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I Am With You

The Red Hot Chili Peppers, The Fans, and the Harmful Effects of *Californication*

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One of the Red Hot Chili Peppers' most recent projects is a book of photographs titled *Fandemonium*. David Mushegain, the photographer for the book, paired with the Peppers to show the fans that "they weren't just another face in the crowd" (Mushegain 39). The book features the stories of over one hundred individual fans from the 2011-2013 *I'm With You* tour. In his introduction to the book, Anthony Kiedis, the lead singer and lyricist for the Peppers, explains his connection to the band's fan base. He writes that the fans were attracted to the Peppers' authenticity, unlike the "posers" in the popular hair metal bands who were simply putting on a show (21). The Peppers were a band to which the audience in California could relate. Kiedis writes that the band's atmosphere "made people feel like, 'Oh, I can talk to these guys. There're just knuckleheads like me'" (21). Since the beginning of their career, the Peppers have had a special relationship with their fans, and this essay will argue that the Peppers used *Californication* to reach an audience harmed by Hollywood's influence on the American Dream.

However, before engaging the album, it is important to understand how postmodernism affected the history of celebrity and the American Dream. According to Val Rust, postmodernism claims that humans no longer possess the ability to attach ultimate meaning to words, arguing against the modernist thought that there is a "universal, international style" (Rust 611). This idea is further explained by Jean Baudrillard, who argues that culture has obliterated nature, especially through replacing reality with signs (Baudrillard 1557). He begins by explaining the loss of the transcendent signified. With a god figure as a metanarrative, signs were stable and thereby represented reality. However, with the death of religion during the Enlightenment, humans have lost the capacity for a single stable sign (1559). He argues for

symbolic order where the sign, or any thing, is comprised of two parts. The signifier, which is the word representing the sign, and the signified, which is the thing itself.

Baudrillard's first level of symbolic order states that when signs are stable, no one doubts the meaning behind the sign, and art reflects a basic reality. However, he would argue that, as a result of postmodernism, there are no more stable signs, and therefore the symbolic order has been steadily decreasing in its realness. Thereby, the second level is when art masks or perverts a basic reality (Baudrillard 1560). This level occurred between the Renaissance and the beginning of the Enlightenment eras. However, the Enlightenment gave way to the next level, which progressed to the modern period. This is when art masks the absence of a basic reality. Finally, once society moved into the postmodern, art bears no relation to reality at all (1560).

Katherine Hayles expands Baudrillard's theory of signs, and explains why the sign is more unstable after the popularity of the internet in the 1990s. Hayles examines Lacan and Levi Strauss' theory of the floating signifier. As humans have moved through time, the sign has transitioned from one stable narrative to several somewhat unstable narratives, similar to Baudrillard's symbolic order. This comes as a result of an increase in images with the introduction of mass media, like the television in 1950's America. The images are floating because they change at regular intervals, and the individual has the ability to choose which images to believe and which to ignore (Hayles 2165-2171).

However, with the rise of the internet, Hayles argues for a transition to the flickering signifier. Signs have moved from floating to flickering because, where the previous images were hanging in the air, the new images appear and are immediately discredited by the next image.

Since information travels quickly across the internet, it only takes a moment for the meaning of one image to be lost to the next (Hayles 2178). Thereby, the definition of human is lost to the power of the flickering signifier.

Finally, Michel Foucault examines how power vectors influence individual thought. Foucault focuses on the influence of government authority on the institutionalization of prisons. He examines how the power vectors influence individual thought. Originally, discipline came through an open system of punishment, where the collective community would decide whether or not to punish a person. Then, the community would also choose the punishment. Thereby, punishment had a clear purpose. Eventually, society institutionalized discipline in a closed system of punishment. This is the introduction of the carceral system, where police are used to enforce laws established by power vectors. Criminals are placed in prisons, where they can be observed at all times. Foucault terms this constant observation the panoptic (Foucault 1491-1502). However, within the context of Hayles' flickering signifier and the postmodern influence on the American Dream, Foucault's theories on the influence of power vectors can also apply to the authority of the media.

Anthony Oberschall examines this connection between Foucault's panoptic and the media. Oberschall connects mass media to "the full glare of publicity," which he also calls "the 'whole world is watching' phenomenon" (Oberschall 280). His argument that the atmosphere of the demonstration changes when the whole of society is observing it echoes Foucault's theory of the panoptic. He explains that "The presence of a camera transforms a demonstration" (280). People take more chances when the press is present because they know their actions will

be observed by the entire world, showing that the constant watch of the media influences the public (280).

He notes that the authorities also became victims of the panoptic. As the public watches the news coverage, although the power vectors controlling the media are not explicitly being observed, the vectors' preferences become apparent. Thereby, when the authorities single out media stars for prosecution, "they ended up adding to their [the media stars] stature and provided a rallying point for the opposition" (281). Society then sees how the power vectors manipulate the media, and attempts to combat that control.

Oberschall then connects Foucault to Hayles' flickering signifiers when he examines how the media is pressured to provide "instant coverage, analysis, and commentary in the context of the highly competitive communications industry" (280). This instant coverage causes contradictions between the information provided, as the news constantly shifts between sides of the conflict, each trying to discredit the other. He writes that "media exposure was a rapid and cheap way of mobilizing a following and of drawing a response from target groups" (282). With an understanding of these theories on postmodernism and the influence of the media, it is possible to understand how Hollywood affects the American Dream and celebrity status.

In the early 1900s, celebrity status entered human history, originating in New York and, more prominently, Hollywood. This system of celebrity grew until, by the late twentieth century, celebrities had come to expect "obsequious deference, exact significant financial tribute, and lay claim to legal privilege" (Kurzman 347). This expectation correlates with Max Weber's work on social groups. Weber asserts that "status is a group characteristic" creating "an autonomous social hierarchy" produced by the society as a whole (Kurzman 348). High

status is defined by “a specific *style of life*,” and thereby use this style of life to limit entry into their status (348-349). Weber claims that those in high-status “usurp” this recognition and status from the lower-status groups, through gaining a certain economic class and legal privilege (349). Finally, through limiting contact with people of lower status, they enforce the differentiation between themselves and the common.

However, within contemporary society a new status system has developed outside of Weber’s theory, the system of celebrity. Within this system, the boundaries between high and low status are uncertain, “with members of the highest-status groups being whisked in and out every year,” much like Hayles’ flickering signifiers (Kurzman 352). Celebrity status has “acquired a new significance in the era of mass media,” as images and information pass rapidly (352). These flickering images are demanded by audiences, and thereby solidify the need for celebrity within contemporary society (353). Unlike previous status groups, celebrity is “a creature of capitalism” (353). They arise from the “commodification of reputation,” promoted primarily through the introduction of the public relations industry, which sculpts the image of celebrity to fit the demands of society (353). As Horkheimer and Adorno noted, the culture industry uses celebrity to distract society from the power vector behind the media, and “measures its interchangeable starlets solely by their box-office earnings” making all of their performances advertisements for the industry (353).

