Consuming Crises: Migrant Labor, Spectacle, and Precarity in the 20th Century

By

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Doria Charlson was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. She graduated from Stanford University in 2013 with a BA in History (Modern Jewish History), with Distinction, and a minor in Dance. During her time at Stanford, Doria received awards for her scholarship and community engagement including the Louis Sadler Prize for the Performing and Creative Arts, the Donald and Robin Kennedy Undergraduate Award for the best essay written in Jewish Studies, and the Susan Rudd Cohen Award for Jewish communal service. Following her graduation, Doria received a Fulbright Scholarship to France as an independent scholar for the 2013-2014 academic year. Her research project, "Oral Histories of an Exodus: North African Jewry in Strasbourg, France 1962-2012," involved archival research and anthropological field work within the North African Jewish community in Alsace-Lorraine, France.

Doria arrived at Brown in 2014 and received her transitional MA degree from the department of Theatre Arts & Performance Studies in 2016. She was accepted into the Open Graduate Education program to receive a fully-funded, secondary MA degree in the History department at Brown, which she completed in 2017. While at Brown, Doria has served as a teaching assistant in courses on performance theory and theatre history and in a studio practicum on performance and visual art. She has been a teaching assistant and instructor of record for the course "Persuasive Communication" for two years and has taught communication at Brown through the School of Professional Studies in their summer high school programs and as guest faculty for the Executive Master's Program in Science and Technology Leadership.

Doria is a scholar and educator whose interdisciplinary research stands at the intersection of Performance Studies, History, and Dance Studies. Her project centers on questions of movement, migration, racial capitalism, labor & performance, history, critical environmental studies, and the limits of the archive. Doria has written reviews for *Women & Performance* and *Dance Research Journal*. Her work appears in the anthology *African American Arts: Activism, Aesthetics, and Futurity* (Rutgers University Press, 2019) and is forthcoming in *TDR: The Drama Review*. Doria brings to her studies and communities a variety of embodied knowledges and critical frameworks that have developed out of her decades of formal dance training, her former side hustle as a caterer and organic gardener, her family history as the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors and refugees, and her early academic training as the product of California's K-12 public school system.

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Reflecting upon all those who have loved and supported this project into fruition puts into relief a limit of the academy: the model of the single author who can use only a dedicated space at the front of her work to recognize the collective efforts of so many. While I look forward to revamping the paradigm of how work gets done — and what counts as work — in the academy, I will say that it would have been impossible to do any of this without the tireless support of my committee. Given that precarity is the inherent condition of a graduate student's labors, I want to begin by recognizing the efforts of my committee members in serving as advocates for me, my time, and my scholarship. I do not take for granted that many graduate students cannot count on their advisors or committee members to actively go to bat for them; this makes the work of Patti, Rebecca, and Jasmine all the more important to highlight. If I can emulate even a portion of their generosity, excitement, and dedication as I embark on my career beyond Brown, I will consider that to be a tremendous success.

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kind of academy I want to be in: one that is attentive to the needs of all its constituents, one that is accessible and equitable, one that is deeply political, and one that sees the arts and humanities as necessary to understanding the past and to enacting the world we so desperately need.

It is not an overstatement to say that my classes with Rebecca Schneider changed the way I move through and think about the world. As both her student and as her teaching assistant, I experienced the magic of Rebecca's analytic ferocity, her expansive mind, and her dexterity in making connections between worlds that seem so disparate. Over the years, Rebecca patiently and attentively encouraged me to create, experiment, and push myself beyond my disciplinary, geographic, and theoretical boundaries. She instilled in me the confidence to be bold, to play, and to be able to sit with disciplinary discomfort. I appreciate, too, her rigorous engagement with my writing and her passionate teaching. The last chapter of this dissertation came out of Rebecca's course on inter(in)amations. I ruminate on that class often, as it remains a starting place for many excavations and adventures in the dusty archives and am grateful for all that has been kicked up in the process of writing this dissertation.

I am so thankful that Jasmine Johnson joined our department my fourth year at Brown. While I only audited one formal course with Jasmine, she is the consummate educator whose scholarship, politics, and teaching are deeply intertwined. Her work is poetic and poignant. She models intellectual generosity, grace, and dynamic thinking. Through our many conversations and drafts, Jasmine has reminded me about the importance of dance not only in terms of my scholarship, but also in relation to

everything that being a dancer has taught me and continues to give me. For all these things, and more, I am beyond appreciative.

In addition to my committee members, there are many others working in the academy who have contributed to this project. In particular, I thank the Graduate School at Brown, especially Vanessa Ryan, for the continued support of my work through the Open Graduate Education program. My studies in the History department, particularly with Omer Bartov, Jennifer Lambe, Mary Gluck, and Beshara Doumani, were integral to the completion of this dissertation and elucidated, for me, the importance of interdisciplinary scholarship. I am grateful for the feedback of all the scholars who have read and engaged with my writing, especially those at the Mellon School for Theatre and Performance Research, the Dance Studies Association Emerging Scholars pre-conference, and my working groups at the American Society for Theatre Research conferences. Specifically, I thank Joanna Dee Das, Judith Hamera, and Kareem Khubchandani for their feedback on iterations of Chapter 2 and Andrew Sofer, Richard Schechner, Sarah Wilbur, and VK Preston, for their contributions to the makings of Chapter 3. Anyone toiling in the archives knows that information workers are a godsent. Without the knowledge and assistance of archivists and librarians like Riette Zaaiman and Atline Maluleke at the TEBA Mineworkers Collection, University of Johannesburg and Mary Mann at the Brooklyn Historical Society, this dissertation would never have been completed on time. Lastly, I extend my thanks to the staff of the Theatre Arts & Performance Studies department who have enabled me to study, work, and live in Providence: Achim Tah, Elizabeth Moloney, Nancy Safian, Chris Redihan, Jo Bynum,

and, especially, Jamie Tyrol Jabeck. Their work and assistance on so many matters are invaluable and they make everything happen.

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gratitude seem wholly inadequate, as what words can encompass all that they share and provide? I am grateful for my cousins, aunts, uncles, and extended kin for their love and encouragement. In particular, my aunts and uncle – Joyce Klang, Janet Herman, David Stone, and Linda Pellecchia – have been unending sources of support, lovely dinners, and pep talks over cups of tea. To my father, Michael Charlson, you have kept me grounded and focused and I am so grateful for your support and encouragement along this, and every, journey. To my mother, Elizabeth Stone, you were with me in the writing of every page of this project and are with me in everything I do. You are my role model and who I want to be when I grow up. To my sister, Meredith Charlson, thank you for sticking with me through it all. You are my most enthusiastic supporter and my best friend and I am unendingly grateful for all that we are, together. Finally, I dedicate this project to the memories of my beloved Oma and Opa, Ann and Dan Stone. Their lives, their teachings, and their enduring commitment to equity and justice are at the core of this project and inspire me daily. All of this is theirs.

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INTRODUCTION

There was a lot of coughing going on in the orchestra. Too much coughing, actually. Quickly, sounds of gasps and choking gave way to movement – folks gathering their coats, standing up, and rushing out of the Broadhurst Theater in New York City mid-performance. In the minutes that followed, the abrupt vacancy of several rows of patrons followed immediately by the presence of theater security and the NYPD gave rise to both panicked whispers and curiosity. On February 15, 2020, I was seated in the mezzanine for the matinee of *Jagged Little Pill*, the Broadway adaptation of the works of singer-songwriter Alanis Morrissette set to a book by Diablo Cody. I heard the coughing but, frankly, thought little of it, until the all the actors rather suddenly cleared the stage and the house lights came up. Immediately, the audience started buzzing – concerned whispers visibly swarmed through the house as people turned to those next to them and wondered aloud what was going on. An usher for the Broadhurst announced that there was an "incident" in the orchestra and that we should sit tight. "Incident?," asked my friend sitting next to me, "what does that mean?" Aside from reminding her that I knew as little as she did, I assumed that someone in the audience had a medical emergency and they were holding the show to let medics in to assist. I told her this. One couple sitting nearby got up immediately, the woman declaring as much to the rest of us as her partner, "I'm not waiting around for them to tell us some shit. We're going." My friends and I sat for a few minutes watching growing numbers of theatergoers make their way to the edge of the balcony, some folding themselves over the railing to see what they could see. After a while, an usher quieted the house, speaking very clearly:

> Ladies and Gentlemen, we have had an incident in the house. No one is in any danger, but someone discharged pepper spray in the orchestra. We need to evacuate the theater in the meantime to make sure everything is ok. Please take all

> of your things and calmly make our way to the exits. Again, no one is in danger. Please move safely and quickly outside. Your ushers will direct you. Thank you for your cooperation.

So, we put on our coats and collected our things. The line to get out of the building was slow; it seemed as though – because the theater staff wanted the show to continue after this interlude – we were being directed through specific exit doors, which quickly became bottlenecked. It was, after all, a sold-out performance. 1,156 people needed to make their way outside. From what I could hear around me, the prominent theme seemed to be incredulity. "Who even uses pepper spray anymore?" However, once we'd been standing in the stairwell for more than five minutes, the energy seemed to shift. A crying woman pushed passed me– she was claustrophobic and needed to make her way out. Perhaps moved by her affect, or out of the frustration of being interrupted and now forced to stand and wait, people start to get anxious. One of my friends asked the rest of our group, "do we really think it was pepper spray? Why would you pepper spray someone? Could it be something more serious?" A person standing behind us overheard and said, "what do you think it is? You think it was supposed to hurt people?" Theories, rumors, and anxieties circulated around us in real time. As the stream of people from the mezzanine merged with the orchestra, there was a lot of chatter. It got noisy and tight. Words floated over the crowd like, "terrorism," "attack," and "anthrax." Tuning out that noise was not easy and was not helped by the fact that by the time we made it out to W. 44th St, the NYPD Counterterrorism Unit has arrived along with at least four firetrucks, ambulances, and dozens of emergency personnel.

Once outside, those of us who decided to stay and see what happened, namely whether or not the show would go on, were siphoned onto the sidewalk and told to hold on. Along with hundreds of other patrons, my friends and I waited, despite the fact that it was below freezing. A

seemingly endless parade of first responders – from the NYPD, the NYFD, and other agencies – came in and out of the theater with no particular urgency. There was a significant juxtaposition between the full force of the emergency response and the actions of the workers. Despite the cold, there were a number of firemen in shorts hanging out beside their trucks, some posed for selfies with people from the line. Indeed, the attention given to the firemen and the various emergency personnel seemed to equal, if not exceed, the worry about the event itself or the safety of those effected (namely, the ushers and the patrons who inhaled the substances) For my part, whilst waiting, my friends and I ran into old acquaintances and family members who happened to be at the show; we gathered together to exchange information. "Well, we were in the orchestra and it was really crazy. Everyone from these two rows in the back started coughing a ton. People got up and left in a hurry," said our friend/informant who had better seats than we. Turning to Twitter seemed to be the best option, given that the theater officials were providing no updates. Other than the selfies with firemen, the only information we could find was in the thread below:

In light of this rather vague information, we deduced that we were probably fine to wait it out. Whatever happened, the fire department was there and, superficially at least, not particularly concerned about a potential threat, despite the anxious and frustrated outbursts inquiring about both safety and when the show would continue. The discomfort and physical symptoms of those impacted, though scary to be sure, apparently subsided and we were not in danger. After almost an hour in the cold, though, our patience and desire to finish the performance wore thin. Theater officials had been coming through the line sporadically, reassuring us that we'd get back in the house soon, but at that point, I was skeptical. We were pushing up against the evening show and

[1]Doug Ruchefsky, @druchefsky, 2020. 15 February 2020, 5:22pm. https://twitter.com/druchefsky/status/1228806803653365760.

it seemed likely to me that the actors, stage crew, musicians, etc. would not be permitted to continue the show without approval from management and their various unions (likely AEA, IATSE, and AFM). Sure enough, the rest of the performance was cancelled. We were told that labor laws prevented the performance from being re-started so close to the curtain of the evening performance and given an email address to contact the production company and ask for a refund. With that, we were told to evacuate and clear the area so the staff could get prepared for that evening's show.

I write out this brief anecdote of my recent brush with mild theatre hysteria because, in a very controlled and ultimately benign manner, it provided me with a kind of proximate and embodied experience that resonates with many aspects of this dissertation: spectacle, crisis, disruption, labor, toxicity, and precarity. In hindsight, it provides one personal example of what it might mean to literally consume (i.e., inhale) a crisis of capitalism: the labors of the show were suspended to take stock of this problem. The deployment of pepper spray – a chemical weapon, if not the most lethal – within the theatre space set off a chain reaction that activated, for me, not only affective and physiological responses to perceived threat, but also an odd dualism within the theatre space – that we were vulnerable and that we are part of the spectacle ourselves. Even hours after leaving the theater, I couldn't shake this feeling that we had a harrowing experience, despite all the evidence that I was not ever in any danger. Maybe it was the crowd mentality, or witnessing swarms of NYPD move into the theater, or maybe it was general anxiety that caused me to considering, briefly, how sitting in a dark space with a thousand other people seems like an odd thing to do in these times. We, the audience, were forced to reflect on our vulnerability – our precarity – the helplessness of sitting together in a dark theatre with our guards down. At a bar later that night, I realized my breathing was shallow and I was zoning out of conversation. Those

ten-ish minutes of not knowing had settled within me, uninvited. The uncertainty lingered as we checked throughout the night for news updates to see if there was any explanation for the event. There wasn't. Furthermore, the interruption of the show enacted, in real time, an exposure of the differentiated modes of labor within the theater space. Suddenly, ushers and back-of-house staff were placed in visible positions and providing critical instructions. The people who work theater – including the actors and musicians (and their union reps), janitorial staff, and the various plainclothes security officers who seemed to appear out of nowhere within minutes – were on display. As the minutes stretched into hours, the incident also clearly had severely disrupted theater time. It took too long to get clearance to reenter the theater. For a few hours, work could not resume as usual. The show did not go on.

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This dissertation focuses on crises of extractive capitalism as they relate to the migrant, laboring body. Roughly spanning the first three-quarters of the 20th century, each of the three chapters in this study center on specific crises of extractive capitalism– events that irrupt or disturb the status quo and require society to recalibrate in its aftermath – and consider how spectacle operates as an embodied mode of managing these crises.

Residing at the intersection of performance studies, history, and dance studies, my project creates a cultural history of extractive capital and migrant labor in the 20th century through an investigation into the ways in which said labor comes to bear on bodies, both individual and collective, by studying how it is that people move under capitalism. Additionally, the project explores how performance – specifically spectacle, dance, and spectacularized dance – functions as both a conduit for, and a site of struggle against, the social reproduction of capital. The connective tissue of this dissertation lies in the material and physical traces of labor in the body

and in the environment. In this way, this study is invested in how laborers consume crises and how workers are consumed by crises. Here, to "consume" something could be to ingest, or absorb something; to take something on, or in, to the body. I am also equally invested in how bodies are consumed, or used up, depleted, and exhausted due to extractive capitalism. In this project, I link these understandings of consumption by sifting through and amongst dust, ash, and smoke. By tracing the movement and impact of dust (and smoke) – often an overlooked byproduct of industrial expansion, environmental devastation, tragedy abandonment, and neglect – I sift through histories of toxic labor practices that impact bodily performance and shape cultural work(s), rendering certain populations in constant states of precarity. This project takes seriously the ways in which capitalism moves through, and as, laboring bodies who move/are displaced, and rearranged into various spatio-temporal configurations that support further extraction of their labor in support of the reproduction of capitalism. Following the work of Lauren Berlant, Christina Sharpe, and others, the dissertation provides a particular (and particulate) understanding of "slow death," one that speaks how systemic degradation of environments, bodies, and psyches is a defining condition of living and laboring under extractive capitalism.[2]

Roughly spanning the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, the historical timeline of the dissertation begins with the Progressive Era in the United States around the turn of the century and ends in the 1960s in apartheid South Africa on the cusp of the global, economic shifts that ushered in neoliberal socio-economic policies. In terms of chronology, this is a historical study that offers a theoretical framework regarding spectacle and capitalism revealing how studies of/in performance can make expedient and explicit the crises (political, economic,

[2] Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016). See also Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

social, environmental) caused by extractive capitalism in the 20th century. However, as I outline more explicitly in the forthcoming section ("Capitalisms Overlapping"), the techniques and strategies studied throughout these three chapters to support the reproduction of capitalism are not relegated solely to the past. In this way, this project presents a type of 20th century labor history that reveals, through its seemingly disparate case-studies, how the duration of what we relegate to "history" is always already extended into the present. Methodologically, each chapter uses rigorous archival research to contextualize and historicize a particular moment in labor history. Drawing heavily from photographs, newspapers, manuscripts, government papers, and the archives of particularly companies/institutions, I ground my theorizations of how various crises were spectacularized, in part, through the information provided by textual and visual evidence and use historiographical methods to fill out narratives of labor history that are underdeveloped or incomplete in the literature of the field. Given that many of the aforementioned documentation/archives was produced as part of dominant archive related to migrant labor and capitalism, I recognize the inherent biases of these archives and turn to both "alternative" archives (i.e. evidence that was refuted, discredited, or censored by those in power), various types of data, materials, and I look to performance and histories of movement and embodied practices to provide a more holistic understanding of the histories narrativized in this project.

I use performance theory, dance studies methods, and theories of embodiment to think expansively about what – and who – constitutes as "evidence" and to expand a conventional understanding of the archive. In addition to providing expansive frames through which to consider what count as evidence/archive, performance studies also provides theoretical frames through which to connect histories of extractive labor to practices of bodily and environmental

devastation. I draw from performance studies and dance studies scholars to hold together theories of the body, of movement, and of the environment; indeed, performance studies and dance studies provide the theoretical grounding to respond to an underlying query of this project: what does an archive of performance and labor look like? How can/does the body act as an archive for toxic effects of extractive capitalism? Importantly, dance studies and performance studies ground how I think with histories of movement through the lens of choreography — of structured and systemic patterns of bodily movement that are instigated through both formal and informal conventions and result in new configurations (spatial, cultural, political) of its participants. Given that this dissertation considers the mass migrations and (re)settling of laborers as a site for movement analysis, the theoretical understandings of "choreography" as an analytic ground my attention to the powerful impulses that shape the flows of peoples from one site to another. This study is also informed by scholars in black dance studies and black radical thought in particular who offer valuable insight on crisis, spectacle, how dance moves with people, the impact of trauma and violence on human bodies psychically, spiritually, and physically, and the ways in which dance (re)surges to its own rhythms.[3] Ultimately, my mixed research methods (history, performance studies, and dance studies) enable me to think through the following questions around which the dissertation circles:

• Does performance in the era of industrialization always serve capitalism? If not, how does performance thwart, divert, or halt capitalism's exploitative means of production? How does the role of performance change as the nature and form of capital shifts over time?

[3] See, for example, Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Avery H. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Thomas DeFrantz, *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

• How do people move within capitalist frameworks? Who is allowed to move and when? What is the role of movement in the industrial imaginary? And, what kinds of movement does capitalism require to reproduce?

• How can studies of performance and inquiry into the way(s) bodies move (in the service of capital and/or across space and time) reveal, elucidate, or upend relations between the environment and industrialization that capitalist apparatuses aim to mask or undermine?

• How does approaching migrant labor through the lens of dance studies contribute to greater understanding of the complex processes of displacement, work, and subject-formation? What can attention at the level of the body reveal about larger socio-economic structures? What are the choreographic and cartographic impulses of capitalism in this period?

Capitalisms Overlapping

As a historian, parsing definitions and terminology pertaining to capitalism's periodization is challenging because capitalism develops unevenly across the globe, which produces a "cross-hatched" understanding of the temporality of primitive accumulation that troubles conventional, linear time.[4] Alongside the disruptive, often violent restructuring of European ways of life in the 16th-18th centuries was the systemic expansion of European conquest in Africa and the Americas, which Marx would also consider as a period of primitive accumulation. Whereas Marx argues that primitive accumulation precedes capitalist accumulation, Sylvia Federici argues the "so-called" primitive accumulation is, instead, the very condition of capitalism's continued reproduction. As long as capitalism exists, then, "primitive accumulation" – through processes of privatization and extraction of natural resources, continued

[4] Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, (Abington: Routledge, 2011).

subjection of women and racialized others, and the disciplining of the workers into compliant laborers – continues, although in different forms as capitalism has globalized.[5] While many Marxist scholars might relegate "colonial capitalism" to a particular era of formal, territorial colonization, I use the term "colonial capitalism" not only to refer to a specific period of history, but also to acknowledge the myriad of enduring legacies of colonialism that have continued to shape capitalism up to the present moment. Colonization can be seen as a natural corollary to capitalism, given that more land and more labor is necessary in order for capital to reproduce and increase its surplus value. Colonial conquest provided both resources: land and labor.

I want to dwell on the relationship between coloniality and capitalism not only because colonization is a means of expropriation and primitive accumulation, but also because race and racialization cannot be separated from either colonialism or capitalism. As numerous scholars have theorized at great length, the subjugation of non-European peoples, particularly African and Indigenous populations, was essential to colonial-capitalist expansion in the Americas and provided the means for industrialization, the accumulation of wealth, and laid the groundwork for the "ascension" of the West into modernity.[6] Settler-colonialism and the legacies of chattel slavery are omnipresent in this project because they are inextricable from capitalism. Following the work of Cedric J. Robinson, this project takes as a baseline that all capitalism is "racial capitalism."[7] Jodi Melamed, expanding upon Robinson, writes clearly:

[5] Sylvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, The Body, and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), 12.

[6] See, for example, Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Neplanta: Views from the South*, vol 1, no 3 (2000); Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Macarena Gomez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017); Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Angela Y. Davis, *The Angela Y. Davis Reader* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 1998); Jackie Wang, *Carceral Capitalism* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018); Hartman; Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Françoise Vergès, *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

[7] Robinson.

> Capital can only be capital when it is accumulating, and it can only accumulate by producing and moving through relations of severe inequality among human groups—capitalists with the means of production/workers without the means of subsistence, creditors/debtors, conquerors of land made property/the dispossessed and removed. These antinomies of accumulation require loss, disposability, and the unequal differentiation of human value, and racism enshrines the inequalities that capitalism requires. Most obviously, it does this by displacing the uneven life chances that are inescapably part of capitalist social relations onto fictions of differing human capacities, historically race.[8]

In other words, capital not only requires racialization – the systemic ascribing of varying degrees of humanity and freedoms to populations based on phenotype and origin – to accumulate, but also capitalism itself produces race as a tool to justify conquest, wealth accumulation and the consolidation of power through violent subjugation, extraction, and exploitation.[9] In this sense, the terms "racial capitalism" and "colonial capitalism" are deeply entwined and are the foundations of capitalism in its various permutations to the present day. The three case studies presented in this project span, roughly, the first three-quarters of the 20th century. Whereas the 20th century is often historicized, particularly in the West, as a century that saw the transition away from formal colonization, the break-up of empire, and increasing modernization, this project recognizes the fact racial/colonial capitalism continues to form the basis for all capitalist reproduction.

As a performance studies scholar and dancer, I recognize the fluidity, and interconnectedness, of terms pertaining to describing modes of capitalism in this dissertation,

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[8] Jodi Melamed, "Racial Capitalism," *Critical Ethnic Studies*, vol 1, no 1, 2015 (76-85): 77.

[9] Anibal Quijano writes, "After the colonization of America and the expansion of European colonialism to the rest of the world, the subsequent constitution of Europe as a new id-entity needed the elaboration of a Eurocentric perspective of knowledge, a theoretical perspective on the idea of race as a naturalization of colonial relations between Europeans and non-Europeans. Historically, this meant a new way of legitimizing the already old ideas and practices of relations of superiority/inferiority between dominant and dominated. From the sixteenth century on, this principle has proven to be the most effective and long-lasting instrument of universal social domination, since the much older principle—gender or intersexual domination—was encroached upon by the inferior/superior racial classifications. So, the conquered and dominated peoples were situated in a natural position of inferiority and, as a result, their phenotypic traits as well as their cultural features were considered inferior. In this way, race became the fundamental criterion for the distribution of the world population into ranks, places, and roles in the new society's structure of power." Quijano, 534-535.

which extends to descriptions of the type of work being discussed in the different chapters; namely, "extractive capitalism" and "industrial capitalism." In this project, my understanding of extractive capitalism is informed by Macarena Gómez-Barris' work on "extractive zones," which usefully links legacies of racial violence stemming from settler-colonialism, exploitative labor practices, and ecological devastation. Gómez-Barris writes, "while racial capitalism refers to the processes that historically subordinated African and Indigenous populations, extractivism references the dramatic material change to social and ecological life that underpin this arrangement."[10] Each case-study in this project contends with "extractive capitalism," which I use to frame the relationship between capitalism and its byproducts, or that which has been extracted: the labors of racialized workers and toxic, environmental hazards. In the first chapter, I study immigrant garment workers, racialized as white "Others" who toiled in dangerous working conditions in Progressive Era New York. The second chapter considers a different form of white "Others", – poor, indigent agricultural migrants from the Southwest Plains – who, as a result of extractive, industrial agricultural practices and environmental catastrophe moved to California in the 1930s as intra-national migrants. The final chapter centers on transnational, black migrant laborers working in South Africa's gold mines in the 1950s-1960s. During apartheid, these miners not only performed dangerous work underground but also performed tribal dances in their "leisure" time for the consumption of white audiences. The modes of labor in each of these chapters are different. Chapter one is classically "industrial" as workers were disciplined into "factory time" as waged laborers, chapter two considers agricultural labor, and chapter three most closely adheres to Gómez-Barris' "extractive" labor as it considers the subjugation of black miners pulling natural resources from below the ground. That said, in this project, at points, I toggle between both terms – industrial capitalism and extractive capitalism

[10] Gomez-Barris, xvii.

– to lift up both how factory work requires the extraction of labor power and of natural resources, and to highlight how, in the case studies presented here, the work of extraction (i.e., mining, or working the fields as agricultural farmers) is also industrialized – meaning using tools of management and technologies that streamlined efficiency and aimed to extract the most value from workers and products.

I glide between, and out of, the terms, methods, and disciplinary frameworks outlined in the previous paragraphs in order to emphasize how classifications of capitalism can limit our understanding of the differentiated modes of extraction that capitalism organizes at any moment. That is to say, rigid definitions of various "capitalisms" that aim to distinguish/delineate/isolate one time period, mode of work, or injurious party necessarily belie the inherent messiness, interconnectedness, duration, and overlapping injuries of the capitalisms that are always operating simultaneously. Delimiting the insidious capacity of global capitalism by trying to compartmentalize into a particular region, time, or type of work is, itself, an operation of distraction that would force us to turn towards one aspect of capitalism and, necessarily, away from others. Refusing to contain the case studies in the project within strict boundaries demarcated by discipline, era, or geography enables me to move with, and attend to, those who have been cast aside, discarded, rendered disposable, and/or become undone by the continual, spidering influence of global capital in the 20th century.[11] Importantly, movement is method throughout this dissertation.

"Value in Motion"[12] : Migrant Labor and/as Crises of Capitalism

[11] See also, Hartman.

[12] Karl Marx in David Harvey, *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1* (London: Penguin Classics, 1990).

Each chapter of *Consuming Crises* traces a particular cartography of migration, – patterns of how people moved in search of, and as, labor – as the necessarily embodied circulations required to reproduce and perpetuate extractive-industrial capitalism. Thinking with Lisa Lowe's concept of "intimate relations" across geographies as a result of globalized operations of racial capitalism, I conceptualize how migration becomes an aesthetic result of capitalism by tracing how and to where people relocate in search of work. I have chosen to focus on migrant labor not only to accentuate the relationship between capitalism and movement, but also in order to consider the complex geographic and social networks that cause people to move and settle in certain places. This dissertation considers migrant laborers to be those who have traveled significant distance to engage in paid work away from their place of origin. The aforementioned definition is intentionally broad in order to include patterns of domestic migration and to encompass a plurality of intentions; meaning, intent to stay in a location, or lack thereof, is not a criterion for classification as a "migrant" for these purposes.[13] This study is not limited to a particular geographic site, nor a specific industry, in order to reveal "intimate" ties that connect seemingly unrelated events and phenomena in the era of mass industrialization.[14] I follow the methods of Lowe who, in reading across national and colonial archives by way of global trade circuits and by looking deeply into material archives of colonial commodities, troubles disciplinary boundaries of methods and objects which are grounded within the frameworks of national histories, thereby enabling far broader understandings of the reach of colonial capitalism and the development and maintenance of global racialized hierarchies.[15] What is productive

[13] UNESCO defines "migrant" in relation to the national (i.e., someone who has migrated to a State of which they are not a national). Here, it is important to think also with the intra-national, for example, in the case of migrants from Oklahoma to California during the Dust Bowl.
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/migrant/
[14] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).
[15] Lowe.

about Lowe's conceptualization of "intimacies" for this project is her emphasis on the co-constitutive nature of violent colonial practices across disparate geographies and the making of the (white) modern, liberal subject. While this dissertation pushes Lowe's framework from the 18th and 19th centuries to the 20th century, her methodology, which focuses equally on the material traces of global trade and on theoretical underpinnings which link physical contact (and physical labor) with racialized cultural and social economies, will be critical to larger arc of this project. While Lowe does not explicitly discuss the role of the body in her theorization of "intimacies," I suggest that cognates of intimacy – especially proximity, physicality, and relation – provide clear connections to the body and how it moves through space and into/out of capitalism as a global system. In particular, I believe that attention to populations that are rendered precarious and disposable – (im)migrant, black, and brown bodies – allows us to most clearly connect large-scale economic and political structures and strategies with their material impact on the lives of individuals and to follow how people move in/as capitalism.[16]

Critical to my theoretical framing of migrant labor through the lens of dance studies and political economy is Judith Hamera's conception of the figural economy. In her study of deindustrialization in Detroit, Hamera outlines "figural economies" as

> [the combination of] the material conditions and details of individuals or places with their rhetorical, exemplary, and metaphoric potential. Figural economies circulate within political and libidinal economies: shaping desires, designating deserving and undeserving economic subjects. Figural economies operate through the dancing body, through stories…and [through] fantasies...circulating in public discourse. Figural economies are deeply racialized, relying on tropes…to construct and resist racial(-ist) representations of the social lives and work of capital.[17]

[16] See also, Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*: *Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) and Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

In this project, I aim to explore, too, the figure of the migrant and how she choreographs relations within the industrial capitalist economy and the cultural economy. What is the work that the migrant is forced to perform both within and beyond the context of her industry? How does the migrant figure relation and affinity? How does the simultaneous need for/desire for/revulsion to/contempt for/ the migrant relate to the migrant body and how is it performed? Because this dissertation uses dance as both a method and an object of study (meaning, I aim to think through migration as a choreographic in addition to studying formal dance performances), Hamera's useful conjoining of the figural body and the dancing body is critically present throughout the project.

Another entry point into the relationship between migration and capitalism can be found in Marx's own writings in which he clearly outlines how crises of capitalism are connected to movement (circulation), labor, and time. As the following paragraphs will elucidate in more detail, capitalism is a logic, or organization, that structures how the laboring body – sometimes extended in the form of the commodity the laborer produces – moves in an elliptical temporal structure: the commodity exchange. Importantly for this study, capitalism both requires and produces migrant labor in order to reproduce. In order for capitalism grow (i.e., for capitalists to continue to extract resources and hire laborers), it requires the consumption of more and more people who become interpellated into living labor in service of the reproduction of capital, which necessarily means people have to move in order to work. The third chapter of this dissertation provides a clear example of the symbiotic relationship between capitalism and migration: as capitalists in South Africa wanted to be able to extract more gold and ore, more labor was required. Because, for a number of reasons, there was a finite amount of domestic labor available

[17] Judith Hamera, *Unfinished Business: Michael Jackson, Detroit & the Figural Economy of American Deindustrialization*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), xii.

in South Africa, gold mines began recruiting in countries across southern Africa to bring migrants onto the South African mines in order to scale up production. Importantly, while certain migrant laborers become incorporated into recognizable subjects within the framework of capitalism – i.e., "a worker" – other populations are displaced. Displacement could take many forms, including the forcible movement to provide material resources (land expropriation, for example), or being priced out of a particular location due to gentrification. In this way, capitalism necessarily destabilizes and renders populations precarious. Importantly, though, within this movement of laborers and/as commodities, there always exists the potential for crises of capitalism, which, for Marx, is located within the exchange of commodities.

Marx often wrote of capitalism as "value in motion," which indicates the centrality of movement (sometimes indicated as "circulation" or "exchange") to the reproduction of capital.[18] Movement is key to the reproduction of capital through the transformation of money into commodities, which then are sold at a surplus value, which enables a reinvestment of money (thus, enabling another circulation) and yields a profit for the capitalist. This continuous circulation, enabled by living labor, is the crux of the reproduction of capitalism. Importantly, while some scholars consider the movement of commodities as somehow divorced from the laboring body, further exploration into the concept of living labor and the process of the commodity exchange not only reveals how capitalism requires the movement of bodies to reproduce, but also illustrates how movement and the body are connected to the concept of "crisis" in capitalism.

"Living labor" is how capitalism moves and grows. Posited as the enactment of labor power – i.e., the process in which one's potential labor power is activated and put into use –living

[18] Marx in Harvey, 2018.

labor alone revitalizes the means of production.[19] Living labor revivifies "dead" labor, which exists outside the exchange of capital – for example, wealth accumulated as a result of past labors that is not reinvested into new forms of capital is "dead."[20] Capital reproduces itself through the extraction of living labor from the worker and that capital is contingent upon a continuous supply of living labor.[21] And, because capital's "sole driving force" is to create more surplus value, more living labor is required to maintain and reproduce the labor process. To put it differently, capital requires an "infusion" of living labor to reanimate dead labor with "vital energy." In this reanimation, living labor repurposes that which was "useless," or "wasted," thereby transforming dead labor back into new products, enabling the commodities to then circulate as part of the means of production for a new labor process.[22]

The commodity, as Marx explains, is an extension of the laboring body and, in that a worker's labor can be exchanged, the body is also a commodity. He writes, "the *substance* of value [of a commodity is] *labor*. We know the *measure of its magnitude*. It is *labor-time*... as exchange-values, all commodities are merely definite quantities of *congealed labor time*."[23] In other words, the commodity itself is a materialization of the laboring body's time, which is only

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[19] Marx, 289-90. As Marx explains, "A machine which is not active in the labor process is useless. In addition, it falls prey to the destructive power of natural process...Living labor must seize on these things, awaken them from the dead, change them from merely possible into real and effective use-values. Bathed in the fire of labor, appropriated as part of its organism, and infused with that vital energy for the performance of its functions appropriate to their concept and to their vocation in the process, they are indeed consumed, but to some purpose, as elements in the formation of new use-values, new products, which are capable of entering into individual consumption as a means of subsistence or into a new labor process as a means of production," 290.

[20] Dead labor can also refer to the means of production that are not in active use in reproducing capital, such as the machine deemed "useless" because it is not actively engaging in the labor process, or, critically, the laboring body that is not perpetually engaged in the production of capital.

[21] Marx, 342.

[22] "Yarn with which we neither weave nor knit is cotton wasted." Here, Marx notes that even though the cotton (a raw product) has been transformed through labor once – it has already been processed into yarn – "the fact that they are products of past labor is irrelevant...whenever products enter as a means of production into new labor processes, they lose their character of being products and function only as objective factors contributing to living labor." Marx, 289.

[23] Marx, 130-1. Essentially, the commodity has an intrinsic use-value (which is a condition of the socially necessary labor-time required for its production) and is also the bearer of an exchange value, both of which are predicated on a body laboring in service of the production of the commodity.

valuable in the process of exchange. Importantly, the commodity exists in social relation, as it only becomes a commodity through exchange. Through the exchange of commodities in the money form, which is described as the fetish of the commodity, Marx argues, the "human relations" inherent to the production of the commodity are hidden, resulting in a form of "substitution" by which it is the commodities which appear as the material form of relation, as opposed to the human relations that enabled the commodities' production.[24] Put differently, the commodity is a materialization of a social relation, a relation that secrets itself through the very process of its actualization: the exchange. Importantly, the commodity takes on its own form of sociality once it enters into the world of exchange. The fetish of the commodity, therefore, conceals the means of its production – human labor and the conditions under which humans labor – thereby attaching value to the "thing" instead of to the labor required to produce the thing.

Importantly, the commodity operates within a cyclical temporal structure: the exchange. In the exchange, in the transition from money to capital to money, there exists a brief moment in which the exchange has not yet actualized. Marx writes, "all commodities are non-use-values for their owners, and use-values for their non-owners. Consequently, they must all change hands. But this changing of hands constitutes their exchange, and their exchange puts them in relation to each other as values..."[25] The circulation is, theoretically, unending, as capital continues to be invested in the production of commodities, which are then exchanged again for more capital.

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[24] Furthermore, "the money-form of the thing is external to the thing itself, being simply the form of appearance of human relations hidden behind it. In this sense, every commodity is a symbol, since, as value, it is only the material shell of the human labor expended on it." Marx,166. As Marx writes, "the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labor as objective characteristics of the products of labor themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labor as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labor become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time suprasensible or social" (165).

[25] Marx, 179.

However, in order to accumulate capital, the process of the exchange becomes extended to include intermediaries (middle men), thereby enabling the capitalist to accrue more surplus value. In the extended "hand to hand to hand" circulations of capital accumulation, "conditions arise under which the alienation of the commodity becomes separated by an interval of time from the realization of its price."[26] As Marx elaborates, in this interval of time there exists the potential for a "crisis" of capitalism – an irruption in which the "metamorphosis" of the exchange process is prolonged, delayed, halted, or stopped, which leads to an incomplete exchange, a disruption the circulation of capital.[27] If the interval stretches for too long, the commodity's value depreciates and risks becoming "dead" labor, thereby requiring further investment (living labor) to revive it, perforating the flow of capital and its exchange, and contributing to a crisis of capitalism. In other words: for Marx, the crisis of capitalism lies in the extension of the interval of exchange which, if stretched too long, will cause a cessation of movement – a stop to the flow of capital.

Consuming Crises: Spectacle and Bodily Comportment

This dissertation not only attends to Marx's theorization of crisis – a disruption of the circulation of capital – but also extends the framework of "crises of capitalism." Each chapter contends with a population of migrant laborers, each of whom always represent the potential for a Marxian crisis, while also exposing a myriad of issues stemming from extractive capitalism, particularly those of racial subjugation, wealth inequality, and toxic working conditions. Indeed, in the title of this project, *Consuming Crises*, "crisis" is pluralized in order to indicate that, at any given moment, there are overlapping and compounding crises that unfold at different velocities.

[26] Rebecca Schneider, "Dance, Labor, Precarity, and Historical Irruption" Lecture, February 15, 2018; Marx, 232.
[27] Marx, 209.

For example, in each of the three chapters, I consider how certain crises become spectacularized (or, perhaps, framed as "acute") within a much longer historiographical narrative in order to emphasize how the chronic, durational deterioration and precarity that occurs under extractive capitalism becomes obscured in the face of a more pressing or immediate emergency.[28] In each chapter, the triage necessary to attend to the spectacularized crisis, I argue, serves to enrich and stabilize individuals and institutions who benefit from capitalist extraction while exacerbating and reinforcing the precarity of those whose labors are required for capitalism to reproduce.

Here, I want to unpack, briefly, the relationship between mobility/movement, the reproduction of capital, and the form of spectacle in the early 20th century, which marks the beginning of the timeframe of this dissertation. The development of mass culture in the United States – here identified as ubiquitous cultural forms that proliferated broadly through processes of dissemination (mass production) and by the scale of consumption – was facilitated by transformational changes in industrial capitalism, namely transportation and the growth of leisure activities and leisure time. Bolstered by a significant increase in real income at the turn of the 20th century, decreases in the cost of both essential and non-essential goods, and increasingly strict divisions between work (factory time) and leisure, the average American in the early 1900s would have had more time and money to spend on recreation and entertainment than ever before.[29] Entrepreneurs, recognizing the massive shifts in cultural values away from those espoused at the beginning of the industrial revolution ("hard work, punctuality, thrift, sobriety, self-control") towards those of the era of mass consumption (abundance, excess, heterogeneity,

[28] See Berlant; Sharpe; Nixon.

[29] Despite the widespread poverty among new immigrants to major urban centers, the years between 1897-1914 were generally regarded as a period of solid economic growth due to the fact that, overall, the national income rose by over 30% while inflation remained just around 3%, which bolstered the spending power of even the poorest city dwellers. This resulted, generally, in a significant increase in the standard of living of the average American and helped to catapult the United States into becoming a society of mass consumption. John Whiteclay Chambers, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000) 61.

pleasure, physicality, mobility, release), created new worlds within the confines of leisure sites – cinemas, amusement parks, shopping arcades, concert halls, etc. – and ensured the accessibility of these spaces to people from all classes, but especially the working-class and immigrant populations through deliberate planning and support for public transit, including train and ferry lines.[30] Furthermore, producers and developers alike recognized that the ability to be transported to a new, different world was critical to the success of any site of leisure. Mobility and circulation within the parameters of the greater city area were necessary to mass consumption and essential to spectacle as a form. Participating in consumption of a spectacle at that time, in other words, required being able to congregate at a particular site of leisure and the communal experience of journeying to, and enjoying, the spectacle was critical.

Mobility and circulation became hallmarks of the urban experience in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century America. As film scholar Sabine Haenni explains, New York City, for example, was

> dominated by the ideology of mobility. Circulation was encouraged, fantasized about legislated. While recently arrived immigrants were certainly less mobile than a freshly minted automobilist, they were nonetheless affected by the circulation in the city....maybe not least because mobility was socially heavily restricted, sites of leisure became sites of virtual mobility: here people could imagine themselves emotionally, geographically, and socially elsewhere, as being able to circulate easily in the city.[31]

As Haenni describes, despite the fact that urban populations were incredibly mobile (i.e., participating in transnational or rural-to-urban migration), social divisions among classes, industries, and ethnicities shaped how people moved through urban spaces. However, I would

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[30] John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 106-7. Something could probably be said here about the simultaneous development of advertising and marketing as part and parcel of mass consumerism and mass culture at the turn of the 20th century. For more, see Rosalind Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth Century France,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[31] Sabine Haenni *The Immigrant Scene: Ethnic Amusements in New York, 1880-1920* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 9.

amend Haenni's assertion that leisure sites were not merely a place of "virtual" mobility where one could picture oneself in another country or in a fantastical world. Amusement parks, cinemas, panorama pictures, and even the theatre were also intensely physical spaces that garnered visitors from across the city (and visitors from elsewhere), where people of all classes literally moved together towards the door of the spectacles and engaged in kinesthetic, embodied forms of spectatorship. The types of communal experiences at these sites "sensuous and sensual" and modeled forms sociality that helped immigrants and native-born Americans alike negotiate and acculturate to the conditions of urban modernity through shared, embodied experiences and close proximity.[32]

Because everything about these new leisure destinations was designed to be spectacular, visitors not only observed the environment around them, but also participated and contributed to it: embodied spectatorship grounded not only in kinesthetic engagement with the spectacle, but also the physical journey to the leisure site was critical to the success of these sites and productions. Spectacles functioned as a foil to the tedium, repetition, and rigidity of urban industrial life, thus pointing to a kind of symbiotic relationship in which work and leisure cannot exist without the other. While industrial capitalism obviously requires the disciplining of bodies into productive and efficient laborers, the myriad sites for spectacle highlight a related aspect of bodily work that is integral to capital's reproduction: conditioning the masses into passive consumers of both capitalism and its inevitable crises.

This dissertation considers spectacle as an operation that (re)activates and (re)animates the flow of capital. Specifically, I argue that spectacle functions as a mode of embodiment that

[32] Andrea Dennett and Nina Warnke, "Disaster Spectacles at the Turn of the Century," *Film History*, vol 4, no. 2, 1990, 104. Importantly, scholars like Lauren Rabinovitz and others have noted, although there is much discussion about how amusement parks promoted a loosening of Victorian customs and comportments, particularly around sex and the co-mingling of classes, there were equally many techniques employed to reinstate and maintain divisions among classes, races, genders, etc. Lauren Rabinovitz, *Electric Dreamland: Amusement Parks, Movies, and American Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 42.

stages and choreographs a transition from precarity to stability in service of the reproduction of capital. Across all three chapters, spectacle is a mode for consuming crises of capitalism in that it functions to manage appropriate bodily engagement with certain crises by diverting or distract from or obfuscate from more insidious, durational crises. In other words, the three chapters in this project present different examples of how spectacle serves to manage or mitigate crises stemming from capitalism's precarity. This theorization of spectacle grows out of, and expands upon, the work of visual and cultural studies scholars who consider the relationship between spectacle and capitalism, in addition to the ways in which spectacle can be an operation of distraction within the realm of the visual. Importantly, I am arguing that spectacle is not only an operation of visuality; rather, one must think about the ways in which spectacles choreograph (i.e., organize within space and time) bodies to recuperate them into structures of capitalism.

Scholars writing in visual and cultural studies have expounded upon how images, film, and other forms of visual culture (advertising, etc.) as spectacle serve to animate the reproduction of capitalism. Despite the fact that these analyses are curiously disembodied, they are important to understanding how the spectacle functions in the service of capital. Guy Debord in *Society and the Spectacle*, explicitly links spectacle with visuality arguing that spectacle is "a social relationship between people mediated by images."[33] Here, Debord essentially asserts that the spectacle is a commodity, as theorized by Marx, whose material and aesthetic form is the image.[34] The image (consumed visually) becomes the commodity that alienates the individual from his own labor and, critically, isolates the individual from others in service of its own reproduction: "[t]he world the spectacle holds up to view is at once *here* and *elsewhere*; it is the world of the commodity ruling over all lived experience. The commodity world is thus shown *as*

[33]Guy Debord, *The Society and the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 12.
[34] Marx**.**

it really is, for its logic is one with men's estrangement from one another and from the sum total of what they produce." [35]

How does the spectacle via image serve as "the concrete manufacture of alienation"?[36] Historians Rosalind Williams and Vanessa Schwartz both outline how, in the 19th century, images and their deployment in visual culture encouraged imagination and fantasy, which contributed to the "manufacture of alienation" by enabling spectators/consumers to dissociate, in a way, from both their lived realities and their labors. The intensity of visual culture, and the saturation of the image within said culture, at the turn of the century, they argue, bombarded people with "unreality" of the age of mass consumption. Williams explains:

> [the] characteristics [of mass consumption] are a radical division between the activities of production and of consumption, the prevalence of standardized merchandise sold in large volume, the ceaseless introduction of new products, widespread reliance on money and credit, and ubiquitous publicity... the merchandise itself is by no means available to all, but the *vision* of a seemingly unlimited profusion of commodities is available, is, indeed, nearly unavoidable.[37]

As Williams outlines in the quote above, the constant visual stimulation in the age of mass consumption not only projects, but also materializes, a logic of capitalism in which commodities are not only needed and desired, but also *promised* to all if the contract of work is upheld.[38] The *vision* that Williams identifies is both literal in the present (people are seeing commodities and their supposed benefits/advances) and denotative of an aspirational future (people not only imagine the commodities as available to them at some point in the future, but also believe that if they work hard enough they should be entitled to them). Following Williams, the entrée to a

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[35] Debord, 26.

[36] Debord, 23.

[37] Williams, 3.

[38] This logic has been used in countless news commentaries since 2016 to explain why low-income white populations support Donald Trump – there is something about the implicit promise or entitlement to some sort of reward if one does what he is "supposed" to do.

"Dreamland" of commodities through visual culture is indicative of a double alienation: fetishism and deferral. Marx acknowledges the fetish character of the commodity. The "human relations" inherent to the production of the commodity are hidden, resulting in a form of "substitution" by which it is the commodities which appear as the material form of relation, as opposed to the human relations that enabled the commodities' production.[39] Another form of alienation is deferral. The imagined, deferred, accessibility of the commodity – the potential to own it *in the future* – necessarily alienates consumers because the path to ownership is individuated; meaning, in industrial capitalist societies, the way to achieve ownership is through one's own labors and efforts, not, say through collective ownership or organizing.

Schwartz, too, considers the imagination – etymologically deriving from the Latin *imaginari,* "to picture oneself" – as a primary mode of engagement in the age of mass consumption. She writes:

> the visual representation of reality as spectacle...created a common culture and a sense of shared experiences through which people might begin to *imagine* themselves as participating in a metropolitan culture because they had visual evidence that such a shared world, of which they were a part, existed.[40]

Here, I argue, Schwartz points less to an imagined future, although there still exists an element here of deferral. What is more interesting, I think, is an implicit connection made here about how visuality and the spectacularization of reality mask the processes by which those whose labors produce this metropolitan culture are excluded from its benefits.[41] In other words: being able to

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[39] Furthermore, "the money-form of the thing is external to the thing itself, being simply the form of appearance of human relations hidden behind it. In this sense, every commodity is a symbol, since, as value, it is only the material shell of the human labor expended on it." Marx, 166.

[40] Vanessa Schwartz *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 6. Emphasis mine.

[41] This is much like Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* in which he points to the rise of print capitalism as a primary driver for the development of nationalism and national consciousness, which also happens to coincide with the Industrial Revolution. While Anderson attributes the consolidation of national identity to the circulation and consumption of media in the vernacular and the formalization of language, Schwartz suggests that the consumption of the "spectacular realities" of late 19th century Paris through visual displays – panoramas, wax museums, visits to the morgue, etc. – functions in a similar way: it provides common experiences that theoretically unite people around

see metropolitan culture provided motivation and desire to labor to uphold said culture, despite the fact that the laborer is fundamentally alienated from full participation in it. In this way, Schwartz, like Williams, describes the participation of the masses in consumer culture as tied to a precarious and ideological futurity. Put differently, the visual representations of this spectacularized reality materializes the deferred promise of ownership, which can only be actualized if one continues to labor and generate capital for the capitalist.[42]

While Williams and Schwartz contribute greatly to an understanding of how mass culture was adopted in the late 19th century, critically, neither discuss visioning (or imagining) as embodied phenomena; indeed, the body is conspicuously absent from their theorization of both spectatorship and the spectacle. One explanation for the disconnect between the visual and the embodied lies, perhaps, in the desire to attribute a sort of agential magic to the commodity, as Marx outlines as the commodity fetish. As this argument goes, the "magic" of the commodity acts upon the spectator and interpellates her into a process of alienation through the cycle of production and consumption as materialized in the image.

However, the move to separate the visual from the body is insufficient as a framework for analyzing the spectacles presented across the chapters of this project because it further severs the spectacle from the means of its own production and the conditions of its (re)production: audience engagement and reception. To make an obvious point, one must consider visualization within the realm of the body because visualization is, indeed, a bodily function. Furthermore, the modes of seeing described by Williams, Schwartz, and others, including the *flâneur* of Benjamin, are only possible through ambulatory processes that require one to circulate through permitted spaces at

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common experiences and knowledge. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983).

[42] Debord also makes this claim when he writes, "The modern spectacle...depicts what society *can deliver*, but within this depiction what is permitted it rigidly distinguished from what is possible. Debord, 20.

particular times.[43] It is important to emphasize, too, that the places for such seeing and imagining – department stores, amusement parks, museums, exhibitions, etc. – continue to structure the body within a capitalist temporality. With clearly delineated spaces and times available for leisure, workers' time was dictated by "factory time" and the circulation of people within cities was heavily curated, monitored, and monetized.[44] In relation to consumer culture, as outlined previously, the advent of aggressive advertising emerge concurrently with the rise of department stores. Mass production required innovative tactics to stimulate demand for unnecessary goods. Furthermore, the spaces and hours of mass culture predominately catered to the working class. For example, the hours and cost of admission to cinemas and amusement parks were crafted around the working week. The parks were open seven days a week; factory workers did not have to worry that they would be unable to attend a show because their day off was on a Monday, for example. The parks were always open from late May through November and from midday until late in the evening, meaning that the majority of operating hours were after the workday finished. The prices were low to attend, but were increased on peak days in order to capitalize profits when most people were off work. "Free time," it turns out, wasn't free.

