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**Cosmic Cowboys, Armadillos, and Outlaws: The Cultural Politics of
Texan Identity in the 1970s**

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**Cosmic Cowboys, Armadillos, and Outlaws: The Cultural Politics of
Texan Identity in the 1970s**

by

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Dedication

In memory of Bob A. Calvert, historian.

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Cosmic Cowboys, Armadillos and Outlaws: The Cultural Politics of Texan Identity in the 1970s

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Abstract: This dissertation investigates the figure of “the Texan” during the 1970s across local, regional, and national contexts to unpack how the “national” discourse of Texanness by turns furthered and foreclosed visions of a more inclusive American polity in the late twentieth century. The project began in oral history work surrounding the cultural politics of Austin’s progressive country music scene in the decade, but quickly expanded to encompass the larger transformations roiling the state and the nation in the 1970s. As civil rights and feminist movements redefined hegemonic notions of the representative Texan, icons of Anglo-Texan masculinity—the cowboy, the oilman, the wheeler-dealer—came in for a dizzying round of celebration and critique, satire and ritual performance. Such Seventies performances of “the Texan” as took place in Austin’s “cosmic cowboy” subculture provided an imaginative space to refigure Anglo-Texan identity in ways that responded to and internalized the decade’s identity

politics. From the death of Lyndon Johnson to Willie Nelson's picnics, from the United Farm Workers' marches on Austin to the spectacle of Texas Chic on the streets of New York City, Texas mattered in these years not simply as a place, but as a repository of longstanding American myths and symbols at a historical moment in which that mythology was being deeply contested.

This dissertation maps the messy ground of the 1970s in Texas along several paths. It begins some years prior with the Centennial Exposition of 1936 and the regionalism of J. Frank Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb, and Roy Bedichek before proceeding to the challenges to their vision of "the Texan" on the part of the African American civil rights, Chicano, and women's movements. The dissertation's central chapters then address the melding of countercultural forms and the state's traditional Anglo-Texan iconography and music in spaces like Austin's Armadillo World Headquarters. Popular music, art, film, journalism, and literature evoke this attempted revisioning of Anglo-Texan masculinity in dialogue with the decade's identity politics.

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Introduction: Meanings of “the Texan” in the 1970s

Late in December 1972, two Texas singer-songwriters stood backstage at the Armadillo World Headquarters nightclub in Austin. They knew each other from their time together in Nashville, until one of them left, frustrated with his uncertain prospects as a leading man amidst Music City’s glitzy production values. The defector had moved to Austin earlier in the year. Soon thereafter, he called the Texan still in exile to let him know that he had “found something” down here, which is why they were backstage at the Armadillo. The two had played any number of dubious honky-tonks and dance halls across the country, but peering out at a screaming crowd of long-haired cosmic cowboys and peasant-bloused honky-tonk angels, Waylon Jennings just was not sure what to make of it all. He turned to his friend, visibly worried. “What the hell have you got me into, Willie?”¹

It is no wonder that the strange currents coursing through that audience at the Armadillo World Headquarters, the city of Austin, and the state of Texas surprised Jennings in the early 1970s. Austin, Texas, in that decade took on the qualities of a lingering remnant of Sixties zeitgeist, an illusion of culture industry hype, an aestheticized social movement, a swaggering bastion of reactionary machismo, and, in a few exemplary moments, a full-blown cultural renaissance. In all, cultural producers in the capital city of Austin provided the decade’s foundation for a substantive subcultural revision of “the Texan.”² Their actions, in turn, fed the projection of “Texas Chic” for

¹ Waylon Jennings with Lenny Kaye, *Waylon: An Autobiography* (New York: Warner Books, 1996), 195-196; Willie Nelson with Bud Shrake. *Willie: An Autobiography*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 171.

² Throughout, I use “the Texan” in quotation marks to denote that symbolic register whereby qualities stereotypically associated with the state are performed, whether in the mass-mediated texts of film or music or in everyday social interactions. “The Texan” as a changing representation and signifier of normative

national audiences in a period of political and economic malaise. By decade's end, the amplification of "the Texan" through such national texts as *Dallas* and *Urban Cowboy* short-circuited this earlier progressive revisioning of the state's iconography born in Austin, though the attempts continue to carry strong cultural resonances. A study of the contestation that marks this process of cultural production sketches the broader social and political contours of the state and nation in the 1970s.

Popular memory lionizes the 1960s as a decade of substantive change. However, those years should be more properly framed as vanguard, as it was in the 1970s that the shifts in the nation's understanding and experience of race and gender difference, morality and cultural sensibility, and skeptical attitudes towards established authority and expertise rippled outside the coterie of activists, intellectuals, and politicians who had defined the Sixties agenda. As David Frum has written, for the "typical" American voter, say, the 47-year old white machinist's wife from Dayton, the 1960s may as well have been the 1940s. It was only in the next decade that she experienced divorce, "discovered cappuccino, and her standard of living failed to rise for the first time in her adult life, and that she cast her first Republican ballot."³ By the same token, it was in the 1970s, not the 1960s, in which the largest numbers of Texans turned out for antiwar demonstrations, La Raza Unida Party defeated the Anglo political machines in the border counties, and long hair and drug references surfaced amongst the state's country-western artists. And even as the liberation ethos of the Sixties became more accessible and diffuse, the politics of

Anglo-American masculinity is a major theme of this study, as is the contestation over alternate visions of and claims to "the Texan." I also use the noun Texanness as shorthand for the same set of stereotyped representations. It is an awkward word. That the reader will continue to trip over the word, in fact, recommends its use, as it remains a continuing reminder of the artifice of the qualities thus named.

³ David Frum, *The 70s: How We Got Here* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), xxii. Frum did not choose the Dayton housewife at random. The selection alludes to an example from the influential treatise on the rise of the values voter by Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg, *The Real Majority* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970).

backlash achieved new levels of organization, visibility, and viability. Taken together, the rise of a liberationist identity politics and the New Right's growing activism, the cultural amplification of the evangelicals and the continued commodification of the hippies, make the 1970s particularly compelling in terms of recent American history.

Austin constituted the epicenter of the cultural and political remaking of the meanings of "the Texan" during a decade that seemed to witness, simultaneously, the realization and defeat of the activist values of the 1960s. Change often arrived in unexpected forms and unlikely places, from Eddie Wilson's Armadillo World Headquarters to Michael Levy's *Texas Monthly*, from the flowering of psychedelic poster art, advertisements, and comics to experiments in community television and theater, from the progressive electoral victories in the Austin City Council to the United Farm Worker activities on the border that reverberated in the capital, from chili cook-offs and festivals in Luckenbach to the progressive country music of Willie Nelson, Michael Martin Murphey, and Jerry Jeff Walker. Revisions of traditional Texan iconography occurred amidst tremendous regional change—Sun Belt (sub)urbanization, oil-fueled prosperity in the midst of the energy crises, the partisan realignment of the solid Democratic South, and the revolutionary social movements for African American, Chicano, and women's rights. They also coincided with shifts in the stature of Texas on the national stage, embodied in the political careers of Lyndon Johnson, John Connally, and George H. W. Bush, and were crowned by the success in popular culture of progressive and outlaw country music, the film *Urban Cowboy*, and the prime-time soap opera *Dallas*.

The confluence of country-western performance, countercultural sensibilities, and an emphatic Anglo-Texan masculinity runs against the most common generational and regional narratives of the preceding decade of the 1960s. In particular, the locally celebrated subcultural union of the "rednecks" and the "hippies" in a storied space like

the Armadillo World Headquarters strikes the casual observer steeped in the Manichean worlds of *Easy Rider* or the New York City hard-hat riots as odd.⁴ And yet, it is this oddity, this inability to securely place the Texan 1970s in an easy generational narrative, that makes these seemingly unlikely phenomena fit well with historians' developing sense of the contrarian decade of the 1970s. How do the legacy of LBJ liberalism and the rise of Carter's New Democrats square with Nixon's "silent majority" of the white, male working class, both Southern rednecks and Northern hard-hats? What does country songwriter Willie Nelson's popular transformation into a honky-tonk hippie signify as the counterculture is rendered diffuse and omnipresent, as long hair on men, loud colors in business suits, and consumption driven by the quest for the authentic self come to dominate the mainstream?⁵ What did the raucous celebration of Anglo-Texan identity signify in the midst of the defeat in Vietnam, economic stagflation, and political corruption of Watergate that cast a pall, a "malaise," as pundits and Jimmy Carter would call it, over the national mood? From the death of Lyndon Johnson to Willie Nelson's picnics, from the United Farm Workers' marches on Austin to the spectacle of Texas

⁴ Like "the Texan," both terms stand in quotes here, a gesture towards their status as figurative labels to be deployed rather than descriptions of definable populations. In short, "redneck" here connotes a member of the Southern, white working or agrarian class, typically seen as possessing conservative social and racial views. "Hippie" references adherents (again, largely white, but not by definition as in redneck) of the 1960s counterculture, typically seen as socially progressive or at least iconoclastic. These shorthand definitions efface much, including the traditional masculinist qualities of each. Both labels could also be used to designate the undesirable outside of the middle-class mainstream, though their shared white privilege rendered this outsidership a bit tenuous. "Redneck" seems to be the more interesting and charged of the terms in that matter. As John Hartigan argues regarding the concept of "white trash," "redneck," too, seems to demonstrate "how a pollution ideology maintains a portion of whites as fitting problematically into the body of whiteness." The hippie shares something of this rhetorical ground, as his or her "dirtiness" merits frequent mention by detractors. The hippie, perceived as middle-class dropout in problematic relation to the privilege that he or she enjoys, is, too, social matter out of place. See John Hartigan, Jr. "Unpopular Culture: The Case of 'White Trash,'" *Cultural Studies*, 11 no. 2 (1997): 316-343. Finally, "redneck" and "cowboy," another key term here, carry very different resonances nationally, one Southern, deviant, and retrograde, the other Western, romantic, and closely tied to American national identity.

⁵ On the penetration of countercultural discourses of the authentic self into the mainstream of American culture, see David Binkley, "Introduction," *Getting Loose: Lifestyle Consumption in the 1970s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 1-24.

Chic on the streets of New York City, Texas mattered in these years not simply as a place, but as a repository of longstanding American myths and symbols at a historical moment in which that mythology was being deeply contested.

This dissertation maps the messy ground of the 1970s in Texas along several paths. Fundamentally, it explores how the idea of Texas operates in the cultural politics of specific moments in historical time and in the frames of local, regional, and national imaginaries. The figures of Anglo-Texan masculinity have traditionally embodied this “idea of Texas.” Invocations of “the Texan” figure in popular discourse find representation, in the first instance, in some variant of the white cowboy, wheeler-dealer, or oilman despite the Mexican origins of Texas ranching, the role of women in the settling of the state, and the significance of cotton production, which occupied more laborers (men and women, Anglo, African American, Mexican American, and Mexican) through much of the state’s history than cattle and oil combined. This dissertation focuses, then, on tracing the cultural operation of Anglo-Texan masculinity, but does so not in the interest of re-inscribing the hegemony of these representations. In fact, by demonstrating the plasticity and historicity of this body of symbols, I hope to accomplish quite the opposite. Anglo-Texan men of countercultural bent who attempted to expand on, amplify, or alter these symbols responded to and learned from the ongoing articulation of identities outside Anglo-Texan masculinity. During the 1970s, as civil rights and feminist movements challenged dominant notions of the representative Texan, icons of Anglo-Texan masculinity—the cowboy, the oilman, the wheeler-dealer—came in for a dizzying round of celebration and critique, satire, and ritual performance. Participants in the cultural scene around the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin engaged in such performance, in part, to de-essentialize the relationship between such symbols and the exercise of reactionary state power, a task in uneasy tension with the

scene's obvious affection for these symbols and attempts to re-tool and re-invent them. To the extent that such re-inventions succeeded, they did so due to the scene's dialogic relation with the civil rights and feminist movements. To the extent that they failed, they did so due to the tendency to re-inscribe the symbols as insular and exclusive reactions to, rather than dialogues with, the decade's progressive identity politics. These two trends competed vigorously with one another in the tastes and fashions of 1970s Texas.

THREE MEN IN TEXAS: SHRAKE/BARNES/FRANKLIN

Understanding the operation of "the Texan" requires examination of the shifting political economy and partisan alignments of the Lone Star State in the decade. Still, most of the work here will be cultural. Literature, film, journalism, art, and popular music trace the contours of the figurative Texan, but its cultural propagation did not simply involve images on a screen or text in a magazine. Rather, I frame Anglo-Texan masculinity as a performative construct, a set of strategies and gestures, some conscious, some not, by which Anglo men enacted "the Texan." Anglo-Texan masculinity had signified for the American nation and developed a performative dimension long before Willie and Waylon's backstage encounter of 1972, dating back to the first Anglo-American incursions into the territory in the early nineteenth century, but their performance in the 1970s carried specific significance that helps to explain the historical period and national mood. To get a sense of that significance requires a glimpse back to the much-mythologized 1960s, and to the kinds of performances carried out on the stages of everyday life. Illustrative moments from the lives of three young Anglo-Texan men, Bud Shrake, Ben Barnes, and Jim Franklin, will help to illustrate the point.

Few knew the specific resonances of the performative Texan in the 1970s as did Edwin "Bud" Shrake, who first published the Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings

anecdote that began this introduction. A friend or acquaintance of such Texas notables as Willie Nelson, Ann Richards, Larry L. King, Gary Cartwright, and Jack Ruby, Shrake's journalism career for *Sports Illustrated*, *Harper's*, and *Texas Monthly* placed him in a fitting situation from which to recount the changing cultural politics of his time. In one such instance, in the spring of 1967, Muhammad Ali had flown into Houston to refuse induction into the armed forces, and, as he often did when he came to Texas, requested that Shrake pick him up at the airport. Shrake rented a Cadillac convertible for the occasion, thinking a leisurely open-air drive through the streets of Houston would do Ali good. Instead, Ali immediately asked Shrake to take him "where the trouble was," that is, to the site of ongoing protests over police brutality racking the traditionally black Texas Southern University in the city's Third Ward. The protestors reacted wildly to Ali, but the nationalist spirit on campus also meant that the Anglo-Texan Shrake came in for verbal abuse as he tried to drive the Cadillac into the heart of the protest. Finally, Ali got up, stood on the car, and shouted to the assembled, "Leave this honky alone! He's my personal valet!"⁶ The rest of the afternoon passed without incident, and Shrake had been inducted into a new racial politics, a reordering of traditional notions of authority, identity, race, and nation that, while perhaps not so total as Ali voiced, made for a changing cultural and political landscape in Texas in which non-white voices could speak back to Anglo power.

The new politics affected Texans far from the confines of Houston. The meanings "the Texan" carried in the late 1960s owed much to the floundering presidency of Texan-in-Chief Lyndon Baines Johnson. Johnson had glad-handed and boy-howdied his way through four years in office following Kennedy's assassination in Dallas, enacted

⁶ Conversation with author, November 2, 2008.

a dizzying array of domestic reforms, and crashed against the debacle of Vietnam. During the last week of August 1968, a frayed Democratic party gathered for its nominating convention in the city of Chicago. It had only been six months since the Tet Offensive rendered the plausibility of victory in Vietnam nil, five since Johnson stated he would not run for re-election, four since the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., two since Robert Kennedy had been murdered in Los Angeles, and mere days since the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Tensions ran high as protestors and police battled in the streets and the ideological differences amongst the Democrats themselves began to look irreconcilable. Vietnam towered over everything else and was intertwined with the prickly issue of how the party should handle its unpopular sitting president and the delegation from his home state of Texas. Party liberals had placed a motion on the floor that the Johnson loyalists from Texas should be refused entry outright. Southern conservatives threatened, in turn, to place LBJ acolyte John Connally in nomination for President.⁷

Vice-President Hubert Humphrey, LBJ's preferred candidate over the antiwar Eugene McCarthy, unsuccessfully sought to name Ben Barnes, the thirty-year-old Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives and another LBJ protégé, as floor leader for the Texas delegation to forestall the Connally revolt. Most delegates and activists treated Barnes, like much of the Texas delegation, as an LBJ surrogate personally responsible for the disastrous Vietnam War. At one point, protestors swarmed the cars carrying Barnes and the other Texas delegates back to their rooms at the Conrad Hilton. As Barnes remembered the incident, his aide Nick Kralj then

⁷ Ben Barnes, *Barn Burning, Barn Building: Tales of a Political Life from LBJ to George Bush and Beyond* (Albany, TX: Bright Sky Press, 2006), 147-150.

reacted in true, if unexpected, Texas style. He pushed his way out of the car and whipped out a pistol he'd brought with him from home. "Everybody move back!" he shouted, holding the gun high above his head. "This car is moving through!" I'll tell you what, those people parted like the Red Sea. From the looks on their faces, I don't believe they'd seen anything like that before.⁸

Now, by 1968, we can rest assured that such a crowd had indeed seen on a movie screen, or at least imagined, a Texan with a gun before, and the image would have been far from unexpected. Barnes acted wide-eyed recounting the 1968 protests in his 2006 memoir, but Texans back home already knew something of the divisive new political and cultural landscape that the Speaker of the Texas House encountered in Chicago.

Austin artist Jim Franklin was one young Texan who had begun to sense and interpret these shifting winds. In the summer of 1970, Franklin sat in the audience of jury selection for a high-profile trial in Los Angeles. Charles Manson surely looked guilty to those assembled, but, besieged Texas hippie that he was, Franklin thought that certainly this was the frame-up job of a vindictive establishment jealous of countercultural freedoms. Reporting for the Austin underground newspaper *The Rag*, Franklin stared daggers at the district attorney and fantasized how that "DA could run for President on the Ant[i]-acid ticket with all the hippie-killer-freak bullshit." The difference of opinion between Franklin and the herd may have been due in part to his distractions during jury selection, as he sketched the Texas-themed designs for which he would soon become famous as the creative spirit of the Armadillo World Headquarters. Upon completing the drawings, Franklin passed them to a Manson Family attorney, Paul Fitzgerald, to let Manson know that he had allies on the outside. One drawing of which he was particularly proud pictured two armadillos in a rather indelicate position with the caption, "these armadillos are balling for you, Charlie!"⁹ The counterculture had been so besieged

⁸ Ibid., 153.

⁹ Jim Franklin, "The Armadillo Looks at Manson," *The Rag*, August 17, 1970, 1, 3.

in Franklin's home state of Texas that he could not imagine Manson's guilt. And yet, even as Franklin was writing these words, the venue that would launch the Texas counterculture into a mainstream phenomenon was opening its doors for the first time, testing the waters of Austin's new acceptance for Seventies hippiedom. The Armadillo World Headquarters, with Franklin as emcee, would soon command attention where the Sixties counterculture in Texas had only drawn scorn.

In each of these examples, Anglo-Texan men confront the transformation of American life in the late 1960s: surrounded by perceived hostiles, besieged as if in a new Alamo. Shrake, a young journalist, learned something of the new terrain of cultural nationalism in identity politics; Barnes, a Johnson protégé, faced off with the spirit of protest against and disregard for the authority of politicians; Franklin, the countercultural artist, exhibited suspicion of the gathering forces of law and order. Each considered himself the repository of the "true Texas style," Shrake and his Cadillac, Kralj and his gun, Franklin and his armadillos. These examples triangulate the shifting terrain on which Anglo-Texan masculinity would operate in the coming decade of the 1970s. In triangulating the three moments, one might easily project forward into that backstage scene at the Armadillo World Headquarters in 1972 with Willie and Waylon, two country-western artists performing for a deeply Texas-inflected counterculture. Or, one might envisage another backstage scene at the Armadillo from a few months later, captured by photographer Burton Wilson, in which country-western singer-songwriters Waylon Jennings and Billy Joe Shaver join an armadillo-helmeted Jim Franklin and University of Texas football coach Darrell K Royal together in harmony behind a Texas flag. Here, in a space colonized by the Austin counterculture, men with divergent subject positions in relation to the cultural politics of the 1960s—a hippie artist who had spent time in Haight Ashbury, two self-declared "honky-tonk heroes" then resident in

Nashville, and that paragon of Anglo-Texan masculine authority, the football coach of the state's flagship university—demonstrated a shared allegiance to some form of Anglo-Texan nationalism in a venue of musical performance.

The notions of performance and performativity will play a large role here, by which I suggest both the conventional performance of musical artists in concert and on recordings, but also the ways in which individuals perform roles in everyday social interactions. In both of these, individuals come to embody an otherwise abstract set of symbolic representations of “the Texan.” The theoretical heft of performance studies informs this endeavor, but it does so through the lens of authors who deploy performativity in close readings of popular music, rather than the genre's more common dramaturgical bent. In particular, I follow the adaptations of performance studies found in Philip Auslander's *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music*. Auslander turns the classic theorists of performativity and gender, including Judith Butler and Erving Goffman, to the topic of 1970s glam. Auslander also usefully elaborates Simon Frith's notion of “persona” as the self-presentation of the musical performer independent both of his or her “real identity” and the character he or she portrays in song.¹⁰ Persona thus encompasses a larger sense of staged selves in performance. To get at performativity in the wider social sense, though, and its relation to Anglo-Texan masculinity, requires Auslander's source of performativity theory in Judith Butler. According to Butler, “gender attributes . . . are not expressive but performative. . . these attributes effectively constitute the identity they are said to express

¹⁰ Philip Auslander, *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 4.

or reveal.”¹¹ In other words, Anglo-Texan masculinity exists not in essential identity, but primarily through and in its material performance by historical actors.

Studies of contemporary country music in Texas would agree with Butler in part, but close readings of musical performance render this sense of the performative even more material. Ethnomusicologist Aaron Fox, in his ethnography of working-class bar culture in Lockhart, Texas, *Real Country: Music and Language in Working-Class Culture*, comes closer to the textures I intend to communicate regarding the Texas 1970s:

Through song and its attendant forms of expressive, technical, critical, and playful talk (especially narrative and humor), working-class Texans construct and preserve a self-consciously rustic, “redneck,” “ordinary,” and “country” ethos in everyday life.¹²

Also, in *Wrong’s What I Do Best: Hard Country Music and Contemporary Culture*, Barbara Ching offers a similar take on the motivated performance of “redneck” or “country” identity in honky-tonk settings, identifying the personae of George Jones, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and others as a conscious burlesque of American masculinity.¹³ In all, my invocations of “performance” tend to draw more heavily on the kinds of close readings offered by the likes of Auslander, Fox, and Ching than the dramaturgical theorizations of Butler.

This mythic expression of Anglo-Texan masculinity, then, possessed an experiential dimension, an element of creative performance that tended to be internalized by Anglo-Texan men. Some actors, sympathetic to the 1970s currents of cultural and

¹¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge Press, 1990), 141.

¹² Aaron Fox, *Real Country: Music and Language in Working-Class Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 20.

¹³ Barbara Ching, *Wrong’s What I Do Best: Hard Country Music and Contemporary Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3-25. The study also expands on Leigh Clemons’s theses on the performativity of “the Texan” found in *Branding Texas: Performing Culture in the Lone Star State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

political liberation, worked to refigure, retool, and reform the traditional iconography and identity of “the Texan.” The long-haired, antiwar Shrake hardly would have been spending time with Ali had he felt otherwise. Others retreated into the image’s masculine swagger, making it a bastion of reaction. Kralj’s confrontation with the Chicago protestors in “true Texas style” leaned towards this second category.

MYTH AND SYMBOL IN THE MALAISE DECADE

For most Anglo-Texan men, though, the reality proved more complex than such either/or, progressive/reactionary binaries. The changing representations and experiences of Anglo-Texan masculinity, refracted through the arena of performance, go far toward explaining the shifting terrain of race, gender, class, region, and nation at work in the 1970s. The year 1968 saw the collapsed presidency of a midcentury liberal in the guise of a crude Texas wheeler-dealer; the year 1980 witnessed the ascension of another president, born of the Hollywood imagination and frequently pictured on horseback, riding in to right liberalism’s troubling malaise. The years between witnessed strange feats of alchemy whereby it seemed that the wounds opened by the social upheavals of the 1960s, the violence of Vietnam and the streets of Chicago, found healing in part through the longstanding American mythos of the Anglo-Texan cowboy.

This myth signified nationally and internationally, but also locally, as it went far towards determining the texture of Anglo-Texan identities. Two books appeared in the tumultuous year of 1968 that supplement the experiences of young Anglo-Texan men like Barnes, Shrake, and Franklin: novelist Larry McMurtry’s *In a Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas* and T. R. Fehrenbach’s epic history *Lone Star: A History of Texas and Texans*. In the first of these, McMurtry continued grappling with the Texas myth in the modern age as he had in the novels *Horseman, Pass By* (1961) and *The Last Picture Show* (1966).

Even as McMurtry crowed over the creative possibilities of the present, seeing in late 1960s Texas a “stage of metamorphosis when [the state] is most fertile with conflict, when rural and soil traditions are competing most desperately with urban traditions—competing for the allegiance of the young,” he evinced, too, nostalgia for that frontier world he feared lost.¹⁴ This notion of a passing agrarian order suggests a narrative key not only to the discourse of America and the American West (from James Fenimore Cooper and Frederick Jackson Turner to Henry Nash Smith, Leo Marx, and Richard Hofstadter), but to the historic consciousness of Western Civilization writ large.¹⁵ For McMurtry, in 1968, this tipping point was at hand for his home state, and he chose as his primary theme for this book of essays the idea that “The God Abandons Texas,” by which he meant the rural way of life and, for him, its paragon, the Anglo-Texan man on horseback. As McMurtry stated the problem:

The god who abandoned Antony was Hercules—what is the name of the god who now abandons Texas? Sometimes I see him as Old Man Goodnight, or as Teddy Blue, or as my Uncle Johnny. . . but the one thing that is sure is that he was a horseman, and a god of the country. His home was the frontier, and his mythos celebrates those masculine ideals appropriate to a frontier.¹⁶

For McMurtry, this essence pervaded the state’s existence, fused its identities and landscapes in the guise of white men engaged in the conquest and taming of a territory. Modernization, for McMurtry, heralded a disenchantment—the secularization and dispersal of the patriarchal gods who suffused the land.

¹⁴ Larry McMurtry, *In a Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas* (New York: Touchstone, 1996 [1968]), 18. Both *Horseman, Pass By* and *The Last Picture Show*, too, addressed the theme of the vanishing patriarch that looms large in public discourses of Anglo-Texan masculinity in the 1970s. Larry McMurtry, *Horseman, Pass By* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961); Larry McMurtry, *The Last Picture Show* (New York: Dial Press, 1966).

¹⁵ Raymond Williams’s *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) parses these larger Western themes well in a British cultural studies context, but one could as easily go back to Ferdinand Tönnies’s *Community and Civil Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001 [1887]), or, for that matter, any of a number of authors dating back to Greco-Roman antiquity.

¹⁶ McMurtry, *In a Narrow Grave*, 20-21.

T. R. Fehrenbach's classic *Lone Star: A History of Texas and Texans* also appeared in 1968. Historians had long rendered the state's past in hagiographic terms, and Fehrenbach's work, even in the midst of the upheavals of 1968, provided that school's apotheosis. It is a work rigorously researched with a narrative exhaustively told, but nevertheless anchored in an imperial vision of the frontier conquest of the Lone Star state by the heroic white man, McMurtry's metaphorical god.¹⁷ Fehrenbach did not step into this thicket unaware of the myths that shadow historical scholarship on the state. After all, he wrote:

all nations have their national myths, and Texas became enough of a nation within a nation to formulate its own. Many of Texas' legends, historically unproven and even historically insupportable, are fondly held and fiercely defended. This is not unique to Texas. The American nation has its own mythology. This book was not written to destroy myths but so far as possible to cut through them to the reality underneath.¹⁸

Ostensibly, historians do just this kind of work, cutting through myths to the material "reality underneath," but even a cursory knowledge of historiography, to say nothing of

¹⁷ Texana literature in many instances remains wedded to this romantic-nationalist vision of the state's past, and the "new histories" of the 1960s and 1970s took some time to enter the historiography of the Lone Star State. A volume edited by Walter Buenger and Robert Calvert, *Texas through Time: Evolving Interpretations* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1991) collected the threads of the new histories as they matured, and issued a clarion call for new lines of research. Significant studies along this line include Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Rebecca Sharpless, *Fertile Ground, Narrow Choices: Women in Texas Cotton Culture, 1900-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Emilio Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1995). Borderlands and Mexican American Studies, of course, provide one of the richest fields for the revision of the state's past. The strongest early synthetic work in this vein is David Montejano's *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987). Though great monographs exist, synthetic studies treating African American history in Texas have been rare. Alwyn Barr's *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1971* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1973) began this work, and an updated edition of that text (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1996), together with Bruce Glasrud and James Smallwood's edited collection of *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* articles on the subject, *The African American Experience in Texas* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007), have been welcome steps in the right direction.

¹⁸ T. R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2000 [1968]), xvi.

critical theory, begs the Rankean formulation of surface mythology and substratum reality that Fehrenbach purported.

Other Texans had employed this formulation on the American West before Fehrenbach. It was, indeed, a seminal notion of one of the founding movements of American Studies in the Myth and Symbol School. Dealing with a similar set of loaded historical signifiers to those Fehrenbach studied, Dallas-born Henry Nash Smith defined myth in the introduction to *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* as “an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image.”¹⁹ Smith’s myth, then, invoked rationality limned with affect, seeming to interpret the material world through the lens of emotion. Smith clarified his interpretation of the relation between myth and reality, though. “I do not mean to raise the question whether such products of the imagination accurately reflect empirical fact. They exist on a different plane. But as I have tried to show, they sometimes exert a decided influence on practical affairs.”²⁰ Such notions of mythology and mythmaking figure largely in this dissertation. To ask whether “the Texan” is *real* misses the contextual signification of the notion’s countless deployments—from mass-mediated films in the international marketplace to local social networks and performances, and the real effects these cultural products engender. Its status as cultural myth or social fact aside, “the Texan” has indeed often exerted a “decided influence on practical affairs.”

¹⁹ Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Myth and Symbol* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950, 1978), xi. Smith’s student Leo Marx mined similar ground in the classic *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964). Finally, second generation Myth and Symbol scholar Richard Slotkin developed the themes at length in his trilogy, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973); *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985); and *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), the publication of which began in the 1970s in the wake of America’s defeat in Vietnam.

²⁰ Smith, xi.

Turning to another Cold War cultural theorist from across the Atlantic elaborates Smith's parsing of myth. In his 1957 work *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes in part summed up the meaning of myth by concluding that "wine is objectively good, and *at the same time*, the goodness of wine is a myth. The mythologist gets out of this as best as he can: he deals with the goodness of wine, not with wine itself."²¹ However, what does it mean to deal with the idea of Texas, rather than *Texas itself*? Though paramount for the semiotician, cultural history might trace this relation between, on the one hand, the material spaces of and social relations that occur within the boundaries of the state of Texas and, on the other, the vast mythologies woven around, and partially motivating, material conditions. Robert Dorman described just such a relation in addressing the mutual constitution of myth and social life in his work on American regionalism:

Myths are not "fairy tales," make-believe constructs debunked by "true" life. They are instead ordered, value-laden symbols and narratives, communally shared and transmitted, that interpret an irrational world and provide guideposts for action within it. Myths have concrete existence *in* history, but only in partially realized, problematized form.²²

The mythic "Texan" and the inhabitants within the political borders of the state of Texas cannot always be easily separated, and, rather than focus on one or the other, I intend to map the lived consequences of mythmaking, the ritual performance of mythic types, and the inscription of cultural geographies in identity formation, and to use 1970s Austin as my primary, but by no means only, context for doing so. We are back, then, to Barthes's dilemma—not denying that there is some relationship between the empirical world (wine) and the myths woven around it (wine's goodness), but to say that the relationship is sometimes best left in suspension for the purposes of cultural analysis. Or, at least, we

²¹ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Noonday Press, 1972 [1957]), 158.

²² Robert Dorman, *Revolt of the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 94.

can hew to Smith's fusion of concept and emotion or Dorman's concrete existence of myth in history to get at the consequences of myth in the material world.

It is just this sort of talk that Houston's "king of the wildcatters" Glenn McCarthy sought to defray with one of his famed performances for journalists. McCarthy proved an attractive magnet for caricatures of the Texan nouveau-riche in the mid-twentieth century. Born to humble circumstances in the oil towns of East Texas in 1907, McCarthy had won and lost several fortunes in the search for new fields. Famed for his garish tastes, affinity for bourbon, and extravagant footprint on the Houston cityscape (most notably the Shamrock Hotel, but also the earliest schemes for the Astrodome), McCarthy so embodied the characteristics of Texas oil wealth that he served as the model for James Dean's character Jett Rink in the film *Giant*. McCarthy courted this attention and played his part well. While at an oil field, say, with a writer for *Time*, McCarthy would stoop down, "rub his hands in thick, crude oil and mutter: 'This is oil.'"²³ For all of the mythic representations of the state in film, literature, and music, McCarthy grounded the discussion in the material substratum, but then again, he performed his gesture towards materiality for a national journalistic audience. While McCarthy's empirical, material attention to oil brings us out of the realm of myth, his projection on the screen as James Dean/Jett Rink in *Giant* returns us to it.²⁴ Oil is objectively valuable, perhaps, but the riches of oil are also a myth. The project of industrial modernity crashed hard against this lesson in the decade of the 1970s, and the political, economic, and cultural ramifications of America's dependence on oil provide a key factor in the particular projection and performance of Texan identity in those years.

²³ "King of the Wildcatters," *Time*, February 13, 1950.

²⁴ Or, for that matter, so does the cover of the issue of *Time* in which the McCarthy story appeared. The painted image contains a western-suited McCarthy in the foreground while, behind him, an anthropomorphized oil well strides across the landscape with boots, cowboy hats, and flexing biceps.

McCarthy's gesture also reminds us that mythmaking is always implicated in material relations and political economy, a central observation of myth's frequent purpose in naturalizing structures of inequality. The Anglo-Texan propagation of the state's mythos portrays it as an essentialist category that floats above social relations, but myth is, in fact, relational, dialectical, contested, and always affected by constructions and assertions of difference—racial, ethnic, and gendered. Indeed, the Anglo-masculine elite's deployment of a unitary mythic sense of "the Texan" to elide the state's ethnoracial diversity is always enmeshed in the exercise of and resistance to power. The borderlands of Texas, with its peoples of diverse racial and ethnic and national and regional histories, belie the essentialisms of United States and Mexico, South and West, black and white. Myth's "decided influence in practical affairs" in this context has typically involved attempts to foreclose alternate visions to the state's Anglo-dominated social relations. For every T. R. Fehrenbach, though, there exists an Américo Paredes, a theorist engaged in the deconstruction of the Anglo-Texan myth and the elaboration of a divergent public memory of the state's history.²⁵ This dissertation treats the 1970s as a particular opening whereby this contestation over the state's history and identities came to the fore with unprecedented force.

However, in 1968 the looming presence of Lyndon Baines Johnson outstripped the most garish of oil millionaires or the most radical of social justice activists in national perceptions of "the Texan." Just as "the Texan" operated in the center of the American national myth as late as the 1960s, so did *a Texan* stand near the center of the decade's political turmoil. Through the presence of LBJ and his civil rights agenda that upended

²⁵ Paredes's classic work, a subject of Chapter 2, is *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958). For a wide-ranging, incisive theorization of Paredes's career, see Ramón Saldivar, *The Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

the partisan loyalties of the white South, a story of political realignment joins itself to this moment of cultural and social transformation in which African Americans, Mexican Americans, women, and other traditionally disfranchised groups fought for, and gained, greater access to the public sphere. Mythic notions complicated political realities. Feminism not only brought into focus the subjugated status of women but interrogated the nature of masculinity and the fantasies of its frontier variant. Black and Chicano nationalism sparked new interest in white ethnicity and, eventually, the normative category of whiteness itself. Finally, the regional resurgence of the Sun Belt brought attention to the newest version of the New South in ways that simultaneously ratified national narratives of progress and rattled the political economy of the high Fordist order.

Public discourse has long trumpeted the pivotal nature of 1968 on a global scale, but most accounts tend to focus on the near, rather than the far side of that divide, reinforcing a slide-show version of the Sixties that elevates the decade's significance far above the years that surround it.²⁶ The year 1968 represents, in this view, the explosive culmination of all-that-came-before, while the decade to follow involved a long and painful declension in which real, progressive change was somehow evaded. As opposed to the talk of revolution or movement or reckoning of the 1960s, pundits from

²⁶ The year is amongst those few, say, 1848 or 1776, that has developed a historical literature all its own. A partial selection follows to make the point. Note the predominance of trade over university presses, marking the wide currency of 1968 hagiography. Tariq Ali and Susan Watkins, *1968: Marching in the Streets* (New York: Free Press, 1998); Michael Eric Dyson, *April 4, 1968: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Death and How it Changed America* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2008); Ronald Fraser, ed. *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988); Lewis Gould, *1968: The Election that Changed America* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc.: 1993); Joe Haldeman, *1968: A Novel* (New York: Avon Press, 1997); Charles Kaiser, *1968 in America: Music, Politics, Chaos, Counterculture, and the Shaping of a Generation* (New York: Grove Press, 1988); Michael Kaufman, *1968* (New York: Roaring Book Press, 2009); Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* (New York: Random House, 2005); Frank Kusch, *Battleground Chicago: The Police and the 1968 Democratic National Convention* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Jeremi Suri, *Global Revolutions of 1968* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006); *Time* editors, *Time 1968: War Abroad, Riots at Home, Fallen Leaders, and Lunar Dreams—The Year that Changed the World* (New York: Time, 2008); Jules Witcover, *The Year the Dream Died: Revisiting 1968 in America* (New York: Warner Books, 1997).

Christopher Lasch to Tom Wolfe to Jimmy Carter's speechwriters developed a vocabulary of the 1970s as a decade of malaise, superficiality, and retreat from the grand historical march that led to the streets of Chicago, the Prague Spring, and the Paris May. The following years provided a stark contrast for some in that, as the title of one of the Seventies' first published histories proclaimed, "It seemed like nothing happened."²⁷

And yet, historian Peter Carroll, even in 1982, intended the emphasis of his title to fall on the "seemed" rather than the "nothing happened." "It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times," he quoted from a *New West* magazine of 1979 before continuing, "beneath the dark headlines, however, beyond the snide journalism and the rhetoric of public figures, a quiet, almost subliminal revolution was altering the cultural landscape." While The Revolution never came to pass as the radicals of 1968 hoped, myriad revolutions nevertheless transpired, and Carroll took as his subject the "dialogue between established values and the emerging alternatives" that he saw as the central narrative of the Seventies.²⁸ Carroll's initial attempts to establish the significance of the decade, however, did not resonate with the academy at the time, and the historical reevaluation of the decade began in earnest only at the beginning of the 21st century. Neoconservative David Frum arrived early in this new wave with *The 70s: How We Got Here*, calling the 1970s "the most total social transformation that the United States has lived through since the coming of industrialism, a transformation (a revolution!) that has not ended yet."²⁹ Bruce Schulman, an American Studies scholar far removed from Frum's ideological orientation, nevertheless agreed with him in *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics*, in which he forcefully asserted that in "race relations,

²⁷ Peter N. Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened: America in the 1970s* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990 [1982]).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, xiii.

²⁹ Frum, xxiv.

religion, family life, politics, and popular culture, the 1970s marked the most significant watershed of modern history . . . One year alone, 1973, witnessed the end of American intervention in Vietnam, the U. S. Supreme court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, the exposure of the Watergate conspiracies, the Indian occupation of Wounded Knee, and the first Arab oil shock.”³⁰ Andreas Killen went so far as to single out 1973 as the crux of the shift, a “year of shattering political crisis and of remarkable cultural ferment,” emphasizing, again, the end of American combat involvement in Vietnam, the eruption of Watergate, and the oil embargo. “Any one of these events alone would have challenged America’s image of itself; together they shook the national psyche to its very core.”³¹ This is the new view of the 1970s among its historians, and one that has a timely basis for those who see it as an immediately usable past.³²

If this self-examination involved image or psyche alone, the mythologies would not have been so sorely tested, but the crises that Schulman and Killen indicate reached to

³⁰ Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), xii.

³¹ Andreas Killen, *1973 Nervous Breakdown: Watergate, Warhol, and the Birth of Post-Sixties America* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006), 2.

³² In addition to Carroll, Frum, Schulman, and Killen, other texts key to the new wave of scholarship on the 1970s include Beth Bailey and David Farber, eds., *America in the 70s* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Edward Berkowitz, *Something Happened: A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Thomas Hine, *The Great Funk: Falling Apart and Coming Together (On a Shag Rug) in the Seventies* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007); J. David Hoeveler, Jr. *The Postmodernist Turn: American Thought and Culture in the 70s* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004); Sherrie Inness, ed. *Disco Divas: Women, Gender, and Popular Culture in the 1970s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Tim Lawrence, *Love Saves the Day: A History of American Dance Music Culture, 1970-1979* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Stephen Miller, *The Seventies Now: Culture as Surveillance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008); Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer, eds., *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Peter Shapiro, *Turn the Beat Around: The Secret History of Disco* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2006); Shelton Waldrep, ed., *Seventies: The Age of Glitter in Popular Culture* (New York: Diana Publishing Co., 2000); and Natasha Zaretsky, *No Direction Home: The American Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

the deepest levels of political economy. Cultural geographer David Harvey, like Frum, Schulman, and Killen, suggests the 1970s as a key turning point in world history marked by an acceleration in the shift from the regime of Fordist production to that of flexible accumulation, from the New Deal compromise amongst big business, big labor, and big government to the postmodern ethos of flexibility in employment, niche production, corporate authority, and fluid global migration of laborers and capital.³³ The disconcerting experience of the old order fading led contemporary observers to construct the decade through a discourse of malaise, retreat, narcissism, reaction, defeat, and a national dialectic of fiscal limits and libidinal excess that signified for some the fall of American Empire. New York City's experience of the Seventies, and that experience's projection in cinema and popular music, figures largely here. Fewer spaces offered greater contrast with the petroleum-driven prosperity of the Texan corner of the Sun Belt.³⁴

In contrast to the nation at large, the oil crisis engineered by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries had an uneven, but typically positive, effect on the Texas economy. In part, OPEC's salutary effect on Texas was owing to the organization's origins in the Texas Railroad Commission. OPEC was based explicitly on the regulatory

³³ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 1990). Along with Harvey, Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991) is likely the most cited work on the postmodern shift. Like Harvey, Jameson is cognizant of the significance of the 1970s, though he draws the shift more broadly across the post-WWII period. For French theorists engaged in the debate over the collapse of the master narratives of modernity, the 1968 Paris May looms large. Jean Baudrillard, *The Illusion of the End* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) and *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (Pantheon Books: New York, 1972); Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

³⁴ This is suggested by the popular Texas bumper stickers of the decade along the lines of "Let 'em shiver in the dark."

example of the TRC's stabilization of oil prices in the 1930s, a time when Texas produced approximately half the oil consumed in the United States. In 1945, the government of Saudi Arabia sent Abdullah Tariki to study the oil business at the University of Texas at Austin. Tariki quickly earned his masters in geology and interned at the Texas Railroad Commission. Upon returning to Saudi Arabia, the government named Tariki the country's first oil minister in 1955, and in 1959 Tariki created an informal "yacht club" including the oil ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, and Venezuela. This organization was the foundation of OPEC, a cartel Tariki based on the TRC model.³⁵ While Texas benefited from the spike in energy prices born of the Arab-Israeli wars and Iranian Revolution, the rising power of OPEC also signified the eclipse of Texas in the realm of oil production as well as the power of the Texas Railroad Commission to regulate world markets. Such is the nature of boom-bust economies based upon nonrenewable resources (as Glenn McCarthy might have said, "This is oil"). However, in the short run, the oil crises treated Texas quite well.

The material conditions of global production and consumption had a decided influence on the national life of "the Texan." The swagger of "the Texan" figure across the 1970s malaise owed to the divergent Texan and American experiences of the decade rooted in the history of the oil industry. In fact, the popularity of this performative dimension of Texanness at times closed the gap between Rust Belt stagnation and Sun Belt prosperity. Amongst its other attributes, the postmodern turn in the 1970s introduced throughout the United States a new, flexible orientation towards the self as an ongoing project. By decade's end, New Yorkers or Pennsylvanians could escape

³⁵ Robert Bryce, *Cronies: Oil, the Bushes, and the Rise of Texas, America's Superstate* (New York: Public Books, 2004), 34-36. To underscore the point, Bryce recounts that when *Wall Street* journalist Jim Tanner asked Tariki later in life what he had studied at the University of Texas, Tariki replied, "I studied the Texas Railroad Commission."

industrial malaise through the blustery representations of Texans in the music of Waylon Jennings, the televised J. R. Ewing of *Dallas*, or Bud Davis in the film *Urban Cowboy*. Indeed, such representations created a space for such individuals to “play Texan” amongst themselves through the consumption and conspicuous display of the proper regalia. This flexible orientation toward and performativity of the self is just one of the arenas in which the conservative valences of “the Texan” collided and melded with the mainstreaming of the counterculture. In *Getting Loose: Lifestyle Consumption in the 1970s*, sociologist Sam Binkley argues that countercultural notions of authenticity drove shifting patterns of consumption and their relation to self-presentation in the 1970s in ways that demand both macroeconomic and microsocial consideration. Economic and structural considerations, in Binkley’s words, “while supplying us with overarching explanations of change on a massive scale, tempt us to read historical events as simple deterministic effects of these changing economic currents. The loosening of the self. . . must be grasped on a smaller scale, in the thin cultural slices in which people encountered it in their everyday lives.”³⁶ Lifestyle consumption in the interest of projecting an “authentic” identity that diverges from the mainstream makes for much in these “thin cultural slices.” This project aims at dissecting such moments, focusing on youth subcultures, Texas-based intellectuals, popular music venues, and regional magazines in addition to the mass-mediated images of television and cinema that dictated Texas iconography on a global scale.

AUSTIN: CULTURAL CAPITAL IN THE LONE STAR STATE

This work treats the subject of Texas within international, national, regional, and local frames, but its guiding spirit is the city of Austin, the political and intellectual

³⁶ Binkley, 9.

capital of the Sun Belt South's largest state. Austin is not always the physical locale in which this dissertation takes place, but its primary actors pass through Austin at notable junctures and consider their time there significant. The social networks generated by their frequent passage make Austin particularly illustrative of the social, political, and cultural trends (re)constituting "the Texan."³⁷ Austin's place in popular music history, too, motivates this focus. In the years from 1970 to 1980, various performers, critics, producers, and audiences positioned Austin as an alternate node of music production to New York, Los Angeles, and, especially, Nashville. "Cosmic cowboys" and "hippie-rednecks" studded cultural-political discourse in the city. Such subcultural narratives operated in the transcendence of opposites, the subversion of that "generation gap" that seared the 1960s. The Seventies vogue for country music nationally fused populist nostalgia for supposedly simpler times with the countercultural preoccupation with authenticity and the natural, making Austin's progressive country music scene primed for national exposure. Dallas's ostentatious orientation to wealth may have had a greater symbolic purchase for Americans during the decade, and Houston was on its way to becoming a Sun Belt megalopolis rivaled only by Los Angeles. However, Austin's progressive country scene constituted "the Texan's" paramount performative stage.

This study expands on existing works concerning the Austin music scene, Austin politics, and social movements at the University of Texas. Jan Reid's *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock* arrived first, documenting the progressive country scene at its inception with a profound immediacy. Reid's profiles of the scene's major artists—Jerry Jeff Walker, Steve Fromholz, B. W. Stevenson, Willis Alan Ramsey, Bobby Bridger, Rusty Wier, Kinky Friedman, Michael Murphey, and Willie Nelson—remain a

³⁷ For an effective theorization linking the regime of flexible accumulation to its effects in subject formation, see Emily Martin, *Flexible Bodies: The Role of Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).

touchstone for understanding musical performances in the period. Contemporaneous participant-observer works on the University of Texas include Ronnie Dugger's *Our Invaded Universities* and Joseph Frantz's *Forty-Acre Follies*. The history of Austin government finds apt sociological exposition in Anthony Orum, *Power, Money, and the People: The Making of Modern Austin*.

Doug Rossinow's *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* and Barry Shank's *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'Roll Scene in Austin, Texas*, however, offer the fullest alternate accounts of the scene I document here.³⁸ Doug Rossinow's book on the New Left intersects with my own study in its attempt to redirect national narratives of political and cultural change by looking to the gestational stage of the New Left in "provincial" Austin. Rossinow skillfully reconstructs activist politics in Austin in the 1960s and its connection to an indigenous Christian existentialist search for the authentic self. I carry Rossinow's story forward through the next generation of youth subcultures and politics, learning from his careful balance of personal stories and cultural patterns, local developments and national context.

Barry Shank was a college student in Austin in the 1980s, and his *Dissonant Identities* aligns itself with that decade's musical subcultures. He skillfully narrates the progressive country story I focus upon but treats it as an account of what Shank's generation of musicians rebelled against. I argue, in contrast, that the Armadillo World Headquarters and Willie Nelson made Shank's privileged subjects—the "New Sincerity" scene, the True Believers, Raul's, the Reivers—possible. If Shank were to turn the same

³⁸ Jan Reid, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004 [1974]); Ronnie Dugger, *Our Invaded Universities: Form, Reform, and New Starts* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974); Joseph Frantz, *The Forty Acre Follies* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1983); Anthony Orum, *Power, Money, and the People: The Making of Modern Austin* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987); Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'Roll Scene in Austin, Texas* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).

sharp interdisciplinary tools that he reserves for punk on progressive country, he would recognize how the early 1970s musical performances enabled and foreshadowed future Austin scenes. The Armadillo World Headquarters, too, was driven by the do-it-yourself ethos the punks held so dear, and, indeed, it was a DIY project with grander ambitions and a more secure legacy than the compelling but somewhat obscure post-punk movement of New Sincerity. Taken together, then, Rossinow's careful research of and attention to the 1960s and Shank's of the 1980s provide a solid basis for this account of Austin's place in the discourses of Texanness in the 1970s. Close attention to the Austin scene in this decade changes the stories told by Rossinow and Shank, projecting forward the activist orientation of the 1960s New Left into the 1970s counterculture and electoral politics, and historicizing 1980s punk as a stage in the continuous development of youth subcultures in the Southwest.

LOOKING AHEAD WITH JOE BUCK IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR

With a close reading of the Austin scene as its guiding spirit, this dissertation ranges afield to many other spaces in which Texas signifies. Looming large amongst these is New York City, a place with a high profile in national narratives of the 1970s. In 1969, the John Schlesinger film *Midnight Cowboy* depicted New York City on the brink of the decade. The lead character, portrayed in the film by Jon Voight, was an Anglo-Texan named Joe Buck who moved to New York to become a gigolo.³⁹ Mass-mediated cultural product though he is, Joe Buck stands at that same nexus of old and new, provincial and metropolitan, rural and urban, frontier and nation, that snared Bud Shrake, Ben Barnes, and Jim Franklin. In New York, he affects an elaborate cowboy guise that in part deflects from his identity through burlesque as much as it advertises his true Texan

³⁹*Midnight Cowboy*, Directed by John Schlesinger, United Artists, 1969. Based on James Leo Herlihy, *Midnight Cowboy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965).

origins. Joe Buck performs “the Texan,” the frontiersman, the redneck, the hypermasculine man alone in the world, all the while denying the alienating effects of that isolation and his desire for union with his male companion Ratso, played as prototypical New Yorker by Dustin Hoffman. The film ends with Ratso dying as the pair move south to Florida, the Sun Belt dream wilting the New York hustler. From whence does Joe Buck come, and where does he go in the years that follow? This is yet another of our starting places.

This dissertation contextualizes the representations, performances, and experiences of Anglo-Texan masculinity in the 1970s, tacking between a national setting of malaise and the state’s popular celebration of “the Texan.” As a way of introduction, Chapter 1 analyzes the period between the Centennial Exposition of 1936 and Lyndon Johnson’s political demise in 1968, when the symbols associated with Texas in the modern United States received their full articulation: the cowboy, the braggart, the nouveau-riche oilman, the wheeler-dealer. Austin’s cosmic cowboy subculture fixated on this symbolism, but it did not arise from this celebration alone. Chapter 2 documents the social justice movements that African Americans, Mexican Americans, and feminists waged against this Anglo-masculine establishment in Texas from the 1940s to the 1970s. These movements largely defined the cultural politics of the 1970s, and it is necessary to frame their expansion of who counts in the public sphere as “Texan.”

The success of these movements opened a space for countercultural Anglo-Texan men to adopt and adapt the state’s traditional iconography to create new resonances for the stereotypical Texan. Chapter 3 addresses this progressive revisioning of “the Texan” through the figure of the cosmic cowboy, who grew his hair long, opposed the Vietnam War, and attended country-western benefits for striking workers. In the process, he negotiated between the subjects of Chapters 1 and 2 by professing allegiance to a

progressive, inclusive polity while evincing a fascination with the agrarian conservatism of the cowboy figure. The resulting cultural productions were riven by masculine swagger and singer-songwriter introspection. Chapter 4 analyzes texts in which Anglo-Texan men invoked themes of fathers and sons, the agrarian and the industrial, and Texas as nation and empire to make sense of their subject position in the 1970s. Larry L. King's essay "The Old Man," Bill Porterfield's articles in *Texas Monthly*, Asleep at the Wheel's western swing revivalism, and Ray Wylie Hubbard's "Up Against the Wall (Redneck Mother)" all point to a pervasive nostalgia on the part of various Anglo-Texan cultural producers.

Chapter 5 pushes these concerns into a sociocultural interpretation of partisan realignment to understand how the political monopoly of the Democratic "party of the fathers" began to unravel. Consequently, this dissertation brings greater specificity to our understanding of the political machinations, racial ideologies, social relations, and cultural themes that inform the partisan realignment of the Sun Belt South. This constitutes a westering of the new literature on race and political realignment by historians Matthew Lassiter, Kevin Kruse, and Jason Sokol.⁴⁰ Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation by looking to the late 1970s and early 1980s phenomenon of "Texas Chic" whereby an unreconstructed vision of "the Texan" again found a national audience through such productions as *Wanted! The Outlaws*, *Urban Cowboy*, and *Dallas*, eclipsing the earlier attempted revisions of the cowboy figure. This organization has an overall chronological thrust with the first two chapters serving as exposition for the 1970s focus of the subsequent four.

⁴⁰ Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005); Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights* (New York: Vintage Press, 2006).

T. R. Fehrenbach wrote *Lone Star* to fill a perceived absence of “modern general histories” of the state.⁴¹ In like fashion, I write this dissertation to fulfill the continuing need for cultural theorizing on Anglo-Texan identity.⁴² The recent close of yet another contentious presidential administration in which Anglo-Texan identities continued to signify, used as a cipher by observers of George W. Bush to explain the origins of his martial biases and coarse manners, jingoism, dim-wittedness, and stubborn honor, begs such examination. George W. Bush haunts this work nearly as much as its other avatars in Lyndon Johnson and Willie Nelson, but he will not enter again explicitly until the conclusion. The dissertation begins, rather, far from him with the prehistories of Joe Buck, Lyndon Johnson, Jim Franklin, Larry McMurtry, Bud Shrake, Willie Nelson, and T. R. Fehrenbach in the Texas Centennial year of 1936, in Dallas rather than Austin.

⁴¹ Fehrenbach, xv. The continuing effort to write synthetic histories of the state has more lately yielded the basic textbook for university courses, Robert Calvert, Arnaldo De León, and Gregg Cantrell, *The History of Texas* (New York: Harlan Davidson, 2007), as well as James Haley, *Passionate Nation: The Epic of History of Texas* (New York: Free Press, 2006), and Randolph Campbell’s *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁴²As with Calvert and Buenger’s collection, this new task begins with an edited work, Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner’s *Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007). As with books on Texas generally, those scholarly texts that take race as their subject present the best advances on the subject. José Limón’s *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994) and *American Encounters: Greater Mexico, the United States, and the Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999) do significant cultural studies work. The literary critic Don Graham provides another productive locus of this cultural work, and has for some time, with the books like *Cowboys and Cadillacs: How Hollywood Looks at Texas* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1983); *Giant Country: Essays on Texas* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1998); *Lone Star Literature: A Texas Anthology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003) and *Literary Austin* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2007). Finally, Carroll Parrott Blue’s *The Dawn at My Back: Memoir of a Black Texas Upbringing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003) transcends cultural theorizing on Texas and provides a provocative lens through which to situate the state in the larger contexts of national popular culture, African American history, and discourses of subject formation and memory.

Chapter One: Anglo-Texan Regionalism in the Ascendant, 1936-1968

On Friday, June 12, 1936, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt toured the grounds of the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas. The Exposition sprawled over the state fairgrounds, a tribute to Anglo-Texan civic leaders' sense of the state's history, culture, and industry. It served, simultaneously, to commemorate the centennial of the war for independence from Mexico, to buoy local spirits in the midst of the Great Depression, and, perhaps most significantly, to market the state to the nation at large as a place to do business and spend tourist dollars. Roosevelt spoke to two audiences at the close of that tour, one of Texans and tourists physically gathered in the Exposition's Cotton Bowl, the other of radio listeners tuned to a national broadcast. He acknowledged the Exposition's multiple purposes, selling the fair as an event, not only for Texas, "but for the other forty-seven states" and as a platform for discussing the New Deal in a contentious election year. He chose to end his address, however, with words that ratified the Exposition's organizing principle: the state's self-declared grandeur and profound sense of distinctiveness. As the President's Centennial tour of the state drew to a close, he concluded by proclaiming: "I salute the Empire of Texas."¹

Though imperial pretensions had long coursed through speechifying on the American West (and Roosevelt's "empire state" of New York was an eastern counterpart to this rhetoric), few other states fit FDR's peroration so well. A salute to the "Empire of Iowa" or the "Empire of South Carolina" would not have made sense to a national audience. Americans had a history of hearing "Texas" deployed in this manner, however,

¹ Kenneth Ragsdale, *Centennial '36: The Year America Discovered Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1987), 247.

and the word evoked a ready stock of images of a distinct, outsized space in the American landscape. As geographer D. W. Meinig has observed, “Texans have long been taught to think of their homeland as an ‘empire’ and to use that word as something more than a grandiose name for a large area. Despite the natural tendency of other Americans to dismiss it as an irritating if harmless pretension, the Texan claim is substantial and their use of the term more than metaphorical.”² The imperial conceit that Roosevelt read into the Centennial Exposition, as with many expressions of Anglo-Texan identity, lay somewhere between Meinig’s substantial and metaphorical levels.

Political history lent the notion substance. The brief, almost accidental, existence of the Republic of Texas served as the Centennial’s subtext, a period that generated an entire rhetorical arsenal defining Texas as a country apart.³ In the nine-year span between Mexican and American sovereignties, the leadership of the threadbare republic engaged in ethnoracial nation-building through warfare and territorial appropriation aimed at Mexico and the Native Americans. For some, however, including President Mirabeau Lamar, nation was never enough for Texas, and alongside the construction of Texan nationality they wove an imperial vision of Texas as a Southwestern rival to the United States. Anglo-Texans, then, imagined a community marked by radical difference not only from Mexicans and Native Americans, but, through their more vigorous conquest and eradication of these groups on the far frontier, as possessors of a manifest

² D. W. Meinig, *Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 7.

³ The point is underscored by the fact that Texas commemorated the centennial of independence in 1836 in exhaustive fashion, while the centennial of annexation to the United States in 1845 passed largely unnoticed. The idea that the republic was brief and accidental rests on the fact that the rebels against Mexico immediately voted in favor of annexation to the United States in 1836. Due to the sectional politics of slavery, however, those desires were rebuffed by the U. S. Congress. The bluster of the Texans’ national and imperial aspirations in the interim may well have been, to some extent, a vengeful response to the snub or, as Marquis James, an early Sam Houston biographer, would have it, a strategic bluff to make the United States covet the opportunity it had relinquished. Marquis James, *The Raven: A Biography of Sam Houston* (Garden City, NY: Blue Ribbon Books, 1929).

destiny, born of Jacksonian striving, that distinguished Texas from and surpassed the American nation itself.

And yet, modern Texas undeniably remained a political unit of the United States, rendering its national and imperial pretensions metaphorical. Moreover, the Anglo-Texan claim to profound difference, whether in 1836 or 1936, cited as evidence qualities that concentrated or amplified the most basic tenets of American nationalism. If Texas aspired to empire, it merely echoed America's larger project of continental expansion. If Texas prized its status as the largest state in the union in 1936, it was still only a single state in the world's largest democracy. If acquisitive, brimming with braggadocio, quick to violence, vulgar, well, so had America been branded with this set of qualities by observers on the world stage and its own domestic critics. "The American" and "the Texan" constituted parallel national ideologies, and the garish projection of the latter through mass cultural forms allows for a close reading of the former's transmission and function.

Arguably, these notions flashed to the minds of FDR's audiences upon the use of the word "Texas," but propagators of the state's mythos more effectively cast its long shadow not through language but through image, not in rhetoric but in performance. The state's signification spread through its perpetual incarnation in the figure of "the Texan" in dime novels, western film, journalism, and popular music, to say nothing of those real live Texans in the world who felt compelled to mirror such mass-mediated representations. Though a diverse state, this "Texan" invariably took the form of Anglo-Texan masculinity, due largely to the Anglo, male dominance of the state's political leadership and the nation's cultural producers. The gendered and ethnoracial monopoly of this designation, the elision of "the Texan" with the white cowboy guise, possessed significant consequences for the discursive formation of "the American."

This chapter outlines major historical currents that made “the Texan” a powerful symbol and site of contestation in the cultural politics of the middle decades of the twentieth century. The 1936 Centennial celebrations, the Lone Star Regionalism of Walter Prescott Webb and J. Frank Dobie, the contestation over “un-American” activities and national character in the 1950s, and the political career of Lyndon Baines Johnson all deployed articulations and performances of Anglo-Texan masculinity as authentic, masterful, populist, and born of the labored soil of the Lone Star State. The oilman, the wheeler-dealer, and the cowboy all signified a triumphalist Americanism rooted in the earth but always striving in pursuit of the big money and the main chance. In the years when the United States achieved superpower status, then, such wheeler-dealer-cowboy-oilmen allowed for a contrarian celebration of stable agrarian identities comfortable with the disintegrative forces of modern capital. This exploration provides a foundation for the revision of these symbols in the 1970s, just as that superpower status came into question amidst economic stagflation, political corruption, and military defeat.

“The Texan” figure fit the dominant discourses of mid-twentieth century American identity. Though in terms of national demographics the United States had fulfilled Richard Hofstadter’s aphorism that America “was born in the country and has moved to the city” by 1920, the transformation of Texas was ongoing in these years.⁴ The state’s demographics tipped from predominantly rural to predominantly urban only with the census of 1950.⁵ Moreover, the urbanization of Texas coincided with the imposition of political solutions to the strains of modernity and industrialism that the American northeast had borne for several decades. David Harvey characterized this

⁴ The line begins Richard Hofstadter’s *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 1.

⁵ Randolph Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 405.

period from the 1930s to the 1960s as a new form of reckoning with the crises of mass production, resulting in a compromise amongst the forces of big business, big labor, and big government.⁶ In this High Fordist formation, the Roosevelt regime and its immediate successors managed financial meltdown and labor insurgency through the Keynesian activism and regulatory machinery of the New Deal.⁷ In effect, Fordism took the earth-shattering prospect of revolution as well as the worst ravages of laissez faire capitalism off the table, promising stability in a world turned upside down by Depression and global war. In the process, it reconfigured not only America's political economy, but its ways of life, its sense of self, its articulations of race and class and nation. To this end, Roosevelt's first term mobilized an unwieldy coalition of organized labor, farmers, African Americans, Northern political machines and ethnics, Southern conservatives, and progressive intellectuals. By 1936, the year of FDR's speech at the Exposition, the New Deal had reigned in the worst of the Depression, and, with FDR preparing for a new wave of reforms, his coalition, what folklorist J. Frank Dobie called "one of the oddest compromises the political world has ever known," had begun to fracture.⁸ The solid Democratic South began to push back at Roosevelt's agenda, couching their critique (yet again) in states' rights philosophy while wringing their hands over the region's sacrosanct legal strictures regarding white supremacy.

⁶ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1990), 126-140.

⁷ Fordism refers to the political economy pioneered by Henry Ford, a combination of mass production and workers paid on a scale to become consumers of the products they manufacture. Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci elaborated the notion of Fordist production and its relation to "Americanism" in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971) as an "ultra-modern form of production and of working methods—such as is offered by the most advanced American variety, the industry of Henry Ford" (280-281). Harvey further explores Fordism to examine the conditions of its replacement by a regime of flexible accumulation. Note that the English translation of Gramsci's major writings appeared at the moment in the early 1970s that Harvey identified as the crux of the shift.

⁸ Clipping, Box 10 folder 5, J. Frank Dobie Papers, Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University.

Texas does not typically figure in national histories that treat the forging of these compromises.⁹ However, the Lone Star state played a pivotal role, in material, political, and cultural terms, both in the construction of twentieth-century statist liberalism as well as its countercurrents and dissolution. The latter looms large in narratives of postwar American history. The pantheon of archetypal far-right bogeymen, after all, would be much impoverished in the absence of the Texas oilman. However, the state's contributions to the construction of American liberalism from the New Deal to the Great Society remain largely unexplored. National narratives that render Texas a reactionary monolith ignore the substantial contestation over labor, race, and political economy in the state's experience of the twentieth century. In the 1930s, a Texas establishment hostile to organized labor nevertheless bolstered FDR's New Deal coalition to maintain party unity and, perhaps more to the point, to secure massive federal aid. McCarthyism's rise and fall, too, possessed significant Texan prologues and epilogues, from Representative Martin Dies of Orange, who in 1937 became the first chairman of the congressional committee to investigate un-American activities, to humorist John Henry Faulk, who won one of the largest libel suits in history in 1962 stemming from charges of Communist affiliation.¹⁰ In the 1960s, the state tragically lurched to the center of the American

⁹ Histories on the forging of the New Deal order include Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso Press, 1997); Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). Such works focus on the role of workers and organized labor in the northern cities and occasionally in Appalachian mining or Piedmont mill towns. If the South figures into such narratives, it is largely as a negative example. The movement of Southern workers, white and black, plays a large role in the declension of Denning's *The Cultural Front*, for example. "Perhaps the most striking of these changes was the extraordinary wartime migration of black and white southerners to the defense plants of the North and West. The largest internal migration in US history, it remade the American working class" in ways that threatened the labor metaphysics of the Popular Front era (467).

¹⁰ On Dies: Richard Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 47-56. On Faulk: Michael C. Burton, *John Henry Faulk: The Making of a Liberated Mind* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1993).

political stage. John F. Kennedy's assassination in Dallas marked the city as a den of reactionary zealots, even as Lyndon Johnson used the event as political capital to elaborate one of the most progressive domestic agendas in the country's history.

The state's political profile did not rise independent of the place's charged mythology. Mass-mediated popular culture, politics, commerce, and folklore all collaborated in these years to create the classic image of the swaggering Anglo-Texan man. Primarily the marker of a supposedly simpler frontier past in the guise of the cowboy, "the Texan" could also act as a towering modern subject, the independent wheeler-dealer oilman as unlikely architect of the industrial order. The iconography of modern industry centered on northern archetypes of the well-heeled capitalist, brawny factory worker, abstemious clerk, and earnest reformer, but what would the forging of the Fordist order be without Ford's automobile itself, its combustion engine, and gasoline? The explosive growth of petrochemical industries and technologies in Texas fueled Fordism just as OPEC's restructuring of the resource's production augured the Fordist order's later collapse.

When Pattillo Higgins and Anthony Lucas struck oil at Spindletop in 1901, they glutted the market for petroleum, a substance not yet an indispensable fuel, but a source of illumination and lubrication. The single well at Spindletop produced as much oil as the 37,000 oil wells back east. The scale of the industry, previously centered in Pennsylvania and California, changed overnight, and its purpose likewise shifted as the mass production of gasoline-fueled automobiles began. By the 1950s, Texas provided much of America's, and nearly a quarter of the world's, oil.¹¹

¹¹ On the history of the early oil industry in Texas, see Diana Davids Hinton and Roger Olien, *Oil in Texas: The Gusher Age, 1895-1945* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

By the middle of the twentieth century, invocations of “the Texan” in popular parlance focused on the perceived gaucheries of the state’s nouveau-riche, drenched in the geological accident of oil wealth. The classic articulation of “the Texan” figure in the 1940s and 1950s joined the frontier image of the cowboy to the wheeling-and-dealing new wealth of the capital frontiers of petroleum. As the oil industry modernized Texas through the growth of refining capacity, labor unions, innovative technologies, and the international development of oil fields, “the Texan” gave modern America a figure that straddled the nation’s past and present and could be used to articulate a sense of the national character as the country navigated its rising geopolitical profile in the modern world.

