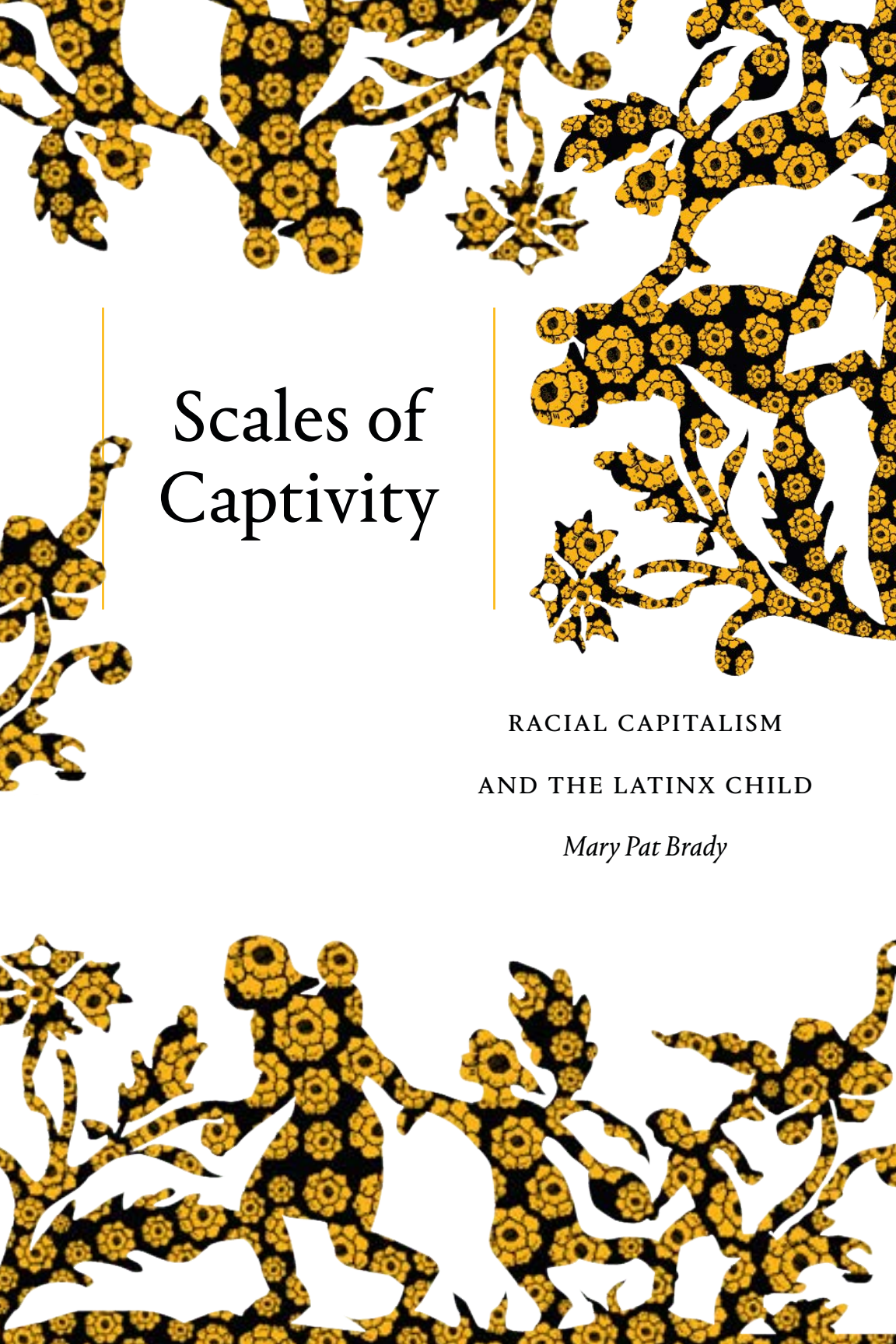




Scales of Captivity

RACIAL CAPITALISM
AND THE LATINX CHILD

Mary Pat Brady

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For Kate
and
for Ana Luisa, Rosa, Rafael
with all my love
and
with my boundless gratitude for
teaching me how to feel our belonging

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INTRODUCTION

The Scalar Lien

When the courts declared in 2018 that the Border Patrol and US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) could no longer separate families seeking asylum in the United States, many thought the practice itself would cease. Few realized that the courts narrowly defined *family*. Only those deemed “immediate”—legal guardians or parents—could count as family. And so, to the shock of refugees but under the radar of an easily bored public media, immigration officials have continued dismembering kin networks, separating grandmothers from their grandchildren, aunts from their nephews, uncles from their nieces, cousins from one another, jailing and detaining them in separate camps, often hundreds, if not thousands, of miles apart from one another. Separated infants and young children are routinely sent to foster homes; if they remain in foster care for six months or more, they can be turned over

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to US adoption agencies, permanently removed from their birth families, their stories and status absorbed into oblivion. All without their guardian's authorization. Bureaucratic kidnapping.¹

While such practices certainly exemplify the brutality the United States exerts as part of its system of immigrant deterrence, they also amplify one of the broader sinews holding together the logics of settler colonial and capitalist systems.² From its inception as English colonies to the present day, the United States has always relied on dismemberment, beginning with African, Irish, and English children spirited away, kidnapped from their parents by the Virginia Company to work its plantations.³ It has similarly relied on a practice of shredding affective relations to build and maintain a labor force: not only were indentured and enslaved peoples denied the opportunity to establish permanent kin networks or reliable affective structures, but so, too, were the men recruited from China and Japan in the nineteenth century, as were the men knitted into the Bracero program in the mid-twentieth century.⁴ The mass lynching of African Americans and Mexican Americans terrorized people of color for decades and helped keep social relations precarious, as did the institutionalization of segregation, as does its contemporary coefficient, mass incarceration.⁵ Similarly, the vision of transforming Indigenous peoples into a new docile labor force entailed deconstructing their social relations by murder and by boarding school.⁶ Put differently, the United States has never welcomed a broad, vibrant sociality composed of "families" of color even as such assemblages have developed despite the best practices of a racialized ideology of labor and power.

And if "family separation" has long been at the heart of US racializing labor practices, so, too, has captivity. Of course, the dissolution of kin relations functions within a relay that presumes multiple forms of captivity. The children held in cages along the US-Mexico border, like their grandparents and cousins, must survive not just the "legal violence" of the deportation machine but an economy and history wedded to captivity.⁷ The articulation of "freedom" as well as the infrastructure necessary for the unimpeded movement of capital and goods requires constraint, a constraint structured discursively as a threat and a stay, a hedge and a border. While the carceral efforts deployed by the United States have been carefully and brilliantly studied by a number of scholars, the habits of captivity extend beyond the ken of institutionalization, remaining largely adjacent to institutional memories even though the informal captivity practices of Spain, Mexico, and the United States effectively shaped what is now the US Southwest.⁸ So, too, life without papers in the twenty-first century must also be understood as a form of captivity, as a flexible enclosure that constrains and delimits socialities just as forced removal and mass deportation

have broadened the geometry of captivity seemingly everywhere. Determined to ruthlessly mangle the affective networks that enable social lives to flourish, the US migration system has become the new Virginia Company.

The resurgence of direct attacks on children of color and nonwhite kin networks has been shocking to many because the relevance of captive taking to the maintenance of white supremacy has been partially forgotten, buried in the narrative of racial progress and the teleological accounts of freedom, of equality. Many Latinx writers, artists, and scholars have not, however, forgotten this history, nor have they understood it as either irrelevant or over. Rather, they note the work of ICE and the US Border Patrol, the proliferation of detention centers alongside new methods of constraint, as a reelaboration of a consistent pattern, evidence of the ongoing coloniality of power. Drawing from this repertoire, *Scales of Captivity* argues that if scholars are to come to grips with intensified violence toward migrant peoples, as well as toward people of color more generally, within and at the edges of US geospaces as well as across its spheres of influence, we must study the history that such writers trace as well as the profoundly different conceptions of being in the world that they offer.

Ultimately, the poets, novelists, and artists discussed here open a significant avenue for consideration of the logics behind forced removal and mass deportation. Through their particular attention to captive, cast-off children, they identify, critique, and undermine a fundamental grid structuring the Western imaginary, one of the operative, taken-for-granted principles of the coloniality of power: scale. Not only do they offer this analysis and critique, but they further provide an alternative to scale. In turning to density of connection, they shirk the violence of the scaffold imaginary that scalar thought enforces. And this is necessarily so because the scalar imaginary subtends policies that produce family separation, caged children, mass deportation, and myriad other practices of captivity. Indeed, it is why attention to the captive child is so crucial right now—the child, as currently conceptualized, is scalar force made productive.

In *Scales of Captivity*, I discuss two aspects of scale. Utilizing the conventional understanding of scale as a mechanism to describe spatial-social relations (such as the local, the national, and the transnational, or the body, the family, and the group), I examine how spatial expansion of geo/economic power and reach, or what geographers call *rescaling*, necessarily involves forms of capture and captivity. I draw attention to this crucial dynamic between scale and the production of new methods of containment by tracing the figure of the captive, cast-off child across nearly 150 years of literature written by people who identify as Mexican, Chicana/o/x, and Latinx. I argue that with each wave

of spatial rescaling, new variants of capture emerge; economic expansion is predicated on the production of new methods of movement and containment.

Scale is also a powerful epistemological form, neither neutral nor transparent. I take up this aspect of scale as well by showing how it functions as the entrenched logic undergirding the coloniality of power. Parading as a useful, quotidian convention through which the Western imaginary organizes an understanding of spatial and social relations, that is, as the merely logical way to describe being-in-place, scale ultimately operates through processes of comparison and containment, requiring abstraction and homogenization to enact a limiting, hierarchical perception of spatial and social relations. My focus on spatial scaling demonstrates the shaping, capturing force of scale, the way its logic is the sine qua non of colonial power, the force of abstraction through comparison, containment, and homogenization. The writers discussed here draw attention to this aspect of scale through the emergent figure of the cast-off child.

If these writers expose this murkier, virulent, violent aspect of scale, their critical engagement also offers a set of alternatives, a crucial set of approaches to being together and being in place without scale. They enable us to think without scale, to avoid its corrosive, encasing effects. Their turn to what I call *density* and *queer horizontality* reveals not only multiple proximities but also shared vulnerabilities, the shards of obligation both opaque and transparent. This attention to the density of the felt nearby is not a parochial move, nor a narrative mode inhibited by a lack of cosmopolitan sensibilities; rather, it exposes the rich connections that underpin the collective labor of making meaning through relation, and thus worlds more multiple than scalar binaries such as small/large or global/local would permit. So, too, these writers' unruly performative modes—including burlesque and impersonation—alongside their focus on cast-out and cast-off captive children create new possibilities for reparative relations that can counter the understanding of sovereignty animating borders and cages.

To understand the breadth of their intervention and its relation to the many logics that suture together structures of power, I begin with a discussion of the figure of the child as crucial to narratives of freedom, practices of captivity, and processes of racialization. Turning to the figure of the child and the privilege of childhood, I examine these categories' relationship to liberal theories of movement and the manner in which they enable various types of capture and bracketing practices that extend beyond formal carceral structures—an importance that has been lost to much of the current analysis of immigration and civil rights but that these writers have presciently considered. I subsequently offer a discussion of scale as form and heuristic before offering descriptions of the chapters to follow.

In the Beginning

It's worth remarking on the surprising fact that María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Phillis Wheatley, Olaudah Equiano, Frederick Douglass, and W. E. B. Du Bois all have something in common: their signal meditations begin with a focus on the figure of the child.⁹ Writing from different historical moments and with different ends, their combined attention to the child hails our attention. At the very least, their attention to the child highlights the importance of the category, because the category of the child, as a conceptual, scalar practice, is integrally connected to the logics of social life, including governance, force, money, race, work, gender, power, and sexuality.¹⁰ This history reveals that how a child is defined and what is meant by *childhood* have been deeply contested within the Western imaginary. Moreover, the current treatment of child refugees indicates that no settled consensus about what childhood is, entails, or merits has been reached. Rather, who can have access to the protection of childhood remains central to the articulation of racializing economies of governmentality.

