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A COMPANION TO LOS ANGELES

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A Companion to Los Angeles

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Contents

List of Plates vii
Notes on Contributors x

Introduction xv
William Deverell and Greg Hise

Part I The Long History of a Global City 1

1 The Border Crossed US 2
Matt Gainer

2 Born Global: From Pueblo to Statehood 20
Louise Pubols

3 Race, Place, and Ethnicity in the Progressive Era 40
Stephanie Lewthwaite

4 Between "White Spot" and "World City": Racial Integration and the Roots of Multiculturalism 56
Scott Kurashige

5 Contemporary Voice: Where You From? 72
Susan Straight

Part II Social Flashpoints 93

6 Social Flashpoints 95
Eric Avila

7 The Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871 and Its Strange Career 110
Victor Jew

8 Disposable People, Expendable Neighborhoods 129
George J. Sanchez

9 Gridlock of Rage: The Watts and Rodney King Riots 147
Scott Saul

10 Contemporary Voice: Here, Now, I 168
Angela Oh

Part III Politics and Economies 175

11 Ab urbis condita: Regional Regimes since 13,000 Before Present 177
Philip J. Ethington

12 Crown Jewels: Infrastructure and Growth 216
Steven P. Erie and Scott MacKenzie

13 Consolidation, Fragmentation, and New Fiscal Federalism 233
Tom Hogen-Esch

14 Contemporary Voice: Contradictions, Coalitions, and Common Ground 250
Manuel Pastor

Part IV Cultures and Communities 267

15 Cultures and Communities 269
Leo Braudy

16 "A Most Advantageous Spot on the Map": Promotion and Popular Culture 289
Anthea Hartig

17 Tijuana and the Borders of Race 313
Josh Kun

18 Counterculture 327
Dave McBride

19 Cinema and the Making of a Modern City 346
Edward Dimendberg

20 Contemporary Voice: Looking for God in the City of Angels 366
Matt Gainer

Part V Landscapes and Place 391

21 Situating Stories: What Has Been Said About Landscape and the Built Environment 393
Greg Hise

22 America's Playground: Recreation and Race 421
Lawrence Culver

23 Landscapes of Health and Rejuvenation 438
David Sloane

24 Excerpts from the San Gabriel River Series 461
Robbert Flick

25 Contemporary Voice: Thickets of Diversity, Swaths of Emptyness 479
Christopher Hawthorne

Index 494

List of Plates

1.1	Los Angeles, 2006.	3
1.2	Los Angeles, May 2003.	4
1.3	Los Angeles, May 2003.	5
1.4	Los Angeles, May 2006.	6
1.5	Los Angeles, May 2006.	7
1.6	Minutemen, Burbank, CA, April 2006.	8
1.7	Fernando Suárez Del Solar at the Cesar Chavez La Paz Center, Keene, CA, March 2006.	9
1.8	Day Labor Center, Burbank, 2006.	10
1.9	Day Labor Center, San Fernando Valley, 2007.	11
1.10	Downtown Los Angeles, 2003.	12
1.11	Downtown Los Angeles, 2006.	13
1.12	The border crossed US, Los Angeles, 2006.	14
1.13	Minutemen, San Fernando Valley, 2007.	15
1.14	Lupe, Minutemen Organizer, Simi-Valley, 2008.	16
1.15	Lilliana and son, Sanctuary Family, Simi-Valley, 2008.	17
1.16	Los Angeles City Hall, May, 2006.	18
1.17	A day without an immigrant, May, 2006.	19
2.1	Map of Los Angeles drawn by José Argüello, 1793.	23
2.2	"Part of Los Angeles," drawn by William Rich Hutton, 1847.	31
2.3	"Los Angeles City Map," drawn by E. O. C. Ord and William Rich Hutton, 1849.	35
5.1	Fine.	79
5.2	Stanford Sims, Robert Sims, and General R. C. Sims, Jr. in front of a house on Central Avenue.	85
5.3	Geneva Stevenson.	86

11.1 Saber-tooth cat skull, La Brea Tar Pits. Catalogue # 2001–1, Pit 61, D 11, 14 1/2′. Photograph May 1916 by Luther E. Wyman. 178
11.2 Misión San Gabriel Arcángel, by Ferdinand Deppe, 1832. Oil on canvas. Original in Santa Barbara Mission Library. Photograph of painting by Max Bruensteiner. 185
16.1 Sunkist Building, photographed in 1939, looking east on Fifth Street across from Los Angeles Public Library's Central Library. 297
16.2 "Have One" brand label from the 1930s, suggestive and suggesting, exemplified the latter prong of the "science and sex" themes of citrus advertising. 299
16.3 Aimee Semple McPherson's majestic and showy Angelus Temple, viewed at night, ca. 1930. 307
20.1 Los Angeles Interfaith Network. 369
20.2 Universal Cao Dai Temple. 370
20.3 Beth Chayim Chadashim. 371
20.4 Salvation Mountain. 372
20.5 Parroquia San Judas Tadeo. 373
20.6 Radha Krishna Mandir. 374
20.7 Islamic Center of Southern California. 375
20.8 Ministerios Nuevo Vivir. 376
20.9 Victory Baptist Church. 377
20.10 Ministerios Linaje Escogido. 378
20.11 Virgin of the Rocks. 379
20.12 Los Angeles Baha'i Center. 380
20.13 Chapel of Peace Holiness Church of the Old and New Testament. 381
20.14 Masjid Bilal Islamic Center. 382
20.15 Chùa Pháp Vân Theravada Buddhist Corporation. 383
22.1 Grace Williams, Albert Williams, Mary Mingleton, and Willie Williams (no relation) at Santa Monica Beach, 1926. 429
22.2 Ralph Bunche and friends at the beach, ca. 1923. 430
23.1 As a destination for health-seekers, southern California quickly developed a healthcare infrastructure, represented here by California Hospital. 441
23.2 Dr. Welwood Murray was so impressed by the climate in Palm Springs, he established a sanitarium there. Many hotels began by serving health-seekers, helping to create the region's tourism industry. 444
23.3 Sanitariums were often located in an isolated natural setting, such as Elysian Park, the home of Los Angeles County's Barlow Sanatorium. 446

23.4 Philip Lovell commissioned Richard Neutra to design an ideal southern California home by integrating the indoors with the landscape beyond. 448
23.5 Herbal remedies, such as those sold at the T. Leung Herb Co. ("under the same manager since 1896"), located at 711 S. Main St., were one type of alternative/complementary medicine long a part of Los Angeles healthcare. 449
23.6 This view of the bungalows, beach, dock, and coast from Santa Monica's palisades represents an iconic representation of Los Angeles as a place of healthy activity. 451
23.7 Six riders of the Los Angeles Bicycle Club pose with their decorated bicycles at the Fiesta de las Flores, ca. 1887. 453

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Louise Pubols is Chief Curator of History at the Oakland Museum of California, where she is working on a major reinstallation of the museum's history galleries. Her book *The Father of All: The de la Guerra Family, Power, and Patriarchy in Mexican California* (2009) explores how patriarchy informed the economic and political systems of the Mexican era.

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Introduction

William Deverell and Greg Hise

Over the past decade and a half, we have worked together on books and other projects focused on the history of greater Los Angeles. These collaborations, as well as the writing we've pursued individually, form a part of a recent groundswell of scholarship that has recast interpretations of nineteenth and twentieth-century Southern California. A host of mostly young scholars have written dozens of insightful, empirically rich, and challenging works which together constitute one of the most lively sub-fields of historical inquiry into North American cities and urban life.

In part as a result of that mini-explosion, historians, including non-Americanists who might never have taught, much less thought about, Los Angeles history, now do so with exuberance. Many have sought to incorporate Los Angeles into their own research. All the more impressive is the embrace of Los Angeles history by non-historians and non-historical scholarly disciplines. Architecture, urban planning, urban studies, sociology, ethnic studies, feminist studies, gender studies, art theory, landscape architecture, photography, cultural studies, literature, comparative literature, urban theory, American studies, critical legal studies, political science, and comparative economics (the list is representative rather than exhaustive) have all drawn Los Angeles history and case studies into their inquiries by way of these many new books and articles.

We designed this volume to showcase some of that work, both by way of the authors who have contributed and in the scholarly surveys each performs in their respective essays. The volume has other ambitions as well. It is the first of the long and distinguished list of Blackwell Companions devoted to a single city. We hope that it will be an important tool by which to understand the complex history of greater Los Angeles and in addition that it might serve as a model for similarly conceived projects on other cities or other regions. Most ambitiously, though, we wished for this volume to

dig deeply into the history of Los Angeles with specific aims related to chronology, continuity, and context.

Chronology and the Re-Balancing of Los Angeles History

In constructing the table of contents for this volume we sought to engage deeply with the nineteenth century as a way to bring chronological balance to the "Los Angeles flurry" of recent years. The field has tipped profoundly in the direction of the post-World War II era. In and of itself this is not especially a problem, particularly since the quality of much of these works is so high. But the relative paucity of historical inquiries taking into account the second, much less first, half of the nineteenth century has created an imbalance in interpretations of the region's past.

Los Angeles of the nineteenth century remains largely the domain of classics written by such figures as Carey McWilliams, Robert Fogelson, Glenn Dumke, and Robert Glass Cleland. This is not to suggest that these books, interpretations, and insights have lost their importance: they are classics precisely because we read and learn from them yet. But the shelf upon which they sit – "nineteenth-century Los Angeles" – is far too thinly populated, especially when it comes to more recent imprints. We can fill that shelf with primary sources, but the monographs are lonely. Hence, we designed the volume's approach around sustained engagement with the deep past and asked specific authors to consider chronological depth specifically as they constructed their essays (that request is honored most apparently in Philip Ethington's roughly 15,000-year inquiry into regional regimes of power, but the long fetch of Los Angeles history is also apparent in contributions from Louise Pubols, Eric Avila, Robbert Flick, and others).

We think that this approach will assist scholars as they further tie together the historical dimensions and dynamism across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries or across the divides of the Spanish, Mexican, and American periods. If scholars were to devote comparable resources of time and talent to the nineteenth century, and if institutions were to enhance collections and access to primary documents via digital initiatives, for example, we could grapple more fully with the level and extent of the various chronological, racial, national, or other ruptures and continuities which separate or amalgamate the post-conquest era.

Continuity and Pattern in the Long History of Los Angeles

The thematic organization of this volume, which includes longer introductory essays launching four of the five sections (Matt Gainer's photo essay, "The Border Crossed US" introduces part one), is designed to address

another vexing and related issue in the writing of Los Angeles history. All too often, discrete episodes, events, or periods are cleaved off for study – sometimes distinguished study – but not folded back into the longer history of the city and region. This can be partly, if implicitly, addressed, as we think we've accomplished here, by thematic analyses that move across time or even space. In this volume readers can begin to see long-term patterns emerging in, for example, land use, political structures and regimes, and even cultural expression. Such organization can help us think in more general terms about Los Angeles history *writ large*, and it can also push collective thinking of Los Angeles beyond the less-than-helpful constructions of ever-present Los Angeles exceptionalism. As a case in point, Eric Avila's introduction to part two's excavation of "social flashpoints" helps to explicate one of the earliest ideas and ambitions we shared in envisioning this volume. Scholarly work on episodic eruptions of racial and ethnic coercion and violence in Los Angeles is among the best of that form of historical inquiry currently in practice. We know a great deal about isolated examples – Sleepy Lagoon, the Zoot Suit attacks, Watts, and the violence of the post-Rodney King verdicts. But have we thought to connect such explosions across time? Have we wondered what a longitudinal exploration that also took account of, for example, the violence of the 1850s, or the 1871 Chinese massacre, or the forced deportations and internments of the 1930s and 1940s, might tell us *in addition* to the usual forensic, episodic treatment? As Avila notes, and as "social flashpoints" authors then take up in detailed portraits in turn, racial and ethnic violence in Los Angeles may be less a story of periodic eruption and more a story of generalized, even regularized, behavior and culture. Such refiguring, or at least rethinking, of the episodic tendencies inherent to much of Los Angeles historical scholarship, which is further pushed along by Susan Straight's deeply personal essay closing out part one, encourages further breadth and depth to our inquiries.

Context and Audience, Past and Present

In our approach to this book, which builds upon previous experience with other Blackwell Companions (specifically those which address the history of the American West and the history of California), we wished to keep true to a central theme of these volumes. That is that it would represent a highly competent, well-informed "state of the field" assessment of the best and most important work to date on, in this case, the history of Los Angeles. All along, we kept in mind – and urged our authors to do the same – that one important audience for these volumes is graduate students at work mastering fields of study, finding their critical voices, and in search of significant thesis topics. This book speaks to those students (and their

professors) in precisely that regard; its success may be judged on the number and quality of thesis "ships" that it helps launch over time.

Graduate students are but one readership. We also kept in mind another proverbial audience, the so-called "lay public" interested, and often deeply versed in, the history of Los Angeles and Southern California more generally. This book demanded a level of scholarly sophistication in conception and execution, but that need not cut off access to (or appreciation of) the volume from non-scholars. On the contrary, in our choice of authors, topics, and formats, including the fine photo essays by artists Robbert Flick and Matt Gainer, we explicitly designed this book as, in part, a dialogue between historians and non-historians, both within the book's pages and in its outward reach to the public.

A related point as regards audience and dialogue: we remained cognizant of the power of history in shaping contemporary life and culture in Los Angeles. While scholars may find history intrinsically fascinating, the enduring significance of historical perspective assuredly springs from its relationship with the present. Accordingly, we asked five of our contributors to offer "contemporary voice" views and visions of specific aspects of life in Los Angeles. At once musings, ruminations, and "think pieces," these visual and textual essays help to bring the volume's scholarly insights into sharp focus on the human and physical landscapes of early twenty-first century Los Angeles.

Together, the various and varied contributions that make up this volume constitute a lively and informed introduction to a history as fascinating as it is complex. Our preeminent hope is for the book to invite further inquiries that will offer additional insights and spark polyphonic conversations that bridge disciplines, audiences, and discourses.

We wish to express our thanks to our colleagues at Blackwell, especially Peter Coveney, Galen Smith, Jack Messenger, and Deidre Ilkson for their expertise, counsel, and vision. We express warm, collegial thanks to the several dozen authors and artists for their outstanding contributions. It has been a privilege to work with such talented scholars, writers, and photographers. We are grateful to the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation of Los Angeles for important financial support, without which this project, and this book, would not have been possible. The Huntington Library and its Director of Research, Roy Ritchie, provided scholarly, administrative, and logistical support to this project; Ross Landry, Jennifer Watts, and Erin Chase assisted us with research into Edison ephemera and Collection of southern California photographs. Research support from the Lusk Center for Real Estate in the USC School of Policy, Planning and Development freed time for Greg Hise to write and edit, as did support from the Office of the Provost and USC College for Bill Deverell.

Part I

The Long History of a Global City

Chapter One

The Border Crossed US

Matt Gainer

On May 1, 2006 more than 1 million people took to the streets of Los Angeles. They were there to protest the House of Representatives passage of HR 4437: Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. Their actions crippled the city.

As written, HR 4437 would have criminalized people who provide illegal aliens assistance and would have stripped asylum seekers of fundamental due process protections. It also would have introduced new penalties – including a minimum five-year prison term – for church workers, schoolteachers, humanitarian workers, and others who sought to aid immigrants who are in the US illegally.

The tensions surrounding the issues HR 4437 addressed had been escalating for years. By the time of the 2006 "Day Without an Immigrant" protests, groups on both sides of the debate were well organized and deeply entrenched. Those who supported the bill argued it was a necessary step for securing American borders and stabilizing the demand on resources. Opponents believed it was unfair, inhumane, and extreme in the way it dealt with immigrants and their advocates. The latter groups sought legislation that would recognize basic rights, establish a guest-worker program, keep mixed-status families together, and create paths towards citizenship, among other things.

Plate 1.1 Los Angeles, 2006.

Plate 1.2 Los Angeles, May 2003.

Plate 1.3 Los Angeles, May 2003.

Plate 1.4 Los Angeles, May 2006.

Plate 1.5 Los Angeles, May 2006.

Plate 1.6 Minutemen, Burbank, CA, April 2006.

Plate 1.7 Fernando Suárez Del Solar at the Cesar Chavez La Paz Center, Keene, CA, March 2006.

Plate 1.8 Day Labor Center, Burbank, 2006.

Plate 1.9 Day Labor Center, San Fernando Valley, 2007.

Plate 1.10 Downtown Los Angeles, 2003.

Plate 1.11 Downtown Los Angeles, 2006.

Plate 1.12 The border crossed US, Los Angeles, 2006.

Plate 1.13 Minutemen, San Fernando Valley, 2007.

Plate 1.14 Lupe, Minutemen Organizer, Simi-Valley, 2008.

Plate 1.15 Lilliana and son, Sanctuary Family, Simi-Valley, 2008.

Plate 1.16 Los Angeles City Hall, May, 2006.

Plate 1.17 A day without an immigrant, May, 2006.

Chapter Two

Born Global: From Pueblo to Statehood

Louise Pubols

Is this how you expected the history of Los Angeles to start? The Spanish empire founded the small settlement of Los Angeles as an afterthought to the system of missions and presidios, or military forts, that it established to hold its northern territory in the late eighteenth century. Living in a poor, dusty village, the citizens of Spanish and then Mexican Los Angeles felt little connection to the rest of the world. Angelenos supported themselves as best they could, raising a few crops and some livestock, living in the shadows of the great mission estates and ranchos. Nothing much happened there for sixty years. But all this changed when Americans arrived, bringing knowledge of world markets and the vigor of an expanding republic. Inevitably, the United States annexed California. Soon, the newcomers turned the little town into a thriving modern metropolis, and Los Angeles could finally claim to be a global city.

It's a familiar story. But is it true?

A perception that early Los Angeles was an isolated and static place has been around for a long time. In the early nineteenth century, Americans who visited Mexican California brought their own standards of "progress," (with themselves at the pinnacle). They condemned Mexicans as lazy and corrupt, lacking enterprise (Dana 1840; Robinson 1846). Conquest would be natural and justified. By the end of the century, boosters and promoters reinterpreted this narrative with nostalgia, lamenting the loss of a simple, pre-modern past. "Never before or since, was there a spot in America where life was a long happy holiday, where there was less labor, less care or trouble," wrote California historian Hubert Howe Bancroft in 1888 (p. 179). This "Fantasy Past" of trailing bougainvillea and flirtatious *señoritas* still informs California architecture, fiestas, and pageants.

A counter-narrative began to develop in the early twentieth century among academic historians of the "Spanish Borderlands," led by Herbert

Bolton (1921). These scholars called for the integration of the Southwest into US national narratives, arguing for the continuing relevance of Spanish colonial institutions and culture. They did much to show historical continuities, yet often neglected the impact of local actors. By the late 1960s and 1970s, a new generation of historians took up the subject, emphasizing Native and *mestizo* perspectives, and celebrating resistance to Spanish and American conquest (Pitt 1966; Heizer and Almquist 1971; Acuña 1972; Camarillo 1979). Yet in many ways, the basic assumptions did not change. Deplore, lament, or reclaim, the history of California before statehood still appeared as a counterpoint to the United States: semi-feudal, pre-modern, traditional. For their own reasons, historians of Mexico, too, have easily dismissed the north as irrelevant to their national story, and the era before their own liberal reforms of the 1850s and 1860s as a simple continuation of the colonial order (Cuello 1982; Guardino 2005: 159).

The history of Spanish and Mexican era Los Angeles, indeed of California as a whole, is a work in progress. But recent studies in California and Latin American history are offering intriguing new paths of inquiry. Far from being stuck in pre-modern stasis, they suggest that Los Angeles before statehood was swept up in the dynamism and debate of a turbulent era (Ríos-Bustamante 1992; González 2005). Scholars are exploring issues such as the "Colombian exchange" and its impacts on the environment, the fluidity of racial categories in frontier zones, the spread and application of liberal thought, the articulation of patriarchy and gender relations, Indian labor and cultural integration, urban economic development, and the expression of national and regional identities. All are fruitful avenues for early historians of Los Angeles.

Los Angeles was born a global city. In the second half of the eighteenth century, Spanish reformers under the Bourbon kings sought to restructure their colonial holdings, and fend off challenges to the empire from Britain, France, and Russia. In 1765, Visitador General José de Gálvez proposed sweeping changes to the whole of the northern frontier, including sending a permanent presence to hold Alta, or Upper, California. A key consideration was the defense of Spanish trade with Asia, and the prevention of any other European power from finding the long-fabled sea passage through North America, called by the Spanish the "Strait of Anián." The 1769 migration of missionaries, soldiers, and settlers into California would turn out to be the last new venture of Spain in the Americas, and in many ways the development of the territory would defy its careful planners (Weber 1992).

In the Los Angeles region, as elsewhere in California, missions were founded before the civilian settlements. Bureaucrats such as José de Gálvez had hoped to subordinate the power of the Church relative to the King, and preferred to minimize the role of missions on the northern frontier of New Spain. But in California, a lack of resources and colonists made it seem expedient to use Franciscan missions to turn the Native population into Spaniards.

In return, these missions held the right to occupy most of the arable land in the colony, as far north as the San Francisco Bay. Without access to firearms, horses, or alternate European allies, and with their subsistence base eroded by an ecological invasion, many Native people had little choice but to join the mission communities (Preston 1998; Hackel 2005; Weber 2005). The fourth mission in Alta California, Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, was founded in the Los Angeles region in September of 1771.

Yet, inspired by the liberal reforms of the Bourbon era, California's Spanish governors such as Felipe de Neve (1775–81) continued to press for a different sort of relationship between California's Native population and Spain's representatives. For the most part, de Neve was unable to weaken the control friars exercised at this edge of empire, failing to convince missionaries to grant self-government to mission Indians, to preach to Indians in their own villages, or to convert missions into parishes. But in 1781 he did succeed in creating a small counterweight to San Gabriel mission, in the form of a civilian agricultural settlement called Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles (Kelsey 1976; Ríos-Bustamante 1992; Estrada 2008).

Spanish officials approved De Neve's plans for Los Angeles in 1779, and soon afterwards Don Fernando Rivera y Moncada, the Lieutenant Governor of California, left to recruit settlers in Sonora and Sinaloa. Rivera y Moncada targeted male heads of families with agricultural and artisanal skills. Although terms seemed generous – a house lot, two plots of farmland, tools, livestock, and a salary – only fourteen families agreed to go, and of those, two deserted before leaving for California. In two or three straggling groups, they walked north from Baja California in the summer of 1781, while 1,000 head of their livestock were driven up from Sonora, and across the Colorado River at the Yuma, or Quechan, settlement.[1]

In the meantime, de Neve was preparing for the new settlement by entering into negotiations with the people of the *ranchería*, or village, of Yaanga, located on the west bank of the Los Angeles River, near the present-day site of the downtown Civic Center.[2] At the time, five to ten thousand native peoples lived across the Los Angeles Basin, in forty to sixty villages. Today, they are known as the Gabrielino-Tongva, but in 1781 they identified themselves by village, clan, and family. Most were Shoshonean language-speakers, who engaged in trade with other Native peoples to the north and south, and, through the Cahuilla and Mojave, eastward to the tribes of the Colorado River and Arizona. Their agreement, as well as their knowledge of local resources and trade routes, would be critical to the success of any Spanish settlement. As part of the negotiation, Governor de Neve himself chose three dozen of the *ranchería*'s children to baptize, and a young couple to remarry "in the eyes of the Church." Apparently, de Neve's hope was to create independent and self-governing villages of Christianized Indians who would visit the missions only for religious instruction.

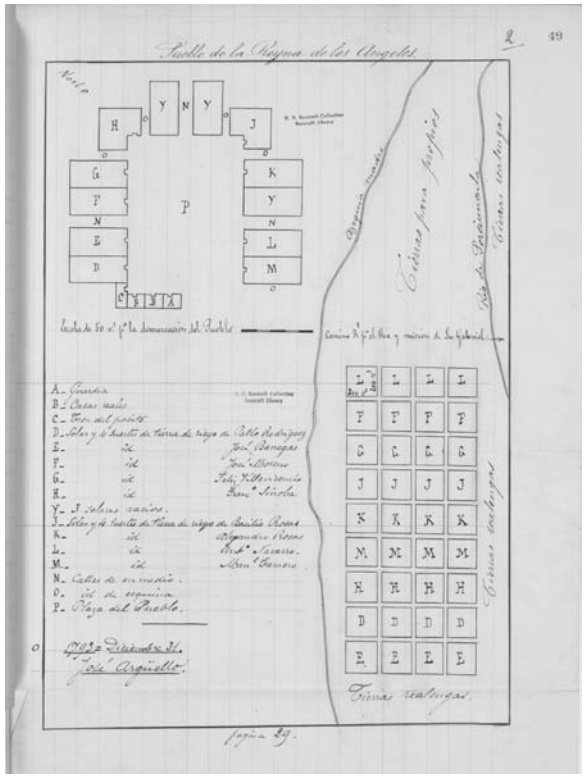

Plate 2.1 Map of Los Angeles drawn by José Argüello, 1793. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. BANC MSS C-A 62.

Forty-two settlers began to arrive in California in June and July of 1781. They stayed at first at San Gabriel mission and walked to the *ranchería* to begin construction with the people of Yaagna on the *zanja madre* (or main irrigation ditch), houses, corrals, and fences of the new settlement. By the end of August, most of the stragglers had finally arrived, and de Neve formally established the town of Los Angeles on September 4, 1781. The dream may not have materialized as de Neve imagined, but henceforth, the future of the Indian *ranchería* of Yaagna, and the Spanish town of Los Angeles, would be intertwined (Kelsey 1976; Ríos-Bustamante 1992; Estrada 2008).

Los Angeles was "Spanish" from the start in the sense that it belonged to the Spanish empire, but not in the actual national origin of its population. Although an official racial system categorized all subjects of the empire in a range of *castas*, or castes, and limited the rights of non-*españoles*, officials demanded only that the civilian expeditions to California be "of clean blood and a good upbringing to establish and propagate civilization among the natives of the land" (cited in Hernández 1990: 208). Of the original

forty-two settlers, forty descended in one measure or another from a mix of American-born Spaniards, Africans, and the Hispanicized native people of northern New Spain (Garr 1975; Mason 1998).[3] Far from their home towns in Sonora, Sinaloa, Baja California, and Jalisco, they reinvented themselves on the frontier. In 1781 less than 5 percent of Los Angeles' population was recorded as "Spanish," but by the 1790 census, 46 percent of the settlers were called *español*. Seven of the eight male heads of household who appeared on both census documents were reclassified to a lighter category in 1790; the eighth was already "Spanish" in the first census. Racial reclassification was understood to accompany social mobility. José Vanegas, an Indian from Real de Bolanos, Durango, was reclassified as *mestizo*, or mixed Indian and Spanish, and was appointed the town's first *alcalde*, a role similar to mayor or justice of the peace (Mason 1998).

Racial categories, it appears, slid around quite a bit in early Los Angeles, but one stark division remained a constant: that between *gente de razón* and California Indian. Originally, the term *de razón* had been used to distinguish a person of any race who understood the tenets of Catholicism (and could be punished for rejecting them), from a person *sin razón* who lacked that ability. But in California, the terms shifted to take on cultural weight, marking tribal Indian from cultural Spaniard (Miranda 1988; Gutiérrez 1989; Weber 1992). Religion, clothing, speech, and above all manual labor divided the two (Hackel 2005: 287–96). Yaagna men constructed and maintained the *zanja* system, built adobe houses and public buildings, and tended horses and cattle. Yaagna women ground corn and prepared food, washed clothing, weeded gardens, and hauled water and wood. Both cultivated and harvested corn, beans, and melons. In exchange, settlers made no demands that they convert to Christianity, allowed them freedom of movement, and gave them one-third to one-half of the harvest, or paid them in manufactured items such as cotton cloth, glass beads, knives, and hatchets. Native peoples might also acquire these goods in exchange for baskets, clay and soapstone bowls, rabbit blankets, or tanned deer, seal, and sea otter pelts (Phillips 1980; Mason 1984; McCawley 1996). None of these things were possible in the missions. Just four years after the founding of the town, it did not escape the notice of Father Vicente de Santa Maria of Mission San Fernando that "the whole pagandom … is fond of the Pueblo of Los Angeles" (cited in Phillips 1980: 433).

Indian peoples native to the Los Angeles area remained the majority population through the 1830s, and even though Spaniards imposed their language, culture, and way of life on them, Natives and newcomers worked and socialized side by side every day. In a few cases through the Spanish era, Native peoples protested their treatment at the missions by staging uprisings, most notably the 1785 rebellion at San Gabriel, led by Toypurina, a female shaman. On occasion, the pueblo's resources might be targets of these uprisings, but in general Indian discontent was directed at the missions. In fact,

Spanish authorities appear to have had a much greater fear of the opposite, attempting without success to prevent a "pernicious familiarity" between the people of Yaagna and Los Angeles. In 1787, Governor Pedro de Fages issued a code of conduct for the pueblo, which prohibited the presence of Indians inside settlers' houses, even for tasks such as grinding corn (Mason 1984: 127). Such pronouncements didn't take. By 1814, Padres Luis Gil y Taboada and José María Zalvidea of San Gabriel remarked that the Indians who worked in town spoke Spanish, "though these settlers commonly speak the Indian idiom also, and even better and more fluently than their own language, which is the Spanish" (cited in Mason 1984: 131).

Settlers and Indians danced, gambled and attended fiestas together, and sometimes formed casual unions. But other settlers, more formally, sponsored Indian children in baptism, and married Indian wives, including José Carlos Rosas, who married Maria Dolores, a woman from Yaagna in 1784, and his brother Máximo, who wed María Antonia of *ranchería* Jajamóbit the following year.[4] As the presence of María Antonia suggests, Yaagna evolved over time into a cosmopolitan village of Native peoples from all over the region, as individuals arrived to work and trade, then return home. Most histories of early California focus their attention, rightly, on the experience of California's Native peoples in the missions. They, after all, were the dominant institutions for most who lived in the coastal zones. Yet a full history of Spanish California would do well to include the other, less formal ways Spaniards and Indians worked out their relationships at the edges of empire.

Up to this point the third institution of colonization, the presidios, or military forts, has been absent. Los Angeles was a civilian settlement, but it felt the heavy hand of the military through the colonial era. In Spanish colonial society, individual settlers did not have direct rights or obligations under the King. Instead, the social order was shaped by corporate bodies such as the military, the nobility, religious orders, and guilds, each with their own independent governing privileges, or *fueros.* California as a territory remained under the jurisdiction of the military; governors came from its ranks, and military officers presided over the civilian and mission populations. After 1788, authorities appointed a municipal government of an *alcalde* and *regidores* (town councilmen) to Los Angeles, but overseeing them was a sergeant of the Santa Barbara company, serving as *comisionado*, or commissioner, and he reported back to the presidio's commander.

Latin American historians in recent years have begun to explore the uneven transition in such places from colonial to republican rule, emphasizing not the colonial continuities, but the dynamism and political engagement of the era. All over the Spanish empire in the Americas, from California to the Rio de la Plata, local populations debated the multi-faceted ideologies of liberals and conservatives as they grappled with new concepts of the state and the social order (Anderson 1983; Mallon 1995; Chambers 1999; Guardino 2005; Reséndez 2005). Liberals, at least in theory, stood on a

platform of constitutional government, free trade, and individual liberty. With their independent *fueros* and vast landholdings, the military and the Church posed obstacles to creating a republic of free citizens, and once in power, liberals moved to abolish military courts and break up Church estates (Hale 1968; Brading 1985; Lynch 1986; Guardino 1996, 2005; Rodríguez 1998).

Los Angeles, as a civilian settlement, offers fertile ground for the study of the spread of liberalism and republicanism on the edges of a new Latin American republic. At the dawn of the Mexican era, the settlers of Los Angeles had begun to chafe at a system in which their local representatives were often overruled by a military commander one hundred miles to the north. In December of 1819, for example, the *regidores* and thirty subjects of Los Angeles signed a petition, complaining that the presidial commander, José de la Guerra, had unlawfully granted communal Pueblo lands to two individuals, probably retired soldiers. Resentment over military rule strengthened at Independence, as liberal reformers arrived in Los Angeles and began to spread notions of the rights of citizens to self-governance. In 1822 officials of the new republic of Mexico instituted a civilian town council, or *ayuntamiento*, in Los Angeles elected by male property owners of the community.[5] Commander de la Guerra did his best to resist the new regime, and continued to appoint a *comisionado*, even though in theory the post no longer existed. In 1825, perhaps as a warning to those who might resist his authority, *comisionado* Guillermo Cota threatened to round up the "large number of vagrants" in Los Angeles to fill his military recruitment quota (cited in Bancroft 1885a: 559). Stung, representatives from Los Angeles protested to the governor, and notified de la Guerra "of the defense that we are making for our rights.… We are angry on account of the outrages against our authority" (Palomares and Carrillo 1825). The military governor refused to intervene.

Armed with a new discourse of governance, citizen Angelenos reframed political legitimacy and authority under Mexican rule. Pío Pico, the son of a presidial soldier from San Diego, remembered his first encounter with the new defiant mood of Los Angeles in 1827. Sent there as a scribe for a military trial, Pico was shocked to discover that a witness, a recently arrived merchant, refused to recognize the authority of the military to conduct the investigation. "I was even more surprised," Pico remembered, to hear the witness explain "that the civilians [*paisanos*] were the sacred core of the nation, and that the military were nothing more than servants of the nation, which was constituted of the people and not of the military." Ever after, he declared, "it always appeared to me, deep in my soul, that the citizens were the nation" (cited in Beebe and Senkewicz 2001: 346–8). Colonial elites had vested authority in corporate bodies like the military. In the 1820s, civilian Angelenos, spurred on by new migrants from Mexico, offered a new model in which citizens claimed the authority to rule themselves.

By the 1830s, this resentment against centralized military rule had spread up and down California, and led to a declaration of independence, and several oustings of the governor. Many historians have dismissed these rebellions as comic operas, or the result simply of strong-man factionalism to control the spoils of customs revenue and land distribution (Bancroft 1885b; Monroy 1990). But if we dig deeper, it becomes apparent that Californios, like their compatriots to the south, were themselves engaging in the nationwide debates over centralism and federalism, and the liberal projects of nation-building.

California, still governed as a territory under central control, served as a space for liberal experimentation during this early federal period, one in which various reforms across the liberal spectrum were introduced and debated (Sánchez 1995: 99).[6] In particular, the liberal drive to self-government merged in California with the liberal plan to secularize the missions. In both Spain and Mexico, liberals advanced the idea that Indians were equally entitled to the rights of man: to equality, liberty, and citizenship. Secularization would transform mission padres into parish priests, mission lands into civil pueblos, and neophytes into full-fledged Mexican citizens. Any "excess" land would revert to the nation and be made available for granting to any citizen (Carrillo 1938: x; Hutchinson 1969: 79–85; Gómez-Quiñonez 1994: 111).

For Mexican liberals, secularization was a tool in the construction of a new Mexican nation. Not only would it break the power of the Church in civil affairs, but it would liberate both the Indians and the land of California. Former neophytes, along with other private citizens, could create family farms and ranches from the undeveloped tracts of mission land, and boost the national economy in the process (Weber 1982: 47–50). But California was not simply acted upon. Almost every rebellion against the central government hinged on who would control the process of mission secularization, and who would distribute its spoils. As one Californio later remarked, "from the year 1829 to 1846 … the desire to dispose of the lands and cattle belonging to the ex-missions was undoubtedly the incentive of every revolution" (Carrillo ca. 1866–75: 132–3).

In this struggle, Los Angeles played a contradictory role. Its chief rival for political power in the territory was Monterey, the official seat of the territorial *diputación*, or assembly, controlled by young native-born men. In 1831 Los Angeles citizens gladly accepted a plan from these young liberals to oust Mexican governor Manuel Victoria. But in 1836, after they deposed another governor, Mariano Chico, and then declared California "free and sovereign," Los Angeles assembled a military force to resist the *diputación* and restore ties with Mexico (Alta California Diputación Territorial, 1836). It certainly seems that the issues of 1836 were very similar to those of 1831. Both deposed governors were conservatives who threatened to prevent or reverse mission land distribution and wrest governing power away from the

local elites. In explaining the different reactions between north and south in 1836, many historians assert that Los Angeles, physically closer to the Mexican heartland, was more "Mexican" or national in its orientation, while Monterey was more "Californio," or local (Weber 1982: 33–6; Ríos-Bustamante 1992; Gómez-Quiñonez 1994: 109; Sánchez 1995: 233; González 2005).

But perhaps something more than loyalty to Mexico motivated Angelenos to take up arms at this moment. The critical difference in the fall of 1836 may have been the open declaration of secession from Mexico: a challenge to authority that prompted deep fears of instability, even chaos. Such fears were particularly acute in Los Angeles, perhaps, because of a shocking event that had taken place there the previous spring. A married woman, María del Rosario Villa, and her lover, the vaquero Gervasio Alipas, had killed María's husband, ranch owner Domingo Félix, and hidden his body in a ditch. Convictions for capital crimes required review in Mexico City, and could take more than a year. Recalling "the frequency of similar crimes," and "fearing for this unhappy country a state of anarchy where the right of the strongest shall be the only law, and finally believing that immorality has reached such an extreme that public security is menaced," a group of fifty men formed a vigilance committee, broke into the jail, and shot the lovers in the street (Chávez-Garcia 2004: 43–5). This incident no doubt left the town feeling jumpy, and ready to link sexual transgressions with civil anarchy.

No wonder, then, when alarmed citizens of Los Angeles gathered to discuss news of Monterey's open declaration of secession, they used the gendered language of female virtue and masculine honor. In Latin America during this era, a man's honor depended in part on his ability to protect the women of his household from any hint of sexual dishonor. Women's honor, by contrast, was considered passive, but their actions could preserve or even restore it by consenting to enclosure and protection by men. Family honor depended on the sexual purity and good marriages of wives and daughters. María del Rosario Villa had clearly left the oversight of her respectable husband's household, and this shameless woman and her lover had brought violence and chaos to the town.

Antonio Maria Osio, a member of the local *ayuntamiento* and a conservative, desperately wanted to persuade Angelenos to send a force north to put down the rebels. So he made one specific complaint about the rebels that he knew would trigger outrage. The Monterey secessionists, he said, were scheming to grant Protestants the authority to perform marriages between Californio daughters and American men. "Moreover," Osio said, the Protestant ministers "would not have to obtain permission from the girls' parents … they would personally seek out the brides and take them to their homes for safekeeping." Osio later recalled the effect his words produced: "A snake which is seized by a falcon and dropped for the first time is not as angry as those

women were at that moment." (Osio 1996: 160–2). It was not long before Angelenos declared their city the new territorial capital and began to assemble a military force to resist the dishonorable men from Monterey.

As this example suggests, the patriarchal family, as an ideal and as a form of social control, continued to be a powerful force in Mexican California. In Los Angeles it even seems to have overcome the attractions of self-government and secularization. Still, Osio himself saw how liberalism was starting to gain ground in its challenge to traditional sources of authority, even in crisis-wracked Los Angeles. As he warned that the new regime would break down the authority of parents to arrange marriages, he noticed that "the girls who were present reacted very favorably, but their mothers did not" (Osio 1996: 160).

Eventually, northerners and southerners came to a wary understanding, and California rejoined the Mexican nation with a native-born governor. But Los Angeles, like the rest of the territory, continued to face the deep challenges secularization put to the economic and labor structure of the region. Los Angeles had been founded as an agricultural settlement, and by Independence was able to supply as much surplus grain and produce to Santa Barbara as there was a market for. The exact number of small to medium-sized farms within the Pueblo lands was never recorded in deeds, but from the observations of visitors there appear to have been about sixty to one hundred farms, vineyards and gardens. Cattle, mules, sheep, and other livestock grazed on Pueblo lands, and chickens and turkeys scratched and strutted in back yards. The agricultural significance and output of Los Angeles has been little studied, but wine and *aguardiente* from local stills seems to have been a significant export commodity. Outside the Pueblo limits, the first grazing permits were granted by the governor to three retired soldiers in 1784. But prior to secularization, few private citizens owned ranchos, and these consisted mostly of small pastures and marginal lands unclaimed by the missions. All this changed with secularization (Nelson 1977: 2).

In fits and starts, Californians implemented the Mexican secularization plans, but on their own terms. In fact, California's mission fathers had been remarkably successful in putting the brakes on official secularization policy, but in 1833 the central government of Mexico came under the control of vice president Valentín Gómez-Farías, a radical liberal who took a particular interest in the far north. On August 17, 1833, his legislature passed a bill ordering the immediate secularization of California's missions. He also organized a colonization project to receive the lands; the director of the colony would become the new civilian governor of California, replacing at last the military regime (Bancroft 1885b: 336; Hutchinson 1969: 161–74; Weber 1982: 185; Gómez-Quiñonez 1994: 115; Sánchez 1995: 108, 128; Reséndez 2005: 68–9; González 2005: 44).

But when news of the federal designs hit California, the sitting governor and the territorial *diputación* did their best to thwart the plans and keep

control over secularization in local hands. At first, they passed a law in May of 1834 ordering "vacant" mission lands to be granted under the terms of the Colonization Acts of 1824 and 1828, then on August 9, 1834, Governor Figueroa proclaimed a preemptive secularization program the law of the land (Bancroft 1885b: 339–43; Weber 1982: 64–6). This regulation gave authority over the mission lands and estates to the territorial government. Ex-neophytes were to receive small plots of land, but the remaining mission lands would come under the administration of *diputación*-appointed administrators who could require the ex-neophytes to labor on the surplus lands. By September and October of 1834 when the colonists – mostly teachers, farmers, and artisans – set foot on the shores of California, they discovered that half of the missions had already been placed under the command of native-son commissioners, and that their patron in Mexico City, Gómez-Farías, had been deposed (Bancroft 1885b: 270–8; Hutchinson 1969: 195–214; Weber 1982: 185; Gómez-Quiñonez 1994: 116).

California's native-son assembly granted 75 percent of Mexican California's private ranches between 1835 and 1845. In the Los Angeles region this amounted to fifty new land grants. Yet, the bulk of the Mexican population remained landless; most listed their occupation on the Los Angeles census as small farmer or farm laborer. By 1845, only 7 or 8 percent of the *gente de razón* population owned ranchos (Hornbeck 1987: 9–10). Most historians of Mexican California now refute any lingering notion that these ranchos were anything like the self-sufficient haciendas found elsewhere in Mexico's northern mining and ranching zones. Most rancheros lived in town, and it was the town that provided services, manufacture, government, finance, and the marketplace. The completion of a church on the central plaza in 1822 had set the form and structure of the town, and by the 1830s the "best people," including the largest landowners, had built their homes around the plaza. Census documents of the 1830s record the presence of taverns, billiard parlors, and retail shops selling cloth, shoes, chocolate, and other imported goods. As the mission estates lost their blacksmiths, weavers, tanners, leather-workers, and carpenters, the town increased its number of urban craftsmen and artisans. Los Angeles grew quicker than other towns in California, at an average annual rate of 9.55 percent from 1781 to 1844 (compared with a rate of 1.1 percent for the whole of Mexico, and 5 percent for all of California). By 1836, the town had grown to 1,088 *gente de razón*, and by 1844, 1,250. Of those, about one-sixth were immigrants from other regions of Mexico, especially Sonora and Sinaloa (Garr 1979; Weber 1982: 206; Estrada 2008).

Who did the labor in town, and what laboring meant for a person's status, seems to have also been evolving in this post-secularization, liberal-minded era. On one hand, as Michael González notes, artisans, shopkeepers, and small farmers of the town appear to have been inspired by new liberal ideals of a virtuous and disciplined citizenship, whose political authority derived

Plate 2.2 "Part of Los Angeles," drawn by William Rich Hutton, 1847. Courtesy of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

from a willingness to support themselves with hard work. As a result, a large number of those elected in Los Angeles were merchants, tradesmen, and farmers, rather than wealthy landowners (González 2005: 42–3).[7] On the other hand, even in Los Angeles, some kinds of labor failed to bring honor. No matter how hard they worked, Indians remained subject to the rule of Mexican men, and thus ineligible for the rights of citizens.

The Indian population of the Los Angeles region appears to have peaked around the time of the 1820 census, at 28,643. After secularization, this number dropped to 2,553, as most left the missions for the interior valleys. Yet the population in the town itself actually increased, from 200 in 1820, to 553 (of 1,088) in 1836, and 650 (of 1,250) in 1844, as ex-neophytes flocked to Los Angeles in search of work, outnumbering the gentile population. George Harwood Phillips has studied the devastating effect this migration had on the political and economic power of the Indians of Yaagna. Unable to find enough work to support their increased numbers, the population became increasingly unable to negotiate the terms of their employment, and fell victim to economic exploitation. Those who found work were paid, not in goods or a fraction of the harvest, but in *aguardiente*, the powerful brandy made from local wines. Those who could not find work also appear to have been enticed by the increased number of taverns and retail shops selling liquor. In January 1836 the Los Angeles *ayuntamiento* ordered that residents patrol the town on the next Sunday and "arrest all drunken Indians and compel them to work" on the *zanja madre*. Soon, a vicious

cycle developed, in which Indians, arrested for drunkenness, would either be sentenced to work on public projects, or be auctioned off to employers who would release them from jail and force them to work off their fines.

The *ranchería* itself, now home to a mix of Native peoples from the missions, from the Los Angeles Basin, from the islands, and from the inland deserts, came under attack. In 1836 the *ayuntamiento* moved the Indian settlement to a place near present-day Commercial and Alameda streets, and renamed it the *ranchería* of *poblanos.* New Indian *alcaldes* were elected to represent the interests of *ranchería* settlers, and were somewhat successful in fending off encroaching claims by Mexican neighbors. But, as economic exploitation led to social disintegration, the village became known as a site where morality and order had broken down, and where Californios and Indians together drank, gambled, and engaged in prostitution. Californios complained about Indian disorder, but Indians themselves were indispensable. "Nearly all the labor performed in the community is done by them," the *ayuntamiento* conceded. In 1844 the *ayuntamiento* moved to curtail the rights of Indians in the *pueblito*, decreeing that all persons without occupation were liable to a fine or incarceration, and in 1845 they forced the village to move across the river to a new settlement that was itself razed two years later and never reformed. Indian servants were ordered, after being prohibited from doing so for almost sixty years, to live with their masters (Robinson 1938; Phillips 1980: 436–51).[8]

If Los Angeles was the place where livestock and agricultural producers found labor and services, it was also, crucially, the place where they connected to world markets. Prior to the 1820s the most traded commodity in the Pacific had been sea otter pelts, sold by Americans, Englishmen, and Russians in China at enormous profit. California, as part of the Spanish empire, was officially closed to their trade, but in fact actively engaged in smuggling. At Independence, the new republic of Mexico lifted trade restrictions, at the same time Pacific trading patterns shifted to include the products of the land, and in particular the hides and tallow of California's vast cattle herds. Although free trade and restrictionism were constantly debated within Mexico, and California's ports alternately opened and closed, the overall movement in the Mexican era was toward greater engagement.

The number of ships which dropped anchor off the California coast increased each year, taking on an average of 285,000 hides and 570,000 arrobas (7,125 tons) of tallow annually. Each ship remained up to two years before its holds were fully loaded. San Pedro, just south of Los Angeles, was "the best place on the whole coast for hides," according to one observer, serving the extensive ranching plains of the Los Angeles Basin and the San Fernando Valley (Dana 1840; Francis 1976: 521–38). As they engaged in this trade, Californios' economic attachment to Mexico decreased while exchange with foreign traders increased. This trend reflected the weakened economy of Mexico as a whole, which suffered after the long and destructive wars of Independence. From

1810 to 1821, Spanish capital had fled, skilled labor had dispersed, and infrastructure had been destroyed. Mexican industry, textiles in particular, could simply not compete with the quality or price of foreign goods (Weber 1982: 122–46; Lynch 1986: 326–8; Reséndez 2005: 93–123).

Much of the literature examining this period in California's history has emphasized the American penetration of Mexico's northern economy as a precursor of eventual conquest (Pitt 1966; Heizer and Almquist 1971; Acuña 1972; Camarillo 1979; Griswold del Castillo 1979; Gómez-Quiñones 1994). Initially, this was not the case. Traders from Lima, Peru had a head start in California, as they had been permitted to trade with other Spanish colonies before Independence. But in the early 1830s, political unrest and population decline in Peru created chaos in the Lima tallow markets, and Californios turned increasingly to the New England hide merchants. Between 1826 and 1848, some historians estimate that Boston traders alone carried off over 6 million hides and 7,000 tons of tallow from California. American traders congratulated themselves frequently for "having more industry, frugality, and enterprise than the natives" (Dana 1840). Although they sent the largest vessels, British and American traders accounted for only a quarter of the total number of ships coming to trade, even in the early 1840s. Mexicans and South Americans sent almost 40 percent of the commercial ships in these years, and the remaining 35 percent were mostly French, Russian, and Hawaiian. Americans did not introduce California to the world. When they arrived they found the world already there (Ogden 1929: 301–5; Weber 1982: 139).[9]

Californios, particularly those engaged most actively in global trade, captured the interests of foreign traders by bringing them into family godparent and marriage networks. Many foreign resident agents and supercargoes eventually settled in the province, converted to Catholicism, married into local families, and swore allegiance to Mexico. But, beginning in the late 1830s, a new kind of immigrant began to arrive in California from the United States – one whose interests were not so easily integrated into Californio family empires and interests. Trappers and farmers, arriving overland from New Mexico and the Mississippi Valley, began to settle in groups near Los Angeles and San Bernardino, and on the Sacramento River. These new migrants sought cheap land and a large Indian workforce, and learned of these enticements through American boosters. But such later arrivals had no intention of becoming part of Californio society. With the example of Texas fresh in their minds, Californios reacted with suspicion. Members of the Los Angeles *ayuntamiento* forbade foreigners from acquiring Pueblo land in 1839, even if they became naturalized citizens (Pitt 1966: 19–20; Garr 1975: 146; Weber 1982: 199–202).

Californios were right to feel distrustful, but their own internal struggles to establish self-rule and a civilian government prevented them from facing the threat with a united front. In February of 1845, Monterey rebels once again

overthrew a centrally appointed military governor, Manuel Micheltorena, who had arrived three years earlier with three hundred convict soldiers. In the aftermath, Californios split the governorship. José Castro in Monterey took over as the military head of the territory, and Pío Pico in Los Angeles became the civilian governor of California. The capital and *junta departamental* (formerly the *diputación*) also moved to Los Angeles. But when the territorial assembly met there from March to July of 1846, not a single elected official from the north took his seat. And when Castro warned Pico that rootless Americans threatened rebellion on the northern frontier, southerners suspected a ruse to declare military rule and thwart the civil government. The dual-governor system broke down completely over the issue, and in June of 1846 Pío Pico marched out of Los Angeles to meet Castro's supporters on the field of battle (Bancroft 1886a: 539–40; 1886b: 37–53). But just after he arrived in Santa Barbara, Pico received the urgent news that John Frémont had taken the town of Sonoma. Pico quickly issued a proclamation of resistance.

Rivalries between north and south, and conflicts between California and the central government, dissolved after the US invasion. Los Angeles in particular became a hotbed of resistance. At first, it appeared that the southland would be forced to capitulate as quickly as Sonoma and Monterey had. On August 6, Commodore Stockton arrived at the port of San Pedro, and insisted that the Californios themselves raise the American flag. They refused, and government officials retreated to avoid capture. Stockton marched into an empty Los Angeles, stripped of government documents and furniture, and a few days later declared himself interim governor. His troops then rounded up the Californio officers who had retreated into the hills around the city (Bancroft 1886b: 267–75; Harlow 1982: 147–9).

The tide soon turned in southern California, however, as Californios regrouped, and mounted one of the most effective campaigns of the war against the US. At the end of September 1846, Californios overthrew the American occupying forces, and soon the entire southland from San Diego to San Luis Obispo was back under Californio control. The *junta departamental* reconvened on October 26. Californios sustained their guerrilla resistance for several months, but in the end the war effort was too difficult to keep going without reinforcements from Mexico. The treaty of Cahuenga, signed January 13, 1847, assured Californios of the rights of American citizens: life, property, and movement. In exchange, Angelenos pledged to lay down their arms for the duration of the war (Bancroft 1886b: 286–7, 403–5; Haas 1998: 342–5).

This is the part of the story when most Americans turn their attention north to the gold fields, and the dynamic history of American California begins. In this traditional version of the tale, California opens to the world, and a sleepy timeless place wakes up and joins a modern republic. And yet, from the vantage of Mexican Los Angeles, the turning point is not so stark, or so clearcut. After the war, cattle ranching in southern California boomed for another ten years, and ranching elites became even richer, selling beef to

Plate 2.3 "Los Angeles City Map," drawn by E. O. C. Ord and William Rich Hutton, 1849. Courtesy of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

miners in the Sierras. In northern California, immigrants quickly overwhelmed the Californio population, but Los Angeles remained more than three-quarters Mexican in 1850, and ten years later, just under half Mexican. Spanish remained the lingua franca, and city life continued to revolve around the plaza through the 1860s. But more importantly, Angelenos were continuing a story that they had begun long before: a story that connected them to the global reach of empires, political ferment in the age of revolution, the world of Pacific trade, the ongoing negotiation of race and labor in the Americas, and Latin American notions of gender and patriarchy. Los Angeles was born a global city.

Notes

1 After the livestock had passed through, wreaking havoc on the Quechans' fields, they rose up and massacred the missionaries and soldiers who remained, including Rivera y Moncada, cutting off this overland passage back to Sonora.

2 The name of the village varied in the Spanish documents, and was called alternately Yangna, Yavit, or Yabit.

3 Antonio Miranda Rodríguez and his daughter, counted on the original census but arriving later and relocating immediately to Santa Barbara, were classified as "Chino," which on the west coast generally meant Filipino.
4 José Carlos and Máximo were the sons of Basilio Rosas, entered as "Indian" from Durango in the first census, and María Manuela Hernández, a "mulata."
5 Unfortunately, the election records for the Los Angeles *ayuntamiento* are fragmentary, and surviving records contain little before 1834.
6 For a discussion of Texas as another haven for Mexican liberalism and liberals, see Reséndez (2005: 61–74).
7 For a similar dynamic in Peru, see Chambers (1999: 192–200).
8 González (2005: 127–34, 224–9) also argues that after 1847 as many as 5 to 10 percent of servants in Los Angeles households may have been captives purchased from New Mexico traders.
9 For more on the origins of ocean-going traders in California, see the lists of arriving vessels in H. H. Bancroft's *History of California*, and invoices and bills of lading in the De la Guerra papers, folder 1050 and 1051, Accounts and Business Papers 1830–1839 and 1840–1849.

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Chapter Three

Race, Place, and Ethnicity in the Progressive Era

Stephanie Lewthwaite

> *She began life as the "Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles." … A mere handful of adobe houses set in straggling rows, a sleepy pueblo with cow paths for streets, such was the Los Angeles of yesterday.… Today, a bustling, wide-awake metropolis has pushed north, east, south and west – over the hills where the vaquero tended his herds; over the gravel flats where stood the shack of the Digger; straight across the broad acres of the rancho, obliterating the last trace of the land baron's hacienda.*
>
> (J. Torrey Connor, *Saunterings in Summerland*, 1902)

The rise of an Anglo-American city had all but submerged the Mexican pueblo by 1902. The completion of the transcontinental railroads during the 1870s and 1880s brought Anglo settlers, new industries, and ethnic workers to Los Angeles in unprecedented numbers. Asian and Mexican laborers in particular transformed the pueblo from a rural idyll into an urban and industrial landscape. And yet in J. Torrey Connor's tourist guidebook to the city and its environs they remain curiously sidelined from the modern metropolis: the inhabitants of Sonoratown, the city's old Mexican Quarter, are "people of the adobe" who continue their traditions as the "tide of progress sweeps by," while Chinatown's inhabitants are "strangely garmented people, shuffling noiselessly to and fro in their odd, thick-soled footgear … like figures in a pantomime – or a hasheesh dream" (1902: 10, 22). Exotic, foreign, impenetrable, and impervious to change, the inhabitants of Sonoratown and Chinatown become suspended in time and space.

Progressive city elites, boosters, officials, and reformers understood and reworked the meaning of race, ethnicity, and citizenship in much the same way as Connor. Connor's narrative unravels some of the fundamental themes in the recent literature on ethnic Los Angeles: the interplay of race, space, time, and power; the uses of the ethnic past and present for negotiating the

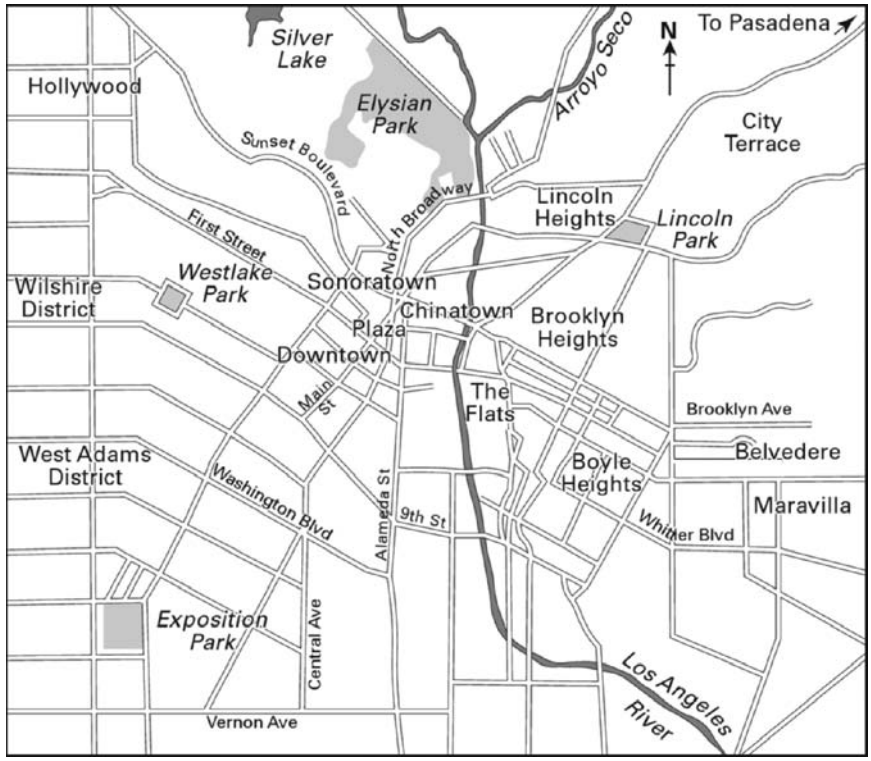
city's contradictions, fears, and desires, and for legitimizing modernity; and the complex, overlapping patterns of racialization that distanced Los Angeles from the black/white paradigm which dominated Eastern, Midwestern, and Southern cities. Connor's mapping of difference and diversity proved vital for structuring the new city and its social relations, for legitimizing the racialized division of labor that sustained the growth of an entire metropolitan region, and for redrawing the boundaries of citizenship. New notions of difference became deeply embedded in transforming the city, and in generating the narratives that elevated Los Angeles as an exceptional place.

The Boom, Migration, and Diversity

The "boom" period of the 1880s spawned LA's territorial, commercial, and industrial expansion. The railroads, land speculation, and the growth of urban industry and specialized farming brought newcomers – settlers, health-seekers, tourists, and workers – in greater numbers. Anglo-Americans from Northeastern and Midwestern farming communities encountered African Americans in search of a new freedom beyond the South, and immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, China, Japan, and Mexico, who found employment in seasonal agriculture, railroad construction, and in urban industry. As LA's total population increased from 50,000 to 1.2 million inhabitants between 1890 and 1930, its non-white, foreign-born population rose from 23,000 to 360,000 residents (Wild 2005: 18–19).

Migration brought diversity to the fledgling metropolis, which generated new ethnic and racial formations, and new debates about assimilation and pluralism. Whereas Southern and Eastern European immigrants and African Americans constituted the bulk of the ethnic industrial workforce in many Midwestern and Eastern cities, in Los Angeles the dominant labor groups were Asian and Mexican. Thus, as Natalia Molina claims, "people 'saw' race differently" (2006: 6). The color line was not simply a case of black versus white, but a much more complex white versus non-white binary beneath which lay a striking diversity. In contrast to the affluent and predominantly Anglo Westside, the Los Angeles east of Main Street was a fluid, kaleidoscopic terrain. Chinatown, the Plaza, and Sonoratown housed an ethnic patchwork of Mexican, Chinese, Italian, German, Danish, Irish, Syrian, and Japanese residents, while just south of Downtown, the Church of All Nations Parish recorded some forty-two different nationalities within its boundaries (Wild 2005: 63).

It was the city's Eastside, however, that became "quite possibly the most ethnically and racially diverse urban area in America" (Flamming 2005: 99). Just east of the river in the increasingly industrial district known as "The Flats" lived Russian Molokans, an Orthodox Christian people, alongside Armenian, Jewish, Italian, Polish, Japanese, and Mexican residents. Even the predominantly Jewish and then Mexican community of Boyle Heights was a



Map 3.1 Central and Eastern districts in early twentieth-century Los Angeles. Map from *Race, Place, and Reform in Mexican Los Angeles: A Transnational Perspective, 1890–1940* by Stephanie Lewthwaite. © 2009 the Arizona Board of Regents. Reprinted by permission of the University of Arizona Press.

"United Nations" of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Mexican, African American, Jewish, and Greek residents during the 1920s (Wild 2005: 98). An array of ethnicities and nationalities also characterized the city's southernmost reaches: Central Avenue, famed as the city's "Harlem," was in fact an amalgam of African American, Mexican, Japanese, Jewish, Italian, and Anglo residents, as was the suburban working-class community of Watts, founded by Mexican and African American railroad laborers (Flamming 2005: 93). The sheer diversity of Los Angeles spawned new debates about race and citizenship, and new narratives about the city's exceptionalism. Both became inextricably entwined with one another in building the new urban order.

The Cosmopolitan City: The Ethnic Past and the Anglo Future

"Los Angeles is nothing if not cosmopolitan," declared J. Torrey Connor in 1902. "The tourist brushes garments, in passing along the streets, with representatives from every state in the Union, and it may be said, of every

country in the world" (p. 74). Tourist guidebooks like Connor's, short fiction of local color, and magazines of regional interest such as *Land of Sunshine* and *Outwest*, promoted LA's diversity as exceptional and the city's ethnic quarters – Sonoratown and Chinatown – as picturesque tourist spectacles. Connor's Chinatown was a "fairyland" adorned with opulent shrines, lanterns "glow[ing] like great jewels" from every doorway, and restaurants "glittering with mirrors," and heavy with the intoxicating "perfume of sacred lilies" (pp. 20–1). Just east lay Sonoratown, a "garden" populated by "time-stained adobes," "perfumed" orange trees, and "children with velvet-black eyes" (p. 8). If Chinatown was a fairyland, then Sonoratown, according to settlement worker and local-color writer Amanda Mathews, was "adored by the tourist as the last remnant of decayed romance" (1906: 67).

Recent historiography, however, has stripped away this cosmopolitan veneer to examine the racialized strategies used by city boosters, Anglo patrons, and preservationists to appropriate, aestheticize, and mythologize ethnic subjects, spaces, and culture. As William Deverell (2004) and Phoebe Kropp (2006) argue, the preservation of California's missions, the revival of vernacular and Spanish colonial architecture after the 1880s, the first Chamber of Commerce-directed Los Angeles Fiesta of 1894, and the restoration of Olvera Street in 1933 all exuded nostalgia for a romanticized version of the Spanish Mexican past, a past that Carey McWilliams called the "Spanish fantasy heritage" (1990: 43). The deployment of a "usable ethnic past" (Deverell 1997: 250) had racial and spatial ramifications: the restoration of Olvera Street as a romanticized Mexican market was matched by the creation of "China City" in 1938, a sanitized tourist space that replaced the old Chinatown, vacated for the building of Union Station (Wild 2005: 59). This nostalgia employed the conjoined processes of "whitewashing" and "cultural cryogenics," which worked to elide patterns of inequality by freezing ethnic subjects in time and space (Deverell 2004: 42). Far from a natural Californian product, then, cosmopolitan Los Angeles was constructed by appropriating diversity and by sidelining "real" ethnic bodies and spaces from modernity and citizenship.

The manipulation of the ethnic past through tourism, preservation, and pageantry articulated not simply nostalgia, but the values of a wider city culture (Kropp 2006). In this way, the ethnic past affirmed LA's status as a modern Anglo metropolis, and the city's dominance within the region as an indigenous, cosmopolitan, yet uniquely American place. For Charles Fletcher Lummis, antiquarian, booster, and founder of the Southwest Museum and the Landmarks Club, Los Angeles was the capital of the Southwest on account of its Spanish Mexican heritage. Yet as the archetypal booster (Deverell 1997: 252; Starr 1985: 84–92), Lummis looked backwards across time to create a future capital beyond his native New England that was definitively Anglo and American.

The quest to recuperate a pastoral ethnic past while affirming an Anglo future brings us to one of the central tensions at the heart of Progressive-era Los Angeles, what historian Robert Fogelson described as the city's "chronic nostalgia for a bygone world" (1967: 276). Yet, these "usable ethnic pasts" proved far from debilitating for LA's social and cultural elites: they were potent tools for organizing time and space, and for building a new, emphatically modern Anglo city, region, and nation. Once again, Connor's *Saunterings in Summerland* illuminates some of these important trends. As Connor traverses Southern California, her ethnic subjects become motifs, artifacts, and museum pieces; or docile, pastoral bodies at work in the outlying agricultural fields. Tellingly, Connor begins and ends her vision of a harmonious regional social and racial order in Los Angeles with the demise of Mexican rule. She leaves us in the Chamber of Commerce where "Indian relics," and more significantly, "a case of Mexican figures in wax, no figure more than an inch high … tell[ing] the story of Mexican life, high and low," are exhibited for the tourist and citizen alike (1902: 79–80). The visions of both Lummis and Connor suggest that race has always been deeply embedded in the "symbolic economy" of the city (Zukin 1995). Moreover, the cosmopolitan city and the early manufacture and marketing of these "usable ethnic pasts" suggests a historical lineage of racialization in which we might locate and more readily understand the conservative, corporate multiculturalism of today's neo-liberal, global metropolis.

The Better City: Americanization, Race, and Citizenship

Another exceptionalist narrative about the city involved Los Angeles as the archetypal melting pot and a new racial frontier. In *The Better City* Reverend Dana Bartlett embraced LA's unique ethnic geography rather differently – as the perfect opportunity to forge a "new world" (1907: 76) where the melding of citizens and newcomers created a city able to transcend the conflicts of the East, Midwest, and South. Bartlett envisioned Los Angeles as an exemplary place – a pure, organic, and interdependent community underpinned by civic responsibility, environmental reform, and the teachings of the Social Gospel. By predicting the triumph of the melting pot and the eradication of the slum, Bartlett envisaged a city that contrasted starkly with the tenement urbanism of New York and Chicago.

African American Progressives, who were city boosters in their own right, shared Bartlett's utopian vision of LA as a "new Jerusalem" (1907: 76). Placed within a wider Western narrative of freedom, opportunity, and idealism (Flamming 2005; Deverell and Flamming 1999), Los Angeles became a new "racial frontier" beyond the South and the black/white divide (Taylor 1998, cited in Flamming 2005: 5). LA's complex ethnic mix and flexible racial dynamic fostered greater opportunities for homeownership, entrepreneurship,

and civil rights. As Douglas Flamming claims, "black Angelenos confronted a … world … in which racism was more subtle than blatant, more unpredictable than not … [and] because the racial mix in Los Angeles was also yellow and brown, the relationships among racial and ethnic groups proved persistently uncertain" (2005: 4). In the West generally, race, whiteness, and citizenship were viewed differently. And in Los Angeles in particular, successive ethnic groups either inherited the full force of earlier patterns of anti-Asian and anti-Mexican nativism, or felt the power of racism diluted by the presence of other stigmatized groups. However, if LA's ethnic dynamic meant that Angelenos "saw race differently," this did not mean that race failed to become a powerful organizing category. If LA's unique racial climate promoted opportunities for African American homeownership and civil rights – hence the black booster mythology – it also circumscribed these openings, for existing nativist impulses shaped the rise of an institutionalized racial segregation that subordinated all people of color. As a result, LA became a "half-free environment" (Flamming 2005: 2, 78) dominated by shifting racial hierarchies.

Like the Cosmopolitan City, the Better City disguised a racialized landscape in which citizenship remained highly tenuous. Nowhere is the disjuncture between myth and reality better illustrated than in the Progressive-era campaigns to Americanize immigrants and newcomers, which intensified during and after World War I. One of these campaigns, the Christian Americanization program initiated by the Methodist Church of All Nations (CAN) during the 1920s, emerged in direct response to the city's unique ethnic geography. The CAN settlement house was located just south of Downtown, in such a polyglot area that its founder and minister, G. Bromley Oxnam, had little choice but to tolerate plurality and uplift parishioners through social service rather than proselytizing and "one hundred percent Americanism." CAN offered local residents welfare and social services regardless of their faith and conversion, for Oxnam's ultimate desire was not to enlarge his congregation, but to provide parishioners with the skills to move on and out of this impoverished district. As Mark Wild notes, at a time when many Americanization programs imposed Anglo values on newcomers in a bid to eradicate their cultural and religious beliefs, Oxnam promoted a "kindlier, gentler incorporation" that tolerated difference and plurality (2005: 64). Oxnam's approach was not only controversial; it typified a real need to respond pragmatically to the city's complex ethnic geography. As a variant of Bartlett's melting pot, Oxnam's pluralistic approach certainly chimed with Michael Engh's assertion that LA was "far more multicultural than anything yet encountered in the nation … this emerging polyglot metropolis [called for] an effort to articulate a new model beyond that of the melting pot" (2001: 212). Yet CAN failed in its objectives, notes Wild, because it embodied elements of "racist paternalism," denied its ethnic subjects leadership, and demanded adherence to a vague Americanism over and above existing cultural, religious, and national loyalties (2005: 81–3).

Like the cosmopolitan city narrative, the melting pot mythology hid patterns of coercion, conformity, and racialization. If CAN's demise demonstrates the failure of the melting pot, it also suggests the ways in which race contracted the boundaries of citizenship. Indeed, the Americanization campaign as a whole differentiated ethnic groups and their capacity for assimilation along spatial and racial lines. According to Dana Bartlett, the "new" European immigrants – "industrious and thrifty" Russians, Italians, Jews, Germans, and Scandinavians – were "quickly becoming Americanized" through residential dispersal, homeownership, and business, while Mexicans remained "crowded together" in shacks and the Chinese "close together in colonies" (1907: 72, 79, 82). Through health, hygiene, and homemaking programs, Americanization helped institutionalize a series of cultural, moral, and domestic norms that became bound up with notions of whiteness and racial purity. Thus, if Americanization sought to absorb diversity, it also instituted a non-white category in which certain ethnic groups were deemed, at best, assimilable yet racialized subjects, and at worst, aberrant and permanently ineligible for citizenship.

Mexican and Asian immigrants in particular were placed within this non-white category (Molina 2006). Macy Street School Principal Nora Sterry confirmed this view when she singled out Mexican and Chinese immigrants for "their striking lack of standards, habits and ideas analogous to [her] own" (1924: 80). For Sterry's counterpart, Americanization teacher Amanda Mathews Chase, Mexicans "offer[ed] all the immigrant perplexities to the highest degree" and remained "at the bottom of the district melting pot" because of their "Indian" origins (Chase, cited in California Commission of Immigration and Housing 1916: 142). Yet non-whiteness was not a stable or a unitary category, but a series of concentric circles. As Molina's study of "overlapping racial discourses" (2006: 43) in relation to Americanization and public health programs demonstrates, Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican residents were racialized along a continuum with other non-white groups, and principally vis-à-vis one another. Anti-Asian nativism directed first at the Chinese and then the Japanese, framed the reception and perception of Mexicans. These ethnic groups were treated differently, however, according to their shifting position within the political economy. When federal legislation excluded Asian immigration outright in 1924, Mexican migrants became the primary source of cheap labor, and subjects for reform, Americanization, and citizenship above the Chinese and Japanese.

This pattern of racialization was evident much earlier, however, in the differential treatment accorded Sonoratown and Chinatown by settlement house workers and social reformers. Close to one another spatially and in the social imagination, Chinatown and Sonoratown were subjected to the racializing discourses of the Progressive reformer from the late 1890s. Although Sonoratown exuded "nothing but the squalor of a Chinese city"

for settlement worker Bessie Stoddart (1905: 296), the old Mexican Quarter became the principal target for reform and welfare initiatives while Chinatown did not. However, the decision to offer Mexicans reform and potential citizenship above the Chinese and Japanese did not preclude their racialization as "disease carriers" and public charges. And when the Great Depression deepened, city and county officials reactivated these racial discourses to sanction Mexican repatriation (Molina 2006: 116–57).

Understanding racial formation through this Latino/Asian dynamic allows us to see beyond the "new" immigration historiography and the black/white paradigm. In Los Angeles the non-white category derived a complexity and momentum of its own from the region's distinctive ethnic contours, and in particular, from the shifting nature of the regional economy and its workforce. The transition from Asian to Mexican labor in line with federal immigration policy partly explains these overlapping discourses. But these shifting configurations of race and non-whiteness were also tied to rural-urban migratory labor flows stemming from the regional economy. These patterns of race and racialization did not simply derive from Progressive responses to the new urbanism, principally because the boom period did not simply create a city: it created an entire metropolitan region forged from an interlocking web of towns, suburbs, and camps where ethnic laborers and their families lived, worked, and migrated into and out of during economic downturns. Rural-urban migratory flows not only denied ethnic workers decent housing, welfare, permanency, and citizenship; they also generated racial discourses that transcended the urban/rural divide. In these discourses, ethnic workers – and principally Mexican workers – contaminated the new townships of Greater Los Angeles with unregulated, primitive slums and shack towns and brought disease, dependency, and disorganization to the city during off-seasons. These racial fears and labor migrations stimulated the Americanization of ethnic workers in outlying camps and *colonias* after the 1910s, but also the demand for immigration restriction and repatriation during the 1920s and early 1930s.

If Mexican laborers were racialized by way of their position as seasonal workers within the regional economy, they were also racialized in spaces beyond the region and the nation – as transnational laborers and colonial subjects. Mexican immigrants were bound by the racial representations and exploitations of a "culture of empire" (González 2004) on their arrival in the US. US-Mexican economic relations, informal empire, and an emerging body of literature on "Old Mexico" by American writers, travelers, and missionaries, significantly shaped responses towards Mexican immigrants north of the border between 1880 and 1930. So too did the transnational milieu of modern social scientific thought, in which academics studying immigrant communities at the local level drew not only on models of urban sociology and an emerging regional anthropology, but on anthropological studies of ethnic folk societies and cultures.

The "Good Community": The White Suburb and the Ethnic Slum

These varied sites and patterns of racialization explain why Bartlett's "Better City" became the ultimate "fragmented metropolis" (Fogelson 1967). According to Robert Fogelson, the concept of the "good community" – a place of single-family homes, gardens, and social harmony – lay at the heart of Progressive-era Los Angeles (p. 144). A variant of Bartlett's "Better City," the "good community" involved a drive for "homogeneity" that promoted a series of segregated white suburbs (p. 274). As the creation of Anglo settlers who came from small rural towns and farms across the East and Midwest, the "good community" expressed deeply anti-urban and anti-modern impulses, and ultimately, the rejection of the American City with all its vices, poverty, and most importantly, its diversity. If Bartlett's drive for moral, social, political, and spiritual purity resulted in a pastoral garden city, then the conservative and regulatory dynamic at the heart of the "good community" created a definitively white city.

If the cosmopolitan city demanded the ethnic village, then the white city demanded the ethnic slum. Indeed, the distance between the ethnic village and the slum was never very great. Both of these racialized spatial categories existed along a continuum central to the debate about the Progressive city, and in times of unrest and rapid social change, the village all too easily collapsed into the primitive urban slum. The vision of Chinatown and Sonoratown in the social imagination was already deeply ambiguous and contradictory. If Sonoratown was the "last remnant of decayed romance," it was also "detested by the citizen … as the last outpost against progress" and feared by the reformer as the place where "the low life of Mexico [was] duplicated" (Mathews 1906: 67). And in Connor's *Saunterings*, Chinatown is a place for consumption and entertainment but also a place for slumming and purification. In and among the fairytale lanterns, "dirt and dinginess" and "foul odors" emanate from local gambling houses, opium dens, and "secret passages" (pp. 22–3).

Clustered together in the northern, eastern, and southern sections of the city, ethnic neighborhoods were neglected by municipal authorities and demonized in the public imagination as "slums." As spatial and racial categories and counter-images to the Progressive city, Sonoratown and Chinatown first earned their reputation as "the underworld of all nationalities" during the 1860s (Pitt 1998: 264). However, the territory known as the slums expanded beyond Sonoratown and Chinatown towards and across the LA River in line with the movement of ethnic populations. As the Eastside began to emerge, housing and health officials targeted the Macy, Aliso, Anderson, and Utah Street district in the Riverbed territory. One local settlement house opined that the city was "spreading along the riverbed more rapidly than on the heights [and] … building the shack as well as the bungalow" (Los Angeles

Settlement Association 1910–11: 7). This unregulated "underside" of Bartlett's Better City needed containing, and rapidly.

Reformers and municipal officials mapped ethnicity through a series of racialized dichotomies – light and dark, high and low, modern and primitive, moral and deviant – all of which cohered in the slum/suburb divide. The binary opposition between the white suburb and the ethnic slum became a classic trope in local-color fiction, reform literature, and urban photography. Bessie Stoddart concluded her exposé of the city's housing problem with a photograph of a "beautiful residence," a white house elevated above one of Sonoratown's house courts (1905: 298). By employing the slum/suburb divide, Stoddart placed Los Angeles within the nationalist mythology of the City on a Hill. Indeed, it was the demarcation and regulation of the urban ethnic slum that sustained LA's reputation as a white city, and as the "white spot of America" (Wild 2005). In this exceptionalist narrative, ethnicity had to be sanitized, contained, or excluded, rather than accommodated, lest it contaminate the "good community."

The slum/suburb divide was both a racial and a spatial divide. Recent studies on planning, health, and public policy in Progressive-era Los Angeles (Deverell 2004; Wild 2005; Molina 2006) have unraveled this dynamic relationship between racialization and the transformation of the material landscape. A series of interrelated spatial practices – slum clearance, public health ordinances, zoning, community building schemes and restrictive covenants – segregated non-white groups as inferior, foreign, diseased, and aberrant. The racialization of space worked to police ethnic boundaries and shore up white hegemony by containing or moving ethnic populations within and across the city. Collectively, Progressive housing reform, slum clearance, and zoning for new industries dispersed ethnic populations beyond Downtown and helped structure the rise of the segregated Eastside.

The rationale for slum clearance in the city's central districts derived not simply from the Progressive reformer's belief in environmental determinism, but from arguments that racial inferiority fostered primitive living conditions. Under the direction of the first municipal housing commission after 1906, LA's slum clearance campaign targeted the city's equivalent of the Eastern tenement, the house court, a lot comprising several dwellings with a communal courtyard. Although inhabited by many different nationalities, the house court came to be identified not simply with "primitive" living, but with Mexican residents in particular: the house courts of Sonoratown and Utah Street became known as "peon" or "cholo" courts. After passing a new housing ordinance in 1907, municipal officials and the city press deployed racialized debates about Mexican primitivism to justify removing rather than rehabilitating the courts.

Like Progressive housers, public health officials also demonized Sonoratown, Chinatown, and the Riverbed territory. Public health policy and discourse played a critical role in excluding and/or reforming the city's Chinese,

Japanese, and Mexican inhabitants, and in constructing "Mexican," "Chinese," and "Japanese" as racial categories in popular and academic discourse (Molina 2006). Municipal zoning ordinances prohibiting certain "ethnic" businesses (Chinese laundries and Japanese fruit vendors in particular), segregated health centers, and the targeting of ethnic communities through maternity, sterilization, and quarantining campaigns, labeled Asians and Mexicans as "public heath hazards" and "disease carriers." Specific diseases – leprosy, typhoid fever, and smallpox – became associated with Asian and Mexican inferiority. And as racially deficient carriers of contagion, LA's ethnic subjects endangered the "good community." The outbreak of pneumonic-bubonic plague in 1924 exemplifies the connection between public health, place, and race (Deverell 2004: 172–206). As Deverell argues, health officials depicted the plague as a peculiarly "Mexican" disease – carried into the city by a Mexican field hand and limited to the Mexican Quarter. Quarantining procedures and the demolition of infected housing effectively controlled both the plague and the ethnic body. By publicizing, containing, and eradicating plague as a distinctly "Mexican" disease, city elites, boosters, and health officials policed the boundaries of race and secured LA's reputation as the white city.

The municipal response to the plague constituted one of a series of attempts to segregate LA along ethnic lines. If city elites, boosters, and officials failed to spatially divide ethnic groupings – no single Japanese, Jewish, Italian, African American, or Mexican quarter existed during these years – they did institute a color line across the city, which checked the residential mobility of non-white inhabitants. When ethnic groups dispersed, they populated suburban tracts set aside for them on cheap, undeveloped land, near industrial districts, riverbeds, and gullies, a pattern replicated across Greater Los Angeles in outlying towns such as Whittier and El Monte. The communities of Watts, Central Avenue, and Belvedere offered African American, Asian, and Mexican families affordable housing tracts beyond the central city. However, real estate practices and restrictive covenants prevented their expansion and out-movement into predominantly Anglo neighborhoods. Over time, patterns of ethnic succession and white ethnic out-movement made the Eastside an incubator for non-whites.

Ethnicity was deeply embedded in the making of Los Angeles as both image and reality. Yet, the strategies used to appropriate, absorb, sanitize, and eliminate diversity, and the different exceptionalist narratives and racialized spaces that accompanied these, were never separate. Rather, they belonged to one overarching strategy, the "corporate reconstruction" of ethnicity, whereby the segregation, exclusion, or absorption of ethnic communities weakened their "collective strength" and bolstered capitalism and white hegemony (Wild 2005: 4). Within this framework, race and ethnicity were malleable constructs that collapsed varied notions of difference within one schema: race and ethnicity were mapped through the organizing

binaries of modernity and tradition, the progressive and the primitive, the pure and the deviant, and an evolutionary framework that structured "time, space, and power" (Tenorio Trillo 1999: 1158). LA's ethnic subjects were positioned along a continuum where they were devalued as primitive slum dwellers or exoticized as remnants of a pre-industrial age with the same result: they were located beyond modernity, whiteness, and citizenship. And because these strategies occurred simultaneously, practices of racial exclusion and segregation were all too often occluded behind a pastoralized image of ethnic difference.

Ethnic Agency

However, LA's ethnic subjects did not necessarily fall prey to the racial categories and spaces imposed upon them by city elites, employers, officials, and reformers. The "fragmented metropolis" produced a dialectic between coercion and exclusion on the one hand, and resistance on the other. Moreover, the malleability of these racial and ethnic constructs proved both a strength and a weakness. Because these categories of difference were shifting and unstable, they were resisted, undermined, and rearticulated by LA's ethnic subjects. Ethnic resistance produced new social and cultural worlds beyond the melting pot ideal and beyond the essentialized models of the village and the slum.

Of the Eastside's Russian Molokan community, sociologist Pauline Young concluded, "The old structure is crumbling and losing its potency and nothing comparable is taking its place" (1929: 402). Yet recent community studies tell a different story, one in which the Eastside in particular witnessed the reorganization rather than the disorganization of immigrant and second-generation communities, and the emergence of new hybrid ethnic entities. Different ethnicities lived, worked, and organized alongside one another, despite the persistent efforts of corporate elites to segregate LA along ethnic lines. As Mark Wild (2005) demonstrates in his study of LA's multiethnic neighborhoods, childhood and adult relationships formed in the schoolroom, the playground, the workplace, and the street, forged a model of pluralism beyond Bartlett and Oxnam's melting pot ideal. Through street oratory, religious revivals such as the Azusa Street Revival of 1906, labor unions, and radical groups such as the International Workers of the World, different ethnicities converged, united, and shared their commitment to socialism, communism, and evangelism. Only over time, argues Wild, did LA become the "hardened, corporate liberal landscape of mono-ethnic neighborhoods" projected by city elites (2005: 208). These early multiethnic alliances forged the basis for new forms of resistance, which came to fruition in the interethnic labor organizing of the New Deal period.

Mexican, African American, and Chinese communities actively resisted the coercive, racializing tendencies of the Progressive city by affirming alternative models of ethnicity and citizenship (Sánchez 1993; Flamming 2005; Molina 2006). These communities negotiated the contradictions and exclusions of Progressivism, Americanization, and urban development by fashioning alternative nationalisms and "new ethnic political cultures" (Flamming 1994: 223) from the seeds of patriotic organizations, benevolent societies, labor unions, and the mobilization of the second generation. The Chinese resisted a series of early zoning ordinances, and the demonization of Chinatown, by petitioning the city with the aid of benevolent societies such as the Chinese Six Companies and the consul general (Molina 2006). As Chinatown evolved from "vice district" to tourist playground in the public imagination after the mid-1920s, thanks in part to the rise of the restaurant industry, Chinese merchants and the local chamber of commerce quickly embraced this new, romanticized image. They adopted their own "purposeful Orientalizing" – shutting down "disreputable" establishments, containing tong conflict, and redesigning cultural festivals and vernacular architecture for the "tastes" of tourists (Light 1974: 390–1). By rearticulating the Cosmopolitan City, Chinese elites worked not simply to boost the local economy, but to promote the respectability of Chinatown and to legitimize the citizenship of its inhabitants.

The emergence of a new generation of ethnic leaders who articulated their own brand of Progressivism also characterized Mexican and African American communities and the rise of a middle-class elite. As a product of residential segregation, the Mexican suburb of Belvedere spawned a community of homeowners, businesses, schools, and patriotic and welfare organizations during the 1920s. Businessman and Methodist minister Zeferino Ramírez helped establish the Mexican Chamber of Commerce, supported Belvedere's Mexican school, organized patriotic meetings, and assisted his compatriots on civic matters. As an intermediary and local representative, Ramírez was renowned in both the Mexican and the Anglo community as a model Progressive citizen (Sánchez 1993: 114–15; 1994). African American community leaders were also "strivers and joiners" who expressed Progressive values of uplift, self-help, and education through homeownership, businesses, churches, women's clubs, and importantly, through "race papers" such as the *California Eagle* and civil rights groups such as the Afro-American Council and the NAACP (Flamming 2005: 8, 26). The limits and the potentialities of Progressivism spawned this new "ethnic political culture" (Flamming 1994: 223). Indeed, by fashioning an alternative booster ideology that re-envisioned the city as a new "racial frontier," the African American middle class might not have achieved full equality, but they did forge the basis for a civil rights campaign that succeeded in electing Frederick Roberts, California's first African American assemblyman, in 1918 (Flamming 1994: 221). Thus, despite exclusion,

LA's ethnic subjects emerged as Progressives, boosters, and leaders in their own right. In doing so, they not only resisted discriminatory racial categories and practices; they forged new counter-narratives that redefined the meaning of place, ethnicity, and citizenship in the City of Angels.

Conclusion

The recent scholarship on Progressive-era Los Angeles provides new models for understanding the construction and malleability of race and ethnicity – in relation to time, space, and citizenship, and in the context of the political economy, institutional practice, and legislation at the local, regional, national, and transnational level. But collectively, what this scholarship suggests most of all, is that a series of narratives and mythologies about Progressive-era Los Angeles – its exceptionalism and its future growth – became entwined with the reworking of the ethnic past and the ethnic present in literal and figurative terms. An amalgam of groups and individuals – city elites, boosters, officials, and reformers – came to depend upon this strategy for enacting their spiritual and "material dreams." Notably, they were all architects and beneficiaries of the "corporate reconstruction" of ethnicity. Appropriating, absorbing, sanitizing, and excluding diversity reconfigured not simply the boundaries of time and space, but of whiteness, citizenship, and power. The symbiotic relationship between the ethnic past and present, and the mythologization and material transformation of the city, produced patterns of exclusion and racialization, and in turn, patterns of ethnic agency and resistance. New counter-narratives about the city and its promise of freedom and citizenship emerged from within and against the dominant yet shifting discourses of race and ethnicity. These narratives resonate today in debates about social justice, exclusion, and multiculturalism in the global metropolis.

Indeed, early twentieth-century Los Angeles forms part of a historical lineage of racialized place-making, and the city is a critical starting point for any understanding of racial formation in the contemporary American metropolis. The dynamics of today's neo-liberal city and the reinvention of the global metropolis through varied forms of multiculturalism, consumption, and the symbolic economy, echo the heavily pluralistic yet racialized landscapes of Progressive-era LA. Likewise, the multiple migrations and powerful racializing dynamics that positioned early Asian, Mexican, and African American Angelenos beyond the melting pot and the black/white divide are now vital for unraveling the complexities of Latinization, Asianization, and multiethnic organizing in the twenty-first century city. Los Angeles has always provided an alternative model for exploring the shifting boundaries of race, ethnicity, and citizenship. In our current age of transnational migration and shifting demographic landscapes, this model is more critical than ever.

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Chapter Four

Between "White Spot" and "World City": Racial Integration and the Roots of Multiculturalism

Scott Kurashige

In the midst of World War II, Nobel Prize-winning author and social critic Pearl Buck was invited to address a grouping of Los Angeles civic leaders on the subject of race relations in a changing world. She used the opportunity to challenge what was almost certainly a predominantly white audience to address the problem of racism. While the nation's white majority had established its authority over the Americas through conquest and oppression, whites were a small minority in a world populated mostly by "colored peoples." Hence, with technology advancing and the world's citizenry growing more and more interconnected, whites were forced to choose between living as equals with people of color or impositng white planetary domination through "military preparation of the most barbarous and savage kind" that threatened "to destroy all civilization" (McWilliams 1944: 272–3).

Global economic and geopolitical developments of the evolving American century compelled the United States to transform its conception of race relations. Buck argued that such developments rendered California "the most important part of our country" because "the center of gravity in our country [was] moving westward." "The people in our Eastern states are already looking toward you," she implored the Los Angeles civic leaders, "as these great questions arise of how to deal with the people of Asia and South America." By integrating diverse communities of color into mainstream society, they could demonstrate to the world that America stood for democracy and human equality. This was ultimately an "opportunity to shape the world's direction" that presented itself but "once in an æon." "Because you in California face the Pacific and Asia," concluded Buck, "you among us have the crux in your hands. You can, by what you decide, be a barrier – or you can be a gateway to a new and better world, for us and for all peoples" (ibid.).

As exemplified by Pearl Buck's Town Hall speech, World War II marked a critical turning point in the paradigm shift toward racial integration in Los Angeles. During the interwar era, the city's boosters catered to the parochial prejudices of white migrants and residents by openly advocating white supremacy and residential segregation. By the 1970s, Los Angeles' elites could be found championing multiculturalism as emblematic of the city's cosmopolitan connection to a globalized economy. While making no pretense to capturing the full diversity of multiethnic Los Angeles, this chapter examines demographic, political, and ideological shifts that were tied to struggles over integration and precipitated the transformation of the nation's "white spot" into a global city. Rife with ironies and contradictions, the history of integration in Los Angeles resists linear portrayals. Nevertheless, it must be known by those who desire a full appreciation of how a place that Carey McWilliams (1973) once acknowledged was "an island on the land" could become what Los Angeles School theorists – viewing Los Angeles as a model of "post-Fordist" urbanism – have called a "world city" (Scott and Soja 1996). In this regard, it occupies a period of relative scholarly neglect between the post-1848 origins of the metropolis (Fogelson 1993) and the "world city" in its more finished form. Building from Buck's insight that the nation's "center of gravity" was "moving westward," the chapter draws attention to Los Angeles as a key local site to study the shaping of a regional identity, reshaping of national identity, and emergence of a globalized identity. In particular, it foregrounds the production of multiethnic discourses and communities in Los Angeles that broke with dominant models of "race relations" and thus emphasizes the need to transcend studies of Los Angeles that have generally followed the contours of black/white narratives of US urban history (Sides 2003; Flamming 2005).

Interwar Period: Revisiting the "White Spot" of the Nation

Historians have characterized the pre-World War II period of racial segregation as a time when Los Angeles defined itself as the nation's "white spot" (Avila 2004; Wild 2005). During the population surge and building boom of the 1920s, commercial and residential developers spurred the decentralization of the city by creating 3,200 subdivisions and 250,000 homes. Emphasizing the city's Westside as its bourgeois best side, boosters appealed to white middle-class revulsion of the "big city" by trading in idyllic images of homogenous suburbs protected from "nuisances" like smokestack industries and residential "invasions" by non-whites (Jackson 1985; Fogelson 1993; Kurashige 2008). Large-scale developers like Janss Investment Company, best known for building Westwood, established new standards for race and class exclusivity while implementing measures to ensure neighborhood stability. For instance, Janss covered its properties with court-validated deed restrictions preventing them

Table 4.1 A rough periodization of twentieth-century Los Angeles history from "white spot" to "world city".

Period	*Racial paradigm*	*Prevailing geographic scale*	*Key historical development*	*Defining moments*
Interwar (1920–40)	Segregation	Regional	Los Angeles as locally distinct "exception" and "white spot"	1920s boom, institution of restrictive covenants, Depression-era repatriations
World War II and aftermath (1941–9)	Integration (domestic)	National	Los Angeles integrated into national economic and political patterns	Japanese American internment, "Negro Victory" movement, Zoot Suit riots, *Shelley* decision
Postwar/Cold War (1950s–1960s)	Integration (domestic and global)	National to global	Los Angeles stretches toward global economy while seeking to contain domestic "problems"	McCarthyism, rise of postwar suburbs/ghettoes, Watts Rebellion
World city (1970s–1990s)	Multiculturalism	Global	Los Angeles as trend setter; nexus of global trade, migration, and intercultural exchange	1973 Bradley election, 1984 Olympics, 1992 Rodney King uprising

from being "used or occupied by any person who is not of the white or the Caucasian race" (*Janss Investment Company v. Walden*, 196 Cal. 753 [1925]). These neo-boosters played the role of modern-day conquerors. Through their appropriation of the "mission" architectural style, they anointed themselves heirs to the Spanish past. At the same time, they viewed the hallowed creation of suburban tracts housing thousands of white migrants as the fulfillment of manifest destiny. "For centuries, the Anglo-Saxon race has been marching westward," declared the official publication of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in November 1924. "The apex of this movement is Los Angeles County" (Davis 2000: 73–4).

Notwithstanding this overt connection to racism, the "white spot" – a pro-growth designation by the national Chamber of Commerce – originally symbolized the quest of Los Angeles' conservative civic leaders for an anti-union "open shop" business climate (McWilliams 1973). In this sense, it actually worked to spur diversity. Migrants of color from many points, including Mexico, Asia, and the American South, were drawn to the city in part because capitalists welcomed them as accomplices in their drive to keep the ranks of labor divided. But there were strict limits to the mobility provided by conditions of "industrial freedom" during the interwar period. Many retailers and entertainment venues kept their workforces and accommodations segregated, as did some public facilities like swimming pools. Furthermore, separate and unequal schools, if not by formal decree, were maintained through the gerrymandering of enrollment boundaries. And with employers coveting immigrants and people of color mainly because their low social status rendered them pliable labor, white skilled tradesmen continued to control the city's relatively high-paying jobs. Worse yet, white leaders from the capitalist and working class united in their opportunistic scapegoating of racial others. Spurred by depictions of Japanese immigrants as a "Yellow Peril," they called for exclusionary measures at the local, state, and national levels with their efforts culminating in the near total ban on Asian immigration provisioned by the federal 1924 Immigration Act. As the economic woes of the Depression set in, white agitators demanded the repatriation of Mexican and Filipino immigrants and gladly sent their American-born children packing with them (de Graaf 1970; Modell 1977; Sánchez 1993).

Although non-white residents were clearly confined to the margins of the city's labor and housing markets, to speak of their histories only in terms of segregation and "ghettoization" is to fail to recognize the dynamic nature of community formation in Los Angeles. Robert Fogelson's curt characterizations of the city's people of color in *The Fragmented Metropolis* (1993) typifies such a neglect. Fogelson remarked: "Exploited economically, separated residentially, isolated socially, and ignored politically, these people remained entirely outside the Los Angeles community between 1885 and 1930." Mike Davis (1990), by contrast, highlighted the centrality of race in *City of Quartz*. Still, despite astute allusions to the significance of

Los Angeles' "polyethnic" culture, Davis was primarily concerned in this work with demystifying technologies of power.

Through my work revolving around the intersecting histories of black and Japanese Americans, I have sought to extend our analysis of power and hegemony while joining the more recent scholarly push to trace the emergence of multiethnic communities within the interstices of the white bourgeois city. Before World War II, thousands of African Americans, Asians, and Mexicans resided near Downtown in the Plaza district, Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Little Manila, and the Central Avenue district. Transient in character and prone to displacement by redevelopment, these were some of the city's oldest neighborhoods (Romo 1983; Wild 2005; España-Maram 2006). Natalia Molina's (2006) research on racial ideology and public health has demonstrated how such places were deployed as a dialectical other against which Los Angeles' overriding reputation as "healthy" and "open" could be nurtured. Constructing a white normative social and geographical hierarchy, local authorities cast them as congested sites where disease festered and needed to be quarantined. Nevertheless, these urban communities, despite this disparagement, were beachheads of opportunity for newcomers. For instance, Central Avenue and Little Tokyo offered migrant workers low-rent accommodations in a city with clearly marked-off limits, and they especially served as sites of small business formation for black and Japanese Americans. These enterprises in turn became the basis for accumulating the social and economic capital that would be used to cement the presence of communities of color in the city. Furthermore, Central Avenue and Little Tokyo were not discrete but overlapping communities (as were the Plaza district and Chinatown). Both were also home to multiethnic populations and exemplified the social, economic, and cultural traffic that developed between ethnic groups (Kurashige 2008).

Although various minority populations had settled in outlying areas (like Pacoima, Sawtelle, and Watts), upwardly mobile homeowners of color now sought out homes in suburban neighborhoods settled by whites. In some cases, they moved into housing uncovered by restrictive covenants, while, in other cases, they fought to break down restrictions and resisted racist violence and intimidation. In nearly all instances, however, they formed communities in concert rather than isolation from other ethnicities. On the Eastside, Mexican Americans established a new residential concentration among Jews in Boyle Heights. Many Japanese Americans and some African Americans followed suit. On the Westside, black pioneers carved out a niche in West Jefferson (also referred to as the "West Side") and were joined by Japanese immigrants, as well as smaller clusters of Chinese, Korean, and Mexican Americans. As they sought to transgress the dominant spatial order, members of each group found themselves positioned differently. Jews were the first minority group to be socially accepted as "white" in Westside neighborhoods like Fairfax. Others had to find cracks in the segregationist armor. While generally viewed as socially

non-white, Mexicans gained leverage in the housing market because the courts at times deemed them legally "white" or "Caucasian." Meanwhile, cast as non-white socially and legally, blacks developed a multiplicity of strategies to attack housing restrictions. They employed legal campaigns backed by a city-wide network of civil rights attorneys, organized collectively through activist homeowners' associations, colluded with "blockbusting" realtors, and even resorted to armed resistance on the rare occasion. Denied the right of naturalized citizenship by federal law, Asians were in large measure the easiest to exclude. Nonetheless, some Japanese immigrants moved out of Little Tokyo into suburban areas where Mexicans and blacks had established a foothold or where their work as gardeners, servants, or shopkeepers had rendered them relatively amenable to neighboring whites (Bond 1936; Vorspan and Gartner 1970; Kurashige 2008).

The Wartime Roots of Integration

World War II gave rise to multiple forms of integration. First, the wartime mobilization against fascism provided leverage to opponents of racial discrimination. Liberal critiques of biological racism, most prominently represented by Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* (1944), garnered newfound attention beyond academic circles and fostered a new discourse of integration among policymakers. Second, military service served as a site of integration for thousands from Los Angeles' diverse ethnic communities. Though most fought within segregated units, they would return to assert bolder claims to the rights of US citizenship. Third, the Southern California home front was especially remade during the war. Because the region was considered a strategic site for defense production, Los Angeles was quickly integrated into the national economy. Billions of dollars in federal contracts poured into the region during the war, transforming an "immature" economy into a warhorse housing over a half-million industrial jobs (Kidner and Neff 1945). Fourth, the resulting conditions of "overemployment" created the prospects for non-white residents to be integrated into the primary labor market and thus employ industrial employment to achieve economic and social stability just as so many European immigrants had done. The process of racial integration, however, would prove to be highly contradictory.

Deftly negotiating discourses of race, nation, and war, African American organizers especially applied grassroots pressure for civil rights. Under the duress of A. Philip Randolph's call for a national March on Washington against American racism, President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the summer of 1941 issued Executive Order 8802 prohibiting discrimination by defense contractors and prompting the creation of the Fair Employment Practices Committee to monitor compliance. Black leaders in Los Angeles seized this historic moment of opportunity by launching the "Negro Victory" movement.

Claiming the mantle of high patriotism, African Americans insisted the state accommodate their passionate desire to serve the war effort by eliminating all discriminatory barriers to war-related employment. Placing demands on local, state, and federal institutions, they asserted that all war workers must have access to housing, education, transportation, and public accommodations regardless of race. Black employment in local war-related plants soared from next to nothing at the time of Pearl Harbor to thirty thousand workers by 1943, stimulating an in-migration that doubled the city's African American population during the war (Anderson 1976; Smith 1978; Kurashige 2008). In the end, the combined effects of change emanating from above and below was profound. According to McWilliams (1949: 3–4), while "race-baiting" was "widespread and endemic" in prewar Los Angeles, politicians could all be found paying at least "lip service to the idea of fair treatment" after the war.

These long-overlooked stories of black struggle in Los Angeles also carry forward the promise to enrich our conception of African American history by situating it within a multiracial and transpacific context. For example, critiquing a recently published black/white narrative of Los Angeles history, Gerald Horne (2005) has argued for more nuanced analyses demonstrating how the "Race War" in the Pacific impacted the status of African Americans. In my own work, I have stressed how the ability of black leaders to assert their right to belong to America was bolstered by the nation's intense concentration on winning a "total war" against a "Jap" enemy – one so racialized and dehumanized that the call for Japanese American internment became an extension of the war itself. Mayor Fletcher Bowron argued that the "Japanese problem" was centered in Los Angeles, home to the largest concentration of ethnic Japanese in the continental US. Leading a chorus of local politicians and civic leaders, Bowron – a liberal Republican who had established a reputation as a civil libertarian – warned that Los Angeles would be the site of a "second Pearl Harbor" facilitated by Japanese Americans harboring "a secret loyalty to the Japanese Emperor" (Kurashige 2008: 119–20). Yet, if transnational politics hardened racial divisions in this way, we can also see the war as opening up a "new cartography of possibilities" emanating from what Andrew F. Jones and Nikhil Pal Singh (2003) have dubbed the "Black Pacific." To avoid humiliating the nation's Asian allies and fueling Japan's race war propaganda, Congress began to reorder domestic racial policies as it sought to integrate Asian peoples into America's sphere of influence. In turn, black leaders in Los Angeles incorporated Asian and Asian American concerns into their agenda by supporting, for example, the abolition of the Chinese Exclusion Act and India's struggle for independence.

For Mexican Americans, the unifying effects of the anti-Japanese mobilization proved to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the drive for national unity provided new grounds for some Mexican Americans to gain employment and the social acceptance of whites. On the other hand, the removal of the city's despised Japanese community made pachucos the

primary local target of racialized hostility. Two subsequent wartime events, exposing the harsh climate of racism and the second-degree citizenship status of Mexican Americans, would come to occupy a central place in Chicano historiography. In January 1943, seventeen Mexican American youths were convicted of crimes ranging from assault to first-degree murder in the well-publicized Sleepy Lagoon case. The jury was swayed by the prosecution's emotional appeal highlighting the defendants' supposed savage racial essence. Five months later, riots erupted in Los Angeles as white sailors went on a five-day rampage attacking "zoot suiters," most of whom were Mexicans but some of whom were African Americans and Filipinos. That the rioting sailors were joined by hundreds of civilians and spurred on by the tacit approval of local authorities highlights a third aspect of parochial white nationalism. While the state integrated non-whites into the military and the primary labor market to defend national security, the prospect of the wartime paradigm shift in race relations bringing about economic advancement, political empowerment, and cultural freedom for African Americans, Mexicans, and Asians made many whites feel less secure (Acuña 1983; Pagán 2003). Most whites would only accept the integration of minorities who knew their proper place in a world governed by white hegemony.

Social Democracy and Multiracial Integration

The crises and struggles of World War II gave rise to a battle over integration that continued into the postwar era. In the wartime rise of industrial employment, social democrats saw an opportunity for tens of thousands of non-white workers to achieve political empowerment and obtain economic security. Bolstered by the new proletarian base of workers of color and the interventionist policies introduced during the war, social democrats like *California Eagle* publisher Charlotta A. Bass advanced a working-class agenda that linked the fight against discrimination to the fight for unionization, full employment, and welfare state provisions. They worked with white labor activists – some of whom were Communist Party members or allies – to recruit workers of color into the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which they deployed as a vehicle to give collective voice to the struggles of diverse communities. Historians researching this aspect of the city's social movement legacy have contributed to a broader effort by US historians to recover the breakthroughs and missed opportunities arising from the struggles revolving around Popular Front Americanism and civil rights unionism during the 1940s and 1950s (Sides 2003; Dowd Hall 2005; Smith 2006).

What distinguished such activism in Los Angeles from that generally found outside of the West Coast, however, was a constant emphasis that implementing a social democratic agenda necessitated new steps toward not merely interracialism ("black and white unite and fight") but multiracial coalition-building

(Sánchez 2004). Charlotta Bass has emerged from a slew of recent studies to become a pivotal figure in the history of race and politics in Los Angeles, with her *Eagle* serving as an indispensible documentary source (see esp. Flamming 2005). While her life as a black pioneer, a proto-feminist, and a radical was no doubt groundbreaking, Bass may have also been (alongside Carey McWilliams) the most persistent mid-century advocate of multiracial coalitions. For example, in the mid-1940s, she called on the NAACP to expand its membership scope by recruiting Asian, Jewish, Mexican, and white members (though apparently not with much result). Bass had become a staunch leftist, who praised the Chinese revolution and extended her political commitment to the global fight against imperialism. Still, proponents of multiracial unity could be found among all the leading strata of the black community, including the nationalist oriented *Los Angeles Tribune* and civil rights lawyer Loren Miller, who revamped the *Eagle* in 1951 while renouncing communism. Furthermore, a new generation of Asian and Mexican Americans emerged from the war committed to fulfilling their rights and responsibilities as US citizens but transcending submissive forms of assimilation. Nisei Hisaye Yamamoto was hired by the *Tribune* in a deliberate attempt to bridge ethnic boundaries. It was her short stories of the early postwar era that not only conveyed the deep psychological scars inflicted upon the Japanese American community by internment, but also demonstrated empathy for the different forms of suffering experienced by other minorities. And Mexican American political pioneer Edward Roybal, whose 1949 election to the city council was catapulted by the Community Service Organization's grassroots mobilization of Eastside Mexican Americans, actively courted and was embraced by African Americans, Japanese Americans, and whites. A rival campaign was moved in response to decry Roybal for running "on that unification of minorities claptrap" (Burt 1996; Kurashige 2008)

These new initiatives toward multiracial organizing that were centered on a working-class agenda strived to overcome divergent experiences rooted in the era of segregation. Mexican and Asian immigrants, marginalized from the American political process, had relied on their homeland consulates to address their concerns, and African American leaders had generally promoted survival strategies that emphasized self-help. Moreover, while George Sánchez (1993) has demonstrated how Depression-era Mexican Americans established an oppositional culture through CIO activism, this critical negation of the contradiction between assimilation and persistent ethnicity could not be generalized to other communities of color. Most black and Asian workers had found themselves in sectors that were unorganized or controlled by the conservative and flagrantly discriminatory American Federation of Labor.

The events of the war thus opened up unprecedented possibilities for coalition-building. The windfall of factory jobs provided the growing body of African American workers with a deep stake in the CIO, thus situating them within the ongoing organizing of white, Jewish, and Mexican American

progressives. All of these forces joined to support the Sleepy Lagoon defendants, and some Nisei even sent monetary contributions from the Manzanar internment center. The 1945 release of Japanese American internees, at first sternly resisted by many white civic leaders, became another basis for advancing multiracial solidarity. Seeing opportunity in a potential crisis, many activists, focused their attention on Little Tokyo. During the war, African American entrepreneurs anxious for opportunities rechristened the neighborhood Bronzeville and were joined by black migrants desperate for housing. While the mayor warned that the return of Japanese to black-occupied Little Tokyo would provoke race riots, *Ebony* magazine characterized the subsequent interaction between the two groups as "a miracle in race relations." From "the mixture of chitterlings and sukiyaki, or jive and Japanese," it declared, a "heartfelt kinship has grown between two minorities, both victims of race hate." As it did throughout the city, however, the reality of interethnic relations in Little Tokyo/Bronzeville fell somewhere between the dire warnings of violent clashes and the celebratory portrayals of solidarity. While working to minimize interethnic tensions, activists helped to create a nascent culture of multiracial coalition-building. But although general forms of sympathy could be found crossing color lines, the activists could not the foster the greater political awareness or organizing necessary to overcome the forces of opposition and division (Kurashige 2008).

The Cold War Limits of Integration

Ultimately, the social democratic movement for integration fell apart during the postwar era, superseded by a watered down vision of integration stressing racial tolerance and formal equality without structural reform. To be sure, Cold War foreign policy concerns compelled American political leaders to address some of the nation's most glaring racial contradictions as the United States sought to portray itself as the leader of the "Free World" (Dudziak 2000). Directly impacting patterns of residential segregation in Los Angeles, the Supreme Court struck down state enforcement of racially restrictive covenants in 1948 – six years before ruling on *Brown v. Board of Education*. But while the state abandoned formal endorsement of racist policies, no level of government implemented aggressive measures to bring about racial equality. Furthermore, the pressure of operating within a conservative political climate reflecting anti-communist dictates tore apart coalitions within and between labor and civil rights organizations (Sides 2003; Sánchez 2004). Overall, integration came to represent an accommodation rather than a challenge to the political and racial status quo. Once they were resigned to the fact that old methods of segregation were outmoded, most white business and civic leaders advocated moderate and conservative forms of integration that emphasized the assimilation of minorities into mainstream

society through gradual and voluntary steps. Although the rise of the "military-industrial complex" helped spark a vast postwar economic expansion and population boom, many workers of color saw job opportunities evaporate in the face of postwar economic restructuring. Meanwhile, a small class of non-white professionals achieved upward mobility and became the poster child for integration as accommodationism.

The fact that a handful of minority households could now aspire to the suburban ideal previously reserved for whites, however, was overshadowed by what the *California Eagle* chastised as a "more insidious" form of Jim Crow. Sharp racial conflicts again erupted within subdivisions, schools, and workplaces as white residents fretted about a new round of "invasions" by black and brown inhabitants of the expanding ghetto and barrio. Seeking to quell such fears, liberal proponents of urban redevelopment promised to clean up the city by removing "slums" and building modern public housing. While the moderate integrationist discourse had promoted non-white professionals as the model subjects of integration, boosters of "slum removal" reinforced the stigmatization of inner-city populations of color as a social problem to state their case. The mayoral-appointed Los Angeles Committee for Home Front Unity warned middle-class whites that poor people of color entered their "homes daily as servants, repairmen [and] tradesmen," attended their "schools, clubs, [and] churches," and comingled with them on "packed, overcrowded buses, streetcars and other means of public transportation." Framed by contrasting pictures of new suburban homes and dilapidated wooden shacks, its pamphlet boldly declared:

> We Live Here
> You Live There
> BUT
> CONTAGIOUS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE TRAVELS WITH US

The upshot of such fear-driven campaigns was to spur support in the name of urban renewal for the destruction of entire neighborhoods like Chavez Ravine and Bunker Hill, which were home to heavy concentrations of people of color. But undermined by conservative attacks, thousands of promised units of modern public housing never materialized, and urban renewal instead served to subsidize the projects of the city's elites (Parson 2005). Meanwhile, with the state subsidizing both the infrastructure and the housing in outlying areas, segregation and inequality emerged on a wider metropolitan scale. Eric Avila (2004) has traced the principal role southern California played in the production of a cultural discourse linking postwar suburbanization to a renewal of whiteness. Whereas discourses of "white flight" and "slum removal" had clearly marked black and brown communities as "problems," whites who feared the race and class tensions within the central city did not need to get their hands dirty in the battles over urban renewal. They could instead hop on the new freeways, literally trampling

over low-income and non-white neighborhoods, on their way to pristine subdivisions where white homogeneity could again be naturalized and the innocent allure of the suburban ideal could be reclaimed. The populations of the San Fernando Valley and Orange County – which found respective fame as the birthplaces of *Leave it to Beaver* and Disneyland – grew exponentially, while cities like Lakewood (in southeastern Los Angeles county) sprung up almost overnight. All owed almost the entirety of their existence to creation of new homes that were to be reserved for whites through overt means when possible and covert means when necessary.

From Integration to Multiculturalism

When US historians look back at the postwar era, the hardening of race and class divisions overshadows the fractured pursuit of racial integration. In one sense, the failure of integration in Los Angeles conforms to national patterns outlined by scholars researching what Thomas Sugrue (1996) has called "the origins of the urban crisis." Suburban whites repudiated even the modest steps toward integration represented by fair employment and housing laws. This became most strikingly evident when the predominantly white electorate passed Proposition 14 by a landslide in 1964, thus making an overt attempt to nullify California's recently instituted Rumford Fair Housing Law. Correspondingly, black and brown poverty and frustration became concentrated in inner-city neighborhoods crippled by the loss of factory work. While the condition of poverty was not novel for these communities, what heightened was the sense that the race/class inequality gap was widening. Despite the blood, sweat, and tears that brought about integrationist policies during the civil rights movement, such reforms stood seemingly little chance of remedying this problem. With the burden of maintaining physical and social distance between the residents of the new white suburbs and the now expansive ghettoes falling on the shoulders of the Los Angeles Police Department, rampant police abuse added fuel to the fires that would explode during the Watts Rebellion in 1965 (Horne 1995). Because the rebellion exposed the inability of white politicians to govern the increasingly non-white city, a new wave of minority politicians subsequently took office. Most struggled to find effective solutions to the problems (poverty, crime, low educational attainment) they inherited, let alone the new ones that emerged (the war on drugs, heightened gang violence, interethnic strife).

In another sense, however, the story of racial integration in Los Angeles defies the "urban crisis" narrative by complicating our understanding of the relationship between race, politics, and urbanism. Most urban historical case studies have accepted the basic conclusion of the Kerner Commission, which reported in 1968 that "our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal." Thus, they have worked primarily within a national and bipolar framework whose limits become readily apparent when

one seeks to make sense of the multiethnic and transnational dynamics that transformed Los Angeles. Whereas the urban crisis literature dwells on the intractable contradiction between white capital and black labor, tracing the origins of the world city also requires an understanding of how Asian capital and Mexican labor were integrated into Los Angeles. While Los Angeles did not exercise a full commitment to racial equality, it took advantage of its opportunity to be a "gateway to a new world" that Pearl Buck presented. (One can debate the degree to which it is a "better" world.) What resulted was a city with a self-awareness of its multiracial diversity and a sense that the nation's gravitational shift toward the Pacific positioned Los Angeles to be a definitive center of American cosmopolitanism. This qualified embrace of multiculturalism was reflected in phenomena ranging from extensive trade with Asia to the election of an African American mayor and the routine hiring of (first) Japanese and (later) Mexican immigrant gardeners to maintain the idyllic charm of suburban tracts.

Taking the mayor's office in 1973, Tom Bradley serves as the archetypal figure in the transition from integrationism to a multicultural paradigm that fused notions of affirmative action, ethnic pride, and economic globalization. Although he was part of a string of African American mayors elected in the wake of the rebellions, Bradley was a product of integrationism rather than black nationalism. His own career as a Los Angeles PD lieutenant turned city councilman had been built upon alliances with whites. But his multicultural sensibility emerged from his experience living and working among the city's diverse ethnic residents. Crenshaw, which served as his personal and political base, lay at the heart of the postwar struggle by minority professionals to integrate the Westside. More than biracial, Crenshaw was a multiethnic district comprised of African Americans, Asians, whites, and Latinos. As mayor, Bradley would consciously strive to have his administration reflect this multiethnic diversity. Moreover, Bradley and other civic leaders shifted away from the assimilationist tendencies of integrationism by celebrating ethnicity, partly in the belief that nurturing minority leadership and some form of community control of local institutions were necessary to manage race relations post-Watts (Payne 1986; Kurashige 2008).

While multiculturalism was in this regard a reaction to the failures of integrationism, Bradley's version of multiculturalism as economic growth strategy sought above all to build upon the transnational connections established during the integrationist era. As Christina Klein (2003) has argued, the US had generated a new form of "Cold War Orientalism" as liberal American conceptions of empire promoted the breaking down of putative racial differences and prioritized the integration of Asians into the American global sphere of influence. Reversing the narrow nationalism and anti-Japanese hostility of the war, political and business leaders in Los Angeles prioritized trade and goodwill with Japan as that nation became one of America's key Cold War allies. In the eyes of some American elites, Asian Americans became a "model

minority," not only because exaggerated narratives of their self-made success were deployed to heighten the sense that Mexican and African Americans were a problem, but also because their perceived integration made them symbols of trans-Pacific harmony. Bradley's vision of Los Angeles as a "crossroads city" functioning as a nexus for global commerce pushed relations with Asia to a new level. "It was something that was just so clear to me that I never questioned it," the new mayor recalled thinking at the outset of his first term, "the development of this city as a gateway to the Pacific Rim" (Erie 2004: 91–2). At the same time Bradley's Los Angeles welcomed foreign investment, the city also opened its arms to new waves of high-skilled and low-skilled immigrant labor spurred by both the 1965 Immigration Act and a rise in undocumented immigration. The expansion of service industries, the reemergence of the garment industry, and the rise of light manufacturing were predicated heavily on the availability of low-wage workers through a transnational labor market that engulfed Mexico, Central America, and parts of Asia.

Conclusion

Although the movement for integration in Los Angeles failed to achieve any form of racial equality, it did establish new levels of racial tolerance and opportunities for non-white settlement that augured the demographic diversity of a once predominantly white city. In turn, the multicultural era gave license to the city's diverse residents and newcomers to flaunt their ethnic identity and culture. For instance, it became easy to access authentic food representing diverse nationalities, and students in Los Angeles' public schools could be found speaking more than eighty different languages. But the neo-liberal vision of multicultural boosterism failed to bring about equality and for the most part never intended to. Indeed, Los Angeles has become more polarized since the dawn of the Bradley era. Moreover, the revolutionary 1960s idealism of what Laura Pulido (2006) has called the "Third World Left" was overtaken by concerns about interethnic conflict. When the city erupted again in 1992, it was clear that multiethnic tensions were now part of the impetus for rebellion. And yet, new attempts to build multiracial solidarity through labor, community, and student organizing persist.

Good historical scholarship can help us to see beyond the essentialized accounts of "cultural clashes" that uninformed observers default to when attempting to analyze interethnic relations they do not understand. It can also provide a sober reality check for those whose conception of multiracial solidarity exists primarily as a philosophical ideal rather than a political movement. We need to understand that the problems and prospects we face today are part of an ongoing quest for justice and harmony in the long history of a global city.

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Chapter Five

Contemporary Voice: Where You From?

Susan Straight

I

Near the intersection of 21st Street and Central Avenue in Los Angeles is a fairly ordinary wood frame house built in the early 1900s. It has a large attic and a fenced yard. According to the *Thomas Guide*, the thick book of street maps which is the Bible of millions of southern California drivers, the house is just inside the demarcation line identifying the original "Rancho City Lands of Los Angeles," as opposed to the "Rancho San Antonio Lugo" five blocks away. This neighborhood would be ripe for "Redevelopment" or whatever other code word a city government wanted to use, if a city considered those residents valuable, which presently, the city does not. They are mostly immigrants from Mexico or Central America.