“OPENING THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE”: LONE STAR REGIONALISM IN THE 1930S

These representations by no means originated with the Texas Centennial, but the highly orchestrated, year-long celebration did concentrate and refine them in significant ways.¹² Its originators in the early 1920s conceived of the Centennial as a marketing tool for the modern business environment of Texas, even as the event ratified the old cowboy garb to gain greater visibility. It arrived at a propitious moment, not merely as the marker of a century of “independent” Texas, but at the maturation of the political economy that Richard Flores theorizes as the “Texas Modern.” In parallel with incipient Fordism, Flores argues that the period between 1880 and 1920 in Texas constituted the “working out of new relationships, habits, and practices, resulting in the establishment of a social

¹² The weaving of a larger-than-life sense of Texanness goes back, at least, to the events of the 1830s that the Centennial had been planned to commemorate, was ratified by the war with Mexico in the 1840s, and found magnification during the period of the cattle drives following the Civil War. The pulp articulation of the figure aided throughout. An important early work in this genre is Charlie Siringo’s memoir *A Texas Cowboy: Or, Fifteen Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000 [1885]).

order segmented into various ethnic and class divisions.”¹³ This restructuring proceeded along several interlocking fronts and involved the closing of the open cattle range, drastic shifts in cotton tenancy, the consolidation of the railroad system, the political revolt of the Farmers’ Alliances and Populist Party, the discovery of oil at Spindletop, and the armed rebellion of the sediciosos in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. These developments rigidified the strident ethnoracial dimensions of labor and political strata in the state. Prior to the closing of the open cattle range in the fence wars of the 1890s, that range’s “open” status itself had been finally realized by the military defeat of the Comanche and their exile to Oklahoma.¹⁴ Anglo displacement of Mexican Americans from titled lands dating back to the Spanish crown penetrated the last tejano redoubts of the Lower Rio Grande Valley along with the railroads.¹⁵ The disfranchisement and segregation of African Americans, dating at least to the collapse of Reconstruction, found new fuel in law and custom in the wake of the interracial threat of the Populist Revolt. Agrarian activists failed to stanch the collapse of the yeoman farmer class in the face of rising

¹³ Richard Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, & the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 1-12.

¹⁴ Provocative works on the Comanche in Texas include Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Conquest of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005) and Thomas Cavanaugh’s *Comanche Political History: An Ethnohistorical Perspective* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996). T. R. Fehrenbach also wrote a history of the Comanche in the vein of his triumphalist *Lone Star*, entitled *Comanches: The Destruction of a People* (New York: Knopf, 1974).

¹⁵ Benjamin Heber Johnson *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexican into Americans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). The sedicioso movement of the 1910s in the Lower Rio Grande Valley remains, as Johnson suggests in his title, largely “forgotten” outside of borderlands studies despite its significance. Johnson echoes authors such as David Montejano, Mario García, José Limón, and Richard Flores in identifying this final armed insurrection on the part of border Tejanos as a turning point from the resistance of an irredenta hoping to return the Trans-Nueces territory to Mexico to a measure of accommodation that conceived of a Mexican-American citizenship and belonging in the U. S. national community. The League of United Latin American Citizens, founded in Corpus Christi in 1929, represented the culmination of this new strategy, especially among the Mexican American middle class of the border states. Also see Richard Ribb, “José Tomás Canales and the Texas Rangers: Myth, Identity, and Power in South Texas, 1900-1920,” Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2001. As for the relationship between this rebellion and the Mexican Revolution of the same years, see William Dirk Raat, *Revoltosos: Mexico’s Rebels in the United States, 1903-1923* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1981).

tenancy, even as cotton growers in the south and west of the state turned increasingly to seasonal Mexican workers. These two developments created a situation in which the labor of cotton was increasingly stigmatized and racialized.¹⁶ By the 1920s, the activist energies of Populists and Debsian Socialists had run their course, and Texas Rangers had decisively defeated the tejano insurgencies against the trans-Nueces penetration of American capital, just as the Mexican Revolution had been contained *en el otro lado* of the Rio Grande.¹⁷

Against this backdrop, New York business editor and former cotton broker Theodore Price delivered a speech to the tenth district meeting of the Associated Advertising Clubs of America in Corsicana, Texas, in 1923. His address, “What Texas Has to Advertise and How to Advertise It,” focused on the “transcendent value” of the state’s “gloriously romantic history” and suggested a centennial exposition to draw attention to the state. The advertising clubs, the Texas Press Association, and Corsicana boosters spread news of the idea and secured the backing of Governor Pat Neff. By January 1925, the Centennial Governing Board of One Hundred had arrived at its strategy to “Texanize Texans” by 1936, or, as folklorist J. Frank Dobie expressed his aims, to “open the eyes of the people to the richness of their own traditions.”¹⁸ In order for the marketing gambit to work on the nation at large, the Centennial’s organizers required that the identities of Texans themselves be disciplined into the romantic mold that they sought to sell.

¹⁶ The key work documenting the changing labor of cotton and tenancy in Texas is Neil Foley’s *White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

¹⁷ On the Populist revolt in Texas and its Socialist echoes, see Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); James Green, *Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895-1943* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978); and Marion Barthelme, ed. *Women in the Texas Populist Movement: Letters to the Southern Mercury* (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1997).

¹⁸ Ragsdale, 3, 4, 10, 99.

Geographically ambitious, the Centennial involved far more than the Dallas Exposition. The state's political and civic leaders engaged in a frenzy of memorialization and self-promotion. Texas politicians and celebrities toured the nation, and honorary appointments to the "Texas Navy" and gifts of ten-gallon Stetsons to national figures abounded. Amon Carter organized a counter-Exposition in Fort Worth featuring bandleader Paul Whiteman and fan dancer Sally Rand's Nude Ranch show. Centennial-themed feature films appeared telling the story of the state's celebrated paramilitary law enforcement agency (*The Texas Rangers*, directed by King Vidor and loosely based on the history by Walter Prescott Webb) or starring singing cowboy Gene Autry (*The Big Show*, filmed at the Exposition). The state constructed a memorial column, purposefully taller than the Washington Monument, at the San Jacinto Battlefield and a dramatic cenotaph in front of the Alamo. Business leaders, politicians, and the culture industries of the state worked hard to brand a certain image of "the Texan" strongly on the minds of the state's residents and potential visitors and business partners abroad.

National audiences were well-primed to receive such images. The musical articulation of Texas masculinity, as in Gene Autry's *The Big Show*, was of paramount importance in these years in how the nation consumed "the Texan." In addition to the singing cowboy cohort of Autry, Roy Rogers, Tex Ritter, Sons of the Pioneers, et al., the 1930s witnessed the regional confluence of big band jazz with southwestern imagery in the western swing of Bob Wills, Milton Brown, Tex Williams, and Spade Cooley. Wills and Brown first pioneered the sound as the Light Crust Doughboys on a Fort Worth radio program hosted by W. Lee "Pass-the-Biscuits-Pappy" O'Daniel in the early years of the Great Depression. After the flour salesman turned gubernatorial candidate O'Daniel ran Bob Wills out of the Light Crust Doughboys, Fort Worth, and the state, Wills elaborated the western swing sound from a home base in Tulsa before establishing a broad audience

that included Depression and war work migrants in California. In short, western swing took the form of big band jazz and replaced the large horn section with string instruments (including some of the earliest steel and amplified guitar), dressing the entire package in the elaborate western wear popularized for performers by the singing cowboy films. Bob Wills resisted the then-current label of “hillbilly music” that came with his attire and bucked tradition in performance at Nashville’s Grand Ole Opry with the inclusion of a drum set. The band alternated in performance amongst fairly straight covers of big band standards, blues numbers, and spirited arrangements of Southwestern fiddle tunes. This curious syncretism, a touchstone for Texas music scholars, remained largely white in performance, absent even the token integration seen in, say, Benny Goodman’s inclusion of black Texan Charlie Christian in his prewar orchestra. However, western swing did popularize the Texas image and an aurally inclusive version of Texas culture from the western swing dance halls of California to the East Coast.¹⁹ The Centennial fit nicely with such commercial images of Texas and the West then on the rise.

In addition, the Centennial’s declaration of Texan distinctiveness hewed to the larger currents of intellectual and artistic regionalism stirring by the late 1920s. A sense of the homogenizing influences of industrial modernity—the collapsing of distance through automobile and radio, the dual alienation from labor and consumption in mass production—led many intellectuals to the project of salvaging the sense of vibrant difference they felt to be passing from local settings. Midwestern intellectuals like painters Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, and John Steuart Curry and writers Meridel Le Seur, Carl Sandburg, Thomas Craven, and Jack Conroy pioneered the regionalist

¹⁹ Jean Boyd, *The Jazz of the Southwest: An Oral History of Western Swing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Charles Townsend, *San Antonio Rose: The Life and Music of Bob Wills* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Peter La Chappelle, *Proud to Be an Okie: Cultural Politics, Country Music, and Migration to Southern California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

ethos and offered its most thorough articulation.²⁰ A tradition of identifying the Plains states as “Middle America” or the “heartland” dovetailed nicely with a resurgent interest in Americanism and American identities, giving rise to a notion of the Midwest-as-mirror for the American nation.²¹ Midwestern regionalism, in this sense, ratified cultural workers’ propensity to investigate American nationality during the intense doubt and anxiety of the Great Depression. The desert Southwest, too, fired the regionalist imagination, as intellectuals discovered in the Native American and Mexican American populations of New Mexico exotic others that defined the outer bounds of this Americanism. Over time, artists Joseph Henry Sharp, E. Irving Couse, Ernest Blumenschein, Victor Higgins, Raymond Johnson, Marsden Hartley, and Georgia O’Keefe, writers D. H. Lawrence and Oliver La Farge, and socialite Mabel Dodge Luhan took up residence in the vicinity of Santa Fe and Taos and deployed their newly-donned Southwesternness in critique of urban modernity, but with their experimental aesthetics intact.²²

In the South, regionalism served different ends. In part, it followed the critique of urban modernity shared by many Midwestern regionalists and spoke to the two regions’ shared political past in agrarian Populism. However, Southern authors and artists shied from identifying the South as essentially American, as the Midwesterners did for their region, choosing rather to shadow the Southwest’s claims of distinction from the American mainstream. Indeed, the South spoke to America’s oldest sense of regional

²⁰ Susan Hegeman, *Patterns for America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 113-114, 120-125, 134-41.

²¹ The conflation of the Midwest as essential American identity finds an influential example in Helen and Robert Lynd’s *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1929), that took Muncie, Indiana, as American microcosm. Also see Richard Pells, *Radical Visions & American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

²² William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann, *The West of the Imagination* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 409-434.

division in a way that went far beyond local color to the radically divergent political economies of mercantilism and plantation agriculture that defined the early republic. In North Carolina, sociologist Howard Odum went far to establish the new field of regionalism, but it was in Tennessee where a group of authors known as the Nashville Agrarians, developing out of the Fugitive Poets circle, set the strident tone for much of Southern regionalism. Their influential collection of essays *I'll Take My Stand* appeared in 1930, a scathing critique of the modern industrial order that dripped with nostalgia for the antebellum South, including its enforcement of racial strata.²³

The various strains of regionalism demonstrate the project's multiple instrumentalities. On the one hand, on display in the Midwestern case, regionalism sought an "authentic American" framed by its difference from the supposedly alien populations and ideologies of the Eastern cities. Thomas Hart Benton made these ideas explicit in his critical retreat from what he saw as the "decadence" of New York art circles to the plain-spoken Americanism of his home soil.²⁴ On the other hand, regionalism, as in the Southwestern case, could serve as recognition of difference within American borders as a very different critique of the homogenizing forces of modernity. Throughout, then, regionalism bespoke a temporal, as well as a spatial, dimension. The conservative and progressive valences of the regional shared a sense of the provincial as uncorrupted by modern capitalism. These regions, "behind" the avant-garde metropolis in grand historical terms, served as sites of salvage for artists and intellectuals to rediscover the possibilities of unalienated social relations.²⁵ The regionalists' cultural

²³ Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2006 [1930]). For the evolution of the Fugitive Poets into the Nashville Agrarians into the New Critics, see the middle section of Angie Maxwell, "A Heritage of Inferiority: Public Criticism and the American South." Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2008.

²⁴ Hegeman, 138-146.

²⁵ Michael Denning traces the multiform manifestations of the regionalist impulse, split between the Nashville Agrarians' rearguard defense of Southern tradition and the proletarian regionalism that sought

production, then, evinced simultaneous critical and celebratory functions that varied across regions (Midwest, Southwest, South), within regions (the nativist sneer of Benton and art critic Thomas Craven over and against the proletarian radicalism of Le Sueur and Conroy in the Midwest), and even within specific regionalist works (the ambivalence of *American Gothic* or Benton's public murals).

For all of its exceptionalist bluster, Texas fit this larger regionalist discourse. The Centennial Exposition provides the most publicized example, but the official commemorations of 1936 built on more organic articulations of the regional turn. Lone Star Regionalism revolved around a group of intellectuals based at the University of Texas at Austin, but with influence throughout the colleges, newspapers, museums, journals, and businesses of the state, including, over time, proto-American Studies scholar Henry Nash Smith, folklorists Mody Boatwright and William Owens, media personalities John Henry Faulk and Cactus Pryor, the illustrator Tom Lea, painters Jerry Bywaters and Alexandre Hogue, historians Eugene Barker, J. Evetts Haley, and Joe Frantz, novelist George Sessions Perry, documentary photographer Russell Lee, and folk music collectors John and Alan Lomax, among others. The *Southwest Review*, the Texas State Historical Association, and the Texas Folklore Society knit them one to another. The ruling triumvirate of historian Walter Prescott Webb, folklorist J. Frank Dobie, and naturalist Roy Bedichek, however, held this cohort together and largely defined its aims. To this day, Webb, Dobie, and Bedichek stand as a shorthand reference to an entire era of

working-class mobilization by establishing the American credentials of radical politics. Denning, 132-133. Denning figures here, too, in his assessment of the Popular Front moment as an origin of American Studies. Michael Denning, "'The Special American Conditions': Marxism and American Studies," *American Quarterly* 38 (1986): 356-380. That origin story has its own Texas variant, as it was Dobie who, according to Henry Nash Smith in the preface to his seminal *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, "first opened my eyes to the significance of the West in American society" (xi). Smith, who took Harvard's first doctorate in American Civilization, taught the first class on the same at the University of Texas at Austin. For a discussion of the "salvage" aspects of American regionalism, literature, and anthropology, see Hegeman, 32-37.

Texas arts and letters. The reference tends to be a condescending one, as the reputation of these authors and their works has substantially declined.²⁶ Understanding the cultural formations of midcentury Texas remains impossible, however, without examining the triumvirate's undervalued work.²⁷

Austin served as an intriguing seat for the regionalist endeavor as, geographically, it laid bare the challenge of framing Texas as *a* region with a common identity, situated between the more obvious (but on closer examination, equally problematic) regional units of the cotton South, the ranching West, and the Mexican borderlands.²⁸ The political and intellectual capital of Texas, Austin could hardly claim itself as representative of the state. Government, academia, and their attendant service sectors employed more people in the Austin area than the dominant Texan affairs of cotton, cattle, and oil. Austin as the epicenter of the Lone Star Regionalists' vision would seem to have offered an opportunity to hybridize the understandings of South, West, and Border, to account for difference and culture and race and labor as they played across these diverse landscapes. In practice, though, the equation of Texas with the Anglo-Western cowboy predominated

²⁶ Don Graham, "J. Frank Dobie: A Reappraisal," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 92:1 (1988): 1-15. Larry McMurtry, *In a Narrow Grave* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 53-77. Larry McMurtry, "Ever a Bridegroom: Reflections on the Failure of Texas Literature," in Char Miller, ed. *Fifty Years of the Texas Observer* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2004), 277-282.

²⁷ Other regionalist expressions that arose between the 1920s and 1940s included the cowboy memoirist Teddy Blue Abbott's *We Pointed them North: Recollections of a Cowpuncher* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1939); Marquis James's Pulitzer-winning biography of Sam Houston, *The Raven* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1929); Eugene Barker's *The Life of Stephen F. Austin: Founder of Texas, 1793-1836* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1926); and the influential syndicated comic strip by Jack Patton and John Rosenfield, Jr., *Texas History Movies*. The best general history of American Regionalism remains Robert Dorman's *Revolt of the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²⁸ This geographic diversity often figured into arguments positing Texas as a country apart, an empire, or, as George Sessions Perry would have it, *A World in Itself* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1942), as, like America, the Texas landscape contains multitudes. Neil Foley makes the case for central Texas as the "shatter belt" of a number of different regional identities and ethnicities in the introduction to *The White Scourge*. See map, p. 3. Such divisions bare the contradictory logic of regionalism itself, an attempt to subvert the unitary ideology of the nation by positing smaller scale cultural unities on the order of the region that themselves elide differences amongst local spaces.

in the cultural productions of the period. Exceptions occurred, of course. Novelist George Sessions Perry strayed from the herd not only in moving physically to the world of New England academia, but in focusing artistically on the cotton culture that tied Texas so closely to the South, as did playwright Horton Foote. Katherine Anne Porter did much the same, but her national renown made few ripples amongst the good ol' boy networks of Texas letters.²⁹ Scholars of Texas music, too, gravitated to the Southern aspects of the state's culture. John Lomax began his career publishing cowboy songs, but the most enduring aspect of the Lomaxes' legacy lay in their recording of African American blues, first in Texas, and later throughout the South. Of course, John and Alan Lomax, like Perry and Porter, left the state to find their fortunes.³⁰ Back in Texas, the cowboy figure, and intellectuals and artists who took the cowboy as their subject, remained dominant in public figurations of state identity.

J. Frank Dobie and Walter Prescott Webb solidified this westering of "the Texan" in their academic works of the 1930s, but they had already begun to sketch the contours of their major theses in the previous decade. As businessmen and politicians prepared the way for the centennial, Dobie and his allies in the Texas Folklore Society began to open their eyes to local traditions. As with intellectuals across the country, they hungered for a literature based in the experiences of their own region. As Dobie wrote Webb as both men were beginning their careers

Think of the hundreds of western novels, poems, and travel books and essays that have been written, and not an American scholar has touched the field. Plenty on Southern literature; too much on New England literature; oceans of rubbish on the prototype of Rosalind in Spencer's Shepherd's Calendar . . . I have been working

²⁹ José Limón, *American Encounters*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 38-43, 62-68

³⁰ John Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (New York: Macmillan, 1910); John Lomax, *Adventures of a Ballad Hunter* (New York: Macmillan, 1947); Alan Lomax, *The Land Where the Blues Began* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993).

into that field and working hard and now damn it, I am exiled from my own birthright.³¹

Not quite yet a folklorist, Dobie struggled to find his place in the English department at the University of Texas. Suffering from perceived snubs on the part of elder scholars in the department who felt that Dobie still had “too much of the cowboy in him,” Dobie retreated from Austin often in these early years. He took time off to run his family’s ranch in South Texas and endured what he regarded as his “exile” to Oklahoma A & M University at Stillwater. Through it all, Dobie persistently desired to record and study Texas experiences in literature. The pull of “the Texan” owed something to a provincial inferiority complex (the English department feuding had this cast to it), as well as to Dobie’s recognition of a career opportunity in the wide open field of western literature. Overall, though, the desire seems to issue from a sense of loss in the moment of the rising Texas Modern. Dobie continued to recruit Webb in the project of constructing a Southwestern literature. Another letter of 1923 reads

As surely as there came to be a literature of New England, of the Old South, of New York, of the Middle West, there is coming to be a literature of the Southwest—a literature at once local and national. Look how Washington Irving used the legends of the Hudson; look how Whittier and Longfellow used the legends of New England. I am collecting the legends of Texas and the Southwest for the Irvings, the Whittiers, the Longfellows of this Texas and the Southwest. And, believe me, those poets of the cattle land pioneers—are on their way.³²

Here, Dobie contends that America’s literary canon derived from regional writers like Irving and Longfellow. And yet, as Dobie makes this statement, he feels compelled to concede that the corresponding Texan litterateurs are still simply “on their way.” Indeed, when Dobie first proposed his university course “Life and Literature of the Southwest,”

³¹ J. Frank Dobie to Walter Prescott Webb, October 3, 1923, Box 2M254, Folder Classified Correspondence J. Frank Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

³² J. Frank Dobie to Walter Prescott Webb, October 30, 1923, Box 2M254, Folder Classified Correspondence, Walter Prescott Webb Papers.

the paucity of Texan literary texts led Dobie to turn his attention to folk culture and lifeways, encouraged by pioneering folklorist Stith Thompson. In the process of their research and publications, Dobie, his colleagues, and students went far towards rectifying the lack of a literary tradition in the state, while simultaneously reifying the notion of a distinct Texas culture in ways that obscured its continuities with America at large as well as its internal diversity. The few significant exceptions to the Anglo-Texan bias of Dobie's Texas Folklore Society, such as Jovita González or the African American folklorist J. Mason Brewer, served more to buttress the group's academic hegemony than defy it.³³

The Centennial of 1936 drew on these developing currents of Lone Star Regionalism, but cautiously, often borrowing from the regionalists' celebration of the state while denying their critical elements. For example, the Exposition in Dallas bypassed the prominent local artists of the Dallas Nine like Jerry Bywaters and Alexandre Hogue, who worked in the regionalist vein as students of Wood and Benton. Organizers feared that the critical-realist edge of their work (such as a focus on Dust Bowl subjects and the rowdy social relations of oil boom towns) suggested too much ambivalence about the state for the exposition's purposes.³⁴

When it came to J. Frank Dobie, however, the man's popularity as Texan public intellectual made the prospect of his exclusion difficult. When Dobie signed on as historical consultant for the state's centennial celebrations in 1935, he was in the middle of his most prolific decade. Following the period in which Dobie wrote his regionalist letter to Webb, he collected folk tales for what he conceived of as a single book of Texas

³³ José Limón, *Dancing with the Devil* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 60-75. We will return to Jovita González in the chapter to follow.

³⁴ Ragsdale, 183.

lore. Instead, he began a four-decade career in which he would do little else other than engage in attempts to “open the eyes of the people to the richness of their own traditions.” Though he intended to raise awareness of the passing generation of “Texans Out of the Old Rock,” his own ceaseless self-promotion led to his identification, in the public mind, with “the Texan” he sought to depict and preserve. Dobie’s production from the beginning of the Great Depression through America’s entry into WWII included *A Vaquero of the Brush Country* with John Young (1929), *Coronado’s Children* (1930), *On the Open Range* (1931), *Tongues of the Monte* (1935), *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver* (1939), and *The Longhorns* (1941). By 1942, George Sessions Perry could say that Dobie was “as unmistakably Texan as a Longhorn steer, as the sight of a lone cowboy laying his fresh fried bacon in neat strips on an absorbent plop of last year’s cow dung to drain off the grease.”³⁵ He maintained a busy speaking schedule, wrote a widely syndicated newspaper column (“My Texas”), edited the journal of the Texas Folklore Society, broadcast frequently on his own radio program in San Antonio, and acted as a consultant on Hollywood films concerning the West.

Though his reputation for political controversy still lay in the future, Dobie often displayed his characteristic orneriness during his time with the Centennial’s Advisory Board of Texas Historians. He railed against the sculptor Pompeo Coppini’s cenotaph in front of the Alamo and pilloried plans for statues to the likes of the Republic of Texas’s final, and inconsequential, President Anson Jones.³⁶ The celebration, in his mind, too frequently took its cues from national, or even international, standards of

³⁵ Perry, 11.

³⁶ As Dobie wrote in a report from the advisory board to the Centennial Commission of Control, “I know positively that the people away out on the Clear Fork of the Brazos care nothing for a \$14, 000 statue of Anson Jones. . . Not many people anywhere, as a matter of fact, care for Anson Jones.” Dobie in Ragsdale, 111.

memorialization, rather than looking to regional forms. Of Coppini's Littlefield Fountain at the University of Texas, for example, Dobie declared

You have seen those horses of the Coppini fountain perhaps. They have wings on their tails and fins on their feet. They are supposed to symbolize something, but it is extremely unlikely that God knows what. . . A genuine natural Mexican burro braying water out of its mouth would be far more meaningful to anybody in Texas than these fin-footed Purcheon steeds that Mr. Coppini put in his fountain.³⁷

He resisted most of the renovations to his University of Texas campus in this vein, protesting the new landmark tower as “the last erection of an impotent administration” and arguing that a more Texan approach would have made use of horizontal, rather than vertical, space.³⁸ His venomous assaults on Coppini's work at the university and in San Antonio (as he told Austin listeners of radio station KNOW, “I would not even rank him as second class”) were such that Coppini threatened to file a \$50,000 libel suit against him.³⁹ Alexandre Hogue, smarting from the Dallas Nine's exclusion from the Centennial Exposition, expressed his allegiance to Dobie's cause.⁴⁰ Dobie survived such Centennial battles with reputation intact, even enhanced, by his orneriness, as letters from colleagues, readers, and fans attest.

Like Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb's intellectual orientation to the times in which he lived has suffered some distortion in the historical record. While scholars have remarked on Dobie's ambivalence in political and cultural matters, comparing the conservatism of his books to the feisty, progressive populism of his public persona, Webb's caution in his professional life allows for conservative interpretations of his work

³⁷ Collection 019, Box 10, J. Frank Dobie Papers.

³⁸ James Haley, *Passionate Nation: The Epic History of Texas* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 499.

³⁹ Collection 019, Box 10 Folder 4, J. Frank Dobie Papers. The suit did not make it much further than a threat from Coppini's lawyer, to which Dobie responded, “As a courtesy to you, I suggest that before filing suit for \$50, 000 you investigate my financial rating.”

⁴⁰ Undated letter from Alexandre Hogue to J. Frank Dobie, Collection 019, Box 10, Folder 4, J. Frank Dobie Papers.

to stand. The regionalist turn in Texas in which both participated did not, for the most part, possess an overt or unitary political agenda. At first sight, a preservationist impulse trumped celebration or critique in the work itself. A sense of profound loss motivated both Dobie and Webb, a notion that the heroic Texas into which they had been born was on the cusp of passing from rural to urban, from adventurous to urbane, from freedom to constraint. Authors utilized this same nostalgic voice prior to the Dobie/Webb/Bedichek contingent and would continue to do so long after they were gone. Indeed, the persistence of this nostalgia, in which observers, typically Anglo, bemoan the constant vanishing of an old, original Texas every few years, provides one of the major themes of this study.⁴¹ The voice speaks to contemporary anxieties and acknowledges the subjective experience of historicity, but often has only a tangential or skewed relation to actual demographic or economic shifts. For Dobie and Webb, however, the lamentation squares nicely with the state's passing of an actual demographic milestone, from majority rural to majority urban around the years of WWII.

Audiences and critics relished the nostalgia in the authors' works, and those books that made the names of Dobie and Webb were those that spoke most forthrightly to such concerns. Webb established a reputation as an historian of national consequence through two books published in the 1930s, *The Great Plains* (1931) and *The Texas Rangers* (1935).⁴² In retrospect, the work that made Webb a popular historian, his romantic account of *The Texas Rangers*, obscured the intellectual heft and social bent of his more significant *The Great Plains*. Together, both books overshadowed a third text of the Thirties, one which contained Webb's most direct interpretation of the American

⁴¹ Recall McMurtry's "passing of the God" passage from *In a Narrow Grave* (1968).

⁴² Though published first, Webb researched and wrote *The Great Plains* after *The Texas Rangers*, which was Webb's master's thesis at the University of Texas.

past. The short *Divided We Stand: The Crisis of a Frontierless Democracy* (1937) was a virtual call-to-arms that poet and Lincoln biographer Carl Sandburg labeled “one of the great modern American pamphlets.”⁴³

The Texas Rangers, *The Great Plains*, and *Divided We Stand* were Webb’s major works prior to WWII. The first was popular in orientation, the second academic, and the third political, but each shared a definition of the West as a specific, bounded geographic space. In an extension of the Anglo-Saxon germ theory that undergirded the origins of American historical scholarship in the German graduate seminars of Leopold von Ranke, Webb constructed an ur-narrative of the “forest” cultures of Anglo American pioneers moving onto the Plains. That movement into the New World required not merely cultural and social, but technical adaptations, in the form of the six-shooter, the windmill, and barbed wire. These adaptations to western aridity, in turn, fed cultural, social, and legal change. Webb’s historical interpretations, then, are of a materialist bent, his regionalism one that privileges the causality of the physical environment. *The Great Plains* of 1931 remains a monumental work of history in its environmental determinism and in its prescience with regards to the impending Dust Bowl, but *Divided We Stand: The Crisis of a Frontierless Democracy* better sketches Webb’s orientation to the crises of the 1930s.

Originally published in 1937, *Divided We Stand* is a curious document. On the one hand, the book fits neatly extends Webb’s take on Frederick Jackson Turner’s frontier thesis. In this view, the windfall of the western frontier had long subsidized

⁴³ Autobiography, Box 2M245, Folder Biographical Records, Walter Prescott Webb Papers. *Divided We Stand* has not attracted wide attention, but historians who have covered it include Robert Dorman, 159-162, 221-225 and Don Carleton, *A Breed So Rare: The Life of J. R. Parten, Liberal Texas Oil Man, 1896-1992* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1998), 188-192. Webb also comes in for substantial discussion in Richard B. McCaslin, *At the Heart of Texas: One Hundred Years of the Texas State Historical Association, 1897-1997* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2007).

American democracy and economic abundance. In the absence of that “free” bounty, the decades between the 1890s and the 1930s challenged the nation to adjust to an Old World notion of limits. The new situation required, in Webb’s estimation, an extensive and vital reform of the nation’s most basic cultural and political assumptions. Where Webb critiques the notion of the public domain as free bounty, he brings attention to the federal government’s role in the exploration and dispersal of those lands while he rarely interrogates or even mentions the appropriation of those lands through the conquest of pre-existing indigenous or Mexican sovereignties. In this regard, *Divided We Stand* is Turnerian, reformist, and ethnocentric, a practically-oriented distillation of Webb’s thought that connects the broader and more academic assessments of *The Great Plains* (1931) and his later synthetic work *The Great Frontier* (1951).

On the other hand, the book also speaks in the voice of regionalist screed, echoing the Nashville Agrarians. The root of the nation’s problems, for Webb, lay in the imperialistic reach and seemingly inherent greed of Northern capital over and against the agrarian South and West. Unlike the Nashville Agrarians, however, Webb staked his hopes on the development of federal government as a popular bulwark against the growing power of corporations rather than in a retreat to hidebound communitarian and white supremacist traditions. Webb’s elaboration of the South-and-West-as-colony argument, then, did not look backward to the Agrarians’ *I’ll Take My Stand* (1930) but forward to C. Vann Woodward’s *Origins of the New South* (1951).

Webb underscored the fundamental difference of the South and West from the North, based in a vision of political economies born at the intersection of geographies and institutions. “These dividing lines so nearly follow the country’s social economic, and political history and its climatic and topographical lines that, when viewed from the future, I believe it will be clear that there have been developed in this country three fairly

distinct cultures, ways of life” amongst the North, the South, and the West.⁴⁴ The regionalist shorthand obscures the tremendous diversity beneath these labels, but also speaks to the most basic narratives of American identity that, traditionally, held the North to be normative, the South a deviation, and the West a blank canvas, a “virgin land” in which the American character was both gestated and renewed. Here, Webb came close to those authors that Michael Denning, via Benjamin Botkin, identified as reactionary regionalists that “identified regional culture with a particular way of life, and thus took ‘a certain social background for granted and a certain social order as final.’”⁴⁵ Despite their origins in environmental determinism, however, Webb argued for the inevitability, rather than the inadvisability or impossibility, of social change.

If these ideas seem disparate, their Southwestern jingoism out of step with Webb’s New Deal loyalties, it may be because the coherence of these positions owed less to Roosevelt’s response to the Great Depression than to the Populist Revolt of the 1890s. Activist government as a tool to restrain corporations lay in Populist theory prior to its adoption by Progressives in the 1910s and New Dealers in the 1930s.⁴⁶ The regionalisms of the Midwest, South, and Texas all drew on the language of Populist insurgency that pitted the “interests” against the “people.” However, few authors built directly upon the

⁴⁴ Walter Prescott Webb *Divided We Stand: The Crisis of a Frontierless Democracy*. (Austin: Acorn Press, 1944), 3. I employ the expanded 1944 edition because of the material that it contains that had been censored out of the 1937 edition for fear of libel suits. Of the authors explored here, Webb most deeply engages a *regional*, rather than merely Texan, vision, but even in Webb’s most expansive moments, as in his world historical synthesis *The Great Frontier* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951), his writing remains rooted in Texana. *The Great Frontier* treats the histories of the Australian Outback and the South Sea Bubble, but he can not help but include the Texas Rangers’ discovery of the Colt six-shooter as a key turning point in global affairs.

⁴⁵ Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 133.

⁴⁶ The erasure of this causal chain owes something to the class and regional biases of the Progressive movement itself and became enshrined in the period’s historiography with Richard Hofstadter’s *Age of Reform*, which held the Populists to be anti-modern, anti-Semitic, slack-jawed yokels wielding pitchforks rather than economic radicals or inchoate statist liberals. The most recent reassessment of the Populists, framing them as thoroughly modern reformers, is Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Populists' economic arguments as did Webb.⁴⁷ Populism remained something of a disavowed progenitor of American progressivism in these years, regarded as provincial, unsophisticated, and insufficiently theoretical. However, the movement born out of the Farmers' Alliances founded in Lampasas, Texas, in 1877 offered a telling critique of the rising power of American capital and crafted a range of responses that found later ratification in Progressivism and the New Deal.

In this vein, Webb concludes *Divided We Stand* with demands for the dispersal of industry across the country, the reform of patent and intellectual property laws that favored northern monopolies, the revision of judicial opinions that rendered corporations legal persons, and, if the Populist origins of this agenda were not clear enough, an overhauling of railroad freight rates that favored northern cities. Amongst the most startling insights here, Webb disavows the rugged individualism that many westerners marshaled as counter-argument against activist government.

[It] is no wonder that democracy was able to succeed. If a man turned farmer, the government gave him a free homestead; if a miner, gold; if cattleman, free grass; if railroader, free right of way and nearly 13, 000 acres of land and a loan of a fortune of cash for each mile; if he turned manufacturer, the government gave him patents and high protective tariff, and probably a Civil War pension.⁴⁸

In other words, the federal government had always been in the business of dispersing entitlements and had in the process developed the West in a manner that, ironically, gave rise to the cultural vision of the rugged individualist. Patricia Nelson Limerick and Richard White largely founded New Western History on this premise, but Webb suggested the way as early as 1937.⁴⁹ The figure of the rugged individualist would

⁴⁷ Roy Bedichek, too, had his own 19th century political quirk as a staunch advocate of Henry George's theory of the single tax.

⁴⁸ Webb, *Divided We Stand*, 114.

⁴⁹ Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987); Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

survive Limerick and White just as it survived Webb, and in part underwrote the Sun Belt shift that Webb prefigured here. The muscular exercise of free enterprise continues to stand as a key component of the Texas myth. Webb exposed it as such, mere myth, long ago, but his exposé in *Divided We Stand* never gained anywhere near the traction his celebratory account of the Texas Rangers did. Nevertheless, Webb provides an early example of an Anglo-Texan man deploying the state's western history and tradition to progressive ends.

With few exceptions, the cohort led by Dobie and Webb fervently supported the New Deal, further testament that an orientation towards the past and regional tradition did not preclude advocacy for the modern, activist state. As Webb and others exposed the history of federal government as a tool used by private companies, they supported the New Deal as a further development of the federal government's instrumentality, only this time in the defense of citizens. Disagreements did occur, of course, and the cultural conservatism of much of the Texas electorate had its proponents amongst the state's intelligentsia. Prominent folk music collector John Lomax frequently chided his old Austin friends for their politics, as in a letter to Roy Bedichek from Rome in 1938 in which he stated that "I've run into Il Duce twice. There is absolutely no idleness in Italy; nobody begs, and nobody looks hungry. . . I wonder if you are still so bullish on Roosevelt?"⁵⁰ His son Alan, of course, fit more neatly the New Deal, and even Popular Front, mold, and John's hand-wringing over what he perceived as his son's Communism served as a source of continual humor for the Austin intellectuals.

Ranching historian and future Republican activist J. Evetts Haley provided another exception whose contrasting presence sharpened the progressive politics of Lone

⁵⁰ John Lomax to Roy Bedichek, April 11, 1938, Box 3Q9, Subject Classified Files Letters Lomax, J. A. 1932-1941, Roy Bedichek Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

Star Regionalism. In a letter to Webb, Roy Bedichek documents the political ire that could arise between colleagues, in this case folklorist William Owens and Haley.

I asked Owens how they got along and he said they had quarreled violently for about two hours. Asked what about he said: “Well, Haley thought I couldn’t use our recording machine out in the country because of lack of power. I told him that since we had Rural Electrification, it was easy. When I said ‘Rural Electrification’ it was just like touching a match to him—he exploded about the New Deal, and we had it up and down from then on.”⁵¹

For an academic like the folklorist Owens (to say nothing of Hill Country farmers), the benefits of the New Deal were manifestly concrete in such things as rural electrification, and one did not even have to venture into the countryside west of town to witness the transformation. For these writers based in Austin, the New Deal revolutionized the urban landscape, eventually creating a series of dams that brought the perpetually-flooding Colorado River that ran through downtown under control and providing a boon to the population of a town that had centered on the service industry of administration as home to the state capital and its flagship university.⁵²

The activist orientation and material dispensations of New Deal governance persisted into the years of World War II, even if the progressive content of its politics did not. With the political climate shifting from reform at home to war abroad in the 1940s, conservative politicians began to wield an all-inclusive anti-communism to combat the

⁵¹ Roy Bedichek to Walter Prescott Webb, undated, Box 3Q15, Subject Classified Files Letters, Webb, Walter Prescott 1937-1943, Roy Bedichek Papers.

⁵² For the historian Walter Prescott Webb, these “material benefits” were even more personally evident. “By the time the city and the University had finished their program,” Webb writes in an unpublished autobiographical sketch, “the New Deal had come forward with a program of assistance to local authorities in public works and both groups continued expansion. Also with the New Deal, Austin, as the capital, became an administrative center and many federal offices were opened with new people. Austin grew steadily throughout the depression, was comparatively on a boom, and almost doubled its population between the census of 1930 and 1940.” Consequently, Webb began to invest heavily in real estate that stood in the five-block divide between the state capitol complex and the university, most notably a brick German Lutheran church that Webb de-sanctified and rented to the Texas State Department. Box 2M245 Folder Biographical Records: Autobiography, Walter Prescott Webb Papers.

influence of activist intellectuals. At the same time, the war strengthened both the cosmopolitan perspective and the Texas accent of the state's homegrown authors and artists. This is significant. Their orientation to the past, their preservationist impulse, their absolute devotion to the iconic (Anglo) man on horseback did not preclude a progressive politics, but neither could Dobie and Webb escape the performance of "the Texan" in their own everyday interactions.

The two authors spent a portion of the war years at universities in England, Dobie at Cambridge and Webb at Oxford, and Dobie returned to Europe in the immediate postwar period to speak and teach in army camps in England, France, and occupied Germany and Austria. In these capacities, both Dobie and Webb made gestures towards moving beyond their status as professional Texans while, in reality, cementing their personal association with the state in the minds of their publics at home and abroad. Webb attempted to use the teaching opportunity at Oxford to expand his horizons and dispel stereotypes. That this was on his mind is suggested by the unpublished manuscript autobiography that he composed in his spare time at Oxford, in which he emphatically stated:

I wish to say one word about myself. [the next sentence, crossed out in the manuscript, reads: So far as I know I am about the only person who has written about the West who does not claim to be a cowboy.] Though I grew up in the edge of the cattle country, I was never a [crossed out: real] cowboy. I owned and rode horses and associated with boys who were cowboys. Lynn Landrum of the Dallas News once intimated that I had the qualities of a cowboy. It is easy for any one who grew up in the West before 1910 to claim cowboy descent. People rather expect it. I might best be described in these early years as a sort of reluctant dry-farmer.⁵³

⁵³ Autobiography, Box 2M245, Folder Biographical Records: Autobiography, Walter Prescott Webb Papers.

At the same time, Webb found his English reception as a cowboy stimulating and played the part to good effect. As he wrote to his wife Jane, from Oxford, “That Stetson hat is a real hit. I had some misgivings about it, and bought in Washington a hat that was more conventional. . . I wore the Stetson, the first one here perhaps,” and to his children, Webb wrote that the “Stetson’s fame is spreading. I hear that the undergraduates say, ‘This is the real thing.’”⁵⁴ Webb delighted in the attribution of authenticity, and, though he did not revel in the performance of “the Texan” as did Dobie, the Stetson nevertheless remained part and parcel of Webb’s image until his death (when his favorite model was one given to him by Lyndon Johnson).

The English experience broadened Dobie’s horizons, as well. Of the intellectuals at the core of the Lone Star Regionalist cohort, observers frequently noted that Dobie had the greatest claim to the cowboy guise so often equated with “the Texan.” He had grown up in a ranching family in Live Oak County and, even alongside his academic career, continued to work cattle. According to historian Joe Frantz, of the Lone Star Regionalists “only Dobie wore boots and Stetson, and they looked natural on him because he had emerged from a spread in the brush country on Ramirena Creek below George West.”⁵⁵ Dobie’s “maverick” reputation had been long in the construction, but its political bent accelerated during the years of World War II. Indeed, his politicization derived in part from his proximity to the war against fascism. As he wrote home to Bedichek from Cambridge:

⁵⁴ Letters from Walter Prescott Webb to family, October 12, 1942 and November 14, 1942, Box 3Q15 Subject Classified Files Letters, Webb, Walter Prescott 1937-1943, Roy Bedichek Papers. Of course, the sentiment may have been fleeting, as two years later Dobie would say that he “would like to get away somewhere and write two or three more books about the Age of Innocence when coyotes howled free and men made razor strops out of Indian hides.” William A. Owens, ed. *Three Friends: Roy Bedichek, J. Frank Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 149-150.

⁵⁵ Joseph Frantz, *The Forty-Acre Follies* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1983).

I have lots of things to put in my books, out of the old innocent days. I suppose that if I withdraw myself from current life, my imagination will take me into them as of yore. However, I can't get into them and remain interested in the rapidly evolving world that right now is the only reality to me. On the other hand, I am too damned ignorant to be effective in writing about the realities of the present. That is what comes from having spent nearly a quarter of a century of my allotted years in doing nothing but soak in the lore of coyotes and cowboys.⁵⁶

Dobie's subsequent career is mired in this ambivalence. The European sojourn added the term "fascist" to his vocabulary, as well as recognition of continuities between Southern white supremacy and the causes of the devastation he witnessed abroad.⁵⁷ His professed ignorance to the contrary, Dobie on his return became an outspoken liberal in state politics, using his weekly syndicated column in the state's major newspapers to harass the state's Dixiecrat politicians. In his published output, however, Dobie never strayed far from the "lore of coyotes and cowboys." In book form, Dobie's folklore remained at the level of Webb's popular *Texas Rangers*. His postwar works largely followed the pattern of his prewar books: *The Voice of the Coyote* (1949), *The Ben Lilly Legend* (1950), *The Mustangs* (1952), *Tales of Old Time Texas* (1955), *Up the Trail from Texas* (1955), *I'll Tell You a Tale* (1960), *Cow People* (1964), *Rattlesnakes* (1965), never shifting in tone or scope to produce a work the likes of *The Great Plains*, to say nothing of the advocacy of *Divided We Stand*. Nevertheless, the stands that Dobie took publicly

⁵⁶ J. Frank Dobie to Roy Bedichek, November 5, 1945, Box 3Q3, Folder Subject Classified Files Dobie, J. Frank, Roy Bedichek Papers.

⁵⁷ Though, again, one must look largely to his speeches, newspaper columns, and letters, rather than his books, to get a sense of this development. *A Texan in England* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1945), Dobie's account of his time abroad, is a touch odd in its rather charming portrayal of the English countryside in the midst of total war, with only a few interruptions in which he talks about Texas politics after he has returned stateside: "I write from a plot of ground, delightful in itself, against the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. Here on this campus, believers in the right as well as the duty to think are combating a gang of fascist-minded regents: oil millionaires, corporation lawyers, a lobbyist, and a medical politician, who in anachronistic rage against liberal thought malign all liberals as 'communists,' try with physical power to wall out ideas, and resort to chicanery as sickening as it is cheap. My mind is paralyzed by this manifestation of 'the American way of life.'" Dobie, *A Texan in England*, 262.

cost him dearly in the postwar environment. The Cold War came to the University of Texas early.

NEW DEALING TEXANS FACE THE COLD WAR: THE HOMER RAINEY AFFAIR

More than any other single event, the firing of University of Texas President Homer Price Rainey sharpened these critical perspectives on Dobie's and Webb's return.⁵⁸ With regard to the regionalist intellectuals, the affair played out over three moments: Rainey's firing in 1944, his gubernatorial candidacy in 1946, and Dobie's dismissal from the university in 1947. Though at first glance the affair seems to consist of typical bickering between university administrators and professors, the Rainey Affair in fact traced the growing schisms within the state Democratic Party. As the initial successes of the New Deal ameliorated the worst of the Great Depression's anxieties, conservatives who had participated in Roosevelt's coalition out of necessity began to oppose FDR's attempts to consolidate the newly activist federal state. The Centennial of 1936 attracted FDR to the Exposition in Dallas not out of romantic attachment to the state's mythology, but because the state had begun to distance itself from the President in an election year in which even FDR's Vice-President, Texan John Nance "Cactus Jack" Garner, began to grouse.⁵⁹ Taking a cue from the shifting political winds, conservative

⁵⁸ The Rainey Affair was one of a series of such events in the South as that region's politicians increasingly soured on the laborist and racial politics of the New Deal. The University of Georgia underwent a similar purge under Governor Eugene Talmadge. See Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 56. Also, the political battles within the University were not always simple. In the pivotal year of 1936 J. Evetts Haley led not only the University of Texas history department's Centennial activities, but also the anti-New Deal "Jeffersonian" faction of the state Democratic Party. Haley was dismissed from the University the same year of 1936 and claimed the firing was political in nature, a casualty of the left-wing department rather than the right-wing Regents. B. Byron Price, "J. Evetts Haley" entry, *The Handbook of Texas On-line*, www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/HH/fhahj.html (accessed June 12, 2008).

⁵⁹ In Dobie's mind, the significance of 1936 was such that he would cite it in his *Houston Post* editorial on the JFK assassination as the moment when Americans began to show disdain for federal authority. "I saw hatred for our President begin about the time of the second election, in 1936, of Franklin D. Roosevelt. I saw some men become monomaniacs in their hatred for President Roosevelt. I have seen this hatred spread

Democratic Governors W. Lee “Pass-the-biscuits-Pappy” O’Daniel (1939-1941) and Coke Stevenson (1941-1947) used appointments to the state university’s Board of Regents to ensure tighter control over curriculum in what they considered to be Roosevelt’s Trojan horse in Texas.

By the 1940s, the composition of the Board of Regents finally allowed for a dedicated purge of New Deal influences in Austin. The Regents sought to dismiss a group of economics professors who spoke out in favor of organized labor in Dallas, to abolish the school of social work as a breeding ground for socialists, and, in the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back, to remove the third volume of John Dos Passos’s *USA* trilogy from an English department reading list.⁶⁰ University President Homer Rainey assembled the faculty to denounce the Regents’ actions in October of 1944, an occasion that led to his dismissal and quickly roused the faculty in his defense. The Regents did not reinstate Rainey, and he used the platform created by his dismissal to run for governor in 1946. Though unsuccessful, Rainey’s run against Beauford Jester in the Democratic primaries set the fault lines between the conservative Regulars and the Liberals loyal to the national party that would fuel political realignment in the coming decades.

J. Frank Dobie became a belated casualty of Rainey’s dismissal. Returning from Europe in 1946, and having witnessed the Nürnberg trials of Nazi leaders firsthand, Dobie was newly sensitive to issues of authority and civil liberties. University officials reasoned that Dobie’s long absence from campus during the war and the fact that he still

from the man who is President to the office of President.” J. Frank Dobie, “Sowers and Reapers of Hate,” *Houston Post*, December 1, 1963.

⁶⁰ For a brief summary of the Rainey Affair, see George Norris Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics: The Primitive Years, 1938-1957* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 86-87. Also, Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 26-27.

did not have his Ph.D. constituted valid reasons for termination in 1947, but his growing tendency to refer to the Regents as “homemade fascists” surely did not help matters.⁶¹ As with other professors, Dobie supported Rainey in the 1946 primaries, and came to regard the conservative faction of the state Democratic Party, the Regents included, as akin to Nazis. In a letter to Bedichek, Dobie drew the distinction sharply. “I actually think that if we Liberals get behind a good man like Rainey . . . the Coke Stevenson Texas Regulars will be driven into a hole as deep as Hitler’s.”⁶² Dobie was not alone in sketching these evocative, if overstated, parallels. As Bedichek himself wrote to Webb regarding Webb’s attacks on Rainey’s replacement as university president, Theophilus Shickel Painter:

You caught the action of this man in clear amber of a purely factual account in which it will be preserved for those students of a later generation who happen to become interested in studying the nazification (or the attempt to nazify) the University. . . . If our own scientists could only understand that it is as much the historic function of a university to fight for justice as it is to search for truth! Unless to their “research, research, research,” we add “fight, fight, fight,” human gains are lost.⁶³

Such passages equating the university administration with Nazism began to reach levels of near-hysteria amongst the Rainey camp in ways that may seem overly dramatic to the modern reader. Historian Doug Rossinow has identified this penchant for paranoia as a defining characteristic of Texas liberalism, but he also points to the fact that such thinking was, at times, justified. The Texas Establishment, Nazis or no, was, indeed, out to get them.⁶⁴ Typically, Webb showed more rhetorical reticence, staying on the sidelines for much of the Rainey controversy and writing to Bedichek that “Frankly, I

⁶¹ J. Frank Dobie to Roy Bedichek, March 13, 1945, Box 3Q15, Roy Bedichek Papers.

⁶² J. Frank Dobie to Roy Bedichek, July 24, 1945, Box 3Q3, Roy Bedichek Papers.

⁶³ Roy Bedichek to Walter Prescott Webb, May 30, 1946, Box 3Q15, Roy Bedichek Papers.

⁶⁴ In Rossinow’s words: “Others in less difficult straits might see Texas liberals at times as afflicted by paranoia and delusions of heroism, but from the Texas point of view, it was only realism. To some extent, liberals at UT did come to display these characteristics—and considering their political background, this was not unreasonable.” Rossinow, 29.

have never seen him as a superman. I can not find anything in his policy, in his performance, or in his promise to make me believe that he is a real Moses.”⁶⁵ Still, Webb, one of the university’s highest profile scholars, belatedly entered the fray only when provisional President Painter broke a personal pledge to refrain from seeking the office on a regular basis, a significant feat of restraint on Webb’s part considering the university’s treatment of his friend and public intellectual peer, J. Frank Dobie.

University meetings, newspaper editorials, and personal correspondence regarding Dobie’s dismissal became heated, re-opening the fault lines of the Rainey controversy. Dobie’s allies quickly rallied, but the Regents defended their official perspective that the firing involved a point of order, not politics. Individuals otherwise sympathetic to Dobie recoiled at his spirited public confrontation with the Regents, what Edward Crane called “his vindictive and well nigh insane attitude toward the University authorities.”⁶⁶ Such controversies rent Dobie’s career and reputation in two. His literary output did not reflect the turmoil of the public fights with the state’s conservatives, but instead continued to document the state’s folk past with a continuing fixation on cowboys and the stories that cowboys told about the animals with which they came in contact. Though he would often hold up the cowboy as a symbol of virtue over and against the corruptions of the present, such pronouncements did not often intrude into his books themselves. Dobie remained a conservative folklorist, even as he agitated in louder and louder terms as liberal gadfly. Henry Nash Smith’s eulogy of Dobie, entitled “Enemy of Reactionary Demagogues,” claimed that “Frank Dobie has two widely different public personalities. One of them is a personification of the Old West, a picturesque and

⁶⁵ Walter Prescott Webb to Roy Bedichek, March 13, 1945, Box 3Q15, Subject Classified Files Webb, Walter Prescott, 1937-1943, Roy Bedichek Papers.

⁶⁶ Edward Crane to Walter Prescott Webb, October 2, 1947, Box 2M253, Walter Prescott Webb Papers.

harmless figure out of the past. The other, belonging very much to the present, is a powerful controversialist with a zest for speaking his mind on economic and political issues.”⁶⁷

The split affected Dobie’s popular reception, too, in provocative ways. As Zack Armstrong, a business executive from Dallas, wrote in response to Webb’s defense of Dobie in the Texas alumni publication *Alcalde*,

I’ve kept files of J. Frank Dobie’s articles for many years, and admire him tremendously for his contribution to the history, literature, and fame of Texas. But as a politician he is still a “teller of tall tales,” and quite frankly I’d fire him from his job of teaching literature if he continued to teach false and damaging social propaganda.⁶⁸

Armstrong and others could remain consumers of Dobie’s folklore and Texas boosterism without accepting his political positions or sympathizing with his plight in the struggle against the university’s regents.

As tempers cooled over the course of the 1950s, many university officials, in particular Chancellor Harry Ransom, regretted the dismissal of Dobie and attempted to convince him to return. They proved unsuccessful, and the stubborn Dobie continued his successful literary career and held whiskey-laden seminars for students at his home just blocks north of campus until his death in 1964. The duality of Dobie’s folkloric concerns and his progressive beliefs bears further examination, though, as this tension between a form of Anglo-Texan nationalism based in the received traditions of the state and a desire for progress beyond the state’s social and political conservatism later resonated in the 1970s just as it did in the 1940s. The third figure of the midcentury Lone Star

⁶⁷ Henry Nash Smith, “An enemy of reactionary demagogues,” in Ronnie Dugger, ed. *Three Men in Texas: Bedichek/Webb/Dobie* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 201.

⁶⁸ Zack Armstrong to Walter Prescott Webb, April 19, 1947, Box 2M254, Walter Prescott Webb Papers.

Regionalist triumvirate, the naturalist Roy Bedichek, provides a fitting subject through which to explore these issues.

BEDICHEK, BLUT, UND BODEN

Though older than Dobie and Webb, Roy Bedichek began his career as an author late in life with *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist* (1947) and *Karankaway Country* (1950). He had known Dobie and Webb for most of their careers at the University of Texas, and predated them in the cohort of Lone Star Regionalists, having become associated with John Lomax when they worked together in the university's registrar office in 1898. Lomax left Texas due to Governor "Farmer Jim" Ferguson's prior purge of the university in 1917, and Bedichek remained in administration rather than academia as the head of the University Interscholastic League. He used frequent trips travelling across the state on UIL business, monitoring high school football programs and debate contests, to indulge his hobby as a naturalist. By the late 1940s, Bedichek had become exhausted with the political fights of the university, and, as Webb and Dobie had been trying to convince him to set aside time for writing, took a leave of absence in the wake of the Rainey controversy. As Bedichek wrote to John Lomax in 1946, "I took this year's leave because I was nauseated with the University situation and wanted to get as clear of it as I possibly could."⁶⁹ The classic *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist* was the result.

Bedichek's life as a bureaucrat and a naturalist would seem to place him outside the mainstream of the rancorous political debates roiling the university. To the contrary, however, Bedichek's deep connectedness in the social web of Texas letters and his voluminous correspondence meant that he actively participated in shaping the arguments being made, and often in ways that intersected with his studies of nature and humanity's

⁶⁹ Roy Bedichek to John Lomax, September 26, 1946, Box 3Q9, Roy Bedichek Papers.

relation to it. For example, the heightened vigilance over “un-American activities” sparked reflection over the meanings of patriotism amongst this group of intellectuals so deeply invested not only in the documentation of things American, but in the parallel nationalism concerning all things Texan. As Bedichek wrote Dobie during World War II:

I have threatened several times to write a philosophic article on the value of such articles as you write in developing patriotism—and I mean patriotism, that is a love of country (and by country I mean country, rocks, soil, creeks, rivers, hills, and valleys) not flag and a lot of gaseous intangibles. There is no patriotism without love of your physical environment just as there is no romantic love without a love of the physical body of some individual woman. . . You inject interest into the Texas scene, interest begets study, study begets understanding, and understanding love.⁷⁰

For Bedichek, patriotism did not reside in ideologies, but in a sort of gendered relationship to the material environment. He is responding here to a column that Dobie had written in a similar vein in which he claimed the following:

If I were some sort of dictator going over the country extracting oaths of loyalty from people and came across a man or woman or child who had manifestly been made happy by the sight of a particular bird belonging to his own homeland, I should mark that person down as more satisfactorily loyal than a thousand oaths would make me feel toward some other people. Like knowledge, patriotism is concrete, particular, not vague and generalized.⁷¹

At base, the regionalism of Webb, Dobie, and Bedichek issued from a rather strict historical materialism. Each catalogued reactions, adaptations, stories, and fantasies that arose from contact with specific places, in which the supposed character of those places as embodied in landscapes (typically rendered as rural, as it was a rural Texas in which each came of age) remained paramount. World War II shifted the terms of the debate, calling on the intellectuals to think in terms of global events and ideologies, but also drawing Texas further into an industrial, urban modernity. Against this backdrop, Webb,

⁷⁰ Roy Bedichek to J. Frank Dobie, July 31, 1940, Box 3Q3, Roy Bedichek Papers.

⁷¹ “My Texas” *Dallas News*, September 7, 1941, 12.

Dobie, and Bedichek retrenched the nostalgic voice in their published work. Bedichek claimed that:

Modern technology has done much to destroy patriotism, as I have described this emotion. Worldwide communications have battered indigenous cultures to pieces; transportation has made globetrotters of us all; the local deities of the ancient communities, haunting streams and woodlands, really the personalized affections of the people for features of the home landscape—these local deities are dead. And with their death, our attachment to the soil is weakened. We tend to become, if not actually proletarians, then proletarians in spirit.⁷²

Bedichek typically evinced more care in his descriptions of the effects of technology, but here he offered mass communications as a major cause for the rupture of a true patriotism rooted in physical soil that served as bedrock for his own brand of regionalism. He also compared this to the alienation from labor engendered by mass production, seeing in patriotism based only in “gaseous intangibles” a proletarianization of the spirit.

Debates over “un-American” activities and ruminations over the definitions of patriotism in the work of Webb, Dobie, and Bedichek continued the arguments behind the regionalist vogue of the 1930s. In their insistence on the highly material nature of “love of country,” foregrounding the relationship between countrymen and their soil, these authors, perhaps unwittingly, tapped the same veins of nationalist, even fascist, thought as their conservative opponents. At times, they willfully did so, making a move to capture the ground of the authentic, rooted “Texan” from those who would use the state’s iconography for ends with which they did not agree.

Paramount amongst these discussions was the relationship between tradition and change. As historian, folklorist, and naturalist, respectively, Webb, Dobie, and Bedichek thought long and hard on the subject. Interestingly, it was the naturalist Bedichek who

⁷² Undated notes for a proposed 1950 speech on patriots and patriotism, Box 3Q27, Folder Literary Productions and Speeches, Roy Bedichek Papers.

consistently theorized the most nuanced relationship of people to country. As a forebear to ecological thinkers of the next generation, Bedichek did not reify the dichotomy of civilization and wilderness as did Dobie and Webb, but instead focused his attentions on their mutual constitution, detailing how natural phenomena responded and adapted to the presence of human activity.⁷³ He occasionally took to chiding tones, as in his long discussion of the relation between brush-clearing, erosion, and the human uses of water in the later chapters of *Karankaway Country* or of the industrialization of poultry-raising in *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist*. However, he was just as likely to highlight instances where the unintended consequences of human behavior provided opportunities for natural change, as in the expanded northern range of the Vermillion flycatcher due to the construction of ranching “tanks,” or seeing in the brush country not the “natural” state of South Texas but a landscape created by longhorns on the hoof, or the rise and fall of Austin woodpecker populations due first to the erection of telephone poles and their later coating with creosote.⁷⁴ Most importantly, Bedichek understood, and exposed, the dangers of projecting human culture onto the natural order, thereby inviting the reverse metaphors to arise. In a telling passage, the bucolic Bedichek detailed the extension of racial stereotypes into the folk naming of animals and plants, and how that process then naturalized racial thinking.⁷⁵

⁷³ Historians of Texas letters typically give more credence to John Graves than Roy Bedichek as a kind of proto-ecologist, but Bedichek’s earlier *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961 [1947]), though at times given to romantic language, addressed modern environmental concerns more forthrightly than Graves’s later classic *Goodbye to a River, a Narrative* (New York: Knopf, 1960) on the damming of the Brazos River. Either way, Graves flows neatly in the currents of Lone Star Regionalism addressed here.

⁷⁴ Bedichek, 12-19, 26-31, 263-264.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 196-199. “In Texas the accidents of history have brought four racial groups together—whites, American Indians, Mexican Indians and Negroes. Anything black is likely to be called ‘n----r,’ as n----r-head, n----r-goose, and so on. Anything noticeably small or stunted will probably earn the ‘Mexican’ prefix, and I think there is a dash of genuine racial prejudice in this. On the other hand, folks all over America quickly forgave the American Indian and converted him into a pleasant legend. It is easy to forgive the exterminated: the greater their prowess, the greater glory of the exterminator. We hold no

Nevertheless, there remains a “blood and soil” quality to many of these midcentury paeans to Texas.⁷⁶ One of Dobie’s highest compliments was to declare a person a “Texan Out of the Old Rock,” by which he meant to convey a rugged, masculine authenticity that constituted an identity between the person and the land itself. To the extent that Texas exists as a kind of “metaphorical nation,” Lone Star Regionalists invoked a rhetoric that dates to the origins of nationalist thinking in the German Romanticism of Fichte and Herder. The gendered and ethnoracial aspects of these expressions were of paramount significance in establishing the normativity of Anglo-Texan masculinity even as most of these men considered themselves to be tolerant and liberal in the state’s politics. Such national aspects of Anglo-Texan identity first came to be articulated in the context of the republic’s war against Mexico and Native Americans. Dobie’s and Bedichek’s insistence on the relation between men and soil occasionally betrayed their recognition of such prior sovereignties. As Dobie wrote to John Henry Faulk, “My dear old friend Gnardo del Bosque . . . summed up the matter when he said, ‘Yo tengo raices aqui’ (I have roots here). A powerful element in British civilization that we have only scatteringly, for we are too mobile for it, is the belonging of many generations to the same plot of earth, roots going deeper and deeper.”⁷⁷ Dobie thirsted for those same roots and worked to construct them through an Anglo-Texan national folklore, collecting tale after tale of “Texans Out of the Old Rock” despite the incessant mobility he acknowledged there that precluded such roots in the soil. When lamenting the

grudge against the grave, but the Negro and the Mexican persist as elements of the populations, and it is here that folk psychology in the naming of natural objects seems loath to idealize and even reluctant to be just.”

⁷⁶ Hegeman, 143. “Moreover, as a theory of art, regionalism was not significantly different from *Blut und Boden*—and indeed, by the time the United States declared war against Germany, it was already something of a commonplace of art criticism to consider regionalism fascist.”

⁷⁷ J. Frank Dobie to John Henry Faulk, October 1, 1956, Box 3E169, John Henry Faulk Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

lack of roots, even when using the example of a Spanish-speaking acquaintance, Dobie fell back on the British experience of ancient, organic community, effacing the fact that Texas had residents with deeper “raices” there than his own. Roy Bedichek, an Illinois transplant, also recognized the history of movement and human adaptation that belied ideas of *patria* as they related to Texas and entitled his observations on the Texas coastal region *Karankaway Country*, after the territory’s absent native inhabitants. What was “the Texan” in this context, and why did it continually invoke this national frame? A national character literature of Texas arose at midcentury to answer these questions.

THE SUPER-AMERICANS: THE NATIONAL CHARACTER LITERATURE OF TEXAS

The Dobie contingent’s critical engagement with patriotism and the notion of the “un-American” ran headlong into a celebratory Americanism deployed to unify and discipline the public in the early years of the Cold War. The celebration-critique dialectic operative in American regionalism gave way by the late 1940s to a unitary definition of American identity as the “city on a hill,” the American Way of Life as the paramount expression of human freedom and prosperity in a world threatened by totalitarianism and want. The discursive formation of Cold War Americanism ran strong through a broad scholarship including consensus historiography, the Myth and Symbol school of American Studies, structural-functionalism in sociology, and the rise of a national character literature geared towards explaining American exceptionalism. As a space closely associated in the national mind with the rugged individualism of the frontier and the freedom of wide open spaces, Texas served as a useful ideological marker of difference from the perceived collectivisms of Europe and Asia. The American national character literature of the decade had a curious corollary in a cottage industry of books that investigated the microcosmic “nation” of Texas. In lock step, it would seem, with

David Potter's *People of Plenty* and Daniel Boorstin's *The Genius of American Politics* (1953), came the likes of George Sessions Perry's *Texas: A World in Itself* (1942), George Fuermann's *Reluctant Empire: The Mind of Texas* (1957), Mary Lasswell's *I'll Take Texas* (1958), and John Bainbridge's *The Super-Americans* (1961).⁷⁸ It is worth briefly examining each of these texts in turn to trace their deployment of the Texan national frame.

George Sessions Perry provides an underappreciated counterpoint in Texas letters as an author who wrote about the state's Southern, rather than Western, experience, running more to Faulkner than to McMurtry. His popular novel *Hold Autumn in Your Hand* (1941) concerned the life of the cotton tenant farmer, based on his own upbringing in Rockdale. Perry followed the novel's success with the national character work of *Texas: A World in Itself* (1942). The book begins with a tour of the United States and the larger world in order to assess how such places are like or unlike the Texas Perry chose to portray (New York and Australia score high marks; France, New England, and Indiana seem wanting). By making these contrasts, Perry began to describe Texas as a space apart, and then turned to the project of defining just what that space is. The notion of Texas as a world in itself is a powerful one that might account for the diverse historical experiences and populations of the state, and yet, in the final analysis, Perry participated in the flattening of the region into its Western stereotypes. He detailed each of the state's sub-regions over several chapters, but his dedication of the work to Dobie subverted the gesture. Dobie had grown up on a ranch in the South Texas Brush Country of Live Oak County; Perry had grown up in the cotton lands near Rockdale. And yet, Perry writes of

⁷⁸ Later extensions of the genre include Larry McMurtry's *In a Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968); David Nevin, *The Texans: What They Are—And Why* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1968); and D. W. Meinig, *Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969).

the “cowboy professor” Dobie, “It is therefore, with great affection and respect, that I dedicate this book about Texas to the Texian who knows most about her and loves her best, my friend, Frank Dobie.”⁷⁹ Perry’s gesture effaced his own contestation over the state’s Southernness by yielding final intellectual authority to Dobie, who wrote plenty about longhorns and mustangs and cowboys and coyotes and Apaches and rattlesnakes, but rarely, if ever, put pen to paper over the crop lien. Perry’s foray into defining Texas as a world in itself, then, fell short in his limited ability to account for his firsthand experience of the state’s diversity.

In *Reluctant Empire: The Mind of Texas*, George Fuermann, columnist for the *Houston Post*, leapt past the national metaphor to extend the state’s imperial conceit, but did so with an appreciation for the changes that the past several years had visited on the state. The book was “meant to be a contemporary, critical appraisal of a state—critical in the Matthew Arnold sense of evaluation—and its effects on the United States. . . I have tried to separate fact from popular conceptions that are drugged with myth and error.”⁸⁰ This weighing of fact against myth brought the cities of Texas into fuller view with recognition of the political and social effects of their growth for the future of Texas identity. The book, like Perry’s, owed much to the University of Texas regionalist cohort. “I do not see how any writer could have been better served than I have been by Frank Dobie. No Texan has stronger convictions than Dobie or is more willing to fight for them.”⁸¹ Nevertheless, Fuermann is differently iconoclastic than Dobie, bringing his criticism of the state’s conservatives fully into book form as Dobie never did, identifying them with the most widely propagated images of Texas (the “myth and error”) over and

⁷⁹ Perry, 15. “Texian” is an older referent for “Texan” or “Anglo-Texan” dating to the rebellion against Mexico.

⁸⁰ Fuermann, 9-10.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

against the growing realities of labor unions, movements for racial justice, and the political costs of the oil industry. In his introductory remarks, in fact, Fuermann answers the question, “What is Texas?” by listing what he sees as the elements of the state conservatives’ dogmatic mythmaking: a romantic approach to history, the cult of individualism, bigness, religion, crass materialism, demagoguery, one-party politics, and oil. The national character that Fuermann defines, the “mind of Texas” that he explores, then, is a mythic state to be overcome, rather than an essential identity to be celebrated.