The conceptual underpinnings of the liberal nation-state were developed concurrently with and even through the articulation of both an idealized child and childhood as a distinct phase. Sharon Stephens argues that the “emergence” of the nation-state depended on the “hardening” of the child-adult dyad.¹¹ By this she means that as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and other political theorists struggled with how to design a government that could be based on the “consent of the governed” rather than the “divine right of kings,” they not only attempted to define consent itself but also wrestled with delimiting who could actually consent to be governed.¹² Locke concluded that the right to consent, to exercise political will, requires reason and experience. He defined this right negatively by describing who cannot adequately reason and so participate in a consensual relation to governance. To Locke, children constitute such a perfect class of people who are incapable of consent; children, he argued, lack the reasoning skills, experience, and autonomy necessary to act as a state subject (to vote, legislate, or enter into contracts) free of coercion. They are too easily coerced and too vulnerable to corruption; children's dependence on adults for protection, food, shelter, education, and training is at odds with the independent, autonomous reasoning Locke claimed necessary for citizens of a nation-state.¹³ Crucial to Locke's evaluation of the child is his assertion that children are incapable of self-restraint: only those who can exhibit self-restraint, the capacity to curb appetite, to act with rectitude, to think independently, are truly capable of self-governance, of sharing power in a participatory liberal republic. Inherent to this narrative of deficiency, then, is

also a claim about development, a linear vision of movement toward some new category of being that is not the child. This developmentalist discourse also entails a nested hierarchy of capacity (staged toward a liberated end: the fully realized rectilinear, autonomous adult). Hence, the category of the child, as a form of scale, and as it evolved from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, finally came to rest on its relationship to lack; the child came to symbolize all those ineligible to claim the right to steer their own social relations or to hold the status of citizen.¹⁴ Put differently, consent was developed as a mechanism to scale the experience of being in place, of being a child, or being an adult, of belonging to a polity.

Of course, as Holly Brewer exhaustively details, the work of defining the child was not left to political theorists alone. British and US politicians wrestled with questions such as at what age a white man could testify in court, serve on a jury, act as a legislator or judge, vote, serve a prison term, or be executed. The resulting legal and civil decisions, Brewer argues, were as instrumental for defining the concepts of a child and of consent within republican governance as any political theory. Colonial leaders such as Pennsylvania governor Robert Hunter Morris put the case this way: “Children do not vote. Why? Because they want prudence, because they have no will of their own. The ignorant and the dependent can be as little trusted with the public interest.”¹⁵ John Adams would follow a similar line of argument: “Children . . . have as good Judgment, and as independent Minds as those Men who are wholly destitute of Property.”¹⁶ In conflating poverty, or lack of property, and lack of judgment with childhood, Morris and Adams brought together the condition of dependence with the concept of autonomy to establish a boundary around suffrage. By conflating childhood with dependence and a lack of reasoning skills, they also established a powerful trope that continues to flourish.

Novelists also actively developed the figure of the child, weaving it into a long stream of texts that laced the figure into a broader conversation about power. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novelists, for example, turned to the orphan as a means to consider relations of governance and consent; children’s relationships to their fathers were turned into allegories of the modern nation and its subjects.¹⁷ Stories of parent-child relationships became fictional opportunities to meditate on the various ways the nation could flourish and mediate power among its members. Its usefulness as a category drew in part from its flexibility—the child signals “the promise of autonomy and the reality of dependence,” Carolyn Levander notes.¹⁸ Drawing on this tradition, writers as various as Thomas Paine and John Adams repeatedly compared the colonies to a white child whose parent, England, was corrupt and corrupting; they thereby

encouraged a nascent nation to identify itself with the image of an Anglo child and to represent itself as such.

By the early nineteenth century, Romantic poets, leaning first on Locke and subsequently Rousseau, further enhanced the category of childhood, according to Robin Bernstein: “William Wordsworth’s romantic representation of children as innocent, holy, and able to redeem adults” ultimately wove “childhood and innocence together wholly. Childhood was then understood not as innocent but as innocence itself; not as a symbol of innocence but as its embodiment. The doctrine of original sin receded, replaced by a doctrine of original innocence.”¹⁹ Innocence animated childhood after reason and judgment were evacuated from it. In this configuration, childhood became (at least in this fantasy) the zone of the authentic, presocial self of innocence. Innocence stood opposed to reason; experience was distinguished from dependence.

Over the course of three centuries, according to Levander, both political and literary arguments came to depend on child subjects as the means to “represent, naturalize, and, at times, attempt to reconfigure the ground rules of US national belonging.”²⁰ The figure of the child could both mediate belonging and serve as a heuristic for the increasingly racialized narratives suffusing the discourse of suffrage. The heady political work of a seemingly innocuous category such as the child has been effective because, on the one hand, it encourages a faith in a utopian childhood that is demarcated as innocent and outside of, apart from, or protected from the corrosive forces of socialization. On the other hand, depictions of the child have been “shot through with race” so that they are never not embroiled in racializing technologies.²¹

Bernstein explains that “white children became constructed as tender angels while black children were libeled as unfeeling, non-innocent, non-children” because “innocence defined nineteenth century childhood and not vice versa; therefore, as popular culture purged innocence from representations of African American children, the black child was redefined as a nonchild—a ‘pickaninny.’ . . . Pain divided tender white children from insensate pickaninnies. At stake in this split was fitness for citizenship and inclusion in the category of the child, and, ultimately, the human.”²² On the one hand, a clear cultural practice of racializing childhood established it as the site of innocence. But, on the other hand, as Brewer notes, scores of politicians followed the lead of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, arguing for the “unfitness” for independence and freedom of nonwhite peoples by figuring them as *perpetual children*: “President Andrew Jackson, for example, justified political authority over native Americans by comparing them to children who lacked reason. . . . President Taft justified American rule over the Philippines . . . by claiming that Filipinos, like

women and children, did not have sufficient reason or fitness to choose their own government.”²³ In this manner, childhood has been figured into the tropological economy of racialism where protected status becomes a triggering mechanism for forms of capture. Subjugated peoples who cannot claim “innocence” remain perpetual children unable to pass through the phase called childhood. They remain, therefore, perpetually suspect and always available to the carceral economy of freedom.

Childhood ultimately became another scaffold supporting a racialized structure that relies on linking original innocence to whiteness, thereby pinning down “the unmarked status of whiteness.”²⁴ This logic depends on distinguishing “the child” from “childhood,” securing childhood as a privileged, innocent, protected phase of life that was racialized as white and establishing a “possessive investment” in childhood.²⁵ As a category of privilege, childhood marks a life phase that is fleeting; the temporality of heteronormativity earmarks childhood as the period before desire, before responsibility.²⁶ Marking this temporality is the assumption that the rational adult leaves childhood behind. Inherent to this structure is a tale of development that sustains the possibility of achieving rationality. Such movement *through* childhood, however, has been historically conceptualized as available only to propertied white men. Only they could move from childhood to rational, independent adulthood. The fight for poor white men and any white woman to claim a place in this developmentalist structure was long indeed. For an even longer period, people of color were figured as perpetual children who were nonetheless robbed of their childhood, denied the protection of innocence the label childhood offers as a privilege. In the great interstices between the child and childhood, one could be a child forever but never experience childhood. And for those bent on perpetually reproducing racializing mechanisms, childhood demanded a possessive investment. It deserved protection, a demarcated status, one that could be withheld, stolen, denied.

So it was not for nothing that Wheatley, Equiano, Douglass, Du Bois, and Ruiz de Burton would begin their literary engagements and crucial interventions into political theory by focusing on children and childhood. Intricately bound by the structures of race and writing, childhood functioned as a sort of gateway to freedom through the mid-twentieth century. To insist on an experience of childhood, one that could be narrated and thereby *grown* out of vis-à-vis education and responsibility, was to give evidence of one’s capacity to evince autonomy, to inhabit and claim freedom; it was also a distinct challenge to the racializing assumptions that underpinned childhood and the language of liberal subjectivity. These writers and scores of abolitionists and critics of white supremacy who would follow continually rearticulated the significance

of protected childhood as part of the project of laying claim to aspirational universal categories such as the human and the citizen.

Working white people wrestled access to childhood from the elite by attacking their assumptions about irrationality and rectitude and insisting that they, too, were capable of independent thought and self-control.²⁷ They forced laws that provided for education, that prohibited child labor, that expanded the temporal length of the category, and, eventually, pressed by African American activists, grudgingly admitted its cross-racial reach. Nevertheless, the habits and practices of treating everyone under the age of eighteen as equally vulnerable remained unstable. Not only were differential treatments the norm as criminal justice and health care systems were established, but educational structures also served to reinforce and produce distinctions, ranging from Indian boarding schools to the shabbily funded schools for poor children everywhere, but especially for poor children of color. Part and parcel of the civil rights movement, then, was an effort to produce a new concept of childhood, one broad enough to include all children.²⁸ Yet these efforts were hedged by anxiety and refusal. The agriculture industry, for example, continues to lawfully employ children, just as uneven educational outcomes illustrate the ongoing refusal to adequately educate all students.²⁹ Most clearly, the disparate treatment of children snared by policing systems reinforces the liberal republic's dependence on a dynamic of inequality. Although children of color have been incrementally granted access to a romantic vision of childhood, complete with some semblance of guarantees to education and health care, such access has been carefully hedged by larger racial projects that produce suspicion and thereby suspend childhood for African American, Latinx, and Indigenous children.

Children without Childhoods

One of the threads that links Latinx writers—whose formal, ideological, and aesthetic projects differ enormously from one another—is their consistent attention to children whose lives have been hedged, bracketed, held in abeyance, and, often, completely enclosed and shackled. If such attention to captive children begins in 1872 with the publication of Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?*, it also appears in novels that rested in the archives until their belated publication, such as *George Washington Gómez*, as well as those that helped inspire new generations of writers, ultimately becoming the iconic texts of the Chicana/o and Nuyoricán movements, such as . . . *Y no se lo tragó la tierra*, *Down These Mean Streets*, and *Nilda*.³⁰ Of course, this threaded, consistent attention to the constrained child is hardly a coincidence. Not only does it reflect an

important aspect of a collective effort to disentangle the logics structuring the US imaginary, but it also signals writers' engagement with the violence of US empire building, the legacies of British and Spanish imperialism, and Mexican histories of complicity with these practices of exploitation, as well as Indigenous Mexican, Chicanx, and Puerto Rican experiences as subjugated peoples.³¹

While such attention to youth loosely links Latinx literature to the canonical British and US novel, contemporary writers such as Helena Viramontes, Manuel Muñoz, and Lorraine López veer away from the historical bildungsroman that figures the child as (Anglo) icon for the nation-state, as emblem of settler sovereignty and liberal governmentality. Their focus on the captive child highlights the racialization of childing (the ongoing construction of people of color as incapable of achieving adulthood) while also illustrating how childhood itself functions as a form of scale. Indeed, concepts such as the child and practices such as racialization work together as conjoined logics of scale showcasing the continuing viability of this relay between denied childhood and impossible adulthood for the political state and for the ongoing efforts to maintain white supremacy within capitalism.

These writers' attention to the variegated forms of submerged captivity reveals how modes of capture anchor articulations of freedom and citizenship and, further, how such modes of capture shift and change as nation-states rescale themselves. That is, with each round of spatial/political expansion, or rescaling of economic and military might, the modalities of captivity change such that the enclosure practices of the seventeenth or nineteenth century look very little like the brackets enclosing young Latinx lives in the twenty-first century. Simply put, if colonial efforts in the Americas began with rounding up England's own poor children and shipping them to Virginia and the Caribbean, their expansion to include the kidnapping of children in Ireland and then across the African continent reveals how much the scalar expansion of capital and empire relies on captivity. By the end of the nineteenth century, captivity included nefarious processes of incorporation such as Indian boarding schools, convict leasing, and sharecropping as the United States extended its (geo)economic reach. By the end of the twentieth century, when national borders had become less crucial to economic scale and the scope of national powers had expanded almost willy-nilly, methods of captivity began to include apparently "voluntary" migration, a face-lift capitalizing on climate change and trade treaties. By the early twenty-first century, after multinational trade pacts fully rescaled markets and recalibrated nation-states into less meaningful economic units, the threat of deportation—omnipresent and sinuous—as well as the very experience of life after forced removal broadened the mechanisms of captivity across the

hemisphere. The discussion of child bracketing that follows ultimately reveals how crucial capture is to every successful effort to rescale power.