Most significantly, the shift in celebrity toward the end of the 20th Century marks the influence of postmodernism and the flickering signifier on the status group. Andy Warhol predicted, “In the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes,” and later changed the line to “In fifteen minutes everybody will be famous” (354). For the current era, Warhol’s

prediction is seemingly accurate. Now, celebrity status requires a “constant recruitment of new members” because the demands of society change so quickly (354). These demands have caused an increase in the number of individuals seeking to gain their fifteen minutes.

This celebrity status has also led to the creation of a cult of celebrity. As soon as the celebrity status arose in society, stars began to appear in everyday life, with advertisements, newspapers, and magazines. The increase in the prominence of the star is directly linked with the growing popularity of the film industry. Samantha Barbas writes how celebrities had become educators to the general public of America, teaching “concrete lessons in personality, style, and good grooming” (Barbas 36). These celebrities, then, promoted the expanding consumer culture through the advertising industry. Thereby, celebrities were creating the image of personality which was deemed ideal (Barbas 52).

Barbas concludes her chapter “The Cult of Personality” by examining the Hollywood cult of celebrity. American pop culture was revolutionized by the “merger of movies and modernity” (Barbas 56). The growth of urban society led to more emphasis on performing skills than character, and society looked toward Hollywood to determine those skills. This is how celebrities became “America’s ideal models of personality” (56). Barbas writes that the cultural impact of this new cult of celebrity was enormous. Society as a whole began revolving around Hollywood, to the point where the media regularly reported on celebrity life (57). This focus on the celebrity created a new fan culture, to whom “worshipping a star meant not only watching her films, but buying the items she endorsed, the styles she wore, and the magazines that chronicled her latest adventures,” thereby perpetuating the cult of personality (57).

Michael Coyne further explains the cult of celebrity. He comments that “stars are placed somewhere “between gods and heroes” (Coyne 430). However, although the stars are idolized, he notes that they fill a “unique American cultural need” (430). Society needs celebrity as much as celebrity is dependent on the culture industry. Therefore, society thrives on following the “social and family background, personal temperament and any marked discrepancy between star image and private actuality” (430). This cult of celebrity is defined by Fowles’ theory that society is dependent on the stars. He explains Hollywood’s construction of “a Great Life,” which is the lifestyle created by the stars which effectively standardizes the construction of celebrity (431). He writes that “Hollywood’s treatment of a given historical personage was as likely to structure its narrative by borrowing from other movie lines which had previously struck gold” to explain how, through attempting to meet the demands of society, the culture industry will recycle material until the concept of celebrity is standard and universal across all spheres (431).

However, Daniel Harris argues that the cult of celebrity affects the celebrities. Pop culture, and much of high culture “thrive on myths of untutored genius,” believing that artists don’t need to undergo training, but rather are born with the natural skill (Harris 623). The social bodies of the celebrities, are thereby dictated to act in accordance with the “mythology of genius” (623). The weight of being determined to not need practice tends to drive stars’ lives out of control, leading to drug and alcohol addiction. Yet, this loss of control is not only accepted, it’s expected of celebrities, because culture dictates that the genius must live a troubled life (623). This permissiveness of “their self-destructive misconduct” as a guarantee of their authenticity as geniuses “ultimately leads to their high rate of mortality” (623-624).

Then, Hollywood also affects the the concept of the American Dream. Lawrence Samuel explains that this dream was first named during the Great Depression. At that time, the dream was “a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage,” but it has since changed into the acquisition of “a golf course viewed through the picture window” (Samuel 42). When the term was birthed, it was defined as, “The dream is a vision of a better, deeper, richer life for every individual, regardless of the position in society which he or she may occupy by the accident of birth” (13). However, the American Dream “splintered and fragmented in the postwar years” as the nation became more complex (42). During the Depression, the dream meant the ability to provide for oneself and one’s family, but in the prosperity of postwar America, it blossomed into “virtually any situation involving aspiration or achievement” (43). Thereby, the American Dream became a focus on acquiring a certain status within society. Within the 1950’s society, the dream became a focus on commercial products. The American Dream was owning the latest appliances and having the appearance of wealth. This same time period saw the rise of celebrity taking a hold on the culture industry. Babe Ruth, in the thirties and forties, became an icon of the American Dream, but he was celebrated in 1958 (54). He gained fame through being the best at baseball, but was idolized because of his wealth and his “fondness for fast cars (and fast women)” (55). Most importantly, however, Ruth was raised in an orphanage, showing that anyone could accomplish the dream.

Samuel argues that the constant shift in the meaning of the American Dream displayed one consistent theme. This was that the dream promoted the acquisition of a certain status. In order to acquire the material goods expected in the dream, one required access to wealth.

According to Samuel, this wealth was always accompanied with status, whether that be celebrity, or simply the attainment of Weber's high-status (Samuel 62-63).

Dick Meyer, then, connects Samuel's explanation of the American Dream with the influence of the cult of celebrity. The values of the United States are found in the political system of the nation, and on the American Dream, which, as seen in Samuel's text, has lost a true definition. Therefore the foundation of American society is unstable. Subsequently, Meyer argues that American culture has filled itself with the "business of the self" (Meyer 70). He blames the culture of narcissism defined by Christopher Lasch for producing this focus on feeling. Lasch wrote, "What a man does matters less than the fact that he has 'made it'" (71). This status is the end goal of the "American Way," attaining the wealth and fame accompanied by celebrity (72). The American people want to emulate celebrities until they become them.

However, Meyer seems to contradict himself near the end of his book. With a theory he calls the "Character Gap," Meyer argues that Americans are unable to trust celebrities, because they are expected to have character traits that don't match their social status. Celebrities, according to the rules of society, should be considered in the high class of the status groups because of their wealth and limited contact with the general public (206). However, as Meyer points out, celebrities tend to have personalities which cause them to act outside the of high status. As a result, these figure heads of society, acting against the status they are supposedly promoting, fill the American public with distrust. However, the public, under the influence of the cult of celebrity, are still influenced to mimic the stars (207).