Just as Fuermann’s title echoed W. J. Cash’s *Mind of the South* in his approach, so did Mary Lasswell’s titular claim *I’ll Take Texas* offer a variant of the Nashville Agrarians’ *I’ll Take My Stand*. And yet, Lasswell follows Fuermann in identifying the present as a welcome transition, and “the Texan” not as a stable, unitary figure on the verge of passing, but as a vessel of adaptation itself.

The more a Texan changes, the more he becomes truly himself. Change and adaptability are among his basic inherited patterns of behavior; resourcefulness is characteristic of him. The country itself is suddenly and violently changeable, often in clashing conflict with itself, elementally, spiritually, and physically, all at the same time, like a Texan’s conflict between his pioneer past and his urban present.⁸²

Rather than strength-in-inflexibility, Lasswell fastens onto the rugged frontier heritage to argue for adaptability as a central characteristic of Texas identity, executing an end-run around the bucolic jeremiads that peek through so many of the Lone Star Regionalists. The theme of change and adaptation fit Lasswell’s biography, a professional author raised in the border town of Brownsville who spent much of her life in Southern California and the Northeast, but who prided herself on her Texas roots.

Lasswell also attended to the performative and figurative aspects of the Texan, spending the better part of a chapter (“The Land and the Man”) on the subject. “In his

⁸² Mary Lasswell, *I’ll Take Texas* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1958), 368-369.

politeness, the Texan likes to do what is expected of him. He has been known to buy his first cowboy boots and ten-gallon hat for a trip to New York.”⁸³ Like Webb with his Stetson in Oxford or, later, Larry L. King with his accent at Elaine’s in New York, Lasswell noted the phenomenon of Texans abroad performing to the cultural expectations of “the Texan” type. Her invocation of New York is particularly significant, as that city has long been a central stage on which Texanness is performed, from Tex Ritter and Texas Guinan to Joe Buck and the Lone Star Café. The performances of Texans on the national stage, in Lasswell’s reading, fed a kind of existentialist need. “The myth of the Typical Texan seems to me to be the result of man’s eternal desire to believe that there is in existence, somewhere, the man he would like to be: a man of super vitality, of monumental size, gargantuan appetites, and epic bravery.”⁸⁴ Lasswell made clear the conflation of “the Texan” with frontier masculinity, even as she attended to the complexity of the figure’s historic performativity. This “Typical Texan” did not denote specific men who actually existed, but a persona to be desired, a projection of the cowboy that individuals both within and without the state’s borders continually found ways to appropriate.

Their appropriation was made easier by a national market for all things Texan that produced the most popular of these national character texts. In 1960, frequent *New*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 323.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 306. This vision of the monumental, gargantuan, and epic qualities of Texas masculinity were by no means the sole province of the Anglo imagination. In his work on orquesta music in South Texas, Manuel Peña identifies a “Texo-centric” variant of borderlands music that conveys “the popular belief that things Texan are conceived not only on a grander scale but on a superior one as well. The myth has taken many forms, but it is embodied most graphically in the image of the Texan as a larger-than-life, virile, heroic, and slightly untamed man. Long considered the exclusive property of the Anglo-Texan (Texian), the myth of bigness in fact is shared by Texas-Mexican men as well. The canción ranchera . . . is an apt example of that cultural commonality. . . More than that, I would suggest that the exaggerated sense of bigness, especially as it relates to the Texas male and his prowess, rubbed off on the tejanos and became part of a common patrimony, one that transcends the intercultural conflict.” Manuel Peña, *Música Tejana: The Cultural Economy of Artistic Transformation* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1999), 67-69.

Yorker contributor John Bainbridge spent a year in Texas to write a book concerning the foibles of the nouveau riche oilmen then garnering the nation's attention. When *The Super-Americans* came out the following year, it was readily apparent that it stood in the tradition of 1950s national character studies, or even perhaps those early Boasian ethnographies of the "other" meant largely to instruct Americans about themselves. In fact, though Bainbridge singled out Texas for a microcosmic study, he employed it consistently as a metonym for "American" values. Bainbridge contended that, culturally speaking, Texas stands in relation to the rest of the country as the United States has traditionally stood in relation to Europe. He demonstrated the argument by presenting parallel accounts of traveling "foreigners." Alexis de Tocqueville and other European voyeurs of the American shadowed the narrative throughout and entered a conversation with northerners, Frederick Law Olmsted prominent among them, visiting and commenting upon Texas culture and mores.

The faults in Texas, as they are recorded by most visitors, are scarcely unfamiliar, for they are the same ones that Europeans have been taxing us with for some three hundred years: boastfulness, cultural underdevelopment, materialism, and all the rest. In enough ways to make it interesting, Texas is a mirror in which Americans see themselves reflected, not life-size, but, as in a distorting mirror, bigger than life.⁸⁵

Elsewhere, Bainbridge referred to the place as "Texas, that other America, where everything appears in extra-high relief."⁸⁶ Bainbridge's account included discussions of the oil industry, travel, climate, and braggadocio, but he spent the greatest number of pages on the society of Dallas, from architecture and Neiman Marcus to cocktail parties and politics.

⁸⁵ John Bainbridge, *The Super-Americans: A Picture of Life in the United States, As Brought into Focus, Bigger Than Life, In the Land of the Millionaires—Texas* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), 6.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 325.

Bainbridge ruffled a good number of feathers in Dallas upon the book's publication (despite the existence of an attractive "special Texas edition"), but his literary flourishes were hardly the most common means by which national audiences consumed their perceptions of Texas. As with the singing cowboys of the 1930s, film and music remained paramount in how representations of Texas were framed nationally in the 1950s and 1960s, and their meanings fitted into the Cold War discourse of Americanism. The popular film *Giant* of 1956 in many ways joined the national character themes of Perry, Fuermann, and Lasswell to the epic Western conventions of Hollywood. The film was based on an Edna Ferber novel that had been received poorly amongst Texans. The state's touchy inhabitants branded Ferber a meddling outsider who "while flying across the Southwest in an airliner, sent a note to the pilot: 'Please fly a little lower. I want to write a book about Texas.'"⁸⁷ In truth, Ferber did extensive research on the topic, and her novel gained its critical edge from the fact that she talked to people like Dr. Héctor García, founder of the Mexican American civil rights organization, the American G. I. Forum. The expansive film, bursting with the star power of Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor, and James Dean, found, on the whole, a greater reception in the state than the novel despite its critical themes regarding the corrosive effects of oil wealth. The critique, perhaps, corroborated the nostalgic voices of Dobie, Webb, and Bedichek, positing a "Vanishing Texan" tied to the soil by ranching or agriculture, as superior to those tied simply to the single commodity of oil. Oil and its riches, though driving Texan prosperity, also stood in for the passing of the agrarian order that invested the Anglo-Texan's cherished symbols. Though the oilman consumed the cowboy, affecting his garb and manners, his image did not similarly compel.

⁸⁷ George Fuermann in Bainbridge, 108

THE PERFORMATIVE TEXAN IN POLITICS

The cinematic Texan as found in *Giant* or John Wayne's version of *The Alamo* became reconfigured in local performances by Texans themselves, perhaps most strongly in the political arena. Though politicians came primarily from the elite strata, deeply implicated in oil and urban finance, their efforts to brand themselves as "the Texan" meant an investment in the cowboy figure. Performing the cowboy for the electorate produced immediate recognition, but also raised questions concerning who "real" cowboys were, anyway. A piece in the liberal *Texas Observer* narrated the process:

1. It all started with the cowhand. You used to find him from Cuero in the east to Encinal in the south and Uvalde in the southwest to Pecos in the far west and then up north to Dalhart. Note his high serviceable boots and his dignified reserve. He was slim enough to sit on his bootheels.
2. Since he was a Texas tradition and a popular symbol, we soon got the senatorial cowboy. He switched from Bull Durham to Havanas, and he conservatively exposed only his left boot top, but this is gorgeously stitched with an inlaid sunflower in bloom. He is not so reserved.
3. From the legislator through the lobbyist, the fad has spread in the chain-hotel crowd. Now we see the Cowboy Salesman, who has added the innovation of the crepe sole boot. Note that he is also wearing ladies heels, because the Dallas cobbler was used to a concave heel and not an undershot one.
4. The full flowering of cowboy regalia materialized in the Oilman Cowboy. Insisting on authenticity, he has gone back to Bull Durham and has his genuine cowboy shirts tailored in Hollywood. He shows his Americanism, his tender heartedness, and his love of beauty in his personalized boot design, which is in purple, red, and green inlay on cordovan with alligator skin bottoms.
5. Now we see our original cowhand riding into the west. Equipped with neither Havanas, sample case, nor Cadillac, he has become too conspicuous on the Texas scene, and that reserve which approaches bashfulness has caused him to move on to make room for the typical Texans who have taken his place.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ *Texas Observer*, August 10, 1955. I am indebted to the deft analysis of this *Observer* article, and the political valences of Texas in the 1950s generally, in Angus Lauchlan's article "The Texas Liberal Press and the Image of White Texas Masculinity, 1938-1963" *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 110:4 (2007): 487-512. On performativity and Texas politics, especially in relation to the later George W. Bush years,

Here we see on display the tangle of authenticity, gender, commerce, and performance that attends discussions of “the Texan” in political and cultural terms.

While the *Observer* treated the figure in rather general ways, the debate over the cowboy guise often entered specific campaigns, as in the William Blakely-Ralph Yarborough senatorial race of 1958. By the 1950s, the fault lines originating in conservative distance from Roosevelt in 1936 and solidified by the Rainey-Jester gubernatorial primary in 1946 became a pitched intra-party battle between conservative Allan Shivers and liberal Ralph Yarborough, a protégé of the former New Deal Governor James Allred. Shivers defeated Yarborough in gubernatorial primaries twice in the 1950s, but then Yarborough filed for the Senator’s seat in 1958, facing a conservative West Texas socialite who branded himself as a cowboy, William Blakeley. As Blakely and Yarborough faced off for the U. S. Senate in 1958, Dobie penned a dissection of Blakely’s studied cowboy image.

He’s a fake cowboy and he’s a fake man in his pretenses to qualifications for being a United States Senator . . . “If the day is come—and it seems it has—when the people of a local community—through sovereign state government—are denied the right to educate their children without interference from outside influence—then no freedom is left in the land.” What does this mean? You could gather up all the cowboys who ever rode after Brahman-blooded cows over prairie grass along the Gulf of Mexico, who ever popped brush in the chaparral thickets of South Texas, who ever went up and down the breaks of the Pecos or the Double Mountain fork, who ever listened to northers whistle through their slickers on the Staked Plains, and even all the cowboys who have had the example of William Alvis Blakely on his own ranches. You could gather up all these cowboys and sift their brains and sift their language, you wouldn’t find a single deceitful sentence like the one just quoted. It means, “I don’t believe in letting Negroes into the schools with white people.” Why doesn’t he come out like a real cowboy and a real man and say what he means? . . . But he can’t buy his way into the Senate of the United States because there are too many real people, including

see Leigh Clemons, *Branding Texas: Performing Culture in the Lone Star State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 95-119.

a considerable number of real cowboys, who know the difference between a genuine article and a fake.

In a letter of July 22, Bedichek voiced his approval. “You were never more authentically the ‘voice of Texas’ than you are in blasting that blatherskite Blakely.”⁸⁹ Blatherskites aside, these attentions to the demonstrative power of the cowboy image, and the contestation over its uses, bring into view a range of anxieties concerning Texan masculinities of the era in the context of rapid social change.

What Fuermann, Lasswell, and Blakely’s victorious opponent Yarborough recognized that political cowboys like Blakely did not belabor was the ongoing transformation of Texas into an urban state, and this recognition characterized the best of the cultural productions to come out of Texas in the 1960s and 1970s. Billy Lee Brammer penned an early exemplar of the genre in his novel *The Gay Place* of 1961. Brammer had been a young aide to both Ralph Yarborough and Lyndon Johnson in Washington, and *The Gay Place* offered a melancholy comedy of manners in which the young liberals, roustabouts, politicians, and bohemians of Austin navigated the tricky political and cultural terrain of the new modern Texas. Brammer placed one of the key arguments of *The Gay Place* in the mouth of Governor Arthur Fenstemaker, a caricature of Brammer’s former boss Lyndon Johnson. Fenstemaker exclaims of a political opponent that “He’s way ahead of some of his people, but what he doesn’t know is that most of us came into town one Saturday a few years ago and stayed. . . We’re urban, by God. All of a sudden the people in the metropolitan areas outnumber the rednecks.”⁹⁰ Over and against the striving, frontiering, yet somehow bucolic world of the ranges of

⁸⁹ Roy Bedichek to J. Frank Dobie, undated, Box 3Q3, Folder Letters Dobie, J. Frank 1950-59, Roy Bedichek Papers. The newspaper clipping accompanies the letter. J. Frank Dobie, “Fake Cowboy,” *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, July 23, 1958. More on the Blakely-Yarborough race can be found in Patrick Cox, *Ralph W. Yarborough: The People’s Senator* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 153-161.

⁹⁰ Billy Lee Brammer, *The Gay Place* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995 [1961]), 325.

South and West Texas, a new cultural formation arose in the cities that came to be seen as a threat to these older ways. Fenstermaker's model LBJ fit well the part of contrarian symbol of Anglo-Texan masculinity—he burlesqued the type to perfection.

LBJ is touchstone and apotheosis for this burlesque performance of Anglo-Texan masculinity on the national stage. Picking up his dog by the ears, showing abdominal scars to reporters, speaking to aides from the toilet, reeling off arcane and often lewd folk sayings, Lyndon Baines Johnson fit the character of “the Texan,” using braggadocio to play off of feelings of inferiority to Eastern elites. Lyndon Baines Johnson, son of the soil and consummate professional Texan, served as the complex marker of the state's transformation, a key leader, to the extent that leadership was necessary, in forging the Sun Belt Synthesis that brought industry, research science, and federal projects (especially defense projects) south. Far more than Nixon's supposed “Southern strategy,” Johnson set into motion the region's political realignment not just through signing the Civil Rights Act, but through the momentous shifts in political economy that his administration accelerated.⁹¹

Before Johnson came to signify all of that, however, Texas added to its infamy with the Kennedy assassination in Dallas on November 22, 1963. The event attached a stigma of violence to the erstwhile heroic gunslingers of cinematic Texas. For the civic leaders of Dallas, the city that had worked so hard to sell its Texas image in 1936, Oswald's actions proved especially galling. Just as Roosevelt attended the Centennial to shore up support and paper over differences in the state Democratic party that was an uneasy segment of his coalition, so had Kennedy come to mend fences between the conservative supporters of LBJ's protégé Governor John Connally and the liberals under

⁹¹ Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 625.

Senator Ralph Yarborough. The assassination opened a divide, nationally, regionally, and locally, of which journalist Gary Cartwright has said, “All I know is that until the assassination, everything in my world seemed clean, transparent, and orderly. Nothing has seemed clean, clear, or orderly since.”⁹² So began the liberal center’s Indian Summer, in Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas.

Though the assassination branded Dallas a hotbed of right-wing reaction (despite Oswald’s left-wing connections), Johnson combined Kennedy’s agenda with his own legislative acumen to crown the New Frontier with the even more ambitious Great Society. He did this despite, or perhaps with the strategic deployment of, his performative image as buffoonish Texan. Johnson made frequent and sentimental use of his Hill Country forebears in Texas, establishing the first of the Western White Houses on a sprawling ranch near Stonewall. The President entertained there with barbecues, country music, and elaborate tours of the grounds. Richard “Cactus” Pryor, who had long worked for the Johnsons’ media holdings in Central Texas, served as the organizer and emcee of the events at the ranch. He described the flavor of one barbecue held for United Nations dignitaries during Johnson’s term as Vice-President.

But one could hardly escape the traditions of Texas. They were unavoidable. You had but to turn around and a member of the Travis County Sheriff’s Posse would come charging up on a palomino to volunteer his services. . . There was a real western band playing the old cowboy songs of Texas. I know they were real cowboy songs because I spent half the preceding night teaching them to our “real western band.”

The event also featured a bullwhip demonstration by a UT co-ed, a sharpshooter who made the Secret Service visibly uncomfortable, an exhibit by a renowned painter of bluebonnet landscapes, and a monkey in cowboy duds herding sheep from the back of a

⁹² Gary Cartwright, *Turn Out the Lights: Chronicles of Texas during the 80s and 90s* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 1.

dog.⁹³ As Anglo-Texan men affiliated with LBJ climbed the political ladder to be the movers and shakers in Washington, “the Texan” was constructed for audiences, local, national, and international in purposive ways. “The Texan” was performed and performing, articulating a sense of national difference for the Lone Star State.

ALONE ON THE FRONTIER

In the final chapter of *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist*, Bedichek described a chance meeting in the Texas Hill Country with an old man clearing the land of cedar. The primal man in the wilderness, the Texan Adam out of the Old Rock, made Bedichek feel as if his own virility was fading. The “Vanishing Texan” of the Hill Country cedar-chopper stands in marked contrast to the performances held at the Western White House. Bedichek’s cedar-chopper “couldn’t do anything but cut cedar, since that was all he had ever done except to farm a little. I found that he was eighty-six years old and that here in this locality his father had put him to cutting cedar when he was only ten.”⁹⁴ This meeting, for Bedichek, underscored his theorized connection between man, labor, and land, a life spent in subsistence in relation to a specific Texas place; the Western White House bespoke spectacle, a simulacrum of the landed rancher woven around a powerful man who had found a very different place in the world from where he was born. And yet, Johnson, too, had his moments as the “Texan alone,” a cedar-chopper on the verge of a political wilderness. One such night arrived on March 31, 1968, when Johnson shocked national television audiences by announcing that he would not seek a second term in office due to the pressures of the Vietnam conflict. Five days later, James Earl Ray assassinated Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, and the liberal center forged in the Great Depression, tested, expanded, and strained in the Great Society overseen by

⁹³ Cactus Pryor to John Henry Faulk, May 7, 1963, Box 3E170, John Henry Faulk Papers.

⁹⁴ Bedichek, 284.

Johnson and the civil rights movement by King, seemed to unravel all at once. The representation and performance of Anglo-Texan masculinity as a cipher for American national identity had served as one element in that vital center's rise and fall.

Deconstructing the hegemony of Anglo-Texan masculinity in Texas itself served as another. This expansive civil rights project of creating a more inclusive vision of Texas on the part of the state's Mexican Americans, African Americans, and women of all races serves as the subject of the chapter to follow.

Chapter Two: Civil Rights Challenges to Anglo-Texan Hegemony, 1936-1977

En tu propio terruño serás extranjero
por la ley del fusil y la ley del acero;
y verás a tu padre morir balaceado
por haber defendido el sudor derramado;
verás a tu hermano colgado de un leño
por el crimen mortal de haber sido trigueño
Y si vives, acaso, será sin orgullo,
con recuerdos amargos de todo lo tuyo;
tus campos, tus cielos, tus aves, tus flores
serán el deleite de los invasores;
para ellos su fruto dará la simiente,
donde fueras el amo serás el sirviente,
Y en tu propio terruño serás extranjero
por la ley del fusil y la ley del acero.

[In your native homeland a stranger you will be
by the law of the rifle and the law of cold steel;
and you will see your father shot to death
for having shed his sweat;
you will see your brother strung up on a limb
for the mortal crime of having been born olive-skinned.
And if perhaps you do survive, it will be without pride,
with bitter remembrances of what was once yours;
your lands, your skies, your birds, your flowers
will be the delight of the invaders;
for them the fruit will sprout,
where once long ago you were the master a servant you will be
by the law of the rifle and the law of cold steel.]¹

In writing the above lines in 1936, Américo Paredes offered a very different take on the Texas Centennial than that of J. Frank Dobie or Gene Autry or Franklin Roosevelt.

¹ Américo Paredes, *Between Two Worlds* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1991), 35-36. Translation quoted here from Ramón Saldivar, *The Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 221.

A young man in Brownsville at the time he composed the poem “Alma pocha,” Paredes was only beginning a momentous career as journalist, musician, activist, folklorist, and cultural studies scholar that would eventually position him to challenge the celebratory Anglo-Texan nationalism of the Lone Star Regionalists at their high tide. Paredes’s intellectual challenge to the Dobie cohort represented the forward wedge of a series of movements claiming equality, public space, visibility, cultural capital, and full citizenship for those denied it in law and custom by Anglo-Texan rule. In light of Dobie’s remark that a love of native birds should be the true mark of patriotic loyalty, Paredes’s exhortation that “your lands, your skies, your birds, your flowers/will be the delight of the invaders” draws our attention to the basic error belying the Lone Star Regionalists’ attempts to tie men and soil, “Texans Out of the Old Rock,” so closely. The “Empire of Texas” Roosevelt saluted in 1936 rested on the conquest of Mexican and Native American populations, the enslavement of African Americans, and the second-class status of women of all races. Anglo-Texan intellectuals forged the walls of their dominion out of new bricks rather than old rock, and this rhetorical edifice would require extensive and forceful remodeling to accommodate a vision of Texas identity and history that spoke for the experiences of all its inhabitants.

This chapter explores the social justice movements that African Americans, Mexican Americans, and women of all races waged against this Anglo-masculine establishment in Texas from the 1940s to the 1970s. It is by no means an exhaustive accounting of the tremendous breadth and depth of these movements, an endeavor with a literature all its own that can be found in the footnotes of this chapter. In the context of this study’s focus on historicizing Anglo-Texan masculinity, the current chapter sketches a moment in the dialectical development of a culture. In other words, events like the Centennial Exposition elaborated a thesis to which individuals like Américo Paredes

antithetically responded. The resulting contestation over the nature of Texan identities enabled the synthetic endeavors of, say, the young men amongst Austin's progressive country scene who sought to re-tool the cultural projection of Anglo-Texan masculinity in light of these subaltern critiques.

Disfranchised groups in Texas had always contested power over the cultural field in a manner that ratified E. P. Thompson's definition of culture as "the study of relationships in a whole way of conflict."² The hegemonic force of Anglo-Texan masculinity endured long periods of subterranean resistance punctuated by instances of vocal protest or outright revolt. The openings brought by protest and revolt, however, were likely to be temporary ones that provoked a redoubling of oppressive Anglo rule. After the Civil War, freedmen sought redress of the antebellum order through racial equality in Radical Reconstruction, only to be reduced to secondary citizenship after the Redeemers drove Governor Edmund Davis from office and marginalized the Republican Party in 1874.³ In the 1890s, Populist activism offered to reduce the burdens and defuse the racial caste of the exploitive sharecropping system, only to spark the near-complete disfranchisement of African American voters as the party's abortive interracialism gave way to the elaboration of Jim Crow laws at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴ In South Texas, from Juan Cortina in 1859 to the sediciosos in 1915, tejanos forcefully reclaimed their lands and their rights again and again, only to face military defeat and brutal suppression by Texas Rangers.⁵ By contrast, the lot of Anglo women offered some small

² E. P. Thompson, "The Long Revolution," *New Left Review* 9 (1961): 24-33.

³ Randolph Campbell, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).

⁴ Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 122-23, 188-89; Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 82, 192.

⁵ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 32-33, 36, 117-119, 121, 125.

but steady improvement over time, perhaps a product of the equalizing effect of the frontier. Texas extended the vote to white women in the critical Democratic primary elections in 1918, two years before the national ratification of the 19th Amendment, and became the second state to swear in a woman governor shortly thereafter.⁶ Still, periods of reform and revolt alternated with periods of serious repression, and Anglo-Texan men retained their authority over political institutions, economic resources, and, key to this study, the cultural projection of “the Texan” that ideologically bound these other spheres together.

In the wake of World War II, however, a number of structural and historical factors converged to create an opening unlike those prior periods of protest and revolt, one in which the full exercise of formal, equal citizenship was finally an attainable possibility. First, the experiences of African American and Mexican American soldiers in war and women in the workforce on the home front gave a sense of participation and hard-won entitlement to previously disfranchised groups. Second, the Cold War context of global ideological conflict made obvious inequalities embarrassing for a United States that had so recently defeated Nazism abroad, strengthening the will of the federal government to bring the Jim Crow South in line with constitutional norms.⁷ The consolidation of landholding and mechanization of agriculture that hobbled the semi-feudal order of the countryside in the 1930s and 1940s drew people to the more free-wheeling atmosphere of the cities in which organization and activism proved more

⁶ Judith McArthur, *Creating the New Woman: The Rise of Southern Women's Progressive Culture in Texas, 1893-1918* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 74-75, 97-99. Robert Calvert, Arnaldo De León, and Gregg Cantrell, *The History of Texas*, Fourth Edition (Wheeling, IL.: Harlan Davidson, 2007), 301-302.

⁷ Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Penny von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

feasible.⁸ Along with and spurred by all these factors, a generation of committed and able activists contributed to the long rights revolution of the 1940s to the 1970s.

These movements defined the state's cultural politics in the 1970s, and to understand the Seventies revision of "the Texan," it is first necessary to frame these movements' expansion of who could lay claim to Texanness in the public sphere. This chapter begins by retracing the historical arc of 1936-68 previously presented, but from a different angle attendant to illustrative moments in the movements launched over that period by those outside the prosperous circle of *The Super-Americans*. The chapter then moves from those movements' struggles for legal and social equality in the 1936-68 period to their more radical variants born of the late 1960s and early 1970s—Black Power and, especially, the Chicano Movement. By the 1970s, an attention to cultural specificity over and against the assimilationist ideal gave rise to a nationalist model of understanding race, ethnicity, and even, in some instances, gender.⁹ In positing metaphorical nationalism, such movements competed with the Anglo-Texans' own elaborate brand of national thinking. Though cultural nationalism participated in reifying essentialisms just as the Anglo-Texans' vision did, these movements generally provoked a salutary contestation over identity that revealed Texanness as relational and constructed, rather than normative or natural.

Contestation over the gendered aspects of the exercise of power in Texas prove more challenging and multiform to document, and always intersects with the identity categories of race, ethnicity, and class. We will attend to the movements of second wave

⁸ Pete Daniel treats the relationship between the collapse of tenancy and twentieth-century movements for civil rights in the urban South as a whole, rather than Texas in particular, but his argument applies. Pete Daniel, *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures since 1880* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985) and Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

⁹ On cultural feminism as a corollary of cultural nationalism, see Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 287-88.

feminism and women's liberation in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, as those movements' elaboration of gender as an operative category of social inequality directly affected discourses on Texas in the 1970s.¹⁰ These movements addressed a number of issues—Texas played a pivotal role in both *Roe v. Wade* and the Carter administration's outreach to the women's movement—but the focus here will be on women's resistance to their frequent erasure in “the Texan.”

Finally, these movements for race and gender equality reverberated in new intellectual and activist work regarding the normative categories of white ethnicity and masculinity in the 1970s, now rendered particular aspects of identity rather than universal norms against which “the other” was defined. Nationally, Black Power and the Chicano Movement inspired a rethinking of the multiple identities submerged in whiteness, and the passion for knowing the authentic self through knowing the identity of one's “people” fed not only off the Black Panthers' militancy, but off the rage for genealogy inspired by the televised mini-series *Roots* (1977).¹¹ These developments provided ground for meaning and a usable past in the unsteady malaise of the 1970s. By the same token, feminism's careful theorization of the experience of womanhood sparked a bifurcated response in the decade's representations and experiences of masculinity—a backlash that retreated into machismo, on the one hand, and, on the other, a movement that echoed the feminists' critiques by arguing for the transcendence of oppressive gender categories altogether.

¹⁰ Such intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, and inequality find elaboration in Julia Kirk Blackwelder, *Women of the Depression: Caste and Culture in San Antonio, 1929-1939* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1984) and Carroll Parrott Blue, *The Dawn at My Back: Memoir of a Black Texas Upbringing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

¹¹ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 41-46.

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: THE ASSIMILATIONIST DIVIDE, 1936-68

In the years just before and after World War II, middle class movements for racial equality in the African American and Mexican American communities of Texas broadly sought integration into and assimilation with the political and cultural mainstream. In that moment, involvement in the mainstream meant dealing with the Lone Star Regionalist cohort that typically regarded the whiteness, and often the masculinity, of “the Texan” as the natural spoils of martial victory over the state’s prior stewards. Subaltern critiques of this notion tended to remain either counter-narratives outside the public sphere or, if they erupted into intellectual and political debate, had a deferential cast. Jim Crow laws largely prevented African Americans from speaking truth to power in the universities or state capitol, but the liminal whiteness of Mexican Americans, inflected through class hierarchies, gave them some voice in Texas institutions of learning and politics. As early as the 1920s, J. Frank Dobie trained Jovita González, the first Mexican American woman to receive a Master’s degree from the University of Texas as well as the first woman to head Dobie’s beloved Texas Folklore Society. She was among the first Mexican Americans to turn the academic folkloric gaze to the borderlands in works such as *The Folklore of the Texas-Mexican Vaquero* (1927), *America Invades the Border Towns* (1930), *Tales and Songs of the Texas-Mexicans* (1930), *Among My People* (1932), *The Bullet Swallower* (1935), and *The Mescal-Drinking Horse* (1940).¹² Ambivalence, rather than advocacy, dominated her portrayals, however, in part due to the necessity of finding her way amongst her Anglo male colleagues of the Dobie cohort, but also due to the lens of her social position in the upper class. At that time, her class afforded her privileges often to the extent that she could

¹² The best introduction to Jovita González can be found in the chapter on her in José Limón’s *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 60-75. Limón has been instrumental in re-introducing Gonzalez’s work into print.

make a claim on whiteness over and against the borderlands working class she rendered “other” through the folkloric gaze. Still, with works like *Among My People* (note the possessive), González, as José Limón has argued, articulated “a class/race paternalism and colonialist attitude consistent with her padrino, Dobie, thereby reinforcing Anglo-American capitalist dominance in Texas as a whole. Yet . . . I do not sense here ‘ambivalence’ in an ordinary understanding of the term, as a synonym for ‘uncertainty.’ González seemed quite certain most of the time of her allegiances in the war of position.”¹³ In a work like *The Bullet Swallower*, as Limón reads it, González was very much of her generation in constructing a coded counter-narrative in plain sight. Her “ambivalence” did not consist of breezy equivocation between the Mexican borderlands and the Dobie cohort, but in a strong attraction to both, with the tejano ultimately having the upper hand. Despite her social class and allegiance to Dobie, González ultimately left the Lone Star Regionalist core of Austin to teach in Mexican American secondary schools in Corpus Christi.

Another Dobie associate who brought a muted borderlands critique into the Lone Star Regionalist circle was state representative J. T. Canales of Brownsville. Canales represented well the tensions visited upon leaders in the Mexican American community of South Texas, the deep “ambivalence” Limón located in González’s writing. With a South Texas lineage dating back to the Spanish land grants, Canales had worked in ranching in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, went to college in Austin and Ann Arbor, and both clashed with and participated in Jim Wells’s political machine in Cameron County. During the sedicioso uprising just prior to American involvement in World War I, Canales served as a commander of a Mexican American scouting unit for the U. S. Army,

¹³ Limón, 69.

but he was also one of the few Mexican American politicians to criticize loudly the overwhelming, violent response to the incident on the part of the Texas Rangers, that law enforcement body which was in many ways the Anglo-Texan myth made flesh.¹⁴

As an activist and advocate, Canales underscored the continuous history of Texas Mexicans in the border region that, by the measures of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, gave them an undeniable claim on U. S. citizenship and its attendant rights. To this end, Canales authored much of the founding constitution of the League of United Latin American Citizens and helped establish the organization's early prioritization of Mexican American claims on U. S. citizenship.¹⁵ During the 1950s, Canales penned both the two-volume *Bits of Texas History in the Melting Pot of America* (1950, 1957) and *Juan Cortina: Bandit or Patriot?* (1951).¹⁶ Both works carefully rebutted Anglo-Texan triumphalist history in keeping with the cultural pluralist ideology of early LULAC. Despite this apparent caution, Canales did not shrink from disagreeing with prominent Anglo academics on divergent interpretations of the South Texas past. For example, Canales once wrote Dobie on the subject of Juan Cortina, a prominent South Texas rancher who, briefly, took over the city of Brownsville by force in 1859 in response to repeated Anglo violations of the rights of Mexican Americans.

My dear friend "don Pancho" Dobie: Several years ago you and I had a conversation about Juan N. Cortina in your office. I called to your attention what I thought were some unfair statements in your book "A Vaquero of the Brush Country" about Cortina and showed you some documents which made you say "I thought I had read everything about Cortina that was ever written but of these I

¹⁴ Patrick Carroll, *Felix Longoria's Wake: Bereavement, Racism, and the Rise of Mexican American Activism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 119. Also, Richard Ribb, "José Tomás Canales and the Texas Rangers: Myth, Identity, and Power in South Texas, 1900-1920," Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2001.

¹⁵ Benjamin Haber Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 183-184.

¹⁶ J. T. Canales, *Bits of Texas History in the Melting Pot of America* (Brownsville: 1950, 1957); J. T. Canales, *Juan Cortina: Two Interpretations* (New York: Arno Press, 1974).

did not know.” . . . My relative, Cortina, was not a saint, but neither was he a “bandit” in the real sense of the term; or a thief. . . He was a disillusioned and, perhaps, a misguided reformer, who was unfortunate in wrongfully taking the law in his own hands to vindicate what he conceived to be his rights.¹⁷

Canales addressed these concerns at length in *Juan Cortina: Bandit or Patriot?*, reclaiming a forebear delegitimized by the catch-all “bandit” slur for Canales’s own project of placing Texas Mexicans squarely as defenders of American constitutional rights. Such compatriots as González and Canales offered some critique from within of the Dobie version of “the Texan,” but their differences could also strengthen Dobie’s intellectual hand through their continued public deference to his leadership.

Such deference issued in large part from political, financial, and bureaucratic matters relating to the University of Texas that made of Dobie’s cohort gatekeepers in academic publishing and professional development, but affairs in the academy would not always be so. As the post World War II period progressed, discourses of subaltern resistance entered the public sphere in new and meaningful ways. Coming close on the heels of Canales’s cautious debates with Dobie, the significance of Américo Paredes’s project of bringing a more forceful historical critique into the open cannot be underestimated. In the late 1950s, Paredes moved beyond the cautious tone of gentle nudging to outright (if often sarcastic) confrontation in *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (1958).¹⁸

With His Pistol in His Hand examined the corrido “The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez,” a song about a man accused of a crime he did not commit, who killed a sheriff in self-defense and fled to near-escape from an enormous manhunt in the borderlands. In June 1901, a stolen horse in Karnes County led Sheriff Brack Morris to the home of

¹⁷ J. T. Canales to J. Frank Dobie, January 16, 1950, Box 2M254, Folder Classified Correspondence J. Frank Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb Papers.

¹⁸ Américo Paredes, *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad & Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958).

Gregorio Cortez, who was rumored to have just such a new horse. He did, in fact, but it was one legitimately acquired. However, the language barrier between Sheriff Morris and Gregorio Cortez, ineptly handled through Deputy Boone Choate, led Cortez to answer “no” when asked if he had a new horse. After more mistranslations, a firefight ensued in which Morris drew his gun on the Cortez brothers and was shot and killed by Gregorio in return. Cortez fled, and nearly made it to the border against near-impossible odds before being apprehended. Governor Oscar Colquitt pardoned Cortez in 1913 due to political pressure, and Cortez left for Mexico shortly thereafter.

Paredes’s book began by tracing the region’s and Cortez’s history, but more importantly, it explicated the songcraft, folklore, and legend that developed around Cortez’s accusation, stand, and flight. In intellectual terms, Paredes’s book revolutionized folkloric work in the state. Early in *With His Pistol in His Hand* he included a chapter very much in the Dobie vein—recounting the Cortez legend just as it was told in the campfire settings with which Dobie was so enamored. “They still sing of him,” begins the chapter entitled “The Legend,” “in the ranches when men gather at night to talk in the cool dark, sitting in a circle, smoking and listening to the old songs and tales of other days. Then the guitarreros sing of the border raids and the skirmishes, of the men who lived by the phrase, ‘I will break before I bend.’”¹⁹ So far, Paredes has done a passable impression of Dobie. He quickly moves on from this voice, though, to tell the story as an academic folklorist and ethnomusicologist, listing different variants of the corrido of Gregorio Cortez and speculating on their social evolution, and how that evolution reflected the needs of the communities in which the song traveled.

¹⁹ Ibid., 33.

This social context, and its explicit critique of reigning historical work on the borderlands, is what made *With His Pistol in His Hand* a metaphorical call to arms. In the work, Paredes, too, took a stand for his rights with a withering critique of the dominant Dobie-Webb interpretation of Texas history then, in the late 1950s, at the height of its powers. Walter Prescott Webb came in for the more devastating criticism, brought on by the casual racism of his celebratory account of the Texas Rangers. It is worth quoting at length Paredes's sarcastic introduction of the Webb legend early in the Gregorio Cortez book. While outlining the status of mainstream historiography on Texas Mexicans, Paredes quoted from Webb's *The Texas Rangers*:

Without disparagement, it may be said that there is a cruel streak in the Mexican nature, or so the history of Texas would lead one to believe. This cruelty may be a heritage from the Spanish of the Inquisition; it may, and doubtless should, be attributed partly to the Indian blood. . . the Mexican warrior . . . was, on the whole, inferior to the Comanche and wholly unequal to the Texan. The whine of the leaden slugs stirred in him an irresistible impulse to travel with rather than against the music. He won more victories over the Texans by parley than by force of arms. For making promises—and for breaking them—he had no peer.

After the quote, Paredes continued, “Professor Webb does not mean to be disparaging. One wonders what his opinion might have been when he was in a less scholarly mood and not looking at the Mexican from the objective point of view of the historian.”²⁰ Though Webb was an economic populist and a self-declared progressive, Paredes easily reveals the hypocrisy of the historian's pretense to racial liberalism. In the late 1950s, a decade when the fight for racial equality still faced an uphill battle in the public eye, Paredes confidently presented Webb's words as obviously false. Again, Webb was still a

²⁰Ibid., 17. The Webb quote comes from Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935), 14. Paredes follows this passage with another infamous Webb line on the Texas Mexican, “whose blood, when compared with that of the Plains Indian, was as ditch water.” This comes from Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), 125-126.

professor of history and famed public intellectual at Paredes's University of Texas at this time. Indeed, when Webb died in a car crash in 1963, the student newspaper the *Daily Texan* ran it as the cover story, with a doctored photo of an ethereal Webb floating above the history department's Garrison Hall. Gushing testimonials to the man from his academic peers as well as the likes of Vice-President Lyndon Johnson and Senators John Tower and Ralph Yarborough accompanied the picture.²¹ This demonstrates the dense social networks by which the Anglo-Texan hold on cultural production ran through the capital city of Austin, and the kind of unified field of cultural power that scholars and activists like Paredes were up against.

Paredes also assailed J. Frank Dobie's paternalism, a man he rather magnanimously considered "a very lovable old fraud."²² As early as the 1930s, Paredes had parodied Dobie by way of the character K. Hank Harvey in his novel *George Washington Gómez*, though that work was not published until 1990.²³ In private, Paredes mocked Dobie's "expert" status on the borderlands in view of his abysmal Spanish, a situation that might account for his remark to Canales, "I thought I had read everything about Cortina that was ever written but of these I did not know." On the few occasions in which Paredes and Dobie met in person (Dobie had already been fired prior to Paredes's arrival at the University in 1950), they did not discuss border folklore. Paredes felt that

²¹ "Texans Comment on Webb," *Daily Texan*, March 10, 1963, 1.

²² Saldívar, 117. Saldívar's intellectual biography of Paredes is a tour de force that replicates the structure of *With His Pistol in His Hand* in telling Paredes's story through his work and advancing the argument that Paredes pioneered a transnational modernism only now coming to fruition.

²³ Américo Paredes, *George Washington Gómez: A Mexicotexan Novel* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1990), 270-275. The portrayal runs as follows: "He wore a large, widebrimmed Stetson under which his flowing white locks dropped to his shoulders in a very patrician way. The cuffs of his finely tailored trousers were neatly tucked into the tops of his ornate cowboy boots, which he wore on all occasions, whether he was talking to a Texas cowboy or entertaining the crowned heads of Europe with his pithy anecdotes. . . In a few years he had read every book there was on the early history of Texas, it was said, and his fellow Texans accepted him as the Historical Oracle of the State. There was a slight hitch, it was true. Most early Texas history books were written in Spanish, and K. Hank didn't know the language. However, nobody mentioned this, and it didn't detract from Harvey's glory."

this was the case due to Dobie's embarrassment for what he knew he did not know.²⁴ So, with Webb branded a villain and Dobie a fraud, Paredes forcefully opened the way for new visions of the Texas past that took account of a much greater number of its inhabitants.

Paredes's academic work arrived as the African American and Mexican American civil rights movements began to command national attention. Even as his work pointed the way forward to the confrontational and nationalist tones of the later Chicano Movement, Paredes's immediate intellectual cohort amongst Mexican American intellectuals included such figures as George Sánchez, Carlos Castañeda, and Arthur Campa. This Mexican American Generation of activists, as Mario García has labeled them, worked toward the assimilation of Americans of Mexican origin through full access to U. S. citizenship and by establishing the whiteness of Mexican Americans as an immigrant ethnicity rather than racialized other.²⁵ The genesis of the Mexican American Generation lay in the defeat of the sedicioso movement in 1915, the last movement of open, violent resistance seeking to reclaim sovereignty over South Texas. This development led the Mexican American middle class in South Texas to organize first in the League of United Latin American Citizens in 1929 and later in the American G. I. Forum in 1948 to assert the rights of U. S. citizenship rather than contest the sovereignty of South Texas. These organizations, even in their names, ratified the categories of Anglo-Texan nationality by appealing to masculine, martial tradition and replacing the charged term "Mexican" with "Latin" to defray the deeply ingrained antagonisms of early Texas history.

²⁴ Saldívar, 118.

²⁵ Mario García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). Carroll, 123-128.

The context of World War II was crucial for the mobilization, indeed central to the identity, of the American G. I. Forum, which catalyzed a new wave of activism in South Texas. In 1948, when the Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi refused to treat Mexican American veterans, Dr. Héctor García formed the American G. I. Forum to advocate for their rights. García fought segregation in the schools, worked on public health issues, and led classes for Mexican American veterans teaching them to secure benefits under the G. I. Bill, working tirelessly at the local and state level. Over the course of 1948, García led a fact-finding mission in the labor camps and segregated school systems of South Texas. He issued detailed reports on his findings, and called to task the injustice he found in and near the towns of Mathis, Three Rivers, and Sandia. Such fact-finding missions and their subsequent reports did not exactly grab headlines, however, in a country seeking to trumpet its prosperity and return to normality after World War II. A deferred interment derived from that conflict, however, would deliver García and South Texas a tremendous mobilizing impetus.

In 1949, the body of Felix Longoria, a Mexican American soldier killed in combat in the Philippines during World War II, was scheduled to return to his hometown of Three Rivers, Texas. The local funeral home refused to let him lie in state, as “the whites would not like it.”²⁶ Felix’s widow Beatrice Longoria implored the undertakers and, when they would not relent, relayed her story to Héctor García of the American G. I. Forum. García, in turn, mobilized the local tejano community and issued a series of telegrams on the incident to influential national and state figures. At a gathering of G. I.

²⁶ Carroll, 56. Carroll’s is the best single monograph on the incident, though it is also covered well in Julie Leininger Pycior, *LBJ & Mexican Americans: The Paradox of Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 68-71.

Forum members and protestors in Corpus Christi, García read aloud the telegram newly-elected Senator Lyndon Johnson sent in response.

I deeply regret that the prejudice of some individuals extends even beyond this life. I have no authority over civilian funeral homes. Nor does the federal government. I have today made arrangements to have Felix Longoria buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, where the honored dead of our nation's wars rest.²⁷

Felix Longoria was to be the first Mexican American so honored, and Johnson's offer energized the protest surrounding the affair. As the event's most thorough historian, Patrick Carroll, has argued, the "glaring but mundane disparities in Mexican American and Anglo educational, working, and living conditions existing in South Texas after World War II might have never become a pressing concern had Dr. García not had the presence of mind to make a narrower affront an issue of national honor."²⁸ The Longoria Affair drew national attention to Anglo prejudice against Mexican Americans in Texas and elevated the careers of both activist intellectual Dr. Héctor García and the freshman senator Lyndon Johnson.

At the same time as the Felix Longoria case garnered national headlines, African American activism developed along similar lines in Texas. Just as LULAC and the American G. I. Forum prioritized an image of respectability and spoke the language of Cold War Americanism, the NAACP followed existing legal channels to establish full constitutional rights to citizenship. In *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) and *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), the Supreme Court handed down two Texas-based decisions instrumental in the abolition of the South's Jim Crow legal structure.²⁹ The level of organization required to

²⁷ Carroll, 66.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁹ To these two Texas cases should be added the critical *Hernandez v. Texas* (1954), the first case regarding Mexican American rights to be heard before the Supreme Court, argued by San Antonio attorney Gus García. The case established that "non-Caucasians" must be included in juries under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

put forth defendants in such cases was more readily available in Texas in the 1940s than in the states of the Deep South like Mississippi or Alabama. Texas was not racially liberal, by any means. However, the issue of segregation was slightly less of a third rail in Texas politics, the state's terror apparatus, though formidable, was not quite so developed as in the Deep South, and a black middle class with a pronounced sense of civic engagement had grown up in the major cities, especially Houston.³⁰

In the first of these two cases, *Smith v. Allwright*, the Supreme Court struck down the all-white Democratic primary that, essentially, determined political power in the one-party states of the South. Houston dentist Lonnie Smith, with the backing of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, challenged his inability to vote in the primary as a denial of rights under the Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Seventeenth amendments. The court agreed, stating, "The United States is a constitutional democracy. Its organic law grants to all citizens a right to participate in the choice of elected officials without restriction by any state because of race. This grant to the people. . . is not nullified by a state through casting its electoral processes in a form which permits a private organization to practice racial discrimination in the election."³¹ Though local authorities continued to obstruct African American voting through other means prior to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the tide had turned. Intensive activism and personal sacrifice in the Deep South continued to push against the strongest redoubts of white supremacist reaction, widening the openings that cases such as *Smith v. Allwright* afforded.

Just as *Smith v. Allwright* augured changes in Southern voting rights, *Heman Sweatt v. Theophilus Painter* provided a needed wedge in the desegregation of schools by

³⁰ Carroll Parrott Blue, *Dawn at My Back: Memoir of a Black Texas Upbringing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 51, 75-87.

³¹ *Smith v. Allwright* on <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com> (accessed August 11, 2008).

striking down the separate-but-equal doctrine in graduate and professional education. Heman Sweatt applied to the University of Texas Law School in 1946 and was denied admission on account of race. Often portrayed as a “postal worker from Houston,” Sweatt was also an educator who had spent some years in Ann Arbor, an occasional writer for the African American *Houston Informer*, and a backer of the NAACP who took an interest in the suits the organization was bringing against the Jim Crow laws. This included *Smith v. Allwright*, which led to Sweatt’s desire to study law. He sued for admission in a case argued before the Supreme Court by Thurgood Marshall along the same lines as the later *Brown v. Board* (1954).³² Not only was there was no separate law school for blacks, Marshall argued; even if such a school were to exist, it could not be considered equal to the prestigious faculty and social contacts afforded by the University of Texas Law School. State lawmakers quickly and ineptly set up a black law program at what later became Texas Southern University in Houston. The Supreme Court found in Sweatt’s favor, and the new Dean of the Law School, W. Page Keeton, admitted him in 1950.³³ Sweatt endured threats on his life, vandalism of his property, heart attack, ulcers, divorce, and an appendectomy upon entering law school. Under such pressures, he eventually withdrew without completing his degree. Nevertheless, as with Longoria’s interment at Arlington, the Rubicon had been crossed, and the integration of the flagship University of Texas at all levels proceeded, unevenly but apace, with the first black undergraduates matriculating in 1956.

³² On the long history and legacy of *Brown v. Board* in Texas, see Neil Foley, “Black, White, and Brown,” *Journal of Southern History*. 70:2 (2004).

³³ A precedent had been set for this case when African American Ada Sipuel sought admission to the University of Oklahoma Law School, resulting in the Supreme Court case *Sipuel vs. the Board of Regents of Oklahoma* in 1948. Oklahoma, like Texas, hastily set up a “colored” law school, but the gambit failed, as in Texas, and the Supreme Court ordered the University of Oklahoma to admit Sipuel. Thurgood Marshall argued this case, as well, and, incidentally, Page Keeton was the dean of that law school at the time of Sipuel’s admission. Dwonna Goldstone, *Integrating the Forty Acres: The Fifty-Year Struggle for Racial Equality at the University of Texas* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 20-30.

In that same year, the Governor of Texas sought to draw the line at the integration of public high schools. Two years after *Brown v. Board*, Governor Allan Shivers briefly allied the Texas government with the Deep South strategy of massive resistance to integration. In Mansfield, Texas, a standoff over integration occurred when a federal court called upon the Mansfield School District to allow African American students to attend the public high school in the small town southeast of Fort Worth, the first school district so ordered in Texas. Indeed, the Mansfield incident prefigured the events at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the following year. However, in this instance, the federal government did not intervene in favor of integration. To the contrary, Texas Rangers arrived to “keep order” by preventing the attendance of African American students.³⁴ Historians have linked federal inaction to Governor Allan Shivers’s support of the Republican Eisenhower in the presidential election. The Governor’s apostasy in breaking from the solid South, in this view, earned him leeway on civil rights issues not accorded to the loyalist Democrat Orval Faubus.³⁵ The Mansfield model did not hold, however, as centrists allied with Lyndon Johnson wrested control of the state Democratic party that same year of 1956, marginalizing the Shivercrat right wing and its preference for massive resistance. School integration remained uneven in the state, but the drama of Mansfield would not be soon repeated.

In all, the civil rights era of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s produced stirring victories and raised hopes for the substantial and rapid achievement of equality. The national narratives of *Brown v. Board*, sit-ins, SNCC, freedom rides, and voter registration had their Texan versions not only in the early cases of *Smith v. Allwright* and

³⁴ Bruce Glasrud and James Smallwood, eds. *The African American Experience in Texas: An Anthology* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007), 178.

³⁵ Randolph Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 426-427. Also Ricky Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans: Allan Shivers and Texas Two-party Politics* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2005), 138-141.

Sweatt v. Painter and the massive resistance to integration at Mansfield, but in the parallel struggle of Mexican Americans through the Felix Longoria Affair and Paredes's intellectual revolt at the University of Texas. The hopes generated by such an accelerated pace of change in the early postwar years created a climate ripe for frustration in instances where change was not so forthcoming. Entry into schools and voting booths did not deliver urban neighborhoods from poverty, end the corruption whereby Anglo political machines ruled the border counties, or bring the Anglo mainstream to recognize the positive value of cultural difference. Activists broached new approaches and new ideas to meet these frustrations, and the resulting atmosphere of cultural nationalism had distinct ramifications for the Anglo-Texans' own brand of metaphorical nationality.

LA RAZA UNIDA: CULTURAL NATIONALISM IN THE BORDERLANDS

In 1966, civil rights activist James Meredith, best known as the student who integrated the University of Mississippi, set out on a solo walk from Memphis to Jackson to instill in African Americans the courage to register to vote under the new Voting Rights Act. Not far into Mississippi, he was shot by a white sniper. A large group of civil rights activists pledged to continue his march to Jackson. During the continuation of James Meredith's Freedom March across Mississippi, Stokely Carmichael publicly introduced the Black Power doctrine that upended the priorities of the civil rights movement. "We been saying freedom for six years, and we ain't got nothin'. What we gonna start saying now is Black Power." The phrase was somewhat vague in Carmichael's introduction of it, but he and others subsequently elaborated the Black Power position as meaning that black activists should orient themselves away from issues of inclusion or equal opportunity, and toward independent institutions and bases of power

that celebrated the cultural distinctiveness, even the distinct nationality, of black people.³⁶ Historians should not overstate the assimilationist/nationalist or liberal/militant dichotomy in the civil rights movements of the postwar period. The NAACP had its militants, to be sure, and LULAC never advocated the complete abandonment of Spanish language or Mexican culture.³⁷ Rather than an evolutionary trend in which cultural nationalism follows neatly on earlier, liberal civil rights movements, the two should be seen as coexisting tendencies that have different moments of dominance in the public sphere. The late 1960s and early 1970s marked one of those periods in which radical nationalist positions came to the fore. A growing sense of cultures as particular, and the American nation as pluralist, came into greater view in the wake of Carmichael's declaration, and this nationalist turn possessed tremendous significance, especially for the Chicano Movement, in Texas.

The race-as-nation rhetoric emanating from the Black Panthers, Ron Karenga's US Organization in California, and the radicalized Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee under Carmichael and H. Rap Brown resonated with existing formulations of cultural nationalism in Texas. While some militant black groups in Dallas, Austin, and, especially, Houston's Third Ward adopted this rhetoric in urban settings, for the most part, African American authors, activists, and artists did not contrast this position with existing discourses of Anglo-Texan nationalism in the same manner as did the state's Mexican Americans. J. T. Canales could turn to Juan Cortina, and Américo Paredes could refashion Gregorio Cortez, as key individuals of the Texas national story to be contested and refigured. However, the history of African American resistance to Anglo

³⁶ Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981, 1993), 199.

³⁷ For a key work in rethinking the liberal-radical dichotomy in the early and mid 1960s, see Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

power in the state remained more submerged in dominant narratives, its rebellions—slave revolts, participation in the Reconstruction-era state police, running for local office under Populism, the Fort Sam Houston mutiny of 1917—were enshrouded in anonymity.³⁸ While Anglos used the stories of open warfare against Mexico and Mexicans to buttress a sense of Anglo-Texan national identity, by extension proffering a public narrative to be reinvented by tejanos, the history of defeat in the Civil War and African American enslavement did not redound to one-sided tales of Anglo-Texan glory, and thus was rendered invisible.

Mexican American participation in the national discourses of Texanness has an additional source, as well. The United States Southwest stands out in the history of American expansionism as a product of war between revolutionary New World republics. This made for variant resonances of territoriality, sovereignty, and claims to a “homeland” among tejanos. In particular, the Nueces Strip’s position as a true irredenta, a bounded territory whose sovereignty is held by an occupying power while linguistically, culturally, and historically, the place remains closely tied to a neighboring nation, accounts for the divergence. This territory between the Nueces River and Rio Grande in South Texas had been a part of the Nuevo Santander/Tamaulipas state under Spanish and Mexican rule, rather than in the administrative district of Texas. Political leaders of the Republic of Texas and the United States claimed otherwise, and it was this swath of territory that directly led to the outbreak of war between the United States and Mexico in 1846. The history of conquest made South Texas a key site of territorial and

³⁸ Carroll Parrott Blue’s *Dawn at My Back* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003) provides a vivid account of cultural memory and the construction of counternarratives in the African American communities of Texas, especially with regard to the 1917 mutiny in Houston. This is not, by any means, to suggest that the African American community in Texas did not have its own pantheon of historic figures, but those figures had to be introduced into the public historical script in these years, while Mexican Americans were often engaged in re-tooling the public memory of historical figures formerly vilified in the Anglo record.

cultural contestation. On the other hand, the history of African American slavery made for a very different attachment to place. Property rights in land remained highly charged for African Americans, and ownership of the plot of ground that one worked remained a dream for African American farmers as a symbol of freedom and independence. Such property could be deeply felt as *homeplace*, but this attachment to Texas was of a different sort than Mexican Texans of the Nueces Strip who framed the place as historical *homeland*. While the point can be overstated, the discourse of territoriality and sovereignty that figured into the more radical cultural nationalist movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s struck a more responsive chord in Chicano politics than black politics in Texas.³⁹

This is by no means to say that African Americans did not exercise a claim on representation in Texas, however. Black Power came in many forms, and amongst the most fundamental changes to occur in either the liberal or radical phases of the civil rights movement was that a black congressional delegation took its place in the state capitol. While the territorial impulse to local control and self-determination motivated Raza Unida organization in South Texas, African American activists focused on representation in the legislature in order to secure rights by law. By 1974, the black caucus in the Texas legislature included Eddie Bernice Johnson and Sam Hudson of Dallas, G. J. Sutton, Senfronia Thompson, Craig Washington, Mickey Leland, Paul Ragsdale, and Anthony Hall of Houston, and Wilhelmina Delco of Austin. Ideologically, the officeholders ranged from the conservative Anthony Hall to the moderates Sam

³⁹ Differences also marked the relationship of African Americans and Mexican Americans to citizenship and belonging within the American nation. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo defined Mexican Americans as citizens upon the Anglo American conquest of northern Mexico, and thus the struggle for full citizenship involved the realization of a status already written in the nation's diplomacy, though complicated by the continuing cross-currents of new Mexican immigration. For African Americans, citizenship and belonging in the American nation involved their creation as citizens in the wake of emancipation.

Hudson and Paul Ragsdale to the radical politics of G. J. Sutton and Senfronia Thompson. That Sutton and Thompson, the radicals of the group who spoke the language of liberation politics, chaired the black caucus is indicative of the breadth of voices entering the chamber by the mid-1970s. However, the acceptance of such black officeholders was by no means immediate. When up-and-coming Comptroller Robert S. Calvert publicly referred to Eddie Bernice Johnson as that “n---r woman,” it was obvious that the nominal victories of inclusion in the political process only constituted a beginning.⁴⁰

Further, the rise of a black office-holding class in Austin did little to alleviate the deep social segregation that, since the city’s Master Plan of 1928 racially segregated municipal services by residential neighborhood, had divided the city along east-west, black-white lines. Social activism required much more than African Americans sitting in the Texas House of Representatives, and other civil rights organizations outside the capitol dome continued to organize in areas that, while not so visible as congressional politics, aided in sustaining a sense of mobilization from the 1960s into the 1970s. In Austin, these energies congregated around individuals like Velma Roberts, who served as president of the Austin Welfare Rights Organization from 1968 to 1975, as well as participating in other East Austin organizations such as Black Voters Against Paternalism and the Black Citizens Task Force.⁴¹

The Chicano movement combined these concerns of electoral politics and social activism as its leaders moved from a focus on inclusion as citizens to the achievement of

⁴⁰ Jack Keever, “Sole Brothers,” *Texas Monthly*, January 1975, 20. This is *not* the Robert Calvert to whom this dissertation is dedicated. Robert A. Calvert was an historian at Texas A & M University, trained at the University of Texas at Austin. Robert S. Calvert the comptroller should also be distinguished from Robert W. Calvert, a Texas Supreme Court justice and chair of the state constitutional convention in the 1970s.

⁴¹ Velma Roberts and Ruby Williams in Daryl Janes, ed. *No Apologies: Texas Radicals Celebrate the 60s* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1992), 109-119.

political power in Mexican American majority areas of the state, using cultural nationalism as a substantive mobilizing force. The Chicano Movement's founding document of 1969 "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán," referred to a mythic homeland of the Aztecs in the U. S. Southwest prior to their migration to the central valley of Mexico. Though mythic, the rhetoric overlapped with the subjective experience of homelands lost in the Nueces Strip and Winter Garden regions of South Texas. These spaces, along with New Mexico, perhaps best fit the nationalist arguments of the Southwestern Chicano movement—irredenta in which many counties had majority Mexican and Mexican American populations. This situation made South Texas fertile ground for such exhortations as Armando Rendon's *Chicano Manifesto* of 1971, proclaiming that the "Chicano revolt strikes at the myths of Anglo supremacy, discards the Anglo-or-nothing value system, and seeks the creation of a meaningful and sensitive balance between the dominant Anglo way of existence and the Chicano way of life."⁴² Rather than seeking the recognition of existing legal rights or appealing to Anglo-American honor as Héctor García and Thurgood Marshall did, this movement hinged on issues of "meaning" and Anglo projections of "supremacy," and was confrontational in rhetoric and stance.

The movement's vanguard organizations in Texas included the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) and its successor the Raza Unida Party.⁴³ Though the successes of both rested in a deeply collaborative social movement structure, the controversial radical José Angel Gutiérrez provided the central organizing energy for

⁴² Armando Rendon, *The Chicano Manifesto: The History and Aspirations of the Second Largest Minority in America* (New York: Collier Books, 1971), 4.

⁴³ These Lower Rio Grande movements remain underrepresented in the historical literature, which tends to prioritize California, Chavez, and the United Farm Workers. Critical first steps include Armando Navarro, *Mexican American Youth Organization: Avant-Garde of the Chicano Movement in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995); Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U. S. Two Party Dictatorship* (Temple University Press, 2000); and Ignacio García, *United We Win: The Rise and Fall of La Raza Unida Party* (University of Arizona Press, 1989).

both. A working class native of Crystal City, José Angel Gutiérrez had gone on to college in Kingsville and was a graduate student in San Antonio in the late 1960s when he became involved in the Chicano Movement. Gutiérrez, Juan Patlán, Willie Velásquez, Ignacio Pérez, and Mario Compean founded MAYO in San Antonio in 1967, but the organization very quickly shifted its focus from the Mexican American metropolis to Crystal City and the Winter Garden region in South Texas. The place had a singular history of bucking against the Anglo political machines that had for so long controlled the counties of South Texas. As early as 1963, Juan Cornejo, the Teamsters, and PASSO organized amongst field workers and Del Monte plant workers to elect a Mexican American slate of candidates to the City Council of Crystal City. The state sent Texas Rangers to “keep order,” and the Del Monte plant doubled hourly wages and went into overtime production to suppress voting. Nevertheless, Cornejo’s entire United Citizens slate of five was elected, the first Mexican Americans to hold office since Zapata County’s incorporation in 1910.⁴⁴ They were voted out of office in 1965, but their example provided a model for future campaigns. Gutiérrez knew this history well.

MAYO activists made note of such prospects for electoral success, but they began their organizing in South Texas around issues of education. The Mexican American education agenda often differed from that of African American groups. While Mexican American student populations were highly segregated, in areas of the state with large Mexican American populations that segregation was often porous, meaning that a number of loosely integrated Mexican-Anglo schools existed. As political battles over education were waged along the border, the issues thus involved disparities within schools in addition to those between schools. Where Mexican and Anglo students shared a campus,

⁴⁴ Ignacio García, 37-39.

largely under Anglo teachers and administrators, Mexican students tended to be underrepresented in extracurricular activities, were forbidden from speaking Spanish, and were more harshly punished than Anglos for similar disciplinary infractions. MAYO ascertained these disparities through organizing in schools and called for their rectification. In addition, they demanded more Chicano teachers and administrators and changes to the content of the curriculum, especially in Texas history. Inclusion was not so much the issue in 1969 Kingsville and Crystal City, as it had been in 1956 Mansfield, but rather the nature of that inclusion and the authority exercised within educational institutions. MAYO used the direct action measure of the school walkout and boycott to great effect in these situations, pressuring local school districts with the threat of reduced funding through absenteeism. MAYO initiated 39 such walkouts in South Texas between 1967 and 1970.⁴⁵

La Raza Unida Party developed out of these activities of the Mexican American Youth Organization in 1970. Having mobilized support for Chicano activism in South Texas, a number of MAYO organizers felt the next obvious step was to form an ethnically-based political party to run against the Anglo Democratic machines that they felt took Chicano votes for granted. While Raza Unida quickly expanded throughout the Southwest and Midwest, its only significant electoral successes and true base of power remained in Texas. Raza Unida's effectiveness on the local level, like MAYO's, owed to its combination of militant nationalist rhetoric with pragmatic political ends. As Ignacio García, a party member and one of its first historians has argued, they "placed importance on getting immediate results by being resilient, adaptable to shifting political winds, and sensitive to the process of action and reaction so as not to be placed in a position they

⁴⁵ Navarro, *Mexican American Youth Organization*, 125-148.

could not control. They shunned the dogmatic approach of sectarian groups in order to avoid ideological limitations on their freedom of action and choice.”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Gutiérrez never shied from militant rhetoric. He envisioned Raza Unida as an ethnic-based, interest group party, and, in a move sure to draw attention, publicly compared it to what he saw as George Wallace’s party for whites, the American Independent Party.⁴⁷ The fiery rhetoric worked, and soon after its founding in 1970, Raza Unida was on its way to being a significant part of the state’s political calculus. Raza Unida’s successes point to the need to theorize the 1970s as an expansion and acceleration of the activist energies of the 1960s.

Amidst this success, Gutiérrez had a habit of letting his mobilizing rhetoric outpace and even hamper his organizational goals. The most notorious instance in which Gutiérrez’s radical posturing did so came in a San Antonio press conference in which, when asked about MAYO’s orientation toward gringos, he stated, “We realize that the effects of cultural genocide take many forms—some Mexicanos will become psychologically castrated, others will become demagogues and gringos as well as others will come together, resist and eliminate the gringo. We will be the latter.” When asked to clarify what he meant by “eliminate the gringo,” he answered, “You can eliminate an individual in various ways. You can certainly kill him but that is not our intent at the moment. You can remove the base of support he operates from be it economic, political, social. That is what we intend to do.”⁴⁸ By 1973, lessons learned, Gutiérrez more carefully parsed the difference between “gringos” as the enemies of the Chicano movement and “Anglos” as individuals with whom the movement might work.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 100-101.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

Gutiérrez's eliminate-the-gringo rhetoric aside, his primary objective (“what we intend to do”) over the years of Raza Unida's prominence remained gaining the taxing power and the courts in Zavala County in the interests of creating a local-regional model for others to follow.⁵⁰ This attention to local control of institutions squared closely with the proposed objectives of militant nationalists—black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Native American—throughout the United States. However, Raza Unida's tremendous practical success—they won mayoral elections in Cotulla and Carrizo Springs and control of two city councils and school boards in the first year of their existence—would not be met by militants elsewhere.

In fact, this local-regional electoral model brought Gutiérrez into conflict not only with more media-oriented and vanguardist urban radicals like Corky Gonzalez's Crusade for Justice in Denver, but with compatriots in Texas like Ramsey Muñiz. Originally a moderate and relatively-unknown activist with the party's Waco chapter, Muñiz's charismatic bearing as the party's gubernatorial candidate in 1972 and 1974 made many people equate him with the party as its public face. As opposed to Gutiérrez, Muñiz believed in campaigning throughout the state, courting liberal Democratic votes (including Anglos), and basing the party in the urban barrios rather than the small towns and rural areas of South Texas. In the end, Muñiz's high profile in the party backfired with his arrest in 1976 on drug trafficking charges. The arrest did great damage to the party's reputation amongst the more socially conservative, older Mexican Americans Gutiérrez sought to court in small-town South Texas.⁵¹ Though many activists had

⁵⁰ Ignacio García, 189. Further evidence of Gutiérrez's effective, and often sarcastic, radical style arises in his *A Gringo Manual on How to Handle Mexicans* (Crystal City: Winter Garden Publishing House, 1974), a satirical handbook printed in English and Spanish telling the history of the movement and educating in the tactics activists might expect Anglo institutions to use against them, with Anglos who “throw out the bone, divide and conquer, [ask you to] prove you are a citizen, [tell you] you're fired, you're not going to graduate, etc.”

⁵¹ Ignacio García, 198.

endured harassment and trumped-up charges from law enforcement, it soon became apparent that Muñiz's crimes were real, even if the product of poor judgment. The strong showing of the party in 1972 and 1974, however, had still been enough to hasten the fracturing of the Democratic coalition as the votes sapped from Democratic totals in both elections strengthened the possibilities for Republican victory statewide by 1978. Far more importantly, though, Raza Unida broke through the conservative Anglo political machines that ruled the border counties as personal fiefdoms in the modern period. Though Gutiérrez's militant, third party vision did not survive past the elections of 1978, the space for political self-determination the party created did.

In Austin, the Chicano movement's activist faces included politician Gonzalo Barrientos, artist Amado Peña, Raza Unida leader María Elena Martínez, and poet Raul Salinas, in addition to the developing Mexican American Studies program on the University of Texas campus, with Paredes's talented colleagues and protégés.⁵² The Brown Berets, too, founded in Los Angeles on the model of the Black Panther Party, established a presence in Austin under Paul Hernandez. Contemporaneous with the developing "hippie-redneck" fusion amongst Anglos whereby the counterculture refigured the traditional iconography of "the Texan," the Chicano Movement in the early 1970s also established a high profile in the city from which to critique the traditional exercise of Anglo power. After a police shooting of a Chicano in his home in 1974, for example, Hernandez led the Brown Berets in a protest in front of the city's central police station.

