

Bad Refugees: Manufacturing Statelessness at the Margins of Global Northern Citizenship

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Abstract

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Written in conversation with critical refugee scholars who have theorized about the politics of cultural memory as it concerns formal state and community-based negotiations over how to remember the Vietnam War, this dissertation begins from this ongoing conversation to examine dismemberment as a cultural process that has significant material implications—how, in other words, historic negotiations over idealized and discarded refugeehoods produced moral distinctions that became durably materialized, categorically hardened, and bureaucratically useful across time and space to continue to authorize the state’s investment in its settler structures of living and dying. Using a frame of memberment/dismemberment, it focuses specifically on the emergence of the disposable “Vietnamese gang member” and the “Saigonese prostitute” in the case of Orange County as key Bad Refugee figures in this process of discursive negotiation that distinguished between acceptable and unacceptable refugee subjects in the historical period following the Fall of Saigon through the end of the Reagan presidency. Centering on the period during which the Keynesian welfare state became hollowed out to make way for neoliberal reforms that converged with the state’s turn to prison building to solve its legitimacy crisis following the pivotal decade, I analyze important critical junctures within county history concerning

refugee arrivals that linked local contestations over taxation, permitting and zoning, and neighborhood defense to the broader racial class struggle that took place in California and later throughout the nation regarding the declining legitimacy of the Liberal Keynesianism. In centering the subjectification of disposed bad refugees within the political economic order that worked to create the conditions of their surplus, I lastly explore how focusing on the violence of instrumental rationality within the settler capitalist state therefore demonstrates how the state has slowly colonized the human lifeworld. Treating their dehumanization by the state with a critical seriousness, the analysis reveals how failure to become rationalized subjects resulted in the production of bad refugee disposability over time. Beyond detailing these vital contestations over how the war came to be negotiated in cultural memory through the formation of “bad refugees,” however, the broad arc of the argument additionally traces these adjudications within the “moral-rational” genealogy of racial capitalism to situate how contested refugeehoods emerged within the nation state relative to transformations in its political economic structure. Couched in a critical analysis of American mythology that illustrates how the suburbs were authorized by the “American Dream” and “American Manifest Destiny,” I broadly forward that suburbanization, as the “spatial fix” to the state’s overaccumulation crisis during the Great Depression that underwrote the expansion of US global influence after WWII, must therefore be understood as a form of ongoing territorialization that continued the process of settler colonization that began centuries before with Spanish contact. Ultimately engaging with Lefebvre’s framework of the “Right to the City” by including the racial capitalist character of the suburbs in its analysis, I argue for a revised definition of war that sees it as an ongoing form of territorialization and state violence that has continued through suburbanization into the present, where political strategies must correspondingly understand how the continuous history of the suburb as a spatial form reveals the ongoing settler state’s investment in claiming and privatizing the land to authorize itself to act. As the US frontier slowly pushed westward to manufacture an emptied landscape, the landscape itself became a domesticated warscape in which mythologies surrounding the home as a moral domain worked to both mask the conditions of settler

expropriation and continually authorize particular family forms compatible with state interests. Conceptualizing the domesticated warscape as such, I close by echoing Lisa Marie Cacho's theorization about the inevitability of criminalized devaluation given that some groups (in this case "Bad Refugee" "gang members" and "prostitutes"), based on the very ontological premise of their emergence, can never represent themselves as moral and deserving as the foundation for law. Insisting on building a political vision and abolitionist solidarities that consequently refuse their dehumanization thus allows for a de-hierarchization of the racial capitalist imperative to categorize human bodies and subjugate them for profit—thereby critically questioning the legal-bureaucratic authority of the contemporary settler state to organize our social relations.

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INTRODUCTION

I've been thinking a bit at that window. I've been reflecting on what the past eight years have meant, and mean. And the image that comes to mind like a refrain is a nautical one—a small story about a big ship, and a refugee, and a sailor.

It was back in the early Eighties, at the height of the boat people, and the sailor was hard at work on the carrier Midway, which was patrolling the South China Sea. The sailor, like most American servicemen, was young, smart and fiercely observant. The crew spied on the horizon a leaky little boat – and crammed inside were refugees from Indochina hoping to get to America. The Midway sent a small launch to bring them to the ship, and safety. As the refugees made their way through the choppy seas, one spied the sailor on deck, and stood up and called out to him. He yelled, "Hello, American sailor—Hello, Freedom Man."

A small moment with a big meaning, a moment the sailor, who wrote it in a letter, couldn't get out of his mind. And, when I saw it, neither could I. Because that's what it was to—it was to be an American in the 1980's; We stood, again, for freedom. I know we always have but in the past few years the world—again, and in a way, we ourselves—rediscovered it.¹

– Ronald Reagan's Farewell Address to the American People,
January 12, 1989

At the conclusion of his second presidential term, a 77-year-old Ronald Reagan delivered his 34th and final speech from the Oval Office to the American viewing public. Reflecting on his departure from what biographer Lou Cannon described as the former actor's "Role of a Lifetime," Reagan drew on the familiar techne of performance and networks of electronic media that emerged during the American Century on which he had so often relied in order to provide narrative coherence to his eight years in office.² Under White House Deputy Chief of Staff, Michael Deaver, the actor who so directly tapped into the American Heartland through films like *Knute Rockne, All American* (1940) had become the leading player in a narrative-driven administration that relied on scripting and staging as a matter of primacy. In *Ronald Reagan, The Movie*, Michael Rogin discusses how Reagan claimed to embody the nation by using images in film and tv to associate his own All-American branded body with the national body politic, invoking a longstanding tradition in political authority rooted in the boundary confusion between the body of the political leader and the body of the realm, where, during his time serving as president, Reagan deliberately quoted classic lines from films that presented him, variably, as at times the noble serviceman, at other times the new sheriff in town, but most often as the self-made cowboy he had originally wanted to play on the Warner Brothers studio lot.

Calling his dog "Lassie" in front of reporters on his Santa Barbara *Rancho del Cielo* property, for example, Reagan staged the signing of The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 by wearing all denim and a pair

¹ Reagan, Ronald. (1989, January 11). "Farewell Address To The Nation." Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, <https://www.reaganfoundation.org/ronald-reagan/reagan-quotes-speeches/farewell-address-to-the-nation-2/>. Accessed 19 May 2022.

² Cannon, Lou. *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991.

of cowboy boots as if, through tax cuts and increased defense spending, he was the cavalry arriving just in time right as America was meeting its Last Frontier; and analogously positioning Congress as the menacing hoodlum holding a woman (and taxpayer dollars) hostage in *Sudden Impact* (1983), Reagan threatened to veto the legislative branch's maneuver to raise taxes by uttering Clint Eastwood's challenge, "Go ahead. Make my day."³ Consequently, as a celebrity-turned-politician, Ronald Reagan occupied a liminal condition "betwixt and between statecraft and stagecraft" that reflected the evolution of politics to the performance of political leaders, made to channel the affective charge of the nation through their mass-mediated images to produce a performance effect for political ends.⁴

His reliance on crafting cultural narratives therefore sat at the center of his political authority, where from the very beginning of his presidency Reagan relied on shaping the nation's cultural memory in order to affirm his rightful place as the nation's leader following the destabilizations of the 1970s. In particular, following the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War in September of 1980 with Iraq's invasion of Iran, Iran entered negotiations with the United States under President Jimmy Carter but only signed the Algiers Accords to formally release the hostages just minutes after Ronald Reagan was sworn into office. Thus, in literally opening the first moments of the Reagan Era, the hostages that once served as a national source of shame and hypervisible symbol of America's declining global power under Carter became transformed into a different narrative on inauguration day—a narrative asserted by Reagan, however dubiously, that under his watch, "America was back."⁵

Just like he recast himself as hero to Carter's hostage resolution, Reagan's entire presidency relied on his facility with reimagining and reordering the nation's memory to recover it from its sullied global escapades. As Timothy Raphael (217) has written of "the mimetic regime of the Reagan presidency":

[M]emory was a floating signifier deployed to discipline unruly referents as required by political exigencies. The past was a boneyard to be scavenged for rhetoric, imagery, signs of life. The dead were dismembered, retrofitted, and remembered in the political unconscious of a presidency that incessantly plundered history for, in Robert Lowell's words, "something imagined, not recalled."

As Lisa Yoneyama (35) forwards, this "ongoing reformulation of knowledge about the nation's recent past is a process of amnes(t)ic remembering whereby the past is tamed through the reinscription of memories."⁶ The past here exists as not a mere temporal ordering of events before the so-called present but is instead reordered and strategically recalled to verify an authoritative account of how we arrived here and how to make sense of it. Present conditions play a role in reconstructing the past to produce collective memory, a concept introduced by sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in 1925, where struggles over cultural memory play a key role "in naturalizing certain understandings of the past, in interpellating and producing subjects, and in reinforcing specific concepts of the U.S. nation."^{7,8}

Taking in the full scope of Reagan's rise to the presidency in the post-Vietnam War era, then, how were the bodies of the corporeally and socially dead from America's "first televised war" taken up to sustain American imperialism in the final quarter of the twentieth century that saw a marked decline in the United States' global

³ Rogin, Michael Paul. *Ronald Reagan, the Movie: And Other Episodes in Political Demonology*. University of California Press, 1987.

⁴ Raphael, Timothy. *The President Electric: Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Performance*. University of Michigan Press, 2009.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁶ Yoneyama, Lisa. *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*. University of California Press, 1999.

⁷ Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. University of Chicago Press, 1992.

⁸ Le Espiritu, Yen. *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees*. University of California Press, 2014.

legitimacy? What matters in choosing the freedom-loving Indochinese refugee as *the central narrative device* to encapsulate his presidential legacy given the significance of negotiating America's cultural memory after the destabilizations and dislocations of the 1970s? "Why," as Jean Baudrillard (26) posed, "did this war, so hard, so long, so ferocious, vanish from one day to the next as if by magic?"⁹ "If it had really signified the failure of the planetary strategy of the United States, it would necessarily have completely disrupted its internal balance and the American political system," and yet, as Reagan concluded after eight years in office, through the image of the grateful Indochinese refugee, America "stood, again, for freedom...and in a way, we ourselves—rediscovered it."

In pursuit of these orienting questions, this dissertation is written in conversation with critical refugee scholars who have theorized about the politics of cultural memory as it concerns formal state and community-based negotiations over how to remember the Vietnam War. Analyzing 25th anniversary coverage of the "Fall of Saigon" that symbolically recuperated Vietnam veterans and Vietnamese refugees alike as compatriots who fought a noble war against communism, for example, Yên Lê Espiritu argues that American rhetoric of liberation and rescue endured after the war to authorize other military campaigns abroad by sustaining the Vietnamese in the American imaginary as lovers of freedom grateful to have benefitted from the generosity of US humanitarianism. Meanwhile examining the community politics of belonging in Orange County's Little Saigon, Long Bui contends that refugee body politics must also be understood as representative of internal struggles taking place within a community composed of heterogeneous and differently located members.¹⁰

Using a frame of memberment/dismemberment, Bui (88) argues that refugee body politics reflect diasporic communities' attempts to negotiate new forms of membership among themselves where, pointing to the Vietnam War Memorial in Westminster as an illustrative example, he discusses the militarized RVN soldier's importance to Little Saigon's process of political memberment:

The central place of the South Vietnamese soldier and armed forces in the Vietnamese diasporic imaginary is best represented by the Vietnam War Memorial in Westminster, California, which opened to the public in 2003. It features a statue of an American soldier and South Vietnamese soldier standing side by side with an accompanying plaque that casts them as defenders of "freedom and democracy." By focusing on soldiers, the memorial fails to speak to the various discourses of the Vietnamese as foreign allies, immigrants/refugees, racial-ethnic minorities, and Asian Americans "by validating these discourses through the figure of the anticommunist male soldier, [which] renders invisible the rest of the Vietnamese American community."

Elaborating on this point by analyzing the 2013 annual Tet parade to celebrate the Lunar New Year, Bui continues by pointing to how, in turn, an example of dismemberment occurred when queer members of the refugee community were denied formal participation in the area's biggest annual holiday parade after funding for it shifted to the Vietnamese American Federation of Southern California, an organization heavily backed by Little Saigon's many Catholic Vietnamese organizations. So while members of the LGBTQ+ community had marched in the parade as a formal contingent beginning in 2010, Bui (115) argues that the subsequent shift in sponsorship led parade organizers to dismember queer members from Little Saigon's body politic by making a blanket statement that "gay people are not representative of the Vietnamese American community at large."

⁹ Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. University of Michigan Press, 1994.

¹⁰ Bui, Long T. *Returns of War: South Vietnam and the Price of Refugee Memory*. NYU Press, 2018.

As a result, given the symbolic weight of these commemorative projects for mediating the nation's cultural memory towards the war, it becomes clear that the centering of the good refugee and the South Vietnamese soldier within national and refugee accounts worked to affirm the militarized national order of things and American hegemony in particular by reorganizing the public's affective attachments in their favor. But what does this centering imply about what else was dismembered for the production of these specific refugee subjectivities, narratives, and body politics? If it is the cisheteropatriarchal settler state within which these politics have been negotiated, who is also disappeared, rendered impossible, and deprived of the means to self-representation in this act of membering a body politic that attaches to the nation-state form and its attendant investments?

Reflecting on the dismembered parts of Little Saigon's body politic as the accumulation of unidealized expressions of its collective form, my analysis therefore begins from this ongoing conversation to examine dismemberment as a cultural process that has significant material implications. Using this frame of memberment/dismemberment, *Bad Refugees* focuses specifically on the emergence of the disposable "Indochinese gang member" and the "Saigonese-bar-girl-turned-massage-parlor-worker" in the case of Orange County as key bad refugee figures in this process of discursive negotiation that distinguished between acceptable and unacceptable refugee subjects in the historical period following the Fall of Saigon through the end of the Reagan presidency. Beyond detailing these vital contestations over how the war came to be negotiated in cultural memory through the formation of "bad refugees," however, the broad arc of the following chapters additionally traces these adjudications within the "moral-rational" genealogy of racial capitalism to situate how contested refugeehoods emerged within the nation state relative to transformations in its political economic structure. As such, this project considers how negotiations over cultural memory that produce these symbolic distinctions become structured enough to be durably materialized across time and space—how, in other words, symbolic contests over idealized and discarded refugeehoods become categorically hardened and bureaucratically useful for the state's investment in its structures of living and dying. Written in alignment with Espiritu and Duong's (2018) framework of "feminist refugee epistemology" that merges transnational feminist studies with critical refugee studies to reconceptualize war-driven displacement as not only destructive in nature but also *productive* of certain social forms, the following chapters consequently look to the intimate corners of everyday life to foreground a politics of the private in relation to the public, the mundane in relation to the spectacularized, and the local in relation to the global to discern how our social worlds have emerged from these material conditions of war and displacement, ultimately questioning along the way the legitimacy of the state to determine conditions of belonging by considering its own inherent reliance of a territorialized, settler national order of things.

AMERICA'S ENTANGLED FOREVER WARS

In terms of the American story *of* itself, *by* itself, attention must be given to the Vietnam War era in particular as pivotal to understanding the United States in the long "post-civil rights" half-century. In many ways—especially at the time—the war was apparent in its omnipresence: 27 million eligible men waiting with bated breath to know if they, too, would be drafted like the 2.2 million *unfortunate* sons ultimately sent overseas between 1964 and 1973; news media regularly circulating wartime images like that of Buddhist monk Thích Quảng Đức setting himself on fire on the busy streets of Saigon to protest the repressive Catholic regime of U.S.-backed Ngô Đình Diệm; later, Nick Ut's photograph of Phan Thị Kim Phúc, once only known as the "Napalm girl," shocks and horrifies an already war-weary American public, winning Ut the Pulitzer Prize in

1973. In 1960s and early 1970s America, the Vietnam War often felt immediate and totalizing. Yet despite being the nation's "first [and arguably *most*] televised war," this chapter of U.S. military intervention in Southeast Asia remains "the war with a difficult memory"—that lingers and hides, just out of sight, thinly obscured by a flimsy post-war narrative of magnanimous American rescue and grateful refugees fleeing communist oppression.¹¹

This forgetting, Viet Thanh Nguyen (105) forwards, is fundamentally related to the political organization of collective memory, in which power is wielded through an entire apparatus that delivers certain images to us that create particular ways of narrating the past, extending "from the photographer to his equipment to the bureau that pays for his time and his film to the machines that airlift the film from outside the war zone to the homeland offices that copyright, distribute, archive, and circulate in perpetuity those images in which the Vietnamese are burned and scarred." Hence, Nguyen (4) astutely perceives, "all wars are fought twice, the first time on the battlefield, the second time in memory," in which organized remembering of the war trades in obfuscation, illusion, and often, sheer entertainment value to circulate particular "screen memories" that work to recuperate imperial state violence in the national imagination. Nguyen's writings on the U.S. war machine, however, point to an ongoing war that is not just fought "in memory" but also in regular *practice*. A war that, as Eric Tang suggests, continues to unsettle Southeast Asian refugees as they are forced to move from one substandard housing unit to another, as they are surveilled by "street level bureaucrats," and as they are disciplined by the criminal-legal system.¹² *Bad Refugees* consequently forwards both a spatial and a temporal intervention in response to common approaches to thinking about the war in Vietnam and the U.S. war machine more generally.

First, it demonstrates how the common spatial boundary drawn between foreign policy and domestic policy as fundamentally and inherently distinct—and the notion of separate foreign and domestic spheres more broadly—is, in practice, blurred and co-constitutive. America's war in Southeast Asia is typically conceived of as a conflict that occurred somewhere "over there," a conceptual distancing afforded not only by geographic distance but also by the symbolic distance that insulates America from its global concerns. Focusing on the Cold War era, however, Mary Dudziak judiciously argues against isolationist readings of American history by demonstrating how foreign policy goals hoping to minimize America's international reputation as a racist regime converged with the growing domestic civil rights movement to facilitate key social reforms like desegregation.¹³ Thus, Dudziak's analysis demonstrates how narratives that focus exclusively on the civil rights movement as a domestic contest miss the global terms and structure of relations that influenced the pathways of key desegregation struggles.

Likewise, the argument of *Bad Refugees* pivots on such observations that, for example, just as the United States suppressed anti-imperial resistance fighters from overthrowing its colonial authority at the turn of the century in the Philippine Islands, so too did it sanction the transportation of indigenous people from there to put on display in a state of manufactured primitivity at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair—a boomerang of "foreign" and "domestic" state actions that both inaugurated America's empire in the Asia Pacific and legitimated American imperial ambitions in the metropole.¹⁴ In his writing towards a "just memory" of the Vietnam War, Viet Thanh Nguyen brings America's imperial acquisition of the Philippines after the

¹¹ Nguyen, Viet Thanh. *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*. Harvard University Press, 2016.

¹² Tang, Eric. *Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the New York City Hyperghetto*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2015.

¹³ Dudziak, Mary L. *Cold War Civil Rights*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

¹⁴ Go, Julian. "Sociology's Imperial Unconscious: The Emergence of American Sociology in the Context of Empire." *Sociology and Empire* (2013): 83–105.

Spanish–American War into a sweeping timeline of the “American War Century” in order to situate the United States’ specific foray in Southeast Asia within its 20th century imperial ambitions. “Two landmark years bracketed this century.” Nguyen (7) observes. “In 1898, America seized Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii, inaugurating an overseas expansion of American interests that ran into unexpected resistance in 2001, with 9/11 and the ensuing conflicts in the Middle East.” Referencing the name Vietnamese nationals use to refer to what Americans typically call the “Vietnam War,” Nguyen asserts that “The real *American War* [emphasis added] was this entire American century, a long and uneven expansion marked by a few periodic high–intensity conflicts, many low–intensity skirmishes, and the steady drone of a war machine’s ever ongoing preparations.” Traveling through time into the Cold War era of supercharged and consolidated American global power and back through the historical convulsions that created the contemporary landscape to the initial point of settler contact, *Bad Refugees* consequently weaves between these strands of presumptively distinct foreign and domestic instances of state action and encounter from the standpoint of Vietnamese refugees resettled in the metropole, working to in part unsettle how we conceptualize ourselves within global–historical time and how we understand the imperial “margins” of state activity.

As Julia Adams and Steve Pincus (336) have argued, the commonly presumed sociological demarcation between modern nation states and empires has been increasingly challenged by historical scholarship on the early modern period of European state formation, during which the logic of colonial expansion informed the material and cultural modes through which European imperial nation states jockeyed for global power both outside of Europe and within it. “While today’s scholars refer to the extra–European manifestations of European power in the early modern world as empires, contemporaries referred to them as states,” they intervene, and “[w]hile scholars often refer to the consolidation of territory in the early modern period as the making of nation–states, contemporaries more often called this consolidation, even internal to Europe, the making of empires”—effectively blurring contemporary sociological distinctions between modern states and empires to reveal their parallel and oftentimes coterminous usages from the 15th century onwards.¹⁵ Therefore, what exactly constitutes distinct “foreign” or “domestic”—and by extension, “national” or “imperial”—domains of state activity in such scenarios, I argue, become muddled and entwined.

Meanwhile, the temporal intervention that *Bad Refugees* forwards is offered in response to common understandings that the Vietnam War ended in 1975 with the Fall of Saigon. Bringing the “long timeline of slavery’s continuance” into his own study of Cambodian refugee experiences with flight and resettlement in the Bronx, Eric Tang’s contextualization of his ethnographic participants’ lives within the racialized apparatus of U.S. drug, crime, and welfare policy brings this timeline of racial capitalism into a generative convergence with the imperial timeline of US militarism during the American War Century. Taking these “domestic wars” like, as discussed in Chapter 3, Orange County’s “war on prostitution” alongside America’s “foreign wars” like the one in Southeast Asia, *Bad Refugees* begins from the idea that wars—because they derive from the state as the singular entity with a monopoly on legitimated violence within a given territory—can be understood not as discrete events in linear historical time but rather as constitutive of a permanent condition of war resulting from a national order of things upheld by the regular practice of state violence. The analysis thus conceptualizes war as, in part, corresponding to Van der Dennen’s (1) definition, where it is conceived as “a species in the genus of violence: more specifically it is collective, direct, manifest, personal, intentional, organized, institutionalized, instrumental, sanctioned, and sometimes ritualized and regulated, violence.”¹⁶ Consequently, rather than view the

¹⁵ Adams, J., & Pincus, S. (2017). “Imperial States in the Age of Discovery.” In K. Morgan & A. Orloff (Eds.), *The Many Hands of the State: Theorizing Political Authority and Social Control* (pp. 333–348). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶ Van der Dennen, Johan MG. “On War: Concepts, Definitions, Research Data.” *Yearbook on Peace and Conflict Studies*, 1981.

Vietnam War as a singularly discrete event with its own contained narrative and meaning, I connect it to America's "other" wars—both literal and metaphorical, "domestic" and "foreign"—to attend to what comprehending the convergence of those wars reveals about the American nation state that emerged as a global superpower after World War II.

In addition to conceptualizing war as a species of violence regularly waged by the state, it follows that wars can be additionally understood as weighty accumulations of legitimized violence—wielded along both its acute and more quotidian registers—that are only narratively comprehended—if only partially and asymmetrically—through the *doing of war* that materializes uneven warscapes in space and understandings of war as bounded in time. Defined as the range of practices through which state violence is both enacted and made legible as purposeful and legitimate, "doing war" moves beyond just unsettling war from the conception that it is neatly bound in space—as in, "foreign" or "domestic"—to also unsettling wars' conventional temporalities as discrete periods in linear time. Defining war as constituted through clusters of situationally meaningful interactions and pursuits that make war real as a felt, experienced, and conceptually bounded social fact, "doing war" emphasizes, to paraphrase and play on Erving Goffman's famous maxim, not wars and their moments, but moments and their wars.¹⁷

Therefore, when America was faced with its military loss to Vietnam in 1975, it did not simply halt its wartime pursuits. Rather, it continued to practice legitimated violence through other means, particularly via alternative policy interventions and the state's symbiotic relation with public-facing associations and possessive citizen-subjects. According to Elisabeth Clemens (37):

Although political theory sometimes invites us to imagine state and society—or state, civil society, and market—as separate and delineated domains, this interpenetration of associational activity and state projects highlights pervasive forms of interdependence. Just as some species depend on their entanglement with others to survive, so the administrative arrangements of American governance often rely upon private organizations to deliver services and to manage relationships between formal agencies and the organization of other domains of social life. In this specific sense the American state is symbiotic, dependent on the organized efforts of private persons and groups to advance projects and implement public policy.¹⁸

So while formal appendages of the American nation state like the U.S. military appeared to largely stop their part in doing war against "the Vietnamese" after 1975, the conduct of activities to forward war's *objectives* continued through both the actions of the U.S. nation state itself (e.g. Congress's passage of the Refugee Act of 1980) and its interrelationships with a number of groups and private persons. From this perspective, voluntary agencies like the United States Catholic Conference that helped resettle South Vietnamese refugees after the Fall of Saigon, individual "citizen-heroes" like American businessman Robert Macauley who helped evacuate children during Operation Babylift, sympathetic media like *The Orange County Register* that reported on the "wretched plight" of unsettled Vietnamese boat people, and often Vietnamese refugees themselves all worked

¹⁷ "Not then, men and their moments. Rather, moments and their men," as written by Erving Goffman in *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (2017/1967).

¹⁸ Clemens, Elisabeth S. "Reconciling Equal Treatment with Respect for Individuality: Associations in the Symbiotic State." *The Many Hands of the State: Theorizing Political Authority and Social Control*, edited by Kimberly J. Morgan and Ann Shola Orloff, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017, pp. 35–57.

alongside federal, state, and local governments to continue to fight the war not just “in memory” but also along its ongoing material registers.

Consequently, *Bad Refugees* builds on these points to assert that this regular practice of state violence thereby insinuates that conventional timelines of when wars begin and end obscure the processual and entangled histories of America’s imperial war games in the Asia Pacific, Central and South America, and the Middle East and North Africa regions as well as its racialized domestic wars against “poverty,” “drugs,” “crime,” and “sexual vice” on the homefront. As such, *Bad Refugees* uses these spatial and temporal interventions in our understanding of state violence to participate in a historical reperiodization of the Vietnam War, extending its timeline back into both nations’ intertwined imperial histories as well as forward past the war’s conventional endpoint of 1975 into the contemporary moment, in order to chart how military–territorial forms of imperial violence became rationalized into administrative violence over time while remaining enduringly consequential. In tracing the emergence of Bad Refugee figures within the context of a contested America during the long post–civil rights half–century, particularly during and immediately after what Judith Stein has termed the “pivotal decade,” it offers a “Southern theory” of body *counts* that matter as told from the standpoint of the criminalized and dismembered bad refugee subject.^{19,20,21}

UNSETTLING BAD REFUGEES

This model of an associational state that Elisabeth Clemens forwards helps conceptualize the varied arenas through which the war “in Vietnam” continued to be practiced well after 1975. In addition to the idea that the state symbiotically relies on its associational relationships to help manage its populace, Clemens also argues that these associational relationships are often a necessary feature of state functioning because they allow the state to manage two contradictory ways of thinking about the relationships it has to the subjects under its authority: one that emphasizes the universalism of rights equally secured and extended by the state to all those with full civic standing and another that must respond to variations in social standing within that populace that generate expectations of differential treatment. That the state uses its symbiotic relationships with public–facing associations to manage this contradiction between consistent treatment across the citizenry and differential treatment based on their individuality points to another observation made by Aihwa Ong (78) regarding what may structure how those contradictions are actually resolved in practice. “Studying state power in the United States, perhaps more than in other societies, require that we think not in terms of an overarching state apparatus, but in terms of a multiplicity of networks through which various authorities, nonprofit agencies, programs, and experts translate democratic goals in relation to target populations,” Ong states, paralleling Clemens.²²

However, beyond just neutrally managing different social groups within a purportedly universalist society, Ong draws on the Foucauldian notion of governmentality to assert that the state operates through these associations in order to engage in a project of moral regulation. In an ethnography on resettled Cambodian refugees in Northern California, Ong therefore presents the Refugee as an *ethical figure* that marks the boundary of national belonging while also acting upon refugees who come to be interpreted, managed, and normalized

¹⁹ Stein, Judith. *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies*. Yale University Press, 2010.

²⁰ Connell, Raewyn. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*. Routledge, 2020.

²¹ Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Routledge, 2011.

²² Ong, Aihwa. *Buddha Is Hiding*. University of California Press, 2003.

into certain kinds of morally constituted citizen–subjects. Given this, what analytical purchase does placing the Bad Refugee at the center of this project then provide as a prototypically *unethical figure*? Before elaborating on how this dissertation leverages the Bad Refugee as an analytic in the context of America’s entangled forever wars, the following discussion will first turn to my engagement with the ongoing Critical Refugee Studies project, then to an overview of scholarship on the emergence and function of the Good Refugee, and then finally to the specific justification for turning to the Bad Refugee in order to comprehend the conduct of state imperial violence in the long post – civil rights half–century.

THE GLOBAL REFUGEE REGIME

Taking a global and historical view of the American War Century, the following analysis aligns with Liisa H. Malkki’s genealogy of the Refugee as an epistemic “problem” under construction, which solidified after World War II when key techniques used for managing large–scale population displacements became standardized and broadly applied on a global scale.²³ In the destructive wake of WWII, the need to redefine entire national communities and how they relate to each other—including their obligations to displaced persons—necessitated the emergence of a formal category through which the law could act and govern. While displaced persons of course existed prior to the end of WWII, the category of the “Refugee” as a legible politico–legal object of knowledge emerged out of *that* war’s particular conditions of possibility—its massive displacements, the postwar shame of having refused entry to asylees fleeing the Holocaust, the 1948 adoption of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the subsequent definition of refugee status according to the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

In the contemporary context, mass displacement across the Global South has largely resulted in flows of people that predominantly settle within the Global South rather than the Global North. This in part reflects the nearly impossible conditions under which the existing international legal system—led most prominently by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in collaboration with national government entities like the U.S. Department of Homeland Security—judges displaced people as first legible as refugees and then fit for resettlement in the Global North. As Mai–Linh K. Hong (34) argues, the contemporary refugee regime—defined as “the global infrastructure of international and domestic laws, institutions, and legal processes that contour refugee flows”—operates to gatekeep asylum seekers more than to ever solve the “refugee problem.”²⁴ In making the observation that this gatekeeping consequently only serves the humanitarian needs of a small fraction of the over 70 million displaced persons seeking resettlement worldwide, Hong contends that this global refugee regime thus largely exists to simply manage refugee flows into the wealthier nations that make up the Global North.

Legitimated by dominant cultural narratives that oscillate between either framing refugees as an “encroaching tide” or as grateful objects of rescue saved by magnanimous nations sympathetic to their plight, narratives about refugees rarely consider their plights as stemming from factors generated within and by the Global North itself. However, displacement exists in relation to emplacement within the presumed naturalness of a national order of things reliant on conditions of attachment to a territorialized polity and people, as Malkki argues. Thus, as Nevzat Soguk and Emma Haddad separately demonstrate, refugeehood is merely the displaced condition of statecraft, wherein humanitarian interventions on behalf of refugees enforce normalized

²³ Malkki, Liisa H. “Refugees and Exile: From ‘Refugee Studies’ To The National Order Of Things.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1995): 495–523.

²⁴ Hong, Mai–Linh K. “Navigating the Global Refugee Regime: Law, Myth, Story.” *Amerasia Journal* 46.1 (2020): 34–48.

intergovernmental reinscriptions of the citizen–nation–state hierarchy.^{25,26} From this perspective, the so-called refugee problem is an unsolvable one because modern states regularly produce displacement through their reliance on territorialization, border securitization, and war to legitimate their own authority to border, claim, and subject in the name of the nation.

In order to participate in an analysis of the Bad Refugee’s significance within this broader context of the global refugee regime, then, I position myself as writing in conversation with Critical Refugee Studies, defined by Y  n L   Espiritu (22) as a project that:

“[C]onceptualizes the refugee not as an object of investigation but rather as a paradigm whose function [is] to establish and make intelligible a wider set of problems. *This field begins with the premise that the refugee, who inhabits a condition of statelessness, radically calls into question the principles of the nation state and the idealized goal of inclusion and recognition within it* [emphasis added]. Critical refugee studies thus flip the script, positing that it is the existence of the displaced refugee, rather than the rooted citizen, that provides the clue to a new politics and model of international relations. Yet...critical refugee studies scholars need to do more than critique; we need to be attentive to refugees as ‘intentionalized beings’ who possess and enact their own politics as they emerge out of the ruins of war and its aftermath...In short, critical refugee study scholarship conceptualizes the “refugee” as a critical idea but also as a social actor whose life, when traced, illuminates the interconnections of colonization, war, and global social change.”

This alignment consequently allows this project to move beyond what Julian Go has called mainstream American sociology’s “imperial unconscious,” which tends to delimit much disciplinary thinking within the boundaries of the Western nation state and the temporal period it declares as taking place “after” the period of European colonization.

GOOD REFUGEES IN THE SERVICE OF THE NATION STATE

Mae Ngai’s careful examination of the emergence of America’s restrictive immigration regime in the 1920s shows how immigration restrictions—particularly national–origin and numerical quotas—have been central features of how the state manages the composition of its citizenry, working to remap and shore up the nation’s physical and cultural borders by reconfiguring racialized categories in territorialized space.²⁷ While the global refugee regime largely functions to complement and partially constitute this restrictive American model of immigration by curtailing asylees’ unchecked resettlement within its borders, it is important to note that this system also admits *certain* petitioners for resettlement on a regular basis. Suggesting that selective acceptance into the nation is thus conditional—based on terms established by the state itself—this section builds on Aihwa Ong’s conceptualization of the Refugee as an ethical figure to elaborate on how asylum seekers came to be disciplined into deserving petitioners worthy of state recognition and provision vis-  -vis the *Good* Refugee.

Asylees hoping to embody the desirable qualities signified by Good Refugee status must learn how to cultivate what Chiara Galli terms “humanitarian capital” to secure authorization for their resettlement. Defined

²⁵ Soguk, Nevzat. *States and Strangers: Refugees and Displacements of Statecraft*. University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

²⁶ Haddad, Emma. *The Refugee in International Society: Between Sovereigns*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

²⁷ Ngai, Mae. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.

as a form of symbolic capital that derives from legal intermediaries' translation of immigrant suffering into legible claims upon which adjudicators in the immigration bureaucracy can meaningfully act, Galli forwards that the relative value of this humanitarian capital exists in an inverse relationship to the perceived "deportability" of the petitioning party.²⁸ Thus, to *become* a good refugee means to cultivate legible forms of humanitarian capital that align with the state's definition of what exactly is *not* deportable—a form of legal discipline that assures the compliance of aspiring good refugees who want to assert their belonging within the national community to secure permission for resettlement.

Scholars have identified how sites like refugee camps, welfare offices, and other arenas in which asylees and refugees interface with the state's many "fingers" operate as disciplinary technologies that first place asylum seekers in probationary space until determined worthy of state support and then in a condition of regular surveillance after refugee status is conferred. Across these sites at which the state and refugee are acutely enmeshed, Ong theorizes that three primary technologies have worked to form the figure of the ethical refugee: (1) historical racial bipolarism and orientalism; (2) related processes of poverty governance with respect to moral deservingness; and (3) American foreign policy's reliance on the moral refugee figure. The Good Refugee, which represents the positively assimilated subject towards which the properly comported refugee is expected to aspire, is therefore marked by a particular *racialized* and *orientalized* symbolic and material position, co-constituted according to its utility to American interests.

This racialized and orientalized position can be understood through the Cold War construction of the Model Minority. Following the Second World War, the atrocities of the Holocaust, and mass global decolonization, Jodi Melamed (xvi) points to how *overt* white supremacy's loss of credibility as a racial discourse and order in the postwar period ruptured the legitimacy of the world historical formations that preceded it. "Before World War II white supremacy justified economic inequality within the United States and Europe and between colonizers and their colonies. After the racial break state-recognized U.S. antiracisms replaced white supremacy as the chief ideological mode for making the inequalities that global capitalism generated appear necessary, natural, or fair."²⁹ As such, the nation in this post-WWII period needed to reconcile growing calls to significantly expand who exactly could be considered "American" in more racially capacious conceptualizations of national belonging all the while managing to secure its interests in relation to both the decolonizing "Third World" and unruly domestic Others.

Melamed (x) argues that the organizing terms of the "Negro problem"—which forwarded that the full integration of African Americans into U.S. society via economic success would demonstrate and redeem American capitalism as race-neutral—was "instrumental for generating a new kind of antiracism that was productive for U.S. global ascendancy and leadership of transnational capitalism" rather than necessarily resistant to it. Additionally used to justify transnational capital flight through deindustrialization at home and globalization abroad, this logic of recuperation-through-economic-integration was analogously applied to Third World economies as part of the United States' theory of economic modernization used to counter Soviet propaganda about capitalism's irredeemability. The "Negro problem" and the "Third World problem" consequently provided a specific strategy through which to reject the materially redistributive demands of the US's post-1965 social movements as well as mobilized a more generalized global logic to negate Soviet critiques by claiming that racism was not entangled with capitalism.

²⁸ Galli, Chiara. "Humanitarian capital: How Lawyers Help Immigrants Use Suffering To Claim Membership In The Nation-State." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46.11 (2020): 2181–2198.

²⁹ Melamed, Jodi. *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

From that context of reconstituted racial formations in the postwar period, Robert G. Lee demonstrates how Asian racialization in the United States transitioned from its earlier “Yellow Peril” expressions prior to and during WWII to its subsequent liberal multicultural expression through the model minority stereotype, a convenient racialized figure that painted Asian groups living in America as assimilable, politically obedient, and ready to embrace the meritocratic process to achieve the American Dream.³⁰ The Cold War construction of the model minority figure thus drew upon cultural racism to position Asian groups in the United States as a racial wedge whose narrative of “successful” assimilation into the nation helped legitimize the state and forward several of its Cold War containment policies. “Three specters haunted Cold War America in the 1950s,” Lee (257) argues,

“[T]he red menace of communism, the black menace of race mixing, and the white menace of homosexuality. On the international front, the narrative of ethnic assimilation sent a message to the Third World, especially to Asia, where the United States was engaged in increasingly fierce struggles with nationalist and Communist insurgencies, that the United States was a liberal democratic state where people of color could enjoy equal rights and upward mobility. On the home front, it sent a message to ‘Negros and other minorities’ that accommodation would be rewarded, while militancy would be contained and crushed.”

The emergence of the Good Refugee fleeing communist oppression in Southeast Asia consequently converged with—and really, constituted in large part—the Cold War construction of the model minority. Due to how refugees came to be racialized despite the actual material conditions in which they were living, Eric Tang observes how the Southeast Asian refugee consequently became central to model minority mythmaking, artfully employed to further demonize the supposed failure of poor Black and Latinx communities living in America’s “inner cities” while obscuring the precarity of refugee lives produced from U.S. militarism abroad.

That this racialized and orientalized position of the Good Refugee serves a legitimating function points to Ong’s specification that notes how the figuration of the ethical refugee is co-constituted with the interests of the nation state. Good refugees are admitted because they—as a class of persons—are of “special concern” to American interests, a humanitarian policy that co-evolved with U.S. Cold War strategy to use Cuban and Southeast Asian refugees to symbolically repudiate communism’s brutalities and failures. For example, Yê’n Lê Espiritu’s elaboration on the Good [Vietnamese] Refugee effectively illustrates its utility in upholding the militarized national order of things. Tracing its emergence as a childlike object of paternalistic rescue following the Fall of Saigon, Espiritu demonstrates how the ethical refugee figure became symbolically leveraged to support attempts to memorialize the Vietnam War as a moral and necessary “good war.” Good refugees embodied the “we-win-even-if-we-lose” narrative. Portrayed as well-assimilated, grateful recipients of American liberation, the Vietnamese professional class, high-performing students, anti-communists, and other properly comported refugee persons helped bolster the narrative of America winning the post-war through the evidence of their own normative achievements and ideological alignments. In documenting the recuperation of both Vietnam War veterans and South Vietnamese refugees, Espiritu argues that these representations’ focus on the “gift of freedom” and its proclaimed rewards worked to recuperate not just the war in Southeast Asia but U.S. militarism writ large for the nation’s future forever wars.

³⁰ Lee, Robert G. “The Cold War Construction of the Model Minority Myth.” *Asian American Studies Now*. Rutgers University Press, 2010. 256–271.

Mimi Thi Nguyen (12) defines the “gift of freedom” as “an assemblage of liberal political philosophies, regimes of representation, and structures of enforcement that measure and manufacture freedom and its others” in continuity with imperial discourse and practice.³¹ Reliant on a definition of freedom that is not assumed to be inherently possessed but instead must be given, the gift of freedom fosters attachments between racial, colonial others and the entities declared as their liberators, manufacturing an impossible debt that regularly demands repayment in the form of good comportment. The aspiring good refugee must therefore perform gratitude and embrace America’s professed freedoms because proper comportment operates as a conditional requirement for resettlement.

The implication of the gift of freedom is that there is no set end to the contractual expectations it imposes on the “liberated.” The contract endures, spanning generations and compelling even those far flung from the Vietnam War towards the militarized demands of the nation in its *other* wars. Looking to the United States’ campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, Long T. Bui (123) forwards the concept of “militarized freedoms”—a refugee condition in which resettlement within a militarized state produces militarized forms of belonging. Bridging second-generation, Vietnamese American military officers’ aspirational attachments to a receiving nation that meaningfully grounds belonging in patriotic duty with officers’ mournful attachments to a South Vietnamese “homeland” they feel symbolically obligated to “defend” in other global conflicts, Bui somberly demonstrates the intergenerational debt manufactured by the gift of freedom that entangles the Good Refugee in the furtherance of the militarized nation’s other wars of imperial ambition. Perpetually mapped vis-à-vis the militarized Good Refugee and regularly disciplined to wholly conform to the state’s conditions of acceptance, aspiring good refugees therefore become consequently deputized to fight for the nation both literally and figuratively in a permanent condition of contingent, martial citizenship.

BEYOND BAD REFUGEES AS PROBLEMS-TO-BE-SOLVED

My discussion of how the Bad Refugee has been manufactured as an unethical figure out of the state’s monopoly on legitimate violence consequently reflects Chandan Reddy’s intervention in conventional conceptualizations of state-given freedoms. At the heart of Reddy’s analysis sits his concern with a crucial contradiction of political liberal modernity between the nation state’s claim to provide freedom from violence at the same time that it regularly deploys violence against those it deems irrational or poorly incorporated.³² Beginning from a definition of the state as an entity that holds a monopoly over legitimated violence in a given territory, it consequently follows that any violence that is not sanctioned by the state is always already rendered *illegitimate*—irrational, pathological, threatening—thereby giving the state permanent authorization to wage moral war against a whole host of violences deemed illegitimate at home or abroad, publicly or privately. Unlike state violence, illegitimate violence cannot, by definition, achieve moral value. As a result, that which is rendered illegitimate becomes consequently processed through a problem-based framework and marked as disposable to the nation state.

In considering the Bad Refugee as an unethical figure, this project therefore elucidates how moral failure in the form of illegitimate violence becomes categorically produced and disposed of as well as how that disposability produces both a condition of social death *and* radical potentialities among the disposed to resist

³¹ Nguyen, Mimi Thi. *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages*. Duke University Press, 2012.

³² Reddy, Chandan. *Freedom with Violence*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

state violence. Before I proceed further, however, it is important to note here why I have chosen to use the phrase “Bad Refugee” to name the so-called problem at the center of this analysis. Firstly, it should be understood that I am using the term with implied scare quotes throughout the text and that this assessment of good versus bad is not a representation of my own sentiments but instead refers to how normative discourse tends to comprehend and evaluate refugees along that moral dimension. Otherwise, I use the term to signify a duality present within “bad” as a modifier—with both negative and positive valences—that enables unsettling as a practice through its usage.

On the one hand, I use “Bad Refugee” as if uttered in a scolding tone “from above” to gesture to the paternalistic relationship between the Global North and the refugees it determines as either eligible or ineligible for resettlement within its borders. Moreover, this gesture towards paternalism also aims to recall the paternalism within imperialism’s “civilizing mission”—one in which America sought to increasingly participate at the turn of the century when it acquired the Philippine Islands and one that, as I and many others have argued, has continued to pursue as an established superpower following WWII.³³ In the particular context of the Vietnam War, Long Bui correspondingly observes that the American approach to its South Vietnamese allies was always a tutelary one in which South Vietnam was represented as childlike—in need of guidance from a stronger, benevolent parent state in order to develop the capacity for full independence. While the metaphorical parent state rewards good refugees for performing gratitude and embracing America’s professed freedoms, bad refugees are punished for their ingratitude and lack of proper comportment. Their supposed failure to integrate into the normative order thereby aligns with my tutelary usage of “bad,” a designation that signals the paternalistic dynamic that enables the United States and other nations in the Global North to determine the moral terms of refugee receipt and to delimit the bounds of freedom within the unit of the nation state itself.

However, my usage of the term here also plays on other connotations of bad “from below” to probe further into what it would mean to view the “bad refugee” as an “intentionalized being...whose life, when traced, illuminates the interconnections of colonization, war, and global social change.” Placing the figure of the Bad *Vietnamese* Refugee within its racialized context, my other usage of “bad” draws on Eve Oishi’s (2011) discussion of the “Bad Asian” to identify a countersignification that contests the naturalized assumption of the model minority’s unproblematized existence. “[A]ny Asian American who makes noise, acts nasty, or in any way flouts the expectations of racist stereotype[s] is a Bad Asian,” Oishi declares. “Bad as in ‘badass.’ Bad as in anyone who does not covet white patriarchal approval; anyone who challenges racism, class oppression, sexism, homophobia; anyone who talks candidly about sex and desire. Bad Asians are inherently threatening to hegemonic systems, but they do not always choose their oppositional status.”³⁴ Oishi’s counterreading of the Bad Asian thus enables a usage of the term “bad refugee” that foregrounds the refusal of persons labeled as such to be disciplined into proper citizen-subjects.

In the act of unsettling these attributions of badness, the second usage returns the gaze of sociological lines of questioning that seek to accept abstracted social problems produced by the state as knowable categories constituted by classes of persons who, as “problems,” are capable of being objectively diagnosed and solved. For example, across their several papers on segmented assimilation, Bankston and Zhou forward that Vietnamese ethnicity operates as a form of social capital because it encourages a dedication to educational attainment and

³³ Wilde, Ralph. *International Territorial Administration: How Trusteeship and the Civilizing Mission Never Went Away*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

³⁴ Oishi, Eve. “Bad Asians: New Film and Video by Queer Asian American Artists.” *Countervisions: Asian American Film Criticism* 231 (2000): 221.

family values.³⁵ When attempting to explain the differences in educational performance among second generation Vietnamese adolescents, the authors suggest that socialization into ethnically homogeneous friend groups facilitates upward assimilation while socialization into racially heterogeneous friend groups, particularly those that include Black peers, results in downward assimilation. Their identification of a culturally essentialist Vietnamese ethnicity as family oriented and educationally motivated in this context of upward assimilation thus shows how these kinds of sociological studies on assimilation work to naturalize the properly assimilated refugee as normal, desirable, and good while framing proximity to Black peers as the domain of deviant, poorly assimilated, bad refugees.

As Linh Thủy Nguyễn has written, however, rather than simply documenting established facts about refugee communities in America, the implementation of these social science surveys and studies on the so-called refugee problem operated as “legibility projects” that conferred “honorary whiteness” onto properly assimilated refugees while setting aside improperly assimilated ones as obdurate problems.³⁶ In her repudiation of the representational distortions enacted by early 20th century sociologists when studying the “urban poor,” Saidiya Hartman (35) levels that these sociological gazes affixed onto urban poverty from beyond the veil transformed the ontological totality of Black people “into social documents and statistical persons, reduced to the human excrescence of social law and slum ecology”—dispossessed of agency and beauty but made to “stand in for sweeping historical narratives about the progress or failure of the Negro.”³⁷ Echoing Hartman’s refutation of certain sociological approaches that individualize and pathologize deviance as a problem that is simply possessed by certain communities, my second usage of “bad” interrogates these assessments of differential value that underwrite such definitions of deviance and inverts its concern towards the power that enables the capacity to label deviance at all.

In questioning the function of social value in constituting deviance through the figure of the Bad Refugee, the overarching analysis is informed by Lisa Marie Cacho’s observation in *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* that some groups, based on the very ontological premise of their emergence, can never represent themselves as moral and deserving because the specific categories to which they have been assigned (e.g. “illegal aliens,” “gang members,” “terrorist suspects”) are *always already* in opposition to our normative, magisterial view of the law as society’s moral arbiter.³⁸ “To say that some groups form the foundation for law is to say that law is dependent upon the permanence of certain groups’ criminalization,” Cacho (6) asserts. These very groups are then deemed “ineligible for personhood—as populations subjected to laws but refused the legal means to contest those laws as well as denied both the political legitimacy and moral credibility necessary to question them.” By examining the figure of the Bad Refugee, then, the following chapters can participate in an analysis of how the state leverages particular discourses to render certain refugee subjects—in–formation—once conditionally “gifted” rights–based personhood upon refugee receipt—into criminalized “bad refugees” ultimately ineligible for personhood and rights.

³⁵ See for example: Zhou, Min, and Carl L. Bankston III. “Social Capital and the Adaptation of the Second Generation: The Case of Vietnamese Youth in New Orleans.” *International Migration Review* 28,4 (1994): 821–845.; Bankston III, Carl L., and Min Zhou. “The Social adjustment of Vietnamese American Adolescents: Evidence for a Segmented–Assimilation Approach.” *Social Science Quarterly* (1997): 508–523.; Zhou, Min, and Carl Bankston. *Growing up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States*. Russell Sage Foundation, 1998.

³⁶ Nguyễn, Linh Thủy. ““Loving Couples and Families”: Assimilation as Honorary Whiteness and the Making of the Vietnamese Refugee Family.” *Social Sciences* 10,6 (2021): 209.

³⁷ Hartman, Saidiya. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals*. WW Norton & Company, 2019.

³⁸ Cacho, Lisa Marie. *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. NYU Press, 2012.

While the criminalized *figure* exists as the symbolic receptacle onto which all negative stereotypes can be mapped, Cacho lastly points to the criminalized *person's* forced engagement in a relative politics of social value that always requires them to assert their value relative to some dispossessed Other. Drawing upon Lindon Barrett's notion that an object of value requires an Other whose negative value functions as a resource, the paradox that Cacho (17) identifies is that in attempting to assert one's own value as deserving of rights-based personhood, one must always participate in the relative devaluation of "an/other, and that other is almost always poor, racialized, criminalized, segregated, legally vulnerable, and unprotected."³⁹ This exchange of value therefore creates a permanent order wherein potentially criminalized groups (as the good refugee is always reminded of the gift of freedom's conditional terms of extension) assert their own value at the expense of Others subject to the same modes of devaluation. Hence, following Cacho's observation of this paradox, the position ultimately argued throughout this dissertation generally rejects relative recognition as the political goal, where I maintain that relative valuation based on human hierarchization underwrites a social value system reliant on criminalization's permanence.

Finally, given this conceptualization of criminalization's permanence as constitutive with the legal-bureaucratic authority of the state, *Bad Refugees'* engagement with social death corresponds to a commensurately troubled notion of innocence since groups always already criminalized cannot ever access its professed protections. Because the subject matter of this dissertation must sit with the realities of sexual assault, murder, war, and other forms of violence, it cannot easily attach itself to innocence as a particularly useful aspiration or analytic. Instead, my arguments draw on Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (234) contention that this overall "insistence on finding innocents among the convicted or killed both projects and derives energy from all the various 'should not be in cages' categories"—reliant on the always already criminalized—i.e. the so-called "*real bad thing/person/act*"—that Cacho, too, identifies.⁴⁰ However, this compulsion to discover innocence, Gilmore notes, represents a mere attempt to recuperate a liberal political modernity within which the figure of the Innocent is rendered legible and real, creating a moral domain within which the state is authorized to act. But ultimately, Gilmore's argument insists, because it is human disposability rather than innocence that organizes carceral geographies in our post-Keynesian political economic structure, "to insist on innocence is to surrender politically" to a naturalized acceptance of a reformable carceral nation state that is capable of wielding punishment justly for that which it presumes to be "truly criminal."

Thus, this dissertation forwards that the Bad Refugee figure and "bad refugee" persons exist in an instructive liminal space on the margins of Global Northern citizenship. Unlike those who participate in South-South flows and unlike good refugees who manage to productively discipline themselves as deserving subjects within the international human rights regime, the bad refugee troubles the legitimacy of refugee status entirely as having been once-deserving-but-no-longer, making explicit the hypocritical and state-serving terms imposed onto refugees when processed for acceptance into the Global North. Correspondingly, I forward that centering the (B/b)ad (R/r)efugee reveals three important dimensions of its analytical purchase:

First, comprehending the significance of the bad refugee's social death can take a cue from Orlando Patterson's (39) discussion of slavery's fundamentally constitutive relationship to social death as both "an intrusive mode of representing social death [in which] the slave was ritually incorporated as the permanent

³⁹ Barrett, Lindon. "Exemplary Values: Value, Violence, and Others of Value." *SubStance* 21.1 (1992): 77-94.

⁴⁰ Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. "Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence." *Futures of Black Radicalism*, edited by Gaye Theresa Johnson, and Alex Lubin, Verso Books, 2017, 225-240.

enemy on the inside—the ‘domestic enemy’—and as “symbolic of the defeated enemy, the power of the local gods, and the superior honor of the community.”⁴¹ In the post WWII period of mass global decolonization and international re-ordering, the Global North’s intent to largely maintain its economic and geopolitical interests in the postwar period reached a “crisis point” when its representative superpower, the United States, faced a humiliating defeat at the hands of a communist, Third World nation in 1975. Therefore, after America’s hypervisible loss in the Vietnam War, while the state cultivated the Good Refugee to help recuperate its image as a global superpower with moral justification for its war making, the Bad Refugee, too, served a symbolic purpose within the nation state. Deriving from its relegation to social death, I argue that the Bad Refugee (alongside other racialized “problems”) became symbolic of the “domestic enemy” subject to criminalization, policing, incarceration, surveillance, immigrant detention, and other punitive dimensions of state control as well as symbolic of the “defeated enemy” in Vietnam that allowed the American nation state to regularly perform its superior dominance in an attempt to narratively recast its loss in the war as an ongoing, “successful war” against the Bad Refugee. As such, the Bad Refugee emerged as an unethical figure through which the United States came to justify its ongoing use of violence against enemy Others, both foreign and domestic, in order to reassert and maintain its legitimacy during a consequential period in which, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore notes in *Golden Gulag*, the state turned to prison building and broadly growing its carceral capacity to address its legitimation problem.⁴²

Second, the Bad Refugee figure marks the outer limits of experience of the national community, providing a crucial point of moral contrast to those the nation imagines as belonging within it. In a historical sociological study on a 17th century Puritan settlement, Kai T. Erikson draws on archival records to illustrate how deviant behavior—as a regular feature of group determinations of identity and belonging—fits in the texture of social life. For the morally minded Bay Colony community, Erikson finds that deviant forms of behavior functioned as a valuable resource to society, creating the immoral foil of the “Wayward Puritan” whose figuration helped maintain a coherent social order.⁴³ *Bad Refugees* consequently corresponds to Erikson’s work on the centrality of deviance in constituting consequential symbolic group boundaries. I argue that much like the Wayward Puritan, the Bad Refugee’s emergence in the late 1970s as a certain kind of racialized global problem fundamentally occurred because the Bad Refugee, in part, needed to function as a negative figure used to externally mark the symbolic, moral boundaries of the nation during a particularly tumultuous and contested period. Symbolically leveraged by the state and reactionary possessive whites as a racial boogeyman, the Bad Refugee also became a vessel for what Mary Douglas termed “symbolic pollution.”⁴⁴ Like “dirt,” the Bad Refugee became “the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements,” Douglas (36) wrote. Hence, by becoming the negative figure onto which the unassimilable “problems” facing a post-civil rights, post-Vietnam America could be mapped, the Bad Refugee both emerged to symbolically absorb deviance in the refugee community that undermined the war-recuperating narrative function of the Good Refugee as well as to delineate the external boundary of (neo)liberal multiculturalism’s possible inclusion of racial Others into the imagined national community during the period of “formal state antiracisms.”

⁴¹ Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Harvard University Press, 1982.

⁴² Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. University of California Press, 2007.

⁴³ Erikson, Kai. *Wayward Puritans*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 1966.

⁴⁴ Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Routledge, 1966.

Building on Douglas' argument, the third dimension of the (B/b)ad (R/r)efugee's analytical purchase concerns the radical potentialities to refuse and resist state violence produced from the manufacture of the category's disposability. Dirty, Douglas (97) argues, can also function as an oppositional ideal that both upholds and *threatens* that ordered rationality. "Danger lies in transitional states...The person who must pass from one to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others." In centering the subjectification of disposed bad refugees within the political economic order that worked to create the conditions of their surplus, I lastly explore how focusing on the violence of instrumental rationality within the settler capitalist state therefore demonstrates how the state has slowly colonized the human lifeworld.⁴⁵ Treating their dehumanization by the state with a critical seriousness, the analysis reveals how failure to become rationalized subjects resulted in the production of bad refugee disposability over time.

Overall, in taking seriously Espiritu's call to "conceptualize the refugee not as an object of investigation but rather as a paradigm 'whose function [is] to establish and make intelligible a wider set of problems,'" I view my deployment of the (B/b)ad (R/r)efugee and its relevance to the arguments made by those engaged here as a practice in unsettling, not just the Bad Refugee, but also: unsettling the normalization of ongoing settler state territorialization; unsettling bounded accounts of warfare; unsettling demarcations between nation states and empires; unsettling the national order of things; unsettling belonging; unsettling the asymmetric legitimation of violence; and, crucially, unsettling innocence itself.

DATA AND METHODS

Bad Refugees examines the categorical-administrative production of "social death" amidst colonization, war, globalization, and reconfigurations of multicultural citizenship in the postwar era through tracing a genealogy of the Bad Refugee in Orange County from the point of settler contact to the present. Because of the Vietnam War's centrality to the emergence of the Bad Refugee figure, I focus on one particular case of the Bad Refugee (the Bad *Vietnamese* Refugee) in one of the most, if not *the* most, politically contested regions in the United States concerning the historic "refugee problem" (Orange County, California).

As David Garland (373) elaborates on what it means to embark on writing "a history of the present" using Foucauldian genealogy as a method, a history of the present "begins by identifying a present-day practice that is both taken for granted and yet, in certain respects, problematic or somehow unintelligible—the reformatory prison in the 1970s, for example, or the American death penalty today—and then seeks to trace the power struggles that produced them."⁴⁶ Concerned with understanding the present reality and the "forms of truth and subjectivity to which the present gives rise," for Foucault, genealogy entailed a method of writing critical history: "a way of using historical materials to bring about a 'revaluing of values' in the present day." As Garland (372) elaborates:

The idea is not to connect the present-day phenomenon to its origins, as if one were showing a building resting on its foundations, a building solidly rooted in the past and confidently projected into the future. The idea, instead, is to trace the erratic and discontinuous process whereby the past became the present:

⁴⁵ Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Beacon Press, 1985.

⁴⁶ Garland, David. "What is a 'History of the Present'? On Foucault's Genealogies and Their Critical Preconditions." *Punishment & Society* 16.4 (2014): 365–384.

an often aleatory path of descent and emergence that suggests the contingency of the present and the openness of the future.

As a method then,

Genealogical analysis traces how contemporary practices and institutions emerged out of specific struggles, conflicts, alliances, and exercises of power, many of which are nowadays forgotten. It thereby enables the genealogist to suggest—not by means of normative argument but instead by presenting a series of troublesome associations and lineages—that institutions and practices we value and take for granted today are actually more problematic or more “dangerous” than they otherwise appear.

As a result, *Bad Refugees* is a critical historical project that is generally genealogical in method and broadly historical in orientation. The strength of historical research is based on its ability to account for the dimension of time as a mode of organizing particular actors, relationships, and other aspects of “the social.” To account for how communities emerge from their historical preconditions, historical researchers pay special attention to how sequential, contingent, path-dependent, and multivalent events converge to shape the conditions of possibility for social life and the specific lines of action available to individuals and groups within distinct temporal structures.

In order to trace the historical emergence of the Bad Refugee and the implications of its struggles and negotiations for the present, I rely on multiple sources of both formal and informal historical texts: news articles from *The Orange County Register* that include relevant discussions of Vietnamese refugee deviance and local history, supplemental news articles from community (*Người Việt*), regional (*The Los Angeles Times*), and national (*The New York Times*) papers of record, available court records from key legal cases, and a number of international agreements, presidential speeches, congressional records, corporate materials, texts produced by and within the Vietnamese refugee community, and digital materials published by local actors. Additionally drawing on the “targeted primary” approach forwarded by Theda Skocpol, defined as a methodological strategy that supplements secondary sources with “carefully selected primary investigations or reinvestigations’ in order to resolve ambiguities, answer novel questions, or supplement the historical record,” the materials used have been leveraged to re-encounter, critique, and extend a synthesis of the secondary literature on American imperialism, the emergence of the Refugee as an epistemic problem, the emergence of the Good Refugee during the Cold War, and America’s position within the global political economy since settler contact but especially during the long “post-civil rights” half century.⁴⁷ Drawing primarily from search queries concerning representations of Vietnamese criminality from the “Fall of Saigon” in 1975 through the conclusion of the Reagan presidency in early 1989, I first analyzed the relevant 714 articles returned from the *Orange County Register*, 267 articles from the *Los Angeles Times*, and 93 articles from the *New York Times* by open coding their content for general themes in racialized coverage, linked events, and discursive frames. After identifying major themes, frames, and key events from that process, I returned to the records and searched in greater depth around illustrative cases and critical junctures that appeared from the initial analysis, including the Orange Grove Trial and “Mr. Tai” case discussed in Chapter 2 and Orange County’s “war on prostitution” discussed in Chapter 3.

⁴⁷ Skocpol, Theda. “Strategies in Historical Sociology.” *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (1984): 356.

So in order to understand the discursive formation of the Bad Refugee, the analytic strategy in part interprets newspaper articles as primary documents. While some historical sociologists consider newspaper materials as secondary rather than primary sources given the second-hand reporting of events that happen at some other point in time, I argue that news articles should be treated as primary materials for the purposes of this kind of discursive inquiry, which understands mainstream media itself as playing an associational role in producing particular “screen memories” of the war and its many afterlives. As *the* predominant discursive technology regularly circulating and producing cultural knowledge on world events in postwar America, the news as a “text” did not just objectively report on meaningful events but rather implemented myriad subjective and value-driven decisions regarding what topics to highlight in its coverage, how to frame controversial issues, and—consequently—what kinds of “problems” about which it thought the American public should be aware.

Following Stuart Hall’s elaboration of the rise of critical media approaches in the study of mass communication, this orientation can be understood as diverging from the “mainstream” behavioral approach popular among American sociologists during the middle of the twentieth century whose legitimization as positivistic social science corresponded to American Cold War ascendancy. Focusing instead on the critical emphasis on ideology in the media in relation to the political economy, the discourse analysis undertaken here generally connects to classical materialist conceptualizations of ideology, where Hall reminds that Marx’s argument forwarded that ideology functions by “appear[ing] to ground itself in the mere surface of things.”⁴⁸ “In doing so,” Hall continues, “it represses any recognition of the contingency of the historical conditions on which all social relations depend. It represents them, instead, as outside of history: unchangeable, inevitable and natural. It also disguises its premises as already known facts..., present[ing] capitalist production ‘as encased in eternal natural laws independent of history.’” To critically read media discourse consequently allows for the critical reading of history necessitated by using a genealogical method, where in tracing the obfuscations and masks produced by ideology such an approach allows for an excavation of different critical junctures from which to understand our present condition.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1, “Dreamland: Fantastical Settler Geographies in Orange County’s Transition From Frontier Zone To Global Suburb, 1769–Present,” begins with a historical discussion of Orange County as a site of contestation. Using Disneyland as an entrypoint to understand the “moral superstructure” of the region, Chapter 1 draws on Jean Beaudrillard’s discussion of both Disneyland and the Vietnam War to trouble the distinction between Disneyland as a “imaginary station” set apart from the real world, including the war in Vietnam itself. Analyzing historic attractions such as “Carousel of Progress,” the “Monsanto House of the Future,” “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah River Run,” and “Indian Village,” the discussion weaves between those sites at Disneyland and the “profound reality” that such images work to mask in order to set the stage for the ensuing discussion regarding countywide contestations over how to define, recognize, and position recently arriving Vietnamese refugees following the Fall of Saigon. Taking one step back to question the basis upon which those contestations were fought and how classifications of goodness and badness were subsequently legitimated in the American racial imaginary, I engage with Walter Benjamin’s concept of “profane illumination” and Avery Gordon’s concept of “haunting” in the sociological imagination to place those Disneyland attractions in a

⁴⁸ Hall, Stuart. “The Rediscovery of ‘Ideology’: Return of the Repressed in Media Studies.” *Culture, Society and the Media*, edited by Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran, and Janet Woollacott. Routledge, 1982. 61–95.

“political constellation” with the history of Orange County since “First Contact,” revealing how even contemporary claims to the land and its resources are written “off the face” of settler racial capitalism. Leveraging Cheryl Harris’ work on ‘whiteness as property’ to delegitimize the moral superstructure that underwrites historic and ongoing forms of dispossession and dehumanization, Chapter 1 ultimately pushes us to examine the basis upon which claims adjudicated by the state have become legitimate and to question whether its authority to act as final arbiter is valid in the first place. Closing by setting up the political economic context within which Vietnamese refugees arrived, Chapter 1 ends by discussing the 1970s as a “pivotal decade” that saw the decline of the Keynesian welfare state and the rise of a neoliberal globalizing economy that pushed the state towards greater punitiveness and securitization. Drawing on other scholarship on Orange County as a “window into the future,” it therefore contextualizes Vietnamese resettlement and receipt within this larger historical sweep to consider what this trajectory might reveal about our historical present.

Chapter 2, “This Land Is My Land: Contested Refugee Citizenships in the Global Suburb and the Possessive Investment In Whiteness,” opens with a discussion of expressions of suburban populism in Orange County’s history, covering a period in which the Ku Klux Klan organized an economic boycott and brief political takeover of municipal office in the 1920s as well as the “tax revolt” headed by Howard Jarvis in the late 1970s and early 1980s to illustrate the region’s enduring and ongoing “possessive investment in whiteness.” Then, turning to the post-1975 period of refugee resettlement, I draw on oral histories collected by historian Elisabeth Orr to contextualize how white suburbanites reacted to the mass arrival of Vietnamese refugees during the period of post-boom suburban decline during the “second era of globalization.” In the span of just a few years, Orange County became—to many white residents’ alarm—home to the largest diasporic Vietnamese community in the nation, where following the Orange Grove Case case discussed in this chapter County Supervisor Harriett Wieder declared that the county should “support sanctions—including jail terms—against employers who hire[d] Indochinese refugees arriving in Orange County from other parts of the country” and “measures discouraging new jobs for refugees, cutting back on welfare programs and requiring refugees who become U.S. citizens to pay back any public financial assistance they’ve received.” Consequently turning to analyze this and one other local flashpoint in refugee deviance in greater depth, I first examine the Orange Grove Trial, a case that took place in 1980 involving four Vietnamese teenage boys accused of raping seven white women and teenage girls over the course of four months, oftentimes in the same location at a secluded orange grove somewhere off the 405 freeway. The trial became the first hypervisible example of refugee deviance in the county, where my analysis of news coverage on the case as well as of public commentary in reaction to its verdict illustrates how it became a consequential moment in negotiating the limits to multiculturalism’s inclusions of an increasing number of racial Others arriving in the country after 1965. Dissecting the debate between “liberal multiculturalists” who hoped to used arguments based on cultural mistranslation and racial discrimination to defend the four Vietnamese teenagers during the trial and “neoliberal multiculturalists” who employed a set of welfarist and pathologizing framing devices to reject their claims, Chapter 2 demonstrates how the Bad Refugee came to be defined as a negative figure in possession of certain moral failings that worked to demarcate the external boundary of the national community for poorly assimilated refugee subjects. Moving forward to less than one year later, Chapter 2 also uses the case of “Mr. Tai” in the 1981 Hoang-My Restaurant Shooting in Garden Grove to demonstrate how Vietnamese gang members came to embody the imagined figure of the Bad Refugee in news reporting, which consolidated refugee deviance through regular racialized and orientalized representations of Vietnamese criminality under the umbrella of “gang violence.”

Finally, Chapter 3, “The Fruits of Her Land: Domesticated Warscapes and the Gendered-Sexual Logic of Suburban Territorialization,” asserts that one additional figure in the Mr. Tai case emerged as critically

important to the early apprehension and meaning making around “bad refugee” subjects. Discussing how the singer, Julie Quang, was regularly covered in news reporting as the married Tai’s divorced “companion” who used to perform on Tu Do Street in Saigon, I argue that the case not only drew on orientalizing gang imagery in imaginings of the Bad Refugee but also on the long history of Vietnam’s sexualization and feminization as a “sensual–maiden–turned–bar–girl.” Using this as a trailhead into a larger conversation about the gendered and sexual continuities that have characterized American immigration policy and justifications for waging its imperial wars abroad, I first discuss how the Page Law, which preceded the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 by seven years, used the figure of the pathologized “Chinese prostitute” to thread a delicate needle during the “first era of globalization” to at once maintain global trade ties with China all the while establishing the United States’ legal–rational authority to limit Chinese immigration and naturalization within its borders. Later connecting this to Julie Quang as a figure, I discuss how fears of orientalizing sexual vice more broadly were again expressed during the second era of globalization to justify piecemeal exclusion and dispossession as morally permissible by analyzing the highly publicized arrest of a Taiwanese immigrant man charged with “pimping” that initiated widespread panic over the local “prostitution problem,” including a case involving Newport Beach’s sting operation on massage parlors that predominately employed Korean and Vietnamese workers. The second theme explored in Chapter 3 moves its analytical lens to Vietnam to trace its own colonial legacy up to and through the point of American involvement in order to illustrate how imperial violence became increasingly rationalized and hidden in the form of administrative violence over time while remaining enduringly consequential. With specific discussions on the US military’s Strategic Hamlet Program and Operation Igloo White, this portion both distinguishes between American approaches to war in Southeast Asia and draws continuities to the preceding colonial period, ultimately showing how many of the technological innovations developed during the Vietnam War became imported back home as part of an “imperial boomerang” to dramatically expand the surveillance and warfare capacities of the US state. Closing by discussing the suburban citizen “war on prostitution” that occurred during this time as a “defense” of property, this final section demonstrates how, in addition to Chapter 2’s focus on the possessive investment in whiteness that largely concentrated on how white backlash racialized the problem of refugee arrivals in relation to their orientalist apprehensions towards global and local Asian economic ascendancy during the second era of globalization, the possessive investment is also a sexual possessive investment. Overall, in discussing how South Vietnamese subjects moved from the sensual imperial landscape of Saigon to the temperate White Christian suburban landscape of Orange County, Chapter 3 presents the Orange County’s Little Saigon as the fiercely contested terrain upon which the cisheteropatriarchal American nation shaped the ethical terms of refugee receipt for its gendered and sexual subjects in relation to its settler investments. As the US frontier slowly pushed westward to the Pacific to manufacture an emptied landscape ready for overwhelmingly white suburbanization and as it became increasingly entangled in global securitization efforts, the landscape itself became a domesticated warscape in which mythologies surrounding the home as a moral domain worked to both mask the conditions of settler expropriation and continually authorize particular family forms compatible with state interests.

CHAPTER 1

DREAMLAND:
FANTASTICAL SETTLER GEOGRAPHIES IN ORANGE COUNTY’S TRANSITION
FROM FRONTIER ZONE TO GLOBAL SUBURB, 1769–PRESENT

“Would you believe it? I’m cooking dinner,” a woman’s voice happily chirps. “Or rather, my electric range is. I just set the time and temperature controls and relax. It even has a self-cleaning oven! And we were able to pick our appliance colors from so many beautiful combinations.”

“ALL the appliances are improved today. Take our refrigerator,” her husband adds, “Why, I remember when—”

“When the man of the house had to work twice as many hours to earn one as he does today? And today, we have a better product!”

“You took the words right out of my mouth, dear.”⁴⁹

The wife is smartly dressed in a light pink cocktail dress and matching bubblegum-hued chiffon scarf. The husband dons a striped camel cardigan over a cream turtleneck sweater. She looks vaguely like Jackie Kennedy as you might imagine her on a Sunday afternoon. He, a hybrid between Jimmy Stewart and Clark Gable, mustache in tow.

We encounter the couple on a Christmas morning—their apartment flush in a prosperous plentitude the audience is encouraged to assume will be the inevitable promise of American modernity. Presents wrapped in shiny holiday paper overflow in the space between them, and a General Electric television set positioned in the center of the room is marked by a conspicuous red bow. Sitting on mid-century style, Steelcase furniture, the visage of the apartment’s polished interior is anchored by a centrally located floor-to-ceiling picture window, revealing a 6,900-square-foot model of “Progress City” in the background, a futuristically imagined and abstracted Los Angeles downtown core described in the attraction as “Walt Disney’s dream for an experimental prototype community of tomorrow.”

The dialogue itself emanates not from live actors but from two of the first early-era animatronic dolls produced for popular consumption in the United States. For the 1964–65 New York World’s Fair, General Electric approached Walt Disney to develop a show for the company’s exhibition pavilion, a rotating play documenting the progression of American technological innovation over the 20th century—the final act of which contained the opening dialogue reproduced above.^{50,51} Embodying the modernist ethos of the American postwar period, Walt Disney embraced the opportunity presented by GE to engineer his “Edison Square” concept, a passion project he sought to eventually install in a permanent area near Disneyland’s entrance dedicated to showcasing how technological advances have benefited American households. After enjoying a notably

⁴⁹ Carousel of Progress Recreation Project. (2020, July 11). *A Recreation of the 1967–1973 Disneyland Carousel of Progress* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wU3RFg3sIF8>

⁵⁰ Cotter, Bill, and Bill Young. *The 1964–1965 New York World’s Fair*. Arcadia Publishing, 2004.

⁵¹ Brady, Hillary. (2016, July 21). Walt Disney’s Progressland. Blog, Smithsonian Institution Archives. <https://siarchives.si.edu/blog/walt-disney-progressland>

successful stint at the New York World's Fair, the GE-sponsored "Progressland" exhibition moved to Disneyland in 1967 after Walt Disney's sudden passing as the renamed "Carousel of Progress," in which all sets and performers were directly imported from the New York World's Fair to continue their run in Southern California directly thereafter.⁵²

Like the turn-of-the-century world fairs that marked civilizational progress through exhibitions contrasting the technological innovations of Western modernity with non-Western manufactured primitivity, Orange County's Disneyland theme park emerged in the postwar period as the analogous yet fixed site in which American modernity came to be imagined and regularly circulated within a mainstream audience. Mirroring Southern California's own growth in the national imagination as the geographical locale for securing the mid-century model of the American Dream, Disneyland embodied "all the entangled orders of simulation" and fantasy from which the American story about itself could be projected, consumed, and made (hyper)real.⁵³ As visitors in 1960s America walked through the phantasmagoric set pieces in Adventureland and Frontierland that recalled classic narrative devices of colonial conquest and indigenous barbarism concerning "Caribbean pirates" and the "Western frontier," they could also later amble back to modernity's presentation of itself as relatively civilized in the form of Disneyland's Main Street, U.S.A. and channel their desire for the American Dream into the utopian vision offered by Progress City in Tomorrowland. "The floors on which you are walking, the gently sloping walls around you, and even the ceilings are made of plastics," a promotional video narrates, describing the mid-century Tomorrowland attraction, "The Monsanto House of the Future," which featured an all-white model home with four 16-foot cantilevered wings projecting from a central concrete core.⁵⁴ Obscured by the fantastical elements of Disneyland's fabrication, the fact that corporate sponsorships were responsible for vast tracts of Disneyland's built environment and rotating attractions therefore went largely unnoticed—or really were more so naturalized without much concern. Yet, General Electric sponsored the construction and ongoing production costs of "Carousel of Progress" while other corporations like Monsanto helped build Tomorrowland's futuristic attractions.

A line of continuity can thus be drawn from the racial capital logics of the Old World international exhibitions to the fixed space of Disneyland theme park, both of which can be understood as being constituted within the *longue durée* of a global political economy whose relationship to racialized production and consumption has consistently been motivated by capitalist self-interest and human value hierarchization. "The objective profile of the United States, then," as Jean Baudrillard (10) theorized, "may be traced throughout Disneyland, even down to the morphology of individuals and the crowd. *All its values are exalted here, in miniature and comic-strip form* [emphasis added]."

In the same year that American troops withdrew from the nation's war in Southeast Asia and tens of thousands of Vietnamese refugees petitioned for resettlement in the United States, Disneyland "Imagineers" in Orange County worked on adapting a new show called "America Sings" to replace "Carousel of Progress" in anticipation of the country's bicentennial celebration. Wanting to strike a patriotic tone, the Imagineers also converted the park's "Main Street Electrical Parade" into a new show called "America on Parade," in which beloved characters like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Goofy were assigned to lead a procession of

⁵² Gennawey, Sam. *Walt and the Promise of Progress City*. Ayefour Publishing, 2011.

⁵³ Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. University of Michigan Press, 1994.

⁵⁴ The Retronaut. (2014, November 23). *1957 Monsanto House of the Future* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk2YBA_0a1A

doll-like, human characters from mythologized accounts of American history.⁵⁵

In the opening float, Mickey, Donald, and Goofy jubilantly wave Betsy Ross' version of the American flag, standing atop a vehicle in the shape of a drum with a bald eagle towering overhead. Behind them, a float made to look like the carrack-style *Santa María* carries a wide-eyed Christopher Columbus at its bow. Following that, a larger-than-life, megafaunal turkey walks with a rope around its neck, the end of which is carried by a set of costumed pilgrims surrounded by caricatures of indigenous people holding baskets of multi-colored corn. After that, a float carrying Benjamin Franklin glides by as he fiddles with a kite—American genius and innovation as its mythologized zenith. Then: Betsy Ross sits gingerly in a towering rocking chair, sewing her fabled “stars and stripes”; A uniformed captain steers a miniaturized float version of Disneyland's “Mark Twain's Riverboat”; Two gun-toting frontiersmen ride a stagecoach with a saloon from the “Wild West” in the background; A train conductor sits atop a float where two locomotives face each other to commemorate the connection of the first transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit; A “Creations of America” float rolls by, in which a “Wright Flyer” plane in the front morphs into a Model T Ford, which turns into a locomotive train, and then finally, into a space shuttle positioned as if in mid-launch into the sky.

Set to the tune of “You're a Grand Old Flag,” the design of the parade floats represented American Whiteness' particular imagining of the nation state, its exceptionalism, and its foundational, moral goodness. “America on Parade” was, in part, a theatricalized account of the American story *of itself, by itself*—a sanitized rendering of American history to reflect the nation state's particular mythic investments.⁵⁶ As Jason Sperb (167) has argued, “Disney theme park attractions distinguish themselves from other amusement parks by focusing resolutely on narrative,” thus affirming Disney's distinctive mythmaking impulses and basis for its mass appeal.⁵⁷

Founding fathers, inventors, geniuses, moral mothers, mayors, conductors, pilots, astronauts—the majority of the parade's main characters are white, depicted in numerous roles imbued with status, authority, and value. The few nonwhite figures include a Black basketball player and football player, made to walk during the parade for the “College Sports” segment in which three white characters—a baseball player, a football quarterback, and a cheerleader—sit on top of the main float. Absent entirely are, for example, any of the Chinese or poor white immigrant laborers who largely built those railroads on which the locomotives first met at Promontory Summit.⁵⁸ In continuation with the indigenous erasure enacted by the American story of Columbus, the float depicting the familiar Thanksgiving myth narratively recasts the particularities of the Wampanoag's complex negotiations with the first Europeans to generate a myth of unquestioned welcome.⁵⁹ In other words, racialized Others were all but erased from the nation's narrative arc about its greatness or only marginally included in order to forward that narrative's investment in centering American Whiteness' goodness, innocence, and superiority.

However, in a year when this Disneyfied American story of itself, by itself felt increasingly discredited by the reality of the nation's just-failed, morally compromised war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, the cultural

⁵⁵ Weiss, Werner. (2020, July 3). America On Parade. Blog, Yesterland. <https://www.yesterland.com/americanparade.html>

⁵⁶ Hbvideos. (2011, February 5). *America on Parade Walt Disney World 1976 Promo Souvenir film* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxqt1vNtxLU&>

⁵⁷ Sperb, Jason. *Disney's Most Notorious Film*. University of Texas Press, 2012.

⁵⁸ Polk, Michael R. “Interpreting Chinese Worker Camps on the Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah.” *Historical Archaeology* 49.1 (2015): 59–70.

⁵⁹ Silverman, David J. *This Land is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony, and the Troubled History of Thanksgiving*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2019.

function of productions like “America on Parade” took the meaning of make-believe to another level, making Americans continue to believe in the diminished nation’s self-mythologized greatness. In many ways, “America on Parade” and other similar spectacles performed crucial cultural-symbolic labor to recuperate and obscure the global political economy within which they had been produced. For example, in a full-page advertisement for Monsanto’s Hall of Chemistry published in *The Los Angeles Times* on July 15, 1955, the text reads,

MONSANTO...in Tomorrowland...shows you the romance of chemistry, how chemically-made products benefit your life, how they can make a new and startling world tomorrow. Your food, clothing, housing, health, and transportation all depend on chemistry...and the future holds some exciting, wonderful things in store for you.⁶⁰

Beyond the prescience of that advertisement’s assertion of plastic’s eventual ubiquity, in contrast to the cheerful tone adopted by the Monsanto promotional materials greeting visitors at the park, Monsanto *the company* manufactured the controversial chemical defoliant Agent Orange for U.S. military use in Southeast Asia in the 1960s at the very same time—a weapon that the government of Vietnam claims has impacted the health of over three million Vietnamese people since the war.⁶¹

To follow Baudrillard further on writings on the second order of the simulacra—i.e., the “imaginary of the...productive/projective order”—Disneyland’s importance lies then not in it *being* a space of pure fantasy removed from everyday life but in its *representation* as exceptionally removed from everyday life as a means to simulate a utopian vision that tricks us into viewing the blunt drudgery and alienation produced from rationalizing capitalism through the redeeming lens of power and capital’s fantastical narratives and ideologies. Framing Pierre Bourdieu’s observations on the forms of capital as such that “[t]he specific character of every relation of force is to dissimulate itself as such, and to acquire all its force only because it is so dissimulated,” Baudrillard (12) insists that capitalism is an inherently “immoral and unscrupulous” system that must not only rely on just relations of force to sustain itself but also on techniques of symbolic mystification to create a “moral superstructure” that legitimates its social order.

All that capital asks of us is to receive it as rational or to combat it in the name of rationality, to receive it as moral or to combat it in the name of morality...Capital in fact has never been linked by a contract to the society it dominates. It is a sorcery of the social relation, it is a *challenge to society* and should be responded to as such. It is not a scandal to be denounced according to moral and economic rationality, but a challenge to take up according to symbolic law.

These symbolic projects like the “Monsanto House of the Future,” “Carousel of Progress,” and Disneyland itself that work to not only authorize but also to create desirous attachments to the militarized racial capitalist order must therefore be understood as being constitutive of the symbolic moral superstructure of American society.⁶² They create both the illusion and the reality—here, one and the same—of a certain world as it is morally imagined “off the face” of the underlying colonial conquests that have produced the conditions from which racial capitalism has emerged. Yet, as Baudrillard (10) insists, Disneyland is just one space for the creation and maintenance of this moral superstructure:

⁶⁰ Monsanto at Disneyland’s Tomorrowland advertisement. *The Los Angeles Times*, July 15, 1955, p. 13.

⁶¹ Schuck, Peter H. *Agent Orange on Trial: Mass Toxic Disasters in the Courts*. Harvard University Press, 1987.

⁶² Palomera, Jaime, and Theodora Vetta. “Moral Economy: Rethinking a Radical Concept.” *Anthropological Theory* 16.4 (2016): 413–432.

Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation...Disneyland is not the only one. Enchanted Village, Magic Mountain, Marine World: Los Angeles is encircled by these "imaginary stations" which feed reality, reality-energy, to a town whose mystery is precisely that it is nothing more than a network of endless, unreal circulation: a town of fabulous proportions, but without space or dimensions...nothing more than an immense script and a perpetual motion picture.