The house on 21st and Central was most likely built for a white family, back when only white people lived in what is now called South Los Angeles because it is south of Downtown. But by 1942 a black woman named Geneva Stevenson (who was actually one-fourth Cherokee, as evidenced by her high sharp cheekbones that looked almost like shields inserted under her velvety dark skin, and her abundant glossy black hair) bought that house, and it became a magnet, a safe place, and a harbor for three generations of African American Angelenos who were part of the vibrant culture and history which is now rapidly disappearing in that city.

Geneva Stevenson died forty years later, in 1982. I married her great-nephew, Dwayne Sims, in 1984, in Riverside, CA, where we were both born; our city is 60 miles directly east of that house.

But the legacy of the Los Angeles aunts and uncles and cousins, such an integral part of the city, continued to surround us and our own children until the early part of this decade, when that time seemed to evaporate into another migration, and under the pressures of drugs, disintegration of

society, and even violence. Like many black families in Los Angeles, ours scattered like cottonwood blossoms in the breeze.

The descendants of Geneva Stevenson might not stand on the sidewalk in front of her former house, to see what was different from the stories they'd been told. They might be asked the deadly question: "Where you from?"

On Sunday, March 2, 2008, Jamiel Shaw II, a star running back for the Los Angeles High School football team, the most valuable player in the city's Southern League, a 17-year-old who'd just received recruiting calls from Stanford and Rutgers, was walking home from a local mall, talking on his cell phone to his girlfriend. He was three doors from his house. A car pulled up, and two brown young men asked the question: "Where you from?"

This is not a curious inquiry for any young man in southern California. The interrogated person is meant to state a territory – street or neighborhood or city – which will identify his gang affiliation. This was the Mid-City area of Los Angeles, not the former South Los Angeles of Geneva Stevenson or the eponymous South Central of rap music and movies. Shaw's home was on Fifth Avenue.

Jamiel didn't answer. He probably never had time to say anything. One young man wearing a hood got out of the car and shot him twice, at close range. Shaw's 14-year-old girlfriend had heard the question, and then no response, and then the phone went dead. His father, Jamiel Shaw Sr., heard the shots and ran outside to find his son bleeding on the sidewalk.

A neighbor testified in July that the second shot was to the back of the head.

Shaw Sr. had always told his son he had "an 18-year plan." "I would tell him, 'I'm going to get you to 18, and if you do what you're supposed to do, you'll get to college.' He was almost there."

Jamiel Shaw Jr.'s mother, Anita, was in Iraq, serving in the Army. She'd served in the National Guard for ten years, but when her son was five, she'd enlisted in the Army full time. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, she said, "I couldn't get a job. I didn't want to be a welfare mama, getting $400 a month and $200 in food stamps. It was a conscious choice I made."

Anita Shaw flew home for her son's funeral. In Los Angeles, she said to a reporter, "The only thing is we don't have sand and dirt flying around. But we have the bullets."

The morning of the funeral, Los Angeles police charged Pedro Espinoza, 19, with the murder and intentionally discharging a firearm in furtherance of his gang. He is reputedly a member of 18th Street, one of LA's oldest gangs, which formed in the 1960s.

Espinoza had been out of jail for one day, after serving months for assault with a deadly weapon. After his arrest, it was discovered that he was born in Mexico, and was brought to California illegally when he was four years old.

Where you from?

Jamiel Shaw Jr. couldn't answer, "Right here. I'm from right here."

On Sunday, March 30, 2008, at around 2 pm police cars sped past our house in Riverside, and blocked off the junior high a block away, while a helicopter circled over our neighborhood.

At the school basketball courts, where my seventh-grade daughter assembled each morning, where my 16-year-old daughter played for two years while leading her team to the city championship game, young men played pick-up games every Sunday. My high school daughter had joined the game a few times.

The official account: a group of Latino players and black players were in a game that turned ugly. A Latino man, 23, who had just been released on parole that morning, started a fight with a black player. Racial epithets, taunting and punches ensued, and a young black man, Donta Harris, 26, shot into the group, killing a 25-year-old Latino man, the older brother of the player who started the fight, and seriously wounding his brother-in-law, also 25.

The instigator ran. Everyone else ran, and for hours, police searched our neighborhood for men on bikes and on foot and in cars.

The personal account: at lunch the next day, my high school daughter heard the story from one of her friends who'd been there, hiding behind a tree, terrified as he watched.

The younger Latino man had wanted to fight someone the whole time. My daughter's friend had just walked onto the grass near the court when the young black man and his toddler son got out of a car. They saw the fight, and then the black man hurried back to his car, put his son inside, and got a gun from the vehicle. He went back toward the group and shot as the two men fighting ran away.

While he told the story, to a group of black high school students, the boys taunted him for hiding. "You punked out," one said.

"What did you want him to do?" my daughter asked.

"Fight for his people," the boy answered.

"I was scared," her friend said.

"Those aren't my people," my daughter said. "They're total strangers."

"That's punk."

That morning, my youngest daughter and her friends saw the yellow tape around the courts. All PE classes were cancelled "out of respect." The blood had been washed off the asphalt. Nearby were three gray-painted picnic benches where I had seen, two years earlier, "Nigger Killer" carved into the wood, along with the name of a local Latino gang.

This inanity is hard to explain to my three daughters. All their lives, they've seen us – their mother a short blonde woman, their father a tall black man – and our friends, our yearbook photos, our relatives of all races who still live right here in Riverside. Chicano married to African American, Anglo married to Filipino American. Seven of their cousins are part black and part Mexican American.

But that kind of community feels a long time ago.

On Friday, May 2, 2008, my ex-husband Dwayne dropped off our daughters after school, because they go for milkshakes on Fridays. He was headed home, to his house on the city's Northside, about 2 miles away, to sleep before his graveyard shift at Riverside Juvenile Hall.

In the middle of his street, the adjacent court was blocked off with yellow crime tape and a crowd of onlookers. A 23-year-old light-skinned black man named Raymond Franklin, father of three young children, an acquaintance of Dwayne's nephews, a student in a corrections officer course, was shot and killed at the end of his driveway. It was four pm. His girlfriend's aunt, into whose house he'd moved, found him bleeding in the gutter. He died 45 minutes later.

Police arrested Jesse Manzo, age 21, a gang member according to testimony who overhead a phone conversation between a fellow gang member and Franklin which seemed to contain disrespect. He bicycled over to the Northside, where neighbors saw him, shot Franklin, and then rode his bike back to the Eastside neighborhood where most of our family was raised.

The bullets have always been here. I have dreamed about them for many years, racing toward us in that movie-like way where we see the gleam and shine and the air wavering in the path of the metal. I used to dream that they hit my boyfriend, Dwayne, back when we were in high school. Then I dreamed that they missed him and hit me. But those bullets came not from guns held by young men his age; they were shot from a police-issued weapon.

"Where you from?" one officer yelled at us, and another held the barrel of his shotgun against Dwayne's skull, pushing it further and further until the opening seemed to be inside Dwayne's ear, under his huge Afro. It was August, 1979.

Where you from? Where's your license? Where's your car? Is it stolen? Why are you here? Why aren't you in Riverside?

They shouted at us, on the sidewalk in Westwood Village, while passersby averted their eyes and stepped around the patrol cars with flashing lights.

We were from Riverside, land of uncool, of orange trees and dairy farms and a tiny downtown with a third-run movie house. We had driven my mother's 1975 silver Ford Granada down the long stretch of the 60 Freeway, past all the small and large cities that lead to LA – Rubidoux, Ontario, Fontana, and San Bernardino to our north. Chino and Upland, Pomona, then over the hills of Diamond Bar and Walnut, into Whittier and Monterey Park and East LA.

The freeway deposited us downtown, near the University of Southern California. I was ready to begin my sophomore year at USC. My dormitory was at the corner of Exposition and 32nd Street; from my window, I could see the huge grinning neon cat suspended over Felix Chevrolet.

Dwayne played basketball for a college in Central California, and our friend Lewis Gainer Jr. played football for a college in Riverside County.

They didn't want to hang out in the mostly black neighborhood around USC that weekend. They didn't want to head down Exposition or Central into the wide commercial avenues and small tidy streets of South Central, where the Sims relatives were. They wanted the beach and hip, bustling Westwood near UCLA, what we considered the truly exotic and wealthy paradise everyone in the world saw in the movies.

It's such a Seventies story. First Venice Beach, where we rollerskated the boardwalk with hundreds of others dressed in bathing suits, cowboy hats, and skintight Lycra. Dwayne wore khaki pants, a black tank undershirt, and a cream-colored cowboy hat on his natural.

Then we drove to Westwood. Throngs of people moved along the streets, lined with first-run theatres, crowded with hip restaurants and record stores.

Michael Jackson smiled at us hundreds of times, on a poster display of his just-released solo album "Off The Wall." A black tux, a big Afro, brown skin, white socks.

Then two police cruisers sped onto the sidewalk where we walked, blocking our path. Four officers shoved us against the brick wall.

I remember how it smelled.

They were shouting so loudly that we couldn't understand what they wanted. We were on foot. We had parked long ago. They separated us. Dwayne was their target, I realized quickly: 6 feet 4, 200 pounds. Star forward on his college basketball team. His shoulder blades were wide dark wings; he was still spread-eagled against the wall.

Why'd you come all the way from Riverside to LA? A man with a shotgun was seen on the UCLA campus. You fit the description. Dwayne fit the description. Three more words we'd heard so often: fit the description. Matched the suspect. A black man.

They shoved Dwayne and Lewis against the patrol car. They told us to find our car and leave LA. They said they'd follow us, and that if they saw us walking again, they would shoot on sight.

Hundreds of Michael Jacksons and a few white Angelenos watched us leave. The patrol car shadowed us as we walked. We didn't speak. Dwayne walked slowly, slightly ahead of me. I knew he was afraid of the bullet that might still come, if he moved wrong. We went back to where we belonged.

We are still here, in Riverside. On a recent July evening, Dwayne sat on my couch, weary and exhausted from having worked all night and escorting two juvenile murderers to court that morning. He has to bend and put ankle shackles on them each time, then wrist shackles, and then march them through the halls to transportation.

Twenty-nine years since he was shoved against that brick wall, his natural bigger than Michael Jackson's, his short hair is half-gray now. He rubbed his eyes and said, "You gonna let her go to that party?"

We are both still nervous about police, but now we're worried about gangs, and we have developed this year a relentless, deathly fear of parties. We went to house parties all the time, in the late 1970s, and while there

might have been a fistfight now and then, we were, again, mostly afraid of the police who might come. Today's parties are different. Our high school daughter can't understand why they scare us so badly.

The bullets. It is common, every weekend, for uninvited guests to drive past parties in houses or yards in southern California and let loose a hail of bullets, or to be ejected and come back to finish the altercation, fatally. Young men shoot into the crowd, or at the house, and often the original target isn't the person killed. It is a girlfriend, or a child.

In war this is called collateral damage.

Dwayne and I have 18 nephews and young male second cousins, about whom our family worries incessantly. Three of them have been shot at on the street or in cars. One has a scar on his hand, where the bullet passed through, and another has a bullet lodged in his shoulder because of the danger of its removal.

"Knuckleheads," Dwayne said. "I had to take R— to court today."

R— and his older brother, who are black, fatally shot another young black man in front of a high school. They had recently moved to Moreno Valley, the city that borders Riverside to the east, a place which used to be a mere stop on the road toward the desert but which now has a population of 150,000 and a serious gang problem.

"He said they had to make sure B— was the strongest gang there," Dwayne said, his eyes closed. "I walked him through the activity area, and I picked up a ball and was shooting while we walked. I made every shot, and he said, 'Oh, you used to play back in the day.' I looked at his sorry ass and said, 'I used to play thirty years ago, and that's all we did. We used to fight, but we didn't have guns. And we didn't run around shootin' each other tryin to claim some territory. Man, y'all claimin a piece of land ain't even yours! You *rent*.' "

Where you from?

Dwayne said, "Remember that movie?"

I knew exactly which one. "*West Side Story*."

"Yeah. The Sharks and the Jets. They probably rented, too."

He got up and said, "But they had knives."

The Sharks and Jets. Puerto Rican and white – where were the white guys' parents originally from? "Life can be bright in America," the girls sing, and the boys sing back, "If you can fight in America."

Did they ask each other "Where you from?" or could they already tell?

II

The history of the Sims family in southern California might have started with three different bullets. But over sixty-five years, it always included homeownership and fierce loyalty and civic pride.

When Geneva Stevenson came to Los Angeles in 1940, I imagine that in the throngs of immigrants who lived and worked and danced in LA at that time, people asked her, "Where you from?"

Which answer did she give? Tennessee? Texas? Or Tulsa?

For years, at Sims gatherings in Crenshaw, Inglewood, Pacoima, Compton, and Riverside, we heard the story of the migration from our family historian, Dwayne's uncle John Prexy Sims, who collected oral reminiscences and passed down the past.

The first bullet belonged to Fine.

She threw it at an old white woman in 1881.

The unnamed slave woman who was Fine's mother was very young, dark skinned, and beautiful, according to John Sims' family legends. She lived in a plantation cabin somewhere in the country outside Nashville, Tennessee. A Cherokee man fell in love with her, and he tunneled a secret passage from outside the plantation boundaries to the floor of her cabin.

She had several children. A daughter was born in 1872. The Cherokee man left the area, and the woman died. John Sims said, "From what I understand, when my grandmother's mother died, white people came in and picked those children like puppies." The daughter was "given" to a white family who forced her to work constantly and kept her in virtual slavery for nine years. Whatever her name had been, they called her Fine.

When Fine was nine, she found a bullet on the ground. She hated the old white matriarch of the family, who beat her nearly every day for any possible offense, and so she waited for the right moment to kill her. The moment came one day when Fine was chopping wood, again, and the old woman berated her for the way she chopped. Fine took the bullet from her apron pocket and hurled it at the woman. It fell away uselessly to the ground, and she stood, astonished and disappointed. The old woman thought the missile was a wood chip, and Fine was beaten again.

At thirteen, Fine picked blackberries for a nickel a bucket. She had no shoes, and few ragged clothes, but a handsome young man, an itinerant laborer, fell into conversation with her. Soon she was pregnant. "She'd never had any consideration in her life," John Sims said. "It wouldn't have been hard to imagine how it would feel to have someone say, 'You're pretty. I want to take care of you. I love you.' "

She was probably sixteen when Geneva, her daughter, was born in 1888.

Living in a migrant worker shack and picking crops, Fine had two more babies in quick succession, and then, her man disappeared.

Destitute, she decided to look for her father. Someone had told her he lived in Denton, Texas. "The miracle of it was that my grandmother saved nickels, sold milk and berries and anything she could, to save enough for a train ticket from Nashville to Denton, with those three babies," John Sims said.

Plate 5.1 Fine, courtesy of the author.

But in Denton, no one had heard of Fine's Cherokee father. Either he'd never been there, or he was gone. Desperate, she sat down to rest on a log outside of town, and Zack Rollins watched her from the window of his house nearby.

He was of mixed race – his father had been white, his mother black, and though his father had legitimate relationships with his other, white children, he'd left this house and land to his illegitimate son. Rollins noticed Fine's beauty, offered his help for her and her children, and married her.

But he was consumed by jealousy and rage. Geneva, Fine's eldest, who had witnessed the long journey to Texas and seen her mother's subsequent struggle for survival, refused to live with Rollins. When she was about fifteen or sixteen, she left for Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Fine's last child, a daughter named Callie, was born in 1900, and soon after that, Zack Rollins died. White neighbors began to intimidate Fine, contesting her right to the land, stealing tools and equipment from the farm. Geneva wrote to her from Oklahoma, offering a place to live until the land was sold.

Geneva had met and married Robert Stevenson in Tulsa. They ran numerous businesses which were off the known economic grid – a private

club, which people called "a hush-hush," in their home, and "policy," otherwise known as numbers betting, which was quite profitable.

Callie went to Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa, where she was such a good student she was accepted to Langston College. During her senior year, though, an ambitious local farmer named General Sims came to the school and told the principal that he wanted to marry an intelligent woman, so that his children would be intelligent. "Show me the smartest girl you have here," he said, and Callie was ushered into the room.

She was seventeen. She didn't want to get married. She attended the first semester at Langston, but Fine, who was still waiting for money from the sale of the Texas land, couldn't pay the tuition. Callie left college and married General Sims. They had six children, and then he passed away from a stomach ailment. Callie was left alone on a farm she couldn't manage, and her own children were parceled out to various relatives and even an orphanage.

Her sister, Geneva, had left Tulsa.

According to John Sims, "As time passed, Robert began drinking heavily and became, I suspect, somewhat abusive."

She had gone to Los Angeles.

Geneva knew something about bullets. She worked in dangerous places. She made her money in sometimes dangerous ways. She once told John Sims, "I was dancing, and I had my pistol in my bosom. That's where I kept it. I was dancing so hard the pistol slipped down and fell out through my dress and landed on the floor. I picked it up and put it back and didn't miss a beat."

Family history has it that she used the gun once, in Oklahoma, on a man who attempted to assault her. That was the second bullet.

The third bullet had hit her brother-in-law in his knee.

Geneva first lived in Los Angeles with "Steve" Stevenson, who'd been shot in the knee during the Tulsa Riots of 1921, when white Tulsans formed a mob after hearing that a white woman had been assaulted in an elevator by a black man. It wasn't true – Dick Rowland had merely stumbled into her by accident – but the pretext was useful for the hundreds of men who wanted to exterminate or drive out the black community of Greenwood, then known as "The Black Wall Street" of America. (White women – so often the carnage began with someone who looked like me.) They hunted down the black men of Tulsa, shot them, burned their houses and barber shops and theatres and churches, and then took picture postcards of dead black men, partially burned, shot, hands frozen in upraised poses, with handwritten notes along the bottom which read "Dead Nigers in Tulsa, Oklahoma 1921."

They sent those to friends.

Many blacks left Tulsa for Los Angeles. "Steve" Stevenson had bought a house on a lot with two smaller rental units and a junkyard area in the back, in south LA.

Eventually, Geneva's husband Robert came to LA. They reconciled, saved money, and bought the house on 21st Street and Central Avenue, in

the heart of black Los Angeles. It was a classic wood frame bungalow, with a porch and an attic. By the time she sheltered all her nieces and nephews, her sister and adopted children, Geneva was still fierce, her abundant glossy hair in carefully controlled curls. But she was all about business: the survival of Fine's family.

Sensei Sims, great-great nephew of Geneva Stevenson, descendant of a woman whose people left Africa behind by force more than a hundred years ago, and a man whose tribe was forced to leave their southern homeland and walk the Trail of Tears, wrote his own will in 2002. He was thirteen.

He is my nephew, the fourth son of Dwayne's oldest brother, General R. C. Sims III.

That summer, two of Sensei's friends were shot to death by gang members, Mexican-born or Mexican American kids themselves. The boys, Anthony Sweat and Markess Lancaster, were thirteen. They attended the same junior high my husband and I and all our siblings had gone to. Anthony Sweat was with a group of older black teens who were shot at; he was chased onto a porch and killed. Markess Lancaster was a passenger in a car driven by his brother, leaving a store near my house; he was killed in his seat. Sensei was certain that he would be hunted down as well, shot and killed soon, by someone with skin not much lighter than his own, so he wanted to make sure his possessions were distributed in the right way.

How did this happen?

How did it come that Riverside County's District Attorney, Rod Pacheco, himself a Mexican American, sought and won a gang injunction against the East Side Riva gang, citing members' participation in those two killings along with many more in the past seven years? He named non-gang members shot merely because they were African American – including a Nigerian man attending a convention in Riverside who was shot at a gas station. Pacheco published an editorial in the *Riverside Press-Enterprise* on July 26, 2008 defending the injunction, which had been controversial, and cited the May 2 shooting of Raymond Franklin as evidence that gang members were "targeting African American men, and even women, for murder and violence."

How did southern California neighborhoods become the new version of sundown towns?

Between 1940 and 1970, while Geneva Stevenson was bringing her sister and the rest of her sister's children to Los Angeles, the city's black population grew faster than that of any other large northern or western city, growing from 63,744 to almost 763,000.

Before the great migration, as the city grew from its original acres of rancho land around the Downtown area and annexed areas such as Highland Park to the east and Harbor-Gateway, a long narrow finger of land that extended south toward the ports, black residents and businesses were located in the Downtown area, near the original settlement. By 1910, they were forced by racial prejudice to move further south, and they transformed

Central Avenue into the black business and residential mecca, that year when the city had the highest percentage of black homeownership in America, with over 36 percent of black residents owning their property. W. E. B. DuBois wrote in 1913, "Nowhere in the United States is the Negro so well and beautifully housed."

In 1930 "the widely reported ability of Black Angelenos to purchase a house, either for their own residence, or for investment as a rental property or profitable resale, was unparalleled … over one-third of LA's Black families owned their own houses, whereas only 10.5 percent in Chicago, 15 percent in Detroit, and 5.6 percent in New York did so" (Ovnick 2001: 235).

In the 1940s, Geneva's husband Robert began to work with his brother, delivering ice to houses and apartments in south central Los Angeles, and soon Robert had his own ice company, on Central Avenue. He and Geneva bought their house at 21st and Central, and soon began taking in Callie's children.

Back in Oklahoma, the Sims children had been close to starving. The older children had picked cotton, chopped weeds, and done anything they could. Callie did domestic work, but she fell ill. John Sims came to Los Angeles for the first time in 1946 and stayed for his seventh grade year. "There was always food at Aunt Jennie's. [The family always referred to Geneva as Aunt Jennie.] There wasn't in Oklahoma. We were so hungry at one point that the marrow dried up in Mama's bones, and she had to go to the hospital. Everything hit her so hard. Rock bottom became every day."

All of Callie's six children ended up in Los Angeles over the course of the years, where they occupied rooms or lived in little homes in what was known as a "court," also owned by Aunt Jennie.

It's easy to forget how segregated southern California was during the decades from 1940 to 1970. In school, my children learned the history of civil rights almost exclusively focused on Selma, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Little Rock. But when their grandfather and his relatives came to Los Angeles and Riverside, the world was strictly separated into places where they could and could not live, eat, or sleep.

Southern California contained many "sundown towns." Hawthorne, a small town located between Compton and Inglewood, both of which were white back in the 1930s, advertised itself as "the town between the city and the sea." It had been named for Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1906, and by 1930 had been settled mostly by immigrants – from the Oklahoma and Texas dustbowl areas. During the 1930s, neat stucco-faced bungalows lined the streets, with perfect yards like small green carpets. And Hawthorne actually had a sign posted at the city limits: "Nigger, Don't Let the Sun Set on YOU in Hawthorne."

(What company manufactured those particular signs, with their eerily similar wording, like the Burma Shave billboards?)

There was also "Lily-White Lynwood" and "Lily-White Lakewood," the latter being one of the first master-planned suburban communities in

southern California. Blacks not only couldn't live in those places, they rarely drove through.

In the city of Los Angeles, things were nearly as strict, though without helpful signage.

"Back then, you only had two hotels in LA for black people," my father-in-law, General Sims II, told me one day. "So when people got here to the train station, they needed to know where they could go to sleep, to rent a room. Uncle Robert had an ice delivery business, but he used to have a flatbed pickup truck, too, and he'd go down to Union Station and meet the trains. Those black people coming off would have everything they owned in a trunk, you know. Too heavy to carry. So he'd take the trunk and drive people to where they could rent a room, because you had to know where to go."

The new sundown towns are not even that. There are streets off-limits day or night, to African Americans, communities where they can't live.

There is no signage. There might be graffiti, but not everyone may understand it or know that it applies.

In four distinct communities, court documents actually make reality the concerted effort by some Hispanic or Latino gangs to drive out African Americans with threats, violence, and murder.

From 1995 to 1997, after African Americans began to move into apartment buildings in the Hawaiian Gardens area, at least 36 hate crimes were committed in the neighborhood, including three murders and six firebombings.

In 2006, four members of the Avenues gang in Highland Park were found guilty of breaking federal hate crime laws for committing numerous crimes. The Avenues shot at a teen riding a bike, pistol-whipped a jogger, threatened a man with a boxcutter and told him, "You niggers have been here long enough."

The gang randomly shot three black men – one in a car, one at a bus stop, and one lying on a futon in his house.

In Harbor-Gateway, numerous shootings have taken place as gangs try to drive out African Americans, including the murder of Cheryl Green, fourteen, who had crossed a street which was off limits for blacks. A week before Jamiel Shaw's killing, a six-year-old African American boy was shot in the head while riding in an SUV, by two Latino men flashing gang signs in Harbor-Gateway.

In another country, this might be called behavior at the edge of "ethnic cleansing," and it's astonishing that it could happen in America to descendants of those who survived slavery, lynching, and riots. Who could imagine a new ethnic group moving to South Boston or Washington Heights or Fort Greene and issuing an edict to get rid of the present generation of residents with intimidation, threats, and gunfire?

Collateral damage in an American city. But this is a long-running battle of skirmishes every day, with African American gangs retaliating, in many

parts of Los Angeles and in surrounding cities like Riverside, San Bernardino, and Moreno Valley.

War?

Looking at statistics and homicide rates only makes that word seem more applicable.

In 2002, by November 22, ABC News reported that LAPD had tallied 596 murders and that police estimated that the city contained 150,000 gang members who were responsible for 374 of those homicides. In a five-day period, fourteen people, mostly in south Los Angeles, had died. Chief Bratton had just been appointed. "I need this city angry about gangbangers shaping the perception of Los Angeles," he said.

In 2003 the LAPD used Bratton's new strategies to fight gangs and reported 262 gang-related homicides. In 2007 the murder rate in Los Angeles dropped, with 379 people killed by December, and about 200 of those gang related. These figures were celebrated in the media. But all Dwayne and I could say to each other was: 200 people in one city? Not counting all the outlying areas?

What if newspapers posted photos of all the homicide victims, as if they were combatants who'd been sent off to another country? National Guard members just trying to earn extra money – or young men and women just going to the store, waiting for a bus, or standing in a driveway?

Black Angelenos knew exactly where they could live in the 1940s, along the narrow corridor where they were tolerated after strict racial covenants were enacted in the 1920s. But according to the Sims brothers, there was always work, and there was nightlife.

At one time, Geneva divided the large attic loft into rooms, using cardboard dividers, and rented them out for four dollars a week. "Oh, I had to pay," General II recalled. "But I had a job, and it worked out."

The older Sims boys each went into the military and then got good jobs in Los Angeles or the area, as so many men did in the 1940s and 1950s. Stanford Sims, the eldest, who had been born in 1925 in Tulsa, worked for the Southern California Gas Company, becoming one of the first blacks to hold a Lead Field Engineer position. In 1959 he bought his house in Compton. Robert Sims was hired as a guard with the Los Angeles Police Department, and then took the exam for the LA County Sheriff's department, where he was hired in the 1950s. He bought his house in Inglewood.

General II joined the Marines and ended up buying a house in Riverside, where his mother Callie came to live with him. She got a job doing domestic work in the 1950s and 1960s, and her youngest daughter Loretta lived nearby.

John Sims, the family storyteller, joined the Army in 1953, got out in 1957, and a week later had a job at the US Postal Service. "I started at the Atwater Post Office in Glendale," he said. "I moved to 20th Street, off Central, a two room flat. My sister Minerva and her husband Clifford had

Plate 5.2 Stanford Sims, Robert Sims, and General R. C. Sims, Jr. in front of a house on Central Avenue, courtesy Toni Sims.

one room. And me, my two brothers, and my friend Bill lived in the other room. But we had such a good time. As a letter carrier, all the Mexican families were so nice to me. They'd invite me in for lunch, and I'd have a few tacos, a beer, and I tell you – my satchel was on the floor."

For more than forty years, on various holidays, the Sims families from Riverside drove that hour due west to Los Angeles, where the descendants of Geneva and her sister Callie ate and told stories about the past.

I began attending Sims holiday gatherings when I was sixteen, on Labor Day, 1977. But I didn't fully understand the poverty and desperation my in-laws had endured until one Super Bowl Sunday in Inglewood when I was about 23. I stood with my husband and about fifty relatives, surveying the food laid out on the long table. Spaghetti, pigsfeet, various cakes, greens, macaroni salad, and more.

The four Sims brothers gathered in the living room and somehow, debate ensued about which meat from their childhoods had tasted best, or worst. (The discussion might have begun with the pigsfeet.)

The men discussed raccoon ("you gotta hang it in a tree for a day or so") and opossum ("that one you better boil first and then roast it with sweet potatoes") and rabbit ("just fry that sucker") and finally, squirrel. General

Plate 5.3 Geneva Stevenson, courtesy Toni Sims.

II said, "Man, I hated squirrels. Didn't seem like you got enough meat for all that trouble. Nothing but bones."

He started laughing. "But by the time we left Oklahoma, wasn't a damn squirrel left in the state. We had shot 'em all, we were so hungry."

In the first three months of 2008, there were 93 homicides in LA, mostly death by gunfire. Young men hunting and hunting and yet nothing gained, nothing more to eat.

People are coming to Los Angeles and Riverside from Oaxaca, and Zacatecas, and Guatemala, and El Salvador, because they've shot all the food they could, and grown corn with no rain, and eaten crickets dusted with chile powder, and hidden from the soldiers and the drug dealers, and added up their futures to decide leaving is the only way.

Just as African Americans did that math in the 1940s, fleeing riots and shotguns and white hoods and burning, or machines that took their places in the field, the Latino immigants of today stream into southern California.

Millions of people from south of the United States, with skin tones ranging from "huero" (white) to caramel to deep ruddy brown, have settled here in southern California in the last decade. They live near hundreds of thousands of people whose ancestors came decades ago from the southern

part of the United States, whose skin tones range from "light, bright, damn near white" to caramel to deep ruddy brown to ebony.

Everyone wants the same thing.

In the 1940s, decent jobs existed. But now, the union jobs – janitorial and hotel maintenance and hospital and landscaping – that black men and women worked in Los Angeles are gone. They disappeared in the 1970s, during strikes, when black workers were replaced with immigrants who would work for minimum wage, no unions, no benefits. Add to that the loss of jobs to overseas companies, and to computerization. The service economy for which LA is famous now consists of hourly-wage immigrant labor, men and women who are so desperate they are routinely cheated out of day-labor pay by unscrupulous contractors or homeowners.

In the 1940s, houses were affordable. But now, real estate prices in southern California, especially in Los Angeles, are so inflated that few Americans, much less recent immigrants, can afford houses. The most recent still live as they have for years – crowded twenty to a garage, sharing beds and a bucket in the corner. People pay more than two-thirds of their monthly income to sleep inside rooms they will never own.

When there is less to fight for, the fighting becomes more fierce. And the children of recent immigrants are often the ones targeting African Americans.

History repeats itself again and again.

Fremont High School, which is located in South Central Los Angeles, opened in 1924, with a white student population. On March 17, 1947, according to the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, a racial disturbance took place "staged by students against the enrollment of six Negro girls." Fremont, during the 1960s and 1970s, was a majority black school. By 2006, the student body had changed again: it was 89 percent Latino and 11 percent African American. On March 21, 2006, and November 13, 2006, racial fights took place at the school, and one student reported that a Latino student shouted at her, "Go back to Africa!"

The first settlers of Los Angeles, the original forty-four pobladores, were "colored," meaning they had dark skin. They were twenty-two adults and twenty-two children. They had responded to requests from Spain to travel north from the Mexican states of Sinaloa and Sonora and colonize Alta California. Specifically, they were of mixed Indian, African, and Spanish descent. They would have had trouble, however, going back to Africa since the "Moors" and Africans who were their forebears had come to Mexico during the 1600s.

Photographs of Pío Pico, the last governor of California under Mexican rule, whose name graces Pico Boulevard, show a very dark skinned man. According to El Pueblo de Los Angeles, his parents and grandparents came with the Anza party to California in 1776 from Sinaloa, Mexico, where two-thirds of the residents were mulattos (www.lacity.org/ELP/).

But by the early 1800s, settlers were referred to as "Spaniards," and when Charlotte Spear, a black activist, tried to resurrect the city's history in 1910 as one heavily influenced by Afro-Mexicans, she met with resistance.

My daughters can't go back to Africa because they've never been there. My own mother is an immigrant, from Switzerland, who came to this country in 1955; my stepfather came from Canada in 1952. Dwayne's mother was born in Calexico, a city on the California border with Mexico, where her own mother had settled briefly after leaving hard-time Mississippi; her nephews became some of the first black Border Patrol agents. She married General Sims II.

The photo of three brothers stands on his marble-topped dresser even now. He, Robert, and Stanford, all in sharp double-breasted suits, the fabric draped in clean lines from shoulder to hip, their young smiling faces as they pose in front of a bungalow, a picket fence, and a palm tree just behind them. It is an iconic southern California landscape.

They remember a particular kind of exhilaration and freedom, with the constant backdrop of music and dancing, that doesn't exist for most black Angelenos now.

Central Avenue was the hub of the universe then. "We used to go to Dynamite Jackson's," General Sims remembered. "Oh, we had such a good time. Sarah Vaughan, Louis Jourdan, all of them came to the clubs."

Jack Kerouac visited, while he was *On The Road*. He wrote, "Terry came out and led me by the hand to Central Avenue, which is the colored main drag of LA. And what a place it is, with chickenshacks barely big enough to house a jukebox, and the jukebox blowing nothing but blues, bop, and jump.… The wild humming night of Central Avenue – the night of Hamp's Central Avenue Breakdown – howled and boomed along outside. They were singing in the halls, singing from their windows, just hell be damned and look out."

The Buckworld One dancers, ten young men in baggy pants, sneakers, and baseball caps, leapt into the air, contorting their bodies in seemingly impossible positions, twisting and landing on their hands, legs like apostrophes dangling above them on the stage.

Then they bent low and mimed bullets coming at them, and they fell onto the floor, utterly limp in imagined death.

My family watched from the audience at a local university, unable to breathe. Dwayne nodded his head and bit his lips.

Playwright Rickerby Hinds had first encountered "buck dancing" in San Bernardino, through which runs the iconic Route 66, a city which now has one of the highest gang-related murder rates in California. At the Central City Lutheran Mission, he saw "Battlezone Krump/Buck sessions." "These kids were dancing for hours, in tiny rooms with no air conditioning, competing against each other, doing amazing things with their bodies. Take the most difficult moves you can imagine from break dancing, and that's the beginning of buck."[1]

Hinds began to talk to some of the dancers, who were from around the Inland area. All were desperately poor, living in dangerous neighborhoods, and their only release was the hours of dancing. Hinds offered to help create a theatre piece with whoever wanted to rehearse with him, and for over a year, he worked with a core group of ten young men and four young women.

With bare chests, using ropes for props, the male dancers portray slavery in an intricate progression of cooperation, tying and untying each other as they move acrobatically through the dance. With white shirts and ties, they make a civil rights protest line, enduring attacks from police and bending under pressure from unseen water hoses. Then, with hats cocked and jackets loose, they fight as gang members wielding guns in front of a harsh red light, so that their silhouettes die again and again.

He wanted to bring the show to our neighborhood stage, inside the former junior high on Riverside's Eastside. But the Buckworld One crew wouldn't come.

Hinds said, "A couple of years ago, I think, they used to 'get buck' at Bobby Bonds." (Our rec center is named for the black baseball star raised nearby – his son is Barry Bonds.) "But apparently a couple of them were chased down University Avenue, all the way downtown, by gang members."

Hinds, who speaks Spanish and was born in Honduras, said, "They also point out, as I drive them home, places where they've had run-ins with 'Mexicans' or where they have had to run." He added, "There's no differentiation between Latinos where they're concerned. They're afraid of cops and Latinos, not necessarily in that order."

I watched them onstage, trembling in the throes of death, leaping up again to circle back around, dying when the police shoot them, or gang members crouching in front of each other shoot them, or someone shoots them over a cell phone. Over and over, they mime the gun and the bullet and the impact – their bodies contort in the air, contort on the wooden floor as they rise up and then lie flat.

Randy Newman made the street famous in his iconic song, "I Love LA."

"Imperial Highway is where I saw someone pop the trunk for the first time," Rickerby Hinds told me recently. "I drove down Imperial every day from my house, at 9th and Florence, to Lynwood Academy. It was 1983, I think. Two groups of guys had been talking a lot, going at it, and then we pulled up into a gas station and somebody said, 'I'ma pop the trunk.'" Hinds shook his head. "He was going to get his gun. And once you say, 'Pop the trunk,' you can't go back." He sighed. "See, we can't ever go back from that time."

It was the beginning of the new war – of the marriage of weapon and automobile which made killing convenient and so anonymous.

Suddenly everybody had guns, and music that went along with the guns. Seventies funk songs we grew up with, all about dancing, sex, marijuana, and survival, went to New York hip-hop, which had been about MCs and beats and girls, to rap, which was about dancing and beats and girls and

raise your hands in the air like you just don't care, to what LA created and polished and sent out to the world. Gangsta rap. NWA became famous for "Straight Outta Compton," and Compton became iconic, much to the dismay of residents like our uncle, Stanford Sims.

Hinds is a nationally known playwright, a professor at the University of California, Riverside. He's an expert on hip-hop, having written a Hip-Hopera, but he's also someone who watched all this happen in Los Angeles. "I spoke Spanish," he said. "But my skin was brown."

His mother Marva Hinds had come to Los Angeles from Honduras in 1977, drawn by her siblings who already lived in the area. Her son Rickerby was among the first generation to be afraid of both compatriots and police – both of whom had weapons.

One night, Hinds was in the oceanside community of Marina del Rey. "I was parked with my girlfriend. You know. And this light, and this voice. I opened the window, and the cop, a white cop, a young cop, said, 'Damn, you're ugly. You look like Leon Spinks.' And it just went on and on. I had to sit there. I was afraid to move. He had that gun. He could have shot me. I felt humiliated. Emasculated. There isn't any other feeling like that. You're nothing. Nothing."

Near the intersection of 21st Street and Central Avenue in Los Angeles, Geneva Stevenson's house still stands.

The clubs are gone from Central Avenue, and of course, the ice company. Now the storefronts are panaderias, carnicerias, taquerias, lavanderias, and the offices of *La Prensa*, a Spanish-language newspaper of LA. The *Los Angeles Sentinel*, which was founded in 1910 and had its offices on Central Avenue for many years, is now housed on Crenshaw Boulevard.

The *Sentinel* featured a front-page photo of Jamiel Shaw Jr. lying in a coffin whose satin lining was embroidered with the words "May The Work I've Done Speak For Me."

The headline read "Terrorism in Los Angeles."

"It's not a race thing, it's a gang thing," Jamiel Shaw Sr. said.

Territory and land and ownership of something even if that something is the very air you displace while you're driving down a street. You own so little that the air is yours, and the walls with your painted names, and the street signs like thin flags planted in a colony. Metal flags that don't waver in the wind when you pass by, keeping watch, soldiers driving point.

John Sims drove to 21st Street years ago, nostalgic for a look, on his new motorcycle, he said. "The old house was still there. And just like us, the Mexicans and Central Americans were crowded in. I thought, hey, we were almost like foreigners when we came from Oklahoma. No one wanted us out here either, no one liked us. I always felt a kinship with them. But some of the things I hear from my nephews, I can't believe what they go through. I can't understand the hatred."

Go back to Africa.

It was because of the bullet and the gun that Africans were first able to be brought to the Americas in such large numbers. Soldiers of warring African tribes were no match for whites with muskets.

There is nothing as powerful as the gun, and the idea that someone is not worth as much as you are.

I think often of Fine's bullet, nestled in her apron pocket, a talisman for her revenge and escape.

"I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain" (James Baldwin).

I cried when I saw Jamiel Shaw Jr.'s funeral cortege on the eleven o'clock news. I cried for a long time, even though I'd never met him, because my daughters were asleep and no one could see me cry for someone I'd never met and accuse me of too much sentiment or softness. I cried for his mother, just arrived from Iraq, and his father, who'd had the same exact plan Dwayne and I have. I will protect you, and you will go to college, and you will work twice as hard.

I cried because I have been for thirty years the woman in the passenger seat, or standing beside the man pushed against the brick wall, afraid of the blood just the same – the blood that she would see and know – and now I'm afraid my high school daughter is that young woman, riding with her cousins, or her boyfriend. He is 6 feet 5, brown skinned, with braids, and he had to miss school for three days this winter because of another drive-by shooting. Over four hundred black students stayed home from our former high school, afraid of retaliation. Dwayne sees the shooters every night, in custody.

It is the confluence of powers – the celebrated car culture of southern California and the American culture of the gun. Both are more powerful than ever before in this country. Uzi and Tech-9 and Mac-10. Navigator and Escalade and in the final irony, the Suburban.

In the early part of this century, American men killed each other for countless reasons, most of them personal – a fight over a woman, a comment in a bar, a dice game, a stolen horse, an insult. We had "cowboys and Indians," glorified in movies and song, "cops and robbers," "the North and the South." We had the Sharks and the Jets.

But this is the ultimate convenience, to drive past people on a sidewalk or in another car, in a driveway or to even just cruise past a house and shoot a gun you've held in your lap or taken from the glove compartment. There is no argument, there is no touching and stabbing with a knife or bayonet, there is no mess, there is not even the popping of the trunk. It is powerful, with movement and music and bravado, a transient mobile party. So much better and easier than horses and bows and arrows, than cannons and canyons, less personally dangerous than the car bomb.

I grew up cruising in cars full of funk music and teenagers, driving for hours with the drums pounding and the windows down. Car culture is part of our

blood. Whittier Avenue in East Los Angeles, Crenshaw in South Los Angeles, and E Street in San Bernardino, right near Route 66, where the first cruising took place, where men of all ages and races still display their classic cars.

But we never thought of doing anything but driving. Now, young men drive, aim out the window, feel the gun in hand – the vital feel of power and adrenaline that must radiate all the way down to the fingers.

That is hunting. On the playground, the freeway, the parking lot, and yes, the sidewalk and the driveway. That feeling of power must be impossible to duplicate, and nearly impossible to take away with intervention and injunction and incarceration.

The question is asked, and it is not. Where you from?

One recent night, I heard a familiar organ riff from the powerful speakers of an SUV idling beside me at a stoplight. Wes Montgomery, "Bumpin' on Sunset," an iconic LA jazz song. What year was that? Then I heard the refrain of Sly Stone's "Family Affair," my brother-in-law General III's favorite song from the 1970s.

But a deep voice began speaking rap lyrics in English and Spanish.

The song is from a 1995 album called "Smile Now, Die Later," a play on an old R&B song from the 1950s.

"You gonna let her go to the party?" Dwayne asked later, calling from work.

My daughter, descendant of those women who survived Tennessee and Texas and Tulsa, those women and men who stirred hundreds of pots of food in Los Angeles and Compton and Crenshaw and Inglewood, will never know a house party like the ones we had in the 1970s and 1980s, a party that spills out in summer into a driveway, the way we partied at Uncle John Sims' house near Crenshaw.

Those boys she laughs with are the descendants of the men in the sharp-lined double-breasted suits who stood in front of picket fences or leaned on the running boards of new cars, smiling and confident and bathed in the southern California sunshine, their chins high, their hands open wide.

Note

1 Krump dancing was featured in the 2006 film *Rize*, which followed a group of dancers trying to survive in Los Angeles. Those dancers wore painted faces and often clown costumes in their competitions. At the end of the film, one young man is killed by gunfire, mourned through dance.

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Part II

Social Flashpoints

Chapter Six

Social Flashpoints

Eric Avila

Los Angeles has no monopoly on racial violence. The "long hot summer" of urban racial violence in America did not first erupt in the 1960s, but rather in the 1860s, amid the turmoil of the Civil War. The New York City Draft Riots were but the most violent instance in a series of racial conflicts that erupted in northern cities in 1863. For three days in July, working-class Irish immigrant men took to the streets of Manhattan to protest their conscription into the Civil War. What began as an anti-war and anti-draft protest quickly descended into a racial pogrom. Innocent black bystanders were beaten, tortured, and murdered. In one instance, a mob stormed a black children's orphanage, clubbing a 7-year-old girl to death.

Fast forward to Chicago, 1919: 6,000 National Guard troops were called in on August 1 to quell a "race war" between whites and blacks, in which rioting, murder, and arson left 38 people dead and almost 600 injured. The Detroit Riot of 1943 witnessed a combination of white mob violence against blacks and blacks looting and burning stores in the black community. Such violence left a total of 25 African Americans dead, marking the worst episode in a spate of urban racial conflicts that ensued during the early 1940s (Fox 1985).

And yet for much of the twentieth century, the image of Los Angeles has remained mired in dark fantasies of race war. One only needs to recall the 2004 film *Crash*, which garnered several Oscars, including the coveted best picture prize. Racial conflict was the central theme of *Crash*, which explored the myriad interethnic and interracial tensions that afflict the City of Angels. Some two decades earlier, *Blade Runner* proferred a celebrated but deeply cynical vision of Los Angeles' polyglot future: whites flee to "off world" colonies, touted as a "golden chance to begin again," not unlike booster promotions of Los Angeles at the turn of the century, and immigrants rummage through the noxious refuse of a hypercapitalist society.

These films are only two instances of representing racial violence in Los Angeles. Throughout much of the twentieth century, newspapers and television news have episodically fixated upon the specter of race war in Los Angeles. During the early 1940s, for example, both the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Herald Examiner* articulated gross caricatures of young men of color, emphasizing their violent nature. In the aftermath of the Watts riot, *Life* magazine issued a photo spread titled "Out of a Cauldron of Hate," rendering a menacing image of an angry black youth. The underlying caption read, "Get Whitey!" Such coverage anticipated *Time* magazine's infamous cover shot of O. J. Simpson, his darkened face conjuring (and confirming) the racial anxieties of its white readership. Throughout this long history of words and images, twentieth-century Los Angeles has become the poster city for the nation's deepest fantasies and anxieties of an imminent racial apocalypse.

Symbolic racial violence, therefore, has as much to do with the history of Los Angeles as real racial violence. And while the city has no unique claim upon the latter category, it is perhaps the relationship between the symbolic and the real that distinguishes the history of race relations in Los Angeles from that of other American cities. Arguably the most mediated city in America, as Mike Davis emphasizes, Los Angeles frames a national, even global understanding of racial identity and racial conflict. As a prologue to the chapters in this "Social Flashpoints" section, this essay revisits some of the nadirs of race relations in Los Angeles and environs. Although many believe (or claim to believe) that we have moved beyond race, or that we live in a post-ethnic world, race continues to shape popular and academic understandings of social relations in urban America and nowhere more so than in Los Angeles. The history of Los Angeles forces us to look beyond the black and white dyad that still dominates the writing of American history. As a major point of contact among people moving east, west, north, and south, Los Angeles has been a laboratory for observing patterns of interaction among people of diverse cultural, linguistic, and geographic backgrounds. In the past decade or so, historians have moved beyond a traditional emphasis upon social conflict to shed light upon the lesser known patterns of cooperation, contact, and convergence, while others still dismiss race as a fictional basis of social conflict, privileging class as the "real" source of tension. Still, throughout its history, a polyglot mass of Angelenos has deployed a language of race and racial difference to explain the city's diversity. This chapter, and those that follow, retell an old story of conflict – racial conflict – delivered with the critical caveat that racial conflict is *never* simply about race: it is also about class, gender, religion, language, and geography. But the discourse of race has been most apparent and most available to diverse peoples of southern California. From a 1776 Indian uprising in the Mission San Gabriel, to the O. J. Simpson trial of 1994, the language of race and racial conflict continues to explain why we can't all get along.

Los Angeles was born of the primordial conflict between Indian and Spanish. The Conquistadores brought with them a set of ideological tools that – with the indispensable assistance of guns and disease – enabled their virtual enslavement of diverse indigenous peoples. The Chumash, Gabrielino, Juaneño, Fernandino, Serrano, and Luiseño Indians succumbed to the brute force of Spanish conquest, their populations decimated by the ravaging effects of disease. Those who withstood the onslaught of epidemics were forced to contend with the harsh means of discipline meted out within the mission system, which used the lash and whip to keep Indians in a state of forced servitude. Runaway Indians took grave risks, as they were often hunted down like animals by Spanish soldiers, brought back to the missions and punished, often executed, always in a very public fashion to warn other Indians of the dangers of fleeing. Recent scholarship also reveals how indigenous women lived under the constant threat of sexual violence. Much to the chagrin of Spanish padres like Father Junipero Serra, rape became a favorite pastime of many Spanish soldiers, who, like soldiers of all ages, often viewed women as the spoils of conquest (Castaneda 1993; Monroy 1993).

What enables historians of early California history to characterize the conflict between Spanish and Indian as a race war were the elaborate notions of race and caste that evolved throughout the long course of Spanish colonization. *Raza indigena* and *indio* were the terms used to identify southern California's indigenous peoples, and they were only two elements within a Byzantine hierarchy of racial identities that the Spanish used to classify, categorize, and organize their subject populations. Moreover, the notion of *razón*, which translates roughly as "reason," produced (and helped to sustain) a primary distinction between European and Indian in the so-called New World. As the Spanish invaders labeled themselves *gente de razón*, Indians were *gente sin razón*, or people without reason, and it was the alleged absence of reason among indigenous peoples that justified Spanish efforts to force Indians into a perpetual state of dependence and servitude (Monroy 1993).

Spanish violence against Indians was met by Indian retaliation. As Douglas Monroy points out, Spanish settlers and soldiers always lived in fear of Indian reprisals and attacks. Such fears were not unfounded. In November, 1775, the Yuman Indians in the vicinity of the first of the missions, San Diego de Alcala, attacked and burned the mission, killing Padre Luis Jaime. In the aftermath of the violence, the conquistador Juan Bautista de Anza noted, "the event has filled everybody with terror and caused them to realize what the natives of the region are capable of attempting, which formerly they did not believe." Such episodes of Indian insurgency unsettled the pervasive convictions that Indians were a docile and compliant people, and that the program of colonization would unfold without consequence (Monroy 1993: 41).

Such conflicted circumstances wrought the founding of Los Angeles, but violence against Indian peoples did not end with the conclusion of Spanish rule. As the missions faded into the ruinous glory that defined the cultural imagery of late nineteenth-century Los Angeles, and as Anglo Americans trickled into southern California during the 1830s and 1840s, racial and class antagonisms between Indian, Mexican, and Anglo escalated, culminating in the outbreak of total war between the United States and Mexico in 1846. The Mexican-American War was little more than the means by which the United States fulfilled its imperialist aspirations towards manifest destiny, but realizing such continental ambitions depended upon a set of ideological assumptions about the racial inferiority of Mexican Americans. Throughout the 1840s, American statesmen and newspaper editors fumed over the Mexican presence in the Far West, insisting upon the "innate depravity" of Mexican peoples and emphasizing their genealogical ties to cannibalistic Aztecs and primitive Indians (Pitt 1998: 75).

As far as wars between sovereign nations go, the American takeover of Los Angeles was a relatively bloodless affair. The aftermath of the Mexican-American War, however, witnessed unprecedented levels of hostility and violence between "gringos" and "greasers." Throughout the 1850s and well into the 1860s, a virtual "race war" descended upon Los Angeles, where the sudden imposition of Anglo American political and economic traditions upon a predominantly Spanish-speaking population created the perfect storm for random outbursts of racial violence and vigilante justice. Nothing better symbolized the lawless climate of early American Los Angeles than the El Monte Boys, an enclave of Texans who had served as Texas Rangers during the Mexican War, coming to southern California to target Mexicans with their fearsome brand of vigilante justice. Mexicans, for their part, particularly working-class Mexicans, rallied around new heroes such as Joaquin Murieta and Tiburcio Vasquez, who gained notoriety among Anglos as lawless bandits who sought to avenge the misdeeds of the United States government. The scattered attacks of Murieta and Vasquez sent waves of hysteria through California's newly established Anglo American communities, fanning the flames of racial animosity towards all Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Carey McWilliams characterized postwar Los Angeles as the "murder capital of the world," and described the lynching of Mexicans by whites as an "outdoor sport." His assessment underscored the high degree of Anglo-Mexican conflict that ensued after the war, but while that conflict was more than simply racial conflict (it was also a working-class, male conflict), its language was coded in primarily racial terms (McWilliams 1983: 60; Deverell 2004).

But the color of racial conflict in late nineteenth-century Los Angeles was more than white and brown. Chinese immigrants had begun to arrive in Los Angeles in the 1850s and increased their numbers in the following decade. By the 1870s, Los Angeles had its very own Chinatown, known to

locals as Calle de los Negros, or "Nigger Alley." Since African Americans had but a minimal presence in Los Angeles in the mid to late nineteenth century, Chinese immigrants essentially became "niggers" for local whites and Latinos – the "indispensable enemy," as historian Alexander Saxton termed Chinese immigrants in nineteenth-century California. Such a conflation of racial identity not only underscores the degree to which the Chinese were marked as racially other, but also the malleability of the term "nigger," which described any group that exhibited visible cultural and phenotypical differences from mainstream white society. Though California enacted a Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, anti-Chinese sentiment ran high in California in the prior decade and was especially pronounced in San Francisco, where the Chinese settled in more substantial numbers.

It was in Los Angeles, however, where possibly the most egregious episode of anti-Chinese violence in American history broke out. On October 24, 1871, Robert Thompson, an Anglo American rancher, was accidentally killed in the crossfire between two rival Chinese factions. Within minutes, a mob of over five hundred white American, European, and Mexican men, including some women and children, descended upon Calle de los Negros, attacking and murdering innocent Chinese bystanders. Chinese-owned buildings were ransacked, set aflame, and destroyed. The *Los Angeles Daily Mirror* reported that "for several hours the bloody work went on, and at evening there were several corpses lying about the streets" (October 27, 1883). In a city that counted only 170 people of Chinese descent in 1870, the massacre claimed the lives of nineteen men, women, and children, fifteen left hanging from makeshift gallows (for a fuller treatment of the grim event, see chapter 7).

Some historians have been quick to point out the underlying economic motivations behind the riot. California's economy, like that of the Far West in general, was tenuous in the aftermath of the Civil War. Unemployment ran high and Chinese immigrant men, who worked cheaply at menial jobs, drew resentment from non-elites at the lower end of the labor ladder. The economic interpretation, however, belies or tends to diminish the racist sentiment behind the conflict. The Chinese, known as "celestials" in nineteenth-century popular discourse, a term that connoted their otherworldliness, were racially marked upon their arrival in California, and their more apparent differences from mainstream white society aroused animosity from both Mexicans and Americans. The motley character of the mob that descended upon Chinatown illuminates the shifting racial fault lines of late nineteenth-century California. For their part, the Mexicans who participated in the riot could step outside, momentarily at least, the circumscribed boundaries that defined Mexicans as Other, to inflict the terror that whiteness has historically perpetrated upon groups deemed even more Other. The Chinese Massacre, as this episode became known, provided a clue to future episodes of racial violence that unfolded in twentieth-century Los Angeles.

The Chinese Massacre can also be viewed as the product of Los Angeles' distinct geography. As the point of contact among culturally diverse peoples moving north, west, and east, Los Angeles, like California in general, cultivated a unique set of social interactions often characterized by conflict, subordination, and violence. Japanese Americans, like Chinese immigrants, encountered their own unique challenges in their move across the Pacific to Los Angeles. The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, for example, was not an isolated outburst of anti-Japanese sentiment, but rather the culmination of longstanding animosities towards that group that date back to the late nineteenth century. While there had been occasional flares of anti-Japanese nativism in southern California prior to the early 1940s, particularly during the xenophobia of the 1920s, the Japanese military decision to bomb the Pearl Harbor naval station on December 7, 1941 sparked a wave of intense hysteria about the presence of Japanese Americans in California. In Los Angeles, home to some 5,000 Americans of Japanese descent, anxieties ran high about the possibility of an enemy attack upon mainland soil. Newspapers like the *Los Angeles Times* substantiated these fears, invoking the specters of internal subversion and enemy attack through a barrage of racist words and images (Hayashi 2004; Kashima 2004).

Such anxieties underlay the 1942 issuance of Executive Order 9066, which declared Americans of Japanese descent a "hostile and enemy race" and ordered the seizure of Japanese American property and the prompt relocation of Japanese American families to makeshift encampments in the remote deserts of California and Arizona replete with barbed wire and armed sentries. In Los Angeles, the Santa Anita racetrack suspended horse racing between 1942 and 1945 to become a holding facility for detained Japanese Americans, many of whom were subsequently shipped to places such as Manzanar in the Mojave Desert. Almost overnight, Japanese American neighborhoods like Little Tokyo became ghost towns, boarded up and virtually abandoned. Detained in interment camps over the course of the war, Japanese Americans experienced the destruction of their communities and bore the brunt of racist anxieties in wartime California.

While nativist hostility towards Japanese Americans had been stewing in California since the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants, World War II provided a terrifying urgency to what the *Times* called the "Jap Menace." The heightened state of national anxiety induced by the war, the drafting of sons and husbands into a global conflict, rumors of enemy aircraft and submarines surfacing just off the California coast – these factors unnerved Americans of all colors and shades during the early 1940s, and the recent memory of a massive economic depression during the previous decade compounded these anxieties. But while the war provided a common cause for unity among diverse Americans, it also provoked deeply ingrained notions of racial entitlement among white majorities in American cities and inflamed xenophobic hostility towards non-white peoples.

In this context, other, perhaps less drastic, episodes of racial strife surfaced in wartime Los Angeles, such as the infamous Zoot Suit Riots. Granted, the so-called riots (the term "white sailor riots" more accurately identifies the instigator of the conflict) were not the product of federal policy, nor did they involve the wholesale removal of an entire racialized community, but they stand nonetheless as an example of the more spontaneous – perhaps "everyday" – brand of racial conflict that ensued during the war. The riots have been a revisited topic in the history of Los Angeles. The well-known story of white sailors launching a mob attack upon the flamboyant zoot suiters; of taxicab brigades carrying vengeful sailors armed with baseball bats; of naked brown bodies left crouching on the streets; of policemen arresting the victims, not the perpetrators – these scenes from the Zoot Suit Riots have been told and retold by Los Angeles and Chicano historians, who emphasize the symbolic nature of the attack, the context of a nation at war, the role of fashion and identity, the cultural politics of subversion, and the "psychology of symbolic annihilation" (Mazón 1984).

Some, like Kevin Starr, however, judge the Zoot Suit Riots as an overplayed episode in Los Angeles history. No one died, after all, in the five days in early June 1943 in which white sailors, many of them teenagers, randomly assaulted young men of color on the streets of the city. But the figure of the zoot suiter, or the "riddle of the Zoot," as Robin Kelley described it, has perplexed generations of historians, who seek to understand why this particular style held such an appeal for young urban men of color in the Swing Era and why it garnered such contempt from mainstream white society. The provocative nature of the zoot suiter – the exaggerated contours, the loud colors, the flashy chains and feathers, the defiant posture – aroused a range of emotions from both inside and outside the Chicano community (as well as from Mexico and Latin America). But in the midst of a global war with an uncertain outcome, when the strains of wartime rationing and the calls for patriotic loyalty minimized public tolerance for expressions of social difference – even sartorial ones – the zoot suiter tested the political and moral expectations of the moment (Kelley 1996; Alvarez 2005).

While much attention has been lavished upon the figure of the zoot suiter – his hidden meanings, his political stylings – there were also the boys in the uniforms, the sailors who were stationed at the Naval Reserve Armory in the Chavez Ravine, less than a mile from downtown Los Angeles. These young white men (the Navy remained a segregated institution throughout the war), mostly between the ages of eighteen and twenty, arrived from all parts of the nation, and most seemed to have had little or no contact with Mexicans or Mexican culture prior to their entry into Los Angeles. On their way to face the enemy on the Pacific front, these boys encountered an unfamiliar social mix on the streets of Los Angeles, and when unfounded rumors spread that a white woman had been assaulted by the exotic and vaguely threatening zoot suiters, they triggered a collective impulse to lash out upon

the dandies who flaunted the very kind of *machismo* that pervaded the militaristic culture of the Navy. Thus began five days of lawless violence in which white sailors rode in taxis, targeting any zoot suiter in sight, stripping them of their costumes, beating them, and leaving them naked in the streets.

In 1940s Los Angeles, the bodies of young men of color were battlegrounds in a contest over meaning. On the one hand, the zoot suiter himself used clothing, gait, language, and dance to self-fashion a distinctive identity, one that flaunted its defiance of the middle-class conventions of society at war. On the other hand, the conspicuous presence of the zoot suiter – the very confidence he exuded in public – sparked a fierce counter-discourse, crafted in the pages of mainstream newspapers like the *Los Angeles Times*, that emphasized the zoot suiter's animalistic nature, his unpatriotic intentions, and his penchant for violence and mayhem. For its part, the *Times* began its war of words against the zoot suiters a year prior to the infamous riots. In 1942, the discovery of the body of Jose Diaz in the Sleepy Lagoon in southeastern Los Angeles prompted the *Times* to level a rhetorical campaign against zoot suiters, inflaming public sentiment against young men of color in Los Angeles. Such racist words infused the infamous court trial of the Sleepy Lagoon defendants, in which the glaring absence of due process led to a rash of convictions based on circumstantial evidence. The Sleepy Lagoon murder trial thus prefigured the Zoot Suit Riots of 1943, underscoring the degree to which young Chicano men were singled out as yet another target of the xenophobic hostilities that ran high in wartime Los Angeles.

The postwar period seemed to deliver a respite from the heated racial and ethnic conflicts of the early 1940s. This was an age of prosperity, rapid growth, and a sprawling distribution of wealth and jobs. Los Angeles emerged as the "it" city of postwar America – a trendsetter metropolis that would shape national culture in distinctive ways. The Dodgers left New York for Los Angeles; the Beach Boys celebrated a regional culture of convertibles, bikinis, and surfboards; LAX opened in 1961, making Los Angeles a hub within a new network of transcontinental jet travel; and southern California's suburbs brimmed with development as freeways, housing tracts, and shopping malls gave shape to a new suburban culture predicated upon an ideal of prosperous, healthy, white nuclear families. The exuberance of that culture found its most compelling expression in the opening of Disneyland in Anaheim in 1955. The prototype of not only theme parks, but also outdoor shopping malls, gated communities, and other models of privatized public space, Disneyland captured national and international attention by delivering a sanitized version of the nation's past, present, and future, one that enshrined the values and ideals of small-town, white, Protestant America. Such values mirrored the aspirations of the new suburban culture of postwar Los Angeles, which turned its back upon the city

and its historic diversity, and retreated into a privatized bubble of newness, sameness, and whiteness (Avila 2004).

The bubble burst, however, in August of 1965. Far removed from landscapes of suburban privilege, and light years from the consciousness of suburban residents, Watts erupted in fury on a hot summer night in 1965, bringing southern California's endless summer to a bloody end. On the evening of August 11, during a record heat wave, a California Highway Patrol officer pulled over a young African American man, Marquette Frye, for erratic driving. A crowd of onlookers began to taunt the policeman, who called for reinforcements. According to eyewitness accounts, a second police officer used his baton against the growing crowd, which sparked accusations of police brutality, a crime long familiar to the residents of Watts. As Scott Saul further discusses in chapter 9, the incident sparked five uninterrupted days of an "insensate rage of destruction." Between August 11 and August 17, 1965, an estimated 35,000 African Americans lashed out against the Los Angeles Police Department, their record of harassment and brutality against black people, as well as the larger conditions of poverty and unemployment in the area. Official estimates recorded approximately $50 million in property damage, mostly against white-owned businesses in the area. To quell the violence, some 16,000 members of the National Guard were brought into the area, aiding the effort of county sheriffs and city police. By the end of the fifth day, more than 35 people had died and over 1,000 were left injured.

In the aftermath of the riot, Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown called upon former CIA director and UC Berkeley alumnus John McCone to head a special investigation into the causes of the Watts riot. Unlike future Governor Ronald Reagan, who blamed the riots upon his predecessor as well as upon a "lawless fringe of society," and unlike Police Chief William Parker, who callously described the rioters as "monkeys in a zoo," the members of the McCone Commission recognized the riots as symptomatic of "a sickness in the center of our cities," identifying three fundamental sources of the conflict: "not enough jobs to go around," "not enough schooling to meet the special needs of the disadvantaged Negro child," and "a resentment, even hatred, of the police as the symbol of authority." The report also noted the degree of racial segregation in the broader urban region, and its consequence for the social fabric. The commission concluded: "Negroes, pressing ever more densely into the central city and occupying areas from which Caucasians have moved in their flight to the suburbs, have developed an isolated existence with a feeling of separation from the community as a whole" (California Governor's Commission 1967).

The Watts riot brought national and international attention to the conditions of racial poverty endemic within the postwar American city. They also shattered the myth of Los Angeles as one big beach party or backyard

barbeque. Like Mexican Americans, African Americans were locked out of southern California's suburban dream by virtue of the historic patterns of redlining, restrictive covenants, and homeowners' associations. And as the abundance of manufacturing jobs that brought many African Americans to Los Angeles during the war years withered during the 1950s, Watts emerged as a regional epicenter of urban racial poverty. Again, Los Angeles was not the only American city to exhibit this kind of racial conflict. The summer of 1964 was a particularly turbulent moment in the nation's inner-city. New York City, Rochester, Paterson, Chicago, and Philadelphia all experienced racial uprisings, but these disturbances paled in comparison to the Watts riot, which exhibited racial violence on a scale unparalleled in American history. The sheer expanse and violent geography of the eruption in Los Angeles was daunting in and of itself: almost 50 square miles of the city beyond the control of military authorities for several days: equal to the size of two Manhattans or seven San Franciscos.

Watts struck fear into the heart of suburban southern California, a fear based upon the very urban predicament of being connected to people you sought distance from. Consciously or unconsciously, white suburban southern Californians secluded themselves within communities that exhibited higher degrees of racial homogeneity, and the workings of politics and land development furthered this pattern. The physical forms of seclusion built into postwar suburbanization also engendered a perceptual seclusion, and while the violence unleashed by the Watts rioters did little to break the physical demarcations between white suburban privilege and urban racial poverty, the scenes of violence in the inner-city shattered the false pretenses of southern California's suburban good life.

The 1960s were a gory decade in the history of Los Angeles, not simply because of the Watts riot. The famous photograph of Robert F. Kennedy dying in a pool of blood on the floor of the Ambassador Hotel underscored a longstanding perception of Los Angeles as the city where dreams die hard, but it was in a secluded canyon of the Hollywood Hills where any lingering vestiges of that dream came to a bloody end. On the evenings of August 8 and 9, 1969, the "Manson family," named after the leader of this cult circle, Charles Manson, staged consecutive murders in the hillside homes of two celebrity families. On the first evening, four members of the Manson gang, following Manson's orders, broke into the Benedict Canyon home of the film director Roman Polanski and his wife, Sharon Tate, a young actress who was eight and one half months pregnant with the couple's first child. While Polanski was in Europe on a film shoot, the intruders tied up Tate and her three guests, shooting and stabbing them multiple times, leaving four people and one unborn infant dead. Upon leaving, the murderers scrawled "PIG" on the front door of the house with the victim's blood. The next night, six Family members, including Manson himself, broke into the Los Feliz home of Leno La Bianca and his wife Rosemary,

butchering the couple to death, leaving the words "Death to pigs," "Rise," and "Helter skelter" scrawled on the walls in the victim's blood.

The Tate-La Bianca murders shocked the nation, but they especially rattled the hillside denizens of Los Angeles, who experienced a new sense of vulnerability and terror. Hillside and canyon homes no longer afforded the privileged seclusion of a David Hockney painting, but instead became prey to the stalkings of deranged killers. The most bizarre and least recognized aspects of these horrific murders, however, were their racial motives. According to court interviews, the Tate-La Bianca murders were orchestrated by Manson to launch what he predicted as the imminent race war between white and black, which Manson called "Helter Skelter," borrowing the title of a song included on *The White Album* by the Beatles. Manson, like many Americans, perceived that racial tensions were on a sharp rise in 1960s America, and the April 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King heightened Manson's perceptions that a racial apocalypse was close at hand. According to court transcripts, the Tate-La Bianca murders were thus part of Manson's effort to spark Helter Skelter to ultimately rule over the blacks who would rise up in rebellion against white racial domination.

Manson's version of Helter Skelter never came to fruition, at least for another 22 years, when Los Angeles exploded, once again, in yet another round of bloody racial violence. In the summer of 1991, a black cab driver, Rodney King, was stopped for speeding on a Los Angeles freeway by the Los Angeles Police Department. A bystander with a video camera captured the image of three police officers clubbing a defenseless King with 56 baton strokes, kicking him in the head and body, while a group of LAPD and California Highway Patrol officers stood by. The release of this image through global circuits of the mass media sparked national outrage over police misconduct towards black people. When a mostly white jury acquitted the four officers of excessive force on April 29, 1992, it incited what became known as the Rodney King Riots.

Racial tensions were simmering on the eve of this verdict as they had been just before the Watts riot. South Central Los Angeles was devastated by a nationwide recession in the early 1990s, as unemployment rates spiked in the area and jobs continued their outward migration. The Los Angeles Police Department continued its notorious pattern of racial profiling and excessive force against people of color, a pattern documented by the McCone Commission some thirty years earlier. The problems of police brutality and poverty were compounded by interracial tensions in South Central Los Angeles. Gang violence took its toll upon the lives of young Chicano and black men throughout the 1980s, and tensions between Korean immigrants and black youth also simmered, leading to the murder of Latasha Harlins by a Korean shop owner a mere eleven days after the beating of Rodney King. Soon Ja Du, owner of Empire Liquor, wrongly assumed that the black girl was stealing a carton of orange juice, shooting

her in the back of the head. The death of Latasha Harlins outraged many in Los Angeles, especially members of the African American community, who reached the limits of their tolerance of racial injustice on the eve of the Rodney King Riots (for further commentary on such tensions and violence, see chapter 10).

Such was the context when the nation's worst episode of urban racial violence flared on the evening of April 29, 1992. That afternoon, at 3:15 pm, the verdicts acquitting the four white officers were announced. By 3:45 pm, a peaceful crowd of approximately 300 people emerged on the steps of the Los Angeles County Courthouse. Between 5 and 6 pm, at the intersection of Florence and Normandie in South Central Los Angeles, officers were outnumbered by an angrier crowd and forced to flee the scene. Around 6:30 pm, one of the most infamous images of the riots appeared at that intersection. Helicopters hovering above recorded the image of a black mob pulling Reginald Denny, a white truck driver stopped at a red light, from his cab, dragging him into the street and beating him. Someone dropped a cinder block on his head, leaving him unconscious in the street. With no police in sight, a few black residents, after seeing the assault on live television, rushed to Denny's aid. Denny was attacked for no apparent reason other than his white skin, but other non-white bystanders also suffered injury.

By 8:00 that evening, a larger and angrier crowd had amassed in the civic center of downtown Los Angeles. Rocks and bottles were thrown at the County Courthouse as well as LAPD headquarters at Parker Center. By 8:45 pm, Mayor Tom Bradley declared a state of emergency, prompting Governor Pete Wilson to send in 2,000 National Guard troops. Violence throughout the city ensued over the next five days, mostly concentrated in the South Central portions of the city. Korean markets were a particular target of rioters and looters, but white and black businesses alike were ransacked. The city's infrastructure was also a target. Cars were torched at the intersection of major boulevards, blocking access to certain neighborhoods. Snipers fired at rescue workers and at police helicopters, prompting officials at Los Angeles International Airport to redirect incoming flights. The California Department of Transportation closed certain freeway offramps to restrict entry into afflicted portions of the city. For five days, much of Los Angeles was an occupied military zone, with thousands of municipal, state, and federal brigades stationed throughout the city. By the time the last shot was fired, 53 people had died, 2,000 people were injured, 10,000 people were arrested, 3,600 fires were set, 1,100 buildings were destroyed, and officials counted over a billion dollars in property damage. Long after the long hot summer of the late 1960s, the Rodney King Riots marked the deadliest and costliest urban riot in American history.

All because of one man who happened to have a video recorder on hand the night Rodney King fell prey to abusive policemen. It's hard to avoid the

conclusion that it was ultimately the global dissemination of a homemade video that prompted this deadly outburst of racial violence in Los Angeles, underscoring the world-historic reverberations of personal technology. The vexed relationship between race and visual media played out once again a mere year and a half after the chaos of the Rodney King Riots. On June 13, 1994, neighbors found the mutilated bodies of Nicole Brown Simpson, ex-wife of football star O. J. Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman in the front courtyard of her Brentwood condominium. When police officials charged Simpson with their murders, the celebrity athlete turned murder suspect fled in a white Bronco driven by his friend Al Cowlings. A low-speed chase ensued on the 405 freeway, enthralling viewers captivated by live coverage of the police chase. Though Simpson held a gun to his head during the chase, he agreed several hours later to pull over and turn himself in. In his court arraignment on June 21, Simpson pled not guilty to the charge of double homicide. Leading the murder investigation for the LAPD was Tom Lange, who investigated the circumstances of the Tate-La Bianca murders. For 134 days in 1995, television viewers could watch the proceedings of perhaps the most publicized murder trial in history. Prosecutors presented a panoply of evidence linking Simpson to the crime, including a series of DNA analyses, which they believed conclusively proved Simpson's guilt. The defense on the other hand, dubbed the "Dream Team" by the media, included the likes of F. Lee Bailey, Alan Dershowitz, and Jonnie Cochran, who pointed to the many ways in which police had bungled the case, emphasizing the racism built into the police investigation.

On October 3, 1995, after only three hours of deliberation, the mostly African American jury returned with a verdict of not guilty. An estimated 150 million people tuned in to watch the reading of the verdict. Simpson's acquittal sparked outrage, laying bare the nation's deep racial divide. Many polls and commentators at the time concluded that while African Americans shared pervasive doubts about Simpson's innocence, they held fast to a stronger conviction that the system of justice and law enforcement had been rigged against blacks for centuries. For many African Americans, justice – at the least the brand of justice that had been leveled against them for centuries – had been served. A CBS News poll found that while 6 out of 10 whites thought that the jury had reached the wrong verdict, 9 out of 10 blacks believed it had decided correctly. While the trial and verdict conjured such historical memories among African Americans, it simultaneously rehashed deep-seated white anxieties about black male sexuality and its threat to white women. The media played upon these fears by rendering menacing images of Simpson. The infamous cover shot of Simpson in an issue of *Time*, in which his face appears darker, blurrier, and unshaven, underscored the ways in which the mass media manipulates images to conform to pervasive white stereotypes of black men as criminal and dangerous. The racial and sexual reverberations of the O. J. Simpson trial signaled

that this was not your typical celebrity scandal, but once again, Los Angeles provided the *mise en scène* for this sordid tale of race, sex, murder, and celebrity.

This cursory history of racial conflict in Los Angeles and the chapters that follow in this section are meant to underscore the unique geographic and historical circumstances of racial identity and race relations. Temporally, "race" meant something different in the nineteenth century than it did in the twentieth. European immigrant groups such as the Irish and Jews, for example, stepped into presumed racial categories upon their arrival to the Eastern seaboard during the mid-nineteenth century, but later found inclusion in broader, twentieth-century definitions of whiteness. Mexican Americans have taken a similar path, sort of. While the steady flow of Mexican immigrants perpetrates racial stereotypes and prejudices, the history of Chicanos in the United States exhibits an oscillation about the boundary white and not-white. One generation's plea for inclusion within the US Census' "Caucasian white" category became the next generation's call for Aztlán and Raza empowerment – both inspired by dreams of mobility and empowerment. Racial boundaries thus shift across time, and the timing of Los Angeles' rise to the status of a first tier city – relative to San Francisco and Chicago and much later than Boston and New York – conditioned unique patterns of social, especially racial, interaction.

Racial identity changes over time, but it also changes across space. A broad survey of race relations in New York would look very different from the portrait delivered in this chapter. Historically, conflict among European ethnic groups has been more pronounced on the East Coast than in the Far West. The consciousness of the differences among Jews, Italians, Irish, and Poles retains its salience in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, even Chicago, but seems to dissipate, mile by mile, across the continent, where it's easier to forget about those differences amid so many *different* people. Out west, whiteness has been even more inclusive, affording access and opportunity to groups that remained marginal in other cities. Thus, westering Jews found a means to place even greater distance between themselves and harsh, old-world prejudices. In Los Angeles, as historians have shown, both the film industry and the suburbs provided a space in which Jews and other ethnic groups could access certain privileges of whiteness, leaving behind denser concentrations of racial poverty. This process unfolded in many cities, but during the post-World War II period, LA's precise mix of economic, demographic, and geographic ingredients produced a space where Europe's subalterns became white.

As a point of contact among Mexican Americans, white Americans, African Americans, Japanese and Chinese Americans, indigenous peoples, and countless other ethnic groups, Los Angeles exhibits the social clash that is the very hallmark of urban life. Its history of race relations underscores the very urbanity of city life. While the stereotypes of Los Angeles as an

infinite stretch of suburban sprawl seem true next to New York or San Francisco, its history of racial violence illustrates what happens when diverse people come to share a limited set of geographic parameters. Sprawling it may be, yet Los Angeles remains a finite spatial entity that delimits its own historic playing field of social interaction.

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Chapter Seven

The Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871 and Its Strange Career

Victor Jew

On October 24, 1871 an urban disruption shook Los Angeles so strongly it remade the pueblo, changing its historical course in a shift so formative it can be likened to how the massive rains of 1825 moved the flow of the Los Angeles River from its westerly direction that emptied into Santa Monica Bay to its current southerly discharge at San Pedro (Pitt and Pitt 1997: 302.) The disruption in 1871 was a descent into mass violence that targeted the city's Chinese inhabitants. What happened that autumnal day and night in 1871 quickly progressed from a local feud to an angry mobbing, and finally, to what one southern California judge later recalled as the deadly shift that changed a riot into a massacre. Writing thirty years later about what happened that night, Judge Robert M. Widney found the word "massacre" appropriate to depict the tally of the evening's violence. A mob of about five hundred Los Angeles residents, mostly white and male, killed nineteen to twenty-one Chinese residents of Los Angeles, fifteen by lynching, with one of the victims being a 14-year-old boy.[1]

Often referred to as the "Chinese Massacre," this mass killing should, for the sake of accuracy, be called the Anti-Chinese Massacre. While the Chinese Angeleno community experienced its deadliest outcome, the massacre did not leave the city unchanged. As a marker of Los Angeles history, the massacre was perhaps "the first time the Americanized pueblo made headline news all around the world" (Scott and Soja 1996: 4.) The national and international notoriety of having murdered 10 percent of its Chinese community left Los Angeles both scarred and tarnished, and the city's leaders embarked on a path that invented modern Los Angeles.[2] Starting with the Protestant congregations who began a concerted effort to reform the Chinese district, the city's social and cultural elites realized that the memory of the killings needed to be managed. While the incessant boosterism of "sunkist" Los Angeles is often associated with the land boom of the

1880s, the anti-Chinese massacre can be seen as its immediate antecedent. The massacre and its memory tapped the impulse and mobilized the necessity to frame Los Angeles in the best light marketable when put before the rest of the nation and the world.[3]

The massacre thus bequeathed a legacy of necessitated image-making, an activity that never failed to absorb important Angelenos. It also became the first in a train of social flashpoints, one of many that would afflict the City of the Angels over the next 130 years. A term used by fire experts, "flashpoint" refers to the threshold when a combustible liquid ignites. As a metaphor used by historians, social flashpoints signify an ignition into widespread violence and draws attention to both the outburst and all that led to it. The anti-Chinese massacre of 1871 was an early flashpoint, sparked into being by issues of race and class and set off by a gendered instance of orientalism. While its particulars were very much of its time, its legacy proved ongoing. As an instance of a Los Angeles social eruption, the 1871 massacre forecast many of the themes that characterized the racialized flashpoints of the twentieth century. Being a racialized disturbance, the anti-Chinese massacre was the precursor of the race-colored "riots" of 1943 (the anti-Mexican American beatings), 1965 (the Watts uprising), and April 1992 (the city's multiethnic disorder that followed the first Rodney King verdicts.) The anti-Chinese massacre in Los Angeles forecast recurring dimensions in these race-oriented conflagrations of 1943, 1965, and 1992. Such factors as the violent investment in whiteness, the ambiguous and problematic details of Los Angeles law enforcement and its presence at the epicenter of the troubles, the symptomatic diagnosing assigned to post mortem assessments that seemed to hail the deeper ramifications that lay beneath the outbreaks coupled with the subsequent failure to fully address such issues – all of these were eerily present in the city's first large-scale racial eruption.

While the immediate casualties were the dead Chinese, the massacre's civic effects ramified in ways that were harder to measure, both at the time and for historians dealing with it for a century thereafter. A glance at a timeline of Los Angeles history might leave the impression that the anti-Chinese massacre was a precedent (Pitt and Pitt 1997: 576). This would not be unreasonable, but being a precedent, one needs to ask, not only of what, but how and to what extent? The anti-Chinese massacre was a "first," but its priority needs to be gauged. It was not the first riot, because at least one large-scale disturbance happened in the Plaza in July, 1856 (Deverell 2004: 258, n.15). Nor was it the first instance of killing because lifetakings happened regularly in the City of the Angels during the 1870s. Rather, the anti-Chinese massacre was the city's first large-scale racially motivated and racially targeted outburst. As brutal as this final outcome was, even this blunt fact has its fine distinctions. While the mobbing was primarily carried out by white Los Angeleno males, it must be noted that members of other communities also contributed perpetrators. The range of this ethnic diversity

was often expressed in the capsule statement that the Yankee (American) and Mexican communities, the Irish working class and French colonies each had representatives doing the night's bloody work, as well as German Angelenos, male and female residents, and people of all ages, including the lore of a gamin youngster who reportedly egged his oldsters into more lynching (De Falla 1960b: 185).[4] From those accounts, one could nominate the massacre with a dubious distinction. In was the city's first multiethnic and multicommunity urban disturbance, a "first" usually reserved for the 1992 Los Angeles uprising.

But being first has other dimensions, and only recently have scholars explored the larger ramifications of what happened. In these new assessments, the massacre's significance traveled far beyond the lethal immediacies that visited the Coronel Adobe and Temple Street. For Kevin Starr, the dean of California historians, the massacre was no less than the condensed harbinger of a decade of near revolution that rumbled throughout the Golden State, a spate of 23 years when "California approached the abyss, flirted with self-destruction, then regrouped" – only in the end to have its future dictated by the "railroads, corporations, and large landowners [who] continued to call the shots" (Starr 2005: 120–1). For Allen Scott and Edward Soja, two geographers of the "LA School" of urban studies, the massacre midwifed the abrupt start of American modernization, changing Los Angeles from the Californio-ruled pueblo to the US city whose governance was always guided by commercial elites (Scott and Soja 1996: 4).

These new assessments of the anti-Chinese massacre are even sharper in their particulars. "What could account for such murderous fury?" asked Kevin Starr. "Certainly, it was more than the riffraff of the city who were involved, as the official report of the incident tried to paint it." For Starr, the Los Angeles killings had state-wide significance and was itself a symptom of a deeper turmoil in societal relations revealing that violence "seethed beneath the surface" and was now "resurfacing in a shocking manner." Placing the anti-Chinese massacre in a new weighing of historical facts, Starr wrote that it "must be seen as the social and psychological paradigm of what was happening in California" in the years after the Civil War (2005: 120–1).[5]

Assigning "paradigmatic" status to the massacre makes the mass killings more than an isolated item within a list of Los Angeles history events. For Scott and Soja (1996), the massacre anticipated the "pattern" that made and remade Los Angeles in specific ways. For them, the anti-Chinese massacre was "the inaugural punctuation point in the urbanization of Los Angeles" (p. 4). It was the exclamatory if bloody beginning of modern Los Angeles because it foretold a governance habit that would be revisited in the city's history, most prominently and definitively after the Watts uprising of 1965 and continuing after (and contributing to) the 1992 multiethnic disturbances. For Scott and Soja, city-wide racial eruptions would prove

to be both disastrous and moments of creative destruction. "In the aftermath of riot and social upheaval, private interests would gather in force to plan and promote their visions of an idealized urban future, often in the absence of effective public leadership and at the expense of a perceived 'problem minority.' "[6] This pattern of mobilizing both urban resolve and private urban leadership could be traced to its nineteenth-century precursor: the October 24, 1871 anti-Chinese killings.[7]

Hence the massacre is now doubly nominated for a new status in the history of the city, signified not only as "paradigmatic" but "punctually" the starting point of the city's modernization. These nominations are recent and are frankly speculative; nevertheless, Starr, Scott, and Soja have broken the mold. Perhaps proceeding from their start, historians can begin to reexamine primary sources and thus rescue the anti-Chinese massacre from its relic status that reduces it to either a footnote or an oft-told romance of California's "lawless frontier" days. As a further move towards a new interpretation, this chapter will suggest, in the course of recounting the basics of the anti-Chinese massacre, additional places where new perspectives can be brought to bear upon the bloody beginnings of modern Los Angeles.

If the stakes are raised and the massacre is put forth as the epicenter of a possible new start to Los Angeles' modern history, then new ways of telling its history need to be imagined, which means, at the very least, an awareness needs to take hold that shortcomings have hampered fresh and accurate understandings of the anti-Chinese massacre. These failures of historiograhical imagination have held sway for 130 years. Stemming from such mundane factors as print culture routine and such larger cultural influences as the enduring hold of nineteenth-century romance over certain aspects of California history, the unimaginative repetition of typified elements has been handed down from historian to historian. This habit, largely uncritical and unreflected on as it was transmitted with each retelling, has had the practical effect of foreclosing the interpretive outlook necessary to see the massacre for its broad significance beyond its bloody excess. Even when authors seemed poised to account for the massacre in larger contexts and hence supply something fresh, the iterative habit led them to lockstep revisitings of the same cast of characters, the same characterizations, and the same interpretive limits. The repetitious default leaves unventured what can be explored in the primary sources. What results is the too easy assumption that everything is known and nothing need further be done but embellish the particulars and simply repeat them (Kim 1982: 108).[8]

Closely related to this tendency, indeed making it near impossible to escape, has been the allure of the narrative form which cast the elements since the mid-nineteenth century. This combination of narrative convention and the unwillingness to see past it, have led to a shuttered historical imagination that constantly restates certain aspects, but leaves unexplored so many more interesting and possible reexaminations.[9] This cultural

operation has always taken the form of revisiting the same chain of colorful events and repackaging the same tired characterizations of Chinese Angelenos, disreputable rioters, and ill-fated misplaced persons who found themselves at the Plaza on October 24, 1871.

One example that illustrates the consistent placement of these core elements is a paragraph from a dissertation written in the 1930s by a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign on the anti-Chinese movement in California. It opens with the announcement of a large-scale mob attack on the Chinese in Los Angeles. The familiars are immediately invoked as the cause is laid to "a feud between two Chinese companies over a Chinese woman said to belong to one of them and to have been stolen by the other." From cause to conflagration: the paragraph quickly notes that antagonism between the two Chinese companies did not cease and fighting continued, but official intervention by the Los Angeles police would escalate matters. "When the police intervened, two officers were wounded and a civilian was killed." From these casualties came rumor, from rumor outrage, and from outrage came the rush of events. "In a very few minutes a large mob rushed into the Chinese quarter, firing into houses, hanging those whom they caught alive, and appropriating all movable property." Finally, denouement. "The entire affair lasted only four hours, but in that time at least eighteen persons were killed, several buildings were burned, and a large amount of loot was carried away" (Sandmeyer 1939: 48).[10]

This verbal stranglehold has never let the story be told soberly. At the very least, a revisiting of what happened on October 24, 1871 should call attention to the cultural baggage that has always burdened the knowing of this incident, and, having appraised that baggage and its costs to understanding the anti-Chinese massacre, to refuse it. After 130 years, there is no need to embellish what happened. The mass killing of nineteen to twenty-one persons is horror enough.

Beyond the Usual Suspects, Culprits, and Characters

The time of the disturbance – the rhythm of its temporalities – seemed to have operated as a combination of discrete moments (at the hour and on the hour) and gobs of hours, two to three at a stretch. The former consisted of key events that happened at 5 pm, 6 pm, and 9 pm, the latter consisted of stretches (1) from late afternoon leading to 5 pm; (2) another span from 6 pm to 9 pm; and then the deadliest set from 9 pm until midnight. The moments involved the killing of a white man at 5 pm, the reporting of his death at 6 pm, and the putting into action of a plan to end what had become by 9 pm a frustrating three-hour standoff between non-Chinese firing weapons at the Chinese quarter and the Chinese firing back.

Leading to that culmination were days of tension rife with stories about impending violence. Trouble brewed in the Chinese district situated in the Coronel Adobe on the Calle de los Negros. This street, also known as "Negro Alley," was located near the Plaza and was notorious for being the intersection where vice and abjection met. In October of 1871, a big fight was rumored between different associations of male Chinese residents of the city. This rumor of war became, in subsequent tellings of the anti-Chinese massacre, the prime mover for the subsequent tragedy. In nearly all accounts of the massacre published since the 1880s, the typically cast source of trouble was the Chinese district itself. Were it not for a feud between rival groups of Chinese Los Angelenos, the riot, fight, and massacre would never have happened. That was the preferred narrative for at least 130 years. Looking back from the twenty-first century, it must be underscored that while disturbances were on the wing in the Chinese district, it never reached the level of the internecine war that many apprehended prior to October 24, 1871. Instead, there was a brief gun fight between two Chinese that resulted in no casualties.

It must be noted that the narrative that blamed the Chinese had its own partialities. Born and crystallized in the 1880s and the 1890s, it took shape at the same time that the United States Congress was building the statutory and administrative regime of Chinese Exclusion, the legal structure of immigration restriction that lasted from 1882 to 1943 (Chan 1991, 2006; Chan and Wong 1998; Lee 2003; Lau 2006).[11] Produced at the same time as Exclusion, these accounts that "remembered" the massacre as having been caused by Chinese wrongdoing were themselves woven with anxieties about the Chinese in the 1880s and 1890s. Accounting for what happened on October 24, 1871 was always done in the shadow of preoccupations about the 1880s and 1890s – a time of increasing labor unrest, urban violence, and sharpening anti-Chinese political rhetoric. Tracing the ultimate fault of the 1871 massacre to the Chinese residents of Los Angeles worked the convenient retroactive effect of blaming the Chinese, both for their misfortune in Reconstruction-era southern California and their hardships during the two decades following the massacre, decades of increasing violence against Chinese in Los Angeles as well as Stockton, Truckee, Pasadena, Seattle, Wyoming (the site of the infamous Rock Springs massacre in September, 1885), and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.[12]

Probably no one in October 1871 could have predicted the events of the 1880s and 1890s, but those living in Los Angeles thought the Chinese quarter was ready for trouble. In the days leading up to October 24, they were telling each other stories about their Chinese neighbors, stories laced with certain laden understandings about "celestials" in their midst. Residents of Los Angeles heard that a big fight among the Chinese was inevitable and "news" circulated that armed Chinese had arrived from San Francisco, and lawlessness would take a serious turn for the worse among the "Chinamen."

As already noted, an exchange of gunfire did happen, but it was a flash in the pan; nevertheless, from those shots came the spark that led to the mass lynching. Following the arrest of one of the Chinese gun shooters, a leading figure in the Chinese American community sought his bail. That Chinese Angeleno, a person known as Sam Yuen, revealed that he had enough money to post bail, to the tune of six thousand dollars.[13] Just the thought of six thousand dollars in Los Angeles, much less the notorious Calle de los Negros, must have set calculations spinning in the minds of Yuen's neighbors. Once let out, the cat of rumor soon spread to numerous persons along the Alley that thousands of dollars were to be had, if only the right circumstances could be worked to pry it from some hiding place within the Chinese quarter.

Getting at the money and getting at Chinese lawlessness became indistinguishable. While the former may have been covert, the latter was pursued with the hue and cry of a posse. The invocation of "posse" was a public call that harnessed the vigilante power that had already ordered and disordered Los Angeles for at least twenty years. Using the power of posse, law enforcement officers deputized Angelenos in the immediate area, perhaps not a wise decision given the fact that many living in the Calle de los Negros were themselves not the most law abiding citizens and denizens of Los Angeles, indeed, they were often castigated as lawbreakers. Nevertheless with deputization and posse came the bestowal of public authority and its subsequent legitimation of violence, a combination that would lead one man to play an unintended role that day.

That man was Robert Thompson. He was not a policeman. He was last reported to be a rancher. Prior to that, a saloon keeper, but on the afternoon of October 24, 1871, he became an enlisted posse member, a defender of the status quo, and a wielder of a weapon he felt confident enough to boldly (and foolishly) use to fire point blank at Chinese Angelenos firing at him. Standing directly at a door from behind which were armed Chinese already using their guns to defend themselves, the result, while not foreordained, was predictable. Thompson was shot. And then he died. What was not foreseen that day, certainly not by Thompson himself, was that he would propel matters irresistibly to mass killing. He did so by becoming a martyr, and thus became a rallying cry.

Thompson's killing was the available accelerant, the relay of his death was the tossing about of that lighted fluid all over the already dangerous situation. Rumor was the specific medium by which this occurred, and rumor along with its inevitable embellishments, jumped unabated throughout the night. What followed next were a series of encroachments and intrusions into the Chinese district, with retribution as its rationale. After Thompson's death, the first lynching to requite his killing happened to a Chinese resident named Wong Tuck. His body would be pummeled by a crowd and his life snapped at the end of a rope thrown over a makeshift hangman's scaffold

at New High and Temple Streets. Had the events of October 24, 1871 been a dramatic film, the type that made Los Angeles famous in the next century, the hanging of Wong Tuck should have been enough, at least under an idealized moral economy of an eye for an eye. However, his lynching would not sate the crowd and no script was publicly available that night to stop the violence.

While the mass killings of October 24, 1871 have often been characterized as a pell mell rush to mob violence, it must be noted that there were moments of pause, or stalemate within the timeframe. While news of Thompson's killing became warmer with passion, assisted by the freer flow of alcohol served in the saloons bordering the Calle de los Negros, the sound of stalemate could be heard close by as a siege of at least three hours continued from six o'clock until nine o'clock, the standoff punctuated by gunfire peppering the Chinese apartments and return fire issuing from within the Coronel Block.[14]

At 9 o'clock that evening, stalemate dislodged when aggression mixed with ingenuity to create a smoke-out. Those who tired of shooting at Chinese who were shooting back from within the safety of an adobe building, seized on a maneuver to break through the roof and fire shots from above. The plan worked, and the non-Chinese flushed out the Chinese, the latter escaping the throes of what suddenly became a shooting gallery, but rushing into the streets, they ran headlong into a trap that greeted them in the Calle.

Even as the Chinese were being smoked out and then systematically killed, the rest of the world began receiving reports through a series of blow-by-blow accounts. An employee of the Associated Press started telegraphing its counterpart in San Francisco that something terrible was happening. The first report was sent out at seven in the evening, the next at 9 pm, and with a shudder it told the world that "there are fears of a general slaughter" happening in the streets of Los Angeles. Fifteen minutes later, the Morse tapping unfolded a tally in blood: "Eight Chinamen have been hung and more will be hung as soon as the ropes can be applied. There is intense excitement and a general riot is impending" (De Falla 1960b: 162).

Excitement and riot happened, but what was done in the streets was done with efficient dispatch. It took only four hours. The most recent narrative recounting of the 1871 lynchings was published in 1960, and Paul M. De Falla made the following acute observation. It was possible that vengeance was exacted so quickly because the lynchers knew that relatively nearby, in Wilmington, stood a garrison of federal troops that could be mustered to the Plaza in short time to suppress further killing.[15] Hence a type of social knowledge that we identify with Reconstruction – the use of federal troops in 1870 and 1871 to suppress white violence – seemed to have manifest in Los Angeles that October. In addition to this parallel to

Reconstruction-era history, another can be drawn between Los Angeles in 1871 and contemporaneous events in the former Confederate South. While it is important to note that the riot and disturbance was a multicultural and multiethnic disaster, the violence took its license as an angry response to a crisis in post-Civil War whiteness. The Los Angeles mob acted under the aegis of a fearsome defense of the racialized status quo – they had heard that the Chinese were shooting at white men and they rushed to punish such impertinence and insubordination.[16]

The typical account of what happened blamed the Chinese Angelenos. The oft-told version also fingered some Angelenos as the usual culprits. From 1871 onward, official and respectable Los Angeles always said the villains of the piece were those denizens of Los Angeles who lived in the disreputable Calle de los Negros, the throughway that in Spanish was called *Negros*, but once Americanized became newly racialized in varying shades of the word "Negro." The respectable in the 1880s and 1890s always referred to the lynchers as the city's habitual criminals, its population of the low and the ruffian. For those who memorialized what happened in 1871, the mob consisted of the dangerous class and the desperate ones.

There probably is little to doubt about the desperation. Those who lived and trafficked in the Calle de los Negros were at the margins of a border society and daily violence was no stranger to their lives. Criminality and criminalization were most likely the lived portion of many who participated in the massacre. But it is also instructive to view the Alley and the usual culprits as being at the nexus of different social factors. In other words, it seems too easy to repeat the judgment of genteel southern Californians in the 1880s and 1890s who equated the horror of the mass killing in the Coronel Adobe with their pre-set moral evaluations of those who were always characterized as the low-life perpetrators of the massacre. Saying this does not excuse the massacre nor elevate the participants to a heretofore neglected subalternity, but the participants could be said to have lived lives that were a shade more complicated than the usual dismissals assigned them. It would be more interesting to say that many in the mob were situated at the margins of an opportunistic dispossession. The social place they occupied was constituted by the rough and shortsighted set of bad life options, something that a European contemporary writing in the 1870s from London would have called the "lumpen" or rag-and-bone existence of those who lived at society's bottom. It was a life of known subordination, but an existence that did not see much in seriously questioning or undermining the way things were; certainly, this class did not rush to any revolutionary barricades. Those who were the opportunistic dispossessed were respectability's forfeits who were all the more dangerous because they had little to lose.[17]

Usually pitted against the depredations of the culprits were individual acts of uncommon courage that happened that night. Persons who later

attained positions of legal authority in Los Angeles are usually remembered as having tried to stem the killing and save groups of endangered Chinese. Examples include Henry Hazard, the 27-year-old recent law school graduate of the University of Michigan who came out west and would eventually become the mayor of Los Angeles. He attempted to reason with the killers and stop the lynching. Cameron Thom, the city's district attorney, and Judge Robert Widney walked through the streets and upbraided the crowds and called for order. These were indeed courageous acts and they need to be mentioned in any account of the anti-Chinese massacre, but stepping back from the immediacies of the oft-told and typical narration of October 24, 1871, one should note that socially, the two ends of Los Angeles society – the respectable and respectability's forfeits – actually mirrored each other that night and in ways not entirely complimentary to the city's bourgeois class.

The two communities actually had more in common than acknowledged, and what bound them together was the extralegal device that enabled the massacre. The so-called "disreputable class" along the Calle were drawn upon by that empowerment that the respectable class had mobilized for the sake of law and order in Los Angeles and in many parts of California since the 1850s. Vigilance committees or vigilantes were a feature of Los Angeles civic order that both predated the more famous San Francisco version and also lasted beyond what occurred in northern California. Prior to the anti-Chinese massacre, vigilantes in Los Angeles had hung thirty-two fellow Angelenos, while San Franciscans dealt the same public punishment to eight of their citizens. All told, Angelenos used "lynch law" thirty-two times under the vigilance committee's authorization and thirty-eight times without it (this does not include the Chinese lynched in the anti-Chinese massacre) (Blew 1972: 13).[18] In the time prior to the Los Angeles massacre, the local southern Californian vigilance committee mustered what observers later noted as the best and most respected citizens of the city. Vigilantism was not born in the Calle the late afternoon and early evening of October 24, 1871. It was an instrument of social discipline that the business and commercial classes had unleashed for twenty years prior to 1871's mass lynchings; however, vigilantism on the night of October 24, 1871 proved to be the tiger that civic and commercial leaders thought they had commanded prior to the massacre, but it showed itself capable of being ridden by new masters, themselves masterless and dangerous.

The empowerment through vigilantism and posse led to social results that were perhaps odd at the time, and seem inexplicable today unless one interprets the events along the Calle on October 24, 1871 through a careful weighing of "white Angelenos" not as static identities, but as an identity effect that could be latched onto by those occupying various shades of ethnic relation to "white." That the massacre was perpetuated by both white and Hispanic males is signified by the names on the subsequent indictments.

Along with Victor Kelly, L. M. Mendell, and A. R. Johnson are Jesus Martinez, Ramon Dominguez, and Refugio Botello.[19] Indeed, Refugio Botello was blamed for conceiving the plan and leading the charge for driving the Chinese out of their Coronel adobe by smashing a hole through the roof. But while the indicted were both Anglo and Mexican Angeleno, thus making the riot a multiracial one, the legitimating and propelling factor was the notion that white men needed to be defended in a situation where the Chinese had suddenly acquired both guns and the proficiency to use them effectively at non-Chinese and especially white Angelenos.

What happened in Los Angeles on October 24, 1871 was a legalizing of those otherwise deemed outside the law or at its borders. Local residents of the Calle were deputized and thus enfolded into a disciplinary form that the city's merchants and commercial class had used to enforce order and discipline the Mexican population. That those deputized in 1871 were Mexican Los Angelenos was the first of many social ironies played out that night. That the violence enfolded others who, as historians of whiteness have recently observed, occupied insecure and conflicted positions by way of white male identities was another.[20] For those who memorialized the massacre, the noteworthy aspect of the participants was not only their low reputation, but that derelict ascription as it took especially colored forms that fell just short of white respectability. Hence, the "Mexican, the Irish and the French" were definitely not black, but they were not characteriologically respectable enough to be completely white (DeFalla 1960a: 58).[21] In terms of whiteness and its multiethnic aspects, the massacre in retrospect was a bloody angle where different troops of irregulars were mobilized under a flag of regularity and known quantity. That the upholders of that known quantity of commercial and business whiteness would later abhor and single out for blame the ambiguously white or strangely recruited Hispanic Angelenos should come as no surprise given the urgent reinstitution of both immediate order and the retelling of the massacre that stressed the need for new urban order in the 1880s.

Strange Career

The end came before midnight. The post mortem started soon thereafter, and has continued to this day, but with varying results. If there is a fresh judgment to be had today of what happened in 1871, it is that in the case of the anti-Chinese massacre, law utterly failed. It failed to stop the massacre. It failed to dispel the crowd. It failed to disburse the mob. After a good number were killed, the law failed thereafter to prosecute the full compass of those involved, and in the end, it failed to incarcerate even the few who were convicted. At first, it seemed the wheels of local government

would work to establish an official record of what happened and proceed to indict and convict. Two investigatory bodies – a coroner's jury and a Grand Jury investigation – seemed to name those involved and responsible. A trial held four months after October 24, 1871 appeared to vindicate the local wheels of justice by convicting eight of twelve Angelenos. But law's success would be illusory. The legal work necessary to secure those convictions against appellate challenge failed early because the city's district attorney drafted an indictment that was so sloppy it neglected to allege the charge of murder (De Falla 1960b: 178). Upon appeal in 1873, the California State Supreme Court overturned the convictions of the eight mobbers and freed them from the state prison at San Quentin (De Falla 1960b: 184). The legal process failed locally in Los Angeles at the point of law's quotidian production, but it also failed in Sacramento. The state's high court may have been motivated by a larger judicial consideration that had everything to do with maintaining the racial status quo and very little to do with justice. On the one hand, the justices of the California State Supreme Court acted as they were obligated when they questioned the carelessness of the Los Angeles district attorney, but on the other hand, it seems that larger social and political concerns may have been a more pressing concern. At a time of increasing anti-Chinese violence throughout the state, the thought of Chinese successfully vindicating their rights in California courts would seem an excessive burden upon local courtrooms, hence the highest court in the state might have had that social constraint on its decision-making horizon. Law also failed in the federalist borderland as a key Reconstruction-era provision that could have addressed issues of civil rights deprivations was never invoked. The Civil Rights Act of 1870 had among its provisions a section that was inserted on behalf of Chinese facing hostile local ordinances, exactions, taxes, and public intimidations. Those who drafted section 16 of the Act aimed to provide a federal solution to local harassments and violence, especially as practiced against the Chinese in the Golden State. Certainly, the mass lynching of October 1871 could have triggered some inquiry under the aegis of the Civil Rights Act of 1870, but no legal authority, either locally or from the United States Attorney General, set that Reconstruction-era machinery in motion. Assessing what happened in Los Angeles more than 130 years ago, one notes the massacre's brute result, but it was also the scene of another defeat. It was the site of law's rout, its retreat, and its hollow impotence in the face of mass racial violence.

Viewed anew, the social and cultural effects of the massacre's social knowledge seemed to have worked persistently within the city. If the embarrassment of the killings made the promotion of Los Angeles imperative, the shame of it made its memory both important to suppress and, paradoxically, equally important to pronounce. This double-minded outlook

expressed itself in the subdued shame and misgiving that seemed to haunt a few public figures who contributed to the city's civic memory from the 1880s to the 1920s. It operated as a festering bad conscience that occasionally flared up as whispered accusation. Such misgiving acted on the level of innuendo. Knowing who was there and who was where that night in the Plaza was kept alive through a secret knowledge that circulated among Angelenos still shocked by the night's brutality, and perhaps scandalized by the success and prominence enjoyed by some who otherwise would have been punished. This sequestered knowledge could not point to a consistent and authoritative public record because the record appeared to be conveniently misplaced, lost, or sequestered.

From October 25, 1871 onward, the story of the anti-Chinese massacre was one of a fabric of documentation that kept getting mysteriously torn and removed in key spots. A front page of a Los Angeles daily newspaper that supposedly printed the names of those suspected to have been rioters that night seems to have disappeared from public availability. One former Los Angeles lawman who wanted to set the record straight years later found this primary document to be a fugitive from history. Likewise, the list of names of those indicted by the County Grand Jury was never published. Historians have had to make do with "variously reported" sightings of this list that included anywhere from 30 to 150 names (De Falla 1960b: 173).[22]

With so many public traces gone, it would seem that final accountings might be frustrated. That might be true of the ones that got away, but not all lists of names have disappeared. The Chinese Los Angelenos who were killed on October 24, 1871 were not nameless. The *Los Angeles Daily News* printed a record of those whose names were known. For the sake of a fresh look at the October 1871 massacre, and to provide a better accounting for at least eighteen of those killed, here is an inventory. There is Chee Long Tong. He was reputed to be a doctor. Non-Chinese Los Angelenos called him "Gene" Tong. He was shot through the head and hanged. There is Wa Sin Quai, noted as "resident of Negro Alley." Shot in the abdomen and legs. There is Chang Wan, resident at Doctor Tong's house. He was hanged. There was Long Quai. Hanged. There was Joung Burrow who was shot though the head and left wrist. Another with no name, but was guessed later to be Won Yu Tuk, hanged, was a cigar manufacturer in life. Wong Chin – hanged, and three cartridges were found in his pocket. There was Tong Wan who was shot, stabbed, and hanged and there was Ah Loo, hanged. Wan Foo was hanged. Day Kee was hanged. Ah Was was hanged. Ah Cut, shot in the abdomen and extremities. He was a liquor manufacturer. There was Lo Hey, hanged; Ah Wen, hanged; and Wing Chee, hanged. There was Fun Yu who was shot in the head and died October 27. And there was an unidentified Chinese male who

was hanged and found in the cemetery (most likely it was Wong Tuck) (De Falla 1960b: 161–2).[23]

Conclusion

Since 1871, Los Angeles has seen its share of urban disturbances. Not unique to the city, but distinctive is the way public memory seems to obsess at what are narrated as precise locations. In many cases, the very intersectional precision proxies for a source point, an "epicenter" of social rupture. Pointing to those street names as origins seems a familiar thing to do and perhaps acts familiarly for denizens periodically shaken by earthquakes, tremors that need to be measured and then traced to a precise topographical fracture. For students of the city, it is always important to note that Marquette Frye had his confrontation with California State Highway Patrol officers at 116th and Avalon in August 1965; for others, Ruben Salazar was shot in the head at the Silver Dollar in 1971, its address was at 4945 Whittier Boulevard; and no one forgets that the "epicenter" and "ground zero" of April 1992 can be gridded with the exactness of a Thomas Brothers map at Florence and Normandie. To these we can and should add Coronel Adobe and Calle de los Negros.

The latter street no longer exists. But even that evanescence has a "harder" reality than anything that currently exists on the ground at Temple, or New High, or the area that abuts what was once the Coronel Adobe. As of today, there is no official marker of the massacre. There is no statue, no plaque, no memorial, no observance. This lack of marking might be as effective an act of public forgetting as what was allegedly done in the hours that followed October 24, 1871. According to the *Los Angeles Times* in the 1880s, the city's "old timers" knew the secret of what seemed to be a clump of unevenly distributed mounds of earth at what was then Third Street. Beneath those mounds, left unmarked by ceremony and headstone, supposedly lay the corpses of those killed during the anti-Chinese massacre.

But for the anti-Chinese massacre in Los Angeles, would one desire a monument? It would be a gesture, but it might also be a tomb, a way to encase the uncomfortable past in a mausoleum of safely domesticated and sequestered detachment. What would be a fitting way to remember the mass killings of October 24, 1871, not only by southern California's numerous and diverse Chinese communities, but by all Angelenos today and tomorrow? Perhaps a reckoning would be more fitting, that coming to grips of this social flashpoint and all flashpoints that followed thereafter, both the spectacular and the ones that happened, as it were, in slow motion and hence remained out of public sight. Perhaps in this way the spirits that accompanied those anonymous mounds supposedly buried and heaped about on Third Street will be granted some measure of finished business on this earth, if for a while.

Notes

1 The reported number of Chinese deaths has varied in different accounts, ranging from fifteen to as many as twenty-one.

2 The population of Los Angeles in 1871 can be roughly estimated from the preceding year's census enumeration. The US Census of 1870 listed the city as having 5,728 residents with 172 Chinese. This figure appears in Pitt and Pitt (1997: 576).

3 As revealed in publications that told readers outside Los Angeles about Los Angeles, the management of the bloody memory could be achieved with blunt forgetting. Parlor magazines could describe zanjas, the Plaza, old Californios (forever riding horses in dramatic fashion) and "sleepy Mexicans," but the Chinese and what happened to them on October 24, 1871, simply disappeared. Forgetting by way of ignoring seemed to be an effective way to deal with the massacre's embarrassment from 1873 to 1880. After 1880, that strategy would be close to impossible to maintain. For example, within the city, the *Los Angeles Times* published stories reminding Angelenos of what happened. During the years 1883 to 1894 other print culture forums printed dramatic narratives of the mass killings.

4 Paul M. De Falla mentioned "ropes used to hang the Chinese" were "cut from a clothesline furnished to the crowd by a woman who ran a boarding house."

5 Thus, for Starr, the Los Angeles massacre was the first spark in a larger conflict that proxied for the Capital vs. Labor conflict throughout the West and the nation. The Los Angeles incident of 1871 was the "paradigm" because the targeting of Chinese within the class war traveled beyond southern California and "moved north to San Francisco and the Chinese became increasingly the scapegoats for collapsed expectations" (pp. 120–1). Recently, Scott Zesch (2008) has correctly observed that too many previous accounts of the Los Angeles massacre had too casually ascribed the violence to the laborer argument; namely, that the killings arose from fear and resentment of Chinese labor. There is little evidence for this and indeed, it is anachronistic because the "labor resentment" rhetoric acted in the 1877 to 1880s wave of anti-Chinese violence, less so if at all in the Los Angeles incident of 1871. Still, Kevin Starr's sense that the Los Angeles violence intimated something larger than what had been immediately transpiring in the Calle is a valid one and more research needs to be done that relates the massacre with larger social and political formations that happened during the postwar years.

6 Scott and Soja assert: "A pattern was set by the Chinese massacre and the subsequent social disciplining of the 'troublesome' minority. The massacre exposed an undercurrent of racism and xenophobia that would periodically burst to the surface, briefly interrupting as well as redirecting the urbanization process" (p. 4).

7 The two geographers go farther than most historians, asserting a near-exact parallel between the aftermath of 1871 and the recuperation pursued after 1992. "The shocked citizenry responded with something very much like the Rebuild LA Committee that was set up in the immediate aftermath of the riots

of 1992, representing (in both cases) an effort to reestablish social order and to improve the severely tarnished external image of the city" (p. 4).

8 In her historically oriented overview of Asian American literature, Elaine Kim found an example of such a missed opportunity. She scored C. Y. Lee (the author of *Flower Drum Song*) for relying upon tired old tellings and traditional stereotypes to recount the massacre. The pull of familiarity seemed especially egregious since Lee claimed to have access to Chinese-language newspapers, a resource that could have shed light on Chinese American remembrance of the Los Angeles tragedy. His retellling was published as "The Triangle and the Los Angeles Massacre," in his *Days of the Tong Wars* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974), pp. 84–96. As Kim noted, Lee chose to tell his account with pidgin English and the typical narrative recourse of the late nineteenth-century accounts, that the Chinese in the United States brought upon themselves their woes and troubles.

9 It is significant that Scott and Soja are urban geographers who wanted to recast the history of Los Angeles into longer patterns or "surges" of modernization and urbanization from the 1780s to the 1990s. Likewise, Kevin Starr, tasked with writing a single-volume overview that swept two centuries of California history in 200 pages, wanted to interpret the anti-Chinese massacre in terms of California's political economy and its social effects. Viewing Los Angeles within broad currents had the effect of deromanticizing the "colorful" Californiana romance and thus enabled new, interesting, and more significant interpretations of what happened in the Calle on October 24, 1871. Another approach to reexamining the massacre is shown by Scott Zesch (2008). Zesch goes deeper into the controversies that roiled the Chinese district in the months prior to the killings. By studying the legal record of Chinese marriages and examining them in a finely detailed manner, he was able to relate both a gendered account of the Chinese Los Angeles community and supply a fresh context by which to understand what happened on October 24, 1871. Zesch's work should be paired with Raymond Lou's dissertation from 1982 to provide a panorama of legal detail culled from Los Angeles court records in 1870–1 and the 1880s.

10 A comparable summary can be found in Mary Roberts Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York, 1909).

11 Chinese Exclusion was the anti-Chinese immigration system that lasted for 61 years and is recognized by all US immigration historians as having been the first immigration law that discriminated against persons based on ethnic, national, and racial categorizations. Inaugurated in May, 1882 by the passage of a "laborer suspension bill," the regime was augmented by subsequent amendments that stipulated ever harsher provisions. At least six such amendments were passed between 1884 and 1904.

12 Anti-Chinese violence was broadly surveyed by John R. Wunder (1992). A long-needed inventory of these events as they occurred in the West can be found in Pfaelzer (2007). Victor Jew (2003) wrote about the Milwaukee incident, the only anti-Chinese mobbing to happen east of the Mississippi River.

13 "After the examination, the question of bail for the litigants arose, and Sam Yuen, a merchant in Negro Alley and the leader of the Nin Yung Company,

stepped forward to offer the court sureties for his fighting man.… At this time the Chinese merchant stated to Judge Gray that he had six thousand dollars in gold in a trunk in his store on Negro Alley to back up his position" (De Falla 1960a: 68).

14 On the possible influence of alcohol contributing to the lack of restraint that night, De Falla wrote: "then, as night descended upon Los Angeles, the gas lights in the dozen-or-so saloons in the vicinity of Negro Alley were turned on, while inside these lively establishments, many hoodlums planned further strategy to be used against the Chinese being held prisoner in the Coronel Block" (De Falla 1960a: 82).

15 De Falla wrote that the dispatch with which the crowd went about its business was due to "the fear that the federal troops stationed at Drum Barracks in Wilmington" would "show up any minute during the riot" and reestablish order with bayonets. Da Falla referred to "two of the mobsters" who "subsequently testified that they thought that the 'dough' boys from Wilmington would surely arrive – but as the soldiers had not been notified of the [crisis] in the Angel City, they did not come" (1960b: 185).

16 Pitt and Pitt (1997: 91) quote "one of the white participants" who later recalled "American blood had been shed. There was … that sense of shock that Chinese had dared to fire on whites, and kill with recklessness outside their own color set."

17 Karl Marx in 1871 would most likely have discerned a social resemblance between the residents of the Calle de Los Negros and the European "lumpen proletariat" who frustrated efforts at revolutionary change in 1848 by aligning with conservatives and reactionaries. As Marx used the term, "lumpen proletariat" referred to "the flotsam" of society, an idea he developed in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (Daniel De Leon, trans., Chicago, Charles H. Kerr, 1907 [1852]).

18 Robert Blew drew this figure from John Caughey's history of California (*California*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1953, p. 300). While these figures present some problems and invite further inquiry, they do not undermine the general sense that during the years preceding 1874, "the citizens [of Los Angeles] resorted with distressing frequency to vigilante actions" (Blew 1972: 11).

19 Los Angeles District Court and County Court. Indictments for "the Chinese riot," 1871 and 1872. Huntington Library, San Marino.

20 The overriding social irony is that those who occupied an ambivalent position regarding whiteness, what scholars today would call "probationary whiteness" or a bordered relation to nineteenth-century American whiteness, avidly participated in a killing spree committed in the name of defending whiteness.

21 The formula that was used in the 1880s to describe the riot's participants was put forth by A. J. Wilson when he wrote that the "American 'hoodlum' and Mexican 'greaser' and Irish 'tramp' and French 'communist' were the constituents of what the Los Angeles coroner described as the massing of "people of all nationalities" the night of October 24, 1871.

22 De Falla noted that "no attempt … was ever made to identify all of the culprits involved in the massacre of Chinese, whether Irish, Mexican, or of any other nationality, because the list furnished to the grand jury by the coroner giving

the names of people 'who seemed to have encouraged the mob' was not published by the newspapers, nor was it ever made public in any other way. In fact, this list seems to have completely disappeared, and is not known to exist today." The former lawman who attempted to find the key newspaper front page of October 25, 1871 was Horace Bell, a cantankerous Los Angeles figure who wrote his understandably controversial "j'accuse" in *Reminiscences of a Ranger: Early Times in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Yarnell, Caystile and Mathes, 1881).

23 Adding to the frustration of knowing the anti-Chinese massacre of 1871 is that even this list of names does not correspond with the names of dead Chinese in other compilations.

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Chapter Eight

Disposable People, Expendable Neighborhoods

George J. Sanchez

1931 was one of the most tumultuous years in the history of the city of Los Angeles. As the city began to plan for the 150th anniversary of its founding in September, city and county officials were busy struggling with the growing economic crisis that would eventually be known as the Great Depression with limited local resources. As one of the most dedicated urban reformers of that decade in Los Angeles, County Supervisor Frank Shaw began in January 1931 to construct a plan that he felt would reduce the welfare rolls in Los Angeles, insure that more relief monies were available to local citizens, and support his growing reputation and ambition as a politician of the common folk of the city. As Chairman of the Board of Supervisors' Charities and Public Welfare Committee, Shaw knew that county relief funds would quickly be expended and unable to meet the exponential growth of the region's poor due to the rapid rise of unemployment.[1] In January, he asked questions regarding the legality of transporting indigents outside the region at the county's expense. By February, Frank Shaw had convinced his fellow supervisors to authorize the expenditure of six thousand dollars to transport indigents to their "place of legal residence wherein they will be officially accepted" (Hoffman 1974: 42, 86–7).

The efforts of Frank Shaw would begin the largest organized repatriation campaign in US history, ironically targeting Mexican immigrants in a city that their ancestors had founded 150 years previously. By the end of 1934 when the last of the county's repatriation trains had left Los Angeles, over 13,000 Mexican residents of southern California had been sent back to Mexico at a total cost of almost $200,000 to the taxpayers of Los Angeles County (Hoffman 1974: 172–3). Moreover, working with other civic leaders in both the city and the county who initiated other efforts to scare, cajole, deport, or encourage Mexican aliens to leave the region, Los Angeles lost nearly one-third of its Mexican population of approximately 150,000

during the first half of the 1930s. Shaw used his aggressive and innovative actions to rise rapidly in Los Angeles politics.[2] By 1933, moderate Republican Frank Shaw was overwhelmingly elected mayor of the city of Los Angeles on a platform to initiate a "New Deal for Los Angeles."