Throughout the chapters of this study, I outline how spectacles condition audiences into particular modes and routes of comportment that are sensuous and mobile, and yet, critically, do not threaten the cycle of reproduction. Debord supports the idea of the spectacle as a corrective choreographic as he outlines how *permissible* bodily engagement is critical to the reproduction of capital. He writes:

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[43] Benjamin's *flâneur* strolls and meanders through urban spaces and is consistently inundated with advertising and the appeal to purchase goods.

[44] I also reflect here about the relationship between transportation and entertainment in this period; railroad companies/owners and amusement park owners had a mutually beneficial relationship with railroads often ending at amusement parks.

> the more [the spectator] contemplates, the less he lives; the more readily he recognizes his own needs in the images of need proposed by the dominant system, the less he understands his own existence and his own desires. The spectacle's externality with respect to the acting subject is demonstrated by the fact that the individual's own gestures are no longer his own, but rather those of someone else who represents them to him.[45]

In other words, the spectacle represents and choreographs appropriate modes of embodied engagement for the spectator who then adopts this comportment in the service of capitalism. Indeed, throughout every chapter, I engage with spectacle as an embodied mode for consuming capitalism's crises and as an operation of managing, or choreographing, exigent anxieties stemming from these crises.

Consumption: Toxicity in/as Capitalism

This dissertation is not only invested in tracing how laboring bodies consume crisis through the mode of the spectacle, but also how laboring bodies are consumed as capital; as in, the multiple ways in which the toxic effects of extractive work enter and destroy the body. In an attempt to make evident the ways in which capitalism alienates workers from their commodities while simultaneously revealing the enmeshment of the commodities of capitalism – the laboring body and materials it produces–, I theorize how the inhalation of toxic materials, the proximity to hazardous materials, and the frequency of workplace incidents render the laboring body an archive of capitalist destruction.

Connecting the sites and events of this project are the toxic environments in which migrant laborers toiled and lived and/or the ways in which industrial capital pollutes the natural resources upon which it depends. This dissertation connects the material toxins, hazards, and conditions of industrial capital to how the migrant laboring body performs physically,

[45] Debord, 23.

economically, and societally. Attention to the materials involved in industrial capital provides a more comprehensive understanding of the multiple ways in which the risk(s) associated with migrant labor are amplified due to systemic inequities that manifest through toxic particles and practices. Key to thinking with toxic material is critical theorist Mel Y. Chen whose work on animacy helps to frame relations between the human and non-human. Dust, for example, enters the body through the skin, nose, and mouth, animating the bodies of those laboring and living in proximity to factories and mines through, as Chen describes, an "*animacy* [that] takes mobile, molecular form, as particles that both intoxicate a body into environmental illness and as particles that constantly threaten the body's fragile state."[46] Importantly, dust does not touch all bodies equally and the disproportionate, toxic impacts of dust on migrants (especially migrant women of color) archives imperial & racist hierarchies of power within contemporary bodies. For example, in the case of mine workers in South African gold mines, the rates of silicosis, asbestos, and other air-borne diseases, are astronomic, due to the lack of worker protections and health screenings afforded to black miners in the 1950s-1970s.[47] Other examples include the hazardous air in tenement buildings in Lower Manhattan alongside the smoke and ash that choked and killed garment workers in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. One, too, can consider the ways in which extractive, industrial agricultural techniques in the Great Plains exacerbated the environmental destruction caused by drought and increased the severity of intense dust storms that polluted air for workers and their families, in addition to the deadly pesticides and other agricultural tools poison the laborers who apply said products.

[46] Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 16.
[47] Gill Nelson, "Occupational Respiratory Diseases in the South African Mining Industry." *Global Health Action*, (2013). http://www.globalhealthaction.net/index.php/gha/article/view/19520/pdf_1.

The toxic byproducts of industrial capital not only impact migrant laborers, but also cause irreversible damage to the natural environment. Sites of extraction (of water or minerals, for example), devastate ecosystems and render land unsafe for use for generations, a particularly toxic and painful fact given the violent history of land expropriation from indigenous peoples globally in the name of capital.[48] As Traci Brynn Voyles outlines, industrial capitalism not only poisons laborers, but also wreaks havoc on indigenous land and peoples for generations, creating "wastelands" in the wake of extractive industry. Defining "the wasteland" as "a racial and spatial signifier that renders an environment and the bodies that inhabit it pollutable," Voyles connects the uranium mines in the Southwest U.S. (an example I will not be taking up in my dissertation, but use here to illustrate the point) to broader histories of global industrialization that poison and pollute bodies of color in service of "advances" of white liberal, capitalist society.[49]

Precarity: Bodies in Suspension and Spectacles of Racial Violence

This project toggles between the metaphorical and the material, as is true with the concept of "bodies in suspension." In the material sense, I am interested in the ways laborers assume risk or danger as a result of their work (or an accident from their work); for example, miners suspended from wires as they delve deep into the ground or garment workers momentarily suspended in the air as they leapt from the windows of the burning Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Additionally, I draw upon dance studies scholarship on movement and embodiment to consider what André Lepecki describes as a "performance of suspension, a corporeally based interruption of modes of imposing flow" as this concept pertains to labor and

[48] See also Gomez-Barris.

[49] See, too, Chen; Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains: Extracting Nature and Identity in the Appalachian Coalfields*, (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 2010).

risk.[50] In other words, how and under what instances are workers enacting suspension, or cessation, as a means to disrupt and interrupt oppressive flows? Thinking less literally, the concept of being left in suspense or in a constant state of suspension is endemic among migrant laborers. One could think of the condition of being a migrant labor as living in perpetual suspension: for example, short term labor contracts mean not knowing whether there will be work in the long-term future, often devoid of extended familial structures, migrant laborers can feel caught between their lives at work and their lives elsewhere, and questions of citizenship and legal immigration place workers in continuous precarity. It is also important to consider how migrant workers operate and survive in a constant state of being suspended from ownership of their own labor, and often are suspended from the benefits of their labor through systemic exploitation. For example, small cotton farmers in the Central Valley in California in the 1930s, were frequently priced out of the ability to be self-sufficient (i.e, due to prices for fuel, seed, water, etc.) and relied heavily on loans from large cotton conglomerates. As a result, many farmers essentially became tenant farmers in debt to Big Cotton and lost their autonomy and financial gains in the process.[51]

This dissertation examines states of suspension through the reverberations of specific case-studies, drawing upon performance theory, critical race theory, and labor historiography to understand the ways in which the always already precarious nature of migrant labor is racialized (or, at least differentially distributed across races) and also how the riskiness, danger, and fear caused by said states might create other types of affiliation and solidarity.[52] The project explores how migrant labor differs from conventional understandings of diaspora (i.e., the Black diaspora

[50] Andre Lepecki, in Schneider 2013,143.
[51] Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994).
[52] I am aware of the ways in which diaspora theory is a somewhat imperfect term; however, I believe that diaspora studies is more appropriate than migration studies or another cognate field for the reasons outlined in text.

or the Jewish diaspora) and yet retains critical similarities that overlap with diaspora studies, such as populations on the move, trauma, confinement, resettlement, precarity, class/racial hierarchies, and violence. Furthermore, I will explore tropes of flight and settlement as they pertain to the various chapters, as I believe these metaphors correlate to the pulses of capitalist expansion and cartography. I am not necessarily interested in thinking through the ideas of "joyful" or "successful" flight (i.e, "white flight" as a sign of economic success or stability, or the tropes of "ascendance" to describe crossing socio-economic classes); however, I am interested, in seeing whether it is possible to connect histories of dispossession, violence, and forced/coerced labor and movement in different contexts.

Additionally, it will be through the lens of "suspension" that I also discuss the proximity of many of these case studies to the carceral. In more than one of the chapters of this project, workers occupy a space somewhere between voluntary/coerced, mobile/restricted, citizen/alien, free/incarcerated. Thinking in terms of site (i.e., the migrant labor camp or the sweatshop), the project gestures towards the relationship between migrant labor and prison systems and how phrases like "suspended sentence" or "suspended funds" or "driving with a suspended license" resonate within industrial capitalist systems of cheap migrant labor, the prison industrial complex, and anti-migrant sentiment.

It would be impossible to theorize precarity and "bodies in suspension" in 20th century America without acknowledging the extrajudicial, spectacular violence against black people in the form of lynching. Designed to perpetuate racial violence and economic inequality in the United States, the use of lynching as a tool of racial terrorism against black Americans began in full force following the emancipation of African American slaves during the Civil War. In the century that followed, during the era of Jim Crow, thousands of black people (mostly men) were

gruesomely tortured and murdered in extrajudicial killings instigated and perpetrated by white mobs.[53] As historian Amy Louise Wood writes, although lynchings were relatively infrequent in relation to other forms of discrimination and violence endured by black Americans in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, the spectacular nature of lynchings as performative and ritualistic acts of violence reverberated beyond the immediate victims of the crime and became a metonym for racialized violence and oppression across the United States.[54] The circulation of lynching photographs – the staged scenes of mutilation and torture that appeared on the covers of newspapers, on postcards, and in letters – gave lynching tremendous symbolic power, which resulted in reinforcing white supremacy and traumatizing black communities.

Critically, Wood and other cultural theorists/historians link these spectacular displays of violence with socio-economic transformations that aligned with not only with the freedoms newly granted to black Americans during Reconstruction, but also with industrial capitalism, mass consumption, urbanization, and fights for suffrage and political freedom. At the turn of the century, the myth of the black male as sexual predator who attacked white women served as the justification for lynchings and this proverbial rationale circulated widely beyond the Jim Crow South. However, as renowned journalist and activist Ida B. Wells documented clearly in her 1892 pamphlet "Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in all its Phases," there were countless acts of lynching that did not even attempt to set up a pretext of a false rape allegation; rather, these horrors were aimed at successful black businessmen (in the case of the lynching of the proprietors of the People's Grocery in Memphis, TN), prominent community leaders, voting

[53] It should be noted that lynchings did not end with the civil rights movement and indeed still occur, though rarely, through the twenty-first century. It is also important to note that lynchings occurred all over the country, although the majority happened in the Jim Crow South. Similarly, African Americans were certainly the most commonly targeted victims of lynching; however, there are many recorded lynchings in which the victims were Mexican, Asian, Indigenous, and other races.

[54] Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

rights advocates and organizers, and those making strides in agriculture whose economic viability threatened white hegemony.[55]

The entire U.S. economy in the early 19th century was powered by slave labor; and, the North industrialized prior to the Civil War, the wage labor jobs and manufacturing industry diversified in ways that were not true in the U.S. South.[56] In the wake of the Civil War, the Southern economy was not only devastated, but also lacked the infrastructure and capital to compete with the industrializing north. The South relied on cheap, exploitative black labor, largely through the continued oppression of newly-emancipated black Southerners, and on northern investments in the textile, agriculture, and transportation industries, among others. Black Southerners exercising their freedoms by voting, establishing businesses, and purchasing property triggered intense anxieties for whites who feared the end of white supremacy and the economic competition with black business owners. Furthermore, the influx of northern investments into particularly industries changed the landscape of the rural South and began to introduce modern technology and encourage urbanization. As Wood explains,

> Racial violence surged at the turn of the century...not because southern communities were [backwards and] cut off from modern institutions and customs, but because they were undergoing an uncertain and troubled transformation into modern, urban societies. The devastation and uncertainties of the rural economy after the Civil War pushed increasing numbers of Southerners, white and black, off the farm, and as northern investment poured into the South, cities and towns grew in area and population. The most spectacular lynchings took place not in the countryside but in these newly urbanized areas, where mobs hanged their victims from telegraph and telephone poles and where streetcars and railroads brought crowds to witness the violence.[57]

While Wood clearly connects "northern" phenomena like modern technology, industrialization, and urbanization with lynching and racial violence, she also illustrates the eerie and gruesome

[55] Ida B. Wells-Barnett. *On Lynchings*. (New York: Dover Publications, 2014), 34.

[56] The U.S. economy continues to be powered by extractive labor, white supremacy, expropriation, and settler colonialism.

[57] Wood, 5-6.

parallels between amusement parks and lynchings: both displayed spectacular events that were supported through the newfound mobility inherent to the urban modernity and were reproduced through the consumption of the spectacle by audience members. Furthermore, Jacqueline Goldsby specifically links popular forms of entertainment and sites of leisure, like amusement parks, with lynchings. She writes, "lynching violence could thrive (however perversely) as a culturally logical practice because its violence enacted the premise that 'Coney Island realism' depended on but did not fulfill—as the very essence of its appeal as a thrill—the spectacularization of death."[58]

Lynchings of black people spectacularized crises of labor and economic competition and served to manage the perceived threats of black suffrage. Additionally, the lynchings rendered the black body as a literal commodity to be traded, mass produced, and displayed through the lynching souvenir. These "souvenirs" could come in the form of a piece of cloth, a part of the rope used in the murder, or even a body part (a finger or piece of hair, for example) that would be obtained as part of the pillaging of the body after the killing. Critical theorist Harvey Young argues

> [lynching souvenirs] not only fix the black body within a historical moment, but also transform it into a captive object to be owned, displayed and, quite possibly, traded. What makes them so interesting is that they, much like the contemporary mass-produced, stereotypical commercial images of the black body, sought to commodify the body at a time when it was gaining new liberties in the present.[59]

At a moment when black people had increased freedoms, access to capital and property, were exercising their right to vote and to representation, and were ascending economically, the lynching souvenir can also be thought of as a means of commodifying black labor. Lynchings

[58] Jacqueline Goldsby, *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 223.
[59] Harvey Young, *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 176.

functioned not only as acts of physical violence and murder, but also as psychic terrorism that perpetuated and enabled the reproduction of white economic supremacy as the South began to industrialize and "modernize." A thread that runs through each chapter of this project is how spectacle manages precarity and threat/danger differently for white people and people of color. The case studies peel back the veneer of moments in American history where whiteness correlates to "neutral" and, in South Africa, where the labors of black men on the mines were bravely exposed in the face of censorship to protect the white supremacist, apartheid state.

The first two chapters of this dissertation focus on precarious, migrant populations of white "Others:" in the first chapter, Jewish and Italian immigrants to the U.S. who were racialized as separate from Anglo-Saxons in the early 20th century; in the second chapter, indigent white farmers from the Great Plains who were ostracized upon their arrival in California for being impoverished, "backwards," and unclean. In these chapters, I theorize how spectacle functions to obscure or neutralize precarity and to (re)incorporate these white workers into forms of labor that supported the capitalist nation-state. Lynchings (as a spectacular form of racial violence), however, did not obfuscate precarity; rather, they make visible a type of precarity that exposes the "impermissability of black belonging"[60] In the third chapter, Ernest Cole's photographs of black miners in South Africa's gold mines during the era of apartheid (1950s-1970s) serve to similarly make visible the precarity of black laborers, contradicting the ways in which the mines' white owners attempted to project how the miners were protected and cared for. Understanding the ways in which race intersects with the spectacular devastation of the laboring body helps to track how both whiteness and racialization intersect with various categories of labor and how whiteness emerges as implicit in the definition of who counts as a "worker" within normative labor historiographies, which often meant further subjugation for workers of color.

[60] Jasmine Johnson, 9 April 2020.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1, " Spectacularizing Disaster: On Fire and Crises of Labor in Progressive Era New York," presents a relationship between industrial capital, transnational migrant labor, and performance by placing in conversation popular performances from the early 20th century – disaster spectacles – and a major event in US domestic labor history: the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (1911). Disaster spectacles were among the most well-attended performances taking place in Coney Island in the first decade of the 20th century. Taking place in the newly-constructed Dreamland amusement park, *Fighting the Flames* (1904) was touted as "the most realistic, the most fraught with danger of any exhibition" at Coney Island and garnered thousands of spectators daily during the decade of its run. The spectacularized conflagration of what appeared to be a tenement building in a working-class neighborhood resonated deeply with the hundreds of thousands of audience members who attended the performance who cheered as actors leapt out of the burning building and firemen rushed to safely put out the blaze before there were any casualties.

Seven years after the premiere of *Fighting the Flames,* a similar scene unfolded as the top three stories of Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in Lower Manhattan caught fire in March, 1911. The disaster itself was spectacular. Spectators describe a horrific scene of young women screaming, choking on black smoke, and leaping to their deaths due to the dysfunctional fire escapes and the flames and smoke engulfing the building. The Triangle Fire was the largest industrial accident in the history of New York City at the time and claimed the lives of over 140 workers, most of whom were young, female migrant laborers working in the sewing rooms of the factory. The scenographic and choreographic similarities between *Fighting the Flames* and the Triangle

Shirtwaist Fire make apparent how both events spectacularize labor and various crises of capitalism present in Progressive Era New York. In this chapter I historicize some of these crisis of capitalism – namely mass immigration, poverty, mass consumption, and wealth inequality – in order to illustrate how *Fighting the Flames* and the Triangle Factory Fire make visible and spectacularize said crises. Using *Fighting the Flames* as a guide to understanding how spectacles of labor are aestheticized and reproduced makes evident the ways in which the Triangle Fire similarly spectacularized a crisis of labor and served to facilitate the reproduction of said crisis, albeit in a different form. This chapter complicates normative historiography of the Triangle Fire, which generally posits the event as turning point in American labor history – the moment that catalyzed worker protections and laid the groundwork for the golden age of unions in the United States. Rather than considering the Triangle Fire as a categorical victory for the working (wo)man, framing the Triangle Fire as a spectacle enables analysis into the ways in which the resulting activism and legislation failed to fundamentally reshape a capitalist economy and ultimately re-subsumed and re-disciplined striking workers back into capital's temporal structure with less visibility than before.

Extending out of the historiography of the first chapter on American liberalism and progressive reforms, the second chapter of *Consuming Crises* focuses on agricultural migrants from the Southwest Plains to California in the 1930s-40s. This chapter frames this mass migration of an estimated 375,000 people as a crisis of capitalism, as it was caused (in part) by extractive, industrial farming practices and a compounding financial crisis: the Great Depression. Using archival material including photographs and government communications, the first section of this chapter considers how the "Okie" migration became spectacularized in American culture through the circulation of photographs that made visible and very public a crisis of migrant labor.

Much like in the first chapter where a crisis of labor (the Triangle Fire) was made so public and spectacular that the government was forced to intervene, the U.S. government's response to the movement of indigent, white laborers across the country was insufficient and too late. The Roosevelt administration's solution to the influx of migrant laborers in California was to build migratory labor camps that would be administered through the Resettlement Administration (RA), which later became the Farm Security Administration (FSA). The migratory labor camps were a stopgap. Similar to the inadequate government intervention illustrated in the first chapter after the Triangle Fire, the camps were a palliative that did not treat the underlying causes of the migrant's precarity; rather, they provided just enough limited protections for a very specific (white) population that these workers could be resubsumed into the service of capital and the subject-formation of the liberal nation-state.

The second half of the second chapter contrasts photographs of performance practices within the FSA migratory labor camps in California in the 1930s with those from the 1940s. FSA images of migrants in the mid-30s emphasized the acute poverty of white agricultural migrants and implicitly linked migrants to pre-industrial ways of life, including through their sparse photographs of dance and performance in the camps. Dance and performance, broadly, were integral to the social lives of FSA migratory labor camps. Community dances, which included square dancing, minstrel shows, and more contemporary social dances, served as a form of entertainment and recreation that, I argue, served two purposes. First, the dances can be viewed as a form of spectacle in that they operated to manage the anxieties of migration and precarity. These dances reminded people of home and, through dancing the squares, migrants created a semblance of stability and continuity within the camps that distracted from the urgency and fears arising the precarity of their immediate status as migrants and their historical

circumstances as tenant farmers in Oklahoma. Second, as the FSA grew and became more formalized, and as the US economy began to rebound in the early 1940s, images of the FSA dances increased and became much more stylized to spectacularize and project the so-called "sucesses" of the New Deal. These photographs emphasized a number of genre conventions that reflected the liberal, ideological priorities of New Deal reforms and served to correlate said reforms to the smiling, white dancers in the pictures. Photographers were instructed to capture images that reflected the sanctity and strength of a cohesive society, propriety, cleanliness, attention to healthy, hearty bodies and white, middle-class appearances, and the harnessing of energy into *active* and socially productive endeavors. Through dance and the disciplining of the migrant body through white cultural expression, one can track how whiteness travels and attaches itself to literal "moves" and cultural objects, which are deeply entrenched and incorporated into notions of liberalism and aimed at producing productive democratic *white* citizens, often exploiting and endangering non-white laborers and citizens in the process.

In the same way that the U.S. government spectacularized the management of workers in the camps both through recreation and the dissemination of images of dancing, so, too did the apartheid government in South Africa turn to spectacularized dance to manage the workforce in the gold mines. The government's strategies for using dance and photographs of dance to manage workers for the social reproduction of capital links this chapter with the next.

The final chapter of this project requires some travel from the United States to South Africa. This chapter coalesces around the dance performances that took place weekly in South African gold mining compounds and were performed by amateur black, African dancers for white South African and European audiences in the 1950s-1960s. Promoted as a tourist attraction to highlight the benevolent treatment of black laborers in the mining industry, mine dances

became a symbol of both "authentic" African culture and, somewhat paradoxically, the progress made towards modernizing and industrializing South Africa. The mine dance performances spectacularized a particular type of black labor while obscuring, for the audiences, the toxic and extractive labors required by black men underground. In this chapter, I unpack the relationship between the political economy of the mining industry, dance performances as tourist attractions in the mines, and ways in which the mechanized, industrial labor of mining erodes away at bodies with disproportionate effect on bodies of color. The chapter considers how the photographs of Ernest Cole's photographs intervene in the machine of the gold mining industry, disrupting and disavowing the hegemonic narratives of the benign façade of benevolent, humane labor conditions in the mines. Moving beyond photographic archives of black labor in South African gold mines, the second half of this chapter contends with how the mines and their toxic byproducts themselves materialize the imperial condition of racial apartheid and extend its temporal reach to the present day.

This project concludes by weaving together the main frameworks of this project – migration and labor, spectacle toxicity, and bodies in suspension – as laying the groundwork for life in the time of COVID-19. Each chapter of *Consuming Crises* centers on a population of migrants whose labors become spectacularized in service of the reproduction of capitalism while other crises of capitalism go untended. Every chapter contends with the co-imbrication of toxicity and the body engendered by extractive forms of labor and racial capitalism while also attending to how said systems function to render the body, particularly the laboring body, in a state of perpetual suspension. Across different sites and political systems, I trace both how movement is necessary to survive extractive capitalism and, simultaneously, how the movements of individuals – both in labor and leisure – are dictated, restricted, and policed in order for

capitalism itself to survive. This epilogue serves not only as a conclusion by way of tying loose ends together against the backdrop of the pandemic (which offers both the breakdown in-real-time of various structures of capital and their deep entrenchment), but also as a means to lift up strategies of survival and empowerment that offer reformulations of proximity and breath that instruct us how to create more sustainable, intimate futures.

CHAPTER 1

Spectacularizing Disaster:
On Fire and Crises of Labor in Progressive Era New York

FIRE!

The street teems with the energy of a New York City working-class neighborhood waking from its slumber. Merchants finish setting up their carts amidst the singsong of calls peddling their wares to passersby. Women and men on their way to work hurry down the stairs of their tenement flats and rush towards the avenue to catch the elevated rail car; children dart in and out of doors, dodging the laundry hanging off of lines strung in the narrow space between buildings. Kids shout out to each other as they run to play in the alleys. Suddenly, an alarm sounds and smoke begins creeping out the windows on the ground floor of a building on the corner. "FIRE!" Cries pierce through the hum of the street punctuating the quotidian clamor with urgency, fear, and threat. Throngs of people flood the street from all directions and gather at the edges of the sidewalk looking along, helpless, as the flames lick their way up the walls of the building. Quickly, though, help arrives. Tens of fire fighters arrive in four horse-powered fire engines complete with water hoses and extension ladders. The men begin their assault on the building. Those trapped inside move to try and escape. First attempting to exit through the doors and windows, the residents climb up the floors of the building hoping to outrun the calamity below. In this battle of man versus fire, fire seems to be winning. The residents of the building are driven higher and higher, climbing the seven floors of the building until they reach the roof. Some men and women leap out of the windows, if they can see a fireman below with a net, but most continue upwards. When the people can go no further, one man, in his panic, decides to jump the 70 feet from the roof into the fireman's life net below. Others are about to follow, but

then they see an extension ladder – a way off the roof! Just as the ladder is raised, an explosion sounds from within the building. One-by-one, the firemen help the residents down the ladder in rapid succession. Just as the last person makes it safely onto the ladder, the roof collapses in on itself, yet, all the residents and firemen are safe. The survivors stand on the street with the firemen and bystanders watching thick, black smoke rise off of the charred remains. From their seats, the audience breaks into raucous cheers and applause.[61] After some minutes, the audience members vacate their seats facing the set; the actors exit the stage and stagehands move to reconstruct the building to prepare it for the next performance.

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The scenario above is a synopsis of the disaster spectacle *Fighting the Flames*, the most popular show at Coney Island during the 1904 season. Taking place in the newly-constructed Dreamland amusement park, *Fighting the Flames* was touted as "the most realistic, the most fraught with danger of any exhibition" and garnered thousands of spectators daily during the decade of its run at Coney.[62] The spectacularized conflagration of what appeared to be a tenement building in a working-class neighborhood resonated deeply with the hundreds of thousands of audience members who attended the performance during its seven-year run; many

[61]"Fighting the Flames...", *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 24, 1904, 29, https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/53860757/; *History of Coney Island - Lists and Photographs of Main Attractions*, (Burroughs & Co, 1904). This description draws from primarily these two sources, although there are ample more that write of the spectacle in the same way. In the newspaper articles, viewbooks, and other promotional and primary source material, there exists photographic, film, and textual evidence, but they are devoid of sound and/ or descriptions of sound prior to the fire breaking out.

[62] Dennett and Warnke, 104. A note on terminology: the term "exhibition" is used here for two reasons: first, at the turn of the century, many of the Coney Island amusement parks were modeled around the World's Fairs, which had "exhibitions" that were part display, part performance. Similarly, for *Fighting the Flames,* I believe the term signifies both scale and site. As will be discussed later in the chapter, *Fighting the Flames* was a performance of unprecedented scale, utilizing thousands of employees. Second, the spectacle took place outside of a conventional theatre space and it was consistent with the marketing of these kinds of shows at the time to call them "exhibitions." In this paper, though, I will be using calling these events either "spectacles" or "performances" for reasons that will be outlined in the body of the work.

of whom lived on streets that resembled that of the set of *Fighting the Flames*.[63] Although the audience would likely have been comprised of people from a range of social classes the vast majority would have been working-class people and, specifically, working-class immigrants or the children of immigrants — people who would have been deeply familiar with the perils of the unsafe and unsanitary conditions of the "urban slum" as epitomized by the tenement building.[64] In *Fighting the Flames* and *Fire and Flames* (a concurrent performance taking place in Coney Island's Luna Park amusement park with an almost identical plot), the thrill and potential danger of the tenement fire is counter-balanced by the heroic actions of the firemen. The firefighters were often performed by men who also worked for the New York Fire Department. They utilized state-of-the-art technology to successfully rescue every person trapped behind the wall of flames. For this performance, at least, the risks, or "dangers" associated with living in immigrant neighborhoods – especially the inability to breathe clean air and the persistent threat of devastating fires – are lessened by the prompt, mechanized, and reliable actions of the state and its institutions.[65] Every fire was put out and every person was saved.

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Seven years after the premiere of *Fighting the Flames*, a scene with remarkable similarities to the spectacle unfolded twelve miles away in Lower Manhattan. On March 25,

[63] There is some debate about whether the buildings could be classified as "tenement." Dennett and Warnke affirmatively call the burning building a tenement, while performance scholar Lynn Sally calls it a "tenement-looking building," while the source material sometimes calls it a hotel. To be sure, the building was aesthetically evocative of a lower-class dwelling which was particularly clear in the first year of *Fire and Flames* (Luna Park) when the building is only four stories high. Lynn Kathleen Sally, *Fighting the Flames: The Spectacular Performance of Fire at Coney Island*, (New York: Routledge, 2006). Lauren Rabinovitz writes, "in 1909, the combined daily attendance of Coney Island's three parks reached half a million [people]." Therefore, one can extrapolate that, because *Fighting the Flames* was the most popular show, hundreds of thousands of people saw this spectacle in the seven years of its run at Dreamland. Rabinovitz, 3.

[64] Chambers, 14; Robert B. Fairbanks, "From Better Dwellings to Better Neighborhoods: The Rise and Fall of the First National Housing Movement," in John F. Bauman, Roger Biles, and Kristin M. Szylvian, ed., *From Tenements to Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth Century America*, (University Park [PA], Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 23.

[65] The fire department was only recently consolidated into one unified, professional department run by the City in 1898.

1911 at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, however, there was no successful resolution to the drama. In the late afternoon on that day, residents living near Washington Square Park in New York City tended to their daily chores. Mrs. Lena Goldman stood in front of her restaurant on Greene St. sweeping the sidewalk. Patrolman James P. Meehan made his rounds in the park. Dominick Cardiane pushed his wheelbarrow down the street. At 4:40pm, they heard "a big puff" from the Asch Building on the corner of Greene St. and Washington Place. Cardiane and others nearby looked up and saw smoke billowing out the windows of the eighth floor – the first of three floors occupied by the Triangle Shirtwaist Company that employed up to 700 people, mostly young immigrant women from Southern and Eastern Europe, making ready-to-wear shirtwaists.[66] Meehan, Goldman, and hundreds of others in the vicinity ran towards the smoke, hearing screams from both the workers trapped inside and those on the street watching.

The event that transpired over the next half hour was, by all accounts, one of almost unimaginable tragedy. Thousands of bystanders flocked to the scene and saw women pouring out of the building, trampling each other in their exit. Survivors and witnesses reported choking on the tremendous amount of black smoke that swept through the corridors and elevator shafts of the building.[67] Those trapped inside began to climb up to higher floors. Within minutes, panicked because the doors to the hallway were bolted and there was no fire escape, the women began throwing themselves out of windows, smashing through the firemen's nets onto the sidewalk. The firemen themselves were "helpless" to save lives; their ladders did not reach the

[66] "141 Men and Girls Die in Waist Factory Fire; Trapped High Up in Washington Place Building; Street Sewn with Bodies; Piles of Dead Inside," *The New York Times*, March 26, 1911. Interestingly, this headline foregrounds men and infantilizes the women workers by calling them "girls" despite the fact that the vast majority of the dead were adult women.

[67] Interview of Sylvia Kimeldorf as conducted by Leon Stein. July 24, 1957 https://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/primary/survivorInterviews/SylviaKimeldorf.html; Interview of Rose Hauser as conducted by Leon Stein. Sept 4, 1958. https://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/primary/survivorInterviews/RoseHauser.html

eighth floor, let alone the eleventh.[68] Many of the firemen were prevented even from fully deploying their ladders and hoses because the sidewalks were so strewn with bodies. Their hoses sprayed in a futile effort to quell the flames that were tens of feet beyond their reach. In thirty minutes, the fire was over. Despite the chaos, the building itself stood tall amidst the horrors on the ground. *The New York Times* report from the next day praised the building's durability as it callously surveyed its condition in the aftermath of the fire: it "show[ed] hardly any signs of the disaster that overtook it. The walls are so good as ever; so are the floors; nothing is the worse for the fire except the furniture and 141 of the 600 men and girls that were employed in its upper three stories."[69] While the author marvels at the phoenix-like resilience of the factory's structure, he illustrates the disposability of factory laborers. By collapsing the deceased women with the furniture, he sutures their bodies and their work to the culture of fast-fashion and mass consumption that would increasingly have valued fungibility and replaceability. Like the furniture, these workers were easily found, bought, and expendable. It goes without saying that the spectacular disaster of the Triangle Fire did not end in the victorious rescue of potential victims; nonetheless, as the report from the *Times* indicated, the stage was ready to be reset with new actors once the smoke had cleared.

The scenographic and choreographic similarities between *Fighting the Flames* and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire make apparent how both events spectacularize labor and make various crises of capitalism present in Progressive Era New York. It is through understanding the overt nature of the Coney Island spectacle that the Triangle Fire can be similarly theorized as spectacular production. That is to say, not only is the factory a site of production (in this case, shirtwaists), but also it is a setting for a crisis labor that requires immediate management which, I

[68] "141 Men and Girls Die in Waist Factory Fire; Trapped High Up in Washington Place Building; Street Sewn with Bodies; Piles of Dead Inside," *The New York Times*, March 26, 1911.
[69] Ibid.

argue, comes in the form of the spectacle. I bring these events together not only to illuminate the risks associated with burgeoning industrialization and offer insight about how performance functioned to both secure and disrupt (temporarily) the cultural and temporal grasp of unchecked capitalist expansion during the Progressive Era, but also to illustrate how the progress narrative of the Progressive Era and of liberalism in the United States, is, at its heart, predicated on the manipulation of perhaps the exemplar disaster spectacle: the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. Framing the Triangle Fire as spectacle allows us to see the event not as the tragic result of negligent behavior of individuals, but as a production – the inevitable culmination of intentional decisions and directions supported by various existing structures, supported by capital, and designed to be reproduced and consumed by the public. I expand upon the historically specific work of analyzing spectacle in the Progressive Era performed by social historians like Vanessa Schwartz and Rosalind Williams by placing their careful analysis alongside situationist theorist Guy Debord who outlines a Marxian understanding of how spectacles function in relation to alienation, the commodity, and the reproduction of capital.[70] Because of the world-changing social, cultural, and economic upheavals that climaxed in the Progressive Era, any working definition of spectacle must attend to the interdependent expansion of industrial capitalism and the urban metropolis and the proliferation of popular culture that was enabled due to that

[70] From the turn of the century to the U.S.' entrance into World War I, the country transitioned into a culture and economy of mass consumption. Driven by new technology and increasingly productive workforces, companies could produce more goods at a lower cost, which put them within the reach of millions of Americans who were simultaneously experiencing significant rises in income. Despite the fact that consumer goods were newly affordable, supply was consistently outpacing demand, which, as historian John Chambers writes, required American businesses to turn to aggressive strategies for advertising to "stimulate demand" for products. Chambers, 65. Debord, 12-13. Debord writes, "the spectacle is both the outcome and the goal of the dominant mode of production. It is not something *added* to the real world - not a decorative element, so to speak. On the contrary, it is the very heart of society's real unreality. In all its specific manifestations – news or propaganda, advertising or the actual consumption of entertainment – the spectacle epitomizes the prevailing model of social life. It is the omnipresent celebration of a choice *already made* in the sphere of production and the consummate result of that choice. In form as in content the spectacle serves as total justification for the conditions and aims of the existing system. It further ensures the *permanent presence* of that justification, for it governs almost all time spent outside the production process itself," Debord, 13. See also Williams; Schwartz.

economy. Drawing from these scholars to inform my analysis of *Fighting the Flames* and the Triangle Fire, I consider spectacle, with its close relationship to crisis and precarity, to be an aesthetic and material manifestation of existing social relations that justifies its existence through its own reproduction. To be explicit about a lacuna in existing theorizations on/of spectacle, this chapter considers the body and bodily labor as the critical manifestation of social relations. In other words, this chapter intervenes in critical scholarship on spectacle to include how the body and the body as labor become spectacularized to serve the needs of industry and the state. I draw upon this broad framework of the spectacle to consider not only aesthetics, but also the specific political economy of mass industrialization and industrial labor that provided material support for performances like *Fighting the Flames* and enabled the exploitative practices that led to the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire.

By placing *Fighting the Flames* and the Triangle Fire together, I outline and demonstrate the strategies that made the performances and the Triangle Fire both aesthetically affective and politically effective; namely, the spectacularization of the common crises of capitalism at the turn of the 20th century, particularly the crisis of work and the ramifications of extractive labor. At Coney Island, the urban fires in these performances function as metonym for a plethora of crises stemming from mass migration and industrialization, such as poverty (wealth inequality), overcrowding, unsanitary/unsafe living and working conditions, disease, economic precarity for the working poor, and the rapid pace of technological change. The Triangle Fire presented the American public with perhaps its most brazen and distressing example of the spectacle of work, making visible and visceral the extractive and exploitative labors of workers in garment factories. However, I argue, that the aftermath serves to reinvisiblize those labors through the subsequent relationships formed by labor unions and the state. The canonization (and normative

historiography) of the Triangle Fire as a turning point for labor protection obscures how the Fire ultimately reinforced and strengthened the relationships between industrial capital and the state, which actually minimized the power of individual workers and limited the capacity of workers to collectively organize.

In both the performances and in the Triangle Fire, technological and state intervention are offered as the panacea to the aforementioned conditions. In *Fighting the Flames*, overwhelming tragedy (the deaths of inhabitants of the burning building) is quelled through state-sponsored actions and technological innovation – the state-of-the-art fire equipment and a professional fire department prevent any casualties. The guaranteed safety of the actors in these spectacles ultimately functions to normalize the occurrence and frequency of urban fires in poor and working-class neighborhoods and creates a false sense of security in the fire department through entirely successful rescues in this elaborate production. The spectacles on Coney Island reinforced the notion that advancements in technology and intervention from the state could protect all its inhabitants; however, during the first decade of the 20th century, there was little political will from lawmakers to create legislation to protect vulnerable populations, nor was there the legal or political capacity to hold individuals/institutions accountable for violating said frameworks. These realities were made all too explicit in the aftermath of the Triangle Fire. Indeed, although preventative technologies like sprinkler systems and fire-retardant materials in high capacity buildings (particularly commercial factories and theaters) were available prior to the Fire and were lauded for their potential to safeguard patrons and workers, in practice, there was little legal enforcement or incentive to use said technologies and little recourse for workers to hold their employers accountable. Furthermore, the economic incentives created from corrupt insurance firms encouraged factory owners' negligent practices by continuing to provide

coverage despite the "rotten risk" of garment factories.[71] After the Fire, amidst intense public outcry from both workers and the general public, the state enacted significant and widespread legislation aimed at preventing another industrial disaster by creating safety codes and holding manufacturers accountable for potential negligence and exploitation.

Because of the workplace safety reforms ratified in the aftermath of the Triangle Fire, the event is widely analyzed and evoked as a turning point in American labor history. Today, on the AFL-CIO's website, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire is listed under "Key Events in Labor History" and narrativizes how the Fire served as a mobilizing force for labor leaders like Clara Lemlich and Frances Perkins (later, Perkins became the Secretary of Labor under President Franklin D. Roosevelt; she is credited as one of the leaders behind the New Deal) and also as a turning point for unions and workers, broadly.[72] In September 2019, presidential candidate and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren delivered a major speech in Washington Square Park against the backdrop of the Asch Building. In her address, Warren cited the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire as an example of the devastating effects of rampant corruption and evoked Perkins' activism after the Fire as an example of the power of labor and of women: "What did one woman – one very persistent woman – backed up by millions of people across this country get done? Social Security. Unemployment insurance. Abolition of child labor. Minimum wage. The right to join a union.... Big, structural change."[73] While exaggerating slightly Perkins' role as Secretary of Labor in order to draw parallels between Perkins and herself, Warren's point still rings clearly: the Triangle Fire was a turning point for American labor and the United States' democracy. Warren, following conventional historiography, neatly traces how the tragedy of the Fire spurred action

[71] Leon Stein, *The Triangle Fire*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 174.

[72] "Triangle Shirtwaist Fire," *AFL-CIO*. https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-events/triangle-shirtwaist-fire.

[73] Elizabeth Warren as quoted in Emily Stewart, "'Corruption is breaking our democracy': Elizabeth Warren's case for the White House." *Vox.* https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/9/16/20869157/elizabeth-warren-triangle-shirtwaist-factory-fire-corruption-speech.

that resulted in the signature legislative package of American liberal democracy: the New Deal. Out of catastrophe, the story goes, came transformational (and previously unimaginable) progress.

Considering the Triangle Fire as spectacle complicates the mainstream narrative of the Fire as a watershed moment that spurred the creation of the modern welfare state and shifted U.S. domestic policy towards the direction of liberal reform. Using *Fighting the Flames* as a guide to understanding how spectacles of labor are aestheticized and reproduced makes evident the ways in which the Triangle Fire similarly spectacularized a crisis of labor and served to facilitate the reproduction of said crisis, albeit in a different form. Put differently, framing the Triangle Fire as a spectacle enables analysis into the ways in which the resulting activism and legislation failed to fundamentally reshape a capitalist economy and ultimately re-subsumed and re-disciplined striking workers back into capital's temporal structure with less visibility than before. When viewed as a spectacle, it becomes clear that the Triangle Fire did not result in a radical reformation of the U.S. economic structure; rather, the Fire serves as evidence of a social relationship (capitalism) that continues, in altered form, to protect industry/industrialists and ensures its own reproduction ad infinitum. To be sure, the spectacular nature and magnitude of the devastation of the Triangle Fire so captured the attention, sympathy, and anger of the nation, that it did create a tear in the legislative, economic, and social fabrics which had previously prevented sustainable, large-scale activist victories. The labor reforms that resulted from extensive organizing and intense public pressure in the wake of the Triangle Fire shaped the nature of work and the political foundations for social liberalism in the United States for the century to come. However, while it cannot be denied that the reforms enacted vital protections that dramatically improved conditions for workers – and included the establishment of

appropriate legislative commissions to enforce said protections – ultimately, the legal, social, and cultural aftermath of the Fire served not to dismantle or undermine industrial capitalism, but to make it more durable within the framework of the liberal nation-state.

Contextualizing the Crises of Capitalism in the Progressive Era

In order to understand the role and function the *Fighting the Flames* spectacles in the Progressive Era, it is first necessary to briefly outline the historical context in which the Coney Island performances and the Triangle Fire took place and to provide background for some of the crises and anxieties felt most pressingly at the turn of the century; namely, those caused by rapid industrialization, mass migration, and mass production that shifted the nature of work and consumption in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century. Widespread industrialization and an unparalleled growth of urban centers contributed to the rapid modernization of the United States. Perhaps most visibly, the development and implementation of life-changing technologies such as the telegraph, electric light, and the massive expansion of transit systems – particularly the railroads – "enabled people to break through age-old barriers of time and space" and fundamentally transformed the nation not only economically, but also culturally.[74] As American society modernized on a grand scale by organizing around industrialization, mass communication, urbanization, technological advances, and mass transit projects, Lauren Rabinovitz importantly emphasizes how the process of modernization was also experienced by individuals. Part of the disorientation of late modernity, she argues, was that changes were occurring on every scale imaginable noting that in addition to tectonic shifts on the global, national, and regional levels, "late modernity was...equally characterized by the transformation in daily life wrought by the growth of capitalism and advances in technology: the

[74] Chambers, 2.

growth of urban traffic, the distribution of mass-produced goods, and successive new technologies of transportation and communication."[75] While there were obvious benefits to many of the aforementioned transformations, the rapid pace of change, the burgeoning populations of cities (including newly-arrived immigrants), major changes to the nature of corporations, the lack of social welfare systems, and increased wealth inequality generally excluded people of color and women from reaping the rewards of industrialization.

As the United States industrialized in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, not only did factories become more productive due to the advent of new technologies, but the nature of work fundamentally shifted: U.S. workers became overwhelmingly wage laborers and employees. The rise in factories and the increased demand for factory labor meant greater productivity in terms of the commodities being manufactured and required new modes of management and labor to keep pace with the demands for increased output. More and more, factories could use technology to scale their businesses, which lead to mass production of consumer goods. As John Chambers writes, large factories, to eliminate their competition and consolidate small companies would try to undersell competitors (essentially, selling their product for cheaper in the hopes that increased sales would ultimately increase their market share); however "intensive price-cutting competition, which often drove prices below cost, led many entrepreneurs in mass production industries to seek to ensure profits through other means, i.e., cutting wages, streamlining processes, [and] advertising."[76] Technological advances enabled factory owners to increase productivity substantially; however, given that the workforce was limited, novel ways of organizing labor were created to streamline productivity, increase efficiency, and reduce waste

[75] Rabinovitz, 12. Importantly, Rabinovitz also refutes the idea that, while the urban centers industrialized, rural areas were left behind, so to speak, in the pre-industrial age. Rural locations, farms, and agriculture as an industry developed and were mechanized and modernized, as well.
[76] Chambers, 21.

(wasted materials, wasted time). Scientific management techniques, also known as Taylorism for its champion Frederick W. Taylor (1856-1915), were introduced into factories "to remold human activities" in the workplace by instituting strict divisions of labor with highly specialized roles with the objective of increasing efficiency and thereby reducing labor costs.[77] Factories also disciplined workers into capitalism's temporal structure, as outlined by Karl Marx.[78] Workers in factories, as Marx outlines, are subject to capitalism's structure both within and outside working hours because leisure time is predicated on factory time. In other words: the shift to wage labor altered both the kind of labor and the structure of labor required of workers and resulted in significant transformations in American society in regard to work, culture, and leisure.

In the mid-Atlantic and in New England, immigrants comprised an increasingly large percentage of the wage labor force and were an increasingly visible demographic, which rendered these populations extremely precarious not only in terms of their labor and working conditions, but also as inhabitants of large, urban industrial centers. Factories required differentiated labor to function and, therefore, employed people across various skill-levels and forms of expertise; meaning, factories needed skilled, highly specialized workers and unskilled

[77] Labor costs would be reduced if the laborer is more efficient. e.g., if Doria can sew 100 sleeves in the time it takes Mary and Sue to sew 50 each, then one laborer can replace two.

[78] Marx is explicit about the ways in which the laboring body is only viewed as productive or useful when it is in service of the production of capital. Marx writes "the time during which the worker works is the time during which the capitalist consumes the labor-power he has bought from [the worker]. If the worker consumes his disposable time for himself, he robs the capitalist...the capitalist maintains his right as a purchaser when he tries to make the working day as long as possible." Marx, 342. The worker is, then, subject to exploitation in service of the capitalist who structures the laboring body in time. Importantly, even when the worker is not directly laboring to produce capital, his time is structured by capital because his "leisure" time serves only to allow the worker to rest just enough to be able to continue to labor the next day. Extending this notion further, Marx posits, within the capitalist system, any act of "individual consumption" on the part of the worker "remains an aspect of the production and reproduction of capital, just as the cleaning of the machinery does, whether it is done during the labor process or when intervals in that process permit," Marx, 718. In this way, capital not only requires the extraction of living labor in order to reproduce itself, but also capital subsumes the worker into a temporal structure in which "not only produces a deterioration of human labor-power by robbing it of its normal moral and physical conditions of development and activity, but also produces the premature exhaustion and death of labor power itself," Marx, 375-7. While a larger discussion of factory time and leisure time will take place later in this chapter, it is important to note that, while factory workers on the whole were disciplined into this temporal structure, the deterioration of workers' bodies disproportionately fell to workers who were racialized as non-white, and to women.

workers, day laborers, or those on short-term contracts in order to function properly. Often, the most dangerous, physically demanding, dirtiest, and least desirable positions were filled by immigrants and non-white Americans and it was these workers who were the most at-risk for injury or death in the workplace.[79] The sheer numbers of immigrants to American cities necessarily caused social, economic, and cultural shifts as urban centers grew to accommodate recently arrivals. As immigrant populations grew and became more visible, anxieties on the part of native-born Americans surrounding labor/economic security and the continuance of white, Protestant hegemony translated into anti-immigrant biases and policies within and beyond the factory walls.

The vast majority of the 20,000,000 immigrants who arrived in the United States between the years of 1870-1910 were from Southern and Eastern Europe and predominantly Catholic and Jewish; critically, these populations were racialized non-white, at least provisionally.[80] There are a few reasons to pause and unpack the processes by which Southern and Eastern European migrants were racialized as non-white, and the results of this racialization: first, on a more basic level, given that labor is always shaped by race, gender, and power, it is necessary to tease apart

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[79] Chambers, 25-6. I want to be clear that non-white workers (i.e., workers of color, in today's parlance) were at the bottom of the social and racial hierarchy at the turn of the century; however, because of the demographics and the ways in which industries were racially/ethnically differentiated, mid-Atlantic and New England factories employed a very small percentage of workers of color, such that the brunt of the destructive and toxic work of these factories fell on immigrants racialized as non-white, or white "Other."

[80] Chambers, 12. According to the Migration Policy Institute, in 1910, for example, immigrants accounted for 14.7% of the national population but accounted for a much larger percentage of people living in urban areas. As John Buenker enumerates, in 1910, 22.1% of the overall population lived in urban areas with a population greater than 100,000 people, but among foreign-born residents that number is almost twice as high with 43.6% of immigrants living in urban areas. In New York in particular that number is higher still with over three-quarters of the city's residents being immigrants and their children (i.e., first-generation Americans by citizenship). "U.S. Immigrant Population and Share Over Time 1850-Present," Migration Policy Institute, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-over-time. John Buenker, *Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform*, (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1973), 2. Regarding "nonwhite" classification, it must be noted that Jews and Italians (and Greeks, Slavs, etc.) were not categorized as "black;" rather, they occupied this intermediate space in a racial hierarchy in which people of color were clearly at the bottom, but Jews/Italians were not much better off (in many cases) in the industrial North. For more on European immigrant populations racialized as white in an earlier part of the 19th century, see Noel Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White,* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

the modes by which Southern and Eastern European immigrant workers were seen as racial "others," which justified the deprivation of certain rights, wages, and privileges that were granted to, and reserved for, Anglo Saxon, native-born, and Western European workers. Second, examining the interconnected consequences of racialization for these workers, helps to illuminate how Jewish immigrants in particular, negotiated their simultaneous hyper-visibility (as an insular and outwardly distinct population) and their invisibility as a source of cheap labor. While Jewish immigrants were generally given the more menial tasks within the factory structure, as outlined above, their invisibility was compounded by the fact that significant amounts of garment work were conducted in private apartments in tenement buildings to cut costs for large corporations at the turn of the twentieth century. Lastly, understanding the ways in which these migrant communities were racialized helps to better understand the necessity and/or desire to assimilate into broader American society and claim whiteness, particularly through participation in mass cultural activities like visiting amusement parks or cinemas.

