'Holy Water': The Crisis of White Affect, Infrastructural Threat, and Horticultural Promise in the Sacramento Valley

By

Robert Edward Moeller

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Abstract

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A network of levees, channels, and weirs means to protect Sacramento, CA from catastrophic flooding. However, civic boosters never claimed geomorphological reinvention as infrastructure's sole fantastic promise for the capital city. Their assurances intrinsically imbricated riverine stability with guarantees of infrastructural financial steadiness and civilizational might. This economic consistency remained an alluring promise within a developmental ethos encouraging speculation and wealth concentration.

Through racial capitalist critique, I dissect three prominent Sacramentan hydrological corporations that appealed to whiteness as aligning these values: Natomas Consolidated, the Sutter Basin Company, and the California Steam Navigation Company. Despite uneven development's racialized landscapes alternately stockpiling potential value or sinking excessive commodities, eventually overproduction or ecological variation inexorably induces market crisis. In response, elite Sacramentans mitigated inherent capitalist contradiction by fabricating a novel white racial form tethered to infrastructural development. They imagined whiteness as a balancing force capturing nature's potential, harnessing returns through technological abstraction, and allowing ceaseless circulation—including of capitalism's detritus. They fantasized a universal, domestic, and fecund whiteness yielding productive landscapes from waste in whatever context. In their fantasy, whiteness could transit ceaselessly from empire's hinterlands back to its core with minimal friction, mimicking infrastructure and avoiding expansion's inevitable limits.

I analyze affective traces from these firms' developmental schema to critique their reliance on whiteness across scales to resolve crisis. They prioritized the domestic imperative, technofetishism, and abstraction of whiteness through infrastructural association. The massive public works offered concrete stability for wandering investment once particular resource caches withered, individual financial parachutes for overeager speculators, and even novel intimate racial identities for an emergent imperial settler colony. I track ephemeral traces of this emotional attachment, recounting the beating heart of capitalism's inevitable catastrophe and an innate racial recourse deferring disaster through offers of white civilizational redemption.

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conceptual approaches to racialization and capitalism, but produces universal social theory that must be celebrated and shared. He taught me to be selfless and to carry my commitments into every academic and casual conversation. He reaffirmed that racialization is a problem of capital and capital is a problem of violence, and suggested alternate visions of healing, relation, and reciprocity towards which I am still striving. Above all, he believed in my project despite no seeming overlap between our fields, and really listened to my passions and stoked that fire. Jovan, thank you for all the laughter and inspiration—I got here because of your guidance.

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I. The Heart of California: Navigating from Sacramento to Sacto as Shorthand for California's Racial Business Plan

According to its own metrics, the United States Army did not fully conquer Sacramento, California until 1949. Despite achieving victory across World War II's Pacific theater four years prior, the inland Central Valley's hydrological system was still too unruly to be deemed stable without further intervention. Thus, in the mid-20th century, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed an exhaustive solution to the perennial flooding and seepage plaguing the Sacramento Valley and Delta's reclaimed farmlands since the mid-19th century. They would build their very own river: the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' "Definite Project Report," this waterway's primary accomplishment—listed first under a section entitled "Benefits"—is the logistical advantage that "Sacramento and its tributary area will be furnished with deep water transportation." This development's subsequent impacts testify to logistics' ultimate compositional purpose, as the Corps bequeaths a merger of ecological and market stability to the Valley.

Following their initial proclamation, they elaborate that "Shippers and receivers of offshore commerce in the Sacramento tributary trade area will save on transportation costs." Constraints on untenable freight rates do not entail the totality of the Deep Water Ship Channel's success; market regulation presupposes that much more profound disasters will also be averted. Fundamental changes to the landscape's geomorphology will ensure that the "Frequency of flooding of the reclaimed tracts in the lower Yolo Bypass will be decreased. The portion of Little Holland Tract and Prospect Island lying easterly of the ship channel can now be economically protected from Yolo Bypass Project floods." (Sacramento District, Corps of Engineers, 25).

While navigational prowess might be the entire *raison d'être* for the project, this last claim terminates the list to reiterate imperial military prowess at altering landscapes for habitability—a godlike capacity consistently touted during the colonial project in the Americas. Yet, the qualitative characteristic of protection betrays a fundamental source of tension. This is an ongoing ecological battle—at this juncture over three-quarters of a century old—yet its rationale recursively returns to Little Holland and Prospect Island's necessity for protection "economically." Navigation accomplishes more than deciphering a landscape for explorers. In the final tally, military might most resplendently accomplishes stabilizing markets.

I begin with exchange's persistence as the engine behind geomorphological infrastructural interventions in the Valley, and proceed to theorize how exchange's valuation, canonization, and resilience fundamentally depend upon racial logics. The Corps' prioritization of a navigable river to ensure imperial sustenance and subsequent well-being mimics the valuation of Sacramento from its earliest settler history. The city consistently responds to both meteorological and financial crises by tapping a mythical fount of natural plentitude and white fortitude to impose material accumulative schemes. Returning through time to colonial Sacramento's origins, this same geographical imaginary roughly mirrors the career of the founder of New Helvetia (the name of Sacramento's forerunner), John Sutter. His initial fortunes relied upon Sacramento's logistical advantages, linking overland routes to California with the Pacific Ocean via the California Delta and San Francisco Bay.

Sutter's demise owed less to natural disaster than his inheritors, but rather a monetary upheaval spurred by the internal dynamics of a developing resource extraction market. As the preeminent biographer of Sutter Albert Hurtado explains, "Sutter's primitive monetary monopoly" based upon forced Indian labor and commercial centralization "quickly ended as gold dust, coin, and regular currency came into circulation." Like his Sacramentan successors, Sutter

would attempt to escape the turmoil of capitalist exchange through a renaissance of his original agrarian vision. He "retired to Hock Farm on the Feather River, where he continued to rely on Indian labor." Sutter's case demonstrates the racist exploitation of Nisenan laborers. He paid them in old clothes while destroying sources of nutrition and health through disease-ridden confinement, targeted ecological transformation, or direct violence to limit avenues for resistance.

Yet his fate also demonstrates the coconstitution of monetary exchange and racial formation in California. For latter arrivants like Chinese emigres, this inherent dependence would lead to lynching and eventual exclusion as white labor asserted its preeminence. For the Nisenan, racial capitalist circuits of finance, extraction, agriculture, and the hierarchization and embodiment of race through civilizational associations of mastery or servitude eventually proved an avenue of potent resistance. Sutter could not reverse the crisis of a diversifying market, as he decried how "The Indians near his farm, Sutter claimed, were out of control. They refused to work for less than a dollar a day and, in Sutter's opinion, spent their money unwisely on liquor in Marysville. […] As Sutter put it in his characteristic broken English, 'nothing as the Dollars could bring them to work.'" (Hurtado, 66-67). Sutter was in no way averse to domination through violence. However, an infrastructure allowing *financial* logics and associated civilizational associations to flow upstream came to define the terms of participation, success, and rebellion in the region.

Sutter embodies an early phase of settler colonial incursion, in which corporal punishment, enslavement, and genocide through murderous militias and ecological violence maintained his fragile foothold amid preexisting political rivalries among tribes. Sutter was able to engage this animosity and brutally enforce his rule, but was unable to secure hegemony over the Sacramento Valley. His incapacity to hedge either financial or environmental variation directly correlated to the extent he could fundamentally alter infrastructural operations. Controlling the Valley meant redirecting its hydrological and commodity flows and transforming seasonal acorn harvesting and coastal-to-mountain trade routes into a primarily mineral and lumber extraction and long-distance agribusiness shipping network. I highlight Hock Farm for the dynamics Sutter encountered at his doomed, eventually burnt-down agricultural settlement. This operation resembles the phase of settler colonialism examined in this dissertation. The three companies I analyze—Natomas Consolidated, the Sutter Basin Company, and the California Steam Navigation Company—each emerged tumultuous financial or ecological moments in the Valley, with each making recourse to financial markets and racial feelings to avoid Sutter's demise.

Sutter did specifically attempt to quash opposition to racialized, devalued labor. He would convince the superintendent of Indian affairs for California to move what he deemed "troublesome" Nisenan to a reservation. Yet he was unable to stoke rivalry and foreclose alternatives for the Hock and Yukulme workers with whom he proposed to replace other quarrelsome fieldhands. My dissertation explores how subsequent firms addressed novel commercial and financial circumstances often directly resultant from ecological shifts due to directed land reclamation or hydrological diversion. Consistently fearful of disaster, environmental crisis and financial instability became nearly synonymous in Sacramento. To preclude capitalist instability that offers labor the opportunity to pit owners and financiers against one another, the firms featured in this analysis specifically assembled a novel imperial whiteness firmly entrenched in previous colonial encounters but recalibrated for a global speculative market helmed by U.S. Pacific influence.

They sought not just like Sutter to take advantage of racialization's impact on the calculation of rates of exchange (as in, more racialized labor allows for a reserve army of excess unfixed capital for cheap investment). They attempted to establish the very management and calculation of those rates—interest, currency, property valuation—as a white operation that melded civilizational goals with a peculiar, emergent, and singular white economic logic. In the century following 1849 when the Natoma Company began to construct ditches diverting water to placer diggings in the gold fields, to the initial Gilded Age infrastructural intervention that made California Steam Navigation steamships regular commercial and cultural liaisons between Sacramento and Eastern markets, to the post-World War fervor over California land valuations the Sutter Basin real estate venture would fantastically fail to make profitable, all of these firms recycled and revised an association between whiteness and infrastructure that sought to reconcile the cultural attachments of race with the economic logics of unfettered growth.