While the basic contours of the Mexican repatriation campaign of the County of Los Angeles are well known among Chicano historians, I am attempting to broaden the focus of this event by linking together three critical examples of forced movement of peoples from the same geographic area, the Boyle Heights neighborhood of East Los Angeles, over a twelve-year time span. Usually discussed separately by academic scholars, the repatriation of Mexican Americans in the 1930s, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the forced removal of urban residents to make way for public housing and freeway construction all occurred within similar neighborhoods made up of a mixed racial population. I will argue that a certain ideology developed among city leaders and urban planners linking racial depravity and urban space that stretched across local politicians and bureaucrats on both the conservative and liberal sides of the political spectrum. This ideology associated particular neighborhoods like Boyle Heights with slum conditions and urban decay, and prompted local officials to consider residents of these neighborhoods as utterly (re)movable to make way for their plans for improved social conditions and urban progress. By the time local officials encouraged the federal government to remove Japanese Americans from the West Coast after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, these same officials had been enacting similar policies of urban removal with other populations for other purposes for at least twelve years. My argument is that historians of race in urban America should see these key events of the Depression and World War II periods as intimately linked in ideology and process, even though they principally affected different racial groups often living next door to each other.

American historians have recently written of the fluid nature of ideologies and actions that informed and shaped the racial hierarchy in the nation's multiracial past. Moving beyond descriptions of a single racial dichotomy between two categories, these historians have argued that populations considered "non-white" have often been racialized in relation to one another, and that this order has often changed over time. Mae Ngai (2003), for example, has argued that the 1924 Immigration Act created the category of "alien citizen" for Asian Americans and Latinos at the federal level, by solidifying the inherently "impossible subject" position of Japanese and Chinese Americans, neither able to legally immigrate to the US nor become citizens through naturalization, and Mexican Americans, who were positioned as forever foreign in the American racial order. At a local level, Natalia Molina (2006) has argued that what it meant to be "Mexican," "Japanese," and "Chinese" in Los Angeles was intricately intertwined in southern California by the public health experiences of these groups in

southern California and by the methods that city and county health officials used to launch projects of racialization at each group over time.

This chapter goes a step further than these arguments to show that the expansion of local state power, supported by the federal government during the New Deal and World War II eras, enabled local racial ordering to be carried out through massive movements of those considered outside "the citizenry." Ethnic cleansing of local geographies was attempted throughout this era by local officials in order to solidify the claims of white Los Angeles residents to the benefits of citizenship, while placing racialized populations outside the boundaries of citizenship status that should be protected or granted by government action. The tying together of federal monies and power with localized actions of massive population movement was as critical to the enactment of New Deal citizenship in Los Angeles as any expenditure for social welfare, labor reform, or building of infrastructure normally characterizing the New Deal order.

Central to the formation of this racial ideology were local officials who enacted significant social policy in an era of an emerging activist government willing to play a role in all aspects of society. Local politicians in southern California played a critical role in shaping the administration of new federal programs in Los Angeles, including housing and transportation programs in the New Deal and World War II eras. Unlike urban politics on the East Coast and in the Midwest, Progressive reformers of the early twentieth century in California had successfully removed partisan elections from the local scene, therefore neither city nor county offices were filled by candidates selected from party machineries or through party primaries. Instead, most opposition candidates ran intensely personalized campaigns, usually stressing their own populist and reformist impulses against the incumbent, who had generally won his election touting his own populist and reformist background. Unusual combinations of leftists and rightists would often make political coalitions in local politics, while city economic and political powerbrokers were quick to embrace and co-opt whoever won city or county elections in order to assure continued access to the corridors of power.

The major local politicians of the 1930s and 1940s in southern California were all moderate reformers who tried to appease the virulently open shop leaders of the Los Angeles business community, the organized labor movement, and the moral reformers connected to the Protestant religious establishment. Most importantly, it was uncommon for any Los Angeles politician to make more than token efforts to include racial minorities in any governing coalition. According to historian Tom Sitton (1983), Frank Shaw was an effective mayor in launching the city of Los Angeles toward taking advantage of FDR's New Deal favoring city building and reconstruction, but he managed to enrage those outside his administration on both the right and left. Having just survived a reelection campaign in 1937 from

County Supervisor John Anson Ford, he suffered a humiliating defeat in a recall election in 1938. After being tied to an undercover police attempt to injure an independent investigator looking into city corruption, Frank Shaw would live in infamy for being the first big city mayor to be recalled in the United States in the twentieth century. His replacement, Fletcher Bowron, was also a moderate Republican who pieced together a coalition of liberal and conservative reformers to challenge Shaw, and would become Los Angeles' longest-serving mayor until 1953.

But mainstream reform in New Deal Los Angeles also fundamentally involved city bureaucrats and private professionals who put their talents into serving the "public good" during the 1930s and helping Los Angeles build its way out of the economic depression. Several groups of governmental actors are critical in understanding the bureaucratic ideology that formed around actions in East Los Angeles during the period. City engineers, for example, made critical decisions regarding the planning, placement, and construction of roads and highways through Boyle Heights that forever changed the landscape of the region. One county engineer and administrator, Rex Thomson, was asked to take over Los Angeles County's largest department in 1931, County Welfare, which would manage the repatriation campaign launched against Mexican immigrants. (Balderrama and Rodriguez 1995: 77–8).

This was not the first time local officials had wanted to relocate a racialized immigrant population out of southern California. As early as 1879, the newly appointed City Public Health Officer Walter Lindley had suggested that the Chinese population of Los Angeles should be relocated to a destination unspecified because of the supposed health risk they posed to the city's population as a whole (Molina 2006: 26). What was unique during the 1930s is that local officials could act on their desire for targeted removal, empowered by the crisis of the Depression that demanded government action to protect local citizenry, which was later institutionalized by more activist government policy under the New Deal.

The actual carrying out of Mexican repatriation by county welfare officials required a collective sense of racial urban geography on the part of city officials and government bureaucrats alike, targeting specific areas in the region for particular attention. Nowhere in the city or county was more targeted that the residential communities directly east of the Los Angeles River, in the Flats area of Boyle Heights. Particular neighborhoods like the Flats certainly came under intense scrutiny from urban reformers in the 1930s because of its visible poverty, spatially expressed in quite modest homes and rental units near industrial sites, that belied city leaders' claims of "progress" within sight of downtown office buildings. But it also became defined as a "slum area" in the region by virtue of the mixture of its racial and immigrant populations, one that was fundamentally at odds with the homogeneity of more middle-class sections of the

city. As described by one of the most perceptive observers of life in the Flats, sociologist Pauline Young:

> Life in The Flats is a strange conglomerate of immigrant peoples living side by side though speaking a veritable babel of tongues.… There is a conspicuous lack of American residents in The Flats. American families which owned homes here before "the influx of foreigners" have left the district a long time ago. Negro workmen, Jewish merchants, Armenian truck drivers, Japanese gardeners, barbers, tradesmen, all contribute to life of The Flats. These diverse groups, elbowing each other in their daily life, have succeeded in accommodating themselves to each other to a certain degree. (Young 1932: 19)

Despite this diversity, the two groups which dominated the Flats in the 1930s were Russian Molokans, a unique set of exiles from Czarist Russia that had settled in the low-lying area after arriving in southern California just before World War I, and Mexican immigrants, who took advantage of the nearby location of employment in the railroad yards and factories just on the other side of the river. While each ethnic group had its own churches and businesses in the Flats, by the 1930s many in the Molokan community had tended to move up economically to own larger mom-and-pop markets and be landlords of several properties, while Mexicans continued to rent their homes and exist in a more precarious economic position. When the Depression hit, Mexicans were among the first to require economic assistance from the government, since their unemployment rose to 60 percent, they were banned from many jobs by their alien status, and they had few resources to fall back upon.

Indeed, charity officials set up a food distribution center in a warehouse just across the river from Downtown on the corner of Brooklyn Avenue and Echandia Street, that was particularly utilized by residents of the Flats. "They give you a little card and they'd punch it," remembered Eddie Ramirez. "They'd throw in corned beef in cans and cabbage and oranges and apples, and different things … they'd fill up these little gunny sacks, burlap.… Everybody was on that welfare just about, except the ones that had a job, and they were few and far between" (Ramirez 2002: 42–3). James Tolmasov remembers going down to the same distribution center as a teenager to help Mexican neighbors carry these foodstuffs: "The County was handing out food, like several sacks of meat, ten pounds of potatoes, and vegetables and all that.… They went out and picked up the food. It wasn't delivered. You had to just go out to bring it home" (Tolmasov 2001: 35).

Not surprisingly, when county officials initiated their repatriation campaign they headed straight for Mexican indigents in the Flats area of Boyle Heights. From materials gathered from the Secretariat of Foreign Relations in Mexico, and connected to individual families identified in the 1930 US

Census or Los Angeles City Directories, I have identified 567 individuals from 125 families repatriated from Boyle Heights between 1931 and 1933. Of these 125 families, 55 percent lived in the area described as the Flats, bounded by the Los Angeles River to the west, Boyle Avenue to the east, Brooklyn Avenue to the north, and 6th Street to the south. Because my database of names and addresses is invariably incomplete, it is likely that many more individuals were repatriated from the area, although I believe that it is likely that the Flats area remained the main area of repatriation from Boyle Heights and one of the most significant targeted areas in all of southern California.

It is important to note that county social workers had long made home visits to the indigent to ascertain whether they were deserving for relief support. Eddie Ramirez remembers one such visit to his home when he was an adolescent:

> My grandfather, I saw him one day, he was in the living room, and the social worker came to talk with him. They wanted to confirm if he's still here, or what. And I was hiding in the closet there. And my grandfather was telling her, to the best of his … in Spanish, he was telling her. I don't know if the lady understood, but he was telling her, he says, "I don't want charity. I want to work." And he started to cry. And he raised up his arm and he showed her his muscle. He's got a big old muscle here. "Look. That's what I want." And he was crying. My grandfather was crying because he was on charity. (Ramirez 2002: 43)

On these visits, social workers were instructed to give Mexican indigents the option of a county sponsored train ticket for each member of their families to the interior of Mexico. If they refused, these employees were told to cut off future relief from these families and take away all documentation enabling them to receive food and other forms of relief.

The extent of the targeting can be described by viewing the impact of the campaign on a single residential block in the Flats. On 151 Utah Street, north of First Street, county officials first convinced Trinidad Garcia, age 46, to return to his birthplace, La Barca, Jalisco, on county funds in October 1931. He had first arrived in the city nine years earlier in 1923, and had been employed as a baker before being forced out of work by the Depression. By April 1932, the Martinez family, two houses down from Garcia at 143 Utah Street, was encouraged by county officials to leave on a county sponsored train. Alberto had arrived in the US in 1905, worked as a boilermaker on the railroads, and had earned enough money to purchase his modest home in the Flats for three thousand dollars. He had met his wife Altagracia in the United States, and when they left for Mexico City they took with them their six children ranging in ages from seventeen to two, all American citizens born in the United States. By October 1932, the Garcia family down the street at 255 Utah Street had left Los Angeles for Guadalajara.

This family included 35-year-old Apolinar, a common laborer, his wife Juana, their 7-year-old child Carmen, and Apolinar's 37-year-old brother, Paulino.[3] Virtually every block in the Flats contained similar stories of widespread displacement during these years.

With the transfer of power in Washington, DC to Democrat Franklin Roosevelt in 1933, interest in repatriation among Mexican immigrants in the region declined precipitously. Each county sponsored train in 1933 had open spots and several had to be delayed for lack of passengers. This did not stop county officials from intensifying their inducements to solicit new repatriates, nor their strong-arming of indigent Mexicans to leave the region. Increasingly, Mexican families committed to staying in the United States resisted county efforts to make them leave, even while pressure mounted by government officials. Indeed, even after county sponsored trains were suspended in 1934, various Los Angeles officials continued to sponsor new initiatives for repatriation to Mexico, at least until the onset of World War II.

But ridding the Flats area of Mexican residents became only part of the strategy for urban progress in Boyle Heights. Since the area sat so close to the new civic center, as well as to train tracks bringing newcomers to Los Angeles, the Flats were an obvious eyesore for city officials attempting to show how the city was successfully weathering the economic downturn. When federal officials made available public funds to support major urban projects for both slum clearance and public works jobs, the city's elite took advantage to initiate plans to obliterate the entire community for the sake of the "public good." As discussed by the best study of housing in Los Angeles, Dana Cuff's *Provisional City*, "while housing activists in the thirties or forties might generally have agreed that the worst housing in the city was located northeast and especially southeast of downtown, specific sites for slum clearance were politically determined." But Cuff goes on to argue "that site selection was relatively arbitrary, and then backed by subsequent surveys rather than originally determined in some scientific way" and "that condemnation and slum clearance policy 'created' areas to demolish" (Cuff 2000: 135–8). With one of its major ethnic populations decimated by repatriation policies, city housing and transportation officials, along with private architects and housing activists, would now target the Flats for a complete urban overhaul, requiring further ethnic cleansing.

In 1934, encouraged by the new mayoral administration of Frank Shaw, a group of prominent Los Angeles architects formed the Utah Street Architects Association to obtain a commission for an enormous housing project in the Flats under the newly constituted federal Public Works Administration. This group, led by Ralph Flewelling, lobbied officials in Washington, DC and utilized their political ties to lobby for low-income housing programs and for federal funding for their extensive plans to revolutionize housing for the poor in the region (Cuff 2000: 158–9). This group

did not get a green light for its project until passage of the 1937 Federal Housing Act, almost eight years after the site had been initially identified as the place for Los Angeles' first public housing project. Although rumors of the planned destruction of the community circulated from at least 1934, it took the block-by-block appraisal done in October 1940 to confirm to all residents that they would be asked to vacate their homes. By that time, of course, many homeowners had already sold their properties and left, and those that hadn't certainly saw their property values plummet, creating a zone of blight that public housing was intended to remedy.

By the time ground was broken for Aliso Village in February 1942, the modernist plan for improving the lot of housing for the poor had also changed considerably. The original plan for 54 acres of housing north of First Street made in 1934 had shrunk to 34 acres due to the addition of a new elevated highway that was added to the plan with federal and state highway construction funds for slum clearance purposes (Cuff 2000: 151). The new village would now be separated on its northern and eastern edges from the rest of Boyle Heights by the juncture of the new Santa Ana and Ramona Highways, currently known as the 101 Freeway. This would isolate the new residents, making them more appropriate subjects for the modernist vision envisioned by urban planners. In addition, as Dana Cuff has argued, "a visitor virtually soared into Los Angeles unaware – above the river, the railyards, the public housing, and any remnants of the working-class neighborhoods below" (Cuff 2000: 156–7).

This pattern of highway construction would severely impact Boyle Heights over the next twenty years. By 1960, four other freeways had been built through Boyle Heights, carving up neighborhoods and placing barriers and eyesores throughout the area. The massive East Los Angeles interchange, which connected three major thoroughfares, was built in the 1950s in the southernmost part of the Flats, displacing another 5,000 residents. Altogether almost 15 percent of all the land in Boyle Heights would be taken up by the freeways by the time construction was completed. For some like James Tolmasov, whose family was forced out of the Flats by the building of Aliso Village and the Santa Ana Highway, displacement would occur several times over. His family bought a home on Lanfranco Street in the eastern part of Boyle Heights after leaving the Flats, only to have that two-story home taken over by the state in the 1950s in order to build Highway 60 (Tomalsav 2001: 1–2).

The advance of World War II prompted officials to erect another nine public housing projects in the city. Of the ten housing projects which opened for residents in 1941 and 1942, nine of them were located in East Los Angeles or South Los Angeles, areas which were increasingly deemed as predominantly minority. Indeed, Boyle Heights alone would house five of the city's ten public housing projects opened in this period. Ramona Gardens, located at the northern fringe of Boyle Heights on 32 acres also

cleared by extensive Mexican repatriation, would actually be the first project to open, just after the new year in 1941. Estrada Courts, along the southern edge of Boyle Heights, would be the tenth and final site selected by city housing officials, replacing the only planned West Los Angeles site, known as San Vicente Village, which was abandoned after local homeowners and clergy in Westwood complained that the housing would bring undesirable poor minority residents to the neighborhood and probably integrate the public schools (Parson 2005: 13–43).

Moreover, almost all of the former residents of the affected areas were ruled ineligible for actually occupying the new housing for the poor. The eligibility requirements had originally, and not surprisingly, required US citizenship, so most of the Mexican residents of the region in 1940 would be deemed unworthy of federal support. However, once the war broke out in 1941, ill-housed defense workers earning $1 or less were given priority. With a long waiting list for spots in the new housing complexes, and widespread discrimination against racial minorities in the defense industries, few former residents of the Flats had the possibility of returning to their neighborhood. This was also the case for the other nine public housing projects completed in 1941 and 1942. When the war ended in 1945, veterans were given priority positions on the waiting lists. So, despite the fact the housing activists celebrated the fact that the City Housing Authority officially saw these projects as racially integrated from the beginning, this integration during and immediately after the war was severely restricted to the American-born who had been able to escape discrimination in the workplace and in the military.

I want to be clear about the framing of the political situation in Depression-era Los Angeles that I am describing. Public housing, of course, was seen in the 1930s as the epitome of New Deal reform politics. In Los Angeles, it clearly generated an opposition from real estate moguls, including their supporters on the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the *Los Angeles Times*, who felt that any government interference in the housing market threatened their profits and freedom. And many of the advocates for public housing were themselves socialists, even a few communists, although most were simply New Deal liberals. Indeed, by 1952 this basic political configuration would lead to the reversal of support for public housing in Los Angeles, leaving sites like Aliso Village without continued levels of support. Indeed, the dramatic story of the abandonment of the residents of Chavez Ravine after the defeat of Mayor Fletcher Bowron for reelection in 1953 by reactionary forces who called public housing in Los Angeles "socialistic" has been the principal way of framing this battle in recent historical works by Don Parson (2005) and Eric Avila (2004). That the Chavez Ravine land was transferred to Walter O'Malley and the Dodgers to entice them to leave Brooklyn for the West Coast in the late 1950s, after the remaining Mexican residents were forcibly removed, only makes this story more compelling (Sullivan 1989).

But I am interested in the ideology central to Los Angeles politics in the 1930s and 1940s across the right, center, and left of the political spectrum that provided support for slum creation, identification, and clearance, and was as likely to fundamentally support public housing strategies as to oppose them. As Ira Katznelson (2005) makes clear in *When Affirmative Action Was White*, New Deal policy was shaped by the political realities of bringing an activist government to bear on regions fundamentally shaped by racial inequalities. Katznelson convincingly argues that Democratic Congressmen from the US South were able to shape all the fundamental New Deal and World War II programs to insure that state and local officials would retain their ability to administer the new infusion of federal dollars with local customs and statutes of rigid segregation and unequal distribution based on race. The same racial political reality which barred agricultural and domestic work from provisions of social security legislation would witness the administration of federal housing statutes that would characterize Boyle Heights, according to a 1939 Home Owners Loan Corporation City Survey, a district full of "subversive racial elements" and "hopelessly heterogeneous."

Race played an important factor in the formulation of urban reform during the decade, but in ways that were particularly suited to the diversity and complexity of California's population. Unlike stories of urban renewal in East Coast cities, the particular spatial ramifications of race could not be drawn up in a strict white-black racial binary. Instead, racialization took on a fundamentally different form when applied to areas like the Flats, a form that more clearly resembles processes of racialization described by some of the leading contemporary Asian American studies scholars, such as historians Gary Okihiro and Mae Ngai and legal theorists Neil Gotanda and Angelo Ancheta. As emphasized by Ancheta, "rather than being centered on color, which divides racially between the superior and the inferior, anti-Asian subordination is centered on citizenship, which divides racially between American and foreigner. Asian Americans are thus perceived racially as foreign outsiders who lack the rights of true 'Americans'" (Ancheta 1998: 15). Perceptions of foreignness intersect with racial categorization, often heightened by nativist anti-immigrant rhetoric at a time of intense economic competition or conflict, to form a particularly volatile form of racism that stretches well beyond any color line.

The process of racialization that Mae Ngai (2003) recognizes in the federal immigration policy of that era which promoted Asian Americans and Latinos in the US as "alien citizens" was localized by city and county officials in Los Angeles by ruling that some neighborhoods were slums that blocked progress for the entire region, and that their populations could be indiscriminately moved because they did not possess full rights as citizens of the United States nor of local communities. Even leftist supporters of public housing in Los Angeles bought into this argument, believing that they

could construct better housing for the deserving poor on land occupied largely by the undeserving poor, categories thoroughly racialized in the housing shortages of the Depression and World War II eras. In Los Angeles, the "undeserving" were most often Mexican and Japanese residents born abroad, but also including their American-born children, in an era where citizenship rights were still largely racialized in the public mind.

My argument, however, stresses that Mexican and Japanese residents of Boyle Heights were directly targeted by this form of nativist racialization, despite the fact that the communities they lived in during this period were multiracial and multiethnic. White ethnic groups that lived among them, including many who had been born abroad and just recently arrived in the United States, were spared the direct assault of targeted programs of removal based on national origin and foreignness. However, the Jews, Russian Molokans, Armenians, and others who lived alongside these racialized immigrants were indirectly affected by this form of racialization by virtue of the fact that the neighborhoods they lived in became stigmatized as urban slums. This stigmatization would force these white ethnic groups to find shelter elsewhere or continue to live in a community increasingly targeted for decline and eventual destruction.

African Americans, on the other hand, were almost exclusively limited to living in areas decried as "slums," even when their population exploded in the World War II era in Los Angeles. While leftist organizers of public housing often heroically promoted white/black integration of public housing complexes in the city, they also were fairly ineffectual in opening up the private stock of housing in Los Angeles to blacks outside of the Central Avenue corridor, nor able to place many public housing units outside of minority communities. Indeed, when African American migration to Los Angeles tripled the size of the black community in LA during World War II, the best new housing option attempted was the abandoned Little Tokyo neighborhood, renamed Bronzeville, that instantly began to be described in "slum" terms (Leonard 2006: 69–73; Kurashige 2008: 158–64). In other words, leftist public housing advocates and administrators usually succumbed to the wider discriminatory housing market in Los Angeles, even while promoting "democratic housing for the poor."

To understand localized government action spurred along by the emergencies of the Great Depression and World War II, therefore, it is critical to understand the particular processes of racialization at work in Los Angeles. Most importantly, racial targeting of particular populations was superimposed onto the geographic landscape of Los Angeles, making certain neighborhoods like the Flats, or the larger Boyle Heights, susceptible to urban reform efforts aimed at moving out populations and restructuring to fit the racial nativist sentiments of city officials, elite civic leaders, or protected middle-class populations. This pattern of dealing with urban populations was well established by World War II and would be a fundamental source of

accumulated knowledge that would be utilized to process the removal of Japanese and Japanese Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Of course, the causes of Japanese American internment have long been debated by some of the nation's leading Asian American historians, including Roger Daniels, Gary Okihiro, Lon Kurashige, and others. Instead of laying out a full description of that debate, it will suffice for me to acknowledge that most historians see local officials and populations on the West Coast playing a role in encouraging the President and the military to remove the Japanese ancestry population from the immediate West Coast under the banner of wartime emergency and the possibility of spying for the enemy. However, that argument has usually focused on the most virulent anti-Asian groups in the West Coast, including those who would benefit economically from their removal in certain key industries, such as agriculture and fishing. I am less interested in the role of these groups in promoting and pushing for Japanese internment, and more interested in the question: why didn't politicians and leaders more moderate or liberal in their outlook step up to oppose or provide alternatives to Japanese removal? Indeed, my answer to this question revolves around a well-established history of racialized population removal for urban restructuring that I have outlined, rather than a specific anti-Asian sentiment lurking underneath these "Friends of Japan," triggered when Pearl Harbor shocked the nation. In other words, it is the stunning silence of opposition and overwhelming acquiescence that is of most interest to me.

Indeed, it is two of Los Angeles' most noted liberal politicians of the period, Mayor Fletcher Bowron and County Supervisor John Anson Ford, whose actions seem to epitomize the place of urban reformers in sustaining a consistent policy of population removal and ethnic cleansing for the purposes of "progress." Both Bowron and Ford were well known in the Japanese American community during the 1930s, seeking endorsements from the organized groups in the community for their campaigns against the supposedly corrupt Shaw administration. As historian Lon Kurashige has shown, they were both active participants in many events in the Japanese American community, particularly those sponsored by the second-generation Japanese American Citizens League. Ford had Los Angeles' Little Tokyo in his own district, as well as Boyle Heights, and probably represented more Japanese Americans than any other elected official in the city.

But Ford had also been a major supporter of renewed attempts to sustain Mexican repatriation efforts in Los Angeles after being elected to the Board of Supervisors in 1934. This support had included several trips to Mexico trying to interest Mexican officials in renewing cooperative efforts at returning Los Angeles residents south of the border. During late 1941, Ford had been working with Wayne Allen, the county's chief administrator, on a plan to initiate a new Mexican repatriation campaign by cutting off all further assistance to indigent aliens from the county, while providing a hundred

dollars from county funds if a family agreed to return to Mexico immediately. On Tuesday, December 2, 1941, John Anson Ford was able to convince his fellow supervisors to initiate this plan, once Allen testified that the amount of compensation amounted to less than two months what it would cost the county to sustain them on welfare relief in the US. With the positive vote, Ford immediately went to Mexico to meet with officials there and work out the particulars of the program. Indeed, that Sunday when news of the attack on Pearl Harbor reached Los Angeles, John Anson Ford had to hurry home from south of the border.

Both Ford and Bowron, in the weeks immediately following December 7, 1941, were quick to publicly announce the loyalty to the United States of the local Japanese American population and to actively ask all American citizens to refrain from attacks on this local population due to their ancestry. This was to be expected, given their histories with the local Japanese American community and more generally, with efforts at racial conciliation in Los Angeles. Yet, by the end of January 1942, both these officials would take official positions to call on President Roosevelt to physically remove Japanese aliens and Japanese Americans alike from Los Angeles and other West Coast cities. Bowron, in particular, became a national spokesperson for questioning the loyalty of Japanese Americans on racial grounds while asking for their removal or incarceration. Most historians have argued that this turnaround was due to the stress of seeing the United States losing badly to Japan in the Pacific War. While this may have played a part, the turnaround was also fueled by local concerns which replayed narratives of the past which justified to them a new round of population removal.

The fate of many Japanese Americans in Boyle Heights speaks to these local concerns. Seventeen-year-old Ruth Matsuo encountered repercussions of the bombing of Pearl Harbor immediately. She had spent December 7 with her family and her closest friends, whose male son, almost a brother to her, was building the Matsuo family a brick barbecue in the backyard of their City Terrace home. When they heard the newscast about the Pearl Harbor bombing, they thought, "What's Japan thinking of? How could they attack the United States? We're so much bigger." It wasn't until that evening, however, that Ruth understood the full impact for her family. The FBI came to their house to take away her father, who at the time was quite ill with very high blood pressure. Her father, Sei Fujii, was the editor of the *Kashu Mainichi*, a local Japanese-language newspaper, which defined him as a respected community leader and put him high on the list of FBI targets for immediate incarceration. An FBI doctor thought he was too seriously ill to be moved, so he stayed in his house for an additional week, until the father could not bear hearing from abandoned wives in the community asking for help. Ruth remembers being scared, hearing her parents speak in Japanese all week, which she could not understand. Finally, her father volunteered to go. He was taken to Tujunga, and immediately called his wife

to bring him pajamas and toiletries for at least six men taken from the streets before they could pack anything. From there, Ruth's father was quickly taken to Missoula, Montana, then transferred to Lordsburg, New Mexico (Brandt 2001: 21–3).

By the end of December 1941, the immediate incarceration of those most under suspicion as "enemy aliens" – by virtue of their prominent role as Japanese editors, teachers, or community leaders – had left their families in precarious positions of destitution. The same county welfare departments that had, for years, been attempting to move Mexican aliens south now were confronted with an almost immediate impoverishment of Japanese families in a community that had rarely sought county assistance before. This group was significantly large in Boyle Heights and Little Tokyo and led local officials to begin asking whether the federal government would assist local governments in dealing with the indigent situation created by removing so many main family wage earners at one time. Throughout January 1941, administrator Wayne Allen was sent to Washington, DC to plead the county's case for assistance, despite the immediate mobilization into a wartime posture. As it became clear that little federal support would be forthcoming, John Anson Ford, and other local officials responsible for providing local welfare assistance, began to advocate that families of these potential "enemy aliens" should be sent to join their incarcerated heads of households, rather than be left under the care of Los Angeles County (Leonard 2006: 69–71).

What initially might have appeared unthinkable became doable, maybe even potentially positive, from the perspective of a wartime emergency and the experience of previous forced population movements under duress for the long-term "benefit" of the affected people and areas. Within the month, John Anson Ford would provide the fifth vote to make unanimous a resolution of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to encourage the President to physically remove the Japanese-origin population from the West Coast of the United States. When President Roosevelt made his decision in late February, and the evacuation was begun later that spring, Boyle Heights lost a significant number of its residents, and Jews, Mexicans, and Molokans in the region saw neighbors and classmates sell their possessions and leave their homes like many others had in the past. But this massive movement of people had been done under the direct sponsorship and control of the US military.

Ironically, this movement only sent these families thirty miles inland in southern California while more permanent sites at Manzanar and elsewhere were still being built. Boyle Heights residents were housed through the summer of 1942 at the Santa Anita Race Track in the San Gabriel Valley, in stalls originally built for the thoroughbred horses that raced there before and after World War II. Many classmates and friends went to visit internees that summer, but more often they renewed friendships

through correspondence. Writing initially on May 21, 1942, one particular set of correspondents interests me for what it says about reaction to this unjust incarceration. "War weaves strange patterns and, at present, with 110–120 other thousands of Japanese extraction, I am now in a concentration camp – American style. They say it is a military necessity so we acquiese quietly," wrote Kay Sugahara from the Santa Anita Relocation Center to Supervisor John Anson Ford.

The motivation for Sugahara to write his old friend and political confident John Anson Ford that May was urgent, if a bit complicated. Sugahara had been president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) before the war, and had a personal and political relationship with Ford since 1934, when they met each other as political reformers trying to unseat the administration of Mayor Frank Shaw. Ford had long been a political supporter of the work of the JACL, having spoken at many of their dinners and events, even nominating a county employee for "Nisei of the Year" in 1940. As Sugahara began his third month in captivity, still in Los Angeles County awaiting the building of permanent relocation centers in the California desert, he decided to write his old friend Ford to inform him of "anything about camp life or conditions which you wish to know, the mind and the attitudes of people here."

But Sugahara also wanted to make clear to Ford that the actions of both federal and local officials in supporting and carrying out evacuation of both Japanese aliens and American citizens of Japanese ancestry had been unwise and potentially destructive of American values of decency and democracy. He certainly was aware that Ford, as part of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, had voted in unanimous fashion in January 1942 for a resolution calling for a transfer of all Japanese aliens "from coastal areas to inland points," putting all the supervisors clearly on the side of internment.

Sugahara wrote to Ford as a "conscientious and conspicuous public official," but one that he had personally "watched … taking the so-called unpopular side of many issues and stood with a great deal of courage." Although voting against Japanese internment had not been among Ford's political actions, Sugahara felt that he could tell Ford directly that the ongoing evacuation would have potentially serious repercussions for the future of race relations in Los Angeles:

> Is there not a danger that certain democratic rights have been infringed and race discrimination placed above law by segregating for evacuation Citizens of a certain ancestry? Is there not a possibility that this may lead to wider types of discrimination after the war in which the fever of hatred would not have yet cooled? Namely I mean the Jew and the Negro groups in certain sections of the country.… While pointing out these facts may not be popular at this time, when the heat of war has cooled and people look with sane eyes upon the entire picture, the men who point [out] these things will be looked upon with regard by the people. (Ford 1942)

Ford's reaction to this rather frank letter was to write back to Sugahara on May 26 sympathetically but cautiously. Beginning his letter with "Dear Kay," he immediately told Sugahara that he appreciated his communication and "the tolerant spirit in which you refer to the problems involved in this unprecedented situation.… Perhaps you and your friends do not realize the significance of the chapter which those of your ancestry are writing in their extraordinary adaptation to restraints and regulations and in their almost unparalleled acceptance of imposed conditions for the sake of this government." However, Ford struggled to find the words that could convince himself that the actions undertaken by the federal government, at the urging of himself and his peers, had been in that same "tolerant spirit." "While battling a foe that has disregarded many of the accepted international procedures," Ford retorted, "we ourselves cannot afford to disregard the basic principles on which our own citizens rely." Ford, only weeks into the evacuation of Japanese Americans from the Pacific Coast, and months from his own support of these efforts, was willing to concede to a close friend that a mistake may have been made. But for years, Ford would argue that strong public opinion against the presence of Japanese Americans in California had forced their hands. As he explained to Sugahara, he was "sure that retrospect will reveal some errors and injustices in the present program, but it will also show a high purpose to reconcile and ameliorate what many believe a desperate reality with the broad principles of our democratic government."

I have argued that it was not the first time, nor would it be the last time, that a "desperate reality" led local officials to support a policy of racialized population movement that would seriously undermine democratic principles. Boyle Heights, and particularly the Flats neighborhood, had long experienced this sort of urban removal policy that made it easier to contemplate Japanese removal in the aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. That the different groups that experienced the pain and agony of these various removal policies lived in the same neighborhood speaks to the way in which a more generalized ideology in favor of expulsion to make room for "progress" or "security" could easily overtake a commitment to democratic values. The individuals and families who lived together in Boyle Heights became disposable, and the neighborhoods which they had created and nurtured were expendable for the "greater good" of Los Angeles, at least in the minds of urban reformers of that era.

Notes

1 Frank Shaw was also a member of the city's Citizens Committee on Coordination of Unemployment Relief.

2 Shaw's estimates of savings from the repatriations of $200,000 a month, or over $2 million total, were wildly exaggerated. A better estimate is a modest half million dollars, which barely made a dent in relief needs.

3 All data taken from list of repatriates from the Secretariat of Foreign Relations archives, Mexico City, linked to the 1930 US Census and the 1931 Los Angeles City Directory.

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Chapter Nine

Gridlock of Rage: The Watts and Rodney King Riots

Scott Saul

Ice-Cold Water

I like to begin my seminar on the history of Los Angeles by popping in a battered, much-used VHS tape of *Twilight – Los Angeles* (1992), Anna Deavere Smith's dramatic monologues about the Rodney King riots. My goal is to move my students as soon as possible into a zone of engrossed discomfort. Most were toddlers when Los Angeles exploded after the verdicts in the Rodney King trial; many come into the classroom expecting to be oriented to Los Angeles as a land of relaxation and fantasy – the city, in David Rieff's words, of "no-fault divorces, no-fault therapies, no-fault insurance claims, and … no-fault citizenship" (Rieff 1991: 145).

Twilight pours ice-cold water into the hot tub. It's nothing if not a meditation on the different shades of responsibility Angelenos bear for the city they've created, often merely by going about their business with an internal monologue running in their heads. By forcing those internal monologues out into the open, Smith asks her audience to weigh their competing claims – not simply to empathize and listen but also to analyze, adjudicate. She begins with three monologues revolving around the infliction of bodily harm: Rudy Salas's story of being beaten by police and losing his hearing; Elaine Young's tale of how her plastic surgeries went horribly awry; and Angela King's account of how her nephew Rodney could barely talk after his encounter with the LAPD. It's hard not to see the common thread tying together Salas and Rodney King – and hard not to see the juxtaposition with Elaine Young as a satirical gesture, albeit one played close to the shoulder-padded jacket that Smith assumes for the role. It's hard, too, not to be increasingly unsettled as *Twilight* proceeds – as the film weaves in the graphic video footage of the killing of Latasha Harlins and the beatings of Rodney King and Reginald Denny, and as the ever-intense Smith adopts

persona after persona, each with his or her own vision of the interplay between violence and justice. We're stuck in what one commentator called a "gridlock of rage," and forced to take its measure (Abelmann and Lie 1995: 7).

Historians writing about the Watts and Rodney King riots face a challenge not unlike that of my students watching *Twilight*: how to sort through seemingly irreconcilable points of view, how to understand this crosstalk as the story of Los Angeles. Of course, for historians, this challenge is compounded by the crucial task of integrating the drama of these two upheavals into the larger stories we tell about how Los Angeles has changed over the past sixty years. The Watts and Rodney King riots were literally apocalyptic events in that they seemed to reveal the truth of the city, to burn its illusions down to ashes. Yet the high drama of the episodes themselves should not obscure long-term trajectories that have also defined the city's social and economic faultlines: the decline of blue-collar unionism and the selective reindustrialization of the city; the emergence of a many-pronged local civil rights movement, recently energized by union organizing of the working poor; the criminalization of poor youth and the militarization of city space; and the fracturing of racial and ethnic communities among class lines. If this sounds, on balance, like a dour catalogue, perhaps that is because the Watts and Rodney King riots act like a gutcheck against the fantasy-life of Los Angeles, calling even its greatest boosters back to earth. Both riots were examples of the "politics of the last resort," and thus force us to consider why so many Angelenos were convinced, for motives high and low, that their best option was to take to the streets.

"A journey into the mind of Watts"

The Watts riot may have been, after the assassination of JFK, the most heavily investigated event of the 1960s. Journalists, sociologists, urban anthropologists, and psychologists descended en masse upon the riot zone after the flames died out, so much so that *Los Angeles Times* writer Art Seidenbaum quipped, "I have a mental image of a USC sociologist interviewing a man on the street who turns out to be a psychologist from UCLA" (Horne 1995: 39). But while a large number of intellectuals sifted through the ashes, many fewer have sifted through the sifting. The story of Watts has yet to be reconceived in line with the new urban histories of Oakland, Detroit, and Chicago, which limn the connections between the growth of postwar suburbia and the hollowing-out of central-cities; and it is only beginning to be set in dialogue with new studies of the "long civil rights movement," which have investigated civil rights stirrings outside the South and offered a more subtle sense of the interrelationship between the civil rights and Black Power impulses (Sugrue 1996; Self 2003).

Like Harlem in 1964 and Newark and Detroit in 1967, Watts erupted in response to a confrontation between police and black residents. On the night of August 11, Marquette Frye, fresh from celebrating his brother's release from the Air Force with a few Screwdrivers, was pulled over by the highway patrol for speeding. The arrest quickly spiraled out of control, attracting hundreds of Watts residents; soon police were wading into the crowd, clubs swinging, while blacks hurled rocks and other missiles at cars driven by whites in response (Conot 1967: 3–29; Horne 1995: 45–63). Over the next six days, the Watts riot broadened in scope as residents openly challenged the forces of law and order, stoning police officers, looting businesses, and burning storefronts to the ground with the then-novel device of the Molotov cocktail. The death of a sheriff's officer on August 13 marked a turning point, the moment that "a community revolt against the police was transformed into a police revolt against the community" (Horne 1995: 72). Over half of the state's National Guard was deployed to contain 46.5 square miles – well beyond the borders of Watts. At the end, 34 people had died, 1,032 had been wounded, and 3,952 had been arrested; property damage was estimated at over $40 million. In a symbolic coda to the week, the LAPD raided the Nation of Islam's Los Angeles temple on August 18, unloading hundreds of ammunition rounds in response to alleged fire from inside the temple. Bringing the week full circle, Marquette Frye, a new recruit to the Nation, had spoken at the temple three nights before, in a talk advertised with the slogan "Stop Police Brutality" (Conot 1967; Horne 1995; Strain 2005; McCone in Fogelson 1969)

The riot produced a flurry of journalistic accounts – of which Robert Conot's hypervivid *Rivers of Blood, Years of Darkness* (1967) is the best – but the terms for understanding the riot were set by the McCone Commission, which released its report four months after the unrest. The McCone Report reflected the worldview of its namesake: John McCone was a law-and-order conservative, a stalwart Republican, and committed anti-communist who had made a fortune building ships during World War II, served on Eisenhower's National Security Council, and headed Kennedy's CIA. Tellingly, he interrupted testimony from ACLU representatives with the declaration that police brutality was a "device … [of] our adversaries, those who would like to destroy the freedom that this country stands for." LAPD Chief William Parker barred LAPD officers from testifying before the commission, and they complied (Horne 1995: 342; Cannon 1999: 131; Weiner 2007: 180). The resulting report soft-pedaled the role of police brutality, tracing the riot instead to a small rump of disaffected blacks – at most 10,000 – who had been caught up in "angry exhortations" that encouraged "disobedience to law" (Fogelson, pp. 1, 29, 93) At the same time, it was a sign of the bipartisan consensus of the '50s and '60s that the McCone Report also called for an extensive set of

publicly-funded interventions in the areas of housing, employment, and education. (Fogelson 1969: 55–6, 68–9, 87–8).

Much of the reaction to the McCone Report was so intense and negative that its repudiation (along with the repudiation of that other maligned report of 1965, Daniel Moynihan's *The Negro Family*, which shared several assumptions about black dysfunctionality) might be said to mark a more radical turn within the politics of the civil rights movement and within the academic disciplines of history, sociology, and psychology. Activist Bayard Rustin, who had helped organize the 1963 March on Washington, attacked the report in *Commentary* as the embodiment of a "liberal consensus" "paralyzed by the hard facts of Negro deprivation," and he witheringly picked apart the double standards driving the report – for instance, how it condemned black disrespect for the law but failed to condemn extralegal violence against black protest (Fogelson 1969: 151, 153, 164). When faced with the McCone Report, mainline organizations like the US Commission on Civil Rights were goaded to the rioters' defense (Horne 1995: 345–6).

The leading academic attack came from historian Robert Fogelson, who analyzed the McCone Report as the product of a particular interest group, "upper-middle-class whites" who shared "preconceptions about violence, law enforcement, ghettoes, and slums" (Fogelson 1969: 118). Using the full records of the commission – an indispensable archive recently given a finding aid – Fogelson dismantled many of the authors' basic propositions. Whereas the report called the riot a "spasm" and an "insensate rage of destruction," Fogelson argued that the "looting and burning" were "articulate protests against genuine grievances and, as such, meaningful protests against the southcentral ghetto." Whereas the report downplayed white resistance to desegregation, Fogelson underlined the "tremendous stakes that Los Angeles whites have in perpetuating the Negro ghetto." And whereas the report concluded that only a small minority of disaffected blacks were involved in the riot, Fogelson undertook to demolish this "riff-raff" theory, contending that many more blacks were involved – between three and eight times the McCone Report's estimate – and that the riot itself was understood sympathetically by the mainstream of the black community (Fogelson 1969: 1, 115, 120–3, 142).

Fogelson's pointed critique was both amplified and diffused by a large body of social science research that grappled with the riot, especially by measuring the attitudes that informed its aftermath. In retrospect much of this work seems narrow in its purview, investigating self-reported individual beliefs rather than the structures of discrimination in place in 1960s Los Angeles or the dynamics of collective movements. One gets the feeling, reading some of these studies, that the authors thought the meaning of the riots could best be determined by a multiple-choice plebiscite. Researchers determined that blacks were more likely to endorse violent protest if they had little contact with whites (Ransford 1968); that middle-class whites

were more likely to be sympathetic to the riot if they had more personal contact with black people (Jeffries and Ransford 1969); and that those who perceived the riot as "social protest" were more likely to be attuned to the problem of racial discrimination, and vice versa (Jeffries, Turner, and Morris 1971). But for all the social science number-crunching, a surprising amount of this work took on a tone of moral urgency, well illustrated by Nathan Cohen's conclusion to the collaboratively conceived *Los Angeles Riot Study*: "Adequate reform of our social institutions will not be achieved without a deep look at our values. Will we be able to place human values above property values? If not, there is a real question as to how far we can go in handling the problems without resorting to extreme punitive measures which in the long run can destroy our democratic way of life" (Cohen 1970: 40). With his moderate talk of "adequate reform" balanced by his attack on the cult of "property values," Cohen was straddling a line that more radical thinkers would aim to trespass.

Within a few years of Watts, a dissonant chorus of voices on the left began seeing the riot as Exhibit A for their theories of revolt and liberation. At a "Watts Grass Roots Seminar" held at USC in 1966, Us founder Maulana Karenga channeled both Moynihan and Fanon, contending that the unrest spoke to a psychological malaise within the black community and that blacks would remain "marginal men in America" until they bound together to create a culture of their own (Everett-Karenga et al., reel 9, 0132, Kerner Commission Papers; Brown 2003: 30–1). By contrast, in *Why Watts Exploded* (1966), the Socialist Workers Party's Della Rossa took a harder Fanonian line, arguing that the riot marked the psychic liberation of black Angelenos, who were decolonizing the ghetto by evicting the "occupying army" of the LAPD. Other commentators saw the consumer society as the rebellion's key backdrop. In his tract *The Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity Economy* (1965), Parisian Situationist Guy Debord took looting as the crucial feature of this "rebellion against the commodity, against the world of the commodity in which worker-consumers are *hierarchically* subordinated to commodity standards" (Situationist International 2002: 230–1). In a different though related key, novelist Thomas Pynchon contrasted the "systematized folly" of white culture with the "pocket of bitter reality that is Watts" and suggested that, "far from being a sickness," the violence on display in the riot might have been "an attempt to communicate, or to be who you really are" (Pynchon 1966).

If, in 1966, Pynchon hedged his proposal that the violence of Watts was a form of communication, by the early 1970s that idea had become the basis for two similarly titled and almost simultaneously published books, David Sears and John McConahay's *The Politics of Violence: The New Urban Blacks and the Watts riot* and Joe R. Feagin and Harlan Hahn's *Ghetto Revolts: The Politics of Violence in American Cities* (both 1973). While *Ghetto Revolts* laid out a broader framework for understanding ghetto riots

as "politically meaningful acts in a struggle between powerholding groups and powerless blacks" (p. vii), *The Politics of Violence* concentrated on Watts and gave new heft and subtlety to earlier rebuttals of the McCone Report. Drawing upon interviews with over 700 Watts residents, Sears and McConahay discovered that the "number of blacks involved in the rioting was staggering" – over 30,000 as active rioters and over 60,000 as close spectators (pp. 9, 13). The close spectators, they argued, formed a "permissive, if ambivalent audience," sympathetic to the rioters and optimistic about the riot's effects, even while disapproving of the riot's bloodshed and destruction (pp. 14, 15).

Yet perhaps *The Politics of Violence*'s most surprising discovery came in its profile of "the new urban blacks" who were the riot's "shock troops" (p. 145). Contrary to the suppositions of the McCone Report and even many liberal commentators, these young rioters were more likely to be reared in Los Angeles (thus disproving the argument that they were yokels who couldn't adapt to the city); just as likely to come from a two-parent home as non-rioters (thus cutting against the logic of the Moynihan Report); and better educated and more hopeful about their career prospects – with 90 percent aspiring to a white-collar job, hardly the dreams of riff-raff (pp. 17–33, 84). They also were more politicized than other Watts residents – more suspicious of the white media, more skeptical about the redress they could achieve through conventional channels, more aware of civil rights organizing outside of Los Angeles – and became increasingly so after the riot, when they developed what Sears and McConahay called a "riot ideology," a sense that the riot expressed legitimate grievances about police brutality, merchant exploitation, lack of political representation, and the like (pp. 70–89, 170–86). *The Politics of Violence* offered, then, an account of the dynamics of black radicalization from the standpoint of social psychology, one that established the younger black generation as the engine of Black Power.

With its formidable statistical apparatus, *The Politics of Violence* seemed to present the last word on the Watts riot – and, for almost the next two decades, many seemed happy to take it as that. Somehow the wave of urban riots had ended, and while Los Angeles' black community suffered wrenching changes in the interim – the flight of manufacturing capital, increasing economic competition with immigrant labor, widening internal class stratification (Davis 1987; Grant, Oliver, and James 1996; Sides 2003) – there was little further reflection on the riot and its legacy in the 1970s and 1980s outside of outliers like Bruce Tyler's 1983 UCLA dissertation "Black Radicalism in Southern California," an avowedly partisan account of the co-optation of black radicalism after the riot.

It took the Rodney King riots to give the Watts riot a second life. The province now of historians more than sociologists and psychologists, the Watts riot was revisited with a wider-angle lens, as scholars undertook to

excavate the broader political and cultural history that informed the riot and the changes that followed from it. Gerald Horne's *Fire This Time* (1995) was both an early part of this wave of scholarship and one of its most ambitious examples. Sympathetic to the rioters but dour about black nationalism's inattention to class, Horne provocatively explained the unrest as, in no small part, the result of southern Californian McCarthyism: "The repression of the left created an ideological vacuum that would later be filled by black nationalism, and this nationalism exploded in Watts" (p. 5). While this thesis is open to challenge – Jeanne Theoharis (2006) has argued for the persistence of the Angeleno black left – *Fire This Time* also offers an unparalleled, prismatic account of the riot and its aftermath, with especially valuable sections devoted to the LAPD, the civil rights leadership in Los Angeles before and after Watts, the apparatus of state-supported discrimination against blacks, and the ripple effects of Watts on local, national, and international politics.

Recently, a new generation of scholars has sharply questioned the received wisdom on the riot, in part by arguing that our fixation on the riot itself has served us poorly. "It was one of the ironic legacies of the riot," Josh Sides suggests, "that the enormity of the event obscured, to contemporary observers and subsequent scholars alike, the many more profound and enduring political and economic transformations reshaping black Los Angeles in the 1960s" (2003: 171). In his cogent political history of black Los Angeles, Sides strikingly spends as much time detailing the failure of the War on Poverty in Los Angeles and the development of Baldwin Hills – parables that suggest how black Los Angeles was increasingly polarized by class during the selective deindustrialization of the 1960s and 1970s – as he does glossing the Watts riot, which he likewise views as a tale of class and generational fragmentation in the black community.

Jeanne Theoharis and Christopher Strain, meanwhile, have challenged perhaps the most sedimented of Watts-related conventional wisdom: that it marked a radical break with the spirit of previous civil rights organizing. Strain's *Pure Fire* (2005) draws connections between Watts and earlier national civil rights campaigns, his through-line being the recently recovered tradition of black self-defense. In his view, the Watts rioters were cousins of firebrands like Robert F. Williams, Malcolm X, and Louisiana's gun-wielding Deacons for Defense, protecting their community from the LAPD just as the Deacons had protected theirs from the Klan and Southern law enforcement. By contrast, Theoharis's pathbreaking "Alabama on Avalon" (2006) reorients our understanding of Watts by placing it in the fresh context of the aggressive local civil rights organizing that preceded it. Detailing grassroots campaigns around desegregation, fair housing, and police brutality that brought together a coalition of middle-class and working-class blacks, the NAACP and the Nation of Islam, Theoharis argues that the riot was the result not of the failure of black leadership but rather

of the frustrations created by the white "frontlash," as manifested in the Los Angeles School Board's stonewalling on desegregation, the repeal of the Rumford Fair Housing Act by popular vote, and the refusal of Mayor Yorty to recognize the problem of police brutality. It may seem that historians of Watts are constantly tilting at the specter of the McCone Report, reformulating Robert Fogelson's objections, but in this respect Theoharis substantiates many of Fogelson's sallies with fresh archival work.

Cultural historians of black Los Angeles have found a way to broaden the McCone-Fogelson debate by turning to the arts organizations that rose "out of the ashes" of the riot, recovering them as the cynosures of the Black Arts movement in Los Angeles. The turn to culture has produced a parallax view of Black Power in Los Angeles: unlike political historians, who have tended to emphasize the fatal friction between the revolutionary nationalism of the Black Panther Party and the cultural nationalism of Karenga's Us organization (Brown 2003), cultural historians have underlined the astonishing creative ferment that sprang from the mood of political urgency. James Smethurst's encyclopedic *The Black Arts Movement* (2005) treats the Los Angeles branch of the movement in a comparative context; Cécile Whiting's *Pop L.A.* (2006) examines the Watts assemblage-art movement spearheaded by Noah Purifoy and John Outterbridge; and Sarah Schrank's "Picturing the Watts Towers" (2000) traces how Simon Rodia's towers became a community treasure after the riot. Jazz composer-musician Horace Tapscott, a magnetic figure in Los Angeles' black arts community who was little known outside of it, has rightly become pivotal to our understanding of this post-uprising renaissance. His autobiography *Songs of the Unsung* (2001) offers a ground-level view of the struggle to create a community arts movement, while Stephen Isoardi's scrupulous oral history *The Dark Tree* (2006) gives the most revelatory portrait yet of the postwar arts scenes of black Los Angeles through a thick description of Tapscott's journey as artist-activist. These books might prompt other historians to describe the relationship between black arts activism and the larger political culture in the 1960s and 1970s –a subject ably opened up by Daniel Widener (2003).

Four decades after the Watts conflagration, there are still surprising holes in the historical record. Much of the history of the riot has been the history of black men – this despite the fact that black women like Charlotta Bass and Marnesba Tackett led progressive grassroots campaigns before Watts, despite the fact that young black women were more active in the riot than black men over thirty, and despite the fact that black women spearheaded welfare rights organizing after the riot through institutions like the Watts Women's Organization, Mothers Anonymous, the Welfare Recipients Union, and the Neighborhood Adult Participation Program. These latter groups may not have the immediate militant cachet of the Black Panther Party or the Nation of Islam (whose Los Angeles chapters are also awaiting

their histories), but they too confronted state power and set an important precedent for the cross-ethnic organizing of poor and working-class Angelenos (Marchevsky, forthcoming). Part of the promise of Sides and Theoharis's bid to open up the history of Watts beyond the week of rioting is that it brings to light the efforts of these and other women activists.

Perhaps the most gaping hole in the record involves the other "shock troops" of the Watts riot, the LAPD officers who clashed with rioters, sometimes with a light finger on the trigger. Yet one could imagine a history of the Watts Rebellion, conceived in the mode of David Farber's *Chicago '68* (1988) or Frank Kusch's *Battleground Chicago* (2004), which would consider how the riot literally pitted insurgent black radicals and white working-class suburbanites at each other's throats. Journalists have been more interested than historians in detailing the evolution of Chief Parker's LAPD as a "paramilitary organization whose efficiency was its pride and discipline its obsession" – an organization so commanding and independent that Ed Davis declined to run for mayor in the 1970s because he felt he had more power as LAPD chief – but no historian has yet plumbed the worldview of LAPD street cops, much less the informers and counter-subversives who filled the ranks of its aggressive intelligence division. (Domanick 1994: 183, 196; Cannon 1999: 582). The cop archive would have to be assembled – from the LAPD's own files, from interviews with former officers, from the cop fiction of their poet-laureate Joseph Wambaugh, among others, and from the cop dramas of the 1950s and 1960s – but the promise would be a synthetic Watts history which took the LAPD's iron hand not as a given but as an enigma to be unraveled. In the process, we might arrive at a new sense of the interplay between suburbanization and urbanization in postwar Los Angeles, and the clash of ideologies involved.

"A day for all vendettas"

From the moment they erupted at the intersection of Florence and Normandie on April 29, 1992, the Rodney King riots were understood as Watts redux, and for good reason. Both events were sparked by the outrage surrounding a single arrest, and kindled by black Los Angeles' underlying sense that the LAPD acted like an occupying army in their neighborhoods. Rodney King was, like Marquette Frye, a young black man stopped for a traffic violation, whose arrest became a galling symbol of the use of excessive force. The LAPD helmed by Daryl Gates in 1992, like the LAPD helmed by William Parker in 1965, prided itself on its aggressive, high-tech methods and its independence from civilian control. Gates had been Parker's driver and had been groomed as his successor; under his leadership, the LAPD earned the prize for being, statistically, the most trigger-happy police

force in the nation, responsible for killing civilians at a rate more than double that of the next most lethal police force (Dunne 1991a, 1991b). Its "Operation Hammer," a series of street sweeps intended to eradicate gang activity around the crack cocaine trade, was notorious for indiscriminately rousting black and Latino youths in the lead-up to the riot. By the time the program shut down, almost half of black male Angelenos between the ages of 21 and 24 were listed as gang members (Davis 1992; Cannon 1999: 17–18). (Not coincidentally, the genre of gangsta rap emerged out of this milieu, taking the criminalization of black Angeleno youth as a given; Kelley 1994; Boyd 1996; Quinn 2005.)

Like the Watts riot, too, the Rodney King riots were triggered by a disillusioning series of failed attempts to press grievances through legitimate channels. Just as black Angelenos in the mid-1960s had encountered fierce backlash after trying to desegregate local schools and housing, so black Angelenos in the early-1990s were incensed by a set of jaw-dropping court rulings: Soon Ja Du, a Korean American grocer who shot black teenager Latasha Harlins in the back, was given a suspended sentence and placed on probation. More famously, the officers who had beaten Rodney King were deemed by a Simi Valley jury to have used "reasonable force" and declared innocent. In both cases, the video evidence seemingly had been so damning that the eventual verdicts came as a harsh surprise. Conservative doyen William F. Buckley wrote that "What alters the character of the episode is of course the presence of as many as seventeen other police officers who simply stood by as if they were official witnesses at an execution. There is an insensibility to the Los Angeles police that is difficult to understand and impossible to defend" (Dunne 1991a, 1991b). The verdicts, then, spoke to a manifestly unequal system of justice – one that incarcerated blacks and Latinos at accelerating rates, with harsh mandated sentences, but seemed to offer an escape clause to everyone else (Fukarai, Krooth, and Butler 1994).

Lastly, just as the Watts riot testified to the hollow promise of the "affluent society," the Rodney King riots were easily understood as a protest against twelve years of Reaganomics – "insurrections against an intolerable political-economic order" or a "referendum on redevelopment" (Davis 1992: 234; Pastor 2001: 260). "Who killed LA?" asked Mike Davis, and his answer was, in large part, "government." The riots of the 1960s had pressed for the expansion of the welfare state; the Rodney King riots responded to its evisceration. Under the Reagan administration, the federal government had slashed its aid budget for subsidized housing and job training by as much as 82 percent: the federal contribution to Los Angeles' municipal budget had plunged from 18 percent in 1977 to 2 percent in 1985 (Davis 1992: 249). Within Los Angeles itself, Mayor Tom Bradley's administration had concentrated on remaking the city as an economic hub of the Pacific Rim – plowing money into harbors, airports, and downtown

redevelopment – but had paid relatively little attention to South Los Angeles neighborhoods as they struggled with factory closings. In the early 1990s the rate of poverty in South Los Angeles surged to over 30 percent – double the overall city rate and higher than the rate during the Watts riot. More than 40 percent of South Central adults were listed by the 1990 Census as "not in the labor force" (Miles 1992; Anderson 1996: 357). The economic restructuring particularly disadvantaged young black men, struggling to compete with recently arrived low-skilled workers from Mexico and Central America: two-thirds of young black men between twenty-five and thirty-four with less than a high school education were unemployed in South Central (Williams 1993: 87). Meanwhile, middle-class black families had left South Central for blue-collar suburbs in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. One commentator judged this development "a long-term, quiet revolt with consequences far outweighing the city's outbreaks of violence in 1965 and 1992," since the exodus exacerbated the black poverty of South Central (Davis 1992: 254; Anderson 1996: 346).

Yet for all the parallels between the Watts and Rodney King riots, the divergences may be equally instructive, especially for those interested in tracking the contrasting struggles of the poor in 1965 and 1992, the impact of immigration on central cities, and the realignment of American politics in the interim. To start: the Rodney King riots are much more difficult to romanticize as an example of what historian Eric Hobsbawm has called "collective bargaining by violence" or what political theorist Harlan Hahn has called "street governance." Hahn goes so far as to describe the Rodney King uprising as participatory democracy in action: "Political sovereignty was brought down from the remote corridors of officialdom to throngs of ordinary people on the streets.... For the first time, persons who were active in the civic uprisings had an opportunity to become involved in a decision-making process that might enable them to shape their own destiny" (Hahn 1996: 81). But the "decision-making process" of the Rodney King riot left behind many victims and often operated according to a logic of racial scapegoating; the multipolar violence in the streets was quite different from the blacks-versus-LAPD struggle of the Watts riot, where twenty-six of the thirty-two deaths resulted from police shootings. Of the fifty-four people who died in the Rodney King riots, only six were killed by LAPD fire (Cannon 1999: 323).

Novelist-journalist Héctor Tobar more accurately describes the Rodney King uprising as "the municipal day of settling accounts, a day for all vendettas, private and public" (Tobar 1998: 283). If it was the "first multicultural riot," as the conventional wisdom suggests, it was also part of a long line of anti-immigrant vigilantism in California. Many blacks aimed to settle accounts not just with the LAPD and Korean-owned businesses in their neighborhood – as one might expect from the example of Watts – but also with their Latino neighbors and with the businesses these neighbors owned. George

Sánchez has argued that the Rodney King riots "were fundamentally an anti-immigrant spectacle": "Although the violence began as a response to a verdict passed by an almost all-white jury against an almost all-white set of police officers, quickly other people of color – those deemed foreign or foreign looking – were engaged in the deadly exchange" (Sánchez 1997: 1010–11). Of the over thirty individuals beaten at the intersection of Florence and Normandie, only two – both truckdrivers, including the well-known Reginald Denny – were white; the vast majority were Latino and Asian. While the television news coverage often toggled between the two chief victims of Los Angeles' racial melodrama – Rodney King, beaten by white cops, and Reginald Denny, beaten by black civilians – as if to call it a draw, there was little attention paid to the likes of Fidel Lopez, a self-employed construction worker whom a group of young black men punched and kicked into unconsciousness before spraypainting his chest and genitals black. "He's black now," said one of his assailants, underscoring the symbolic charge of this aspect of the riot (Cannon 1999: 307). Latinos suffered, too, in their role as inner-city entrepreneurs: state officials estimated that at least 30 percent of the businesses damaged in the riot were Latino owned (Miles 1992).

Although fewer scholars have scrutinized the black-Latino vector of the unrest, it's analytically useful to consider the Rodney King riots as two interrelated riots: the first, a "justice riot" that was a predominantly black response to the verdict and largely took the form of anti-immigrant looting and violence (though there *was* a to-the-death shootout between the LAPD and young black men at the Nickerson Gardens housing project); and the second, a "bread riot" that was the response of the immigrant and black poor to the LAPD's hapless engagement on the ground (Pastor 1995: 239; Cannon 1999: 337). Notably, the "justice riot" took root in the relatively prosperous Florence-Normandie tract, where unemployment rates were half, and home ownership rates double, the South Central average; but Florence-Normandie was also a "contact zone" where Latino immigrants were heavily displacing black residents (Pastor 1995: 247). From one angle, Florence-Normandie may have been "the most secure and affluent inner-city neighborhood ever to become the flashpoint of a riot," but from another it was ground zero in an undeclared struggle between well-established blacks and newer migrants for jobs that, during the early 1990s recession, were hard to find (Cannon 1999: 282). Two sociologists concluded, with a provocative flourish historians might probe, that the Rodney King uprising "better resembles the communal riots of the 1900–1920s than the riots of the 1960s.... When African Americans comprise the residential majority and face in-migrants themselves, they may become the initiators of backlash violence" (Bergesen and Herman 1998: 51–2). If anything, law enforcement colluded with this anti-immigrant backlash, arresting and deporting almost five hundred illegal aliens in the melee (Oliver, Johnson, and Farrell 1993: 122; Navarro 1994).

Latinos, however, were not simply victims of street violence, vandalism, or immigration roundups during the riot. In the "bread riot," many of the most hard-pressed Latinos – poor immigrants who had fled poverty or political terror in Mexico and Central America, settled in overcrowded apartments in South Central or Mid-City, and taken subminimum wage jobs to support their families – enthusiastically availed themselves of food, clothing, diapers, and other goods. Here, many immigrants from Central America drew upon their experiences growing up in war-torn countries. They viewed the riot as a crisis not unlike a raid by a government or rebel army in their home country, after which stores would close for weeks; civilians learned to take fragile advantage of the chaos. In all, over half of those arrested during the riot were Latino, and 80 percent of this group were foreign born. The riot revealed a gap between the Latino community of East Los Angeles, which had longer historic roots in the city and was untouched, and the newer immigrant enclaves like Pico-Union and Westlake (Cannon 1999: 337–8). In contrast to black-dominated neighborhoods, where socioeconomic status did not fully predict the extent of damage, in Latino neighborhoods it was the poor who were generally the most hard hit (Pastor 1995: 247).

Korean Americans were doubly hit in this double riot: targeted as predatory business owners during the "justice riot," their stores stripped of wares during the "bread riot." Several scholars have traced how, ironically in retrospect, the suffering of Korean Americans – the razing of their stores in South Central and Koreatown, coupled with the LAPD's lackluster response to their calls for assistance – seemed to link them, as minorities who had been refused the protection of the state, to the people looting their stores. Elaine Kim commented that the riots were "a baptism into what it really means for a Korean to become American in the 1990s," part of an "Asian American legacy of violent baptisms." (Abelmann and Lie 1995: 24). "Almost overnight," suggested Edward Park, a "politics of ethnic insularity" was discredited in the eyes of both businessmen and progressive activists in the Korean American community (Park 1996: 158). Yet the place of Korean Americans in the making of the riot is so complex that it has courted controversy: Korean American entrepreneurs seemed at once stolid representatives of the petit bourgeoisie, sympathetic examples of the working class (performing the "cheap labor of American capitalism"), victims of racial intolerance, and agents of racial discrimination (Cho 1993). At least one sociologist has condemned the "Asian American abandonment narrative" as a self-serving fiction and called for more investigation of the "material basis" of Korean-black and Korean-Latino antagonism (Nopper n.d. 105). The most promising scholarship, like Nancy Abelmann and John Lie's *Blue Dreams*, presents a nuanced account of the diversity of Korean American involvements in South Central and Koreatown, as well as an exploration of the role that Korean concepts like *hamyon toenda* ("if you try

you will succeed") played in Korean American self-understandings of the riots (Abelmann and Lie 1995: 13). In fact, *Blue Dreams* presents a model for how other historians – interested in, say, the Latino involvement in the uprising – might trace the transnational aspect of immigrant identities, as they were remade in the crucible of the riot.

Politics of Violence author David Sears responded to the shopworn description of the Rodney King upheaval as a "wake-up call" by riposting, "Well, maybe. Somebody keeps pressing the snooze button" (Sears 1994). Sears was right to be skeptical. Just after the riots, an astonishing 70 percent of Americans revealed to pollsters that they judged the problems of American cities to be "essentially insurmountable" (Gale 1996). The official response to the riot, Rebuild Los Angeles (later known as RLA), was a private organization that looked to corporate America to redevelop riot-damaged areas. Whereas the Watts riot had spurred federal agencies to grant more anti-poverty funds to Los Angeles than any other city, RLA was a proudly market-oriented solution to the economic crisis of South Central (Hahn 1996: 82). "RLA is not government, it is not laws, taxes, and courts," boasted RLA literature, adding, with a touch of grandiosity, that RLA represented "the only predominantly private-sector response to civic crisis in history" (Zilberg 2002: 192). Unfortunately, the private sector was not quite up to the job. RLA had hoped to attract and manage a $6 billion corporate investment in the inner-city, but instead devolved into a tiny non-profit organization that brought together businesses in self-help networks (Cannon 1999: 370, 586; Gottlieb et al. 2006: 178–83). When businesses did sprout in South Central Los Angeles over the next decade, they were often small businesses launched by Latino entrepreneurs rather than large-scale corporate enterprises – part of the ongoing "tropicalization" of the inner-city (Cannon 1999: 585–6; Davis 2001: 63–4).

The Rodney King riots did provoke an ironic realignment of Los Angeles politics, delegitimating the very mayoral regime that the Watts crisis had helped launch into power. Tom Bradley, elected by a black-Jewish-liberal coalition that lasted almost two decades, declined to run for another term, and was succeeded by Republican Richard Riordan, who peeled away enough Anglo voters with a law-and-order promise to expand the LAPD without raising taxes (Cannon 1999; Gottlieb et al. 2006). Riordan's law-and-order campaign underlined yet another ironic outcome of the riots: although the Rodney King *beating* cost Daryl Gates the approval of Anglo Angelenos, his base of support, the Rodney King *riots*, swept into office a tough-on-crime mayor who enlarged the LAPD and gave his support to anti-gang injunctions in areas like Pico-Union, formerly riot-torn and now the site of aggressive police surveillance (Zilberg 2002).

Yet the LAPD continued to be battered by a cascading series of scandals – first, the malfeasance of detective Mark Fuhrman in the O. J. Simpson case, then the discovery of widespread corruption within the Rampart

Division's anti-gang unit. When the Department of Justice investigated the LAPD it found a "pervasive pattern" of constitutional-rights violation, and forced a consent decree upon it, mandating an independent monitor to track compliance. The 2000 consent decree counts as one of the most impressive, if oblique, consequences of the Rodney King riots; arguably for the first time since 1923, when a city charter amendment made the job of Chief of Police a civil service position, protected from the influence of the mayor and city council, the LAPD was forced into an arrangement where it could no longer run itself with a free hand (Cannon 1999: 55; Boyer 2001). Scholars would do well to explore how the LAPD evolved under the pressure of the consent decree (currently renewed through 2009), a historically novel instrument of police reform since adopted in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and elsewhere. Progressive Angeleno activists, meanwhile, were perhaps the most consequential and organized group of people who refused to press the snooze button. At first, the riots had prompted many advocates of social and racial justice to fear "death by globalization": it seemed that international capital would continue searching for the cheapest labor possible, undercutting wages for those at the bottom, while a well-educated, high-income American elite would retreat to their suburban fortresses (Pastor 2001: 269). Moreover, the riots had exposed and exacerbated the disunity among non-Anglos in Los Angeles, and the "human relations" model for building interethnic alliances – with the premium it placed on empathy and mutual understanding, and with its reliance on elite dialogues – seemed too weak to dissipate the tension in the air (Pastor 2001: 269, 278; Chang and Diaz-Veizades 1999). Responding to this crisis, community and labor organizers began to rethink the possibilities of the terrain. A new labor-Latino-progressive coalition emerged out of a series of concrete campaigns focusing on the struggles of the working poor: an expansive living wage campaign, union drives among home healthcare workers and janitors, the fight for affordable public transportation spearheaded by the Bus Rider's Union, and more. Umbrella organizations like the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) challenged and redefined the term "new economy," which conventionally conjured up images of hi-tech workers telecommuting to work in a newly rootless world, insisting instead that the new Los Angeles economy be tied to community needs for decent-paying jobs and environment-friendly practices. (Pastor 2001: 278; Gottlieb et al. 2006). The election of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, a former labor organizer and community activist, has spurred many in this coalition to imagine Los Angeles as a "laborator[y] of progressive policy reform" – even (gasp!) a "livable city" for all its inhabitants (Gottlieb et al. 2006: xxiii). It remains to be seen how this progressive coalition, pieced together in the aftermath of the riots, will reshape the city now that it is no longer in the opposition, and whether its achievements will be exportable to cities across the US, but there are grounds for cautious optimism.

Why Isn't Los Angeles Burning?

Reversing the question usually posed by social scientists, urban historian Michael Katz (2007) has asked, "Why aren't US cities burning?" After all, young people in the inner-city continue to receive inadequate healthcare, attend underfunded schools, suffer police harassment, and languish in minimum wage jobs; income inequality has risen sharply since the mid-1960s, and the spatial concentration of poverty has only intensified. Katz's answer is threefold. First, a new "ecology of power" has allowed minorities to inherit city governments at a time of urban stress, while white flight has meant fewer boundary conflicts within cities themselves. Second, American power-brokers have learned to "manage marginalization" – to selectively incorporate a minority elite into public and quasi-public employment; to institute window-dressing reforms like the Rebuild Los Angeles organization; to depoliticize minority groups by speaking to them as consumers above all; and to militarize policing, so that many young blacks and Latinos have found themselves on a fast track to prison and disenfranchisement. Third, those in power have incorporated immigrants into the workforce and, more ambivalently, into the body politic, using the vulnerability of illegal immigrants to leverage social control.

Katz's provocative question is a useful pendant to any investigation of the Watts and Rodney King riots. His equally provocative set of answers focuses our attention on the price of civil peace, a price admittedly much harder to measure than the damage caused by rioting (though we might begin tallying the latter with the annual bill for incarcerating non-violent offenders). Like other American cities, Los Angeles has generally opted to contain rather than solve its profound issues of social and economic inequality, so it continues to live on the edge of another riot. When Villaraigosa first assembled his mayoral team, he asked everyone to watch *Crash* (2004), a film that follows a diverse ensemble of Angelenos as their ethnic and racial resentments move from a slow simmer to a rolling boil. Not long after the inauguration – certainly not long enough for Villaraigosa to savor the euphoria – the mayor received a report that Latino and black students were at each other's throats at a local high school, part of a rash of such incidents, and so rushed over to calm the situation (Gottlieb et al. 2006: xvii; Fabienke 2007). One imagines that Villaraigosa felt a chill – the shadow of the Watts and Rodney King riots hanging over the city – after what had promised to be a bright morning.

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Chapter Ten

Contemporary Voice: Here, Now, I

Angela Oh

For two years in the late 1990s, I served as one of seven advisors to President Bill Clinton's national Initiative on Race. As a native of Los Angeles and as someone who had experienced the full range of what it means to live in a multiracial and multiethnic society, this was, among other things, a highly personal chance to share lessons learned. In our collaborative effort to engage the public in a dialogue about the future of American race relations, I made the suggestion that the national conversation should include a conversation that took us well beyond the black/white paradigm. As an Angeleno, the suggestion of looking at what it means to be moving toward a society that is multiethnic and multiracial seemed sensible and self-evident to me; yet in the East and in the South, such a suggestion was viewed as extreme, and I can still recall the push back I received from the President. Was I suggesting that we no longer needed to think about the remnants of slavery? Was this a signal that the nation should abandon the idea that the black/white divide was the essential racial chasm in the United States? Was this a suggestion that history is unimportant? Was this what Los Angeles and Angelenos had to offer in the first, and historic, effort by a President to engage the public on the subject of race relations?

All of these questions were raised in response to the simple statement that we are a nation ready to look beyond the black/white framing of race relations. The suggestion was offered as a way to look to the future and to learn from what was happening in a place such as Los Angeles (and elsewhere in the nation), where the reality of multiracial, multiethnic, mixed-heritage, multilingual, intergenerational, immigrant issues already reside.

Yet the President was clear on his view: the legacy of slavery and the black/white divide is central to the concerns that Americans must carry forward in the examination of what race and racism have meant to society – and how they have affected and infected the development of the nation.

This view of the President did not, however, preclude the possibility that we might begin to examine our future as one that will inevitably evolve into a nation built on the spirit of democratic and pluralistic values at the core. Indeed, today, the inquiries about race and race relations embrace both: a continuation of the examination of the black/white divide, as well as the emergence of new work, both scholarly and popular, that reveals the treasures and contributions of communities that are neither black nor white.

To be sure, race and ethnic relations have been central in shaping Los Angeles and the multiplicity of communities residing there since its founding. Race and ethnicity will always be an issue – whether a tool to teach and enlighten, or one to play upon ignorance and distrust. And how they are used depends not on the "will" or even the "conscience" of the community, but rather upon the possibility for individuals to recognize the common humanity, through all of the indifference, scarcity of time, lack of resources, and daily frustrations of life in a mega-city.

In the spring of 1992, when the "not-guilty" verdicts were rendered in the state prosecution of four Los Angeles police officers videotaped beating Rodney King, Los Angeles erupted in a way that had been unprecedented on a national level. Between April 29 and May 1, 1992, the arson, vandalism, and looting that took place created a situation in which emergency response teams were confronted with the fact that their standard operating procedures and policies were woefully ill-prepared to meet a crisis that involved race, economic disparities, and frustration arising from perceived failures in the justice system. Variously referenced as "the uprising," "the civil disturbance," "the riot," or "the unrest" – the days that produced what has commonly been described as the worst civil disaster of the century brought the city of Los Angeles to the twin realization that the needs of the community had shifted in seismic proportion– and no one had been paying attention.

Early suggestions by news reporters intimated that declining relations between African Americans and Korean Americans were at the center of the reaction to the verdicts. The beating of Mr. King happened on March 3, 1991.

However, there was a subsequent case, less frequently recalled, that played a significant part in the events which led to the violent eruption in early 1992. That case involved the shooting death of a teenager, Latasha Harlins, in south Los Angeles. She died after being shot by Soon Ja Du in the family's store – the Empire Market – on March 16, 1991. Mrs. Du was a Korean immigrant. She was tried for murder in the death of Ms. Harlins.

Race was an issue.

The mainstream media focused on the beating of Mr. King. Yet the shooting death of this young teenager was even more devastating. The decision in the prosecution of Mrs. Du resulted in a verdict of "guilty" – but guilty of voluntary manslaughter, and not murder (which would have required

a showing of malice aforethought or premeditation). The subsequent sentencing outraged the public, as Mrs. Du was granted probation, under certain terms and conditions, but none of which required confinement. Her lawyer, Charles Lloyd, was African American. The judge presiding over the case was Caucasian.

Race was an issue.

The public's deep sense of bitterness about the sentence of probation did not translate into an outward manifestation of anger or mass protest. In large measure, this was because of the pending trial of the police officers in the Rodney King case. There was a willingness to wait – to see if the justice system would deliver convictions in a case where the evidence seemed indisputable: a videotaped beating of a downed man in handcuffs. The man on the ground was African American. The officers on trial were Caucasian.

Race was an issue.

What would happen? You could almost hear the people of Los Angeles holding their collective breath; you certainly could feel it. Once the acquittals were announced in the police officers' case in April 1992, the fertile ground of resentment, sadness, and sense of hopelessness provided the impetus for four days of terrifying havoc. In the end, over 2,000 Korean-owned businesses were destroyed, and the estimated damage to property across the city and into Los Angeles County approached one billion dollars. The torrent of reaction and action clearly targeted Koreans – no other ethnic group was singled out in the same way. Perceived as having encroached upon and exploited the poor people of the inner-city, Korean immigrant "merchants" were regularly vilified in news stories that suggested greed and rudeness were a part of the Korean culture. The area known as Koreatown became a destination for those bent on making a statement by taking to the streets, looking for – and finding – trouble.

Let's step back. Rarely were there journalistic stories about the discrimination faced by immigrants seeking to find a way to help their families survive in a society unfamiliar and often hostile to their efforts to stabilize themselves. Never did reporters focus on the true stories of Koreans who owned stores in poor neighborhoods and regularly extended credit to families that could not afford to pay until a later date, or made home deliveries to customers who were ill, or provided giveaways to children who did not have the money for a soda or treat after school. Family owned businesses that tried to make friends in the neighborhood, sponsored local sport teams, or offered after school tutoring inside the store were not part of the media image of Koreans. On the contrary, such instances of kindness and accommodation were of little interest to the local news before April 1992; certainly, such stories did not emerge after. Instead, sensational images of immigrants dressed in army fatigues, armed with rifles on rooftops or semi-automatics in their stores, were a regular part of the nightly news for weeks to follow.

Race was an issue. As were ethnicity, economics, and stereotypes.

The efforts to understand what had occurred (and might again occur) in Los Angeles created a laboratory environment. We'd seen this before in Los Angeles, in the aftermath of the Watts riot of 1965. Not only were government efforts (local, state, and federal) focused on the city and region in an attempt to rebuild and reconnect what had been fractured, but scholars, filmmakers, artists, and philanthropists converged in Los Angeles from all over the country to begin to put together the pieces of an intricate puzzle that might help to explain the events that followed the Rodney King decision. Many enhanced their academic and media credentials on the tragedies that befell the city. Students built graduate degrees atop endless inquiries about what had happened in Los Angeles. Others came to or spoke out about the city because of their fascination, appreciation, or curiosity about its rich racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural heritage. Some asked how something like this could happen, others insisted that they knew something like this *would* happen. All were interested, in greater and lesser ways, in race, race relations, and the myriad intersections between race, economics, and politics. And in the midst of all of these inquiries, the vastness of the diversity, complexity, and possibilities continued to be revealed in Los Angeles. Interesting, important questions became paramount in public discussion. Who would next lead the city? Who would next lead the police department? Who would remain and invest in the community?

Diversity in all its facets was found in Los Angeles, right where it had always been.

The conditions that led to the events of April 1992 were multi-layered and involved not only race and ethnic tensions, but other tensions as well: a faltering, segmented economy; enduring conflicts between police and community; demographic changes affecting access to housing, schools, and jobs; a deep and universal lack of experience with intergroup differences across the region; and media coverage that relied too often on superficial, stereotypic portrayals of communities that had complicated and long histories.

In the midst of the larger conflict in the city, a somewhat surprising realization came to light: generational differences played an important role in the conflicts so glaringly played out in the "unrest" and its aftermath. This lesson around generational differences highlighted the way in which immigrant families process "generation" gaps. For example, reference to the "1.5" generation, versus the first generation and the second generation, became the centerpiece for education within the ethnic community as to why there were differing points of view on what it means to "heal" after an event such as Sa-I-Gu (literally translated 4–29, in reference to the post-verdict violence). Through the public educational process, self-reflection about why the Korean community was not prepared to face the possibility of being blamed for the failure of the justice system, how the community was perceived by non-Koreans, and how to prioritize the action and steps

needed to begin successful recovering and rebuilding – all became subjects for deeper inquiries by academics, artists, writers, and others. This framework, juxtaposed with the idea that "generation" gap is an age-reference, created a bridge that revealed the differences in how American society and how immigrant families understand the term "generation gap."

Race and immigration status were at issue.

Studies of multiracial identities began to recognize that the diversity of a population has the latent ability to create a new consciousness about how race or ethnicity can shape communities, organizations, and relations among "family." The debates about whether a "multiracial" census category was a positive step toward how Americans count and categorize themselves seemed to rise out of post-1992 Los Angeles. That debate, for the new vocal population of "multiracial" or "biracial" advocates, resulted in a census category that allowed individuals to check a box that meant, to many, finally being recognized in the appropriate racial category. But for many in the African American, Hispanic, Asian American communities (as in others), new census categories brought anxiety about their own status. What did this mean for their future, knowing that government decisions about voting districts, appropriation of public dollars, and even organizing for civic and political engagement relied so heavily on maximizing numbers in racial and ethnic population counts?

Multiracial status was an issue.

We'd be foolish to assume that Los Angeles is or has been unique in this regard. On the contrary, the lessons that came from Los Angeles, the good and the less good, have been experienced in other parts of the nation – in places like Texas, Washington, Georgia, Maryland, Colorado, Florida, New York, and many other states where the multi-faceted nature of race relations is creating new challenges for politics, the economy, and local culture. How each area encounters its race relations questions is in some ways unique to that community, but nonetheless has features in common with every other place where diversity of the population begins to grow.

The common features include tensions, insecurity, ignorance, and fear. There is always a reaction based on numbers – and the rate at which a community begins to change. There is always an essential tension between African Americans and newcomers that raises questions about strangers, or foreigners, who both give and take from the community that was there before. There are demands for attention to problems that fester when there is a lack of affordable housing, when public schools are forsaken, and when jobs are scarce. Local leaders must search for solutions that address both the public policy needs in conjunction with the need to uphold a spirit that believes that obstacles can be overcome, and that it is possible and desirable to reach across the natural divides that appear.

Does post-1992 Los Angeles show that things can be different because the elected leadership is diverse? Are the conditions in people's lives a

change for the better, and a result of the fact that representational diversity is more accepted and better established? Is Los Angeles a place where the diversity of the population has been able to produce more meaningful relations between those who share this place as home? Or, has the city become even more segregated as diversity increases – allowing people to live lives separate and apart from "the others?" Has increasing the diversity of the judiciary, by appointing and electing more women and minorities to the bench, increased confidence in our justice system? Or, does the public still view the justice system as one that falls short? Has the business sector delivered on its promise to bring 50,000–90,000 jobs to Los Angeles during the rebuilding of the city? Or, has that estimate given by Rebuild Los Angeles in 1992 turned into a pipe dream? Do people in Los Angeles feel they "can all get along?"

Experiences have shown that race relations ebb and flow. There are periods of expansion and periods of contraction. The expansive periods – those times in which people are willing to grasp the possibilities of stretching the boundaries – tend to come when economic times are healthy. The contracting periods are when jobs are not easily found and security is fragile.

It happens that at the time of this writing, I fear that we are in a contracting period. As I look at race relations in Los Angeles today – in my work, in my life, and for this essay – I see anxiety and sadness. On some very important level, there has been success in that those born after 1985 (the so-called Millennial Generation) are more open to building friendships with people who come from different racial or ethnic backgrounds. They are ready to do the work of looking more deeply into who the person is, beyond the physical packaging. But the elders are often reluctant, and still hold back.

For me, race relations is essentially an issue that can most effectively be answered one person at a time. To see the common humanity comes through a lifetime of encounters. Yes, institutional racism and biases exist. Dismantling the barriers is the work of politicians, administrators, and holders of resources (whether in the form of dollars, jobs, or opportunities). But they, like us, are also individuals. So, in its simplest form, to build better race relations is best accomplished by building better human beings.

And this work happens one by one.

Part III

Politics and Economies

Chapter Eleven

Ab urbis condita: Regional Regimes since 13,000 Before Present

Philip J. Ethington

Introduction

Los Angeles is a very old work-in-progress, retaining the shapes of power inscribed by generations since the first human settlements of the late Pleistocene Era. I begin with the first Angelenos to identify those features of rulership that can be recognized in later epochs. My goal is to explain why Los Angeles became a global city and identify the political-cultural forms of its rulership. Those are traced as they spread through time and space. This method divides the region's history into nine "regional regimes" (see table 11.1).

The location "Los Angeles, California" (centered at 34° 3′ N. Latitude, 118° 14′ W. Longitude) can be variously defined. As terrestrial topography, the Los Angeles Basin is the best definition. Bounded by the San Gabriel Mountains to the north and the Santa Ana Mountains to the southeast, interrupted by the Santa Monica and Puente ranges, the basin is centered on the Los Angeles River and communicates naturally with the San Fernando, San Gabriel, and San Bernardino Valleys. These valleys are ancient alluvial plains. The principal rivers carrying runoff during the rainy season of this Mediterranean climate are the Los Angeles, San Gabriel, Rio Hondo, and Santa Ana.[1]

Across an immense antiquity, fearsome creatures inhabited these plains, cañons, and mountains. The arrival of *Homo sapiens* marked the end of the Pleistocene, a continuous period of floral and faunal families that had endured for 1.8 million years. Megafauna, or "giant animals," thrive only in resource-rich ecoregions. For hundreds of thousands of years, mammoths, mastodonts, saber-toothed cats, giant lions, glyptodons, ground sloths, and short-faced bears, to name only the major genera, thrived here. Many smaller species, such as American camels, American horses, and dire

Table 11.1 The regional regimes of Los Angeles, 13,000–present.

Regional regime	*Date range*	*Description*
1	~13,000 calendar years Before Present (BP)	Clovis conquest: first peoples and megafaunal extinction
	~13,000 to ~10,200 BP	Post-extinction transition
2	~10,200 BP to 1 Common Era (CE)	Archaic or Millingstone people
3	1 CE to 1769	Uto-Aztecan
4	1769–1822	Spanish Franciscan theocracy
5	1822–1848	Mexican latifundia
6	1848–1881	US latifundia-mercantile
7	1881–1940	US industrial-imperial/ porfirian borderland
8	1940–1992	US global military-industrial
9	1992–present	US/global networked neoliberal

Plate 11.1 Saber-tooth cat skull, La Brea Tar Pits. Catalogue # 2001–1, Pit 61, D 11, 14 1/2′. Photograph May 1916 by Luther E. Wyman. Courtesy of the George C. Page Museum, Los Angeles.

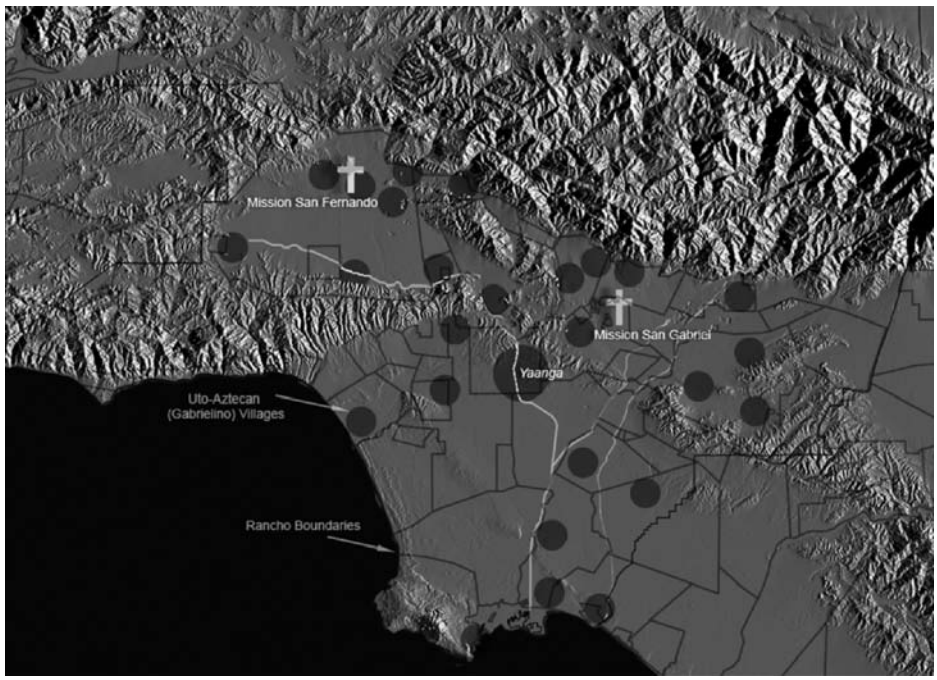
wolves, also evolved in this rich ecosystem. All perished at the end of the Clovis period.

The Los Angeles Basin has proven remarkably rich as an exploitable ecosystem. Such fecund abundance characterized the landscape for millions of years, since the late Tertiary period. On the surface, jungles, forests, and countless generations of creatures thrived and perished. Crushed beneath later sediments, forest and animal biomass accumulated into vast subterranean lakes of crude petroleum oil.

This same abundance attracted the predatory and nomadic Clovis hunters (ca. 13,200 years BP), who cleared the landscape of its giant animals and thereby opened the land to permanent human settlement. The Clovis era was followed by a long, 10,000-year settlement by the sedentary Millingstone people. The Millingstone people were finally pushed aside by the Uto-Aztecans during the time of the Han dynasty and the Roman empire. With their arrival, the now-legible inscription of social institutions into the landscape began.

This long regional past produced many stories (most forever lost). My story is a narrative of inscription and mentorship; of the durable attachment of human institutions to the terrestrial landscape; of generations that entered this institutional landscape; of how they shaped it, and how they were in turn shaped by it. Every new ruling cadre assumed command, not merely of people and location, but of the preexisting rules of production and exchange; of the norms of command and obedience; of standards of justice, and other human bonds. The thickness and endurance of these institutional ways of life are precisely what I mean by "region" and "place." To enter the Los Angeles Basin in any given calendar year was to enter a network of power relations. Every person and material object was already spoken for.

My emphasis in this chapter will be on the transmission of political-economic culture from earlier to later regimes, through a process of mentorship that linked many generations of Los Angeles leaders: *gabrielino*, *hispano*, *mexicano*, *californio*, and *estadounidense*. The abiding influence of the Uto-Aztecan, Spanish, and Mexican periods on the US regimes has been significantly underestimated by most scholars, who have likewise underestimated the shaping influence of the larger-scale regional context: the Spanish Borderland location of Los Angeles. During the seventh (1881–1940) and eighth (1941–92) regional regimes, Los Angeles became a global metropolis, and it did so by carrying forward the social institutions of previous regimes. The sections of this chapter narrating those more recent developments chart the rise and decline of a durable ruling oligarchy, the Otis-Chandler dynasty. The global growth ambitions of that dynasty were successful but also fraught with grave injustices that remained inscribed, haunting the landscape, exploding periodically in conflict.



Map 11.1 Los Angeles County during regional regimes 1 through 5 (to 1848). Cartography © 2009 Philip J. Ethington.

Regime 1: Clovis Conquest: First Peoples and Megafaunal Extinction ~13,000 Calendar Years BP

The earliest evidence of human beings in this region, at the Arlington Springs site on Santa Rosa Island (indicating a seaborne arrival), dates from 13.1 to 13 thousand calendar years BP, contemporaneous with the Clovis culture that is now firmly dated from 13.2 to 12.8 thousand calendar years BP. Producing fine fluted stone blades for spears, knives, scrapers, and other tools, the Clovis people were nomadic hunters of megafauna, ranging in size from deer and camels to the very large mastodonts, mammoths, archaic bison, and giant ground sloths that once roamed North America. Research concludes that these people migrated down the Pacific Coast from the Beringian Land Bridge and spread rapidly across the continent. While the Clovis people were almost certainly not the first human settlers of North America – evidence shows that an earlier migration had occurred at least 1,000 years prior to their arrival – their importance lies in the durable role they played in reshaping the ecology. They did not just touch the ground first; they were the first human *rulers* of Los Angeles to establish themselves at the top of the food chain (Waters and Stafford 2007; Goebel, Waters, and O'Rourke 2008; Gilbert et al. 2008).

The Clovis people wrested control of the Los Angeles Basin from its non-human rulers: fearsome American lions (*Panthera leo atrox*) and saber-toothed cats (*Smilodon californicus*). While the Clovis people would have had few material reasons to hunt *Smilodon* (other than for honor or status), they competed with them and with packs of dire wolves for the megafaunal herbivores. In the most primitive sense, the first regime of the Los Angeles Basin was a violent struggle for control of a resource-rich environment. The very giantism of the mammoths, mastodons, giant sloths, and *Bison antiquus* is evidence, in the form of biomass, of "capital accumulation." Columbian Mammoths (*Mammuthus columbi*), weighing up to 10 metric tons and eating as much as 500 pounds of vegetation per day, were only one of several large mammals supported by this ecosystem. These behemoths, in turn, provided volumes of protein for both human and non-human predators.

But the Clovis people were all too successful. During their relatively short occupation of North America, fully 33 species of megafauna became extinct precisely at the end of their era in the archeological record. Debate continues over the relative role of climatic versus human agency in this catastrophic extinction, but the weight of evidence for North America is that mammoth-hunting humans pushed, at the very least, a stressed population of megafauna over the edge of eternal doom. The extinction of saber-toothed cats, the American lions, and dire wolves necessarily followed that of their primary food sources. The entire Pleistocene world collapsed in a terrestrial instant (Grayson and Alroy 2001; Brook and Bowman 2002; Haynes 2002; Barnosky et al. 2004; Jones and Porcasi et al. 2008).

Transitional Period: Post-Extinction Recovery, ~13,000 BP to ~10,200 BP

About a few thousand years elapsed between the disappearance of both Clovis and the megafauna, around 12.9 thousand calendar years ago, and the next durable human occupation about 10.2 thousand calendar years ago. Most probably a period of scarcity, it is likely that the region was not fit for large animals for a considerable period of time. Mass extinctions are catastrophic events, implying widespread ecosystem imbalance. This transitional period is therefore not given a regional regime number: in all likelihood it was not ruled at all.

Regime 2: Archaic or Millingstone Era, ~10,200 BP to 1 CE

After about 10,200 calendar years Before Present, a culture complex known as Archaic or the Millingstone people comes clearly into view and appears to have persisted for about ten millennia, with a very important alteration

in economic culture evident in the record occurring about 5,000 years ago. The gift of the Clovis people to the Millingstone people was to have cleared the terrain of giant animals, making possible their sedentary way of life. The Millingstone people are so-called because of the many *metates* – flat grinding stones – and the matching *manos*, or hand stones, discovered from this long period. The "Early Millingstone" culture seems to have engaged in broad consumption of diverse grains and animal foods, both aquatic and terrestrial, using primarily flat, all-purpose *metates*. But around 5,000 years Before Present, the record shows the sudden appearance of mortars and pestles (a more refined grinding apparatus), and a shift to more sedentary, acorn-based, intensive subsistence, alongside continued hunting and fishing. This shift has been associated with increased social hierarchies and gender division of labor, with women and girls specialized in food processing and men specializing in hunting. Too little is known about the cause of this pronounced shift in the local economy to speculate on its causes, but at present there is no evidence to suggest that a new population had conquered the region. Instead, there is evidence of climate shifts that would have led to practical changes among the resident population (Wallace 1955; Basgall 1987; Erlandson 1994; Jones 1996).

Preserved in petroleum tar on Wilshire Boulevard is the skull of "La Brea Woman," the earliest human remains found within the Los Angeles Basin, dated to about 9 thousand years Before Present. A *metate*, the central productive tool of the early Millingstone people, was found nearby. La Brea Woman died from a violent blow to the head, a sobering reminder that sedentary people were not necessarily peaceful. The findings of archeologist Mark Raab and his colleagues have made it clear that, throughout the long Millingstone period, while food supplies of Southern California often were abundant, there were also long periods of draught and famine, likely leading to periods of intense violence (Raab 2004, 2005).

Regime 3: Uto-Aztecan Era, 1 CE to 1769

At about the beginning of the Common Era (1 CE), the Uto-Aztecan-speaking ancestors of the indigenous "Gabrielinos" began their invasion of the Los Angeles Basin. As the name of their linguistic family indicates, the Nahuatl-speaking Aztecs were descendants of common ancestors originating in the Borderlands between present-day Mexico and the United States. The Uto-Aztecan family includes the Shoshone of the Great Basin, the Comanche of the southern Great Plains, and Paiutes, Yuma, Papago, Hopi, and, in present-day Mexico, the Yaqui, Tepehuan, Huichol, and Nahuan (Aztecs). Linguistic evidence indicates that the Uto-Aztecans came westward from the Great Basin and may have arrived in several waves, beginning as early as 1,000 before the Common Era (BCE), to as late as around

700 CE. I have chosen year 1 of the Common Era as the beginning date of their reign because it conveniently compares with Western calendars and happens to be the best point of agreement across existing scholarship (Kroeber 1925; Koerper 1979; Hinton 1991; McCawley 1996).

The Uto-Aztecans were the people we now call "Gabrielinos," or Tong-va, as most members of this Native American group prefer to be called at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Until 1769, their names for themselves were less encompassing, perhaps as various as the names of their villages (McCawley 1996: 9–10). To their northwest were the people we call Chumash, a Hokan-speaking people, whose territory extended south to Topanga Canyon (*Topaa'nga*) in present-day Malibu (*Maliwu*). North, east, and south of the Gabrielinos were other Uto-Aztecans: these were the Tataviam, Serrano, Cahuilla, and Luiseño. South of the Luiseño were Yuman-speaking people such as the Diegeño. Yuman, like Chumash, is also a Hokan language, so one strong possibility is that the original Uto-Aztecan invaders split and displaced a Hokan-speaking Millingstone people northward and southward as they pushed their way in gradual westward conquest to the sea. Scholars are not united on this, however, and another possibility is that both the Hokans and the Uto-Aztecans displaced or subsumed an earlier, now extinct language group, who might have been the Millingstone people (Hinton 1991; Poser 1995)

Because they ruled the Los Angeles Basin, we focus here on the Gabrielinos – so named because they came under the authority of the Franciscan Mission San Gabriel after the Spanish conquest of 1769–81. The approximate Gabrielino population circa 1770 was 5,000, distributed across approximately fifty permanent villages, or what Alfred Kroeber called "tribelets," a characteristic sociospatial organization throughout much of California (McCawley 1996: 25). Ranging in size from 50 to 150 persons, these tribelets were dominated by a politico-religious headman of aristocratic lineage called a *tomyaar*, a patrilineal hereditary office. As McCawley observes, "the Gabrielino lineage was capable of being split and reorganized, and this 'segmented' lineage organization served as an important mechanism of territorial expansion" (p. 25), which may also describe the process by which the Uto-Aztecans muscled their way into the Los Angeles Basin.

The office of the *tomyaar* reveals the dynamics of the larger society. The *tomyaar* served as "chief administrator, fiscal officer, religious leader, legal arbitrator, and commander-in-chief." Upon assuming office the *tomyaar* took the name of the village community itself. Such was the corporate identity within these miniature urban settlements (McCawley 1996: 90–1). The Gabrielino mode of production was a complex mix of hunting, fishing, and gathering. Food, luxury goods and money – in the form of shell strings – were traded between village communities via a gift economy with extensive circuits that knitted together a wide region beyond the boundaries of the Gabrielino territories and inclusive of the Channel Islands. Among the

tomyaar's most important jobs was to "maintain the food stores from which the poor would be fed, and mismanagement of these reserves was a serious offense that might be punished by death". The *tomyaar* sat atop a stratified society: aristocracy at the top, a middle class below it, and a stratum of slaves and outcasts at the bottom. Despite their collective social bonds, the Gabrielino were intensely proprietary, and the aristocracy reproduced its position through constant accumulation of capital from gifts or payments for religious and medical services, which "released them from much of the burden of food-gathering activities." (McCawley 1996: 90–1). Because this wealth was heritable and marriage was apparently restricted to one's own caste, the Gabrielino aristocracy was self-perpetuating. It also served to bind village communities together through elite endogamous marriages. Sovereignty over the broad Los Angeles Basin was achieved by a network of alliances among people with shared language and culture.

As McCawley and others have observed, an intricate network of allegiances, including trade, marriage, and religious observance, minimized conflict between villages. Important in this respect is the overlay of a shamanic religious society that transcended Gabrielino society and was shared by Chumash and other cultures.

What distinguished a "commoner" was precisely his lack of qualification for high office and the lack of inherited wealth that flowed from those offices. Commoners had to work for a living and abide being ruled by social superiors. But they too could exploit others: slaves. The practice of slavery was a consequence of both economy and warfare. Social relations were mediated by gift exchanges, including invitations to festivals. Failure to reciprocate gifts was a major afront, leading to warfare if *tomyaars*, who served as mediators in disputes, failed to conciliate offended parties. In battle, fallen warriors were beheaded. The dead warrior's wife and children (who would have watched, because they served on the battlefield as arrow-collectors) were then taken as slaves. Given the large population of slaves at the time of contact, we can only surmise that war was a fairly common experience (McCawley 1996: 103–9).

By the time the Spanish arrived in 1769, the Gabrielino had long ago established settlements in the valleys and the best locations on the coast. Spanish and Mexican settlements were thus overlays on those of the Gabrielino.

Regime 4: Spanish Franciscan Theocracy, 1769–1822

Spanish invaders of the fourth regional regime brought a social and political culture that closely resembled indigeneous Uto-Aztecans, but the conquering Spanish avowed a radical difference and superiority to the people they came to rule in the years after 1769. Perhaps the similarities between

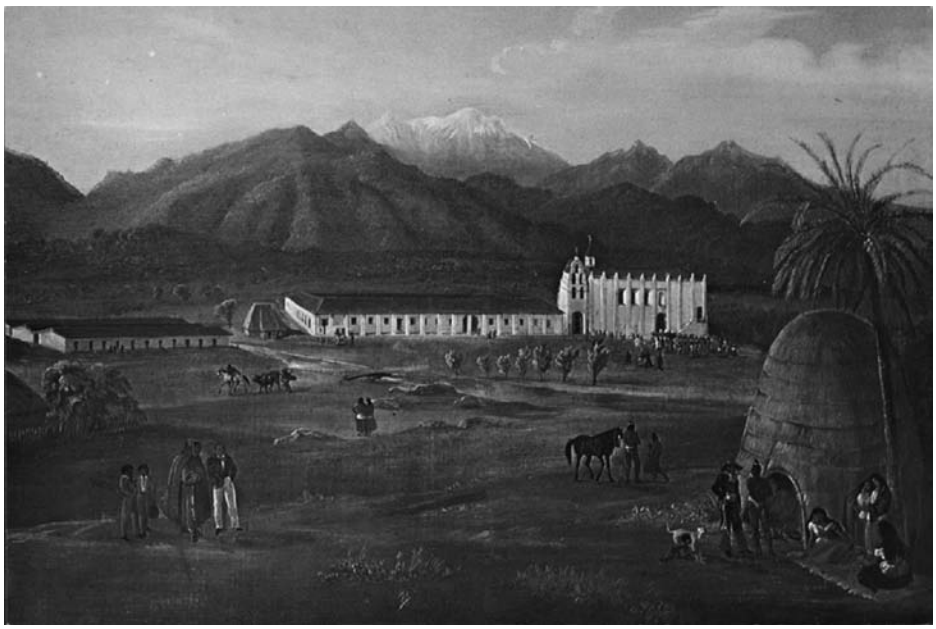


Plate 11.2 Misión San Gabriel Arcángel, by Ferdinand Deppe, 1832. Oil on canvas. Original in Santa Barbara Mission Library. Photograph of painting by Max Bruensteiner, n.d. Courtesy of University of Southern California, on behalf of the USC Special Collections.

two aristocratic, warlike and slaveholding people prompted the Spanish all the more to their conceit, believing themselves as bringers not only of civilization but also spiritual salvation to the Uto-Aztecans. Given the powerful leadership of the Franciscan order, another strong similarity was the highly theocratic nature of their polities.

The Spanish Catholic Colonial regime is a marvel of tragic contradictions.[2] The Spain of Carlos III de Borbón, at the fateful moment of 1769, was still waging the global war with Britain that had consumed more than a million lives in the Seven Years War (1756–63), that sparked the American War for Independence, and drew Spain into close alliance with France. From the perspective of the colonizers, the central conflict of the day was between Catholic and Protestant empires, and this Latin/Anglo opposition was among the first European institutions inscribed on the landscape of Los Angeles. Generations since that day have reproduced enemy stories about the other cultural system as barbaric, evil, backward, and so on. By contrast, the Uto-Aztecans were highly tolerant spiritually, as evidenced by the shared shamanic orders that crossed Hokan-Aztecan cultural boundaries. They were in some ways bystanders caught between these two violent, spiritually intolerant cultures, but they were by no means innocent – as we have already seen – and their leaders at first collaborated with the new rulers.

The version of Spanish colonization imposed on Alta California by order of Carlos III, under the direction of Gubernador Felipe de Neve in the "Sacred Expedition" of that year, was remarkably theocratic. In the many thousands of Latin American places under Spanish rule, the balance between civil, military, and clerical rule varied widely. As the ironic result of the Bourbon king's reformist policies, the missions founded by the Franciscan order acquired the upper hand of power over both military and civil authorities. Carlos III had just expelled the Jesuits from that vast empire, and put the mendicant order founded by the gentle St. Francis in their place. Continuing the long strategy of the Church and Crown, native peoples were deemed "neophytes," or children in need of a probationary period of instruction until their souls matured sufficiently to understand Spanish, "civilization," and the Word of God. In an idealistic sense, the plan was humane as far as conquests go.

In theory, Uto-Aztecans would have graduated in about ten years and acquired access to Spanish citizenship, rights, and dignity. But in practice, the Franciscans – like the Spanish in general – fell far short of these goals. Succumbing to the temptation of material interests, they never graduated their charges to European, Catholic adulthood, leaving them in a state of peonage that has long disgraced the reputation of the Franciscan order and the Roman Catholic Church more generally. Worse, these California missions rapidly became death-traps, killing the Uto-Aztecans in their moment of greatest vulnerability. The hapless Franciscans presided over a genuine holocaust, a tragic genocide that marks the first great crime against humanity known to the history of this region. "They offered the promise of individual and community salvation," Steven Hackel writes of the missions, "but they destroyed nearly all of those they intended to save" (Hackel 2005: 97).

When the Spanish began offering payment for work on the new presidios, missions, and pueblos, it was the *tomyaar* who made the initial, fateful decisions, leading his people into a spiral of dependency on Spanish institutions. The Spanish form of rulership hinged on the institution of the *cabildo*, or council of *vecinos* (property-holding male heads of household). Throughout the Spanish American empire, the (nominally elected) *cabildo* had a theoretical uniformity: it was to represent every municipality (*ayuntamiento*) to the Spanish Crown, and supervise implementing and enforcing the edicts of Church and Crown. Officers of this *cabildo*, typically the *alcalde* (approximately the "mayor"), performed many of the same duties as the *tomyaar*, so it is most likely that they were – especially in the 1770s and 1780s, before the Spanish could cultivate their own leaders – often in fact the same person.

As Hackel has persuasively argued, the Franciscan missions set in motion two "revolutions": ecological change and demographic collapse. The basic dynamic began with the initial dependence of Spanish Alta California

settlements on inadequate supply ships sailing from San Blas in Baja California. Settlers, reluctant or refusing to put their own hands to the jobs of building missions and cultivating fields, began drawing the Gabrielinos into labor relations, trading food for services. Gabrielino villages first performed this work casually, splitting their time between work for hire and their own hunting-gathering pursuits, such as fishing and acorn-gathering. In fact, the Franciscans encouraged the Gabrielinos to practice traditional lifeways when the food supply produced by the missions was insufficient (Hackel 2005: 65–123). Within a few years, however, Franciscans learned to make the irrigated California soil produce in abundance. The introduction of European livestock was particularly successful. By 1819 the Mission San Fernando grazed 12,800 head of cattle across the San Fernando Valley, and the Mission San Gabriel herded almost 13,000 cattle (plus another 4,443 "cattle loaned to various individuals"), 2,938 horses, and 6,548 sheep. The Gabrielinos under the authority of that mission cultivated 163,578 grape vines, 2,333 fruit trees, and applied their hands to looms and other craft industries (Monroy 1990: 66–7). Yet the impact of the European grazing animals was enormous, wrecking the ecosystems that the Gabrielinos depended upon. By the end of the eighteenth century, Uto-Aztecans had very little choice but to join the nearest mission. The second revolution in Hackel's account was that of demographic collapse driven by infectious disease and a general health and sanitation decline in the missions. The numbers are staggering. Overall, Douglas Monroy reports, "the mission annals from 1769 to 1834 record about 79,000 baptisms, 62,600 deaths, and only 29,100 births" (1990: 79). Despairing, many neophytes escaped, only to be recaptured by soldiers. Upon interrogation, "Indians presented a litany of grief arising out of the dislocation and disorientation that accompanied the high mortality, plunging fertility, and fraying of family and kinship networks in the missions." One recaptured neophyte, Tiburcio Ombusa, "explained that after his wife and daughter died, because he was crying, on five separate occasions Father Dantí ordered him whipped, for these reasons he fled" (Hackel 2005: 123). Apparently, gentle fathers who subjected their own bodies to *la disciplina* (short whip with steel teeth for self-flaggelation) had little restraint in applying the whip to their spiritual children. As one of many scholars documenting Franciscan violence summarizes, "the padres employed a variety of coercive measures, including solitary confinement, whippings, stocks, and leg chains, to punish neophytes for infractions against the work schedule and moral code" (Lightfoot 2005: 60).

The enormous productivity of the missions created a new form of dependency: that of the civil and military authorities and *pobladores* (civilian householders) on the labor of the Gabrielinos. *Gobernantes*, *soldados*, and *pobladores* alike rented Gabrielino labor from the missions, or hired "gentile" (not mission-bound) Uto-Aztecans directly. The *padres* grew increasingly

proud of their economic accomplishments, reporting productive success even as their human charges were dying in alarming numbers. The *gobernantes*, dependent upon mission productivity, were practically at the mercy of the Father-President. Governor Diego de Borica could only express "pity and compassion" at "what those sad and unfortunate Indians have suffered" (Weber 2005: 124), as he planned another year of buying meat, flour, blankets, and leather goods from the mission labor camps, and of hiring Gabrielinos from those *padres* for the services his men required.

Regime 5: Mexican Latifundia, 1822–1848

Mexican Independence, reaching Alta California by 1822, toppled the Franciscans from their seat at the apex of Los Angeles rulership. Every Los Angeles regime transition has been Janus-faced, so the new rulers climbed into the saddle emptied by the Franciscan fathers. But this transition, as with Spanish and Mexican society in general, looked back farther still in time, to the Roman empire. The Roman conquest of Europe, especially in southern Spain, proceeded by converting vanquished territories into *latifundia* (great farms) and the conquered peoples into slaves. Carlos I continued this Roman practice by establishing *haciendas* in Mexico in the 1520s, which remained the preferred form of agrarian production during the late eighteenth century and practiced, as we have seen, by the Franciscans.

It is time now to introduce *los rancheros*. Following Roman custom, Gobernante Pedro Fages granted in 1784 a large *hacienda* to Juan José Dominguez, aged 65, providing him the right to build a home, graze cattle, and employ gentile Uto-Aztecans and neophyte Gabrielinos on that land. This grant – the first Rancho in California – encompassing present-day Palos Verdes and the harbor, was technically a "usufruct" (usage) right, but in effect it was a grant of heritable private property. The lands were held and subdivided by Dominguez's heirs for the next two generations. Two other retiring military officers, Jose Maria Verdugo and Manuel Nieto, petitioned for and received similar grants, of Rancho San Rafael (present-day Burbank and Glendale) and the sprawling "Los Nietos," between Santa Ana and San Diego. This model spread rapidly, until a new landed aristocracy was briefly and (literally) *founded*, in estates that empowered them (Robinson 1939: 9–13).

The principal issue before the new rulers was the proposed "secularization" of the missions. The Franciscan missions, central to the political economy prior to 1822, were the principal stake of power in the years thereafter, leading to nearly all of the political instability among secular *Californio* grandees. All told, there were about five hundred rancho land grants in

California during the entire Spanish and Mexican periods. The vast majority (all but twenty) were made after secularization in 1834. In Los Angeles County, most of the valuable non-mission territory had been granted during the Spanish period.

From the time of Mexican independence until the beginning of the war with the United States in 1846, the ruling ranchero class in Los Angeles amounted to only a handful of families, the most prominent names being Nieto, Dominguez, Lugo, Sepulveda, Verdugo, Pico, Yorba, Carillo, Peralta, Ontiveros, and Ybarra. Long before US conquest, Spanish and Mexican families were joined by Yankee immigrant-businessmen. Emblematic of this *yanqui* cohort was Don Abel – aka "Cara de Caballo" (Horseface) – Stearns (1798–1871), a Massachusetts native who in the 1820s adopted Spanish, converted to Catholicism, and became a Mexican citizen. In 1839 he married 14-year-old Arcadia Bandini, daughter of the San Diego-area rancher Juan Bandini. Stearns rose to leadership within this outpost of Mexican society, sharing rule of the region with José Antonio Carrillo, Pío Pico, Manuel Domínguez, and Antonio F. Coronel. These men were the most prominent officeholders in state apparatus, and also the dominant economic figures (Ríos-Bustamante 1991: 184–91).

Much has been made of the differing economic cultural values of the Spanish-descended Rancheros and the commercial capitalist Yankees who began settling in California in the early nineteenth century. The "Decline of the Californios" (Pitt 1968) is a time-honored narrative that portrays the early Yankee infiltrators as the advance guard of a more progressive, or at least more aggressive, commercial culture. But recent scholarship has shown that the transition from Mexican to United States rule was an ongoing process that took well into the early twentieth century to complete (Monroy 1990; Gutierrez 1995; Deverell 2004; Ryan 2006). Building on this recent work, I seek to emphasize an aspect of the transition that deserves more attention. Cultural differences between Hispanic and Anglo have been exaggerated: these groups were highly integrated within the ruling class. They were landed gentry, maintaining a racialized peon-like workforce within a client-patron political culture.

Prior to US conquest, a handful of perhaps two dozen landed families ruled Los Angeles. Mission secularization was supposed to result in distributing land to the neophytes, virtually none of whom actually acquired lands. About 1,250 people of European descent lived in the Pueblo of Los Angeles in the early 1840s, another 430 lived on the ranchos, and possibly 1,100 Gabrielinos lived and worked as *vaqueros* (cowboys) and in the pueblo. Only 300 natives remained on each of the shrunken mission grounds at San Fernando and San Gabriel by 1846 (Ríos-Bustamante 1991: 203).

At the time of US conquest, the principal political leaders were José Antonio Carillo, Andrés and Pío Pico, and Mañuel Domínguez. Don Mañuel was first in family grants and also established himself as *primus inter*

pares politically. He was elected first to the Los Angeles *Ayuntamiento*, and then as *Alcalde* (Mayor and Judge) when he was 29 years old.[3] His verdant Rancho Palos Verdes, originally 70,000 acres, was extremely successful as a cattle ranch, with his adobe home and headquarters on a hillside in present-day Carson City. Patent to his Rancho San Pedro, totaling 43,000 acres, was issued by the Buchanan Administration on December 18, 1858, but it took the family until 1880 to get the papers. Don Mañuel died in 1882, and in 1885 his estate was divided among his six daughters, three of whose married names illustrate the deep integration between the ruling Hispanic and Anglo families: Ana Josefa Domínguez de Guyer, Guadalupe Domínguez, Maria D. Domínguez de Watson, Victoria Domínguez de Carson, Susana Domínguez, and Maria de los Reyes Domínguez. That the Domínguez family actually clung to so much valuable property forty years after the conquest is testament to the gradual transition from Mexican to American rule (Clay and Troesken 2005: 61).

Regime 6: US Latifundia-Mercantile, 1848–1881

The US-Mexican War of 1846–8 brought California under yet another set of rulers. After a brief series of battles, in which control over Los Angeles passed back and forth between the flags of two nations for several weeks, Mexican commander Andrés Pico surrendered to United States Army Lt. Col. John C. Frémont in the Cahuenga Pass (where today the Hollywood Freeway crosses the Santa Monica Mountains) on January 13, 1847. Such dramatic events, followed rapidly by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 (which enabled former Mexican citizens to obtain US citizenship) and the discovery of gold in the Sierra foothills, have overshadowed the deeper continuities between the sixth and seventh regional regimes of Los Angeles. By 1852, out of a total Los Angeles area population of 2,500, only about 75 had come from the United States. Many more were to follow in the next few years, but even as late as 1860 only about a third of the 5,000 Angelenos were of US origin (Pitt 1968: 122).

The *estadounidenses* brought a new bipolar racism to their regime, gradually reclassifying most Mexican Americans into the disenfranchised non-white category. Nevertheless, *Californios* remained powerful for decades after the conquest. The surnames of many of the region's highest elected officeholders during the 1850s and 1860s were those of the ruling *Californio* elite families: del Valle, Coronel, de la Guerra, Sepulveda, Pico, and Ibarra. Even the key post of County Sheriff was held by *Californio* Tomás Sanchez as late as 1859. Andrés Pico, who led the fight against the *yanquis* in 1847, was elected State Senator in 1860. His brother, Pío Pico, financed the construction of the first high-class hotel in the city, the Pico House, in 1862. This protracted period of empowerment for the conquered was crucial for

maintaining their claim to justice. As late as 1866, for example, 45 percent of jurors were Mexican Americans (Griswold del Castillo 1982: 118).

As Douglas Monroy (1990) and David Gutierrez (1995) have shown, however, this ongoing partnership between *Californios* and Anglos was also an agreement to be "white" together, in common domination over the irreplaceable source of their wealth: agricultural laborers. As Monroy summarizes, "the old peonage system of the Californios was giving way to a forced-labor system of the conquerors," thanks to harsh new laws passed in 1850 providing for the virtual enslavement of native peoples convicted of any offense or deemed to be loitering (Monroy 1990: 186). While the strategy of joining with Anglos as white Europeans worked well enough for one generation, it committed the old rancho families to the harsh form of white supremacy that plunged thousands of workers into disempowered status as Anglos poured into the region in the 1880s.

The rancho production system, the heart of the Los Angeles regional economy until the 1880s, was inherently dispersed. During the sixty years in which it thrived, *Californios*, commoner, elites, and middle classes alike, established the nuclei of major settlements in the Los Angeles area. The *Californios* inscribed their institutional forms into the landscape, beginning with the structure of property boundaries, major roadways, and later municipal boundaries. Howard J. Nelson, Cornelius Loesser, and colleagues found that "the vast majority" of rancho boundaries remain the boundaries between real estate parcels owned by different individuals. "Today," they write, "about 173 miles of roadway in Los Angeles coincides with former rancho boundaries." About 87 miles of municipal boundaries also coincide to the *confirmed titles* of the original ranchos (Nelson et al. 1964: 4–5). Further, the average geographic scale of the ranchos is representative of the eventual formation of municipal boundaries, and even the peculiar shape of the City of Los Angeles can be vaguely seen outlined in rancho shapes on the ground.