Understanding the processes, and results of, nonwhite racialization among these immigrant communities, particularly the Jewish community, illuminates complex (and sometimes competing) socio-economic and socio-cultural forces at play for spectators of the Coney Island performances and the workers in the Triangle Factory. As historian Matthew Jacobson explores in his book *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, the last half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century marked a significant shift in the conceptualization of "whiteness" away from a white-black binary to a differentiated, hierarchical structure of white "races" with varying abilities to potentially assimilate into "American" culture.[81] He writes,

[81] Matthew Jacobson critiques scholars like David Roediger and Eric Lott for an over-reliance on economic rationales behind the construction of whiteness in the United States. Providing historical context for the enshrinement of whiteness in the U.S. Constitution, Jacobson's text aims to fill in notable gaps in a more purely Marxist critique that smooths over distinct fissures within 'white' America; he writes, "economics alone explain why

> whereas the salient feature of whiteness before the 1840s had been its powerful political and cultural contrast to nonwhiteness, now its internal divisions, too, took on a new and pressing significance. The main currents in this period (c.1840-1920) included, first, a spectacular rate of industrialization in the United States, whose voracious appetite for cheap labor – combined with political and economic dislocations across industrializing Europe – brought unprecedented number of migrants to the U.S.; second, a growing nativist perception of these laborers themselves as a political threat to the smooth functioning of the republic; and third, consequently, a fracturing of monolithic whiteness by the popular marriage of scientific doctrines of race with political concerns over the newcomers' 'fitness for self-government.'[82]

As Jacobson outlines, a series of forces helped to shape the contours of whiteness at the turn of the 20th century that generally excluded Jews and Italians – populations who made up the largest concentration of workers in the garment industry in New York and who lived in vibrant and visible enclaves in lower Manhattan at the turn of the century.[83]

Jewish migrants' visibility stemming from unprecedented migration rates and historical distinctiveness from Christianity made them a target of fierce antisemitism at the turn of the century and a racialized figure in American discourse, which also resulted in the proliferation of Jewish enclaves and intensely Jewish spaces in New York City, especially. Although anti-Jewish sentiment had long been present in the United States, historian Eric Goldstein points to the confluence of industrialization, migration, and urbanization for a renewed focus on Jews and

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native elites again and again tried to deny peoples like Celts (and Jews and Armenians and Italians and Slavs) a full share in whiteness itself... one need look further, at the complex crosscurrents at the confluence of capitalism, republicanism, and the diasporic sensibilities of various racially defined groups themselves." Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 19. David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991); Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[82] Jacobson, 41.

[83] More than other immigrant groups (categorized at Ellis Island by nationality, not usually ethnicity), Jews who arrived in New York City's ports intended (and did) stay in New York. As the report "Foreign Immigration and the Tenement House" (1903) reports, 73% of Jewish (here, "Hebrew") immigrants to the U.S. entered the country in New York City and of that number, 72% of those migrants listed New York City as their intended destination. By comparison, 95% of Italian immigrants arrived through New York but only 55% gave New York *State* as their intended destination. Robert W. DeForest and Lawrence, Veiller, ed.,*The Tenement House Problem: Including the Report of the New York State Tenement House Commission of 1900,* (United Kingdom: Macmillan, 1903), 82.

their place within American society and the American racial order.[84] During this period (c. 1880-1920), certainly most Anglo Saxons considered Jews to be nonwhite. Jews' religious practices, distinct social behaviors, and the tendency of Jews to settle in particular urban neighborhoods and in specialized realms of trade and commerce theoretically pointed to a lack of "political fitness" (in Jacobson's terms) for assimilation into the American republic.[85] At the same time, as Goldstein explains, Jews were not only differentiated themselves from Anglo Saxons, but also from other racial minorities. He writes, "Jews boasted an unusually high proportion of merchants and skilled workers, and they tended to rise quickly up the economic ladder. Unlike African Americans, who were seen by whites of late 19th/early 20th centuries as the epitome of a backward, preindustrial race, Jews appeared to be thoroughly implicated in the urban, industrial, capitalist order that characterized the modern 'civilized' world."[86] Put differently, at the turn of the 20th century, Jews simultaneously represented an increasingly visible, un-assimilable, non-Christian population who threatened Anglo Saxon supremacy and the agrarian republic through their tacit infiltration of American cities *and* somewhat of a model minority whose links to industrialization, urbanization, and commerce represented positive change. Thus, despite rampant discrimination and constant reminders of their status as "Other," Jews "[m]ore than any other distinguishable group in American society, [were a symbol] of the processes transforming the nation."[87] The racialization of Jews was central in voracious and persistent depictions of racial hierarchies of the period – Anglo Saxons at the top, white 'Others' next with Jews as the

[84] Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[85] Goldstein, 2. It should also be noted that the propensity of Jews to be traders or involved in commerce stems from centuries of anti-Jewish legislation and oppression in Eastern Europe. Jews in the Pale of Settlement (the only area of the Russian Empire where Jews were allowed to live and work in the 19th century, with few exceptions) were restricted to very few occupations, creating a surplus of artisans (especially tailors), traders, merchants, and semi-skilled laborers.

[86] Goldstein, 2.

[87] Goldstein, 35-6.

lowest of those, and people of color at the bottom – which were introduced and supported by the burgeoning fields of eugenics and physiognomy. This racial order was then disseminated in popular culture through newspapers, literature, political rhetoric, and visual culture and was reinforced through "ethnic compartmentalization" in industry and urban planning.[88]

The tenement building simultaneously served as a hyper-visible symbol of Jewish "ethno-economic" insularity and as the object of racialized discourse and anti-immigrant/anti-Jewish sentiment pertaining to disease and overcrowding, which later came to bear on public policy pertaining to urbanization and industrialization.[89] Tenement buildings, at the most basic level, were low-rise buildings constructed (or converted) to accommodate multiple, small apartments. In New York City, tenement buildings came into widespread use in the mid-to-late-1800s as an attempt to provide housing for the city's rapidly growing population of immigrants and migrant workers (then majority Irish and German). As cultural studies scholar Lynn Sally explains, tenement buildings were property owners' and city officials' "architectural solution" to urban problems: poverty, overcrowding, population growth, and public health concerns over the spread of disease and incubating epidemics.[90] For many poor immigrants arriving in New York in the late 1800s, particularly those who were the first in their families to arrive in the U.S., tenements were the only viable housing options. Over the course of the 19th century, the sheer volume of tenement houses in New York City exploded from about 15,000 tenement houses in 1867 to an

[88] Jacobson, 41; Chambers 15. "Ethnic compartmentalization," here, refers to the separation of workers by ethnicity whether across industries (e.g., Jews predominantly worked as skilled laborers in the garment industry) or at a particular factory/plant (e.g., "Slavs" were in the furnace room, Italians were on the assembly line, etc.). Chambers notes that this was likely as much a directive from the management of the particular factory as self-selecting on the part of workers. Notably, this compartmentalization often resulted in Anglo Saxon and native-born Americans as managerial workers or at least the highest paid laborers. Based on a 1909 survey, native-born Americans and immigrants from Western Europe (i.e., the UK, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, etc.) made between 10-25% more than their Southern/Eastern European counterparts and reported their jobs as more stable and less precarious. Chambers, 15.

[89] Chambers, 15.

[90] Sally, 32.

estimated 39,213 in 1893.[91]By 1900, that number more than doubled to 80,000 tenement buildings in New York City (over 43,000 of which were in Manhattan) which housed 2.3 million of the city's 3.4 million residents.[92]

Both in demographics and in the popular imagination, Jewish and Italian immigrants were most closely associated with the proliferation of tenement buildings and urban squalor. As indicated in a 1903 book edited by Progressive reformer Lawrence Veiller, "the main factors in immigration of to-day, as affecting the housing problems of New York City, are the Italians and the Hebrews."[93]Indeed, at the turn of the century, the Lower East Side, an almost exclusively Jewish neighborhood, had the highest population density in the world with 700 people living per acre of land.[94] Furthermore, Jewish immigrants were much more likely to live and work in the same tenement apartment – setting up makeshift and incredibly dangerous production lines for garment making in the various rooms of a connected flat. The lamination, therefore, of tenement buildings' association with overcrowding and the dangers of urbanization with the invisiblized, cheap labor being executed by Jewish immigrants within tenement buildings renders the structure a potent symbol of this tensions of hyper/invisibility experienced by this community. In short: tenements became even more closely associated with the "perils" of urbanization: poverty, disease, overpopulation, unsanitary conditions, unsafe labor conditions, and rapid growth within cities due to the influx of foreigners, especially Jews and Italians.

In addition to being overcrowded, tenement buildings posed extreme risks for the health and safety of their inhabitants – a fact spectacularized in the Coney Island shows. Dark and

[91] DeForest and Veiller, 77-8.

[92] Roy Lubove, *The Progressives and the Slums: Tenement House Reform in New York City, 1890-1917*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962), 133. Of those 2.3 million residents living in tenement buildings, 1.6 (i.e., almost two-thirds) lived in Manhattan. Lubove, 133.

[93] DeForest and Veiller, 77-8.

[94] "Immigration: Polish and Russian," Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/polish6.html

poorly ventilated, apartments in tenement buildings were often no larger than 400 square feet – a space that could house ten members of the same family, or be sub-divided (illegally) into two or three smaller apartments, each housing up to four people. Generally, these apartments did not have in-unit access to running water, nor did they have individual toilets or showers. It would be common for the entire floor, which housed multiple families, to share a lavatory. In addition to general concerns about noise, personal space, and rapid dilapidation, the number of people in these substandard apartments bred more deadly public health concerns: air pollution and the lack of clean air, the rapid spread of disease by people in such close, unsanitary quarters, and the potential for fire.

Access to clean air was central to the efforts of late-19th century reformers and city officials who aimed to improve the quality of life for those living in tenements; however, lack of political will prevented comprehensive solutions to the housing and health crises prevalent in tenement buildings. As early as 1867, New York City recognized the dangers posed by the severe overcrowding. The Tenement House Act of 1867 was an attempt by the city government to improve the housing standards for tenement buildings by requiring each unit to have a window, which, at the time, was thought to be critical to health and safety. The centrality of fresh air and the possibility of taking deep breaths was based on a Victorian theory of public health and safety: miasma ("bad air"). It was thought, then, that diseases were caught and spread through the inhalation of "bad air" – e.g., air made dirty or odorous due to proximity to rotting matter (vegetables, excrement, etc.) – and a solution to this problem was to provide a vehicle for clean air (a window) for people to breath.[95] However, the Tenement House Act was vague and,

[95] See Sally, 33-4. Stephen Halliday, "Death and miasma in Victorian London: an obstinate belief." *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)* vol. 323,7327 (2001): 1469-71. As Stephen Halliday explains, miasmatic theory was predominantly used to fight cholera epidemics in Victorian London; the theory that air was responsible for epidemics was largely discredited later in the century when an epidemic in Hamburg was positively linked to contaminated water, not air.

rather than reforming and improving conditions in tenement houses, the law served as a blueprint for loopholes in compliance. For example, the Act required that all units have a window; however, it was never specified that the window needed to open onto a source of fresh air (i.e., placed on an exterior wall of the building). Many building owners, therefore, would add a "window" facing an internal hallway to an apartment and be legally compliant in accordance with the Act. A subsequent legislative effort, the Second Tenement Act (1879), theoretically closed the window loophole by directing that all windows should face a source of fresh air. However, the common architectural solution to the issue of windows was the construction of an air shaft in between buildings to supply the requisite "fresh air," creating what was known as a "dumb-bell" building because of the blueprint of the structure.[96] In practice, though, many serious health and safety issues arose through the implementation of the air shaft. Tenants without access to other means of disposing of their waste would often throw garbage, water, and sewage into the shafts, clogging them and creating veritable cesspools, which harbored disease. Furthermore, the design of the airshafts essentially created a flue between apartment buildings – many of which were made from cheap and more flammable building materials from the onset – thereby increasing the danger, speed, and strength with which tenement fires swept through buildings and adjacent structures with disastrous results. The 1885 report from the New York Department of Fire shows the disproportionate frequency of building fires on the Lower East Side as compared to the 11th Ward (Upper Manhattan); in that year, 6.8% of the dwellings in the Lower East Side reported a fire, whereas less than one percent of dwellings in the 11th ward were affected by fire; furthermore, tenement fires on the Lower East Side accounted for almost

[96] Interestingly, DeForest and Veiller's volume reports that "partly due to accident, partly to differences in racial character," Jews tended to occupy flats in dumb-bell buildings, whereas Italians moved into smaller homes with fewer units that tended to have been occupied by Irish immigrants in the mid-19th century, further cementing the connection between visibly marked tenement buildings and Jewish immigrants. DeForest and Veiller, 87.

half of fire-related deaths in all of New York City .[97] Tenement fires were in the air in the Lower East Side at the turn-of-the-century, literally**.** Given how common tenement fires were in New York City at the time, and how widely reports of the fires circulated in newspapers and penny literature, perhaps it is only natural that they should become the subject of dramatization and mass consumption at Brooklyn's Coney Island. As outlined in the introduction, amusement parks were key sites for spectacular culture and provide insight into the relationship between spectacle, consumption, embodiment, and capitalism.

Fighting the Flames, Spectacularized Labor & Reliance on the State

For a wage laborer in New York City at the turn of the century, a trip to Coney Island on a summer weekend would have been an exciting, although not altogether uncommon, affair. One could hop onto an electric trolley car at the end of the Brooklyn Bridge in Manhattan and get off right at the gates Luna Park at Coney Island and pay just a nickel. In thirty-two minutes, thanks to the expansion of the public transit system, one could be transported from a world of work to one of pleasure, leisure, and fantastic spectacle that was accessible at just $.10 for admission.[98] Each aspect of Coney Island's amusement parks was designed to entice and stimulate the masses with an overwhelming display of modern, mechanized entertainment and the latest technological advances, which were both implicitly and explicitly linked to the notion of "Americanness." One must imagine what it must have been like to lack electricity at home, perhaps using it only

[97] Sally, 35. Importantly, this only a number reported by dwelling, but considering the density of inhabitants in the Lower East Side, these fires likely affected/displaced many more residents than fires would in the 11th ward. Furthermore, Sally notes that this increase was likely caused by a combination of factors: lack of windows, dark stairways, and massive populations without electric lighting meant a reliance on candles or oil. Because of overcrowding, residents tended to sleep on straw beds or on top of selvage (excess clothing material used in the garment industry), which were highly flammable. Also, because many of these apartments were illegally sub-divided, there were many makeshift kitchens that used open flames.

[98] John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century,* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 37.

through the machinery at work, and then to witness the marvel of Luna Park at night, illuminated by 1,300,000 electric lights.[99] The sight and scale of the amusement parks at Coney Island was unlike anything most of its visitors had ever seen before and, as cultural historians and popular culture scholars have noted, amusement parks provided and facilitated a new, modern sensibility regarding what life could be. Visitors meandering through Coney Island's amusement parks were greeted, at every turn, with sensationalism and fantasy alongside technological innovations of the highest caliber. As Rabinovitz argues, the enmeshment of technology with spectacle at Coney Island was designed to promote a uniquely American cultural identity that embraced this new, mechanized urban modernity. The proliferation of mechanized rides and highly technical spectacles that touted industrial innovation, she asserts, aided in teaching Americans not how to tolerate mechanization, but also how to find enjoyment within it. The amusement park, in this way, guided visitors in how to find pleasure in "adapting to new technologies, to hyperstimulation analogous to the nervous energies of industrial cities, to mechanical rhythms and uniformity, and to this perceptual condition as itself American."[100] Moving through Coney Island as a spectator, the idea of America presented itself not only through the diversity and scale of its audiences, but also through the increasing familiarity and desire for mechanization as a means of entertainment.

Of all of the spectacles and exhibits at Coney Island, disaster spectacles were the most sensational, with *Fighting the Flames* and *Fire and Flames* being the most popular shows at their respective parks in from 1904-1908. As Rabinovitz writes, disaster spectacles at amusement parks employed various techniques – both dramatic and technical – to deliver to spectators large-

[99] Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*: *A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 42. Furthermore, it should be noted that many postcards of Dreamland and Luna Park from 1903-1910 depict the parks at night with their turrets and pillars aglow in electric light. Some postcards even had hologram-like images where the lights were adorned with glitter or iridescent paint to make them glisten when held at different angles. Fred Snitzer Collection of Kings County Postal Ephemera, Brooklyn Historical Society Archives.
[100] Rabinovitz, 2.

scale, highly stimulating experiences. She writes, "as an amalgam of theater, circus, modern panorama, fireworks show, and magic tricks, the disaster show and pyrodrama was the largest scale, most multisensory spectacle of the period."[101] While certain disaster spectacles depicted natural disasters (i.e., floods or earthquakes), the shows *Fighting the Flames* and *Fire and Flames* centered on man-made disasters: the relatively common occurrence of fires in tenement buildings.

Postcard: "Dreamland, Coney Island," 1905

[101] Rabinovitz, 53. Here, Rabinovitz makes a slight distinction between disaster spectacles and pyrodramas; she distinguishes pyrodramas as a subset of disaster spectacles which generally depicted historical events (i.e., the burning of Pompeii, the raising of Rome, etc.) as opposed to disaster spectacles, broadly, which often took as their subject contemporary disasters, such as the 1900 flood in Galveston, Texas which resulted in over 6,000 fatalities.

The architecture of the performance space emphasized the spectacular nature of *Fighting the Flames* (Dreamland) from before the production even began. To get to one's seat, audience members entered the building by passing through a huge archway with an "appropriately adorned" cornice decorated with firemen, fireman's hats, trumpets, and stylized hoses.[102] The scale of these spectacles is difficult to overstate. Viewbooks from the period are explicit about the size of the performances –because of the insistence on realism and the authenticity of the spectacle to "real life" – and describe the *Fighting the Flames* set ("the building and it's enclosure") at 130,000 square feet.[103] For scale, 130,000 square feet is larger than an entire city block in Manhattan and almost twice the size of the White House, which, again was designed to make the spectacle as realistic as possible. The set itself was constructed on a vast plot – 250 ft x 150 ft – on which was constructed a full city block in New York, complete with a tenement building flanked on either side by various other buildings and a wide street. Spectators sat across from the tenement in raised seats. In addition to the sheer size of the physical structures of the spectacle, viewbooks and reviews point to a truly enormous cast of players participating in the scene. A 1904 souvenir booklet, "History of Coney Island - Lists and Photographs of Main Attractions," boasts that "over four thousand people will be employed" in the spectacle, including thousands of people cast as city dwellers observing the scene from the street.[104] Importantly, the critical mass of an on-stage crowd (participating actors) in *Fighting the Flames*

[102] You can see on the top of the arch in this postcard a fireman's bell. Underneath each illuminated letter of "Fighting" and "Flames" is a statue of a fireman. The pillars underneath the main archway are decorated with helmets. Rem Koolhaas writes, "Each column on the façade is surmounted by a figure of a fireman; the roofline is an intricate motif of fire hoses, helmets, and axes. The classical exterior gives no indication of the drama inside.... [archival description here. see notes]...the main protagonist on the urban stage is the city block itself: Fighting the Flames introduces the block as actor." Koolhaas, 56.

[103] "Views of Coney Island" published 1905 by L.H. Nelson Co. Object ID: V1986.24.1.19

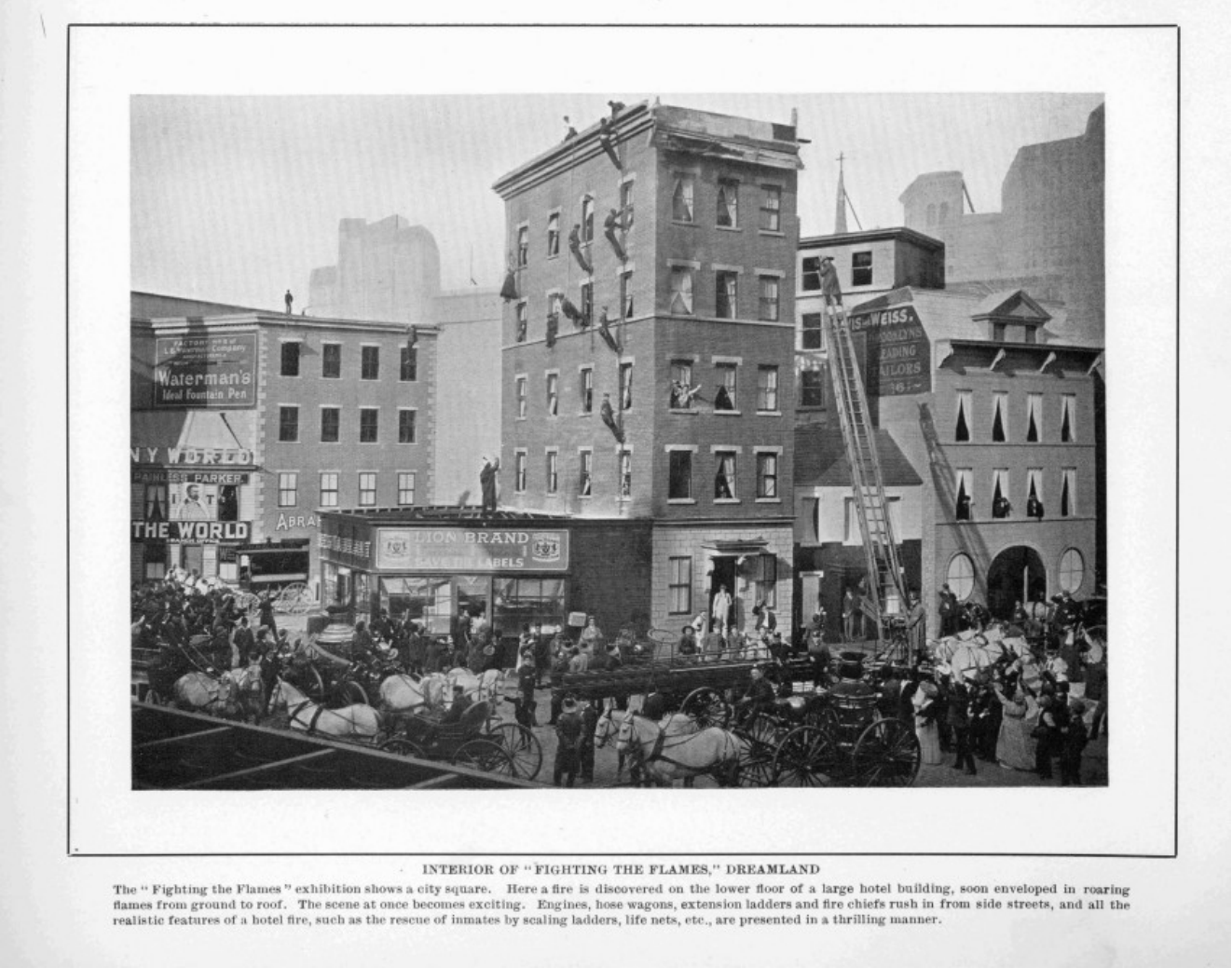
[104] "History of Coney Island – Lists and Photographs of Main Attractions," (Burroughs & Co, 1904), Brooklyn Historical Society Archives.

models appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, affects, and comportments for the off-stage audience of spectators as the performance progresses.

Following a few extraneous vignettes, the dramatic action of the spectacle begins when a fire breaks out in the ground floor of the central tenement building. As the fire begins to spread, creeping up the floors of the building, the fire brigade arrived as a huge crowd forms, screaming and watching as the firemen conduct the rescue. Using some of the more advanced tools at the time – including engines, hose wagons, a mobile water tower, and, importantly, extension ladders – firemen began their work of putting out the blaze. The firemen, unperturbed by the mass number of actors-as-spectators who clog the area "shouting and gesticulating," deploy their hoses, ladders, and life nets and begin to climb, taking inhabitants of the building down with them in the ladders, or helping them jump into life nets from extraordinary heights. Although difficult to see in the image below, this depiction of *Fighting the Flames* shows how the on-stage crowd functioned both to direct the focus of the spectators by pointing towards the building (evidenced by the throng of people in the lower righthand corner of the image with raised arms parallel to the angle of the fireman's ladder) and to increase the sensorial experience of the spectacle through the cacophony of screams, gaspings for breath, and the swell of various noises as people leapt from the buildings. Many reviews describe someone trapped on the top of the roof of the burning building leaping 70 feet, landing safely on the ground in the fireman's net. With huge amounts of water gushing furiously from the hoses, the last person is rescued from the tenement, the fire is extinguished and the on-stage crowd bursts into cheers celebrating the rescue.[105] These embodied responses on the part of the on-stage audience were effective in creating a controlled scene of chaos. Audiences were guided in what to see and how to react

[105] "History of Coney Island."

through the intensely choreographed actions of the actors, which created a deeply kinesthetic environment that overwhelmed spectators' senses, imagination, and capacity to look elsewhere.



INTERIOR OF "FIGHTING THE FLAMES," DREAMLAND

The "Fighting the Flames" exhibition shows a city square. Here a fire is discovered on the lower floor of a large hotel building, soon enveloped in roaring flames from ground to roof. The scene at once becomes exciting. Engines, hose wagons, extension ladders and fire chiefs rush in from side streets, and all the realistic features of a hotel fire, such as the rescue of inmates by scaling ladders, life nets, etc., are presented in a thrilling manner.

Interior of 'Fighting the Flames,' Dreamland[106]

The excitement and pleasure of watching *Fighting the Flames* was that it *seemed* so real. Because of the deftly choreographed stunts performed (after much rehearsal) by professional actors and acrobats, the precise dramatic timing, and the special effects, although the audience could rest assured of the outcome of the performance, the employment of well-executed performance strategies and techniques kept audiences on the edges of their seats, watching with

[106] "History of Coney Island"

bated breath.[107] Part of the appeal of the spectacles, surely, was that, more than other performances on the Island, spectators likely had previous experiences with tenement fires and could recall, kinesthetically and emotionally, the experience of watching or having been affected by such events. As Andrea Dennett and Nina Warnke note, in *Fighting the Flames*, "the convention of the 'removed audience' was consciously broken. Spectators were supposed to witness the fire as if they were an integral part of the event; they became, in effect, an extension of the watching crowd on stage."[108] By hiring thousands of people as spectators to produce particular affects and move and circulate throughout the scene, the audience of spectators rather seamlessly became incorporated into the mass of paid professionals, blurring the line between spectator and actor.

The reality of the spectacle was further increased through the employment of professional firefighters in *Fighting the Flames* who provided a kind of star-power to the performance, in addition to authenticity and expertise, that sutured the spectacle to the state. At the turn of the 20th century, firemen were America's heroes who embodied physical strength, masculinity, discipline, professionalism, organization, and a tremendous sense of duty. As Lynn Sally notes, throughout the majority of United States history up to the premiere of *Fighting the Flames*, firemen were largely composed of volunteers (usually civic leaders, politicians, or businessmen) and their deployment and training was ad hoc, at best.[109] Furthermore, in the first half of the 19th century, volunteer firemen had developed poor reputations for being easily egged into fights, being intoxicated on the job, and for fighting amongst each other in terms of the leadership and

[107] The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* remarks that the manager of *Fighting the Flames* was well established on Broadway in the realm of special effects and mechanized stagecraft. "In the spectacle "Fighting the Flames" at Coney Island, Manager Hagen has just introduced one of the "Ben Hur" horses. Mr. Hagen is the master mechanic who originally constructed the "Ben Hur" effects when it was brought out at the Broadway Theatre years ago. In "Fighting the Flames" the same effect is obtained when the engines are dashing to the burning building where the hero fireman's family is in danger as in the "Ben Hur" chariot race" *Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* Sunday 23 June 1907, Page 18.

[108] Dennett and Warnke, 104.

[109] Sally, 15.

organization of the departments. In 1865, the volunteer system for firefighting was abolished in New York and the Metropolitan Fire Department was created with the explicit aim to create a department founded on order, discipline, and professionalism.[110] Firemen became employees of the city, dressed in uniforms, and underwent extensive training. Furthermore, the prevalence of fires, particularly in cities, made firefighting and the professionalization of the force incredibly visible to the rest of the population. With the transformations in the Fire Department came newfound celebrity. As Dennett and Warnke note, firemen were "celebrated for their selfless protection of helpless victims" which translated into firemen enjoying "a public reputation not unlike that of soldiers. These images of firemen held almost mythical dimensions."[111] Images and representations of firemen proliferated in popular culture at the end of the 19th century; firefighters were the subject of melodramas and plays, in addition to appearing on all sorts of paraphernalia from postage stamps to weather vanes.[112] The appeal of firemen, the allure of their work, and the promise of their success against the flames was critical to the popularity of *Fighting the Flames*.

Fighting the Flames spectacularized the labors of the firemen. Much of the advertising for, and written media about, *Fighting the Flames* centered on the use of professional firefighters in the production itself not only as proof of the realism and authenticity of the spectacle, but also because the work of the firemen was the enduring action of the performance. For example, a review in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* from summer 1904 reads:

> [Fighting the Flames] is considered the most realistic, the most fraught with danger of any similar exhibition. The fireman's work is as difficult as that of firemen fighting a genuine conflagration. The firemen enter the burning building and perform duties of regular firemen. The men go about their work fearlessly,

[110] It wasn't until 1898 that the existing New York Fire Department was created, consolidating the fire departments in from the separate boroughs under the centralized command of the Fire Commissioner.
[111] Dennett and Warnke, 105.
[112] Dennett and Warnke, 105.

> because the work is an old story with many of them, who were formerly in the New York Fire Department.[113]

This excerpt highlights the physically strenuous work the firemen perform, the technical difficulty involved in putting out the staged fire, and comments on the continuous labors of those in the NYFD beyond the realm of the spectacle. The physical labor was the performance and the virtuosity of the firemen was the appeal of the display.

In *Fighting the Flames*, the firemen embody not only tremendous physical strength, but also tremendous cultural attachments connected to masculinity, honor, and national pride that came together in a virtuosic performance that captivated audiences.[114] In the performance, one can see how the display of the extraordinary labors of the firemen function within the "relational economy" of virtuosity, as outlined by Judith Hamera.[115] As Hamera outlines, virtuosity is not solely about exceptional physical prowess; rather, virtuosity is a system upon which desire, identification, and various anxieties are projected (and in some cases, welcomed) by the virtuosic performer. While virtuosity, or the status of "virtuoso," is often conferred upon a singular figure, in *Fighting the Flames*, the firemen as a collective function as a surrogate for the singularity of the state. Through their dexterity in climbing ladders, their strength in pulling women out of the windows, and their effectiveness in racing to the scene in time, the firemen exhibited and

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[113] *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Sunday 24 July 1904, page 29

[114] As Bruce McConachie outlines in *Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre and Society, 1820-1870*, the deep connection between masculine honor and firefighting extends back to the 1840s. At this moment prior to the professionalization and consolidation of state-run fire departments, volunteer fire brigades were generally composed of men in the same white ethnic group (i.e., Anglo, Scot, Italian, Irish) and adhered to strict, traditional codes of honor steeped in ethnocentric patriarchy. Functioning like secret societies, these fire brigades would have initiation rituals, secret oaths, and operate much like a private social club. Furthermore, they would consolidate around a singular leader who was usually the most temperamental and violent. This leader would earn the admiration and respect of his brigade and they would compete with other brigades to be the first at a fire and the ones to put it out. The character of the Bowery B'hoy, popular in melodrama and popular culture of the 1840s – "a working-class dandy bristling with class and nativist antagonism whose black suit, soaped-back hair, and swaggering defiance was meant to frighten rich folks and Irish immigrants" is based out of the ethnic enclaves connected to fire brigades. Bruce McConachie, *Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre and Society, 1820-1870,* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992, 131.

[115] Judith Hamera, "The Romance of Monsters: Theorizing the Virtuoso Body," *Theatre Topics* vol 10, no 2, (2000), 153.

embodied how the state was supposed to function. More importantly, however, the spectacle ran without the participation of the spectators, both on-stage and off -– in no account of the spectacle that I've read does it seem like anyone "called" for the fire department, they just appeared at the sound of the alarm (a bell). This is critical because, as Hamera describes, "virtuosos incarnate 'plots of possibility' for audiences—seeming mastery of one's own labor and the affective surplus it generates—even while demonstrating the audiences' inability to activate these plots themselves."[116] The appearance of the fire department as a result, ostensibly, of some sixth sense of fire detection, did not so much reinforce the "inability" to activate a response to disaster so much as it rendered spectator activation as unnecessary. As Dennett and Warnke observe, because audiences knew that the fire would eventually be extinguished, **"**the fire itself became a secondary attraction. It served as an organizing theme and background for the real spectacle – the relentless activity of the firemen, the gushing water, and the victims escaping."[117] In the mix of affective attachments and the physicality of these virtuosic performances is the gendered division of labor presented in *Fighting the Flames.* While audiences fixated upon the firemen's work of upholding the honor of a community through power and brute strength, the implicit and explicit domestic labors and garment work performed by women within the building are made irrelevant to the plot. In short: virtuosity of the firemen performing the "rescue" further engrained the precarity of female, domestic, and wage laborers by diverting attention away from them and by reinforcing that audience members need not take action themselves in the face of calamity.

The powerful stagecraft, the use of state-of-the-art firefighting technology, and the work of the firemen were so realistic that even the most seasoned, expert firemen were taken in by the

[116] Judith Hamera, "The Labors of Michael Jackson: Virtuosity, Deindustrialization, and Dancing Work," *MLA*, 127.4 (2012): 753.
[117] Dennett and Warnke, 105.

show.[118] An extended newspaper column also from July, 1904 (*Fighting the Flames'* first production year) ran with the following headline: "Good Crowd at Island; Croker Sees Fire Show: Chief is greatly interested in Dreamland's 'Fighting the Flames' Spectacle." The article reads:

> Chief Edward F. Croker, of the Fire Department, was a guest of the proprietors at Dreamland for the afternoon and the evening. He spent about all of his time at the Fighting the Flames show, which greatly pleased his strenuous nature. After he had seen one performance of the show as a spectator he assumed charge of the fire-fighting forces for the remaining performances. A good many actors in the show were former city firemen under Croker. They seemed to appreciate the compliment of his presence and worked like Trojans in his honor. "Boys, you did well," said Chief Croker after the fire was extinguished, "and I will see that you all are placed on the honor roll for promotion." Before Chief Croker played his part in "Fighting the Flames," he inspected the fire apparatus and the horses and met many former acquaintances, who grasped him by the hand in good fellowship. "What is the pay, John?" said the chief to one of his old men in the New York department who was attached formerly to engine company No 20. "Twenty a week and if you are promoted $25["] "Have you been promoted?" ["] Not yet chief, but I hope to be."[119]

Although it seems Chief Croker was invited to *Fighting the Flames* to endorse the realism of the spectacle, he evidently found it so compelling that he jumped into the action on his own accord, "assuming charge" of the forces. Chief Croker's "inspection" and approval of both the technology and the techniques employed by the firemen explicitly connects *Fighting the Flames* to the New York Fire Department, assuring audiences that the actions of, and tools used by, the firemen in the spectacle would transcend the gates of Dreamland. Put differently, Chief Croker's successful participation in, and endorsement of, *Fighting the Flames*, not only added authenticity to the spectacle, but also served to reassure spectators that the Fire Department could, and would be successful in extinguishing "genuine conflagrations" and rescuing those in danger.

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[118] The sets were treated with asbestos for fire-proofing. This later becomes relevant because Triangle Shirtwaist Factory was also "fireproof"

[119] Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Sunday 10 July 1904, Page 6. This was a significant sum of money. Average annual income was $450-500.

Through the spectacularization of the actor's labor, particularly the firemen, *Fighting the Flames* conditioned audience members into a particular mode of spectatorship that serves to reinforce capitalist disciplining of the body in the service of its own reproduction. Certainly, *Fighting the Flames* appealed to audiences' desire for both horror and pleasure, entertainment and suspense. As John Kasson writes, fires garnered a kind of fascination because of their frequency, power of destruction, and unpredictability, even in "modern" America. As such, disaster spectacles like *Fighting the Flames* elevates tenement fires into "transcendent" experiences that allowed for audiences to experience a range of emotions and physical sensations – the smelling of smoke, the sounds of bells and screams, hearing the water flow from the hoses – with the "inestimable advantage of allowing them to emerge from the performance unharmed."[120] Despite the undoubtedly intense kinesthetic responses to the sensorial overload that was *Fighting the Flames* – and the distant possibility that the something would go awry and the firemen would lose their battle – ultimately, the successful reproduction of the spectacles proved that the action would resolve through the work of the firemen without any intervention required by the audience members themselves.[121] Only one person in the documented history of the spectacle ever got up to help extinguish the flames themselves: Chief Croker. The spectacle required and demanded that audiences maintained an embodied, albeit, immobile form of spectatorship that placed its trust in the role of the government's labors and technology. As Rem Koolhaas writes of *Fighting the Flames,* "the entire spectacle defines the dark side of Metropolis as an astronomical increase in the potential for disaster only just exceeded by an equally astronomical increase in the ability to avert it."[122] The ability to avert disaster in *Fighting the*

[120] Kasson, 71-2.
[121] Perhaps in the ultimate manifestation of irony, Dreamland burned down in 1911, the same year as the Triangle Factory.
[122] Koolhaas, 56.

Flames, importantly, rests in the strength of the Fire Department and its resources. Because of this "successful" aversion, spectators are left feeling satisfied with the work of the state, as opposed to expressing concern over the laborers working in the building or questioning the causes (and possible prevention) of the fire itself.[123] In his critique of Aristotelian drama, Brecht points to this diversion/immobility/complacency on the part of the audience as the very mechanism of instructive theater. He writes that this type of drama "bundl[es] together the events portrayed and present[s] them as an inexorable fate, to which the human being is handed over helpless despite the beauty and significance of his reactions."[124] Following Brecht, the spectacle seemed so real that audiences who had just witnessed this scene of overwhelming panic and potential tragedy were encouraged by the choreography and direction of the show to celebrate the rescue of the trapped inhabitants because that is all they could do. The diversion of energies towards the rescue served to distract from, or obscure, further inquiry into the causes of the fire itself or action to prevent them from happening in the future exonerates audience members from recognizing their complicity in perpetuating precarity for the most vulnerable. Ultimately, *Fighting and Flames* conditions audiences into a kind of reactive spectatorship that is predicated on the inevitability of disasters related to urban industrial modernity, the capacity of the state to intervene to prevent too much tragedy, and a willingness to turn away from root causes of said disasters in favor of the narrative of resolution that enables the show to reproduce.

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[123] Importantly, the only person on record who disturbs the spectatorial conventions of the drama is a professional firefighter who joins in on the action after observing its successful resolution. There are no documented incidents of spectators leaping to aid those in the building, of trying to unearth the cause of the flames, or to prevent fires in the future.

[124] Berthold Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 87.

Setting the Scene: Labor Organizing in the Garment Industry before the Triangle Fire

In the seven years between the premiere of *Fighting the Flames* (1904) and the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (1911) the crises of industrial capitalism continued to deepen in New York City. In 1910, the population of the city of New York grew by more than 28%, housing 1.3 million more people than a decade prior.[125] As previously outlined, mass industrialization and rapid urbanization contributed to a proliferation of substandard living and working conditions, exploitative labor practices, and a simultaneous rise in mass consumption and consumer culture. New York's garment industry in the first decade of the twentieth century reflected and, in many ways, epitomized, the broader challenges of urban, industrial modernity. By 1909, almost two-thirds of all the clothing in the United States was produced by the over 250,000 garment workers in New York City, the most vulnerable of whom were immigrant women laboring under substandard and exploitative conditions.[126] The industry was toxic and led to massive labor strikes in 1909 and 1910; however, the gains from these actions were limited. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire has been historicized as a turning point in American labor relations because of the ways in which it seemed to materialize and make visible the plight of the young, female workers. Indeed, in the aftermath of the tragic fire, the New York State government passed widespread legislation guaranteeing worker protections and created protocols, committees, and departments to enforce said legislation. The policies and forms of government oversight and intervention into the private sector laid the groundwork for hallmark programs and legislation like the New Deal and the National Labor Relations Act, which have shaped the nature of work in the United States to the present day. However, framing the Triangle Fire as a

[125] "Total Population, Cities and Boroughs, 1900-2010," https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/planning-level/nyc-population/historical-population/nyc_total_pop_1900-2010.pdf. The population of Manhattan alone grew by over 20% in that decade.

[126] Kenneth T. Jackson and David S. Dunbar ed., *Empire City: New York Through the Centuries*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 506. About 30,000-32,000 of this number worked in the manufacture of shirtwaists.

tragedy or an accident is an inadequate framework through which to analyze how such an event was an inevitable result of the exploitative, dangerous, and risky practices and decisions imposed by factory owners and tacitly endorsed through corollary industries and agencies, such as insurance firms and the state. Without discounting the ways in which the reforms following the Triangle Fire improved the lives of workers in very real, material ways, viewing the event as a pure victory for workers is a fallacy. Considering the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire as a disaster spectacle teases apart the ways in which the event was a production that spectacularized labor and that functioned, ultimately, to re-invisibilize work, to ensure the smooth production of capital, and to protect the interests of private industry and the state.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, factory labor, particularly in the garment industry, was unregulated, exploitative and dangerous. Around the turn of the century, a significant amount of labor for the garment industry was done in private homes. Families would, essentially, serve as independent contractors who bore almost the entirety of the costs and risks associated with garment work. Laborers would either purchase the cloth to be cut, or be given certain cuts to sew together, and perform this work until the job was complete, with no mode of recourse in case of fire or accident.[127] Beginning in 1900 or so, manufacturers began to consolidate these independent garment factories located in tenement buildings into company-operated factories. The reasoning behind this consolidation was not to increase protections for workers or to institute quality assurance, but to increase productivity and efficiency and to decrease costs. In the company-owned factories, workers could utilize the latest technology and were quickly specialized into precise modes of work – "each worker does one minute part swiftly, with exact precision"– which aided in the automation of the labor and of the factory

[127] Stein, 160.

itself.[128] Employing women as young as 15 years old, garment factories generally required their employees to work 13 hour days (with a 30 minute lunch break), six days a week for less than $6/week; however, during the peak seasons, hours were extended – without overtime – and workers were required to work seven days a week.[129] Consolidation within the factory walls came with increasingly punitive, demeaning, and dangerous behaviors towards workers in the name of productivity and efficiency, and likely these practices were more pronounced than in other industries because the majority of the workforce were young, immigrant women. Workers were frequently underpaid, levied fines for arbitrary reasons, forced to toil in under-ventilated, crowded, dark sweatshops where workers were often locked in the workroom; furthermore, workers were searched upon entrance and exit (ostensibly to prevent stealing) and were siloed by division of labor to minimize opportunities for social interaction at the factory.[130] It was against this backdrop that garment workers began to organize to strike for better working conditions.

The fourteen months preceding the Triangle Fire were marked by unprecedented labor organizing and activism in the form of garment worker strikes; however, the valiant efforts of the striking workers resulting in only moderate and loosely enforced gains. On November 22, 1909, at a general meeting for the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) Local 25, Clara Lemlich – a Local 25 executive committee member and an employee in the shirtwaist trade – called for a general strike a motion which was approved by those in attendance.[131] Over the course of the next two days, 20,000 shirtwaist workers walked out of the factories and joined together under the banner of the ILGWU, with critical support from Samuel Gompers and the

[128] Stein, 160.

[129] See, Kenneth T. Jackson and David S. Dunbar; Joseph J. Portanova, " Anne Morgan and the Shirtwaist Strike of 1909-1910," http://www.nyu.edu/projects/mediamosaic/thepriceoffashion/pdf/portanova-joseph.pdf; "Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, " *AFL-CIO*, https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-events/triangle-shirtwaist-fire.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Despite the fact that there were reportedly thousands of people in attendance at this general meeting, the actual membership of ILGWU Local 25 numbered just in the hundreds.

AFL, the Socialist Party, and other allies like the Women's Trade Union League to demand closed union shops, a 20% increase in weekly pay, a 52 hour work week, and extra pay for overtime.[132] The ILGWU Local 25 in coordination with organizations like the Women's Trade Union League began disseminating information about picketing and the continuance of the strike. While smaller factories (approximately 70 of the estimated 500 in New York at the time) acquiesced to the striker's demands within the first week, the top twenty major manufacturers who were fiercely anti-Union – headed by the owners of the Triangle Factory – met to form a "manufacturing association" to respond to the strike.[133] In an attempt to end the strike, the Manufacturers hired people to physically assault the workers, brought in strike breakers who were willing to cross the picket lines, and used their political connections to sway police to arrest strike leaders and intimidate others. Despite the pressures, strikers held out for months and attracted widespread support due, in part, to the public nature of the strike. The 20,000 women on strike were a visible presence both in the streets and in the media. The women were supported by not only leaders from other unions, but also by wealthy female "allies" such as Anne Morgan (daughter of J.P. Morgan) and Alva Belmont (wife of William Vanderbilt, grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt) who would host fundraisers, use their media connections to garner publicity and support for the strike, finance rallies, and pay the bail of strike leaders.[134] However, in February

[132] A closed union shop means that management agrees to only employ members of the Union unless they can't find enough people & agrees to abide by union negotiations.

[133] "Triangle Shirtwaist Fire," https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-events/triangle-shirtwaist-fire

[134] See Nancy Schrom Dye, "Creating a Feminist Alliance: Sisterhood and Class Conflict in the New York Women's Trade Union League, 1903-1914." *Feminist Studies* 2, no. 2/3 (1975): 24-38. It must be noted that this cross-class "sisterhood" was not entirely successful or well-received. There were a lot of issues regarding class consciousness and feelings of suspicion on the part of workers regarding the limits of this solidarity. Furthermore, it must also be noted that all the players in this alliance were white. This is important not only because it reinforces the notion that cross-class, racial solidarity (particularly among white people) necessarily excludes and undermines the power of cross-racial, class-based solidarity. Furthermore, it seems clear that a major motivation (though not the sole motivation) of this "sisterhood" was to galvanize women to organize for the vote and for women's suffrage; of course, the goals of the overwhelming majority of white, wealthy suffragettes was to ensure that white women would be able to vote. See also, Portanova; Meredith Tax, *The Rising of the Women: Feminist Solidarity and Class Conflict, 1880-1917* (Urbana and Chicago, U of Illinois Press, 2001).

1910 with AFL support dwindling and the dissolution of attempted negotiations, the strike ended with some gains, but they were not universal. Shirtwaist workers for major manufacturers (including the Triangle Factory) ended up returning to work without their employers having signed a union contract.

Although the 1909 strike – often referred to as the "Uprising of 20,000" – did not yield the industry-wide, transformational shifts it aspired to enact, the 1909 strike did result in exponentially increased union membership and it laid the groundwork for the "Great Revolt" of the summer of 1910 which resulted in the "Protocol of Peace." Galvanized by the relative successes of the women-led ILGWU strike earlier that year, in July 1910, the cloakmakers unions (mostly male) and the shirtwaist workers joined together for a strike of up to 60,000 garment workers. The strike was effective in disrupting the garment industry as a whole. Although, like in 1909, smaller manufacturers agreed to strikers' demands, the major firms refused to negotiate until reform-minded civic leaders persuaded both sides to allow well-respected lawyer Louis D. Brandeis, who would later become a Justice on the Supreme Court, to broker a deal. The resolution, the "Protocol of Peace," was signed on September 2. 1910 between members of the ILGWU and members of the Cloak, Suit, and Skirt Manufacturers' Protective Association (the association of garment manufacturers) and represented the first labor dispute resolved through a third-party "outsider." Hallmarks of the compromise included a 50-hour work week, paid holidays, a guarantee that employers (not employees) would pay for equipment like sewing machines, the abolishment of sub-contracting, the establishment of a board overseeing santiary conditions at factories, and industry-wide standards for wages.[135] Importantly, the Protocol of Peace marks an important moment in labor history whereby unions and

[135] "Protocol of Peace," Louis Marshall Papers, American Jewish Archive. http://americanjewisharchives.org/exhibits/aje/_pdfs/E_59.pdf

manufacturers agreed to mandatory arbitration in labor disputes.[136] As historian Richard A. Greenwald observes, the Protocol fundamentally shifted the nature and visibility of labor issues in the United States. Prior to the Protocol, American industrial conflicts were marked by tremendous amounts of public and visible violence. Strikes were well-publicized as were the often-repressive responses on the part of industrialists; the 1892 Homestead Strike is a prime example of the ways in which labor crises "made all the more visible the socioeconomic inequalities of modern capitalism."[137] Too, the publicity and widespread support garnered by garment workers in 1909-1910 was substantial. It is important, therefore, to recognize how the stipulations mandating arbitration and prohibiting strikes/lockouts without giving "full opportunity" to resolve the conflict in arbitration remove labor disputes from the public eye, making opaque both the claims against a particular party and the processes of resolution.[138] The Protocol certainly made significant gains towards the improvement of working conditions and the quality of life for many garment workers, at least in theory. In practice, the requirement to arbitrate led to serious backlogs of complaints that were left unresolved and, therefore, there was little to no enforcement of the agreement and no opportunity for recourse on the part of workers.

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[136] "Protocol of Peace," Louis Marshall Papers, American Jewish Archive. http://americanjewisharchives.org/exhibits/aje/_pdfs/E_59.pdf., 5. "Stipulation 16: The parties hereby establish a Board of Arbitration, to consist of three (3) members, composed of one nominee of the Manufacturers, one nominee of the Unions, and one representative of the public, the latter to be named by Meyer London, Esq. and Julius Henry Cohen, Esq. and in the event of their inability to agree, by Louis Marshall Esq. To such board shall be submitted any differences hereafter arising between the parties hereto, or between any member of the Manufacturers and any of the members of the Unions, and the decision of such Board of Arbitration shall be accepted as final and conclusive between the parties to such controversy." Stipulation 17 (excerpt): "the parties to this protocol agree that there shall be no strike or lockout concerning such matters in controversy until full opportunity shall have been given for the submission of such matters to said Board of Arbitration, and in the event of a determination of said controversies by said Board of Arbitration, only in the event of a failure to accede to the determination of said Board." (5).

[137] Richard A. Greenwald, *The Triangle Fire, the Protocols of Peace, and Industrial Democracy in Progressive Era New York*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 17. This tactic has become part of popular culture again in the 21st century with the #MeToo movement, which has brought to the fore how mandatory arbitration is still employed to protect the corporation, not the victims of sexual assault.

[138] Mandating arbitration can have a further secreting effect because resolving disputes through the Board of Arbitration means that they are settled out of court; therefore, the records of said negotiations/settlements are not available as public record.

Greenwald notes that the Protocol laid the groundwork for "modern industrial relations and what we now think of as modern liberalism" because the agreement "brought labor into the political economy as a partner by giving it voice in industry, ushering in a tripartite system of labor relations [i.e., Unions, Manufacturers, and the State] that would find its crowning fulfillment in the National Labor Relations Act of 1936."[139] However, it is more appropriate to assert that, through the Protocol, the Union became a willing but unequal part of this "tripartite system." The Protocol responded to labor's reasonable demands in exchange for crafting a system that ultimately protected and safeguarded the Manufacturers within a legal, state-sponsored framework. By crafting an agreement that secrets the processes of filing grievances and removes the ability of workers to strike, the Protocol takes labor disputes out of the public arena, decreasing the ability to garner widespread public support for labor rights and further invisibilizing the dangers of factory labor and the work of collective bargaining under the cloak of "peace."

