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# Unsettled Subjects: Inventing the Refugee in North American History

PAUL A. KRAMER

THE NECESSITY OF WRITING THE HISTORIES of forced migrants and dispossessed peoples moving across national borders long predates, but is underscored by, agonizing present-day realities of mass exodus, migrant endangerment, and the ferocious politicization of refugee admission for reactionary, nationalist purposes across the globe. Perhaps most obviously, scholars engaged in this research take up the unique challenges of eliciting, reconstructing, and preserving the memories of migrants that large-scale structures of violence and inequality have, in compounding ways, conspired to erase: the loss and destruction of documentary and other sources, traumatic suppressions and distortions of memory, the scattering of communities and erosion of rituals of history-making, the death of community historians and storytellers. The endangering of memory and history—pasts from which selfhood and belonging are cultivated—can, in fact, be seen as an extension of the dispossessing violence that set migrants to flight. And migrants' oppression—in “home” country, “host” country, or both—is often predicated in part on the suppression of pasts that can carry political standing, claims, and rights, pasts that historians can play a role in sustaining and mobilizing. A rationale for writing these histories based in the idea of recovery is not, however, without its complications. It can trade on empiricist ideas of the historian as merely finding and rescuing—rather than mediating or co-inventing—the histories they write. And it can, consciously and not, position the historian as savior, mirroring the rescue narratives commonly advanced by receiving, “host” states themselves. Still, as with other cases involving the histories of oppressed and subordinated peoples, historians can and do have critical, productive roles to play.

In the historiography of the modern era, studies of forced migration and displacement have, in varied ways, pivoted around the concept and figure of the “refugee.” They do so in distinct, overlapping, and conflicting ways. Some scholars set the term to work without significantly questioning it, recounting the experiences of those they and others define as refugees: what these migrants suffered, what compelled them to move, how they navigated

dispossession, how they adapted and survived, and what characteristics distinguished them from other migrant groups.<sup>1</sup> Other scholars, especially more recently, have sought to historicize and problematize the making of the term “refugee” itself: as concept, ascription, and axial element of juridical and policy framework. To these scholars, what might be called the history of refugee-making is ideally not limited to histories of dispossession and the dispossessed, but also accounts for the ways that uprooting and the uprooted were apprehended, rendered legible, and shaped by national and international regimes with the overwhelming power to delineate “refugees” from other kinds of migrants and political subjects. For such scholars, refugees are not only important subjects of study in their own right; precisely because the refugee was and is a political invention, they hold, reconstructing the ways that the concept of “refugee” came to be defined opens a unique window onto processes of nation-making, state-building, and the construction of international and global orders. Refugees were not only important to think about; they were necessary to think with.<sup>2</sup>

Some of this scholarship focuses on what might be called the refugee figure’s moral work. As it shows, representations of refugees are inevitably charged sites where the meanings of violence, responsibility, statehood, and the boundaries of social membership are worked through and fought over. This research reveals the ways that dominant narratives of exodus and refuge have served as vehicles for conveying political messages about the abject, victimized character of refugees, the heroic, self-sacrificing generosity of “receiving” societies, and the open-ended gratitude owed by the former to the latter. Such narratives proved especially complicated and necessary when—as was so consistently true during the Cold War—refugee-receiving societies were also profoundly implicated in the devastation that uprooted migrants in the first place. They were also inflected in specific ways by contexts like the Vietnam War, in which receiving societies’ destructive campaigns ended in ignominious failure. In such cases, transporting and admitting refugees performed the particular, difficult moral work of transmuting what some regard as sin into good deed, and defeat into honorable victory. While refugees’ own approaches to and memories of their experiences were informed by official, moral narratives—particularly for public consumption—their stories also make space for pain and loss while affirming community history, sacrifice, adaptability, and achievement, infused with distinct beliefs, practices and sensibilities; the question of which if any refugee narratives were permitted to circulate, and under what conditions, remained contested. Yen Le Espiritu’s compelling *Body Counts*, in

particular, sets out an agenda for the political-cultural study of the figure of the Vietnamese refugee as a site of struggle over the memory and morality of the Vietnam War, and of refugees as active participants in these struggles.<sup>3</sup>