This dissertation examines racial capitalism's attempted mitigation of accumulation's contradictions through civilizational appeals. Specifically, I address how temporary racial displacement, blame, and uneven developmental potential inevitably yield to either economic or ecological crisis. Whiteness resolves this crisis through an affective appeal that equates colonial expansion with domestic bliss, and oscillates between the two when one or the other inevitably falters. Undergirded by a racialized emotional appeal, infrastructural engineering remains the pivot point that secures fidelity to and naturalizes this uneven, disaster-ridden development. Sacramento serves as my case study as its prominent corporate firms cycled through myriad catastrophes buoyed by whiteness's affective appeals—to domesticity, ordered landscapes, and universal exchangeability. Infrastructure offers a palpable realization of these ideals in the fields and streams of the Valley. We will follow this process across scales, as financial infrastructure regulates landscapes to yield dividends for future settlement despite catastrophe. This promise eventually saturates interiority and subjectivity and demonizes racializations that remain disconnected from its core directive: uninhibited flow.

The legacy of contestation, racial violence, infrastructural reuse, and economization as a white settlement strategy is captured at Sutter's second-chance settlement, Hock's Farm. On a visit to the venture's memorial, nestled among citrus groves below the sacred Sutter Buttes, I encountered a plaque erected in 1927 by the Sutter and Yuba Bi-County Federation of Women's Clubs. The barely noticeable tablet recounted how "This memorial is constructed of the original iron from the fort of Hock Farm, established in 1841 by John Augustus Sutter, being the first white settlement in Sutter County." The reuse of iron in the sign demonstrates that colonial civilizational paeans are durable to the point of reconfiguration and that even a failure to properly read the racial dynamics of intertwined places and markets can still be regaled for inserting whiteness into a region. The bullet holes from target practice that riddle this sign, however, suggest that crisis resolution is never easy. Settler futurity needs a stable, affectionate association with technoscientific infrastructure to stubbornly and often misguidedly declare that whiteness is here to stay despite ecological and social upheaval. I begin with an overview of whiteness and infrastructure as the inherently flawed but stubbornly persistent subjective and material instantiations of capitalism's claims to geographic universality and relevance.

Communicating the Crisis: Affective Whiteness and Geographic Stability

Sacramento is a fearful city; its entire existence relies upon a cradle of earthworks dampening monumental seasonal topographical shifts. Emblematic of the irrigated West, Sacramento served as the continental terminus of Manifest Destiny and the port of call for its transmogrification into a global empire across the Pacific. Civic developers entrusted regional

infrastructure with two discrete tasks to span and suture these missions: force interoperability and translatability with colonial political economy upon unique climatological zone, and within that laboratory of environmental transformation synthesize a racial order that denigrated isolation and more importantly crafted intimate racial subjectivities out of that denigration. Although Sacramento concentrated this process, the novel emotional attachments to infrastructure undergirding a whiteness both imperial *and* settler colonial strove for universality on an unprecedented level for racial order and the capitalist impulses this order reflects. Infrastructure practically provides diversion routes for stagnant capital within a region alongside flumes for excess capital elsewhere to (re)develop a frontier. Its mechanics simultaneously reaffirm an imagined sanctity of whiteness by grading landscapes on their affective comportment with market imperatives and abstract interchangeability.

Crisis demands an emergency exit route. Whiteness also always needs a place to go. Sacramento historiography offers a unique opportunity to analyze on a more intimate scale this seemingly contradictory geographical impulse to demand movement in order to secure stability under racial capitalism. The California State Railroad Museum's display of the golden spike hammered at Promontory Point, Utah to complete the Transcontinental Railroad is perhaps the most vivid exemplar of this phenomenon. For the city to establish itself as a fixed urban space, fighting back the floodwaters of the Sacramento and American Rivers would not suffice. Perpetual investment in the hydrological infrastructure securing the city required engineering not just in local riverbanks but in far-flung deserts near the Great Salt Lake. Only national market integration could establish Sacramento as a valuable, or even viable, depot along imperial commercial and military logistical routes. Permanence for the capital necessitated local infrastructural regulation and consistent attentiveness to hydraulic and transportation webs stretching across the arid West and aqueous Pacific.

Within the Sacramento Valley, that stability is cast in decidedly cultural and civilizational terms, consistently racialized as a genteel existence amid flurries of geological and economic revolutions. A transitionary introductory passage from the sole environmental history of the Sacramento Valley, *River City and Valley Life*, begins and concludes with reference points to Eurocentric mythologies, tacking from gods and heroes to the indescribable allure of leisure:

> The reclaimed lands provided by dams, levees, and the huge Thor and Hercules dredgers of the Natomas Company also provided agricultural produce and work for the Sacramento food-processing plants. The rivers were the point of reference for city buildings and public space, and they gave, in the biblical phrase, 'joy to the city' by providing bucolic pathways for walking, jogging, or biking, lovely vistas for elegant homes, recreational boating for summer months, and water for drinking, maintaining lawns, and filling swimming pools. (Avella)

Avella casually assesses the trajectories of a purpose-built technology designed to tame these particular waters: the clamshell dredger. He does not remark on the associations mustered by allusions to bellicose, masculine might from Norse and Roman mythology. Rather, Avella chronicles how these Natomas Company behemoths, property of a mining and water rights concern that diversified into an agribusiness and real estate conglomerate, literally scraped industrial security by fortifying the riverbanks with silt deposits. Runoff enabled the entire post-farm industrial commodity chain.

This initiative culminates in an absolute reorientation of urban space with religious and affective undertones. The rivers otherwise could not be a 'point of reference' guiding any civic development scheme, but merely a threat. For Avella, the greatest achievement of the Natomas dredgers is an affective state free of worry symbolized by a touchstone of vernacular Californian architecture: the swimming pool. As Sacramentan Joan Didion corrects any misguided elite East Coast readers, "Actually a pool is, for many of us in the West, a symbol not of affluence but of order, of control over the uncontrollable. A pool is water, made available and useful, and is, as such, infinitely soothing to the western eye." (Didion 1979, 64). Didion's choice of modifiers—the *western* eye, rather than the *Californian* eye—insinuates that the taming of unruly waters is most effectively realized by their transformation into leisurely spaces to contend with an architectural agenda much more comprehensive than California's fantasy Spanish past.

Civilizational fantasy's role in tethering together diversified corporate structures at the moment of a global U.S. empire's emergence indicates whiteness's utility as an affective fix for crises of accumulation. Its impact amplifies when deployed to infrastructurally resolve ecological disorder as profoundly disruptive of markets. Sacramento River Valley development from 1851 until 1938 demonstrates vividly the indispensability of whiteness for capital as the region contended with recurrent and calamitous 'natural' disasters alongside a trans-Pacific realignment of both imperial power and labor regimes. While the U.S. sought commercial and eventual military hegemony projected from a second coastline, a redefinition of 'free' labor spurred by transnational Black emancipation campaigns forced racial capitalist extraction to reconfigure racial hierarchies and their shades of unfreedom. Ultimately, whiteness would serve as the navigational 'north star' through both of these tumults for capitalists. They continually activated its ideology to cohere increasingly complex financial, logistical, and productive corporate entities. These firms concentrated supposedly properly deserved wealth while justifying bellicose disregard for 'unruly' territories and peoples—excesses deemed 'waste' crying out for redemption.

In her astute reading of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, Vitorria di Palma diagrams these twinned imperatives through the Enlightenment notion of 'improvement.' She analyzes how "Because improvement was framed as both *an economic and a moral imperative*, wasteland," or the uncultivated, "was not merely land that had not been improved, but was in fact understood as land that was in need of— and even calling out for— improvement." (Di Palma, 39, emphasis added). Wasteland serves as infrastructure's indispensable guide. This nomenclature captures how emotional attachments to particular (i.e., Eurocentric, white, masculinist) notions of the social fuel cultivation. This desire spurs the invention of novel markets within private property and commodity exchange regimes.

Infrastructure proliferates whiteness through its affective associations. It remains a Janus-faced obsession with anxiety abroad and at home. These concerns merge by replicating the racialist logic of development and maintenance. A foreign locale is exotic due to its lack of recognizable Western infrastructure. Similarly, the proper functioning of a metropole can be measured by the rapidity and efficiency—in other words, the maintenance and continual advancement—of its transportation and communication grids. In her definitive study of mobility networks in Southern California from bicycle routes to automobile highways, Genevieve Carpio highlights this dynamic. She diagnoses how "one of the ways whiteness operates has been through exercising control over one's own mobility and managing the mobility of others." (Carpio, 10). From the drawbridges of SR 160 snaking through the Delta to the Oroville Dam entrapping the Feather River's waters, infrastructure in the Sacramento Valley figuratively and

often literally concretizes the permissiveness of white mobility. Engineering moves earth and diverts river confluences to achieve preferable routes of goods and desirable people. An explicitly stated function of these public works is to ensure encultured tastes enter the region. Abstract racialized culture proclaims nature's subdual while obfuscating continual reinvestment in capitalist production. Its fantasies facilitate the arrival of wilderness's tantalizing promise while occluding the original residents of the farmland or the migrant laborers whose hands wrest that fantasy from the earth.