Yet, this mixture of celebrity and the American Dream influenced the culture of California, and, more specifically, Los Angeles. Kenneth Marcus writes that "the recording and

radio industries helped define modern entertainment in Los Angeles” (Marcus 163). He explains how the large number of radio stations not only reflected the demand for radio, but also helped produce a “radio culture” in which recording artists sought to bring together “virtual communities of listeners who enjoyed a variety of music” (163). Marcus writes that radio broadcasting paved the way for Los Angeles to become the center of the entertainment industry which would later be defined by the growth of film.

Michael Fallon comments that L.A. has become the cultural capital of California. L.A., as “the richest, healthiest, most admired urban area in the United States,” embodies the “California Dream” (Fallon 1). This dream is fame, wealth, and happiness, all of which the city promises. As the influence of Los Angeles grew, it eventually spread into areas of art historically characterized as “the territory of Eastern [American] establishments,” namely theatre, dance, music, literature, and visual art (2). In his book, Fallon explores how California eventually came to dominate these fields of art.

However, Fallon argues it was the seventies in which the artists were struggling to define the meaning of art. He writes how the artists of the seventies transitioned the art scene from a focus on “dominant group narratives,” to “a fragmented ‘society of spectacle,’” showing the movement toward postmodernism and Hayles’ theory of the flickering signifier (Fallon 309). The art culture allowed almost anything as “there was no returning to the singular and heroic art narratives of the past” (341). In this new atmosphere, anyone had the potential to rise to the top. Fallon explains how the term “Appropriation” came to dictate the art scene in the seventies (314). Appropriation had to do with the influence of Baudrillard, who is noted to have gained “five minutes” of fame for his theory of simulacra (314). Through the disassociation of

image with meaning, the generation of artists in the seventies would leave the 1980's with the disillusionment of the California Dream (342). However, the artists who rose during the seventies, and into the early eighties, found that their art impacted the culture of California. This impact came through redefining art to fit into the new context of art without a grand narrative (342).

Within this context, Blackie Dammett, the stage name of John Michael Kiedis, left his family in Michigan and moved to Los Angeles. He hoped to pursue the American Dream through acting, and as previously stated, Hollywood was the space to find that success. However, in order to chase this dream, he had to leave his wife Peggy Idema and their son Anthony Kiedis. After Dammett left, Idema and Kiedis had a difficult home life, leading Kiedis to move to Los Angeles with his father when he was twelve. When he left, he told his friends he was going to be a movie star, already showing the cult of celebrity obsession of status (Kiedis 25). Once in California, his father exposed him to the artistic culture of Los Angeles. At the same time that Kiedis had his first joint, at the age of twelve, his father had him take pictures of a naked girl, but had added that it "might be more artistic if you just had her expose one of her breasts" (27). This was the kind of relationship Kiedis had with his father and with California culture. He was learning that drug use and art of all kinds went hand in hand. His father, an attempted actor, spent most of his time high on drugs. As a result, Kiedis found a role model in Sonny Bono, someone who had already achieved the celebrity status (29). When his father's acting career wasn't paying bills, Dammett turned to selling cocaine and prescription narcotics.

In high school, Kiedis became friends with Michael Balzary (Flea), Jack Irons, and Hillel Slovak, who would later become the first lineup of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. After they

graduated, they realized college wasn't for them, and decided to form a band. Slovak and Irons were already in a somewhat successful band named *What Is This?* (Apter 125). However, through an accidental need for a singer during a performance, Kiedis got up and rapped some of his poetry and thus the Red Hot Chili Peppers began, originally as Tony Flow and the Miraculously Majestic Masters of Mayhem (60).

Slovak and Kiedis were best friends, and eventually began getting and taking heroin together. Kiedis remarks that Slovak was "a late bloomer to drugs" (Kiedis 83). Kiedis however, had started heroin around the time of his short stay at college. Kiedis recalled a time when, on tour with the Peppers, he and Slovak had promised to quit heroin (221). Their next gig was in Oslo, after they played the show, they flew home, and Slovak died of a heroin overdose. Kiedis, then, did the only thing he knew how to do, and went and got more heroin. He writes, "You don't want to deal with your own wreckage, you just want to keep getting high" (223). Slovak's death was the inspiration for the Peppers' song "Under the Bridge," which gained the band fame in mainstream music (Apter 151). Eventually, Kiedis went to rehab and got off the heroin. However, the band had to find a replacement guitarist.

This is when Kiedis met John Frusciante. Frusciante was a fan of the Peppers, and had memorized all of their songs on the guitar. After Slovak's death, the band's decision to add the eighteen year-old was only logical, because, he not only knew the songs, he had the funk the Peppers needed. However, after helping with the album *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*, Kiedis writes that Frusciante "didn't know how to live in tandem with that creativity" and started using heroin (Kiedis 280). His addiction continued to worsen, just like Kiedis' or Slovak's, until he eventually quit the band in 1992. He left because he couldn't get rid of "the voices in his head

(his “spirits”)” (Fitzpatrick 101). He had fallen into serious heroin addiction, to the point where he’d lost his teeth and a lot of his hair (100). Frusciante, who had decided to constantly take heroin and cocaine because they were the only way he could be happy after he quit the band, not only lost his health, but also most of his guitar skill from the absence.

However, he couldn’t stay away forever. Six years after he quit, he returned, after having nearly died from heroin addiction. Kiedis remarks that “I didn’t want to see him die a sad and miserable death,” remembering his previous experience with Slovak (Kiedis 397). However, the band needed to make some changes to bring Frusciante back into the band. Frusciante and Kiedis had a terrible relationship near the time Frusciante quit the band in 1992. Apter notes that Kiedis had become self-absorbed and just completely ignored Frusciante on stage. Frusciante recalled that “it was always that Flea and Anthony were at odds with each other and I was always friends with one of them,” but all three could not be friends at the same time (Apter 301). When he and Frusciante finally talked about their problems with each other Kiedis says, “I thought we should probably go over all this stuff, but I don’t feel bothered by it anymore” (Kiedis 398). This tense relationship makes Kiedis’ recollection of the restoration of his and Frusciante’s friendship in *Scar Tissue* more impactful. However, when the band decided to let him play again, “it was so funky, that I [Kiedis] don’t think I’ll ever experience that feeling ever again” (Fitzpatrick 101).

Frusciante rejoined the band in 1997, and in 1999, the Red Hot Chili Peppers released their seventh studio album, *Californication*. The album was the band’s highest grossing, selling over 12 million copies. Kiedis, Flea, and the the rest of the band had all begun changing their individual characters during the writing and after the production of *Californication*. Mirit Eliraz

examines the character of the individual band members around this time. He quotes Flea, who exclaimed that “[Kiedis] has really shed his ego and is much more considerate of the world around him” (Eliraz 204). Eliraz calls this the “inner search” on which the band embarked during their work on the album, and he notes that “their mutual bond has grown stronger as a direct result of these efforts” (204). Thereby, Eliraz argues that Kiedis recognized the harmful nature of californication through his interaction with Frusciante.