Other scholarship tracks the emergence and definition of refugees within national and international policy regimes, looking at the refugee as a problem of politics, regulation, and administration, which states and societies wrestled with in various ways. What specific groups, especially as defined by nationality, race, or ideology, were implicitly or explicitly understood to deserve the granting of refuge and the possibility of eventual membership in the polity, and which were not?<sup>4</sup> What specific kinds of jeopardy and flight counted for purposes of refugee status and admission, and what, if any, relationship did this have to a receiving state's geopolitical friends and enemies? What kinds of documentary evidence did asylum-seekers have to produce to substantiate their claims? What if any rights were due to them during the asylum process? Where and when was refugee status to be granted: abroad, at the border, or within the territory of the receiving state? How should states square their interests in admitting some refugees with their interests—not infrequently, paranoiac interests—in securing themselves against those they saw as dangers? Intertwined with these questions, and overarching them, was the question of who within the state had the power to shape asylum determinations: executive branch agencies, low-level officials, the courts? There was also the larger question of the degree to which national states adopted policy definitions and procedures recognized by international institutions, or pursued more sovereigntist paths. Because of the ways refugees' situations implicated government institutions at multiple layers—their geopolitical situation involved makers of foreign policy; questions about relocation, housing, work, education, and welfare involved state and municipal authorities—refugee politics could intensify federalist and inter-agency tensions. Among the essential, recent books in this vein are path-breaking, foundational works by María Cristina García on Cuban exiles, Central American refugee politics, and post-9/11 US refugee policy; and by Carl Bon Tempo on US refugee politics since 1945.<sup>5</sup>

The historical study of refugee-making—in both of the above senses—is reshaping the writing of North American migration history in a number of generative ways. First, it is contributing to a much-needed emphasis on violence, force, and coercion as factors in the making of migration. In at least the US historical context, these factors were never absent—they were among the “push factors” historians required to set migrants in motion—but in early US immigration histories they were generally limited

to background or pre-history when it came to the main event: dramas of arrival, struggle, adaptation, and social mobility in the receiving country itself. Relatedly, those push factors tended to be geographically confined to migrants' homelands, rather than being seen as connected to larger-scale, extra-national, imperial, or global forces, least of all those originating in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Among US immigration historians, this fact had much to do with the interpretive hold of exceptionalist framings of the United States as a uniquely magnetic cluster of pull factors, and a larger and more durable methodological nationalism that situated the US nation, narrowly conceived, as the geographic frame of research inquiries and practices, and as the ultimate subject of immigration history-writing.<sup>7</sup> More recently, historians' emphases on migrant agency, autonomy, and resourcefulness have also played a role in bracketing coercion: scholars who dwelled too long on violence, fear, and constraint were chargeable with denying migrants "agency"; for some, this was tantamount to denying their humanity.<sup>8</sup> The best recent and emerging work on refugee-making finds its way through these difficult straits, carefully attending to the particular dynamics of power and maneuver that migrants confronted and shaped, not as matters of a priori methodological commitment, but as they played out in widely varying historical situations.

Relatedly, histories that foreground the political construction of the "refugee" category necessarily call scholars' attention to one of the defining yet counter-productive dichotomies in immigration history-writing generally: hard distinctions between free and unfree, voluntary and involuntary migration. This dichotomy found its way into immigration history-writing from statist modes of authority and ways of framing immigration in which many early immigration scholars were deeply implicated. Both scholars and policy makers, for example, animated by the ideological necessity of anomalizing labor coercion within industrial capitalism, participated in marking a moralized, republican distinction between "free" migrants who could build up a free society and "unfree" migrants that would corrode it. The mandate to permanently externalize "unfree" migrants promoted the racialization of this distinction: European labor migrants ("immigrants") were cast as actually or potentially "free," Asian labor migrants ("coolies") were viewed as inherently unfree; the Middle Passage was, by and large, excised from US immigration history.<sup>9</sup> This racialized, definitional association of "immigration" and "immigrants" with "free" European migrants in turn segmented and Europeanized "immigration history" itself, in ways that required decades of ongoing scholarship to remedy.