Infrastructure secures the moving target of untapped potential when industrial hubris depletes a landscape. Construction reinvents that landscape in the image of whiteness as lacking any upkeep and unmoored from natural limitations or material obstacles. Even to designate "infrastructure" serves a settler colonial and racial purpose. Berenika Byszewski's entry in the edited volume *Formations of United States Colonialism* considers the misrecognition of the Navajo Nation's Chaco Canyon as an "ancient" antiquity rather than an evolving and contemporaneous Indigenous infrastructure. This designation enabled the territorial claims of the U.S. Topographical Corps of Engineers during a "punitive expedition" to the Navajo borderlands. She explains how "the colonial mapping of antiquity not only initiates the moment of Chaco's 'discovery,' when the ruins were forced to stand still, but it also continues to make possible, and foreclose, particular claims in the present." (Byszewski, 58). Chaco Canyon's continual stewardship by the settler state's National Park Service distinguishes between modern, useful, and universally "accessible" technologies versus static architectures noteworthy only for a historiographical distinction between decline and an era of prosperity. Infrastructure here is adaptable. It exists as a material trace that can be reformatted from settlement to pedagogy and leisure. This reinvention establishes a moral claim to superiority through its presence. Again, whiteness operates here to wrest sovereignty over a landscape through the grafting of novel infrastructure that displaces alternative social functionality. This transplantation subsequently affirms the sanctity of stable settler territory able to apportion and advertise land uses adhering to its prerogatives.

Chaco Canyon demonstrates that one racial axis in settler colonial plantocracies revolves around temporal distinctions among artificially designated groups. Whiteness imagines Indigenous people as disappearing and fading into the past, Blackness as evolutionarily inferior, and Asian laborers as improperly and mechanically temporal in their indefatigable 'nature.' In contrast, whiteness determines its temporality as properly regulated civilizational progression. Improper time remains a critical designator of racial classification in the U.S. Infrastructure offers a unique intervention for geography because its material impacts upon landscapes concretely and palpably spatialize these temporal designations. Infrastructure acts as the interface between narrative strategies of racialization organized around advancement and degradation and the spatial politics of race through segregation and cartographic distinction. Once again, advice on tule captures this dynamic in its peculiar incubation in Sacramento.

One of the recurrent suggestions of advice for farmers of reclaimed lands concerns how to get rid of the infernal tule. An Eastern agrarian journal, *The Cultivator and the Country Gentleman*, informed readers in a sensational report from out West that "The most common method is burning, and this is easily accomplished among the dry tules and flags." The publication summarizes the process by which drained and reclaimed tidal land would be steamrolled and the flattened tule set ablaze. While effective at clearing the tall reeds, this strategy was not entirely uncomplicated for the settler. From an infrastructural perspective, tule burning only accomplished the material reconfiguration required for proper "civilization" by

turning foraged wetlands into scientifically managed cropland and not the ultimate aim of infrastructural status.

Like whiteness, this desired final goal combines the material reconfiguration of landscapes for extraction and accumulation as well as the symbolic narration of those parcels. The land would need to be tilled in a manner consistent with racialized agricultural designations: plowed, not burnt. The sketch suggests this course with a neutral, scientifically informed tone meant to defang its culturalist value judgments. In an impartial tone, it decalres "That part of the soil which has had the most air and sunshine, and contains the most plant food ready for use, is burned up. The only compensation is a large supply of potash, and the saving of the labor of plowing. […] If the turf could be turned over by the plow, and made fine by the harrow or some other implement, the slow decay of the vegetable fiber would be better for the land." ("California Sketches—IX", 683). This text does not directly suggest a lineage from California Indian burning practices establishing meadows for gathering and hunting that definitively dotted the Delta (Whipple, Grossinger, Rankin, Stanford, Askevold) to tule farmers potash conflagrations. Yet the insinuation that these practices coexisted amongst both Maidu and Anglo settlers suggesting association casts controlled burns as improper for truly efficient, managed infrastructure. Burning may be a stopgap, but true mastery would accord to white European agronomy.

Another key feature of infrastructure is its recalcitrance. Generations of critical theorists have demonstrated that the false assertions of racialist proselytizing or scientific Social Darwinism may be challenged discursively via their own logics. Yet, the massive materiality of infrastructure locks particular lifeways into a region with unpredictable repercussions conceived as seemingly irreversible. The Sacramentan commentator Santa Louise Anderson, who herself met an untimely fate at the unpredictable hands of the Sacramento River, reflects on the Sisyphean endeavor that is "tule farming—when once you begin, you never can afford to give it up." (Anderson, 81). Infrastructure instills particular social values into behaviors like cultivation, but also requires perpetual capital outlays and investments that further propagate a political-economic system through fear of crisis and loss. The affective attachment to infrastructure as the crystallization of racial logics is certainly strong. Combined with a material rearrangement of ecological processes, however, engineering establishes a seemingly unimpeachable and convincing case for this mode of (social re)production in perpetuity. For both the tule marshes and Chaco Canyon, once a previous social relationship with an ecology and a geography is overwritten by investment, interference, and financial obligation, infrastructure not only disseminates white settler valuations and relations it also forecloses alternatives through malicious adaptive reuse.

A final crucial case for infrastructure's purchase within racial capitalist critique emphasizes that Marxist theory since its inception has noted transitions points of capital as instances of contradiction where the obscured mechanisms of capitalism most vividly emerge. Marxist political economists primarily identified these as infrastructural whether in the financial (banking) or transportation (rail line) sectors. This argumentation suggests that infrastructure may provide an avenue to delineate the precise use and value whiteness provides or maintains in this system. Marx identifies that "The *possibility* of crisis, which became apparent in the *simple metamorphosis* of the commodity, is once more demonstrated, and further developed, by the disjunction between the (direct) process of production and the process of circulation. As soon as these processes do not merge smoothly into one another but become independent of one another, the crisis is there." (Marx, 450). Marx diagrams crisis's eruption to highlight how the action that

occasions disruption is not solely a failure of movement within the "merging" moment between production and circulation, but also a qualitative deficiency of "smoothness" during that transition.

Infrastructure can be conceived of as the primary facilitator of capitalism's moments of transition: shipping raw material via freight to the factory, placing commodities on truck beds for delivery, and creating retail hubs for consumption. Following Marx's definition, a failure in infrastructure while not the sole precursor to crisis can either auger or indicate an emergent cataclysm. Considering Carpio's insight about the racialized character of infrastructural motivation, design, and implementation, I turn to infrastructure as an instigator and recorder of crisis. This racial capitalist substrate is a material network that operates not solely to bridge production and circulation, but to naturalize both as an inherent spatial order. Infrastructure accomplishes this conjunction with racialist precepts to both rationalize its existence despite intense instability and to plug capitalism's inevitable leakages. Sacramentans' technofetishistic obsession with uninterrupted commodification and market exchange—no matter the environment—betrays crisis's inevitability as the overarching motivation behind racialization's necessity and immense potency within racial capitalism, especially at its bottlenecks and chokepoints.

Conceptually, whiteness claims its supremacy by imagining a gradient of geographic engagements. It firmly positions itself as avoiding any overindulgence. Whiteness seeks the reinvigoration of natural potential but rationalizes ecological relationships. Conversely, whiteness elevates the sublime to avoid dehumanizing spiraling extraction. Either deviation breaks capitalism: reciprocity with environments prevents the conversion of natural resources into exchangeable currency; overproduction destabilizes prices and sends markets careening.

Whiteness therefore engineers environments to facilitate use and exchange in markets and in subjective understandings of geographic emplacement. Infrastructure frames this multiscalar calibration. It simultaneously liberates the movement of white people and commodities by refashioning landscapes as recognizable reiterations of previously conquered spaces while flattening their potentials to match white prerogatives. Unruly tule transforms into reliable fertilizer. Infrastructure cordons unfamiliar environments by signaling out the exchangeable among diverse ecological configurations Whiteness even allows empire's machines to find rebirth as restored hardware for emergent manufacturing processes, or even sometimes as aesthetically transcendent objects in and of themselves.

Metropolitan growth's need for connectively is not a novel geographic insight. Neil Smith summarizes this phenomenon quite succinctly by spatializing Marx's discovery of a paradoxical need for transformation in the capitalist commodity's basic riddle. For Smith, "The seesaw from developed to underdeveloped space and back again is none other than the geographical expression of the constant necessary movement from fixed to circulating capital and back to fixed. At an even more basic level, it is the geographical manifestation of the equally constant and necessary movement from use-value to exchange-value and back to use-value." (Smith, 199). Sacramento certainly exhibits this trait. The city acted both as a sink for excess capital from the Sierra gold fields and an administrative center to continue the circulation of excess labor capacity into state prisons as a crucial node reconciling the crises of excessive wartime production (Gilmore).

Critical race and ethnic studies theorists like Iyko Day posit that exchange-value and use-value are thoroughly racialized terms. Considering Smith's insight in the context of *racial* capitalism urges scholars to mesh the spatial fix with indistinguishable racial fixes. Unmooring

and circulating fixed capital depends upon the recycling of racial tropes. Demonization of certain racial figures fixes communities as cheap exploitable labor and denigrates their cultural expression. As desire for disinvestment and reallocation arises, these narrative strategies condone initiatives to circulate either a specific racialized community or to (re)absorb land and commodities associated with this group. Smith seems to suggest this tendency in his definition of accumulation's irreplicable safety valve of circulating capital. He diagrams how "It is circulating capital[…] that facilitates the survival of the capitalist class, albeit one which has had 'to cannibalize itself.' The mobility of circulating capital during rapid bouts of devaluation becomes a means not toward geographical equalization but a differentiation upon which the survival of capital is predicated." (Smith, 173). Differentiation for Smith here refers to sectoral and regional development. Yet race predicates productive differentials allowing for capital's migration from 'savage' frontiers towards the bourgeoisie metropole followed by a course reversal towards novel exoticized lands and peoples during moments of devaluation.