Steven Van Wolputte defines the act of californication as a “dominant ideology [that] promotes looking young and beautiful as a way of being healthy, successful, and morally right,” and this identity “is considered conterminous with lifestyle, a commodity to be purchased” (Wolputte 264). In his article “HANG ON TO YOUR SELF: Of Bodies, Embodiment, and Selves,” he examines the difference between the physical body and the social body, claiming the two bodies are interdependent. The physical body effects the social, and yet itself only being experienced through social terms. The social body, then, is only a symbol. Yet, it restricts the actions of the physical body (253). Van Wolputte, then, relates the body and space. He argues that, in order for the body to even become a social construction, it must first be associated with a space. Spatial ordering “fits the symbolic and social order,” meaning that space is the interaction between text and context (253-254). Here he argues that social interaction is “riddled with contradiction and conflict” which is shaped by the dominating ideologies of the space within which those social orders are found (254).

Within the context of the social and spatial body, Van Wolputte proposes a logical definition of californication, as the society dictating how the body should look and act. This dictation becomes synonymous with success and moral character, influenced heavily by the

media and the depictions of celebrities, specifically in Hollywood. However, this influence of californication on the body in contrast with the individual self raises “the awareness of fragmentation and multiplicity brings with it a stronger emphasis on an ideology that denies it” (264).

Yet, Van Wolputte’s definition of californication only focuses on the physical appearance and how that plays into the social ideologies. The Peppers, both through the album *Californication* and their individual lives, show how the social space and the influence of California has affected their identities, thereby affirming Van Wolputte’s analysis. However, the Peppers redefine californication as a compound word composed of California and fornication, to expose how the Hollywood culture and the pursuit of the American Dream has “fucked,” or harmed, both those rejected and accepted by celebrity, and use that definition to connect with the audience affected by californication.

The song, “Californication,” as the title track, provides a basis for the Peppers’ definition of the act of californication. At the beginning of the song, Kiedis describes a few types of people who move to California looking for success, the “Psychic spies” and the “Little girls from Sweden” (“Californication” 1-4). These dreams, to gain the recognition of the general public, are what Kiedis uses in the first stanza to define californication. This idea reflects Foucault’s theory of the panoptic. With Hollywood as the center of entertainment media and the influence of the cult of celebrity, those who gain fame are constantly being watched by the general public. Kiedis restates this idea in the fourth stanza when he references Greek fame with “be my very own constellation,” with a double meaning of being a star, in the sense of acquiring celebrity status, and being visible to the general public (22). In the same stanza, he also alludes

to the cult of celebrity when the teenage bride is “getting high on information,” using a drug reference to describe the addictive nature of following celebrity gossip and news (24).

In the second stanza, he claims that “it’s understood that Hollywood sells Californication,” and it is important to note his use of “sells” (“Californication” 12). As seen through Kiedis’ experience with californication, he uses the word “sells” to argue that the success comes with a price. Within the context of Frusciante’s recent reconnection with the band after his self-destruction from the effects of drug use related to the band’s fame, Kiedis’ understanding of the cost of californication is logical. He echoes this idea in the fourth stanza when he writes, “buy me a star on the boulevard,” with the boulevard alluding to Hollywood Boulevard and its Walk of Fame, but once again connoting the idea of a cost to that fame with the use of “buy” (25).

Then, Kiedis shows the definition of californication presented by Van Wolputte. He writes, “Pay your surgeon very well to break the signs of aging,” showing how appearance is influenced by the social expectation that people with success in Hollywood have “Celebrity skin” (“Californication” 13-16). With these lines, Kiedis displays Van Wolputte’s idea that the social body of celebrities, affects their own physical body and the bodies of those wanting to attain celebrity status. He reinforces this idea by repeating the lines in the final pre-chorus.

The chorus echoes typical Peppers’ style with its use of the absurd. However, with the strangeness of the lyrics, Kiedis explains the nature of celebrity. Kiedis uses the absurd language in this song to show the complexity of californication, since, although the Peppers often use absurd lyrics, the chorus is the only time they appear in this song. With “First born unicorn,” Kiedis explains that success as a result of californication is rare (“Californication” 17). As

proposed in the introduction, the success of the album was in part related to the Peppers' ability to connect with an audience that experienced the negative effects of californication. Therefore, Kiedis uses "First born" to imply that the "unicorn" is the recipient of an inheritance, which, within the context of the title of both the song and the album, seems to be the success of Hollywood (17). The unicorn mentioned is a mythical creature, which Kiedis uses to imply that this inheritance is only received in rare instances (17). Next, he compares californication to "Hard core soft porn," which is an oxymoronic statement (18). Kiedis uses this to show the contradictory nature of californication, and how the success doesn't come without harm, shown prominently through the life of Frusciante, whose experience with fame led him to self-destruction through drug abuse. Kiedis then intentionally repeats "Dream of Californication" (19-20). These lines draw the connection between the absurdity in the first two lines of the chorus and the overall theme of the song, showing that people are expected to dream of this success, but in reality it is rare and often comes with self-destruction.

After this chorus, the song shifts from describing the dream of attaining fame, to revealing the unfulfilling nature of californication. In the fifth stanza, Kiedis begins exposing how the Hollywood dream is fake. He alludes to Star Trek with space as the "final frontier," and claims that even space is "made in a Hollywood basement" ("Californication" 27-28). He then alludes to the suicide of Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain, whom he rhetorically asks if Cobain can hear his fame "singing songs off station to station," relating Cobain's death to californication (30). Finally, he alludes to Star Wars, saying that Alderaan, the planet that was destroyed by the Death Star, is "not far away," again showing the falsity of Hollywood (31).

Kiedis then draws on the panoptic again in the second pre-chorus, however, this time he shows the negative side. He writes that californication was “born and raised by those who praise control of population,” implying that the people in charge of the media use it to control the public through the cult of celebrity (“Californication” 33). He reasserts this control through using the panoptic when he claims “everybody’s been there [California],” meaning that everyone has experience with californication through the entertainment industry and the media (34). However, he also sings that those people did not experience californication “on vacation,” implying that the media does not have a positive influence (34).

However, although Kiedis exposes the negative aspects of californication, he must still attribute the Peppers’ success to it. He writes that, “destruction leads to a very rough road but it also breeds creation,” showing that, although they experienced drug addiction and Slovak’s death, they did still gain their fame (“Californication” 41-42). He restates this idea in the next two lines when he claims that earthquakes, or the negative side of californication, are “just another good vibration,” because that destruction led to their success (43-44).