Importantly, the Protocol did not explicitly address standards for fire safety. Fire prevention and fire safety were obviously of the utmost importance to workers, but notably, these issues came under scrutiny by the New York State Legislature in February 1911, just a month before the Triangle Fire, not because of concerns related to workplace dangers, but because of an investigation into corrupt insurance practices. In a hearing established by the "Joint Committee Appointed to Investigate Corrupt Practices in Connection with Legislation, And the Affairs of Insurance Companies Other Than Those Doing Life," Chief Edward F. Croker of the New York Fire Department was called to the stand to testify about fire prevention, six and a half years after

[139] Greenwald, 16-17. He writes, too, "the Progressive Era witnessed a radical departure from the Gilded Age notion of laissez-faire economics. Traditionally, liberalism and economic thought cast labor relations as a purely private matter between two equal parties: employers and workers. The notion that the public had a stake in labor relations took hold during the Progressive Era;" however, it is important to consider who this "public" is. In the cases outlined above, it seems as though the public represents the state rather than its citizens, necessarily. Greenwald, 15.

he took the stage in *Fighting the Flames* at Coney Island. In his testimony, Chief Croker explains that the vast majority of his department's budget and man-power dedicated to fire prevention is used to dispatch 5 inspectors and 133 firemen in order to have someone from the Department present to attend every performance in New York City on any given evening.[140] In Croker's testimony, the theatre serves as the primary foil for the lack of fire protection in factories. When asked "what should be done" about the factories in Manhattan in terms of fire prevention, Croker replies:

> [Workers] should be protected and made to give more protection than the people who go to theatres. The people go to the theatres; there is every known law, there is every known skill thrown around the public to prevent and save their lives in case of fire. But there is not a bit of trouble, not a bit of attention paid to the poor man, that has to go to his bench, or his machine, in the so-called sweatshop. Anything is good enough for that man. I say give these poor devils some protection that has got to work for a living and not pay all your attention to people that want to go to the theatre. They don't have to go there. But the working man has to go to work, and he should have the same protection as the better class of people have that go to the theatres.[141]

Here, Croker makes the argument that theatres are more granted more protection (attention and funds) than factories because theatre-goers are ostensibly wealthy, or at least middle-class. Without disputing the validity of Croker's claim, I posit another reason for the fire prevention afforded to theatres, which circles back to the idea of the spectacle. First, it should be noted, that theatre fires were common in the late 19th and early 20th century and they were extremely deadly. Most notable at the time of Croker's testimony was the Iroquois Theatre Fire, which took place in Chicago in 1903, and resulted in the deaths of 602 people. In addition to the capacity of theatre fires to move quickly to injure or kill the massive crowds of packed spectators, these fires

[140] New York (State) Joint Committee to Investigate Corrupt Practices in Connection with Legislation, and Insurance Companies, and Edwin A. Merritt. Report of the Joint Committee of the Senate And Assembly of the State of New York Appointed to Investigate Corrupt Practices In Connection With Legislation: And the Affairs of Insurance Companies, Other Than Those Doing Life Insurance Business. Albany: J. B. Lyon, state printers, 1911, (3139-40).

[141] Ibid., 3153.

were incredibly public, garnering tremendous publicity and outcry among city-dwellers. As the notion of the public and private shifted with the rise of nationalism, industrial revolution and the age of mass consumption, I would argue that, because the theatre was connected to the notion of the public, the state was required to assume responsibility for the theatre as a protected site of leisure. In other words: the state intervened to protect dedicated sites of leisure because they were viewed as "public" and because leisure time was required to ensure the reproduction of the state and of the economy. Furthermore, by having a dedicated presence of fire marshals at theatres, the state could perform its responsibility to the public in a way that it could not/was not invested in regard to workplace fire prevention enforcement. The separation of leisure and work, endorsed and supported by the state meant that industry could continue to operate outside the realm of the state without (much) interference. Ultimately, though, the Triangle Fire shifted public opinion about separation of industry and the government, resulting in the further invisibilization of labor, taking organizing away from the public eye and couching it within the legal frameworks of the nation-state.

Spectacularized Disaster: The Triangle Fire and Visible Labor

Despite the efforts of laborers and organizers, workers at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, won no concessions after the events of 1909 and 1910; and, the manufacturers' anti-worker violence continued. The extractive, industrial practices deployed at the Triangle Factory made an event like the Fire a logical reality. Max Blanck and Isaac Harris, the owners of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, had been among the most prominent manufacturers to hire private policemen and other hitmen to physically assault workers who went on strike. Staunchly anti-union, Blanck and Harris agreed to provisional wage increases and tentatively shorter hours to

draw workers back into the factory in 1910, but only without a union contract. Returning to work out of necessity, garment workers at the Triangle Factory saw no substantial changes to the working environment, nor to their compensation; Blanck and Harris continued their dangerous and toxic practices that ultimately and inevitably resulted in a catastrophe of epic proportions. Over a century after the fire that caused the deaths of 146 workers, the Triangle Fire is described as a "preventable tragedy," the effects of which spurred monumental labor and workplace reforms that continue to shape the nature of work in the United States to this day.[142] However, the framework of "tragedy" absolves or suspends how such a destructive fire was not just possible, but indeed, inevitable given the circumstances. If we think of the Triangle Fire not as an accident or merely a tragedy, but instead as a spectacle, one can delve into the ways in which the event was a production: the result of calculated decisions that ultimately killed 146 people.

The Triangle Fire shares uncanny similarities in action and plot to *Fighting the Flames* with the most critical difference: the visible failure of the state to successfully rescue the garment workers trapped in the burning building. In *Fighting the Flames* the spectacle functioned as it was supposed to: to protect the state and to maintain the status quo of industrialization. There, the crises of capitalism (exploitative and extractive labor and horrible living conditions for the poor) were overshadowed, literally, by the fire which was promptly extinguished. Distracted from the underlying problems, audiences celebrated the suppression of the flames, encouraging the drama to unfold again and again. In the case of the Triangle Fire, however, exploitative labor itself was the spectacle. On the afternoon of March 25, 1911, as the garment workers of the Triangle Factory were gathering their belongings to head home for the day, a fire broke out on the eighth floor of the Asch Building. Within minutes, dark smoke engulfed the top three floors

[142] "The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire," *U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration*. The tagline for OSHA: Healthier Workers. Safer Workplaces. A Stronger America. https://www.osha.gov/oas/trianglefactoryfire-account.html

of the building - the heat broke the windows and crowds began to run towards the sounds of screams and gathered to watch the clouds of billowing smoke and flames. Those trapped inside, mostly women, attempted to get down the sole passenger elevator and use the decrepit, singular functioning fire escape. Blinded by the smoke, trampled by other panicked workers, many women died trying to vacate the building. Many headed to the broken windows, hoping to be rescued by the Fire Department. Leon Stein, his compilation of interviews of Triangle survivors, describes women and men on the windowsills of the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors who, upon realizing that no ladder was coming to save them, jumped off the ledge rather than be consumed in flames.[143] Witnesses describe unfathomable, graphic scenes of the ineffective life nets employed by the NYFD.

In a more physical, visible, and terrifying way than ever before, the means of production – the people behind the factory walls – were spectacularized and consumed by a growing crowd of a horrified (and enthralled) public. As the minutes wore on, the situation for those inside the building became increasingly desperate and many more jumped to their deaths. Meanwhile, firemen were entirely unequipped to put out the blaze. Many firemen had difficulty entering the building due to locked doors, few entrances, and stairwells blocked with women fleeing from upstairs. Although provided with the finest firefighting technology of the day, the NYFD's hoses and ladders could only stretch to 85 feet, or seven stories. The Asch Building had eleven. The fire was finally subdued in about twenty minutes and fully extinguished within a half hour. For the thousands of people who made their way to the Asch Building that evening to see the disaster for themselves, or to look for loved ones, there was no scene of triumphant rescue. The Triangle Fire tore through the seams of the garment industry's toxic work environment, exposing the means of production of ready-made shirtwaists, and spectacularizing work in such a visceral

[143] Stein.

manner that spectators could not look away. Unlike in *Fighting the Flames* where the rescue provided the illusion of protecting the victims of the conflagration, the Triangle Fire and its aftermath revealed the fallacy of the state functioning to protect its most vulnerable citizens.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, March 25, 1911[144]

[144] "Triangle Shirtwaist Fire," Kheel Center, Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations. Kheel Center image identifier: 5780-087pb1f5c. http://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/slides/146.html

The set of *Fighting the Flames* post-production, 1905.[145]

While there are contradictory claims about the origin of the fire, what is clear is that is spread quickly due to structural and organizational conditions exploited by Blanck and Harris and endorsed by the (in)actions of the state.[146] Structurally, the Asch Building was physically sound and it legally adhered to the safety standards of the time that were stretched to the limit. For example, the Asch Building, constructed in 1901, used wooden trim for its windows and floors, which was entirely legal because the building was 135 feet high. Had the architects and

[145]"Dreamland," The Heart of Coney Island. https://www.heartofconeyisland.com/dreamland-coney-island.html

[146] Some people say the fire started by a couple of the sewing machines, others say it might have been from a cigarette from one of the workers.

building owners added one more floor, making the building 150 feet high, the trimmings and floors would have to have been constructed from concrete or metal, which are far less flammable.[147] The building, as per the building codes in 1901, was theoretically legally required to have at least three staircases that led to the outer street (as opposed to an inner courtyard), but the architect applied for, and was apparently granted, an exemption to this law and therefore the building only had two staircases. Crowded workplaces were encouraged through poorly written legislation. The building code required that factory owners provide workers with 250 cubic feet of *air* (as opposed to 250 square feet of space); therefore, because of the high ceilings in the Asch Building, Blanck and Harris could pack their workrooms full of laborers and still be within the limits of the law. Furthermore, as Stein describes, the insurance companies operating in New York factories at the time de-incentivized safety measures like the installation of sprinkler systems, working fire escapes, etc., because it would decrease insurance premiums and therefore cut the profits of the brokers. As such, it was more lucrative for companies like the Triangle Shirtwaist Company to file a claim than to ensure the safety of their workers. Indeed, the Triangle Company was a "repeater" having filed at least six claims against fires in their factories between 1902-1911 and it is estimated that Blanck and Harris collected over $400 in insurance per victim of the Triangle Fire.[148] Adding these facts to known labor practices at Triangle – such as compiling cutaway scraps of fabric under wooden tables for months to avoid paying people to haul it away, locking women in the workroom to prevent wasted time, and refusing to train workers in how to respond to emergencies through drills, maps, or plans – reveals only part of the strategies and tactics on the part of factory owners, as supported through private industry (insurance and construction) and upheld by the inaction of the states to make a profit and

[147] Stein.
[148] Stein, 172-3, 176.

continue production. These were not the result of negligence; rather, they were intentional actions taken in the name of cutting costs, streamlining efficiency, and increasing production. Viewed in this context, the Triangle Fire was, in fact, a likely outcome of said risky behaviors and dangerous environments.

The public response to the Triangle Fire was extensive and immediate; it was also intensely mobile. The Fire not only garnered despair from those who had lost loved ones, but also collective anger, revulsion, and fascination. In the hours after the Fire, an estimated ten thousand people flocked to the Asch Building to watch the firemen and employees of the morgue continue the gruesome work of transferring the bodies from Washington Square to the 26th St. Pier where they would be held for identification. Unlike in *Fighting the Flames* where the spectators' gaze was directed away from the charred remains of the burning building and towards the triumphant rescue, after the Triangle Fire those in crowd – confronted by unprecedented devastation and loss – became hyperfocused on the sites of the fire and the morgue, physically interacting with spaces of death and destruction as both mourners and spectators.

In the hours just after the fire, people from all over the city descended on the morgue, gathering together in astonishing numbers to be in physical presence with those affected by the disaster and to marvel at the devastation. On Saturday evening, March 25, thousands of people made their way to the 26th St. pier in the hopes of identifying their loved ones, or, seeking reassurance that their relative was not among the dead. That night, chaos, sorrow, and despair descended upon the morgue as the process of identification began. Because of the severity of the injuries and burns to many of the victims, identification was a slow and imperfect; it took days to positively identify the majority of the dead and seven people, who remained unknown, were buried anonymously.

Aside from the hundreds making their way to the pier looking for a specific person, over 100,000 others lined up at the morgue on Sunday and Monday in pursuit of entering the morgue to see the bodies.[149] Working-class people, especially Yiddish and Italian-speaking immigrants looking for their relatives, who headed to the morgue Saturday evening were replaced on Sunday morning with "fashionably attired" city dwellers who "had read the morning papers before starting out their Sunday stroll and who wished to see the dead out of curiosity."[150] The morgue – located on "Misery Lane" at E. 26th St and 1st Ave – was purposefully located far away from commercial centers, in a neighborhood exclusively populated by those experiencing extreme poverty. In other words, the morgue was not en route of anyone's "Sunday stroll." People intentionally walked to the far edge of Manhattan to stand in line for hours in an attempt to enter the morgue and to circulate through the lines of bodies arranged for the purpose of victim identification. As Vanessa Schwartz writes on late-19th century Paris, visiting the morgue was a popular activity because it spectacularized the conditions of living in a modern city. She writes, "the morgue represented the quintessentially urban experience of anonymity with its potential for both increased freedom and alienation. After all, only in a city might a woman or man or child die alone and go unrecognized."[151] While the circumstances of death were usually unclear for those housed in the public morgues in Paris, Schwartz's point nonetheless stands: the kind of

[149] "100,000 Crowd To See Bodies At The Pier: Police Try to Keep Back Morbidly Curious While Mourners Seek Their Dead," *New-York Tribune,* March 27, 1911.

[150] There are conflicting numbers in *The Sun*, as quoted in Stein, 102 and the *New-York Tribune*, March 27, 1911. Both estimate over 100,000 but Stein's is closer over 200,000.

[151] Vanessa Schwartz, 46. This argument on the part of Schwartz is bolstered by a description in the *New-York Tribune* which highlighted how a small sliver of visitors were in search of loved ones who had been "lost" to the big city. The article reads: "... aside from the morbidly curious there were hundreds looking for their lost ones, scores searching for girls who had wandered from their homes into the great city months ago. The old women were the most pitiful of all as they slowly walked by, their heads wrapped in heavy shawls the Italians wear, the eyes cast down. One who spoke very good English said "I don't know if my girl worked in this factory. I think she did. But I would rather have her lying here dead now than for her to be not in the city and not to know where she is. She left my house one night four months ago, and I have never heard from her." 100,000 Crowd To See Bodies At The Pier: Police Try to Keep Back Morbidly Curious While Mourners Seek Their Dead," *New-York Tribune,* March 27, 1911. 3.

large-scale destruction of the Triangle Fire and the necessarily bureaucratic and prolonged (and impossible, in some cases) process of identification is a hallmark of the industrial metropolis. Furthermore, as Schwartz asserts, the morgue presented to the public a kind of "real-life theater" in which one could cultivate their sense of being part of a public and theoretically exercise their "duty" as a citizen of the city. She writes,

> the morgue offered an active and participatory kind of spectatorship – one through which the public looked and then could be called on to act in the name of civic duty by identifying a corpse...No doubt, however, the vast majority of the visitors probably did not go to the morgue thinking that they actually might recognize a corpse. The 'duties' of urban life were thus transformed into spectacular entertainment.[152]

Deputy Police Commissioner Driscoll who was on duty at the morgue on Sunday further connects the scene to "spectacular entertainment" when he remarked, almost repulsed, "Good God! Do these people imagine that this is the Eden Musée?" before ordering that no one be permitted into the morgue unless they could name a relative whom they were looking to identify.[153] The crowds at the morgue and the scene of mourners/spectators at Washington Square were magnified and circulated through the barrage of media coverage in the immediate aftermath of the Fire and served to fuel both public outrage and feed growing fascination about how those responsible would be held accountable.

A thirty-minute walk from the morgue, a similar scene of embodied spectatorship was unfolding at the Asch Building on Sunday and Monday as crowds gathered around the ruins of the factory itself. A stunning article from the *New-York Tribune* describes in detail the way that the throngs of people moved around the site and the "peculiar" atmosphere of intense grief, on

[152] Schwartz, 63.

[153] Stein, 103. There was a tremendous amount of literal policing of affect at the morgue. People were turned away because of their dress, their ethnicity, their language, and also their comportment and affect. Did they look sad? Or, more accurately, correctly sad?

the part of some, and that of a "country circus or of a Vanity Fair" for the majority of spectators.[154] The author describes in great detail the centrality of the destroyed building and how mourners and tourists alike moved deliberately through and around the site. Mourners seems to circle the building in an endless feedback loop. While it is impossible to speculate on their rationale for this pilgrimage, it is clear that it was important and necessary for people to feel as though they had seen the factory from every possible angle.[155] For the thousands gathered in nearby Washington Square Park, the feeling was almost jubilant. New Yorkers of all classes convened in the park, so much so that boys took to climbing the trees to get a better view – both of the building and of the crowd itself. Of course, there was also economic opportunity. The author points out in detail how vendors came to hawk their wares, well aware of the novelty of having such a large and captive audience; the presence of the ice cream man and his tinkling bell, for example, illustrates the spectacularization of the site and of the event, especially in its aftermath. As the crowd grew, the mix of gaily dressed women and men who took the bus down to Washington Square and the thousands of mourners increased; the atmosphere became more tense and divided, spatially and affectively, with those grieving on one side of the park being observed by others across the way.[156] By evening, though, the police intervened and cleared the square of people, attempting to bring some semblance of normalcy to a place tainted with death and "morbid curiosity."

[154] "Holiday Throng Sees Ruins of Building: Mourners Slowly Pass Through Streets, Viewing the Scene from Every Side. Pushcart Venders Busy. Police Kept Procession Moving, and Not Until Late at Night Did the District Regain Normal Appearance," *New-York Tribune*, March 27, 1911. This article is really insane, so much so that I enclose it here in full in the Appendix.

[155] Reading this description of the mourner's constant rotation around the city block, my mind went immediately to the act of Muslims circling the Kaaba – the holiest site of Islam – during the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. I also think of the Jewish custom of *hakafot* - lit. "to circle" – which occurs during the festivals of Simchat Torah and Sukkot in which one circles an object with the Torah scroll seven times to symbolize the circling of the city of Jericho. While obviously vastly out of historical context, there does seem to be an aspect of sacrality in the circum-navigation of Asch Building site in the days following the fire.

[156] Holiday Throng Sees Ruins of Building: Mourners Slowly Pass Through Streets, Viewing the Scene from Every Side. Pushcart Venders Busy. Police Kept Procession Moving, and Not Until Late at Night Did the District Regain Normal Appearance," *New-York Tribune*, March 27, 1911.

For those who had spent years organizing for better working conditions in garment factories, the Triangle Fire was the ultimate manifestation of the perils of industrial labor and required a concerted response; for some, the obvious path forward was to refuse to work until conditions were changed. The actions – refusals and protests – served to, temporarily, disrupt the cycle of production, bringing the whole garment industry to a halt.

The most public and effective form of refusal came through the actions of public mourning, particularly through the funeral parade for the unidentified victims.[157] The day after the fire, the ILGWU and other unions held general meetings to discuss the next steps, particularly in regard to mourning the victims and protesting the conditions of factories like the Triangle Company. While many victims were buried privately in the days after the Fire, the ILGWU organized a massive funeral parade to mourn the unidentified victims of the fire to take place on Wednesday, April 5, 1911. Although the funeral was scheduled to start at 1:30pm, crowds began to form at two meeting points in Manhattan as early as 9:30. By mid-morning, traffic throughout the city was at a halt; cars had to be diverted and workers were walking out of factories en masse. By the official start time, tens of thousands of mourners were in attendance. Two groups – one starting downtown and one beginning uptown – began marching to meet together at Washington Square for. a processional under the archway in memory of the victims. The uptown contingent was led by a coalition of leaders from the Socialist Party, the WUTL, the Embroidery Workers' Union, the Central Federated Union, and the Suffragist and Trade Union Leagues and the marchers were primarily workers affiliated with those groups. Headed by leaders of the ILGWU Local 25, the downtown processional began with members of the Waistmakers' Union Local 25 and thousands of other ILGWU members. The broad support from

[157] For more on refusal, see Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

labor leaders, garment workers, and union members of other adjacent industries was truly astonishing – reports indicated that members of over 60 different unions and trade organizations marched in the processional.[158] Once the two groups met at Washington Square Park around 3:30pm it took almost four hours for all the mourners in attendance to pass under the arch – final estimates from the police department and various newspapers are that over 120,000 people participated in the march with up to 300,000 more standing guard along the route.[159] That Wednesday, the garment industry was brought to a standstill, as was much of the commerce conducted on lower Manhattan. Workers had united to form a coalition of labor leaders, galvanized to act; furthermore, they had widespread public support. However, differing opinions on the tactical and ideological responses on the part of organized labor, and the material needs of workers to continue to earn a living, meant that the refusal to work was short-lived.[160] The halting of the means of production was significant in that it exposed the broad support for workplace reform, but ultimately did not reshape work to exist outside of capitalism. Rather than attempt to cultivate a system that operated independently from (and/or beyond) the government, most union leaders and progressives pushed for reform via legislation that further enmeshed and incorporated labor organizing into the realm of the state in the service of upholding capitalism.[161]

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[158] Stein, 151.

[159] Stein

[160] Note on anarchists here. Dr. Anna Shaw, a physician, Methodist minister, and noted suffragist spoke the following words at a protest rally held six days after the fire: "There was a time when a woman worked in the home with her weaving, her sewing, and her candle making. All that has been changed. She has been driven into the market with no voice in the laws and powerless to defend herself. The most cowardly thing that men ever did was when they tied women's hands and left her to be food for the flames...Something's got to be done to the law. And if it's not constitutional to protect the lives of workers then we've got to smash the constitution. It's our 'instrument' and if it doesn't work, we've got to get a new one!," Stein 141. Furthermore, Fire Chief Edward F. Croker suggested using refusal as a tactic for widespread change. At the same protest meeting, he suggested, "It would be my advice to the girls employed in the lofts and factories to refuse to work when they find the doors locked," Stein 141. Although Croker's advice obviously comes from a place of privilege in that women, without collective power, who refused to work would lose their livelihoods.

[161] In an extension of this project, one could consider this a starting place for a potential theory on cross-class, racial solidarity as a reason for theoretical strengthening of labor through the state is because "allies" of the garment workers – members of the WUTL who were super wealthy – wanted women to vote and also were deeply connected to both politics and commerce. Importantly, many of these super rich white women wanted garment workers to

Without a doubt, the legislative reforms enacted in the aftermath of the Triangle Fire improved the day-to-day lives of American workers; however, rather than fundamentally transforming American industry, the successful protections afforded to laborers served more as a legalized protection of industry using worker safety as the means, to ensure the smooth "flow" of commerce. In the months after the Triangle Fire, Progressive activists, unions, and trade leagues made significant strides in pressuring the New York City and State governments to enact legislation to protect workers and to establish the infrastructure to hold industrialists accountable to said laws. Responsible for a tremendous amount of legislation and bureaucratic (re)organization was the newly-formed New York State Factory Investigation Commission, whose leaders included New York State Senators Robert Wagner and Al Smith, Samuel Gompers of the AFL, and Frances Perkins, who would later become the U.S. Secretary of Labor under Franklin Roosevelt and was in part responsible for the implementation of the New Deal. The Factory Investigation Commission successfully recommended over 56 state laws concerning wage standards, the protection of women and children in factories, the implementation and enforcement of new safety laws (including the functioning of fire escapes, elevators, and stairwells, codes about building occupancies, and mandatory fire drills), which were passed by a majority Democratic state legislature.[162] The Democrats in Albany, led by Governor John Dix, also established a number of new state agencies with legal power of enforcement, such as the State Industrial Board, also on the recommendation of the Factory Investigation Commission.

Importantly, the wave of legislation passed in the wake of the Triangle Fire continues to serve as the basis for workplace safety legislation in the United States to the present day and it

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eventually rally and support the right to vote. Critically, the desire for women's suffrage was not universal and did not extend to women of color. This parallels other moments of potential class-based, cross-racial solidarity being overtaken or undermined by the influence of wealthy whites who invoked the privileges of whiteness to create fleeting moments of racial solidarity that further entrench class and racial positions.

[162] Buenker, 47-9.

widely cited as the foundations upon which the modern welfare state was built. Indeed, as Richard A. Greenwald writes, the legislation reforms of 1911-1913 brought about a new era of labor relations that included the interests of the state, industry, and workers as part of the calculus. The "crowning fulfillment" of this era was the ratification of the National Labor Relations Act (1936), also known as the Wagner Act, which was drafted by some of the very same people involved in the NY State Factory Investigation Commission.[163] The NLRA serves as a key statue of United States labor law and was theoretically designed to protect the rights of workers to collectively organize, to strike, and to unionize. An excerpt from first section of the law reads:

> **The denial by some employers of the right of employees to organize and the refusal by some employers to accept the procedure of collective bargaining lead to strikes and other forms of industrial strife or unrest, which have the intent or the necessary effect of burdening or obstructing commerce**...The inequality of bargaining power between employees who do not possess full freedom of association or actual liberty of contract and employers who are organized in the corporate or other forms of ownership association **substantially burdens and affects the flow of commerce,** and tends to aggravate recurrent business depressions, by depressing wage rates and the purchasing power of wage earners in industry and by preventing the stabilization of competitive wage rates and working conditions within and between industries.[164]

As is evident from the language of this first section of the NLRA, the rights of workers to collective bargaining and to unionize is not for their benefit or protection; rather it is to prevent the impediment of the flow of capital and the "obstruction" of industry through "strife or unrest." Furthermore, the NLRA and union agreements post-NLRA further secret and invisibilize labor struggles by moving them away from the public eye and into months of private arbitration and

[163] Greenwald, 17.

[164] Emphasis mine. "National Labor Relations Act," Title 29, Chapter 7, Section 151. https://www.nlrb.gov/how-we-work/national-labor-relations-act. Importantly, the NLRA established the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) whose duty it is to enact and enforce the NLRA. Currently, as of this writing, the NLRB is denying the rights of graduate student workers to collectively organize on university campuses in the United States by tentatively ruling that graduate student workers do not qualify as "employees" and therefore are not subject to federal protections under the NLRA.

negotiation reserving collective actions like striking or boycotts for only the most severe and egregious violations. In many ways, the narratives of progressive, modern liberalism upon which the United States prides itself are predicated on the manipulation of the spectacular disaster of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. The popular narrative perpetuates the notion that the Fire was a tragic accident that galvanized the American public into demanding common-sense reforms, bolstering the power of American workers, and ushering the U.S. into a modern, liberal state. While the Fire provided workers with significant gains, its status as a spectacular event succeeded in ultimately diverting the public's attention away from labor organizing by couching the processes and legal frameworks to settle disputes within more decentralized and opaque structures and making more difficult the ability of workers to make visible their labors. In this way, the Fire served to further discipline workers back into socially reproductive capitalist structures and more deeply suture together the objectives of the state and industry in service of the growth of the reproduction of capital to disproportionately benefit the few.

CHAPTER 2

Framing the Migrant:
Spectacle and Images of Labor and/as Dance in New Deal California

During Labor Day Weekend, 1941, over 2,000 migrant laborers poured into the Woodville Farm Workers community in Tulare County, California to eat, drink, listen to music, and dance as part of a Folk and Field Festival sponsored by the Farm Security Administration (FSA).[165] The Woodville Farm Workers Community was one of over eighteen migratory labor camps built in California by the FSA to house agricultural laborers who had migrated to California from other parts of the country, mostly the Great Plains, following years of drought and the Great Depression. The overwhelming majority of migrants were poor and, notably, white. According to Harvey M. Coverley, an FSA administrator who wrote up a report on the Festival for the district supervisors and other FSA officials, the event was a tremendous success. Coverley describes scenes of jovial singing and hog-calling contests, an abundance of barbeque, and a line-up of musicians who played while residents of a number of FSA camps from different counties "danced themselves into a frazzle" doing "old time Square [dances]" for supposedly hours on end.[166] The Festival – an event originally suggested by two employees of the Library of Congress engaged in work recording folk music and folklore in the migrant labor camps – cultivated a space that straddled past and future. At once, the cultural practices and forms of the festival were steeped in a performance genealogy and sense of nostalgia that traveled with/in the migrants across the country from the Great Plains to California. On the other hand, the

[165] The Resettlement Administration, created in 1935, was superseded by the Farm Security Administration in 1937. In essence, what were RA programs became FSA programs at that point.
[166] Harvey M. Coverley, " To: District Supervisors, Area Farm Supervisors, Community Managers, Farm Managers," Oct 23, 1941. National Archives at College Park, RG 96, Box 27. National Archives at College Park.

festival served as a boon for public relations for the migratory labor camp program (and FSA initiatives more broadly) through the reports and disseminated images of satisfied, engaged laborers who were thriving through the financial and material support of the government (i.e., through subsidized housing programs); additionally, the laborers were also now able to partake in "traditional cultural interests" that had been, supposedly, neglected and pushed aside during periods of dire poverty and the migrant journey itself.[167] The Folk and Field festival signaled that New Deal reforms and labor programs were working. An afternoon of dance and song was both a return to pre-Depression ways of life and an opportunity to project the successes of initiatives to revitalize the economy and to put unemployed, migrant laborers back to work.

This chapter considers how the mass migration of hundreds of thousands of people from the Great Plains to California in the 1930s was a visible, mobile, and embodied crisis of labor. While this internal migration is usually historicized as a result of multiple other (compounded) crises of capitalism; namely extractive, industrial agricultural practices that devastated arable land (the Dust Bowl) and the financial crisis of the Great Depression, this chapter contends that the migration itself also caused crises of labor and, subsequently, of public relations for the U.S. government that necessitated coordinated, public action to manage the situation. The FSA migratory labor camps did provide temporary relief to indigent migrants in the form of access to safe and sanitary living conditions, access to health care and other social services, and the ability to be a part of a community where one could enjoy entertainment and recreation, like Saturday night dances. At the same time, this chapter interrogates how FSA photographs, particularly those of dance and performance, staged for the American public a transition from precarity to stability that minimized the continued struggles facing migrant laborers.

[167] Coverley. He wrote, "In the eyes of the [residents], the Festival was something akin to the weekly 'gatherings' back yonder -- just one more thing that they used to do and have had to do without for a long time."

Dance and performance, broadly, were integral to the social lives of FSA migratory labor camps. While large festivals like the Labor Day events in Woodville were rare, dances were held weekly, if not twice-weekly, in most camps and not only served as a form of entertainment and recreation, but also became imbued with cultural, political, and ideological significance. The dances can be viewed as a form of spectacle in that they operated to manage the anxieties of migration and precarity in two ways. On the one hand, these dances reminded people of home and, through dancing the squares, migrants created a semblance of stability and continuity within the camps that distracted from the urgency and fears arising the precarity of their immediate status as migrants and their historical circumstances as tenant farmers, particularly in Oklahoma.

Another way in which the FSA dances in the migratory labor camps became spectacle, a mode of consuming the crises of the 1930s-40s, was through the cooption and dissemination of images of the dances by the state. As the FSA grew and became more formalized, and as the US economy began to rebound in the early 1940s, images of the FSA dances increased and became much more stylized to reflect the so-called "successes" of the New Deal. These photographs emphasized a number of genre conventions that reflected the liberal, ideological priorities of New Deal reforms and served to correlate said reforms to the smiling, white dancers in the pictures. Photographers were instructed to capture images that reflected the sanctity and strength of a cohesive society, propriety, cleanliness, attention to healthy, hearty bodies and white, middle-class appearances, and the harnessing of energy into *active* and socially productive endeavors. By tracing the evolution of FSA photographs of performances in migratory labor camps one can identify the ways in which whiteness and American-ness become laminated together, and onto, the dancing body. Furthermore, study of the dances reveal the ways in which

the embodied practices were not only evacuated of their racialized history, but also were circulated broadly through photographs to better serve and protect the state and its programs.

The chapter begins by outlining the foundations of a liberal agrarian politic in the United States and then explores more deeply how conceptions of land and race set the stage (so to speak) for the creation of a precarious, white underclass of tenant farmers who felt entitled to the liberal promise of eventually owning a homestead to settle and work. Tracing the journey of these migrants to California, the chapter moves from Oklahoma to the West, where impoverished "Okie" migrants not only caused major shifts in the job market, but also faced tremendous stigma from long-time California residents and business owners. To "growers" and major agricultural leaders, indigent migrant farmers presented a threat to the agricultural economy in California; however, for some government officials, the migrants embodied an unfolding humanitarian tragedy that needed to be remedied. As the result of efforts by Resettlement Administration (RA) photographers, like Dorothea Lange, and authors like John Steinbeck, agricultural migrant laborers received unprecedented aid and attention compared to migrant workers of color because of their race and the subsequent public relations campaigns that emphasized the migrants' whiteness as a reason to help support them. I outline how photographs, news articles, and public relief efforts spectacularized the crisis of labor through the circulation of images and narratives about the plight of migrants. Similar to the government's reaction in response to the spectacular crisis of the Triangle Fire, the U.S. government's intervention was insufficient and too late. While the establishment of migratory labor camps did provide material relief to thousands of migrant families, tens of thousands more were unable to obtain placement and residency in the camps and the protections that were afford to those in the camps were temporary. The migratory labor camps were a palliative that did not treat the underlying causes of the migrant's precarity;

rather, they provided public, albeit limited, protections for a very specific (white) population. These protections not only enabled the government to project its efficacy, but also operated to resubsume workers back into the service of capital and into proper subject-formation in the liberal nation-state.

The latter sections of the chapter tease apart how dance and performance in the FSA migratory labor camps served as a form of distraction from the tedium, labors, and stressed of living in the camps and embodied a deep connection and affinity to the mythology and promise of white, agrarian liberalism. Through dance and the disciplining of the migrant body through white cultural expression, one can track how whiteness travels and attaches itself to literal "moves" and cultural objects, which are deeply entrenched and incorporated into notions of liberalism and aimed at producing productive democratic *white* citizens, often exploiting and endangering non-white laborers and citizens in the process. I then consider how photographs of these dances were spectacularized in the media and by the government to highlight the efficacy of migrant "rehabilitation" programs and economic stimuli. In short: attention to the depictions of, and genres of, dance in the camps from the 1930s-1940s reveals a process of choreographing a particular type of whiteness – rural/agrarian – into the position of the modern, liberal citizen who would be put to work and, thereby "protected" by the state.

"Whiteness as Property"

In order to better understand the complex and overlapping factors that instigated the mass migration of hundreds of thousands of poor, white Americans from Oklahoma to California in the 1930s, it is necessary to trace the imbricated relationship between notions of the individual and notions of property in the United States and how these two concepts are grounded firmly in a

racial hierarchy that presupposes whiteness as a cognate for both "man" and "citizen."[168] The exodus of white farmers and agricultural laborers from Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl does not have one sole cause; however, many factors that contributed to the departure en masse can be connected to the histories of land expropriation, land ownership, and agricultural capitalism in Oklahoma, which have roots in liberal and agrarian ideologies that have been a cornerstone of both American identity and legislation. Despite the fact that most agricultural migrants in the 1930s were tenant farmers whose livelihoods were inherently precarious, the deeply held cultural value of property ownership in the United States correlates directly to narratives of the yeoman who was guaranteed a right to cultivate his "own" land provides critical insight into the motivations behind this mass migration and the response to it.

Liberalism emerged in Britain as an ideology grounded in Enlightenment philosophy, particularly Lockean understandings of the natural rights of man and the function of natural law within societies. As Uday Mehta illustrates in *Liberalism and Empire*, John Locke (1632-1704), known for his writings that extol the freedoms and rights of *all* men, bases his philosophy on the "natural" rights bestowed upon men at birth. Importantly, though, despite the view that all humans are, by nature, free and rational beings, Locke immediately limits the potential actualization of a "perfect freedom" by providing the caveat that man's freedom can only be upheld if he continues to conduct himself within the parameters of "the Law of Nature."[169] In short: men are free and equal as long as they operate within what is perceived as the "natural

[168] There is excellent and critical black radical and black feminist scholarship on race, biopolitics, and the making of the "modern man," that recenters/reorients race (and intersectional identities of race/gender) as the core and defining mechanism by which populations are managed and governed. This project is informed by the works of Alexander G. Weheliye's *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) and Katherine McKittrick's *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), among others. The decision to explicate, here, a Lockean trajectory of liberalism comes from the desire to historiographically trace the implications and incorporated practices of Locke's flawed and violent ideology into the 20th century through particular policies and performative practices.

[169] Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 54.

order" of society, which governed by natural laws. Critically, though, the natural order that Locke describes is one built on, and maintained by, entrenched class-based and racial hierarchies that manifest not only through liberal institutions, but also through access to property.[170] As Mehta explains, "Locke presumes on a complex constellation of social structures and social conventions to delimit, stabilize, and legitimize, without explicitly restricting, the universal referent of his foundational commitments."[171] Locke's theorizations of the co-constitutive relationship between freedom and natural law hugely qualify the universality of his claims, and provide, for Mehta, the core of the "exclusionary thrust" of liberalism.[172] Ultimately, Mehta traces the ways in which the "impulse" towards exclusion is actually inherent to liberalism and its projects, despite the rhetoric of inclusivity, equality, and freedoms. Thus, he outlines the entwined emergence of liberal ideology and imperial expansion, while highlighting the historical and philosophical roots of an inherently exclusionary impulse within liberalism.[173] Importantly, Mehta explains how liberal understandings of freedom, grounded in Lockean understandings of the rights of man, relate to intertwining concepts, which I will further explore: who is defined as "man" and the notion of property.

The concepts of individual liberties and the right to own property became critical tenets of liberal ideology in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in the Anglo-Atlantic, including the nascent United States, and served to define who counted as a liberal subject with guaranteed rights. As established above, liberalism is a doctrine built on exclusion, particularly exclusion on the basis of race, despite its universalist rhetoric. As Lisa Lowe explains, "the genealogy of modern liberalism [is] also a genealogy of modern race; racial

[170] Here, liberal institutions signal organizational structures that maintain natural law, i.e., contracts, representation in government, the rule of law, broadly, etc. Ibid.
[171] Mehta, 57.
[172] Ibid., 46.
[173] Ibid.

differences and distinctions designate the boundaries of the human and endure as remainders attesting to the violence of liberal universality."[174] Critically, as Lowe outlines, race determined who qualified as "human" within the boundaries of liberal society with whiteness being equated with humanity and non-white persons with various degrees of unhumanity. Racial hierarchies, though certainly not an invention of liberalism, became codified in new ways (through legislation, for example) and spread through the imbrication of liberalism, slavery, and settler colonialism beyond Europe and into the United States.[175]

The conquest and settlement of indigenous lands in the U.S. was legalized through processes of white privilege that "invisiblized" the rights of non-whites and decimated Native populations. Under the system of chattel slavery, slaves *were* property and thereby had no legal standing or rights.[176] Not only did chattel slavery render enslaved Africans as unfree, but also slavery as an institution reduced black bodies to the status of unhuman property and inherently ownable, while establishing the right to own slaves as a benefit inherent to whiteness.[177] We can

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[174] Lowe, 7.

[175] Furthermore, Lowe's theorization of "intimacies," helps to set the stage for a discussion of the unequal treatment of migrant workers of color and white migrants in California in the 1930s. She writes, "the intimacies of four continents becomes a way to discuss the coeval global processes of settler colonialism, slavery, and imported colonial labor, as the conditions for British and American national formations of liberty, liberal personhood, society, and government at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries." Any discussion of white migrants from Oklahoma to California would be incomplete without recognizing the disproportionate attention and resources granted to white migrants as migrants of color. Since the California gold rush in 1848, the state has been home and host to migrant laborers from across Asia, primarily China and Japan in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, joined by Filipino and Indian laborers in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. While white migrants did not necessarily replace or displace workers from Asia (or from Mexico), it must be noted that global systems of trade and capital meant that the laborers who occupied California's agricultural jobs were intimately and globally connected. Furthermore, one can push these intimacies further in the collapse of the public/private domain in regard to peoples of Japanese descent through their incarceration in internment camps at the onset of WWII.

[176] Hartman, 5.

[177] Imani Perry further links concepts of property, sovereignty, and personhood not only to race but also to gender. She writes, "If we can acknowledge that forms of structuralist thought, from Marx to Claude Lévi-Strauss, failed to account for the individual before the society, we must also recognize that it also failed to account for those not contemplated as individuals before society. Both categories of humans fell into juridical rule, but non-recognition must be understood as more than a yet unrealized potentiality in the early nineteenth century (e.g., an overly romantic account for the emancipation of the enslaved or the rise of property rights for women later in the century) but as a constant in the logic of patriarchy, a form of domination on which the law of property and sovereignty rested." While concepts of gender, gendered violence, and feminist labors are present in the case studies presented here, more thorough and nuanced understandings of the intersectional oppressions of race, gender, and class can be

understand whiteness as a racial identity formation centered on exclusion in that whiteness is predicated on the existence of those who are presumed or categorized as "not-white." Legal scholar Cheryl Harris explains:

> White identity and whiteness were sources of privilege and protection; their absence meant being the object of property. Slavery as a system of property facilitated the merger of white identity and property. Because the system of slavery was contingent on and conflated with racial identity, it became crucial to be 'white,' to be identified as white, to have the property of being white. Whiteness was the characteristic, the attribute, the property of free human beings.[178]

Harris, here, introduces a bifurcated, though related, understanding of the connection between whiteness and property: first, whiteness as the legally recognized racial formation that allows for the possession of land and material property and second, whiteness as a state of freedom. Critical to Harris' analysis, and to this essay, is the way that "the law constructed 'whiteness' as an objective fact, although in reality it is an ideological proposition imposed through subordination."[179] In short: white bodies could operate with relative impunity, whereas bodies racialized as "non-white" were subject to legal and extralegal violence within regimes of colonialism and chattel slavery, from which United States law and policy are derived. Particularly public, spectacular examples of racial violence against black peoples were the estimated 4,400 lynchings that took place between 1877-1950.[180]

Especially relevant to the land now known as Oklahoma is the way in which whiteness links to concepts of citizenship and property in regard to land rights and legislation. What is now known as Oklahoma today has been the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples for millennia. The

found in Perry's work among countless others including Hortense Spillers, Christina Sharpe, Gloria Anzaldua (some of whom she cites). Imani Perry, *Vexy Things: On Gender and Liberation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 44.

[178] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993), 1721.

[179] Ibid, 1730

[180] "Lynching in America," The National Memorial for Peace and Justice. https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/memorial.

history most relevant to chronology of this paper begins with Jackson's Trail of Tears in which tens of thousands of indigenous peoples were forcibly removed from their land in the American Southwest and relocated to the Arkansas Territory, which included the land that is now Oklahoma until 1828. American national policy towards indigenous nations in the nineteenth century, including destructive Jeffersonian Indian policy, the atrocities of Jackson's Trail of Tears (beginning in 1830), and the General Allotment Act (1887), was one of forced removal, massacre and extermination, and coercive and violent assimilation practices, all of which were legal methods of oppression as ratified by the U.S. government.[181] As Harris further explains:

> the conquest and occupation of Indian land was wrapped in the rule of law. The law provided not only a defense of conquest and colonization, but also a naturalized regime of rights and disabilities, power and disadvantage that flowed from it, so that no further justifications or rationalizations were required.[182]

The removal of indigenous peoples from their land throughout the nineteenth century not only granted legal ownership of indigenous land to white settlers, but also sanctioned and condoned racist notions of white supremacy through property ownership.[183] The devastating removal of

[181] Beginning with Jeffersonian policies in the 1810s-20s, land that later became the state of Arkansas became the location to which the US government would "relocate" indigenous peoples who lived in close proximity to white settlements further east. After the Missouri Compromise of 1820, a series of skirmishes relating to the boundaries between US territory and Indigenous national sovereignty broke out, which ultimately resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Doak's Stand in October 1820. Signed by Gen. Andrew Jackson and the Choctaw Nation, the treaty granted substantial land claims in southern Arkansas to the Choctaws until "the period at which said nation shall become so civilized and enlightened, as to be made citizens of the United States." The process of renegotiating the Treaty of Doak's Stand began almost immediately and the subsequent years were ones of intense conflict between the Choctaw and Cherokee nations and the US government regarding the western border and the rights of indigenous sovereign nations, which only grew more violent with the formalization of Andrew Jackson's Indian removal policies in the 1830s, including the Indian Removal Act (1830), which I consider to mark the beginning of the Trail of Tears legislation and action. Derek R. Everett, "On the Extreme Frontier: Crafting the West Arkansas Boundary," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, vol. 67, no 1, (2008), 6. For more on the history of forced removal and land treaties between indigenous nations and the US government, see S. Charles Bolton, "Jeffersonian Indian Removal and the Emergence of Arkansas Territory," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* vol 62 no 3 (2003).

[182] Harris, 1723.

[183] Scholars have written extensively about the ways in which the forced removal of indigenous nations has led not only to diminished territory, but also has had devastating effects on indigenous cultural practices and epistemologies, including Glen Coulthard. Patrick Wolfe puts it succinctly: "Land is life." Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *The Journal of Genocide Research*, vol 8, no 4 (2006), 388.

indigenous nations from their land through settler colonialism resulted in not only loss of life, but also aimed to "dissolve" and erase native societies.[184]

Conceptions of land and land ownership represent vividly the clash between European, liberal ideology and policy with indigenous epistemologies grounded in ancestral lands. U.S. legislation regarding stripping indigenous nations of their land is steeped in Jeffersonian ideals of land ownership through an agrarian (and Lockean) understanding that, in order for the country as a whole to progress, land must be owned and cultivated through an *individual*'s hard work, as opposed to communal tending to the land.[185] In short, as historian David A. Chang writes, "ideas of race and nation exist in dynamic relation to property, land, and the means of production."[186]

The Dawes Act of 1887 (formally known as the General Allotment Act) is critical legislation that enabled the United States government to disband communal tracts and estates held by indigenous peoples, viewed as a critical step eventually absorbing Native Americans into "proper" modes of land ownership into American citizens.[187] Chang describes, "for white Americans, allotment and the dissolution (in American eyes) of tribal authority constituted the setting aright of hierarchies of race and gender. To such men, allotment and tribal dissolution

[184] Ibid.

[185] Locke writes in "Treatise of Civil Government" (1690), "God gave the world to men in common; but since He gave it them for their benefit and the greatest conveniences of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed He meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational – and labor was to be his title to it." As Lisi Krall notes, the distinction between the "commons" and individual property and the potential for progress in individual cultivation of the land is distinctly Lockean and later taken up by Jefferson. Furthermore, Krall notes, "This philosophical basis of property provided justification for replacing past institutional arrangements and introduced an evolutionary notion that some uses of property are clearly superior to others," Lisi Krall, "Thomas Jefferson's Agrarian Vision and the Changing Nature of Property," *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol 36, no 1 (2002), 134. John Locke, "Two Treatises of Government. In the Former the False Principles and Foundations of Sir Robert Filmer, and His Followers, Are Detected and Overthrown. The Latter, Is An Essay Concerning the Original Extent, and End, of Civil Government," http://www.yorku.ca/comninel/courses/3025pdf/Locke.pdf

[186] David A. Chang, *The Color of the Land: Race, Nation, and the Politics of Landownership in Oklahoma, 1832-1929,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 6.

[187] A further goal of the law was to diminish, if not dissolve entirely, tribal governmental structures (including tribal courts) and, hence, tribal sovereignty. Practically, the Dawes Act enabled the President to send government officials to survey tribal territory and break it up into individual plots of land. Native Americans who took the individual allotment and committed to live separately from their tribe were granted U.S. citizenship, theoretically with all the rights and privileges entitled therein.

were part of the inevitable expansion of a racialized nation that had taken a continent and was building an island empire."[188] For the U.S. Government and for many settlers who began heading towards the West, the Dawes Act represented an almost convenental understanding of the relationship between citizenship and individual land ownership, as conceptualized through European constructions of personhood and property.

Notably, land belonging to the "Five Civilized Tribes" whose communal lands were in what is now Oklahoma – the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole nations – were originally exempt from the Dawes Act and were able to continue to cultivate their lands and that white property ownership in the Territory was illegal. In the late nineteenth century, Indian Territory was continuing to receive poor, white settlers who moved in order to attempt to eventually own property (perhaps via the Homestead Act or a revised Dawes Act); however, until 1898, when the Dawes Act was amended to include the Five Civilized Tribes, the only legal form of farming for white settlers in Indian Territory was to be hired to work by members of the indigenous nations, a far cry from the ideal of establishing one's own farm or homestead. To poor white people from across the Southeast, Indian Territory held the potential to realize their ultimate rights as citizens: land ownership. As Chang explains, to landless whites, the region "represented the hope to fulfill a birthright denied, to take on the yeoman status to which they believed their whiteness entitled them" – a "birthright" which continued to be denied as the white settlers were relegated to be tenant farmers and hired laborers on indigenous land, which continued well after the implementation of the Curtis Act (1898) and the dissolution of communal, indigenous lands.[189]

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[188] Chang, 76. Critically, Chang also notes re: African American land ownership and its importance in OK; however, for this paper, I am focusing particularly on white settlers and ownership.
[189] Ibid., 7.

The "pull" of white settlers westward towards Oklahoma (and eventually California) was not only a result of the deeply entrenched political-ideological "birthright" of yeoman farming as outlined by Chang, but also was bound up within an iconography and mythology of the American West that valorized and romanticized individualism, American exceptionalism, and white masculinity. Particularly towards in the latter-half of the nineteenth century, reports, images, and folklore of cowboys, explorers, prospectors, and railroad tycoons in the American West were pervasive and served to reify the potential offered by migration to the west: the ability to set out on one's own, to take life into one's hands, and to create a life unfettered by the constraints of convention. The figure of the cowboy, for example, circulated affectively as a symbol of a certain type of freedom and, interestingly, as one with a strained relationship to the nation, the law, and the notion of work/labor. All of this to say that the flows of white settlers from the Southeast and Eastern United States through to Oklahoma and the Midwest, and later in the twentieth century, onwards to California, point to a cartographic and choreographic expression of economic, political, ideological, and emotional desires that center around conceptions of land and personal freedom.

As illustrated above, white settlers to Oklahoma were motivated by a range of factors including the lure of property ownership and economic independence – "the family farm logic" inspired by the Homestead Act – and the socio-emotional associations that were mapped onto the idea of the "West;" however, the realities of agricultural life in Oklahoma at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century did not, for the most part, fulfill these aspirations.[190] Oklahoma was uniquely positioned within the United States in terms of land ownership and agricultural development in the twentieth century because of the extended rights and regulations

[190] James N. Gregory, *An American Exodus*, 10?; also, the notion of "economic independence" comes from David Roediger and thinking through the relationship between wage labor and "white slavery"...

of indigenous nations to their land. Given that white land ownership in Oklahoma was extremely limited until the enactment of the Curtis Act, white migrants to Oklahoma following the Civil War through the end of the century were relegated to working as hired laborers, tenant farmers, or sharecroppers on indigenous land. Following the Curtis Act, there was a brief rush in which some white settlers were able to purchase their own land; however, a number of conditions (including a lack of initial capital, intermittent periods of severe drought, and other issues like crop & livestock disease) confined the majority of agricultural workers in Oklahoma to tenancy.[191] Importantly, Oklahoma was unique in the proportion of white tenant farmers; by 1900, an estimated 75% of tenant farmers in Oklahoma were white.[192] Furthermore, the amount of white tenant farmers almost doubled in the following decade.

Moving West: Migration as Crisis

Migration to the American West from Oklahoma and other states in the Great Plains region was touted, even contemporaneously, as an "exodus" – a move from a land devoid of opportunity that held histories of oppression to, literally, the Promised Land.[193] For many, California represented not so much of a Promised Land, but another step. The last option.

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[191] Sharecropping and tenant farming are both variations of agricultural labor systems whereby the people who farm the land do not own it; rather, the farmworkers lease or rent land on which to grow crops and pay for the privilege with profits from their harvest, often with interest. The difference between sharecropping and tenant farming is a question of scale, as they are related systems of work. Usually sharecroppers would be poorer people who lease everything (including shelter, tools, seeds, clothing, food etc.) from the landowner. In the Deep South (less true in Oklahoma), predatory and exploitative sharecropping practices were used, essentially, to keep black Americans enslaved in debt to white landowners well after the Civil War and Reconstruction through the mid-twentieth century. Tenant farmers were usually slightly better off financially and might own their own tools and build their own homes with their own capital. As such, the idea was that tenant farmers might eventually buy themselves off the land and own their own plot. "Farming," https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=FA019 and "Tenant Farming and Sharecropping," https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=TE009.

[192] David E. Conrad, "Tenant Farming and Sharecropping," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=TE009.