Yet even as methods of captivity have shifted, one discursive aspect of captivity has not changed—captivity requires forms of witness. Although in many cases witnessing simply serves to reauthorize the state, to indemnify it against its own violent fantasies, these writers remake witnessing, shifting it out of a juridical context and elaborating its potential to repair and heal, to produce connections and acknowledge obligations.³² Such reparative possibilities entail, however, a different nodal structure, one that does not serve a system of sovereignty requiring a masquerade of rectitude and individuated autonomy, nor one that maintains a system that proclaims freedom by ensuring that only some may enjoy unencumbered movement because others are constrained. Rather, the reparative witnessing that writers elaborate entails connections, acknowledged and shared vulnerabilities, mutual indebtedness, and obligation. This witnessing turns against individuated possession, and it turns against scale—both essential planks of the scaffold imaginary; it emanates from density. Not only do the texts studied here reveal and examine the formal relations among scalar expansion, captivity, and witnessing, but their consideration of the child captive-witness offers an alternative to scale's imposition of the scaffold imaginary as well.

So, when young twenty-first-century refugees approach the US-Mexico border as generations before them have, their horizon of possibilities is already split—a path to childhood lies open at the same time that their access to such childhood is limited by the matrices and land mines of racialization. This splitting is exemplified by the policing practices that justify separating children from their caregivers by categorizing the children, essentially, as objects that have been trafficked; when the parents are accused of felony human trafficking, the children are reconceptualized as captives of their own parents, and the methods of separation and captivity are cast anew.³³ This policy draws on a history of children as captives and of racialized peoples and children as lacking access to the world of adult rationality, and thus a history of children as objects of improper treatment, to justify their policy of separation. When the policy was initially announced, it drew nationwide condemnation as activists and the media drew on the hard-won right of children of color to claim a childhood and to access a romanticized image repertoire of childhood innocence and protection to combat new efforts at subjugation. Partially successful in mitigating some of the brutality of border policing, activists demanded that children, however racialized, could lay claim to childhood. Nonetheless, this clash between competing conceptions of who has access to childhood also reveals another deep contradiction at the heart of the liberal state.

When the figure of the child took on new importance as philosophers and novelists began to imagine a world organized not around the sovereign authority of a king but around a form of shared governance by the propertied, the education of elite sons took on a new importance as necessary to widen the ambit of sovereignty and to refine the concepts of both property and contract.³⁴ Another aspect of the child gained attention too. The movements of a child, a dependent, could be easily constrained, justified as due protection, but what of the child turned unruly adult? Unrestrained movement posed a threat to the propertied elite reliant on constrained bodies to produce their wealth. The figure of the ignorant, willful child disinterested in curbed appetites easily foreshadowed the trouble an unrestrained adult might cause to social stability, which is to say to wealthy property owners. So, just as childhood was figured as a form of privilege, so, too, was mobility, and thus mobility as an expression of freedom appealed, albeit in a contradictory manner, to the liberal imaginary.

Meditations on the capacity of locomotion in Hobbes and Locke especially helped to define what came to be known as the liberal subject. For both, freedom pivots around movement even as, or perhaps especially because, the maintenance of sovereignty increasingly requires more and more modalities to manage, constrain, encourage, and contour movement. The concept of freedom is materialized through mobility, and power is materialized through the ways in which it can regulate and constrain movement. According to Hagar Kotef, “This liberal concept of freedom emerged in tandem with other configurations of movement, wherein movement was constructed as a threat rather than an articulation of liberty.”³⁵ While Hobbes expounded the importance of free movement of capital, goods, and services, he was far less certain that people should be allowed to move without restraint. Hobbes ultimately construed unregulated movement as dangerous, a threat that must be constrained and made real or materialized such that some “subjects appear as free when moving (and oppressed when hindered).” Eventually, the poor, vagabonds, and colonized, racialized subjects, Kotef contends, “were constituted (or rather deconstituted) as unruly subjects whose movement was a problem to be managed. This configuration was the grounds for justifying nonliberal moments—and spaces—within liberal regimes.”³⁶ For the liberal elite to be truly free, hedges and grooves were necessary to constrain the movement of the nonelite. Hobbes’s concept of freedom subsequently emerged as intimately bound with a contradictory dynamic, one that requires for its practice the hedging, constraining, and capturing of the movement of most of the inhabitants of a liberal regime. This double play

crystallizes in the practices of enclosure, eviction, forced removal, deportation, imprisonment, surveillance, and siege. All of these efforts foreclose movement for some in order to instantiate and seemingly guarantee movement for a few, elite others. Such an understanding of freedom through limitation produced what Kotef calls a “schism, a contrast, between those who can control their movements, and thus rule, and those whose movement is hindered or excessive, and thus cannot.”³⁷ The modern state emerged not only, as Max Weber argues, through its efforts to gain a monopoly on violence but also, as Kotef points out drawing on John Torpey, through its ability to authorize and regulate ways to move.³⁸ The centrality of movement to liberal subjectivity compels the economies of captivity into the quotidian logics of all subjected to sovereign practices such that “through the production of patterns of movement (statelessness, deportability, enclosures, confinement) different categories of subjectivity are produced. . . . Regimes of movement are integral to the formation of different modes of being.”³⁹ The constraint and bracketing of those denied adulthood, those perpetually deemed the unruly, dependent child, orders movement for everyone else. Ordered movement, configured as liberal freedom corporealized, requires ballast. Private property came to be understood as one of the crucial stabilizers of freedom. For those without property, captivity does the trick.

The Removes of Captivity

As a newly robust concept of childhood began to emerge, redefining the experience for the sons of the British elite, and as the old order of child-rearing was revised to adapt to a changing political economy, nonelite children were redefined by their status as excess. Their capacity to move became an opportunity to exploit. This contrast between an elite few and the broader population reinforced the status, vulnerability, and value of childhood for the elite and reinforced childhood as unavailable to poor people. The distinction is important: for the elite few of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, childhood functioned as a protective embrace, a hedge against vulnerability, and an opportunity for growth. Moreover, it was a stage, a temporally marked platform that young men would leave behind as they acquired the privileges of wealth, power, and property. For the broader population, to be a child was to be permanently assigned the status of *dependent*, incapable of rational thinking, ineligible for transformation. For the broader population, to be a child meant to be ineligible for citizenship; one could not expect to own property or even, practically speaking, to learn to read. Put differently, the systems of enclosure that were articulated through the dynamic of possession and dispossession also

entailed a transformation of human relations as scaled into a nested hierarchy reliant on forms of enclosure, which was integral to an understanding of the forms of movement sovereignty would permit. More specifically, childhood was restructured, not as a temporary stage of development, but as a kind of hazard for poor children, who were harvested for the colonial project and nascent industrialization. It is not stretching the analysis too far to suggest that for poor children, childhood and captivity were one and the same.

And children were captives. Tens of thousands of English and Irish children were kidnapped and shipped to the nascent colonies to labor, usually to their deaths.⁴⁰ Many millions more were kidnapped from Africa. Forced removal and impressment led to death, and eventually rebellion, as well as new configurations of fugitivity among escapees from English brutality and Native communities willing to welcome them; indentured servitude subsequently served as a palliative to disaggregate Anglo laborers from African laborers and hence refine concepts of movement and captivity still further. In the Spanish Empire, Catholicism, the mission system, and peonage emerged as structures to restrict the movements of Indigenous peoples, while slavery became the major method through which capital and labor were organized and cultures devised in Europe and the Americas.

Given how central regimes of captivity and coerced mobility were to an unfolding discourse of freedom and practice of sovereignty, it should be no real surprise that the first “best seller” in the British American colonies was a captivity narrative.⁴¹ Mary Rowlandson’s “The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, Together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed,” published in 1682 and republished within the year as “A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson,” describes Rowlandson’s wartime experience of 1675. Printed four times when it was first published (in London and Boston), it was continually circulated and reprinted throughout the colonial era. Credited by scholars as a crucial instance of the development of a nascent colonial literary imagination and, later, of women’s writing more generally, Rowlandson’s narrative became the iconic US captivity narrative, helping to produce an understanding of Anglo freedom as dependent on the confinement of American Indians.⁴² Puritan captivity accounts were lionized in the British colonies and spawned countless imitations even as they served as models for a form of writing that would later be called ethnography and even as they evinced, repeatedly, a certain ambivalence on the part of the white women who related (usually in a mediated fashion) their experiences as prisoners of war.⁴³

Embedded in the iconic captivity narrative is a complex economy of recognition and misrecognition in which the “captive” retrospectively testifies to

the experience of living within a very different culture. As the captive observes a set of practices drawn from radically different philosophies, she frames and misrecognizes these not as different cultural practices or the articulation of different philosophies but as the habits of the subhuman. She misrecognizes Native homelands as “uncultivated” and “ungoverned.”⁴⁴ Rowlandson, for example, misrecognizes her own comrades’ hostile, murderous actions against Indigenous peoples just as she misrecognizes the Indigenous alliance’s own compassionate treatment of her amid the violence of warfare. What is not available in this economy of (mis)recognition is the possibility of open admiration, an acknowledgment of ingenuity, generosity, or compassion, the affective labor of shared sociality. Thus, what Sylvia Wynter calls “transcultural modes of cognition” remained out of reach for Rowlandson, who maintained “the ostensible universally applicable ‘natural law,’—a law that imposed a by-nature divide between ‘civilized’ peoples (as true generic humans who adhered to its Greco-European cultural construct) and those, like the indigenous peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean, who did not.”⁴⁵

Read from the perspective of early American literature, Rowlandson’s story is one of captivity. Read from the perspective of Indigenous studies, however, a different story of captivity emerges. As Lisa Brooks (Abenaki) astutely notes, “Rowlandson’s captivity was not marked by confinement, but rather forced movement through unfamiliar space. Her description of the ‘several Removes we had up and down the Wilderness’ reflects a discomfiting disorientation.”⁴⁶ She did not know the land that she and her family were attempting to colonize. Moreover, as Brooks explains in her careful study of King Philip’s War, Rowlandson’s captivity could hardly be said to exemplify captivity as carceral. Rather, the narrative reveals that Rowlandson’s experience was just an instance in a wide web of captivity established not by the Nipmuc but by the English, who had laced together numerous carceral spaces in which to hold, imprison, and kill Indigenous peoples as part of their arsenal in a permanent war for control of the territory.

Ultimately, captivity narratives like Rowlandson’s and those that followed also served, as Kate Higginson notes, as “*narratives of absolutism* strategically mobilized to mask contemporaneous captures of local Indigenous populations.”⁴⁷ However much one can detect admiration of Indigenous cultures and ambivalence toward Puritan and Anglo cultures in early captivity accounts, the larger effect of the genre was to reinforce the militaristic and violent assault against Indigenous peoples and to underscore their ongoing representation as irrational forces supremely dangerous to Anglo property and prosperity. If Rowlandson’s narrative creates what Brooks calls an “uneasy dialectic” in which the Indigenous are “constructed as foreign,” it also exemplifies the logic of movement that

Kotef sees as the primal contradiction animating a hidden theme of liberal governmentality: “A contemporary split organized around mobility between (I) the citizen (often as a racialized, classed, ethnically marked, and gendered entity more than a juridical one), as a figure of ‘good,’ ‘purposive,’ even ‘rational,’ and often ‘progressive’ mobility that should be maximized; and (II) other(ed) groups, whose patterns of movement are both marked and produced as a disruption, a danger, a delinquency.”⁴⁸ In Rowlandson’s account, the unimpeded movement of Indigenous people is counted as “a threat rather than an articulation of [their] liberty,” while Rowlandson’s hindered movement is accorded the status of oppressive. The captivity narrative reinforces the Hobbesian schema of hedging and bracketing, constraining and denying free movement for all but a few. Rowlandson embroidered this schema with a racializing logic that furthered the creation of a colonial framework and reinforced the budding ideology establishing who got to move and who did not.

