intent on blurring lines of identity must contend with the reality that some lines are better left unblurred. One of those is the boundary between who counts as Indigenous and who does not as Indigenous rights depend on this sharp distinction. However, if we collapse all discussion of Native–Chicanx relationality into the question of Chicanx indigeneity, I contend that we miss something important. We miss the numerous, ongoing intimacies that exist beyond the scope or interest of nationalist-oriented scholarship and that confound the easy classification of people into distinct racial categories. These intimacies are present in lived interpersonal relationships such as the one between Pat and Lolly Vegas's parents, and they also influence our interior worlds, inspiring our creations and shaping our fantasies.

In his childhood living room, Pat Vegas learned Cajun guitar from his Shoshone grandfather who was also a mariachi. He dreams of his Shoshone mother clothed in the Mexican flag. He imagines himself to be kin to both Wovoka and Ritchie Valens. These are the intimate details of Pat Vegas's life—what he does, what he thinks about, and what he dreams about in his day-to-day experience. They are also details for which the nationalist-oriented projects of Native American and Indigenous and Chicanx studies have little use. They are details that threaten Vegas's legibility as a Native American public figure as they press against American dominant culture's demand that, to be "really Indian," one must meet oppressive standards of cultural and racial purity. This study troubles nationalist modes of scholarship that organize around the normative experiences of an imagined citizen-subject, leaving no room for experiences, lives, and intimacies that extend beyond national boundaries. If we are to take seriously the call emanating from Critical Latinx Indigeneities and Critical

Ethnic Studies to critically reexamine the relationship between Chicanx people and Indigenous peoples as well as Chicanx Studies and Native American and Indigenous Studies, this work must necessarily entail an examination of the messiness of identity and experience.

The examination of these messy intimacies is vital to both Chicanx and Native American and Indigenous studies. Writing from a Chicanx/Latinx studies perspective, María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo asks us to look more closely at these Indigenous–Chicanx/mestizo postcolonial intimacies and "subject that intimacy to critical analysis." What is at stake, she continues, is "(re)claiming an Indigenous ancestry not for the purpose of claiming to be Indian, but for the purpose of rectifying the historical record."[98] Writing from a Native studies perspective, Joanne Barker argues that the U.S. settler nation's demand for Indigenous authenticity "makes it impossible for Native peoples to narrate the historical and social complexities of cultural exchange, change, and transformation—to claim cultures and identities that are conflicted, messy, uneven, modern, technological, mixed."[99] Examining experiences that are messy and mixed offers the opportunity to resist the oppressive demands for authenticity that weigh on Native people. In examining the intimate messiness of the Vegas brothers' identities, this study highlights both the constant, ongoing nature of Native–Chicanx intimacies as well as the lengths the brothers had to go to curate a legible public image.

Cultural nationalism, dominant notions of race, and oppressive authenticity impacted the Vegas brothers' lives, prodding them to curate their public images, highlighting some aspects of themselves and de-emphasizing others to render themselves legible as Native American. These forces further shape how the public remembers Redbone. Redbone is undoubtedly a Native American band, and their induction into the Native American Music Association Hall of Fame as well as their continuous presence on radio stations across the world reflect the love both Native and non-Native people have for the band as well as their musical excellence. But the well-deserved recognition they receive as an important Native American rock band should not have to entail the erasure of their Mexican Americanness. Pat and Lolly Vegas's lived experiences point to the messiness of everyday lived experiences and how the racial categories *Native American* and *Mexican American,* categories held to be distinct in both American cultural perception and in the work of Native studies and Chicanx studies scholarship, are actually marked by continual intimacies.

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Notes

1. For core Redbone member Pat Vegas's perspective on their success, see Pat "Redbone" Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love: A Celebratory Ode to Redbone (1939-Present)* (Self-pub., Rehbon Publishing, 2017). For more on Indigenous popular music, see Jeff Berglund, Jan Johnson, and Kimberlie Lee, eds., *Indigenous Pop: Native American Music from Jazz to Hip Hop* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016) and John W. Troutman, *Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879-1934* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009). For more on Redbone's contribution to activism during Red Power, see Jan Johnson's "We Were All Wounded at Wounded Knee: The Engaged Resistance of Folk and Rock in the Red Power Era," in *Indigenous Pop*. See also George Lipsitz, *Footsteps in the Dark: The Hidden Histories of Popular Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), esp. 130–132.

2. See Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love*. "Come and Get Your Love" has received increased airplay in recent years thanks to its inclusion in the film *Guardians of the Galaxy*. It's also been featured in numerous commercials and television series. See Kory Grow, "Hooked on a Feeling: Inside the Hit 'Guardians of the Galaxy' Soundtrack," *Rolling Stone*, September 3, 2014, https://www.rollingstone.com/movies/movie-news/hooked-on-a-feeling-inside-the-hit-guardians-of-the-galaxy-soundtrack-46941/.

3. Throughout this essay, I use *Mexican American* and *Chicanx* interchangeably to refer to people of Mexican descent living in the United States. I also use *Chicanx* to refer to the contemporary academic field of Chicanx/Chicana/Chicano studies. I use *Chicano* to refer to the Chicano Movement, keeping the *o* ending to indicate both how the group named itself at the time as well as the privileging of a male citizen-subject within this group. I use Latinx when including discussion of people of Latin American descent in the United States who are not Mexican. I use *Native American* and *American Indian* interchangeably to refer to Native peoples as a racial category in the United States. I use *Indigenous* to refer to first peoples as a sociopolitical category within a settler nation.

4. Of the innumerable examples, I am thinking here of Stuart Hall, "What Is This 'Black' in Popular Culture?" *Social Justice* 20, no. 1/2 (Spring-Summer 1993): 104–114; John Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, *2nd Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2011 [1989]); and Josh Kun, *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

5. The idea that people seek to control the impression others have of them has a long history in sociological literature. See, for example, Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959). More recently, scholars such as John Potter have used curation to discuss the strategic presentation of self on social media. See John Potter and Øystein Gilje, "Curation as a New Literacy Practice," *E-Learning and Digital Media* 12.2 (March 2015): 123–127.

6. This is especially true of the memoir. As G. Thomas Couser notes, memoir is the "narration of our lives in our own terms" (6) and "life writing does not register preexisting selfhood, but rather somehow creates it" (14). See Couser, *Memoir: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

7. For instance, other accounts of the Vegas brothers' early life, notably scholar George Lipsitz's, seem to contradict the specifics of Pat Vegas's account. See *Footsteps in the Dark*, pp. 130–132.

8. For more on nationalism within Native Studies, see Clara Sue Kidwell, "American Indian Studies: Intellectual Navel Gazing or Academic Discipline?" *American Indian Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 1–17; entries for "Sovereignty" and "Nation" in *Native Studies Keywords*, eds. Stephanie Nohelani Teves, Andrea Smith, and Michelle Raheja (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015); and Jace Weaver, Craig S. Womack, and Robert Warrior, *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006).

9. For more on nationalism within Chicanx studies, see Dennis López, "Cultivating Aztlán: Chicano (Counter) Cultural Politics and the Postwar American University," *American*

Studies 58, no. 1 (2019): 73–111 and Rodolfo F. Acuña, *The Making of Chicana/o Studies: In the Trenches of the Academe* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

10. See Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011) and Gary Y. Okihiro, *Third World Studies: Theorizing Liberation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

11. See Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Lee Bebout, *Mythohistorical Interventions: The Chicano Movement and Its Legacies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); and Cathy J. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ* 3, no. 4 (1997): 437–465.

12. For more on *Native American/Indian* as a racial category, see Barker, *Native Acts*; Malinda Maynor Lowery, *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South: Race, Identity, and the Making of a Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); and Brian Klopotek, *Recognition Odysseys: Indigeneity, Race, and Federal Tribal Recognition Policy in Three Louisiana Indian Communities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011). For more on *Mexican American* as a racial category, see Martha Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001); Laura E. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: NYU Press, 2007); and Julie A. Dowling, *Mexican Americans and the Question of Race* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

13. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States From the 1960s to the 1990s, 3rd ed.* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

14. I take this phrasing from Okihiro, *Third World Studies,* p. 2.

15. Berglund, Johnson, and Lee, eds., *Indigenous Pop*.

16. David Reyes and Tom Waldman, *Land of a Thousand Dances: Chicano Rock 'n' Roll from Southern California* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

17. Of the numerous significant Native and Chicanx scholars who have explored these questions. I would like to highlight Jack Forbes, *Aztecas del Norte: The Chicanos of Aztlán* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1973), as he is one of the most prominent Native scholars supportive of the idea of Chicanx indigeneity. The work of Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa has been deeply influential and is frequently referenced in current scholarly debates on the topic. See, for instance Cherríe L. Moraga, *Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó por su Labios* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000 [1983]); Gloria Anzaldúa*, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987); and Cherríe L. Moraga, *The Last Generation* (Cambridge, MA; South End Press, 1999 [1993]). For more on the Chicano Movement's uses of mestizaje, see Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race* and Bebout, *Mythohistorical Interventions*. See also work examining broader cross-racial relationships in California: David-James Gonzales, "Placing the *et al.* Back in *Mendez v. Westminster*: Hector Tarango and the Mexican American Movement to End Segregation in the Social and Political Borderlands of Orange County, California," *American Studies* 56, no. 2 (2017): 31–52; and Allison Varzally, *Making a Non-White America: Californians Coloring Outside Ethnic Lines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). Key works charting Native-Chicanx relations and the contention over Chicanx indigeneity include Inés Hernández-Avila and Domino Perez, eds., "Indigenous Intersections in Literature: American Indians and Chicanos/Chicanas," special section, *SAIL* 2, no. 15 (Fall 2003/Winter 2004): 1–127; Lourdes Gutierrez Najera, M. Bianet Castellanos, and Arturo J. Aldama, eds., *Comparative Indigeneities of the Américas: Toward a Hemispheric Approach* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012); María Eugenia Cotera and María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "Indigenous But Not Indian? Chicana/os and the Politics of Indigeneity" in *The World of Indigenous North America*, Robert Warrior, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 549–568; Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies Across Mexico and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); and Simón Ventura Trujillo, *Land Uprising:*

Native Story Power and the Insurgent Horizons of Latinx Indigeneity (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2020).

18. María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) and "Who's the Indian in Aztlán? Re-writing Mestizaje, Indianism, and Chicanismo from the Lacandón" in *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader*, María Milagros López and Ileana Rodriguez, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Sheila Contreras, *Blood Lines: Myth, Indigenism, and Chicana/o Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008); Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*; Laura Pulido, "Geographies of Race and Ethnicity III: Settler Colonialism and Nonnative People of Color," *Progress in Human Geography* 42, no. 2 (2017): 309–318; and Lourdes Alberto, "Nations, Nationalisms, and *Indígenas:* The "Indian" in the Chicano Revolutionary Imaginary," *Critical Ethnic Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 107–127.

19. See Pulido, "Geographies of Race and Ethnicity III."

20. Other key early borderlands works include Renato Rosaldo, *Cultural and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); D. Emily Hicks, *Border Writing: The Multidimensional Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); and Hector Calderon and José David Saldívar, eds., *Criticism in the Borderlands: Chicano Literature, Culture, and Ideology*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991). For more on borderlands studies, see Nicole M. Guidlotti-Hernández, "Borderlands," in *Keywords for Latina/o Studies*, eds. Deborah R. Vargas, Nancy Raquel Mirabal, and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes (New York: NYU Press, 2017), 21–24, and Nancy A. Naples, "Borderlands Studies and Border Theory: Linking Activism and Scholarship for Social Justice," *Sociology Compass* 4.7 (2010): 505–518.

21. For an example of hybridity in American Indian Studies Scholarship, see Louis Owens, *Mixedblood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998). For the reconceptualization of Native American and Indigenous Studies, see Robert Warrior, "2010 NAISA Presidential Address: Practicing Native American and Indigenous Studies," *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 3–24, and Clara Sue Kidwell, "American Indian Studies."

22. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409. An example of a work that engages both Native and Settler Colonial studies is Eve Tuck and Wayne K. Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1, no. 1. (2012): 1–40. For an examination of distinctions and tensions between settler colonial studies and Native studies, see J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "'A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity," *Lateral: Journal of the Cultural Studies Association* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2016).

23. María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "Indians Have Always Been Modern: *Roma*, the Settler Colonial Paradigm, and Latinx Temporality," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 45, no. 2 (2020): 221–242, esp. 225–226. For further critiques of settler colonial studies, see Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), esp. chapter 1; Nandita Sharma, *Home Rule: National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), esp. ch. 8; and Mahmood Mamdani, *Neither Settler Nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020).

24. Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); and Victor Román Mendoza, *Metroimperial Intimacies: Fantasy,*

Racial-Sexual Governance, and the Philippines in U.S. Imperialism, 1899-1913 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 10.

25. Kun, *Audiotopia*, 13.

26. Kun, 23.

27. Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, 6.

28. See Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick A. Ferguson, eds., *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Okihiro, *Third World Studies*; and María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "Critical Latinx Indigeneities: A Paradigm Drift," *Latino Studies* 15, no. 2 (2017): 138–155, esp. 143.

29. Mendoza, *Metroimperial Intimacies*, 11.

30. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love,* 14.

31. Jeffrey Sissons, *First Peoples: Indigenous Cultures and Their Futures* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005).

32. Barker, *Native Acts*, 6.

33. See Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); and Andrea Smith, "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing," in *Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006): 66–73.

34. Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*. One can also see this in the salvage ethnography of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the anthropological preference for the "pure" cultural traditions of the past over the dynamic, living cultures of existing Native peoples. See Barker, *Native Acts*, esp. 19–22.

35. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love,* 39.

36. See Barker, *Native Acts*; María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given*; Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004); and Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

37. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love*, 51.

38. Other Mexican American musicians at the time have commented on this dynamic. For example, Frankie "Cannibal" Garcia of the band Cannibal and the Headhunters said that after their record "Land of a Thousand Dances" reached the top 40 in 1965, record companies, "didn't know how to market us, for one. There were basically only black or white groups in the early 1960s…the people didn't even know what we were half of the time." Ethlie Ann Vare, "Cannibal and the Headhunters," *Goldmine,* November 1983, 26, quoted in George Lipsitz, "Cruising Around the Historical Bloc: Postmodernism and Popular Music in East Los Angeles," *Cultural Critique* 5, Modernity and Modernism, Postmodernity and Postmodernism (Winter 1986-7): 157–177, esp. 167.

39. Vegas, 53.

40. Reyes and Waldman, *Land of a Thousand Dances*, chapter 4.

41. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love,* 84.

42. Whereas there is no reason to doubt that Hendrix had Cherokee ancestry, his claim must also be placed in context. Though he claimed Cherokee ancestry, Jimi Hendrix was not enrolled in a Cherokee tribe. Although there are many African Americans with Cherokee or other Native ancestry, one must also note that claiming to have a Cherokee grandmother, as Hendrix did, is a common way that non-Indians in the U.S. appropriate indigenous heritage. See Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988 [1969]), chapter 1. See also Circe Sturm, *Becoming Indian: The Struggle over Cherokee Identity in the Twenty-First Century* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2011).

43. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love*, 71–72.

44. Vegas, 74–76.

45. Vegas, 74.

46. Vegas, 89.

47. Vegas, 27.

48. Vegas, 90–91. Reyes and Waldman note that Chicano musicians also embraced a more explicit ethnic identity after 1968 in *Land of a Thousand Dances*, p. 103.

49. Vegas, 91.

50. For more on Tierra and El Chicano, see Reyes and Waldman, *Land of a Thousand Dances,* esp. ch. 10.

51. See Josephy et al., *Red Power,* and Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*.

52. See Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins* and N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (New York: Perennial Classics, 1999 [1968]) and James Ruppert, "Fiction: 1968 to the Present," in *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*, eds. Joy Porter and Kenneth M. Roemer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 173–188.

53. For more on this phenomenon, see Phillip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), esp. ch. 6; Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), esp. ch. 3; and Sherry L. Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

54. See Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power.*

55. The production of "authentic" Indianness in music and performance for a non-Native audience has a long history stretching back to the wild west shows of the late nineteenth century and Native musicians in the early twentieth century. See John W. Troutman, "Joe Shunatona and the United States Indian Reservation Orchestra," in *Indigenous Pop*, pp. 17–32.

56. For more on the occupation, see Josephy et al., *Red Power,* and Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane.*

57. Morgan Ames, liner notes to *Potlatch*, Redbone, Epic, 1971.

58. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love,* 39–41, 53–60.

59. Vegas, 57.

60. Vegas, 89.

61. See, for instance, Don C. Marler, "The Louisiana Redbones," (presentation, First Union, a Meeting of the Melungeons, Wise, VA, July, 1997), *AfriGeneas Library*, http://www.afrigeneas.com/library/redbones.html.

62. Janis Schacht, "Redbone and the Top Forty Trap," *Circus*, April 1972, 60–63, digitized and uploaded to Christian Staebler, "Circus," Redbone: Redbone's Official Website, http://www.redbone.be/presse/Circus.html.

63. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love*, 90.

64. You can find images of Redbone's self-titled album on the band's official site. Chris Staebler, "1970—Redbone," *Redbone: Redbone's Official Website*, http://www.redbone.be/Discography/Redbone.html.

65. For example, Pete DePoe is Northern Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Siletz among other tribal affiliations and Tony Bellamy is Yaqui. See Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love*, 86–87. For more on pan-Indian activist movements, see Alvin M. Josephy Jr., Joane Nagel, and Troy Johnson, eds., *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999) and Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1997).

66. Redbone performed "Come and Get Your Love" on *Burt Sugarman's The Midnight Special*, episode 98, originally aired December 13, 1974 on NBC. It was posted online by Redbone Official, "Redbone—Come and Get Your Love (Live on the Midnight Special) HQ," YouTube video, 4:46, June 9, 2010, https://youtu.be/OnJqFrVD3uE.

67. Ames, liner notes to *Potlatch*.

68. As of his 2017 memoir, Pat Vegas does not claim Aztec ancestry or attribute Aztec ancestry to any other band member.

69. See Gregory E. Smoak, *Ghost Dances and Identity: Prophetic Religion and American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

70. See Smoak, *Ghost Dances and Identity*. For narrative accounts of the massacre at Wounded Knee, see Luther Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux,* 2nd ed. (Lincoln: Bison Books, 2006 [1928]) and Black Elk, John G. Neihardt, and Raymond J. DeMallie, *Black Elk Speaks* (Albany: Excelsior Editions, State University Press of New York Press, 2008 [1932]).

71. Vegas acknowledges in the text that other bass players, including Motown's James Jamerson, also claim to have developed the ghost note style. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love,* 49–50.

72. Redbone, performers, "Wovoka," by Pat Vegas and Lolly Vegas, track 1 on *Wovoka*, Epic, 1973, 33 1/3 rpm.

73. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love,* 84.

74. Vegas*,* 84.

75. For more on Los Angeles as a center of Latin American music, see Josh Kun, ed., *The Tide Was Always High: The Music of Latin America in Los Angeles*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

76. Lipsitz, "Crusing Around the Historical Bloc," 167; Josh Kun, "Introduction," in *The Tide Was Always High*, 36–37.

77. Reyes and Waldman, *Land of a Thousand Dances*, 128.

78. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love*, 32–33.

79. Vegas, 33.

80. Mendoza, *Metroimperial Intimacies*, 5.

81. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love,* 74.

82. As Native studies scholars, such as Philip J. Deloria, John Troutman, and John-Carlos Perea have demonstrated, Native American musical contributions have been central to much of American popular music. See Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*; Troutman, *Indian Blues*; John-Carlos Perea, *Intertribal Native American Music in the United States: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Berglund, Johnson, and Lee, eds., *Indigenous Pop*.

83. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love,* 75 and 258.

84. Vegas provides this definition on page 118 of *Come and Get Your Love*. In a personal communication, however, Indigenous Creole scholar Andrew Jolivétte revealed that *fais-do* is more commonly used to refer to a party, a dance, or a lullaby. Jolivétte, email message to author, August 6, 2019.

85. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love,* 74.

86. Tyina L. Steptoe, *Houston Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).

87. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love*, 15. What I interpret as Tohono O'odham, Vegas lists as "Tahona" and "Papago."

88. Vegas, 15.

89. Vegas, 15 and 31.

90. Vegas, 15 and 27.

91. Vegas, 23, 28, and 29.

92. Vegas, 28, italics in original.

93. For instance, Gloria Anzaldúa writes that Guadalupe*,* "the single most potent religious, political and cultural image of the Chicano/*Mexican*," appeared outside of Mexico City in 1531 at a site where Nahuas had once worshipped Tonantzin. She suggests Guadalupe is a homophonic approximation of Coatlalopeuh, the goddess's full name. See Anzaldúa*, Borderlands/La Frontera*, esp. 50–52.

94. Vegas, *Come and Get Your Love*, 15.

95. Simon J. Ortiz, "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism," *MELUS* 8, no. 2 (Summer, 1981): 7–12, esp. 8.

96. Scott Richard Lyons, *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 33.

97. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005 [1977]), 29.

98. Saldaña-Portillo, "Indians Have Always Been Modern," 236 and 237.

99. Barker, *Native Acts*, 223.

Neoliberal Projects: Rationalizing Poverty in Sean Baker's *The Florida Project*

Dale Pattison

It was not by coincidence that the decline of public housing occurred in tandem with the rise of neoliberalism in the final decades of the twentieth century. The New Deal commitment to a robust social support system for the poor simply had no place within an increasingly ubiquitous logic engineered around the liberatory potential of deregulation, the free market, and the privatization of space. Under this logic, the poorest individuals living in public housing stood to benefit from a state-bolstered free-market housing economy that would drive down rents and provide more opportunity for the exercise of individual agency in housing decisions. This shift in policy would in fact do great harm to those communities it was ostensibly intended to benefit. The following pages address the often-unseen consequences of this shift through a reading of Sean Baker's *The Florida Project* (2017), a film that engages with the discourses of poverty and personal responsibility that have shaped neoliberal attitudes toward low-income housing and unemployment in the United States. Working on both representational and ontological registers, *The Florida Project* invites viewers in their assessment of the film's complex and flawed protagonists, in often unsettling ways, to deploy the very neoliberal rationale that has shaped U.S. housing policy. Involving viewers in the exercise of this rationale enables a critique of what Wendy Brown calls "the neoliberal markets-and-morals project," a far-reaching ideological campaign responsible for tethering politics, economics, and morality to the family unit. The final part of the essay addresses how the film's immersive and reflexive strategies operate on affective levels, exposing the

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humanistic limits of attitudes that punish the poor amid conditions that all but ensure their continued domination.