Finally, Kiedis ends the song claiming that the effects of californication are inevitable. He sings that “tidal waves couldn’t save the world from Californication,” claiming that the California represented by the media and the cult of celebrity is an idea, not a location (“Californication” 45-46). Therefore, the idea is not limited to people in California. Then, he writes “sicker than the rest, there is no test, but this is what you’re craving,” meaning that californication is a sickness, because of the destruction he has already described in the song, but this sickness is what leads to fame (49-51). The final chorus, then, urges the listener to “Dream of Californication” after having exposed the negative influence of the idea (54-57).

Therefore, through the song, Kiedis establishes the Peppers' definition of californication, showing both the influence of the cult of celebrity and American Dream on the social body, and the harm they cause.

Now, with this understanding of the song "Californication," the rest of the album shows how all of the songs fit under the Peppers' definition of californication. The overall structure of the album seems to show the realization of the negative influence of celebrity and how Kiedis' interaction with Frusciante exposed the need to escape from this influence. Then, the album reaches out to its audience, making a connection between the experiences of the band and the experiences of the fans. Thereby, the Peppers use the album to connect with the audience and reveal the effects of californication.

In the first song, "All Around the World," The Peppers ease the audience into the negative influence of celebrity. The song seems to celebrate the Peppers' success, which allows them to travel the world, play their music, and have sex. Kiedis gives it an autobiographical feel when he writes, "born in the north," referring to Michigan, and references some of the cities and states which the band visited on tours ("All Around the World" 5). He implies that their travels are the result of their music, or their fame, when he sings, "sworn to entertain ya" (6). He again shows the hopeful view by writing that "I [Kiedis] know for sure that life is beautiful around the world" (18). He even proposes a hopeful view on California when he writes, "Where you want to go? Who you want to be? What you want to do? Just come with me," implying that, since the band gained their fame through californication, that the listener can also get whatever they want by following the band's example (41-44).

However, Kiedis hints at a problem with californication. With the lines “I must warn ya, bout the motherfuckin’ girls from California,” he seems to say that those girls are desirable, most likely with a sexual connotation (“All Around the World” 10-12). However, within the context of the album’s title, and the definition of californication that Kiedis seems to be establishing with the album, the lines could also show that Kiedis actually wants to warn listeners about California, not the girls. Then, while the first two choruses include the lines “life is beautiful around the world” and “you say ‘hello’ and then I say ‘I do,’” in the last chorus, Kiedis replaces these lines with gibberish words (18, 38). Thereby, Kiedis shows a loss of certainty in himself, because, he sings, “I know, I know for sure,” before the lines he replaced with gibberish (17, 37, 57).

The next song, “Parallel Universe,” shows the negative effects of californication more explicitly. In “Californication,” Kiedis exposed both the negative effects of celebrity, but also how it led to the Peppers’ success. In the first verse of “Parallel Universe,” Kiedis writes that “it’s getting harder and harder to tell what came first,” which, within this context, could mean he is uncertain if the fame came before the negative influence, or the other way around (“Parallel Universe” 2). He then writes that he is “a California king,” or a graduate of californication, which he claims is the only thing that matters (5-6). With the line “I swear it’s everywhere, oh it’s everything,” Kiedis claims that californication is everywhere, and the fame and harm that come from it are everything (6).

Then, Kiedis comments on the band’s connection with its fanbase. He claims that californication effects people on a psychological level when he sings, “Psychic changes are born in your heart to entertain. A nervous breakthrough that makes us the same” (“Parallel

Universe” 15-16). Kiedis uses the “us” to connect the band to to audience. He references a girl, who has experienced the negative effects of californication (17). He urges her to “kill the pressure” that causes her to cry, implying that she has had an unsuccessful attempt at acquiring fame (18). However, Kiedis sings “I am with you,” to show that he understands how the failed attempts at success through californication feels, because he watched his father sell drugs when acting did not work for him (19). Therefore, the Peppers can have community with their audience within the negative influence of californication.

This idea of community shows itself explicitly in the Grammy award-winning song “Scar Tissue.” Within the context of the album’s title, “scar tissue that I [Kiedis] wish you saw” refers to the harm Kiedis experienced as a result of californication, his father’s failure, his drug abuse, Slovak’s death, and Frusciante’s self-destruction (“Scar Tissue” 1). However, unlike his father, Kiedis did acquire fame, and in the song’s chorus, he reveals that this success was not fulfilling. He sings “With the birds I’ll share this lonely view,” meaning that, although he has risen up to the rank of celebrity, he feels like no one fully understands the difficulty he experienced to acquire fame (5). Therefore, he sings about the scars he has acquired from the negative influence of californication. He references these difficulties in the third and fourth verses. In the third verse he sings about his experience with drug abuse, “blood lost in a bathroom stall” (14). Then, in the same verse, he writes about the issues he had with his mother in Michigan and his experience with his father’s drug habits and failure in acting, “wave goodbye to ma and pa” (16). In the fourth verse he shows his desire to gain the fame, even through all of the harm californication caused him, when he sings “I’ll make it to the moon if I have to crawl” (23). In

Fandemonium, Kiedis writes that sharing these stories of his life helped him connect with the fans on a personal level (Mushegain 22).

In the song "Otherside" Kiedis justifies the negative influence of californication because it was the only part he knew. Until Frusciante returned to the band, the Peppers had always had some problem with drug abuse, death, or a missing band member. Therefore, Kiedis asks, "How long will I slide?" in the chorus of the song, wondering if californication will ever be good for them ("Otherside" 1). Yet, he justifies the harm by claiming "I don't believe it's bad. Slit my throat. It's all I ever [had]," revealing how, until that point, he only experienced the negative side of californication (3-5).

Kiedis explains the need to justify the harm through the rest of the song. First, the title implies that the "otherside" is the transition between pursuing success through californication and experiencing the negative influence of celebrity. However, he sings that "once you know you can never go back," meaning that once he decided to pursue fame, there was no other option ("Otherside" 8). Kiedis uses this idea to connect with the fanbase again, many of whom had experiences with californication like that of Kiedis' father, and were now ruined by the pursuit of fame. Then, Kiedis alludes to his own self-destruction when he sings, "Pour my life into a paper cup. The ashtray's full and I'm spillin' my guts," to refer to his drug abuse (22-23). These difficulties, he sings, "I've [Kiedis] got to take them on the otherside," meaning that they are just an aspect of californication (24). Finally, he alludes to how the self-destruction that comes with the pursuit of fame can kill people, like it did to Slovak, when he sings, "push the trigger and pull the thread" (27).