Sacramento maintains an intensely infrastructural existence not merely facilitated or maximized but literally resting atop innovative hydrological engineering. This reliance betrays how capitalist crises of overaccumulation and circulatory failure reference, reenforce, and seek resolution through racial characterizations. Feminist affect theorists frequently rely on infrastructural and circulatory metaphors to extrapolate the affective influences on subject formation. As Lauren Berlant elucidates, this is a fundamental aspect of infrastructure in its unwavering association with circulation. While the monoliths of capital, such as banks or stock exchanges, function to congeal accumulation, "Movement is what distinguishes infrastructures from institutions […]. Institutions enclose and congeal power and interest and represent their legitimacy in the way they represent something reliable in the social, a predictability on which the social relies. Institutions norm reciprocity. What constitutes infrastructure in contrast are the patterns, habits, norms, and scenes of assemblage and use."

For Berlant, infrastructure materially facilitates the movements of goods, people, and value to markets and extractive zones. It also corporeally and socially rehearses the logic and rationale of individual worthiness for wealth (or destitution) through habitual behavioral sequences. If "Collective affect gets attached to it too, to the sense of its inventiveness and promise of dynamic reciprocity" (Berlant, 403), this 'collective affect' of infrastructure must derive potency from previously indexed forms of socialization. Sacramento's emotional tenor often features fantastic tales of previous imperial hinterland infrastructure—especially the antebellum South's mechanization of the cotton gin and steamship travel.

As one of the primary matrices through which movement, potential, transcendence, and promise are communicated, in Sacramento, the valuation of whiteness as coeval with, and metonymic of, the continual cycle of concentration→circulation→concentration attests to the underlying sanctity and righteousness of this process. This representational strategy transforms into a much more potent formation when the material presence of flood control and rail infrastructure testifies to the permanence of settler arrangements of exploitation, accumulation, and justifiable crisis and then gets assigned to admirable social behaviors. Affect theory often critiques the processual, illegible, dynamic collision of iconography and architecture, wherein the contours of hegemony are simultaneously rhetorical and institutional. Affect, or emotional, corporeal registration of phenomena (without complete comprehension), is a powerful register to access this complexity without disregarding or simplifying its convolution.

The inherent instability of Sacramento—ecological fears of floods in the night, social fears of rowdy laborers forming multiracial political coalitions—forces the city to betray its

settler aspirations. My focus on affect's substantive import for landscape, subjective definition, and hegemony diverges somewhat from other conceptualizations such as Kathleen Stewart's more suggestive hypothesis that "Ordinary affects highlight the question of the intimate impacts of forces in circulation. They're not exactly 'personal' but they sure can pull the subject into places it didn't exactly 'intend' to go." (Stewart, 40). In this last clause, her insistence that affects are not 'personal' suggests they do not influence subject formation but act as elusive forces within capitalism that ideologically influence without explicitly indoctrinating. Her exegesis does highlight that affect is inherently concerned with *circulation*. I insist upon the materiality of circulation under capitalism to perceive how affect in Sacramento makes palpable, tangible, and corporeal an imagined necessity for technology and civility to stave off utter apocalypse. Emotion is a scalar operation that does not just communicate market forces buttressed by regional militarization as a social necessity. It imbues these values into everyday bodies and domestic scenes of social reproduction.

A singular pitfall in analyzing affect and racialization remains these phenomena' intensely uneven, subjective, and corporeal facets. I have attempted to mitigate the scalar weakness of this methodology by topically approaching empirically the political economy of particular corporate firms and conglomerates rather than a phenomenology of somewhat arbitrarily selected residents. I hope to use the focus on corporate history to examine the white dynamics of racial capitalism: whiteness as a recourse for capital's inevitable tendency towards crisis, its reciprocal relationship with infrastructure as channels naturalizing inequitable extraction, and the central role whiteness retains in rationalizing exchange and the affective benevolence of the market. My nimble and flexible approach demonstrates this valuation's impact on individuals and social collectives.

Nevertheless, the issue persists that racial emotion structures yet does not directly historiographically trace regional development. Navigation has remained a core concern of Sacramentans—from the flat-bottomed wheat schooners for Delta farm delivery to the container ships plying the Deep Water Ship Channel's water towards the Port of West Sacramento. Nodding to that tradition and clarifying my case studies, it is prudent to commence with a skeletal outline of the significant regional developmental milestones contextualizing, inspiring, or deriving from the firms under consideration.

Landscape domination and optimization form the socio-ecological backbone lending potency to the intertwined racial appeals and infrastructural escape routes of the Natomas Company, Sutter Basin Land Company, and the California Steam Navigation Company. The effort to control the city's most valuable commodity—the American and Sacramento Rivers—saturates Sacramento's historiography. Although these rivers would irrigate the grass for early settler livestock and, through races, reach the sluices of gold miners, their natural proclivity to overflow their banks due to runoff from snowmelt out of the Sierra inundated Sacramento during its impressionable earliest years as a burgeoning U.S. frontier outpost. After tremendous flooding in the winters of 1850, and especially the Great Flood of 1861-1862, large portions of the city's business district and the entire Sacramento Valley remained submerged. This disaster enjoined a joint state and local effort to tamp down the river's proclivity for variation and excessive abundance. While an entire history of flood control efforts in the Valley remains beyond the scope of this argument, several vignettes can craft a rough schematic of Sacramentans' quarrels with the river and the unintended consequences of their fears and triumphs. Both functioned as ample reserves that corporate actors could access to stoke speculative investment and cultural awe.

The cursory diagram of flood prevention and riverine control follows the following pattern:

i. individual or neighborhood earthworks→
ii. Reclamation Districts reclaiming state swampland via leveeing through the Board of Swamp Land Commissioners→
iii. increasing centralized investment from corporate firms using advanced technologies like the clamshell dredger→
iv. after the 1884 Sawyer decision effectively outlawing hydraulic mining by banning dumping accumulating silt downstream, crescendoing federal regulation and planning standardizing levees and digging new weirs and bypass channels for runoff to enhance navigation through the Sacramento Flood Control Project

The subsequent chapters involve businesses that profited off, interceded against, or helped transition various stages of this process. However, the dissertation's overall structure positions the firms' founding mission or primary profitability mode in alignment with these eras. Natomas emerged from an early miner cohort's effort to commodify and control fluvial resources; Sutter Basin relied upon the Reclamation District architecture to receive state approval but attempted to scale its revenues through intense monetary largesse towards engineering and mechanical firms; the California Steam Navigation Company provided the initial private funding that made river navigability a poignant and intimately felt cultural goal alongside its promises to balance the capriciousness of industrial expansion with the unpredictable fertility of unimproved wilderness.

Initial schemes to reclaim the Sacramento River Valley and Delta owed as much to a peripheral desire to tap the clear horticultural potential of peat formed by generations of tule grass as the overwhelming need for the poorly planned city embarcadero to escape rising waters. The classic study of Sacramento flood control, *Battling the Inland Sea*, recounts how "As early as 1862 farmers had seen that the swampland enclosed in this northwestern pocket of Sutter Basin—the section enclosed by Butte Slough to the north and east, and the Sacramento River to the west—was fertile soil. What they needed to do to clear out its thick strands of tules, put the land to the plow, and live on it as to dry it out by building a levee along the inside curve of Butte Slough." (Kelley, 142-143). Kelley indicates the essential structure of the aforementioned first and second iterations of flood control: a local gathering of settlers recognizing profit potential and appealing to their own shovels and the newly empowered state authority sanctioning this labor. As such, "Accordingly, under the original swampland commissioners program of 1861, they had organized District 20, and had carried forward a small amount of leveeing along Butte Slough, doubtless at the upper, or northern, end of their pocket." (Kelley 143). Homesteaders essentially replicated this model after the first decade of the Anglo city of Sacramento's existence until the turn of the 20th century: loose collectives of neighbors allied to receive sanction from the state to reclaim and, in turn, possess public land through the implementation of joint levee projects.

The involvement of multiple federated levels of government in managing and controlling the dual rivers characterized Sacramento throughout its growth. This endeavor provides one rough measure of historical periodization. Indeed, the debate often drove state and national policy on the matter. The previously mentioned swampland commissioners evolved at the very first independent state commission—some of the initial bureaucracy with authority over the massive land tracts of California. Kelley intones how "Sacramento took the management of

entire valleys into its hands. Now an independent public commission that was not under the governor's authority but stood by itself—the first such body in California's history—had been called into being: a Board of Swamp Land Commissioners, elected by the legislature, would begin responding to the problems of central management of state resources[…] in accord with sophisticated scientific principles." (Kelley, 47). The establishment of this Board introduced the noteworthy dynamic into the management of Sacramento Valley floodwaters and land valuation of a hybrid model integrating civic or even neighborhood development goals with state and eventually national expertise of technocratic engineers colluding with political operators.

In turn, the guarantee of state concern for disaster mitigation induced substantial capital investment from corporate firms—such as the Sutter Basin Land Company—to either form large agribusiness enterprises cultivating alluvial soil clawed back from the floodplain or reclamation businesses that leased or sold these reclaimed lands to smallholders or tenant farmers with certainty that the state would maintain regular flows for strategically crucial navigability. The Amalgamated Sugar Company (whose former Depression-era refineries now house the tourist destination Old Sugar Mill replete with local wineries and gourmet commodities) and Liberty Farms (whose post-WWI reclaimed lots are currently flooded marshland managed as an Ecological Reserve by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife) typify the elevation of speculative reclamation of specific districts of basins marshlands or seasonally-inundated islands to industrial scale manufacturing and real estate ventures.