Much scholarship on the housing crisis of the twenty-first century identifies the neoliberal commodification of housing as the underlying cause for both the erosion of public housing and the rapidly rising cost of housing across the United States. Existing under a rationale that ascribes commodity value to housing, lived spaces have become subsumed under real estate regimes operating solely on the logic of profit, a shift that has proven disastrous for those in need of affordable housing. Public housing, after all, is not profitable; real estate ventures that attract the wealthy, on the other hand, are. David Madden and Peter Marcuse observe how, with the recent surge in real estate investment in major U.S. cities, we have entered a stage of hyper-commodification in which "all of the material and legal structures of housing—buildings, land, labor, property rights—are turned into commodities. In the process, the capacity of a building to function as a home becomes secondary. What matters is how a building functions in circuits of economic accumulation."[1] Within these systems, investors and developers make decisions based not on public good, but on the potential for attracting future investment. In this new era of hyper-commodification, Madden and Marcuse argue, housing has been replaced by real estate, or the commodification of habitation. Under these processes of privatization, individuals' right to inhabit space and exercise agency within it is being existentially challenged.

These processes associated with the commodification of lived spaces are particularly pernicious when considering the vital role that housing plays in facilitating human autonomy, individual agency, and civic participation—all core tenets of democratic liberalism. As public housing continues to erode under conditions that frame city space in terms of profit, individuals, and particularly those on society's margins, will encounter obstacles that preclude opportunities for growth and the exercise of political agency. "Struggles over housing," Madden and Marcuse write, "are always, in part, struggles over autonomy. More than any other item of consumption, housing structures the way that individuals interact with others, with communities, and with wider collectives… No other modern commodity is as important for organizing citizenship, work, identities, solidarities, and politics."[2] The neoliberalization of American cities, and of housing in particular, therefore has profound consequences for how we think about social and political life in the twenty-first century. The struggle over housing as a lived practice and a human right—rather than an investment opportunity—is imperative to reclaiming political subjectivity in the era of neoliberalism.

The Material and Ontological Landscapes of Neoliberalism

The Florida Project addresses these enduring tensions within and outside of its diegesis, using creative strategies to both critique neoliberalism and involve viewers in the very logic that underlies the implementation of neoliberal housing practices for low-income communities. Baker's film depicts the day-to-day lives of Halley (Bria Vinaite) and her six-year-old daughter, Moonee (Brooklynn Prince),

Figure 1: The Magic Castle. *The Florida Project,* June Pictures, A24, 2017

who, along with dozens of other poor and working-class families, live transiently in a motel situated just outside of Walt Disney World.[3] Halley continually exhibits erratic and at times unlawful behavior as both a mother and as a member of the motel community, and the relentlessly mischievous Moonee cannot seem to keep herself out of trouble throughout the film. When Halley turns to sex work to provide for herself and Moonee, the film requires characters in the narrative and viewers themselves to question her fitness as a mother.[4] In the conclusion, Halley presumably loses custody of her daughter when social workers arrive to place Moonee in foster care. *The Florida Project* is very much concerned with exploring the lives and behaviors of its two protagonists, but the film's overt attention to the purple "Magic Castle" motel and the impersonal nearby strip malls—which dominate the mise-en-scène for much of the film—betray Baker's interest in critiquing the neoliberal machinery that produced the environment in which these characters struggle to survive, an environment notably absent of public support systems and vital public spaces (Figure 1). With this neoliberal critique in mind, the "project" in the film's title might refer, more acutely, to the motel as a neoliberal instantiation of a housing project, a privately owned, unregulated business inadequately filling the void left by the decline of public housing over the past several decades.

The majority of *The Florida Project* simply tracks the everyday lives of its central characters. We see Moonee, for instance, visiting the nearby abandoned condominiums with her friends, we see the children getting into assorted mischief around the motel complex, and we see Halley spending time with her friend, Ashley (Mela Murder), who also lives in the complex. The central narrative conflict concerning Halley's impending loss of custody does not actually emerge until well into the film's fourth act when financial pressures force Halley into sex work. Because of its focus on the quotidian experience of poverty, the film produces intimate temporal spaces in which viewers may experience, alongside the characters, the exigencies of precarity. The quotidian in this way functions as a temporal category linked to precarity. Following the work of Lauren Berlant, these characters find themselves at an "impasse," "a temporary housing"[5] in

which the pressures of "getting by" preclude the production of future-focused imaginaries. Berlant writes, "An impasse is a holding station that doesn't hold securely but opens out into anxiety… An impasse is decompositional—in the unbound temporality of the stretch of time, it marks a delay that demands activity. The activity can produce impacts and events, but one does not know where they are leading."[6] Much of *The Florida Project* resides in the zone of the impasse, a perpetual delay in which its characters go about their everyday lives without thinking about the future, a temporality embodied here by the purple Magic Castle motel. The extended crisis that Halley is experiencing, of course, is the condition of precarity produced by neoliberal systems and policies. Because little opportunity exists for these characters, they find themselves trapped in an eternal present, a quotidian day-to-day existence in which they reproduce and recycle their own precarity. It is appropriate, therefore, that the film takes place predominantly in a motel; as "temporary housing," the motel symbolically represents the temporal impasse from which the characters cannot escape.

Baker is attentive to contextualizing this crisis within the material and ontological landscapes produced under neoliberalism. As I have already discussed, the Magic Castle motel functions as a neoliberal iteration of public housing. Baker, significantly, dwells on the fact that the motel is a private business operated for profit. At one point, the owner, Narek (Karren Karagulian), who makes a brief appearance midway through the film, dispassionately instructs the manager, Bobby (Willem Dafoe), to evict anybody within the week for failing to move their bicycles to the back of the building. As the proprietor of a private enterprise, Narek quite evidently feels no social responsibility to his tenants. In another instance he even instructs volunteers from a food security nongovernmental organization to distribute food at the back of the building in order to preserve appearances at his establishment. These moments in the film reveal the hostility of the motel environment to the fundamental needs of its residents; the motel exists not to support the poor, but rather to profit from them. Even Bobby, the otherwise conscientious and compassionate motel manager, spends much of his time tracking down tenants and demanding rent payments, levying the threat of eviction when necessary. Furthermore, to avoid the possibility of tenants establishing residency (and thereby gaining legal renter's rights) Bobby forces tenants to periodically vacate the premises for twenty-four hours, effectively turning them out into the streets or to another motel if they can afford the one-night rate. When Halley, upon one of these temporary evictions, discovers that the nearby motel has barred people like her from staying there, it becomes evident that no institutional structures exist to prevent her from falling into homelessness.

The urban landscape beyond the motels is equally inhospitable to the poor. In their daily excursions to the surrounding parking lots, strip malls, and abandoned condominium complexes, Moonee and her friends traverse city spaces that are dominated by private development and dangerous thoroughfares populated by fast-moving automobiles presumably taking visitors to and from the nearby Walt

Figure 2: The privatized city. *The Florida Project*, June Pictures, A24, 2017.

Disney World. Habitable public spaces do not exist in the world of *The Florida Project*. The children, who have normalized this environment, are blissfully unaware of the lack of public spaces around them as they move from one private development to another [Figure 2]. They have no money and therefore cannot participate in the practices of consumption that are a prerequisite for occupying these profit-oriented spaces. In one instance, they beg the customers of a nearby ice cream shop for money so that they can purchase a cone. This moment, like others that take place in the privatized outdoor strip malls, underscores the uncomfortable fact that wherever these children go, they do not belong.

Halley, too, finds herself incapable of locating free and inclusive public spaces. The most notable example of her encountering exclusionary spatial practices takes place during two scenes in which she attempts to sell perfume and cologne—which she has purchased from a wholesale retailer—in the parking lot of a nearby upscale resort. Catering to wealthy visitors to Walt Disney World, the resort is an intensely privatized space disciplined by security guards in golf carts. Initially, selling her products in the parking lot proves to be a modestly successful venture, as she raises enough money to pay that month's rent. On the second instance, however, a security guard confronts her, accuses her of solicitation on private property, calls the police, and violently confiscates Halley's entire supply of perfume and cologne, incurring what we can only imagine is catastrophic financial harm on the mother and her daughter.

Halley's struggles to establish herself as an economic body have much to do with the privatization of space that has taken root in American cities as a result of a neoliberal logic that prioritizes the profitability of land. Public spaces, which have long played a critical role in the exercise and practice of democracy, are increasingly being sold to private developers as cities attempt to find new ways to create tax revenue and raise property values in surrounding neighborhoods. For instance, the cost of maintaining a public park, combined with the opportunity cost of *not* using that space to generate tax revenue, all too often compels cities to appropriate park space for private development. These processes have given rise to what Samuel Stein calls "the real estate state," a "political formation in which real estate capital has inordinate influence over the shape of our cities, the parameters of our politics and the lives we lead."[7]

Both in terms of planning and governance, cities are increasingly imbricated within neoliberal capitalist structures that force them to shift their priorities from providing for their residents through housing and public services to creating conditions favorable for investment. In some instances, cities have ceded control of formerly public spaces to private organizations of commercial property owners who take responsibility for policing and maintaining these spaces. These private entities are not bound by the same city ordinances that protect people experiencing homelessness, vendors, street artists, and children—those whose existence depends upon the comparative freedoms of public space—and these populations are therefore frequently subject to exclusion. Private spaces in this way reinforce social inequality.[8]

Often absent in these calculations to transform public spaces is an argument for the important role that these spaces play in fostering marginalized discourses and political dissent. Most major political movements depend upon the ability for people to organize in public space.[9] Significantly, the decision to sell off or privatize public spaces is usually based on a logic of profitability, not on the needs of the people or on the costs to democracy of eliminating such spaces. Considering that public spaces are among the few places that people experiencing homelessness and poverty may legally occupy, and where vendor permits can allow low-income individuals to sell their wares, the disappearance of public spaces disproportionately affects the city's most vulnerable populations. In *The Florida Project*, because public spaces are so scarce, Halley lacks the legal means through which to sell perfume and thereby establish herself as a self-sustaining economic subject; in short, the intensely privatized environment prevents Halley from earning money to provide for her daughter. She is at once punished for her poverty and prohibited from taking the steps required to remove herself from it.

The economy of private spaces that dominates the film's mise-en-scène is directly connected to the presence of the nearby Walt Disney World, the looming corporate entity symbolically and materially responsible for sustaining asymmetries between the wealthy and the poor in the film. From the Magic Castle to the nearby Futureland Inn to numerous gift shops and other establishments attempting to capitalize on the tourist economy related to Walt Disney World, Halley and Moonee find themselves living in something akin to a neoliberal simulation of the Disney universe [Figure 3]. Significantly, this fantasy-oriented theme—replete with the familiar trappings of Disney—serves to conceal the brutal realities experienced by the poor, who cannot participate in the fantasy produced by the Walt Disney Corporation in the same way as those middle-class individuals in automobiles traveling past the motel. The most visible symbol of the asymmetries produced by this neoliberal landscape is the helicopter that shuttles wealthy tourists to and from Walt Disney World. In several scenes taking place in and around the motel, a helicopter can be seen taking off and landing in a field adjacent to the motel property. Even in scenes taking place inside Halley's motel room, Baker uses asynchronous sound to call viewers' attention

Figure 3: Girls running. *The Florida Project*, June Pictures, A24, 2017

to the presence of the helicopter. In these instances, viewers cannot help but be reminded of the deep asymmetries that exist between those individuals inhabiting the motel and the tourists who participate in the fantasy created by the Walt Disney Corporation. It bears noting that whatever economic benefits to the community brought by this tourist economy are quite evidently not being enjoyed by the residents of the motel.

The material landscape that these characters inhabit is a product of capitalist modernity, but Baker's film is attentive to capturing the totalizing force—associated specifically with neoliberalism—that this environment exerts on Halley, Moonee, and the other residents of the motel. Critics of neoliberalism like David Harvey, Wendy Brown, and Jamie Peck have been attentive to the various ways in which policy makers enacted deregulatory reforms in the last decades of the twentieth century that would reconfigure American cityscapes. In Halley's world, such transformation is notably not visible. The world that she inhabits, created entirely in the era of neoliberalism, embodies a totalizing ideological project that privileges the private sector and renders public life subordinate to commerce. The commons never existed in this tourist economy born entirely out of a neoliberal development logic. Consequently, the horizon of possibility contained in the idea of the commons can neither be said to exist. Halley and Moonee, born into a world bereft of the social, cannot imagine a life outside of a reality in which private investment defines and shapes, in the most absolute of ways, the materiality of existence.

The eradication of this horizon of possibility is a key feature of neoliberalism, and its effects extend deep into the realms of subjectivity and personhood. In their introduction to *Neoliberalism and Contemporary Literary Culture*, Mitchum Huehls and Rachel Greenwald Smith plot the history of neoliberalism in four phases—economic, political-ideological, sociological, and ontological. It is in the fourth and final phase, the ontological, that neoliberal rationale becomes normalized in subjects and material environments to the extent that imagining a world outside of it proves impossible. Here, horizons of possibility associated with the commons cease to exist. Echoing the work of Michel Foucault and, more recently, Wendy Brown, Huehls and Greenwald Smith explain, "No longer just a

set of ideological beliefs or deployable rationalities, neoliberalism becomes what we are, a mode of existence defined by self-responsibility, entrepreneurial action, and the maximization of human capital."[10] In this phase, "the market and its bottom-line logic are everywhere."[11] Understanding neoliberalism as a totalizing ontology—one that shapes cities and subjects alike—helps to underscore how material realities, such as those that determine Halley's entire existence, perpetuate conditions of inequality by limiting the work of the imagination. Born into this world, so to speak, Halley and Moonee remain tragically incapable of locating the horizon of possibility beyond it.

The environment that Baker depicts, therefore, is capitalist to the core, but its ontological dimensions align it more specifically with neoliberalism as a phase of late capitalism. In this way, the film's depiction of Halley's struggles underscores the fact that neoliberalism has colonized the domain of reality so completely that forms of political action, such as those idealized by Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and other theorists of urban life, have ceased to exist. Halley, for instance, does not encroach upon the private property of the upscale resort to establish herself politically in space, but rather to enter the market and assert herself as an economic body. As Wendy Brown, Steven Shaviro, Mark Fisher, and others have noted, the marketization of everyday life has had the consequence of depoliticizing subjects, thereby radically transforming the arena of political action under neoliberalism. Ironically, the very ethos of personal responsibility and entrepreneurialism central to neoliberal subjectivity is undercut by cultures of privatization that channel state-regulated forms of commerce, cultures fundamentally hostile to informal economies such as those in which Halley attempts to participate. As Foucault explains, neoliberal market conditions must be actively produced by governmentality,[12] and these conditions are here responsible for preserving unequal access to opportunity through the disciplining of space. Amid the contradictory impulses that simultaneously compel Halley toward and yet prevent her from entrepreneurializing her person, political action becomes an increasingly obsolete and unrealizable pursuit. Considering the extent to which neoliberal rationale has shaped Halley's thinking on ontological levels, it might be appropriate to acknowledge that political action has never been on her horizon of possibility.[13]

Baker captures the totalizing presence of neoliberalism in these characters' lives through another scene that features Moonee and her friends ransacking the ruins of a nearby condominium complex. Although the film is not explicit about what led to their abandonment, the relatively intact furnishings of the condos suggest that the units were remnants of the housing market crash of 2008, an event directly attributable to large-scale neoliberal deregulation that gave rise to the derivatives market and, subsequently, the housing bubble. The condos, then, are the always-already ruined landscape of neoliberalism, a landscape built for consumption and subject to the vagaries of the market. When the children infiltrate the ruined complex, ostensibly free of the disciplinary constraints present in the world outside, it might be tempting to read their

behavior as a channeling of the Debordian "situation," an act of creative play rife, at least on symbolic levels in the film, with political potential. But the ruins that they inhabit are notably *not* the ruins of Lefebvre's capitalist modernity. Rather, what becomes clear is that the deteriorating condo complex—the refuse of neoliberal investment—is the materialization of a failed neoliberal imaginary that disingenuously promised stability and prosperity for all [Figure 4]. As Shaviro explains, the neoliberal capitalist debt economy responsible for the 2008 crash "is a kind of double process. It ravages the present in the name of a future that will never actually arrive; and it depletes our hopes for, and imaginings of, the future by turning it into nothing but a projection of an endless repetition of the present."[14] Characters in *The Florida Project* seemed trapped in this repetition of the present—the "impasse," in Berlant's words—and thus it is not surprising when the children's play in the ruined complex devolves into violence. When they eventually set fire to the buildings, it is difficult to understand the act in redemptive or future-oriented terms, especially considering the problems it might later pose for Halley's custody case. More likely, the destruction of the ruins underscores the latent violence that accompanies material and ontological projects that prioritize the economic over the political and that work to colonize the domain of the imagination.

Figure 4: Abandoned development. *The Florida Project*, June Pictures, A24, 2017

The Neoliberal State

Beyond the ontological shift that has evidently taken hold in the world of *The Florida Project*, it is worth noting the institutional obstacles that Halley faces as she attempts to access temporary financial assistance from the state, obstacles specifically associated with neoliberal reform in the 1990s. As Lenette Azzi-Lessing discusses in her study on the failures of social welfare reform, financial assistance has, since legislation passed under President Bill Clinton in 1996, become increasingly difficult to access for those who need it most. Operating

under a neoliberal rationale that blames the poor and insists upon personal responsibility for lifting oneself out of poverty, these welfare reforms introduced work requirements to welfare programs. "Blaming chronic poverty on the poor choices made by irresponsible adults," Azzi-Lessing notes, "has become a tidy and convenient way for Americans to absolve themselves and their government of responsibility for solving [the complex problem of poverty in the United States]."[15] Introduced in 1996, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding made states responsible for ensuring that recipients participate in specific work-related activities to receive cash assistance. Those who cannot find work are ineligible for assistance.[16] This reform has been nothing short of catastrophic for those living in deep poverty with incomes below one-half of the Federal Poverty Threshold, or what is commonly referred to as "the poverty line." Indeed, the number of families "living in deep poverty has doubled in the period since welfare reform became law in 1996 to 2011."[17] These funds became even scarcer following the 2008 financial crisis, during which time states routinely diverted funding from those living in deep poverty to other social services that were not immediately connected to poverty. In 1996, 70 percent of TANF funding went to poor families; by 2012, that number had dropped to 29 percent.[18] The repeated cuts to funding for welfare programs that benefit the poor are a direct result of a prevailing neoliberal logic that blames the poor—and not the systems that produce poverty—for the circumstances in which they find themselves.

Baker addresses these institutional failures in a brief, but important, scene in which Halley seeks help finding a job and applies for TANF assistance at the local social services office. During the scene, she explains how she was fired from her previous job as an exotic dancer for her refusal to perform sexual favors for patrons. After listening to Halley's story, the social worker responds dispassionately, "Okay. I'm sorry to say that's gonna affect your TANF" and advises her to "Please make a concerted effort to put in 30 hours." Halley, of course, has visited the office precisely for the purpose of gaining employment; she appropriately tells the social worker that she has submitted applications all over town, but has had no success finding a job, partly, the viewer is left to surmise, because she lacks the skills to comport herself for the demands of the workplace. Halley is financially destitute because she is unemployed, and, ironically and absurdly, she cannot receive financial assistance because she has not met the 30-hour minimum work requirement. In a subtle but scathing critique of the welfare system, Baker asks viewers to note that the person most in need of financial assistance is unqualified for that assistance.[19]

The filmic strategies Baker uses to advance this critique are likewise worth addressing. Baker alternates between two shots, the first of which features Halley's face foregrounded in profile and out of focus, with Moonee, in focus, playing with a doll in the background. The second is a medium shot adopting an over-the-shoulder perspective in relation to the social worker. Notably, the social worker is visually absent through the duration of the forty-second scene, giving viewers the sensation that the faceless and dehumanizing institutions

Halley is attempting to navigate, which ostensibly exist to serve people in her position, are themselves inhumane in their assessment and judgment of her moral character. Baker uses the over-the-shoulder shot to implicate viewers in the institutional processes that will ultimately prevent Halley and Moonee from receiving financial assistance. Baker seems to suggest through his camerawork that his presumptively well-educated, middle-class viewership is responsible for supporting social systems that punish the poor.[20] Also worth noting here is Baker's decision to keep Moonee, who is silent throughout the scene, in focus through the duration of shot one. The person most affected by the state's war on poverty will, of course, be the voiceless child in the background.

As scholars of neoliberalism and poverty in the United States have noted, welfare policies and reforms throughout the 1990s and 2000s were products of an emerging ethos that prioritized "personal responsibility" over reliance on public resources. Consistent with the core tenets of neoliberalism, these reforms worked under the assumption that individuals are responsible for their own successes and failures and that poverty is a result of poor choices and moral failings. Absent from this ideology is the role that neighborhoods, and the absence of neighborhoods (as we see in *The Florida Project*), play in creating conditions that lead to persistent poverty. As Patrick Sharkey's recent work has demonstrated, data gleaned from the 1960s onward shows that, despite civil rights protections and periods of economic prosperity, inequality has been passed down from one generation to the next. Poor Americans have achieved no upward mobility. He explains, "The American ghetto appears to be inherited. In the same way that genetic background and financial wealth are passed down from parents to children, the neighborhood environments in which black and white Americans live have been passed down across generations."[21] Placing Sharkey's work alongside what Scott W. Allard identifies as the "changing geography of poverty," in which the suburbs and not the inner cities are increasingly becoming home to the poor,[22] reveals how inherited poverty moves transiently in city spaces in the twenty-first century. Moonee, as the visual focal point in the scene discussed above, stands to inherit her mother's poverty. However, what is significant and disturbing about Baker's portrayal of poverty in *The Florida Project* is that Moonee and her mother—living transiently in a neoliberal instantiation of public housing—are placeless in their poverty and lack the security that may have been provided by functional welfare and/or housing systems. Moving just outside of the urban/suburban dialectic within which Sharkey and Allard work, Baker's characters exist in a nonplace, to use Marc Augé's term, characterized by financial precarity, the absence of rooted community, and real and symbolic immobility.[23]

Internalizing Neoliberal Rationale

More than simply critiquing neoliberal systems and policies that fail to provide for individuals like Halley and Moonee, Baker's film takes steps to implicate viewers in the logic and the processes that sustain inequality in

American cities. Some viewers may be tempted to read Halley as an unlikable figure; she is crude, insolent, discourteous, and combative from the film's first frame to its last. She is also, however, trapped in poverty and lacks the resources to pull herself and her daughter out of the impossible circumstances in which she finds herself. In depicting the desperate measures that Halley takes to provide for her daughter—including sex work, theft, and physical assault—the film places viewers in the uncomfortable position of having to determine the extent to which Halley is a product of her environment and, simultaneously, the extent to which she has exacted her own ruin through her "irresponsible" behavior. Viewers may wonder why, if Baker's aim is to critique neoliberal systems that exacerbate inequality, Halley is not framed more explicitly as a powerless victim of these systems. I argue here that Baker's complex framing of Halley—who is simultaneously a victim of America's war on poverty and a flawed human being who makes regrettable decisions—invites viewers to both sympathize with and exercise moral judgments against her behavior; in this process, viewers are themselves interpellated as neoliberal subjects who may unknowingly mobilize the logic of neoliberalism as they balance the moral conflicts that define her character.

