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Fictive Kinship: Family Reunification and the Meaning of Race and Nation in American Immigration. By Catherine Lee. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2013. Pp. xviii+181. $29.95 (paper).

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In *Fictive Kinship*, Catherine Lee illuminates the long-standing relevance of the role of family in shaping immigration policy. Set long before the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, which typically demarcates the shift from the restrictionist era of national origins to the more open era of family reunification, this book shatters our assumptions about the inherently liberalizing qualities of invoking family in the process of crafting immigration policy. Lee's central theoretical contribution is *family ideation*, which she defines as "the conceptualization of what family means, constitutes, and features in terms of its idealized characteristics, such as gender or sexual norms, class ideals, and racial or ethnic attributes" (p. 76). How we have defined the ideal family is central to the ways in which we also defined the nation, and family ideation has been a central vehicle for demarcating the boundaries of race, class, and gender. As with other sociological categories, family and kinship in this approach is also socially constructed.

Lee makes an important contribution to the literatures on policy making, framing, and though not discussed directly, the function of intersectionality in shaping inequality. She begins by comparing the role of family ideation in U.S. immigration policy to that of other countries. Though she stops short of providing a typology of family ideation across distinct national contexts, chapter 2 provides an excellent template for future comparative analyses. The detailed tables provided throughout the book reflect the changing preference categories over time and are an important reference for historians of U.S. immigration policy.

Lee walks us through the key legislation in the history of U.S. immigration policy, hitting the oft-discussed hallmarks such as the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, and the reforms of the 1990s and post-9/11 era. Yet, the author also highlights the more often overlooked bills, such as the 1907 Expatriation Act, which stripped citizenship from women who married foreign men, and the 1945 War Brides Act, which lauded the service of military men while also seeking to preserve racial purity through limited piecemeal reform. *Fictive Kinship* also draws on the archives of legislation that never passed yet set the stage for future overhauls and debates. In doing so, this book sheds light on the delicate and often fraught coalition building that has driven many of the policy compromises in the last century. For example, though today the AFL-CIO is seen as the united house of labor and champion of immigrant rights, the merger of the traditionally anti-immigrant American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the more racially progressive Congress of Industrial Relations (CIO) marked

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an important shift in the role of organized labor for the immigration debate. Though not discussed in depth, immigrant civic organizations, such as Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and later the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), also made critical interventions while also often maintaining key aspects of the status quo.

Though Lee's discussion of family ideation is tautological at times, *Fictive Kinship* provides an important theoretical intervention. This book reveals that family ideation has always emerged on both sides of the immigration debate by facilitating the simultaneous formal inclusion and informal exclusion of particular groups, by limiting women's political and sexual autonomy, and by the ways we have judged immigrants' economic and civic contributions to the country. In the vein of other critical legal theorists such as Linda Bosniak (*The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership* [Princeton University Press, 2006]), Lee's approach also emphasizes the dual function of alienage and the ways in which liberal democracies such as the United States simultaneously struggle to define the borders of the national self through exclusion of the foreign other.

Although Lee's account does not focus on the more recently divergent role of family ideation in the inclusion of deserving postwar refugees and high-skilled workers versus the deportation of low-wage laborers, Lee's initial chapters comparing Chinese exclusion to nominal Japanese inclusion are important reference points for understanding current patterns of racial formation. Today we are still grappling with who is part of a legitimate family (e.g., attempts to limit and exclude siblings), what constitutes legal proof of familial ties (e.g., the role of biology and bureaucracy), what types of families are deserving (e.g., the reification of military families and the criminalization of those believed to have engaged in "fraud"), concerns about chain migration and social service use (e.g., the sensationalization of immigrant "public charges"), and how should the needs of immigrant families be weighed vis-à-vis concerns about the economy and national security. Our nation has already seen these issues, Lee reminds her readers, come before us.

Fictive Kinship also contextualizes immigration policy in the concurrent debates raging in other arenas such as civil rights and geopolitics. Yet, at times, the author seems to place immigration policy in an exceptional category unto itself. Conversely, one could argue that immigration policy is in large part a foil for family ideation in these and other realms. For example, Senator Jeff Sessions's impassioned speech regarding the primary responsibility of the family to care for immigrant parents parallels basic Republican views of the limited role of the government and individual responsibility (p. 110). Lee implores us to not assume that the invocation of family in immigration policy is necessary liberalizing. Yet, a review of family ideation in this and other policy arenas such as economic justice, women's reproductive rights, and welfare reform provides little evidence that it necessarily would be.

Fictive Kinship is an important book for scholars and policy makers who may be quick to valorize the strategic references to family unity in attempts

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to surmount our current congressional impasse. As scholars such as Leisy Abrego, Joanna Dreby, Cecilia Menjívar, and Amalia Pallares have also attested, these notions of family still largely privilege white, heteronormative, and middle-class nuclear formations while ignoring transnational realities. Lee makes an indispensable contribution to this growing and increasingly important field.

Native Life in South Africa by Sol T. Plaatje. Pp. 382. London: P. S. King, 1916. *Mhudi* by Sol T. Plaatje. Pp. 190. Francolin: Capetown, 1996.

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In the first few years of the Union of South Africa, the warp and weft of apartheid were not yet fully spun. The political, social, and economic groupings that later composed that unstable fabric were themselves not yet enduring social realities. And in different worlds they might have made a different cloth. We must therefore ask when and how apartheid as practiced in the 1950s and 1960s became inevitable.

We ask this question in order to avoid the many teleological narratives of this case: of nationalism and racism, of secret societies and amoral capitalism, of struggle and emancipation. We seek rather the contingencies of social perception and action that swirled in the decades before the momentous election of 1948 and the links and arrangements through which those local contingencies gradually chained themselves together into the phenomenon of apartheid, a phenomenon with its own seeming teleology, which doomed the heirs of its proponents just as surely as those proponents had believed themselves to be doomed without it. To rediscover the contingency from which this inevitability somehow emerged—the contingency that characterizes social life as it is actually lived—we need views from within the ongoing social process. One such is Sol Plaatje.

Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje was born in 1876, sixth son of African farmers of the Barolong people. Since his parents were members of the Berlin Missionary Society's communities at Doornfontein (and later Pniel) on the Vaal River, Plaatje studied and taught in mission schools until he was 17. In surrounding Barolong communities, observing the ways of Native justice, the missionaries introduced him to Western literature. In 1894 Plaatje took a job in the Kimberley post office and began an active social and political life in the city's community of mission-educated Africans. (Since Africans could then vote in the Cape Colony, the politics were real and consequential.) He read Shakespeare, sang solos in concerts, and became active in court challenges to the pass laws, already being used to harass Africans.

In 1898, Plaatje married. The couple came from different tribes and spoke different languages, but the marriage was long, happy, and productive, al-

* Another review from 2053 to share with *AJS* readers.—*Ed.*

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