

The Makings and Unmakings of Americans: Indians and Immigrants in American Literature and Culture, 1879–1924. By Cristina Stanciu. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023. 384 pages. \$45.00 cloth.

This year marks the centennial of the Johnson-Reed Act, or the National Quotas Act, which shaped much of US immigration policy in the early twentieth century. One hundred years later, immigration remains a critical political, social, environmental, and human rights problem. In 2021, the percentage of the US population that was foreign-born reached 15 percent, a record high seen only before in 1890 (*New York Times*, “The Global Immigration Backlash,” July 11, 2023). Indeed, the 1890s saw a wave of pivotal immigration legislation that led to 1924, including the first federal regulation over immigration (1891), the opening of Ellis Island (1892), and the formation of the Bureau of Immigration (1895). The 1890 census as well became the foundation for the exclusive quotas established by the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, restricting certain countries from out-migration over others. Yet days after the Immigration Act was signed into law, the Indian Citizenship Act was also passed. Claiming all Native individuals born within US borders as US citizens, the act at first seemed at odds with the regime of exclusion proffered by immigration laws. It is with this apparent contradiction that Cristina Stanciu begins this pivotal new work.

Stanciu, who is associate professor of English and director of the Humanities Research Center at Virginia Commonwealth University, brings a detailed literary and cultural history approach to this heavily studied period. Refreshing in both research and historiographic interventions, this work is a much-needed addition to traditional immigration histories that have struggled to include or outright absented Native voices from studies of citizenship and the fight for migrant rights. Joining recent scholars like Kevin Kenny, Christina Leza, and Benjamin Hoy, Stanciu complicates the narrative of the United States “as a nation of immigrants” by positioning Indigenous and immigrant identities together. Questioning why Native people are framed through “assimilation” and migrants through “acculturation,” she argues that both were imagined as unfit for civilization and experienced Americanization through education and exclusionary citizenship laws.

The Makings and Unmakings of Americans echoes the work of Lisa Lowe, whose foundational 1996 study *Immigrant Acts* provides an organizing framework for Stanciu’s focus on Americanization. Lowe describes “immigrant acts” as both the legal “acts” enabling Asian exclusion and the negotiated identities wrought by Asian immigrants in response. Stanciu builds upon this in naming “Native acts,” the scale of “consent and dissent” that both migrant and Native people expressed in their acceptance or rejection of Americanization ideals.

While much of the scholarship on Americanization focuses on the early twentieth century, Stanciu argues that the roots of its ideology and institutionalization may be found much earlier. Beginning in 1879 with the foundation of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, she examines political and cultural discourse concerned with immigration and the role of Native people in a moment of mass industrialization of print and visual culture. This made possible, she argues, the circulation of Americanization discourses and the tools of education to perpetuate it.

Stanciu's use of print and visual culture recalls the impact of earlier cultural histories of immigration such as *Whiteness of a Different Color* (1999), which analyzed the spread of popular forms of literature and film in the makings of European immigrant racial identities. However, Stanciu uses this methodology to focus on self-produced texts by Native and immigrant people to identify what she calls "affective Americanization." Through letters sent among students, parents, and alumni at Carlisle, school newspapers, and a wealth of publications by the Society of American Indians (SAI), Stanciu shows that the bonds between students and teachers were also replicated between parents to spread "an insidious form of cooperation" with the goals of Americanization.

Stanciu links Richard Henry Pratt and Carlisle to the foundation of SAI's citizenship ideology that Native assimilation and Americanization should follow that of immigrants. SAI relied on the figure of the immigrant to argue for political integration and the end of distinct wardship status. Figures like Carlos Montezuma rewrote, therefore, the racial script of assimilation into an alternative American identity that they hoped would safeguard Native sovereignty.

In later chapters on foreign language education and the urban, immigrant press in Chicago, she shows similar affective programming for various immigrants. Like boarding school courses for Native children, targeted language and citizenship classes promoted the assumed role of children learning English to educate their parents. Likewise, as in her examples of Yiddish literature and poetry, immigrant authors visibly reframed ethnic identities into "palatable" Americanized versions to translate across generations.

The literary and epistolary sources of the first few chapters are supplemented by Stanciu's excellent use of film, popular culture, and performance. Framing Americanization as both an ideology and a state-sponsored program, Stanciu weaves together the written with the visual, juxtaposing the self-authored voice with a directed audience experience. Using state and corporate sources such as patriotic films sponsored by Ford Motor Company that were disseminated among students and immigrant and working-class audiences, she also considers advertisements and public performances such as parades and citizenship ceremonies. Such diversity in sources helps highlight her focus on the relationships produced by media viewership and dissemination, the active participation of immigrants and Native people in *making* Americanization ideologies.

Stanciu is careful not to merge the experiences of Native and immigrant populations, pointing out that citizenship did not end Native wardship after 1924. The resulting legacy of the Indian Citizenship Act led to a decades-long struggle for voting

rights, land ownership, and, among others, border-crossing rights. US citizenship collapsed tribal identities into settler-drawn categories of nationhood that were highly protested, most notably by the Haudenosaunee-led Indian Defense League. How the story of “making” a Native identity across hundreds of distinct political nations and tribes came about is not addressed within this work. It is, however, a crucial expansion to the history of Native citizenship and the contradictions of immigration legislation. Attention to the racial legacy and the categorization of blood quantum would also magnify the legal differences between immigrants and Native people, particularly after 1924 and into the eras of recognition and termination.

As the fight for tribal sovereignty and migrant rights increasingly overlaps today in the rising percentage of Indigenous migrants at the US-Mexico border, this work pushes us to detangle categories of legal, political, and cultural belonging. On the eve of the centennial of 1924, Stanciu offers a timely intervention in studies of both Indigenous and immigrant histories that will surely be useful for scholars and students alike.

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