By involving viewers in this logic, the film operates on ontological levels that replicate the work of neoliberalism, both in the film's diegetic space and in the world beyond it. As I have addressed above, the ontological phase of neoliberalism is characterized by the internalization of neoliberal rationale—what Jamie Peck calls "neoliberal reason"—through a totalizing process that colonizes the domain of subjectivity and, on institutional levels, shapes future regulatory restructuring and "free-market liberation."[24] Channeling Foucault's ideas from his lectures in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Wendy Brown argues that neoliberalism depends upon a rationale in which individuals prioritize neoliberal principles of profit and efficiency, thereby giving rise to a new species of the human: *homo economicus*. Embodying this ethos, individuals pursue public policy that intensifies inequality by locating wealth in the private sector and depleting the public sector of funds and public spaces that are vital to those in need.[25] For Brown, at the heart of neoliberalism is "a peculiar form of reason that configures all aspects of existence in economic terms,"[26] "an order of normative reason that, when it becomes ascendant, takes shape as a governing rationality extending a specific formulation of economic values, practices, and metrics to every dimension of human life."[27] Neoliberalism is, therefore, a *way of being* that depends upon exercising modes of reason, rationality, and judgment that prioritize economic fitness; *homo economicus* could be said to *practice* neoliberalism by embodying this ethos.

Building on these foundational theories of neoliberalism and political subjectivity, Jane Elliott's recent work on personhood and subjectivity in the twenty-first century helps to clarify how internal logics serve to reconfigure attitudes toward human agency and personal responsibility. Elliott's work centers on the concept of "suffering agency," a condition under neoliberalism in which

individuals "must make agonized binary choices between horrific options," the outcomes of which prove existentially significant and are often matters of life and death.[28] Crucial to this formulation is the idea that subjects are not powerless or without agency in their capacity for self-determination; rather, they are imbued with an *excess of agency* as they weigh equally undesirable options. Elliott discusses how, under ontological regimes that valorize economic rationale, suffering agency becomes regarded as "a universal facet of human life itself."[29] To be human under neoliberalism, argues Elliott, is to embrace and exercise hyper-agency amid increasingly dire economic conditions. Worth noting is that threat and risk are unevenly applied across economic contexts and that those on society's margins are therefore much more likely to experience agency not as liberation, but as suffering.

Elliott's framing of subjectivity and personhood is useful for understanding how viewers, even as they are clearly meant to sympathize with Halley's predicament, may be susceptible to internalizing the logic of neoliberalism in their assessment of her character and the difficult choices she is forced to make. When suffering is understood as a "universal facet of human life itself," the conditions that produce suffering are often uncritically accepted as the brutal and unforgiving substance of reality itself. Mark Fisher calls this process "reflexive impotence," a condition in which individuals accede to a perceived state of powerlessness amid the seemingly overwhelming forces of late capitalism; in the fashion of a self-fulfilling prophecy, those who accept this reality are also responsible for producing it. To follow Fisher's thinking, when capitalist realism takes root, institutional critique is replaced by cultures that pathologize human behavior. Individuals, not institutions, are seen as responsible for social problems.[30] Fisher's commentary extends broadly across the ontological landscape of neoliberalism, and to imagine that viewers of *The Florida Project* are exempt from or exterior to this logic is to misunderstand its totalizing reach as an ontology that shapes every facet of human life, within and without the domain of representation.

Baker interpellates viewers into these neoliberal subject positions through his complex renderings of Halley's character, challenging us to explore the affective dissonance produced by our conflicting desires to read her as both a victim of her circumstances and the architect of her ruin. The moral crux of the film—which emerges in the final act—concerns whether Halley should be allowed to maintain custody of her daughter in light of her violent behavior, her history of sex work, and her financial insecurity. In presenting this moral dilemma at the film's conclusion, Baker invites viewers to question Halley's fitness as a mother and as a member of the community, a question made legitimate only by the flagrantly combative behavior she exhibits throughout the film. Even as viewers empathize with her decidedly human shortcomings, they may find themselves participating in a logic that normalizes suffering and pathologizes poverty by locating in Halley's agency the source of her failures. Daring viewers to participate in this dehumanizing logic, Baker's realistic framing of his characters

creates opportunities to dwell in the messy complexities and contradictions of neoliberalism.

Despite her many endearing qualities, Halley fails as a subject under the logic of neoliberalism. David Chandler and Julian Reid describe the neoliberal subject as an individual stripped of political agency whose fitness within a neoliberal landscape is dependent on resilience and adaptability. Lacking belief in the power to challenge or shape the systems and institutions that comprise an impossibly complex institutional landscape, the neoliberal subject only believes in their capacity to *respond to* institutional power. The perfect neoliberal subject, in Chandler and Reid's words, is a "resilient, humble, disempowered being that lives a life of permanent ignorance and insecurity."[31] Viewers confronting Halley's fitness as a mother may be tempted to assess her character based on this neoliberal logic, which quite conclusively frames her as a failed subject who has inadequately adapted to her environment. According to this neoliberal logic, Halley lacks resilience, which provides a simple and convenient way to explain her failures. Living in precarity and perpetually exercising suffering agency, Halley is furthermore vulnerable, a category of neoliberal subjectivity that Chandler and Reid describe as emerging from one's inability to adapt to their environment. Vulnerable subjects, like Halley, who prove insufficiently resilient, are dangerous insofar as they lack "sound" decision-making capacity[32] and are subsequently unpredictable in their behavior. Antagonistic to a mode of thinking that prioritizes economic efficiency, such individuals unknowingly work to impugn the idea that neoliberal rationale is innate, ubiquitous, and fundamental to the human subject.

Markets and Morals

When viewers confront the moral dilemma surrounding the decision to remove Moonee into foster care, part of the calculation may rest on their inclination to read Halley as an individual who cannot adapt to her environment. As an obstacle to neoliberal progress through her vulnerability and her propensity for making "poor decisions," Halley may also be read, through this logic, as unfit for motherhood. In this equation, one's fitness as a mother becomes conflated with one's failure to embody the ethos of *homo economicus*. In *Family Values*, Melinda Cooper explains how, with the embrace of welfare capitalism in the 1960s, the idea of the family was strategically reinvented around "private family responsibility," an amalgam of neoliberal atomistic individualism and socially conservative traditional morality.[33] The family, tethered to politics and economics, thus became a conduit for traditional morality. Wendy Brown describes this alignment of politics, economics, and morality as the "markets-and-morals project of neoliberalism,"[34] which, alongside disinvestment in social infrastructure, seeks to create "moral-economic familial units" responsible for fostering traditional morality.[35] In this relationship, the family functions as a site of both moral investment and, in its failed state, moral censure.

This neoliberal ethos of "private family responsibility" factors into viewers' assessment of Halley's character. Depicted realistically as a flawed and complex

human being whose behavior jeopardizes the familial unit, Halley's actions invite readers to exercise a perspective that locates her failings in moral terms. From this "markets-and-morals" perspective, Halley's position as a mother intensifies the degree to which viewers operating in this mode would locate her failings not just in economic terms, but in moral ones that ultimately disqualify her for motherhood.[36] The complicating consideration here is that, despite her failures as a neoliberal subject, Halley clearly loves her daughter and does, indeed, provide for her basic needs. The only moment in the film when Moonee displays anguish over her situation—this moment is also not coincidentally the height of the film's pathos—occurs when she realizes she is being separated from her mother. In considering the moral dimensions of this separation, viewers must determine the extent to which they privilege a logic that frames Halley as an unfit mother because of her failures to adapt and contribute to a challenging economic environment. I want to suggest here that Baker invites viewers to participate in a neoliberal logic that would justify Moonee's separation from her mother, only to challenge that logic by depicting the human cost of abiding by it. In locating morality in the "private familial unit," the film, like the neoliberal markets-and-morals project, strategically dissolves the boundary between the economic public domain and the affective domestic sphere. Viewers experiencing affective attachments to Halley's character thereby find themselves in a space of moral ambiguity resultant from the attempt of neoliberalism to colonize both sides of the purported public/private divide.[37] Witnessing the impending separation between mother and daughter, viewers can only feel on a humanistic level that a great injustice has been done, but the source of that injustice may be obfuscated by the indeterminate space in which we are left to process it.

In this way, *The Florida Project* invites viewers into a reflexive posture in which they employ a neoliberal rationale only to locate the limits of that rationale. The affective dissonance produced through this practice exposes the problems and costs of abiding by a mode of thinking that determines human value solely in economic terms. The character in the film who best embodies this dissonance—and who occupies a moral space similar to that of the viewer—is the kind-hearted and conscientious motel manager, Bobby, who cares deeply about his tenants, demonstrates compassion throughout the film, and, with no other options available, initiates the process through which Moonee is removed into foster care. In neoliberal times that have seen sharp decreases in funding for public housing and social services for the poor, it falls to conscientious characters like Bobby, individuals in the private sector who are themselves exercising suffering agency, to provide for the poor. In fact, one component of the neoliberal argument for decreasing funding for public services rests on the assumption that individuals in the private sector will fill the gaps—through charitable giving or philanthropic work—if public funding is diverted from programs that aid those in need.[38] The tragedy, of course, is that Bobby cannot make these provisions; he lacks the financial resources, he is ill-equipped to deal with complex familial and social conflicts, and, as the manager of the motel, he must prioritize the interests of the

business over the well-being of his tenants. Furthermore, because he is closer in class and social status to his residents than to the patrons of the nearby Walt Disney World, the moral obligation to help those in need—by sheer proximity to poverty—rests on him. The wealthy, who fly overhead in helicopters or drive past the motel in luxury automobiles, are not forced to confront poverty and are therefore morally exempted from dealing with it on micro or macro levels. Progressive tax systems that place a greater burden on the wealthy for providing for the poor (through welfare and social services) help to alleviate these moral obligations on individuals like Bobby, but such systems quite evidently do not exist in the neoliberal environment that Baker's characters inhabit. Instead, each character occupies a space of moral responsibility that locates, by necessity, their own survival above the well-being of those around them.

The film's final scenes demonstrate the devastating consequences of embracing such neoliberal policies and practices that exacerbate inequality and simultaneously render poverty invisible. Frantic after escaping from the social workers at the motel, Moonee tearfully attempts to explain to her friend, Jancey, that she is being taken away from her mother, but she "can't say it," suggesting that the separation is so traumatic that it pushes beyond linguistic limits. Instead, she squeezes out a single word, "bye," indicating that she understands that this will be the last time she sees her friend. Instead of returning the gesture, Jancey grabs her hand and the two girls run beyond the limits of the motel property, through the nearby strip malls and privatized city spaces, alongside the fast-moving automobiles on the thoroughfare, and finally into Walt Disney World, where they push through throngs of well-to-do tourists. Their journey ends in front of Cinderella's Castle, the iconic center of the Magic Kingdom theme park at Walt Disney World [Figure 5]. The two girls stare up at the castle for a moment, and then the film cuts to the closing credits.

Figure 5: The Magic Kingdom. *The Florida Project*, June Pictures, A24, 2017

This final scene functions as the key to Baker's critique of a neoliberal system that disingenuously promises prosperity while in fact exacerbating inequality. Baker uses several filmic strategies to convey to viewers that this surreal conclusion—a conclusion inconsistent in tone with the rest of the film—can only be read as a critique of the impossible fantasy produced by neoliberalism in the twenty-first century, which privileges privatization and corporate investment over the needs of the poor. At the moment when Jancey grabs Moonee's hand, Baker, for the first time in the film, uses nondiegetic music, an orchestral rendition of Kool and the Gang's 1980 hit "Celebration," as the soundtrack for the girls' desperate trip to the Magic Kingdom. The irony, of course, is that, unless the viewer has subscribed to a neoliberal logic that frames Moonee's removal into foster care as beneficial for the child, there is nothing to celebrate. In fact, Moonee at this moment finds herself in the midst of the most traumatic episode of her life, which is hardly cause for celebration.

Concurrent with the film's surprising introduction of a musical score, Baker in this scene transitions from 35-mm film stock to digital video filmed on an iPhone 6S Plus. Speaking in an interview about the logic underlying this decision, Baker explains, "[the iPhone 6S Plus] has what's called a rolling shutter, and it gave it this hyperactivity and a very different, jarring feel, and we liked that. We could have shot it on [an iPhone] 5s and made it more smooth, but we actually wanted to the audience to know that we were jumping from 35 mm to another medium."[39] This abrupt movement from the lush and fluid 35 mm, running at twenty-four frames per second, to the relatively grainy, stuttering iPhone video stock disrupts the sense of reality produced throughout the film, thrusting viewers into a surreal filmic space.[40] Baker's strategy here suggests that viewers are not meant to regard the girls' journey into the Magic Kingdom within the same diegetic space as the rest of the film; rather, their journey offers fantastical closure to a narrative incapable of providing happy endings.

As the girls stare in wonder at the shimmering castle and the film cuts to the closing credits, Baker leaves viewers to ponder the meaning of the girls' surreal journey into the Magic Kingdom. Is Cinderella's fairy-tale castle a symbol of the opportunity awaiting Moonee as she begins a new stage in life removed from the destructive exigencies of poverty, or is the castle—the iconic centerpiece of Walt Disney World—a symbol of the fairy tale of opportunity that is always visible, but never attainable, for those on society's margins? The former reading depends upon viewers exercising neoliberal rationale, as Moonee's future can only be secured by removing her from the financially destructive tendencies of her mother. Within the film's indeterminate moral space between the public and the private, this reading suggests that Moonee's financial well-being supersedes her emotional comfort and the inviolability of her relationship with her mother. The castle in the final shot represents a brighter future that awaits Moonee as she enters foster care and escapes poverty. The latter reading, on the other hand, involves a more pointed critique of the myths that fuel neoliberalism—that anyone, with hard work and determination, can achieve "the dream," captured

by the enchanting castle. The tragedy, of course, is that Moonee will likely never surmount the systemic obstacles that deny her the opportunity for growth and self-realization. This moment, as she is surrounded by the well-to-do patrons of the theme park, may in fact be the closest she ever gets to entering the middle class.

The surreal qualities of the scene contribute more readily to this latter reading, as Baker quite clearly seeks to frame the vision of possibility contained in the castle ironically as a fantasy produced by neoliberal corporatism. The Walt Disney Corporation, the company behind both the Magic Kingdom and the sprawling culture of commodification associated with Disney, is also the symbolic corporate presence responsible for producing the asymmetries that viewers witness in the film. As the girls gaze longingly at the castle, viewers may recognize in the castle the spectacle of corporatism that has transformed American life over the past several decades and that has created the consumer desire that we see reflected in the girls' faces. Ironically, the very object of that desire is the source of these characters' disenfranchisement. The rationale that would foster the rise of Amazon, Google, Apple, and any number of other megacorporations was executed through the defunding of public services and programs for the poor. Whereas we often think of neoliberalism as committed to "scaling back" public spending, it bears noting that neoliberal governance is equally committed to "rolling out" programs that foster corporate growth. These are two sides of the same coin: the public monies that would support programs for the poor are increasingly committed to policies and programs designed to support private investment—through tax abatements, decreases in the corporate tax rate, the building of public infrastructure necessary for economic growth, and public-private partnerships that minimize risk and maximize profits for developers. As Mark Purcell notes, these policies begin in conservative think tanks but quickly make their way to local and state governing bodies in which decision-making authority is often given to panels of business leaders and economic experts rather than elected representatives, who are perceived to be ill-equipped to confront the complexities associated with urban development.[41] Once these policies are put into action, they determine the shape and politics of urban space. In Baker's film, the corporate presence of Disney is total. While the girls symbolically confront the source of the fantasy in the film's conclusion, neoliberal corporatism may be said to have permeated the girls' ontological realities throughout the film to the extent that the privatized motel in which they live, the Magic Castle, is itself a symbolic extension of both Cinderella's Castle and the Magic Kingdom. The corporate landscape has become the very substance of these characters' lived reality, and because that reality is omnipresent, it remains largely invisible and transparent. Only in the final scene might we claim that the source of the fantasy has been laid bare, if not to Moonee, then at least to the viewer, who must consider the moral costs of embracing a rationale that privileges economic growth over protections for the poor.

Having taught this film at the undergraduate level, I found that students are quick to blame Halley for the tragedy that befalls her at the film's conclusion. Born into a logic of neoliberalism, these students read Halley as being unfit for motherhood largely because, in her efforts to provide for her daughter, she places Moonee in compromising situations. It is Halley's responsibility, these students argue, to find steady employment and thereby provide for her daughter. By framing Halley as a combative and contrarian character, Baker certainly invites readers to make snap judgments of her character; the viewer's initial impulse might be to assess her character according to a logic that aligns failure as a mother alongside failure as *homo ecomomicus*. A more careful consideration of both the environment that Baker's characters inhabit and the filmic strategies he employs, however, inspires modes of thinking that complicate this neoliberal rationale. Viewers who are attentive to the more subtle mechanics of Baker's film will identify a counter-critique that challenges the very logic that the film invites viewers to deploy. Working against a neoliberal rationale that has reconfigured how we understand ourselves and our world, viewers may experience affective dissonance in their processing of the film's contradictory messages and indeterminate moral spaces. To employ Rachel Greenwald Smith's term, the film produces "impersonal feelings," or complex affective responses that are resistant to the market logic that drives emotional investment in popular narrative media.[42] Incompatible with conventional modes of affective consumption, impersonal feelings work to deconstruct the transparent neoliberal logic responsible for shaping subjectivity and political life in the twenty-first century.

Operating on these dissonant affective levels, *The Florida Project* captures the contradictions endemic to late capitalism, contradictions that are fully integrated in the social world that the film depicts as well as present in its interpretive frame. Walter Benn Michaels explains how the intensifying inequality and the erosion of the middle class occurring under neoliberalism produces dissonant and contradictory feelings toward the unemployed, who are perceived as objects of both empathy (for their poverty) and resentment (for the fact that their growing numbers drive down wages in capitalist economies).[43] This affective dissonance might be similar in kind to what viewers experience as they confront Halley's character, who simultaneously inspires both empathy and resentment in viewers attempting to process the complexity of her predicament and the film's framing of that predicament. For Michaels, the dissonance produced through these contradictory affects—what he calls "the beauty of a social problem"—enables new heuristic modes capable of laying bare the machinery of inequality under neoliberalism. He writes, "To feel the beauty of the problem… is precisely not to feel the pathos produced by the problem; it's to feel instead the structure that makes the problem."[44] Baker's immersive strategies in *The Florida Project* offer such opportunities for structural critique. Moving beyond representation, the film invites viewers into contradictory and dissonant affective spaces that expose, in Michaels' words, "the beauty of the problem," or the divergent impulses that compel individuals to adopt simultaneously inclusive (empathy)

and exclusive (resentment) postures in relation to poverty and class difference. Significantly, Michaels identifies affect ("to feel") as the mode through which structural inequality may be perceived. In the case of Baker's film, "the structure that makes the problem" only becomes apparent when viewers are actively and immersively incorporated into the moral logic of neoliberalism, a logic replete with unresolved contradictions and antihumanistic textures that must be felt to be understood.

Baker's critique of the American housing crisis in *The Florida Project* therefore begins, but does not end, with housing; indeed, the housing crisis emerges as an outgrowth of a neoliberal logic that reaches into every domain of human life, and the film renders visible the social and infrastructural detritus produced under this logic. The purple Magic Castle motel, itself the depleted aspiration of a failed tourist economy, materializes the social wreckage that Baker stages through his desperate characters. Importantly, the film's realism enters viewers into these characters' lives in ways that illuminate the cruel structure of hegemonic neoliberalism, a structure in which all participants, in one way or another, and to varying degrees, are complicit. That these characters exist at all undercuts the promise of neoliberal reforms claiming that, once freed from dependency-producing public support, individuals will climb out of poverty. Such upward mobility is beyond the horizon of possibility for Halley and the other residents of the motel, as they remain trapped in responsibilizing cultures that ensure their continued domination. And yet these characters—and the populations of disinherited Americans that they represent—persist. Deemed illegitimate under the neoliberal markets-and-morals project, the social formations that they produce—the friendships and alliances that emerge throughout the film—contribute significantly to the film's affective power. Indeed, the loss of these marginalized social forms, staged symbolically through Halley and Moonee's traumatic separation, registers on affective levels that enable viewers to recognize the cruel logic of neoliberalism.

The depleted public sphere depicted in *The Florida Project* would prove instrumental for the antidemocratic politics of the Trump era, which relied upon a calculus that prioritized the economic over the human and the market over the social. Casting the political always in terms of the economic, according to Wendy Brown, results in the hollowing out of both "liberal democratic reason and a democratic imaginary that would exceed it."[45] Within this environment, "fundamentally human capacities to think, imagine, know, create, and act purposively in the world are being pathologized as expressions of humanity's hubris."[46] The "natural order" is one that is openly hostile to the fostering of democratic agency. In *The Florida Project*, the neoliberal environment no doubt precludes the characters' attempts to exercise such agency, but it is the film's formal and narrative mechanics that invite viewers into an affective space that exposes the glaring limitations of neoliberal rationality, as viewers momentarily assume a posture in which they exercise neoliberal reason in their condemnation of a vulnerable family. How to confront the totalizing machinery of neoliberalism

has been an enduring concern for scholars working in this field, but perhaps what Baker's film teaches us is that to understand the dehumanizing logic of neoliberalism, above all else, it must be *felt*.

Notes

1. David Madden and Peter Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 2016), 26.

2. Madden and Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing*, 12.

3. "The Florida Project" was the name given to what would become Walt Disney World in its planning phase in the 1960s. In *Married to the Mouse*, Richard E. Foglesong describes the unprecedented union of corporate investment and public governance that was forged in the second half of the twentieth century between the Walt Disney Corporation and the city of Orlando. Foglesong reads this public-private partnership as a cautionary tale that underscores the pitfalls of neoliberal urban development. Indeed, the tourist economy emerging from this union would shape the growth of gated communities and, in more abstract terms, the prioritization of private over public spaces. See Richard E. Foglesong, *Married to the Mouse: Walt Disney World and Orlando* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

4. Baker's film centers around the day-to-day lives of Halley and Moonee, both of whom are white. In locating precarity situationally in terms of whiteness, *The Florida Project* points to the ways in which inequality under neoliberalism has encroached upon the otherwise protected domain of whiteness. At the same time, in depicting white protagonists experiencing the brutal realities of neoliberalism, the film operates on racialized affective registers that arguably reinforce claims to vulnerability traditionally afforded to whiteness.

5. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 5.

6. Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 199.

7. Samuel Stein, *Capital City: Gentrification and the Real Estate State* (New York: Verso, 2019), 5.

8. Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 128.

9. John R. Parkinson, *Democracy and Public Space: The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2.

10. Mitchum Huehls and Rachel Greenwald Smith, "Four Phases of Neoliberalism and Literature: An Introduction," in *Neoliberalism and Contemporary Literary Culture*, ed. Mitchum Huehls and Rachel Greenwald Smith (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 9.

11. Huehls and Smith, "Four Phases of Neoliberalism and Literature," 10.

12. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 121.

13. In *Dying of Whiteness*, Jonathan M. Metzl describes how the conservative political movements of the Trump era successfully mobilized low-income, white Americans to advance political initiatives that worked directly against the interests of those populations. Tapping into "white racial resentment" and thereby consolidating notions of racial difference, these movements framed everything from conservative tax bills to health-care strategies to pro-gun legislation as cultural imperatives foundational to white identity. While Baker's film stages the depoliticization of everyday life under conditions of white poverty, it bears noting that the Trump era saw the opposite: a repoliticization of everyday life through the fomenting of political action and violence under the rubric of white racial resentment. See Jonathan M. Metzl, *Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment Is Killing America's Heartland* (New York: Basic Books, 2019).

14. Steven Shaviro, "The 'Bitter Necessity' of Debt: Neoliberal Finance and the Society of Control," May 1, 2010, http://www.shaviro.com/Othertexts/Debt.pdf, 9 .

15. Lenette Azzi-Lessing, *Behind from the Start: How America's War on the Poor Is Harming Our Most Vulnerable Children* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 36.

16. Under the Trump administration, federal work requirements became even more punitive for individuals seeking food assistance under the federal government's long-standing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides food assistance to individuals in need. Beginning April 1, 2020, the federal government limited states' ability to extend eligibility waivers to unemployed or underemployed "able-bodied adults without dependents." See Maggie Dickinson, "The Ripple Effects of Taking SNAP Benefits from One Person," *The Atlantic*, December 10, 2019, http://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/12/trump-snap-food-stamps-cuts/603367/. Were it not for extensions granted under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, almost 700,000 Americans would have been denied food assistance under Trump's rule. The rule will go into effect once the emergency legislation expires. See Jessica Shahin, "SNAP – Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Impact on Time Limit for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)," US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, March 20, 2020, http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ffcra-impact-time-limit-abawds.

17. Azzi-Lessing, *Behind from the Start*, 25.

18. Azzi-Lessing, *Behind from the Start*, 53.

19. Ronald Reagan's conjuring of the "welfare queen" in the 1970s and 1980s strategically deployed race to shape Americans' views of the welfare system as being exploited by morally corrupt racial minorities. Tapping into racist perceptions of African-American women, in particular, this narrative worked to undermine faith in the effectiveness of public assistance, thereby authorizing dramatic reductions in funding for social welfare programs. See Azzi-Lessing, *Behind from the Start*, 34. In *The Florida Project*, it is ironically a white woman, Halley, who encounters the dysfunctional wreckage of a welfare system dismantled over the course of several decades by racist cultures of whiteness.

20. *The Florida Project* premiered in the prestigious Directors' Fortnight section of the Cannes Film Festival in 2017, and A24 has been diligent about calling attention to this fact since its theatrical release in October of that year. The DVD packaging features the Cannes affiliation, evidently appealing to festival film audiences that, as research has shown, are statistically highly educated and affluent. See Andrea Báez and María Devesa, "Segmenting and Profiling Attendees of a Film Festival," *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* 5, no. 2 (2014): 108. Since its release, the film has enjoyed widespread distribution on Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, and other streaming services, but its slow pacing and minimalist plotting hardly align with the consumption expectations of mainstream audiences.

21. Patrick Sharkey, *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress toward Racial Equality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 9.

22. Scott W. Allard, *Places in Need: The Changing Geography of Poverty* (New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 2017), 7.

23. Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity* (New York: Verso, 2009), 63.

24. Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7.

25. Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015), 33.

26. Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 17.

27. Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 30.

28. Jane Elliott, *The Microeconomic Mode: Political Subjectivity in Contemporary Popular Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 1.

29. Elliott, *The Microeconomic Mode,* 136.

30. Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Washington: Zer0 Books, 2009), 21.

31. David Chandler and Julian Reid, *The Neoliberal Subject: Resilience, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (London: Rowman and Littlefield International, 2016), 3.

32. Chandler and Reid, *The Neoliberal Subject*, 122.

33. Melinda Cooper, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (New York: Zone Books, 2017), 21–22.

34. Wendy Brown, *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism: The Rise of Antidemocratic Politics in the West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 15.

35. Brown, *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism*, 39.

36. User comments in online discussion forums reveal the extent to which many viewers fault Halley for her perceived moral failings. On IMDB and Moviechat.org, users describe Halley as "garbage," "white trash," "a horrible person with no values," "a good-for-nothing mother," and countless variations on these themes. In these contexts, Halley's whiteness interestingly authorizes forms of moral censure that are impervious to the charge of "racism." Seemingly freed from the constraints of political correctness attached to race, Halley's detractors levy classist slurs that more or less abide by the logic and ideological foundations of neoliberalism. Notions of traditional morality reside at the heart of these judgments, and readers need only scan these forums to get a sense for how the markets-and-morals project has shaped viewer perspectives.

37. In *After Critique*, Mitchum Huehls discusses how distinctions between the public and the private have become obsolete with the ubiquitous rise of public-private partnerships. He explains, "On the one hand, the everyday workings of the neoliberal city blur and undermine any meaningful distinction between public and private space: the true nature of neoliberal space is its hybrid, public-private doubleness. On the other hand, neoliberalism encourages and deploys concepts, rhetoric, and discourse that represent public and private as purified, mutually exclusive domains. By capturing the entire public-private relationship, neoliberalism ensures that arguments favoring the public over the private and those favoring the private over the public will ultimately reinforce its core values." See Mitchum Huehls, *After Critique: Twenty-First-Century Fiction in a Neoliberal Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 63.

38. Michael D. Tanner, "Why Is There So Much Government Hostility to Private Charity?" *National Review*, January 10, 2018, http://www.nationalreview.com/2018/01/government-hostility-charity-must-end/.

39. Ashley Lee, "'The Florida Project': Director Sean Baker Explains How and Why He Shot that Ending," *The Hollywood Reporter*, October 11, 2017, http://www.hollywoodreporter .com/news/florida-project-ending-director-sean-baker-explains-meaning-how-he-did-it-1047215.

40. Apple's marketing for the iPhone has consistently framed the device as integral to managing intimate relations and helping users to realize their dreams. The company's marketing campaign in 2013 and 2014, in particular, channeled these ideals, depicting children using the iPhone's video production capabilities to connect with loved ones across space and time. As a filmic technology in *The Florida Project*, the iPhone's recognizable video stock might resonate with viewers on these consumer levels, imbricating them further in the corporate fantasy—loaded with affective consumer desire—that the film's conclusion seeks to capture.

41. Mark Purcell, *Recapturing Democracy: Neoliberalization and the Struggle for Alternative Urban Futures* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 27.

42. Rachel Greenwald Smith, *Affect and American Literature in the Age of Neoliberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 2.

43. Walter Benn Michaels, "The Beauty of a Social Problem (e.g. unemployment)," *Twentieth-Century Literature* 57, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2011): 319.

44. Michaels, "The Beauty of a Social Problem (e.g. unemployment)," 320.

45. Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 42.

46. Chandler and Reid, *The Neoliberal Subject*, 6.

"There Is Only the World": Transnational Adoptees and Forced Migration

Justice Hagan

Introduction

There has been a sense of security in the transnational adoptee[1] community regarding our legal status in the United States for a long time. Part of that security is rooted in our awareness of the expectations of others; many think that our parents' American culture has imprinted itself onto us seamlessly. However, transnational adoptee stories that exist in popular culture and academic study—as well as the deportation of adoptees such as Adam Crapser, who was deported to South Korea despite living in the United States as an American for more than forty years—have revealed cultural challenges to us within our adopted space. Even though we are not living in tents and pushing against the armed guards of the European Union, the American border patrol, or the barred gates of wealthy nations, we no longer possess our former sense of security. Our inclusion in the American community has been called into question by a nationalist apparatus hostile to immigrant populations, bringing some of our worst fears regarding our belonging to the fore: anxieties of legal status and social rejection. The analysis that follows addresses this new reality and illustrates the interpersonal and cultural experiences that can displace the transnational adoptee through a resigned cosmopolitanism from a national to a global space—resigned because that global space was not sought but is the one in which we must exist. This space is not uninhabited; it is the interstitial zone of refugees, exiles, and the stateless. With them, transnational adoptees are part of the forced migrant population and contribute new experiences and perspectives to the discourses of displacement.

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As a white, male, transnational adoptee able to pass as a white, male, natural-born American citizen, my subject position within the larger discursive formation of transnational adoption is markedly different from that of non-white transnational adoptees, whose adoption stories are the focus of the films studied in this article. Our experiences place us within the same community of forced migrants, but it must be recognized that I am reading across embodied knowledges that are different from my own. This specific difference of subject position—and the larger slippage that exists between the transnational and transracial realities of adoption—makes it difficult for me to comfortably characterize the lived experiences of transnational adoptees as "ours." My use of the personal pronouns throughout this article is not an effort to erase the differences between transnational and transracial adoption or to diminish the need to further explore the slippage between them. Rather, it is done both to highlight the legal frameworks that apply to all of us within the transnational adoptee population and to strengthen the solidarity of our community, a community that increasingly finds itself in spaces of precarity, indeterminacy, and threat.

Although the primary texts of this analysis are documentary films about adoptees searching for pieces of a lost past, not all the experiences of transnational adoption and a realignment of identity are tied to voluntary narratives of discovery. Adopted as a toddler from an orphanage in South Korea, Adam Crapser's life in the United States did not fit into the idealized mold of the 1950s transnational adoptee that was established as the cultural expectation before his birth; he did not spend evenings in the backyard eating barbeque and watching fireworks as a child with his white American parents. Abused by the first family that adopted him, they then put him up for adoption again, separating him from his sister. When this new family kicked him out of the house at age sixteen, he went back to retrieve his personal belongings and served over two years in prison for burglary. Because neither of these families properly completed his naturalization documents, holding a job was extremely difficult for him, as he was never able to prove his legal status. A court ruling on October 24, 2016, called for his deportation back to South Korea within thirty days. Regarding his imminent forced migration—the second in his life—Adam says, "I guess in a sense the good thing is that I am a citizen of Korea so when I go back I will already be the citizen of some country. I guess that's where I belong."[2]

Adam Crapser was adopted from South Korea at the age of three, an age that many individuals have a difficult time remembering and an age at which a strong sense of national and cultural belonging is nonexistent. Taken into a new home and told that he was now an American, Adam's entire identity has been shaped by a society that has repeatedly rejected him and has now relocated him to a place that he was originally forced to leave. Though the failures of his family to follow the technical requirements of naturalization might allow the court to deport him, no institution possesses the authority to dictate one's identity,

and so the second forced migration of Adam's life will do nothing to erase his American history and upbringing.

This article addresses topics shared by American studies and critical adoption studies. As a field still in the process of defining the scope of its cultural and academic functions, the examination of the experiences and perspectives of the transnational adoptee community are key to answering some of the formative questions of critical adoption studies articulated by Margaret Homans in "Critical Adoption Studies: Conversation in Progress." She asks,

> is [critical adoption studies'] purpose to use adoption (and related practices) as a critical lens through which to see, in new ways, such central features of human existence as race, identity, kinship, heritage, nationality, sexuality, and gender? Is the focus of adoption studies the rights-bearing individual whose subjugation within unequal relations of power calls out for justice; can the critical study of adoption expose the structural inequalities… that not only render contemporary adoption intrinsically unjust but that also characterize global social relations more generally?[3]

I argue that the answer to these questions is unmistakably yes; the lived experiences of transnational adoptees reveal new dimensions of forced migration by exposing the inaccuracy of the cultural assumptions that occupy outsiders' perceptions of the adoptee experience. Though told that we are not really immigrants by those around us, our otherness is reinforced by a barrage of transnational—and often transracial—reminders that we encounter regularly. The gain of recognizing transnational adoption as a form of forced migration is to acknowledge the interstitial anxieties of a community of people whose privileges of citizenship and cultural familiarity often mask those anxieties. Admittedly, there is a degree of specialized knowledge unique to the adoptee required to fully recognize the instability of the transnational space in which we find ourselves, but that is in part because the system that facilitated our migration also works to occlude our lack of choice behind a veil of charity.

In addition to expanding our understanding of forced migration and the communities that it affects, this work also serves to grow the range of focus for critical adoption studies. In "Critical Adoption Studies as Inclusive Knowledge Production and Corrective Action," Kim Park Nelson provides a concise overview of the discursive functions of the field. She writes,

> Critical adoption studies is grounded in social justice ideologies. It acknowledges that the loss of a child, the loss of identity because of an adoptive placement or displacement, and the loss of control over reproductive processes are

> common within adoption experience. … It recognizes that adoption processes are about power and have often relied on social, political, and economic disenfranchisement to operate, including the oppression of women, children, people of color, and poor people.[4]

While a critical analysis of these realities of adoption are crucial to the field and the community of adoptees, much of critical adoption studies at this time looks at the cultural and legal frameworks of the adoption process, with less attention paid to the cultural and legal precarity of the adoptee community whose processes of adoption are a distant memory. As a comparatively small field of study with the opportunity to reduce future harm to oppressed persons, this attention to the adoption process is appropriate. Outside of the legal battles being waged between countries and institutions over access to adoption, however, is a community of countless adults who have spent our lives in a culturally—and now legally, for those in the United States—vulnerable space.

Three documentary films that represent some of the most groundbreaking adoption stories in popular culture in the past twenty years are at the center of this work. Deanne Borshay Liem's *First Person Plural* (2000) and *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee* (2010) and Linda Goldstein-Knowlton's *Somewhere Between* (2011) document the lives of transnational adoptees from South Korea and China. A significant number of adoptees come from South Korea and China, and the fact that these films focus on these specific transnational adoptee populations reflects another observable practice; fairly or unfairly, transracial Asian American adoptees are often called upon to speak for the transnational adoptee community, a reality that is explicitly demonstrated in several of the scenes in *Somewhere Between*. This reality is due in part to the number of Asian American adoptees in the transnational adoptee population. In *Global Families: A History of Asian International Adoption in America*, Choy writes,

> Since the late 1990s, China has been a major sending nation of adoptive children to the United States. In 2000, it led the list of the top twenty primary sending countries, with 5,095 children from China being adopted by U.S. citizens. South Korea provided 1,794 adoptive children, making it third on the list. Vietnam, India, and Cambodia also placed in the top ten of primary sending nations.[5]

With this in mind, it comes as no surprise that these films occupy a prominent place in the discourse of adoption studies. In all three of these films, in addition to being Asian-American, the adoptees are also women, and their forced migrations are linked to the political policies and wars in their countries of origin. Though the claims that I make here are applicable to the transnational adoptee community broadly, we can understand transnational adoption as forced migration through a

more focused examination of the films of Borshay Liem and Goldstein-Knowlton as Asian-American women's texts. Each of the central figures in these works have been adopted into predominantly white American families and are forced to contend with the differences of place, belonging, and identity between themselves, their parents, and their siblings, as well as between themselves and the larger society in which they live. So, what does it mean for them to not be permitted what those around them might refer to as a "real" or "authentic" sense of belonging in the United States because they were adopted from another nation? And from this, if they cannot "authentically" inhabit the country in which they have been raised, then what is the space that they are forced to inhabit?

While *Somewhere Between* has not received much scholarly attention, Deanne Borshay Liem's films have been among those narratives closely focused on in ethnic studies and adoption studies discourse. Scholars such as Jodi Kim have made important contributions to the conversation about transnational adoption through their readings of Liem's films, and their work has helped us begin to think of the transnational adoptee as a forced migrant figure. In "'The Ending Is Not an Ending at All': On the Militarized and Gendered Diasporas of Korean Transnational Adoption and the Korean War," Kim, writing about Liem in *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*, cites Eun Kyung Min in her description of the transnational adoptee figure. She writes that "she is 'an immigrant without an original home, exiled from nowhere, uprooted in the most total way imaginable, without the memory of what it is she has lost.'" She further cites other Korean adoptees whose adoptions have resulted in "the fact that the loss itself is lost…," resulting in the imaginings of "what might have been."[6] While these accounts match those of many other transnational adoptees, there are also many more, such as Fang Lee in *Somewhere Between*, who don't have to wonder what life would have been like, at least in the early years, in their places of origin. For them, the loss is not lost, but is an observable sequence of events from a life that they remember being stolen from them. It is taking this recognition of the transnational adoptee as a forced migrant and recognizing the space into which this migration has situated them that we can understand the emergent global identity that is born from their experiences.

Early in *Immigrant Acts,* Lisa Lowe addresses one of the core realities of the Asian-American experience that circles back again and again in narratives of immigrant inclusion. She writes, "… these same narratives are driven by the repetition and return of episodes in which the Asian American, even as a citizen, continues to be located outside the cultural and racial boundaries of the nation."[7] In this article, I will show how many of the interactions that take place between the adoptees in the films and the members of their families and communities fit within this experience of resigned cosmopolitanism; being part of a community, being a *citizen* of a community, yet outside of the close-knit, familial sense of belonging that otherwise pervades that community. The persistence of this experience within the Chinese-American and Korean-American adoptee communities in the films results in, among other things, a new perspective of the

self for many members of the these communities. Several of the Asian-American adoptees in the community come to view their inner and outer beings as distinct from one another, that they are "yellow on the outside and white on the inside" (*Somewhere Between*). How this new perspective guides their decisions and communication with their families and communities requires close study.

In my analysis of the films, I focus on scenes in which the central figures undergo a transformative moment of awakening to illustrate the new perspectives that transnational adoptee narratives bring to the field of forced migrant literature. Throughout their lives, up to that moment, their conception of home and belonging remained a stabilizing force; they knew that despite the racial and country of origin differences between themselves and their communities, they were Americans and this was their home. This transformative moment for them is a realization that this belief was a misconception; despite their family's love for them and the acceptance of at least some within their community, a part of them had always existed outside of this home. In the films, we can see the way that such a loss of social and familial security realigns their sense of belonging and identity. This realignment is one that transcends national borders, a displacement that forms connections between the place of origin and the place of habitation and situates the adoptee in what can only be defined as a global space of resigned cosmopolitanism.

Don't Tell Your New Family Your Real Name

According to the Adoptee Rights Campaign,[8] there are roughly 35,000 transnational adoptees in the United States who do not currently possess citizenship.[9] To be clear, that means that tens of thousands of children displaced from their countries of origin and told that this is their new home do not yet possess the security of citizenship.[10] These children are entirely at the mercy of their parents' responsibility. While the same could be said of any child in the United States, if the parents do not fill out the proper immigration and citizenship documents, then these children, as well as forty-one-year-old parents of five, like Crapser, are subject to exile from the only home that they have ever known.

Fortunately, international adoption has reached a point in its proliferation and development that it has become the subject of legislative discourse. Both The Hague and the United Nations have drafted conventions that include international adoption: the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child and The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption. Among the greatest achievements of these conventions have been the opportunities to articulate certain agreed-upon claims regarding what priorities should be in international adoption. Article 3 of the UN convention states, "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."[11] Article 21 further describes the circumstances under which adoption should proceed, requiring institutions to "ensure that the child concerned by inter-country

adoption enjoys safeguards and standards equivalent to those existing in the case of national adoption."[12]

That legislative provisions did not really exist for the safety of transnational adoptees until the 1950s remains among the most surprising facts at the intersection of adoption studies and international law. Perhaps equally surprising to some is that the United States is the only country in the world that has not yet ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among the chief reasons that the United States has not ratified the convention is that a significant portion of the legislative body of the United States views the provisions of the convention as infringing upon their sovereign authority, stoking fears that international law would supersede, and in many cases replace, American law.[13] Along with The Hague convention, these two works of international legislation represent the global discourse finally evolving to a state advanced enough to consider the ramifications of displacing infants across national borders and what might await them in the new place that they are then forced to inhabit.

As unenforceable as the provisions of these conventions currently are, they also leave room for a significant amount of deception and confusion, which leads to the circumstances of forced migration. Deanne Borshay Liem's films *First Person Plural* (2000) and *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee* (2010) showcase much of the intentional deception of the international adoption system in South Korea, a dysfunction not isolated to that country but particularly relevant in a world in which many South Korean adoptees are seeking out their origins with a sense of destined belonging. One of the most startling revelations for the transnational adoptee community in these films concerns the rhetoric of deception engendered in the adoptees by the state orphanages. These children were coached by their orphanage administrators, instructed "don't tell your new family your real name" (*In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*). Though most of the administrators who ran those orphanages at the time of the adoptions depicted in the films have long since retired or died, their successors carry on this legacy of deception, not in the same direct terms of the further coaching of adoptees, but in suggesting that those displaced persons of the war and the intervening decades forget about the past and the mistakes or errors that were made. After all, these administrators claim, the only motivation of these institutions and individuals was the well-being of the adoptees (*In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*).

While this explanation behind their motivation might satisfy some parties, it is difficult to fathom the ethics behind robbing an individual or family of its right to a future unfettered by the private interests of governments or institutions. And, though it did not impact the perspectives of Deann Borshay Liem's family, it is also worth noting that deception happened at both ends of the adoption process in this case: her family spent months sending money to South Korea to sponsor her before deciding to adopt her, but the picture that they were shown of the young child that they were supporting did not match the appearance of the girl that they ultimately adopted. Again, this fact did not cause any alarm for Deann's parents, as they claim that she is their daughter regardless of the past—a line

reminiscent of the administrator's excuses to her inquiry—but the truth is that they were intentionally deceived by an institution who took their money for one child and sent them another.

While the scope of harm of these institutional practices in South Korea can never be fully articulated, they are linked to a history of Western—and especially American—military conflicts. Elisabeth Wesseling writes about the surge in transnational adoption following the Korean War: "The removal of children from their birth families in Asian or African countries to rear them according to Western standards was standard practice in Europe's settler and extraction colonies. Indigenous (especially mixed) children persistently figured as targets and tools of Western civilizing and missionizing efforts."[14] South Korea became this very kind of extraction colony for the United States following the Korean War, with more than 109,000 children adopted by American families in the years following the war.[15] There is perhaps no more characteristic example of this homogenizing process than the Korean children adopted by military families following the war. As Soojin Pate writes in *From Orphan to Adoptee: US Empire and Genealogies of Korean Adoption*,

> In the same way that [the] Korean orphan has been adopted by the American military man, South Korea—treated by the United States as if it too is an orphan—has also been adopted by the American military government. The U.S. nation becomes the adoptive father to South Korea. . . . Consequently, Korean adoption both preserves and maintains American neocolonialism.[16]

With this in mind, we can certainly still find fault with the practices of Korean adoption institutions, but the whole of the blame cannot rest on them; the West has an insatiable material interest in creating circumstances that expedite the exportation of children.