This contradictory logic of liberal movement also animates the understanding of the prison in the US imaginary. As Caleb Smith argues, imprisonment has been understood dialectically: one tradition envisions the prisoner as a dehumanized figure, the figure whose unimpeded movement can only be conceptualized as a threat, while a second tradition imagines the prisoner as a figure capable of the necessary self-restraint to reform and move freely. This bifurcated understanding emerged in the century after Rowlandson’s narrative appeared and illustrates, as Smith puts it, “the harrowing concept of the human on which the prison rests.”⁴⁹

Rowlandson’s libelous characterization of Indigenous people thunders across US writing, infiltrating representations of kidnapped Africans and the Mexican residents dispossessed of their status as Mexican citizens after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; it is echoed in the characterization of Asian immigrants as non-Christian, and the ongoing slandering of Indigenous peoples as irrational. Its logics of racialized (im)mobility trundled along through post-Civil War Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and beyond to the late twentieth century, essentially indemnifying the buildup of a mass carceral system. Although the broadening of suffrage chipped away at the exclusionary club established by Hobbes, Locke, Adams, Jefferson, and others, the momentum for a transformed concept of whose movements constituted a threat and whose did not was slowed, nevertheless, by the implacable dependence of liberality on the distinction between a child and an adult, between captivity and mobility. It would creep into the patronizing accounts of the Progressive Era, the Americanization campaigns, and especially the legal opinions of judges who held people’s lives in their hands. The racialized narrative of the child that

was used to justify captivity, colonization, and depredations against Black and Indigenous peoples remained in force centuries after its development.

Whereas captivity once looked like a very specific set of practices organized especially around chattel slavery, by the early twentieth century multiple other forms of captivity had morphed into myriad forms of bracketing, methods of constraining lives that included, most obviously, mass incarceration. In the literature studied here, however, captivity is treated differently, although the dynamic between respectability and spectacularization remains. The legacy of classic captivity tales animates the work of both Ruiz de Burton and a contemporary writer, Lorraine López, both of whom shadow the captivity tale of Olive Oatman in particular. Yet they, and the other authors studied here, turn captivity sideways, arguing that the United States captured and held Indigenous and Mexican people and resources captive. They further argue that the “victims” of captivity were not always iconic white women celebrated by popular media, such as Rowlandson or Patty Hearst. And, finally, they show how the logic of captivity, its usefulness to the state and especially to the national imaginary, structures and constrains Latinx lives in various ways right up to the current moment when the family separation policy, the rush to put infants and children in different cages from those supplied to their adult companions, became the subject of political outrage and court battles over this treatment of refugees. As the texts explored here show, captivity doesn’t need to include iron bars to constrain choices. Being stranded by freeways, abandoned by caregivers, made to migrate, forcibly deported, deprived of historical connections to communities and cultures and life-giving stories all bracket life, hold it captive, constrain possibilities. But as the texts discussed here also show, such experience of violent constraint, of being cast off and cast away, doesn’t simply mean loss and death. Instead, by turning to practices of density and queer proximities, these writers refute the logic that splits childhood and children and imagine instead relations linked by reciprocity without sovereignty.

The long development of liberal governmentality clearly depended on the conceptual work of categories such as the child and childhood as much as the empire-building work of Spain, England, and the United States came to depend on material children, deprived of their childhood and harnessed to do the laborious work of extracting resources and planting new economies. Similarly, all three empires depended on hedges and grooves to limit movement for most of their subjects, to contain freedom for an elite (even when proclaimed as available to all). A stunning array of forms of captivity suture the histories of these three empires together, their legacies present not only in mass incarceration but also in the contemporary migration machinery of all three countries,

all of which have variously refined their practices of captivity and targeted refugees for new types of enclosures. Yet while these aspects of the emergent modern have been studied (although largely not studied in tandem), far less attention has been given to a crucial conceptual structure that is both a routinized habit of thought and a material practice that lies beneath the work of empire making. It has been essential to the definition of childhood, the logic of captivity, and the making of nations: scale.

Scale and Its Castagories

Scale pervades the form of articulation that names a European longing called America. Yet what is this desire called scale? What work does it do and for whom? Part and parcel of the colonial apparatus that ensnared potatoes, llamas, caca-huetes, cochineal, and on and on into a structure of belonging as owned, even treasured, scale cuts earth, cuts languages, cuts textures of relationality. Then, scale populates, renames, reconceives, possesses, brands, markets, and demeans.

Scale stoked Francisco López de Gómara to ecstatically explain to an audience still hesitant to embrace the categories or especially the authorities bubbling through the ideas called Spain and Spanish that “*the world is only one and not many*.”⁵⁰ López de Gómara, Hernán Cortés’s confessor and apologist, sought to shift away from a plurivocal multiverse to gain a sense of perspectival possession that could enact the terms and architecture for empire and form a monovocal, monofocal universe. He turned to the idea of scale to produce the possibility of empire; scale enables rationalized abstraction (the world is one), transforming and authorizing indistinction and defining possessions claimed and carved and narrated from the ejido to the rancho, from the local to the regional to the hemispheric to the global, the planetary, and beyond. The many belong to the one (a king, a pope), articulated as his, as mappable and mapped, as for sale, a source of tribute and point of pride, articulated within a nested hierarchy, a new geoimaginary. This conceptualization of the world that renders it “only one and not many” is a founding abstraction of the global, initiating the fetishization of separability and individuation, of indistinction amid hierarchies.⁵¹

Of course, López de Gómara was not the first Spaniard to harness scale for empire. Preceding him by more than a dozen years, the Jesuit theologian Juan Maldonado imagined flying to the moon, where he could visualize the entire surface of the earth as one whole unit. As Jesús Carrillo Castillo explains, Maldonado turned to a “classical topos in order to create a detached view of the world, a fictional vantage point from which to make the world an object of visual scrutiny.”⁵² From the perspective of the moon, Maldonado envisioned “the earth as a

continuously inhabited and fully intelligible surface open to imperial troops and Catholic religious orders,” thereby creating “an abstract and strictly theoretical approach” to conceiving the world as one made for empire.⁵³ From the perspective of the moon, places lose their specificity, and scale emerges fully reliant on fictions of abstraction, homogeneity, containment, and spectacularity. The view from the moon makes possible what geographers call the “scaffold imaginary”—the vision of the world as understandable through a set of nested hierarchies that privilege a vertical plane.⁵⁴ Most clearly articulated as the stretch from body to home to city to region to nation to hemisphere, scale names mass and relation, while insisting on the fundamental logic of abstraction, containment, categorization, and comparison folded into a vertical, hierarchical orientation.⁵⁵

Scale, like its workhorse the border, claims its power in part because it functions as metaphor made material, as a rhetorical device and an economic practice, as a register for the selling of socks and the ordering of zoning laws, as the linguistic reservoir for racism and racializing conventions and, ultimately, as both an epistemological and ontological formation.⁵⁶ In other words, built into scale is an assumption that the view from the moon offers truth, that the world is one and can be homogenized as such, and that, indeed, the density of the nearby has no transcendent meaning, and certainly no meaning that can’t be scaled. Scale underpins the coloniality of power and, as a habit of thought, helps establish and maintain a global order of racialized peoples.

Early in Spain’s colonial project, López de Gómara and Maldonado articulated a heuristic structure that would vivify the nascent colonial system, helping to embed it in the emerging colonial violence as perpetual logic itself. Moreover, their claims echo and elaborate the broader effort of early European modernity to insist on the perspective imposed by singularity, to seize the vanishing point that disappears multiplicities. To make the monoworld functional for empire, these and other early modern writers turned to scalar methods that would order and hierarchize relations, compare and contain them. They devised more and more scalar projects, initially by folding descriptions of landmasses into categories that would simultaneously name and discursively homogenize them while also locking them into a structure of comparison. Viewed from the moon, the monoworld could be divided for the pursuits of power, reinforcing verticality and leveraging hierarchy, scooping all into a singularizing accountability through infinite but regulated detail. The seductively explanatory power of scale functions as a heuristic *and* as naturalized phenomena. Scale reinforces an understanding of space and sociality that depends on binaries (e.g., local/global) while romancing the ongoing movement between the small and the large, consistently emplacing sociality within structures of comparison.⁵⁷

This scaling of the world helped create a global order of racialized peoples dispossessed of their relations to their lands, their beliefs, their languages, their socialities.⁵⁸

Spanish colonialists developed an elaborate architecture, the *casta* system, for naming human relations. *Castas* held vast legal and political import; they slotted people into a nested hierarchy, creating a scaffolding of peoples abstracted and rationalized into a structure of explanatory difference. *Castas* logics were marked legally through birth registries.⁵⁹ Those designated “of caste” were registered in a book Spaniards called *El libro de color quebrado* (The book of broken color).⁶⁰ *Quebrado* can also be translated as “bankrupt,” a usage that would have been common in sixteenth-century New Spain; *color quebrado* thereby reinforces an incipient racial capitalism while signaling the relation Spain established between tribute and caste.⁶¹ *Castas* entailed a process of differentiating peoples by abstracting them into categories aligned with structures of property, thereby materializing as “real” these distinctions and generating a relay between the fictional work of putting people into categories, or *castagories*, and the recognizably real material demands made by empire. Yet if such *castagories* offered an aspirational effort to manage and capitalize on sensual relations, they did so by simultaneously homogenizing and differentiating them. Thus, intimacies were intricately categorized such that children were cast through finely tuned division into *castagories*, while at the same time the intricate, multilingual, complex cultures of kidnapped Africans and colonized Indigenous peoples were homogenized, cast into a kind of named oblivion, into the reductive terms *indio* and *negro*. Such *castagories* inscribed scaling by disarranging prior social affiliations so that sustainable structures of feeling were narrated against and through nested hierarchies. In this manner, the *casta* system embedded scale into the quotidian, situating the scale of the body within hierarchal systems of place making, that is, in settler colonial terms of possession, to make real and practical the scaffold imaginary. This elaboration of fictional difference in the name of hierarchy also reinforced Maldonado’s view from the moon, because it animated the perspective from *outside*, an apartness that spectacularizes differences while making them manageable and distinct.⁶²

Castas begged visualization, a mapping that could make visually explicable complex processes of differentiation and homogenization. Popular and mostly completed during the eighteenth century, *casta* paintings offered an elaborate and extensive spectacle of social transformation through the visualization of nested hierarchies.⁶³ They were used to create and illuminate racialized difference, to narrate the meaning of *caste*, or, put differently, to constellate race around sex. They typically depict a woman, a man, and one or more children, each marked or narrated by a visual symbolic that suggests that they are “from”



FIGURE I.1. Eighteenth-century casta painting. Anonymous. From Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, 36.

supposedly different “races.” These racializing tableaux helped to create a visual grammar of race, sex, and domesticity so that to see race is to know sex. If they typically appeared in sets of sixteen or so to suggest progressions, they also worked to create the concept of a *Latinidad* in which the visualization of hierarchies was a crucial mechanism for narrating sexualization and racialization as one and the same process.

In their most well-known iterations, they depict grids of trios, a man, woman, and child, each trio elaborately and distinctly garbed, distinguishing them from

other trios. Except for the top tier, who may be shown playing instruments, relaxing in elaborate rooms, or viewing their land, the depicted groupings are usually engaged in some form of labor/commerce, and they are always emplaced within an enumerated naming system that identifies each caste, the child, as a “by-product” of the “mixing” of the two adults. The adult figures typically lean toward one another, suggesting desire and care; the paintings thereby casually reinforce their subjects’ habits of inclination over European men’s supposed habit of rectitude and rationality (symbolized by their portrayal as surveyors and masters of European musical instruments). The presence of children not only naturalizes racialization but reinforces the depiction of women, especially racialized women, as a species governed by maternal and erotic inclinations. As “founding statements of modern representation,” casta paintings instrumentalize intimacy as heterosexist and as a mechanism of racialization.⁶⁴ Linking the exoticism of intimacy to difference, casta paintings produce race as knowable; they instruct by making race a quotidian materiality, an outcome of the everyday.⁶⁵ By scaling cultural difference through the multitude of differentiated garbs and skin tones, casta paintings taught racial difference as cultural difference (marked by clothes, activities, locations) and, through these multiply circulated syllabi, taught Europe to understand race and to find satisfaction in a particularly useful apparatus (scale) that helped render race meaningful, real, natural, and universal.⁶⁶ Such efforts helped solidify the idea of a single world, one that could be characterized as having a single, underlying nature or reality but with many cultures. This representational move, according to Arturo Escobar, promoted “the West’s ability to arrogate for itself the right to be ‘the world,’ and to subject all other worlds to its rules.”⁶⁷ Casta paintings ultimately reinforce the figure of the child as a manifestation of scale and the scaffold imaginary.