Kiedis uses the bridge of the song to show the true nature of the relationship between californication and self-destruction. He sings, "Turn me on, take me for a hard ride. Burn me out and leave me on the otherside," which not only alludes to the sexual nature of californication as California and fornication, but also shows how Kiedis was willing to endure the self-destruction as long as he ended gained celebrity status ("Otherside" 36-37). Thereby, Kiedis connects to the audience who had also experienced the harmful effects of californication.

The next song is "Get On Top," which alludes to acquiring the celebrity status. Kiedis uses this song to reveal how californication occurs. The first verse consists primarily of negative and criminal images. In the first stanza, Kiedis uses the words, "cunt," "Salmonella," "ass killer," and "ill" to connote the process of acquiring fame with negativity ("Get On Top" 3-7). Alongside these negative words, Kiedis presents criminal imagery with the lines, "I'll malingering on your block and give the finger to a cop and pick a lock before I knock" (8-11). He also refers to drug abuse when he sings, "she lit up" (19). All of these images "set you up to get on top," which Kiedis sings to connect the acquisition of celebrity status with harm (12). He also reveals the panoptic with the media influence on californication in the second verse when he sings, "show stopper," "wife swapper," and "big bopper," alluding to television programs and personalities (20-22).

Then, the randomness of these images can be related to Hayles' flickering signifier. With the influence of the media, and new methods of gaining fame constantly arising and then disappearing, Kiedis' proposal of gaining fame using negative, criminal, and media related imagery shows how he recognizes the many ways to "get on top." Thereby, Hayles' theory reveals itself in the song because Kiedis' proposed methods will only work for an instant, or will

only be available for an instant which he alludes to when he sings that all of the methods to gain fame will happen “in time” (“Get On Top” 17).

After this acknowledgment of the influence of the flickering signifier comes the song “Californication.” Kiedis uses this placement to show how, until this point, the message of the album has remained undefined. Thus, when californication is defined in this song, the remaining songs are used to further examine this definition. Immediately preceding “Californication” is the song “Easily,” which displays Kiedis’ recognition of negative influence of celebrity and the need to escape that influence.

With the first verse of “Easily,” Kiedis shows the benefit of exposing the negative influence of celebrity. When he “shouted a rose from his throat,” Kiedis implies that protest yields the escape from this influence (“Easily” 3-4). With the repeating line “Everything must go,” Kiedis reveals the need to escape all of the negative influence of californication (5). Yet, Kiedis also recognizes the difficulty of ridding himself of this negative influence when he sings, “A lickin’ stick is thicker when you break it to show” (6-7). Firstly, the stick is symbolic of the influence of californication, and since it’s used to punish, he implies that its impact is negative. Secondly, he argues that exposing this adverse effect is difficult, because the “stick is thicker” when it’s broken “to show” (6-7).

In the first chorus, Kiedis then compares the need to rid himself of the influence of californication to “the story of a woman on the morning of a war” to reiterate the difficulty of rejecting the effect of celebrity (“Easily” 8). However, Kiedis shows the benefits of celebrity when he asks the listener to remind him “what we’re fighting for” (9-10). Yet, he qualifies this idea by saying that the negative effects of californication outweigh these benefits. He sings that

he is “calling for something in the air” to show that, although he has gained the fame, he still cannot fully see the positive influence of californication because of the toll it had on his and the Frusciante’s lives (11).

However, although he wants to participate in the positive aspects of californication, he still needs rid himself of the negative influence. He argues that he “won’t get caught in a cage,” claiming that, with the knowledge of the influence of californication, he is now equipped to remove himself from its grasp (14). He further shows that he wants to remove the harm celebrity has inflicted when he sings, “looking mighty tired of all the things that you own,” claiming that the material benefits of fame do not satisfy (17-18). Therefore, the version of the American Dream promised by californication does not provide enough benefit to outweigh its negative influence.

Then, in the second chorus, Kiedis again shows the impact of both the cult of celebrity and the flickering signifier. He sings, “I can’t tell you who to idolize,” implying that the audience falls prey to the cult of celebrity (21). Thereby, Kiedis again show how the album is designed to engage an audience who has been influence by californication. Then, he claims that “you think it’s almost over, but it’s only on the rise,” showing Hayles’ theory of the flickering signifier (22-23). The “it” in these lines refers back to the idolization of celebrities mentioned in the preceding line. Therefore, Kiedis argues that, under the influence of californication, the audience will continue to worship fame. Since celebrities are constantly gaining and losing fame as a result of media portrayal, the figure heads of Hollywood culture become the flickering signifiers. Kiedis, then, returns to connecting californication to the audience listening to the album. First, he repeats the lines of the first chorus, reminding the listener of the previous

themes. However, he then connects them to the audience themselves by singing, “throw me to the wolves because there’s order in the pack” (30-31). He uses the symbol of the wolves to show the harm inflicted by californication. However, there is “order in the pack,” meaning that, within this community, individuals can find healing from the negative influence (31).

Then, in the final chorus, Kiedis argues that, within this community, he will deconstruct the effects of californication. He claims that he will no longer be “your little research monkey boy” (“Easily” 44). In this line, the “your” personifies californication, showing how it used him for “research,” because he experienced both the negative and positive effects of celebrity. However, as a result of this experience, he claims that “the creature that I am is only going to destroy,” or that he will expose the true nature of californication (45). Then, through repeating “throw me to the wolves because there’s order in the pack,” Kiedis argues that he is going to expose californication through the community previously explained (46-47).

The song “Porcelain,” shows the destruction of californication through the effects of heroin. Kiedis wrote in *Scar Tissue* that “Porcelain” was based on him meeting a young mother with a baby girl trying to get sober (Kiedis 404). Therefore, since the album is an attempt at reaching the community harmed by californication, Kiedis uses “Porcelain” to show this harm with the story of an individual woman. He asks, “are you wasting away in your skin,” to show the destruction caused by heroin use, which he and Frusciante both understand (“Porcelain” 2). He repeats the phrase, “drifting and floating and fading away,” after every verse to emphasize that heroin causes the individual to lose their identity within its effects (4, 8, 15, 19). However, within the context of the album as a whole, Kiedis is also showing that the heroin addiction is a

result of the harm caused by celebrity. Therefore, the individuals do not lose their identity to heroin, but to californication.