Narratives of international adoption published in the past twenty years[17] depict individuals struggling with questions of identity and belonging, and their conclusions are an ever-evolving set of perspectives that displace them from traditionally recognized borders and nations. As new considerations intersecting with the idea of "impossible subjects" written about by Mae Ngai,[18] transnational adoptees—though many of us technically, for now, possess the protections of the state—still cannot breach the social fortifications built around the insular notion of what many consider constitutes a "genuine" citizen: someone whose belonging within the borders of a nation-state is unquestioned. Though Ngai is referring to Asian-Americans specifically, the moves made by the administration of the U.S. government in recent years (see endnote 10) to create a process of denaturalization places all of us who have gone through the process of naturalization vulnerable. While the degree of vulnerability based on the race of the adoptee is certainly a valid distinction to be made, many of us feel as

though we cannot exist where we are—a displacement that reminds us of the stories of refugees and exiles—and because the anxiety is different for each transnational adoptee (even among those with the same national origin), our shared community falls into a space of uncertainty. Redefining the transnational adoptee experience as one of forced migration represents a major shift in the way that the adoption process is perceived, not only for individuals and organizations earnestly pursuing transnational adoption as a charitable, humanitarian act, but also for adoptees who have found a cultural equilibrium in the space that they inhabit. As we work to unpack these lived experiences and add to the field of critical adoption studies, the slippage between the transnational and transracial realities of adoptees is a significant issue. Because race is the thing that marks Asian-Americans as "impossible subjects," extending this distinction to include other transnational adoptees—especially white adoptees—is uncomfortable.

Including transnational adoptees alongside the narratives of refugees and exiles presents rich opportunities to contrast the circumstances of displacement among different groups of forced migrants, especially because, as Catherine Choy notes, so few studies have even gone to the effort to include transnational adoptees as a part of the immigrant community.[19] In "The Quiet Migration Redux: International Adoption, Race, and Difference," Jessaca Leinaweaver shares some quotes from educators and caregivers working with adopted children that demonstrate how transnational adoption is viewed as "the unknown immigration" or "the silent immigration." When faced with idea that these transnational adoptees have immigrated to their new countries, the educators and caregivers say, "we do not have immigrant children, we have children adopted internationally," and "our children are NOT immigrants. They are, once adopted, citizens of the United States."[20] This push even extends beyond professionals working in the areas of education or administration and extends to the parents of transnational adoptees, as will be seen later in the sections of this article that focus on Deann Borshay Leim's films; to many adoptive parents, the idea that their child is an immigrant—despite having filled out naturalization paperwork as part of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services process—is baffling and might seem to be an attempt to somehow lessen the bond that they have. Because of these conflicting statements and perspectives, it is critically important to look at transnational adoption as forced migration. As Leinaweaver writes,

> Viewing international adoption as a form of migration can also offer some important insights into what happens *after* the initial migration. … Examining international adoptees' lives through a migration lens powerfully reveals some of the persistent discomforts that preclude open conversations about racial difference and minority status in an adoptive context, that is, one where children have been caused to migrate as part of their recruitment into families.[21]

One of the central concerns of this work is this question: What does it mean to include transnational adoptees within the larger context of forced migration? As Laura Briggs notes in *Somebody's Children*, "We have begun to develop a more critical account of adoption, one that asks about it not as a celebrity event or a private, family decision but as one deeply embedded in the politics of race and poverty, gender and sexuality, and international relations and economies."[22] My contention in this work is that those geopolitical realities faced by transnational adoptees place them—unexpectedly, for those unaware of those realities—among the forced migrant populations of refugees, political and religious exiles, and stateless persons. Looking at the narrative works of transnational adoption allows that critical accounting of adoption to take place within a wider academic discourse that includes literary studies. The material outcome of this analysis for literary studies is the understanding that a number of works thought to once occupy only the broad genre of American literature in fact also fall under the category of immigrant literature and further distinguish themselves as narratives of forced migration.

Transnational adoption narratives can be read as stories of forced migration in a way that distinguishes them within the larger field of immigrant literature, but they also conceive of the places and planes inhabited by those who are seen as "inauthentic." Saskia Sassen, exploring the emergence of new global classes, writes, "these types of disadvantaged individuals also find themselves in an ambiguous position between the national and the global."[23] If we broaden how we define "disadvantaged individuals" here, transnational adoptees number among these emergent global classes. We still must contend, however, with the notion that there is an "ambiguous position" between the national and the global. If the "global" in this case is the established networks of solidarity that exist between groups, then many transnational adoptees do not fit that description, as they are not part of those networks. Instead, I argue that the "ambiguous position that they inhabit between the national and the global" is still the global, if only for the reason that despite the numerous provisions that exist for individuals occupying "refugee" or "exile" status as determined by international legislative bodies such as the United Nations, the view of many societies is far more binary; you are either the citizen of a nation, or you are not. That those international legislative bodies have made such determinations does not change the experiences that the characters encounter in the films or the experiences of transnational adoptees outside of these texts. So, global citizenship, instead of only an outcome of transnational networking, also includes those existing between places. This space occupied by the "inauthentic" inhabitant is ultimately an empty globality because in the binary perspective within which these disadvantaged individuals must contend there is no acknowledgment of any such space.

First Person Plural and *In The Matter of Cha Jung Hee*

First Person Plural (2000) and *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee* (2010) are two films by Deann Borshay Liem about her experiences as a transnational

adoptee from Korea who was adopted by white American parents in California. *First Person Plural* is about her search for her identity after learning that the biography and name provided by the orphanage from which she was adopted was false. In the film, she finds her biological family in South Korea and brings her adoptive parents to meet them, uniting the two halves of her life that had been separated by lies and misinformation. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee,* made ten years after the first film, follows Deann as she seeks out the Cha Jung Hee whose identity was used by the orphanage to facilitate the adoption of Deann to a family who had been in contact with Cha Jung Hee and had intended to adopt her. Though Deann meets an adult Cha Jung Hee who might have been the same child, there is uncertainty that the ultimate truth might ever be revealed. One of the reasons that an analysis of Deann Borshay Liem's work is so critical in showcasing the forced migrant experience is that, as Catherine Ceniza Choy writes in "No Longer Silent: The Adopted Diaspora's Return to Korea" regarding the availability of such accounts, "her films analyze the prominent role that organizational records played in her life history as a Korean adoptee in the United States. . . . Such links are difficult to find as adoption case records typically do not provide longer, continuous accounts of the adoption after placement."[24] Indeed, without the document archives retained by her adoptive parents and the links that they provide to state archives in South Korea, her story could not have been discovered in the way that it was.

Deann Borshay's adoption happened decades before the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and as such was not beholden to the specific laws articulated in that document. Even so, the institutionalization, negotiation, and exportation of Deann would have been permissible under the UN and Hague laws. As such, this section will attend to both an analysis of Deann's perspectives on her own displacement as well as an investigation of the ways in which the state agencies in her country of origin circumvented what would have been seen, even in those early days of transnational adoption, as unethical practices.

Deann was adopted after she had begun to form strong memories and was told by the South Korean institution where she lived several years of her life that she was to conceal those memories from the American family that was to adopt her. The Borshay family had spent years corresponding with a girl named Cha Jung Hee and made known to the South Korean authorities their intention to adopt her. In a move that surprised even the veteran social workers at the orphanage, Cha Jung Hee's father returned to collect her without even a word to the administrators. Faced with the potential loss of a source of charitable income from the Borshays, the social workers and administrators decided to replace Cha Jung Hee with another girl named Ok Jin. Continuing the correspondence with the Borshays under the name of Cha Jung Hee, they arranged for the replacement girl to be sent in her place. Even though Ok Jin—now Deann Borshay Liem—still possessed the memories of her life in Korea, she was confined within this new persona assigned to her by the social workers. Resisting this fate was impossible

for young Deann, she says, as "there was no proof that I had ever been anyone else."[25] This practice of South Korean orphanages was common. According to Soojin Pate, "The primary goal of the orphanage was to transform the unadoptable orphans into adoptable children."[26] Deann Borshay Liem herself acknowledges the manifestation of this practice within her own history: "Cha Jung Hee became the template for the perfect orphan. Once the template existed, any girl could step into it."[27] Literally placed into the shoes originally sent by the Borshay's to Cha Jung Hee, Deann, a girl unknown to them until she stepped off the plane in the United States, became their daughter. The beginning of Deann's life with the Borshays matched that idealized picture created by Harry Holt and Holt International Children's Services.[28] Deann says that, "Over time, I became one of them. I learned to change the way I smiled, and carried my body to match theirs. Soon, I no longer saw a difference between us, and when I looked into the mirror, it was not my face I saw, but their bodies, their beauty, reflected back at me."[29]

Returning to the original correspondence between the Borshays and the social workers at the orphanage, on a document uncovered through Deann's investigation, the social worker—ostensibly writing a letter on behalf of Cha Jung Hee—expresses Cha Jung Hee's desire to live with the Borshays. When this is read in light of the shock the social workers felt at her reclamation by her father, which occurred after this letter had been written, we can see the clear interest—if not definite intent—by the state to send Cha Jung Hee overseas for adoption. Without knowing whether she had parents, without having any legal documentation from a parent or guardian releasing her for adoption, the orphanage openly implied the possibility of Cha Jung Hee's adoption to the Borshays. The specific words spoken by the social worker assigned to Cha Jung Hee's case were, "We didn't even know that she had parents. . . ."[30] That she did not instead say that the orphanage assumed that her parents were deceased or something similar means that there was no investigation of the orphan's status prior to opening talks about adoption.

During the meeting that Deann had with the social worker during her investigation into Cha Jung Hee, the social worker's inability to grasp the violation that had been wrought upon Deann stood out clearly. For the majority of their meeting, she voiced sentiments similar to what was mentioned above, citing a lack of knowledge and hope for Deann's future as the motivations for her actions. Though we do not see Deann's face during this interview, we can assume that recalling these moments of her own life, and learning of the suffering faced by Cha Jung Hee at such a young age, impacted her greatly, as similar exchanges do in various other scenes in the film. The social worker sees this as well and responds "the switch was done out of a belief that you would be happy. I'm sorry it's still haunting you."[31] Whether this statement can be read as an admission by a state agent that such actions can cause trauma and grief in the adoptee is a good question, but the displacement of any blame on her part, the remorselessness that she displays in claiming that if any trauma is being experienced, it's not because of any wrongdoing on the part of the South

Korean government, immediately calls into question the number of children who have been exported under similar circumstances. Not all of the transnational adoptees who have lived through the process of migration have access to this information, and so there are generations of adoptees who might have been subject to unrecorded state violence.

One of the unfortunate, and perhaps unforeseen, consequences of these misleading and deceptive acts by state institutions is that they severely compromise what little chance there is of the child finding a link back to the heritage that has been stolen from them, something that will be discussed later in the section on *Somewhere Between*. If this is a completely unforeseen consequence, as any ethical governing body would claim, then the government programs designed to present a welcoming atmosphere to Korean adoptees who return to learn about their country of origin would call that claim into question. In "Wedding Citizenship and Culture," Elaine Kim writes that these programs construct "the adoptees as tourists, with an emphasis on their lack of cultural competence, over the acknowledgement of their intimate and embodied ties to Korea and to their biological families."[32] Deann writes about her mother, "I've never felt critical of my birth mother for giving me up, but for some reason during her visit, an unexpected anger welled up in me. I realized there was a mutual betrayal; she'd given me up for adoption, and I betrayed my entire family by forgetting them." She then goes on to say, "The decision to give me up fit into a lifelong struggle to survive. . . . I also learned that she looked for me after I left."[33] Her mother later sent a letter to the Borshays in California, asking for the return of her daughter, Ok Jin. Because they believed it was addressed to the wrong person due to the manipulation of the state agencies in Korea, Deann discarded the letter. Though we might hope for shock and apology on the part of those state adoption agencies at this revelation, it seems as though the response would just be another attempt to pacify the grief by telling them that they were only trying to make them happy.

A forced migrant who possesses memories from her life before her displacement—a rarity for an adoptee—who was given explicit instructions by the state agencies in her country of origin to lie to her adoptive parents, Deann had to actively carry out that deception each day of her life. Though by her own admission she went through a process of assimilation, becoming as American in her own eyes as much as the rest of her family, the illusion of belonging breaks down for Deann. She wonders, "If I wasn't Cha Jung Hee, who was I? My world began falling apart. All of a sudden, I saw myself in a completely different light. I wondered, had I lived my entire life as an imposter? I know in reality, I am not her. But my sense of who I am has been held captive to her name and her identity."[34] Here we have an example of what Soojin Pate refers to as "coming to." She writes, "coming to is not so much about declaring or achieving some end result (like coming out implies) but about confronting one's circumstances and conditions in order to achieve a more nuanced and complex understanding of oneself."[35]

As Deann's world falls apart, she undergoes, I argue, a moment of crisis that allows her to acknowledge the way that her origin story informs her identity. Deann gains a new perception of herself: a moment of enlightenment and realization that her idea of who she is comes into a kind of conflict with the place and circumstances in which she originated. For Deann, it is intentional deception that adds a particular trauma to her awakening. She writes,

> Because I was not the child my parents had originally fallen in love with, there was a part of me that always questioned whether I belonged … and whether I had a right to accept my family's love, and to love them. When my mother was dying, my greatest fear was that she would lose her memory and forget that I was her daughter. I asked her one day, 'Do you remember who I am?' She paused, then she said, 'you're Deann, you're my daughter.' These were the words that I most wanted to hear, and the words that I've had the hardest time accepting.[36]

Many adoptees go through the process of questioning whether the love that their adoptive family has for them is real or if it is different from the love they would or do have for their biological children. Few have to ask themselves whether or not they deserve love because it was originally meant for another. This manifestation of a broken system and a lack of understanding by the legislative entities tasked with creating the processes results in the ongoing trauma of forced migration, something that might not ever be able to be separated from the experience of transnational adoption. Deann's story severely compromises the professional integrity claimed by the adoption agencies that facilitated adoptions from South Korea because it demonstrates the way that infants are treated as exported goods rather than as individuals with rights. What is the point at which this distinction changes? We have only to look at Deann's experiences after arriving in the United States for an answer.

When Deann's family does learn of the deception carried out against them by the state agents of the South Korean government, they don't seem to care that they had been misled because for them the process of adoption was about the future of the adoptee rather than her past; their daughter Deann is who mattered, not whoever she was before she became that. Her mother says, "I didn't care that they had switched a child on us. And just because suddenly you weren't Cha Jung Hee, you were Ok Jin Kang . . . Kong . . . or whatever didn't matter to me. You were Deann and you were mine." And her sister, upon hearing her real name says, "That doesn't mean nothin' to me. You're still Cha Jung Hee."[37] Both statements contain their own versions of violence, but the seeming conflict between them is actually a point of commonality. Her mother, though she at least attempts to pronounce Deann's birth name, and her sister, who completely denies that reality and claims that she is still Cha Jung Hee, are saying the same thing: the girl who was adopted did not have an authentic identity until she became a part of their

family. Recalling when her family went to pick up Deann from the airport, her sister remembers confusion as to which of the arriving children was her new sibling. She says, "It didn't matter. One of them was ours."[38] It's difficult to read this lack of concern on the part of her family as not at least in some way tied to race and culture and not just a family's excitement, with her mother's carefree stumble with her birth name and her sister's referral to the Korean adoptees as a formless group. Her family believes that the life that she might have known before coming to the United States didn't matter because a non-American cultural origin is lesser, according to the professed beliefs of her brother.[39] Such a sentiment can hardly be separated from the imperial nature of white American citizenship, and despite the love that her family has for her, the Korean child and sibling did not even exist until she was pointed out to the family and became Deann. Until then, she was just "one of them," another forced migrant with no innate right to an identity.

Somewhere Between

The film *Somewhere Between* was created by its director, Linda Goldstein-Knowlton, as a gift to her daughter who she had recently adopted from China. This film is a white director's accounting, and thus the accounting of an adoptive parent, of the lives of four teenage Asian transnational adoptees. Though this differs from Deann Borshay Liem's identity as a transnational adoptee filmmaker, the perspectives and experiences articulated by the adoptees in the film are their own and are valuable contributions to the discourse of transnational adoptee narratives. While Goldstein-Knowlton's original purpose may have been to document a kind of living diary of four different teenage girls' reflections on their lives as transnational adoptees, the film reveals more than just the methods employed by the girls to cope with their constant sense of "cultural ambassadorship," as Elaine Kim would identify it. With the individuals in this film having gone through a traditional international adoption process, compared to the experience of Deann Borshay, the focus of my analysis is not on reconciling a perceived deception, but on what the end results of a more traditional transnational adoption can be.

One of the unique differences between the two countries of origin discussed here, South Korea and China, is that in China families placed their children up for adoption because, among other reasons, it was what the law allowed; if they already had one child, they could not keep the others. Each of the adoptees in this story are fully aware of this reality; they know, some more than others, that their lives in the United States are the result of abandonment by their biological families. Though each of them has come to terms, to one measure or another, with this reality, it is a part of their story that stands in contrast to the intimate family lives that they have in the United States.

In *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages*, Mimi Thi Nguyen writes in the introduction about the parade float of Madalenna Lai, which says, "Thank you America and the world."[40] This important quote illustrates an

attitude encountered by Fang, Jenna, Haley, and Ann, the individuals at the center of *Somewhere Between*, and transnational adoptees like them nearly every day. On a sunny afternoon in Nashville, Tennessee, Haley, her mother, and her sister—who was also adopted from China—are at a salon. An elderly white American woman is in the chair next to Haley, speaking to their mother. Upon learning of Haley and her sisters' country of origin and their adoption story, she extends her hand to Haley's four-or five-year-old sister and congratulates them both for coming to "The United States of America. Are you happy? Boy, aren't you lucky!"[41] From the expression on Haley's face, this is not the first time that this has happened to her. This entire encounter would not have occurred were it not for the racial difference between parent and child noted by the elderly white woman. Not only does this presumption cross the bounds of propriety, it can also create a potential emotional anxiety in the adoptee when the parent is placed into the role of savior, a parent-child circumstance unique to transnational/transracial adoption scenarios.

For Haley, such a sentiment is not necessarily unwelcome or disagreeable. Raised in a southern American city by a family that seemingly rolls American cultural identity and Christianity into a single package, Haley does see her adoption from China as a form of divine intervention, allowing her to have the Christian life that she was always destined to have. This belief has developed in her to the extent that she sees her outward appearance as an illusion; Haley sees herself as a "banana." She claims to be "yellow on the outside and white on the inside."[42] Though it would not be equitable to speculate on the political or racial perspectives of her adoptive family, as they are not presented in the film, at no point do her parents disagree with Haley's claim of an inner transformation of race. Not all the other adoptees studied in this narrative share this perspective, however, and one must ask the question: For what do they need to be thankful? In these films, when faced with characters like the elderly white woman in the salon, there is an assumption made by the white Americans they meet that their presence here was a premeditated desire fulfilled. Informed only by that assumption, these individuals seem incapable of viewing transnational adoptees' inhabitation of the United States as involuntary. Further, the notion that one can inhabit a place without choice yet be content to remain without an abundance of gratitude—a behavior exhibited by the native-born population, it should be noted—seems incomprehensible to them. The connection between the lived experiences of transnational adoptees and refugees, then, is due in part to the presumptions of the society or state of the role that they are supposed to fill.

Most of the adoptive parents in *Somewhere Between* are very open about the adoption of their children, actively including their culture of origin within the thoroughly American activities of their everyday lives. Fang Lee's mother displays a particularly enthusiastic dedication to Fang's cultural and linguistic heritage, learning to speak Mandarin before adopting her and her two sisters. Partially because of this dedication, there was no moment of transformative

crisis for Fang during her childhood—at least, not one observed or discussed in the film. Adopted at the age of four or five, Fang was able to retain her native language and all of the stories and nursery rhymes that went with it, for her entire life. She says, "It's a blessing to be able to know your roots, and be able to know the people you came from."[43] With memories of her life even before her abandonment in a large city, Fang possesses an unbroken memory of her life and the cultural transitions that she has made.

Jenna Cook articulates the forced migration identity of transnational adoptees in the film, saying "Everyone else's beginnings seemed very, like, sure. You never think about why you were born to a certain family if you're just born there because physically in, like, science, it makes sense. But if you're put there, it's different."[44] Her mother is aware of the difference that her daughter perceives in herself, saying "If you're always being seen and you're never blending in, of course you want to appear like you've got everything under control and you're doing everything perfectly."[45] However, Jenna's awareness goes further than recognizing a racial and familial contrast with others in her community. The way that she has deliberately designed her life addresses those conflicts, and she says, "I think I'm always searching for a way to compensate for the fact that I'm a girl and that I was probably poor and that for some reason I wasn't good enough . . . I can't get rid of the thought that I was really abandoned."[46] Taking both Jenna and her mother's words into account, we can see that her efforts to compensate for the circumstances of her origin and adoption have a dual purpose. Not only does Jenna seek to prove that she is worth the effort to nurture and raise that her biological parents were apparently unwilling to give, but with so many questions about her differences in her seemingly homogenous racial community in New England, she hopes that her high achievement will be the focus rather than her race.

Though all of the personal stories in *Somewhere Between* are relevant to a study of transnational adoptee narratives as stories of forced migration, Haley and Fang stand out because of the familial and emotional places that they come to inhabit by the end of the film. In the beginning, they express an acceptance—if not total contentment—for the lives that they lead. Haley, as discussed briefly before, feels a sense of destiny with her membership in both the American citizenry as well as her church, and Fang, natively bilingual and possessing an identity that is a composite of an unbroken chain of memories from China as well as the United States, sees no critically empty spaces in her life, even remembering what her biological mother looked like. Two important events showcased in the film, however, produce moments of crisis for both that cause either a prolonged change in family dynamics or that result in questions about environment and belonging. These experiences of "coming to" help the reader to see, in the case of Haley, a casual curiosity of her biological origin become a globe-spanning quest, and for Fang, the routine of her role in participating in the transnational adoption of others take on a greater meaning for her own sense of

belonging and identity. As emotional crises created through understanding—or witnessing—the inability of the adoptee to resist the displacement that adoption necessarily facilitates, these events demonstrate the proximity of transnational adoptee narratives to those of refugees, exiles, and the rest of the forced migrant community.