The culmination of this trend contoured the rough outlines of the modern Sacramento Valley and Delta, with various revisions for conservation or catastrophe, through a study of navigability in the wake of the 1884 Sawyer decision effectively outlawing hydraulic mining. The case of Woodruff v. North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company articulated the consternation of downstream farmers around the silt and debris runoff intrinsic to the hydraulic mining in the Sierra. By "washing" the mountains with high-powered "monitors," or industrial-grade hoses, capital-intensive enterprises could upscale laborious panning or rocking methods of straining gold from Sierra placer deposits in arid riverbeds while accessing deposits from ancient streams now buried underneath mountains. The high-profile coverage of the case emphasized the extreme acceleration of a natural process of innumerable mountainous torrents silting the Sacramento River. Now proceeding at an unprecedented and unsustainable pace, the levees preventing the natural dispersion of the Sacramento's mass of runoff into its floodplain through regular inundation ensured substantial flooding further downstream. Unpredictable riverbeds also increased navigational difficulties for river-borne craft. This latter concern prompted federal legislation in 1893 that formed the California Debris Commission, helmed by a rotating cast of Army Corps of Engineers Officers.

The express concern of the Commission was to respond to California farmers' entreaties to protect their livelihoods from further degradation due to mining activity and to protect strategic navigability during a period of intense infrastructural turmoil (Hagwood). The Commission partly owed its formation to the massive railroad defaults characterizing the Panic of 1893 and the desire to shore up Western mobility in its wake. Once again, an overture to crisis highlights infrastructural ecological intervention as a crucial release valve during capital's overextension. Writing the most consequential report for the California Debris Commission in 1907, West Point graduate and Corps of Engineers officer and decorated First World War veteran Thomas H. Jackson spearheaded the architecture that would evolve into the Sacramento Flood Control Project. Kelley emphasizes the report's obsession with riverine navigability as a

bulwark against rail freight's economic failure and Western insecurity spurred by a weak economy. He explains that

> The Jackson Report was still a strongly navigation-centered plan. These were years with a nationwide enthusiasm for river navigation, as competition to the railroads, had seized the country[…] Accordingly, Jackson called for keeping a heavy flow within the Sacramento's main channel by means of high, strong levees not too far apart. This would induce scour and make an excellent navigable channel. At the same time the river's excess waters, which to this point had generally broken through levees to spread widely in the basins, would be made to overflow in a controlled way through weirs. Thereafter they would be put under the strict discipline of being held within leveed bypass channels within those basins, the beds of which could be farmed between inundations. (Kelley, 282)

The most apparent visible geographic imprint of Sacramento's fidelity to Jackson's vision remains the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel, completed about three decades after the report.

Unlike the weirs, which inconspicuously redirect surging flows into bypasses to transmogrify basins like the Yolo Bypass flanking West Sacramento into unexpected inland lakes overnight, the still-operational Deep Water Ship Channel proudly displays the precision and mastery of the Corps by essentially funneling a second river to the Port of West Sacramento.

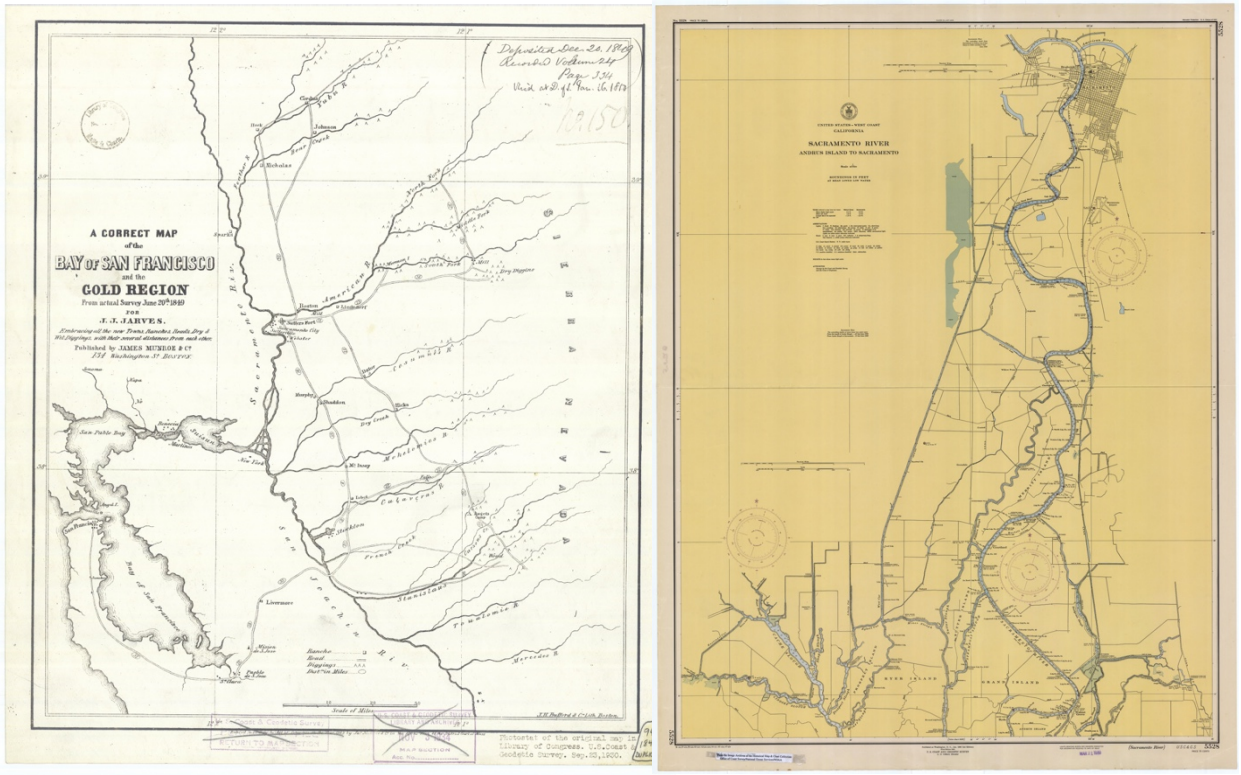

Fig. 1: The transition between these two nautical charts that bookend my dissertation—1849 on the left (the year of Natomas founding), 1947 on right (after the Deep Water Ship Channel's construction)—emphasizes the enormous extent of the alluvial deposits, rip rap, electrical pumping stations, and channeling marshalled to regulate the river. Note the Delta islands' infill to the east of Suisun Bay at the bottom of the 1947 map, and the straight, engineered course of the Deep Water Ship Channel compared to previous bends. (Jarves; U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and Army Corps of Engineers)

That port enables the Sacramento Valley's flourishing rice industry. This crop's growth relies on dehydrated bypass marshland, fed by runoff and regularly farmed between overflows starting in 1912. Despite engineering marvels, rice only achieved global profitability due to trans-Pacific shipping to Asian markets after the Vietnam War (Walker 2004). The channel achieves Jackson's vision of a regular and knowable riverbed firmly wedded to global exchange routes, maintained at a constant depth with a clear heading. Its predictability allows for the uncharacteristic appearance of container ships with intense drafts about seventy miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. The period of roughly a century between the advent of Natomas and its commodification of Sierra runoff and the realization of a navigable straight line in the peat of the Sacramento Valley offers a stark contrast in form and purpose. Two maps from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (fig. 1) emphasize the extent of earth moved and sweat spent straightening, rerouting, and otherwise capturing the Sacramento to form a self-sustaining aquatic ecosystem achieving the consistency of placid San Francisco Bay.

While Jackson and the Corps prioritized infrastructural access to and consistency within the inherently unstable Delta, this may have buoyed investment but did not ensure the immensely productive capitalization of the region. The formation of soil buttressed by levees, mechanical pumps, and last-resort diversions through weirs maintained commodification through its promise to yield inflated returns on specialty crops. The meticulous level of control over moisture, horticultural precision fostered by the Morrill Land-Grant Act mandated University Farm near Sacramento in Davis, and the abundant existent, readily available potash fertilizer derived from desiccated tule bogs contributed to a diversified and carefully calibrated specialty crop market.

The remnants of the 1870s wheat boom (itself originally meant to attenuate a crash in cattle and mining economies (Henderson)) still lingered as reclaimed swampland transformed into fields and orchards in the late 19th century. Despite ensuing uncertainty after the market crash, growers doubled down. They encouraged an increasing trend toward more valuable staples and novelties alike to recoup significant initial investment outlays became increasingly evident. Chinese workers, recently laid off from construction gangs toiling on laying the Transcontinental's tracks in the Sierra, labored with unenviable pay and effort to stack peat blocks for the initial levees.

Once these Chinese arrivants (primarily originating in the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong, China) fenced in marshland with walls of dirt, they toiled alongside a rotating multiracial patchwork of mainly white smallholders and Latinx tenants. This labor arrangement commenced a pattern "During the nineteenth century, [where]in general[ly], the smaller farms grew vegetables and fruit in combination with large amounts of grain, while the larger farms in the backswamps of the peat islands produced primarily grain, potatoes, and beans. Asparagus—first grown commercially in 1892 on Bouldin Island, and for many years considered the queen crop of the Delta—was grown on farms of different sizes." (Chan, 162-163). This progression of commercial agribusiness held well into the 20th century: monocropping, corporate land tenure, and tenants or small purchasers maintaining large tracts with variable plantings often deploying migrant seasonal harvest labor. Its search for increasingly sustainable returns on reclaimed land that required inordinate amounts of sunk capital in infrastructure and maintenance culminated in a market characterized by relative luxuries such as asparagus firmly associated with the refinements of the Netherlands that incidentally analogized Northern California with European land reclamation mastery.