Consequently, using Disneyland as a critical entry point to follow Orange County's own transition from Spanish colonization to its mid-century, suburban reimagining and beyond, this chapter begins with the question of how America's moral superstructure has been produced in *other* fantasy spaces.

In particular, more than just home to Disneyland, I argue that Orange County itself has historically functioned as an "imaginary station" whose symbolic image as first a frontier zone and then later as an idealized suburb has crucially fed into the construction of (and contestations over) the nation's central ideological sorcery: the American Dream, and—even more fundamentally—American Manifest Destiny. Tracing the genealogy of this so-called dream even further back from its mid-century associations, this chapter draws continuities between the American Dream's glamourization of home ownership, high consumption, and nuclear family formation to the settler logics of privatized property ownership and cisheteropatriarchal discipline that underwrite those desires. In doing so, it apprehends Orange County's importance as a site of contestation by first posing a more fundamental challenge to the "rules" of the field upon which struggles over resource distribution have taken place in the post-Vietnam era—questioning what exactly legitimates the claims made to resources, value, and innocence in Orange County and challenging the premises of claims made off the face of settler capitalism.

Acknowledging these more foundational contests over the moral superstructure that legitimates settler claims over those asserted by dispossessed others, the sections of this chapter trace the history of racial-class formation in the county vis-à-vis the region's political economic development to map how race is figured *in particular* in the Orange County case as the embodied category through which capital has been spatially and materially organized—to map the way "race," as Stuart Hall (394) famously phrased, "is the modality through which class is lived."⁶³ Examining Orange County's transition from a "black gold suburb" to a "Cold War suburb" to, finally, a "global suburb," the chapter's temporal scope from the moment of colonial encounter to the postindustrial globalized present is subsequently pivotal for understanding how race emerged as an organizing principle in the field of power and how racialization functions to provide the symbolic material necessary to create hierarchical gradations of laboring racial classes in time and space.

Finally arriving at the end of this chapter to the moment where this project enters into that history with its particular questions and investments, this discussion closes by examining the last quarter of the twentieth century as a consequential moment for reencountering the relationship between race and capital in territorialized space. Opening the American War Century, colonial warfare bracketed the United States' entry onto the world stage as an imperial power as it fought for territorial holdings in the Philippines, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, feeding into the nation's emergence as a modern industrial economy in the early twentieth century capable of advancing the commercial and economic interests of industrial capital on a global scale in relation to racialized others both at home and abroad. Building the ideological apparatus to continuously generate desire within the

⁶³ Hall, Stuart, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts. *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. Palgrave, 1978.

American consumer, the American Dream emerged within this imperial genealogy to support the productive and consumptive growth requirements of industrialization, luring subjects into a bargain with the settler state that promised home ownership, security, and commercial comforts as the core entitlements associated with citizenship. The modern liberal and racial welfare state form cohered during this moment of American imperial industrialization, as Chandan Reddy has argued, and we have inherited the legacy of its differential protections and social distinctions during its initial moment of turn-of-the-century globalization that saw the racial state assert its national sovereignty through *explicitly racial* immigration control measures, warfare, and the development of an administrative-police state. However, at the end of the twentieth century, as Orange County transitioned from being a Cold War suburb to a postindustrial, global suburb, the United States was likewise in a new period of restructuring that, as Reddy argues, largely worked to slowly negate the liberal welfare state to prioritize the emergence of a financialized security state more concerned with total profit maximization and national defense than social provision of any kind, even for those previously assured of their differential inclusion in the social contract relative to the piecemeal exclusion of devalued others.

As the end of “American Dreaming” came to therefore disenchant the general public at the century’s close, in detailing how reactionary white suburbanites in Orange County responded to these shifts as they misattributed the dislocations caused by state retrenchment and economic globalization to the arrival of Southeast Asian refugees, the final section of this chapter sets up the larger question posed by *Bad Refugees*: How did the United States express its sovereignty during this period of intensive economic restructuring at the end of the American War Century in relation to its “most televised war”—and the refugees it produced—as it found itself confronted with “the end of the myth”? As the remaining chapters set about answering that question, this chapter first prepares the ground to situate how those post-Vietnam contests over state obligation, white entitlement, and refugee subjectification occurred within a deeper settler history of the land. In continuing to set the parameters and terms for how we morally and “rationally” apprehend the sorcery of our social relations under racial capitalism, recognizing Orange County’s settler context allows this analysis to go beyond the terms of morality or rationality that racial capitalism insists we use to comprehend it, instead shifting the focus from its imposed terms to the processes of symbolic mystification that inhere to create the moral superstructure through which we evaluate claims and authorize the state to act as arbiter to begin with.

SUBURBAN UTOPIAS

Host: Tonight we’re going visiting at the Ronald Reagans again in their new home to see how their many wonderful electric servants are helping them—just as they’ll help you—“Live Better, Electrically” [cutaway to the Reagan household]

Ronald Reagan: Oh! That’s hot.

Nancy Reagan: No it’s not [playfully chiding]

Ronald: Oh, but delicious. Everything is just right, isn’t it Patti?

Baby Patti: Yes [sweetly]

Nancy: Well it’s the easiest meal to make. My electric servants do everything.

Ronald: Well, that’s part of “Living Better, Electrically”

Nancy: The english muffins—my new toaster toasted them, then I sprinkled on some grated cheese and put them in the toaster oven down here and that melted the cheese. The egg soufflé—

Ronald: —It’s something we haven’t had in quite awhile...

Nancy: Oh well it’s pretty tricky to make. With the steady heat and exact timing of my new automatic

skillet, even a soufflé is easy and safe to make.

Ronald: *You haven't even mentioned the best part of the meal...*

Nancy: *Oh that's right. You say that our new percolator makes the best coffee in all of California—*

Ronald: *[Interrupting]—and suburbs!*⁶⁴

As General Electric Company grew from a merger between Edison Electrical Company and Thomson–Houston Company in 1892, it quickly established itself as the dominant player for connecting electricity for industrial use across America's urban centers.⁶⁵ During the economic boom following the First World War, the company's product catalog offered a staggering four hundred thousand items, cementing its place as the nation's electrical power behemoth—though at the time GE produced very few direct-to-consumer goods beyond a limited number of fans and light bulbs.

From its inception, General Electric understood that its interests relied on both controlling the means of production as well as the cultural levers of moralized consumption to evade regulation and maintain its corporate autonomy. Propped up as the embodiment of the “power trust” in Gilded Age America, GE had created a Publicity Bureau as early as 1897 to combat efforts to nationalize the electrical industry, employing 242 full-time workers to publish targeted advertisements, instruction manuals, company magazines, technical reports, photographs, posters, films, and catalogs under a number of company guises to mask the true scope of General Electric's power.⁶⁶ Intentionally forwarded as distinct material produced from separate interests, e.g. news editorials, trade organizations, suppliers, etc., this early period of brand management intentionally kept the breadth of GE's sphere of influence out of public view, which in turn maintained GE as a largely discrete corporate entity during the early decades of its consolidation and growth.

However, as the 1920s ensued, industrialists who had largely overcome former constraints on production found themselves faced with a crisis of overproduction, deepening a concern among capitalists over how to stimulate consumer interest in purchasing the surplus of mass produced goods saturating the market. Its former marketing strategy of inconspicuous corporate branding could not produce the brand loyalty needed to build a dependable customer base, and as a corporation that had publicly participated in monopolistic patent practices, coercive public utilities deals, and legally spurious holding companies to avert regulation, it still faced a daunting PR battle over its moral capacity to serve the public interest.

Consequently, in order to address its image problem to build consumer appeal and convince government regulators that it served an essential public function that should not be hampered by anti-trust legislation, GE followed other large industrial corporations in the 1920s by developing a corporate persona that positioned itself as indispensable to the nation's identity. To begin GE's era of conspicuous corporate branding in 1922, GE's new president, Gerard Swope, entrusted the company's image to twenty-five-year-old advertising wunderkind and future congressional representative, Bruce Barton, whose body of work for the likes of GE and General Motors helped facilitate America's transition from a production-driven industrial economy to a consumer-oriented one.

⁶⁴ Multi45621. (2013, July 21). *Ronald Reagan "Live Better Electrically" Commercial of "GE Theater"* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5Lz1C53RwI>

⁶⁵ Hammond, John Winthrop. *Men and Volts: The Story of General Electric*. New York: Lippincott, 1941.

⁶⁶ Marchand, Roland. *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

In Barton, Swope managed to find an adept brand marketer who helped reimagine GE's image into that of a company that provided the nation with a moral public service. Born into an evangelical Protestant family, Barton forwarded a spirit of capitalism that promoted advertising as a sacred calling for revealing the divine purpose of the corporate soul.⁶⁷ His best-selling book, *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925), narrates Jesus through the frame of bootstrap rugged individualism as "the world's greatest business executive," painting a picture of a physically strong and masculine Jesus who worked with his hands, slept outdoors, and traveled on foot to create a world-dominant religious organization with only twelve men—the original self-made entrepreneur, or so Barton proposed. As Timothy Raphael (166) characterizes, "For Barton, salesmanship in general and advertising in particular were, like Jesus' ministry, evangelical missions that spread the good news that work was worship, consumerism was holy, and corporations were coworkers of 'the Almighty in the great enterprise which he has initiated but which He can never finish without the help of men.' American capitalism was God-given, but in order to thrive it was, like the nation, in constant need of representation."⁶⁸

Consequently when he took charge of branding GE's corporate image, Barton merged these moral and national corporate imperatives by positioning General Electric as America's ordained "headquarters of progress." Releasing a series of print advertisements that linked General Electric's development of electrical infrastructure to human civilizational progress overall, for example, Barton placed GE on modernity's linear historical timeline as "engaged in the great profession of lighting the world"—framing GE as divinely sanctioned from time immemorial beginning with the biblical utterance of "Let there be light" from God himself. Barton as a result managed to transform the corporation's negative image as an avaricious money trust into a familiar and comforting symbol of consumer trust by offering GE-branded goods promising to help average families "live better, electrically."

Replacing Swope as president in 1950, Ralph Cordiner continued GE's relationship with Barton through contracts with Barton's advertising company, Batten, Barton, Durstine, & Osborn (BBDO), which saw the medium of television as the most effective vehicle for crafting and sustaining GE's corporate image in the postwar era. However, their chief TV property, *General Electric Television Theater*, struggled to obtain high ratings, underperforming in the early years of its run so much that BBDO decided that the show needed a host who possessed the charismatic capacity to connect American audiences to General Electric in the atomic age.

In Ronald Reagan General Electric consequently found the ideal celebrity brand representative whose years of experience in broadcast radio and film had primed him in the art of perfecting the presentation of the self. A master storyteller originally hailing from Illinois, Reagan learned during his time in the entertainment industry how to manage his public and personal lives for mass consumption. For example, during his early film career, he gained the most public attention from his marriage to actress Jane Wyman, when Louella Parsons transformed their off-screen relationship into the ideal "dream marriage" for celebrity gossip readers. During WWII as Reagan served in the U.S. army, Parsons spun their marriage into a wartime story made to stand in for all the nation's lonely "Janes" and "Johns" asked to temporarily sacrifice their love in the name of service to the nation's war effort, publishing a series of letters written between Reagan and Wyman while he was "away at war." Nevermind that Reagan was actually only stationed in Culver City at the Hal Roach studio lot with the US Air Force's propaganda unit or that he could come home to Wyman at the end of every work day. Studio executives, military officials, magazine publishers, readers, and Reagan alike cared little about these details,

⁶⁷ Ribuffo, Leo P. "Jesus Christ as Business Statesman: Bruce Barton and the Selling of Corporate Capitalism." *American Quarterly* 33.2 (1981): 206–231.

⁶⁸ Raphael, Timothy. *The President Electric: Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Performance*. University of Michigan Press, 2011.

wanting to buy into the story of individual wartime sacrifice and relatable romantic yearning regardless of the inconvenient specifics.⁶⁹ Moreover, in terms of his appearance, Reagan followed Warner Brothers' suggestions for his styling to a T well into and even beyond his time as President. Prior to taking on his first role following a successful screen test in 1937 that led to him signing a seven-year deal, for example, Reagan describes how studio executives transformed his image to reinforce an idealized "all-American look," encouraging him to reclaim his first name "Ronald" as opposed to the more foreign-sounding "Dutch," tailoring custom shirt collars to balance his small head and short neck relative to his broad shoulders, and glamorizing his midwestern persona by styling him with an elegant side-parted pompadour.⁷⁰

As a result, Reagan's appeal was always tied to Hollywood's manufacture of his intimate relationship to middle America, in being able to seemingly represent it both authentically, on the one hand, and aspirationally, on the other. Unlike other actors who might have found acclaim for portraying characters quite dissimilar from themselves, Reagan's charm largely derived from the apparent seamlessness between his offscreen and onscreen personas, in which he evoked a seemingly authentic midwestern ordinariness that cleaved his brand to the pulse of the American heartland. In showing himself to also be a willing conspirator able to conform to corporate demands on his branded image, Reagan hence emerged as the ideal candidate for GE's foray into televised programming as its first brand ambassador. Thus, despite his initial reluctance to adopt the "Mr. Norm" role assigned to him by studio executives, his manufactured image as a handsome and genial midwestern everyman perfectly fit the bill for General Electric's corporate strategy to use their brand ambassador to endear GE to the average American consumer.

Ultimately, Reagan's appointment as General Electric's brand ambassador in 1954 marked the mid-century variety of a process that in the 1920s similarly saw production-driven industrial production shift to consumer-driven production, requiring corporations to build consumer brand loyalty through marketing campaigns to sustain growth. After WWII, Lizabeth Cohen coined the term "A Consumers' Republic" to describe the specific postwar political economy and culture of mass consumerism that grew out of this structural reorganization, which prioritized family-centered high consumption as the Cold War domestic strategy to maintain both American ideological and economic dominance in light of communism's "godless" expansions.⁷¹ Seen as an immoral ideology that threatened the sanctity of the upright and hardworking Christian family, communism was apprehended as a threat to the nation's moral character. The idealized white, middle-class nuclear family consequently became upheld and valorized as the principal unit through which to protect American freedom. In his regular performance of idealized breadwinner masculinity on *General Electric Television Theater*, Reagan consequently helped circulate and produce this Cold War campaign of nuclear family aspirationalism, associating modern progress with the acquisition of a placid and amenity-rich suburban life. Corporate sponsored programming and advertising worked to blend market and state subjectification with an entertainment effect, leveraging the medium of television to continue building brand loyalty and forward aligned Cold War priorities. In the process, the suburban home became the generalized setting through which the state indexed citizenship in a time of Cold War nationalism.

As the opening tableau of a breakfasting Reagan family in the Pacific Palisades with all manner of electrodomestic conveniences suggests, then, the suburban utopias modeled by new developments in mid-century Southern California and advertised by Reagan as GE's brand ambassador figured prominently in

⁶⁹ Ibid, 140-141.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 132-133.

⁷¹ Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Vintage Books, 2003.

the development of this consumers' republic. As access to suburbia's commercial comforts became increasingly tantamount to the *feeling* of American citizenship, Southern California embedded itself as the ultimate locale for the realization of this Cold War suburban utopianism, accomplished through repetitive media saturation whereby idealized images produced from branded products like *General Electric Television Theater* and *Carousel of Progress* firmly worked their way into the American imaginary.⁷² Property ownership, breadwinner nuclear family ideals, and community security consequently became foundational to the American Dream as the idealized vehicle through which the social contract became expressed and premised in the Cold War era, manifesting themselves through a utopian imagining of Southern California—and Orange County in particular—as the place where every “deserving” American could finally obtain the *great* life.

SELLING “THE GREAT LIFE”

Even before 1931 when James Truslow Adams coined the term, “The American Dream” had already symbolically burrowed itself into the fabric of the nation's identity—legitimated by meritocratic stories about Gilded Age ingenuity and entrepreneurialism in business and manufactured by seductively glamorized Hollywood depictions of the consumption patterns of high society.⁷³ Perhaps the term can be simply defined by Alexis de Tocqueville (1820) as “the charm of anticipated success,” whose strength derives from a peculiar orientation held by Americans who are “always considering themselves as standing alone, and [who] are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands.”⁷⁴ Particularistic discussions will inevitably fail to fully account for the multitude of ways the bootstrap myth of upward mobility actually narrates and mythologizes itself across the textures of our social lives, yet despite the American Dream evading attempts to define it straightforwardly, the power of its ideology remains in its reliable and structured ability to communicate the dictum pushing so many of us to doggedly pursue “the good life”—sometimes even despite our awareness of its futility, and often to cruel and devastating effect.

In twentieth century America this Dream became entwined with home ownership, particularly after WWII when widespread (though racially uneven) uptake of GI Bill benefits made possession of a single-family home central to signaling one's full civic standing.^{75,76} The postwar era was the era of the “Sitcom Suburb,” a democratic utopia portrayed on TV through polished images of fully outfitted ranch and split-level homes populated by happy, carefree families.⁷⁷ Aided by slick marketing campaigns that understood the affective power of combining the feeling of security and wholesomeness with the suburbs, American families who moved to outlying developments often did so because their visions for an ideal life became circumscribed by representations of “the good life” on television, which offered family sitcoms and corporate advertising that demonstrated the pleasures of an ordered, suburban life unplagued by racialized urban chaos.⁷⁸ However, these cultural portrayals did not exist in a vacuum. Suburbs did not emerge singularly from the imaginations of corporate advertisers hoping to sell their consumer goods through portraying idealized family life, and the emergence of the single-family home as the central entitlement of the American Dream was not an inevitable

⁷² Cornfeld, Li. “Expo Afterlife: Corporate Performance and Capitalist Futurity in the Carousel of Progress.” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 27.3 (2017): 316–333.

⁷³ Adams, James Truslow. *The Epic of America*. Routledge, 1931.

⁷⁴ De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America—Vol. I. and II.* Read Books Ltd, 2015.

⁷⁵ Humes, Edward. *Over Here: How the GI Bill Transformed the American Dream*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006.

⁷⁶ Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. Oxford University Press, 1987.

⁷⁷ Haralovich, Mary Beth. “Sitcoms and Suburbs: Positioning the 1950s Homemaker.” *Quarterly Review of Film & Video* 11.1 (1989): 61–83.

⁷⁸ Rowley, Stephen. *Movie Towns and Sitcom Suburbs: Building Hollywood's Ideal Communities*. Springer, 2015.

outcome.

Rather, the rapid expansion of postwar suburban communities resulted from decades of intensive cooperation between real estate interests, the state, and industry. According to Paul Knox, real estate interests took a number of steps in the early twentieth century to shape national and municipal housing practices. To accelerate this process of American homeownership and settlement, for example, realtors collaborated with government agencies and civic groups from 1915 through the 1920s to encourage Americans to embrace the idea of the single-family home, which contrasted with the many multigenerational and communal housing arrangements that were common in rapidly urbanizing settings at the time.⁷⁹ In another move to directly enact real estate priorities as policy, the national association of real estate interests worked to forward their own models for broker licensing and zoning laws in the 1920s that many municipal and state governments—which were also heavily controlled by landed interests—often adopted verbatim without debate or modification.

Moreover, during the Great Depression, the federal government came to increasingly shape housing policy. For example, President Herbert Hoover worked with the National Association of Real Estate Boards to allow for a reduction in real estate taxes, to promote a government financing preference for developers able to take advantage of economies of scale by manufacturing large, planned suburban tracts, and to create a federal mortgage bank able to extend discounted, long-term mortgages to prospective buyers—all of which would form the backbone of subsequent New Deal legislation under the Roosevelt administration.⁸⁰ Inheriting a depressed economy, the Roosevelt administration in turn oriented housing policy in response to the market failures that had triggered the Depression, moving towards an egalitarian liberalism that hoped to soften the effects of free-market capitalism through state intervention. As part of a broad package of Keynesian macroeconomic interventions forwarded under Roosevelt, the Federal Housing Administration was established in 1934, working to stimulate the construction industry and facilitate sound home financing to those entitled to the state's guarantees (all the while solidifying the racial structure of the nation's property relations). Furthermore, the courts also played a significant role in shaping the composition and character of suburban development. The *Sitcom Suburbs*, for example, benefited from the US Supreme Court's landmark ruling on zoning law in *Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Ambler Realty Co.* (1926), which gave local governments the power to "abate a nuisance" if property owners were found to use land for purposes other than that which the land had been originally zoned. Broadly and loosely defined as anything affecting the general welfare of the residential area, nuisance management allowed the suburbs to maintain the protective enchantment they had for fleeing white families hoping to maintain neighborhood racial homogeneity.⁸¹

The consequences of these cooperative machinations between consumer culture, real estate interests, and the state therefore produced consequences for suburban development and American life that were far-reaching. Speculative developers, now reassured of the land market's stability through the imposition of federal zoning maps, moved to build suburban tracts as quickly and efficiently as possible. Pursuing economies of scale, product standardization, rationalized urban planning, and the refinement of prefabrication technologies, developers attempted to copy, as much as they could, Fordist techniques of mass production and consumption.⁸² As Keynesian housing policy helped spur this dramatic suburban expansion, housing became what David

⁷⁹ Knox, Paul L. *Metroburbia, USA*. Rutgers University Press, 2008.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 23.

⁸¹ Korngold, Gerald. "The Emergence of Private Land Use Controls in Large-Scale Subdivisions: The Companion Story to *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*" *Case W. Res. L. Rev.* 51 (2000): 617.

⁸² Hubka, Thomas C., and Judith T. Kenny. "Examining the American Dream: Housing Standards and the Emergence of a National Housing Culture, 1900–1930." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 13.1 (2006): 49–69.

Harvey termed the “spatial fix” to the state’s overaccumulation crisis during the Depression.⁸³ While 1933 marked the low point for housing starts during this period of economic stagnation, Keynesian policy more than quadrupled that number on the eve of the United States’ entry into WWII. Meanwhile, the immediate 1950s postwar era saw the most dramatic period of suburban expansion. While the population of metro cities grew by only six million, or 11.6 percent during that decade, the suburban population of the United States grew by nineteen million, or 45.9 percent—reflecting suburban growth alongside that of the postwar US economy until 1973 that saw the GDP increase fivefold, the median income double, and the rate of home ownership climb by 50 percent.⁸⁴ Using rationalized techniques involving pattern-book designs, balloon framing, and assembly line builds to quickly erect thousands of suburban tracts around the country, sprawling concentric zones of suburbia soon encircled every major American city to become the new “cradles of national personality.”

As the industrial belts in the east and midwest declined, suburban life anchored a standard of living commensurate with the nation’s status as the leader of the “free world,” legitimating America’s economy and form of government as the best for “affluence, democracy, and world peace” during the Cold War.⁸⁵ While some suburban communities, like the Levittowns in the northeast, had established national reputations as being emblematic of suburban life—for better or for worse—California’s mid-century subdivisions soon supplanted them as the model for the ideal suburb. “Awash in consumer goods, enjoying nearly full employment, and blessed with high wages,” the daily life of the “average” California suburbanite became taken up as part of America’s Cold War narrative, authorizing its claims of having the ideal model of governance to produce such prosperous and desirable life conditions.⁸⁶ In this way, Orange County was uniquely positioned to become the model suburban utopia. With local developers offering “modern housing, rural open space, high-quality schools, amenities, and a temperate climate that permitted an easy-going outdoor life year-round,” the area’s undeveloped coastal space, proximity to Los Angeles, and wealth of defense industry jobs paved the way for Orange County to emerge as the ideal candidate to prototype a “real life” version of Walt Disney’s dream for a “community of tomorrow.”⁸⁷

COUNTY TRANSFORMATIONS FROM BLACK GOLD SUBURB TO COLD WAR SUBURB

*Welcome aboard Trans World Airlines’ Rocket to the Moon! In Tomorrowland’s world of 1986 you’ll zoom through space at speeds over 172 thousand miles an hour! Actually experience the “feel” of space travel—see Earth below and Heavens above as you pass space station Terra, coast around the Moon and return! An eight-hour flight in ten thrilling minutes—all without ever leaving the ground.*⁸⁸

– Disneyland Advertisement,
The Los Angeles Times, July 15, 1955

Orange County remained a largely rural agricultural town well into the Second World War, only

⁸³ Harvey, David. *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. Routledge, 2002.

⁸⁴ Knox, Paul L. *Metroburbia, USA*. Rutgers University Press, 2008.

⁸⁵ Beauregard, Robert A. *When America became Suburban*. University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁷ Kling, Rob, Spencer C. Olin, and Mark Poster. *Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County since World War II*. University of California Press, 1995, 6.

⁸⁸ Disneyland’s Tomorrowland advertisement. *The Los Angeles Times*, July 15, 1955, p. 10.

developing into its white-collar suburban image in the late 1950s after the opening of Disneyland in July of 1955 put the region on the map. At the park's opening over two years before the Soviet Union managed to launch Sputnik 1 into space, a ride called "Rocket to the Moon" in Tomorrowland brought America's modernist vision of the nation's march towards the future to the park goer, simulating the experience of traveling to the moon and back.⁸⁹ Seated on the floor around a circular screen, the bottom screen would play where the guests had been while the top screen would show where they would be going. As a series of images and sounds simulated the sensation of spectators ascending towards the moon at the top and leaving first, Anaheim, then Southern California, then the United States, and eventually planet Earth itself, Rocket to the Moon placed both the park goer and Orange County within the Cold War geopolitics of their time, affirming in the national imagination a feeling of certainty that America was resolutely headed towards a bigger, better, and brighter tomorrow.⁹⁰

Following WWII, the United States emerged as the singular superpower able to check the rise of Soviet influence after the two World Wars effectively saw the overstretch and subsequent decline of the Old World imperial nation states during the twentieth century. As a result, the nation's need to build a robust military apparatus for its sustained superpower growth continued to underwrite Orange County's development after WWII, when firms like Douglas Aircraft and Lockheed opened primary manufacturing sites in and around its borders. Much like Disneyland's other attractions, Rocket to the Moon was therefore developed through this military-industrial collaboration between Disney and the Department of Defense. Designed by the head of the US Army's guided missile program, Wernher von Braun, Rocket to the Moon reflected the narrative dimension to the state's broader maneuvers during the Cold War, which fought an affective and ideological campaign on top of its hot proxy wars on the ground.⁹¹

In order to fund its development, the attraction was sponsored by TWA, owned by former-movie-tycoon-turned-aviation-magnate Howard Hughes. But just like Disneyland merely reflected America in miniature form, Hughes not only sponsored the narrative of Cold War modernity at the amusement park through the Tomorrowland ride but also materially attempted to realize it in the outlying suburbs of Orange County. Relying on the region's "cheap" land and oil resources to subsidize the county's skyrocketing ambitions through defense spending and housing development, Hughes was a key part of the county's transformation from a "Black Gold Suburb" to what Stuart Leslie has termed a "Cold War Suburb."

...

As historian Fred Viehe has argued, the suburbs surrounding Los Angeles County that developed from about 1890 to 1930 fragmented the region along a distinct pattern tied to the geographic distribution of oil fields and refineries in the area. Therefore, unlike suburbs in the east coast or midwest that largely followed a pattern of white flight from industrial urban centers, Southern California's suburbs developed into a fragmented landscape that sociologist Harlan P. Douglass (1934) distinguished at the time as those that became "suburbs of production" and those that became "suburbs of consumption." Beginning in the 1890s, suburbanization evolved in response to the initial discovery of oil in Whittier in 1896 and in Fullerton in 1899. Likened by Douglass to a "frontier mining camp," these early suburbs offered few amenities and primarily developed to house oil workers

⁸⁹ Findlay, John M. *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940*. University of California Press, 1992.

⁹⁰ Avila, Eric. "Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Film Noir, Disneyland, and the Cold War (Sub)Urban Imaginary." *Journal of Urban History* 31.1 (2004): 3-22.

⁹¹ David, Leonard. (2019, September). "Long Before Apollo, I Went on a Lunar Flight at Tomorrowland." Air and Space Section, *Smithsonian Magazine*. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/air-space-magazine/my-trips-moon-180972972/>

residing in the area. Fullerton, for example, became home to an extractive geography of oil derricks while adjacent Brea housed oil refineries and La Habra became a residential community with small bungalows built to house workers and their families.

Within a few years of oil discovery, however, residents and city leaders quickly realized the growth advantages that ready access to oil provided them. Oil production brought an estimated \$1 million annually into Whittier, for example, which then helped it invest \$175,000 in its water system, \$110,000 in a sewage system, and \$165,000 in a vocational high school.⁹² The presence of an oil field translated into immense revenues for suburban communities, subsidizing municipal budgets so heavily that residents enjoyed some of the lowest tax rates in the state while still benefiting from city investments in municipal infrastructure like electricity and paved roadways. Both La Habra and Fullerton, for instance, significantly decreased their tax rates after receiving \$1 million and \$5 million in annual oil revenues, respectively, driving one contemporary observer to declare that “Orange County practically lives off oil.”⁹³ Local gas prices were also subsidized by the glut of nearby oil resources, where the average consumer in Southern California paid less than half the national average to purchase gasoline for personal use. Incentivizing more suburbanites to take to the newly constructed inter-urban highways in cars that all collectively benefitted from their close proximity to oil, California’s growth therefore reflected the nation’s growth, becoming both an extractive zone for oil production and a consumer zone for its use via the expansion of the automotive and defense industries. The subsequent industrialization of Southern California began in 1919 when Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company opened a facility in the area, which marked the ascent of metropolitan Los Angeles in the following decade as the western headquarters for automotive, tire, glass, and steel manufacturing as well as the regional center for the aircraft and chemical industries.

As the region continued to industrialize over the next decade, Los Angeles and its surrounding suburbs experienced a jolt to their growth with the onset of WWII when increased demand for war production drew tens of thousands of new migrants to its industrial nodes, a trend that continued well after the war in light of GI suburbanization and steadfast Cold War defense spending. While many companies chose to establish their headquarters in Los Angeles proper, many built their actual factories and warehouses in the surrounding suburbs. Ford Motor Company, for example, opened its west coast assembly plant in Long Beach, which housed the state’s largest network of refineries.⁹⁴ Similarly, in 1957 Howard Hughes personally selected nearby oil-rich Fullerton as the site on which to expand his defense electronics division just six miles north of “The Happiest Place on Earth” and just forty miles south of his Culver City headquarters in Los Angeles County.⁹⁵

Well ahead of other cities in the region, Fullerton had hired Robert Clark in 1952 as its industrial coordinator to buy or lease land in its surrounding plots to high-tech companies in search of cheaper land and lower tax rates. Clark’s first significant contract was struck with the medical technology company, Beckman Instruments, which moved its scattered offices in Pasadena to a consolidated 40 acre campus on the border of Fullerton and La Habra. With an executive wing designed by famed architect, William Pereira, the development of the Beckman campus signaled Orange County’s transformation into one of the epicenters for the nation’s enlarging military-industrial complex, a “network of defense firms, laboratories, and government facilities,

⁹² Viehe, Fred W. “Black Gold Suburbs: The Influence of the Extractive Industry on the Suburbanization of Los Angeles, 1890–1930.” *Journal of Urban History* 8.1 (1981): 3–26.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹⁵ Leslie, Stuart W. “Cold War Suburbs: Thinking about the Unthinkable in Style.” *Southern California Quarterly* 102.1 (2020): 24–56.

[where] more than anywhere else, the great strategic, technical, and industrial competition with the Soviet Union was fought out.”⁹⁶

During the Cold War, Hughes Aircraft shifted its operations from aviation to become the largest military electronics firm in Southern California, developing new radar and guided missile technology to assist America with its arms race. When Howard Hughes brokered a deal with Clark in 1957 to relocate Hughes Aircraft’s Ground Systems Group to a massive 350-acre site in Fullerton with the plan to invest \$6 million dollars on a new plant and supply 2,000 high-paying jobs to workers to run it, the campus’ development offered a large-scale model for the modern company town in which handsome suburban houses were built in the California-ranch style to serve an increasingly upwardly mobile cohort of predominantly white Americans. Offering enough open space to test the company’s radar technology, Hughes also chose Fullerton because its open space would allow for the development of new housing to accommodate the families of its workers, which he hoped would promote a more exclusive variety of the California contemporary suburban home to attract prime talent.⁹⁷ Correspondingly ushering in Orange County’s rapid transformation into a “Cold War suburb,” local developers quickly moved in response by the early 1960s to build tracts with state-of-the-art amenities, marketed to “executive category” prospective buyers that the Hughes Ground Systems Group employed at its new campus. In the particular Cold War context where aerospace engineers and other R&D talent were in short supply, firms hoping to attract the candidates most likely to continue to win them defense contracts scrambled to offer more attractive amenities to prospective employees and often coordinated with real estate interests to develop an area together.

With its largest single tract development located just to the north of the Hughes facility containing 563 lots on 233 acres of land, the development of the Hughes plant and its surrounding subdivisions would not have been possible without being heavily subsidized by large federal defense contracts and seemingly unlimited oil resources, where funds in the sum of billions allowed the company to keep a fleet of engineers and technicians employed on incomes that provided them with a rarefied life. After its \$30 million contract to develop an air-defense system for the US Army, Hughes Ground Systems secured a \$400 million contract to develop an air-defense system for NATO and then regularly drew \$300 million annually after that until that number exploded during the Reagan era. In the 1980s, Hughes Ground Systems won \$500 million in DOD funds for a NATO air-defense system update, \$91 million for a similar air-defense system for Taiwan, and a whopping \$837 million for Saudi Arabia’s broad air-defense “Peace Shield.” By 1984 the Fullerton plant alone possessed a \$2.5 billion backlog, employing nearly 16,000 employees on an expanded campus that had reached the scale of a small city with amenities like parks and baseball fields and utilities like its own water reservoir and backup electrical system.⁹⁸

Blurring capital’s manufactured boundary between Disneyland theme park’s fantastical escapist landscape and the fantastical landscape of Orange County, the story of Fullerton’s development through Hughes Ground Systems in Orange County therefore illustrates how the overall region grew due to its dialectical reliance on both a heavily subsidized and extractive defense production economy as well as a steady flow of veteran settlement and high consumption, evincing a political economic structure that epitomized America’s “warfare-welfare” state in microcosmic action at the mid-century height of the Cold War.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid, 26–28.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 28–30.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 29–32.

⁹⁹ O’Connor, James. *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*. Routledge, 2017.

PROTOTYPING PROGRESS CITY

A model city of the future. It's based on a concept developed by Walt Disney for a community he called "E.P.C.O.T"—"Experimental Prototype City of Tomorrow."

Realistic to the smallest detail, this model is a living blueprint of new ideas and systems for future cities. The concept for EPCOT is one part of Walt Disney's master plan for the future Disney World in Florida.

*The City of Tomorrow, possible today, with the technology and imagination of American industry.*¹⁰⁰

Disneyland's Carousel of Progress was originally composed of four primary acts highlighting GE innovations over time; first at the turn of the century, then in the 1920s, then the 1940s, and, finally, some futuristically imagined time beyond 1967 (that still looked like 1967).¹⁰¹ Its trajectory captured the arc of America's "Golden Age," conveniently bookended from the invention of electricity (i.e., GE's purported "beginning" for humanity's progress into modernity) to the year right before what many historians identify as the nation's rubicon year, 1968, after which America witnessed its rapid unraveling. During this era of postwar national optimism, the forces of industry, real estate interests, and the state converged in the domain of urban planning, which they saw as vital to the Cold War capitalist strategy of valorizing the single-family home and its inhabitants as the consequence of living within a superior American regime that could secure the good life over Soviet communism.¹⁰²

So beyond the first four major acts of Carousel of Progress, the Disneyland attraction actually presented a separate fifth act that signaled their collective faith in coordinated urban planning. After audiences watched the happy family opening Christmas presents in front of their picture window framing Progress City in the background, they were directed upstairs to another level of the Carousel Theater where they could view the large scale model of Progress City for themselves. The original Progress City model was a detailed mechanized display fully outfitted with electricity to light up the model's miniaturized skyscrapers and ranch-style homes. Featuring a polished, yet encircled, urban core surrounded by a concentric outer ring of low-density suburban homes, Progress City offered a vision for the built environment that reflected how suburbanization was actively transforming the interrelated urban-rural spatial form throughout the country.

Transitioning from the fourth to final scene, the wife remarks on Walt Disney's vision, highlighting the underlying logic that drove planners in the 1960s to create an architecture conducive for urban containment and suburban order. "Today our whole downtown is completely enclosed," she says in awe. "Whatever the weather is outside, it's always dry and comfortable inside," she continues, pointing to the affective power of suburbia as comfortably secure from—if well designed—a containable urban center. Noting the City's symbiotic relationship to the professed benevolent powers of American industry, she additionally extends a warm neighborly welcome to General Electric in Progress City's universe, saying, "Now far off to your right, we have a welcome neighbor."

¹⁰⁰ The Original EPCOT. (2010, May 28). *E.P.C.O.T / Original 1967 Progress City model* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KutV8FqWQ8s>

¹⁰¹ Gennawey, Sam. *Walt and the Promise of Progress City*. Ayefour Publishing, 2011.

¹⁰² Light, Jennifer S. *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America*. JHU Press, 2003.

“Our GE nuclear power plant, dear,” he husband finishes, thus also encapsulating the implicit narrative forwarded by industrial capitalists and defense contractors that only under their stewardship would this ideal (sub)urban form be realized.

Consequently, continuing with the analysis that Orange County operated as an imaginary station alongside Disneyland and metropolitan Los Angeles, this section forwards that the region became the site where the convergence of state, industry, and real estate interests sought to materialize their vision for a community of tomorrow, today—not just at “The Happiest Place on Earth” but also in its surrounding landscape.

...

On August 11, 1965, a twenty-one-year-old Black man named Marquette Frye was pulled over by white California Highway Patrolman, Lee W. Minikus. Marquette and his younger brother, Ronald, recounted celebrating Ronald having just been discharged by the US Air Force when Minikus attempted to flag them down for drunk driving, at which point Minikus physically confronted Frye and struck him in the face with a baton. As a crowd of onlookers gathered around the scene, rumors circulated that the police had kicked a pregnant woman who was present during the incident. In part a reaction to this moment of police violence, the community in Watts subsequently began five days of civil unrest that resulted in 34 deaths and over \$200 million in property damage, establishing the Watts Rebellion as the costliest urban civil unrest event of the civil rights era.¹⁰³ More than just a spontaneous response to this moment of police–community tension, however, Watts community members were rebelling to oppose the everyday apartheid that characterized life in South Los Angeles, which had relied on LAPD’s Chief William Parker—an openly brazen white supremacist—to keep the community’s growing discontentment over high unemployment, substandard housing, and underfunded schools in check through use of state–sponsored, physical force.¹⁰⁴

Throughout the multi-day “urban crisis” that saw automobiles burn and grocery stores looted, public officials advanced the hypothesis that outside agitators—communists and other such Cold War enemies—had infiltrated American cities, stoking violence and theft in poor, nonwhite urban areas. Despite a gubernatorial commission ultimately finding evidence instead that community members had participated due to discontentment with being systemically overpoliced, underfunded, and underemployed, the claim that immoral enemy forces had corrupted the Black masses in America’s cities persisted in the discourse surrounding the “problem” of what to do about the nation’s increasingly abandoned metropolises where the flight of white capital had left in its wake concentrated centers of racialized poverty.

Recalling how a mass of 14,000 California National Guard troops arrived in the throes of the Watts Rebellion to quell the unrest, officials turned to building a more robust punitive apparatus at the local, state, and federal levels to secure property and safeguard against urban disturbances, as much of the rest of this dissertation argues. However, urban planners also had their role to play. Staring at an imagined future where habitual mass uprisings regularly threatened the placid everyday comings and goings of white capital, planners looked to urban design as a possible solution to the “racial problem” by devising ways to contain the suburbs from the city

¹⁰³ Murch, Donna. “The Many Meanings of Watts: Black Power, Wattstax, and the Carceral State.” *OAH Magazine of History* 26.1 (2012): 37–40.

¹⁰⁴ Felker–Kantor, Max. *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD*. UNC Press Books, 2018.

center through manipulating the built environment.¹⁰⁵ As a result, looking back to the protective layer surrounding the downtown core of Progress City, the sanitized model depicting a modern hotel skysrise and convention center actually masked something else about how Walt Disney, real estate interests, and white homeowners saw America's mid-century urban centers, which in reality signified the boogeyman of urban unrest, racial resentment, and social chaos. Thus, as urban planners went about designing their outer rings of low-density, ranch-style suburban homes, one of their primary motivations was concerned with how to design a utopian suburban environment secure from these urban threats—models of ex-urban living that could ideally produce the ordered, prosperous life promised and premised by American modernity.

In Orange County, planners largely looked to the region's coast and southern half to prototype this utopian endeavor. Though suburbanization had begun to transform the region's development since the discovery of oil at the turn of the century, the composition of these early suburbs were tied to the blue collar jobs North Orange County and metro Los Angeles had to offer, resulting in an early suburban landscape made largely by "merchant builders" who undertook decentralized projects in response to working class demand. After the influx of DoD funds flooded into Orange County as it developed into one of the nation's military-industrial nodes, however, regional developers looking to take advantage of the defense spending boom began to see their coastal properties as placing them at a distinct advantage in attracting an increasingly aspirational class of homebuyers.¹⁰⁶ Quickly, they set to work on designing more deliberate "total communities," i.e., self-contained suburban neighborhoods guarded from Los Angeles through a planning emphasis on local access roads with only limited connections to the new inter-urban highways.¹⁰⁷

To discuss how the coastal and southern portions of the county—further afield from Los Angeles proper—actually developed these total communities to guarantee the great life to those who could afford it and looked the part, the story must now turn to Irvine and the Irvine Company, which, as a company that owns the bulk of South Orange County, played a central role in prototyping their own version of a Disneyfied "Progress Suburb." During the period of the company's late twentieth century expansion, its President and Chief Planner, Ray Watson, held deep ties to Disney as a corporation. From 1972 to 2004, Watson served as a board member for the media giant and directly acted as Chairman for Walt Disney Productions from 1983 to 1984, playing such a key role in Disney's corporate development that he was designated a Disney Legend Award honoree in 2011.¹⁰⁸ Ray Watson's relationship with Disney actually began in the 1960s, however, when Walt Disney himself asked the trained architect to meet with him to discuss his plans for EPCOT, a community he dreamt of fully materializing near Disney World in Florida as his major urban planning project before he passed away in 1966. Wanting to discuss his dream for a community of tomorrow with someone with experience in planning large scale communities, Disney found in Ray Watson an ideal consultant, who, while never directly involved in the development or construction of Disney World, frequently stopped by the Florida site whenever his work took him to the East Coast.¹⁰⁹ Though he was dedicated to his collaboration with Disney, however, Watson's focus

¹⁰⁵ Hirsch, Arnold R. "Containment on the Home Front: Race and Federal Housing Policy from the New Deal to the Cold War." *Journal of Urban History* 26.2 (2000): 158–189.

¹⁰⁶ Leslie, Stuart W. "Cold War Suburbs: Thinking about the Unthinkable in Style." *Southern California Quarterly* 102.1 (2020): 24–56.

¹⁰⁷ Schiesl, Martin J. "Designing the Model Community: The Irvine Company and Suburban Development, 1950–88." *Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County since World War II* (1995): 55.

¹⁰⁸ Mannheim, Steve. *Walt Disney and the Quest for Community*. Routledge, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ Watson, Raymond L. "Raymond L. Watson: Planning and Developing the New Town of Irvine, California, 1960–2003; Irvine Company President, 1973–1977; Walt Disney Company Chairman, 1983–1984." Interview by Ann Lage. Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. 2003.

was on planning Irvine's 90,000 acres of undeveloped land, a gargantuan project that would, in a way, reflect EPCOT's ideals in Southern California well before they were exported to Florida.

Following a high-profile request from the University of California to open a new campus on part of its land, the Irvine Company hired the famed "futurist" architect, William Pereira, to centrally plan the campus in relation to a "quintessential privatized suburb" further south from North Orange County's unplanned suburban sprawl.¹¹⁰ Having built the executive wing for Beckman Instruments when the company relocated to Orange County and having worked on Ford Aeronutronic's glass-walled lobby on a Newport Beach property leased from the Irvine Company, Pereira was the perfect candidate to realize the land giant's vision for a better tomorrow, today. Architectural critic Allen Temko called Pereira "Hollywood's idea of an architect." A former producer and set designer at Paramount, Pereira himself functioned as a ideal vision for aspirational mid-century modernity; tall and handsome by Temko's account, he nurtured a conspicuous love for Bentleys and Lear Jet travel, preferred to dress in slick black and white, and appeared to be constantly surrounded by a sea of blond women.¹¹¹

Completing over two hundred fifty projects over the course of his career, William Pereira is frequently cited as one of the most significant influences on defining the "look" of mid-century America's institutions and cities, going on to build the bulk of America's Cold War architecture including Cape Canaveral in Florida, the United States Navy training facility in San Diego, the Western Hydraulics plant in Van Nuys, the Jet Production and Test Center in Palmdale, Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, and the hospital and Electronics and Radio Propagation Research Laboratories at Camp Pendleton. Though perhaps most famous for projects like the famed "Theme Building" at Los Angeles International Airport or the Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco, his body of work was ubiquitous: designing banks for financial institutions like Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Citibank, Union Bank, and First National Bank; department stores for JCPenney and Sears; shopping centers like Newport Beach's Fashion Island; tourist destinations like the Kauai Inn and the Disneyland Hotel; and corporate headquarters for Firestone Tire, IBM, Hilton Hotels, ABC, Paramount, AT&T, Toyota, Lockheed, and American Airlines, Pereira managed to connect the aesthetic of US defense with that of American industry, tourism, and commerce to materialize a Cold War imagining of "Modern America" in geographic space.¹¹²

Notably, however, it was Pereira's collaboration with the Irvine Company that largely defined his early career, which—to speak to its discursive importance—landed him a cover feature on Time Magazine in September of 1963 as the nation's acclaimed new urban planner.¹¹³ Responding to the rash of social criticism characterizing the early postwar suburbs as soulless, generic factories for the production of social conformity, the Irvine Company sought Pereira's help to plan Irvine as an aspirational place to live, devoid of any pejorative associations attached to the early, Levittown-style suburbs of postwar years long past. Hoping to brand Irvine as a new and improved suburban community in which anyone would be thrilled to live, Irvine promoted itself as mastering the largest and most ambitious of the "New Towns"—"the latest community to embrace this utopian ideal of optimal living."¹¹⁴ Pereira capitalized on Southern California's media-assisted image as the ideal place to

¹¹⁰ Oliver, H. Pike, and C. Michael Stockstill. *Transforming the Irvine Ranch: Joan Irvine, William Pereira, Ray Watson, and the Big Plan*. Routledge, 2022.

¹¹¹ Johnson, Scott. "William Pereira." LA Forum for Architecture and Urban Design, Issue 7, 2015, <http://laforum.org/article/william-pereira/>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

¹¹² Hines, Thomas S. *Architecture of the Sun: Los Angeles Modernism, 1900–1970*. New York: Rizzoli, 2010.

¹¹³ *Time Magazine*. 6 September 1963, <http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19630906,00.html>

¹¹⁴ Bell, Ellen. "Irvine Was Biggest 'New Town' Experiment." Irvine World News, 11 February 2014, <https://150.irvinecompany.com/irvine-biggest-new-town-experiment/>

live, delivering on the amenities executive-level buyers desired in their search for their slice of the American Dream: large three-, four-, even five-bedroom homes with open floor plans, massive stone fireplaces, marble foyers, tennis courts, club houses, and sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean across sliding glass doors that produced a uniquely Southern California variety of luxurious indoor-outdoor living.

However, beyond providing these commercial comforts to Orange County's growing white-collar, "R&D" class, Pereira forwarded a model for Irvine that also addressed planners' anxieties towards how to architecturally address the urban racial problem. Hoping to use strategically placed corridors to control the flow of traffic within and between its borders, William Pereira drew Irvine's master plan so that it could be divided into parcels of smaller, more insulated "residential villages" connected by "environmental corridors."¹¹⁵ While residential villages were internally connected by smaller roads inaccessible to most outsiders without requiring them to go significantly out of their way (i.e. the "cul de sac" strategy), access to the environmental corridors, which led to more open public spaces that contained citywide services, were limited to designated and sparingly located entry and exit points—reflecting analogous tactics used to design university campuses during the antiwar era to constrain the access points in which students could organize protests. Thus, as Pereira managed to produce the idyllic image of Irvine as a planned residential community populated by affluent homeowners enjoying suburban amenities and secure in their knowledge that their "New Town" could adequately safeguard them from urban threat, his affirmation of America's Cold War domestic strategy won him national acclaim.

Moreover, as a "master plan" for future cities, the Irvine project also had enduring and far-reaching consequences for producing global suburban architectures, exporting an aspirational model for comfortable living and neighborhood security that became taken up as the gold standard for attaining the American good life. "One of the highest compliments paid to the company is the number of planners and developers around the world who have studied what the company has done and essentially copied it," the company's website claims, gesturing to the influence of Irvine's vision for exporting its prototype for a *global* "community of tomorrow," today.¹¹⁶

Overall, then, Pereira and Watson's influence in Irvine and beyond ultimately demonstrates how Orange County's mid-century suburbs became indicative of a broader American strategy fought through the built environment to forward global and local Cold War priorities and address concerns over unchecked racial disorder. In the process, their collaborations across industry, real estate, and government came to blur those peculiar distinctions between fantasy and reality towards which Baudrillard had been so skeptical, where the imagined suburbia in Disneyland's Progress City dovetailed with the actual materialization of that suburbia in Orange County by the Irvine Company itself to enshrine the region as the bulwark of American democracy, freedom, and prosperity at the height of the nation's ideological contest with the Soviet Union.¹¹⁷

PROFANE ILLUMINATIONS ON HAUNTED GROUND

¹¹⁵ Schiesl, Martin J. "Designing the Model Community: The Irvine Company and Suburban Development, 1950–88." *Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County since World War II* (1995): 55.

¹¹⁶ "Visionary Dreamers Created a Modern City for Dreamers." Irvine Company 150th Anniversary, Irvine Company. <https://150.irvinecompany.com/visionary-dreamers/>. Accessed 13 August 2021.

¹¹⁷ Lelekis, Debbie, and Madelaine Elam. "Blurring Fantasy and Reality: Disney's EPCOT Dream and Tomorrowland." *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture, 1900 to Present* 16.1 (2017).

*O, I wish I was in the land of cotton
Old times there are not forgotten
Look away! Look away! Look away! Dixie Land.*

Dressed in wide-brimmed felt hats, cotton vests, and black bow ties, a trio of animatronic geese sing the opening words to “Dixie” to begin the first act of “America Sings.”¹¹⁸ As the attraction that replaced “Carousel of Progress,” Disney Imagineers designed America Sings so that it would sweep through a sample of American musical history across the show’s four acts.¹¹⁹ In the opening dialogue, the show’s narrator, Sam the Eagle, proudly answers a question from his curious owl companion. “Where’d the songs come from?” the owl asks, to which Sam answers matter-of-factly, “Why, they were the songs people brought from their native country!”¹²⁰ While productive for reifying the notion of America being a “nation of immigrants” at a time when the passage of the Hart–Celler Immigration Act of 1965 and the Fall of Saigon in 1975 were significantly reshaping the nation’s demographic makeup, Sam’s answer to the owl’s question is only partially “true”—masking the profound conditions of racial violence from which many of the songs used in America Sings were actually produced.

While the exact origin of the folk song is still somewhat unclear and contested, the writing of “Dixie” is often attributed to Daniel Decatur Emmett, an Ohio-born American songwriter who founded the first full troupe of blackface minstrel performers.¹²¹ Initially staged in New York as the closing song for a “Bryant’s Minstrels” show in 1859, “Dixie” soon gained mass popular appeal throughout the United States as a campy tune easily adapted to various narrative ends. By the conclusion of the Civil War, however, the song cemented its reputation as being associated with the Southern Confederacy, which repurposed it to function as its army’s favored battle hymn during the war. Beyond being a symbol for the Old South, however, “Dixie” was reclaimed by Abraham Lincoln after Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox, where he was heard remarking that “the song [was] federal property now.”

After the Civil War, “Dixie” emerged as synonymous with the Old South in the post-Reconstruction period. Only superficially lambasted for attempting to preserve an outmoded slave economy, Karen L. Cox demonstrates how depictions of Dixie in late nineteenth and early twentieth century music and literature more so romanticized the antebellum South as a kind of Paradise Lost in the popular imagination.¹²² Observing this emergence and consequent recuperation of the Old South in popular culture, Cox argues in *Dreaming of Dixie* that music producers from New York City’s Tin Pan Alley released songs depicting genteel life in the antebellum period in order to play to consumer anxieties concerning America’s rapid transition from the Reconstruction Era through WWII. By imagining “Dixie” as the original idyllic landscape, songwriters helped produce a space of psychic escape for white listeners uneasy with the political, social, and economic changes wrought by the abrupt dissolution of the Southern slave economy. As Cox (7) describes:

During the period of this study, the South was frequently portrayed in popular culture as a region that was either primitive or exotic and was seen through the haze of moonlight and magnolias. Southern

¹¹⁸ Bierman, James H. “Disney’s America Sings.” *The Drama Review* 20.2 (1976): 63–72.

¹¹⁹ Weiss, Werner. (2018, October 28). America Sings Presented by Del Monte. Blog, Yesterland. <https://www.yesterland.com/amersings.html>

¹²⁰ Mouse Steps. (2020, April 11). “America Sings” Full Show at Disneyland 1987 in Tomorrowland’s Carousel Theater [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6Kx5WM-I_M

¹²¹ Nathan, Hans. “Dixie.” *The Musical Quarterly* 35.1 (1949): 60–84.

¹²² Cox, Karen L. *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South was created in American popular culture*. University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

identity in the national imagination encompassed many regional icons, including the old Confederate colonel, the mammy, the belle, the opulent plantation big house, bolls of cotton, and the hillbilly. Such representations of the region became part of the catalog of southern imagery that was employed in everything from advertising to movies. In popular culture, the South was used to represent the pastoral ideal and to recall a premodern America.

As such, Cox argues that the significance of this imagined Dixieland lay not (just) in its usage as a Southern anthem during the actual Civil War but also in its function as a symbol of both premodern escapism from the urban North and national reconciliation in which the South became symbolically reintegrated into the American story.

Pastoral and genteel Dixieland reflected some of the most enduring themes in American mythology termed the “agrarian myth” by Richard Hofstadter, which lent a moral dimension to rural space and attached a sentimental nostalgia to rural ways of life. Though images of The Belle and Chivalrous Planter indicate the vaunted class status they both occupy, the pastoral ideal manages to temporarily ignore this, broadly associating rurality with populist interests in the south in opposition to “urban elites” residing in northern cities at the turn of the century. By symbolically recuperating the dignity of the Confederacy through reframing its struggle as one between “real people” in rural settings versus “out-of-touch” urban elites, dreams of Dixie abstracted the antebellum period to a symbolic spacelessness, void of its true context to lend a symbolic concession to the South as it rejoined the Union. In other words, Dixie emerged as central to America’s racial imaginary, where visions of “The Belle,” “The Mammy,” and “The Chivalrous Planter” have continued to circulate in popular culture well after the Civil War—symbolic vehicles through which continuities from the antebellum racial capitalist order underlying the entire nation, not just the South, could be circulated and psychically maintained.

After the America Sings show closed in 1988, many of the animatronic “critters” were exported to Disney’s newest attraction: Splash Mountain. Squeezed onto a site located between the Haunted Mansion and Bear Country, Splash Mountain is a log flume roller coaster whose main thrill consists of a forty-nine-foot drop at the very end following ten minutes of riders’ steady progression beforehand through set pieces reenacting the various escapades of “Br’er Rabbit.” Originally built as an attraction based on Disney’s 1947 film, *Song of the South*, the ride has been mired in controversy since its opening.¹²³

Set during the Reconstruction Era, *Song of the South* tells the story of seven-year-old Johnny, played by Bobby Driscoll, who alongside co-star Luana Patten, made up Walt Disney’s so-called “Sweetheart Team” of child actors. Visiting his grandmother’s Southern plantation for an extended stay, Johnny befriends a “worker” named Uncle Remus played by James Baskett. Based on Joel Chandler Harris’ book from 1881, Uncle Remus is a fictional character invented by Harris to be the narrator of a collection of stories about Br’er Rabbit, a key figure in West, Central, and Southern African oral tradition presented as a hare-trickster who succeeds with his wits to outsmart authority figures.¹²⁴

While in the oral version, Br’er Rabbit is not tied to a particular place, in the Harris retelling Br’er Rabbit is reframed as living on a Southern plantation, anthropomorphized—we are made to assume—to stand in

¹²³ Sperb, Jason. “‘Take a Frown, Turn It Upside Down’: Splash Mountain, Walt Disney World, and the Cultural De-rac[e]-ination of Disney’s *Song of the South* (1946).” *Journal of Popular Culture* 38,5 (2005): 924–938.

¹²⁴ Stein, Daniel. “From ‘Uncle Remus’ to ‘Song of the South’: Adapting American Plantation Fictions.” *The Southern Literary Journal* (2015): 20–35.

for wily African slaves. Criticized for reproducing the made-up slave dialect devised by Harris in his writings on Uncle Remus, *Song of the South* also experienced its own backlash for sanitizing its representation of the Southern plantation, depicting it not as a brutal monument of the antebellum slave economy but rather as a pleasing, genteel landscape where plantation owners and guests happily coexist with former slaves—where an innocent child and a harmless grandmother *just happen* to live. Following Disney's downturn in the 1970s and subsequent corporate reshuffling in 1984, Jason Sperb (163) documents how the new leaders at Disney resorted to “transmedia dissipation” as a solution to the controversy surrounding *Song of the South* and their need to recuperate the charm of Splash Mountain, then called “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah River Run.”¹²⁵

The result of this changing landscape was that *Song of the South* would have to change. The company limited home video releases to excerpts from the film, and it fundamentally altered the narrative of the film's story in Splash Mountain. Uncle Remus was completely removed, as were the other “real” human characters. The plantation narrative was replaced with a fantastical journey through an ambiguous cartoon bayou.

Sperb notes that while prior to the 1980s, Disney could largely regulate access to its vault and release company-approved films to audiences under a controlled environment, the emergence of VHS and the technology's ability to record and distribute versions of Disney's films without its approval led the company to actively decide on its strategy for *Song of the South*. In order to manage any risk to the post-1984 executive team's effort to sanitize some of Disney's earlier films whose content conflicted with race-liberal norms of the period, Disney began to selectively soundbite and package isolated segments that were especially marketable. As part of its transmedia dissipation strategy where “old texts remain in an age of media convergence, but dispersed and watered down,” the company removed these clips from their original context, refocusing audience attention on the most affectively rewarding parts like its most famous musical number, “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah.”

The song itself went on to become a major Disney marketing tool. When the corporation created Touchstone as an “adult-friendly” distribution label for it to release other types of content beyond animated children's films, their very first film, *Splash* (1984), was cross-marketed with “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah,” containing a scene in which Tom Hanks is seen singing the song to himself while making breakfast. Throughout the 1980s, the song also appeared in movies like *National Lampoon's Vacation* (1983), *Overboard* (1987), and *Fletch Lives* (1989)—which, alongside the song's usage in CDs, VHS releases, and Disney theme parks, collectively cemented “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah”'s place as a taken-for-granted part of the Disney experience.

Transmediated fragments of *Song of the South* continue to appear everywhere throughout Disney's media universe. In addition to the versions of Splash Mountain in California, Florida, and Japan, direct traces of the film populate sing-along videos, compilation CDs, video games, and a wide range of other merchandise lines. Brer Rabbit himself is available in the form of plush toys and porcelain statues. Meanwhile, “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah” is so deeply engrained within Disney's media landscape of theme parks, videos, CDs, and television shows that its presence is nearly impossible to capture. The hit tune that preceded *Song of the South* on the pop charts back in 1946 has now outlived the film. “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah” is perhaps the only part of *Song of the South* that most audiences recognize, although the association is more often with Disney's fun-loving corporate image than with the tales of Uncle Remus. [emphasis added]

¹²⁵ Sperb, Jason. *Disney's Most Notorious Film*. University of Texas Press, 2012.

As Baudrillard (35) writes, “Forgetting extermination is part of extermination.” Disney’s deliberate strategy to “de-rac[e]-inate” one of its most lucrative products, “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah,” helped effectively launder *Song of the South* from its Uncle Remus telling, which itself—alongside other “Dreams of Dixie” representations—helped sanitize the institution of chattel slavery that built the antebellum South to begin with. By subjecting the song to countless isolated copies of itself—reconfiguring it as a sing-a-long in VHS tapes or as background dialogue in a Tom Hanks movie—Disney managed to keep the most profitable aspect from *Song of the South* in circulation where it could continue to produce value for the corporation well after the original content’s loss of cultural favor. This progression ultimately corresponds to what Baudrillard (6) refers to as the precession of the image:

Such would be the successive phases of the image:
it is the reflection of a profound reality;
it masks and denatures a profound reality;
it masks the absence of a profound reality;
it has no relation to any reality whatsoever;
it is its own pure simulacrum.

In the first case, the image is a good appearance—representation is of the sacramental order. In the second, it is an evil appearance – it is of the order of maleficence. In the third, it plays at being an appearance—it is of the order of sorcery. In the fourth, it is no longer of the order of appearances, but of simulation.

Thus, this is not to say that “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah” is utterly meaningless. Rather, its meaning is not what it claims to represent, which at this point, is arguably absolutely nothing at all beyond the affective investments that it generates. Instead, if we are to take Baudrillard’s word for it, the song must be traced to the first phase of the image in order to understand its most “sacramental” meaning, where “it is the reflection of a profound reality”—not a mere mask manufactured to denature and obscure the reality itself. So how can we trace the history of these Disneyland “images” as presented to their masked images in their first phase of representation? What does going about doing so accomplish for the task at hand?

...

In the essay, “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia,” Walter Benjamin provides an in-depth discussion of his concept of “profane illumination,” which, alongside what Saidiya Hartman has termed “critical fabulation,” constitute the primary methods that have informed the style in which this chapter has been written as well as the chosen objects of its analysis.¹²⁶ Elaborated in a series of essays, Benjamin apprehends the city through a formal methodology that takes the imaginistic material within it and rearranges the components into new political constellations.¹²⁷ Quoting a passage attributed to Apollinaire, Benjamin (6–7) writes that his usage of profane illumination originates from its declaration:

The trick by which this world of things is mastered—it is more proper to speak of a trick than a method—*consists in the substitution of a political for a historical view of the past* [emphasis added].
[Quoting Apollinaire:] “Open, graves, you, the dead of the picture galleries, corpses behind screens, in

¹²⁶ Benjamin, Walter. “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot Of The European Intelligentsia.” *New Left Review* 108 (1978): 47.

¹²⁷ Benjamin, Walter. *One-Way Street: And Other Writings*. Verso Books, 2021.

palaces, castles, monasteries, here stands the fabulous keeper of keys holding a bunch of the keys to all times, who knows where to press the most artful lock and invites you to step into the midst of the world of today, to mingle with the bearers of the burdens, the mechanics whom money ennobles, to make yourself at home in their automobiles, which are beautiful as armour from the age of chivalry, to take your places in the international sleeping cars, and to weld yourself to all the people who today are still proud of their privileges. But civilization will give them short shrift.”

“Concerned with experiences, not with theories and still less phantasms,” profane illumination therefore sees as its primary political imperative a need to illuminate and desecrate that which is sacred to bourgeois power. A profane illumination of history, interprets Benjamin (6), demands us to mingle with the haunted traces of the so-called past that make themselves known in the so-called present—“to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the ‘outmoded.’” A profane illumination of history insists that we finally face that “profound reality” reflected by the first image, where there lies the sobering and brutal picture of open graves and corpses “in palaces, castles, [and] monasteries”—*masked* by a fabulous keeper of the keys who obscures that reality by seducing us to make ourselves at home with the abundance of privileges that money “ennobles” and enables. A profane illumination consequently dances with history to cast a spotlight on and repudiate those empty bourgeois seductions that like to designate themselves as sacred, and in doing so, transforms the latent energy residing in the most seemingly destitute or outmoded things into political constellations that can produce intoxicating, revolutionary revelations and experiences. Consequently, Disneyland’s Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah River Run can be understood as one such outmoded object whose latent energy can be channeled when placed in a political constellation with, say, America on Parade, Carousel of Progress, Rocket to the Moon, and a host of other “imaginistic material” across time and space in order to summon particular ghosts that can help us better understand what profound reality they are masking.

But what does it mean to summon ghosts? Reflecting on her classic, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Avery Gordon (2) explains that, “Haunting was the language and the experiential modality by which I tried to reach an understanding of the meeting of organized force and meaning because haunting is one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with...or when their oppressive nature is continuously denied.”^{128,129} Yet offering a corrective to how the term evolved from its political usage to something else, Gordon critiques the impulse towards resignation where haunting is misunderstood as simply mourning the impossibility of fully recovering the ghost’s “shape”. While noting that trauma and oppression are often intimately bound with haunting, Gordon (2–3) explains that unlike trauma, haunting is distinctive because it produces a sense of “something-to-be-done” in response to the specters that haunting conjures.

What’s distinctive about haunting as I used the term...is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely. I used the term haunting to describe those singular and yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive....Haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in linear time, alters the way we normally separate and sequence the past, the present and the future....Haunting and the appearance of specters or ghosts is one way, I tried to suggest, we are notified that what’s been concealed is very much alive and present, interfering with those always incomplete forms of containment and repression

¹²⁸ Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

¹²⁹ Gordon, Avery. “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity.” *borderlands* 10.2 (2011): 1–21.

ceaselessly directed towards us....[Haunting occurs] when the cracks and rigging are exposed, when the people who are meant to be invisible show up without any sign of leaving, when disturbed feelings cannot be put away, when something else, something different from before, seems like it must be done.

Thus, in this chapter's profane illumination of racial capitalism's mechanical graveyard of outmoded Disneyland attractions, what emerges is a chorus of ghosts who insist on making themselves known to express an unresolved social violence produced from the conditions that laid them to waste—to help us, as their collective audience, understand the drama of the American national project as well as the tragic arc of its foolhardy pursuits.¹³⁰

How this discussion manages to speak to these ghosts relies on a method forwarded by Saidiya Hartman called "critical fabulation." In "Venus in Two Acts," Hartman (11) discusses how critical fabulation is a method through which we can engage with haunting in our interrogations into history—as-knowledge by "playing with and rearranging the basic elements of the story" and "by re-presenting the sequence of events...from contested points of view."¹³¹ In her specific discussion of the Atlantic slave trade:

I have attempted to jeopardize the status of the event, to displace the received or authorized account, and to imagine what might have happened or might have been said or might have been done. By throwing into crisis "what happened when" and by exploiting the "transparency of sources" as fictions of history, I wanted to make visible the production of disposable lives (in the Atlantic slave trade and, as well, in the discipline of history), to describe "the resistance of the object," if only by first imagining it, and to listen for the mutters and oaths and cries of the commodity. By flattening the levels of narrative discourse and confusing narrator and speakers, I hoped to illuminate the contested character of history, narrative, event, and fact, to topple the hierarchy of discourse, and to engulf authorized speech in the clash of voices. The outcome of this method is a "recombinant narrative," which "loops the strands" of incommensurate accounts and which weaves present, past, and future in retelling the girl's story and in narrating the time of slavery as our present....The intent of this practice is not to give voice to the slave, but rather to imagine what cannot be verified, a realm of experience which is situated between two zones of death—social and corporeal death—and to reckon with the precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance. It is an impossible writing which attempts to say that which resists being said (since dead girls are unable to speak). It is a history of an unrecoverable past; it is a narrative of what might have been or could have been: it is a history written with and against the archive.

Looping strands of the region's history and weaving between related snapshots that have taken place there in historical time, this chapter consequently leverages an alinear chronology of how we got here and where we might be going to subvert authorized accounts that have legitimated the objectives and rationales of the state, industrial capitalists, and commercial real estate interests over the wailing of ghosts who mourn and denounce the settler state's reliance on a regular production of disposable lives.

That being so, the combined method of this chapter consequently engages profane illumination and critical fabulation to pursue what Herman Gray and Macarena Gómez-Barris (5) have termed a "sociology of the trace," a way of engaging with haunting and the telling of history that recognizes the limitations of pure

¹³⁰ Weiner, Albert. "The Function of the Tragic Greek Chorus." *Theatre Journal* 32.2 (1980): 205–212.

¹³¹ Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12.2 (2008): 1–14.

empiricism in coming to know what is true about the social worlds that have been disappeared and rendered impossible by structural violence.¹³² As they push:

One of the defining features of American sociology is its investment in the veracity of empirical evidence. Social facts that can be measured, seen, and accounted for are privileged by the discipline because they can be tracked through quantitative and qualitative social methods that are founded upon the scientific method of observation, reality testing, and corroboration. Although more recently certain methodologies have come under some pressure, statistics and other quantitatively based approaches like surveys have long occupied the top position in a hierarchy of approvable methods within the discipline. And, within the “toolkit” of qualitative sociology, methods such as large sample interviews and comparative case studies have been conferred with the status of reliable over observations that are referred to as “mere impression,” including some forms of ethnographic work, textual analysis, analysis of visual archives, or “listening closely” to the field. Because they pose problems of generalizability, systematicity, and a normative notion of rigor, these latter methods are thought to be unscientific and therefore suspect, when in fact they may be the only tenable way to approach social traces.

We propose a sociology of the trace as a way to attenuate the distance between observable social worlds and those things that are not easily found through methodologies that attempt to empirically account for social reality. If we were to trace a trace, how would we do it? Where would it lead us? What would be gained through this approach? How would we trace time and space, the agents, the debris of structural projects like privatization and deregulation, the coal mining industry, state violence, and welfare and its representation? What of those cast on the edge by dominant representations and practices that flatten the complexity of and ability to access their social lives? A sociology of the trace thinks about erasures of violence, bodies used by powerful interests, emptied lands filled with spectacle, and memory receptacles that bide time with promised futures as partial answers that prompt yet more questions... We take up the challenge posed by Gordon as an exercise in how to apprehend disappeared social worlds, subjectivities, and experiences that may be outside of the purview of disciplinary knowledge that relies exclusively on empirical forms of knowing.

Thus, rather than subscribing to any linear or uncontested understanding of historical causality or event, the argument here takes both haunting and the material traces it leaves behind seriously as placed within contingent and constrained historical processes, making what Pacewicz has called “constitutive claims” about the case of Orange County as a fantastical settler landscape—“external validity claims about the make-up of a phenomenon that straddle both causal and descriptive accounts.”^{133,134}

Therefore, before discussing the context of contestation in which the arrival of Vietnamese refugees in 1975 became historically positioned in this chapter’s final section, this intermediary discussion first asks some more fundamental questions to attempt to adjudicate the claims subsequently lobbied by competing groups during that period of time about the boundaries of citizenship, state obligation, and refugee deservingness/innocence. Mainly: What exactly was the basis for the contests over state provision and belonging

¹³² Gray, Herman, and Macarena Gómez-Barris, eds. *Toward a Sociology of the Trace*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

¹³³ Pacewicz, Josh. “What Can You Do With a Single Case? How To Think About Ethnographic Case Selection Like a Historical Sociologist.” *Sociological Methods & Research* (2020).

¹³⁴ Lara-Millán, Armando, Brian Sargent, and Sunmin Kim. “Theorizing with Archives: Contingency, Mistakes, and Plausible Alternatives.” *Qualitative Sociology* 43.3 (2020): 345–365.

following the Vietnam War, and how far back did these struggles really go? Who is entitled to claim status, resources, and innocence in Orange County, and how do national myths of the American Dream and American Manifest Destiny work to legitimate those claims? Why is Orange County specifically a generative site from which to re-encounter the American story of itself, by itself, and what unobservable truths do the particular ghosts that continue to roam its landscape need to make known?

Looking to a 1945 *Life* magazine article titled, “The California Way of Life,” these inquiries begin by calling into question the underlying assumption made about why Southern California emerged as the site where the United States could invest so much capital into building its Cold War, single-family home domestic strategy, where the article forwards:

As a laboratory for experiments in modern living, California has certain advantages. *Compared with the east it has no past* [emphasis added]. It is not hampered by 19th-Century tradition; it scarcely had a 19th Century. Its cities, towns, highways, homes and modes of life have been built from scratch, freshly tailored to fit the needs of the automobile era. Its people, about 70% of whom come from somewhere else, have left behind them the social and architectural encumbrances designed for more rugged climates and have adopted new ways especially suited to the sun-warmed Pacific slope.¹³⁵

Thus, as developers, industrial capitalists, and the state worked to build Orange County into the paramount Cold War Suburb, they relied on this key assertion—rooted in a long tradition of national identity tied to rugged individualism’s tango with Manifest Destiny—that California emerged as the ideal setting to plan communities of tomorrow because its land was empty and devoid of any past, a perfect tabula rasa on which to plan suburban communities to reflect American ingenuity and progress for the modern age.¹³⁶

But is this true? Returning now to the Irvine Company as an illustrative and vital case, the remainder of this section will now place the real estate behemoth within a deeper settler capitalist history of the land, juxtaposing its claims alongside a cacophony of spectral voices that question the company’s authority to privatize and own that which needed to be stolen and emptied in the first place. Acknowledging how this history of the region encapsulates the significance of territorialized land itself in the making and legitimation of the state, the ensuing discussion focuses on how land—its process of dispossession, its privatization, its development, and its unmarked graves—has played a central role in authorizing certain futures over others for the materialization of a settler capitalist vision of tomorrow, today, as well as in turn foreclosing our capacities to imagine alternative, decolonial temporalities.

IMAGINEERING AND PROFITEERING IN THE LAND OF WHITE NOSTALGIA

Turning to the homepage of the Irvine Company’s 150 Year Anniversary Website, the layout prominently features a photo slideshow: waves gently washing onto a sandy shore, mission-style architecture, a beach at sunset, and a mid-rise building foregrounded by a palm tree, all cycling through on an endless loop. To the side of a heading that reads “CELEBRATING 150 YEARS,” the navigation menu is organized into three

¹³⁵ “The California Way of Life: Climate and Automobile Create a New Pattern of Indoor-Outdoor Living.” *Life* (22 October 1945): 105-117.

¹³⁶ Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2000.

parts, displayed in dignified letters: LAND. LEGACY. LIFE.¹³⁷ At the bottom of the page, an interactive timeline features photos with short descriptions of how the Irvine Company has philanthropically contributed to the benign management of the county's land since its founding:

1897 The Irvine Company makes its first public land donation of 304 acres for Irvine Regional Park, formerly known as the "Picnic Grounds" to Orange County.

1918 James Irvine offers right-of-way for Coast Highway to County. An attraction in itself, the highway runs alongside the coastline, providing access to coastal cities and communities, as well as parks, beaches, and other attractions.

1937 Exemplifying Irvine Company's history of philanthropy, the James Irvine Foundation is created in 1937 to provide financial aid for privately supported educational and charitable institutions.

1941 The site of Irvine Bowl in Laguna Beach is made possible by a 17.7-acre donation from James Irvine.

1960 Acclaimed architect and urban planner William Pereira is commissioned to create a master plan to guide development and set standards for the entire Irvine Ranch. The original master plan calls for 10,400 acres, roughly 11 percent of the 93,000-acre Ranch, to be set-aside as parks and Open Space land. Master-planning begins. The Irvine Company sells (for one dollar) 1,000 acres to the University of California on which to build UC Irvine.

1979 The Company transfers 2,791 acres of land to the State of California, which in turn becomes Crystal Cove State Park, preserving three and a half miles of precious coastline and priceless biological resources in the coastal foothills.

1996 The Irvine Company contributes 21,000 acres to The Nature Reserve of Orange County, thus creating a massive contiguous habitat area containing a wide variety of rare plant and animal species and the vital eco-systems necessary to support their survival.

2001 The Irvine Company designates 11,000 acres of pristine Open Space for permanent protection in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. This gift is the final link in a contiguous sweep of Open Space from the coastal mountains to the sea on the historic Irvine Ranch

2005 The Irvine Ranch Land Reserve Trust is created to help ensure comprehensive protection and public access to the preserved lands. The trust is soon renamed the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, reflecting its increasingly active role in stewardship of the lands.

2006 40,000 permanently protected acres of the 93,000 acre Irvine Ranch® are designated a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior, following rigorous scientific review. Two years later, in 2008, the same lands are named a California Natural Landmark — the first such designation — and marks the beginning of a new program for the state.

2010 The Irvine Company® designates the final 20,000 acres it still owns to the County of Orange — bringing the total contribution of permanently preserved land to more than 50,000 acres, representing more than half of the original 93,000-acre Irvine Ranch®.

2014 Culminating more than 50 years of open space master planning, the Irvine Company

¹³⁷ *Irvine Company 150th Year Anniversary*. 2021, <https://150.irvinecompany.com/>. Accessed 23 August 2021.

announces a major land gift of 2,500 acres near Anaheim Hills, East Orange, and Irvine Lake. The gift brings the grand total of parklands and open space given by the Irvine Company to nearly 55,000 acres, or approximately 60% of the 93,000-acre Irvine Ranch.

According to Martin J. Schiesl, few organizations have played such an outsized role in the economic and social evolution of Orange County as the Irvine Company, which continues to hold the largest stretch of acreage in the county during a century of staggering demographic and economic growth. Allocated from massive parcels of ranching lands, the holdings are documented to have been privatized and owned since the 1850s when the outbreak of the Civil War increased demand for California wool and compelled Irish investor–sheep farmers Benjamin Flint, Thomas Flint, and Llewellyn Bixby to expand their Monterey County operation southwards.¹³⁸ After a devastating drought damaged the local economy, Mexican rancheros working in the local cattle industry were left financially destitute, and the three sheep farmers found themselves ready to sell their land to their business partner, James Irvine. Acquiring the land belts of Rancho San Joaquin, Rancho Lomas de Santiago, and part of Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, Irvine bought the three partners out for \$150,000 dollars in 1876, securing the title to all three properties' 93,000 open acres and consolidating much of South Orange County under singular, privatized ownership.

Returning to the Irvine Company's timeline, what the designated founding date of 1864 consequently implies is that any claim to land prior to James Irvine's acquisition of its title is irrelevant to the history of the company and therefore the county—irrelevant in the sense that prior claims of habitation and stewardship are relegated to a “permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire,” illegible in their claims directed at the territorialized nation state to those stolen acres of land.¹³⁹ The company–commissioned narrative of itself is thus deeply aware of the tension between its privatized control of the bulk of South Orange County and the tightrope it must walk to maintain its authority to rightfully claim it. These “gifts” are premised on the notion that the Irvine Company continues to possess the moral–legal authority to choose what happens to the land to begin with, even if they decide that it is in the company's best interest to “give away” portions of that land for public use.

The Irvine Company's claim today to the land is thus considered largely unquestionable, cemented by history, legitimated by the state, and certified by the Irvine Company itself on their self–narrated timeline, which dates the company's own—and hence, the county's—“founding” to the year 1864, when “James Irvine and three partners purchase[d] 120,000 acres assembled through Mexican and Spanish land grants.” Though wouldn't even this minor nod to the Mexican and Spanish land grant system suggest that the history of the county did not begin in 1864, when increased wool demand from the Civil War led sheep farmers Benjamin Flint, Thomas Flint, and Llewellyn Bixby to purchase property in what is now South Orange County? How did the Spanish rancho system, which made it so that Orange County was composed of a mere sixteen privately owned rancho tracts covering nearly one thousand square miles of land at the time of purchase, contribute to the dispossession and privatization of Orange County's land?

While many would identify the Irvine Company as the primary influence behind the private character of Irvine's design, the legacy of the Spanish and Mexican land grant and rancho systems laid the groundwork for privatized ownership of massive tracts of land within California so that they could be packaged as a parcel of

¹³⁸ Schiesl, Martin J. “Designing the model community: The Irvine Company and suburban development, 1950–88.” *Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County since World War II* (1991): 55–91.

¹³⁹ McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge, 2013.

over 100,000 acres available for purchase in the first place to a single group of private investors.¹⁴⁰ By the time the three sheep farmers and James Irvine obtained the titles to Rancho San Joaquin, Rancho Lomas de Santiago, and part of Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, they acquired ranching lands already under contested ownership from centuries of settler conquest. So in this process of tracing the history of the Irvine company's land, the discussion must now turn to the history of the land's colonization and early settlement in order to place the claims made by the Irvine company alongside those of the dispossessed, enslaved, and corporeally and spiritually genocided to dispute the moral-legal authority from which the state and capital assert their entitlements to "empty lands" ready to be "tailored to fit the needs of the automobile era."

IMPERIAL DREAMLANDS IN THE WAKE OF SUSPENDED APOCALYPSE

Thanks to you and three million other visitors, Disneyland has had a wonderful first year and has been established as a Southern California and world-wide attraction. Because of your support, Disneyland is continuing to grow...Our new Indian Village in Frontierland will present authentic dances and Indian exhibits...and from there you can take an Indian war canoe for a thrilling ride around the island. Thanks again for your acceptance and confidence in Disneyland. We will continue to fulfill the pledge we made when Disneyland opened: "To provide a place where people can find happiness and knowledge."¹⁴¹

– "Thank You From Disneyland" Advertisement,
The Los Angeles Times, June 12, 1956

The BIA office and the Urban Indian Development Assn., both in Los Angeles, are the only organizations listing available jobs in Orange County for Indians. Most openings are for warehousemen, truck drivers, mechanics and construction laborers... 'At one time, we had 75 or 80 singing and dancing at Indian Village at Disneyland. Mostly those who couldn't find work elsewhere. Mr. (Walt) Disney came by often to enjoy the shows. He said it was his pet project at Disneyland and would never close it."¹⁴²

– "Urban Indian Faces Conflict of Cultures,"
The Los Angeles Times, December 26, 1971

As America "in miniature and comic-strip form," it is perhaps fitting that at Disneyland, Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah River Run was built on a site that replaced a former attraction in Frontierland that no longer exists: "Indian Village." Previously an exhibition and immersive experience area intended to simulate the encounter between Early Frontiersmen and the Imagined Primitive, the now defunct Indian Village included attractions like "Indian War Canoes" where visitors could experience the only ride at Disneyland "not powered by electricity," a "Fire Dance Circle" where Native actors were tasked with regularly carrying out ritualistic

¹⁴⁰ Baker, Charles C. "Mexican Land Grants in California." *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California* 9.3 (1914): 236-243.

¹⁴¹ "Thank You from Disneyland" advertisement. *The Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1956, p. 23.

¹⁴² "Urban Indian Faces Conflict of Cultures," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 26, 1971, p. 185.

performances, and an “Indian Trading Post” where visitors could purchase tribally de-specified turquoise and pottery souvenirs from a shop made to look like an outpost from the Northwest territory. On a souvenir map of Frontierland published in 1968, clear areas for playing “Cowboys and Indians” are marked, where parts of Tom Sawyer Island are additionally labeled as zones for “Fort Wilderness,” “Unfriendly Indians,” and even “Burial Grounds” and “Settler’s Burning Cabin.”¹⁴³

As an imaginary station within Disneyland, Frontierland was, in actuality, everywhere. Its physical manifestation at Disneyland merely reflected, in miniature, the settler rationale of Manifest Destiny at work within the *longue durée* of settler time in the “American West.”¹⁴⁴ By the middle of the nineteenth century, Americans had already begun to develop a sense of their own exceptionalism tied to their unique relationship with Nature compared to Europeans from the Old World. Forming a distinct “boots on the ground” settler national identity, America’s history of revolution and westward expansion produced a distinctively American national self-concept that tied its now familiar values of rugged individualism and entrepreneurial spirit to the idea of the frontier itself as the ever wild, yet always-potentially, tameable landscape.¹⁴⁵ Writing on how the frontier served a crucial role for the nation as an “emptied landscape,” Barbara A. Barnes (168) discusses how “adventure spectacles in nationally coded ‘wilderness’ spaces that have been symbolically emptied through their repetitive representation as empty” used the adventure genre to authorize “accepted histories of the birth and growth of the nation and its subjects.”¹⁴⁶ “Familiar and oft-repeated mythic stories of heroic white men traipsing through frontier wilderness in pursuit of noble causes,” Barnes elaborates, “have provided extraordinarily durable symbols of a “shared” national past that promises equal access to the freedoms and opportunities that the frontier (and, hence, the nation) promised.”