Haley, on the road to becoming the next Miss Nashville, following in the footsteps of her sister, expresses casual interest in discovering more about her origins at several points throughout the film. Her acceptance of her life as an adoptee seems rather convincing—if occasionally performed—and so it comes as somewhat of a surprise when she decides to travel to England with a group called Global Girls, an organization designed to help young girls adopted from China find each other and share their experiences and their stories. Haley shares stories with the assembled group in London, hearing stories that are much like the ones that she has experienced in her own life. However, the events of the trip take a far more decisive turn when the group has the opportunity to meet with Hilbrand Westra, a Korean-Dutch adoptee from South Korea who is known for his transnational adoptee rights activism and for his much more controversial perspective that international adoption should not be allowed to happen in the world.[47]

Haley, completely unfamiliar with the corruption of state adoption agencies and how that affects the lives of adoptees not as fortunate as her, is stunned to silence hearing Hilbrand recount the injustices perpetrated against the transnational adoptee community. What began as a casual statement about her curiosity to discover what her biological family might be like changes to grief as Hilbrand urges her to seek them out immediately if she is to have any hope of finding them, as the orphanages and government agencies that handle adoption often "lose" their records in fires. Her casual approach to seeking out her biological family, and her comments about her racial identity as a "banana," cannot withstand the argument of Hilbrand that "adoption is something that we carry with us for our whole life. You can try to run from it, but it runs faster than you."[48]

Fang Lee, natively bilingual and still conversant in much of the culture of her early childhood, has had many opportunities in her life to serve as an intermediary between Chinese orphans and their prospective adoptive parents. More than halfway through the film, we see her participating in many of the activities that might fit into the dictionary's definition of a cosmopolitan individual. Using her family's significant resources, Fang travels to China with her American passport, walks into a Chinese marketplace, speaks in Mandarin to the shopkeepers and people that she encounters, and goes to serve in solidarity with those members of the transnational adoptee community far less fortunate than she. Recalling a time that she traveled with her mother to an orphanage, Fang saw a small girl dressed in pink sitting in a low seat. Told that the girl suffered from cerebral palsy, the administrators of the orphanage label her as hopeless. Seeing her as far from hopeless, Fang raises a vast sum of money with her mother and sends the girl to

physical therapy. Much to her joy, a family adopts the young girl, and Fang returns to China to serve as intermediary once again.

The young girl is excited to meet her new family, expresses joy when she does, and even meets her soon-to-be-siblings on a Skype call. With all of the events leading to that expected happy ending, Fang takes the young girl in her arms again to say goodbye. For the first time in all the films we have discussed here, we witness the moment of crisis occur for a new adoptee. As Fang says goodbye, prepared to hand the adoptee over to her bright future, the young girl sighs deeply, expressionless, and begins to keen and weep. The emotion behind the moment is impossible to define; it is so much more than a combination of sadness and anxiety about the unknown, and it cuts through Fang's familiar composure quickly.

When we next see Fang, she is sitting in a van and talking about herself in a reflective way that is new for her. Her "coming to" takes her to a space that questions her ability to serve as a bridge between recognizable, comfortable borders for a transnational adoptee such as her. This is not to suggest that her experience acting as the intermediary between the young girl and her new family placed her abilities as a linguistic and cultural translator into doubt, but that she has begun to question that process of transition following this interaction. It is the circumstances of this new experience—its complete lack of the typical trappings of the migrations that Fang has witnessed—in which Fang's "coming to" is triggered. Reflective now about the way that her mannerisms distinguish her in China, she writes, "Whether I'm in America or China, they know in some way I'm a foreigner. I guess I'm a child stuck between two countries, and I don't know what that makes me . . . I guess I'm kind of confused about my identity."[49]

Part of Fang's "coming to" at the moment of the young girl's traumatic crisis resides in an aspect of transnational life that both of them share: a line of unbroken memories. Adopted at roughly the same age, they have memories of what their life was like before their adoption. As previously mentioned, the young girl was deemed hopeless by the administrators of the orphanage where she lived, abandoned and unwanted. Similarly, Fang, through the manipulations of her birth family, was left abandoned and unwanted in a large city, a circumstance that almost any reader would see as hopeless as the young girl's; though Fang was not physically disabled, being abandoned at the age of three or four in a large metropolitan area is its own type of hopeless. Seeing what might have been her own moment of crisis reflected in the eyes of the young girl, Fang confronts her own forced migrant experience and, despite her unbroken chain of memories, is no longer able to retain the position of comfort in her own identity. Fang's profession that she loves China, that it is her homeland, that some of her richest memories of her life before her adoption showcase her mother's desire and love for her, and that she has the ability to take all of those memories with her to her home and family in the United States with relative ease, collapse at the sight of a young girl going through a similar process of abandonment and relocation.

Where Is the Place of Habitation?

The occupation of a nationless, global space is articulated most clearly within the reflective language of Fang and Deann and acknowledged in a way best described as uncomfortable by those individuals they encounter in their travels to both China and South Korea. In the interviews with orphanage administrators and other government officials, there is an awkwardness when they are faced with a person of significant means who cannot be placed within a single place of belonging, reflecting the binary perspective mentioned above. By focusing on the passages from the films that describe the new sense of being for both Fang and Deann, we can see how the revelations of forced migration moved them to that global level of consideration.

Visiting South Korea to learn about the fate of the original Cha Jung Hee, Deann has many opportunities to speak with Koreans who have been adopted internationally. Of particular note are her reflections upon meeting with a group of transnational Korean adoptees from Sweden. In this scene, the adoptees are sitting around a large table singing a drinking song in Swedish at a traditional Korean restaurant in Seoul. The length of the scene itself demonstrates Deann's fascination with them; in a film of roughly an hour, we see this scene for a considerable time. In reference to seeing them together, Deann says, "There is a randomness to our fate. Not only could I have been Cha Jung Hee, I could have been Swedish."[50] In this statement we can read Deann's knowledge that the place of habitation for transnational adoptees is not a destined exercise of their own fate, but that it is rather random in that it results from the whims of the state agencies and whichever wealthy country's citizens are willing to pay for the, at times, exorbitant adoption fees. Also, her claim that she "could have been Swedish" is more than a reference to a country into which she could have been adopted. It brings us back to Deann's claim that Cha Jung Hee was not a single person but rather a template that any girl could fit into that could then be shaped into the idealized American or Swedish child desired by the adoptive family.

This same scene also brings to the mind of the reader another statement made by Deann, as well as other scholars such as Elaine Kim, that "Wherever adoptees end up, when we come back to Korea we become tourists in our own land."[51] Whether that tourist identity is one imparted upon the individual by the state, as Elaine Kim discusses, or whether the honest unfamiliarity with both the language and the culture creates a sense of otherness in the mind of the adoptee, as it did many times during Deann's travels in Korea, we see the transnational adoptees wandering in that place between nations, searching for a new revelation of their own identity in their country of origin while simultaneously expressing the cultural identities of the country in which they were raised.

The transition that Deann had to endure as a transnational adoptee is also the subject of her first conversation with "the real" Cha Jung Hee, after Deann discovers a woman from the orphanage whose life story most closely matches the early life of Cha Jung Hee. In her, Deann sees a Korean woman's life that she could have had—or at least, that she imagined herself as having—had she

not been adopted by the Borshays. Closely connected to her community and possessing a social position of respect, Cha Jung Hee refuses to accept the artifacts of her time at the orphanage: the shoes given to her by the Borshays, as well as the other keepsakes that Deann had kept with her after she moved to the United States. She says, "You were sent to a foreign country and had to get used to a new culture. That must have been very difficult for a young child. It hurts me to think about it." She wants Deann to keep those items, saying that she wants to forget about the past, as "I am afraid I might dream about it."[52]

After these revelations, Deann says, "I originally thought if I gave back Cha Jung Hee's shoes, I would be free of the identity they symbolized. But I realize, they don't belong to her, they belong to me. Although I arrived in America walking in Cha Jung Hee's shoes, I can see now the path I've taken has always been my own."[53] The deception perpetrated by the Korean government as well as by Deann herself, while extremely significant in the ways that it contributed to her forced migration, does not represent the sole source of uncertainty for Deann. Though the words that she speaks here do present a form of closure for her origin story, it does not reconcile her sense of belonging fully within her family or the United States. Deann says, "I feel like I've been several different people, in one life. . . . I've had three names, three different sets of histories. My name is Deann Borshay, I was born. . . the moment I stepped off the plane in San Francisco."[54] While Deann might now have found peace with the first half of that statement, her relationship with her adoptive family and the one that she has formed over the course of years with her biological family does not allow the second to be reconciled in the film alone. Being comfortable with her former identity as Ok Jin while living as Deann Borshay Liem in the United States still contains and conveys some of the anxiety that Haley feels in *Somewhere Between*, sitting on the couch with her biological father after seeking out her birth family, uncertainty stamped upon her face. What is the point at which this ambiguous existence is reconciled? Or does it have to be? For Deann, comfort does not necessarily mean an end to the narrative; accepting the truth of her early life's circumstances doesn't mean that the journey of discovery must end. Perhaps Haley will also come to a point where uncertainty and anxiety are lessened, but not dispelled entirely, through reflection and discovery.

Fang Lee, sitting in the bus on the way to the airport in China, imagines a place of unquestioned belonging in which the disparate parts of herself can live in perfect harmony. Incorporating what she sees as the most important parts of her American and Chinese cultural history, she names this utopic vision "Fangtopia."[55] What she does not say, but what is quite apparent to the reader, is that she has been living in the imagined Fangtopia all of her life until this point. Though it has not manifested itself as an autonomous land for her to inhabit, her circumstances that have allowed her to retain her linguistic and cultural heritage from China and incorporate it relatively seamlessly into her life as an American teenager is a utopic vision many transnational adoptees are never able to realize.

Whereas Deann's status as a global citizen (and she herself might not have thought about her identity in precisely those terms before) presents itself to the viewer as the composite meaning of her reflective journey, Fang begins to transform the way that she sees herself on a global level of consideration, giving voice to the ambiguous space that she inhabits. Fang understands that there is no idealized country for her to inhabit; she knows "there is only the world."[56] Not only is there no physical space for her to inhabit that meets all of her cultural criteria, but the Fangtopia that she has been experiencing has come to an end, and that realization accounts for the depleted energy in her voice as she articulates these ideas in the film. She knows that there is nothing standing in the way of her continuing to serve as an intermediary between adoptees and their new parents, and there is no reason for the reader to assume that she will not choose to keep her practice of helping others close to her sense of identity. However, the fantasy that she was sending these girls off to a peaceful transition between the lives that they used to live and the lives that they are now being forced to live is gone.

The above quote, "there is only the world," is an idea voiced only by Fang throughout each of these films. Many of the other transnational adoptees only come as far as Fang did in the scene in which the young girl has her moment of traumatic crisis. For those other individuals, the stunned look on their faces or the anxiety that brings tears to their eyes is as far as we are permitted to witness their transformation of perspective. Fang's revelation represents the end of this emotional journey, for even though we know of the many support and international solidarity groups that exist for each member of the forced migrant community, including transnational adoptees, the opportunities that each of those members have of understanding that such groups exist, of having the means to reach out to them across vast distances, and of possessing the bravery to make that contact in the first place, are rare indeed. And though Saskia Sassen's work on emergent global classes does represent a powerful and desperately needed call to action for the transnational adoptee community as well as the larger societies and nations in which we live, if Fang Lee were faced with the claim that disadvantaged individuals occupy an "ambiguous position" between the national and the global, it is likely that she would respond by saying that for us in the transnational adoptee community "there is only the world." Our cosmopolitanism is not one of choice, but one of resignation; as our manifold anxieties encounter wall after wall on our journey for a fixed identity, where else can we exist?

Notes

1. Transnational adoptees are those individuals who have been formally adopted from their country of origin and have immigrated to the country of their adoptive family. Through their experiences as adoptees, their identities and life stories extend and operate across recognized national boundaries.

2. Liam Stack. "A South Korean Man Adopted by Americans Prepares for Deportation," *New York Times,* November 1, 2016. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/02/us/adam-crapser-deportation-south-korea.html

3. Margaret Homans. "Critical Adoption Studies: Conversations in Progress," *Adoption & Culture* 6, no. 1 (2018): 1-4

4. Kim Park Nelson. "Critical Adoption Studies as Inclusive Knowledge Production and Corrective Action." *Adoption & Culture* 6, no. 1 (2018): 20-21

5. Catherine Ceniza Choy. *Global Families: A History of Asian International Adoption in America*. (New York: NYU Press, 2013).

6. Jodi Kim. "The Ending Is Not an Ending At All": On the Militarized and Gendered Diasporas of Korean Transnational Adoption and the Korean War." *Positions: Asia Critique* 23, no 4 (2005): 807-835.

7. Lisa Lowe. *Immigrant Acts.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

8. Although it lacks the term "transnational" or "international" in its name, The Adoptee Rights Campaign is an advocacy group of adoptees and allies that campaign for equal citizenship rights for foreign-born adoptees.

9. Stack. "South Korean Man Adopted.".

10. The idea of secure citizenship for transnational adoptees—and all naturalized citizens—has become a tenuous one, not just because of the general anti-immigration agenda of the government administration, but also because the Justice Department has officially created a Bureau of Denaturalization to strip citizenship from certain naturalized American citizens. Stack. "South Korean Man Adopted."

11. OHCHR. *Convention on the Rights of the Child.* Article 3. https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

12. *Convention on the Rights of the Child,* Article 21.

13. Sarah Mehta. "There's Only One Country That Hasn't Ratified the Convention on Children's Rights: US." November 20, 2015, https://www.aclu.org/blog/human-rights/treaty-ratification/theres-only-one-country-hasnt-ratified-convention-childrens.

14. Elisabeth Wesseling. "Creating Historical Genealogies for Intercountry Adoption," *Adoption & Culture* 6, no. 1 (2018): 32.

15. Eleana J. Kim. *Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 21.

16. Soojin Pate. *From Orphan to Adoptee: U.S. Empire and Genealogies of Korean Adoption* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

17. Transnational and transracial adoption stories represent a dynamic genre still in its early stages of development. As a field, the narratives are found in nearly every genre from documentary films like the ones analyzed in this article, to traditional novels, nonfiction, and children's books. Helpful sites for referencing this expanding field include Affcny.org, adoptivefamilies.com, and harlows-monkey.com. They possess vast catalogs of adoption texts across many genres as well as critical reviews for many of them.

18. Mae Ngai. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

19. Catherine Ceniza Choy. *Global Families: A History of Asian International Adoption in America* (New York: NYU Press, 2013).

20. Jessaca Leinaweaver, "The Quiet Migration Redux: International Adoption, Race, and Difference," *Human Organization* 73, no. 1 (2014): 62–71.

21. Leinaweaver, "The Quiet Migration," 63.

22. Laura Briggs. *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012): 5.

23. Saskia Sassen. "Emergent Global Classes and What They Mean for Migration Politics." *Migration Policy Institute*, 2006.

24. Catherine Ceniza Choy. "No Longer Silent: The Adopted Diaspora's Return to Korea." *Fulbright Korea Infusion,* July 14, 2016. https://infusion.fulbright.or.kr/no-longer-silent/

25. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*, directed by Deann Borshay Liem (2010, MU Films).

26. Pate, *From Orphan to Adoptee*, 115.

27. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*.

28. It is worth noting that these international pro-adoption agencies, and their unyielding view that adoption is the correct choice for all children in circumstances similar to Ok Jin's, are in many cases as much at fault for the forced migration of adoptees as are individuals such as the social worker for Cha Jung Hee who make unilateral decisions regarding the fate of orphans under their care. See Briggs. *Somebody's Children* , 21.

29. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

30. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

31. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

32. Elaine Kim. "Wedding Citizenship and Culture: Korean Adoptees and the Global Family of Korea." *Cultures of Transnational Adoption* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 54.

33. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

34. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

35. Pate, *From Orphan to Adoptee,* 147.

36. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

37. *First Person Plural,* directed by Deann Borshay Liem (2000, MU Films).

38. *First Person Plural.*

39. *First Person Plural.*

40. Mimi Thi Nguyen. *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 2.

41. *Somewhere Between,* directed by Linda Goldstein Knowlton (Long Shot Factory, 2011).

42. *Somewhere Between.*

43. *Somewhere Between.*

44. *Somewhere Between.*

45. *Somewhere Between.*

46. *Somewhere Between.*

47. *Somewhere Between.*

48. *Somewhere Between.*

49. *Somewhere Between.*

50. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

51. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

52. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

53. *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee.*

54. *First Person Plural.*

55. *Somewhere Between.*

56. *Somewhere Between.*

Crowning Revolution

Rick Rodriguez

Arguably, no one better than Thomas Paine (maybe Alexander Hamilton) grasped the significance of politicizing common sense, though more so than Hamilton, Paine worried about the implications of doing so. By enlisting the body's capacities for making sense of experience (or experience out of sense) and thus legitimating rebellion against the British Empire, Paine was aware that he could create more problems than not for the revolution he was charged with promoting. The event that he hoped would be an extensive and intensive expression of people's common grievances and aspirations could unravel into what his opponents called "uncommon phrenzy."[1] Not insensitive to this charge, Paine anticipates it in the signature-making political tract that made him famous, if not infamous.[2] Paine's *Common Sense* (1776), over and above an articulation of sensible attunement and passionate attachment to the cause of independence, is also a palimpsest of anxieties about the sensory (i.e., affective) dimension of his revolutionary project.

It is instructive to draw a parallel with Hamilton's own affective politics. Although radically different, Paine's and Hamilton's projects share a preoccupation about the implications of making revolution and nation-building dependent on the sensations of the people. At the height of the contentious debate over the ratification of the U.S. Constitution Hamilton worried that citizens accustomed to local governance would, at the very least, balk at pledging their allegiance to the Federalist state: "A government continually at a distance and out of sight can hardly be expected to interest the sensations of the people."[3] If the new centralized government was to succeed, Hamilton reasoned, it would

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have to reach citizens in their person, making sovereign order intimately felt. The new system of governance would have to subsume citizens' allegiance to local institutions of law and order by quickening in their bodies an affective attachment to a transcendent form of governance, an experience not entirely foreign to former subjects of a distant and out-of-sight empire. American colonists, after all, were once thought to be linked to English citizens by cords of affection, which, as Paine observed a decade or so earlier, had been irrevocably severed by explicit or tacit consent of English subjects to the King's indifference to Parliament's greed, prompting revolution: "The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did."[4] In Paine's formulation, nature is part of the constitution of sentient human beings whose affective capacities would inform revolutionary and republican politics. In both instances, revolutionary and republican collectives are imagined as one subjectivity writ large. For Paine, the generalization of grievances felt in common in favor of independence would be the revolution's driving force; similarly, for Hamilton, the amplification of citizens' sentient investment in a centralized system of governance would legitimate the new Federalist constitution. This is to say that Paine's radicalization of "common sense" and Hamilton's "federalization of affect" constitute two sides of the same problem: how to make of the many One when this One is not all.[5]

Collapsing differences between revolution and state-formation may seem an intellectually irresponsible and politically heretical endeavor, considering that the One in question is a formal abstraction. But if the One suggests a loose, elastic concept deployed initially by revolutionaries and then constitutionalists (militant subjectivities often housed in the same bodies) to loop together disparate, some might say, antithetical projects, it is important to keep in mind that Paine and Hamilton sought to supplement the abstract dimension of the One with a sturdier affective infrastructure. This affective substantiation of the One constitutes the sense of the common underpinning the political events in question. What I am proposing here is a subordination of ideological and political differences in favor of an analysis of the underwriting affective dimension of common sense informing the historical sequence comprising both revolutionary and republican projects. Indexed by the figures of Paine and Hamilton, the arc encompassing the key political events of the late eighteenth century delineates the emergence of what has been considered by some as the American Thermidor, that is, the betrayal of the will of the people by constitutional order. As one of the exponents of this position, Sheldon Wolin claims that constitutionalism "marks the attenuation of democracy."[6] Constitutionalism, so goes this line of thought, signals the narrowing of democratic politics into a specialized, regulated, and administrative juridical order. Similarly, Antonio Negri reads the American postrevolutionary settlement as the political transformation of the people's constituent strength into the state's constituted power, with the people's revolutionary role reduced to a legitimating function of state authority.[7] Jason Frank rejects this model for theorizing the role of the people in a postrevolutionary context, arguing that the

"people are at once a constituted and constituent power, whose enactments can never be wholly free of the resulting paradox." Constituent power, according to Frank, "is not wholly subsumed in the [constitutional] text that represents it."[8] According to his formulation, the people's constituent strength is not an outside force impinging on constitutional order but an internal disruption to the status quo, realized in the people's self-authorized public acts demanding redress against the limitations and exclusions dictated by said order. In other words, what Wolin and Negri find inhibiting or compromising about the organization of constituted power, Frank identifies as the conditions of possibility for democracy. To translate this language in affective terms, Hamilton's federalization of affect is an inconclusive project incapable of wholly absorbing the public rage following the postrevolutionary settlement that disenfranchised so many.

My contention here is that the revolution that would instantiate subsequent public enactments of the people's democratic becoming was itself a contest over a sense of the common, of which Paine's is a compromised articulation. In other words, Frank's paradoxical conception of the people as both constituent and constituted power is not just a postrevolutionary phenomenon but already a symptom of the American Revolution's crisis of legitimation, which Paine sought to shore up in his formulation of common sense.

In the wake of the postrevolutionary settlement, Federalists sought to manage this symptom by purging the national body of revolutionary excesses, and Paine, as the revolution's chief ideologue, fit the bill to perfection. Federalist repudiation of Paine is well evidenced in the political cartoon "Mad Tom in a Rage," [Figure 1] showing the devil taking Paine from behind as the pair jointly pulls on a strap looped around a pillar of classical architecture symbolizing the Federal government.

The image turns Paine's radical opposition to empire against him—that is, the insurgent passion that animated his opposition to British rule has grown intemperate (note the bottle of brandy in the foreground) and rageful against legitimate constitutional order.[9] Revolutionary affect has not only outgrown its usefulness, its excess now threatens the foundations of

Figure 1: Author unknown, "Mad Tom in a Rage," c. 1801, *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1953.

sovereign order. But what the cartoon cannot recognize in its Federalist bias is not just how Federalism, Hamilton's thinking in particular, has made allowance for Paine's radicalization of common sense philosophy, but, more pointedly, how Paine anticipated Hamilton's insistence that matters of state conciliate a sentient and sensible citizenry primed to accept a transcendent form of governmental authority—in other words, how Paine sought to neutralize the radical implications of grounding revolution on sensation by shading sense into feeling and popular insurgency into republican sovereignty.[10]

Sense, Paine observes, can be manipulated as "our eyes may be dazzled with show, or our ears deceived by sound." In contrast, the man of feeling is not distracted by the politics of shock and awe but is rather attuned to "the simple voice of nature," of which the author of *Common Sense* is a master ventriloquist.[11] This is a case of the medium being the message. The emphasis here is on voice (the medium), not language, *phone*, not *logos*. Attuned to the voice of nature, the man of feeling intuits that the institution of "a continental form of government" is the end goal of the war of independence.[12] The "taking up arms, merely to enforce or repeal laws, seems as unwarrantable by the divine law and as repugnant to human feelings, as the taking of arms to enforce obedience to."[13] In other words, what we find in Paine's deployment of common sense as a discourse of general affectivity is an already refined sensibility capable of accommodating Hamilton's subsuming of affect in favor of Federalist sovereignty. This is not to say that there is nothing radical about founding revolution on how sense and sensation implicate bodies in the mutual construction of political subjects and the social worlds they inhabit. Paine's *Common Sense* in fact suggests the opposite, which is precisely why his deployment of a sense of the common for revolutionary ends is a less radical proposition than it is often taken to be.