Histories of refugee-making, particularly in its more recent, cultural-historical mode, implicitly and explicitly challenge the ontological division between “free” and “unfree” migration. By turning critical attention to the ways policy makers, officials, and refugee advocates attempted to draw boundary lines between free and unfree migrants—and the tensions involved in this process—historians have been able to shed light on the ways these concepts have been malleable. In the process, they have invited thinking about degrees and kinds of freedom across migration histories, and enabled comparisons between migrations that are not traditionally compared. Breaching these divisions also raises the prospect of historicizing distinctions between “refugees” and “economic migrants”—the latter the preeminent, defining exclusionary category of a neoliberal age—as partly descended from older divisions between coerced and free migrants.

Finally, the study of refugee-making challenges the intractable, taken-for-granted division between “domestic” and “foreign” policy histories. Among the main arguments for refugee history has been the way that the topic itself, by its very nature, requires the bridging of domestic and foreign policy histories, and practical approaches for constructing such linkages. Going further, one might say that refugee politics underscores the analytical limitations of the very distinction between domestic and foreign itself, in both political and historiographic domains; rather than connecting across the divide, such histories have the potential to problematize the divide itself, while making available to historians the very question of how the divide was constructed, contested, and changed over time.<sup>10</sup>

As a growing scholarly field has shown, refugee-making was necessarily a geopolitical project that unfolded at multiple overlapping and contending geographic scales, from the high-political worlds of inter-state diplomacy to the quotidian worlds of family, household, and neighborhood. Granting refuge to migrants was, both potentially and actually, a clear, forceful statement about geopolitical friends and enemies, as in the centrality of anti-Communism to US refugee definitions during the Cold War. In the United States and elsewhere, the pursuit of diplomatic and military ties, commercial access, and basing rights, for example, played overwhelming roles in officially determining which states produced “refugees” through oppression of their citizens to the point of exit, and which did not. Especially during the Cold War, rival states encouraged and publicized the defection of refugees, insisting that escapees’ destinations vindicated their own values and institutions. Powerful states outsourced refugee regulation to politically weaker ones in their geographic and political orbits, in ways that extended

their influence and institutional forms and often made the pursuit of asylum more difficult and dangerous. Here and elsewhere, the place where the “foreign” ended and the “domestic” began was not a given, but continually under construction, marked and contested as an aspect of political and jurisdictional battles over what the proper criteria for designating refugees should be, and which national or international institutions should decide. When these and other geopolitical dynamics of refugee-making made their way into local communities—or emerged out of them—they taught citizens about their states’ actual and aspirational place in the world and about geopolitical friends and enemies that should also be their own.

The essays in this special issue take this growing field in fresh directions, in particular, by identifying and mapping new and significant geographies of refugee-making. Where much existing scholarship explores refugees’ situations in the aftermath of wars, Sam Vong’s essay explores debates about refugees as they unfolded *during* the Vietnam War itself. As he powerfully shows, those dispossessed by the conflict raised serious strategic concerns among both US and southern Vietnamese military officials. Refugees were seen as potential sources of instability, to be won over through relief and aid programs, and potential subjects of controversy, to the extent that they were used to index chaos and the failure of pacification by the United States and its partners. Over time, refugees also came to be viewed as potential instruments of war, especially as human shields and subjects of military indoctrination and training; some populations were forcibly relocated in the interests of building up other, ostensibly stabilized villages. This intentional weaponizing of refugees in turn required systematic efforts to register and classify refugees as objects of knowledge. Questions of nomenclature—whether the US military was simply relabeling refugees as “war victims” to persuade home publics of a declining refugee problem—themselves became controversial. Vong’s essay demonstrates the value and possibility of tracing processes of refugee-making even as far back as the displacing violence, in ways that have important methodological implications for histories of other wars and other dispossessed populations.<sup>11</sup>