Because they situate the heterosexual family as a unit within spaces of consumption and labor, casta paintings also register “families” within scalar structures, including markets of various kinds. They offer an idealization of mixed kinship within the normative family unit, signaling the figuration and castagorization of the child in the name of a scalar project that embedded a nested hierarchy of relations. These paintings similarly work as a modality of dismemberment even as they depict a “family” unit. They divide sociality by establishing who is subject to dismemberment, to analysis, and who is subject to the denial of childhood by way of the ascription of an incapacity for childhood, or inability to have a childhood. Even if these paintings were popular only during the eighteenth century, their visualization of homogenization through differentiation nevertheless cast long shadows.

Castagories helped orient the Spanish Empire and aided in articulating a newly scaled planet as a method of folding the many into one world. Casta paintings helped clarify the newly emerging separation between the observer and the observed as the first principle for what science and ideology would call *objectivity*. This visualization of relations scaled into grids of intelligibility was also important to the effort to produce newly rescaled sovereign imaginaries. The scalar imaginary nurtured its nearest relation, globalization, such that scalar thinking undergirds the intellectual and practical work of empire building just as it mutated into the crucial work of nation building during the nineteenth century.

Scale's utility to empire can also be seen by turning to an obscure speech about an early argument for an infrastructural transformation that would rescale an already powerful but nascent economy. Speaking in 1819 while the United States debated whether to admit Missouri as a slave state, DeWitt Clinton, then governor of New York and the man who propelled the Erie Canal into existence, linked the construction of the canal to the preservation of a union among states:

A dissolution of the union may therefore be considered the natural death of our free government. And to avert this awful calamity, all local prejudices and geographical distinctions should be discarded, the people should be habituated to frequent intercourse and beneficial intercommunication, and the whole republic ought to be bound together by the golden ties of commerce and the adamant chains of interest. When the Western Canal is finished and a communication is formed between Lake Michigan and the Illinois River, or between the Ohio and the waters of Lake Erie, the greater part of the United States will form one vast island, susceptible of circumnavigation to the extent of many thousand miles. The most distant parts of the confederacy will then be in a state of approximation, and the distinctions of eastern and western, of southern and northern interests, will be entirely prostrated. To be instrumental in producing so much good, by increasing the stock of human happiness; by establishing the perpetuity of free government, and by extending the empire of improvement, of knowledge, of refinement and of religion, is an ambition worthy of a free people.⁶⁸

Clinton advocates for the creation of a “people” at a national scale, a group that identifies with the national and that emerges out of its production.⁶⁹ What should be noted is Clinton's sense of urgency over the production of this national scale. Perceptively suggesting that for the United States in 1819 the national will emerge not through common sociality, nor through a sense of

shared responsibility to a communal land, nor through language or ideology, but through technology, transportation, and communications systems and that these will structure the formation of a “people,” Clinton calls for shifting the significance of regional scales, by *rescaling* the North through a unitary transportation scheme, through infrastructure that would defeat the South’s challenge to Northern supremacy.

Clinton’s language reinforces the nested hierarchies of scale (local, regional, national) helping to structure capitalism even as he predicts that the regional would, indeed must, learn, over the course of the nineteenth century, to prostrate itself before the national. Furthermore, his comments neatly anticipate how important the national scale would become to industrial expansion, just as his deployment of the rhetoric of national union, of submission to the national good, anticipates the secessionist conflict. While Clinton also suggests that a national “people” may already be in place—one that can be defined through reference to the discursive—he also implies that the empire of improvement (infrastructure) in the hands of capital would go much further to produce such a “free people.” Government-supported capital investment would create the conditions of freedom, a claim long resonant with efforts at intertwining capitalism with nationalism and democracy. And here, in the meshing of the concept of nation with that of people, by creating a category of people comparable to the scale of the national, a project that preoccupied the nineteenth-century intellectual elite across the Americas and that structured the declarations of governors and capitalists such as Clinton, one can see the significance of scale to narratives of nation and identity. Clinton here argues for the usefulness of scale for managing and mitigating dissent even while he might be puzzled by his sought-after national scale’s failure to adequately define and structure a homogenized people. Clinton tells us that scaling establishes relations between scales but also, crucially here, entails the consolidation of power and the establishment of affiliations within the order of the scale itself, just as it produces a vision of one’s “place” within a scale that must always be transcended. The scalar work of infrastructure makes peoples, creates the condition of possibilities for castagories and for new forms of containment (in Clinton’s case, the containment of Southern financial power).

Clinton understood the coercive force of scale and scalar projects’ capacity to reshape cultural relations as well as financial ones, and in doing so he was drawing on the already substantial history of rescaling power through captive taking. The kidnapping and forced removal of poor Irish, English, and African children were also mechanisms by which spatial relations were rescaled, power extended, surveillance enhanced, and economic control articulated across a wider swathe of power and space. The process of rescaling was a way to not

only transform labor structures everywhere but also to change the narrative about sovereign power and sovereign reach. Forced removal, as a practice of scaling, transformed how people oriented themselves and their relations, creating a structure of loss and producing subjunctive mourning for what could have been. Not surprisingly, the poor, and especially poor children, were most vulnerable to this practice of taking captives and removing them to their deaths. Put differently, rescaling nearly always entails some form of capture, yet the work of captivity is hidden even as everyone from López de Gómara to Clinton to contemporary CEOs celebrates the power of scale and invokes the scaffold imaginary.

Critical geographers such as Sallie Marston have offered a substantial critique of the ideological work that scalar thinking presumes. Marston and her collaborators note the way in which scalar analyses have tended to prioritize large-scale structures. Not surprisingly, “globe talk” implicitly renders as parochial the quotidian practices of social reproduction, from cooking, to sharing an anecdote on a bus, to changing diapers, “thereby eviscerating agency at one end of the hierarchy in favor of such terms as ‘global capitalism.’”⁷⁰ Such scale talk reinforces what Henri Lefebvre calls “phallic verticality” and a “small-large imaginary” that entails “preconfigured accounts of social life that hierarchize spaces of economy and culture, structure and agency.”⁷¹ One can easily see this sensibility in operation given the privileging of global and hemispheric comparisons over the seemingly regional and local, as Marston and her collaborators note: “Hierarchical scale (de)limits practical agency as a necessary outcome of its organization. For once hierarchies are assumed, agency and its ‘others’—whether the structural imperatives of accumulation theory or the more dynamic and open-ended sets of relations associated with transnationalism and globalization—are assigned a spatial register in the scaffold imaginary. Invariably, social practice takes a lower rung on the hierarchy, while ‘broader forces’ such as the juggernaut of globalization, are assigned a greater degree of social and territorial significance.”⁷² The result is a tendency to direct a “critical gaze toward an ‘outside over there’ that in turn, hails a ‘higher’ spatial category.”⁷³ In other words, spatial thinking, but also studies of the world more generally, depends on “prior, static conceptual categories” (nation, region, locale, hemisphere, globe) as *a priori* explanations in which form determines content.⁷⁴ Even as they may critique the logic of property underpinning capital relations, scholars nevertheless recur to Maldonado’s view from the moon, presuming the world is one and not many.

Scale’s seductive quality is clear. Enormity is scary and threatening, appealing and alluring. Scalar rhetoric, for example, has been used most effectively

by anti-immigrant politicians and activists to threaten a social transformation that undermines the power and privilege of white people in general and white men especially. Whether immigrants are described as waves or floods, a scalar affect invokes a force that cannot be withstood.⁷⁵ Scale works through multiple analytic strategies as a rhetorical force, as a geographic heuristic, as the apparently neutral, transparent backbone to the logics of capital and empire that would ultimately describe and inscribe more than abstract places.

Scale also draws the attention of literary critics, who see in it a chance to name a critique of the nation form and thereby ensure a call to think and read diasporically, or hemispherically, or transnationally. Inherent to these calls is both a critique of the damage and violence the nation-state did and does and a sense that the nondiasporic, the nonhemispheric, the nontransnational analyses may somehow be too local, hence too narrow-minded, too stuck in the status quo, too enmeshed in “the nation,” to effectively capture a liberated imaginary.⁷⁶ Such a critique in arguing for radical resistance to US imperialism has often been directed at Chicana studies as well as African American and Indigenous studies by claiming they fail in a parochial way to understand transnational rubrics and encounters. While this critique of nation-oriented studies has been helpful, it may inadvertently reinforce capitalism’s nested hierarchies and size fetishism. Or, as Marston and colleagues note, “A Newtonian worldview continually haunts the calculus of mobilization and resistance,” which insists that “global capitalism and imperialism can only be combated by entities operating at a similar scale.” Such an insistence “leaves those who are constrained by various ‘militant particularisms,’ or who are too under-resourced or disorganized to ‘scale jump’ on the bench when it comes to the zero-sum game of global resistance.”⁷⁷ Thus, the use of scale to critique the apparently too parochial imaginary of, say, Chicana studies or African American studies reinforces the violence of scale in the name of scale.⁷⁸

Furthermore, in such a Newtonian worldview, the tide of time moves away from the local, the parochial, and toward the swifter currents of the global, trans, diasporic, and cosmopolitan. The local is surrounded by the eddies of stasis. The local is mired, stuck, out of step with time. This insistence on scalar jumping denigrates the ephemeral, the opaque shrug, the small poem, the devotion to the nearby, the single refusal, the quirky song, the diminutive move, the creative articulation that refuses to be scaled up and rendered “universal” or “transnational,” the narrative that stays home and avoids the master. Such attention to the small-large imaginary calibrates narratives about agency only insofar as it can be named through the language of mass mobilization.⁷⁹ As Vanessa Agard-Jones argues in her meditation on Michel-Rolph Trouillot,

this focus on the world and the planet, or the view from the moon, fails to be sufficiently “attuned to the possibilities” that the body and “the quasi-human agents that constitute it” may compel together.⁸⁰ By contrast, Agard-Jones suggests, we recognize the multiple, “material entanglements—be they cellular, chemical, or commercial” that may be engaged with one another at any given time and that disappear within the project of scalar epistemologies.⁸¹

The view from the moon also fails to understand opacity, density, queer horizontality, social/spatial relations, affective meshes that cannot be narrated via the norms of “family” or “nation” or “region” because they cannot be scaled up. This fetishization of scale, and the scaffold imaginary more generally, repeatedly returns through castagories, and naturalized scalar norms, through the faith that ever more refined and ever grander scales make new legibilities possible. And it is thus in those terms that we see the long fingers of colonial enlightenment continually shaping even our desires to decolonize thinking, to get out from under its weight. Scale hides like a sniper on the moon—emplacing and containing over and over again.

Either World or Situation

The rich critique of scale offered by Marston and others compels us to shift our conception of scale as a *fait accompli*; it helps us reject the illusion of a monoworld that scale has conjured, so that we can shut our eyes to Maldonado’s now-naturalized perspective from the moon. It asks us to understand how sites and events morph, how they exist through dense and changing interactive practices and through the processes by which conditions of possibility for some are conditions of constraint for others.⁸² Such an effort demands a shift away from dualistic, hierarchical conceptualizations of relationality: it calls for a new effort, one that leans toward connection. Although Marston and her collaborators urge an effort to “overcome the limits of globalizing ontologies,” they admit that doing so will require “sustained attention to the intimate and divergent relations between bodies, objects, orders and spaces, that is to the processes by which assemblages are formed.”⁸³ To think space without scale is to abandon the scaffold imaginary, to imagine relations that don’t rely on narrative scaffolds or borders for their definition, their articulation. It is to abandon the romance of family and childhood and give up the nostalgia for the whole and the one.