Regime 7: US Industrial-Imperial/Porfirian Borderland, 1881–1940

After 1880, we observe a dramatic shift toward Anglo domination of Los Angeles. Founding dynasties of their own, a new class of rulers with the names Otis, Chandler, Doheny, Huntington, and Getty moved into the region, operating huge landed estates and employing thousands of laborers on both sides of the US-Mexico border. These new rulers aggressively recast the region as an emerging industrial powerhouse, invented Anglocentric cultural traditions, and defeated labor-based challengers, all before the outbreak of the Great War. Anglo oligarchs, operating through the Chamber of Commerce, the Merchants and Manufacturers Association,

and other business networks, laid the groundwork for an industrial metropolis by amassing property, planning infrastructure, and attracting capital, labor, and millions of settlers. During the 1920s this infrastructure enabled a boom in population, productivity, and most crucially, in technological and economic innovation. By the end of this period in 1940, three giant industrial sectors had made Los Angeles a global city: oil, aircraft production, and motion pictures. Through all three, the autocratic political culture of the previous regional regime was reinforced and magnified.

How all these factors came together is a complex story. But key to understanding the formation of the seventh regional regime is the influence of the preceding regional regimes and Los Angeles' deep integration with the Borderland political culture. That political culture was characterized by the *porfiriato* – the rule of the Mexican dictator and modernizer Porfirio Diaz (1876–1911), and by the Mexican Revolution (1911–29), which was caused by the policies of the *porfiriato* and those of its allies in the United States (including the Anglo elite of Los Angeles). The *porfiriato* enriched the Los Angeles Anglo ruling class, and the Revolution deeply threatened it. Both reinforced the autocratic, reactionary nature of the seventh ruling regime.

Mexican American officeholding virtually ended in the 1880s and, as indication of a hierarchy of legal rights, those with Spanish surnames were increasingly barred from jury service (Griswold del Castillo 1982: 117). Integral to the Anglo consolidation of hegemony was the invention of traditions during the 1880s and 1890s that "whitewashed" the Spanish-Mexican heritage of the region, recasting the missions and ranchos as romantic symbols of a quaint but backward and inferior culture (Deverell 2004). So successful was this new cultural hegemony in constructing narratives to support the Anglo right to rule that subsequent historians have lost sight of the profound and ongoing Mexican shape of regional power. The Spanish-Mexican socioeconomic institutional influence was all too real, even while the Anglo-invented cultural heritage was fake, but historians of recent decades have been distracted from the former by debunking the latter.

From the 1880s through the 1914 outbreak of the Great War, a peculiar combination of natural assets, labor relations inherited from the Spanish-Mexican periods, and a concerted marketing campaign (touting the Hispanic "fantasy heritage," Mediterranean climate, citrus culture, real estate opportunity, and health) literally prepared the ground of Los Angeles for its meteoric rise to globalism in the 1920s. A railroad rate war began in 1886 between the established monopoly, the Southern Pacific, and the Santa Fe, which opened its Los Angeles service from points east in that year. Combined with advertisements about the utopian climate and cheap land, this rate war produced a flood of middle-class Anglo Americans eager to migrate to the region (McWilliams 1980; Starr 1991: 45–64).

The Southern Pacific delivered 120,000 people to Southern California in 1887 alone, and the Santa Fe was arriving with as many as four passenger trains every day. Carey McWilliams called this the "Pullman Car Migration." But the boom also led to a bust, so the region's business leaders held an "Emergency Meeting" in October of 1888, during which General Harrison Gray Otis, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, led the formation of the Chamber of Commerce and its battle plan for infrastructure development and aggressive promotion throughout the United States and the world. Typical of this plan's audacity was the proposal (which instantly caused a diplomatic incident) for the United States to purchase Baja California from Mexico (McWilliams 1980: 113–37).

In short order, this oligarchy successfully planned the federally funded dredging of a deep-water port at San Pedro and the bond-funded construction of the Owens Valley Aqueduct. While all city boosters have been stricken with grandiose dreams, the Los Angeles oligarchs succeeded in laying the foundations, in these massive infrastructure projects, for a megacity. Once the liquid assets of water and oil began to flow, this Mediterranean landscape simultaneously bloomed fragrant orchards and belched the smog of industrial progress (Deverell 1996; Erie 2004).

Several great migrant population streams ran to Los Angeles between the 1880s and the Crash of 1929. The first, composed of relatively affluent Anglos from the Midwest, overwhelmed the resident *Mexicanos* and *Californios.* Highly visible among the newcomers were thousands of affluent Iowa farmers, leading to the joke that Los Angeles was the "sea coast of Iowa" (McWilliams 1980: 164). These Pullman Car Anglos largely drove the stakes and set the agenda for those who followed: founding more new cities and hiring incoming workers. After the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910–11, 10 percent of the entire Mexican population moved north of the border, and Los Angeles became the most important portal for this flow. With the concurrent regional industrial boom, the Los Angeles population became dramatically more working class and non-Anglo. By 1930 about 100,000 Mexican immigrants, 30,000 Japanese, Chinese, and Korean immigrants, and 40,000 African Americans had settled in Los Angeles. But it is very important to remember that the majority of the much larger Anglo population of about one million persons were working- and lower-middle-class migrants (Romo 1983: 3–11; Laslett 1997; Sabagh and Bozorgmehr 1997).

Citrus, the first of the major new productive sectors developed by Anglo leadership, grafted easily onto rancho territories and their labor system. Eventually, the citrus belt "stretched sixty miles eastward from Pasadena, through the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Valleys, to the town of Riverside." By 1946, about 40,000 workers toiled in the orange and lemon groves of Southern California. The growth of this agribusiness deepened the Mexican communities eastward across this belt, laying the groundwork

for the Latinization of the San Gabriel Valley decades later. The citrus labor force was mixed: Mexican, Filipinos, Japanese, and Chinese, as well as "whites." As historian Matt Garcia recounts, as the workforce became more non-white, wages dropped, to about $13 per week during the late 1920s and 1930s (Garcia 2001: 19, 38–9, 49).

The citrus industry was only one of many race-specialized productive sectors developed as Anglo overlords magnified the racial hierarchies of the Spanish-Mexican periods. When Simons Brick Company opened a new worksite in Montebello in 1907, the owners supplied barrack housing for Mexican workers and their families, on-site housing that recalled the former *rancheria* of the San Gabriel Mission, which lay within sight just to the north (Deverell 2004: 135). Gradually at first, and then rapidly after 1910, the older sedentary, landholding Mexican elite that had mentored the new Anglo elite was lost in a sea of Mexican immigrant laborers, who arrived to take increasingly racialized positions in a fixed social hierarchy.

The key to understanding the rise of Los Angeles to globalism in the 1880s to 1930s is its relationship to Mexico. Porfirio Diaz, who ruled almost continuously from 1876 until his ouster at the onset of the Revolution in 1911, set out to modernize Mexico through partnerships with foreign investors, who poured a staggering $1.2 billion into Mexico, building its railroad infrastructure and developing its mines and agricultural estates. "Diaz's policies of keeping down popular protest, muzzling the opposition press, preventing the formation of labor unions, and not allowing strikes," writes Friedrich Katz, "greatly contributed to this enrichment" (Katz 1998: 15–16). The *porfiriato* also sharply centralized political power, in the hands of local *caudillos* and the wealthy beneficiaries of foreign investment (Coatsworth 1974; Hart 1987).

The new industrial elite of Los Angeles – Edward Doheny, Harrison Gray Otis, Harry Chandler – were among the major *porfirian* capitalists in Mexico. Although not a permanent Los Angeles resident, newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst founded the city's second-largest newspaper, the *Los Angeles Examiner*, in 1903 and joined this elite as an eccentric but powerful force in the political public sphere. His father had purchased the giant 1,000,000-acre Rancho Babicora in Chihuahua in the 1880s. In 1899 Harry Chandler bought an option on 862,000 acres of land in the Colorado River drainage and formed the California-Mexico Land and Cattle Company (its US name) and the Colorado River Land Company, SA (its Mexican name), which became the largest cotton plantation in the world, employing 8,000 Mexican peasants and yielding in one year alone $18 million in cotton (McDougal 2001: 73–5). Los Angeles became a contested space within the emerging revolutionary/counter-revolutionary dynamic of the Borderlands. Drawn by the expatriate community of Mexican workers, the revolutionaries Enrique and Ricardo Flores Magón had made Los Angeles their frontier headquarters during much of the first two decades

of the century, where they were constantly harassed by the Los Angeles Police Department's "Red Squad," and frequently imprisoned and threatened with extradition. But the political Left was very strong in Los Angeles as well, at least until 1911 – with unionists and socialists very active among the burgeoning working classes of the industrializing city. The Magonistas were successfully defended in court by socialist attorney Job Harriman, avoiding extradition and a firing squad (Escobar 1999: 53–76).

Indeed, the spectacular Mexican events of 1910–11 were paralleled by the near-overthrow of the Otis-Chandler regime in Los Angeles as Harriman ran a nearly-successful campaign for Mayor in 1911. That election outcome would be determined by the course of the trial of John and James McNamara, accused of plotting the October 1910 bombing of the *Los Angeles Times*. Harriman joined the McNamara brothers' defense team headed by Clarence Darrow and backed by union leaders across the country. But when the McNamaras confessed their guilt on the eve of the election, Harriman was disgraced and lost the election. His defeat "aborted the labor movement in Los Angeles" in the words of McWilliams. Otis was vindicated as the righteous defender of "industrial freedom" and the middle classes, whose loyalty was at stake, were persuaded to back the forces of security (McWilliams 1980: 281–3).

With firm control of the local political apparatus lasting through the 1950s, the Otis-Chandler oligarchy headed a pro-growth coalition to promote an "open shop" (non-union) landscape that attracted major established industries, like rubber and automobiles, and also incubated brand-new, leading-edge industries – principally, motion pictures and aircraft. The great burst of population growth took off after the Great War. A staggering volume of materials and human labor was required to achieve the building boom of approximately 600,000 new homes during the 1920s, necessitated by the migration of 1.2 million new residents to the county in that decade. Port activity at the twin harbors of Long Beach/San Pedro increased from 2.4 million tons in 1917 to 27 million tons just five years later. Investors poured billions of dollars into the region and in turn, hundreds of thousands of workers migrated to Los Angeles.

The ambitions of the Otis-Chandler oligarchy were greatly aided by the commercial development of huge oil fields. The credit for developing this regional extractive industry belongs to Edward L. Doheny who dug his first well by hand in 1892. Doheny realized his first fortune not from the bounty of Southern California geology, but from a shrewd alliance with the railroad industry. When the Santa Fe Railroad bought Doheny's Petroleum Development Company in 1902 for $1.25 million, he immediately invested his capital in the Veracruz-Huasteca region along the Gulf Coast of Mexico. There, fostered by the generosity of Porfirio Diaz, Dohney led the founding of the Mexican oil industry, and in turn became a leading counter-revolutionary for the next two decades (Ansell 1998; Davis 2001).

Doheny was only one of several types of "oil men" operating in the Los Angeles Basin. Like him, many of these figures played leading roles in shaping the reactionary political culture of the region. The earliest oil corporation was Union Oil of California (later Unocal), incorporated by the State of California in 1890 by Lyman Stewart, Wallace Hardison, and Thomas Bard. Stewart founded the Pacific Gospel Mission, later the Union Rescue Mission in 1901, and in 1908, when Union Oil's market capitalization had reached $50 million, Stewart teamed-up with the Christian author T. C. Horton to found the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (later renamed Biola University). It was within these walls that the modern "Fundamentalist" movement was born, through the Bible Institute's publication in 1910 of a series called *The Fundamentals*, advocating the literal reading of the Scriptures in opposition to the liberal Progressive "social gospel" movement.

J. Paul Getty arrived in Los Angeles as a teenager with his wealthy family in 1906. George Getty had made a small fortune as an oil man in Oklahoma and the move to Los Angeles was the work of a nouveau riche seeking refinement in the pleasant Mediterranean setting – all according to the plan of the Boosters. At first holding themselves aloof from the oil business in Los Angeles, the conservative Gettys changed their attitude when the Union Oil Company brought in a gusher at Santa Fe Springs in 1921. The Gettys moved rapidly into the local market, buying-up leases throughout Huntington Beach and Long Beach: the main site of the action during the region's second oil boom.

By the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, industry, shipping, navies, heating, and automobiles had created an unquenchable international thirst for fuel oil and refined gasoline. The oil that Doheny had begun to exploit in the 1890s suddenly gained a new value, and the industrial infrastructure of Los Angeles enabled its exploitation. Exploration by a wide range of oil companies rapidly opened and new oil strikes erupted in Culver City, Torrance, Dominguez, Santa Fe Springs, Whittier, and Montebello. The fantastic wealth of the Getty Oil Company was now pumped from Los Angeles. By the time of George Getty's death in 1930 and transfer of control of the family business to his son, the Getty Oil Company had practically started over again from a new foundation in Los Angeles (Getty 1963: 9, 77–8; Miller 1985: 26–7, 47).

The presence of gushers and automobiles in the middle of a metropolis attracted major auto and rubber manufacturers. Goodyear opened its plant in 1919, followed by Firestone, Goodrich, and US Rubber. Ford built its first branch plant in 1917 and a much larger plant in Long Beach in 1927 (later moving to Pico-Rivera), Willys-Overland built a plant in Maywood in 1929, and auto plants continued to open throughout the 1930s: Chrysler began production in the City of Commerce in 1931; Studebaker in Vernon in 1936; General Motors in South Gate in 1936. By the end of the 1920s,

Los Angeles boasted the highest per capita rates of automobile ownership in the world, with 1 auto for every 3 persons (Bottles 1987; Pitt and Pitt 2000).

The social power of the new economic sector of motion picture production would be hard to exaggerate. As they produced movies, the studio chiefs, directors, camera operators, actors, set builders, and myriad assistants inscribed specific workplace relations and other social forms into the Los Angeles landscape. Their product was another, imagined and enacted social landscape, circulated to millions worldwide, depicting the maximum range of historical and topical subject matter. These two landscapes were deeply interrelated. The movies were much more than entertainment to the hundreds of thousands who made their living making them. And these cultural products proved to be far more than entertainment to the millions who spent their leisure time and money watching them. Stars became role models and sets became utopias and dystopias. Indeed, the motion picture industry managed to reinvent aristocracy itself by creating a class of celebrities for mass entertainment. Movies were also adopted by warring nation-states as vehicles of propaganda, which thrust Los Angeles into the role of international relations. Because of how they were made, and why and where they were made, motion pictures attributed to Hollywood circulated the visions and ideologies of the men and women who made them.

Light is the indispensable raw material for motion pictures. Southern California, supplying an average of 300 cloudless days each year, made Los Angeles an obviously attractive production location. The Biograph Company had maintained a branch studio in Los Angeles from 1910. Thomas Ince headquartered his production company in Los Angeles in 1913 and developed the "central producer system," which "shifted control from the individual director units making films to a single producer who now oversaw several productions simultaneously" (Ross 2001: 258). Ince found ample movie factory space in 1919 at 9336 West Washington Blvd in the newly incorporated suburb of Culver City. There he built the most venerable studios in the industry; some buildings are still in use, after changing many hands, in the twenty-first century. Along with Culver City, movie production took root in Hollywood in the nineteen-teens.

Seizing on their respective achievements, Ince and Griffith, along with the comic film producer Mack Sennett, formed the Triangle Film Corporation in 1915, capitalized at $5 million, and headquartered in Los Angeles. Soon "Universal, Triangle … Lasky, Vitagraph, Metro, Hodkinson, and Fox all erected sprawling studio facilities so imposing that tourists well might have mistaken them for factories" (Ross 2001: 260–2). They *were* factories, and the terms "dream factory" and "culture industry" are not facetious or merely metaphorical. Moviemakers materialized the dreams of writers by building the required realities inside the studio, outside the studio, or simply by appropriating it from available

urban and regional landscapes. The raw materials for these dream factories encompassed the entire human landscape.

The movie industry flourished so spectacularly that New York capitalists could no longer resist. By 1919, Americans flocked to 15,000 movie theatres, leaving an estimated $800 million at the box office. As historian Steven Ross puts it, "The movie industry entered the world of seriously big business in 1919 when several powerful investment banking houses arranged stock offerings of $10 million and $9.5 million … respectively, for Paramount and Loew's Inc." The New York Stock Exchange soon listed the stocks of the major studios, and by 1930, the capital invested in the movie industry had reached the staggering figure of $850 million (Ross 2001: 260–2). Capital concentration reorganized the movie industry during the 1920s into eight major studios: Columbia, Fox, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount, RKO, United Artists, Universal, and Warner Brothers. These studios, born largely from exhibition itself, also continued to expand their own theatre chains, controlling not only production but also distribution. They amassed a huge pool of talent, with "stars" locked into long-term contracts and treated as capital stock. The apogee of the studio system was reached in 1946, when the motion picture industry sold 4.5 billion tickets (Sedgwick 2002).

Immigrant entrepreneurs who had built movie empires from scratch had no sympathy for labor unions and hated their growing presence in the studios. Jack Warner called the union organizers "communists, radical bastards and soapbox sons of bitches." William Fox, himself a former socialist, waxed democratic about his populist-themed movies starring Will Rogers, but his studio chief, Darryl Zanuck, threatened to "mow down" the unionists if they picketed the Paramount studios. The unions themselves became a violent arena of struggle, between a mob-controlled International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) and the progressive Congress of Studio Unions (CSU). While the liberal studios made their populist message films about historical gangsters, the living gangsters kept those studios free of unions (Horne 2001).

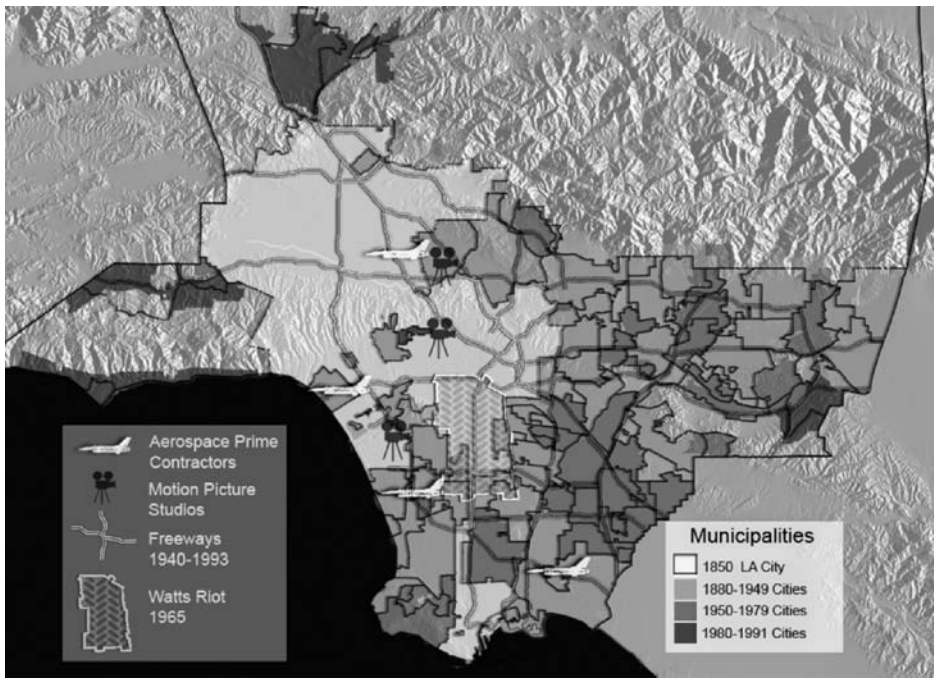
The regional regime's political culture took a distinctive turn with the sudden arrival of nouveaux-riche Jews of great power, wealth, and influence – a very unusual phenomenon in the Euro-American world, during the height of anti-Semitism. The relationship between this group and the established leadership is important to understand, because within it we have an example of the mentorship that reproduces elements of a grounded (regional) political economy. The nouveaux-riche Jews staked out a new center of power to the west, along Wilshire Boulevard, mitigating the supremacy of the Otis-Chandler dynasty, whose headquarters lay in Craftsman Pasadena and San Marino. The geographic salient of this second, rival head, was the "Westside" – Beverly Hills, Westwood, Brentwood, Santa Monica, and Pacific Palisades.

But a larger and more complex process was at work than merely the division of power: the new ruling elite underwent a segregated mentorship in the ways of economic relations and public ethics that were necessary to do business in Otis and Chandler's world. The new men had entered a milieu that already had a chieftaincy. Their hardbitten rise from the status of pogrom-fleeing peddlar refugees to captains of mass culture made them sympathetic to the anti-union reactionaries at the *Times*, and they needed the publicity that a friendly *Times* gave them. Thus, the notoriously autocratic and exploitative studio system can be seen as a product of the regional regime milieu.

Also historic in scale was the rise of the Los Angeles aircraft industry. The first aircraft built in Los Angeles were made by the employees of Glenn L. Martin in 1912, but these were far from Martin's headquarters in the nation's industrial core: the Ohio River Valley. As part of his "crusade for industry," *Los Angeles Times* publisher Harry Chandler sent reporter Bill Henry to Cleveland in 1919 "to investigate the possibilities of the aircraft industry" for Los Angeles. Henry was actually an industrial spy who got a job at Martin's factory and, while working there for a full year, met and wooed the company's vice president, MIT graduate Donald Douglas (1892–1981). Douglas had his own dreams, but zero capital. Chandler underwrote a $15,000 initial investment and gave Douglas access to nine "other prominent Angelenos to contact for the rest of what he needed" (Lotchin 1992: 108–110). Douglas won his first military order in 1921 to build torpedo bombers for the US Navy. He delivered six DT-1's (Douglas Torpedo, First) in 1922, for $130,890. By 1928 the Douglas Company was worth $25 million (Hise 1997: 127–8).

The Loughead brothers, Allan and Malcolm, who had built two flying boats for the Navy in Santa Barbara, relocated as Lockheed Aircraft to Hollywood in 1926, and again in 1927 to Burbank, in the large empty spaces of southeastern San Fernando Valley, near the sprawling Universal Studios, where they could maintain an airfield adjacent to their expandable factory space. After some rocky years, they won in 1936 from the British Royal Air Force "the largest contract ever placed with an aircraft company," for 250 reconnaissance bombers. By 1938, Lockheed employed 2,500 workers and by the end of World War II Lockheed was the largest aircraft producer in the world. They had produced 19,000 aircraft with a workforce of 60,000 (Scott and Mattingly 1989: 49).

Douglas, meanwhile, established spin-off plants in El Segundo in 1932 and in Long Beach in 1941. By 1939 Douglas employed 11,000 workers and by 1941 the company held $78 million in military orders (Keane 2001: 251n7). In 1935 North American Aviation, headed by former Douglas vice president J. H. "Dutch" Kindleberger, located in Inglewood with 75 employees. By January the following year North American had 250 employees building their first Army Air Corps NA-16 trainers. By 1941 more than



Map 11.2 Los Angeles County during regional regimes 6 through 9 (1848–2009). Cartography © 2009 Philip J. Ethington.

14,000 employees labored in 1 million square feet of factory space to produce 325 units per month (Hise 1997: 123). Similar stories could be repeated for Vultee Aircraft (later General Dynamics Convair), which began production in Downey in 1936, and for Northrop Aircraft.

The airframe industry created a regional critical mass of university-trained talent, production facilities, and subcontractors that gave it an unrivalled global position that would last half a century (Scott and Mattingly 1989; Hise 1997). Although they could not predict it, the early success of Los Angeles airframe producers positioned the region to benefit mightily by the arrival of another world war in 1939. In that year 15,000 Angelenos were employed building aircraft, but just four years later this sector employed nearly 200,000 workers.

By the time the United States entered World War II, the seventh regional regime (1881–1940) of Los Angeles had produced a regional metropolis with wide global reach, a major seaport, an extensive transportation system, and two new world-transforming industries: motion pictures and aircraft. The city achieved global recognition in hosting the 1932 Olympics in its purpose-built Coliseum south of downtown. The Otis-Chandler oligarchy had also magnified the racial-caste labor system of the Borderlands political economy. They had organized an interlocking directorate of reactionary economic and political leaders.

This leadership had been mentored in the ways of exploitive labor relations by their predecessors the Mexican Rancheros; their ally and benefactor had been the dictator Porfirio Diaz, and their counter-revolutionary zeal against democratic movements was reinforced by the autocratic structure of their new industries, especially oil and motion pictures. Those leaders now became the mentors to an even mightier generation of leaders, who remade Los Angeles as an exporter of its regional political-economic regime, a global city of truly historic proportion.

Regime 8: US Military-Industrial, 1940–1992

After 1940 Los Angeles became one of the weightiest metropoles in world history, as its leaders and institutions rose to shape the United States and much of the world in the last half of the twentieth century. Los Angeles produced the warplanes that won World War II and the atomic ICBMs that threatened apocalypse during the Cold War. US Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan placed the political culture of Los Angeles in the most powerful office on earth, where their joint impact on world history is incalculable. Both Cold Warriors, Nixon and Reagan distilled the reactionary violence of their regional milieu and projected it outward.

It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of the Los Angeles aircraft corporations and factories to the Allied victory in World War II. Air power fundamentally changed military strategy and tactics. Long-range bombers and carrier-based dive-bombers extended the front across thousands of miles. The Navy was now completely dependent on its aircraft carriers. Under the new military environment of "total war" (which considers civilian war production sites as legitimate military targets), warplanes were required in huge numbers both to attack and defend homelands.

Generals hurled giant flotillas of heavy bombers at the cities and factories of Japan and Germany: nearly one thousand aircraft (and 10,000 airmen) in single long-distance raids by B-17s (Flying Fortresses), B-24s (Liberators), and B-29s (Superfortresses). Meeting the War Department's demand for 60,000 aircraft per year was only possible because Los Angeles had already developed the knowledge base (Ph.D.-level aeronautic engineering programs at Caltech, USC, and UCLA), the supply chain (subcontractors specialized in advanced materials and electronics), and a trained workforce.

We can briefly encapsulate the indispensable contribution of Los Angeles to the Allied victories in the story of a triumphal June, 1945 visit by Generals George S. Patton Jr. – fresh from the German front – and James Doolittle, who had led the first daring air raid on Tokyo in 1942. After parading the city, they arrived on the stage of a giant rally of more than 100,000 at the Memorial Coliseum. Patton – who seriously believed that he was the reincarnation of Hannibal the Great – was (re)born and raised in San Gabriel

(adjacent to Pasadena). "If you don't know me," Patton growled at the San Marino City Hall, "you're ignorant as hell. This is my part of the country" (Platt and O'Leary 2005: 102).

World War II deepened racial ideologies and policies, resulting in major human rights abuses and intergroup social upheavals in Los Angeles, which was already ruled by an official policy of white supremacy and apartheid. The war was fueled by a rabid anti-Japanese racism that had been officially promoted in California since the Alien Land Law of 1913. Los Angeles officials gladly aided General DeWitt in complying with Executive Order 9066, rounding-up 120,000 people of Japanese descent, including 40,000 US citizens and even orphaned babies, incarcerating them in remote desert concentration camps such as Manazanar. Having deported thousands of Mexican immigrants (and even some C*hicano* US citizens; see chapter 8, this volume) during the 1930s, authorities now brought "Braceros" to fill wartime labor needs. African Americans recruited to the war plants from Louisiana and Texas filled the emptied space of Little Tokyo and renamed it Bronzeville. But the discrimination against all non-whites in every area of life was such that blacks, Latinos, and Asians felt solidarity with one another. When white sailors, soldiers, and police joined in a pogrom called the "Zoot Suit Riots" in 1943, African Americans from Central Avenue backed their Mexican friends in facing down white mobs (Smith 2006: 86–9).

Meanwhile, Hollywood continued to cast African Americans in subservient roles, such as Hattie McDaniels' famous "Mammy" in *Gone With the Wind* (1939), or Dooley Wilson's "Sam" in *Casablanca* (1942). While so-called "white ethnic" groups such as Italians and East European Jews were endowed with malleable and mobile social roles in the Classic Studio Era, non-white racial groups had standard stereotypic roles, from the ethereal Chinese of Charlie Chan to the hoards of rebellious savages in the Tarzan-Jungle genre (Gerstle 2002).

The abrupt end of the war led to a temporary mass layoff in the Los Angeles war plants. "The future is as dark as the inside of a boot," Donald Douglas cursed, as three of his plants closed and the Douglas payroll dropped from 160,000 to 27,000 over the course of a few months (Ethington, forthcoming). The fantastic growth and soaring profits of the aircraft industry had crash-landed in the field of peace. But wartime conditions rapidly returned, crystallizing as the Cold War by 1947, so Los Angeles grew instead into the Metropolis of Mars. Because of its leading role in airframe production, Los Angeles became the logical home for the new sectors of missiles and electronics-based systems engineering. During the 1950s and 1960s, Los Angeles became the new capital of the nation's Military-Industrial Complex, twinned with Washington, DC as the new anchors of the ruling regime of the United States. With the expansion of automobility, air travel, and global trade, petroleum became the heart-blood

of the entire system of power and wealth, so the oilmen of Texas and California were positioned to play leading roles in postwar power.

It is easy to understand why two of the most important presidents in US history rose to the Oval Office from Los Angeles. Richard M. Nixon was the quintessential product of the Otis-Chandler dynasty. Ronald W. Reagan was the quintessential product of a new mass consumer politics of spectacle shaped primarily by the motion picture industry. These two men were mentored by the two wings of the region's governing cadre: the Protestant and Pasadena-based Otis-Chandler wing, and the Jewish and Beverly Hills-based Hollywood wing, respectively.

The institutional support and mentorship that the Chandlers gave to Nixon is indispensable for understanding his extraordinary career. They were the gatekeepers in 1946 when he brashly sought Congressional office, and shortly thereafter, a mere phone call from Kyle Palmer, the *Times*' political editor, made him the 1950 Senatorial candidate. "Few other major politicians came out of a metropolitan context so pampered," writes David Halberstam (2000: 261). Much of Nixon is *sui generis*, of course. An economic commoner, socially uncouth, and distinctly unphotogenic, he was an absolutely uncommon political genius, bending the region's structures of power to his own will – which happened to suit the region profitably. He represented the far Right, Military-Industrial wing of the Republican Party, and as Vice President in the Eisenhower administration, presided as the chief inquisitor of domestic anti-communism, which decimated the ranks of his potential opponents. As a member of the new National Security Council, Nixon helped direct not only the anti-communist guerrilla counter-insurgency (Honduras, Guatemala, Cuba), but also the nuclear-tipped vanguard weaponry produced by Los Angeles.

By the late 1950s, the former aircraft industry had been totally transformed into the aerospace industry, dominated by the "Big Five" prime contractors for military missiles, satellites, aircraft, munitions, and electronics systems: Convair, Douglas, Lockheed, North American, and Northrop. Convair Astronautics was the largest of Convair's divisions, employing nearly 25,000 workers at its San Diego plant alone, where workers produced the Atlas ICBM, which became operational at Vandenberg Air Force Base in September 1959, and the Atlas-Centaur spacecraft, designed for the first landings on the Moon, slated for 1962–3. At Douglas, missile and space programs by 1960 accounted for 72 percent of the company's outstanding orders (Ethington, forthcoming).

By 1960 Los Angeles stood at the very center of the new culture and economy of postwar America. California was now the most populous state, with the biggest delegation in Congress. No wonder the Democratic Party held its presidential nominating convention in Los Angeles, with Jack Kennedy, the "prince of glamor," headquartered in the downtown Biltmore Hotel. The seductive suburban "Southern California Lifestyle,"

in architecture, recreational sports, automobility, and popular culture, was reproduced *ad infinitim* in movies, on television, and in popular magazines such as *Life*, *Look*, *Time*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *House and Garden*. This cultural power was a crucial element of the entire eighth regional regime of 1940–92. Epitomized by the iconic "Case Study #22" photograph by Julius Shulman, this glamor was realized as pure white against a backdrop of racial danger: hundreds of square miles of segregated urban landscapes.

The bitter note of race relations at the end of World War II hardened into racial segregation projects by authorities and planners even as a newly emboldened civil rights movement arose. That movement achieved many victories in Congress, but the 1965 Immigration Reform Act towers over others in its impact on Los Angeles. Opening the nation to huge new immigration streams from Latin America and Asia, Los Angeles became the global entrepôt of the Cold War United States.

By the 1970s and 1980s, preexisting Mexican, Chinese, and Korean communities were now augmented, and new ethnic enclaves were established for each of the major points of conflict in the Cold War. Mexican immigration increased steadily over the following decades, producing the largest Mexican urban population after Mexico City. Central Americans established their own enclaves within and at the peripheries of Spanish-speaking Mexican neighborhoods. Proxy wars in Guatemala and El Salvador gave Los Angeles the second-largest populations of those nationalities as well. The 1979 Iranian Revolution was a backlash against Nixon's heavy-handed support of His Imperial Majesty (King of Kings, Sun of the Aryans), Mohammad Rez Sh h Pahlavi (b. 1919, d. 1980; reign: 1941–79). The exodus of elite Jewish "Persians" (refusing identification as "Iranians") to Los Angeles created a major exile community centered in Beverly Hills. Longstanding immigration streams from the Philippines were magnified during the corrupt reign of Ferdinand Marcos and its aftermath.

Adding 4,000,000 individuals over four decades to its 1960 population of 6,000,000, Los Angeles County went from 81 percent white in 1960, to 68 percent by 1970, 53 percent in 1980, to 41 percent in 1990, and only 32 percent by 2000. But the gripping boundaries of residential segregation were not broken until the late 1970s, and in a positive sense, massive waves of co-ethnics have created hundreds of square kilometers of vibrant, creative communities. These two forces of segregation and community formation were overlaid by proliferating new governmental boundaries, as the pro-white, anti-civil rights policies of the rising Nixon-Reagan movement in the Republican Party adopted a policy of promoting reactionary fear among those white suburbanites.

The Space Age metropolis underwent a rapid phase of boundary-formation during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1954, the year of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education*, a massive wave of municipal incorporations began,

following the example of Lakewood, a territory just north of Long Beach, near the Douglas plant in that city. The "Lakewood Plan" was a scheme to lower the costs of incorporation by skipping the step of police and fire departments and other services, contracting these services from the County Board of Supervisors instead (Connor 2008).

The 1950s wave of suburban city formation altered the balance of power in the region, eroding the city's onetime political, economic, and cultural dominance. In 1956 Baldwin Park, Cerritos, La Puente, and Downey incorporated; in 1957 a record of ten incorporations took place: Rolling Hills, Paramount, Santa Fe Springs, Industry, Bradbury, Irwindale, Duarte, Norwalk, Bellflower, and Rolling Hills Estates. There were three more in 1958 (Pico, Rivera, South El Monte); three more in 1959 (Artesia, Rosemead, Lawndale and Walnut); seven in 1960 alone (Bell, Cudahy, La Mirada, Parmount, San Dimas, Temple City, and Commerce), and nine more by 1982 (Bell Gardens, Palmdale, Hawaiian Gardens, Lomita, Carson, Rancho Palos Verdes, La Canada Flintridge, Lancaster, and Agoura Hills). Many of these new municipalities were shaped by the confirmed titles to the original Spanish and Mexican ranchos. Indeed, they lay on the landscape in nearly identical distribution to the even earlier Uto-Aztecan tribelets headed by *Tomyaars*.

Richard Nixon called his white suburban constituency the Silent Majority and gave voice to its militarist, anti-radical, anti-civil liberties conservatism. The suburban strategy was more generally a sunbelt strategy, as a chain of sunbelt cities grew: San Diego, Dallas and Houston, Phoenix, Atlanta, Charlotte, and Miami (Lassiter 2007). Whereas Nixon retained key links to the moderate New York Republican regime and its compromise with the welfare statism, Reagan emerged as a paragon of the Republican Right. A true believer, Reagan encapsulated the entire conservative movement into a single message. The election to the White House of Richard Nixon in 1968 and Ronald W. Reagan in 1980 marked the period in which the formerly *regional* political culture of Los Angeles became the *national* culture of the United States (Ethington and Levitus 2009).

The political culture of Los Angeles, then, evolved upward and outward, as the Republican Right. But within the region, a much different story developed. Nixon's rise in the late 1940s and early 1950s was paralleled by a Red Scare purge of New Deal liberals from municipal government. Longtime liberal mayor Fletcher Bowron, who had overseen New Deal liberal policies since his election in 1938, was ousted in 1953 by Norris Poulson, who reversed the public housing policies of his predecessor. He also appointed William Parker, a new apostle of military-style police professionalism, as Chief of Police. Parker put cops in patrol cars to separate them from the people they policed, a formula made familiar to millions by the *Dragnet* television series he helped Jack Webb produce. Poulson was succeeded by Samuel Yorty, a right-wing Democrat who backed Nixon in 1968

and shared his philosophy of evoking fear of racial minorities and urban crime to establish voting majorities. Racial animosity toward minorities distinguished the ideologies of the Poulson and Yorty regimes, a policy enforced by Chief Parker, who opposed race mixing and raided places of entertainment to prevent it. Parker also maintained the Red Squad, an undercover political police unit that infiltrated and monitored left-wing organizations.

Another pivotal change took place in 1960, when Otis Chandler, son of Norman and Dorothy "Buffy" Chandler, ascended the throne of the *Los Angeles Times*' publishers, and took it into the mainstream of American liberal journalism, ending the paper's long reign as a reactionary regional paper. Throughout the 1960s, new critical voices would be heard in the *Times*, which gained in reputation in its national and international coverage.

Despite this dramatic transformation headed by the very namesake of the Otis-Chandler dynasty, the most important political leaders – Poulson, Yorty, and Parker – remained ideal representatives of the Otis-Chandler regime. During the metropolis's most spectacular growth spurt, these local rulers minimized the opportunities of non-whites, just as blacks and Latinos were building the civil rights movement to topple such injustice. The Watts riot exploded in the pinch of this mighty vice and deeply discredited the Otis-Chandler tradition of uncompromising repression. The effect was not immediate, but a new coalition of white liberals, blacks, and Latinos gathered around Tom Bradley, an African American policeman who was elected to the City Council in 1962 and ran for mayor in 1969, narrowly losing to Sam Yorty, who ran a predictable race-baiting campaign. But Bradley beat Yorty in the 1973 rematch and remained in office two decades.

The ironic condition of the Bradley-era portion of the eighth Los Angeles regional regime was epitomized by the 1984 Olympics, crowning Bradley's drive to internationalize Los Angeles. Bradley rightly foresaw that globalization, while undermining manufacturing jobs, would only benefit port cities that could attract the traffic of the Pacific Rim. Accordingly, he launched trade missions to Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Long Beach officials did likewise, floating bonds to build facilities leased to the container shipping giants SeaLand and K-Line. The twin harbor of Los Angeles-Long Beach became China's first US port of call in 1981 (Erie 2004: 90–2).

But the 1984 Olympics was also a spectacular show for that other Angeleno, President Ronald Reagan. It became his ultimate patriotic festival, in a city that was at the very height of its Cold War prosperity, armed and arming the United States to the teeth. With the Soviet Union boycotting the Los Angeles Olympics, the Cold War had reached its climactic moment, and US Olympic Commissioner Peter Ubberoth made that Olympic the new model worldwide: the first actually to turn a profit, thanks to the business model of branding it with corporate sponsorships.

Bradley was a tragic visionary. While he promoted global trade and the associated rise of a new downtown on Bunker Hill, the spatial economy of Reagan's Anti-Great Society policies continued the injustices felt by the city's vast non-white and immigrant working classes. In this, Reagan's policies exacerbated globalizing forces that had begun in the 1970s. The chickens first came home to roost when the Saudis, tutored in the ways of global power by J. Paul Getty and Richard Nixon, led the OPEC embargo of 1973. As Japan began to invade the US steel and auto markets, and as US multinationals discovered how to avoid New Deal-era labor unions by taking their factories abroad, the region's "Fordist" factories began to close. The first to slip away were the branch plants in the old industries: General Motors, Ford, and Goodyear. "Ten of the twelve non-aerospace plants had closed between 1978 and 1982 in the face of foreign competition and rising production costs in Southern California." As the United States "won" the Cold War during the years between the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the next sector to decline was the arsenal of that war. "From 1988 to 1993, California lost 140,000 aerospace jobs, at a time when the state was growing so rapidly that it needed to create 200,000 new jobs a year to stay even." Most of those jobs were in southern California (Cannon 1999: 8–9).

The stress of military-economic demobilization rippled through the economy. The political constellation aligned by Nixon and Reagan pitted white suburbs against policies designed to help the urban working classes. Enforcing the racism evident throughout the Nixon-Reagan era was William Parker's protégé, Daryl Gates, a Los Angeles version of Birmingham's Bull Connor. Insulated from mayor or city council by a "Progressive" city charter that left him with a virtual lifetime appointment, Gates continued to subject the city's broad working-class sections to an oppressive Fort Apache law enforcement policy – Parker's philosophy.

The explosion of the 1992 "civil disturbance" arose from the confluence of these global, national, and local pressures. The conflagration was so extreme that the legitimacy of the William Parker cruiser-based, paramilitary style of policing was finally broken, leading to a protracted period of reform still underway in the early twenty-first century under the leadership of William Bratton, the pioneer of community policing as the former Commissioner of the New York Police Department. The last major repressive prop of the Otis-Chandler regime was finally broken. The curtain did not immediately fall on the eighth regional regime, but its effective power was broken in 1992.

Regime 9: US/Global Networked Neoliberal (1992–Present)

The 1992 Rodney King riot was the terminal heart attack in the unhealthy life of the eighth regional regime (1940–92). The segregationist policies of

the racialist regime had stored mistrust and rage in the vast spaces of neighborhood violence, school failure, and economic abandonment. The civil disturbance was a genuine sociocultural rupture, temporarily leaving the regime in disarray. Its political-cultural infrastructure had been deeply compromised, and it was not obvious which kind of regime might emerge in its place. In large part, the regime change was made necessary by the protracted death of the previous ruling order, which was "hollowed-out" by the migration of its most powerful institutions and individuals to national and global locations. The question "who rules?" in Los Angeles began to mean something very different than it had during the height of the Otis-Chandler regime, when an interlocking directorate of economic and political command posts was highly concentrated within the region. Regional institutions gained global footprints in the seventh and eighth regional regimes, but those institutions became so globalized by the end of the eighth regime, circa 1989–92, that local power become mostly divorced from global power. Angelenos, in other words, have been left to rule themselves now that their progeny have gone off to rule nations and shape the globe.

The plant closures and aerospace decline from the 1970s through the early 1990s did not lead Los Angeles into an across the board "decline," as had been the fate of Detroit and other rustbelt cities. Instead, it prospered in new, often ruthless ways. Major consumer durables such as cars were replaced with industries powered by low-priced immigrant labor, as Los Angeles became the primary US entrepôt of the "new immigration." These immigrants were, of course, among the most entrepreneurial of their native countries: risktakers with means and determination enough to move thousands of miles. They have staffed every type of occupation in a highly diverse economy, from unskilled laborers to semi-skilled needle trade workers, and from domestic service to independent gardeners, shopkeepers, skilled tradesmen, petty manufacturers, professionals, and entertainers.

This post-Fordist economy is certainly global. Steven Erie estimates that "in 2001, upward of one-quarter (or $160 billion) of the Greater Los Angeles' $650 billion economy depended on global trade, up from 13 percent in 1972" (Erie 2004: 211). Low-wage, non-union labor in dispersed, small plants is characteristic of many of its newly globalized sectors, especially apparel, which was the "only manufacturing industry that continued to grow as the California economy declined and its growth was greatest in Los Angeles County, which in 1991 employed 99,000 of the state's 141,000 garment workers" (Cannon 1999: 9).

Vast landscapes of Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Eurasian homeowners represent a middle class of taxpayers and participants in the astonishingly variegated public spheres of the metropolis. Thanks to the victories of the civil rights movement, these immigrants found residential spaces in the now-opened working- and middle-class suburbs to the east of downtown

Los Angeles: the vast "East Side," East LA; Southeast LA, and the San Gabriel Valley. More than twenty of the municipalities in the county are now ruled by Latino, Asian, and other "non-white" city governments. Many municipal spaces are majority-Latino, but even more are highly integrated and diverse (Ethington, Frey, and Myers 2001).

Until the early twenty-first century, however, it was not clear whether the eighth regime's political culture was dead. The triumph in 1994 of Proposition 187, an attempt to deny public services to undocumented immigrants, pointed toward a new wave of repression under the neo-Nixonian policies of Governor Pete Wilson. When a coalition of fearful whites and African Americans elected James Hahn mayor in 2001 over Antonio Villaraigosa, it was not clear if the multiracial acrimony would ever subside. But the 2005 multiethnic support for Villaraoigosa, coupled with a highly responsive, community oriented LAPD under Chief Bratton, seems to indicate that the politics of racial division may have lost its currency with the arrival of the newest center-weight of the political culture, Latino voters.

The collapse of the Parkerian LAPD opened the way to genuine reform of a repressive political economy and the rise of a Latino political resurgence during the ninth regional regime (1992–present). The seeming irreversible rise of Latino politicians, voters, and political discourses poses one of the most remarkable recoveries for a conquered people in American history. The vast majority of Los Angeles' 50 percent Latino population, nearing 5 million persons, are Mexican-born or of Mexican descent. The possibility of a "reconquista" has been seriously discussed, but the metaphor can be carried too far. The Borderland political territory of Los Angeles has cultivated an Angeleno version of *mexicanidad* in American politics. But a new mostly non-white ruling coalition that is bound to characterize the politics of Los Angeles City, its suburbs, and the County, is of a different type than the Otis-Chandler regime.

The most important difference is that the chieftains of the region's most distinctive industries, oil, aircraft, and motion pictures, no longer coincide with the membership of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. Ownership and corporate headquarters of the leading sectors dispersed globally, feeding the regime strength of the United States at a global scale, as it re-headquartered throughout the Sunbelt. Burbank-based Lockheed merged with Martin Marietta in 1995 to become the global giant Lockheed Martin, and shifted headquarters to Bethesda, Maryland, close to the hands that feed it. In 2000, the *Los Angeles Times* was purchased by the Tribune Company of Chicago, ending the long reign of the Chandler family, and ceding control of the dominant voice of the region's public sphere to absentee owners. Motion picture corporations are owned by shifting conglomerates. In 2005, a tsunami-sized echo of Nixon's foreign policy arrived in the form of an offer from the Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC),

which tried to acquire Unocal for between $16 and $18 billion. Provoking a vote by Congress and review by the Bush Administration, this offer was considered a serious threat to the national security of the United States.

Conclusion: The Jaws of *Smilodon*

The present is always in the grip of the past. The Los Angeles past haunts Angelenos in ways that are usually unseen, but felt and understood in everyday interaction and high policy decisions. The trajectory of Los Angeles on the global stage has entered a phase that has been common to many great world cities that also achieved a "golden age" of influence on world affairs, such as fourteenth and fifteenth-century Venice, Elizabethan London, and *fin-de-siècle* Paris or New York.

That period, including both the seventh and the eighth regional regime eras, marked the apogee of "Los Angeles" as a transformative force across the global human world. Once its major innovative sectors – motion pictures/mass culture and aircraft/aerospace – became dispersed and globalized at the end of the eighth regional regime (1941–92), the neat homology between ownership and governance was broken. The Southwest/Borderland context of Los Angeles characterized the political culture of the Otis-Chandler dynasty and its reactionary anti-democratic orientation. When Nixon embodied this philosophy and regional political culture and captured Washington with it over the long haul of 1947–74, he and his movement infected the US political system with a power-concentrating assault on democratic institutions (fully exposed in Watergate). Meanwhile, Ronald Reagan spread the gospel of the idealistic free-enterprise, "neoliberal," Right, riding to international power from his anti-communist leadership of the Screen Actors Guild in 1947–54, to his presidency and the climax of the Cold War (1981–9) on nothing more than the propaganda machine of mass media political culture.

The apotheosis of these two quintessential Angelenos – two of the most powerful men who ever lived – also marked the moment when Los Angeles' political culture became, metonymically, that of the entire nation-state, and even much of the world. The international aerospace industry, the global production of mass media, and this generalization of its media-political culture in the new, Silicon Valley-led Information Society, have deprived Los Angeles of the relative monopoly it held on the leading-edge sectors.

Los Angeles is today ruled by a vast array of county, state, municipal, and other entities; the massive player of Los Angeles City; the LA Unified School District; many major corporations still headquartered there; the occasional eccentric billionaire like Eli Broad; and major labor organizations, led by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. The extraordinary institutional

thickness of the major immigrant enclave communities, such as those in East LA and Koreatown – operating so many transnational ties to sending countries, also tends to hollow-out the metropolis. More interestingly, we could say that rule of this region has flattened-out, dispersed across millions of property owners, actors, and agents. Paradoxically, Los Angeles became so global at the uncommon height of its power that it is now all too common, representing as it does so much of the globe's past.

Notes

1 Until 1825 the Los Angeles River ran mostly east-west, draining through present-day Santa Monica. See map 2, p. 102 in Deverell (2004), after Blake Gumprecht.

2 In contrast to the scattered works on the pre-European period, there is a very large body of scholarship documenting and interpreting the Spanish Colonial period of California history. The following paragraphs are especially indebted to Sandos (2004), Weber (2005), Lightfoot (2005), and Hackel (2005).

3 Mañuel was the son of Cristobal Dominguez, who was the nephew and heir of the original grantee, Juan José Dominguez (Robinson 1939: 14–22).

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Chapter Twelve

Crown Jewels: Infrastructure and Growth

Steven P. Erie and Scott MacKenzie

Los Angeles Growth Machines

How does one account for Los Angeles' improbable yet explosive twentieth-century growth? Although the region was blessed with a temperate climate, it initially lacked the infrastructure (water, energy, a natural harbor, transportation networks, capital) and geographic location (access to national markets, a rural hinterland) thought conducive to growth. How, then, was this self-styled West Coast Chicago built in the first place? For many observers, Los Angeles' secret weapon was leadership. As Roger Lotchin observes, "Perhaps more than any other American city, Los Angeles was the product of a development conspiracy by its leadership" (1992: 68–9).

If Los Angeles' chief early asset was leadership, who were the growth conspirators, and what were their plans for building a great city and region? The conventional wisdom is that business leaders and private development strategies were the central forces shaping growth, particularly in the pre-World War II era (Issel 1988; Davis 1990). For example, Robert Fogelson (1967), the leading chronicler of the political economy of early Los Angeles, emphasizes the overweening power of the business community – particularly the *Los Angeles Times*, the Chamber of Commerce, and real estate developers – in shaping the region's late nineteenth and early twentieth-century development.

Marc Weiss (1987) and John Logan and Harvey Molotch (1987) have pointed out how real estate developers and rentier interests historically have shaped urban growth, especially in the West. Nowhere did this appear more evident than in Los Angeles. As William Friedricks (1992) argues, transportation baron Henry E. Huntington was the region's private-sector equivalent to New York's Robert Moses. Whereas Moses used public authority to shape an entire metropolitan region (Caro 1975), Huntington

used private authority to similar effect. The wealthy Huntington's well-oiled private development machine started with trolleys but quickly spread to real estate and utilities. Before the age of the automobile, Huntington's sprawling empire of trolley-connected suburbs gave the area its decentralized character. Huntington's privately owned electrical power firm supplied energy for both his trolley lines and his residential customers.

There were other visionary private entrepreneurs who linked infrastructure provision to property values and regional growth. The *Los Angeles Times*' Harrison Gray Otis and Harry Chandler and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce had even more imaginative visions of how infrastructure – especially an imported water supply and harbor facilities – could develop the region, albeit at public expense. While possessing motive and vision, they lacked the capacity for large-scale infrastructure development. In the end it was huge public infrastructure investments that provided the foundation for modern-day Los Angeles, allowing it to become a regional imperium and later global city. The Los Angeles growth story is as much about local state capitalism as private entrepreneurs transforming an undeveloped region (Erie 1992, 2001; Gerschenkron 1962).

Crown Jewels

By focusing primarily upon private-sector growth elites and private development strategies, the received account seriously underestimates the role of the local state and of public actors, particularly bureaucrats, in shaping Los Angeles' development from the Progressive Era onward. An unusually large, powerful, and increasingly autonomous local-state apparatus – requiring voter approval at each step of the way – was constructed in the early twentieth century to provide the necessary infrastructure for growth. At the heart of the local developmental state were the city's three semi-autonomous proprietary departments – Water and Power (created in 1902), Harbor (1909), and Airports (1928, achieving proprietary status in 1947). The local developmental state also included nearby Long Beach's Harbor Department (1907, achieving proprietary status in 1921) and the mammoth Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, a regional special district created in 1928 to provide a supplemental water supply for Los Angeles and its suburbs.

Massive public projects – the so-called "crown jewels" – supplied the three essential pillars of regional development: the man-made Ports of San Pedro Bay (the world's largest such harbor complex); the Owens River and Colorado River Aqueducts (among the most complex and expensive water engineering feats of their age); and the Department of Water and Power's (DWP) hydroelectric plants (the largest municipal power system in the nation) generating the cheap energy needed to attract Eastern industry

after World War I. The federal government actively assisted Los Angeles in building its public works projects. These projects underwrote Los Angeles' explosive population growth, early industrialization and territorial expansion, and, later, suburban development. They were an essential precondition to private development such as the region's burgeoning real estate market (Clark 1983). In the postwar era, Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) would become another regional crown jewel.

Los Angeles' version of Progressive Era state-assisted capitalism also displayed growing independence from the business community. Although an instrumentalist theory (wherein economic elites control government) best describes the initial stages of local-state building, a more autonomous model better describes the behavior of the city's development bureaucracies after World War I. Powerful public agencies such as the DWP fashioned political alliances with politicians and voters to successfully extend the city's water and power systems (and the department's authority) in the face of strong opposition from private utilities, the influential and then arch-conservative *Los Angeles Times*, and business organizations such as the anti-labor Merchants and Manufacturers Association. Los Angeles early experience with bureaucratic machines (Lowi 1967) shows that the state cannot always be reduced to instrumental terms (Block 1977; Weir and Skocpol 1985; McDonald 1989).

This chapter surveys critical work on the historical development of Los Angeles' public water, power, port, and airport systems. We focus on two questions. First, given the dominant narrative of private power and interests shaping modern Los Angeles, what governmental and non-governmental actors have influenced Los Angeles' public enterprises? While the early twentieth century seems a saga of business interests, bureaucrats, politicians, and voters, the late twentieth century is a much more pluralist tale, with community, labor, minority, and environmental groups becoming major actors. Although mixed governance (e.g., formal governmental institutions and informal political actors) has a long history in Los Angeles, public-private infrastructure partnerships have changed dramatically as the city's power structure has shifted from a business-dominated elitist model to a more pluralist one featuring diverse actors and voices armed, at the very least, with veto power.

Second, what have been the effects of Los Angeles' public enterprises on southern California's spatial and economic development? Water has played a key role in both Los Angeles' early municipal territorial expansion and the region's subsequent suburban development and political fragmentation. The Ports of San Pedro Bay (Los Angeles and Long Beach) and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) have played a major role in globalizing the southern California economy. Los Angeles' public enterprises even cast a long shadow over nearby San Diego, which vitally depends upon Los Angeles' infrastructure.

Ghosts of *Chinatown*: Water and Power

The region's fundamental growth-limiting reality is its semiarid climate and the omnipresent need for water. The modern southern California water saga begins with the City of Los Angeles and its still-contested quest for new water supplies in the early twentieth century. Los Angeles water chief William Mulholland, working closely with former mayor Fred Eaton, pioneered the development of imported water supplies from the faraway Owens Valley. The 233-mile long Los Angeles Aqueduct was completed in 1913, ensuring Los Angeles' territorial and population growth (Mulholland 2000).

From its inception the aqueduct project was mired in controversy. The conventional wisdom is imaginatively encapsulated in Roman Polanski's famed *noir* movie *Chinatown* (1974), depicting a secretive and incestuous Los Angeles water/land developer conspiracy. The conspiracy theory has informed generations of scholarship. The received account also depicts the "rape of the Owens Valley" as Los Angeles' water diversions seemingly ruined the livelihoods of valley farmers. For example, Carey McWilliams (1973) and Marc Reisner (1993) depict Los Angeles' greedy land barons orchestrating the Owens Valley aqueduct project for profit on their San Fernando Valley land purchases while ruining a pastoral and unsuspecting agricultural community.

The *Chinatown* conspiracy theory, though, has come under sustained criticism. Abraham Hoffman (1981) offers an impressive and energetic demolition of conspiracy theories surrounding the formative decades of the DWP. Even William Kahrl (1982) – no admirer of the Los Angeles growth machine – admits that no conspiracy was necessary since businesspersons and bureaucrats acted independently out of a common booster mindset. Thus, there was no government plot to aggrandize land speculators. As the aqueduct project was taking shape, the land barons positioned themselves to make a speculative profit when the water flowed. What they did was exploit insider knowledge (most likely provided by water commissioner Moses H. Sherman in an egregious breach of public trust for personal gain) to purchase land before the project was publicly announced. The ostensible "rape of the Owens Valley" has also been questioned. Gary Libecap (2007) shows that Owens Valleyites did substantially better by selling their land and water rights to Los Angeles than if they had stayed in farming and ranching. These were voluntary transactions; no land was purchased under threat of eminent domain. Further, most lands were immediately leased back to their original owners for farming or livestock grazing.

Other historians have focused on the project's governmental side. For Kevin Starr (1990), Los Angeles is the classic story of water imperialism. He offers a tale of ruthless municipal realpolitik as Los Angeles municipal authorities secretly bought up Owens Valley water rights, publicly financed

and built the world's then-largest and most expensive aqueduct, and used its surplus water as an irresistible force for territorial expansion. To acquire water, Los Angeles created a formidable public development machine – the Department of Water and Power. Starr sees in this municipal bureaucracy the potential for a political life of its own: "The Los Angeles board [of water commissioners] was soon to become a government within the government or, as many believed, the real government of Los Angeles" (1990: 47). Despite the DWP's potential power, Starr furnishes only occasional evidence of the water board's independence from the business community. He too readily accepts the conventional wisdom that early Los Angeles was firmly ruled by a powerful, tight-knit business oligarchy. For Starr, Los Angeles' public development machines largely were guided by private hands and interests.

In the Progressive Era the DWP became a potent and increasingly autonomous political machine, using its employees' association as a precinct organization to secure voter approval of water and power bonds. Public power was the chief catalyst for DWP's growing political prowess. While the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations generally supported water bonds, much of the business community turned its back on municipally supplied power. Understandably, the city's private utilities led the opposition. They were joined by the *Los Angeles Times* and other newspapers, the anti-labor Merchants and Manufacturers Association, the Los Angeles Realty Board, and, importantly, the leading downtown banks, investment firms, and insurance companies. Conservative ideology fueled much of the anti-public-power crusade (Ostrom 1953; Erie 1992).

In response to the opposition of the "Power Trust," public power supporters counter-organized. In a series of bruising electoral battles, the DWP raised the public capital needed to build and expand the Owens River aqueduct system, to purchase the city's private utilities, build the nation's largest municipally owned hydroelectric system, and secure water and power from the federal Hoover Dam project. The DWP's electoral prowess extended to charter amendments designed to enlarge the agency's autonomy and authority (Erie 1992). From 1906 to the mid-1930s, the DWP was at the core of local politics, helping to elect pro-public-power mayors and city council members, who, in turn, appointed friendly water and power commissioners such as noted reformer John Randolph Haynes (Sitton 1992). The DWP also helped breathe life into the city's moribund labor movement, which had been gutted by a well-organized union-busting campaign. Organized labor embraced municipal power for its union-contract and job-creation possibilities.

The DWP profoundly shaped the City of the Angels. Armed with abundant Owens Valley water supplies, the city annexed thirsty neighboring communities. By the late 1920s, the city's boundaries had mushroomed from half the size of San Francisco to nearly ten times its Bay

Area rival – 442 square miles. Imported water would allow the city to grow to a population of 2 million. The San Fernando Valley – Los Angeles' Louisiana Purchase – was annexed in 1915. Soon there were Valley complaints of inadequate city representation and services. In the 1920s Los Angeles' city charter change from at-large to district councilmanic elections was designed in part to soothe restive Valley residents by providing greater formal representation. However, growing resentments would finally erupt in the late 1990s in a powerful movement seeking separate Valley cityhood. Water and power reliability and rates for the proposed Valley city would become important issues in the secession campaign.

The public utility machine helped pave the way for Los Angeles' rapid industrialization after World War I. Inexpensive water became available for industrial use. The city's public power rates were the nation's lowest, acting as a magnet for industry. DWP bureaucrats actively lobbied eastern manufacturers for local branch plants. Airplane manufacturing – civilian and later military – was a key nascent industry that took advantage of Los Angeles' business-friendly public infrastructure. The region's economy prospered and diversified. With the coming of World War II, the region's newly energized manufacturing base became dependent upon military spending. As Roger Lotchin (1992) has shown, the mighty military growth machine created powerful metropolitan-wide growth coalitions, uniting city and suburb, business and labor, and even public and private utilities.

While there is valuable scholarship on the early years of the DWP, the Owens Valley controversy, and the department's impacts upon politics and the economy, there is little written on water and power issues in the late twentieth century. This was a momentous period for the DWP, as it faced growing environmental pressures both in the Owens Valley and locally to reduce imported water supplies and achieve greater conservation; determined mayors such as Tom Bradley (1973–93) and Richard Riordan (1993–2001) seeking to rein in the once-independent agency and use its surplus funds to balance the city budget; the challenge of coping with state electricity deregulation; and the growing influence of community groups, particularly newly formed Neighborhood Councils, over proposed DWP rate increases.

Under Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, elected in 2005, the DWP launched an ambitious "green" energy initiative to replace fossil-fuel based supplies with solar power. Under Los Angeles' new progressive regime, the business community and bureaucrats are less influential actors as the clout of environmental, labor, minority, and community groups has grown. Given new stewardship and a more environmentally oriented mission, there is opportunity for a major scholarly reassessment of the still *Chinatown*-tainted DWP.

Also suffering from the *Chinatown* legacy is the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), the giant regional water wholesaler

created in 1928 by Los Angeles and its suburbs to provide the region a supplemental water supply from the Colorado River (Fulton 1997). By 2007, MWD had grown to serve over 18 million residents in 300 cities and communities in southern California, from Ventura to San Diego Counties.

Early on, a companion conspiracy theory crystallized concerning MWD as a new metropolitan "shadow government" doing the bidding of Los Angeles' real-estate interests and the city's "water imperialism." Robert Gottlieb has been an influential popularizer of this theory. In *A Life of Its Own* (1988), he argues that developers captured control of the MWD board of directors and fashioned policies favorable to suburban development. In *Thirst for Growth* (1991), Gottlieb and Margaret Fitzsimmons claim that while the great real-estate subdividers were prominent, their hold over MWD was circumscribed by Los Angeles' imperial will to dominate its smaller neighbors. However, recent scholarship calls into question whether MWD was so firmly controlled by developers or Los Angeles interests. Los Angeles heavily subsidized early water provision to outlying undeveloped areas primarily to encourage their joining MWD and sharing the fiscal burden. Los Angeles also agreed to voting rules that limited its influence relative to smaller agencies (Erie 2006).

Admittedly, a powerful public-private partnership, involving business and municipal interests, created MWD. The original idea for a region-wide special district came from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce's Water Committee, headed by geologist Joe Jensen (who would later serve as MWD's long-serving and imperious board chair, 1949–74). The Chamber lent its full support in Sacramento to secure passage of the MWD Act. Later, the Chamber would actively campaign for voter approval of the $220 million general-obligation bond needed to construct the Colorado River Aqueduct. The DWP also strongly endorsed the District proposal. For Los Angeles water chief William Mulholland, Colorado River water would allow the city and region to continue growing. Los Angeles filed for Colorado River water rights which were subsequently given to MWD. The DWP also wanted the hydroelectric power generated by a high dam in Boulder Canyon. Finally, suburban communities – particularly Pasadena – saw the need for new regional water supplies independent of those controlled by Los Angeles. The Chamber and the Cities of Los Angeles and Pasadena formed a close working relationship to successfully launch MWD (Ostrom 1953; Hundley 2001).

Soon thereafter, MWD – like its DWP counterpart – began to resemble a bureaucratic machine as engineers and lawyers drove the agency's agenda and policies. In the early years, as it built an aqueduct, reservoirs, a regional distribution system, and filtration plants, MWD's top leadership was composed of engineers. Since the 1980s, as infrastructure projects have diminished, MWD's general managers typically have been lawyers, dealing with complex federal, state, and regional political environments and legal issues

involving water transfers and rights, environmental regulation, and governance (O'Connor 1998a, 1998b; Hundley 2001; Erie 2006). Over the years, MWD's regional growth-oriented mission has changed. Once derided as the "Sultan of Sprawl," MWD in the early twenty-first century is being hailed as a model of environmental stewardship, promoting conservation and reclamation projects for its 26 member agencies. Once derided as a developer's agency (Fulton 1997), MWD's water planning process now features diverse stakeholders including business, labor, environmental and community groups, agricultural interests, and state and federal agencies.

The Metropolitan Water District has profoundly shaped the face of southern California, including San Diego, which joined MWD in 1946. MWD broke Los Angeles' water monopoly and allowed fast-paced suburbanization. Newly incorporated suburbs created water districts and annexed themselves to MWD, not to the City of Los Angeles. Los Angeles' municipal boundaries (470 square miles) are basically the same as they were when MWD was created. While scholars have explained southern California's extensive political fragmentation and suburbanization (Bollens 1997) in terms of consumers choosing optimal bundles of public services (Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren 1961), or the municipal incorporation incentives of the "Lakewood Plan" (city contracts for county services) and situs-based sales tax revenues (Miller 1981), it is water that has most profoundly shaped the region's political/spatial development.

In effect, MWD created a "water wall" around the City of Los Angeles, allowing suburban development to proceed. MWD's low-cost imported water supplies (the Colorado River and, since the early 1970s, the State Water Project bringing water from northern California) fueled southern California's explosive postwar population growth. The dueling regional hegemons – Los Angeles and San Diego – have fought fierce battles in the MWD boardroom over governance and representation, water rights and rates, and project financing, with Los Angeles historically enjoying superior influence (Erie 2006).

Global Gateways: Ports and Airports

Southern California's other crown jewels – the Ports of San Pedro Bay and Los Angeles International Airport – were also improbable and remarkable achievements. They too reveal a similar historical trajectory of mixed governance. In the beginning, private interests predominated. Local business groups such as the Chamber played major roles in the creation and early development of the region's global gateways. New and durable public-private partnerships formed as bureaucrats fashioned close working relationships with their clientele groups – the shippers, carriers, and airlines – and with the federal government. In the late twentieth century, this system of bureaucratic clientelism

underwent challenge by community, labor, minority, and environmental groups seeking greater influence in planning and policymaking.

Unlike the Los Angeles water saga, the port and airport story is much less understood and still largely confined to official histories commissioned by the agencies themselves (Queenan 1983, 1986; Moran 1993). The narrative of Los Angeles' global gateways and the region's belated but rapid rise as a major global trade center imperfectly fits into accounts of southern California globalization offered by Los Angeles School theorists (Soja 1989; Davis 1990; Scott and Soja 1996; cf. Erie 2004).

What is best told is the story of Los Angeles' early harbor development – a riveting tale of urban rivalries, railroad hegemony, and political revolt (Deverell 1994). In the 1870s, after the transcontinental rail line was completed, Los Angeles and San Diego (120 miles away) fiercely battled to secure the rail connection to San Francisco that would ensure regional growth and supremacy. San Diego held the early advantage with a natural harbor, thought to be a prime lure. Not so Los Angeles, which only had shallow sloughs and unprotected open-sea anchorages. Yet, by 1876, Los Angeles had secured the vital rail connection to San Francisco and the East. As a price for placing a trunk line through Los Angeles, the Southern Pacific Railroad demanded a king's ransom – a subsidy equal to 5 percent of the county's assessed valuation – and control of the local railroad linking then-landlocked Los Angeles to San Pedro's privately owned harbor. Believing that "Los Angeles must place herself on the world's highway" (Nadeau 1948: 85), local voters approved the deal.

This proved to be a Faustian bargain. The economic benefits were immediate. The Southern Pacific connection ensured Los Angeles' dominance over regional competitors such as San Diego. Owning vast tracts of southern California land, the railroad seemed a willing promotional partner with local boosters. But the Southern Pacific monopolized the southern California transportation network and soon saddled the region with high shipping rates and poor service (Starr 1985). Not merely content to exercise economic power, the railroad created a powerful bipartisan political machine to control Los Angeles' destiny. However, the city's business elite, led by *Times* publisher Harrison Gray Otis and the Chamber of Commerce, did not share the vision of a railroad-controlled Los Angeles.

The epic free-harbor fight of the 1890s galvanized local business opposition to the railroad. When the Southern Pacific promoted a railroad-controlled harbor at Santa Monica, the Los Angeles business community countered with a proposal for a municipally owned harbor at San Pedro. With rival railroads as allies, local businesses embraced municipal ownership – and the powers of the local state – as a counter to Southern Pacific dominance (Deverell 1994). After a lengthy battle, the San Pedro site received needed federal assistance for a breakwater and harbor dredging. Thereafter, the business community strongly supported Los Angeles' annexation of

San Pedro and Wilmington, local control of the tidelands, the creation of a Harbor Department, and the voter-approved bonds needed to fund port development (Queenan 1983). Arguing that political reform was good for business, Los Angeles' Progressives proselytized the local business establishment in their successful campaign to end railroad political rule (Culton 1978; Issel 1988).

Los Angeles port officials emulated their DWP colleagues in securing passage of voter-approved city charter amendments enhancing their authority and autonomy. In 1926 the Los Angeles Harbor Department achieved further autonomy with financial self-sufficiency. Bond elections were no longer needed and local business influence declined. The port could now devote its energies to serving its customer base of shippers and rail carriers. An early example of new public-private collaboration was the 1920s-era creation of the Harbor Trunk Line Railroad, jointly owned by the Harbor Department and its old railroad antagonists, including the Southern Pacific. This became a prototype for later public-private port-rail partnerships such as the 1990s-era Alameda Corridor rail project linking the ports with the downtown rail yards (Erie 2004).

The Long Beach business community played a similar supportive role in that city's lengthy transition from private to public port development (Queenan 1986). By the early 1930s, Long Beach had developed a port system comparable to Los Angeles', although on a much smaller scale. Its waterfront and tidelands were finally under public ownership and control. In organization and function, its semi-autonomous Harbor Department closely resembled Los Angeles' proprietary departments, complete with substantial city charter protections and powers. Oil revenues ultimately made Long Beach a true competitor for San Pedro Bay trade. It could offer lower prices and thereby lure port business from its larger neighbor. Competition between the ports for trade and shippers reinforced bureaucratic clientelism.

In the sixty-year period from the New Deal through the administration of Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley (1973–93), the region's ports were fundamentally transformed from small-scale, local-market-oriented facilities to major wartime arsenals of democracy and, finally, to world-class trade portals serving huge regional, national, and global markets. The hallmark of the Ports of San Pedro Bay during these years was their public entrepreneurship, which featured long-term strategic planning and development, agile responses to market forces such as to globalization and containerization, and public-private partnerships (Erie 2004).

Starting in the 1970s, port planning and policymaking became more complex and pluralistic, in part due to new state and federal fiscal and environmental policies. In 1978 California voters approved Proposition 13, which brought property tax relief but threatened infrastructure financing. State and federal environmental initiatives empowered community and

environmental groups to challenge port mega-projects on the basis of their environmental impact. Starting with Mayor Tom Bradley, the port governance began to reflect the city's racial diversity. Enhancing their control, Los Angeles mayors slowly reined in the city's semi-autonomous proprietary departments.

By the early twenty-first century, protecting the environment and nearby communities became central parts of the port mission. Los Angeles Mayors James Hahn and Antonio Villaraigosa pushed "green" port plans designed to mitigate the growth's adverse environmental impacts. Long Beach launched its own green port initiative. Most contentious was a costly proposal to replace older, polluting diesel trucks with newer, cleaner ones. While a labor-environmental alliance in Los Angeles sought to phase out independent contractors (many of them poorly paid immigrants) with unionized truckers, Long Beach balked. In Los Angeles, a new city charter enshrined local community influence with Neighborhood Councils and a local residency requirement for one of the five harbor commissioners.

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) followed a similar flight path. In 1926 the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, recognizing a burgeoning market in the aircraft manufacturing industry, began lobbying the City Council for the siting and development of a municipal airport. The economic potential of aviation led several groups of local businessmen to promote their own sites for a future airport. One site actively promoted by local boosters was a relatively small 3,000-acre swath of bean field known as Mines Field. Chosen by the City Council, this site would become the future home of LAX. Like the ports, early airport development required substantial federal assistance. During the 1930s the city purchased the then-leased airport site to meet federal requirements for WPA grants. During wartime, the federal government assumed control of the airport and improved the landing field.

In the postwar era, the city's business, civic, and labor groups actively supported LAX modernization and expansion. The airport encouraged bureaucratic clientelism, in which the airlines received low landing fees and other concessions as growth inducements. However, beginning in the 1960s, adversarial stakeholders emerged. As LAX expanded to meet the needs of the jet age, nearby communities organized to oppose airport growth (Friedman 1978). In the 1990s a new LAX Master Plan effort was stymied despite strong business and labor support. Community, environmental, and minority groups successfully raised the issue of "environmental justice" involving the disproportionate adverse environmental impacts – air pollution, noise, and traffic – of airport expansion upon nearby minority communities (Erie 2004). Mayor Villaraigosa has pushed a "regional" approach, shifting air traffic from congested LAX to less-utilized outlying airports.

Los Angeles' global gateways also have played major roles in the region's economic development and restructuring. Los Angeles' hard-won early investment in a municipally owned harbor quickly led to a world-class port. By 1932 the Port of Los Angeles was first on the Pacific Coast and third nationwide (behind New York and Philadelphia) in total tonnage. By World War II, Los Angeles had become the shipping and wholesale center not only for southern California but for the entire Southwest. In the postwar era, the expanding Ports of San Pedro Bay became the nation's largest port complex, serving as potent engines of trade and globalization.

Along with LAX, the ports helped cushion the impact of the 1990s-era recession as the region shifted from a defense-based to a trade-based economy. By the early twenty-first century, international trade was a driving force of the regional economy. Over one-quarter of the metropolitan Los Angeles economy depended upon global trade, up from one-eighth in the 1970s. With its superior global gateways and rail connections, Los Angeles had become the nation's leading Pacific Rim gateway. Ironically, San Diego, which early on enjoyed an infrastructure advantage, found itself depending upon rival Los Angeles' global gateways because of chronic failure to expand its limited port, airport, and rail facilities.

From Progressivism to progressivism

Los Angeles' crown jewels have served as major catalysts for Los Angeles' extraordinary twentieth-century growth and globalization, both city and region. Integral elements of the region's once-vaunted growth machine (Fulton 1997), they are critical markers of Los Angeles' mixed governance system and of its transformation from early twentieth-century Progressivism to early twenty-first century progressivism. After 1900 an entrepreneurial growth regime, featuring a small, caretaker local state controlled by the Southern Pacific political machine, was replaced by a Progressive-era regime featuring a powerful state apparatus propelling growth (Erie 1992). The business community played a key role in constructing the new state-centered regime and providing early direction. Los Angeles' business leaders, as elsewhere, also spearheaded and shaped early city planning efforts (Fogelson 1967; Blackford 1993). Federal financial assistance underwrote Los Angeles' ambitious public infrastructure projects, much as it later would with the region's housing and suburban development (Hise 1997).

Like the sorcerer's apprentice, Los Angeles' public enterprises soon developed a life of their own. Bureaucrats helped rewrite the governance rules to achieve semi-autonomy and fashioned powerful alliances with their chief customers – e.g., the shippers and airlines – in the process weakening oversight by elected officials and voters. By the late twentieth century, new

players contested once-unchallenged business and bureaucratic hegemony. Los Angeles' new progressive coalition featured minorities, labor, environmentalists, and neighborhood activists. They challenged new infrastructure projects, championed environmental and community stewardship, and focused more on the quality of life than growth. In response, mega-projects like the LAX Master Plan stalled, and public enterprises embraced a more environmentally and community friendly agenda.

The crown jewels are keys to understanding the spatial and economic development of Los Angeles and indeed all of southern California. Water profoundly shaped the region's growth and political fragmentation. The global gateways ushered in the new global economy. Yet there is a growing question whether municipal public enterprises can meet daunting twenty-first century challenges. Harking back to the Progressive era, California cities chose municipal rather than regional institutions for infrastructure provision because of expansive home rule and financing powers. Thus, the Los Angeles and Long Beach port and airport systems remain in municipal hands while their reach is regional, national, and even global.

Although municipal institutions early on gave Los Angeles an economic advantage, local public bureaucracies are especially sensitive to parochial interests. Susceptible to NIMBY (Not-In-My-Backyard) pressures, can city agencies like the LA airport system continue to effectively serve regional and even larger needs? Or should the preferred governance model (such as for airports) be regional or even mega-regional, similar to the Metropolitan Water District, which serves member agencies in six southern California counties ranging from Ventura to San Diego? These are major governance challenges confronting the city and region in the early twenty-first century. The collapse in 2008 of a revived regional airport authority (composed of Los Angeles city and four surrounding counties), which tried to decentralize the region's air traffic, is hardly reassuring.

Given the importance of the crown jewels, the uneven and dated historiography is surprising. While the early railroad wars and Owens Valley water controversy remain important topics, the new scholarly challenge is to build upon this valuable record and engage and inform the infrastructure and growth debates and stakeholders of the twenty-first century.

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Chapter Thirteen

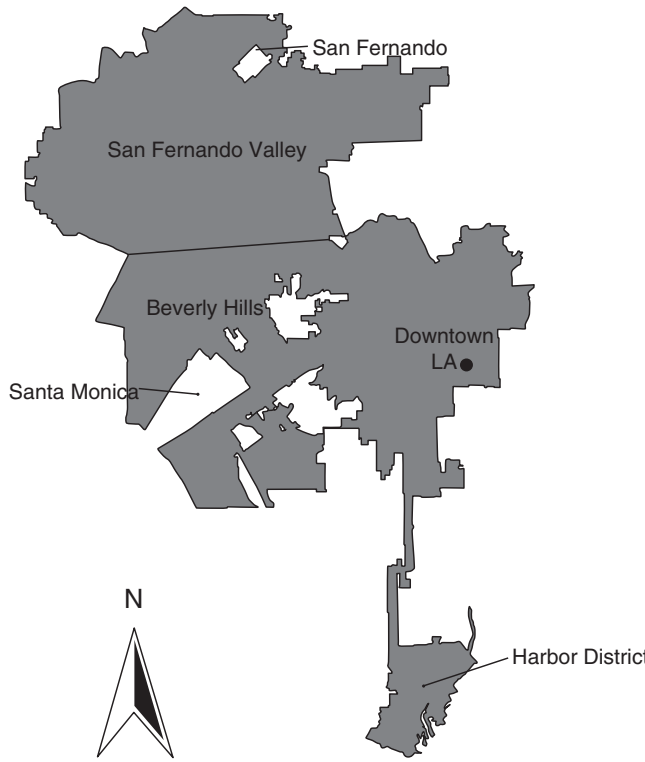
Consolidation, Fragmentation, and New Fiscal Federalism

Tom Hogen-Esch

Introduction

This chapter explores the history of municipal incorporation between 1900 and 2008. My analysis is divided into three eras: consolidation, fragmentation, and the new fiscal federalism. It begins with the consolidation of the City of Los Angeles and its surrounding suburbs between 1915 and 1930, achieved through the ingenuity of city boosters who wrested control over a distant water supply. In the 1940s, Los Angeles relinquished control over water resources, then ushered in a new era of suburban political fragmentation. During the post-World War II economic boom, citizen preferences for local control and state government reforms promoted the proliferation of municipal governments. Two reforms in particular, the Lakewood Plan during the 1950s, and the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, created powerful incentives favoring incorporation. Beginning in the 1990s, fiscal crisis resulting from Proposition 13 and economic recession led state government to pass the 1992 "revenue neutrality" law, preventing future incorporations from negatively impacting county revenues. The new fiscal structure has had a chilling effect on incorporations. Since 1993 eleven mostly affluent cities have incorporated in California – only four in southern California.

Recently, several efforts to promote fragmentation through municipal secession have emerged. Most notably, San Fernando Valley activists successfully changed state law to make viable independence from the City of Los Angeles. In addition, the current era of fiscal federalism has been a period of unprecedented immigration to southern California, mostly from Latin America and Asia. In light of these trends it is instructive to examine a current effort to incorporate East Los Angeles, the historic center of Mexican American politics and culture in Los Angeles. The case illustrates



Map 13.1 Fragmentation of the Los Angeles region.

both the rising political expectations of Latinos in southern California and the fiscal barriers to incorporation in post-revenue neutrality California.

The Consolidation of the City of Los Angeles (1915–1930)

Southern California, a metropolitan region anchored by a geographically large, multiethnic city of nearly 4 million residents within a five-county megalopolis, provides an ideal case study of all three major trends in the history and politics of municipal incorporation. The five-county region contains 181 cities, with 88 independent cities in Los Angeles County, 34 in Orange County, 25 in Riverside County, 24 in San Bernardino County, and 10 in Ventura County. In *The Fragmented Metropolis* (1967) Robert Fogelson traced the historical and cultural origins of the region's rapid population and economic growth from the American conquest to 1930. Spurred by the ingenuity of local boosters, southern California emerged as one of America's most suburban, most spatially and politically fragmented metropolitan areas.[1] Fogelson's analysis centered on the profound impact of

Map 13.2 Boundaries of the City of Los Angeles and selected communities.

Midwestern immigrants who valued private enterprise, local control, ethnic segregation, and above all, a suburban ideal. These early Midwestern immigrants implanted their cultural ideals into virtually all aspects of political and social life in Southern California.[2]

Despite political forces favoring fragmentation, the City of Los Angeles imposed itself as the political, economic, and social anchor for the region – indeed, as something of a metropolitan government. Bigger and Kitchen (1952), Ostrom (1953), Crouch and Dinerman (1963), and many others have told the story of Los Angeles' spectacular growth from dusty Spanish pueblo to a mega-city spanning nearly 500 square miles. Early Los Angeles boosters gaining control of a distant water supply is now legend, as the construction of the Owens Valley Aqueduct and a deep water harbor at San Pedro provided the necessary infrastructure for the city's great annexation campaigns between 1915 and 1927.[3]

Given the overwhelming preferences for local control, that the City of Los Angeles became a quasi-regional government is all the more remarkable. But by the 1930s, the forces driving consolidation were being replaced by organic demands for greater local control. Water – the main catalyst for

the city's territorial growth – now became the reason for halting expansion. With the completion of the Metropolitan Water District-controlled California Aqueduct in 1941 and the arrival of water from the Colorado River, Los Angeles no longer had the only hand on the faucet. With their inclusion in the governance structure of the Metropolitan Water District, suburban communities that had previously considered joining the city could now assert their political independence (Crouch and Dinerman 1963; Miller 1981; Erie 2006).

By the 1950s, municipal incorporations and annexations from Burbank in the north to Long Beach in the south effectively blockaded the City of Los Angeles from further expansion (Miller 1981). Near Los Angeles, only cities with reliably independent water sources, such as Beverly Hills, San Fernando, Santa Monica, and Culver City, were able to maintain their independence. Although the political wall around the city was not yet complete, the fierce resurgence of suburban independence set the tone for the region's future politics.

State Government: Promoting Fragmentation (1953–1992)

Prior to the 1950s, state government had played a fairly hands-off role in shaping the governance structure of California's metropolitan areas. To the extent that it was involved, state law had made incorporation fairly easy. California's permissive incorporation statutes required little more of a community seeking incorporation than to have at least 500 inhabitants (Miller 1981).[4] Beginning in the early 1950s, however, state government began to assume an increasingly active role in promoting municipal incorporation. One reform, known as the "Lakewood Plan," made it cheaper and easier to incorporate by allowing cities to contract for services with county governments. A second reform, Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs), intended to slow incorporations, did little to bring coherency to the incorporation process. A third reform, passage of Proposition 13, injected great momentum into municipal incorporation in California. In particular, the Lakewood Plan and Proposition 13 created fiscal incentives for incorporation voters found almost impossible to resist.

The Lakewood Plan was named for the first city to incorporate cheaply by contracting critical services to the County of Los Angeles. The logic underlying the plan would allow communities on Los Angeles' southern and eastern periphery to take advantage of existing county infrastructure in the provision of police, fire, sewage, parks, and other municipal-type services without having to pay for new municipal bureaucracies. The plan was billed as a "win-win" for both the incorporating community and the County of Los Angeles, which stood to attract thousands of new customers while generating additional tax revenues. As Gary Miller noted in

Cities by Contract (1981), state government's 1956 Bradley Burns Act, which established a site-based system of sales tax collection, added additional impetus to Lakewood Plan incorporations. Since 1956, California cities have been entitled to garner 1 percent of sales tax revenue generated within their boundaries, creating yet another economic incentive for incorporation.[5]

Miller provided the first systematic examination of the economic and social implications of Lakewood Plan incorporations. He found the primary goal of Lakewood-style incorporation to be protection of local tax bases from annexation by Long Beach and Los Angeles, cities with aging infrastructures, shrinking economies, and poorer residents. Between 1954 and 1970, thirty-two new cities were formed in Los Angeles County, all but one relying primarily on Lakewood-style contracting for the delivery of urban services. The proliferation of Lakewood Plan cities in southeastern Los Angeles County sparked a mass exodus of middle-class whites from older cities to these new low-tax communities. The end result, Miller says, "benefited middle and upper income groups at the expense of those low income individuals who were increasingly concentrated in low resource cities" (Miller 1981: 1196).

Since the 1950s the Lakewood Plan has served as a primary strategy for Californians seeking incorporation as a means to control tax revenues and land use. Although not a formal action by state government, the Lakewood Plan represented "bottom up" reform that drove incorporation across the state. Allowing counties – administrative agencies of state government – to play such a critical role in urban service delivery represented tacit state support for urban fragmentation.

Economic expansion following World War II encouraged immigration and population growth in California. Between 1940 and 1960 the state's population more than doubled to 15,717,204. Many observers implicated the state's liberal incorporation statutes as a cause for the rapid and chaotic formation of new cities. Planners and environmentalists identified incorporation standards as a contributing factor in an emerging environmental problem, urban sprawl. In 1963, California passed the Knox-Nisbet Act, delegating the state government's power to regulate municipal incorporation to Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs). Essentially a hybrid between a local and state government agency, the primary purpose of LAFCOs was to mitigate urban sprawl by encouraging a more orderly formation of local governments.[6]

Since their inception, LAFCOs have provided a standardized process for incorporation, annexation, and other boundary changes. However, as Miller (1981) and Pincetl (1999) note, the hope that LAFCOs would provide regional bureaucratic oversight to a process controlled by special interests has largely gone unfulfilled. Pincetl finds that LAFCOs have had only minimal effect on either slowing the pace of incorporations or protecting

open space from development. Pincetl concludes that development interests in particular have simply adapted their power and influence to the new bureaucratic arrangements. State government's decision to allow LAFCOs to be run by appointees of city and county governments has ensured that these governments will likely never lead to regional decision-making. Moreover, Pincetl finds that LAFCOs, unknown to most Californians, are largely "insulated from the public and sheltered from any direct, democratic accountability" (Pincetl 1999: 143). California's experiment with LAFCOs reveals the extent to which state policies intended to curb municipal incorporation in theory have had little or no effect in practice. As Pincetl notes, the tools of incorporation have largely remained in the hands of California's local growth machines: "Instead of solving problems of growth, LAFCOs perpetuated them" (p. 143).[7]

The next major event in municipal incorporation took place at the state ballot box around an issue seemingly unrelated to incorporation: property taxes. In a period of rapidly escalating property values, the 1978 tax revolt measure Proposition 13 sent shockwaves through the corridors of state and local government, helped to usher in Reagan-style small government and deregulation, and effectively marked the end of the New Deal era in American politics (Schrag 1998).

Although not fully appreciated at the time, Proposition 13 also created strong new incentives for municipal incorporation (Musso 1994). Prior to Proposition 13, property tax revenue had been a mainstay of local government in California: each local jurisdiction – city, county, or special district – had the power to set property tax rates with a simple majority vote of the governing body. As property values escalated during the 1960s and 1970s, property owners were subject to steep increases in annual property taxes. Rising political discontent set the stage for a tax revolt. Led by activist Howard Jarvis, voters passed Proposition 13 in June 1978 limiting the property tax rate statewide to 1 percent of assessed value. In addition, Proposition 13 placed a 2 percent cap on the amount that a property's assessed value could increase in any given year. Moreover, subsequent measures passed during the 1980s and 1990s required voter approval – in some cases, two-thirds approval – for all state and local tax increases (Schrag 1998).

For affluent residents of districts considering incorporation, Proposition 13 significantly enhanced the already substantial fiscal incentives to do so (Musso 1994: 52). Following Proposition 13, those who owned real estate could live with the certainty that their property taxes would never go up more than 2 percent per annum, unless voters themselves approved an increase. In addition, under current state law, incorporation allowed communities to retain whatever taxes were generated within their boundaries, without having to repay revenue lost to the county. Thus, during the 1980s, incorporation became a "net-sum game, enabling residents to

improve substantially their fiscal standing" (Musso 1994: 58) without incurring commensurate costs.

Between 1980 and 1992, seventy-one California communities, mostly in southern California or the Bay Area, attempted to incorporate; forty-seven of these were successful (Musso 1994). During the 1980s and early 1990s in Ventura County, the cities of Westlake Village (1981) and Moorpark (1983) incorporated. In Los Angeles County numerous communities, including affluent Agoura Hills (1982), Calabasas (1991), Santa Clarita (1987), and Malibu (1991), incorporated. In Orange County affluent communities such as Laguna Niguel (1989), Mission Viejo (1988), Lake Forest (1991), Dana Point (1989), and Laguna Hills (1991) also became municipalities. In addition to substantial tax advantages, incorporation came with home rule over land-use decisions, a power that became increasingly important to local communities as an anti-growth strategy during the 1990s.[8]

The New Fiscal Federalism: Expanding the Role of State Government (1992–2008)

By the early 1990s, a confluence of forces significantly altered the incentives for municipal incorporation in California. Major cutbacks to the defense industry following the end of the Cold War and a steep decline in the value of housing combined to create the worst economic downturn in California since the Great Depression. At the same time, state and local governments had begun to feel many of the worst effects of cuts resulting from Proposition 13. As budgets were slashed, particularly for school districts and counties, state government was forced to step in to backfill revenues. The result was a series of large state budget deficits that have characterized California's politics during economic downturns (Debow and Syer 2006).

In order to help mitigate the fiscal impacts of incorporations on counties, the state legislature passed a "revenue neutrality" law in 1992 preventing LAFCOs from approving any municipal incorporation that would leave county governments financially worse off.[9] In one fell swoop, the new law removed one of the longstanding fiscal incentives to incorporation. Prior to 1992, sales, property, and other taxes were generated on a geographic basis and incorporation allowed communities to capture revenues that would otherwise have gone to the county. Moreover, under Proposition 13, counties and other local governments could no longer make up for lost revenue by increasing property and other taxes which now required two-thirds voter approval. During the 1980s, each new incorporation deprived counties of the tax base needed to pay for countywide services. When tax-rich communities incorporated, the only option for counties was to respond with budget and service cuts (Governor's Office of Planning and Research 2003).

Table 13.1 Incorporated cities in California, 1993–present.

City	*County*	*Incorporation Date*	*Population at Incorporation*
Wildomar	Riverside	February 2008	27,000*
Rancho Cordova	Sacramento	July 2003	54,627
Goleta	Santa Barbara	February 2002	47,106
Aliso Viejo	Orange	July 2001	40,166
Elk Grove	Sacramento	July 2000	72,687
Rancho Santa Margarita	Orange	January 2000	48,336
Oakley	Contra Costa	July 1999	26,217
Laguna Woods	Orange	March 1999	16,725
Citrus Heights	Sacramento	January 1997	86,794
Truckee	Nevada	March 1993	10,000*
Shasta Lake	Shasta	July 1993	9,800

Source: "City Fact Sheet," *California Senate Local Government Committee*, July 2006.
*figures were estimates by various sources.

With revenue neutrality, incorporation turned from a net-sum game for cities into a zero-sum game, ensuring that counties would no longer be fiscally harmed by incorporations. For the first time in California history, only communities with healthy property and commercial tax bases have a realistic chance to meet both the state's fiscal viability and neutrality requirements.

The new arrangements have had several effects. Most importantly, there have been far fewer incorporation efforts statewide. Since 1993, only eleven cities have successfully incorporated in California, including the relatively affluent Orange County cities of Aliso Viejo (2001), Rancho Santa Margarita (2000), and Laguna Woods (1999), and Wildomar (2008) in southern California. Second, the combination of Proposition 13 and revenue neutrality means that future incorporations in California likely will be limited to either relatively affluent areas with relatively low service needs or areas where significant commercial and retail activity generate sufficient sales tax.

San Fernando Valley Secession (1996–2002)

As territory for incorporation has been reduced in southern California, and with incorporation harder to achieve, some cities are facing internal political pressures. During the 1990s, a group in the San Fernando Valley revived the idea of breaking away from the City of Los Angeles. Secession advocates, a coalition of Valley business and homeowner associations calling themselves Valley Voters Organize Toward Empowerment (Valley VOTE), made the usual incorporation arguments: lower taxes, local control, better services,

and a more representative city government. Valley activists were attempting something fairly unique in modern California history: simultaneously breaking away from one government, and forming a new one.[10] Standing in their way, however, was a state law which allowed any secession proposal to be vetoed by a city council, effectively making secession impossible.

In 1996, Valley VOTE recruited state Assemblymen Tom McClintock and Robert Hertzberg to sponsor a bill to remove the city's veto power over secession. In October 1997 Gov. Pete Wilson signed AB 62 into law. AB 62 required that any "special reorganization"[11] measure be approved by a dual majority of voters, both in the seceding area as well as the city as a whole. After gathering the signatures of 25 percent of the area's registered voters, a LAFCO-required Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis found that special reorganization could be fiscally neutral, paving the way for a secession election (Sonenshein and Hogen-Esch 2004).

On November 5, 2002, residents in the City of Los Angeles voted on two secession proposals, Measure F for San Fernando Valley and Measure H for Hollywood, a simultaneous effort that had piggybacked on the Valley's success. Supporters faced a powerful anti-secession coalition of government officials, public employee unions, regional business interests, and ethnic lobby groups such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) and the NAACP. On election day, Valley residents passed the measure with a slim 50.7 percent majority, with significant support coming from neighborhoods in the western San Fernando Valley. A majority of South and East Valley residents, areas more economically integrated and geographically closer to other parts of the city, voted against the measure. Citywide, the measure only received 33 percent support (Hogen-Esch and Saiz 2003).[12]

This case highlights a number of themes in this chapter. First, the San Fernando Valley is a product of the period of consolidation when the City of Los Angeles more than doubled its size by annexing the Valley in 1915. Second, the case highlights the forces of fragmentation, as political values emphasizing local control created tremendous tensions between the center and periphery. Third, the case highlights the critical role of state government in local government formation, as Valley leaders successfully petitioned the state to lower the legal threshold for secession. Fourth, voter fears about financial sustainability played a major role in the effort's defeat, factors characteristic of the post-Proposition 13, post-fiscal neutrality era of California's incorporation politics. Fifth, the case of San Fernando Valley secession highlights the geographic reality that as territory for incorporation has become further removed from the center, politics have become focused inward. As it becomes more difficult for residents to start a new city on the urban periphery, politics in existing southern California cities will likely take on added significance. Finally, the underlying causes of the movement highlight the impact of immigration, urbanization, and spatial change in southern

California. With the dual threats that immigration and urbanization pose to the suburban ideal, land use has become an increasingly salient issue in incorporation efforts since the 1990s.

Minority Empowerment and the Incorporation of East Los Angeles

Although the impacts of immigration have spurred some communities to seek land-use control through incorporation, southern California's increasing diversity raises questions about the role of new immigrant groups in the region's municipal politics. In 2007 in unincorporated East Los Angeles, the historic center of Mexican American culture in Los Angeles, the East Los Angeles Residents Association revived a decades-old dream of creating a City of East Los Angeles. The proposal would create a city of roughly 130,000 residents, 95 percent of whom identify as Hispanic. Proponents argue that cityhood would provide local residents with greater control over economic development. Moreover, advocates say that the new city would serve as both a symbolic home as well as practical training ground for future Latino political leadership in Los Angeles.

The contemporary movement to incorporate East Los Angeles can be traced back to 1960.[13] Then the Census Bureau estimated a population of approximately 70,000 residents was 80 percent Mexican American. Proponents argued that incorporation would provide representation to a community long excluded from the political process. Supporters also argued that municipal autonomy would allow residents direct control over local taxes and that incorporation could be done without an increase in taxes under the Lakewood Plan.

However, middle-class residents voiced their opposition; they were concerned the area's relatively high proportion of low-income residents and relatively few areas of industry or commerce would burden them with future taxes (Salazar 1961). Proponents placed an incorporation measure on the April 25, 1961 ballot, but the initiative lost by a few hundred votes. In addition to tax concerns, newspaper reports at the time cited low voter turnout and opposition from unions as reasons for the defeat (*Los Angeles Times* 1961). For similar reasons, a second incorporation attempt in 1963 never got off the ground.

In 1972, activists again began the incorporation process, now under the new LAFCO rules. As with previous efforts, claims for the benefits to be derived from local control, the provision of enhanced services, and political representation formed the basis for the movement. In particular, proponents argued that East Los Angeles had long been systematically gerrymandered to limit Latino political representation. Activists complained that the area was divided among five State Assembly, three State Senate, and three congressional

districts. Moreover, there was no Latino representation either on the County Board of Supervisors or the Los Angeles City Council (Del Olmo 1973).

Despite similarities with earlier efforts, the 1973–4 effort was unique in important respects. First, incorporation was spearheaded by the East Los Angeles Community Union (TELACU), an organization which had emerged as a key social service provider and political institution. Moreover, the 1974 effort unfolded during a moment of heightened political awareness. In particular, control over land use and development had emerged as a primary issue. Advocates cited numerous urban renewal projects that had been implemented over the objections of local residents.[14] Finally, incorporation efforts unfolded alongside a more cohesive Chicano rights movement in East Los Angeles, marked by student and community protests over schools, housing, and civil rights issues (Raigoza 1977; Acuna 1984; Marin 1991). Overt appeals to "Chicano Power" alienated many of the area's non-Hispanics, including longtime Japanese, Chinese, and white residents who made up most of the remaining 20 percent of the population. Incorporation also exposed divisions within the Mexican American community, particularly along class and generational lines. According to reports at the time, more affluent Latinos were less likely to identify themselves as "Chicano," instead seeing themselves as more assimilated into the dominant white culture (Castro 2007).

In one critical respect, the 1974 campaign closely mirrored previous efforts in 1961 and 1963. Middle-class property owners feared a new city would raise property taxes in order to survive. On November 4, 1974 ballot Proposition X, as it was known, was defeated 58 to 42 percent. Post-election analyses revealed that opposition was particularly strong from tax-averse homeowners.

In late 2007, East Los Angeles incorporation proponents hired a consulting firm to perform the required Initial Fiscal Analysis. The study found that a new city could be financially viable, while also having fiscally neutral impacts on the county (Report to the East Los Angeles Residents Association, 2007). In July 2008, the effort began the process of collecting signatures from 25 percent of the registered voters in the area. Ultimately, Los Angeles LAFCO must approve the proposal's financial viability and revenue neutrality before placing a measure on the ballot. Organizers hoped to place the measure on the 2009 ballot before a new state law took effect in June depriving new cities of a portion of the vehicle license fee and gasoline tax revenue (Rosenblatt 2007).

This case illustrates both the rising political aspirations of Latinos in southern California as well as the difficulty of incorporation in post-Proposition 13, revenue-neutral California. As with three previous attempts to incorporate East Los Angeles during the 1960s and 1970s, the question of financial viability will prove central to the effort. State law requires both that any new city must be deemed financially viable, and that any tax

revenues lost to the county through incorporation must be repaid by the new city (Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2003). Critics point to East Los Angeles' lack of a commercial tax base as a reason to doubt the proposed city's fiscal viability. Proponents countered that local control over economic development, coinciding with the expected completion of the Gold Line extension in 2009, would allow the city to generate sufficient tax revenues to sustain itself (Miller 2007).

Incorporation in Southern California: The End of History?

Since becoming a state in 1850, California residents have created 479 cities, 181 of them in southern California. During a 12-year period between 1915 and 1927, the consolidation of the City of Los Angeles became a notable exception to the dominant pattern of local government fragmentation. Between 1950 and 1990, Californians created 154 new cities. During this period, incorporation became a primary strategy for racial and class segregation, as communities walled off their tax bases and used zoning and other laws to ward off threats to the suburban ideal. State government played a critical role in promoting this wave of fragmentation as reforms such as the Lakewood Plan and Proposition 13 provided new incentives to incorporation. However, economic recession, and the fiscal constraints imposed by Proposition 13, prompted state government to put the brakes on future incorporations.

Incorporation politics since 1993 have also coincided with a period of unprecedented immigration and spatial change in southern California. During the 1990s, immigration and urbanization emerged as primary issues in an attempt by activists in San Fernando Valley to secede from the City of Los Angeles. In 2007, activists in the Ventura County City of Oxnard initiated their own campaign for secession. Under the familiar banner of "local control," secessionists hope to create a new "City of Channel Islands Beach," where development and municipal services could be locally controlled. Critics, however, worried that the movement was primarily motivated "by racial, ethnic and economic reasons and not much else" (Castro 2007). Unless state laws stacked against secession are changed, the strategy is unlikely to have a significant long-term impact on the political structure of California's urban areas.

For future scholars, the political incorporation of new immigrants is probably the most promising new territory in understanding the future of local government in southern California. Latino political mobilization at the local level can be seen in the revived campaign to incorporate a City of East Los Angeles in 2007. It is highly likely that geographic realities will constrain the future of municipal incorporation in southern California. Much of the region is already incorporated territory. In Los Angeles County, only the communities of Stevenson Ranch, Altadena, La Crescenta, and

Hacienda Heights remain as viable candidates for future incorporation. Much of what might be considered territory open for incorporation lies in the deserts of north Los Angeles County, San Bernardino and Riverside counties. On February 5, 2008 the City of Wildomar in southwestern Riverside County became California's newest municipality. Proponents argued that incorporation would allow the community of 30,000 residents to better manage future growth.[15]

Finally, recent scholarship has begun to question the extent to which the politics of fragmentation – which have formed much of the economic and political basis for local politics in southern California – can continue. Studies suggesting that "sprawl has hit the wall" have documented the reality that southern California's dominant spatial trend of outward development may soon be at an end (Dear, Fulton, and Wolch 2002). In addition, rising gas prices, increasing gridlock, water shortages, and ultimately global climate change are all factors that call into question the long-term sustainability of southern California as a viable model of continued fragmented development.

Given these factors, it is likely that future studies of the politics of incorporation in southern California will center less on creating new governments on the urban periphery, and more on the mobilization of interest groups to control existing city governments. With the rapid increase in the Latino and Asian populations in southern California – Hispanics may already be a majority of the population in Los Angeles County – one can expect that the arena of municipal government in southern California will remain contested terrain between various ethnic groups and class interests vying to control urban space.

Notes

1 Fogelson documents Los Angeles' 1930 housing stock comprised of an astounding 94 percent single-family homes.

2 Fogelson describes early Los Angelenos' enthusiastic embrace of zoning ordinances protecting single-family neighborhoods from apartments or industry. Residents also enlisted private developers whose deed restrictions, in particular "racial covenants," enforced the dominant vision of Los Angeles as a racially segregated suburbia.

3 Which included the communities of Westgate, Venice, West Adams, Watts, Highland Park, Bairdstown and most notably, the 224-square-mile San Fernando Valley.

4 Miller (1981) describes the bizarre 1957 incorporation of the City of Industry in which proponents attempting to reach the 500 inhabitant threshold solicited signatures from 169 patients and 31 employees of a local mental hospital.

5 Numerous observers have noted that California's site-based sales tax system has encouraged the "fiscalization of land use," which discourages the construction

of affordable housing, and led to wide fiscal and service disparities among California cities.

6 Under California law, LAFCOs are required to report on the fiscal viability of proposed cities. A typical California LAFCO has five members: two county supervisors, two city council members, and a citizen member chosen by the four elected officials. Some LAFCOs, such as Los Angeles, have a specially designed statutory membership comprised of nine members: two supervisors, two city representatives, a public member, a Los Angeles City representative, two special district members, and a public member from the San Fernando Valley (see Manatt 1996).

7 Pincetl (1999) also provides a history of other failed efforts at regional land-use control in California. Perhaps the most successful example of regional land-use control has been the California Coastal Commission, created by California voters through Proposition 20 in 1972.

8 The post-Proposition 13 era in municipal finance has been defined by a dramatic shift toward funding city operations with sales taxes. The resulting "fiscalization of land use" has contributed to widespread reluctance to construct affordable housing (see Fulton 1997).

9 The new law did include provisions for revenue sharing, "alimony payments," and other mitigation measures as long as all parties agree (see Fulton 2002).

10 See Detwiler (1996) for a good overview of the history of urban secession in California. See Hogen-Esch (2001, 2004) for a more detailed history of Valley secession.

11 The legal term for secession in which a community simultaneously detaches and reincorporates as a separate city.

12 Despite failing to create a new city, most observers credit the movement for spurring a major political reform movement in Los Angeles. Passed by voters in June 1999, major changes to the new city charter, such as the creation of a system of neighborhood councils and area planning commissions, were in direct response to complaints voiced by secessionists.

13 There were also previous attempts in 1925, 1931, and 1932 (see Acuna 1984).

14 During the 1950s, the relocation of Mexican Americans from Chavez Ravine to make way for the Los Angeles Dodgers, and redevelopment efforts in the Bunker Hill area of Downtown, had traumatized the community (see Santillan 1974). In addition, thousands of residents had been displaced during the 1950s and 1960s to make way for the construction of the 710, 60, 5, and 10 freeways, which all converged in or around East Los Angeles.

15 In recent years, a group known as Menifee Valley Incorporation Committee has been leading a cityhood campaign in Riverside County, also along I-15 near Lake Elsinore. The communities of Stevenson Ranch in Los Angeles County, and Rossmor in Orange County, have also recently taken steps to incorporate.

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Chapter Fourteen

Contemporary Voice: Contradictions, Coalitions, and Common Ground

Manuel Pastor

Introduction

Contemporary Los Angeles is a place of both contradictions and coalitions. It is one of the country's major manufacturing and financial centers, replete with concentrations of wealth and ostentatious displays of consumption, and it is also one of the nation's most prominent centers of working poverty. It is open to people from all over the world – one-third of Los Angeles County residents hail from other countries – and yet it is a place riven by spectacular racial conflicts and conflagrations. It is at the heart of the American Dream, with a myth that anyone can, in Hollywood fashion, remake themselves, and it is also a social landscape with seemingly rigid lines of income, geography, and ethnicity.

It is partly because of these contradictions that coalitions bridging differences – seeking new and higher common ground – have been an important part of contemporary Los Angeles. The early business elites that constructed the city may have been able to eschew the construction of a broad range of supporters, controlling the major medium of communication, the *Los Angeles Times*, keeping a tight grasp on political officials, and setting up a "wicked city" in terms of its anti-labor attitude and harsh approach to the environment (to wit, the city's infamous "taking" of water from the Owens Valley). But even city elites felt their grip pried open when economic problems in the form of the Great Depression shattered the sense that at least business was delivering the goods.

As a response came the rule of Mayor Fletcher Bowron, starting late in the Depression years and continuing through the early post-World War II period. It was more inclusive racially, with Bowron evincing serious concerns about improving the lives of black migrants and others who came to the city during the wartime boom, but his mayoralty ran aground postwar

when he sought to build public housing for the poor (Sitton 2005). Facing a buzzsaw of opposition, much of it orchestrated by business, Bowron's regime gave way to a series of conservative mayors with little vision and less integrity. But when the 1965 Watts riot signaled the end of old guard control – with no immediately clear sign of what would be new – more broad-based coalitions quickly became the political order of the day.

The first coalitional response to Watts was the grouping that came together to support the candidacy of Tom Bradley. Spanning the east, west, and south sides of the city and building on a liberal black-Jewish alliance, Bradley's coalition first sought power in 1969. This initial effort was stymied when the incumbent mayor, Sam Yorty, baited away on issues of race and crime, and it took till 1973 for Bradley to assume the reins of office as the first African American mayor in the city's history. His coalition, chiseled into finer and firmer shape by the first run, promised to address the economic and racial challenges made evident by Watts through a mix of symbolic appointments – that is, increased diversity on commissions and in the bureaucracy – and a commitment to economic growth. The latter eventually came to rely on facilitating downtown development, a factor that led to business support.

Much as the Watts riot exposed the rot of the old and the need for the new, the 1992 civil unrest laid bare the limits of Bradley's approach. Downtown development had not, as envisioned, trickled down – minority neighborhoods felt left out of employment growth and economic benefits, and part of Bradley's base, while respectful of the historic role of the Mayor, was disgruntled enough to burn the city. The unrest essentially made clear the limits of symbolism: having a black mayor, Latino officials, and Asian commission members was not enough when racial income gaps between whites and non-whites, as well as between areas of the city, remained severe.

The reaction was actually a reversion to traditional politics, with the election of a white Republican mayor with solid pro-business and anti-crime credentials. But this was an interregnum – while the old coalition had been shredded, this Republican rebirth did not represent the basis for a new one. It would take until Antonio Villaraigosa took office in 2005 – like Bradley, on his second try – that the shape of the new would be clear: development was to be better shared, economic growth was to extend beyond the downtown, and diversity was to be more than skin-deep.

Whether this new coalition can overcome the underlying contradictions remains to be seen but, like the Bradley era, it has attracted some degree of business support – not because this is what business elites would prefer to do all on their own, but rather because this is the sort of political coming together that will be necessary for them to realize their goals as well. Nonetheless, it is a difficult balance of interests ahead: Villaraigosa represents the culmination of a set of social movements and

community organizations that have pressed for economic justice and yet business, as in any successful major city, must be a key element in a sustainable coalition. Negotiating this minefield will be a challenge for years to come and the jury remains out on whether the Villaraigosa alliance – if not the Mayor himself – is likely to be as longlasting as the Bradley coalition.

Considering Coalitions

Urban regime theory suggests that political leaders must put together coalitions both to win elections and eventually to govern (Stone 1993; Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001: 147). The governing coalitions must often be broader than the electoral coalitions – as noted above, progressives campaigning on a social justice platform, for example, must eventually find some accommodation with business in order to bring resources to bear on the challenges they face. The latter is one of the reasons why sociologist Harvey Molotch's theory regarding "growth regimes" – which implies that coalitions necessarily accommodate developers and local officials eager to maximize the increase in land values – has retained such explanatory power, particularly in real estate-driven southern California (Molotch 1979, 1988; Logan and Molotch 1987).

One challenge with both the urban and growth regime frameworks is that because they focus primarily on providing richer analytical descriptions, they unintentionally seem to be static. Both frameworks provided a limited sense of transformational moments – those dramatic periods when coalitions collapse and are reformed or replaced. Mark Purcell (2000) thus takes Molotch to task for not noting the erosion of the consensus for growth in Los Angeles as part of the eventual reduction in Bradley's political power; while he suggests that William Fulton (1997) may be going too far in asserting the "collapse" of the growth machine, he argues that an emergence of slow-growth forces (mostly residents of middle-class neighborhoods) and the globalization (and hence rootlessness) of the Los Angeles business elite created conditions that undermined growth as the cementing influence for the Bradley coalition.

What Purcell stresses less is that while growth was supposed to cement consensus by delivering for all, it was surely falling short of that goal by the end of the Bradley regime (see Ong et al. 1989). Complicating the analysis of Los Angeles regimes and coalitions with an attention to issues of inequality and racial disparity can surely enrich the explanation, particularly since the Bradley coalition was so explicitly forged on interracial grounds. Lifting up the race piece was the central point of the pioneering analysis of Raphael Sonenshein, one of the first academics to explore the unique character of Bradley's black-white (often Jewish and always liberal)

coalition, and to argue that the regime successfully tied this new cross-city base to some elements of business leadership in Los Angeles (Sonenshein 1989: 344).

But Sonenshein was perhaps too race-focused in his analysis: even as blacks gained power and Latinos and Asians gained access, little was moving on the economic front. Moreover, the demographics of the city were shifting dramatically, making the relationship between minority groups as important as their relationship to whites, a group that would also become a minority in the city by 1987. Jaime Regalado (1994) addressed this phenomenon of interethnic relations with an important piece written just after the 1992 civil unrest. While he mostly stresses the relative thinness of the theoretical literature on interethnic coalition-building, his review of the extant coalitions operating at that time distinguishes between those focused on group relations *per se*, those consisting of multiracial professionals seeking advancement for minorities, and those with a progressive vision focused on economic redress for minority workers and the unemployed.

Indeed, Regalado (1994: 216–20) argues that longlasting multiracial coalitions can only be built through sustained dialogues that address the meaning and application of representative democracy, tackle the nature of economic rebuilding and development/redevelopment, and explore the meaning of multicultural pluralism beyond symbolism. Regalado suggests that multiracial coalitions are at risk when they improperly understand the complexities of race and class, and as a consequence rely on middle-class membership, fail to realize the gaps in corporate-based economic development, and come up short on job creation efforts.

Thus, any analysis of sustainable coalitions must pay attention to issues of race, class, and economic viability. In doing this, I would suggest a distinction between three different variants of coalitions based on the interdependence of the actors. The first are thin coalitions: these are fleeting, issue specific, sporadic, and unstable. An example would be groups that might come together to oppose or support a particular real estate development or a particular policy who may traditionally fight on a wider range of issues (think of those instances when labor unions and the Chamber of Commerce jointly support a new hotel or job training program, or the 1980s alliance between slow-growth Westsiders and black and Latino activists to resist the siting of the LANCER incinerator in South Central). The motto here may be "live to fight another day" – while immediate interests are common, long-term interests diverge.

A second sort of coalition is thick. In this case, the common interests are longer term and the coalitional interactions are thus repeated. Think here of community groups and labor unions, traditionally in conflict because of the poor record of trades unions in integrating minorities, coming together to ask for a new living-wage ordinance for the city or community benefits agreements that guarantee union jobs and improve local housing. The repeated

interactions around sequential issues can transform views, develop and/or sustain commonality, and create the basis for yet another form of coalition.

This third sort is transformative: the link is not just a sense of common interest but a broader vision of common destiny and common ground. What gives rise to such transformative coalitions? Coalitions typically evolve out of the need for some sort of policy change – but if the situation is relatively normal, the policy change is incremental and the coalitions are generally thin or thick. It is crisis that stirs transformation, but crisis is not enough: new leadership must propose a new vision, proffer a believable policy package, and present it in a way that resonates with potentially universal appeal. The latter is the nod to common destiny and common ground, resulting in a continually widening notion of who is part of the coalition membership.

At a national level, such transformative coalitions include the New Deal – in which labor and capital, Southern white lawmakers and urban blacks, came together to support a significant change in government's role – and the more recent conservative era prompted by President Ronald Reagan – in which an unexpected grouping of corporate leaders, Christian evangelicals, and free market libertarians came together around just the opposite. In Los Angeles, the most significant transformative coalition in the last fifty years was that forged by Tom Bradley – and the newest being made by Antonio Villaraigosa may be of just such a character as well.

The Bradley Era

The Bradley era witnessed a multiracial coalition unlike any modern Los Angeles had seen. The coalition was built in response to the power and racism of former elite cliques and stretched its power with the election of Tom Bradley as mayor. Under his authority, minorities were elected and appointed to city positions at unprecedented rates, and the city enjoyed a strong vision and record of economic growth. Eventually, however, moderate-income residents felt put upon by increasing density and low-income residents felt frustrated at the lack of economic inclusion. The institution of Proposition 13 at the state level (in 1978) only exacerbated distributive concerns by constraining the fiscal powers of the city and helped produce pressure for redevelopment strategies (which could rely on tax increment financing) in the downtown area.

Bradley's coalition had its roots in the alienation of both blacks and Jews from political power. In the 1950s, Los Angeles decision-making was dominated by the Committee of 25, an elite clique drawn from the city's businesses and law firms. With blacks, Jews, and Latinos excluded, the Committee was largely responsible for the defeat of Fletcher Bowron in 1953, and went on to dominate politics for the next twenty-five years (Gottlieb et al. 2005: 137–9). Against this backdrop, those left out decided

to lead, forming a cross-town coalition that tried first in 1969 and then succeeded in 1973 with the candidacy of Tom Bradley, a moderate black politician who had served as a police sergeant and thus seemed to combine the combination of aspiration and discipline needed to fit the times.

The times were dictated by the Watts riot and their aftermath. The riots reflected unaddressed tensions with regard to both the policing of South Los Angeles and the economic distress of the community. The standing mayor, Sam Yorty, had promised to reform the police department to curtail brutality, a persistent issue in Los Angeles, but had backtracked. Meanwhile, the economic boom being enjoyed by Los Angeles and the nation was having little impact on joblessness in black LA. While business leaders had long ignored both problems, the riots suggested that this was a luxury – those frustrated could burn the city and damage economic prospects even more. Thus, while the Bradley coalition was largely driven by a new liberal alliance, it gained (and once in power, consolidated) the support of business as well.

The result was an odd but initially sustainable mix of symbolic representation for minority constituencies and concrete investments for business – what Purcell labels an "archetypal growth machine" (2000: 88). Bradley's term did mark a 30-year period of unparalleled appointment of African Americans, Jewish, and Latino candidates to public commissions and boards, but the middle-class or symbolic nature of the change is best told by examining public employment (Regalado 1994). While the black share of total municipal employment increased slightly from 21.9 percent in 1973 to 26.7 percent in 1990, the share of blacks among top administrators and professionals went from 6.3 percent to 22.7 percent (Gottlieb et al. 2005: 142).

Meanwhile, the poverty rate in Los Angeles County rose from just under 11 percent in 1969 to just over 15 percent in 1989; the rate for the city was 18.9 percent. Racial disparities were evident: while black poverty rates actually fell (as did the rates for whites), they were three times higher than that for whites, and that ratio increased over the period. Why an increase in the overall poverty rate? There was a sharp jump in Latino poverty, mostly for the foreign-born: the rate rose from 17 to 23 percent, and the share of Latinos in the poverty population increased dramatically (as it did for the region as a whole; for more on the poverty changes, see Ong 1993; Grant 2000). The evidence suggests that while Bradley may have provided for middle-class minority advancement, this effort did not much move the needle on the poverty conditions affecting the overall population of color.

Bradley did, however, produce a burst in downtown development – many of the skyscrapers that now dot the central city business district rose in his time. To some extent, this was the culmination of the earlier period of domination by the Committee of 25, those business leaders that had come together to clear the downtown of low-income housing and create the "emptied" landscape the taller buildings were soon to fill. But it was also a reflection of Bradley's green-lighting of construction and an artifact of a

shifting fiscal situation; when 1978's Proposition 13 curtailed property tax revenues and led local governments to rely increasing on redevelopment authorities and tax-increment financing.

Such tax-increment financing is necessarily geographically focused: after declaring an area a redevelopment zone, all tax gains from investments that improve property values accrue back to the authority and must be spent (or at least mostly spent) in the zone itself. Thus, downtown development fed on itself and, with the exception of limited employment impacts (partly because the most significant job beneficiaries were the professionals who could fill the office buildings), little was left for the more distressed areas of the city. By the late 1980s, progressive reformers, once enamored of the multiracial character of the Bradley regime, were quietly critiquing the Mayor and explicitly arguing that downtown development needed to be better "linked" to the neighborhoods (Pastor and Hayling 1990; Ridley-Thomas, Pastor, and Kwoh 1989).

The erosion of political cover from the minority side was matched by dwindling support from the Jewish base in the Westside. Here, the issue was not too little growth, but too much. The real estate boom under Bradley had led to irresistible development pressures meeting an unmovable force: homeowners devoted to the nearly suburban life that had long been the promise of Los Angeles. In 1986, Proposition U, pushed by Westside councilman Zev Yaroslavsky, was passed; it made cuts in commercial zoning, institutionalized "slow-growth fever," and signaled the erosion of the Bradley alliance. It also heralded the power of the San Fernando Valley: while the proposition passed all over the city, the margins were especially high in the Valley and the Westside (Fulton 1997: 51–5).