As Frederick Jackson Turner forwarded in his famous “frontier thesis,” the frontier experience was the most important influence on the development of “American character” where “access to undefiled, bountiful and sublime Nature is what accounts for the virtue and special good fortune of Americans.”¹⁴⁷ In allowing unprecedented upward mobility due to access to a seemingly infinite bounty of “virgin lands” to the west, America could promise to its burgeoning populace a release valve for the economic constraints that emerged in developed regions in the east—a powerful input for the nation’s economic growth to which the Old World did not have similar access. Merging with growing anti-urban ideology that apprehended rapid urban industrialization with fear, frontier identity therefore coincided with rising unease that urbanization was compromising traditional white patriarchal authority, and so imagined western lands as the idyllic setting in which masculine power could be reasserted through a valiant struggle between Man and Nature.

From Tahitian Village to Aladdin’s Oasis Dinner Show to Jungle Cruise—Disneyland is manufactured to reflect this gendered and racialized American story of itself—its desirability, its superiority, its goodness—in relation to these imperial imaginaries of primitive Otherness. Dreams of the tropical “South Pacific,” the exotic-yet-regressive “Orient,” and the dangers purportedly endemic to the “Heart of Darkness” are reproduced and circulated by Disney as one and the same as the *national* racial imagination, which itself regularly trades in the symbolic value of these images. Disneyland is, after all, materialized from a country and within a county that relies on this American story of itself, assembled from centuries of narratives to manufacture the sorcery of the

¹⁴³ Weiss, Werner. (2018, August 3). Indian Village. Blog, Yesterland. <https://www.yesterland.com/village.html>

¹⁴⁴ Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. WW Norton & Company, 1987.

¹⁴⁵ Nash, Roderick Frazier. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. Yale University Press, 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Barnes, Barbara A. "Ecoadventures in the American West." *Toward a Sociology of the Trace* (2010): 167.

¹⁴⁷ Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. Henry Holt, 1921.

American Dream whose foundation is a fiction—“a town of fabulous proportions, but without space or dimensions...nothing more than an immense script and a perpetual motion picture.” A place where, by the end of the American Century: an animatronic American homesteader at the turn of the century can sent to Disney Imagineers to become a Bavarian greeter at Disney World’s “Germany Pavilion” and where a felt-hat wearing Dixieland member of a trio of singing geese can become a stripped-down-to-the-wire robot in Tomorrowland’s Star Tours—their appearance more or less irrelevant, really, just as long as they keep on making money.

What do I mean when I say that the basis of this town, this dream, and this nation is hence fictive? Anne McClintock writes that since colonial expansion and territorialization necessitated the construction of the idea of undiscovered and unclaimed lands unpopulated by indigenous people, indigenous people themselves became “symbolically displaced” onto “anachronistic space.”¹⁴⁸ “According to this trope,” McClintock (30) writes, “colonized people—like women and the working class in the metropolis—do not inhabit history proper but exist in a permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire as anachronistic humans, atavistic, irrational, bereft of human agency—the living embodiment of the archaic ‘primitive.’”

In McClintock’s analysis of Flemish artist Jan ver der Straet’s (c. 1575) drawing, “Allegory of America,” Amerigo Vespucci is depicted carrying a staff with a crucifix, a banner of the Southern Cross, and a mariner’s astrolabe as he encounters an eroticized naked female figure sitting on a hammock. As McClintock (26) analyzes:

America allegorically represents nature’s invitation to conquest, while Vespucci, gripping the fetish instruments of imperial mastery—astrolabe, flag and sword—confronts the virgin land with the patrimony of scientific mastery and imperial might. Invested with the male prerogative of naming, Vespucci renders America’s identity a dependent extension of his and stakes male Europe’s territorial rights to her body, and by extension, the fruits of her land.

However, more than just an artistic rendering from van der Straet’s imagination, the drawing itself was in fact part of a series called *Nova Reperta* (New Inventions of Modern Times) funded by the Florentine Medici banking family, while van der Straet was more commonly referred to by his Italian name, Giovanni Stradano, or Stradanus, for short.¹⁴⁹ Though the Medici were not directly involved with the colonization of the Americas, Grand Duke Ferdinando sought to strengthen cultural and economic ties with the “New World” during his reign from 1587 to 1609. Produced within the imperial political economy of its time, then, it is significant that Stradanus drew the image under his role as a Medici court artist alongside other allegorical paintings, ephemera, and cartography that helped forward propaganda aimed at strengthening Medici financial and cultural influence throughout Europe—blurring into one continuous thread the differentiation between the so-called period of “primitive accumulation” and the rise of mercantilism in Europe.¹⁵⁰

Following this material trace of the racial capitalist project that ties Indian Village to Stradanus’ *Allegory of America*, what profound reality, ultimately, do copies of this original colonial encounter such as Tom Sawyer Island’s “Cowboy and Indians” play area and “Indian War Canoes” consequently mask? And how did the specific fiction of Manifest Destiny authorize Orange County as a productive site for regularly circulating the

¹⁴⁸ McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge, 2013.

¹⁴⁹ *Allegory of America*. The Met Museum. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/343845>. Accessed 23 August 2021.

¹⁵⁰ Markey, Lia. *Imagining the Americas in Medici Florence*. Penn State University Press, 2021.

related sorcery of the American Dream?

...

Following a campaign of manipulation involving local factions with pre-existing political divisions, the siege and Fall of Tenochtitlan in 1521 marked the decisive turning point in the Spanish war with the Aztec Empire.¹⁵¹ Afterwards, Habsburg Spain established the settler colonial territorialized entity of New Spain in what is now considered Mexico, much of the American Southwest and California, Central America, northern regions of South America, the Philippines, and Guam. In 1769 the Portola Expedition set out from Baja California on the first overland journey through what is now present-day California to establish a military post at Monterey, where Junípero Serra headquartered the Spanish mission system as its “Father Presidente” after eventually establishing the second of his twenty-one missions in nearby Carmel.¹⁵² During Spanish rule from 1769 to 1821, the ranchos in California were concessions from the Spanish crown, which retained the title to the land but permitted settlement and grazing rights on specific tracts beginning in the late 1780s outside of the boundaries of existing presidio, mission, and pueblo areas. During this period of intensive settler activity, the original Spanish concessions of land—including those tracts that now comprise Orange County—were originally made to retired soldiers as an incentive for them to remain on the frontier during a time when the Spanish empire needed to stake embodied claims to the land.

However, shaped by upheavals in Spain itself—including Napoleon Bonaparte’s invasion in 1808 and the subsequent abdication of Spanish monarch Charles IV—complex interplays between both royal factions and Catholic missionaries in New Spain eventually resulted in Mexico’s independence from the Spanish crown following a series of local and regional struggles fought between 1810 and 1821. After the Mexican War of Independence, the claimed territory of New Spain that contains what is now California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Arizona, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico was renamed Alta California in 1824.¹⁵³ Over a decade following independence, the Mexican government maneuvered to further diminish Spanish influence on the continent by passing the Mexican Secularization Act of 1833 (*Decree for the Secularisation of the Missions of the Californias*), which sought to “disestablish” the Spanish mission system because of its enduring loyalties to the Catholic Church in Spain. As a result of the 1833 decree, the Mexican government confiscated the land from the Spanish missions and converted them into ranchos.

Compared to the Spanish land grant system, the Mexican government encouraged even greater settlement of Alta California by issuing larger land grants. While Spain had made about 30 land concessions between 1784 and 1821, Mexico issued a staggering 270 between 1833 and 1846. Measured in leagues, which encompass approximately 4,428 acres each, both native-born and naturalized Mexican citizens could obtain on average two or more square leagues per land grant, allowing for the rapid settlement of large tracts of California.

Mexico’s hold over Alta California, however, would soon be replaced by the United States.¹⁵⁴ In 1844, James K. Polk was elected as a compromise candidate to the presidency on an American expansionist platform aimed at incorporating Oregon and Texas into the nation state. After failing to negotiate the disputed southern

¹⁵¹ Restall, Matthew. *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

¹⁵² Sandos, James A. *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions*. Yale University Press, 2004.

¹⁵³ Jackson, Robert Howard, Edward Castillo, and Edward D. Castillo. *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians*. University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

¹⁵⁴ Hyslop, Stephen G. *Contest for California: From Spanish Colonization to the American Conquest*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2019.

Texas border with Mexico and after unsuccessfully bidding to purchase New Mexico and California for up to \$30 million dollars in the fall of 1845, Polk ordered U.S. troops to occupy the disputed territory in Texas between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers in the hopes of provoking Mexican troops into initiating military conflict in the area. Ultimately, the message Polk delivered to Congress claimed that Mexico had “invaded our territory and shed American blood on American soil.” However, most Whigs at the time viewed Polk as orchestrating a transparent land grab and challenged the veracity of his claim that the initial conflict had occurred on undisputed U.S. territory. Even throughout the ensuing war between the United States and Mexico, the Whigs maintained vocal skepticism towards Polk’s territorial actions on the frontier, even moving to censure him in 1847 by a margin of 85 to 81 in the House for “unnecessarily and unconstitutionally” initiating combat.

Despite the spurious terms under which President Polk materialized his ambitions to significantly expand America’s territorial reach, U.S. military forces quickly moved to occupy Alta California and other regions under Mexican control after the Texas encounter. After the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, Mexico ceded not only what is now Texas but also areas conquered by the U.S. Army during the war, including Alta California.¹⁵⁵ Two years later, California joined the union in 1850 as the 31st state, and the United States government subsequently passed the California Land Act in 1851 to process land claims deriving from concessions authorized by the Spanish and Mexican governments.¹⁵⁶

With the passage of the land claims legislation, then-President Millard Fillmore established a three-person Public Land Commission to begin adjudicating and verifying the validity of land claims submitted for recognition by the American government. In order to successfully claim the transference of Spanish- or Mexican-granted lands within the newly established American government in California, the commission required that grantees present acceptable documentation within two years or lose their rightful claim to the land, whereupon it would automatically pass into the public domain under the purview of the U.S. government.

This proved to be easier said than done.¹⁵⁷ Grantees were asked to certify that they had met the conditions of Mexican law requiring that a home be established on the granted land within one year of settlement. Grantees were also asked to provide exact details on their land grant’s exact geographical boundaries even though the grant system had largely relied on *diseños*—simplified hand-drawn maps—to determine rancho boundaries. While many of the *diseños* also indicated the location of neighboring properties in which all borders on the map were already agreed upon by surrounding landowners, by contemporary cartographic standards, the maps were simplistic and vulnerable to interpretive scrutiny. Using naturally occurring boundary markers such as rivers, mountains, boulders, and trees to designate the boundaries between land grants, many of these markers did not always remain in the same location (as with rivers) or remain at all (as with many trees). After an extended term lasting a total of five years, the commission reviewed 813 total grant claims.

Though Article Eight of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo required that the United States respect the land grants made by the Spanish and Mexican governments in California and though Articles Nine and Ten required the U.S. government to recognize the property rights of Mexican nationals living in ceded Mexican territory, the Public Land Commission ultimately only recognized and approved 553 claims by the end of the five

¹⁵⁵ Griswold del Castillo, Richard. “Manifest Destiny: The Mexican-American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.” *Sw. JL & Trade Am.* 5 (1998): 31.

¹⁵⁶ Gates, Paul. “The California Land Act of 1851.” *California Historical Quarterly* 50.4 (1971): 395–430.

¹⁵⁷ Clay, Karen, and Werner Troesken. “Ranchos and the Politics of Land Claims.” *Land of Sunshine: An Environmental History of Metropolitan Los Angeles* (2005): 52–66.

years of initial hearings.¹⁵⁸ In order to win legal recognition, owners of ranchos incurred high legal fees for assistance in arguing their cases before the commission, paid substantial costs to travel to San Francisco where the commission was based, and sold large parcels of their ranching lands over time to cover the legal costs of lengthy litigation, with many appeals lasting well through the Civil War for nearly two decades before arriving at a final judgment. Because of the asymmetric terms upon which the claims-making process was organized to begin with, the process favored propertied, white, male American citizens, English speakers, literate and educated claimants, and other privileged groups so that the United States government on the whole recognized their right to legally and rightfully claim the land over the non-rights of those without the race and class credentials to successfully navigate the complex legal terms of the land grant certification process.¹⁵⁹

The passage of the California Land Act in 1851 thus led in large part to the breakup of the massive tracts of rancho lands that dominated California's landscape—allowing for the westward expansion and settlement of California during the gold rush and producing the ripe conditions for investors Benjamin Flint, Thomas Flint, Llewellyn Bixby, and James Irvine to purchase Rancho San Joaquin, Rancho Lomas de Santiago, and Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana from Californio ranchers beleaguered by a devastating drought after years of financial strain from fighting legal battles over land title with the American government. It is at this moment that the Irvine Company's narrative of its own timeline begins, not only masking the "theft" of land from Mexico during the Mexican-American War but also the *originary settler colonial encounter* that the "Spanish Imaginary" has also worked to mask.

...

According to Charles Anthony Sepulveda, the "Spanish Imaginary" refers to the mythologies inherited from narrative recuperations of Spanish colonization and its effects on the contemporary period.¹⁶⁰ Arguing that Spanish colonial history is entangled with California state history in a genealogy that stretches back far beyond the state joining the Union in 1850, Sepulveda (30–31) calls attention to the sanitization of the mission system and its figurehead, Father Junípero Serra, within the Spanish Imaginary as it is still employed in contemporary state narratives:

The Spanish heritage is a colonial imaginary, written and rewritten to the point where even the historian producing a much more accurate narrative of California's history has to contend with the mythology. The imaginary has constructed California's history to be one in which the symbol of the state in the U.S. Capitol Building and its National Statuary Hall consists of Junípero Serra and Ronald Wilson Reagan, heroes of Californian folklore. Of Serra, the description states, "Serra was ascetic and uncompromising in his zeal to convert the Indians to Christianity and to make his missions self sufficient. Inhabitants built their own homes, spun wool for garments, and pursued careers as masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, and millers; thousands of barrels of grain were kept in reserve supply, and herds of cattle, sheep, horses, and swine were maintained."

Correspondingly, Sepulveda critiques, this Spanish Imaginary allows the U.S. government to benevolently narrate the legacy of the Spanish mission system as a laudable civilizing endeavor in which the Catholic Church performed a moral duty in converting otherwise heretical "savages" into economically

¹⁵⁸ Hornbeck, David. "The Patenting of California's Private Land Claims, 1851–1885." *Geographical Review* (1979): 434–448.

¹⁵⁹ Gates, Paul W. "Adjudication of Spanish–Mexican Land Claims in California." *The Huntington Library Quarterly* (1958): 213–236.

¹⁶⁰ Sepulveda, Charles Anthony. *California's Mission Projects: The Spanish Imaginary in Riverside and Beyond*. Dissertation. UC Riverside, 2016.

productive believers. The statue of Serra at the U.S. Capitol consequently performs two dimensions of symbolic work: on the one hand, it authorizes the narrative of benevolent and necessary colonization for the sake of civilizational progress; on the other, it positions Serra himself as the prototypical frontiersman doggedly pursuing his own version of a meritocratic dream—if not “American” in the mid-century sense per se—still no less centered on the Dream’s self-sufficient, bootstrap individualism. Noting that the statue was built long after Serra’s passing in the 1930s, Sepulveda (32) observes how “Serra is seen as doing all of the work in producing the missions...promoted as a hardworking individual overcoming the hardships of the frontier.” This historiography of California hence entirely erases the experience of indigenous communities who endured forced conversion through the mission system during the period of Spanish colonization and the *longue durée* ever since.

In *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, Deborah A. Miranda (24) insists on the profound importance of writing another story about California—quite different from the American story of itself, by itself—because “[d]emanding to know who is telling your story means asking, ‘Who is inventing me, for what purpose, [and] with what intentions?’”¹⁶¹

Europeans told stories about Indigenous people in North and South America long before any of them ever left European shores in their small boats and actually met a Native person. Cannibals, human-animal offspring, mutated monsters, bloodthirsty devils—the names and stories sank into the minds and identities of Europeans and made them fearful, defensive, righteous. The stories that had been told about the inhabitants of other lands created, in turn, the stories that played out at First Contact [i.e., the profound reality]—stories about savages, heathens, pagans, barbarians, and other lesser, inferior beings.

While the state-sponsored story perpetuates the narrative of a benevolent and necessary civilizing mission undertaken by the Spanish Empire and the Catholic Church, the “tribal memoir” Miranda weaves together in *Bad Indians* interrupts that laundered re-telling by reclaiming a different story for the indigenous communities that lived in the region prior to the founding of the California missions. When the Portola Expedition set out in 1769 from Baja to establish a presidio in Monterey and the first of the California missions, the Expedition passed several Acjachemen villages located in what is now present-day Orange County. In 1778 Father Junípero Serra decided to finally locate the new Mission San Juan Capistrano at the village of Acjchema, and the term *San Juaneño* came to apply to all indigenous people brought to the mission from the surrounding area or subsequently born on its premises.¹⁶²

In many historical treatments of the Franciscan missions in California, Sepulveda admonishes accounts that, while sometimes quite critical otherwise, shy away from plainly naming the sexual, corporeal, and psychological forms of genocidal violence actively conducted by the Church against indigenous persons, citing cooperation between Franciscan missionaries and Spanish military personnel wherein the former relied on the latter to secure—by force, if necessary—the acquiescence of Native persons resistant to evangelization. In particular, both Sepulveda (57–66) and Miranda (47, 65, 73, 194–196) devote significant portions of their discussions to the practice of gendered and sexual trafficking, rape, and slavery through the *monjerios*, where around the age of seven, children marked as female were forcibly separated from their families and made to live

¹⁶¹ Miranda, Deborah A. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday, 2013.

¹⁶² Woodward, Lisa Louise. *The Acjachemen of San Juan Capistrano: The History, Language and Politics of an Indigenous California Community*. University of California Davis, 2007.

in tightly-controlled barracks in order to prevent attempts to run away or to secretly continue with any indigenous ways of life that the Church sought to entirely eradicate. Troubling exclusive discussions of US slavery as having been distinct to the practice of chattel slavery in the Southern Atlantic, Edward D. Castillo (75) details how “[b]oth contemporary observers and later scholars have identified these female barracks as major culprits in the spread of infectious disease,” citing the *monjerios* directly for accelerating the spread of infectious diseases that, alongside systematic abduction, forced labor, cultural erasure, and rape, contributed to the genocidal removal of the Native population from the land to prepare it for privatization and profit.¹⁶³

Aware that the missions held some of the largest and most desirable tracts that could be alternatively opened up for settlement, these acts of Native removal and dispossession continued when Mexico secularized the missions after Alta California’s Governor, José Figueroa, implemented the decree that “emancipated” supposedly “advanced” neophytes living on the missions. According to Lisa Woodward (16), deserving, “Good Indians” were defined as those “who [had] been more than 12 years [converted], married or widowers with children, [who knew] how to cultivate the soil or [had] some trade...and [an] ‘application to work’”—i.e. Christian, disciplined into the heteropatriarchal family form, and ready to economically contribute to the colonial-capitalist project. Once legible to both church and state as productive, God-fearing subjects ready, willing, and able to participant in the laboring class, emancipated Juaneños would then be given “lots of a size corresponding to the amount of land at the place, where they may build their houses so as to form streets and a plaza” in “the best land nearest the pueblo, where there will be given to each family a field, and to the pueblo grazing lands.”

While most padres appeared resistant to the wholesale emancipation of neophytes, officials in San Juan Capistrano believed all neophytes were ready for emancipation, making the South Orange County location the first of the California missions to fully emancipate its “Mission Indian” population in 1833. According to Lisbeth Haas, after secularization many Acjachemen moved back to at least seven known villages on the outskirts of Mission San Juan Capistrano.¹⁶⁴ However, even after secularization, recently emancipated Mission Indians were still subjected to being governed under the legal authority of the colonial state. Subsequently controlled by a corrupt, Mexican-appointed administrator and then a Franciscan priest who insisted on opening the lands for external settlement, the pueblo originally established at San Juan Capistrano after secularization was eventually dissolved by 1841 and the former mission lands subsequently auctioned off under questionable circumstances for \$710 dollars worth of tallow and hides (equivalent to about \$15,000 in 2004 USD) to Englishman John “Don Juan” Forster and James McKinley. Following the expansion of the Mexican-granted ranchos, Juaneños who had learned how to farm and ranch under mission rule became sought-after laborers—effectively forced to work on the consolidated rancho lands after secularization. By 1843, nearly all of California’s mission land had been entirely converted into ranchos, blanketing the area in which all the Acjachemen villages that had developed around Mission San Juan Capistrano following secularization had been located.¹⁶⁵

Shortly after when the Americans came to occupy and conquer Alta California during Polk’s war with Mexico, the dispossession continued apace. Documenting the experience of land theft within her own genealogy at this moment in time, Miranda traces her family lineage to Isabel Meadows, related through the marriage of

¹⁶³ Castillo, Edward D. “Gender Status Decline, Resistance, and Accommodation among Female Neophytes in the Missions of California: A San Gabriel Case Study.” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 18.1 (1994): 67–93.

¹⁶⁴ Haas, Lisbeth. *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769–1936*. University of California Press, 1995.

¹⁶⁵ O’Neil, Stephen Thomas. *The Acjachemen in the Franciscan Mission System: Demographic Collapse and Social Change*. Dissertation. California State University, Fullerton, 2002.

Jacinto, one of Meadows' half brothers, to Miranda's great-great-great-grandmother, Sacramento Cantua. Born in Carmel Valley in July of 1846, Meadows became a "primary informant" on the cultures and languages of the Carmel/Monterey/Big Sur Mission Indians for Smithsonian ethnologist, J.P. Harrington, relaying how Mexican and then later American settlers moved in and often simply claimed pueblo and rancho lands for themselves. As Miranda (96) relays:

The American ran Estéfana and her children off the land at Rancho El Potrero—that same land awarded to Estéfana's parents, Fructuoso Cholom and Yginia María Yunisyunis, by the Mexican Governor Alvarado after the mission was shut down; the very land where Echilat, the village of Fructuoso's mother, his maternal grandparents, and his great-grandmother, had existed long before the mission was a gleam in Padre Serra's eye. The American told Estéfana, "Those signatures are no good anymore; *Indians can't own land* [emphasis added]." Estéfana and the other displaced Indians she had taken into her home carried their few belongings to the banks of the Carmelo River. They camped there a few days, paralyzed by grief and anger, wept themselves hollow with frustration. "And then," Isabel says, "they dispersed."

After California joined the union in 1850, Lisa Woodward (2007) writes that a complicated racial reorganization occurred in which previously elite Californio ranchers were in turn subjected to mass dispossession and devalued racialization once the American government incorporated California into its domain. The subsequent influx of more settlers moving into the San Juan Capistrano region further destabilized local Juaneño communities, forcing many to continue or obtain work on the ranchos' agricultural fields, citrus groves, and cattle grazing sites.

"By this time, most Acjachemen spoke Spanish and were able to mask their indigenous heritage so well that the landowners and foremen of the Ranchos were not aware of their descent," Woodward (6) relays of Nancy Evans, leading officials from Rancho Mission Viejo, for example, to claim that "places like Capistrano were made up of people of Spanish descent." This attribution of *foundational* Spanish descent thus narratively erases the historic and continued presence of Acjachemen people on the land that is now called Orange County, symbolically relegating the Imagined Primitive to what Nicholas Rosenthal has termed "Indian Country."¹⁶⁶

In *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, Rosenthal documents how by 1970, Los Angeles had more Native inhabitants than any other place outside of the Navajo reservation. Yet, Rosenthal suggests that the common understanding of "Indian Country" is often imagined as taking place in isolated and rural reservation spaces—cast away from mainstream American society—to reproduce the ideology of Manifest Destiny, which by necessity relies on the fiction of expansive, empty lands ready for westward settlement and of Native peoples as a "disappearing race."

Counter to the skeptics who Miranda (20) recalls often told her that they thought "all you California Indians [were] extinct," the Acjachemen self-narrate on their own official website a very different kind of story about this land and how we got here compared to that offered by the Irvine Company. "The Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation are the original inhabitants of the lands that ultimately became the County

¹⁶⁶ Rosenthal, Nicolas G. *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*. University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

of Orange, as well as parts of San Diego, Los Angeles, and Riverside Counties,” their “History” page asserts.¹⁶⁷ Naming the forced labor under which California was built and situating the timeline of the region far before the Irvine Company’s chosen starting year of 1864, the Acjachemen story continues:

The Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation are the original inhabitants of the lands that ultimately became the County of Orange, as well as parts of San Diego, Los Angeles, and Riverside Counties. Long before the Spanish arrived to build Mission San Juan Capistrano, the land of Orange County was home to the Acjachemen people. For thousands of years, the Acjachemen culture and way of life thrived because they understood their survival was interconnected with the natural world. The oak woodlands, valley meadows, river marshes and ocean were their supermarket, pharmacy, and hardware store. The Acjachemen viewed the land as something sacred that needed to be protected and carefully used to insure the livelihood of their people. Our ancestors provided the original manpower for the construction of some of the earliest key landmarks in Orange County, including the Mission San Juan Capistrano, where we get our Juaneño name.

As of 2022, the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation is a state-recognized Native American Indian Tribe governed by the Tribal Council and led by Tribal Chairwoman, Heidi Lucero. They continue to organize among themselves and through coalitions to assert their self-narrated story of their relationship to the land, managing to halt, for example, the construction of the “241” toll road through the sacred site of Panhe—one of the largest of the ancestral Acjachemen villages dating back at least 8000 years—located between San Diego and Orange Counties.¹⁶⁸

In acknowledging the continued presence of the Acjachemen community well into the present, then, it is probable that at least some of the laborers who came to work on the sheep farm purchased by Benjamin Flint, Thomas Flint, and Llewellyn Bixby and who continued to work on James Irvine’s consolidated parcels of ranching lands and citrus groves after that were of Acjachemen descent. And yet, given their likely presence during the very same timeframe highlighted by the Irvine Company on its 150-year-anniversary website, why does the company fail to acknowledge the deeper history of its land and who worked to cultivate it in the early years of its founding?

In addition to the archaic-rural imagining of “Indian Country,” one other reason why the Irvine Company’s authority to claim its land has managed to maintain its legitimacy is the legacy of treaty rights in the state of California. From 1851 to 1852, the American government sent representatives to California to negotiate a total of eighteen treaties with the indigenous communities still living there even though those treaties were never ultimately ratified—“tucked away,” according to Kelsey (225), for decades until they were recovered fifty-four years later.¹⁶⁹ As a result, no American Indian tribe has ever been the counterparty to a ratified federal treaty in California. Consequently, all the reservations in the state were created by federal statute or executive order, resulting in California experiencing fewer possessory land claim litigation compared to other states. In other words, aboriginal land claims in California are distinctly framed as lacking in a history of recognized colonial encounter, where land claims made by indigenous people there are framed as especially illegitimate.

¹⁶⁷ Acjachemen History. *Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation*. 2022, <https://www.jbmian.com/history.html#/>. Accessed 20 July 2022.

¹⁶⁸ Acjachemen Sacred Site Panhe Saved! U.S. Commerce Department Says Toll Road Not In National Interest. *State of California Native American Heritage Commission*. 2022, <https://nahc.ca.gov/2008/12/acjachemen-sacred-site-panhe-saved/>. Accessed 20 July 2022.

¹⁶⁹ Kelsey, Harry. “The California Indian Treaty Myth.” *Southern California Quarterly* 55.3 (1973): 225–238.

Therefore, in commending Junípero Serra for the civilizing work of the Spanish missions, American state narratives get to have their cake and eat it, too; because it was Spain and not the United States that managed the up-front work of large-scale land theft, genocide, and conversion before Polk actually achieved his goal of incorporating California, U.S.-produced narratives appear ready to wash their hands of the dirty work of eradication at First Contact. At the same time, the American nation state and propertied interests still get to benefit from capitalizing on the enduring value of the land that was stolen anyway, comfortable in being two steps removed from the originary encounter in California and therefore able to sustain the myth of their own innocence.

Despite this strange comfort in which America cloaks its own settler claims to the land, the United States regularly conducts itself and defines its very authority on the basis that it retains “the general constitutional grant of power to deal with Indians,” as decided by a Texas Court of Claims in *Lipan Apache Tribe v. United States* (1967). Specific to the eradication of aboriginal land title in California, former California Deputy Attorneys General Bruce Flushman and Joe Barbieri cite two primary cases decided in the courts.¹⁷⁰ In *Thompson v. Doaksum* (1886), the California Supreme Court held that a tribe claiming aboriginal title failed to present their aboriginal title claims to the Land Commissioners during the two-year span in which claims needed to be submitted, thereby establishing their claimed land as part of the public domain available to later preemption. In a reversal of a decision made in *Byrne v. Alas* (1888), in which the court agreed that both Mexican and Spanish law protected “Mission Indians” in their occupancy of the land they had worked and tilled following secularization, the California Supreme Court in *Harvey v. Barker* (1901) eliminated the distinction, holding that even Mission Indians who had failed to present their claim to the Land Commissioners were barred from proving their title claims.

Hence, as the American told Estéfana before running her off Rancho El Potrero, “Indians can’t own land.” That is, the land as a privatized form of property is inherently racialized, historically ordered, and continually practiced through property ownership’s co-constitutive relation to whiteness and legal personhood. Whiteness, then, operates as *the* legitimating distinction between those that can own property versus those that can only add value to property or be *made into* property. Any contestations over who can claim the land (or any other privatized public good), who can belong on it, and who is obligated to tend to it must therefore contend with how those struggles are evaluated within a “moral superstructure” produced within this racial capitalist order that remains haunted by the horrific violences of racial slavery and indigenous dispossession conducted over the longue durée since First Contact. As Cheryl Harris (1721) has argued regarding the racialized nature of private property:

Slavery linked the privilege of whites to the subordination of Blacks through a legal regime that attempted the conversion of Blacks into objects of property. Similarly, the settlement and seizure of Native American land supported white privilege through a system of property rights in land in which the “race” of the Native Americans rendered their first possession rights invisible and justified conquest. This racist formulation embedded the face of white privilege into the very definition of property, marking another stage in the evolution of the property interest of whiteness. Possession—the act necessary to lay the basis for rights in property—was defined to include only the cultural practices of whites. This definition laid the foundation for the idea that whiteness—that which whites alone

¹⁷⁰ Flushman, Bruce S., and Joe Barbieri. “Aboriginal Title: The Special Case of California.” *Pac. Law Journal* 17 (1985): 391.

possess—is valuable and is property.¹⁷¹

Consequently, these legal decisions in cases like *Thompson v. Doaksum* and *Harvey v. Barker*—made in response to anti-indigenous fervor loudly voiced by contemporary settlers hungry to profit off the mythologized surfeit of gold in California’s “open land”—ensured that it would be effectively emptied by the time James Irvine consolidated his collection of rancho properties in 1876—“emptied” despite enduring claims made by the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians to the land that continue to this day.

And so, one hundred fifty years later, when the Irvine Company’s anniversary website displays in its photo slideshow an image with Spanish mission architecture featured as a *selling point* of its legacy of development in Orange County, it also conjures something else. Not just fantasies of an American Dream ripe for the taking in the idealized mid-century suburb. Not just delusions of Manifest Destiny driving us to settle the open American Frontier. Instead, through the cracks and the rigging, a chorus of ghosts jostle their way through the dimensions of time and space to instead look upon the Disneyfied mission-style architecture dotting the landscape—to intimate, ultimately, a profound challenge to the American story of itself, by itself:

Who claims to own this land?

What emboldens them to take it?

THE WHITENING LANDSCAPE AND SUBURBAN MODERNITY’S RELENTLESS AHISTORICISM

As the curtain fell on the rancho era of Spanish and Mexican land grants, the ensuing chapter of American settlement ushered in a flow of new migrants like Benjamin Flint, Thomas Flint, and Llewellyn Bixby, who encountered a manufactured landscape of emptied lands already primed for profit. Reliant on a collective forgetting that accompanies faith in American modernity’s march through progressive-linear time, these new migrants came to California under the ideological justification of Manifest Destiny—in continuation with the project of frontier settlement that began with Spanish contact. Similar to James Irvine, investors like Nelson O. Stafford, Columbus Tustin, Sam Ross, and George Hansen purchased their Santa Ana Valley tracts from former ranchos, converting into farmland the vast acreage of North Orange County that eventually encompassed cities like Anaheim, Fullerton, Santa Ana, Orange, Tustin, Westminster, and Garden Grove.¹⁷² Thus, noting how Westminster and Garden Grove in particular eventually became home to the largest diasporic Vietnamese community after the Fall of Saigon, when they are emphasized in the following discussion, it is because this section means to contextualize the local racial class structure encountered by Vietnamese refugees as they themselves underwent and negotiated their own racial-class subjectification after 1975. As such, the following discussion will now turn to the long history of racial labor in North Orange County to examine the context in which Vietnamese racialization eventually became figured *in particular* as the needs of capital mapped the contours of refugee subjectification at a particular moment in time. In doing so, it begins with a history of Westminster’s founding as a specifically racialized and moralized frontier utopian project.

Frontier communities during the early period of California’s incorporation channeled the energies of the nation’s unflagging optimism, often imagining themselves as members of a new moral community whose goal

¹⁷¹ Harris, Cheryl I. “Whiteness as Property.” *Harvard Law Review* (1993): 1707–1791.

¹⁷² Gould, Stephen. *Orange County Before It Was A County*. Western Association for the Advancement of Local History, 1988.

was to realize a utopia in the West in which an unfettered relationship between God and the self could be practiced without external intrusion. Founding the “Westminster colony” in 1870, Presbyterian minister Lemuel Webber hoped the town would become a kind of “city upon a hill,” whose pious community of like-minded residents were required to promise not to sell, purchase, or produce any alcoholic beverages, be at least supportive, if not members, of the Presbyterian church, and generously contribute to the education of Westminster’s children.¹⁷³ From its initial settlement, then, Westminster was a community rooted in utopian ideals of living a good *Christian* life, unperturbed by the immoral temptations endemic to the secular realm and reliant on notions of the temperate Christian family.

While these frontier villages and colonies were thinly populated by a mere handful of families, by the early 1900s towns like Westminster had grown to a couple thousand residents. During this period, the racialized class structure of the region emerged from the nascent farming economy where whiteness continued to define legal relationships to property, creating a predominately white landowning class and a predominantly non-white, seasonal laboring class that was expected to plant, tend, and harvest crops for landowners to sell in an increasingly profitable agricultural market. This dispossessed laboring class was always, by definition, racialized, but the exact makeup of which racial formations constituted its shape changed in dialectical relationship to both labor demand and nativist violence.

...

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chinese migrants first arrived to build the railroads and then transferred into agricultural and service industry work. Those who moved into farming were hired to work the converted rancho fields—largely single men temporarily housed in communal bunkhouses who moved from farm to farm in search of seasonal employment harvesting vegetables, citrus, and other cash crops.¹⁷⁴ Placed on the historical borders of the Westminster and Garden Grove farming communities near the localities of Smeltzer, Talbert, and nearby Wintersburg in present-day Huntington Beach, these areas of the county first developed as labor camps that housed large communities of seasonal workers, with small Chinatowns established in Anaheim, Orange, Santa Ana, and Tustin. However, Chinese farm labor largely ended with the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which resulted in the return migration of many temporary migrants and the outmigration of rural Chinese laborers into more densely populated enclaves in Los Angeles and San Francisco. During a heightened moment of anti-Chinese sentiment in 1906, the region’s largest Chinatown located in Santa Ana was officially burned down after a suspected case of leprosy was reported, broadly ending the early era of Chinese labor settlement in Orange County and leaving a vacuum that came to be filled with Japanese replacement labor at the turn of the century.¹⁷⁵

...

A sizable Japanese community then moved to the Westminster and Garden Grove area in the early 1900s, arriving during the expansion of the citrus industry when laborers were oftentimes housed in the same communal bunkhouses recently vacated by Chinese workers. Smeltzer, for example, was reportedly using hundreds of Japanese laborers to tend over 6,000 acres of celery by as early as 1906. In his oral history giving a

¹⁷³ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. *Living along the Fault Line: Community, Suburbia, and Multiethnicity in Garden Grove and Westminster, California, 1900–1995*. Dissertation. Indiana University, 1999.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁷⁵ Chan, Sucheng. *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860–1910*. University of California Press, 1986.

first-hand account of these labor camps in the first years of the twentieth century, Henry Kiyomi Akiyama describes how he came to Wintersburg:

At that time, each landlord provided housing for the laborers; however, there was no bed provided. The workers just spread straw on the dirt floor and used a blanket to sleep on. There were about thirty people living in one house...After harvesting, each laborer rolled his own blanket and carried it away. They went to Los Angeles [Little Tokyo] and stayed in a boarding house and tried to find their next job. So to describe these laborers at that time, they called them *buranke-katsugi*, which meant "blanket carrier." For the labor, the fee was fifteen cents an hour and they worked ten hours a day. They had to work on Saturdays, too. Only Sundays were off.¹⁷⁶

Accordingly, Chinese and Japanese farm workers were essential to the region's burgeoning agricultural economy. Nevertheless, in parallel fashion, Japanese laborers only remained in Orange County until they, too, experienced restrictions in response to "Yellow Peril" fears of their encroachment, beginning with the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907.¹⁷⁷ In exchange for agreeing to withhold issuing passports to emigrants to the United States (except to narrow categories of business and professional men), Japan accepted an offer made by President Theodore Roosevelt to urge the city of San Francisco to rescind its order to segregate Japanese children from white children in schools. As a result, by 1910 most immigration from Japan to California had ceased, and Orange County's own Japanese community would largely only see its size expand through natural increase.

Still containing a provision that allowed for the immigration of wives, though, the Japanese community in California continued to grow even after the 1907 agreement and—by as early as 1920—Japanese people comprised the single largest non-white group in the county with a population of 1,491. Larger clusters of Japanese families began to settle in Orange County around this time, even managing to establish a Japanese language school, Japanese Presbyterian churches, ethnic organizations, and commercial businesses specifically serving members of the Japanese community.¹⁷⁸ In finding a market niche growing labor intensive crops, the presence of an increasingly successful and economically competitive non-white community nonetheless galvanized nativist support for measures aimed at maintaining their "possessive investment in whiteness," described by Geroge Lipsitz (371) as a continuous settler process of racialized appropriation, exclusion, and domination that maintains this material relation—if only shifting its modes of expression—well into the liberal present:

From the start, European settlers in North America established structures encouraging possessive investment in whiteness. The colonial and early-national legal systems authorized attacks on Native Americans and encouraged the appropriation of their lands. They legitimate racialized chattel slavery, restricted naturalized citizenship to "white" immigrants, and provided pretexts for exploiting labor, seizing property, and denying the franchise to Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and African Americans. Slavery and "Jim Crow" segregation institutionalized possessive identification with whiteness visibly and openly, but an elaborate interaction of largely covert public and private decisions during and after the days of slavery and segregation also produced a powerful legacy with enduring effects on the racialization of experience, opportunities, and rewards in the United States.

¹⁷⁶ Akiyama, Henry Kiyomi. "Issei Experience in Orange County, California." Interview by Arthur A. Hansen and Yasko Gamo. Oral History Center, California State University, Fullerton. 1982.

¹⁷⁷ Daniels, Roger. *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion*. University of California Press, 1977.

¹⁷⁸ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 44–45.

Possessive investment in whiteness pervades public policy in the United States past and present—not just long ago during slavery and segregation but in the recent past and present as well—through the covert but no less systematic racism inscribed within U.S. social democracy.¹⁷⁹

Correspondingly, in order to maintain racial control of California's increasingly lucrative farmland amidst growing nativist fears of economic competition, California leveraged the settler state's claim to legal authority and enacted the Alien Land Law on May 3, 1913, which barred "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning or possessing long-term leases over land.¹⁸⁰ Consequently relegated to marginal parcels with poor growing conditions by white property owners under short-term leases, Japanese farmers became subjected to even more precarious economic circumstances, constrained to grow crops on inhospitable terrain and—after tediously converting the land into a more fertile resource—forced to turn the land back to white owners and made to start over on similarly unproductive marginal plots.

Even despite these barriers, however, the Japanese community continued to expand its influence on the agricultural economy during the decade following the passage of the 1913 land law. In response to this and other similar contestations occurring throughout the state, reactionary whites across California organized a campaign in the early 1920s to further limit land leasing to Japanese "aliens," led by political aspirants eager to capitalize on Yellow Peril fears to maintain their vision of a white utopian landscape. On a campaign stop in Los Angeles for his 1920 "Keep California White" campaign, for example, the following portion of Democratic Senator James Phelan's speech demonstrates how land encroachment fears undergirded anti-Japanese racism:

Whenever I went in the beautiful and productive regions about Los Angeles, I could not but feel a shudder at witnessing the disappearance of the white man's family...I am sure that rural Los Angeles County, where for every three births one is a Japanese, will realize before it is too late that there is a duty just before us which we will have to perform. *We must stop this yellow tide and regain our soil for our own people* [emphasis added].¹⁸¹

By the time votes were tallied, additional land restrictions passed by an overwhelming majority in 1920 and 1923, barring US-born children of Asian immigrant parents and any corporations controlled by Asian immigrants from long-term leasing or owning land. Voicing support for the land restriction laws in a 1923 letter to the editor of the *Hollywood Citizen*, one white voter explained, "This is not a question of racial equality. It is simply the incompatibility of the white and the yellow races. We cannot mingle, socially, industrially, economically, or politically. *Once a Jap always a Jap. All of their dreams and aspirations are of and for the Mikado* [emphasis added]."¹⁸² Thus, in distinguishing between an implicitly white articulation of the American Dream and a purportedly distinct Japanese dream "for the Mikado" seen as incompatible with the national project, even second-generation Japanese *nisei* came to be defined as perpetual foreigners, symbolically expunged of any inherent or even meritocratic ability to belong to the land.

¹⁷⁹ Lipsitz, George. "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the "White" Problem in American Studies." *American Quarterly* 47.3 (1995): 369–387.

¹⁸⁰ Higgs, Robert. "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941." *The Journal of Economic History* 38.1 (1978): 205–225.

¹⁸¹ John Modell, *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation: The Japanese of Los Angeles, 1900–1942*. University of Illinois Press, 1977, 45.

¹⁸² Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 40.

Japanese immigrants who remained in the United States during the 1920s and 30s therefore became subjected to increasingly strained and oftentimes hostile life circumstances. In Orange County one particular incident during the Great Depression rocked the community when the County Sealer of Weights and Measures accused Japanese chili growers of water soaking their dried chilis in order to fraudulently fetch a higher market price. Despite never presenting evidence for these accusations, white landowners remained in tension with local Japanese farmers who controlled about 50% of the total chili sector in the county and who operated the single largest drying plant in the district through the Japanese Chili Association.¹⁸³ Effectively illustrating how white resentment continued to grow towards Japanese farmers even after these earlier immigration and land restrictions, this persistent base of anti-Japanese sentiment in the depression-era years leading up to America's entry into WWII would prove consequential for dramatically reconfiguring the demographic makeup of postwar Westminster and Garden Grove.

Following the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, anti-Japanese animosity grounded in land-based resentments converged with orientalist wartime fears in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 issued on February 19, 1942. In the community of Wintersburg which had developed since its early labor camp period into a hub for Japanese residents in the county, FBI investigators swiftly moved to interrogate the owner, Charles Furuta, and Wintersburg's resident Presbyterian minister, Sohei Kowta. While Kowta was allowed to remain with his family and congregation until the time when they all would be forcibly removed to a wartime concentration camp, Furuta's enemy status was hastily certified after being identified as a land owner and president of the Japanese Association, and he was first detained at the Tuna Canyon Detention Station in nearby Los Angeles and then later at an "enemy alien camp" in Lordsburg, New Mexico before being able to reunite with the rest of his family at the Poston, Arizona camp where most Wintersburg families had been moved.¹⁸⁴

Overall, Executive Order 9066 established a military exclusion zone and mandated the wholesale expulsion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. In Huntington Beach, some Japanese residents were directed to gather near the pier at the Pacific Electric Railway station while others were directed to congregate at the Japanese Language School in Garden Grove. Once corralled into these waiting spaces, Japanese community members were collectively transported by bus to the Colorado River Relocation Center located in Poston—one of the largest concentration camps operated by the War Relocation Authority and Office of Indian Affairs.¹⁸⁵ Reflecting on white attitudes in Orange County at the beginning of World War II, Ted Minemitsu—a Japanese *nisei* whose family owned a small farm—recalled, "There were quite a few who were glad to see us go so that they could take over our land and start farming for themselves. They had ulterior motives because they were farmers."¹⁸⁶

In a perverse settler turn, the Poston camp was built on the Colorado River Indian Reservation despite opposition from the Tribal Council. With their objections overridden by the War Relocation Authority and Office of Indian Affairs, Chemehuevi, Mohave, Hopi, and Navajo members witnessed the federal government seize 71,000 acres of tribal land as government engineers proceeded to develop the recently expropriated territory using what they described as "volunteer" Japanese labor. Hoping to consolidate scattered American

¹⁸³ Ibid, 42.

¹⁸⁴ Urashima, Mary F. Adams. *Historic Wintersburg in Huntington Beach*. California: Arcadia Publishing, 2014.

¹⁸⁵ Historic Wintersburg. *National Trust for Historic Preservation*, 2022, <https://savingplaces.org/places/historic-wintersburg#.YtjG3OxIDPZ>. Accessed 20 July 2022.

¹⁸⁶ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 42.

Indian tribes from smaller reservations into a more desolate, concentrated rural locale after the war, historian Michael Tsosie documents how the US government used Japanese concentration camp labor in Poston to build infrastructure like schools, dams, canals, and farms in order to slowly enclose members of the Colorado River Indian Tribes in an increasingly smaller geographic space.¹⁸⁷ Wanting to fund a large water irrigation project to redirect part of the Colorado River to the reservation, Japanese incarceration hence became the ideological and wartime rationale given to justify large scale federal expenditures for rural development on tribal lands that worked to manufacture the enduring image of indigenous persons banished to some permanently anterior time—to an imagined “Indian Country” whose essential rurality frees modernity to claim “the fiction of expansive, empty lands ready for westward settlement and of Native peoples as a ‘disappearing race.’”

Thus less than six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the entire population of Japanese Americans living in Orange County had been forcibly removed. In turn, their own dispossession and removal became the means through which their labor capacity could be used to further the warring state’s ongoing settler project of indigenous erasure and land expropriation—ultimately coerced by the unremitting war machine to help manufacture the nation’s whitening landscape.

In terms of the social rhythms of everyday life in Orange County before WWII, *nisei* children experienced their own form of discrimination in schools since they attended the same institutions as white children. Teasing and taunting were regular features of schoolyard racial dynamics, and class articulated with race to make clear distinctions, where Japanese children whose families could generally not afford to buy them shoes were often singled out using familiar pathologized language associating poverty with racialized disease. Recalling an incident in which she went to swim in nearby Long Beach’s “Plunge” swimming pool with her friends who were white, *nisei* Annabelle Kanase remembers being told that she could not enter the facility unless she provided them with a doctor’s or health department certificate verifying that she was “clean and disease free.”¹⁸⁸

However, Kanase’s oral history also gestures to the practice of social gatherings and groups being not entirely segregated for Japanese Americans, where social rules demarcated clear racial lines but nonetheless afforded some degree of cross-racial interaction, particularly among students in racially mixed schools. Japanese Americans therefore occupied a middle category in which their embrace of Protestant Christianity, emphasis on education, and practice of provident frugality made them relatively congruent with the majority white community in Orange County whose moral fabric remained tethered to the area’s founding as a “city upon a hill.”

...

But while Japanese children were still permitted to attend the same schools as white children, Mexican students in Westminster and Garden Grove were placed in distinct “Mexican Schools” due to their segregation in *colonias*.¹⁸⁹ Relying on Orange County’s emptied expanse of land to de facto segregate Mexican laborers and their families in isolated pockets removed from the region’s central towns, most *colonias* were planned in the

¹⁸⁷ Watanabe, Teresa. Celebrating a Shared History. *The Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 2008. <https://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-poston19feb19-story.html>. Accessed July 14, 2021.

¹⁸⁸ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 50.

¹⁸⁹ Ruiz, Vicki L. "South by Southwest: Mexican Americans and Segregated Schooling, 1900–1950." *OAH Magazine of History* 15.2 (2001): 23–27.

early 1920s to be predominantly surrounded by orange groves and vegetable farms. Attending schools located on their premises, Mexican students were subjected to mandatory weekly showers that were not part of the curriculum in mixed white–Japanese schools. Belittled as “dirty Mexicans,” these forms of racialization emerged from the pseudo–scientific discourses perpetuated by Progressive–era reformers who aimed to control sexual vice and urban poverty by pushing for social hygiene measures. As a result, in addition to their requisite Monday morning shower, students in segregated Mexican schools were regularly placed in Americanization programs that emphasized the importance of cleanliness and “proper” food values.¹⁹⁰

So while the Mexican and Japanese communities in Orange County held much in common due to their shared history in agricultural employment, each experienced discrimination and exclusion in particular ways and each developed distinct social and economic relations with the white majority. Rather than occupying the partially integrated position of their Japanese neighbors, Mexican residents were placed lower on the racial hierarchy. In his oral history of the area, white resident Lloyd Thomas recalls that “most people considered the Japanese to be white but the Mexicans were treated more like blacks in those days.”¹⁹¹ Thus it is noteworthy that—as a longtime white resident—Thomas implies that he conceives of “most people” as categorically white, taking on the stance of there being a naturalized white majority with the authority to determine placement in the racial structure. Symbolically locating Japanese people as more adjacent to whiteness and Mexican people as more adjacent to blackness, Thomas’ characterization therefore demonstrates how white meaning making around race relies to some degree on racial bipolarism and presumptive white authority to establish the structure of race relations for other non–white groups. Consequently, while “Mexican” was oftentimes used to refer to a much more diverse collective of laborers of American Indian, Californio, Spanish, and Mexican descent, whites perceived them as a singular symbolic entity, largely unified by the agricultural labor they jointly performed. In addition to descending, in part, from Californios who settled in Orange County during the rancho era and from San Juaneeño Mission Indians who became forcibly assimilated and sometimes disappeared into categories of “Spanish” or “Mexican” identity, the roots of Orange County’s Mexican community can also be more directly traced to the waves of outmigration that occurred from Mexico during the Mexican Revolution.

Mexican migrants who came to Orange County initially entered a local economy undergoing structural changes to its labor pool due to both Japanese exclusion, on the one hand, and Japanese upward mobility, on the other. The continuing need for cheap farm workers to meet agricultural demand following nativist responses to Japanese encroachment assisted in increasing the number of Mexican migrants entering California who replaced the recently curtailed stream of Japanese laborers that arrived in the first decade of the 20th century.¹⁹² As white majority sentiment shifted from stereotypically considering Japanese laborers as a docile workforce and began to view them through the lens of Yellow Peril threat, the Japanese farm workers who remained in the US began to lose their appeal to white employers. Once word spread that Japanese laborers were beginning to organize to collectively bargain for more protections, the paternalistic sheen of them being considered “wonderful little workers” (as described by one white resident from pre–war Orange County) dulled, and the desire for a more pliable workforce emerged. Mexican laborers were deemed still hard working but also, to the benefit of whites, less economically threatening compared to the “land hungry” *issei*.¹⁹³ Moreover, the economic ascent of some Japanese families who began to manage their own farms drove demand for a replacement labor

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 47–48.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 57.

¹⁹² Gonzalez, Gilbert G. "Labor and Community: The Camps of Mexican Citrus Pickers in Southern California." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 22.3 (1991): 289–312.

¹⁹³ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 43.

pool to perform the least remunerative and most grueling work. Altogether, then, the newly arriving Mexican migrants consequently largely replaced Japanese farm workers by the 1920s, hired by employers on the premise that they would be less likely to organize and could more easily return to Mexico in a seasonal labor cycle that made permanent settlement in the US less likely.¹⁹⁴

This uptick in Mexican migration continued well into the 1920s when the community's size more than doubled. In some sectors like the citrus industry, Mexican laborers came to entirely replace Japanese laborers by this time. According to Gilbert González the origin of Mexican enclaves in Orange County can be traced to these citrus worker camps, the Mexican *colonias* in which community members lived, and some neighborhoods that emerged on the outskirts of existing settlements.¹⁹⁵ Constrained to live in or near the labor camps and fields in which they were contracted to work, Mexican residents who wanted to settle more permanently in the county were consigned to *colonia* tracts specifically created for and marketed to the growing Mexican community. While the Alien Land Laws had prevented Japanese members of the community from purchasing land after 1913, the *colonias* represented a mixed opportunity for the new migrants. While heavily segregated, real estate developers and agents offered houses on *colonia* tracts as an option through which Mexicans could legally purchase property. As a result of these segregated subdivisions, Mexican enclaves formed at Colonia Independencia at Katella and Gilbert in Anaheim, Colonia Juarez just south of Mile Square Park in Fountain Valley, and Colonia La Paz and Colonia Manzanillo/Diecisiete on Westminster and Euclid in Garden Grove, alongside a couple quasi-*colonias* in La Habra and Placentia—all built between 1923 and 1925.

Altogether an estimated twenty-one communities formed in these agricultural tracts to house citrus industry pickers and packers, swelling the Mexican population to 16,000 and bringing the percentage of Mexican residents to approximately 15% of the county's total population by the end of the 1920s.¹⁹⁶ However, while ranchers who employed Mexican laborers were happy to receive this replacement labor pool, nativists in California who had first targeted Chinese and then Japanese migrants quickly turned their attention to pursuing restrictions on Mexican settlement. Fearing that Mexican migrants might soon follow the Japanese trajectory and move out of farm work into more upwardly mobile economic activities in the urban trades, nativists were aided by organized labor, who urged Congress to include Mexico in its immigration quota restrictions. Noting his distaste for this racialized surplus labor pool, American Federation of Labor president Samuel Gompers observed that "it appeared...that every other person [he] met on the streets [of Los Angeles] was a Mexican."¹⁹⁷

The rapid growth of Orange County's Mexican community was facilitated at first by the economic boom of the Roaring Twenties, which marked a decade of swift economic growth and social change that followed the destabilizations caused by the First World War. This was the very period reflected in the second act of Disneyland's Carousel of Progress in which the animatronic husband wondrously declares:

Well, we've progressed a long way since the turn of the century twenty years ago, but no one realized then that this would be the age of electricity. Everyone's using it: farmers, factories, whole towns! With electric street lights we don't worry so much about the youngsters being out after dark, and what a difference in our home. We can run as many wires as we need in any direction for mother's new

¹⁹⁴ Turner, Laura Gray. *Citrus Culture: The Mentality of the Orange Rancher in Progressive Era North Orange County*. Dissertation. California State University, Fullerton, 1995.

¹⁹⁵ Gonzalez, Gilbert G. *Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900-1950*. University of Illinois Press, 1994.

¹⁹⁶ Haas, Lisbeth. *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936*. University of California Press, 1995.

¹⁹⁷ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 59.

electrical servants—electric sewing machine, coffee percolator, toaster, waffle iron, refrigerator—and they all go to work on the click of a switch.¹⁹⁸

Consequently, the 1920s was a decade that enlivened the spirit of American optimism. White American families experienced unprecedented prosperity, a new real estate industry emerged to bring them the promise of homeownership, ordinary citizens began investing more of their funds in stocks and bonds, and—as borrowed money poured into equity markets—stock prices soared.¹⁹⁹

However, the unprecedented boom of the 1920s ended with a devastating bust. On October 28, 1929, the Dow declined by nearly 13%, and by the summer of 1932, the Dow closed at its lowest value—89% below the decade’s peak. Following a series of regional, national, and international banking panics and financial crises, industrial production plummeted, nearly 25% or about 12,830,000 people found themselves unemployed, and marriage rates declined. Lasting over a decade from 1929 until 1941, the Great Depression decidedly ended the unfettered progress narrative that had so captivated the imaginations of White America from the turn of the century—their optimism waning until America’s formal entry into the “good war” restored both the workforce and citizen faith in the national project.²⁰⁰

The mass disillusionment that pervaded the public psyche during the Great Depression sought answers to the abrupt end of early twentieth century American dreaming. In their frenzied search for meaning in a time of national turmoil, nativists found their scapegoat in Mexican workers, whose influx into low wage labor in the decade just prior helped justify narratives that they were stealing jobs from more deserving Americans. Though largely attributing the nation’s economic predicament to the excesses of speculative capital and overproduction, during his December 2, 1930 second State of the Union address, President Herbert Hoover also diagnosed that:

There is need for revision of our immigration laws upon a more limited and more selective basis, flexible to the needs of the country. Under conditions of current unemployment it is obvious that persons coming to the United States seeking work would likely become either a direct or indirect public charge. As a temporary measure the officers issuing visas to immigrants have been, in pursuance of the law, instructed to refuse visas to applicants likely to fall into this class. As a result the visas issued have decreased from an average of about 24,000 per month prior to restrictions to a rate of about 7,000 during the last month. These are largely preferred persons under the law. Visas from Mexico are about 250 per month compared to about 4,000 previous to restrictions. The whole subject requires exhaustive reconsideration.²⁰¹

Consequently, resentment towards Mexican immigrants grew following the 1929 stock market crash as down-and-out whites saw their presence as a drain on public coffers and in competition with them for scarce jobs. As local relief agencies began to strain in the face of an increasingly indigent populace, many decided to

¹⁹⁸ Carousel of Progress Recreation Project. (2020, July 11). *A Recreation of the 1967–1973 Disneyland Carousel of Progress* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wU3RFg3sIF8>

¹⁹⁹ Garrison, Roger W. "The Roaring Twenties and the Bullish Eighties: The Role of Government in Boom and Bust." *Critical Review* 7.2–3 (1993): 259–276.

²⁰⁰ Caprettini, Bruno, Fabio Schmidt–Fischbach, and Hans–Joachim Voth. "From Welfare to Warfare: New Deal Spending and Patriotism during World War II." (March 22 2018). Discussion Paper DP12807. Economic History Series. Centre for Economic Policy Research.

²⁰¹ Hoover, Herbert. (1930, December 2). "Second State of the Union Address." Miller Center, University of Virginia. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-2-1930-second-state-union-address>. Accessed 20 July 2022.

exclude foreign-born applicants from qualifying for assistance while others required applicants to supply proof of legal residence. At the federal level, Hoover signaled that the US government would take the “deportation of alien criminals” much more seriously, arguing that those who entered the country in violation of immigration laws clearly demonstrated “their objectionable character” simply through their chosen method of entry. Moreover, immigrants who became “public charges” could be deported under federal law. As a result, Mexican communities during the Great Depression were met with a domestic context in which employers ceased to offer them jobs, in which relief agencies discriminated against them and withheld assistance, and in which—even if successful in receiving aid—they became vulnerable to deportation based on transitioning into “public charge” status.²⁰²

During this wave of renewed nativist sentiment, many Mexican migrants and their second-generation children became targeted through local “repatriation” efforts largely coordinated at the municipal level. By the early 1930s local governments began to organize repatriation programs in order to cleanse the welfare rolls of Mexican beneficiaries, with the largest and most infamous of these programs taking place in Los Angeles in 1931. According to Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, relatively few of the total number of Mexican residents who left the United States during the Great Depression are actually documented in federal archives.²⁰³ This is because the majority left under the coercive conditions discussed above as “voluntary” returnees, largely given no other choice but to leave in order to find work and the means to survive. Others who left en masse through local repatriation campaigns did so through local and state channels, which explains why no federal record exists for these departures.

Taken altogether, then, conservative estimates officially show that the recently created Immigration and Naturalization Service removed approximately 82,000 Mexican residents—both citizens and non-citizens alike—through both deportation and “voluntary” departure proceedings, i.e., formal methods through which resident aliens could “choose” to leave under so that, if departing voluntarily, they would be allowed to eventually re-enter the United States, but if departing via deportation, would be permanently banned from doing so. Accounting for voluntary migrations as well, other estimates place the number between 400,000 to 1 million for those who were repatriated during the Great Depression. Throughout the Southwest, some *colonias* and *barrios* literally disappeared as entire communities left their neighborhoods behind, given few other options to subsist if they remained. In Orange County, it is estimated that approximately 1,600 to 2,000 Mexican community members were removed due to repatriation efforts, but it is likely that many more left on a quasi-voluntary basis that are absent from the official record.²⁰⁴ Therefore, like the Chinese and Japanese migrants who met with exclusion before them, Mexican migrants experienced the familiar bargain that racialized labor has perpetually brokered with whiteness, a bargain in which their productive capacity and extractive potential operate as the principal means through which white capital is willing to accommodate their presence, and whose accommodation remains contingent on the vacillating demands and sentiments of a possessive white majority.

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²⁰² Hoffman, Abraham. *Unwanted Mexican Americans In The Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929–1939*. VNR Ag, 1974.

²⁰³ Balderrama, Francisco E., and Raymond Rodríguez. *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*. University of New Mexico Press, 2006.

²⁰⁴ Gonzalez, Gilbert G. *Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900–1950*. University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Overall, the racial hierarchies established in California's early history of joining the union largely reflected the region's long history of colonization and forced assimilation since Spanish contact. Impossible to neatly classify into a Black/white binary though still informed by this racial bipolarity, race relations in Orange County were indelibly shaped by the area's reliance on racial labor performed by indigenous, Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican workers to develop its infrastructure and agricultural sector. As the region rapidly expanded, the racial economic structure characteristic of Westminster and Garden Grove's early years persisted, where whites generally owned the land and controlled the means of production while non-whites were tasked to labor for them in the face of regular fearmongering, discrimination, and threat of removal.

As a result, as second-generation *nisei* found themselves subjected to the same Alien Land Laws that prevented *issei* from owning land and as Mexican Americans were targeted alongside their migrant parents for repatriation during the Great Depression, the racially targeted nature of their treatment reveals the contingencies and external limits of national citizenship, which, according to Mae Ngai (8), is constructed in opposition to their constitutive classification as "alien citizens":

[U]nlike Euro-Americans, whose ethnic and racial identities became uncoupled during the 1920s, Asians' and Mexicans' ethnic and racial identities remained conjoined. The legal racialization of these ethnic groups' national origin cast them as permanently foreign and unassimilable to the nation. I argue that these racial formations produced "alien citizens"—Asian Americans and Mexican Americans born in the United States with formal US citizenship but who remained alien in the eyes of the nation...For Chinese and other Asians, alien citizenship was the invariable consequence of racial exclusion from immigration and naturalization citizenship. For Mexicans, the concept of alien citizenship captured the condition of being a foreigner in one's former native land.²⁰⁵

Thus, Ngai argues that the shared condition of these "impossible subjects" was produced through law, which juridically barred them from citizenship and rights and symbolically vacated them of any legitimate means to assert their belonging within the nation state, irrespective of the duration of their presence within its territorialized borders.

After the conclusion of WWII, some Japanese community members journeyed back to Orange County in an attempt to pick up the threads of whatever remained of the lives they had left behind. A lucky few like Charles Furuta managed to reclaim their land from caretakers and redevelop their farms into new enterprises, but far more came to find that locals who had moved into the market vacuum they had left behind were hostile to their return. "Some were bitter and didn't want the competition," one white resident recalled.²⁰⁶ Many families ultimately chose to never return to the area, permanently dislocated after the period of Japanese "internment" ended. A generation of *issei* toil amounted to painfully little as camp detainees saw their homes and belongings lost to the ravages of war, nativism, and time. As a result, very few Asian people lived in Orange County by the Second World War's end, and the Mexican communities that remained there did so under inhospitable conditions of white majority receipt that entangled Mexican ethnicity with alien illegality.

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²⁰⁵ Ngai, Mae. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.

²⁰⁶ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 55.

Upon judicial repeal of restrictive housing covenants, upwardly mobile Black families began to move out of segregated neighborhoods, benefitting from an postwar increase in blue collar manufacturing jobs in Southern California's industrial centers. In response, many white residents began to perceive this encroachment as “threat[ing] to their opportunities as working Americans” when residential desegregation stoked fears of plummeting property values. According to Thomas Sugrue, outmigration took place in postwar America in large part because of racialized fears held by both working and middle class white families regarding protecting the value of their most important investment and claim to full civic standing: their property.²⁰⁷ Viewing integration as a threat to their home values and anxious to insulate themselves from growing racial unrest in the core, white households left cities for more homogenous communities in the suburbs.

During Orange County's transformation into a Disneyfied “community of tomorrow,” white suburbanites actively leveraged a variety of practices—formal and informal, legal and extralegal—to maintain the area's image as a naturalized white space evacuated of its own history. As the suburban building boom ensued, Black and Jewish families hoping to move into the suburbs often met with countless barriers aimed at maintaining suburban homogeneity. Early on, restrictive covenants had helped formally manage the transfer of property deeds so that white property owners were required to only sell or rent to other whites. Black and Jewish applicants were specifically targeted by these restrictions, thereby significantly limiting their numbers in the county to artificially low levels well below national (and metro) proportions. In the 1970 US Census, for example, Westminster officially registered only 48 Black residents out of a population of 59,865 (0.08%), and Garden Grove similarly registered only 162 Black residents out of a total of 122,524 people (0.13%).²⁰⁸ After the 1948 *Shelley v. Kraemer* US Supreme Court ruling that declared restrictive covenants “unenforceable as law and contrary to public policy,” residents de facto restricted non-white incorporation into their neighborhoods regardless, continuing the practice of keeping property transfers within white control through unstated and informal means.

After WWII, aspiring homeowners moved into cities like Westminster and Garden Grove in droves, drawn by advertisements in local papers buoyantly offering newly constructed two bedroom homes for \$8,000. Zero down payment requirements for veterans and monthly payments for as low as \$56 dollars finally placed the dangling carrot of homeownership within reach of white Americans.²⁰⁹ Notoriously, however, while GI subsidies helped white veterans achieve unprecedented levels of upward mobility through home ownership, these benefits were not readily available to veterans subjected to racist exclusions at the local, state, and federal levels. Although the bill's language did not explicitly exclude Black beneficiaries, it was structured so that the 1.2 million Black veterans who returned from fighting in WWII could not access its entitlements in practice.²¹⁰ Fear of Black advancement drove Southern Democrats to draft the 1944 GI Bill in a manner that would privilege whites as its primary beneficiaries, in line with previous tactics they had successfully used to structure New Deal reforms in racially asymmetric ways. Congressional Representative John Rankin in particular—a segregationist who opposed interracial marriage and who had proposed the wholesale deportation of Japanese Americans during the war—won the vital concession for the bill to be administered by individual states rather than by the federal government.²¹¹ As a result, Black veterans experienced immediate challenges when trying to secure

²⁰⁷ Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*. Princeton University Press, 2014.

²⁰⁸ Baldassare, Mark. *Trouble in Paradise: The Suburban Transformation in America*. Columbia University Press, 1986.

²⁰⁹ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 55.

²¹⁰ Banks, Taunya Lovell. “Race, Place and Historic Moment – Black and Japanese American World War II Veterans: The GI Bill of Rights and the Model Minority Myth.” *Minority Relations: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation* (Robert S. Chang & Greg Robinson eds. 2017), *U of Maryland Legal Studies Research Paper* 2015–20 (2015).

²¹¹ Herbold, Hilary. “Never a Level Playing Field: Blacks and the GI Bill.” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 6 (1994): 104–108.

benefits, blocked by discretionary state actors invested in maintaining the pre-civil-rights racial order. Some Black veterans found themselves being denied benefits because they had not been given an honorable discharge; others were directly intimidated through threat of physical violence and lynching. Meanwhile, Federal Housing Authority policies openly promoted the production of homogeneous neighborhoods: builders were advised to limit tracts to single racial groups, neighborhoods were redlined to protect white property values, and loans were frequently rejected for non-white applicants, particularly Black applicants seeking to purchase homes in white suburban neighborhoods.

For their part, developers also had a significant incentive to dodge the *Shelley* decision, protective of property values shored up by the valorization of whiteness. After 1948, the Los Angeles Realty Board and California Real Estate Association worked together to propose a constitutional amendment that would allow them to sidestep the decision's terms.²¹² In other maneuvers, they backed individual efforts to legally challenge *Shelley* in the courts mounted by signatories of pre-1948 restrictive covenants who sued those they argued were now violating the rights accorded to them from those earlier agreements. In response to the 1953 Supreme Court decision in *Barrows v. Jackson* to outlaw all indirect discriminatory strategies and to the 1963 Rumford Fair Housing Act passed by the state legislature that provided for anti-discrimination enforcement, the California Real Estate Association and California Apartment Owners Association formed the Committee for Home Protection with the aim of amending the state constitution and circumventing forced integration through Proposition 13. A 1964 ballot measure that would allow property owners, landlords, and agents to exercise discretion over racially restricting housing in whatever way they wanted, Prop 13 eventually passed with 65% voter support, only eventually checked by a 1966 California Supreme Court decision that deemed it unconstitutional and finally dealt a more considerable blow with the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968.

In short, homeowners, landlords, developers, and state actors all worked independently and oftentimes in concert to maintain their possessive investment in whiteness, shored up by the legal authority of the nation state to authorize their claims. While Black veterans and civil rights activists protested their discriminatory treatment, the GI Bill ultimately set into motion a series of wealth building processes that were, by design, deeply racialized, preparing the ground for white veterans to capitalize on a suburban housing boom that exacerbated racial asymmetries and further homogenized Orange County into a whitening landscape.

...

Interestingly, by the 1950s many of these sleepy pre-war and early post-war bedroom communities would soon cease to exist anyway in light of Cold War expansion, which transformed the region's reputational character as a semi-rural outpost outside metropolitan Los Angeles into that of a modern suburban utopia ready to decidedly break from the Depression- and WWII-era lean years and recommit wholesale to the consumer project of American dreaming. In their push to build bigger, more amenity-rich houses marketed to the new R&D buyer class, developers offered Orange County's pre-war landowners generous buy-out packages to create the region's midcentury subdivisions, rapidly converting its once-familiar orange groves, strawberry fields, and dairy farms into endless tracts of modern ranch-style homes.²¹³

Before long, communities like Westminster and Garden Grove rocketed in size, with Garden Grove ballooning from its once small-town population of 5,500 to a dizzying 113,800 in just fifteen years. Orange

²¹² Abrams, Charles. "The Housing Problem and the Negro." *Daedalus* (1966): 64-76.

²¹³ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 72.

County as a whole also expanded at an astronomical rate, growing from 130,800 to 1,110,211 residents over the same period. By the time the countywide population passed its million count, white residents comprised a staggering 96% of the region's demographic makeup.²¹⁴ The formerly agricultural cities of Garden Grove and Westminster once populated by Chinese, Japanese and Mexican laborers came to reflect whites' utopian fantasy of a homogenous community. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, the recorded number of racial minorities in the cities remained exceptionally low, where from 1950 to 1960, Garden Grove's nonwhite population actually declined from 1.9% to 0.9% while Westminster's remained negligible, growing slightly from 1.1% to 1.4% over that decade.²¹⁵ Though these estimates are likely somewhat skewed due to US Census conventions classifying people with Spanish surnames as administratively white, the proportion of white residents living in the county by the mid-century nonetheless demonstrates how decades of structural exclusion and removal practices towards nonwhite and "alien" others, alongside centuries of historical and ongoing indigenous genocide and enclosure, managed to produce the white space in which suburban Orange Countians built their dreams, convinced of the moral primacy of the American project and assured, in turn, of their own innocence.

So in building on this now-whitened landscape already emptied and re-emptied of racial surplus to sustain the myth of open territory, developers and settlers alike managed to manufacture that successive phase of the image described by Baudrillard as that which "masks the absence of a profound reality"—relying first on the violence of primitive accumulation and then subsequently on the violence of organized forgetting to assert a relation of ownership to the land that presents as irrefutable fact that which is but a sorcery—"not a scandal to be denounced according to moral and economic rationality, but a challenge to take up according to symbolic law."^{216,217} Asserting the nation's authority to make claims on history, its narration, and the organization of collective memory for the advancement of capital, whiteness consequently holds a vested interest in maintaining its innocence through fabricating a relentless ahistoricism, casting centuries of racial violence through the redemptive lens of American dreaming—and simulating orders of knowledge and being that take us ever further away from coming to terms with this profound reality.

DISLOCATIONS IN THE GLOBALIZING SUBURB

*Yesterday's memories may sparkle and gleam,
 Tomorrow is still but a dream.
 Right here and now, you've got it made,
 The world's forward marching and you're in the parade.*

*Now is the time, now is the best time,
 Be it a time of joy or strife,
 There's so much to cheer for—
 be glad you're here for—
 It's the best time of your life.*

After Disneyland shuttered Carousel of Progress in 1975 to make way for America Sings, the show's animatronic figures were sent to the media giant's recently opened Tomorrowland in Disney World to continue

²¹⁴ Ibid, 126.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 165.

²¹⁶ Singh, Nikhil Pal. "On Race, Violence, and So-Called Primitive Accumulation." *Social Text* 34,3 (2016): 27–50.

²¹⁷ Giroux, Henry A. *The Violence of Organized Forgetting: Thinking beyond America's Disimagination Machine*. City Lights Publishers, 2014.

an updated version of the show in another Orange County, this time in Florida.²¹⁸ Those who viewed the version in California would have noticed several changes to the show that significantly departed from its former rendition; the stage now turned counterclockwise instead of clockwise, Progress City was no longer featured in the show's fifth act but instead spliced and put to the side as showgoers passed by, and perhaps most jarringly, the original show's linchpin song, "There's a Great, Big, Beautiful Tomorrow" was replaced with the song above, named "Now Is the Time."²¹⁹

In the Disneyland version of Carousel of Progress which had been made for the 1964–65 New York World's Fair, "There's a Great, Big, Beautiful Tomorrow" reflected the atomic age's optimism about America's future in the world and the role American industry had to play in it. Its lyrics professed the spirit of how Walt Disney and the planners of Irvine had approached their terraforming in Orange County, leading with their dreams, which also became constitutive with the American Dream in the national and global imagination. Performed by "singing cowboy" Rex Allen, the song goes:

*There's a great, big, beautiful tomorrow
Shining at the end of every day
There's a great, big, beautiful tomorrow
And tomorrow's just a dream away*

*Man has a dream and that's the start
He follows his dream with mind and heart
And when it becomes a reality
It's a dream come true for you and me*

*So there's a great, big, beautiful tomorrow
Shining at the end of every day
There's a great, big, beautiful tomorrow
Just a dream away*

However, in the 1975 version in Florida, "Now Is the Time" clearly indicated a different temporal focus, patently not looking to tomorrow but on the "right here and now," assuring audiences that, at least in the present, they've still "got it made." The tone of Carousel of Progress' replacement musical number therefore appeared hesitant to speculate about both the future and America's place within it after a decade's worth of cataclysmic events changed the course of the nation forever. Though Disneyland's 1975 America on Parade featured its myth of American progression through time as the rightful inheritor to modernity's throne, the line "The world's forward marching and you're in the parade" in "Now Is the Time" only places the park goer *within* the forward propulsion of modernity's march, not necessarily leading the charge in front of it. The omission of the fifth act where both husband and wife declare uncomplicatedly that GE's nearby nuclear power plant was a welcome neighbor, for example, was likely removed because of nuclear power's growing social controversies, which placed the United States on uneasy footing in the precarious period of the Cold War nuclear arms race. Seemingly self-aware, then, that the future after 1965 was not delivered as promised by Walt Disney's original vision for a community of tomorrow, lines in the Florida variation like "Be it a time of joy or strife/There's so

²¹⁸ Robson, Tom. "The Future Is Truly in the Past': The Regressive Nostalgia of Tomorrowland." *Performance and the Disney Theme Park Experience*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 23–42.

²¹⁹ Rambo, Shelly. "Traumatized Bodies and the Slow Work of Theology." *Doing Theology in Pandemics: Facing Viruses, Violence, and Vitriol*, edited by Zachary Moon (2022): 106.

much to cheer for” appear to recognize that the future as advertised could not design its way out social strife and attempted to reassure audiences that, nevertheless, “There’s so much to cheer for.”

Ending the song forebodingly, the closing line “It’s the best time of your life” portended the decline of Carousel of Progress’ own lifespan in the ensuing decades. As a product, it possessed several design flaws that made it trickier for Disney to easily reproduce and circulate its value. Ironically, even though the animatronic dolls saved the park on having to run a live show with actors so that it could efficiently offer the show as many times as the wheel could turn on any given day, this also meant that park goers were not particularly interested in seeing the show more than once, producing an issue of consumer demand as Carousel of Progress could only entertain so many people in one place for a limited length of time.

Worse still, the biggest flaw became more and more apparent as the years passed. As a show, the narrative originally offered in Carousel of Progress could no longer give an orderly and unbroken presentation of progress over the last century as originally presented in the GE-sponsored display. While in the original acts, the segments were separated by twenty-year increments to mark corporate innovations in the late 1890s, the 1920s, the 1940s, and a futuristically imagined, 1960s-inflected present, Act IV in the 1975 Florida show had to be updated to acknowledge the future that actually came to pass *and* reconcile it with some new vision for a slightly further off future. In the process, it clunkily attempted to respond to the cultural and structural changes that occurred after the 1960s. Act IV of the new show secularized the Christmas holiday as originally presented by changing the date to New Year’s Eve. Moreover, the domestic scene inverts so that it is the wife that is shown working at a computer while the husband is depicted preparing dinner.²²⁰ Removed, too, are the television set, electrodomestic appliances, and furniture from 1965. In their place, newer updates, though less conspicuous, since GE’s inventions for tomorrow were deemphasized in this reformulated script.

Past the 1980s, though, even this revised imagining of the future began to feel outdated, revealing the narrative flaw in Carousel of Progress once again. In having to consistently imagine relevant and plausible futures that always came to pass but rarely in the way the show claimed, the enchantment of Carousel of Progress slowly transformed into disenchantment as time marched forward to refute its optimistic account. With the leap from Act III in the 1940s to Act IV in “the future-present” getting longer and longer, by the 1990s the story could not relay a clear narrative progression to connect GE’s innovations from from the 1940s through the 1990s without offering some coherent summary of how the 1960s and 70s helped transition America into the contemporary moment. However, Carousel of Progress could not straightforwardly narrate what American industry had done in those intervening decades without invoking bad memories of industrially-facilitated state violence across college campuses, in Black urban communities, and across its proxy wars around the globe. Thus cracking linear-progressive time’s fantastical veneer, the show’s forward-moving design that was once its primary motivation and basis for its commercial appeal thereby established the conditions of its own undoing. Carousel of Progress consequently became a depreciating asset that Disney soon hoped to dispense with entirely in its overhaul of Florida’s Tomorrowland in the 1990s after GE decided to not renew its contract in 1985. Originally, the plan was to renovate Carousel into a new edition of the park’s “Flying Saucers” ride, but after Disney suffered enormous financial losses following the opening of EuroDisneyland on the outskirts of Paris, plans to overhaul Tomorrowland were scaled back, and the corporation moved to complete Tomorrowland’s makeover for as little money as possible. Because of this, the proposed Flying Saucers renovation was jettisoned and instead Carousel of Progress got a new lease on life.

²²⁰ Cornfeld, Li. “Expo Afterlife: Corporate Performance and Capitalist Futurity in the Carousel of Progress.” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 27.3 (2017): 316–333.

Interestingly, in Carousel's 1990s remodel, Disney decided to approach the show with a different strategy. Deciding, apparently, that the original narrative produced too many complications with predicting uncertain futures, Disney turned to restore the show to many of its original features, emphasizing instead Carousel's nostalgic value as a time capsule for viewing pop-culture visions of futures that never were and diverting audiences to outer space as the actual final frontier, where a fantasy future far, far away could still be imagined. Thus, as America faced an uncertain future whose unpredictability came in large part from the machinations of American industry in the 1970s to put capital on the move, Carousel of Progress—instead of claiming to be modernity's herald into to the future—turned back to nostalgia as Disney's new corporate strategy, cultivating a yearning for a less complicated and more idealistic past that in the throes of the globalizing present could no longer be.^{221,222}

Perhaps it is telling, though, that Carousel of Progress temporarily closed in October 2001 right after the September 11 attacks when parkgoers started to attend in lower numbers. Despite nostalgia's marketability, Carousel's optimism still appeared disconcertingly out of place in moments when manufactured comfort could only do so much to reassure an increasingly dislocated and anxious public that things would be okay. While the show still occasionally runs during the busy season, Disney stopped maintainancing it as much as before and park watchers continually speculate about its final curtain call. Though it still remains in Florida, if Carousel did finally close, it would mark the decommission of the last of the great industrial pavilion exhibits that were displayed at the 1964–65 New York World's Fair that dealt with the fair's theme of Space Age progress—symbolically bookending that long chapter of the American Century where optimistic dreaming, for a time, attempted to outpace reality through manufacturing an incessant stream of images to reflect the American story of itself, by itself.

...

As Judith Stein opens in the preface of *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies*, what brought her to focus on that infamous decade was learning that “the 1970s was the only decade other than the 1930s wherein Americans ended up poorer than they began.”²²³ After over two decades of colossal postwar growth, the 1970s featured the deepest recession the country had experienced since WWII, rocketing oil prices, halting productivity, high unemployment, rising inflation, and growing and increasingly permanent trade deficits. As the value the nation consumed in imports surpassed the amount it produced in exports in 1971 for the first time since 1893, “stagflation” was on the horizon as factories moved out of US cities and across international borders, precipitating the decline of manufacturing jobs and a decimation of American labor. As both Democrats and Republicans alike moved swiftly to attempt to contain the problem through competing economic philosophies, few imagined at the time that productivity decline would continue until 1995 or that wage growth would stagnate to such an extent that the postwar growth Americans assumed would always move upwards and onwards for the next generation had already passed its expiration date. The future that “Now Is the Time” was so unwilling to portray and predict therefore revealed itself to many Americans in this moment—not at all the future California's Carousel of Progress has forecasted but instead a frightening horizon that recalled the specter of the nation's trauma from the Great Depression.

²²¹ Weiner, Lynn Y. “There's a Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow”: Historic Memory and Gender in Walt Disney's “Carousel of Progress.” *The Journal of American Culture* 20.1 (1997): 111.

²²² Upton, Elizabeth Randell. “Nostalgia for a Past Futurism: The Main Street Electrical Parade.” *American Music* 39.2 (2021): 169–181.

²²³ Stein, Judith. *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies*. Yale University Press, 2010.

Though atomic age American optimism had been authorized in the postwar period in part for its claim that its model for ordered living would protect Americans from such economic ruin, it turned out that it couldn't, consequently triggering a widespread "structure of feeling" that something was not right, and that, perhaps, Americans' faith in industry and the nation had ultimately let them down.²²⁴

So how did we get here? Why did the 1970s mark the shift that saw the end of American hoping and the beginning of American despair? What happened that made tomorrow scary and made nostalgia come back into fashion?

As Stein lays out, this process was marked by two periods. In the first, "The Great Compression," the economy grew and also saw some mild redistribution from 1947–1973. As the postwar economy grew by 4% every year, so did home and auto ownership, and more people moved above the poverty line. In 1945, only 44% of American families owned their homes compared to 63% in 1970, and the percentage of Americans living under the poverty line shrunk from 40% to 10%. During this period of time, poor people gained at a faster rate than the rich; while the lowest fifth of the income bracket saw an increase in income of 116%, the top fifth only grew by 85% by comparison. The middle bracket also gained more compared to the top fifth, leading to a structure of mild income redistribution amidst soaring national economic growth to which Claudia Goldin and Robert Margo's term "The Great Compression" ultimately refers.²²⁵ Between 1947 and 1973, more workers earned incomes with large discretionary funds, unionized workers who made up one-third of the laboring class enjoyed steady living wages and benefits, and working class life came to reflect and expect the suburban comforts that attended this shift to the organization of life within the consumers' republic. By the early 1960s, American prosperity seemed destined and ensured, so even if the state entered into one-sided trade policies, its global supremacy largely promised that the terms, for a time, did not matter.

Over time those terms did come to matter, however. After 1973 a number of global challenges to US power and a dramatic spatial reorganization of capital initiated the second period identified by Stein that shifted America from its period of Great Compression to the "Age of Inequality." While economists and American industry had been preoccupied with continuing to stimulate consumer demand for cars and homes—what they believed were the backbone commodities of the national economy—they paid scant attention to the supply of food and energy.