Associations with the Low Countries abounded in the Delta. Typical in this regard is the Netherlands Farms Company, which went belly up due to World War I after initially hoping to

profit from the Sacramento Flood Control Plan. Eventually, the Holland Land Company recovered its assets (Gunasekara). This anecdotal investment scheme's European civilizational allusions—engineering nature for a pastoral ideal—underscore the general racialized precepts of California agribusiness and the uniquely infrastructural tone this practice evinces in Sacramento. Marginalized racialized laborers such as Chinese farmers leased white landowner's tracts, including corporate conglomerates, for exorbitant amounts owing to a legal prohibition on Asian property ownership. Racist property definitions fostered productive rents for landowners and developed a surplus migrant labor force composed of those who could not afford leases. Revenue streams and devalued labor maximized returns on agricultural holdings.

However, this stratification and exploitation also enabled specialty crop agriculture and a sizable return on reclamation's massive initial capital outlays by relying on racial exclusion as tenants leased marginal land at inflated fees "began to lease the uncultivated portions of land owned by resident landowners […] The terms of the leases signed by these Chinese tenants seem to indicate that the landowners had decided to rent to Chinese for the express purpose of bringing unimproved portions of their farms under cultivation. The Chinese were asked to plant new orchards or hop fields of whatever else the landowners desired." (Chan, 194). Delicacies like fruits and nuts recouped reclamation architecture and maintenance's extravagant financing but only achieved profitability by throttling production costs through minimal wages. They demanded a racialized infrastructural network that subjugated successive waves of expendable migrants to not merely harvest the land but to construct and secure it through improvements. Not only did tenants bear the risk of these improvements—they paid for the privilege of doing so.

Ultimately, the import of cropland among the increasingly consolidated owners of Sacramento Valley agricultural land does not demand attention to particular market cycles of the array of crops deemed valuable by distant commodity exchanges like Chicago's famous trading floor. More critical to my argument is the infrastructural dynamic in which marginalized tenants provide construction and reclamation expertise alongside their astute horticultural knowledge and commodity-market prognostications. While the major crops of the Delta have transitioned from grain to asparagus, to potatoes, to pears, to grapes, to rice—all accompanied by the quintessential hyperlocal variation based on microclimate and situational access to major public works—more significant is the racialized development dynamic perfected in the Delta. This system operates primarily through disposable workers that cannot accumulate their own value but rather secure the value of absentee landlords by innovating and maintaining drainage and irrigation infrastructure and introducing crops profitable to wholesale agricultural exchanges.

Chan encapsulates this feature through scenarios where "Chinese tenants leased large tracts from land corporations or individual landowners who had spent veritable fortunes reclaiming these areas with dredges and modern equipment. When landlords did not specify what crops to grow, Chinese tenant farmers usually planted these newly reclaimed tracts in potatoes, beans, onions, and sometimes asparagus." (Chan, 194). Notably, potatoes, beans, and onions netted tenant farmers a significantly greater return than the monocropping endemic to massive Eastern industrial wheat farms. Landlords, of course, took note and encouraged these crops in turn. This pattern is perpetual in the Sacramento Valley and Delta. It channels not just ground rent profits to landowners (who can then reinvest returns in an array of profit-driven schemes) but also a storehouse of horticultural acumen.

This comprehensive racially and infrastructurally manipulative pipeline exists uneasily amid tension with ecological and financial crises. The Sacramento Valley and Delta are overextended and exposed, naturally and culturally, and rely upon ceaselessly expanding

technological intervention and racial immiseration. This trend crystallizes in the increasing complexity of the machines plying the waters of the Sacramento or attempting to send them back from whence they came. Because California capitalists never envisioned the state's valleys as solely agricultural enterprises but rather as multifaceted resource stores, the Sacramento and American Rivers contended with competing interests such as mineral extraction throughout their history.

To contend with silt endemic to the river even after the Swayer Decision outlawed hydraulic mining, residents fashioned a recognizably Sacramentan floating chimera, part steam shovel, part ship, when "Starting in the late 19th century, they used the clamshell dredger, developed in the Delta, to move alluvial material from the river channel to the levees. […] Because they eliminated the flood plain, […] The channels began to silt up with the alluvial sediment that had formerly replenished the surface of the islands[…] Hydraulic mining in the Sierra Nevada sent huge amounts of soil and rock into the Delta and made the channel bottoms still higher." (Wolff, 38). Wolff here stumbles upon a definable dynamic characterizing the region: topographical risks of mountain runoffs into deep basins remain compounded by precarious corporate and financial institutions that circulate massive funding into even more gargantuan efforts to reformat landscapes. The ecological impacts of such monumental interventions often balloon considerably to impede a return on investment. Firms then seek other avenues to profit off the detritus and renew obsolete infrastructural capacity, further sinking capital into a region they cannot afford to let fail and embedding themselves in an ever more intricate web. The dredger typifies mining technology's refashioning to enable agricultural and residential development safely tucked behind precarious levees needing maintenance at all costs.

Often the very firms engaged in the mining activities that slid the silt down the mountains were the same businesses scooping that sludge and dumping it to raise levees ever higher. This imbrication fosters the geomorphological feedback loop described by Wolff: runoff from mining cannot be dispersed in floodplains due to levees; this fosters spillover as river flows accelerate, that in turn necessitates more massive earthworks. It also creates a social and financial ouroboros to solve that ecological crisis, as both fixed capital sunk into technological infrastructure and consonant requirements for more exploitable laborers to offset that cost magnify. Wolff succinctly condenses a representative step in this process wherein "Flooding became a constant threat rather than a seasonal one. As the scale of cultivation increased, the infrastructure needed to support it became more extreme. The land fell so low that groundwater had to be pumped up and out of the fields." (Wolff, 38). The levee, the workforce toiling in the fields directly adjacent to its slope, the mandatory pump to drain increasing subsidence, and the account books in corporate offices funding the whole endeavor remain hopelessly entangled in the nation's most productive fields.

Wolff establishes the defining facet permeating Sacramento hydrology and agronomy: each is an unstable and perpetual investment, buffeted by environmental variability and questionable monetary returns, that displace and then restrict alternative ecological intervention and imaginations by their sheer tendency towards expanding disaster. Echoing capitalism's incessant requirement to circulate, infrastructural intervention and ecological backlash require continual investment and progressively more extensive intrusions. Like the Delta landlords who relied upon the precarious economic position of Chinese tenants to pry additional value from the infrastructural peripheral to appease the voracious capital requirements that supposedly ensured their dominance, regional elites and boosters justified, naturalized, and obscured the unquenchable sink of infrastructure, bandaging the hemorrhaging of speculative exchange,

through racial fantasy, projection, and appeals. Whiteness, in other words, emerged as a cyclical requirement to disguise and displace natural and financial disasters akin to the incessant infrastructural fix. Elite Sacramentans displace financial tumult and geomorphological variation onto racial scripts, projecting capitalism's cancers onto recalcitrant bodies and offering whiteness as panacea.

My case studies unearth this displacement to progressively zoom in and magnify California's unique financialized racialization which spans corporate investment priorities, business decisions during collapse, and innermost local identity. In particular, Sacramento hones this previously unarticulated commercial whiteness as exclusively merging settler colonial domesticity and imperial dominion's universal ambitions. This emergent racial form refashions Atlantic racial management techniques and retrofits domestic hierarchies onto a globally exploitative network. Its action as a ligament exaggerates racialization's infrastructural elements, fabricating commodifiable and circulatable landscapes alongside white subjectivities intimate with the natural world yet proficient in a regulated, efficient, and abstract technical productivity. Infrastructure also tethers these characteristics to political-economic imperatives, as whiteness will balance use-value (the natural) with exchange value (the technoscientific universal) to curtail crises arising from misalignment towards either extreme.

To avoid capitalism's lure of abstraction, any work of California Studies dating from the Anglo period onwards must grapple with the logistical and market circumstances out of which the state's presence was forged. As a maritime Western colony, economic geographers have outlined California's unique regional positioning as a resource colony initially lacking stable overland routes to Eastern metropolitan trade centers. As such, Richard Walker describes the singular political-economic conditions of California as essentially imbricated with entrepreneurs' negotiation of territorial isolation from imperial metropoles, natural plentitude encouraged by Native land tenure, and a transnational context for initial colonization. Walker notes how connection via maritime networks in addition to successive waves of resource rushes (mineral, lumber, agricultural), led to "The first component of regional accumulation[:] the way resource wealth stuck around in California, rather than being carried away to distant cities and foreign powers. This was capitalism springing up from the roots—or rather, the rollout sod of Anglo-American conquest." (Walker 2001, 181). Economic geography offers the necessary frame of political economic concerns—primarily, temporal isolation punctuated by steadily intensifying global trade networks jostling among empires. These conditions respond to geographical connections, boundaries, and definitions and simultaneously seek to shape them in their own comfortable image.

Furthermore, the field expands upon these postulates by investigating how political-economic systems, while determinate, also inevitably rely not just on abstract principles but on the economization of social attitudes and biases. In his pathbreaking study of Wall Street's imposition on Caribbean politics, legal frameworks, and finance, historian Peter James Hudson describes how racial formations inherited from the U.S. plantocracy became a *lingua franca* to translate, encourage, and model banking in the region in accordance with white supremacist dictates. He recounts how "As they moved into the Caribbean, [Wall Street] bankers rendered the region with the same racist tropes and narratives in which African Americans were cast […] in some cases debunking stereotypes as a means to encourage investment, in others replicating and reconstituting racial stereotypes to further the expansion of white supremacist control of the region". Hudson notes that while credit and investment as the hardware of development may have wrought significant upheaval by restructuring trade and corporate relationships, racial

discourse fueled and conditioned the rationale, terms, and even epistemologies of Caribbean opportunity. He surmises this endeavor's "returns and accounting [are] found not in the rational extraction of values, but in the ledger of white racial dominance." (Hudson, 15).