Laura Madokoro’s essay takes the politics of refugee-making in other novel directions. Beginning with a striking reflection on the contested use of the term “refugee” to refer to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, Madokoro inquires into situations in which citizens are at risk—or are feared to be at risk—of becoming “refugees” within their own countries. The essay then turns to the complex meanings of the refugee category in the

context of Japanese internment in Canada during World War II, specifically among Japanese Canadians who managed to escape internment and white allies who opposed internment. Madokoro focuses on the experiences of journalist Muriel Kitagawa and her family, who sought refuge in Toronto. As she recounts, activist groups like the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians used the term “refugee” in their pamphlets in order to generate outrage, warning that interned Japanese Canadians were being effectively reduced from citizens to refugees and comparing wartime internment to Nazi racism (and, fascinatingly, invoking the forced removal of Acadians as a negative historical reference point). Japanese Canadians, she finds, were less likely to use refugee language in public—although it appeared in their private deliberations—perhaps because their citizenship in a racialized Canada was itself so precarious: invocations of refugee status risked emphasizing Japanese Canadians’ “foreignness” in ways that many white Canadians were all too ready to accept. Where scholars have traced the emergence and definition of “refugee” with respect to international migrants, Madokoro’s work reveals the potential of tracing the relationships between “refugee” and “citizen” as mutually defining political and social categories.<sup>12</sup>

Yael Schacher’s essay similarly expands the geographies of refugee-making with a close analysis of Edith Lowenstein’s legal campaigns on behalf of refugees seeking asylum within in the United States. As she points out, most studies of refugee politics in the 1950s and 1960s center on overseas vetting and resettlement, but advocates like Lowenstein insisted that migrants should be allowed to apply for refugee status even after their arrival, without discrimination against those in the country illegally. She tracks Lowenstein’s energetic work on behalf of “de-illegalization,” with special focus on her litigation on behalf of seamen who had deserted the vessels of Communist nations and remained in the United States. Immigration officials and the State Department tended to view these seamen’s claims of anti-Communist political action and likely political persecution dismissively; Lowenstein fought hard to expand the persecution standard to incorporate economic harms, while suing on equal protection and due process grounds. Schacher’s essay makes clear the need to approach refugee-making as an ongoing process that continued after migrants entered the United States and that, against the wishes of executive branch agencies, extended into US courts in the form of status adjustment campaigns. Studying such cases, she shows, will help break down the rigid boundaries between “refugees” and



“immigrants” that immigration historians have inherited from immigration policy frameworks, past and present.<sup>13</sup>

As these and other new works in this field emerge, it will be especially interesting to track where these histories position themselves along a spectrum between what might be called juridical and critical global perspectives. In the former category are works that proceed from an implied or explicit aspiration for inclusionary nations that acknowledge responsibility for refugee admissions; apply fair, non-discriminatory, non-geopolitical criteria in both refugee admission and treatment; obey their own laws in making and implementing refugee policy; empower their courts to challenge unjust or unlawful exercises of state authority; and balance their needs for national sovereignty with a sense of their international role and obligations.<sup>14</sup> This ideal—derived in part from the demands of refugee rights advocates—is held up as the critical lens through which historical and present-day realities are viewed. In the latter category is scholarship grounded in critical refugee studies and critical international law and geography. It views national and international refugee policy as a key stabilizing and legitimating element in an unequal global order. Refugee policy, it holds, does little to challenge the sovereign boundary prerogatives of national states, even as such policy can sublimate states’ violence into humanitarian discourse that rewards perpetrators with the badge of rescuers, obfuscates their role in dispossession and disorder, and essentializes uprooting forces as endemic to migrants’ home societies.<sup>15</sup> The very diversities of approach here—including works that straddle or blur the above distinction—index the range and richness of this field of inquiry; the most promising work may be that which finds an analytic vocabulary capable of placing these perspectives into a dialectical relationship.

Like other terms, “refugee” defines and is defined by nearby categories that border and oppose it, and those with which it overlaps. When historical actors talk about refugees, they are also talking about other migrants and other dispossessed people they do not mark as refugees. When they talk about refugees, with their fragile or nonexistent hold on rights, they are also talking about citizens, who ostensibly possess and exercise them. They are also talking about legitimate and illegitimate forms of state violence, the place where national sovereignty ends and international norms and authority begin, and the political-geographic contours of a radically unequal world. But “refugee” also seeks to name groups of people pushed from their homes and countries whose claims to rights have been threatened and who, if they

claim the term, may not define it in the ways that states do. They may just as easily avoid the label, with its burdens and stigmas of unwantedness, homelessness, distrusted loyalty, conditional membership, and vulnerability to pity and charity. Alongside the statist invention of the “refugee,” migrants’ assertions of their own narratives of displacement, and power to embed these narratives within larger realms of life never completely enveloped by dispossession, require the historian’s care, attention, and imagination. In past and present, the space between these entangled definitions of membership, place, and safety remains unsettled.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, David W. Haines, *Refugees in the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985); David Haines, *Refugees as Immigrants: Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese in America* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1989) and David Haines, ed., *Refugees in America in the 1990s: A Reference Handbook* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997).