[193] More could be said here about the semantic and practical distinction between the language of "exodus" versus "diaspora" and what this distinction might mean in terms of concepts of the individual v. the community, questions of displacement and the idea of return, etc.

Despite the advertisements that targeted rural communities in Oklahoma and Arkansas that called for work – i.e., "800 pickers needed!" – for many, work was not easy to come by and there were significant obstacles and hardships to overcome in the "Eden" of the west. Often, for the "800 pickers needed," thousands of migrants would arrive ready to work. The simultaneous movement of hundreds of thousands of people paired with the highly seasonal nature of agricultural labor in California lead to a significant labor surplus, which depressed wages for those who were able to find employment.

Although outward migration from the Plains began in the 1910s, the movements of people flowing out of the heartland intensified drastically at the end of the 1920s and through the 1930s. Overwhelmingly, and disproportionately, the migrants headed to California were white. One possible explanation for the racial makeup of migrants to California relates back to the relationship between land and personhood, as discussed earlier in the chapter. While many of the migrants were severely impoverished and had never owned land in Oklahoma, California represented a new opportunity to find work and save enough money to buy one's own plot of land. In essence, the mythology that surrounded westward migration (to California, specifically), mirrored, and acted as a continuation, of a white, American mythology that encompassed notions of individualism, American exceptionalism, and an agrarian promise that was unfulfilled in the Great Plains. It is plausible that the draw of California and an extension of the agricultural ideology and status quo was less appealing to black and indigenous Americans for whom said mythology never applied. The appeal of a shift in work from agricultural labor to industrial labor, as actualized through northern migration, could be representative of a desire to leave behind oppressive and violent systems of agricultural labor to find and create different forms of

affinity, survival, and freedom.[194] In any case, of the estimated 375,000 migrants from the Plains who made their way to California and pursued agricultural work in the decade between 1930-1939, it is estimated that 95% of them were white, which clearly indicates racial divergence in regards migratory patterns.[195] Additionally, this population was largely impoverished, as those who did own land or were otherwise financially and socially invested in the state had fewer incentives to leave.[196]

California had long been a prime destination for migrants (both domestic, or "internal," and international) for decades; however, the influx of people moving westward from the central United States in the 1930s presented new challenges. The sheer numbers of newcomers overwhelmed state and local governments, which simultaneously were economically dependent on migrant labor (particularly agricultural labor). At once disdained by local residents who believed that migrants were unsanitary, uneducated, and a threat to both one's job and peace in the town, migrants were courted by large companies in need of cheap labor and a vital component of the industrialized agricultural economy – the richest in the country.[197] The figure of the white, agricultural migrant to California – the "Okie" – circulated broadly across the nation, encompassing the complicated, often contradictory, economic needs and social desires of the State, and impacted the lived realities of migrants attempting to make their lives anew in

[194] As James N. Gregory writes regarding northern migration from the South in the early twentieth century, "going north meant something different to black southerners than it did for white southerners. It meant, black migrants hoped, rights, freedoms, and dignity that the South perpetually denied them." James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America*, 23.

[195] Davis McEntire, "A Study of Migration and Resettlement in the Far Western States," (1940), Record Group 211, Box 26, National Archives at College Park. It should be noted that the figure above represents inclusive migration, not net migration.

[196] As McEntire, Gregory, and others note, destitute migrants were in no way the norm in regards to the migrant population writ large. However, poverty was endemic among migrants from rural areas in Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas, the majority of whom migrated to rural areas in California to pursue agricultural work. Middle-class and wealthier migrants, as a whole, tended to settle in cities, particularly Los Angeles, San Diego, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, the focus remains on the population of people who were agricultural workers both in the Plains and in California who were largely financially dependent on the State.

[197] Casey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*: *The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), ix.

California. As Judith Hamera explains, "the figural" is a performative framework, an "interpretive strategy for identifying the simultaneously material/historical, exemplary, and representational qualities of an object of analysis."[198] In other words: the conceptual framework of "the figural" account for both the histories of the object and the symbolic space that the object hopes to fulfill in a type of material palimpsest that occupies both reality and desire. Critically, Hamera locates the figural "in the interplay of the discursive, the pictorial, and...the kinesthetic," which instructively centers the body and recognizes the role of movement, and potentially migration, in the circulation of figural economies.[199] The Okie, as a figure, moved through public consciousness in the 1930s and 1940s and also figured a racialized relation between the industrial, agricultural economy and the socio-political and demographic changes that confronted the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. With California receiving thousands of new migrants per month, this migration was highly public and highly disruptive.[200] Despite the fact that most migrants to California were not indigent and ended up settling in urban areas, California residents and leaders – particularly those in rural areas – were in close proximity to the scores of squatter camps that developed along major highways in the state. Against the backdrop of local resistance to migrants, the media and, later, the state and federal governments would focus attention on narratives of white destitution and misfortune that not only belied the reality of the majority of migrants to California, but also served to downplay, if not erase, the socio-political and economic conditions of industrial agriculture and land tenancy that were at least partially responsible for said poverty.[201]

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[198] Hamera 2017, 13.

[199] Ibid.

[200] James R. Swensen, *Picturing Migrants: The Grapes of Wrath and New Deal Documentary Photography*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 12. On one day in November 1937, over 3,000 migrants crossed into California from Arizona.

[201] Gregory, most migrants arrived and settled in urban areas, despite the consistent images of rural poverty.

Poor, white migrants from Oklahoma and the Plains to California did face significant obstacles upon their arrival in California including tremendous stigmas surrounding poverty, education, and vocation (despite agricultural workers being a minority amongst migrants), violence due to the perceived economic threat that migrants posed, and continued unemployment due to a surplus of workers. In response to the perceived "invasion" of migrants flooding into Oklahoma, local governments and the state of California attempted to stem the tide both through legislation targeting the movements of poor folks and vigilante and police violence against migrants.[202] In 1933, for example, the California state legislature passed the California Indigent Act, which made it illegal to bring indigent peoples across state lines and in 1936, the Los Angeles Police Department implemented what became known as the "Bum Blockade."[203] In this egregious extension of local jurisdiction, the Chief of Police for Los Angeles, James Davis, deployed 125 city police officers to points along the California state borders with Arizona, Nevada, and even Oregon, to prevent transient workers from entering. The police would set up checkpoints and levy heavy fees for families looking to enter California.[204] With a challenge from the American Civil Liberties Union, the "Bum Blockade" dwindled in support and was eventually stopped by the state government; however, towns across California developed or enforced variations of transient laws that prevented families from establishing residency and thereby excluding families from the state and federal aid to which they were entitled.

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[202] Charles L. Todd, "The 'Okies' Search For A Lost Frontier," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 27, 1939. Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Workers Collection, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Violence was certainly not limited to white migrants from Oklahoma. Police and extra-legal violence against migrants of color in California has a long and difficult history. Contemporaneous examples of violence and legislation against agricultural migrants of color include the Watsonville Riots (1930) and the Filipino Repatriation Act (1935), which build off of legacies of laws like the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), etc.

[203] James N. Gregory, "Dust Bowl Migration," in *Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, and Policy,* ed. Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O'Connor, 245-7.

[204] Dorothea Lange, "Bum Blockade," https://www.loc.gov/item/2017759567/; James N. Gregory *American Exodus,* 80.

Without support, many families coming from rural areas in the Great Plains who aimed to settle in rural and agricultural regions in California ended up living in squalid conditions in makeshift camps alongside highways and rivers. The squatter camps, the presence of unemployed men and women gathering in towns and in front of ranches, and the destabilization of labor in the agricultural sector, among other issues, made the migration a highly visible and disruptive crisis in and of itself. Although the migrants faced stigmatization, backlash, and legal maneuvering to prevent them from settling and receiving relief in California, certain regional officials and artists were appalled by the treatment of migrants and began to document their plight. The squatter camps and similarly destitute Okie migrants featured subjects in the works of Dorothea Lange and John Steinbeck, among others, who contributed greatly to the images and narratives that shaped the nation's understanding of an American migrant.

The works of Lange and Steinbeck spectacularized the crisis of labor as embodied through the migration to California as their photographs and narratives, respectively, circulated well beyond California; their works helped to garner the necessary public pressure needed to institute programs to provide needed assistance and support to the migrant population. Lange and Steinbeck exemplify the efforts of artists, regional officials, and others working towards minimizing the antagonism towards migrants in California by presenting migrants as victims of misfortune who deserve not only sympathy, but also financial support in order to right themselves back onto the path towards the American agrarian ideal. Lange and her husband, economist Paul S. Taylor, used affective, emotionally charged photographs of destitute migrants to encourage the state and federal government to act more swiftly and aggressively in providing relief to migrants.

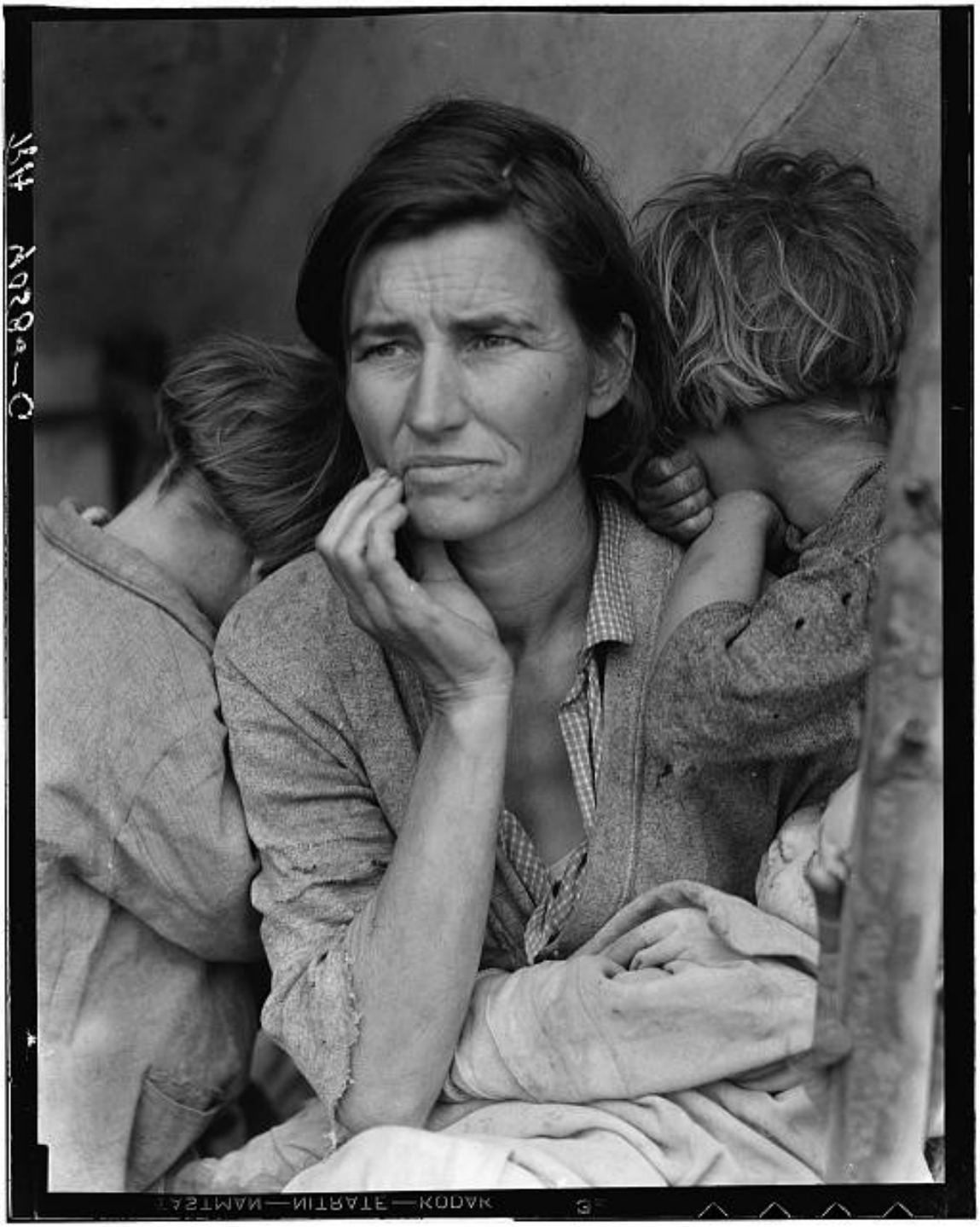
FSA photographers, particularly Lange, and Steinbeck used artistic, aesthetic strategies to appeal to the American public by staging poor, white Dust Bowl migrants as passive subjects upon whom tragedy befell; a tragedy that could happen to anyone. Like in the case of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, however, this Dust Bowl "tragedy" could have been drastically mitigated and, in fact, was rendered more egregious through state initiatives and policies. Regardless, the aesthetics of Lange's photographs and Steinbeck's texts aim to create empathy for the migrants; they are just like "us," codifying a relationship between whiteness and Americanness. Already established as a photographer in California, notably for her studies of people waiting in line bread and unemployment lines during the Great Depression, Dorothea Lange was hired in 1935 by Roosevelt's Resettlement Administration (RA) to document the lives of Dust Bowl migrants across the country. Along with her husband, UC Berkeley economist Paul S. Taylor, – himself appointed to the California State Emergency Relief Administration and the Resettlement Administration – Lange toured the state, taking photographs of migrants with the express purposes of documenting the quality of life of Dust Bowl migrants and to raise public awareness of the humanitarian crises developing with the hope of galvanizing policy changes, motivating state officials to back (or at least not undermine) Roosevelt's initiatives and to garner increased fiscal support for New Deal programs like the Resettlement Administration.

Lange's images, especially those of destitute mothers and children, circulated widely in newspapers and magazines. Perhaps exemplary of Lange's aesthetic vision and strategy is her famous 1936 photograph "Destitute Pea Pickers in California. Mother of Seven Children. Age Thirty-Two. Nipomo, CA," which is frequently referred to solely as "Migrant Mother."[205] Quickly, Florence Owens Thompson – the subject of the photograph – became the figure of Okies in California; her weather-worn face and melancholic look of resignation and fatigue

[205] Dorothea Lange, "Destitute Mother, Pea Picker, Nipomo."

shaped how the general public understood both the economic and social reasons behind migration and her symbolic tragedy. Ironically, as photo historian Sally Stein explains cogently in her essay on "Migrant Mother," Florence Owens Thompson is a member of the Cherokee nation yet Lange's photographic practices did not provide the need or opportunity to have much discussion, with Thompson in which she might have (or not) revealed her ethnic background, likely because she "passed" as white.[206] The image of the impoverished "white" mother at once evokes sympathy – the relationship between wage labor and gender absolves the woman of any potential fault for circumstances – and neutralizes the exploitative and extractivist practices that prompted her relocation from Oklahoma and kept her in poverty in California. Furthermore, Thompson's poverty signaled a potential failure and dissolution of America's promise as a nation. In an agrarian republic, no one like Thompson should be left unable to make ends meet, so to speak. In this way, nostalgia, empathy, and fear were mapped onto Thompson's body affectively and effectively. Broadly, Lange's images serve to correlate visual/aesthetic and financial economies grounded in what her husband Paul Taylor termed "the empathetic value of white skin."[207] Lange's images and her narrativized book co-published with Taylor, *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion* (1939) presented the nation at a precipice: there was an opportunity to tend to migrants and replenish/reestablish their potential as landowners and productive members of society, if only both individuals and governments were to invest wisely in, and buy into, relief programs.

[206] Sally Stein, "Passing Likeness: Dorothea Lange's 'Migrant Mother' and the Paradox of Iconicity," in *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self,* ed. Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis, (New York: International Center of Photography, 2003), 345.
[207] Gregory, *American Exodus*, 81.



"Destitute Pea Pickers in California. Mother of Seven Children. Age Thirty-Two. Nipomo, California," by Dorothea Lange. March 1936.[208]

[208] Lange, "Destitute Pea Pickers..."

Author John Steinbeck further mobilized the potency of Lange's photographs through his advocacy work on behalf of migrants and his literary pursuits. Prior to Steinbeck's critically-acclaimed novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) – which was based on accounts of migrants at Arvin migratory labor camp – Steinbeck engaged spoke, fundraised, and wrote on behalf of organizations working to improve the lives of Dust Bowl migrants. The cover of Steinbeck's 1938 pamphlet, "Their Blood Is Strong" features a large photograph taken by Dorothea Lange of a migrant mother breastfeeding her child in an open-air shelter next to a tree.[209] The brochure, published by the Simon Lubin Society in San Francisco aimed to raise awareness for the plight facing migrant workers and also served as a type of fundraiser for the Society whose purpose was to "work towards the enforcement of existing legislation and the passage of further legislation designed to protect and improve the housing, sanitation, medical, educational, working, and living conditions of the agricultural worker and his family."[210]

In the text of the work, Steinbeck is explicit in his amplification of the whiteness of migrants as a means, and reason, to elicit care and action. A section of the brochure entitled "Good Old Names," illustrates that the migrants from the Plains are from "true" American stock. As he writes, "The names of the new migrants [as opposed to previous waves of migration to California from Asia and Mexico, chiefly] indicate that they are of English, German, and Scandinavian descent. There are Munns, Holbrooks, Hansens, Schmidts."[211] Steinbeck continues:

> The earlier foreign migrants have invariably drawn from a peon class. This is not the case with the new migrants. They are small farmers who have lost their farms, or farm hands who lived with the family in the old American way. They are men who have worked hard on their own farms and have felt the pride of possessing and living in close touch with the land. They are resourceful and intelligent Americans who have gone through the hell of the drouth [sic], have seen their

[209] John Steinbeck, "Their Blood Is Strong," (San Francisco: Simon J. Lubin Society of California, April 1938). Record Group 96, Box 12. National Archives at College Park.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid., 3.

> lands wither and die and the top soil blown away; and this, to a man who has owned his land, is a curious and terrible pain.[212]

Steinbeck here reinforces the relationship between whiteness and Americanness through a connection to agrarian ideology while also presenting an underlying positive morality that he associates with Dust Bowl migrants.[213] The account presented in the brochure erases the tenant system and rapidly industrializing agricultural economies in the Great Plains, instead presenting a case for empathy through an invocation of both the pain and the pride of these metaphorically wounded farmers. Critically, the migrants' whiteness entitles them to a kind of care that would not be, and was not, afforded to people of color.[214] Also noteworthy is Steinbeck's use of pathos as he describes farmers being torn away from their "own" land, despite the fact that, as previous sections of this chapter have illustrated, the land which these farmers worked was never theirs. Steinbeck minimizes, if not erases, the precarity faced by tenant farmers for decades in order to appeal to the myth of the republican landowner that still holds such powerful, cultural sway in the United States to this day.

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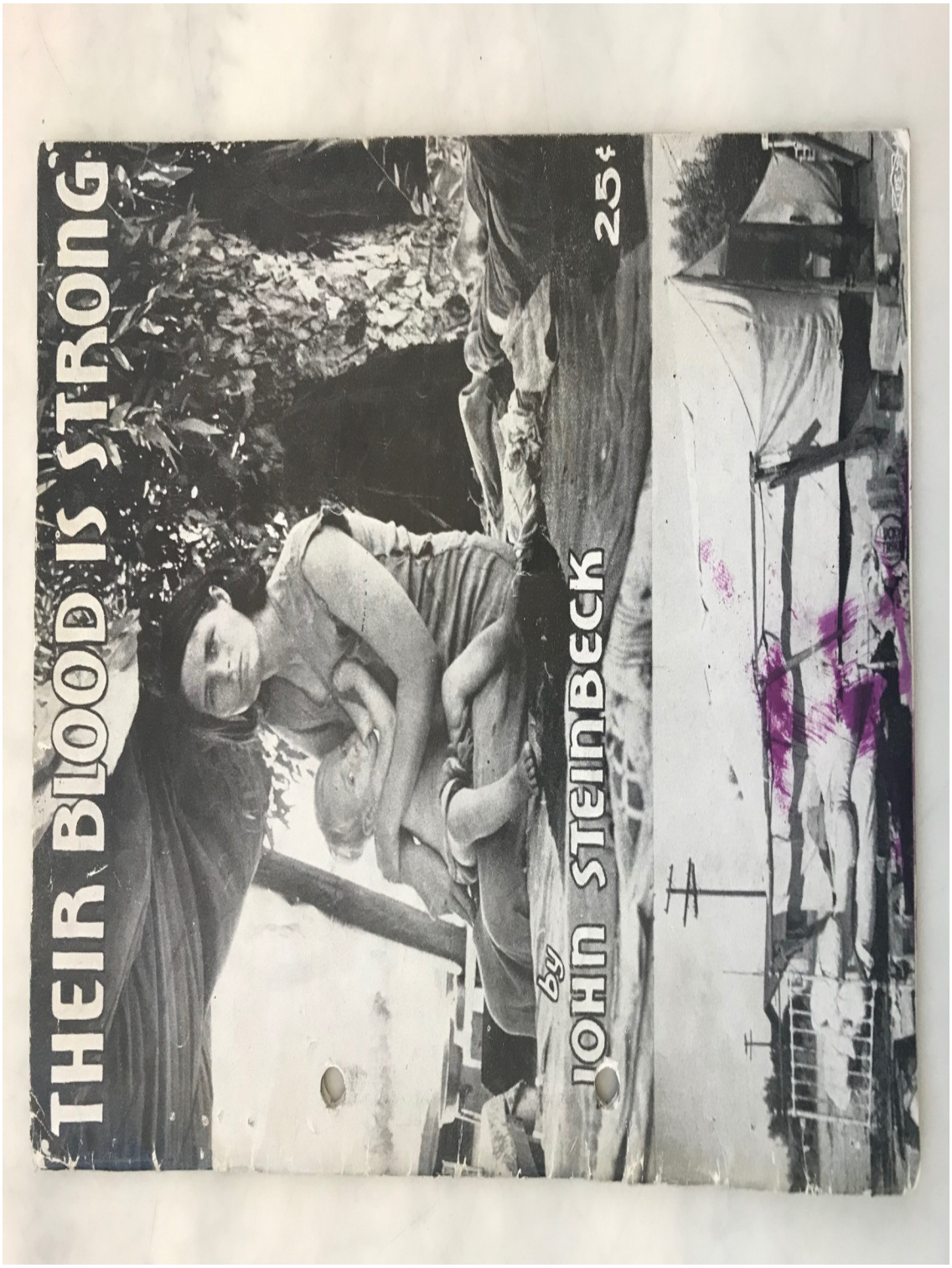
[212] Steinbeck, 2.

[213] See also, Kate Sampsell, "'Three Generations of Grass': Photography, Liberalism, and the Myth of the American Yeoman," *History of Photography*, vol. 27, no. 4 (2003): 333-341.

[214] Henry Hill Collins Jr., a New Deal administrator, explained in his 1941 book *America's Own Refugees* that Dust Bowl Migrants were [Just plain Americans, mostly young, mostly families; more whites and fewer aliens than in the rest of the population...poor in pocket, but pioneers in spirit." Notably in his text, Collins' presents an abridged history of migration in the United States which is notably and inaccurately homogeneous; all the examples he cites are of predominately white migration events – the Pilgrims, the Donner party, westward expeditions of Zebulon Pike, and the movement of Latter Day Saints into Utah. All this to say that the tropes of pioneerism and a valient or organic migration pattern were not unique to Steinbeck but were in fact picked up in other places. Henry Hill Collins Jr., *America's Own Refugees*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941).



"Their Blood Is Strong" by John Steinbeck. April 1938.

The migratory labor camp system in California serves a clear example of efforts made by the government to support Dust Bowl migrants that disproportionately benefitted, and were designed for, white families. Here, Steinbeck presents a case for empathy through an invocation of ties to a pre-industrial, white agrarian past. Critically, the migrants' whiteness entitles them to a kind of care that would not be, and was not, afforded to people of color. Whereas prior forms of large-scale housing for migrant laborers primarily took the form of company camps or low-cost, dormitory-like accommodations and predominantly served single, male migrant laborers of color, the sympathy and attention garnered by the caravans of white families eventually galvanized the public, resulting in pressure for government intervention and the establishment of the migratory labor camp system beginning in 1935. In addition to the basic humanitarian goals of providing migrants with access to clean, running water, toilets, and shelter, the federal government saw migratory labor camps as an opportunity to develop in migrants a sense of a democratic community and sociality, acclimatizing them to participate in "civilized" American society and engage in wholesome, social activities and physical recreation. With the exception of Dorothea Lange who notably prided herself on the power of her portraits of one or a few subjects, as many photo historians have studied, the documentary-style photography commissioned by the FSA of the migratory labor camps are framed to emphasize "collective issues rather than those affecting individuals," specifically.[215] As will be expounded upon later in this chapter, changes in photographic conventions and styles from the late 1930s to the early 1940s reflect the changes in the strength and "successes" of New Deal programs – the images of dance and performance, too, shift from focus on individuals to a type of liberal collectivity promoted through social recreation.

[215] Abigail Solomon-Godeau as cited in Swensen, 5.

FSA Migratory Labor Camps

The implementation of the Farm Security Administration (formerly the Resettlement Administration) migratory labor camp system grew out of the growing need for humanitarian relief for Dust Bowl migrants and their families and marked a drastic shift in both the treatment of agricultural workers and the role of the federal government in regard to agricultural labor. The FSA camps differed from previous forms and conventions regarding housing for agricultural workers in that the camps were not connected with a particular industry or company and that they were intended to function as small communities with the goal of "rehabilitating" migrant families from their stigmatized embodiment as "backwards," "disease-ridden," and generally undesirable rural transplants with the hope of their subsequent integration into broader California society, as opposed to functioning purely as temporary shelter.[216] Prior forms of large-scale housing for migrant laborers primarily took the form of company camps or low-cost, dormitory-like accommodations and predominantly served migrant laborers of color. Historian Devra Weber describes the housing provided to migrant workers in California's cotton fields as a means to further extend the authority of the cotton growers. By offering slightly more attractive housing options (though mostly in aesthetics only), cotton growers enticed workers to stay on the ranches, despite well-developed systems of surveillance, and a monopolization of the goods accessible to laborers, which minimized the workers' wages.[217] Outside of the cotton industry, it was common for migrant laborers to band together along racial and ethnic lines to find cheap housing.

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[216] "Statement of Regional Office of Resettlement Administration on Possible Establishment of Migrant Camps," Presented at California Conference on Housing of Migratory Agricultural Laborers, Santa Cruz, November 18, 1935. Record Group 96, Box 11. National Archives at College Park.
[217] Weber, 43.

Housing options for migrant workers in California in the early decades twentieth century – when workers of color predominated the agricultural industry – tended to extend control over the laboring population either through designed environments (i.e., the company camp) or designed transience (i.e., temporary housing with no permanent infrastructure). As writer and activist Carey McWilliams noted in his influential work *Factories in the Fields* (1939), growers and ranchers assumed and expected a high level of transience among migrant workers of color. It was assumed that laborers of color, most of whom were single men without families, – especially Japanese, Filipino, and Mexican migrant workers – would not remain in a particular city after the harvest and therefore there was no need, or desire, to invest in infrastructure or permanent housing to support these populations.[218] Conversely, Dust Bowl migrants generally came to California in family units and there was an understanding of relative permanence in their migration. It was generally assumed that Okies who engaged in agriculture desired establishing homesteads and eventually purchasing or cultivating property in California. As previously established, the fact that 95% of migrants from the Dust Bowl were white significantly altered national policy regarding their treatment and housing.[219] Correspondence at both the state and national level confirm the explicit relationship between whiteness and government benefits as they pertain to white, Dust Bowl migrants and their desire to own land. For example, in a letter from Dr. William Alexander of the Resettlement Administration (RA) to California congressman John H. Tolan, Alexander writes:

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[218] McWilliams. A notable exception is the development of Mexican and Mexican-American barrios, particularly in urban/suburban areas in Southern California. For more on barrios at this time, see

[219] As described previously, there was significant resistance to even semi-permanent housing for Dust Bowl migrants on the local level and, sometimes, the state level. In correspondence between Jonathan Garst, regional director of the Resettlement Administration to Washington D.C., he essentially begs the federal government to intervene because he does not believe that the State will take charge of providing resources for migrants. "Letter between Jonathan Garst (Regional Director, RA/FSA) and Dr. William W. Alexander, Administrator FSA, US Dept of Agriculture," November 27, 1937. Record Group 96, Box 12, National Archives at College Park.

> The migration of destitute and semi-destitute farm families to California from the mid-western and southern states in recent years has resulted in a very significant change in the character and racial composition of the migratory agricultural laboring population of the state. Whereas in former years a large proportion of this group consisted of single men of Oriental or other foreign extraction, the most numerous element today are native-born American families, the majority of whom at one time were farm operators in their own right, who have been forced to seek new opportunities to the westward...Most of these families went west in the hope that they might become re-established as small farm operators.[220]

In sum: the establishment of the FSA migratory labor camp system signals a departure from previous modes of housing for agricultural labor and government interference in said realm due to the particular make up and supposed permanence of rural Dust Bowl migrants; namely, that they were white and traveled to California in family units with expressed desires to own and cultivate land in the west. This shift in policy was in line with the sweeping changes in federal relief and public works projects enacted through New Deal legislation.

By the time President Roosevelt was inaugurated in 1933, the Great Depression was well into its third year and westward migration was swelling, along with unemployment rates across the country; among his responses was the implementation of broad relief plans known as the "New Deal." As labor historian Devra Weber notes, during the first years of New Deal programs, "national policy favored work relief as a way of providing assistance without the stigma of paying money for idleness."[221] One such policy was the creation of the Civil Works Administration (CWA) in 1933 as a subsidiary of the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA). The CWA, which became the Works Progress Administration in 1935, aimed to provide manual labor jobs, both unskilled and skilled, for millions of underemployed Americans. The vast majority of the jobs created through the CWA/WPA were public works projects, such as the construction of schools, parks, roads, and libraries. Importantly, the CWA/WPA did not supply

[220] Dr. William Alexander to Hon. John H. Tolan, July 1, 1937. Record Group 96, Box 12., National Archives at College Park.
[221] Weber, 127.

laborers for agricultural jobs and only migrant agricultural workers who had established residence in California for over one year were eligible for FERA benefits. Transient agricultural workers, then, had to overcome a great deal of bureaucracy – and deliberate efforts to prevent the establishment of residency – to access state and local funds (SERA, State Emergency Relief Act) for relief. Given these barriers to receiving state and federal funding (in addition to other issues, such as not knowing where relief offices were, not having adequate transportation, etc.), many Dust Bowl migrants traveling to work in agriculture in California lived in makeshift camps of tents, tin shacks, or in their automobiles, often without access to running water, supplies of food, gas, and health facilities. These unofficial camps – often known as "squatters camps" or "jungles" – prompted outrage and dismay from local governments who were more concerned with the threat of crime, labor strikes, and disease epidemics and the burden on local facilities (like schools) than with the quality of life of the migrants. In 1934, a series of government agencies began surveying migrant camps in California and developed into serious queries into the migrant housing crisis in 1935.[222] In addition to the myriad of anxieties pertaining to potential labor crises as a result of an influx of migrants – including increase potential for striking, communism, or other means of disseminating "subversive propaganda" – the state and federal government began to also face major public relations crises, at least in part due to the circulation of images like those of Lange and migrants advocates like John Steinbeck and labor leader Casey McWilliams.[223] Ultimately, the migrants not only made visible extraordinary rural poverty that translocated to California, but also exposed the failure of the state to intervene and protect its "true" citizens – those white migrants who worked "their own land."

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[222] Brian Q. Cannon, "Keep On A-Goin:" Life and Social Interaction in a New Deal Farm Labor Camp, *Agricultural History,* vol 70 no 1, 1996, 4.

[223] Statement of Regional office of Resettlement Administration on Possible Establishment of Migrant Camps Presented at California Conference on Housing of Migratory Agricultural Laborers – Santa Cruz, November 18,, 1935, Hotel Palomar. RG 96, Box 11.

At the forefront of the plan to design temporary housing for migrant agricultural workers was Harry Drobish, a former agricultural economist who served as the California State Director for the Rural Rehabilitation program (subsidiary of SERA) and Resettlement Administration from 1934-6.[224] The underlying goals of the migratory labor camps were manifold. In addition to the basic humanitarian goals of providing migrants with access to clean, running water, toilets, and shelter, the federal government saw migratory labor camps as an opportunity to potentially quell labor disputes between workers and growers, instill in migrants a sense of a democratic community, and acclimate migrants to living in broader California (and American) society. Importantly, the camps also were meant to provide large-scale growers with easy, unencumbered access to a relatively stable labor supply. Upon completion of a survey of migrant laborers in California conducted in 1935 by Drobish, Schuster, and Lange, Lowry Nelson (director of the Rural Rehabilitation Division) was able to secure an initial investment from the federal government to build two "demonstration" migratory labor camps: one in Marysville, California (Yuba County) and one in Arvin, California (Kern County).[225] The Marysville Camp was completed in December 1935 and Arvin a few months later.

Regarding labor issues, critics of the migratory labor camp program argued that consolidating agricultural workers in one space and providing them with a built-in community structure would result in widespread, aggressive labor organizing that would hurt growers and ranchers. This anxiety surrounding organizing and potential union activity comes from decades of labor strikes and attempts to unionize vast numbers of migrant, agricultural workers, particularly in the cotton fields. Records of meetings regarding the FSA camps and correspondence reveal consistent fears of "subversive activity" in regard to labor politics and

[224] In 1937 the Resettlement Administration became subsumed into the Farm Security Administration, which operated until 1946.
[225] Cannon, 6. Kern County's primary crop was cotton.

union membership. Aiming to minimize this fear amongst growers and powerful farming lobbying groups, federal officials argued that migratory labor camps would help to ameliorate labor relations between all parties. One statement from a conference discussing housing migratory laborers reads

> Present conditions only aggravate the relations between grower and laborer. We have had 50-odd strikes in California agriculture during the past three years. In all of them it has been easy to inflame the laborers by calling attention to the squatter conditions under which they live. Camps such as the Resettlement Administration is considering will eliminate one potent breeder of unrest. We have watched the Marysville camp and the Resettlement Administration asserts that it has produced a clear improvement in relations between growers, laborers, and townsfolk[226]

Furthermore, as Devra Weber has illustrated, workers also believed that their quality of life would improve if their living conditions were separate from their employers.[227] While none of the camps were directly affiliated with union organizing, many allowed union representatives to come to camp, advertised local union meetings, and ran editorials on the benefits of joining the union. Overall, regarding labor organizing, the initial design of the camp was aimed at neutralizing tensions and increasing the possibility of peaceful and swift resolution of labor conflicts. While many growers feared that housing migrant laborers together in camps would breed labor unrest and provide ample opportunities for organizing against the growers, members of the Resettlement Administration responded with the following logic: "No more fertile soil

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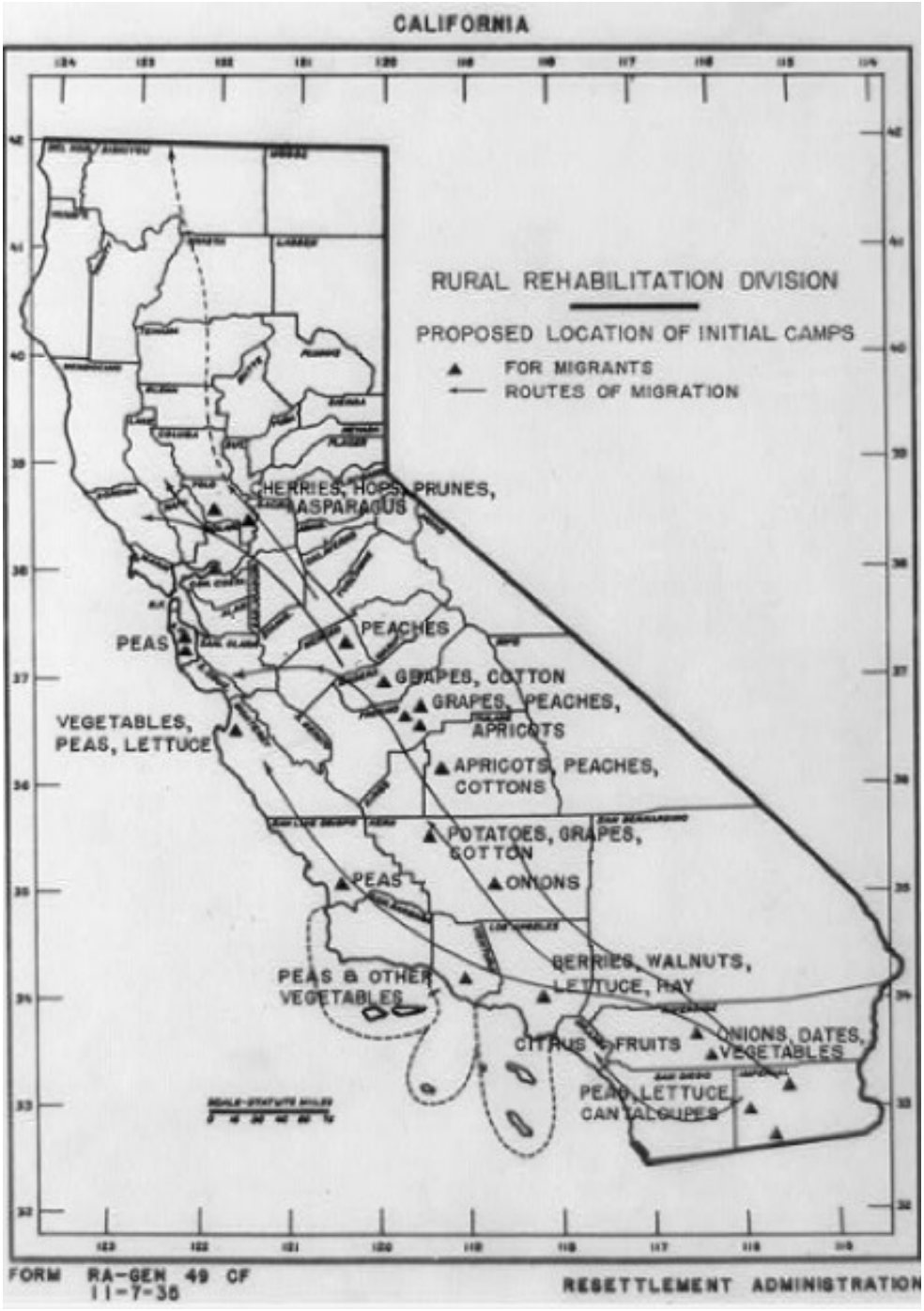
[226] "Statement of Regional office of Resettlement Administration on Possible Establishment of Migrant Camps", 3. 1935. See also "Letter from Congressman Jerry Voorhis to President Roosevelt" (Aug 1937) in which Voorhis writes on migratory labor camps "[the] most hopeful thing that has yet been done [is] the work of assisting these uprooted farm families to "reroot" themselves on little farms in regions where there is enough seasonal work to give them a fairly good annual cash income. Thus "an eddy is set up" in the stream of migration. People settle down and become parts of the community. They continue to perform seasonal work in the fields. But they come from their own nearby homes to do it. This means a far, far better situation from a labor standpoint, lessens the chance of violent conflict between workers and employers, and makes possible stabilization of a decent wage standard." RG 96, Box 11.

[227] Weber, 134.

exists for spreading unlawful propaganda than in squatters' or jungle camps."[228] The general principle was that providing stable, secure housing would at least mitigate radicalism and also provide opportunities for the government to "detect" the spread of unlawful propaganda.[229] In any event, it is clear that despite the critics and supposed "risks" for labor unrest, large growers and the agricultural economy were critical to the impetus behind the migratory labor camp system. In other words: the humanitarian concerns raised by Lange and Steinbeck existed alongside the opportunity to develop and choreograph labor relations for the industrial, agricultural economy of California. The map below of proposed locations for migratory labor camps illustrates clearly the relationship between the need for labor (i.e., growers and crops) and the plans for developing the camps, alongside relevant information about intra-state circulation and movement for different growing seasons.

[228] Statement of Regional office of Resettlement Administration on Possible Establishment of Migrant Camps. Presented at California Conference on Housing of Migratory Agricultural Laborers – Santa Cruz, November 18,, 1935, Hotel Palomar. Record Group 96, Box 11. National Archives at College Park.

[229] In response to the question: "What grounds are there to fear subversive propaganda within the camps, and what means should or can be taken to reduce any such danger to a minimum?," representatives of the RA replied, "Subversive propaganda means unlawful propaganda. Unlawful propaganda can be detected in Resettlement Administration camps as readily as in town meetings or in growers' camps. The law can and should be enforced in Resettlement camps as elsewhere. No more fertile soil exists for spreading unlawful propaganda than in squatters' or jungle camps." Ibid., 4-5.



"Map of California by the Rural Rehabilitation Division showing areas where different crops are grown, proposed location of initial camps for migrants, and routes of migration." (1935).[230]

[230]Map of California by the Rural Rehabilitation Division showing areas where different crops are grown, proposed location of initial camps for migrants, and routes of migration." (1935). Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2002723443/.

Another objective of the migratory labor camp program was to provide a structured setting in which Dust Bowl migrants could become "rehabilitated" through engagement in democratic governance and education on how to assimilate into "modern" communities.[231] Language of rehabilitation abounds in discourse on the migratory labor camp system, at the level of the name of the Division which initially administered the program (the Rural Rehabilitation Division) down to private communications between government officials and camp staff. The desire to "rehabilitate" the Okie reflects an understanding of Dust Bowl migrants as folks who somehow lost their way and stalled in a kind of cultural and economic backwater. Indeed, as previously discussed, there was a tremendous stigma in popular discourse surrounding the rural, Okie migrant as uneducated, dirty, diseased, and idle. As a result, in order to become productive, modern members of their new home – California – some reeducation was required in terms of both civic and personal matters.

Federal officials seemed to fear that Okie culture was too grounded in the role of the individual, as opposed to the collective (an anxiety that follows a history of westward expansion and agrarian propriety), and operated the migratory labor camps with collective and democratic design in mind. This illustrates an ambivalence embedded within the ideals of liberal individualism. On the one hand the ideology values the individual and single-family ownership or property rights are enshrined as an ideological and cultural value. On the other hand, only a particular type of individualism could be tolerated; hence, the need to "re-educate" the migrants and coach them into correct forms of comportment and collectivity. From an architectural standpoint, scholars have shown how the physical construction of the camps aimed to promote civic engagement and forms of liberal sociality that were aligned with New Deal and progressive

[231] Veronica Martínez-Matsuda, "Making the Modern Migrant: Work, Community, and Struggle in the Federal Migratory Labor Camp Program, 1935-1947," Dissertation at University of Texas at Austin (2009), 89.

values at the time.[232] In addition to shelter, all migratory labor camps were required to provide sanitary toilets and showers for residents, in addition to a community hall and a health clinic. Most camps, particularly those built after 1937, included parks, schools, community gardens, and facilities for arts and recreation (like baseball fields). In essence, each migratory labor camp was designed to function like a small town not only from an architectural perspective, but from the perspective of governance, too. The FSA migratory labor camps were solidly under the jurisdiction of the federal government; however, there was a conscious effort to shift the day-to-day control of the camps to a small, local staff and the migrants themselves. Each camp created a constitution or a charter establishing codes of conduct and governance, which was enforced by a democratically elected board, the Camp Council. The Camp Council, in addition to the ability to set the tone and culture of the camps, was primarily in charge of distributing the camp funds and maintaining good relations amongst inhabitants. While the efficacy and buy-in to the Camp Council on the part of residents of the camp varies drastically by camp and year, the FSA touted the camp governance structures as critical to the labor camp project. W.F Baxter, press secretary for the FSA wrote in a 1937 report, "the most outstanding feature is the democratic management by the residents of these camps. With about 85 per cent of the campers emanating from truly American villages and descendants of American stock, they are eager to maintain the American tradition of government."[233] In addition to the desire to re-engage, or make explicitly visible and accessible, the "American tradition of government," the camps served in an additional

[232] Martinez-Matsuda, 89-117. More on architectural analysis here; 3 Greg Hise, "From Roadside Camps to Garden Homes: Housing and Community Planning for California's Migrant Work Force, 1935-1941," *Gender, Class, and Shelter: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, eds. Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Certer L. Hudgins (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995). Martinez-Matsuda also compellingly argues that FSA camps laid the groundwork for planned communities that sprung up in the aftermath of WWII.

[233] W.F. Baxter, "Migratory Labor Camps" (1937), 6. RG 96, Box 18, National Archives at College Park. See also Weber, 134.

educational capacity regarding public health and sanitation – concepts the FSA considered essential to integration into "modern" society.

Camp newspapers and government correspondence from FSA migratory labor camps reflect a preoccupation with hygiene and sanitation that reveals a deep and prolonged association between Okies, and dust, dirt, and disease. While public health was a major concern nationally in the 1930s, the amount of communication and emphasis on said topics in FSA camps seems disproportionate and presents as an extremely paternalistic understanding of migrants who were purported to be incapable or vastly ignorant of basic concepts of hygiene and self-presentation. A generalized fear of contagion and epidemics could have been warranted at this time (particularly given the preponderance of childhood illnesses like polio and a particularly severe measles outbreak in 1936); however, when analyzed alongside the language of uplift present in official government materials, it seems evident that the intensity of public health campaigns in FSA migratory labor camps was steeped less in reality than in harmful stereotypes of poverty; namely, Okies as being inherently contaminated or, at the very least, unbothered by their appearances.[234] Campaigns and educational initiatives surrounding public health were critical to the rehabilitative potential and objectives of the FSA migratory labor camps, which alongside the vast social and recreational offerings of the camp, provide an important framework through which to analyze the role of the body in shaping the "modern" migrant and the laboring citizen.

[234] See, for example, the following statement: "As a broader program of rehabilitation and resettlement, migrant camps have unique value. Not only do they contribute to the abolition of squatter camps, they serve also as reservoirs from which distressed farm people can be filtered upward and selectively re-established on part-time farms, as tenants, and even assisted back to the rank of farm owners. Thus, for some, camps will constitute a first rung in a reconstructed agricultural ladder, which they can ascend in traditional American fashion according to their abilities.," "Statement of Regional office of Resettlement Administration on Possible Establishment of Migrant Camps", 3. 1935.

Dance & Performance in the Camps

Social activities, including dance, music, and theatrics, were central aspects of daily life in the camps in that they provided much needed (and desired) recreation and entertainment for the migrants while contributing to the overarching goals of the FSA camp program. Logistically, the majority of social activities in the camps were organized by the Camp Council, with some oversight and logistical support from the camp manager, a government employee.[235] The vast majority of FSA camps in California offered similar recreational activities including quilting and sewing guilds (sometimes lead by WPA volunteers), gardening clubs, the camp newspaper, book clubs, choirs, sports teams (especially baseball), and activities for children.[236] Additionally, each camp had either a designated dance hall or a recreation building that could accommodate large crowds for community dances.

Organized dances and dance classes were the most highly attended (and frequently attended) social activity in the camps. As a February 1941 FSA narrative report from Region IX (which included California, Nevada, Arizona, and Oregon) enumerates, the number of dances that took place in the month of February numbered 23 with a total of 4,417 attendees. By means of comparison, the only activity that took place more frequently than dances was "church;" however church was less attended with only 3,021 attendees and the next most frequent activity were movie screenings that yielded less than 50% of the number of participants as the dances. [237] Large community dances were generally held on either Friday or Saturday nights, though some

[235] Camp managers were hired by the FSA and were generally young men who spent anywhere from a few months to a couple of years at any given camp. A notable exception would be Tom Collins of Arvin Camp who was on staff for years.

[236] Brian Q. Cannon. Also note that there were nursery schools and sometimes elementary schools in the camps

[237] It should also be noted that this report is from an off-peak month in terms of seasonal labor, which meant that camp populations were at some of their lowest in terms of net numbers. Additionally, it should be noted that these data are not disaggregated by state; however, it is fair to assume that the trend applies to California, specifically, given that California camps are disproportionately represented in Region IX (i.e., California had more camps than any other state). "Narrative Report, Region IX, Migratory Labor Camps and Grant Offices," February 1941. Record Group 96, Box 18. National Archives at College Park.

camps had dances twice-weekly; additionally, some camps offered up to three dance classes a week in addition to a community dance on the weekend.[238] Furthermore, many camps also had weekly minstrel shows in which dance played a major role. The question is raised, then, why dance? What do the regularity and popularity of dance in the camps reveal about the structures of daily life in the camps? How does the act of dancing relate to conceptions of the self and connect to one's body? What forms of sociality are engendered through dancing?

Despite its popularity in the camps, social dance has received little attention or analysis, potentially because recreational activities were often viewed as a function of nostalgia or a palliative to entertain migrants who were living in less than ideal conditions. Perhaps, too, the lack of critical engagement with dance could be because dancing is often fun and pleasurable, therefore generally relegated to the notion of benign entertainment. However, as dance theorist Susan Leigh Foster argues in her essay, "Why Is There Always Energy For Dancing?" that it is *because* dancing is enjoyable and lively – because it lifts one's spirits and puts us in a better mood – that dance is perfectly positioned to mobilize communities and attune people to their capacity to move *together* towards a particular vision.[239] Indeed, closer attention to the preoccupation with dancing and the styles of dance in which the migrants engaged reveals how deeply dance was entwined in the social and political life of the camps and the ways in which

[238] See, for example, "The Migratory Clipper" (Indio, CA) from April 20, 1940 which lists in the weekly calendar of events a minstrel show and dance on Tuesday, an "Old Time Dance" on Thursday, and a "Camp Dance" on Friday. National Archives at San Bruno. The "Marysville Camp News" (Marysville, CA) from August and September 1937 lists tap classes, ballroom dance classes, and a community dance "for campers only" each week. National Archives, San Bruno. These are but two examples of countless entries in camp newspapers that would advertise dance of some sort in the vast majority of issues. See also Lisa Doolittle, "The Trianon and On: Reading Mass Social Dance in the 1930s and 1940s in Alberta Canada" in *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy Sham, Shake: A Social and Popular Dance Reader*, ed. Julie Malnig (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009) for another example, albeit geographically and politically different, of a preoccupation with dancing in terms of social and recreational life during this period.

[239] Susan Leigh Foster, "Why Is There Always Energy For Dancing?," *Dance Research Journal*, vol 48, no 3, (2016): 11-26. Critically, Foster also recognizes the coercive aspects of dancing and its inherent association with pleasure; she cites Saidiya Hartman's work on the torturous, compulsory pleasuring and dancing of enslaved black peoples on the auction block as an important example of how dance can also "be placed in the service of all political and social agendas." Hartman, 13.

residents understood themselves. Indeed, close study of social dancing and performances that featured dance in the camps suggest that dance functioned to stage a transition from the precarious life of a transient migrant into a stable, rooted, and employed citizen. For the migrants, dancing provided a connection to some sense of normalcy – it was a way to embody a connect to the more immediate memories of home pre-migration and, as I will illustrate, ties to performance traditions stemming from white agrarianism. FSA images of migrants in the mid-30s, particularly those of Dorothea Lange, emphasized the acute poverty of white agricultural migrants and implicitly link migrants to pre-industrial ways of life, including through her sparse photographs of dance and performance in the camps. Later, in the 1940s, the dissemination and circulation of photographs of FSA dances, Saturday night dances became a spectacle that projected the government's successful rehabilitation of migrant workers back into a capitalist economy.