Bradley's formerly cohesive pro-growth vision thus began to crumble as one set of constituents searched for real economic progress and another sought to preserve quality of life. Business remained committed to Bradley, and there remained enormous attachment to the man himself; even critics of his policies tended to pay homage to the Mayor's dignity, bearing, and personal history. Yet, by the late 1980s, the real underpinnings of the Bradley coalition were slipping and the Mayor, somewhat adrift, had shifted his own views to back curtailed growth (Fulton 1997: 58–60). And then came the beating of black motorist Rodney King, the trial of the Los Angeles police officers accused of the crime, and the 1992 explosion that greeted news of their acquittal.

The Civil Unrest and the Scrambling of Coalitions

The 1992 civil unrest was the most damaging in US history, taking over fifty lives and wreaking nearly half a billion dollars in property damage. Lost as well was the last vestige of the Bradley coalition: the Mayor responded to

the crisis by appointing an Orange County businessman to spearhead the "Rebuild LA" recovery effort. This alone was a clear signal that his administration was fresh out of ideas (or else the Mayor himself would have taken the lead) and limping towards an uncertain future. Rebuild LA more or less shipwrecked, partly because of interethnic squabbling, and within a year, Bradley had stepped out of office, the bookends of riots having loosely bracketed his era.

In his wake came a Los Angeles-based businessman, Richard Riordan, who promised to be tough on crime and restore a positive economic climate. His support drew from the remnants of LA's corporate elite, homeowners in the San Fernando Valley, and residents left frightened by the lawlessness of the riots – and he was lucky in that he faced anemic competition in the form of City Councilman Michael Woo. But his was more a thin electoral coalition of convenience than the sort of thick or transformative realignment that was necessary to forge a future, particularly given Riordan's limited support from the city's growing minority populations.

And while Los Angeles did soon pull out from a deep recession, triggered mostly by the cutbacks in aerospace and related ripple effects, Riordan failed to convincingly jumpstart the city's economy or restore investor confidence. Part of this was the steady erosion of corporate headquarters and the growing presence of smaller companies less closely tied to issues of civic engagement. But it was also that he did not have a full formula for both incorporating the emerging minority population and stirring the business sector – and such a disconnect was fatal, partly because the geography of the riots seemed, unlike Watts, to have been more about poverty than race.

Indeed, it turns out that the property damage from the civil unrest occurred in neighborhoods that had shifted from black to Latino, with damaged areas being nearly 50 percent Latino and only 37 percent African American. Multivariate regression analysis conducted after the event suggested that economic factors were as important as race in driving the unrest – that this was as much a "bread riot" as it was a "race riot." Moreover, the composition of poverty had shifted dramatically in the Bradley years: while the poverty population was 24 percent black and 22 percent Latino (and actually majority white) in 1969, by 1989 it was 57 percent Latino and 18 percent black (see Ong 1993; Pastor 1995).

This implied several things for any new coalition: it would have to address poverty seriously; it would have to go beyond symbolic representation of minorities (particularly since they were no longer a minority); and it would have to have the burgeoning population of Latinos at its core. The last point, however, deserves nuance: because such a large portion of the Latino population was either too young or immigrant to vote, any coalition would need to be built on an interracial understanding of common ground. The facts thus called for an entirely new approach – and as it turns out, one had been bubbling up from the community level.

The civil unrest, after all, had triggered soul-searching not just among elites but also among community organizers – with this much evidence of rage at the system, why had more progressive forces been unable to channel it into anything more productive than burning down the neighborhood and looting local stores? In the early to mid-1990s, organizing thus shifted from ethnic identification to a more community and labor oriented strategy.

The resurgence of labor had started before the unrest. In 1990, for example, a group of mainly Latino immigrant janitors launched a citywide strike. The strike became famous for a peaceful march and demonstration in front of a prominent Century City hotel that ended with police attacking the marchers. This prompted a backlash of public opinion against the hotel owners (as well as the police), and union contracts were soon signed in nearly all of the Century City buildings. This was the largest private sector organizing success led by Latino immigrants since the United Farm Worker victories twenty years earlier but, just as important, it signaled that labor was ready to align with the changing workforce and the new face of poverty (Waldinger et al. 1996).

This was further evidenced by the electoral machinations of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor (County Fed). Led by Miguel Contreras, the County Fed became a powerhouse for electing officials. Much of the Fed's success stemmed from its work at getting thousands of union activists out on the streets for "get-out-the-vote" campaigns when most previous (and competing) electoral strategies focused on television and prints ads. In addition, the County Fed not only focused its efforts on mobilizing union members, but reached out to newly naturalized immigrants as well. These efforts helped back and elect pro-labor progressive candidates, and changed the face of politics in Los Angeles (Meyerson 2005).

In the same period, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, a union with an important immigrant Latino base, helped launch a new organization, the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, which successfully secured a living-wage ordinance – against the opposition and over the veto threat of Mayor Riordan. The organization quickly pivoted to secure a series of community benefits agreements (CBAs), the first major one involving the expansion of the downtown Staples Center (the facility housing several sports teams, including the Lakers). CBAs are accords between developers and organizers in which developers promise good employment, replacement housing, and other benefits in return for support by community groups. Observer of Los Angeles politics Harold Meyerson (1998) labeled this approach "growth-with-equity" (or in terms of negotiating stance: "no justice, no growth") and it was exactly reflective of what Bradley could not deliver: guarantees that investment in major projects downtown (and elsewhere) would actually benefit those residents in poorer areas of the city.

Labor and its Latino worker base was not the only game in town. Out of South LA arose several new groups, including AGENDA, led by former Black Panther Anthony Thigpenn, and the Community Coalition (CoCo), led by health activist Karen Bass. Not traditional black organizations, AGENDA and CoCo were multiethnic from the get-go and their organizing strategies tended to rely on forging coalitions on economic and quality of life issues. AGENDA, for example, created a city-wide Metro Alliance and negotiated a program to train animators as part of a subsidy the city was awarding to the Dreamworks studio headed by Steven Spielberg, David Geffen, and Jeffrey Katzenberg. The Community Coalition, as part of its struggle to lift health standards in South LA, fought to prevent the reconstruction of liquor stores burned down in the riots, but kept lines of communication to the Korean owners who were steered in the direction of other enterprises.

Meanwhile, the late 1990s saw the emergence of the Bus Riders Union, a group that organized the working poor who were riding the city's and county's transit system. Arguing that too many transportation dollars were directed at a rail system serving long-distance suburban commuters, the group fought and sued their way to a settlement that redirected funds to buses and their working-class clientele. And as LA business leaders sought to build the Alameda Corridor, a new high-speed rail to carry goods from the ports to warehousing near downtown, they were met by the Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition, a ragtag group of churches and activists that nonetheless managed to secure the largest local hiring program in US history (Pastor 2001).

From the "wicked city" to a hotbed of social justice organizing, Los Angeles had been transformed. In essence, the movements and organizations listed above (and others equally vibrant) had become the vehicles for true empowerment that the previous coalition lacked. And with Riordan stepping down and, in any case, increasingly out of touch with the new emerging forces, the 2001 mayoral election was to be a referendum on the future of the city and the strength of the emerging forces. As it turned out, the city blinked.

Electing a Mayor

The contest in 2001 pitted Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa against City Attorney James Hahn. The demographics and the times would seem to have favored Villaraigosa, but the coalition had not yet fully ripened. Instead, Hahn, whose father Kenneth Hahn had been a legendary County Supervisor representing much of South LA, was able to secure the support of older black voters who remembered the good deeds of his father (and may have been suspicious of a Latino with weaker ties to their community)

and of white voters in the San Fernando Valley who were not ready to support a progressive Latino candidate.

It was a seeming defeat for labor which had backed Villaraigosa, partly because of his history as a union organizer and partly because of his general ties with the progressive community. Tellingly, however, the seeds of a future victory were in place: younger black leaders, such as Thigpenn and Bass, had supported Villaraigosa, insisting (as in the antithesis to the Bradley era) that actual progressive economic policy was more important than the symbolic representation of the black community. And Villaraigosa wisely retreated to wait for another turn, aware that Bradley's coalition had not been strong enough to win on its first run either.

A second chance came in 2005 and Villaraigosa was blessed by a series of events, all entirely unplanned, that went his way. Early in his term, Hahn fired black police chief Bernard Parks, thereby eroding his strong relations with that community. This created an opening for Villaraigosa to build ties with those who were once concerned about his ability to represent them. These ties were further strengthened by the fact that Villaraigosa chose community organizer Thigpenn to run his field operation, a striking fact given labor's usual dominance in such on-the-ground campaigns. However, labor had stuck with its rule of supporting friendly incumbents, in this case Hahn, and, lacking labor's get-out-the-vote troops, Villaraigosa was forced to turn elsewhere. But not for long: labor's support for Hahn was half-hearted and fell apart completely when the head of the labor federation, Miguel Contreras, passed away just before the election, and Villaraigosa attended the funeral at the side of Contraras' widow, Maria Elena Durazo.

Durazo, in turn, attended Villaraigosa's victory party at his side, a celebration held in a downtown street where his triumph was heralded by the U2 song, "It's a Beautiful Day." Villaraigosa had secured over 60 percent of the overall vote, a result helped along by an 84 percent share of the Latino electorate, but also facilitated by his winning 50 percent of the white vote, 48 percent of the black vote, and 44 percent of the Asian vote. Support was also evident across the income board: about two-thirds of those in the income bands below $60,000 in household income voted for Villaraigosa, while his share of those with household incomes above $60,000 was still a healthy 55 percent. This was Bradley redux – Villaraigosa had reached across the racial and class lines that had divided the city (Pastor 2008).

Of course, electing and governing, as regime theory tells us, are different enterprises – and the latter requires firm support from those who invest as much as from those that vote. Villaraigosa, despite progressive credentials, seemed determined to prove that his would be a business-friendly (but not too friendly) regime. The approach was reminiscent of both Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Tom Bradley: Villaraigosa essentially argued that accommodation regarding distributive issues would be the cornerstone for getting his firm support for pro-growth policies.

The dance Villaraigosa has been involved with has been fascinating for political observers. Even before he took office, he helped settle a conflict with hotel employers and employees, arguing that a strike would damage the hospitality industry and thus hurt business. After taking power, he helped set the conditions for a community benefits agreement regarding a downtown mega-project, the $2 billion development on Grand Avenue; what was good for the community, he suggested, would be good for business because it would speed up approval. And Villaraigosa was also careful to push back on his own supporters: early on, he announced he was in favor of inclusionary zoning (a policy by which developers must set aside units for lower-income families), but held off on supporting legislation on the grounds that he wanted to generate a consensus of the developer community on the strategy.

Perhaps the clearest case of the new coalition taking form is in and around the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. The ports handle up to 40 percent of all imports entering the US and have given rise to a thriving "goods movement" industry. Unfortunately, the pollution burden generated by diesel truck traffic, intermodal transfers, and the actual boats tends to be highly concentrated in the low-income and minority communities that lay along the trade line, with high health costs the consequence. Meanwhile, parts of the industry are plagued by low wages, in particular the drayage or short-haul trucks that have fallen into an independent operator system with a consequent erosion of wages – according to one study by the Gateway Council of Governments, average wages for truckers in 2007 were around $12 an hour, without benefits.

It seems like the perfect intersection of the contradictions of southern California: an important economic asset, disastrous environmental conditions, and an income structure producing disparities. And yet the Mayor and his allies helped to forge consensus on a Clean Air Action Plan that included support for the goods movement industry (including mayoral lobbying for state-funded infrastructure improvements), strict standards designed to "green" the ports, and a shift to a concession system for trucking that would put the responsibility for retrofitting diesel trucks onto large companies and require that they employ (rather than subcontract to) drivers (on the grounds that the independent operators would not be able to take on the financial burden and risk of retrofitting).

It wasn't just an action by officials: simmering below the Mayor's approach was a coalition of community and labor forces – the same elements had brought the city the living wage, community benefits agreements, and the Mayor himself – called the Coalition for Clean and Safe Ports. The fact of such organizing is important, partly because Villaraigosa faces term limits in 2013 (assuming reelection) and, moreover, seems to have both higher political ambitions and a history of hop scotching positions. Thus, he will not stay in his position as long as Bradley

(who did not face term limits, but did have his own ambitions, launching unsuccessful runs for Governor in 1982 and 1986, with 1982 especially close). This presents a fascinating challenge for activists and analysts alike: while there is a tendency to look at the electoral elements of a coalition and its political figurehead, the real underlying glue of any coalition is the relationships between the grassroots actors and not just the treetops decision-makers.

At the same time, one crucial element in keeping any coalition intact is not just the usual political give-and-take of the main community elements but the importance of integrating a business voice. While the "growth machine" thesis may have faults, its strength is its focus on how distribution can be improved by incorporating investors and growing the pie. In Los Angeles, one part of the business community seems to have realized that its last, best bet is with a Villaraigosa who can soothe the roiling progressive forces and still generate business-friendly conditions. When Villaraigosa departs, the progressive forces – who cut their teeth fighting business on the "no justice, no growth" bandwagon – will have to develop their own capacities to work with the private sector in order to guarantee a vibrant economy that can deliver for all.

Reinventing the Common Good

Robert Gottlieb, longtime academic and activist, recently completed a wonderful book called *Reinventing Los Angeles* (2007). The title is striking – and refers to all the ways in which LA residents have tried to restore the long-disparaged Los Angeles River to some sort of glory, rework the public transportation system to better serve the poor, and reestablish local markets to promote community health. Yet the most profound reinvention, Gottlieb acknowledges, has been in the politics of the city and the coalitions established by its residents.

It is, as I've argued above, not the first time such reinvention has occurred. Los Angeles, after all, is an invention all of its own: in a place inhospitable to building a city, water was brought, people were attracted, and industry was established. With all that done by elite leaders who thought they spoke for the region, exclusion became the standard operating procedure. A short-lived attempt at broader incorporation, during the term of Mayor Fletcher Bowron, was met by an elite backlash and that, in turn, was met by the Watts riot. And with the underbelly of social injustice exposed, those who had been excluded – African Americans, Jews, liberals, and labor – came together under Tom Bradley, and fought through two electoral cycles till they captured power.

This is, I would suggest, a similarly transformation moment. The 1992 civil unrest laid bare the limits of Bradley's approach – symbolic representation for

minorities and downtown development for business – and created the conditions for a new set of community forces that stressed economic justice. But for the new coalition symbolized by Villaraigosa to persist – that is, to be transformative – it must get beyond a sense of us versus them, of the have-nots against the haves. It must restore a sense of common ground and common good.

To do this, it will need to incorporate business leadership and it will need to generate a capacity to last beyond the leader. On the business side, there are reasons for concern. Business is fragmented in Los Angeles, and many of those who purport to speak for the private sector – the Central City Business Association, the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, and the Chamber of Commerce – are often fiercely anti-labor and resistant to the sorts of measures (like inclusionary zoning) that feel like impositions to them and necessities to community groups. There seems to be no analog to more regionalist and forward-looking business groups – like the Silicon Valley Leadership Group or Chicago Metropolis 2020 – who focus less on irritants like the living wage and more on issues like affordable housing and quality of life. Unless such organizational forums are prompted into place by the business leaders who do support Villaraigosa, the longer-term struggle for justice will continue to meet the buzzsaw of business resistance.

As for lasting past the leader, it is clear that Villaraigosa is the reflection of a coalition and not the organizer of that coalition. At the same time, he is an extraordinarily gifted politician and any departure in the future is likely to weaken coalitional power. The political elements of the coalition do remain in place – organizations like the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy are stronger than ever, the former head of Community Coalition, Karen Bass, is now Speaker of the California Assembly, and the 2008 election of progressive stalwart Mark Ridley Thomas to one of the five thrones at the County Board of Supervisors is testimony to the continuing strength of community based forces. And while there is some breathing room – there are no candidates that pose a serious threat to Villaraigosa in his 2009 reelection campaign – those local politicians positioning to be the Mayor after that (politicians always look a few elections ahead!) have a much looser connection to the elements of the Villaraigosa coalition.

Yet surely the city must find a way to keep such a coalition for its future. Long the land of contradictions, Los Angeles has a chance to become the place of new common ground, the place where interethnic squabbles give way to multiethnic collaboration, where business-labor bickering is replaced by multi-sector consensus, where geographic separation is replaced by an unshakeable commitment to the whole. It will be a huge task. But Los Angeles, a city where reinvention is standard practice and dreams are there to be realized, may pave the way for a nation also looking to get past old divisions.

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Part IV

Cultures and Communities

Chapter Fifteen

Cultures and Communities

Leo Braudy

In the summer of 1961 I drove out to California with some high school friends from Philadelphia. We couldn't find summer jobs and our reading of *On the Road* gave us that urge to explore America, to test Norman Mailer's assertion in *The Naked and the Dead*: "Who can comprehend it, the vast tableland of America?" We might not be able to comprehend it, but we could certainly travel it and sample its varieties. It was the dawn of the interstate system. The Federal Highway Act had been passed only four years before and the amount of constructed highways was small. We were still not far from the America of the 1920s, when my father did a similar trip during the Depression, a trip that took a year, as he and his jobless friends ran out of money and settled down for a few weeks in one small town or another until they could build up their stake and take off again. The number of dirt roads had diminished since then, the gas stations and motels were now more frequently scattered alongside the highway, but the sense of local and regional difference had not yet been obliterated or pushed to the edges by shopping malls and national brand stores.

We arrived in San Francisco first and when we came to Los Angeles, it suffered by comparison. We were still East Coast kids after all. All I could see in southern California was the absence of the East, the lack of trees, the few tall buildings, the bareness of the desert and the chaparral. Los Angeles, I thought, despite the association with movie glitz, was a sleepy town that looked as if it were born yesterday. It didn't even have many movie theatres, let alone good bread or a reasonable Italian restaurant. In other words, I saw the emptiness but I missed the opportunity. I missed the sense of a past not so obvious as it was in Philadelphia, where you couldn't avoid hearing about and visiting Benjamin Franklin's grave or the Betsy Ross house from kindergarten onward.

Now I have lived for twenty-five years near the Fern Dell entrance to Griffith Park, along the permeable border between Thai Town and Little Armenia, and I have a very different view. Close to the corner of Los Feliz Boulevard and Western Canyon Road is a water fountain. Hardly anyone tries to use it. And if someone does, they often find it dry. It seems like an odd civic artifact, an empty gesture to slake the thirst of the hot passerby: the mother wheeling her baby carriage in the park, the twice-weekly outdoor yoga class, or the woman with the big dark blue duffle bag who slept for a decade on the pavement next to the dry cleaners a block or so away.

But at least until 1947 this was not a virtually useless chunk of iron and chrome but a spring, to which my aunt and uncle, who had just moved here from the East Coast, would come from their new home in the San Fernando Valley weekly to fill their water jugs with the same water that had served the Gabrielino tribe who lived here into the nineteenth century. That Historical Cultural Monument marker in Fern Dell, number 112, calls the tribe the Gabrielinos just as I have, certainly not what they called themselves but a name given to them from the San Gabriel Arcángel mission, St. Gabriel de los Temblores, St. Gabriel of the Earthquakes, some twelve or so miles away, where many of them were moved – their website says "enslaved" – to help build it. They called and call themselves Tongva, the people of the earth, although like the Chumash, whose influence extended from San Luis Obispo to Malibu, they were also skilled with the canoe, and their language still marks the land in place names like Topanga, Pacoima, Azusa, and Cahuenga.

Heraclitus wouldn't say it was the same water, and certainly the Gabrielinos are long gone, the only trace of their passing that bronze plaque at the entrance to Fern Dell proper, in the midst of landscaping dating from the 1920s, a winding semi-tropical path alongside a wandering stream flanked by fieldstone banks and filled by the occasional rainstorm and the more dependable runoff from the water fountains and air conditioners of the Griffith Observatory up on the hill. The Observatory itself has recently been redone and expanded, and so the ratty corner of food and game machines that overlooked the canyon that flows down to Fern Dell is gone, along with the cinematic memory that this was the place where the naked Arnold Schwarzenegger, later the governor of California, landed in *The Terminator* and quickly made hash of the three vaguely sinister young men hanging out there, who had the temerity to threaten him.

Norman Klein called his 1997 book on the way Los Angeles erases the past *The History of Forgetting*. And so many of the myths and old jokes stress the transience of the Los Angeles population, the mock-surprise in discovering that someone was actually born here, still perpetuated by East Coast transplants who move to rich neighborhoods on the west side of Los Angeles or Santa Monica and then complain about the lack of any ethnic and cultural variety resembling what they left behind on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

But such myths obscure a richly layered history. In fact, the past and present, the seemingly real and the actually fictitious, interweave tightly in Los Angeles. For a place whose stereotyped popular image by the early twenty-first century was defined by superficiality and short-lived glamor, Los Angeles at closer look is made up of layers, not just geological layers that need to be penetrated, but also juxtaposed layers that slip and slide under one another like the tectonic plates that both create and undermine the city and the region's fragile identity. Not that that past and the culture it has nurtured are so easy to find. The Los Angeles Conservancy, which aggressively challenges development that would raze the great and not-so-great buildings of the past, was not founded until 1978, appropriately enough to play catch-up nostalgia by protesting proposals to tear down the Central Library, itself built in 1926. But Los Angeles makes up for its comparatively short "civilized" history by the ghostly closeness of that past to the present, if the visitor or longtime inhabitant has the wit and the antennae to notice it.

As the nation expanded, California, even more than the rest of the West, was perceived as the open space, in which one could build for oneself a new life and a new identity or unburden oneself of an old one. As the old folksong asked:

> Oh, what was your name in the States?
> Was it Johnson or Thompson or Bates?
> Did you murder your wife?
> And fly for your life?
> Say, what was your name in the States?
> Sandburg (1928: 106)

California was the land of opportunity, eternal sunshine, the Golden Gate. Whatever the metaphor, it involved self-consciousness and self-definition, an intensified version of the myth of the original Colonies, as John Donne in the seventeenth century phrased it, "my America, my new found land." Another image that influenced the attitude toward California was the old idea, newly revived in the Renaissance, of the *translatio studii*, the constantly westward movement of culture, from Athens to Rome to Paris and London, to the East Coast of the United States and then westward. As one of Abraham Lincoln's campaign songs had it:

> Westward the course of empire takes its way
> The girls link on to Lincoln,
> Their mothers were for Clay.

Where would be the next flowering of art and literary culture? In *A Hazard of New Fortunes* William Dean Howells recorded the movement from Boston to New York in the 1880s. What would be the new last, best place, the inheritor

of the ages? Would it be Chicago? Or San Francisco? At the time there was little reason to speculate that it might be Los Angeles, that backward cow town, infused with Hispanic culture, on the shores of a hardly navigable river in a land subject to earthquakes and other disruptions of nature.

Instead of culture, it was nature, external and internal, that first drew settlers to southern California. If the founding myth of northern California, as Kevin Starr has argued, is inextricably entangled with the Gold Rush and the possibility of untold wealth, where paupers could become rich by driving a pick into a hillside or dipping a pan into a stream, the myth of southern California is another kind of enrichment, which stressed self-invention along with physical and psychic health. Like the 49ers, the settlers of southern California were in search of a new start as well, not by digging in the ground, but by basking in the sun. Much more than the north, southern California was the premeditated place, where almost everything civilized or natural, with the possible exception of the La Brea Tar Pits, the sycamore, and the live oak tree, was planted and put there within living memory for a purpose.[1]

Flush with the money made in the Gold Rush and the expansion of the city it brought, San Francisco embodied a wealth and prestige that constantly compared itself to Eastern cities, particularly Boston. As so many visitors to California used to say, they felt comfortable in San Francisco because it was a gaudy but still recognizable version of the East, while Los Angeles was alien territory. To a great extent San Francisco's past and culture were borrowed, particularly from New England, which ironically or appropriately was the name – Nova Albion – Sir Francis Drake gave northern California when he landed there in 1579 during his round-the-world voyage (Hayes 2007: 22–7).

Looking to the East and to Europe, San Francisco took off as a city in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It had a port facing the Pacific that modeled itself on grand ports like London, Marseille, and Shanghai. Los Angeles at the time, by contrast, was not even built on the ocean and, as it grew, defined itself more by relation to the Midwest, from which many of its early Anglo settlers came. It was a lack of interest in European models that would serve Los Angeles well when it came into its own culturally, not as part of a preexisting heritage but with a broth of many different cultures and communities. While San Francisco tended to stick to its single model and a settled image, Los Angeles in the twentieth century became a kaleidoscope of multiple images. In the century as well the migratory patterns reversed entirely, with the ethnic diversity of San Francisco's population declining while that of Los Angeles rose. In 1926 Los Angeles was 90 percent white European, while by the 2000 census the white population was 31.1 percent, Hispanic 44.6 percent, Asian, 12.1 percent, and African American 9.5 percent (Starr 1973: 245; 1985: 239; 1990: 120).

The first stage of this migration was, like the search for gold, a search for purity and purification. It began in the early twentieth century with

advertisements about the climate that lured the sick, the dying, and even the merely cold to a place where they might get a renewed lease on life. On my 1961 trip, faced with what I took to be the emptiness of southern California, I wrote a poem that concluded "I am Death and I live in Southern California." I knew virtually nothing of the therapeutic rush to southern California that had moved so many migrants for the past half century, but somehow I got the message.[2]

The next phase, which I would date from the end of World War II, emphasizes instead the mixed self, the crossing of borders, the interplay between cultures and communities, that characterizes what is best and most interesting about Los Angeles in the twenty-first century. It helps define why it has achieved emblematic status among world cities and remained a destination that even now promises the fulfillment of dreams, fostered in great part by Hollywood movies but hardly exclusively, for even the movies claim to have been born when filmmakers escaped from the East Coast restrictions of the Edison Trust to find the somewhat illegal freedom and optimal filming weather in southern California.

The culture of migration is part of modern California history, as it is of American history generally, but the question of assimilation or distance is characteristically southern Californian. Was it emblematic that the prime California theme song, "California Here I Come," was first sung by a Jew in blackface (Al Jolson) in a 1921 Broadway play (*Bombo*) in which his role is the servant of an explorer, with flashbacks to a past life in which he was a slave brought over by Columbus?[3]

After the Native Americans came the Spanish and then the Californios, an umbrella term for inhabitants of Alta California that could include Native Americans who had converted to Christianity, European-descended settlers from Spain and Mexico, and even whites from the Eastern United States, who spoke Spanish and married into local families. Their current legacy in Los Angeles, a mingling of the hacienda and mission life fictionalized in the Zorro stories of Johnston McCulley, subsists in the Ramona pageant presented yearly in nearby Hemet and in such similarly romanticized invocations of the past as the Fiesta parade in Santa Barbara. But in the 1920s the sense of Spanish past was an important part of the Arroyo culture promoted especially by Charles Fletcher Lummis, whose house still stands next to the Arroyo Seco Parkway between Los Angeles and Pasadena, the first such road in California, a recognition of the coming ubiquity of the car after World War II.

The Midwestern white migration that began in the early twentieth century, so often impelled by a search for bodily health, had a moral tinge as well that emphasized a broad spectrum of purifications from whatever cultural evils had been hopefully left behind. In California's self-image the metaphor that lies openly or barely beneath the surface is that of a return to nature, an equation of nature with freedom, a nostalgia for the lost edenic

world, and a reflexive belief in the cultural diseases that come with industry. San Francisco may have its own immediate relation to nature, and its literary and artistic traditions include such figures as the stories of endurance of Jack London and the celebrations of natural beauty in the photographs of Ansel Adams and Imogen Cunningham or the socially engaged images of Dorothea Lange. But in a version of geography as iconographic destiny, San Francisco was a peninsula, sea-locked on three sides, an almost Manhattan Island, while Los Angeles was the edge, the ocean, and the widening valley barely contained by its low ranges and hills, opening the eye to longer vistas. Rather than the manmade canyons of New York or Chicago, with masses of people coursing through the streets like electrical energy, it suggested openness. Unlike those more structured and seemingly preordained landscapes, the landscape of Los Angeles promised fluidity, potentially without traditional boundaries and hierarchies or at least, with limited scope for them to operate.[5]

There was certainly an element of refounding a traditional culture in the Los Angeles of the 1920s. In a place seemingly committed to the boundless future it was necessary to construct a useable past, inspired not just by the invention of traditions like the Mission myth but by forging links to culturally validated forms as well. William Andrews Clark, Jr., whose wealth came from Montana copper, and Henry Huntington, the founder of the Pacific Electric railway (the Red Cars), competed for rare books, with Clark also being instrumental in the founding and funding of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Clark and Huntington were only the most prominent among a host of collectors in the 1920s and 1930s, helping create what is still the biggest book-buying market in the country. Similarly, although the Los Angeles County Museum, surpassed in the United States only by the Met in New York and the Chicago Art Institute as an encyclopedic museum, took until 1961 to become a separate facility, galleries and dealers in the 1920s and 1930s were showing many of the major artists of European modernism, while at the same time Mexican muralists such as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, and others completed works that had a lasting effect on an indigenous Angeleno tradition of wall painting that still thrives.[6]

In the 1920s Frank Lloyd Wright designed a few masterpieces, including Hollyhock House and the Ennis House, used so often in the movies as setting for both upper-class feminist utopia (*Female*, 1933) and scifi-noir dystopia (*Blade Runner*, 1982). Wright left after a few years, but his son Lloyd and his assistants Richard Neutra and Rudolf Schindler stayed to put the mark of the modern movement in architecture decisively on Los Angeles. There was in the 1930s yet another significant migration, this time of painters, writers, musicians, and filmmakers fleeing Nazi Germany, who both created and consumed art, as well as encouraged an increasingly sophisticated Hollywood community of collectors like Edward G. Robinson,

Vincent Price, and John Huston (Nieto 1999). These émigrés made the artistic scene in Los Angeles – always present but shunted to one side in the national discussion by the noisier publicity of the East Coast – into a more visible and salient part of the community. So too Igor Stravinsky, Thomas Mann (visited by the teenage Valley girl Susan Sontag), Bertolt Brecht, Arnold Schoenberg, Aldous Huxley, and Chistopher Isherwood and many other expatriates made their homes in Los Angeles and helped create an environment of European high culture whose sensibility also made its way into the movies in the person of composers like Erich Wolfgang Korngold and filmmakers like Billy Wilder.

Los Angeles' diffuse geography impelled the need for premeditated associations and connections rather than the casualness of an old-style city where running into people on the street was a daily occurrence. From the 1920s into the 1940s in particular, it hosted a singular salon culture, overseen by such as Schindler and Neutra for architects, Sasha Viertel for the movie business, and Stanley Rose in the backroom of his art gallery cum bookstore on Hollywood Boulevard. The comings and goings of these overlapping groups maintained a fluidity of association that was always more possible in Los Angeles than in the prestructured cities of the East, even though creating the chemistry to bring such groups together from the far corners of the city required as much forethought as charisma. As the artist Tony Berlant recently remarked about his own long-lasting friendship with the sculptor Robert Graham, the architect Frank Gehry, and the painter Ed Moses, it wouldn't have happened in New York, where the competitiveness and embattled aesthetic camps create a silo effect that keeps people apart, believing the publicity of their own uniqueness.[7]

Yet the divided attitude of official Los Angeles toward the arts remained, and the anti-communist crusade that swept Hollywood and the rest of the country in the 1950s fostered a climate of anxiety about art as much as about politics. In the same postwar period that saw the premiere of Brecht's *Galileo* in Los Angeles, directed by Charles Laughton, the gift of the important modern art collection of Walter and Louise Arensberg was rejected by UCLA and wound up in Philadelphia instead, and the Los Angeles City Council, which in 1914 had denounced the racism of *Birth of a Nation*, now accused the Los Angeles Museum of Art of communist sympathies for showing the works of Picasso. An early show at the Ferus Gallery, opened by Walter Hopps and Edward Kienholz in 1957 to show new Los Angeles art, was raided by the police and the artist Wallace Berman arrested for obscenity. Berman decided to move to San Francisco, but many others stayed.[8]

Some of the effort to bring the sanction of the past and the best of the present to bear on the new place as well as urge to innovation, substantial and dreamlike, came from the acute sense in the West and particularly in Los Angeles of being on the periphery of the American empire – a secondariness that San Francisco embraced more wholeheartedly. California boosterism

has been criticized since the beginning for its blatant sense of inferiority, but unlike the archetypal booster – Sinclair Lewis's Babbitt – who stood firmly against nostalgia and doggedly proclaimed the future, the boosterism of Los Angeles particularly interwove historical fantasy with its visions of utopia. Still, Babbitt's occupation as a realtor had some affinity with the growth of Los Angeles, as real estate developments spread over the landscape in the 1920s and nature became part of a merchandising scheme so pervasive that it seems inevitable that the Hollywood sign was born as an advertisement for a real estate development. Like the roadside restaurants of the period shaped like hotdogs or doughnuts, the Hollywood sign bespeaks a visual culture of people on the move who need spectacle to slow them down for a second look. However much the powerful tried to create a center, it is the multitude of centers that then and now still characterizes Los Angeles. Instead of asserting the center, as planners are trying to do even now with the gentrification of the civic center area, another vision makes the lack of a center a virtue, embracing numerous communities each with its own overlapping version of Los Angeles history.[9]

The early twentieth-century triumvirate of bodily purity, political purity, and cultural purity was thus in constant tension with the basic idea of migration and pioneering that brought so many of the new Angelenos to southern California in the first place. The conservatism that existed, sometimes manifested as hostility and racism, distrusted those of mixed race. Owen Wister, whose novel *The Virginian* (1902) promoted the West as the place where the effete values of the East could be transformed by a manly infusion of nature, echoed many writers at the time when he spoke disparagingly of the "halfbreed," while the early feminist writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman, at the time living in Pasadena, imagined in *Herland* (1915) a world in which women gave birth to women, all Aryan. Amid the many who flocked to California with utopian visions in their eyes, such views of the need for racial purity and eugenics, a hostility to the hybrid rooted in social Darwinism, were hardly uncommon.

At the same time that sense of purity and rebirth also animated what outside observers considered to be the cacophonic and cultic in southern California, in the often-repeated joke about God picking up the country from Maine and shaking it until all the loose nuts wound up here. Intriguingly, that cornucopia of eccentricities existed alongside an odd sort of conservatism, born in the Midwest, that emphasized a libertarian sense of making your own choices, and the clash or dialectic between these disparate views of self-creation or recreation (in both senses) sowed the seeds of the more mixed culture to come. The very diffuseness of Los Angeles geographically replicated the margins of past empires where innovation could flourish away from the pressure of official patterns. Against the rhetoric of racial purity there was always another language of racial harmony and mixing. Luther Burbank, a New Englander transplanted to northern California,

echoed the imagery of Hector St. John Crevecoeur in *Letters from An American Farmer* (1782) when he compared human beings to plants and argued that human stock, like plants, could be improved by grafting – an intriguing alternate image to the melting pot of the East, in which differences became indistinguishable.

This basic Angeleno tension between purity and mixture, nature and what could be made of it, the unalloyed and crazily diverse, bodied itself forth in so many ways on the visual landscape that, when surrealists like Salvador Dali and Man Ray came to Los Angeles, they could only conclude that here was a place innately surrealist (Anderson 1996: 200). It was there in the shoulder-to-shoulder juxtaposition of styles of domestic architecture from a variety of eras and imaginations. All history or at least history conceived as style was immediately available. Unlike New York critics like Clement Greenberg after World War II, who argued that there was a teleology and a progression in the history of art and the end product, at least for the moment, was abstract expressionism, the message of California in general and Los Angeles in particular was that art history was better understood as a grab bag or encyclopedia of stylistic possibilities, which included popular visual culture, the visual life of the normal world, and the visual life of personal fantasy as well.

The movies of course played an important role in creating this sense of the permeability of fact and fiction, past, present, and future. They also not incidentally helped make the Los Angeles landscape an alternate city of the imagination for moviegoers. Through the movies, Los Angeles became everyone's other city. But that city changed over the years. At the beginning it was agricultural, close to nature, and sparsely urbanized, more like a large village than a city, and so it appears in the comedies of Mack Sennett, Buster Keaton, Laurel and Hardy, or Chaplin's *Sunnyside*. To a certain extent that early image corresponded with the general impression of the Los Angeles population of the period as compounded of Midwestern farmers and immigrants from the East Coast and the villages of Eastern Europe – all rubes of one sort or another, and all equally shunned by the old Los Angeles upper class, itself removed hardly a generation or two from migration (Starr 1990: 268).

But this sense of physical space was also the innovation, part style and part subject matter, that decisively separated films from theatre: the opening to a natural world. The film historian Kevin Brownlow (1979) has described the three prime subjects of silent film as the war, the West, and the wilderness. Each setting in its different way suggests that even in the early years, when film was still heavily indebted to theatre, the film frame was not always equivalent to the enclosure of the stage proscenium or a magically transparent fourth wall, but also invited movement outside its momentary limitations into a more chaotic, less orderly world. Landscape was vision in early films and it was there to be consumed, as much by the

imagination as by the wallet. European films might with some few important exceptions stress the bounded world of the stage set and the city, but the importance of nature in American films, especially in the western, reflected a California-nurtured commitment to the outside world.

Not everyone was so convinced there was a new vision of American culture being born in Los Angeles or at least in which Los Angeles was a chief pioneer. From the start of the movie business, writers were lured to Los Angeles with often mixed results. After several years of wintering in California, L. Frank Baum settled in Los Angeles in 1911 and wrote all of his Oz books, the first in a home he called Ozcot, just off of Hollywood Boulevard, was never very successful in his film projects. He died in 1919, the year that Musso and Frank Grill opened down the block. Edgar Rice Burroughs and Zane Grey created more thriving film companies to merchandise their fantasy lives to the movies. Burroughs arrived in 1919 and built a ranch named Tarzana in the San Fernando Valley. Zane Grey and his family moved to Altadena in 1920. None of the three seemed as interested in writing the Great American Novel as in touching the fantasy lives of a large public.

Of these early literary émigrés, Burroughs, at home in such genres as science fiction, westerns, and the Tarzan jungle books, could be considered the most consummate Los Angeles writer. He may also have inaugurated the writerly tradition of profiting from the movie business while having a decided contempt for it. But by contrast with his more bucolic and utopian visions of the West, the East Coast writers of the 1930s who came out to work in the movies almost invariably saw Los Angeles darkly, filled with crazed would-be actors and actresses mired in greed, corruption, and casual violence.

1939 is an intriguingly archetypal year to test attitudes toward the Hollywood version of Los Angeles, as well as the attitudes of the movies toward themselves. Some critics have claimed it was a banner year for great Hollywood films, but that argument could be made equally well for many other years. I find it more interesting to observe instead the confluence of certain movies and certain novels released and published that year. Two films especially stand out: *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*, one looking back nostalgically to a world that was lost, the other stressing the importance of the inner life and the emptiness of all forms of authority. Neither explicitly dealt with Los Angeles, but each took something of its outlook from the California conflict between the utopian purity of either the past or the future, versus the struggles of the present. 1939 was also the year when four novels brought the California experience to national attention. Most successful was John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, which won the Pulitzer Prize. But also that same year were published Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, John Fante's *Ask the Dust*, and Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* – each with its own vision of a gloomy, even surreal

Los Angeles, unlike the sunny dreams of decades earlier. If we add in two novels of 1941, Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's posthumously published *The Last Tycoon*, we have an even half-dozen dark anatomies of the California and Los Angeles experience on the verge of World War II.

The long-lived strain of dystopia in southern California fiction, in which the past is always better, extends at least as far back to *Ramona*, whose Mission-era romanticism is remembered more than its critique of the treatment of Native American tribes and its indictment of the greedy culture of the new state. The urge to utopia seems to need dystopia to define itself, just as dystopia critiques utopia perhaps more than it does normality. In the history of California they perform a kind of two-step or dialectic. Steinbeck's Okies and West's Hollywood wannabes are looking for a new life just as much as the 49ers were, and finding the same blighted world. No wonder perhaps that Nino Frank, a French film critic, in 1946 coined the term *film noir* to describe a certain genre of Hollywood film, influenced visually by the oblique angles of German expressionism and the shadowy streets of French poetic realism, but often set in a now gritty and urban Los Angeles. Chandler's stories were one prime embodiment of this new Los Angeles, a world of moral depravity, where substance, depth, and honor are only appearances mirrored in the architecture: "About the only part of a California house you can't put your foot through is the front door" (Chandler 1992: 34). In this insubstantial world only the ill-paid and frequently beaten detective managed to retain anything like personal integrity. "Down these mean streets a man must come," Chandler intoned in one of his memorable efforts to identify his detective as the last vestige of chivalric ideals in a debased society (1995: 991–2). But even Philip Marlowe had to fight hard against the whirlpool. "Me, I was part of the nastiness now," he says at the end of *The Big Sleep*, although the movie version, starring Humphrey Bogart, gives him a happy ending embracing his off-screen wife Lauren Bacall (Chandler 1992: 230). (For further commentary on film and urban culture in Los Angeles, see chapter 19.)

Born in Chicago, Chandler came to Los Angeles in his twenties after growing up in England, and went to work in the oil business, Los Angeles' great boom economy, until fired for drunkenness and frequent disappearances from his job. Equal portions of disgust and romanticism seem to animate his fiction, just as West's *Day of the Locust*, while satirizing the ragtag misfits and fantasists of Tod Hackett's world as he contemplates his great painting "The Burning of Los Angeles," manages to convey at the same time a grudging admiration for their energy and imagination, perhaps underlining the way in which dystopia allures even as it repels, down to later film versions like *Blade Runner*. Although explicitly indebted to Dashiell Hammett as his mentor in the detective realm, Chandler, by setting his stories in Los Angeles rather than Hammett's northern California,

creates a different relation between the hero and his world. In Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* (1930, but made into its third and most iconic film version by John Huston in 1941), Sam Spade's San Francisco is the settled place and the gang who are after what turns out to be the fool's gold of the falcon are out-of-towners, transients with no discernible homes or roots. But in Chandler's Los Angeles, everyone is a transient, even the rich, and the only solidity is the detective's own moral code. The gold falcon that turns out to be lead could be read as Hammett's metaphor for the lost promise and empty dreams of the California gold rush. But not even such ersatz values survive in Chandler.

The noir influence spread far and wide and still to a great extent dominates the image of Los Angeles past in the movies, whether those made on the 1940s and 1950s or the neo-noirs like *Chinatown* (1974) and *L.A.Confidential* (1997). So pervasive was its vision of postwar anomie and characters caught in an inescapable fate that even the work of a noir fiction pioneer like James M. Cain had to be assimilated to the general gloom, as his novel *Mildred Pierce*, written as an incisive critique of the obsessive urge to material success in 1930s California, became transformed by the movies into a tale of betrayal and murder.

As these examples show, some of the most influential of California literature traffics less in a recognizable realism than in the heightened realism and broad affective strokes of genre, just as its usual form is more often first person than third person, down even to the literary and social criticism of Susan Sontag and Joan Didion. The modern hardboiled detective story may reasonably be considered a California-born genre, a West Coast revision of Poe and Sherlock Holmes, and a refusal of the amateurism of later British detectives. The other literary form that has distinct California roots is science fiction. Robert Heinlein, a prominent figure in the 1940s movement toward science fiction with a recognizable scientific basis and the first to be published outside the scifi niche periodicals, was born in the Midwest but spent most of his life in California, beginning his writing career in Los Angeles. A supporter of Upton Sinclair's EPIC (End Poverty in California) campaign for governor in 1934 and later accused of fascism for the strong military bias of his novels, Heinlein more clearly embraced a kind of small-group utopianism that could be either of the left or the right. In essence his science fiction novels often imply a pioneer ethic transferred from the westward movement to outer space. When there is a battle to be won, whether against Asian invaders of the United States (*The Day After Tomorrow*, 1949), or space aliens (*The Puppet Masters*, 1951), or the stupidities of American politics and morality (*Stranger in a Strange Land*, 1961), it is always the small group of dedicated fighters who are the protagonists and heroes.

Vast changes occurred in Los Angeles and the Southland with World War II and its aftermath. The war had a huge impact on all port cities. On the West Coast it introduced a group of migrants who differed markedly

from the early waves who came to southern California either to become healthy or to die, and the later artistic refugees in flight from Hitler. Many of these new migrants came instead to work in the defense plants and aircraft industry that grew up in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Because of the shortage of manpower, such jobs were for the first time also open to women. Rosie the Riveter, the archetypal patriotic woman working in the war effort whose image was created by the New Yorker Norman Rockwell, was nevertheless probably a Californian, either transplanted or native. Such jobs were also extensively filled by African Americans who migrated from the South in only the latest of many waves to escape the greater racism of the rest of the country to what Douglas Flamming has called "an oddly half-free environment" (2005: 2). Earlier black migrations had come after the 1906 Atlanta riot, which brought the family of Arna Bontemps, later to be one of the founders of the Harlem Renaissance. The rise of the "second" Ku Klux Klan in the wake of *Birth of a Nation* brought migrants as well, and its unanimous denunciation by the Los Angeles City Council and the city film censorship board, until a judge denied the injunction against its showing, gave some indication of their welcome into the community. The Midwestern riots of 1919, the postwar Red Scare – all had their effects in impelling migration to the place that seemed as yet unspoiled by the inherited prejudices elsewhere.[10]

The federally mandated end of housing covenants in 1947 had the potential in Los Angeles as elsewhere to undermine ghettoization and create more mixed neighborhoods. But, as in the world of the arts, all was not so sunny. Chester Himes' novel *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945) depicts a Los Angeles so riven with racial and social prejudice, even within the black community, that the only possible escape the hero, who works in a shipyard, can envision at the end is to join the army. Himes himself chose to settle permanently in France in the 1950s, but in spite of the still rampant prejudice, more and more immigrant groups and migrating individuals surged into Los Angeles over the decades that followed, until now the city has the largest population of Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans in any urban area, with 92 languages spoken in the LA Unified School District, 224 in Los Angeles County, and a plurality of the city of Latino and Hispanic background.

Other cultures beside the ethnic began to flourish in Los Angeles as well. After World War II many gay men from other parts of the country, who had been in the service and discovered the relative freedom of life in the port cities, found a home in such port cities as San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, and Los Angeles (Bérubé 1990). In 1950 Harry Hay and others founded the Mattachine Society, not the first gay rights organization in the country but in its various forms the longest lived and the most influential until the post-Stonewall days of the late 1960s gave a new, more militant tone to the movement. The Mattachine Society became ONE, Inc. in 1952, admitting

women, and helped support the San Francisco-based Daughters of Bilitis, and the magazines ONE and *The Ladder*.

The effect that these changing demographics had on Los Angeles culture was profound. On the one hand the self-consciousness of Los Angeles as a place that exists in both a realistic and a symbolic realm continues the century-old sense of California itself as a self-conscious creation by outsiders. Only now the outsiders wear an even greater variety of faces and come from an even greater variety of cultures than ever before. Instead of a boosterism based on utopian purity, the new boosters emphasized the variety and complexity of Los Angeles cultures and communities. With this shift of a multicultural population from San Francisco to Los Angeles over the twentieth century, the face of Los Angeles has come to mirror more of the world outside our borders, making the city a laboratory for the increasingly complex face of the United States themselves. The shift had also been from an agricultural culture, with its emphasis on traditional values and a tight hold on families against outsiders, to an urban culture with its collisions and changes, a change delayed and complicated by the migration of so many new Angelenos from agricultural and farm areas, including even the waves of African Americans and Mexicans.

Like the romanticized Mission past, the urge to nature also continued to attract fantasies of personal change and improvement. The English painter David Hockney in 1950s Yorkshire leafed through magazines with pictures of muscled young men flexing beside swimming pools and was drawn both sexually and artistically. At about the same time, as a 9 year old, I watched a Disney cartoon travelogue in which Goofy skis down a mountain, speedily shedding his clothes until he is waterskiing at the beach. The appeal was undeniable and, as so often in the past, it was the vision of the landscape, built or natural, perceived anew by foreigners and migrants that helped invigorate Los Angeles' view of itself. As his fellow countrymen Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood had come to Los Angeles to commit themselves to a different religious perspective in the teachings of Swami Prabhavananda, so Hockney saw in the interplay between surface and depth in the Los Angeles landscape, the bold colors of its billboards and vegetation, new ways of energizing his own sense of what his art could accomplish.[11]

One crucial change as Los Angeles moved toward the twenty-first century was that the old hostility to the hybrid and the different began to evaporate, especially in the arts. The newly mixed Los Angeles, what commentators like Gregory Rodriguez have called the *mestizo* culture, seemed in these manifestations to be the model of a boundary and border crossing between genres, forms, and techniques, high culture and popular, that in the postwar period began to clearly mark art being created in Los Angeles. Andy Warhol is widely considered to be the New York icon of the invasion of museum and gallery art by the popular, but it is usually forgotten that he was given his first one-man show in Los Angeles at the Ferus Gallery in 1962. Similarly, it might be worth mentioning that Jackson Pollock's gestural painting style

may owe a debt to his Manual Arts high school teacher Frederick Schwankovsky who "taught the students (including Pollock) to lay canvas on the ground and dance around it, dripping and spilling paint to create starscapes and tropical lianas" (Moritz 1996: 236–7).

The hospitality of Los Angeles art to the popular and the quotidian clearly owes a debt to the movies and the omnipresence of comically exaggerated commercialism in the city. It seems particularly ironic in this way that two of the high culture refugees who landed in Los Angeles (1941) were Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, whose Frankfurt School view considered film, popular culture, and totalitarianism to be inextricably interwoven in their manipulation of a mass audience. Fresh from Hitlerian precedents, at best they condescended to popular culture, but more often dismissed it.

Returning to Europe in the late 1940s, Adorno and Horkheimer could have hardly foreseen how Los Angeles itself became the inspiration for so many visual artists in the decades to come. If the Hollywood sign, with its 50-foot white block letters, was the emblem of the mingled world of entertainment and real estate, the icon of this new world, the other most invoked image of Los Angeles worldwide was Watts Towers, begun by Simon Rodia in the 1920s and finished in 1954, an amalgamation of urban detritus – soda bottles, milk of magnesia bottles, metal, dishes, popular icons of all kinds – encased in soaring concrete spires like some vision of an alternate Oz beside the old Pacific Electric rail tracks. With its emphasis on found objects to create a world, Watts Towers has hints of the surrealism of Duchamp, Dali, and Man Ray. But its grandiosity is pure Los Angeles, transforming the normal, the everyday object, the everyday experience into the spectacular (Schrank 2008).

As such, Watts Towers has a godfatherly relation to important elements of both painting and sculpture in Los Angeles, especially the assemblage expressionism of Edward Kienholz, John Chamberlain, Wallace Berman, and George Herms. The word *assemblage* itself had been coined by Jean Dubuffet in the 1950s to describe the work that he and others were doing in Europe. But as it developed in Los Angeles, even while abstract expressionism reigned in New York, assemblage described a turn outward rather than inward, and in particular an effort to bring together abstraction with representation. Another aspect of this outward turn was toward the light and color of the city itself in the work of painters like Ed Ruscha, Larry Bell, Robert Irwin, and Ken Price. Richard Diebenkorn, a prime figure in the Bay Area Figurative Movement, which had polemically diverged from the reigning formalist shibboleths of abstract expressionism, arrived in 1966 and began his monumental Ocean Park series, named after the Santa Monica neighborhood in which he had his studio, and suffused with the cool colors and surprising vividness of the often mist-shadowed beachfront.

In the realm of popular art, the gaudy car culture of Los Angeles also had a strong effect on the development of the New Journalism as a more personal, involved, passionate style of reporting. Tom Wolfe's article

"The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby" – originally published in *Esquire* in 1963 as "There Goes (Varoom! Varoom!) That Kandy-Kolored (Thphhhhhh!) Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby (Rahghhh!) Around the Bend (Brummmmmmmmmmmmmm)…." – revealed to a larger public a popular art form – car detailing – peculiar to southern California, and also attempted to convey something of that form's own dynamism in the writing. At the convergence of such influence, Los Angeles art in this period was neither the Bierstadtian grandeur of the first pictorial images of California in the nineteenth century nor the *plein air* impressionism of the earlier twentieth century, but an art engaged with a complex urban-natural environment, Los Angeles itself, in all its disparity and complexity. The 1972 installation of Womanhouse, a powerful early feminist art statement, in a soon-to-be demolished mansion in downtown Los Angeles, handsomely continued these new traditions.

Another national postwar cultural change that had a special impact in Los Angeles was the rise of the teenager as an iconic figure. Connected in various ways with the car culture of older southern Californians as well as the surfing culture, teen culture grew based on the new amount of disposable income in their jeans and changes in the recording industry. The ASCAP monopoly of recorded music and radio play had been broken in the early 1940s, but its real implementation occurred in the postwar period, as thousands of new stations appeared on the dial with a host of new, often regional and minority singers and composers that effectively challenged the East Coast monopoly. Among the larger cities outside New York, Los Angeles had one of the largest number of recording studios in the country, not counting the uncountable number of garage bands that could take advantage of newly portable recording devices. In one of the often remarkably emblematic interconnections of Los Angeles history, two brothers emigrated from Vienna to Los Angeles in the 1920s. The elder, Paul, a successful agent, married the Mexican actress Lupita Tovar, best known for her role in the Spanish-language *Dracula*, and became the father of Susan Kohner, who co-starred with Lana Turner in *Imitation of Life* (1959) as the ill-starred Sarah Jane, who rejects her black mother and tries to pass for white. The younger, Frederick, was a writer whose first novel, *Gidget* (1957), based on the experiences of his daughter Kathy, featured a young girl immersed in surf culture. Thus, one family could contain within itself something of the more common post-World War II experience in Los Angeles of crossing boundaries and combining cultures, even while television itself often seemed stuck in a nostalgic vision of all-white small town America, hardly past the days of Andy Hardy, a vision in part of what Los Angeles used to be.

Focusing on any phenomenon runs the risk of tunnel vision. Greg Hise has called Los Angeles "a border city since its founding" (2004: 549), although he admits that in certain historical eras that sense of intermediacy and permeability has been heavily disguised. Michael Dear and Gustavo Leclerc (2003) have referred to the "postborder city" in the book of essays they have edited

on Bajalta California, which stretches from Los Angeles to Cabo San Lucas. And in this chapter I have been arguing for a shift from the older Los Angeles that emerged from the defeat of Mexico in the 1846–8 war and the statehood of 1850 to the newer Los Angeles percolating below the surface that comes more clearly into sight since World War II. But how different is California in general and Los Angeles in particular? How much then is either the state or the city what Carey McWilliams long ago called "the great exception"? How much is the city an intensified incubator of popular culture, and how much merely an entertainment machine to satisfy desires for trivial escapism? Has its culture really grown rich and complex, or is it merely a simulacrum of other cultures, well mixed perhaps but unoriginal?

These are serious questions that the chapters in this section seek, at least in part, to answer. Events like the Watts riot of 1965 and the Rodney King riots of 1992 have helped make the point negatively that Los Angeles is scarcely identifiable with "Hollywood." But what kind of civilization, what kind of culture is being built in Los Angeles? Part of the role of the West and California in American culture has been as a safety valve, a release from the pressures of the East, the possibility of opportunity and change. But the belief in pastoral renewal seems long gone and the social and cultural realities of Los Angeles are now being replicated across the country, as migrations no longer tend to go exclusively from east to west, or south to north, but radiate in all directions both internally and externally.

In this new world the often-ridiculed lack of a center in Los Angeles potentially becomes a metaphor of new connections and multiple centers. The heterogeneity of city spaces both contrasts with the old images of purified utopias and allows space for the flourishing of a sense of community and distinctiveness. The question remains whether the promise of innovation and cross-fertilization in a variety of cultural areas that has been the hallmark of Los Angeles for the last several decades will continue. Or whether, like so many other major cities in the world, it will lose its uniqueness in a sea of brand names and chain stores, becoming corporatized and gentrified, lose its special enclaves and its local vitality along with the possibility of crossing borders and mixing traditions. As multiracial heroes appear in fiction and film, not to mention real life, as visual artists experiment with the borders between genres and traditions, the barriers of the past seem to crumble. But at the same time the expansion of suburban walled communities conveys an urge to isolation, protection from crime, and fear of otherness.

Paradoxes of repression and assimilation, hostility and embrace, the institutional and the libertarian, abound. During the 1970s many of the same multiple cultures that now frequently unite their energies went through a phase of separatism, looking inward to their own traditions and values in an effort at a deeper self-understanding that street gangs still violently parody. One of the ongoing cultural issues of democracy is the need to respect everyone's traditions – as canonized and separate – while avoiding the fundamentalisms of non-mixing and identity politics. Assimilation, as I've tried

to show, has always been a central question in southern California. As the twenty-first century expands, the conceptual boundaries of the regional, the national, the international, and the global are in constant revision and may be themselves outmoded. In this changing world, Los Angeles, the most diverse city in the United States, with its history of cultural purity and impurity, its failures and successes with migration and assimilations, has a claim to be a model, a work in progress.

Notes

1 Starr (1973: 443) remarks that both the search for gold in the North and health in the South were ultimately disappointing.

2 Perhaps it was the story of my first wife's grandparents that inspired me. Living in Philadelphia, her grandfather had received a diagnosis of tuberculosis and a prescription to move to drier country. By the time the doctor revealed that the x-ray plates were fogged and his lungs were fine, they had already lived several years in Escondido, where they remained.

3 The lyrics were written by University of Southern California graduate Buddy DeSylva. Jolson is listed as co-author but apparently just recorded it and was prominently featured on the sheet music. *Bombo* was on Broadway for two years and the song was added later in the run, along with "April Showers" and "Toot, Toot, Tootsie" (see www.musicals101.com/jolsonbio2.htm). It is intriguing to wonder why there are so many songs about American cities and places compared to European songs – perhaps a phenomenon of American boosterism combined with American regionalism. Gilbert and Sullivan, for example, didn't write about London, whereas New York has numerous examples from "The Sidewalks of New York" (1894) on; to these should be added forerunners such as "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1904), "St. Louis Blues" (1914, one of the numerous place name songs of W. C. Handy), "Chicago" (1922), "San Francisco" (1936), and "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" (1954). In this array Los Angeles comes off oddly unboosterish. Three of the most famous – "California Dreamin'" (1965), "I Love LA" (1983), and "Born in East LA" (1985) – mix elements of separation, irony, and parody.

4 Few other cities have had so many versions of their own histories put on the screen as often as Los Angeles, not just because Hollywood was there but because those stories themselves became emblematic.

5 The urban philosopher D. J. Waldie has suggested that the real linkage in Los Angeles is the Los Angeles River, on whose banks the city was founded, and whose wandering route through many disparate communities to the Pacific was the basis for the so-called Shoestring Addition that in 1906 expanded LA's territory to the south to establish the port in San Pedro.

6 See Nieto (1996). Peter Selz (1996) and Paul Karlstrom (1996) point out that Galka Scheyer represented Kandinsky, Feiniger, Klee, and other European modernists, showing their work in both San Francisco and Los Angeles. Susan Anderson (1996) discusses the frequent showings of surrealists in both San Francisco and Los Angeles galleries.

7 Otto Friedrich's portrait of Los Angeles in the 1940s, *City of Nets* (1997), delves deeply into such groups, using the two poles (and virtual polar opposites) of Brecht and Ronald Reagan. Its sense of the many cozy groups of Los Angeles at the time is so acute that in my mind I always think that its title is City of Nests.

8 An important part of the Arensberg collection is the work of Marcel Duchamp, whom the Arensbergs had known in New York and Los Angeles. In a characteristic bend of California eccentricity, Walter Arensberg's other great interest was the effort to prove through elaborate cryptographies that Shakespeare's works were actually written by Sir Francis Bacon. His collection of Baconiana is housed at the Huntington Library in San Marino.

9 One early critic of California boosterism was Ambrose Bierce (Starr 1973: 273). The cycle of boosterism and anti-boosterism is another Los Angeles constant. Even Mike Davis in his dark vision of Los Angeles history finds time at least in his footnotes to dispute New York's claim to precedence in jazz and modern dance (1990: 94 n.112). In his own more decisive embrace, the architectural historian Reyner Banham (1971) argues that the spread of Los Angeles is due to both the multi-centered history of the city as well as the infrastructure, specifically the Red Car transportation system that both served and expanded that reach. A decade before Banham (1960) had criticized the architecture of the modern movement for its airless formalism. The 2003 rejection of Rem Koolhaas's plan for the renovation of the County Museum and his replacement by Renzo Piano neatly restates the traditional conflict. Koolhaas wanted to raze the many buildings to the ground and create a uniform structure, while Piano embraced the variety of architectural styles and made them into a new whole.

10 Health, as so frequently in southern California history, was also a reason for migration, as it was for the family of teenager Ralph Bunche, who first moved from Detroit to Albuquerque and then to Los Angeles after his sickly mother died. Bunche later went to UCLA.

11 The Vedanta Temple, where Huxley, Isherwood, and others attended services, is still there in Hollywood, tucked away on Vedanta Terrace in the shadow of the 101 freeway.

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Chapter Sixteen

"A Most Advantageous Spot on the Map": Promotion and Popular Culture

Anthea Hartig

> *Two more years and Los Angeles will be 150 years old. The fact will come as a surprise to many. The sesquicentennial year begins on September 4, 1931 and before its close Los Angeles will be the scene of the Olympic Games. Never before have these historic athletic contests been held in America. The fact that this municipality was founded while Washington and Lafayette were closing in on Cornwallis and will celebrate its one hundred and fiftieth birthday during the sesquicentennial year of the famous surrender at Yorktown, does not dissipate the oft-repeated and generally held impression that Los Angeles is "the newest city in the world."*
>
> (Hill 1929: 2)

From its founding on September 4, 1781 by a ragtag group representing the Spanish Crown, El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles would go on to host the first modern Olympic Games in the United States. If one considers that the 1932 Games were only the eighth held in the modern era, Los Angeles' meteoric rise in the world's political, economic, and cultural pantheons seems inspiring and surreal. Anchored by its mighty City Hall (1928), a neo-Summerian pile with concrete purportedly mixed from water taken at all twenty-one Spanish Missions, Los Angeles was the juggernaut with a ziggurat.

Lawrence Hill wrote *La Reina: Los Angeles in Three Centuries* to celebrate both Los Angeles and the Security Trust and Savings Bank. Like many odes penned to promote the city during the early twentieth century, *La Reina* emphasizes the hardscrabble, foreign beginnings of the City of Angels to magnify its remarkable ascendancy and to legitimate its past. Yet a few sentences after the text in the epigraph, Hill apparently contradicts his claim to historical legitimacy when he suggested Los Angeles was a "city without a past, as vehemently up to date as the latest extra issue of an

evening newspaper.… Ancestral worship is unknown because those with local ancestors are few and far between. Los Angeles will never be troubled with hardening of the civic arteries. It always has new blood."

Hill's propaganda piece opens up many of the working tensions of understanding Los Angeles. Was Los Angeles rooted in a romantic if scruffy past that matched that of the English Colonies? Or was it a *tabula rasa* upon which the American Dream and its powerful cohort, the California Dream, could be enacted in a vibrant, always changing place with fantastic weather? Perhaps it was both.

Early promoters did not emphasize the humble beginnings of the pueblo, save to mock them as primitive and needing dramatic improvement if not outright erasure. Starting in the early 1900s and ramping up to full steam in the 1920s, boosters sought a usable past and selectively mined the Spanish, not so much the Mexican, origins of California, much like their counterparts along the Eastern seaboard constructed an Anglophilic Colonial Revival. In the twentieth century boosters were also imbued with expanding technological and artistic means at their disposal as art and advertising aligned more closely and with real or reconstructed places like the missions and Olvera Street. Hill was a historian, albeit an antiquarian, and his *La Reina* is a Progressive narrative of Los Angeles' growth. Later historians, including the harshest and the gentlest of critics of the construction of Los Angeles' past(s), have privileged the dominant narrative and lent it often unintentional legitimacy.

We ought to understand how the promoted, popularized versions of Los Angeles have been reflected and manifested in real time, in real places – citrus groves, mega-churches, ribbons of roadways, sports stadiums, heritage sites – and how these places were reinterpreted by non-hegemonic groups to produce different experiences, even realities. The ascendancy of Los Angeles would not, could not, have occurred without the powerful, complicated construction of the place, both literally and figuratively, and the symbiotic emergence of mass or popular culture during the decades between 1880 and 1940. Los Angeles grew up alongside, even inside, its own promotion and popularization.

Popular Culture and Los Angeles: Too Close for Comfort

Popular transformations of Los Angeles in the early twentieth century stretch one's comprehension – so much so that the great transformation trope has often substituted for the study of the city's popular culture. But thousands of women and men and numerous organizations and institutions acted out in tense, collaborative, energetic, and forceful ways the parallel constructions of the physical Los Angeles and its mythical counterpart. Examining Los Angeles' manufactured realities to comprehend what might be considered

mass or popular culture is important for understanding this complex region. However, to this point the subject has received uneven attention.

Perhaps this unevenness lies in the fact that defining popular culture is a squishy endeavor. The popular culture movement was founded on "the principle that the perspectives and experiences of common folk offer compelling insights into the social world." Its proponents claim that "the fabric of human social life is not merely the art deemed worthy to hang in museums, the books that have won literary prizes or been named classics, or the religious and social ceremonies carried out by societies' elite" (*Journal of Popular Culture*, www.msu.edu; see also Levine 1988, 1992; Mukerji and Schudson 1991; Ashby 2006). However, understanding what constitutes "popular" and thus informs and mediates subsequent cultural production is complicated in Los Angeles.

Defining popular culture from the boom of the 1880s to the middle years of the Great Depression would involve ascertaining just who was "common" and what the cultural fabric or fabrics that they wove looked and felt like. The challenge then lies in stripping away layers of constructed, manipulated knowledge (especially that gleaned by advertising and regional promotion) to locate "common folk," understand their identities and perceptions, and assess their places, reactions, and cultural productions. Scholars such as Eric Avila and Michael Sorkin would tell us not to bother with such an impossible intellectual exercise. Avila argues that popular and mass culture "both implicate the market as the mediator between cultural producers and the consuming public" and claims that "the problem with popular culture – especially in the southern California context – is not its definition but its interpretation" (Avila 2004: 13). Sorkin posits that historic, popular culture of Los Angeles is nearly impossible to see – "nearly unviewable save through the fictive scrim of its mythologizers" (Sorkin 1982: 8).

The ways in which the market shaped Los Angeles physically and the outcomes of this force, this phenomenon, have been the subject of much academic debate ranging from the enthralled to the skeptical, from Reyner Banham to Mike Davis (see Banham 1971; Davis 1990). Davis and many others have been most captivated by the materiality of Los Angeles and try to understand the popular culture of Los Angeles through its constructed form, most often architecture or infrastructure, and most always from the perspective of the power elites. Robert Fogelson set the course for much subsequent work with *The Fragmented Metropolis* (1967).

From Douglas Suisman's emphasis on Los Angeles' boulevards to Edward Soja's riffing on the decentralized metropolis of capital, generations of scholars have pondered Los Angeles and its landscape, most often looping architecture with automobiles (Soja 1989; Suisman 1989; Longstreth 1997; Scott and Soja 1998). Los Angeles is so popular and popularized via such a variety of media that it stands out for many thinkers in urban studies as a unique urban form. But after reading masterful works on other western

cities like Chicago (Cronon 1991) one wonders if Los Angeles is unique and whether the broader approach of environmental historians as applied recently in a rich volume of essays (Deverell and Hise 2006) would provide an alternative approach.

Race and privilege were constructed along with the built environment during this critical fifty years as well. We know much more about the white power elite from their own prolific writings (McClung 2002). William Deverell (2004) has sought to understand Los Angeles' growth through the often ugly contestations of ethnicity, in particular in response to Mexicans and related spaces. The political, ethnic, and racial diversity of Los Angeles was and remains notable. Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Italian, German, Irish, Russian, and Jewish immigrants joined white migrants from Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas and African Americans from many states – all bringing with them a remarkable range of political philosophies and cultural constructions. Many found themselves on the margins of popular culture at best or ridiculed in now-horrifying stereotypes, from Sambos to peons, Micks to greasers, traitors to Commies, and living in the segregated spaces of Sonoratown or Chinatown.

In his seminal *City of Quartz*, Mike Davis did not attempt to locate these folks, the folk of popular culture studies. He chose instead to pry open the minds of countless Los Angeles intellectuals to understand the "history of culture produced about Los Angeles," not native cultural expressions or cultural history (Davis 1990: 20). Thus one of the most popular and popularized cities in the world has received insufficient attention to what was produced by an ever-growing and remarkably diverse group of people from around the world. Broad analytical efforts on the rise of Los Angeles have not in general been undertaken since Carey McWilliams' *Southern California Country* (1946). Kevin Starr, who has waxed voluminously on popular culture of the Golden State writ large (Starr 1973, 1985, 1990), notes the immensity of our intellectual debt to McWilliams (Starr 2000; also McClung 2002; Deverell 2004). Yet McWilliams bought into the climactic and cultural uniqueness paradigm of California as a whole (McWilliams 1998), as well as the lands South of the Tehachapi. There are opportunities to move out respectfully of McWilliams' shadow by both zooming in for greater detail and pulling back to realize new overarching structures of analytical thought.

Focused work such as Linda Espana-Maram's (2006) text on popular culture and the construction of Filpino manhood during the pre-World War II years in Los Angeles smartly combine the politics of gender and racial identity formation and contestation against a backdrop, not of movie sets, but of actual places like Chinatown and with real Angelenos, including Chinese, Mexican Americans, and African Americans. Hers is an integrated history that draws upon Matt García's (2001) work on the interracial citrus belt of greater Los Angeles and extends George Sanchez's (1993) work on Mexican cultural identity.

More indigenous and specific studies, like William Estrada's (2008) in-depth unpacking of the Plaza to understand its sociospatial contours, highlight and contextualize a place or neighborhood, or one ethnic group. Or, as Robin Kelley (1992) suggests, a different paradigm would enable a better understanding of how popular culture can "simultaneously subvert and reproduce hegemony." An overemphasis on the important places and rituals constructed by an elite can leave one sinking into near nihilism and, moreover, denies the engagement factor in which people, even as consumers, mold cultural production (Avila 2004). While we cannot overlook the force and power of mass marketing to alienate and deny ethnic communities and related cultural expressions, George Lipsitz (2001) has encouraged us to anticipate more scholarly investigation into the ways Filipino laborers, for example, subverted dominant cultural norms. We can acknowledge collectively for the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries what Allen Scott and Edward Soja (1998) claim for the late twentieth century, namely that a multidisciplinary approach, one that simultaneously recognizes a multiplicity of perspectives on urban form, ought to reveal the coexistence and inseparability of often conflicting forces.

The ways in which people constructed, reconstructed, interpreted, and reinterpreted Los Angeles also provides hints to the city's popular or mass culture. Dolores Hayden (1997) has called this complicated process the "politics of place construction." Whether built from the earth with adobe bricks, or from sticks, paper, and plaster of Paris for movie sets, the built environment of turn-of-the-twentieth-century Los Angeles reflected people's desire to make the land profitable, while the rapidity of change masked the dislocation of workers, for example.

The Pueblo Transformed and Promoted

Focusing on Los Angeles' places, from the San Fernando Valley to East Los Angeles, from Echo Park to San Pedro, we realize the place, the pueblo-cum-City, is as elusive, expansive, and large as its culture, especially its popular culture. So we start by understanding the physical elements shaped by human actions – land use and circulation patterns, buildings, and landscaping – as they form the most basic layer of any cultural landscape. Further layers gain complexity as one tries to understand the ways in which individuals and groups produced and reproduced the cultural landscape and how it functioned in any given society at any given time (Mitchell 1996).

At the heart of this chapter lies this assumption that a strong, discernable relationship existed between Los Angeles' cultural landscape and its creators (see part five of this volume). To reference but one example, the citrus industry, headquartered in Los Angeles, helped establish a decentralized pattern of commerce and social life that shaped development in the post-World War II years as acre upon acre of citrus was ripped out for tract houses.

The patterns of land development that began in the 1880s in Los Angeles proper had many similarities with the greater southern California region. Gone were the *hectares* and loosely defined Rancho boundaries, so confusing and backward to Anglo American sensibilities. In came the standard surveying patterns wherein men claimed a section of land, 640 acres, and divided it into 160-acre quarters, then again into 40-acre sixteenth sections. Usually, speculators and owners further divided the quarter into four 10-acre parcels, and so on. At its most basic, the Anglo view of the landscape placed the surveyor's grid over an existing topography, one of the largest coastal valleys in the hemisphere. The regular, rectilinear survey enabled an immediate and critical distancing of owner from that which he owned, and turned the earth into a commodity.

After securing water and eventual rail access, early American growers in southern California planted citrus fruits, often with other standard and specialty crops. Farmland with its water and rail proximity would become the central core of a town, with the trees and vines replaced by hotels, office buildings (or "blocks" as they were referred to then). Radiating outward from the core, single-family houses on urban (50 × 150) lots defined the perimeter of the community. For instance, William Wolfskill's groves, the first commercial citrus acreage in the state when he planted it circa 1840, lay in what would become the heart of modern-day Los Angeles, encompassing 70 acres between modern-day San Pedro and Alameda, Third and Sixth streets. Jean Louis Vignes farmed his 100-acre vineyard in the area now bound by Aliso Street and Alameda, east of Little Tokyo.

Citrus cultivation introduced key ingredients to the stew of Yankee-style urban growth, namely, water and irrigation infrastructure, railroad access, investors and settlers with capital, and a set of marketable vistas. Railroads formed key links to development of the citrus belt where growing towns were connected to Los Angeles by the transcontinental lines and later the Pacific Electric. Water, especially in the form of mutual water companies created to nurture thirsty citrus fruits, was the true enabler of regional growth. The evolution of the basin's built landscape owes much to the decentralized yet controlled patterns of land use the citrus industry created.

But from McWilliams forward the primary industry of Los Angeles has been considered speculative land development. "Place entrepreneurs," land speculators, bankers, newspaper publishers, politicians, the mighty Chamber of Commerce, and public utilities with a stake in the economic growth of an area collectively formed a "cartel of powerful interests" (Fulton 2001). Los Angeles grew due to rampant speculation by the best collection of boosters the West had ever seen (Davis 1990).

Desiring an endless and profitable cycle of urban development, consequences be damned, the cartel sought to provide infrastructure, promoted business, immigration of the right sorts (from the Midwest mostly), and the "subdivision, settlement and cultivation of our lands," according to the

Chamber By-Laws of 1892 (Zimmerman 1985: 27). After an initial failed attempt in 1873, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce reconstituted itself in 1888 with a mission: to bring back some of those who had left following the boom of 1885–7 and to remind the nation that Los Angeles "occupies a most advantageous spot on the map" (Zimmerman 1985).

The Chamber supported interurban and regional trolley and train lines and sewer and water projects necessary for population growth. It also lobbied for federal assistance in dredging out the then-largest manmade harbor in San Pedro after arm-twisting to take over that existing city. William Mulholland, chief engineer for the Department of Water and Power, declared that "if we don't get it," that is water, "we won't need it" (Fulton 2001). But his words resonate metaphorically for us, as the same could be said of both the infrastructure and material culture of Los Angeles.

The boosters succeeded. With increased Anglo immigration Los Angeles grew from the 187th largest city in the nation in 1880 to the largest city in the western United States in 1920; from a city of 11,000 in 1880 to 1,238,000 in 1930; from 29 square miles in 1895 to 442 square miles in 1930. The local growth machine was successful in attracting intranational migration: in the decade between 1910 and 1920, one-third of all Americans going west of the Rockies came to live in Los Angeles. Hill was right about that new blood: according to the 1910, 1920, and 1930 censuses, only one-quarter of all Los Angelenos had been born there (Monroy 1999).

Many of those newcomers hopped in cars to transverse the expansive basin. The conflation of popular culture with car culture in Los Angeles has been a topic of sustained study, but its early twentieth-century contours remain unexamined. This trope too is rooted in certain realities: at one car for every eight residents in 1915 and two cars for every three Angelenos in 1929, Los Angeles boasted one of the highest per capita rates of ownership of any metropolitan region (Bottles 1987; Brilliant 1989). Importantly for ethnic minorities and women (Scharff 1992), roads allowed for greater mobility to work and recreate (Sanchez 1993) and were not segregated or run with restricted stops like interurban cars were (García 2001). When the state began constructing limited-access roadways in the 1910s, it funded these projects with over $70 million in state bonds (Fink 1998).

As citrus growers hopped in their mighty Packards for the drive from Riverside to downtown Los Angeles for a meeting of the California Fruit Growers' Exchange (CFGE), known by their trademark Sunkist, in say 1925, they were participants in the great and emerging car culture. Upton Sinclair began his novel *Oil!* with "The road ran, smooth and flawless, precisely fourteen feet wide, the edges trimmed as if by shears, a ribbon of grey concrete, rolled out over the valley by a giant hand" (1997: 1). At the turn of the twentieth century, Los Angeles proved an ideal location for the engineers of an aggressive marketing coup by an extremely transformative agribusiness, the citrus industry, which consumed the vast valleys of the

Southland. Side by side, the leaders of the CFGE worked with the railroads, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the *Los Angeles Times*, and booster Charles Fletcher Lummis's Arroyo Set to transform the economic, social, racial, and cultural landscapes of greater Los Angeles. The solidification of the cooperative marketing movement and the marking of the spatial conquest of the region went hand in hand.

Selling the Land

With speculation in citrus land the booster cartel designed the first iteration of the southern California growth machine. The completion of the Southern Pacific's southwest route the "Sunset" in 1883 and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe lines in 1885–6, furthered the transformation of the regional landscape and economy. Handily, SP's promotional magazine, *Sunset*, served as the proverbial other hand clapping to promote and construct popular notions of desire and meaning around California. The railroad companies also supported irrigated scientific farming and in particular citrus fruit crops with money and rhetoric (Orsi 1975; Deverell 1996). McWilliams, of course, first noted the distinctness of citrus culture, and Davis and many others built on that analysis and claimed that citriculture met many if not all of the growth cartel's goals, "attracting thousands of affluent investors, raising land values, reinforcing the region's 'Mediterranean' image, promoting tourism, stimulating town-building, and above all, dramatically raising the unit value of railroad shipments" (Davis 1990: 111; see also García 2001; Sackman 2005).

By World War I, Sunkist had grown exponentially and moved its headquarters from Riverside to the Consolidated Realty Building in downtown Los Angeles, the focal point of southern California's development, banking, transportation, and government activities. A new 68,000-square foot Sunkist building opened in 1935 at a cost of $482,000 on the northeast corner of 5th and Flower. Its Streamline Moderne design emulated City Hall, but was, of course, a tad shorter, per custom.

CFGE leaders and their contemporaries placed the corporate, capitalistic, and cooperative nature of the southern California citrus industry neatly into the nation's and the region's "natural" evolution. Key to staking their claim was the cartel's development and use of advertising and mass communications to construct a popular culture of Los Angeles. *La Reina* and like propaganda reiterated that message, going so far as to claim that it took capitalists to do justice to Los Angeles' heralded "Mediterranean" climate. In 1921, Chamber of Commerce President Maynard McFie claimed that "God had certainly wished on us in Southern California climate, but it has taken men of vision to capitalize on it" (Zimmerman 1985: 23). We should recall that there was little "natural" or inevitable about the rise of corporate capitalism in Los Angeles and southern California. The "heroic" men who

Plate 16.1 Sunkist Building, photographed in 1939, looking east on Fifth Street across from Los Angeles Public Library's Central Library. Designed by Walker & Eisen, this was one of the first poured concrete office buildings in downtown Los Angeles, with simple but strong modern lines and roof gardens. Built by the California Fruit Grower's Exchange at the height of the Great Depression, it architecturally demonstrated the shift to corporate-based dominance of Los Angeles both physically and economically in the 1920s and 1930s. (WPA; images courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library and used with permission. Security Pacific Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.)

created this new political economy and the corresponding ideology of corporate liberalism were able to write their own history, commission their own art and photographs, hire their own ad men, and make their own films. They positioned themselves well in a world they claimed. But generations of laboring men and women of color had participated in its creation.

Advertising the Land

> *For there is a golden haze over the land – the dust of the gold is in the air – and the atmosphere is magical and mirrors many tricks, deceptions, and wondrous visions.*
>
> (McWilliams 1998: 4)

In 1906 the presidents of Sunkist and the Union Pacific railroad agreed to a joint advertising campaign for southern California oranges during the 1907–8 winter season. Their campaign, "Oranges for Health, California for Wealth," included special trains and crates to carry the fruit to Iowa, traveling professors who waxed eloquently on sunny southern California (especially poignant in the winter months), and poetry contests. Nationwide sales rose 17.7 percent, but Iowa sales jumped 50 percent (MacCurdy 1932).

The CFGE never looked back: in its first twenty-five years of advertising the Exchange spent $17 million. In 1932–3 Sunkist's advertising budget reached $1.5 million per annum. That year 26 million full-color ads ran in magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Deliniator*, *McCalls*, *Woman's Home Companion*, and *American Weekly*. Newspapers with a total circulation of 4,447,000 ran Sunkist ads as well. The CFGE helped shape and lead the dynamic and powerful trends in the history of advertising of the early twentieth century that scholars like T. J. Jackson Lears (1995) examined.

A well-crafted combination of gender-based strategies and a multi-tiered marketing approach geared to sell fruit, climate, and an idealized version of nature – "Where the orange and the lemon / Grow amidst the peace and plenty" – Sunkist's promotion of place, health, financial security, and emotional wellbeing complemented the promotion of southern California. The Exchange became one of the first advertisers to make use of colored copy, and in full color, citrus land quickly became the favorite subject of the CFGE's advertising staff: carefully selected and drawn images of oranges, orchards, and vistas filled pages of copy.

Sunkist ads complemented the crate labels citrus growers used to make a commodity of lifestyle and place. A young advertising wizard, Don Francisco, transformed the art and message of labels by arguing that both the label and the label trademark carried "value," just like the groves and packinghouses dotting the landscape (McClelland and Last 1985). Carefully constructing the message, colors, brand name, and art was the key to successfully catching the eyes of wholesalers who selected the fruit for distribution. Brand names should be short, catchy, and distinctive – many of the post-Francisco labels spotlight brands such as Request, Demand, Order, and in a wonderful combination of tactics, Have One. Francisco believed the label should suggest the contents of the crate, be aesthetically pleasing, and most importantly connect the fruit to its source, the California landscape. Francisco reiterated this last point incessantly, as he understood well the draw of the Southland's increasingly popular image.

When citrus became another assembly line product, advertisers had to figure out how to induce its mass consumption. The CFGE reshaped, remade, and sold oranges and their "natural" assembly line, the citrus landscape, throughout the nation and then throughout the world. When the CFGE's managers and Board of Directors shone the light of corporate advertising based on sophisticated market research techniques on American

Plate 16.2 "Have One" brand label from the 1930s, suggestive and suggesting, exemplified the latter prong of the "science and sex" themes of citrus advertising. (Image from the author's collection.)

consumers they worked to maintain a "managerial cultural hegemony" they strove to create (Jackson Lears 1995).

Understanding the consumption-based mass marketing of the citrus industry helps pierce the scrim, McWilliams' golden haze, that has obscured the role popular culture played in creating Los Angeles and the Southland. Sunkist used a variety of media to construct a historical narrative for its various audiences, including radio (beginning in 1928) and film. Taking full advantage of the emerging movie industry in Los Angeles, in 1917 the Exchange made its first motion picture, *Story of the Orange*. In 1932 it produced two features. The first, *Partnership for Profit*, began with padres planting orange seedlings at the San Gabriel Mission. According to a later Sunkist publication, "the cross and citrus went hand in hand" and "orange juice and lemonade helped sermons and homilies make converts" (Ainsworth 1968). Hollywood also adapted the mission myth. D. W. Griffith's first movie made completely in California was filmed at Mission San Gabriel (Starr 1985: 291). Sunkist's advertisers traced its lineage to the first, 6-acre orange orchard planted by the Franciscans and their neophytes at the Mission San Gabriel in 1804–5.

In the advertised world of citrus an elegant woman's hand would urge consumers to just have one beautiful, sun-kissed, sun- and vitamin-filled globe of goodness. Raymond Williams (1973) interpreted analogous false pastorals centered on the gradual disappearance of labor and laborers from the agricultural countryside. Citrus promotion and advertising parallels closely the overall promotion of Los Angeles in the early twentieth century, a carefully framed and composed set of words and images to sell a place and privilege a way of life (McClung 2005). Labor and laborers drop from sight; quite a feat, given there were an estimated 40,000 non-white citrus industry laborers by 1940 (McWilliams 1983).

During the period of this chapter, Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican workers performed the intensive and varied labor required to tend delicate and thirsty fruit which made land and business owners millions of dollars. By the labor of these men, women, and children, large-scale capitalist agriculture became the state's new farming reality in the early twentieth century. McWilliams (1998) called the state's system of agricultural labor "California's peculiar institution," deliberately paralleling it with Southern chattel slavery. The core imbalance created by this peculiar labor structure – that a white elite depended on the permanent subjugation of unorganized laborers paid wages well below subsistence level – defined the state and in particular Los Angeles County. Large growers subjugated and controlled labor by marginalizing and segregating groups into *colonias* or *campos* near worksites, whether those worksites be groves or railroads and whether the workers be Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, African American, or Mexican. In Los Angeles, most of these segregated places were clustered around La Placita. More work is needed to build upon the existing foundation laid by Estrada (2008), Deverell (2004), García (2001), and Sanchez (1993) to ascertain how living and cultural production and transformation occurred within such marginalized places.

Agriculture on an industrial scale was joined by industrialization on a massive scale (Hise 2001). The Chamber of Commerce promoted this in a 1929 brochure, "Los Angeles County To-day," that depicted the machine and the garden separated by the arch of a mission arcade. While the citrus landscape spills out on the left side, the industrial metropolis and downtown Los Angeles, anchored by the just-completed City Hall, comprise the right frame. As Douglas Sackman observes: "This bifurcated scene should be seen as a unity, for the horticultural landscape was intimately shaped by the machine, while the organic fruits of nature made the rise of the cityscape possible" (2004: 6).

The Mission Myth

The elegantly decaying mission arch of the Chamber's representation provides an important clue to the popular culture of *fin-de-siècle* Los Angeles. By the 1890s, the remainder of the twenty-one missions founded by Spain

and the Franciscans in Alta California lay in partial ruins – a state of decay that made them objects to mythologize and commodify. Surprisingly, white Protestants touted the mission myth and oversaw the subsequent reconstruction and restoration of the mission as they constructed a history of partial truths tempered with dramatic revisions of the Spanish colonial past. This new, usable past assisted the advertising and wholesale liquidation of southern California landholdings to eager transplants during the boom (and bust) years of the 1880s, 1890s, and the early 1900s (McWilliams 1983; McClung 2002; Deverell, 2004).

Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* (1884) popularized the mission myth of well-fed, content, ever-grateful Indians, benevolent wise padres, and tortured, marginalized Californios. *Ramona*, despite its contractions and inherent ironies, became a remarkable success. Never mind if California Indians were civilized or syphilized, their actual treatment bore little resemblance to the love-fest Jackson depicted. No matter; once boosters overlooked the spin Jackson put on the nasty American characters (they were earlier, rougher sorts) Ramona became the George Washington of imaginary historical sites – where she slept, schooled, married Alessandro – with all the accompanying tourist trinkets – pincushions, pillows, baskets, and plaques for sale at stops along the Southern Pacific line.

Joining Jackson in myth construction was Charles Fletcher Lummis who, along with young architect Arthur Benton, founded the Association for the Preservation of the Missions in 1888, soon known as the Landmarks Club. Lummis matched manifest and divine destiny with the romance of the Southwest – "God made Southern California – and made it on purpose" (McWilliams 1983: 128). In the *Los Angeles Times* and in *Land of Sunshine* (later renamed *Out West*), Lummis called for the creation of a rooted style of architecture, one unique to the climate and "history" of the region. Radiating from his handmade home, *El Alisal*, a tangible, intimate, and literal interpretation and refashioning of Los Angeles' Hispanic past, Lummis and an "Arroyo Set" of writers, publicists, boosters, sun-worshipers, and the like helped define southern California's "comprehensive fiction." Importantly, Lummis was on General Otis's payroll, providing a critical link to the *Los Angeles Times* (Davis 1990).

Architects, writers, romantics, designers, boosters, and railroad men – many answered Lummis's call, and what came to be known as the Mission Revival style of architecture reshaped the built environment of Los Angeles and southern California. While listening to bells at the Mission Inn in Riverside (a fantasy world a Lummis associate, Frank Miller, constructed where there had never been an actual mission), John McGroarty penned the Mission Play. McGroarty was one of Harrison Gray Otis's star writers. Inspired by the success of *Ramona*, McGroarty exalted the padres who put to hard work the "idle," "useless" Native Californian race (McGroarty 1923). The Mission Play cost approximately $1.5 million to produce; it ran sixteen consecutive seasons and was seen by an estimated 2.5 million people

(Starr 1985; Deverell 2004) in a state-of-the-art Mission Revival style theatre next to the real San Gabriel Mission. Architecturally the early nineteenth-century mission era and its early twentieth-century revival merged seamlessly to the untrained eye in a promotional fiction.

The pope (the real one) later decorated McGroarty, who profited from his investments in land and later served two Congressional terms. In 1923 McGroarty built Rancho Chupa Rosa in Tujunga in the north San Fernando Valley near the site of a Tongva settlement that later became a citrus ranch. In 1907 M. V. Hartranft founded a socialist colony in Tujunga based on the principles of the Utopianist cooperative farm movement led by William Ellsworth Smythe. The cooperative ended by 1920, and the city was annexed by the City of Los Angeles in 1932, to solidify both landmass and water rights for the burgeoning metropolis. McGroarty became the California Poet Laureate the following year. There is more to learn about such development which would expand on Davis's (1990) fascination with utopian colonies. Rancho Chupa Rosa and the "Little Landers" community also suggest the rapidity with which the cultural landscape changed and the propensity for boosters, artists, and politicians to use the Southland as their own stage set and to write their own scripts.

Further blurring fact and fiction, McGroarty's *Mission Play* and his *History of Los Angeles County* (1923) constituted the primary educational experience and history texts for thousands. His accounts of the missions became icons of Los Angeles, Californian, and Western popular culture. Deverell (2004) traced the emerging elite's attempts to corral the Hispanic and Mexican pasts and presences in Los Angeles via a series of elaborate, scripted cultural productions like the city carnival La Fiesta and the Mission Play. The commodification of Los Angeles' history during the forty years following the Treaty of Guadelupe Hildago masked racial violence, outright exploitation, and a systematic segregation of Mexican residents, while Chamber of Commerce pageants like La Fiesta served to glorify the Spanish elements of Los Angeles' past and obscure the Mexican past (Monroy 1999; Deverell 2004).

By all accounts, Los Angeles remained "a predominantly Mexican town" well into the mid-1870s, until the 1876 connection to the transcontinental railroad brought more and more Anglo Americans to southern California (Hayden 1997; McWilliams 1998). Los Angeles proved foreign and strange to many newcomers surrounded by Spanish in both spoken and written word. Official city documents were bi-lingual into the 1870s. Disdain and outright racism fueled a hatred for Mexicans and led to numerous lynchings, as part of a type of guerrilla warfare – a tactic used as well on Chinese men living and working in Los Angeles (McWilliams 1983). Hatred encouraged speculators and boosters to eradicate the Mexican and his presence from the Southland (Deverell 2004). McWilliams found this transformation of the land radical, noting that during the 1880s, "Spanish" towns transformed overnight into "gringo villages" (1983: 65).

Historians, however, have often overlooked the fact Mexicans fought back via culture. Attention to Los Angeles' Mexicans and Mexican Americans opens up inquiry into the market-mediated understandings of cultural production and the difficulties of practicing the history we preach. An estimated 925,000 Mexicans came to the United States between 1910 and 1930, and their numbers in Los Angeles grew from approximately 5,000 to 90,000 over that same twenty-year period. Many arrived at La Placita. There they found themselves in the very center of left-wing political action, encouraged to consider tenets of workers' rights, adequate wages, and other putatively subversive notions.

Though it is important to understand cultural productions like La Fiesta, it is equally significant to consider the ideas and actions of those Mexicans who sought to replicate Mexico in Los Angeles. "Mexicans' efforts to continue on a new landscape" receive particular attention from historian Douglas Monroy (1999), who unpacks the meaning of *Mexico de afuera*, "Mexico outside" or "outer Mexico." Monroy recounts that in the weeks leading up to the 1903 La Fiesta, the workers of the Union Federal Mexicano, who were slaving to lay the tracks that would carry the people and floats, went out on strike. Monroy writes, "the alteration of history, which the festival reflected and engendered, rendered this event [the strike] indecipherable in any authentic way" (1999: 8).

Such counter-hegemonic expressions can also be found spatially and culturally through music, and in particular Mexican American *corridos,* or folk ballads, more so than in literature (Parades 1987). Prior to 1940, Mexican American literature suffered from "a rather ingenuous hopefulness, a submissiveness, and a contrived and derivative romanticism," penned by writers from relatively privileged positions with more investment in dominant ideologies (Parades 1987: 1086). Those who had worked hard and yet had nothing to lose as they sought to preserve and defend their culture articulated proletariat oral traditions, thus *corridos* provided to Mexican American writers and artists a key path of expression in the early twentieth century, one that both celebrated and vindicated the "Greater Mexico experience" (Parades 1987; Sanchez 1993; Monroy 1999). One of the more famous songs from the 1920s, "El renegado," chastises the "most miserable creature," those who have rejected Mexican heritage in favor of American temptations.

In the 1920s, simultaneous with the booming Mexican population and its cultural renaissance (Sanchez 1993), amid a bricolage of Mexican culture centered at La Placita, civic activist Christine Sterling nudged and prodded prominent Angelenos into preserving and transforming the historic core of the Pueblo into an "authentic Mexican shopping street," commonly known now as Olvera Street. Three blocks from where the new City Hall would soon rise, Sterling viewed a landscape in need of renewal. Beginning with the condemned Avila Adobe, Sterling spearheaded efforts

to reshape the historic Plaza, claiming it "belongs to the history of Los Angeles. It is not ours to destroy, but an entrusted heritage left to us to preserve and pass on to future generations" (Sterling 1947). Ironically, it was Italian immigrants who constructed a significant number of the buildings preserved as "Spanish" in the Plaza, a site where the City had been trying to curtail the radical organizing that had occurred in the public square since the early 1900s (Estrada 2008). As part of the larger efforts to calm and remake the historic pueblo, City officials razed what remained of Sonoratown and a decade later forcibly removed Chinatown and its occupants to make way for Union Station.

The complications over what would be acceptable cultural productions, mediated by the market and its mavens, in early twentieth-century Los Angeles can be articulated via the story of a privately commissioned mural painted on private property by David Alfaro Siqueiros in 1932. One of the great Mexican muralists of the twentieth century, Siqueiros painted "América Tropical" on a second story, south-facing wall of a brick building known as the Italian Hall. Commissioned by F. K. Ferenz, director of the Plaza Art Gallery, the mural was controversial from the start. Although the art community of Los Angeles heralded it as a powerful creative work, others considered its content politically explosive (Estrada 2008).

"América Tropical" measures eighty by eighty feet and features a large central figure of a Mexican Indian, crucified on a double cross beneath an American eagle. In the mid-1930s, Sterling challenged Siqueiros' supporters and required that the mural be whitewashed to obscure its indictment of the economic exploitation of Latino workers and American imperialism. No longer would the Plaza be a hotbed for radical, threatening, populist, or popular activities; it would be sanitized and re-purposed for safe, staged, commercial engagement with a chosen cast of Hispanic looking and dressed characters, beckoning all to "the mighty city's womb" (Deverell 2004: 271). Bedecked with flowers and bright colors and enlivened with lyrical songs sung in Spanish, Olvera Street's transformation was soon deemed complete, but to what had it been transformed?

Consider the music performed on Olvera Street after Sterling's urban facelift in the context of the rapidly growing Mexican musical and theatre scene in Los Angeles of the 1920s. Entertainers employed in a tourist hotspot, singing in a language many tourists and white residents did not understand, must have offered powerful opportunities for a range of expression. And what did it mean in those spaces that music has been called the nexus of Mexican American cultural transformation of the time (Sanchez 1993)? One wonders what Sterling thought of the Olvera Club, a nightclub that drew mixed-race and ethnic fun-seekers adjacent to her immaculate restoration project.

Historic preservationists have upheld Christine Sterling as one of its pioneering *madres* (Hata 1992), yet we have much to learn about the

construction of Los Angeles' heritage. A comprehensive, holistic, multicultural understanding of Los Angeles still eludes those who practice public history. However, great strides have been taken to bridge the gap between a triumphalist view of beneficent conquest and a comprehensive telling of multiple narratives, unafraid of the ugliness of genocide and racism and embracing of amazing points of human connection and goodness.

Build It and They Will Come – Or Else!

As Lummis, McGroarty, Sterling, and other boosters constructed and reconstructed the history and heritage of Los Angeles, the Chamber and the All-Year Club (established in 1921) sought the ultimate in global acceptance: the new international, classical sports competition of the modern Olympic Games. Wanting to proclaim both the city's rise to prominence and its sesquicentennial meant that history had to matter as much as the boosters' dream of making Los Angeles a seasonless "playground of America" (Zimmerman 1985: 26).

Thus, the local growth coalition determined the city ought to invest in sports. Boosters manned a new group with the officers of the existing organization and incorporated the Community Development Association (CDA) in 1920. A twenty-two member, cooperative non-profit organization led by Harry Chandler, the CDA sought to secure an Olympiad, lobbying hard in Antwerp at the 1920 summer games, and eventually convincing the IOC. Once the bid was accepted, promoters had to construct the requisite public facilities for athletic events, festivals, and related events (Riess 1981; Chalkley and Essex 1999).

Exposition Park, next to the University of Southern California, where most of the sons of the CDA members attended college, was chosen as the site for a Coliseum. Its construction tested the very constitutionality of local government's power. After failed ballot measures, lawsuits brought by the upstanding coalition of middle-class Progressives in the Municipal League, and the backing of the State Supreme Court, the CDA leased 17 acres and broke ground in 1921. Amazingly, the CDA financed the Coliseum's construction with $800,000 (non-adjusted sum) supplied by fourteen banks and underwritten by the City and County of Los Angeles. Each of those local governments agreed to pay the CDA $499,225 over five years in rent to pay off the loan and interest; the CDA would run the stadium. Little wonder the Municipal League opposed the construction of the facility as too expensive and though financed by the public, clearly not a public facility (Riess 1981).

The Memorial Coliseum, designed by John and David Parkinson and built by thousands of low-paid, non-union, and non-English speaking immigrant laborers, was completed in May of 1923. In October USC

hosted cross-valley rival Pomona College and squashed the team from the orange empire, 30–0, in front of a crowd of 17,836. Los Angeles' population at that time was just over 576,000. When the CDA formed the Xth Olympiad Association, it began its campaign with a $1 million state bond and used newspapers to advertise the importance of expanding the 75,000-seat Coliseum, then barely five years old, to accommodate 101,573 spectators. Doubling its previous investment, the City again heeded the call. The Xth Olympiad ran from July 30 to August 14, producing celebrity athletes, breaking world records in nineteen of twenty-two track and field events, and making a profit (Riess 1981).

The 1932 Olympics demonstrated the popularity of sports, an understanding of how pageantry can sell place, and the ability of place entrepreneurs to market Los Angeles and to manipulate public financing. It also showed the ability to transform place: the CDA led efforts to build and expand the Coliseum, to rename 10th Street Olympic Boulevard, to construct an Olympic Village (for male athletes only) in Baldwin Park, and construct the Grand Olympic Auditorium, the largest indoor arena in the United States at the time, seating 15,300.

The remaking of LA for the Xth Olympiad presents us with lines of sight into the importance of labor, ethnicity and gender as well. Railroad, streetcar, road, and other infrastructure, along with large and small construction projects, were intricately linked to the expansive growth of the Mexican community during the Revolution-related exodus from 1910 to 1920. At the same time, most of the workers lived in overcrowded courtyard apartments, "cholo courts" or railcars in Boxcarville on the east side of the river (Deverell 2004). Simultaneously, thousands of small "California Bungalows" were built and lived in by white migrants, happy to own their piece of heaven (Nicolaides 2002).

Popular notions of gender and identity and power mesh with celebrity and stardom in the Los Angeles of the 1920s and 1930s. The Xth Olympiad also brought Los Angeles, the United States, and the world the "most flawless section of muscle harmony, of complete mental and physical coordination, the world of sport has ever seen" – Mildred Ella "Babe" Didrikson, a nickname she earned the day she hit five home runs in a softball game (Schwartz n.d.). But it was the lure of the Lord who would bring forth Los Angeles' key female celebrity of the early twentieth century.

Stop! And Be Saved!

The popular culture of spectacle, whether in sports or pageants, while certainly not unique to Los Angeles, took on a new scale during the early twentieth century. Mass religion, most powerfully exemplified by Sister Aimee's evangelical behemoth of the 1920s and 1930s, proved to be a

Plate 16.3 Aimee Semple McPherson's majestic and showy Angelus Temple, viewed at night, ca. 1930. Spotlights set the place aglow as it dominated the northeastern Los Angeles neighborhood of Echo Park from its location at 1100 Glendale Boulevard. The marquee claims there is a "Continuous Revival" going on within its walls. Sister Aimee Semple (1890–1944) founded the Pentecostal Four Square Church in 1927 and dedicated the mighty temple on January 1, 1923. The temple, still the headquarters of the International Church of the Four Square Gospel, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. (Keystone Photo Service; images courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library and used with permission. Security Pacific Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.)

series of real and marketed places where Hollywood, vaudeville, and acculturation met. When 250,000 watched the Rose Parade in Pasadena in 1923, a particularly stunning float, the flowers making the Angeles Temple of Sister Aimee Semple McPherson, caught many an eye. On January 1, devotees of the Four Square Pentecostal Church would fill the 5,300-seat structure on Glendale Boulevard, across from Echo Park, to see the glamorous queen of evangelicals pray and speak. McPherson's pan-Christian, New Testament sermons filled the temple thrice on Sunday and nightly during the week.

With great savvy and passion, McPherson created an empire, with her own radio station, missionary and Sunday schools, outreach programs, and

healing ministries – not to mention forty satellite churches in the Los Angeles area alone. Her sermons were the bundled popular culture of Los Angeles: vaudeville acts, complete with costumes, sets, musical scores, drama, and more. She once rode on a motorcycle, dressed as a police officer, holding a "Stop!" sign and then spoke to her followers about the need to stop sinning and listen to the Lord (Blumhofer 1993).

Gender and popular culture in Los Angeles are a topic worthy of further study. Sister Aimee could be cast in the context of Hollywood, but also as a cultural bridge to hundreds of thousands of transplanted Midwesterners who needed a tonic for their ennui and a star to whom they could relate. The mix of "piety, patriotism, and pageantry that made Sister a cultural phenomenon," with a hint of sexuality, masked Aimee McPherson's personal turmoil (Blumhofer 1993: 15–16).

Sister Aimee erected a cross that served as a radio tower on the roof of the Four Square Church in the mid-1920s to capitalize on improvements in sound recording and in radio technology, and soon reached over 200,000 radio owners in the greater Los Angeles area with KFSG (Kall Four-Square Gospel). We do not know as much as we should about the importance of radio and key stations such as KNX, KHJ, and KFI that were established between 1921 and 1922 (White 2007), or about the highly important and empowering ethnic radio stations (Sanchez 1993). But radio would seem to have served as a key agent of mass and marketed culture as well as a way to cohese the far-flung, unevenly populated city of 442 square miles, not to mention the rapidly growing surrounding cities in the county whose population in 1930 reached over 2.2 million souls.

Social movements for gender and racial equality railed against and needed and used modes of popular culture, claiming the right of self-expression of culture and of sexuality as other ways to challenge white male supremacy. As Maria Elena Buszek argued in *Pin-Up Grrrls*, "as a movement driven by the need to reach, educate, and persuade the masses, popular culture has not been viewed by feminists solely as a reserve of conservative messages to rage against but also as a powerful tool for offering progressive alternatives to these very messages" (2006, p. 4).

Few took this charge as seriously as Charlotta Bass, managing editor and publisher of the *California Eagle* from 1912 to 1951. Overseeing one of the longest-running African American newspapers in the western United States, Bass shines as one of Gramsci's "organic intellectuals," a member of a subordinated group who constructs a "counter-hegemony" to dominant social group(s), someone who strives to create a coalition of united, oppositional groups (quoted in García 1995: 350). In a direct counterpoint to the *Los Angeles Times*, and joining other important counter-hegemonic dailies like *La Opinion*, established in 1926, full equality for all under the Constitution remained Bass's only main goal via the popular press. Located on Central Avenue in the heart of Los Angeles' black community, the

California Eagle promoted black businesses hiring of African Americans. It included news about politics, religion, sports, and entertainment in the black community. In 1924 the *Eagle*'s circulation reached 60,000, and by the mid-1930s Bass had expanded to include the mass-communication tool of radio, broadcasting news and programming geared towards the African Americans in Los Angeles six nights a week.

It's a Wrap

In tracing the growth of a pueblo to a metropolis we can ascertain the contours of conflict and cooperation; of racial subjugation and segregation and occasional, if uneasy, coexistence among a diverse population. These forces come into play when searching for a market-mediated popular culture of that time period. Through history we see ethnic and cultural diversity overlaid with a powerful search for hegemony by whites. Yet we also can find counter-hegemonic and surprising claims to the land and to a cultural and political place in the Los Angeles sun.

To understand fully cultural production in Los Angeles from 1880 to 1935, we need to grasp the contours of the region's diversity as reflected in the built environment, the arts and material culture, literary production, foodways, religious expressions, fraternal organizations, transportation (particularly cars), and sports. Scholars who seek to study where myth begins and ends need to understand the region's dynamic, ongoing dialogues between past and present, imagined and real during the pre-World War II years so that the sunshine and *noir* representations make sense or are challenged in meaningful ways.

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Chapter Seventeen

Tijuana and the Borders of Race

Josh Kun

> *And the people – ah, the people! – they that dwell in Tia Juana. All nations! But the American, the Mexican, the Chinese, and the "colored gem'man from the Souf" predominate.*
>
> (New York Times, June 6, 1920)

On the first Sunday of February 1923, a shot that rang out on the old Tijuana bridge echoed two hundred miles north to Los Angeles. Border locals had nicknamed the bridge *la marimba* – a rickety xylophone played by the dirt-crusted wheels of buggies and carriages – and suddenly the melody of its clattering wooden planks was joined by the rhythm of bullets. An American had shot and killed a Mexican, but not just any American and not just any Mexican. The American was a black ex-serviceman with LA connections, the Mexican a Tijuana cop.

Here's how just about every press account had it. The two had been friends just days earlier in Tijuana, when Chester Carleton had loaned George Monteverde his car for a short trip north to San Diego. Monteverde, drunk on "a half gallon of wine," got into a wreck in Old Town and Carleton wanted more for the damages than Monteverde was willing to pay. They haggled for a week and then ended up on the bridge. Carleton came alone. Monteverde came with his two brothers, Porfirio and Miguel. Nobody knows who pulled first, but Carleton put a bullet in Monteverde and Porfirio, emptying his pistol before he could take out Miguel, who got him on the run across the bridge, away from the US, and back south into Tijuana. All of Miguel's shots missed, but he finally caught Carleton across the road from the racetrack, right in front of the Monte Carlo casino, where Miguel beat him over the head with his pistol and put him under arrest, out of sight and earshot from the track's handicap hordes clutching their rolled up sporting pages and the casino's whiskey weekend luck hounds.

When news of the murder at the bridge spread beyond the tourist haunts of Main St., a mob of Tijuana locals allegedly armed with knives and guns demanded Carleton's life. He was put in jail and promised a fair trial, but the damage had been done on both sides of the line. Tijuana spun it as the murder of two Mexicans killed by a violent man who had already had some trouble with police east along the border in Mexicali. California spun it as a murder in self-defense that now left Carleton a Negro victim of Mexican mob violence. Rumors were already floating north in newspaper headlines that if he hadn't been lynched already, he would be soon, his body hung from a Lower California tree, then set on fire, as the Mexicans in that once quaint and forgiving border village just across the river burned their way to justice.

The shootout on the Tijuana bridge was the beginning of the end for Tijuana's glory days as a cross-border suburb of black Los Angeles. From the opening of the Tijuana racetrack in 1916 through the late 1920s, Tijuana had become an invaluable South of the Border hub of black life in the American West, a particularly important site for both the creative and commercial development of black music culture in the Americas, and a key part of the rise of the jazz and blues scenes of Los Angeles itself. "Ragtime" Billy Tucker, a popular Los Angeles based journalist who wrote the "Coast Dope" column for the leading black newspaper the *Chicago Defender*, called them the "Gang from Los Angeles," members of "the Race" who had left southern California for a nearby below-the-border haven, "Tia Juana, Mexico, where the soil is moist" (Tucker 7/17/20).

Though certainly not limited to the years between 1916 and 1930 (one only has to fast forward to the Tijuana-hopping career of Charles Mingus in the 1950s, the blossoming of the Tijuana rock and blues scenes of the 1960s, and the impact of both African American and Chicano LA hip hop culture on the growth of Tijuana's own hip hop underground in the 1990s), this was a crucial time in both LA and Tijuana history; the first coherent period that saw the transformation of Tijuana into a center of LA black life and music culture. It was during these years that, to borrow a formulation from Graham Lock, Tijuana became a "blutopia," a utopia "tinged with the blues, an African American visionary future stained with memories." Like all blutopias, Tijuana was a detour off a road that led cleanly back to the horrors of slavery – it was not simply a place to go, but an "aid to survival" (Lock 1999: 3). Instead of seeing the border as a limit that clearly divides two opposing forces, as the end point of one nation and the beginning of another, the Gang from Los Angeles approached the border as "a mediator, a filter that acts as a powerful and active mechanism of cultural translation" (Berumen 2004: 30).

The story of these black cultural circuits and mediations between Los Angeles and Tijuana – these creations of alternative social worlds, these border-crossings in pursuit of what jazz legend Sun Ra would decades later

call "alter-destinies" – have gone mostly undocumented in both histories of black Los Angeles and histories of Tijuana (to say nothing of their omission from histories of US-Mexico cultural relations more broadly). The movement of African Americans south to Tijuana forces us to consider the role of the Mexican border in the shape and structure of Los Angeles itself, the extent to which the border drawn at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 has played a key role in the history and identity of Los Angeles as a city. Greg Hise has richly suggested that "Los Angeles has been a border city since its founding," due to its crossings of cultures, communities, artifacts, and worldviews, and it most certainly has been. But it has also been a border city in an even more direct way because of its thick network of connections – past, present, and future – to the US-Mexico border itself and specifically to the border city of Tijuana. Indeed, the "social distance" between Los Angeles and Tijuana (and the "topographies of race" that distance both reveals and creates) that was bridged and traversed by the Gang from Los Angeles is a reminder that space is social, that in Hise's words, "social segregation affects social relations," and that as Mary Pat Brady has argued, space should always be seen and felt as "performative and participatory" (Hise 2003: 549, 555; Brady 2002: 6).

Most accounts of the connection between Los Angeles and Tijuana in the 1920s tend to focus only on Tijuana's popularity as a vice outpost for LA gamblers, drinkers, and Hollywood stars eager for an escape from Prohibition America. From 1919 – when the 18th Amendment was added to the US Constitution and the reformist heyday of Prohibition began – to 1933, Tijuana was California's principal escape valve for illegal pleasure and it quickly grew into a US suburb of adult entertainment with its own main street, Revolution Avenue, lined with bars like the Tivoli and the Capri, and open-all-night "girlesque" halls like the Molino Rojo. As the *New York Times* reported in 1920, in Tijuana " 'There ain't no ten commandments.' There the weary and law oppressed may find an oasis in the desert, a place where he may rest his tired foot on a brass rail and drink to the health of Pancho Villa, or whoever it was who invented Mexico" (Vanderwood 2004: 93–4). The rush to quench Prohibition thirsts grew to such a fever pitch that on July 4 of that same year, over 60,000 Americans left LA and other parts of California and headed straight for Tijuana. San Diego had a gas shortage, and Tijuana's fate as a south-of-the-border American amusement park was sealed. Silent film stars like Charlie Chaplin, Fatty Arbuckle, and Buster Keaton soon began to flock and once the legendary Agua Caliente complex opened in 1926 – complete with ornate Italian-tiled casino, luxurious spa, and private bungalows, all surrounded by extravagant fountains and palm trees – Tijuana was a confirmed see-and-be-seen Hollywood hot spot.

The city quickly earned a reputation as a bottomless pit of sin and corruption right alongside Sodom, Gomorrah, and Babylon, "paradigmatic

cities of moral perversion and vice." Tijuana literary theorist Humberto Felix Berumen has argued that it was in the 1920s that Tijuana became a "city-symbol, the definition of perversion, of vice, a myth that has a great capacity to renew itself continually" (Berumen 2003: 18, 24). This *leyenda negra*, or Black Legend of Tijuana, led many in the US to condemn it, as one sign read in the 1920s, as "The Road to Hell" (Ridgely 1967: 53). As early as 1916, when it was just the Tijuana racetrack doing most of the luring of American tourists, a series of editorials in the *Los Angeles Morning Tribune* railed against Tijuana as "the shame of San Diego" that "had spread to Los Angeles." The mayor of Los Angeles, Charles E. Sebastian, even wired President Wilson to urge that the border with Mexico be sealed (Taylor 2002: 9).

But this history has another embedded within it: how a tourist border boom town became not the corrupting "road to Hell" for white Protestants, but a liberating "road to Heaven" for African Americans. What many reformers decried as an "open city" meant a different kind of openness for African Americans in Los Angeles. The loosening of the social order and the transgressions of established laws made Tijuana by definition a potentially safer space for those restrained by the social order. While the notion of Tijuana as an "open city" – of sin, vice, gambling, prostitution – has been written about extensively, the other political and social possibilities of that openness – progressive racial beliefs, unstable social hierarchies – has yet to be fully explored.

For instance, the birth of a vice industry in Tijuana meant more gigs for musicians and entertainers. A large number of Tijuana's Gang from Los Angeles were musicians, a breed of professionals always happy to follow the call of a new gig or a better contract and in the 1920s, the road to those gigs and contracts ran south to Tijuana. The border city had, rather quickly and by necessity, become a fixture within LA's black music scene. You came West to play in LA and soon enough you headed South. If LA was the black music Mecca of the West then Tijuana was its southern Medina, but a Medina that had one thing over its more well-known sister city: it was not in the United States, it was an "other" or "third" space beyond the confines of the geographical here-and-now.

A number of scholars have pointed to black music's role in generating new improvisatory spaces of survival and emancipation, where the music itself functions as an actual place to go to. Ajay Heble and Daniel Fischlin have called it "the other side of nowhere" (2004: 1), while for Mark Anthony Neal it's making a way out of no way – how musical improvisation leads to what Neal dubs "social improvisation" (2004: 196). Neal's emphasis on the creation of space and place through music does not stop with the music, but involves a physical construction of space as well – musical improvisation that becomes social improvisation, enacting what Paul Gilroy has called a "contemporary politics of transfiguration" which "exist on a

lower frequency where it is played, danced, and acted, as well as sung and sung about" (1993: 37). For the musicians of the Gang from Los Angeles, Tijuana was where musical improvisation became social improvisation, where Tijuana was an actualized musical somewhere brought into being through the lower frequencies of music and entertainment.

When the shots were fired on the Tijuana bridge, then, it was also a wake-up call to a new geography of California culture: what happens in Tijuana doesn't stay in Tijuana, what happens in Tijuana has aftershocks in Los Angeles. This notion of an interconnected spatial and social relationship between Los Angeles and Tijuana has become commonplace in contemporary scholarship that studies Tijuana in the era of globalization (from roughly 1965 to the present). Michael Dear and Gustavo Leclerc, for example, have even suggested we rethink the southern California region of Los Angeles-San Diego-Tijuana as a single "post-border" configuration of "Bajalta California," a global metropolis that joins southern California to northern Mexico despite (or indeed, because of) the geopolitical border that separates them (Dear and Leclerc 2003: 2). Lawrence Herzog has long explored this notion of a "transfrontier metropolis," a "prototype of global urban space in the next century" in which urban regions "sprawl across international boundaries" (1997: 1). Yet the Gang from Los Angeles a good reminder that the condition of transnationality – which Steven Vertovec succinctly defined as "multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" – did not begin during the age of economic globalization and multinational manufacturing (Jackson, Crang, and Dwyer 2004: 4). The Gang from Los Angeles leads us into an earlier era of cultural and geographical transnationalism that linked Los Angeles to Tijuana according to a cartography of racial freedom and the tireless pursuit of equality. The tourist boom of Tijuana during the Prohibition era of the 1920s did not just create a transnational circuit for hard-drinking Hollywood directors and desperate gamblers, but a transnational musical and cultural circuit for African American entertainers, entrepreneurs, and fans who saw Tijuana as a site for a very different kind of freedom.

When it comes to histories of black Los Angeles in the same period, Tijuana maintains an equally invisible profile. In two important recent books on black Los Angeles by Douglas Flamming and Josh Sides, for example, we meet Los Angeles, to quote Sides, as a "city of paradoxes," a city glowing on the one hand with the sunshine of racial boosterism and the promise of racial equality and social progress (in the words of one black newspaper from 1911, "California is the greatest state for the Negro"), and plagued on the other by its own battles with racial segregation (Sides 2003: 11–12). In his own study of black life in turn of the twentieth century Los Angeles, Flamming describes how the booster idea of "the Western Ideal" – the notion that "the West was the freest part of free America" – helped drive the

westward migrations of African Americans out of the post-Reconstruction South. There were rumors of black empowerment, all-black towns, and other signs that the West might be the home of greater racial equality and greater business opportunities and indeed, in California, segregation was outlawed, African Americans could vote, and as Sides emphasizes, initially blacks did not live in confined areas segregated from the rest of the city. But as both Sides and Flamming also show, this ideal quickly became a less utopian reality: racism, the KKK, racial covenants, and job discrimination were all part of an American West that had its own set of racial hierarchies and racial rules (Flamming 2005: 37, 55).

The Gang from Los Angeles were very much a part of this story, of African Americans heading west to Los Angeles in search of greater freedom, only to find that LA was not immune to America's greatest social diseases. Yet their continued movement forces us to rethink the maps of the black West and consider that the West does not end with the West. The promise of an Ideal West extended south as well. This was especially true during the Mexican Revolution years of 1910–20, when Mexico was not just any nearby getaway, but a nation with radical potential, where change was possible, where a man many believed to be part black, Pancho Villa, could lead a socialist uprising against a dictator in the name of land, justice, and liberty. When the ideal of Los Angeles ran out of hope, there was always Mexico. As soon as you hit land's end, you could always change direction, head south, and make that fabled run for the border. *La linea*, the borderline, had become a way out of the color line. For the musicians and entertainers who left LA for Tijuana's blutopia – even if only for weeks at a time or for the pay-day months of the entertainer's high summer season – the worn-out but never-dead tourist trope of "South of the Border" as an imaginary, virtual landscape of napping vaqueros and smiling senoritas had become an outer-national space of performance, collaboration, and anti-racist political articulation. This South had become an inverted North – to go south in order to get north, to find freedom, where "everything's fine."

For the Gang from Los Angeles, crossing the border wasn't just sport, a gateway to the racetrack and a mention in Tucker's column. In Tijuana, social inequalities seemed to be leveled, if not at times erased. In the US, segregation functioned on social restrictions and the policing of movement in order to maintain hierarchies of power. On Revolution Avenue, African Americas were tourists just like white folks, sat for black-and-white photos atop beleaguered donkeys just like white folks, made fools of themselves in sombreros just like white folks – on the surface, equal below the border as visitors and foreigners. Or as the *California Eagle* beamed in 1919, "Mexico is the country in which the white man is the same as a Negro in Mississippi and where a Colored man is regarded as the equal of all men" (McBroome 2001: 4). At the tourist photo booths of the "Tia Juana Jail"

or the "San Diego Brig," black couples could pose behind bars and know that they could walk away – these jails were made of cardboard, not steel. Unless, of course, you shot a Mexican cop and were instantly turned back into a Negro, then put behind bars that were your only protection from an angry mob that – if legends were true – wanted you dead.