During the 1973 Arab–Israeli War, Arab members of OPEC imposed an embargo against the United States for deciding to re-supply Israeli forces and in order to further advance their position in the conflict. As part of the embargo, oil exports were banned from being sent to the United States and other supporters of Israel, and cuts in overall production were imposed that reduced supply. Occurring at the same time as the Watergate Scandal and Spiro Agnew's resignation from the vice presidency, mistrust in government showed up in polling, where 23% of Americans blamed the oil crisis more on the US than the Arab countries, and some even believed the conspiracy that Nixon had conjured the oil crisis to distract from his scandals in office. In the end, rising oil prices affected every business that used oil, which reduced the purchasing power of consumer dollars and caused reduced demand in consumer goods. In a dramatic reversal from the Great Compression, economic growth subsequently declined by nearly 5 percent, which culminated in a recession that peaked in early 1975. That same

²²⁴ Matthews, Sean. "Change and Theory in Raymond Williams's Structure of Feeling." *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies* 10.2 (2001): 179–194.

²²⁵ Goldin, Claudia, and Robert A. Margo. "The Great Compression: The Wage Structure in the United States at Mid-Century." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 107.1 (1992): 1–34.

year, unemployment reached 9.2 percent, and the stock market lost nearly half its value over just a couple years.²²⁶

During this period, there was a distinct feeling that the government had to do *something* across the political spectrum, but what political solutions were offered by either party differed greatly. For New Deal Democrats, many offered that recent Republican leadership had strayed from Roosevelt's vision for a postwar liberal order where high wages and regulated capital formed the basis for a strong US economy. For a growing base of Goldwater Republicans, however, the Keynesian welfare state was an affront to American taxpayers, offering instead a vision where the promotion of capital was prioritized in advance of labor, operating under the assumption that the benefits of capital would trickle down to the small guy through the self-regulating miracle of the market's invisible hand. Ultimately as both parties continued to devise methods for spurring economic growth during the 1970s, the challenges that the globalizing world imparted onto Americans played out during Jimmy Carter's term in office, setting the stage for the denouncement of the already diminished Keynesian welfare state under Carter by Republican challengers. Therefore, when Democrats failed to restore America to its former prosperity after Carter was elected into office, faith in the Democratic theory of the case evaporated and turned instead to Reagan's Republican party, which claimed that the former actor's landslide victory was a clear rejection—whether true or not—of the liberal ideas and practices that had characterized the Age of Compression.²²⁷

In his role as president, Reagan created a neoliberal blueprint for the growing advance of capital and its logics. The new Reagan-rebranded GOP affirmed a theory that capital that could be on the move—freed from government taxation, regulation, and trade barriers—would not only restore America to its former prosperity but superpower it to new levels. His successors across the political divide maintained this theory, forwarding a despatialization and deregulation of capital that shifted resources away from domestic manufacturing into finance and housing. As globalization managed to push America's growth frontier further for a little while, it also created the conditions for an unprecedented trend in wealth redistribution in the economic structure that severely reversed the pattern found during the Great Compression. Finally, when it became clear that deregulation of the housing market had created the powder keg underlying the 2008 subprime mortgage crisis, the Great Recession and its aftermath have by now, too, put the Reagan era's neoliberal policies under review.

Consequently, as a consistent stronghold for Reagan as he ascended the political ladder to the highest office, Orange County's history of suburbanization and oil-based development makes it a symptomatic case for the transformations that Stein describes happened on the national level in the transition from the Great Compression to the Age of Inequality.

By the 1970s the county's growth conditions were beginning to approach a stalemate, especially in the non-industrial, non-coastal belt that ran along north-central Orange County in cities like Santa Ana, Westminster, and Garden Grove. Three decades after the postwar boom, the area's aging 1950s prefabricated housing was beginning to show signs of wear, their original homeowners had reached retirement age, and their children were leaving for college elsewhere to later settle in other cities. Garden Grove, once a bedroom community known for offering a bucolic landscape to city-weary commuters, became derisively known as "Garbage Grove" as its more hastily built tracts slowly started to deteriorate in quality under the care of absentee landlords. Also impacted by the construction of the 22 freeway that ran right through Garden Grove and

²²⁶ Stein, Judith. 2010. 102.

²²⁷ Stein, Judith. 2010. 262–300.

Westminster, their North County locations began to lose their value despite—or rather really because of—their proximity to Los Angeles.²²⁸ Highway construction only made them more penetrable and less capable of white self-preservation, driving developers to move their subdivisions further west and south to exclusive beach locales like Newport Beach capable of attracting more monied and upwardly mobile families.

With residents drawn to more premier shopping centers located in these new coastal areas, the commercial districts in inland cities also experienced decline. Without the heavy oil and defense industrial bases that subsidized other nearby cities' municipal budgets, cities like Garden Grove and Westminster found themselves heavily relying on property taxes to support public services, which only contracted further when the tax revolt saw the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 and indefinitely froze property taxes throughout the state. A Garden Grove commissioned committee emerged to try to address the city's decline, proposing to rename the area the "Twin Lakes Community" to leave its derisive moniker behind. Westminster floundered even more as it encountered similar problems to its neighbor but with even fewer commercial businesses within its city limits. The cities were at an impasse, and for the first time since the Great Depression, the "serial enchantment of suburbia" began to flounder.

As the county continued to deindustrialize from the mid-1970s onwards in accordance to the shift described by Judith Stein above, postindustrial service and IT employment came to replace the industrial defense jobs that had played such a significant role in forming Orange County's mid-century identity. The old base of manufacturing industries in rubber, glass, and steel slowly disappeared as well, replaced by a "new economy" forged within the transnational forces of globalization and reliant on new digital technologies.²²⁹ High home values made it more difficult for companies to promise the great life to its employees, whose incomes needed to be subsidized more and more as the cost of living continued to outpace once-cushy defense job salaries. Then, in response to land becoming more profitable than defense manufacturing, the defense firms moved out in exchange for selling their valuable holdings. Worth \$75 million or more by this point, Hughes Ground Systems, for example, slowly relocated the plant's projects to other facilities, lowering the number of employees at the Fullerton site to just several thousand before finally closing the campus entirely in 1995. Likewise, Ford—never entirely sure footed in the aerospace realm and unable to sustain its workforce after losing a \$3 billion dollar bid to develop laser-guided missiles for the US military—decided to broker an estimated \$100 million dollar deal with the Irvine Company in 1990 to demolish its Newport Beach campus and convert the land into luxury homes. By the time a new development took over the Hughes campus and built more homes on its former land, only 15 percent of its employees remained in Fullerton.²³⁰

As a result, since the arrival of non-aerospace firms in the late 1970s and 1980s and the rise of Irvine and the surrounding area as an IT hub, Orange County's regional economy has become increasingly integrated into the worldwide capitalist market system in the contemporary era of globalization. As transnational capital transformed the greater metro area, Los Angeles developed into what Saskia Sassen (27) has termed a "global city," where,

[W]ith the partial unbundling or at least weakening of the national as a spatial unit due to privatization and deregulation and the associated strengthening of globalization come conditions for the ascendance

²²⁸ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. 1999. 180–183.

²²⁹ Kling, Rob, Spencer Olin, and Mark Poster. "The Emergence of Postsuburbia: An Introduction." *Postsuburban California. The Transformation of Orange County Since World War II*. University of California Press, Berkeley (1995): 1–30.

²³⁰ Leslie, Stuart W. 2020. 54.

of other spatial units and scales...[among them being] the sub-national, notably cities and *regions* [emphasis added].”²³¹

Orange County’s transition during this period in many ways mirrored the globalizing Los Angeles economy. Alongside San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and Los Angeles Counties, it has consequently established itself as a vital part of one of the nation’s largest postindustrial regional economies, surpassing the neighboring state of Arizona and now ranking among the top thirty economies in the world if treated as a nation in international comparisons.^{232,233}

Therefore, the 1970s proved to be a “pivotal decade” for Orange County’s own development towards the end of the twentieth century. In the span of just two decades, the region rapidly transformed from an industrial economy to a postindustrial “global suburb.” Having traditionally relied on real estate associations, banks, and community organizations to keep nonwhites out of their neighborhoods, the prospect of desegregation coupled with increased interconnectedness due to globalization unnerved white suburbanites who had hoped their urban exits would have been sufficient action to protect their wealth and desire for homogeneity. Those in the inland northern areas that did not possess oil resources became the most displaced from their former class positions in the county’s transition to an information technology and service-oriented economy. And so, as the era of multiculturalism dawned on the white enclave as it transformed into a global suburb, both regionally-based elites and working-class whites found themselves increasingly dislocated from their former positions in the field of power by financialization, opening a pathway for a particularly bitter and high-stakes variety of white reactionary politics to emerge as Vietnamese refugees began arriving in 1975.

A DOOR TO THE PAST AND A WINDOW INTO THE FUTURE

Black Panther Hot Breakfast: 9am—10am at Aunt Jemima’s Pancake House

Young Pirates League: 11am on Captain Hook’s boat

Women’s Liberation: 12 noon rally to liberate Minnie Mouse in front of Fantasyland

Self Defense Collective: 1pm—2pm at shooting gallery in Frontierland

Mid-Day Feast: 3pm barbecue of Porky Pig

Late in the afternoon Yippies plan to infiltrate and liberate Tom Sawyer’s Island.

*Declaring a free state, brothers and sisters will then have a smoke-in and festival. Get it on over to Disneyland, August 6. YIPPIE!*²³⁴

– Youth International Party promotional flyer, 1970

ANAHEIM, Calif., Aug. (AP) — *Disneyland was closed for five hours tonight after amusement park officials said that more than 100 long-haired youths “threatened destruction of property and violence.” About 29,000 people were in the park shortly before 8 P.M. when loudspeakers blared requests to leave. The park normally closes at*

²³¹ Sassen, Saskia. “The Global City: Introducing a Concept.” *Brown J. World Aff.* 11 (2004): 27.

²³² Kling, Rob, Spencer Olin, and Mark Poster. 1995. 1–3.

²³³ Gottdiener, M., and George Kephart. “The Multinucleated Metropolitan Region: A Comparative Analysis.” *Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County since World War II* (1995): 31.

²³⁴ Yippie Invasion. Daveland. Blog. <https://www.davelandweb.com/yippies/>. Accessed 21 July 2022.

*1 A.M. Disneyland spokesmen said the request followed the refusal by a group of more than 100 youths to cease demonstrating on the amusement park's Main Street. The youths, who were participating in what was called Yippie "invasion," had shouted obscenities and had pulled down red, white and blue bunting hanging near Disneyland's make believe City Hall. The police said 18 youths were arrested, mostly on charges of disturbing the peace.*²³⁵

– "Disneyland Closed By Yippies' Threat,"
The New York Times, August 7, 1970

On August 6, 1970, a group of "Yippies" organized to take over Disneyland on the 25th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, managing to close the amusement park for the second time ever since its founding (the other occasion following the presidential assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963).²³⁶ Short for members of the Youth International Party, the Yippies were an extension of the antiwar movement known for their use of absurdist political spectacle as a form of dissent—once performing an exorcism on a makeshift altar, for example, in front of the Pentagon to "cast out the evil" they felt resided within it.²³⁷ Perhaps most famous for the trial of two of its more prominent members, Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, in the "Chicago Seven" case following the countercultural protests organized during the 1968 Democratic National Convention, the Yippies continued to organize demonstrations against the American regime during the Vietnam War, attempting to destabilize the state at the intersections of its investment in imperialism, capitalism, racism, policing, and gender and sexual oppression at a time when the American story about itself was visibly buckling under the weight of its own contradictions and hypocrisies during its campaign in Southeast Asia.

Just five months before on February 25, 1970, a crowd of student protestors stormed a Bank of America building and set it on fire in Isla Vista, a community adjacent to UC Santa Barbara. Following a speech delivered earlier in the afternoon by William Kunstler—dubbed by the *Times* as "the country's most controversial and, perhaps...best-known lawyer" for defending members of the Chicago Seven, the Black Panther Party, the Weather Underground, participants in the Attica Prison Uprising, the American Indian Movement, the Revolutionary Communist Party, and other individuals and organizations that were associated with the Countercultural Left—Kunstler had said in his address, "I have never thought that breaking windows and sporadic violence is a good tactic. But on the other hand, I cannot bring myself to become bitter and condemn young people who engage in it."^{238,239} Following the incident, Ronald Reagan—then in his role as Governor of California—ordered the U.S. National Guard, the Los Angeles County SWAT team, and nearby police officers and sheriff's deputies to descend on Isla Vista to quell the unrest and impose order.²⁴⁰

For the 50th year anniversary of the Bank of America incident, Cyrus Godfrey, a UCSB radio station manager who was present in 1970 for that day, told a local news outlet, "People were afraid. You could see the

²³⁵ Associated Press. "Disneyland Closed by Yippies' Threat." *The New York Times*, August 7, 1970, p. 25.

²³⁶ Lewinnek, Elaine, Gustavo Arellano, and Thuy Vo Dang. *A People's Guide to Orange County*. University of California Press, 2022.

²³⁷ Shawyer, Susanne Elizabeth. *Radical Street Theatre and the Yippie Legacy: A Performance History of the Youth International Party, 1967–1968*. Dissertation. The University of Texas at Austin, 2008.

²³⁸ Navasky, Victor S. "Right On! With Lawyer William Kunstler." *The New York Times*, April 19, 1970, p. 217.

²³⁹ Guilhem, Matt. "UCSB Students Remember 50th Anniversary of Isla Vista's Bank of America Burning." KCRW Features. Podcast. <https://www.kcrw.com/news/shows/kcrw-features/isla-vista-burning-50>. Accessed 21 July 2022.

²⁴⁰ Olson, Gayle Clark. "Campus Cop Talk: The Oral Historian, The Law Enforcement Officer, and the "War in Isla Vista"." *The Oral History Review* 10.1 (1982): 1–31.

police shooting off tear gas. I saw them beating up students. They probably thought they were chasing somebody, but they would just break down the door to an apartment building where students lived and go into the apartment and just start beating up people that were there. It was extremely tense.” It was not until the death of 22-year-old student Kevin Moran on April 18th that acute tensions in the area subsided. After the slaying, police first claimed that the bullet that hit Moran originated from a sniper in the crowd, though a ballistics test later determined that it came from a police officer’s rifle. Regardless of that later determination, the incident was deemed an accident and the officer was eventually exonerated.

Channeling energy from these actions taken in Isla Vista against Bank of America as “the establishment” incarnate and responding to the police crackdown on campus protests, Yippie organizers planned that year’s National Yippie Day protest in Disneyland so that it would eventually convene in front of the Bank of America branch located on the amusement park’s Main Street. As the *Pomona Progress Bulletin* reported, “During the day the group of dissidents marched down Main Street and into Frontierland singing the Mickey Mouse Club song and obscene chants. The group took over Tom Sawyer Island and eventually ran off all the tourists. They displayed the Viet Cong flag from the fort on the island and, chanting ‘legalize marijuana,’ unveiled a flag embellished with a dark green marijuana leaf.”²⁴¹

Implementing profane illumination as praxis, the Yippies had scheduled a series of satirical “performances” in a bid to recast the sacred values held there—of the American Dream and, more broadly, the American story of itself, by itself—as a profoundly violent moral superstructure of fantastical proportions. The Blank Panther Hot Breakfast scheduled at Aunt Jemima’s Pancake House, for instance, was chosen to desecrate the narrative produced by the restaurant. Summed up in the breakfast stop’s own disposable paper flyers given to every diner, the Disneyfied narrative begins:

THE STORY OF AUNT JEMIMA..Yesterday...Today...

Aunt Jemima’s fame began in the days ‘before the war’ when she was cook for Colonel Higbee, whose Louisiana plantation was a mecca for visitors. Often, entire families, ‘happened in.’ Aunt Jemima served them memorable meals and her pancakes were famous as the ‘specialty of the house.’...Years later, the representative of a Northern flour mill heard the story from a general while traveling down the river on the ‘Robert E. Lee.’ At Higbee’s Landing the two men went ashore to try to persuade Aunt Jemima to share her recipe with other homemakers. Aunt Jemima was at first reluctant to reveal her ‘secret,’ but the opportunity to make so many families happy with the ease and satisfaction of serving her mouth-watering pancakes was irresistible and Aunt Jemima left her cabin to begin travels which have taken her up and down America...

....and Now...AUNT JEMIMA AT DISNEYLAND!

When she’s not lending a hand with Pancake Days, Aunt Jemima is “at home” to you and all your friends at Aunt Jemima’s Kitchen in Disneyland. Here in a gracious Old South setting, in sight of the “Mark Twain” steamboat landing, Aunt Jemima herself will welcome you warmly, serve you her famous pancakes, and send you happily on your way with her cheerful, “You all come back!”²⁴²

As Maurice Manring demonstrates, despite Disneyland hiring an actress to play Aunt Jemima at the

²⁴¹ “Disneyland Eyes Hair of Patrons.” *Pomona Progress Bulletin*. August 7, 1970, p. 1.

²⁴² Gale, Neil. “The Story about Aunt Jemima and the Illinois Aunt Jemima’s Kitchen Restaurants.” *Digital Research Library of Illinois History Journal*. <https://drloihjournal.blogspot.com/2021/01/illinois-aunt-jemimas-kitchen-restaurants.html>. January 1, 2021.

park, “America’s pancake queen” is actually a fictional character, developed by advertisers in the early 20th century to market a new self-rising, premixed pancake flour.²⁴³ Originating from business partners Chris Rutt and Charles Underwood, Manring instead attributes the rise of Aunt Jemima to the two men viewing a performance of the contemporary minstrel song, “Old Aunt Jemima,” that depicted a hospitable Mammy figure devoted to caring for her white family on a Southern plantation. Thus, the Black Panther Hot Breakfast organized by Yippies in 1970 explicitly challenged such depictions of consensual labor on the part of enslaved Black Americans (and enslaved Black women specifically) as well as critiqued how capitalist interests were continuing to profit off these sanitized depictions of Dixie.

However, because of the extensive campaign run in advance to promote the event in underground newspapers, the Yippies’ descent on Disneyland was known and anticipated by the park. “Those underground idiot sheets advertised it, but they said it would be 30,000 Yippies,” a spokesperson for the Anaheim police department had said after the park closure. Disneyland called on approximately 100 to 150 Anaheim and Fullerton police officers to secure the park and control the 200 to 300 protesters who arrived for the day of action. According to David Sacks, who was the organizer along with Michael Dale behind the “Yippie Invasion”:

The people who had gotten off the first two rafts for Tom Sawyer Island (that’s about what it was, two raftloads of people) decided to march down Main Street in Disneyland, singing various odes to sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll until they got to City Hall, where they have the American flag on a flagpost. And there was an empty flagpost. Someone pulled out a so-called Yippie flag, red and black with a green marijuana leaf, and started to raise it on the flagpole. An Orange County redneck came storming up to them and said “How dare you raise that flag next to the American flag!” And someone else went to the other flagpole as this guy was trying to rip down the Yippie flag, and said “If you rip down our flag we’ll rip down your flag.” He started to try to untie the American flag to bring it down. At which point fisticuffs broke out and Orange County’s finest appeared out from behind all the buildings of Disneyland...Police in brand new yellow riot gear—this was the first chance that Orange County had had to test out their new riot gear—*these guys looked like something out of a comic book* [emphasis added]. It looked hi-tech before that was even a word. All of a sudden, the whole circle promenade was circled with these police. I come out and I see all these police in riot gear, and I knew something had happened.²⁴⁴

An announcement was quickly made over the intercom for visitors to clear the park, and Disneyland closed for the second time in its history before the scheduled hour. Recalling the events that took place afterwards, a guest said, “I remember staying at the Disneyland Hotel, and the stores in the hotel getting looted. I remember the helicopter flying low over the hotel grounds with a searchlight, and police and hotel security chasing people. I remember the riot police marching down the street in riot gear and riot formation.”²⁴⁵

Thus, as police in full riot gear emerged from behind the placid facade of Disneyland’s Main Street to swarm the area and make arrests in front of “City Hall,” the Yippie affair marked when reality came to roost in

²⁴³ Manring, Maurice M. “Aunt Jemima Explained: The Old South, The Absent Mistress, and the Slave in a Box.” *Southern Cultures* 2.1 (1995): 19–44.

²⁴⁴ Yippie Invasion. Daveland. Blog. <https://www.davelandweb.com/yippies/>. Accessed 21 July 2022.

²⁴⁵ Tremaine, Julie. “We’re Going to Liberate Minnie Mouse’: The Day Yippies Invaded Disneyland, and Shut Down the Park.” *SF Gate*. <https://www.sfgate.com/disneyland/article/We-re-going-to-liberate-Minnie-Mouse-The-day-15872203.php>. January 20, 2021. Accessed July 21, 2022.

Disneyland, marking the beginning of the seventies by demanding a profane illumination of the false line that supposedly divides “America in miniature and comic-strip form” from, simply, America—and Orange County—itsself.

...

When Orange County seceded from Los Angeles in the late 19th century, its proposed name was actually prophetic. In the year 1872 when the title was originally suggested, the region would still be decades away from developing into a major citrus economy. Because Southern California was being promoted at the time as a semitropical paradise, the name was chosen as a marketing ploy in the hopes of enticing settlers to come for the good weather and fertile soil—a fitting “beginning” for a county that has often led with its imagination first.²⁴⁶

For two reasons, this imaginary quality makes Orange County a particularly illustrative and significant site to study the always-present fantastical settler geographies in which we all continue to live. In the first sense, as a “dream factory,” the preceding sections have discussed how Orange County has played a central role in the production of America’s mythologies about itself centered on the nation’s entitlements to settle and claim the land, its civilizational exceptionalism, its moral goodness, and its meritocratic promises. In the second sense, as Kling, Olin, and Poster (4) characterize it, Orange County can also be understood as an “anticipatory region,” a place from which one can extrapolate nationwide trajectories that might follow in its path.²⁴⁷ As Robert Fishman (14; 159–161) affirms, the region has a kind of “exemplary status,” “as much the ‘shock city’ of the late twentieth century as Chicago was for the early twentieth century.”²⁴⁸ As a white flight suburb of the military industrial complex’s imagining, this makes sense, since we might expect after the era of suburbanization that the trends of American politics might center on a “shock suburb” so to speak, rather than a shock city as it did at the beginning of the last century.

Over the course of its postwar development, the political, economic, and cultural transformations that have occurred in Orange County have often preceded analogous transformations in other parts of the country. In its rapid transition to an information economy over just a few decades, the economic developments that have transformed Orange County into a global suburb are also taking place in at least twenty other large and decentralized counties in the United States.²⁴⁹ Moreover, the 1970s taxpayers revolt that dramatically changed California’s political trajectory resulted in substantial cuts to public services and government assistance that likewise also anticipated the turn towards the next decades’ tax cuts and welfare reforms for the nation at large. In the 1990s, representatives from Merrill Lynch worked with lawmakers in Orange County to pass bills in the state legislature designed to expand the county’s authority to invest local tax funds in complex financial instruments, ultimately resulting in Orange County filing for the largest municipal bankruptcy in history up to that point in 1994 due to its high-risk investment strategy.²⁵⁰ Placing part of the blame on supervisors having little understanding of securities markets, the bankruptcy augured a future that would prove to be vulnerable to

²⁴⁶ Arellano, Gustavo. *Orange County: A Personal History*. Simon and Schuster, 2008.

²⁴⁷ Kling, Rob, Spencer C. Olin, and Mark Poster. *Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County since World War II*. University of California Press, 1995.

²⁴⁸ Fishman, Robert. *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*. Basic Books, 2008.

²⁴⁹ Gottdiener, M., and George Kephart. “The Multinucleated Metropolitan Region: A Comparative Analysis.” *Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County since World War II* (1995): 31.

²⁵⁰ Baldassare, Mark. *When Government Fails: The Orange County Bankruptcy*. University of California Press, 1998.

financial predation and deregulation. Capitalizing on the bankruptcy, current Irvine Company chairman and owner, Donald Bren, used this period of financial vulnerability to consolidate the company's holdings under private ownership, cementing him as the wealthiest real estate developer in America with an estimated net worth of \$15.3 billion dollars and pointing to the deepening Age of Inequality that has emerged since the Great Recession.^{251,252,253} These events, alongside others, thus demonstrate how Orange County, in many ways, has always been a "window into the future" as much as it functions as a door to the nation's haunted past, portending the growing racialized colonization of the human lifeworld by market forces and the penetration of relentless rationalization and normalization into the most intimate corners of our private lives.

As a site where historical struggles between populist conservatives, urban elites, and racially minoritized communities have demonstrated these enduring dialectical tensions within racial capitalism, Orange County's transformations over the American War Century consequently illustrate how the national story could only sustain itself off the growth of a voracious war machine. Reliant on both the symbolic and material registers of this war machine to maintain its own legitimacy, the nation state continued to create and earmark the necessary budgetary funds required to keep the entire show going for as long as possible, hoping the moral capital from its "good war" during WWII would continue to justify its other wars—formal, proxy, or otherwise—in the Asia Pacific, Latin America, and the Persian Gulf. However, while mid-century images of a future-destined America had successfully managed to keep American mythology alive well into the Cold War, the Vietnam War and a series of other compromising mass-mediated events began to undermine the nation's claim that it was capable of providing the best model to secure "affluence, democracy, and world peace" for all. So as Orange County began to falter in its mid-century optimism, its crisis spoke to a national dilemma of once-unlimited expansion meeting its final frontier, reflecting Joan Didion's diagnosis that "California is a place in which a boom mentality and a sense of Chekhovian loss meet in uneasy suspension; in which the mind is troubled by some buried but ineradicable suspicion that things had better work here, because here, beneath that immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent."²⁵⁴

So as the final section of this chapter focused on how the pivotal decade created massive dislocations in status and class power for working class whites, the stage was set for Vietnamese refugee subjectification to become the center of the struggle as they arrived right in the thick of the 1970s as potential public charges. As the next chapter subsequently argues, these contests occurred through negotiations over the nation's collective memory towards the Vietnam War, which in turn mapped "good" and "bad" categories of legal distinction onto particular refugee bodies that disposed of "bad refugees" during the state's turn towards punishment in the era of mass incarceration. Offering a racial capitalist account that corresponds to Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (2007) political economic argument in *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, it forwards that bad refugees, in being marked as surplus racial labor unnecessary to and inconvenient for state reproduction during this time, became targeted for removal through criminalization,

²⁵¹ "The Incredible Rise of Billionaire Donald Bren, The Richest Real Estate Developer in America." *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.in/finance/the-incredible-rise-of-billionaire-donald-bren-the-richest-real-estate-developer-in-america/slide-list/51217890.cms#slideid=51217903>. July 26, 2021. Accessed July 21, 2022.

²⁵² Vrana, Deborah. "Irvine Co. Chairman Bren Buys All Stock Held by Minority Shareholders." *The Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1996-07-19-fi-25634-story.html>. July 19, 1996. Accessed July 21, 2022.

²⁵³ Lansner, Jonathan. "Irvine Co. Owner Bren Remains Wealthiest US Property Owner." *The Orange County Register*. <https://www.ocregister.com/2021/04/11/why-13-billion-made-by-20-real-estate-tycoons-looks-small/>. April 12, 2021. Accessed July 21, 2022.

²⁵⁴ Didion, Joan. "Notes from a Native Daughter." *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*. (1968).

incarceration, and if allowable, deportation.²⁵⁵ As symbolically and materially useful to the state, good refugees, on the other hand, performed crucial labor to recuperate the state's moral authority and affirm its shift towards neoliberalism, and so were relatively accommodated, though always within a constantly negotiated, uneasy embrace.

Therefore, how refugees came to be categorized into "good" and "bad" categories is—the remainder of this book argues—significant to understanding how imperial violence manufactured by the state managed to obfuscate itself and hide in the form of administrative violence over time to reflect the nation's laundered tale of its unwavering innocence and maintain its continued investment in a settler capitalist order of things. Certifying the licenses of capital and the state to make moral claims "off the face" of racial capitalism, these classificatory acts and struggles worked to sustain narratives that fundamentally masked not only America's imperial war in Southeast Asia but also—in tandem with other imaginistic material—"the profound reality" of First Contact that continues to authorize ongoing settler state and imperial violence that continues to this day.

In considering this moment of encounter between a region that had spent the better part of its existence claiming to represent an idyllic place of escape for propertied white interests and Vietnamese refugees dislocated by yet another of America's imperial wars of ambition, I therefore conduct my analysis *facing* the settler state's racial capitalist order upon which these contests have taken place, viewing with suspicion those steadfast American values sanctified by the American Dream and Manifest Destiny that so often like to view naked capital as more sacred than flesh and bone. Critically examining "from below" the top-down evaluations of badness authorized by those values and mythologies, my work in this project asks, finally, what might unmasking those images reveal about this land and the nation built on top of it? And in posing that question, the analysis steels itself to meet Beaudrillard's (5; 11) forewarning that "it is dangerous to unmask images, since they dissimulate the fact that there is nothing behind them"—"nothing more than a network of endless, unreal circulation: a town of fabulous proportions, but without space or dimensions...nothing more than an immense script and a perpetual motion picture." And, once the wizard is finally (really, again) revealed from behind the curtain to illuminate a mechanical graveyard of futures promised that never came to be and futures foreclosed from ever emerging, it turns back to Gordon's chorus of ghosts to then ask:

So, what is to be done?

²⁵⁵ Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. University of California Press, 2007. p. 30–86.

CHAPTER 2

THIS LAND IS MY LAND: CONTESTED REFUGEE CITIZENSHIPS IN THE GLOBAL SUBURB AND THE POSSESSIVE INVESTMENT IN WHITENESS

Warm spring air swept through the Magic Kingdom and down Katella Avenue to Satellite Shopland, where Annie May Walker scrounged amid the trash bins for food and aluminum cans. Afternoon sunlight skipped across the brown paint-peeled eaves of the [Sir] Rudimar Motel, over the silent doors of Mugsy Malone's, a failed restaurant. The weathered neon musketeer towering over his namesake motel brightened in the light, despite the shadow of huge hotels and the wood-frame skeletons of new competitors. Utility lines hung from everywhere like spaghetti in the sky, webbed in by a kaleidoscope of signs hawking food, liquor, religion and rooms. "Breakfast special: 99¢" blared the marquee outside Chao's restaurant, a flashy hybrid of Las Vegas-Chinese motif. "Lowest rates in town," echoes the signs for motels shouldering each other for attention.

Chalk up another day of fun for visitors in Anaheim's tourist district—and for Walker, another day of survival. She slipped her hand into a back-alley trash bin, but found nothing worth saving and moved to the next. Hunched over a grocery cart filled with plastic bags, she wore a polyester blouse, men's trousers and floppy sneakers. Her head was wrapped in a pink rag knotted about the forehead. "It's hell to be out here," she growled. "This ain't no heaven for nobody."

Once the crown jewel of Orange County, the commercial recreation district around Disneyland is deteriorating. An ambitious redevelopment proposal failed last year, and city leaders are now stymied over the area's future.²⁵⁶

– "Outside the Kingdom: Urban Decay Becomes the Theme in Disneyland Area,"
The Orange County Register, May 15, 1988

In the early summer of 1988, the region's primary newspaper, *The Orange County Register*, published a "close up" Sunday report on the commercial corridor adjacent to Disneyland on Katella Avenue. With subsections on "Anaheim Vice" and "Decay," the special feature both recalled, on the one hand, Anaheim's formerly masked history during the 1920s as a vice-ridden, bootlegging town, and, on the other, revealed how financializing capital on the move had left a material trail of "paint-peeled eaves," "failed" restaurants, and struggling motels behind. In their wake remained an increasingly dislocated white suburban class, whose value as tied to privatization and ownership of homes on the land walked in anxious lockstep with the community value of Anaheim itself as a "good neighborhood."

²⁵⁶ Serrano, Barbara A. "Outside the Kingdom: Urban Decay Becomes the Theme in Disneyland Area." *The Orange County Register*. May 15, 1988. p. 165.

To understand the character of how that dislocated white suburban class apprehended this threat to their home values and feeling of security, some clues lie in how the opening excerpt from the report narrates this story of area decline. First, the article—framing the anthropomorphized Sir Rudimar Motel as “brightened in the light” “despite the shadow of huge hotels and the wood-frame skeletons of new competitors” looming overhead—casts as hero the struggling little guy, noble in the face of large-scale development—a David and Goliath story—the common man against a colossal force. Racializing this competition, however, the next section colors the sentiment of masculinized populist struggle by alluding to why a “failed restaurant” like Mugsy Malone’s might have been outcompeted and shuttered. Still open, it is implied, is the “Las Vegas-Chinese” style Chao’s restaurant, a place where, the article notes, one could purchase a breakfast meal for just 99 cents.

The placement of blame is subtle but significant. As globalizing capital came to transform the local landscapes and employment opportunities for the working class at home, the meaning making that surrounded how to make sense of its effects came to focus not on the neoliberal economic philosophy offered by the Reagan administration that allowed for capital to flow and consolidate at the top more readily but rather on the orientalized specter of economic and geopolitical competition from Japan and China as they ascended the global ladder and produced former domestic goods for lower prices.^{257,258} In turn, that which became racialized as “Oriental” by dislocated suburban whites in the area like Chao’s restaurant really stood in for those enemy forces that locals saw as the root cause of their displacement—the effect of liberal Democratic policy opening borders and public coffers at the expense of “real” Americans, not Republican-led fiscal and trade policy.

Consequently, this chapter focuses on the period during which the Keynesian welfare state became hollowed out to make way for neoliberal reforms that converged with the state’s turn to prison building to solve its legitimacy crisis following the pivotal decade. First examining the historical legacy of white supremacy in the region and its relationship to the suburban tax revolt of the late 1970s and early 80s, the discussion opens by situating the context of refugee receipt within Orange County’s enduring legacy as a bulwark for defending the possessive investment of whiteness. Framing the Vietnamese influx as occurring within the economic ruptures of this period, the section after therefore relies on oral histories largely collected by Elizabeth Orr with three generations of suburban white residents who resided in the county during the 20th century to show how the arrival of Vietnamese refugees in the region’s most economically depressed areas triggered a peculiarly multicultural variety of white backlash.²⁵⁹

Then, the discussion turns to analyzing two major cases that functioned as hypervisible examples of refugee deviance in Orange County as the emblematic site where refugee subjectivities were discursively negotiated and bound during the early period of refugee resettlement. The first example will discuss a case that began in 1980 involving four refugee teenagers who were convicted of raping six young girls and women, demonstrating how law and culture worked constitutively to make early distinctions between good refugees as grateful, law-abiding, welfare independent subjects and bad refugees as ungrateful, sexually deviant lawbreakers undeserving of state generosity. The second example will discuss a case involving a restaurant attack that occurred in Garden Grove in 1981 that *The Orange County Register* characterized as the area’s first “gangland shooting.” Following how police and local media constructed a man they called “Mr. Tai” into the consummate representative of the bad refugee as the accused leader of California’s largest Southeast Asian gang, the analysis

²⁵⁷ McKeivitt, Andrew C. *Consuming Japan: Popular Culture and the Globalizing of 1980s America*. University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

²⁵⁸ Wong, Kent. “Blaming It All on China.” *New Labor Forum*. Vol. 13, No. 3. Sage Publications, 2004.

²⁵⁹ Orr, Elisabeth Esther. *Living along the Fault Line: Community, Suburbia, and Multiethnicity in Garden Grove and Westminster, California, 1900–1995*. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1999.

of the second case focuses on how symbolic distinctions between good and bad refugees solidified through Tai as a figure to imagine the bad refugee as embodied in the form of the Indochinese gang member.

More generally placing these cases within the period of “liberal multiculturalism,” the sweep of this chapter’s argument tracks how refugee subjectification occurred as the state turned to selective incorporation to manage minoritized difference in the post–civil rights era. No longer able to enact the necessary subjugations required for racial capitalism to function on the basis of mere assertions of biological superiority and legitimate exclusion alone, the period of liberal multiculturalism, as Jodi Melamed has argued, centered on the racially “diverse” and “included” subject to extend relative protections in a piecemeal fashion to useful racial others capable of affirming both the state’s authority and capitalism’s right to possess and profit.²⁶⁰ As a result, in placing good and bad refugee subjects as constituted within liberal multiculturalism’s throes while neoliberal reforms worked to increasingly supplant Keynesian protections, the discussion broadly demonstrates how bad refugees emerged as racial surplus during that period of welfare state retrenchment, where they became transformed into refugee “gang members” to authorize and expedite their disposal as the state increasingly turned to its carceral capacities for legitimation following the 1970s. Meanwhile, discursively formed through narratives of idealized good refugee business owners willing to cooperate with police to take down gang members, the good refugee emerged as a properly comported multicultural subject able to attest to the US state’s beneficence, legitimacy, and civilizational superiority by assimilating into a juridical personhood cooperative with the law and its enforcement officials.

SUBURBAN POPULISM AND THE POSSESSIVE INVESTMENT IN WHITENESS

*They said, the first time you’re caught trading in a store that’s not a Klansman’s store,
you’d be warned. The second time you’d be fined, and the third time, God Help
You!...They said, You don’t need to be afraid, we’ll know where you’ll be shopping.*²⁶¹

Although chapters of the KKK experienced a revival that corresponded to growing nativist sentiment in the 1920s throughout the country, the Anaheim klavern in North Orange County was one of the largest and most politically influential in the nation, embedded within a chain of West Coast organized Klan activity that—while still relying on vigilantism and racial terrorism to some degree—more regularly and conspicuously articulated its agenda through formal civic participation and economic competition. Referring to the opening quotation, a Klansman recalled a meeting in which Anaheim’s local chapter of the KKK unveiled its ambitious plan to secure greater municipal influence in the town through an organized boycott. “I attended the meeting and they talked about...the plan of all sticking together. A Klansman was supposed to trade with nobody but someone who was in the Klan, and you could tell who was a member of the Klan because they had the American flag hung way back in a certain place. And if you didn’t see that flag in the store, you weren’t supposed to trade there,” the attendee recalled. Counter to popular representations of Klan members as poor, ignorant whites whose acts of vigilantism were prompted by moments of irrational racial animus, then, the boycott was actually indicative of a broader organized strategy within the Anaheim klavern that understood the exercise of white power in early Orange County as not just tied to vigilantism, but more fundamentally, racialized, economic control.²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Melamed, Jodi. *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

²⁶¹ Cocoltchos, Christopher Nickolas. *The Invisible Government And The Viable Community: The Ku Klux Klan In Orange County, California During The 1920's*. University of California, Los Angeles, 1979. p. 332.

²⁶² *Ibid*, 152–156.

Anaheim was uniquely located during the early twentieth century as a place where the Klan could emerge. Due in part to the town's origin as a wine production colony and subsequent reputation as a vice-ridden area permissive of bootleggers and saloons during Prohibition, its embeddedness within an otherwise dry region centered it as the stage upon which moral battles over the county's soul were most visibly waged. Further, the pervasive racial tensions of that period over land ownership directed against both Japanese and Mexican community members found fertile ground in Anaheim, whose agricultural base of small landowners alongside a ballooning immigrant population combined to foster an increasingly conservative class of reactionary non-elite whites. Dissimilar from the elite rancho owners and wealthy industrialists that controlled the majority of Orange County's land and raw materials, white migrants who came later during the turn of the century were blue collar workers or generally people of more modest means, whose relatively small homes often accounted for the bulk of their wealth, and over which they had grown quite possessive.²⁶³

After the rancho period, towns like Anaheim predominantly grew from a class of midwestern settlers who—motivated by Progressive ideals and fleeing the influx of Black migrants arriving from the Great Migration—imagined the rural regions south of Los Angeles as the contemporary edge of the American frontier—a place to escape the encroachments of both elite governance and racialized “urban vice.” As a result, the many young suburbs of Southern California became a beacon of hope for white isolationists hoping to distance themselves from the march of an unchecked modernity that they met with anxious trepidation, and many journeyed by rail to leave their diversifying communities in the east with hopes of escaping to more homogeneous towns in the frontier west.²⁶⁴

Midwestern teetotalers who settled in and around Anaheim therefore found themselves in the midst of a key arena that animated a racial and moral battle waged throughout the nation between wealthy elites and non-elite whites who offered competing visions for development. Wealthy elites largely controlled local government and historically made decisions in favor of their own economic interests. Because towns sometimes “failed” due to unbalanced or insufficient growth conditions that caused residents to abandon settlements entirely, the success of Orange County's elite became wrapped up in the success of the county as a whole as a desirable place to live—the greater demand for settlement, the higher the land's valuation. These incentives frequently translated into elite-driven policy boosterism that prioritized civic beautification campaigns, oftentimes with little thought to other matters in the county affecting non-elite whites like funding for public services or moral prohibitions against vice and intemperance.

Coming on the heels of a controversial and expensive initiative to build a new Anaheim City Hall that they hoped would enshrine the town's reputation as a place of modernist progress, aggressive boosterism subsequently lit a white populist tinderbox in the early 1920s, setting the city's entrenched German Catholic elite class on a path to face a slate of undercover evangelical Klan candidates in the next citywide election. Criticizing elites' decision to use government funds on a project they found wasteful and out of touch with community priorities, one observer wrote, “Voters are smarting under the steadily mounting taxes, alleged extravagance in public improvements, that the administration is far from being responsive to the wishes of the people is a very general attitude.”²⁶⁵ Consequently seeing “wet” Anaheim as the result of highbrow elites' disregard for everyday Americans' concerns for maintaining the moral character of their town, a coalition of white evangelicals,

²⁶³ Ibid, 226–321.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 122.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 344.

parents, teachers, and oil workers came together to contest elite control over the fate of the county, offering a white populist vision for municipal growth that sought to bring Christian morality back into city politics.

By the fall of 1922, the Klan became entrenched in Anaheim through the growth of the First Christian Church headed by pastor Leon L. Myers, affiliated with the major Protestant evangelical denomination the Disciples of Christ that broadly construed fundamentalist moral values as central to the national character. In a pastor's report written at the height of the Klan's power in Anaheim, Myers pronounced, "For thirty years, as all the older citizens of Anaheim know, Anaheim's record was a record of wild parties, saloons, booze and crime. A ring of politicians ruled Anaheim. These leading citizens were of the lowest type. They were Rome controlled and liquor souzed."²⁶⁶ Thus, rising to power in the midst of opposition to secular vice and elite capture, Klan ideology rapidly spread in response to growing perceptions of municipal government becoming a tyranny of the elite that was threatening to transform the edge of the American frontier into an urbanized zone more reminiscent of the eastern and midwestern cities working class whites had originally hoped to flee.

Therefore, in fusing evangelical Christianity with Progressive ideals and nativist sentiment, the Anaheim Klan managed to use its claim to moral supremacy to band together a diverse coalition of reactionary whites, counting in its membership an estimated 1200 people at the height of its power that helped them win, albeit temporarily, control of city government in 1924 when a slate of Klan-affiliated candidates won four city council seats in that year's election. After they took office, the four city councilmembers moved to wholesale replace all non-Klan civil servants with Klan supporters, installing a fleet of KKK foot soldiers throughout Anaheim's governing institutions. For a short period in the 1920s, then, the new city councilmembers managed to briefly remake Anaheim into "Klanaheim"—the ideal Klan city—thereby establishing the region as the instructive, if short-lived, site where organized white power managed to capture local government for the temporary making of a White Christian utopia.²⁶⁷

Reacting to their takeover of city politics with a swift organized response, wealthy elites rallied to reclaim the council seats in the spring of 1925, publishing in a local paper information for the recall election in which all four Klan members would be replaced with representatives who harbored pro-boosterism views. "We, the business and professional men of Anaheim, desiring to restore business to its normal conditions; to engender confidence in our citizenship; to abolish klan control in our city, respectfully request the voters of Anaheim to vote YES on the recall of E.H. Metcalf, Emory E. Knipe, Dean W. Hassen, A. A. Slaback" the ad begins, undersigned by dozens of established business owners.²⁶⁸ As a result, by the summer of 1925—just one year after the Klan managed to sweep the city election and install its "Invisible Empire" outpost in the west—business elites succeeded in formally removing Klan members from their takeover of municipal government.

Assured in their ability to recapture political control, the "founding families" of Anaheim subsequently launched a marketing campaign to launder "Klanaheim's" tainted reputation as—to their horror—not a world-class paragon of modernist growth but now instead an unstable region susceptible to white populism and government takeover. For example, interests from the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad dedicated the entire July 1926 editorial section in their lifestyle magazine, *The Arrowhead*, to Anaheim, proclaiming that "No other

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 434.

²⁶⁷ Melching, Richard. "The Activities Of The Ku Klux Klan In Anaheim, California 1923-1925." *Southern California Quarterly* 56.2 (1974): 175-196.

²⁶⁸ The Film Archives. (2020, April 15). *Ku Klux Klan in Anaheim* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ICDg7Qh8KQ>. City of Anaheim Heritage Center.

City in the State of California has a wider range of business opportunities, or a greater abundance of the things which make for happiness, contentment, and prosperity, than has the City of Anaheim.”²⁶⁹ Branding it as a growing hub of opportunity and investment, the editorial content provided a history of Anaheim’s commercial, agriculture, and manufacturing industries, emphasizing the stability of the city’s financial institutions and deal making business climate as well as more generally signaling Anaheim’s continued progress from a dirt-road town to a first-rate city paved with “miles of concrete boulevard.” Anaheim’s business elites therefore managed to use an early version of transmedia dissipation themselves, effectively cleansing the more racially disreputable moments of the city’s history by reducing its image to that of its most marketable qualities—citrus, sunshine, the promise of happiness, and miles of paved roads— hence refocusing public attention to Anaheim as an affectively comforting space devoid of any inconvenient histories.

As a result, once the Anaheim klavern’s organized efforts were exposed and stamped out, the battle between modernizing elites and fundamentalist populists over the region’s civic imagination became ostensibly settled for the time being. Gone was “Klanaheim” and back again was the elite vision for Orange County’s development, which attempted to attract wealthy migrants of the “right sort” who could realize their dream of genteel escapism without the intrusion of reactionary whites who were part of an increasingly dislocated and economically precarious lower-middle class. “Growth...without a comeback,” as one businessman said.²⁷⁰

Yet despite experiencing a visible loss to the region’s elite interests in 1925, the influence of the Anaheim klavern remains embedded with Orange County’s local politics. Instead of becoming superseded by the rise of secularism, fundamentalism emerged from the tensions within modernity and continues to inform the area’s notable reputation for suburban conservatism.²⁷¹ In contrast to elites’ modernist vision for the county’s ever-progressing present and future, Klan politics appealed to populist desires for a mythical utopian past in which moral cohesion and protected individualism existed hand-in-hand. So while 1920s Orange County may have appeared quite different from the mid-century suburbs that were built on top of its pre-war, rural farming communities, understanding the region’s Klan legacy critically fractures the ahistorical veneer of white innocence in the second half of the twentieth century by tethering it to a longer genealogy of regional white supremacy, where postwar suburbia emerged as the spatial form that could re-enliven deeply racialized fantasies of a homogenous white community capable of preserving itself through civic participation.

In sum, as America increasingly settled the West, early investors like James Irvine and Anaheim’s founding families were able to consolidate considerable financial and political control over the region by taking advantage of the massive land tracts up for sale due to rancho dissolution, producing an early context of almost total elite capture of California’s land resources and a ripe setting for burgeoning populist backlash that played out both *within* suburbs and *between* suburbs and urban centers. The friction between the Anaheim Klavern and local business elites in the 1920s was therefore indicative of a broader struggle over the economic fate of the region that took place over the twentieth century, one that boiled down to the home (its ownership, its valuation, its security in a sea of social uncertainty) as the animating unit of struggle within a wider field of racial value tied to property. Reliant on the pastoral ideal to frame their actions, Klan members drew from a deep symbolic well in American ideology to present their concerns as one between the “the people” and the “the

²⁶⁹ Sowers, Phyllis Anne. “*Klanaheim*”: *Suburbia, Civic Identity, and the Second Ku Klux Klan*. Dissertation. California State University, Long Beach, 2012. p. 69–70.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 71.

²⁷¹ St. John, Paige and Hannah Fry. “From the KKK to Skinheads, A Century of Fighting Hate in Orange County.” *The Los Angeles Times*. March 21, 2021. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-03-21/orange-county-extremism-history-kkk-cold-war-skinheads>. Accessed July 21, 2022.

urban elite,” downplaying their racial animus while nonetheless forwarding a distinctly homogeneous vision for a White Christian utopia.²⁷²

As the following discussion now turns to another period in which the suburbs rose up to contest liberal urban centers of “elite power,” it is written with this account of Orange County’s Klan legacy in mind, producing a recombinant narrative that loops these two periods’ echoing histories to reveal Orange County’s constitutive and enduring possessive investment in whiteness.

...

Turning now to the period right after Vietnamese refugees first arrived *en masse* to the United States in 1975, this section traces another populist suburban revolt that centered on suburbia’s possessive investment in white homeownership, what historians often refer to as the “taxpayers revolt.”

The taxpayers revolt typically refers to a set of three fiscal–limitation measures that appeared on California’s state ballot from 1978 through 1980 forwarded by Howard Jarvis, an apartment landlord with political ambitions, and Paul Gann, a retired car and real estate salesman. As rapidly rising property taxes went unaddressed, homeowners lost faith in elected officials to protect their property interests, taking to the polls to initiate three measures in a spree of “ballot box government financing.” Fears of rising immigration drove tax revolt supporters to frame the issue in welfarist terms: the government was unfairly giving away their hard earned, suburban tax payer dollars and to an undeserving, racialized population living in urban centers—as siphoning money away from the white suburbs to redistribute funds unfairly to the racial core from which they had already, for a time, successfully fled.²⁷³

The first and most famous, Proposition 13, passed with two–thirds support in 1978 and primarily intervened to limit the assessed tax burden on homeowners to just one percent of the property’s 1978 market value. Prop 13 also restricted tax increases to just two percent every year thereafter based on whatever the assessed home value was in 1978. Its passage, which radically altered the financing structure of local government to the great expense of funding for public services, appeared to afterwards set off a continuous string of other tax and spending reform measures in other parts of the state and the nation. The second measure voters put on the ballot was Proposition 4, which passed in a special 1979 election with 74% support. A technical measure that contained several provisions and subprovisions, Prop 4 largely aimed to limit increases in state and local government spending to a rate not exceeding the combined total of the annual rate of inflation and the annual rate of population growth. Finally, Prop 9 was the final measure put on the ballot as part of the taxpayers revolt in 1980, which sought to limit state income taxes and business inventory tax. However, Prop 9 failed to pass with 54% of voters opposing it statewide, which effectively marked the end to the taxpayers revolt in the state of California as it is often defined. Orange County was a hotbed for supporters of the taxpayers revolt, whose demographic makeup (white, suburban, homeowner) belied the crux of the issue at hand. Voting patterns in Orange County followed statewide patterns on all three fiscal–limitation measures, however OC voters supported Prop 13 and 4 much more enthusiastically than statewide voters. This, in addition to being one of the few counties supporting Governor Reagan’s appropriation–limitation measure in 1973 and one of the few in the

²⁷² Gordon, Linda. *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition*. Liveright Publishing, 2017.

²⁷³ Eribes, Richard A., and John S. Hall. "Revolt of the Affluent: Fiscal Controls in Three States." *Public Administration Review* 41 (1981): 107–121.

area to in turn reject a sales tax increase to improve public transportation, makes Orange County an ideal site to explore the nature of the tax revolt and its relationship to the possessive investment in whiteness and suburban politics.²⁷⁴

Because Prop 9 did not pass and because Prop 4 was forwarded as a kind of supplement to address anticipated issues related to the passage of Prop 13 (i.e., in terms of providing a check on potential increases in government spending to make up for the loss in property tax revenues), the tax revolt can really be understood as centered on Proposition 13 and so the remainder of this discussion will focus on it specifically. As a measure whose core objective revolved around reducing the tax obligations placed on homeowners, landlords, and land owning businesses, the flip side to this reduction in statewide property taxes concerned the shrunken budget it left behind and the devastation to state-funded public services that it wrought. Public education, road construction and maintenance, public sanitation, public health services, libraries, parks, fire, and police all experienced cuts—some permanently, some temporarily—in relation to the limited availability of public funds in the state’s coffers. In turn, lack of state funds compromised many communities’ overall quality of life and ability to provide basic services, subjecting marginalized neighborhoods to further disinvestment.²⁷⁵ As such, Prop 13 was not just a tax saving measure for the propertied class but a moral choice among white homeowners to assert the extent of their perceived obligation to care for other residents in the state.²⁷⁶ Consequently, it represents an ideal object of analysis through which to understand how home ownership has become constitutive with and determining for the character of populist suburban political struggle in light of statewide and national demographic change.

In general, William F. Gayk summarizes that there are three primary theories as to why the tax revolt happened: self-interest, class-based movement formation, or a shift in political ideology to the right. In the first, it is simply argued that the extent of support for fiscal-limitation measures is related to how much a person stands to benefit from a measure’s passage. In the second, it is said that the revolt is an expression of class-based discontent over inflation, unemployment, and other economic concerns that affected suburban homeowners in particular ways. In the third, it is argued that a shift to the right spurred by a rejection of the racially liberal, Keynesian welfare state both caused the revolt and sustained its consistent base of support well past the 1970s. As Gayk finds, however, in a regression that operationalized measures for these explanatory variables, no clear discrete “cause” emerged as the singular phenomenon responsible for the taxpayers revolt, pointing to the issue’s underlying complexities and contingencies. Instead, he found that all variables were significant to some extent and to varying degrees depending on the specific measure. Especially noteworthy for the argument here, however, Gayk observed through a factor analysis that the “suburbanism-homeownership factor” accounted for far more support for Prop 13 in particular than any other factor, thereby supporting the idea that this chapter has forwarded that the home was central to suburban development, not just in its land use and growth but also its racial identity and political field of struggle.

So taking this altogether, how did the home influence suburban politics during the revolt and what influence does it continue to have for political struggles at the local level?

As already outlined in the discussion on Cold War nuclear family geopolitics and its relationship to

²⁷⁴ Gayk, William F. “The Taxpayers Revolt.” *Postsuburban California. The Transformation of Orange County Since World War II* edited by Rob Kling, Spencer Olin, and Mark Poster. University of California Press, Berkeley (1995): 281–300.

²⁷⁵ Martin, Isaac William. *The Permanent Tax Revolt: How the Property Tax Transformed American Politics*. Stanford University Press, 2008.

²⁷⁶ Hennigh, Lawrence. “The Good Life and the Taxpayers’ Revolt.” *Rural Sociology* 43.2 (1978): 178.

suburbanization, the home is partly important for what it signifies and the feelings that it manages to evoke: full civic standing, middle-class respectability, security amidst fear of urban unrest, and comfort that one's life is under control, ordered, and aligned within a rational and ultimately good universe. In this consumers' republic the home produces a significant amount of symbolic value that can be leveraged in any number of social stages to assert one's worth. As the preceding discussion has also gestured, the home, moreover, is important for its economic function. A house is also a commodity that is bought and sold regularly, put into circulation to generate, increasingly, astronomical profits.²⁷⁷ Houses are sold to transfer equity to further aspirations for updates in style, more square footage, a "good" school district, and, generally, an upgrade in one's quality of life as dictated by our consumer culture and the concomitant desires it produces.

But the home as a symbolically and economically valuable commodity is also intimately tied to its relation to space, and so the location of home—where it is in relation to other places, what and who is or is not there—becomes additionally important to understand. This is where the home becomes vital to our understanding of suburban politics as a place-based political field of contestation. As Gayk (292) elaborates,

The locational attributes of a house—that is, the neighborhood and community in which it is located—weigh much more heavily in determining the social value of a house than do the product attributes. The very same house in different areas commands different prices. Thus, we can see that there is a strong and definite symbiotic relationship between a house, a neighborhood, and a community. There is an underlying assumption and expectation on the part of the homeowner that these attributes will endure. Like its social value, the economic value of a house is also tied strongly to its attributes and to the neighborhood and community. Homeowners perceive many threats to the social and economic value of their homes, neighborhoods, and community. The list of threats is varied and extensive; it includes residential and commercial development, vanishing open space, low-cost housing projects, inclusionary zoning, property taxation, noise, group homes, halfway homes, mental hospitals, jails, and roads and highways.

In other words, home as a place that is particularly located within a broader community with its own history functions as the site where the relationship between state and citizen—governing and being governed—becomes mediated and materialized in the everyday lives of the polity. In the process, home owning citizen-subjects come to enter into the social contract through an expectation that the state will protect their property rights as *the* fundamental right conferred by full citizenship as defined in this arrangement.²⁷⁸ Meanwhile, what that expectation of protection often involves is not only home's securement by force, which is generally implied, but also an obligation expressed by the propertied citizen that the *feeling* of home also be secured, where comfort and convenience become affectively associated with the state's delivery of its end of the bargain—and where discomfort and inconvenience often become conversely perceived as threats to the home. Orange County's enthusiastic support for Prop 13 can therefore be understood as the outcome of the county's heavily white homeowners class asserting its political will by expressing a particularly suburban variety of US citizenship, one that was cultivated and prioritized by the state as part of its reliance on the home as a useful unit of subjectification throughout the twentieth century but especially during the Cold War.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Gayk, 1991, p. 292.

²⁷⁸ Simon, Jonathan. *Total Incapacitation: The Penal Imaginary and the Rise of an Extreme Penal Rationale in California in the 1970s*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012.

²⁷⁹ Williamson, Thad. *Sprawl, Justice, and Citizenship: The Civic Costs of the American Way of Life*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

As a result, other political outcomes and patterns in Orange County can often also be understood through the lens of the white homeownership citizenry reacting to these threats to their home, neighborhood, and community value. After the revolt, many of the threats—“residential and commercial development, vanishing open space, low-cost housing projects, inclusionary zoning, property taxation, noise, group homes, halfway homes, mental hospitals, jails, and roads and highways”—came to animate a string of political struggles in the county throughout the 1980s. For example, Orange County’s aptly named John Wayne Airport was litigated by residents fearing noise pollution from its proposed expansion, affordable housing projects were vehemently opposed, and some more exclusive cities passed measures to control both residential and commercial development to maintain pastoral integrity.²⁸⁰ By extension, homeowners expected local government to be the voice that reflected these concerns with containing threats to the value of their land, asking representatives to implement exclusionary housing policies, disapprove plans for unwanted developments, and “banish” the houseless from its borders.²⁸¹ Therefore when “threats” to suburban home, neighborhood, and community value emerged—sometimes from racially “undesirable” outsiders moving in, sometimes from a developer coming into a neighborhood hoping to build something cheap and fast, other times from the government mandating the construction of affordable housing—Orange County’s suburban citizenry came out to make a plethora of claims that were often piecemeal, only sometimes ideologically cohesive, but always with an eye to maintaining their enduring possessive investment in whiteness and the land.

WHITE BACKLASH AND THE THREAT OF REFUGEE ENCROACHMENT

At the same time that Orange County’s white suburbia was confronted with its own decline, the United States withdrew the bulk of its active duty military forces from Southeast Asia, marked poignantly by the Fall of Saigon in 1975. The first wave of approximately 130,000 Vietnamese refugees were airlifted out of Vietnam or nearby refugee camps shortly following the collapse, transported through an archipelago of American military bases to eventually land in processing centers set up at Fort Chaffee in Arkansas, Fort Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania, Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, and—crucially—Camp Pendleton located just to the south of Orange County. Later, 21,000 came in 1977, 106,500 in 1979, and then tens of thousands more throughout the 1980s so that by 1985 there were roughly 643,200 total resettled Vietnamese refugees living in the United States.²⁸²

Refugee resettlement policies initially attempted to disperse the large influx of Vietnamese refugees across the country in order to spread the demand on public services and increase the rate of assimilation. However, as refugees increasingly carved paths for themselves, many found their way to ethnic enclaves in California and other states that provided more social services, employment opportunities, and the chance to form supportive communities with co-ethnics who shared their history, culture, and language. California received an estimated 21% of first wave refugees and 25–30% of second wave refugees, housing over 40% of all refugees who came from the countries most directly affected by the US campaign in Southeast Asia: Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.²⁸³ Aided in part by a strong anti-communist Republican base that hoped successful Vietnamese refugee resettlement would narratively recuperate America’s military failure in Vietnam and sustain American mythology, Orange County in particular became home to the most prominent Vietnamese enclave in

²⁸⁰ Gayk. 1991. p. 292.

²⁸¹ Beckett, Katherine, and Steve Herbert. *Banished: The New Social Control in Urban America*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

²⁸² Orr. 1999. p. 186.

²⁸³ Orr. 1999. p. 188.

the world, Little Saigon, which grew into the epicenter for diasporic South Vietnamese refugees as it developed into a thriving commercial and cultural hub.

Fifteen refugee families initially settled in Westminster, encountering a declining suburb still largely dotted with endless tracts of 1950s subdivisions, mobile home parks, and farmland.²⁸⁴ Not before long, however, word of a Vietnamese town growing in a sunny locale with which many refugees were already somewhat familiar began to spread. Less than ten years later, Westminster's Bolsa Avenue—once home to little more than a handful of second-hand car dealerships, auto repair and salvage shops, and a few other stray stores during the era of postwar suburbanization—transformed by 1984 into a bustling Vietnamese enclave with over 350 stores and restaurants densely arranged along the Westminster–Garden Grove border.

Demographically, the population shift rattled Orange County suburbanites. Though having risen notably from their former mid-century levels that hovered around less than 1%, the percentage of nonwhite residents remained relatively low at 14% in Garden Grove and 16% in Westminster by 1980. However, this number had begun to surpass the national rate, which still placed the average suburb at 90% white in racial composition on average. By 1990, though, these demographic shifts became apparent and seemingly irreversible. The percentage of white residents significantly declined to 67% in Garden Grove and 69% in Westminster, and by 1993 both cities faced the prospect of transforming into “majority–minority” areas, with Garden Grove first crossing the threshold that year as the white population declined to 45% and Westminster following on its heels at 52%.²⁸⁵

Suddenly, longtime residents who had enjoyed their homogeneous vision for suburbia in the immediate postwar decades found themselves confronted with unwelcome changes to their community that seemed to happen overnight. Jo Porter's family moved into one of the more expensive subdivisions built during the 1960s, residing in a home outfitted with a yard and pool that was located right around the corner from where Little Saigon emerged:

It's kind of interesting how it happened to me personally. I was one of those average people who just went to work, came home, fixed dinner and went to bed. One day I woke up and I went outside and I said, “Oh my God. *Our country has been invaded!*” [emphasis added]. This had been happening little by little but I just had not paid that much attention to it and neither had I prepared for the event. Consequently there is a shock factor that you're dealing with, and that was when I walked outside [and saw the changes occurring in Little Saigon].²⁸⁶

Describing how she and other neighbors felt during this period of demographic change, Porter continues:

I didn't see a familiar face anymore and all of the places that I went, my grocery market, my regular bank, my regular post office, were no longer recognizable. Nor was it recognizable getting from my home to that place. I was losing touch with the familiar things that I had lived with for so long and that was the “big quake” for me. It wasn't familiar anymore and there's a certain amount of regret when you can't attach to something that's familiar. It's a great loss when you can't keep touch with the familiar so

²⁸⁴ Allen–Kim, Erica S. “Exile on the Commercial Strip: Vietnam War Memorials in Little Saigon and the Politics of Commemoration.” *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*. Vol. 21, No. 2. University of Minnesota, 2014.

²⁸⁵ Orr. 1999. p. 254.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 256.

I don't think I was unique in feeling that way, I think this was shared by a lot of people. It was a big, big, big change, especially on this side of town.

Consequently, a general sentiment grew among established white residents that, suddenly, they were no longer in control of their community and the direction of its development. Viewing refugee newcomers as foreign invaders taking over rightful American territory, Porter's complaint gestures to the larger symbolic contest that the "refugee problem" animated within Orange County, where the problem centered on the taken-as-fact belief that deserving Americans had lost something, not only locally but nationally.

Drawing on a bittersweet nostalgia for "good old days" long gone, white suburbanites like Porter imagined the postwar decades as a golden era in county history. Describing her childhood in mid-century Garden Grove, Margaret Powers recalled, "It was just a little country town. Didn't have to lock the door. There was a little dry goods store downtown, and I could get my skates and go down there. My mother would call them if I needed a pair of shoes and she would send me down there when I was eight years old. Very safe. Never a problem."²⁸⁷ Other residents echoed this sense of community in which "everybody knew everybody" and neighbors could be trusted to watch one another's children, which they believed had evaporated in light of increased immigration that had made the streets more "crime ridden" and "unsafe."²⁸⁸ Therefore, by recalling the era of suburbanization (1950–1975) as one in which everyone in the community knew each other and could be trusted, residents conveniently narrated the past in a way that was useful to their claims of experiencing unfair loss in light of recent immigration, ignoring the long process of whitening that had occurred in the landscape prior to suburbanization to manufacture their homogeneous utopia in the first place.

Many framed their early suburban memories as representative of the American Dream that had been promised and temporarily delivered by a great nation they believed was now only reneging on the deal because it was being compromised by foreign and immoral influences. In the decades that followed the postwar boom, Orange County suburbia had not only been challenged by the throngs of refugee arrivals that came starting in 1975 but also by the reckoning of the civil rights, antiwar, labor, women's, gay rights, and environmentalist movements that shifted national politics towards Democratic liberalism and fostered grassroots movements supportive of the Countercultural Left. In the conservative Republican and white libertarian stronghold of Orange County, these contests reached a crisis point once the prospect of a majority-minority takeover dawned on them as a real and rapidly approaching possibility rather than just an abstract and distant threat.²⁸⁹

Global and national tensions subsequently animated local politics in Orange County, which became the field upon which many of America's battles over deindustrialization, racial integration, multicultural citizenship, and global interconnectedness were fought on a microcosmic yet nationally consequential scale. In the era of state sponsored multiculturalisms following the civil rights movement and passage of the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, however, white residents refrained from identifying their reactions as a form of racism. Instead, the issue of immigrant and racial encroachment became contested through the frame of "melting pot" assimilation, in which minoritized groups would only be superficially accommodated as long as their trajectory of assimilation ended in Americanization and maintained the existing order. Vietnamese refugees therefore became constituted as, on the one hand, perpetually foreign and unassimilable similar to the Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican immigrants who had preceded them. Thought to care little for the "American way of life," refugees were accused of only being

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 30.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 123–125.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 254.

interested in building an ethnically distinct community for themselves and sending their remittances to “enemy” Vietnam instead of contributing their “fair share” of taxes. On the other hand, unlike the pre-1965 immigrants who undertook their moves during an explicitly racially restrictive period for the American immigration regime, South Vietnamese refugees were specially approved for asylum by the state, seen as symbolic allies in the global fight against communism, and undertook their moves after the passage of an immigration bill that formally excised the national origins quota imposed by the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act. Therefore, they occupied a peculiarly untenable position as at once unassimilable and also *completely* assimilable.

The following sentiment expressed by a white realtor from Orange County demonstrates this tension produced within the white enclave under the conditions of multicultural assimilation. Making sure to preface his complaint by explicitly noting that he is not racist, Ray Call rationalized in his oral history that the thing that *did* bother him was refugees’ apparent lack of willingness to assimilate, though he also expressed certainty that the second generation would more successfully do so.

I can’t read their signs. It looks foreign. I’ve been to many foreign countries, about thirty-nine major countries in the world. [In the Air Force Reserves] we’re taught and even get briefings when we get to a command post somewhere, before we get off base, on the customs of the people in the area, how not to offend them. But it doesn’t seem like a lot of different people come over here, and they don’t do that. It hurts them because when they have their signs and cater primarily to their own people, then...It’s like they’re looking for economic opportunity here and don’t want to add anything to this country. That’s the biggest problem I have with those people, the different types of ethnic groups, is you take the Irish—I’m Irish, okay? They came to this country but they didn’t seem to take—they had communities where they were grouping together because they had familiarity—but I don’t remember anything in history that says that the Irish people would save all their money and send it back to Ireland to run the mainstay land holdings there, and then when they got to retirement age that’s where they were headed back to. It seems like they’re over here, they’re raping and pillaging our economy, and all they care about is their own country and that’s where they want to go back to. But I know that eventually their kids will go into the melting pot.²⁹⁰

Here, Call’s comments therefore reflect both the unassimilable frame through which resettled refugees were perceived as “those people” who only cared about “their own country” and the assimilationist frame through which they were still expected to eventually join America’s “melting pot.” Like Call, many others in the community saw the Vietnamese use of foreign signage on their businesses as an unwillingness to assimilate and embrace American values. As white junior high school teacher Julie Peckham similarly bemoaned, “Some things bother me. Like when you see a billboard and it’s in a foreign language, Vietnamese or whatever, and you can’t read it. I don’t like that...Everybody’s so “our group” instead of “we” as a whole.”²⁹¹ Peckham’s remark is consequently interesting because the pejorative use of “our group” here refers to her impression of the Vietnamese community as disinterested in becoming a “we,” where the implied “we” is really white America and the complaint more-or-less pivots on a logic of poor assimilation.

Moreover, in drawing a comparison between the expectations emphasized in his own military training for engaging with people in “foreign countries,” Call’s analogy additionally demonstrates how Southeast Asian refugees remained symbolically tied to America’s war in Vietnam, where—when failing to properly assimilate in

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 263–264.

²⁹¹ Ibid, 263.

the American context—their actions became re-cast as those undertaken by enemy combatants “raping and pillaging our economy” as if still conducting themselves under the terms of territorial war. As Jo Porter’s comment above also affirms, the suburban frame through which many white residents therefore saw Vietnamese refugee arrivals came to be cast through the lens of foreign invasion tied to land, i.e. a “threat” to their home, neighborhood, and community values.

While the early appearance of Vietnamese refugees vexed some residents, it was really not until they began to significantly expand their commercial corridor that a mainstream faction of white suburbanites began to more vocally oppose their presence. Described in greater detail in a February 1981 feature on the new Vietnamese community published by the *Orange County Register*, Little Saigon began to generate a more pronounced white unease as more and more refugees moved into the neighborhood and claimed a greater share of its land and resources:

The 30-unit Bolsa center itself is a microcosm of the boom in Indochinese businesses that, to use the word of a peeved Caucasian businessman, have “taken over” a 12-block area straddling the Garden Grove–Westminster border. Built in 1975, the mall underwent a cultural shock of sorts in the last two years—changes that brought to predominantly Caucasian west-central Orange County such novelties as the Thanh My Restaurant, A Chau Oriental Gifts and *Tuan Bao Saigon* (a weekly newspaper). Today, 70 percent of the center’s units are Indochinese-owned and operated. Further evidence of the phenomenon can be found on both sides of the mall along Bolsa Avenue and on Westminster Avenue between Euclid and Magnolia streets. A manager at the Bolsa Verde Mobile Home Park, whose caucasian tenants are fast becoming a minority group, put it aptly in his observation: “This is like a regular Vietnamese town.”²⁹²

In observing that “This is like a regular Vietnamese town,” the manager of the mobile home park appears to acknowledge that the meaning of the neighborhood was starting to change to something more racialized, “Third World,” and therefore compromising for the value of the land that was once painstakingly manufactured to preserve the possessive investment in whiteness. Demonstrating the sense of shock and despair felt by white residents, the passage therefore effectively highlights how the expansion of Vietnamese businesses and residential relocation of many refugees into formerly homogeneous neighborhoods became comprehended by longtime suburbanites as refugees “[taking] over” white Americans’ rightful claims to the land and the economic opportunities produced from it as they witnessed refugee encroachment. Moreover, as the perceived threat of encroachment continued, this foreign invader frame converged with antiblack welfarist discourse to place refugee arrivals in a precarious position. As a publisher of the local periodical *Saigon News*, Du Mien was paraphrased by the *Register* as saying he would often be “pestered with questions from ‘Americans’ who want to know why we are here, why we are taking away their jobs and businesses and where we get the money to do business when so many of us are on welfare.”

White residents with the resources to do so soon saw the writing on the wall of a pending “majority–minority takeover” and moved to other locations in the county and outside of the state. Echoing Ray Call’s expressions of racial denialism and cherry picking liberal ideas like having the “right” to choose her own

²⁹² Kwong, Rosa. “Little Bit of Saigon: Asians Making County Area Like ‘Home.’” *The Orange County Register*. February 1, 1981. p. B1.

neighborhood, Westminster City Councilmember Charmayne Bohman defended that she, too, was not racist for wanting to maintain a homogenous white community:

What the statistics seem to be saying to me is that in another decade in California, whites will be a substantial minority which is one reason I don't want to continue to live in California. I don't want to live where I'm going to be a minority population and that has been consciousness raising for me. I understand people's need to be with others like themselves but by God, I have that right too. And if I want to be in a society that is predominantly white and shares my values, whatever they are, then I want to be there and I have that right. And I'm not a racist because I want that.²⁹³

As a result white residents who were resigned to stay or unable to relocate to other neighborhoods like Bohman were consequently left with a highly charged racial context in which they saw a need to mount some kind of response to the evident racial changes occurring within their communities, albeit within the constraints of needing to negotiate these maneuvers in the post-civil rights, race liberal era of non-discrimination.

Despite rhetorical claims to the contrary, a 1989 poll conducted by the Los Angeles Times of 400 adults in Orange County found that 62% of respondents said that there was "a lot" or "some" prejudice against their Vietnamese neighbors, which played out in both formal and informal ways.²⁹⁴ Formally, local residents attempted to use official pathways to check refugee consolidation through voicing their concerns to representatives in municipal government. To attempt to stem the tide of Asian businesses that they feared would eventually overwhelm the area, for example, over one hundred Westminster residents signed a petition in 1982 to place a moratorium on the issue of business licenses to Vietnamese entrepreneurs, an overtly discriminatory move that was ultimately rejected by the city council but nevertheless demonstrates how residents attempted to use civic participation as a means to maintain racial homogeneity and economic control.²⁹⁵

Once again enlivening an enduring conflict within the county between working-class and middle-class white residents and "elites in government," residents balked at representatives' openness to Vietnamese settlement where, as the council reasoned, refugee migration had actually helped the city recover from its financial nosedive in the 1970s through re-population and commercial development. Making its decision just a few years after the Fall of Saigon, city council members had initially believed that the refugee community would quickly assimilate into the county without major issue and so prioritized Westminster's financial health over the reactionary machinations of its longtime residents—a move that would help galvanize Orange County's more libertarian and conservative residents in support of candidates who more closely aligned with Ronald Reagan's emerging rearticulation of the Republican party platform that brought together a now familiar free market, evangelical, "law and order," and small government brew of nostalgia-inflected talking points under one political umbrella.²⁹⁶

Interestingly, many of the challenges mounted by this growing segment of reactionary whites continued to be expressed through the language of melting pot assimilation. Viewing the refugee community's continued use of Vietnamese language as a problem for community cohesion, the refugee problem generated impassioned campaigns to make English the county's official language and end bilingual education in schools, reflecting the

²⁹³ Orr, 1999, p. 271.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 272.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 290.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 291.

broader “English only” movement at the national level that became a routine dog whistle to signal anti-immigrant sentiment. In Garden Grove and Westminster, white residents complained about the Korean and Vietnamese language store signs being “incomprehensible.” Justifying that non-English signs would make it more difficult for police and firefighters to identify immigrant businesses despite just seven out of six hundred Korean businesses at the time having signs exclusively in Korean, Linda Trinh Vo and Mary Yu Danico document how the Garden Grove Planning Commission voted in 1989 to mandate the inclusion of English on signs—a decision that was later only rescinded after the city was warned that such a decision would be met with a civil liberties lawsuit mounted by a coalition of Korean business owners, the Orange County Human Relations Commission, and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center in Los Angeles.²⁹⁷

These municipal efforts to mandate the use of English were also indicative of identity and state obligation struggles occurring throughout California. Anti-immigrant and anti-affirmative action measures were increasingly placed on the ballot throughout the 1980s and 1990s, reaching a symbolic turning point when reactionary Orange Countians helped lead the charge on the passage of Proposition 187 in 1994.²⁹⁸ An initiative known colloquially known as the “Save Our State” referendum that proposed to restrict undocumented immigrants from obtaining state public services like public education and healthcare, a Huntington Beach-based organization called the California Coalition for Immigration Reform (CCIR) helped stage a number of rallies in support of the measure. Under its “Our Credo” page on their former website, the organization had condemned,

Liberals, self-serving politicians and cheap labor advocates [who] have made a mockery of these laws. They have not only allowed MILLIONS of ILLEGAL ALIENS to jeopardize our very way of life, but defend their ‘right’ to do so! Statistics repeatedly prove that ILLEGAL ALIENS, first committing a criminal act by violating our borders and then bringing their values and culture to our midst, are major contributors to our mounting financial burdens as well as moral and social decay.²⁹⁹

Reflecting familiar nativist language and populist reprisals of elite governance, CCIR’s credo disquietingly gestures to Klan rhetoric that was popular in 1920s Anaheim and its surrounding environs. But interestingly, the connections are not ambiguous. A thread can be traced from the county’s white supremacist legacy to CCIR’s founder and “commander” herself, Barbara Coe. Having gained notoriety and far-right fame at the organization’s helm, Coe was, up through her passing in 2013, a self-described member of the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), which is the modern reincarnation of the Citizens Councils of America that were formed in the 1950s and 60s to block school desegregation in the American South.³⁰⁰ Directly created from the mailing lists of these “White Citizens Councils,” the CCC shared its predecessor’s facade of civic responsibility, whose actions at the time led future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall to refer to them as the “uptown Klan.” Though Prop 187 was never implemented because its challenge in the courts ultimately ended when a newly elected Governor Gray Davis struck a deal with civil rights organizations to end the litigation and effectively kill the referendum, the political shrewdness of CCIR ensured that it would respond, with Coe helping to organize Davis’ eventual gubernatorial recall in 2003.³⁰¹ Faye Metz (1995), in an oral history given as someone who had lived in Westminster since the 1920s, said of Prop 187’s end, “If it only could have worked!

²⁹⁷ Vo, Linda Trinh, and Mary Yu Danico. “The Formation of Post-Suburban Communities: Koreatown and Little Saigon, Orange County.” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* (2004).

²⁹⁸ Ross, E. Wayne. “What Is to Be Done in the Aftermath of Proposition 187?.” *Theory & Research in Social Education* 27.3 (1999): 292–295.

²⁹⁹ “Barbara Coe.” Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/barbara-coe>. Accessed July 22, 2022.

³⁰⁰ McMillen, Neil R. *The Citizens’ Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954–64*. University of Illinois Press, 1994.

³⁰¹ Balleck, Barry J. *Hate Groups and Extremist Organizations in America: An Encyclopedia*. ABC-CLIO, 2019.

But it seems insurmountable. I would back anybody who could do anything to keep them in their place,” clearly evidencing the connection between these measures and their intent to maintain a hierarchical racial mapping of class.³⁰²

Reminiscent of California’s early twentieth century land laws, other initiatives therefore reflected a general resurgence of nativism in the state that sought to limit the economic mobility of nonwhite groups to “keep them in their place,” including the passage of Proposition 209 in 1996, another ballot initiative that amended the state constitution to effectively end affirmative action by prohibiting public institutions from considering an individual’s race, sex, or ethnicity in matters related to employment, contracting, and education. Serving as the first electoral test of affirmative action legislation, its successful passage and implementation marked another significant victory for conservative reactionaries battling for the “soul of America” in the presumptive liberal capital of the nation.^{303,304}

Consequently, the local politics within Orange County represented a grander symbolic contest over the identity of America during a period of white crisis, in the midst of recuperating and reorganizing how to sustain power and growth within the constraints placed on expressions of overt racism by the civil rights movement. Behind measures like Prop 187 and 290 lay a marked white anger towards their perceived sense of having lost something to which they had always been entitled: status, income, land, political power—“the possessive investment in whiteness.” As capital moved from the northern to southern regions of the county and increasingly embedded the entirety of Southern California in a globalized network of economic interconnectedness, both Garden Grove and Westminster found that their dreams of a homogenous white community destined for greatness due to residents’ sheer American gumption was faltering. That renewed spirit of American hoping that followed the nation’s exit out of the Great Depression was once again under threat of collapse; glitches in the mid-century order of sorcery produced from successive images of a carefree white America began to reveal to the public that, maybe, the “planetary strategy” of American empire had failed and that the end of the myth had arrived. Instead of identifying the forces of globalization and financialization, however, as key to their loss of “a sense of place,” residents revived California’s enduring nativist script to mount a campaign to “Save [Their] State” from the racial boogeyman of liberalism’s excesses—the illegal immigrant and the welfare-dependent public charge—which arrived in Orange County through the figure of the “Indochinese Refugee.”

THE ORANGE GROVE CASE: NEGOTIATING THE BOUNDARIES OF MULTICULTURAL STATE CITIZENSHIP AT THE DAWN OF THE REAGAN PRESIDENCY

Three Vietnamese refugees were sentenced to more than a century each in state prison on Tuesday for their roles in the gang rapes of six Orange County women last summer. Superior Court Judge Francisco Briseno said he wanted to make sure that the three youths “serve the remainder of their lifetimes in prison” after he commented that the massive terms are “the most severe punishment you can impose...even worse than the death penalty.” The “atrocious felonies” committed by Bo Quoc Pham, 20; brother Dung Quoc Pham, 19; and Minh Quang Nguyen, 18, “are not condoned on either side of the Pacific Ocean,” Briseno said. His sentences

³⁰² Orr, 1999, p. 251.

³⁰³ Tolbert, Caroline J., and John A. Grummel. “Revisiting the Racial Threat Hypothesis: White Voter Support for California’s Proposition 209.” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* (2003): 183–202.

³⁰⁴ Chavez, Lydia. *The Color Bind: California’s Battle to End Affirmative Action*. University of California Press, 1998.

of 118 1/2 years in state prison for the Pham brothers and 100 1/2 years for Nguyen are believed to be the longest total sentences in California history, according to longtime court observers. The sentence means that Nguyen, who was nicknamed by his cohorts "the boss man," will first become eligible for parole in the year 2047 when he will be 84 years old. The Pham brothers will be eligible 12 years later when they will be in their late 90s, if they survive prison life. Briseno still must sentence a fourth co-defendant, 17-year-old Tung Thanh Le, who was convicted of involvement in five of the rapes. State law mandates that because Le was a juvenile at the time of the crimes he must first undergo a 90-day diagnostic study at the California Youth Authority.³⁰⁵

– "Century-Plus Terms Meted Out to 3 Vietnam Youths for Rapes,"
The Orange County Register, April 15, 1981

In the opening months of 1981 a "headline-making trial" brought the refugee problem to a head in Orange County. As Chapter 1 chronicled, residents had not expected the transformation of their cities to occur so swiftly or dramatically as Vietnamese refugees began to settle in the Westminster-Garden Grove area, and the evolution of Bolsa Avenue into a bustling "Vietnamese town" over just a couple years unsettled longtime white residents who had counted on their possessive investment in the suburban racial project to secure their interests and status.

The first subsection in this discussion therefore concerns itself with how the trial itself emerged from a case that proved to be symbolically ripe for mediating these disputes over state obligation and provision. Occurring during this time in the transition from Liberal Keynesianism to the neoliberal era of welfare retrenchment, the refugee had already been a reluctant "object of rescue" for many Americans to begin with as fears of using tax dollars to bankroll a growing population of nonwhite "public charges" sat uneasily with the citizenry. Consequently, in framing the defense team as representative of Liberal Keynesian's position in the field of contestation concerning which economic philosophy would prevail during the late 1970s, their ultimate loss in the form of the four refugees' convictions, I argue, reveals how welfarist and law-and-order arguments forwarded by the Reagan administration—as represented by the prosecution—won the struggle over bounding liberalism's perceived excesses in America's transition into the 1980s. Interestingly, when the normally conservative and Libertarian-leaning *Orange County Register* published an admonition against Judge Briseno's "excessively cruel" sentences, the verdict ignited a generative flashpoint in county discourse over several weeks when readers flooded the paper with letters debating the op-ed. Analyzing these suburban citizen engagements with the legal verdict, the final portion of this subsection thereby closes by discussing how suburban possessive individualism created racializing discourses to differentiate between "good refugees" and "bad refugees" during this time, where good refugees made the transition from, to use Jodi Melamed's framework, "liberal multicultural citizens" to "global multicultural citizens" in the accompanying shift from "liberal multiculturalism" to "neoliberal multiculturalism," and where bad refugees did not and became marked as disposable and irreformable through permanent criminalization, which is introduced here and elaborated on further in Chapter 3.