On a basic level, dances in the camps were an important mode of social interaction that brought together residents of all ages into a common space for a shared activity that, undoubtedly, provided some comfort and connection in tumultuous, challenging, and isolating times. Furthermore, dances offered the opportunity to leave the cramped quarters of one's own tent and "be seen," so to speak within the camp community. The dance halls varied in form, – older camps were built with an open-air dance platform in a central location on the grounds, while newer camps held dances in large community buildings that were constructed with social dances and other gatherings in mind – all of which were in prominent places within the camp. One can also understand how dances, generally held on Friday or Saturday nights, would provide not only entertainment, but also a critical break in the structure of the working week. Similarly, dances were an easy economic choice of entertainment. Generally, one does not need special

equipment to participate and, save the music and a dance floor, there are very few expenses associated with putting on a community dance.[240]

The choice to dance, given that the majority of work in which residents engaged was incredibly physically demanding, suggests a layered understanding of the role of bodily recreation in the camps. Agricultural labor is exhausting. During harvest and planting periods, farm workers could be out in the fields from 5am to 6pm in varying, often extreme, weather conditions.[241] It is curious, therefore, that in their limited leisure time, camp residents chose to partake in an activity that requires a fair amount of physical exertion. The move towards dancing can be explained, in part, through dance scholar Mark Franko's assertion that "dance and labor were not just circumstantially contemporaneous but profoundly interrelated during the 1930s."[242] He argues that, due to the "economic and social deprivation" caused by the 1929 stock market crash and mass unemployment, the body took on new meaning as a "crucible of experience."[243] In essence, he argues, that in the face of systemic upheavals in the global economic and political structures and pervasive feelings of helplessness in regard to one's own future, renewed attention to the body provided the opportunity to engage in "action," or, to be simplistic, to do *something*. Dance offered a way to stay active and literal method of moving away from any conception of idleness – a notion that would have been familiar to Okies, especially those who lived in FSA camps, who were already stigmatized as freeloaders, lazy, and incompetent. Too, one could imagine how staying active through recreation was important to someone whose livelihood

[240] Generally, there was a small fee to attend the dances (a slightly larger fee if you didn't live in the camp) and that money was usually to pay for the music.
[241] Cannon, 16. Furthermore, especially in the older camps, migrants were housed in tents and generally we can assume that the quality of sleep was impeded by the elements, the proximity of tents to each other, and other environmental factors.
[242] Mark Franko, *The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement, and Identity in the 1930s*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 7.
[243] Franko, 2.

depended on their physical fitness. For agricultural workers (and most wage laborers at the time), their body was their commodity; labor power was their only source of income. Furthermore, Franko suggests that, during the 1930s, "action occupied the forefront of human concerns, and *purposeful movement* became the occupational drama of life itself in life's most physical and, some might argue, most essential dimension."[244] Movement, or "action," in other words, gave both body and momentum to unvoiced socio-political angst and desires. Franko's argument on the centrality of dance in 1930s politics and political ideology is grounded, primarily, in analyses of modern (concert) dance, ballet, and chorus girls alongside the development of radical leftist politics. Importantly, studies of FSA dances extend Franko's thesis through consideration of the relationship between vernacular dance and ideology (both progressive and conservative), providing a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the relationship between dance, labor, and politics in the New Deal era. Furthermore, as will be illustrated in the following chapter on mine dances in South Africa, the spectacularization of dance through photography and its consumption by audiences (both live and in print) complicates Franko's theorizations of dance as a means to exercise (literally) bodily autonomy. In other words, when vernacular and traditional dance becomes co-opted by the state, the phrase "purposeful movement" takes on new meanings.

Official FSA photographs account for the majority of archival documentation surrounding social and community dances in the camps. For many conventional historians, dance is viewed to be an ephemeral form; prior to the advent of video, there was no way to visually or linguistically transcribe movement or sequencing that was a direct transcription of the practice. Dance photography, too, can only provide so much information about the choreography, social setting, and environment of the practice or performance. As such, one can only glean an imperfect and curated understanding of dance from textual and visual archives; however, said

[244] Franko, 2. Emphasis mine.

archive still provides critical information regarding the way dance is mobilized and circulates within a particular society or culture. The genre of the official "documentary-style" photograph typical of New Deal government campaigns adds another layer of complexity to studying dance in the camps in relation to the role of the body, particularly the dancing body, in potentially furthering the progressive ideology of the Roosevelt administration. As Judith Hamera explains, performance – especially dance – can bring into relief the relation between the individual body and the body politic, particularly in times of economic and political transition. She writes that performance "[stages] normative and aberrant relationships to capital in the new regime; [narratizes] memories of and nostalgic for the old one; [and animates] rhetoric that touts or challenges the benefits or dangers of shifting modes of production."[245] The tension that Hamera describes, or the means by which dance to negotiates a multiplicity of relations to capital and politics is evident in the archive of FSA migratory labor camp dances. At one community dance, there would be a series of square dances with callers who directly cite and reproduce practices that have a genealogy steeped in the American South and west that embody a particular relation to race, land, and conceptions of citizenship. A few minutes later, the camp manager might play a "round dance tune," like a waltz or a polka, which was meant to "urbanize the public" into the forms of movement that might be transferrable to non-agricultural society.[246]

FSA photographs capture a myriad of gatherings and dance styles that, through their use and circulation by the government (and their accessibility within the archive), present the residents of the FSA camps as a cohesive community, at least for the duration of the dance, despite the fact that there is considerable evidence that camps were often a site for consistent tension between residents for a number of reasons including proximity/lack of privacy and labor

[245] Hamera 2017, xi.
[246] Cannon, 7.

issues.[247] The entanglement of public image and private reality at the site of the dancing body, can be explored further through an expansion of what Elizabeth Maddock Dillon theorizes as the "performative commons."[248] For Dillon, the "performative commons" describes a relation between "the politics of popular sovereignty and cultural production both in print and in person," in which audience members "sought to display and represent themselves *in* public and represent themselves *as* a public."[249] The theatre, for Dillon, functions as a material site for the confluences of aesthetics, politics, and assemblies that both reflected and constituted audience members' understandings of themselves as members of a particular community. While Dillon writes primarily on theatre and theatrical spaces in the centuries prior to FSA migratory labor camps, her conceptualization of the "performative commons" is generative for understanding the ways in which performance and media conjoin through the FSA photographs of community dances. Photo historians Sally Stein and Pete Daniel importantly note that the 1930s marked a significant change in the way the government communicated with the public; they write "the New Deal was more adept with images than words. [Changes in technology and media shifted] the Progressive [era's] culture centered on the book" to a "culture of sight and sound."[250] While the images (and sound recordings of dance music) produced by the government were stylized to depict of a cohesive public in a literal common space that was benefitting from federal relief and reeducation programs, deeper queries into the forms of dance and performance unravel the tidiness of FSA efficacy to reveal bodily negotiations between past and present, individual and nation, rural and urban, nostalgia and modernization.

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[247] Cannon.

[248] Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 16.

[249] Dillon.

[250] Pete Daniel and Sally Stein, "Introduction" in *Official Images: New Deal Photography,* ed. Pete Daniel, Merry A. Foresta, Maren Stange, Sally Stein (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1987), ix.

"Early" FSA dance photography, for example, images by Dorothea Lange's visit to the camp in Shafter, CA in 1938 – are aesthetically distinct from those produced in the 1940s; they provide some texture and grit in contrast to the more sanitized (and sanitary) images of later years. The early images are more tightly cropped around specific couples, as opposed to gathering wide shots of the crowd. The musicians appear to be in a corner of the room, pressed against the wall with no equipment to amplify the sound. Too, the images reflect the bustle of living in a transient community – the clothing worn is shabbier (men without ties, patches on pants, wearing caps; woman in an outer coat with scuffed shoes). The dance halls are not enclosed usually enclose, instead they are open-air platforms, potentially with some kind of roof (but not always).[251] Essentially, these images reflect less of the "success" of the FSA programs than a continuation of practices begun in Oklahoma that were translocated to this particular location. While it is not clear what type of dance is captured in these images, it is inevitable that many of the dances that evening were square dances, which comprised a significant portion of the community dances and were most often accompanied by live music and are generally associated with white American folk culture.

[251] For a clearer image of an early dance floor in relation to the camp architecture, see the image by Dorothea Lange in Appendix.

"Halloween Party at Shafter migrant camp. California," Dorothea Lange, 1938.[252]

[252] "Halloween Party at Shafter migrant camp. California," Dorothea Lange, 1938. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USF34-018551-D

Extremely popular in the FSA labor camps, square dances generally comprised a significant portion of the community dances and were most often accompanied by live music and are generally associated with white American folk culture.[253] "Square dancing" is a vast and polymorphous designation of dances whose syncretic practices have roots in European quadrille social dance, Anglo and French folk dances, and have been influenced greatly by Scot-Irish folk dance, Afro-diasporic performance and music traditions and more. There are many types and classifications of square dancing and while this paper does not aim to enumerate or analyze the form, specifically, I aim to point out how square dance becomes incorporated (literally) into a body of knowledge that is racialized as white and Anglo. "Square dance," broadly, refers to a form of social dance in which four couples are arranged in various formations and respond with particular choreography to a "caller," a figure who has memorized movement sequences and coordinates them (roughly) with the music. While square dance is a broad and diverse style of dance with many offshoots and variations, administrators and residents of FSA camps locate the genealogy of the form squarely in an Anglo-European culture through both the music and its association as an intergenerational, pre-industrial tradition that connected migrants to their homes. For example, FSA official Harvey Coverley wrote in an official report on a "Folk and Field Festival" held at the Woodville, CA camp that the hundreds of migrant laborers and camp residents from across California who attended the festival

> play-partied, sang songs five hundred years old, and danced the old time Squares for fourteen hours without a break in interest or participation... You heard ballads that folks were singing in England, Scotland, and Ireland when Elizabeth was Queen -- songs like the 'Brown Girl,' the 'Wexfield Girl,' 'Little Onie,' and 'Ring Ding Billy Ding,'....[then] you got out on the floor and danced yourself to a

[253] As previously mentioned, square dance is often depicted as a white, Anglo-European folk tradition; however, the association between square dance and whiteness itself belies a syncretic history in which European, African-American, and indigenous folk dance, performance, and music contributed to the development of the genre.

> frazzle to 'Skip to M'Lou' 'Old Joe Clark,' 'The Wagoner,' 'Happy Was the Miller Boy,' 'Chicken Reel,' 'Under the Double Eagle,' and 'Eighth of January.'[254]

Coverley's report not only indicates a level of familiarity with these popular dances such that the district and farm supervisors of the FSA would recognize them by name, but also underscores an implicit connection between square dancing and whiteness. By invoking centuries of Anglo musical traditions in the same breath as square dances, Coverley correlates the dance moves with a particular, white folk history with roots in pre-industrial, rural communities.

Regarding the music and calling, square dances in the camps were most often accompanied by a series of string instruments – guitar, banjo, and fiddle being the most common – that played songs (accompanied by calls) that were associated with English, Irish, and Scottish traditions. Notably, there is a lack of percussion and horn instruments in both photographic and textual records of square dance accompaniment, as are record players, grammophones, and jukeboxes. Square dance "calls" are sometimes correlated to the lyrics of a popular song to which one might dance, but are often instructions for partners on what movement to do next, such as the following call to the dance tune of "Sally Goodin:"

> Round up 8 and go circle south
> Everybody wind
> Right left the old left hand
> Go right away around
> Watch your partner watch her close
> When you meet her go double (dosie) dos.
> Once and a half and the other half too...[255]

It seems as though most attendees of the dances would know songs and calls by name, and that they were popular knowledge. "Calling" contributes to the social aspect of square dancing in

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[254] Harvey M. Coverley, "To: District Supervisors, Area Farm Supervisors, Community Managers, Farm Manager," Report on Folk and Field Festival held in Woodville, California at the Woodville Camp over Labor Day Weekend. October 23, 1941. Record Group 96, Box 27. National Archives at College Park.

[255] Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Workers Collection, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. AFC 1985/001, Folder 2, "Todd-Sonkin 'Voices from the Dust Bowl," "27A -- Square Dance: Tune: Sally Goodin. Caller, Walker King; Fiddle & Guitar"

that, theoretically, anyone should be able to join in and follow the calls. Additionally, there are many dances that require switching partners and moving among different dancers as the songs progress.

Dances were, to be sure, a social event and one that drew a large, intergenerational crowd. Square dances in FSA camps are often described as functioning as a "cultural link" between the "bygone home" of the Great Plains and life in California, and that assumption could be rooted in the fact that the older generations were quite familiar with square dances, as opposed to newer trends.[256] An article by Mrs. A Deramus, the recreation secretary of Arvin migratory labor camp, that appeared in the *Tow Sack Tattler* (the camp newspaper) seems to confirm that there was a desire to move away from live music and square dancing towards more contemporary dance trends. She writes on the issue of music and the (nominal) cost to attend dances

> Yes we do have the Nicalodan [sic] and no one on the committee objects to it playing for the latest steps such as the Jitterbug, Rumba, and fox trots. But some can't do those steps so why not try to please every one? We can use the Nicalodan for the latest tunes and steps and the string band for the square dances and waltzes. Then every body will be happy.[257]

In other words: square dances are the dances that everybody could learn, from grandmothers to little children. Indeed, many FSA photographs of Saturday night dances feature cross-generational dance partners and feature groups of children along the sidelines. Furthermore, Deramus differentiates the temporal nature of square dancing from contemporary styles through her description of music and technology. She connects the Jitterbug to modern apparatuses like the nickelodeon (jukebox), whilst square dancing remains connected to instrumental or acoustic music and thereby connected to the "bygone days" of rural society.

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[256] Cannon.

[257] Mrs. A Deramus, *Tow Sack Tattler*, 3.

Music further cements a relationship between dance and white agrarianism through blackface minstrel performances and photographs of musicians in blackface playing for special Saturday evening dances. Minstrel shows were not uncommon occurrences in FSA labor camps. Weekly agendas published in the camp newspapers list "minstrel shows and dances" fairly frequently at certain camps, while other newspapers advertised for minstrel shows in the community, published "blackface skits" (in dialect) written by camp residents, and kudos to minstrel performers.[258] Images from Dorothea Lange's 1938 visit to the Shafter migratory labor camp provide photographic documentation of "camp talent providing the music for dancing" at the Halloween dance.[259] In one of the images, three musicians in blackface are seated on benches next to a piano; the musicians are holding string instruments: a fiddle, guitar, and banjo. The man in the foreground holding a fiddle is wearing a round, squat hat, a "prop" cigar, and his pants have patches on the thighs, seemingly to cite the outfit of Jim Crow. The following image in the series shows four men in blackface (the three musicians from the prior still plus another), with three of whom staring directly at the camera.[260] One is smiling. The piano player, who is not in blackface, is smoking a pipe and smirks at the camera. The popularity of blackface and minstrel dances and shows in the camps, could be attributed as much to a continuation of traditions from Oklahoma as to racialized (and racist) class anxieties surrounding white agricultural labor in California.

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[258] See, *The Migratory Clipper* as an example. In the March 9, 1940 edition, the following shoutout was published: "A Word of Praise for Mrs. White, Mrs. Kitchens, Bob Gentry and the boys in our Tuesday night minstrel show. Last Tuesday night was our first time to see the characters perform, and we must say we wouldn't miss them again for anything. The music was swell, also the songs. The acting was tremendously good, chocked full of laughs and suspensions. The climax was best of all where the devil made his appearance and almost frightened poor Sambo out of his wits."

[259] Dorothea Lange, "Shafter, Calif. Nov 1938. The farm security administration camp for migratory workers. Camp talent providing music for dancing at the Halloween party." LC-USF34-018548-D

[260] Dorothea Lange (attributed), "Untitled." LC-USF34-018550-D.

"Camp talent provides music for dancing at Shafter camp for migrants. Halloween party, Shafter, California ." Dorothea Lange, 1938.[261]

[261] Dorothea Lange, "Camp Talent provides music for dancing at Shafter camp for migrants. Halloween party, Shafter, California" (1938). Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USF34- 018548-D.

[Untitled], Shafter Camp, California. Dorothea Lange. 1938.[262]

Blackface performances in the United States began in the antebellum north and, on its most basic level, involved predominantly white, working-class men in the industrial North, donning cork make up and performing exaggerated caricatures of blackness for entertainment and for profit. As Eric Lott has traced in his seminal study *Love and Theft*, blackface performances in the nineteenth century were not merely representations of Jacksonian racial politics in theatrical form; rather, blackface was a complex genre that built off of the relationship

[262]Dorothea Lange, "Untitled". Digital ID: ((digital file from original neg.)) fsa 8b15419 http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b15419

between race and class. Lott writes, "the minstrel show was less the incarnation of an age-old racism than an emergent social semantic figure highly responsive to the emotional demands and troubled fantasies of its audience...its [an] historically new articulation of racial difference."[263] In the context of the 1830s-1850s, the "troubled fantasies" of the largely white, working-class audiences would have included anxieties surrounding their status as white liberal subjects: angst over property ownership, the economic "threat" posed by new immigrants to the United States and free blacks, rising tensions surrounding the debates over the legality of slavery, and anxiety surrounding the intimacy between blacks and working-class whites in urban areas. In a gloss, blackface performance used the blackened body of the white performer as a site for negotiating the power of the white working-class and their place in American society. Indeed, as Lott argues, "one of minstrelsy's functions was precisely to bring various class fractions into contact with one another, to mediate relations, and finally to aid in the construction of class identities over the bodies of black people."[264] Furthermore, Lott asserts, the blackface mask itself became "a figuration of the commodity," the symbol for the exaggerated performative "blackness" that audiences paid to see.[265] In other words, through the surrogated black body on the minstrel stage, economically dispossessed whites used the subjugated position of blackness to leverage their power in antebellum society and profited through the commodification of the black body.

In California's industrialized agricultural industry in the 1930s, migrants from the Great Plains, particularly Oklahoma, also faced tremendous political and economic upheavals that were deeply entwined with class and race. As previously discussed, disempowered and financially precarious white tenant farmers in Oklahoma in the 1910s-1920s became increasingly disinterested in cross-racial solidarity and organizing; organizations like Klan galvanized on

[263] Lott, 6.
[264] Ibid., 70.
[265] Ibid., 50.

notions of white supremacy tied into a sort of patriotism at the onset of WWI to coalesce the white poor around ideas of racial solidarity, as opposed to class consciousness. As David Roediger explains, given that the United States is structured on legal and other systemic structures that uphold whiteness and white supremacy, impoverished white agricultural workers were still able to be "better than" and "better off than" people of color with their same occupation. Roediger writes, "the pleasures of whiteness could function as a 'wage' for white workers...white workers could, and did, define and accept their class positions by fashioning identities as... 'not Blacks"[266] Blackface minstrel performances in FSA labor camps extend and embody the desire to differentiate residents in the camps (again, 95% white) from agricultural laborers of color in California who posed an economic and cultural threat. During the 1930s, although numbers of Mexican workers were down from the decade prior due to mass deportations, there were many industries that employed predominantly farm workers of color, including not only Mexican laborers, but Japanese, Chinese, Indians, and Filipinos. While one could easily see a scenario in which agricultural laborers of all races invoked class solidarity to unionize and organize for fair wages and the dismantling of predatory or dangerous employment practices, deeply entrenched racism, and economic desperation dissolved most instances and opportunities for success in cross-racial organizing.

Blackface performances similarly evoke and instantiate pre-industrial, agricultural tropes that not only signal racist ideology, but also economic anxiety surrounding industrial capitalism. A shifting economic environment – one in which agriculture (and other fields) were rapidly industrializing away from certain forms of manual labor, which all but eliminated the economic viability of single-family farms – would have provoked similar fears as the rapid growth of factories in the antebellum North during the industrial revolution. Industrial agriculture and the

[266] Roediger 13.

incredible growth and adaption of new technologies across all sectors in the mid-twentieth century rendered the agrarian vision and goal of settling into a homestead a risky and unviable move. As Roediger explains, the gradual absorption of rural, agricultural workers into capitalist (industrial) rhythms of work and divisions of labor/leisure pushed "old time," preindustrial values onto black bodies. In essence, Roediger asserts, with the economic shift into industrial capitalism, white people who still yearned for (and engaged in) certain aspects of pre-industrial life turned to blackface performance. He writes, "All of the old habits so recently discarded by whites adopting capitalist values came to be fastened onto blacks. [An important aspect in holding together a very diverse white working class was] the idea that blackness could be made permanently to embody the preindustrial past that they scorned and missed."[267] The popularity of blackface performances in FSA labor camps animates economic fears on the part of white migrants who are being pushed further from the American promise of an independent, agrarian existence, while also pointing to racist, nostalgic practices of white supremacist ideology that existed on the West Coast in the 1930s.

Alongside the bounty of blackface performances, square dancing and "hill-billy" dance music associated with rural and pre-migration folk traditions, there was a simultaneous initiative and desire on the part of the camp administration to use social activities and recreation as tools to "reeducate" migrants on how to integrate into New Deal understandings of "better living," which I argue can be found in later photographs of the FSA dances from the 1940s.[268] Community dances did not consist solely of square dances; residents often requested contemporary music and styles and camp managers took a role in integrating more "urban" dances into the rotation.[269]

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[267] Roediger, 95-97.

[268] Albert Croutch, "Housing Migratory Agricultural Workers in California, 1913-1948" (Berkeley: University of California, 1949?), 47. Cannon.

[269] Cannon.

While there were waltzes incorporated into square dance tunes and calls, often ballroom styles like a waltz, rumba, or a foxtrot would be associated with high society and the big cities. Ballroom dances require a different type of comportment and partnering from square dances in that partners are often closer together, physically, and generally adopt more formal stylings of the arms and head.

FSA photographer Arthur Rothstein's photograph "Saturday Night Dance, Tulare Migrant Camp (Visalia, California)," features four male-female couples in the foreground engaged in a partnered dance.[270] The positioning of the dancers' elbows (high and away from the body), head (looking away from their partners), and hands (men have hands on the waist, women on the shoulders), in addition to the formation of the couples on the dance floor suggest that this is a "round dance" or a variation of a ballroom-style dance, like a waltz. The men dancing, and those on the sidelines of the community hall, are well-dressed in collared shirts, some in jackets with ties; the women are mostly in dresses with heeled shoes, although one woman in the center-left of the photograph is in a light pant suit, signaling a shift into contemporary trends and decorum. Through their dress and body positioning, one can see that the dancers in the room are aware of their appearance and their movements and seem to be performing (perhaps for the photographer) a desire for upward mobility and class ascendance. While this image is a particularly compelling reflection of more "modern" dance styles and comportment in the FSA dances, many other photographs in the FSA archive reflect a desire to project a modern sensibility through community activities, especially dances. Many of the images of Saturday night or community dances after 1940 are wider-angled shots designed to highlight the physical space of the recreation hall, the large number of attendees, and the band.

[270] Arthur Rothstein, "Saturday night dance. Tulare migrant camp. Visalia, California" (1940), LC-USF34-T01-024159-D.

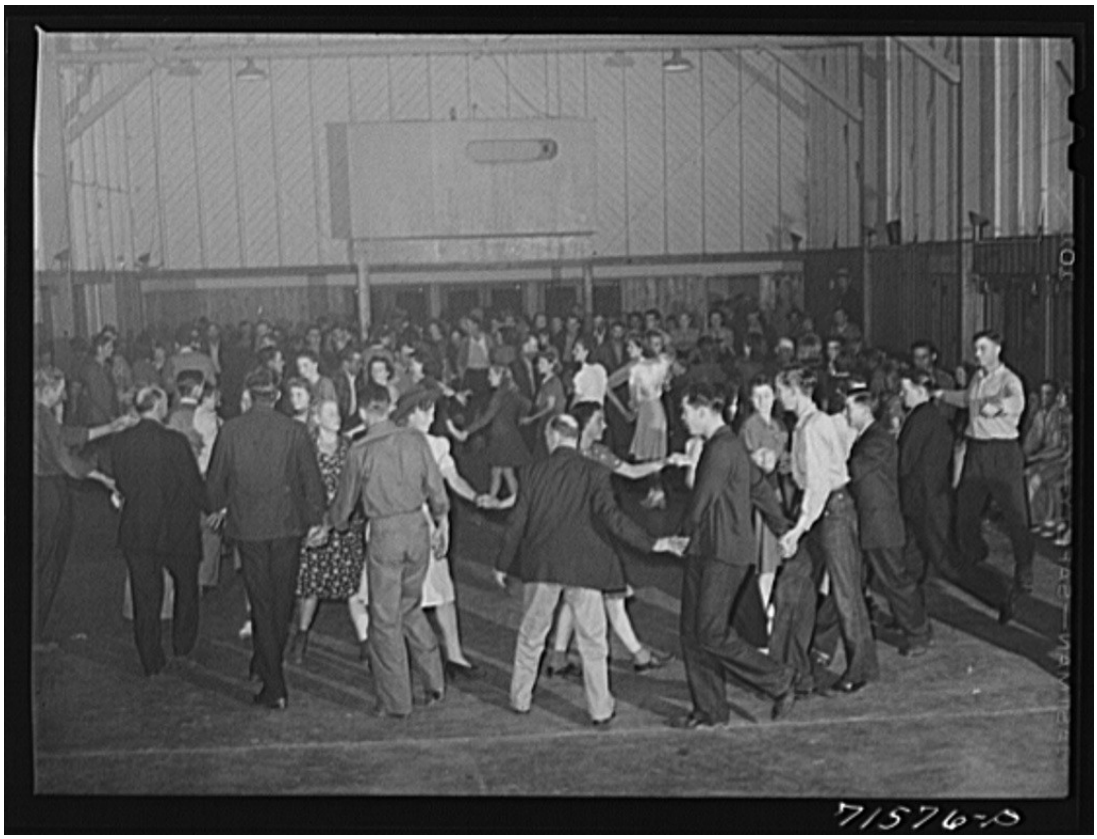
"Saturday Night Dance. Tulare Migrant Camp. Visalia, California." Arthur Rothstein, 1940."[271]

Photographs from the early 1940s emphasize the successful incorporation of migrants into migrant labor communities and function to spectacularize the "successes" of the state; even when engaging in "pre-industrial" performance practices, the framing of the dances project modern sensibilities and aesthetics. For example, a photograph by Russell Lee from 1942 shows a "Paul Jones" dance – a "mixer" dance – in which all dancers form a circle and proceed to move through a variety of calls, particularly the "Grand Right and Left" which enables dancers to "pull through" to dance with a variety of different people.[272] In this photograph, one can clearly see the

[271] Arthur Rothstein, "Saturday Night Dance. Tulare Migrant Camp. Visalia, California." 1940. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USF34-021459-D.

[272] Russell Lee, "Woodville, Calif. Jan 1942. Farm security administration farm workers' community. "Paul Jones" at the Saturday night dance." LC-USF 34- 071576-D.

high level of participation in dance activities; there are dozens of people of varying ages arranged in concentric circles in a large community hall. The dancers hold hands and the viewer of the image gets the sense that there is a sense of unity and cohesion in the movement that is further emphasized by the choreography of the circular movements. The fact that the folk dance is being held in a modern, clean, and very large recreation hall perfectly frames the supposed aims of the migratory labor camp program: to (re)shape the migrants into a particular comportment – the passive cohesion found within the modern recreation hall – while still enabling them to practice their cultural traditions, albeit in a controlled and managed scene.



"Woodville, California. FSA (Farm Security Administration) farm workers' community. "Paul Jones" at the Saturday night dance." Russell Lee (1942).[273]

Particularly in the photographs of Arthur Rothstein and Russell Lee, the architecture of the space features prominently. Given the government's emphasis on the quality of the modern

[273] LC-USF34- 071576-D [P&P] LOT 135.

facilities in FSA labor camps, it perhaps unsurprising that images of the dances draw viewers eye to the large, open space with nice beams, solid floors, and room for spectators on the sidelines. Some recreation halls had a proscenium stage upon which the band performed, others did not. All, though, seemed to tout modern building techniques, the relative luxury of having a designated structure for community recreation, and the popularity of said events.[274] As Pete Daniel and Sally Stein explain, "government photography was intended to influence public policy and opinion; indeed, that was its reason for being. The larger the federal government grew, the more it depended upon popular graphic forms to convince people that government intervention was beneficial and proper."[275] FSA photographs circulated widely and were used in myriad campaigns to garner public support for the economic and policy initiatives of the Roosevelt administration.

[274] Veronica Martinez-Matsuda on architecture

[275] Daniel and Stein, xi.

"Woodville, California. FSA Farm Security Administration farm workers' community. Saturday night dance in the auditorium of the community house." Russell Lee 1942.[276]

Photographs from Rothstein, Lee, and others, emphasize the propriety of community dances – only photographing square dances or other partnered dances, i.e., styles viewed as different flavors of wholesome – while not capturing dances that were too popular or associated with rowdy, sexualized young people, which no doubt occurred. Under directives from Roy Stryker, the project director, FSA photographers were given precise instructions on what types of scenarios, events, and characters to shoot, while being as obscure and inobtrusive as possible while completing their assignment. FSA images, including those of dances are aesthetically imbued with New Deal politics. As photo historian Maren Stange explains, New Deal reformers

[276] Russell, Lee. "Woodville, California. FSA Farm Security Administration farm workers' community. Saturday night dance in the auditorium of the community house. California Tulare County United States" 1942. Jan. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017817122/.

built upon the gains made earlier in the century by progressive lawmakers and activists. She writes, "[the policy architects of the FSA] saw the major goal of American reform as an effort to adjust all social classes to the new 'economy of abundance' that had been achieved through mass production...they relied heavily on social institutions and mass media to begin a 'program of constructive mass education in the ways of better living.' [277] The photographs of community dances from FSA photographers reflect the priorities of New Deal reforms: emphasis on the sanctity and strength of a cohesive society, propriety, cleanliness, attention to healthy and hearty bodies and middle-class appearances, and the harnessing of energy into *active* and socially productive endeavors.

"Building Better Bodies" and Better Workers

It is important to recall that the migratory labor camps were not wholly humanitarian and altruistic initiatives on the part of the Roosevelt administration; rather, a goal of this FSA program was to provide safe, secure housing and social rehabilitation to better equip growers with productive, healthy workers whose contentment was a priority for those aiming to manage potential labor crises. Dance and attention to the body, broadly, figured into these aims and photographs of healthy, dancing laborers projected the successes of this government program. In the following chapter, I will illustrate how bodily management through dance was also used by the government of South Africa to gain potential investors and to mitigate the anxieties caused by the constant fear and threat of black migrant laborers uprising against their white managers.

[277] Maren Stange, "The Record Itself:" Farm Security Administration Photography and the Transformation of Rural Life" in *Official Images: New Deal Photography,* ed. Pete Daniel, Merry A. Foresta, Maren Stange, Sally Stein (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1987), 2.

FSA initiatives and programs surrounding public health further highlight the way migrants' bodies figured in attempts to reeducate and modernize laborers for work in a new (industrial) economy and life in California society.

Particularly in the early years of the camp program, migrants were drawn to the camps because of their access to modern health and sanitation facilities, a program which was equally touted as a crowning achievement by the FSA. Each camp had shower facilities with hot and cold water, a room for laundry that also had hot water, and at least one health clinic that was generally staffed by an FSA-employed nurse or doctor. Additionally, traveling health professionals would tour the camps giving lectures on cleanliness, decorum, preventative medicine, pre- and ante-natal topics, and more. A press release from the US Department of Agriculture in 1937 concisely explains: "The permanent structures emphasize the purposes of the camps, which are to promote health, recreation, and education among the residents of the camp, improve sanitary conditions, and to demonstrate better methods of community living."[278] Camp newspapers devoted an incredible amount of space to discussions of disease, cleanliness, and bodily health, potentially because of the stigmatization of Dust Bowl migrants as inherently dirty and carriers of disease without the knowledge or desire to follow "proper" sanitary and hygiene practices.[279] Examples of articles could include a brief editorial by an anonymous "squawker" in the camp decrying parents who allowed their children to play in the garbage, listings of residents who had come down with infectious diseases (scarlet fever, diphtheria, and the measles were common), or announcements for the latest clinic talk by a visiting doctor.[280]

[278] "US Dept of Agriculture Farm Security Administration Division of Information: Release on Receipt," December 1937. RG 96, Box 11. National Archives at College Park.

[279] Brian Cannon writes in his article, an anecdote regarding a woman who had never seen a flush toilet before and ended up washing her clothes in the basin because she assumed it was a washtub. It also must be noted that there seems to be a dearth of public health initiatives directed towards agricultural laborers of color during this period, although more research is required to confirm.

[280] "The official squawker [sic] says no attention has been paid to the request of last week regarding the children rummaging through garbage cans in the labor home section. We expect you parents to see that the children stop

Frequent announcements or editorials admonished residents for a variety of offenses: not keeping their tent tidy, not keeping their children out of sewage drains, and drinking too much. Said articles often took on the tone of public health announcements, establishing that cleanliness and hygienic care for the body were critical to the success of the camps and to the development of residents as proper citizens. An example of the kinds of health education found in the camps that focused on the development of bodies can be found in an article from the *11 Mile News*, "Building Better Bodies." It reads:

> Not all people whose bodies are in good condition look alike, but there are certain signs which show good health and there are other definite signs which show poor health. The following signs are found whenever a body is in good condition. 1. Glossy hair – not dull, dry and brittle. 2. Sparkling, bright eyes – no dark circles underneath them. 3. Rosy cheeks and red lips. 4. Enough fat to round out the bony places. 5. Skin rosy, smooth and firm – not flabby, yellowed, and wrinkled. 6. Muscles hard and full, not soft and small. 7. Posture correct – head up, chin in, chest out, abdomen held in, knees relaxed, toes straight ahead. The spine should be in a straight line from top to bottom. Strong muscles help hold the body in the right position. 8. Happy features, not worried and sad. All those signs can be seen just by looking at a boy or girl.[281]

This article, intended for parents, not only posits that migrants did not know how to care for their children through paternalistic language, but also outlines a "better" body that is designed for labor. The simultaneous emphasis on musculature and posture alongside information on proper nutrition might be purely altruistic and scientifically sound, but the precision and almost mechanical instructions on how to have a healthy child suggests that health and a certain fitness for work go hand in hand. In this way, not only through community dances and the images that

doing this or official action will be taken...Also we would like to see the area around your cabins just a little cleaner. Signed, The Squawker." *11 Mile News*, March 14, 1941. Note: this camp was in Arizona. RG 96, Box 1, National Archives at San Bruno.

[281] "Building Better Bodies," *11 Mile News*, November 15, 1940. Note: this camp was in Arizona. RG 96, Box 1, National Archives at San Bruno. See also this article in the *Marysville News:* "Dr. Banks showed those present that good posture is important, not only because it looks better but also because it gives certain organs of the body a chance to function properly. If one is standing or sitting in a stooped position the heart, the lungs, and the stomach become crowded causing indigestion and serious stomach trouble. Ailments such as heart trouble have also many times been traced to incorrect posture. Dr. Banks summed up her talk by giving four reasons which were the cause of poor posture: infected teeth and tonsils, *lack of exercise,* insufficient rest, and improper pre-natal care." Emphasis mine. *Marysville Camp News*, March 12 1938. RG 96, Box 1, National Archives at San Bruno.

circulated of the performances, but also through public health initiatives, the Farm Security Administration recognized the body and bodily performance as critical to their modernization project. In this way, bodily comportment and management through public health programs in the camps bolstered the FSA's goals of providing healthy laborers for the agricultural and industrial economies in California. Through photographs, news stories, and, importantly through the laborers themselves, the government was able to project success and reintegrate transient, unemployed migrants back into the structure of capital in the U.S.

Planting Roots, Planting Seeds: Reinvisibilizing Crises of Capitalism through Housing

By way of concluding this chapter, I return to a key principle of spectacle throughout this dissertation, which is that spectacle can also function to reinvisibilize precarity by altering its form, burying it within institutions and systems that ostensibly are designed to regulate and protect stability. In the Triangle Fire, the enactment of worker protections after the event did provide positive changes to the daily lives of many laborers; however, these protections also limited certain modes of freedom (i.e., the right to strike) and were designed to, first and foremost, protect the flow of labor. In the case of the migratory labor camps in California, I want to suggest that the conjoined labor- housing crisis in the 1930s (i.e., indigent migrants who could not afford lodging and were, therefore, homeless) laid the groundwork – or, at least, planted some seeds to help develop – another form of housing crisis: speculative lending and the mortgage crises of late-capitalism.

In 1937, almost two years after the first migratory labor camps were built in Marysville and Arvin, California congressman Jerry Voohis wrote a letter to President Roosevelt requesting additional funding for the Resettlement Administration's migratory labor camp program. Among

his requests (based on the recommendations of RA Regional Director, Jonathan Garst), Voorhis implored the President to construct four new migratory labor camps in California and assist in the construction of new "worker homes" near the camps. He wrote on the construction of worker's homes:

> [the construction acts as] further development of what is the most hopeful thing that has yet been done, -- namely, the work of assisting these uprooted farm families to "reroot" themselves on little farms in regions where there is enough seasonal work to give them a fairly good annual cash income. Thus "an eddy is set up" in the stream of migration. People settle down and become parts of the community. They continue to perform seasonal work in the fields. But they come from their own nearby homes to do it. This means a far, far better situation from a labor standpoint, lessens the chance of violent conflict between workers and employers, and makes possible stabilization of a decent wage standard.[282]

As Voorhis clearly illustrates, government officials recognized a positive relationship between homeownership and stable labor conditions; if people owned their own homes, they "plant roots" and are invested (literally) in developing the community, which leads to consistent and reliable labor. Given that residence in migratory labor camps was time-limited (most camps allowed families to stay for about a year), there was both need and incentive for the government to step in to ensure the flow of passive labor continued after migrants aged out of the camps by stepping in to assist with homeownership.

Single-family homeownership was critical to the United States' economic recovery during the Great Depression. Not only does housing provide a significant percentage of jobs and commerce in the U.S., but also, as previously outlined, the government considered homeownership to correlate to better labor conditions ("better," of course, from the perspective of business owners). Furthermore, as I argued earlier in this chapter, property ownership occupies a particular, venerated place within American

[282] Jerry Voohis. Letter from Congressman Jerry Voorhis to President Roosevelt, Aug 22, 1937. RG 96, Box 11. National Archives at College Park.

society as a crowning achievement – a realization of the republican promise of the Founding Fathers. For all these reasons, it makes sense that the Roosevelt Administration would step in to creative government programs to aid lenders (financial institutions) and individuals who desperately desired to settle down and purchase a home.

One response from the federal government was the creation of the Federal National Mortgage Association (FNMA), better known as Fannie Mae, in 1938. Fannie Mae was created to expand the secondary mortgage market and provide liquidity to financial institutions, thereby enabling them to loan more money to more borrowers with the guarantee of the federal government. As David Harvey and others illustrate in their work on urbanization and capitalism, in addition to propping up the financial and construction markets, the establishment of Fannie Mae as a mortgage lender also spurred on tremendous amounts of debt to the U.S. government. While there were many economic and socio-political factors that went into the establishment and implementation of Fannie Mae, an additional theory that bolstered the government's plan to incentivize housing debt was, as Harvey succinctly writes: "debt-encumbered homeowners don't go on strike."[283] Regardless, the creation of Fannie Mae buoyed the housing market and enabled another generation of American's to fulfill their right to homeownership, further entrenching the value of the single-family home within American culture. Over the subsequent decades, changes to the housing market due to increased financialization and debt speculation led, eventually, to the Great Recession in 2008. Among other changes, I highlight the triple-fold increase of bank-held mortgages (as opposed to individual-held mortgages) from 1940 to 1990, the ten-fold increase in the length of mortgages (i.e, now a mortgage is typically a 30 year loan), and a 25% increase in homeownership from 1940

[283] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2013), 50.

to 2010.[284] In essence, what I am trying to illustrate is that the beginnings of a particular mode of debt speculation related to housing that came to a head in 2008 has links – however tenuous – to the labor crises of the 1930s. In part, I suggest, the government's solution to agricultural migrants' housing precarity actually resulted in laying the groundwork for ensnaring generations of Americans into debt, thereby extending and perpetuating differentiated extractive modes of capitalism into the present day.

[284] Harvey 2013, 51. F. John Devaney, "Tracking the American Dream: 50 Years of Housing History from the Census Bureau: 1940-1990," Department of Commerce, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/Publications/pdf/HUD-7775.pdf., 51-53. "In 1940, the 4 million owner-occupied single-family homes with a mortgage had total outstanding debt of $8.5 billion on first mortgages and a total value of $16.5 billion. Converted to 1991 dollars, this was a total debt of $83.2 billion and a total value of $160.5 billion. The debt represented 52 percent of value. In 1991, 30 million owner-occupied, single-family homes with a mortgage had total outstanding debt of $1.9 trillion on first mortgages and total value of $3.3 trillion. The debt represented 58 percent of value," 51.

CHAPTER 3

Breathing in the Archive: Dance, Dust, and Labor in South African Gold Mines, 1950-1970

We will follow the dust. Here, one can conceptualize "mine" as both a location and as a process: first, as a noun –the physical structure of the mine as a system of underground burrows, cavities, and passages built for the extraction of natural resources, particularly metals; second, as a verb – to dig a passage, to tunnel beneath, to extract in the course of digging, to extract with the benefit of exploitation, to exhaust by extensive cultivation. In the first sense, the scene of this paper is the gold mines of South Africa during the 1950s and 1960s; in the second sense – the verb – I aim to unearth the history of mine dancing with my own excavation of archival material, focusing on the connections between dance, labor, and racialized workers under apartheid through images of both the performances and the quotidian lives of the miners who danced in them.

As in any mine, this exercise produces byproducts, particularly dust. I would like to theorize dust both "metaphor and material," dust as a metaphor for displacement, obfuscation, and sediment, and dust as a material that has bodily consequences for those who live among it. We may also think of dust as the product of matter that has been reduced by disintegration or decay. Looking over the fences of construction sites, dust is the record of earth disturbed in order to dig out mines or build skyscrapers; as such, we can connect dust to both creation and destruction. Dust is inherently transitory – it moves from the earth onto our clothes, our hands, and into the air we breathe. It also moves from our clothes, our hands, and the air into the dirt of the earth – dirt we then kick up in an ongoing quotidian choreography of circulation. Dust, then, becomes not only a product of earthly labor – rocks and boulders pulverized into submission by

glaciers, earthquakes, bulldozers, or jackhammers – but also, a vehicle for, and operation of, transference. Dust is residue that circulates. Carried through the air, dust has the advantage of possibilities for movement between sites and across geographies.

The images of mine-dances in newspapers and books became spectacularized through their circulation within and beyond South Africa, and became part of the mediated, dominant archive through which apartheid policies, and the flow of transnational, migrant labor to the gold mines were maintained. Archive, deriving from the Greek root *arkho,* meaning "to rule or govern" and *Archon*, the building that housed official documents, already suggests a relationship to power, to a site, and to knowledge, as the archive is deeply connected to the state and state institutions.[285] As text-based documents and, later, photographic images collected, indexed, and preserved by institutions remain crucial to the hegemonic understanding of history, the Archive reflects and reveals both politics and ideologies. Here, I will look examine dominant archival material regarding mine dances, but too, I will dig into alternative archives; namely, the role of embodied performance in resisting classification into normative indexation and the archives of Ernest Cole, a photographer who documented the working conditions in metal mines in apartheid South Africa.[286] Dust and mines are a constant presence in Cole's images of dusty shacks and of miners whose faces are barely visible through the haze. However, what also becomes clear, paradoxically by virtue of the haze, is the way in which the mines, and the dust that mining

[285] Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 2002, ix.

[286] In attempting to counter the textual privilege that occurs in the writing and re-writing of history, scholars have demanded an expansion of the archive beyond the Western epistemology of text-based evidence as a measure of an event's, or a people's, history and authenticity. Many performance scholars, Diana Taylor, José Muñoz, and Peggy Phelan among the most prominent, have argued that performance resists the archive of ancient Greece, citing the ephemerality of performance. Using the concept of the repertoire in opposition to that of the archive, Diana Taylor writes that repertoire "enacts embodied memory" and encompasses aspects of performance that were previously excluded from the archive and considered "nonreproducible knowledge." In brief: embodiment poses a challenge to the traditional archive. In her work *Performing Remains*, Rebecca Schneider lessens the discreteness of the archive as oppositional to repertoire, suggesting that history is porous and that the present is in constant negotiation with the past, and that performance itself should be considered an archival practice.

creates, are primary examples of the remnants of imperialism, which continue to impact racialized bodies and the spaces those bodies inhabit.

The first section of this chapter contends with how black labor on the mines is framed within two distinct archives: one of materials produced by South Africa's apartheid government and the other of photographs taken by Ernest Cole, a black South African photojournalist. The mining industry in South Africa, the economic engine of the country, required a constant supply of black migrant labor. As sociologist T. Dunbar Moodie notes, as the quality of South African gold was not as high as ore from other parts of the world, the key to the viability of the industry was the ability to extract enormous quantities of gold, which, in turn, required a tremendous amount of labor.[287] To put it simply: the ability to recruit, hire, and retain black migrants to work for a fraction of the amount paid to white laborers was essential to both gold production and the South African economy writ large. Throughout the early twentieth century, at any given point, hundreds of thousands of black men labored in South Africa's gold mines. While gold mining in South Africa had always been racially segregated work with black workers performing the most dangerous physical labor with white workers performing largely supervisory roles, following the 1948 election of the Afrikaner National Party, apartheid laws across all sectors of society further isolated and insulated black miners.

Images and descriptions of mine dances – performances of "tribal" or "native" dances by black miners in gold mining compounds – in tourist guides, magazines, and books circulated within and beyond South Africa, are part of the mediated, dominant archive through which apartheid was marketed and maintained. The archive of these dances — documents and images

[287] T. Dunbar Moodie with Vivienne Ndatshe. *Going for Gol: Men, Mines, and Migration*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 44.

collected, indexed, and preserved by institutions — reflects and reveals both hegemonic politics and ideologies.

Mine dances in materials produced and disseminated by government and mine officials posit the performances of "tribal dances" on the mining compounds as a benefit to the mine workers, a reflection of how well the laborers were treated. Mine owners touted that miners engaged in "traditional" native practices with the support of the companies. Furthermore, mine dances were showcased to tourists and potential financial investors to demonstrate not only the contentment, health, and well-bring of the workers, but also as an exotic form of recreation that fulfilled the "innate" impulse of Africans to move in rhythm. In addition to studying the mainstream archives, one must dig into alternative archives; namely, the role of embodied performance in resisting classification into normative indexation.[288] In this, I turn to the archives of Ernest Cole, a black photographer and photojournalist who, in the early 1960s, first documented in *Drum* magazine the working conditions in gold mines in apartheid South Africa. After Cole was exiled from South Africa in 1966, he was free of the censorship of the apartheid government and thereby able to publish jarring images revealing the inhumane treatment of miners. Many of these photographs appeared in his monograph *House of Bondage* (1967).

Unlike other prominent photographers of the time, Cole did not photograph the men engaging in the actual work of mining or in the midst of some dynamic movement in mine dance

[288] In countering the textual privilege that occurs in the writing and re-writing of history, scholars have demanded an expansion of the archive beyond the Western norm. Many performance scholars — Diana Taylor, José Muñoz, and Peggy Phelan among the most prominent — have shown how performance resists the archive. Diana Taylor writes that the repertoire "enacts embodied memory" and encompasses aspects of performance that were previously excluded from the archive and considered "nonreproducible knowledge." Diana Taylor *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press 2004), 23. In brief: embodiment poses a challenge to the traditional archive. In *Performing Remains* (2011), Rebecca Schneider brings the archive closer to the repertoire, suggesting that history is porous and that the present is in constant negotiation with the past; that performance itself should be considered an archival practice.

performances.[289] Instead, Cole's photographs depict not only the violent realities of anti-black violence by the apartheid state in the migrant labor system, but also, the

pervasive and brutal banality of life in the mines: the exhaustion, boredom, and loneliness; the extreme labor conditions in the mines; the inadequate means of sustenance; and the prolonged effects of the isolation and dehumanization the miners endured. In contrast to the hegemonic archive full of physically active, "happy" laborers, Cole's photographs are what Tina M. Campt defines as "depictions of stasis."[290] Whereas stillness is generally considered to be the absence of movement, Campt posits stasis as a "muscular tension" and "unvisible motion" that is "produced by holding a complex set of forces in suspension."[291] Stasis is not the absence of movement; rather, it "attends to the muscular tension imaged [...] as a performance of stillness that holds the complex forces that surrounded and produced these images temporarily at bay or in equilibrium."[292] In short: accounting for the complexity of the situational practices captured in the images is key and allows for viewers of the images to "consider the embodied postures of the subjugated as visible manifestations of psychic and physical *responses* (rather than submission) to colonization."[293] Whereas Campt explicitly discusses portraiture and photos that capture muscular tension, Cole's images expand upon Campt's conceptualization of stasis to also include moments of muscular release – sitting on the ground with hunched shoulders, lying on a barrack,

[289] Perhaps the most well-known example would be Margaret Bourke-White, an internationally-renowned photojournalist who published many photographs of the South African gold mines in *Life* magazine on September 18, 1950. The article "South Africa and its Problem" features many images of black miners underground; notably the first photograph in the article is captioned "Gold Miners Nos 1139 and 5122, both Mndaus, stand sweating in 95 [degree] heat of a tunnel in Johannesburg's Robinson Deep Mine, more than a mile underground" (Bourke-White 1950, 111). In the same article, is an image of mine captioned "Against a backdrop of mine shaft headgear at Robinson Deep, sinewy gold miners stage a violent tribal dance for other miners and weekend tourists" (Bourke-White 1950, 120). Notably, this was early in the period of mine dancing as professionalized recreation and Bourke-White uses the primitivist tropes of apartheid leaders and industry officials. It is also important to note that it is not clear whether or how this article and these images circulated in South Africa, particularly given increasing restrictions on press critical of the apartheid government.

[290] Tina Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 51.

[291] Ibid., 49-51.

[292] Ibid., 52.

[293] Ibid., 52.

leaning against a wall for relief – as an index of temporary suspensions of, and physical responses to, the bodily work of laboring and living in the apartheid state. Cole's photographs of miners frame the perpetual state of suspension endemic to the workers. For example, gold miners were solely employed by short term labor contracts (6-12 months), which meant not knowing whether there would be work in the long-term future. Additionally, because the gold mines only employed men, the miners were deprived of their families; and migrant laborers were often suspended between their lives in the mines and their lives elsewhere. The dangers of gold mining added the threat of debilitating or fatal injury. Migrant workers live precariously, not owning their labor, systemically exploited. Cole's images show the weight of these "complex tensions" felt, if not always seen, through the juxtaposition of taut muscles required to work and postures of repose that combine to form an embodied repertoire of laboring, living, and surviving in the apartheid state.[294] Ultimately, Cole's photographs intervene in the machine of the gold mining industry disrupting and disavowing the hegemonic narratives of the benign façade of benevolent, humane labor conditions in the mines.

Moving beyond photographic archives of black labor in South African gold mines, the second half of this chapter contends with how the mines and their toxic byproducts themselves materialize the imperial condition of racial apartheid and extend its temporal reach to the present day. The dust given off in a morning of drilling deep underground animates the archive through its paradox: dust simultaneously reveals and occludes, it signifies long periods of undisturbed stillness while also being a record of movement and transit. Dust troubles the boundaries between live and dead; dust is a record of annihilation by pulverization, yet also can host habitats, accumulate mass, and travel to different environments. A journey through dust parallels the messiness of studies of movement – one could not study dust or movement linearly; we

[294] Campt, 50.

would constantly drift into and out of sites, subjects, ecologies, and histories. As such, sustained engagement with mining, dust, and performance requires queries into questions of movement, historiography, corporeality, affect, animacy, race, and temporality. Ann Laura Stoler writing on ruins in *Imperial Debris* suggests that, ruins "slip between metaphor and material, between infrastructure and imagery, between remnants of mind and matter."[295] In the same vein, I want to suggest that dust, mines, and archives are all examples of the imperial ruins Stoler describes. Serving as a primary interlocutor, triangulating between ventures into mines and archives, dust will lead us into and around mines and archives as crucial structures within imperial projects *and* will help to think through the ways in which mines and dust themselves become archives of imperialism. Tracing dust through mines and archives produces the following questions: How could one perform a historiography through dust? What is left when the dust settles in sites of imperial expansion and colonial exploitation, and, what are the environmental and bodily archives of dust's imperial histories?