How, then, to begin to think the textures of connections without relapsing into possession, into emplacement and orientation, into an architecture of explanation that enfolds all form, all narration, all being, into a nested scalar hierarchy? Put differently, how does one read and write knowing the world is

many? Undoing the strictures of monoworlding, some would say decolonizing, entails a turn to writers who know the pluriverse, who scrutinize the coloniality of perspective López de Gómara celebrates. To refuse the logic of one world (and the dualist structure it relies on) entails embracing the sense that many worlds coexist together. It is to shift away from what José David Saldívar, drawing on Aníbal Quijano, notes emerges with 1492 and the coloniality of power: the planetary.⁸⁴ Fred Moten puts it slightly differently when he writes that the “Atlantic slave trade and settler colonialism (in themselves, which is also to say in the traces of the insistently previous but anoriginal displacements and emplacements they bear) are irreducible conditions of global modernity—that is, of the very idea of the global and the very idea of modernity.”⁸⁵ Moten’s suggestion here is that embedded in the scaling of the nearby and the next door into the “global” are containment, slavery, and the displacement of multimodal ways of being together. The planetary names the global form of modernity that is containment, comparison, and bracketing.

Moten signals this abstraction of land and people together into a scalar project of “emplacement” when he notes, “When being-in-the-world is who you are, and who you are is what you own, and what you own is where and when you are, then what it is to have been taken and to have been made to leave which marks again and again the already inexhaustible vestibule of what is known and lived as the exhausted, is the beginning and the end of the world.”⁸⁶ So to abandon scale means thinking without not just the coloniality of scale; it also means refusing the idea of a neutral, passive ground from which one claims a sense of self; it is to give up the assumption that the self begins from that which is propertied and can be acquired and scaled.⁸⁷ Without scale it may be possible to understand land as “agentive,” as Jodi Byrd (Chickasaw) suggests: “There is a possibility that the spirit of the land itself works with an agency of its own on the imagination of settlers, arrivants, and Natives alike, influencing us and actively inflecting which stories we tell and how we tell them.”⁸⁸ To turn toward a sense of agentive materiality is to engage in an entirely different understanding of relationality; it is to unbuckle scale from connection; it is to make possible dis/objectification without castagories.

Such thinking without scale can also be found in José Esteban Muñoz’s theorization of brown relations.⁸⁹ For Muñoz, thinking brown shifts us away from the logics of racialization, mired as the language of race especially (but gender and sexuality additionally) is in the scalar metrics of a world that is one and not many, a world that can be abstracted into a scaffold imaginary and assembled within nested hierarchies. For Muñoz, to take brown affiliation seriously may mean to lose the individual per se, to shift from a faith in stability and toward

the “swerve of matter” into a brownness that is a “being with, being alongside.”⁹⁰ To think brown is to think with the density of connection, into a sort of queer horizontality, a queer density textured apart from and without a phallic verticality. Such density leans toward incompleteness; it dips into indebtedness and allows us to relinquish the grounding idea of the whole and the one, to abandon the reverence for rectitude required by the monoworld, or what Adriana Cavarero calls the rectitudinal “geometry of modernity.”⁹¹

The concept of the child has been mobilized to enshrine rectitude. Theorists of the child drew from the earliest of Greco-Roman pedagogies, including Aesop’s fables, to train elite children toward rectitude, to produce a developmentalist model that emblemized phallic verticality and that structured markers of the movement toward rectitude within a nested hierarchy. In this way the child came to figure, to serve as an icon, for the logic of scale; it became the face of the scaffold imaginary. Not only is the child the name, the figuration, for a form of scale that works as both metaphor and heuristic; it also relies on nested hierarchies that instantiate norms of “development” toward rectitude and through a process of comparison that unfolds within normative time. This logic of development requires comparison, benchmarks, effectively pitting children against each other, in order to produce the castagorical work that whittles multiplicities of experiences into singularity, normativity, neurotypicality. To have a childhood is to have the capacity to unfold through normative, developmental time into a “properly upright” adult citizen. Those who cannot so unfold, the logic goes, are cast off, hedged and bracketed.

Scales of Captivity examines a group of writers who, if they have not used the specific language of rectitude and inclination, take up the castaway, cast-off child who refuses the conditions rectitude requires; the texts studied here rebuke the emplacements of scale and castagories, unwind the logic of borders, and refuse complicity with a scaffold imaginary in order to imagine being-in-relation, thriving through connection. Not only do they refuse the traffic in bodies that, in the name of rescaled economies and through their false promises, relies on repeatedly shredding the social and sustaining ties and meshworks of relations that enable social beings to flourish, but they also refuse the logic that scalar ideologies deploy. The writers discussed here draw from African American and Indigenous philosophies and traditions, from the hard lessons of organizing and activism against the brutality of the deportation regime, to offer a sophisticated set of theories about how to think about the pluriverse and how to think relationally; by centering the cast-out child, they ask us to start with relational practices of knowledge that do not rely on either the scaffold imaginary or phallic verticality. Rather, they envision relations and connections through a

rich sense of the indebtedness that emerges from acknowledging shared vulnerability and forms of interdependence, an understanding that, as Fannie Lou Hamer would have it, none of us are free if we aren't all free.⁹²

Split Off

When Hamer demanded freedom, she refused rectitude and commandeered a different geometry of connection, one not organized around phallic verticality. She insisted on unbracketed movement, without hedges or borders. She redefined freedom away from liberal individuation and autonomy by demanding the sustenance of all as inextricable from the well-being of all. She unbundled children from scale, childhood from captivity. She demanded that we think from debt, from obligation, from inclination. Taken seriously, Hamer's call should rewire academic analyses, because it refuses a functional bifurcation, one that again reinforces the discipline of scale and the logic of the scaffold imaginary. Put differently, the scalar habit of thought tends to lock down how scholars study belonging and belonging together and thereby maintains rectitude against inclination, because scale.

Analyses organized from the moon's vantage point see the world configured as local, regional, and global and tend to take these categories as transparent, neutral, as frameworks for beginning rather than logics that subtend analysis. For example, scholars may take an aspirational approach and focus on relations within a community or nation; this is the approach grouped under the banner of civil rights. The second approach considers how a community or nation is constituted by its limits, that is, by what establishes who can belong to a community or nation; this is the approach demarcated by immigration studies. These two approaches are rarely studied simultaneously. So, for example, scholars who study gay rights or sexual citizenship usually begin from the first perspective by discussing what constitutes the relationship between members of a society, what activities and relations are allowed, encouraged, or prohibited. Scholars studying immigration law and policy, however, take the second approach.⁹³ They study how a nation constitutes itself by creating an outside, a border, a juridical limit that is both geographic and biographical. This bifurcated approach—which considers either how citizenship can or cannot guarantee equality (civil rights) or how outward structures of boundaries (such as immigration) are constructed and reinforced—is untenable for Latinx studies. *Scales of Captivity* therefore examines a set of texts that understand captivity, belonging, and nation making differently. These texts pick apart scale, identifying the violence that scalar practices entail and the methods by which

we are inured to the scaffold imaginary. Writers' focus on children, on youth hedged out of childhood, on the methods of captivity, enclosure, and dispossession as they iteratively shift with each project of rescaling from the early nineteenth century into the present, deserves attention, for it reveals a complex technology of the coloniality of power that has largely escaped our notice and continues to encumber our imagination.

Captivity and captivity narratives have typically been studied in a narrow sense even as literary historians have insisted that the captivity narrative itself played a central role not only in US literary history broadly but also, and especially, in the development of literature by white women.⁹⁴ Practices of captivity and constraint, however denied or ignored, were crucial to the development of the British colonial system and the later US empire along with its settler colonial imaginary; they helped to establish not only the state's claim to a monopoly on violence but also its claim to a monopoly on movement, on who may leave and who may stay, who may move with impunity and who may not.⁹⁵ Yet few studies have highlighted captivity from the other side. Correcting this elision, chapter 1, "Captivating Ties: On Children without Childhood," turns to María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's 1872 novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, demonstrating that her portrait of a racialized child held captive by white Northern financiers and abolitionists reveals how practices of captivity, bracketing, and constraint were central to the production and maintenance of sovereignty in general and liberal republican governmentality more specifically. I examine how Ruiz de Burton's novel pursues this problem, showing that in taking aim at the fiction of consent of the governed animating liberal idealism, Ruiz de Burton exposes its underlying quotidian racializing practices and logics and illustrates its crucial reliance on the figure of the constrained and racialized child who is unable to grant consent. This turn to the racialized child, I argue, is both significant and prophetic, announcing the figure as central to any cultural discussion that would seek to engage the experiences of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the United States over the next 150 years.

While the politics of *Who Would Have Thought It?* have garnered much critical attention, less time has been spent on the novel's formal innovations.⁹⁶ Ruiz de Burton drew on the widely circulating captivity genre that had already shaped sentimental fiction, but, more important, she also molded her novel by drawing on a very different repertoire, one that I read as also emerging from captivity: the spectacular, rambunctious display culture of circulated enfreaked and enslaved peoples and the burlesque theater that emerged from that culture. Ruiz de Burton, I argue, mined burlesque for its unruly play with the reveal and impersonation as well as its knowing winks and narrative joking, all

of which enable her to dissect the usefulness of captivity to fictions of consent, hedging as it does some people's mobility to enable free association for others. Finally, I demonstrate how Ruiz de Burton's critique of consent and the uses to which the racialized, captive child has been put remains germane today. I do so by examining how immigrant rights activists have deployed both the logic of consent and the figure of the captive child to argue for broader access to forms of enfranchisement within the US polity, even as they, too, like Ruiz de Burton, utilize burlesque forms to contend with and undermine the ongoing demand for varying forms of constraint and captivity. As I show in subsequent chapters, Latinx writers have followed Ruiz de Burton in centering their texts on the figure of the constrained child under duress, thereby putting pressure on propriety's masquerades, on the economies of respectability and authenticity that are interlaced throughout narratives of (white) belonging.

Ruiz de Burton tells a doubled captivity tale, one that follows not simply Lola's captivity but also the capturing of Mexico's and Indigenous nations' resources, a coupling of narratives that illustrates how these resources and people funded the Civil War and rescaled the United States. Her captivity tale makes it clear that practices of capture did not end in 1865, nor did the process of rescaling the nation, as a subsequent set of novels remind us. In chapter 2, "Plausible Deniability: Pursuing the Traces of Captivity," I examine three novels that not only link captivity to scalar practices and highlight its long temporality but also underscore its relationship to systems of labor management. The first novel, *Caballero* by Jovita González and Eve Raleigh, written after the scale of the territorial United States had largely been solidified, returns to the antebellum moment when Anglo settlers invaded Texas and began seizing Tejano ranches, setting off a new enclosure movement and licensing the violent scalar transformation that would leave landholders dead, their families penniless. Yet *Caballero* does not simply tell the story as one of invasion by Anglos; instead, I argue, it locates that invasion within the history of the two-century multinational conflict for control of Texas, a conflict involving the French, Spanish, US, Comanche, and Apache peoples at the very least. *Caballero* makes clear that the ideological formations emerging from this conflict hinged on captivity and were crucial to the development of the abstract fixities necessary for the scaffold imaginary to flourish anew.