Moreover, as a case involving four orientalized refugee teenage boys who were convicted of raping six predominately white girls and young women, the second subsection argues that this particular moment in the

³⁰⁵ Welborn, Larry. "Century-Plus Terms Meted Out to 3 Vietnam Youths for Rapes," *The Orange County Register*. April 15, 1981. p. A10.

history of refugee resettlement proved to be a critical juncture that reformulated the boundaries around acceptable refugeehood and, by extension, multicultural citizenship, in the post-1965 US immigration regime. Engaging with critical legal and critical race scholars who have identified how the Asian category as a legal object (and its varied subarticulations, e.g. “Chinese,” “Japanese,” “alien,” etc.) has been constitutively formed vis-à-vis the cisheteropatriarchal state’s management of nonwhite immigration through regulating marriage, family, and sexual unions, I tie the case’s miscegenist undertones to this history to relay its importance in relation to broader shifts in immigration law that have occurred after 1965 when the US immigration regime shifted from formal exclusion to selective inclusion. Pointing to the case’s outcome in which the four refugees became marked as “bad” through cultural negotiations of legal meaning that served as a blueprint for subsequent refugee criminalization and punishment, this subsection draws an analogy between Deenesh Sohoni’s discussion of how immigration and naturalization law worked together to render the Asian immigrant permanently alien to show how refugee criminalization, as epitomized by the Orange Grove Case, worked in tandem with the Refugee Act of 1980 to make an amendment to the post-1965 selective inclusion immigration regime, expanding the repertoire of criminalization to function as the release valve for undesirable immigrant others determined unuseful to the state and its imperatives.³⁰⁶

LIBERAL KEYNESIANISM ON TRIAL

As the trial began in January of 1981, the defense team mounted several strategies to convince the court and public of the four refugees’ innocence, particularly relying on arguments that the accused rapists had experienced racism during the trial and before arraignment. During a preliminary hearing in the fall, for example, three women had come forward to tell similar stories of their assaults, but in a twist for the prosecution, could not identify all four defendants as their attackers. Hoping to capitalize on their inability to consistently identify all four refugees, court-appointed lawyers Clarence Hewatt, Dixon Walcott, Dennis McNerney, and Larry Buckley forwarded that the defendants had been subject to racial profiling and false identification.³⁰⁷ After this argument failed to take hold, however, the team moved on during the trial to accuse the police of misconduct in an attempt to have a purported forced confession given by one of the refugees, Bo Quoc Pham, thrown out. As argued by his legal team, Pham claims that Huntington Beach police detective, Art Droz, had threatened to “put him in the electric chair” and throw him “in jail for 100,000 years” if he did not admit to his role in committing the sexual assaults.³⁰⁸ “He felt he was held by police—and not taken to court—until he made some incriminating statements,” Hewatt explained. “Pham was arrested Aug 13, a Wednesday, and he should have been arraigned that Friday. The incriminating statements were made Aug. 16, but we think that any statements made after the 48-hour arraignment period should be declared improper,” his lawyer continued, accusing the police department of holding Pham past the 48-hour period until a Saturday and attempting to cast doubt on the department’s interrogation methods to assert his client’s innocence. Moreover, Pham claimed that he was not provided adequate translation services. Though Droz had supplied him with an interpreter and a copy of his rights in Vietnamese, Pham contended that he did not understand what the officer wanted and was brow-beaten until he signed a document he couldn’t comprehend. “I understand a few words here and there, but not what he really wanted to say,” Pham said. “They made me sign something, but I don’t know what. I was scared. I said I didn’t do it but he made me—he kicked me and yelled at me when I say no.”

³⁰⁶ Sohoni, Deenesh. “Unsuitable Suitors: Anti-Miscegenation Laws, Naturalization Laws, and the Construction of Asian Identities.” *Law & Society Review* 41.3 (2007): 587–618.

³⁰⁷ Weir, Jeff. “3 Women Tell Similar Stories At Rape Trial.” *The Orange County Register*. September 25, 1980. p. A4.

³⁰⁸ Weir, Jeff. “Viet Claims Rape Confession Was Forced.” *The Orange County Register*. January 22, 1981. p. A26.

For their part, the prosecution—led by Deputy District Attorney Carl Armbrust—aimed to take a “tough on crime” approach to make an example out of the four refugees. While the defense had made a particular effort to have the youngest of the four, Tung Thanh Le, 17, tried as a minor during the preliminary hearing, Armbrust told the media that he expected Le to be certified to stand trial as an adult and planned to file 68 felony counts against each of the four Vietnamese refugees without special consideration for Le’s age.³⁰⁹ Deputy Probation Officer Dorlene A. Marsh echoed Armbrust’s stance in her sentencing recommendation which urged Superior Court Judge Francisco Briseño to give “the maximum term prescribed by law,” which would have amounted to “maximum 400-year terms.”³¹⁰ Using an argument that full, separate, consecutive terms should be calculated for each convicted refugee, Briseño ultimately gave what he saw as the harshest justifiable terms, meting out 118.5 years to brothers Bo Quoc Pham and Dung Quoc Pham, 100.5 years to Minh Quang Nguyen, and 70 years to Tung Thanh Le. In response, the prosecution team told the press that they were pleased with Briseño’s decision. “I think the message is out,” Armbrust pronounced. “The judge bit the bullet. The buck stopped right there.” However, he pushed, “Justice won’t be achieved until the maximum sentence is imposed. Crimes shouldn’t come cheaper by the dozen.”³¹¹

Consequently comparing the arguments forwarded by the defense and the prosecution, the adjudication of innocence occurred within a broader field where the “Indochinese refugee” became a mediating figure that became negotiated within the postwar liberal Democratic order’s decline as America exited the seventies and entered the Reagan era. Using arguments borne out of the intersection of postwar liberalism and cultural pluralism, the defense unsuccessfully attempted to leverage liberal multiculturalism’s protective bargain with the state by framing refugee experiences with the criminal legal system as characterized by racism, discrimination, and police misconduct. Their loss in court, however, to a prosecutorial team that heavily relied on punitive language to ultimately win what was believed to be “the longest total sentences in California history” by court observers, speaks to how liberal ideas forwarded by Democrats in power also lost favor in the court of public opinion as the 1970s came to a close.

Illustrating this link between the trial and larger shifts in the American polity, public discourse surrounding the Orange Grove case went beyond focusing on just the refugee defendants but also on their legal defense team. At the height of the “headline-making” trial which occurred right on the heels of the taxpayers revolt, Hewett, Walcott, McNerney, and Buckley themselves came under attack as a growing population of dislocated suburbanites grew increasingly frustrated with the idea of liberal government in California using tax dollars on the “undeserving.” In an article titled “Court Offices Explain Costs of Public Defense” published on March 3rd, 1981, *The Register* opined:

Crime doesn't pay. It costs. That's a sentiment being expressed around the county courthouse by observers watching the spiraling cost in legal representation for indigent defendants in criminal cases. Two court-appointed attorneys in the recent headline-making trial involving four young Vietnamese refugees charged with a series of gang-rapes soon will draw an estimated \$15,000 cash each from the county. And that's not counting payments for investigators, interpreters, expert witnesses and other

³⁰⁹ Welborn, Larry. “Four Viet Teens Face 68 Charges—Leprosy Victim Held In Rape Spree.” *The Orange County Register*. August 21, 1980. p. A2.

³¹⁰ Welborn, Larry. “Victims Tell of Traumas Following Rapes.” *The Orange County Register*. March 4, 1981. p. B1.

³¹¹ Welborn, Larry. “Century-Plus Terms Meted Out to 3 Vietnam Youths for Rapes.” *The Orange County Register*. April 15, 1981. p. A10.

miscellaneous expenses. The cost of providing the defendant lacking sufficient funds an attorney free of charge is borne by the county. The price paid by the taxpayers for this mandatory expenditure is a whopping \$5 million—plus per year, which pays for the public defender's office and fees for private lawyers appointed to defend such clients. If the public defender's office—which has an annual budget of \$4.3 million—is unable to take a particular case for some reason, federal law requires that a private attorney be appointed at taxpayer's expense. These attorneys generally are paid approximately \$50 an hour for the time spent investigating, preparing and trying a case. Sometimes, especially in more serious cases, they are paid more. The 1980–1981 county fiscal budget allotted \$1.1 million to pay private attorneys appointed for indigent defendants. In the first seven months of the fiscal year, judges already had authorized \$906,510 in payments to private lawyers. "We're going to go over budget for sure," said Dave Maher, office manager for the public defender's office. "And there is no way to predict by how much."³¹²

Thus, the article opens by tying broader public sentiment towards use of public funds for supplying indigent defendants with legal representation to the Orange Grove trial directly, implicating the "[t]wo court-appointed attorneys in the recent headline-making trial involving four young Vietnamese refugees" in general discourse concerning taxpayer resentment. As the article continues to detail, "The two court-appointed attorneys are each likely to reap a payment from the county in excess of \$12,000. Both already have been paid \$2,500 for a two-week preliminary hearing. McNerney's court-appointed private investigator, Dan Duffy, has been paid \$2,157.68 for his work on the case, including 74 hours at \$25 an hour." Expounding further on the cost of indigent defense, however, the article then moves to compare and conflate these fees to higher quotes given by other lawyers interviewed for the article, where one said "they wouldn't take the case on a retainer for less than \$25,000" and another said it would take "at least \$100,000." Not stopping there, the fees the defense team incurred were also disparaged along with other expenditures "paid by the taxpayers" for "investigators, interpreters, expert witnesses and other miscellaneous expenses," which, it is implied, unfairly diverted budgetary funds from deserving (and increasingly struggling) suburban citizen-subjects to undeserving members of the purportedly irredeemable criminal class. Capitalizing on anti-liberal sentiment to further mock the excesses of state spending, the article derides that the defense team's private investigator, Dan Duffy, even used tax dollars to "secure the services of an astronomer, who was paid \$150 by the county to testify about how much moonlight there was one night during one of the rapes." Consequently, the legal defense team for the four refugees and their associates ended up becoming mediating figures in this broader decline of the Keynesian welfare state themselves, standing in for a bloated and ineffectual liberal Democratic government that not only failed to solve the nation's stagnating growth problem in the final years of the 1970s but also, through its "soft on crime" approach, created a terrifying horizon for the suburban taxpayer where the county would "go over budget for sure" with "no way to predict by how much."

"LAW AS CULTURE AS LAW" IN THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION

After the verdict came in, the adjudication of innocence did not neatly end. Interestingly, as reporters asked the defense team for comment following sentencing, all three said the terms were "outrageous" for punishing rapists more severely than murderers. "If the judge and the DA believe that life in prison is really worse than the death penalty, then the word that is being put out on the streets is to kill your victims," Dixon Wolcott said. In response to Wolcott's comment, *The Orange County Register* published an op-ed discussing

³¹² Welborn, Larry. "Court Offices Explain Costs of Public Defense." *The Orange County Register*. March 3, 1981. p. B1.

that very proposition, which triggered a series of symbolically charged debates in the paper's Clearinghouse section between the editorial team, court actors, and the public, including Deputy District Attorney Carl Armbrust, Presiding Superior Court Judge Robert Rickles, and twenty-five residents from throughout Orange County, though generally from its more racially white and middle-class cities.

Now turning to analyze this discursively rich moment in which the case became contested within the broader community, this portion corresponds to the larger "cultural turn" in socio-legal studies in which, marking the field's shift toward focusing on the subjective experience of law and culture, their deep interpenetration, and how law is found within our cultural images and practices, suggests that scholars must now widen what we understand to be moments of subjectivity in the legal constitution of society, where images hold a power in and of themselves to produce "law as culture as law."³¹³ For the purposes here, I echo and use Naomi Mezey's (43) definition where culture is conceptualized as "any set of shared, signifying practices—practices by which meaning is produced, performed, contested, or transformed."³¹⁴ In this usage, Mezey specifies that it is not altogether accurate to talk about the study of "law and culture" as distinct since law itself is one of the signifying practices within culture that produces, performs, contests, and transforms meaning, so a constitutive conceptualization of "culture and law" is better reflected by the refrain "law as culture as law." Once we understand culture as a set of signs that communicate intersubjective meaning, law and culture are seen as dialectically entangled and oftentimes functionally indistinguishable. Thus, as Clifford Geertz (173) argued, law does not simply entail legal rules but is rather "part of a distinctive manner of imagining the real," of producing the social world we come to take at face value through a codification and normalization of culture.³¹⁵

Keeping this in mind, then, how did discursive negotiations during this moment of sustained and emotionally charged struggle over the Orange Grove sentences work to both culturally and legally bound acceptable refugeehood and begin to define the outlines of unacceptable refugeehood? In other words, how did this key moment in the function of "law as culture as law" begin to draw meaningful distinctions between perceived "good" and "bad" refugees that produced good and bad refugee subjects in their own image? To examine these questions, this section must now outline the trajectory of the debate and its key controversies.

Six days after hearing Judge Briseño hand down his sentences to the convicted refugees, *The Orange County Register* published an op-ed called "Cruel and Unusual Punishment" on April 21, 1981.³¹⁶ In the opinion piece, a then-unnamed staff writer made the case for the Orange Grove trial's unusual outcome, which, the author noted, far surpassed the usual sentences given to people convicted of multiple rape offenses and exceeded the typical sentences given to people who commit murder. After describing the details of the case, the composition of the jury (7 out of 12 jurists were women), and the particulars of the refugees' sentences, the article takes Armbrust's comment to task that "The buck stopped right there." "Did it?" the writer challenges, "If there was any message at all coming out of Judge Brisenos's extreme decision to effectively put three young men behind bars for the rest of their lives for a crime spree of six rapes it is that a rape victim's chances of surviving future attacks with her life has been decidedly reduced in Orange County."

³¹³ Calavita, Kitty. "Reflecting on Law's Image: An Inward Turn?" In *Invitation to Law and Society: An Introduction to the Study of Real Law*. University of Chicago Press, 2016. p. 171–188.

³¹⁴ Mezey, Naomi. "Law as Culture." In *Cultural Analysis, Cultural Studies, and the Law: Moving Beyond Legal Realism* edited by Austin D. Sarat and Jonathan Simon. Duke University Press, 2003.

³¹⁵ Geertz, Clifford. *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. Basic Books, 2008.

³¹⁶ "Cruel and Unusual Punishment." *The Orange County Register*. April 21, 1981. p. B6.

Therefore echoing the defense team's reaction to the century-plus terms handed down to the refugees, *The Register* appeared to lend credence to Wolcott's argument. The op-ed continued:

Giving some idea how extreme Judge Briseno's sentencings were, consider the fact that the usual penalty for premeditated murder boils down to about 17 actual years in prison. The penalty for second degree murder is actually about 10 years before the usual parole is granted. In the Vietnamese case, the penalty for rape (rapes) has become 60-80 "real" years in prison and it is unlikely the Pham brothers and Nguyen will ever know freedom again.

The question then, whether the penalty verges on cruel and inhuman, [goes] far beyond the bounds of reasonableness. Undoubtedly many will see no reason to feel concern over the fate of four Vietnamese rapists. Still the question must be asked if the penalty in any way matches the crime. It might be added that the four men were first offenders, apparently held a concept based on their Vietnamese upbringing that has still not enabled them to understand the American view of rape, and have been in confusion since their arrests last year about why so much has been made of their rape spree last summer. Given all the above and given that they hardly rank with the Charlie Mansons of society, you are forced to wonder why they are being treated more roughly than the courts have dealt with virtually any criminal in our memory.

Whether Judge Briseno's sentencings will be softened somewhat in the weeks to come remains to be seen. Appeals will undoubtedly be made and we would find it surprising if higher courts uphold the severity of the penalties. Frankly, from both a human standpoint and from our feelings that penalties of such magnitude could lead to the increased likelihood of murder following rape, we would hope the courts have the good sense to make the penalty better fit the crime. Briseno's sentencings verge on viciousness.

Thus, in a surprise to many of its regular readers, the typically conservative and Libertarian-leaning *Register* appeared to side with the liberal defense team, forwarding an argument in the county's primary newspaper that questioned the fairness of the sentences and taking a position that, due to cultural differences and their status as first offenders, the refugees did not rank as morally reprehensible as compared to the "Charlie Mansons of society." Moreover, in closing the piece by suggesting that the sentences would likely be "softened somewhat" following appeals made to contest their severity in higher courts, the op-ed also dangled the prospect that the harsh sentences handed down by Judge Briseño might not stick, consequently fanning the flames for "the court of public opinion" to see their responses as particularly important for authorizing the verdict and sentencing as the "right decision."

Two days after the op-ed was published, Presiding Superior Court Judge Robert Rickles called a press conference attended by television, radio, and newspaper reporters to address it, claiming that he hadn't slept for two nights after reading the piece. Asked why he was holding the press conference, Rickles' response points to the symbolically charged quality that the case took on, saying, "It might seem highly unusual, but I think it's appropriate because of the fact that when I think things that are done are irresponsibly, something should be done about it."³¹⁷ In his address to the media, Rickles said that he felt like *The Register* should apologize for publishing the op-ed, calling it "intemperate, inaccurate, without investigation and completely irresponsible." The claim that rapists would be more incentivized to kill their victims because of the punishment surpassing that

³¹⁷ Welborn, Larry. "Judge Decries Register Editorial As 'Irresponsible.'" *The Orange County Register*. April 24, 1981. p. A3.

handed to murderers, Rickles scoffed, was “ridiculous and without any foundation whatsoever.” Affirming Judge Briseño’s sentences as completely justified, Rickles himself said that he would have called for sentences of at least 240 years for each of the refugees based on his own interpretation of the state penal code. Though he respected the right of *The Register* to print its own opinions on the editorial pages, he wanted to make sure they were actually investigating their claims, Rickles said. Though for his part, the now-identified op-ed writer, Marv Olsen, said he contacted a former Superior Court judge about the editorial before writing it.

Four days later, the formal debate between court officials and the editorial team at *The Orange County Register* went head-to-head as the paper published its response to the controversy alongside an opinion piece submitted by Deputy District Attorney Carl Armbrust himself. In his portion titled, “Looking Deeper Into the Viets’ Case,” Armbrust addresses the issue by first chastising, “*The Register’s* editorial of April 21 entitled ‘Cruel and Unusual Punishment’ is not the type of writing that one would expect to find in a respectable newspaper interested in the welfare of the citizens in the community.”³¹⁸ Describing the six women who testified about their rapes in court and the trauma they experienced in great detail, Armbrust challenges Olsen, the original op-ed writer, on the purported excessiveness of the terms meted out, “Whose daughter should be the ‘free’ victim? Would you want the judge to not sentence the criminal for his attack on a young girl simply because he was sentencing the criminal for his attack on someone else’s daughter? Should the word go out to the rapists in the streets that if you’re going to rape one girl you might as well rape a dozen because the sentence will be the same?” Attempting to frame the prosecution’s victory as the just outcome, Armbrust hence manages to turn the argument around to assert that it is lighter sentencing that would be the true insult to justice, denying each victim her fair share of the punishment.

Continuing to rationalize the fairness of the decision and drawing on modernity’s linear timeline, Armbrust continues by insisting that the refugees are in fact lucky to be sent to America’s prison system, where prisoners “still have their televisions, libraries, clean sheets, entertainment and three square meals a day” compared to “Devil’s Island” or “the ‘tiger’s cages’ of Vietnam.” Seeming to both take credit for these privileges but still implying that liberals are the ones responsible for these excessive comforts offered to prisoners, Armbrust closes by attempting to use liberals’ own arguments against them. Recalling how “[p]rior to 1977 when criminals were being sentenced to state prison under the so-called Indeterminate Sentencing Law...the do-gooders clamored for determinate sentences so that these poor people in prison would know exactly when they could get out,” which the state legislature then obliged when it passed the Determinate Sentencing Law in July of that year. “Under this law, the defendants could have received up to 483 years and 10 months in state prison,” Armbrust reminds, which means, “that the legislators, who presumably carry out the will of the people, frown on rapists” and therefore should support Briseño’s terms, not call them “cruel and unusual,” he chides. But “of course,” he finally lamented, “there is always the chance that some higher court will find a technical error made by the prosecutor or the trial judge and turn these guilty criminals loose again on society.” Armbrust’s opinion piece therefore reaffirmed the prosecution’s position during the trial that liberals had been soft on criminals in the past, leading to a rise in crime as evidenced by the four convicted refugees who, despite being found guilty, would still get to enjoy the modern comforts of an American prison compared to the primal “tiger’s cages” that would have been their fate in Vietnam and who might, due to liberal leniency, still be set “loose again on society.”

³¹⁸ Armbrust, Carl. “Looking Deeper into the Viets’ Case.” *The Orange County Register*. April 27, 1981. p. B6.

Finally, printed on the same page as Armbrust's submission, the paper published a reply to the controversy in "The Truth vs. Judge Rickles."³¹⁹ In agreement, the piece begins, are the editorial team and both Rickles and Armbrust about the viciousness of the crimes. However, the writer claims that their original argument appears to have been misunderstood. Accusing Armbrust's response as "approaching hysteria and failure of reason," the editorial in turn attempted to clarify its original argument by making "two single philosophic points":

1. The sentences in the Vietnamese case, *compared with murder sentences and previous sentences for rape in Orange County*, were "extreme," "verged on cruel and inhuman" and were "far beyond the bounds of reasonableness."
2. That handing down sentences ranging from 100 ½ to 118 ½ years in prison without possibility of parole until the rapists are in their 80s or late 90s has *reduced the chances of rape victims surviving future attacks with their lives*.

Maintaining that, "whether the public likes it or not, California generally frees first-degree murderers after 17 years in prison and generally paroles second-degree murderers after 10 years," the editorial then asks the reader to compare the sentences the four refugees received compared to previous sentences handed down in rape cases by other judges in the Orange County Superior Court system over the past year and a half:

In the following space we present without further comment the actual sentences handed down by Judge Briseno (as repeated from Tuesday's editorial), followed by previous sentencing in rape cases handed down by other judges in the Orange County Superior Court system over the past 18 months. We do not present this as an argument for either lighter or heavier sentencing for rape, but rather to counter Judge Rickle's seeming contention that there was nothing unusual in the Vietnamese gang-rape sentencing involving six young women.

We invite our readers to draw their own conclusions. Here is the listing:

- Bo Quoc Pham, 20, sentenced to 118 ½ years in state prison, eligible for parole in the year 2059 when he will be 98 years old.
- Bo's brother, Dung Quoc Pham, 19, sentenced to 118 ½ years in state prison, eligible for parole in 2059 when he will be 97 years old.
- Minh Quang Nguyen, 18, sentenced to 100 ½ years in state prison, eligible for parole in 2047 when he will be 84 years old.
- The fourth defendant, now at the California Youth Authority for diagnostic study, has not yet been sentenced.

Meanwhile, the 13 most recent violent rape sentencing in Orange County over the past 18 months:

- Ty Glen Clayton, 30, whom the prosecution has accused of 15 to 20 rapes and whose victims included a 21-year-old who later committed suicide. Convicted April 14, 1981, in the courtroom of Judge Briseno. Sentencing scheduled May 8. Faces maximum sentence of 13

³¹⁹ "The Truth vs. Judge Rickles." *The Orange County Register*. April 27, 1981, p. B6.

years. Prior to the most recent rapes, Clayton had served three years of a 3 years-to-life sentence for an unrelated multiple-rape conviction in 1977.

- James Lewis Rollings, 42, convicted of 12 felony charges related to unlawful intercourse and sex perversion including two counts of forcible rape, sentenced to six years in state prison. Presently free on \$25,000 bail awaiting appeal.
- Stephen Earl Garrison, 32, sentenced to five years in state prison for first degree burglary and deadly weapon charges after assaulting a sleeping nun in her bedroom at knifepoint.
- Fili Fili Pedro, 17, sentenced to 20 years and 2 months in state prison for raping a 20-year-old Santa Ana housewife after pleading guilty to seven rape-related felonies. His partner, Billy Ray Junior, 16, sentenced to CYA for a maximum term of eight years.
- Joseph Edward Robinson, 26, also known as the "Night Stalker Rapist," convicted of 15 felonies including two rapes, sodomy, kidnap and armed robbery, fined \$7,500, sentenced to 22 years in prison (15 before parole is possible) plus a life sentence (eligible for parole in 7 years).
- Bernard Allen Parker, 31, sentenced to eight years in prison for rape and attempted rape of two women "with a high degree of cruelty." Eligible for parole in 5 1/2 years.
- Ken Richard Hulbert, 27, also known as the "Fullerton Rapist," who murdered one of his 12 victims, sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole.
- Michael Ray Simmons, 18, Benjamin Jamal Montgomery, 18, and Darryl Bernard Watts, 17, sentenced to terms ranging from 23 to 27 years (18 years before eligible for parole) for the gang rape of a 14-year-old El Toro girl in her own home during a night that began with the terrorization of a Laguna couple in their own home. Each man was convicted of 14 felonies each.
- Marion Franklin Miller, 32, also known as the "Pantyhose Rapist," found guilty on 38 felony counts after a two-year rape spree involving more than one dozen women, sentenced to 53 years in prison. Eligible for parole in 35 years.
- George Louie Lucio, who along with his uncle, 43, was convicted of repeatedly participating in the gang-rape and savage beating of a mentally-retarded 23-year-old Santa Ana woman, sentenced to five years in state prison. His uncle was sentenced to nine years. Both will be eligible for parole after serving two-thirds of their sentences.
- Alfonso Calhoun, 18, the so-called "Cat Burglar Rapist," sentenced to 20 years in state prison on 13 counts of rape and "life in prison" for the murder of one of his victims, a 65-year-old Laotian immigrant. Eligible for parole in 30 years.
- Danny O'Campo Acosta, 17, sentenced to 12 years in state prison for kidnap and the rape of two young women. Pled guilty to 13 felony charges including rape, kidnap and robbery. Victims kidnapped at knifepoint, ordered to perform sex acts on each other after being raped in their automobile.
- Jon Richard Rowland, 18, who admitted he was responsible for a series of rape attacks that terrorized women in apartment complexes in southeast Santa Ana last summer, sentenced to 10 years in state prison. Nine felony counts including three for rape, three for oral copulation, three for burglary.
- And for those whose memories are short, a Nevada judge handed down a 14-year sentence to Larry Singleton, the man who chopped off the arms of Mary Vincent, then 14, after he repeatedly raped the girl as she was hitchhiking in California.

Summarizing the intent of drawing these comparisons, the piece points out that despite these patterns, it appeared that “suddenly, contrary to all previous sentencings in comparable cases involving rape (usually accompanied by kidnap, oral copulation and the rest), we have three Vietnamese refugees sentenced to terms of more than 100 years each.” Finally closing by simply conceding that while “we do not know what the appropriate penalty for rape should be,” the reason why the original op-ed was written was “not to support lighter sentences but to challenge the sentencings in light of past performances by, specifically, the Orange County court system and—in truth—by most courtrooms throughout the nation.”

Consequently, after the two pieces written by *The Register*’s editorial team and Armbrust were published, the stage was set to pit liberalism against the rising “law and order” punitive turn in the court of public opinion as local residents flooded *The Register* to respond to the original op-ed and its ensuing controversy.

Across two Clearinghouse sections published in *The Orange County Register* on May 3rd and 10th after these initial editorials set up the stakes of the contest, the newspaper chose to print reader submissions from twenty-five residents across the county, which predominantly highlighted voices in disagreement with the “Cruel and Unusual” op-ed.^{320,321} Out of the twenty-five submissions selected, only three voiced any degree of understanding or sympathy for the editorial’s original points, though the reasoning for support varied from pushing for rehabilitation over punishment (“Those of us who go crazy and do great harm should be rehabilitated, if possible.”) to accusing the prosecution of being the true “sex perverts” (“The Moral Morons and their pawns in various public offices are, in fact, sex perverts—voyeurs”). The remaining twenty-two submissions, however, vociferously disagreed with the paper’s position. Readers in opposition to the original editorial generally supported the punitive turn towards harsher sentencing and did not believe that “criminals” could be rehabilitated, only deterred (“I can’t help but believe it would put a little fear in the criminal”) or contained (“Finally a judge has the guts to impose the law and put people behind bars where they belong”).

Overall, the central organizing tensions that animated the debate across those who disagreed and those who agreed reflected the broader struggle represented by the trial itself when the case gripped local attention starting in January of that year. Demonstrating the entwined relationship between law and culture, readers in disagreement explicitly framed the struggle over authorizing Briseño’s decision as one between them and liberals. “We are surprised and saddened by *The Register* editorial which criticised the lengthy sentences given three of four Vietnamese gang-rapists recently by Judge Briseneno,” then Deputy District Attorney Richard W. Stanford, Jr. and his wife Melodie Stanford (Fullerton) wrote. “We might expect such a reaction from some rich liberal Democrat running for local political office in Boston, but not from the usually reliable editorial staff of Orange County’s voice of conservatism and respect for law and order.” “Liberals” here, then, are imagined and framed to be party-affiliated with the Democrats, from the elite “North,” and definitionally antagonistic to a respect for law and order. Affirming the voice of dissent against the paper’s surprising liberal sympathies expressed in the editorial, Jay Peterson (Santa Ana) expands, “The writer seems to be advocating the standards of the liberal ‘reformers’: a short stay in some ‘correctional’ institution, after which they are certified as ‘cured’ by some diplomaed witch-doctor and released. And how often have we heard about some ‘cured’ or ‘reformed’ parolee reverting back to his old ways as soon as he is again free?” Once again tugging on anti-elite sentiment (“some diplomaed witch doctor”), Peterson’s comment correspondingly encapsulates the same struggle seen in the trial between “soft on crime” liberals, both real and imagined, and “tough on crime” conservatives.

³²⁰ “Editorial Denounced as Cruel and Unusual.” *The Orange County Register*. May 3, 1981. p. I11.

³²¹ “Afterthoughts on Viet Case.” *The Orange County Register*. May 10, 1981. p. G11.

Moreover, as these struggles took place during the postwar era of formal state antiracisms, this overarching framework of liberalism versus conservatism became contested through positions that either agreed with the paper's implied point that the severity of the sentences were racially biased or disagreed by invoking color denialism or reverse racism. One of the three readers who sympathized with what *The Register* claimed in its op-ed, Oneita Mathis (Westminster)—after reading others' comments from the first round of submissions—supported the implication of racial bias in sentencing. “Having heard all the hatred espoused against the Vietnamese, just because they are Vietnamese, makes me wonder if maybe a little of it came out in the sentencing,” Mathis reflects. Readers who submitted letters in disagreement, however, denied any racial wrongdoing. Applauding Briseño's decision, David Dimick (Laguna Hills) referred to the paper's implication of racial overtones that affected the severity of the sentences, arguing that in the hypothetical scenario where the exact same crime had taken place but with the accused rapists being white, one would expect to see the same level of punishment. “The only additional message I would carry to [Briseño], and also to the only implied problem that I can find as a justification for your editorial position, is that the same sentencing would have taken place if these four men were White Anglo-Saxon Protestants from rich, influential, American families,” he defends. Employing a racial frame that denied the continued relevance of race in the courts, Dimick's comment therefore draws on what Eduardo Bonilla Silva (26–28) has termed “abstract liberalism” where, in the era of formal state antiracisms, racial denialists rely on cherry picking liberal ideas such as equal protection (and punishment) under the law to sidestep recognizing the enduring effects of racialization on maintaining social inequalities, all the while still retaining their ability to claim being “not racist.”³²² Ignoring the actual sentences given to accused white rapists implicated in similar crimes within the past 18 months, Dimick merely refutes the accusation of racial bias by abstractly claiming that he would expect Briseño to have handed down the same sentences had the accused been “White Anglo-Saxon Protestants from rich, influential, American families.” Supporting Dimick's comment by making a similar point, Betty Mills (Orange) also denied being racist, instead drawing on abstract liberalism to make the point that everyone who breaks the law should be treated equally. “[T]heir nationality has nothing to do with this situation,” Mills contended, “They broke our laws, and they must be deterred from doing such heinous crimes again.” Others turned to accusations of reverse racism, charging the refugees with terrorizing the community by racially targeting only young white women as their victims. “Racial overtones in the sentencing? How about deliberate racial bigotry in selecting white, American girls, or can't we say these things in today's confused world?” I. Sigworth (Newport Beach) rebuked. “It seems to me the crimes were committed solely against another race and it shows their hatred and contempt for that race,” maintained J. Collins (Huntington Beach). Despite these denials, however, racialized language used by those in disagreement would nevertheless regularly emerge to cast the convicted refugees as especially backwards, dangerous, and irreformable as tied to their relationship to the immigration regime as “permanently alien” (e.g. “foreign hoodlums,” “anti-social” “thugs”).

Democratic liberalism's struggle to maintain its position as the dominant political philosophy in the first 100 days of the Reagan administration can therefore be seen playing out in these debates over liberal softness and the enduring legitimacy/formal recognition of racism in the post-civil rights era. Beyond speaking to just ideological shifts in the polity concerning ideas about race and racism, however, this discussion of “law as culture as law” in the Orange Grove case also draws on Sarat and Simon's (10) point that cultural frameworks increasingly supplanted prior governing logics of state obligation to the social during this time with cultural and

³²² Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006.

identity politics that prioritized symbolic struggles over ones with a materially redistributive basis.³²³ Viewing cultural politics as functionally tied to the management of more materially redistributive forms of political struggle, it is therefore unsurprising to see that readers in disagreement not only couched their arguments in racialized and anti-liberal language but also ways that were tied to the taxpayers revolt. As Karl A. Sense's (Huntington Beach) comment illustrates, racialization worked to attribute welfare state bloat to liberal government's excessive and unmerited generosity towards refugees as orientalized subjects, putting unfair strain on down-and-out "real" Americans:

What makes this all the more reprehensible is that these Orientals were given the hospitality of this nation and freedom from the tyranny which exists in the country whence they came. No doubt they were also provided with all kinds of government help and subsidies not available to the average American who is in dire financial straits. I won't support a newspaper that disseminates that kind of un-American thinking. Good bye, *Register*.

Likewise, as CJ Gross (Santa Ana) confirms in a comment racializing the refugees as "animals," the taxpayer is asserted as the one who is truly being punished for the crimes committed by undeserving others. "[M]y objection is to the fact that the taxpayers will have to support these animals for the rest of their lives," Gross condemns. "The death penalty, or castration if they are to be kept alive, would seem much more fitting."

As such, counter to critiques of the "cultural turn" that lament its myopic focus on the symbolic dimensions of law, this proposition from Sarat and Simon coupled with the racialized discourse that emerged during Reagan's early presidential years of welfare state retrenchment indicate how studying the relationship between law and culture also has core material implications. Cultural contests that occur (e.g. refugee "animals" versus "real" Americans) over how to symbolically negotiate meaning and distinguish difference rely on law as a system to encode a materially-realized order of things, i.e., refugees racialized as "animals" become transformed through legal-cultural meaning making into dispossessed "criminals" without rights or protections, meanwhile "real Americans" become transformed into "deserving" citizens granted state entitlements and protections. Likewise, material organizations of society rely on culture as the legitimating proposition for their imposed distributional forms, i.e. culture provides the symbolic material that collectively authorizes the existing material structure of a society. In this way, law can also be understood as an interface between the symbolic and material, where, as Rosemary Coombe suggests, it exists and emerges from concrete political-economic fields of contestation that are constitutive with culture.³²⁴

REBUKING REFUGEE DEVIANCE AND BOUNDING ACCEPTABLE REFUGEEHOOD

So returning to the concrete field from which the public made sense of the Orange Grove case, how did the post-editorial public discourse, as represented by the Clearinghouse reader submissions, begin to specifically racialize Vietnamese refugees in light of this hypervisible moment of refugee deviance to dispossess "bad refugees" entirely compared to their "good refugee" counterparts? Broadly, dissenting submissions began to

³²³ Sarat, Austin D., and Jonathan Simon, eds. *Cultural Analysis, Cultural Studies, and the Law: Moving beyond Legal Realism*. Duke University Press, 2003.

³²⁴ Coombe, Rosemary J. "Contingent Articulations: A Critical Cultural Studies of Law." In *Law in the Domains of Culture* edited by Austin Sarat and Thomas R. Kearns. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (1998). p. 21-64.

distinguish between acceptable refugees and unacceptable refugees in three ways: gratitude towards the gift of freedom, juridical assimilation as indicated by respect for the law, and relationship to the welfare state.

Refugee Gratitude and the Gift of Freedom

According to Mimi Thi Nguyen the Indochinese refugee subject's emergence is definitionally tied to "the gift of freedom."³²⁵ That is, only in the wake of both the war that was waged *and* being "saved" from that war was the formation of the indebted refugee subject possible. Opening *The Gift of Freedom* with a discussion of Madalenna Lai's refugee story, Nguyen (1) quotes a December 2001 article from the *Los Angeles Times* describing Lai's Rose Parade Float set to travel its Pasadena route nearly three decades after the Fall and just a few months after September 11th. In the story, Lai is described as having "arrived on U.S. soil in May 1975 after fleeing the Communist takeover of Vietnam in a boat"—at the time age "34, penniless and the sole provider for four children, all younger than 10." Noting her transformation from desperate refugee to grateful immigrant, however, the article continues by describing Lai's gratitude for freedom's opportunities after being gifted American rescue:

Lai quickly created a career for herself, starting beauty shops in El Monte and then in Pomona before opening a cosmetology school in Pomona...The Vietnamese refugee sees the life she has cultivated in the United States as a gift from the people and country that adopted her...In 1993, she decided to thank as many of them as she could and let the world know how grateful she is.

On New Year's Day she will do just that to a worldwide television audience estimated at 350 million people and an audience along the parade route of 1.5 million. Amid the floral pomp of the Tournament of Roses will come Lai's version of a thank-you card: a fully bedecked parade float that suggests the story of the boat people like her who left Vietnam by sea.

In a year in which the Rose Parade is expected to be awash with red, white and blue patriotism...Lai's Vietnam-themed float will carry a simple message from an immigrant: "Thank you America and the world."

"Her gratefulness invites us to consider a second tale," Nguyen (2) contends, "about the powers through which a benevolent empire bestows on an other freedom."

In Lai's words, we find all the good and beautiful things the gift claims as its consequence—the right to have rights, the choice of life direction, the improvement of body and mind, the opportunity to prosper—against a spectral future of their nonexistence, under communism, under terror. That she is rescued from such psychic death through the gift of freedom as a promise of care encodes a benign, rational story about the United States as the uncontested superpower on the world stage today.

Saved from supposed non-existence under communism and spotlighted just as the United States launched its war in Afghanistan, the image of Lai attempting to repay an unpayable debt for freedom's extension in the immediate months following 9/11 managed to circulate the performance of freedom's intrinsic value and America's role as freedom's guarantor among an estimated worldwide television audience of 350 million. Consequently, through these performances of indefinite refugee gratitude, images of grateful subjects continuously evoked a renewed

³²⁵ Nguyen, Mimi Thi. *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages*. Duke University Press, 2012.

national pride that helped recuperate America from its infamous wars, masking imperial–state violence behind the veil of humanitarian rescue.

As readers of *The Orange County Register* consequently debated whether Judge Francisco Briseño’s sentences verged on “cruel and unusual” punishment, one of the primary ways they discursively distinguished between deserving refugees and undeserving refugees was through the logic and rationale undergirding the gift of freedom. Returning to the comment made by Karl A. Sense earlier, the Huntington Beach resident explained that what made the crime “all the more reprehensible” was that “these Orientals were given the hospitality of this nation and freedom from the tyranny which exists in the country from whence they came.” Freedom is here positioned as an inherent American possession and tyranny the immanent condition of Vietnam; meanwhile, the refugee is reminded that their presence is the result of American hospitality, not obligation. As another reader, Aron Weibe (Torrance) echoed, “This is not Vietnam. These people came to this country to escape the barbarisms that would be inflicted on them had they stayed in their native land. In exchange for that, it is not at all unreasonable to demand that anyone who accepts our hospitality must accept our laws and customs. If they do not like it, they can always go home and let the Red regime there use them for buzzard bait.” Written in response to the op–ed that seemed to take sides with the four convicted refugees, both Sense and Weibe’s comments rely on the gift of freedom as the justifying pretext for both the conditions under which refugees are allowed to remain in the United States and the conditions under which they are deemed to have overstayed their welcome. If gratitude is not perpetually given—in this context, through refugee acceptance of American laws and customs—then freedom becomes a revocable condition, not a guarantee or obligation.

A key distinction between the good and bad refugee therefore emerged in relation to the extent to which the refugee subject could regularly profess and perform gratitude towards being given the gift of freedom. Good refugees were reminded that deviations from this gratitude that operated in solidarity with bad refugees would threaten their own status as acceptable refugee subjects. After the sentencing of the three refugees who were tried as adults, five Vietnamese language newspapers issued a shared condemnation of the severity of the sentences. Signed by the newspaper publishers, an editor, and eight community leaders, the statement asserted that Briseño’s sentences had been excessive and “designed to punish rather than rehabilitate.”³²⁶ Moreover, the statement said that “the constitutional rights of the men were violated because language problems prevented them from fully understanding the legal procedures” and that “the trial was unfair because... ‘excessively intensified’ publicity about the case in local newspapers impeded the selection of an impartial jury.” “We are not judging their guilt or innocence,” said Tran Minh Cong, president of the Vietnamese Association of Orange County and one of those who signed the statement. “We are concerned that they didn’t get a fair trial. We also think that the sentences are ridiculous.”

Decrying this act of refugee solidarity and rejecting the liberal theory of rehabilitation over punishment, Marshall Norris (Anaheim) rebuked, “Whether all mankind agrees or not, this was truly a vicious crime and deserves, to quote your editorial, a vicious punishment. To the Vietnamese newspapers who were so critical of the punishment, remember our laws were designed to punish persons who break them. It is only a pipe dream that drifted away so long ago, that crime violators could, should, or would be rehabilitated.” Reiterating Norris’s point, David Dimick (Laguna Hills) challenged, “I found it interesting to read that five Vietnamese publishers, an editor and eight community leaders said, in part, ‘Judge Brisenos sentences were designed to punish, not rehabilitate.’ My question: What is wrong with punishing people who commit acts like these?”

³²⁶ Welborn, Larry. “5 Vietnamese Newspapers to Publish Condemnation of Sentences Given Rapists.” *The Orange County Register*. April 24, 1981. p. A3.

Legal Assimilation and Juridical Subjectivity

Consequently, the gift of freedom required that good refugee subjects cultivate a legal consciousness that stood before and revered the law as a rational American enterprise, where questioning law's claim to rationality or fairness served to compromise the claim undergirding the gift itself.³²⁷ As such, ambivalent refugees or refugees acting in solidarity with bad refugees tested the gift of freedom's conditional terms of receipt, which in turn jeopardized their own status within the acceptable bounds of refugeehood. In this process of cultural negotiation, refugee citizenship therefore became tantamount to assimilation into an American legal order of things, which disciplined the refugee into a juridical subject expected to accept and authorize the legal-bureaucratic authority of the state.³²⁸

As a result, good refugeehood therefore also became negotiated and bound through the language of legal assimilation as associated with progression into modernity. In response to the editorial's reasoning that the four refugees had not understood the severity of their crimes due to cultural differences, I. Sigworth (Newport Beach) wrote, as to "their confusion since their arrests as to why so much has been made of their rape spree...Bo Quoc Pham has been in America for at least six years (left Vietnam in 1975). If poor Mr. Pham is still confused after six years of living in this country, would the writer concede that Mr. Pham has made little or no effort to becoming familiar with the country that gave him freedom? Did Mr. Pham graduate from one of our American high schools or has he wandered aimlessly for six years within the refugee community? I find it interesting indeed that the four refugees had time to learn how to purchase a gun (or guns), the words, "I kill, I kill" and to tell American girls that "this will teach you to stay off the streets at night" but "still not...understand the American view of rape." Consequently, the comment implies that the expectation of assimilation that is attached to the gift of freedom involves an assimilation into American legal norms and reasoning. After six years of living in the country from approximately age 14 through 20, which was Pham's age at the time of being sentenced, the comment evaluates that this should have been more than enough for proper assimilation to have taken place. Instead, it criticizes, Pham has only "wandered aimlessly" without taking advantage of the gift of freedom's professed opportunities.

Welfare State Dependency

Finally, in this materialization of "law as culture as law" within a post-Fordist America that increasingly saw the transnational flight of financial capital, tax cuts, and welfare state retrenchment, the boundaries of acceptable refugeehood also became framed through these discursive negotiations of the deserving citizen-subject vis-à-vis the welfare state. News reports, government officials, and social scientific studies on Vietnamese assimilation converged to construct the racialized good refugee subject as a model minority whose primary distinction became expressed through their idealized autonomy from the welfare state. Recalling Robert G. Lee's (257) work on the Cold War construction of the model minority, this narrative of Asian refugee ethnic assimilation fit the requirements of Cold War containment perfectly, where the "successful transformation of the Oriental from the exotic to the acceptable was a narrative of Americanization...through which America's anxieties about communism, race mixing, and transgressive sexuality might be contained and eventually tamed" via model minorities' embrace of the "American way of life." As Yên Lê Espiritu (94) writes,

³²⁷ Ewick, Patricia, and Susan S. Silbey. *The Common Place of Law: Stories from Everyday Life*. University of Chicago Press, 1998. P. 57-107.

³²⁸ White, Stephen K. "Foucault's Challenge to Critical Theory." *American Political Science Review* 80.2 (1986): 419-432.

[S]ocial scientists have participated in the construction of the “good refugee” by closely charting Vietnamese economic adaptation and celebrating successful adjustment as the attainment of the “American dream.” In the early 1980s, scholars, along with the mass media and policy makers, began to depict the newly arrived Vietnamese as the desperate-turned-successful—that is, as the newest “model minority.” Since World War II, social citizenship in the United States has been defined as “the civic duty of the individual to reduce his or her burden on society.” By the 1960s, two racial categories had emerged —“model minority” and “underclass”—to refer to nonwhite groups who were deemed independent of or reliant on the state, respectively. In the midst of the civil rights movement and race rebellions in cities across the United States, the popular press and social scientists began to publicize the alleged economic success of Asian Americans in part to delegitimize black and brown demands for economic equity and formal political claims. In other words, Asian Americans who heretofore had been conspicuously absent from public racial discourse suddenly became highly visible as the model of successful ethnic assimilation—“as embodying the human capital of diligence, docility, self-sufficiency and productivity.”³²⁹

Consequently, as the reader submissions debated the boundaries of good refugeehood, their meaning making drew on this symbolic repertoire of “model minority” as defined as independent from the welfare state and “underclass” as defined as reliant on the welfare state’s provisions to distinguish between good and bad refugees, respectively. Echoing the comments made by, for example, C.J. Gross (“The taxpayers will have to support these animals”) or Karl A. Sense (“No doubt they were also provided with all kinds of government help and subsidies not available to the average American”), Aron Weibe’s proposed “solution” to the problem of ungrateful, bad refugees thus summarizes how these refugee distinctions served to create symbolically and materially bounded internal categories within the refugee community, which in turn created marked differences in refugee subjects’ relationship to the nation state as deserving and undeserving subjects who are imagined to belong or not belong within the nation’s borders to reflect Cold War distinctions of enemy threat.^{330,331}

When Bo Pham, Dung Pham and Minh Nguyen were admitted to the United States by the INS, they promised to obey the law. Instead, they now stand guilty of over 50 felonies and sentenced to over 100 years in prison. Some way to thank their rescuers. Since incarceration (to say nothing of costs of apprehension, trial and treatment of the victims) will cost millions of dollars before all is said and done. I have a much better idea: The three should be turned over to the INS for immediate return to their former homeland. Everyone benefits—the state and county save, the people of California will be safe from further attack by these thugs—and most importantly, an example will be made to others who flee here for refuge and then rape and maim and kill. They will also learn that some here will do something very definitive about anti-social behavior.

PATHOLOGIZING BAD REFUGEES AND THE BIOPOLITICS OF THE REFUGEE REGIME

The 17-year-old leprosy victim, who left his homeland with his relatives approximately five years ago, has been treated for the rare disease ever since his arrival in this country, according to Len Foster, an administrator with the county health department. The youth's disease is not

³²⁹ Le Espiritu, Yen. *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees*. University of California Press, 2014.

³³⁰ Buff, Rachel Ida. "The Deportation Terror." *American Quarterly* 60.3 (2008): 523–551.

³³¹ Schrecker, Ellen. "Immigration and Internal Security: Political Deportations during the McCarthy Era." *Science & Society* (1996): 393–426.

contagious at this stage, Foster said, and is considered in remission...Foster said that the communicable disease section of the county health department has monitored the juvenile's treatment sessions at the U.S. Public Health Service in San Pedro for five years. Leprosy, he said, is a chronic disease which requires long-term treatment. It is infectious only for a short time in its early stages, he said. His section has monitored the juvenile's treatment to make sure he kept appointments for treatment sessions, he said. Very few cases of leprosy are reported in Orange County, Foster said, and most of those are usually refugees from Southeast Asia or illegal immigrants from the Latin American countries. He said that so far this year there have only been four reported cases of leprosy, compared to three for the same period last year. Municipal Court Judge Richard Orozco said he learned about the leprosy situation (earlier) in the week, and requested that medical officials in the jail check the other Vietnamese suspects to see if they also had the disease. Orozco said he was informed Tuesday that the three adults are healthy.³³²

– “Four Viet Teens Face 68 Charges – Leprosy Victim Held In Rape Spree,”
The Orange County Register, August 21, 1980

During initial reporting on the Orange Grove Case, the refugee minor's leprosy diagnosis became a matter of public attention alongside other details of the case. Focused on informing the public of the potential for contagion, the excerpted text demonstrates how, in addition to conjuring miscegenationist fears of Asian sexual predation, early refugee deviance in Orange County was interpreted through the lens of pathologized difference and fear of contamination. As a result, refugees became constituted as racially distinct through their cultural formation within what Mimi Thi Nguyen has termed the “the refugee condition.”³³³

As Nguyen (54) has argued, the “refugee condition” can be understood through an engagement with Foucault's genealogy of the abnormal individual:

Not an illness, but also not not-an-illness, according to Foucault, “the condition is a sort of permanent causal background on the basis of which illness may develop in a number of processes and episodes. In other words, the condition is the abnormal basis upon which illness become[s] possible.” In a “normal” state, human consciousness is aimed toward possible action and probable consequence, in a universe that is knowable through empirical measures. This capacity for human freedom and intercourse with others rests in discriminating by moral reasoning between that which belongs to the interior, and to the exterior, of the subject. The condition therefore names the absence of an underlying structure, or the underdevelopment of such a structure, that would otherwise commit the faculties of human consciousness to their proper place and proportion.

Thus, lacking an interior rationality, the abnormal subject is rendered incompatible with the professed rationality of the system and therefore considered out of place, threatening, and polluting. When refugees first arrived for processing in the camps, Nguyen discusses how it was “not difficult to find statements imputing to the refugee the under-development, or arrested development, of apperception, understanding, and reason,” characterizing

³³² Welborn, Larry. “Four Viet Teens Face 68 Charges – Leprosy Victim Held In Rape Spree.” *The Orange County Register*. August 21, 1980. p. A2.

³³³ Nguyen, Mimi Thi. *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages*. Duke University Press, 2012.

all refugees as relegated to some “permanently anterior time” of irrational being until proper assimilation could pull them into the modern present. The refugee condition, in other words, operates as the backstory for diasporic Vietnamese subjects to form the basis from which illness and normality are categorized and ordered, where assimilation becomes the ostensible “solution” to refugee “under-development” while failure to prove assimilability authorizes exclusion on the basis that the premodern subject might still pose a threat to the modern community. As Nguyen (72–73) continues, the refugee camp in particular can thus be read as the intermediary site between primitive space and modern space where refugee lives were brought into a political calculation through the state’s regulation of their productive economic and biological capacities as a general population.

Such encampment first concurred with the premise that the refugees are “the most symptomatic,” and then established this population pathology as an operational principle for their biopolitical management. Here the refugee population is a mass object in a technical–administrative field of power operating through governmental policies and state laws and managerial and bureaucratic institutions, including charities and other agencies of civil society. This assemblage of interdependent institutions together sought to monitor, measure, evaluate, and develop the refugees’ life capacities, as well as contain their potential danger to public health and human security, through tactics encompassing health screenings, immunizations, and the guidance of public but also private conduct (including directives about bathing and using deodorant), as well as employment placement and vocational training programs. Addressed to widespread anxieties and preoccupations about scarce resources and biological contagion, these tactics proposed to ensure the necessary social and economic order for the refugees’ reintegration into the external world...

Put another way, such tactics and technologies might be understood to be the gift through which liberalism creates the conditions under which one is free to be free. Into this schema, the narrative of the camp is scripted both as the scene of the refugee’s profound deprivation...and the scene of her rehabilitation through discipline, regularity, and occupation. Obliging the refugee to submit to the camp’s management and use of time, to the regularity of certain actions and habits, including work, the camp regime also holds the inchoate promise of her freedom.

Through biopolitical and disciplinary technologies specific to camp life that placed the entire population of refugees in a “technical–administrative field of power,” refugees who managed to demonstrate the capacity to successfully assimilate therefore became placed within it as relatively protected modern–subjects–in–production, acceptable as long as they could demonstrate their rational place in the civilizational order of things. As Aihwa Ong (88) has correspondingly observed, the refugee camps therefore sought the “systematic naming and ordering of refugee illnesses,” where the condition of refugee pathology was first sorted in the camps but then later would follow refugees into resettlement as they interacted with charities, welfare offices, and other social service providers.³³⁴

Refugees consequently arrived with this “permanent causal background” in tow, where refugee subjects–in–production were required to regularly display and authenticate their trajectory of successful assimilation in the resettlement context in order to symbolically distance themselves from the discrediting features of the refugee condition. That is, even after being authorized for resettlement, refugees—because of the refugee condition—needed to affirm their deservingness through regularly displaying and attesting to their proper assimilation into modernity. In turn, the logic of assimilability consequently produced gradations of properly

³³⁴ Ong, Aihwa. *Buddha Is Hiding*. University of California Press, 2003.

assimilated refugee subjects, where inevitably, as Lisa Marie Cacho (17) shows, the production of refugee value as deserving of rights-based personhood necessitated the relative devaluation and pathologization of “an/other,” which in this case was the poorly assimilated bad refugee still relegated to a “permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire.”^{335,336}

NEGOTIATING REFUGEE DISPOSABILITY

As a critical juncture in the county’s own history of transitioning to the punitive turn, the Orange Grove Case is thus significant for understanding racialization as it functioned after what Howard Winant called the “racial break.”³³⁷ According to Winant, prior to the Second World War white supremacy operated as the explicit logic for organizing global race relations and hierarchies. During this period of formal state racism, legal structures and practices that maintained, for example, Jim Crow segregation in education, housing, employment, and public space were formally authorized by state officials and constituted the taken-for-granted logic of the pre-WWII racial order. After the events of WWII politicized white supremacy’s genocidal and nationalistic impulses as Hitler embarked on his campaign of ethnic cleansing to promote an Aryan state, antiracist activist movements managed to connect the horror of the Holocaust to global decolonization movements occurring throughout the “Third World” as the global conduct of war also brought together local racial struggles under a broader ideological umbrella critiquing the coordinated function of European fascism, racial apartheid, and colonial governance.

As a result of the racial break, the tensions just identified largely informed the key ideological debate between the United States and the Soviet Union as they embarked on their post-WWII Cold War geopolitical contest. As Mary Dudziak has shown, the Soviet Union regularly produced Cold War propaganda directed towards the United States that criticized capitalism as an inherently racialized system that subjugated labor according to global hierarchies of human value.³³⁸ From this perspective, capitalism and white supremacy could not be disentangled, and an adoption of capitalism (i.e. an alignment with the United States) would thereby foreclose the ability of postcolonial nations and nonwhite racial groups to participate in capitalism without reinscribing their own racial subjugation. In response, the United States’ Cold War strategy needed to in turn respond to the racial break and Soviet accusations of capitalism’s irredeemability by officially becoming an antiracist regime in talk if not practice, in which capitalism was asserted as a liberating economic system available to all willing to work hard enough within its rules to reap its freedoms.

As Jodi Melamed has theorized, after WWII the racial orientation of the US can therefore be broadly characterized as a period of formal state antiracisms marked by three major expressions: racial liberalism (1940s to 1960s), liberal multiculturalism (1980s and 1990s), and neoliberal multiculturalism (2000s).³³⁹ As rationalizing discourses that emerged from shifts in the Cold War political economy, each expression therefore corresponded to the United States’ trajectory since WWII from first, state-oriented Cold War expansionism, to later post-Keynesian market-oriented transnational capitalism, to finally contemporary neoliberalism. As such, immediate post-WWII Cold War expansionism co-formed with *racial liberalism* to conceive of racism as an irrational prejudice incompatible with capitalism. Through this framework, the state established itself as the

³³⁵ Cacho, Lisa Marie. *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. NYU Press, 2012.

³³⁶ McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge, 2013. p.30.

³³⁷ Winant, Howard. "The Modern World Racial System." *Souls* 4.3 (2002): 17–30.

³³⁸ Dudziak, Mary L. *Cold War Civil Rights*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

³³⁹ Melamed, Jodi. *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

rational purveyor of capitalist freedoms whose racially-neutral rewards were curtailed by antiquated and outmoded racisms out of place in modernity, where extensions of equal opportunity, possessive individualism, and cultural citizenship were presented as the state-given solutions to the “problem” identified during the racial break.

Later as the state economy shifted during the pivotal decade to a post-Keynesian, market-oriented form of transnational capitalism, the expression of formal state antiracism likewise shifted to *liberal multiculturalism* because the hegemony of post-war racial liberalism was eventually undermined by its own contradictions. Professing that the state could rationally address the irrationalities of racism through capitalist uplift, desegregation, and the cultivated tolerance of white liberals, racial liberalism found itself confronted with the reality of enduring and growing racial poverty in urban centers abandoned by white capital even after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. More radical expressions of antiracist formations began to challenge racial liberalism’s claims of holding the “solution” to the racial problem, forwarding materialist solidarities that generally questioned cultural normativity and American hegemony through far ranging movements such as “Black Power, black feminism, Chicano nationalism, Asian American civil rights, American Indian sovereignty, queer, third worldist, women of color, [and the] New Left,” which “sought psychic decolonization, nonexploitative ethico-economic orders, an internationalism aligned with the third world, and new powers for new collectivities.”³⁴⁰ In response to these challenges and following the pivotal decade that saw the dismantling of the Keynesian welfare state in favor of a free market model of economically prioritized governance, Melamed argues that liberal multiculturalism emerged to articulate new state-approved terms of social solidarity that were required to disguise and enable the dislocations produced from deindustrialization at home, capital flight abroad, and the growing class consolidation of power among elites while still operating within formally antiracist terms that could accommodate America’s growing post-1965 multicultural population.

As a result, liberal multiculturalism worked to incorporate and abstract the insurgent antiracist movements of the late 1960s and 70s in the same way racial liberalism had worked to incorporate and defuse more radical anticolonial movements that had emerged in the early to middle twentieth century, innovating state antiracism to emphasize representation, diversity, inclusion, and “gaining voice” as the authorized solution to racism during the Keynesian-to-free-market shift.³⁴¹ The essential prerogative of liberal multiculturalism was to therefore “manage minoritized difference—to run difference through [a] machinery of validation, certification, and legibility to generate forms that augmented, enhanced, and developed hegemony rather than disrupt it.”³⁴² In this racial order, the master narrative from racial liberalism of racially minoritized groups triumphing over racism to fully participate in American democracy was retained, but a complementary narrative emerged to center the “fully included” racially diverse subject as the vehicle through which that vision could be realized. Setting full inclusion under liberal multiculturalism as the primary goal therefore limited the horizon of antiracist intervention to still be within the primary domain of the state and subjected nonwhite groups to normative modes of validation and assessment that proclaimed giving “authentic voice” while still inhibiting radical dissent. The minoritized subject, once a simple object of tolerance and uplift, was thereby transformed into a productive asset for capital able to, on the one hand, commodify their own racialized narratives as a form of cultural property for market exchange and, on the other, authorize through their inclusion that capital in the post-Keynesian era was still working the way it claimed it was—i.e., including the racial masses in a system of

³⁴⁰ Ibid, 26.

³⁴¹ Ibid, 36.

³⁴² Ibid, 31.

capitalist consumer freedom purportedly untethered to systemic racial devaluation or subjugation. As Melamed (35–36) elaborates:

With the inclusion of people of color, the thesis could then be reworked to describe the United States as an internalized model of global diversity. Its logic justified applying the ethnic model of immigrant social mobility to people of color (dissimulating race as the same thing as ethnicity in the post – civil rights era) and disguised U.S. expansionism as merely a universal nation fulfilling its destiny. “We are the world” also structured the new economy. U.S. multiculturalism became the cultural model in which capitalist social relations were arranged and exported, inserted, or infiltrated into other locations. At home liberal–multicultural ideology persuaded Americans to accept capital flight abroad in the name of being antiracist and cosmopolitan. Abroad, it indicated to the countries of the global South that development was not a revival of civilizationist imperialism but a path to a just, pluralistic world system where neutral free markets would enrich culturally diverse nations...Liberal–multicultural terms were thus incorporated into the production of racialized privilege and stigma bifurcating communities of color. *Within racialized communities and according to the dictates of liberal multiculturalism, responsible and representative community members were identified as good over and against those who were identified as bad, while relational judgments were made about minoritized communities as a whole, with model minorities—primarily Asian racial formations—being elevated over and against African American racial formations that came to signify intractability in the face of liberal–multicultural mores* [emphasis added]. Liberal–antiracist terms of privilege and stigma also policed the bounds of acceptable racial discourse, and so it became difficult for African Americans to discuss African American impoverishment, for example, without being judged ad hominem as having played the victim or the race card. The terms of racialized stigma recycled those of previous eras and included the criminalizing of urban communities. Yet marginalized majorities of minoritized people were now as much dematerialized as stigmatized. Isolated and replaced with racialized cultural products, such communities were made illegible to the nation.

Liberal multiculturalism thus reinscribed American capitalist hegemony through the selective inclusion of good model minorities, who, through their apparent economic success and diverse inclusion, testified to the moral supremacy and unquestioned rationality of the capitalist model as a racially–neutral, meritocratic economic order. In doing so, liberal multiculturalism managed to dematerialize the claims made by insurgent antiracist groups through the superficial inclusion of nonwhite members in a reconfigured hierarchy of racial difference that privileged those on either side of the “color line” who could leverage and put into circulation their difference in the service of capitalism and the nation.

Finally, as the US economy has shifted to its more contemporary iteration in the form of neoliberalism, Melamed theorizes that *neoliberal multiculturalism* emerged from this postwar genealogy after liberal multiculturalism’s own decline to constitute the current expression of formal state antiracism. As the 1990s saw new and resurgent materialist solidarities emerge to resist the extractive and coercive conditions imposed by free trade policies and economic globalization, claims once made under liberal multiculturalism that globalization would promote equitable development for all faced the reality of its rhetorical mismatch, where it had become evident by that point that the opening of many former Third World economies had only resubjugated them under the asymmetrical terms imposed by the world capitalist system. At the same time, as global capitalism reached its point of full development characterized by free trade, deregulation, speculative markets, land and natural resource privatization, and the rise of international financial and regulatory institutions, their collective influence also worked to subsume national governments themselves within an increasingly interdependent world

market system, a phenomenon called “neoliberal sovereignty.” Under neoliberal sovereignty, the ability of nationalist discourses on antiracism to shape citizenship became constrained within the logics of the global system, creating global orders of citizenship and noncitizenship that prioritized the market’s rubric of human value over the state’s rubric, in whatever ways they differed. As Melamed (39–40) elaborates:

The concept neoliberal sovereignty emphasizes that neoliberalism, far more than a purely economic system, is also a world–historical configuration of governance and biological and social life, premised on the belief that the market is better than the state at distributing resources and managing human life. The term not only indicates a constellation in which governments function in the interest of capital maximization but also signifies that neoliberal calculations have come to govern biopolitical life, to rationalize, engineer, and organize forms of humanity. In particular, neoliberal sovereignty has produced what Aihwa Ong has called “differentiated citizenship”—*a differentiated experience of citizenship that ensures governments protect those who are valuable to capital, whether formally citizens or not, and devalue and render vulnerable those who are not valuable within circuits of capital, whether formally citizens or not* [emphasis added]. Given liberal multiculturalism’s pluralist and nationalist orientation, its racializing schemas were insufficient for coding racialized privilege and stigma in the context of neoliberalism’s differentiated citizenship. In addition, with the supersession of the Development phase of U.S.–led transnational capitalism, liberal–multicultural terms could no longer attach antiracist value to global capitalist expansion as they did previously, by portraying the world as gradually maturing through transnational capitalist development into a multicultural community of coequal nations.

Consequently, as America became interdependently configured within the globalized, neoliberal economic system, the shift from liberal multiculturalism to neoliberal multiculturalism also affected the underlying logic of value that rendered some subjects as deserving, protected, and entitled and others as without value and therefore disposable to capital and—by extension under neoliberalism sovereignty—the nation state. Under this evaluative logic, citizenship becomes flexible and differentiated so that its protections are asserted to global subjects, whether formally citizens or not, who can make themselves legibly useful to the global circulation of capital. Meanwhile, global subjects who cannot express their utility—be it the dislocated, the outmoded, the irrational, or the antithetical—become the surplus waste of a market system whose only goal is to maximize profit and narrate its right to do so as a given.

In order to accomplish this mystification, Melamed argues that neoliberalism further participated in rhetorical abstraction by using the key frames employed under multiculturalism (e.g. “openness,” “diversity,” “freedom”) to no longer refer to social relationships between racial groups but to the economy itself. Therefore the target of antiracism shifted from the racialized individual to the economic system. Through displacing the openness, diverse inclusion, and freedom originally forwarded by antiracist state discourses as qualities that should be extended to liberal multicultural citizens onto the free market system itself, the “solution” to the racial break became expressed under neoliberalism as synonymous with “open *societies*,” “*economic freedoms*,” and “*consumerist diversity*.”³⁴³ As a consequence, neoliberal multiculturalism transformed the liberal multicultural subject of diverse inclusion in the nation state into the “global multicultural citizen” whose wealth, mobility, and political power, irregardless of formal citizenship, became the proposition that authorized neoliberalism’s arrangement of global capitalist production, consumption, and human assessment. Taking this altogether to understand how Chapter 1’s detailed discussion of Orange County’s political economy relates to Melamed’s

³⁴³ Ibid, 42–43.

framework of post-WWII racialization, what can the Orange Grove Case teach us about how racial capitalism consequently interacted with law to reconfigure the global color line after the post-WWII racial break?

As discussed, the trial represented Orange County's internal class struggles characterized by the intensified dislocation of working class whites who exercised their power through contesting taxation at the local level. In the California case, growing class divides were exacerbated by the state's reliance on the "warfare-welfare" or military Keynesian state, which had originally offered upward mobility through stable jobs to both blue-collar industrial and white-collar "R&D" workers to later only retain white-collar jobs and replace unionized blue-collar jobs in manufacturing with un-unionized immigrant labor. As California continued to economically grow from this "glocalization" and as immigration seemed to increase rapidly to shift the state's demographic makeup, working class whites mounted tax revolts in an attempt to re-externalize their obligation and keep their resources to themselves, which in turn decreased the ability of the state to provide basic services, ultimately leading tax revolters to increasingly blame why they weren't seeing their piece of the pie on immigrants who had "stolen American jobs" and on welfare dependent persons using an "unfair share" of increasingly dwindling public tax dollars.³⁴⁴ As James O'Connor (10) said of Karl Marx's observation that "tax struggle is the oldest form of class struggle," the taxpayer backlash movement can thus be understood as a general indicator of state illegitimacy, where the authority of the state to rationally distribute resources and opportunities amongst its citizenry became an object of suspicion and doubt in the 1970s and early 1980s.³⁴⁵

As Democratic candidate, Tom Bradley, a retired African American policeman and four-term LA mayor, lost to Reagan's ideological successor, George Deukmejian, in the 1982 election for California governor, the Orange Grove Case therefore played out in the midst of neoliberalism's consolidation of authority following the decline of liberal Keynesianism, during which it offered market-structured solutions to political problems by way of, for example, Deukmejian's implementation of the nation's first workfare program.³⁴⁶ Conditioning welfare receipt on beneficiaries holding paid jobs while receiving benefits, Deukmejian's workfare program started requiring full-time mothers and even mothers who were also in school full-time to provide evidence of performing paid work starting in 1985. From this view, the Orange Grove Case can be taken alongside the taxpayers revolt as linked to the broader class struggle that took place in California and later throughout the nation regarding the declining legitimacy of the Keynesian welfare state, where, through the Orange Grove Case in particular, we can trace how neoliberal multiculturalism began to reconfigure the boundaries of acceptable citizenship as subjects admitted under liberal multiculturalism found themselves in the interface where prior logics of liberal subjectification became transformed under neoliberalism into market logics: specialization, efficiency, competition, and profit maximization. Thus, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore (83-84) has laid out:

The central contradiction for the waning welfare-warfare, or military Keynesian, state was this: the outcomes of tax struggle translated into delegitimation of programs the state could use to put surpluses back to work, while at the same time, the state retained bureaucratic and fiscal apparatuses from the golden age. The massive restructuring of the state's tax base in effect made surplus the Keynesian state's capacities. However, the state did not disappear—just as surplus workers, or land, or other idled factors of production do not disappear. Rather, what withered was the state's legitimacy to act as the Keynesian state. The state's crisis, then, was also a crisis for people whose protections against calamity,

³⁴⁴ Moseley, Jack. "The New Immigrants: Is There Enough to Go Around?" *The Orange County Register*. May 31, 1981. p. 6.

³⁴⁵ O'Connor, James. *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*. Routledge, 2017.

³⁴⁶ Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. University of California Press, 2007. p. 94-95.

or opportunities for advancement, would be made surplus by the state, into which their hard-fought incorporation was only ever partial and therefore contingent. A related crisis, for the entire surplus population, rested on how absolutely they would be abandoned and whether their regulation would take new forms.

“The postwar pragmatic care once unevenly bestowed on labor was transferred, with an icing of solicitude, to capital,” where the state under growing neoliberal sovereignty increasingly prioritized capital’s needs, “particularly on how to minimize impediments, and maximize opportunities, for capital recruitment and retention.” Glocalization consequently made precarious and unnecessary protections for laboring classes who were no longer needed for the expansion of capital. How absolutely abandoned this surplus labor would become, Gilmore argues, became tied to how the state would go on to reproduce its own legitimacy as its Keynesian obligations became vacated for market priorities.

The new state built itself in part by building prisons. It used the ideological and material means at hand to do so, renovating its welfare-warfare capacities into something different by molding surplus finance capital, land, and labor into the workfare-warfare state. The result was an emerging apparatus that, in an echo of the Cold War Pentagon’s stance on communism, presented its social necessity in terms of an impossible goal—containment of crime, understood as an elastic category spanning a dynamic alleged continuum of dependency and depravation. The crisis of state capacity then became, peculiarly, its own solution, as the welfare-warfare state began the transformation, bit by bit, to the permanent crisis workfare-warfare state, *whose domestic militarism is concretely recapitulated in the landscapes of depopulated urban communities and rural prison towns* [emphasis added].

The state solution to its crisis of legitimation in the face of neoliberal restructuring therefore saw its surplus capacities diverted to the management of its post-Keynesian-state-building project through an anticrime, prison building strategy that could absorb the “surpluses that the newly developing political economy had not absorbed in other ways”—idled productive capacities including land, labor, and finance capital waiting to be put to use in the newly forming welfare-workfare state.³⁴⁷ Crisis hence became the permanent condition of the pugilistic carceral state, where “crime” became analogous to “communism” through the merger of domestic discourses of urban threat and Cold War discourses of protracted and diffuse war, which were both commanded to play boogeyman to a muscular state whose rearticulated legitimacy came from its capacity to both flexibly define the crisis and use whatever means at its disposal to contain it.³⁴⁸

The heated debate that occurred during the Orange Grove Case to distinguish between good refugees and bad refugees can therefore be understood as being shaped within the grooves of these political economic shifts and postwar antiracist discourses. In testing the boundaries of the welfare state’s limit and extent of obligation, the conviction of the four refugees subsequently determined that refugee deviance would not be accommodated and, moreover, severely punished; and in the reader submissions that followed, local residents in support of the punitive turn began to engage with the legal decision to affirm its moral righteousness, outlining in their discursive claims the conditions under which refugee presence would still be tolerated. Acceptable, good refugees hence emerged as those who remained perpetually and demonstrably grateful for the gift of freedom, who were willing to assimilate as juridical subjects in awe of American law as a magisterial, rational, and legitimate form of authority, and who, as model minorities, managed to find capitalist success and reap

³⁴⁷ Ibid, 54.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 57.

freedom's rewards without having to rely on welfare assistance. Good refugees therefore became emblematic of liberal multiculturalism's expression of post-Keynesian citizenship where their classification as responsible and upstanding members of their minoritized communities constructed them as good (i.e. modern, law-abiding, economically productive) in relation to the designation of some members as bad (i.e., "animalistic," "lazy," "thugs"). Working to both produce differentiated refugee citizenships as well as assert Asian racial formations as more deserving than Black racial formations overall, this intra-racialization of refugee subjects consequently speaks to how the global color line reconfigured itself after 1965 to dematerialize the claims made by antiracist movements through superficially including good model minorities and leveraging their racial narratives to work in service of the purportedly antiracist American capitalist project.

What the discursive formation of the bad refugee additionally illustrates, moreover—in relation to Gilmore's argument—is that refugee subjectification occurred not only under the organizing logic of liberal multiculturalism but also, because of the Orange Grove event and its timing relative to transformations in California's political economy, under the growing authority of neoliberal multiculturalism that began to supercede it. As a result, the discursive formation of bad refugees in Reagan's first 100 days as welfare dependent, animalistic, and irreformable worked to lend cultural shape to how the criminalized would be narrated during the punitive turn to reaffirm the rational and moral authority of the state to do whatever was needed to contain the threat of crime. Bad refugees would subsequently be discursively realized from the raw material of the case's early contestations into "Asian gang members," serving as a criminalized category upon which the legal-bureaucratic state could efficiently act to forward its post-Keynesian project of state-building-through-prison-building.

The bad refugee consequently became configured and disciplined through these punitive discourses as irreformable and therefore ultimately permanently incarcerable and deportable. In publicly censuring the four convicted refugees and using them as an example for what happens when the boundaries of acceptable refugeehood are violated, the case functioned as a discursively rich critical juncture in county-refugee relations, when the terms of the gift of freedom, legal personhood, and the shrinking welfare state worked together through the constitutive operation of law, culture, and the political economy to begin differentiating between deserving, good refugee and undeserving, bad refugee subjects in the eyes of the modern state.³⁴⁹ More than just a singular case in Orange County's courtroom history, its importance hence lies in its role as the flashpoint after which internal refugee distinctions became regularly practiced and refugee criminalization became authorized. As Tustin resident Dorothy Padgett summarized, "I think the reason the public jumped on [*The Register's*] case so badly is that we are all aware that lenient punishment hasn't done very much for deterring crime. We have realized that crime is increasing, at an alarming rate, and we have been praying for someone to take just one little step toward controlling it. Judge Briseno's decision represented that." Apprehending the sexually deviant Vietnamese refugee as the hardened target for these fears concerning rising immigration and liberal tyranny in the form of unfair taxation, the Orange Grove case consequently illustrates how the refugee subject became reconfigured within the struggles mounted by a declining liberal Keynesian order and a clamorous "tough on crime" public in support of the Reagan revolution, producing some refugees as conditionally "keepable" and others as endemically disposable within the tightening conditions of relative value and rational order imposed by the neoliberal multicultural state.

³⁴⁹ Katz, Michael B. *The Undeserving Poor: America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

LIBERAL MULTICULTURAL SUBJECTIVITIES AND THE POSSESSIVE INVESTMENT IN HONORARY WHITENESS

Along the main streets of Chinatown, Vietnamese signs are now as common as those in Chinese. Over the last few years Chinatown has become a magnet for Vietnamese refugees, particularly those of Chinese extraction. In the last year alone, the number of Vietnamese operated businesses has doubled, to about 50 stores, and is expected to nearly double again by 1983. Of the estimated 16,000 people in Chinatown, 5,000 to 10,000 are said to be Vietnamese...

Chinatown's new Vietnamese immigrants are not especially welcome there. Old-timers complain about the new commerce, of the government aid they receive, which some believe is unnecessary. Some blame the Vietnamese for the local increase in crime, while others put them down for their clannishness, their aggressiveness or the twang in their Cantonese...

The Chinese isolate them, say they're not Chinese," observed Ben Lee, a member of the Los Angeles Police Department's Asian Task Force. "They're from there; they have that culture," one business woman spat out resentfully. "People are moving out; they don't want to be around them."³⁵⁰

– "Vietnamese Influx: It's Chinatown, with Subtitles,"
The Los Angeles Times, February 14, 1982

On Valentine's Day in 1982, *The Los Angeles Times* published an article on the increase in Chinese Vietnamese settlement in the city's downtown Chinatown neighborhood. As second wave refugees fleeing the war arrived, so too did a large number of Chinese Vietnamese who had come from Saigon's District 5 neighborhood, *Chợ Lớn* (oftentimes anglicized as Cholon). Thus, the text differentiates the former Chinatown from its shifting milieu due to encroaching refugee resettlement by saying, "What the Chinese from Vietnam have been recreating in Chinatown is perhaps more reminiscent of Cholon, the Chinese District of Saigon from which thousands fled during the fall of the U.S.-backed regime in 1975," i.e., a new Chinatown whose bustling streets now resembled those of Saigon's Chinatown rather than the Chinatowns established by "first globalization" immigrants from mainland China.³⁵¹ Elaborating in a subsection titled "Atmosphere Changes," the article continues:

The newcomers have brought a change to Chinatown, its atmosphere, and its street life. There are new jewelry shops, beauty salons, herb stores with Vietnamese patronage, and shops featuring fabrics that immigrants send to relatives still in Vietnam. And particularly on weekends, there are street vendors hawking from sidewalks and parking lots. By late morning on most days, crowds gather at the "noodle houses"—refugee versions of American fast-food establishments. Waiters squeeze through tables serving bowls filled with steaming spiced noodles and soup. By mid-afternoon, a more youthful, Western-dressed group might be found sipping *café filtre* or eating French pastries at Brodard, named after a well-known restaurant in

³⁵⁰ McMillan, Penelope. "Vietnamese Influx: It's Chinatown, with Subtitles." *The Los Angeles Times*. February 14, 1982. p. 40.

³⁵¹ Strikwerda, Carl J. "Imagining a Global World: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Tragedy of Great Power Politics in the First Era of Globalization, 1870–1914." *Culture and Civilization*. Routledge, 2018. 1–26.

Saigon. “I opened this to try to recreate the old atmosphere,” owner Tom Tovan said nostalgically. The street vendors are reminiscent of Southeast Asian street life. On weekends, some set up to sell clothes in one parking lot, and in another green vegetables are sold from wooden crates. In a third, Mexicans selling oranges compete with Vietnamese selling hot food.

“‘We want to be in Chinatown more than in a Viet town,’ said Vincent Cong Siu Ky, a Chinese from Vietnam who runs a supermarket,” the article explains, though it cautions that tensions have formed between locals and newcomers. “There is animosity toward them...because of the government aid they receive, and because they’re willing to work longer hours than the Americanized Chinese,” added a community liaison in New York’s Chinatown.

Interestingly, quotations included in the article from LA Chinatown’s “pioneer families” set up the stakes of the story as a struggle between “native” Chinese Americans—newly transformed in the post-1965 era as part of “immigrant America”—and recently arriving, yet-to-be-assimilated refugees. “The Chinese who built Chinatown and still call themselves ‘the pioneers’ are perhaps the most likely to be affected by the changes in Chinatown. The Vietnamese might well replace this group,” the article surmises. David Lee, part owner of Chinatown’s oldest restaurant, bemoans, “I see the old timers like us getting the squeeze. We’ve been sandwiched between the Hong Kong money and now the new, hungry immigrants.” Consequently, in placing “more assimilated” Chinese Americans as the proxy in Chinatown for an intraethnic rewriting of the possessive backlash arc seen in suburban Orange County, the *LA Times* article therefore set up the downtown neighborhood’s contestations to perfectly accommodate the internal distinctions that needed to be drawn during the era of liberal multiculturalism to differentiate between good and bad members of minoritized groups, particularly Asian ethnic groups after 1965. In subtly inserting the good Chinese American immigrant who has successfully assimilated into the role of a liberal multicultural Sir Rudimar type, the article positions the dislocated Chinatown residents as sympathetically aligned with whites also affected by global economic competition.

As scholars of the post-civil rights era have shown, culture came to replace purely biological justifications for narrating racial difference after the racial break and especially in the post-civil rights era, when essentialized notions of cultural difference became the dominant mode for legitimating sustained racial distinctions within the period of formal state antiracisms.^{352,353} Rather than plainly asserting that refugees were “materially” different in body in order to justify racial exclusion, cultural arguments performed analogous and increasingly important boundary work that instead used stereotypes of inferior and deficient cultures to sustain durable hierarchies of human value produced before the racial break.

Through the language of assimilation, subjectivities consequently emerged as the embodied solution for resolving the post-Keynesian contradictions in the racial capitalist order of things, where assimilation managed to distinguish between useful multicultural citizen subjects and poorly assimilated, disposable others out of place in linear-historical time. The internal logic of progress narratives concerning human-civilizational evolution that once were wholesale applied to colonies and empires became superimposed and rearticulated within individuals themselves for whom progress became commensurate with rejecting premodern cultural anachronisms for

³⁵² Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006. p. 39-47.

³⁵³ Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. “Thinking Through Race and Racism.” *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 38, no. 2, Mar. 2009, pp. 121-125.

Western habits, values, and tastes. Thus as Catherine S. Ramírez has forwarded, rather than viewing cultural assimilation and racialization as distinct processes, assimilation can be understood as itself a process of racialization through which the national boundary has been negotiated vis-à-vis a standard defined by the normative values of whiteness as the culmination of liberal individual advancement.³⁵⁴

In another part of the “Vietnamese Influx” article, long time resident Irwin Lai’s comment that “[t]hey have their living habits: they have a very high density, pile a lot of people into little apartments” and that there are problems with “sanitation, personal hygiene” can therefore be understood as an expression of cultural racism that managed to distinguish between assimilated Chinese Americans as “honorary whites” and not-yet-assimilated refugee others.³⁵⁵ Imposing racialized standards of proper domesticity and cleanliness, Lai’s characterization that refugees cram many people into small apartments and pose a threat to sanitation through their lack of hygiene managed to reinvigorate familiar tropes concerning the abnormal Asian family and the spread of Asian disease that arose during the period of Chinese exclusion, only this time, expanded to selectively allow ethnically Asian honorary whites to participate in their circulation.^{356,357}

Through this standard of assimilation into whiteness, both honorary white Chinese Americans and probationary refugee subjects consequently became differently positioned participants in a local “moral economy of deservingness,” defined by Sébastien Chauvin and Blanca Garcés-Masareñas as sites where social actors must demonstrate particular kinds of behaviors or adhere to particular values and ideals in exchange for rights, resources, and/or recognition.³⁵⁸ As such, when comments like that from David Lee are expressed (“I see the old timers like us getting the squeeze. We’ve been sandwiched between the Hong Kong money and now the new, hungry immigrants”), they more broadly demonstrate what Joong Won Kim has termed the “possessive investment in honorary whiteness,” where intra-ethnic othering in everyday interactions relies on attesting to relative assimilation to claim resources in the political economic field.³⁵⁹

However, as the imperative of assimilation demands, even the unruly new refugees had the potential to assimilate and were expected to eventually do so. As the text continues, “Whatever animosity exists between the more Americanized Chinese and the Chinese from Vietnam will pass,” Chamber of Commerce head, Irwin Lai, predicted. “They will be assimilated,” he said. “In due time, the Chinese will drop the Vietnamese connection and go along with the Chinese-Americans. The Viet culture, they have to drop that.” Pointing to the “more youthful, Western-dressed group [who] might be found sipping *café filtre* or eating French pastries,” they already somewhat exist, the article gestures, as the legacy of French colonialism already helped to jumpstart the process in transforming their Third World backwardness into Western modernity. Compelled into modern liberal multicultural subjecthood, properly assimilated refugees consequently would soon, too, be afforded the relative privileges of honorary whiteness during this period of political economic restructuring, while poorly assimilated

³⁵⁴ Ramírez, Catherine S. *Assimilation: An Alternative History*. University of California Press, 2020.

³⁵⁵ Tuan, Mía. *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?: The Asian Ethnic Experience Today*. Rutgers University Press, 1998.