Syl Stewart had been a successful businessman back in Muskogee, Oklahoma, but he was the Mayor of Black Tijuana and by extension a major player in the black music business of Los Angeles. The "millionaire sportsman and saloon owner" who served on Tijuana's Board of Trade owned the Kansas City Bar, the Newport Bar, and the Iona Inn, and had three homes in Tijuana. Each of his bars, "the only two saloons in Tia Juana conducted by the Race," had its own jazz trio: James Carson, Harold Washington, and Ernest Powell at the Newport; Billy Bentley, Jesse Stansel, and Audley Smith at the Kansas City. "The noise that these birds kept up," Tucker wrote, "would make some of our six and seven piece jazz bands look like a pet calf" (Tucker 7/1/22). Most of LA's top black musicians made Tijuana a regular stop on their calendars. "Elite" John Williams, Melba Clay, Frank Shivers, Kid Jazz, Homer Jones – for most of the early 1920s, they shuttled back and forth between the black cafés and dancehalls of Los Angeles and Stewart's black outposts in Tijuana. Jolly Johnson and Peggy Massy played over at the Main Event, owned by another "Gentleman of the Race," David Montgomery. With 10,000 feet of floor space, thirty-five black employees, and the Jazziest Jazz Band as house band, the Main Event was one of the bigger cabarets on the West Coast. When Daniels and Daniels played there in April of 1920, they showed "the natives what jazz really is" (Tucker 3/27/20).

Eddie Rucker, "one of the highest priced entertainers in Tia Juana," was one of the few of the LA gang to play "non-colored" venues like the white-owned Palace Bar, where Rucker led a band of all-US whites. "Work is plentiful there," Tucker told his black readers, "They are still crying for entertainers" (Tucker 9/10/21). The scene had become such an organic part of black life in southern California that it began to turn up in popular songs. In her "Tia Juana Man Blues," Ada Brown heads down to that "place where you'll have a good ol' time," looking for the man who'd left her for the border and never came back. She turned all of her "weepin'" for her "Tia Juana man" into a bi-national lament about a city where her sadness, like the bands and the dancing, didn't stop. "Blues for my Tia Juana man," she sang, "Are driving me insane."

The most famous of Tijuana's black entertainers was jazz legend Jelly Roll Morton, who went to LA in 1921 and soon after applied for a Mexican work visa. Morton had been to Tijuana before, to gamble legally at the only number-running racetrack in the West. "The horses had taken me to a little place called Tia Juana on the borders of Mexico," Morton told Alan Lomax, "where I got a job in a place called the Kansas City Bar." Before Stewart,

the Kansas City was owned by an old friend of Morton's from Oklahoma, "a light-skinned Negro millionaire" named Jack Lanes. Lanes was in Tijuana on the lam from a murder rap and not long after Morton arrived for his gig, the cops caught up with him, deported him, and put him away for twenty years. Stewart, Lanes' business partner from back in Oklahoma who many believed tipped off the police, took control of the bar and quickly rose to the top of Tijuana's black artistic elite (Pastras 2001: 112–13).

Morton played at the Kansas City toward the end of 1921, and returned the next summer for another string of shows. At the Kansas City he could make as much as fifty dollars a night in tips, more than he was used to in LA. His Tijuana trips inspired two original compositions: "Kansas City Stomps," written as an homage not to the American jazz haven of Kansas City but to Stewart's bar, and "The Pearls," a song written for "a very pretty little waitress" at the Kansas City that jazz scholars continue to hold up as one of Morton's more sophisticated early works. "The Pearls" might have been inspired by a waitress, but it sounds more like the border itself, like the bridge and the river that took him to Tijuana in the first place, with its separate pieces that meet and part, its flows that get interrupted only to flow again. "The Pearls is built upon contrast, rather than interrelationship," wrote Morton biographer James Dapogny, "its form dependent upon the balance of its parts." To play it successfully requires "the artistic task of drawing together the piece's diverse elements into a coherent whole" (Pastras 2001: 114–15). Long after Morton left Tijuana and crossed the bridge over the river to LA to get back to New Orleans to start recording, he carried the feeling of the border with him, translating Tijuana into the sound of contrasts in balance.

A year after leaving, Morton recorded another Tijuana ode, one that he didn't write but that did come with its own pronunciation guide, "Tia Juana (Tee Wana)." Not to be confused with other early Tijuana odes, Morton's song came from a 1924 piece written by St. Louis jazz staples Gene Rodemich and Larry Conley, who had led jazz bands of their own in Mexico City. Morton skipped the lyrics and used the song's simple structure as an opportunity to meld national styles, starting it with a ragtime lead that gets dusted by what he liked to call jazz's "Spanish tinge," elements of the Cuban habañera rhythm, traces of the Argentine tango, hints of mariachi. Morton scholar Phil Pastras, who first dug up Morton's Mexican work visa, also hears the border in Morton's recording, calling it "a musical statement about the bi-cultural experience of playing jazz in Tijuana, Mexico" (Pastras 2001: 135).

Morton's Tijuana excursions were big news in "Coast Dope," Billy Tucker's column for the *Chicago Defender* where his beat was to cover the West Coast black arts scene using Los Angeles as his home base. But soon enough, the draw of Tijuana as black musical and artistic hub was too strong and Tucker headed south himself. For three months during the spring of

1924, the most popular column about black music on the West Coast was being filed from "Tia Juana." "It seems like it is getting to be a habit – my coming to this city," he wrote. Tucker told stories of the "Darktown Derby" at the Tijuana racetrack featuring Colored jockeys, horses owned by Colored men, and all the "Race notables" from LA and San Diego, spit gossip on who lost money at what casino and rode all the way home in shame, warned everyone about the hoof and mouth disease quarantine in May of 1924, gave easy-to-follow directions on how to get there from LA (50 cents from San Diego to the borderline, 30 cents from the borderline to downtown Tijuana), and kept his readers up to date on what upcoming boxing matches would be good for Race business. "A person can learn more in a day in Tia Juana than he can learn in the average city in the States in a month," he promised. His first border dispatch found him at the reopening of Stewart's Newport Bar on 2nd street, a two-story saloon with a dance floor and six-piece orchestra on the bottom and fourteen hotel rooms on the top. It was decorated, Tucker boasted, "a la King Tut style with mirrors of huge size hanging here, there, and everywhere" (Tucker 3/15/24).

When the moralism of US Prohibition laws led to the imposition of a new 9 pm curfew on border tourists in 1924, Tucker went on the offensive against the "so-called Vice Crushers." Beyond the hypocrisy of the US blaming Tijuana for the opium addictions and gambling debts of its own citizens ("Why not clean your own backyard first?"), Tucker was concerned with the implications of border conservatism on the prosperity of black Tijuana. He worried that "Any number of our Race … will suffer from the blow," and then be forced to head back north above the line to overcrowded Los Angeles, where there were more black entertainers than there were available gigs (Tucker 3/22/24). Tucker had quickly become Tia Juana's most reliable booster, using his column in the nation's most influential black newspaper to sing the praises of the "Mexican border village" that had become a utopic haven for California blacks looking for an easier and more equitable life. Not even the lynching scare that came in the wake of the murder of the Monteverde brothers and the jailing of Chester Carleton could dampen Tucker's faith in Tijuana as a refuge for the Race. Where there was race hatred against blacks – the occasional "Colored Trade Not Solicited" sign that would pop up in Tijuana storefronts – it was usually the work of relocated Southern whites. Racism was a white American problem, not a Mexican one. "As a rule," Tucker assured his readers a year after the black vs. brown shootout on the Tijuana bridge, "the Mexican people don't give a rap how dark you are or what race you represent. In fact, they are inclined to be more friendly towards the Colored brother" (Tucker 5/17/24).

Positioning the US-Mexico border as a beginning – a threshold of freedom from slavery and Jim Crow – rather than a limit or an end was a way of thinking with a long history in African American thought. Indeed,

instead of crossing the Mason-Dixon line, why not head south across the US-Mexico line to a place where slavery hadn't existed since 1829, a place where runaway slaves could set up free lives, a place where whiteness didn't mean the same thing it did back home? There was already proof in Coahuila, where runaway slaves teamed up with black Seminole Indians who had chosen to move south after being "removed" by Andrew Jackson. "The slaves had learned through the repetition of group experience," wrote Ralph Ellison, "that freedom was to be attained through geographical movement" (Mulroy 2003: 1).

That sentiment reached its peak in the early part of the twentieth century when blacks across the US started heading south across the border to start colonies where freedom was not a betrayed promise. Call it Mexican Colony fever: between 1910 and 1923, clusters of black colonists were loading up their livestock, farm tools, and household appliances and setting up communal, agricultural shop in Mexico. Among the more prominent was a group of LA blacks who believed that all of Baja could be not just a temporary home, but a permanent one. A year after the establishment of the LA branch of the NAACP they established an organization called the Los Angeles People's Realty Company, aimed at securing their rights and equal treatment, and which set its sights on owning and developing land in Baja as an African American colony. Its plans for a black colonization of the Lower California peninsula never materialized, but that of another black real estate company did. Spurred by the Mexican government's public invitations for foreign investment and settlement on its lands, and excited by the potential for harvesting citrus, wheat, vegetables, alfalfa, and potatoes (not to mention mining and oil incentives) the Lower California Company bought up six separate parcels of land sprinkled between the border line and the port hub of Ensenada. They called their land below the line Little Liberia, drawing a direct connection to an earlier colonization on another continent, an earlier attempt by freed slaves to create a self-sufficient nation of their own. Just like Upper California's campaign of sunshine and oranges, the black settlement of Lower California produced its own brand of libertarian boosterism:

> There is only one solution of the Negro problem:
> First: The Negro must become self-supporting;
> Second: He must own enough soil to support himself and his family;
> Third: He must be in a country where his color is not against him.…
> Come join us in this colony and lead in the only sure way to freedom.
> Let us bid our boot-black jobs, our janitor jobs, our porter jobs, and all our scavenger jobs one fond goodbye and become landlords or owners of the soil. (McBroome 2001: 160)

It was in Northern Mexico, in the Baja provinces of Little Liberia, that Booker T. Washington met Marcus Garvey, that boot-straps uplift took a

seat on a Black Star Liner that instead of heading over oceans to Africa, headed south over the bridge of the Tijuana River. Where the river cut southeast, the black colonists cut southwest until they became "sovereigns of their own labor" in a land where they believed "the white man is the same as the Negro in Mississippi and where a Colored man is regarded as the equal of all men." Events like the Tulsa race riots of 1921 – which led a number of Jelly Roll Morton's old Oklahoma compatriots to the Little Liberia colony – were reminders to African Americans that they might be safer elsewhere. In the words of Little Liberia's Hugh Macbeth, it was "a real solution to the future progress of [our] people" (Horne 2005: 82–3).

Little Liberia was the first American land grab of Mexican territory – 21,800 acres meant to house a new Negro state of 20,000 people – that wasn't driven by exploitation. The Wirt Bowmans, James Croftons, and Baron Longs who at the same time were building up Revolution Avenue and lording over Tijuana's tourist amusement park, were using Mexico to generate American profits and to satisfy American appetites for chance and skin that were, thanks to bans on gambling and cabaret dancing, no longer available up north. For white American business barons, Tijuana was the raw material for American prosperity, with not even the most rudimentary of service jobs going to Tijuana workers. The nineteenth-century *filibusteros* wanted Baja to be part of the United States, the revolutionaries and radicals who captured Tijuana in 1911 wanted it to be the capital of its own country, and J. P. Morgan wanted to buy up Baja land to monopolize its natural resources. Decades later, this same strategy would take on a global dimension, with tourist emporiums and expansionist desires morphing into *maquiladora* factories where local Mexican bodies use imported foreign parts to assemble foreign products that get exported and sold in foreign markets. Low wages flow into Mexican pockets, high profits flow into international investment portfolios.

The colonists of Little Liberia, like the musicians and entrepreneurs of Black Tijuana, made it clear that they wanted no part of this history. In a meeting with Mexican President Alvaro Obregon, Little Liberia founder Hugh Macbeth offered the following prophetic pledge:

> We do not mean to come here and acquire or exploit whatever part of the wealth of Mexico we can and then ship it to some other country for its benefit. On the other hand we want to become a part of this incomparable country and we want to become citizens of this Republic and bring to it all our wealth, our ability and efforts in order to help develop it and make it among the very greatest of nations. (McBroome 2001: 168)

The shootout on the Tijuana bridge and the subsequent Chester Carleton lynching flashback were only part of what made 1923 a bad year for black Tijuana. President Obregon gave Tijuana's anti-black rumblings a wider

national angle when, contrary to the brothers-of-the-same-skin rhetoric he offered the Baja Liberians, he issued an order calling for a halt to African American migration to Mexico. Just a year earlier Obregon had said: "Mexico has no color line and the Mexican Constitution forbids Race distinction on the ground of race, color, or degree of wealth." But pressure from the US – specifically, US oil companies – and their accusations of Mexican enticement to black ex-patriots as part of a "colonization scheme" pushed Obregon to start thinking more like his political colleagues north of the border. Where only a few months earlier the *California Eagle* ran headlines announcing "Mexico, land of Peace and Prosperity," now the paper ran a very different kind of headline: "Mexican Anti-Negro Propaganda Exposed," "Mexico Bars Colored Folks." Mexico had enough of a race problem with its Indians, Obregon reasoned in the press. Why add blacks to a crackling fire that, as the murder of George Monteverde and the phantom lynching of Chester Carleton were already proving, was about to blaze out of control? "It would not be wise to increase the complexity of the equation" (McBroome 2001:168). Racial common sense had gotten the best of him. Like the old *marimba* itself, maybe there were some bridges that shouldn't be built after all; some rivers that, no matter how shallow their bed, just shouldn't be crossed.

Once word had spread about the shootout on the bridge, Tijuana's small but thriving community of expatriated black Americans started to question their safety and customs agents reported a mini Negro exodus. "There has been a little trouble down Tia Juana (Mexico) way during the past two weeks," Tucker wrote in his column. "Many of the musicians and entertainers are now in Los Angeles, or on the way here" (Tucker 2/24/23). Singer and comedian Eddie Rucker, a staple of LA's black vaudeville circuit and "one of the coast's favorite entertainers" (as well as one of the coast's more notorious aficionados of the cocaine-and-Scotch cocktail), had become a regular headliner at Tijuana's Palace Bar and Kansas City Bar. But after Carleton's arrest, "the Tia Juana pet," as Tucker called Rucker, had come back to Los Angeles. "Things were critical down there," Rucker told Tucker. "All of the places where Colored were employed let them out until things cooled down a bit. There was some talk of a race riot" (Tucker 8/12/22).

Syl Stewart took matters into his own hands. As soon as Carleton was jailed, he began raising money for a defense fund that would set Carleton free on US soil. In Los Angeles, he helped organize a "mammoth ball" benefit concert at the Hiawatha Dancing Company. Even if "the Colored boy" was not set free, the money would be "turned over to some organization for the uplift of the Negro race" (Tucker 2/24/23). Jelly Roll Morton played, as did Rucker and Herman Higgs, Mantan Moreland, Sonny Clay's jazz band, and the Black and Tan Orchestra. None of them knew the man being held in the Tijuana jail, but it didn't matter. Chester Carleton was

one of their own, a black man who crossed the line south to find the work and the freedom that "the empire of liberty" in the north had, more than once, failed to deliver. They would add to the cause of his emancipation by filling Los Angeles with the communal sounds of black music, improvising yet another new reality, only this time back north of the borderline.

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Chapter Eighteen

Counterculture

Dave McBride

In 1964, Theodore Roszak, who would later write the bestselling genre classic *The Making of a Counterculture* (1968), surveyed Los Angeles and found it deeply depressing: "There is perhaps no modern city where the sense of community is so dissipated in Los Angeles."[1] Writing in the pages of the *Los Angeles Free Press* – which by 1970 would be the most widely circulated "underground" newspaper in the United States[2] – Roszak invoked a commonly held truism. Often perceived from afar by critics of mainstream culture as an unholy mix of right-wing politics, white-bread sameness, and anti-intellectual mass cultural production, Los Angeles hardly seemed like a city that could generate a viable radical culture. Indeed, a few years after Roszak's complaint, the New Left-oriented political scientists Michael Rogin and John Shover (1970) blamed the rise of Reagan on southern Californians, whom they believed to be right-wing authoritarians and conformists.

Yet events in mid-1960s Los Angeles – the Watts riot, the emergence of the New Left, and the growth of a sizeable counterculture – would upend conventional wisdom about the region. By the early 1970s, Los Angeles would house one of the largest countercultures in the world, along with a variety of other radical movements. How did this happen? Certainly, national political events such as the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement were crucial. But larger demographic, technological, and economic changes were afoot as well. Broad economic prosperity allowed a vast population of middle-class baby boomers to defer entering the workforce and continue schooling into their twenties. The southern California region, a major benefactor of defense industry growth and in-migration from other parts of the country, was especially fortunate in this regard. In a detailed 1966 analysis entitled *The Dynamics of the Youth Explosion*, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce conducted an extensive market survey and reported

that "San Francisco and Los Angeles enjoy a substantial lead over other cities in terms of per capita consumption by youth" of new, trendy styles.[3] Tom Wolfe agreed: after observing a Los Angeles teen fair in the mid-1960s, he remarked, "these kids – especially in California – have *money*" (1965: 79).

Los Angeles' status as a mass media capital was also important. The counterculture that emerged in the mid-1960s relied on the technologies of modern media, and Los Angeles was uniquely situated to accommodate it. For all the focus on other countercultural enclaves – particularly in New York and San Francisco – the Los Angeles counterculture stands out for the sheer breadth and quality of its cultural production. The Byrds, Love, Buffalo Springfield, and the Doors as well as more avant garde artists like the Mothers of Invention were LA icons, yet they stood on a scaffolding of literally hundreds of garage bands and minor psychedelic groups. Many of the films that we identify as countercultural in retrospect – from quasi-exploitation films like *The Trip* to *Easy Rider* – were almost entirely products of Los Angeles, whether it was the setting, the financing, or the cast.

Of course, bohemia existed in Los Angeles before the 1960s. As the nation's film capital, it had drawn artists for decades. It had its own unique literary history, and had attracted intellectuals such as Frankfurt School refugees and Anaïs Nin (Nin: 1977; Friedrich 1986; Dunaway: 1991). The beat scene in 1950s Venice was also famously vibrant (Lipton 1959; Maynard 1991), and a number of locally based avant-garde artists had achieved a modest degree of notoriety by the mid-1960s, including Ed Ruscha, Ed Kienholz, and Wallace Berman. The latter two were affiliated with the Ferus Gallery in Hollywood, which had opened in the late 1950s and featured some of the most challenging art of the era.

Though southern California's reputation as a conservative bastion was well deserved, Los Angeles had witnessed a number of political and social insurgencies throughout the twentieth century (McWilliams 1980; Mitchell 1992). The connections between these earlier movements and the counterculture were tenuous, but the Watts riot was not. In the years to come, it would have a significant impact on all strands of that era's youth-oriented radicalism. Not least, the riots shattered any illusion that Los Angeles was an island of middle-class placidity and ideological consensus.[4]

In any event, by the mid-1960s, hippie countercultures had sprouted up in numerous locales across America, and by mid-1967 scores of thousands of adherents and fellow travelers were in Los Angeles. But before describing its growth, it is important to explain the term "counterculture." The counterculture of the 1960s was at base bohemian – aesthetically oriented, supportive of transgression (sexual, social, political), and self-consciously oppositional to the perceived mainstream. Historian Jerrold Siegel (1986) has traced its roots to early nineteenth-century romanticism, and since then bohemias have flourished in the major metropoles of the Western world (Douglas

1995). In the 1960s, the new bohemians followed the tracks laid by earlier generations, opposing what they perceived was a degraded and overly commercialized mainstream culture, sexual repression, racism, and militarism. While hippies rarely offered sophisticated commentary on inequality, they valorized social outcasts and the oppressed.

There were significant differences from earlier eras, however. Prior to the 1960s, bohemias were marginal, typically possessing only a few enlightened adherents. Its aesthetics were notoriously forbidding to the uninitiated. Also, if one did not have a fallback option – and far fewer did prior to the 1960s – it was not an easy life. Casting one's lot with bohemia could very well mean a life of poverty. In contrast, the 1960s counterculture, spawned from the baby boom, was the first "mass bohemia."

Bohemia has always had a complicated relationship with politics proper, although bohemias have traditionally leaned leftward. This is important to remember, because historians of the 1960s have often differentiated the more politicized New Left from a less politicized and hedonistic counterculture. There is a degree of truth to this – there were differences between Students for a Democratic Society and the more ecstatic wings of the counterculture – but in Los Angeles at least, the lines were more blurred.[5] Art Kunkin, the founder of the *Los Angeles Free Press*, was emblematic. A New Yorker who sported a Trotsky beard, Kunkin had been a member of the Congress for Racial Equality in the late 1940s and generally supported left-wing causes.[6] Yet his newspaper was the nerve center of the local hippie scene. Al Mitchell, who owned the Fifth Estate coffee house on the Sunset Strip, played a leading role in the Sunset Strip hippie "riots" of 1966, but also championed minorities in disadvantaged neighborhoods throughout the city.[7]

The beginnings of the counterculture in Los Angeles correspond roughly with the birth of the *Free Press* in 1964. The beat subculture in the beach community of Venice was an important precursor, but the beats, for all of their intellectual influence, were essentially hostile to mass culture, and produced a tiny number of artists able to reach a mass audience. Moreover, in contrast to the 1960s, there simply were not as many young people able to drop out of mainstream society and join them in the 1950s.

Hollywood became the principal geographic locus of the Los Angeles counterculture. Prior to the mid-1960s, Hollywood functioned mostly as a support mechanism for a "conservative and at best complacent" entertainment industry (Ryan and Kellner 1988: 2–3). Its commercial heart was the Sunset Strip, an unincorporated and loosely administered district within Los Angeles County. It was best known as a "star struck haunt of the rich" and "Hollywood's last sanctuary of chi-chi for the middle-aged."[8] By the late1950s, though, the Strip was in decline. The film industry was in the doldrums because of the rise of the television industry (large parts of which were based in suburbs like Burbank). Also, the cultural flavor of the Strip

was becoming passé, and for people who still wanted it, Las Vegas – a new contender – offered far more.[9] According to one critic, seediness had replaced much of the glitz: "The area in general is like a Great Society nightmare, jammed with sleazy motels, all-night lunch counters, and billboards advertising vacation spots and cemeteries."[10]

A number of proprietors on the Strip, however, saw a silver lining: a massive population of young people with disposable income. Between 1961 and 1966, stores and clubs that catered to them opened en masse. By the summer of 1966, the Strip had become a destination for young people, many of whom identified with hippies. The elaborate old clubs transformed into coffee houses, hip clothing boutiques, and rock clubs. Meanwhile, the Strip became home to a self-consciously bizarre collection of young people with long hair, op-art dresses, and dandified Edwardian outfits. In 1967, the *New York Review of Books* reported that Strip habitués were "the vanguard of California youth, where the vanguard is quite far out."[11]

By 1967, the hippie counterculture had expanded beyond the Strip area and Venice – whose down-at-the-heels bohemia had transformed into a hippie zone by the mid-1960s – to its canyons (Malibu, Laurel, Topanga) and the Hollywood-adjacent Fairfax district. Also, the institutional network expanded, as a slew of underground papers followed the *Free Press*'s example, including *Open City* and the *Oracle of Southern California*.[12] The canyon communities north and west of Hollywood all the way to the coast attracted hippie primitivists. While back-to-nature sentiment and disdain for technology was an important component of the hip ethos, those who chose to live in communes (including 250 of them in Laurel Canyon during the summer of 1967)[13] championed those notions above all else. Gridley Wright, the founder of the Strawberry Fields/Desolation Row commune in Malibu/Decker Canyon, felt that outside the metropolis, his people could "take acid in a relatively paranoia free atmosphere" and "man [could] come to know his God, nature, and his unity with life."

That same year an impressionistic Los Angeles Police Department estimate placed the number of hippies between 70,000 and 100,000, numbers that convey a sense of how pervasive the counterculture was.[14] Judging from the near-blanket coverage in the local newspapers, it *did* seem like hippies were everywhere. Certainly, their outlandish style raised their profile, and they were more likely to congregate in the city's major public spaces – streets and parks. Beginning in mid-1967, a series of "love-ins" – essentially, concerts cum festivals modeled after the 1966 San Francisco Be-In – took place in city parks (most famously, Griffith) and attracted tens of thousands.

But who participated in the Los Angeles counterculture? They were in fact mostly white and from middle-class backgrounds, which is the stereotype (and the criticism). Following one of the police's periodic sweeps of the Sunset Strip in mid-1967 that netted some two hundred suspects, one

officer noted the parents who came to pick up their children "were nearly all middle-class people."[15] A team of UCLA psychiatrists that interviewed hundreds of California hippies agreed: "the hippie … was generally a middle-class youth who had solved the basic problem of survival" (Hyman and Wallach 1969; see also Pennock 1971: 27–42, 122).[16] An observer of the Sunset Strip scene noted, "the young longhairs … seem already to inhabit some sort of leisure-time frontier." Watts-based black filmmaker Ed Gentry's documentary *A Groovy Griffith Park Love-In* (1968) cut to the heart of the matter. According to *Open City*, Gentry "seem[ed] to be insisting that the flower experiment has failed, that if you are white and hip you are still white and middle class, and though you have turned your back on white bourgeoise [*sic*] conventions, you still bear the guilt of whiteness."[17]

However, the demographics and politics were more complicated than this schematic portrait suggests. While it was a largely middle-class phenomenon, the counterculture included many from poorer backgrounds and broken homes that were hardly representative of the middle-class familial ideal. After the 1967 "summer of love" became a media spectacle, runaways arrived in droves, often from far away. Many ended up panhandling or selling underground newspapers on street corners to make rent (Pennock 1971: 27–38).[18] The point is that regardless of origins, a sizeable contingent of the local scene was hardly at the forefront of the new leisure class. The UCLA psychiatric team concluded: "There are many borderline adolescents attached to the hippie movement … [who] would require hospitalization if they did not have this large group to which they could go and be accepted" (Hyman and Wallach 1969: 18).

When observers peg the counterculture as "white," though, they are suggesting a basic insubstantiality, especially given the general consensus that racial inequality framed the most important issues of the 1960s. Yet blacks and Chicanos – though comprising a minority – were visible throughout the scene. Moreover, there were numerous attempts by hippies to form alliances with Chicanos and blacks, and some of LA's best-known musical artists, including both War and Love, were multiracial. Rhythm and blues keyboardist and soon-to-be Rolling Stones session musician Billy Preston even took a group of three hundred black children from Watts to his recording session on the Strip. While no Chicano band achieved the notoriety of a black artist like Arthur Lee of Love, East LA-based El Chicano and other bands did play with some frequency.[19] The *Free Press* featured black writers like Earl Ofari and Jerry Harrison, and *Open City* published Robert Igriega and Bob Garcia.[20]

The Watts love-ins of summer 1967 revealed both the hoped-for connectivity and the divisions between white hippies and minority Angelenos. Organized by whites, the first event, in July, drew seven thousand attendees. Numerous black artists performed, including the Chambers Brothers and Taj Mahal. Organizers deemed it a complete success, and *Open City*

writer Bob Garcia enthused that the "hippies short-circuited the ghetto's mental hate syndrome with smiles, freaky renaissance clothes … and an open attitude which became contagious as the day wore on."[21]

A second Watts love-in a few weeks later was more tense, and the racial problems that surfaced revealed much about the gulf in countercultural-minority relations. It was marred by open antagonism between blacks and whites, although few whites attended. According to underground press reporters, a young black man climbed onstage and "began to lay down a barrage of hate about getting whitey."[22] Finally, a third such event – a Be-In in East Los Angeles – was a fiasco. Apparently, the mostly poor attendees from the surrounding area were outraged by the "stale food" from "people who accept poverty as a mask of liberation from the materialistic codes of the establishment but who have had 'it' in the past."[23]

The East LA Be-In was not anomalous; poor minority communities in Los Angeles and across the country rejected what they felt was patronizing assistance from white radicals. The divisions resulting from the race-class nexus accounted for some of the scorn, as underprivileged people of color viewed local hippies' anti-materialism and peace-and-flowers rhetoric as frivolous. How could they think otherwise when hippie journalists claimed that love-ins were "probably far more dangerous to the establishment than the less subtle and more active citizens of Watts who protested the establishment by burning the place down"? Or when *Free Press* polemicist Lawrence Lipton entitled an article "Hippie, the new Nigger"?[24]

These divisions, however, should not be exaggerated. For all of the conflict and hostility, as Doug Rossinow (1998) explains, white radicals of the 1960s were probably the least racist cohort of white people the nation had ever produced up to that point. In fact, the underground press consistently devoted considerable space to local black and brown radicalism.[25] Such sentiments usually went unreciprocated, however, and suspicion of hippies remained high. The Black Panthers even felt it necessary to rein in this hostility, going so far as to place an ad in *Open City* in 1968: "Your enemy is not the hippies. Your blind reactionary acts endanger the BLACK PANTHER PARTY members and its revolutionary movements. WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THE HIPPIES. LEAVE THEM ALONE."[26] H. Rap Brown, who thought that hippies were "politically irrelevant," did confess to the *Free Press* in an August 1967 interview that "I wish that all white Americans were like the hippies, because they ARE peaceful, and that's more than can be said for most honkies."[27]

Brown's estimation of hippies undoubtedly derived from his evaluation of their worldview. It is actually fairly easy to outline that worldview given how prolific they were in the realm of cultural production, especially music and print. While commercial concerns often factored into what they wrote and recorded, most acts were able to publicize hip ideology in relatively unfiltered terms. Record labels, both small and large, were acutely conscious

of the success of innovative acts like the Beatles and Bob Dylan, and hence open to experimentation. While local artists were not perfect vessels of ideological consciousness, they had more artistic freedom than any prior cohort and are therefore a good source of the countercultural vision. When we combine what musicians communicated with commentary from the local scene, a relatively coherent worldview emerges.

Networks were required to disseminate this worldview, and Los Angeles was as well endowed as any locale in the country in this regard. The cost of entry was crucial for media networks, and importantly, music and print were far cheaper to produce than film and television. There were literally scores of smaller record labels operating on shoestring budgets, and some of them occasionally had local hits. The rise of the underground press in the 1960s also owes much to cheaper technology, namely offset printing (Glessing 1970: 12, 41–4, 71–3; Peck 1985).[28] Amazingly, Art Kunkin started the *Free Press* with only fifteen dollars. Yet by the end of the decade, the paper – one among many such papers by then – claimed a circulation of 100,000 and readership of 250,000.[29] An *Esquire* reporter found the free-wheeling, low-budget *Free Press* typical: "Kids, dogs, cats, barefoot waifs, teeny-boppers in see-through blouses, assorted losers, [and] Indian chiefs wander in and out, while somewhere a radio plays endless rock music.… It's all ferociously informal."[30]

By 1967, the counterculture was well established in physical space too, and neighborhoods transformed with their presence. For their ideas to flourish, hippies needed places to live and congregate, and by that point they had successfully occupied large stretches of Hollywood and its adjacent areas, along with portions of Venice (Gibson and Kennedy 1966).[31] The density of media and physical networks made the counterculture's presence a thick one. In turn, that allowed them to not only establish a larger intragroup conversation, but also to broadcast their loose creed. That worldview was comprised of a variety of related components, many of which were rooted in prior bohemian movements, especially the beats. Yet while both beats and hippies scorned materialism (in theory, if not necessarily in practice), beats extended this to a condemnation of mass culture writ large, including 1950s youth culture forms like rock and roll. Instead, they favored commercially marginal forms like bop and free jazz.

As Daniel Bell (1976) and especially Bernard Gendron (2002) have argued, a sea change occurred in the mid-1960s, as mass culture melded with the avant garde. In LA, cultural opposition had meant standing firm against the dominant local mass culture industries, but that stance eroded quickly. Beginning around 1965, the most articulate members of the scene gravitated toward mass cultural forms. That year, the Byrds scored a number one hit with a ringing version of Bob Dylan's surrealistic "Mr. Tambourine Man." Within a year, dozens of local rock acts, many of which were fronted by suburban post-adolescents, were incorporating

dissonance and surrealism into three-minute rock songs. There was also a new appreciation for pop's plasticity and artificiality, evident in *Free Press* paeans to the garish Sunset Strip landscape and pop artist Ed Ruscha's (1966) wry photographic tribute to it.[32]

LA's youthful bohemian population may have embraced mass culture, but they also adhered to many time-tested bohemian tropes. Their overarching framework might be characterized as "transgressive libertarianism": a disdain for all limits, whether physical or mental, and an idealization of aesthetic antinomianism and absolute freedom that bordered on a vague anarchism. Contempt for the "stultifying codes of tradition" was pervasive, but local musician and scene organizer Frank Zappa encapsulated this spirit of negation best in his description of a "freak out." It was "a process whereby an individual casts off outmoded and restricted standards of thinking, dress, and social etiquette.... On a collective level ... the participants, already emancipated from our national social slavery, dressed in their most inspired apparel, realize as a group whatever potential they possess for free expression."[33] Other local musicians said as much, albeit without Zappa's flair, and the sentiment extended beyond the musician community. One local Provo (a countercultural collective that was an offshoot of the Dutch-based anarchist group) wrote in late 1966 that the Provo-organized Sunset Strip Liberation Front "recognize[s] the validity of no laws save our own, and assert[s] the higher law of self-autonomy which no legislature can remove and which can only be denied by naked force."[34] Moreover, their public events – freak-outs, acid tests, and love-ins – were outrageous, as this description of a 1966 freak-out attests: "blurry Picassos, film footage of flames and snake charmers, [and] stroboscopic spotlights ... all danced simultaneously on the wide screen" as a hippie Santa Claus passed out "Peace on Earth/End the Vietnam War balloons."[35]

Central to this larger enterprise were psychedelic drugs. LSD had spread like wildfire through the nascent California hip scenes, with the *Free Press* reporting in 1966 that nearly a quarter of a million southern Californians had tried it. It was easily obtained in Los Angeles, as was marijuana. The most famous proselytizers for the liberating, consciousness-shattering potential of acid, Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert, gave numerous talks in the area, and the drug became for many a cultural tool with important consequences. One group, the "tribe" associated with the underground paper *The Oracle*, issued a series of proclamations connecting LSD with revolutionary potential (one article was entitled "On the Possibilities of an LSD Utopia").[36] It pervaded local music as well, and was indeed celebrated in hit songs like Steppenwolf's "Magic Carpet Ride" and the Strawberry Alarm Clock's "Incense and Peppermints."

LSD was not the only drug of choice; by the late 1960s more damaging drugs like heroin, methamphetamine, and STP were in vogue. But LSD itself was highly problematic. Rather than ushering in a revolution

in consciousness, for many it fractured their sense of reality. Al Mitchell, owner of the Fifth Estate, noted its ill effects: "Once or twice is OK, for insights, but I know a girl who's taken LSD over 100 times, her boyfriend over 300 times. … They're *wasted*." He was hardly alone. One researcher concluded that in a local hippie commune the "entire lifestyle of my interviewees was centered around the procurement and use of drugs."[37] The phenomenon never abated, and large swaths of the scene became more seedy and desperate. *Esquire* reported that most of these lost souls "came to LA to do things they couldn't do at home. Like staying stoned on drugs more or less permanently."[38]

Not unexpectedly, hippies' basic intransigence to all rules and convention created other problems besides drug abuse. Many had an almost primal revulsion to the workaday world and believed they could live parasitically off the affluent society's surplus. Occasional articles in the *Free Press* even dispensed advice on successfully living the life of a hip freeloader.[39] Consequently – and regardless of hippies' manifest sympathies for society's less fortunate – it is hardly surprising that non-hippies who had to participate in the mainstream economy held them in contempt.

Hippies' disdain for rules often led them to identify with outlaws. In theory, this could have been a legitimate position; in practice, it often meant valorizing southern California's many biker gangs. The counterculturally oriented biker had become a stock character in exploitative films by the late 1960s. Yet, in reality, biker gangs lived around and visited the same haunts and festivals as hippies. Both revered drugs and had "common enemies."[40] But bikers were deeply involved in the amphetamine trade. They also tended to be violent, crudely misogynistic, and politically reactionary. Following a violence-plagued Griffith Park love-in, one perceptive hippie thought "all the talk about hippies embracing the Hell's Angels, all the talk about them beginning to change the motorcycle gangs is a lot of self-delusion.… For most of them, hate is a way of life, violence the mode of expression."[41]

Perhaps the worst case of local hippies' identification with outlaw culture was a glorification of mass murderer Charles Manson. The hip community's reaction to the episode was illuminating – and depressing. The *Free Press* in particular imagined Manson a martyr for the entire counterculture, which by 1970 was feeling the weight of both internal implosion and heightened police repression. It printed innumerable articles about him, condemning his captors and defending him to the end. Tellingly, when Manson received the death penalty, noted poet and musician Ed Sanders paralleled it with US crimes in Vietnam.[42]

Sexuality was also a complicated issue for the counterculture. It almost goes without saying that it was a gendered phenomenon, and women did participate in very large numbers. Although males typically held the positions of power, hippies were at root genuine enthusiasts for a less repressive sexual culture, and many of the more thoughtful locals were not

misogynistic. One writer for *Open City* spoke for many: "Those youths that engage in freer sex … seem to engage in … actively fighting against the powers that be and tend to take strong stands on political, economic, racial, and other social issues."[43] While this claim was undoubtedly wishful thinking to some degree, there was some truth to it. For instance, while hippies were ambivalent toward the emergent gay culture in Los Angeles, they were certainly more accepting than any other subculture in the city. In fact, the growing gay culture in LA was nested in hip neighborhoods like Hollywood, and by the late 1960s the *Free Press* and *Open City* were staunch champions of gay rights. Their frontal attack on obscenity laws was also part and parcel of their social tolerance. Art Kunkin argued before the Los Angles Commission on Pornography that obscenity laws were "a means of social control over the population. [Young people] are … challenging the old means of social control and places reserved for young people, women, minorities, and ordinary working people."[44]

Despite all of these liberatory tendencies, outright misogyny and commodification were pervasive, particularly by the early 1970s. Rock singers celebrating sexual prowess and the unrestrained libertinism of the new "swinger culture," of which LA was famously a seedbed, sat uneasily alongside hippies' agitation against sexual repression. The *Free Press* increasingly became a champion for this sort of "liberation," and by the late 1960s featured numerous pages of ribald personal ads.[45] By 1970, outright pornography pervaded the scene, and many of the teenage girl runaways who landed in Hollywood were the industry's victims. Hip institutions were not immune either. Beset by legal fees stemming from an infamous exposé of undercover narcotics officers, the *Free Press* had transformed into a porn rag by the early 1970s, and X-rated theatres dotted hip zones.[46] Such sexism was an important factor in the growth of the local women's liberation movement, which in mid-1969 formally accused the *Free Press* of being a " 'pimp paper.' "[47]

The enthusiasm for both drugs and uninhibited sexuality were part of a broader romanticist impulse encompassing both anti-intellectualism and mysticism. Drugs were prized for their ability to provide "insights" into pure nature stripped of abstract rationalism, and open sexuality connected hippies with a more primitive – and hence truer – nature.[48] But as with sex and drugs, hippie mysticism presented problems. Mystical primitivists tended to essentialize women as softer and purer, which was deeply sexist – foundational to sexism, even. Moreover, primitivism could degenerate into a valorization of the child-like, which was profoundly anti-intellectual.[49] Combined, such sentiments left hippies at a loss as to how to go about actually transforming society.

Given their manifest contradictions and aporias, the counterculture could easily be pegged as drug- and sex-obsessed anti-intellectuals, shallow narcissists even. Indeed, degeneration within the local scene by the late 1960s

was hard to deny. The signs were depressing: an apparently widespread willingness to defend Charles Manson, the rise of the "Jesus Freak" culture on the Strip (where it originated),[50] the proliferation of pornography and hard drugs, and an increasing embrace of cults and mysticism.

But even factoring all of this in, the counterculture proved to be far more than this, and the local scene's connections with other, more celebrated liberation movements should give historians pause when casting aspersion on hippies as the advance guard of hyperconsumerism and apolitical hedonism (Frank 1997). Throughout the era, it intermixed with the anti-war movement, the black and brown liberation movements, the nascent gay rights movement, and even the women's liberation movement. They were most active in the anti-war movement, and at the 1967 anti-war demonstration in Century City, one of the most important local protests of the era, an observer claimed that 25 percent of the protestors were hippies.[51] The protest and others like it were typically marred by LAPD brutality, which tended to bind hippies and the political New Left together tightly. Local impresario Elliot Mintz noted the alliance born of repression in the *Free Press*: "If the Sunset Strip was difficult, if the police behavior in Watts was sickening, then their action at Century City was insane." Mintz questioned LAPD claims that officers acted "In the name of the people of the state of California." Which people? Mintz asked. Those demonstrating in front of the hotel? Blacks in Watts "slaughter[ed] at an incomprehensible rate? … The people in Topanga, Monterey, Venice?"[52]

In making these connections, Mintz was calling attention to the linkages between hippies and other movements that police repression repeatedly generated throughout the city. The notorious Sunset Strip protests of late 1966 were essentially about the counterculture's right to the city. Yet within two months, police repression had radicalized elements of the protest movement. Al Mitchell used the event to call attention to larger structural oppressions. At the tail end of the protests, he tried to organized concurrent events in Watts, East Los Angeles, and a predominantly black neighborhood in Venice. The joint protest failed, but even the failure was revealing: events on the ground had forced a radicalized counterculture to look beyond their immediate grievance.[53]

The perpetually tense situation in Venice was the apotheosis of this process, as the counterculture and the New Left melded into one. Venice was not a model beach community: it had a large black population and an entrenched bohemia. In the booming sixties, real estate interests saw an opportunity to remake it into a "new Miami Beach," and the LAPD initiated a ceaseless campaign against local bohemians in an attempt to drive them from Venice.[54] The city tried to initiate a new "master plan" to redevelop the area, part of which entailed a freeway cutting through the black neighborhood. The upshot was that hippies aligned with local New Leftists to develop a fairly sophisticated understanding of how urban power operated

in favor of powerful real estate interests and against both poor and radical constituencies.[55] It was a critique that negated passivity and primitivism. The analysis developed by local hip activists matched up fairly closely with the New Left's emerging political economic understanding of urban power. This did not stop redevelopment, and pockets of Venice did become exclusive. But it never became a "new Miami Beach." The political activism of hippies informed by New Left critique had played a part in stopping the full makeover desired by urban elites.

Like every city, Los Angeles was unique – it had a large countercultural population, an unusually hostile political establishment, a booming economy, and a dispersed geography. Yet the city's counterculture was part of a larger political and cultural matrix that encompassed all major cities in the US. Consequently, the events of Century City, Venice, and the Sunset Strip suggest that the sweeping histories of a counterculture that paint it as categorically different from the New Left are missing an important point. Two of the most influential academic histories of the era's white radicalism and its counterculture – Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties* (1987) and Thomas Frank's *The Conquest of Cool* (1997), both of which are national in focus – argue for this divide. On the other hand, key histories of the New Left such as James Miller's *"Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987) essentially ignore the counterculture. Historians of the local (Farber 1988; Flacks and Whelen 1989; Rorabaugh 1989; Rossinow 1998) are more attentive to the cross-pollination of movements, and their work is essential for anyone interested in 1960s radicalism. But their focus is the New Left; none examine a counterculture as influential as the one in Los Angeles.

Historians who have considered 1960s Los Angeles have tended to ignore the counterculture. Those who have looked at radicalism, like Laura Pulido (2006), have understandably focused on black power and Chicanos (Oropeza 2005; Escobar 1993). In *City of Quartz* (1990) Mike Davis ignored the topic entirely (though he published an essay on the Los Angeles counterculture that is a prelude to a larger book; see Davis 2007). Certainly, the counterculture is not more important than the Watts riot or the Chicano power movement. Yet the Los Angeles counterculture is important in its own right and its history, both as a local and a comparative case, can tell us a great deal about transformations in urban politics and the increasing role of culture in the urban economy.

Following the 1960s, Los Angeles was a changed city. It was more open to cultural innovation, and its expanded bohemias flourish to this day. The hip vision also served as a broadly available "structure of feeling" for young people growing up in southern California from the 1970s onward. Just as importantly, the ideals of the counterculture in conjunction with those of the New Left – authenticity, tolerance, hedonism, environmentalism, mysticism, sexual freedom, pacificism – achieved the status of conventional wisdom among post-1960s liberals. That vision was clearly

foundational to left-leaning localities like Santa Monica (environment, localism, authenticity) and West Hollywood (hedonism, sexual freedom, tolerance) in the post-1960s era.

Interestingly, while much of the best recent historical scholarship on politics at the local level focuses on either the New Right's rise or the implosion of urban liberalism (Sugrue 1996; McGirr 2001; Self 2005; Kruse 2005; Lassiter 2006), few have tackled the equally important impact of left-leaning 1960s movements on the urban political landscape. For all its continuing economic, geographic, and social inequality, anyone looking at the political history of Los Angeles from the 1960s onward should consider very seriously the fact that while the reactionary mayor Sam Yorty was the dominant politician of 1960s LA, by the 1990s the archetypal 1960s radical Tom Hayden and lesbian progressive Jackie Goldberg were formidable political power brokers. Moreover, given the entertainment industry's outsize influence on the city's politics and culture, it is worth noting that while it was primarily a conservative force in 1960, it is self-avowedly liberal now. In other words, Los Angeles politics has tilted leftward in important ways, and judging from the content of contemporary progressive politics, the movements of the 1960s – including the counterculture – bear a significant degree of responsibility. Certainly, this is worthy of further investigation by historians, whether they are focusing on Los Angeles alone or making a larger counterargument about the lasting impact of the 1960s on urban politics and culture in a conservative era.

A rejoinder to this is that while urban *culture* has changed in a progressive direction, the economy has not. In fact, American cities are significantly more unequal now than in the 1960s (Mollenkopf and Castells 1991; Sassen 1991). Alongside these explicitly political economic works, some of the more influential recent books on American cities have tackled the role of culture in urban political economy, and, subsidiary to this, the role of urban bohemias in postindustrial society. Such analyses tend to focus on the "new class," educated professionals that Robert Reich (1991) has termed "symbolic analysts" and Richard Florida (2002) has labeled a "creative class." In these accounts, professionals educated in the post-1960s era and sympathetic to countercultural values have, through a process of gentrification, colonized arts districts in major American cities. Sharon Zukin brought this to the fore in *Loft Living* (1982), and it is now accepted as a signal phenomenon in American life (although some argue about the extent of its impact) (Harvey 1989; Smith 1996; Mele 2000; Lloyd 2005; Currid 2007; Greenberg 2008).[56] Still the preserve of sociologists and scholars of urban planning, the implications stemming from the decades-long interplay between an evolving postindustrial urban economy, cultural change, and gentrification ought to inform historical scholarship on the 1960s, the counterculture, and Los Angeles in the years to come.

What can this development tell us, and what directions can it point us in? First of all, it means that we should not only place the rise of the 1960s counterculture within the standard framework of 1960s radicalism, politics, and culture, or of the immediate reaction to it in the form of the New Right. Rather, we should integrate its story into a longer trajectory of the transformation of Los Angeles and other major cities, as the information and cultural economies have come to play increasingly central roles in cities throughout the world's advanced economies. One could even be forgiven for looking back at 1960s Los Angeles and finding virulent police hostility to bohemians almost quaint given current realities, where cities actively solicit members of the creative class and its aspirants. Like scores of other cities today, Los Angeles celebrates its quirky arts-oriented districts and outré performers against a backdrop of ever-increasing levels of inequality. The current situation, however, should not blind us to the fact that in its initial phase, mass bohemianism in Los Angeles was neither welcome nor isolated from other social movements. The counterculture was regarded as a powerful threat to civic order and the very stability of postwar culture, and it cast its lot – albeit irregularly and idiosyncratically – with the larger body of racial and political liberation movements that transformed both Los Angeles and America in irrevocable ways.

Notes

1 *Los Angeles Free Press*, August 27, 1964, p. 1.

2 "The *L.A. Free Press* is Rich," *Esquire*, June, 1970, p. 56; *New York Times*, August 1, 1966, p. 30; *Wall Street Journal*, March 4, 1968, p. 1; *Los Angeles Free Press*, September 9, 1966, p. 13; March 8, 1968, p. 25.

3 Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, *Dynamics of the Youth Explosion* (Los Angeles, 1966), pp. 20–1, 55–6. See also *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1967, pp. E1–2.

4 However, for an excellent discussion of Los Angeles' important role in furthering the politics of the white New Right, see Avila (2004).

5 For paradigmatic examples of books implying a split between bohemia and politics in the 1960s, see Gitlin (1987) and Frank (1997).

6 Interview with Art Kunkin by the author, 1995. See also "The *L.A. Free Press* is Rich," *Esquire*, June, 1970, op. cit.

7 Interview with Mitchell, *Los Angeles Free Press*, January 13, 1967, pp. 8–9; February 10, 1967, pp. 1, 5; February 17, 1967, pp. 1., 6; *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, November 24, 1966, p. 2; *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, 2/13/67, p. 9.

8 *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1966, p. 3; March 10, 1966, pt. II, pp. 1, 8; April 1, 1966, pt. II, pp. 1, 8; "Sunset Strip – A City in Self-Defense?" *Los Angeles Newsletter*, October 29, 1966, pp. 3–5; "Sunset For the Strip," *Newsweek*,

July 4, 1966, pp. 22–3; "The Mad New Scene on Sunset Strip," *Life*, August 26, 1966, pp. 75–83; "Sunset Boulevard's New Bohemia," *Los Angeles Magazine*, December 1965, pp. 34–40; *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, November 19, 1966, p. C6; November 28, 1966, p. B2.

9 *Los Angeles Magazine*, December, 1965, op. cit., pp. 34–5; "The Sunset Strip," *New York Review of Books*, March 9, 1967, p. 8; Schatz (1981).

10 *Newsweek*, July 4, 1966, op. cit., p. 23.

11 Los Angeles County Ordinance No. 8874, 6/29/65; 5/31/65 letter from Gordon Nesvig, clerk of the County Board of Supervisors, to Sybil Brand of the County Public Welfare Commission (with attachments). Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Archives, file no. 330. *New York Review of Books*, March 9, 1967, op. cit., pp. 8, 10.

12 *Open City*, May 19, 1967, p. 10; May 26, 1967, p. 4; *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1969, pp. C1, C7; *Los Angeles Free Press*, January 26, 1968, p. 10.

13 *Los Angeles Times*, July 6, 1967, p. W1; July 23, 1967, p. V4; *Open City*, May 22, 1968, p. 3.

14 *Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 1967, 6/4/67, pp. W1, W4.

15 *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 1967, pt. II p. 1; *Los Angeles Free Press*, December 15, 1967, p. 7.

16 Pennock concluded that most hippies living in a nearby Laguna Beach commune were middle class in both origin and worldview.

17 *Open City*, March 8, 1968, p. 12.

18 *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 1967, pp. C1, C4; *Open City*, May 26, 1967, p. 8; June 29, 1967, p. 2; August 24, 1967, p. 4; Wein (1970: 180–202).

19 *Los Angeles Free Press*, August 12, 1966, p. 8; December 25, 1967, p. 22; September 4, 1970, p. 39.

20 *Los Angeles Times*, October 27, 1968, pp. W1, W4, W5. Also see *Los Angeles Free Press*, July 28, 1967, p. 1; April 11, 1969, pp. 1, 22; *Open City*, July 28, 1967, p. 1.

21 *Provo*, August 1, 1967, p. 13; *Open City*, July 14, 1967, pp. 8, 9, 16; *Los Angeles Free Press*, July 14, 1967, pp. 7, 12.

22 *Open City*, August 4, 1967, p. 9; *Los Angeles Free Press*, August 4, 1967, p. 17.

23 *Open City*, September 2, 1967, p. 7.

24 *Provo*, May 1, 1967, p. 4; *Los Angeles Free Press*, September 20, 1968, p. 8; July 11, 1969, p. 4.

25 For articles on the Black Panthers and black radicalism in general, see *Los Angeles Free Press*, September 2, 1966, pp. 1, 12; September 16, 1966, p. 3; July 21, 1967, p. 1; March 22, 1968, pp. 5, 6, 15, 32; August 23, 1968, pp. 10, 12; April 18, 1969, pp. 6–9; August 1, 1969, pp. 10, 18; *Open City*, September 22, 1968, p. 9; October 11, 1968, p. 7; January 24, 1969, p. 3; February 7, 1969, p. 2. For articles on local Chicano radicalism, including La Raza, the Brown Berets, the murder of Ruben Salazar, and student strikes at East LA high schools, see *Los Angeles Free Press*, Feburary 23, 1968, p. 20; March 8, 1968, pp. 1, 6; March 15, 1968, pp. 1, 3, 9; June 7, 1968, pp. 25–6; September 4, 1970, p. 1; September 18, 1970, pp. 8–9.

26 *Open City*, September 22, 1968, p. 4. The ad was reprinted from the Panthers' own Oakland-based newspaper.

27 *Open City*, February 7, 1969, p. 2; *Los Angeles Free Press*, August 18, 1967, pp. 3, 5.
28 *Open City*, October 4, 1967, p. 12.
29 *Esquire*, June 1970, op. cit.; *Los Angeles Free Press*, July 19, 1968, pp. 3, 6; June 27, 1969, pp. 10, 16, 23. Other papers included *Open City*, *The Oracle of Southern California*, *Provo*, *Free Venice Beachhead*, *World Countdown*, *Los Angeles Underground*, and *Everywoman*.
30 *Esquire*, June 1970, op. cit., p. 58; *Open City*, February 23, 1968, p. 16.
31 *Los Angeles Magazine*, December 1965, op. cit., p. 40; *Los Angeles Free Press*, June 10, 1966, p. 7.
32 *Los Angeles Free Press*, January 14, 1966, p. 7.
33 Liner notes to the Mothers of Invention, *Freak Out*! (Rykodisk: RCD 10501), 1966.
34 *Los Angeles Free Press*, June 21, 1968, p. 33; The Byrds, *Fifth Dimension* (Columbia: CK 9349), 1966; *The Doors* (Elektra: EKS-74007), 1967; *Provo*, May 1, 1967, p. 3.
35 *Los Angeles Free Press*, December 20, 1966, pt. V, p. 14.
36 *Los Angeles Free Press*, September 17, 1965, p. 6; February 11, 1966, p. 6; April 1, 1966, pp. 10, 11, 13; May 27, 1966, pp. 3, 6; June 3, 1966, p. 12; June 17, 1966, p. 12; *Open City*, July 21, 1967, p. 1; "The Student Drug Kick," *Los Angeles Magazine*, September 1965, pp. 59–63; *Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 1966, pp. W1, W12; *Oracle of Southern California*, May 1967, p. 9; June 1967, p. 7. For an insightful analysis of the importance of LSD to the counterculture, see Bromell (2000).
37 *Los Angeles Magazine*, May 1967, op. cit., p. 35; Pennock (1971: 131).
38 *Esquire*, March 1970, op. cit., p. 116. See also *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 1967, pp. W1, W4; "A Night with the Drugged Children of America," *National Review*, May 6, 1969, pp. 534–5.
39 *Oracle of Southern California*, April 1967, p. 2; *Los Angeles Free Press*, June 24, 1966, p. 5; January 20, 1967, p. 12;. *The New Yorker*, February 25, 1967, op. cit., p. 127; *Open City*, May 26, 1967, p. 8.
40 *Open City*, April 4, 1967, p. 7; interview with Hell's Angels leader Sonny Barger, *Los Angeles Image*, September 5, 1969, pp. 7–8; *Los Angeles Free Press*, February 2, 1971, pp. 1, 5. *The Wild Angels* (American International Pictures, 1966) and *Easy Rider* (Columbia Pictures, 1969) are the archetypal counterculture-themed biker movies set in southern California.
41 *Open City*, June 23, 1967, p. 6; *Los Angeles Free Press*, April 17, 1970, p. 21
42 *Los Angeles Free Press*, June 19, 1970, p. 1; August 14, 1970, pp. 1, 4; November 13, 1970, p. 5.
43 *Open City*, July 19, 1968, p. 5.
44 *Los Angeles Free Press*, May 22, 1970, p. 6.
45 *Los Angeles Free Press*, November 24, 1967, p. 16; November 28, 1969, p. 36.
46 *Los Angeles Free Press*, July 21, 1967, p. 10; July 19, 1968, p. 5; April 24, 1970, pp. 1, 4; May 22, 1970, p. 6; April 30, 1971, p. 15.
47 *Los Angeles Free Press*, July 4, 1969, p. 6; August 1, 1969, p. 5.
48 *Los Angeles Free Press*, August 1, 1969, pp. 3, 15; *Oracle of Southern California*, October 1967, pp. 6–7, 25.

49 *Los Angeles Free Press*, June 21, 1968, p. 33; "The Hippie Invasion," *Los Angeles Magazine*, May 1967, p. 30; *Oracle of Southern California*, December 1967, pp. 4, 5, 14.
50 *Los Angeles Times*, December 26, 1969, pt. II, p. 1; *Los Angeles Free Press*, July 4, 1969, p. 22; July 2, 1971, p. 14; "Street Christians: Jesus as the Ultimate Trip," *Time*, August 3, 1970, pp. 31–2; "The Jesus Freaks: Savagery and Salvation on the Sunset Strip," *Commonweal*, October 30, 1970, pp. 122–5.
51 *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, June 24, 1967, pp. 1, 4; June 25, 1967, p. 3; *Los Angeles Free Press*, June, 21, 1968, p. 6; December 5, 1967, p. 4.
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53 *Los Angeles Free Press*, November 18, 1966, p. 3; January 13, 1967, pp. 8–9; February 10, 1967, pp. 1, 5; February 17, 1967, pp. 1, 6; *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, February 13, 1967, p. 9.
54 *Open City*, April 5, 1968, p. 13; June 9, 1968, p. 8; "Damn It, We'd Rather Do It Ourselves," *Los Angeles Magazine*, April 1969, pp. 32–5, 56–62; *Free Venice Beachhead*, January 1969, p. 1; *Los Angeles Free Press*, August 29, 1969, p. 12.
55 *Los Angeles Times*, March 25, 1968, p. 1; July 28, 1968, pp. W1, W6; *Los Angeles Free Press*, October 11, 1968, p. 2; *Evening Outlook*, April 19, 1969, p. 1; April 26, 1969, pp. 1–2; *Free Venice Beachhead*, September 1969, p. 1.

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Chapter Nineteen

Cinema and the Making of a Modern City

Edward Dimendberg

Every metropolis creates its own stories. These narratives shape perception and frequently outlive the built environment and social structures that witnessed their emergence. Often such stories cling to a city with a tenacity that occludes their questionable veracity and status as verbal fictions. Although the complex urban dynamics and demographic transformations which comprise the history of Los Angeles include larger-than-life personalities and momentous events, they more typically involve slow and, for most residents, imperceptible changes in transportation, infrastructure, governance, and taxation with little intrinsic drama. Viewed from a subsequent vantage point, the belief that urban development proceeds according to a predictable formula or that it reflects the influence of a single individual inevitably proves false, or at best simplistic, given actual dynamics in the region.

The deepest truth of Los Angeles cinema may be its articulation of a wish to preserve collective and individual agency while allowing people to see history in a city that frustrates spatial and psychological orientation and the sense that events unfold sequentially. Where does power reside, by whom is it exercised, and how so are puzzles for residents and outsiders alike. The operations of city agencies and commissions long have provided a fertile mulch for the growth of legends and conspiracy theories. In part this hinges upon an urban scale that frustrates anyone seeking an overview or to follow simultaneous developments in far flung neighborhoods. Los Angeles possesses fewer monuments than other cities; it is the rare metropolis where most buildings are the first structures constructed upon their soil. Its inhabitants sometimes share nothing more than the fact that they all have arrived from elsewhere and thus prove an ideal subject and audience for the mass medium of film, a cultural form that simultaneously represents and creates communities.

With its ability to compress time, overcome geographical distance, magnify the normally invisible, and juxtapose contradictory realities, cinema lays a plausible claim to being the definitive medium for representing Los Angeles, as significant as painting was to nineteenth-century Paris and photography later became in twentieth-century New York and Berlin.[1] If these other media initially were employed in Los Angeles in the spirit of boosterism so as to publicize and promote the city, film allowed for and encouraged the development of a range of critical attitudes and perspectives, no longer tied exclusively to the initial goals of image production in the city – increasing tourism and selling real estate. Some filmmakers sought to deglamorize Los Angeles, to find beauty in its often tawdry and vulgar realities, a key sensibility of European modernism. Cinema played a key role in creating the image of Los Angeles as modern metropolis, as capable of basking in ambivalence and nostalgically musing about the losses incurred though its modernization as older cities.[2] More than any other cultural form, film holds out the elusive promise of representing the sprawling metropolis as a totality, just as it relentlessly demonstrates the practical impossibility of doing so.

The motion picture was not invented in Los Angeles, which does not appear to have been filmed prior to 1897, two years later than Paris, London, Berlin, and New York and other metropoles, yet no city has been associated more closely with the medium. Today, few would disagree that it is capital of the world entertainment industry and that its products have expanded beyond the movies screened in theatres – once the main revenue stream of the Hollywood studio system – to encompass DVDs, music, television, merchandise, and web-based content. Yet in charting the relationship of Los Angeles and the cinema the paradox soon emerges that the reality of the city, which has been inflected by film, remains irreducible, and often antithetical, to it.

The glamor of the movies and the excesses of the star system stand in stark contrast to the daily lives and experiences of most residents whose access to Hollywood myths and celebrities is usually through channels – the mass media, the local cinema theatre, and the DVD – available to people elsewhere. Historian Benedict Anderson (1983) has noted the importance of the newspaper in forming the sense of national collective identity that he terms an "imagined community." Los Angeles cinema undoubtedly creates many imagined communities of film viewers, often at the expense of turning the actual inhabitants of the city into spectators of cliché-dominated stories with little relation to their own lives. The cult of the movie star and fantasies of discovery by talent scouts were ubiquitous by the 1920s and 1930s, myths contrary to the actual challenges and conditions of daily life in a city marked deeply by divisions of race, class, and gender (Cendrars 1995; Morin 2005).

One might claim that a permanent tension exists between Hollywood, understood broadly to encompass the motion picture industry and its storytelling, and the urban reality and population of Los Angeles, with the former continually challenging, some might say colonizing, the latter. Under what conditions it has been possible to make films that bridge this gap and engage with the experiences of actual inhabitants remains an enduring question for all who study film culture. At what moment it became possible to watch films set in Los Angeles and to discern that the city comprised its own unique urban culture is no less significant. What defines a Los Angeles film? Is it any movie produced there or directed or written by a resident of the city? Or must a film address the challenges of living there to qualify as Los Angeles cinema? The sheer number of films made in Los Angeles – an Internet database (www.imdb.com) lists more than 14,000, and does not include numerous television productions – cautions against generalizations.

Nonetheless, two broad traits that cut across film genres, historical periods, and modes of production facilitate preliminary definitions. In *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (1971), architectural historian P. Reyner Banham argued that the history of Los Angeles, especially the development of its transportation infrastructure, made it a unique urban environment, a claim scholars have challenged in recent years. Nonetheless Banham's assessment does suggest one ask: What distinguishes Los Angeles cinema from other urban film cultures? Many Los Angeles films suggest the city frustrates, in some cases poisons, human relationships, be they familial, professional, or community based. Separation rather than solidarity appears to define everyday life in a city where extremes of physical and racial segregation become the norm. More so than other cities, Los Angeles films present maladjusted, discontented, and pathological characters seeking the unobtainable, be it financial and emotional stability or illicit financial rewards (see Carringer 2001). Until recently, the absence of normality and a predilection for transgression, perversion, and self-deception defined most characters in films set in Los Angeles.

While novelist Nathanael West's career as a Hollywood writer was insignificant, in retrospect his 1939 novel, *The Day of the Locust*, appears a prescient announcement of what the Los Angeles cinema would later represent. In this vision, recent Anglo immigrants from the American heartland, seekers of fame and fortune in the entertainment industry, petty grifters, and aimless drifters compose a permanent underclass of aspiring actors, criminal predators, flesh peddlers, and clueless onlookers swept along by the crowd. All that is most entropic and unsettling, most destructive of former social structures and affiliations, and hence most emblematic of the violence implicit in American capitalism, gravitates toward the city. For West (and other writers), Los Angeles is a convenient symbol for a depravity and avarice seemingly absent in the Midwest or other regions.[3] Los Angeles is hell

with freeways, the measure in American cinema against which the normality of all other cities can be affirmed.

In *City of Quartz* (1990) historian Mike Davis claims the two dominant poles of Los Angeles cultural representations are "sunshine and noir"; a naive optimistic boosterism and a fatalism rooted in a grimy urban environment. In Davis's eyes Los Angeles appears to oscillate between a middle-class pastoral with an ideal climate and a concrete and asphalt purgatory of barely contained violence and simmering resentments fueled by class antagonisms. While most large cities can provoke extreme responses, Los Angeles films remain unique for their alternation between these two extremes, often within the same film. If these stereotypes filter out the less dramatic possibilities of middle-class domesticity, upward mobility, socialization across ethnic and racial boundaries, and cultural syncretism, they underscore the fact that benign realities rarely appear in films set in Los Angeles.

However, the coexistence of different modes of production – from studio-financed films, to independent productions, to avant-garde and experimental efforts – speaks against conceiving Los Angeles cinema as a monolith expressing a single tendency, let alone domination by Hollywood. As film historian David James (2005) persuasively argues, Los Angeles possesses a rich and diverse tradition of experimental filmmaking and political "counter cinema," often produced by the very same people who work for the commercial film industry. Maya Deren's avant-garde classic *Meshes of the Afternoon* was filmed in her Hollywood apartment. Kenneth Anger made his films *Fireworks* (1947) and *Puce Moment* (1949) in the city, and only Paris and New York can rival the depth and variety of experimental and underground film that has been nurtured in its environs, generally in contact with subcultures and sexual minorities.

Los Angeles had a long tradition of silent film, yet in many respects the material city was a relatively minor presence in commercial cinema during the four decades before the advent of the talkies. Studio filmmakers rapidly became adept at making it look like someplace else and generally did. Thomas Ince's Westerns filmed in Santa Monica Canyon could have been set in any number of western states. Ditto for the spectacular *Intolerance* (1916), whose director, D. W. Griffith, never made a film in Los Angeles that rivaled the New York milieu of his *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912). Nor did the great comics Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd engage the urban environment in a manner comparable to how European directors Ernst Lubitsch or René Clair addressed social life in Berlin or Paris. Apart from copious sunshine and the occasional oil well or view of Santa Monica Pier, life in Los Angeles rarely commands attention in silent film comedies, and usually appears as a mere backdrop for gags and stunts, or middle-class aspiration, as in the Harold Lloyd vehicle *Safety Last* (Fred Newmeyer and Sam Taylor, 1923.) A truly robust cinematic identity arrived later than in

any other metropolis and seems incompatible with the generally affirmative character of many early twentieth-century literary and cultural representations of the city (Adamic et al. 1928).

Whether this indicates that the city had not yet attained a critical mass of native film artists or perceptive immigrants who could leave their mark on silent cinema, or simply reflects the skewed sample of films which have survived from the period remains a topic for future research. Silent films depicting significant landmarks and ethnic and racial communities without common stereotypes may well be rediscovered and complicate our understanding of early cinematic representations of Los Angeles, yet it remains striking how inexpressive its cityscape typically appears in most films made there before the coming of sound. Even the opulent 1927 production of *Sunrise*, directed by German Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, turned its back on Los Angeles; signs on the set for Euston Station are meant to place events in London.

Only toward the end of World War II did Los Angeles emerge as a distinctive urban environment in cinema thanks to the development of the city's major cinematic aesthetic innovation, film noir. Indebted to the crime fiction of Raymond Chandler, a member of the Black Mask "tough guy" school of fiction whose hard-drinking detective Philip Marlowe replaced genteel investigators like Sherlock Holmes, film noir also developed in New York and Paris, yet never became as identified with either city as it did with Los Angeles. To this day film noir remains a seemingly timeless cultural style, endlessly rediscovered and appropriated by successive generations of filmmakers, sometimes at the expense of concealing as many dimensions of the reality of the city as it might reveal, It has become the greatest of all Los Angeles cultural clichés.

In its early years, nostalgia for the 1930s permeated the genre. Its idealized world of gambling ships, old family money (with associated racism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia), and stylish attire and automobiles was already on the way out, soon to be replaced by middle-class suburbanization and mass consumption, when Chandler published *The Big Sleep* in 1939. His writing evoked atmosphere and detail. More than any specific plot type or narrative form, Chandler's contribution to film noir was to romanticize Los Angeles as a place, alternately decrepit, glittering, or sun-parched, but in no way mistakable for other American cities.[4] Marlowe's automobile journeys across the city captured geographic dispersal, a variety of urban landscapes, and the temporal experience of passing through these. His travels provided an ideal device for surveying disparate class and social milieux, which remains an invariant feature of nearly all Los Angeles cinema. In a city without a system of public transportation or public parks used by most of the population, film has become one of the most significant means by which residents of Los Angeles obtain information about how others different from them live their lives.

Often considered to be an invention of German émigré directors such as Fritz Lang, Robert Siodmak, and Billy Wilder, film noir's stylistic techniques of shadowy low-key lighting were less likely importations of German expressionism than the rediscovery of techniques employed by Hollywood in the silent period (Vernet 1993). Still, many of the most perceptive cinematic observations about Los Angeles have been made by foreigners, sometimes thought to be more sensitive than natives to the rhythms and textures of the city but more likely just adept at their trade and tuned in to filmic implications of modernism and modernization.[5] This is certainly the case with *Double Indemnity* (1944), a collaboration between the British-raised Chandler and Austrian director Billy Wilder. Their presentation of the artificiality of life in Los Angeles and the regimentation of its business society was already present in James M. Cain's novel, but Wilder gave them an unforgettable twist through an ingenious flashback narration structure and the powerful opening evocation of corporate homogeneity signaled by desks arranged in rows in the Pacific All Risk Insurance Company. Chandler's own novels were made into films, perhaps most successfully in Edward Dmytryk's *Murder My Sweet* (1944), an adaptation of *Farewell My Lovely* that bowdlerized Chandler's depiction of South Central race relations.[6] The conventions of film noir – boring middle-class domesticity, a tempting femme fatale, and the lure of crime and easy money – soon became staples of American cinema. Another film by an Austrian émigré, *Act of Violence* (Fred Zinnemann, 1949), presented a tale of a crippled veteran set on avenging the traitorous behavior of his commanding officer during the war. Filmed alternately in Santa Monica and on Bunker Hill, a downtown neighborhood of decaying Victorian houses the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) redeveloped in the 1950s (one of the earliest urban renewal sites in the city), it suggested a split between the city's manicured suburban superego and its violent urban id (see Davis 2001). Even on a sunny day, the domestic interiors are basked in shadows and convey the persistence of the war in the newly constructed middle-class community.

Bunker Hill figured prominently in many films noir, including *Criss Cross* (Robert Siodmak, 1949) and *Night has a Thousand Eyes* (John Farrow, 1948). It received one of its most idiosyncratic treatments in Joseph Losey's *M* (1951), a remake of Lang's Weimar German classic transposed to the streets of Bunker Hill. Mob vigilante activity and the rule of law are explored by the film, which was the director's last before leaving America during the blacklist period. The politics of its left-wing cast led to its being picketed and underscores the genre's non-conformity. The extent to which audiences received films noir as social critique remains a topic for further research (see Naremore 2008).

In *The Exiles* (Kent MacKenzie, 1961) a Native American community is the object of a neorealist-inspired exploration of everyday life and the urban environment on Bunker Hill. Losey and MacKenzie were among the few

directors to suggest that the neighborhood was not the exclusive preserve of criminals, but also included families and ordinary citizens, a position contrary to that of city officials and the *Los Angeles Times*, both of which agitated for renewal. Among the final films made on Bunker Hill was *Angels Flight* (Raymond Nasser and Ken Richard, 1965), in which the clichés of the alcoholic writer and the fallen woman unfold against the background of demolition cranes.

By the end of the 1950s, the film noir cycle had begun to show its age. Genre fatigue, the decline of the B movie in the wake of the 1948 Paramount Decree that required studios to sell off their movie theatres, and the changing face of downtown – increasingly a series of barren construction sites – each contributed to its decline. Another significant factor was competition from television police series such as *Dragnet*, broadcast from 1951 to 1959 and partially inspired by the police procedural *He Walked By Night* (Alfred Werker, 1949), famous for its concluding manhunt through the storm drain system beneath the city. In *Dragnet*, the inevitable triumph of law and order and the emotionless performance of Jack Webb as Sergeant Joe Friday cast Los Angeles as capital of conformism, domestic stability, and racial homogeneity during the Cold War period and spread its fame across global television screens.

Fears of radiation and the recently introduced threat of nuclear annihilation animate *Kiss Me Deadly* (Robert Aldrich, 1956), an adaptation of a Mickey Spillane novel by truck driver turned proletarian novelist A. I. Bezzerides. Paranoia and attack by external forces manifested itself in the science fiction genre, most notably in *Them!* (Gordon Douglas, 1954) that presented an assault by giant ants memorably lodged in the storm drains under the Los Angeles River. More ambiguously, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956) depicted the transformation of ordinary citizens into mindless pod people, a politically ambiguous allegory that avoids downtown in favor of the suburban periphery of Los Angeles. Whether such films produced at the height of the Cold War offered genuine criticism of American xenophobia and defensiveness or merely uncritically recirculated such attitudes remains widely debated and is a likely line for further inquiry (Shaw 2007).

During the 1950s the quintessential representation of Los Angeles was as an enclave of suburban villages, perhaps most memorably captured in *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955). Ray cast James Dean in his most famous role and popularized the Griffith Park Observatory in the iconography of LA cinema, among the few urban icons – the others include the Hollywood sign, City Hall, Grauman's Chinese Theater, and Venice Beach – that consistently appear in the film to mark the city. An intimation of violence lurking beneath the surface of daily life was similarly evident in *The Killer is Loose* (Budd Boetticher, 1956), in which a convicted criminal breaks out of prison to avenge the death of his wife at the hands of the police.

A citywide manhunt is broadcast on television, here presented as the medium that knits together the city's disparate spaces. By the 1950s, television was becoming a key fulcrum of the identity of the region, as local programming and news coverage began to compete with the products of the movie industry (Williams, forthcoming). The attempted rescue of Kathy Fiscus, a child trapped in a well, in San Marino on April 8, 1949, after 52 hours of live television news coverage by KTLA, is often considered the first media event and inspiration for Billy Wilder's later film *The Big Carnival.*[7]

Hollywood turned its lens upon itself in numerous films about the industry and its associated lifestyles, none more famous than Billy Wilder's 1949 *Sunset Boulevard*. Masterful performances by Gloria Swanson, William Holden, and Eric von Stroheim convey the faded glory of an earlier silent film culture while intimating the contemporary workers in the industry are narcissistic and self-destructive. Later contributions to the genre include *In a Lonely Place* (Nicholas Ray, 1950), the story of a writer falsely accused of murder, and *The Bad and the Beautiful* (Vincente Minnelli, 1952), a tale of a scheming producer. They confirm a vision of an industry marked by betrayal and narcissism frequently out of touch with reality themes Budd Schulberg introduced in his novel *What Makes Sammy Run?* (1941).

The emergence of the French New Wave at the end of the 1950s brought the visual fluidity and narrative ambiguity of European art cinema to representations of Los Angeles in the 1960s after several of its exponents traveled there to make films. Italian director Franco Rosi's *Smog* (1962) chronicles a day in the life of a lawyer stranded in the city during a long connection between flights. His encounters with fellow countrymen, seductive women, and ambitious social climbers confirm the stereotype of the city as a bastion of superficiality, an idea further suggested through the film's use of Pierre Koenig's notoriously transparent and poised Case Study House # 22 (Stahl House) as a location. Here modernism becomes the backdrop for middle-class alienation, a rather different message from the optimism communicated by Charles and Rae Eames in the architecture, furniture designs, and films they realized throughout the 1950s.[8] Whether the genre of tragedy with its sense of a predetermined universe and limited possibilities of human action has any place in Los Angeles cinema, typically associated with refashioning the self and forms of mobility, remains an open question, although Rosi's film and those by fellow European filmmakers made during the 1960s suggest exceptions which confirm the rule.

In *Zabriskie Point* (1967), Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni's vision of college student revolts, commercial signage, and surveillance in a corporate office suggests a world in which communication and human authenticity are at a premium. Yet an appreciative view of the art deco style Richfield Oil Company Building (Stiles O. Clement, 1929), which would be demolished in 1969, confirms Antonioni's prescient recognition of the precarious status of modern architecture in the city and its coexistence

alongside dilapidated spaces, frequently shabby vernacular buildings, and pockets of wealth and poverty. His gaze upon this earlier moment in the Los Angeles built environment appears a quasi-archeological impulse and in seeking to reclaim an earlier stratum of its history suggests a view of the metropolis considerably more nuanced than his depiction of its streets and mass culture might initially suggest.

French director Jacques Demy took on Los Angeles in his 1969 *Model Shop*, in which Anouk Aimee and Gary Lockhart pursue romance against a background of Venice oil wells and a pornographic modeling studio. Improbably cast and scripted, it may well be the most European film ever made about the city, eschewing action in favor of a slow and meditative study of failed relationships and the passage of time. British John Boorman's *Point Blank* (1967) cast Lee Marvin and Angie Dickinson in a tale of retribution narrated from the perspective of a dead man. Its riotous colors, pop art references, gaudy suburban homes, fast food restaurants, and epic shoot out in the dry bed of the Los Angeles River became widely imitated standard tropes for filming the city. Its elliptical narrative point of view and skewed temporal continuity reinforced a vision of the inscrutability of power relations within it. No one seems to be in charge of the Multiplex corporation, nor are its characters seemingly in control of their own destinies.

Directors such as Antonioni and Boorman pioneered a novel use of polychromy in films about Los Angeles. Color utilized in the commercial imagery of billboards and the visual palette of 1960s consumer society, the furniture designs of Charles and Ray Eames and the sheen of automobiles and surf boards that so fascinated Reyner Banham, bestowed the city with a sense of its own visual culture. These films evoked comparisons with contemporaneous paintings by Ed Ruscha and David Hockney and portended later films such as *Heat* (Michael Mann, 1995) (Whiting 2006). Here one can discern the presence of the global in the local, for the discussion of capital flows and business society in these films allegorically suggests the arrival of Los Angeles as a center of lifestyle and design offered up to the world as luxurious and forward looking.

American filmmakers also responded to the European art film. Peter Bogdanovich made *Targets* (1968) for low-budget producer Roger Corman with Boris Karloff as an aging movie star. A self-reflexive tale of movie making, it was also an early suggestion of the pathology of middle-class families in the San Fernando Valley. The film ended with a wild shooting spree by a serial killer at a Reseda drive-in theatre. At once a tribute to Karloff and the B movie, the film nostalgically captures the institution of the drive-in (which originated with The Pico in 1934), on the cusp of its disappearance.

Unquestionably, the most dramatic comeback of a long-invisible Los Angeles neighborhood goes to South Central in Melvin Van Peebles's *Sweet Sweetback Badasses's Song* (1971). Filmed with an often hallucinatory array of techniques that reveal the influence of American underground film, the

movie begins in a brothel and follows its protagonist, played by the filmmaker, a man pursued by the police for attacking a cop who assaulted a defenseless suspect. Van Peebles presented a vision of Los Angeles as racially segregated yet marked by a sense of community and shared hatred of the police that had never before been seen in film. Self-financed and promoted as a sex film in order to circumvent union labor restrictions, the movie included a wailing soundtrack by fledgling band Earth, Wind, and Fire. (Remarkably, Van Peeble's son Mario, who appeared in the film, directed a moving account of its production, *Bad Ass* (2003), that insightfully conveys the cultural divisions of 1960s Los Angeles and the tenacity of his father in getting his film made.)

Although there could be little doubt by the 1970s that the first wave of film noir had subsided, its influence was still evident. Indeed, a key tendency during that era was the emergence of a neo-noir aesthetic marked by a profound idealization of the 1930s *á la* Chandler. Whether understood as a cinematic manifestation of the postmodern "nostalgia film" that cultural theorist Fredric Jameson discerned as a compensation for a waning connection to history, or a more benign attempt to recover and celebrate the city's past, a fascination with noir style preoccupied director Robert Altman, whose adaptation of Chandler's *The Long Goodbye* (1973) catalyzed the trend (see Jameson 1991). Altman cast Elliot Gould as a rough-shaven and gullible Philip Marlowe. The director's relentlessly ironic and often hilarious noir reenactment of noir conventions displays a bitter recognition of corruption and amorality, perfectly timed for the age of post-Watergate morality. Filmed in the Malibu Colony, Westwood Village, and Hollywood, Altman romanticizes the city without flinching from its vulgarity. Marlowe has lost the synoptic overview once the privilege of the all-knowing private eye, and the film emphasizes a disconnection between the city's inhabitants and neighborhoods. John Cassavetes employed a similar mode toward like conclusions in *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (1976), in which the director plays a deluded gambler fleeing the American and Chinese mafia.

If *The Long Goodbye* made no attempt to conceal or embellish its setting in contemporary Los Angeles (revealingly, the film had no art director), the opposite was true of *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974), in which the visual traces of the 1930s, from automobile styles, to interiors, to neighborhoods such as Echo Park, are meticulously recreated and any visual hint of the 1970s rigorously excluded. Focusing on the politics of water rights, urban development, and incest, it took considerable historical liberties with the actual history of the Owens Valley water diversion and the development of Los Angeles, yet audiences remain convinced of its veracity.[9] Urban legend and conspiracy film in one, its vision of power and ecology in the Los Angeles region has been criticized by historians (Erie 2006). More recently, the author of its screenplay, Robert Towne, directed *Ask the Dust* (2006),

an adaptation of the classic Bunker Hill novel by John Fante that ironically recreated 1930s Los Angeles in a studio environment in South Africa.

Chinatown exemplified the possibilities and limits of stylization, although many of the most memorable Los Angeles films of the 1970s gravitated toward more spontaneous documentary modes. Trading on the example of Tom Wolfe's new journalism, *Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles* (Julian Cooper, 1972) wittily explored the history of urban infrastructure and architecture. In its depiction of the Gamble House (Greene and Greene, 1908), the proliferation of gated communities, the underdevelopment of downtown, and driving the freeways as a defining spatial experience, the film illustrates many of the arguments in Banham's book through its investigations of the Eames House and a typical California bungalow (Dimendberg 2006). If a disregard for the ecological consequences of automobility and a failure to acknowledge ethnic diversity render the film dated, it does recall the dangers of too closely identifying Los Angeles with the latest stage of modern life and vice versa.

A rejection of the theatricality and expressionism of noir fueled a tendency toward low-budget documentary that reached its apotheosis in two films of 1977. Director Bruce Schwartz presented the life of a native American ex-con in *In MacArthur Park*. Non-glamorous locations and non-professional acting gave the film a brutal realist flavor. The banality of everyday life in a single-residency hotel has seldom been presented more effectively, ditto the suggestion that MacArthur Park comprises a social and urban space discrete from the more familiar landmarks of Downtown and the Westside.

More polished and cinematically distinguished, Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep* regularly elicits comparisons with films by Italian neo-realist directors Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio De Sica. Set in South Central Los Angeles in a milieu of grinding poverty, it follows the uneventful life of a slaughterhouse worker and his family. If *Sweet Sweetback* filmed the ghetto with a jumpy handheld camera and reveled in violence, sex, and shrill neon signage, Burnett by contrast opted for austere black and white cinematography, minimal camera movement, and carefully composed camera angles. Few Los Angeles films have more effectively captured the temporality of life in this district – its rhythms and disappointments, and sense of isolation from the surrounding city. A more thorough repudiation of sensational approaches to representing Los Angeles is difficult to imagine, and *Killer of Sheep* remains an orientation point for subsequent filmmakers.[10]

Yet in 1977, the same year that Burnett's landmark film attempted to impart weight and density to the city, a comedy appeared that emphasized its superficiality. Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* and later Mick Jackson and Steve Martin's *L.A. Story* (1991), each featured their director protagonists and presented middle-class characters pursuing neurotic behavior. Both reified popular stereotypes of Los Angeles as the locus of unrestrained hedonism,

conspicuous consumption, and narcissistic physical and psychological self-improvement. More remarkable than their satire of the indulgent behavior of the white urban middle class is the fact that it took so long to emerge in postwar Los Angeles. Perhaps this is due to the fact that at the end of the 1970s foreign investment and the growth of a downtown financial sector made it apparent Los Angeles had become a global metropolis and a node in an international economy,

Ethnic and cultural diversity was conveyed powerfully in British director Ridley Scott's 1982 science fiction film *Blade Runner*. Dense crowds, a culturally hybrid population, and kinetic advertising in English and Japanese suggest a blending of Los Angeles with Tokyo. The film's dark and rainy cityscape is borrowed from film noir, as is the choice of architecture, notably the Bradbury Building (George Wyman, 1893) and the Ennis Brown house (Frank Lloyd Wright, 1924). Harrison Ford plays a bounty hunter in search of escaped mutant robots, a "blade runner" in the film's parlance. Based on a story by the paranoia-tinged science-fiction writer Philip K. Dick, it presents a world in which the boundaries between human and cyborg, past and present, and utopia and dystopia have become permeable.

Arguably the definitive cinematic manifestation of postmodernist pastiche, the film's narrative ambiguity (alternately construed as sloppy filmmaking or a deliberate rejection of closure) has spawned a major industry of academic commentary, not least of all thanks to the multiple versions (at last count, five) in which it has been released. No Los Angeles film has more vigorously aestheticized the city as heaven and hell simultaneously, a visually arresting 24-hour multicultural bazaar in which criminality, insidious technology, pollution, and personal isolation have become norms. The virtual elimination of nature from the film suggests environmental crisis as one of its underlying anxieties (a reading confirmed by the pastoral conclusion of its first version).

Blade Runner posited the once unthinkable notion that Los Angeles is a first world and third world city rolled into one, in which the delirious "culture of congestion" (posited by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas (1978) to explain Manhattan's appeal) finds expression in the street life and energy of downtown. Few attempts to imagine the future of urban density in Los Angeles manage to escape its legacy. The film remains a notable instance of how a wholly cinematic street life, in this case designed by Syd Mead, a former stylist for the Ford Motor Company, came to influence thinking about the city's future. That said, by the twenty-first century that vision appears less relevant given the challenges of providing mass transportation, housing, and green space in the metropolis.

That same year, another European filmmaker, German Wim Wenders, made *The State of Things* (1982). Filmed in harsh black and white and set in a disenchanted present, its narrative of a hapless film director who becomes embroiled with organized crime features Roger Corman and

Samuel Fuller. A coda to film noir, the film's protagonist laments the impossibility of making feature-length films in an age when film studios believe that audiences demand color. If this complaint was in reality a shibboleth, Wenders nonetheless possessed a remarkably keen eye for visual details, a shopping cart marooned at a freeway entrance or Tiny Naylor's drive-in restaurant on Sunset Boulevard (subsequently demolished), that bestowed the film with the character of a mournful lament for the disappearance of the late modern urban fabric of the city.

Commencing in the early 1980s, race relations, particularly the interaction of African Americans and whites, became a dominant concern of feature-length films set in Los Angeles. If earlier films portrayed life in separate communities with an occasional mediating character or connecting incident, more recet films focused on institutionalized racism embedded in daily social exchanges and professional settings. Their filmmakers sought to articulate a sense of racially coded neighborhoods, systematic discrimination in the criminal justice system, and socially charged encounters in public space. Whether presented through film noir, the crime genre, melodrama, comedy, or the disaster film, the underlying impetus of such films was to highlight Los Angeles as a city whose inhabitants negotiate a labyrinth of race in their ordinary lives.

One modality involved the criminal activity of gangs and the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) response as represented in *Colors* (Dennis Hopper, 1982), a star vehicle for Robert Duvall and Sean Penn. The actors play a cop team imbued with the competitive rivalry of father and son. The film's fluid aerial cinematography and car chases, including a spectacular crash at the Watts Tower, inaugurated a new realism at the service of capturing a volatile social reality, the spread of gang activity and warfare from South Central to Venice. Yet the emphasis upon violent confrontation and its often superficial African American and female characters relied on conventions that rendered its realism suspect.

Beverly Hills Cop (Martin Brest, 1984) exemplified the comedy variant of the race film, with Eddie Murphy portraying a charismatic detective transferred from desolate Detroit to Los Angeles privilege. Murphy's role established a pattern of casting strong African American leads in films that otherwise might be seen as social melodramas. No actor better exemplified this trend than Denzel Washington, cast as detective E. Z. Rawlins in the neo-noir *Devil in a Blue Dress* (Carl Franklin, 1995). Based on mystery writer Walter Mosley's novel and directed by an African American, the film vividly recreates the jazz clubs of Central Avenue and middle-class prosperity in the neighborhood in the years following World War II. While undoubtedly a romanticized view, *Devil* remains one of the few attempts to represent Los Angeles' black community as culturally and economically vibrant at a time when hip white Angelenos would drive from the westside to hear Eric Dolphy and Charles Mingus. In *Training Day* (Antoine Fuqua, 2001),

Washington gave a definitive performance as a corrupt police officer whose rapacity and outbursts of violence eventually lead the residents of a gang-dominated neighborhood to turn on him.

The social melodramatic variant of the race relations film is exemplified well by *Crash* (Paul Haggis, 2004). Here an interlinked group of characters, including a cop and a politician, grapple with racist attitudes. When it received the Academy Award for best picture that year it brought more attention to Los Angeles than any cultural work since the publication of *City of Quartz*. Numerous disaster films in which the city is shown facing impending destruction also raised the issue of race relations, from *Miracle Mile* (Steve De Jarnatt, 1988), in which Los Angeles confronts nuclear annihilation, to *Volcano* (Mick Jackson, 1997), in which lava flows threaten its population. They suggest a return to the anxieties of the 1950s, with the twist that racial conflicts and antagonisms are shown to be as destructive as external attacks.

By the early 1990s, a new strand of Los Angeles cinema emerged. It suggested the sheer randomness of urban life, the impossibility of plotting or predicting events, and the corresponding difficulty of drawing moral conclusions. *Grand Canyon* (Lawrence Kasdan, 1991) presents car breakdowns and violent assaults as the ordinary background of the middle-class search for meaning. Robert Altman's *Shortcuts* (1993) weds epic length with everyday banality, offering a cross-section of Los Angeles social types, from swimming pool maintenance men, to middle-class mothers who work at phone sex, to sport fishermen who happen upon a female corpse. *Falling Down* (Joel Schumacher, 1993) presents an angry white male, normal but for the loss of his job and the break-up of his marriage, confronting a dysfunctional urban environment. In *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino, 1994) clichés of popular culture and music become the background for seemingly arbitrary and inevitably violent outcomes. In *Magnolia* (Paul Thomas Anderson, 1999) being in the right place at a specific moment can lead to a bag of hold-up loot landing in one's lap or giant frogs falling from the sky onto the hood of one's car. Long neglected as a topos of Los Angeles cinema, the San Fernando Valley here appears as an incubator of dysfunctional middle-class families, as it did in Anderson's film about the pornographic film industry, *Boogie Nights* (1997). Race informs *Collateral* (Michael Mann, 2004), in which a hapless cab driver (Jamie Foxx) picks up the passenger from hell at the airport, a hired contract killer (Tom Cruise) on the way to work. If Los Angeles is still a city of opportunity, these films suggest that the links between birthright, social status, labor, and life prospects can no longer be taken for granted. On the contrary, life there has become subjected to increasing disruption from an urban system driven by chaos as much as by order.

Hollywood remained an enduring topic for filmic scrutiny in the 1990s. *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* (Paul Bartel, 1989) presents

the foibles of the movie colony bourgeoisie. In *The Player* (Robert Altman, 1992) a self-reflexive and wickedly cynical vision of the studio movie-making process unfolds. *Ivans xtc.* (Bernard Rose, 2000) adapts Tolstoy's short story "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" to tell the tale of a Hollywood agent diagnosed with cancer and the intrusion of mortality in a world dominated by false values. *Mulholland Drive* (David Lynch, 2001) couples a victim of amnesia, an aspiring actress, and mob control of the entertainment industry with an inscrutable web of dreams, nightmares, and fantasies of sex and death. In all of these films motion picture production and those who work within it are pathologized. Any sense that this labor is comparable to that of other professions or that those who perform it might lead normal lives is curiously absent.

A notable inquiry into histories of the city's cinematic representations is *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (Thom Anderson, 2003), a filmic essay compiled from earlier Los Angeles cinema. Following a Hegelian trajectory, Anderson depicts a city gradually coming to consciousness of itself. He explores representation across genres and time periods and suggests how these typically occlude any sense of what life as a resident of the city might actually mean. In part a database and an archeology of forgotten cinema, *Los Angeles Plays Itself* is Anderson's most systematic attempt to focus on a body of films that foster a sense of Los Angeles identity, a true imagined community. Ranging from low-budget genre movies to high-budget star vehicles, the director uncovers a daunting number of little-known films. Mackenzie, Burnett, and Billy Woodberry, three African American directors who work in a neorealist mode, emerge as the heroes of this story.

Documentarians continue to develop and to explore the city's history and its people. *Silver Lake: The View from Here* (Peter Friedman and Tom Jos, 1993) presents the unromanticized life of a gay couple dying of AIDS. *Chavez Ravine: A Los Angeles Story* (Jordan Mechner, 2003) takes its cues from Don Normark's photographs and extensive interviews with former residents of a Chicano neighborhood razed in 1959 to construct Dodger Stadium. *Gala* (2004) filmed the opening night of the Walt Disney Concert Hall as a comment on the divorce of the building's predominantly affluent white Westside audience from its downtown location. *The Architect, the Ants, and the Bees* (Billy Woodberry, 2004) chronicles the hall's construction and the multiracial and mixed gender composition of its workforce. Gehry's building makes its most malevolent appearance in *After the Sunset* (Brett Ratner, 2004) as the locus for a dramatic heist, its reflectivity a visual synonym for the duplicity normally absent from the televised automobile commercials for which it has become a favorite background.

Chicano films constitute the most sustained attempt to investigate the experience of a growing Mexican American population of Los Angeles (Fregoso 1993; Noriega 2000). *Born in East LA* (Cheech Marin, 1987) is

a tale of mistaken identity and false repatriation to Mexico. *Mi vida loca* (Allison Anders, 1993) deals with female members of Chicana gangs and is notable for its location filming in Echo Park and attempt to narrate the story from a female point of view. *Quinceañera* (Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland, 2006) considered the life of a pregnant teen in Echo Park. In all of these films the breakdown of older racial stereotypes and abandonment of noir framework is evident, as is an emphasis on interaction within groups. If sometimes strained by lackluster acting and scripts, their attention to the fabric of daily life and refusal to romanticize Los Angeles or view it nostalgically suggests a novel approach to the city's cinematic representation grounded in a willingness to consider previously ignored ethnic milieux and present characters marked by their ordinariness and absence of criminal traits.

Digital technology has already transformed the post-production sound and image editing phases of filmmaking. There is reason to believe it will eventually transform the channels of distribution, making content easily available over the Internet and leading to new genres and narrative forms. Three recent projects provide some indication of the direction these developments might take. *Bleeding through Layers of Los Angeles* (Norman Klein, 2003), an interactive DVD ROM, traces an imaginary character, Molly, as it presents sites of cinematic memory in the city. Its non-linear hypertext presentation of texts and images may well approximate the actual experience of navigating a city. Most intriguingly, it presents past and present street scenes and allows interactive viewers to alternate and dissolve between these, and visualize the passage of time in the city with powerful effect. Produced by the Labyrinth Project (University of Southern California), *Bleeding* suggests how an academic institution can facilitate the production of local-based media content through a new model different in key respects from that of traditional independent film production or large studios.

Veteran experimental filmmaker Pat O'Neill set *The Decay of Fiction* (2001) in the Ambassador Hotel, a locus of celebrity culture and the site of Robert Kennedy's assassination. The film presents elaborate digital layers of characters and voice-over narration from earlier film noir and in effect links avant-garde traditions with an homage to Hollywood studio film. *Los Angeles Now* (Philip Rodriguez, 2004), a documentary produced for Public Broadcasting Service, digitally alters the cityscape as it speculates on the future of community formation and solidarity. These digital projects hinge upon the logic of the palimpsest and the suggestion that the built environment of Los Angeles may be approached quasi-archeologically, as a series of sedimented layers. Although that insight is not novel, portraying it visually has become easier due to new digital technologies. How and to what extent such experiments will transform perception and subsequent investigations is a promising line of inquiry for future research.

As new populations arrive in Los Angeles and the city increases in density, future generations of media-makers will find their work cut out for them. Environmental degradation, declining public services, homelessness, gentrification, and ever worsening traffic congestion are poised to create unlikely social and political alliances from which a compelling cinema might well derive inspiration. Whether this will involve the posting of films on Internet sites such as You Tube, promote lower-cost exhibition through satellite transmissions, or encourage a revival of neighborhood movie theatres, remains to be seen. Given the number and the diversity of people in Los Angeles, the city has been poorly served by filmmakers. Few have thought deeply about what it might mean to represent the city in ways that defy received conventions. In the twenty-first century the invention of new cinematic forms adequate to the complexity of Los Angeles is a vital task if audacious and hopeful futures are to be imagined for it.

Notes

1 On the role of photography in the construction of an early cultural identity in the city, see Watts (2004).
2 On the metropolis and European modernist aesthetics, see Hirsh (2004).
3 This idea is explored in *Hardcore* (Paul Schrader, 1979), in which a young woman travels from Michigan and becomes entangled in the Hollywood sex industry.
4 For an astute analysis, see Jameson (1983).
5 The most comprehensive treatment of this history is Bahr (2007).
6 See Ruhr (1982). For a more general discussion of Los Angeles film noir, see Dimendberg (2004).
7 See www.ktla.trb.com/extras/ktla/60th/news-kathyfiscus.html for a text and a video clip.
8 Although the films made by the Eames did not explore the urban space of Los Angeles, they did recast the nature of cinematic modernism. See Kirkham (1995).
9 The most concise discussion of the film and its relation to California history is Walton (2001).
10 For a useful statement of Burnett's aesthetic and the near absence of plot in *Killer of Sheep*, see Thompson (1997).

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Chapter Twenty

Contemporary Voice: Looking for God in the City of Angels

Matt Gainer

It is a warm Saturday night in the San Fernando Valley, and I'm standing outside a converted storefront church, waiting for someone to look up from prayer and let me in. I'm here to observe, to listen, to try to understand how and to whom the almighty reveals itself.

The tiny sanctuary of *Ministerios Linaje Escogido* doesn't have a functioning air conditioner or windows that open, and temperatures today peaked at over 100 degrees. The main room, balmy but tolerable, is cooled by six or seven fans blowing in all directions. Several dozen people have filled the few available seats; an adjacent daycare room hosts ten or twelve children. Services here are egalitarian – people take turns reading and singing, crying and ministering. There is intimacy in this space, and passion. The rhythms of worship are distinctly beautiful, ebbing and flowing between a meditative slumber and an urgency that demands attention while inspiring participation, which comes mostly in the form of clapping and verbal bursts of joy or sorrow – it's hard to tell which.

A man near the front of the room walks to an acrylic pulpit and begins to speak. As he ministers through a crackly microphone, the congregation responds. Babies cry, a woman chants quietly, a band plays in the background. "Gloria Dios" is called and repeated, and the congregation dissolves into clusters of small groups that pray, cry, and find release. Some pray with their hands in the air, while others kneel and face back toward their pews. A group of young girls runs up and down the center isle, laughing as if to welcome the benediction. As the sanctuary slowly empties, I make my way forward to talk with Pastor Marvin Lopez. I tell him I am working on a project about religion in and around Los Angeles, and that I would like to begin by photographing people in his church as they talk to God.

"Every photograph is a certificate of presence," wrote Roland Barthes, but "the power of authentication exceeds the power of representation"

(1981: 87–9). This tension is particularly apparent in photographs of living religion. Think of the plethora of photos showing endless lines of pilgrims circling the Kaaba at Makka al-Mukarrama; of rays of light dappling congregants at one of Italy's Duomos; of a white robe on a half-submerged body in a small river in the American South. We embrace pictures of rituals, holy places, and the faithful as reasonable representations of faith itself. Yet at best, photography can only name an act of faith as having happened, and suggest the kind of solace, intimacy, and conviction that religious experience can provide. What is missing in religion pictures is the sublime itself – at least in tangible form. In order to represent both sides of the act of faith, a photographer must embrace tertiary representations while subjectively navigating between what is and what cannot be seen. This seeable absence weighed heavily during my foray through the religious landscape of the City of Angels.

Among the subjective curiosities that guided my path were the number of transformed spaces being used for worship throughout Los Angeles – warehouses, movie theatres, suburban homes, small storefronts – spaces that suggested an urgency to find room to congregate. Of particular interest were groups who seemed to anchor the communities around them by providing focal points for traditional culture, or by serving needs that were not being otherwise met. Once I selected where to photograph, the thing I focused on most was the *way* worship happened and how people made what seemed to be individual connections with God.

With 220 identified languages and residents from more than 140 countries, Los Angeles is home to more religious diversity than any other city in the world (Orr et al. 1994). Documenting the full range of faith expressed here seems like an unlikely proposition, and the groups I focused on represent only a small fraction of religious traditions that have sprung roots in the city.

The numbers of adherents to different faiths in and around Los Angeles vary drastically depending on their source, and unfortunately census data doesn't always offer the level of granularity one might hope for. My primary guide for understanding the overall religious makeup of the city has been *Politics of the Spirit: Religion and Multiethnicity in Los Angeles* (Orr et al. 1994), followed by the 2000 census and finally church records and interviews.

The largest religious group in Los Angeles is Roman Catholicism, and currently has close to 300 parishes with more than three and a half million members. Catholic iconography is ubiquitous here – especially images of the Virgin of Guadalupe which can be found on everything from barbershop walls to bodegas.

The next largest group is Protestant Christians. Protestant worship services can be found in dozens of languages, and are perhaps LA's best local version of "roll your own" religiosity – a highly personalized form of worship

that employs everything from hip-hop dance crews to traditional missionary work – and takes place in open fields, parking lots, store fronts, movie theatres, schools, homes, stadiums, and churches.

Greater Los Angeles is currently home to the third largest Jewish population in the United States. The community has been growing since the first informal services were held in 1854 – with recent estimates at approximately 600,000.

The Muslim community in Los Angeles is also thriving. With Sunni, Shia, and Western converts worshiping together and cultivating community it is both inclusive and broad. Current estimates put Islam's growing population in Los Angeles at more than 100,000 adherents.

Buddhist services in LA are held in at least a half-dozen languages, and represent strains of Buddhism from across Asia and the West. Hinduism also plays a significant role in the religious life of the city, along with some lesser known faiths such as Cao Đài, Baha'i, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, and others (CRCC).

Plate 20.1 Los Angeles Interfaith Network.

Plate 20.2 Universal Cao Dai Temple.

Plate 20.3 Beth Chayim Chadashim.

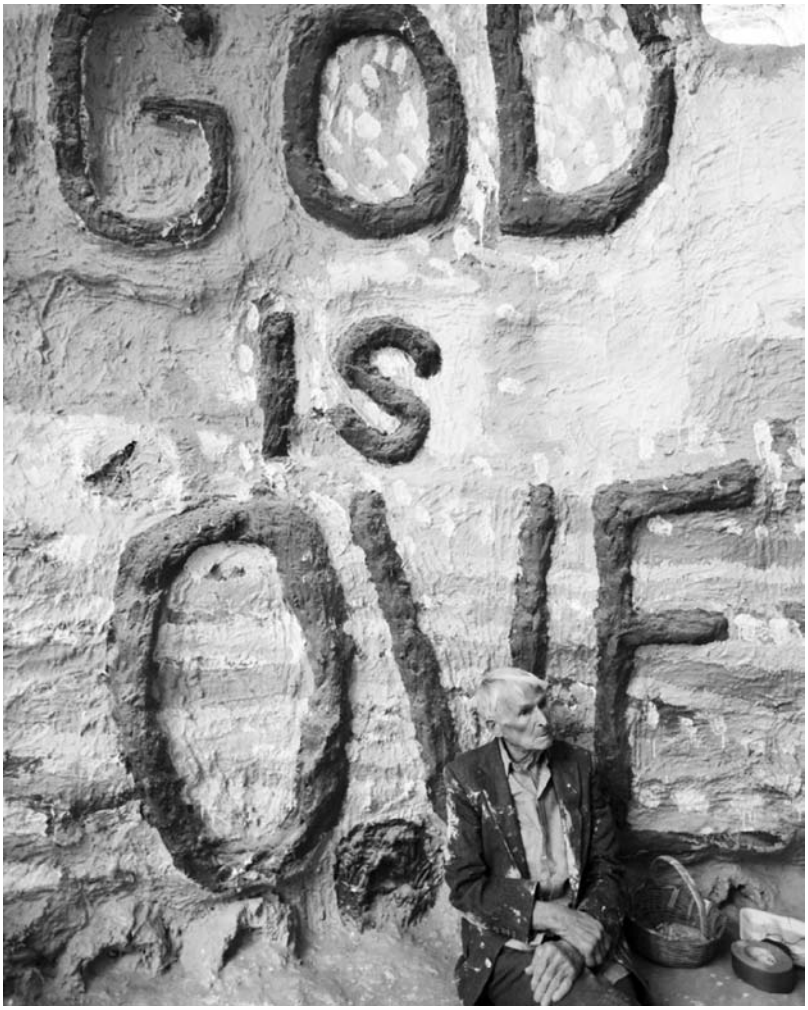

Plate 20.4 Salvation Mountain.

Plate 20.5 Parroquia San Judas Tadeo.

Plate 20.6 Radha Krishna Mandir.

Plate 20.7 Islamic Center of Southern California.

Plate 20.8 Ministerios Nuevo Vivir.

Plate 20.9 Victory Baptist Church.

Plate 20.10 Ministerios Linaje Escogido.

Plate 20.11 Virgin of the Rocks.

Plate 20.12 Los Angeles Baha'i Center.

Plate 20.13 Chapel of Peace Holiness Church of the Old and New Testament.

Plate 20.14 Masjid Bilal Islamic Center.

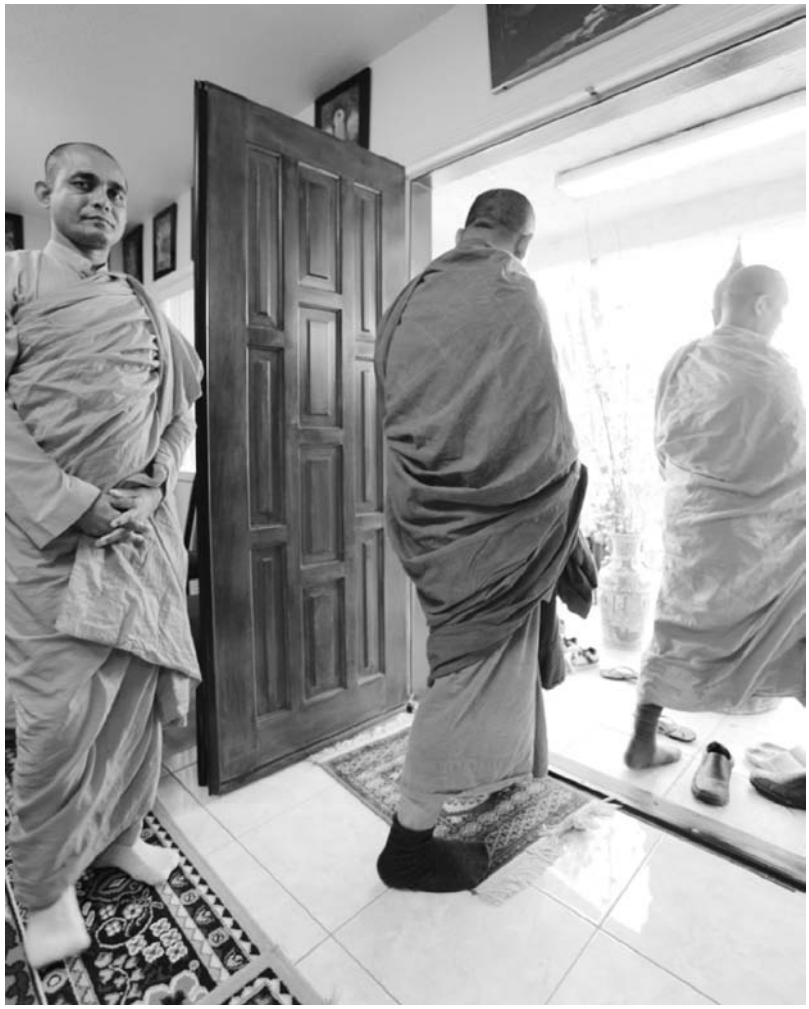

Plate 20.15 Chùa Pháp Vân Theravada Buddhist Corporation.

About the Groups Pictured

Los Angeles Interfaith Network (World Interfaith Network)

The roots of the Los Angeles branch of World Interfaith Network go back to the Festival of Faith held in Pomona in 1956 when approximately 2,000 participants from different religious groups gathered to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. That event was held in Bridges Auditorium in Claremont on April 22, 1956. California Governor Goodwin Knight and K. C. Wu, a former governor of Formosa, China were the keynote speakers. These days the Interfaith Network's gatherings typically draw 15–50 people, and are hosted by a diverse group of churches, temples, and religious centers.

The central ritual of an Interfaith celebration is the candle-lighting ceremony held at the beginning of each celebration. Typically, six candles representing different faiths and teachings are lit by participants, with a central candle symbolizing unity. Readings on different subjects are chosen from Dr. Mary Mann and Rev. Leland Stewart's *Science and Spirituality*. The closing chant is "Spirit Is One; Paths Are Many."

www.udcworld.org/
PO Box 661401
Los Angeles, CA 90066

Universal CaoDai Temple

CaoDai (also known as Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ, or Third Amnesty of the Great Way) is considered a "universal religion" and its practitioners believe that all religions are based on and come from the same God, or the Tao (and acknowledge that God can have different names or no name at all). Adherents of CaoDai use teachings from many religious traditions and they embrace the notion that while major religious traditions may have different ways of explaining concepts like love and justice, they are just different manifestations of the same truths. The philosophy and moral code of CaoDai are derived from Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and Confucianism. Worship services are most closely aligned with Buddhism, and texts from all major religions play a significant role in CaoDai's overall belief structure.

Worship ceremonies at the Universal Temple in Pomona are held on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar month. Special prayer sessions are organized on an ongoing basis, and are typically held to mark events such as weddings and deaths.

www.caodai.org
573 W. 10th Street
Pomona, CA 91766

Beth Chayim Chadashim

Judaism's roots in Los Angeles can be traced as far back as the 1850s when the first informal Sabbath services were held. Since then the community has grown to an estimated 600,000 people representing a broad spectrum of Jewish belief and culture. Beth Chayim Chadashim, founded in 1972, is reported to be the world's first Lesbian and Gay synagogue. With a congregation of approximately 190 families, BCC is an inclusive Jewish community of progressive individuals of all ages. People are welcome to attend Sabbath services on Friday nights, as well as services/celebrations on every Jewish holiday.

www.bcc-la.org
6000 West Pico Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90035

Salvation Mountain

In 1983 Leonard Knight migrated to southern California with a mission. He had spent the previous four years piecing together a 200-foot high hot-air balloon with Acts 2:38 on it, and brought it to a year-round squatter village called "Slab City" near the southeast shores of the Salton Sea. His plan was to launch his balloon, stay a week or two, and then move on. Unfortunately, the material he used ripped when he tried to fill the balloon, and after dozens of attempts to launch, Leonard decided that he would share his message by painting it on a hill instead. He has been painting steadily ever since. While Salvation Mountain is not connected to any formal church, it has become a site of regular religious pilgrimage for many Angelenos.

Parroquia San Judas Tadeo

Originally founded to meet the needs of a new immigrant community, this modest church in North Hollywood continues to structure itself around the particular needs of its low-income neighbors.

11855 Hart Street
North Hollywood, CA 91405

Radha Krishna Mandir

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which abolished national-origin quotas and set new guidelines for the number of visas available to immigrants from Eastern Hemisphere countries, permitted significant growth in the Indian community of greater Los Angeles. In the mid-1970s the Indian community in and around Artesia founded Radha Krishna Mandir, Los Angeles' first Hindu Temple. Since then, the congregation has grown to include 400–500 families.

The Mandir is open for worship seven days a week, and has two services each Sunday. There are bi-weekly (first and third Sunday) health fairs for community members.

12634 Pioneer Blvd
Norwalk, CA 90650

Islamic Center of Southern California

Historically, the Muslim community in Los Angeles was comprised primarily of immigrants. Many came as students in the 1960s and 1970s and then settled locally after graduating. These early immigrants defined the Islamic Center's vision – that home is not where one's grandparents are buried, but where one's grandchildren will be raised. The congregation at the Islamic Center of Southern California has grown to more than 5,000 families since its founding, and attendance for Friday prayers has become so large that many worshipers pray beneath tents behind the Center's main building.

The Islamic Center is open daily for all five prayers: Fajr, Dhuhr, 'Asr, Maghrib, and 'Isha. Friday prayers (luma' a) are led by prominent religious speakers, scholars, and community members – who provide sermons (Khtuba) and lead weekly prayer sessions. The community celebrates two annual holidays. Eid al Fitr is a celebration at the end of Ramadan, a lunar month of fasting during daylight hours. The second holiday, Eid al Adha, is a celebration of Prophet Abraham's deep faith and God's profound mercy; as demonstrated by Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son and God's command to sacrifice a ram instead.

www.islamctr.org
434 S. Vermont Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90020

Ministerios Nuevo Vivir

Congregants founded Nuevo Vivir in the late 1980s as a response to the increase of Spanish-speaking people in the San Fernando Valley, with a particular focus on serving the needs of migrants who had left Central American countries because of difficult political situations. The congregation initially formed as the Hispanic Department of the North Hollywood First Assemblies of God, and in 1990 transitioned to American Baptist Church. Ministerios Nuevo Vivir considers itself a "cell group" church. Its adherents believe the Church is a "body of Christ" and its members compose the cells. Cells are small groups of three to twelve people that meet weekly for evangelism, Bible study, fellowship, and friendship. Sunday service is a celebration of the coming together of all cells.

Youth services are held Friday Nights. Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of every month. There is a special service on Christmas Eve, and a midnight service on New Year's Eve. Services are broadcast on the Almavision Hispanic Network, a Christian Hispanic network that airs the program through DishNetwork, channel 9413, DirecTV, channel 31 (KVMD), Sky Angel, channel 145, open TV channel 57 and 69 (Van Nuys, CA), and online. Services are aired on Thursday at 10:30 am and Saturday 12:00 pm. Broadcasts are also shown weekly in several Latin American countries, including Guatemala, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Chile.

www.nuevovivir.com
7532 Lankershim Blvd.
North Hollywood, CA 91605

Victory Baptist Church

During the 1950s and 1960s, Victory Baptist was considered by many to be the Western headquarters of the civil rights movement. It was the first African American church in Los Angeles to broadcast its services on television, and it hosted a radio program for more than 20 years. Victory Baptist is also the home church of the Voices of Victory, an influential and charismatic choir who have played a central role in the development of gospel music in Los Angeles.

All major Christian holidays are celebrated. Sunday morning worship service is televised Sunday evening from 5:00–5:30 pm on Time Warner Cable and Channel 24 (Hollywood), and 9:00–9:30 pm on Channel 27

(Los Angeles & Inglewood). The service can also be heard at 9:00 pm on radio station KPRO (Riverside, San Bernardino, and Barstow, California).

www.victoryla.com
4802 South McKinley Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90011

Ministerios Linaje Escogido

Founded in February 2004, Ministerios Linaje Escogido is a "missionary church," its congregation focused on both religious fulfillment and civic engagement. The church is actively engaged with the disenfranchised, and outreach is a central part of its spiritual practice. Congregants forego services in order to prepare food each Sunday morning, and then deliver it to local homeless people and drug addicts.

13200 Sherman Way
North Hollywood CA, 91605

Virgin of the Rocks

On the 13th of every month, Maria Paula Acuña goes to a site in the Mojave Desert where she sees and talks with the Virgin Mary. Hundreds of witnesses join her on a monthly pilgrimage, the majority of whom have come from Los Angeles. They follow Maria Paula to a makeshift sanctuary, marked by a small wooden fence, plastic flags, and a plywood shrine, where she will kneel to see the Virgin. Only the visionary can see the Mother of Jesus, and while Maria Paula is in conversation with the Virgin, witnesses take photographs of the sun. They hope to catch on film what their naked eyes cannot bring into focus: visible proof of the Virgin's presence.

Los Angeles Baha'i Center

The Baha'i faith began in the mid-nineteenth century in Persia, but its official introduction to America occurred at the Parliament of World Religions held in Chicago in 1893. By the early 1900s, Baha'is had arrived in Los Angeles. The first American Baha'i, Thornton Chase, died in 1912 and was buried at the Inglewood Cemetery. The Los Angeles Baha'i has 2,300 members, the largest community in North America.

Baha'is believe that Divine Revelation is not final but continuing, that all of the world's religions come from the same source, and that while social teachings may differ from one religion to the next, the spiritual lessons are the same. Adherents believe that social problems require spiritual solutions, and that personal spiritual transformations must occur if societal problems are to be solved.

There are very few rituals or rites in the Baha'i faith. The public is welcome to attend any of the Baha'i holidays. One of the most popular is Naw Ruz, or New Day, which is the first day of Spring (coinciding with the vernal equinox) and is the first day of the Baha'i year.

www.labc.org
5755 Rodeo Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90016

Chapel of Peace Holiness Church of the Old and New Testament

Originally an affiliate of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas (headquartered in Greenville, South Carolina), Chapel of Peace was founded by current Co-Pastors Ervin and Winnie Sue Smith after the couple migrated to Los Angeles from Spartanburg, South Carolina in the 1950s. Seeking to live out its motto "To Reach the Unreached, and to Love the Unloved," the church combines traditional Pentecostal teaching, singing, and preaching with a practical ministry addressing the realities of poverty, gangs, teen pregnancy, drug addiction, and hopelessness.

Members celebrate all major Christian holidays. They produce arts and worship celebrations throughout the year. Its annual Woman's Retreat, Women's Breakfast, Debutante Recognition, Black History Month Celebration, and Gospel Concert draw Angelinos from a cross-section of denominations.

5529 S Vermont Avenue,
Los Angeles, CA 90037

Masjid Bilal Islamic Center

The Masjid Bilal Islamic Center's roots in Los Angeles go back to 1956. It has been at its current location on South Central Avenue for 35 years. The Center's religious leader, Imam Abdul Karim Hassan, has been a proponent for education since his arrival in Los Angeles in the early 1970s. Along with being the spiritual home for more than 100 families, Bilal also operates a school, the Bilal Learning Center, that serves the surrounding community.

Bilal's day of congregation, prayer, and social gathering is every Friday at 1:00 pm. Two religious holidays are celebrated each year: Eid ul-Fitr (the minor Eid) and Eid al-Adha (the Greater Eid).

4016 S. Central Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90011

Chùa Pháp Vân Theravada Buddhist Corporation

An influx of refugees from Southeast Asia in the mid-1970s reshaped the religious landscape in and around greater Los Angeles. This particular branch of Vietnamese Theravada Buddhism began as a result of immigration in the wake of the Vietnam War. Chùa Pháp Vân has approximately 250 member families. It has been at its present location in a converted home since 1979.