Although Paine addresses *Common Sense* "to the inhabitants of America," his ideal readership is far less expansive than he initially announces. Paine's ideal reader is "every Man to whom Nature hath given the Power of feeling; of which Class, regardless of Party Censure, is the Author."[14] This man of feeling, generic in his anonymity yet singularly distinguished by sentiment raised above crude sense, allows Paine to claim that his pamphlet is no mere piece of tendentious partisan rabble-rousing but the articulation of sensible truths about the current state of affairs in the colonies—truths that, according to him, cut across factional lines because they are felt, even if not readily understood, by fellow citizens regardless of their political affinities. For Paine, people's capacity to sense and feel comes before any ideological differences that may divide them. This "power of feeling" constitutes the somewhat consistent affective ground on which ideological battles are fought and won—or lost. To be sure, citizens may differ in their feelings about specific issues that concern them, but what matters is their self-awareness as a collective bound by sense, or so Paine presumes his audience believes to be true, and this presupposition constitutes his sense of the common.

This presupposition is in part based on the Anglo-American tradition about the body's sentient capacity to learn about itself and the world based on principles of sense and sensibility. The eighteenth century, as has been more than amply recorded and theorized, witnessed a vast interest in all forms of sensible matters and concerns, developing a form of cognition based primarily on sensory impressions and ideas that subsequent learning, according to Garry Wills, "dimmed or perverted by theoretical presuppositions."[15] Common sense, as theorized by Thomas Reid, a leading light of the Scottish Enlightenment and a major influence on American education, was an "egalitarian epistemology, a humble empiricism, and a communitarian morality."[16] The Scottish Enlightenment's common sense was devised as a way of combating skepticism and an emerging individualism, which threatened commonly held principles of faith and ways of knowing as well as social cohesion. As Sophia Rosenfeld argues,

> [t]he common sense defense of common sense became, in the hands of a small group of mid-eighteenth-century professional men in Aberdeen, the foundation for a decidedly populist epistemology, rooted in the wisdom of the ordinary and the aggregate. When it came time to find truth in the realm of common life, they argued, there was no better starting point than what everybody already agreed to be true; the "unlearned" person was actually less likely to be misled than the overeducated person, and the collective sentiment trumped the individual or the isolated genius every time.[17]

The Scotts' conception of common sense is largely conservative in that it relies, as Rosenfeld notes, on "what everybody already agreed to be true." "Everybody," like "common sense," is an ideologically powerful nominal. It is informed by an inherent notion of One or Oneness that acts as a transcendental form of identity meant to contain or domesticate multiplicity, singularity, and difference. Common sense philosophy is conservative in that it reduces epistemology to recognition of commonly held ideas and beliefs. Yet if habit and tradition mediate and legitimate common sense's truth claims, its "egalitarian" dimension threatens to override its conservative and preservative principles. That is, the egalitarian idea that ordinary people were possessed of innate faculties through which they could, among other things, know themselves and the world and therefore determine what kind of lives to lead and how to go about leading them would eventually unsettle the consensus that some hoped this particular method of apprehending reality would make possible. The unsettling of the status quo may not have been the intent of common sense philosophers, but their generalization of the intellectual conditions for making epistemological as well as sociopolitical truth claims would have repercussions beyond centers of learning in Glasgow,

Edinburgh, and Aberdeen. As Sarah Knott observes, "A dynamic of sensibility expanded, extraordinarily rapidly in a narrow temporal window from the 1760s, and popularized among the elite and middling sort—they were likewise quickly assimilated to reformist and oppositional ethos and a source from which revolution emanated. A shared transatlantic culture of sensibility made at once for a sense of belonging and betrayal, a form of participation in a cosmopolitan empire and the indignant rationale for a necessary alternative."[18]

An intellectual response to a crisis in moral and epistemological authority, common sense philosophy, an ideology inclined to validate tradition or perhaps even passive obedience and nonresistance, also placed a great deal of faith in ordinary people's capacity to challenge authority and chart a political path for themselves based on intuitive principles of sympathetic benevolence toward others. Impediments to the enactment of these principles and their social and material manifestations could be met with radical opposition to the status quo. Impelled by a sense of benevolence for neighbors and fellow citizens immiserated by a despotic government and unfeeling brethren, American colonists legitimated their independence by appealing to common sense principles found in the pages of Frances Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, and Adam Smith, among others. "The Almighty," Paine sounded off, "hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of his image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a causal existence, were we callous to the touches of affection."[19] According to Paine, sensibility distinguishes humans from common beasts and further argues that the hardening of feelings toward others dims human capacities for benevolence, wisdom, and justice, thus leading to the unraveling of the social and a reversion to a Hobbesian state of nature where animal instinct and aggression dominate. Reconciliation with a country of men who behave like beasts and take orders from a "Royal Brute" is therefore beneath the dignity of good men for whom the public enactment of virtue as spectacle constitutes the basis for social and political transformation.[20] Paine places the enemy beyond the pale of humanity and in doing so creates the conceptual and affective conditions for legitimating the colonists' claims for independence, which, as he notes, were "sentiments… not *yet* sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor."[21] Paine tips his hand with that "yet." Natural sentiment turns out to be not natural at all but subject to the vagaries of fashion and dependent on circulating print media as the delivery system for the passions of ordinary people.

The appeal to sense and sensibility pervading political discourse indexes a general crisis of legitimation, political as well as epistemological, the lineaments of which are traceable throughout Paine's pamphlet. His strategy to achieve hegemony over the revolutionary event involves the discursive marriage of language and affect, with the two working in supplemental relation to one another. It is easy to overlook the distinction between these two constituent elements in

the text. After all, are not the two inextricably fused in practice, that is, in Paine's masterful ability to argue in favor of independence from a position of affect? One might ask, why separate the two when their articulation by the author is often lauded as an ideal example of how to do things with words? Many of Paine's contemporaries as well as recent critics have credited the text with extraordinary perlocutionary power, with the ability to move hearts and change minds—in that order—and impel impassive citizens into revolutionary action. Consider Massachusetts Whig Joseph Hawley's telling comment about his reading of the tract: "Every sentiment," he wrote in 1776, "has sunk into my well prepared heart."[22] In Hawley's formulation, sentiment and the printed word, affect and its delivery system, are virtually imperceptible. But if Hawley's heart was already well prepared to receive the text's sentiment, can the pamphlet be said to possess the transformative power so often ascribed to it? I would argue that it is because we tend to think of rhetoric and affect in Paine's text as part of one articulation of an ideological position grounded in the presumption that humans are possessed of a *sensus communis* that writing can potentially touch, that this particular internal tension in the text has not received the full attention it deserves. The marriage of affect and rhetoric in Paine reveals something missing—rather lacking—not only in the idea of common sense but in each of its constitutive elements and, more importantly, in the larger revolutionary event emerging at the close of the eighteenth century. That is, that Paine has to argue in favor of revolution based on common sense principles reveals the very obvious observation that colonial Britons did not sense in common. This point was made readily apparent when only thirteen of Britain's New World colonies rebelled against the Crown, not to mention when North Americans loyal to King and Parliament pushed back against Paine's assertion that the conflict had reached critical mass and general opinion had tipped over in favor of independence. Conversely, the text's repeated claims about the colonists' shared sense of outrage at Parliament's overreach and the King's abdication of responsibility toward his subjects implies that rhetoric is in this case either superfluous or not ideologically cohesive enough. In short, far from completing each other's lacks, the coupling of rhetoric and affect points to a fundamental problem in the attempt to marry language and sentient bodies, the stitching of which for political ends is symptomatic of an open-ended event subject to external threats and internal upheavals and usurpations.

There is a general tendency to structure analyses of Paine's text around oppositions and find in their contradictions the key to what gives the pamphlet its enduring power. Robert Fergusson notes that despite many claims about *Common Sense*'s historical impact and timeless rhetorical merit, the two are rarely brought "together as mutually informing insights or controlling premises."[23] Sophia Rosenfeld argues that the success of "Paine's brief polemic lay in… encapsulat[ing]… two previously distinct and in many ways antithetical Enlightenment uses of both the expression and the concept of common sense."[24] While I agree with these critical observations, I disagree with the notion that the pamphlet's ideological efficacy and enduring power lies in its ability to

reconcile tensions or conflict. For Fergusson, the text's inconsistencies "need to be incorporated into a larger philosophical and rhetorical frame of reference, for when they are not, they seem to be contradictions in terms, blocking awareness of the underlying consistencies and overall aesthetic integrity of *Common Sense*."[25] Like Fergusson, Rosenfeld is also concerned with the text's reconciling of opposites, but whereas for Fergusson this helps explain how the "widest range of readers could be pulled into Paine's orbit," she finds this expansiveness ideologically troubling. Rosenfeld writes, "A politics of common sense is not only an antihistorical politics but also an antipolitical politics, a politics designed to sidestep contention and rational debate. This quality is part of its enduring appeal."[26]

It is important to keep in mind that "antihistorical" and "antipolitical" gestures can and often are both deeply historical and political: Paine's idea of common sense is itself a historically situated response to a political problem for which the Romantic repurposing of the language of blood and soil, popular throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, proves inadequate in an American context defined by differences recalcitrant to appropriation by language of sameness. The language of sense is meant to bypass linguistic and ethnic differences, so the vitalism on which Paine grounds his sense of the common is one conditioned less by tradition and identity carried over from the old country and more by jolting new experiences forged on this side of Atlantic. Cut to the quick and prone to action by a sense of outrage at the curtailment of liberties by a far-removed yet tax-exacting imperial power, colonial subjects legitimated rebellion by appealing to evidence registered on the body's surfaces, more so in the fleshy shallows than in the deep interiors of uppity Britons proud of their place of provenance and lineage.

It should go without saying that sense is not synonymous with sensibility: sense is no refined habitus one acquires over time with routinized practice and alongside other people with whom one shares class history. Sense denotes quickness of perceptions and sensations, which, far from uniform, can be multiple, varied, and contradictory, and, as such, constitute a split foundation for any political project grounded on the body's sensory faculties. Bodies are never just sentient flesh sensitive to the pains and pleasures history doles out. It is because bodies are always historically situated and socially articulated within uneven relations of power that the universalist claims Paine makes on their behalf never quite ring true, as the Loyalist response bears out.[27] He voices his concerns on the fragility of revolutionary sentiment toward the end of the text. What holds the patriots together, he writes, is an "unexampled concurrence of sentiment, which is subject to change, and which, every secret enemy is endeavoring to dissolve."[28] Before we consider the question of how this "concurrence of sentiment" came to be in the first place, presumably obviating the need for the pamphlet, let us consider its exceptional and solvent qualities. It is precisely the fact that this thing he has named is "unexampled," a new assemblage of affects that sustains the revolutionary event, that calls attention to its fragility. That

the revolutionary event is a political process in the making is also what renders the transformative potential of this exceptional set of sentiments "subject to change," or, much worse from a tactical standpoint, subject to appropriation by some secret enemy—there are many, so he claims, capable of undoing the loose affective knot that binds the rebels to the cause. If this is in fact a credible threat to the revolutionary project—that a skillful Loyalist pamphleteer can win over the undecideds against the rebels and not just a genre convention of propaganda—it is the "unexampled" nature of this particular affective flashpoint that is really the problem. With no program to give it consistency or purpose, sense primarily figures as a reservoir of impressions and feelings and of course therein lies both opportunity and problem.

The pamphlet's opening is in keeping with its purpose, that is, to win new converts to the revolutionary cause and not just offer its author with another opportunity to preach to the converted, though the possibility that this is all propaganda ever accomplishes is something Paine is keenly aware of. He addresses his readers, first, as sentient beings, specifically as readers capable of sympathy and other feelings—a sense of betrayal and rage chief among them—and then treats them to critical genealogies of the Crown and Parliament that turn the British government into a debased version of its official representation in an attempt to short-circuit any allegiance and affection his readers may have toward the figures and institutions he holds responsible for the current imperial crisis. This is, after all, what good propaganda is supposed to do: provide popular disaffection with a discursive barebones structure around which grievances can graft themselves onto and grow like affective topiary.

Yet for all the transformative potential ascribed to people's capacity to know and judge by sense, there is nonetheless something troubling about this proposition, not just in the obvious meaning of subjects having disparate feelings about any number of things—especially about what to do about the conflicts that informed relations between the colonies and the metropolis—but in the more radical problem that sense is not subordinate to the unity of the One that Paine invokes in the figure of the common, which is another way of saying that the world sense makes accessible to subjects is always incomplete, as are the sentient subjects themselves. The incomplete nature of this project wherein subject and world are mutually constituted through acts of appropriation poses conceptual and political problems. The sentient bodies Paine is trying to arouse from their political slumber are singular, anonymous, and many. They do not amount to a fragmented whole, but rather constitute populous multiplicities that he is at pains to fashion into a public. Strength lies in unity, not numbers.[29] Mindful of this, Paine knows that he will need the organized actions of crowds to make colonial independence from Britain a reality, and so his project and that of the leaders of the revolution is to make of the many One, not long before that phrase will become enshrined as the official motto on the national seal.

But that is still years away, when the revolution's constituent strength will be enlisted in the service of constituted power, in nation- and empire-building

projects that come to define the nineteenth century. Channeling that strength will not be easy. That is why the shift from sense, in the title of the pamphlet, to feeling, in the address to his ideal reader at the end of the preface, as near imperceptible now as it would have been then, belies an anxiety about enlisting sense in the service of insurgency. That's also why there's a hierarchy at work here, and sense, as Paine employs it, is near the bottom, far from the empyrean heights of Parnassus and the fine sensibilities of its devotees. This reader he envisions is a man who can be counted on to control his passions and channel his anger toward the right cause. The problem is that if the revolution is to succeed, he will especially need the anonymous and unpredictable crowds on his side, which is not to say that crowds are simply synonymous with violent and irrational outbursts. As Jason Frank observes, "Crowds were not only justified in the revolutionary discourses of the day: they were also political repertoires participated in by all kinds of citizens and also noncitizens, by those granted and denied juridical recognition."[30]

But although the crowd, in its quasi-legal status, could be said to be enacting a civic function in its attempt to redress a lack of recognition and representation in its occupation of public spaces, the passions impelling such performances remain indeterminate and unpredictable precisely because they cannot always be said to belong to the order of common sense. Loyalists saw in the increasingly violent actions of Patriots and in Paine's prose evidence of a dangerous irrationality. Philip Gould's history of Loyalist writing during the revolutionary era notes that

> [f]orms of humiliation and intimidation became more widespread and more severe. Loyalists were disenfranchised politically and forced to sign oaths of allegiance. Some were banned from practicing law or other professions; some were even ridden on skimpoles and subject to tar and feathering, which Ann Fairfax Withington has shown was not merely a punitive act or symbolic act but part of a larger regime of terror that 'robbed them of their humanity and rendered them unnatural.'[31]

John Adams agreed with Paine's arguments for independence but "dreaded the effect so popular a pamphlet would have upon the people."[32] Paine himself worried that the insurgency would become unmanageable should the Patriots relent and consider reconciliation:

> [N]othing but independence, i.e. a continental form of government, can keep the peace of the continent and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as it is more than probable, that it will be followed by a revolt somewhere or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain.[33]

Paine articulates "independence" with "continental form of government." If reconciliation with Britain could lead to revolts or civil war, an independent continental power, he hoped, could rein in those revolutionary passions so gingerly held together by sense and purpose and therefore subject to the contingencies of unpredictably outbursts "somewhere or other." Should the hegemony of common sense fail to bring about the formation of a republican government, the precarity of the insurgency could lead to its highjacking by unprincipled and interested adventurers: "Some Massanello may hereafter arise, who laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and the discontented, and by assuming to themselves the powers of government, may sweep away the liberties of the continent like a deluge."[34] Massanello, dismissed by Locke and championed by Spinoza, was a seventeenth-century fisherman from Naples who led a populist revolt against Spanish rule. Paine sides with Locke's conception of Massanello as an example of unrestrained constituent strength resulting in the political instability caused by might-makes-right rule: "The manner of his government by supreme power, made him *properly* king, who was but the day before *properly* a fisherman."[35] For Paine, Massanello is emblematic of the potentially catastrophic consequences of "keeping vacant the seat of government."[36] Massanello, like the form of popular sovereignty he embodies, indexes the improper made proper by a "supreme power" that Paine both exploits and contains for the purposes of propaganda. The result, however, yields not just a sense of indeterminacy as to the unstable constitution of the revolutionary body but indeterminacy as sense in the service of sovereignty. If the revolution fails to yield a continental government, the result could be "more fatal than the malice of Britain."

A decade later, the eruption of a backcountry uprising against farm foreclosures resulting from postwar economic depression and made worse by foreign debt obligations helped the framers of the new constitution make their case for a more "energetic" centralized government. Daniel Shays, an American Massanello of sorts and reluctant leader of the uprising, was part of a larger protest movement led by rural citizens who felt that the Massachusetts legislature, composed of merchants and speculators, was unresponsive to their call for the issuance of paper money as a means of debt relief. As a result, armed citizens of the western counties began closing local courthouses as a form of popular sovereignty against what they saw as a government of and by elites. Addressing the Shays' uprising, Alexander Hamilton asked in Federalist 21, "Who can determine what might have been the issue of her late convulsions, if the malcontents had been headed by a Caesar or by a Cromwell?"[37] If the uprising represented the expression of popular sovereignty against elite interests, Hamilton appeals to fears about a fragile government subject to usurpation not by anarchists but tyrants: "Who can predict what effect a despotism, established in Massachusetts, would have upon the liberties of New Hampshire or Rhode Island, of Connecticut or New York?" As with Paine, an excess of freedom and independence can morph into the expression of its opposite: the loss liberty by

the willful imposition of the One over the many.

According to the Federalists, what is needed is not an abstract theory of government devised by philosopher-statesmen but a strong centralized state sanctioned by the common sense of citizens who recognize in the uprising in Massachusetts not a legitimate grievance by fellow citizens but the inability of the current government to deal effectively with threats to property and state sovereignty. James Madison allows for the imperfection of the new constitution but further notes that the essays written in favor of it are neither meant to obscure its flaws nor convince those who vehemently oppose it: "the truth is, that these papers are not addressed to persons falling under either of these characters. They solicit the attention of those only, who add to a sincere zeal for the happiness of their country, a temper favorable to a just estimate of the means of promoting it."[38] Madison's reasoning is guided by a for-us-by-us logic, the "us" here indexing a sentient body bound by a common zeal for national happiness. In his formulation, the new constitution and the articles in favor of it were written under the aegis of common sense by sensible statesmen for similarly sensible citizens capable of putting aside partisanship and disinterestedly considering the best political course to achieve the common good. The problem is that the partisanship and unrest Madison references show no signs of abating. Backcountry insurgencies by insolvent farmers, growing discontent among the poor and disenfranchised, including unemployed veterans, as well as factional rancor prevents the hegemonic closure of common-sense republicanism. If postrevolutionary partisan self-interest threatened to fragment, if not dissolve, the homogeneity of common sense, Federalists sought to combat what they identified as narrow local or regional affiliation by calling for an unselfish expansiveness of sentiment of a federalized people. Only a centralized state responsive to all citizens, Hamilton argued, could "feel itself most deeply interested in the preservation of every part."[39] Madison sees the factional fragmentation of conflicting passions as the problem, or problems, that the new constitution, the imperfections of which he acknowledges, can address. He is less sanguine than some of his colleagues, like Dr. Benjamin Rush, about mapping the metaphor of the sensible body onto state organs: "The faculties of the mind itself have never yet been distinguished and defined, with satisfactory precision, by all the efforts of the most acute and metaphysical philosophers. Sense, perception, judgment, desire, volition, memory, imagination are found to be separated by such delicate shades and minute gradations that their boundaries have eluded the most subtle investigations, and remain a pregnant source of ingenious disquisition and controversy."[40] This lack of conceptual distinctions for differentiating the human faculties follows an analysis of the importance of delineating the differences between the powers of the states and that of the central government proposed by the framers of the new constitution. The analogy he draws between matters of state and the citizen's faculties is significant because not only does it reanimate the metaphor articulating the relation between the sovereign and the bodies of the members of the commonwealth but also calls for sharper

differentiation and clearer distribution of powers that had been rendered opaque during the tumultuous revolutionary and subsequent postrevolutionary periods. The new republican order demands a recalibration of the Hobbesian image of the Leviathan containing all the subjects of the realm into a more refined and articulated anatomy attuned to the proper function of cognitive and affective faculties: "sense," "perception," "desire," "imagination," etc.

Hamilton imagines the people in terms of a broader subjectivity whose affective dimension ought to intermingle in the ordinary exercise of government. For Hamilton,

> Man is very much a creature of habit. A thing that rarely strikes his senses will generally have but little influence upon his mind. A government continually at a distance and out of sight can hardly be expected to interest the sensations of the people. The inference is, that the authority of the Union, and the affections of the citizens towards it, will be strengthened, rather than weakened, by its extension to what are called matters of internal concern.[41]

In Hamilton, Madison's indeterminacy of sense is subsumed by the positing of a transcendent subject, "Man," for whom the legitimacy of state authority is only a problem when matters of state fail to engage his innermost self. For Hamilton, as for Paine, the citizen-subject's fundamental relation to politics is an aesthetic one, that is, one enabled and mediated by sensation.[42] That their aims differ, in that Paine is trying to give the revolution form and purpose while Hamilton is trying to put the revolutionary genie back in the bottle, matters less than the fact that both take for granted that sensation, as both a somatic and discursive phenomenon, is the new animating element in American politics. This new aesthetics of republican power discards the sense of awe and reverence, or terror, often associated with the sublime, in favor of a cultivation of associational practices designed to integrate the citizen-subject in the ordinary exercise of government. In Hamilton's conception of affective governmentality, the citizen-subject comes into his own not by cowering from the enormous demands of revolutionary and nation-building projects but by fleshing out and animating the concepts and principles that constitute these events. According to Christopher Castiglia, Hamilton understood,

> that turning people into citizens required reaching them where they live, which was not yet in a nation but in churches, families, and communities where the affective bonds of loyalty and affection already existed. Those familiar locations of feeling held structures of hierarchy that, if reoriented toward federal affiliation, would render coercive power obsolete. Hamilton saw that education in social feelings precedes the

> law, rendering its dictates palatable to citizens who might otherwise see little profit in consenting to its restrictions or in answering to interpellative naming.[43]

In Castiglia's formulation, local and familiar institutions like church and family engender the structures of feeling that later facilitate the subject's interpellation into federalist order. Disciplinary institutions like church and family inculcate the civic dispositions that will enable the transition from colonial to republican sovereignty. Both Paine and Hamilton understand that the vacuum left behind by the eclipse of royal sovereignty, whose mystic aura gained precisely from being distant and out of sight, has to be occupied by a transcendent authority that somehow has the familiar feel of the local. The problem republicans face is not quite what Eric Santner in a different context calls "the migration of the royal flesh… into the bodies and lives of the citizens of modern nation-states."[44] But an implicit political theology is nonetheless at work in an American context where the transmutation of the authority and legitimacy ascribed to the king's body is now ascribed to the people's sentient faculties.