Economic analyses such as Hudson's allow for a seamless integration of the culturalist insights of American Studies including thoroughly racialized representational strategies proliferating in U.S. culture into a materialist analysis of imperial and capitalist functionality and impact. As foundational American Studies scholar Leo Marx explains, the contradictions of industrial development in territory under direct settler authority made persistent recourse to "a central theme in the ideology of American industrialism: the capacity of the New World environment to 'purify' the system. Just as the American sun is a more potent bleaching agent, so the entire social climate of the new Republic will cleanse the factory system of its unfortunate feudal residues." (L. Marx, 158). Leo Marx weaves the insights of environmental historians to again prescribe the relevance of infrastructure as a mediating agent between urbanization, the social unrest inherent to the wage relation and property regimes, and a fictitious inherent regenerative character in "New World" ecology. Industrialization certainly required financing fixed capital in factories as well as peripheral utilities like canals or electrification. Yet American Studies foregrounds the vital component of narrative and visual tropes to resolve the material contradictions inherent in perpetual accumulation battling the tendency towards stagnation. Marx interprets the presence of the 'machine in the garden' as paradoxically proving to white settlers the countryside's implicit purity. The garden handles the machine through innate vitality counterfactually evinced by infrastructural flourishing.

The promise of natural vitality in the Americas is interminably racialized. Scholarship like Hudson's *Bankers and Empire* allude to the plethora of racial tropes with which colonizers could justify exploitative extractions in terms of sweeping social benefits. Colleen Lye offers a particularly incisive delineation of one of these "racial forms" particularly serviceable in Sacramento's Pacific context. She approaches the contradiction of Americans' description of Asian laborers, in which "On the one hand, the Asiatic belonged to a discourse of alien invasion; on the other and, in embodying the ultimate logic of industrial subjection, the Chinese coolie had paradoxically become a familiar icon of American capitalist modernity." (Lye, 55). For Lye, the U.S. working class displaced anxiety about the commodification of everyday life and subservience to the wage relation onto fantastical models of relationship with Asia, especially after recourse to frontier expansion or social mobility ceased as the 19th century drew to a close.

Asian markets intoxicated merchants with a utopian source of wealth after settler colonialism reached the sea, but figural Asian labor received the misguided brunt of domestic white fears linking prosperity ineffably to dehumanization. Lye explicates the multiscalar influence and imprint of this racial form's rhetoric extending even to biomedical descriptions of how Chinese bodies lacked a functional nervous system. This supposed "nervelessness […] explains why the Chinese are such good workers. […] the Chinese body is the body of the twentieth century." (Lye, 54). Marxist American Studies including Lye's research demonstrates the field's compatibility with economic geographical assessments. For this literature, markets and commodification inextricably determine landscape valuation and functionality, but this occurs not merely through numerical assessment. Modulated by feminist theory's influence, American Studies searches for political economic impacts not just in ledgers, but in descriptions of the most intimate spheres including fundamental bodily composition.

Inspired by Lye's study, I shift the Californian gaze away from the soil settlers associated with California Indians or the sea dreaded for its ships brimming with Chinese contract labor.

Instead, I refuse the egotistical myth of the white racial form existing in a heavenly sphere immune to any spectatorial examination of its internal apparatuses. Classic works in the field of critical whiteness studies model this refutation by examining the economic logics of labor management crucial to whiteness's appeal for investors, petit bourgeois managers, and workers themselves. Paramount in this lineage is David Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness*. This text elucidates class anxiety and the projection of racial desire as intertwined and codependent. Roediger offers an exegesis of "the white working class, disciplined and made anxious by fear of dependency, [that] began during its formation to construct an image of the Black population as 'other'—as embodying the preindustrial, erotic, careless style of life the white worker hated and longed for." (Roediger, 14). For Roediger, base economic concerns over labor competition with a devalued workforce remain paramount to understanding the allure of whiteness. The cultural reflection of this attitude is most putridly expressed in the omnipresence of minstrelsy in U.S. entertainment from the antebellum period to vaudeville and beyond. Fundamentally, minstrelsy ideology and descendant cultural forms serve to justify a fundamental monetary worry.

Subsequent texts published during the academic boom of whiteness studies in the 1990s reflect a more nuanced and complex Venn diagram of economic reality and cultural dynamics. They note that whiteness remains fundamentally yet is often misrecognized as a racial logic that offers economic advancement only through annihilating other forms of social affiliation. Noel Ignatiev explains of Irish Americans that "To become white they had to learn to subordinate country, religious, or national animosities, not to mention any natural sympathies they may have felt for their fellow creatures, to a new solidarity based on color—a bond which, it must be remembered, was contradicted by their experience in Ireland." (Ignatiev, 111). *How the Irish Became White* offers a richer portrait in which whiteness demands the affiliation of prosperity with racial markers, comingling economic and social behavioral imperatives. In certain areas proper habits in both categories remain thoroughly epidermalized, yet white success and feeling white remain flexible as a defense against movements to delegitimize their prominence. While physiology—especially skin color—maintains a certain currency within racialist societies, markers such as a clean and orderly home, preferred flavors and cuisine, or appreciation of 'elevated' cultural genres make colonialism's civilizational gestures that much more potent. They don't just chart and classify identity and assign belonging. Whiteness achieves hegemony through its displacement of any competing loyalties.

The richest analysis of white people's psychic connections to their race and the dynamics of modernity these attachments fertilize often proceed from anthropological perspectives. These views decenter whiteness and instead approach it as a relational formation so saturated culturally to appear inconspicuous but with recognizable impacts on exchange, commodification, and accumulation. W.E.B. Du Bois denotes the intensity of whiteness's impregnation with his essay "The Souls of White Folks" as a racial form extending from global commodity markets to the spiritual sense of self. Whiteness gathers certain representational strategies as an abstract protagonist combating maligned foils. It accumulates potency as a racialist "theory of human culture and its aims [that] has worked itself through warp and woof of our daily thought with a thoroughness that few realize. Everything great, good, efficient, fair, and honorable is 'white'; everything mean, bad, blundering, cheating, and dishonorable is 'yellow'; a bad taste is 'brown'; and the devil is 'black.'" (Du Bois, 25). I take inspiration from Du Bois's lexicon of whiteness's impact on the soul and its moral claims for subjectivity, demonizing caricatures of Black "devils" and glorifying 'angelic' white folks. "Souls" tenders a useful model of whiteness that individualizes civilizational pleas focused only on *aggregate* impacts of racism. Du Bois sagely

identifies that the universal mission of colonialism appealed to people precisely because it defined their personal stake in the project.

That stake for Du Bois is not merely an abstract sense of superiority. While valuable to seed hatred and reap vigilante violence, the reward for this racial mechanism is simple: "above all—it pays! There's the rub,— it pays. Rubber, ivory, and palm-oil; tea, coffee, and cocoa; bananas, oranges, and other fruit; cotton, gold, and copper—they, and a hundred other things which dark and sweating bodies hand up to the white world from pits of slime, pay and pay well" (Du Bois, 25). For Du Bois, the political-economic necessity of denigrated racial labor as well as profitable markets generating commodities' desirability through association with and reification of inequity, dominance, and intrusion constituted the primary cause of the first World War. Du Bois's dissection of whiteness remains impeccable for its tethering of the commodity to geopolitical catastrophe. Neither racial imaginaries fueling a taste for the tropics and their 'natural' abundance nor racialized labor hierarchies ensuring the cheapest denigrated production conditions are solely causal as whiteness's fuel. The power of this racial form, like any other, rests in its seamless merger of both concerns. For Du Bois, an inevitable bellicose outcome derives from the engine that keeps this alloy stable: recourse to a wellspring of violence whenever the reproduction of the representational or economic conditions of whiteness falters.

After the genocidal campaigns of Sutter's conscripted and impressed militias, Sacramento would not directly experience impacts as catastrophic as the pitched combat of world war. Yet the Du Boisian critique of whiteness's marriage to disaster extends to the economic turmoil inexorably tethered to racial anxiety that continual bubbled up along the banks of the capital city's rivers. In her analysis of the dual nature of 'speculation' in and around the Panic of 1873, Hannah Catherine Davies argues that the false promise of paper currency and credit's uninhibited flow alongside the facile and seemingly guaranteed returns promised by advanced corporate structuration influenced and eventually depended upon narration. Specifically, these flows of capital seemed guaranteed by explicit—and, I would add, racialized—references to otherwise invisible financial connections between transnational banks, bond and stockholders, and nationalist and colonialist railroad development. She explains how, during the latter half of the 19th century,

> The peculiarly abstract, virtual, and expansive nature of financial markets produced certain forms of narration and interpretation that rendered financial markets real, concrete, and material. During the nineteenth century, financial markets grew in both scope and in size, increasingly transcending national borders and linking places through chains of paper and credit, and drawing in an ever-greater number of investors. Contemporaries registered this but at the same time felt that the exact mechanisms of this process appeared strangely elusive. (Davies, xii)

I apply Davies' analytical frame to a related project of speculative state and market building: the infrastructural grid hardening hinterlands supposedly containing verifiable profitable potential of untapped passengers and freight for the speculative project of railroad investment. I reformat her approach further by considering a timescale of *recurrent* catastrophes in one particular locale, rather than a single panic or crisis across globally linked markets.

