
Producers, Parasites, Patriots: Race and the New Right-Wing Politics of Precarity, by Daniel Martinez HoSang and Joseph E. Lowndes. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019. 208 pp. \$19.95 (paper). ISBN 9781517903596.

Daniel Martinez HoSang and Joseph E. Lowndes's new book, *Producers, Parasites, Patriots: Race and the New Right-Wing Politics of Precarity*, takes a critical, theoretical approach to sociopolitical change by examining how conceptions of race and class have transformed over time in the United States. In five sharp and telling chapters, the authors center their arguments around stories of racist, capitalist oppression that take on a distinctly American perspective. While components of race and class have been heavily examined, discussed, and debated throughout the literature, it is imperative that scholars revisit such discussions through a new lens, as the contemporary landscape of race and class is incredibly complex and extraordinarily fine grained. The authors add their piece to the discussion on the recent and very public rise of the "alt-right" and various white nationalist factions in the US by investigating ways that these phenomena reveal just how deeply racism is embedded into American culture, despite claims of diversity and multiculturalism. With this book HoSang and Lowndes add to the critical body of work that illuminates the aforementioned changing structures of race and class in the US by focusing on the particulars of the deployment of racialized rhetoric and categories that work in tandem to pathologize poor Americans of all demographic categories, taking time to hone in on the oft-undiscussed precarity of poor, white Americans. Those who engage with the field of Critical Whiteness Studies will find substantial benefit in reading this incredibly nuanced work, as it adds a fresh perspective to the field and addresses the historical lineages that have brought us to this contemporary moment in American politics.

To expand on the paradoxical discussion regarding a so-called multicultural United States in the face of white supremacist movements that are gaining increased traction, HoSang and Lowndes begin by looking into the scenarios that exemplify such confusion, particularly looking to cases of men of color who not only engage with, but dedicate their lives to being the face of, white supremacist politics, which one might think is inherently contradictory to the racial identity of these individuals. These sorts of cases serve as insight into this paradox, such as that of the Japanese American activist Joey Gibson, who operates the far-right group Patriot Prayer and has become one of the most infamous far-right figures in the country. Gibson and other people of color who hail as the new leaders of these conservative movements (which have traditionally been spearheaded by white men) imagine themselves as the new bearers of the civil rights movement, despite their intentions to regress on the very goals that civil rights movements intended to realize. Alt-right movements like Patriot Prayer are led by and accepting of people of color, not to uplift them but to use them as an embodiment of the message they intend to propagate: that racial oppression and institutionalized racism do not exist in the contemporary US. As such, the authors organize their book around stories like Gibson's, which are entrenched in the precarity of whiteness in the new era of right-wing politics.

The book illustrates how political and economic structures in the US have long been racialized, with some groups deemed to be self-reliant and worthy of protection from those who are dependent and degenerate: the oft-discussed and divisive argument of the “makers” and the “takers.” The changing sociopolitical conditions of the US, which have been driven by multiculturalism, globalism, and neoliberalism, have effectively but discreetly changed the faces of the categories of “producers,” “parasites,” and “patriots.” Like other recent critical discussions of the rise of the far right and white supremacy in the US, HoSang and Lowndes argue that populism and tribalism have significantly contributed to the narratives of racialization and economic hierarchies. Therefore, a significant element of the book is the authors’ emphasis on the concept of “racial transposition,” a term used to identify and describe manners of racial representation and subsequent transferal in different contexts.

In the first chapter, the authors examine how cultural representations of race were deployed to fuel anti-statist criticism during the Great Recession of the mid-2000s. Most notably, public employees and interest groups were largely vilified by right-wing critics, such as radio pundit Rush Limbaugh calling public-sector employees “freeloaders” and “parasites of government” (19). Limbaugh and others like him continually perpetuated this narrative, convincing a significant segment of the American population that public institutions and social welfare programs were to blame for taking advantage of taxpayers who foot the bills for a new, privileged class of parasites. As such, public sector wage-earners, represented by unions and dependent on these institutions for their livelihoods, were now being placed into the same racialized and gendered categories as the so-called “welfare queens” and “illegal aliens” who have long been erroneously associated with idleness and entitlement.