In “Emit Remmus,” Kiedis shows the influence of the cult of celebrity. The title of the song is “summer time” spelled backwards, which is a phrase repeated in the chorus (“Emit Remmus” 9). The song is arguably about Kiedis’ relationship with Sporty Spice of the Spice Girls (Fitzpatrick 108). Therefore, the imagery in the song deals with Kiedis’ own fascination about dating a celebrity. He sings, “cuss me out and it’ll feel all right,” showing how a celebrity can do anything and the fans will still love him/her (“Emit Remmus” 12). He repeats the phrase, “it’s all right” throughout the song, reminding the listener that anything a celebrity does is fine, because of their status, showing the influence of the cult of celebrity (26, 28-29, 31-32). Kiedis sings, “[she] stabbed that boy all in his heart,” using violent imagery to speak of love, showing that the worship of famous people is harmful to the worshipper (16). This violent nature leads the people under the influence of californication to turn to heroin, which Kiedis reveals with, “The California flower is the poppy child,” since heroin comes from poppies (33).

In “I Like Dirt,” Kiedis sympathizes with the album’s audience through describing the people drawn by californication. Each verse begins by describing the people drawn to California for its fame with the repeating phrase “Some come...” (“I Like Dirt” 1, 14, 22, 36, 44, 52). He uses this phrase to show the variety of people tempted by fame because they “come up,” “come young,” and “come slow” (1, 22). These people cause Kiedis to sing “I like dirt,” and “the earth is made of dirt and wood,” showing that he supposedly likes the earth (9). However, he argues that, “I’d be water if I could” (10). Thereby, within the context of the overall theme of the album, Kiedis argues that “dirt” is the influence of californication, and he would reject that

influence if he could. He emphasizes this connection by repeating “live in a dream” throughout the song, by which he draws connections to the American Dream (11, 13, 33, 35). Thus, Kiedis draws a connection to the audience of the album, through sympathizing with their experiences. He shows how he would also like to escape the draw of californication, but ultimately, he likes the “dirt” that comes with the American Dream.

“This Velvet Glove” is about Frusciante and Kiedis’ bond through heroin use. As previously argued, *Californication* was the result of Kiedis recognizing the harmful effects of fame through interacting with Frusciante. He sings that “John [Frusciante] says to live above hell,” referencing John’s near death experience with heroin use (“This Velvet Glove” 6). However, Kiedis responds to Frusciante by singing, “my will is well,” showing that he doesn’t worry about falling to the temptation of heroin anymore because of his experience with both Slovak’s death and Frusciante’s issues (7). He claims that “my will could sail,” referencing his ability to stay away from heroin (11). He then connects this line to “sailin’ for the sun” because “there is one who knows where I’m from,” meaning that his friendship with Frusciante reminds him to stay sober (26-28). In the first prechorus, Kiedis sings that “it’s such a waste to be wasted,” referencing Frusciante’s loss of guitar skill due to his heroin addiction (12). He also claims that he “want[s] to taste the taste of being face to face with common grace,” referencing the second chances for fame and life that Kiedis and Frusciante received (14-15). Then, Kiedis shows the community between him and Frusciante when he sings, “when I walk alone I listen to our secret theme,” meaning the bond they share because of their addictions due to the influence of californication (17-18).

With the chorus, Kiedis shows how community is the method of reversing the destruction caused by californication. He references the desire for celebrity status through the line “your solar eyes,” playing on meaning of star to refer to fame (“This Velvet Glove” 19). However, Kiedis argues that this desire for fame is broken by “somebody close that can see right through,” claiming that community is the means of recovering from the destruction of californication (21-22). He sings that he would “do anything” for Frusciante, which, in combination with the preceding line, Kiedis uses to show that the community is how Frusciante and Kiedis will both escape the harm caused by celebrity (24).

Kiedis further shows the connection between the harm of californication and community in the last verse of the song. He refers to Frusciante as “someone who’s been” “close to my skin” (“This Velvet Glove” 52,51). Then, Kiedis is “falling in” to disasters that are “just another star,” linking himself and Frusciante to image of the celebrity who has been harmed by his fame (53-55). He finishes this thought by repeating the lines “John says to live above hell, my will is well,” linking the harm caused by celebrity to their recovery as a result of the community Kiedis and Frusciante share (57-58).

Kiedis uses the song “Savior” to make the connection between his and Frusciante’s experiences with californication, and to further show the connection with their audience. The song retells the story of Frusciante’s return to the Peppers, and the settlement of the dispute between Kiedis and Frusciante. Kiedis sings, “Dusting off your savior,” to reference Frusciante playing his guitar again (“Savior” 1). He shows that the “you” speaks to Frusciante because he sings “Always my man,” paralleling his remarks at Frusciante’s return (3). Then, Kiedis reiterates the settlement of their argument by singing, “No one here is to blame for misunderstand” (7-8).

However, after he establishes the context of his and Frusciante's argument, Kiedis shows how Frusciante exposed him to the nature of californication. Kiedis sings, "Just like you cause you made me all that I am," in which the "you" is to two different speakers (9-10). Firstly, within the story of the song, the "you" refers to Frusciante, how his guitar ability helped the Peppers gain their fame, and how he and Kiedis shared a heroin addiction. Secondly, within the context of the album as a whole, the "you" refers to californication, and how it gave both Kiedis and Frusciante their fame and their addictions.

Kiedis expounds on this distinction in the first chorus. The first line, "A butterfly that flaps its wings affecting almost everything," hints at Hayles' flickering signifier ("Savior" 11-12). The Butterfly Effect is a form of chaos theory which claims that there are an infinite number of universes stemming from minute choices, i.e. if a butterfly changed the way it beat its wings. Thereby, when Kiedis alludes to this theory, he connects the flickering signifier to californication by showing that the small shifts in fame affected the lives of the Peppers, such as the death of Slovak and the addictions to heroin. Therefore, Kiedis understands how this constant change as a result of celebrity has negatively influenced the band. He sings, "the more I hear the orchestra, the more I have something to bring" to show that, as he understands more about the impact of californication, he can better understand his and Frusciante's addictions (13-14). Thereby, he is able to "see you in a beautiful and different light," in which the "you" refers to Frusciante, and Kiedis can now see the influence of californication on Frusciante's decisions (15-16). Since Kiedis now understands the impact of celebrity, he is able to forgive Frusciante, seen in the lines, "He's just a man and any damage done will be all right" (17-18).

Thereby, Kiedis uses the song to make a connection with the audience affected by californication. Within the context of understanding that Frusciante's actions were influenced by celebrity, Kiedis engages the community affected by the pursuit of the American Dream when he sings, "We are the red hots and we're loving up the love me nots" ("Savior" 31-32). With these lines, Kiedis makes a direct reference to the band's fans, with the "red hots" obviously being the Peppers, and the "love me nots" being their fans (31-32). He shows that the audience to which the album is designed is the community of people harmed by the influence of californication by calling them unloved. Thereby, Kiedis uses the song to show that, just as his interaction with Frusciante exposed him to the effects of celebrity, the audience of *Californication* can find healing within the community of Peppers' fans.