³⁵⁶ Markel, Howard, and Alexandra Minna Stern. “Which Face? Whose Nation? Immigration, Public Health, and the Construction of Disease at America’s Ports and Borders, 1891–1928.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 42.9 (1999): 1314–1331.

³⁵⁷ Proschan, Frank. “Syphilis, Opium, and Pederasty’: Colonial Constructions of Vietnamese (and French) Social Diseases.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11.4 (2002): 610–636.

³⁵⁸ Chauvin, Sébastien, and Blanca Garcés-Masareñas. “Becoming Less Illegal: Deservingness Frames and Undocumented Migrant Incorporation.” *Sociology Compass* 8.4 (2014): 422–432.

³⁵⁹ Kim, Joong Won. “The Possessive Investment in Honorary Whiteness?: How Asian and Asian Americans Reify a Transnational Racial Order through Language.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45.1 (2022): 173–191.

refugees would remain consigned to the space of premodernity as anachronistic humans, disposable to the rationalizing impulses of globalizing capital.

“GANGLAND” INFILTRATES SUBURBIA: FEAR OF CHINATOWN CRIME AND SOLIDIFYING THE BAD REFUGEE INTO THE REFUGEE GANG MEMBER

The two masked men who gunned down seven persons in a Vietnamese restaurant early Sunday morning apparently missed their intended mark and the man they wanted to kill escaped virtually unscathed. Police are now searching for the man believed to have been the primary target of the shotgun assault at Hoang-My restaurant, a man known in the Vietnamese community simply as Mr. Tai. Also being sought for questioning is Mr. Tai's female companion, popular Vietnamese singer Julie Quang. Mr. Tai, believed by sources in the Vietnamese community to be a chieftain in gang circles, sought medical treatment for a minor wound at Fountain Valley Community Hospital shortly after the 2:30 a.m. shootings. However, when police and other shooting victims began arriving at the hospital, he left before being treated and hasn't been seen since. Police believe that Quang may have been wounded in the restaurant confrontation but, along with Mr. Tai, hurried from the hospital parking lot without having received treatment...

At the time of the shooting, neither Mr. Tai nor Quang was listed among the victims. Since then, however, it has been learned that the couple are central figures in a police investigation of gang-related activities that has crept into Los Angeles County. Mr. Tai, said to be in his early forties, is known by members of the Vietnamese community in Orange County to have been active in the Cholon District of Saigon. Though police refuse to confirm his standing here, among Vietnamese Mr. Tai is believed to be a low-profile leader of gang-linked elements, though there are no records to indicate that he has been involved in illegal activity. Nonetheless, members of the Vietnamese community described him as a powerful and feared man whose soft-spoken and cordial manner is at odds with his reputation. Included in that reputation is his nickname, Chem, meaning "to chop." The nickname is meant to be testimony to his skills as a Kung Fu master. Quang was a nightclub and recording star in Vietnam and has been a popular entertainer at Vietnamese activities in the United States.³⁶⁰

– “Did Gunmen Miss Their Mark? Police Seek Viet Man Who Fled GG Café,”
The Orange County Register, October 15, 1981

Prior to the Orange Grove Case igniting tensions between recently arriving refugees and dislocated white residents, infrequent mention of refugee crime occasionally entered local news discourse, with early themes largely speculating on the possibility of welfare fraud as the primary concern associated with housing such a large community of refugees reliant on government assistance. Around the time of the preliminary hearing for the Orange Grove Case in the fall of 1980, however, it was reported that four Vietnamese young men and teenagers, two living in Orange County and two in Los Angeles, had received 1-year jail sentences and four

³⁶⁰ Irwin, Delores Brooks and Rosa Kwong. “Did Gunmen Miss Their Mark? Police Seek Viet Man Who Fled GG Café.” *The Orange County Register*. October 15, 1981. p. 1.

years probation, respectively, for robbing \$400 from a Vietnamese restaurant. While charges against them had initially been dropped for lack of evidence, Garden Grove police later claimed that the two teenagers had admitted during interrogation that they were “members of a gang called the Frogm[e]n, whose leaders reportedly were under-water demolition experts in South Vietnam,” while detectives claimed that “they believe[d] all those participating in the robbery were gang members.”³⁶¹

Five months after the controversy over Judge Briseño’s sentences, fresh memories from the case coupled with lingering impressions that there was a growing “gang problem” in the refugee community to place the opening investigation concerning “Mr. Tai” in the eye of the storm as the purported “Kung Fu master” from Saigon’s Cholon District became imagined through news discourse as the leader of The Frogmen—guilty of bringing refugee crime and orientalized vice from Los Angeles’ refugee-transformed Chinatown neighborhood to the suburbs. As such, when the investigation emerged on the heels of both “the first successful Orange County prosecution of admitted Vietnamese gang members” and the Orange Grove Case, even though the four refugees from the Orange Groves Case were never directly accused of being formally gang affiliated, the uptick in speculative reporting on refugee gang activity during its height worked to create a general public perception that “gangland” crime had come to Orange County from Los Angeles’ Chinatown neighborhood in the form of “Mr. Tai” as a major threat to the suburban citizenry’s well-being and security. Consequently, this section turns to this case to show how speculative reporting on the suspected gang leader worked to discursively produce the “Indochinese gang member” as the hardened target for refugee criminalization and further discipline good refugees into cooperative juridical subjects with reverence for the law.

“A CASE THAT PLAYS LIKE A MYSTERY MOVIE”: THE TRIAL OF “MR. TAI”

Mr. Tai has been here before. The place is a courtroom. The charge, attempted murder. The alleged victim is Bong Bach, a Los Angeles County welfare department supervisor, who says Mr. Tai shot at him in Chinatown 18 months ago. Mr. Tai says he didn't do it. Mr. Tai's former attorney said he had seen hundreds of similar cases that district attorneys either reduced to assault or didn't even bother with. A non-injury shooting is insignificant in the criminal world of murder, rape and robbery, he said. But Mr. Tai isn't just any defendant. He is Tai Huu Nguyen, 40, a former South Vietnamese special forces soldier who some police agencies believe is a kingpin in Vietnamese organized crime, a specialist in extortion. The victims, police said, primarily have been Vietnamese business owners in Orange County.³⁶²

– “Mr. Tai Stars in Sequel: A Case That Plays Like a Mystery Movie,”
The Orange County Register, July 11, 1983

While initial reports of the Hoang My Restaurant shooting originally listed nine people sitting at the table when the attack occurred, including two Marines named Brian Scott and Son Van Vu, lead investigator Sgt. Phil Mason quickly honed in on “Mr. Tai” and Julie Quang as the persons of interest in the police search, distinguishing that some of the shooting victims, “including the two Marines, ‘just happened to be in the wrong

³⁶¹ Kwong, Rosa. “2 In Viet Gang Given Year Terms.” *The Orange County Register*. October 9, 1980. p. A9.

³⁶² Irwin, Delores Brooks. “Mr. Tai Stars in Sequel: A Case That Plays Like a Mystery Movie.” *The Orange County Register*. July 11, 1983. p. B5.

place at the wrong time.”³⁶³ Having discovered what appeared to be .38 caliber slugs inside the restaurant on the wall and in a door jamb, investigators theorized that there had been an exchange of gunfire instead of a one-way attack, though they could not find anyone to corroborate that assertion. As salacious reporting on the incendiary “gangland” shooting positioned the investigation as another flashpoint in local-refugee relations, pressure mounted for Garden Grove police to solve the case and bring the man they identified as “Mr. Tai” to justice for his implied gang ties. However, two weeks after the initial incident, Tai Huu Nguyen and Julie Quang emerged for questioning but were not charged due to lack of evidence, thereby frustrating police officers who found themselves at an investigatory dead end.³⁶⁴

Interestingly, though, that was not the end of the case that “played like a mystery movie.” Though the “gangland” shooting in Orange County first occurred in October of 1981, the media circus surrounding the Mr. Tai investigation lasted for almost two years afterwards due to a convergence in reporting that discussed the Garden Grove restaurant shooting in relation to another case that occurred in Chinatown that following January. After the trail went cold in late October, coverage on Mr. Tai disappeared until, suddenly, just over two months later on January 3rd, *The Register* discussed the case again in a follow up news brief on the “unsolved mystery” of the Hoang My Restaurant shooting. While the story did not mention any new details concerning the investigation, it did offer an explanation from police officers as to why they weren’t more successful. Placing blame on uncooperative refugee witnesses, Garden Grove police Sgt. Phil Mason said, “None of the diners ‘have been willing to, or wanting to help us. We do have leads as to who’s responsible in this but it’s going to be a long row to hoe [without refugee cooperation].”

Shortly after it was reported in *The Los Angeles Times* that a Chinese Vietnamese newspaper publisher and county welfare officer, Bong Bach, had come forward to name Mr. Tai as his attacker for a separate incident involving a daytime shooting attempt in front of a restaurant in Los Angeles’ Chinatown.³⁶⁵ Though there were no other witnesses, Bach claimed that Nguyen had attempted to shoot him in broad daylight after reading a story published in Bach’s newspaper relaying English-language news stories that linked Nguyen to gang crime. As a result, relying on coordinated efforts across the Garden Grove Police Department and the Los Angeles Police Department’s Asian Task Force, Garden Grove police eventually moved to arrest the alleged “leader of the Frogmen” on February 2nd in 1982 in order to hand him over to the LAPD for an attempted murder charge. Finding a concealed pistol on his person during the arrest, moreover, the Garden Grove police department itself used that as the premise to additionally charge Nguyen within the county for carrying a concealed weapon.

After Garden Grove police transferred Tai Huu Nguyen to the LAPD, one of his dining companions from the Hoang My shooting was found shot to death in another restaurant killing in Los Angeles, sustaining fear among local residents that Tai’s arrest was “only the tip of the iceberg,” and by mid-July of 1982, the Los Angeles case involving the attempted shooting of Bong Bach went to trial.³⁶⁶ Speaking to an eight-woman, four-man jury in a downtown Los Angeles courtroom, Nguyen’s defense lawyer Steve Pankratz provided two witnesses who testified that his client was elsewhere when the proposed shooting took place. Meanwhile, the prosecution relied on Bach as their major witness as well as on expert testimony given by Monterey Park police

³⁶³ Irwin, Delores Brooks and Rosa Kwong. “Did Gunmen Miss Their Mark? Police Seek Viet Man Who Fled GG Café.” *The Orange County Register*. October 15, 1981, p. 1.

³⁶⁴ Alger, Tim. “County Slayings: Not All Cases Are Closed.” *The Orange County Register*. January 3, 1982, p. B5.

³⁶⁵ Moore, Beverly J. and Evan Maxwell. “Man Charged in Attempted Murder of Viet Newsman.” *The Los Angeles Times*. February 3, 1982, p. 38.

³⁶⁶ Irwin, Delores Brooks. “Mysterious Mr. Tai: Gang Leader or Communist Fighter?.” *The Orange County Register*. July 28, 1982, p. A3.

officer, Gary Palmer, who served in Vietnam as a combat veteran and was believed at the time to be “the only Vietnamese-speaking police officer in California.”³⁶⁷ Within less than three weeks, the jury found Nguyen guilty for the attempted murder, a conviction law enforcement officials said at the time “could be a major breakthrough in smashing the Vietnamese underworld.” “Although the Los Angeles case boiled down to one man's word against another's,” *The Register* reported, “the specter of Tai's alleged Vietnamese gang activity hung over the jury. Jurors said they believed the story of the intended murder victim.”³⁶⁸

About one month later, Nguyen's alleged “singer companion” Julie Quang announced to the paper that she found evidence to clear his name and that she would bring it to his sentencing on August 24th.³⁶⁹ During the sentencing, Quang presented a copy she found of the *Thoi Ngay* issue Bach had claimed was the cause of Nguyen's fury. As Bach originally testified in court, his printing of a Vietnamese translation of English-language news stories that speculated on Nguyen's gang affiliation “enraged Tai.” However, as Quang managed to demonstrate, the paper Bach cited as responsible for his attack contained several details that refuted Bach's testimony. First, Bach claimed that Tai targeted him because we wrote and published the story, but Quang's evidence showed that Bach was actually listed on the newspaper's masthead as its assistant business manager while another person, Tran Nha, was actually listed as the editor, publisher, and writer of the story referenced by Bach. Second, Bach claimed that the story was particularly offensive to Nguyen because he discussed the suspected Frogmen leader, Quang, and the Hoang My shooting in the context of “gangland” crime committed by members of the “Vietnamese mafia.” However, the story's translation did not actually mention any of them by name or the gangland implications of the restaurant shooting. Finally, Bach said that he was particularly targeted because he was the only publisher who dared to print a story about the shooting, though Quang also managed to prove that at least one other local Vietnamese paper had done so.

Regardless of this new evidence, Judge Betty Jo Sheldon rejected defense attorney Steve Pankratz's motion for a second trial based on Quang's new evidence and sentenced Tai Huu Nguyen to nine years in state prison, the maximum possible sentence for attempted murder at the time. Accusing the district attorney's office of using the case to attract publicity around its effective control of the Southeast Asian “gang problem,” Pankratz admonished, “If this was anyone but Mr. Tai, (the charge) would be a misdemeanor. I've seen hundreds of cases like this.”³⁷⁰ Though no testimony was presented to formally link Nguyen to gang activity and the prosecution relied exclusively on Bach's account of the news story's content, prosecuting attorney Robert Savitt told the judge he had “gut reactions” to the purported gang leader and that, although his gang status was “obvious speculation,” he “believe[d] that Mr. Tai was a dangerous fellow...responsible for scores, if not hundreds, of deaths.” For his part when asked what he thought about the trial, Nguyen countered that Savitt's “relentless onslaught... [seemed] fueled by law enforcement's determination to get a reputed Vietnamese gang leader in jail at any cost. “There's no evidence. I didn't do anything,” he said. “That's not justice. Justice is to find the truth.”

Shortly after the sentencing, however, concerns over the ethical legitimacy of the trial prompted Savitt to return to Judge Sheldon to re-try the case. Saying he couldn't stand behind the conviction he won because of the new evidence, Savitt managed to get Sheldon to nullify the conviction and grant a new trial to take place one month later in a move “almost unheard of in Los Angeles Superior Court.” “The whole problem is that these

³⁶⁷ Irwin, Delores Brooks and Kathryn Barton. “The Mysterious Mr. Tai: They've Got the Wrong Man' – Viet Figure Denies Role in Underworld, LA Murder Attempt.” *The Orange County Register*. August 22, 1982. p. A3.

³⁶⁸ Irwin, Delores Brooks. “‘Mr. Tai' Guilty of Attempted Murder” *The Orange County Register*. July 27, 1982. p. A3.

³⁶⁹ Irwin, Delores Brooks and Kathryn Barton. “Singer-Companion Works to Overturn Conviction.” *The Orange County Register*. August 22, 1982. p. A3.

³⁷⁰ Irwin, Delores Brooks. “Reputed Viet Gang Chief Gets Prison Term.” *The Orange County Register*. August 24, 1982. p. A3.

people (Vietnamese) are extremely polite, and that's why some of this information did not get admitted," Savitt explained. Though, he assured, "the new evidence '[didn't] change the facts of the case'"—he planned to still "convict him again."³⁷¹

During the second trial, the arguments were largely presented as they were before with two major exceptions. First, the news article was admitted into evidence this time compared to its earlier omission, and second, testimony was included by more police officials who discussed "the structure and behavior of Vietnamese organized criminals."³⁷² After seven days of deliberation, Judge Sheldon made the decision to declare a mistrial when the jury said they were deadlocked 9–3 in favor of convicting Tai Huu Nguyen. A third trial was then scheduled for the summer of 1983.

While in the third trial many of the details of the case remained the same, the location of it shifted from a maximum security courtroom to Judge Sheldon's regular courtroom, and Nguyen's former defense attorney, Steve Pankratz, was replaced by Becky Duggan.³⁷³ While in the first two trials Pankratz had not managed to persuade the jury to accept his account of events, Duggan leveraged the news article as well as copies of other Vietnamese newspapers that carried versions of the same story to damage Bach's credibility, getting him to admit that he had not written the article and that it had not mentioned gangs or Nguyen by name.

By October of that year nearly two years after the original Hoang My Restaurant shooting, the saga of Tai Huu Nguyen's investigation and trial concluded its run in news discourse when it was reported that he had been sentenced to three years' probation after pleading no contest to assaulting Bach with a deadly weapon. While Nguyen maintained that he was innocent, he stated that he "entered the plea to end more than a year of litigation in which he ha[d] been tried twice and ruined financially."³⁷⁴ Declaring that "[in] California, a no-contest plea is equivalent to a guilty plea," *The Register* reported that prosecutors agreed to drop the charge of attempted murder in exchange for the assault charge. In addition, the terms of the plea stipulated that Nguyen would not have to serve additional time in jail after already spending 45 days there when he was initially sentenced to nine years before the conviction was first voided. Moreover, the article notes, he also already served a six-month term in Orange County for illegally possessing a concealed weapon for the charge filed against him when Garden Grove police initially arrested him for the Bach case.

No mention of "Mr. Tai" appeared in the news again after 1983 to confirm his status as the supposed head of the "most powerful Vietnamese gang" operating in the country. Afterwards, Nguyen was never directly cited as formally associated with any Indochinese gang, though the conjectures forwarded about the nature of Vietnamese gangs in general by police during the two years of intense coverage endured in general discourse concerning the refugee gang problem. Nine years later near the anniversary of the restaurant shooting, however, *The Orange County Register* published its last word on the unsolved case by re-interviewing Sgt. Phil Mason about its final outcome in October of 1990. Despite the evidence against Nguyen being highly irregular and the constrained terms of his eventual plea bargain, the open ended nature of the mysterious case nonetheless maintained "Mr. Tai" in the local imagination as a potent symbol for "yellow peril" refugee threat.

³⁷¹ Irwin, Delores Brooks. "Retrial Slated for 'Mr. Tai' in Murder Try: Judge Voids Conviction Since Evidence Omitted." *The Orange County Register*. September 9, 1982. p. 1.

³⁷² "Mistrial Ruled in Mr. Tai's Second Trial." *The Orange County Register*. January 22, 1983. p. B5.

³⁷³ Irwin, Delores Brooks. "Mr. Tai Stars in Sequel: A Case That Plays Like a Mystery Movie." *The Orange County Register*. July 11, 1983. p. B5.

³⁷⁴ Associated Press. "Mr. Tai Placed on Probation after No-Contest Plea to Assault." *The Orange County Register*. October 5, 1983. p. B7.

[P]olice might never know for certain, because the leads on the case have dried up, Mason said. The restaurant at 14452 Brookhurst St. has since changed ownership and most of the witnesses have disappeared. The investigation from the beginning was hamstrung by tight-lipped witnesses. Nguyen and Quang denied they were at the scene of the shooting until investigators cornered them with accounts from other witnesses, Mason said. "They never talked and they probably never will."³⁷⁵

As such, Nguyen's specific figuration as a mysterious gang leader implied that other gang members were still active in the community, thereby allowing police to claim that they had caught "the big one" while still perpetually searching for insurgent refugee threat. As Lisa Marie Cacho has documented, by 1983 President Ronald Reagan had established the President's Commission on Organized Crime where in the following year the commission held a hearing on "emerging" Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese gangs. "According to the commission and its expert witnesses," Cacho (64–65) writes, "Asian gangs did not act like U.S. black and Mexican American gangs because Asian gangs were not concerned with territory, which, in turn, made them difficult to locate and infiltrate." Considered "extremely mobile" and "very difficult to identify," Southeast Asian gang members in particular were pathologized for their lack of territoriality, which was forwarded as a sign of the broad existential danger they posed to anyone living near "concentrations of [refugee] ethnic groups" since they could, theoretically, be anywhere.

However, where did the commission get its information on the nature of the refugee gang problem in the first place? Beyond characterizing Southeast Asian gangs as less interested in territory and willing to move across state lines to conduct their crimes, the commission also claimed that these street gangs were tied to the war in Vietnam and primarily engaged in "theft, home invasions, drug dealing, kidnapping and extortion." Consequently, this section argues that the Reagan-appointed commission relied on early flashpoint cases of bad refugee contestation like the "Mr. Tai" saga and several others discussed throughout this writing to define the national refugee problem. By the time it met in 1984 to discuss Asian organized crime, the Mr. Tai and Orange Grove cases had already been adjudicated in the court of law and public opinion to discursively shape the general outlines of how that national refugee problem would come to be framed by the end of the decade. As a result, the next sections will discuss how the Mr. Tai case specifically helped solidify the problem of refugee deviance through the criminalization and apprehension of suspected Southeast Asian gang members. In placing good refugees who owned businesses and who were willing to cooperate with law enforcement officials against bad refugees hostile enough to the state to dare shoot at a "welfare worker," the saga also illustrates how, once again, refugee distinctions were made through the racialized mandate of successful assimilation reinforced through the everyday practice of good refugees' possessive investment in honorary whiteness.

STAGING THE INDOCHINESE GANG THREAT

The Los Angeles Police Department has compiled intelligence reports on Vietnamese gangs that detail how hundreds of former soldiers banded together as gangs to prey on fellow refugees in the United States. Many of the former soldiers were trained assassins, Savitt said. They were trained in the beginning to kill North Vietnamese Communists and Viet Cong, but also were used by the South Vietnamese government to "get rid of anyone who was against the government," he said. Tai's nickname while he was in Vietnam was "The Butcher," according to

³⁷⁵ Chow, Robert. "Police Beat: Leads Have Dried Up in Shooting at Vietnamese Restaurant, Police Say." *The Orange County Register*. October 17, 1990. p. B3.

a Los Angeles Police Department confidential report, although no investigator has identified him as being an assassin.

The belief, however, that either Tai or his associates are ruthless gang members led court officials to assign his attempted murder trial to Los Angeles' high security courtroom. Tai was patted down for weapons by the court bailiffs each time he entered the courtroom, and spectators were separated from the rest of the courtroom by a partition that was part bullet-proof glass, part wire cage. But neither his family members nor any of his associates—except for witnesses who testified on his behalf—ever entered the courtroom. Nevertheless, the bullet-proof partition as well as testimony about Vietnamese gang members and their ruthless ways had an impact on the jury. “We got the feeling that this was only the tip of an iceberg,” jury foreman Bruce Lowrey said.³⁷⁶

– “Mysterious Mr. Tai: Gang Leader or Communist Fighter?”
The Orange County Register, July 28, 1982

Following the Hoang My Restaurant shooting that occurred on October 11, 1981, police officers became frustrated with their inability to find cooperative witnesses to help them with their investigation. Some witnesses, police said, “had difficulty recalling what they had seen only a few minutes earlier” while others “gave false names and addresses.”³⁷⁷ In the first two initial articles published in *The Register* that reported on the details of the restaurant shooting, police investigators never explicitly said that Mr. Tai was a gang member due to lack of evidence, but it was often implied. For example, one excerpt threads this needle deftly by saying, “Police refuse to speculate about possible gang motives for the restaurant assault. However, they conceded that the apparent attempt to kill Mr. Tai could have been the result of a rivalry or a leadership struggle.” In another that supplies refugee sentiment to bolster these claims, it reads, “Though police refuse to confirm his standing here, among Vietnamese Mr. Tai is believed to be a low-profile leader of gang-linked elements, though there are no records to indicate that he has been involved in illegal activity.”³⁷⁸

As the investigation continued, this use of the Vietnamese community as an abstracted general population with a single voice came to take on greater importance. Absent official witness cooperation, speculative reporting during this time on Mr. Tai being the leader of a fearsome Vietnamese gang started to treat local refugee gossip obtained and relayed by the police as fact, consequently shaping the public's reception of the case by framing it as gang warfare without any concrete evidence. As Garden Grove police investigator Mike Walker said of them, “refugees are not reticent to pass along rumors that circulate in the community” even if they were reluctant to talk to the police, so he and others in the adjacent Westminster PD force “use[d] rumors as their stock in trade.”

This reliance on statements made by the Vietnamese community about the threat of refugee gang encroachment took on an even greater role once Garden Grove officers met their investigatory dead end. With

³⁷⁶ Irwin, Delores Brooks. “Mysterious Mr. Tai: Gang Leader or Communist Fighter?” *The Orange County Register*. July 28, 1982. p. A3.

³⁷⁷ Irwin, Delores Brooks and Kathryn Barton. “Crime in the Indochinese Communities Publicized Out of Proportion, Police Say.” *The Orange County Register*. July 14, 1982. p. A1, A11.

³⁷⁸ Irwin, Delores Brooks and Rosa Kwong. “Did Gunmen Miss Their Mark? Police Seek Viet Man Who Fled GG Café.” *The Orange County Register*. October 15, 1981. p. A1.

nothing to report two weeks after the shooting when police failed to charge or book the couple they had set up as the primary suspects in the investigation, *The Register* instead turned to print a story on how members of the Vietnamese community themselves were insistent that the gang problem was real, not just a matter of speculation:

They insist that gangs bearing such names as Luns ("midgets"), Saigon Cowboys, Frogmen and Pink Knights do, in fact, exist and engage in the business of extortion. And to help prove their point, members of the Vietnamese community point to such instances as: [1] The recent gangland-style shotgun shooting of seven persons in a Vietnamese restaurant in Garden Grove and the execution-type slaying a few days later of a Vietnamese man in San Diego who may have been linked to the restaurant shootout in which a woman was killed and six men were wounded. [2] A gunpoint robbery and retaliatory machete attack in Anaheim in September 1979, which police believe to be the work of two rival gangs. [3] The arrest on mass robbery charges in May 1979 of six Vietnamese youths who claimed Frogmen membership. [4] The surrender in February this year of a Vietnamese double-murder suspect in Garden Grove, who reportedly told police he turned himself in because he feared reprisal by rival gang members.³⁷⁹

Consequently, reporting on refugee attestations to gang activity helped tie the Hoang My restaurant shooting to a larger gang panic that was growing in Orange County due to a string of events categorized as gang-related that occurred beginning 1979, with the "Mr. Tai" case bringing the issue to a discursive head.

From these reports citing claims relayed by the police about the Vietnamese community, Mr. Tai emerged as a specifically orientalized figure whose threat became tied to the pathologization of war itself as endemic to the refugee condition. From the very first article written on the case, *The Register* described the assailants as "two armed men whose features were obscured by ski masks and Army rain capes," where the military attire donned by the gunmen combined with reporting on the presence of two Marines sitting at the table to symbolically tether the domestic "gangland" case to the recently ended war in Southeast Asia. Broadly invoking exoticized imagery of oriental danger, subsequent reporting almost always relied on "yellow peril" signifiers that referenced Nguyen, varying, as a "martial arts" or "Kung Fu master," a South Vietnamese government "assassin," "Tai Chop," "The Butcher," and, most enduringly, the leader of the "The Frogmen," which resembled other "Southeast Asian gangs [that were] more like secret societies" than their "American counterparts."³⁸⁰ As refugee community gossip became vital to the police and media effort to make sense of these early instances of hypervisible refugee deviance, the initial characterizations forwarded in these early articles on rumored refugee gang activity eventually solidified into regular talking points used in reporting by the press and law enforcement officials.

As the trial of "the mysterious Mr. Tai" began and became increasingly presented as a potential "breakthrough in smashing the Vietnamese underworld," this repeated speculation on Nguyen's gang affiliation eventually made its way into the courtroom.³⁸¹ In the first trial before the newspaper story was found to cast doubt on Bach's testimony, Savitt moved to play up the theatricality of the suspected gang leader's trial by persuading Judge Sheldon to schedule the trial to take place in a maximum-security courtroom. Still lacking any concrete evidence linking Nguyen to gang activity, the request was based on pure speculation of Nguyen's gang

³⁷⁹ Kwong, Rosa. "Gangs Thrive on Extortion, OC Vietnamese Say." *The Orange County Register*. October 26, 1981. p. A1, A7.

³⁸⁰ Hubner, John. "Hundreds of Ex-Viet Soldiers Linked in Gangs-Police." *The Orange County Register*. July 14, 1982. p. A10.

³⁸¹ Irwin, Delores Brooks. "'Mr. Tai' Guilty of Attempted Murder." *The Orange County Register*. July 27, 1982. p. A3.

leader status alone and consequently worked to shape the jury's perception of the danger the "Frogman" could potentially pose despite the lack of evidence. In contrast to a regular courtroom, the maximum-security courtroom separated the spectators from the judge, jurors, and counsel tables with a "partition that was part bullet-proof glass, part wire cage."³⁸² As an extra security precaution, Nguyen also had to be frisked for weapons by court bailiffs each time before entering the courtroom. Consequently, the legal spectacle of trying the purported "kingpin of gangland activities in Orange County" decisively produced enduring images of "Mr. Tai" as the embodiment of refugee deviance and the representative target for state maneuvers to ramp up refugee discipline and selective bad refugee criminalization.³⁸³

Moreover, the testimony provided by the Vietnamese-speaking Monterey Park police officer, Gary Palmer, also worked to lend additional frames of meaning to this emerging refugee gang problem. Drawing on claims made by refugees in early news reporting that suspected gang members were distinct from good, law-abiding refugee subjects since they were "simply transplants into Orange County of gangster mobs that operated in the urban streets and waterways of Vietnam," Palmer said in his court testimony that the Frogmen took their name "from the U.S. Navy's Underwater Demolition Team, whose members wore wetsuits and webbed slippers as they moved in and under the water in Vietnam during the war."³⁸⁴ *The Register*, in elaborating further, reported:

The most powerful Vietnamese gang is the Frogmen, so named because its leaders were members of an elite Vietnamese navy underwater demolition team. According to the Los Angeles police report, the gang has 200 members. Internal power struggles have split them into three factions, called "Tai's gang," "Cac's gang," and "Phong's gang," after their leaders.

"The leader of Cac's gang is Cac Van Tran," the report says. "Tran is an ex-Vietnamese UDT (underwater demolition team) captain who is a highly skilled assassin, and reportedly carries small hand-guns in ankle holsters....Cac has reportedly aligned himself with the Thunder Tigers (Loi Ho) gang. The Thunder Tigers are based in Houston, Texas, and are considered the largest Vietnamese gang in that area. The leader of Phong's gang is Huynh Phong Hong. Phong is also an ex-Vietnamese UDT military officer and reportedly a highly skilled assassin." Neither Cac nor Phong could be reached for comment.

According to the Los Angeles Police report, "The leader of Tai's gang is Tai Huu Nguyen, AKA (also known as) The Butcher. Tai Nguyen was the leader of the Frogmen before the recent dissension. Tai is a very dynamic leader and has managed to recruit the majority of the Frogmen into his gang....Tai reportedly controls the majority of the extortion activity in the Orange County Vietnamese community."³⁸⁵

Thus the pathology of war's continuance as now an anachronistic individual trait retained by poorly assimilated refugee subjects demonstrates how the US conduct of war in Southeast Asia managed to rationalize its own imperial violence by expertly masking the culpability of American militarism behind bad refugee gang members

³⁸² Irwin, Delores Brooks. "Mysterious Mr. Tai: Gang Leader or Communist Fighter?" *The Orange County Register*. July 28, 1982. p. A3.

³⁸³ Irwin, Delores Brooks. "County's Viet Gang Problem Still Far from Solution, LA Merchants Helped Bust Ring, but Here Fear Prevails." *The Orange County Register*. July 17, 1982. p. A3.

³⁸⁴ Irwin, Delores Brooks and Kathryn Barton. "Crime in the Indochinese Communities Publicized Out of Proportion, Police Say." *The Orange County Register*. July 14, 1982. p. A1, A11.

³⁸⁵ Hubner, John. "Hundreds of Ex-Viet Soldiers Linked in Gangs-Police." *The Orange County Register*. July 14, 1982. p. A10.

themselves. By dating the war to a period of prehistory that merely became part of the refugee condition from which “illness” and “abnormality” were made possible, the war became transfigured from an active event to a pathologized trauma backstory that worked to perversely displace onto the refugee a condition from which they were expected to progress through assimilation to attain proper subjectivity within political modernity.

After the first trial, Deputy District Attorney Robert Savitt was asked what he thought cemented the case against Nguyen that initially led the jury to convict the suspected gang leader, to which he replied, “Gary Palmer,” attesting to the influence of Palmer’s testimony.³⁸⁶ Following the media frenzy surrounding the trial that worked to saturate these gang characterizations in public discourse, police subsequently grew increasingly willing to formally generalize about Southeast Asian gang crime in news interviews. Relying on early claims made by Palmer in the trial regarding Vietnamese gangs, law enforcement officials managed to extrapolate from Nguyen a more general category of bad refugees that linked these symbolic refugee distinctions to a bureaucratically legible category in the form of the criminalized Southeast Asian “gang member” upon which punitive state systems could subsequently act.

Closing his testimony by insisting that since “Vietnamese soldiers [and by implication, “Mr. Tai”] were trained to lie as government assassins during the war,” Palmer left the jury (and a captive public) with the warning that nothing Nguyen said could ever be trusted. Cloaked in the orientalist frame of enemy deceit and secret subversion, descriptions attesting to Nguyen’s “soft-spoken and cordial manner” despite this being “at odds with his reputation” thereby additionally encoded through him the legal impossibility of innocence for accused refugee gang members. As the article described of Nguyen:

He doesn’t look like a gangster. Wrapped in a baggy, royal blue jailhouse gown, Tai Huu Nguyen appears smaller than his 5-foot-5-inch, 120-pound frame. Even by Vietnamese standards, he is diminutive. But on “Mr. Tai’s” narrow shoulders rests the reputation he believes is responsible for his stay in Los Angeles County Jail. Police intelligence reports name Tai as the No. 1 officer of the Frogmen, the most powerful Vietnamese gang in Southern California.

Given this double frame of apparent harmlessness and exceptional danger, “Mr. Tai” and bad refugees more broadly were therefore ultimately consigned to “social death” as criminalized persons with no legal legibility or access to rights or innocence. Emerging as racial surplus during the era of liberal multiculturalism, they remained relegated to anachronistic time and thus became disposable subjects available to the state-building-through-prison-building post-Keynesian project while still functioning as the negative resource used to conjure the enduring existential threat posed by an imagined and orientalized foreign enemy.

BAD REFUGEE EXTORTIONISTS AND GOOD REFUGEE BUSINESS OWNERS: PRODUCING REFUGEE COOPERATION AND ALIGNING GOOD REFUGEEHOOD WITH THE CARCERAL STATE

The mystique of Mr. Tai and the whispers about mobsters have thrived on two admitted characteristics of most Indochinese:

³⁸⁶ Irwin, Delores Brooks and Kathryn Barton. “The Mysterious Mr. Tai: They’ve Got the Wrong Man’ – Viet Figure Denies Role in Underworld, LA Murder Attempt.” *The Orange County Register*. August 22, 1982. p. A3.

- A distrust of police, based on experience in their homeland. It is a characteristic that, for example, would cause many to remain silent even though they might be victimized by criminals.
- An inclination to stick together, to shunt outsiders aside in deference to their own.

– “Crime in the Indochinese Communities Publicized out of Proportion, Police Say,”
The Orange County Register, July 14, 1982

In addition to this pathologization and orientalizing of war as inseparable from the refugee condition, the hypervisible saga of Tai Huu Nguyen’s trial was also interpreted through an assimilationist lens to further draw intraethnic distinctions among good and bad refugees. To start, in several reports over the course of the restaurant shooting’s early investigation phase, refugees were scolded for not cooperating enough with police officers. “We could solve this in no time at all if people would open their mouths,” Sgt. Phil Mason said. Reporting how Garden Grove police “waited in vain for business owners to file extortion complaints after investigators arrested Tai Huu Nguyen,” Sgt. Bruce Beauchamp complained during the first Chinatown trial that cooperation was still an ongoing issue.³⁸⁷ As such, police cooperation emerged as a key marker of modern juridical subjectivity for refugees during this period as initial distinctions between good and bad refugees were still being drawn by state actors through the language of legal assimilation.

During this time, *The Orange County Register* printed a series of articles for their special on refugee adaptation called, “Between Two Worlds: Orange County’s Indochinese Refugees,” which forwarded that refugee trauma and gang crime were the major difficulties facing new refugees in their struggle to assimilate.³⁸⁸ As the excerpt from the beginning of this section shows, content from the series used the Mr. Tai case to generalize about two characteristics that continued to racially other Indochinese refugees as improper subjects: police distrust “based on experience in their homeland” and internal refugee solidarity at the supposed expense of melting pot America (“An inclination to stick together, to shunt outsiders aside in deference to their own.”). “In Vietnam,” one story reasons, “there was often as much to fear from the police as there was from the extortion gangs” where “it was not uncommon for Vietnamese police to be gang members themselves.”

Thus by attributing unwilling refugee witnesses’ improper comportment to the refugee condition (i.e. as a “passive acceptance of gangsterism as a way of life” “largely because of the scheme of things in their homeland), their non-cooperation became constructed as an anachronistic consequence of their Third World-ness and the government corruption asserted as particular to Vietnam itself.³⁸⁹ Thus, in pitting bad refugees as fundamentally unassimilable violent individuals against yet-to-be-assimilated refugees who were still traumatized and distrustful of law enforcement, the series demonstrates how refugee cooperation with the police itself became an important dimension through which to evaluate assimilation into modernity during these early stages of negotiating the terms of proper refugee subjectivity.

This dimension to expectations surrounding refugee assimilation became actively negotiated after initial reports scolded uncooperative refugees and quickly turned to Bong Bach as an exemplary figure to demonstrate

³⁸⁷ Irwin, Delores Brooks. “County’s Viet Gang Problem Still Far from Solution, LA Merchants Helped Bust Ring, but Here Fear Prevails.” *The Orange County Register*. July 17, 1982. p. A3.

³⁸⁸ See also: Barton, Kathryn, and Delores Brooks Irwin. “Refugees in New Fight: Emotional Distress.” *The Orange County Register*. July 14, 1982. p. A10.

³⁸⁹ Kwong, Rosa. “Gangs Thrive on Extortion, OC Vietnamese Say.” *The Orange County Register*. October 26, 1981. p. A1, A7.

proper juridical comportment. As the Chinatown trial emerged as a struggle between bad refugees and law enforcement officers who sought good refugee cooperation, this discursive negotiation of the intraethnic boundary cohered around Bong Bach and Tai Huu Nguyen themselves as idealized good and bad refugee persons, respectively. Both the *LA Times* and the *OC Register* consistently referred to Bach—cast here in the role of good refugee—as either a “welfare supervisor” or “welfare worker” who oversaw eligibility requirements.^{390,391} Tai Huu Nguyen—cast again in the role of the bad refugee—was regularly accused of being a gang leader who specialized in extortion. “[B]elieved to be the leader of a loose-knit gang or organization,” one article speculated, police hypothesized that Nguyen was “involved in the extortion of Vietnamese businesses from San Diego to San Jose.” Thus pitting Bach’s status as a government worker dedicated to preventing welfare fraud, coverage thus framed Bach’s attack along assimilationist lines where Nguyen stood accused of taking the easy way out by preying on hardworking refugee business owners. As a prime example from which to manufacture these assimilationist distinctions, Bach’s own saga as the first cooperative refugee to help police with the case therefore worked to establish juridical personhood as central to good refugee acceptability.

Bong Bach’s arrival on the scene under what we later come to learn were questionable circumstances helped turn the discursive point around that refugees were uncooperative. “Sure I am scared that I will be killed in revenge,” Bach said to reporters after coming forward, “but I cannot go back now.”³⁹² Asked to explain why refugees felt unwilling to report gang crimes to the police, Bach offered, “I believe 90% of the Vietnamese people would come forward if they felt they would be protected. We Vietnamese are peaceful people from a warring country. We do not want these things in our community but we feel helpless.” In situating good refugees as a “peaceful people” despite being from a “warring country,” Bong’s explanation therefore relied on an assimilationist logic to assert that good refugees had progressed past the pathologized state of war ascribed to the refugee condition, only hampered now by a lack of assurance that American police officers would actually protect them if they came forward.

As a result, coverage turned to reporting on how Bach’s story could serve as an example for the refugee community by demonstrating that cooperative good refugees could trust law enforcement officials to protect them if they fully assimilated into proper juridical subjects. After Bach reported the assault to the LAPD, he later spoke to the *Los Angeles Times* about one month later to complain that the police did not alert him that Nguyen had posted bail and that, because of this, he feared for his life and needed police protection. Exercising a form of constrained agency, he asserted that though he had held up his end of the bargain, police officers had failed to deliver on theirs. Police officials responded by saying that “they had not been aware that Bong wanted protection” but Bach insisted that “he had requested protection and that the request had been denied.”³⁹³ Adding that “[t]he issue [was] of great interest in the Vietnamese community,” Bach managed to present this particular instance of police cooperation as a test of “whether local police could protect them from retaliation” by attempting to negotiate what good refugees would actually receive from assisting police in their anti-gang efforts.

Afterwards, LAPD officials said that they had “taken a number of steps to protect Bong and that they would take several more, both at his residence and at the Los Angeles County Welfare Department office where

³⁹⁰ Irwin, Delores. “Extortion Down in Viet Community.” *The Orange County Register*. July 11, 1983. p. B5.

³⁹¹ Irwin, Delores. “Vietnamese Slayings Linked? Garden Grove, Los Angeles Police Pool Efforts in Probe.” *The Orange County Register*. April 15, 1982. p. C2.

³⁹² Maxwell, Evan. “Police Won’t Help Him, Target of Shooting Says.” *The Los Angeles Times*. February 10, 1982. p. Part II.1

³⁹³ Maxwell, Evan. “L.A. Police to Guard Vietnamese Editor: Target of Assassin Will Get Protection.” *The Los Angeles Times*. February 12, 1982. p. Part II.1

he works.” In response, Bach repaid the gift of “police protection” through a public expression of refugee gratitude. Following the LAPD’s agreement to “provide special protection” for him, Bach told the *LA Times* that he was “very grateful” and “would continue to cooperate with police investigating the attempt on his life and reported extortion rackets in the Vietnamese refugee community.”

By the end of the first trial after which Nguyen was originally sentenced to the maximum nine years in state prison, Dep. District Attorney Robert Savitt reaffirmed that a clear distinction had been made between well-assimilated good refugees willing to cooperate with police and bad refugees like “Mr. Tai” who were, as gang members, rendered intrinsically hostile to the state’s legal-rational authority by the very nature of their refugee condition. “It isn’t unusual for new waves of ethnic immigrants to victimize their own when they first come over,” Savitt said. “This conviction of someone who is victimizing others is going to help with the successful assimilation of the Vietnamese community. I’m certain there are other cases where people will come forward once they recognize that the police will help.”³⁹⁴

Consequently, it appeared clear to both Bach and Savitt that the former’s own hypervisible example of helping police investigators served a larger purpose in establishing the terms of refugee assimilation around police cooperation. In addition to staging the refugee gang problem through the heavily publicized trial of “Mr. Tai” as a problem of individual bad refugee pathology, discourse surrounding Nguyen’s purported attack on Bong Bach as a county “welfare worker” further worked to discipline good refugees into juridical subjects not just respectful of the law but also cooperative with its enforcement officials in the identification and punishment of its violators. As a result, the bad refugee gang member became constructed as the antithesis to these markers of successful assimilation as ungrateful, hostile to the law and police, and antagonistic to the generosity ascribed to state extensions of assistance. Likewise, through his temporary imagining as a good refugee who successfully helped police catch “the bad guy,” Bach as a figure helped discipline good refugees into well-assimilated juridical subjects willing to assist law enforcement officials, crucially fracturing internal refugee solidarity and realigning good refugees with the punitive objectives of the state.

Moreover, in characterizing good refugees as “helpless” victims in need of police protection, Bong’s rationale also managed to reinscribe good refugees within a paternalistic relation to the American nation that had structured how the United States also approached its diplomatic ties to the South Vietnamese government during the war. Shifting the refugee subject from its place under the paternalistic custody of the American military, resettled refugees were moved more directly under the supervision of municipal police departments, which, in the apprehension of a mobile gang threat that could, as Garden Grove PD Sgt. Bruch Beauchamp said, victimize anyone from “30, 40 or 100 miles away,” increasingly coordinated their investigation efforts to stamp out the emergent Southeast Asian gang problem in a domestic version of war against racially discarded gang members.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ Irwin, Delores Brooks. “‘Mr. Tai’ Guilty of Attempted Murder” *The Orange County Register*. July 27, 1982. p. A3.

³⁹⁵ Irwin, Delores. “Vietnamese Slayings Linked? Garden Grove, Los Angeles Police Pool Efforts in Probe.” *The Orange County Register*. April 15, 1982. p. C2.

CHAPTER 3

THE FRUITS OF HER LAND: DOMESTICATED WARSCAPES AND THE GENDERED–SEXUAL LOGIC OF SUBURBAN TERRITORIALIZATION

A Vietnamese singer is attempting to rally community support behind her jailed companion—Orange County's mysterious "Mr. Tai"—in the hope that his conviction for attempted murder will be overturned. Julie Quang of Midway City, a popular singer in the Vietnamese community, has organized a letter-writing campaign urging a Los Angeles Superior Court judge to declare a mistrial in Tai's case. She is the woman who was dining with Tai when killers invaded a Garden Grove restaurant in October, shooting at two tables of diners. One woman was killed, but Tai escaped injury...

Tai has helped guide Quang's United States singing career, producing dances featuring the petite singer, as well as helping produce record albums. Tai has traveled to Orange County frequently from his Gardena home, and is seen often in Quang's company. Quang is divorced. Tai is married and has two children. He said he has no plans for divorce. He and Quang are "just friends," Tai said in a jailhouse interview. "She's a good woman," Tai said. "She's the first woman I've known in my life who loves her country. Also, a very smart woman."

Quang was well-known as a cabaret singer during Vietnam's war years, aided by her 1970 hit song "That Autumn." She came to the United States in 1979 with her husband, but the couple split and Quang now lives in Midway City with the family of a well-known Vietnamese song writer. Besides singing at dances and recording albums, Quang performs at anti-Communist rallies and benefits. Quang said she will bring her evidence to Tai's sentencing on Monday in hopes that Sheldon will order a new trial.³⁹⁶

– "Singer-Companion Works to Overturn Conviction,"
The Orange County Register, August 22, 1982

Although the orientalized figure of "Mr. Tai" emerged as the public face of the "bad refugee" adjudication crisis in the early resettlement years, I contend that it is critical to recognize that from the very beginning of the investigation, Nguyen was not the only one who appeared in journalistic coverage as a person of interest in the Garden Grove Police Department's investigation of the Hoang My shooting. At the time of the 1981 shotgun attack, it was regularly reported from the start that Tai was accompanied by popular singer, Julie Quang. Just like Tai as "the leader of the Frogman" evoked images of Oriental gangsterism, Quang, too, as a well known singer from Vietnam, came to stand in for the trope of the seductive-yet-dangerous "dragon lady." It was the notion of them *together*, I argue, that animated how Nguyen became rendered as a figure of not just oriental threat and juridical hostility but also of moral suspicion as tied to well-worn imagery of deviant Asian sexuality and family formation patterns.

In recognizing that both the Hoang My shooting investigation and the Orange Grove Case were constituted within specific gendered and sexual politics involving, on the one hand, a refugee pair composed of a "cabaret singer" and "gang leader," and, on the other, an instance of refugee "gang rape" that predominantly targeted white girls, the emphasis of this chapter consequently focuses on how both the Southeast Asian gang threat and good and bad refugee subjectivities became constituted within the material family politics of the cisheteropatriarchal state itself, which in the 1980s particularly came to stand in for the larger ideological divide between liberal Democrats and supporters of the Reagan Revolution. As Chandan Reddy (17) has argued then, a materialist account of sexuality must, in part, understand sexuality in terms of how it operates in our contemporary moment as:

that which frames, redivides, or seeks to offer synthetic "meaning," simultaneously conserving and revising the relations and histories of force of both US globalism and racial capitalism. It is sexual freedom—as the evidence of civilization and progress—that at this moment most powerfully disallows a reckoning with its own conditions of possibility, redeeming through its status as an amendment the very state that these global and racial violences have built.³⁹⁷

Thus, rather than treating the details of sexual deviance in refugee-centered reportage as epiphenomenal to the formation of the bad refugee, this chapter examines how newly arriving Vietnamese refugees found themselves negotiating their own assigned value as subjects-in-production within the cultural politics of mainstream discourse on declining "family values." "Honorary white" refugee *families*, as Linh Thùy Nguyễn (4) has argued,

³⁹⁶ Irwin, Delores Brooks and Kathryn Barton. "Singer-Companion Works to Overturn Conviction." *The Orange County Register*. August 22, 1982. p. A3.

³⁹⁷ Reddy, Chandan. *Freedom with Violence*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

emerged “at the nexus of domestic transnational considerations of the refugee regime as an apparatus in conjunction with, rather than as distinct from US aims to maintain control of economic markets and assert global hegemony during the Cold War.”³⁹⁸ As such, this chapter contends that good refugee men and women became classified through their furtherance of the globalizing–punitive US agenda as particularly configured gendered and sexual subjects whose value became indexed vis-à-vis the suburban single family home as the site of social worth. Meanwhile, the bad refugee emerged as a fundamentally gendered and sexual subject whose figuration as a sexually suspect and morally deficient (un)ethical figure helped vivify the domestic Indochinese threat and position it within the era’s expression of state welfare politics as sexual politics.

The organization of this chapter therefore follows the material trace of Asian sexual deviance in the American racial imaginary, beginning by framing the politics of US citizenship as both culturally mediated through and constitutive with the figure of the sexually deviant Asian woman. By discussing the historical role of the Page Law in forming the basis from which the American immigration regime developed, the first section’s focus on the 1875 law that prohibited the entry of Chinese women of “lewd” or “debauched” character demonstrates how the specific figure of the Chinese prostitute emerged to thread a delicate needle during the “first era of globalization” to at once maintain global trade ties with China all the while establishing the United States’ legal–rational authority to limit Chinese immigration and naturalization within its borders.

Moving to the “second era of globalization,” this chapter then turns to discussing how the United States managed to once again thread that needle to exclude disposable others in the era of liberal multiculturalism, using Asian sexual deviance—now in both conventional and more categorically flexible ways—to morally authorize its right to exercise control over the composition of the national body and expel those deemed irrational to it. Returning to Quang as a revived figure of Asian women’s sexual deviance by noting the details of her career from working as a popular singer on Saigon’s (in)famous Tu Do street during the Vietnam War, I bring this discussion of gendered–sexual refugee subjectification into conversation with work on white sexual imperialism in Southeast Asia in particular, showing how enduring colonial frames of aberrant and licentious Asian sexuality were reinscribed by the professional–managerial US state to manage and apprehend Vietnamese subjects along the lines of still–justifiable moral exclusion.

Then, transitioning to how vice–centered exclusionary politics became more broadly expressed through Orange County’s “war on prostitution,” the discussion broadly covers the arrest of an accused Chinese “pimp” and Newport Beach’s “massage parlor problem” to show how a rearticulated moral panic emerged in 1985 concerning sexual vice and the boundaries of (suburban) citizenship. In this way, the possessive investment in whiteness expressed by the suburban citizenry came to understand threats to their home values through both an orientalist lens exacerbated by the second era of globalization as imagined through the Southeast Asian gang member (as discussed in Chapter 2) *and* a racialized sexual deviance lens as imagined through the resettled Saigonese bar girl and the fallen white woman thought to have succumbed to the false promises of an overzealous feminism.

Overall, in discussing how South Vietnamese subjects moved from the sensual imperial landscape of Saigon as the “Mistress of the Mekong” to the temperate White Christian suburban landscape of Orange County, this chapter presents the region’s Little Saigon as the fiercely contested terrain upon which the cisheteropatriarchal American nation shaped the ethical terms of refugee receipt for its gendered and sexual

³⁹⁸ Nguyễn, Linh Thủy. “‘Loving Couples and Families’: Assimilation as Honorary Whiteness and the Making of the Vietnamese Refugee Family.” *Social Sciences* 10.6 (2021): 209.

subjects in relation to its settler investments. As the US frontier slowly pushed westward to the Pacific to manufacture an emptied landscape ready for overwhelmingly white suburbanization and as it became increasingly entangled in global securitization efforts, the landscape itself became a domesticated warscape in which mythologies surrounding the home as a moral domain worked to both mask the conditions of settler expropriation and continually authorize particular family forms compatible with state interests. Therefore situating Orange County within the *longue durée* of colonization, occupation, and settlement in the US West and across the Pacific, I draw on Chapter 1's argument about the region's profound reality to forward that the suburban landscape emerged as the twentieth century expression of ongoing state territorialization. As Vietnamese refugees arrived in this domesticated warscape, the settler nation continued to fight its war to tame an imagined intractable frontier into defensible, privatized space against a growing roster of irrational and disposable enemy others.

THE PAGE LAW AND ITS DESCENDANTS: IMAGINING ASIAN SEXUAL DEVIANCE AND MANAGING THE BODY POLITIC DURING THE FIRST ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

I have attempted to place before the house the incalculable evils of Chinese immigration; to show its alarming extent; its withering effects on the morals of society; its degrading and destructive influence on American labor...But why dwell longer upon a subject so disgusting, so revolting that it must shock the moral sensibilities of everyone who has listened...? I hope...[the testimony] will send the brazen harlot who openly flaunts her wickedness in the faces of our wives and daughters back to her native country...[China] insist[s] on sending here none but the lowest and most depraved of her subjects...[and] we have long enough been her cesspool.³⁹⁹

- Horace F. Page in his speech advocating for the Page Law to the House of Representatives, February 10, 1875

During the frontier years of California's entry into the Union and especially following the Civil War, sustained labor demand coupled with a labor shortage after emancipation to create a path for Chinese immigrants to become a replacement laboring "coolie" class. According to Moon-Ho Jung, coolie labor materialized through often contradictory political debates that ultimately presented the Chinese as both the answer to the nation's fractured and imperiled racial-class structure after the abolition of chattel slavery and, opposingly, an external threat to American civilization.⁴⁰⁰ In response to the immigration of Chinese laborers in the final quarter of the nineteenth century as the United States increasingly participated in the era of "first globalization," possessive apprehension towards foreign takeover took hold in California as nativist fears surfaced to check the growth of the Chinese community. Pointing to the racial-class panic that drove Page to forward his law to Congress and the specific role California played as the battleground for establishing the nation's early immigration restrictions, the congressman delivered to the House a petition that had been signed by 17,000 "true and loyal citizens" protesting the arrival of "debased Asiatic labor":

³⁹⁹ Sae-Saue, Jayson Gonzales. "'Incalculable Evils': Policing Gender, Race, and the Family in the US West." *The Routledge Companion to Gender and the American West*. Routledge, 2022. P. 259.

⁴⁰⁰ Jung, Moon-Ho. *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation*. JHU Press, 2006.

That this immigration is in no manner homogeneous with us as a people; that [Chinese] social wants, habits, and character differ so materially that the standard of labor must be debased to such a degree... [They] not only degrade the social status and moral welfare of our producing classes but arrest the advancement of our civilization...[T]he spread and augmentation of the number [of Chinese laborers] throughout the State of California has seriously discouraged the increase of the most desirable class of European immigrants...[The Chinese] destructive influence on the industrial condition is the inevitable result which must follow its extension into every other State of the Union."⁴⁰¹

Thus, Chinese immigrants became processed through multiple nativist lenses as a racialized contagion that threatened to spread from the frontier to other parts of the “civilized” United States, where Chinese “wants” and “habits” became racially constructed as “materially” (i.e. biologically) distinct from the “desirable class of European immigrants” that had become constitutive with the American national imaginary by the turn of the century.

However, though much of the motivation for Horace Page’s push for immigration restriction derived from these possessive fears of Chinese encroachment and existential threat, Page was also aware that he needed to delicately frame his proposal so as to avoid unnecessarily damaging the United States’ ongoing diplomatic relationship with China, especially the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 which, in addition to providing the permissive basis that allowed for increased Chinese immigration to the US, had also granted the United States and its Christian missionaries access to China’s trade markets and supply of prospective converts.⁴⁰² Consequently, as Jason Gonzalez Sae–Saue has shown, early immigration management in the US West came to be discursively and legally threaded through the specific imagining of the sexually deviant Chinese woman as especially vulgar and therefore justifiably subject to exclusion and restriction in order to circumvent these concerns. As Page’s concluding remark in his speech to Congress illustrates in the opening epigraph, nativist fears of Chinese immigration’s “degrading and destructive influence on American labor” hence became discursively transfigured and encoded through the naming of a scapegoat in the form of “the brazen [Chinese] harlot who openly flaunts her wickedness in the faces of our wives and daughters,” placing the sexual and gender subjectification of the Asian woman at the nexus of racial–class resentment, immigration law, and family form regulation to police the boundaries of citizenship during the nation’s Reconstruction years of state building in the US West.

Prior to this period of anti–Chinese nativism, the US–Mexico border and US ports throughout the West that marked America’s new territorial holdings following Polk’s contrived war with Mexico had remained largely open to new immigrants.⁴⁰³ It was only when rising fear of white replacement under Chinese subjugation took hold that the Page Law was passed in 1875, when Page himself led Congress to adopt a nativist platform to begin the United States’ turn towards developing a federal strategy to manage the nation’s racial and cultural composition through regulatory and exclusionary immigration policy. While historians often cite the Chinese Exclusion Acts of 1882 and 1892 as the first examples of national immigration exclusion laws, the two were actually preceded by the Page Law and shaped by how it articulated the rationale for Asian women’s particular exclusion from the nation state.

⁴⁰¹ Sae–Saue, Jayson Gonzales. 2022. 258.

⁴⁰² Fitzpatrick, Joan, and William McKay Bennett. “A Lion in the Path: The Influence of International Law on the Immigration Policy of the United States.” *Immigr. & Nat'lity L. Rev.* 17 (1995): 223.

⁴⁰³ Lee, Erika. *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943*. University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Relying on sworn testimony provided by three US missionaries, Page used these “expert” accounts on Chinese prostitution to assert a totalizing portrayal of all Chinese women as either voluntary sex workers or indentured servants coerced into performing sexual labor at the hands of organized Chinese secret societies. “There are from two to three thousand women in the city, and certainly nine–tenths of them are prostitutes and been brought from China for that purpose,” Ira Condit, a missionary from San Francisco, had claimed, thereby gesturing to how these accusations of moral turpitude came to characterize Chinese women in general despite the actual number of Chinese immigrant women admitted to the US being low in the years leading up to Page’s speech (about 500 were admitted from 1870–1874 annually).⁴⁰⁴

Moreover, Page enlisted the help of others who argued that Chinese women, in regularly working the sex trade by engaging with not only Chinese men but also white men who sought out their services, ran the risk of transmitting infectious sexual disease that compromised the health of the nation. As immigration commissioner, R. Korwin Piotrowski, urged members of the House, “abolish a traffic which is demoralizing to the people of this state...[and] uncontrollably spread[ing] disease to the young and inexperienced in our population.”^{405,406} Therefore, in successfully subsuming the morality of Asian “alien capital” under white American capital and mystifying the threat of Asian economic competition in general through their frame of encroaching Chinese sexual vice, Page and other members of the House passed the bill just twelve days after he delivered his speech, and President Ulysses S. Grant signed the bill into law the evening the Senate passed it without any amendments less than one month later on March 3, 1875.⁴⁰⁷

Afterwards, both the legal language of the Page Law and the state apparatus that emerged to enable its enforcement provided the underlying symbolic and material basis to begin using immigration and naturalization law to shore up the borders of the nativist state to include those it imagined as belonging within the national family and exclude others it considered antithetical and threatening to it.⁴⁰⁸ Though Chinese women did not all work in the sex trade and were vastly overrepresented in the framing of the law compared to other immigrants who also participated in sex work, the fear of Western moral decay nevertheless consolidated in her image. Consequently, the figure of the sexually deviant Chinese prostitute became the basis for over–enforcement when customs officials with no previous experience in immigration control were newly tasked with determining the status of Chinese women seeking entry as part of the nation’s first federally coordinated effort to control the racial porousness of its borders.⁴⁰⁹ As Sae–Saue (260) elaborates:

In terms of practice and enforcement, the Page Law concretized the image of the Chinese woman as sexually deviant, for it mandated US officials to define (in order to identify) “immoral” Asian women in ways “that informed every aspect of admission and exclusion.” For example, the work of defining and identifying prostitutes resulted in recognizing second wives of Chinese immigrants in a culture of polygamy to be without the woman’s free and voluntary consent, and therefore cast her as a prostitute subject to exclusion. As such, enforcing the Page

⁴⁰⁴ Sae–Saue, Jayson Gonzales. 2022. 258.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 258.

⁴⁰⁶ Shah, Nayan. “Between ‘Oriental Depravity’ and ‘Natural Degenerates’: Spatial Borderlands and the Making of Ordinary Americans.” *American Quarterly* 57.3 (2005): 703–725.

⁴⁰⁷ Day, Iyko. *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism*. Duke University Press, 2016.

⁴⁰⁸ Lew–Williams, Beth. “‘Chinamen’ and ‘Delinquent Girls’: Intimacy, Exclusion, and a Search for California’s Color Line.” *The Journal of American History* 104.3 (2017): 632–655.

⁴⁰⁹ Calavita, Kitty. “The Paradoxes of Race, Class, Identity, and ‘Passing’: Enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Acts, 1882–1910.” *Law & Social Inquiry* 25.1 (2000): 1–40.

Law often resulted not in identifying prostitutes, but in identifying whether the Chinese woman was married, and if so if she were a first or second wife.

So as Kerry Abrams (679) writes about how the Page Law interacted with the 1870 California State Act to Prevent Kidnapping and Importation of Mongolian, Chinese, and Japanese Females for Criminal or Demoralizing Purposes, the Chinese woman was rendered through law as both sexually immoral and a victim of her own culture's backward attitudes toward family formation, where the state essentially separated "Chinese women into two categories: prostitutes and proper wives." "Women were not questioned about whether they were prostitutes," Abrams writes. "Rather they were questioned about their marriages, and if their answers fail[ed] to satisfy...they were deemed 'lewd' or 'debauched.'"⁴¹⁰ Therefore, the Asian immigrant woman herself became a specifically gendered and sexual "impossible subject," allowed only two forms of legal legibility tied to, on the one hand, sexual immorality, racialized vice, and endemic victimhood, and on the other, proper subservience to the monogamous, patriarchal family form.

Moreover, naturalization and anti-miscegenation laws additionally complemented racially exclusionary immigration laws to further the Chinese subject's sense of fundamental unassimilability. "If Asian exclusion laws positioned the border and Western US ports as the first front on which to wage a battle against US demographic changes, immigrant labor, and racial integration, then anti-miscegenation laws made the bedroom the second front," Sae-Saue (262) forwards. According to Leti Volpp, the legal regulation of marriage and sexual unions functioned as the means through which the state managed the internal composition of the national body as well as its external exclusions.⁴¹¹ For example, focusing a portion of the discussion on the Expatriation Act of 1907 that mandated "[t]hat any American woman who marries a foreigner shall take the nationality of her husband," Volpp (407) illuminates how unions not sanctioned by the state affected not only Chinese American women who married Chinese immigrant men, but also white American women and any other US citizens who had previously married non-citizens and who subsequently lost their citizenship due to the Expatriation Law.

Therefore as immigration and naturalization laws increasingly manufactured a lopsided gender demographic structure affected Chinese men's ability to form acceptable intraethnic unions in the eyes of the state, their lack of attachment to legible family forms only furthered stereotypical impressions of their innate difference, unassimilability, and capacity for sexual predation. As Sae-Saue (261) continues:

Chinese men thus came to represent an imaginary danger to White womanhood and a menace to the values of the heteronormative family, which has always been considered a foundation of US civil society. Significantly, images of Chinese males as menacing immigrants who fail to replicate heteronormative relations arrested the national imagination by highlighting their commitment to long hours of work instead of to raising families, and it cast them as predatory bachelors who threaten White women and the national social order. In this way, the Page Law contributed to making the narrative of the Chinese as uninterested in national integration an approximate reality by severely restricting their means of assimilation. To add to these contradictions, a report of The Joint Commission to Investigate Chinese Immigration published two years after the passage of the Page Law found that the lack of families and wives for

⁴¹⁰ Abrams, Kerry. "Polygamy, Prostitution, and the Federalization of Immigration Law." *Colum. J. rev.* 105 (2005): 641.

⁴¹¹ Volpp, Leti. "Divesting Citizenship: On Asian American History and the Loss of Citizenship through Marriage." *UCLA L. Rev.* 53 (2005): 405.

Chinese workers actually encouraged prostitution and the very industry the law professed to target.

Consequently, in establishing the basis from which to justify broader exclusion measures, the Page Law managed to create ethical exceptions in US immigration policy that formalized national belonging as a moralized domain from which to determine the boundaries of acceptable citizenship, not just for Chinese women but all Asian immigrants who were constituted within the Page Law's articulation of family and sexual pathology from "the Orient."

To address the "incalculable evils" of Chinese immigration, Page's pathologization of the Chinese prostitute as presenting first just a localized threat to later a potential national crisis, therefore forged the way for lawmakers to use the ever-present existential danger posed by even minimal Asian presence to justify further immigration restrictions. Following the Page Law, the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Acts of 1882 and 1892 additionally moved to bar the entry of all Chinese laborers and made Chinese immigrants ineligible for naturalization while the 1917 Immigration Act broadened the categorical umbrella so far as to encompass the entire region from Afghanistan eastward to the Pacific as a "barred Asiatic zone."⁴¹²

In general, as Deenesh Sohoni has shown, historical fears of racial contact and pollution through the intimate channels of sex and marriage have therefore lied at the heart of the United States' migration and naturalization laws that have worked in tandem to maintain the "racial purity" of the Anglo nation along both symbolic and material lineages of descent.⁴¹³ The first anti-miscegenation laws issued in 1660s Maryland and Virginia, for example, illustrate the underlying material interests of regulating carnal relations, where in prohibiting English women—"forgettfull of their free Condiçion and to the disgrace of our Nation"—from marrying slaves, ensured that the children of those marriages would remain "slaves as their fathers were" to maintain the pure lines of inheritance afforded by colonial marriage and inheritance laws. So while congressional immigration legislation broadly shaped the terms of entry and exclusion for racialized groups at the national level to produce an Anglo-dominant society, state anti-miscegenation laws ensured the ongoing maintenance of clearly delineated racial hierarchies by prohibiting the formation of intraracial unions.

Asian immigrant racialization consequently became co-constitutive with the passage of these immigration and naturalization laws where, initially, anti-miscegenation laws targeting Asian ethnic groups passed between 1861 and 1890 in six states in the American West with the aim of preventing the permanent settlement and incorporation of predominantly Chinese labor migrants through intermarriage and family formation with white citizens. Preventing even US-born Asians from forming intimate attachments to the body politic, naturalization laws therefore served as the crucial bridge that symbolically and legally linked foreign-born Asian immigrants to US-born Asian persons as fundamentally "un-American." In determining the racial meaning of Asian ethnic groups by linking them through a shared logic of exclusion and periodic unsettling, Sohoni (608) demonstrates how disparate categories like Chinese, Japanese, South Asian, "yellow-Mongolian," and "brown-Malay" became unified in relation to the law as permanently unassimilable "aliens ineligible for citizenship."

⁴¹² Lee, Erika. "The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882–1924." *Journal of American Ethnic History* (2002): 36–62.

⁴¹³ Sohoni, Deenesh. "Unsuitable Suitors: Anti-Miscegenation Laws, Naturalization Laws, and the Construction of Asian Identities." *Law & Society Review* 41.3 (2007): 587–618.

Working conjointly to both externally and internally command the racial character of the national body, immigration and anti-miscegenation laws thus performed complementary functions to both clarify the boundaries of whiteness during a moment of legal uncertainty in light of newly arriving Asian immigrant groups and maintain a clearly delineated hierarchy for the continued functioning of the racial capitalist order after the Civil War. Meanwhile, the Page Law, in paving the way for these other racially-targeted exclusionary and regulatory efforts, formed the moral basis from which these hierarchical rationales emerged, positioning Asian sexual deviance as central to national concerns over maintaining the racial purity of the body politic as well as that project's relationship to the possessive investment in whiteness as America grew its imperial reach and became increasingly embedded within the globalized economy at the turn of the last century.^{414,415}

CONTINUITIES OF ENCOUNTER IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN PORNO-TROPICS

According to fellow Vietnamese singer Thiên Phú, before Julie Quang resettled in Orange County, she was born as Rany Angot in French Indochina in 1951 to a Vietnamese mother and a French national father of East Indian ancestry who served in the colonial French Expeditionary Army—the eldest and only one of her six siblings born in Vietnam as her family later moved to her father's native Pondicherry in India.^{416,417} After his untimely death, however, her mother moved the family back to Vietnam to live in Cần Thơ near the army airfield by the same name originally built by French colonial forces and later adapted by the US army as a ARVN base camp. Later, Julie and her family moved to Saigon where, during her teenage years, she began to sing with local bands to supplement her family's income in clubs primarily catering to American military personnel and other civilians stationed in the city during the war. Assisted by her knowledge of French, English, and Vietnamese due to her French colonial and Vietnamese background, she became a popular entertainer in collaboration with a band called the Free Ones for US troops stationed throughout the south, performing at army strongholds like Bien Hoa Air Base, Nha Trang Air Base, and Ban Me Thuot East Airfield.

Eventually, Julie's career took off in 1970 when she and her younger sister, Veny, formed a band with two sons of the legendary Vietnamese songwriter, Phạm Duy. Calling their band The Dreamers, the group's covers of British and American pop songs helped them land a regular slot performing at the famous Ritz and Tu Do nightclubs in Saigon.⁴¹⁸ Known for her "exotic" appearance that some speculated as "possibly Italian" and Vietnamese, Quang developed a large fanbase drawn to her Twiggy-esque look and cosmopolitan singing style that incorporated lyrics in French and English as well as Vietnamese, and she herself became a star in her own right with the release of mournful hit ballad "Mùa Thu Chết" that same year.⁴¹⁹

Noting her background as formed within both the colonial and American interventionist histories of Vietnam, this section therefore begins by considering how Quang's arrival came with attendant layers of Cold War orientalist imaginings about the Vietnamese woman as a particularly gendered and sexual object of

⁴¹⁴ Callinicos, Alex. *Imperialism and Global Political Economy*. Polity, 2009.

⁴¹⁵ Chilcote, Ronald H. "Globalization or Imperialism?" *Latin American Perspectives* 29.6 (2002): 80–84.

⁴¹⁶ Phú, Thiên. (2014, August 4). "Julie and Me." Blog, Thien Phu: Vietnamese Singer of French Love Songs. <http://thienphu-vietsinger.blogspot.com/2014/08/julie-and-me.html>

⁴¹⁷ Phú, Thiên. (2015, April 23). "Julie Quang." Blog, VietCeleb. <https://vietceleb.blogspot.com/search/label/Julie%20Quang?m=0>

⁴¹⁸ borntowander. (2007, November 14). "Vietnam: The Dreamers Band" [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m0Jq1klhpY>

⁴¹⁹ Saigon Music Before 1975. (2019, July 26). "53/ MÙA THU CHẾT. Cửa: Phạm Duy. Ca sĩ: Julie Quang ca. (Thu Âm Trước Năm 1975)" [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVvycnZUd1Q>

possession, paternalism, and—eventually—derision. Recalling how coverage of the “Mr. Tai” case frequently referenced Quang as a divorced yet “glamorous” “cabaret singer” known to be a “constant companion” of Tai’s, this next section subsequently traces her formation as an object of orientalized and feminized suspicion back to colonial French Indochina to show how American military engagements in Vietnam continued to rely on representations of Saigon as a sensual maiden-turned-whore to authorize and structure its own relation to the unruly “Third World.”⁴²⁰

FROM SENSUAL MAIDEN TO SAIGONESE BAR GIRL

As Cynthia Weber forwards in *Imagining America at War: Morality, Politics and Film* of the 2002 adaption of *The Quiet American*, the opening scene perfectly captures how Graham Greene’s 1955 novel on early American involvement during the late colonial period of French Indochina remained relevant in narrating America’s wars into the twenty-first century.⁴²¹ Standing “at the intersections of a stereotypical masculine desire for (colonial) conquest and a stereotypical feminine desire for commitment,” Weber (42–44) argues that the film’s opening minutes lay out the enduring gendered and sexual stakes:

During the opening credits, we hear a mournful Vietnamese woman singing in her native language before we see the first image of the film: something small and delicate is perched on the end of a long stick, roasting over a small pot. This image suggests three of Indochina’s precious “fruits”: opium, the palm date (also known as a phoenix), and woman (a soft fruit penetrated by a firm stick). As the singing continues, cymbals shimmer. Two images simultaneously fade in over the opening image, a close up of an emotionless Phuong (whose Vietnamese name, she later tells us, means Phoenix) and a fiery bomb blast. All images fade out until we see only the naked flame of a glass-covered lantern dancing before a tapestry. Fade again to another transparent head shot of Phuong cross-dissolved over another bomb blast. Fade to an image of Fowler sitting at a desk before a typewriter. His narration begins.

FOWLER: I can’t say what made me fall in love with Vietnam—that a woman’s voice can drug you; that everything is so intense. The colors, the taste, even the rain. Nothing like the filthy rain in London.

As Fowler speaks, his image slowly fades to that of the [Mekong] river running through Saigon. When he pauses, the film’s title fades in and then out over this river and is replaced by the fade in and out of the words “Saigon, Vietnam, 1952,” as Fowler’s narration continues.

FOWLER: They say whatever you’re looking for, you will find here. They say you come to Vietnam, and you understand a lot in a few minutes. The rest has got to be lived. The smell, that’s the first thing that hits you, promising everything in exchange for your soul. And the heat. Your shirt is straightaway a rag. You can hardly remember your name or what you came to escape from. But at night, there’s a breeze. The river is beautiful. You could be forgiven for thinking there was no war, that the gunshots were

⁴²⁰ Barton, Kathryn, Delores Brooks Irwin. “Vietnamese Singer’s Conviction Protest Close Shave for Tai.” *The Orange County Register*. September 10, 1982. p. A3.

⁴²¹ Weber, Cynthia. *Imagining America at War: Morality, Politics, and Film*. Routledge, 2020.

fireworks, that only pleasure matters—a pipe of opium with the touch of a girl who might tell you she loves you.

Set during the interim years that witnessed the breakdown of French colonial occupation and early American interventionism in Saigon, Graham Greene's 1955 *The Quiet American* tells the story of a jaded and cynical British journalist named Thomas Fowler in his fifties who finds himself in an allegorical love triangle competing with an American aid worker/undercover CIA officer for the affections of a young Vietnamese woman named Phuong.⁴²² As the eponymous "Quiet American," Alden Pyle is a young man from a privileged East Coast background whose Harvard education has taken him to Vietnam as a devoted follower of a fictional intellectual named "York Harding." Committed to Harding's argument in *The Role of the West* that a "Third Force" in Vietnam was needed to provide an alternative to both Vietnamese communism and French colonialism, Pyle's character is presumptively meant to stand in for the American regime more broadly as it became increasingly entangled in Indochina during the period of French colonial collapse. Never fully developed as a character through discussions of her inner life, Phuong is merely written as a 20-year-old former dancer who once worked at The Arc-en-Ciel club in Saigon's Cholon district, now stuck between being Fowler's mistress and the object of Pyle's desire in a bargain for their paternalistic protection.

The choice to use the three characters' love triangle as the central storytelling device manages to cast the geopolitical struggle between a declining French colonial power and an upstart professional-managerial US state in romantic and sexual terms. Imagining Vietnam as personified in the figure of Phuong, she and the unruly "Third World" nation become constitutively formed into feminized and territorialized objects of desire, possession, and masculinist "protection." Therefore, while none of the three main characters are "conventionally situated" within the nuclear family form (Fowler is written as an adulterous atheist, Pyle is described as still unmarried well into his bachelor years, and Phuong is two-dimensionally written to be a colonial mistress), this use of a romantic-sexual premise to narrate geopolitical affairs supports Cynthia Weber's contention that a feminist reading of *The Quiet American* must understand the film and its source text as squarely positioned within the politics of the family.

As Jeffrey Keith has consequently forwarded, *The Quiet American* can be used as the entry point from which to observe the sexual and family politics of empire as it encoded Vietnam as the "Mistress of the Mekong" during the period of European colonial expansion and as it endured through paternalistic engagements undertaken by the United States to resubjugate its feminized, infantilized, and hypersexualized subjects under the premise of a "Third Force."⁴²³ Pointing to how the novel "straddles and symbolizes the blurry line between fact and fiction in wartime reportage," Keith (254) additionally discusses how, because of the novel's mass popularity and ubiquity, Greene's vision of Saigon influenced the American wartime imaginary as "many journalists who wrote about Saigon [during the Vietnam War] lifted from *The Quiet American* as though it were a work of non-fiction":

Journalist Paul Gray's 1991 *Time* magazine eulogy of Greene insisted that "no serious writer of this century has more thoroughly invaded and shaped the public imagination than did Graham Greene." "Millions who have never read him are nonetheless familiar with his vision," he continues. "Versions of Greene scenes can be found in daily headlines...." This was certainly true for Western journalists who

⁴²² Greene, Graham. *The Quiet American*. London: William Heinemann. 1955.

⁴²³ Keith, Jeffrey A. "Producing Miss Saigon: Imaginings, Realities, and the Sensual Geography of Saigon." *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 22,3 (2015): 243–272.

filed wartime stories from Saigon. Recalling Saigon during the early 1960s, David Halberstam, the Pulitzer Prize-winning war correspondent for *The New York Times*, remembered how he and his fellow members of the press corps “used to sit in the small French cafés and talk about Greene’s book” because the work “seemed at that time...the best novel about Vietnam.” Elsewhere, Halberstam more adamantly described his and his colleagues’ affinity for *The Quiet American*. “Many passages some of us can quote to this day,” he insisted. “It was our bible.” David Greenway, a correspondent for *Time* and *The Washington Post*, believed “every reporter” in Vietnam owned a copy of the novel. And at the war’s end, Tiziano Terzani noted that Saigon’s fall left Greene’s work littering the streets of Ho Chi Minh City.⁴²⁴

“As Greene had before them, correspondents reporting on Vietnam often wrote about topics they had grown to anticipate after a century of Western writings about Saigon predisposed them to confirm their biases about the city’s sensuality, or they recounted the perceptions of *colons* who knew ‘her’ well.”⁴²⁵ Taking into account this sensualized colonial legacy of French Indochina as it became reproduced in American war reportage through the widespread influence of Greene’s novel, Keith therefore argues that it is critical to analyze how American imaginings of Saigon continue to be connected to the region’s history of colonization through the lens of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* given that Said published his path breaking critique of Western discourse about the “Orient” in the wake of the Vietnam War.⁴²⁶ So while some may attribute the hypersexualization of Southeast Asia to the American war in Vietnam that saw the proliferation of sex work in shantytowns, R&R regional tourist stops, and the streets of Saigon itself, Keith argues that in fact “Western preoccupation with Southeast Asia’s sexualized reputation predated the Americanization of the Second Indochina War by more than a century.”⁴²⁷

As Ann Laura Stoler (43) writes in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, “[n]o subject is discussed more than sex in the colonial literature” where tropical Asia in particular “provided a site for European pornographic fantasies long before conquest was under way with lurid descriptions of sexual license, promiscuity, gynecological aberrations, and general perversion marking the Otherness of the colonized for metropolitan consumption.”⁴²⁸ Such representations of the Asian jungle tropics as the primitive site for erotic colonial encounter therefore “predisposed Europeans to perceive Southeast Asia in sexual ways” that constituted the region as a feminized space for white masculine sexual play and imperial consumption, which in turn constituted law-as-culture-as-law in the colonial context within the domain of sexuality.

As Matt K. Matsuda’s (140) *Empire of Love: Histories of France and the Pacific* discusses of French Indochina specifically as a “romance of the ruins,” Saigon’s history of French colonization can be traced back to at least the 1850s, when the navy intervened in the territory of Cochinchine under the premise of protecting the morally authorized work of Catholic missionaries:

As a colony under a French governor, “Indochina” was the heart of an empire that extended from the Mekong delta to Panama. The combined territories harbored the only substantial French settler population in the Pacific and the only commanding landmass. Official bulletins highlighted the sheer

⁴²⁴ Ibid, 254.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, 255.

⁴²⁶ Said, Edward. "Orientalism: Western Concepts of the Orient." *New York: Pantheon* (1978).

⁴²⁷ Keith, Jeffrey A. 2015. 248.

⁴²⁸ Stoler, Ann Laura. "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power." *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*. University of California Press, 2002.

scale of the territory: "Our colony has a surface area of 680,000 square kilometers, about 150,000 kilometers more than France." As the jewel of French overseas empire and her "balcony on the Pacific," Indochina also shaped the Oceanic colonies through the leverage of the Banque de l'Indochine, and through the Tonkinese and Annamite workers sent to labor-poor settlements in New Caledonia and the New Hebrides.

The French navy first intervened in the Southeast Asian kingdom of Annam in the 1850s, establishing a protectorate over the adjoining territory of Cochinchine ostensibly to defend the work of the Catholic church. This "time of the admirals" was characterized by complicated military and diplomatic maneuvering between French governors and Annamite rulers at Saigon governing Cochinchine, the emperor at Hue in Annam, and mandarins in Tonkin at Hanoi...Cultural and political confrontation lay at the heart of developing colonial narratives—both French and Vietnamese—which built upon and underscored for effect the differences between peoples, *while also courting their loyalty and association* [emphasis added].⁴²⁹

The expression of French colonial authority through the language of affection, Matsuda argues, particularly worked to make desire the lingua franca for the metropole's real and imagined encounters with the colonized territories in Indochina during its early consolidation. "The 'possession of the native' promoted by colonialists was realized in civil policy of the early twentieth century through state-approved mixed liaisons and colonial marriage fictions," Matsuda (152) writes, where the Mekong itself became constructed through law and literature as the feminized site for masculine adventure as "one of the greatest routes of penetration in the world—two thousand kilometers—toward fecund and unexplored regions." The productive role played by the circulation of colonial literature consequently demonstrates Edward Said's point in *Culture and Imperialism* regarding studying the colonial era novel and other forms of colonial culture to understand the ideological basis for legitimating imperial authority.⁴³⁰ In a survey of French colonial texts produced during the late nineteenth century, Nicola Cooper's (2001) *France in Indochina* analyzes these erotic themes across contemporary memoirs, journals, press reports, and anthropological ethnographies to show how Indochina became incorporated into the French empire through paternalism and sexual conquest. These documents frequently gendered Indochina as a young girl who needed the protection of her colonial parent state, contrasting her condition of feminine dependence to the "glory and discovery" of the land's masculine French conquerors.⁴³¹

As the riverine gateway to these erotic colonial fantasies, Saigon, too, emerged as the "Mistress of the Mekong" well before the arrival of American GIs, where, for example, French naval officer and novelist Pierre Loti often staged his tales in Saigon as a "contact zone" where "military men in erotic liaison with exotic, often subordinated or prostituted females" became narrated through "empire as a love story"—"a delicious Western town" where "even in the European quarters it still ha[d] a cachet of exoticism that enhance[d] the attraction."⁴³² Moreover, in their edited volume *France and Indochina: Cultural Representations*, Kathryn Robson and Jennifer Yee (2005) discuss how Claude Farrère's (1905) *Les Civilisés* made Saigon into "a topos of corruption" in French literature. Telling the story of three French colonialists—a doctor, an engineer, and a naval officer—who indulge in the debauchery of Cochinchina-era Saigon by consuming opium and regularly fornicating with the city's "sexually available" women, *Les Civilisés* ends with the men all ruined by succumbing to the region's hedonistic

⁴²⁹ Matsuda, Matt K. *Empire of love: Histories of France and the Pacific*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

⁴³⁰ Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage, 2012. p. 74.

⁴³¹ Cooper, Nicola. *France in Indochina: Colonial Encounters*. Oxford: Berg, 2001.

⁴³² Matsuda, Matt K. 2005. 19, 30.

temptations, where the protagonist is left by his French fiancé after falling back into his lecherous habits.⁴³³ As a result of these depictions, Cooper notes how late 19th century portrayals of Saigon as a young girl changed by the start of the First World War to portray her as “escaping the paternal grasp of her metropolitan parent,” making her “all the more alluring” to lustful adventurers who were drawn to Saigon by the colonial era novel to have their way with her.⁴³⁴ Concluding this survey of colonial texts, Cooper closes by arguing that “the indigenous woman” in French colonial literature consequently became “a cipher through which the metropolitan male possesses Indochina.”⁴³⁵ Echoing this point, “[t]o love and be loved by Indochina,” writes Matsuda (141–142), “was the articulation of French empire: the shaping of the nation and its conquests.”