We assembled under Interstate 35, right next to the police station, and we were having our rally when we heard Mayor Roy Butler speaking from the roof of the cop shop, where there were about thirty to forty helmeted police with riot gear,

⁵² The university community's interest in the Chicano movement was widespread. Ben Sargent, "Chicano Third Party Underway in the Valley," *Daily Texan*, February 1, 1970, 4.

automatic weapons, the works. Butler stood there with the microphone, talking down to the people. . . And they were going to provide a microphone down there so we could talk up to him and he could talk down to us.⁵³

Instead of enduring this condescension, Hernandez led the marchers to Roy Butler's home in a tony neighborhood on the west side of town. Hernandez thus underscored the city's segregation based in the city's Master Plan of 1928.⁵⁴

In addition to public protest, the Chicano movement in Austin followed both the model of black officeholders in pressing for greater political representation and the model of the mainstream Chicano movement in its focus on issues of labor. Gonzalo Barrientos ran for state representative from Austin in 1974 and was endorsed by César Chávez, and César Chávez's United Farm Workers, arguably the central entity in the Chicano Movement, organized in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.⁵⁵ As in California, the Lower Rio Grande Valley housed the "factories in the field" of modern agribusiness tended largely by Mexican migrant labor. Often treated as peripheral to the concerns of the capital, the UFW and other farm worker groups led marches to Austin that dramatized their concerns, as early as 1966 and deep into the 1970s.⁵⁶ Labor issues did not simply exist along the border, either. In Austin itself, a highly-publicized strike at Economy Furniture from November 1968 to March 1971 became a cause célèbre for the local Chicano Movement and its progressive allies. In an echo of prior struggles such as the San Antonio pecan shellers' strike of the late 1930s, a predominantly Mexican and Mexican American work force walked out over the non-recognition of their union, local

⁵³ Paul Hernandez in Daryl Janes, ed. *No Apologies: Texas Radicals Celebrate the '60s* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1992), 129.; "Across the Great Divide," *Daily Texan*, October 14, 1974.

⁵⁴ Anthony Orum, *Power, Money, & the People* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987), 175-76.

⁵⁵ Barrientos ad in *Daily Texan*, November 5, 1974.

⁵⁶ One of the first of these marches so shook Governor Connally, who feared embarrassment in Austin, that he went to meet with the farm workers in New Braunfels as they neared the capital. The fact that he pulled up to the march in an air-conditioned limousine did not help to build rapport and, indeed, the publicity caused Connally just the kind of embarrassment he sought to avoid. Ben Barnes, *Barn Burning, Barn Building* (Albany, TX: Bright Sky Press, 2006), 90-93.

456 of the Upholsterers International Union. The National Labor Relations Board sided with the union soon after the vote for unionization, but manager Milton Smith resisted the NLRB, fought the order to negotiate in court, and lost.

The high profile of the Chicano Movement drew the attention of Austin's broader cultural scene. Over Thanksgiving weekend in 1972, the United Farm Workers held a benefit concert in Austin with Vida, Greezy Wheels, Steve Fromholz, Teatro Chicano, Moods of Country Music, Alfonso Ramos, and Willie Nelson, mixing the developing sounds of progressive country with La Onda Chicana, the soundtrack of the Chicano Movement.⁵⁷ The close connections amongst political officeholders, insurgent labor, and popular music point to the creative ferment of the Chicano Movement in Central and South Texas. The Chicano Movement in Texas, as in California and the Southwest, possessed a pronounced cultural dimension that joined black nationalist rhetoric in highlighting distinct cultural forms with the aesthetics of the Anglo counterculture.

As Manuel Peña has documented in *Música Tejana*, a 1970s style known as La Onda Chicana synthesized working-class conjunto (an accordion-driven polka music) with middle-class orquesta (a smooth, pop-oriented mix of ranchera and big band jazz) to create a new style of music that took pride in Chicano forms while also remaining conversant in contemporary mainstream rock. Little Joe y la Familia served as the primary arbiters of the style and extremely popular performers of a radicalized Chicano identity. Its leader, Joe Hernandez, had spent much of the 1960s in a popular band, Little Joe and the Latinaires. Little Joe had long aspired after the crossover success of such artists as tejano Sunny Ozuna, who had appeared on Dick Clark's American Bandstand with his hit "Talk to Me."⁵⁸ By the 1970s, however, Hernandez's group began to develop

⁵⁷ *The Rag*, November 13, 1972, November 20, 1972.

⁵⁸ Manuel Peña, *Música Tejana* (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1999), 156-157.

priorities beyond Dick Clark. As his trumpeter Tony “Ham” Guerrero recalled in an interview with Manuel Peña, Little Joe “said, ‘I’ve decided we’re gonna drop the Latinaire bullshit, and we’re going to *la Familia*, and we’re gonna become hippies with long hair.’ . . . And he became the first freak in *La Onda Chicana*. *Andaba* Little Joe with real long hair down to his ass. He looked like a cross between a hippie and a militant Chicano.”⁵⁹ In their countercultural renaming, the central Texas group Little Joe y La Familia echoed a name change in the band of that other 1970s Austin “cross,” between a hippie and a redneck, in Willie Nelson and Family. Though it harkened to countercultural rhetoric, the all-male La Familia also draws our attention to the continued homosocial nature of this Chicano cultural production, rooted in the concept of carnalismo, or brotherhood. Nevertheless, the nationalist movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s challenged the sheltered vision of the state set forth by Anglo-Texan nationalism.

The shared masculinist ground of Anglo-Texan nationalism and much of the Chicano challenge to it made for a doubly challenging situation for women of color.⁶⁰ This made the accomplishments of black women and Chicana officeholders and activists all the more impressive in the period. Barbara Jordan was foremost amongst African American lawmakers in the state and the effective organization of African American welfare recipients was most often an affair conducted by women like Velma Roberts in East Austin. Likewise, the Chicano movement, its paeans to machismo and carnalismo aside, had strong, though often less visible, leadership from Chicanas, from Dolores Huerta’s example in the United Farm Workers to María Elena Martínez in the Austin

⁵⁹ Ibid., 164.

⁶⁰ Michele Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (New York: Dial Press, 1978) was a key 1970s text critiquing the masculinist posture of the Black Power movement. Also see Carroll Parrott Blue, *The Dawn at My Back: Memoir of a Black Texas Upbringing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

branch of Raza Unida. The women's movement in Texas began to address these issues, even if at times it was slow to theorize race and class.

LONE STAR WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Anglo-Texan identity had long encompassed a variant performativity for women, a frontier femininity, as it were, that existed as a kind of mirror to the masculinist Anglo-Texan. Confidence, bluster, and independence associated with either the "tough prairie mother" or "cowgirl" stereotype prevailed. From Texas Guinan and Miriam Ferguson and Bonnie Parker to Molly Ivins and Ann Richards, this theme signified on the national stage, though often still in the shadow of male Anglo-Texan performance. Texas Guinan, "Queen of the Nightclubs" and veteran silent film cowgirl, had gone far to establish the brashness of flapper New Womanhood in 1920s New York. Miriam Ferguson served as the first woman governor of Texas in the same decade. Despite claims that "Ma" was solely the tool of her husband Jim Ferguson, who had been banned from public office after being impeached in 1917, she participated actively in setting the agenda during her administrations of 1925-27 and 1933-35.⁶¹

However, the visibility and performativity of these individuals largely stood outside the later development of second wave feminism born of Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* and the National Organization for Women that defined activism amongst Texas women in the 1970s. This new feminist development was similar in Texas to that in other states, growing not only out of frustrations with the lot of women in postwar

⁶¹ Louise Berliner, *Texas Guinan: Queen of the Nightclubs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993); Norman Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug: Texas Politics, 1921-1928* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1984). The suffrage movement and Southern Progressivism provided the larger context for developments in the public role of Anglo-Texan women. Judith McArthur has become the primary historian of these movements with the books *Creating the New Woman: The Rise of Southern Women's Progressive Culture in Texas, 1893-1918* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998) and, with Harold Smith, *Minnie Fisher Cunningham: A Suffragist's Life in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

America generally, but with the chauvinism experienced even in the civil rights, antiwar, and student movements. Young Texas women primed to challenge inequality in the wider world discovered that inequality even amongst the beloved community of “the Movement.” Casey Hayden of Victoria and Austin proved a vital link in this chain that theorized the new wave of women’s liberation for the 1970s. Together with Mary King, Hayden in 1965 penned “Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo,” an internal SNCC document instrumental in drawing attention to the movement’s hypocritical record on gender difference.⁶² As Hayden and King argued, “having learned from the movement to think radically about the personal worth and abilities of people whose role in society had gone unchallenged before, a lot of women in the movement have begun trying to apply those lessons to their own relations with men.”⁶³ The feminism opened up by Friedan’s critique of postwar domesticity found new fire by the late 1960s in women’s liberation, a shift from liberal to radical rhetoric akin to the assimilationist-nationalist shift in the racial justice movements of the period.

Hayden had left the Austin that did so much to form her sensibilities by the time she wrote the memo, but the community continued to harbor an independent women’s movement that left a distinct imprint on the larger city. Young women formed a number of feminist communal houses in the neighborhoods west of the University of Texas. According to Frieda Werden, the peak of the movement’s fervor was in 1974 or 1975, coincidentally alongside that of the city’s Chicano Movement and progressive country scene.⁶⁴ Feminists created a series of independent institutions like Red River Women’s

⁶² Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left* (New York: Vintage Press, 1980), 98-100; Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 302-303; Echols, 30-34.

⁶³ Hayden and King in Evans, 99.

⁶⁴ Frieda Werden in Janes, 204.

Press, Austin Women's Center, the bookstore Book Woman, the magazine *Texas Woman*, and University Women's Liberation. Some nodes of this scene began their own revisions and critiques of "the Texan" in its tendency to masculine swagger. Frieda Werden was a particularly effective advocate in this regard. In 1975, while working at both the new regional magazine *Texas Monthly* and editing the feminist publication *Texas Woman*, she wrote an article entitled, "'Balls,' Said the Queen, or Tit for Tat in Texas," in the latter publication, criticizing the sexist language of *Texas Monthly* and the centrality of chauvinist behavior to the performance of "the Texan."⁶⁵ The title evidences the fact that the brashness of "the Texan" need not be a male domain, and feminists could easily re-tool its ardor to make themselves heard amongst the traditionally conservative din of the state.

As with the African American and Mexican American civil rights movements, the women's movement sought candidates and allies in the formal realm of electoral politics. In a political culture marked by the impenetrability of the good-ol-boys network, Austin elected Sarah Weddington as the first woman to represent the city in the Texas House of Representatives in 1972. Ann Richards managed that campaign as well as African American representative Wilhelmina Delco's in 1974 prior to Richards's own run for Travis County commissioner in 1976. Weddington had a much larger role in American history, however, than as the first woman elected state representative from Austin. Prior to Weddington's election, Austin feminist Judy Smith had approached Weddington, recently graduated from the UT Law School, about drawing up a federal test case on abortion, and a group of women's movement veterans found their subject in Norma McCorvey of Dallas.⁶⁶ In the youth-oriented spirit of the early 1970s, Weddington argued

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁶⁶ Rossinow, 329-330.

the case of *Roe v. Wade* before the Supreme Court, at age 27 the youngest attorney ever to do so.

Roe v. Wade marks one of two milestones in the women's movement that drew the nation's attention to Texas. The National Women's Conference of 1977 held in Houston was the other. In 1975, a United Nations conference in Mexico City declared "The International Year of Women," and President Gerald Ford and Congress called for a national women's conference to focus on the challenges, problems, and promise involved in the changing status of women in American society. The National Organization for Women chose Houston as the site of the conference for a number of reasons, including the pro-woman policies of Mayor Fred Hofheinz. Hofheinz had established the office of Women's Advocate in Houston in 1976. By 1977, when the National Women's Conference convened in Houston, the nation had come to see in Texas, and especially in the postmodern metropolis of Houston, the rising Sun Belt tide.

State conferences elected the slate of delegates to the national gathering. Though conservatives attempted to capture the delegations in a number of states, women associated with the state's feminist movement dominated the Texas proceedings in Austin in June 1977. The Conference was a watershed in the mainstreaming of the concerns of the women's movement and gave rise to such empowering and novel events as Lady Bird Johnson introducing the keynote speech by Barbara Jordan, who spoke of handing a gavel once used by Susan B. Anthony to New York Congresswoman Bella Abzug, who would be overseeing the conference.⁶⁷ In the end, social conservatives controlled about twenty percent of the delegates within the conference itself, and anti-ERA activist Phyllis Schlafly led a spirited coalition of counter-demonstrators in

⁶⁷ Suzanne Braun Levine and Mary Thom, eds. *Bella Abzug: An Oral History* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 204.

Houston. The state government came down on the side of Schlafly's group, though, with Governor Dolph Briscoe appeasing values voters by proclaiming the week of the conference "Family Week" in Texas. The state's ruling clique, and especially the wealthy white rancher governors amongst it, was not quite ready for women's liberation, Texas style.⁶⁸

THE UNMELTABLE TEXAN: REFLEXIVITY IN MASCULINITY AND WHITE ETHNICITY

By the 1970s, the new attention to identities as raced and gendered invited a parallel investigation of those identity categories, masculinity and whiteness, so long considered normative. This produced both a reflexive masculinity and white ethnic revival that turned the feminist attention to gender on the experiences of men and applied the cultural nationalist thesis to white immigrant ethnicities long considered fused in the American melting pot—Italian, Jewish, Polish, Irish. In addition, cultural nationalism and the white ethnic revival bolstered the old categories of regional identity difference, especially in representations and experiences of the Sun Belt South.

Feminism's echoes produced two divergent versions of reflexive masculinity in the 1970s. The first, exemplified by works like *The Liberated Man*, *The Hazards of Being Male*, and *The Male Machine*, made the case that men, too, were victimized by society's vision of masculinity.⁶⁹ Most of these employed the logic of women's liberation to argue for men's need to access those aspects of themselves gendered feminine in order to exercise true freedom and create an authentic self unburdened by societal constraints. Herb Goldberg, in *The Hazards of Being Male*, argued that the "male in our culture is at a

⁶⁸ Prudence Mackintosh, "The Good Old Girls," *Texas Monthly*, January 1978.

⁶⁹ Warren Farrell, *The Liberated Man: Beyond Masculinity* (New York: Random House, 1974); Marc Feigen Fasteau, *The Male Machine* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974); Herb Goldberg, *The Hazards of Being Male: Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege* (New York: Signet, 1976). The paperback edition of this last work carries a review blurb from the *Houston Chronicle*: "The breakthrough book that does for men what women's lib does for women."

growth impasse. He won't move—not because he is protecting his cherished place in the sun, but because he can't move. . . . He lacks the fluidity of the female who can readily move between the traditional definitions of male and female behavior and roles.”⁷⁰ Goldberg both overstated the ease of women's move beyond gender roles in the mid-1970s and understated the masculine impulse to defend patriarchal privilege. He did, however, raise a common perception. Marc Fasteau's *The Male Machine* also fixated on this transcendence of masculine-feminine duality. “To resolve, however temporarily, the opposing forces in society, to release the energy bound in opposing positions and make it fruitful, one must be able to accept and integrate the corresponding opposites in oneself.”⁷¹ This desire to transcend opposites echoed throughout the 1970s, as many Americans in the decade sought to restore a notion of the unitary American public in the midst of social strife and the assertion of particular identities. The actor Alan Alda of *M. A. S. H.* publicly stood for this new, sensitive masculinity in the mainstream press with television appearances and articles in *Ms.* defending the Equal Rights Amendment from a male perspective.⁷² The literature on sensitive masculinity provided a venue, suffused with countercultural tropes of authenticity, for men to explore these issues in a venue other than backlash politics—an alternative meditation on their lost hegemonic force in the unitary American public.

The second version of masculine reflexivity sparked by the women's movement involved a re-investment in the masculine, rather than a desire to transcend it. This most commonly took the form of a cranky backlash politics that shouted its defense of

⁷⁰ Herb Goldberg, *The Hazards of Being Male: Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege* (New York: Signet Books, 1976), 4.

⁷¹ Marc Feigen Fasteau, *The Male Machine* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 208. Fasteau also explored the key 1970s events of Vietnam and Watergate through the lens of unbalanced masculine selves out of touch with the feminine.

⁷² Alan Alda, “ERA: Why Should Men Care?” *Ms.*, July 1976, 48-50, 93.

patriarchal privilege. This was hardly the only arena in which the re-assertion of the masculine occurred, however. The gay liberation movement, too, contributed to a broader revisioning of gendered identities speaking in both the cultural nationalist tongue and the counterculture's language of authenticity. Styles amongst gay men often attempted to reclaim or, at times, burlesque, the traditional performance of hyper-masculinity that had been denied them on the basis of their sexual orientation and the stereotyped behaviors associated with it. The most notable phenomenon in this development was the clone style associated with gay enclaves of New York and San Francisco. According to Martin Levine,

The clone was, in many ways, the manliest of men. He had a gym-defined body; after hours of rigorous body-building, his physique rippled with bulging muscles, looking more like competitive body builders than hairdressers or florists. He wore blue-collar garb—flannel shirts over muscle T-shirts, Levi 501s over work boots, bomber jackets over hooded sweatshirts. He kept his hair short and had a thick mustache or closely cropped beard.⁷³

Gay men thus re-claimed masculine sartorial performances, and often did so in the public sphere, as with the camp musical group the Village People. Though such styles in New York and San Francisco constituted the vanguard of gay culture in the 1970s, Texas participated in these currents. The Gay Liberation Front held its National Conference in 1971 in Austin, a locale even in this early post-Stonewall era known for a relative lack of police harassment and an open bar scene.⁷⁴ This re-investment in the masculine played across a number of fields far beyond gay liberation. From Burt Reynolds's infamous *Cosmopolitan* spread in which his nude, hirsute body blended seamlessly into a bear rug

⁷³ Martin P. Levine, in Michael Kimmel, ed., *Gay Macho: The Life and Death of the Homosexual Clone* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 7.

⁷⁴ James T. Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones: Queering Space in the Stonewall South* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 64.

to the swagger of Anglo-Texan country music, the playful orientation towards identity in the decade's popular culture put a premium on the confidence afforded by machismo.

Just as feminism unleashed a wider interrogation of gender, so did Black Power spur an investigation of race and ethnicity that fractured, at least superficially, the monolith of American whiteness. The hyphenated identities of ethnic immigrant Americans came into fashion as, drawing on the narratives of civil rights, Polish-Americans, Italian-Americans, and Jewish-Americans revisited the history of their peoples' struggles in American history, so recently submerged in suburbanization and Cold War Americanism. Michael Novak issued the manifesto for the white ethnic turn in *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the Seventies* (1971).⁷⁵ The work testified to the delicate, often ambiguous, political nature of the white ethnic revival sparked by cultural nationalism. In short, Novak made an effort to differentiate the white ethnic from the Anglo-Saxon mainstream along similar lines to the separatist pronouncements made by black and Chicano nationalists. He suggested that Eastern European-, Irish-, Italian-, and Jewish-Americans belonged to more communitarian, organic traditions than the Anglo-Saxon, and that they were becoming impoverished by their assimilation to the atomized individualism of the Anglo American mainstream. "What is an ethnic group?" Novak asks:

It is a group with historical memory, real or imaginary. One belongs to an ethnic group in part involuntarily, in part by choice . . . Ethnic memory is not a set of events remembered, but rather a set of instincts, feelings, intimacies, expectations, patterns of emotions and behavior; a sense of reality; a set of stories for individuals—and for the people as a whole—to live out.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Michael Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the Seventies* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1971).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

In its near-spiritual and instinctual basis, Novak's "ethnicity," then, echoed the nationalism born of German Romanticism in nineteenth century Europe, though it possessed qualities, as well, of Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities," involving solidarities based on choice and imaginary memory.⁷⁷ The second chapter, "Confessions of a White Ethnic," offers Novak's own subjective experience of alienation in a very Seventies confessional mode.⁷⁸ The white ethnic turn's subjective orientation made for a tricky politics. The white ethnic could establish a rhetorical distance from white privilege through historical narratives of oppression without surrendering, or even acknowledging, the material wages that whiteness continued to confer.⁷⁹

However, Novak hoped, in 1971, to turn white ethnicity to progressive ends. After invoking Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, Novak asks:

What is the correlative ethnic dream? It is based on self-interest; and on the solidarity of underdogs. It is the dream of the one inevitable, fundamental, indispensable coalition: blacks and ethnic whites, shoulder to shoulder. It is a dream of frank and open talk about the needs of each.⁸⁰

However, political realities on the ground often made for bitter contestation between African Americans and white ethnics in northeastern cities. As with his political strategies with white Southerners, Nixon targeted northern working class ethnics as a vulnerable partner in the Democratic coalition. As Rust Belt industries failed and the strength of unions began to waver, many white ethnic underdogs chose to draw the circle tighter around white privilege, rather than express solidarity, shoulder to shoulder, with

⁷⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso Press, 1983).

⁷⁸ The title echoed another 1971 work, Larry L. King's *Confessions of a White Racist*, a sort of psychohistory/autobiography of one Anglo-Texan's retrospective awareness of his own white privilege. Larry L. King, *Confessions of a White Racist* (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

⁷⁹ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁸⁰ Novak, 249.

black citizens. These tensions flared most prominently in the battles over school integration through busing, North and South, as in the Boston crisis of the mid-1970s.⁸¹

Organizations like Joe Colombo's Italian Unity League and Rabbi Meir Kahane's Jewish Defense League borrowed from the rhetoric and tactics of the Black Panthers and Brown Berets but often deployed them in "defense" of white ethnic neighborhoods against people of color. Novak's dream did not come to pass, then, even though the celebration of white ethnicity rapidly became mainstream. In *Roots Too* (2006), Matthew Frye Jacobson has argued:

Here is one of the reigning ironies of the ethnic revival, and one of the mainsprings of our national political life in the decades since. If the project to restore Ellis Island initially took root in the soil of an ethnic-revival ethos of disquiet—even of outright protest against the homogenizing forces of modernity—it ended in an ancestral vision that has been made fundamentally nationalist. And if the “nation of immigrants” paradigm [that the ethnic revival cemented] began as a push for recognition and inclusion, it ended in a vision of the nation that is strangely exclusive, even in its celebration of diversity.⁸²

In other words, “the immigrant” has become central to dominant conceptions of American identity in the wake of the Seventies white ethnic revival, with Ellis Island replacing, to some extent, the master narratives of the pilgrim and the pioneer, but somehow none of this generates the political will to embrace the nation's real, existing Latin American and Asian immigrants born of the Immigration Act of 1965.

Central Texas would seem to be fertile ground for a resurgent white ethnicity based in its prominent German and Czech communities, but these groups did not participate on a large scale in the movement, except to reify their ethnic enclaves as tourist destinations.⁸³ The process of suburbanization of formerly urban, industrial ethnic

⁸¹ David Frum, *How We Got Here* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 256-62.

⁸² Jacobson, 67-68.

⁸³ In this, sites like Fredericksburg, West, Gruene, and Luckenbach followed Novak less than the dynamics of “the invention of ethnic place” described by Steven Hoelscher in *Heritage on Stage: The Invention of*

enclaves in the North did not mirror the experience of the largely rural, small-town, agricultural Central European ethnic communities in Texas. To the extent that the boomerang effect of cultural nationalism came to the fore in Texas, it issued from the resurgent interest in white Southerners as a kind of distinctive ethnic group. The sociologist John Shelton Reed continued Howard Odum's regionalist vision of Southern distinctiveness at the University of North Carolina in articulating this "Southern ethnic" thesis. The renewed celebration of immigrant white ethnicity revisited identities submerged in the mass culture of the postwar decades; the renewal of white Southern identity attempted to refurbish an identity whose position in the national imaginary was highly compromised by the period of massive resistance to civil rights.

The good ol' boy Southern resurgence exploded across music, film, and politics. Jimmy Carter smoothed the edges of Lyndon Johnson's image in constructing a vision of the New South politician (with brother Billy filling the gaps left by the Johnsonian burlesque). The "hixploitation" genre not only made Burt Reynolds's name through such fare as *Smokey and the Bandit*, *Gator*, *White Lightning*, *The Longest Yard*, *Hooper*, and *Deliverance*, but also had its Austin versions in *Outlaw Blues* (1977), in which Peter Fonda played Bobby Ogden, an ex-con turned country star in Central Texas, and *Roadie* (1980), in which Meat Loaf portrayed Travis Redfish, a Shiner Beer truck driver turned world's greatest rock-and-roll roadie. The John Travolta vehicle *Urban Cowboy* capped the trend as it related to Texas, a text we will return to in Chapter 6. By 1976, all of this resulted in a renewed attention to white folk culture in Texas, as Dobie's intellectual descendants joined with Paredes's in the investigation of the "thin cultural slices" of Texas life. By 1976, a Texas Folklore Society collection, entitled *What's Going On? (In*

Ethnic Place in America's Little Switzerland (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998); Joy Kristina Adams, "Going Deutsch: Heritage Tourism and Identity in German Texas." Ph.D diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006.

Modern Texas Folklore), included essays on Jack Ruby, Neiman-Marcus, marijuana, the underground press, rodeo, CBs, beer busts, zydeco, and western swing.⁸⁴ Something was afoot amongst Dobie's old folklorist confreres who set out to redefine the terrain of Texanness from their home base of Austin. Just as Anglo-Texans had long professed a metaphorical nationality, the larger context of the 1970s allowed them to fashion a fictive ethnicity. This pose offered the possibility, as Novak suggested, of sympathy for and political coalition with the African American and Mexican American movements for a more inclusive body politic that recognized the value of cultural pluralism. At the same time, assertion of Anglo-Texan "ethnicity" also ran the risk of positioning Anglo-Texans as just one group celebrating their "heritage" amongst many such groups, evading the subjects of power and inequality that had so long defined the exploitive relations that accompanied Anglo-Texan mythmaking.

CONCLUSION: "TOO MANY COSMO COWBOYS?"

In April of 1975, the cover of the *Austin Sun* featured Ed Guinn dressed in full cowboy attire, with weathered hat, oversized belt buckle adorned with armadillo, heavy turquoise jewelry, and brandishing two longneck beers as pistols, pointed cavalierly at the viewer. The caption next to the image editorialized: "Whoa!" By the spring of 1975, readers of the *Sun*, one of the alternative weeklies found in cities across the country that professionalized elements of the underground press, would have been acquainted enough with the imagery to recognize a disparity in the cover. The cosmic cowboy style pictured there, after all, had become closely associated with night life, leisure, and musical production in Austin over the past several years, and Ed Guinn would have been well known on the scene. A veteran of the late 1960s psychedelic-blues band Conqueroo and

⁸⁴ Francis Edward Abernethy, ed. *What's Going On? (In Modern Texas Folklore)* (Austin: Encino Press, 1976).

an activist associated with the *Sun*, Guinn's image ran against the grain here due, on one level, to the simple fact that he was an African American dressed as a 1970s cosmic cowboy. Further, he was a black man who had protested loudly against segregation in Austin ever since he became the first African American accepted into the University of Texas Longhorn marching band. Finally, in his musical career, he had protested against the turn to the country-western aesthetic as bringing with it an inherent reactionary politics.⁸⁵ His foray into the cowboy style here was meant to jar the viewer into recognition of the racialized nature of the subculture it represented. Jeff Shero Nightbyrd, a former national leader of Students for a Democratic Society who was the *Sun*'s editor-in-chief and author of this cover story, emphasized the point with the piece's title: "Too Many Cosmo Cowboys in Austin?"⁸⁶

These movements to expand the polity and to re-affirm marginalized identities called into question the hegemony of Anglo-Texan masculinity, its symbols and exercise of power. Many young Anglo-Texans came to sympathize with these movements and, as they did so, to re-investigate their own sense of identity. Their experiments were marked by ambivalence. They were, on the one hand, critical of the uses of "the Texan" in shoring up Anglo-masculine authority, but also, as in the white ethnic revival, they took new pride in a particular, rooted identity deeply associated with such privileges. This involved a purported hippie-redneck confluence of progressive, countercultural modernizing influences and resurgent white Southern identities. Who were the "Cosmo Cowboys" Nightbyrd felt in overabundance in Austin by the mid-1970s? What did their appearance mean, and how did it jibe with the New Texas envisioned by African

⁸⁵ "An Inconqueroos Interview," *The Rag*, July 11, 1968, 15.

⁸⁶ Jeff Shero Nightbyrd, "Too Many Cosmo Cowboys in Austin?" *Austin Sun*, April 3, 1975, 13, 19. As an aside, Guinn is one of a number of figures in this study, including John Henry Faulk, who had a cameo in Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974).

Americans, Mexican Americans, and women of all races then challenging the state's status quo? The following chapters examine the two elements of the synthesis, first defining the progressive revaluation of Anglo-Texan masculinity in the figure of the cosmic cowboy before moving on to the nostalgic declension narratives that marked that revaluation.

Chapter Three: “This New Cross between Baba Ram Dass and Sam Bass”: The Making of the Cosmic Cowboy, 1968-1975

The image finally made sense. . . I could understand that these people were not faking it. Behind the image was a reality, that these people were Texans, caught up with a genuine love of the hip. It’s hard being a hip Texan. . . The image abounds in contradictions. Think now: long hair and long horns, psychedelics and porch sitting, sexy truckers punching cattle; all that. Somehow the Cosmic Cowboy image fuses those contradictions and makes them whole. Listening to everyone standing around singing Murphy’s [sic] song, I felt it was a song of liberation, of people recognizing who they are and saying it out loud.¹

—Danny Schweers

Jeff Shero Nightbyrd’s article of 1975 that concluded Chapter 2 addressed a trend at its peak, one that had drawn enough attention locally to garner the *Austin Sun*’s backlash. The above quote appeared in Austin’s underground newspaper *The Rag* over a year prior to the *Sun*’s article, in February of 1974, and points to the wider enthusiasm to which Nightbyrd responded. The cover of that issue featured a cowboy drawn in the style of the psychedelic poster artists, winking, smiling, and, from the midst of a smoke cloud, reassuring the paper’s countercultural audience that “Podnabs. . . You can be damn sure it ain’t from Marlboro Country!” In the accompanying article, Danny Schweers reviewed the recent “Tribute to the Cosmic Cowpeople” benefit for the Pacifica radio station in Houston, a self-conscious attempt to export a musical style then developing in Austin. The concert featured progressive country artists Michael Murphey, Doug Sahn,

¹ Danny Schweers, “The Kosmic Kowboys,” *The Rag*, February 18, 1974, 1, 10, 14. Schweers tempered his enthusiasm by article’s end, recognizing that in the midst of this scene, “no one has yet developed a popular image of a Black or Chicano who is hip and Texan. Trouble is, ‘Texan’ just doesn’t seem to mix with anything but white.” Still, Schweers’s connection of the cosmic cowboys to liberation politics jibed with *The Rag*’s editorial stance, perhaps motivated in part by the looming presence of the music venues as sources of advertising.

Jerry Jeff Walker, Willie Nelson, Billy Joe Shaver, Commander Cody, Freda and the Firedogs, and Kinky Friedman. “Up until last week,” Schweers began, “I was only seeing the bad in the Cosmic Cowboys. . . Well, my opinion has changed. He then proceeded to explain how the “image finally made sense,” seeing in Murphey’s song “I Just Wanna Be a Cosmic Cowboy” a liberation anthem, and in the subcultural figure of the cosmic cowboy an unlikely melding of the organic constituencies of the hippie counterculture and the Texan cowboy or redneck, shorthand for the state’s traditionally-minded white working class. As such, this New Left newspaper, counterculturally inflected, deployed the liberationist rhetoric of the 1960s social justice movements to describe a genre of country-rock performance that supposedly achieved that transcendence of opposites that brought wholeness in the midst of the Seventies’ fracturing malaise.

Schweers here suggested the basic components of the hippie-redneck confluence over the markers of Anglo-Texan identity that was so discussed, performed, celebrated, fretted over, and maligned in 1970s Austin.² The fascination with the cosmic cowboy audiences of progressive country music rested in its perceived transcendence of deeply ingrained social contradictions.³ Participants and observers painted a picture of the counterculture coming home to roost amongst those spaces it had sought to escape, the

² By the late 1960s, the counterculture became a cause célèbre of sorts in the trade press, with a cottage industry of works trumpeting its utopian nature. Two key books on the edge of the 1970s are Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1969) and Charles Reich, *The Greening of America* (New York: Random House, 1970). Reich’s thesis is emblazoned across the cover of the paperback Bantam Books edition: “There is a revolution coming. It will not be like revolutions of the past. It will originate with the individual and with culture, and it will change the political structure only as its final act. It will not require violence to succeed, and it cannot be successfully resisted by violence. This is the revolution of the new generation.” No such utopianism prevailed amongst commentary about rednecks.

³ Still, Schweers’s illustration of that contradictory nature falls short: “long hair and longhorns, psychedelics and porch-sitting, sexy truckers punching cattle” is one of the less successful evocations of the divide the cosmic cowboy was purported to transcend.

generation gap closing over roots nostalgia for “the Texan” as a fictive ethnicity or metaphorical nation. Often, accounts focused on “the Texan’s” romantic attraction as the enabler of such fusions, reminiscent of that same figure constructed through such events as the Texas Centennial.⁴ Schweers and other journalists insisted that all of this transpired communally, in spaces of live musical performance in the Austin area, from the coffee house atmosphere of clubs geared towards singer-songwriters like Castle Creek and the Cactus Cafe, to the cavernous Armadillo World Headquarters in which the synthesis was largely produced, to the spectacle of hip country festivals helmed by artists like Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Kris Kristofferson, and Michael Murphey in Dripping Springs, Luckenbach, College Station, and Gonzales.

If the assertion of Anglo-Texan identities in Chapter 1 and the challenge to that assertion’s hegemony in Chapter 2 constituted the contestation over regional identity corresponding to the maturation of Richard Flores’s “Texas Modern,” the performative Anglo-Texan of the 1970s spoke to the forward edge of a “Texas Postmodern.” That is, even as cosmic cowboys borrowed the language of liberation in “recognizing who they are,” their performance occurred as the relation between that cowboy-wheeler-dealer-oilman-Texan figure and the (sub)urban experience of the majority of real, existing Texans became increasingly unmoored. Dobie, Webb, and Bedichek had engaged in much the same project of salvage in the years surrounding the tipping point of Texan urbanization in 1950. The cosmic cowboys grew up on the far side of that divide, and yet, the demographic data would still suggest that a substantial number of them would have had early memories of rural lifeways. All the more reason, then, for young Anglo-Texan men to hunger for the notion that “behind the image was a reality.”

⁴ Nicholas Spitzer, “‘Bob Wills Is Still the King’: Romantic Regionalism and Convergent Culture in Central Texas,” *John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly* 11:40 (Winter 1975): 191-196. Also see Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities* (Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 68-69.

The colliding talk of organic wholeness and redneck identity suggested to some the retreat, exhaustion, and routinization of the counterculture, a hollow victory through ubiquity. Rednecks could appropriate the counterculture, and vice versa, not because an Aquarian utopia free of exploitation had been accomplished, but because such stylistic gestures as long hair and beards on men had lost their disruptive charge over time. Surely, the celebration of hippie-redneck hybridity easily got out of hand, but the critics, too, overstated their case. While Nightbyrd and others dismissed the scene as the monolithic projection of a reactionary vision of Anglo-Texan masculinity, I propose that the identity politics of the 1970s spurred fissures in the dominant, whereby an alternate, though ultimately unstable, construction of Anglo-Texan masculinity developed around the cosmic cowboy trope. The cultural nationalism of Black Power and the Chicano movement, the gendered consciousness of feminism, and the authenticity discourses of the counterculture contributed to this reappraisal of the hegemonic forms of Anglo-Texan masculinity, and that reappraisal erupted in visual and aural fashion in the progressive country movement in the capital city of Austin. This attempted progressive revisioning of the Texan transpired through the figure of the cosmic cowboy, who grew his hair long, opposed the Vietnam War, and attended country-western benefits for striking workers. In the process, he negotiated between past and present, professing allegiance to a progressive, inclusive polity while evincing a fascination with the agrarian conservatism of the cowboy figure. This chapter makes its central argument through a series of examples: Bud Shrake's sartorial epiphany in the Big Thicket portrayed in his article "The Land of the Permanent Wave," the rise of the Armadillo World Headquarters, a reading of the cosmic cowboy as a subculture in the Birmingham School sense, and the persona, work, and words of such musical artists as Willie Nelson, Doug Sahm, Michael Murphey, and Kinky Friedman.

Austin's participation in, and divergence from, national trends in the 1970s go far towards explaining the curious frames of Anglo-Texan masculinity that arose in the scene's cultural productions. Nationally, pundits bemoaned the collapse of a unitary American public in the 1970s as Americans supposedly retreated into the identity politics of race, gender, and ethnicity, marooned themselves on consumerist islands of lifestyle, and became exhausted with the mobilizing activisms of the 1960s, but Austin ran against the grain with a recombination of formerly antagonistic social elements through hippie-redneck populism.⁵ Alternately, the hippie-redneck confluence echoed the larger celebration of ethnic particularity in white Southern identities, as the Solid South became the Sun Belt South, truckers entered the pantheon of American icons, and Jimmy Carter replaced Lyndon Johnson as the country's regionally-accented president.⁶ Just as Austin fit uncomfortably with a number of national narratives of the 1970s, so did the state of Texas at large. As the editor of the celebrated new regional magazine *Texas Monthly*, William Broyles, set the scene:

Confused, introspective, plagued with doubts, our economy beset by double-digit inflation and run by single-digit politicians, we can only fumble blindly from the harsh memories of 1974 into the uncertain future of 1975. Depressing, isn't it? . . . we propose that Texans consider washing their hands of the whole mess and become (drum roll, please) the Republic of Texas. We did it once, didn't we? This time, however, instead of a thinly-populated, rough, frontier republic, we'd be the world's fifth largest petroleum producer (ahead of Venezuela and Kuwait), the thirteenth largest producer of beef and fifth of cotton, and we would rank ninth in Gross National Product among the non-Communist nations of the world.

⁵ The effects of the counterculture on the development of lifestyle in the 1970s have found an able chronicler in the aforementioned Sam Binkley, *Getting Loose: Lifestyle Consumption in the 1970s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). As for jeremiads regarding malaise, exhaustion, and decline, see Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978). Michael Novak's *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1971) and Tom Wolfe's "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening," *New York*, August 23, 1976, had this tone, too.

⁶ On the high cultural profile of truckers in the 1970s, see Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

We could, in fact, be sitting pretty, able to turn our thermostats to 65 in the summer with impunity, and to drive for miles on cheap gas like we used to.⁷

Broyles underscored the old adage that Texas was different, apart, here in the 1970s, just as in 1836 or 1936, wealthy in cotton, cattle, and oil, and cocksure over that abundance. The gulf between the American and Texan zeitgeists opened by the decade's oil crises temporarily masked the decline of regional distinctiveness, as the landscape and population of Texas rapidly suburbanized. Nevertheless, this gulf fueled the fashionable celebration of "the Texan," in a process that simultaneously reified older markers of regional distinction and modernized them through the lens of countercultural consumption and musical performance.

The iconic Willie Nelson stood symbolically at the center of this frequently memorialized countercultural confluence in Austin. The scene's cosmic cowboy, in turn, stands close to the center of Anglo Austin's continued myth of itself as a progressive community, a liberal Democratic island in a conservative Republican state. This frequently retold story flows against much in the national cultural-political narrative of those years. The cosmic cowboy image participates in the themes of Seventies jeremiad, where a search for roots, ethnicity, and authenticity eroded the basis of liberal universalism through an identity politics that collapsed the notion of a national community and public sphere.⁸

Such hand-wringing misreads the significance of the cosmic cowboy scene, as the progressive country scene sustained the energies of the left-liberal coalition that had developed in Austin over the course of the Sixties.⁹ Drawing its significance at the

⁷ William Broyles, "Behind the Lines," *Texas Monthly*, January 1975, 5.

⁸ Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), 76-77.

⁹ For the general debate concerning the relation of liberal universalism to identity politics, see Todd Gitlin's *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1995) for the jeremiad's side, and Robin Kelley's *Yo Mama's DisFUNKtional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997) for a spirited rebuttal.

largest, Austin represented one of many regional exceptions to the 1970s transformation of the electorate into a conservative majority coalition whose ethos has ruled through the beginning of the twenty-first century. Changes in city politics and the state Democratic Party were not merely contemporary with the scene centered on the Armadillo World Headquarters. They were, I argue, mutually constitutive. At its best, then, this confluence suggests a sort of “hippie-redneck” populism that confounds contemporary appraisals of political polarization on the national stage. At the same time, these “best” moments were few and far between, and multiple failures belied the myth of the cosmic cowboy. Where and why did these “redneck” and “hippie” audiences cohere? What conditions contributed to their successful construction as an audience, and which to their failure? How did the idea of “Texas” figure into these events? These questions point us to the beginning of the decade and an example involving an individual who helped to introduce this dissertation.

“THE LAND OF THE PERMANENT WAVE”: PROGRESSIVE COUNTRY

The unlikely specter of hippie-redneck fusion, and its relation to Anglo-Texan identity, had been on the imagined horizon for some time. The period from 1968 to 1970 offered a number of glimpses of the developing trope. In 1970, for example, journalist Bud Shrake spent several days exploring environmental politics in the Big Thicket of East Texas, but found himself shunned at every turn. Prospects did not look good for the article he meant to file with *Sports Illustrated*, and not only because the new owners of that magazine had serious money invested in the region’s lumber concerns. *Sports Illustrated* editor Andre Laguerre reluctantly passed on the resulting article, and it ended up in *Harper’s* under the title “Land of the Permanent Wave.” In it, Shrake made his ritual shunning by local residents, and his attempts to rectify the situation, the

centerpiece. Shrake's challenge was that he exactly met locals' visual cues of the hippie. A tall Fort Worth native with substantive Texas accent and undeniable swagger, Shrake had spent the past several years in New York, grown his hair long, and adopted other countercultural habits. The conflicting image created no small amount of consternation. "For about five hours I had been drinking scotch whiskey and arguing with a rather nice, sometimes funny old fellow named Arch," Shrake noted, "who was so offended by my moderately long hair that he had demanded to know if I weren't actually, secretly, a Communist."¹⁰ As it turned out, Shrake's most obvious sin in East Texas was sartorial, and the meanings projected by his hair could be easily redirected.

Then the notion struck me that I could quite simply change all this. I went to the parking lot, opened the trunk of the car, and put on a battered, well-crushed cowboy hat that I have owned for years. As I turned back toward the coffee shop, there stood the cop. His mean face slowly resolved into a baffled, respectful expression, like that of a weasel facing a trap. "Good morning," he said. "Hot sumbitch today," I said. "Yes sir, it is."

In donning the cowboy hat, Shrake's social difficulties instantly disappeared. State Senator Charlie Wilson, who was with Shrake on this trip, "congratulated me on having lived for a week bareheaded in East Texas without being beaten with a tire iron. 'With this hat on, they can see your hair hanging down, but a long-haired cowboy is likely to be a dangerous man best left alone.'"¹¹ Shrake spent much of the rest of the 1970s in some form of the guise, and he was not alone in discovering its powers.

The counterculture had long held the cowboy as amongst its many aesthetic options. Even in making its case against the Southern redneck, for example, *Easy Rider* (1969) celebrated the code of the West not only in the meal the protagonists shared with an interracial Anglo and Mexican ranching family, but in the figure of Dennis Hopper's

¹⁰ Bud Shrake, "Land of the Permanent Wave" *Harper's*, February 1970, 81.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Charlie Wilson later rose to the U. S. House of Representatives, where he became a central figure in American support for the Afghan mujahedeen in their war against the Soviets.

Billy himself, all cocked-hat, unruly moustache, and fringed jacket. The counterculture appropriated from country-western music, as well. In 1968, the Beau Brummels' *Bradley's Barn*, The Byrds' *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, and The Band's *Music from Big Pink* all laid the groundwork for the country-rock hybrids that would become so popular in the 1970s, corollaries of Austin's progressive country scene. In fact, one of the first visual glimmers of the cosmic cowboy image in Austin is a Gilbert Shelton cartoon accompanying *The Rag's* review of *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*. Bob Dylan, the counterculture's most curious bellwether, issued the country-themed albums *John Wesley Harding* (1967) and *Nashville Skyline* (1969), the latter a fully-fledged country album recorded in Nashville with performances by Johnny Cash, Earl Scruggs, Norman Blake, and Charlie Daniels.

Even as the Sixties counterculture nationwide drew aesthetically on "the Texan" qualities of the cowboy and country music, Austin had its own claims on being central to the Sixties counterculture. In the 1960s, Austin was both a significant node of the New Left, with one of the nation's largest SDS chapters, and a point of origin for a number of countercultural developments more commonly associated with San Francisco, from the pioneering psychedelic rock of the 13th Floor Elevators and the kosmic blues of Janis Joplin to the underground comix of Gilbert Shelton. A strong Austin-San Francisco-Austin migration stream buttressed these developments in both spaces. Janis Joplin, Chet Helms, Doug Sahm, Augie Meyers, Roky Erikson, and Gilbert Shelton, among others, all participated as charter members of the Haight-Ashbury scene.

In the summer of 1970, local countercultural heroine Janis Joplin made her final visit to Austin for her mentor Kenneth Threadgill's birthday party, a concert organized by antiwar activist Martin Wigginton and headlined by psychedelic rock group Shiva's

Headband.¹² As a figure who connected the brashness of Austin's counterculture with that national counterculture's more storied locale of San Francisco, Joplin's visit stirred a great deal of interest and shaped the Austin counterculture's focus in a moment of transition. In the University of Texas student newspaper the *Daily Texan*, Roger Leinert noted the changes underway. The show's audience presented a diverse, but converging, "blend of longhairs and rednecks, hippies and businessmen."¹³ Further, with her 1969 album *I Got Dem Ol' Kozmic Blues Again Mama!*, Joplin was amongst those beginning to deploy the "cosmic" label to a developing hybridity of American roots music with countercultural rock. Gram Parsons's quest for a "Cosmic American Music" provides another significant antecedent, and one that flowered into a Southern California country-rock, singer-songwriter aesthetic around the Eagles, Linda Ronstadt, Poco, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and others.¹⁴ In other words, the musical counterculture's attraction to the narrative artistry and perceived authenticity of white, rural, American musics was

¹² Kenneth Threadgill owned a tavern in Austin known as a space where traditional working-class Anglo musicians like Bill Neely (and Threadgill himself, a yodeler in the Jimmie Rodgers vein) consorted with University of Texas students interested in the folk revival like folklorist Roger Abrahams, country music historian Bill Malone, musicians Lanny Wiggins, Janis Joplin, Powell St. John, and others. As Joplin biographer Alice Echols parses the Threadgill's scene, "In more urban places like Cambridge, Berkeley, and Greenwich Village the search for authenticity led folk music mavens to seek out obscure records and songbooks. But in Austin authenticity was considerably less hard to come by. Texas was a region still alive with 'real' music [whatever that is], including country and western. 'It was less academic for us,' says [Stephanie] Chernikowski [a Threadgill's regular], 'because we were living in the past.'" The temporal-spatial dimension of American regionalism is on full display here. Alice Echols, *Scars of Sweet Paradise: The Life and Times of Janis Joplin* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999), 53-58; Reid, 15-28; Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 253-55.

¹³ Roger Leinert, "Celebration for Western Musician Becomes Fun-Filled Minifestival," *Daily Texan*, July 16, 1970, 12.

¹⁴ An account that highlights the Southern California scene as the motor of these developments is Peter Doggett, *Are You Ready for the Country: Elvis, Dylan, Parsons, and the Roots of Country Rock* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001). The documentary *Heartworm Highways*, directed by James Szalapski, 1976, places 1970s Austin and Nashville alongside one another to highlight the new styles and sensibilities infusing each.

gathering steam in the late 1960s. Austin was a significant node in this wider cultural field.

In this time and place, a previously besieged countercultural sensibility attained a temporary local hegemony through the revaluation of regional identity markers. The artists, texts, firms, and audiences involved all invite discussion on their own terms, but a fuller understanding requires an appreciation of their cohesion as a larger scene. Normally the notion of musical scene leans heavily on its origins in the theatre, suggesting that audience, industry, venues, and cityscapes serve as a backdrop for musical performance. More than mere setting, however, a scene such as Austin in the 1970s constitutes a dense web of social, economic, and affective relations that give meaning to, not merely adorn, the performance of popular music. Stirring these discussions together invokes Raymond Williams's classic formulation of a "structure of feeling" as "social experiences in solution . . . distinct from other social semantic formations which have been precipitated and are more evidently and immediately available."¹⁵ By understanding this larger subjective context, we can begin to make sense of why Armadillo World Headquarters proprietor Eddie Wilson remembers the "Me Decade" in the following manner: "We felt the rush of joyful and energetic optimism that comes when you realize . . . that the giant tug-of-war is beginning to shift in your favor. Voices begin to speak in unison. New power rushes from your fingers through your shoulders then down your back into your legs and suddenly we've got the bastards on the run."¹⁶ Why would Wilson frame a pop cultural endeavor so squarely in terms of struggle? He speaks here about much more than music. His Armadillo World Headquarters visibly aligned itself with what it saw as the rising tide of new politics in

¹⁵ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 133-134.

¹⁶ Eddie Wilson, *A Good Time in Austin, Texas* (unpublished manuscript, 2003), 1.

Austin and in Texas and briefly reconfigured mainstream representations of “the Texan” with countercultural aesthetics and progressive political concerns.

The cosmic cowboy’s recombination of countercultural preoccupations and “the Texan” coincided with a period of provocative theorizing on the cultural politics of youth subcultures across the Atlantic that helps explain the larger resonances of the Austin scene. The Birmingham School’s classic *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (1976), edited by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, and Dick Hebdige’s *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) argued that working-class youth enacted a form of symbolic revolt through well-delineated subcultural styles.¹⁷ In many ways, the Austin scene’s cosmic cowboy is a subcultural figure in the Birmingham sense. In the introductory essay of *Resistance through Rituals*, the authors set out the relations between classes in a society with the terms dominant culture, subordinate culture, parent culture, and (youth) subculture. The fourth represents a stylistic reimagining of the relation amongst the other three, an attempt to “resolve” the problems of class conflict on the ideological plane.¹⁸ The clearest of their examples concerns the early British skinheads, who,

In the resurrection of an archetypal and “symbolic” form of working-class dress, in the displaced focusing on the football match and the “occupation” of the football “ends,” Skinheads reassert, but “imaginarily,” the values of a class, the essence of a style, a kind of “fan-ship” to which few working-class adults any longer subscribe: they “re-present” a sense of territory and locality which the planners and speculators are rapidly destroying.¹⁹

¹⁷ Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds. *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (London: Hutchinson Press, 1976) and Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York: Routledge Press, 1979). Subsequent scholars have criticized the Birmingham School for its focus on the public, performative behavior of exceptional young men to the exclusion of young women, private behavior, and in-depth biography and history. See Sarah Thornton and Ken Gelder, eds. *Subcultures Reader* (New York: Routledge Press, 1997) for the most cogent collection of these critiques.

¹⁸ *Resistance through Rituals*, 32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

The skinhead example suggests an analogy with the image of the cosmic cowboy in Texas. In the 1970s, oil-rich Texas witnessed an affluence and urbanity that brought with it rapid change. Opportunities drew many whom urbanites would term “rednecks,” members of the rural or small-town white working-class, to the larger cities of Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin.²⁰ New jobs simultaneously drew migrants from other regions of the country, as Texas participated in the more general pattern of Seventies Sunbelt growth over and against the Northeast and Midwest. This urban turn (represented later “on the ideological plane” by the television drama *Dallas* and the movie *Urban Cowboy*) fed nostalgia for an imagined “Texanness” that both “hippies,” with their concern for roots and authenticity, and “rednecks,” with their strong conservative streak, feared might vanish. As Dick Hebdige argued in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, “punks were not only directly *responding* to increasing joblessness, changing moral standards, the rediscovery of poverty, the Depression, etc., they were *dramatizing* what had come to be called ‘Britain’s decline.’”²¹ Punk in America worked in much the same fashion, playing with the apocalyptic rhetoric surrounding 1970s New York. Cosmic cowboys likewise performatively articulated social change, even if the economy of Texas (unlike New York or London) was relatively strong, dramatizing the survival of “the Texan” in a region secure from national malaise but also, in some measure, unsure of its new urban landscapes. The analogy to the Birmingham School’s contemporaneous discussion of skinheads and punks is clear.

²⁰ This is the dynamic that Tony Scherman cites as a condition for the cycles of authentic renewal in country music. “Country music was born of the trauma of rural people’s adjustment to industrial society.” Scherman simplifies matters greatly, but it is a notion that many country fans make “true” by believing it to be so. Hence, their demand for “fabricating authenticity.” Quoted in Richard Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 222.

²¹ Hebdige, 87.

At the same time, the cosmic cowboy differed from the British mod or punk. The subculture's creation closely paralleled that theorized by Birmingham fellow traveler Stanley Cohen in his *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972) in that, despite the popularity of the cowboy style as a precipitate of live music performance, the cosmic cowboy as a clearly defined figure arose primarily through localized media accounts of the Austin scene.²² "Cosmic cowboy" was a term more frequently used by critics in the press than by participants in the scenes surrounding the Armadillo World Headquarters and Soap Creek Saloon. The cosmic cowboy subculture hung together loosely through the homology of its fashion, music, and preoccupations, rather unlike the British subcultures, which tended to be loudly declared and vigorously defended through boundary maintenance on the part of its participants. Though constructed in part through moral panics regarding youth culture in London and Brighton, British mods and rockers declared themselves as such. Cosmic cowboys, identified largely through media accounts of a style, had a more lackadaisical definition of how their fashions fit together in a subcultural whole. Few participants talked about their cosmic-cowboyness as such, in contrast to mods or skinheads or punks. The subculture hung together not through self-conscious declarations, and so, to understand how the subculture hung together, it is necessary to look to where they hung out, the venues in which they gathered.

"SUDDENLY WE'VE GOT THE BASTARDS ON THE RUN": THE ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Austin's neighborhoods south of the Colorado River traditionally consisted of working class Anglos and Mexican Americans, both of whom were peripheral to the city's symbolic power centers: the capitol building and University of Texas north of the

²² Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, Ltd., 1972).

river. Honky-tonks, cantinas, and dance halls were scattered amongst these neighborhoods, spaces for weekend or end-of-workday leisure in which musical performance meant much. George Davis's Cactus Club on Barton Springs Road was one of these spaces, and yet it was a traditional honky-tonk open to reaching beyond its core audience, changing along with Austin at large. On Thursday nights in 1970, to boost attendance, Davis ceded the venue's stage to psychedelic rock and folk acts that alternated with traditional honky-tonk.²³ Indeed, Jim Franklin had displayed posters there that prefigured the hippie-redneck alliance with the motto "where the heads and the necks come together." Coincidentally or no, the club burned down shortly after this poster campaign, but, before then, it provided one Austinite a chance for epiphany.²⁴ The manager of rock group Shiva's Headband, while attending a Hub City Movers show on one of the Cactus Club's psychedelic Thursdays, stepped outside to relieve himself, as the venue's plumbing was not in working order. With future Flatlander Jimmie Dale Gilmore on one side and guitarist John X. Reed on the other, Eddie Wilson stood staring into the Austin night. Amidst an auto repo lot, cafeteria, and roller rink, he spied a hulk of an abandoned ex-National Guard armory. Capitol Records had recently signed Shiva's Headband to a new deal, including a hefty bonus that might be used as seed money for similar Austin acts. As the Vulcan Gas Company, Austin's most reliable venue for psychedelic acts in Austin, had closed, Wilson had been looking for a space amenable to Shiva's performances. With this in mind, Wilson explored that abandoned armory, and,

²³ This one-night colonization of discordant venues is common with emergent musical forms on a live performance scene. The evolution of the Austin punk scene as narrated by Barry Shank hinges on a "punk night" held during 1978 at a club called Raul's alongside the University of Texas that otherwise focused on Tex-Mex music and the Chicano movement. Shank, 102. In the 1960s in Austin, psychedelic rock acts often took the stage on specified nights in African American blues clubs on the city's east side like the IL Club.

²⁴ Wilson, 4-6.

shortly thereafter, he and a group of collaborators dubbed the site the Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin's new countercultural capital.

The physical structure of the Armadillo was far from ideal for the near-utopian imaginings it often housed. A large, open central space with inadequate roofing made for poor acoustics and precluded effective climate control. The 150 by 96 feet hall was too hot in the summer, too cold in the winter, and given to flooding in the region's intermittent storms. The space before the stage was covered, in the beginning, with rather desolate, dirty carpet squares. Seating in the venue was rudimentary, and early on the tables consisted of used spools made for industrial cable. Around this central space, a network of rooms constantly shifted in function to meet the needs of the Armadillo's ever-changing mission—offices, makeshift apartments, art galleries, recording studios, bakeries, and arcades came and went. The venue's staff made the most of these accommodations, and a talented group of psychedelic poster artists—Jim Franklin, Henry Gonzalez, Guy Juke, Danny Garrett, Bill Narum, Ken Featherston, Kerry Awn, Jack Jaxon, Micael Priest—created a vision of the Armadillo that transcended its humble physical existence. The kitchen was a constant in the Armadillo equation and, especially under the stewardship of Jan Beeman, the former leader of a commune in San Angelo, became well-known amongst national touring acts as a sign of the scene's hospitality. The most popular and lasting of the venue's modifications was an outdoor, Central Texas German-style beer garden that expanded the venue's capacity and gave it an outside stage. In all, the Armadillo World Headquarters was an unwieldy, awkward, but charming beast that took after its namesake. It was an unlikely space from which to revolutionize the civic identity of the state capital, but, through the labor and imagination of a spirited legion of cultural laborers from 1970 to 1980, it worked.

There was reason to believe that there was an audience for such an experiment in Austin. Countercultural performance venues and gathering spaces had briefly flourished in the past few years, but they met with daunting community opposition. The Vulcan Gas Company founded by Houston White, Gary Scanlon, and Don Hyde was the most well-known of these places, and its location downtown on Congress Avenue, overflowing with long hair, light shows, loud music, and smoke of questionable provenance, stood in defiance of the conservative propriety guarded over by the Capitol building at the end of the street. The Chequered Flag, the Eleventh Door, the IL Club, the New Orleans Club, and others provided similar spaces for folk, blues, and psychedelic rock performance. However, all of these operations were small, and all were on the verge of failing.

In the first years of the Seventies, it seemed that the countercultural wave may have crested and broken, but an unlikely series of developments in Austin somehow renewed the tide. Talk of a “hippie-redneck” convergence became rampant by the early 1970s in a manner that would have been inconceivable to the denizens of the Vulcan Gas Company or the psychedelic rock pioneers who decamped from Austin. When asked about how the hippies and rednecks interacted in the Austin he knew, Powell St. John, among the members of the Austin counterculture who left for San Francisco early as a friend and bandmate of Janis Joplin, said “they didn’t.” Reflecting for a minute, he then recounted several instances of harassment and violence that constituted the whole of hippie-redneck relations in his memory of later-60s Austin.²⁵ However, by the early 1970s, a number of the San Francisco migrants and other countercultural exiles began to stream back. The Armadillo World Headquarters gave this native counterculture a home. In time, it became the central representation of the 1970s Austin scene. Other centers of

²⁵ Interview with author, September 11, 2008.

gravitation would arise over the course of the decade with their own subcultural allegiances—blues at Antone’s, a more intimate country-rock venue at Soap Creek Saloon, punk at Raul’s—but the cavernous Armadillo put Austin on the musical map and created the network of performers, audiences, and media that enabled these other nodes of the scene.

Wilson had initially intended to name the place the “Armadillo National Headquarters,” a tribute to the venue’s military past, but Bud Shrake convinced him that, in the wake of the Vietnam War, international symbolism would play better than national would, hence “world.”²⁶ The role of the armadillo in the name has a more nuanced history, and one that, in its own way, made of the strange creature a Texas national symbol. The saga began with a stable of artists including Glenn Whitehead and Tony Bell at the University of Texas humor publication the *Texas Ranger*. Jim Franklin continued the trend and made the armadillo a psychedelic genre all its own in *The Rag* and on concert posters and album covers. In Franklin’s armadillo universe, the creatures counterattacked against riot police, helped the Longhorns win football games, staged raucous music festivals, copulated with the Texas capitol building (in a piece titled “Cross-Breeding”), flew over dangerous roadways, burst out of the chest of bluesman Freddie King, and, lest we forget, “balled” for Charles Manson. Jim Franklin has offered a number of reasons for the symbol’s popularity, the most succinct being his late-60s realization: “Armadillo. They dig underground. We’re underground.”²⁷ Bud Shrake drew the counterculture-armadillo analogy out further in the pages of *Sports Illustrated*:

Exactly why armadillos are taking hold as a youth symbol is a matter for speculation. Armadillos are paranoid little beasts who prefer to mind their own businesses. They love to sleep all day, then roam and eat all night. They are

²⁶ Wilson, 41.

²⁷ Jim Franklin in Wilson, 31.

gentle, keep their noses in the grass and share their homes with others. Perhaps most significant, they are weird-looking, unfairly maligned and picked on, and have developed a hard shell and a distinctive aroma. They do far more good than harm, and yet the usual social reaction toward an armadillo is to attempt to destroy it.²⁸

The symbol proliferated across the landscape, and discussions ensued over pet armadillos, armadillo recipes, armadillo anatomy, armadillo races, and whether or not the armadillo should replace the longhorn as the mascot of the state's flagship university.²⁹ A resolution on this last development passed the student government, only to be met with the disdain of the university's powerful alumni. A local Houston DJ even issued a novelty record mocking the idea.³⁰ Ken Kesey visited campus and called for the organization of an independent political Armadillo Party to carry forward the aims of the counterculture.³¹

The sensation was not yet in full effect, however, in August of 1970 when Wilson opened the place. In addition to "trail boss" Wilson, significant figures in the early Armadillo World Headquarters included Jim Franklin, Vulcan Gas Company veteran Bobby Hedderman, Shiva's frontman Spencer Perskin, and lawyer Mike Tolleson. Franklin became the club's mascot and emcee, bearded and bespectacled, living in an

²⁸ Bud Shrake, "An Armored Force on the March," *Sports Illustrated*, January 4, 1971, 52-53.

²⁹ J. R. Compton, *Armadilla* (Dallas: Brown Dog Publications, 1974); Jim Franklin, *Armadillo Comics* (San Francisco: Rip Off Press, 1969, 1971). Armadillo recipes rarely appeared without a tip of the hat to their appellation from the Great Depression, "Hoover hogs."

³⁰ "Hornadillo Mascot Debate: Sold for a Song," *Daily Texan*, January 24, 1972, 1. "When Bob Binder and the University Student Senate decided to back a resolution calling for the armadillo to be named the official mascot of the University last semester, they roused more fury in Houston, Dallas, and other cities where there are large numbers of Texas exes than they did in Austin. . . Now a Houston record company has decided to capitalize on the whole episode and attempt to placate both the students, who are evidently dissatisfied with the mascot and the ex-students, who would like to retain some of the University's tradition, with a record called "The Texas Hornadillo—Part 1 & 2. . . The record, to be available in Austin Monday, was produced by Torok's Calico Records and features the Orange and White Barroom Singers and Dancers, Class of '49. Also heard on the record are impersonations of Darrell Royal, political personalities, and the head of the Institute of Texas Animal Crossbreeding."

³¹ Tom Kleinworth, "Kesey: Author Fights Political System by Organizing Armadillo Party," *Daily Texan*, March 1, 1972, 1.

apartment he had built just offstage at the venue, in a uniform of armadillo helmet and Texas flag cape. Mike Tolleson joined Franklin and Wilson in seeking something more than a mere concert hall. He championed the idea of making the Armadillo not merely a concert venue, but a community arts laboratory. Recently returned from London, he hoped to model the Armadillo after John Lennon's Arts Laboratory, which tried to combine film, dance, theater, and music under one roof.³²

After opening in 1970, the Armadillo World Headquarters tested the bounds of this community arts credo, hosting crafts fairs; the Underground Press Syndicate conference; the National Lawyers Guild conference; benefits for the Free Clinic, Greenbriar School, striking UT shuttle bus drivers, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the United Farm Workers; community rap sessions on drug abuse; the Austin Ballet Theater; musicals; lectures; and the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Politicians such as Austin mayor Jeff Friedman and gubernatorial candidate Frances "Sissy" Farenthold regarded the place as a significant segment of their base. Soviet delegations, Chilean exiles, and future president Bill Clinton would make notable visits. The odd admixture would invite the broader audience that nurtured not only the hippie-redneck and cosmic cowboy tropes, but made of the space a common destination for other figures long involved in the process of manufacturing "the Texan." "Inside the cavernous Armadillo gloom, the audience gropes its way to its seats. A polite offer of assistance to the elderly Mrs. Walter Prescott Webb, widow of the renowned Texas historian, is refused with a firm, 'Honey, I know the way. I come here to rock shows all the time.'"³³ A shaken

³² Wilson, 32.

³³ Suzanne Shelton, "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," *Texas Monthly*, October 1973, 88. The article is also noteworthy for its reference to proprietor Eddie Wilson as a "teddybearish cross between Fidel Castro and Gene Shalit."

Charlie Daniels, in later years known for his cantankerous conservatism, broke the news of John Lennon's murder from the stage.

In short, the Armadillo World Headquarters homesteaded a space for a countercultural confluence to take place, but space alone does not create the dense social network that is a scene. Performers and audiences still had to find their reasons for gathering. At this point, in the early Seventies, the social climate of Austin, which had earlier pushed a wave of countercultural migrants to San Francisco, now began to pull them home. The reasons are related to the diffusion of the counterculture's influence and shifts to more lax law enforcement practices. Among these returnees was Doug Sahm, a Tex-Mex rocker from San Antonio. Sahm had moved to San Francisco with his band the Sir Douglas Quintet following a drug bust in Corpus Christi in the mid-Sixties. In the early 1970s, he followed the homesick laments of his own recordings like "Texas Me" and "Is Anybody Goin' to San Antone?" by making the return trip himself. Such high profile homecomings began to reverse the 1960s migration stream. As music writer Joe Nick Patoski remembers, "The back-to-the-roots album *The Return of Doug Saldaña*—whose cover featured longhaired Doug in cowboy hat, a bottle of Big Red in hand—signaled to Texans in exile that it was okay to come back home, that we wouldn't get our asses kicked for looking or being different."³⁴ Sahm's performative orientation towards the self, here seen in his ability to signify with only a cowboy hat and a bottle of regional soda Big Red, fit the moment well.

The flaxen-haired Michael Murphey was another prodigal son of the period, back from a lucrative stint as a pop songwriter in Los Angeles. It was Murphey who,

³⁴ Joe Nick Patoski, "Doug Sahm: We Remember," *Texas Monthly*, January 2000.

reluctantly, gave the growing core of Texas-styled hippies its name and its anthem in the song “Cosmic Cowboy, Pt. 1”:

Riding the range and acting strange is where I wanna be.

I just wanna be a cosmic cowboy.
I just wanna ride and rope and shoot.
I just wanna be a cosmic cowboy.
A supernatural country rockin’ galoot.

Skinny dippin’ and Lone Star sippin’ and steel guitars and stars
Are just as good as Hollywood and those boogie-woogie bars . . .³⁵

Murphey early on took the position that the song was satirical and wanted little to do with the elaboration of a subcultural iconography around it. The song, satirical or no, became a climactic number at many festivals built on the concept it named, whether the Pacifica benefit in Houston or Willie Nelson’s second Fourth of July Picnic in College Station, both in 1974. Murphey would often close out his portion of the show with the song, joined onstage by all of the other performers to contribute on the chorus.

In iconic terms, however, neither Sahn nor Murphey contributed as much to the cosmic cowboy figure as Willie Nelson, who played a catalytic role in amplifying the significance of the Seventies Austin scene. The Armadillo World Headquarters and other like venues scraped by in 1970 and 1971, but failure always looked to be right around the corner until Willie Nelson moved to town and cemented the much talked about hippie-redneck or progressive country alliance, joining crowds across generation and class to form a country-western music infused with the sensibilities of folksy, improvisational countercultural rock. The transformation began with the Dripping Springs Reunion festival of March 1972 that brought older Nashville stalwarts (Tex Ritter, Roy Acuff, Earl Scruggs) together with a new generation of songwriters (Willie Nelson, Billy Joe

³⁵ Michael Murphey, *Cosmic Cowboy Souvenir* (A & M, 1973).

Shaver, Kris Kristofferson) in an event billed as a country Woodstock. The concert had mixed results, losing a substantial amount of money and creating tension between the honky-tonk and hippie entrepreneurs involved. It created enough interest, though, that Nelson continued his pursuit of the youth crossover audiences in Austin. He played the Armadillo World Headquarters for the first time in August 1972, and as Eddie Wilson says, “changed everything.”³⁶ When he arrived from Nashville, Nelson had yet to adopt the beard and flowing hair of his now trademark image. Soon enough, though, Willie-as-icon became the archetype of the redneck-hippie, the cosmic cowboy, carrying the contradiction in the guise of his own person.