Tết Nguyên Đán (the Vietnamese New Year) celebrations, held during the last week of January and first week of February, are based on the lunar calendar. Vesak (the birth, life, and passing of the Buddha) is held in late May and early June. Vu Lan, or Parents Day, is held in September. The Kathina Festival (where monks receive new robes) celebrates the end of the rainy season. Prior to the festival, monks go on retreat for 90 days – studying, chanting, meditating, and renewing their spirituality.

www.phapvan.org
850 W. Phillips Blvd
Pomona, CA 91766

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Part V

Landscapes and Place

Chapter Twenty-one

Situating Stories: What Has Been Said About Landscape and the Built Environment

Greg Hise

When conversation turns to Los Angeles' look and feel, its environment and built form, one expects impassioned debate. Jeremiads decrying sprawl, smog, and relentless growth, laments for landscapes and ecologies overrun by development, phantasmagoria of a city and region headed for inevitable collapse are standard fare in books, newspapers, films, and in talk at scholarly symposia and casual conversation. Critics point to greater Los Angeles – a metropolitan region comprised of five counties stretching from Santa Barbara to San Diego, from Pacific Palisades to Palm Springs – as the great what-not-to-do of twentieth-century city building (Fogelson 1967; Blake 1979; Davis 1998).

On the other hand are the many who claim Los Angeles has been and continues to be a bellwether for innovation in architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design. It has become an article of faith, for example, that southern California houses – whether highbrow, of the type associated with the Case Study program; middlebrow, say a craftsman bungalow or a ranch house; or lowbrow, such as the ubiquitous post-World War II tract – elide if not erase distinctions between nature and artifact, what is outside (a garden) and what is inside (shelter). Boosters note rightly that these residential types have been disseminated nationally and internationally and have set standards of desire and aspiration. Geographer Pierce Lewis posited the post-World War II suburban tract as distinctly southern Californian, the most recent type in a sequence of landscapes that has defined American society and culture following the New England village green and Main Street (McCoy 1960, 1977; Gebhard and Winter 1977; Lewis 1979).

Then there are those who extol incremental, piecemeal, or everyday urbanism, who delight in the unintended and the accidental, the novel, often surprising juxtaposition of activities, scales, structures, flora, building

materials, and people they associate with southern California. For Reyner Banham, Charles Moore, and like-minded contrarians, Los Angeles was and still is almost alright (Moore, Becker, and Campbell 1984; Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski 1999; Banham 2001).

Regardless of the breach between those who admire and those who condemn, advocates and naysayers share a belief that the city is exemplary; it may be an archetype (that is, unique) or a prototype (the first case of what will become universal), it might be the "best" or the "worst," but Los Angeles is certainly the "first" and the "most" (Ethington n.d.; Brenner 2003). Over time the relative weight of promotion (a better city in the making) and criticism (a city going to hell in a handbasket) has ebbed and flowed. Was Los Angeles a "paradisiacal garden" or a dusty backwater as nineteenth-century visitors and residents alternatively described the site and situation? Was it an American Mediterranean, "Our Italy" found, or was it a paradise soon defiled, an Eden lost? (Warner, Hayes, and Widney 1876; Starr 1990; Davis 1996). Is the contemporary city a multicultural metropolis, a cosmopolitan agglomeration of neighborhoods, or a poster for placeless sprawl and postmodern anomie? (Jameson 1984; Fulton et.al. 2001; *Crash* 2005; see also chapter 19, this volume). Or might Los Angeles be some amalgam of "sunshine and noir"? May perception and meaning allow for seeming oppositions to be held simultaneously?

Benjamin Taylor, who spent the summer of 1878 in California, looked out upon a city of contrasts when he passed through the Southern Pacific tunnel and into the San Fernando Valley. Outside the carriage window were dry fields, palm leaves as "gray as elephant's ears," and a landscape with a "disused air." Two paragraphs later Taylor answered a rhetorical query "where is Los Angeles" by describing a place where "ocean winds breath upon [a city] … where the flowers catch fire with beauty; among the orange groves; beside the olive trees … where the figs of Smyrna are turning; where the bananas of Honolulu are blossoming; where the chestnuts of Italy are dropping … in the midst of a garden of thirty-six square miles – there is LOS ANGELES."

When assessing the relationship between a city as material artifact, the textual, graphical, and additional documents that record its history, and the stories told to explain why and how people built the city they did, it is instructive to ask: How have certain ideas and particular knowledge become received wisdom? Why have scholars, pundits, and an interested public relied on particular themes, specific examples, and certain sources when interpreting landscape and the built environment in southern California? This overview is intended as a guide to the talk about natural and built environments and to the considerable and growing literatures devoted to city building in the region. Primary sources and interpretive texts speak repeatedly of ecology and environment, land as property, building types and style, and infrastructure and urban systems. Because these topics are

relevant elsewhere, their use here ought to facilitate studies that examine Los Angeles in comparison with other cities.

Nature's Bounty

Narratives of place often begin with an event that evokes distinction and is suggestive of future significance. Dutch traders presenting trinkets and beads to indigenous peoples in exchange for Manhattan Island and the subsequent rise of New York City as a great center for trade and finance is a familiar example. In Los Angeles the correlate is Fray Juan Crespi's August 2, 1769 diary entry, an official record for the de Portola expedition. Three hours' travel from the Rio Hondo brought this advance guard of Spain's colonial enterprise to

> another river with another very green lush valley [flowing] from the quite high mountains lying next by here. [The bed] is lined with large trees, sycamores, willows, cottonwoods, and very large live oaks [with] green bottomlands, looking from afar like nothing so much as large cornfields. A very lush pleasing spot in every respect. There are great amounts of brambles, a great deal of grapevines, and a great many rose bushes. To the southward there is a great extent of soil, all very green, so that really it can be said to be a most beautiful garden. [G]rand though the previous places have been, to my mind this spot can be given the preference in everything, in soil, water, and trees, for the purpose of becoming in time a very large plenteous mission of Our Lady of the Angels of La Porciuncula. (Quoted in Brown 2001: 337)

Crespi's favorable description of place – a lush, green garden of great extent – and his projective assessment of future greatness are analogous in Los Angeles' civic imaginary to William Penn's articles of incorporation for Philadelphia.

Antiquarian histories of southern California evoke nature's bounty as a principal explanatory factor. Myriad authors have typified the region as so fecund with possibility it could be coaxed into production by the slightest enterprise. Place promoters participated in growth coalitions to advertise the relative advantages and benefits that might accrue to those who moved to the region. These interests effectively sold the idea of the "Southland," a "land of sunshine" in order to attract people and capital. Their outsized claims have held an undue prominence in subsequent accounts of why a city grew at a site seemingly devoid of natural advantage (Starr 1990; Hise 1997; Loomis, Ohland, and Moule 2005). Paradoxically, a number of authors have viewed the environment as a cause for all manner of apocalypse. They have written on the ravage – or revenge – of fire, flood, and drought; they have portrayed Los Angeles at various points in history as an

Eden despoiled by the ruinous actions of those who sought to profit from place (West 1939; Pynchon 1966).

These narratives are essentialist. None is sufficient explanation for why a city, and most critical why a particular city, was built there. Those proclaiming boom and doom had a common need to explain southern California to an audience for whom much about the region was exotic, strange, perhaps aberrant. Its Spanish origins and Mexican past, its history of common lands and land grants in excess of 1,000 acres, its alternating dry and wet seasons with cycles of drought and flood, its immigrants from Asia and the East, marked Los Angeles as different from the cities, towns, and settlements most visitors knew. Strangeness, substituting *tierra firma* for *tierra incognito*, forced people to rethink assumed practices. Visitors from temperate zones often recorded what they saw and wrote to family and friends. Their experiences, along with those who stayed, remind later readers just how exotic southern California appeared (Wrobel 2002; Sackman 2005). For example, absent prior experience with seismic activity, Anglos and other newcomers understood the ground shifting beneath them as a reminder of nature's power; some associated this with the devil, others with the divine. Given the significance of earthquakes for determining what was built and for how buildings have been constructed, there is a relative dearth of interpretive, non-technical analysis of seismology and its implications for city building in southern California (Schrag 1998).

For those who wrote about, rendered, and increasingly photographed the environment, citrus and the groves of trees planted in enfilade represented what was exceptional and desirable about the region. In text and especially as image, the orange became a visual trope: the golden orbs juxtaposed against waxy green leaves during seasons when experience suggested nothing ought to be in bloom, the orchards covering the plains, hugging the hills, filling the landscape from foreground to snow-capped mountains beyond. A generation or more of scholarship has called attention to what was excluded from these views, how authors and visual artists made a fetish of the fruit while ignoring the capital and labor necessary for its production. Other sources such as reports of agricultural commissions, investigations into irrigation practices, legal cases over access to and control of water and land, and the technical or documentary drawings and photographs that accompany these documents speak of risk and reward rather than romance. Those with experience sought to explain the investment of time and resources, the specialized knowledge and craft, the perseverance and pluck required in order to transform a semi-arid landscape of grass and shrub into an ordered and predictably bountiful landscape. That the order captivating visitors and residents alike resulted from effort and enterprise, that growers applied agricultural science and hydrological engineering when creating a land of low-hanging fruit, did not deter people from seeing this as a landscape where nature had lavished its bounty in excess (Hartig 1995; Garcia 2001; Sackman 2005).

The conceit of citriculture and other exotics as indigenous to the region has shaped ideas about the past and the future. Passion for the orange during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to a more general reassessment of the four decades Alta California was a northern outpost of the Spanish colonies, a period people referred to then as the "Mission Era." Anglos came to view the padres who transplanted European foodstuffs to the frontier as the progenitors (or fathers) of local agriculture. In the mid-twentieth century, when population growth, preference, and policy combined to create a seemingly insatiable demand for single-family houses on 50-foot lots, when investors, land developers, and homebuilders sought to convert land that had been cultivated for citrus (and other crops) into tracts for housing, commerce, and associated uses, people who valued citriculture as a land use strove to retain this with limited success. It is an irony, rarely remarked upon, that both citriculture and tract housing are engineered landscapes. Those who fought to conserve the former spoke of it as natural, as if trees grew in carefully spaced rows, as if land had grooves within which water flowed. Those who denigrated the latter used photographs of houses built sequentially in tidy rows as a sign of mass culture and homogeneity (Blake 1979; Garnett 1982; Waldie 1996).

Reading the landscape and built environment literature one comes away with a distinct impression that rapid and significant change became the norm in the 1920s and that this condition has been characteristic from that time forward. The implication, often stated, is that change was gradual during the preceding one hundred and fifty years. The pre-contact and Spanish and Mexican eras have been understood to be a time when indigenous peoples and Californios made few and then only minor modifications on the land. Rather than a timeless past, archeology and primary sources document often dramatic change. In a retrospective "sketch" of Los Angeles County produced to celebrate the US centennial, J. J. Warner, Benjamin Hayes, and Joseph Widney recount the aftermath of a flood event in 1825. Californios who experienced both that episode and the floods of the 1880s (the wettest decade since records have been kept) believed the former far exceeded the magnitude of the latter (Hise and Deverell 2000; Deverell and Hise 2005). Warner and his co-authors write that up to 1825,

> a large portion of the country, from the central part of the city to the tide water of the sea, through and over which the Los Angeles River now finds its way to the ocean, was largely covered with a forest, interspersed with tracts of marsh. It was seldom, if in any year, that the river discharged its water into the sea. Instead the waters spread over the country, filling the depressions in the surface, and forming lakes, ponds, and marshes. No channel existed until 1825 [when the floodwaters] cut a river-way to tide water, drained the marsh land, and caused the forests to disappear. (Warner, Hayes, and Widney 1876: 17–18).

Speculation

Place promoters' image of Eden reached beyond landscapes of unspoiled nature and orderly landscapes of agricultural production to built landscapes. Beginning in the last decades of the nineteenth century, boosters touted "Los Angeles the City of Homes," where everyone practicing thrift and industry could own a parcel of land with a freestanding house. Their desire to make that vision reality made property transactions and the buying and selling of land preeminent in the region's economy. Despite fluctuations in assessed valuation and the seesawing cycles of boom and bust intrinsic to real estate, speculation in property has been a mainstay of capital formation. This helps explain why diarists, journalists, pundits, and academics writing about Los Angeles' built environment often have equated urbanization with speculation.

When Governor Felipe de Neve chose a site along the Rio Porciuncula for a pueblo he reportedly heeded Fr. Crespi's account of natural advantage. At the official founding on September 4, 1781, representatives of the Spanish Crown and the Franciscan order followed criteria codified in the Laws of the Indies. They marked the boundary for a plaza and assigned lots for residences, farming, and grazing to twenty-one families. The Laws dictated a tripartite pattern of settlement – mission, pueblo, and presidio. These institutions in concert with the landscapes and structures missionaries, settlers, and the military had been instructed to create were intended to impress an indigenous population and to instill in these putative heathens love of a Christian god and servitude to that god and to a foreign state (Weber 1980; Crouch, Garr, and Mundigo 1982; chapter 2, this volume).

Americans who visited the Pueblo in the 1830s and 1840s recorded Californios living as passive beneficiaries of nature's bounty. The implication was that Anglos would do otherwise; their activities and achievements would generate wealth and prosperity. Abel Stearns, Benjamin D. (Don Benito) Wilson, John (Don Juan) Temple, William Wolfskill, J. J. Warner, and others who acculturated into Californio society in the period promoted trade and enlarged the scale of husbandry. They did so, however, as members of a local aristocracy whose wealth was based in its large landholdings, the ranchos, and secondarily in improvements and goods. Many of these arrivistes became citizens of Mexico, converted to Catholicism, spoke Spanish, and upheld Californio institutions, customs, and traditions. Following the American conquest, a subsequent generation of Yankees of greater number and increased stridency amplified the rhetoric of enterprise and of Americans as change agents. Rather than acculturating, Phineas Banning, Joseph Lancaster Brent, Francis Mellus, and others worked to recast culture and practice that had kept the oversight of land, trade, and the production of goods in the purview of territorial officials and the *gente de razon* (Pitt 1966; Estrada 2008; Sitton 2008).

When Lieutenant E. O. C. Ord surveyed the pueblo in 1849 the plan he drew rendered fixed and orderly what had been informal and ad hoc: patterns of streets, parcels, and blocks; ownership and usufruct (a grant of use, typical in the Spanish and Mexican eras); improvements and land use. Ord designated streets and numbered parcels south and west of the Plaza in anticipation of a transfer of land held by the Mexican government to the American council and hence to private holdings. The council sought to promote investment and improvement in Pueblo lands. Ord's plan has been a primary document in both senses of the term. It influenced the laying out of streets, the relative value of property, the location of activities, people, and institutions; and it has been a primary reference for those who study the city's nineteenth-century history.

After the Mexican-American War and the transfer of Alta California to the United States, Yankees and other arrivistes strove to usurp political and economic authority and to displace an indigenous Californio culture. These newcomers noted the scale of landholdings and the use of adobe block for building construction as unique and characteristic. Enterprising Anglos eager to sweep the past aside wrested control of rancho lands from Californios and replaced "mud houses" with structures built of wood and later of brick. Contemporaries viewed such change as progress; dividing large holdings into tracts for agriculture and town lots and the use of wood and brick were symbols of a future that would exceed the present and past. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Anglos enamored of a past that appeared to be melting away organized to renew, restore, and reinterpret the missions and these landscapes have come to be seen as fundamental for understanding Alta California. Then and now the decline of the Californios has been viewed as causal for the rise of the Anglos (Crouch et.al. 1952; Pitt 1966; Weber 1980; Deverell 2004; Kropp 2006; Estrada 2008).

Though it took most of two decades for the federal government to adjudicate land claims to large holdings and an equivalent time for a market in town lots to supersede an ethos of use, speculation in land has been a predominant theme in the talk about Los Angeles from the 1850s forward. This is the case certainly for accounts of regimes and regime change. The formation of an independent Mexico initiated a process that wrested control over land from the Franciscans and a redistribution by territorial governors to members of the *gente de razon*. Their estates, the ranchos, have been understood to be both a defining factor for culture, social relations, politics, and economy during the Mexican era (1821–48), as well as the Californios' most significant legacy. The first quarter-century of the American era has been seen principally as a time when Yankees sought to divest rancheros of their land and to open up large holdings to the federal government for redistribution. The hopes of those who clamored for a land rush similar to that which later occurred in the territory that became Oklahoma vanished as ownership of the former ranchos passed from grantees to their creditors,

often the lawyers whom they had retained and from whom they had borrowed much needed cash (Cleland 1951; Gates 1991; Clay and Troesken 2005). Financiers and lawyers speculated in turn. Their sale or lease of land to syndicates of capitalists based in New York, London, and elsewhere, and the subdivision of large holdings into parcels for truck farms, town sites, or city lots, spurred land booms (and busts). Subsequent speculation, in traction companies and the land along public transit corridors during the first decades of the twentieth century, in oil lands and mineral rights during the 1920s, in property zoned for residences during the defense build-up and in the immediate aftermath of World War II, in high-rise office buildings during the 1980s, in any real estate during the first years of the twenty-first century – for many, this has been the story of city building and built environments in Los Angeles.

Carey McWilliams characterized these processes as a "continuous boom punctuated at intervals by major explosions" (1946: 114). It is instructive to consider what accounts of speculation reveal, while being mindful of what they obscure. In broad terms, analyses of land as property and as resource have focused on large holdings (mission lands, ranchos, town sites, and more recent new towns). For the most part *petit rentiers* have been absent from these studies. The role small holders played in the timing and the type of development is a topic for further study. Though speculation has shaped the scale, scope, and pattern of city building, most authors have focused attention on the influx (and outflow) of private capital. The role the public sector has played in determining value via land use regulation and the ways municipal expenditures have enhanced use value for property owners have received much less attention. Despite episodic disruptions, the "continuous boom" thesis is a narrative of growth, advancement (of assessed value, of capitalization), and progress, where the lines on a graph are consistently inching upward. Growth has been uneven. That unevenness has been temporal and spatial. When property value is on the rise the rate of increase may vary by location. If that variance continues over time, investors and owners in one district may have asset growth considerably higher than those in another district (Kidner and Neff 1945; Pegrum 1963; Soja, Morales, and Wolff 1983; Gish 2007).

Although speculation has been and remains a key theme for understanding architecture and city building in southern California, scholars have examined only certain aspects of the subject. Long-term appreciation in the exchange value of land and improvements has generated capital for local and exogenous investors. Whether that capital was reinvested in the region or not and in which sectors is a subject in need of study. British syndicates held large tracts outside municipal boundaries in the late nineteenth century; Chicago capitalists bankrolled the creation of a Central Manufacturing District; investors awash in yen during the 1980s provided the cash and credit necessary for the building of high rise office towers on the blocks of

vacant lots the Community Redevelopment Agency had staged for redevelopment after clearing Bunker Hill (Davis 1990; Parson 2005). Tracing the history of these and comparable building programs would enrich the talk about Los Angeles' place in economies that linked nations before the present cycle of globalization and world cities.

Speculation has been and continues to be bound closely with regulation. Recent studies have shown property owners and renters, business owners and workers, elected officials and voters initiating or opposing ordinances intended to control where certain functions might locate (districting) or implementing zoning to separate and segregate land uses. These debates were instrumental (the decisions shaped the material city) and moral (excluding apartment houses and apartment dwellers in districts of single-family residences). The resultant legislation affected investment and value. When the mayor and council in Los Angeles approved a series of ordinances designating certain districts in the city for housing and other districts for manufacturing in 1908 and 1909, their actions had the intended consequence of separating activities deemed incompatible by concentrating housing and industry in discrete zones. Implementing and enforcing this policy restricted the land area where manufacturers could locate. This had an unintended consequence: it increased the value of land in those districts. A difference in taxes could be a means to entice firms to set up shop in one locality rather than another. Over time, Los Angeles' ordinances, coupled with the variance among municipalities and between the city and county in appraisal and tax policies, encouraged manufacturers to locate in Vernon, Huntington Park, City Terrace, Torrance, and additional incorporated communities (Weiss 1987; Gish 2007; Hise and Gish 2007; Kolnick 2008; Hise 2009).

These examples and similar cases reveal a local state creating location via policy. How municipal officials made decisions, how they strove to implement these and the resistance they encountered, how partisan decisions and actions created distinctions across and among jurisdictions, how these produced uneven development are but a few of the questions to which there are partial answers. Regulation has been and continues to be significant in determining the scale, density, and formal character of what gets built.

Styles, Types, and Patterns

Query a resident, tourist, or someone who had never traveled to southern California about its architecture and it is likely each would begin their response with some reference to "indoor-outdoor living," the sunshine and limited rainfall, the absence of snow, and the relatively moderate temperatures Angelenos enjoy year round. Analyses by type and typology, taste and sensibility, style and period, or personality and zeitgeist have been the norm

for studies of landscape and built environments. Sites and structures can be characterized and catalogued by function (residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, transportation), by scale, by aesthetic criteria, and by association with a particular epoch or era. A sequence of styles – "A" is eclipsed or overshadowed by "B" – or of a body of work – early, mature, late – are progressions over time. Advocates for a reigning style or those promoting its replacement champion presumptive benefits: for physical or moral wellbeing, for social distinction or the leveling of hierarchies, for individual uplift or civic improvement. In Los Angeles this manner of analysis begins with the Laws of the Indies and a clutch of adobe structures surrounding a plaza and continues forward to a postmodern present.

Consider the bungalow. Whether within a court or as a detached, single-family residence, the bungalow became a symbol for the quality of life wage-earners and the laboring classes might achieve in southern California. That promise and ideal animated subsequent initiatives, most famously the Case Study House program in the post-World War II era. The well-to-do could achieve distinction by building an "ultimate bungalow" designed by Charles and Henry Greene. Place promoters disseminated a bungalow type via books such as Warner's *Our Italy* and magazines including *Land of Sunshine*. These publications advertised Los Angeles' climate, its flora, and its residences to home-seekers in the United States and abroad. Promotional literature from business associations such as the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and trade journals such as *Southwest Builder and Contractor* can be found at specialized libraries, public libraries, museums, historical associations, and municipal archives.

Another genre of style and type is the architect-artist monograph. These come in different forms: the catalogue raisonne (complete works of), select project types (the most significant houses designed by), or work from a particular period in a designer's career (formative or experimental years, mature style). Often, these publications treat architects whose work is well known, or a discrete project (most likely designed by someone well known and admired), or functional types. Considerable shelf space in libraries, bookstores, and the offices of design professionals is given over to compendia detailing the creative output of Charles and Henry Greene, George Washington Smith, Richard Neutra, John Lautner, Frank Gehry, Thom Mayne, and their kin (Gebhard and Winter 1977; Hines 1982; Ovnick 1994; Bosley 2000; Waldie and Keaton 2007). Guidebooks tend to lionize the work of designers who have achieved wide acceptance or those an author or critic would like to elevate to the status of icon and household name (Gebhard and Winter 1977; McCoy 1960). The Gamble House (the Greenes'), Hollyhock House (Wright), and Walt Disney Concert Hall (Gehry) have been the subjects for multiple monographic studies. Buildings and projects not attributable to an individual tend to be left out of the canon.

How might scholars proceed? Perhaps design could be analyzed as integral to processes that encompass relations and negotiations among clients, architects, and financiers, as well as those who approve (or reject) proposals. Intended use might be considered along with modifications, and repurposing. During the first half of the twentieth century, community builders defined their projects as "complete communities," and federal housing acts encouraged firms to develop new towns such as Irvine and Valencia after World War II. Both types require researchers to account for a purposeful intermixing of activities and building types. Current projects, often talked about as infill, adaptive reuse, or sustainable in type, are premised as well on a mix of uses; in some cases within project boundaries, in other cases via proximity to other projects or existing districts. Even if the subject of research is defined narrowly, say, modern houses of post-and-beam construction, a building-type approach is intrinsically comparative. The tendency to evaluate a type in isolation is inherently limiting. Everyday experience, survey, or fieldwork reminds us that an inter-digitation of functions and a mix of building types has been and continues to be the norm in much of southern California. Analyses that began with people, organized according to their use of structures, might come closer to approximating an inter-digitated landscape and the reciprocal relations between environment and experience.

When product is coupled with process, analysis bridges domains. For a 1941 primer, *Los Angeles: Preface to a Master Plan*, editors L. Deming Tilton and George Robbins solicited essays from geographers, sociologists, and professionals in the private and public sectors that examined the city's "physical base" – streets and circulation, ports and harbors, water and sanitation, the civic center and business district, housing and recreation – and planning's "imperatives" – its economic and social implications, zoning and subdivision, population and land use patterns. In *Building Rules: How Locals Shape Community Environments and Economies* (2000) Kee Warner and Harvey Molotch studied the implementation and application of design guidelines in three jurisdictions: Santa Barbara, Santa Monica, and San Bernardino. Each city has required investors, designers, and builders to adhere to standards written to ensure a project's scale, mass, and materials will be consistent with what is already in place. Their comparative study of applied policy revealed process: what had been proposed (design), what had been permitted (governance), and why. When Warner and Molotch asked decision-makers in each city to evaluate the same proposal, results varied. Despite common objectives and comparable mechanisms, municipal officials with more affluent and more fiscally secure Santa Barbara were the least likely to approve and commit public funds as a supplement for private investment, whereas officials at revenue-strapped San Bernardino, a city striving to attract additional investment, were most likely to approve.

Contrary to Tilton and Robbins or Warner and Molotch's focus on institutions and regulation, experimentation, innovation, and the invention (or reinvention) of self have been interpretive staples in the literature on Los Angeles architecture. For those with the means to choose, the choice of residence has been seen as an expression of self (Ovnick 1994; Waldie and Keaton 2007; Watters 2007). Fancy yourself a romantic, perhaps something in the Spanish revival or a faux chateau; more a bohemian or an artiste, perhaps a modern house of right-angles, crisp edges, and planes of glass. People use houses for distinction the world over. In southern California this has been treated as an art. Beginning in the nineteenth century, newspapers featured notable residents and their manses. In 1984 the *Los Angeles Times* initiated a weekly report, "Hot Property," on the buying and selling of trophy houses ("Johnny Carson Sets Record in Malibu" was the premiere piece). For a quarter-century the Sunday Real Estate section was where bold-print denizens of the society pages met bold-print architects and interior designers.

A desire to own a house with pedigree has subsidized industries of design, materials, and fabrication necessary to produce the one-off, a cutting-edge structure which positions its owner on the leading edge. As a strategy for distinction, this has proven to be successful even when (or especially when) no one followed the lead. Experimentation, innovation, and novelty can also be found in design for a mass market. This is true in housing (bungalow courts and the production of tract houses during and following World War II), in commercial buildings (such as movie theatres and "Googie" diners), and in building types that have been overlooked (apartments and flats, boulevard commerce, manufacturing) or denigrated (dingbat apartments, strip- or mini-malls). Eccentric forms and unusual uses command attention from those who study the built environment. Scholarly monographs and coffee-table books feature structures such as the Brown Derby (a restaurant in a hat), or the hot dog stand or camera shop shaped like the thing it was designed to sell. Historians, architects, and scholars of popular culture have attributed this fancifulness (or eccentricity) to southern California's seemingly benign climate, to the once much hyped now much lamented prevalence of automobiles which allowed for movement through the city at 30 miles an hour, and to the outsized effect the motion picture industry has had in the local economy and in residents' imaginary. Film also has informed designers' preferences and clients' predilections, while employment on studio lots has contributed to the skill sets of those who construct and furnish houses, showrooms, and offices.

Relative prosperity in the post-World War II era, though never as broadly or equitably distributed as contemporary sources implied, has been understood as causal for the construction of a landscape of consumption and leisure whose primary symbols were the tract house with its ample yard, the automobile, and Disneyland. Cruising the city's highways and boulevards,

Rayner Banham extolled mimetic architecture, Armet & Davis's "Googie" diners, billboards, ranch houses, and other artifacts of pop culture. In an age when America had achieved economic dominance, political authority, and cultural prominence, it was California and especially southern California that led the production of landscapes and buildings that expressed optimism and exuberance (Hess 1986; Banham 2001).

Banham's reverence for Los Angeles' "sympathetic ecology for design" where "all parts are equal and equally accessible from all other parts" obscured the reality that discord and upheaval, inequity and despair have been as determinant as equality. Surveyors from the Los Angeles Housing Authority recorded social segregation and functional obsolescence; HOLC (Home Owners Loan Corporation) enumerators documented substandard housing conditions. The maps they produced directed where investment capital would flow. Few would be surprised to find that the areas colored red (for high risk) in the 1930s were among the districts that burned in the 1960s and again in 1992. Robert Fogelson sought incipience for the unrest and upheaval of the 1960s in patterns of urbanization and social relations rooted in the nineteenth century. Mike Davis provided a bookend for Fogelson's analysis of political and civic fragmentation. Davis's account of oligarchic interests run amok, of corporate capital remaking Bunker Hill, of the related loss of "genuine public space" and the creation of fortified landscapes has been read in hindsight as prefiguring the civil disturbances following the first Rodney King trial in 1992 (Fogelson 1967; Davis 1990; Lipsitz 1990; Avila 2006; Ethington n.d.).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the focus for those writing on Los Angeles' built environment had turned toward a new crop of high-profile projects for culture (the Getty Center, Walt Disney Concert Hall, a reworking of LACMA's Wilshire campus), institutions (a new downtown cathedral, the Caltrans headquarter building), and commerce (the Grove, Americana at Brand, Grand Avenue), augmented by increasing attention to environment, ecology, and sustainability. LEED standards, and acquiring certification as an Energy Star structure (such as the NRDC offices in Santa Monica) has become a desirable sign of distinction with a cache equivalent to the manipulation of program, plan, and elevation architects employ to produce "look at me" forms (see chapter 25, this volume). There is local precedent for ecological design. From the turn of the twentieth century forward, design professionals had talked about climate, nature, and local biologic systems as the "goose that laid golden eggs." They knew landscape and ecology attracted tourists and home-seekers to a city dependent on newcomers who spent and invested and whose continued presence assured rising property values and enhanced Los Angeles' status nationally and internationally (Hise and Deverell 2000).

Built environments are dynamic. Change is inevitable. Interpretation varies. Is change a reasoned response to necessity? Or is it a form of creative

destruction? Critics assail the latter, a repeated cycling through of structures and spaces, as ruinous to place and use values. As a practice, creative destruction diminishes the benefits and value people accrue in place over time through their actions, social investments, and memories. As a thesis or theory, creative destruction is consistent with popular assessments of Los Angeles' uniqueness; it is a city where history matters little, certainly less than elsewhere. Yet history as association, a form of historicism, has been significant in the making of the city's built environment. The heterogeneity of style within a block of residences in Pasadena, Long Beach, or Westwood underscores how powerful the lure of historical reference has been for builders and buyers. Advertisements promoting the sale of individual houses or entire tracts have trumpeted the putative advantages associated with craftsman, Spanish, Tudor, modern, or moderne.

Historic preservation is a public practice intended to bring attention to the built heritage. In southern California the Los Angeles Conservancy has been an effective publicist for its cause. The Conservancy leverages a critical mass of seven thousand plus members when advocating for particular buildings and for policy that increases the likelihood structures will be reused rather than demolished. The recent creation of an Office of Historic Resources (OHR) within the Department of City Planning was intended to facilitate a multi-year program to oversee the creation of a context statement and field guide for the approximately 880,000 parcels and 446 square miles within Los Angeles proper.

There are rich repositories of primary materials for studies of building types, style, and development patterns. Collections at UC Santa Barbara, the Getty Research Institute, UCLA, and the Huntington Library include archives of architects' papers, drawings, and project records; each institution holds significant photographic documentation of structures and built environments, as do USC, the Natural History Museum, and the Los Angeles Public Library.

Infrastructure and Engineering

As is the case in all cities, Angelenos have constructed and relied on a complex network of urban systems for health and hygiene, mobility, power, and communication. These systems and their associated right-of-ways (for example, transit), routes of transmission (water, power), generation, and storage consume land and shape landscapes. They have had a significant imprint on people's everyday experience of place. Given infrastructure's centrality for city building and its ubiquity in the built environment, the imprint on scholarship (with rare exception) has been less than one might anticipate.

One might expect Robert Fogelson (1967) to begin his account of a fragmented metropolis with a vignette or epigraph prefiguring devolution.

Instead, he quotes a British visitor, Morris Markey, who asked in 1932 why a metropolis rose up in such an improbable site. Fogelson's answer, that businessmen and civic officials overcame the limits imposed by geographic isolation and the absence of essential resources (such as coal and capital) to grow the population, attract skilled labor, and promote innovation, continues a theme Carey McWilliams (1946) introduced. Both authors sought shaping hands; both found these in the person of entrepreneurs or in entrepreneurial agencies that harnessed nature's bounty and created a system of urban systems. Kevin Starr equated that infrastructure – the harbor, an aqueduct, and hydroelectricity – with DNA. Like DNA, these systems ought to be fundamental for analyses of the region's built environment (Starr 1990; Erie 2006).

Water, transportation, power; each is derived from nature's bounty. From 1781 forward, pobladores, Californios, and Yankees tapped riparian systems for potable water and irrigation, first locally, then at ever-greater distances. Federal monies and technical assistance supported local initiative in the construction of railroads and when transforming a marshland into a deepwater port. Voter support for municipal debt financed proprietary agencies engaged in water provision, harbor development, and the generation of hydroelectric power. Private firms, most notable Southern California Edison, developed capacity to store Sierra runoff, pass this through turbines, and transmit power to and throughout the Southland (Kinsey 1928; Redinger 1949; Starr 1990; Hoffman 1991; Hundley 1992; Gumprecht 1999; Orsi 2004; Erie 2006).

Few would debate the fundamentality of infrastructure in shaping cities. There are differences of interpretation, however, and this is true in the literature on Los Angeles. Some authors favor path dependence and related theories. Doug Suisman (1989) captured this succinctly, if poetically, when describing an iterative process whereby the seam at the boundaries of ranchos and other large landholdings became the paths along which first Spaniards, then Mexicans, then Americans walked and later rode when traversing the basin. Over time the laying out of streets and boulevards etched these incisions deeper. Suisman likened these lines on the land to scars on a human body. The accumulative and layered affect of decisions and actions produced a physical trace that informed subsequent action. Suisman likened interpretation to a physician analyzing an X-ray.

Cultural geographers' term of art, "first patterns," invokes similar processes of inscription. In a strong form these theories shade toward determinism – build it and much else will follow accordingly. When people debate the merits of federal, state, and local investment in light rail they are debating first patterns. Advocates contend that investment in ancillary development of housing, shops, and offices will gravitate to station sites. Detractors claim that money spent on mass transit is a misappropriation of resources, a subsidy (often unacknowledged) to those who control land along routes,

and a public intervention into a domain of planning that ought to be left to a "market." Interpretations in which a market predominates, in which investors and entrepreneurs construct waterworks, trolley lines, airfields, or toll roads in response to demand, either perceived or induced, is an alternate pole in the infrastructure talk (Meinig 1979; Gordon and Richardson 1993).

From an initial grid of streets defining a central plaza to a mostly hub-and-spoke pattern of highways and freeways; from carjetas to automobiles; from streetcars to subways; from lighters and rudimentary wharves to a harbor complex that handles more freight than all but one or two facilities in the nation; planning for and engineering an infrastructure for mobility has been a potent shaper of subsequent development. People riding horses or conveyed in horse-drawn carriages extended the bounds of the Pueblo and the nineteenth-century walking city east to Lincoln and Boyle Heights, west to the slopes of Bunker Hill, and south beyond the patent boundary toward what became the Adams district. Regular streetcar service encouraged Angelenos to adopt the riding habit; this increased the distance those commuting to employment might travel, while encouraging those who invested in land and its improvement to do so along vectors set by transit. Beginning in the 1910s the zones interstitial to these alignments became as convenient to those who could afford an automobile. During the subsequent decades a number of factors – lower unit costs for cars, the adoption of systems for traffic control, street widening, the construction of boulevards and limited access roadways – recalibrated the time-distance function. Those who chose to commute greater distances in equivalent time could travel to one of several central points; the dispersion and recentralization of production, commerce, and housing had made multiple points in the region as central as the initial business district south of the Plaza that has served as a Central Business District (CBD) for much of Los Angeles' history (Brodsly 1981; Bottles 1987; Wachs and Crawford 1992; Longstreth 1999).

The literature on transportation has its origins in local history, popular history, and fiction. Though impressive in number, the reading list for mass transit remains limited in scope. Antiquarian accounts resurrect a golden age when streetcars shuttled people throughout the region efficiently and expeditiously for a nickel fare. Only recently have research, analysis, and interpretation gone beyond an early and persistent narrative equating relatively high per capita ownership and use of automobiles with a decline in mass transit. Studies based on archival sources that refute the myth of automobile manufacturers colluding with tire and petroleum interests have not eclipsed a conspiracy narrative seemingly impervious to challenge (Crump 1962).

Although a relationship between transportation projects, property investment, and homebuilding has been acknowledged for some time, few scholars have chosen to produce case studies detailing these processes. Henry Huntington's consolidation of independent traction companies into the Pacific Electric (PE) to provide regular, inexpensive, and (at least initially)

convenient connections from centers of population and employment out to land he held in the San Gabriel Valley, south of downtown, and at the coast has been the exception. Yet the Huntington Library's cache of PE and Los Angeles Railway (LARY) surveys, business and financial records, tract maps, and related documents remains largely unexamined. Longitudinal and comparative research into the effect highway and freeway construction had on property values, land use, and the precise pattern of building along these routes has yet to be undertaken. It might be telling to consider similarity and dissimilarity among highway projects constructed through areas that had yet to be developed for urban uses – such as routes 10 and 60 in the eastern sections of Los Angeles County – or to compare these with a project such as the 105 freeway, which cut through sections of the region that had been developed densely prior to its construction. A yet-to-be-tapped Century Freeway archive at USC's Special Collections would be invaluable for such studies.

Given the longstanding association of Los Angeles with automobiles and an enduring belief it is a city "built for the automobile," one would expect to find the infrastructure literature weighted toward transportation. Although water and its management may be second to transit, the scale of the works that secure "blue gold" sufficient to sustain 13 million people has attracted attention. In a region where annual rainfall totals shuttle-cock between record or near-record lows to record or near-record highs, conserving a precious resource or directing its flow via catch basins, dams, or flood channels is one of the signature ways southern Californians control nature. The local riparian system – the Los Angeles, San Gabriel, Santa Ana, and Santa Inez rivers, the tributaries that feed these streams, and the aquifers they replenish – have been essential for local ecologies. From the pre-contact era to the 1880s, the above-ground flow in rivers, streams, and creeks was adequate for agriculture and domestic use. The pobladores' initial civic endeavor consisted of collecting, diverting, and distributing water from the Rio Porciuncula (the Los Angeles River) to the Pueblo from a point at the Glendale Narrows via a *zanja* (an open ditch). Californios and Yankees enlarged that system over time to facilitate expansion and to enhance agricultural production. When demand exceeded capacity in the 1880s, city engineers oversaw the construction of below-grade dams designed to divert water to the surface. Landowners and private companies who managed water constructed reservoirs; these became a prominent landscape feature in the hills and on the bluffs along both sides of the river. Those who owned land without access to a river or to irrigation canals tapped aquifers or acquired water rights in local mountains to capture and distribute "blue gold" to their fields. When engineers deemed these sources insufficient for future growth, voters approved bonds that financed a transfer of water from the Owens Valley. William Mulholland, Ezra Scattergood, and the water officials with whom they collaborated managed a system

capable of siphoning water from the eastern Sierra and then in the 1930s from Arizona and the Colorado River. Current efforts to capture storm runoff and recharge local aquifers are one strategy among many to conserve this precious resource for times of scarcity (Mulholland 2000; Erie 2006).

Moving people and goods and supplying water are essential urban functions. So are the removal of waste and the supply of power. The literature on urban infrastructure in New York, Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco has included waste. That has not been the case in Los Angeles. Timing of development may be a factor. Sanitary reformers in New York and Chicago struggled to improve rudimentary systems put in place during a time when urban populations were much smaller, when cities covered less area, and when the scale and mode of production were quite different. Ever-increasing demand and greater toxicity of waste encouraged innovation, experimentation, and the construction of state-of-the-field systems. Engineers and technicians in Los Angeles, as well as those in other cities whose periods of rapid growth began in the 1890s or later, learned by example and installed systems for waste that emulated best practices in other cities. Yet given the magnitude and geographic extent of growth since, studies of past, present, and likely future systems are in order.

Power, specifically capturing and transforming the potential energy of falling water to produce hydroelectricity, is a history that ought to be fundamental for the study of Los Angeles. In the late nineteenth century a booster would have agreed with a detractor who pointed to the lack of local coal deposits as a constraint that discouraged manufacturers from establishing plants in the region. At the time, enterprisers had begun damming and sluicing the water that flowed year round in Lytle, San Antonio, and Mill creeks in the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountains. These innovators, and the engineers whose success transmitting electrical current over increasing distances set records and established standards, made Los Angeles a leading site for the second industrial revolution. The adoption of electricity as a primary motive power for manufacturing as well as a source of power for lighting and other tasks in houses, shops, and businesses meant that transmission lines, power generation plants, and the substations which step power down became material reminders of hydroelectric power (Kinsey 1928; Redinger 1949).

Initially, independent firms scaled operations to meet the needs of nearby consumers. Long-distance transmission favored consolidation and merger. Innovations in distribution and delivery made it possible for a single generating plant to serve multiple subscribers. This brought firms, towns, urban districts, and entire cities into regional systems. In the 1890s streetcar companies operated their own generating plants. Consolidation and metropolitan routes required a regular supply of power distributed over a wide territory. During the first decade of the twentieth century Pacific Light and Power (PL&P), a Huntington firm, undertook an audacious project along

Big Creek to generate "white gold" (hydroelectricity) and transmit this via a 150-volt line to Los Angeles. Big Creek power began operation in 1913, an achievement as foundational for future development in southern California as the often cited Owens Valley aqueduct. Huntington and his associates enlarged PL&P via acquisition, merger, and functional consolidation. When Southern California Edison purchased PL&P in 1917 the combined firm became the fifth largest central-station power company in the United States.

Abundant power made possible innovation and enterprise in film, aviation, and additional sectors of the metropolitan economy. Aviation, defined to encompass research and development (R&D), component fabrication, and assembly has been an economic mainstay in greater Los Angeles since the 1920s. For much of that period firms in southern California led competitors in other parts of the country in the design and production of airplanes and later the rockets, missiles, satellites, and communication technologies associated with aerospace. Planning and constructing airfields for testing, for commercial flight, and for the military has been a potent determinant of land use. Regional Planning Commission land use maps from the 1920s reveal a propensity on the part of property owners to designate land as an airstrip or landing field.

During the second half of the 1930s Los Angeles functioned as a proto-arsenal for democracy. Contracts for planes, petroleum, and ships meant that the economic crisis of the Great Depression was less severe there than elsewhere. Federal investment in these sectors and related industry during the war years financed a boom. The city's geographic position as a gateway to the Pacific theatre enhanced the likelihood firms would benefit from federal largesse. Public investment in plant, equipment, and personnel underwrote continued economic growth when the war ended. Firms producing component parts or assembling aircraft in the middle decades of the twentieth century developed sizeable tracts. Factor in the attendant hangers, terminals, and warehouses and aviation's footprint increases considerably. Add the hotels, office space, parking, and additional facilities related to business and leisure travel and the built environment of flight expands yet again. After World War II commercial aviation made Los Angeles area attractions for recreation, leisure, or culture accessible to many, thus enhancing the viability and vitality of such built environments (Hise 1997).

The literature on communication and how these systems create location is in development. Although scholars have examined how networks designed to transmit information have linked economies across states and nations, few have considered implications on the ground. Attention to communication and metropolitan economies might lead someone to study telephony as an aid to those who created citrus cooperatives, for example. What role did an immediate exchange of information regarding production, price, demand, shipping, and related data play for those who created Sunkist and

like associations? Perhaps the attention devoted to Los Angeles' seemingly singular medium for communication, the motion picture, has had such fundamental gravity as to eclipse work that seeks to understand and explain the role less captivating technologies such as the telephone have had (Christopherson and Storper 1986; Bills 2006).

Studying systems for transit, water, power, or communication is necessary for understanding a city's built environment. But systems alone cannot explain landscape change. As the Board of Harbor Commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce, and related agencies and associations knew, absent products to ship, the city's harbor facilities would be underutilized. Without robust and expanding agricultural and industrial sectors, water would flow unused to the sea and electric power would be left to dissipate.

Infrastructure has been talked about as a handmaiden of growth. Yet understanding how people capitalized on nature's bounty and developed nature's capital then and now is another area where research remains to be done. Histories of agencies and firms engaged in the construction and management of infrastructure such as hydroelectricity would be instructive. The value would be enhanced if authors examined Los Angeles in a comparative context and if they considered recent changes in regulation and oversight. Alternatively, one could undertake an archeology of landscape change, tracing the transformation over time of a site, a district, or a particular system. Or one could examine the changing location of a particular land use, or trace infrastructure along a trajectory such as Alameda Street, which had its origins in a path along the river, became the route for the city's first rail line, and now serves a related function for a high-speed, below-grade rail corridor carrying containers from the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles-San Pedro to downtown Los Angeles and from there out to inter-modal freight facilities in Rancho Cucamonga and the Inland Empire.

Projects for Consideration

As the chapters in this section make clear, research that might be considered first-order business for landscape and built environment studies of Los Angeles remains to be done. Only limited archeological work has been undertaken. On occasion, contract work associated with big projects has opened up the layered landscape for some to see. The discovery of a circa-1870s burial site in Boyle Heights in the path of an MTA trench and cover excavation for the Eastside Gold Line light rail project is a recent example. Such sites, and the remains they contain, have sparked some public conversation about the past.

Above ground, in the archives, there is a need for baseline studies that chart the influx (and outflow) of capital into (and out of) the region.

In which localities and at what scales did London, New York, and San Francisco financiers choose to invest when they purchased land in the nineteenth century? What percentage of dwelling units constructed were in multi-family and single-family structures from 1880 forward? In which tracts were restrictive covenants in place? Where were these not imposed or enforced?

A desire to improve has led institutions and individuals to alter the built environment. Soon after the American conquest newcomers initiated a discourse critical of living conditions in Sonoratown, a site they associated with Californios or Mexicans. Anglos denigrated those who lived in the "foreign districts." Reformers in the nineteenth century and their counterparts in the twentieth believed in the power of structures and sites to effect change; one could create an improving environment through better housing and the creation of accessible and democratic space that might promote neighboring and community (Cuff 2000; Wild 2005; Ryan 2006). Social uplift via physical reform is viewed as a historical artifact or condemned as social engineering. However "smart growth," transit-oriented development, or the use of historic preservation to foster association with an agreed upon past are efforts to shape the built environment in order to achieve social ends. Some urbanists suggest mixed-use zoning and higher density will increase the frequency of face-to-face interaction and lead to a more consensual society (Calthorpe 1993). In this case empirical studies of past practice ought to inform current proposals.

In terms of city building and construction, studies that traced building materials such as lumber or steel in artifact chains from their points of origin through processing, distribution, installation, use, and in many cases reuse or conversion to refuse would link Los Angeles materially with other regions and states. It would also link producers with consumers, policy with its implications, and ecologies with economies, and reveal the consequences of style, taste, and aesthetics over time (rather than treating these solely as fashion). A study of concrete would of necessity examine landscape change, the scarfing of rock and gravel, and the remnant pits in numerous sites across greater Los Angeles. Such studies would open up for exploration a subject that has languished in the afterlife of nineteenth-century accounts that assigned materials to cultures (defined by race-ethnicity) and classes – adobe with Mexicans, wood with Yankees, brick with elites and high culture – arrayed in ascending order as stages in a march of progress.

Related to the production of Los Angeles' built environment, one could design linked investigations of construction practice as this evolved over time. Existing studies suggest that at certain moments configurations of demand, material availability, labor, regulation, federal policy, and like factors created a context conducive for contractors and builders able to innovate to develop methods that became state of the field. Studies of innovation and the dissemination of practice and knowledge would provide a counterpoint to

conventional accounts that interpret the built environment as a successive repetition of styles. Histories of design guidelines – what has been regulated formally and informally, has enforcement been stringent or lax – would allow for a comparison of policy, implementation, and effect across the region (say, Irvine and Valencia) or of sites with formal design guidelines and those without (say, Old Pasadena and Little India in Westminster).

With but a few exceptions there has been surprisingly little work on electoral politics and the fine-grained territoriality of governance. Studying the ward system, for example, most likely would reveal district-scaled contest and competition, negotiation, and brokered resolution, processes that drove and that resulted in particular building projects. These might also illustrate how the implementation of specific projects contributed to local state building via demands for oversight and regulation.

Those who have written on urban renewal and displacement have focused almost exclusively on Bunker Hill and Chavez Ravine (Cuff 2000; Parson 2005). The scale, scope, duration, and amount of capital invested in Bunker Hill, the convention center, Staples Center, Grand Avenue, and ancillary projects in the CBD warrant critical attention (see chapter 25, this volume). Yet a longitudinal study of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), examining its strategies, institutional arrangements, and political alliances and how these and other facets have changed over time, would shed light on its legacy in the core of the metropolitan area as well as in Hollywood, North Hollywood, Van Nuys, and additional sites. An institutional history would be as significant for understanding what the CRA overlooked or neglected given priorities, preferences, and political exigency as it would be for understanding what has been accomplished, where, through what means, and at what cost.

Metanarratives about landscapes of desire (Eden found or constructed) and creative destruction (Eden despoiled or lost) cast events within simplistic and ultimately partial accounts of ascension or declension. Boom and gloom are part of the story of landscape and city building in southern California; neither is *the* story. Interpretable patterns of investment, disinvestment, and reinvestment emerge when scholars examine property records, ordinances, and related documents, as do processes of construction, demolition, and repurposing, of NIMBYism, gentrification, and preservation. These processes have been and continue to be uneven across space and over time. Variance is the norm at the scale of municipalities (Bell Gardens, San Fernando), as well as at the scale of micro-geographies within a city such as Pasadena or Santa Monica (Hanson and Becket 1944).

Neglect, selective vision, and uneven attention have kept districts within the city, county, and region off the printed maps and the mental maps municipal, institutional, and individual investors relied on when they decided where capital ought to be made available. In the passed-over districts, residents and property owners seeking affordable capital that might

allow them to maintain and enhance property and reap the benefits of a growth in appreciation have had few options. Whether benign or intentional, neglect has its consequences. Within Los Angeles city and county it is common to find localities where capital has been withheld and the regenerative capacity of appreciation, reinvestment, and a healthy mix of those who choose to stay in place with new residents has been absent. In Lincoln Heights, El Sereno, Atwater Village, or South Los Angeles one finds residence districts built for workers with shotgun houses adjacent to a manager's four-square, with cottages, duplexes, four flats, and apartment buildings lining alternate blocks. We know districts with heterogeneous activities and populations mostly through reformers' surveys with associated maps and descriptive analysis. Only recently have students in design studios or in historic preservation begun to reexamine and remap putatively abject zones within the city.

Then there are sites controlled by the federal government and the military (bases and training grounds, airfields and test sites) or by the State of California (prisons, facilities for flood control), or by a county or a local state (reservoirs, detention centers). There are sites consumed by extractive industries (petroleum and its refining, rock, sand, and gravel, water) and by other large-scale enterprises (railroad property). Making these, and other, territories and localities visible would be a significant, foundational contribution to knowledge of Los Angeles. Studies of landscape and the built environment ought to account for spaces that may be known to only a few – a resident's local knowledge – as well as the knowledge of those who know the city through texts, films, photographs and other representations of place.

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Chapter Twenty-two

America's Playground: Recreation and Race

Lawrence Culver

The promotion of outdoor recreation proved central to the growth of Los Angeles. Beginning in the 1870s, southern California boosters utilized tourism as a strategy to foment regional development. Tourist leisure served an important economic function, but as tourists became resident recreationalists, leisure took on profound social and cultural meaning. Recreation served as a central element of the city's culture and its national and international image. This image – of swimming pools and movie stars, or beaches thronged with surfers and sunbathers – concealed a far more complex reality in which recreation served as a flashpoint for social, political, and racial conflict. Recreation was indeed central to the city's culture and identity, but not necessarily in ways that were always and unequivocally positive. In a city whose residents privileged private over public leisure, recreation consistently served as one of the few things Angelenos did publicly and collectively. Recreation created a public space, sometimes shared and sometimes contested. Indeed, recreational space proved one of the most contentious issues in the city's history – who should have access to it, and how it could be used. Examining recreation in Los Angles can tell us about much more than just fun in the sun. It can tell us about race and class, politics and power, and the problematic place of recreation in a city inextricably connected to leisure (Starr 1985, 1990; McClung 2000; Nicolaides 2002; Flamming 2006).

Los Angeles never enacted large-scale plans for parks or public spaces to bring nature into the city. Beginning soon after it's initial boom in the 1870s, and continuing across the twentieth century, in fact, critics bemoaned the lack of parkland in LA (Davis 1998; Hise and Deverell 2000). Yet it created the nation's first municipal Playground Department, made outdoor recreation and nature appreciation part of the city's school curriculum, and purchased beaches and mountain camps to ensure public access. In contrast

to its reputation as a morass of unplanned sprawl, Angelenos adopted ordinances to control land use in advance of other cities in the United States.

In Los Angeles access to nature was conceptualized as something domestic and democratic – outdoor recreation in the backyard of a bungalow home or a family automobile trip to the beach, to the mountains, or to desert areas of southern California. This domestic, private form of nature in the city offered outdoor leisure to the middle class, promising a new and in many ways better kind of life than could be lived in a crowded apartment or on an isolated farm homestead. Contained within this cheery and optimistic vision of democratic access to nature, however, were grimmer realities. Racism and poverty limited access to housing, private automobiles, and recreational space. This affected African Americans most directly, but it affected others as well. Mexican Americans, who composed the largest minority population in the city, and who were expected to provide low-wage labor to support Anglo American leisure in this metropolis in the US-Mexico borderlands, also faced restrictions on housing and access to nature. Thus, while representations of Los Angeles from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century idealized suburban life, the city portended the future of a nation that would be increasingly suburban and, long after racially restrictive housing laws were overturned, increasingly segregated.

Parks, Urban Planning, and Planning Play

In the nineteenth century, recreational policy in American cities was primarily an issue of the acquisition and development of parkland. Green spaces offered city dwellers a chance to enjoy the aesthetic contemplation of bucolic scenery without leaving the city. This era witnessed the creation of parks, parkways, and green spaces in innumerable cities. Many of these borrowed from the design of the nation's premier urban oasis, Central Park in Manhattan, which was carefully designed and engineered to look like a "natural" landscape, rather than a formal garden (Cranz 1982; Wilson 1989; Blackmar and Rosenzweig 1992).

The early growth of modern Los Angeles was not accompanied by similar purchases of open land or of planning for a park system. Founded in 1781 as a Spanish pueblo, Los Angeles remained a small community during the Mexican and early US eras. Beginning in 1885, however, when the Santa Fe Railroad arrived and ended the monopoly of the Southern Pacific Railroad, the population in Los Angeles grew from 11,000 to 1.2 million in 1930, making it the fifth largest city in the United States. At that time another million residents lived in communities in Los Angeles County (Pitt and Pitt 1997: 576–8). Rapid growth, facilitated by cheap land, a balmy climate, and a massive regional publicity campaign, was certainly one reason

why the city did not plan more extensively for parkland. Yet that was not the only reason Los Angeles lagged in park development. Local promoters and outside observers alike asserted that Los Angeles was a new sort of city, unlike those of the East or even other Western cities. Some of them believed that this new city would not need an extensive park system, for it had transcended the traditional urban ills that made parks necessary (Dykstra 1926).

Beyond climate, Los Angeles and southern California sold a lifestyle – one which proved irresistible in a nation of growing affluence and longevity. This was to be a place where retirees – an entirely new demographic class – could enjoy an old age of leisure, rather than dotage on some marginal farm. Affluent farmers might relocate to a southern California citrus plantation where they could enjoy all of life's luxuries – including inexpensive labor provided by Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and various Asian immigrant groups. Henry Huntington's Pacific Electric interurban train system connected dispersed communities. Public transit allowed the development of a landscape neither city nor country that combined the best qualities of both. Trains also provided access to beaches, resorts, and other attractions in the growing communities within Los Angeles County (Fogelson 1967).

Los Angeles did not adopt a City Beautiful plan, nor did it buy undeveloped landscapes for recreational purposes. Why? Ideology and a local political culture that catered to the wishes of developers, allowing profits to take precedence over the public good, contributed to this outcome. Surrounded by recreational amenities, it seemed to political and business leaders – two groups which often proved synonymous, and most often unanimous in their desire for ever-increasing real estate development – that Los Angeles would not need to plan for parks or public space. Rather, the city would function as a pastoral, an antidote to industrialization, "un-American" immigration, and other urban woes afflicting cities back East (Schmitt 1969).

The automobile accelerated residents' access to recreation and encouraged the development of dormitory suburbs. Angelenos founded the Automobile Club of Southern California in 1900. By 1910 the city had the highest per capita rate of car ownership in the world. Automobiles allowed development to expand beyond the reach of Huntington's trains. It also allowed residents to escape the city, venturing up into the mountains or out into the desert for recreation. The car, like the bungalow, was an essential part of the projected Los Angeles lifestyle (Bottles 1987). Many Angelenos, of course, did not have picturesque homes or automobiles. Many more would be discouraged or actively banned from recreational areas due to their race or ethnicity. What mattered, however, was the image. Boosters sold a proto-suburban, semi-fictionalized lifestyle to the nation; it proved to be irresistible.

Only haltingly did Los Angeles develop a system of urban parks on land hived from city properties or in the form of donations to the city. The first public space in Los Angeles was the original Plaza, created when the pueblo was founded in 1781. Subsequent to the annexation of California and the rest of northern Mexico into the new Southwest of the United States, the current Plaza was designated a city park in 1856. City officials created several other parks, either in whole or in part, from communal pueblo lands. The 1889 Charter, created to help the city cope with rapid growth, included provisions for a Park Commission. This commission, like those of Eastern cities, conceptualized parks as places of genteel recreation for more affluent residents and tourists. As such, members largely concerned themselves with picturesque plantings and pathways. In the 1910s and 1920s, the commission also made arrangements for motion picture companies to use city parks for filming, and operated a series of municipal auto camps for tourists (Hunter 1933; Crawford 1955; Goldfarb 1988).

The early parks acquired through donation included Echo Park (1891) and Lafayette Park (1899). By far the most significant donation came in 1896, when local magnate Griffith J. Griffith gave the city 3,500 acres for Griffith Park, his "Christmas gift" to the City of the Angels. Griffith's donation afforded Los Angeles the largest urban park in the United States, yet the response of local political leaders was underwhelming. The park languished for years, suffering from illegal squatters and timber harvesters. Film production companies appropriated parkland for sets and film shoots (Griffith 1910).

In contrast to their lax attitudes towards the development of parks, city leaders carefully planned for population growth and a metropolitan economy. Critics have condemned Los Angeles as the epitome of unplanned sprawl, yet the city was intricately planned. Beginning in 1904, citizens approved a series of ordinances that identified districts intended to be used exclusively for residences and industry. Areas west of the commercial district were classified as "higher class" residential only, with some allowances for commercial establishments. A swath east and south of the Plaza, adjacent to the Los Angeles River, was one of two districts classified as industrial. "Residential only," in reality, meant white – Anglo Saxon and usually Protestant – only, and realtors and white homeowners' associations maintained this color line. In addition, regulations limited activities that produced noxious smells or other byproducts, such as the rendering of beef tallow. These same restrictions, however, often served as additional ways to segregate by race. A ban on laundries, for example, might formally prohibit a particular economic enterprise, but also served to exclude the Chinese who owned many such businesses (Hise 1997, 2001; Pitt and Pitt 1997: 93; Nicolaides 2002: 50).

In the same era that Los Angeles attempted to impose a planning and zoning system, the city pursued a new avenue in recreational policy. In

1904 the city was the one of the first in the nation to create a Department of Playgrounds and Recreation – a landmark in the national Playgrounds Movement. The Playground Movement asserted that parks could serve as places of physical recreation and interaction rather than just settings for aesthetic contemplation. This new movement, part of larger Progressive Era efforts to improve American life, did not completely abandon the elitist attitudes of earlier park proponents. The masses would now be encouraged to visit parks, but parks – and especially new playgrounds – were strictly controlled to ensure that everyone enjoyed recreation "properly." Far from just offering a place for play or relaxation, parks were charged with an essential mission. They were intended to keep the public physically and mentally active, ensuring their participation as productive members of society. Additional recreation programs, aimed not only at children but adult workers, were designed to teach immigrants to socialize with the larger population. Thus recreation could "Americanize" immigrants by teaching them to play, dress, and live as middle-class white Protestants did (Hunter 1933; Cavallo 1981; Goldfarb 1988).

This agenda also influenced the public school curriculum in Los Angeles. Students were taken on field trips to the La Brea Tar Pits, and on hikes to collect insects in the foothills and marine life in tidal pools. In the classroom, they were taught about conservation, and hunting that was "proper," rather than wasteful. The goal of this instruction was to help each student "better know himself as part of nature." Exposure to the outdoors was also intended to promote health. To that end, the city's school system experimented with outdoor "teaching porches," akin to the "sleeping porches" attached to many houses of the era, and provided instruction in physical activity and hygiene (Edwards 1914; Health Supervision in Los Angeles County Schools, n.d.).

Like city planners who divided residential areas from industrial ones, the Playground Department took as its mission the separation of spaces for safe, productive play, removed from the dangers of urban life. For the employees of the new department, children's play was serious business. On its annual reports the department emblazoned the motto: "The test of whether a civilization will live or die is the way it spends its leisure" (City of Los Angeles Department of Playgrounds and Recreation 1932; Hjelte 1978).

The Segregation of Recreational Space

California did not enshrine Jim Crow in its constitution, as happened in the American South. Nevertheless, racism could sometimes be just as pervasive in greater Los Angeles as in cities in the South, with African Americans often suffering as the targets of white hostility, as Sides (2003) and Flamming

(2005) document. A complex web of laws regulating housing, land ownership, labor, and marriage targeted people of color. These included laws banning interracial marriage, and "alien" land laws, which prevented immigrants – primarily Asians – from owning land. Immigration laws added another layer of coercion to the lives of Mexican Americans and Asian Americans. Los Angeles, however, differed from Southern cities, and indeed from almost all Eastern cities, because of its diversity. In the East, racial issues were almost always portrayed as a matter of black versus white. In Los Angeles, systematic racism, when manifested in recreational space, was most consistently targeted at African Americans. With the aid of national organizations such as the NAACP, African Americans combated the restriction of recreational space in a more systematic way than other non-whites.

Yet in Los Angeles, whites and blacks were only two groups within a racial and ethnic mix which included Mexicans, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos, as well as Native Americans, and even "ethnic" whites such as Jews or Italians, whose "whiteness" was questionable to nativist Anglo Americans. Boosters might try to sell Los Angeles and southern California as a balmy version of the Midwest, but even they could not entirely ignore its racial and ethnic diversity. The city's heterogeneity also fostered a sometimes remarkable degree of racial and ethnic interaction, as Wild (2005) found in central Los Angeles in the early twentieth century. For that matter, as Varzally (2008) documents, young people proved the most willing to bridge racial divides, from neighborhood friendships to shared popular culture and even romantic relationships (Anderson 1996; Taylor 1998; Nugent 1999; de Graaf, Mulroy, and Taylor 2001).

The ordinances that governed Los Angeles city parks, playgrounds, and other recreational areas in the first decades of the twentieth century made no reference to race. Indeed, it appears that parks and pools were initially integrated, though that did not necessarily mean that they were always welcoming. The first publication of the Playground Department depicts black and white children playing together. Later reports would occasionally show children who appear to be Mexican American, but black children would virtually disappear from Playground Department reports for decades. The reason for this remains unclear, but it seems likely that whites in Los Angeles were influenced by both national and local trends that were manifested in recreational policy (Wiltse 2007).

In the 1920s and 1930s, migration, both black and white, began to "Southernize" parts of the American North and West, as Gregory (1989) has illustrated. Large numbers of African Americans began the "Great Migration" out of the South in search of employment in the North, and to a lesser degree the West. Though still small compared to the African American population of major Eastern cities, Los Angeles' black community nevertheless expanded. The African American population of the city grew from 15,579 in 1920 to 63,774 by 1940, the largest of any city in the

far West. These new residents included a significant number of incipient middle-class African Americans drawn to the region for many of the same reasons as middle-class whites. Not just in flight from Southern oppression, these new arrivals were drawn by the prospect of a better life, in a city that seemed rife with opportunity, and fed their aspirations for the future (Flamming 2005). Despite restrictions, they could buy homes and cars, vote, and live lives that seemed filled with opportunity, particularly compared to the prospects of poor blacks in the Jim Crow South. In fact, they were not subject to the harsh immigration laws that affected Mexicans and Asians, and restrictions on "alien" land ownership. These African American migrants, therefore, possessed the resources to enjoy life and leisure in southern California, and the fact that they could stake a claim to the recreation and recreational space that stood at the core of the city's civic life and identity made them seem more of a threat to white dominance than poorer migrants or immigrants (Taylor 1998).

While "Okies" are associated with the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, significant numbers of poor whites from the South, Texas, and the Southwest began migrating to California and Los Angeles by the early 1920s, bringing their racial views with them. Likewise, while the Joad family in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) ended their migration in California's Central Valley, more such 1930s "Okie" migrants in fact settled not in the rural Central Valley, but instead in urban and suburban southern California (Gregory 1989: 41). By 1924, the editors of the *California Eagle*, the first African American newspaper in the city, fretted that "part of Texas seemed to have been transplanted in and near Los Angeles." The disappearance of blacks from printed representations of Los Angeles parks and playgrounds thus likely also represented a changing white population, and local white anxieties concerning the appearance of a growing African American presence by the 1920s (Gregory 1989: 6; Bass 1960: 55).

In Los Angeles, segregation and recreation collided over the issue of swimming at public pools and beaches. For segregationists, public bathing was a potentially explosive issue, mixing issues of race, gender, and the body in disturbing ways. Most public swimming pools in the United States were separated by gender in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the 1920s, however, many public pools dropped such restrictions, and men and women began to bathe together. The lessening of gender divisions, however, opened an even more explosive issue – race. For some whites, the prospect of males and females of different races swimming together in revealing swimming attire was unacceptable. Even among bathers of the same sex, sharing public changing rooms and showers forced a degree of physical intimacy that some found troubling. In 1920 the Playground Commission set aside Vignes Pool as the "Negro pool." By 1923, all city pools were segregated. In 1927 a group of African Americans asked that the Los Angeles City Council appoint an African American to the City

Parks Commission, no doubt hoping to end racist policies. Their request was denied. When the NAACP became involved, Los Angeles built Central Pool exclusively for blacks, hoping to preclude court action (Los Angeles City Council Minutes, July 7, 1927; Board of Park Commissioners 1928; Keil 1994; Wiltse 2007).

Swimming pool segregation limited non-white access to one of the most popular forms of recreation in the city. (One survey found swimming to be the single most popular mode of recreation for men under the age of 45, and women under the age of 35.) Neither backyard pools nor air conditioning would be common among middle-class residents until the 1950s and 1960s. Pools, like an array of weekend, afternoon, and evening recreational programs offered by city and county parks, drew legions of residents in the decades before television competed for the attention of Americans in their free time. As a result, public pools were crowded oases during the heat of summer, and popular for much of the rest of the year (Hartman 1942: 47).

Yet pools were just one place where people of different races might swim together. A far larger subject of contention was the 75-mile coastline of Los Angeles County. This expanse of sand and surf was the premier recreational amenity for the entire region – an unofficial "park" that served as public recreational space. During the 1920s, the Department of Playgrounds and Recreation estimated that on a summer weekend or holiday a half-million people converged at local beaches – a number representing a quarter or more of the total population of Los Angeles County at the time. Beaches were also a primary tourist destination. Various cities in LA County had already taken steps to police beaches, and maintain sanitation. By the 1920s, the city and county of Los Angeles began purchasing and managing beaches to ensure public access and urging voters to support more beachfront purchases. Political leaders, however, also had another agenda. White politicians feared that private ownership could mean non-white ownership, and this was a possibility they could not countenance for the region's most important recreational and tourist asset (City of Los Angeles Department of Playgrounds and Recreation 1928: 15; Pitt and Pitt 1997: 41–2).

The money for such purchases, as well as the maintenance of public beaches, initially came from taxpayers in individual beach municipalities. Yet the realization beaches were a regional resource led to new methods of assessment which more equitably spread the cost of the public beach system. Ultimately, all taxpayers in Los Angeles County paid for the beaches they enjoyed through either municipal taxes or county taxes and sometimes both. Yet at least one group of taxpayers was prohibited from the recreational resource they helped pay for. African Americans were banned from almost all beaches in Los Angeles County. Worse yet, they were forced to pay taxes to buy up even more beach land that would expressly prohibit them (Flamming 2002).

Plate 22.1 Grace Williams, Albert Williams, Mary Mingleton, and Willie Williams (no relation) at Santa Monica Beach, 1926. Courtesy Shade of LA Archives/Los Angeles Public Library.

This segregation appears to have happened at most beaches relatively early, whether through explicit ordinance or by custom. Blacks who arrived at local beaches did not necessarily need to see signs or encounter police to know to leave. As was the case with white homeowners, white beach-goers did not hesitate to confront African Americans – and others – who dared to enter a "public" beach. At one time, the only beach in Los Angeles County African Americans could visit was Bruce's Beach. George Peck, the developer of Manhattan Beach, set aside two blocks along the waterfront for use by non-whites when the city was incorporated in 1912. A black couple, Charles and Willa Bruce, bought the first two lots and began development of the resort known as Bruce's Beach. Peck assisted them in developing the beach area. Yet as the region's African American population grew, and the resort drew more and more black recreationalists, local whites became increasingly hostile. Members of the Ku Klux Klan tried to terrorize the Bruces by making threatening phone calls and attempting to set their house on fire. Blacks arriving for a day at the beach could face harassment, vandalism to their cars, and bogus signs proclaiming a ten-minute parking limit in the area. In spite of this, the resort endured.

In 1924, exasperated city officials, who lacked Peck's enlightened views, condemned the beach, claiming that it had been selected as the site of a

Plate 22.2 Ralph Bunche and friends at the beach, ca. 1923. Courtesy Shades of LA Archives/Los Angeles Public Library.

park. The Bruces and others sued. While the court ruled that they were guaranteed the right to buy other land in Manhattan Beach with the compensation they received for eviction, they were not allowed to buy beachfront property. The Bruces took their financial settlement and left the city (Rasmussen 2002).

African Americans could frequent the "Inkwell" in Santa Monica. That beach, at the terminus of Pico Boulevard – the site of a sewer outlet – ran only the width of the street. It became a black beach in 1924, likely in response to the impending closure of Bruce's Beach. Unlike Bruce's, the Inkwell remained in operation for years as the only beach open to African Americans. Even so, black beachgoers could still face harassment from local whites and police, and the city of Santa Monica shut down clubs that catered to blacks within walking distance (Flamming 2002).

As with swimming pools, African Americans fought back against the restriction of beaches. The NAACP even organized a "swim in" (akin to the "sit-ins" at segregated restaurants and other public facilities in the 1950s and 1960s). This resulted in the abandonment of an explicit policy of segregation at beaches and pools in the city of Los Angeles during the early 1930s. Yet the end of segregation at city beaches and pools by law did not mean the end of segregation of beaches in fact. For that matter, other communities maintained official segregation. In the 1940s, Mexican American high school students reported that some "public" beaches remained closed to them, kept all-white by aggressive local police or homeowners' associations. Others apparently tolerated Asian American, Mexican American, and African American visitors – but only as long as their attire

and haircuts were "clean-cut," and their numbers remained small. This *de facto* segregation suggests the type of discrimination that was likely most common at city and county pools, parks, and playgrounds. While county or city policies might not explicitly ban non-whites, local police, homeowners' groups, and average citizens could take on the role of self-appointed enforcers of white sentiment.

While African Americans and other people of color fought back against white attempts to control recreational space, they also created their own places of leisure. Despite pollution and the dangers of sudden floods, Mexican American children swam in the Los Angeles River and other watercourses. Another favorite swimming spot was a water-filled quarry called Sleepy Lagoon. This swimming hole grew popular as a place where young Mexican Americans could enjoy swimming and socializing without the hostility they might encounter at Anglo-dominated public swimming pools. It would become best remembered for its association with the Sleepy Lagoon trial of 1942, at which twelve Mexican American youths were convicted of the murder, and five others of the assault, of another youth, José Diaz. The convictions were later overturned, but the trial remains a landmark in the history of Anglo American fears about "Mexican" violent crime (Pagán 2003; see also chapter 6, this volume).

The recreational habits of Asian Americans varied widely by generation. Conservative views brought from the homeland about the mingling of men and women, or the public visibility of married women and unmarried daughters, limited the recreational activity of some Asian Americans. Many younger, American-born Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans, however, frequented beaches and parks as regularly as Anglos did. They usually encountered less overt racism than African Americans, though there have been episodic cases of violent anti-Asian behavior, most notably a race riot that resulted in the deaths of nineteen Chinese, shot or lynched by a white mob in 1871 (see chapter 7, this volume), and the vocal local support for Japanese American internment during World War II.

Despite its efforts to restrict and segregate recreational areas, city government facilitated inter- and intraracial and ethnic sports competition. Individuals of all races participated in the team sports leagues organized by the Department of Playgrounds and Recreation, from basketball to baseball and soccer. These teams were often organized by race and ethnicity. They therefore functioned as a form of socialization within individual racial and ethnic groups, but could also facilitate socialization between different groups when they met on the court or playing field. At times children of different races played together, regardless of what their parents thought. While many pools, beaches, and parks were off-limits – or at least hostile – to African Americans, an exception was Lincoln Park, which, due to its proximity to both East Los Angeles and the neighborhoods that came to be

called South Central, attracted both black and Mexican children who took mass transit to play in the park (Sides 2003: 21–2).

The segregation of recreational areas, or the outright banning of some groups, was certainly the most obvious variety of racial bias in the development of the Los Angeles city and county park and recreation systems. Yet more subtle forms of discrimination were far more pervasive, and just as damaging. Funding – or more accurately, a lack of funding – for recreational spaces and amenities in non-white areas of the city and county functioned as a pernicious form of fiscal discrimination. Since local assessments funded parks and playgrounds, affluent neighborhoods could more easily pay for such amenities. After World War II crime – and a fear among some white residents that parks were havens for crime rather than spaces for leisure – became a common concern.

One early example of this was the privileging of Pershing Square over the Plaza, and then Pershing's subsequent decline. While the Plaza originally served as the city's focal park, by 1900 government attention – and money – had shifted to the "South Plaza," or "Central Park," a square in the heart of what was then the Central Business District. This park was subsequently renamed Pershing Square. The Plaza was retained as a part of the historicist makeover of Olvera Street, as the city attempted to transform what had been a center of the city's Mexican American community into a shopping and tourist attraction. Pershing Square's fountain and lush landscaping made it a favorite lunchtime gathering place for white-collar workers. As downtown declined, however, Pershing Square also lost its luster. The park became a focus of LAPD surveillance due to its popularity as a place for drug dealing, protests, and covert meeting for gay men. The city passed ordinances banning alcohol and vagrants, and ultimately gouged out the park in the 1950s, leaving only a sparse garnish of greenery atop a subterranean parking structure. The parking was intended for white professionals, and the removal of trees and foliage made it easier for police to perform surveillance. It also made Pershing Square a far less pleasant place to linger. The Department of Recreation and Parks described the new park design as a "see-through, walk-through park" (Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, n.d.; McClung, 2000; Estrada, 2008).

Los Angeles, Leisure, and the Shaping of Postwar America

World War II brought new challenges to Los Angeles. The city's industrial base expanded as wartime munitions and aircraft factories opened, precipitating an influx of industrial workers and military personnel. The city had to accommodate these new arrivals, as well as plan for the future. Yet World War II did not simply increase the population of the Los Angeles region. It also accelerated the region's demographic diversity. The number of black

Angelenos, for example, jumped from 64,000 in 1940 to more than 171,000 in 1950. Anglo Angelenos were on the move as well. They moved to new developments in the San Fernando Valley and Orange County where homebuilders could acquire affordable land, secure Federal Housing Administration mortgage insurance, and court buyers with Veterans Administration loans to make home ownership feasible. The same government assistance – as well as the new federal freeway system – made the mass suburbanization of the US possible.

This new national suburban landscape owed much to federal policy that had shaped Los Angeles during World War II. The ubiquitous postwar "Ranch" house incorporated hallmarks of the more exclusive homes constructed in Palm Springs and other southern California resorts. The movement of family social life and leisure time into the backyard, and the construction of patios, barbecues, and swimming pools, allowed suburbanites to live a resort lifestyle year-round, at least as long as weather permitted. Perhaps the most striking manifestation of this was the backyard swimming pool, which before World War II had been a luxury for the wealthy. In 1949 there were 10,000 private swimming pools in the United States. In 1959 there would be more than 250,000; 90,000 were located in Los Angeles (Keil 1994: 32; van Leeuwen 1998).

Postwar prosperity, at least for Anglos, ensured that private leisure and private nature, rather than public, would dominate Los Angeles. Backyards and private swimming pools became the preferred leisure areas for middle-class homeowners. The same federal programs that facilitated home ownership for millions also encouraged residential segregation. While Federal Housing Administration mortgage guarantees and Veterans Administration loans were theoretically available to all, the loans were managed not by the federal government, but by local banks – banks that refused to offer loans to African Americans or other non-whites. As a result, the most famous postwar suburb in the US, Levittown, on New York's Long Island, was the whitest community in America, because it did not have a single black resident.

In Los Angeles, postwar growth exacerbated existing problems. The number of parks in the city, and especially in the county, did increase in the postwar era. Yet it was too little and too late. Park acquisition simply could not keep up with population growth and the spread of residential and commercial development across the landscape. Moreover, most of the new parks were placed in suburban neighborhoods rather than in the crowded non-white areas of the city and county that needed these most. At this time fulfilling the recreational needs of residents in the city and county was probably unattainable. The only hope was to try to keep pace, and prevent shortages from becoming more severe. Yet many in local government seemed as indisposed as ever to addressing the issue. Even the Watts riot of 1965 did not spur large-scale action on parks.

A 1967 report, "The Challenge of Leisure: A Southern California Case Study," laid out the region's problems in stark terms: "Dozens of square miles in Los Angeles, lying mainly to the south and east of the park-like sections of Beverly Hills, West Los Angeles and Santa Monica, are covered with urban sprawl virtually unrelieved by green open spaces of any sort.… Statistically, Los Angeles has *less than* one acre of neighborhood and community recreational facilities per 1,000 population." Further, the city had passed up opportunities to buy up large tracts in the Santa Monica Mountains. Overall, the report concluded, the city that had once sold itself as America's playground, a city in a garden, now met less than 10 percent of its residents' need for recreational space (Southern California Research Council 1967).

For the rest of the twentieth century, Los Angeles would remain profoundly shaped by the visions of its nineteenth-century boosters, who promoted southern California as a pastoral frontier of leisure for middle-class Anglo Americans, a place designed for recreation in nature. A public conceptualization of nature and outdoor recreation did provide a crucial, if contested, public space for Angelenos. Parks, pools, and beaches, no matter how restricted by racism or neglected by developers' greed or politicians' indifference, were public spaces where residents of the city met, sometimes quarreled, and sometimes mingled. Yet a private conceptualization of nature could not accommodate massive population growth nor provide for all those it excluded. This would become an increasingly dire problem, one still unresolved by the city in the early twenty-first century.

The study of recreation in Los Angeles illustrates many themes of the city's history. It also shows that recreation is central to many aspects of urban and social history. Unequal access to recreation, recreational space, and recreational funding could and can still be found in many cities. Cities in the US South unsurprisingly segregated recreational areas and provided precious little in the way of recreational amenities for African Americans. Yet it was an issue in other places as well, from Seattle to Chicago. Chicago's race riot of 1919 began when a black swimmer, a 17-year-old boy, drifted into a white-only beach on Lake Michigan (Klingle 2006; Chicago Commission on Race Relations 1922). While historians of civil rights have justifiably focused on struggles for political or educational equality, recreational equality proved an important issue as well. The officials of the Los Angeles Playgrounds Department had pursued the "correct" supervision of leisure with a particular single-mindedness in the early twentieth century. While their views on race were highly problematic, their belief that recreation was a serious matter can be instructive. Recreation and its promotion helped create the modern megalopolis of Los Angeles, and it remains essential to fully understanding its history.

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Chapter Twenty-three

Landscapes of Health and Rejuvenation

David Sloane

Aren't you tired of the doctoring and nursing,
Of the "sickly winters" and the pocket pills –
Tired of sorrowing and burying, and cursing,
At Providence and undertaker's bills?

Don't be afraid; you don't need defenses;
This heavenly day breeds not a stormy end;
Lay down your arms! Cut off your war expenses!
The weather is your friend!
"Invitation to California"
(Charlotte Perkins (Stetson) Gilman, 1885)

Suffering from "mental prostration" and feeling "feeble and hopeless," Charlotte Perkins (Stetson) Gilman set forth in 1885 "armed with tonics and sedatives, to cross the continent" where weather could be friend not foe (Baur 1959). In the first year after arriving in Pasadena, the pioneer feminist wrote thirty-three short articles and twenty-three poems, including an "Invitation to California." Her sense of rejuvenation was similar to that felt by thousands of "health-seekers" who traveled west in the years after the railroad came to Los Angeles. Attracted by a kinder climate, lured by booster promotion, and enabled by inexpensive travel costs, they poured into the region, helping transform a sleepy backwater into a major metropolis.[1]

A slick promotional campaign informed Americans they could enjoy a "palms to pines" lifestyle, while letters sent home reminded friends and relatives they could own chickens, grow oranges, and afford a small bungalow. Ironically, many of those who came were ill with respiratory and other illnesses, creating the need for an increasingly sophisticated medical

system. The region's public officials relied on contemporary views on race and ethnicity to shape their scientific responses to contagion and infection.

Los Angeles presented a paradox. It was a city of golden sunsets, shimmering beaches, and snow-capped mountains populated by physically active and too often (for the rest of the country) beautiful people (whether originally or artificially) and a city of smog, polluted water, and a setting for a deeply divided population whose healthcare system served the rich much more effectively than the poor. It was a region where boosters such as Dr. Remondino asserted that a person could gain ten or twenty years of life due to the 'rejuvenating influence" of the climate and natural surroundings, but whose civic leaders refused to publish a report from Olmsted and Bartholomew laying out a plan for new parks, resulting in the current city having a deficit of parkland (Zimmerman 2008: 51; Hise and Deverell 2000).

Health-Seekers

Location and climate have played an important role in the city's development. Each year, Rose Bowl parade commentators make the obligatory reference to the warm sunshine on New Year's Day, while blimps point their cameras toward the sea and mountains between floats and forward passes. Climate has become both a cliché and a powerful lure for visitors, some of whom became residents (Winther 1946; McWilliams 1973; Zimmerman 2008). City boosters have long viewed climate as a critical component of the Los Angeles story, though we may cringe at some elements of those narratives.

In 1874, Benjamin Cummings Truman, a distinguished Civil War correspondent, authored *Semi-Tropical California*. In it, he argued that the city had a "genial" climate "noted for its healthfulness" (Truman 1874: 31; Winthur 1946; Starr 1985). Truman believed that if "eastern invalids" who foolishly went to Cuba, Florida, and the Mediterranean could learn about Los Angeles, "how many, many hundreds of lives might be spared yearly, and how many delicate constitutions might be made strong forever" (p. 32). His tract was followed by dozens of others proclaiming the climate's benefits, providing information on the area, and guiding health-seekers to services and lodging.

As John Baur (1959) first detailed, and Emily Abel (2006) and Tom Zimmerman (2008) have reminded us, health-seekers were leading boosters for the region. Charles Dwight Willard, Frank Wiggins, and Harry Chandler came to Los Angeles for their health, only to serve as key personnel in the drive to develop and expand the city. Supported by railroad connections and a growing agricultural and industrial economy, these boosters

were able to sell the city and region as a "land of sunshine" where both sick and healthy could come to develop new lives (Miller 1982; Wrobel 2002).

Ministering to the Wants of the Afflicted

In 1875, Dr. G. W. Linton remarked, "We in Los Angeles have a larger percentage of doctors in relation to the population than in any other city I know" (Splitter 1969: 533). Whether Dr. Linton was correct is uncertain, but in an age when physicians were still relatively in short supply, Los Angeles appears to have had a surplus. As Splitter (1969: 533) noted, in 1890, the city counted one doctor for every 273 residents. The number of physicians led to a wealth of health facilities, many serving those health-seekers suffering from respiratory diseases (Kress and Lindley 1910; Baur 1959; Miller 1982; Wrobel 2002).

Los Angeles' first hospital was opened by the Sisters of Charity in 1856.[2] After two years at the Aguilar adobe on Spring Street, the hospital moved to a second adapted residence on Ann Street near Main. In their new hospital, with its second floor porch and surrounding orange, pepper, and walnut trees, the nuns spared no effort "to minister to the wants of the afflicted … the burning fever is quenched by healing medicine administered by the hands of the ministering angels" (*Los Angeles Star*, 1858). Later, the staff of Los Angeles' Children's Hospital (1901) cared for young patients in a federal-styled home whose pillared porch welcomed the children and their families. Orthopaedic Hospital's (1922) first medical staff worked in a reconditioned stable on the downtown Singleton estate (Newmark 1952: 170).

Many visitors were cared for in rest or old age homes rather than hospitals. Architectural historians of the region have largely ignored the activities of some prominent designers responding to this need. In 1916, for instance, African American architect Paul Williams drew plans for an old age home sponsored by the Western Baptist Association of Southern California. Myron Hunt did the same in 1928 for the Hebrew Home for the Aged. Other architects and contractors were involved with a Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People, Swedish Pacific Home for the Aged, Pacific German Methodist Old People's Home, and Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged.

Starting in the late nineteenth century, new diagnostic technologies allowed physicians to better understand the internal manifestations of disease. Professionalized nursing produced a more sophisticated level of care. Dramatically improved operating conditions resulted in a vast expansion of general surgery. These changes were foundational for the general public's acceptance of the hospital as a medical necessity (Sloane and Conant Sloane 2003). While most historians have focused on the medical systems of older

Plate 23.1 As a destination for health-seekers, southern California quickly developed a healthcare infrastructure, represented here by California Hospital. Its design is transitional. Up to this time the facade of the hospital had looked like a home rather than a sophisticated medical facility. USC Digital Archive, ca. 1910. Courtesy of University of Southern California, on behalf of the USC Special Collections.

American cities, southern California clinical interiors were being transformed by the addition of new machinery, improved surgical facilities, and the adoption of new practices.

Architectural historian Annmarie Adams (1999) has argued that as late as the interwar period, hospitals were "modern in [their] spatial attitudes, not necessarily [their] look." Southern California hospitals were indicative of her claim that architects clothed "modern plans in historic dress in order to smooth the effects of social change." California Hospital (1898), the first purpose-built hospital in the city, was promoted as "An Elegant Hotel for the Sick," and looked more like one of the period's luxury hotels than a modern hospital (Harnagel 1971; Bennett 1993). An advertisement highlighted the one hundred sunny rooms, "furniture made especially for this Hospital," and the "five delightful Verandahs"; it also promoted the "two well equipped Operating Rooms" with "every modern facility for the treatment of … patients." In Los Angeles and other cities, medical professionals were living through a period of rapid change in institutions and in procedures.

Case studies of local hospitals and a broader overview of the system emerging at the turn of the twentieth century will help us better understand the medical system and its role in the development of the region.

Not the Right Kind of People for Los Angeles

At the same time, civic boosters began to worry that too many health-seekers would make the region less attractive and curtail growth. Ironically, it was a health-seeker, Charles Dwight Willard, who voiced this concern most forcefully. Abel (2006) describes Willard's thirty year struggle with tuberculosis even as he became a successful journalist and booster in Los Angeles (Coulton 1971; Deverell 2004). Although he encountered discrimination due to his illness, he consistently wrote about the dangers posed by indigent health-seekers. In 1902 Willard opposed the expansion of the Los Angeles County Hospital. The current facilities were widely found wanting. Willard argued that new facilities would simply serve as an "invitation to indigent invalids from all over the Union to come to this county" (Abel 2006: 81–2). Although the hospital did expand, the number of buildings was cut in half.

Those suffering from tuberculosis knew discrimination in housing and other domains (Abel 2006; Molina 2006). In 1904, a woman who applied for assistance from the Los Angeles Ladies and Hebrew Benevolent Society reported that every effort to find housing failed after people found out her husband was ill with consumption. Willard felt that as "indigent Jews, the [family] represented the kind of people who did not belong in the city he was trying to create" (Abel 2006: 117). The Society did help the family – by paying for their return trip to New York. Abel (2006, 2007) reminds us that such a solution would have fit with Willard's view of how all such indigent health-seekers should be handled, even as he, following a devastating fire that destroyed his family's home in 1910, was forced to depend on the kindness of friends and colleagues. In the "better city" that civic leaders such as Willard imagined Los Angeles becoming by the first decade of the new century, the landscape of health and rejuvenation had a very clear white middle-class frame (Bartlett 1907).

A Better City: Spreading the Gospel of Los Angeles

A generation after Gilman came and went from Pasadena, Progressive booster Dana Bartlett (1907) spoke of Los Angeles "growing as a giant grows," yet capable perhaps, if current trends continued, of being a place where "unnecessary disease and death may be eliminated." In his "better city," residents would "spread the gospel" of "a life in the open air as the

only proper mode of life for human beings," as well as create the healthcare and preventive institutions necessary to root out tuberculosis and the other scourges plaguing America's cities, especially their poor.

Bartlett's vision included sweeping away physical remnants of disorder through tenement controls and of social disorder through such programs as the "helping station" intended as a place "where the worthy poor may come and receive treatment and instruction from competent physicians" (Bartlett 1907: 156). Progressives developed or enacted a wide range of programs and regulations to create the "better city." Jennifer Koslow (2001, 2002, 2004), for instance, tells of how Progressives responded to the nationwide concerns about milk production, and its ties to consumption. Her narrative reminds us of the role tuberculosis played in the politics, social life, and culture of Los Angeles.

As more people migrated to the city for jobs and other prosaic reasons, Los Angeles remained a haven for those seeking to renew their health. We commonly associate the sanatorium with the late nineteenth century because of the fame of early pioneers such as Dr. Edward Trudeau's 1883 Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium at Saranac Lake, New York. Yet, a 1930s federal survey found ten times as many places to care for adults and children with tuberculosis as existed in 1905; some 510 sanatoria and preventoria, as well as 630 hospital wards devoted to tuberculosis, had been opened, for a total of 1,400 facilities (Murray 2004). In the "sanitarium belt" that stretched across the San Gabriel Mountains a new generation of health-seekers sought refuge, rejuvenation, and cure.

The sanatoria were part of a rapid expansion of specialized medical care facilities, typically associated with the middle-class acceptance of the general hospital. Physicians increasingly encouraged sanatorium care in the early twentieth century, just as they did care during birth or surgery. As one contemporary physician stated in a pamphlet about a local facility, "prompt hospitalization increases the possibility of complete recovery and prevents continued infection of others in the community" (Bryer 1937). The sanatoria represented a faith in institutionalization reminiscent of the era's growing reliance on institutionalized medicine.

Of course, in southern California, efforts to house health migrants had begun long before the sanatorium age. The grand Hotel Coronado, which initially promoted itself as a "sanitarium and pleasant seaside resort" on the beach off San Diego, symbolized such places (Kelly 2002: 335). As the tubercular epidemic developed, many general hospitals refused to admit contagious or infectious patients (Fifield 1933). Sanatoria became essential in such a situation.

The speed of response was startling. In Redlands, "The Settlement," a tent hospital for tubercular patients, opened in 1900; Idyllwild Sanatorium followed in 1901, Barlow Sanatorium in Los Angeles in 1902, and Pottenger Sanatorium in Monrovia in 1903. The Los Angeles Sanatorium (City of

Plate 23.2 Dr. Welwood Murray was so impressed by the climate in Palm Springs, he established a sanitarium there. Many hotels began by serving health-seekers, helping to create the region's tourism industry. USC Digital Archive, 1903. Courtesy of University of Southern California, on behalf of the USC Special Collections.

Hope) was part of a second phase in the nineteen-teens. A third phase came in the 1920s, with Olive View. At least forty tuberculosis sanatorium or hospital wards devoted to tuberculosis patients had been established in southern California by the 1930s. The San Gabriel Valley became known as the "Sanitarium Belt," with sanatoria dotting the cities of Altadena, Pasadena, Sierra Madre, Monrovia, and Duarte (Fifield 1933).

Strikingly, given the association of southern California with the tuberculosis epidemic, its many facilities, and longtime population of sufferers, relatively few general works on the epidemic have focused on the region. With the exception of Abel and Molina, tuberculosis has been told as a national social and medical story in which the place of TB, and particularly the sanatorium as a building, has played a minor role (Bates 1992; Feldberg 1995; Ott 1996; Deverell 2004; Abel, 2006, 2007; Molina 2006). While Yanni (2007) has recently produced an overview of American asylums, we still await one on sanatoria. How were sites selected? What were the land politics around the development of new sanatoria in the

growing regions of the San Gabriel Valley? How did events in Los Angeles and surrounding cities mirror those in other places in the United States, and around the world?

We do know from contemporary sources that sanatorium style matured as the epidemic evolved. When the Barlow Sanatorium opened in Los Angeles a generation after Trudeau's cabins, the founder, Walter Jarvis Barlow, designed a modified cure cottage; like Trudeau's, it was a simple wood building, but Barlow added a large screened porch, two sitting side porches, two small bedrooms, and a tiny adjoining bathroom (Carrington 1914: 177). Small, wooden cure cottages were flexible and cheap to build. As new funds were raised, cottages were constructed. At Barlow, and sites across the nation, the result was a small village of cottages spread out among the trees and shrubs.[3]

We know less about life inside the sanatoria. In the 1905 *Annual Report* of the Barlow Sanatorium, the managers laid out rules governing patient care and activities. One stipulated that "when the doctors think them able, every patient must do some work about the Sanatorium or go away." Surviving diaries and annual reports from other institutions describe a routinized life of eating, resting, and, for some, recreating. We await a study drawn from these diaries and institutional records.

Studies of a special class of sanatoria, the preventorium, intended for children exposed to tuberculosis but not yet symptomatic, could be useful for southern California. Though relatively rare, a government report found only thirty-one nationwide in 1940 ("Tuberculosis Facilities in the United States," 1940: 803), but California was home to fully one-quarter. The Los Angeles Tuberculosis Association maintained a health camp in San Gabriel Canyon for children who lived a life of regulated eating and exercise, all conducted with as little clothing as possible so their bodies could soak in the sunshine. At the preventorium in the hills, the children's diets were watched carefully, with generous meals (and four glasses of milk) part of a rigidly maintained routine.

Amazingly, within two generations, the development of efficacious medical treatments largely made such facilities obsolete. Most sanatoria were shuttered, but a few persevered. City of Hope, in Duarte, California, for instance, transitioned in 1946 into a medical center focused on cancer and other diseases (Golter 1954). Seaview Hospital (New York City) administrators proclaimed victory in a Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* photograph.[4] As the accompanying text states, "A year ago, hopeless and with nothing to lose, [these six men tried] a new miracle drug." Now, the empty chairs represent two men who have already gone home, Choy Kow is dressed to join them, and the remaining three "are showing marked improvement." An empty chair in earlier decades would have represented another death; here it signified the end of the need for a sanatorium. While doctors noted that the word "cured" "is never used at Seaside," the white plague was now arrested.

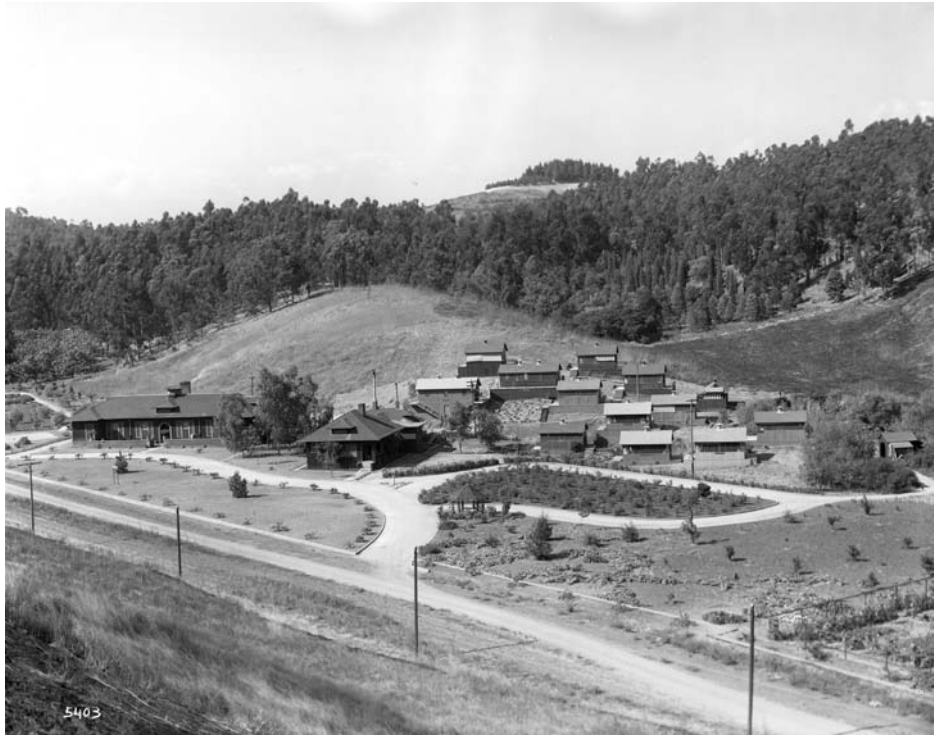

Plate 23.3 Sanitariums were often located in an isolated natural setting, such as Elysian Park, the home of Los Angeles County's Barlow Sanatorium. Individual bungalows were constructed as needed, with the rationale that the wood units could be destroyed as easily as they were built. USC Digital Archive, 1915. Courtesy of University of Southern California, on behalf of the USC Special Collections.

A Plague in Our House

Ironically, Choy Kow's presence in that photograph calls attention to the myriad ways that Asian, Latino, and African American minority populations were discriminated against in the land of sunshine. While the history of medical practice in Los Angeles is relatively sparse in comparison to New York, Boston, or Chicago, California has become the subject for a growing literature on the intersection of race, ethnicity, and public health.

Bartlett extolled the "magnificent hospitals," "aroused social consciousness," and comforts "for the aging poor," but he also pulled back from earlier claims that had propelled the migration of health-seekers. He quoted medical authorities on the faulty relationship between climate and cure for tuberculosis. Dr. Woods Huntington of a local sanitarium argued "climate is of little importance," while well-known physician George Kress flatly stated that there "is no such thing as a specific climate in tuberculosis."

Patients, particularly those who could not afford the expenses of the private sanatoria, were advised that the "mass of tuberculosis patients should be treated in or near their homes, and the southern and southwestern climates used only as a luxury for those who afford them" (Bartlett 1907: 146–56; McWilliams 1973: 99–100).

As recent scholarship has documented, public officials, supported by private civic groups, systematically disrupted ethnic neighborhoods, targeted poor and ethnic communities, and crafted public policies that provided services and yet dis-served those communities. The history of public health policy and programming is one of the most exciting areas of research. Books and articles by Emily Abel (2006, 2007), William Deverell (1999, 2004), and Natalia Molina (2006) show how fears of contagious disease were associated with targeted communities and demonstrate at every turn how those policies were shaped by racism that repels today's reader. Further discussion of the treatment African Americans have endured and the administrative and programmatic changes in public health systems in the latter decades of the twentieth century are particularly needed.

An Alternative Approach to Health

From the mid-1920s until the start of World War II, naturopath Dr. Philip M. Lovell [originally Morris Saperstein] wrote a health advice column for the *Los Angeles Times*. Lovell encouraged his readers to integrate health into their routine diet, drinks, and habits. He strenuously advocated for physical activity. He also told readers that they needed to build homes that enabled them to live healthier lives. In 1928, Lovell asked architect Richard Neutra to design such a home for him. The resulting "health house" became an acknowledged masterpiece of modern architecture and a window into the alternative landscape of health in twentieth-century southern California (Neutra 1930; Upton 1998; Marmorstein 2002).

Lovell invited his readers to visit his new home. Apparently some 5,000 Angelenos drove, walked, or bused to the house on Dundee Drive in the Loz Feliz hills (Marmorstein 2002: 255). What they found was a sleek, modern building of "steel and slurry," tiered to fit the sloping site, and filled with modern health-oriented conveniences. As Lovell wrote, the house might be unaffordable for many, but the "dozens and dozens of health features, designs, and construction [could] be incorporated into the humblest cottage." These included the steel which made the house "fireproof, verminproof, and quakeproof"; the bathrooms with their "sitz baths, multiple marathon showers and the latest type of sanitary features"; bedrooms equipped with "porches so that sleeping can be done outdoors"; and a kitchen which incorporated the "principles of hygiene and sanitation" as well as "labor-saving devices so dear to the average woman," including

Plate 23.4 Philip Lovell commissioned Richard Neutra to design an ideal southern California home by integrating the indoors with the landscape beyond. The resulting "Health House" (1927–9) used modern building materials to create an open residence with access to the surrounding lawns for outdoor leisure and play. Security Pacific Collection, Los Angeles Public Library, n.d.

an electric dishwasher, vegetable-washer, water filter, coffee and grain grinders, and "heaps of closet space" (Lovell 1929).

Lovell promoted indirect interior lighting as helpful for our eyes. "We do most of our reading at night – yet very little consideration is paid to the lighting system in our homes" (Lovell 1930a). During three years of planning one can only imagine the number of times Lovell reminded Neutra of the need for windows, porches, and access to light and nature. The result was spectacular. Lovell proudly proclaimed that the house had "a greater profusion of [windows] than in any home I have ever seen." Extensive fenestration allowed for nude sun baths "privately taken by each [family] member." Then, they surrounded the house with playgrounds and an outdoor "schoolroom" where children could learn "carpenter work, clay modeling and other hand tools," and engage in swimming, basketball, and handball. Lovell's house was a physical embodiment of the liveliness of alternative medicine (to use the current term) in Los Angeles. Strikingly, Lovell wrote the newspaper column because one of his patients, Harry Chandler, was publisher of the paper and a fervent believer in chiropractics (McDougal 2001).

Plate 23.5 Herbal remedies, such as those sold at the T. Leung Herb Co. ("under the same manager since 1896"), located at 711 S. Main St., were one type of alternative/complementary medicine long a part of Los Angeles healthcare. Often associated with minority communities, such non-mainstream practices were widely accepted, as suggested by the local newspaper's health column written by naturopath Philip Lovell. Shades of LA Archives, Los Angeles Public Library, n.d.

While Lovell extolled southern California's healthfulness, Morris Feisbein, editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, who visited Los Angeles in 1930, asserted the city "was known throughout the medical world as one of the richest stomping grounds in the country for medical quackery and 'cultism'" (January 3, 1930). In Fishbein's view the region was a haven "for old people who have come from the East suffering from all manner of chronic diseases" who were protected inadequately by state laws limiting medical licensing. Such people "try any and all things from strange healers to faith cures."

When writer Louis Adamic arrived in Los Angeles in the early 1920s, he found "no end of chiropractors, osteopaths, 'drugless physicians,' faith healers, health lecturers, manufacturers and salesman of all sorts of health 'stabilizers' and 'normalizers,' psychoanalysts, phynotists, mesmerists, the flow-of-life mystics, astro-therapeutists, miracle men and women" (Adamic 1932: 219; quoted in Abel 2006: 159). Little has been written about the health faddists in California. We have only snippets of scholarship rather

than a comprehensive portrait of such practices. Yet as one opponent wrote, "there is a chiropractor at every cross-roads, and in such sinks of imbecility as Los Angeles, they are as thick as bootleggers" (Whorton 2002: 182).

Even as we need scholarship to deepen our understanding of the competing medical systems of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we could also profit from work that considers the broad relationship of health and religion in this rapidly changing city. Fragmentary evidence suggests that the practitioners of "drugless medicine" and natural cures were closely connected with unconventional faith groups. In the nineteenth century Christian Science pioneer Mary Baker Eddy promoted natural healing, leading one Los Angeles family to write to her that just by reading her *Science and Health* to their son, his rickety bones "grew perfectly straight" (Whorton 2002: 124). In the early twentieth century, osteopaths were graduating students from two colleges.

In addition, Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican communities continued to embrace traditional medical practices viewed as unconventional in America. A family snapshot caught a young man standing by a gleaming car outside T. E. Leung's herbal company in 1896. As the store's sign proclaimed, "Pure Natural Herb Remedies Good For All Aliments."[5] Historical studies would illuminate the history of these communities, and deepen our understanding of the complex interactions between competing medical systems. Currently, over 40 percent of Americans utilize alternative medicine, spending just under $43 billion (Eisenberg et al. 1998). While many studies suggest a dramatic growth in Americans' adoption of alternatives, case studies might reveal a longstanding commitment.

Smog Obscures the Landscape

Fifteen years after Lovell invited the public to his "home for health," the city underwent an attack that demonstrated the threat industrialization and a growing reliance on the car posed to the city's healthfulness. In July 1943, Los Angeles residents began complaining to their public health officials about eye and throat irritation (Brienes 1976). At first, the *Los Angeles Times* could casually note that the "atmosphere in the downtown area stunk – reeked yesterday." Yet by July 26 a "thick, smoky cloud, heavier by far than any experienced before" descended over downtown, cutting visibility to three blocks. Throughout the following months the crisis deepened, with the city taking repeated action to limit industrial pollutants from causing further damage. It all led up to what Reyner Banham (2000) characterizes as Black Wednesday, September 8, 1943, when the city experienced a "dim-out."

As Banham reminds us, the real impact was psychological. "The communal trauma of Black Wednesday … has left permanent scars, because it

Plate 23.6 This view of the bungalows, beach, dock, and coast from Santa Monica's palisades represents an iconic representation of Los Angeles as a place of healthy activity. USC Digital Archive, ca. 1930. Courtesy of University of Southern California, on behalf of the USC Special Collections.

broke the legend of the land of eternal sunshine" (p. 198). Commentators began to worry that Los Angeles was not the "better city" that defied the industrial heartaches of the Midwestern heartland. The environmental concerns apparent to early twenty-first century residents were now clearly evident to anyone who was willing to face the truth of air, water, and ground pollution arising from a dependence on automobiles, a commitment to industrial growth, and a devotion to an urban form that produced polycentric nodes scattered throughout the region.

Public policy to manage the ravages of the industrial society started in the Progressive Era (Johnson 2005). Later, California emerged as a leader in efforts to minimize air and water pollution with such pioneering legislation as the 1967 automobile emission standards (Gonzalez 2002). Over the next half-century, such concerns would grow exponentially as the region's population skyrocketed, its impact on the land grew geometrically, and the injustices associated with these changes became more widely known (Pulido 2004). Of the many possible examples, continuing concerns about air quality stand out. Although the United States, prodded by California, adopted restrictions on automobile air emissions, the public's health remains endangered. This risk is not equitably shared according to studies done by local

scholars. In "Breathless in Los Angeles," University of Southern California environmental health specialists demonstrate that severe consequences, such as reduced lung function, are related to exposure to air pollution (Künzli et al. 2003). Further studies show that such exposure is dramatically elevated for those living close to a freeway. Unfortunately, that means that poor and minority communities are much more likely to be affected.

Trails, Beaches, and an Outdoors Life

The irony of smog is that many Americans continue to believe that Los Angeles epitomizes a life of recreation and physical activity. As Carey McWilliams (1973: 111) wrote, in southern California the "cult of the body" takes the form of an enormous interest in sports, in sports ware, in the cult of nudism … in sun-bathing and surf-bathing, and in open civic planning." Just as newcomers discarded their heavy curtains for venetian blinds, they did the same with their "hats, overcoats, umbrellas, vests." Here, he imagined, people "thaw out." From Muscle Beach to the Memorial Coliseum, southern California became a haven of formal and informal sports.

Recreation was a recommended treatment for respiratory diseases, so the development of a wide variety of facilities and programs around Los Angeles is not surprising. At the 1923 National Tuberculosis Association meeting, Los Angeles physician George Dock (1923) argued that a balanced program of "rest, exercise, air, light, and food" would stem the disease's effects. Many early resorts, trail camps, and beach hotels responded directly to such a prescription.

Dana Bartlett (1907: 151) wrote: "Los Angeles has become an educational center for the spread of the gospel of 'a life in the open air as the only proper mode of life for human beings.'" Thaddeus S. C. Lowe was among the entrepreneurs who developed facilities for the open air life. Lowe started building his resort complex in Rubio Canyon in the 1890s. Although it lasted less than a decade, it was indicative of the numerous trail camps and ring of more elaborate resorts constructed through the San Gabriel and Sierra Madre Mountains. Before the Angeles Crest Highway brought cars to the mountains, small-gauge railways, minimally developed roads, or arduous trails were the only ways into the facilities, which, in the opinion of Abraham Hoffman (1968, 1976), made them particularly desirable to the health-seeker generation.

While hikers conquered the mountains, surfers, swimmers, and volleyball players romped in the sand. Ocean swimming as a form of exercise is as old as the settlements of the area, while surfing and organized volleyball are largely a twentieth-century phenomenon. Surfing came first, propelled by George Freeth, the man who "walked on the waters," according to Ian

Plate 23.7 Six riders of the Los Angeles Bicycle Club pose with their decorated bicycles at the Fiesta de las Flores, ca. 1887. Bicycle clubs proliferated in Los Angeles, one more representation of the "cult of the body" that provided part of the foundation for modern recreational culture. USC Digital Archive, ca.1887. Courtesy of University of Southern California, on behalf of the USC Special Collections. California Historical Society Collection.

Whitcomb's (2000) account. Freeth was a Hawaiian made famous by Jack London in his story "A Royal Sport." In 1908, Henry Huntington imported Freeth to Redondo Beach as part of his effort to turn the town into a resort. In addition to the Hotel Redondo, Huntington "built a three story pavilion, a good restaurant, and a large theater." Freeth was part of the entertainment, coming out twice a day to surf his eight-foot board. The next year, Freeth became the chief swimming instructor at Redondo's new bathhouse. He also started the city's first lifeguard corps, water polo, and water basketball team. Before he was taken by influenza in 1919, Freeth symbolized the development of a second component of Los Angeles' open air culture. Apparently a very handsome man, he epitomized an emphasis on the athletic and healthy body.

This open air culture has been understudied. While books of photographs, such as those of the 1950s by Charles Phoenix (2001, 2004), always include plates of bathing beauties, muscular men, and sports teams, the relationship of formal and informal sports to the identity of Los Angeles is more asserted than analyzed. Before his untimely death, Clark Davis (1992) laid out a possible approach in a study of tourism, while Ronald Davidson (2004) has provided a geographical analysis of the development of the key

South Bay cities before they symbolized Reyner Banham's "surfubia." Studies on sports, recreation, the relationship of nature and recreation, and the racial, ethnic, class, and gender context for recreation are needed.

An example of how such studies might illuminate contemporary as well as historical Los Angeles is provided by those scholars who have begun looking specifically at the history and location of parks within the community as a lens into health disparities and spatial inequities (Hise and Deverell 2000). Parks are the modern city's place of recreation – the means by which the open air life is integrated into the life of neighborhoods. Unfortunately, parks are not evenly located in the area's communities. As studies by Wolch, Wilson, and Fehrenbach (2005), Wolch (2007), Garcia and White (2006), and others have repeatedly shown, minority and poor communities, particularly children, do not have as generous access to the open air as do wealthier, white neighborhoods. Nor do those communities necessarily use the park in the same manner as conventional planning dictates (Loukaitou-Sideris 1995). The sun does not shine evenly or equitably on children in their play and recreation.

Modern Medical Marvel Beside a Tattered Healthcare System

In a city with several of the best hospitals in the nation, with a surplus of physicians and other medical providers, and with a billion-dollar public healthcare system, health disparities akin to those related to parks are found in the access, care, and financing of the area's medical system. Given the high-quality public and private healthcare systems developed during the twentieth century, such an outcome is shocking.

That system of private, high-quality, typically non-profit regional and community hospitals has been little studied. Newly consolidated Cedar-Sinai, Good Samaritan, Daniel Freeman, and others joined early general hospitals, such as St. Vincent and California (Golter 1954; Gray 1991; Sloane 1999). These general hospitals were complemented by hospitals for children, othopaedics, and other specialties. Propelled by changing federal financing policies, many hospitals opened or expanded after World War II, creating a remarkable system by late century (Roemer 1981). As the century progressed, many hospitals responded to the needs of ambulatory patients by becoming more consumer-driven. The University of Southern California hospital opened a concierge desk, while Children's Hospital brandished bright colors and a new healing garden (Sloane and Conant Sloane 2003).

However, costs associated with seismic retrofits and concerns about the general state of healthcare financing have created significant stresses for private hospitals. Following the 1994 Northridge earthquake the State of California mandated that older hospitals were to perform seismic upgrades

that one study estimated would cost $100 billion (Meade and Kulick 2006). Twenty-four hospitals in Los Angeles County closed or merged between 1996 and 2005, primarily due to financial difficulties (California Hospital Association 2006). The closings have placed increased pressure on the public healthcare system, since many patients affected by these closings are unable to switch their care to private providers.

Unfortunately, the outcome has been a tattered public healthcare system plagued with questions about its facilities, staff, and administrative structures. Recently, Cousineau and Tranquada (2007: 606) summarized the history of Los Angeles County hospitals since 1858 by noting that it is a "chronicle of a community's complex and contentious struggle to shoulder the burden of healthcare for its indigent and uninsured population." The authors trace the hospital story from its origins through the construction of the 1933 one-million square-foot structure to the design of a new facility slated to open in 2008. They relate the political, financial, and administrative challenges of responding to the healthcare needs of the region's poorest residents during a period when government revenues were uncertain and typically declining. The result was the "near collapse" of the system in the mid-1990s, and a truncated system since. Cousineau and Tranquada's "story demonstrates the ongoing vulnerability of the healthcare safety net" and the need of government officials to "stabilize the healthcare system" (p. 614; Martin 1979; Baxter and Mechanic 1997; Rubino and French 2004). However, they provide only a skeleton of the deeper political story, which is emblematic of such crises across the nation.

Life Dictated by the Sun, Shaped by Society

Los Angeles journalist Farnsworth Crowder once wrote, "Sun-bathing, nudity, bare head, open-neck shirts are not imposed by cranks; they are dictated by the sun" (McWilliams 1973: 110). Southern California culture and society have been and continue to be shaped by a search for health and rejuvenation. Whether a monastic retreat in the Santa Monica Mountains, "surf seals" lined up along Manhattan Beach, soccer teams at the park and school-yard, or a roaring crowd cheering the local college sports team, health is a dynamic, multi-faceted aspect of life in the city and region. Ironically, Los Angeles also has become a national symbol of environmental threats to health: whether the smog that continues to plague the air, the obesity associated with the city's sprawling form, or the health disparities associated with an inequitable distribution of parks, grocery stores, and other components of a healthy life. Whether seen as a positive or a negative attribute, health has defined the Los Angeles experience for those who lived there as well as for those who know the city through literature, photography, film, and other representations of rejuvenation in southern Calfornia.

Notes

1 For information on the landscapes of health and rejuvenation in earlier Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and early American eras, see Shuman (1938). A general account of the rise of Los Angeles is available through McWilliams (1973).
2 The hospital was renamed the Los Angeles Infirmary in 1869, then St. Vincent's Hospital in 1918.
3 The Barlow Annual Reports, held in the collections of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, detailed the development of the sanatorium, using photographs of the site to demonstrate the vitality of the enterprise. The result is that one can trace the site's development, including the individual cottages, which the "Report of the Treasurer," in the *Second Annual Report* (1905), notes cost $226 each.
4 Photograph and text from the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* collection, folder "Hospitals," University of Southern California Special Collections.
5 Photograph from the collections of the Los Angeles Public Library, March 25, 1953.

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Chapter Twenty-four

Excerpts from the San Gabriel River Series

Robbert Flick

My interest in the San Gabriel River dates back to the early 1980s when I first discovered Route 39 and its access to the rich and highly diverse use of the San Gabriel River canyon recreation area. I was also intrigued by the industrial landscape generated by aggregate mining near the 605 and 210 freeway intersection. In 2004 I began seriously to seek out the river as a repeated site for my photographic practice. With this project, I am wrestling with ideas about photography, and I use my encounters with the river as a site for that activity. The sixteen plates included here track these visual encounters with select locations along the river chosen to reflect the distinct shifts in appearance along its course.

The San Gabriel River flows approximately 80 miles from multiple sources 6,500 feet up in the San Gabriel Mountains to its terminus at the Pacific Ocean in Seal Beach. Roughly 40 miles goes over and through a series of alluvial fans created by the intensity of historical floods. The river is now controlled by a series of dams and debris basins which function as flood protectors, along with water collectors and ground water replenishment spreading grounds. Ten miles of the San Gabriel River flows in a channel of concrete. Approximately 1.5 million people live near the river. They reside in nineteen cities and unincorporated areas and are represented by seventeen congressional districts. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works completed a Master Plan for the river and its watershed in 2006 (www.ladpw.org/wmd/watershed/sg/mp/).

For me, the San Gabriel River has become an evolving metaphor for the twenty-first century. Among its parts are the collision of man-made and natural conditions, affluence and poverty, fresh water and dead zones, conjunctions of responsibility and tending. There is the sudden emergence of hidden systems such as the discovery of sea turtles near the effluent pipes of power plants and the mark-making of territorial intent by spray can or a mountain lion's urine. The photographs are conjunctions within contexts, observations of ground truths framed to resonate across each other into a measure of options.