2. On the construction of the refugee category see, for example, Liisa H. Malkki, “Refugees and Exile: From ‘Refugee Studies’ to the National Order of Things,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (1995): 495–523. On the necessity and capacity of refugee studies to destabilize scholars’ national and regional imaginaries, see Viet Thanh Nguyen, “Refugee Memories and Asian American Critique,” *Positions* 20, no. 20 (2012): 911–42.

3. Yen Le Espiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014). See also Yen Le Espiritu, “The ‘We-Win-Even-When-We-Lose’ Syndrome: U.S. Press Coverage of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the ‘Fall of Saigon,’” *American Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2006): 329–52.

4. For a transformative account of the racialized character of early US refugee status; refugee land-grants as a strategy of settler-colonial empire; the recruitment and “redemption” of formerly enslaved people seeking refuge during the Civil War; and the promise of payments to Creek refugees loyal to the Union Army as a tool of displacement, see Evan Taparata, “‘Refugees as You Call Them’: The Politics of Refugee Recognition in the Nineteenth-Century United States,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 38, no. 2 (Winter 2019): 9–35; Evan Taparata, “No Asylum for Mankind: The Creation of Refugee Law and Policy in the United States, 1787–1924” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2018). The study of contexts in which African Americans have been identified by others as “refugees,” been denied the label and its protections, taken on the term for themselves or refused it, is crucially important, as is the impact of these discursive-political dynamics on the racializing and de-racializing of the term “refugee.” Works that employ the category of refugee in the study of African Americans during the Civil War era include Amy Murrell Taylor, *Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War’s Slave Refugee Camps* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018) and Chandra Manning, *Troubled Refuge: Struggling for Freedom in the Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 2017). My thanks to Alisha Hines for bringing these works to my attention. On the concept of “refugee” in African American studies, see Régine Michelle Jean-Charles, “Refugee,” in *Keywords for African American*

*Studies*, ed. Erica R. Edwards, Roderick A. Ferguson, and Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar (New York: NYU Press, 2018), pp. 172–74.

5. María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959–1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); María Cristina García, *Seeking Refuge: Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); María Cristina García, *The Refugee Challenge in Post-Cold War America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Carl Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). Other important works on the politicizing of refugee politics along Cold War polarities include Gil Loescher and John A. Scanlan, *Calculated Kindness: Refugees and America's Half-Opened Door, 1945–Present* (New York: Free Press, 1986); Peter H. Koehn, *Refugees from Revolution: U.S. Policy and Third-World Migration* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991); Norman L. Zucker and Naomi Flink Zucker, “From Immigration to Refugee Redefinition: A History of Refugee and Asylum Policy in the United States,” *Journal of Policy History* 4, no. 1 (January 1992): 54–70; Michael S. Teitelbaum, “Immigration, Refugees, and Foreign Policy,” *International Organization* 38, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 429–50; Aristide Zolberg, “The Roots of American Refugee Policy,” *Social Research* 55, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 649–78; Stephen Macekura, “‘For Fear of Persecution’: Displaced Salvadorans and U.S. Refugee Policy in the 1980s,” *Journal of Policy History* 23, no. 3 (2011): 357–80. On Cold War politics and East Asian refugee migration, see Madeline Y. Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); Arissa H. Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015); Michael G. Davis, “Impetus for Immigration Reform: Asian Refugees and the Cold War,” *Journal of American–East Asian Relations* 7, nos. 3–4 (1998): 127–56; Michael Gill Davis, “The Cold War, Refugees and U.S. Immigration Policy, 1952–1965” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1996). On attempts to encourage escape from Communist bloc countries in Europe and to mobilize anti-Communist refugees, see Susan L. Carruthers, “Between Camps: Eastern Bloc ‘Escapees’ and Cold War Borderlands,” *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (Sept. 2005): 911–42; and Simo Mikkonen, “Exploiting the Exiles: Soviet Émigrés in U.S. Cold War Strategy,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 98–127. On US programs to aid and mobilize Cuban anti-Communist refugee communities, see María Cristina García, *Havana USA*; Felix Roberto Masud-Piloto, *From Welcomed Exiles to Illegal Immigrants: Cuban Migration to the U.S., 1959–1995* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); Gil Loescher and John A. Scanlan, “U.S. Foreign Policy, 1959–80: Impact on Refugee Flow from Cuba,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science* 467, no. 1 (May 1983): 116–37. On the politics of Vietnamese refugee relocation, see Yen Le Espiritu, *Body Counts*; Sucheng Chan, “Politics and the Indochinese Refugee Exodus, 1976–1997,” in *Remapping Asian American History*, ed. Chan (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), pp. 171–222; Heather Marie Stur, “‘Hiding Behind the Humanitarian Label’: Refugees, Repatriates and the Building of America’s Benevolent Image after the Vietnam War,” *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 2 (April 2015): 223–44; Jana K. Lipman, “‘Give Us a Ship’: The Vietnamese Repatriate Movement in Guam, 1975,” *American Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (March 2012): 1–31; Sam Vong, “Compassion Politics: The History of Indochinese Refugees and the Transnational Networks of Care, 1975–1994 (PhD diss., Yale