Born in Abbott, Texas, in 1933, Willie Hugh Nelson had led a long itinerant life as a musician in Texas dance halls, Pacific Northwest radio stations, and, finally, in the country music mecca of Nashville. By the 1960s, Nelson had established himself there as a successful songwriter, placing hit songs with Faron Young, Patsy Cline, and Ray Price.³⁷ His attempts to record his own material as frontman, however, had fallen short.³⁸ Willie Nelson did not look quite right for Nashville producers in the 1960s. He did not sound quite right, and many producers, behind closed doors, mused that Nelson, well, maybe he just was not quite right, at all. Straining against the recording sensibilities of the Chet Atkins-era countrypolitan sound, Nelson as early as 1971 recorded a concept album, *Yesterday's Wine*, that spoke to the new interests, new ideas, new identities that Nelson was developing beyond Nashville. The album, using a number of Nelson's previously recorded songs, narrated the life of a man from birth to grave. The first track,

³⁶ Wilson, 101.

³⁷ Nelson also played in Price's band, the Cherokee Cowboys, a proving ground of future country stalwarts like Johnny Bush, Johnny Paycheck, Roger Miller, and Buddy Emmons. Price, in turn, had been an acolyte of Hank Williams, Sr., and a member of his band the Drifting Cowboys, a connection prized by the outlaw country movement of the late 1970s despite Price's later countrypolitan turn.

³⁸ The best biographical account of Willie Nelson is Joe Nick Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life* (New York: Little, Brown, 2008).

beginning before this man was born, seemed prophetic of Nelson's impending countercultural shift. Spoken voices before the music begins murmur "You do know why you're here?" The man answers, "Yes, there is great confusion on earth, and the power that is has concluded the following. Perfect man has visited earth already. The voice of imperfect man must now be made manifest, and I have been selected as the most likely candidate." His interlocutors respond, "The time is April and therefore you, a Taurus, must go. And this strength, combined with wisdom and love, is the key." The music then enters, and Nelson sings, imploring God to let him get started:

Explain to me again Lord why I'm here.
I don't know, I don't know.
The setting for the stage is still not clear.
Where's the show? Where's the show?
Let it begin, let it begin.
I am born. Can you use me?³⁹

The astrological references, the notion of the seeking self, and Nelson's plaintive voice combined to suggest to the listener that Willie would not be contained by Nashville's traditional order much longer. In the same year that Nelson recorded *Yesterday's Wine*, his farm house in Ridge Top, outside of Nashville, burned to the ground. Nelson moved back to Texas, settling first in Bandera and looking to move to Houston before deciding that his sister Bobbie's home of Austin might prove a receptive audience. His inclinations proved correct, and by 1974 Jan Reid could write that whatever "his ideology, in Austin Willie seemed to be able to do no wrong. He was as natural as dirt, and when he walked through a crowd he knew everybody who spoke to him. . . And Willie acted like Texas was the center of the universe."⁴⁰ In other words, for the young,

³⁹ Willie Nelson, *Yesterday's Wine* (RCA, 1971).

⁴⁰ Jan Reid, *Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock*, New Edition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 229.

previously rock-oriented audiences of Austin, Willie was a “Texan Out of the Old Rock,” and thus extremely valuable as an avatar around which to build a subculture, joining youth countercultural forms to the traditional “redneck” ways through authentic performance. As with Doug Sahm, Nelson’s presence ushered a return to Texas on the part of its prodigal sons. In an article for *Playboy* about his Texan friends’ entreaties to return, Larry L. King, a prominent Texas writer resident in New York and Washington, wrote that “People kept telling me Austin was the only thing happening in Jerry Ford’s America other than inflation and Tupperware parties. The Texas city was represented as the new Haight-Ashbury and the new Nashville, the only wide-open-dope-and-music resort available now that students were studying again and Tom Hayden had taken to wearing neckties and kissing babies.”⁴¹ Though King was less than impressed upon his visit, the Willie Nelson mystique resonated with the developing currents of Texas Chic that King was promoting in New York City, a subject of Chapter 6.

The likes of Sahm, Murphey, and Nelson suggest patterns of migration that operated not only amongst artists in the cultural production center of Los Angeles, Nashville, and San Francisco, but also movement amongst young people within the state of Texas itself from San Angelo, Lubbock, Laredo, and Corpus Christi to Austin. Tracking the artists playing at the Armadillo World Headquarters shows a definite and dramatic rise in the performance of country music over the course of 1972 and 1973 (taking pride of place over psychedelic rock, blues, and folk music), with Nelson’s late summer, 1972, appearance there a major turning point. With this shifting performance on the Armadillo stage came a change in how the Armadillo’s audiences performed themselves.

⁴¹ Larry L. King, “The Great Willie Nelson Commando Hoo-Ha and Texas Brain-Fry,” *Playboy*, November 1976, 100. Coincidentally, this article follows Robert Scheer’s notorious interview of presidential candidate Jimmy Carter in which he admits having committed “adultery in his heart.”

HOMOLOGIES: COSMIC COWBOY IDENTIFICATION CHARTS

The contemporaneous cultural theorizing coming out of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies offered a tool kit for unpacking the significance of these developments. In particular, Paul Willis's notion of subcultural homology between "the values and lifestyles of a group, its subjective experience, and the musical forms the group adopts" fits the conversations surrounding the cosmic cowboy figure in Austin in the mid-1970s. The authors of *Resistance through Rituals* developed this notion of homology as a key strategy to map subcultural styles. When Dick Hebdige addressed punk in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, he argued that the stylistic "objects chosen [by punks] were, either intrinsically or in their adapted forms, homologous with the focal concerns, activities, group structure, and collective self-image of the subculture."⁴² To discover the homologous nature of the cosmic cowboy subculture, how its musical tastes, fashion, and political unconscious cohered through commodities, it is necessary to single out those objects selected to express the cosmic cowboy's identity.

Conveniently, in a piece entitled "Cosmic Changeling," the *Daily Texan* set out a step-by-step guide to the style. "We went ahead and designed a How To Be a Cosmic Cowboy Course especially for all you newly arrived Eastern Establishment Liberals and carpetbaggers eager to adopt this new cross between Baba Ram Dass and Sam Bass":

1. The prerequisites are few. No previous experience is necessary. Just begin with the stripped down model of your average student hippie.
2. Leave the jeans on. Discard the rest except the hair, then add basic Western shirt of the fancy variety, boots, and Stetson. There you be.
3. For the chrome job (very important) throw in optimals like reflective mirror shades. For mystique, coke spoon from Oat Willie's, and any kind of turquoise you can afford.

⁴² Hebdige, 114.

4. Fill in background with old lady in gingham dress, large dog (preferably a German Shepherd named Toke or Milo), and pickup truck. The older the better (the truck, that is).

5. You're ready to ride, buckaroo. Complete the backdrop with the most essential item—a beat-up guitar made whole with autographs from the stars. Stir in stimulants.⁴³

The hippies, then, engaged in an appropriation of the uniform of their erstwhile enemies, the rednecks. The pickup trucks and boots that once signaled the proximity of violence for Austin hippies now became fashionable paeans to the authenticity of their Texas home. Likewise, young Anglo-Texan men of rural or small-town backgrounds found a terrain on which to experiment with new lifeways promised by the counterculture. Even traditional mores came in for re-use, as the above guide displays the subculture's easygoing misogyny by characterizing a woman as an accessory akin to a dog or a truck.

The resulting cosmic cowboy, though, still ostensibly possessed a difference from the "real" cowboy or redneck, as evidenced in Jack Jaxon's similar "Cosmic Cowboy Identification Chart" published in 1976 in the *Austin Sun*.⁴⁴ Here, the cartoon of a hirsute cosmic cowboy stood alongside the drawing of an "authentic" cowboy, the similarities and differences of the two tabulated for comparison. They shared their western hats, shirts, and boots, but the cosmic cowboy differed in the length of his hair, the flashiness of his clothes, and the amount of jewelry, including an earring. Interestingly, these differences hinged on heavily gendered fashion accessories, rendering the cosmic cowboy's uniform a tad glam. It is the more interesting because a primary motivation in the male hippie's appropriation of cowboy/redneck style and mores may have owed to their very claim on masculinity. The performance of machismo played

⁴³ The pseudonymous Lyndon Berry and Earl Scheib, "Cosmic Changeling," *The Pearl* supplement to the *Daily Texan*, January 1975. Note the similarity to the *Texas Observer's* tabulation of the politician's cowboy guise in Chapter 1.

⁴⁴ *Austin Sun*, March 11, 1976.

well on the scene, and this may be because, just as J. Frank Dobie's "homemade fascists" had long characterized the counterculture as un-Texan and un-American, conservative Anglo-Texans also questioned the manliness of young men who wore their hair long.

Texas Monthly also published a redneck identification chart to aid in the discernment of the true and the false under the title "So You Want to Be a Redneck." Editor William Broyles introduced the piece for its readers with an invocation of the state's ambivalence towards its white working class, "It is not a pretty heritage, but it is ours. Rednecks at times may be violent, ignorant, and racist, but they are also the same people we venerate as settlers and pioneers . . . This mixed heritage—with its ethics of hard work and friendship and its prejudices of race and ignorance—is the source of much of the social confusion in Texas today." And yet, Broyles argued, there was a reason for the current fascination with the redneck, his elevation as a new American hero, as the magazine's cover proclaimed. Speaking in the language of the white ethnic revival, Broyles argued that re-inventing oneself as redneck "is arguably easier for middle-class whites than waking up one morning and deciding to be black or Indian. So, if you feel affluent and rootless and wonder if the meaning has gone out of your life, you might consider 'So You Want to Be a Redneck.'"⁴⁵ On pages that front each other appeared images of two couples. The first carried the caption, "This here's the cleaned-up but honest-to-God Redneck pair. Don't Mess with 'em." A middle-aged, portly man with a trucker cap and rolled-up sleeves glares ahead, while his well made-up wife or girlfriend sits in the cab of a pickup truck. The second pair consisted, notably, of two long-haired androgynes in calculated outfits, also with a pickup truck, captioned "And this is the pseudo-Redneck couple. Note worn clothes and \$1000 in Indian jewelry." The gendered

⁴⁵ William Broyles, "Behind the Lines," *Texas Monthly*, August 1974, 8.

content of the comparison is obvious, imputing a masculine virility to the “real” redneck male, while disparaging the fashionable accessorizing (\$1000 in Indian jewelry), purposive dishevelment, and dilettantish pose of the “pseudo” Redneck style.

Beneath the images is a chart anthropologically documenting the tastes of authentic rednecks and their cosmic replicas. According to the chart’s authors, real rednecks could be discerned through their tastes for Webb Pierce, Gilley’s nightclub, catfish, Budweiser beer, John Wayne, bourbon, and “Roy Clark” sideburns, while pseudo Rednecks betrayed their affectations through Jerry Jeff Walker, the Armadillo World Headquarters, Mexican food, Shiner beer, Clint Eastwood, tequila, and long hair on men.⁴⁶ Note the cosmic predilection for Mexican food and tequila that, taken from the widest angle of view, might suggest a questioning of their whiteness, but more likely commented on the cosmic cowboys’ ideological alignment with a more inclusive Texas in line with the Chicano movement. Stirred together, the commodities of boots, hats, and beer, combined with long hair and other stimulants, created the type of the cosmic cowboy, and yet, this expanded, updated figurative Anglo-Texan continually attracted disdain. As a member of the satirical rock group Uranium Savages wrote to the *Austin Sun* in response to Jeff Shero Nightbyrd’s 1975 article:

Dear Sun: I read with interest your story on “Cosmo Cowboys.” However, the term should be cosmetic cowboys. It takes a lot of time, money and effort to keep up with the ever changing style in Indian jewelry and custom boots. Why just yesterday it seemed a ’55 pickup truck was the rage and now everyone has a ’75 Dodge with a camper and big tires. By the way, where can I get a sequin cowboy suit? Cosmetically yours, O. T. Tall, Sons of Uranium Savage, Pioneers of Regressive Country Glitter⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Richard West, “So You Want to Be a Redneck,” *Texas Monthly*, August 1974, 57-58.

⁴⁷ *Austin Sun*, April 17, 1975.

Together with the *Daily Texan*'s "Cosmic Changeling," Jaxon's "Cosmic Cowboy Identification Chart," and *Texas Monthly*'s "So You Want to Be a Redneck" guide, the Uranium Savage letter evinces the regional obsession with parsing out visually the differences between hippies and cosmic cowboys, cosmic cowboys and real cowboys, and even pseudo-rednecks and real rednecks. The tone is typically tongue-in-cheek, but nevertheless points to a very real anxiety about the changing nature of Texas and the performative discourses of self in the 1970s.

Even as economically Texas seemed out of step with the American malaise brought on by Vietnam, Watergate, and the oil crises, there were reasons for anxiety surrounding the subject position of Anglo-Texan masculinity. This is not simply because that position's primacy had been justifiably shaken by the decade's identity politics. The collapse of high Fordism as postwar prosperity waned, even in those regions marked by lower rates of unionization, made for a sense of diminished horizons for the American working class. For the "redneck" of Austin's cosmic cowboy scene, then, the contractions of lived experience at times tempered the bravado of Texanness. Indeed, the bravado performance of redneck qualities themselves burlesqued expectations of white male privilege as the political economy of flexible accumulation accelerated the group's further proletarianization. As Barbara Ching has argued concerning masculine honky-tonk performance in this setting, perhaps "this simultaneously comic and abject destruction of 'American Cool' explains why hard country now seems a virtual monopoly of white males: a truly effective *burlesque* of the American dream must be enacted by those who in theory should stoically enjoy the privileges of power."⁴⁸ The cutting edge of this burlesque was occasionally aimed at bosses. Johnny Paycheck's 1977 recording

⁴⁸ Barbara Ching, *Wrong's What I Do Best: Hard Country Music and Contemporary Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 30.

of David Allan Coe's "Take This Job (And Shove It)" has been cited as a flashpoint in any number of late 1970s wildcat strikes, for example. However, redneck performance, as in other moments of American history, frequently directed its ire at the country's changing politics of race and gender. Either way, Nixon's "silent majority" hardly kept its social theorizing quiet in the late 1970s, and the honky-tonk burlesque often performed these larger critiques of economic exploitation and the sullen politics of resentment.

The thesis of misdirected resentment does not exhaust the meanings of white working-class activism in the late 1970s, however, and misses one of the many reversals and inversions that characterized the decade's politics. In a *Daily Texan* article entitled "The Irony of Redneck Radicalism," journalism student Jeff Case weighed the strange inversions of the late 1970s whereby the white working class, supposed opponents of 1960s-style activism, discovered the assertions of identity politics and the efficacy of direct-action protest to protect their interests in mining, trucking, and farming. "Taking in all of this fast-moving history, one becomes numb. Perhaps the definition of 'growing up' is being able to cope with life's ironic paradoxes."⁴⁹ David Harvey likely would have agreed with Case's assessment of the period, as one marked by ironic paradoxes and fast-moving history producing feelings of numbness. A chronicler of postmodernity, Harvey states that in the midst of the postmodern shift the "assertion of any place-bound identity has to rest at some point on the motivational power of tradition. It is difficult, however, to maintain any sense of historical continuity in the face of all the flux and ephemera of flexible accumulation. The irony is that tradition is now often preserved by being commodified and marketed as such."⁵⁰ The cosmic cowboy performed the

⁴⁹ Jeff Case, "The Irony of Redneck Radicalism," *Daily Texan*, March 13, 1978, 5.

⁵⁰ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (London: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 1990), 303.

workingclassness of country music even as that class position eroded with American industrial decline; he performed Texanness even as that regional identity's ground continually shifted through suburbanization, migration, and mass communication. The cosmic cowboy's performative deployment of boots and pickup trucks and cowboy hats and dogs fit Harvey's contention.

In the midst of 1970s flux, in other words, young Anglo-Texans repackaged markers of region and class as "lifestyle," seeking to fix subject positions through commodity consumption. Sam Binkley, writing on the same decade and its affective developments, argues that "the experience of the new is often one of disaffiliation and rupture within previously consolidated groups, but also a regrouping, an investment, emulation (or even fetishization) of identity across boundaries dividing previously competing groups."⁵¹ The "hippie-redneck" or "cosmic cowboy" fusion exhibited these qualities in a moment heady for the denizens of Sun Belt Texas trying to find their post-1960s, post-civil rights, postindustrial footing. The Austin scene propelled a new investment in Anglo-Texan masculinity through commodities that, consumed together, constituted a lifestyle. Businesses that developed around this subcultural consumption often made the links explicit. As KOKE-FM, the radio station that pioneered the local progressive country format for the airwaves, proclaimed, "We're not just a radio station—we're a Texas lifestyle."⁵² Each of the elements of countercultural Texas style fit Harvey's argument—markers of tradition available in the marketplace, often with a fetish for the craftsmanship of pre-industrial methods.

The cult of the cowboy boot definitely fit the bill. A *Texas Monthly* article of 1976 made the argument:

⁵¹ Binkley, 29.

⁵² *Austin Sun*, May 1, 1975.

Perhaps even more than the cowboy hat and shirt, a pair of boots is quintessentially Texan and, by extension, quintessentially American. Until recently, this was something that a lot of native sons tried to sweep under the rug, but now, thanks to Willie, Jerry Jeff, progressive country, and—yes, even to Lyndon—it’s become a source of pride rather than acute embarrassment. Texas chic, our own homegrown variety of redneck chic, is just the natural outgrowth of the cowman and the hippie being friends.⁵³

Boots, too, could be assessed according to their presumed authenticity, whether they approached “the real” of function or merely served fashionable ends. “There are a few clues, though, that will help you tell the real true-grit cowboy and the rodeo star from the cheap imitation cosmic variety. . . . The only real problem in telling the cowboys (real and rodeo) from the cosmics is that there’s been some cross-pollination between them lately. The cowboys are easing into lower heels and rounder toes while the cosmics are tottering around in high-heeled boots just like the real McCoy.”⁵⁴ Buck Steiner’s Capitol Saddlery, a few blocks away from the Capitol building, was ground zero for this cross-pollination. In addition to being a boot tycoon, Steiner was rodeo royalty who had reportedly made a fortune in bootlegging during Prohibition. As a bit of an iconoclast, Steiner exhibited a strange appreciation for the Austin counterculture, and Austin’s hippies returned the favor. Jerry Jeff Walker promoted the shop and recorded a song about Steiner’s master bootmaker Charlie Dunn.⁵⁵ The celebration of boots, of course, only constituted one element of the subculture. Cowboy hats came in for slavish devotion, too, especially those from local makers such as Manny Gammage. Long hair on men transformed the meanings attached to boots and hats, and, in the context of the hirsute 1970s, signified much.⁵⁶

⁵³ Brad Cooper, “Texas on my Feet,” *Texas Monthly*, September 1976, 97.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵⁵ Jerry Jeff Walker, *Gypsy Songman* (Emeryville, CA: Woodford Press, 1999), 135-136.

⁵⁶ Henry Wells, “Barbers Suffering Over Hair ‘Shoulder Length and Longer,’” *Daily Texan*, April 17, 1970, 9; There was a kerfuffle in the letters column of the *Daily Texan* over the suspension of UT swimmer Frank Salzhandler over hair length, “Long Hair Associated with riots, Molotov Cocktails, VD?”,

In addition to boots, hats, and hair, the expressive function of brand loyalty to Texas beers in the cosmic cowboy subculture should not be underestimated. As late as the 1970s, the United States was still a map of fairly distinct beersheds. Indeed, the regulatory laws governing interstate commerce in alcoholic beverages, holdovers from the prohibitionist impulse, served as the basic conceit of the popular 1977 film *Smokey and the Bandit*. In Texas, the drinking age, like the voting age, was reduced to 18 in the 1970s, and liquor by the drink first became available in Austin. In the beginning, the Armadillo World Headquarters did not intend to serve alcohol at all (following the example of such countercultural venues as the Vulcan Gas Company), but economics and demand intervened. Soon enough, as Armadillo employee Fletcher Clark recalled, “If music [was] the soul of the Armadillo, beer [was] certainly its blood.”⁵⁷ The position of bartender was one of the most prestigious on the Armadillo floor and, not coincidentally, a strictly male domain. Male bartenders claimed that women did not have the discriminating taste to tell the difference between finely crafted Texas beers, each of which had its rabid partisans. As an experiment, employee Leea Meckling switched the lines to the Lone Star and Pearl taps. No one noticed for days. For all of the blustery attachment to Lone Star, Pearl, and Shiner beers, then, the attraction owed not to taste but to cultural capital, the beers’ association with “redneck” lifestyle and country music.⁵⁸

The Armadillo World Headquarters’s early lack of a beer and wine license made for some tense near-confrontations with local authorities. In one such instance, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission officials burst into the offices of the Armadillo, where a

September 27, 1970, 5; David Shannon, “Showdown at Dodge City,” over hippies challenging the “No Hippies or Long Haired Men Served” rule at the local Dodge City Steak House, October 3, 1970; “Firefighters Seek Change in Hair Length Standard” June 30, 1975, 2; Steven McBrearty, “Long Hair Grows from Rebellious Roots,” February 10, 1976, 1. By the time of the 1976 article, McBrearty has to stretch to consider long hair on men a continued sign of rebellion.

⁵⁷ Eddie Wilson interview of Fletcher Clark, January, 1981, author’s collection.

⁵⁸ Interview with author, August 1, 2007.

small group of people were partaking of alcohol. Luckily for the venue's countercultural denizens, Monday Night Football announcer and former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dandy Don Meredith was among them, a guest of Bud Shrake. The officers lit up upon recognizing Meredith, who put his hands on their shoulders, escorted them out the doors, and signed autographs. Eddie Wilson grabbed Bobby Hedderman by the elbow and told him to go get one of the gaudy basketball trophies they happened to have in storage under the stage. "I gave the trophy to Eddie and he took it to the stage as the band finished their set," Hedderman recalled, "Eddie relayed to the audience what had just taken place and called Don Meredith to the stage. Underneath the anemic stage lights Don accepted the trophy. 'You may not know it' he said 'But this is what I really always wanted.'"⁵⁹ Such prestigious contacts eased the Armadillo's way with traditional audiences and legal authorities.

The Armadillo World Headquarters's success in both selling Lone Star Beer and embodying "the Texan" in the 1970s led to a formalized promotional relationship between the venue and the beer. Wilson devised a consulting firm, TYNA/TACI ("Thought-You'd-Never-Ask/The-Austin-Consultants-Inc.") to develop the partnership, through which the Armadillo commissioned the Lost Gonzo Band's Bob Livingston to pen a song and radio jingle, "The Nights Never Get Lonely," about Lone Star Beer. "Dancing in the moonlight under Lone Star skies/in the Lone Star state with a Lone Star high/and the nights, they never get lonely/Harry Jersig's Lone Star Beer. It's really fine." They then leaned on Lone Star to expand its demographic, to refigure its appraisal of Texas identity, by recording versions of the song for radio advertisement by bluesman Freddie King and Onda Chicana star Sunny Ozuna, in addition to the progressive country

⁵⁹ Bobby Hedderman in Wilson, 60-61.

version recorded by Jerry Jeff Walker's Lost Gonzo Band.⁶⁰ Further, the Armadillo World Headquarters used their influence with Lone Star Beer to channel advertising money to their political allies, as when they convinced Lone Star to buy the entire back cover of the *Texas Observer's* twentieth anniversary issue in 1974. The Armadillo purchased the inside back cover, and the trinity of liberal politics, Armadillo World Headquarters, and Texas beer that underwrote the cosmic cowboy style appeared prominently in print. Conservatives in the state had long deployed the national frame and its opposite (the un-American, the un-Texan, and the foreign) in defense of their agenda, forcing such progressives as the Armadillo, in turn, to theorize their own organic unity between the inhabitants of the political state of Texas and its symbolic meanings. During the 1970s, the organizers, audiences, and artists of the Armadillo World Headquarters successfully performed, in a few exemplary moments, this progressive revisioning of "the Texan."

HIPPIES AND REDNECKS, DOBIE AND PAREDES: PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED FOLKLORISTICS

"Authenticity" is the stalking horse in such formulations. Just as Dobie and Bedichek had theorized an organic Anglo-Texan nationalism joining men and land, progressive country music and its attendant fashions suggested a performance of "the Texan" that claimed a natural relationship amongst the homologous elements of the subculture, rather than their artifice. Authenticity, though, need not be a bogeyman here, as these performances possessed a great deal of self-consciousness. Further, there may well be an "authentic" element to the performance of such musics in Central Texas. Ethnomusicologist Aaron Fox has defended the concept in its relation to country music performance in nearby Lockhart, "the working-class claim on 'country music' is

⁶⁰ Wilson, 166.

coherent, justified, and ethical—that is to say, ‘authentic’. . . Explaining ‘country’ culturally, in terms of forms of personal and communal local musical practices rather than industrially mediated processes, is not to ‘folklorize’ country music, or to lose sight of political economy.”⁶¹ Country music has long invited such fierce contestation over its authenticity claims, as it conveys a certain organic relationship amongst the American nation, whiteness, and rurality.

Many young Anglo-Texan men donning boots and hats in Austin in the 1970s could make claims to a rural or small-town background. Their relation to the subject position of “redneck” was often understandable, but the elision of this position with the cowboy guise was often much more tenuous. To the extent that they did have experiences of rurality, the referent would more likely be farming than ranching. One response to the style’s problematic claims on authenticity, and the tangled regional markers of cowhand and farmhand, came in John Clay’s song “I Just Want to be a Plastic Plowboy,” a satirical answer to Murphey’s (again, itself supposedly satirical) “I Just Want to be a Cosmic Cowboy.” The authenticity claims at work in the Austin scene, though performed over the figure of the Anglo-Texan cowboy, more closely signified the temporal-spatial distance between the urbanizing generations who came of age in the 1950s and the 1970s.

The cowboy was frequently heralded in song as a handy metaphor for an older, rural Texas, but it was often an imagined Texas outside the experience of both the “hippies” and the “rednecks” gathering at the Armadillo. Willie Nelson has testified to the formative influence of the singing cowboy pictures he watched as a boy in Hillsboro. Culturally, this North-Central region of Texas immersed Nelson more in the cotton South

⁶¹ Aaron Fox, *Real Country* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 31.

than the cattle West, and his first bands echoed western swing in their sartorial embrace of the cowboy wrapped around the aural core of jazz and the local accents of Czech and German polka. As his most recent biographer, Joe Nick Patoski, stated the case, “Willie and [his sister] Bobbie fantasized about cowboys and cowgirls, horses and singing. Their play acting did not include cotton,” though their everyday life included plenty.⁶² Likewise, Nelson’s frequent collaborator Waylon Jennings reflected on his upbringing in Littlefield, near Lubbock, that “You’d figure growing up in West Texas we’d practically be cowboys ourselves, but most of our six-gun lore came from the movies. I considered us farmers.”⁶³ In addition, Don Graham, the foremost expert on the state’s literature, grew up in Parker, near the site of what would become the Ewings’ Southfork Ranch on television’s *Dallas*, but that, too, was cotton land, and the cowboys entered these parts of Texas via movie screens, just as they did in Nelson’s Hillsboro and Jennings’s Littlefield and elsewhere in America and the world.⁶⁴ While familial connections to cowboys did exist, they could just as often be to these screen cowboys, as well: the premier Texas Chic artist Bob “Daddy-O” Wade, a subject of Chapter 6, was a second cousin of Roy Rogers; Hank Alrich, who took the helm at the Armadillo in 1976 after Eddie Wilson’s departure, was the heir to the wealth of a silent film cowboy.⁶⁵

In investigating the relationships between performers and “the folk,” whether they be of the “redneck” or “cowboy” variety, the “performance-oriented folkloristics” that

⁶² Patoski, *Willie Nelson*, 25.

⁶³ Waylon Jennings with Lenny Kaye, *Waylon: An Autobiography* (New York: Warner Books, 1996), 24.

⁶⁴ Don Graham, *Cowboys and Cadillacs: How Hollywood Looks at Texas* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1983), 5. And recall Walter Prescott Webb from Chapter One: “Though I grew up in the edge of the cattle country, I was never a [crossed out: real] cowboy. . . It is easy for anyone who grew up in the West before 1910 to claim cowboy descent. People rather expect it. I might best be described in these early years as a sort of reluctant dry-farmer.” Autobiography, Box 2M245, Folder Biographical Records: Autobiography, Walter Prescott Webb Papers.

⁶⁵ Bob Wade with Keith and Kent Zimmerman, *Daddy-O: Iguana Heads and Texas Tales* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 205-209.

Américo Paredes's students and colleagues theorized in these years at the University of Texas at Austin can be brought to bear. While this theoretical school by no means made the mark that Birmingham did in subsequent cultural studies, their manifesto "*And Other Neighborly Names*": *Social Process and Cultural Image in Texas Folklore* (1981), with chapters by Roger Abrahams, Richard Bauman, Archie Green, José Limón, and Manuel Peña, has a direct relevance to the musical scene with which these scholars lived. Roger Abrahams was a fixture on the Threadgill's folk scene, Manuel Peña was a banda musician on the verge of becoming the foremost chronicler of tejano musics, and many of the rest were deeply connected in the social networks of the Austin scene. As Bauman and Abrahams described their endeavor at the beginning of that volume, performance-oriented folkloristics consists of three basic traits, undergirded by the now obvious notion that "on the one hand, folklore must be observed in its living place and, on the other, in terms of its social and even political ramifications."⁶⁶ First, the performance-oriented folkloristics school is "marked by a deep personal sense of real life that goes through and beyond the nostalgia that tends, in most places, to overwhelm the study of local folklore."⁶⁷ The "in most places" phrasing here served less to distinguish performance-oriented folkloristics geographically as it did historically, contrasting the Paredes School with the Dobie School. Nevertheless, they did not completely eschew Dobie's legacy. Secondly, another "characteristic that sets these Texas folklorists apart from the mainstream of American folklore study . . . is that they have seen themselves not only as scholar-collectors of lore of their own people and region, or as authors in the purely academic sphere, but as writers for a readership that went far beyond the academy."

⁶⁶ Richard Bauman and Roger Abrahams, eds. "*And Other Neighborly Names*": *Social Process and Cultural Image in Texas Folklore* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

However, this popular orientation, a positive holdover from the Dobie generation, could also crash against the dangers of Bedichek's occasional blut und boden tendencies: "When you know your group as an insider, you will also have a clear sense of who the outsiders are." In short, performance-oriented folkloristics provided an intellectual analog to the aural markers of progressive country in Austin, a further theorization of "the Texan" in the decade synthesizing old and new, Dobie's nostalgic formulations and Paredes's challenge to them joined through an attention to folkloric performance. "*And Other Neighborly Names*" deployed this methodology on such subjects dear to the cosmic cowboy as dogs, rodeo, the Chicano Movement, storytelling, conjunto, and, in a chapter by Archie Green subtitled "Words in Collision," the cosmic cowboy subculture itself.

As the cosmic cowboy scene attained high visibility in Austin by the mid-70s, critics seized on the obvious fissures in the tenuous performative alliances between hippies and rednecks. Jeff Shero Nightbyrd made the most high-profile critique in the aforementioned "Cosmo Cowboys: Too Much Cowboy, Not Enough Cosmic." He emphasized the troubling gender politics of the movement. "Who has heard of the Cosmic Cowgirl? . . . The cosmo scene consists of male tribalism. Women are relegated to spectators or hangers on." He assailed what he saw as the apolitical elements of the cosmic cowboy identity.

It doesn't take much. Particularly it doesn't require any changes in attitude like being a hippie in the sixties did. You don't have to know anything about the war, give a damn about race, tussle with psychedelics, or worry about male chauvinism. No internal restructuring is required. . . Cosmo cowboydom allows you to be just what you always were.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Jeff Shero Nightbyrd, "Cosmo Cowboys: Too Much Cowboy and Not Enough Cosmic," *Austin Sun*, April 3, 1975, 13, 19. Not that Nightbyrd himself was at the height of militancy by the mid-1970s. In a *Texas Monthly* article of 1976 detailing the career trajectory of Sixties radicals, Nightbyrd said of his time with the *Sun*, "I expect there'll be big movements again, and I'll organize again. But right now I'm in

The question remains, then, whether this conservative valence is something that inheres in the homologous set of symbols surrounding the cowboy and whether the alternate, progressive vision of Anglo-Texan masculinity was sustainable. Chapters 4 and 6 will wrestle with these issues at length. However, the scene's artists and audiences were often more savvy regarding these issues than they at first appeared.

“THE AUSTIN NERDS DON’T LIKE ME”: CONCLUSIONS OF KINKY FRIEDMAN

Of course, some artists approached the project of performance with the distancing persona Auslander theorized for 1970s glam, consciously inhabiting a role rather than attempting to project an essential authenticity. In particular, Kinky Friedman's performative take on the cosmic cowboy begs scrutiny. Friedman was one of the few country artists on the scene who had been raised in Austin, and he debuted his performative persona, a cranky, cigar-smoking, sequin-suited Jewish cowboy, with great fanfare. His song “They Ain't Makin' Jews Like Jesus Anymore” staked out the continuing tensions in the Texas hippie-redneck fusion, foregrounding Friedman's Jewishness as a factor in preventing his fusion into the cosmic cauldron. Friedman was by no means the only Jewish artist in the progressive country fold, but, in keeping with the resurgence of white ethnicity, Friedman explored Jewish identity even as these other artists often effaced their origins in recreating themselves as Anglo-Texans. The song begins with a “redneck nerd in a bowling shirt/guzzling Lone Star beer” who insults Friedman's Jewishness even as he misrecognizes him racially as black. When Friedman balks, the redneck laments, “They sure ain't makin' Jews like Jesus anymore/They don't turn the other cheek the way they done before.” In the chorus, Friedman reclaimed the redneck's insult as a masculine assertion of self-defense in which “not makin' Jews like

business.” Thorne Dreyer, “What Ever Happened to the New Generation?” *Texas Monthly*, November 1976, 232.

Jesus anymore” meant “*we* don’t turn our cheeks the way we done before.” Just as Friedman penned perhaps the only cowboy song about the Holocaust in “Ride ‘em, Jewboy,” he also, here, delivers a rare country song that echoes the Israeli nationalism sparked amongst American Jews by the Six Day and Yom Kippur Wars.⁶⁹

Like Auslander’s glam artists, Friedman bracketed the performative self. “‘Jewboys don’t jam’ has been our motto,” he told Jan Reid in 1974, “I play on bills with these bands, and they say come pick, let’s jam. We never use the word pick when we’re going onstage. A lot of bands say they’re going to pick at nine o’ clock. We say we’re going on. We’re more realistic, I think, about the whole damn thing.” “The word pick,” Friedman’s bandmate Finley added, “indicates some kind of imbecilic joy at being able to get your hands on a guitar.”⁷⁰ Friedman’s approach contradicted the aesthetic ideology of Austin artists insofar as, according to a September, 1974, *Time* article on the scene, “If the Austin sound has a common trait, it is the lack, onstage, of show business antics or, in the recording studio, of slick electronic techniques. Leading musicians concretize and make records the way they drink—quickly, while everybody is looking, with few rehearsals and fewer regrets. The more natural, unlauded, even raunchy the result, the better.”⁷¹ Authenticity here is not a mark of essential identity so much as privileged, non-technical approach to the performance of country music.

Friedman foregrounded the “show-business” artifice of performance. He argued that the “Austin nerds don’t like me because I got a lot of publicity for a bogus

⁶⁹ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 164-170. Friedman drove the point home in promotional photos in which he was draped in an Israeli flag in cowboy garb. Finally, in “Asshole from El Paso,” Friedman also offers an interpretation of that most lauded of progressive country texts, Merle Haggard’s “Okie from Muskogee.” Haggard’s ambivalence in the original is strengthened here, making the satirical nature of the song obvious, and underscoring the ethnopolitics of the borderlands.

⁷⁰ Reid, 237.

⁷¹ “Groover’s Paradise,” *Time*, September 9, 1974.

personality. Why, I'd kill any one of them with a fork. I didn't have to hang around Kenneth Threadgill's for ten years to be cool."⁷² Of course, Friedman is being deliberately provocative here as part of that "bogus personality" ("I don't really view hippies as people," he added), but the remarks spoke to a divergent sense of the performative self, a recognition of persona that was not nearly so forthcoming in conversations with Michael Murphey or Willie Nelson. Friedman offered an honesty regarding the celebration of Texas in the decade, as well. "I've always told people I love Texas. I love Texas, I really do. But I can't say anything good about it when I'm geographically here. I have to go elsewhere to appreciate it. Right now I'm digging New York."⁷³ And New York City, in turn, was digging Texans, but that is a story we will return to in Chapter 6.

In a less obvious way than Friedman, Willie Nelson's performative authenticity could also be seen as something of a hall of mirrors. Nelson had, indeed, the long experience of performing in honky-tonks. He did come from Anglo-Texan roots and a rural upbringing. Both counted for much in establishing Nelson's experiential authenticity for young audiences in Austin. This is not to comment on Nelson's ability nor sincerity, but to recognize the extent to which his celebrity elevated him to the order of Henry Nash Smith's myth, not so much an historical individual as, at times, a concept and emotion fused into an image. Again, as Reid aptly observed, "Willie seemed to be able to do no wrong. He was as natural as dirt, and when he walked through a crowd he knew everybody who spoke to him. . . . And Willie acted like Texas was the center of the universe."⁷⁴ As much as his musical ability or performative persona, Nelson's centrality

⁷² Reid, 238.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 229.

in the progressive country scene tapped a deep discursive stream involving the transcending of oppositions: hippie/redneck, urban/rural, country/rock, masculine/feminine, but also in transcending the tricky terrain of generation and history by providing an embodied amalgamation of fathers and sons, tradition and change. It is to the resonances of this historical-generational narrative that we now turn.

Chapter Four: The Vanishing Texan

While we digested our suppers on The Old Man's front porch . . . [he] recalled favored horses and mules from his farming days, remembering their names and personalities though they had been thirty or forty years dead. I gave him a brief thumbnail sketch of William Faulkner—Mississippian, great writer, appreciator of the soil and good bourbon—before quoting what Faulkner had written of the mule: “He will draw a wagon or a plow but he will not run a race. He will not try to jump anything he does not indubitably know beforehand he can jump; he will not enter any place unless he knows of his own knowledge what is on the other side; he will work for you patiently for ten years for the chance to kick you once.” The Old Man cackled in delight. “That feller sure knowed his mules,” he said.¹

—Larry L. King

Larry L. King's story about his recently deceased father, “The Old Man,” appeared in *Harper's* in April of 1971. The issue served as a swan song for the editorship of Willie Morris, formerly of the *Daily Texan* and *Texas Observer* and a friend of King's, who had risen to *Harper's* editor-in-chief in 1967. Though Morris led the literary magazine to new heights of prestige and relevance, the magazine's owners dismissed him over flagging sales.² It is fitting that “The Old Man” appeared in Morris's final issue. The editor had tried to pull this story out of King for some time, knowing that it touched on something that King, an Anglo-Texan who had spent most of his adult life in Washington D. C. and New York, felt deeply. However, it was only in the wake of Cyrus King's death that King felt up to the task of writing about “The Old Man.” He took as his subject a road trip he and his father embarked upon in his father's eighty-

¹ Larry L. King, “The Old Man” *Harper's*, April 1971, 80-89. Anthologized in Larry L. King, *The Old Man and Lesser Mortals* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), 3-30.

² King led a walkout of writers, including the likes of Norman Mailer and William Styron, to protest Morris's firing. For more on Morris, and the King-Morris relationship, see Larry L. King, *In Search of Willie Morris: The Mercurial Life of a Legendary Writer and Editor* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006).

second year. “The Old Man” had seen neither the Alamo nor the state capitol in Austin, wanted to do so before he died, and so the father and son set out from the plains of Midland to do so.

King’s article “The Old Man” engaged in wistful reverie regarding a lost masculine self, rendered as a generational narrative that the author mapped onto the rural-urban, temporal-spatial divide. “He had a love for growing things, a Russian peasant’s legendary infatuation for the motherland; for digging in the good earth, smelling it, conquering it.”³ This is King’s sense of his father, a denizen of West Texas tied to that ground just as a Russian serf. Hardly a “redneck” (King goes to great lengths to establish his father’s sense of propriety), Cyrus King nevertheless possessed that element of presumed authenticity that undergirded the hippie-redneck confluence discussed in the previous chapter.⁴ Larry L. King, a liberal who had worked as an aide for Lyndon Johnson and, if no hippie, certainly of bohemian bent, wrote this piece in 1971 in much the same tones as music critics investigating the Austin scene. Further, he envisioned the rapprochement between feuding generations on the terrain of symbolic state power in the capitol and the Alamo. King’s piece sketched the older generation’s perceptions of changing times with relation to war, race, and gender.

What did the Old Man think of this age of protest and revolt? “It plagues me some,” he admitted. “I got mad at them young boys that didn’t want to fight in Vietnam. Then after the politicians botched it so bad nobody couldn’t win it, and told lies to boot, I decided *I* wouldn’t want to risk dyin’ in a war that didn’t make sense.”⁵

³ King, *The Old Man and Lesser Mortals*, 12.

⁴ Larry L. King contrasts that propriety with his own youthful carousing. King would later go to great lengths to define the redneck in a story for *Texas Monthly* in August, 1974. The cover of that issue featured a portrait of the back side of a white male’s head, defiantly red neck exposed, with the title “Presenting the New American Hero: The Redneck.”

⁵ King, *The Old Man and Lesser Mortals*, 19

Larry L. King and his father agreed on this once most contentious of political points, regarding a war championed by King's former employer, while on a trip visiting a shrine to the Texans' martyred folly of 1836.

The changing cultural politics of the 1970s gave rise to renewed interest in the figures of Anglo-Texan masculinity in a way that not only refashioned them for the future, but simultaneously retrenched them. This refashioning spoke to a deep nostalgia for a Texas that always seemed to be passing, through a figure I call the "Vanishing Texan." Anglo-Texan men invoked themes of fathers and sons, the agrarian and the industrial, and Texas as nation and empire to make sense of their subject position in the 1970s. The tone echoed Dobie's concern with "Texans Out of the Old Rock"; only these authors looked back to Dobie's generation rather than the state's Anglo "founding fathers" to make much the same arguments on the passage of time. Where the Lone Star Regionalists wrote at the state's tipping point from rural to urban and its national ascendance through oil wealth, these authors and artists operated in a contrarian moment in which the Texans' imperial reach appeared at times extended by its connections to oil, and at other times foreshortened by the perceived homogenization of the American landscape. Economically prospering from energy prices even as the state passed its peak production of oil, culturally swaggering even as social change eroded the state's distinctiveness, politically in limbo with the death of LBJ and contentious debate amongst the Democrats in the midst of partisan realignment, narratives of declension arose to explain it all away. This chapter sketches this discourse in three parts by investigating figures of Anglo-Texan masculinity in early *Texas Monthly*, the western swing revival aspect of Austin's progressive country alliance, and the imperial rhetoric of rise-and-fall surrounding oil wealth in novels by Bud Shrake and H. L. Hunt.

“LOYD IS AN ANACHRONISM”: ANGLO-TEXAN MASCULINITY IN EARLY *TEXAS MONTHLY*

When *Texas Monthly* won a National Magazine Award in May 1974 after having only been in business a year, publisher Michael Levy crowed that the “greater significance is the simple fact that our existence and growth as a new magazine is a very real product of the state of Texas and its cultural maturation. . . Texas has come of age. Texans are sophisticated, inquisitive, and aware.”⁶ The fledgling magazine’s strong investigative bent chided what it saw as the state’s petty corruptions in politics and business, its small-mindedness in matters of culture and education, but there existed also a definite soft spot for the state’s provincial affectations, a bittersweet nostalgia for what the journalists of *Texas Monthly* felt they had lost in the very process of Levy’s “cultural maturation.” This loss frequently took the form of a generational narrative akin to King’s, in which fathers stood in for the worlds in which journalists perceived their forebears to have moved, ruggedly, alone, and taming the frontier even as they fought back the rigidifying effects of Eastern institutions.

Themes linking the vision of a supposedly nobler Texas to a narrative concerning fathers and sons, youth and age, identity and difference, constantly recur in the 1970s, both visually and rhetorically. A perusal of the cover stories of early *Texas Monthly* reveals a significant anxiety over the icons of Anglo-Texan masculinity, together constituting a considerable bout of hand-wringing over the “Vanishing Texan.” Three cover stories, in particular, stand out. First, from September 1974, Paul Burka’s “What’s Happening to Texas Football?” or “The Decline and Fall of the Southwest Conference.” On this cover, mourning cheerleaders gather around the casket of a uniformed football player. Second, from November 1974, there is Bill Porterfield’s “The Texas Wildcatter:

⁶ Michael Levy, “From the Publisher.” *Texas Monthly*, June 1974, 1.

Endangered Species” or “The Lonely Search for Oil.” Here, a cowboy-hatted oilman leans against his Cadillac, longhorns on hood, profiled against a sunset scene of derricks. Finally, from October 1975, Bill Porterfield chimes in again with “Is the Texas Cowboy Extinct” or “In Search of the Modern Cowboy.”⁷ A bemused cowhand’s taxidermied head sits on the wall, labeled *Cowboy Texanus*. Each cover story sets forth a particular iconic figure as representative of the passing distinctiveness of Anglo-Texan masculinity. The titles borrow from the environmental language of the threatened (“endangered species,” “decline,” “extinct”), fashion a quest for the increasingly rare (“oil,” “the modern cowboy”), and suggest on the surface a general state of bewilderment with the world of the 1970s (“What’s Happening to Texas Football?”).

It makes sense that these manifestations occurred in the 1970s. Texas shared in the spoils of Sun Belt prosperity peaking in those years, and alongside the political clout and wealth came new migrants to the cities, new migrants to the state, and new questions over what it meant to be Texan. Of course, these questions did not merely revolve around newcomers and the specter of homogenization, the national-normative versus regional-distinctive axis. The changing proportion of natives and newcomers within the Anglo-American male demographic coincided with contestation on the part of the African-American civil rights, Chicano, and feminist movements over claims on the very identity of Texan itself. The word “Texan,” standing alone, had long conjured images of the icons *Texas Monthly* singled out on these covers. The Seventies opened the term “Texan” and its attendant symbolism to a wider range of the state’s inhabitants. The notion of “who counts” politically, socially, economically, and ideologically shifted in

⁷ Paul Burka, “The Decline and Fall of the Southwest Conference,” *Texas Monthly*, September 1974, 58-65, 100-106, 110; Bill Porterfield, “The Lonely Search for Oil,” *Texas Monthly*, November 1974, 62-68, 109-110; Bill Porterfield, “In Search of the Modern Cowboy,” *Texas Monthly*, October 1975, 58-64, 88-96. The dual titles reference the blurb that accompanies the cover image in addition to the article’s title in the issue’s table of contents.

radical ways. In this sense, the figure of the “Vanishing Texan” augured not the disappearance of Texanness, but an anxiety over the new contours of that identity in the absence of Anglo-Masculine normativity.

The magazine’s cover stories portraying Texas women (typically Anglo) provide further evidence of this anxiety and of *Texas Monthly*’s uneven ability to project these new identities in progressive fashion. Some examples include October 1973, “World’s Oldest Profession Hits the Road” on the closing of the Chicken Ranch house of prostitution in La Grange with a cover that alludes to Jerry Bywaters’s painting *Oil Field Girls*. In October 1974, the cover featured a Miss Texas dressed in janitorial gear asking, “Me? A Beauty Queen?” Feminism came in for interrogation in June 1975 with “The New Woman? Returning to Submission” on women’s liberation, with a cover that makes the *New Left Notes* gaffe of 1967 look like a rousing endorsement—a made-up, smiling model with deep cleavage wearing a metal collar, hand-cuffed to ball-and-chain.⁸ Other traditional icons of Texas femininity appeared in the December 1975 “War in the Sky” on competition in the airline industry, illustrated as a brawl amongst leggy stewardesses and the October 1977 cover “Is Cheerleading Really Necessary?” which inverted the doleful tone of the earlier cover of the football player. Most tellingly, two covers referenced gendered and raced hierarchies in Texas in the late 1970s, one as a knowing interrogation, the other terribly patronizing. Both featured Anglo women and African-American maids: January 1977, “Fitting into the South: How to Make It in Jimmy Carter’s America” and “Made for Each Other: The Private World of Women and Their Maids” by Prudence Mackintosh.

⁸ The SDS newspaper in 1967 published a pathbreaking article on women’s liberation paired with an illustration of a girl in polka-dotted, baby-doll dress.

In all, *Texas Monthly* engaged in the contradictory exercise of reifying the distinctly Texan at the same time it documented the modernizing forces that fractured the monolith of the state's mythology. The three cover stories on football players, wildcatters, and cowboys sketched those contradictions in miniature. Burka's story on football appeared first, in September of 1974, and, on the face of it, the figure of the football player seemed to be an unlikely candidate for "Vanishing Texan," the sport's association with the state still being relatively young in the 1970s. Paul Burka argued, however, that at the collegiate level a formerly competitive Southwest Conference had passed with the increasing urbanization and homogenization of the Lone Star State.

There was a time when Southwest Conference football was more than a sport: it was a social institution, as definitive of Texas life as the oil well or the open range. Each school symbolized a different way of life, and the meeting of two football teams represented a confrontation between lifestyles. . . farmers and laborers [identified] with Texas A & M, Baptists with Baylor, Dallas socialites with SMU, West Texas farmers and ranchers with TCU. The Southwest Conference is a relic of a time when Texas was both diverse and chauvinistic, varied yet inbred. Life was simpler then; people knew who they were.⁹

Burka's vision of Texas ran against the narrative that attaches heterogeneity and diversification to the forward march of modernization. Rather, Burka perceived in the urban a flattening of social difference, at least as far as college football was concerned. He outlined a Texas that seemed to be somehow multicultural within an Anglo framework alone, organized around the concept of distinctive "ways of life." Tellingly, the article failed to engage the issue of race that had become so prominent as sports teams, pragmatically and in piecemeal fashion, faced up to the challenge of racial integration. Instead, the author focused on the urban-rural divide as that which distinguished authentic, vibrant, Texan competition from the stilted games played by

⁹ Burka, 59.

interchangeable parts without natural, organic constituencies. In particular, urbanization leached the supposed Texanness of college football as talent pools shifted from rural areas of East, West, and South Texas to Dallas and Houston.

But the farms are disappearing now, and so are the people: as the water table drops on the High Plains, people flee the unproductive land for the city. The best schoolboy athletes are no longer found in the small towns of West Texas, but in the bigger cities and suburbs. [The University of] Texas doesn't recruit much better in the rural areas than it ever did, but that no longer matters. The players are no longer there.¹⁰

College football, Burka argued, had become less organically tied to its community, and thus less engaging, as urbanization generally favored the recruiting demographics of the University of Texas. However, that same rural-urban divide also stood in for the issue of race. The racial integration of college football was largely complete by 1974, but the struggle remained in very recent memory. The process began as much as twenty years earlier, in the year of *Brown v. Board*, when University of Texas football coach Dana X. Bible ignored Regent rules disallowing African American players in the football stadium for a highly publicized game featuring Washington State College's African American running back Duke Washington. As late as 1969, however, Darrell K Royal's Longhorns secured the dubious honor of being the last all-white team to win the national championship, and Royal subsequently carried a reputation as an opponent of racial integration. Royal unfortunately bore the brunt of the criticism of the university's slow pace of integration, as he provided a face to a systemic problem that implicated the Board of Regents and influential alumni organizations more than it did the university's football coach.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid., 65.

¹¹ Dwonna Goldstone, *Integrating the 40 Acres: The Fifty-Year Struggle for Racial Equality at the University of Texas* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 115-122. Darrell K Royal with John Wheat, *Coach Royal: Conversations with a Texas Football Legend* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 33-34; "Royal Fights Racist Image," *Daily Texan*, November 16, 1972, 7; "Racist Image Puzzles

Such issues lay beyond Burka's immediate concern in this article. He did not engage the racial politics of football, but rather offered a spirited defense of the collegiate game against the corruption of virtue and community he attributed to professional football. As the University of Texas achieved domination in the Southwest Conference, Burka cast Darrell K Royal as a Trojan horse carrying the cold, cybernetic philosophy of Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry into the collegiate game. College football, Burka argued, should be collectively owned by a community of like-minded peers, preferably real, rural Texans. Professional football, on the other hand, "owns the cities today. A pro team is the natural repository for the loyalties of thousands of people who came to the city from far away. . . In a rootless and anonymous environment, the professional team gives the newcomer something to identify with."¹² Again, the city, rootless and anonymous, threatened the native Anglo-Texan traditions of lifestyle-oriented football in a place where the "people knew who they were."

Texas Monthly took professional football seriously as a site of threat and promise in the landscape of urban Texas, and not only because some of the state's best journalists in those years either began their careers or achieved their greatest success as sportswriters.¹³ The magazine book-ended its first year of issues with cover stories on television announcer and former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dandy Don Meredith (the inaugural issue of February 1973) and Cowboys coach Tom Landry (November 1973). That Meredith came first and Landry later may reveal where the magazine's loyalties lay in the cultural struggle that has been mapped onto the two men: Meredith a spirited,

Royal," *Daily Texan*, November 17, 1972, 5. For the defense of Royal in the face of this larger systemic prejudice, see Gary Cartwright, "Orange Peril," *Texas Monthly*, November 1976, 124-128.

¹² Burka, 64.

¹³ Steve Davis covers this story well, as he does so many other aspects of the literary milieu recounted here, in *Texas Literary Outlaws: Six Writers from the Sixties and Beyond*. (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2004).

good-timing good ol' boy with a slight countercultural tinge, and Landry the straight-laced fundamentalist and cybernetic statistician. Gary Cartwright began the conversation with a cover story, "Tom Landry: Melting the Plastic Man," that announced itself in the caption: "In Landry's presence you do not feel the plastic and computers you might expect. You feel something more visceral. You feel fear."¹⁴ Here, the stern, silent brand of frontier masculinity, adorned in a fedora rather than a Stetson, evoked threat rather than nostalgia, and some observers nationwide mapped this same sensibility onto the Seventies designation of Landry's Cowboys as "America's Team." In this regard, Texas's imperial reach seemed to be in the ascension, as Dallas and its Western-themed team stood in as representative of the nation.

Following the political demise of Lyndon Baines Johnson, one might have expected the nation's hand-wringing over the stereotypical uncouth, trigger-fingered, drawling Texan as political player to have faded somewhat, but Texas continued to loom large in the minds of those who saw something sinister in the much-discussed Rust Belt-Sun Belt dichotomies of those years. The "America's Team" moniker suggested the shifting locus of national identity South and West, as well as an entire discursive arsenal that flashed into view when the Dallas Cowboys played representatives of the Northeastern industrial core such as the Pittsburgh Steelers.¹⁵ One of the highest-profile critiques of the Sun Belt phenomenon, in fact, Kirkpatrick Sale's *Power Shift* of 1975, summed up the whole series of demographic, economic, political, and cultural changes in the country as a struggle for power between the "Yankees" of the Eastern Establishment and the "Cowboys" of the Southern Rim.

¹⁴ Gary Cartwright, "'Melting the Plastic Man,'" *Texas Monthly*, November 1973.

¹⁵ This was especially true when the Cowboys and Steelers met in the Super Bowls of 1976 and 1979, both won by the Steelers.

There is a broadly metaphorical but rather apt way of describing these rival power bases. . . as the yankees and the cowboys. Taken loosely, that is meant to suggest the traditional, staid, old-time, button-down, Ivy-League, tight-lipped, patrician, New England-rooted WASP culture on the one hand, and the aggressive, flamboyant, restless, swaggering, newfangled, open-collar, can-do, Southern-rooted Baptist culture of the Southern Rim on the other.¹⁶

And while Sale did not mention the Dallas Cowboys by name, he saw it as no coincidence that football's popularity rose along with the fortunes of the region with which it had become increasingly identified. He argued that

It is bizarre but not at all fanciful to see football as the objective correlative of the third major characteristic of the Southern Rim: repression. No other sport is inherently so rigid, so autocratic, so brutal, so anti-individualistic. No other sport combines one-man rule on and off the field, systematic and sanctioned violence, automatonism as a clear virtue, established and elaborate plays and patterns, and the orderliness of a set field of play and an inflexible clock. No other sport surrounds itself with such patriotism and piety, such spectacle and militarism, such mechanization and organization. And no other sport is so beloved, associated with, and characteristic of, the Southern Rim.¹⁷

These same elements made some Anglo-Texan men cringe, too. A Larry L. King article entitled "Coming of Age in the Locker Room" accompanied Paul Burka's jeremiad to Southwest Conference football in the September 1974 issue. In it, King extensively documented a series of extreme yet commonplace brutalities visited upon high school and college athletes by coaches.¹⁸ King preferred anecdotes of extreme and grotesque hazing to Sale's ideological ax-grinding, but their accounts produced much the same effect.

As with the issue of racial integration in sports, Coach Royal gave a public voice to the dehumanizing vision of football with such attributed aphorisms as his definition of the game as "meat on meat, flesh on flesh, and stink on stink."¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, a

¹⁶ Kirkpatrick Sale, *Power Shift: The Rise of the Southern Rim and Its Challenge to the Eastern Establishment* (New York: Random House, 1975), 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁸ Larry L. King, "Coming of Age in the Locker Room" *Texas Monthly*, September 1974, 80-99.

¹⁹ Cartwright, "Orange Peril," 128.

disgruntled former University of Texas player, Gary Shaw, assailed Royal's program with much the same language in *Meat on the Hoof: The Hidden World of Texas Football* in 1972, opening up a genre of exposé and thinly-veiled fiction regarding Texas football during the decade. Former Cowboys tight end Peter Gent and journalist Dan Jenkins carried these critiques to the professional level and burlesqued the practices of modern football in the novels *North Dallas Forty* (1973) and *Semi-Tough* (1972), furthering the rendition of the Texas football player as a sort of tragic hero, a man-child who participated in the systematic destruction of his own body for the love of playing a game.²⁰ Other cultural references to the sport include Lubbock musician Terry Allen's spoof of 1979 with "The Great Joe Bob (A Regional Tragedy)," in which the counterculture is placed squarely as the nemesis of traditional football when the star athlete's declension culminates: "He growed his hair, then give up prayer and said, 'Football days is done.'"²¹ Perhaps we are supposed to feel that the player whose funeral is staged on the September *Texas Monthly* cover has been put out of his misery. Yet, all of these authors remained fans of the game while declaiming a sordid loss of dignity in the modern arena with the routinization of the players' charisma and the remove that separated local Texas boys from their natural Texas fandoms in college and professional football. The anxieties ring untrue and somewhat routine themselves in light of the

²⁰ Pete Gent, *North Dallas Forty* (New York: Morrow, 1973); Dan Jenkins, *Semi-Tough* (New York: Atheneum, 1972). Gent's work deals rather explicitly with the Dallas Cowboys. Gent, a former tight end highly critical of Landry's methods, made *North Dallas Forty* semi-autobiographical, with the relationship between the lead characters Phil Elliott and Seth Maxwell bearing a more than incidental likeness to the friendship between Gent and Landry's free-wheeling nemesis, quarterback Don Meredith. Both Gent and Jenkins's works were adapted into film. *North Dallas Forty*, Directed by Ted Kotcheff, Paramount, 1979, starred Nick Nolte and Mac Davis in the leads, toning down the critique of the novel while ratcheting up the good ol' boy humor. The adaptation of *Semi-Tough*, Directed by Michael Ritchie, United Artists, 1977, starring Burt Reynolds and Kris Kristofferson, altered the substance of Jenkins's novel a good deal, rendering it a slapstick critique of the new age therapy EST. The *Friday Night Lights* franchise (book, film, and television show) provides a contemporary echo of this genre.

²¹ Terry Allen, "The Great Joe Bob (A Regional Tragedy)" *Lubbock (on Everything)* (Fate, 1979).

sport's continued high profile in the state, but the virtuous hometown hero, in Burka's and King's and Allen's eyes, became one instance of the "Vanishing Texan."

As symbols of the state, the two professional football teams at the time were the Houston Oilers and the Dallas Cowboys. *Texas Monthly* journalist Bill Porterfield did not write on football, but he did explore both of these symbols, oilers and cowboys, and the men who lived in and through them. The wildcatter, like the football player, seems at first an odd figure to be tagged as a Vanishing Texan.²² Texas swagger in the 1970s, after all, owed a good deal to the resurgence of the petroleum industry in the energy crises of the decade. In "The Lonely Search for Oil" of November 1974, though, Bill Porterfield lamented the demise of what he suggested was once organic, spirited, and wheeler-dealerish in the wildcatter's profession. These frontier virtues that had supposedly formed the core of Texanness came under threat in the face of federal environmental oversight, the consolidating corporate powers of the oil industry, and the burgeoning production and market control of foreign fields.

In the article, Bill Porterfield accompanied second-generation wildcatter Loyd Powell, Jr. through several days of his ventures in West Texas. The aforementioned outside, bureaucratic forces of the federal, the corporate, and the foreign had reduced the room for maneuver, the frontiers to be exploited, the optimum habitat, for one such as Loyd Powell, Jr. In short, Porterfield wrote:

Loyd is an anachronism. In his manner and dress, in his ideas and values, he is a swashbuckler of the Texas Fifties. He looks like he just stepped off a Trans-Texas prop plane from Austin, where he had been closeted at the capitol with Governor Shivers and Price Daniel (the old man, not the boy), plotting to keep the Texas tidelands and throw Harry Truman out of office.²³

²² Briefly, a wildcatter is an independent operator who seeks to strike oil in unproven fields.

²³ Porterfield, "The Lonely Search for Oil," 64.

As anachronism, Loyd provided an interesting type. In the wider cultural manifestations of the Vanishing Texan, talk usually turned to comparisons of fathers and sons, the Vanishing Texan typically portrayed as what Dobie called “Texans Out of the Old Rock.” Here, we have a young man acting the role of a Texas icon whose heyday has passed. However, Loyd, too, held his father as model and avatar.

He wanted action, not soul-searching psychology. Life was to conquer, not to contemplate, and Loyd’s head was full of stories of his father’s heyday. It seemed a bolder, more adventurous time, more manly, somehow, than his own, and for a while there Loyd felt cramped at every turn of his growing maturity, a Gulliver in a land of Lilliputians.²⁴

Porterfield put these words into Loyd’s head, but they echo not only through these three cover stories and, indeed, much of 1970s *Texas Monthly*—“a bolder, more adventurous time, more manly, somehow, than his own”—but through much of Texas culture in the decade. These journalists by no means engaged in rigid worship of the past nor simplistic sexism. *Texas Monthly*, on the whole, remained reflexive about the nostalgia it communicated, and these authors prove useful in thinking through old and new conceptions of masculinity and their relationship to Anglo-Texan identity in the 1970s.²⁵

In Burka’s football article, nostalgia appeared in a narrative of *gemeinschaft/gesellschaft* declension, the corruption of organic communities through the rapid movements of people induced by modernity and urbanization. The wildcatter of Porterfield’s piece, on the other hand, thrived in the rapid movements and displacements of early modernity. The wildcatter did not exist in an organic community that gave him purpose. Rather, it is the very advent of purposeful society—environmental regulations,

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁵ There is some credence to those critics who note the magazine’s early (some would say continued) Anglocentricity, but it was, for 1970s Texas, on the whole very well-balanced, and frequently progressive. It is the combination of these more progressive moments with the operation of nostalgia, masculinity, and Texas identity that make the magazine a compelling study.

the geopolitical body of nations, the risk-averse nature of corporate bureaucracy—that hem him in. The wildcatter is not some symbolic avatar of the village agrarian, in other words, but the embodiment of the lone frontier gambler. The focus on such a figure as iconic of the masculine recalls the early equation of women and the arrival of “society” in the context of frontier America.²⁶ In the context of the 1970s, revisiting the masculine icons of the Texas frontier became overlain with the rhetorical challenge of a resurgent feminism. Porterfield fell back on no less a masculinist Anglo-Texan authority than J. Frank Dobie to fend off claims to a frontier mythology on the part of Texas women, in the 1970s just as in the 1870s.

J. Frank Dobie, that deceptive cowboy of campus and chaparral, once summed up the oilman’s contribution to the American spirit. In the Old World, he said, the legends that persisted with the most vitality were legends of women—Venus, Helen of Troy, Dido, Guinevere, Joan of Arc. But in the New World, men have been neither lured nor restrained by women. . . . Into this world, women have hardly entered except as realities; the idealizations, the legends, have been about great wealth to be found, the wealth of secret mines and hidden treasures, a wealth that is solid and has nothing to do with ephemeral beauty.²⁷

This trope of the Vanishing (macho, Anglo) Texan ran deep in the cultural politics of the 1970s. The profusion of such symbols bore the weight of a perceived or threatened loss of mastery on the part of Anglo-Texan men in the wake of the ongoing civil rights and feminist revolutions in the 1970s. The legends of Anglo-Texan men, according to Porterfield’s parsing of Dobie, had always been of something “solid,” but the Seventies unmoored these past certainties with regard to the social order and Texan identity. The ground which had yielded Anglo-Texan men so much wealth seemed to shift rapidly

²⁶ See Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000).

²⁷ Porterfield, “In Search of the Modern Cowboy,” 65. The reference is from the introduction to J. Frank Dobie, *Coronado’s Children: Tales of Lost Mines and Buried Treasures of the Southwest* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978 [1930]), xxi.

under their feet. Flexible accumulation brought with it the prospect of fluid and multiple identities that challenged the “solidity” of Anglo-Texan masculinity.

No iconic Texan saw greater deployment in the midst of these rhetorical struggles than the cowboy, one of the foundational figures of American masculinity, and Bill Porterfield provided one of the more sophisticated examples of the Vanishing Texan genre in the October 1975 cover story, “Is the Texas Cowboy Extinct?” or “The Search for the Modern Cowboy.” Here, finally, we have an up-front lamentation over the loss of a literal frontier. And yet, Porterfield’s narrative hardly proved that straightforward. His story of the modern cowboy was the only one of these pieces to find something worthwhile in adaptation, bemoaning the industrialization of cow-work, but also finding much that is praiseworthy in the continuing enterprise. “With millions at stake, the hand-crafted, horse-driven West has had to give way to the realities of efficient mass production and distribution. Computers are more important than cowboys,” but, “it was always economics, then and now.”²⁸ Porterfield tells the story through profiles of three separate ranches that exemplify different trajectories in the industry: the “Santa Berta in South Texas because it represents the Mexican heritage of the cowboy; the Waggoner in Northwest Texas because it is a traditional Anglo institution, and the Circle K outside Dallas because it is a modern, experimental ranch.”²⁹

Porterfield here offered the first instance in this series of articles joining the iconic figures of Texanness to a discussion of race and ethnicity, the first acknowledgement of African American and Mexican American claims on an expanded vision of the state’s basic iconography. Porterfield does not draw our attention directly to race, but matter-of-factly paired the well-known Mexican genealogy of the cowboy with a look at a

²⁸ Porterfield, “In Search of the Modern Cowboy,” 58.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

contemporary Mexican American owned and managed ranch.³⁰ Also, the only “old-timer” cowboy with connections to the late 19th century trail drives whom he had met, Pluck Smith, was an African American man who retired to farming in East Texas. Even as he investigated the cowboy’s legendary resonance, Porterfield employed small details to portray a more complicated, more varied cowboy reality.

Such investigative work is important, for cowboys appeared as figurative forms of slander and promise in settings that far outstripped such realities. When Kirkpatrick Sale defined the dichotomy of Eastern Establishment and Southern Rim through Yankees and Cowboys, he oddly chose to climax *Power Shift* with a portrayal of President Nixon as King of the Cowboys (“The Nixon Presidency was the culmination of cowboy influence in American affairs”).³¹ Even further afield, Nixon’s national security advisor Henry Kissinger first publicly sketched the now familiar contours of “cowboy diplomacy” in a 1972 interview with Oriana Fallaci, explaining that “the cowboy doesn’t have to be courageous . . . all he needs is to be alone to show others that he rides into town alone and does everything himself. . . This amazing romantic character suits me precisely because to be alone is part of my style.”³² Porterfield, again, subverted such solipsistic manifestations of the cowboy by sticking close, as the best ranching and cultural historians have typically done, to the occupation itself, with its wellspring of communal endeavors, technical knowledge, and basic drudgery.

³⁰ On the Mexican genealogy of the cowboy, see Terry Jordan, *North American Cattle Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, Differentiation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993). However, an even more nuanced evolution of the cowboy figure can be found in Américo Paredes, who argued that after the Anglo-Texan borrowing of the cowboy from the Mexican vaquero, the cowboy’s projection from Hollywood, in turn, re-entered and refigured the Mexican vaquero and conceptions of Mexican masculinity. “The United States, Mexico, and Machismo,” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 8 (1971):17-37, originally from the Spanish in *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 9 (1967): 65-84.