Following a series of successful military campaigns led by Francis Garnier and Henri Rivière, the “time of the admirals” slowly gave way to armed colonial rule as France grew its territorial reach in Indochina. An occupational military regime coupled with French and local figureheads largely came to characterize colonial governance thereafter, where the Union of Indochina came to be militarily bound within territorialized space under governors like Jean Marie Antoine de Lanessan (1891–1894), Joseph Athanase Paul Doumer (1897–1902), and Albert–Pierre Sarraut (1911–1919).⁴³⁶

In 1940 during the Second World War, the newly created Vichy France formed after the occupation of Nazi German forces moved to grant Imperial Japan military access to Tonkin. German occupation opened a vacuum in Indochina as the recuperating French state lacked the capacity to retain control of Indochina following the disintegration of its once 65,000–strong colonial army, resulting in the Japanese occupation of Indochina during the remainder of WWII until the dissolution of the Japanese Empire itself shortly after.⁴³⁷ During Japanese occupation, French Indochina was impacted by a catastrophic famine in 1945 due to transport system attacks by American forces, an unresponsive colonial administration, and a series of damaging typhoons, resulting in the deaths of between 400,000 to 2 million people by starvation and generating widespread anticolonial sentiment among the rural communities in the north who were most impacted. Building on communist momentum from the interwar years to critique the influence of colonialism on the Vietnamese people, the Viet Minh, which formed in 1941 as the only organized anti–French and anti–Japanese resistance group, declared independence in September 1945 after the collapse of Imperial Japan and in response to French designs to reoccupy its former colony. Beginning years of protracted anticolonial resistance, it was not until the 1954 Battle of Điện Biên Phủ during the First Indochina War that French rule began to rapidly unravel when Viet Minh resistance fighters’ familiarity with the local topography and use of guerilla tactics helped them to decisively win the fight for independence.⁴³⁸

After the Battle of Điện Biên Phủ, a large portion of negotiations at the 1954 Geneva Conference largely dealt with settling outstanding issues concerning the dismantling of French Indochina. Negotiated between France, the Viet Minh, the Soviet Union, and the People’s Republic of China, the accords temporarily separated Vietnam along the 17th parallel into a northern zone to be governed by the Viet Minh and a southern zone to be governed by the State of Vietnam headed by former emperor Bảo Đại. Educated in France, Đại was the 13th and

⁴³³ Robson, Kathryn, and Jennifer Yee, eds. *France and Indochina: Cultural Representations*. Lexington Books, 2005. p. 5.

⁴³⁴ Cooper, Nicola. 2001. 136–137.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁴³⁶ Matsuda, Matt K. 2005. 140.

⁴³⁷ Namba, Chizuru. “The French Colonization and Japanese Occupation of Indochina during the Second World War: Encounters of the French, Japanese, and Vietnamese.” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 8.2 (2019): 518–547.

⁴³⁸ Jennings, Eric T. *Vichy in the Tropics: Petain’s National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940–44*. Stanford University Press, 2004.

final Emperor of the last dynastic family in Vietnam who ruled the Annam and Tonkin protectorates from 1926 to 1945 during French colonialism until Japan ousted Vichy France in 1945. With Đại temporarily installed once again as the apparent head of the southern region for a temporary period, the parties at the Geneva Conference decided that a democratic election in 1956 would be held under international supervision to eventually re-unify the state under one elected regime. Assured that Vietnam's largest population resided in the north, the Viet Minh agreed, believing that they would easily win the election once it came to pass.⁴³⁹

Behind the scenes, however, both the US and French governments had discussed how to maintain regional influence in Indochina, hoping to win allies in support of a US military intervention sent in support of the French army to continue its war to reclaim colonial control. By the end of the conference, however, US representatives decided that it might be preferred to let France withdraw from the region in favor of exerting direct American influence through the newly formed northern and southern states in order to distinguish its actions from French colonialism.⁴⁴⁰ Consequently, after France granted full independence to Vietnam and after Đại appointed the US-backed Ngô Đình Diệm as Prime Minister just before the signing of the Geneva accords, US global security policy shifted to working through Diệm to direct American interests in Southeast Asia.

A staunch nationalist who became increasingly authoritarian, Diệm opposed both communism and colonialism, searching for an alternative that initially appeared to align enough with American priorities.⁴⁴¹ After consolidating political power by winning control over Saigon from the independent Binh Xuyên Force contracted by Đại and brokering deals with semi-autonomous religious groups throughout the south, Diệm scheduled a referendum for October 1955 seeking to officially replace Đại as the south's leader. While official results showed 98% support for Diệm, the implausible landslide gestured to election fraud, especially after it was counted that over 600,000 Saigon residents voted for Diệm when only 450,000 voters were registered in the city overall.

Nevertheless, Diệm took power with behind-the-scenes US support, creating the Republic of Vietnam after the election to replace the State of Vietnam. By the time the 1956 deadline arrived to hold the elections prescribed by the 1954 Geneva Accords, Diệm refused to comply, claiming that free elections were not possible in a communist-controlled north and that the newly formed Republic of Vietnam was not the same as the Đại-led State of Vietnam implicated in the agreement. Holding power for the next seven years, however, it became clear to the United States leadership that a Diệm-headed South Vietnam had moved increasingly out from under their thumb, and Diệm was eventually assassinated via a military coup in 1963 that received secret authorization from the US government, which had grown wary of his dictatorial proclamations and unpredictability as a US ally.⁴⁴² Using a colonial frame of Diệm's South Vietnam as a willful lover, a declassified "top secret" report on Diem said:

One of the important lessons of the American involvement in South Vietnam in support of Diem was that a policy of unreserved commitment to a particular leadership placed us in a weak and manipulable position on important internal issues. The view that there were "no alternatives" to Diem greatly limited the extent of our influence over the regime and ruled out over the years a number of kinds of leverage

⁴³⁹ Thayer, Carlyle A. *War by Other Means: National Liberation and Revolution in Vietnam, 1954-60*. Routledge, 1989.

⁴⁴⁰ Greene, Daniel P. O'C. "John Foster Dulles and the End of the Franco-American Entente in Indochina." *Diplomatic History* 16.4 (1992): 551-572.

⁴⁴¹ Jacobs, Seth. *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*. Duke University Press, 2005.

⁴⁴² Jones, Howard. *Death of a Generation: How the Assassinations of Diem and JFK Prolonged the Vietnam War*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

that we might usefully have employed or threatened to employ. Furthermore, it placed the U.S. in the unfortunate role of suitor to a fickle lover. Aware of our fundamental commitment to him, Diem could with relative impunity ignore our wishes. It reversed the real power relationship between the two countries.⁴⁴³

So as was revealed in the declassification and publication of the Pentagon Papers, it was confirmed that South Vietnam (unlike any of the other countries in Southeast Asia) was essentially the creation of the United States and that without U.S. support Diem almost certainly could not have consolidated his hold on the South during 1955 and 1956. Asserting that absent US aid, Diem's bid for power after the Geneva Conference would have failed, the report documented how the United States had sent equipment and supplies to help strengthen the south's army and provided US military training to 32,000 South Vietnamese forces. Moreover, the Pentagon Papers also identified the core motivation for US interventionism in Southeast Asia. Counter to President Lyndon B. Johnson's stated aim to the public that the war was a campaign undertaken to secure an "independent, non-Communist South Vietnam," the larger goal was really directed towards Chinese containment. In a memorandum sent by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to Johnson on November 3, 1965, Macnamara told the President that "major policy decisions with respect to our course of action in Vietnam" only made sense "if they are in support of a long-run United States policy to contain China."⁴⁴⁴

Holding the belief that the PRC harbored imperial aspirations akin to Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, McNamara framed the Chinese threat as an attempt to unify all of Asia against the United States in a global bid for power. "China—like Germany in 1917, like Germany in the West and Japan in the East in the late 30s, and like the USSR in 1947," he wrote, "looms as a major power threatening to undercut our importance and effectiveness in the world and, more remotely and menacingly, to organize all of Asia against us."⁴⁴⁵ Thus to halt the spread of Chinese geopolitical expansion, Southeast Asia became perhaps the most visible of the "three fronts" from which the United States mounted its containment strategy alongside the "Japan-Korea front" and the "India-Pakistan front," a military campaign the American government knew would result in staggering troop deaths and large-scale defense spending but saw as nonetheless justified for its strategic importance in maintaining US global hegemony.⁴⁴⁶

Consequently, despite claims to it being otherwise, examining these details from the Pentagon Papers alongside the early history of US engagement in Vietnam reveals the continuities in colonial frames that reinscribed Western influence in Southeast Asia through the United States as a "Third Force."^{447, 448} While sequestered American histories of the war in Vietnam tend to obfuscate the continuity of Western domination in Southeast Asia that saw Americans destroy food supply chains during WWII and American CIA officers secretly

⁴⁴³ Pentagon Papers Project. "[Part IV. B. 5.] Evolution of the War. Counterinsurgency: The Overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem, May–Nov. 1963." In *The Pentagon Paper*. Los Angeles, CA: Pentagon Papers Peace Project, 1972. Periodical. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <lc.cn.loc.gov/2016202039>.

⁴⁴⁴ Pentagon Papers Project. "[Part IV. B. 1.] Evolution of the War. Counterinsurgency: The Kennedy Commitments and Programs, 1961." In *The Pentagon Paper*. Los Angeles, CA: Pentagon Papers Peace Project, 1972. Periodical. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <lc.cn.loc.gov/2016202039>.

⁴⁴⁵ Pentagon Papers Project. "[Part IV. B. 3.] Evolution of the War, Counterinsurgency: The Advisory Build-up, 1961–67." In *The Pentagon Paper*. Los Angeles, CA: Pentagon Papers Peace Project, 1972. Periodical. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <lc.cn.loc.gov/2016202039>.

⁴⁴⁶ Lee, Steven Hugh. *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam, and the Origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949–1954*. McGill–Queen's Press, 1996.

⁴⁴⁷ Herring, George C. "The Truman Administration and the Restoration of French Sovereignty in Indochina." *Diplomatic History* 1.2 (1977): 97–117.

⁴⁴⁸ Nguyen, Dieu Thi. "European Reconquest and Neocolonialism in Southeast Asia." *World War II in Asia and the Pacific and the War's Aftermath, with General Themes: A Handbook of Literature and Research* (1998): 152.

assist French forces during the First Indochina War, it is clear from following the material trace of *The Quiet American* that the boundary between colonial domination and American-inflected professional-managerial domination is much blurrier than is commonly recognized.⁴⁴⁹

So by the time Graham Greene published *The Quiet American* just one year after the Battle of Điện Biên Phủ, his fascination with the sensuality of a feminized Vietnam did not simply materialize from his singular imagination but rather from over a century's worth of "layered discourse" produced from colonial encounters with the Southeast Asian "porno-tropics." As war journalists from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* moved to cover the Americanization of the War in Indochina with their dog-eared copies of *The Quiet American* in tow, they continued to draw upon and add to these layered discourses of sensual encounter with the feminized Orient, bringing the purportedly "archaic" colonial past into temporal convergence with the linear-historical temporality of American modernity as the hand-off of Western influence in the region occurred in the middle of the twentieth century. "Put another way, femininity and sensuality functioned as tropes for [American] correspondents who inherited colonial imaginings, reported on postcolonial realities, and in turn helped to produce a deeply sensual geography of Saigon."⁴⁵⁰

Examining American reportage on the Vietnam War, Keith's analysis subsequently shows how depictions of Saigon-as-woman began to shift in response to the progress of the war itself. Following the Geneva Conference, Saigon at first underwent its own morality reforms under Diệm who tried to place bans on prostitution and dancing in the hopes of improving the city's sordid reputation by limiting interactions between servicemembers and local Vietnamese women. During this period, journalists often bemoaned Diệm's draconian and "oppressive" measures which "threatened to dim Saigon's luster as the pearl of the Orient." Indignant that he was making the "world's most sinful city" now "staid," bans became framed as regressive and reflective of an intolerant regime that inhibited the freedom of Vietnamese women.⁴⁵¹ At the same time, others paradoxically blamed the de facto First Lady of South Vietnam, Trần Lệ Xuân (popularly known in English as "Madame Nhu"), for the crackdown as "an ardent feminist" who had become too overzealous in her misguided attempt to liberate Vietnamese women.⁴⁵² As a result, the sensual maiden found herself during Diệm's rule in the midst of a geopolitical culture war, which anxiously apprehended her as betwixt-and-between her former image as a precious colonial fruit in need of US emancipation and an Americanized-woman-in-the-making in danger of succumbing to modernity's pitfalls.

Following Diệm's assassination, however, news coverage that at first celebrated the revival of the "Paris of the Orient" began to shift as wartime realities became progressively bleaker. With bans now lifted to once again allow for increased sexual contact between local women and American GIs, reportage began to apprehensively observe Saigon's demise into becoming the "Stained Pearl of the Orient."⁴⁵³ After a massive injection of American troops into Vietnam in 1965, coverage pivoted to differentiate between the sensual maiden and the emerging "dragon lady" as imagined through figures like "Hanoi Hannah," who became famous for

⁴⁴⁹ Statler, Kathryn. *Replacing France: The Origins of American Intervention in Vietnam*. University Press of Kentucky, 2007.

⁴⁵⁰ Keith, Jeffrey A. 2015. 244.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid, 257.

⁴⁵² Bui, Diem-My T. "Reporting on Madame Nhu in the Viet Nam War: Representations of the Gendered Other." *positions: asia critique* 20.3 (2012): 851-875.

⁴⁵³ Keith, Jeffrey A. 2015. 259.

directing English-language propaganda at US troops to demoralize the southern war effort.^{454,455} As Keith (259) continues:

Time, for example, ran an article titled “Girls Under Fire” that conflated French colonialists’ sensualized portrayals of Vietnamese women with the rhetoric of U.S. Cold Warriors: “The French used to call Vietnamese women *douces comme les mangues* (sweet as mangoes).” Yet *Time* insisted these “mangoes” often pursued the Viet Cong’s agenda. In August 1965, Charles Mohr used an article in *The New York Times* to explain how the war had transformed the sentiments of American military personnel about Saigon and its residents. In 1962, he recalled overhearing a U.S. soldier admiring a Vietnamese woman on a bicycle. “Listen, we gotta save these girls from Communism,” he advised. By the summer of 1965, however, the “grimness” of the war led U.S. troops to hide from most locals, since Americans had grown cynical in the company of “B-girls” (Saigonese bar girls) working behind barbed wire and iron grated windows.

Again gesturing to the trope of the dragon lady, Don Moser’s article in *Life* in 1968 reporting on a U.S. official’s story demonstrates how Americans’ relationship to the sensual maiden subsequently came to change, still viewing her through the lens of erotic attraction but now also with an air of suspicion and danger that made her less-and-less alluring.

Recently an American official in one U.S. office in Saigon—an admitted admirer of the female form—was attracted each morning by a curvy Vietnamese girl in his office. But when she went home at the end of the day, she no longer seemed so appealing...When he ordered a body search pulled on the girl the next morning, police found her brassiere packed with plastic explosives. A few more days and she would have had enough smuggled in to blow the building off the map.⁴⁵⁶

As the US war in Vietnam became increasingly perceived as a hopeless one, the sensual maiden correspondingly evolved in media representations to reflect American cynicism as a “degraded, disrespected, and crass figure” while Saigon in turn became “a sad, ugly city, without nostalgia, hardened to pity.”⁴⁵⁷ A hub of intimate encounter, the Cholon district especially came to embody the war’s exoticized hedonism and illicit economies—a place where danger, lawlessness, and wanton sexuality were imagined as existing hand in hand. Meanwhile, the bar girls known to work on Tu Do street as part of the city’s nightlife scene came to embody the maiden’s descent into ignominy due to becoming “too Americanized.” As Ward Just, a correspondent for *Newsweek* and *The Washington Post*, wrote about the workers of Tu Do street on Vietnam’s biggest holiday, “The [Tu Do] bars at Tet are filled with girls who have no place to go, disowned as they are for becoming courtesans to the Americans. So they sit in their hip-huggers and miniskirts and vinyl spike-heeled shoes and drink Coke, dreaming of home.”⁴⁵⁸ The figure of the improperly modernized, hardened, and crass Vietnamese prostitute “who could be hired for less than a dollar” therefore became the American-era form that the sensual maiden came to take in response to the deteriorating military campaign waged by the United States. As a

⁴⁵⁴ Angelica Kalika. “The Sirens of Wartime Radio and How the American Print Media Presented Them: The Stories, the Intrigue, and the Evolving Coverage of Their Legacies.” *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 65.2 (2021): 314–316.

⁴⁵⁵ Demery, Monique. *Finding the Dragon Lady: The Mystery of Vietnam’s Madame Nhu*. Public Affairs, 2013.

⁴⁵⁶ Keith, Jeffrey A. 2015. 263.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 260.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 262.

Chicago Tribune article printed of a quotation given during the city's final days before the "Fall of Saigon": "Saigon is a dying place, but she is dying like a whore who is desperately trying to turn her last trick."⁴⁵⁹

As a result, these tensions and convergences between former colonial and new American imaginings of the sensual maiden-turned-prostitute played out by imposing onto the Vietnamese woman a doubly fraught condition of impossibility. This is exemplified in a conversation between Fowler and Pyle in front of The Arc-en-Ciel club in 2002's film adaptation of *The Quiet American*.⁴⁶⁰ As the two men leave the dance club located in Cholon, Pyle turns to Fowler in a scene that demonstrates how Phuong's protected status as a desirable maiden needed to tow a delicate moral line that retained her as an object of conquest:

PYLE: Please forgive me for dancing with Miss Phuong so many times.

FOWLER: I like watching her dance.

PYLE: She's a very good dancer.

FOWLER: She should be. She used to do it for a living.

PYLE: What do you mean?

FOWLER: She was a taxi dancer. A hostess. Here at The Arc-en-Ciel.

PYLE: *I thought you said she came from a good family* [emphasis added].

FOWLER: She did, but the father died so the sisters had to earn a living.

PYLE: Well, that's too bad.

FOWLER: What?

PYLE: Isn't that just a step up from the girls across the street?

FOWLER: Good God, no. It took me six months to get her to go on a date.

Fowler's reaction of "Good God, no. It took me six months to get her to go on a date" used here to distinguish Phuong from the prostitutes working across the street accompanied by Pyle's sigh of relief therefore belies the larger point. The value of the sensual maiden, albeit increasingly under question as the twentieth century proceeded, nevertheless could be retained if her love was not presented as merely transactional but rather won through the dedicated efforts of her suitors. Therefore, it was not simply enough for either imperial conquest or American hegemony that Vietnam's taking occur through hard force alone but also through the cultivation of her "loyalty and affection," which worked to manufacture a false image of consent under subjugation that not only appeared to authorize conquest but also to perversely invite it.⁴⁶¹

So by the end of the war, there were really two variations of the trope of Saigon as a woman that largely bifurcated into, one, the uncorrupted country girl who still retained her colonial innocence and coquettish appeal, and two, the "excessively liberated," cheapened and despised Saigonese bar girl who could not be trusted. Instead of appealing to early explorers' paternalistic care or seducing colonial men with her exoticized sensuality, the latter transformed over the course of the twentieth century into a mere "whore" American troops would prefer to leave behind and quickly forget. Meanwhile, the former, if "lucky" enough to have gained entry into the US through some intimate attachment with an American servicemember, would continue to be viewed through the layered image of the submissive yet sexually available Vietnamese congai vulnerable to modernity's corruptive forces.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, 267.

⁴⁶⁰ Noyce, Phillip. *The Quiet American*. Miramax, 2002.

⁴⁶¹ Simpson, Audra. "The Ruse of Consent and the Anatomy of 'Refusal': Cases from Indigenous North America and Australia." *Postcolonial Studies* 20.1 (2017): 18–33.

Consequently, as the first wave of refugees arrived for resettlement in the US, many of these colonial tropes followed them, producing as part of the refugee condition unruly referents like the Saigonese bar girl and the Cholon gangster who remained tethered to Vietnam as anachronistic remainders of an endemically war-torn country. Recalling the article discussed in Chapter 2 on the “Vietnamese Influx” into Los Angeles’ Chinatown that was published right after coverage began to intensely focus on Bong Bach’s accusation of Tai, frequent mention of Cholon as related to Nguyen and Quang therefore did not just describe the neighborhood from which many refugees came. Instead, Julie Quang’s description as a modern “cabaret singer” with ties to Tu Do Street and Cholon worked to conjure familiar images of the sexually iniquitous Asian woman, and, more pointedly, the untrustworthy Saigonese bar girl, where frequent mention of her being Tai’s “companion” despite him still being married also recalled fears of the aberrant concubine and colonial mistress. As reports continued to describe how the accused Cholon gangster in the form of “Mr. Tai” would often travel from Los Angeles to Orange County to visit Julie in particular, her specific image thus became the symbolic figure through which the encroaching refugee gang threat came to be morally apprehended. In this way, the discursive formation of Julie Quang in the Mr. Tai case can be understood as existing in continuity with earlier imaginings of Chinese women as sexually deviant used to mark the external moral boundary for national belonging.

To echo Anne McClintock’s (14) critique of Edward Said’s reliance on gender as just a metaphor for colonialism, this section thus corresponds to the argument that gender and sexuality are constitutive with the exercise of imperial power in ways that produced the colonies as feminized sites ready for literal and metaphorical penetration, possession, and taming, claiming that this colonial inheritance also influenced America’s engagements with Vietnam.⁴⁶² Discursive imaginings of Saigon as the “Mistress of the Mekong” produced understandings of Saigon as a physical place, demonstrating how sensuality became a mattering process that mapped imperial fantasies of woman-as-developing-nation to colonial acts of territorialization in Southeast Asia and translated these imaginings of Third World unruliness from the war zone to the domestic context to attach additional layers of orientalized meaning to urban-suburban space.⁴⁶³

*DOMESTICATION THROUGH DEVELOPMENT: COUNTERINSURGENCY AND
PACIFICATION THROUGH NATION-BUILDING IN THE STRATEGIC HAMLET PROGRAM*

FOWLER: I met Pyle where you meet everybody—at the Hotel Continental. I’m there every morning at 11.00. I’m English. I have habits. I drink tea. I’m a reporter, so I listen. I have a lover. I like to watch her arrive at the milk bar. And there was Alden Pyle—a face with no history and no problems. The face we all had once.

[The scene turns to Pyle and Fowler meeting for the first time outside the hotel at the cafe on the sidewalk. Fowler introduces himself as a reporter for *The London Times*, and Pyle enthuses that he’d like to speak with Fowler further about the war in Indochina. “And what brings you to Saigon, Mr. Pyle?” Fowler asks, to which Pyle responds, “I’m with the Economic Aid Mission, on the medical side.” Pyle continues to walk with Fowler down the street as Fowler observes the enthusiastic, naive Pyle with a war-worn weariness.]

⁴⁶² McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge, 2013.

⁴⁶³ Edwards, Anastasia, ed. *Saigon: Mistress of the Mekong: An Anthology*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2003.

FOWLER: Pyle was hungry for everything I could tell him about Vietnam and her fight for independence. “Why were the French losing the war?” “And why were the communists winning?” Then he saw Phuong [cut to Pyle and Fowler looking at Phuong from outside the window of the “milk bar”]. *I should have realized how saving a country and saving a woman could be the same thing to someone like Pyle* [emphasis added].

At the end of the opening scene of *The Quiet American*, Fowler closes his narration over the Mekong at night as the camera quickly follows the sound of a heavy thud to show Pyle in a white, bloodstained suit, dead on the dockside. The scene sets up the geopolitical parable as intended, positioning Fowler as a cynical reporter from a declining colonial power assessing the naive machinations of an insistent Pyle convinced of America’s distinct exceptionalism to resolve the problem of insurgent anticolonial struggle.

As the film proceeds, it returns to a flashback of Fowler’s to the day he and Pyle first met. Still narrated through the love triangle, Phuong appears as a beautiful and infantilized object seen through a glass window that divides her from the men who later maneuver amongst themselves to win her affections. Fowler—written to be thirty years her senior—stands in for the aging colonial order, and through his treatment of Phuong reveals the underlying relationship between the colonial official and sensual maiden; that is, he romanticizes her while taking her for granted, assumes she is willing, and feels entitled to her loyalty due to the history they have shared together. In contrast, Pyle is written to be much younger than Fowler—a stand-in for an upstart American government ready to offer an alternative to colonialism. The love triangle in *The Quiet American* consequently points to important dimensions of American foreign policy in Vietnam that more broadly illustrate how it approached global governance and security following WWII through a revised language of intimate encounter from one of colonial sexual excess to temperate American beneficence and “gentlemanly” paternalism.⁴⁶⁴

Looking to Pyle’s treatment of Phuong, we can observe how America envisioned itself as distinct from colonialism while still remaining in continuity with it.⁴⁶⁵ In contrast to Fowler’s relationship with Phuong and appetite for sex and opium, Pyle is performatively virtuous despite secretly working as an undercover CIA agent responsible for a deadly car bomb attack in the city center. He refuses to drink liquor, never swears around women, and attempts to win Phuong by acting in a “proper” manner. Ultimately asking her to marry him instead of just being his mistress like under Fowler, Pyle presents himself as the better option of the two, where his expression of “true intent” is meant to communicate to Phuong that, this time around, love would work out under his watch. Near the end of the film when Phuong tells Pyle a story of how her friend from school went to the airport with her French boyfriend, only to be left behind (“So many girls with French boyfriend, no one to marry them”), Pyle reassures her, “Well, that’ll never happen to you. I promise.”

In the end, though, as Fowler questions Pyle about his secret motives for being in Vietnam after the bombing, Pyle demonstrates how this declaration of commitment and love is nonetheless largely indistinguishable from the colonial language of “empire as a love story.” Incredulous that Pyle would so willingly sacrifice civilian lives to frame the North Vietnamese and rally congressional support for increased military aid, Fowler pushes to see if Pyle harbors any regret, leading to the ensuing exchange:

⁴⁶⁴ Patadia, Ashley Elizabeth. *The Language of Empire and the Case of Indochina: Masculine Discourse in the Shaping and Subverting of Colonial Gender Hierarchies*. Dissertation. Kent State University, 2009.

⁴⁶⁵ Lawrence, Mark Atwood. *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam*. University of California Press, 2005.

PYLE: What do you want me to tell you? That I took no action? That I have no opinion?

FOWLER: Tell me that you don't mean any of this. Tell me that you were only obeying orders. Or tell me that after what you saw in the square, those children, who did nothing and hurt no one. Tell me that you were so confused and horrified at how brutal and insane these actions are. Tell me how your love for Phuong has caused you to have some doubts.

PYLE: But it's because of Phuong that I am even more determined. Let's just look at Phuong. There's beauty. There's daughter of a professor. Taxi dancer. Mistress of an older European man. That pretty well describes the whole country, doesn't it? Look, Thomas, we are here to save Vietnam from all of that. What happened in the square makes me sick. But in the long run, I'm going to save lives.

Pyle's courtship of Phuong is thus portrayed as operating alongside his conviction that Vietnam as a country needed to be saved from communism and a dying colonialism through American involvement. Just as he proposes to Phuong to assert himself as the more committed suitor compared to Fowler, Pyle is also implicitly proposing an American alternative reliant on expressions of paternal beneficence and protection in order to claim innocence while still justifying intervention anyway. Love and war become entangled as one and the same—offered to Vietnam—as-woman as her saving grace, if only she would have him.

What then did it mean for Fowler to say that to Pyle “saving a country” would be the same as “saving a woman”? How did feminized colonial imaginings of Vietnam as a precious fruit influence how America came to understand the basis from which she needed saving and how it should be done?

This section argues that for America, “saving” mainly meant “defending” Vietnam from communism where, through a strategy of economic development alongside military warfare, the United States attempted to distinguish itself from its colonial predecessor.⁴⁶⁶ It is not coincidental that Greene chose to write Pyle as both an economic aid worker and an undercover CIA agent. From the American point of view, financial assistance for economic development functioned as both the underlying counter-insurrectionist strategy to fight the north and the moral premise from which it narrated its exceptionalism. Vietnam, as a “Third World” country imagined as a young girl in need of paternal guidance, therefore became the gendered object of development assistance as colonial renderings of it relied on feminized tropes to manufacture its dependency.⁴⁶⁷

According to Arturo Escobar (4), after WWII, the Truman Doctrine initiated a new era in the organization of global relations that sought to “bring about the conditions necessary to replicat[e] the world over the features that characterized the ‘advanced’ societies of the time—high levels of industrialization and urbanization, technicalization of agriculture, rapid growth of material production and living standards, and the widespread adoption of modern education and cultural values.”⁴⁶⁸ In response to the political upheaval and economic devastation in countries affected by the war that increasingly turned some to communism and specifically after the British government informed the United States that it could no longer afford to fight insurgencies in Greece and Turkey, Truman promised that the US would do whatever necessary to economically and militarily contain the spread of communism throughout the world. This containment policy effectively

⁴⁶⁶ Stur, Heather Marie. ““Hiding Behind the Humanitarian Label”: Refugees, Repatriates, and the Rebuilding of America's Benevolent Image After the Vietnam War.” *Diplomatic History* 39.2 (2015): 223–244.

⁴⁶⁷ Pentagon Papers Project. “[Part IV. B. 2.] Evolution of the War. Counterinsurgency: Strategic Hamlet Program, 1961–63.” In *The Pentagon Paper*. Los Angeles, CA: Pentagon Papers Peace Project, 1972. Periodical. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <lccn.loc.gov/2016202039>.

⁴⁶⁸ Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

ended the longstanding American isolationist position that it maintained prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and signaled the beginning of America's intensive campaigns throughout the "Third World" to crush communist insurrectionists deemed fundamentally threatening to the American-Western way of life.⁴⁶⁹

In particular, this cultivation of Vietnam-as-developing-woman-and-nation was assisted by social scientists who forwarded modernization theory as a comprehensive global theory in response to Soviet challenges. During the Eisenhower (1953-1961) and Kennedy (1961-1963) administrations, political and economic theorists saw modernization as the key to checking counterinsurgent revolutionaries.⁴⁷⁰ In terms of its application to Cold War strategy, one of its most prominent proponents was Walt Whitman Rostow, the National Security Advisor to Lyndon B. Johnson and a Yale political and economic theorist. Rostow argued in *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* that societies progressively moved in a linear sequence across the following five periods: traditional, transitional, take-off, drive to maturity, and age of high mass-consumption.⁴⁷¹ Arguing that all societies had to transition in the same way from agricultural economic systems characterized by low productivity to industrial economic systems characterized by high disposable income and durable consumer goods, Rostow's (54) particular discussion of the preconditions for "take-off" provided the intellectual justification for US intervention, stating that an invasive outside force could help "shock the traditional society" and "hasten its undoing" to accelerate its progress into modernity.

Consequently as Michael Latham demonstrates, the application of modernization theory in Vietnam began when the United States assumed this role of a "Third Force" in the region to "help" Vietnam move through the stages of development into a fully modern economic system and society.⁴⁷² Relaying the reflections made by modernization scholar, Lucian Pye, Latham explains how the US theory of counterinsurgency at the time relied on the experience of Malayan Chinese who joined the Communist Party to understand why insurgents turned to communism. As Pye claimed, Malayan Chinese who turned to "People's Liberation Communism" did so because "[l]arge numbers of people [were] losing their sense of identity with their traditional ways of life and [were] seeking restlessly to realize a modern way."⁴⁷³ Echoing similar theories developed in criminology at the time to attribute deviance to social strain, Pye believed that "in the structure of the party they [could] find a closer relationship between effort and reward than anything they [had] known in either the static old society or the unstable, unpredictable new one." "In Pye's terms," Latham (34) summarizes, "the key to competing with a revolutionary insurgency lay in an expanded state structure reaching from the capital into distant provinces and villages, one that could meet the needs of an alienated, anxious peasantry more effectively than the revolution could."

Rostow, after a short visit to South Vietnam in 1961, echoed Pye's conclusion. After interviewing captured leaders of the National Liberation Front, he determined that "revolution appealed most to 'young men in a developing region who had been caught up for the first time and found various degrees of satisfaction and disappointment in a modern organizational structure reaching beyond family, hamlet and village.'" According to Latham (34):

⁴⁶⁹ Spalding, Elizabeth. *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism*. University Press of Kentucky, 2006.

⁴⁷⁰ Gilman, Nils. *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America*. JHU Press, 2003.

⁴⁷¹ Rostow, W. W. "The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (1960)." *The Globalization and Development Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change*, (2015): 52-61.

⁴⁷² Latham, Michael E. "Redirecting the Revolution? The USA and the Failure of Nation-Building in South Vietnam." *Third World Quarterly* 27.1 (2006): 27-41.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, 33.

The solution, therefore, was to promote a pattern of nation-building that would replace the institutions of the insurgency with those of the state and give the peasant, caught in the “transition” to modernity a renewed sense of the potential for personal advance. As the State Department's Vietnam Task Force concluded in mid-1961, the problem was to “bring the rural people of Vietnam into the body politic.” Nation-building from the bottom up and from the top down, US officials concluded, would convert “traditional” peasants into “modern” citizens, and once that happened the revolution wouldn't stand a chance.

In *Modernization as Ideology*, Latham draws on archival materials from the likes of USAID, the John F. Kennedy Library, and the United States Peace Corps Library as well as secondary sources to show how the Agrovilles and subsequent Strategic Hamlet Program in South Vietnam consequently became the central counterinsurgency and modernization strategy implemented by US officials.⁴⁷⁴ “Designed to resettle some 15 million people,” Latham (35) writes, “the Strategic Hamlet Program was, in Vietnam expert Bernard Fall's estimation, the “most mammoth example of ‘social engineering’ in the non-Communist world” where its main goal focused on promoting “a pattern of nation-building” from the ground up:

“Civic Action teams” of Vietnamese backed by US supplies and advice were the “most important element in eliminating the Viet Cong” because they were to build an “essential socio-political base,” by forming a new set of ties between the rural peasantry and Diem's regime. [Yale political scientist and intelligence chief, Roger] Hilsman's goal was to “set up village government and tie it into the district and national levels assuring the flow of information on village needs and problems upward and the flow of government services downward.”

Having just heavily invested in the formation of a proxy state to contain the communist threat, the years following the Geneva Conference necessitated extreme interventions to cultivate a sense of South Vietnamese national identity where none had previously existed. Nation building therefore became the means through which US interventions aimed to fracture Vietnamese identity along geopolitical fissures to counter the efforts among communists to unify Vietnamese against foreign colonizers. The broad intention of the Strategic Hamlet Program therefore aimed to use the hamlet as the smallest unit through which to build a national consciousness among the peasantry supportive of the newly formed South Vietnamese state.

In reciprocation, Roger Hilsman drew on modernization theory to forward that hamlet residents should receive US economic assistance and government support in exchange for buying into the South Vietnamese national project. Once inside the hamlets, the program aimed to build infrastructure like schools and give residents livestock, rice seed, cooking oil, and other essential supplies in order to “transform rural consciousness” so that “‘traditional’ loyalties to family and formerly isolated, largely autonomous villages would be replaced by ‘modern’ identification with a specifically South Vietnamese nation-state.”⁴⁷⁵ As one Joint Chiefs of Staff Report argued in early 1963:

Historically the central government in Vietnam has not reached down and made itself felt to the peasant. Likewise, the peasant has not truly identified himself, his activities, or his future with his government nor has he thought in terms of national political issues as we know them. The Strategic Hamlet Program, however, would change that: Following the election of a hamlet chief and a hamlet

⁴⁷⁴ Latham, Michael E. *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and “Nation Building” in the Kennedy Era*. University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

⁴⁷⁵ Latham, Michael E. 2006. 35.

council, the new officials, themselves, decide on projects for the improvement of the well-being and living conditions of the people. It is through this “rice-roots” program that the framework for a democratic political process is being developed. It is the intention of the government to extend this process from the hamlets and villages up through the districts and provinces, whose officials are now appointed by the central government. Nation-building, in this vision, would steadily move forward: one hamlet at a time.⁴⁷⁶

As a result, kin and community formations prior to economic development became imagined as belonging to a period of premodernity from which only through the cultivation of a modern national consciousness could the Vietnamese subject progress.⁴⁷⁷ The nation as imagined metaphorically as a desirable family, in other words, was imposed onto a fractured populace to replace and delegitimize historic kin and community ties with the nation state.

As Anne McClintock (64) writes, “the family image came to figure *hierarchy within unity* as an organic element of historical progress, and thus became indispensable for legitimating exclusion and hierarchy within nonfamilial social forms such as nationalism, liberal individualism and imperialism.”⁴⁷⁸ From that view, Patricia Hill Collins (64) elaborates,

Families are expected to socialize their members into an appropriate set of “family values” that simultaneously reinforce the hierarchy within the assumed unity of interests symbolized by the family and lay the foundation for many social hierarchies. In particular, hierarchies of gender, wealth, age, and sexuality within actual family units correlate with comparable hierarchies in U.S. society. Individuals typically learn their assigned place in hierarchies of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nation, and social class in their families of origin. At the same time, they learn to view such hierarchies as natural social arrangements, as compared to socially constructed ones. Hierarchy in this sense becomes “naturalized” because it is associated with seemingly “natural” processes of the family.⁴⁷⁹

The bourgeois family ideal, in other words, continued alongside US expansion to provide the symbolic and material organizational form through which devaluations of difference could still be sustained in liberal conceptions of US global ascendancy.

In practice however, these lofty goals, though important for understanding the American conduct of war in Southeast Asia, did not materialize. According to one report, when serious efforts to implement it began in earnest with “Operation Sunrise” in a heavily infiltrated NLF area, only 70 families agreed to move while 140 others had to be forced to resettle at gunpoint, creating the impression of Americans as neo-colonialists among the rural peasant class in confirmation of communist accusations. Residents were forced to build new homes and fortifications as South Vietnamese soldiers burned their former dwellings and USAID workers offered each family just \$21 in “compensation.” Growing evidence produced by field reports, aid officers, and RAND studies all confirmed that as the program continued, it only fostered greater opposition as “peasants resented being forced off their ancestral lands, put on corvee labor teams, and losing access to their crops and fields.”⁴⁸⁰ So

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid, 36.

⁴⁷⁷ Masur, Matthew B. *Hearts and Minds: Cultural Nation-Building in South Vietnam, 1954-1963*. Dissertation. The Ohio State University, 2004.

⁴⁷⁸ McClintock, Anne. “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family.” *Feminist Review* 44.1 (1993): 61-80.

⁴⁷⁹ Collins, Patricia Hill. “It’s All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation.” *Hypatia* 13.3 (1998): 62-82.

⁴⁸⁰ Latham, Michael E. 2006. 36.

though the program itself was eventually shut down due to failing to achieve its stated goals, it nonetheless illustrates how the United States used both economic aid and military warfare together to assert influence in the region where nation building became central to America's global security strategy.

Lastly, the final portion of this section discusses how analyzing the disciplinary architecture of the strategic hamlet itself can ultimately help us understand how America envisioned and tried to impose what nation-building entailed for its unruly Third World subjects. Specifying what fortifications might be required in his 1962 "Strategic Concept for Vietnam" report for the Kennedy administration, Roger Hilsman proposed that each strategic hamlet should "be protected by a ditch and a fence of barbed wire" and have "one or more observation towers, guard posts and [a] defense post for central storage of arms." Moreover, Hilsman said that the immediate surrounding area around the hamlet should be "cleared for fields of fire" and "strewn with booby-traps (spikes, pits, explosives, etc) and other personal obstacles."^{481,482} As such, strategic hamlets were established as spatialized enclosures for rural communities that used the design of the hamlet to turn the countryside into a patchwork of enemy and fortified zones, gesturing to a spatial politics of hamlet construction worth examining in greater detail.

In particular, it is important to note how these measures were not just directed towards North Vietnamese communist fighters. Hilsman also directed watchtowers to face inward as well as outward for the regular surveillance of residents within the strategic hamlets. This was because, although the Strategic Hamlet Program claimed to be protecting vulnerable rural residents from VC predation, in practice there was no way for Americans to confirm their loyalties due to fears of infiltration, which consequently made every South Vietnamese hamlet resident a person of suspicion that needed to be regularly watched, tracked, and documented for signs of defection. "[P]easants would be issued identification cards, photos of families would be posted on the walls of homes, a hamlet administrative centre would track all population movements, and curfews would be enforced," Latham (35) details. As Duy Lap Nguyen (252) elaborates,

Statistics on the welfare, attrition and pacification of the Vietnamese population, both friendly and hostile, were gathered through government studies, secret informers and surveys dispatched to the provinces. Transferred to punch cards, the data was processed on IBM supercomputers produced for the Pentagon. This "information panopticon" was used in order to isolate an irregular army hiding in an impenetrable jungle in the midst of an inscrutable people. The partisan war, waged by guerrillas using the land and the peasants as cover so as to reduce a superior enemy to "a giant without eyes," would be met by a system of surveillance based on the quantification of every relevant detail of the environment and the people.⁴⁸³

Security forces were charged with "enforcing curfews, checking identity cards, and ferreting out hard core Communists" to accomplish what head of the British Advisory Mission in Saigon Robert GK Thompson called "the physical and political separation of the guerillas from the population." "One must get all the 'little fishes' out of the 'water' and keep them out," he said, "then they will die."⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸¹ Hilsman, Roger. "A Strategic Concept for South Vietnam." February 2, 1962. Hilsman Papers, Box 3, Vietnam, "Strategic Concept." John F Kennedy Library.

⁴⁸² Donnell, John C. and Gerald C. Hickey. *The Vietnamese "Strategic Hamlets": A Preliminary Report*, Memorandum, RM-3208-ARPA, Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1962.

⁴⁸³ Nguyen, Duy Lap. *The Unimagined Community: Imperialism and Culture in South Vietnam*. Manchester University Press, 2019.

⁴⁸⁴ Thompson, Sir Robert. *Defeating Communist Insurgency*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1966. p. 123-124.

The area inside the hamlet consequently became a probationary zone subjected to complete surveillance as the offered solution to address the advantages of enemy guerilla warfare. Forced to live within these consolidated hamlets under conditions of permanent suspicion and prevented from moving freely outside them, rural South Vietnamese found themselves within a militarized dragnet that used mass surveillance techniques to continually categorize and sort them into enemy insurrectionists or uneasy allies, disciplining their movements and habits to constitute nation-building from the ground up with both a carrot (foreign aid and government assistance) and a stick (militarized and centralized surveillance, policing, and documentation). As Duy Lap Nguyen argues, the terraforming employed by US agencies through the hamlet program consequently produced a new kind of warscape, described by Michael Herr as a countryside that became:

“converted to terrain, the geography broken down into its more useful components; corps and zones, tactical areas...vicinities of operation, outposts, positions, objectives, [and] fields of fire. The weather of Vietnam [became] translated into conditions, and [this was] very much the same way with the people, the population.”⁴⁸⁵

So ultimately, instead of asserting its will through sheer military might, the US campaign in Southeast Asia also relied on feminized imaginings of Vietnam to offer development assistance as a paternalistic form of counterinsurgency and pacification. War and development—as narrated through the grammar of protection and cultivation—consequently functioned as two sides of the same coin, both subsumed under the authority of the American nation state to extend both as within the legitimate domain of state action.⁴⁸⁶ Using economic development assistance to both incentivize “homegrown” nationalism to counter insurrectionists and build the very architecture used to enclose, police, and surveil the entire southern countryside, the Strategic Hamlet Program is thus a key example of how US foreign policy informed by the Truman Doctrine came to package its anti-communist maneuvers throughout the Third World, with an examination of hamlet architecture specifically illustrating how the United States increasingly turned to comprehensive surveillance to manufacture a terrain more suitable for war use against guerilla fighters.

ENGINEERING A “BETTER WAR”: MASKING IMPERIAL VIOLENCE IN THE ERA OF COLD WAR TECHNO-OPTIMISM

In Quỳ Sơn and in other critical operations throughout Southeast Asia, Free World Forces have been aided by a knowledge of the enemy’s location and movements. Much of this battlefield intelligence has been developed by the employment of an integrated detections surveillance system which performs day and night under all weather conditions. This system has enabled our forces to direct timely countermeasures against concentrations of enemy troops and supplies. This surveillance system is based on the concept of utilizing an electronic sensing or eavesdropping device which can be monitored from a remote location. We are, in effect, “Bugging the Battlefield.”

The Communist aggression against South Vietnam has been supported by an overland flow of men and supplies from North Vietnam by way of several infiltration routes. Hundreds of gasoline and diesel cargo trucks operate on a complex network of roads in

⁴⁸⁵ As quoted in Duy Lap Nguyen (2019); Michael Herr, “Hell sucks,” *Esquire*, 70. (August 1968). p. 68.

⁴⁸⁶ Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation.” *American Economic Review* 91.5 (2001): 1369–1401.

Communist-controlled areas. The dense jungle canopy overhead, the complex network of roads, trails, and footpaths, the constantly changing weather conditions, and the rugged terrain make the detection of this infiltrating traffic difficult. To assist in solving the problem of reducing infiltration of enemy personnel and supplies into South Vietnam, the Department of Defense initiated a program to develop an anti-infiltration system for gathering intelligence and by its use, impeding these movements.⁴⁸⁷

– “Bugging the Battlefield,”
US Department of Defense informational film, 1969

In an early scene featuring Fowler and Pyle as they return from a gruesome field visit, Fowler asks Pyle about the book he is reading, to which Pyle answers by providing more context for his vision for Vietnam.

FOWLER: What's that book you're always reading?

PYLE: York Harding, *The Dangers To Democracy*.

FOWLER: An American?

PYLE: Yeah. He was out here a couple of years back.

FOWLER: Was he here long?

PYLE: I don't know. I heard him lecture once. Joe actually met him. He put forward the idea of a Third Force to run Vietnam. Not the communists, not the French.

FOWLER: Not the Americans?

PYLE: No, we're not colonialists! Something that could really help these people.

As French colonialists were being driven out of Vietnam and America arrived as her replacement suitor, it is important to now discuss how the period of colonial handover took place during the postwar suburbanization boom to understand how Alden Pyle could have convinced himself with such moral certainty that his was a better, more justifiable war. Just like the writing of Pyle as both an aid worker and CIA officer was no coincidence given the use of development as a technology of war, Pyle's devotion to York Harding's ideas as the intellectual basis for his actions reveals the complicit role played by the professional-managerial class in authorizing and modernizing America's wartime endeavors in Southeast Asia.^{488,489} In particular, scientists and academics who contracted with the Department of Defense to develop new theories and technologies compatible with the liberal state's assertion that its foreign interventions were entirely different from the old European powers' more brutal and inhumane colonial interventions replaced anthropologists as the analogous official knowledge producers in the age of postwar American ascendancy.⁴⁹⁰

As the rising elite R&D class emerged in Southern California to purchase their luxury homes and partake in the American Dream, what was the work they actually performed to attain their vaunted status? What did they produce? While Chapter 1 focused its discussion on how Cold War optimism was sustained by the suburbanization boom, this section focuses instead on the other side of the equation: not on the

⁴⁸⁷ *Bugging the Battlefield*. Motion Picture. 1969. Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1921–2008, Record Group 330. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. ARC identifier: 4524913.

⁴⁸⁸ Light, Jennifer S. *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America*. JHU Press, 2003.

⁴⁸⁹ Reisch, George A. *How the Cold War Transformed Philosophy of Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁴⁹⁰ Solovey, Mark. *Shaky Foundations: The Politics-Patronage-Social Science Nexus in Cold War America*. Rutgers University Press, 2013.

compensation they received in exchange like a marble foyer, views of the Pacific Ocean, or access to “good” schools but rather on the war-enhancing work they undertook in order to secure them. In particular, the remainder of this section focuses on one group of researchers and academics called “The Jasons,” who were later revealed in the Pentagon Papers to be, as deputy director of DARPA from 1967–1974 Steve Lukasik called them, the “peaceniks” who tried to design a “battlefield of the future” to fight a “cleaner war.”^{491,492}

In general, America was looking to innovate traditional wars fought on the ground to correspond to the modernist optimism expressed during the early Cold War that, through “American Industry,” anything could be possible. A bright future—including, paradoxically, “better wars”—appeared on the horizon as a much sought-after possibility, especially as the intensification of the draft compelled researchers to devise ways to protect American soldiers from having to physically go to war.^{493,494} Due to the development of microprocessors in the early 1970s, the dawn of the IT age resulted in an American-led “revolution in military affairs,” which fundamentally changed the conduct of war from its colonial vestiges to what we recognize today as “modern warfare.” Describing this new kind of war in a 1969 speech, General William Westmoreland presciently said,

On the battlefield of the future, enemy forces will be located, tracked, and targeted almost instantaneously through the use of data links, computer assisted intelligence evaluation, and automated fire control. I see battlefields under 24-hour real or near-real time surveillance of all types. I see battlefields on which we can destroy anything we can locate through instant communications and almost instantaneous application of highly lethal firepower.⁴⁹⁵

So, in order to develop the technology required to realize this “battlefield of the future,” the Department of Defense poured billions of dollars into research and development that helped ultimately develop the state’s modern surveillance architecture.

Though films about the Vietnam War from the American perspective have often portrayed it within the tropical jungles and rice paddies of Southeast Asia to manufacture a collective memory of US involvement characterized by muddy guerilla warfare, as Matt Novak has documented, the war also took place in pristine buildings outfitted with computer terminals and central air conditioning that more closely resembled the Cold War suburb’s own defense laboratories than the Vietnamese countryside seen in the movies.⁴⁹⁶ “Step out of the jungle and inside the building,” Duke Wiley recounted in his co-pilot John T. Halliday’s (16) memoir, and “you step back into America—but an America fifteen years from now.”⁴⁹⁷ The facility referenced by Halliday via Wiley was the US military’s Infiltration Surveillance Center located at Nakhon Phanom Air Base in Thailand where “the messy wars of yesteryear collided with the ‘clean,’ remotely-fought wars of the future.”

Built expressly for conducting remote operations during the war in Southeast Asia, the state-of-the-art building took up 200,000 square feet and was the largest building in the entire region at the point—its size a

⁴⁹¹ Edwards, Paul N. *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America*. MIT press, 1996.

⁴⁹² Franklin, H. Bruce. “How American Management Won the War in Vietnam,” *American Quarterly*, 40.3 (1988): 422–428.

⁴⁹³ Gibson, James William. *The perfect war: Technowar in Vietnam*. New York: Knopf Doubleday, 1986.

⁴⁹⁴ Deitchman, Seymour J. “The ‘Electronic Battlefield’ in the Vietnam War.” *The Journal of Military History* 72.3 (2008): 869–887.

⁴⁹⁵ Westmoreland, W. C. “Westmorland on The Army of The Future.” *NACLA Newsletter* 3.7 (1969): 14–16.

⁴⁹⁶ Novak, Matt. “How the Vietnam War Brought High-Tech Border Surveillance to America.” *Gizmodo*. (2015). <https://gizmodo.com/how-the-vietnam-war-brought-high-tech-border-surveillan-1694647526>. Accessed July 24, 2022.

⁴⁹⁷ Halliday, John T. *Flying Through Midnight: A Pilot’s Dramatic Story of His Secret Missions Over Laos During the Vietnam War*. Simon and Schuster, 2005.

necessity for housing the enormous IBM 360 computers and IBM 2260 monitors used by the military to monitor, process, and analyze the reams of data collected by newly developed remote sensor technology placed in Vietnam and Laos. Filled with “a whole bunch of civilians who look[ed] like IBM guys running around in three-piece suits all wearing glasses,” the Infiltration Surveillance Center points to how the professional-managerial class prototyped its own kind of war alongside the soldiers sent to the countryside, overlaying an “electronic battlefield” onto the existing physical battlefield to fight twin campaigns against enemy infiltration.

The Jason Division would play the largest role here. According to Ann Finkbeiner, the group initially formed in 1960 when some physicists were awarded funds from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to spend the summer learning more about the problems facing the Department of Defense in its fight against the Soviet Union.⁴⁹⁸ Drawing on about forty-five scientists from elite universities throughout the country, their most famous project was arguably “Operation Igloo White,” the covert electronic warfare campaign conducted between 1968 and 1973 described in the “Bugging the Battlefield” video excerpted and reproduced above. As the video explains, one of the major problems confronting the military during the Vietnam War was the movement of North Vietnamese troops and supplies through dense jungle canopies and mountainous regions that made them difficult to spot. Attempting to come up with a solution to cross-border infiltration, at first Defense Secretary Robert McNamara suggested the construction of a physical fence that could stop the flow of weapons and enemy others from moving in from the north. However, believing they could design a superior fence using remote sensors, the Jasons had the idea to use real-time surveillance to identify and disrupt all Viet Cong movements attempting to enter into South Vietnam, thereby—as the theory went—forcing the discontinuation of war and forcing the North Vietnamese to enter peace talks.

Originally, the Jasons planned to retrofit off-the-shelf sensor technology for the “virtual fence” along the “Ho Chi Minh Trail” and surrounding areas, hoping to produce easy-to-use sensors capable of being dropped from military aircraft into inaccessible regions. The first sensors were adapted from existing sonobuoys used by the US Navy to identify enemy submarines where the existing sonar component was simply replaced with microphones and other sensors developed by the Jasons and other contractors to fit war conditions. Physically, they were designed to camouflage into the surroundings so that a heavier, pointed end would implant itself upon landing in the ground to only reveal a top of fake foliage. Beyond just microphones, additional types included acoustic, seismic, metal, and even chemical sensors designed to detect human sweat and urine produced by the likes of—perhaps unsurprisingly—General Electric, as well as Texas Instruments, Magnavox, Western Electric, and Hazeltine Corporation.

On a practical level, the sensors were extremely expensive to produce despite proving themselves to be quite flimsy on the battlefield. According to Paul Edwards, the early sensors cost about \$2000 each at the time to produce, and engineers quickly realized that off-the-shelf retrofitted sensors tended to break on landing.⁴⁹⁹ Moreover, all defense contractors encountered a major obstacle in the form of battery life. Originally powered by nickel cadmium batteries that would only last two weeks, some turned to developing remote powered sensors to conserve energy and only made further advances once lithium batteries were invented to last up to two months in the field.

⁴⁹⁸ Finkbeiner, Ann. *The Jasons: The Secret History of Science's Postwar Elite*. Penguin, 2006.

⁴⁹⁹ Edwards, Paul N. *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America*. MIT press, 1996. p. 3-4.

Eventually by the early 1970s, DARPA deputy director Steve Lukasik determined that the original sensor system was infeasible despite having invested an estimated \$1 billion annually to build it. Instead, Lukasik moved to develop a different surveillance system that did not rely on having to maintain so many ground sensors by turning to drone technology.⁵⁰⁰ While in the original design ground sensors would relay information to remote overhead aircraft that would then convey that information to the surveillance compound in Thailand, Lukasik wanted to consolidate the relay component by attaching a robust sensor platform to remotely piloted vehicles that included optical, radar, infrared, and other types of detection devices.

As Paul Edwards argued in *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America*, looking at Operation Igloo White can therefore demonstrate how the state itself intensively rationalized during the Cold War in relation to the information technology revolution. Produced within McNamara's implementation of the DoD cost-accounting technique known as the Planning Programming Budgeting System (PPBS), Edwards (6) wrote:

In Operation Igloo White we see how these techno-strategic developments were played out on a regional scale: centralized, remote-control led operations based on advanced computing and communications gear; an abstract representation of events (sensors, maps, grids, "worms") justified in terms of statistics; and a wide gap between an official discourse of overwhelming success and the pessimistic assessments of independent observers, including American soldiers on the ground. Like McNamara's [broader move to centralize and rationalize the Department of Defense], Igloo White was a "a closed system, rationally ordered to produce carefully defined outputs."

So beyond this one military program developed by the Jasons, this discussion of Operation Igloo White more broadly points to how military surveillance emerged from the Cold War rationalization of the state's executive functions.⁵⁰¹

For a number of reasons, though, the entire plan was faulty from the start. Bureaucrats fighting the remote war still needed to analyze sensor data to determine whether to order military airstrikes, but how they distinguished between the sounds made by civilians and those made by undesirable infiltrators was an imperfect and oftentimes arbitrary exercise.⁵⁰² Sensors looking for the sound of an enemy truck or the clanging march of an armed soldier could not, in reality, distinguish between North Vietnamese communists and everyday civilians going about their daily lives, which led to mass civilian casualties and widespread internal displacement. So despite this "automation" of war making it appear as though technology was clearly identifying foes from allies, the architecture of military surveillance just more deeply penetrated the once-inaccessible parts of the countryside and subjected all those subsequently encircled under the watchful eye of the rationalizing state.⁵⁰³

Reflecting on Hannah Arendt's comment on the war that "[o]ne sometimes has the impression that a computer, rather than 'decision-makers,' had been let loose in Southeast Asia," Duy Lap Nguyen (251) writes,

⁵⁰⁰ Shaw, Ian GR. "Scorched Atmospheres: The Violent Geographies of the Vietnam War and the Rise of Drone Warfare." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 106.3 (2016): 688–704.

⁵⁰¹ Shaw, Ian GR. *Predator Empire: Drone Warfare and Full Spectrum Dominance*. University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

⁵⁰² Rühle, Michael. "The Rise and Fall of the "McNamara Line": Enduring Lessons from the Vietnam War." *Comparative Strategy* 37.5 (2018): 404–413.

⁵⁰³ Bishop, Ryan. "Smart Dust and Remote Sensing: The Political Subject in Autonomous Systems." *Cultural Politics* 11.1 (2015): 100–110.

Using techniques of surveillance employed in the Taylorist factory, including the collection of empirical evidence and the use of statistical analysis, “problem-solvers” such as Robert McNamara attempted to modernize the political act of decision-making itself. Based on data derived by “translating all factual contents into the language of numbers and percentages,” policymaking could be transformed, so the problem-solvers believed, into a process of logical inference. Executive power, including the sovereign right to decide life and death, would be treated as an administrative procedure, rationalizing the work of the war planners, while minimizing the moral burden attached to their extralegal prerogatives.⁵⁰⁴

In other words, instead of war involving a soldier hearing a stray noise in the field and having to calculate whether to run, duck, hide, or shoot, an “IBM guy” in an air-conditioned room analyzes some data and decides whether to order an airstrike.⁵⁰⁵ The colonial brutalities associated with direct, immediate conquest became replaced with layers of bureaucratic action that rationalized and atomized every decision into fractured, nonindividuated calculations, and war for the bureaucrat increasingly transformed into a detached exercise.

But in the end, between one and three million Vietnamese civilians and soldiers were killed from the war anyway and thousands of internal refugees across Laos were displaced from this transformation of the “Ho Chi Minh Trail” into a zone of violent unpredictability.^{506,507} So if Operation Igloo White illustrated anything, it was that America could not design its way into fighting a “better” war. It did, however, begin to prototype the surveillance technologies it would come to increasingly use as it encountered greater challenges to its legitimacy after the pivotal decade. And ultimately, what it produced was another image: that of a well-meaning bureaucrat—certainly “not a colonialist!”—manufactured to mask war’s immediate brutalities behind remote technologies claiming to be doing things more rationally, more optimally, and—by extension in this order of things—more ethically.^{508, 509}

THE MISTRESS OF THE MEKONG COMES TO THE COLD WAR SUBURB: RATIONALIZING DISPOSABILITY IN THE EMERGENT MODERN SURVEILLANCE STATE

Computer tapes containing vast amounts of police intelligence were smuggled to the United States and are now being used to uncover “undesirable” refugees from Indochina, the San Diego Evening Tribune reported Wednesday. The newspaper said it learned of the tapes’ existence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service and from a man reported to be a Central Intelligence Agency operative now at Camp Pendleton. The tapes were used to uncover most of the 209 refugees now in this country being required to undergo additional security checks, an INS spokesman said. These refugees are suspected of criminal activity or other irregularities, spokesman Vern Jervis told the newspaper in a telephone interview. “*There is one allegation of murder (in Vietnam) as well as allegations of activities that, if proved, would place*

⁵⁰⁴ Nguyen, Duy Lap. *The Unimagined Community: Imperialism and Culture in South Vietnam*. Manchester University Press, 2019.

⁵⁰⁵ Feltham, Dan E. *When Big Blue Went to War: A History of the IBM Corporation’s Mission in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War (1965–1975)*. Abbott Press, 2012.

⁵⁰⁶ Hirschman, Charles, Samuel Preston, and Vu Manh Loi. “Vietnamese Casualties during the American War: A New Estimate.” *Population and Development Review* (1995): 783–812.

⁵⁰⁷ Pholsena, Vatthana. “The (Transformative) Impacts of The Vietnam War and The Communist Revolution in a Border Region In Southeastern Laos.” *War & Society* 31,2 (2012): 163–183.

⁵⁰⁸ Rappert, Brian, and Brian Balmer. “Ignorance is Strength?: Intelligence, Security and National Secrets.” *Routledge international handbook of ignorance studies*. Routledge, 2015. 328–337.

⁵⁰⁹ Adas, Michael. *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America’s Civilizing Mission*. Harvard University Press, 2009.

refugees in an excludable or undesirable category,” Jervis said. Among such categories were listed prostitution, Communist Party membership or Communist sympathies and trafficking in drugs [emphasis added].

A library of South Vietnamese police computer tapes was taken out by U.S. officials before Communist takeover, Jervis said, adding that they contain profiles of virtually every South Vietnamese citizen including known and suspected members of the Viet Cong. Jervis said the tapes were delivered to U.S. mission officials in Saigon just before the takeover and are now in the hands of the State Department. The existence of the Saigon tapes was revealed by a CIA agent at Camp Pendleton. He was described as one of the last to be evacuated from Vietnam. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese bungled a chance to duplicate the tapes, he said. “They rocketed and shelled the central Saigon police compound, destroying the computer punch cards used to make the tapes,” he said. “That was one of the greatest mistakes they made.” “The cards could have given them a handle on everyone in South Vietnam.” The current investigations, Jervis Said, are being made by INS agents, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Drug Enforcement Administration.⁵¹⁰

– “Paper Reports Police Tapes on Refugees Brought to U.S.,”
The Orange County Register, June 26, 1975

As Alfred McCoy has shown, the federal surveillance apparatus was initially formed through the migration of both personnel and policies from the Philippines in the early twentieth century, which served as a colonial workshop used for prototyping counterinsurgency techniques for broader applications elsewhere abroad as well as in the domestic context.⁵¹¹ Demonstrating how this “imperial panopticon” emerged from the first information revolution in America that corresponded with the invention of electricity and mass media communication technologies at the turn of the century, McCoy’s argument in *Policing America’s Empire* ultimately shows how this surveillance architecture managed to slowly crush anticolonial insurgents resisting American occupation to go on to shape the development of the United States’ surveillance matrix used to police and repress domestic communities within its formal borders. As such, looking to the second information revolution that occurred after the invention of microchip processors, this section forwards that Cold War-era developments in communication and data retrieval technologies inaugurated another significant period in the militarization of surveillance and policing, which leveraged computerization to increasingly centralize local collections of records for more coordinated and comprehensive use and imported techniques and personnel from abroad to bring them to the homefront.

Returning to the specific examples examined in the preceding sections, it is consequently important to discuss how innovations in warfare surveillance that were implemented through initiatives like the Strategic Hamlet Program and Operation Igloo White did not only remain in the battlefields of Southeast Asia. In terms of the Strategic Hamlet Program, it is clear from the opening news story that the comprehensive surveillance techniques used to develop a “demographics of war” in the rural countryside during the Diêm era were imported back by what Julian Go (2020) has termed “imperial importers”—in this case, it would seem, by a Pyle-esque

⁵¹⁰ Associated Press. “Paper Reports Police Tapes on Refugees Brought to U.S.” *The Orange County Register*, June 26, 1975, p. A3.

⁵¹¹ McCoy, Alfred W. *Policing America’s Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2009.

figure in the form of a shadowy CIA officer and others who either retained colonial-era actor-functions like missionary work and policing or represented the centralizing bureaucracies of the administrative state (“INS agents, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Drug Enforcement Administration”).⁵¹² With data now stored on high-capacity IBM punch cards that contained “profiles of virtually every South Vietnamese citizen,” surveillance techniques from Vietnam illustrated the expanded capacity offered by these new IT innovations to not just target specific persons deemed suspicious by the state but to develop exhaustive databases capable of storing, linking, and retrieving data profiles for members of entire populations.⁵¹³ So while in times before the advent of computerized surveillance municipal departments or disconnected federal agencies may have only kept records for their own internal use and were saddled with the problem of information retrieval for non-digital records, the computer microprocessing revolution changed policing, immigration enforcement, and surveillance by rationalizing their functions in correspondence to the rise of the professional-managerial administrative state.

Moreover, looking to Operation Igloo White, Ann Finkbeiner reports how after Lukasik pulled the plug on its application in Southeast Asia, the Jasons were still very much in high demand, with some members going on to give their sensor surveillance system a new lease on life after being invited on a trip to the US-Mexico border in the 1980s to see how their anti-infiltration sensors might work on managing the flow of “criminal immigration.” “We were working for Customs and Immigration, I guess,” Jasons physicist Freeman Dyson told Finkbeiner. “We were trying to stop the drug traffic.” As Robert Barkan documented at the time, “the US Border Patrol...adopted the same anti-infiltration barrier used by the military to detect troop and truck movements on the Ho Chi Minh Trail,” where “remote stretches of the border” were subsequently “seeded with sensors similar to the Acousids and Minisids that detected sounds and vibrations from footsteps and vehicles in Vietnam.”⁵¹⁴ So although the original sensor plan employed by Operation Igloo White largely failed to stop the transit of Northern forces and supplies into South Vietnam, manufacturers and the Department of Defense hoped to transfer the system into the domestic context anyway as the war on drugs and crime reconfigured the southern US border as an intensified zone of threat and infiltration.⁵¹⁵

Moreover, as Barkan continued to detail, the US Air Force’s QU-22B remote-controlled wireless aircraft first used to relay sensor signals to the Infiltration Surveillance Center in Thailand that were made surplus due to the development of the more compact sensor drones were literally returned to the United States in order to surveil the US-Mexico border in the same way they had the Ho Chi Minh Trail. While DARPA deputy director Steve Lukasik had scrapped the sensor relay system in the Southeast Asian context, it was thought that having access to “friendly territory” along the southern border would help ease the burden of having to simply airdrop flimsy sensors from the sky, making the upkeep for the relay mechanism more feasible than before. “The political implications of using surveillance equipment along a friendly foreign border have been considered by selecting equipment that can be deployed without attracting attention and easily concealed,” one sensor maker, Sylvania Electronics, assured Congress in 1970 about having better luck in “friendly” territory.⁵¹⁶ Thus, this circulation of war matériel and personnel from the Cold War suburbs to Operation Igloo White and then back to the domestic border war zone illustrates how America’s imperial-military regime after the second information

⁵¹² Go, Julian. “The Imperial Origins of American Policing: Militarization and Imperial Feedback in the Early 20th Century.” *American Journal of Sociology* 125.5 (2020): 1193–1254.

⁵¹³ Belcher, Oliver. “Sensing, Territory, Population: Computation, Embodied Sensors, and Hamlet Control in the Vietnam War.” *Security Dialogue* 50.5 (2019): 416–436.

⁵¹⁴ Barkan, R. “Bringing The Toys Home From Vietnam’.” *New Scientist* 15 (1972).

⁵¹⁵ Dominguez, Ricardo. “Border Research, Border Gestures: The Transborder Immigrant Tool.” *American Quarterly* 71.4 (2019): 1053–1058.

⁵¹⁶ Investigation into Electronic Battlefield Program. Hearings, Ninety-First Congress, Second Session. November 18, 19, and 24, 1970. U.S. Govt. Print. Off.; 1971.

revolution was additionally shaped by the “imperial boomerang,” where the revolution in military affairs brought on by the invention of computer microchip processors and IT surveillance infrastructure created a new generalized electronic domain through which the state began to exert and expand its territorial reach to fight its growing roster of enemies from which it authorized itself to act with impunity.⁵¹⁷

So while in 1875 when the Page Law was originally passed the federal immigration enforcement infrastructure did not yet exist, one hundred years later by 1975, this had changed significantly. In contrast to the period following the passage of the Page Law when the United States immigration regime had not yet been established and border officials were just starting to develop practices to determine the basis for categorizing “lewd” and “debauched” undesirable immigrants, Vietnamese refugees emerged from and were apprehended within the state’s established bureaucracies that became intensively rationalized and centralized during the Cold War IT revolution.⁵¹⁸ So though the moral and nativist basis for exclusion remained strikingly similar to the earlier period of “Chinese threat” in many ways (e.g. the normalized undesirability of “such categories [like] prostitution” and “trafficking in drugs”), determinations of admissibility converged with the rationalization of the modern bureaucratic state to illustrate how the US immigration regime became increasingly depersonalized and automated by new technologies of police and military electronic surveillance that produced biodata about potential arrivals even prior to their formal petitions for entry.

Overall, then, in examining these specific imperial ricochets in the form of the Strategic Hamlet Program and Operation Igloo White, this section more broadly gestures to how the second IT revolution became constitutive with the war in Southeast Asia to produce advanced surveillance techniques that have shaped the current exercise of state power. As Gary T. Marx (12) has argued, contemporary surveillance consequently resembles many of the traits found in the wake of the 1970s imperial boomerang: “the breaking through [of] previously protected information barriers/borders of the person often in a low-visibility or invisible fashion; the use and integration of multiple kinds of data (no border is an island); and the use of acontextual, non-local and abstract categories to construct profiles of, and decisions about, the individual.”⁵¹⁹

This automation of surveillance has thus only expanded the state’s proclaimed sovereign right to decide life and death as an “administrative procedure,” which, as David Lyon (89) notes, has led most sectors “towards classificatory, pre-emptive surveillance [that] tries to simulate and anticipate likely behaviors”—i.e., the kind of predictive work more often commented on in the contemporary context but that nonetheless traces a deeper genealogy through military maneuvers in South Vietnam that first aimed to ensure “the physical and political separation of the guerillas from the population.”⁵²⁰ Securitization by way of electronic surveillance was imported back into the domestic sphere through the centralization of the state’s security-based bureaucracies to create an “information panopticon” that increasingly approached total global enclosure as the United States pursued its containment policy on all fronts. Consequently drawing on this trajectory of the importation of surveillance techniques back to the United States, this discussion illustrates how the IT military revolution

⁵¹⁷ Slotten, Hugh R. "Satellite Communications, Globalization, and the Cold War." *Technology and Culture* 43.2 (2002): 315–350.

⁵¹⁸ MacWillie, John. "From Keyhole to Big Brother: The Legacies of Early Cold War Surveillance." *Surveillance & Society* 16.2 (2018): 203–218.

⁵¹⁹ Marx, Gary T. "Some Conceptual Issues in the Study of Borders and Surveillance." *Global Surveillance and Policing* edited by Elia Zureik and Mark Salter. Portland: Willan Publishing, 2013. 23–47.

⁵²⁰ Lyon D. (ed.) (2002) *Surveillance as Social Sorting: Privacy, Risk, and Digital Discrimination* (London: Routledge).

indelibly reshaped the territorial capacities of the modern state, converting the global landscape into a comprehensive electronic battlefield against the threat of enemy infiltration, broadly defined.⁵²¹

THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF SUBURBAN TERRITORIALIZATION

Ask Edna about men, and she will talk about money. Ask her about heroin, and she will tell you about the real passion of her life. “The only relationship I tend to have is with a spoon,” she said, referring to the implement used for cooking heroin before it is injected. “When I see a guy, dollar signs flash in my mind. I think, ‘How much is this punk worth?’” Edna, 33, sells her body. And like dozens of other prostitutes in Orange County, she has found the Disneyland area to be profitable turf...The Disneyland area is a big draw for prostitutes because it contains the intersection of two of the busiest streets in Orange County—Harbor Boulevard and Katella Avenue. Although tourists and convention-goers fill the area, police said local residents are the prostitutes’ most frequent customers. Anaheim vice and police officers work hard to keep prostitutes off the Harbor-Katella commercial strip and outside city limits, Sgt. Steven Rodig said. In the first four months of this year, Anaheim police arrested more than 400 men and women on prostitution-related charges. *For now, “The problem is under control,” Rodig said. But he admits that prostitution “is still there. There are always new girls coming into town”* [emphasis added].⁵²²

– “Outside the Kingdom: Anaheim Vice – Sex Serves as Another Roadside Attraction,”
The Orange County Register, May 15, 1988

In another story featured in the “Outside the Kingdom” special report that opened Chapter 2, Edna emerges from this discussion of local neighborhood decline to embody the fully corrupted white woman who has succumbed to the threats imagined by suburban citizens as their primary enemies: drugs, “prostitution,” poverty, and the existential fear that what you see is just the “tip of the iceberg.” Conjuring racist ideas of cocaine, opium, and marijuana use, respectively, emboldening African American, Asian, and Mexican men to rape and seduce white women, *The Register’s* claim that Edna’s only “real passion” is heroine not only implicates her own degeneracy but also that of the illicit drugs’ alleged pushers.^{523,524} The report’s use of Edna’s declaration that “[t]he only relationship [she] tends[s] to have is with a spoon” is consequently not just a judgment of her drug usage but also of her intimate associations where, absent the respectability of marriage and family life, her lack of a “real” relationship becomes moralized as a personal failure in which normative love has been replaced with an addiction to drugs and, by association, unsanctioned relationships with the “wrong kind” of men.⁵²⁵

⁵²¹ Cullather, Nick. “Bombing at the Speed of Thought: Intelligence in the Coming Age of Cyberwar.” *Intelligence and National Security* 18.4 (2003): 141–154.

⁵²² Serrano, Barbara A. “Outside the Kingdom: Anaheim Vice – Sex Serves as Another Roadside Attraction.” *The Orange County Register*. May 15, 1988. p. N4

⁵²³ Auerhahn, Kathleen. “The Split Labor Market and the Origins of Antidrug Legislation in the United States.” *Law & Social Inquiry* 24.2 (1999): 411–440.

⁵²⁴ Cohen, Michael M. “Jim Crow’s Drug War: Race, Coca Cola, and the Southern Origins of Drug Prohibition.” *Southern Cultures* 12.3 (2006): 55–79.

⁵²⁵ Keire, Mara L. “Dope Fiends and Degenerates: The Gendering of Addiction in the Early Twentieth Century.” *Journal of Social History* (1998): 809–822.

Recalling the opening story from Chapter 2 featuring Annie May Walker, it is therefore important to understand Orange County's suburban possessive politics not only from the standpoint of racial and class resentment but also from the view that these resentments arranged themselves through the vernacular of gendered and sexual apprehension. The gendered honorific of Sir Rudimar is consequently relevant to the story, where, more than just *any* business owner, Sir Rudimar is cast as the symbolic representation of the struggling little *guy*. In this story about Anaheim's declining commercial corridor, however, Rudimar is not the focus of the special report, only its fallen hero. Rather, the focus is on the women the stories come to suggest are implicated in the decline of the neighborhood—an interrogation exercise into their culpability.

Noteworthy in that opening story therefore is the presentation of Annie as marked by the signs of failed feminine accomplishment as both a warning of things to come and a theory as to how she might have landed there. "Hunched over" a grocery cart, "scroung[ing]" for food, "slipp[ing]" her hand into a back alley trash can," and "growling," Annie is portrayed as poor, less-than-human, unclean, improper, and alone; that is, decidedly unfeminine, retaining all of its purported irrationalities but none of its protections.⁵²⁶ She is less a protagonist in this case than a cautionary tale. As the opening scene pans to Annie "scroung[ing]" amid the trash bins for food and aluminum cans," the prospect of becoming dispossessed of a home—the worst fate in this era of suburban citizenship in which worth has become tied to home ownership—is presented as the true "hell" that suburbanites imagined to be their potential fate if "threats" to them as homeowners were not adequately addressed and contained.

To the right of Annie's photo in that special report sits another relevant story on the motels that dot Katella Avenue nearby to serve the tourist economy, only instead of housing throngs of happy families visiting Disneyland, the article bemoans how the motels have slowly turned into low-cost housing for long term tenants. "For hundreds of families that can't afford anything better, the motels are the closest thing they have to a home," the report laments. "Themed motels with soothing names like the Caravan and the Golden Forest no longer cater to tourists in station wagons, but to transients and poor families who accept tenement conditions as a way of life." The children at the Golden Forest, the article continues, have become stripped of their innocence, playing make-believe games where "one little girl" assigns to three of her friends the role of a "drug dealer," "banker," and "gunman" "at the foot of a grimy concrete stairway" and where nearby, "a pair of boys [take] turns standing on the rim of a parking-lot trash bin, and with shouts of glee, jump in."⁵²⁷

Annie as a figure is consequently presented as a symbol of the decline of the traditional American family and what happens to women when they move outside its professed protections. Though Annie was not implicated in the remainder of the report's focus on nearby Harbor Boulevard's sex work corridor as a hotbed for local "sexual vice," the inclusion of both her and Edna's stories together alongside that of the unruly children in the special Sunday feature was not coincidental. As per the report's description of her, Annie fails to comport to the expectations of a domesticated femininity that found rearticulated footing in expressions of the Cold War nuclear family ideal, and is thereby coded as wearing masculine-typed clothing (e.g. "men's trousers" and "floppy sneakers") that symbolically severs her from embodying "true womanhood."⁵²⁸ Despite these discrediting

⁵²⁶ Serrano, Barbara A. "Outside the Kingdom: Urban Decay Becomes the Theme in Disneyland Area." *The Orange County Register*. May 15, 1988. p. 165.

⁵²⁷ Brennan, Pat. "Outside the Kingdom: Motel - Poverty, Crime Check into Tourist Haven." *The Orange County Register*. May 15, 1988. p. 165.

⁵²⁸ Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." *American Quarterly* 18.2 (1966): 151-174; and Roberts, Mary Louise. "True Womanhood Revisited." *Journal of Women's History* 14.1 (2002): 150-155.

features, however, the report acknowledges, “[h]er head was wrapped in a pink *rag* [emphasis added] knotted about the forehead”—her gender not under question, necessarily, only the nature of its failed performance and the implied consequences of its inadequacy. Moreover, in framing Edna as a woman opting to work for money at the expense of “sell[ing] her body” instead of choosing to form a respectable family, Edna is also cast as the living consequence of a second wave feminist movement gone too far, on public trial by the late 1980s for having falsely liberated women to the point of their own downfall and destitution.⁵²⁹

As a result, Annie and Edna, in having lost the presumptive protections suburban citizenship could have afforded them, found themselves in a precarious position in this context of possessive backlash that had been brewing in the county for over a decade. In associating Edna with the broader threat posed by unchecked “prostitution” to the respectability of declining suburban neighborhoods, she, “like dozens of other prostitutes in Orange County” and countless “new girls coming into town” emerged as part of a rearticulated moral panic concerning sexual vice and the boundaries of (suburban) citizenship. In this way, the possessive investment in whiteness expressed by the suburban citizenry came to understand threats to their home values through both an orientalist lens exacerbated by the second era of globalization as imagined through the Southeast Asian gang member (as discussed in Chapter 2) *and* a racialized sexual deviance lens as imagined through the resettled Saigonese bar girl and the fallen white woman thought to have succumbed to the false promises of an overzealous feminism, as analyzed here through a concluding discussion of the area’s other domestic war: the “war on prostitution.”

SIR RUDIMAR AND THE ORIENTAL PIMP: FRAMING HARBOR BOULEVARD’S “PROSTITUTION PROBLEM”

Police on Friday arrested the owner of a Harbor Boulevard motel on prostitution-related charges and said they hoped the move would send a message to others along the boulevard who rent rooms for illicit sex. In an elaborate display for the media, Garden Grove police arrested Fan Chen Kung, owner of the Fiesta Motel near Harbor and Lampson Avenue. Shutters clicked and cameras whirred as the 57-year-old Kung was led from the motel office to a waiting squad car. Kung declined to comment. Lt. Ken Adair, head of the Police Department’s special investigations unit, said Kung—who was jailed in lieu of \$25,000 bail—was aware that at times most of the rooms in the 28-room motel are occupied by prostitutes. He said Kung, who had been warned to cease the activity, charged prostitutes a higher rate. Police and the media had to wait for the arrest until Kung returned from his accountant’s office in Monterey Park. Kung is charged in his arrest warrant with one felony count of pimping and misdemeanor counts of keeping a house of ill fame and letting rooms for the purpose of prostitution. He faces nearly two years in jail if convicted on all counts, Adair said. The city will also take civil action under the Red Light Abatement Act to close down the motel, Adair said. The abatement action will be the first in Garden Grove against a motel, although a massage parlor on Euclid Street—allegedly a front for prostitution—was closed. Adair said the media was invited to witness the arrest because police want to warn other motel owners along Harbor Boulevard that they may face similar action.

⁵²⁹ Chesney-Lind, Meda. “Patriarchy, Crime, and Justice: Feminist Criminology in an Era of Backlash.” *Feminist Criminology* 1.1 (2006): 6–26.

“We believe there are at least three other motels doing the same thing,” Adair said. The Friday afternoon arrest culminated a two-week investigation, which involved an undercover female police posing as a prostitute, Adair said. Prostitutes are charged \$6 to \$10 per night above regular room rates, according to Adair. Many prostitutes lived at the motel permanently, and drug use and dealing were rampant, said Adair, pointing out a hypodermic syringe in the motel driveway. Harbor long has been a haven for street-walkers, Adair said, due in large part to the annual influx of tourists to visit Disneyland or attend large conventions. “You come to Garden Grove and give me 30 minutes, and I’ll find you a hooker,” Adair said. He estimated that 98 percent of women who walk the boulevard in Garden Grove, Anaheim and Santa Ana are drug addicts. On the Garden Grove stretch of Harbor, he said, 101 women were arrested on prostitution charges in 1984. Although the average age was 25, the youngest was 16 and the oldest 67, he said.

Anaheim police Lt. John Flanagan said police from adjoining jurisdictions need to work together to control the problem. “We try to keep a close eye on them,” he said. “Every night, there are some vice officers out there. What tends to happen is that police chase prostitutes from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. He said some motels in Anaheim cater to prostitutes but that officers never have come across a case as “blatant” as that described by Garden Grove police. As officers pored over motel business records, Kung’s son, Murray, said the arrest was “totally a mistake. Prostitutes don’t rent here that I know of,” he said. “Do we need to ask people who check in if they are a prostitute? I have no idea what’s happening.” Kung and his family came to the United States from Taiwan five years ago, he said. They bought the motel because “it’s the kind of business we could afford to put a down payment on and operate ourselves”⁵³⁰

– “Prostitution Probe Ends in Arrest of Motel Proprietor,”
The Orange County Register, February 2, 1985

Three years before *The Orange County Register* published its report on neighborhood decline in the areas surrounding Disneyland, the suggestion that Sir Rudimar was being outcompeted by other motels “shouldering each other for attention” by advertising the “[l]owest rates in town” next to businesses like Chao’s restaurant drew on several layers of orientalized meaning concerning Asian sexual vice that initially became reanimated in 1985 after police organized a media spectacle around arresting a Taiwanese immigrant man named Fan Chen Kung on charges of “pimping” and “keeping a house of ill fame” near Harbor Boulevard. “The Fiesta Motel is on Lampson Avenue about a block from Harbor Boulevard.” a follow up story later described, continuing:

This stretch of Harbor is notorious for its prostitution, and almost any hour of the day or night you can see hookers walking the sidewalks, plying their trade. Often they take their customers to nearby motels. And so the police, wanting to broadcast the message that they were cracking down, invited the media along when they visited Fiesta. TV cameras whirred, still cameras clicked and reported scribbled furiously as Mr. Kung was led out in handcuffs. The story got big play on television and in the newspapers.⁵³¹

⁵³⁰ Eddy, Steve. “Prostitution Probe Ends in Arrest of Motel Proprietor.” *The Orange County Register*. February 2, 1985. p. B1, B4.

⁵³¹ Emmers, Bob. “Garden Grove Vice: More of a Sitcom than a Drama.” *The Orange County Register*. September 29, 1985. p. B1, B4.

Wanting the move to “send a message to others along the boulevard who rent rooms for illicit sex,” the police arranged an “elaborate display for the media,” demonstrating how Kung and the “prostitutes working at the Fiesta Motel” emerged as key figures of sexual deviance onto which possessive fears during the second era of globalization were projected and expressed.