Then, Kiedis uses the song "Purple Stain" to show the all encompassing effects of californication. Firstly, it is important to note that "Purple Stain," in typical Pepper style, is designed to be highly sexual, alluding to the definition of californication proposed by the Peppers. However, within the context of *Californication*, the non-sexual images reveal the effects of Hollywood. Firstly, Kiedis shows the impact of celebrity with the lines "Python power straight from the Monty," and "Farley is an angel and I can prove this" ("Purple Stain" 5, 45). With the first of these lines, Kiedis connects the Monty Python cast with power, implying that their show has influence over its viewers. With the second line, Kiedis connotes Chris Farley with purity, "an angel," even though he had died of drug overdose, showing that the public is willing to excuse the actions of celebrities because of the impact of californication (45).

Then, Kiedis uses the chorus of the song to more clearly show Hollywood's range of impact. He sings, "Knock on wood, we all stay good cause we all live in Hollywood," firstly

showing that his intended audience is the people affected by the pursuit of fame through californication (13-14). Yet, he also shows the negative influence of celebrity when he tells the listener to “knock on wood,” implying that Hollywood does not always bring the success promised by its version of the American Dream (13). Now, with an understanding of the intended audience, the preceding lines further demonstrate the nature of californication. He sings, “Black and white a red and blue things that look good on you,” using the pairs of colors to show a binary between the beneficial and harmful effects of celebrity (9-10). However, he deconstructs this binary by showing that fame requires both the positive and negative in a “purple stain” (12). Then, with the colors red, white, and blue, Kiedis alludes that the range of Hollywood is the entire United States, by directly linking it to the US flag and, subsequently, the American Dream (9). Thereby, the “all” in the line “we all live in Hollywood,” not only refers to the Peppers’ fans, but also every citizen in the USA (14).

Next, Kiedis uses “Right On Time” to examine the interplay of fame and harm as a result of californication. He sings, “One shot all I need, I’ve got rhythm when I bleed,” which has a double meaning that reveals the dual nature of californication (“Right On Time” 1-2). Firstly, it shows the flickering signifier as it relates to celebrity, in that fame is gained in a moment, which Kiedis displays with “one shot” (1). Secondly, Kiedis uses “shot” to refer to a heroin needle, which he further reveals when he says “when I bleed” (2). He solidifies the drug reference when he sings, “Til death do us part. Break my heart so I can start,” alluding to Slovak’s death, and the popularity the Peppers attained after “Under the Bridge” was released (3-4). Then, Kiedis examines the harm caused by fame and decides it is “twisted but I must insist it’s time to get on

top of this,” claiming that he needs to break free of the negative influence of californication (7-8).

This examination of drug abuse leads Kiedis to the chorus, in which he focuses on Frusciante’s return to the band. As previously discussed, Frusciante opened Kiedis eyes to the effects of californication. Therefore, within the context of the first verse, Kiedis expresses hope for the Peppers with Frusciante’s return being “right on time” (“Right On Time” 9). He clearly alludes to Frusciante when he sings “you’re lookin’ fine, get on 1999,” which was the year *Californication* was released, and therefore Frusciante was working with the band to create the album (14).

Kiedis then uses this hope to speak to the audience of *Californication*. He sings that he is “calling all you shooting stars,” or all of the people trying to acquire fame (“Right On Time” 17). His use of the adjective “shooting” shows the flickering nature of celebrity, in that, those people who are trying to gain their fame only have a moment to be seen (17). Thereby, those people that are not discovered in their moment are rejected and subsequently harmed by californication. However, Kiedis then argues that those who do acquire the fame are also negatively affected. He sings, “now I’m here I’m nowhere now,” showing that celebrity status didn’t save him from the effects of drug abuse (19). Kiedis argues that the Peppers only gained their fame because californication did not destroy them, which he shows with the lines, “death row let us go, it’s time to blow up for the show” (34). Therefore, Kiedis relates to all of the Peppers’ fans when he sings, “maybe we could be related” (21).

Finally, Kiedis ends the album with “Road Trippin,” to show the need to escape the effects of californication. Kiedis states that “it’s time to leave this town,” and that the band

should “get lost anywhere in the USA,” meaning that he wants to break free of the influence of Hollywood (“Road Trippin” 3, 5-6). Then, Kiedis uses the chorus to deconstruct the appeal of californication. Firstly, he describes the Pacific Ocean with “Blue you sit so pretty west of the one [California],” and how it tempts the band to stay with “sparkles light with yellow icing” (9-11). However, they finally realize that the fame promised by californication is “just a mirror for the sun,” meaning that the Hollywood version of the American Dream does not fully provide everything it promised. In contrast, Kiedis sings that “these smiling eyes are just a mirror for,” without giving an object for the preposition “for” (15). Thereby, Kiedis shows that, after understanding the impact of californication, he is no longer trying to fill the image of celebrity.

However, Kiedis also argues that he can return to his fame after breaking free of the influence of californication. He sings that “so much has come before those battles lost and won,” referring to the harm caused by their pursuit of celebrity (“Road Trippin” 16). Yet, he counters that statement by noting that the Peppers did actually gain fame as a result of californication with the line, “this life is shining more forever in the sun” (17). Therefore, the band needs to “check our heads” and “check the surf,” meaning that he thinks the band should return to their fame after understanding the harm it caused them (18-19). He sings that “staying high and dry’s more trouble than it’s worth,” meaning that rejecting the fame would be more difficult than learning to handle both the positive and negative influence of celebrity (20-21). Finally, Kiedis decides to “drink the stars,” or keep their fame and use it as a means of exposing the nature of californication (29). Within the overall context of the album, Kiedis’ intention to reveal the effects of celebrity is revealed in lines 31-32 when he sings, “Let’s go get lost right here in the USA.” Kiedis replaces “anywhere” from the first verse with “right here” in

the last verse (6, 32). With this, he shows that the band intends the audience of the album to be people affected by californication.

Therefore, the Peppers use *Californication* to connect with their audience and form a community within which to escape the harmful influence of celebrity. As previously mentioned, the album was the band's highest selling, revealing how the audience accepted the Peppers' message. The band continues to engage their fanbase through their projects. In 2011, they released the album *I'm With You*, referencing the lyrics from "Parallel Universe." The *I'm With You* tour was focused on the audience, and, as previously mentioned, the book *Fandemonium* was conceived during that tour.

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