Pause. Inhale.

Circulation sweats money from every pore.[296]

Exhale. Resume.

To discuss mine dancing as it relates to labor and performance, it is necessary to contextualize the mining industry as part of colonialism, urbanization, and capitalist extraction in South Africa. Johannesburg was created in the late 1880s following the discovery of gold at Witwatersrand Reef in 1884. With the resulting gold rush, the city grew to a population of over

[295] Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Rumination,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 22.
[296] Marx, 208.

100,000 by the end of the century. During this period, what had been a predominantly agrarian Boer society quickly industrialized, with considerable intervention by the British who staked a claim to the gold wealth pouring out of the country. By 1899, South Africa produced close to 30% of the world's gold, attracting investments worth more than 75 million British pounds ("South Africa," n.d.). Tension between the British and the Boers over control of the gold mines in the Witwatersrand came to a head later that year, resulting in the Boer War (1899-1902). This fierce conflict spawned atrocities committed mostly by the British who interred Boer civilians and soldiers alike in concentration camps. In 1902, the Boers surrendered resulting in the Treaty of Vereeniging which consolidated the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State as parts of the British Empire, paving the way for the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 under British economic and political hegemony.[297] Because the Union of South Africa incorporated the former territories of two British colonies (the Cape of Good Hope and Natal) and two Boer Republics (Transvaal and the Orange Free State), the country was deeply divided among the British, Afrikaners, and Africans. Although Johannesburg had deep ties to Afrikaner culture that extends to the present, Britain's huge investment in mining resulted in significant cultural influence in Johannesburg. It was the British who developed Johannesburg into a modern city.

The impact of British imperialism can be seen not only in the urban development of Johannesburg, but also in the relationship between black South Africans, white South Africans, and Europeans. South Africa's natural resources and the subsequent capitalist investment by Europeans helped South Africa to become the first sub-Saharan region to experience mass industrialization. However, as historian Vivian Bickford-Smith notes, among many elites and investors, the question remained: Could South African cities ever truly be modern or

[297] The Union of South Africa remained a dominion of the British Empire until 1931 when the Statute of Westminster gave South Africa the right to legislate for itself. After 1931, the British Governor-General's power was subservient to that of the elected officials, such as the Prime Minister.

cosmopolitan compared to major global centers?[298] The British hoped to accomplish this by using the profits reaped from capitalist mining practices to increase industrialization and urban development for white settlers, investors, and tourists.[299]

By the mid-twentieth century, both the South African government and individual companies engaged rapid urbanization and subsequent publicity campaigns to promote their cities internationally. Bickford-Smith notes that by mid-century South African cities were portrayed in a light that was "overwhelmingly positive." This was due, in part, to "international acceptance as greater urban 'order' was achieved and as publicity associations were formed that actively promoted positive and 'unique' city identities. [...] Members of the Black working class, to the extent that they were featured at all, were portrayed as 'local colour'" (Bickford-Smith 2016, 14). Particularly following the election of the Afrikaner National Party in 1948 and the subsequent apartheid, depictions of black South Africans in tourist and investor materials often congealed around images of content, albeit primitive, laborers whose productivity and well-being were sustained by benevolent white control. Although tribal dances have been documented in mining compounds since the 1890s, it was not until 1948 and the election of the apartheid government that mine dancing became overtly politicized.[300]

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[298] Vivian Bickford-Smith, *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis: Cities and Identities in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 10.

[299] It should be noted that modernization efforts often displaced and disenfranchised black South Africans.

[300] The Barnett Collection of Photographs at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg holds some photographs dating back to the 1890s of miners in tribal dress dancing on mining compounds. However, these performances differed in nature from the ones for primarily white audiences in the 1950s - 1970s. The evidence suggests that in the first few decades of the mining industry, dance and dance "battles" were instigated by miners themselves as forms of entertainment and relaxation. They were much more ad hoc, amateur performances, often in the living quarters of the compounds. Additionally, Veit Erlmann notes that dance competitions took place within mining compounds since at least 1921; however, these were primarily for the miners and not for tourists. Veit Erlmann, *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 95-98. Following the ascension of the apartheid government, the performances became much more spectacular, were moved out of the living quarters and into amphitheaters, and were given support by the mining officials in order to promote the activity for commercial and social purposes, as outlined in this paper; Cecile Badenhorst and Charles Mather, "Tribal Recreation and Recreating Tribalism: Culture, Leisure, and Social Control on South Africa's Gold Mines, 1940-1950," *Journal of South African Studies* vol 23, no 3 (1997), 465.

Dance as Tourism, Dance as Labor

Ezra Eliovson's 1956 book *Johannesburg: The Fabulous City* highlights the connection between industrialization and tourism. The book's compact size and content suggest that it was published for the tourist economy to familiarize foreign visitors with the sites and cultural offerings of Johannesburg; each of the 75 pages contains photographs highlighting various parts of the city. In the introduction, Eliovson makes clear the transformations that Johannesburg has undergone since the late-1800s: "A new building rears symbolically behind the man-made ruins of an old one, like a phoenix rising from the ashes – symptomatic of the young giant that has mushroomed into the semblance of a long-established city."[301] The book's focus on progress and industrial development speaks the tropes of modernization and cosmopolitanism aimed to attract foreign tourists, especially from Europe and the United States. The few examples of black South Africans within its pages display motifs of exoticism and labor power.

[301] Ezra Eliovson, *Johannesburg, The Fabulous City* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1956), 5.

Their chief relaxation on Sunday mornings is the dance. These dances may be visited by all and are enacted in the form of an open-air theatre. Arrayed in the traditional dress of their different tribes, the Zulus, Swazis, Xosas and others abandon themselves to their ancient war dances and create new dances reflecting their new experiences.

To see such a dance is a great excitement. The infectious rhythm of the chanting squadrons makes the onlookers want to stamp their feet in sympathetic response and bounce on their seats in time to the wonderful, xylophone-like Chopi pianos.

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Image of Mine Dancing in *Johannesburg: The Fabulous City*[302]

[302] Eliovson, 15.

Mine dances are discussed in *Johannesburg* only briefly, but offer a critical example of the ways in which foreigners may have experienced or learned about them. Following a few pages about the technological advances in the mines themselves, the book features a photograph of about a dozen black men in various kinds of traditional dress performing a mine dance. The caption reads:

> Their chief relaxation on Sunday morning is the dance. These dances may be visited by all and are enacted in the form of an open-air theatre. Arrayed in traditional dress of their different tribes, the Zulus, the Swazis, Xosas and others abandon themselves to their ancient war dances and create new dances reflecting their new experiences. To see such a dance is a great excitement. The infectious rhythm of the chanting squadrons makes the onlookers want to stamp their feet in sympathetic response and bounce on their seats in time to the wonderful xylophone-like Chopi pianos.[303]

Here, mine dances are offered as the "chief relaxation" of laborers taking a well-deserved break from their toils – despite the fact that the men are still laboring, this time for the enjoyment of predominantly white spectators.[304] Too, the emphasis on "infectious rhythm," "ancient war dances," and "excitement" illustrates how primitivist tropes were deployed to distance the laborers from the "modern," white onlookers. Interestingly, the correlation between mine dances and "infectious rhythm" and "war dances" disappears in later years. Probably as a result of increasingly oppressive apartheid legislation and strong black resistance, later descriptions of mine dances for white audiences definitively declare that "the war dance has gone," that dances are purely for entertainment.[305]

Modernization, which theoretically correlates to l progress and freedom, clashes drastically with the treatment of black South Africans under apartheid, but aligns with strategies

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[303] Eliovson 1956, 15

[304] Audiences were not exclusively white. There was most often a segregated seating section for black spectators, including other mine workers. From the 1970s-1990s, miners would perform dances at large functions, much like a sports rally, to welcome visitors to the mine or for other special occasions. This is distinct from the types of Sunday performances being discussed in this paper.

[305] "Programme of Events of a Tribal Dance" 1961, 1.

employed across the British Empire dealing with native populations. As political scientist Uday Mehta writes in *Liberalism and Empire*, rhetoric from liberal, imperial nations regarding colonialism is

> an odd mix of maturity, familial concern, and an underlying awareness of the capacity to direct, and if need be, coerce... [S]imultaneously conveys familiarity and distance, warmth and sternness, responsibility and raw power.[306]

Benevolence and paternalism abound in writings about mine dancing. For example, British ethnomusicologist Hugh Tracey wrote of dances in the Witwatersrand Gold Mine in 1952 that "nothing is more natural to an African than to dance or to make the music for dancing, nothing more satisfactory than to share the dance routines with friends."[307] The self-congratulatory attitude that "allows" black miners to express their "natural" desire to dance literally in the center of an extractive and exploitative gold mine, while designing the spectacle to appeal to the aesthetic appetites of white spectators (both tourists and investors in the gold industry) is, while supremely distorted, an example of British colonial logic. Furthermore, as art historian Krista Thompson notes from her work on photographs of black sugar cane workers in post-emancipation Jamaica, there is a tension between tropes of leisure and exoticism in tourist materials (i.e., miners dancing in "tribal" clothes) and the simultaneous iconography that posited "[blacks] as industrious and disciplined laborers –qualities that would appeal to new business investors (and potential new white residents)."[308]

White government and industry officials carefully deployed tropes of African primitivism in an attempt to strike a balance between providing audiences with authenticity, while

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[306] Uday Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth Century British Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 11

[307] Hugh Tracey, *African Dances of the Witswatersrand Gold Mines* (Johannesburg: African Music Society, 1952), 1.

[308] Krista Thompson, "The Evidence of Things Not Photographed: Slavery and Historical Memory in the British West Indies," *Representations* vol 113 (2011), 46.

simultaneously removing any political or social context or subtext that might threaten white hegemony. One manifestation of this tension can be found in the costuming. As musicologist Veit Erlmann and others have noted, when miners and laborers danced together outside of the dance arenas in the gold mining compounds, they generally wore a basic "costume" over quotidian attire: "a vividly colored cloth and cape-like shoulder covering over long trousers, vests, and car-tire sandals."[309] But when white government officials began marketing tribal dances, they suggested more "traditional-looking" attire to more explicitly connect the dances to a visual aesthetic of preindustrial and precolonial Africa. Mine managers provided ostrich feathers, animal skins, and generally "assist[ed the dancers'] inventiveness at producing striking and individual styles of uniforms" for the performances.[310] Additionally, the dances themselves are described in tourist materials with particular attention to the benign nature of the movement, illustrating how dance is a tool making the miners more productive and healthier. Representations of dance in texts and materials produced by white South Africans, such as Eliovson and Tracey, illustrate the ways in which labor, embodiment, and colonialism functioned in tandem in both the performances and the in the production of materials that advertised and documented them.

The most comprehensive book on mine dances is Tracey's *African Dances of the Witwatersrand Gold Mines* published by the African Music Society of Johannesburg in 1952. Tracey arrived in South Africa from Britain in the early 1920s and, in addition to his anthropological work documenting African instruments and music genres, was fascinated by African dance. His book contains many full-page descriptions of African dance styles (from the Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, and other groups) followed by close to 100 pages of staged photographs of

[309] Erlmann 108
[310] Tracey, 5

miners performing the various dances that Tracey meticulously attempted to transcribe both in terms of movement and music. These lengthy descriptions are notably devoid of any epistemological or cosmological context pertaining to the socio-political and socio-spiritual meaning of the movement. Importantly, the photos of dances in *African Dances* were not taken within the mining compounds themselves. Rather, the miners were photographed in what looks to be an empty field on the property. The idea was for the pictures to be taken "away from buildings, where incongruous backgrounds would detract from the value of the pictures as studies of dance action."[311]

'Ndlamnu' Stamping Dance, Consolidated Main Reef Mine Team[312]

One example from Tracey, above, exemplifies what Tina Campt describes as "[a] depiction of timeless Africans frozen in an unspoiled wilderness [that] was deployed to invoke an idyllic image of authentic native culture that required 'separation' and 'protection.'"[313] In his quest to

[311] Tracey 1952, frontmatter.
[312] TRACEY 1952, 25.
[313] Campt, 57.

capture the dances in these staged images, Tracey is careful to remove any visual reminders of the hard labor – mine headgear, the labor compounds, etc. – that would detract from the ability to extract entertainment "value″ from the performance. The austere backdrop further highlights the discrepancies between the way mine dances were portrayed to white audiences and the lived realities of the workers. Beginning in 1943, though not made standard protocol until 1948, mine dance performances were taken out of miners' living areas and were performed in amphitheaters and stadiums adjacent to the barracks, thus providing white audiences with a sterilized, controlled experience. They never saw the truly appalling conditions of black mine workers.

In some ways, the text explicating the process of making the book itself proves more informative than the descriptions of the "dance action" because of the vague nature of Tracey's ethnographic "transcription." Indeed, it is unclear where Tracey learned the genealogy of the dances and, likely because of his lack of training in dance, he uses broad and unspecific terms such as "stamp," "shuffle," "jump," etc.), which have countless variations. The inability to capture the performance in text or in images points, again, to the role of embodiment in preserving forms of knowledge that escape codification by Western modes of archival practice. However, what one can glean from Tracey's text is three-fold: first, the foreword written by W. W. M. Eiselen, then the Secretary for Native Affairs, reveals an important relationship between mine dances and the official policies of apartheid; second, in the acknowledgements of the book, Tracey outlines how mine dancing became a recreational activity for white tourists; and third, the documentation of the various tribes and their particular dance styles highlights the extent of the displacement of migrant laborers from South Africa and neighboring countries who all found themselves in the Witwatersrand mines.

In his foreword to *African Dances,* Eiselen frames the book as an important step towards understanding "the soul" of the "Bantu."[314] He writes:

> From time immemorial the Bantu have been wont to reveal the genius of their culture, the soul of their people, in rhythmic action accompanied by instrumental and vocal music.[...] I am convinced [that studying the Bantu through their dances and their music] will not merely give us a great deal of pleasure, because Bantu music is so fascinating in many ways, but that we will thereby also learn to see our Bantu fellow-country-men in more correct perspective.[315]

The "correct" perspective to which Eiselen refers seems to be a continuation of racist tropes characterizing Africans as primitive, or backwards. It is only through seemingly anachronistic ("from time immemorial") tribal performance, Eiselen suggests, that white South Africans and (white) foreign visitors (whom we can safely assume are the intended readers of this text) can comprehend "the Bantu." Indeed, images such as the ones in *African Dances* "often deployed a visual rhetoric designed to emphasize something essential and timeless about African 'native life' that made it incompatible with European modernity, thus reinforcing the idea that black miners were temporarily aliens in modern Johannesburg."[316] The notion of the Bantu as a "temporary worker" – a cultural inferior and political threat – who cannot and should not be incorporated into South African society is evidenced by the apartheid legislation that Eiselen pushed through the Department of Native Affairs. In 1953, the year after Tracey's book was published, the Bantu Education Act was passed on the advisement of the Eiselen Commission within the Department of Native Affairs. The legislation took the control of black South Africans' schooling away from missionaries and placed it under the auspices of the State for the expressed purpose of providing black South Africans a limited curriculum focused on vocational skills because "there is no place

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[314] Eiselen was also an anthropologist. Another project would be to think through the disciplines of anthropology and ethnomusicology in relation to this work.

[315] Eiselen in Tracey 1952, frontmatter.

[316] Alexander C. Lichtenstein, Rick Halpern, and Margaret Bourke White, *Margaret Bourke-White and the Dawn of Apartheid* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 83.

for the Bantu in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour."[317] The Bantu Education Act was but one of several restrictive measures that were adopted by the South African government during Eiselen's tenure as the Secretary of Native Affairs. Other policies included the Population Restriction Act (1950), which separated South Africans into racial classifications, the Public Safety Act (1953), which, in response to the civil disobedience strategies of the African National Congress, allowed for the detention of black dissenters without trial; and the Natives Labour Act (1953), which prohibited strikes by black Africans, among others.

Through Eiselen, one can begin to piece together the relationship between the mine dances and the increasingly oppressive policies designed to subjugate black South Africans. Mine dances, at least for Eiselen, seem to reveal the "true" Bantu – a person whose essence, expressed through dance and music, is incompatible with the modern and "civilized" white South African, a person who poses a threat to white society. It would seem, therefore, that it was only through the sanctioning of mine dance performances within controlled environments of extractive labor that black miners were deemed worthy of appreciation ... by whites.

In Tracey's acknowledgements in the front matter of *African Dances*, he describes how mine dances attracted tourists. The majority of this section concerns Lewis G. Hallett, the Chief Compound Manager of the Consolidated Main Reef Mine and Estates. Tracey recognizes Hallett was "the first man on the Reef to build a Dance Arena" – a practice then "copied" across the country. Tracey continues:

> I had long advocated the construction of such arenas (as opposed to flat dance floors without tiers of seating or grass banks for spectators) so that the art of native dancing should receive its proper recognition from white and black alike. [...] But it was not until Lewis Hallett, accepting my design for a semi-circular arena, built it in stone in his East Compound at the Consolidated Main Reef Mine

[317] Kallaway 1984, 92.

> that the practicability of a special stadium set aside for dancing became apparent. It was an immediate success both with the dancers and the audiences; and from that date in 1943, when it was first opened, Mine Dances have been a recognised attraction for European tourists and visitors. It is not too much to claim that it has signally contributed to a better understanding of the African mind on the part of white South Africans and their guests.[318]

From Tracey, one learns not only that Mine Dancing developed into a tourist attraction beginning in the early 1940s, but also his description of the dance arena highlights another aspect of European control. The "semi-circular arena built in stone" and the raised stadium seating are European architectures of performance, which create a bicameral performance experience separating performers from spectators and privileging a perspectival as opposed to participatory mode of engagement. In contrast, African performance traditions are usually participatory with much more fluid interactions between performers and spectators. In traditional African societies, dances are rarely be performed *in front* of spectators; rather, many African (and Afro-Diasporic) performance practices occur in a circular or cypher formation with performers and spectators entering and exiting from the center of the circle. The flattening of African dance into a perspectival experience highlights its purpose as entertainment for Europeans: the dances (and the miners) were spatially rearranged for easier consumption by white spectators.

In addition to the information provided by Eiselen and Tracey in the front matter of the book, the content – showcasing the diverse styles of various ethnic groups – highlights the role of migrant labor in mining. The inside cover of *African Dances* helpfully illustrates how miners in Witwatersrand hailed from a wide range of locations including the Ngoni people (known for their "Round Dance") from Northern Rhodesia, the Shona people in Southern Rhodesia, the Twsana people in Bechuanaland, and miners from tribes all along the eastern coast of the Union

[318] Tracey 1952, frontmatter.

of South Africa.[319] In addition to performing dances categorized by ethnic group, miners were housed together with those from their tribe or region, which functioned to "reinforc[e] powerful ethnic affiliation and identification designed to keep the diverse migrant workforce divided."[320] Given that the early 1950s marked periods of significant protests and strikes conducted by black workers, mine managers and senior officials no doubt emphasized ethnic differences in attempts to "retribalize" migrant workers in order prevent or discourage workers' solidarity and organizing.[321]

In the decade following the publication of *African Dances,* mine dancing became a popular recreational pastime for white tourists; images from the dances circulated widely in tourist pamphlets, visitor guides, and newspapers. Given that mine labor was segregated, by the 1960s it would have been common for mainstream white South Africans not involved in the mining industry to have "experienced" life in the mines only through their travel from the cities to mining reservations on Sundays to observe mine dances performed by the black miners on their "day off" from underground labor.

The 1960 "Visitors' Guide to Johannesburg," published by the Johannesburg Publicity Association provides key insight into the marketing and widespread popularity of mine dances as forms of popular entertainment for whites. The guide itself is compact and lightweight, designed to be easily carried in a front pocket or handbag; the cover features a color image of the Johannesburg skyline with gold mines in the foreground. Opening the booklet, the reader is welcomed by "his Worship the Mayor of Johannesburg" who serves as the honorary president of the Johannesburg Publicity Association, which further legitimizes the guide as an official,

[319] Tracey, "Front Matter." Northern Rhodesia now correlates to Zambia, Southern Rhodesia became Zimbabwe following decolonization, and Bechuanaland is now the Republic of Botswana.
[320] Lichtenstein, Halpern, and Bourke White 2016, 80.
[321] Badenhorst and Mather, 475.

government-authorized item.[322] "Native Dances" can be found in the index at the front of the guide, highlighting their prevalence and position as a tourist attraction; visitors wishing to view the performances need only fill out an application to the Publicity Association or the African Music Society (headed by Hugh Tracey) the Saturday prior to the Sunday performance they wish to attend.[323]

Importantly, the description of the "Native Dances" in the Visitor's Guide reinforces misleading and racist narrative of mine dancing as a form of benign recreation that is primarily a benefit to the miners who are naturally talented dancers. As the guide outlines, the "Native Dances" are performed by the "picturesque peoples" who have migrated to the Johannesburg area in order to labor in the gold mines.[324] The text reads:

> Coming as they do, straight from their homes, many of [the African Natives] find week-end relaxation in traditional fashion by taking part in the dances usually performed by the young men of their villages...[i]t is Johannesburg's good fortune to be able to witness, almost every Sunday morning in one or other of the mine compounds, a selection of African dances widely representative of all tribes.... In spite of popular opinion, none of the dances are war dances, and in South Africa, few, if any, have secondary significancebeyond the clear and immediate appeal of the rhythmic performance in perfect co-ordination of action. They are, however, a genuine example of African talent and the Natives taking part are among the world's best dancers.[325]

The language of "witnessing" these performances in the guide not only ignores, but also obfuscates the deliberate construction of the mine dances as a commodity. For a tourist who has little to no information about black labor in the mines, one could think that the performances developed organically and white spectators luckily, and unobtrusively, "discovered" them. By

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[322] "Visitor Guide" 1960, 1

[323] In the author's copy of the Visitor's Guide, the booklet is marked in pencil, presumably by the original owner. In the "Native Dances" section, the information about how to obtain tickets is underlined three times indicating that it was of tremendous interest. Visitor Guide" 1960, 10

[324] Ibid.

[325] Ibid.

suggesting that white spectators are merely "witnesses" to events that would take place in roughly the same fashion in the "villages," the Johannesburg Publicity Association attempts to remove the potentially voyeuristic elements of mine dances, instead framing the performances as an extension of traditional, rural life that is joyfully shared amongst tourists.

A critical aspect of the guide's description is the emphasis on the movement as entertainment and its supposed purely visual and musical functions. Ascribing no social, spiritual, cultural, or political significance to the dances, the guide erases the integral nature of dance and movement for various aspects of African culture, thus feeding tourists an ahistorical and inaccurate depiction of mine dances aligned colonialist and white supremacist narratives that present African cultures as simple, de-historicized, and non-threatening to white hegemony. The clear distancing of the mine dances from any "war dance" indicates a preoccupation or anxiety surrounding black men moving together— the ultimate fear being that the men, overcome by the power of unison movement and the rhythms of the dance, would become ungovernable and rise up against the mine owners (that is, against the National Party's apartheid government).[326]

The fear of the "war dance" in gold mines stems from the relationship between dispossession, labor, and dance in the decades prior to the formalized performances advertised in the tourist guide. Erlmann explains that white colonists from the time of the Anglo-Zulu war in 1879 (almost a decade before the founding of Johannesburg) were particularly shaken and threatened by a series of variations on preindustrial Zulu dances. Erlmann traces how "*amahubo* regimental dances, the most powerful expression of Zulu military might and group identity" became associated with black militancy and how the steps/rhythms of *amahubo* later

[326] For more on the theories of colonial anxiety resulting from African performance traditions, see Barbara Browning's *Infectious Rhythm: Metaphors of Contagion and the Spread of African Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

converged with other practices brought by migrant laborers into urban areas to become part of a larger set of performance practices known as *ingoma*.[327]

Ingoma – a broad term to describe a number of male group dances – was a form that became associated with migrant laborers in the larger cities of South Africa in the early-twentieth century. Furthermore, *ingoma* became associated with labor disputes and protests against white-owned companies and industries in the late-1920s, particularly in Durban. As a mode of embodied protest, *ingoma* "represented a...serious effort at appropriating the symbols of imperial warfare for the expression of Zulu workers' resistance" and, as such, was targeted by the government who connected the dance to anti-white illicit activity, including riots.[328] After a struggle between white vigilantes and members of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) in 1929, in which 6,000 Africans – many of whom practiced *ingoma* – rushed to support the ICU workers, *ingoma* was officially banned. Paradoxically, in the 1930s, against a backdrop of increasingly restrictive legislation aimed at controlling black people's movements and "alternative, autonomous forms of popular entertainment," the ban on *ingoma* was lifted — but, it could only be performed government-sanctioned spaces and that all participants abided by specific codes of conduct that forbade "marching in formation, singing *amahubo* regimental songs, and performing the challenging *giya* steps."[329] *Ingoma* in this "domesticated" and theoretically "benign" form continued to be practiced by teams who competed against each other for predominantly white audiences in urban centers.[330] The modified and sanctioned *ingoma* was so entertaining and effective as a spectacle for white South Africans that it warranted praise from the Chief Native Commissioner of Natal who declared the practice a "healthy form of exercise,"

[327] Erlmann, 97.
[328] Erlmann, 95 and Tara Firenzi, "The Changing Functions of Traditional Dance in Zulu Society: 1830-Present," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* vol 45, no 3 (2012), 416
[329] Erlmann, 106.
[330] Erlmann, 95

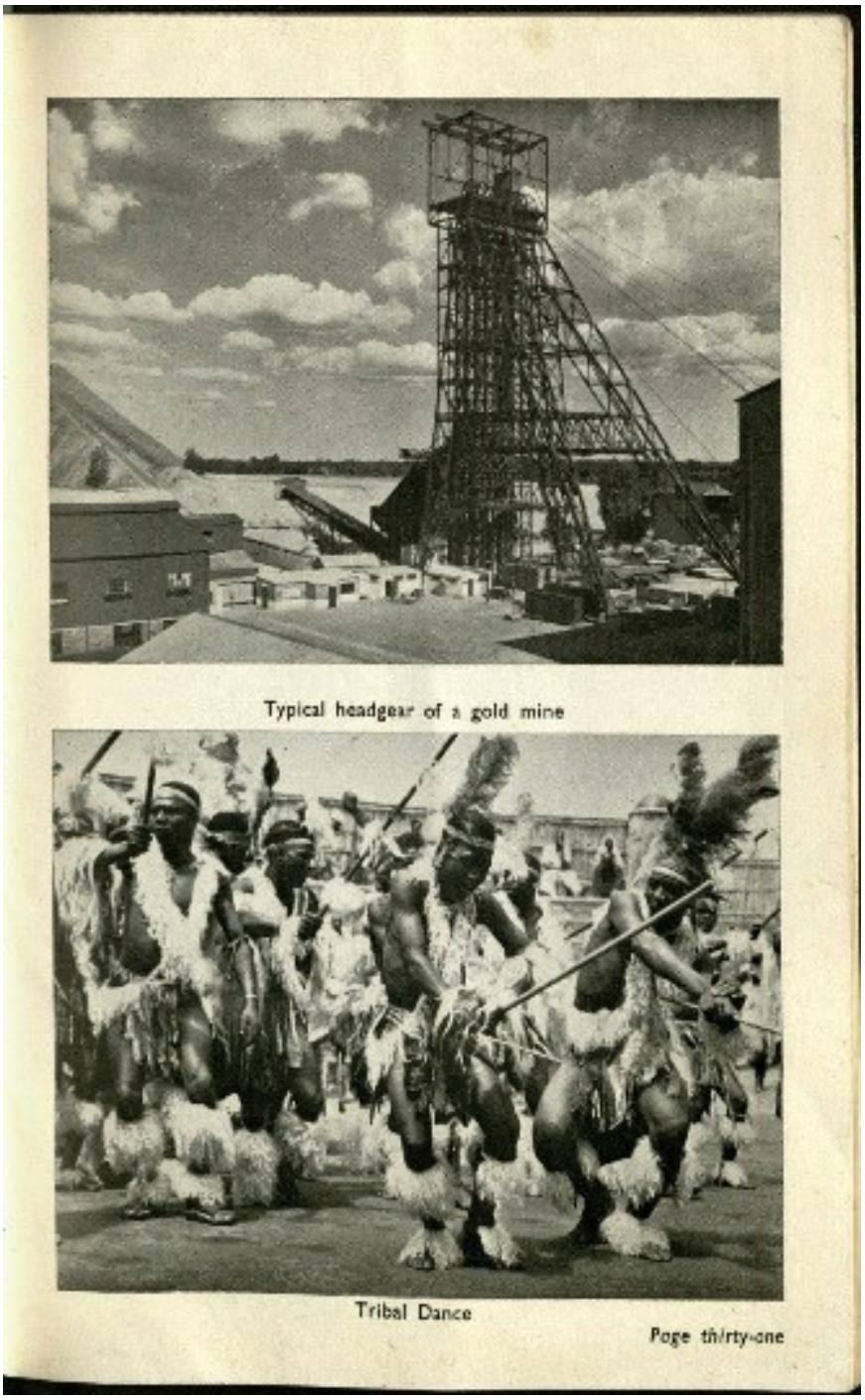
assuring audiences that there were "no war dances today in Southern Africa."[331] The supposed eradication of war dances was also cemented by Tracey in *African Dances* where he wrote, "... mine dances are not 'war dances.' None of the dances to be seen on the 'Reef' are remotely connected with fighting. They are all secular dances performed wholly and singularly for the fun and enjoyment of dancing."[332] Put another way: the legislation and preoccupation with *ingoma* highlights the ways in which white authorities ascribed meaning to black cultural practice – meaning which was then manipulated, and even reversed to suit the needs of the state.

While it is not explicitly clear to which "war dance" the 1960 Johannesburg guide references, it is evident – through the inclusion of this disclaimer – that the Johannesburg Publicity Association was well aware of spectators' potential fears and their knowledge of tropes of virile, militant migrant laborers who used dance to instigate violence upon whites. As such, the Publicity Association found it necessary to preemptively alleviate audiences' anxiety and concerns.

The photograph of "tribal dance" in the Johannesburg Visitors' Guide (Figure 3) provides a clear example of the complexities of showcasing mine dance as a form of leisure and recreation for working men, while also evacuating political meaning from the framing of the spectacle. The photograph features a group of miners dressed in goat skin calf-coverings and ostrich feathers, carrying sticks. None of the men are looking directly at the camera, which is level with the performers; rather, they are engaged in the movement and, for most, their gaze follows their hands. The men's muscular thighs are hypervisible and accentuated, particularly by the deep bend in their knees and crouched posture. In the foreground, two dancers are curved to one side, similarly exposing and highlighting their strong arms and oblique muscles. In the background,

[331] Erlmann, 96.
[332] Tracey, 1

one can just make out the high wall behind the tiered seating of the dance arena, confining the dance within a specific, sanctioned physical location. The closely cropped image showcases the miners and intentionally obscures the connection between the dance and the gold mine where the men are laboring. Despite the effort to remove the traces of the work of mining from the photograph of tribal dances, the image's placement directly underneath an image of industrial mining equipment simultaneously reinforces the implicit connection between dance and work, while also visually creating a clear distinction between the "real" labor of the gold mine – the work underground – and the supposed recreation of mine dances. Furthermore, the guide reinforces the wide gulf between the modern industrial machinery of the mine and the primitivism displayed through the costuming and movements of the miners performing.



Typical headgear of a gold mine

Tribal Dance

Page thirty-one

"Tribal Dance"[333]

At the performances themselves, illustrated programs were distributed to tourists that outlined the particular dances being performed on that date ("Crown Mines Limited," Bliss

[333] VISITORS' GUIDE TO JOHANNESBURG" 1960, 31

Papers 1965). For example, a dance performance that took place at the Crown Mines mining compound on 14 November 1965 consisted of fifteen dances and a "tea interval" accompanied by music from the Chopi Band. The program explains clearly:

> We wish to draw the attention of the public that although we welcome them to dances, these dances are staged primarily for the recreation and entertainment of the African Mine Workers. European spectators are prohibited from going on to the actual floor of the Dance Arena at any time. [...] THE PRIVILEGE OF ATTENDING THIS DANCE IS EXTENDED TO VISITORS ON THE STRICT UNDERSTANDING THAT NO USE IS MADE OF THE OCCASION FOR COMMERCIAL OR PUBLICITY PURPOSES.PLEASE DO NOT THROW MONEY TO THE DANCERS.[334]

This brief directive at the front of the program scripts not only how white audiences should comport themselves, but also how they should interact with the dancers and what the content of the performance is. For instance, the instruction to not "throw money to the dancers" indicates that scores of previous audiences had, in fact, done just that. Furthermore, it suggests that mining officials wished to elevate the cultural status of attending these performances by imposing a perhaps more "civilized" decorum.

It is critical, too, that the program forbids the spectators from taking their own photographs for "commercial or publicity purposes." In the decades following 1948, the National Party formed inquiry committees and enacted various pieces of legislation including the establishment of the Press Commission (1950) and the ratification of the Publications and Entertainments Act in 1963 aimed at controlling and censoring media/information that could disrupt the general order of the state. By controlling the images of mine dances, mine owners maintained and perpetuated the narrative of benevolent managers facilitating mine dances as a benefit to the laborers.

[334] Crown Mines Limited," Bliss Papers 1965. Stylizing (capitalization, underlining) all in original.

Though the program emphasizes how mine dances are "for" the miners, it is unclear whether or how miners participated in the performances for their own entertainment and recreation. Erlmann, again writing about "tribal" dance competitions performed in Durban in the 1920s-1930s, notes that while the commodification of black dance (*ingoma*, in this instance) cleared functioned to further white control over black South Africans and to quell unrest resulting from oppressive and violent legislation, the dancers were not "simply victims" of the systems of control. He writes, "... the commercial exploitation of dance competitions in part agreed with the traditional ethos and aesthetic norms of preindustrial Zulu performance whereby individual social status was enhanced through the demonstration of competence in performance...the domestication of *ingoma* required consent and at the very least had to be part of a process of negotiation."[335] One can extrapolate from Erlmann's more nuanced understanding of how *ingoma* competitions proliferated that participation in mine dances was, too, a process of negotiation. There is no evidence to suggest that miners were forced to participate in the performances, although it does seem clear that there were incentives (either social or professional) for those who did.

While the degree of anti-black violence and oppression was considerably higher in the 1950s - 1970s under apartheid, miners still seemingly consented to participate in the performances; likely there were many enjoyable and potentially subversive aspects of the dances. Given the audiences' and the officials' lack of understanding of how dance and music was used by the diverse tribes housed in the compounds, it is likely that the dances served to bolster morale and to, indeed, connect miners to each other. Too, the performances were an opportunity to showcase talent and engage in forms of sociality forbidden underground and in the barracks. While it is unknown how miners were chosen – perhaps pressured – to participate in the

[335] Erlmann, 110

performances, there was a clear imperative for mine officials to make sure that the dancers looked healthy, well-fed, and energetic. On her trip to the South African mines in 1950, photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White noted that the best dancers were given special privileges including being assigned fewer hours underground. However, the WNLA and NRC archives do not enumerate benefits or work schedules for those who danced on Sundays.[336]

Images of healthy, smiling mine workers dancing were featured prominently in recruitment materials aimed to attract young, black men from across southern Africa to the mines.[337] In promotional materials, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) and the Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC) often used carefully curated photographs and illustrations of strong, muscular men dancing to highlight the ample opportunities for recreation and leisure at the mines. A 1967 calendar from the NRC's promotional materials is a particularly effective example.[338] In the center of the calendar is an illustrated image of a black miner in the center of a shield. He wears his well-fitting mining helmet and standard issue uniform, which is vividly colored, clean, and free from obvious signs of wear. He smiles brightly. This miner is strong; his muscular arms fill out the sleeves of his shirt, he stands tall and looks in the peak of health. Surrounding him are six vivid, color photographs of mine dance performances. In each photograph, miners are engaged in dynamic, bold movements (i.e., high jumps, large unison phrases); they appear to enjoy being in the company of their fellow performers and dancing in front of large crowds. Importantly, the mine dances here are set apart from the miner "at work," reinforcing an arbitrary difference between the labor of mining and the labor of performing.

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[336] Lichtenstein, Halpern, and Bourke White, 83

[337] In addition to calendars and other materials, which also featured mine dances, the N.R.C. sent other paraphernalia to help recruitment. Most common were matchbooks, razorblades, and pennants all adorned with either the WNLA or NRC logos.

[338] "1967 Calendar" 1967. TEBA Mineworkers Collection, University of Johannesburg.

Set within a shield and in front of what look like two crossed spears in the background, the calendar is meant to correlate a sense of honor and pride with work in the mines. These images were meant to assure recruits that they could participate in practices that would connect them to their homes (predominantly rural villages spread across several countries in southern Africa) and to counter the popular opinion among at least black South Africans that mine work was "grisly."[339]

[339] Cole 1967, 22.

1967 Calendar. TEBA Mineworkers Collection, University of Johannesburg[340]

Mine dances, too, were meant to assure potential foreign investors and industry experts of the capability and productivity of black workers. A gold-vellum covered item entitled, "Programme

[340] 1967 Calendar.

of events of a Tribal Dance," for example, reveals that this particular performance in 1961 was organized for an international conference of metallurgists. The subtitle reads: "Presented by the Bantu employees of Robinson Deep Limited on the occasion of the visit of the seventh Commonwealth Mining & Metallurgical Congress on Sunday, 16th April, 1961."[341] In this program, each page describes a single dance in great detail with an accompanying illustration of black workers performing that particular dance. The descriptions follow a pattern similar to the discourse on black dance at the time: these dances *used to* serve a particular function in pre-industrial society, but *now* are predominantly for entertainment. The "presentation" on behalf of the black workers for an international set of mining industry experts at a period when criticism of apartheid was gaining indicates a desire on the part of the conference organizers to placate concerns about the welfare of black miners by showing them dancing.[342]

The Visitor Guide to the Vaal Reefs Exploration and Mining Company is, in many ways, the epitome of the dominant archive.[343] Donated to the Wisconsin Historical Society by Robert L. Bliss, an American public relations executive who ventured to South Africa in 1965, the Guide is part technical explanation of the process of extracting gold and part of an account of life in the mining compound. Included in this archival folder is a program of a mine dance performance.[344] The document, apparently, was designed for investors, both foreign and domestic. It was full of empirical data, such as the capital costs of running the mine, the technical advancements in shaft engineering, and the tons of ore extracted from the earth since the mine's opening. The Guide

[341] Programme of events..." 1961, front cover.

[342] While acknowledging the differences, historically and contextually, between chattel slavery in the U.S. and apartheid South Africa, it is important to recognize the historical continuity of this scene. In both sites (the U.S. and South Africa) dancing is deployed (with varying levels of violence or coercion) in order to display black people's fitness for labor and service, as has been theorized by Hartman.

[343] "Vaal Reef's Exploration and Mining Company, Ltd," Bliss Papers 1965

[344] Robert L. Bliss was the executive vice-president of the Public Relations Society of America in 1952. More on the relationship between American public relations executives and firms can be found in Ron Nixon's *Selling Apartheid: South Africa's Global Propaganda War* (2015).

discusses at length questions of labor and the quality of life for the miners. From this, one learns that in 1965, Vaal Reefs employed approximately 1,050 European workers (640 underground, 410 surface), the majority of whom were housed in an "attractive village" on the mine grounds, complete with a "modern club and sports fields." The mine also employed 9,500 Bantu workers, 8,000 underground. The Africans were housed in "compounds." By and large, mining compounds were overcrowded and in various states of disarray. Men often slept on bare wooden bunks and had little or no privacy. The close quarters also meant that diseases spread easily. Generally, the sanitary conditions were inadequate.[345]

A significant portion of the Visitor Guide is devoted to "The Bantu Worker in the Mining Industry and How He is Cared For on Vaal Reefs." The authors highlight the nature of contract, migrant labor in the mines: only 45% of the 9,500 workers in Vaal Reefs were "Republic Bantu" (from South Africa). The remainder of the workers came from neighboring countries (Mozambique, Malawi, Angola, Rhodesia - now Zimbabwe -, and the High Commission Territories – now Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana). Regarding housing, the Guide states, "the Government lays down a minimum standard for housing and feeding which is far exceeded in this compound" with a daily minimum of "4,500 calories per person" provided to the miners.[346]

According to the Guide, the miners are entitled to medical services at no cost, highlighting for visitors the supposedly excellent care which miners receive. Specifically, the Guide states that "every Bantu entering the service of the mine undergoes a pre-employment examination which includes a radiological examination of his chest. In accordance with the Pneumoconiosis Act of 1956, periodical radiological chest examinations are made of all Bantu

[345] Francis Wilson, *Labour in the South African Mines: 1911-1969* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 58

[346] Vaal Reef's Exploration and Mining Company, Ltd. The Bantu Worker in the Mining Industry and How He is Cared For on Vaal Reefs," Bliss Papers 1965, 2.

employees working in dusty conditions." This claim is hardly plausible given that only six medical officers were assigned to the mine to care for over 10,000 workers and the hospital could accommodate only 373 men at any given time.[347] Despite the positive language of the Vaal Reefs' Visitor Guide, life for black miners in South Africa was dangerous, isolating, and deadly. Information on the dangerous working conditions and substandard housing was not reported at the time, due to the imbrication of the gold mining industry and the apartheid government and press censorship. The material produced by publications like *Johannesburg*, *African Dances,* and the Visitor Guides represent the dominant archive crafted and circulated by the apartheid government.

Ernest Cole's *House of Bondage*: "Undermining" the Archive

In contrast to the archives produced by white South Africans in positions of power, Ernest Cole's images document a different situation. Cole's *House of Bondage* (1967) is a collection of photographs highlighting the atrocities and injustices of apartheid South Africa in the early 1960s. During his affiliation with *Drum* magazine in the early 1960s, Cole was assigned to photograph a story about the supposed "benefits" of working in one of South Africa's many mines. While on this assignment, Cole began to document the lives of miners from their "processing" at the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association depot in Johannesburg, to their lives in the camps, to the labor conditions in the mines.[348]

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[347] "Vaal Reef's...,"Bliss Papers 1965, 2

[348] The WNLA was the recruiting team for the entire mining industry in South Africa. Almost all mines were supplied with laborers from the WNLA — the centralized system helped to control wages and eliminate competition between mines. The WNLA had recruiting stations offices throughout South Africa and neighboring countries. Once men were contracted with the WNLA at their local office, they would be sent to Johannesburg via train or bus in order to be "processed" at the depot. The Witwatersrand Native Labor Association depot in Johannesburg was the location at which black men from all over sub-Saharan Africa were assembled. Theoretically, once assigned to a particular mine, the recruits were subject to medical testing to check for infectious diseases like tuberculosis and also for strength, etc. Following a clean bill of health, the miners were then sent to their respective mines to serve out their contract.

In *House of Bondage*, Cole explains that *Drum* magazine was a popular, English-language publication among African readers. It differed from other magazines targeting Africans because of its racially mixed staff. The magazine was also popular because of its exposés of oppressive apartheid laws. For this particular story, the white owner of *Drum* who also owned mines and was (presumably) compliant, if not enthusiastic, when the Chamber of Mines approached *Drum* to run an advertising supplement to recruit black workers for the mines. According to Cole, "[...] the editorial department was expected to develop a success story on an individual miner. It was not an idea any of us sympathized with, for we all knew how grisly the mines really were. But the publisher was determined, and soon a reporter and photographer were sent off to show how well a career in the mines paid off."[349]

Because he was black, Cole claims his presence went largely unnoticed by the guards at the mines. In Cole's words, "I was nothing but a 'bloody Kaffir' with a menial job to do and [the guards] carried on as though I were not there."[350] Granting Cole access to photograph the staggeringly abhorrent conditions of the mines and the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association depot resulted in images so explosive that Cole was threatened with arrest — he fled in exile to the United States in 1965. Indeed, the entire collection of Cole's work shows how his personal images – those not published in *Drum* – undid the work of the white-authored photographs of mine dances in tourist brochures and mine recruitment materials.[351]

Cole's photographs more accurately depict the living and working conditions in the mines, undermining the apartheid era narrative of benign social and labor conditions. "Undermining" is artist Lucy Lippard's term for information that can "alter irreplaceable

[349] Cole 1967, 22
[350] Cole 1967, 22
[351] See photo, "Cole." *House of Bondage* was published in the same year as Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and Cole's writing certainly reflects the black consciousness movement sweeping through South Africa and the African diaspora at that period.

ecosystems and generate new structures" through political subversive acts, adding that "subversion is one way artists can resist."[352] The majority of images of the inhumane working and living conditions of the miners in *House of Bondage* are dated and captioned providing specificity and narrative to the images absent from the generic photographs depicted in the tourist materials and recruitment literature. The photograph "Mine Recruition," for example, spans two full pages in the book. Its caption: "During group medical examination, the nude men are herded through a string of doctors' offices. After processing, they wait at railroad station for transportation to mine. Identity tag on wrist shows shipment of labor to which man is assigned."[353]

[352] The electronic version of the book has no page numbers; therefore, none will be cited. Lippard 2014.
Here, Stoler cites Carole McGranahan's *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
As Badenhorst and Mather point out, in the 1940s and 1950s mining officials organized sporting events, like soccer or rugby; however, it is not clear how popular these efforts were in the late 1950s-1960s. Furthermore, there is significant evidence that, like in mine dances, these forms of recreation were designed to create factions and reinforce tribal/ethnic difference between miners (Badenhorst and Mather 1997). It should also be noted that literacy rates among miners were incredibly low and therefore miners did not usually engage in reading or writing as a leisure activity.
[353] Cole 1967, 31

"Mine Recruition" by Ernest Cole, 1967.[354]

The descriptive caption makes clear how the workers are dehumanized: they are stripped, "herded" like animals, then, once they pass inspection, they are reduced to a "shipment of labor." Cole's work emphasizes the language of commodification, the mechanical process of mine recruiting and the debased treatment of the miners. Publishing Cole's images for an international audience, performed what Ann Laura Stoler describes as "the labor to revise what constitutes the archives of imperial pursuit, to reanimate 'arrested histories,' to rethink the domains of imperial governance and the forms of knowledge that evaded and refused colonial mandates to succumb, 'civilize,' and serve."[355] In addition to the ways in which "Mine Recruition" counters the apartheid regime's discourse on the conditions in the mining camps, it is impossible to escape the

[354] Cole, 31.
[355] Stoler 2013, 4.

connection to a multitude of other similar images featuring people of color and/or dehumanized "others" being stripped, inspected, prodded, and made into a spectacle under the auspices of slavery, imprisonment, or police "law enforcement." The vulnerability shown in "Mine Recruition," suspends the miners in a universal scene of arrest, making evident the slippage between free and coerced labor in the apartheid state.

In "Mine Recruition," one can easily see the muscular tension outlined by Campt. The miners, driven or lured from their land and precolonial forms of labor, respond to the command to stand for inspection and classification. The hypervisibility of the men's muscles –aimed to probe and examine the men's capability for hard work, their lack of physical impediments – exacerbates, for the viewer, both the strength of the recruits and their discomfort. Writing about identification photographs of indigenous South African women, Campt notes that "muscular tension was not simply a visible display for the camera ... it was mobilized as an everyday survival practice ...."[356] For the miners whose livelihood relied on their muscles, their bodies were both a survival strategy and a site for exploitation. This tension can be sensed Cole's photograph.

The circulation of Cole's photographs outside of South Africa in the years before formal apartheid was abolished disrupted the dominant logics and optics of apartheid – "arresting" the state-sponsored archive, challenging its monopoly of media. Many of Cole's images in *House of Bondage* intervene in the discourse celebrating the miners' constant productivity and boundless energy to work in the mines and still dance on their "day off." In addition to images of the inhumane lodging and lack of good food, Cole's photographs of the miners in the barracks, particularly on Sundays, reveal the boredom, tedium, and fatigue of the miners — very different

[356] Campt, 58-9.

from the images of highly energetic, dynamic performances taking place in the amphitheater just beyond the living quarters.

The miners in Cole's photographs of the barracks are exhausted. In figures 6 and 7 -- – placed next to each other in *House of Bondage* – the caption reads: "Miners are idle on Sunday. Some, like man with penny whistle, pass time with musical instruments."[357] While Cole describes the miners as "idle," a more appropriate description is that the miners are depleted. A normal shift in the mines began before dawn, around 4 a.m., and finished anytime between 2-6 p.m. — a workday of 10-14 hours without food, six days a week.[358] Those stationed underground were subject to ear-splitting drilling, drastically hot temperatures, and many injurious or deadly accidents. The viewers of photograph can sense the miners' boredom. In the mining compounds, there was very little to do besides work, unless one participated in the mine dances or the other infrequent sporting events.[359] Although most miners were technically able to travel outside the compound on Sundays, most did not because of the expense of travel, time restrictions, or a lack of transportation. Sundays were a combination of sleep and trying to pass the time. Figure 8 provides a clear example of both the extent of the miners' fatigue and the inadequate housing provided by the mine. The "concrete slab" lined with newspaper and cardboard on which the miners sleep stands in stark contrast to the glowing language of care expressed in the materials for foreign investors and tourists. Cole's photographs depicting moments of muscular release –

[357] Cole, 37

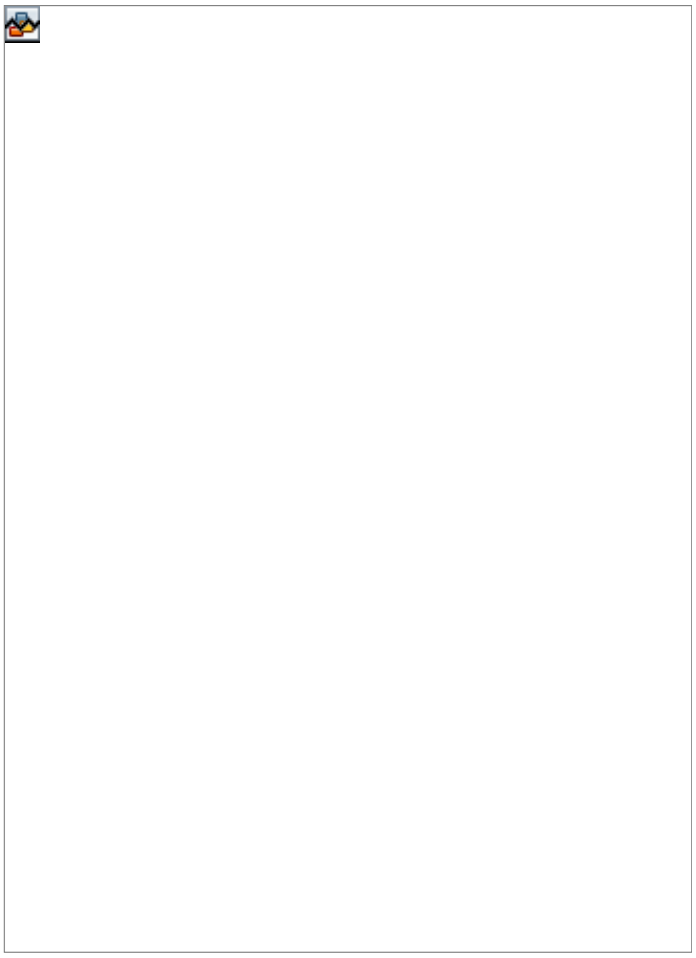
[358] Paul Finley Stewart, *Labour Time in South African Gold Mines: 1886-2006*, PhD Dissertation. University of the Witswatersrand, South Africa (2012), 121

[359] As Badenhorst and Mather point out, in the 1940s and 1950s, mining officials organized sporting events, like soccer or rugby; however, it is not clear how popular these efforts were during that time. Furthermore, there is significant evidence that, like in mine dances, these forms of recreation were designed to create factions and reinforce tribal/ethnic differences between miners. It should also be noted that literacy rates among miners were incredibly low due to a combination of factors including systemic exclusion from formal schooling and the transnational and multilingual demographics of the mines; low literacy rates meant that reading and writing as leisure activities were far less popular than physical ones.

lying down, leaning, propping one's head up with an arm –undermine the official hegemonic narrative.