³¹ Sale, 207.

³² Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 153.

In fact, in all of this *Texas Monthly* cover talk of endangered species and extinctions, Porterfield shifted attention to ongoing transformations, the move from lariat tricks and cowboy games to pickup trucks and innovative business practices. Porterfield showed less interest in the fading away of the old-timers (though he occasionally gave voice to that common, Vanishing Texan response) than in the likes of John Waggoner, an urbane stockbroker who had returned to family land to take up the trade. If authenticity reared its head in the rhetoric of the piece, here as elsewhere it was used to distinguish the appropriation of the occupation's symbols by outsiders from the changing nature of the requirements of the occupation itself. The Southwest Conference failed to remain competitive, and so was reorganized. The rules to garnering quick wealth through independent, domestic oil exploration changed, and so the wildcatter lost much of his purchase on the public imagination. The cattle industry became more industrial, scientific, and advanced, and so the cowboy changed to fit the new scene. His purchase on the public imagination and Texas identity, however, remained undimmed.

Texas Monthly's home base of Austin, with its 1970s cosmic cowboys, provided an interesting backdrop and counterpoint to the figure of the Vanishing Texan that Burka, Porterfield, King, and others explored. As Bill Porterfield put it, while ruminating over the progressive country music then bubbling up in the capital city, it "is a curious hallucination. Cosmic cowboys around counterfeit campfires, breathing burning grass and drinking longnecks, listening to the lowing of Darrell Royal's Longhorns."³³ The cosmic cowboy or hippie-redneck fusion among Austin youth, symbolized by the music of Willie Nelson and Jerry Jeff Walker and locales such as the Armadillo World Headquarters and the Soap Creek Saloon, participated in these same currents of nostalgia

³³ Porterfield, "In Search of the Modern Cowboy," 59.

for a certain vision of Anglo-Texan masculinity, but the young men of Austin must have re-tooled the iconography a little too much for the tastes of Burka, Porterfield, and the like. The cosmic cowboys' attraction to these passing icons as repositories of authenticity seemed to share much with the journalists of *Texas Monthly* questing for the Vanishing Texan, but the cosmic cowboys were widely disparaged in articles that mourned the passing of a certain type of masculine authenticity. Willie Nelson and other artists associated with the style got a free pass and even a cover story of their own on occasion, but the youth subculture that formed their primary audience irked these authors, even as they traveled in similar circles themselves. Another example comes in Larry L. King's widely anthologized *Texas Monthly* article "Redneck!"

Now, the Rednecks I'm talking about are not those counterfeit numbers who hang around Austin digging the Cosmic Cowboy scene, sucking up to Jerry Jeff Walker and Willie Nelson, wearing bleached color-patched overalls and rolling their own dope, saying how they hanker to go live off the land and then stay six weeks in a Taos commune before flying back on daddy's credit card. Fie and a pox on such fakers; may such toy Rednecks choke on their own romantic pretensions.³⁴

However, the magazine's relationship to the Austin scene was by no means wholly adversarial. *Texas Monthly*, after all, generated Jan Reid's classic chronicle of Seventies Austin music, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock* (1974). However, when these journalists invoked the Vanishing Texan, that figure's rhetorical power was predicated on a notion of authenticity that precluded the kind of role-playing, the re-habitation or re-tooling through style and art of older models of Texas identity, that the counterculture represented. Porterfield and King both use the word "counterfeit" in their descriptions of the Austin scene, and they were by no means alone in doing so.³⁵ Both were savvy

³⁴ Larry L. King, "Redneck!" *Texas Monthly*, August 1974, 18.

³⁵ Recall John Clay's "Plastic Plowboy" or the Uranium Savages's "Cosmetic Cowboys" from the previous chapter.

enough to recognize “the Texan” as a persona, but some form of essentialism still crept into their best works.

If the cosmic cowboys seem less serious or accomplished to us now than their sometime chroniclers in *Texas Monthly*, they nevertheless may have had a better grasp of the Seventies zeitgeist. In *1973 Nervous Breakdown*, Andreas Killen argues that “if the sixties emphasized being, the seventies were about becoming.”³⁶ The Vanishing Texan required a vision of authenticity rooted in the essence of what one has always been, while the cosmic cowboy’s countercultural flirtation with supposedly outmoded ways of life, returning consciously to a set of symbols that may not fit his or her everyday reality, was a means of consciously, visibly *becoming* Texan, Nightbyrd’s critique to the contrary. The cosmic cowboys had no monopoly on this strategy, of course. Loyd, Porterfield’s wildcatter, may have been an anachronism, but he became such through a series of choices. His replication, sartorially and professionally, of his father’s lifestyle involved an avoidance of that lifestyle’s other, as represented in the photographer who accompanied Porterfield for the *Texas Monthly* story: “Gary, on the other hand, looks like a male model’s version of a chic Cosmo or Playboy photographer, all old denim and elegant equipment. Handsome and long-haired, he is in every way a man of the Seventies.”³⁷ The Vanishing Texan, then, might have as his counterpart a sort of Sartorial Texan, who becomes such through a conscious figuration of these iconic roles, rather than through the simple matter of his or her raising. In the rhetorical corridors of Texas identity, there remains a fetish of nativity-as-destiny, but a vigorous and truthful exploration of “the Texan” will always generate other possibilities, recognizing the

³⁶ Andreas Killen, *1973 Nervous Breakdown* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006), 154.

³⁷ Porterfield, “The Lonely Search for Oil,” 64.

plastic, performative nature of personal identity. The hybridity of Austin's western swing revival of the 1970s suggests how this may be so.

UP AGAINST THE WALL, BOB WILLS: WESTERN SWING REVIVED AND LUCKENBACH REVISITED

Icons of Anglo-Texan masculinity vanished literally as well as figuratively in these years: Walter Prescott Webb died in 1963, J. Frank Dobie in 1964, Lyndon Johnson in 1973, oilman H. L. Hunt in 1974, Bob Wills in 1975, and Luckenbach poet Hondo Crouch in 1976, among others. Though Johnson's demise loomed large in Central Texas, the passing of western swing legend Bob Wills in 1975 perhaps cast the larger shadow over the progressive country scene of Austin. The following year, Waylon Jennings testified to this effect clearly in a live recording of his "Bob Wills Is Still the King" at the Austin Opry House, a large country-western concert venue and Armadillo World Headquarters competitor backed by Willie Nelson. He introduced the song as being "about a man that has as much to do with why we're down here as anybody" before launching into verses that culminate in the chorus, "It don't matter who's in Austin/Bob Wills is still the king."³⁸ Western swing's syncretic embrace of the musical styles of country, jazz, polka, and tejano, paired with its elaborate western image, provided a model for thinking through the sartorial and performative aspects of Texan identity. As Nicholas Spitzer, in a contemporaneous article on Jennings's performance, suggested, the Austin Opry's crowd "hoots and hollers on cue in a manner that . . . I would describe as self-conscious. That is, they are themselves performing in the fashion presumed to be truly Texan."³⁹ Somewhat ironically, then, these artists and audiences performed

³⁸ Waylon Jennings, "Bob Wills is Still the King," *Waylon Live* (Buddha, 1976).

³⁹ Nicholas Spitzer, "'Bob Wills Is Still the King': Romantic Regionalism and Convergent Culture in Central Texas" *John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly* 11:40 (1975): 191-196. Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 68-69.

authenticity via an expansive genre that subverted the very notion in its hybridizing gestures.

In actuality, western swing of the 1930s and 1940s provided less an authentic ancestor or well of Anglo-Texan essentialism than an apt model for the progressive country mixture of hippie and redneck, rock-and-roll and honky-tonk. Bob Wills's band wore western clothing to amplify their regional image, but did so in the self-conscious, flamboyant manner of their singing cowboy peers. As a big band, they conveyed rurality by relying heavily on strings where other swing orchestras foregrounded horns. Still, their fiddles spoke in an improvisational jazz idiom, and the only songs that Wills himself sang, for the most part, were blues numbers. This was a whitened jazz and blues, surely, but the performers still considered it jazz and blues of the most modern variety. Further, the rhythms of polkas and schottisches quite nearly dominated the western swing oeuvre. As a model of generic hybridity with wide-ranging raced, ethnic, and national origins, western swing offered an aural reminder of the Southwest's diversity—within certain bounds. Bands and their audiences remained, for the most part, segregated by race. Though German and Czech bands could cross between Anglo and ethnic European audiences, and a number of western swing stars claimed Native American ancestry, the self-presentation of acts in performance tended towards the white, western, and Anglo-Texan mainstream. Still, for 1970s cosmic cowboys to ground a performance of Anglo-Texan masculinity on the figure of Bob Wills connoted either a subtle recognition or a willed ignorance of the patchwork nature of that identity's cultural forms. More likely, the popularity of western swing in the cosmic cowboy subculture encompassed both, evidence of that playful suspension of the essential and the performative, the stylized gesture and the nostalgic pang, that echoed throughout the developing currents of Texas Chic in the Lone Star State.

Western swing's revival in Central Texas in the 1970s involved artists such as Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen, Asleep at the Wheel, Cornell Hurd and His Mondo Hotpants Orchestra, and Alvin Crow and the Pleasant Valley Boys. Given its basically syncretic and hybrid origins described above, western swing provides a curious repository of authenticity. Of these artists, only Alvin Crow hailed from Texas, while the others moved to or performed in the area, in part, due to its historic association with western swing. As such, it stands to reason that those countercultural, rock-oriented artists from outside the state who adopted the genre found its "old-time" qualities its primary fascination, its authentic communication of a rustic time and place trumping its openness to the complexity of Depression and World War II America. This perhaps sells such artists short, however, as groups like Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen reveled in the genre-jumping, freewheeling live performance that such a tool as western swing afforded them. Cody (real name George Frayne IV), originally from Michigan, had settled in the San Francisco Bay Area in the late 1960s, performing a variety of boogie-woogie, rock, and western swing revival musics in a countercultural vein, tinged with the earnest humor of Haight Ashbury. His style played well in early 1970s Austin and made the Lost Planet Airmen very near a local group by mid-decade. Commander Cody was the touring act that played the Armadillo World Headquarters the largest number of times, and he helped to draw national attention to the venue with the recording *Live from Deep in the Heart of Texas* of 1974.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ This may be the most significant of the live recordings at the Armadillo, though it is closely rivaled by Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart's *Bongo Fury* (Discreet, 1975) and much of Freddie King's *Texas Cannonball* (Shelter, 1972). Both Commander Cody's and Freddie King's albums bore Jim Franklin covers full of armadillos. The Armadillo World Headquarters had an in-house recording system that also produced a number of albums locally and regionally by the likes of Shawn Phillips, Stevie Ray Vaughan's Triple Threat Revue, Bugs Henderson, Paul Ray and the Cobras, and Too Smooth.

In an odd variant of the migration streams that brought Texas musicians home from San Francisco and Nashville, Commander Cody's successful performance of western swing for Austin audiences, though it did not lead to the band's relocation, led to the bookings and subsequent migrations of the like-minded groups of Asleep at the Wheel and Cornell Hurd to Austin from the San Francisco Bay Area. Both groups have subsequently become institutions on the Austin music scene. Indeed, few have either carried the western swing torch or embodied the performative Texan as has Philadelphia native Ray Benson. Asleep at the Wheel performed Wills's songs faithfully, and though Bob Wills's stroke at the time of his recording sessions for the album *For The Last Time* in 1973 prevented their collaboration, a double album of Wills and Asleep at the Wheel music was released as *Fathers and Sons* in the year of Wills's death of 1975.

If Asleep at the Wheel's western swing revivalism provided the most straightforwardly nostalgic variant of progressive country, Jerry Jeff Walker and the Lost Gonzo Band's album *Viva Terlingua* defined the sound's progressive edge. Still, the experience of its recording in Luckenbach steeped it in a similar nostalgic mode. Of the Old Men who became symbolic fathers on the progressive country scene, Hondo Crouch stands out as the most patently eccentric and his project of Luckenbach, Texas a prime performative space for the Austin singer-songwriter.⁴¹ Crouch purchased and presided over the hill country hamlet of Luckenbach, a small group of buildings including a post office, general store, bar, and dance hall, in 1970. He made the site an attractive gathering space for songwriters, musicians, and artists in Central Texas, hosting an annual mud dauber festival, an all-women chili cook-off, visits by Billy Carter, and interminable picking sessions.

⁴¹ Becky Crouch Patterson, *Hondo, My Father* (Austin: Shoal Creek Publishers, 1979); Bryan Heck and Howard Hilliard, *Celebrated Luckenbach Texas: Standard of the World* (Houston: D. Armstrong & Co., 1974).

In terms of progressive country, however, Jerry Jeff Walker and the Lost Gonzo Band indelibly placed Luckenbach on the map as the site of the live recording of *Viva Terlingua* in the summer of 1973.⁴² A ramshackle collection of Walker originals and the songs of other progressive country luminaries Michael Murphey, Guy Clark, Ray Wylie Hubbard, and Gary P. Nunn, the simple nature of its recording illustrated the “spontaneous” aesthetic so prized by the Austin scene.⁴³ In *Dissonant Identities*, Barry Shank selected the Gonzo Band’s rendition of “Desperadoes Waiting for a Train” on that album as the creative pinnacle and truest expression of the progressive country alliance, a performance steeped in nostalgia but pushing against the bounds of tradition that determine country performance. “Listened to as a whole, the version of ‘Desperadoes’ recorded by Walker and the Gonzos concisely, sensitively, and sympathetically performs the narrative of the alienation of these generations through the power of popular culture and the particularly evocative communicative capacity of popular musical practice.”⁴⁴ Clark’s song takes the point of view of a young man recounting his childhood relationship with an old man and mentor, who is in the present moment of the song recently deceased. The narrator is wistful over the Old Man’s aging and death: “Well, he’s a drifter an’ a driller of oil wells/An old school man of the world. . . To me he’s one of the heroes of this country/So why’s he all dressed up like them old men?” Shank deftly analyzes the song as an aesthetic recognition of social change and evolution in the

⁴² Jerry Jeff Walker and the Lost Gonzo Band, *Viva Terlingua* (MCA, 1973).

⁴³ Jerry Jeff Walker’s recordings did proceed rather spontaneously, in a sense, but they were far from unmediated. On *Viva Terlingua*, Gary P. Nunn led the Lost Gonzo Band in performing his iconic “London Homesick Blues” before a live audience for the first time. On the album, Nunn begins the song about being homesick for Texas while alone in London (“I wanna go home with the armadillo/good country music from Amarillo and Abilene”) with the spoken remark, “Gotta put myself back in that place, again.” The modern listener might tend to interpret the remark as Nunn’s attempt to put himself in the frame of mind he had while writing the song in London. In fact, however, this was the second take of the song—the sound crew missed catching the first—and Nunn is merely trying to re-orient himself to the beginning of the song to start again. Interview with Gary P. Nunn, August 26, 2008.

⁴⁴ Shank, 63-64.

progressive country form, as the song begins with snatches from a traditional song and ends with a fadeout on guitar licks in a countercultural “jam” mode. As opposed to the western swing revivalists, the Lost Gonzo Band was much more grounded in these rockist elements of the country-rock spectrum and placed them in creative tension with the conventions of country-western music.

The more immediately influential, even anthemic, album cut from *Viva Terlingua*, though, was Ray Wylie Hubbard’s “Up Against the Wall, Redneck Mother.” Like “Desperadoes Waiting for a Train, this song effectively encapsulates progressive country’s creative contradictions. In expressing a fascination with redneck masculinity, it delineated the commodified elements of the redneck style that countercultural Anglo men in Austin sought to perform and bundled them together with a sort of satirical, countercultural self-loathing. Here, too, is another instance of the outlined subcultural homologies of the cosmic cowboy, a listing of commodities that together define the style. Mid-song, the lyrics pause for a recitation:

M is for the mudflaps you give me for my pickup truck
O is for the oil I put on my hair
T is for T-bird
H is for Haggard
E is for eggs, and
R is for redneck.

In this instance, a mother-son relationship disrupts the generational narrative of fathers and sons that dominated discussions of Anglo-Texan masculinity: “And it’s up against the wall, redneck mother/ Mother who has raised her son so well/ He’s thirty-four and drinkin’ in a honky-tonk/ Just kickin’ hippies’ asses and raisin’ hell.” In an inversion of the Cold War *Generation of Vipers* trope, it is the mother here that replicates the hyper-masculinity that threatens Austin’s hippie-redneck hybridity (even as it is that hyper-

masculinity that tantalizes countercultural men disparaged for their perceived abdication of same). Hubbard intended the song as satire, more obviously so than Murphey's "I Just Wanna Be a Cosmic Cowboy," though the pleasure taken in the song by audiences led Hubbard to believe that they were not typically aware of his intentions.

In performance, the song consciously tacks back and forth between countercultural and country-western allusions. The "Up against the wall," of course, references the militant poetry of Amiri Baraka's "Up Against the wall, motherfucker, this is a stick-up," that gained wide currency in New Left sloganeering, and the "What's that spell?" shouted at the song's close refers to Country Joe McDonald's famed obscenity at Woodstock. These references are nested in the entire song's larger conversation with the more subtle satire of Merle Haggard's "Okie from Muskogee," and musically the songs sound quite similar. The song's end punctuates the Haggard allusion, as the answer to the shouted query "What's That Spell?" is the sung "Muskogee, Oklahoma, USA." *Viva Terlingua* strains to close the cultural rifts that Haggard performed in 1969 by making their satirical bent more transparent and over-the-top, but still affectionate, in 1973. The deep, playful ambivalence of Haggard's song, as transformed and re-written by Hubbard, holds the contradictions of the cosmic cowboy subculture in suspension.

The deaths of Bob Wills in 1975 and Hondo Crouch in 1976, and the search for their replacement and revival through Asleep at the Wheel and Waylon Jennings's recording of "Luckenbach, Texas (Back to the Basics of Love)" in 1977, suggest that the death of the fathers seemed to be possessed, too, by notions of dynastic succession and the compromised hegemonic position of Anglo-Texan masculinity. Nostalgia concerning the Old Man trope mourned the passing of a supposedly simpler time, but it also signified anxiety over the status of "Imperial Texas."

“GREAT LUKE NEVER HAD ENOUGH”: THE APPETITES OF IMPERIAL TEXAS

Though originally established as the capital of the independent Republic of Texas, Austin was familiar with such dynastic imperial concerns. In 1838, Vice-President of the Republic of Texas Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar stood near the north bank of the Colorado River and declared that the site would serve well as the “seat of a future empire.” Lamar won the presidency soon thereafter, succeeding his rival Sam Houston, and intent on using his new position to further an alternative to Houston’s annexation agenda, envisioning Texas in imperial terms as an independent, expanding, continental power with the potential to rival the United States. The city of Austin was born of that endeavor.⁴⁵ Events did not play out in support of Lamar’s chest-thumping bluster, but this imperial conceit did not die so easily in representations of Texas and Texanness and erupts periodically when the Lone Star State is on the minds of those debating the larger constructs of American power and character. The discourse of generational crisis evident in Anglo-Texan popular culture in the 1970s marks one of these instances.

In 1969, with a conspicuously Texan figure recently departed from the White House, cultural geographer D. W. Meinig defined this notion of an imperial Texas in a thin, but instructive, volume of the same name. For Meinig, the state’s claims to the status of empire rested in parallels it shared with that particular form of historical polity, the fact that Texas possessed “a history of conquest, expansion, and dominion over a varied realm, and not only an outward movement of people, but the thrust of a self-confident aggressive people driven by a strong sense of superiority and destiny.”⁴⁶ How did this imperial conceit work, and what did it mean? These questions have contemporary currency, as we witness the close of another conspicuous Texan’s reign,

⁴⁵ Randolph Campbell, *Gone to Texas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 172-173.

⁴⁶ D. W. Meinig, *Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 7.

and the new life it has given to all of the old discursive categories: the imperial Presidency, the dynastic succession of fathers and sons, cowboy diplomacy, the Western White House, and even the Alamo under siege.⁴⁷

Anglo-Texans' imperial conceit hardly sets them apart from America as a whole, and, in fact, provides a key site for the investigation of representations of Texas as a kind of displaced self of the American nation. As Meinig saw it, what proved so distinctive about Texas was the extent to which its dominant Anglo class insisted upon its own distinctiveness. Meinig did not stand alone in this evaluation. John Bainbridge's *Super-Americans* is a classic in this line of thought, in which Bainbridge argued that despite the ways in which it is viewed by Americans and presents itself, Texas serves as exemplary, even super-exemplary, of the American national character. According to Bainbridge, as discussed in Chapter 1, "Texas is a mirror in which Americans see themselves reflected, not life-size, but, as in a distorting mirror, bigger than life. . . it may not be possible to escape the fact that the epitome of America is Texas and the epitome of Texas is its most picturesque product, its millionaires. They are the Super-Americans, making up a little civilization—the United States in microcosm."⁴⁸

Both Bainbridge and Meinig identified the oil industry as the key element in perpetuating this Anglo-Texan sense of distinction. Meinig viewed the early twentieth century oil strikes as a means of artificially perpetuating the trope of the frontier individualist in the wildcatter guise. Bainbridge, too, saw in the stereotypes of oil wealth an exaggeration of the figure of the self-made man. Oil gave rise to new visions of Texas's imperial reach. As an industry based on the extraction of a crude natural

⁴⁷ On the perceived effects of the historical frame of the Alamo on national policymaking, see Larry L. King, "The Alamo Mind-Set: Lyndon B. Johnson and Vietnam" in *Of Outlaws, Con Men, Whores, Politicians, and Other Artists* (London: Penguin Press, 1980), 253-274.; James McEnteer, *Deep in the Heart: The Texas Tendency in American Politics* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Press, 2004).

⁴⁸ John Bainbridge, *The Super-Americans* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), 6.

resource, petroleum at first served to demonstrate the state's provincial and underdeveloped nature, but Texas soon elaborated the industrial (refining, pipelines, exploration) and post-industrial (finance, research in new technologies) infrastructures that have made the state the center of the global petrochemical field.⁴⁹ Texas's extraction of oil from its own soil reached its peak in the era under study, the early 1970s. However, the wealth that continued to be derived from oil in Texas was no longer simply that of trading in a commodity that wildcatters stumbled upon, but stemmed from a global web of scientific models, abstractions, and transnational flows of capital and expertise. Imperial Texas survived in this sense, taking on the characteristics of empire described by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's 2000 meditation *Empire*, in which the authors claimed that the postmodern world would witness the resurgence of empire not as a bundling of conquered territories, but as an entirely new form of transnational sovereignty in the wake of the decline of the nation-state.⁵⁰ Big oil has that kind of reach.

To invoke empire, though, commits to a certain fatalistic historicity in which a brash, virile, triumphalist period of expansion is followed by inevitable decline attended by corruption and fey decadence. As the imperial conceit relates to Texas, it is in this in this last stage of the course of empire, that of corruption, decadence, and brash and bodily vulgarity, that the idea of Texas has tended to serve as America's abject other. The powerful Anglo-Texan can serve as America's displaced self in positive terms, as in the

⁴⁹ This frontier model of oil wealth speaks to the historical record of wildcatting, but also, as is so often the case in the case of the "frontier," effaces the cooperative nature of oil exploration, the deep subsidies provided to the early industry in the form of the depletion allowance on taxes, and the key role of the regulatory mechanisms of the Texas Railroad Commission in guiding oil field prosperity. See Diana Davids Hinton and Roger M. Olien, *Oil in Texas: The Gusher Age, 1895-1945* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002): "Thus, though the high visibility of successful wildcatters created the impression that oilmen were solitary heroes, those who succeeded in the high-risk end of the industry, exploration, learned that partnerships, business circles, and cooperative relationships with each other and large integrated oil companies were all requisites of survival and growth on the geological frontier" (64).

⁵⁰ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), xi-xvii, 9.

unfettered, can-do frontiersmen-made-good, but the displaced self trope more commonly surfaces as a form of displaced self-abnegation: the representative Texan as the grasping, violent, vulgar, wheeler-dealer at work. Think of the representations of LBJ as the corrupt, corny-folksy, warmonger Texan. The image speaks to a larger type. The nouveaux riches who seemed to spring up from the earth as quickly as the roughneck boomtowns of the Golden Triangle and Permian Basin played a preponderant role in each of these three modes of national thinking through the idea of Texas (as rival empire, displaced self, and abject other) in the middle of the twentieth century. The decade of the 1970s, with its contestation and anxiety over older notions of stable patriarchal authority, provides a significant hinge moment in this imperial metaphor. As President Nixon himself noted while speaking at the National Archives Building in 1971:

Sometimes when I see these columns I think of seeing them in Greece and in Rome. And I think of what happened to Greece and Rome, and you see only what is left of great civilizations of the past—as they became wealthy, as they lost their will to live, to improve, they became subject to the decadence that destroys the civilization. The United States is reaching that period.⁵¹

Midcentury visions of grandeur thus gave way to narratives of Watergate-inflected corruption and Vietnam-imposed decline. The idea of Texas could simultaneously signify the cause of this imperial decline (in Johnson's perceived arrogance on the world stage) and its remedy (Sun Belt prosperity in the midst of industrial malaise).

These ideas, Texas as empire, displaced self, and abject other, play across two curious texts that have received little in the way of academic attention, Bud Shrake's *Peter Arbiter* of 1973 and H. L. Hunt's *Alpaca* of 1960.⁵² They are both novels, but to describe either of these authors as primarily a novelist is to ignore much of what is

⁵¹ Nixon quoted in Jonathan Schell, *The Time of Illusion: An Historical and Reflective Account of the Nixon Era* (New York: Random House, 1975), 160.

⁵² Bud Shrake, *Peter Arbiter* (Austin: Encino Press, 1973); H. L. Hunt, *Alpaca* (Dallas: H. L. Hunt Press, 1960).

compelling about the two as cultural-historical figures. A thumbnail biography of Bud Shrake would point to his various incarnations as an adversary of nightclub owner Jack Ruby, a celebrated journalist for *Sports Illustrated*, a ghostwriter of an autobiography of Willie Nelson, a screenwriter on everything from the Dennis Hopper anti-Western *Kid Blue* to *Beverly Hills Cop II*, a sort of unofficial prince consort of Ann Richards during her time as governor, and co-author with UT's Harvey Penick of an instructional golf manual that became the best-selling sports book of all time. When not involved in such varied endeavors, Shrake quietly wrote a body of solid regional historical fiction. "Novelist" proves an even trickier category in which to fit Haroldson Lafayette (hereafter H. L.) Hunt, oilman, America's first billionaire, model for Jock Ewing of the prime-time soap opera *Dallas*, and prolific right-wing propagandist at the time he penned his first and only novel, the utopian romance *Alpaca*. Though *Alpaca's* publication in 1960 places it earlier than the contested representations of *Texas Monthly*, the western swing revival, and Bud Shrake in this chapter, Hunt's death in 1974 brought renewed attention to his family's wealth, politics, and place in the Texas mythos and re-inserted him into conversations over the "Vanishing Texan."

Shrake's *Peter Arbiter* of 1973 adapted Petronius' *Satyricon* to the setting of contemporary Texas in a city that amalgamates Dallas and Austin. The imperial conceit, and implicit critique, of Anglo-Texan wealth proves difficult to miss. The *Satyricon*, on which Shrake based *Peter Arbiter*, charted the picaresque adventures of four characters: a young man, Encolpius; his companion Ascyrtos; their servant boy Giton who serves as the object of their desire; and an older poet and con man named Emolpus. Shrake updated these four characters, adopting as his narrator and alter ego a pansexual interior designer by the name of Peter Arbiter. His roommate Albert stands in for Ascyrtos, Guy Guy for the servant boy, and the elderly poet appears as a bohemian named Sidney

Hulmes. Shrake followed the basic conventions and episodes that propelled Petronius' picaresque, but did so in a manner that magnified parallels between the imperial strata of nouveaux riches of late twentieth century Texas and Rome of the first century A. D. Where Petronius focused on the class of freedmen who had attained wealth and sought to boast publicly of it, Shrake unleashed a panoply of rags-to-riches, up-by-their-bootstraps oilmen and their various attendants, in the process making of this updated ancient text a contemporary *roman à clef*.

For each author, a feast provided the central episode for the display of vulgar excess. In Shrake's re-telling, this feast took place at the mansion of Dallas oilman and football team owner Billy Roy Eanes, a surreal and grotesque evening that featured pastries mimicking the shape and texture of baby possums, meats descending from a roast pig's belly to replicate entrails, and the sexual organs of animals cooked as representations of the zodiac. The event climaxed with a mock-funeral for the host, who declares that he wants a burial monument that features chiseled likenesses of great men he has known, "Roosevelt, Churchill, Hitler, Mussolini, Sinatra, Lombardi, Lyndon, Ike, old Curt LeMay, Duke Wayne, old man Hunt, guys like that—sitting on their thrones welcoming me to heaven with Shirley Temple giving me an armload of roses . . . Put up a big neon sign that says THIS IS BILLY ROY EANES'S TOMB—HIS HEIRS DON'T OWN IT."⁵³ Eanes's pantheon projected a vision of robust masculine wealth, power, and authority, an interlocking directorate of American presidents, European dictators, and full-blooded American right-wingers.

The gorging goes on for what Peter Arbiter reckons to be several days and nights, and Shrake used the opportunity to display alongside these deep, gaping maws a brand of

⁵³ Shrake, 55.

shallow, right-populist politics. He begins with a cue from Petronius, having the dinner guests discuss supernatural events. General Enos Taylor tells the story of encountering a werewolf while on counter-insurgency maneuvers in Paraguay. What provokes horror in Taylor's audience, however, is not the invocation of lycanthropy, but Taylor's further disclosure that the very same man who had transformed into a wolf before his eyes later turned out to be a leader of the troublesome miners' union: "'Not only was the son of a bitch a werewolf, he was a goddam Communist!' The crowd gasped." The other attendees followed with diatribes concerning the need for military intervention in Central America, the rising costs of labor, the general decline in morals, and the increasing difficulty of purchasing the services of a loyal congressman.

Peter Arbiter's plot advances through such parties, and to describe them, Shrake employed the device of serial naming to invoke a sense of almost obscene plenitude in portraying the breadth of empire and the fruits it yielded to its ruling class. Food provides the best example, as on walking through a meat freezer Peter saw "the carcasses of cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, ducks, quail, pheasants, blue jays, doves, and deer" or was served "barbecued ribs, chicken, cole slaw, barbecue sauce, potato salad, pinto beans, jalapeño peppers, red chilis, sliced onions, scallions, pickles, garlic bread, hot sausages, beef tacos, boiled shrimps, fried quail, and oysters on the half shell."⁵⁴ On topics of discussion at a party, Shrake listed "baseball, bowling, moon shots, duck hunting, pipelaying, television, quarterhorse racing, cockfights, chili, beer, and Bermuda grass." On people, Shrake envisioned the ruling Anglo-Texan class and its retainers as "actors, dancers, museum patrons, university professors, oil men, politicians, electronics tycoons, violin players, landscape architects"; "a football player, a university horticulturist, and an

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

astronaut.” Finally, amidst these absurdities, Shrake forthrightly described a 1973 newscast: “Wars. Riots. Strikes. New weapons. Kidnappings. Arson. Murder. A Politician’s birthday party. Hunger march. Rebellion. Dope raids. American Legion rally. A brief report on polluted rivers.”⁵⁵ The lists served as shorthand in this brief novel to survey and tabulate, often through homologous commodities, the Texas that Shrake sought to describe, and, despite the good humor with which he engaged in the descriptions, also hoped to indict. Race figured here in interesting ways. African Americans and Mexican Americans appeared wholly in servile roles to the super-rich, an obvious historical inaccuracy for Texas of the early 1970s, but one that Shrake used to suggest a set of organic hierarchies tinged with paternalism that is nothing if not imperial in its pretense. The non-Anglo subjects of the novel speak as if from behind the masks of these roles, casting sly judgment on the foibles of the arriviste elite that they serve.

And there is much to judge in Shrake’s portrayal. *Peter Arbiter* sketched the late imperial impulse as an inability to maintain control of appetites, a deadly penchant for excessive consumption that finds its most obvious manifestations in the desires for food and sex. This discourse of appetites begs further the connection between Texanness and Americanness, as the basic iconography of modern Texas rests on the production of commodities, beef and oil, the consumption of which right-thinking Americans in the early twenty-first century are meant to limit. When the ribald character “Great Luke,” who entices Peter and Guy-Guy to his ranch with a trip on his private plane, perishes after being thrown off his yacht, his tombstone reads “Great Luke never had enough/He couldn’t help it.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

That epitaph might serve as well to describe any number of Shrake's characters in *Peter Arbiter*, as well as the historical figures upon which many of them are based. As the central figure of eccentric excess, Billy Roy Eanes combines characteristics of assorted true-to-life wheeler-dealers and right-wing oilmen, including Lamar Hunt, Clint Murchison, Jr., Edwin Walker, and H. L. Hunt. A satirized Hunt family appears even more clearly in *Strange Peaches*, Shrake's previous novel on Dallas at the time of the Kennedy assassination.⁵⁷ There, Shrake's narrator and alter ego, actor and television cowboy John Lee Wallace, lunches with the oilman Big Earl, and, over the course of the meal, enough bizarre details emerge to identify the character Big Earl with the historical (if equally unbelievable) H. L. Hunt—the all-liquid diet, the penchant for spontaneously breaking out into Tin Pan Alley sing-song, a belief in alternative health therapies, ESP, the merits of crawling on all fours as a means of rejuvenation, and, finally, an almost mystical interest in the medicinal properties of aloe vera that Hunt made the last of his entrepreneurial endeavors. Now, to be fair, a number of these qualities of H. L. Hunt might be rightly considered Dallas folklore, perhaps even folklore that Shrake himself had a hand in inventing, but the 1960 novel *Alpaca* leaves no doubt that Hunt was a very eccentric man indeed. To explore the biographies of the oil rich in 20th century Texas is to encounter the very real possibility that the Bud Shrake behind *Peter Arbiter* and *Strange Peaches* possessed less the skills of a clever satirist than those of a shrewd documentarian.⁵⁸

The oilman H. L. Hunt, born in Illinois in 1889, had already made and lost fortunes in oil in Arkansas and real estate in Florida before prospering as a wheeler-

⁵⁷ Bud Shrake, *Strange Peaches* (New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1972).

⁵⁸ For confirmation, see Bryan Burrough, *The Big Rich: The Rise and Fall of the Greatest Texas Oil Fortunes* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009).

dealer in the East Texas oil field strikes of the 1930s. To promote his rags-to-riches story and the national ethos to which he attributed it, H. L. Hunt oversaw a conservative media empire instrumental in the early growth of the 1960s New Right, including the radio programs *Freedom Forum* and *Life Line*. From this position, Hunt proved one of Joseph McCarthy's staunchest Texas defenders in the Fifties and supported editorial attacks on the civil rights movement and counterculture in the Sixties.

Alpaca appeared in 1960 as a small fifty-cent paperback for distribution by the vanity H. L. Hunt Press. On one level, it seems to be far removed from the gross display of excessive appetites found in *Peter Arbiter*, and even farther from Shrake's indictment of Texas as an overweening empire. At the same time, *Alpaca* outlines the political desires of a member of the arriviste class that serves as Shrake's subject. The book sets out to construct the perfect constitution for the fictional Latin American nation of Alpaca. Hunt's dashing alter ego Juan Achala buries himself in the libraries of the European capitals and organizes a brain trust of the world's best political and economic minds, whom Hunt insists on giving names and roles which to him signified the height of exoticism (Orlando Tasso, the Roman lawyer; Sir Gerald Ripney of England; Joset Holbecht, the Austrian autodidact; Jan Wankowski, Polish exile; Andre Marchillon, tax genius; and Robert and Betty Brown, American department store clerk and factory worker who "had dealt with life in its actuality rather than theory").⁵⁹ Hunt hoped to sweeten the didactic pot by marrying this constitutional quest to a romance between two political exiles, Juan Achala and his fellow Alpacan, the opera singer Mara Hani. The romance of Juan and Mara never approaches the heated level of Peter and Guy-Guy in *Peter Arbiter*, its steamiest episodes dulled by Hunt's awkwardly wielded arsenal of

⁵⁹ Hunt, 45.

clichés.⁶⁰ Though the love interest Mara's actions communicate some surprising positions for Hunt regarding gender parity, she just as often serves as an ideological straight man, cooing in Juan's ear, "Now tell me more about the work you're doing to free Alpaca from dictatorship. That is far more important than anything I have ever tried to accomplish."⁶¹ In all, *Alpaca* reads like a Ross Perot invective disguised as an Ayn Rand novel, wrapped up in Voltaire's *Candide* by way of a censored Harlequin romance.

For Hunt's dashing alter ego Juan, the essential notion of good governance, the key to a future utopia for Alpacans, rests in graduated suffrage, which is to say that an individual's vote in national affairs should be, must be, defined relative to that individual's personal wealth, property holdings, and tax contributions. Hunt, apparently, was willing and eager to pay such taxes if it yielded him a constitutionally defined influence in national affairs. After all, in "efficiently operated corporations, the larger stockholder naturally has the greater voting power. This was one of the clinching arguments in favor of the graduated voting power favoring the larger taxpayers who in effect are the largest stockholders in the national entity."⁶² For the wheeler dealer, the civic sphere should not operate on principles separate from those of private enterprise. The purchase of liberty is rigid hierarchy. "To operate successfully, a government must have a ruling class far above the average of its citizenry. The average, and particularly the lower class, of its citizenry are incapable of efficiently conducting their own affairs."⁶³ This organic conception of hierarchy echoes those stratifications so apparent

⁶⁰ Literary critic Don Graham singled out a particularly saccharin line regarding their honeymoon: "the world stood still, and did not move at all." Don Graham, "Alpaca," *Texas Monthly*, October 2000.

⁶¹ To be fair, Juan Achala had his moments of vulnerability with Mara, as well: "I am putty in your hands—direct me, my diva." Hunt, 40.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 143.

in *Peter Arbiter*, and, though Hunt's language is tame and prim, his ideal republic begins to resemble that imperial Texas spelled out around the feasting table of Billy Roy Eanes.

Here, too, race intruded in interesting ways, as Hunt borrowed from his older McCarthyite toolkit regarding aliens to get at the need for the protection of borders. Aliens, Juan Achala says,

are often hosts to or somehow become part and parcel of a Fifth Column, infiltrating many countries as agents for aggressor nations; they are to be found residing or "visiting" in strategic places. They are there to practice espionage, to entice and enlist gullibles and dupes; they consort with intellectuals to build and join subtle organizations intended to pave the way for the overthrow of their host government. . . the aliens toil indefatigably for the national ruin and the ruin of all that these queer citizens are supposed to hold dear.⁶⁴

Texas does not serve as an explicit referent in *Alpaca*, but its presence is implicit in a number of the book's high pseudo-philosophical moments, as in this section on border-crossing "aliens." Hunt's utopia does not meet the definition of empire as centralized rule over a diverse group of nations, but graduated suffrage and the explicit, constitutional recognition of class privilege do speak to Hunt's own vision of the Texas wheeler-dealer as the ideal of the displaced American self, of the supposedly unfettered entrepreneurial climate of the Lone Star State as a model on which the rest of the nation should remake itself.

Hunt trumpeted the success of *Alpaca* in 1967 with an updated edition entitled *Alpaca Revisited* that offers the revised narrative of the love of Juan Achala and Mara Hani and their graduated suffrage utopia. In addition, *Alpaca Revisited* offered appendices with a song about the Alpacan Constitution to the tune of "How much is that doggy in the window," talking points for what Hunt terms "youth freedom speakers" to target the 15-23 year-old age bracket so endangered by 1967, and reactions from

⁶⁴ Ibid., 85.

governments around the world upon their receipt of a proposed constitution for a mythical country penned by one of the world's wealthiest men. Ferdinand Marcos writes "Congratulations and more power to you . . . My receipt of the Constitution of Alpaca is very timely for our Congress is scheduled to prepare some amendments on our Constitution,"⁶⁵ but more common than the enthusiasm of the Philippine dictator is a kind of polite acknowledgement that Hunt did, in fact, send them his book. Finland's response is representative, "Yours is a very interesting and informative accomplishment."⁶⁶

I am inclined to conclude by seconding the Finns in response to these two bizarre mid-twentieth century Texan texts as interesting and informative accomplishments, but my thesis regarding their relationship to wider discourses concerning Texas as empire, displaced self, and abject other requires more closure. Though not on its surface imperial in intent, the corporate model of governance outlined in *Alpaca*, with its hierarchy in the interest of efficiency and its stockholder approach to suffrage, has its echoes in the visions of the multinational corporation as a model of imperial sovereignty described by Hardt and Negri in *Empire*. Further, these ideas do not simply echo one another in manifestos, but have found their way into practice, as this view of corporate decision-making as governance surfaced frequently with our most recent Texan-in-Chief.⁶⁷ As in Meinig's 1969, the notions of Texas as empire, displaced self, and abject other continue to appear as live issues in cultural conversation and national debate. Finally, H. L. Hunt's status as a famed Anglo-Texan oil patriarch fits the mainstream of Anglo-Texan iconography, and the concerns over the "Vanishing Texan," attracting so much attention amongst the state's young Anglo-Texan men in the 1970s. The far-right H. L. Hunt

⁶⁵ H. L. Hunt, *Alpaca Revisited* (Dallas: H. L. Hunt Products, 1967), 203.

⁶⁶ Hunt, *Alpaca Revisited*, 202.

⁶⁷ Robert Bryce, *Cronies: Oil, the Bushes, and the Rise of Texas, America's Superstate* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

embodied “the Texan” just as much as Kenneth Threadgill or Hondo Crouch, and this thorny fact complicated the progressive revisioning of the figure attempted in the 1970s.

RITUAL SLAYING OF THE FATHERS: “SOUTHWESTERN LITERATURE?”

As with many other matters in relation to Texas, the novelist Larry McMurtry saw deeper than most, ahead of the curve. In 1968, McMurtry published an essay that sought to distance Texas from its literary past entitled “Southwestern Literature?”⁶⁸ In it, McMurtry ruthlessly critiqued the Webb/Dobie/Bedichek triumvirate, to the extent that he appeared to be engaged in the ritual slaying of the fathers. McMurtry, in a sense, sought here to hasten the vanishing of the Vanishing Texan, aptly skewing the Lone Star Regionalists’ romantic vision of an organic Texas in which man’s relation to nature was the only true source of wisdom and authentic identity. “Sentimentalists are still fond of saying that nature is the best teacher—I have known many Texans who felt that way, and most of them live and die in woeful ignorance,” McMurtry argued, “When I lived in the country I noticed no abundance of full men.”⁶⁹ This conclusion issued, in part, from McMurtry’s own wrestling with the theme of masculine generations in the novel *The Last Picture Show* of 1966, memorably adapted to the screen by Peter Bogdanovich in 1973. McMurtry’s own harsh critique of the Dobie/Webb/Bedichek triumvirate in the 1968 essay is itself a common technique attending the passing of generations, whether in art, academia, or politics, whereby an author must scorch the earth behind him in order to move forward.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Larry McMurtry, *In a Narrow Grave* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 53-77. McMurtry reprised these conclusions in the essay “Ever a Bridegroom: Reflections on the Failure of Texas Literature,” which appeared in the *Texas Observer* in 1981. McMurtry in Char Miller, ed. *Fifty Years of the Texas Observer* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2004), 277-282.

⁶⁹ McMurtry, *In a Narrow Grave*, 58.

⁷⁰ Of course, after McMurtry called these authors to task for their continued fascination with the pastoral aspects of Texas identity and the cowboy, he turned around to write the *Lonesome Dove* trilogy of historical fiction in the 1980s on the classic period of the cattle drives. On the dynamics of feuds between

Much the same dynamic, a generational feud over primacy, was at work in the formal politics of the Texan 1970s as in its cultural politics. Changes lay on the horizon for the vaunted “Party of the Fathers,” the solid Democracy that had ruled the South since the collapse of Reconstruction in 1877. Cracks had occasionally appeared to signify the difference between Southern and national Democrats, dating back to the infighting over FDR’s New Deal and through the fractures of the Homer Rainey Affair. These ideological divides within the Texas Democratic Party were especially stark, and yet, strong traditions of racialized republicanism, tied to LBJ’s placing of Texans in the center of national policy debates, made for a “stickiness” to one-party rule that precluded any easy or obvious realignment of conservative white voters to the Republican Party.

Cyrus King, Larry L. King’s “Old Man,” spoke to the Democrats’ ability to maintain their base amongst rural voters. He may have been reluctantly antiwar by 1971, but, in most senses, a conservative Texan he remained. When his son asked if he had ever voted Republican, though, he answered, “Yeah, in 19-and-28. Voted for Herbert Hoover. And he no more than put his britches on the chair till we had a depression. I promised God right then if He wouldn’t send no more depressions, I wouldn’t vote for no more Republicans.”⁷¹ The death of the fathers paved the way for a struggle over their political party with new generations of voters in an expanded Texas electorate, and the partisan realignment of the 1970s ensued. This complex negotiation serves as the subject of the following chapter.

intellectual generations, see the introduction to Judy Kutulas, *The Long War: The Intellectual People’s Front and Anti-Stalinism, 1930-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995). Kutulas frames the late 1930s contestation between Popular Front and anti-Stalinist intellectuals as being in part about ideology, but also about generations competing over reputation and institutional control in the literary, artistic, intellectual, and political spheres. This in some ways seems far afield from McMurtry’s critique of the Dobie cohort, but the dynamics prove to be quite similar.

⁷¹ King, *The Old Man and Lesser Mortals*, 19.

Chapter Five: The Establishment in Texas Politics in the Realignment Years

The anxious ferment surrounding the figure of the Vanishing Texan traced not only a cultural moment, but a significant shift in the realm of formal, electoral politics in the state capitol in Austin. In such an atmosphere, hand-wringing over the compromised hegemonic force of Anglo-Texan masculinity spoke not simply to the changing cultural representation of regional identity, but to issues involving political representation in legislative bodies and the rights of legally constituted subjects and citizens. As African Americans, Mexican Americans, and women of all races contested the nature of political and cultural authority in the 1970s, the terrain of their struggle increasingly became entangled with partisan alignment in a state where the Democrats had ruled from the end of Reconstruction to the modern civil rights movement. Over the latter half of the twentieth century, the South's monopoly "party of the fathers" yielded to a competitive two-party system with Republicans in the ascendance, with the decade of the 1970s as that shift's pivot. This chapter maps that change by looking to the legacies of Lyndon Johnson and the careers of his protégés, the history of the modern Republican Party in Texas, the rhetoric of Texas liberalism, the Sharpstown Scandal, and local politics in Austin. While the partisan upheaval did not necessarily signify substantive ideological change in Texas—a conservative bloc continued to set the basic agenda—the movement of politicians and voters from the Democratic to the Republican Party did draw out the changing relations amongst class, race, gender, region, and the state in the 1970s.

Lyndon Baines Johnson connects these cultural and political currents, his political immolation of 1968 and death in 1973 punctuating the Vanishing Texan discourse. In

The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock, Jan Reid narrated his first visit to Luckenbach on the day of Johnson's funeral in January 1973. "LBJ was an enigma to most Texans under thirty, an awesome figure full of stupefying contradictions," Reid began, musing over the old man's deceptive complexity.¹ The invocation of "stupefying contradictions" might as well refer to the year that LBJ's death opened, one that Andreas Killen deems every bit as significant as the much-mythologized 1968. The events in the week of LBJ's death bear out his argument. Johnson died at home on January 22, 1973, the same day the Supreme Court issued its 7 to 2 ruling in *Roe v. Wade*. Johnson's funeral cortege proceeded through the Texas Hill Country on January 25th, just two days before the signing of the Paris Peace Accords between the United States and Vietnam. The war that killed Johnson's presidency died with him. As the nation became more acquainted with Nixon and the New Left's energies dissipated (the inability of the student movement to recover from the war's end) or spiraled out of control (the Symbionese Liberation Army's kidnapping of Patty Hearst), many began to reevaluate Johnson and his politics. For Texans, the sentiments could be quite contrarian. Jan Reid wrote:

Many of them had cursed and hated Johnson at times, but he was still the mightiest of Texans. At times he had been an almost comic figure, an unwitting butt of those jokes that typecast Texans as blundering, foolish braggarts, but he also symbolized times that were changing, even in Texas. For all his faults, he was one of them. Rest in Peace LBJ, one movie marquee along the way read. Rest in peace, Ho Chi Minh.²

Reid failed to make it to the burial at the Johnson ranch that day, sufficiently unnerved by the spectacle to veer off the road to spend time with Hondo Crouch at Luckenbach.

Johnson's political shadow and complex legacy in the state, however, would not be so easy to avoid. The presence of Johnson's political machine, as well as the state's

¹ Jan Reid, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004 [1974]), 89.

² *Ibid.*, 91.

hybrid Southwestern identity, complicates the narrative of partisan realignment in Texas. During Johnson's presidency, 1963-68, his allies maneuvered typically conservative Texas politics so as to keep the state visibly aligned with his national agenda, or at least rendering it incapable of embarrassing his larger initiatives. This was no small task. The tremendous scope of Johnson's Great Society vision conflicted with the small government conservatism not only of his home state voters, but of his financial backers in Texas oil.

The solution involved squaring the differences between corporate liberalism, an ideology in which the government smoothed over the worst contradictions of free-market capitalism, and humanist liberalism, an ideology aimed at maximizing liberty and human dignity for the citizenry. The expansive government of the Great Society required partners and patrons in the private sphere, and Johnson loyalists like the Brown & Root corporation, who had supported LBJ since the New Deal efforts to dam the Colorado River, could easily back expanded government spending on infrastructure. Such corporate partners could not balk at the federal largesse that subsidized Sun Belt growth. However, the War on Poverty and Johnson's civil rights initiatives also linked his success to insurgent social movements that desired a more equitable society, anathema to oilmen like the Brown brothers.³ The balancing act required firm leadership of the state Democratic party by a cohort of centrists loyal to Johnson in Texas. This group had won control of the party from the pro-Eisenhower, massive resistance Shivercrats in the mid-

³ The success of Great Society programs was often in direct proportion to the agency afforded social activists from the communities thus served, as in the Community Action Program, even as such successful programs threatened moderate and conservative Democratic politicians in the cities. Allen Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1984), 242-269. For another take, see Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter: The Presidency of Lyndon Johnson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

1950s around the time that Johnson became Senate Majority Leader and would hold onto that power until the Sharpstown scandal brought down their leading figures in 1972.⁴

A moderate Democratic congressional delegation from Texas strengthened Johnson's hand in passing the flurry of legislation that comprised the Great Society—the Civil Rights Act (1964), Economic Opportunity Act (1964), Food Stamp Act (1964), Immigration and Nationality Services Act (1965), Voting Rights Act (1965), Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965), Higher Education Act (1965), Bilingual Education Act (1968), the creation of VISTA (1964), Head Start (1964), the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities (1965), Medicare and Medicaid (1965), PBS (1967) and many others. In addition, this centrist wing of the party held the major state offices in Texas. Johnson's longtime associate John Connally served as Governor from 1963 to 1969. Protégé Ben Barnes held the office of Speaker of the Texas State House of Representatives from 1965 to 1969. Frank Erwin oversaw matters at the University of Texas as Chair of the Board of Regents from 1966 to 1971. These associations outlasted Johnson's presidency and structured, at least initially, the state's post-1968 politics. Ben Barnes rose to Lieutenant Governor (1969-73), Johnson's friend Roy Butler became mayor of Austin (1971-75), a number of Johnson's advisors, including Walt Rostow, taught at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, and Erwin continued on at the Board of Regents.

Change accelerated after Johnson's retirement, however, and not in ways that brought the Great Society vision closer to fruition in a New Texas. Without Johnson's ability to distribute patronage at the highest levels, and with the Nixon White House working to fray Johnson's Texas coalition, a substantive realignment began to appear

⁴ The "Shivercrats" were the Texas followers of former Governor Allan Shivers, conservative Democrats akin to the wider regional "Dixiecrats."

inevitable. In May 1973, John Connally, amongst the highest-ranking and longest-serving of LBJ's many protégés, the man who had engineered LBJ's earliest runs for the Senate, had been shot with JFK in the Dallas motorcade, and had acted as Johnson's key lieutenant as Governor of Texas, switched to the Republican Party at the height of Watergate. Connally's abrupt change of partisan loyalties owed something to personal ambition, but it also highlighted the changing regional and ideological coalitions being reworked between Republicans and Democrats. Among other subjects, this chapter seeks to contextualize Connally's abrupt defection by narrating the political history of partisan realignment in the middle of the twentieth century and especially the 1970s.

Such a project attends to the shifting coalitions in Texas politics, but this chapter also situates this electoral calculus in a social network and cultural context, spatializing realignment, as it were, in the capital city of Austin in which this political process took on human scale. The concerns of this dissertation—Texas identity, counterculture, new politics, popular music, performance, gender, race and ethnicity, and partisan shift—converge in the space of Austin in the 1970s, and do so in discrete, material ways. The casts of characters in Austin's narratives of politics, popular music, and regional identity overlapped considerably. A brief example will demonstrate the larger point. One day in Luckenbach, as Jerry Jeff Walker's guitarist Craig Hillis recalls, the Gonzos were playing poker with University of Texas football coach Darrell Royal. After a while, Royal looked at his watch and abruptly excused himself. "Boys, I gotta go," he said. "Gotta play golf with the President," that is, the retired LBJ, who lived in the neighborhood.⁵ Such juxtapositions were not random or taken lightly, but suggested dense social networks and meaningful relationships that made for a thicker level of politics. The

⁵ Conversation with author, July 24, 2008.

Austin scene generated a number of such disparate seeming meetings, such as a university football coach who played cards with progressive country musicians and golf with former presidents. Willie Nelson secured top billing at Raza Unida rallies and caused mischief in Jimmy Carter's White House. A Soviet delegation listened to Texas music at the Armadillo World Headquarters, and a "hippie mayor," Jeff Friedman was elected to Austin's City Hall. These lines of influence form the significant backdrop of the more arcane level of political maneuvering that must first garner our attention.

THE BIFURCATION OF SOUTHERN DEMOCRACY

These overlapping social networks by no means made for a monolithic cultural formation, and, in fact, resulted in a fairly shambolic stew of competing residual, dominant, and emergent formations contained within a single, largely unopposed Democratic Party. Countercurrents, idiosyncrasies, and tensions marked the Democrats' long monopoly of power. To be a Southern Democrat in the post-Reconstruction, pre-Nixon era was to belong to a distinctive bloc whose chief rationale for partisan allegiance lay in the fact that the Democrats were not the odious Republicans who had attempted to establish racial justice in the South following the Civil War.⁶ This tenuous loyalty could spark temporary schizophrenia, leading to the phenomenon of the "presidential Republican" who voted conservative Democrats into office locally while casting a ballot for the Republicans' presidential candidate. In 1928, Texas engaged in its first rebellion along these lines, choosing Republican Herbert Hoover over Democrat Al Smith to

⁶ The classic account of this development is V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Knopf, 1949). The key work on the historical dynamics of Texas politics is George Norris Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics: The Primitive Years, 1938-1957* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979).

protest his urban ways, wet politics, and Catholicism. Democratic Texas selected Dwight Eisenhower over Adlai Stevenson in 1952 and 1956, for similar reasons.⁷

This bifurcation in partisan behavior accelerated apace in the 1940s and 1950s, as the Democratic monolith began to fracture through much of the Jim Crow South. Traditional conservatives or “Regulars” continued to elect Democrats on the local level but often voted for Republicans on the federal, while those denoted liberal or national or loyalist Democrats fully supported the larger ideological aims of the party. The state Republican Party, in post-Reconstruction years primarily a vehicle of federal patronage, benefitted from this split as voters and candidates began to consider it a party of protest and, perhaps, the standard bearer of a conservatism that would limit federal authority, especially with regards to the legal strictures that undergirded white supremacy in the state.

The notion of realignment has a long history in political literature. In short, realignment holds that the parties in the American political system consist of disparate interest groups joined by an electoral calculus. At key moments of political strain, those interest groups rearrange their partisan loyalties. The labels Republican and Democrat remain constant, but they signify ever-shifting coalitions. The election of 1860 and the Civil War set up a regional partisan dynamic with the new Republican party of northern capital, farmers, and abolitionists over and against the agrarian South. The Populist Revolt of the 1890s shook much of the agrarian Midwest and mountain west from its Republican moorings, making 1896 a realignment election. By the time of the New Deal, the Democratic coalition became an umbrella group comprising organized labor in the northern cities, white ethnic immigrants, African Americans, white Southern

⁷ The Eisenhower loyalties owed much to the leadership of Allan Shivers, a conservative who objected to the liberalism of the national party on race and the paramount Texas issue of state control of tidelands.

conservatives, and western farmers. Though ideologically disparate, the New Deal's broad scope appeased each in some manner, while the Republicans became a rump opposition party of northern capital. The South remained solidly in this Democratic fold into World War II.

Conservative Republican Bruce Alger's election to the U. S. House of Representatives from Dallas augured the impending partisan shift as early as 1954, not coincidentally the year of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The next important sign came with John Tower's election to the U. S. Senate in 1961, filling the seat vacated by Johnson's move to the vice-presidency. While the Johnson years kept Austin a firmly Democratic city within and without the capitol dome, Johnson's balancing act on the national stage and the state's senate delegation split between conservative Republican Tower and liberal Democrat Ralph Yarborough sketched the outlines of the partisan shift to come. Johnson's elevation to the presidency, together with his political acumen and able lieutenants back in Austin, slowed these developments. In fact, Johnson's landslide election in 1964 seemed at first to reverse the Republican beachhead, with Alger's defeat wiping out the only Texas Republican foothold in the U. S. House. Political fallout over Vietnam and unrest in the cities soon eroded the brief liberal consensus of 1964, however, and the late 1960s brought the election of three Republican U. S. Representatives from Texas: Robert Price from the Panhandle, James Collins of Dallas, and George H. W. Bush of Houston. From there, partisan realignment in Texas from a one-party Democratic state to a predominantly Republican one occurred slowly over a number of years. As the 1960s passed into the 1970s, the stage was set for a decade of substantial jockeying over partisan allegiances amongst voters and politicians, beginning with the Sharpstown scandal of 1972,

proceeding through Connally's party change in 1973, and culminating in Republican William Clements's watershed gubernatorial victory in 1978.

Still, Republicans did not hold a majority in the Texas state senate until 1997, the state house until 2002, or in the federal congressional delegation until 2004.⁸ This echoed the shift in the wider South, which, rather than a wholesale switch of partisan allegiance, involved fits and starts that reconfigured the priorities of both Democrats and Republicans in the region. Nixon's Southern strategy of bringing conservative whites opposed to the civil rights revolution into the Republican fold did not meet with immediate success. In fact, the strategy's clumsy and obvious deployment led to the defeat of Nixon's preferred congressional and gubernatorial candidates in the region in 1970.⁹ As historian Matthew Lassiter argues:

[I]nstead of the next stage in an inexorable Republican realignment, the midterm elections of 1970 demonstrated the intellectual bankruptcy of the Southern Strategy in the electoral climate of the Sunbelt South. The hard shift to the right orchestrated by the White House opened the political center for a group of New South Democrats who rejected the divisive racial politics of the past. . . and projected a regional future of interracial progress.¹⁰

The early failure of Nixon's strategy and the success of Southern Democratic centrists in the elections of 1970 made the discrediting of those centrists a key Republican strategy in Texas by 1972. Given this back-and-forth context, it becomes apparent that the political changes of the post-World War II era were continuous, and arguments over the pivotal nature of a single decade oversimplify the nature of history's persistent unfolding.

⁸ Kenneth Bridges, *Twilight of the Texas Democrats: The 1978 Governor's Race* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2008), 129-130. Republicans had won the governor's office in Arkansas (Winthrop Rockefeller) and Florida (Claude Kirk) in 1966. Georgia lagged behind the rest of the South in this regard, electing a Republican Governor and U. S. Senator only in 2002.

⁹ A political moment dealt with efficiently and well in Randy Sanders, *Mighty Peculiar Elections: The New South Gubernatorial Campaigns of 1970 and the Changing Politics of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2002). Matthew Lassiter also argues the point in *Silent Majority* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 249-251, 271-75.

¹⁰ Lassiter, 251.

Nevertheless, the decade of the 1970s remains undertheorized politically, though interest in the origins of movement conservatism's electoral rise in what Sean Wilentz terms the "Age of Reagan" has drawn new attention to the period.¹¹ The 1970s constitute the tipping point in this narrative of political realignment, as the Republican Party gained unprecedented legitimacy in the Southern states.

The changes in Texas and the South existed in close dialogue with the national political environment of the 1970s. In political terms, as in cultural ones, "the Seventies" is a polysemic notion, less given to the kind of quick characterizations that judge decades as dominated by one set of political beliefs or another, that securely place "the Sixties" as the decade of the left, "the Eighties" the decade of the right, and throws up its hands when it comes to the years in between. "The very term *the Sixties* conjures a whole set of political, social, and cultural associations," the decade's historian Bruce Schulman argues. "So does *the Eighties*. References to a 'Sixties veteran' or an 'Eighties outlook' evoke knowing nods and clear, if stereotyped, images. But the term *Seventies sensibility* evokes only laughter."¹² In part, this gesture unintentionally recognizes the complex character of the moment, one which established the viability of left alternatives and consolidated the civil rights revolutions of the 1960s, even as the right successfully appropriated the prior decade's movement tactics for different ends. In general, political discourse in the period shifted from a focus on social problems to the doctrine of individual responsibility, from an appreciation for the instrumentality of government to an anxiety about the unintended consequences of social reform. Finally, a base distrust of

¹¹ Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008* (New York: Harper Books, 2008).

¹² Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), xii.

constituted authority dominated these years and provided one of the rare shared threads between the decade's populist voices of left and right.¹³

At the same time, the position of the traditionally conservative, Democratic South in the nation changed substantially. Historians differ on the nature of this shifting relationship between the nation and the region. On the one hand, Sun Belt historian Bruce Schulman has posited a “thoroughgoing southernization of American life” in the decade as national political debate hewed more and more to the region's small-government conservatism and evangelical religion.¹⁴ On the other, a new wave of historians sees in the Seventies not a southernization of American life so much as a nationalization of the South and a suburbanization of its politics, convergent with the United States at large. Matthew Lassiter and Kevin Kruse, in particular, fit the Southern political narrative of the post-civil rights moment more neatly to the arc of white flight and urban divestment in the North as set out by Thomas Sugrue in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*.¹⁵ As Lassiter argues, “the ascendance of the metropolitan Sunbelt played a crucial role in the fading of Southern distinctiveness and the national collapse of the New Deal Order, a process of regional convergence marked by the parallel suburbanization of southern and American politics.”¹⁶ Though in many ways distinct within the region, on this point Texas looked like the rest of the South and, indeed, the nation. As seen in previous chapters, this convergence provides one of the primary motive factors in the celebration of regional difference regarding both Texas and the South in the 1970s.

¹³ Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); David Frum, *How We Got Here: The 70s* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 115-23.

¹⁴ Schulman, xiii-xv, 256.

¹⁵ Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Lassiter, 3.

Whether its causes involved regional convergence or Southern ascendance, the significance of the partisan realignment cannot be missed, and its dynamics beg further examination.

Realignment's logic made for strange bedfellows. By the 1970s, the progressive *Texas Observer* had been promoting the fortunes of the Republican Party as a means of realigning the state's politics for at least a decade. Southern liberals argued that forcing conservatives into the Republican Party in a new realignment would create a competitive two party system. Southern liberal support for conservative Republicans promised a space for political choice outside of the Democratic primary elections that had a rather predictable dynamic in Texas unfavorable to the party's liberal faction. Since the eruption of the liberal-conservative split in the state party during the New Deal, Democratic primaries in the state typically featured a crowded field of conservatives and a sole liberal. With the conservative vote thus divided in the initial primary, a run-off usually resulted between the leading conservative candidate and the lone liberal. While this emboldened state liberals by keeping their candidates in the spotlight despite their minority status, it also led to perennial disappointments. The liberal faction almost always fielded a strong gubernatorial candidate who achieved statewide name recognition through the primaries—Ralph Yarborough in the 1950s, Frances “Sissy” Farenthold in the 1970s—but a Democrat from the party's liberal wing would not win that office until the post-70s victories of Mark White in 1982 and Ann Richards in 1990.¹⁷ That is, liberal Democratic candidates did not prevail until the exodus of rural conservatives made the Republicans relevant and recalibrated the state's electoral politics.

¹⁷ James Allred (1935-39), a New Dealer and FDR ally, provides a partial exception, as his election in 1934 occurred prior to the deepening of the liberal-conservative divide over Roosevelt's Second New Deal, the Homer Rainey Affair, and African American civil rights. On Ann Richards's election, see Sue Tolleson-Rinehart and Jeanie R. Stanley, *Claytie and the Lady: Ann Richards, Gender, and Politics in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

The strategy of liberal support for conservative Republicans goes back at least to John Tower's Senate campaign in 1961. The *Texas Observer* endorsed Tower against the conservative Democrat William Blakely in that election, stating that liberals "want to free their party from the dead weight of the Dixiecrats . . . Republicans want to reorient Texas conservatism into a source of greater state prestige. At the intersection of these two basic objectives lies a vote for John Tower."¹⁸ Republicans accomplished little to expand on these initial victories in the 1960s. Just as the Republican Party found its conservative voice and Southern audience with Barry Goldwater's candidacy in 1964, Johnson's victory of that year reversed the Republican tide in Texas. It was not until the Sharpstown scandal of 1972 that liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans made further progress in realignment.

Realignment, in practice, hinged on the politics of race in the midst of the civil rights movement. Drawing on the ideological deployment of a skewed historical memory, the Republican Party had been anathema in the South due to the party's association with the Civil War and Reconstruction.¹⁹ In recent years, a provocative new scholarship on race, politics, and the post-civil rights South has emerged from historians Matthew Lassiter, Kevin Kruse, Jason Sokol, and Joseph Crespino to explore Southern realignment.²⁰ Each of these historians documents the ways in which a Southern politics of race became coded in a more moderate-sounding rhetoric trumpeting law and order,

¹⁸ "A Vote for Tower," *Texas Observer*, 5/20/61.

¹⁹ The reigning historical consensus on Reconstruction as an era of corrupt misrule had been authored by William A. Dunning, whose protégé Charles Ramsdell was a founder of the Southern Historical Association and prominent University of Texas at Austin history professor. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 230, 236.

²⁰ Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006); Paul Gaston, Matthew Lassiter, and Andrew Lewis, eds. *The Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

private property, or the rights of white citizens, as the nation came to revile, and Southern elites came to be embarrassed by, the open politics of white supremacy as voiced in massive resistance. In *Mighty Peculiar Elections*, for example, Randy Sanders argues that the moderation of rhetoric from appeals to white supremacy to the codes of law and order removed overt discussions of race from the Southern political formula during the gubernatorial elections in 1970 of Reuben Askew in Florida, Dale Bumpers in Arkansas, John West in South Carolina, and Jimmy Carter in Georgia.

Texas politics, in the west of the New South, differed in some small degrees from developments in the Deep South. With one of the smallest African American populations of Southern states, by proportion, the white-black racial dyad had not driven politics in the same way in the state. Rather, it acted as one wedge issue amongst a number of broader arguments over federal authority. Too, the effects of the African American civil rights movement operated in tandem with the Chicano movement to bring substantive change to the Texas Democratic Party in the 1970s by virtue of Raza Unida's third party movement in the border counties. Raza Unida's defeat of the Anglo political bosses in that region removed a primary bloc of conservative power brokers from influence in the Democratic Party. The political bosses who had delivered the border counties to state and national candidates in return for political favors now represented districts that required campaigning on issues much as the rest of the state.²¹

The shifting nature of politics in the 1960s and 1970s derived from many causes in addition to the most salient one of race and divergent opinions regarding the federal government's sanctioning of racial justice. Contemporaneous accounts such as Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg's *The Real Majority* and Kevin Phillips's *The Emerging*

²¹ For the workings of the border political machines, see Evan Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

Republican Majority traced the shift towards a generalized mistrust of government and a turn from understanding issues in terms of the social to the lionization of individual responsibility for success or failure.²² In the first, Scammon and Wattenberg, centrist Democratic strategists, predicted the move from economic and workplace issues to a concern with “the social issue,” and especially the theme of “law and order,” amongst the electorate. In the second text, American regionalism came to the fore with Phillips’s introduction of the terms Southern strategy and Sun Belt to describe the Republican need to pursue the ideological outlier of the Democratic coalition. By mid-decade, Kirkpatrick Sale agreed with Phillips’s regional assessment, even as he bemoaned the successful Republican inroads in the South, in *Power Shift: The Rise of the Southern Rim and Its Challenge to the Eastern Establishment*. “This power shift is more than a passing phenomenon,” Sale argued, “it is a way of comprehending modern America. An understanding of its sweep and pattern helps to make sense out of the recent past. . . It helps to make order out of the tangled present, to explain the energy crisis and the price of food, the economic chaos of the mid-1970s.”²³ Philip Jenkins’s recent *Decade of Nightmares* and Rick Perlstein’s *Nixonland*, too, summarized this shifting debate and hold the 1970s as a Rosetta Stone for understanding the political landscape at the turn of the 21st century.²⁴ Each of these authors focused on a singular element to describe a series of shifting political moods (region, race, values, Richard Nixon) but the logic that connected them one to another remained the collapse of Cold War liberalism as the vital center of American politics.

²² Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg, *The Real Majority* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970); Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1969).

²³ Sale, 15.

²⁴ Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008).

Political consensus shifted in ways that belie easy divisions of left and right, and this rhetorically murky middle makes the assessment of late-Sixties and Seventies politicians at times quite challenging. For example, though law-and-order rhetoric maligned the strident elements of student antiwar protest, public opinion as a whole had turned largely against the Vietnam War by the early 1970s, if not the late 1960s. Texas Democrats felt compelled to chart a middle ground on the issue. As Bob Eckhardt, a liberal congressman from the Houston area, wrote, the “reaction that I have indicated to me from letters sent to my office has been very adverse to the Cambodian intervention [of 1970]. And I don’t even come from a particularly dovish district.”²⁵ This led liberal Texas Democrats like Eckhardt to deploy the state’s history and iconography to frame political points in this uncertain atmosphere. In arguing for a withdrawal from Vietnam, for example, Eckhardt suggested that discretion might be the better part of valor, as in “the South, names like Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee stir our blood, but they fought for a cause as questionable and for a victory as unattainable as that in Vietnam. . . [James] Fannin’s men were no less heroic for fighting in the clearing, under orders, rather than taking to the woods” during the revolt against Mexico.²⁶ The heroic complex embedded in Anglo-Texan masculinity, he suggested, was not compromised by the logical need to retreat from Vietnam, nor was the heroism of American troops in question for fighting a “losing” battle, as Fannin’s men had at Goliad.

The attempt to give Texas shape to the philosophies of liberal Democrats extended to the quest for a symbolism to match Eckhardt’s stance on the war.

²⁵ Text of speech given in Memphis, “Brief History of U. S. Involvement in Vietnam,” Box 95-147/33, Bob Eckhardt Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. For more on Bob Eckhardt, see Gary Keith, *Eckhardt: There Once Was a Congressman from Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007).

²⁶ Text of speech given in Houston on Vietnam Moratorium Day Program, October 15, 1969, “We Cannot Win the War by Proxy,” Box 95-147/33, Bob Eckhardt Papers.

I'm not a dove, I'm not a hawk. I suppose I'm a paisano. "Paisano," you know, means two things in Spanish. It means a kind of southwestern bird, a roadrunner, and it means a "countryman." I think we should keep our feet on the ground: we must keep our Anglo-American pragmatism: the kind of approach that, like our common law, fits the solution to the particular facts. I don't think we can "coo" our way out of responsibility for a situation that did not come about without our participation. Also, I am sympathetic with the position of "the countryman," opposing those who would block his aspirations toward nationalism.²⁷

Eckhardt thus appealed to local knowledge to forge a middle way using the bird that was J. Frank Dobie's totem, and, in the process, he even deployed the Spanish vernacular of the Southwest to bolster "our Anglo-American pragmatism". He framed his paisano position as based in patriotism, pragmatism, and, by extension, the nationalist aspirations of the Viet Cong. These attempts at a middle-way liberalism, a transcendence of the oppositions marked by hawk and dove, required such Texas accents, as individuals like Eckhardt sought to push the state party leftward without invoking political labels then becoming unpopular with voters.

Bob Armstrong, an up-and-coming candidate for state land commissioner in 1972 who brought environmental issues to the fore of the General Land Office's mission, trod lightly on this issue of political labeling. While attending a "program sponsored by the Texas AFL-CIO [that] featured liberal members of the legislature" in Houston, Armstrong resisted the label that came from his association with the group. As the *Houston Chronicle* wrote, while "Armstrong has since received organized labor's endorsement for the land commissioner post, he claims this does not make him a liberal,

²⁷ Text of speech given in Austin in April, 1967, Box 95-147/33, Bob Eckhardt Papers.

for he also had the help of former governors John Connally and Allan Shivers.”²⁸ In other words, Armstrong garnered support not only from the liberals, but from the right wing of LBJ’s centrists (Connally), and, indeed, from the far right of the Democratic Party (Shivers). Texas politicians in the 1970s missed an opportunity to construct a populist coalition around this center that maintained broad rural support. The attempts of urban liberals to hold onto the language of agrarian populism and the symbols of Anglo-Texanness ultimately fell short, even as the Armadillo World Headquarters scene across the Colorado River allowed for young adherents of the new politics to celebrate and re-imagine the traditional symbols of rural Anglo-Texan masculinity “on the ideological plane.”

SHARPSTOWN AND WATERGATE

While John Tower’s election to the Senate in 1961 augured the coming realignment, the denouement of the Yarborough-Connally feud within the state Democratic Party more effectively traced realignment’s 1970s pivot. In 1970, Senator Ralph Yarborough, the most effective and highest-ranking politician ever elected out of the explicitly liberal wing of the Texas Democratic Party, lost to South Texas rancher Lloyd Bentsen in the Democratic primaries. Bentsen went on to defeat Republican George H. W. Bush in the general election, and Bush moved on to a consolation prize as chairman of the Republican National Committee. George Norris Green, whose seminal *The Establishment in Texas Politics* appeared in the late 1970s, argued that Yarborough’s defeat, as well as his earlier electoral successes, owed more to the national political climate than the rise or fall of liberal sentiment amongst Texas voters. Throughout the

²⁸ *Houston Chronicle*, January 17, 1971, 2.

postwar period, liberal Democrats pressed the argument that the state was trending in their direction, with urbanization, industrialization, unionization, and the civil rights movement. Green, rather, suggested that Yarborough won in 1958 due to unrest with a recession that was blamed on Republicans and in 1964 on the coattails of a wider liberal wave. In 1970, however, the shifting political discourse of “law-and-order” issues on which Yarborough was perceived as weak doomed his campaign against the upstart Bentsen.²⁹ For a politician whose career had been built on the notion of “putting the jam on the lower shelf so the little man can reach it,” the collapsing fortunes of liberal egalitarianism hit hard.³⁰

Lyndon Johnson recognized the changing political landscape, and by 1970 devoted his remaining energies in his home state not to Great Society liberalism, but to shoring up the centrist bloc he saw as the Democratic Party’s only chance for remaining dominant in Texas. Back in 1964, Johnson had not only endorsed Yarborough as a key legislative ally, but made it known in Texas that he did not want any other Democrat running against Yarborough. In 1970, the retired President conspicuously refused to endorse a candidate in the Yarborough-Bentsen contest.³¹ Johnson’s concerns over the centrist bloc’s fortunes were valid. John Connally left the Democratic Party during his time as Treasury Secretary and influential adviser in the Nixon White House. From that position, he shaped Nixon’s perception of a watershed event in Texas politics, the Sharpstown scandal that broke over the course of 1971 and 1972. Nixon put a great deal of stock in Connally’s counsel, in part due to the charisma Connally exercised by playing Texan in Nixon’s presence. As Henry Kissinger said of Nixon’s estimation of Connally,

²⁹ Green, 202, 203.

³⁰ Cox, 156.

³¹ *Houston Chronicle*, July 25, 1970.

“there was no American public figure Nixon held in such awe. Connally’s swaggering self-assurance fulfilled Nixon’s image of how a leader should act.”³² With Johnson retired, Yarborough defeated, and Connally ensconced in the opposition party, the leadership vacuum amongst Texas Democrats left them particularly vulnerable to the perfect storm of scandal that hit the party at the dawn of the Seventies.

The Sharpstown Scandal that shattered Johnson’s centrists began to unfold in January of 1971, concomitant with the inauguration of LBJ’s Democratic allies in statewide offices. In short, investigators alleged that Frank Sharp of the Sharpstown State Bank and National Bankers Life Insurance had issued lenient loans to a number of Democratic politicians. Sharp then instructed the politicians to invest that money in stocks of the National Bankers Life Insurance Company, vote for banking legislation amenable to Frank Sharp’s business interests thus increasing their stock value, and sell their stocks at a profit. The scandal directly implicated Governor Preston Smith, state Democratic chair Elmer Baun, Texas House Speaker Gus Mutscher, Fort Worth Representative Tommy Shannon, and Mutscher aide Rush McGinty. Lieutenant Governor Ben Barnes, though not technically guilty of the improprieties of his colleagues, found himself caught in the crossfire in the election year of 1972. Both the liberal wing of the Democratic Party and an energized Republican Party raised the flag of reform, placing LBJ’s centrist wheeler-dealers in their cross-hairs. Sharpstown accelerated partisan realignment, as it closed the period in which Johnson’s pragmatic

³² Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), 386. Also see John Connally with Mickey Herskovitz, *In History’s Shadow: An American Odyssey* (New York: Hyperion Books, 1993). The charismatic, extroverted Connally acknowledged the difference between the two men in something of a back-handed compliment while puzzling over Nixon’s political success, “In a world where charisma is regarded as a priceless asset, and extroverts are the rule, he has been an anomaly. Basically a humorless man, and extremely private, almost antisocial, he nevertheless went against the trend and the grain. He has outlasted many of his enemies.” Connally, 256.

centrists, who had taken control of the state party from the Dixiecrat-leaning supporters of Allan Shivers in 1956, guided the party.

Despite Johnson's retirement, the Texan profile remained high in national politics, if not always quite as visible or evocative. By the end of 1972, Robert Strauss and George H. W. Bush, both Texans, had been named National Chairmen of the Democratic and Republican Parties, respectively.³³ In addition, Anne Armstrong, another Texan, served as co-chair of the GOP from 1971 to 1973 and, like Connally, had the ear of the Nixon White House. As knowledge of Nixon's dirty tricks and their unconstitutional cover-up unfolded, Texans headed both major parties, and another Texan, John Connally, hoped to benefit politically from Nixon's fall. His partisan switch originated in part from his belief that he could win the Republican Party's nomination for President. The larger air of political maneuvering around Watergate involved Nixon's close attention to events in Texas.³⁴ The state's bloc of electoral votes and its close association to LBJ made of Texas a coveted prize in the Southern strategy. As Attorney General John Mitchell told President Nixon, "where, I think, you have a prime and vital interest is the politics in Texas. As you know, this Sharp thing has just about destroyed the Democrat Party down there, and will continue to as this thing builds up."³⁵ Ben Barnes maintains that Nixon's political interest in Sharpstown drove the aggressive federal investigations that cut short the careers of moderate Democrats like himself not directly linked to improprieties with

³³ Al Reinert, "Bob and George Go to Washington," *Texas Monthly*, April 1974, 52.

³⁴ In addition to the advice of Connally and Anne Armstrong, Nixon had received substantial monetary and other contributions from Texas oilmen dating back to his career as a fervent anticommunist in the 1950s. Their support earned the Texans cameos in such dubious milestones of Nixon's career as the "smoking gun" recording detailing Nixon's and H. R. Haldeman's complicity in the Watergate cover-up involving laundered money from "the Texans," and even Nixon's "Checkers" speech of 1952, in which the vice-presidential candidate responded to claims of financial impropriety by saying that the only "improper" gift he had ever received was the family dog, Checkers, which came from a political supporter in Texas.

³⁵ Mitchell-Nixon recording quoted in Ben Barnes, *Barn Burning, Barn Building* (Albany, TX: Bright Sky Press, 2006), 209.

Sharp. If Barnes overstates the extent to which Sharpstown was among Nixon's dirty tricks—the core defendants were, after all, guilty—it is nevertheless true that Nixon's interference served his partisan ends and diminished the political legacy of his predecessor, LBJ.

Sharpstown brought the most reform-minded Democrats to the fore even as the party still held broad voter loyalty among rural conservatives as well as urban liberals.³⁶ In the short term, the biggest winner in this development was Frances “Sissy” Farenthold, a state representative from Corpus Christi who ran stirring, but ultimately unsuccessful, campaigns for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 1972 and 1974. Born Frances Tarlton to a prominent South Texas lawyer, Sissy attended Vassar before marrying Belgian George Farenthold, a steel importer based in Houston. Frances Farenthold originally envisioned herself working behind the scenes in politics, but was inspired by the women's movement to come into her own as a candidate. “I was going to be a student of it and work in politics, but I didn't expect to be elected. This is part of those low expectations (of women).”³⁷ First elected to the Texas House of Representatives in the contentious year of 1968, Farenthold sought the Democratic nomination for Governor in 1972 and 1974, both years in which she faced off with, and lost to, prominent Uvalde rancher Dolph Briscoe.³⁸

³⁶ This parallels developments in the national party whereby Nixon's divisive rule elevated the fortunes of the liberal wing of the Democrats and the presidential candidacy of George McGovern.

³⁷ Carolyn Barta, “Sissy, Anne Hooked on Politics,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 15, 1973, 18. Anne Armstrong gave the keynote speech at the Republican National Convention in 1972 and served as co-chair of the Republican National Convention from 1971-73, Chief Counselor in the Ford and Nixon administrations, and U. S. ambassador to the U. K. from 1976-77. Armstrong and Farenthold were classmates at Vassar.

³⁸ For more on Dolph Briscoe, see his memoir written with Don Carleton, *Dolph Briscoe: My Life in Texas Ranching and Politics* (Austin: Center for American History, 2008). Briscoe did not have to work hard to affect the cowboy guise, as he was one of the state's more prominent ranchers. He was also something of a reluctant politician only loosely affiliated with any of the factions of 1970s Texas politics. In a sense, his stint as governor from 1973-1979 rendered the governor's office neutral ground in the contentious political jockeying of the period.

Farenthold energized a liberal base that felt the modernization of the state, its “cultural maturation,” in publisher Michael Levy’s words, had perhaps finally delivered them their moment in the sun. The *Texas Observer’s* endorsement of Farenthold for Governor in 1972, written by Molly Ivins and Kaye Northcott, made the case, if in self-deprecating terms: “OK, so white liberals are a bad joke. OK, so Texas liberals are a national laughingstock—petty, disorganized, and more prone to fight one another than the perverted priorities of the people who call themselves conservatives in this state. We don’t give a damn. GET UP OFF YOUR BUTTS AND MOVE. This woman is worth fighting for.”³⁹ Ivins’s enthusiasm mirrored Connally’s consternation over Farenthold’s popularity in Texas. The Secretary of the Treasury introduced Sissy Farenthold to President Nixon with the exclamation, “And hell, this woman—this Sissy Farenthold, who’s for legalized abortion, who’s for legalized marijuana, who’s for this, who’s for that, a very radical woman!”⁴⁰ Farenthold, a prominent feminist in Democratic politics, had to create some distance from the liberal label in Texas, echoing Eckhardt and Bob Armstrong in framing herself, in populist terms, as an “insurgent.” “While Anne [Armstrong, the prominent Texas Republican] is prone to drink Dubonnet on the rocks with a lemon twist, Sissy was apt to pop a can of Budweiser after a tough day on the campaign trail. Philosophically, Sissy has been tagged a liberal, although she prefers to call herself an ‘insurgent.’”⁴¹ While her liberalism might have caused voters uneasiness (note Connally’s echo of Spiro Agnew’s slander of George McGovern as the candidate of

³⁹ Kaye Northcott and Molly Ivins, “Texas Needs Farenthold,” *Texas Observer*, March 3, 1972.

⁴⁰ Connally-Nixon recording quoted in Barnes, 217.

⁴¹ Barta, 18.

“Acid, Amnesty, and Abortion”), this beer-accented populism played well in the context of the Texan 1970s.⁴²

If Nixon’s political machinations with regards to Sharpstown seemed to pull the rug out from under the Johnson centrists in Austin, they simultaneously helped to propel the career of another Johnson acolyte. The televised impeachment hearings of the House Judiciary Committee made Houston congresswoman Barbara Jordan a household name. In this, Jordan was the rare politician supported by LBJ to survive the 1970s with reputation intact. *Texas Monthly* editor William Broyles imagined that the outcome would have pleased the Old Man highly.

So far as Johnson could tell, both Connally and his protégé Ben Barnes had inherited the skills but none of the heart. Barbara Jordan was different. . . In the King Lear fantasies of his final year, with John Connally a Republican, Barnes’ political career in ruins, and Nixon dismantling the Great Society, she was the one child who never wavered, who kept his legacy and promised to carry it on when he died.⁴³

Further, Broyles, mused, both Connally and Jordan “had LBJ’s backroom magic, but Connally had Lyndon’s poor-boy materialism, and she had Lyndon’s New Deal heart. Blended together, they made a pretty good LBJ.”⁴⁴ Jordan’s rise, and Connally’s partisan switch, signified a rupture in what had been formerly portrayed as a unitary, organic body politic. In this view of political declension, no Texan could combine or transcend the contrarian qualities of traditional Texanness and modern liberalism as had LBJ.⁴⁵ Savvy,

⁴² The Farenthold-McGovern comparison is a valid one. Farenthold played a pivotal role in the 1972 Democratic National Convention that nominated George McGovern as the first woman to be put competitively in nomination for the position of Vice-President. The floor fight over the issue was contentious, as feminist support kept Farenthold a close second to (the later scuttled) Thomas Eagleton on several ballots. The voting drew out the televised convention and forced McGovern’s acceptance speech to the early hours of the morning, when few Americans were awake to see it.

⁴³ William Broyles, “The Making of Barbara Jordan,” *Texas Monthly*, October 1976, 199.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁴⁵ This hunger for transcendence, of course, was also behind the hippie-redneck, cosmic cowboy performances at the Armadillo World Headquarters. Willie Nelson’s success, in this case, served in part as an antidote to the “Vanishing” of LBJ, combining traditional Texanness and modern liberalism as he did.

Jordan did not read this rupture as a move away from Texan identity, but a step towards its reconfiguration. Indeed, she publicly embraced the state. “I am a Texan. . . My roots are there. . . ‘Texan’ frequently evokes images of conservatism, oil, gas, racism, callousness. In my judgment, the myths should be debunked, or at the least, should include the prevalent strains of reasonableness, compassion, and decency.”⁴⁶ A number of Texas voters, in a variety of locales, came to similar conclusions.

ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL: AUSTIN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN THE 1970S

Austin serves well as a laboratory for examining the intersection of national, state, and local politics, as the capital city of the Sun Belt South’s largest state and home territory of a retired president. As sociologist Anthony Orum wrote in his political history of the city, the “early 1970s were a time not only for the small revolts of American youth. They were a time when challenges to the normal routine of political life were breaking out everywhere.”⁴⁷ Youth did have something to do with it, however, as the university’s experience of the Sixties student movement carried over into the changing municipal politics of the city in the 1970s. The *Daily Texan* advocated for the mobilization of the University of Texas student vote in local elections as early as 1973 and analyzed the returns at length to determine the efficacy of the student bloc. The study concluded that student precincts, with high turnout, could deliver a significant swing vote to liberal candidates. In the city council elections of April 7th of that year,

Further, LBJ himself let his hair grow a little longer upon moving back to Texas. An early 1970s comic book insert into the *Daily Texan* by Richard Hoffman entitled “The Day the Freaks Took Austin” played with this sense of inversion, imagining a time when the counterculture took the reins of government in Austin (which would come soon enough, in the municipal elections of 1975). The figures of the Texas establishment were then forced to live off the land. The final panels of the comic end with the narration, “And finally, the mightiest men took to the road to rediscover their country” and a picture of a smiling, long-haired, Stetson-wearing LBJ hitchhiking.

⁴⁶ Broyles, 202.

⁴⁷ Anthony Orum, *Power, Money, and the People: The Making of Modern Austin*, (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987), 290.

most student-supported, “new politics” candidates lost (the exception being “hippie councilman” Jeff Friedman in Place 5).⁴⁸

By 1975, however, the student precincts had sufficiently mobilized to force a realignment of sorts in Austin city politics. “University students turned out *en masse* in 1975 to elect one of the most liberal city council’s in Austin’s history: a chicano, a black, two women (one liberal, the other conservative), a blind millionaire, another woman who campaigned on a ‘think trees’ platform, and a Jewish mayor in his thirties . . . Molly Ivins said it ‘looked like an affirmative action program gone berserk.’”⁴⁹ Young local politicians delighted in the new political landscape. As the *Austin Sun* editorialized in 1975, the year of Austin’s city council shift, “Lyndon is dead, Ben Barnes rejected, John Connally disgraced, and now local kingpin Roy Butler has been reduced to just another car dealer.”⁵⁰ In LBJ confrere Roy Butler’s place arose the new politics-oriented Jeff Friedman, a product of political mobilization amongst the student voters who also formed the basis of the Armadillo World Headquarters audience. Friedman performed the new politics of the 1970s, providing a face to that left-liberal coalition that furthered the movement politics of the 1960s in electoral fashion. The local press, from the center-right *Austin American-Statesman* to the progressive *Austin Sun*, kept a close eye on the unfolding of Friedman’s countercultural pose.

Image is the key to understanding Friedman. Jeff Friedman obtained his image in 1971 as a mustachioed, shaggy councilperson elected at a time when such foliage was not quite yet in. As the city has grown increasingly more polarized, younger and hipper, Friedman has gained in acceptability. Mayor Butler and rightist journalist Wray Weddell . . . helped Friedman’s image along with snide loaded remarks about Austin’s “hippie councilman” and “New Left” politician. Friedman used the adversity to oppose Butler’s whims when no one else would,

⁴⁸ David Powell, “Campus, Austin Voters Differ,” *Daily Texan*, April 17, 1973, 3.

⁴⁹ “UT Activists: Former Radicals Move towards Political ‘Centre,’” *Daily Texan*, April 26, 1977, 1.

⁵⁰ Michael Eakin, “River City Round-Up,” *Austin Sun*, January 22, 1975, 4.

and cultivated an image of tough leadership—for all the people. That history of personality battles has obscured people’s ability to see Friedman in an objective light. The fact is that Friedman is a liberal—but a liberal moderating rapidly with time.⁵¹

Friedman, like Farenthold, recognized the value of the Armadillo World Headquarters as a base. He held campaign fundraisers and, as emcee, shared the stage in 1976 with the likes of Balcones Fault, the Uranium Savages, Jim Franklin, magician Harry Anderson, and belly dancer Chastity Fox.

In 1975, the year of Friedman’s election as mayor, Austin hosted the National Conference on Alternative State and Local Public Policies, an event aimed at exploring the paths out of the New Left and into electoral politics represented by the city’s rising political stars. Other examples of New Left or countercultural figures who became invested in electoral politics in the 1970s include John Froines of the Chicago Seven, a state health official in Vermont; Tom Hayden in California state politics and Hunter Thompson in Aspen politics; Sam Brown as Colorado State Treasurer; and Paul Siglin as mayor of Madison. Barbara Cigianero, a former United Farm Workers organizer who served in the 1970s on the Texas State Board of Paroles and Corrections, addressed the logic of the activists’ turn to existing institutions. “You no longer think you can somehow personally end the war or that you’ll be on the cover of *Time*. . . People with experience in the Movement have learned that they can make a difference. They are less likely to be overcome by the sense of futility that bureaucracies nurture.”⁵² While many media accounts in the 1970s focused on the degeneration of the New Left into farce with such events as the Symbionese Liberation Army’s 1974 kidnapping of Patty Hearst, numerous movement politicians shifted toward left-liberal electoral coalitions with less public fanfare. Though the *Austin Sun* derided Friedman as a “liberal moderating rapidly

⁵¹ “This Pledge Must Be Kept,” *Austin Sun*, April 3, 1975, 1.

⁵² Thorne Dreyer, “What Ever Happened to the New Generation?” *Texas Monthly*, November 1976, 98.

with time,” learning the lessons of Johnson’s half-a-loaf politics—you can not always get what you want—proved valuable amidst the contracted horizons of the 1970s. These developments deepened and diffused the new politics in ways that rendered them, often, less visible and audible, but more efficacious, than the prevailing rhetoric of Seventies exhaustion and cranky conservatism.

This transition occurred through the mechanism of elections, but also transpired in the leisure spaces described elsewhere in this study. These shared spaces and the scenes they engendered did not merely involve a series of coincidental meetings between random individuals or places for letting off steam after the politicking was done, but represented dense social networks in which affiliations were forged and decisions were made. The work/leisure divide does not describe the mechanisms of political life in a state capital. The “personal is political” aphorism that migrated from feminist circles across any number of discourses in 1970s life, had as its unlikely corollary in a place like Austin the recognition that the political—the lives of legislators in a lawmaking town, campaigning in municipal elections amidst a politicized youth culture, enjoying music and the arts that traffic in the same symbols that enable political leadership—is personal. The operation of formal, electoral politics involved affective relationships by which the cultural and political scenes of the city did not merely coincide, but proved mutually constitutive.

Sam Binkley’s “thin cultural slices of life” come into play here, too, as illustrative of the intimate cultural-political continuum in Austin. Eddie Wilson recalls Bob Bullock’s decision to pursue the office of comptroller as he described it in the Armadillo World Headquarters Beer Garden. Wilson asked Bullock if he’d decided what office he was running for in 1974. “Yup, just now, and you’ll be the first to know. I’ve learned that my liberal friends don’t trust me enough to want me as treasurer. I’ve also learned

that they don't know what comptroller means, so I'm going to take that one and shove it up their ass."⁵³ Obviously, though Bullock had friends amongst them, he did not see himself exactly aligned with the left-liberal forces that dominated the Armadillo scene, nor did they necessarily return the favor. Later, while running the bar The Raw Deal, Wilson, at Ann Richards's request, marketed T-shirts referring obliquely to Bullock's later comptroller campaign and well-documented orneriness: "Idi Amin for Comptroller."⁵⁴ Ann Richards also became involved in one of these less heralded struggles that made for those "thin cultural slices" of the city's cultural-political fabric, as she lobbied with Wilson in a feud with former mayor Roy Butler over whether or not the Armadillo World Headquarters should stock Coors beer. The reactionary politics of the Coors family of Colorado led Richards to push a boycott (declared nationally by the AFL-CIO and gay rights advocates) despite the brand's popularity. Butler, a local beer lobbyist and friend of the Coors family, argued otherwise. As Wilson put it, his "best defense about Coors' politics was claiming the Budweiser family was a bunch of former Nazis and even worse than the Coors family."⁵⁵ The row over beer points to the developing politics of consumption as expressive of social values.

As early as 1976, the year following the 1975 victories in the city council, the *Daily Texan* lamented "Austin progressives' retreat." Erwin McGee grouched over perceived moderation on the part of the progressive bloc, the lack of funds for the get-out-the-vote efforts of the university's Young Democrats and Student Action Committee,

⁵³ Eddie Wilson, *A Good Time in Austin, Texas*, (unpublished manuscript, 2003), 229.

⁵⁴ Bullock held the office of comptroller from 1975 to 1991 and reinvigorated the role of what had previously considered a moribund office by seizing on its powers to increase tax revenues. Bullock would similarly reinvigorate the office of Lieutenant Governor, which he held from 1991 to his death in 1999 and which he made, through its prerogatives in the State Senate, more powerful than the office of Texas Governor. For more on Bullock's colorful and momentous career, see Dave McNeely, *Bob Bullock: God Bless Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

⁵⁵ Wilson, 215.

and, finally, his sense of a falling readership of the all-important *Daily Texan* editorial and letters pages.⁵⁶ Such jeremiads commonly appear in the wake of progressive political victories. To the contrary, however, the coalitions of 1975 altered the language and focus of Austin politics in the long term and remain close to the city's civic identity.

THE BICENTENNIAL, CARTER, AND CLEMENTS

On the national level, the presidential election of 1976 promised to reverse the Republican gains from earlier in the decade. Just as Johnson's victory in 1964 closed the Republican window opened in Texas by Bruce Alger and John Tower, Democrats in 1976 felt that Richard Nixon's resignation and Gerald Ford's bumbling exhausted the political capital yielded the Republicans by the "law and order" issue and the Southern strategy. Indeed, to read editorials from the period is to get a sense that the Republican Party would never recover from Watergate.

To underscore the point, the Democrats went back to their moderate Southern wing for the 1976 candidate, Jimmy Carter, who, like Johnson, carried deep regional inflections in his public performance. Texas joined in the Democrats' attempted Southern resurgence. *Texas Monthly* published two articles on the subject in September 1976, one chronicling the continued high-profile of Texas Democrats in the national party at the New York convention, "All's Fair in Love" by Richard West, and, opposite, one covering the continuing feuds between liberal and conservative Democrats in the state party back home, "And War," by Paul Burka. The first celebrated Democratic Texas in the post-Johnson era, while also foregrounding the performance of "the Texan" in New York.

⁵⁶ Erwin McGee, "Austin progressives' retreat," *Daily Texan*, December 9, 1976, 4.

Why, then, five days later—after the Reverend Martin Luther, Sr.’s benediction—was New York City Mayor Abe Beame, standing five-foot-two on the bandstand of the Rainbow Room atop Rockefeller Center, looking like Yosemite Sam in a twenty-gallon Stetson, thrusting a hook-‘em-horns sign toward the roof, telling of his love for the hundred or so gathered Texans . . . The whole convention was a love-in, as everybody has heard by now ad nauseum. But the biggest love-in of all turned out to be New York for Texas and vice versa. Who would have thought it, after all, thought that those old antagonists, the melting pot and the frontier, would have finally got together and picked each other out to love and honor, out of all the states in the USA?⁵⁷

Despite, or perhaps because of, New York’s bankrupt doldrums and Texas’s oil-driven swagger, the two outsized spaces, “empire states,” stuck close to one another at the Democratic Convention.

Texans’ success at the national convention in 1976 did not reflect the bitter contestation over authority within the state party regarding the State Democratic Executive Committee. This locus of leadership proved the primary battleground between liberals trying to cement their control of the party in a realigned Texas and those conservatives attempting to maintain the party’s centrist course. Paul Burka, surveying the scene in the state convention, observed that things had been

different under John Connally. For his six years as governor, beginning in January 1963, he was in total control of the state party. With Lyndon Johnson lending his weight from the White House, conservative Democrats were at the apogee of their power; liberals could seldom muster more than 10 of the 62 votes on the SDEC. But Briscoe is in the unenviable position of needing help from the outside—from Jimmy Carter, perhaps, or from organized labor (try to imagine Connally in that position)—to avoid an embarrassing defeat, not from his veteran political rivals, but at the hands of a bunch of political novices, and liberal novices at that. It didn’t use[d] to be this way.

This comes across as a declension narrative, the organic unity and patriarchal authority exercised in the state’s only functioning party fractured into shrill dissent by the rising power of the liberals and their attempts to shunt the conservatives from leadership.

⁵⁷Richard West, “All’s Fair in Love,” *Texas Monthly*, September 1976, 102.

Burka then outlined the history of prior party feuds including Lyndon Johnson versus Coke Stevenson in the 1940s, Johnson versus the Shivercrats in the 1950s, Ralph Yarborough versus John Connally in the 1960s, and Sissy Farenthold versus the Sharpstown Gang in the 1970s. “This one is different. Everyone’s in this one: the governor, all the high-ranking state officials, labor, blacks, browns, career liberals, a congressman or two, the Democratic presidential nominee. This is not just one faction against another; this is an entire political party playing musical chairs.”⁵⁸ The object was to stake out the party’s identity and its position on the prospects of partisan realignment. By 1976, the Yarborough Left/Johnson Center/Shivers Right calculus had been vastly reconfigured. McGovern’s new politics wave, represented in Texas by Sissy Farenthold, crashed against rural conservatism, and Carter’s moderating New Democrats were on the rise in the South. This vulnerability finally produced an opening for the Republican Party on the state level, in the gubernatorial election of 1978.

The election of 1978 brought to power Bill Clements, the first Republican governor of Texas in the century since Reconstruction. Richard Nixon declared Clements’s election as “the nation’s most significant Republican victory in a generation.”⁵⁹ The election also marked the passing of the Raza Unida tide, as RUP candidate Mario Compean’s poor showing beneath the two percent threshold meant that the party lost its claim on future state money for primary elections. Still, Clements beat the Democratic candidate, state Attorney General John Hill, with fewer than 20,000 votes out of two and a half million cast. Compean had polled 14,000, and a Socialist Workers Party candidate 4,500 votes that otherwise might have tightened the race. Clements’s victory followed the pattern established by presidential Republicans on the national level,

⁵⁸ Paul Burka, “and War” *Texas Monthly*, September 1976, 103.

⁵⁹ Green, 209.

as he did not extend coattails of any significant length to local officeholders. For the time being, Texas voters continued to vote Democratic (and conservative) on the local level, while placing a Republican in a statewide executive position.⁶⁰

CONCLUSION: HIGH IN THE SADDLE

Though pivotal, Clements's victory by no means sealed the Republican ascendance in the state. After a single term, Democrat Mark White defeated Clements for governor in 1982, when the independent party challengers (Libertarian Party and Constitution Party) lay to the right, rather than the left (Raza Unida and Socialist Workers), of the insurgent Republicans. The 1982 elections, in fact, suggested a revival in the fortunes of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party with the victories of candidates Ann Richards for State Treasurer and Jim Hightower for Agriculture Commissioner. The *Observer* thesis regarding the salutary effects of realignment for liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans seemed to be vindicated. The pendulum continued to swing, though, as Clements returned to take the Governor's office back from White in 1986. The election of 1982 proved a temporary reprieve for the liberals. Their desire to have the Democratic party to themselves and create a competitive two-party system has, thus far, created mixed results.

If electoral politics on the state and national level shifted rightward, the legacy of the New Left had a greater effect in the "thin slices of cultural life" that can be traced

⁶⁰ The elections of 1978 also tempered the shifts in Austin city politics. Voters elected Carole Keeton McClellan (nee Carole Keeton, Carole Keeton Rylander, Carole Keeton Strayhorn) the first woman mayor of Austin. Carole McClellan was the daughter of liberal Republican Law Dean W. Page Keeton, and, though she remained ambivalent about party affiliation then as later, her agenda evinced a business-oriented progressivism wrapped in the tough prairie mother guise. McClellan served as mayor until 1983, when Governor Mark White appointed her to the State Board of Insurance. Strayhorn changed her partisan affiliation in 1986 in order to run as the Republican candidate for the seat of Democratic Congressman J. J. Pickle, and later ran as an independent for Governor in 2006.

through local and municipal politics. It was at this local level that cultural politics and electoral politics can be seen as engaged in the same “thinking through” of the Anglo-Texan in the 1970s, where the new calculus of identity politics and civil rights opened the space for an Austin City Council that, as Molly Ivins put it, “looked like an affirmative action program gone berserk.” In the 1970s, the office-holding class on the local, state, and federal levels at last began to look a little more like the population as a whole. Though the performance of “the Texan” in its traditional, Anglo-cowboy guise would remain a popular fall-back position in the state’s politics, it was no longer the prerequisite performance that it once was.

However, Texas often still signified, in the national imagination, traditional gendered dichotomies and frontier values. The political fluidity of the 1970s, its digestion of the new politics and countercultural impulses of the 1960s, would soon give way to the New Right ascension nationwide in the 1980s. Here, too, cowboys signified the political aspirations of a certain segment of the American electorate, placing the United States high in the saddle again with a President, Ronald Reagan, who thought best “with a horse between my knees.”⁶¹ McMurtry’s “God,” it seemed, was due another round of resurrection. In spaces like Gilley’s in the Houston suburb of Pasadena, or in Manhattan’s Lone Star Café, or the Broadway stages or outlaw country concerts or television or cinematic screens that projected these images, the cowboy rendered counterculturally cosmic at mid-decade was reclaimed by the forces of political backlash. A Georgia peanut farmer and a Hollywood cowboy helped ease the way.

⁶¹ Reagan quoted in Beth Bailey and David Farber, eds. *America in the 70s* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 26.

Chapter Six: “You a Real Cowboy?”: Texas Chic in the Late Seventies

The movie screen fills with the bottom of a pair of blue jeans and pans up, to a tremendously large belt buckle and Lone Star longneck held at side, across the field of a blue western shirt, to find as the object of our gaze a clean-shaven John Travolta, aka Bud, leaning against a bar in Gilley’s nightclub in a black felt cowboy hat. The band strikes up a number of honky-tonk songs, time passes, and to the tune of Johnny Lee singing Michael Murphey’s “Cherokee Fiddle,” Debra Winger’s character Sissy approaches to pose a question that resonates across this study, as well as with broader issues of national identity, constructions of gender, region, race, and power.

“You a real cowboy?” she asks.

“Well, depends on what you think a real cowboy is,” Bud answers.¹

While this question and its answer play across a long history of American perceptions of cowboys real and true versus those performed and false, the appearance of the film *Urban Cowboy* in 1980 lends to this question and its answer a very specific, rather than a general, historical resonance, sitting as it does between the zeitgeists of decades, both a summing up of the various 1970s countercultural interpretations of the cowboy and a preview of Reagan’s counterrevolution on horseback. A figure of archetypal opposites, like the virgin-mother, the eternal-boy, or the hippie-redneck, the urban cowboy contained within his person the most basic tropes and contradictions of the American nation, an assertive masculine hero who might tame that machine in the garden or, at the very least, the mechanical bull in the world’s largest honky-tonk.

¹ *Urban Cowboy*, Directed by James Bridges, Paramount, 1980.

Where Jimmy Carter's New South moderation drew on, as well as fed, what Bruce Schulman has termed the cultural "reddening of America" in the 1970s, the Reagan revolution of the 1980s reinvigorated Barry Goldwater's earlier westering of the imaginary of Sun Belt realignment. This chapter sketches the turns in nationally projected representations of "the Texan" that accompanied and influenced these shifts in the late 1970s and early 1980s. "Texas Chic" once more amplified the state's ongoing self-examination through popular forms into a tool for the nation's own cultural-political signifying. The trend drew on the local countercultural re-imagining of the cowboy at the Armadillo World Headquarters, but frequently contradicted or erased that figure's tentative progressive dimensions. Rather, the cowboy's masculinist, Americanist core dovetailed nationally with the rising politics of backlash. Where the cosmic cowboy subculture of the early- and mid-1970s attempted the refiguring of the Texan in the face of the shifting raced and gendered discourses of the decade, the purveyors of Texas Chic tended to deploy the figure as a bulwark against the new identity politics, rather than its extension. The cosmic cowboy subculture emanating from Austin in many ways sparked the larger faddishness of Texas Chic, but its originators did not control the national (and international) diffusion of the image.²

² I do not intend to make the claim that Austin's cosmic cowboys possessed greater aesthetic or political value as originators over and against the dilution or declension of the cowboy figure as it comes to be amplified on the national stage. That is, the cosmic cowboys do not have a greater claim on 1970s cowboyhood because they came before the national urban cowboy phenomenon. This line of argument privileging stylistic originators dates to the origins of contemporary subculture studies in Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York, Routledge Press, 1979): "Each subculture goes through a cycle of resistance and defusion. . . Subcultural deviance is simultaneously rendered 'explicable' and meaningless in the classrooms, court, and media at the same time as the 'secret' objects of subcultural style are put on display in every high street record shop and chain-store boutique." Hebdige, 130. The counter-argument, positing that subcultural style is valid in terms of the users' experience whether they are originators or late adopters of the style can be found in the introduction to Sarah Thornton and Ken Gelder, eds., *The Subcultures Reader* (New York: Routledge Press, 1997). Also see Gary Clarke, "Defending Ski-Jumpers: A Critique of Theories of Youth Subcultures" in Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin, eds., *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word* (New York: Routledge Press, 1990), 81-96.

The shifting perspective takes us from Austin's Armadillo World Headquarters to Gilley's nightclub on the outskirts of Houston and envelopes such texts as the album *Wanted! The Outlaws* (1976), the musical *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (Broadway 1978, film 1982), the figure of the *Urban Cowboy* (article 1978, film 1980), and the prime-time soap opera *Dallas* (1978-1991). As with the country's perennial fascination with the dialectic of cowboys real and false, Texas Chic spoke to contemporary anxieties over gender, race, desire, nation, and empire. In the 1970s environment of corruption and malaise, the Sun Belt's swagger, its novelty, and, in particular, the Texan connection to oil, made the Anglo-Texan cowboy figure attractive for Americans at large.

WANTED! THE OUTLAWS

In January of 1976, the album *Wanted! The Outlaws*, produced by Waylon Jennings and Steve Albright in the Nashville studios of Tompall Glaser, quickly climbed both pop and country charts and, in fact, became the first country album to achieve platinum status by selling a million copies.³ All of this transpired despite the fact that the songs on the compilation had previously appeared elsewhere. The album's packaging, surely, had something to do with its success. The cover evoked the wanted posters of the Old West, faded and yellowed, with the artists pictured: Waylon Jennings at top and center, with Willie Nelson, Jessi Colter, and Tompall Glaser arrayed beneath. The album itself, like its packaging, featured Jennings most prominently, beginning with his renditions of "My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys" and Billy Joe Shaver's "Honky-Tonk Heroes," then Jennings's wife Jessi Colter singing "What Happened to Blue Eyes?" and "You Mean to Say" before proceeding to the Waylon duets that anchor the album,

³ Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Jessi Colter, and Tompall Glaser, *Wanted! The Outlaws*. RCA, 1976.

“Suspicious Minds” with Colter and “Good-Hearted Woman” with Nelson. Nelson and Glaser carry the last half of the album, with Nelson on “Heaven or Hell,” the autobiographical “Me and Paul,” and “Yesterday’s Wine,” and Glaser singing Jimmie Rodgers’s “T for Texas” and Shel Silverstein’s “Put Another Log on the Fire (Male Chauvinist National Anthem).” Chet Flippo, the music journalist who had cut his teeth on the Austin scene before becoming the head of *Rolling Stone*’s New York office, wrote the fairly extensive liner notes.

By 1976, country music’s perennial and ever-changing bid for mainstream crossover success had reached another of its peaks.⁴ Country’s cult of authenticity attracted new fans nationally as both the white ethnic revival and countercultural discourses of self, national self-examination in the Bicentennial year and the regionalized politics of backlash, created a hunger for “real” American musics. In this environment, Austin’s progressive country scene and the new wave of Nashville singer-songwriters were on the verge of national celebrity. The soundtrack to late-decade Texas Chic, the subject of this chapter, however, was not “progressive” but “outlaw” country. The derivation of this “outlaw” label remains disputed, and it seems to have sedimented over time rather than exploding in national consciousness all at once. The name’s most plausible origin may have been when Lee Clayton pitched the song “Ladies Love Outlaws” to Waylon Jennings, who made it the title track of a 1972 album. Or, it may have originated the following year, when Hazel Smith, the secretary of Tompall Glaser’s studios at “Hillbilly Central” in Nashville, began to use the term to describe Jennings’s

⁴ Bill Malone, *Country Music U. S. A.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002 [1968]); Joli Jensen, *The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization, and Country Music* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998); Cecelia Tichi, *High Lonesome: The American Culture of Country Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Richard Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Manufacturing Authenticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Diane Pecknold, *The Selling Sound: The Rise of the Country Music Industry* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

and Glaser's music for publicity purposes. Art critic Dave Hickey became an early proponent and deployed the outlaw frame in an influential 1974 *Country Music* magazine profile of the edgier artists among the progressive country set. "Now, as you know, I'm just an old foot-tapper, bottle-thrower and freelance layabout," Hickey wrote, "I don't know much about these guys except by watching and listening. But just by watching and listening I can tell you that they're about the only folks in Nashville who will walk into a room where there's a guitar and a *Wall Street Journal* and pick up the guitar."⁵ These men (and men, Anglo-Texan men, predominated in the outlaw phenomenon) were presumed to be artists who spontaneously rebelled against the bloated business strategies of Nashville.⁶ In addition to Jennings, Nelson, Glaser, and Colter, other prominent members of the circle included Billy Joe Shaver, Kris Kristofferson, Rita Coolidge, Shel Silverstein, Bobby Bare, Hank Williams, Jr., and David Allan Coe.⁷

What does "outlaw" signify in this context? Though the 1976 album's themes continued the decade's musical elaboration of cowboy masculinity, these artists focused on those elements of the mythos that stressed the cowboy's singular moral authority outside the community and outside the law. Country music's outlaw pose fit the Seventies, a musically performative variant of the outlaw antihero that dominated the decade's best cinema, born of the general mistrust of established institutions inherited from the Sixties and ratcheted to new levels through Watergate. From *Dog Day*

⁵ Dave Hickey, "In Defense of the Telecaster Cowboy Outlaws" *Country Music Magazine*, January 1974. Hickey rose through the 1960s Austin scene as manager of the avant-garde gallery A Clean Well-Lighted Place before decamping to New York as executive editor of the prestigious *Art in America*.

⁶ In many ways, this parallels the contemporaneous origin narratives of punk rock.

⁷ Hickey included Townes Van Zandt and Kinky Friedman amongst their number, and Michael Bane added Jennings's brother-in-law, influential producer Cowboy Jack Clement. These were each impressive creative presences in their own right, but did not necessarily strike the outlaw pose in the same manner as the artists listed above. Jessi Colter and Rita Coolidge fit the label rather uneasily, as well, contrasting with its masculinist cast, but their marriages to Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson, respectively, linked them into the same performance circles.

Afternoon to Taxi Driver to Network to Dirty Harry, individuals who operated outside the bounds and against the strictures of bureaucratic institutions spoke to a broad anti-authoritarianism that, in many ways, transcended traditional labels of left and right.⁸ Country outlaws drew on both countercultural flair and hard-hat reaction to make their point (and their record sales), and it is this breadth, in part, that accounts for the musical sub-genre's meteoric success.

As far as Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and the Texas music contingent were concerned, the outlaw pose served three ends. First, as with the cosmic cowboy, the outlaw was a performative guise that successfully drew on the decade's populist anti-authoritarianism, discourses of authenticity, and libidinal charge. Dallas Cowboys tight end turned novelist Peter Gent spoofed the shift from progressive to outlaw style, even as he acknowledged its appeal, with the character Willy Roy Rogers in *Texas Celebrity Turkey Trot* (1978): "Willy Roy's act sure had changed. Instead of the smiling, sleepy-eyed, melancholy drunk he was a strutting, threatening bad guy. . . 'God I love being an outlaw.' Willie Roy grinned. 'These people need me to do their feeling. They love outlaws. I don't put up with any shit. I do and say what I want. I tell it like it is. . . I'm just mean, and I feel wonderful.'"⁹ Second, the outlaw was an aesthetic ideology that, while claiming a return to authentic, honky-tonk roots in its music, also cemented the country rock crossover from bases in Austin and Nashville. James Szalapski's documentary *Heartworn Highways* of 1975, for all its paeans to the country life (as represented by the depiction of Townes Van Zandt in his seemingly rural home, actually in central Austin, amidst his chickens and guns), showed in its musical performances (by

⁸ Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), xii. On these themes in film, see Peter Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

⁹ Peter Gent, *Texas Celebrity Turkey Trot* (New York: Berkley Books, 1978), 186-187.

the likes of Charlie Daniels and David Allan Coe) the blending of country styles with rock tempos and artist-audience interaction.

The third and final element of the outlaw pose involved a declaration of independence not only from Nashville's smooth-pop countrypolitan sound, but from the Nashville seat of production itself. Outlaw, in this sense, signified a rebellion against country's means of production along Music Row, building a cultural apparatus outside the law of the Nashville studio system.¹⁰ To this end, Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings exerted greater control over their creative work, looking to producers in New York, Los Angeles, and Austin, employing their own touring bands in the studio, and participating more heavily in management decisions. Nelson went so far as to construct an alternate infrastructure for recording country music under artists' control in Austin, with the performance venue of the Austin Opry House and his own Lone Star Records imprint for Columbia at its center.

Just as Willie Nelson's performance at the Armadillo World Headquarters in August of 1972 catalyzed the progressive country movement in Austin, the continued ascent of Nelson's career through *Wanted! The Outlaws* marked the new national appeal of Texas music even as it upended the Nashville establishment. Willie Nelson carefully cultivated his celebrity status in mainstream venues. He appeared on the *Muppet Show*.¹¹

¹⁰ Elizabeth Harris, "Country Stars Happy in Adopted Home," *Daily Texan* supplement *Images*, April 19, 1976, 26: "Jennings said his main gripe with the Nashville people was 'artistic control' over his music. 'We just weren't understood. All we want to do is play music our way. We're not trying to build anything or destroy anything.'" Willie: "Nashville won't miss us. . . They're doing pretty good business without me and Waylon. We're just going to do everything we can to lure all the musicians down to Texas." This differs in some small degree from Austin's progressive country moment in that the artists who operated under the outlaw label tended to be individuals who had a past record in Nashville and who used the Texas scene to distance themselves operationally from Music City.

¹¹ Incidentally, the *Muppet Show* serves as a central stage of Seventies celebrity, and its hosting of the stars of outlaw country, progressive country, and country rock attests to those genres' salience. Charlie Daniels and John Denver put in appearances, but perhaps the most interesting cameo involves Candice Bergen in late 1976 performing in a skit involving Shel Silverstein's "Put Another Log on the Fire (A Male Chauvinist National Anthem)" that Glaser had popularized. In a rural log cabin, a grotesque, hillbillyish,

He and Waylon posed for photo opportunities with Andy Warhol at the premier of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. He visited the White House, starred with Robert Redford and Jane Fonda in *The Electric Horseman*, and performed with Doc Severinsen at the grand opening of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

This broad visibility draws attention to the outlaw phenomenon's relationship to country music's perennial (if not continuous) crises of authenticity, the face-off that sociologist Richard Peterson sketched between masculine, hard-core country and feminized, soft-shell country-pop.¹² Nelson and Jennings framed themselves, and were framed by critics, as returning to the wellsprings of the country aesthetic, but did so largely by doing what Peterson calls "authenticity work" outside of country's traditional audiences and sounds, borrowing heavily from blues, rockabilly, and rock.¹³ What constituted "the popular" in pop music influences in country in the decade depended to a great extent on angle of view. Critics read the outlaws' forays into rock as diametrically opposed to the existing pop orientation of mainstream country, despite the fact that both were involved in crossover projects.

In 1974, the same year in which the progressive country formula caught fire at the Armadillo World Headquarters, the Country Music Association stirred controversy in selecting Australian singer Olivia Newton-John as female entertainer of the year. In response, a number of traditionalists, including Ernest Tubb, George Jones, Tammy Wynette, and Grandpa Jones, briefly formed the rival Association of Country Entertainers—an organization solely of country artists, to the exclusion of promoters and

human-sized muppet figure sings as a harried Bergen acts out the chores described in the lyrics. At the end, she doffs her schoolmarmish clothes in frustration, breaks the tools of domestic oppression, reveals a T-shirt with the woman symbol, raises her fist, and shoots her way out of the cabin. Outlaws came in many forms. *The Muppet Show-Season One*, DVD, Buena Vista Home Video, 2005.

¹² Peterson, 137-55.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 230.

industry moguls who held sway in the CMA—in order to “preserve the identity of country music.”¹⁴ In 1975, a visibly intoxicated Charlie Rich burned the envelope for male entertainer of the year on stage upon learning that the award went to John Denver.¹⁵ The irony, of course, is that Rich himself first recorded with Sam Phillips’s Sun Records in Memphis, the epicenter of the genre’s prior authenticity crisis brought on by rockabilly. Further, Charlie Rich’s 1970s albums that earned him male entertainer of the year in 1974 (thus giving him the honor of presenting the 1975 award) were of the country-pop variety, as well. Rich’s crooning on *The Silver Fox* hardly echoed the plaintive wail of Hank Williams, Sr. on “Lost Highway.” In short, by 1976 the country music industry had run up against one of its perennial authenticity deficits, but the terrain on which the authenticity work continued was heavily contested. While countrypolitan’s crossover project sputtered, outlaw’s ability to reach new audiences soared, not by smoothing out the rough edges of country’s sound, but by acting as if those rough edges were all that country ever was.

“The Texan” had long stood as a marker of masculinist authenticity in hard-core country music. Central Texas was indeed the place where Jimmie Rodgers, country’s first recording star, spent his last years, and Johnny Horton and Hank Williams, Sr. played some of their final concerts.¹⁶ The authenticity deficit operative in the country music field was writ large across American culture in the 1970s, and the desire for authentic lifestyles and experiences were in part what drew youth counterculture to Austin’s progressive country and Southern California’s country-rock scenes. However,

¹⁴ Malone, 374-375. Waylon Jennings with Lenny Kaye, *Waylon: An Autobiography* (New York: Warner Books, 1996), 227.

¹⁵ Peter Doggett, *Are You Ready for the Country: Elvis, Dylan, Parsons and the roots of country rock* (London: Penguin, 2000), 339-340.

¹⁶ The Horton and Williams concerts were held at Dessau Hall, just north of Austin, in a building that would house, in the 1970s, the later incarnation of George Majewski and Carlyn Majer’s progressive country-oriented Soap Creek Saloon.

the punctuation mark that took this beyond local youth subcultures or the rock market, what brought the conflict into the open in Nashville itself, was the outlaw phenomenon of the late 1970s. In this environment, the artist Tompall Glaser had been pushing against the country-pop stylings of Chet Atkins and his affiliated producers that still held sway over much of Nashville. Glaser constructed an independent studio, dubbed it “Hillbilly Central” to lay claim to the rural authenticity he felt drained of contemporary country, and dedicated the space to restoring artistic control and embracing the abject status and regional markers that, in his mind, gave country music its very identity.¹⁷

The success of *Wanted! The Outlaws* vindicated the aesthetic ideologies of the outlaw group, even as the album laid bare their contradictions. Waylon, Willie, and others had been pushing for traditional country music over and against the vestiges of Atkins’s countryopolitan sound. In practice, however, the tracks on *Wanted! The Outlaws* seem aimed at a crossover strategy not unlike the one that Atkins had in mind.¹⁸ The countryopolitan sound first arose in the wake of the rockabilly revolt from within country, as that youth-oriented form embraced African American rhythm and blues. Atkins sought to shore up the genre’s respectability by securing an upscale pop audience in the face of rockabilly’s vulgar thrust. Waylon and Willie sensed that, by the late 1970s, this was the wrong crossover project with which to be involved, and the “something” they found in countercultural Austin audiences in 1972 translated into a new fan base for country music. Still, Waylon Jennings’s and Jessi Colter’s rendition of “Suspicious

¹⁷ Michael Bane, *The Outlaws: Revolution in Country Music* (New York: Country Music Magazine Press, 1978), 34.

¹⁸ In fact, when Atkins and Jennings were working together prior to the outlaw years, one of their very first collaborations aimed at a crossover with the collegiate folk revival, the album *Folk-Country* of 1966. Further, Jennings’s home base between the Buddy Holly and Chet Atkins years, the club J. D.’s in Phoenix, aimed at bringing together “long-haired college students, executives, and Arizona cowboys” with an upstairs honky-tonk and basement rock venue. Jennings ruled the country-western upstairs, but he also mentored and produced tracks with the rock-oriented acts that played downstairs. R. Serge Denisoff, *Waylon: A Biography* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 101, 102, 122, 125.

Minds” on *Wanted! The Outlaws* brought to mind Vegas-era Elvis rather than the Grand Ole Opry. The outlaw label signified a rather unstable aesthetic difference, then, from mainstream Nashville music.

In projecting an aesthetic distance from Nashville, Nelson and Jennings focused on doing so in performative, rather than aural, ways, reveling in the dark imagery of the outlaw. Jennings, for one, was comfortable with the new pose and had long been aware of its popular appeal. He had ridden the rockabilly wave with Buddy Holly in West Texas and was early on marketed as an unruly outsider in the American International Pictures drive-in feature *Nashville Rebel* of 1966.¹⁹ Outlaw recaptured the masculine swagger long associated with authenticity claims in country music, and the shift made Austin critics invested in the peaceable communitas of hippies and rednecks uneasy.

The changing styles led Jan Reid to declare the “death of redneck rock” in a *Texas Monthly* article just two years after he had mythologized the genre’s “improbable rise.” In effect, Reid bemoaned the eclipse of the hippie elements of the hippie-redneck hybrid as the performance of stereotyped redneck behavior came to the fore. The earlier critiques of Nightbyrd and Guinn seemed to prove prescient as perceptions of a distance grew between the audiences and their stars. Declension narratives arose concerning the local meanings of the scene even as its performers began to receive national recognition. As Michael Bane wrote:

Willie’s gate is set into a six-foot high, three-foot thick stone wall topped with three strands of electrified barbed wire and a whole bunch of No-Trespassing-No-Hunting-Keep-Out-Do-Not-Pass-Go signs. The gate itself is solid steel, mounted on a rolling track and, like the wall, topped with electrified barbed wire. To talk to the people’s poet, you press a call button mounted on a stone post beside the gate and wait patiently while a television camera sunk into the wall gives you the

¹⁹ The film’s tagline: “With a guitar in his hand, a gal on his arm, and a talent for trouble in his fists, he battled his way from the backwoods to the bigtime the only way he knew how.” *Nashville Rebel*, Directed by Jay Sheridan, American International Pictures, 1966.

once over. If that gate keeps out one person he doesn't want to see, Willie tells me later, then it's worth every cent he paid for it.²⁰

Bane accused Nelson of creating a distance between artist and audience that ran against the basic subcultural dictums regarding the privileged intimacy of artist and audiences in a scene. The question this raised, a common one over the course of Nelson's career, was the extent of Willie's own agency in this development. As Bane saw it:

Like with everything else surrounding Willie, there are two distinct schools of thought. The first is that there are a lot of bums operating under Willie's name and without Willie's knowledge, a lot of crazies just hanging around for the glory of being close to the flame. The other is that those same crazies operate with his knowledge, if not with his approval.²¹

The perception of distance ruptured perceptions of an unmediated, beloved community of artists and audiences in Austin, now supposedly and suddenly fraught with marketplace relations. As Jan Reid wrote, "Outlaw country music is not just some misguided notion of the crowd. It's a sales promotion hawked by the recording industry with Madison Avenue zeal."²² National popularity, in this reading, short-circuited the local subculture's use of music as a means of redefining "the Texan" on its own terms.

If Nelson and his circle, for some observers, represented countercultural heroes gone astray, David Allan Coe performed the outside edge of the outlaw style for most critics and fans and demonstrated the performative contrast between the outlaw and the cosmic cowboy. Curiously, Coe began his career as "The Mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy," performing outside of Nashville's Ryman Auditorium following the Grand Ole Opry, masked and in a full, rhinestone-bedecked Nudie-style suit. This, at least, suggests an attention to persona and burlesque of country earnestness akin to Kinky Friedman's. His showmanship, and his songwriting, caught the attention of Nashville's new wave,

²⁰ Bane, 146.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 147.

²² Jan Reid, "Who Killed Redneck Rock?" *Texas Monthly*, December 1976, 210.

and Plantation Records released his soul-inflected debut, *Penitentiary Blues*, in 1968. However, Coe employed the convict trope of country, not out of sympathy with the downtrodden, but to give a menacing edge to a performer who routinely dressed in rhinestones. He claimed to have once been on death row in his native Ohio for murdering a cellmate who had made sexual advances. *Rolling Stone* successfully questioned the facts of the story—Coe had been in and out of correctional facilities, but never for murder and never on death row—and Coe responded to the critics in surly song with “I Want to Kick the Shit Out of You.” As Jennings said of Coe, whom he respected as a songwriter but looked askance at as celebrity, “David Allan Coe was the most sincere of the bunch, though he wasn’t as rough as he wanted everybody to think When it came to being Outlaw, the worst thing he ever did was double-parking on Music Row.”²³ To emphasize his outlaw status, though, Coe went furthest in incorporating a biker aesthetic, audience, and entourage into his particular brand of outlaw country. The countercultural flirtation with biker subculture that began with Kenneth Anger, Hunter Thompson, and Ken Kesey’s *Merry Pranksters* and ended with the debacle at Altamont migrated into the orbit of hard-core country in the 1970s.²⁴

The glam elements of the cosmic cowboy guise could not efface the outlaw’s tendency to violence, or, perhaps, simply Coe’s eagerness to telegraph such a tendency to audiences. At base, as Coe expressed in the song “Longhair Redneck,” the title track of a 1976 album co-written with Jimmy Rabbitt:

Country DJs knows that I’m an outlaw

²³ Jennings, 231-233.

²⁴ *Scorpio Rising*, videocassette, Directed by Kenneth Anger (Mystic Fire Video), 1964. Hunter S. Thompson, *Hell’s Angels; A Strange and Terrible Saga* (New York: Random House, 1967). Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968). On Coe’s and Jennings’s biker entourages, see Larry L. King, *Of Outlaws, Con Men, Whores, Politicians, and Other Artists* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 74-85.

They'd never come to see me in this dive
Where bikers stare at cowboys
Who are laughin' at the hippies
Who are prayin' they'll get out of here alive

Loudmouth in the corner's gettin' to me
Talkin' 'bout my earrings and my hair
I guess he ain't read the signs that say I been to prison
Someone ought to warn him
'Fore I knock him off his chair

'Cause my long hair just can't cover up my red neck
I've won every fight I've every fought
And I don't need some turkey tellin' me that I ain't country
Saying I ain't worth the damned
Old ticket that he bought

'Cause I can sing all them songs about Texas . . .

Here, "redneck" authenticity did not connote, in the first instance, race or class, but a tendency to criminality and an ability to perform masculine Texanness musically.²⁵ The observer causing Coe's irritation in the song does not recognize this authenticity (does not "read the signs") due to the hybrid nature of Coe's appearance, here coded, cosmically, as gendered (earrings and hair). The tempo of the song slows as Coe attempts to demonstrate his authenticity aurally in a verse that begins "'Cause I can sing all them songs about Texas." This is just one of many songs that demonstrate the voyeurism so characteristic of scenes, in which the act of gazing and assessing subcultural credentials produces a kind of authenticity hall of mirrors. He visually telegraphs, first, his allegiance to a countercultural audience, but takes umbrage when audience members of other views fail to see that, just beneath, he possesses the capacity for masculine violence. And all of this transpires in a place where bounded subcultures

²⁵ David Allan Coe, *Longhaired Redneck* (Columbia, 1976).

size up bounded subcultures, where “bikers stare at cowboys who are laughing at the hippies who are praying they get out of here alive.”²⁶

Georgia fiddler Charlie Daniels explored similar themes in his song “Leave This Long-Haired Country Boy Alone” from the album *Fire on the Mountain* of 1974. There, Daniels theorized a hybridity of the rebellious elements of the counterculture and the redneck in the South that made it attractive for many of the region’s young white men. Of the artists who played the Armadillo World Headquarters regularly, Daniels was the most significant bridge to the styles of Southern rock that provided another hybrid corollary to Austin’s progressive country or Southern California’s country-rock. Based largely around the artists rostered on Phil Walden’s Capricorn Records in Georgia, Southern rock envisaged a regional hybridity similar in many ways to the cosmic cowboy style in Texas. Just as the cosmic cowboy re-imagined “the Texan,” Southern rock joined countercultural style to new interpretations of the post-civil rights South.²⁷ In “Leave This Long-Haired Country Boy Alone,” Daniels adopts the persona of a countercultural redneck, complete with long hair, marijuana, and blue tick hound, who rails against the moralizing of evangelical religion and those who “don’t like the way I’m livin’.” Daniels’s persona hewed to the libertarian thread of the counterculture, the notion of freedom from authority that proved a powerful adhesive in the hippie-redneck hybridity of the 1970s.²⁸ Daniels song does not posit the hippie and redneck in opposition, or as

²⁶ Coe’s subsequent career continued in this vein, recording a series of X-rated misogynistic and racist tracks strictly for the biker market, covering himself in tattoos and wearing dreadlocks, and, into the new century, performing with the likes of Kid Rock.

²⁷ Mike Butler, “‘Luther King Was a Good Ole Boy’: The Southern Rock Movement and White Male Identity in the Post-Civil Rights South,” *Popular Music and Society* 23 (1999): 41-61. Also, Barbara Ching, “Where Has the Free Bird Flown?: Lynyrd Skynyrd and White Southern Manhood,” in Trent Watts, ed. *White Masculinity in the Recent South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 251-265.

²⁸ Michael Allen has argued that this libertarian strain was the sole connection between hippie and cowboy styles in the decade of the 1970s, and that any reading of a progressive content to the appearance of countercultural styles, say, in the decade’s rodeo circuit, are misguided. Michael Allen, “I Just Want to Be

threats to one another, as Coe did, placing the qualities together within a single male subject.

Doug Sahm, too, penned a meditation on long hair and the Southern white working class, only with an air of weary accusation, rather than threat, in “You Can’t Hide a Redneck (Underneath that Hippy Hair)” from the album *Texas Rock for Country Rollers* of 1976. Sahm sided with Coe against Daniels on the uneasy nature of hippie-redneck hybridity, perhaps marking the distance between the year of Daniels’s song in 1974 and 1976, the year of both Coe’s and Sahm’s songs, or, the distance between Jan Reid’s “improbable rise” and “death” of redneck rock. Sahm’s song differs from the other two, however, in that it is a Chicago blues that seems to make the naïve equation of the counterculture with blackness over and against the undeniable “white soul” of the redneck.

White is white, and black is black
Rich folks rottin’ in a big Cadillac
You can’t have one without the other
And here’s one thing that you might as well get used to
‘Cause you can’t hide a redneck underneath that hippy hair
Don’t care how many joints you roll
Oh, man, you got a white man’s soul²⁹

Sahm suggested the improbability of hippie-redneck hybridity on the grounds of a kind of racial essentialism, and yet this gesture seems to align “non-redneck” hippies with blackness despite the white-is-white, black-is-black absolutism of the song’s first line. An alternate reading might have Sahm here adopting the persona of a black observer commenting on the shared whiteness, and white privilege, of all of the Anglos in the

a Cosmic Cowboy’: Hippies, Cowboy Code, and the Culture of a Counterculture,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 36:3 (2005): 275-300.

²⁹ Sir Doug & the Texas Tornados. *Texas Rock for Country Rollers*. (Dot, 1976).

Armadillo scene, but Sahm would then seem to implicate himself in his cosmetic appropriation of the blues form.

Sahm was no stranger to such adoption of raced and ethnic guises and perhaps saw himself as able to crossover soulfully in a way that “rednecks” never could. Though he was a steel guitar prodigy who had played with Hank Williams, Sr., on his last visit to Texas, Sahm first achieved fame as a rock-and-roller in the Sir Douglas Quintet. That group, the brainchild of producer Huey Meaux, tried to capitalize on the British invasion by packaging Anglo and Mexican American teen rock-and-rollers from San Antonio as an English group. The charade worked well enough, insofar as its goal was to attract consumers. The Quintet’s second single, “She’s About a Mover,” went to the top of the charts and earned them an appearance on the televised teen dance program *Hullabaloo*. *Hullabaloo* was about as far as the English charade got. As Meaux recounts, “we did the ‘Hullabaloo’ show and the host was Trini Lopez, who knew us all. Trini just fell to the floor laughing and introduced us as the Sir Douglas Quintet from Manchester via San Antonio.”³⁰ Doug Sahm’s heavy Texas accent during the interview portion of the show did not help matters. It was an interesting image coup. Three of the five members of the quintet were Mexican Americans, now rendered literally as Anglos for the American public. In a sense, Sahm became doubly English-Anglo by means of this maneuver. Sahm would later adopt other ethnic disguises, effacing his Anglo-ness while performing Tex-Mex music under the name Doug Saldaña. As discussed in Chapter Three, Sahm

³⁰ Many of the garage bands of the 1960s were themed in much the same manner as the Sir Douglas Quintet, but the use of guises to obscure a band’s origins seemed to have an especially high profile amongst mid-60s rock groups consisting of tejanos. While the African American origins of rock and roll made it a contentious cultural artifact, the provisional whiteness of Mexican Americans allowed them to perform the music in integrated settings if some disguise explained away their difference. This was the case with such groups as Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs, whose leader donned an Orientalist Egyptian guise, and with Question Mark and the Mysterians, Texas Mexicans from Michigan who played on their “alien” status by purporting to be beings from another world. See Jason Mellard, “Regional Hybridity in Texas Music: The Case of the Texas Tornados,” *Text/Practice/Performance* (2003), 107-132

spent the following years in San Francisco before moving to Austin as a key artist of the cosmic cowboy scene. His faith in the scene's utopian hybridity had its bounds, though, as evidenced by "You Can't Hide a Redneck."