This reading of *Caballero* provides a preface to my discussion of two twenty-first-century novels that consider the aftermath of the enclosure movement that shaped contemporary Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona and that offer captivity tales strangely resonant with those of *Who Would Have Thought It?* and *Caballero*. Oscar Casares's *Amigoland* and Lorraine López's *The Gifted Gabaldón*

Sisters also take up the figure of the captive, racialized child instrumentalized for scalar forces. I argue that by staging a captivity narrative as an instance of a senile grump's fantasy life, *Amigoland* comments on captivity's disappearance from historical memory even as it draws crucial parallels between nineteenth-century captivity and twentieth-century labor regimes. Both *Amigoland* and *The Gifted Gabaldón Sisters* change the subject slightly, telling captivity tales that focus on child captives not usually singled out for memorialization; more important, I show how they transform the captivity tale and undo its traditional narrative work. If canonical captivity tales relied on the captive-speaker as an authorizing witness and were subsequently deployed as anti-Indian state propaganda, these two novels unwind that process. Focusing on a Hispano ranching couple who held a Tewa child captive throughout her life and denied her role as her progeny's matriarch, *The Gifted Gabaldón Sisters*, moreover, transforms the function of the witness, challenging its claim to phallic rectitude by inclining the work of witnessing so that it becomes reparative. As I argue, this transformation undoes the phallic verticality that traditional captivity narratives instantiated by pulling down the scaffold imaginary and offering a vision of how contemporary Chicanx might come to terms with our ongoing relations to settler colonial violence amid an ever-expanding deportation regime.⁹⁷

Just as Lorraine López moves beyond the impasse of violent loss toward a reparative witnessing that privileges inclination rather than phallic verticality and market individuation, other writers also underscore inclination as a refuge that rebuffs the logic of containment. As I show in the first two chapters, scalar transformation entails not simply violence but forms of capture that are both material and discursive, ensuring the logic of categorical containment. The scaffold imaginary is structured through these systems of bracketing, but the mechanisms themselves are not particularly stable. The emergence of Fordist systems entailed new processes of rescaling but also new forms of containment, even while these systems transposed the racialized child as productive signifier. Chapter 3, "Submerged Captivities: Moving toward Queer Horizontality," takes up the mechanisms for containment that emerged when canals and railroads were left behind: freeways and highways created new forms of enclosure as they rescaled urban and rural regions and delimited mobility anew. I argue that Helena María Viramontes's *Their Dogs Came with Them* illustrates the coloniality of scalar logic and scalar practices, especially as they are materialized through urban planning and urban policing. The novel offers a searing critique of the scaffold imaginary and the effects of that vision through portraits of kidnapped and captive children who nevertheless find the cracks and faults in the scaffolding that is meant to contain and defeat them. Yet the enclosure of

once thriving urban barrios was not the only form of captivity to emerge from new systems of mobility that developed in the second half of the twentieth century. As José Montoya's moving poem "Gabby Took the 99" suggests, captivity can also be stretched out, sinuous and thinned through the figuration of the rural as left behind, left over.⁹⁸ This dynamic between the urban and the rural as scalar nodes and predictable steps in the scaffold imaginary, nodes that are temporal and material, also fuels Manuel Muñoz's *The Faith Healer of Olive Avenue*. I argue, however, that Muñoz moves beyond critique to provide instead a vision of situatedness that is not bound by a scalar imaginary; *The Faith Healer of Olive Avenue* offers a queer horizontality that rejects the phallic verticality that scale talk promotes. This queer horizontality acknowledges a different kind of constraint and envisions a tapestry of indebtedness that eclipses and undermines the abstract fixities and castagories enacted by scalar talk. Their works all similarly transform the captive witness, offering forms of reparative inclination, a turning to a density of connection that refuses the lien on our imaginations that the view from the moon extorts.

Chapter 4, "N+1: Sex and the Hypervisible (Invisible) Migrant," takes up yet another shift in geospatial alignments by examining how the work of neoliberal hemispheric rescaling gained needed momentum from the contemporary anti-immigrant movement that emerged as a homophobic response to an increasingly energized gay rights movement. If previous efforts at rescaling national economies and political reach entailed new rounds of violence and new forms of captivity, the rescaling of the hemisphere at the end of the twentieth century set in motion yet more methods of bracketing lives, in particular the lives of cast-off children. If at the start of the century highways took the place of railways, which took the place of canals, delineating regional scales, eighty years later highways no longer stabilized or articulated scale. Instead, financial institutions found new ways to rescale relations and create wealth; they bypassed traditional forms of infrastructure and initiated new techniques to hobble labor, thereby deflating the gains won by workers over the previous one hundred years. Trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) further rescaled the US economy, while dismantling social safety nets, to, in effect, bring structural adjustment programs home to roost in the United States. This complex political and economic transformation simultaneously encouraged flexible, informal labor and dramatically enhanced the surveillance and policing of that labor. If NAFTA tacitly encouraged informal migration to the United States, the subsequent militarization of the border effectively locked people in once they had arrived within its political territories. And, indeed, by forcing people to migrate, the newly rescaled economies of the Northern

Hemisphere effectively turned migration into yet another form of capture. By the end of the twentieth century, the United States was well on its way to creating an entirely new system of captivity even as it relied on an old retainer to service the mechanisms justifying the massive transfer of wealth from social support to incarceration. That is, it relied on sex. Conservative activists were crucial actors in this transformation; they parlayed sex, especially the vision of untethered queer sex, into the required momentum to animate and nurture a new era of anti-immigrant policing. And this new era entailed a new form of capture: the broadening and thickening of juridical borders into deportability.

I place the poetry of Eduardo Corral, Laura Angélica Simón's film *Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary*, Bettina Restrepo's novel *Illegal*, and Reyna Grande's novel *Across a Hundred Mountains* in the aftermath of this spectacular rupture, a rupture that challenged the explicit work of immigration law to police and maintain white supremacist heterosexuality and to cordon off queer life from the privileges of citizenship. Moreover, I argue that understanding a migration system determined to ruthlessly cleave the affective networks that enable social lives to exist and flourish demands a turn to the imaginary and to the brilliant interventions these literary texts provide. All three texts pursue the relationship between migration and freedom by telling stories that are, in effect, this era's captivity narratives. *Illegal* and *Across a Hundred Mountains* are especially crucial, however, because they portray cast-off female children, thereby defying the dominant portrayal of migrants as primarily men.

While it's clear that the contemporary condition of living in the United States with the looming threat of deportation amounts to a form of containment, a bracketing, it's less common to characterize life after deportation that way. Moreover, rarely do scholars in political theory even question the *right* of the state to remove people, just as few scholars study what life is like for people once they have been exiled, removed, and turned into refugees in the ostensible place of their birth.⁹⁹ Far more attention has been paid to the arsenal of tactics the US state utilizes to terrify, snare, cage, and export people, dispossessing them of their livelihoods, belongings, access to friends and lovers and kids.¹⁰⁰ Silence subsequently greets the deportee, and silence helps to sustain the power of the state to act with impunity, to presume absolute power in the name of a shady concept of legality. The failure to tell stories about life after deportation is, in effect, another kind of removal, another kind of disappearance.¹⁰¹ For these reasons and more, it's crucial to turn to texts that think about the experience of life "after removal." To take on the taken-for-granted—end-of-story—logic of forced removal is to counter the logic of sovereignty and disconnect it from one of its mechanisms for maintaining its power.

In chapter 5, “Misplaced: Peopling a Deportation Imaginary,” I discuss three novels written in the wake of a transformed emphasis on removal, each of which considers deportation’s wake. Maceo Montoya’s *The Deportation of Wopper Barraza*, Malin Alegría’s *Sofi Mendoza’s Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*, and Daniel Peña’s *Bang* all ask readers to witness the ruthless sociality that deportation produces. I argue that these texts reveal how forced removal kidnaps time and inaugurates a sense of subjunctive mourning; they also demonstrate how even one person’s removal is felt broadly among kin and community networks. Forced removal spreads dispossession, containment, and captivity far and wide; not only do the removed feel constrained, but so do those they’ve left behind and, perhaps, those they’ve joined. These three novels tell stories of captive and castaway children, youths whose lives have been delimited by the crisis of removal, a crisis that narrates the children’s apparent limit. They extend the ongoing story of freedom in the United States, a story predicated on the captivity of people constrained seemingly everywhere. As I argue, taken together, these texts all offer a vision of a different habit of thinking, an understanding that our destinies are bound together. To think past the traffic in unfreedom, the traffic in containment, will be to do conceptual work that thinks densely, without borders, without captives, without scale, without sovereignty.

If one were demarked as a perpetual child as most of the world was by the ruling men of the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, then one could not actually pass through childhood into adulthood, into the age of reason, to claim the capacity to grant consent to be governed. To seize the narrative of childhood and captivity, then, as the writers discussed in *Scales of Captivity* do, is to refute that tradition and to imagine and conjure a world less structured through the violence of the scaffold imaginary, a world without the possibility of deportability and thus of sovereignty, much less sovereign borders, one created through relations of reciprocity and by a general sense of indebtedness. It is to turn to thinking densely, enmeshed in queer horizontality.

DUKE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 See US Commission on Civil Rights, *Trauma at the Border*; Miriam Jordan, “Family Separation May Have Hit Thousands More Migrant Children Than Reported,” *New York Times*, January 17, 2019; and Molly O’Toole, “Family Separation Returns under Cover of the Coronavirus,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 2020. Note also that while the Biden administration has tempered some of the worst aspects of Trump’s border policies, it has not eliminated the understanding of “family.” Miriam Jordan, “Migrants Separated from Their Children Will Be Allowed into US,” *New York Times*, May 3, 2021.
- 2 For decades the United States has attempted to devise various mechanisms to “deter” people’s efforts to enter the United States by forcing people to cross in desolate, dangerous desert areas. I was first alerted to such efforts when, in 1997, I visited the Border Patrol Museum in El Paso, Texas, and a retired border guard, a volunteer docent, explained that they sought measures “to drive people” into the rural desert where the Border Patrol could isolate them and discourage attempts to migrate. For a detailed history of instrumentalizing the ferocity of the desert and border management as deterrence more generally, see De León, *Land of Open Graves*.
- 3 Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*; and Jordan and Walsh, *White Cargo*.
- 4 Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; and Ling, “Reading.”
- 5 Haley, *No Mercy Here*; and Martinez, *Injustice Never Leaves You*.
- 6 Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?*
- 7 Alvord, Menjivar, and Gómez Cervantes, “Legal Violence.”
- 8 Reséndez, *Other Slavery*; and J. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*.
- 9 See Wheatley, *Writings*; Douglass, *Narrative*; Du Bois, *Souls*; and Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*.
- 10 For discussions of the racialization of children, the construction of childhood, and the particular role of literature, see Thomas, *Dark Fantastic*; L. Jones, ““Most Unprotected””; Haywood, “Constructing Childhood”; Stephens, *Children*; Bishop,

Free within Ourselves; Martin, *Brown Gold*; Kelen and Sundmark, *Nation in Children's Literature*; Monaghan, *Learning to Read*; MacCann, *White Supremacy*; Murray, *American Children's Literature*. See also Gill-Peterson, *Histories*; Wilson and Gabriel, *Asian Children's Literature*; Jiménez García, "En(countering) YA"; and Cox, *Shape-shifters*. For discussions of how Latinx children are racialized, particularly around language use, see Orellana, *Translating Childhoods*; for helpful discussions of Latinx literature for children, see Jiménez García, "Lens of Latinx Literature"; Jiménez García, "Pura Belpre"; Jiménez García, "Side-by-Side"; and Aldama, *Latino/a Children's and Young Adult Writers*.