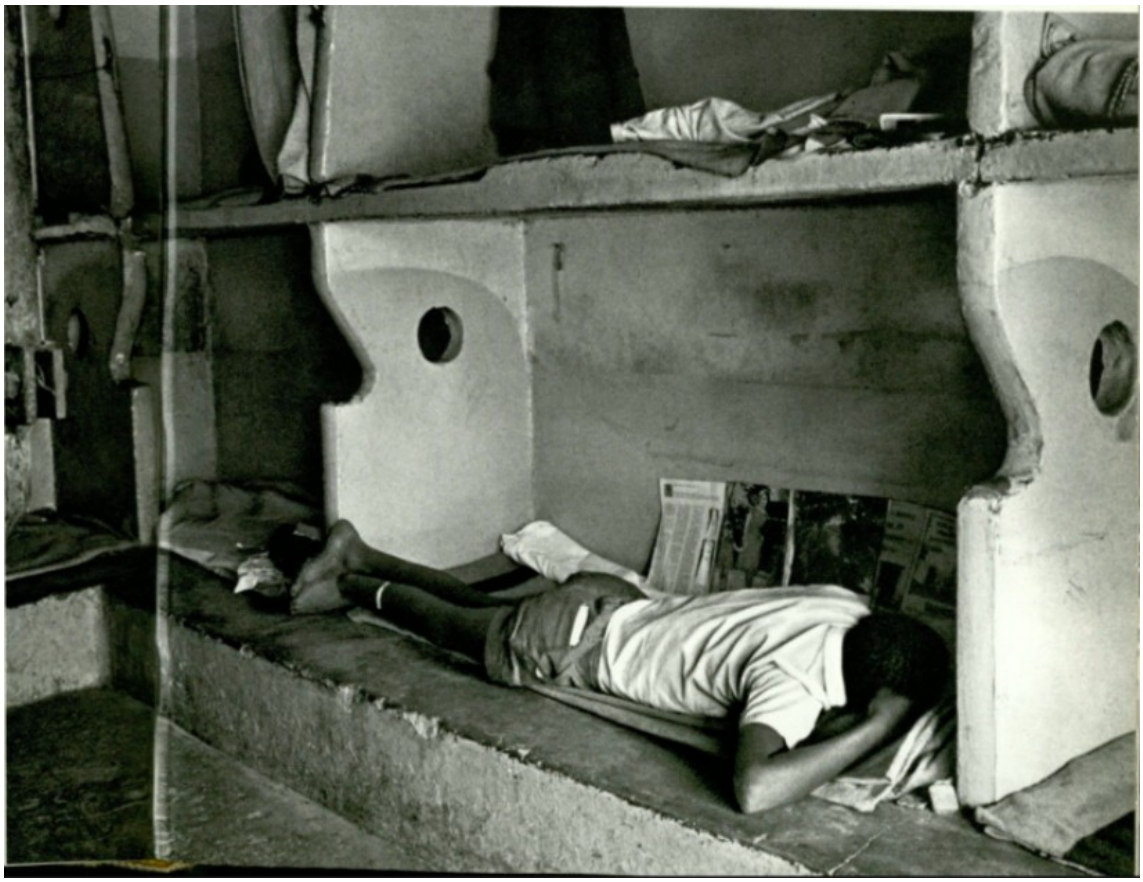
"Miners are idle on Sunday. Some, like man with penny whistle, pass time with musical instruments" by Ernest Cole. 1967.[360]

[360] Cole, 35.



"Miners are idle on Sunday. Some, like man with penny whistle, pass time with musical instruments" by Ernest Cole. 1967.[361]

[361] Cole, 37.



"Miner sleeps on concrete slab, must supply his own bedding" by Ernest Cole. 1967.[362]

In materials produced by the South African government and the gold mines during apartheid, images of mine dances were used not only to promote the mining industry as a benevolent employer of black migrants from southern Africa, but also to garner support and financial investments from foreign tourists and investors. The materials also promulgated primitivist, racist notions of black cultural practices. Ernest Cole's photographs subvert the hegemonic photographic archive. Cole's images of miners in moments of stasis – standing in a line up, sitting, reclining, and sleeping – depict the boredom, exhaustion, and exploitation of the workers. *House of Bondage* provides critical evidence enabling us to reframe black labor and performance in South Africa's gold mines.

[362] Cole, 35.

Pause. Inhale.

Gold is forever. It is beautiful, useful, and never wears out. Small wonder that gold has been prized over all else, in all ages, as a store of value that will survive the travails of life and the ravages of time.[363]

Exhale. Resume.

In the process of unearthing colonial archives of mines, one inevitably has to enter into the mine and move among and through dust. Dust is an inescapable aspect of the mines, as is evidenced in the Cole's photographs – dust and dirt are everywhere in the mining compounds and serve as a corporeal and material point of reference. We can feel dust – it might itch, irritate, inflame – and we can know dust – it can obscure, obfuscate, obstruct. The materiality and ontology of dust, and the structures of mines, provide a physical and tactile archive of imperialism; mines and dust carry histories of empire.

Found all over the country, the proliferation of mines across South Africa serves as a physical reminder of the far-reaching, and well-funded, structures of extraction and exploitation sponsored and facilitated by imperialism. Industrial mining became a hallmark of the colonial period in South Africa beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. For over a century, South Africa's mining of natural resources, including gold, silver, diamonds, platinum, copper, uranium, etc., accounted the bulk of the country's economic wealth. Although the country continues to be among the top in the world for chrome and platinum mining, the South African economy is more diversified and the consolidation of mines is becoming more common. Today, it is estimated that there are over 6,000 "derelict and ownerless" mines in South Africa which, although they are no longer a formal part of the colonial apparatus, disrupt the linearity of the

[363] Rand Refinery, http://www.randrefinery.com/.

imperial archive by continuing to pose serious environmental and public health risks to the populations nearby.[364] In other words: the mines continue to affect surrounding populations in ways that perpetuate the racialized discrimination and violence instated by imperial structures and extend the temporal reach of empire into the present.

Lippard, in discussing one particular type of mine – the gravel pit – writes, "like graves, these pits – whether they are dwellings or burial grounds or archaeological digs or the remnants of industries that claim to keep us alive – are eventually abandoned, their meanings forgotten, leaving stubborn scars on the land." Buried deep underneath the earth's surface, extending for miles in every direction, bleeding toxins into the groundwater, the mines' "stubbornness" can perhaps be attributed to the lack of supervision, regulation or funds granted to help heal the land from a century of scarring. No longer producing metal or contributing to the gross GDP, the unowned mines are ignored, "rejected," as Stoler would suggest, as "sites of decomposition that fall outside historical interest or preservation, places not honored as ruins of the empire proper."[365] Steadfast in their rejection, the mines still stand and, in their "derelict" state, continue to pose severe environmental hazards, which disproportionately affect people of color. Decrepit mines, built into the land of indigenous South African peoples, exemplify the process of imperial industrialization and expansion: as Lippard writes, "the [mines'] emptiness, their nakedness, and their rawness suggest an alienation of land and culture, a loss of nothing we cared about." Stripped, like the miners in "Mine Recruition," the empty structures serve as an archive of colonial extraction and exploitation.

The mines still in operation today are exhausted. The South African Chamber of Mines estimated that in 2013 mining companies produced 562,000 times as much waste as gold, more

[364] Mark Olalde. "The Haunting Legacy of South Africa's Gold Mines, " *Yale Environment 360*, 12 Nov 2015.
[365] Stoler, 13.

than double the 2003 rate.[366] Because the mines are running out of gold, it requires more energy and resources to drill deeper into the earth, the environmental effects of which include higher energy and production costs, more waste and byproduct, and increased acid from mine drainage. Caustic water, acid mine drainage, poisonous soil, and contaminated structures are all examples of the "toxic corrosions and violent accruals of colonial aftermaths."[367] According to studies from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research in 2010, mines polluted up to 20% of the stream flow water in and around Johannesburg.[368] In a district just outside Johannesburg, mines blew over 42.2 metric tons of dust into the air daily.[369] Despite awareness on the part of South African government of the environmental hazards of both abandoned and functioning mines, South Africa's Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) is slow to respond to the threats to the most affected populations; for example, the estimated 15% of Johannesburg residents, including many whom are unemployed miners who cannot find work, living in informal settlements created by the former apartheid government "near or even on top of" closed mines.[370] Interestingly, the literature surrounding the process of cleaning up the mines (both closed and functioning) is one of "rehabilitation." For instance, the DMR attempts to "rehabilitate" fifty mines per year, although reports show that only about 20% of that goal is met annually. What does anthropomorphizing the mines through the language of "rehabilitation" suggest? Rehabilitation encompasses both destruction and restoration; for instance, someone must have been injured or compromised in order to recover. Designating the mines as projects that can be rehabilitated emphasizes a return to "normalcy;" however, evidence suggests the majority of the

[366] Olalde.
[367] Stoler, 2.
[368] Paul Hobbs. "Water and Sustainable Mining" in *A CISR (Council on Scientific and Industrial Research) Perspective on Water in South Africa: 2010*, (2010), 46.
[369]"West Rand District Municipality Environmental Management Framework" http://www.wrdm.gov.za/wrdm/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Final-WRDM-EMF-2013.pdf, 53.
[370] Olalde.

damage is irreversible and the only course of action is to mitigate future environmental impact. As Lippard describes, the mines "transform the incomprehensively geological past to dubious futures."[371] It would be impossible to return to the period before rampant industrialization in the name of the empire, yet the "dubious futures" of environmental extraction and colonial exploitation continue to unfold through the earth and the dust.

Pause. Inhale.

In the Johannesburg mines
there are 240,000 natives working.

What kind of poem
Would you make out of that?

240,000 natives working
in the Johannesburg mines.[372]

Exhale. Resume.

Dust circulates freely in, above, and around the mines in caustic clouds. Dust inter(in)animates the ecology of the mines. Constantly present within the mines and the mining communities, dust coats every surface and affects the senses. Dust, entering the body through the skin, nose, and mouth, animates the bodies of those living in proximity to mine sites through, as Mel Chen describes, an "*animacy* [that] takes mobile, molecular form, as particles that both intoxicate a body into environmental illness and as particles that constantly threaten the body's fragile state."[373] Importantly, dust does not touch all bodies equally and the disproportionate,

[371] Lippard.
[372] Langston Hughes and Arnold Rampersad, ed. *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes: The Poems 1921-1940*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 160.
[373] Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 16.

toxic impacts of dust on people of color archives imperial hierarchies of power within contemporary bodies.

Following the ways in which dust weaves into and out of racialized bodies proves difficult in that dust inhalation is an "intimate injur[y] that only appear[s] as faint traces."[374] Much like dust itself, respiratory diseases among miners and those living close to mining sites, present subtly, at first. Unlike a mining accident in which someone is gravely injured or killed, miners infected with occupational respiratory diseases, such as silicosis and tuberculosis, often are not symptomatic right away.[375] Latent and often undetected until accumulated to a critical mass, toxic dust inhabits the body, scars the lungs, shortens breath, limits vitality. Sifting through the byproducts of mining – dust – forces one to focus on the processes and structures that "continue to bind human potentials to degraded environments, and degraded personhoods to the material refuse of imperial projects – to the spaces redefined, to the soils turned toxic, to the relations severed between people and people, and between people and things."[376] As such, it is important to explore the ways in which race and dust intersect and animate each other in the mines.

The data are clear: dust inhalation in mines in South Africa disproportionately affects black miners. In his 1992 study on occupational diseases in South African mines, JP Leger concluded that black miners were more prone to develop respiratory illness in a shorter period of time than their white counterparts. Noting that black miners were exposed to "substantially higher dust levels than white miners," he extrapolates to observe that, despite advances in

[374] Stoler 2013, 18.

[375] Silicosis and tuberculosis are the two most common occupational respiratory diseases among miners in South Africa. Silicosis is caused by the inhalation of dust containing silica, a common occurrence underground. Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection; however, the chances of catching TB are three times higher among people with silicosis. RL. Cowie "The epidemiology of tuberculosis in gold miners with silicosis," *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, vol. 150.5 (1994).

[376] Stoler 2013, 7.

technology that should have served to better protect workers from dust inhalation, "black workers in the 1980s were exposed to dust levels similar to those experienced by white miners in the 1930s." Furthermore, Leger is emphatic about the fact that the data present results that likely do not reflect the severity of the situation for black miners because of a lack of consistent reports on disease contraction. He explains that black workers would be fired if they were diagnosed with a "compensable" disease and that "South African legislation [did] not require miners suffering from occupational disabilities to be provided with alternative employment."[377] Given that the majority of the miners were either disenfranchised black South Africans living under apartheid or black migrant laborers from other countries in Africa without many options in terms of employment or livelihood, many concealed their conditions from their supervisors and the mine's medical officers.

The end of formal apartheid in South Africa did not drastically change working conditions for black gold miners; indeed, dozens of studies that have come out in recent years on the "hidden epidemic" of occupational respiratory disease among miners. As Gill Nelson reports in her 2013 study, "the migrant labor system, poor dust control, an inadequate occupational exposure limit, and an ageing workforce with increasing durations of employment" are a few reasons for the increased rate of disease contraction.[378] Returning to Mel Chen, one can see the parallels in the way toxic dusts perform across geographies. Writing on lead toxicity in toys in the U.S., and a racialized lead "panic," Chen explains "the ongoing exposure of immigrants and people of color to risk that sets them up for conditions of bodily work and residence that dramatize the body burdens that projects of white nationalism can hardly refuse to perceive. Blithely overlooked – or steadfastly ignored – are the toxic conditions of labor and of

[377] JP Leger. "Occupational diseases in South African mines a neglected epidemic?," *South African Medical Journal*, vol. 81, issue 4, Feb (1992), 197.
[378] Nelson, 2013.

manufacture, such as inattention to harmful transnational labor and industrial practices that poison, in many cases, badly protected or unprotected workers."[379] In addition to the issues of transnational and migrant labor present in the mines of South Africa, we also conceptualize dust within the framework of the remnants of colonialism. Dust thwarts temporal categorization. The body of color, breathing in fatal dust particles, which themselves contain a history of exploitation, becomes a site of "*uneven temporal sedimentations* in which imperial formations leave their mark."[380] Dust is present, affecting the future health of the miners while also being a fossilized and "sedimented" article of the past; yet, dust animates different populations unevenly. As such, it is important to read in dust an extension of imperial temporality; meaning, colonial practices of systemic and rampant racial discrimination and prejudice are dragged into the present in a cloud of dust to be inhaled by a black miner in the Johannesburg mines.[381]

***Tshiamiso* - "to make good," or "to correct"**

In May 2018, the Court of South Africa approved an historic R 5,000,000,000 (228 million USD) class action settlement that awarded compensation to miners with silicosis and tuberculosis from major gold mining companies across the region. The litigation, which began in earnest in late 2012, was an uphill battle from the start. Until 2011, no worker in South African history had ever been successful in filing a common law suit against his employer for workplace injuries or illness. The landmark ruling in *Mankayi v. AngloGold Ashanti Limited* (2011) – a case filed by Thebekile Mankayi, a gold miner with silicosis and tuberculosis (who subsequently died

[379] Chen, 173-4.

[380] Ibid.

[381] Although slightly beyond the scope of this paper, it would be interesting to think, too, of how mining in the U.S., particularly coal mining, blackens miners both literally and as subjects. This could be an area of continued investigation: the ways in which race and mining intersect and inter(in)animate each other through subjectivity and skin.

during the trial process) – resulted in his being awarded damages for lost wages due to illness and for his medical expenses. Through this case, the Constitutional Court of South Africa opened the doorway to more expansive and comprehensive rulings. Following *Mankayi v. AngloGold*, attorney Richard Spoor filed suit in 2012 against major gold mining companies on behalf of over 15,000 prospective claimants from across Sub-Saharan Africa; the geographic breadth of the claimants maps onto the transnational recruitment strategies employed by mining conglomerates who relied on labor from rural areas across southern Africa to compliment, and suppress wages for, domestic labor. In 2016, the South African courts allowed the class action suit brought by Spoor (and other participating firms) to proceed against the "Occupational Lung Disease Working Group" - which represented the respondants: African Rainbow Minerals, Anglo American SA, AngloGold Ashanti, Gold Fields, Harmony Gold, and Sibanye-Stillwater.[382]

In theory, the litigation was not only meant to prove criminal negligence and endangerment, but also to demand, through subsequent legislation, that gold mining companies take concrete steps to improve workplace safety and adequate compensation for their employees. According to Spoor's website on the matter, the litigation

> alleges that the respondent gold mining companies knew of the dangers posed to miners by silica dust for more than a century and claims they are liable for 12 specific forms of neglect and endangerment. Foremost among these allegations are willful disregard and/or failure to execute almost all of the steps mandated in regulations and legislation designed to protect miners from silica dust.[383]

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[382]Ed Stoddard, Patricia Arou, "South Africa miners reach $400 million silicosis settlement with mining companies," *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-safrica-mining-silicosis/south-africa-miners-reach-400-million-silicosis-settlement-with-mining-companies-idUSKBN1I41B9; Motley Rice LLC, "Historic Settlement Agreement Reached in South African Gold Mine Workers' Class Action," *PR Newswire*, https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/historic-settlement-agreement-reached-in-south-african-gold-mine-workers-class-action-300642209.html; Richard Spoor Inc, "About the Silicosis Litigation," http://goldminersilicosis.co.za/about-the-silicosis-litigation/; "Summary of Court Judgement," file:///Users/doriacharlson/Downloads/Annexure%20G%20-%20Approved%20Summary%20of%20the%20Courts%20Decision%20-%2012%20Aug%202019%20(1).pdf

[383] Richard Spoor Inc, "About the Silicosis Litigation," http://goldminersilicosis.co.za/about-the-silicosis-litigation/

Through the class action suit, attorneys for the workers (and the workers themselves) hoped to prove that the epidemic of silicosis/tuberculosis among gold miners was not merely a result of compounding occupational hazards; rather, that mining companies "willfully" subjected their employees to practices that resulted in debilitating injury, loss of function, and, in many cases, death. A secondary goal of the litigation was to establish more precedence within the realm of South Africa common law in favor of the rights of workers to file suit against their employers for compensation. In practice, though, it is unclear what the impact of this settlement has been, or will be, on the gold mining industry in South Africa or for workers in other industries across the county because the suit ended in a settlement, which often does not impact case law (the type of law that formally establishes precedence). In other words, the years of negotiation and complex legal maneuvering to achieve this settlement provides for workers access to critical monetary compensation for their exposure to silica dust and negligent working conditions; however, the settlement did not go to trial, which means that there will likely little, if any, immediate modifications or actions taken to strengthen existing worker protections in South Africa. The problem with settlements – in this case of gold miners, and also in cases, say of sexual harassment – is that they absolve the parties of all responsibility with respect to this particular group (or, class) of claimants without establishing case law and, often, without being a matter of public record. All this to say that while the settlement was necessary and an important incremental step in achieving justice and reparations for gold miners, it was also a missed opportunity for rapid, structural change that could have outlined broader protections and regulations for industries and employers across the county.

The terms of the settlement include payments made by the mining companies to claimants that are determined based on the severity of their illness and granted upon proof of

both work history and injury. Part of the settlement included the creation of "The Tshiamiso Trust," named for the Setswana word meaning "to make good" or "to correct." The Trust is the main entity that will distribute funds to claimants and, as the name implies, indicates broader goals of reparations and recuperative justice that far exceed the terms of the settlement. What would it look like to actually "make good" in this context? Surely, to correct decades of systemic violence enacted on black miners, a one-time settlement is insufficient, particularly considering the ways in which the funds from the settlement are being distributed. Of the R 5 billion allocated in the settlement, R 845 million will be going to the administration of the Trust and R 370 million will be used to pay the legal fees of the various law firms involved in the suit.[384] Doing the math, that leaves about R 3.8 billion for fund distribution to the miners themselves. There are ten "classes" of claimants who receive payments of particular amounts once their illness and work history has been "certified" – the benefits are broken down as follows:

1. Silicosis Class 1: R70 000;*This is an early stage of silicosis (lung function impairment of up to 10%)*
2. Silicosis Class 2: R150 000; *This is the equivalent of 1st degree silicosis in ODMWA*
3. Silicosis Class 3: R250 000; *This is the equivalent of 2nd degree silicosis in ODMWA*
4. Silicosis Class 4 with defined special aggravated medical condition: a special award of up to R500,000. *This category provides relief to a small number of claimants who are suffering from extraordinary disease conditions which exceed most other silicotic claimants. There is no equivalent ODMWA compensation category.*
5. Dependant of a deceased eligible silicosis claimant who died between 12 March 1965 and the effective date: R100 000, where silicosis is deemed to be the primary cause of death;
6. Dependant of a deceased eligible silicosis claimant who died between 1 January 2008 and terminating on the effective date, where the deceased had the condition referred to in 2 or 3 above: R70 000;
7. First degree tuberculosis. An eligible claimant must: (i) have worked underground at a Working Group mine for two years; and (ii) have been diagnosed with first degree tuberculosis within a year of working at least one shift at a WG mine: R50 000;

[384] Stoddard.

8. Second degree tuberculosis (same conditions as 7 above save for second degree diagnosis): R100 000. The tuberculosis diagnoses are in line with MBOD definitions;
9. "Historical" tuberculosis (in absence of medical report determining degree of tuberculosis): An eligible claimant must: (i) have worked at a WG mine for 2 years between 12 March 1965 and 28 February 1994; (ii) have been issued with a tuberculosis certificate (without indicating degree of tuberculosis) within a year of working at least one shift at a WG mine: R10 000 or same condition as (i) and (ii) above but with proof of first degree tuberculosis: R50 000 or second degree tuberculosis: R100 000.
10. Dependant of a deceased tuberculosis claimant where: (i) the deceased worked underground at a Working Group mine for two years; (ii) the deceased died within a year of working at least one shift at a WG mine; and (iii) tuberculosis was the primary cause of the deceased's death: R100 000.[385]

Using the metrics outlined above, a worker with moderate silicosis (between class 2 and class 3) would receive a one-time payment of R200,000 which is $12,064 in 2020. A miner with "historical tuberculosis," meaning someone who has suffered from painful and chronic lung disease for between 30-60 years will receive maximum $6,031.[386]

In doing the research for this chapter, I learned that silicosis is called an "interstitial" disease. While one might generally consider an "interstice" to be a generic, small place, an alternative definition is the amount of space that exists between grains of sand. When looking at images of lungs affected with silicosis, I marvel at how the inhalation of miniscule particles of sand and stone can build up and do so much damage. The gradual erosion of the body inhalation of rock and dust created tunnels of scarring within the body. As a progressive disease, silicosis and tuberculosis develop quietly, insidiously. Like so many chronic conditions, particularly those pertaining to workplace injuries or illnesses, a formal diagnosis comes far too late. The damage

[385] "Silicosis Settlement" https://www.silicosissettlement.co.za/about; "ODMWA" stands for Occupational Diseases in Mines & Works Act (1973) and indicates a parallel to prior standards in that law.

[386] For comparison, based on research from the Pew Research Center, the average household income for black South Africans in 2011 was R60,613, which was about $8,700 USD at the time. That said, the average income for miners, particularly ones who were discharged for medical reasons was likely much lower than that. So, this settlement would likely be the equivalent of a few years of income. For further comparison, the average white household income for 2011 was R365,134. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/12/06/chart-of-the-week-how-south-africa-changed-and-didnt-over-mandelas-lifetime/

has already been done. I think about the temporality of silicosis within the body in relation to the gold miners' settlement: how can a court delineate the tipping point of injury? When does silicosis become "extraordinary"? And, what happens to those for whom illness is lying in wait? For those miners ineligible for benefits because they are too healthy, or too young, or have not have the ability to see a doctor, the distress and pain of illness is compounded by further rejection from the state and the institutions theoretically designed to protect them.

• • •

An excavation usually begins with a purpose; one, generally, digs *for* something. In the process of mining, there exists a pile of earth laid off to the side – land disturbed from its place in service of the greater project, this dirt is deemed useless and is left untended as the exercise of digging continues in search of the treasure. What happens when we turn away, even momentarily, from the holes left by shovels and tractors, and tend to the piles of discarded earth sacrificed for noble endeavors, when we honor that which is considered trivial, unimportant, or a nuisance? This study in dust sifts and sorts through histories tossed aside in favor of focused attention to, and resources for, larger projects, both archival and imperial. Following the dust into the mines and the archives, we have considered how the photographs of Ernest Cole both serve to maintain dominant narratives of colonialism while simultaneously contribute to the undermining of the imperial structures that encouraged their creation. Mining the archives with attention to places where dust accumulates can lead to new avenues and detours through material and provide a useful methodology for conducting historiography. Because dust circulates and moves, tracing dust expands our understanding of site and ecology, while also allowing for a renewed focus on the ways in which history can move between bodies. Dust, like performance, unsettles conceptions of linear temporality and serves as an archive of imperialism as it animates

breathing bodies with diseases bound to histories of apartheid and colonialism. In short: studies in and through dust allow us to explore the various ways we can breathe in the archive.

EPILOGUE

Social Distancing & Intimate Futures, or Getting Close in the time of COVID-19

This dissertation began with a story about coughing and panic. It seems fitting, then, that it would also end with coughing and panic. Just four weeks after the ultimately benign and temporary cloud of pepper spray that wafted across the orchestra of *Jagged Little Pill*, Broadway theatres have shuttered and will remain closed for weeks to avoid spreading novel coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) – a severe respiratory infection that has proven to be especially lethal for elderly people, those without access to healthcare, and those unable to take preventative measures.[387] At the time of writing this epilogue, each hour seems to bring news of closures, cancellations, and various permutations of "shelter-in-place." The hashtag #flattenthecurve is trending on Twitter and explains to the lay audience how these preventative measures, like cancelling large gatherings, asking people to work from home and self-isolate, and employing mitigating social praxes like "social distancing" will help prevent the U.S.' eviscerated health care system from being overwhelmed.[388] We've become suspicious of our bodies – a cough

[387] The situation report from the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that the crude mortality ratio is about 3-4% however, that number only indicates deaths per incidents reported. Given that there are likely many more cases of COVID-19 that are not reported, the actual mortality rate is presumed to be around 1%. A 1% mortality rate would mean that COVID-19 is ten times more lethal than the seasonal flu; however, these numbers are not dispersed equally across the population. COVID-19 is much more lethal for people over the age of 65, a population whose deaths are represent a high proportion of the overall mortality figures. Similarly, people with existing conditions (namely hypertension and other respiratory diseases) are much more likely to be severely affected by COVID. "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report - 46," *World Health Organization*. 6 March 2020. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200306-sitrep-46-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=96b04adf_2

[388] For so many reasons, the utter failure of leadership and preparedness from the Trump administration was entirely predictable. I need not expound here beyond a few key points; first, in 2018, the National Security Council's global pandemic director left his position and was not replaced. The entire team was disbanded by John Bolton. Second, Mike Pence has been appointed to head the government's task force against COVID-19. As Governor of Indiana, Mr. Pence was responsible for countless deaths from HIV when he refused to allow clean needle exchanges, defunded Planned Parenthood (thereby eliminating free HIV tests and closed testing sites) at the center of an outbreak. Third, the Trump administration has systemically dismantled social services that are required to respond to

suggestive of the worst possible outcomes, the catalyst for panic and scorn from those nearby (if one is still around people, of course). There is a run on items that are beneficial in preventing the spread of viruses (soap, hand sanitizer) and also on items that people are purchasing in bulk out of fear (toilet paper, bottled water – none of which mitigate COVID-19 nor are particularly necessary to prepare for a couple weeks of isolation). In a matter of months, the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped much of modern life. Not only has attention been newly drawn to the interconnectedness of global capital through the closing of various points across the supply chain, but also the virus has now fundamentally altered how people work, shop, eat, gather, move, and breathe. Basic hygienic measures such as washing one's hands, cleaning down surfaces, and avoiding extraneous touching of surfaces – objects and people – have centered and elevated awareness around what Sara Ahmed describes as the way "bodies take the shape of the very contact they have with objects and others."[389] Life in the pandemic not only requires us to take stock of, and recognize, our movements and how we circulate in space, but also attend to the ways in which the affective economies of COVID-19 are produced, policed, and mobilized to the detriment of those most vulnerable to its harmful effects. We have been exposed, literally.

The COVID-19 pandemic weaves together the threads extended by each case study presented in this project: the precarity of migrant labor, the ways in which we move and breathe are shaped by global flows steeped in extractive histories of racial capitalism, toxicity, and the experiences of being caught off guard and held in an extended period of suspense. The sites and examples of the preceding chapters lay the groundwork for the current labor and public health crises laid bare in the wake of COVID-19. Each chapter of *Consuming Crises* traces a particular cartography of migration, – patterns of how people moved in search of, and as, labor – as the

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an international crisis like a pandemic. More here. For more on #flattenthecurve: http://hscnews.unm.edu/news/flattenthecurve

[389] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2014), 1.

necessarily embodied circulations required to reproduce and perpetuate industrial capitalism. Every chapter contends with the co-imbrication of toxicity and the body engendered by extractive forms of labor and racial capitalism while also attending to how said systems function to render the body, particularly the laboring body, in a state of perpetual suspension. Across different sites and political systems, I have traced both how movement is necessary to survive extractive capitalism and, simultaneously, how the movements of individuals – both in labor and leisure – are dictated, restricted, and policed in order for capitalism itself to survive. This epilogue serves not only as a conclusion by way of tying loose ends together against the backdrop of the pandemic (which offers both the breakdown in-real-time of various structures of capital and their deep entrenchment), but also as a means to lift up strategies of survival and empowerment that offer reformulations of proximity and breath that instruct us how to create more intimate futures.

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Consuming Crises centers on moments of disruption. The various temporal, geographic, and systemic irruptions to the status quo presented in my chapters triggered drastic and dramatic responses which, perhaps inevitably, eventually stabilized and cultivated a new normal, a slightly different baseline from which to measure "progress." The project opens with an extended framing of one of the most visible and disruptive events of contemporary American labor history: the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. In this chapter, I juxtaposed the Triangle Fire with disaster spectacles on Coney Island to illustrate how common crises of capitalism in Progressive Era New York, such as access to clean air, safe housing, and viable workplace conditions, were spectacularized and consumed by the public. The Triangle Fire and its aftermath mirrored the scenography and choreography of Coney Island's disaster spectacles with a critical difference;

whereas in the disaster spectacles audiences were directed towards the labors of firemen acting as agents of the state, the Triangle Fire spectacularized labor that was supposed to be invisible – that of immigrant women working in garment factories. Framing the Triangle Fire as spectacle allows us to see the event not as the tragic result of negligent behavior of individuals, but as a production – the inevitable culmination of intentional decisions and directions supported by various existing structures, supported by capital, and designed to be reproduced and consumed by the public. Furthermore, I outlined how the progress narrative of the Progressive Era and of liberalism in the United States, is, at its heart, predicated on the manipulation of an exemplar disaster spectacle: the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. I demonstrated how the aftermath of the Fire serves to reinvisiblize precarious labors through the subsequent relationships formed by labor unions and the state.

In this chapter, I demonstrated how the public canonization of the Triangle Fire as a turning point for labor protection obscures how the Fire ultimately reinforced and strengthened the relationships between industrial capital and the state, which actually minimized the power of individual workers and limited the capacity of workers to collectively organize. Key to the normative historiography of the Triangle Fire is the direct line drawn between the events surrounding the Fire (including prior labor strikes and subsequent organizing) and labor protections enacted during Frances Perkins' tenure as Secretary of Labor. One of Perkins' hallmark legislative victories was the enactment of the National Labor Relations Act (1935) which did drastically alter the working conditions of industrial laborers for the better, but at the expense of more widespread worker protections across various industries. Particularly relevant to this moment is the fact that in order to get the NLRA through Congress, its authors required the support of Southern congressmen who vehemently opposed including domestic workers in the

law's protections (notably the right to collectively organize). Given that the majority of domestic workers in the South in the 1930s were black women, immigrants, and other women and people of color, the law provides an example of the ways in which the U.S.'s labor protections abandoned black women in order to enshrine rights for industrial workers who were overwhelmingly white and male. Corollary legislation such as the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938) and the Family and Medical Leave Act (1993) also functionally excludes domestic workers and caregivers from its protections and benefits.[390] Much like in the aftermath of the Triangle Fire, life during COVID-19 exposes, once again, the precarious labor that keeps the global economy flowing. Government officials and public health experts from across the world are imploring people to self-isolate and practice social distancing; however, for the most vulnerable workers, there is no safe option. In a country without universal paid sick leave, many U.S. workers are forced to choose between an income (i.e., the ability to have shelter and food) and the risks involved in either working while ill or infecting others. Domestic workers, caregivers, and service workers are among the most vulnerable populations; these are also occupations that have been historically, and are presently, held predominantly by women, immigrants, and especially women of color. At this moment of crisis, domestic labor that has been demeaned and invisiblized is now at the forefront of an international public health emergency. Ai-jen Poo, the founder of the National Domestic Workers' Alliance writes in her recent *New York Times* op-ed about the necessity of passing the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights which would extend existing protections granted to workers of other professions to

390 The Fair Labor Standards Act expands upon minimum wage standards, hour protections, and overtime work/payment. As written in 1938, it excluded all domestic workers; however, in a 1974 amendment, it was altered to cover some forms of domestic labor. Notably it excluded live-in domestic workers from receiving overtime pay and it excludes certain forms of senior caregiving from its protections. Rachel Homer, "An Explainer: What's Happening with Domestic Workers' Rights?," *On Labor*. https://onlabor.org/an-explainer-whats-happening-with-domestic-workers-rights/

domestic laborers and would grant them additional protections to compensate for the greater risks imposed on them during times of crisis.[391] As the case studies in this dissertation have shown, enacting legislation to protect workers against the ravages of extractive labor under capitalism is, euphemistically, imperfect and entirely insufficient, subsuming workers into structures where precarity is not eliminated but altered. And yet, for the time being, incremental steps matter and the visibility and urgency of this moment can raise and maintain energy to provide some solace, support, and relief to those upon whose labors we rely every day to keep us safe and healthy.

The second chapter of *Consuming Crises* also contends with a vulnerable population – migrant, agricultural laborers during the 1930s.[392] The poor, indigent agricultural migrant moved from the Great Plains to California because of compounding crises; notably, drought worsened by extractive, industrial agricultural techniques and eviction due to land consolidation and histories of debt/land tenancy. I argue that this migration of hundreds of thousands of people causes its own crisis of labor that, once spectacularized through photographs and narrative, required the government to intervene. One form of government intervention was the creation of the migratory labor camp system, which temporarily housed migrants after their arrival in California. Importantly, I historicize this Dust Bowl migration through the lens of white agrarianism that is grounded in liberal understandings of property rights and citizenship; I then trace how this politic travelled and moved with migrants to California through analysis of the performance practices that took place in FSA migratory labor camps. An extension of the discussion on the ways in which the triumphs of American liberalism were narrativized and embodied from the previous chapter, chapter two honed in on how dance practices in the camps

[391] Ai-jen Poo, "Protect Caregivers from Coronavirus," *The New York Times*, 9 March 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/09/opinion/protect-caregivers-from-coronavirus.html
[392] Notably, agricultural workers are also excluded from the NLRA.

consolidated the white, agricultural migrants into a narrative of American progress that was critical to Roosevelt's New Deal programs and the American imaginary at the onset of World War II. Offering a vision of how poor workers became "modernized" and incorporated into white working subjects through training in industrial, agricultural practices (then considered state of the art), this chapter also traces how the evolution of images of dances and blackface minstrel performances in the camps which served to project, for the government, a narrative of successfully reincorporating the migrants back into the social reproduction of capital.

In the time of COVID-19, America's "modern" workforce is shaped through its proficiency in, and access to, technology. Those who are able to shift to work-from-home or remote learning/teaching are taking their labors into the private sphere at a scale that's unprecedented, leaving exposed to the public – and to the virus – those whose work is site-specific, contingent, and precarious. Through the internet and other technology like online classrooms, video conferencing, streaming services, and more, it is easier than ever to keep capitalism moving even while those who can afford it stay sheltered in place. The proliferation of online services like food delivery apps – from grocery stores and restaurants – and online shopping, particularly during the enforcement of "social distancing," exemplify the tension between manual labor and late-stage capitalism. As our Grubhub driver bikes across town to deliver our food, leaving it on the side of the house to avoid contact, we become further removed, further disembodied from the process of creation. While one form of the modern worker employs technology, he forgets that another "modern" worker – one who is differently employed and sustained through the use of technology – is anonymized, invisible, and unprotected.

Racial violence and extractive capitalism come together in explicit fashion in chapter three, which considers dance performances performed by black gold miners in apartheid South Africa. Through an excavation into the archives of black South African photographer Ernest Cole, I unearth a more thorough history of "tribal dances" that took place on gold mining reservations between the 1950s-1970s that considers these dances as extractive labor. Furthermore, this chapter emphasizes the ways in which the work of gold mining degrades the bodies of the workers through exposure to toxic dust. The chapter outlines how silicosis, tuberculosis, and the scarring of miners' lungs renders his body an archive of capitalist destruction, environmental devastation, and racial violence. The durational and permanent damage wreaked upon black gold miners for over a century was acknowledged, at least in part, in 2018 when the Court of South Africa sided with gold miners in the largest class action lawsuit in its history, granting access to reparations and medical care to thousands of gold miners.

The ability to breathe freely – to have access to clean air and to work and live with freedom – is a central motif throughout this project. Whether through particulate matter – smoke or dust – or through exposure to toxic working conditions, each chapter contends itself with the relationship between labor, toxicity, and the body, with particular attention paid to the ways in which processes of racialization and structural violence are enacted within each of these frameworks. In the first chapter, factory laborers and immigrants racialized as non-white in the industrialized Northeast were subject to toxic living and working conditions. Immigrants were relegated to substandard housing and work conditions, which necessarily bred ill health and disease; attributes which were then sutured to immigrants themselves. Jewish and Italian immigrants were considered to be ontologically dirty or prone to disease and these populations, particularly Jews, were also associated with rampant urbanization. Similarly, migrants from the

Great Plains in chapter two were considered to be naturally dirty, unhygienic, and prone to disease, a stereotype reinforced through vagrancy laws in California. In South Africa, the apartheid government itself was grounded on white supremacy and the notion that black people were inferior to whites. As such, black miners were placed in the most toxic and strenuous occupations without regard for their safety, health, or well-being.

The co-imbrication of breath, toxicity, and race has again come to the forefront of public discourse amidst COIVD-19. As Mel Y. Chen outlines in their work *Animacies*, there exists a long history of racial anxiety and "Orientalist threats/yellow terror" regarding China and people of Chinese origin in the United States, which extends to the present day through the novel coronavirus.[393] Chen writes, "interests in toxicity are particularly (if sometimes stealthily) raced...toxins participate vividly in the racial mattering of locations, human and nonhuman bodies, living and inert entities, and events such as disease threats."[394] Indeed, since the initial outbreak of COVID-19 near Wuhan, China in December 2019, the virus has been ascribed both a nationality and an origin story by politicians and the media. For example, on March 9, 2020 Kevin McCarthy, the House Minority Leader tweeted a link to the CDC's coronavirus homepage with the following message: "Everything you need to know about the Chinese coronavirus can be found on one, regularly-updated website..."[395] After being criticized for this racist tweet, McCarthy attempted to justify himself by tweeting the next day, "Coronavirus in a China-born disease – made worse by the Communist Party that rejected America's help to contain it."[396] In one tweet, McCarthy exemplifies Chen's theorizations of how toxins become animated for political expediency, in support of a racial hierarchy, and in service of biopolitical control while

[393] Chen, 169-70.
[394] Chen, 10.
[395] Kevin McCarthy, Twitter. 9 March 2020. https://twitter.com/GOPLeader/status/1237165063565447168
[396] Kevin McCarthy, Twitter. 10 March 2020. https://twitter.com/GOPLeader/status/1237529551946670080

simultaneously inciting racial violence against Asian Americans, and people of Chinese origin living in the United States. At the time of writing this epilogue, countries across the world are enforcing severe restrictions on travel and general mobility in order to stave off the worst-case scenarios, an over-run health care system and staggering human death. It's unclear, at present, the extent and efficacy of these restrictions in stopping this airborne virus.

At this point, I want to hit pause on the weight, brutality, and burden of COVID-19 to offer up some thoughts on breath and intimacy as a means of surviving this pandemic. I'm asking out of personal and collective interest: what does it mean to get close in the time of COVID-19? Public health officials, the media, and institutions across the United States have begun advocating for "social distancing" – a technique of mitigating exposure to viruses through self-isolation and by literally keeping one's distance. How are we creating moments of intimacy without physical proximity? In the short term, social distancing demands urgent creativity in order to support those within our communities who need care and services at scale.[397] How we will respond to both the needs of our community and our own desires amidst indefinite isolation is unknown. In the past days, in my own community, the mobilization of a number of mutual aid societies, ad hoc food tables, and offers for groceries, medication, employment, and more has been uplifting; yet, the duration and scope of social distancing means these networks will only be one part of the solution. There is no doubt that many of the most vulnerable will have calamities compounded as the pandemic spreads through our communities.

In the long term, I wonder if this immediate, necessary mode of relation could be considered an invitation to reconsider our relationships within the frameworks of time and space and to enact practices that could yield more intimate futures. Black feminist activist, poet, and

[397] It must be underscored that communities under attack from the state and nefarious forms of systemic exclusion and violence have been doing this for centuries.

organizer adrienne maree brown in her podcast, "How to Survive the End of the World," hosted a conversation between herself, her sister, Autumn, and scholar/poet/activist Alexis Pauline Gumbs in 2018 entitled "A Breathing Chorus."[398] In this conversation, Gumbs and the Brown sisters discuss black feminist strategies of breathing that invite history, power, and capacity-building into the space and into the body. In reflecting upon this podcast in 2020, brown writes that Gumbs' practices invite a kind of "respiratory invasion" – a physiological and spiritual exercise in which, through breath, one can enter into circular time and be present with both history and the future.[399] Unlike the nationalist, deadly respiratory invasion evoked through McCarthy's rhetoric, the work of breath for Gumbs and Brown is not a hostile, violent take-over but a joyful surrender into rhythm. In the interview, Gumbs draws upon Franz Fanon and Ntozake Shange's conceptualizations of "combat breathing" – a mode of respiration practiced in the face of threats and violence. Combat breathing is reactive – a powerful survival tactic that enabled struggles for freedom to be waged. Gumbs, though, sought to experiment with breathing as a chorus, collective breathing, and breathing informed by desire; her resulting practices use individual and and collective breath as a means of accessing freedom.[400] As Gumbs describes, there is tremendous power in being able to call in, through breath, histories of (im)possibilities and the triumphs of freedom seekers, joyful ancestors, and the vision of collective liberation. While Gumbs' leads her breathing chorus as a workshop, as brown comments, the practice can be modified for individuals. It is an exercise in mindful breath, conjuring, and groundedness.

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[398] adrienne maree brown and autumn brown, "A breathing chorus," *How To Survive the End of the World.* https://soundcloud.com/endoftheworldshow/a-breathing-chorus-with-alexis-pauline-gumbs

[399] adrienne maree brown, "additional resources for facing coronavirus." http://adriennemareebrown.net/2020/03/10/additional-resources-for-facing-coronavirus-covid19/comment-page-1/?unapproved=3060627&moderation-hash=595789ecedc1e1e9cd0c1e5a045f9bab&fbclid=IwAR1Wq4K3X9t1B71_N89nAR77LivqDBovlQMaoKnv45uANap-PVHTM7l_Xf8#comment-3060627.

[400] brown and Brown, 29:00-36:00.

I highlight Gumbs and brown's black feminist approaches to cultivating relation and intimacy in social distancing because of the expansiveness of their breathing practice to extend across distance and across time. By attending to other forms of sociality such as accessing alternative times, embodying groundedness, and attending to our most immediate surroundings, the breathing chorus provides one means of returning to our bodies, many of which need a lot of care in the face of rampant overwork and lack of tenderness (from ourselves and others). Furthermore, by holding space and time for breath and by honoring how our bodies connect time and space provides an opportunity to reflect upon histories of resilience and our individual and collective capacity for care/change. I am not a black woman and necessarily my practice in this mode of breathing chorus is different, the ancestors I invoke overlap, likely, with Gumbs and brown, but not entirely. What I take away from this exercise is an invitation to be open. To allow my breath to be a vessel and a story that weaves its way out, through, and into my body, collecting knowledge along the way. I am imbued with it. I am strengthened and calmed. I am connected.

Breath will not alleviate the myriad and multiply unknown problems left in the wake of COVID-19, that is a given. However, as a practice that enables us to better survive these tumultuous times, to pause and call in our communities and how we must act to support them, to feel connected to the world around us, engenders a mindfulness that I hope transcends isolation. As COVID-19 as laid bare the utter clarity of the interconnectedness of global capital and the circulation of affect, goods, and people, I hope that it will also serve to redirect and restructure our modes of relation to ourselves, each other, and the planet. To be with bated breath, ready to face our world at this moment, is to be standing at a precipice, to be full of trepidation about what could happen next. As we stay put, suspended from "normalcy," there is no better time than

the present to truly attend to our immediate surroundings in ways that are novel and meaningful. It's a unique moment where we are required to be extended – distanced in physical space – but proximate in this shared experience together. What will we make of it?

APPENDIX

I. "Holiday Throng Sees Ruins of Building: Mourners Slowly Pass Through Streets, Viewing the Scene from Every Side. Pushcart Venders Busy. Police Kept Procession Moving, and Not Until Late at Night Did the District Regain Normal Appearance"

The crowd that formed a solid mass about the scene of the fire was peculiar in many ways. It has been said before that New York crowds differ from those that congregate in any other quarter of the globe. This one was cosmopolitan, and to walk through [...] from one end of the serried ranks to the other was to run the gamut of human emotions.

Here there stood a solid little group – father, mother, and son – perhaps the daughter was among the dead. A few steps further down the line would be another group, watching the people, looking at the long lines of police, perhaps at the roof of the burned building, for that was all they could see – patient, but full of curiosity. Then there were irresponsible young fellows, with giggling girls on their arms, who seemed to regard the whole affair as a festival.

To one standing at Greene street and Washington Place, where the burned building looms up, the crowd had appearance of a battle square formation. Over in Washington Square Park could be seen the heads of others, the brightly colored hat of a girl, or the head of a small boy perched in one of the old trees in the park. Certain it is that every place of vantage from which any angle of the building could possibly be seen was occupied.

A journey through these people in the park by one who knew nothing of the fire which had exacted its grim toll of death would have been most misleading. The general atmosphere was that of a country circus or of a Vanity Fair.

Standing over there are the intersection of the footpaths would be a vender of ice cream cones. In a strident voice he would call his wares, leaning on the handles of his small pushcart. If those who passed by him did not heed his voice he had recourse to his small bell, which he tinkled energetically as he extolled the virtues of his stock.

Passing under the great Washington Square arch, there was another feature out of the ordinary and strangely out of place, near as it was to scenes of sorrow and disaster. With the resonant blowing of a horn and the rumble of heavy wheels, one of the unwiedly Fifth avenue stage buses would roll along the smooth asphalt pavement. Atop of the great wagon, like country people riding on a farmer's carry-all when it is loaded with hay, would be gayly dressed men and women. The hats of the women would form a gaudy bit of coloring against the dull green of the bus, like flowers in a bit of greensward, and the high silk hats of the men would add a touch of smartness to the effect.

The people on the top of those buses did not seem to realize that they were so near to where had been death and destruction a scant twenty-four hours before. They had the appearance and the air of sightseers wending their way through a country fair. The very ringing of the conductor's bell heightened the general effect of hilarity and freedom from care. The entire park, surrounded as it

was with the gray old houses of New York's earlier aristocracy, seemed to have been created from the pages of a Thackery or a Dickens.

This was the lighter side of the picture, the angle on which the flooding sunshine radiated. There was another tone in the background – the sombre one – and the appeal of this quality was the more powerful of the two. Long after the gayer side has been forgotten that darkened area will linger in the memory of all who were there to see it.

Most of those who had real cause to be there - those who had lost relative or friend in those few mad minutes of Saturday -- congregated on the Waverley Place side of the building, it afforded them a closer view. Those who had lost in that fire could be easily distinguished from the others, led by idle curiosity. They walked slowly - as slowly, that is, as the police would allow them, with a curious halting step. Many of them kept their hands folded across their breasts – the women and there was a piteous appeal in their eyes.

As they reached the crossing of Greene street and Waverley Place, from which they could see that corner of the building where the fire had started, they halted a moment, trying to focus the last spot where their dead had stood poised a moment before the downward leap on the cruelly narrow passage formed by Greene street and be lost to view behind the walls of the next building.

The same people would make their appearance a few minutes later at the Broadway Side of the square of humanity. Here again they would go through the same performance, seeing the building from another angle and that corner from which six girls plunged to their death at one time.

Exceeding in the links of the endless chain of humanity which revolved about the building, the bereaved would then come slowly into view on the Mercer street side. From there they could catch a fleeting glimpse of the Washington Place side of the factory building. At the foot of the gray mass of brick they saw the jagged glass portico through which one of the unfortunates in Saturday's calamity had crashed to sudden death.

In the centre of the square of sorrowing humanity, rising grimly like a giant tomb, the blackened and scarred building reared its head.

Those who were in charge of the crowd, besides the two hundred patrolmen, included First Deputy Commissioner Driscoll, Inspector Max Schmittberger, Inspector Daly, Captain Dominick Henry, of the Mercer street station, and a score of other lieutenants and sergeants. Whenever the people would grow too insistent – and this usually happened on the Washington Square side of the square -- Commissioner Driscoll would give a short half audible command to a lieutenant. Then the patrolmen would push the crowds back, clear across the street, and the slow-moving procession would continue.

It was well after 9 o'clock before the last straggler left the neighborhood of the burned building. By 10 o'clock only the firemen stationed in the building and a handful of police remained.

II.

In this photograph, "View of Kern migrant camp, community center at left, California" by Dorothea Lange (1936), one can clearly see an open-air platform with a kind of bandshell that served as the community center. This is in stark contrast to the modern, indoor community centers of the 1940s migratory labor camps. [401]

[401] Dorothea Lange. "View of Kern migrant camp, community center at left. California." California Kern County Kern County. United States, 1936. Nov. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017763237/.

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