Plate 24.1

Plate 24.2

Plate 24.3

Plate 24.4

Plate 24.5

Plate 24.6

Plate 24.7

Plate 24.8

Plate 24.9

Plate 24.10

Plate 24.11

Plate 24.12

Plate 24.13

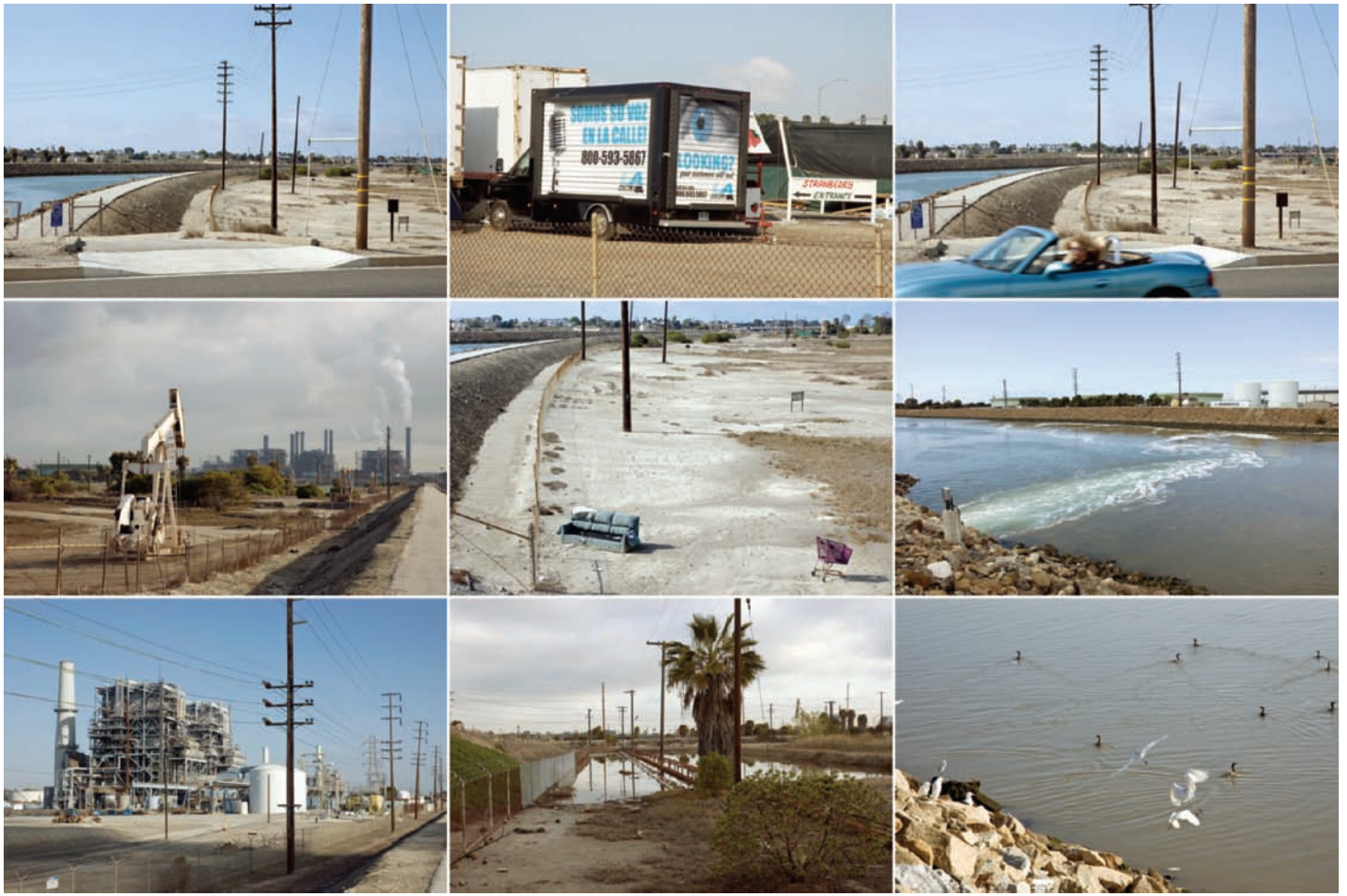

Plate 24.14

Plate 24.15

Plate 24.16

Chapter Twenty-five

Contemporary Voice: Thickets of Diversity, Swaths of Emptyness

Christopher Hawthorne

In the last decade, density has become more than a mere buzzword in Los Angeles, something far more significant than what bloggers call a "meme." It is now nearly impossible to get through a conversation on the shape of the city, or its future, without stumbling repeatedly over the term. The reasons for this aren't difficult to identify: as development in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan region reaches a geographic limit, new construction in the basin is doubling back on itself in the form of infill projects, turning a famously suburban landscape more broadly urban. The population, meanwhile, keeps growing: Los Angeles County alone will be home to at least 11 million people by 2020, more than 43 states now contain, and an increase of 2 million, or 22 percent, from 2000 figures. The population of the six-county region may reach 22 million by 2020, a remarkable 40 percent jump since 2000. Choking traffic, particularly within the thickly developed Westside, is keeping everybody closer to home, drawing more tightly the circle of daily life. These are striking developments in a city long organized around the idea of free-flowing mobility and known for its scattered cultural, natural, and architectural attractions, many of them reachable only by car.

Multi-family buildings – those filled with either condominiums or apartments – now make up more than 95 percent of new residential construction in Los Angeles each year. Angelenos are slowly becoming more comfortable with the prospect of vertical living, trading a Tudor or a modest bungalow with a generous backyard for a 6th floor two-bedroom – or, as the late television producer Aaron Spelling's widow, Candy, has famously done, swapping a 56,000-square-foot estate in Holmby Hills, the city's most expensive neighborhood, for a two-story, $47 million penthouse atop the Century, a new 42-floor condo tower in Century City due to be finished in 2009. The Century was designed to look old-fashioned, and exclusive, by New York's Robert A. M. Stern, who does upscale architectural nostalgia

better than anyone. Given the coverage Spelling's forthcoming move has generated in the press, which included front-page articles in both the *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times*, you would think she were ushering in a new phase for Los Angeles all by herself. (Imagine: $47 million for an apartment! In Century City!) And in a symbolic way, perhaps she is. At the very least, she is a well-heeled avatar of a transition that has been accelerating in Los Angeles since the 1980s: the shift from a city notable for its relationship, however complicated, with nature and for architectural experimentation to a place where dense and vertical development may finally happen at a scale significant enough, in certain expanding pockets of the city, to create a real sense of urban energy and maybe even sidewalks full of people.

The architectural and planning implications of this change are legion. Part of what it means is that the city's commercial strips and boulevards have become not only places to drive through but, increasingly, places to live. Density is beginning to create a political constituency for public transit, for parks and other open spaces, and for planning that takes walkability into account – for all the things, in other words, that the city has always been criticized for lacking. At the same time, architects here are beginning to realize that they'll have to make a mark with the sorts of projects more closely associated with cities like New York or London than with Los Angeles: interior renovations, townhouses squeezed between existing buildings, even designs that require no land at all, like museum installations or digital projects that exist only on screen. No longer can a firm fill its first monograph with page after page of ground-up houses in Santa Monica and Venice, as Frank Gehry, Frank Israel, Thom Mayne, Eric Owen Moss, and countless others once did. This change will accelerate if the real-estate market's current malaise turns into an extended slump, or the credit crunch continues to make raising capital for new construction nearly impossible.

On the planning front, the transition from a frontier mentality – in which landscape and sensibility always promised room for future expansion – to greater concerns about traffic and overcrowding has transformed debates about the city's future. The hot-button issues are growth and how to manage it: height limits, zoning changes, new subway lines, and the congestion and disruption that come with new construction. For many longtime Angelenos, the word "density" is an alarming one, raising the specter of overbearing new development that will threaten the low-rise, single-family fabric of the city while producing noise, crime and – perhaps worst of all – traffic. For others, mostly newcomers with young families, it holds the promise of a different Los Angeles: more connected, more neighborly, more friendly to pedestrians. Regardless of point of view, density is not a word that anyone can reasonably ignore.

And yet. And yet. A quick drive around nearly any developing neighborhood in Los Angeles will reveal another truth about the city. The amount of open land here remains remarkable. Some of these unbuilt parcels were

created when older buildings were razed after World War II to make room for surface parking lots, as is the case in much of the downtown core. (The developer Tom Gilmore, a dedicated student of Los Angeles history, has called this spasm of demolition our version of the aerial bombing that cleared out central Rotterdam, London, and other European cities during World War II.) But most of the empty land in the city has simply never been developed. On my short block in Eagle Rock, for example, a peninsula of the city of Los Angeles squeezed between Glendale and Pasadena a few miles north of downtown, there are three empty parcels to go with about a dozen single-family houses built in the 1920s and 1930s.

The same mixture of emptiness and development is apparent even in parts of the city known for density. Try an experiment the next time you drive down Wilshire Boulevard: instead of paying attention to terra-cotta clad landmarks from the 1920s or to the new buildings – Renzo Piano's Broad Contemporary Art Museum at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, say, or the Solair apartment tower going up above the subway stop at the corner of Wilshire and Western, in Koreatown – look out for empty lots choked with weeds. You'll be surprised just how many of them there are: enviably flat, eminently buildable pieces of real estate sitting on prime corners of the city's "horizontal downtown" – the most built-out artery in the city. An artist could create a fascinating project by photographing those empty parcels close-up and at their most overgrown. Stripped of context and hung on a gallery wall, the images could pass as fields in Iowa or West Texas. Documenting them would qualify, in the odd taxonomy of Los Angeles green spaces, as nature photography.

Or consider the sight that caught my eye one warm afternoon not long ago as I drove along Hill Street toward the offices of the *Los Angeles Times*: a group of more than 100 goats grazing on a steep hillside, at the foot of two soaring, mirrored glass skyscrapers. I learned later that they'd been hired by the Community Redevelopment Agency to clear a vacant parcel of overgrown brush in advance of the fall fire season. The herd seemed to prove that goats will indeed eat anything – even downtown Los Angeles.

Overlay of Opposites

Los Angeles has always been a place where opposites don't just coexist but sit astride one another, creating a veiled, overlapping sense of what is and what is not. A place infamous for bulldozing the past and keeping its eye fixed on the future boasts one of the finest collections of historic architecture of any city in the world, from the Arts and Crafts era through to the modern era, from the 1893 Bradbury Building downtown and Rudolf Schindler's 1923 house in West Hollywood to the 1949 Eames House in Pacific Palisades and the work of Gehry, Mayne, and other members of the

LA School in the 1970s and 1980s. Better known for smothering nature beneath smog and development, Los Angeles still offers more Edenic pockets of natural landscape than any other big city in the country.

This is the experience of living in contemporary Los Angeles, peering through one condition into its opposite: through the dust of demolition and new construction to see world-famous historic buildings, through haze to see vast stretches of green. And perhaps most important of all for the purposes of this chapter, through thickets of density – and through the dustups of the density debate – to swaths of empty real estate and the sense of possibility that goes with them.

This overlay of opposites is perhaps most extreme in downtown Los Angeles, which as ever is the focus of intense chatter about development and the future of the city's broader urban identity. A well-chronicled rebirth of downtown as a residential neighborhood, with new apartment towers in South Park, near Staples Center and the rapidly expanding LA Live development, and rehabbed ones in the historic core, has brought the number of residents in the district to 38,000, a nearly threefold increase since 1999. When a Ralph's supermarket opened on 9th Street in July 2007, it marked the first time a full-service grocery was willing to take a gamble on downtown. On its first day in operation, crowds lined up around the block to get in, and the *Los Angeles Times* covered the event with the enthusiasm of a small-town daily. The store's arrival seemed to signal that some kind of critical mass had been reached for residential life downtown.

But even a brief walk or drive around the area tells a very different story. When you move through downtown at ground level, particularly as a pedestrian, what you notice are not the buildings but the gaps between them. The Civic Center, in particular, is an urban map waiting to be filled in, a puzzle anticipating a solver. As part of a video-training class that I took at the *Times* not long ago, I took a kind of test-run walking tour, high-definition camera in hand, filming buildings and streetscapes along the way. (It must say something about the nature of mobility in Los Angeles that our "walks" through the city are often contrived, part of a guided tour with an architect or scholar, a school assignment or a trip to see a string of art galleries staying open late for the occasion. These walks are the opposite of a stroll. In an effort to avoid repeating the cliché that "nobody walks" in Los Angeles, many writers tend to steer clear of the topic altogether. It is of course not true that nobody walks in LA. We have many prolific walkers; they tend to be our poorest citizens, walking from bus stops to workplaces or apartments. What is true, and what is still worth saying, is that the streetscape treats car traffic so favorably as to make walking feel like a peripheral, unsanctioned, and even *unreasonable* activity, something to do only when circumstances – personal, financial – dictate.)

I rather randomly chose a route that took me from Bertram Goodhue's Central Library at 5th and Flower streets to the heart of Japantown, at 1st

Street and Central Avenue. For a good stretch, I walked northeast on Main Street, toward City Hall. Main Street on those blocks still feels like the ambivalent heart of a ghost town. There is a new buzz at 4th Street and Main: Pete's Cafe is usually full, a handful of new art galleries has emerged, and for a few months in 2008 the fashion label Comme des Garcons opened a "pop-up" store accessible only through a narrow alley. But as you move north the built landscape falls away and emptiness takes over. The walk got awfully lonely at that point.

Similarly, whenever I pull my car into my parking spot at the *Times* garage, at the corner of Second Street and Broadway, I am greeted by a terrific view of Frank Gehry's shimmering Walt Disney Concert Hall, which opened at the crest of Bunker Hill in 2003. One of the reasons the view is so good is that the space between the garage and the concert hall – in the middle of the civic center of the second-biggest city in the United States – contains no buildings. Between my car and the entrance to the hall, on Grand Avenue, is a distance of three city blocks: Broadway to Hill, Hill to Olive, and Olive to Grand. Between Broadway and Hill is a huge pit, cleared in 2007 as the site for a new federal courthouse designed by Atlanta firm Perkins + Will that is caught up in a funding battle in Washington and may never be built. Between Hill and Olive is a small surface parking lot. And between Olive and Grand, at the feet of Disney Hall, is a bigger garage, a three-level parking structure known to locals as the Erector Set.

The Erector Set, despite its outward modesty, is in the landscape of downtown Los Angeles a highly significant structure. It was built in 1969 as a temporary garage, designed by an engineer named Charles Bentley. It sits on land owned by the city's Community Redevelopment Agency. "Over and over," as Cara Mia di Massa reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, "proposals were made to replace it with a skyscraper – only to have the plan fizzle and the structure remain." The latest such proposal is the most ambitious yet. In 2005, Gehry was hired by the developer Related Cos. to design a $3 billion, three-phase mixed-use project anchored by a pair of towers, one 50 stories and the other 25, on the Erector Set parcel, opening onto Grand Avenue directly across the street from Disney Hall. At the first press conferences for the project, completion of its first phase, on the Erector Set lot, was pegged for 2009. But delays have plagued the project, which was first known informally as "the Grand Avenue project" and was recently rechristened "The Grand" by Related's marketing team. In 2008, only timely investments by wealth funds in Dubai and South Korea kept it on track. After remaining closed for much of 2007, as Related came close to breaking ground on the new development, the garage is once again accepting cars. It is proving more difficult to kill than Rasputin.

The story of the Erector Set parcel is in many ways the story of downtown Los Angeles. It has since 1969 lived a rather extreme double life. It is on the one hand a purely pragmatic example of architecture that fills a basic

need – more space for cars during the workweek – and on the other a staging ground for elaborate dreams about the role that downtown might someday play. It has never been able to achieve a middle ground. It is either going to be a parking garage, ungainly and expedient and meant to be temporary, or it is going to be a gleaming collection of buildings designed by the most famous architect in the world. In that sense it is a direct reflection of the way the city's power brokers have long envisioned downtown. They see it as a natural setting for high-stakes gambles – for mega-developments that build out each empty parcel of land to its edges, and into the sky, before moving on to the next parcel, whether it's next door or down the street. These wide-shouldered behemoths can be architecturally attractive in their own right, and they can provide a windfall of profit for their developers, but what they can't do with any real effectiveness is address the gap-toothed smile that downtown Los Angeles shows the world. Rather than beginning to fill in the wide gulf – visual, spatial, economic – between the built and unbuilt landscape downtown, they exacerbate it. The result is a district made up of an archipelago of extra-large attractions, each one surrounded by oceans of empty space, or oceans of parking, or both. Hence the view from my parking spot to Disney Hall, from one downtown satellite to another.

City leaders in LA have long been attracted to the mega-development model. The approach is, first of all, a byproduct of urban-renewal strategies that came into vogue in so many American cities in the years after World War II. In Los Angeles, the wave of enthusiasm for slum clearing happened to coincide, beginning in the early 1950s, with the city's emergence as a national power. Cleansing Bunker Hill of its tight-knit, down-at-the-heels collection of Victorians, many of which had been divvied into multiple units, to make way for new development was therefore more than simply an attempt to jump on the Robert Moses bandwagon. It was a way for Los Angeles to flex its newfound muscle as the capital of the American West and as the US city with a brighter future than any other. That coincidence of urban-planning strategy and civic development meant that parts of downtown were razed just as the city at large was building itself up, both literally and figuratively. Unlike New York, Boston, or San Francisco, in which the urban-renewal impulse was at least in part an effort, however misguided it looks to us in retrospect, to make an old city modern, and therefore relevant, in Los Angeles the destruction of the Victorian-era city fabric was a kind of growing pain.

In other ways the mega-model is a symptom of a larger uncertainty about the position that downtown ought to occupy in the larger universe of Los Angeles. The city is multi-polar rather than having a single center. That truism has practically acquired the status of cliché. But there has always been a group of powerful locals, running the *Los Angeles Times* or the Community Redevelopment Agency, sitting on the City Council or on a broad portfolio

of real estate in the area, who have never been able to fully come to terms with the fact that downtown Los Angeles is not like other downtowns around the world: that is not the obvious heart of the region, with development moving out from it in regular, predictable concentric circles.

If you have a desire to transform downtown Los Angeles into a fully urban district, as many of those leaders always have, you have two basic choices. You can push for changes to zoning, transit, and streetscape design that over time might make downtown vital and walkable, and perhaps truly central in the region – but are necessarily slow-moving and do nothing for the skyline. Or you can push for individual architectural icons, which are likely to create an instant splash and garner publicity but are less likely to have a broad urban effect. For the last six decades, city leaders have chosen the latter course consistently – in part because it fit their ideas about what a big-city downtown ought to look like, and partly because it was simply the path of least resistance and offered the greatest opportunity for investment returns.

Among the first mega-projects downtown was the Music Center, occupying a prominent stretch of Grand Avenue at the peak of a newly reengineered Bunker Hill. Planned in the late 1950s and early 1960s and opened in phases between 1964 and 1967, it was designed by Welton Becket and Associates, a firm that smoothly combined corporate-minded and urbane design in its wide-ranging work, which also includes the Capitol Records building in Hollywood and the 34-story Equitable Life tower on Wilshire Boulevard. From the start, Becket envisioned the Music Center as a kind of cultural Acropolis, much like Lincoln Center in New York. Three separate auditoriums – the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the circular Mark Taper Forum, and the Ahmanson Theater – sit on a raised plinth atop several levels of underground parking, wholly detached from the sidewalk below. Just to the west of the Music Center, A. C. Martin's Department of Water and Power building, from 1961, is a product, for all the appeal of its pure architectural geometry, of the same mold. It is an object on a wide plane, barely even acknowledging the street.

In recent decades a new crop of mega-developments has grown up in downtown, with several more in the planning stages. As pieces of architecture, many show the strain of trying to fit into this odd landscape, a setting that holds clear symbolic and geographical importance but is also oddly placeless. In 1996, Cardinal Roger Mahony selected the architect Jose Rafael Moneo to design a 195,000-square-foot cathedral on Grand Avenue, on a tricky site backing onto the 101 Freeway as it slices through downtown. (The Catholic Church's existing downtown home, St. Vibiana's, on Main Street between 2nd and 3rd streets, suffered significant damage in the 1994 Northridge earthquake. It was also, Mahony felt, cramped and out of date. Perhaps he also worried that its classical style – highly decorated but also imposingly Roman – communicated a disconcertingly Eurocentric

message to LA's largely Latino church-going population.) Moneo, known for precise, unadorned late-Modernist boxes in many parts of his native Spain, was an intriguing choice, already widely recognized as one of most talented contemporary architects in Europe. Indeed, Cardinal Mahony announced that he'd chosen Moneo on the day before the architect was due to receive the Pritzker Prize, the profession's highest honor, taking advantage of the fact that the Pritzker ceremony, at the still-unfinished Getty Center in Brentwood, had brought Moneo to Los Angeles.

In the end, however, the architect was flummoxed by the moonscape urbanism of downtown Los Angeles. Moneo's most effective work – notably his City Hall Annex in Murcia, finished in 1998 – gains energy by contrast with its older surroundings, by inserting its clean lines and pure geometry in the midst of elaborately decorated buildings. In Los Angeles, Moneo was confronted with a textbook mega-development site: a full city block without any sizeable architectural neighbors and bordered on one side by a freeway. In response he produced a massive horizontal building, like a skyscraper tipped on its side, facing a large interior courtyard. The shape is a familiar one in Los Angeles – Moneo had clearly studied the form of Cesar Pelli's Pacific Design Center, the so-called Blue Whale, in West Hollywood, among other local landmarks. But the Spanish architect struggled to reconcile the city's wide-open spaces and pop-culture sensibility with his own disciplined, chiseled design vocabulary. Many of the interior spaces of the $195 million building, known officially as the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, are wondrous. But as an urban object it flounders, and it turns away from the streets around it in dramatic fashion.

The link provided by the Pritzker ceremony between the cathedral and the new Getty Center was fitting, since the Getty, sitting on a Brentwood hilltop, is the city's supreme mega-development. Designed by New York architect Richard Meier and his LA-based partner Michael Palladino, the project, which cost just over $1 billion, is essentially a museum, library, and research center in the form of a small college campus. Seven buildings clad in white metal panels and travertine surround several levels of landscaped, fountain-filled plazas and terraces above a generous sloping garden. The campus-like plan is a result of the architects' attempt to break up the Getty's mammoth programmatic needs into a number of smaller, more manageable pieces. Still, whatever one makes of the design of the buildings, there is no getting around the fact the complex is basically a gleaming castle on a hill, a landmark very much in keeping with the history of Los Angeles, a city that has built its architectural legacy one aloof, standalone icon at a time.

It is entertaining, nonetheless, to speculate about how another approach might have unfolded. How might Los Angeles be different, a decade later, if the Getty had built not a single billion-dollar museum on a hill but ten $100 million museums sprinkled around the city? Each one might have been designed by a different architect, as a reflection of the city's diffuse, multipolar

character and as a catalyst in each location for economic development. (If even half of those museums went to emerging local architects, the effect on a whole generation of designers and on civic architecture might have been profound.) What about a hundred $10 million museums? Or a thousand $1 million museums? What if, that is to say, the Getty had traded the mega-development model for a micro-development approach, sowing seeds in several neighborhoods for new urban growth?

The Getty never remotely considered going down that path, of course, and the mega-development model the finished museum solidified continues to be followed downtown, often with what resembles blind faith among the city's planners, philanthropists, and policymakers. Along with the Cathedral, developments built in a similar fashion include Thom Mayne's shimmering, monolithic Caltrans Headquarters, which was finished in 2004 and includes more than 1 million square feet of office space for the officials who run the state's highway system; Gehry's Disney Hall, which is an effective design in large part because it was designed to embrace its utter lack of context; and even a new public High School for the Visual and Performing Arts, designed by the Vienna firm Coop Himmelblau, on Grand Avenue across the freeway from Moneo's Cathedral. The school, due to open to students in the fall of 2009, is a sort of miniature Getty Center for creative teenagers, five angular classroom and auditorium buildings turned inward and wrapped around a sizeable interior court. Funded in part by the philanthropist Eli Broad, who picked the architect for the school just as he'd pushed for Moneo for the Cathedral and helped Disney Hall to completion, the school is at once a stunning piece of architecture, full of the slashing formal lines and concrete-and-glass compositions Coop Himmelblau is known for, and a reaffirmation of downtown's atomized landscape. The architects gesture to the Cathedral across the freeway, raising a purely symbolic vertical superstructure to match Moneo's belltower; together these form a kind of gate for drivers to pass through. But the school otherwise remains an isolated *tour de force*.

LA's preference for mega-development projects downtown likely will be strengthened by recent changes in real-estate practice and finance. Increasingly, ambitious developments require amassing funding from a number of far-flung sources, including, lately, sovereign wealth funds from the Middle East, China, and other parts of the world. Leaders of those funds won't consider a project unless it reaches a certain size and budget, and in turn attracting money from those foreign sources encourages developers to ratchet up the scale even more. The result is a feedback loop that boosts scale and height. Gehry's Atlantic Yards project in Brooklyn – designed as 16 separate towers and a staggering 8 million square feet of mixed-use development on 22 acres – is the poster child of this trend. (As of this moment its completion has been threatened by the credit crisis.)

Another major reason – arguably *the* major reason – that downtown has continued developing as it has is the longstanding and continuing weakness of the city's planning apparatus. The new director of the City Planning Department, Gail Goldberg, who was appointed in 2005 by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, has brought energy and ambition to the job, saying bluntly soon after beginning work that her top priority was "to do real planning," by which she presumably meant involving her department in the sort of land-use decisions that tended, in the past, to be sealed with handshake agreements between developers and city council members – or those members' planning deputies. (Only in Los Angeles and maybe in Houston would a planning director find it necessary to make such a statement.) Goldberg has begun to push for a more walkable, less auto-friendly city. She has created an Urban Design Studio focusing on downtown; led by a pair of experienced LA planners, Emily Gable Luddy and Simon Patucha, it spends its time on worthwhile projects like planting shade trees and widening sidewalks – the sort of basic urban gestures that have long been neglected in many parts of Los Angeles. Still, Goldberg is a newcomer to the city's political scene, having moved north from San Diego to take the job, and faces a stubborn status quo.

Many past planning failures in Los Angeles are so obvious to be almost laughable. When the city began expanding its modest subway and light-rail system in the 1990s, for example, transit planners put train lines within two miles of both Los Angeles International Airport and Dodger Stadium – without bothering to connect either to the system. The Grand Avenue project, a collection of condos, apartments, hotels, restaurants, and shops set to rise on city and county owned land, is a textbook illustration – and a rather dispiriting one, at that – of how this planning process usually plays out. The development grows out of a civic revitalization effort with deep roots. The CRA and its best-heeled backers have been trying to fully develop Bunker Hill since the agency was founded in 1948. In 1959 Charles Luckman produced a master plan for the newly cleared area that was only partially realized. And on my desk at the *Times* is a overstuffed binder showing proposals for a Grand Avenue redevelopment from the late 1970s, when another publicly organized competition pitted the Canadian architect Arthur Erickson against a collection of architects and designers, dubbed the "All-Stars," that included Gehry, Charles Moore, Cesar Pelli, Barton Myers, Ricardo Legoretta, landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, and the graphic designers Deborah Sussman and Paul Prejza. The All-Stars proposed a diverse if mannered collection of buildings and park spaces connecting five separate blocks along Grand. Erickson countered with a scheme for three massive, sleek, mirrored-glass towers.

Though very different in sensibility, the schemes were both products of the day, Erickson's reflecting a 1970s desire to create a car-centered, self-contained architectural world, entered through underground parking rather

from the sidewalk, and the All-Stars countering with what looks to contemporary eyes like textbook post-modernism: an energetic, colorful assemblage of architectural fragments that mixed a diverse collection of buildings with lush landscape design and streetscape improvements. Erickson prevailed, though ultimately two rather than three towers were built. These are the two towers, in fact, at the base of which I saw the goats grazing.

In 2004, the city, county, and the CRA together formed a new joint-power entity called the Grand Avenue Authority. Empowered by both city and county leaders, it was operated by the accompanying Grand Avenue Committee, chaired by Eli Broad. The Committee's first and most important decision was to hire a developer to run the project. It selected the New York-based Related Cos., which in turn hired Gehry to design the first phase, on the Erector Set site directly across Grand Avenue from Disney Hall. From the developer's point of view, the choice of Gehry, rather than a way to rehabilitate the All-Star scheme, was an attempt to take advantage of his growing stature as perhaps the most innovative – as well as famous – architect in the world. Since his firm's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao opened near the end of 1997 – the same fall that saw the Getty Center's opening festivities – Gehry has reached a level of celebrity and influence unmatched among American architects since Frank Lloyd Wright. Gehry emerged in the late 1990s and the early part of this decade as a leading member of a new class of celebrity architects – "starchitects" for short. Because Gehry is also associated so closely with Los Angeles, and because his Disney Hall has been nearly as much of a triumph as Bilbao, Related overlooked its usual reluctance to work with the stars of the architecture profession.

It was an odd commission for Gehry, to say the least, one that required him to design a gigantic complex of buildings directly across the street from one of his own most famous designs – in essence, to create the urban context that the concert hall had so clearly lacked. In architectural terms, he responded with a complex scheme, driven by a nuanced reading of this peculiar setting. Where the design of the concert hall is convex, its steel-paneled ribbons pushing out toward the city, the scheme for the Grand is concave: a U-shaped arrangement of buildings open toward Grand Avenue and the concert hall, as if to capture its radiating energy and then filter it down into the Civic Center and downtown's Historic Core. A prominent 50-story skyscraper at the corner of Grand and 1st Street – Gehry's first tower in his adopted hometown, where he has lived since 1947 – will contain an upscale hotel in its base and condominiums above. It is to be balanced by a 24-story tower on the opposite corner, at Olive and 2nd Street. In between is a multilevel collection of shops and restaurants, many with terraces, the whole composition lushly landscaped with flowing vines and trees. (There will even be oak trees atop both towers, echoing the clock tower in the Italian town of Lucca.)

Laurie Olin, a Philadelphia-based landscape architect who has collaborated with Gehry in the past, produced the initial landscape design. But Olin quietly left the project in 2006, complaining of problems communicating with – and receiving timely payment from – Related. His departure was an early sign of trouble for a project that has seen more than its share. As of this writing, in the fall of 2008, the development still seems likely to be built, but only because it has the backing of so many powerful civic leaders who would be embarrassed to see it fail. If it were a garden-variety mixed-use project, it doubtless already would be a victim of the poor economy and credit crunch. At the very least, its groundbreaking will be pushed off well into 2009, if not 2010 or later.

Despite the fact that it will rise on public land, the Grand is in many ways being run as a private project, and if it can be said to have a single author – and if Gehry can be said to have a single client – it is Related. The developer has set the construction schedule and decided when and by how long to delay the groundbreaking. That has left members of the Grand Avenue Committee, including City Councilwoman Jan Perry and County Supervisor Gloria Molina, in the odd position of complaining about delays to a project that many of their constituents assumed they were running. This is the strange new world of the public-private partnership, in which the lines of authority are often blurred and elected officials often find themselves ceding significant authority to private developers. But it is also emblematic of how high-profile construction has long been planned and carried out in Los Angeles.

If the project is ultimately cancelled, it would be a severe blow to Broad and the downtown establishment. Because the leaders of that establishment have raised such high hopes for it – suggesting it might single-handedly remake the reputation of downtown – the development's failure would be all the more resounding. Indeed, it is precisely this kind of either-or, all-or-nothing gamesmanship that too often defines planning in much of the city.

Some of the same confusion has marked the development of a major park that is part of the Grand project. Financed by Related in the form of a $50 million advance on its ground lease payments for the Gehry-designed commercial project, it will occupy four county owned parcels of land – 16 acres altogether – running downhill between the Music Center and City Hall. There is a rather scruffy and overgrown public park on that land already, tucked away between a collection of courthouse and other city and county buildings and frequented mostly by jurors during lunch and coffee breaks. Related and the Grand Avenue Committee have hailed the makeover they are planning for the park as a yet another way to make downtown Los Angeles feel truly central. Still, the park – designed by the local firm Rios Clementi Hale Studio – is being built to a design that is handsome but little more. It seems clear that the doubts many had about the park from the

beginning – specifically, that it would be an afterthought, given less attention and offering less promise that Gehry's commercial portion – have proved justified.

On the other end of downtown, meanwhile, another mega-project is rising as a kind of mammoth bookend to the Grand Avenue development. This one, a $2.5 billion, 4-million-square foot collection of restaurants, nightclubs, hotel rooms, condominiums, and performance venues called LA Live, has faced none of the delays that have so far plagued Related and Gehry. Financed and developed by the Anschutz Entertainment Group, it is anchored by the Nokia Theater, completed in 2007, and now also includes a Grammy Museum and ESPN's West Coast headquarters. Adjacent to the 110 freeway as it runs north-south along the western edge of downtown, LA Live is located near the Los Angeles Convention Center and just north of the Staples Center, another AEG property that is home to the NBA's Lakers and Clippers as well as the Kings of the National Hockey League.

The design of LA Live, overseen by the Baltimore firm RTKL Associates, is sleek and placeless, with none of the complexity or subtle connections to regional character that mark Gehry's plans for the Grand. What the project does have is solid financing, and therefore momentum. While the Grand announces more delays, LA Live rises inexorably into the sky; drivers on the 110 have watched its tower, which will top out at 54 stories, go up with remarkable speed. That tower, which will hold a Marriott Hotel on its lower floors and hotel rooms and condominiums operated by the Ritz Carlton above, is poised to remake the skyline of southern downtown.

At the ground level, however, LA Live is an example of the civic risks involved in allowing a developer to dictate how the shared spaces of the city are designed. Its three mid-sized buildings, holding the Nokia Theater, a collection of shops and restaurants, and the ESPN facilities, respectively, surround a generous paved plaza with attractive landscaping (also by Rios Clementi Hale) around its perimeter. But though the plaza looks like just the kind of shared space that Los Angeles needs, in civic terms it is a kind of Trojan horse. It is a means of bringing a decidedly anti-urban, wholly private development into the heart of downtown Los Angeles while disguising it as a project that has learned from the lessons of past mega-developments and that respects pedestrian scale and connections to the larger neighborhood.

Six towers ring the plaza, each holding a video screen. An even larger screen – about the size you'd see inside a cineplex – overlooks it from the north. AEG has turned the whole area into a zone where pedestrians are treated as a captive audience for a ceaseless stream of video and audio advertisements, at top volume, and promotions for upcoming LA Live events. Dogs are banned from the plaza, which has helped keep away many residents of the South Park neighborhood. The problem is not just that the design of the plaza is primarily aimed at visitors to LA Live's concerts and

restaurants, rather than to local apartment- and condo-dwellers. It is that the space actively discourages doing any of the activities we traditionally associate with the use of collective space in a city: talking, reading, sitting under a tree, even pausing with a friend for a cup of coffee. Anybody who tried to do any of those things in the LA Live plaza would look not just out of place but foolish or even unhinged. When I first visited, a security guard eyed me warily as I walked through.

There are risks involved in more active planning. Some developers shy away from cities where planning departments play a prominent role in the approvals process and in civic debate more generally, and in Los Angeles some downtown boosters – Carol Schatz, to name one, who leads the Central City Assocation – have implied that it would be unwise to suggest changes to the planning process that might convince already wary investors to steer clear of the area while it is still in transition. But the last five decades have shown that giving developers free reign on individual projects is a recipe for isolated monuments, for an architecture that can hardly be bothered to speak to its surroundings, let alone coalesce into anything resembling an authentic neighborhood.

There are some tentative signs that the efforts of Goldberg and her downtown Design Studio are beginning to have an effect. In the fall of 2008 the South Group, a developer with roots in Portland, Oregon, finished a group of three residential towers, holding more than 500 units among them, four blocks east of LA Live. (The towers were designed by Portland's TVA Achitects, with landscape design by the Los Angeles firm Ah'be.) Though they are unexceptional architecturally, as a group of buildings in the cityscape they are quite sophisticated, with shops and extensive landscaping at sidewalk level. They reach out to the South Park neighborhood rather than turning inward.

Architecture for a Liminal Time

"It is not the particular good but the common good," Niccolò Machiavelli wrote, "that makes cities great." Since the 1950s, Los Angeles has conducted an urban experiment making the case that the opposite is true. It is now becoming all too clear that the experiment is failing, at least downtown – or at least is no longer a viable strategy in a more crowded Los Angeles, not to mention a Los Angeles with its eye on a post-oil future. As a result, the city is grappling, however belatedly, with the realization that without strong steps to reassert the notion of shared space and connective tissue, Los Angeles will drift toward full Balkanization.

While halting that drift will not be easy, the basic criterion for improvement is simple. Planners and other city officials should insist that all new development downtown stress *community* as much as, if not more than,

amenity. It is not enough, or should not be enough, for a developer to promise to build attractive condos for new downtown residents, or bring high-end restaurants and shops and the service jobs that come with them. The tax-base argument, in other words, has severe limitations as a basis for urban policy. If they are interested in any kind of subsidy – and nearly every downtown development gets some subsidy, whether it is hotel-tax rebates or streamlined approvals – developers, or their architects, should be required to make a case for how their projects will help drive downtown toward the goal of creating a real urban neighborhood. By "real" I mean a place that acknowledges Los Angeles exists in a sustained in-between moment, stuck between a car-centric urbanism and a post-petroleum future, between *densification* and actual *density*, between the end of civic adolescence and a full acceptance and embrace of urban middle age. Architecture appropriate for that sort of city will need to work on multiple levels at once, succeeding at the scale of spectacle, the scale of the automobile, and the scale of the sidewalk. It will need to understand that the true character of downtown is not coherent, singular, or even rational but rather haphazard, full of energy, deeply vain, mercurial and unsure of itself – and that terms like "context" and "history" have very different meanings here than they do in a traditional city center.

Creating a place like that is a very different goal, in the end, than trying to make downtown *the* urban neighborhood in Los Angeles. New developments needn't produce a Times Square for LA, or a Champs-Elysees, or a Fifth Avenue, or a Las Ramblas – and, indeed, the eternal fixation on these references, even as metaphor, often does more harm than good in promoting downtown's evolution. (Not least, it suggests a tin-eared reading of LA urbanism.) Instead, they need only help satisfy those needs residents of an urban neighborhood desire and, in some ways, require: a chance to see and interact with and talk with other citizens, to feel both anonymous and connected to a larger urban group.

There has been a sense for too long in Los Angeles that those goals are quaint or irrelevant in a car-centered metropolis – or in fact that they fly in the face of what continues to make LA a magnet for new arrivals. But the truth is we yearn for those sorts of connections here as much as in any other city – and probably more, since they are so often denied us here. There is a reason that the region's outdoor shopping and entertainment complexes – Disneyland, the Grove, Universal City Walk, Old Town Pasadena, the Santa Monica 3rd Street promenade, Larchmont Boulevard, and the new Americana at Brand in Glendale, among others – have proved so consistently popular. Though they are unabashedly commercial, they also give us a chance to engage in the rituals of urbanism – rituals whose appeal, in a scattered, auto-centric city stepping uncertainly into its future, remain as strong as ever.

Index

Abel, Emily 439, 442, 444, 447
Abelmann, Nancy 148, 159–60
abject zones 115, 415
Act of Violence (Zinnemann) 351
Acuña, Maria Paula 388–9
Adamic, Louis 350, 449
Adams, Annmarie 441
Adams, Ansel 274
Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium 443
Adorno, Theodor 283
adult entertainment 315
advertisements 297–300, 406
AEG, LA Live 491
aerospace industry 203, 207, 208
  see also aircraft industry
African Americans
  aircraft industry 281
  Angelenos 72, 81, 82
  arts movements 154
  and Chicanos 105
  counterculture 331
  Great Migration 426–7
  Hollywood 202
  housing restrictions 61
  and Korean Americans 169
  and Latino immigrants 158
  leadership 52, 61–2
  left-wing 153
  manufacturing jobs 104
  Mexico 324–5
  and newcomers 172
  population growth 41, 62, 193
  Progressives 44
  radicalization 152
  slums 139
  small business formation 60
  Tijuana 314–15, 317–18
  US-Mexico border 321–2
  violent protest 150–1
  West Jefferson 60
  young people 105, 154, 156
  see also Angelenos, Black; Black Panther Party; Black Power
Afro-American Council 52
After the Sunset (Ratner) 360
AGENDA 259
agriculture 32, 41, 300
  see also citrus fruit; irrigation
Agua Caliente complex 315
Ah'bé Landscape Architects 492
AIDS 360
Aimee, Anouk 354
air quality 451–2
aircraft industry 195, 199–201, 209, 221, 281
airframe industry 200, 202
Airports Department 217
Alameda Corridor 225, 259
alcohol factor 117, 126n14
Aldrich, Robert 352

alien citizens 130, 138–9
Alien Land Law (1913) 202
Alipas, Gervasio 28
Aliso Village 136, 137
All Year Club 305
Allen, Wayne 140–1, 142
Allen, Woody 356
"All-Stars" architects 488–9
Alpert, Richard 334
Alta California 21, 186–8, 273, 399
Alta California Disputación Territorial 27
alternative medicine 447–50
Altman, Robert 355, 359, 360
American Civil Liberties Union 149
American Federation of Labor 64
American lions 181
American War for Independence 185
Americana 493
Americanization 46, 425
Americans 20–1, 33
  see also Anglo-Americans; Yankees
amphetamine trade 335
Ancheta, Angelo 138
Anders, Allison 361
Anderson, Benedict 347
Anderson, Paul Thomas 359
Anderson, Susan 286n6
Anderson, Thom 360
Angeles Crest Highway 452
Angels Flight (Nasser and Richard) 352
Angelus Temple 307
Anger, Kenneth 349
Anglo-Americans
  California 98, 399
  and *Californios* 191
  cultural hegemony 192
  and Hispanics 189
  immigration 41, 295, 302
  nativism 426
  oligarchy 191–2
  pastoral past 44
Anián, Strait of 21
Annie Hall (Allen) 356
Anschutz Entertainment Group 491
Anti-Chinese Massacre: *see* Chinese Massacre
anti-communism 203, 210, 275
anti-gang unit, LAPD 160–1
anti-Semitism 198
anti-war movement 337
Antonioni, Michelangelo 353–4
Anza, Juan Bautista de 97
Arbuckle, Fatty 315, 349
archaeological studies 412
Archaic period 181–2
The Architects, the Ants, and the Bees (Woodberry) 360
architecture
  art deco 353–4
  in film 353–4, 356, 357
  innovation 393
  style diversity 414
Arensberg, Walter and Louise 275, 287n8
Argüello, José 23
Arlington Springs site 180
Armenians 41, 139
Armet & Davis 405
Arroyo culture 273
Arroyo Set 273, 296
art deco style 353–4
art history 277
Arts and Crafts era 481
arts movements 154, 275, 283
arts organizations 154
ASCAP monopoly 284
Asian immigrants
  denied citizenship 61
  Immigration Reform Act 204
  integration 68–9
  laborers 40
  and Mexican immigrants 47
  nativism 46
  population growth 233, 245
  racialization 138
  railroad workers 41
  recreation 431
  see also specific nationalities
Ask the Dust (Towne) 355–6
assemblage-art movement 154, 283
assimilation 285–6

Associated Press 117
Association for the Preservation of the Missions 301
Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad 296
Atlanta riot 281
Atwater Village 415
Automobile Club of Southern California 423
automobile industry 196–7
  see also car culture
avant-garde films 349
Avila, Eric xvi, xvii, 66, 137, 291
Avila Adobe 303
ayuntamiento 26, 31–2, 186
Aztecs 182–4
Azusa Street Revival 51

Babbitt character 276
Bacall, Lauren 279
The Bad and the Beautiful (Minnelli) 353
Bad Ass (Van Peebles, Mario) 355
Baha'i 368, 380, 389
Bailey, F. Lee 107
Baja California 193, 322–3
  see also southern California
Baldwin, James 91
Baldwin Hills 153
ballistic missiles 201, 202, 203
Bancroft, Hubert Howe 20
Banham, Reyner 394
  Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies 348
  materiality 291
  mimetic architecture 405
  multi-centred LA 287n9
  smog 450–1
  surfurbia 454
  visual culture 354
Banning, Phineas 398
Bard, Thomas 196
Barlow, Walter Jarvis 445
Barlow Sanatorium 445
Bartel, Paul 359–60
Barthes, Roland 366
Bartlett, Dana
  The Better City 44–7, 442–3
  melting pot 51
  open air 452
  tuberculosis 446, 447
Bass (Spear), Charlotta A. 63, 64, 88, 154, 308
Bass, Karen 259, 260, 263
Baum, L. Frank 278
Baur, John 439
Bay Area Figurative Movement 283
Beach Boys 102
beaches 421–2, 427–31, 428–30
The Beatles 105, 333
Bell, Daniel 333
Bell, Horace 127n22
Bell, Larry 283
Belvedere 50, 52
Bentley, Charles 483
Benton, Arthur 301
Berlant, Tony 275
Berman, Wallace 275, 283, 328
Berumen, Humberto Felix 316
Beth Chayim Chadashim 371, 385
The Better City (Bartlett) 44–7, 442–3
Beverly Hills 198, 204, 236
Beverly Hills Cop (Brest) 358
Bezzerides, A. I. 352
Bible Institute of Los Angeles 196
Bierce, Ambrose 287n9
The Big Carnival (Wilder) 353
Big Creek power 411
The Big Sleep 279
Bigger, R. 235
biker gangs 335
Biograph Company 197
Biola University 196
Birth of a Nation (Griffith) 275, 281
Black and Tan Orchestra 324
Black Arts movement 154
Black Legend of Tijuana 316
Black Pacific 62
Black Panther Party 154–5, 332
Black Power 148, 152, 154
Blade Runner (Scott) 95, 274, 279, 357
Bleeding through Layers of Los Angeles (Klein) 361

Blew, Robert 126n18
Blue Dreams (Abelmann and Lie) 159–60
body cult 452, 453
Boetticher, Budd 352
Bogart, Humphrey 279
Bogdanovich, Peter 354
bohemia 328–9, 334, 338–9, 340
  see also hippies
Bolton, Herbert 21
Bombo 273, 286n3
Bontemps, Arna 281
Boogie Nights (Anderson) 359
book collectors 274
Boorman, John 354
boosterism
  African Americans 44–5
  alternative 52–3
  Babbitt 276
  criticized 275, 287n9
  fragmentation 234–5
  racial segregation 317–18
  speculation 294
  Westside 57
Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (2005) 2
Borica, Diego de 188
Born in East LA (Marin) 360–1
Boston traders 33
Botello, Refugio 120
Bowman, Wirt 323
Bowron, Fletcher 62, 132, 137, 140–1, 205, 250–1, 254–5, 262
Boxcarville 306
Boyle Heights
  burial site 412
  ethnic diversity 41–2
  highway construction 136
  Home Owners Loan Corporation City Survey 138
  Jewish Americans 60, 142
  Mexican Americans 60, 142
  roadway construction 132
  Russian Molokans 142
  urban removal policies 130, 142, 144
Braceros 202
Bradbury Building 357, 481
Bradley, Tom
  civil unrest 251, 262–3
  coalition 206–7, 251, 254–6
  on DWP 221
  excluded people 262
  globalization 206, 207
  multiculturalism 68
  Pacific Rim economy 156–7
  ports 225–6
  Rodney King riots 106, 160
Bradley Burns Act (1956) 237
Brady, Mary Pat 315
Bratton, William, Chief of LAPD 84, 207, 209
bread riot 158, 159
Brecht, Bertolt 275
Brent, William 398
Brentwood 198
Brest, Martin 358
Britain
  Royal Air Force 199
  speculators 400
  traders 33
  war with Spain 185
Broad, Eli 210, 487, 489
Broad Contemporary Art Museum (Piano) 481
Bronzeville 65, 139, 202
Brooklyn Dodgers 137
Brown, Ada 319
Brown, Edmund Pat 103
Brown, H. Rap 332
Brown v. Board of Education 65, 204–5
Brownlow, Kevin 277
Bruce, Charles and Willa 429
Bruce's Beach 429–30
Bruensteiner, Max *185*
Buchanan Administration 190
Buck, Pearl 56, 68
Buckley, William F. 156
Buckworld One dancers 88
  buck dancing 88–9
Buddhism 368, 383, 390
Buffalo Springfield 328
building materials 413

Building Rules: How Locals Shape Community Environments and Economies (Warner and Molotch) 403
built environment 393–5, 404, 405, 406
  see also architecture
bungalows 306, 402, 404
Bunker Hill
  CRA 488
  in films 351
  redevelopment 246n14, 405
  slum clearance 401, 484
  urban renewal 66, 414
Burbank 10
Burbank, Luther 276–7
Burnett, Charles 356
Burroughs, Edgar Rice 278
Bus Riders Union 161, 259
business community 216, 250, 263
Buszek, Maria Elena 308
The Byrds 328, 333

cabildo institution 186
Cahuenga Pass 190
Cahuenga treaty 34
Cain, James M. 280, 351
California
  American invasion 20, 33, 34
  Anglo-Americans 98
  cattle ranching 34–5
  colonization 29–30
  cultural hegemony 204
  foreign trade 32–3, 36n9
  gold 34–5
  incorporated cities 240
  land of opportunity 271
  and Mexico 29
  rebellions 27
  secularization 29–30
  see also Alta California; Baja California
"California, Here I Come" 273
California Aqueduct 236
California Bungalows 306
California Eagle 52, 63, 64, 66, 308–9, 318, 324, 427
California Fruit Growers' Exchange (CFGE) 295–6, 297–300
  see also Sunkist
California Hospital 441, 454
California State Highway Patrol 123
Californios 24, 179, 190–1, 273, 398–9
Calle de los Negros 115, 117, 118, 123, 126n17
Caltrans Headquarters (Mayne) 405, 487
CAN settlement 45, 46
canyon living 105, 330
Cao Dai 368, 370, 384
Capital Records building 485
car culture
  consumption 404
  gun culture 89–90, 91
  New Journalism 283
  ownership 197
  prices 408
  rituals of urbanism 493
  Sinclair 295
  suburbs 423
  traffic 479
Carleton, Chester 313–14, 321, 323, 324–5
Carlos I 188
Carlos III 186
Carrillo, José Antonio 189
Casablanca 202
Case Study Houses 353, 402
Cassavetes, John 355
Castells, Manuel 339
Castro, José 34
Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels (Moneo) 405, 486
cattle ranching 34–5
Cedar-Sinai hospital 454–5
Central Americans 204
Central and Eastern districts 42 (map)
Central Avenue 42, 50, 60, 483
Central Business District 408
Central City Association 492
Central City Business Association 263
Central Library (Goodhue) 482
Central Manufacturing District 400

Central Park, Manhattan 422
Central Pool 428
central producer system 197
Century City 479–80
Century Freeway archive 409
Cesar Chavez La Paz Center *9*
CFGE: *see* California Fruit Growers' Exchange
Chamberlain, John 283
Chambers Brothers 331
Chan, Charlie 202
Chandler, Harry 194, 199, 217, 305, 439–40, 448
Chandler, Otis 206
Chandler, Raymond
  The Big Sleep 278, 279, 350
  Farewell My Lovely 351
  films from novels 351
  The Long Goodbye 355
  Los Angeles setting 279–80
Chapel of Peace Holiness Church of the Old and New Testament 381, 389
Chaplin, Charlie 277, 315, 349
charity officials 133
Charter (1889), Park Commission 424
Chavez Ravine 66, 137, 246n14, 414
Chavez Ravine: A Los Angeles Story (Mechner) 360
Chicago capitalists 400
Chicago Defender 314, 320–1
Chicago race riots 95, 434
El Chicano 331
Chicano community
  and African Americans 105
  counterculture 331
  female gangs 361
  history 130
  Mexican Americans 108
  repatriation 202
  Sleepy Lagoon 63
  xenophobia 102
  see also Hispanic Americans; Latinos; Zoot Suit attacks
Chicano films 360–1
Chicano Power 243
Chicano rights movement 243
Chico, Mariano 27
Children's Hospital 454
China, trade with LA 206
China City 43
Chinatown
  Chinese immigrants 98–9
  Connor on 40
  demonized 48–50, 52
  forced removals 304
  multiethnic 41, 60
  racializing discourse 46–7
  social imagination 48
  tourism 43, 52
Chinatown (Polanski) 219, 280, 355, 356
Chinese Americans
  citizenship 130
  citrus fruit workers 300
  as health risk 132
  lawlessness 116
  as Other 99–100
  population growth 204
  racial category 50
  relocation 132
Chinese Exclusion Act 99, 115, 125n11
  abolished 62
Chinese immigrants
  Bartlett on 46
  celestials 115
  Chinatown 98–9
  employment 41, 193
Chinese Massacre xvii, 431
  alcohol factor 117, 126n14
  culprits 111–12, 119–20, 126–7n22
  end of 120–2
  evidence disappearing 122
  key events 114–20
  LAPD 111, 114
  lynchings 116–17
  names of those killed 122–3
  origins 110–11
  Otherness 99–100
  primary sources 113
  public forgetting 123, 124n3
Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation 209–10

Chinese Six Companies 52
chiropractics 448, 449–50
cholo courts 49, 306
Christian Americanization program 45
Christian Scientists 450
Chrysler 196
Chùa Pháp Vân 383, 390
Chumash people 183, 270
Church of All Nations (CAN) 41, 45
cinema 346–7, 349, 358–9
  see also motion picture industry
citizenship
  Angelenos 26–7
  Chinese Americans 130
  ethnicity 40–1, 52
  Japanese Americans 130
  liberalism 30–1
  Mexicans 190
  New Deal period 131
  public housing 137
  race 40–1, 139
citrus fruit 193–4, 292, 293–4, 296, 298, 396–7
city formation 244, 413
City Hall 18, 289, 303
City Hall Annex (Moneo) 486
City Housing Authority 137
City of Channel Islands Beach 244
City of East Los Angeles 242, 244
City of Hope 445
City of Industry incorporation 245n4
City Planning Department 488
City Terrace 401
Civic Center 482
civic pride 77–8
civil disturbance
  Bradley 251, 262–3
  coalitions scrambled 256–9
  Latino neighborhoods 257
  political/cultural 208
  pressures 207
  sexual transgression 28
  see also specific riots
Civil Rights Act (1870) 121
civil rights movement
  African Americans 52, 61
  Black Power 148
  education about 82
  recreational equality 434
  residential spaces 208–9
  segregation 204
  unionism 63
  Watts riot 327
Clair, René 349
Clark, William Andrews, Jr. 274
class factors 148
Clay, Melba 319
Clay, Sonny 324
Clean Air Action Plan 261
Cleland, Robert Glass xvi
climate
  capitalizing on 216, 296–7
  health benefits 192, 438–9
  human agency 181
  lifestyle 401–2, 423
  light 197
Clinton, Bill 168
Clovis period 179, 180–1
Coalition for Clean and Safe Ports 261–2
coalitions 252–4, 257
  Bradley 206–7, 251, 254–6
  civil disturbance 256–9
  multiracial 63–4, 253, 254–6
Cochran, Jonnie 107
coercion/resistance 51
Cohen, Nathan 151
Cold War
  airframe production 202
  climax 210
  ending 207, 239
  foreign policy 65
  ICBMs 201
  integration limits 65–7
  xenophobia 352
Collateral (Mann) 359
collectors 274–5
Colombian exchange 21
colonization 29–30, 185–8
Colonization Acts 29–30
color photography 354
Colorado River Aqueduct 217, 222, 410
Colors (Hopper) 358

Columbia studio 198
Columbian Mammoths 181
Comme des Garçons pop-up store 483
commercial buildings 404, 480
Committee of 25 254–6, 255–6
communal lands 26
communication systems 411–12
community benefits
agreements 253–4, 258
Community Coalition 259
Community Development
Association 305–6
community formation 59, 104, 204, 403, 492
community leaders 52
community policing 207, 209
Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) 351, 401, 414, 481, 483, 488
community/culture 273
compulsory removal 130
see also slum clearance
concrete 413
condominiums 479
congestion, culture of 357
Congress for Racial Equality 329
Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) 63, 64
Congress of Studio Unions 198
Conley, Larry 320
Connor, J. Torrey 40–1, 42–3, 44, 48
Conot, Robert 149
consolidation
Los Angeles 233, 234–6, 244
San Fernando Valley 241
conspiracy theories 219–23
consumption 250, 357, 404
container shipping 206
Contreras, Miguel 258, 260
Convair Astronautics 203
Coop Himmelblau 487
Cooper, Julian 356
cooperative farm movement 302
Corman, Roger 354
Coronel, Antonio F. 189
Coronel Adobe 112, 115, 118, 120, 123
corridos 303
Cota, Guillermo 26
counter-cinema 349
counterculture
African Americans 331
Chicanos 331
emergence 327–8
Hollywood 329–30
Los Angeles Free Press 329
New Left 337
participants 330–1
physical space 333
sexuality 335–6
see also hippies
counter-hegemony, Gramsci 308–9
County Federation of Labor 258
county relief funds 129
Cousineau, M. R. 455
Cowlings, Al 107
CRA: *see* Community Redevelopment Agency
crack cocaine trade 156
Crash (Haggis) 95, 162, 359
credit crisis 480, 487
Crenshaw 68
Crespi, Juan 395, 398
Crevecoeur, Hector St. John 277
criminalization 118, 148, 156
Criss Cross (Siodmak) 351
Crofton, James 323
Crouch, W. W. 235
Crowder, Farnsworth 455
Cruise, Tom 359
Cuff, Dana 135, 136
cultural geographers 407–8
cultural hegemony 192, 204
cultural production 197, 309, 332–3
culture industries 197–8
cultures/building materials 413
Culver City 236
Cunningham, Imogen 274

Dali, Salvador 277, 283
Daniel Freeman Hospital 454
Daniels, Roger 140
Daniels & Daniels 319
Dapogny, James 320

Darrow, Clarence 195
Daughters of Bilitis 282
Davidson, Ronald 453–4
Davis, Clark 453
Davis, Ed 155
Davis, Mike
  Bunker Hill 405
  citrus 296
  City of Quartz 59–60, 292, 338, 349
  jazz 287n9
  materiality 291
  mediated city 96
  Rodney King riots 156
  utopian colonies 302
The Day After Tomorrow 280
Day Labor Centers 10, 11
Day Without an Immigrant protest 2, 19
De Fages, Pedro 25
De Falla, Paul M. 117, 121, 122, 124n4, 126n14
De Jarnatt, Steve 359
De la Guerra, Jose 26
De Neve, Felipe 22, 23, 186, 398
De Sica, Vittorio 356
Dean, James 352
Dear, Michael 284–5, 317
Debord, Guy 151
The Decay of Fiction (O'Neill) 361
deed restrictions 57, 59
defense industry 137, 239, 281, 327, 411, 432–4
deglamorization 347
deindustrialization 153
Democratic Party 203–4
demographic diversity 432–4
demonization 48–50, 52
Demy, Jacques 354
Denny, Reginald 106, 147, 158
density 479, 480, 493
Department of Public Works 461
Department of Water and Power building (Martin) 485
Department of Water and Power (DWP)
  city boundaries 220–1
  conspiracy theories 219–23
  green energy initiative 221
  hydroelectricity 217, 220
  Los Angeles Times 218
  Starr on 219–20
dependency 187–8
Deppe, Ferdinand 185
Deren, Maya 349
Dershowitz, Alan 107
Detroit Riot 95
Deverell, William 43, 50, 292, 300, 302, 447, 454
Devil in a Blue Dress (Franklin) 358–9
DeWitt, General John L. 202
Di Massa, Cara Mia 483
Diaz, José 102, 431
Dick, Philip K. 357
Dickinson, Angie 354
Didion, Joan 280
Didrikson, Mildred Ella "Babe" 306
Diebenkorn, Richard 283
digital technology 361
Dimendberg, Edward 356
Dinerman, B. 235
dire wolves 177, 181
discrimination 61, 139
disease 97, 187, 447
  see also tuberculosis
Disney cartoon travelogue 282
Disneyland 102, 493
displacement 134–5, 136, 138–9, 246n14
Dmytryck, Edward 351
Dock, George 452
documentary films 356
Dodger Stadium 488
Dodgers 102, 137, 246n14
Doheny, Edward 194, 195–6
Dolphy, Eric 358
domestic service 66
Dominguez, Juan José 188
Domínguez, Mañuel 189–90
Dominguez, Ramon 120
Donne, John 271
Doolittle, James 201–2
Doors 328
Double Indemnity 351
Douglas, Donald 199, 202

Douglas, Gordon 352
Douglas aircraft 203
Downtown 12, 13, 60, 81, 481
Dracula 284
Dragnet 205, 352
Drake, Francis 272
dream factories 197–8
Dreamworks studio 259
drug use 334, 337
Du, Soon Ja 105–6, 156, 169–70
Dubois, W. E. B. 82
Dubuffet, Jean 283
Duchamp, Marcel 283, 287n8
Dumke, Glenn xvi
Durazo, Maria Elena 260
Duvall, Robert 358
Dylan, Bob 333
The Dynamics of the Youth Explosion 327–8
dystopia 279

Eagle Rock 481
Eames, Charles and Rae 353, 354
Eames House 481
Earth, Wind and Fire 355
earthquakes 396, 454, 485
East Coast Americans 270
East LA Be-In 332
East Los Angeles 159, 233–4, 242–4
The East Los Angeles Community Union (TELACU) 243
East Los Angeles interchange 136
Eastside 41–2, 48–9, 50, 51, 60
Easy Rider 328
Eaton, Fred 219
Ebony magazine 65
eccentricities 276, 404
Echo Park 361, 424
ecological design 405
ecology 394–5
economic decline 255
economic growth 68, 237
economic restructuring 157
Eddy, Mary Baker 450
18th Amendment 315
El Monte 50
El Monte Boys 98
El Salvador 204
El Sereno 415
electoral politics 414
electronics-based systems 202
elites 194, 250, 254–6, 292
Ellison, Ralph 322
Elysian Park 446
emergency response teams 169
employment
  low-wage 422
  minimum wage 87
  war-related 61–2
empowerment 242–4
End Poverty in California (EPIC) 280
Energy Star structure 405
Engh, Michael 45
engineering infrastructure 406–12
Ennis House 274, 357
environmental pressures 221, 451
environmental stewardship 223
EPIC campaign 280
equal rights 27, 69
Equitable Life tower 485
Erector Set parcel (Bentley) 483, 489
Erickson, Arthur 488–9
Erie, Steven 208
Espana-Maram, Linda 292
Espinoza, Pedro 73
ESPN's West Coast headquarters 491
Esquire 284, 333, 335
Estrada, William 293, 300, 304
Estrada Courts 137
Ethington, Philip xvi, 180 (map), 200 (map)
ethnic cleansing 83, 131, 135
ethnic communities 42, 50, 52, 331–2
ethnicity 40–1, 50–1, 52, 169
European immigrants 41, 46
evangelism 306–7, 308
exceptionalism 41, 42
excluded people 51, 57, 59, 262
The Exiles (MacKenzie) 351
ex-neophytes 30, 31
experimental cinema 349
exploitation of labor 201
Exposition Park 305
extractive industries 415

factory jobs 64–5
Fages, Pedro 188
Fair Employment Practices Committee 61
Fairfax district 330
Falling Down (Schumacher) 359
family grants of land 189–90
family honor 28
Fanon, Frantz 151
fantasy 20, 43, 276
fantasy heritage 192
Fante, John: *Ask the Dust* 278, 355–6
Farber, David 155
Farewell My Lovely 351
Farrow, John 351
Feagin, Joe R. 151
federal government 218
Federal Highway Act (1957) 269
Federal Housing Act 136
Federal Housing Administration 138, 433
federal troops 117–18
Federation of Labor 210
Fehrenbach, J. 454
Female 274
female virtue 28
femme fatale 351
Ferenz, F. K. 304
Fern Dell 270
Ferus Gallery 275, 282, 328
La Fiesta 43, 302
Figueroa, Governor 30
filibustering 323
Filipino immigrants 59, 293, 426
film industries: *see* motion picture industry
film noir 279–80, 350, 351, 352
film stars 197, 198, 347
Fire This Time (Horne) 153
Firestone 196
Fireworks (Anger) 349
fiscal federalism 233, 239–40, 246n7
Fischlin, Daniel 316
Fishbein, Morris 449
Fitzgerald, F. Scott: *The Last Tycoon* 279
Fitzsimmons, Margaret 222
Flamming, Douglas 41, 45, 52, 281, 317–18, 425–6
The Flats 41, 132–3, 134, 135
Flewelling, Ralph 135
Flick, Robbert: San Gabriel River Series xvi, xviii, 461, 462–77
flood 397
Florence-Normandie tract 158
Florida, Richard 339
Fogelson, Robert xvi
  business community 216
  The Fragmented Metropolis 59, 234–5, 291, 406–7
  good community 48
  housing 245n1, 245n2
  McCone Report 150, 154
  nostalgia 44
  urbanization 405
food for poor 85–6
forced-labor system 191
Ford, Harrison 357
Ford, John Anson 132, 140–1, 142, 143–4
Ford company 196, 207
foreign investment 69
foreign policy 65
foreign trade 32–3
Fox, K. 95
Fox, William 198
Fox studio 197, 198
Foxx, Jamie 359
fragmentation 48, 51, 233, 234, 236–9, 245
Franciscans 185, 186–8, 299
  see also mission system
Francisco, Don 298
Frank, Nino 279
Frank, Thomas 338
Frankfurt School 283, 328
Franklin, Carl 358
Franklin, Raymond 75, 81
Freeth, George 452, 453
freeways 66–7, 130, 132, 246n14
Frémont, John 34, 190
Fremont High School 87
French colonists 112

Friedman, Peter 360
Friedrich, Otto 287n7
Friedricks, William 216–17
Frye, Marquette 103, 123, 149, 155
Fuhrman, Mark 160–1
Fujii, Sei 141–2
Fulton, William 252
Fundamentalist movement 196
Fuqua, Antoine 358–9

Gabrielinos 22–4, 179, 182–4, 187, 189, 270
Gainer, Lewis 75–6
Gainer, Matt xvi–xvii, xviii, 2, 3–19
Gala 360
Galileo (Brecht) 275
Gálvez, José de 21
Gamble House 356, 402
gang affiliation
  Chicana 361
  on cinema 358
  disrespect 75
  identifying 73
  LAPD 84, 358
  race 83–4
  territoriality 77, 90
  violence 105
Gang from Los Angeles 315, 316, 317, 318
gangsta rap 90, 156
Garcia, Apolinar 135
Garcia, Bob 331, 332
García, Matt 194, 292, 300
Garcia, R. 454
Garcia, Trinidad 134
garment industry 208
Garvey, Marcus 322
gated communities 356
Gates, Daryl 155, 160, 207
Gateway Council of Governments 261
gay culture 281–2, 336, 360
Geffen, David 259
Gehry, Frank 480, 483
  Atlantic Yards project 487
  groupings 275
  Guggenheim Museum 489
  Related Cos. scheme 483, 489
  Walt Disney Concert Hall 360, 402, 405, 483, 487
gender equality 308
Gendron, Bernard 333
General Motors 196, 207
generational differences 171–2, 173
genocide 186
gente de razón 24, 30, 97, 398
gente sin razón 24, 97
gentrification 339
Gentry, Ed 331
German Americans 112
German expressionism 279–80, 351
gerrymandering 242
Getty, J. Paul 196, 207
Getty Center (Meier and Palladino) 405, 486–7
Getty Oil Company 196
Ghetto Revolts (Feagin and Hahn) 152–3
ghettoization 59
Gil y Taboada, Luis 25
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins
  Herland 276
  "Invitation to California" 438
Gilmore, Tom 481
Gilroy, Paul 316–17
Gitlin, Todd 338
Glendale 481, 493
global networks 207–10
globalization 206, 207, 208
goats, grazing 481, 489
gold fields 34–5, 190, 272, 286n1
Gold Line extension 244
Goldberg, Gail 488, 492
Goldberg, Jackie 339
Goldman, Ronald 107
Gómez-Farías, Valentin 29
Gone With the Wind 202, 278
González, Michael 30–1
Good Samaritan Hospital 454
Goodhue, Bertram 482
Goodrich 196
goods movement industry 261
Goodyear 196, 207
Googie diners 404, 405

Gotanda, Neil 138
Gottlieb, Robert 222
Reinventing Los Angeles 262
Gould, Elliot 355
Graham, Robert 275
Grammy Museum 491
Gramsci, Antonio 308–9
Grand Avenue Committee 489
Grand Avenue project 487–8, 489–90
Grand Canyon (Kasdan) 359
Great Depression 47, 129, 133, 137, 250, 297, 411
Great Migration 426–7
Green, Cheryl 83
green initiatives 221, 226
green spaces 422, 481
Greenberg, Clement 277
Greene, Charles and Henry 402
Greenwood community 80
Gregory, J. 426
Grey, Zane 278
grid system 408
Griffith, D. W.
Birth of a Nation 257, 281
Intolerance 349
mission myth 299
The Musketeers of Pig Alley 349
Triangle Film Corporation 197
Griffith, Griffith J. 424
Griffith Observatory 270, 352
Griffith Park 270, 330, 335, 424
grinding stones 182
Grove 493
growth-with-equity approach 258
Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty 190, 302
Guatemala 204
guidebooks 402
gun culture 89–90, 91
Gutierrez, David 191

Hackel, Steven 186
Haggis, Paul 359
Hahn, Harlan 151, 157
Hahn, James 209, 226, 259–60
Hahn, Kenneth 259
Halberstam, David 203
Hammett, Dashiell 279
The Maltese Falcon 280
harbor complex 217, 224, 295, 407, 408
see also San Pedro Bay
Harbor Department 217
Harbor Trunk Line Railroad 225
Harbor-Gateway 81
hardboiled detective stories 280, 350
Hardison, Wallace 196
Harlem Renaissance 281
Harlins, Latasha 105–6, 147, 156, 169–70
Harriman, Job 195
Harris, Donta 74
Harrison, Jerry 331
Hartranft, M. V. 302
Hassan, Abdul Karim 389
Have One brand 299, 300
Hawaiian Gardens 83
Hawthorne 82
Hay, Harry 281
Hayden, Dolores 293
Hayden, Tom 339
Hayes, Benjamin 397
Haynes, John Randolph 220
Hazard, Henry 119
He Walked By Night (Werker) 352
health benefits 286n2, 287n10, 438–40, 455
health centers 50
health faddists 449–50
Health House 447–8, 448
health seekers 439–44
healthcare infrastructure 440–2, 443, 454–5
see also public health
Hearst, William Randolph 194
Heat (Mann) 354
Heble, Ajay 316
Hebrew Home for the Aged 440
hedonism 356–7
hegemony 60, 63
Heinlein, Robert 280
Hell's Angels 335
Helter Skelter 105
Henry, Bill 199
Heraclitus 270

herbal remedies 449, 450
heritable property 188
Herms, George 283
Hertzberg, Robert 241
Herzog, Lawrence 317
hide trade 32, 33
Higgs, Herman 324
High School for the Visual and Performing Arts (Coop Himmelblau) 487
Highland Park 81, 83
highway construction 136, 269
  see also freeways
hiking 452
Hill, Lawrence 289–90
Hill Street 481
hillside homes 105
Himes, Chester: *If He Hollers Let Him Go* 281
Hinds, Marva 90
Hinds, Rickerby 88–90
Hinduism 368, 386
hippies
  canyons 330
  freeloading 335
  New Left 337–8
  Sunset Strip 329, 330
  UCLA interviews 331
  Venice Beach 333
Hise, Greg 284, 300, 315, 454
Hispanic Americans 83, 119–20, 189, 242, 245
Hobsbawm, Eric 157
Hockney, David 282, 354
Hodkinson studio 197
Hoffman, A. 129, 219, 452
Hokan people 183
Holden, William 353
Hollyhock House 274, 402
Hollywood 197
  African Americans 202
  counterculture 329–30
  film noir 279–80, 350, 351, 352
  hippies 333
  1939 films 278–9
  studio system 199, 347
Hollywood sign 276, 283
Holmby Hills 479
Home Owners Loan Corporation 405
Home Owners Loan Corporation City Survey 138
homeowners' associations 61
homeownership 60, 77–8, 84
Homo sapiens 177
homocides 86
Hoover Dam project 220
Hopper, Dennis 358
Hopps, Walter 275
Horkheimer, Max 283
Horne, Gerald 62, 153
Horton, T. C. 196
hospitality industry 261
hospitals 440, 454–5
Hotel Coronado 443–4
Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union 258
hotels for African Americans 83
house parties 76–7
housing
  affordability 87, 172
  improved 253–4
  legislation 67
  low-income 135–6
  middle-class black Angelenos 157
  poverty 422
  racialization 47, 48, 422, 426
  rented 60
  resistance to restrictions 61
  values in decline 239
  see also public housing
housing and health officials 48–9
housing loans 138, 405, 433
Howells, William Dean 271
HR 4437: Border Protection Act 2
Hunt, Myron 440
hunters' settlements 179, 182
Huntington, Henry E. 216–17, 274, 408, 411, 423, 453
Huntington, Woods 446
Huntington Library 409
Huntington Park 401
Hush-Hush 80
Huston, John 275, 280
Hutton, William Rich 31, 35

Huxley, Aldous 275, 282
hydroelectricity 217, 220, 407, 410–11

identity/race 108, 172
Igriega, Robert 331
Imitation of Life 284
immigrant labor
  aircraft industry 281
  defense industry 432–4
  public health 130–1
  service economy 87
  undocumented 2, 209
  wage cuts 208
immigration 211, 237, 242, 272–3
  see also specific ethnic groupings
Immigration Acts
  (1924) 59, 130
  (1965) 69
Immigration and Nationality Act (1965) 386
Immigration Reform Act (1965) 204
In a Lonely Place (Ray) 353
In MacArthur Park (Schwartz) 356
Ince, Thomas 197, 349
inclusionary zoning 261
incorporation 240, 242–5
  see also municipal incorporations
India 62
Indians: *see* Native people
indigents, transported 129
indoor-outdoor living 401–2
industrialization 41, 61, 221, 450–1, 461
Information Society 210
infrastructure 216, 217, 218, 227, 406–12
Initiative on Race 168
Inkwell beach 430
integration
  Asian Americans 68–9
  Cold War 65–7
  multiculturalism 67–9
  multiracial 56, 63–5, 74, 172
  public housing 137, 139
  race 56, 57, 426
  World War II 61–3
intercontinental ballistic missiles 201, 203
interethnic alliances 161, 253
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees 198
International Workers of the World 51
Internet sites 362
internment of Japanese Americans xvii, 62, 100, 130, 140, 141–4, 202, 431
Intolerance (Griffith) 349
Invasion of the Body Snatchers (Siegel) 352
Iona Inn 319
Iowa farmer immigrants 193
Iranian Revolution 204
Irish immigrants 95, 108, 112
irrigation 187, 296, 407
Irvine 403, 414
Irwin, Robert 283
Isherwood, Christopher 275, 282
Islamic Center 375, 382, 386, 389
Isoardi, Stephen 154
Israel, Frank 480
Italian Americans 41, 426
Italian immigrants 108, 202, 304
Ivans xtc. (Rose) 360

Jackson, Helen Hunt: *Ramona* 279, 301
Jackson, Michael 76
Jackson, Mick 356–7, 359
Jaime, Luis 97
James, David 349
Jameson, Fredric 355
Janss Investment Company 57, 59
Japanese American Citizens League 140, 143–4
Japanese Americans
  Boyle Heights 141–2
  citizenship 130
  internment xvii, 62, 65, 100, 130, 140, 141–4, 202, 431
  small business formation 60
Japanese immigrants 41, 59, 61, 193, 300, 426

Japanese racial category 50
Japantown 482–3
Jarvis, Howard 238
Jensen, Joe 222
Jesuits 186
Jew, Victor 125n12
Jewish Americans 139, 142, 198, 202, 256, 426
Jewish immigrants 41, 60, 108
Jewish Persians 204
Jewish religious community 368, 371, 385
Johnson, A. R. 120
Johnson, Jolly 319
Jolson, Al 273
Jones, Andrew F. 62
Jones, Homer 319
Jos, Tom 360
Journal of Popular Culture 291
Journal of the American Medical Association 449
justice riot 158, 159
justice system failures 170, 171–2

Kahrl, William 219
Kansas City Bar 319–20
Karenga, Maulana 151, 154
Karloff, Boris 354
Kasdan, Lawrence 359
Kashu Mainichi 141–2
Katz, Friedrich 194
Katz, Michael 162
Katzenberg, Jeffrey 259
Katznelson, Ira 138
Keaton, Buster 277, 315, 349
Kelley, Robin 101, 293
Kelly, Victor 120
Kennedy, John F. 203
Kennedy, Robert F. 104, 361
Kerner Commission 67–8
Kerouac, Jack 88
  On the Road 269
Kid Jazz 319
Kienholz, Edward 275, 283, 328
The Killer is Loose (Boetticher) 352
Killer of Sheep (Burnett) 356
The Killing of a Chinese Bookie (Cassavetes) 355
Kim, E. 113, 125n8, 159
Kindleberger, J. H. 199–200
King, Angela 147
King, Martin Luther 105
King, Rodney xvii, 105–6, 147, 156, 169, 256
  see also Rodney King riots
Kiss Me Deadly (Aldrich) 352
Kitchen, J. D. 235
Klein, Christine 68
Klein, Norman
  Bleeding through Layers of Los Angeles 361
  The History of Forgetting 270
K-Line 206
Knox-Nisbet Act (1963) 237
Koenig, Pierre 353
Kohner, Frederick: *Gidget* 284
Kohner, Paul 284
Kohner, Susan 284
Koolhaas, Rem 287n9, 357
Korean Americans
  and African Americans 169
  businesses 106, 157, 159, 170, 259
  justice system failure 171–2
  population growth 204
Korean immigrants 105, 193
Koreatown 159, 170, 481
Korngold, Erich Wolfgang 275
Koslow, Jennifer 443
Kress, George 446
Kroeber, Alfred 183
Kropp, Phoebe 43
krump dancing 92n1
Ku Klux Klan 281, 429
Kunkin, Art 329, 333, 336
Kurashige, Lon 140
Kurashige, Scott 60, 62, 65
Kusch, Frank 155

L.A. Confidential 280
L.A. Story (Jackson and Martin) 356–7
La Bianca, Leno and Rosemary 104–5
La Brea Tar Pits 272
La Brea Woman 182

LA Live 491
LA School 112–13, 224, 482
labor
  exploitation 47, 201
  Gabrielinos 187
  mission system 188
  race 59
  unionism 87, 148, 195, 198, 226
  wage cuts 161
  see also immigrant labor
labor organizations 210, 258
laborer suspension bill 125n11
LACMA Wilshire campus 405
The Ladder 282
The Ladies Depository 124n3
Lafayette Park 424
LAFCOs (Local Agency Formation Commissions) 236, 237–8, 242–3, 246n6
Lakewood 67, 82–3, 205, 223
Lakewood Plan 233, 236–7, 242, 244
Lancaster, Markess 81
LANCER incinerator 253
land development 294, 297–300
land grants 30, 188–90
Land of Sunshine magazine 43, 402
land ownership 188, 427
land speculation 41, 294, 296, 398–401
land use 239, 242, 246n7, 422, 488
Landmarks Club 301
landscape
  of desire 414
  fortified 405
  human influences 397
  industrialization 461
  material transformations 49
  motion picture industry 277–8
  openness 274
  passed over districts 414–15
  racialized 45
  sensibility 480
  silent films 277
  social 250
Lanes, Jack 320
Lang, Fritz 351
Lange, Dorothea 274
Lange, Tom 107
Larchmont Boulevard 493
Las Vegas 330
Lasky studio 197
latifundia 188–91
Latinos
  businesses 157
  civil unrest 257
  gangs 83
  immigrants 86, 158, 204, 233, 258
  Mexican-born 209
  political expectations 234
  political leadership 242
  population growth 245
  poverty 255
Laughton, Charles 275
Laurel and Hardy 277, 349
Laurel Canyon 330
Lautner, John 402
LAX (Los Angeles International Airport) 102, 106, 218, 223, 226–7, 488
leadership 52, 61–2, 172–3, 216, 242, 263
Lears, T. J. Jackson 298
Leary, Timothy 334
Leclerc, Gustavo 284–5, 317
Lee, Arthur 331
Lee, C. Y. 125n8
LEED standards 405
left-wing 153, 195
  see also New Left
leisure pursuits 421, 433
Leung, T., Herb Co. 449, 450
Lewis, Pierce 393
Lewis, Sinclair 276
Lewthwaite, Stephanie 42
Libecap, Gary 219
liberalism 25–6, 30–1, 198, 205, 206–7
libertarianism 334
Lie, John 148, 159–60
Life magazine 96
lifestyle 203–4, 354, 423
Lightfoot, K. G. 187
light-rail system 488

Lincoln, Abraham 271
Lincoln Heights 415
Lincoln Park 431–2
Lindley, Walter 132
Linton, G. W. 440
Lipsitz, George 293
Lipton, Lawrence 332
Little Armenia 270
Little Landers community 302
Little Liberia 322–3
Little Manila 60
Little Tokyo 60, 61, 65, 139, 140, 142
livestock from Europe 187
living conditions 413
living spaces 480
  see also housing; residential areas
living-wage ordinance 258
Lloyd, Harold 349
Local Agency Formation Commissions: *see* LAFCOs
local government 139–40, 238
Lock, Graham 314
Lockhart, Gary 354
Lockheed Aircraft 199, 203
Lockheed Martin 209
Loesser, Cornelius 191
Logan, John 216
Lomax, Alan 319
London, Jack 274, 453
Long, Baron 323
Long Beach 217, 225
The Long Goodbye (Altman) 355
looting 151, 158–9, 169
Lopez, Fidel 158
Lopez, Marvin 366
Los Angeles
  as Anglo-American city 40
  consolidation 233, 234–6, 244
  as cosmopolitan city 42–4, 68
  exceptionalism xvii, 41
  as garden 394
  as global city 21, 32, 58, 177, 179, 192
  history xvi, 210–11, 396
  literature on 278
  as metropolis 200, 201, 347
  multiple centers 285, 287n9, 484
  patterns of xvi–xvii, 272–3
  as postborder city 284–5
  regional regimes 177, 178, 179–210
  Spanish language 35
  as white spot of nation 57, 58
Los Angeles: Preface to a Master Plan (Tilton and Robbins) 403
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy 161, 258, 263
Los Angeles Aqueduct 219
Los Angeles Basin 177–8, 179, 181, 184
Los Angeles Bicycle Club 453
Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
  The Dynamics of the Youth Explosion 327–8
  formation of 193
  manifest destiny 59
  power of 216, 263
  real estate 137
  reconstituted 295
  Water Committee 222
Los Angeles Children's Hospital 440
Los Angeles Commission on Pornography 336
Los Angeles Committee for Home Front Unity 66
Los Angeles Conservancy 271, 406
Los Angeles County 180 (map), 200 (map)
  Department of Public Works 461
  ethnicity 204
  Federation of Labor 210
  future incorporation 245
  population growth 422–3, 479
  poverty 255
Los Angeles County Hospital 442
Los Angeles County Museum 274
Los Angeles Daily Mirror 99
Los Angeles Daily News 122–3
Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation 263
Los Angeles Examiner 194
Los Angeles Fiesta 43, 302

Los Angeles Free Press 327–8, 329, 332, 333, 335, 336
Los Angeles Harbor Department 225
Los Angeles Herald-Examiner 87, 96, 445
Los Angeles Housing Authority 405
Los Angeles Interfaith Network 369, 384
Los Angeles International Airport: *see* LAX
Los Angeles Ladies and Hebrew Benevolent Society 442
Los Angeles Morning Tribune 316
Los Angeles Museum of Art 275
Los Angeles Now (Rodriguez) 361
Los Angeles People's Realty Company 322
Los Angeles Philharmonic 274
Los Angeles Plays Itself (Anderson, T.) 360
Los Angeles Police Department
  anti-gang unit 160–1
  archives 155
  Chinese Massacre 111, 114
  gangs 84, 358
  ghettoes/suburbs 67
  hippies 330
  Nation of Islam's temple 149
  patrol cars 205
  personal experience of 76–7
  police brutality 103, 147, 149, 154, 337
  racism 107
  Rampart Division 160–1
  Red Squad 195, 206
  Rodney King riots 155–6
  Zoot Suit attacks 101
Los Angeles Railway surveys 409
Los Angeles Realty Board 220
Los Angeles Riot Study 151
Los Angeles River 110, 177, 211n1, 286n5, 409, 431
Los Angeles School Board 154
Los Angeles Sentinel 90
Los Angeles Settlement Association 48–9
Los Angeles Times
  aircraft industry 199
  bombing of 195
  bought over 209
  Chandler 206
  Chinese Massacre 123, 124n3
  downtown supermarket opening 482
  DWP 218
  Erector Set 483
  housing 137
  infrastructure 217
  Japanese 100
  Lakewood Plan 242
  Lummis 301
  naturopath column 447
  Otis 193
  political officials 250
  power 216, 220
  racial violence 96
  Shaw family 73
  smog 450
  Spelling's move 480
  trophy houses 404
  Watts riot 148
  Zoot Suiters 102
Los Angeles Tribune 64
Los Angeles Tuberculosis Association 445
Los Feliz Boulevard 270
Losey, Joseph 351
Lotchin, Roger 216, 221
Lou, Raymond 125n9
Loughead, Allan and Malcolm 199
Love 328, 331
love-ins 330
Lovell, Philip M. 447, 449
Lowe, Thaddeus S. C. 452
Lower California Company 322–3
LSD 334–5
Lubitsch, Ernst 349
Luckman, Charles 488
Luddy, Emily Gable 488
Lummis, Charles Fletcher 43, 44, 273, 296, 301
Lynch, David 360
lynchings 116–17, 119
Lynwood 82–3

M (Lang) 351
M (Losey) 351
Macbeth, Hugh 323
McBroome, D. N. 322–3, 324
McCawley, W. 183–4
McClintock, Tom 241
McConahay, John 151, 152
McCone, John 103, 149–50, 152, 154
McCone Commission 105, 149
McCulley, Johnston 273
McDaniels, Hattie 202
McFie, Maynard 296–7
McGroarty, John 301–2
Machiavelli, Niccolò 492
machismo 102
MacKenzie, Kent 351–2
McNamara, John and Hames 195
McPherson, Aimee Semple 306–8
McWilliams, Carey xvi
  agricultural labor 300
  Anglo-Americans 57, 192
  body cult 452
  Buck 56, 57
  citrus 296
  eradicating Mexican past 302
  on Harriman 195
  land speculation 219, 294, 297
  lynching of Mexicans 98
  multiracial coalitions 64
  placing of Los Angeles 407
  popular culture 285
  Pullman Car Migration 193
  race 57, 62
  Southern California Country 292
  Spanish fantasy 43
  speculation 400
Magnolia (Anderson) 359
Magón, Enrique and Ricardo Flores 194–5
Mahony, Roger 485, 486
Mailer, Norman 269
Main Event cabaret 319
Main Street 483
Malibu/Decker Canyon 330
Manhattan Beach 429
manifest destiny concept 59, 98, 301
Mann, Michael 354, 359
Mann, Thomas 275
Manson, Charles 104–5, 335, 337
manufacturing 104, 401
Manzanar internment center 65, 142, 202
Manzo, Jesse 75
maquiladora factories 323
Marcos, Ferdinand 204
marijuana 334
Marin, Cheech 360–1
Markey, Morris 407
marriage 29, 33
Martin, A. C. 485
Martin, Glenn L. 199
Martin, Steve 356–7
Martinez, Alberto 134
Martinez, Jesus 120
Marvin, Lee 354
Marx, Karl 126n17
Masjid Bilal Islamic Center 382, 389–90
Massy, Peggy 319
Mathews, Amanda Chase 46
Matsuo, Ruth 141–2
Mattachine Society 281–2
Mayne, Thom 402, 480, 481, 487
Mead, Syd 357
Mechner, Jordan 360
mega-development model 484, 487
megafauna extinction 181
Meier, Richard 486
Mellus, Francis 398
melting pot mythology 46, 53
Memorial Coliseum 305–6
Mendell, L. M. 120
Menifee Valley Incorporation Committee 246n15
mentorships 179
Merchants and Manufacturers Association 218, 220
Meshes of the Afternoon (Deren) 349
mestizo classification 21, 24
Metro 197
Metro Alliance 259
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio 198

Metropolitan Water District (MWD) 217, 221–3, 236
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund 241
Mexican Americans
  access to beaches 430–1
  anti-Japanese feelings 62–3
  Boyle Heights 142
  Chicanos 108, 360–1
  Chinese Massacre 112
  citizenship 190
  citrus fruit workers 300
  corridos 303
  displacement 134–5
  East Los Angeles 242
  elites 194
  as foreign 130
  lynched 98
  officeholding 190–1, 192
  as Other 99–100
  population growth 204, 306
  recreation 426
  unemployment 133
  whites/non-whites 46, 50, 60, 98, 190
  working-class 98, 422
Mexican Chamber of Commerce 52
Mexican immigrants
  Asian immigrants 47
  culture 292, 302, 303
  laborers 40, 41, 194
  Mexican Revolution 193
  race 46, 179
  repatriation 47, 59, 129–30, 132, 133–4, 135, 140–1, 144n2, 202
  and Spanish 20
Mexican Revolution 192, 193
Mexican-American War 98, 189, 190–1, 399
Mexican-US borderlands 14, 179, 182–3, 191–201, 318, 321–2
Mexico
  African-American immigrants 324–5
  economic relations with US 47
  Independence 26, 32, 188
  Secretariat of Foreign Relations 133–4
  secularization 29
  socialist uprising 318
Meyerson, Harold 258
Mi vida loca (Anders) 361
Micheltorena, Manuel 34
Midwestern immigrants 235, 273–4, 277
Midwestern riots 281
migration, culture of 273
military aircraft orders 199, 221
military bases 415
military service, segregated 61
military-industrial regime 26, 201–7
Miller, Frank 301
Miller, Gary 236–7, 237–8, 245n4
Miller, James 338
Miller, Loren 64
Millingstone people 179, 181–2
Mingus, Charles 314, 358
minimum wage jobs 87
Ministerios Linaje Escogido 366, 378, 388
Ministerios Nuevo Vivir 376, 387
Minnelli, Vincente 353
Mintz, Elliot 337
Minutemen 8, 15, 16
Miracle Mile (De Jarnatt) 359
Mission Play (McGroarty) 301–2
Mission Revival style of architecture 59, 301, 302
mission system 397
  Conquistadores 97
  dependency 187–8
  estates 20, 27
  labor 188
  as myth 300–5
  romanticized 192, 273, 282
  secularization 27, 30, 189
  settlements 21–2
missions, preserved 43, 301
Mitchell, Al 329, 335, 337
Model Shop (Demy) 354
Molina, Gloria 490
Molina, Natalia 41, 46, 47, 50, 60, 130, 444, 447
Mollenkopf, J. 339
Molotch, Harvey 216, 252, 403

Moneo, José Rafael
City Hall Annex 486
new cathedral 405, 485–6
Pritzker Prize 486
Monroy, Douglas 97, 187, 191, 303
Monterey 27, 28, 29, 33–4
Monteverde, George 313–14, 321, 324
Monteverde, Porfirio 313–14, 321
Montgomery, David 319
Montgomery, Wes 92
Moore, Charles 394
Moreland, Mantan 324
Morgan, J. P. 323
Morton, Jelly Roll 319, 320, 323, 324
Moses, Ed 275
Moses, Robert 484
Mosley, Walter 358
Moss, Eric Owen 480
Mothers Anonymous 154
Mothers of Invention 328
motion picture industry
central producer system 197
conglomerates 209
exhibition/distribution 198
landscape 277–8
non-union 195
origins 347
production modes 349
racial identity 108
social power 197
storytelling 348
studio system 199
and television 329
unionism 198
see also cinema; Hollywood
mountain camps 421–2
movie star: *see* film stars
movie theaters 404
Moynihan, Daniel: *The Negro Family* 150
Mulholland, William 219, 222, 295, 409–10
Mulholland Drive (Lynch) 360
multiculturalism 57, 67–9, 68, 282
multiethnic communities 60–1, 168–9
multi-family buildings 479
municipal authorities 25, 48, 50, 209, 233
municipal incorporations 204–5, 233–6, 239
Municipal League 305
muralists 274, 304
Murder My Sweet (Dmytryk) 351
Murieta, Joaquin 98
Murnau, F. W. 350
Murphy, Eddie 358
Murray, Welwood 444
Music Center (Welton Becket and Associates) 485
The Musketeers of Pig Alley (Griffith) 349
Muslim community 368, 386
Musso & Frank Grill 278
MWD Act 222
Myrdal, Gunnar 61

NAACP 52, 64, 153, 241, 322, 426, 428, 430
Nasser, Raymond 352
Nation of Islam 153, 154–5
Nation of Islam's temple 149
National Guard 103, 149
National Security Council 203
National Tuberculosis Association 452
Native people
citizenship barred 31
disease 97
equal rights 27
mission system 22
paid in brandy 31–2
and Spanish settlers 24–5, 97, 273
trading 24
uprisings 24–5, 96, 97
villages 22–4, 32
see also Tong-va people
nativism 46, 426
natural environment 278, 394–5, 434, 482
nature's bounty 395–7, 398, 412
naturopathy 447, 450
Naval Reserve Armory 101–2
Nazi Germany 274–5
Neal, Mark Anthony 316

Negro Victory movement 61–2
Neighborhood Adult Participation Program 154
Neighborhood Councils 221, 226
Nelson, Howard J. 191
neoliberalism 207–10
neo-noir 280, 355, 358–9
neophytes 27, 186, 187
Neutra, Richard 274, 275, 402, 447, 448
New Deal 51, 131, 132, 138, 205, 238
New Journalism 283–4, 356
New Left 327–8, 329, 337–8
New Right 340
New York 108, 198
New York City Draft riots 95
New York Review of Books 330
New York Times 313, 315, 480
Newman, Randy 89
Newmeyer, Fred 349
Newport Bar 319
Ngai, Mae 130, 138
Nieto, Manuel 188
nigger, use of term 99, 118, 332
Night has a Thousand Eyes (Farrow) 351
NIMBY pressures 228
Nin, Anaïs 328
Nixon, Richard 201, 203, 205, 207, 210
Nokia Theater 491
non-union workforce 195
non-whites 46, 47, 50, 202, 209
see also specific ethnic groupings
Normark, Don 360
North American Aviation 199–200, 203
Northridge earthquake 454, 485
Northrop Aircraft 200, 203
nostalgia 20, 43, 276, 284, 350, 479–80
nostalgia film 355
NRDC offices 405
nudism 452
Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles 22
nursing profession 440
Obregon, Alvaro 323–4
Ocean Park series (Diebenkorn) 283
Ofari, Earl 331
Office of Historic Resources 406
oil 179, 195–6, 203, 209, 225
Okies 427
Okihiro, Gary 138, 140
old age homes 440
Olive View Sanitarium 444
Olvera Club 304
Olvera Street 43, 303–4, 432
Olympic Games
(1932) 200, 289, 305, 306
(1984) 206–7
O'Malley, Walter 137
Ombusa, Tiburcio 187
On the Road (Kerouac) 269
ONE, Inc. 281–2
101 Freeway 136
O'Neill, Pat 361
OPEC embargo 207
open air culture 453, 454
Open City 330, 331, 336
Operation Hammer 156
La Opinion 308
The Oracle 334
Oracle of Southern California 330
Orange County 67, 240, 433
oranges 298, 299, 396
Ord, E. O. C. 35, 399
Orozco, José Clemente 274
Orthopaedic Hospital 440
Osio, Antonio Maria 28–9
osteopaths 450
Ostrom, V. 235
Otis, General Harrison Gray 193, 194, 195, 217, 301
Otis-Chandler oligarchy 179, 195, 200, 203, 206, 208
Outterbridge, John 154
Out West magazine 43, 402
Ovnick, Merry 81, 82
Owens Valley 355, 409–10
Owens Valley Aqueduct 193, 217, 219–20, 228, 235, 250, 407, 411
Oxnam, G. Bromley 45, 51

Pacheco, Rod 81
Pacific Design Center (Pelli) 486
Pacific Electric railway 274, 294, 408–9, 423
Pacific Gospel Mission 196
Pacific Light and Power 410–11
Pacific Palisades 481
Pacific Rim economy 69, 156–7, 206
Pacific War 141
Pacoima 60
Palladino, Michael 486
Palm Springs sanitarium 444
Palmer, Kyle 203
Paramount and Loew's Inc. 198
Paramount studio 198
Park, Edward 159
Park Commission, Charter (1889) 424
Parker, William 103, 149, 155, 205, 206, 207
parking spaces 483, 484
Parkinson, John and David 305–6
parkland 421–3, 433
  Grand Avenue project 490–1
  lack of 434, 439
  planning for 422–3
  recreation 454
Parks, Bernard 260
Parroquia San Judas Tadeo 373, 385–6
Parson, Don 137
Partnership for Profit 299
Pasadena 307, 481, 493
Pastras, Phil 320
paternalism 45
Patton, George S. Jr. 201–2
Patucha, Simon 488
Peace Holiness Church 381, 389
Pearl Harbor 62, 100, 130, 140, 141, 144
Peck, George 429–30
pedestrians 482
  see also walkability
Pelli, Cesar 486
Penn, Sean 358
Pentecosal Four Square Church 307
peon courts 49
peonage 186, 191
Perkins & Will 483
Perry, Jan 490
Pershing Square 432
Peru 33
Pete's Café 483
petroleum 202–3
Pfaelzer, J. 125n12
Philippines 204
Phillips, George Harwood 31
Phoenix, Charles 453
photographic representations 366–8
physicians per resident 440
Piano, Renzo 287n9
  Broad Contemporary Art Museum 481
Picasso, Pablo 275
Pico, Andrés 190
Pico, Pío 26, 34, 87, 189, 190
Pico Boulevard 430
Pico-Union 159
Pincetl, Stephanie 237–8, 246n7
La Placita 303
plague outbreak 50
planning restrictions 424
The Player (Altman) 360
Playground Department 421–2, 425, 426, 431, 434
Playground Movement 425
Plaza
  Chinese Massacre 114, 115
  mixed ethnicity 41, 60
  and Pershing Square 432
  pueblo 424
  Sterling, Christine 304
Pleistocene Era 177, 179
pluralism model 51, 53
Point Blank (Boorman) 354
Polanski, Roman 104
  Chinatown 219, 280, 355, 356
police brutality 103, 105, 147, 149, 154, 337
Polish immigrants 41, 108
political economic inequalities 339
politicians, local 131–2
The Politics of Violence (Sears and McConahay) 152–3, 160

Pollock, Jackson 282–3
pollution regulations 451–2
polychromy 354
Pomona College 306
popular culture 285, 290–3, 308, 405
Popular Front Americanism 63
population decline 187
population growth
  immigrants 41, 62, 193, 204, 233, 245, 306
  industrialization 41
  Los Angeles County 422–3, 479
  post-World War II 237
  railroads 41, 422
  water supply 220–1, 223
porfiriato 192, 194
Porfirio Diaz, José de la Cruz 192, 194, 195, 201
pornography 337
port officials 225
ports 224, 225–6, 261
post-Fordist economy 208
Poulson, Norris 205, 206
poverty
  criminalization 148
  foods 85–6
  housing 422
  Los Angeles County 255
  public housing 251
  racial disparities 255
  unemployment 157
  walkers 482
  working-class 250
poverty riots 257
power supply 407, 410
Power Trust 220
Prabhavananda, Swami 282
preservationists 304–5, 406
presidios 20, 25, 398
Preston, Billy 331
preventorium 445
Price, Ken 283
Price, Vincent 275
primitivism 49, 336
Pritzker Prize 486
privilege/race 108, 292
Progressive Era 49
  ethnic leaders 52
  health measures 49, 443
  Playground Movement 425
  pollution regulations 451–2
  race/ethnicity 53
  state apparatus 227
  state-assisted capitalism 218
Progressives, African American 44
Prohibition 315, 321
property, railroads 415
property taxes 238
Proposition 13 238–9, 240, 244, 254–6
Proposition U 256
Proposition X 243
Protestants 110–11, 301, 367–8
Provo 334
Public Broadcasting Service 361
public enterprises 227–8
public forgetting 123, 124n3
public health
  air quality 451–2
  demonization 49–50
  hazards 50
  immigrants 130–1
  race 60, 446–7
public housing 66, 130, 135–7, 139, 251
public space 148, 421, 424
public transport 423
  see also railroads; streetcar service
public utilities 220, 221
public-private partnerships 218, 223–4, 490
Pubols, Louise xvi
Puce Moment (Anger) 349
pueblo culture 29, 293–6, 303–4, 398, 424
Pulido, Laura 69, 338
Pullman Car migration 193
Pulp Fiction (Tarantino) 359
The Puppet Masters 280
Purcell, Mark 252, 255
Pure Fire (Strain) 153
Purifoy, Noah 154
Pynchon, Thomas 151

Quinceañera (Glatzner and Westmoreland) 361

Raab, Mark 182
race
  citizenship 40–1, 139
  classifications 24, 46
  community formation 59
  diversity 41–2, 44–5
  ethnicity 50–1, 169
  gang affiliation 83–4
  identity 108
  integration 56, 57, 426
  labor 59
  Mexican/American conflict 98
  New York 95, 108
  poverty 255
  privilege 108, 292
  public health 60, 446–7
  schooling 59, 87
  and segregation 173, 317–18
  social mobility 24
  social movements 308
  stereotypes 170–1
  symbolic/real violence 96
  team sports leagues 431
  tolerance 69
  wage levels 194
race relations 57, 173, 358–9
racial ideology 131, 202
racialization
  Asian Americans 138
  class 148
  housing 47, 48, 422, 426
  landscape 45
  local government 139–40
  patterns 46–7
  riots 95
racism
  biological 61
  Buck 56
  as contagious disease 447
  institutionalized 358
  LAPD 107
  recreational segregation 425–32
Radha Krishna Mandir 374, 386
radiation fears 352
radicalism 152, 328, 338
radio technology 308
railroads
  citrus fruit 294, 296
  city expansion 439–40
  irrigation 296
  long distance commuters 259
  population growth 41, 422
  ports 224
  property 415
  rate war 192
  transcontinental 40
  workers 42
rainfall 401–2, 409
Ralph's supermarket 482
Ramirez, Eddie 133
Ramírez, Zeferino 52
Ramona Gardens 136–7
ranch houses 433
ranchería 32
los rancheros 30, 188, 189, 399–400
Rancho Chupa Rosa 302
Rancho City Lands of Los Angeles 72
Rancho San Antonio Lugo 72
ranchos 20, 30, 188, 191, 192
Randolph, A. Philip 61
rape 97
Ratner, Brett 360
Ray, Man 277, 283
Ray, Nicholas 352, 353
Reagan, Ronald
  Anti-Great Society policies 207
  Cold War 201
  free enterprise 210, 254
  New Left on 327
  Olympics 206
  Republican Right 205, 254
  spectacle 203
  Watts riot 103
Reagonomics 156
real estate 61, 216, 480
Rebel Without a Cause (Ray) 352
Rebuild Los Angeles 160, 257
recession 105
Reconstruction era 117
record labels 332–3
recording studies 284

recreation
  access to space 425–32, 434
  Americanization 425
  Asian Americans 431
  outdoor 421–2
  parkland 454
  for residents/tourists 421–2
  segregation 425–32
  socialization 431
  tourism 421
Red Car transportation 287n9
Red Scare purge 205, 281
Red Squad, LAPD 195, 206
Redondo Beach 453
Regalado, Jaime 253
regional institutions 208
Reich, Robert 339
reindustrialization 148
Reisner, Marc 219
Related Companies scheme 483, 489–90
religion 366–8
Remondino, Dr. 439
repatriation
  Filipino immigrants 59
  Mexican immigrants 47, 59, 129–30, 132, 133–4, 135, 140–1, 144n2, 202
republicanism 25, 26
reservoirs 409
residential areas
  civil rights movement 208–9
  mobility regulations 50
  multi-family buildings 479
  segregation 52, 292
  self-expression 404
residential tower blocks, South Park 492
resistance 51, 52, 61, 253
rest homes 440
retirees 423
revenue neutrality law 233, 239, 240
Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles (Cooper) 356
Richard, Ken 352
Richfield Oil Company Building 353
Rieff, David 147
Rio Hondo 177
Riordan, Richard 160, 221, 257, 258, 259
Rios Clementi Hale Studio 490–1
rituals of urbanism 493
Rivera, Diego 274
Rivera y Moncada, Fernando 22, 35n1
Riverbed territory 48–9
Riverside 74, 75, 157
Riverside Press-Enterprise 81
Rize 92n1
RKO studio 198
Robbins, George 403
Roberts, Frederick 52
Robinson, Edward G. 274–5
rock music 314, 318, 334
Rock Springs massacre 115
Rockwell, Norman 281
Rodemich, Gene 320
Rodia, Simon 154, 283
Rodney King riots
  Bradley 106, 160
  as bread riot 158–9
  costs of 106
  justice system failures 158, 170, 256
  LAPD 155–6
  lead up to 171–2
  multiethnic 111
  participatory democracy 157
  segregationist policies 207–10
  Anna Deavere Smith's monologues 147–8
  video of attack 105, 106–7, 169
  and Watts riot 152–3, 155, 285
Rodriguez, Gregory 282
Rodriguez, Philip 361
Rogers, Will 198
Rogin, Michael 327
Rollins, Callie 79, 82
Rollins, Fine 78, 79
Rollins, Zack 79
Roman Catholic Church 24, 26, 27, 185–8, 367
Roman Empire 188
Roosevelt, Franklin D. 61, 134–5, 141, 142
Rosario Villa, María del 28

Rose, Bernard 360
Rose, Stanley 275
Rose Parade 307, 439
Rosi, Franco 353
Rosie the Riveter 281
Ross, Steven 198
Rossa, Della 151
Rossellini, Roberto 356
Rossinow, Doug 332
Roszak, Theodore: *The Making of a Counterculture* 327–8
Rowland, Dick 80
Royal Air Force 199
Roybal, Edward 64
RTKL Associates 491
Rubio Canyon resort complex 452
Rucker, Eddie 319, 324
Rumford Fair Housing Law 67, 154
rural-urban migratory flows 47
Ruscha, Ed 283, 328, 334, 354
Russian Molokans 41, 51, 133, 139, 142
Rustin, Bayard 150

saber-tooth cats 178, 181
Sackman, Douglas 300
Safety Last (Newmeyer and Taylor) 349
St Vibiana's Cathedral 485
St Vincent Hospital 454
Salas, Rudy 147
Salazar, Ruben 123
salon culture 275
Salvation Mountain 372, 385
San Bernardino 157, 403
San Diego 218, 223, 227
San Fernando 236
San Fernando Valley 67, 221, 233, 240–2, 256, 433
San Francisco 99, 269, 272, 274
San Francisco Be-In 330
San Gabriel Arcángel Mission 22, 24, 96, 183, 185, 299
San Gabriel Canyon health camp 445
San Gabriel River 177
San Gabriel River Series (Flick) 461, 462–77
San Gabriel Valley 142–3, 444–5
San Pedro Bay 193, 217, 218, 223, 224–5, 235, 295
San Vicente Village 137
sanatoria 443–6, 456n3
Sánchez, George 64, 157–8, 292, 300
Sanchez, Tomás 190
sanctuary family 17
Sanders, Ed 335
Sandmeyer, E. 114
sanitation 410, 428
Santa Ana Highway 136
Santa Ana River 177
Santa Barbara 403
Santa Fe railroad 192, 193, 296, 422
Santa Monica 198, 236, 339, 403, 430, 451, 493
Santa Monica Canyon 349
Santa Monica harbor 224
Santa Rosa Island 180
Sassen, Saskia 339
Saudi Arabia 207
Saul, Scott 103
Sawtelle 60
Saxton, Alexander 99
Scattergood, Ezra 409–10
Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills (Bartel) 359–60
Schatz, Carol 492
Scheyer, Galka 286n6
Schindler, Rudolf 274, 275, 481
Schoenberg, Arnold 275
schooling 59, 87, 154, 172
Schrank, Sarah 154
Schulberg, Budd: *What Makes Sammy Run?* 279, 353
Schumacher, Joel 359
Schwankovsky, Frederick 283
Schwartz, Bruce 356
Schwarzenegger, Arnold 270
Science and Health 450
Scott, Allen 112–13, 124n6, 125n9, 293
Scott, Ridley 357
Screen Actors Guild 210
sea otter pelts 32
sea turtles 461

SeaLand 206
Sears, David 151, 152, 160
Seaview Hospital 445
Sebastian, Charles E. 316
secularization 27, 29–30, 188–9
segregation
  beaches 427–31
  civil rights movement 204
  community formation 204
  Eastside 49
  ethnicity 50
  good community concept 48
  health centers 50
  housing 422
  military service 61
  race 173, 317–18
  recreational space 425–32, 427–8
  residential 52, 292
  Rodney King riots 207–10
  swimming pools 59
Seidenbaum, Art 148
self-improvement 357
self-reflexivity 360
Sennett, Mack 197, 277
Serra, Junipero 97
service cuts 239
service economy 87
Seven Years War 185
sexism 336
sexuality 28, 97, 107, 335–6
shamanism 185
Shaw, Anita 73
Shaw, Frank 129–30, 131–2, 135, 144n1
Shaw, Jamiel 73, 90
Shaw, Jamiel II 73–4, 83, 90, 91
Sherman, Moses H. 219
Shivers, Frank 319
shootings, drive-by 77, 81, 91–2
Shortcuts (Altman) 359
shotgun houses 415
Shover, John 327
Shulman, Julius 204
Sides, Josh 153, 155, 317–18, 425–6
Siegel, Don 352
Siegel, Jerrold 328
Sikhism 368
silent films 277, 351
Silent Majority 205
Silicon Valley 210
Silver Lake: The View from Here (Friedman and Jos) 360
Simons Brick Company 194
Simpson, Nicole Brown 107
Simpson, O. J. 96, 107–8, 160–1
Sims, Dwayne 72, 75–7, 91
Sims, General 80
Sims, General II 83, 84, 85–6, 88
Sims, General R. C. 81, 85, 88
Sims, John Prexy 78–9, 84–5
Sims, Robert 84, 85, 88
Sims, Sensei 81
Sims, Stanford 84, 85, 88
Sinclair, Upton 280, 295
Singh, Nikhil Pal 62
Siodmak, Robert 351
Siqueiros, David Alfaro 274, 304
Sisters of Charity hospital 440
site-based sales tax 245–6n5
Sitton, Tom 131
Situationist International 151
skin color 86–7
Sleepy Lagoon incident xvii, 63, 65, 102, 431
slum clearance 49, 66, 135, 136, 484
slums 48, 132, 139
small business formation 60
Smethurst, James 154
Smith, Anna Deavere 147–8
Smith, George Washington 402
smog 450–1
Smog (Rosi) 353
smuggling 32
Smythe, William Ellsworth 302
social Darwinism 276
social democracy 63–5
social engineering 413
social flashpoints xvii, 111
social justice 252, 259, 262
social moblity 24, 60, 66
social movements 308
socialism 195
socialist colony 302
Socialist Workers Party 151

Soja, Edward 112–13, 124n6, 125n9, 291, 293
Solair apartment tower 481
Sonenshein, Raphael 252–3
songs about Los Angeles 286n3
Sonoma 34
Sonoratown
  demonized 48–9
  ethnic diversity 41
  living conditions 413
  peon courts 49
  people of adobe 40
  racializing discourse 46–7
  razed 304
  tourism 43
Sontag, Susan 275, 280
Sorkin, Michael 291
South Central 159, 354–5, 432
South Group 492
South Los Angeles 72, 415
South Park 482, 492
Southern California Edison 407, 411
Southern Pacific railroad 192, 193, 224, 296, 422
Southwest Builder and Contractor 402
Soviet Union 206
Spain 185, 186–8
Spanish Borderlands 20–1, 179
Spanish colonial institutions 21, 300–1, 395
  see also mission system
Spanish conquest 21, 97, 179, 184–8
Spanish language 35, 302
Spanish settlers 22–5, 88, 97
Spear, Charlotta A.: *see* Bass, Charlotta A.
spectacular/everyday 203, 283, 306–7
speculation: *see* land speculation
Spelling, Aaron 479
Spelling, Candy 479, 480
Spielberg, Steven 259
Spillane, Mickey 352
Splitter, H. W. 440
Stahl House 353
Staples Center 258, 482
Starr, Kevin
  Chinese Massacre 112, 124n5, 125n9
  gold 272, 286n1
  infrastructure 407
  popular culture 292
  water imperialism 219–20
  Zoot Suit riots 101
state government
  fiscal federalism 239–40
  fragmentation 236–9
The State of Things (Wenders) 357–8
Stearns, Abel 189, 398
Steinbeck, John
  The Grapes of Wrath 278, 427
  Okies 279
Steppenwolf 334
stereotypes 107–8, 170–1
Sterling, Christine 303–5
Stern, Robert A. M. 479–80
Sterry, Nora 46
Stevenson, Geneva 72, 78, 79–80, 81, 82, 84, 86, 90
Stevenson, Robert 80–1
Stevenson, Steve 80
Stewart, Lyman 196
Stewart, Syl 319, 320, 324
Stockton, Commodore 34
Stoddart, Bessie 47, 49
Stone, Sly 92
Story of the Orange 299
Straight, Susan xvii
Strain, Christopher 153
Stranger in a Strange Land 280
Stravinsky, Igor 275
Strawberry Alarm Clock 334
streetcar service 217, 295, 408, 410
Studebaker 196
Students for a Democratic Society 329
studio system 199, 347
suburbanization 66–7, 205, 223, 352, 423
subway system 488
Sugahara, Kay 143–4
Sugrue, Thomas 67
Suisman, Douglas 291, 407
Summer of Love 331
sun bathing 448

Sun Ra 314–15
sunbelt cities 205
sundown towns 82, 83
Sunkist 295–6, 298, 299–300, 411–12
Sunkist Building 297
Sunrise (Murnau) 350
Sunset Boulevard (Wilder) 353
Sunset route 296
Sunset Strip 329, 330, 337
Sunset Strip Liberation Front 334
sunshine 395–6, 401–2, 455
surfing 452–3
surrealism 283, 286n6, 334
Swanson, Gloria 353
Sweat, Anthony 81
Sweet Sweetback Badasses's Song (Van Peebles) 354–5, 356
swim-in, NAACP 430
swimming pools 59, 427–8, 433

Tackett, Marnesba 154
Taj Mahal 331
tallow trade 32, 33
Tapscott, Horace 154
Tarantino, Quentin 359
Targets (Bogdanovich) 354
Tate, Sharon 104
Taylor, Benjamin 394
Taylor, Sam 349
team sports leagues 431
teenagers 284
television 284, 329, 352
Temple, John 398
Temple Street 112
The Terminator 270
territoriality 77, 90
Tertiary Period 179
Texas Rangers 98
Thai Town 270
Them! (Douglas) 352
theocratic rule 186
Theoharis, Jeanne 153–4, 155
Thigpenn, Anthony 259, 260
Thom, Cameron 119
Thomas, Mark Ridley 263
Thomas Guide 72
Thompson, Robert 99, 116, 117
Thomson, Rex 132
Tijuana
  anti-blacks 323–4
  black culture 314–15, 317–18
  reputation 315–16
  rock and blues scene 314, 318
  tourist photo booths 318–19
Tijuana bridge shooting 313–14, 317, 319, 321, 323
Tilton, L. Deming 403
Time magazine 96, 107
Tobar, Héctor 157
Tolmasov, James 133, 136
Tolstoy, Leon 360
tomyaar 183–4, 186
Tong-va people 183, 270
Torrance 401
tourism 43, 52, 421, 453
Tovar, Lupita 284
Towne, Robert 355–6
townhouses 480
tract houses 404
traffic congestion 479
Training Day (Fuqua) 358–9
Tranquada, Robert E. 455
transfiguration politics 316–17
transnationalism 317
transport 223–4, 295, 407
Triangle Film Corporation 197
The Trip 328
trolley cars: *see* streetcar service
trophy houses 404
Trudeau, Edward 443
Truman, Benjamin Cummings 439
tuberculosis patients 442, 443
tuberculosis sanitoria 443–6
Tuck, Wong 116–17, 123
Tucker, Billy 314, 320–1, 324
Tulsa race riots 323
Turner, Lana 284
TVA Architects 492
Twilight – Los Angeles (Smith) 147–8
Tyler, Bruce 152

Ubberoth, Peter 206
UCLA 76, 152, 275

underground cinema 349
underground press 333
unemployment 99, 105, 133, 157, 172
Union Oil (Unocal) 196
Union Pacific railroad 298
Union Rescue Mission 196
Union Station 43, 304
unionism 87, 148, 195, 198, 226
United Artists studio 198
United States Congress 115
Universal City Walk 493
Universal studio 197, 198
University of Southern California 75–6
University of Southern California hospital 454
Unocal 210
urban crisis literature 67–8
Urban Design Studio 488, 492
urban regime theory 252
urban removal policies 130, 142, 144
urban renewal 66, 138, 414, 484
urban studies 112–13
urbanization 41, 405
US Constitution 315
Us Organization 151, 154
US Rubber 196
Utah Street 49
Utah Street Architects Association 135
utility companies 220
Uto-Aztecans 179, 182–4, 185, 186
utopian colonies 302

Valencia 403, 414
Valley Voters Organize Toward Empowerment 240–1
Van Peebles, Mario 355
Van Peebles, Melvin 354–5
Vanegas, José 24
Varzally, Alison 426
Vasquez, Tiburcio 98
Vedanta Temple 287n11
Venice Beach 76, 329, 330, 333, 338
Ventura County City 244
Verdugo, José Maria 188
Vernon 401
vertical living 479, 480
Vertovec, Steven 317
Veterans Administration 137, 433
Vicente, Father 24
Victoria, Manuel 27
Victory Baptist Church 377, 387–8
Viertel, Sasha 275
vigilantes 119
Vignes, Jean Louis 294
Vignes Pool 427–8
Villa, Pancho 318
Villaraigosa, Antonio
  business-friendly 260
  city planning 488
  Crash! 162
  DWP green energy initiative 221
  elected 161, 251–2, 259–62
  green ports 226
  hospitality industry 261
  LAX 226–7
  multiethnic support 209
  transformative coalition 254
violence 96, 97, 117–18, 150–1
Virgin of Guadalupe 367
Virgin of the Rocks 379, 388
Vitagraph 197
Volcano (Jackson) 359
Von Stroheim, Eric 353
Vultee Aircraft 200

wages 87, 161, 194, 208
Waldie, D. J. 286n5
walkability 480, 482, 488
Walker & Eisen 297
wall paintings 274, 304
Walt Disney Concert Hall (Gehry) 360, 402, 405, 483, 487
Wambaugh, Joseph 155
war 331
Warhol, Andy 282
Warner, Charles Dudley: *Our Italy* 402
Warner, J. J. 397, 398
Warner, Jack 198
Warner, Kee 403
Warner Brothers 198
Washington, Booker T. 322

Washington, DC 202
Washington, Denzel 358, 359
waste disposal 410
water 218, 219–23, 294, 409
  see also water supply
water fountain 270
water supply 233
  aqueducts 217
  irrigation 407
  population growth 220–1, 223, 295
  territorial growth 236
Watts 42, 50, 60, 331–2
Watts riot xvii
  African-American involvement 152
  aftermath 96, 171
  Bowron 251, 262
  civil rights movements 327
  economic distress 255
  historians on 148
  local government 433
  Otis-Chandler 206
  policing problems 67, 255
  precursor 111
  radicalism 328
  and Rodney King riots 152–3, 155, 285
  as social protest 103–4, 151
  studies of 148–55
Watts Towers 283
Watts Women's Organization 154
weaving 187
Webb, Jack 205
Weiss, Marc 216
Welfare Recipients Union 154
welfare rights organizations 154
welfare rolls 129
welfare statism 205
Welton Becket and Associates 485
Wenders, Wim 357–8
Werker, Alfred 352
West, Nathanael: *The Day of the Locust* 278, 279, 348–9
West Hollywood 339
West Jefferson 60
West Side Story 77
Western Baptist Association 440
Western Canyon Road 270
Westlake 159
Westside 41, 57, 60, 198, 256, 479
Westwood 76, 198
Whitcomb, Ian 452–3
white ethnics 202
white supremacy 56, 57
whites
  ambivalence 126n20
  Chinese Massacre 111–12
  ethnic 426
  as guilt 331
  hegemony 63
  Jewish people 108
  poor 427
  power elite 292
  privileges 108, 292
  suburbanization 66–7
  violence 117–18
Whiting, Cécile 154
Whittier 50
Widener, Daniel 154
Widney, Joseph 397
Widney, Robert M. 110, 119
Wiggins, Frank 439
Wild, Mark 45, 51, 426
Wilder, Billy 275, 351, 353
Wildomar, City of 245
Willard, Charles Dwight 439, 442
Williams, "Elite" John 319
Williams, Paul 440
Williams, Raymond 300
Willys-Overland 196
Wilshire Boulevard 182, 198, 481, 485
Wilson, A. J. 126n21
Wilson, Benjamin D. 398
Wilson, Dooley 202
Wilson, Pete 106, 209, 241
Wister, Owen: *The Virginian* 276
The Wizard of Oz 278
Wolch, Jennifer 454
Wolfe, Tom 283–4, 328, 356
Wolfskill, William 294, 398
Womanhouse 284
women in workforce 281
women's liberation movement 336, 337

Woo, Michael 257
Woodberry, Billy 360
working class 98, 250
World War I 195, 196
World War II
  aftermath 280–1
  aircraft 200, 201, 221
  economic expansion 237
  industrialization 61
  integration 57, 61–3
  racial ideologies 202
  racial integration 57
Wright, Frank Lloyd 274, 357, 489
Wright, Gridley 330
Wright, Lloyd 274
Wunder, John R. 125n12
Wyman, George 357
Wyman, Luther E. 178

xenophobia 100, 102, 352

Yaagna people 22–4
Yamamoto, Nisei Hisaye 64
Yankees 112, 189, 399–400
Yanni, Carla 444
Yaroslavsky, Zev 256
yen investors 400–1
Yorty, Samuel 154, 205–6, 251, 255, 339
Young, Elaine 147
Young, Pauline 51, 133
YouTube 362
Yuen, Sam 116, 125–6n13
Yuman Indians 97

Zabriskie Point (Antonioni) 353–4
Zalvidea, José María 25
zanja traditions 24, 31–2
Zanuck, Darryl 198
Zappa, Frank 334
Zesch, Scott 124n5, 125n9
zoning ordinances 50, 245n2, 424
Zoot Suit attacks xvii, 63, 101–2, 111, 202
Zoroastrianism 368
Zukin, Sharon 339