Adding to the discussion of the shifting narratives surrounding “producers” and “parasites,” the second chapter moves to explore the declining wages and loss of wealth of working-class individuals, who have become disillusioned with working longer hours while benefits like healthcare and paid time-off diminish. Of course, whites are not the only American demographic to undergo such loss; nonetheless, the culprits have been misleadingly identified by the far-right as feminism and political correctness gone awry. In truth, social support services have been increasingly reduced over the years, and lower-income white Americans, who had once taken for granted these economic guarantees, collectively feel abandoned by the state. This idea began to seep into the mainstream narrative as a means to claim that wealth is taken from the “producers” and redistributed to the “parasites.” HoSang and Lowndes establish a critical link between this narrative, enduring racialized poverty, and the growing loss of wealth among lower- and middle-class white American households. The economic losses that white households are now experiencing do not in any way supplant or displace the conditions that were brought about by racialized poverty but instead extend them. White Americans, on average, still remain at the top of the economic pecking order, so to speak, despite feelings of particularized vulnerability. The chapter concludes with a statement about how the authors will now move to examine the developments of new and “dangerous forms of white populism” among conservatives, which result in the rise of extremist right-wing movements that

especially aim their message toward young, white men. Further, it asserts that these new forms of white populism and vulnerable whiteness have caused some “unlikely forms of racial transposition” (71).

In the next chapter, HoSang and Lowndes return to the paradox of the traditionally white movements that now have nonwhites serving in leadership roles. They argue that the involvement of these individuals is not a symbolic ploy to attract the nonwhite vote to the Republican Party but instead a response to neoliberal politics and a growing resistance to dependence on government institutions and structures. The incorporation of select people of color into the nationalist agenda has extended into the overarching mainstream conservative agenda, as Black and Brown figures and leaders have now prominently emerged in far-right circles. Along the same lines, chapter 4 examines how nonwhite individuals end up in white supremacist movements, such as Tusitala “Tiny” Toese, a Samoan American and self-proclaimed “brown brother for Donald Trump” whom the authors describe as “enthusiastically embraced by the far right” (103). Indeed, far-right groups have become increasingly diverse, and the distinction can be found in the slight difference between white nationalism and economic nationalism. While one movement is distinctly racist and does not deny that it is, the other is more adroit because their narrative focuses on reestablishing power and control in the form of a masculine, pro-American scope. Despite continuing a racialized narrative of what it means to be American, the Trump administration has been able to draw in disaffected nonwhites who feel that their hard work and sacrifices for their country are unnoticed and often unappreciated. Relying on frameworks from political theorists such as Michael Rogin, the authors examine how American nationalists have been able to use the argument of economic nationalism as an optical guise, while what they truly support is anti-immigrant and anti-poor politics, and at the same time enigmatically claim that the United States is freedom-loving and egalitarian (109).

In the final chapter of the book, HoSang and Lowndes reiterate their concept of racial transposition, examining how it has occurred in the context of a widespread sentiment of “state abandonment” (129). That is, the attitude of having been abandoned by the state due to the economic and political disempowerment of all demographics, which was discussed in chapter 2, and the resulting movements to end state violence and regain control over people and places. To exemplify this sentiment, the 2016 militia occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon is discussed at length to examine the wider contemporary issues of popular insurgencies in Black communities like Flint, Michigan, and Ferguson, Missouri, where the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement started, following up on the reaction after George Zimmerman’s acquittal in the Florida murder trial of Trayvon Martin in 2013. While these two insurgencies emerged out of opposition to the state, they are wildly different, based on divergent cultural and racial contexts, but at the same time are focused on giving power back to the people. BLM and related transformative movements have not been able to take a real hold in areas like Flint and Ferguson because of the exact “legacies of white producerism” that helped to spur the existence of these issues arising in the first place (142). From this perspective, it is easier to see how the changing dynamics of race and class in the US have been formed in part by

anti-statist appeals, and seemingly self-contradicting movements have emerged as a refusal to accept dependency on government.

Situated within the normative tradition of political theory, the authors conclude with the argument that shifting hierarchical and oppressive structures will continue to flourish until there is simultaneously an end to both white supremacy and class rule. This may leave the reader wishing for more in terms of an action plan; however, in terms of diagnosing the cause at the heart of contemporary race politics in the United States, HoSang and Lowndes leave little room for error.

University of California, Irvine

MICHELLE KIM GARDNER