Republican sovereignty here is not seen as a system of legal arrangements but as a vital and vibrant political order where citizen-subjects aren't coerced into submission by the state but rather actively participate in the making of self and world. In producing this sense of the common, Paine and Hamilton implement a norm of consensus in response to general agitations in the body politic that are part of the historical sequence in which sensuous life is inscribed into sovereign order. Such inscription results in the unexpected consequences that call into action strategies of containment like the ones articulated by Hamilton, for whom the people's capacity to sense takes on the legitimating functions of conciliation, respect, and attachment for a state authority that's not yet real. It bears keeping in mind that Hamilton's enlisting of the sensible is a direct response to questions about the government's need to exert military force against domestic unrest brought on by turbulent factions.

By relying on sense to produce the One of the common, Paine and Hamilton potentially make their projects vulnerable, not to a diversity of differences—Madison persuasively argued in Federalist 10 that factional conflict could be contained by expanding the franchise and dispersing difference—but to the radicality of an unbound multiplicity not determined by then emergent fictions of blood and soil. Social and demographic realities in America made that kind of project a nonstarter for Paine. He left that to Loyalists, with their appeal to parent or mother country that he found "false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous."[45] The true ideological dimension of this political battle for the hearts and minds of colonial subjects is about the expansiveness of affect: selfish and narrow on the British-Loyalist side, broad and inclusive on the American. The Loyalists' exclusionary discourse needs myth and history, or myth as history, to take root in the lives of people bound by obligation and tradition to the generational transmission of real and symbolic capital. As Paine argues elsewhere, that legacy

is not what revolutionary America is or has been about: "He that is here and he that was born here is alike concerned."[46] Eliding distinctions between native and new arrival—though holding fast to the subject's male gender—his vision of revolutionary America, aims in principle for universalist inclusion: "The cause of America, after all, is in great measure the cause of all mankind."[47] And such a project requires the surmounting of local prejudices, as Americans enlarge their acquaintance with the world to engage in commerce. On this point he writes, "We forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England) and carry our friendship on a larger scale."[48] The problem is no longer how to limit selfishness and natural rights but how to go beyond partialities, how to move from "a limited sympathy" to an extended generosity, in Gilles Deleuze's language, how to stretch passions and give them an extension they don't have of their own.[49]

Becoming American thus entails leaving behind local attachments and reorienting affects away from the obligations and duties subjects felt they owed kin in the Old World toward the generosity one freely extends to friends in America's new and vast spaces, in contrast to which England's narrow divisions of street, parish, town and county, are rendered irrelevant, as "too limited for continental minds."[50] Paine conceives of this transformation in general affectivity as more significant than the political revolution. As he explains to the Abbe Raynal: "Our style and manner of thinking have undergone a revolution more extraordinary than the political revolution of the country. We see with other eyes; we hear with other ears; and think with other thoughts, than those we formerly used."[51] The revolution has in effect produced "a material change in sentiment," putting the meaning of sentiment closer to sense, as Paine foregrounds the sensory organs that become co-implicated in the refashioning of self and world.[52] The revolution in sentiment is more significant than the political revolution because, while the political revolution comes to an historical end, the radicalization of affect has implications beyond the historical event.

Not yet isolated nor exceptional, as Paine's American will be refashioned in subsequent decades, this early cosmopolitan version stands against a provincial (or provincialized by his pen) Englishman or Loyalist that, try as the latter might, cannot claim a general ethnic or proto-national identity in the colonies, since not one third of America's inhabitants, Paine reminds us, is of English descent.[53] This lack of commonality, this nothing that is, is what he thinks charges Americans with the "the power to begin the world over again."[54] The problem is that the lack of commonality that is the revolution's condition of possibility starts to feel like a liability, a condition made evident in Paine's reversion to the language of sovereignty, indicating that the power for starting all that transformed newness he envisions wants an authorizing source:

> [W]here says some is the King of America? I'll tell you Friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal Brute of Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be

> defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America THE LAW IS KING. For as in absolute governments the King is law, so in free countries the law ought to be King; and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown at the conclusion of the ceremony be demolished, and scattered among the people whose right it is.[55]

This key passage articulates the oscillating tension that I have been tracking throughout the text. The rhetorical question with which it opens binds the text's revolutionary message to the political theology that Paine has been trashing throughout the pamphlet, as if wary about the integrity of the affective bond that holds together the revolution his imagination fails him and the inventiveness that's animated the pamphlet up to this point devolves into the familiar legitimating discourse of sovereign authority. The technology that helps mediate this transfer of authority, according to Michael Warner and Trish Loughram, each developing their own arguments, is print. They both read this passage as emblematic of the shift from voice to print that characterizes the transformation of the public sphere in late-eighteenth-century American culture. For Warner Paine here presages how the Constitution will attain legitimacy by virtue of its printedness, thus allowing it "to emanate from no one in particular, and thus from the people."[56] Loughram focuses on the interplay between discursive constructions of abstraction and the challenge perpetually posed to them through the actual embodiment of material texts, living actors, geographical space, and everyday life."[57] In these formulations the materiality of the text attains something close to the status of a relic, a fetishized "icon of egalitarian diffusion, circulation, and exchange among Enlightened citizens of the (American) world." Print thus figures as the people's second immortal body whose function is chiefly a legitimating one.

While print no doubt plays a starring role in the production, circulation, and consumption of revolutionary and postrevolutionary narratives as a conduit of the ideology of popular and republican sovereignty, it also bears traces of its inadequacy as a delivery system for the very thing it sets out to articulate, disseminate, and, perhaps more importantly, animate—this last prompting the political anxieties that may warrant the continuation of traditional legitimating practices. To be sure, the passage quoted above shows Paine trying to lend the revolution the same legitimating aura that once was associated with monarchical rule, but that does not mean that the text achieves what its writer set out to do, especially since he has spent the early part of the pamphlet arguing not only that the concept of monarchy is an ancient practice that has exhausted its currency in the modern world but that its essence is nothing but affect enlisted

in the service of ideology organized in rituals like the one he's described and venerated. That is why his reanimation of ancient rituals of legitimation betrays real concerns about a project that by his own admission lacked foundation or peer in the modern world. This crisis of legitimation, as Bonnie Honig observes, "is largely attributable to the rise of secularism and to the corresponding dearth in modernity of commonly held and publicly powerful instruments of legitimation, such as political authority."[58] By making no attempt to erase or disguise the ceremony, nor his own priest-like function in the proceedings, where print, not flesh, holds pride of place, Paine betrays his own anxiety about both the evacuation of that which once was thought to be held in common and the unpredictable vitality of bodies charged with occupying that same space. This anxiety is evident in the series of pathetic appeals to the unidentified authority to "let" this or that consecrating action take place: let a day be set aside, let the charter be brought forth, let a crown be placed thereon, etc. Paine crowns the revolution his opponents equate with anarchy, not quite foreclosing insurgency at the moment of its inauguration but rather limiting the terms of its articulation.

That he ends this imagined ritual with the destruction of the fetish object, this farewell to symbolism, artifice, and the legitimating mechanisms whose function is to make people believe and consent to sovereign power is a well-known strategy of legitimation. For one, it echoes that of a fictional Italian duke bidding farewell to island magic by breaking his staff and drowning his book of spells only after these implements have helped restore him to the sovereign position to which he always felt entitled. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare understands that modern sovereignty is not simply characterized by a diachronic shift from the symbolics of blood to a creative synthesis of general affectivity, if I may modify Foucault's formulation of the passage from royal to democratic sovereignty.[59] The securing of sovereign power in the play—over and above the symbolics of blood indexed by denouement of the marriage ritual that legitimates rule by kin—is dependent on intractable figures individually recognizing and admitting that the sovereign-magus knew all along what was best for his subjects.[60] "I'll be wise hereafter" says the most unruly, though the statement could well apply to all who now know enough to make a public show of contrition and good sense.[61] Hegemony is here enforced not through coercion but by the consent of subjects disciplined by the not-so-rough magic of the play's governance of affect.[62] Rule by consent has less use for the sovereign, as the play ends with Prospero abdicating his official role for a second time and turning his thoughts to death. Where Shakespeare ends, Paine wishes to go. But the eclipse of the royal sovereign that *Common Sense* announces does not signal a new dawn for populist politics. Paine's fantasy of consecrated popular sovereignty is less sure about its own radical implications. If *Common Sense* articulates a political theology for the democratic age, a shattered crown scattered like relics among the people betrays anxieties about what radicalizing affect can do for a politics of the common.

Notes

1. [Charles Inglis], "The True Interest of America Impartially Stated," in *Common Sense*, ed. Edward Larkin (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2004), 152.

2. Following the pamphlet's publication, Paine regularly used "Common Sense" as his signature.

3. Alexander Hamilton, "Federalist 27," *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 136.

4. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense, The Crisis, & Other Writings from the American Revolution*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: American Library, 2015), 35.

5. As Christopher Castiglia argues, "The nation-state's future as an imagined community required, as Hamilton recognized, a federalization of affect: the creation of metaphors of 'innerness' to serve as sites of correspondence between individual bodies (character, personality, even biology) and state interest." Christopher Castiglia, *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States* (Durham: Duke University Press), 2008, 18.

6. Sheldon Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," *Fugitive Democracy and Other Essays*, ed. Nicholas Xenos (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 108.

7. Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 154.

8. Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 31.

9. According to Edward Larkin, "Paine had to be demonized and dismissed because his ideas threatened the very foundations upon which Adams and his fellow elites' power was built." Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11.

10. On the influence of Scottish common sense philosophy in revolutionary America, particularly the work of Francis Hutcheson, see Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (New York: Mariner, 2002), 193–206.

11. Paine, *Common Sense*, 9.

12. Paine, *Common Sense*, 31.

13. Paine, *Common Sense*, 52.

14. Paine, *Common Sense*, 6.

15. Wills, 184. On sensibility and common sense, see G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Julia Stern, *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Sophia Rosenfeld, *Common Sense: A Political History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

16. Wills, 184.

17. Sophia Rosenfeld, *Common Sense: A Political History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 62.

18. Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 24.

19. Paine, *Common Sense*, 35–36.

20. Paine, *Common Sense*, 34.

21. Paine, *Common Sense,* 5.

22. Quoted in Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 86.

23. Robert Fergusson, "The Commonalities of *Common Sense*," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2000): 465.

24. Sophia Rosenfeld, "Tom Paine's Common Sense and Ours," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (2008): 634.

25. Fergusson, 469.

26. Rosenfeld, "Tom Paine's Common Sense and Ours," 667.

27. See Philip Gould, *Writing the Rebellion: Loyalists and the Literature of Politics in British America* (New York: Oxford, 2016), 114–44.

28. Paine, *Common Sense*, 50.

29. Paine, *Common Sense*, 36.

30. Frank, *Constituent Moments*, 92.

31. Gould, *Writing the Rebellion*, 11.

32. John Adams, *The Adams Papers*, *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams, vol 3, Diary, 1782–1804; Autobiography, Part One to October 1776*, ed. L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 331.

33. Paine, *Common Sense,* 31.

34. Paine, *Common Sense*, 35.

35. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 53.

36. Paine, *Common Sense*, 35.

37. Hamilton, "Federalist 21," 103–104.

38. John Madison, "Federalist 37," *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 180.

39. Hamilton, "Federalist 23," 117.

40. Madison, "Federalist 37," 181–82.

41. Hamilton, "Federalist 27," 136.

42. On the aesthetic as a sensuous engagement with the world, see Terry Eagleton, "The Law of the Heart: Shaftesbury, Burke, Hume," *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Malden: Blackwell, 1990).

43. Castiglia, 18.

44. Eric Santner, *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 10.

45. Paine, *Common Sense*, 24.

46. [Thomas Paine], "The Forester's Letter III," *Common Sense, The Crisis, and Other Writings from the American Revolution*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: Library of America, 2015), 83.

47. Paine, *Common Sense*, 5.

48. Paine, *Common Sense*, 23.

49. Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Urzone, 2001), 46.

50. Paine, *Common Sense*, 23.

51. Thomas Paine, "Letter to the Abbe Raynal," *The Writings of Thomas Paine v 2: 1779–1792,* ed. Moncure Daniel Conway (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1894), 105.

52. Paine, "Letter to the Abbe Raynal," 105.

53. Paine, *Common Sense*, 23.

54. Ibid., *Common Sense*, 52.

55. Ibid., *Common Sense*, 34.

56. Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 107–108.

57. Trish Loughran, "Disseminating Common Sense: Thomas Paine and the Problem of the Early National Bestseller," *American Literature* 78, no. 1 (2006): 19.

58. Bonnie Honig, "Declarations of Independence: Arendt and Derrida on the Problem of Founding a Republic," *American Political Science Review* 85 (1991): 84.

59. Foucault characterizes the shift from classical sovereignty to biopolitical governmentality as a shift from "a symbolics of blood to an analytics of sexuality." Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol I: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1978), 148.

60. Traitors, conspirators, insurrectionists, and even the inattentive daughter, all come to see the errors of their ways and fall in line at the end of the play.

61. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, eds. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Westerstein (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d.), 5.1.351, accessed June 10, 2021, https://shakespeare.folger.edu/downloads/pdf/the-tempest_PDF_FolgerShakespeare.pdf.

62. Prospero's slave, Caliban, offers a critique of the master's coercive kindness early in the play: "When thou cam'st first, / Thou strok'st me and made much of me, wouldst / give me / Water with berries in 't, . . . And then I loved thee." Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.397–402, accessed June 10, 2021, https://shakespeare.folger.edu/downloads/pdf/the-tempest_PDF_FolgerShakespeare.pdf

BOOK REVIEWS

Editorial note: Book reviews are lightly edited for clarity and typographical errors.

COLLISIONS AT THE CROSSROADS: HOW PLACE AND MOBILITY MAKE RACE. By Genevieve Carpio. Oakland: University of California Press, 2019.

For over forty years in ethnic studies, we scholars have examined "race-making" practices in sustained scholarly ways. We have examined the role of structural forces (e.g. laws, policies), as well as cultural narratives (e.g. media, representations) across fields. We have learned much and yet Carpio has managed to show us a new way of seeing by bringing Mobility Studies into the conversation on how race is made. Mobility as a race-making concept is so powerful that once you see it, you cannot un-see it. In her book, *Collisions at the Crossroads: How Place and Mobility Make Race*, Carpio examines the history of California's Inland Empire across the span of the twentieth century, beginning with the rise of the citrus industry. In this work, she demonstrates how "mobility has been an active force in racialization over the twentieth century, one that has operated alongside 'place' to shape regional memory and belonging in multiracial communities" (5). Her strongly argued thesis is firmly supported by close examinations of the everyday movement of racialized immigrant communities. At times, she contrasts the experience of these racialized communities with that of dominant white communities, which enjoyed a right to mobility, as well as settlement, often denied to racialized communities. Carpio conducted research in over thirty archives to put these shards of evidence into conversation with one another and construct this history.

What is so fascinating about Carpio's work is the way she elucidates how mobility, and the lack of it, can serve to depict groups as entitled or as unworthy—and then how these scripts might flip depending on what was at stake. As the citrus industry developed in the nineteenth century, for example, Mexicans living in the new state of California were dispossessed of their land under the California Land Act of 1851. Under the Homestead Act of 1860, this land was redistributed to whites who were depicted as more worthy of settling on the land, making them better candidates for land development. Indigenous peoples, who were considered nomadic, were not even considered as possible land owners, though of course it was their land to begin with. Similarly, Japanese were not allowed to settle long-term in the first half of the twentieth century. Japanese were depicted as so undesirable that under the Alien Land Law Acts beginning in California in 1913 they were not allowed to own land or lease it for more than three years, a law that stayed on the books until it was overturned in 1952. As such, we see how settlement, in contrast to mobility, was an important tool for maintaining a racial hierarchy in the region and securing racial capitalism for whites only.

A relational understanding of race is central to Carpio's argument about how mobility can shape ideas about race differently. In the previous example, we can see how one group's acquisition of resources (land for settled whites, not for supposedly nomadic or itinerant others) is made possible by those resources being stripped away from others. This is more than comparing and contrasting one group to another: her work is central in showing how the freedoms and privileges of one group actively depend on those privileges being denied to others. Overall, *Collisions at the Crossroads* provides groundbreaking insights into how mobility allowed some groups to become insiders and how the lack of it forced other groups to become outsiders, occupying different places in the regional racial hierarchy. This is a strongly original and insightful work.

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GRAND ARMY OF LABOR: WORKERS, VETERANS, AND THE MEANING OF THE CIVIL WAR. By Matthew E. Stanley. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press. 2021.

In his review of Bruce Levine's recent biography of Thaddeus Stevens in *Jacobin*, Matthew Stanley stresses the importance of Stevens' demand for the confiscation of Confederate lands so they could be distributed to formerly enslaved people. However overly-radical Stevens' impulse proved in a moment of "revolutionary possibility" (18), it prefigured important questions that returned in future decades as workers and veterans contemplated the meaning of the war: why was it actually fought, and what kind of nation should it have made?

As Stanley demonstrates in *Grand Army of Labor*, generations of labor movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries fought for their own "emancipatory program" (13) through an "*antislavery vernacular*" (6), including symbols and narratives formed by "divergent memories of the Civil War *within* American labor" (10). Much of what workers actually wanted—a new political party, another currency, one big union—changed over time, and, as with the possibility of land confiscation, never materialized. Yet, through the spiraling composition and decomposition of working-class power during the era, one constant remained: the war. As Stanley relates in an interview on the podcast *Nostalgia Trap*, he was "trained as a memory historian and Civil War historian," and thus labor historians will find him a highly credible scholar for unpacking the "deep reservoir of Civil War memory that was just everywhere in Gilded Age and Progressive Era labor movements." Activating those memories wasn't merely incidental, but pivotal, to how those movements emerged and also declined.

Many of the text's chapters skillfully relate how the "events, leaders, [and] ideas" of Civil War memory anchored the farmer-labor class bases driving the "Greenback-Labor, Knights of Labor, Farmers' Alliance" (44), and other institutional movements of the late nineteenth century. Drawing on a wide range of archival materials, Stanley discusses attempts at "class reconciliation" (57) between northern and southern workers, worker-

veteran culture in the Knights of Labor, the "red memory" of socialists and anarchists (98), and the Grange, Readjuster, and Populist movements. His treatment of wartime culture in James B. Weaver's 1892 Populist campaign, Samuel Gompers notion of "an army of labor" and labor aristocracy (157), and the "antislavery memory" (190) of Eugene Debs' abolitionist arguments for socialism are particularly vivid illustrations of Stanley's scope, which also includes the Industrial Workers' of the World (IWW). His attention to the contested symbols of Abraham Lincoln and John Brown, among others, are among many compelling stories told across the text's detailed chapters.

Tracing "collective memories" gives Stanley the chance to flex a wide lens on what Fink calls the Long Gilded Age, and the book's seven efficient chapters (plus an introduction and epilogue) manage to offer readers both surveys appropriate for students and insights for specialists. Stanley explains his focus is less on "the productive relations of class per se but with industrial workers and farmers who exhibited class consciousness through participation in coordinated worker movements" (4). In this respect, readers would do well to read it alongside Robert Ovetz's *When Workers Shot Back: Class Conflict from 1877 to 1921* (Haymarket, 2019).

Beyond being a thoughtful contribution to the venerable The Working Class in American History series by the University of Illinois Press, the book advances field-specific conversations about the politics of race and class with vital scholars on the period, including David Roediger, Mark Lause, and Leon Fink. Even though the text largely examines labor movements led by white men, the book continually engages with how central questions of whiteness and blackness structured tensions that contributed to success and failure of movements that tried to organize workers North and South, and how various attempts at "white reunion" (92) *and* black inclusion compounded increasingly fraught racial politics of Jim Crow and white nationalism.

The book also moves with special force for studies on the period because it invites the integration of histories typically segregated. For example, the first chapter boldly examines the influence of antebellum reform language on postwar worker memory, particularly in terms of attempting to interpret emancipation in economic terms with the "large-scale material redistribution" of property (27). The book's integration of Reconstruction into an analysis that also includes the 1877 general strike, and the Populist presidential campaigns with the 1898 Wilmington Insurrection, models a productive synthesis that new studies can hopefully continue. Likewise, Stanley's historicized analysis of "wage slavery" (69-77) discourse in the third chapter should be required reading.

One of the most powerful suggestions in Stanley's book is the recognition that the era's labor and populist movements can't be fully understood except through the afterlives of slavery generally, and the Civil War in particular. Such an insight begs the question: how else *can* we think about the ceaseless—and problematic—idea of "wage slavery" *beyond* its relation to chattel slavery? How, that is, can we understand the labor wars of the Long Gilded Age in *our* terms, rather than theirs?

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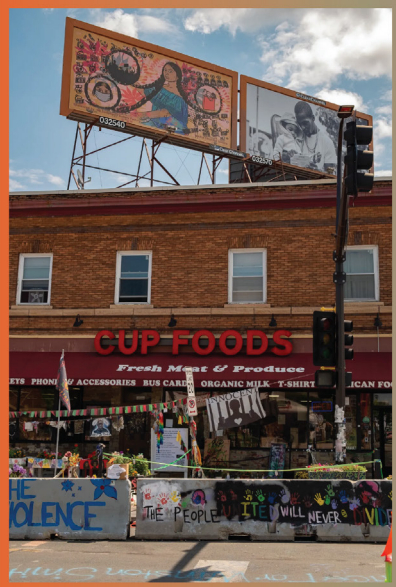

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