The subcultural tensions in the songs by Coe, Daniels, and Sahm belied the hippie-redneck mythology born of the Armadillo World Headquarters scene. In the pages of *Texas Monthly*, music critic Joe Nick Patoski perceived the declension of progressive country into outlaw bravado in the bicentennial Willie Nelson Fourth of July picnic at Gonzales. Nelson had chosen the site for his 1976 gathering due to its ties to the Texas revolt against Mexico in 1835-36, thus collapsing the national revolutions of the United States and Texas in the bicentennial year. There, the Mexican government had lent a small cannon to the people of Gonzales for defense against Comanche raids and, as tensions rose between the Anglo American settlers and the government, Mexico asked for the cannon to be returned. The settlers balked, and the first slogan and flag of the conflict were born. The Gonzales militia fired the diminutive cannon on the Mexican troops sent to retrieve it, while flying a banner picturing a black cannon on a field of white with the phrase "Come and take it." Outlaw bravado could hardly have chosen a more fitting site for performance.

Joe Nick Patoski's review of the Gonzales picnic in the pages of *Texas Monthly* took a dour view of the affair. "For openers, this year's marathon heralded the artistic decline of progressive country just as the style has begun to enjoy national popularity. The only consensus hit at the picnic was old traditionalist George Jones . . . [who] wasn't the least bit impressed by progressivism, flatly stating after the show, 'Country music is going to the dogs.'" In addition to aesthetic shifts, such critics perceived a fracturing of the cosmic cowboys' beloved community. "At this affair, guns, knives, and chains seemed more plentiful than joints and coke spoons." Whether or not the decline in

number of coke spoons augured the demise of the Armadillo's utopia (most participants would suggest the contrary proposition), Patoski and others saw the rise in violent behavior and, especially, hypermasculine swagger, as signs that the promises of progressive country had been betrayed. "There were no violent deaths or serious shootings this year, but with the growing emphasis on armed macho posturing, it's only a matter of time."³¹ Patoski here noted in 1976 trends that such critics as Larry L. King ("The Great Willie Nelson Outdoor Brain Fry and Ejacorama") and sociologist William Martin ("Growing Old at Willie Nelson's Picnic") had raised about Nelson's earliest picnics.³²

There is evidence to suggest that Waylon Jennings concurred with Reid's and Patoski's assessments of Texas outlaw audiences becoming prisoners of their outsized subcultural image. The song "Don't Y'all Think This Outlaw Bit Has Done Got Out of Hand?" explored Jennings's 1977 drug bust occasioned by the tremendous efficacy of outlaw hype in making the musicians' claims to operating outside the law seem literal.

I'm for law and order, the way that it should be
This song's about the night they spent protecting you from me
Someone called us outlaws in some old magazine
New York posse down like I ain't never seen

Don't y'all think this outlaw bit has done got out of hand?
What started out to be a joke, the law don't understand
Was it singing through my nose that got me busted by the man?

³¹ Joe Nick Patoski, "It Was No Picnic" *Texas Monthly*, September 1976, 22. Guns had long driven a wedge between the countercultural and traditional camps of the cosmic cowboy/progressive country scene. Hip capitalists often did not understand the practical nature of honky-tonk musicians carrying weapons to ensure payment in some of the dodgier venues they were forced to play on the road. In fact, it was this issue that occasioned the Armadillo's break with Willie Nelson, and his subsequent backing of a rival venue, the Opry House. Joe Nick Patoski, *Willie Nelson*, (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008), 269.

³² Larry L. King, *Of Outlaws, Con Men, Whores, Politicians, and Other Artists* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 139-157; William Martin, "Growing Old at Willie Nelson's Picnic," *Texas Monthly*, October 1974, 94.

Maybe this here outlaw bit has done got out of hand.³³

This song played on the rapid conflation of the three dimensions of the outlaw movement—cultural production, aesthetic ideology, and performative guise. For Jennings, the most significant of these involved independence in cultural production that allowed for a free hand in determining how he created music. But it was not “singing through [his] nose” in the traditional style that brought down the New York City posse.³⁴ Outlaw’s successful hype derived from its third leg, the staged performance of liminal criminality. It was this pose that struck a chord in the late 1970s and invited the kind of surveillance that resulted in Jennings’s bust (owing, as well, to his literal and flagrant consumption of cocaine). Jennings’s invocation of a “New York posse” in this matter was not random, as New York City made for one of the outlaws’, and Anglo-Texans’, most successful performative stages.

TINYs, OR, TEXANS IN NEW YORK: “TOO MUCH AIN’T ENOUGH”

Though Willie and Waylon’s success possessed local resonances in Austin and Texas, bolstering the incipient culture industry Nelson was constructing in the Opry House complex, the outlaws owed their platinum status to their national appeal. New York City had long served as a stage for performative Texans. This performance was self-conscious and, in the 1970s, took on organized and self-parodying forms as Texans in New York (or TINYs, as they came to call themselves) gathered in the Lone Star Café or wrote paeans to one another in the TINY newsletter, the *New York Texan*. The decay that marks representations of New York City in the period stands in stark contrast to the swagger of Texas’s cultural production, drenched in oil. New York’s financial collapse signified for the nation the pinnacle of Seventies corruption and decadence. Its presence

³³ Waylon Jennings, *I’ve Always Been Crazy* (RCA, 1978).

³⁴ Jennings’s booming baritone, in fact, did not rely much on nasal twang. A search for progressive country nose singers would send one first to the haunting voice of Flatlander Jimmie Dale Gilmore.

was projected across the screens of the decade's New Hollywood cinema in the gritty films *Serpico*, *Mean Streets*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, *The French Connection*, *The Warriors*, and *Taxi Driver*. When a bankrupt New York went to the federal government for aid in the mid-1970s, the White House balked, resulting in the infamous *New York Post* headline on President Gerald Ford's refusal to bail out the city's finances: "FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD!" The symbolism of New York's moral and financial bankruptcy resonated throughout the national culture of the American 1970s.

"The Texan" rode in to the City to right its troubling malaise, a symbolic arrival of figures of hale confidence, the Joe Buck naïf now posing as the sense of can-do Americanism that pundits argued had been fleeing the Rust Belt. This infusion was in some instances literal. For example, the organization formed to get the city's finances in order, New York's Municipal Assistance Corporation, was headed by Houstonian Eugene Keilin in 1976. At other times, the help "the Texan" offered was metaphorical. In 1978, a delegation from Luckenbach offered to help set New York City on better financial ground. "'Everybody is somebody in Luckenbach,' city spokesman Jack Harmon wired Ed Koch, in announcing the Luckenbachians were coming to his aid. 'And we feel the same about other folks—even those as far away as New York City. We'll meet with you anytime in the mornings or afternoons and tell you how Luckenbach has coped with urban expansion.' Luckenbach recently installed its second parking meter for added revenue." The three official citizens of Luckenbach, together with a brace of armadillos, boarded a train for the Big Apple shortly thereafter, though there is no evidence they were able to meet with Mayor Koch.³⁵

³⁵ "Luckenbach to Hit the Road: Texas Frolics and Financial Advice for the Big Apple," *Daily Texan*, August 11, 1978, 14.

In this atmosphere of financial anxiety, danger, grime, and corruption, a banner waved atop Mort Cooperman and Bill Dick's Lone Star Café when it opened at Fifth Avenue and 13th Street in 1976, proclaiming, "Too Much Ain't Enough."³⁶ From the late 1970s through the late 1980s, the Lone Star Café served as the capital of Texas Chic, an embassy of "the Texan" to communicate the shared brashness of two of America's largest, and symbolically salient, states. Kinky Friedman decamped to the Lone Star as a scene more conducive to his ironic take on country music than the earnestness of Austin. Judy Buie held Texas fashion shows heavy on boots and hats. Strange assortments of prominent people came through its doors over the years, lending it a voyeuristic, performative air: Mick Jagger and Johnny Paycheck, Abbie Hoffman and Doug Sahm, John Connally and Jerry Garcia, Julian Schnabel and Tommy Tune. In some ways, the Lone Star Café played a similar symbolic role in transcending oppositions as the hippie-redneck confluence in Austin, only here in New York closing the imaginative gulf between Big City and Sun Belt celebrity.

New Yorkers, Texans, and tourists could easily identify the Lone Star Café by the enormous iguana statue that sat atop it, causing a longstanding fight with city authorities. In the iguana's creator, artist Bob "Daddy-O" Wade, the Lone Star Café found the perfect imaginative diplomat of "the Texan." Wade, from El Paso by way of Austin, Berkeley, Waco, and Oak Cliff, was a significant figure promoting the state to the larger world through imagery and playful iconography in the Texas Chic moment. His *Texas Mobile Home Museum* for the Paris Biennale in 1977 contained plastic bluebonnets, stuffed armadillos and rattlesnakes, a two-headed calf, and a taxidermied bucking bronco.³⁷

³⁶ The line is from the Billy Joe Shaver song "Old Five and Dimers Like Me," though it also echoes Great Luke's tombstone from Bud Shrake's *Peter Arbiter* (Austin: Encino Press, 1973), 93.

³⁷ Bob Wade with Keith and Kent Zimmerman, *Daddy-O: Iguana Heads and Texas Tales* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 80.

Wade also held Texana-themed shows in San Francisco and Los Angeles. In San Francisco, Wade re-created an entire Texas dance hall in a museum gallery, installing wood floors and scattering sawdust, lowering the ceilings and spraying them with glitter, and putting in an old jukebox filled with Texas honky-tonk music. He engaged in a similar diplomatic endeavor between Texas and the New York art world. In 1975, independent filmmaker Ken Harrison made the documentary film *Jackelope* of Wade's collecting trips as he assembled Texana materials for an art show in Soho. Along the way, the two met with Chicano Movement artist Mel Casas, hatmaker Manny Gammage, taxidermist Byron Jernigan, and, for that redneck frisson, a group of Wade's old friends he referred to as the "Waco Boys" who liked to shoot up and explode old cars out in the country. Wade's Texan was not the mythic and heroic figure of the American West, but its burlesque, a fixation on the excessive and colorful and weird, those things that distinguished Texas, in his mind, from the homogenizing herd. As he stated about his trip making *Jackelope*, "Even though the Texas landscape was beautiful, I was taking pictures of weird trailer trash and dude ranch signs."³⁸ Operating in the art world, Wade collapsed the distinctions of high and low in his performance and creation of "the Texan," whether for French galleries or New York nightclubs.

If the Lone Star Café was Texas Chic's Armadillo World Headquarters, and Bob Wade its diplomat from Texas artistic circles, Larry L. King was perhaps the phenomenon's leading light, its exhibit A. *Rolling Stone's* New York bureau chief Chet Flippo declared Larry L. King the pioneering and undisputed leader of the Texans in New York. King sold "the Texan" through social performance:

³⁸ Ibid., 63. This was more or less contemporaneous with a trip to New York that Armadillo World Headquarters chief Eddie Wilson took in his capacity as TYNA/TACI consultant for Lone Star Beer, providing further tinder for the coming Texas Chic inferno.

[he] was marvelous company. He could even out-bullshit the late Slim Pickens, the man who inspired the word *bullshit*. Larry could good-ol-boy it better than any man, dead or alive. His voice, tempered by decades of “whiskey” and tobacco intake, was a rumble that could shake glass. And he was the real thing. He had actually worked for LBJ . . . Yankees, my first night in New York, actually crouched at his feet and marveled aloud as he sipped from his bottomless tumbler of whiskey and told marvelous lies with such gravelly charm that even me and Elaine believed him. But he could bullshit anybody and come out ahead. So he was the number-one TINY.³⁹

Larry L. King has admitted as much. As his rationale, King offered that:

New Yorkers tend to think of Mississippians or Georgians or Virginians under the catchall category “southerners,” of Californians as foreigners, and of Texans as the legendary Texan. We are the only outlanders, I think, that they define within a specific state border and assign the burden of an obligatory—i. e., “cowboy”—culture.

In 1970s New York, King confronted much the same phenomenon as had Dobie and Webb in wartime England. King further stated:

Long after I knew that the Texas of my youth dealt more with myth than reality, and long past that time when I knew that the vast majority of Texans lived in cities, I continued to play cowboy. This was a social and perhaps a professional advantage in the East; it marked one as unique, permitted one to pose as a son of yesterday, furnished a handy identity among the faceless millions.

Fletcher Boone, owner of The Raw Deal bar in Austin, responded.

All you goddamn expatriates act like time froze somewhere in the nineteen-fifties or earlier. You’d think we hadn’t discovered television down here, or skin flicks, or dope. Hell, we grew us a President, down here. We’ve got tall buildings and long hair and some of us know how to ski!⁴⁰

Boone committed a bit of aw-shucks-good-ol-boyism here himself (“Hell, we grew us a President, down here.”), but his larger point identified the gulf between the imaginative space that professional Texans in New York inhabited over and against the material and political conditions refiguring Texas itself in the 1970s.

³⁹ Chet Flippo, *Everybody Was Kung-Fu Dancing: Chronicles of the Lionized and Notorious* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991), 118.

⁴⁰ King, 54-67.

As Larry L. King led the TINY faction, it is fitting that a Broadway play that he wrote served as one of the central expressions of Texas Chic in New York. The Broadway production of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* premiered on June 19, 1978. It told, loosely, the true story of the closing of a notorious house of prostitution in Texas in 1973. Marvin Zindler, a Houston crusader of the burgeoning “action news” genre, took it upon himself to expose the Chicken Ranch, a house of prostitution that had been operating in plain sight in La Grange since 1905 (although local lore pushes the date back to 1844). Responding to Zindler’s pressure, Governor Dolph Briscoe and state Attorney General John Hill forced the closure of the Chicken Ranch in August, 1973. Larry L. King saw a perfect vehicle to exploit the current rage for outsized, outsexed Texanness in New York City and began developing the story into a musical. In adapting the *Playboy* article he wrote on the closing of the Chicken Ranch, King enlisted fellow TINY Tommy Tune.

The musical followed the aging madam of the Chicken Ranch, Mona, in her clash with the Zindler character and the aging sheriff, her paramour, who was torn between his love for Mona and his duty to enforce the law as interpreted by Zindler. A *gemeinschaft/gesellschaft* theme appears even here, and one that inverts stereotypes of urban/rural moralities. Here, it is the city of Houston and the policing that its anonymous population requires that sanctimoniously misunderstands the basic social arrangements that, in *The Best Little Whorehouse’s* fantasy, at least, make the Chicken Ranch a functioning element of the La Grange community.

And the Chicken Ranch did, indeed, have a high profile in Texas culture prior to the musical. *Texas Monthly* advertised commemorative tin plates and wall-hangings when it closed. Houston’s rock trio ZZ Top scored a hit single in 1973 with “La Grange” with suggestive lyrics and bluesy riffs on an institution that never served African

Americans. The *Daily Texan*, the student newspaper of the University of Texas published a rather straightforward review of the place and its services as late as 1971. After its closing, a group of investors moved the building itself to Dallas in 1977 and made of it a bordello-themed fried chicken restaurant, with its former madam Edna Milton as hostess. The establishment's posthumous fame, however, reached its height with the 1982 feature film starring Burt Reynolds and Dolly Parton (with cameos by Kenneth Threadgill and Bill Neely). The film furthered Texas Chic, but is not the movie most associated with the aesthetic. For that distinction, we turn to another film adaptation of a magazine article based on a popular nightlife venue: Aaron Latham's *Urban Cowboy*.

“AMERICA’S SEARCH FOR TRUE GRIT”: *URBAN COWBOY*

John Burnett of Galveston founded the city of Pasadena, Texas, on the south shore of the Houston-area Buffalo Bayou in 1894. He thought he saw past the bayou's swampy exterior to a lushness, a brightness, a vibrancy, that reminded him of nothing so much as Southern California, hence the new settlement's name. The place broke out in a rash of strawberry farms around the turn of the century, but its future, like much of the state's, soon superseded these pastoral origins. With the dredging of Buffalo Bayou in the early decades of the twentieth century, the rise of the Houston Ship Channel, and Houston's efforts to surpass Galveston in the wake of the devastating 1900 hurricane, Pasadena became linked to the industries surrounding port traffic. In the beginning, this meant the factoring of cotton; the first ship to leave the port of Houston via the ship channel carried the South's most traditional export. Soon, however, the oil companies that had been building small empires in East Texas saw the value of Houston as a port, and several refineries were in operation by 1920. By 1948, Houston consistently ranked

in the top five American ports by tonnage shipped. By 1980, the port of Houston and its attendant ship channel led New York City in the tonnage of foreign trade.⁴¹

The ports and refineries along the Texas coast set them apart from the rest of the state. The specter of labor radicalism at Port Arthur had nearly jettisoned liberal Ralph Yarborough's political career as early as 1956.⁴² This difference makes it all the more curious that in 1980, the year in which Houston first topped the nation's ports in foreign trade, *Urban Cowboy*, a film set in Pasadena about the figure of the cowboy, would amplify an ongoing national passion for all things Texan. The film, and the fad, has a prehistory. Gilley's was a nightclub in Pasadena, Texas, set among the refinery communities that ring Houston. Opened by Sherwood Cryer, the club carried the name of local entertainer and impresario Mickey Gilley. Gilley had had a long and uneven career to this point, and it seemed that the kind of fame that his cousins and boyhood pals Jerry Lee Lewis and Jimmy Swaggart had achieved was beyond him. *Texas Chic*, *Esquire*, and a John Travolta film rescued him from obscurity.⁴³

Gilley's anchored a distinctive honky-tonk scene that nourished a similar set of artists and aesthetics to those found at Austin's Armadillo World Headquarters (both would claim Southern rock icon Charlie Daniels as a patron saint), but with an emphasis on the "hard-core" elements of the scene, and the "redneck" end of the hippie-redneck spectrum.⁴⁴ Progressive country did not come in for open celebration here, though many of the same notions came into play. To return to the iconic scene with which this chapter

⁴¹ David McComb, *Houston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 120.

⁴² Patrick Cox, *Ralph W. Yarborough: The People's Senator* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 114-121.

⁴³ Peter Guralnick, *Lost Highway: Journeys and Arrivals of American Musicians* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 176-185.

⁴⁴ The closer equivalent of the Armadillo World Headquarters in Houston was Mike Condray's Liberty Hall.

began, Bud and Sissy meet to the sound of Gilley's house vocalist Johnny Lee singing Michael Murphey's "Cherokee Fiddle," Sissy asks Bud to dance, and as they take the dance floor, the volume of the song increases, and we hear the following lyrics:

Now the Indians are dressin' up like cowboys
And the cowboys are puttin' leather and turquoise on.
And the music is sold by lawyers
And the fools who fiddled in the middle of the stations are gone

Some folks say they'll never miss him
The old fiddle squealed like the engine's brakes
The Cherokee fiddle is gone forever
Like the music of the whistle that the old locomotives made⁴⁵

As in the "hippie-redneck" narratives surrounding Austin, the song associates hybridity with modernity, the corruption of the supposedly separate authenticities of "Indians" and "cowboys" scrambled sartorially through cowboy wear, leather, and turquoise. Attending this stylistic mash-up is a declension in musical performance, a Vanishing Cherokee Fiddle, facilitated by modern law and commerce: "the music is sold by lawyers/And the fools who fiddled in the middle of the stations are gone." The song encapsulates the film's fascination with cowboy authenticity in the site of the industrial exurbs of Houston.

Intriguingly, the adaptation of this scene to the big screen began through Bud's birth in the pages of the upscale men's lifestyle magazine *Esquire*. Before there was Bud Davis on the screen, there was his prototype, a man named Dew. Aaron Latham's article of September, 1978, "The Ballad of the Urban Cowboy: America's Search for True Grit" centered on the figure of Donald Edward "Dew" Westbrook, a foam insulator of pipelines by day, a performative urban cowboy at Gilley's by night. Latham found the scale and spectacle of Gilley's to be an obvious object of fascination to *Esquire* readers and acted

⁴⁵ Various Artists, *Urban Cowboy Soundtrack*, (Asylum Records, 1980).

as an anthropologist of sorts using Dew as a native guide to the romantic-erotic entanglements encountered therein, adventures concerning a mechanical bull, and the very basic divides between rough labor and tough leisure, men and women, machine and nature in the late 1970s Sun Belt.⁴⁶ On the one hand, Latham drew each of these dichotomies starkly—the leisured universe of Gilley’s stood as a world apart from the industrial refineries, where alienated, marginalized workers transformed themselves into iconic frontier cowboys (as in the film’s tag line, “hard hat days and honky-tonk nights”). On the other hand, even within the preserve of Gilley’s, the borders between these traditional dichotomies collapsed or were subverted. In this sense, the retreat into Gilley’s did not constitute a successful escape from the industrialized, mechanized world of the refinery. Despite the desires of its patrons, Gilley’s could not serve as pastoral other to the workplace, and the mechanical bull became a dangerous adversary that subverted the cowboy’s presumed ties to nature (more unpredictable than a live bull because the rider could not watch the head to see which way the bull will turn). Linked to the theme of the collapsing borders between machine and nature in the guise of the mechanical bull (or at least the ability of the machine to engulf and mimic the natural), the urban cowboy’s parallel retreat into the most traditional subject position of American masculinity, the cowboy, did not constitute an effective defense against the presumed contentiousness of women’s liberation and the more fluid perceptions and projections of gendered identities in the Seventies.

Dew met his ex-wife Betty at Gilley’s, though their marriage likely broke on the back of the mechanical bull. Betty wanted to ride. Dew did not approve. Betty rode, and her skills on mechanical bull-back outpaced those of Dew. The marriage ended. At the

⁴⁶ Aaron Latham, “The Ballad of the Urban Cowboy: America’s Search for True Grit,” *Esquire*, September 1978. Latham, too, has moments where he takes on the native guide role for himself as a Texan born in the town of Spur, an origin he transfers to Bud in the film.

time of Latham's article, Dew was with his new Gilley's girl, Jan, a frailer, more feminine character than Betty. This conflict points to a central concern of *Urban Cowboy*, as article and film, with traditional masculinity and its perceived castration at the hands of women's liberation. For his national audience, Latham suggested that even Gilley's of Pasadena, a site which *Esquire* readers would likely identify as a last-stand ranch-hand redoubt of pre-70s masculinity, existed as a world of inversion continuous with American society at large in the late 1970s, where the traditional gender order upon which such men's magazines are based is thrown into confusion. In the article, even more than the movie, it was the hybrid figure of the mechanical bull that ushered in the confusion. Several times in the eight-page essay, Latham felt compelled to mention that the reason the women (not only Betty, but Betty prominent among them) had begun to out-compete men on Gilley's mechanical bull rested in the lack of a phallus, that it was the bull's power to castrate that threatened the urban cowboy's sense of masculine mastery. Several comments appeared along these lines, "Put your left nut in your right hand and hang on."; "Hurts your nuts, don't it?"; "He crashed back onto the bull's back, his sexual organs taking a beating."; "breaking an occasional arm, leg, or collarbone. Sometimes it crushes something worse. A honky-tonk cowboy has to risk his manhood in order to prove it." And, most plainly but also suggestive of the gendered power dynamics that are a constant subtext here: "As the cowboys around the bullring put it: 'a woman has nothing to lose.'"⁴⁷ The animal-machine castrated men in a physical sense, just as the competition of women appeared to in the metaphorical. In the context of Gilley's, Dew's strikingly offensive pick-up line to Jan, "When are you going to take me home and rape me?" made sense only in light of this perceived gender inversion in the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 26.

midst of what would at first appear as a virtual shrine to American masculinity. Readers and viewers were meant to see the cowboys thwarted in their escapist leisured endeavors at Gilley's by ambitious women even as they were in their dangerous jobs by callous bosses. The hemmed-in nature of the urban cowboy's range, the threats on all sides, were supposed to be such that the act of violence against women was presented to readers and viewers as at least understandable if not defensible. It was not, and the film weakly made apologies at the end.

As with any adaptation, the film departed from the article in a number of particulars, though it also drew upon Latham's writing and his informants' wit for its basic vocabulary. Latham was very much involved in the screenplay and filming under director James Bridges, and a number of details survived, though often given a different life on screen. The film traced a different narrative arc in the relationship of Bud (nee Dew) and Sissy (nee Betty). Jan is not the new, fragile girlfriend, but is represented by a slumming socialite, Pam, and the wedge that the bull drove between Bud and Sissy is exacerbated by the fact that the bull master is a smoldering, tattooed, mesh shirt-wearing ex-convict named Wes who bests Bud in a fight and takes Sissy in when the star-crossed lovers split temporarily. The pathos of Latham's article lies in the fact that Dew and Betty are portrayed as still loving one another, but divided by the bull, whereas the film, constrained further by the moral economy of middlebrow convention, reconstitutes the union of Bud and Sissy after Bud has put their disparity to rest by mastering the mechanical bull in the contest at film's end. The triumph of the good is furthered by Bud's thwarting the robbery of Gilley's by Wes while extracting vengeance for Wes's abuse of Sissy, figured as a displaced defeat of his own abusing tendencies.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Latham did not prefer this ending, which he found too traditionally Hollywood. An alternate ending that he conceived would have neatly tied up the "Are you a real cowboy?" "Well, depends on what you think a real cowboy is" exchange that begins the Bud/Sissy relationship. In that film, the last lines of dialogue

The gendered competition over the back of the mechanical bull does not constitute the only inversion with which these urban cowboys must contend. The article and film, too, related the men's anxiety over the mechanical bull in part to their own objectification and domestication in the marketplace of new Houston, uprooted from the agrarian experience that would seem to give the cowboy his reason for being. The film, even more than the article, brought out themes of the place of working-class men in the New Southern regime of flexible accumulation. The uncertainty and anxiety attaining to the position of men like Bud in this brave new petrochemical world is such that the inversions over the meanings of manhood and mastery slip into confusions not only over gender roles but also, in a rhetorical sense, over the categories of man and animal, man and machine, reducing working-class men to either brute creatures or cogs. The mechanical bull appears all the more threatening in this context. The theme becomes clear in the scene where Bud gets his job at the refinery. The boss says that most of their insulation work, for which Bud is qualified, is contracted out, but that there may be a gopher position available.

“Do you know what a gopher is, boy?”

“I think it means, ya know, go for things. Or, could mean you're an animal,” Bud jokes.

The boss nods sternly, “Yeah, well around here, they're on the same level.”

Or, in another scene, the slumming socialite Pam, who has picked Bud up at Gilley's to bring him back to her downtown Houston penthouse, describes her Daddy's views on cowboys as dumb brutes. As Pam explains, “I have a thing about cowboys, just drives my daddy crazy. . . I told daddy most men today are just too complicated. . . I like a man with simple values. . . ‘You mean dumb,’ he said. Daddy's a real scream.” And finally,

would have been Bud saying to Sissy, “I'm not a cowboy, I just thought I was,” to which Sissy would reply, “I didn't want a cowboy, I just thought I did.” Aaron Latham's *Urban Cowboy* diaries, September 20, 1979 on www.aaronlatham.com (accessed June 21, 2008).

there is the scene in which Aunt Corrine, visiting Bud and Sissy's trailer, comments "Y'all live like pigs, Bud." Bud brings the point up later with Sissy, prodding her into one of their frequent confrontations, but once the argument is underway, it becomes clear that its subject is not the immediate porcine nature of their surroundings, but the fact that Sissy had been absent that afternoon when Bud had fallen from the scaffolding at the refinery and hurt himself. In the argument, the metaphorical animalization of the couple's living space crashes up against the uncertainty associated with Bud's position as a sort of expendable beast of burden. Now that he has broken his arm, the plant lets him go without recompense. And Sissy's absence following the injury of her man-animal, of course, was due to the fact of her recent flirtation with the machine-animal, the mechanical bull at Gilley's with which she had furtively spent the afternoon.

Even as these strains on the animal nature of the cowboy place him apart from urban civilization, the anxiety is not that he is an outsider, but that he is not, in fact, really, authentically of the land, the "real cowboy" of Sissy's query. Latham, in both article and film, focused on the transformation that these urban cowboys undergo and the sartorial artifice that underlies Sissy's query regarding the reality of Bud's guise. Dew and Bud's very cowboy-ness is a construction much more than an essence.

He was ready to turn into an urban cowboy. He exchanged his hard hat for a black felt cowboy hat with toothpicks stuck in the band and his name spelled out in small gold letters on the back (No country cowboy ever decorated his hat with gilt lettering). He traded dirty bell-bottom blue jeans for clean bell-bottom blue jeans that had just been ironed. (No country cowboy ever wore anything but unironed, straight-legged jeans). Then he swapped his work sneakers for cowboy boots with a flat, rubber heel designed for a range made up mostly of asphalt, sidewalks, and linoleum. (No country cowboy ever wore anything but high, pointed leather heels designed to let a cowboy dig in his heels if he roped something mean). And his workingman's T-shirt was replaced by a cowboy shirt with mother-of-pearl snaps and short sleeves. (If a country cowboy wore short

sleeves, his arms would be scratched off the first time he passed a mesquite tree).⁴⁹

In the end, the effect is a sort of cowboy drag, an urban workingman trapped in a grueling, oppressive job, finding an escape in the fantasy of the open range through costuming. But he does not escape the industrial order for agrarian utopia through this transformation. Gilley's greets him with an enclosed economy of scale that mocks myths of the open range. He rides machines rather than animals, and even fights a machine, John Henry-like, in the guise of the mechanical punching bag. The bag, like the bull, has a tendency to beat these men, with blood left on it by night's end. The urbanization that seems to promise change and class mobility to these men instead delivers dangerous work escaped only through ritualized leisure in contests that cannot be won—with mechanical bulls, mechanical punching bags, or affairs with women.

According to Latham, the sartorial transformation brought with it a certain orientation toward the world. "When a city cowboy dons his cowboy clothes, he dons more than garments: He dons cowboy values." It is this value system that proves their undoing by, as Latham suggests, creating the chivalric conditions that welcome competition from the women. "And yet the values represented by the cowboy hat prevailed. The cowboys did not try to exclude the cowgirls from the bullring, for that would have violated their code of openness. The cowboys didn't tell the cowgirls that a woman's place wasn't on the back of a bull . . . I could tell, though, that they weren't happy with the way things were turning out."⁵⁰ The cowboy's sullen gender politics of resentment, as Latham frames it, is not due to a misplaced pride in chauvinism but to their own victimization as the women find their weakness in the chivalric code. The gendered inversions played out on the bodies of Gilley's regulars as interpreted by

⁴⁹ Latham, 23.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

Latham: “She wore pants, not having worn or even owned a dress for years,” or “An urban cowboy doesn’t have to know how to rope or hog-tie or bulldog . . . but he does have to know how to dance.”⁵¹ This echoes the postmodern sensibility of identities as performative guises, but here transferred to the Sun Belt South.

The soundtrack carried the urban cowboy phenomenon into the wider world as much as did the film itself and underscored the fact that the whole affair was only nominally about Texas, or about the convergence of Texas culture and a mass-mediated mainstream. The music here was tangential to the Armadillo scene, with one track authored by Rusty Wier, “Don’t It Make You Want to Dance” (performed by Bonnie Raitt) and two by Charlie Daniels, “Fallin’ in Love for the Night” and “The Devil Went Down to Georgia.” Jimmy Buffett (“Hello Texas”) and Linda Ronstadt (“Hearts Against the Wind”), both prominently featured, had both put in their time in Austin. The Gilley’s scene did anchor the soundtrack, with songs by Mickey Gilley and Gilley’s house vocalist Johnny Lee, but the remainder issued from that country-rock fusion so popular in the decade: The Eagles, Joe Walsh, Anne Murray, Bob Seger, Kenny Rogers.⁵² The aural hybridity of the soundtrack echoed the hybrid identities on screen: urban/rural, agrarian/industrial, man/woman, man/animal, country/rock. Thus, even though the attraction of the cowboy symbol would seem to have been in a nostalgia for its purity, the use of the guise as a defense against the fluidity of identities in the 1970s, the urban cowboy participated, if surreptitiously, in these same currents.

⁵¹ Ibid., 24.

⁵² That the soundtrack reflected California country-rock (the Eagles, Joe Walsh) as much as it did the Gilley’s scene owes something to the nature of its production by Irving Azoff, an agent who loaded the album with artists he represented. See Latham’s *Urban Cowboy Diaries* entry for August 8, 1979, among others, on www.aaronlatham.com (accessed June 21, 2008). Critic Stephen Holden aptly referred to the soundtrack’s style as “Sun Belt Pop.” Denisoff, 300.

Charlie Daniels's hit "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" was one of the soundtrack's breakout singles and aurally conveyed the dichotomies *Urban Cowboy* explored. The song's narrative involves the Devil, loose in Georgia, challenging a backcountry good ol' boy to a fiddling contest, and losing. The devil's solo in the song consists of a flight from the organic authenticity that cloaks Johnny's playing. The Devil, in the words of Peter Shapiro, "was joined by a band of demons who played a pretty mean disco-funk vamp over the top of which Beelzebub improvised some evil Psycho-style string gashes." Johnny beats the Devil with traditional Southern, and often African American, homilies "Chicken in the bread pan/pickin' out dough/granny does your dog bite?/No, chile, no." Just who is being demonized here? According to Shapiro, "the implicit antidisco message of the song couldn't have been clearer."⁵³

The song's prominence on *Urban Cowboy's* soundtrack carries this message into the heart of a film that echoes, answers, and contests an earlier movie held responsible for the national disco craze, *Saturday Night Fever* (1977). More than the cinematic tropes of class mobility, leisure, desire, and dance join the two movies. Latham latched onto the connections from the beginning. The *Esquire* cover that announced the article declared it "Saturday Night Fever, Country & Western Style," and, of course, there is the uniting figure of John Travolta. *Saturday Night Fever*, like *Urban Cowboy*, built on journalistic foundations, in this case Nik Cohn's *New York* article "Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night."⁵⁴ The two narratives map onto one another in conventional ways. In each, a

⁵³ Peter Shapiro, *Turn the Beat Around: The Secret History of Disco* (New York: Faber & Faber, 2005), 245.

⁵⁴ Nik Cohn, "The Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night," *New York*, June 7, 1976. Cohn's article upon which the film is based is itself a sort of fraud, as Cohn has admitted his *New York* profile actually chronicled the 1960s mod scene in Britain rather than the 1970s disco scene in New York, of which he knew almost nothing (note the trace in the language of "Faces," as well as, according to disco historian Peter Shapiro, the dancing itself, which speaks more to the individualistic acrobatics performed by mods at Wigan Pier than the more collectivist ethos of the mirror-balled domain).

leisured dance space (Odyssey, Gilley's) figures as a weigh station between a peripheral class position and geography (Brooklyn, Spur) and the wealth and prestige of the Metropolis (Manhattan, Houston). And, in fact, the urban cowboys of Latham's article fit better to Cohn's disco dancers than one might imagine. In contrast to the cinematic Gilley's of 1980, Latham's 1978 article revealed a countercultural flair that placed the urban cowboys in greater continuity with Seventies dance floor fashion: bell bottoms, long hair on men, a paucity of bras on women.

The films diverged in significant ways, though. Tony Manero is pulled along by the social-climbing ambition of his dance partner Stephanie, rather than intimidated by it, as Bud is by Sissy. The viewer is left with a sense that Bud and Sissy's love is true and lasting, the two having learned their lesson through a series of assaults, robberies, and empty sex, but the peace always seems to be a fragile one. *Urban Cowboy* the film catches Bud in a different narrative arc than does Latham's article, leaving him not in a heart-wrenching love triangle, but finding Bud and Sissy together, driving away in a pickup truck, Bud carefully replacing Sissy's vanity license plate in the back windshield, driving away from Gilley's and, if not into the sunset, at least into the happy-ever after of the dawn's early light as they speed away from the world's largest honky-tonk. It is Bud who has resolved the film's conflict in his defeat of Wes and his magnanimous apology for physically abusing his wife. *Saturday Night Fever*, too, climaxes with sexual assault, Tony holding the threat of masculine power over the ambitious woman. Tony, too, recognizes his error and apologizes for his violence, but in following her to Manhattan, Tony also defers to her lead. In many ways, the sociocultural erasures of *Saturday Night Fever* are of a greater order than those of *Urban Cowboy*.

It is easy to overstate the distinction between the subcultural resonances of the cosmic cowboy and his urban successor—both were, in fact, enacted in the urban

landscape; both were, sartorially, of the Seventies—but *Saturday Night Fever* assumes as disco's originary group the very bridge and tunnel crowd that the genre's black, Puerto Rican, and gay originators decried as gate crashers. The film gives a nod to the black and Puerto Rican roots of New York disco during the climactic dance contest, but shies from the topic of gay liberation. A fascination with performative hypermasculinity joins the discourses one to another, though, through the cowboy signifying in gay culture, beginning the decade with Joe Buck's closeted character in *Midnight Cowboy* and reaching its camp apex with the Village People, as well as the macho "gay clone" born of the New York and San Francisco disco scenes.

Urban Cowboy also differed from *Saturday Night Fever* in its basic relation to the incipient culture wars of the 1970s. The film projected an image of the Gilley's cowboy that stood in distinction to the photographs that accompany Latham's piece, and as the film, rather than the subculture, came to define the style in its new national projection on the cusp of the 1980s, an erasure occurred as to the countercultural hybridities that had been stirring in Seventies Texas. *Saturday Night Fever's* national projection of disco also involved erasure, in this case of the style's gay, black, and Latin roots, but just as the language leaves traces of Cohn's mods, so does the subplot of Tony's anger over being given the trophy over the more deserving Puerto Rican couple provide for a return of the repressed. Finally, the temporal lag between the two films is significant/ At the end of 1977, *Saturday Night Fever* propelled the national popularity of disco, a genre that had been developing in New York City, Chicago, Miami, and Philadelphia nightclubs and recording studios since the early 1970s. Even if the role of blacks, Puerto Ricans, gays, and women were somewhat effaced in 1978 discomania, it could not be entirely denied. Disco's popularity did amplify voices in the culture that would have been unimaginable ten years prior: the drag falsetto of Sylvester, the assertive sexuality of Donna Summer,

the empowering defiance of Gloria Gaynor or Grace Jones, to say nothing of the Village People's barely disguised, hugely popular celebration of gay subculture. These artists found the spotlight, in part enabled by the movements for inclusion on the part of disfranchised groups in the 1960s and 1970s.

By the time of *Urban Cowboy*'s release in 1980, these popular assertions over the airwaves and on the dance floors had provoked a sizable, vicious backlash, especially amongst young, white men invested in the genre of 1970s guitar rock, a form performed largely by young white men. This backlash often took on outlandish form, climaxing in the anti-disco riot held between the two games of a double header at Comiskey Park in 1979. There, Chicago disc jockey Steve Dahl, one of the primary leaders of the "disco sucks" movement, marshaled his supporters in the destruction of disco albums. Dahl, like a number of disco's angry critics, claimed that his ire had nothing to do with the identity or body politics of disco, the voice it gave to previously disfranchised subject positions. As disco historian Tim Lawrence argued in *Love Saves the Day*, however, "Dahl claims that he was less incensed by disco's gayness than by its superficiality and artificiality, but his argument holds significantly less water than Lake Michigan."⁵⁵ *Urban Cowboy* stood firmly on the other side of this divide, retrenching a pre-disco masculinity despite having a gay director, James Bridges, at the helm. Its popularity constituted a retreat from national malaise and contentious debates over identity politics, placing the final seal on Texas and redneck chic for the decade.

Perhaps no document better sums up *Urban Cowboy*'s erasures of local meanings than a diagram published in the *Daily Texan*. Entitled "Kicking a Dead Horse," a layout diagrammed the urban cowboy style—"Kicking a Dead Horse" because this was one in a

⁵⁵ Tim Lawrence, *Love Saves the Day: A History of American Dance Music Culture, 1970-1979* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 377.

long series of cowboy style diagrams that had appeared in the *Daily Texan* and other state publications over the course of the decade as conflicts erupted as to just what a cowboy looked like here in the cosmic cowboy's hometown. The *Daily Texan's* previous foray into such matters had been the "Cosmic Changeling" of Chapter Three, documenting the transformation of a hippie into a cosmic cowboy (much as the oilfield worker becomes the urban cowboy). A full-page diagram instructs on urban cowboy style, including the following tips.

Belt buckle—Accentuates your leather belt with a shiny, garish touch. Best varieties feature longhorns, beer brands, and scenes from the Old West.

Longneck—Nowhere else but Texas. Good for sippin' or smashin'.

Hairstyle—Cowboys are not hippies! Hair must be kept off the collar and above the earlobes. Sideburns and moustaches are optional, but don't forget a two-day stubble for that macho look.⁵⁶

As Wanted!: *The Outlaws* and *Urban Cowboy* seized on and amplified the Texas Chic ignited by Austin's cosmic cowboy, the progressive content of the style rapidly waned. By 1980, the owner of West World in Austin could argue that "the country and western trend is tied in somehow with America's current situation in world affairs. 'With the Iranian crisis, people are definitely more to the right. People are more patriotic.' And the cowboy, he said, is a truly American symbol."⁵⁷ Media, national and local, viewed the

⁵⁶Steve Davis, "How to be an Urban Cowboy," *Images* supplement to *Daily Texan*, August 11, 1980.

⁵⁷Martha Grisham, "Country Western Chic Arrives in Austin," *Daily Texan*, June 20, 1980, 7. Other articles from the *Daily Texan* in this vein include Ray Ydoyaga, "Urban Cowboy Dies with Boots On" of June 9, 1980, Scott Campbell, "Northerners Gag on Texas Bull" of June 11, 1980, "Western Music Attracts Tourists" of June 20, 1980, and "Collegiate Cowboy" of August 5, 1980. These urban cowboy themed pieces coincided with hand-wringing over the impending closure of the countercultural Armadillo World Headquarters and the end of the decade in "The '70s in Retrospect: A Decade of Change" of January 14, 1980, Gardner Selby, "Armadillo Landlord Plans Sale of Concert Hall Site" of February 6, 1980, Gardner Selby, "Armadillo Relocation Probable" of February 20, 1980, Debbie Hendrixson, "60s Cultural, Political Revolutions Discussed: 'Cowboys and Indians' Attractive to Counter-culture, Says University Instructor" of March 27, 1980, Cindy Widner, "Goin' Home with the Armadillo" of April 28, 1980, Jeff Whittington, "Where Have All the Rebels Gone?" of June 9, 1980, Alisa Hagan, "Zoning Decision Threatens Armadillo Future" of June 27, 1980, Kent Anschutz, "City Council Sides with Developer over Armadillo" of July 16,

Urban Cowboy phenomenon through a curiously amnesiac lens with regards to the cosmic cowboy of just a few years past. Even within the context of the film, the cosmic cowboy is erased by the neater style of Travolta's urban cowboy, as the transformation that produces the iconic image with which this chapter began involved Bud shaving off his beard and trimming his hair. In the film, these markers are meant to connote his "hayseed" status fresh from Spur in West Texas, but their effect purges the pastoral hippiness of the cosmic cowboy.⁵⁸

The distinction can be made, in part, not just between the Austin scene and the projection of Texanness on national film screens, but in the distance between the cities of Austin and Houston. In 1969, David McComb's *Houston: A History* treated the entrepreneurial spirit of the place prior to its final ascension.⁵⁹ Both cities arose in the wake of the revolt against Mexico, and carried the names of prominent Anglo-American leaders of that conflict. However, the service sector employment of the University of Texas and the state government gave the mid-sized city of Austin a bucolic white-collar cast, while Houston's petrochemical base made it an industrial site given to the kind of spectacular growth and class mobility that marked the boom-bust economies of oil.

Though Gilley's, in its own way, participated in the hippie-redneck hybridity of 1970s Texas, the film *Urban Cowboy* contributed to a wider 1980s restoration of

1980, Ron Seybold, "Armadillo World Headquarters: Hotel, Parking Garage to Replace Humble Home of Austin's Music Roots" of August 5, 1980, and Jody Denberg, "Armadillo to Close, But Its Spirit Will Live On" of September 5, 1980.

⁵⁸ Both Latham and Travolta recognized the repercussions of cinematic images in creating fashions and subcultures outside the life of the film. In Latham's diaries kept during the filming of *Urban Cowboy*, he commented upon seeing the Birmingham School-style subcultural primer film *The Warriors* on a near-future, gang-ruled New York City, that the "kids are so deeply into fantasy lives that they cannot tell their own lives for the movies. So they have gang-fights at gang-fight movies. Where does the screen stop and the audience start?" (February 16, 1979) Travolta remarked to Latham on studying the film's wardrobe and the Ralph Lauren spread that accompanied Latham's *Esquire* article, "We could start a whole new look. And these clothes are even more interesting than the *Saturday Night Fever* clothes." (February 7, 1979). Latham's *Urban Cowboy* diaries can be found on www.aaronlatham.com (accessed June 21, 2008).

⁵⁹ David McComb, *Houston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981 [1969]).

normative masculinity incipient in the tensions of progressive country. This rears its head as early as the Latham article, as a pictured feature directly following the article shows Ralph Lauren's new Western line. As Suzanne Slesin reports

"It's not fashion, it's life," insists Lauren, who while traveling out West last year in search of cowboy clothes found none he liked and decided to create his own. "I gave the style what I thought it should have. . . I did it because it's what I believe in, it's the way I want to express myself. This look represents my way of being part of the world today. It reflects me and my life-style."⁶⁰

Lauren definitely speaks to a Seventies sensibility here, and one that would carry over forcefully into the coming years. Though less likely to encounter such ideas in the pages of *Esquire*, Bud Davis and Tony Manero both express themselves and their beliefs through these Seventies rituals: the obsession with self and changing selves, the articulation of segmented lifestyles via commodities over and against a monolithic vision of the public. The underlying attraction of the *Urban Cowboy* phenomenon was not that any cowboy could be urbanized, but that every urbanite could play cowboy in Houston, Austin, or Dallas.

DALLAS: "ZENITH OF WESTERN CAPITALIST SIMPLICITY"

In September 1978, the same month of Latham's urban cowboy article in *Esquire*, a prime-time soap opera premiered on CBS. Among Texas Chic's most popular vehicles, the television program *Dallas* chronicled the travails of the Ewings, a fictional clan of cattlemen and oilmen.⁶¹ The place of Texas in the cultural imaginary in the 1970s owed something to the fact of continued prosperity, abundance, and indulgence, read onto the landscape despite the economic limits imposed by the end of the long postwar boom with

⁶⁰ *Esquire*, September 19, 1978.

⁶¹ Parenthetically, it only took two episodes before the Ewings found themselves at the opening night of the Braddock disco "Sky Blue," while it would be several episodes before they danced the cotton-eyed joe at Southfork.

the first oil crisis of 1973. As Texas stood to gain from the rising fortunes of oil, however, the state stood apart from this general concern. *Urban Cowboy* critiqued, if obliquely, the industrialization of the burgeoning oil economy. *Dallas* might be seen in this light, too, deploying the Manichean devices of the soap opera to highlight the corruptions seemingly inherent in oilmen. However, it also gloried in the organicism of an industry connected by kinship, handshakes, and back-room deals—as if the transparent corruptions of robber-baron modernity made the more instantaneous, public relations smokescreens thrown up by the postmodern corporation seem especially duplicitous. As Alan Coren, editor of the British magazine *Punch*, saw it, the Texas of *Dallas* was the “zenith of Western capitalist simplicity.” “The genius of *Dallas* is that it pays constant homage to the mythic past while it incessantly tosses its people about in the rootless, relationship-oriented world of the Singles Apartment Scene. *Dallas*’s past is vintage patriarchal frontiership, the legend of the empire builder.” *Dallas* animated Bainbridge’s work from *The Super-Americans*, making the case that these outsized Texans were merely consumers like everyone else, or, as Alan Coren put it, “just like us . . . booze-sodden, nymphomaniac swindlers; guilt-crazed, greed-ridden psychopathic junkies; homicidal, schizophrenic dropouts.”⁶² Coren may have exaggerated, but in the world of *Dallas*, it is difficult to escape the sense that the fix is in, and no more noble cowboys ride the range.⁶³

Dallas follows the escapades of the Ewing family who reside outside of, but do business in, Dallas. Newly wealthy Jock Ewing married into Ellie’s Southfork Ranch and the older wealth of cattle. Jock and Ellie’s sons J. R. and Bobby have taken over

⁶² Don Graham, *Cowboys and Cadillacs: How Hollywood Looks at Texas* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1983), 66.

⁶³ The show drew an especially remarkable international audience, and its domestic popularity sparked a copycat trend amongst daytime soap operas. The popular program *One Life to Live* introduced Texas oilman character Asa Buchanan in 1980 to exploit the Texas Chic stylings of *Dallas*.

Ewing Oil. This set-up is, of course, a fable that takes place in the mythological geography of Texas long posited by Hollywood. Literary critic Don Graham, who was born and raised a few miles from the physical site of Southfork outside of Parker, Texas, writes that this had always been cotton, rather than cattle, land, marked by the South more than the West. The series' titular city of Dallas, too, offered discrepancies between image and reality. Settled by itinerant traders and French utopians in the early nineteenth century and a key site of Populist revolt and union organization in the late nineteenth century, the civic leaders of Dallas in the twentieth century worked hard to promote an image of the city in which free enterprise and unfettered industry defined the metropolis. The Dallas Citizens Council of local businessmen organized by Robert Lee Thornton trumpeted this new vision of Dallas through the Centennial of 1936 and the luxurious commodities on display at Neiman-Marcus. This was the city that so interested John Bainbridge in its "Super-American" status and, as a recent book by Harvey Graff notes, was ruled by an elite that declared the place a "city with no history," a continuous ferment of self-invention among self-made men.⁶⁴ The television series *Dallas* echoed the city's boosters in their equation of the city and free-wheeling American enterprise, even as the program attempted to ground this rootless image in the broader agrarianism of the Texas myth.

Even the fable, though, resonates with reality. The Ewing-Barnes feud central to the early plots of the series was patterned, in part, on the origins of the Hunt oil fortune. H. L. Hunt and Dad Joiner had been instrumental in pioneering the East Texas oil fields of the 1930s, only Dad Joiner sold out his stakes to Hunt at a deep discount and regretted

⁶⁴ The civic erasures of Dallas's history of classed and raced contestation over power have been traced in Patricia Evridge Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996) and Harvey Graff, *The Dallas Myth: The Making and Unmaking of an American City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

it, just as the broken Digger Barnes blamed Jock Ewing for his misfortune.⁶⁵ Hunt's fodder for the Ewing saga goes deeper. In 1955, Lyda Bunker Hunt, Hunt's wife of forty-odd years, passed away. Two years later, Hunt remarried to Ruth Ray, his secretary, and adopted her four children. Hunt later revealed that these children were his own, the product of a long-running affair with the secretary. Upon Hunt's death in 1974, a battle over the will, which granted most of the fortune to Hunt's second family with Ruth Ray, ended up drawing in private investigators, the FBI, Nixon, the Libyan government, and the Al-Fatah faction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, in 1975, a third wife, Frania Tye, came forward. Hunt and Tye had married in Florida in 1925. When Tye discovered Hunt's other family in the 1930s, Hunt spirited her away to New York and provided trust funds for their four children. It is easy to see how a soap opera could sprout in such fertile soil.⁶⁷

Neither Jock Ewing/H. L. Hunt, nor Digger Barnes/Dad Joiner, nor their union in Bobby Ewing's and Pam Barnes's marriage, however, would have made for a series so resonant with the late 1970s zeitgeist. *Dallas* captured the attention of the world through J. R. Ewing.⁶⁸ J. R. embodied and performed the excesses of the wheeler-dealer ethos, a

⁶⁵ Hinton and Olien, *Oil in Texas: The Gusher Age* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 173-74.

⁶⁶ In short, private investigators looking into the contestation over the will revealed wiretapping within Hunt Oil, which they traced back to two of Hunt's sons. As it turned out, the spying concerned internal investigations over embezzling rather than H. L. Hunt's will and prosecution followed. Sentencing was delayed, however, as the Nixon White House tried to broker a deal for Hunt Oil's intelligence regarding Al-Fatah agents in the United States, whom Hunt feared due to the jockeying over his oil fields in Libya, which had recently been nationalized by PLO ally Muammar al-Qaddafi. Bill Porterfield, "H. L. Hunt's Long Goodbye" *Texas Monthly*, March 1975, 63.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ J. R. Ewing's name signifies the tendency of mid-century Texan oilmen to use their initials, most notably with the Ewing model in H. L. Hunt. J. R. may also allude to the initials for Jett Rink that festooned the ballroom in Rink's hotel grand opening in *Giant* (itself an allusion to Glenn McCarthy's grand opening of the Shamrock Hotel in Houston). Finally, there was J. R. Parten, a real-life oilman who, like H. L. Hunt, made his initial oil fortune in the Dorado fields of Arkansas. Parten, however, was something of an antithesis to J. R. Ewing in his devotion to philanthropy and liberal political causes, including being one of the primary financial backers of the progressive *Texas Observer*. Don Carleton summed up Parten's life in

reckless, ruthless, but effective variant of capital accumulation that made a mockery of Weber's Protestant ethic and fit the developing cult of flexible capital in the late 1970s. The "Who Shot J. R.?" episode of November 21, 1980, remains one of the most-viewed in the history of television. Locally, the episode served much as the series had as an exorcism of the aura of the JFK assassination. Just as J. R.'s shooting recalled that other violence in Dallas, the show eclipsed the city's prior association with murder in the national imaginary. Southfork replaced Dealey Plaza as the number one tourist destination in Dallas as J. R. marginalized, and even fictionalized, the JFK assassination. As journalist Gary Cartwright had said of that initial day in Dallas, "All I know is that until the assassination, everything in my world seemed clean, transparent, and orderly. Nothing has seemed clean, clear, or orderly since."⁶⁹ By 1980, it did not seem to figure for much in the city's image.

CONCLUSION: MAOISTS AT THE ALAMO

The tendency to periodize historical change by decades has its limitations, even its absurdities. Still, years ending in zero spark journalistic reflection on the spirit of the times. As 1979 passed into 1980, the *Daily Texan*, which had expended so much ink parsing out the sartorial distinctions between the counterculture and cowboys, printed the prevailing new wisdom that fashion "in the 1980s will probably return to the 'preppie' look of the 1950s, with a definite trend toward buying clothes based on their investment value." This was something new, the student newspaper no longer as advocate of the new politics, the city it described no longer the province of a prolonged Sixties zeitgeist. Then again, the next day's paper carried an article entitled "Revolutionary Maoists Scale

the biography *A Breed So Rare: The Life of J. R. Parten, Liberal Texas Oil Man, 1896-1992* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1998).

⁶⁹ Gary Cartwright, *Turn Out the Lights: Chronicles of Texas During the 80s and 90s* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 1.

Walls of the Alamo,” so the Seventies’ long digestion of the Sixties may not have yet ridden into the sunset: “A group calling itself the Revolutionary May Day Brigade scaled the walls of the historic Alamo, removed the U. S. and Texas flags, raised their own banners, and threw down leaflets protesting the ‘vicious oppression of the Chicano people.’”⁷⁰ The preppie article’s focus on investment value pointed the way forward to a new zeitgeist and discursive focus for the new decade, whereas Damian Garcia, “one of the three revolutionaries who raised the Red Flag over the Alamo,” was killed in a shootout with police, his pistol in his hands, in an East L. A. housing project on April 22, 1980.⁷¹ In a manner similar to the first-time-as-tragedy-second-as-farce rhetoric seen in the reception of the terrorist Weathermen and their successors in the SLA, this dramatic last gasp of 60s radicalism in Texas appeared in the press as a mere curiosity rather than portent of The Revolution.⁷²

By the mid-eighties, *Dallas*, though it spoke to the 80s cultural fascination with elite lifestyles, became a bit of a fantasy, as well. As the bottom fell out of crude oil prices, so did the boom of Texas Chic bust. The same currents buffeted the world inhabited by the real, live urban cowboys. In 1985, Aaron Latham revisited his subject in the pages of *Texas Monthly* with the article “The Return of the Urban Cowboy.”⁷³ By 1985, Gilley’s nightclub had expanded, yet again, but the fortunes of its patrons had

⁷⁰ Clara Tuma, “‘Preppie’ fashion return forecast,” *Daily Texan* March 20, 1980, 15; “Revolutionary Maoists scale walls of the historic Alamo” *Daily Texan*, March 21, 1980, 3.

⁷¹ David Stitt, “Alamo Revolutionary Slain in L. A.” *Daily Texan*, April 29, 1980, 5.

⁷² The specter of Revolution continued to haunt Central Texas. In 1982, the British punk band the Clash brought their brand of revolutionary chic to Austin to film the video for their hit single “Rock the Casbah.” The video begins with a nod to the city’s countercultural past, as an armadillo waddles up to the band as they break out into song before a working oil pumpjack. The armadillo then scurries to a roadside scene of a hitchhiking Arab sheik being picked up in a 1970s model Cadillac convertible adorned with longhorn horns on the hood, driven by an Orthodox Jew. Together, the adversaries drive around the capital of Texas, the home of the Texas Railroad Commission that taught Abdullah Tariki the basis of OPEC, dancing to the beat of an English punk song ostensibly about censorship in revolutionary Iran.

⁷³ Aaron Latham, “The Return of the Urban Cowboy” *Texas Monthly*, November 1985, 148-155, 236-255.

sharply contracted. The fates of the characters are predictable, and the down-turn in oil especially hurt the fortunes of Dew Westbrook, upon whom the character Bud Davis was based. The effects on Texas Chic were clear. Romance with Wall Street finance had caught the rest of the nation up in the boom economics that had yielded Texas its 1970s aura, and the collapse of oil prices sent even the state's wheeler-dealers into other ventures. When T. Boone Pickens made the cover of *Time* in 1985, it was as a cowboy corporate raider, not an oilman.

By 1986, fifty years had passed since the Centennial Exposition in Dallas, and Texas found itself in economic doldrums akin to its experience of 1936. As in that year, the state engaged in a flurry of memorialization and commemoration, this time for the sesquicentennial of the war for independence from Mexico. The Texas of the 1980s was a far cry from the state marketed during the Centennial of 1936. Where the latter strove to convince the nation of the state's modernity and its normality, the former had to work hard to continue to trumpet its sense of distinctiveness. By the 1980s, Texas had become a great deal like the rest of the nation, even as the rest of the nation had come to be a lot like Texas. Still, similarities between 1936 and 1986 persisted. In the midst of the downturn in the price of oil and the pinch of the savings and loans crisis, Texas again faced the future with trepidation masked by bravado. As in that earlier moment, Texans remained in the center of America's political and cultural life. Where Vice-President John Nance Garner groused at Roosevelt's New Deal liberalism in 1936, however, another Texan now in the office, George H. W. Bush, could applaud the conservative ascendancy of Republican Ronald Reagan. The echoes of this story in the present, and the continuing resonance of "the Texan" in contemporary affairs serve as the subjects of the epilogue to follow.

Epilogue

“Some folks look at me and see a certain swagger, which in Texas is called ‘walking.’”¹

—George W. Bush

I conceived, researched, and, for the most part, wrote this dissertation over the years of the George W. Bush presidency. Few combine the elements of “the Texan” 1970s that I have discussed—Kirkpatrick Sale’s Yankee-Cowboy dichotomy, Bill Porterfield’s discussion of fathers and sons and men and oil, the lure of the sports world, the stylized projection of the cowboy—as that man does. He seems to bring all of these icons within himself to cut the figure of Anglo-Texan masculinity, and his relative success in doing so illustrates the type’s performative nature, its existence as a set of symbols that can be embodied as second nature. Inexplicably clearing brush in the wilderness for journalists just as Glenn McCarthy had fondled oil, drawling more strongly as the years in Washington passed, and offering to “smoke out” America’s dastardly enemies abroad, Bush once more placed “the Texan” in the center of American political discourse and punditry at the turn of the twenty-first century.

He did so in a manner that reveled in the conservative valences of “the Texan” born again in the national imagination with the *Urban Cowboy-Dallas* turn of the late 1970s. Though Texans who did not agree with the man might dismiss his performance of Texanness and connections with the state with the notion that he was, after all, a Connecticut Yankee in King LBJ’s Stetson crown—all hat and no cattle, as it were—the attempted progressive revisioning of “the Texan” in the 1970s seems to have crashed

¹ “President Bush’s Acceptance Speech to the Republican National Convention,” *Washington Post*, September 2, 2004.

against the political realignments of the late twentieth century.² It was not as if Bush gave an altogether false sense of the state's conservative political mainstream—his birthplace matters much less than his own subject position as an Anglo-Texan formed in youth. In a blog entry whose title, “8th Grade Texas History, LBJ, Larry L. King, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, Sam Houston, Big Foot Wallace, John Wayne, The Alamo, and Texas Rangers,” said it all, Austin-born author and professional gambler Gary Carson stated that the “other day somebody made the comment that Bush wasn't really a Texan because he was born in Connecticut rather than Texas.” However, Carson concluded, “If you took Texas history in Midland, Texas as a 13 year old boy, then as far as waging war goes you're a Texan. I don't give a shit if you went to Yale later or not.”³ Carson overstates the case, perhaps, but “the Texan” continues to serve as a powerful performative site implicated in subject formation, and we must be attendant to the settings—popular culture, politics, schools, advertising—in which such atavistic “Texans” are created.

In the light of Bush's performance of “the Texan,” what happened to that progressive revisioning of Anglo-Texan masculinity through countercultural style and country music in the 1970s? Was it untenable? Was it progressive at all, or was it a retreat into traditionalism in uncertain times, a circling of the wagons whereby men amongst the “hippies” and the “rednecks” celebrated and defended their shared privilege

² I am tempted, too, to explain the relationship between LBJ and George W. Bush, the wars in Vietnam and Iraq, by invoking Marx's parsing of Hegel that “all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice . . . the first time as tragedy, the second as farce,” only both LBJ and George W. Bush shared in the tragic and farcical in their performance of “the Texan” and its relation to an Anglo-Texan sense of historicity. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963 [1852]), 15.

³ “8th Grade Texas History, LBJ, Larry L. King, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, Sam Houston, Big Foot Wallace, John Wayne, the Alamo, and Texas Rangers,” <http://americantradition.blogspot.com/2006/12/8th-grade-texas-history-lbj-larry-l.html> (accessed February 28, 2009).

in the face of the civil rights and women's movements? In the course of this dissertation, I have repeatedly referred to the developments surrounding the cosmic cowboy as an "attempted" revisioning of traditional Anglo-Texan identities and symbols. The type did have progressive seeds, responding to the new investigations of identity sparked by the cultural nationalism of African Americans and Mexican Americans and the attention to gender brought to the fore by the women's movement. The institutions of the Austin progressive country scene aligned themselves explicitly with these movements, supporting the Economy Furniture Strike and United Farm Workers, giving a stage and votes to Sissy Farenthold. But, as Jeff Shero Nighbyrd charged, the performance of "the Texan" might also mean simply allowing Anglo-Texan men to be just who they always were, shrinking from the challenge of their own white skin or patriarchal privilege. The movements for racial and gender equality in an inclusive polity moved all Texans forward, but did the Austin scene around the cosmic cowboy do the same?

The swagger of progressive, and later, outlaw country could indeed act as an excuse for deeply misogynistic and ethnocentric behavior. Mary Lasswell's "change and adaptability" as the progressive cornerstone of "the Texan" was never David Allan Coe's strong suit, just as it was never George W. Bush's.⁴ However, this was not the case in the best of the Austin progressive country scene centered on the Armadillo World Headquarters, which may as well have taken Lasswell's adaptive rendition of Texan identity as its motto. The countercultural youth gathered in that place sought to expand the circle of "the Texan," whether in forcing Lone Star to record radio spots with Freddie King and Sunny Ozuna or holding benefit concerts for striking workers or Vietnam

⁴ Lasswell, one of the Texas national character authors quoted in Chapter 1, argued that the "more a Texan changes, the more he becomes truly himself. Change and adaptability are among his basic inherited patterns of behavior; resourcefulness is characteristic of him." Mary Lasswell, *I'll Take Texas* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), 368.

Veterans Against the War, drinking beer and having fun all the while. In the end, I admire the artists, entrepreneurs, and audiences who made up the scene and take pleasure in their countercultural production of “the Texan.” The world would be much impoverished in the absence of the recordings of Willie Nelson’s *Red-Headed Stranger* or Jerry Jeff Walker’s *Viva Terlingua*.

Moreover, as right-wing signifying over the past decade, embodied in Bush’s “swagger” of 2004, has demonstrated the persistence of “the Texan” as a performative site of exclusionary renditions of American nationality, we are reminded that these symbols are not going away any time soon. We may combat them or divest from them, but we cannot wish them away. Why not, then, contest them again, refashion and refigure them to render “the Texan” more thoroughly conversant in its historical *tejanidad*, geared toward interpreting its “frontier” past in terms of inclusion, adaptability, and equality, along Lasswell’s lines, rather than toward the Texas Rangers’ combativeness and insularity? Moreover, this endeavor to reclaim “the Texan” from its martial meanings involves more than mere strategy or pose. In addition to “Texans,” there are, of course, Texans. As in Aaron Fox’s argument concerning the relation between the working-class and country music, the claims to Texan identities on the part of the state’s inhabitants are “coherent, justified, and ethical,” based in, and responding to, the territory’s contentious history, even as the state’s inhabitants look toward a future less tied to cotton, cattle and oil, more toward the service sector and transnational flows of capital, less rooted in an inflexible Anglo projection of the state’s image, more open to a diversity consonant with Texas history and the larger American, and global, community.⁵

⁵ Aaron Fox, *Real Country* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 31.

However, if the temporary symbolic victories of the cosmic cowboy subculture do not convince us of the possibility of further contesting, and complicating, “the Texan” in our own time, then perhaps the cosmic cowboys’ material victories in the city of Austin, Texas, do so convince. Birmingham School theorist Angela McRobbie regarded youth subcultures as training grounds for future life, and tracing the arcs that participants took out of the Austin scene shows the contention to be valid.⁶ The generation of 1970s Austinites who came up through independent music venues, alternative publications, bands, and political activism now stand in significant positions in the culture industry, business, and politics of the city and have gone far towards establishing its civic identity. The Armadillo World Headquarters closed in 1980, but Antone’s and Threadgill’s, the latter now run by Eddie Wilson, remain cultural institutions. The PBS television program *Austin City Limits*, the magazine *Texas Monthly*, Whole Foods, and the music festival South by Southwest all have, at their core, a coterie of graduates of the Austin 1970s scene. Ann Richards won the governorship, Gonzalo Barrientos served as state senator, and Kinky Friedman ran for governor in 2006 himself, against all odds. Friedman’s campaign ran on the efforts of such fellow Seventies scenesters as Cleve Hattersley (of the band Greezy Wheels) and the visual artists Guy Juke and Bob “Daddy-O” Wade. This is but a brief and rather random selection of a wealth of possible examples. These individuals’ participation in the earlier countercultural scene was not a detour from their eventual success, but its prior condition. That they have gone far towards making Austin a vibrant and livable city suggests that the Texas they performed and envisioned looked forward to the future. Austin is not without its problems, to be sure. Issues of continued residential segregation and gentrification, development and sprawl, police brutality, and

⁶ Angela McRobbie, “Shut Up and Dance: Culture and Changing Modes of Femininity,” *Cultural Studies* 7 (1993): 412.

the deep cleavages of class continue to challenge it, but a political will exists to confront these issues. This scene can still speak in Texas accents, but it is not imprisoned by the type, more given to Lasswell's adaptability than Bush's stonewalling resolve.

The Austin progressive country scene of the 1970s, though the guiding spirit of this study, was but one node of its broader investigation of "the Texan's" projection through Anglo-Texan masculinity, and the challenges to and revisions of Anglo-Texan symbolic authority in the twentieth century. Amongst its larger cast of characters, Texas and "Texans" have proved to be moving targets, the source of a set of symbols that can be mobilized for multiple ends. Dobie, Bedichek, and Webb nostalgically celebrated the Anglo "Texan Out of the Old Rock" even as they lambasted the structures of power that hampered modern development and liberty in the state; Américo Paredes, the Raza Unida Party, Sissy Farenthold, and Barbara Jordan challenged the Anglo-masculine authority that these Lone Star Regionalists represented even as they expanded on their own political project of an inclusive, egalitarian Texas. And in the Austin, New York, Houston, Nashville, and Dallas of the 1970s, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Eddie Wilson, and Doug Sahm; Bud Shrake, Larry L. King, and Bob Wade; *Texas Monthly* and *Urban Cowboy* all tackled "the Texan" in this troubled and exhilarating moment and, through progressive revisions and conservative salvages, created a body of works, songs, institutions, and ideas whose legacy continues to delight and frustrate, entertain and intrigue, instruct and inform.

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- Leea Meckling, conducted by author, Austin, Texas, August 15, 2007.
- Gary P. Nunn, conducted by Aaron Brown with author, Austin, Texas, August 26, 2008.
- Jan Reid, conducted by Aaron Brown with author, Austin, Texas, August 27, 2008.
- Powell St. John, conducted by author, Austin, Texas, September 11, 2008.
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Vita

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