University, 2013); Ayako Sahara, “Globalized Humanitarianism: U.S. Imperial Formation in Asia and the Pacific through the Indochinese Refugee Problem” (PhD thesis, University of California, San Diego, 2012); Jana Lipman, *Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Repatriates: Vietnamese Refugee Camps, 1975–2005* (forthcoming). Most histories involving the United States and refugees treat US policies toward the granting of refugee status and admission to the United States, but a promising avenue of research explores Americans’ involvement with international refugee relief and resettlement efforts directed at other destinations. See E. Kyle Romero, “Moving People: Refugee Politics, Foreign Aid, and the Emergence of American Humanitarianism in the Twentieth Century” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, work in progress).

6. On the need to foreground the role of war in US immigration history, in opposition to these dominant trends, see Ellen D. Wu, “It’s Time to Center War in US Immigration History,” *Modern American History* 2, no. 2 (July 2019): 215–35.

7. For a compelling critique of exceptionalist framings of US immigration history, see Donna R. Gabaccia, “Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and the Immigrant Paradigm of United States History,” *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (1999): 1115–34. On methodological nationalism in immigration scholarship more broadly, see Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, “Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences,” *Global Networks* 2, no. 4 (2002): 301–34.

8. For a critical account of “agency” in the context of histories of enslavement, see Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (Autumn 2003): 113–24.

9. For illuminating histories and genealogies of the “free” migrant and its racialized construction, see, especially, Moon-ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

10. On the need to problematize and historicize the distinction between “domestic” and “foreign” in US immigration policy history rather than employ it analytically, see Paul A. Kramer, “The Geopolitics of Mobility: Immigration Policy and US Global Power in the Long Twentieth Century,” *American Historical Review* 123, no. 2 (April 2018): 393–438.

11. Sam Vong, “‘Assets of War’: Military Displacements, Deterritorialization, and the Strategic Uses of Refugees during the Vietnam War, 1965–1973” (this issue).

12. Laura Madokoro, “‘From Citizens to Refugees’: Japanese Canadians and the Search for Wartime Sanctuary” (this issue).

13. Yael Schacher, “‘I Hate to See Human Beings Kicked Around by Fate and by Law’: Edith Lowenstein’s Asylum Advocacy in the 1950s and 1960s” (this issue).

14. For a recent work carried out along these lines, David FitzGerald, *Refuge Beyond Reach: How Rich Democracies Repel Asylum Seekers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

15. For varied works in this vein, see Espiritu, *Body Counts*; Eric Tang, *Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the New York City Hyperghetto* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015); Emma Haddad, *The Refugee in International Society: Between Sovereigns* (Cam-

bridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Robyn Liu, "The International Government of Refugees," in *Global Governmentality: Governing International Spaces*, ed. Wendy Larner and William Walters (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 116–35; Nevzat Soguk, *States and Strangers: Refugees and Displacements of Statecraft* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Randy Lippert, "Governing Refugees: The Relevance of Governmentality to Understanding the International Refugee Regime," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Politics* 24, no. 3 (1999): 295–328.