Less than two weeks after Kung’s arrest, *The Register* published an interview with Garden Grove Police Captain, Monte Davis, linking the case to Harbor Boulevard’s “prostitution problem.”⁵³² Reflecting on his police career with the department since 1959, Monte Davis acknowledged that “[f]or as long as [he could] remember there ha[d] been prostitution to some degree in certain bars and motels along the boulevard.” However, he continued, “[a]s far as streetwalkers go, [he’d] say they...emerged heavily in about the last seven to 10 years,” thereby dating the origin of the “real” problem anywhere between 1975 and 1978 when, coincidentally, increasing numbers of Asian ethnic groups, including Southeast Asian refugees, began to establish enclave communities in North Orange County. In his account of the “prostitution problem” facing the declining city, Davis overall makes two primary points from his official position as the Garden Grove Police Department’s longtime captain. First, he asserts that “[m]any of them do it because they have to support a drug habit” or because “[t]here’s a lot of money in it” where a “girl can make several hundred dollars on a good night”; and second, though “realistically” “[p]olice [would] never have the resources to stop the problem” entirely, increased coordination between the police departments of Garden Grove, Anaheim, Santa Ana, and Buena Park has helped his department “exercise some reasonable control” over the “prostitution problem.”

Davis’ contention that “prostitution” was a job women turned to either because they lacked the self control to stave off a “drug problem” or because it was easy money therefore echoed the pathologies already discussed commonly used to characterize women outside the paternalistic confines of the normative family, and his comment on police departments’ growing coordination due to sex workers’ spatial mobility gestures to the centralization municipal departments underwent as well during this period. Moreover, though, in an article published just two months after that lamented the return of Harbor Boulevard’s “streetwalkers” following a reduction in intensive policing, the problem grew to increasingly refer to a change to the former organization of sex work from involving “known” locals to a more invasive frame of “circuit prostitutes” “who travel[ed] the major cities of the West.”⁵³³ “The worst thing is that we’re getting in the circuit prostitutes,” Garden Grove Police Lt. Ken Adair said, “the ones who travel around moving where they find the least pressure. We’ve always had the locals, but they were known to us and a manageable group. Now we get swarms on the street corners. Go onto Harbor on a weekend night and it’s nothing to see six, eight, 10 of them out there on a corner.” In general, then, intensive reporting that picked up after the Fan Chen Kung arrest spectacle came to associate the rising prostitution problem as a distinct one that discursively linked the “swarms” of “circuit prostitutes” to the shift in local businesses due to Asian economic competition as imagined through Sir Rudimar’s struggle against places like the Kung family’s Fiesta Motel.

Fascinatingly, eight months after the arrest of Kung, the whole affair ended like “more of a sitcom than a drama,” as reported by regular columnist Bob Emmers for *The Register* on September 29th of that year. Three days prior to the paper running Emmer’s column, *The Register* had reported that the charges against Kung had been dismissed by Deputy District Attorney Nina Brice, who “was quoted as saying the prosecution’s star

⁵³² Eddy, Steve. “Q&A: Monte Davis – The Harbor Boulevard Prostitution Problem.” *The Orange County Register*. February 13, 1985. p. B2.

⁵³³ McLeod, Ramon G. “OC Thoroughfare Again a Hot Spot for Prostitution: Bail Reduction Cited in Increased Harbor Boulevard Streetwalking.” *The Orange County Register*. April 20, 1985. p. B1.

witness, a prostitute-turned-police informant, had lied in some of her statements.”⁵³⁴ “But,” Emmers writes, “I found myself wondering: The police make a highly publicized arrest that then fizzles out into a dismissal—what had happened?”⁵³⁵ So Emmers’ column begins with this query, subsequently following Emmers on his investigative journey to understand the trajectory of the case with the goal of bringing these details to the public to decide for themselves. “It’s either a funny story or a frightening story or an exasperating story, depending on your point of view,” Emmers reckons, “And as to the good guys and the bad guys, you’ll have to make your own decisions.”

What had happened, according to Emmers, was that Garden Grove police had run an elaborate sting operation on Kung at The Fiesta that ultimately produced no hard evidence that prostitution had actually taken place despite them “putting on a good show.” According to his own research into police reports and interviews with some involved, a resident at the motel named Rose Marie Klahn, age 25, who “had a long record of prostitution convictions” was arrested again by police in early January the month before Kung’s arrest. “She told them that the Fiesta was a hotbed of prostitution and that when Mr. Kung had found out she was using the rooms for prostitution, he immediately had raised her rate from \$20 to \$30 a night to get his share of her earnings,” the column details.

Working with Garden Grove police, the Orange police officers proposed an undercover operation against Mr. Kung, noting in their report, by way of justification, “that a large amount of arrests have been made for prostitution in this motel.” A microphone was attached to Miss Klahn and she was sent back to the motel. An undercover policewoman took a room there as well to pose as a prostitute...Other male officers went to the motel to pose as customers for the policewoman who was posing as a prostitute...The male officers would go in and out of the female officer’s room like customers. The female officer would go down to the office and ask Mr. Kung for additional towels, which he provided her for an additional charge. The female officer would ask if there had been any police around and if Mr. Kung would let her know if he saw any. The female officer would ask Mr. Kung to watch out for a “john” who was coming to see her. Miss Klahn would visit the office, too, and talk to Mr. Kung, using terms like “pimp,” “tricks,” “parties,” “half and half,” and other terms used in the prostitution trade. Soon, the police were convinced that Mr. Kung indeed had an intimate knowledge of prostitution. He seemed to know what “trick,” “party,” “half and half,” and the other slang meant, and he had said he would be on the lookout for the cops. He had provided more towels. “It should be noted that prostitutes, when...utilizing a motel, request large quantities of towels to accomodate their many “johns,” the police said in their report. So Mr. Kung was arrested.

After several months Kung’s case finally made its way to Nina Brice, the Deputy District Attorney overseeing the case, but after so much fuss had been made about the growing “prostitution problem” Brice ultimately identified two key issues. First, there was the “legal difficulty” that “[d]uring the undercover operation at the motel, police apparently had witnessed no real prostitution: The ‘johns’ were cops and the ‘hookers’ were a policewoman and a police informant.” So at worst Brice could only see, she told Emmers, a case for “attempted pimping.” But worse still, Brice continued, was the issue of the police’s key informant.

⁵³⁴ Welborn, Larry. “Garden Grove Pimping Case Dropped: Charges Dismissed Against Motel Owner Arrested in January Raid.” *The Orange County Register*. September 25, 1985. p. B1.

⁵³⁵ Emmers, Bob. “Garden Grove Vice: More of a Sitcom than a Drama.” *The Orange County Register*. September 29, 1985. p. B1, B4.

She had told police that Mr. Kung had raised her room rate from \$20 to \$30 so he could get his cut from her prostitution business. Of course, if Mr. Kung were getting a cut, he might have been getting it in some other fashion, but the fact was that the registration cards showed that Miss Klahn had been charged \$30 a night all along. Also, Miss Klahn later told police that she had continued to turn tricks at the motel. But the officers who had her under surveillance there said they saw no such thing.

“If you have a star witness who you think is a liar, you can’t go into court with that,” Brice explained to Emmers, accounting for why she moved to dismiss the case.

Emmers himself then opines here that for him, there are some additional questions he has that go even beyond the doubts expressed by Brice. In particular, while still acknowledging that “the police did put a lot of time into the case and must have thought they had a good one,” Emmers doubts the claim made by Garden Grove PD that there had been “a large number of arrests’ for prostitution at the motel,” which justified them targeting the Fiesta and Kung specifically. According to Kung’s attorney who pulled police records from September 1984 to January 1985, however, Emmers relays that police had only made 15 visits to the motel and surrounding area throughout that period, and no arrests for prostitution were ever documented. The visits were for “a variety of activities—loitering, possible drug use, that sort of thing,” but even then he says “the number of calls [did not] seem to be out of line for this sort of neighborhood.”

Moreover, Emmers points to the spurious claims made by police about what actually happened during the sting operation that implicated Kung in their view. Interviewing Kung after Brice dismissed the case, Emmers reports that Kung “said the problem was that he and his wife don’t speak English that well.”

When the undercover officers asked him to keep watch for police, he said, he would smile and say “yes” because he didn’t quite understand and besides, in America the customer is always right. He said that when the undercover policewoman asked him to watch for a “john,” he did—he waited for a man named “John” to come and visit her. When Miss Klahn said she was going to a “party,” Mr. Kung said, he thought she must mean a “dinner party.” And when Miss Klahn talked about “tricks,” “lays” and “half and half,” Mr. Kung added, he and his wife would spend hours with their Chinese–English dictionary trying to figure out what the girl meant. And about the woman wanting extra towels? “We always answer ‘yes’ to client’s request,” Mr. Kung said, “and so when she asked for extra towels, we said yes, for a charge. Standard practice.”

“We would have done more,” Kung said. “All the police had to do was come and tell us there was a problem, but they never did.” In the end, Emmers alludes to his opinion though he leaves the question largely open for his readers. Noting that Klahn had her original charge dismissed one month after Kung’s arrest, he speculates whether she “cut a deal for herself by talking,” and as for the Kung family, Emmers closes, “I suppose the police could be right and these two might really be overlords of vice in Garden Grove, but sitting there, at least, they just looked like two ordinary people.”

As a case that became so discursively significant despite eventually getting dismissed, what was then the material import of attempting to frame Fan Chen Kung as an overlord of vice? Returning to the opening article regarding Kung’s arrest, it is important to note what the city intended to do with the case if it had moved forward even if that outcome did not come to pass. While Garden Grove Police Lt. Adair told reporters that they

were arresting Kung on a felony charge for pimping, he also made sure to mention that the city of Garden Grove itself planned to “take civil action under the Red Light Abatement Act to close down the motel.”⁵³⁶

So what is the significance of the Fiesta Motel case from the perspective of its relationship to the Red Light Abatement Act? Tethering Kung’s arrest during this second era of globalization to the rise of anti-Chinese sentiment oriented around sexual vice during the first era globalization, Adair’s citation of the Red Light Abatement Act demonstrates the genealogical durability of these processes of Asian sexual racialization across time. Passed by the California state legislature and signed into law by Governor Hiram Johnson in 1913, the Red Light Abatement Act was written alongside other vice laws designed to target the threat of foreign, especially Chinese and Japanese, economic competition through the modality of sexual persecution.^{537,538} Under the Act, it was determined that “every building or place used for the purpose of prostitution, and every building or place in or upon which acts of prostitution, are held or occur, is a nuisance which should be enjoined, abated, and prevented, and for which damages may be recovered,” meaning, property owners would become financially liable for the prostitution that took place in their buildings. Written with the design that this would compel the propertied class to become more vigilant of sexual vice on their premises, the Act resulted in the normalization of discriminatory rental practices applied to morally suspicion persons, especially suspected prostitutes, which in turn pushed more workers in the sex industry to move to the streets.

Understanding this triangulation between property interests, sexual discipline, and white nativism is therefore critical to understanding the Fiesta Motel case as well as the broader argument of this dissertation that has attempted to draw important parallels between the period of the 1970s onward to the century preceding it.⁵³⁹ As Mara L. Keire has written about the “white slavery scare” that gripped Progressive Reformers from 1907–1917, beyond just being a moral panic over sexual vice and foreigner threat, its thrust was also materially aligned with the anti-monopolism expressed by dislocated Americans who started to comprehend their class oppression by turning to abstract organizational conspiracies—e.g. “the Trust and Wall Street, the Political Machine and the System of Influence.”⁵⁴⁰ This was broadly related to the actual extensive cooperation among industrial trusts like Standard Oil and U.S. Steel, but more so for the discussion here, it created a general climate “in which Americans feared the impact of corporate centralization and perceived a cooperative complicity among economic interests” that extended to the area of “commercialized vice.” So as Keire (5–6) elaborates:

By situating the tale of the captive maiden within the broader critique of monopoly capitalism, anti-vice reformers adopted a language, and a legislative agenda, that resonated with other Progressive-era reforms. Economic allusions permeated anti-vice rhetoric, but three metaphors in particular anchored reformers’ representation of social relations in urban red-light districts. The first metaphor depicted the business of vice as a trust composed of allied interests. The second metaphor was that red-light districts were like marketplaces where the Vice Trust bought and sold prostitutes to fill district brothels. And finally, contemporary writers correlated white slavery with debt peonage. By shifting the rhetorical terrain away from sin and individual salvation and toward an economic analysis of social structures,

⁵³⁶ Eddy, Steve. “Prostitution Probe Ends in Arrest of Motel Proprietor.” *The Orange County Register*. February 2, 1985. p. B1, B4.

⁵³⁷ Hennigan, Peter C. “Property War: Prostitution, Red-light districts, and the Transformation of Public Nuisance Law in the Progressive Era.” *Yale JL & Human*. 16 (2004): 123.

⁵³⁸ Matsubara, Hiroyuki. “The Anti-Prostitution Movement and the Contest of the Middle-Class Reformers over Cultural Authority: San Francisco, 1910–1913.” *Japanese Journal of American Studies* 12 (2001): 83–104.

⁵³⁹ Briggs, Donald Lewis. “Sarong Gals: Green Light for the Red Light Abatement Law.” *Pepp. L. Rev.* 1 (1973): 116.

⁵⁴⁰ Keire, Mara L. “The Vice Trust: A Reinterpretation of the White Slavery Scare in the United States, 1907–1917.” *Journal of Social History* 35.1 (2001): 5–41.

Progressive-era anti-vice reformers appropriated laws governing commerce as a new set of legal referents and strategically employed the three interlocking metaphors as juridical analogies for constructing legislation and interpreting laws that regulated vice.

Consequently, this period of anti-prostitution policing during the second era of globalization that saw many suburbanites place the onus of responsibility for their class anxieties on their “foreign” neighbors can trace its possessive rationale to this earlier time described by Keire. As they were conceptualized, California vice laws were constituted from nativist apprehension towards foreign, Chinese and other Asian threat through metaphorical analogies that shaped vice law according to a market logic that both gave priority to the propertied and enlisted them as proxy regulators for the state. As such, these three dimensions are constitutively entangled, where, through the moral vernacular of sexual vice, property, too, became itself a claimed ethical domain to which possessive whites rendered themselves legally entitled.

THE PUSH FOR DISCRETIONARY POLICING AND THE SECOND WAVE BACKLASH: NEWPORT BEACH'S PREDICAMENT AS "THE NEW MASSAGE PARLOR CAPITAL OF ORANGE COUNTY"

Sexually explicit magazines, a black-lace garter and the vice squad have turned up in Newport Beach's rub-down rooms lately. In an attempt to gauge prostitution at the growing number of massage parlors in the city, investigators conducted a four-week undercover sweep of the 10 most notorious of Newport Beach's 17 parlors that ended Wednesday. Undercover officers posing as customers found that at least seven centers for the “world's oldest healing art” also dabble in the world's oldest profession, said Sgt. Richard Long, who headed the investigation. The sweep netted 10 female parlor employees and one male customer. Newport Beach, as the massage parlor capital of Orange County, has 32 businesses licensed to do massage and five applications pending, business license manager Dave Larson said. Police only define 17 of those businesses as parlors, since the other 15 permits belong to health clubs, beauty salons and doctor's offices. “We've been receiving enough complaints to let us know prostitution was becoming conspicuous,” Long said. “We tried to determine whether the complaints were valid...I think you can draw some conclusions from the fact that out of the 10 covered, seven had arrests.”

Some community leaders are worried that Newport Beach has unwittingly rolled out the carpet for massage parlor prostitution by maintaining a relatively lenient ordinance while other cities have tightened their laws. Huntington Beach, Seal Beach and Stanton recently have tried to restrict where, when and how massage parlors operate, although neither Seal Beach nor Stanton have parlors. A Huntington Beach ordinance taking effect in June bans parlors from within 200 feet of a home, 500 feet of a school or 1,000 feet of other “adult entertainment” business. Seal Beach's proposed ordinance confines business hours to between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. and requires massage technicians to have 1,000 hours of training. Early this month a federal court upheld a 2-year-old Anaheim requirement that masseurs and masseuses lacking conditional-use permits perform massage only on customers with a doctor's prescription. The Newport Beach ordinance imposes no restrictions on massage parlor business hours or zoning controls except to confine them to commercial areas. People may give professional massages in

the city if they have completed 100 hours of massage school training. No changes are proposed. “Maybe we painted ourselves into a corner,” Councilwoman Jackie Heather said.⁵⁴¹

– “11 Arrested in Newport Beach Massage Parlor Investigation,”
The Orange County Register, March 21, 1985

Less than two months after Kung’s arrest, it was reported that Newport Beach had emerged as the “massage parlor capital of Orange County,” much to residents’ shock and horror given the city’s well-established reputation as one of the region’s most exclusive residential areas. “We’ve been receiving enough complaints to let us know prostitution was becoming conspicuous,” Sgt. Richard Long had said, pointing to how the increased association of vice with the toney neighborhood had begun to cause some local residents to bristle and subsequently request police action to reverse any reputational harm inflicted on the city by the growth of its massage parlor industry. Publishing a column on this undercover operation as well, Emmers helped contextualize the gravity of what this meant, writing in bemused disbelief that he was “entranced by the notion that it [was] Newport Beach which [was] the new massage parlor capital of Orange County”—“that land of the Mercedes, the stock option, the garden party, upward mobility and so much high-toned California quasi-gentility.”⁵⁴²

Ocurring in the midst of Fiesta Motel-initiated coverage on the county’s “prostitution problem,” the story consequently emerged as a linked discourse to additionally orientalize the issue and tie it to the politics of racial property, this time specifically implicating Korean and Vietnamese women as participants in the underground sex economy through the guise of massage parlor work. As the article went on to describe the undercover sweep that resulted in the arrest of ten massage parlor employees across seven establishments, the framing made sure to note some defining shared characteristics across the parlors where workers were arrested to racialize the problem as a matter of Asian sexual vice. Using one raid as emblematic of the others, *The Register* reported that:

A Monday vice squad raid on Asian Acu-health overlooking Newport Boulevard...illustrates what undercover officers said they tended to find in the seven parlors where they made arrests. *Playboy*, *Penthouse* and other magazines were stacked on small tables in each of the six cubicles that each contained a mattress, a chair and small mirror. A stereo played soft music, and the smell of Oriental food drifted from a small stove in a back room.

Later in the same story the writer lists the names of the workers who were arrested, who predominantly shared Korean and Vietnamese surnames. They were also listed next to their places of employment, where names like “Shangrila” and “Coast Shiatsu Acupuncture” served to additionally cast the problem in racial terms. Therefore symbolizing the southward flow of racialized threat into the “moral community” of Newport Beach by way of the Asian-prostitute-as-figure, the orientalized imagining of encroaching sexual vice triggered concern over declining local property values as a once impenetrable, exclusive city found itself at the center of the regional “prostitution problem.”

⁵⁴¹ Krattenmaker, Tom. “11 Arrested in Newport Beach Massage Parlor Investigation.” *The Orange County Register*. March 21, 1985. p. B5.

⁵⁴² Emmers, Bob. “Buying a “Massage” in Newport Beach.” *The Orange County Register*. September 29, 1985. p. B1.

One interesting theme that emerged from this story on Newport Beach's massage parlor problem was the assignment of blame. As the opening article laid out, the shocking collective realization that Newport Beach then contained the highest number of massage parlors of any city in the county drove many to try to make sense of why that had become the case. Some blamed the commercial corridor near John Wayne Airport that drew "mainly from business executives who stay[ed] at nearby hotels or work[ed] at the surrounding offices," which offered "cheaper rents" for converted warehouse spaces in older parts of town. But mostly, blame was attributed to lenient city ordinances that did not clamp down on local sex work as harshly as surrounding cities, causing those more at risk of being heavily punished elsewhere to move their operations to "the only [remaining] place they [could] go." This conversation concerning lenient city ordinances then took two primary positions: one, lenient city policies were related to women exercising greater decision making in public office and, two, "tough on crime" policies affirmative of police authority should be pursued as the solution to the so-called massage parlor problem.

So to start, this rise in "law and order" discourse towards controlling prostitution came to push for more regulation through coverage that implicated working women in local office and the courts as somehow related to this issue for being too "soft" on vice crime. In the opening article excerpt, for instance, the story notes how currently no changes to city ordinances had been proposed despite the rising threat to Newport Beach's reputation, quoting City Councilmember Jackie Heather to imply some burden of guilt as she acknowledged that "[m]aybe we painted ourselves into a corner" by not moving more swiftly to combat the problem. This figure of the recently empowered working white woman as sign of feminist overstep appeared to emerge as worthy of media mention in the particular context of their work going against police talking points. For example, in the Fiesta Motel case, when Dep. District Attorney Nina Brice decided to dismiss the case, her decision became framed as incongruous with police who, though having found a good working relationship prior to the DA's office in earlier times, now felt "sold out" and at odds with new members like Brice.⁵⁴³

Eventually these underlying sentiments found a compelling scapegoat in recently elected North Orange County Municipal Judge Margaret Anderson, who ruled out probation for repeat offenders (counter to the police department's strategy of using strict probationary rules to regulate and punish sex work), where it was noted that Anderson had gotten the idea from recently attending a "statewide judges' seminar at UC Berkeley"—implying her liberal sympathies by association.⁵⁴⁴ "I had always thought we could place them on probation, but Judge Ryan pointed out the statute to us, and it does seem to be very specific," Anderson said. As stated in the penal code, Anderson referred to the passage stating that "In no such case shall the court grant probation or suspend the execution of the sentence imposed upon the defendant," which, if following Anderson's ruling, threatened to "set a [statewide] precedent in prostitution law" at the expense of police efforts to control the trade. "Anderson's ruling," Sgt. James Brantley of Anaheim's police department decried, "could have a significant effect on prostitution enforcement," thereby pointing to this conflict between law enforcement seeking greater authority to police the "prostitution problem" and imagined figures of feminist overreach like Judge Anderson who represented the growing participation of white women in the paid workforce following the second wave movement as adverse to the punitive turn by being too "soft on crime."⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ Emmers, Bob. "Garden Grove Vice: More of a Sitcom than a Drama." *The Orange County Register*. September 29, 1985, p. B1, B4.

⁵⁴⁴ Welborn, Larry. "Judge Rules Out Probation for Repeat Prostitutes: Anaheim Fears Decision Hinders Guidelines' Force." *The Orange County Register*. August 26, 1985, p. B3.

⁵⁴⁵ Chesney-Lind, Meda. "Patriarchy, Crime, and Justice: Feminist Criminology in an Era of Backlash." *Feminist Criminology* 1.1 (2006): 6-26.

Moreover, in response to this perception of leniency, “law and order” discourse directed at orientalized sex workers converged with processes of centralization and rationalization happening at the municipal level to encode deeply embedded colonial imaginings of deviance and nonbelonging into a legal language that authorized their devaluation through the mechanism of bureaucratic credentialing. For example, coverage of the undercover sweep—in attempting to frame the massage parlor problem—relied on professional credentialing to make important distinctions between “legitimate” massage businesses and illegitimate ones that offered sexual services, imposing a logic of bureaucratic authority onto the unruly prostitution problem to “rationally” and “morally” discard unwanted persons through permit-based determinations of acceptable business enterprises. Incorrectly permitted or unpermitted businesses were automatically categorized as illegitimate, demonstrating how permits worked to draw basic distinctions between businesses authorized by the state’s legal-bureaucratic authority and those that were not.

In addition, categories related to the rising value of the professional-managerial class and the enduring value of scientific-rational authority within modernity in general performed symbolic boundary work that legitimated some massage businesses and not others (e.g. the Anaheim requirement that “masseurs and masseuses lacking conditional-use permits perform massage only on customers with a doctor’s prescription” or the detail concerning how “Police only define[d] 17 of those businesses as parlors, since the other 15 permits belong[ed] to [professionally legitimated] health clubs, beauty salons and doctor’s offices.”).⁵⁴⁶ Comparing “legitimate’ massage businesses” to the seven parlors caught up in the sweep, coverage even discussed the role played by professional-coded clothing where, unlike “the lab coats worn at ‘legitimate’ massage businesses, the female-only technicians at the seven parlors usually wore more revealing tops, hot pants or short skirts.”

Members of the massage profession likewise attempted to draw moral distinctions between their chosen vocation and that of the workers at the seven targeted parlors to protect their relative status as respectably employed suburban citizens. As Doris Dietemann, a “massage instructor at the Academy of Health Science in Garden Grove,” insisted, although “[m]assage parlors [were] ‘a natural for the prostitution business,’” only some participated in the sex trade. Calling for a moral distinction, Dietemann insisted that “[t]hese [were] sex parlors, not massage parlors, and they should call them what they are” instead of hurting the reputations of “professionals” working in “‘therapeutic’ massage.”

Finally, having established this legal-bureaucratic basis from which moral distinctions between “good” and “bad” parlor workers could be made, this more broadly translated into a general approach that sought to remove undesirable sex workers from area boundaries by expanding and coordinating anti-vice efforts across the county’s police departments.⁵⁴⁷ Frequently emphasizing how Newport Beach may have unwittingly “rolled out the red carpet for massage parlor prostitution by maintaining a relatively lenient ordinance while other cities have tightened their laws,” coverage noted how because other cities had moved to impose various regulations and harsher punishments to more effectively curb the problem, Newport Beach had unknowingly fallen victim to its own soft policies. As a solution, police told the media that there should be tougher ordinances on prostitution crime as well as expanded law enforcement capacity to address the problem with greater discretion.

In terms of stricter ordinances, the article on the Newport Beach parlors noted how a Huntington Beach ordinance, for example, banned parlors from locating within 200 feet of a home, 500 feet of a school, and

⁵⁴⁶ Casey, Catherine. “Bureaucracy Re-enchanter? Spirit, Experts and Authority in Organizations.” *Organization* 11.1 (2004): 59–79.

⁵⁴⁷ Hubbard, Phil, Roger Matthews, and Jane Scoular. “Regulating Sex Work in the EU: Prostitute Women and the New Spaces of Exclusion.” *Gender, Place & Culture* 15.2 (2008): 137–152.

1,000 feet of other “adult entertainment” businesses as well as how Seal Beach proposed an ordinance to limit massage parlor business hours between 7 AM and 10 PM. Furthering the process of legitimation through legal-professional rationalization, coverage also discussed Newport Beach’s relatively low standard for credentialing compared to other cities. While in Seal Beach massage technicians were required to have 1,000 hours of training before working, for instance, by comparison Newport Beach was noted for only requiring 100 hours of massage school training.

Law enforcement officials lastly pushed for greater discretion in how they wanted to address the prostitution problem. Reacting to Judge Anderson’s ruling about repeat probation, both the Anaheim City Attorney, Mark A. Logan, and the Anaheim Police Department said that they were “concerned Anderson’s interpretation of the code [would] jeopardize their ability to cope with prostitution on Harbor Boulevard.” “It doesn’t just affect the women we now have on probation, but all future second-time arrests,” Sgt. James Brantley said. “Our probation terms are very effective tools in controlling street hookers. If the tools are taken away from us, we may have to start from scratch.” Declaring that the city of Anaheim would “appeal Anderson’s ruling to the appellate division of the Superior Court and to the State Supreme Court if necessary.” Logan insisted that if those appeals were not successful, he would “seek to have Orange County legislators change the wording of the penal code statute.”

So with city officials and police up in arms about Anderson’s ruling, it is important to examine what the probation limitation would have curbed in terms of police power. As stated in the article on the decision, sex workers under probation were expected to follow nine rules developed by the City Attorney’s office where the city imposed the following probation conditions:

- No hitchhiking, accepting rides or contacting male motorists on any public street in Orange County
- True names must be used.
- Valid driver’s license or identification card must be carried at all times.
- Proper identification must be shown to police officer upon request.
- While walking, a woman on probation for prostitution may not be in contact with males in vehicles in Anaheim.
- Women on probation may not use a motel room or apartment without being registered under their true names.
- They must cooperate with police in any investigation.
- They may not be employed as a model, escort, or in a massage parlor, sauna operation or outcall service.
- They may not be employed in any business used to conceal or act as a front for prostitution activities.

Therefore, the nine rules imposed by the city on repeat offenders charged with prostitution gave the police broad authority to regulate the movement of sex workers in public space, managing their interactions with men and requiring them to regularly carry identification and use their real names in all manner of transactions in order to supply authorities with a traceable record of their comings and goings.⁵⁴⁸ These measures were so “effective” that prosecutors in other cities, including Newport Beach, were encouraged to look at Anaheim as a model to impose the same rules in their jurisdictions—that is, until Judge Anderson put that police power under threat.

⁵⁴⁸ Razack, Sherene. “Race, Space, and Prostitution: The Making of the Bourgeois Subject.” *Can. J. Women & L.* 10 (1998): 338.

So taken altogether, this section's discussion closes by turning to the significance of these events in the context of the broader chapter. As Newport Beach emerged as the massage parlor capital of the county and blame shifted to both the orientalized massage workers and the liberal-cast white women in power thought to be too lenient on them, the move to establish coordinated regulations across Orange County's cities drew on masculinist law-and-order discourse to offer a solution in the form of protecting and bolstering police authority to use their own discretion in such matters. In a period characterized by not only racial and class dislocation, the post-1965 feminist climate consequently brought a slew of anxieties to the conservative bastion of Orange County. In an area that became constitutive with the Cold War nuclear family ideal, the arrival of these figures of sexual vice alongside the specter of women's upward mobility in the workplace coming at the expense of masculine authority therefore framed the problem of dislocation in hypervisible gender and sexual terms.

As such, the regulations imposed by Anaheim and other localities can be understood in part from the perspective of what Yvonne Svanström (15) has identified more generally as the practice of "policing public women" where she uses the term "public woman" as "an overall concept when discussing regulated women or women who were referred to as prostitutes, whores, loose and lecherous...[in order to] leav[e] the concept as fluid as the practice of categorising women in public" itself.

Public woman, as I use the term, covers both the public, spatial nature of these women, but also opens for potential sexual connotations as well. Using a concept like public woman rather than, for instance, prostitute means to leave open the possibility of change over time in the connotations of the term, and as to which women that were perceived as sexually public. The way the women referred to themselves, and the way the authorities looked upon them, did not always correspond.⁵⁴⁹

Citing art historian Griselda Pollock (1995), Svanström (14–15) elaborates in her own historical research on the regulation of the sexual economy and its workers in Stockholm in the 19th century that "certain spaces in modernity were inscribed as masculine or feminine, as the possible relations between men and women in these spaces were prescribed." Drawing on Carole Pateman's classic argument that this distinction is constitutive with the liberal bourgeois social contract itself and Habermas' writing on property relations and authority in the "private" sphere, Svanström argues that consequently, from this view, "bourgeois space was not only ideologically structured according to gender in 'private and public,' but that public spaces were where gender was structured by class—in spaces of sexual commodity exchange, where working women meant prostitutes."^{550,551} In this way, Svanström theorizes (while acknowledging the limitations of treating these spheres as absolute or distinct) that public space can therefore be understood as the spatialized domain where sexuality came to be the primary dimension through which those categorized as women were perceived as moral or immoral (and consequently valuable or cheap) within the parameters of the patriarchal family form.

Finding in the case of 19th century Stockholm that formal regulations against prostitution emerged shortly after the abolition of trade regulations in response to the rise of economic liberalism as well as the extension of greater civil rights to women in 1858 when unmarried women could apply to be their own guardians without a man's legal supervision, Svanström (16–17) writes:

⁵⁴⁹ Svanström, Yvonne. *Policing Public Women: The Regulation of Prostitution in Stockholm 1812–1880*. Atlas, 2000.

⁵⁵⁰ Pateman, Carole. *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*. Stanford University Press, 1989.

⁵⁵¹ Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. MIT press, 1991.

It seems as if increased civil rights for women provoked a need to control women's sexuality. Some women's presence in public space was regulated and public women could, on certain conditions, be present but not enhance their presence. However, the regulation affected all women's access to public space. The historian of literature Jann Matlock has argued that the regulation of prostitution in France was based on a system of closed spaces, between which the regulated women should circulate: the brothel, the prison, and the hospital. Yet the creation of the regulations themselves actually promoted the visibility of these women in public space by regulating their movements, stating which streets to walk, [and] what kind of clothes to wear.

Citing historians Donna J. Guy (1992) and Jill Harsin (1991), Svanström also notes how this regulation of everyday presence in public space was not limited to the context of Stockholm. Guy showed how the Argentinian government violated basic civil rights for public women when it began to formally regulate prostitution by selectively curtailing former guarantees like the right to earn a living, own property, practice religion, and marry and forcing suspected women working in the sexual economy to "live in special lodgings" and "submit to forced medical examinations."⁵⁵² Meanwhile, Harsin demonstrated how in the context of France the "legal foundation of the regulation of prostitution rested on a wide interpretation of the powers of police."⁵⁵³ As in Orange County and many other areas with local sex work economies, prostitution in France was treated somewhat arbitrarily by police because, though technically illegal according to both local vagrancy and extramarital sex laws, it was tolerated as an ineradicable and perhaps necessary nuisance. Regardless, police relied on this discretionary power to clamp down on disorderly areas when deemed necessary.

Consequently, reflecting on these related histories of the intersection between structural changes to gender and sexual relations occurring in the public sphere, discretionary policing, and the regulation of public women in space, this section concludes by arguing that Newport Beach's massage parlor saga can therefore be interpreted through this framework of gendered and sexual backlash due to the misattribution of blame of dislocated persons invested in the cisheteronormative patriarchal family that it was really "invading" orientalized sex workers and their pimps and excessively liberated white feminists who were at fault for the changes that gripped Orange County in the 1970s and 80s.

SUBURBAN CITIZENS' "WAR ON PROSTITUTION" AND THE POSSESSIVE SEXUAL INVESTMENT IN WHITENESS

With prostitutes and their customers constantly invading his neighborhood, Lynn Baldock figured he had only two choices: move or fight. "We've lived in the same house for 14 years and didn't want to move," Baldock said. "*It was time to declare war*" [emphasis added].

Baldock, 38, not only formed a civilian watchdog force this year to drive prostitutes from the 99-home Quatro Street neighborhood, but city officials credit him with helping police create a network of similar groups along Harbor Boulevard to combat the illicit sex business. On Tuesday, the Garden Grove City Council will present certificates of appreciation to Baldock, his wife, Toni, 35, and several other residents for their anti-prostitution efforts and help in establishing the Harbor Watch Network.

⁵⁵² Guy, Donna J. *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina*. University of Nebraska Press, 1991.

⁵⁵³ Harsin, Jill. *Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Paris*. Princeton University Press, 2019.

“Lynn has done a great deal to get this program going. I don’t think we could have done it without him,” said police Lt. Scott Jordan. Jordan was the department’s liaison who worked with Baldock to organize his neighbors and set up the network. Jordan also recommended Baldock for the city’s Community Spotlight award. Formed May 15, the Harbor Watch Network comprises about 230 people from eight Neighborhood Watch groups and merchant associations, who live and work along Garden Grove’s two-mile strip of Harbor Boulevard between Chapman and Westminster avenues. So far this year, police have made 350 arrests—about twice as many as during the same period last year—for prostitution or lewd conduct stemming from incidents on Harbor Boulevard, Jordan said. The increase in arrests, Jordan said, can be traced in part to the Harbor Watch Network’s involvement in reporting suspected prostitution activity.⁵⁵⁴

– “Citizens ‘Declare War’ on Prostitution,”
The Orange County Register, September 4, 1988

In September of 1988 *The Orange County Register* published the article reproduced above reporting that the citizens of Garden Garden had “declared war” on local prostitution along the Harbor Boulevard commercial corridor. Using the now-familiar lens of “invasion,” the article profiled an area man named Lynn Baldock, 38, who was set to receive a certificate of appreciation from the Garden Grove Police Department for his work in forming the Harbor Watch Network, a consolidated organization comprised of eight pre-existing Neighborhood Watch groups and merchant associations that formed the very same day the May 15th “Outside the Kingdom” report featuring Annie and Edna was published by *The Register*.

Though this was not the first effort mounted by community residents against local “prostitution” along Harbor Boulevard, the moment is notable for its temporal emergence alongside the report on Disneyland’s area decline in the sense that it demonstrates how members of the propertied class continued to exert their claim to the land as suburban citizen-subjects through the defense of property values from the specter of racialized, sexual vice. While the Harbor Watch Network was formed in May of 1988, however, the “war on prostitution”—at least in this wave of moral panic—was actually declared three years prior in the aftermath of the Fiesta Motel and Newport Beach massage parlor stories that reinvigorated local fears of “circuit prostitutes” invading Orange County and dulling its sheen. The same “99-home Quatro Street neighborhood” mentioned in the 1988 article appeared earlier in an opinion piece that was written in May of 1985 just a few months after Kung’s arrest, which commented on the “stories about private citizens [who] conduct[ed] what they call[ed] a ‘Whore Patrol’ to try to discourage prostitution that ha[d] begun to impinge on their neighborhoods.”⁵⁵⁵ Though acknowledging that they had “mixed feelings” about these reports, the Clearinghouse op-ed writer nevertheless sympathized:

Some of the concerns that have activated these citizens seem valid enough: who wants to have people copulating or shouting vulgarisms on or near your front lawn?...Given a certain ambiguity about just who “owns” the streets, that seems fair enough. When prostitution invades your neighborhood or yard

⁵⁵⁴ Boyer, William H. “Citizens ‘Declare War’ on Prostitution.” *The Orange County Register*, September 4, 1988, p. B1.

⁵⁵⁵ “Recognizing Reality.” *The Orange County Register*, May 9, 1985, p. A26.

in an offensive manner, a citizen ought to be able to put up a defense. Few would dispute that it is undesirable for rampant prostitution to invade a residential neighborhood.

One year later another opinion piece published in *The Register* in July of 1986 titled “The War on Prostitution” followed up by reporting that the issue had become serious enough that the mayors of Anaheim, Santa Ana and Garden Grove planned to meet with Orange County Sheriff Brad Gates and District Attorney Cecil Hicks “to discuss the logistics of a proposed crackdown on prostitution in the county’s urban core.”⁵⁵⁶

As Lorraine Mazerolle and Janet Ransley have written about how more contemporary policing has operated in practice:

A central part of contemporary police work is forging partnerships with individuals, groups and organizations in an effort to regulate, control and prevent crime. Police team up with property owners, building inspectors, environmental regulators, education department representatives, community groups, insurance companies, business leaders, local government personnel and anyone else who is motivated and able to work with police...Third party policing exists in many forms. In about 30 percent of all third party policing initiatives, the police use coercion or persuasion of third parties to solve ongoing problems within the context of their problem-oriented policing program. In some police agencies third party policing exists as an especially designed, stand-alone-policing program using a one-size-fits-all third party solution...In some jurisdictions, forms of third party policing are now being mandated by governments, such as the crime and disorder reduction partnerships...In most police agencies, however, the police implement third party policing in very episodic ways either as part of a crackdown or during routine patrol work.⁵⁵⁷

In “third party policing,” as Mazerolle and Ransley finally define, “laws and legal mechanisms are used to co-opt willing or unwilling non-offending third parties, with the object of facilitating or coercing them into helping to control the behavior of offending ultimate targets.” So in this case of the “war on prostitution,” the residents of Quatro Street and others like Lynn Baldock and his wife Toni represent the variety of third party policing in which suburban citizenship was constituted within a deeper historical context in which lawmakers passed materially motivated anti-prostitution laws to pit the propertied class against those deemed dangerous to their home and business values. Third party policing has therefore fundamentally been part of how city ordinances targeting private life managed to penetrate into domains typically inaccessible to police officers, especially within the home, where community insiders could more easily “see” the everyday affairs of local residents as police proxies compared to law enforcement officers.⁵⁵⁸

So by 1988, these abiding possessive practices remained largely consistent with such rumblings of anti-prostitution sentiment and policing, with the only difference being that, if Baldock’s opening story suggests anything, less formalized neighborhood watch groups appeared to be going through their own process of centralization and professional legitimation as a recognized extension of formal policing. By coordinating across all groups and establishing a more formal relationship with city police, the opening article demonstrates how “third party policing is the manifestation of society trends towards the regulatory state,” where though

⁵⁵⁶ “The War on Prostitution.” *The Orange County Register*. July 10, 1985. p. B10.

⁵⁵⁷ Mazerolle, Lorraine, and Janet Ransley. *Third Party Policing*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. p. 45–46.

⁵⁵⁸ Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State*. Yale University Press, 2008.

episodically used mostly during police crackdowns, still increasingly took on policing's regulatory functions over time.

Informed and structured by the Cold War ideal of the nuclear sitcom family, Southern California postwar suburbs like Garden Grove and tony Newport Beach were consequently authorized in their claims to be rightfully defending their property by a moral superstructure that sanctified the "traditional" cisheteropatriarchal nuclear family form. From as early as the period of Spanish colonization, Junípero Serra and the Spanish military relied on Catholic notions of God as the Almighty Father to annihilate heathenized forms of indigenous kinship in favor of a patriarchal family model of social interrelationship that also, as a result, allowed for colonial expansion and territorialization. This patriarchal family form persisted—albeit somewhat varyingly with its supersession by Anglo-Christian idealizations of the family—to underwrite a generalized relationship between the subject and the territorialized state narrated through the metaphor of the national family, where national and global hierarchies of authority became analogous to familial structures of paternal leadership of the home. That is, relations in which obedient children placed under dutiful wives subsumed under the authority of protector-provider father-husbands came to find organizational analogs in, for example childlike "underdeveloped" countries said to be in need of guidance from paternalistic "developed" states.

As such, the argument here recognizes that the suburbs are inherently gendered and sexual settler formations that reflect material arrangements between people in space—traversing from the suburb into the city as interrelated forms. As Kim V.L. England (24) has argued, the overall layout of cities generally reflect "a patriarchal capitalist society's expectations of what types of activities take place where, when, and by whom" where the suburb represents an intensification of the separation of the public from the private sphere.⁵⁵⁹ Though this dichotomization of the so-called public and private spheres has well-known critiques, Svanström forwards that any examination of capitalism conceptually necessitates some distinction between the two because, drawing on Pateman's discussion of the "bourgeois family ideal," the transformation of the agrarian family form into the bourgeois ideal corresponded to the grand-historical eclipse of feudalism by capitalism as the primary mode of production. Prior to the rise of industrial capitalism in Europe, family historians have documented that women and children played different roles that largely reflected agrarian priorities which placed family members together as common participants in a more localized economy. But by the end of the nineteenth century widespread expropriation and urbanization created a fractured landscape characterized by "areas of specialized reproduction" in the form of residential communities and areas of "specialized production" that concentrated in central cities, thereby shifting the spatialization of material relations from a more localized arrangement to one that began to increasingly bifurcate private and public space into distinct and separate gendered spheres.

As suburbanization increasingly functioned to produce these two spheres as culturally distinct, England documents how federal housing policy directly imposed restrictions to preserve the suburbs as strongholds of the nuclear family ideal. Discussing how strictly segregated "gender roles" were a fundamental part of the original design of the 1930s "Greenbelt Towns" program (not to mention race and class concerns), England describes how the program preferred normative families with a commuting husband and homemaker wife, even going so far as to stating in lease agreements that wives with employed husbands were not permitted to have paid jobs or use the home for any "trade, profession, or industry, without the written consent of the Government."⁵⁶⁰ By defining the acceptable family in terms of this limited breadwinner-homemaker ideal, such restrictions worked

⁵⁵⁹ England, Kim VL. "Changing Suburbs, Changing Women: Geographic Perspectives on Suburban Women and Suburbanization." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* (1993): 24–43.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 138.

to foreclose the formation of alternative households not headed by a breadwinner husband, including households for older women or single mothers who might have preferred to share housing with others like them but were not legally or normatively permitted to do so in suburban settings. Illustrating how zoning and residential leasing laws helped to construct these social distinctions between masculine, public space and feminine, private space, the Greenbelt example therefore shows how processes of spatialization turned the suburbs into bastions for reifying the bourgeois family ideal relative to other spatial forms.

Looking to this “war on prostitution” as a “defense” of suburban property, this discussion therefore demonstrates how, in addition to Chapter 2’s focus on the possessive investment in whiteness that largely concentrated on how white backlash racialized the problem of refugee arrivals in relation to their orientalist apprehensions towards global and local Asian economic ascendancy during the second era of globalization, the possessive investment is also a sexual possessive investment. As concern over economic redistribution during the era of welfare retrenchment converged with “family values” discourse, these struggles became inextricably linked and ultimately expressed through racialized language towards sexual invasion and vice. Broadly, then, the Orange County suburbs can be understood as a “domesticated warscape,” in which techniques of social control and social cultivation became embedded in both “public” space and “private” space to produce a comprehensive gendered–sexual landscape.⁵⁶¹

CONCLUSION

As stated earlier, the question broadly posed by *Bad Refugees* concerns how the United States managed to express its sovereignty during the period of intensive economic restructuring that occurred following the collapse of the Keynesian welfare state at the end of the American War Century in relation to its “first televised war”—and the refugees it produced—as it found itself confronted with “the end of the myth.”⁵⁶²

Focusing on the period during which the Keynesian welfare state became hollowed out to make way for neoliberal reforms that converged with the state’s turn to prison building to solve its legitimacy crisis following the pivotal decade, this dissertation analyzed important critical junctures within county history concerning refugee arrivals that linked local contestations over taxation, business permitting and zoning, and neighborhood defense to the broader racial class struggle that took place in California and later throughout the nation regarding the declining legitimacy of the Keynesian welfare state. Generally placing these cases within the period of liberal multiculturalism’s transition to neoliberal multiculturalism, the argument in Chapters 2 and 3 examined how refugee subjectification occurred as the state turned to selective incorporation to manage minoritized difference in the post–civil rights era, where “bad refugees” emerged as racial surplus during the period of welfare state retrenchment. Imagined through the figure of the refugee “gang member” and “prostitute,” refugee deviance worked to authorize and expedite the disposal and regulation of poorly assimilated racial others as the state increasingly turned to its carceral capacities for legitimation following the 1970s. Meanwhile, discursively formed through narratives of idealized good refugee business owners willing to cooperate with police to take down gang members, the analysis demonstrated how the good refugee emerged as a properly comported multicultural subject able to attest to the US state’s beneficence, legitimacy, and

⁵⁶¹ For a general discussion of intersectional feminist geographies see: Mollett, Sharlene, and Caroline Faria. “The Spatialities of Intersectional Thinking: Fashioning Feminist Geographic Futures.” *Gender, Place & Culture* 25.4 (2018): 565–577; Rose, Gillian. “Geography and Gender, Cartographies and Corporealities.” *Progress in Human Geography* 19.4 (1995): 544–548.

⁵⁶² Grandin, Greg. *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border wall in the mind of America*. Metropolitan Books, 2019.

civilizational superiority by assimilating into a juridical personhood cooperative with the law and its enforcement officials. Broadly showing how reactionary white suburbanites in Orange County responded to their dislocations in status and material security as Southeast Asian refugees arrived in large numbers to resettle in the north's declining neighborhoods, the analysis shows how possessive suburbanites misattributed these dislocations through frames of orientalized invasion and takeover that attempted to make sense of changes wrought by transnational globalization through figures of Asian refugee and immigrant deviance like "Mr. Tai," Julie Quang, the Fiesta Motel's Fan Chen Kung, and the massage parlor workers of Newport Beach.

Then, going beyond this period of 1975–1988, the temporal scope of the analysis across all chapters embedded this particular period of white backlash, refugee resettlement, and state response within a settler genealogy that undermines the absolute assertion forwarded by the United States that it possesses a rational and moral claim to the land it has bordered and territorialized and from which it declares a legal basis to determine the distribution of resources. Comparing how the first era of globalization produced the modern liberal and racial welfare state that saw the state assert its sovereignty through *explicitly racial* immigration control measures like the Page Act, warfare against anticolonial resistance fighters in the Philippines, and the development of a police surveillance state in the colonial territories that got imported back to the domestic context, the discussion shows how the state turned to expanding its carceral capacity and its technological apparatus for comprehensive, global surveillance during the second era of globalization in specific ways related to the Vietnam War and refugee resettlement that accommodated the piecemeal liberal multicultural inclusion of select refugees and increasingly automated and rationalized processes of disposability for bad refugees and enemy others.

Finally couched in Chapter 1's critical analysis of American mythology that illustrated how the suburbs were authorized by the "American Dream" and "American Manifest Destiny," this dissertation also argued that suburbanization, as the "spatial fix" to the state's overaccumulation crisis during the Great Depression that underwrote the expansion of US global influence after WWII, must therefore be understood as a form of ongoing territorialization that—as formed through the imaginations of urban planners and machinations between real estate developers, the US government, and American industry—continued the process of settler colonization that began centuries before with Spanish contact. By masking the nation's possessive investments through rationalizing settlement via suburbanization and legitimating suburban citizens' claim to the land via legal-bureaucratic validation, American suburban innocence—just like that of the IBM bureaucrat or the peculiar Alden Pyle—managed to maintain its insistent veneer of irreproachability by distinguishing the conduct of the United States as verifiably different from that of the Old World colonial powers. Through the use of Cold War methods of techno-mystification, be it the phantasmagoria of Disneyland's now-outmoded mechanical attractions or the whirring sound of an IBM computer compiling data for some purpose, somewhere—US-led Western hegemony managed to manufacture a series of images to recast itself as lead in the imperial march through linear-progressive time that saw a rather superficial rescripting, all things considered, following the post-WWII period of global decolonization.

Taken altogether, this concluding discussion will consequently examine how to make sense of these arguments in the context of the two questions initially posed by Gordon's chorus of ghosts: Who claims to own this land? And what is to be done? Using the first section to contextualize the issue within Henri Lefebvre's framework of "The Right to the City," I consider how extensions of the concept by critical scholars of the sub(urban) form can help conceptualize a contemporary politics of struggle over the suburb as a space of significant contestation. Returning to the first question uttered by the chorus, however, I complicate this

discussion of viewing struggles as limited to political participation, rights, or petitions for formal protection, drawing on Beaudrillard's caution in Chapter 1 that all capitalism wants of us is to fight it along rational and moral terms. Then elaborating on what conceptualizing suburban territorialization as a domestic warscape engenders in response to this complication, I use the second section to contemplate alternative ways to not only think of war, as the chapters of this dissertation have done, but also resistance to it to engage the chorus' final challenge regarding what should be done in response to these hauntings. Bringing Ruth Wilson Gilmore's framework of "abolition geographies" (2017) into conversation with feminist critical refugee scholarship on the territorialized state, I center my closing discussion of what it might mean to critically resist the state at this juncture from the perspective of fighting it within the domesticated warscape.

WHO CLAIMS TO OWN THIS LAND? RETHINKING THE "RIGHT" TO THE SUBURB

"The Right to the City" was first conceptualized and coined by Henri Lefebvre as a spatial and political analysis of the urban social form as it relates to both capitalist industrialization and the urban working class.⁵⁶³ Theorizing urbanization as a process related to capitalist industrialization due to the spatial trajectory taken in Europe that saw the expropriation of the land from the peasant class and consequent enclosure of workers in city centers, Lefebvre's (67–68) thesis forwards that there is a dialectical tension within the city that pits the "urban reality" of the city as a "refuge of use value" for the working class against the destructive forces of industrialization that subordinate the use value of the city to its exchange value. In the "urban system," he elaborates, "action is exercised over specific conflicts: between use value and exchange value, between mobilization of wealth (in silver and in money) and unproductive investment in the city, between accumulation of capital and its squandering on festivities, between the extension of the dominated territory and the demands of a strict organization of this territory around the dominating city." Dialectically, the process more-or-less operates on these opposing yet interrelated tensions:

We have before us a double process or more precisely, a process with two aspects: industrialization and urbanization, growth and development, economic production and social life. The two 'aspects' of this inseparable process have a unity, and yet it is a conflictual process. Historically there is a violent clash between urban reality and industrial reality.⁵⁶⁴

The city as such can therefore be conceptualized as "a projection of the global on the ground," a series of signifiatory mediations, though not a closed system of signs.⁵⁶⁵ Published right after the 1968 Parisian student uprisings that protested traditional French institutions, American imperialism, capitalism, and consumerism, Lefebvre saw these global processes and relations as inscribed onto and through the city itself, "transcribed by ideologies, [and] interpreted by tendencies and political strategies" that come to constitute the city through signs that bound it and give it meaning. As a result, the city as an urban text that can be analyzed to uncover global processes and relations as they shape the dialectic between use value to exchange value must be approached through an examination of the "relations of inclusion–exclusion, of belonging or non–belonging," Lefebvre asserts, so as to understand how use value is being subordinated to exchange value in practice.⁵⁶⁶ This

⁵⁶³ Lefebvre, Henri. *Le Droit à la Ville*. Paris: Anthropos (1968); Lefebvre, Henri. *Writings on Cities*. Edited and translated by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing (1996).

⁵⁶⁴ Lefebvre. 1996. 70.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid, 107.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid, 113.

ideological arrangement of the city around capitalist tensions that manifest as a series of signs therefore compels the residents of the city who want to preserve and expand its use value to engage in struggles over “The Right to the City,” described by LeFebvre as “a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit” where the “right to the oeuvre, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied.”⁵⁶⁷

Since its initial conceptualization this idea of the Right to the City as a distinct form of citizenship—defined not in relation to the nation state but to the space of the city as it relates to capitalist domination and different ways of engaging with collective space that go beyond property ownership—has influenced additional intellectual elaborations and social movements that have taken up its call to action. Don Mitchell, Mark Purcell, Clara Irazábal, and Peter Marcuse have all offered important elaborations on LeFebvre’s use of the framework of rights as it relates to assumptions of citizenship.⁵⁶⁸ While LeFebvre’s conceptualization of rights largely focuses on the inhabitants themselves and the political actions they might pursue from trying to maximize use value despite attempts to subordinate it to exchange value, Mitchell, for example, considers the definition of “public space” in relation to the management of homelessness, arguing that designs to privatize the urban commons and police the use of public space are also attacks on The Right to the City; Irazabal, meanwhile, has attempted to explore how the urban reality of non-citizens influences their strategies and constraints when organizing through a Right to the City framework, and Purcell questions the usefulness of national orders of citizenship more generally as the basis for rights within a global political economy, reflecting Saskia Sassen’s idea of the weakening of the national as a spatial unit in light of globalization transforming cities and regions to places of transnational exchange and spatial interrelation. As Genevieve Carpio, Clara Irazábal, and Laura Pulido (2011) have noted, Lefebvre’s concept of The Right to the City therefore must now account for these spatial units that have become reconfigured due to globalization, particularly the suburbs. Arguing that dramatic demographic shifts in the United States have resulted in the movement of immigrants into “non-traditional” areas, they point to Orange County as an example of an emerging region where struggles between workers and industrial capitalists are increasingly being fought.⁵⁶⁹

Taking these perspectives into account, I want to now elaborate on these important discussions about the right to the suburb. As Carpio, Irazábal, and Pulido argued, it is important to understand these struggles as occurring in spatial formations outside of conventional metropolitan centers since many suburbs have followed Orange County’s process of post-industrial suburban transformation to become much more interconnected and multiculturally diverse compared to the homogeneity of the 1950s sitcom suburbs. In addition to this observation about the influence of globalization on changing suburban politics, however, I also want to return to Henri LeFebvre to examine where the suburb fits in his conceptualization of the countryside in order to broaden this temporal scope of the globalized suburb from that which only refers to the second era to one that encompasses both the first and second in order to both situate the suburban politics of Orange County within the *longue durée* of racial capitalism and highlight the settler-territorial stakes of these struggles. To do so, I first discuss his theorization of the countryside prior to and during prewar urbanization and then elaborate on his theorization of the political and spatial nature of the postwar suburb in order to bring the period of mid-century growth in

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid, 173–174.

⁵⁶⁸ Mitchell, Don. *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. Guilford Press, 2003.; Purcell, Mark. "Citizenship and the Right to the Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World Order." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27.3 (2003): 564–590.; Irazábal, Clara. *Ordinary Places/Extraordinary Events: Citizenship, Democracy and Public Space in Latin America*. Routledge, 2008.; Marcuse, Peter. "From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City." *City* 13.2–3 (2009): 185–197.

⁵⁶⁹ Carpio, Genevieve, Clara Irazábal, and Laura Pulido. "Right to the Suburb? Rethinking Lefebvre and Immigrant Activism." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 33.2 (2011): 185–208.

Orange County into theoretical conversation with its longer history of “primitive accumulation” from the period of settler contact onwards.

So beginning with his conceptualization of the countryside during the prewar period, LeFebvre’s discussion begins with a definition of “Nature” as that which remains outside the influences of domination and appropriation, “it ‘is’ what flees” and can only be “reached by the imaginary.”⁵⁷⁰ In turn the countryside is defined as “the place of production and oeuvres” where “[a]gricultural production gives birth to products” and “the landscape is an oeuvre [that]...emerges from the earth slowly moulded, linked originally to the groups which occupy it by a reciprocal consecration, later to be desecrated by the city and urban life (which capture this consecration, condense it, then dissolve it over through the ages by absorbing it into rationality).” Where this “ancient consecration of the ground” comes from, he does not speculate any further, but instead emphasizes that this consecration as a precursor to desecration is important for the conduct of capitalist accumulation. “What is important is the complex movement by which the political city uses this sacred–damned character of the ground, so that the economic (commercial) city can desecrate it.” Drawing on Marx’s brief discussion of primitive accumulation in his explanation of the dialectical succession of this consecrated arrangement to the land by feudalism and then capitalism in the European context, this theorization of the countryside therefore links it to the political economy within which capitalism and its forms of rationality could emerge.⁵⁷¹

Now, transitioning to his theorization of suburbs, as LeFebvre writes, after WWII the character of the city as analyzed through Paris changed in response to “various emergencies and constraints related to the demographic and industrial growth and the influx of people from the provinces of Paris, causing a housing crisis that became politically destabilizing and expanding the city inordinately.

“Emergencies” overwhelm the initiatives of capitalism and “private” enterprise, especially as the latter is not interested in construction, considered to be insufficiently profitable. The State can no longer be content with simply regulating land plots and the construction of informal suburban housing or fighting (badly) property speculation. By means of intermediary organisms it takes charge of housing construction and an era of “nouveaux ensembles” (large–scale housing estates) and “new towns” begins.⁵⁷²

As a result, this extension of the city through the development of new towns reflects the analogous process that took place in South Orange County as illustrated through Chapter 1’s discussion of Irvine. Following a pattern of capital flight from the increasingly unstable urban core, LeFebvre echoes that this movement “carr[ied] along the bourgeoisie and the well–off who...established residential suburbs” while city centers in turn converted former public space into privatized space for the concentration of the city’s productive and consumerist capacities. But as he emphasizes, though these postwar suburbs formed under these pressurized circumstances, the process was “none the less oriented by a strategy.” “[W]hat is the essence of the city for power?” he (128) poses, answering:

It ferments, full of suspect activities, of delinquency, a hotbed of agitation. State powers and powerful economic interests can think only of one strategy: to devalorize, degrade, destroy, urban society. In the course of these processes, there are determinisms, there are strategies, spontaneities and concened acts.

⁵⁷⁰ Lefebvre. 1996. 118.

⁵⁷¹ Marx, Karl. *Capital: Volume I*. Penguin UK (2004): 873–876.

⁵⁷² Lefebvre. 1996. 78.

Subjective and ideological contradictions, ‘humanist’ worries impede but do not halt these strategic actions...As a result, the crisis of the city is linked not to rationality as such, definable from a philosophical tradition, [but]...relates to explicit forms of rationality: state, bureaucratic, economic, or rather, “economistic,” economism being an ideology endowed with an apparatus.

So furthermore, according to LeFebvre, suburbanization as understood as a strategy entails the capitalist industrialists’ desire and need to destroy—or at least regularly discipline and weaken—urban consciousness. Suburbanization as a process referred to the spatial reorganization of classes from within the urban core to across the city center to peripheral areas. As a form of non-urban, urban planning, the strategy used the built environment to decenter the city within the consciousness of the dispersed classes to reduce its capacity to become “a hotbed of agitation,” where, “[i]solated from the city, the proletariat [lost] its sense of the oeuvre” and “[i]solated from the places of production...the proletariat [allowed] its creative capacity to diminish in its conscience”—in other words, urban consciousness increasingly vanished as the proletarian connection to the landscape as oeuvre became severed. “Effectively,” he writes, “these new suburban dwellers are still urban even though they are unaware of it and believe themselves to be close to nature, to the sun and to greenery.”⁵⁷³

“Without necessarily owning it all,” Lefebvre continues, the state and capital possess the authority to exert spatial policy to reflect this compulsion to stamp out the solidarities and insurrectionary tendencies of the city center. Comparing the mid-century spatial organization of labor to that of Classical Athens, he poses a series of comparisons. Though “there are human groups which can no longer bear the name of slaves, serfs, vassals or even proletarians,” he says, subjugated persons under capitalism still “provide a multiplicity of services for the Masters of this State solidly established on the city.”⁵⁷⁴ The professional managerial class is given “possession of secondary domains” like “the enjoyment of nature, the sea, the mountains, ancient cities (available through trips, hotels, etc.) but nonetheless circumscribed within “science parks” and “university campuses” that separate them as a class from other differently subjugated groups. “The mass, under pressure from many constraints, spontaneously houses itself in satellite cities, planned suburbs, and other more or less residential ghettos. There is for it only carefully measured space. Time eludes it.” “One could call it a de-urbanizing and de-urbanized urbanization to emphasize the paradox,” he (78) says, a “strategy” of sometimes planned, sometimes unplanned, sometimes contradictory actions, that nevertheless converge through rationalization to create ever-more pliable capitalist subjectivities by reconfiguring proletariat consciousness to misunderstand its relationship to the city and become more convinced of its individual fate *against* rather than *with* others as a matter of spatial design. Drawn to the state and capital’s utopian visions of an orderly future, this individualism is sustained by the ideology of suburban utopia itself, which “attaches itself to numerous more or less distant and unknown or misunderstood realities, but no longer to real and daily life,” where the suburban subject’s “gaze turns away, leav[ing] the horizon, los[ing] itself in the clouds,” succumbing to the diversionary power of ideology even if optimism eventually became supplanted by rationality itself.⁵⁷⁵

Consequently turning now to Orange County’s history of initial settler contact and tracing it to the mid-century period of suburbanization, how can LeFebvre’s account of the countryside and the development of the postwar suburbs be used to understand this thread as a linked process? LeFebvre’s account of “Nature” in relation to the original consecration of the landscape roughly corresponds to Marx’s discussion on primitive accumulation that, while recognizing the direct corporeal violence and “brute force” required to create

⁵⁷³ Ibid, 77–78.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid, 161.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid, 163.

conditions for the eventual proliferation of capitalism in urban centers, still centered the European proletariat as “the revolutionary subject of history,” as Cedric Robinson critiqued.⁵⁷⁶ Drawing on Robinson’s engagement with Marx’s writing on primitive accumulation in *Black Marxism*, this discussion therefore cites how Robinson rearranged Marx’s materialist account of history to trace how racism “was not simply a convention for ordering the relations of European to non-European peoples” but rather had its “genesis in the ‘internal’ relations of European peoples” that “would reverberate within and without, transferring its toll from the past to the present.”⁵⁷⁷

Asserting that a theory of racial capitalism necessitates this recognition of racism’s antecedent, constitutive, and ongoing relationship to capitalism, Robinson (10–13) illustrated how colonization within Europe and the “social basis of European civilization” relied on racial distinctions from the very period of its uncertain formation. “The ‘Europe’ of the ninth century for which the Carolingian family and its minions claimed paternity was rather limited geopolitically and had a rather short and unhappy existence,” he wrote; and for “several centuries following the deaths of Charlemagne and his immediate heirs...both the Emperor and Europe were more the stuff of popular legend and clerical rhetoric than manifestations of social reality.” As such, he charts, “[t]he idea of Europe, no longer a realistic project, was transferred from one of a terrestrial social order to that of a spiritual kingdom: Christendom,” that provided many of the moral and civilization distinctions used to draw boundaries between imperial insiders and “barbaric” outsiders, both within “Europe” and later between Europe and colonized peoples.

Taken altogether, rather than viewing Orange County’s history of initial settler contact as processually divorced from the process of modern capitalist accumulation and rationalization, the historical continuities drawn by Robinson within Europe to show how primitive accumulation and colonization continued to inform the proliferation of a racial capitalist order demonstrates how “the countryside” and “the suburb” are interrelated and superimposed spatial forms that reveal the ongoing settler investment in claiming the land.⁵⁷⁸ So when considering the political vision for asserting a “Right to the Suburb,” as Carpio, Irazábal, and Pulido have suggested, I offer that it is critical to conceptualize the suburb as not just a postwar spatial form to which capital migrated from city centers as the basis for contesting material forms of redistribution, but also a utopian mask projected onto a colonized landscape that continues to obfuscate the brute force required to maintain it as territorialized space for the state and capital to desecrate.

So returning now to Chapter 1’s argument that claims to the land were based on primitive accumulation and expropriation underwritten by Catholicism’s moral authority and capital’s reliance on the state’s legal–bureaucratic authority to determine the right to private property, what does the challenge uttered by Gordon’s chorus of ghosts necessitate in terms of rethinking a Right to the Suburb? Recalling Baudrillard’s (12) caution about the moral superstructure of capitalism that only “asks of us..to receive it as rational or to combat it in the name of rationality...[or] to receive it as moral or to combat it in the name of morality,” it therefore follows that a “Right to the Suburb” that includes racial capitalism in its political analysis must correspondingly understand that to struggle against capitalism on its own terms of rationality or morality confines political action to petitions made to the settler state, which in turn simply reauthorizes the state’s legal–bureaucratic legitimacy to rationally and morally organize the terms of life and death.

⁵⁷⁶ Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. UNC Press, (2020): 4.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁷⁸ Veracini, Lorenzo. "Suburbia, Settler colonialism and the World Turned Inside Out." *Housing, Theory and Society* 29.4 (2012): 339–357.

Because of its intrinsic investments (“Indians can’t own land,” as the American told Estéfana), the state can only ever manage the contradictions within racial capitalism, not address the core issue of its reliance on human value hierarchization and exploitation to sustain growth. As such, this rethinking of the “Right to the Suburb” reviews these strategies informed by legal optimism that call for expanded rights—strategies long examined in the context of the post-civil rights era—to offer instead a critical legal cynicism that points to the limitations of state recognition and questions the legitimacy of the state to serve as first and final arbiter in the arrangement of our social relations.⁵⁷⁹ With this political conceptualization of contesting the suburbs in mind, this concluding discussion will now finally turn to the second question posed by the chorus, which, given the reality of this haunted landscape, challenged, “So, what is to be done?”

WHAT IS TO BE DONE? ABOLITION GEOGRAPHIES AGAINST THE NATIONAL ORDER OF THINGS

As Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) posed in *Golden Gulag* in the closing chapter titled “What is to be done?” (which is also the opening question in Gilmore’s 2022 collection of essays in *Abolition Geography*), the political economic reality with which we are presently confronted involves several features already discussed in *Bad Refugees*, including the federal reduction in state and local funding for social safety net programs, the resulting budgetary burdens placed on local-municipal administrative units to address gaps in social provision, and the abandonment of the racial working class by a security state set on carceral expansion and global militarism as the post-Keynesian basis for its ongoing legitimation.⁵⁸⁰ However, with the proliferation of prisons offered as the wide scale “solution” to the problem of racial surplus comes an attendant “structure of feeling” and organizational capacity among the criminalized and dehumanized to resist the state’s voracious carceral compulsions that emerged during and immediately following the pivotal decade. This tension thus serves as the primary space of conflict between the modern state and the subjugated, where anti-prison groups who organize in solidarity across multiple dimensions of historically contingent classificatory categories work in a number of ways to resist, undermine, and destroy the current mode of state organization as such.

But as discussed by Gilmore in alignment with anti-carceral feminists critical of turning to the state for recognition or protection, activists and organizers were not immune from the penetration of the legal-bureaucratic rationality of the state, which professionalized the diverse strategies, political analyses, and emancipatory visions mounted by the radical materialist solidarities that emerged after 1965 and selectively incorporated them into the liberal multicultural antiracist order to simply assist the state in managing political dissension through superficial displays of diverse inclusion. As discussed in *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*, the mainstream antiviolence movement, for example, in first aiming to “break the silence around violence against women,” opened the first rape crisis center in the United States in 1972 and first domestic violence shelter in 1974.⁵⁸¹ However, though it initially prioritized its responses to sexual and domestic harm based on the political analyses offered by grassroots mobilizations, DV and rape crisis workers and activists eventually became increasingly professionalized and defanged from voicing more critical positions against institutional violence due to the constraints placed on organizational actors to regularly secure operational funds,

⁵⁷⁹ Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*. Duke University Press, 2011.

⁵⁸⁰ Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. University of California Press, 2007.; Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Abolition Geography: Essays Towards Liberation*. Verso Books, 2022.

⁵⁸¹ Smith, Andrea, Beth Richie, Julia Sudbury, Janelle White, and Incite! Women of Color Against Violence collective members. “The Color of Violence: Introduction.” *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*. South End Press (2006): 1–12.

consequently limiting their scope to focus on just interpersonal and intra-community violence instead of structural critiques.⁵⁸²

Skeptical of this alignment with the state in order to sustain organizational durability, this critique points to examples such as the mainstream DV movement's carceral demands for harsher sentencing, more police involvement, and the development of sex offender registries as pointed examples of how the state slowly co-opted the feminist movement to bolster its claim as a protective entity capable of punishing illegitimate violence in the service of "women's rights."^{583,584} Growing the administrative, punitive, and warfare capacities of the very state that definitionally relies on exercising regular, legitimated violence against pathologized groups deemed threatening to it, these carceral and militarist allegiances illustrate the dead end of political strategies that do not question the national order of things writ large, which inherently requires state violence to maintain its claim to racialized territorialization both within and outside its formal borders. Those most impacted by living at the intersection within which the full force of both state violence and interpersonal violence come to bear on their everyday lives are consequently invisibilized by the atomization of their experiences into different political problems where only interpersonal violence—i.e., that which can be individualized and pathologized—emerged as the only state-legible form of harm, which in turn both authorized the state to act in its name and obscured the state's constitutive role in materializing the conditions from which all manner of violences are continually rendered possible.

"In a sense, the professionalization of activism has made many committed people so specialized and entrapped by funding streams that they have become effectively deskilled when it comes to thinking and doing what matters most," Gilmore (242) writes, proposing instead for us to consider "the possibilities of nonreformist reform—of changes that, at the end of the day, unravel rather than widen the net of social control through criminalization." In practice, *Golden Gulag* in part focuses on the organization Mothers ROC as an example of this orientation. Rather than organizing as "petitioners for a share of the available social wages," Gilmore points to how Mothers ROC's "frontline relation to the state" was instead based "in opposition to the state's form and purpose with respect to the life chances of the mothers' family members and those like them."⁵⁸⁵ Citing how members reassembled the ideology of motherhood "to challenge the legitimacy of the changing state" as it turned to prison-building-as-state-building, the example of Mothers ROC demonstrates how new solidarities emerged from the familiar "to reach across social and spatial divides" and open up new possibilities for collective identification and purposeful action.⁵⁸⁶ By considering the general dynamics of how they framed this antagonism, Gilmore encourages that "we can see how other kinds of oppositions become possible" where "new solidarities based in recognition of the life-threatening harms that new and old racist structures produce in all kinds of households of all races and ethnicities" can produce imaginative solidarities from a vernacular of the familiar.⁵⁸⁷

Specifically offering a spatial lens from which to contest state power, Gilmore then insists that these new

⁵⁸² While it is vital to acknowledge the collective work produced by the INCITE! Collective and its members, my engagement with them also acknowledges and aligns with the call to accountability for Andrea Smith in particular, who has come under scrutiny for failing to establish the basis for her claim to Cherokee ancestry. See: Nada Elia, David M. Hernández, Jodi Kim, Shana L. Redmond, Dylan Rodríguez, and Sarita Echavez See. "Accountability: An Exhortation." Duke University Press (2016).

⁵⁸³ Bracewell, Lorna Norman. "Beyond Barnard: Liberalism, Antipornography Feminism, and the Sex Wars." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42.1 (2016): 23–48.

⁵⁸⁴ Whalley, Elizabeth, and Colleen Hackett. "Carceral Feminisms: The Abolitionist Project and Undoing Dominant Feminisms." *Contemporary Justice Review* 20.4 (2017): 456–473.

⁵⁸⁵ Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2007. 239.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid, 238.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid, 247.

solidarities that emerge from the structures of feeling produced from state violence consequently form the basis from which numerous abolition geographies emerge to undercut the authority of the state from below. “Abolition geography,” then, “starts from the homely premise that freedom is a place”—a place that is, of course, not nationalist in vision. As Gilmore (511) explains:

Place-making is normal human activity: we figure out how to combine people, and land, and other resources with our social capacity to organize ourselves in a variety of ways, whether to stay put or to go wandering. Each of these factors—people, land, other resources, social capacity—comes in a number of types, all of which determine but do not define what can or should be done. Working outward and downward from this basic premise, abolitionist critique concerns itself with the greatest and least detail of these arrangements of people and resources and land over time. It shows how relationships of un-freedom consolidate and stretch, but not for the purpose of documenting misery. Rather, the point is not only to identify central contradictions—inherent vices—in regimes of dispossession, but also, urgently, to show how radical consciousness in action resolves into liberated life-ways, however provisional, present and past. Indeed, the radical tradition from which abolition geography draws meaning and method goes back in time-space not in order to abolish history, but rather to find alternatives to the despairing sense that so much change, in retrospect, seems only ever to have been displacement and redistribution of human sacrifice. If unfinished liberation is the still-to-be-achieved work of abolition, then at bottom what is to be abolished isn’t the past or its present ghost, but rather the processes of hierarchy, dispossession, and exclusion that congeal in and as group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.⁵⁸⁸

Thus the formation of Mothers ROC and the proliferation of other groups opposed to the linked processes of US carcerality, militarism, capitalism, and imperialism illustrates how state violence has produced numerous contradictions across spatially dispersed but interconnected landscapes that, as much as enabling the penetration of state authority, have also spawned countless battlefields from which the conditions for its own destruction have been seeded. As Gilmore (2007) writes in *Golden Gulag*:

If we take to heart the fact that we make places, things, and selves, but not under conditions of our own choosing, then it is easier to take the risk of conceiving change as something both short of and longer than a single cataclysmic event. Indeed, the chronicles of revolutions all show how persistent small changes, and altogether unexpected consolidations, added up to enough weight, over time and space, to cause a break with the old order. Certainly, the political forces that hold governmental power in the United States of the early twenty-first century figured this out and persisted for decades until they won. With persistence, practices and theories circulate, enabling people to see problems and their solutions differently—which then creates the possibility of further, sometimes innovative, action.

Ultimately though, Gilmore qualifies this elaboration by drawing on Raymond Williams that this shift does not only rely on just changes in ideas and frameworks but on changes to “the entire structure of meanings and feelings (the lived ideology, or “taking to heart”) through which we actively understand the world and place our

⁵⁸⁸ Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. “Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence.” *Abolition Geography: Essays Towards Liberation*. Verso Books, (2022): 507–512.

actions within it.”⁵⁸⁹ Abolition geographies are consequently consolidations of sustained and principled political action that accumulate over time to matter space—to project onto it an entirely different arrangement of our material and social relations that begins with the acceptance that the order in which we currently live is a social order we materialize every day, but under conditions which were never of our choosing.

As Lawrence Grossberg (255) writes of the uses of ideology in channeling affective investments for political purposes, contemporary politics therefore involves the question of “how people’s affect—their attention, volition, mood, passion—is organized, disciplined, mobilized and ultimately put into the service of specific political agendas.”⁵⁹⁰ The struggle for hegemony consequently is fought through popular culture, where mid-century ideological projects like *Carousel of Progress* and *General Electric Television Theater* worked to structure suburbanites’ affective investments to realign with the Cold War state and American industry by making desirable the breadwinner nuclear family ideal and enshrining the single-family home and its surrounding built environment as the ultimate vision for utopia. But as shown by Chapter 1’s discussion about the “end of American hoping,” these affective investments are not guaranteed and must be regularly disciplined and structured for “serial reenchantment” because of capitalism’s cyclical booms and busts that structurally produce conditions of mass despair.⁵⁹¹ Affective realignment, then, necessitates challenging this “psychology of belief” so that the power of ideology to remobilize the body politic for violent state ends is weakened, in varying degrees, to the point of its practical impotence. As a result, since the contention of Chapter 1 proposed that both the American Dream and American Manifest Destiny function as ideological moral superstructures that underwrite this serial reenchantment, it becomes politically urgent to comprehend the nature of their mandates and consider how the weight of collective *disbelief* towards them over time might serve to realign our affective investments towards different goals that undermine rather than bolster the life shortening and spatially alienating compulsions of the state. As structural mass despair is cyclically inevitable due to the inherent features of capitalism as an economic system, what are the political possibilities that become more available when American mythology loses its hold?

From the perspective asserted by *Bad Refugees* that war is ongoing and that territorialization has continued through suburbanization so that the family organizationally structures social relations in the suburb as a microcosm of the nation state, how can this conceptualization of the domesticated warscape consequently inform the present discussion on how to resist the state through the formation of abolition geographies? As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, twentieth-century nation building in the United States occurred through getting select breadwinner households to buy into the American Dream through a social contract extension of protected homeownership in exchange for national loyalty and defensive service. In this way, suburban territorialization managed to foster possessive suburban subjectivities where homeowners came to most directly identify with the nation state and align their futures with the overall direction of the country. As noted in Chapter 3, however, the possessive investment in whiteness is a *sexual* possessive investment in whiteness where figures of orientalized sexual vice and conquest, respectively, have constitutively continued to mark the boundaries of propertied citizenship in the American racial imaginary and authorize the nation’s foodhardy imperial pursuits against existential enemy threats abroad. As such, the heteronormative suburban nuclear family as informed by these

⁵⁸⁹ Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. “Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence.” *Futures of Black Radicalism*, edited by Gaye Theresa Johnson, and Alex Lubin. Verso Books, 2017, 225–240.; Williams, Raymond. “Structures of Feeling.” *Structures of Feeling: Affectivity and the Study of Culture* (2015): 20–28.

⁵⁹⁰ Grossberg, Lawrence. *We Gotta Get out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture*. Routledge, 2014.

⁵⁹¹ Atkinson, Will. “Falling In and Out of Love: With and Beyond Bourdieu on Individual Enchantment and Disenchantment.” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 52.2 (2022): 377–391.; Knox, Paul L. “The Serial Enchantment of Suburbia.” *Metroburbia, USA*. Rutgers University Press, 2008.

layers of meaning became the unit through which the American nation, especially since WWII, became imagined, regulated, disciplined, and *defended* to create the hegemonic conditions necessary for the perpetuation of US global power into the present.

Conceptualizing the domesticated warscape as such, we can then understand many of the examples discussed in this analysis as snapshots of battlegrounds where affective investments in the American national project were mobilized in defense against perceived threats to the state and suburban citizenry's possessive investments. Considering the spatial qualities of state control and how it wages its wars on many—often intimate, often private—domestic fronts, struggles over state authority therefore occur across a number of arenas. From vigilante citizen patrols that form to third party police and banish sex workers from their borders to zoning laws that manufacture idealized family forms by regulating tenancy to colonial literature that projects onto non-Europran lands the image of a conquerable, feminized body ready for the taking, fields of contestation appear as the act of possessive sexual categorization necessarily creates its own discontents. The spatial design of the suburbs, by way of another example, obscured the collective nature of laboring wives' subjugation as workers by enclosing them within isolated household economies for which they were held personally and morally responsible as mothers and not laborers.

These diffuse battlegrounds can consequently help us to identify different spaces in which fights take place that can be understood as seeding areas for the formation of abolition geographies. Taking into account the political economic basis of the domesticated warscape and drawing on the long history of feminist scholarship on reproductive labor, for example, just because state recognition of household reproductive labor refuses to assign it formal monetary or social value does not mean that it, as a form of labor, cannot be withheld. Moreover, as the Mothers ROC example provided by Gilmore showed, existing categories like motherhood, with all their layers of inherited meaning, still hold the ideological capacity to mobilize groups when they are reassembled to undermine and not enhance the authority of the state. And just as capitalism relies on gendered production in order to sustain its cycle of growth, it also relies on consumption, where abolition geographies can additionally be formed from organizing and acting against the mass consumerism required for perpetual accumulation so that eventually, through the condensation of these acts, as Gilmore (248) writes, “powerful alignments begin to shake the ground” and “*movement* happens.”⁵⁹²

But finally returning to one additional insight from LeFebvre on Parisian urban planning by Baron Haussman that finds an analog in William Pereira's master plan for the City of Irvine, it is important to lastly consider how the state and industrial capital have innovated their tools to respond to the enduring threat posed by the urban center as “a hotbed of agitation” in order to comprehend the nature of this increasingly asymmetrical fight. As LeFebvre discusses in the case of Haussman according to an argument made by René Héron de Villefosse (1955), Lewis Mumford (1961) and others, though the orderly streets of Paris today lend it an aesthetic appeal and assists with the flow of auto traffic, this was not necessarily their intention by design.⁵⁹³ Haussman, who served as a prefect of the Seine from 1853 to 1870, was chosen by Emperor Napoleon III to lead the massive urban renewal program that set to redesign massive tracts of the city around new boulevards, parks, and other public works, which at least in part considered the urban planning effort from the perspective of managing insurrection. Between 1830 and 1848, Paris had experienced six urban uprisings that all took place

⁵⁹² Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. University of California Press, 2007.

⁵⁹³ Héron de Villefosse, René. "Histoire de Paris." *Bernard Grasset* (1959): 340.; Mumford, Lewis. *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization*. Boni and Liveright, 1924.

in narrow, crowded streets located in the central, eastern city and on the left bank near the Panthéon. Given their winding pathways and concentrated sprawl, these areas helped urban resisters more easily find places to hide and fortify. With wide open boulevards designed for easy military navigation and improved visibility for the state to “see” the happenings of the city, Haussman’s streets made it so that large sections could be controlled at key enforcement points that required less military power to hold and easier for cannons to fire against urban insurrectionists. All the more effective, LeFebvre (76) wrote, in suppressing the Paris Commune in 1871 to crush the kindling of “urban democracy” as the rising bourgeois capitalist class sought to defend its ascendancy. Tasked with developing the master plan for Irvine’s model “New Town,” William Perreiras’s design for the defensive R&D suburb that used “environmental corridors” to manage threats to the community after the 1965 Watts Rebellion and widespread campus protests therefore exhibited some important similarities that drew on these spatial techniques to improve the state’s ability to efficiently quell urban unrest.

Taken together, these advancements in urban planning reflect how the state responded to urban “crises” by turning to spatial counterinsurgency as a means to both facilitate easier policing and suppression as well as grow its field of vision.⁵⁹⁴ But the state of course did not stop there. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the European colonial powers and America also prototyped their counterinsurgency techniques and strategies in “colonial workshops” where advancements in policing and surveillance developed abroad were brought back home to subject domestic threats to the state to greater social control. Following the co-development of IT surveillance techniques alongside America’s late twentieth century wars, the field of vision only increased as Cold War technological advances increased the state’s capacity to see, crush, and pre-empt agitation. “Public” rebellions that occur in planned streets and in full view, visually or electronically, have been effectively “designed out” so that that state can, if it wants, bring the full weight of its military and police might to suppress open revolts. The implication for those fighting in solidarity against the state is that, with the changes to state technological power, “public” acts of resistance become all the more risky and easily targeted for punishment and removal.

Given these constraints, I therefore close by emphasizing the importance of considering the capacious avenues offered by abolition geographies as seeding within this diffuse domesticated warscape other spaces, strategies, and solidarities for action beyond inherited masculinist and nationalist political visions for freedom that tend to focus on the public sphere. Beginning from the community dismemberment of the “Indochinese gang member” and the “Saigonese bar girl” as emblematic “Bad Refugee” figures, I echo Lisa Marie Cacho’s theorization about the inevitability of devaluation in *Social Death* given that some groups, based on the very ontological premise of their emergence, can never represent themselves as moral and deserving as the foundation for law. Insisting on building a political vision and abolitionist solidarities that consequently refuse their dehumanization thus allows for a de-hierarchization of the racial capitalist imperative to categorize human bodies and subjugate them for profit—thereby critically questioning the legal-bureaucratic authority of the modern state as the rational and moral basis from which to organize our social relations.

⁵⁹⁴ Tullis, Tracy. *A Vietnam at Home: Policing the Ghettos in the Counterinsurgency Era*. Dissertation, New York University, 1999.