- 11 Stephens, *Children*, 8–24.
- 12 Levander, *Cradle of Liberty*, 25.
- 13 Levander, *Cradle of Liberty*, 79.
- 14 For a full discussion of this relationship, see Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States*.
- 15 Quoted in Brewer, *By Birth or Consent*, 43.
- 16 Quoted in Brewer, *By Birth or Consent*, 43.
- 17 Alryyes, *Original Subjects*; and Nixon, *Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Law*.
- 18 Levander, *Cradle of Liberty*, 3.
- 19 Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 4.
- 20 Levander, *Cradle of Liberty*, 4.
- 21 Levander, *Cradle of Liberty*, 19.
- 22 Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 33–36.
- 23 Brewer, *By Birth or Consent*, 365.
- 24 Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 8. It is no surprise, then, that in the period in which cartes de visite of children displaying a range of skin colors became popular as part of an abolitionist effort to brand whiteness as endangered (as potentially infiltratable), the regulation of immigration also picked up steam, culminating in Abraham Lincoln's signature on the first immigration reform measure. For more on the role of cartes de visite in revising racial imaginaries, see M. Mitchell, *Raising Freedom's Child*.
- 25 Lipsitz, "Possessive Investment in Whiteness"; and Harris, "Whiteness as Property."
- 26 For a rich discussion, see Stockton, *Queer Child*.
- 27 As Ruth MacDonald notes, one crucial aspect of this effort to wrest control from the propertied elite was assisted by the Puritan commitment to reading. Settler colonists adhering to Puritanism encouraged literacy because they believed a direct relationship with God could only be obtained by reading the Judeo-Christian Bible. MacDonald, *Literature for Children*, 7.
- 28 Laura Briggs argues that the foster care system was used to punish African American civil rights activists by separating them from their families. Briggs, *Taking Children*, 32–45.
- 29 See Rooks, *Cutting School*.
- 30 Paredes, *George Washington Gómez*; T. Rivera, . . . *Y no se lo tragó la tierra*; P. Thomas, *Down These Mean Streets*; and Mohr, *Nilda*.
- 31 Terminology here proves very difficult. *Latina/o* (and, eventually, *Latinx*) emerged as a scalar attempt to draw together different constituencies; it names a desire for

a new collectivity that signals multiple and overlapping diasporas, one that scales up people who may be hailed by their own or their great-great-grandparents' nation of origin or their settler/colonial status or even their status as what Jodi Byrd in *Transit of Empire* calls arrivants. Jane Juffer in *Intimacy across Borders* offers a rich engagement with this emergent collectivity, with the complexity of writing about overlapping diasporas. An alternative approach unpacks the concept of "greater Mexico"; this approach offers the advantage of attention to spatial relations without attendant assumptions about racial authenticity. For an extraordinary unpacking of this concept in relation to art see Amy Sara Carroll, *Remex*. A different kind of collectivity, that is the market/brand called *Latino*, was also called into being by advertising executives, according to Arlene Dávila in *Latinos Inc.* That *Latina/o/x* leaves something to be desired is eloquently articulated by Virginia Grise, who notes, "Pan-Latino(ism) is killing me, as Latino is not a politic nor an ideology and does nothing to prepare us to defend ourselves against what is actually killing us (Grise, *Healing*, 57). For in this very naming of *Latina/o/x*, the haunting presence of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous articulations remains nearby. After all, Latin America was a name meant to associate the hemisphere with France and all things European by invoking the Roman Empire's language of Latin and thereby disentangling the former Spanish colonies from their reputation as the scene of multiracial intimacies (see Arturo Ardao's *Génesis de la idea y el nombre de América Latina*). *Chicana/o* and *Nuyorican* were attempts to unbundle naming from empire and thus to disrupt the scalar work of castagories. Not surprisingly, the critique of the term *Chicana/o* emerged out of a scalar ambition. The label *Chicana/o* was seen as too fully linked to a messy activist nationalism that was misogynist and homophobic, a failed collectivity that embarrassed a certain kind of assimilative academic scholarship. More significantly, a critique of Spain's and postindependence Mexico's genocidal practices has rendered distasteful the romanticism of some *Chicana/o* writing about Indigenous histories. Scholars inspired by queer studies have distanced themselves from this debate by turning to the concept of "brown" developed by José Esteban Muñoz (see his *The Sense of Brown*). Others, such as Marissa López, have sought to undo the assimilative narrative rebuking Chicana scholarship and activism and to reinvigorate its critique and disruption of scalar ambition (see *Racial Immanence*). Other scholars, such as Patricia Ybarra, Ricardo Ortiz, Ralph Rodriguez, and Frederick Aldama, have sought to understand what is at stake in the naming of cultural practices as *Latina/o/x* (Ybarra, *Latinx Theater in the Times of Neoliberalism*; Ortiz, *Latinx Literature Now*; Ralph Rodriguez, *Latinx Literature Unbound*; Aldama, *Routledge Concise History*). Richard T. Rodríguez in "What Lies Beneath" has offered a significant and stellar meditation on the friction between such practices. For the purposes of *Scales of Captivity*, when I seek to name a broad constituency that can be signaled by its relationship to Spanish coloniality and US imperialism, I will use *Latinx*; if a writer or argument is especially associated with Chicana politics historically, I link the two as such. To the extent possible, I do not invoke scalar narratives in order to avoid using abstract fixities to homogenize dense materialities. For an alternate and very compelling use of witnessing, see Figueroa, "Faithful Witnessing as Practice."

- 33 The Trump administration's innovation in May 2018 was to declare all minors as trafficked. This allowed the administration to then charge accompanying adults with more serious felony trafficking charges, thereby justifying the separation of children from caregivers and blocking asylum options.
- 34 Atiya, *Rise and Fall*.
- 35 Kotef, *Movement*, 4.
- 36 Kotef, *Movement*, 5.
- 37 Kotef, *Movement*, 9.
- 38 See Torpey, *Invention*; and Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*.
- 39 Kotef, *Movement*, 15.
- 40 Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 59.
- 41 The captivity narrative has figured in canonical US literary studies for nearly a hundred years. See Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence*.
- 42 Rowlandson's narrative takes pride of place as a genre-defining text, but of course it was not the first captivity narrative. These accounts were abundant—largely following the work of empire building and resource theft. See Carroll, "Captivity Literature."
- 43 See Castiglia, *Bound and Determined*; Namias, *White Captives*; and Tinnemyer, *Identity Politics*.
- 44 L. Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*.
- 45 Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 299.
- 46 L. Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 255.
- 47 Higginson, "Caught Up," iii.
- 48 Kotef, *Movement*, 29.
- 49 C. Smith, *Prison*, 23.
- 50 López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias*, 7.
- 51 Ferreira da Silva, "On Difference without Separability."
- 52 Carrillo Castillo, "'The World Is Only One,'" 142.
- 53 Carrillo Castillo, "'The World Is Only One,'" 142.
- 54 Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale," 422.
- 55 Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale," 422.
- 56 In earlier work I examined the border as fungible, as an abjection machine, and as the mediator of homoerotic desires expressed through a repertoire of homophobic attacks. See Brady, *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies*; "Fungibility of Borders"; and "Homoerotics of Immigration Control."
- 57 For the most innovative critiques of scale, see Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale"; J. Jones et al., "Neil Smith's Scale"; Woodward, Jones, and Marston, "Of Eagles and Flies"; and Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Flattening Ontologies of Globalization."
- 58 See Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse*.
- 59 Katzew, *Casta Painting*, 39–63.
- 60 Carrera, *Imagining Identity*, 2. For a helpful discussion of the way some African descent peoples negotiated the casta system see Williams, "My Conscience."
- 61 For a thorough history of the emergence of capitalism and its racializing technologies see Robinson, *Black Marxism*.

- 62 See Ferreira da Silva, "On Difference without Separability."
- 63 Earle, "Pleasures of Taxonomy," 428.
- 64 Ferreira da Silva, "Notes for a Critique," 140.
- 65 Ferreira da Silva, "Notes for a Critique," 139.
- 66 Ferreira da Silva, "Notes for a Critique," 140.
- 67 Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse*, 86.
- 68 Clinton, "Opening Speech," 966–67.
- 69 For a wonderful discussion of peoplehood, see J.-M. Rivera, *Emergence of Mexican America*.
- 70 Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale," 421.
- 71 Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale," 422.
- 72 Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale," 427.
- 73 Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale," 425.
- 74 Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale," 428.
- 75 As Alicia Schmidt Camacho brilliantly outlines in "Hailing the Twelve Million," the rhetoric of scale enables a set of political practices that have no actual relationship to the lived conditions of people in the United States.
- 76 For this reason, perhaps, much of the revelatory theoretical work of Indigenous scholars goes unconsulted because Indigenous studies tends to challenge cavalier scalar claims, articulating a set of values and insights that take *place* (as opposed to the scalable fiction of abstract space) seriously as real, vibrant, fecund, and constitutive of culture and meaning, which is to say avowedly not scalable. This does not mean, however, that scholars working from within Indigenous studies do not see connections across cultures and languages, nor do they refuse networks of meanings and histories. Chadwick Allen, for example, in *Trans-Indigenous* argues for attention to just such a mesh of relations. Yet Allen's work also keeps time with the attention scholars such as Daniel Heath Justice (*Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*) and Christopher Pexa (*Translated Nation*) give to the importance of attending to heuristics focused on nation and tribe. Making connections, locating shared histories and epistemologies, does not reduce such relations to easily scalable forms that can be inserted into an already existing nested, scalar hierarchy; it does not mean that cultural, tribal, linguistic, and cosmological differences can be swished away into a homogenized narrative of an empty category of indigeneity that can be accommodated by universalizing narratives (one/not many) or simple dualisms. This critique of sovereignty is linked to its emergence as part of the scalar imaginary. Indigenous Studies offers a very different model of sovereignty than that explored here.
- 77 Jones, Woodward, and Marston, "Situating Flatness," 274.
- 78 For an elegant argument that places this critique in an earlier moment, see Ross, "Trans-Atlantic Parochialism." For a thoughtful engagement with the use of scale in contemporary cultural theory, see N. Mitchell, "View from Nowhere." For an extraordinary discussion of place as a dense ensemble of practices thereby illustrating orientation without scale, see Alexandra Vazquez, *The Florida Room*.
- 79 Ilene Grabel makes this case eloquently when she notes that change can be found in the "disparate, the seemingly trivial, or the experimental . . . because they are not scalable." Grabel, *When Things Don't Fall Apart*, 23.

- 80 Agard-Jones, "Bodies in the System," 184.
- 81 Agard-Jones, "Bodies in the System," 192.
- 82 This argument has been developed in a sophisticated, engrossing manner by Indigenous studies scholars. See especially Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*.
- 83 Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale," 424. For a helpful critique of worlding see Woodward, Jones, and Marston, "The Politics of Autonomous Spaces."
- 84 Saldívar, *Trans-Americanity*, xvii.
- 85 Moten, *Black and Blur*, 198.
- 86 Moten, *Black and Blur*, 199.
- 87 Ferreira da Silva, "Notes for a Critique," 142.
- 88 Byrd, "Souths as Prologues," 26.
- 89 See J. Muñoz, "Feeling Brown, Feeling Down"; "Feeling Brown: Ethnicity and Affect"; "Theorizing Queer Inhumanisms"; and "Chico," as well as his recorded lecture "The Brown Commons." Special thanks to Joseph Miranda for thinking through this work with me.
- 90 J. Muñoz, "The Brown Commons."
- 91 Cavarero, *Inclinations*, 11.
- 92 As Hamer explains, "And until I am free, you are not free either." Hamer, "Until I Am Free, You Are Not Free Either," 125.
- 93 See Bosniak, *Citizen and the Alien*, for an elegant discussion of this problem.
- 94 Castiglia, *Bound and Determined*, 1–15.
- 95 Koteř, *Movement*, 24–26.
- 96 For a foundational essay, see Alemán, "Thank God."
- 97 See Blackwell, Lopez, and Urrieta, "Critical Latinx Indigeneities."
- 98 J. Montoya, *In Formation*, 52.
- 99 Nyers, "Abject Cosmopolitanism," 420–25.
- 100 For extended discussions, see Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*; Kanstroom and Lykes, *New Deportations Delirium*; and Menjivar and Kanstroom, *Constructing Immigrant "Illegality"*.
- 101 For further discussion, see Boehm, *Returned*.

CHAPTER ONE. CAPTIVATING TIES

- 1 See J. J. Rodríguez, *Literatures*. See also Lazo, *Letters from Philadelphia*, for a magnificent analysis of early transnational theories of liberal formation and democracy. For an important contextualization of the novel, see Lazo and Alemán, *Latino Nineteenth Century*. Lucas Dietrich draws on archival material to argue that Ruiz de Burton paid for the novel's publication. See Dietrich, "On Commission."
- 2 For a splendid discussion of Ruiz de Burton's meditation on suffrage and her analysis of the economy of the "alien," see Arrizón-Palomera, "Trove of the Papers." For a helpful history of the emerging vision of citizenship in concert with Reconstruction, see Hyde, *Civic Longing*.
- 3 From its first reintroduction to the reading public, scholars have correctly noted the novel's racism and especially its racist portrayal of African Americans as well as