Through a situated and localized analysis, I emphasize the entwined ecological, racial, and geopolitical factors that precipitated and oftentimes provided fertile narrative and creative ground to imagine capitalist contradictions' resolution. Specifically, Davies theorizes the

coconstitution of transnational financial speculative networks with the narrativization of diffuse systems of credit auguring potential accumulation that funded these networks. I suggest that when considered as geographical scale- and place-making processes, these initiatives' imbrication inevitably foregrounds the primacy of racialization. More specifically, the invention and investment in whiteness emerges as an indispensable mechanism to embody, and hence make palpable, the indispensable chronicling that makes tangible market functionality.

Novel racial infrastructures often develop alongside shocks to market functionality. Roughly coinciding with the Panic of 1873, the global emancipation of enslaved people functioned to destabilize extractive plantation economies, the industries that refined their raw materials, and the financial markets that funded and insured their operations. Planters and other industrialists evoked new configurations of labor still fundamentally delineated by racialist categorization. These emergent racial forms in turn depended upon and spurred the enshrinement of transoceanic maritime infrastructure. Edlie Wong recounts how during "The end of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery facilitated wide-scale labor crises in the Western Hemisphere, as the lucrative agricultural economies of the U.S. South and the British and Spanish Caribbean drove demand for easily replaceable workers who were both cheap and plentiful. Labor-strapped planters looked toward China and its teeming population as a source of labor replenishment." (Wong, 5).

Wong's analysis concerns the creation of a dialectic between Black inclusion/Chinese exclusion in which each articulated and delineated emergent racializations in the post-Emancipation period. Both efforts ultimately maintained white supremacy by linking citizenship to whiteness. The former case *de facto* maintained whiteness via racial violence, subjugation, and "separate but equal" segregation. In the latter case, racial hegemony increasingly relied upon *de jure* legislation and court cases. Her reference to the dialectical nature of this arrangement also shows how these strategies relationally informed one another from the eventual legalization of Jim Crow to the violent arsons against Chinatowns and lynching of Chinese individuals.

Wong focuses on how legal and representational strategies deployed this dialectic of Black inclusion/Chinese exclusion. She emphasizes the ambiguity of the dialectic as both multiracial democracy's proponents as well as segregationists cited this comparative racialization schematic to conflicting ends. Complimentarily, Moon-Ho Jung's study of Caribbean and Louisianan "coolie labor" foregrounds the shortcoming of this dialectic's appropriation for radical or even liberatory ends. Ultimately, Jung concludes that comparisons between enslaved and exploited contract labor helped bridge emancipation's momentary rupture of dispossessed racialized labor's steady supply and thus maintain colonial models of territorial expansion and subjugation. Jung "contends that [coolies'] evolving definitions and ultimate ambiguities—a slippery and disruptive creation between and beyond slavery and freedom, black and white—rendered coolies pivotal in the reconstruction of racial and national boundaries and hierarchies in the age of emancipation." (Jung, 5). For Jung, a shared recourse to whiteness—initially defined through free labor as self-possession counterposed to chattel slavery's Blackness and subsequently through Christian piety and national belonging versus Asianness—justified accumulation buttressed by violence and greed.

Critically, these characterizations served to resolve specific political and economic realignments, but also maintained their fictional utility for recycling and reuse. Even after Black people were granted nominal self-possession through their ability to contract their labor, their lack of emotional or cultural "self-possession" was used to instantiate hierarchical apartheid. Legal unfreedom morphed into appeals to an abstract civilizational lack. Through Black/Asian

comparative racialization, late 19th-century racialists navigated free labor's turbulent emergence and the expansive global economy it continued to fertilize. Jung expands racialization's role as a fix for capital during political and market upheaval, as "The construction of coolies, moreover, formed a crucial ingredient in redefining blackness and whiteness—and Americanness—when equality under the law (Reconstruction) and wage labor (industrialization) seemed to erode their meanings. The portrayal of Asian 'dependence' and 'servility' had the dual effect of reifying white 'independence' and quelling black 'insolence.'" (Jung, 9). Critically, this racialization serves both a managerial and stratifying purpose for oppressed classes *and* dominant actors. This relational matrix crystalizes economic behaviors and rationales that maintained market stability and encouraged further white investment. The broker selling bonds before the Panic of 1873 balanced between an appeal against the servility of wage labor through passive income and the insolence and irrationality of refusing to participate in the market economy.

Wong's account in particular emphasizes how epistemological models of economic racialization emergent in 19th-century modernity did not primarily engage abstract financial spaces like an ideal "market." As Davies indicates, they were forged using very real geographical analogies to distinguish proper economic and racial behavior. Wong notes that Justice John Marshall Harlan's dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson* laments that Chinese people as "a race so different from our own" can ride in a white railroad car, yet this privilege is denied to Black passengers. Harlan does not only reaffirm an imagined perpetual foreignness of Asian people. In reasoning through and rationalizing the status of this and related otherings, he remains inspired by and accountable to concerns over a quotidian matter of comfortable travel arrangements in the era's most important transportation network. Oftentimes, the amalgamated financial and racial fix to capitalism's disturbances owed its resolution, and in some cases became synonymous with, infrastructural innovation. The technologies bridging racial regimes and capitalist epochs often were quite literally the same. Remarkably, at the advent of "coolie labor" "some ships formerly used as African slave ships" transformed to accommodate Pacific passages with contract human cargo after their careers in the Atlantic became outlawed. Discussing the advent of Asian contract labor in Cuba coinciding and overlapping with enslavement (a form of hedging abolitionism), Lisa Yun belabors the fact that "Names of coolie ships reflected the legacy of the African trade, such as *Africano* and *Mauritius*." (Yun, 18). While they carried the names and legacies of bondage, these vessels persisted constantly attuned to crisis. Similar to legal and racialization mechanisms' reaction to turmoil arising from enslaved peoples' mutinies, rebellions, and organizations, emergent technologies were superimposed on previous infrastructural/racial formations to enact new racial commonsense.

One critical example is the militarization of these ships, belying yet ultimately demanding the myth of the subservient Asian laborer. "As one example of ship modifications, the coolie ship *Norway* left the port of New York loaded with coal for a U.S. naval squadron and returned with a cargo of Chinese under the hatches. A ten-foot-high barricade was built that stretched from rail to rail, with an armed guard to prevent against coolie rebellion." (Yun, 28). The reliance between predictable and ascendant white racialization as a balm for capitalism's woes and legal or mechanical infrastructural innovation are consistently resurrected. This imbrication amplifies in areas where colonial and white authority seems unable to discipline a natural order. Infrastructural observers can become obsessed with ecological stasis and agricultural fecundity as the assured outgrowth of proper hierarchical racial arrangement.

Indeed, as Manu Karuka argues for an analysis of the Transcontinental Railroad as an industrial, legal, and social assemblage meant to homogenize divergent sovereignties and

lifeways and concretize the fiction of U.S. territorial control of the West. The railroad is the premier engineering project in which legal and industrial solutions to capitalist contradiction and implicit explications of racial destiny ideology emerged simultaneously. The narrative and material fabrications of the railroad were hopelessly entangled: "Corporate personhood was first articulated in relation to a railroad corporation, through the constitutional amendment guaranteeing citizenship, due process, and equal protection to formerly enslaved people and their descendants. Corporate personhood was articulated around a principle of freedom from taxation, articulated around fences, a mechanism of exclusion." (Karuka, 164). Karuka is blunt: Western corporate structures irreversibly enmeshed patentable technological implements like barb wire, the codification of liberal conceptualizations of Enlightenment citizenship and selfhood as foundational to a nation-state-based order, epistemologies and methods of territorial boundary formation in surveying, and racial negotiation and navigation as interwoven and mutually dependent distinctive qualities of emergent 20th-century racial capitalism.

For Karuka, railroad barons did not cut from whole cloth a racialist model of capitalist unaccountability through a diffuse and obfuscated structure that shifts blame and seeks renewal by pivoting through cycles of cyclical devaluation. This tactic recycles resilient colonial technologies of distributing risk, accumulating benefits, and reaffirming racial logics to downplay or excuse crises and find new pools of exploitable resources and labor for continual accumulation. These firms did, however, justify interminable settlement and landscape transformation by organizing themselves to displace capitalism's inherent contradictions as a consequential racial drama. In this play, cyclical bubbles are a natural or even beneficial outcome of a civilizational contest against unruly nature (and those human beings cast as its unrepentant scions) rather than a fault of any inherent unsustainability.

The nascent Western firms rationalized local communal resistance or ecological rupture as temporary setbacks not for just the market—whose own capricious calculations could not always be trusted—but for whiteness itself. Solutions to catastrophe could be found in the character and emotions of any settler admitted to this racializing club. Capitalists appealed to the philosophical transcendence of whiteness as a revered civilizational principle associated with mental, emotional, and spiritual capacities divorced from corporeal concern and cached somewhere between the mind and the will. Proper racial association redeemed imperial capitalist expansion and could be trusted as it subsequently inflected modern infrastructure, from accounting to steam engines. Karuka reminds scholars that "Joint-stock or chartered companies founded European colonies, mobilizing resources drawn from multiple investors, raising capital while leavening individual exposure to risk. Pooling risks for colonialism and slavery led to the development of very particular rationalities, empirical knowledge about the strategic immiseration of human life in the interests of maximizing returns on investment." (Karuka, 151). These risk pools did not just trumpet racial discourses to reassure their investors of the worthiness of their cause. These consortiums coalesced the sinews of trade itself: the machines, ledgers, and investment schema they regarded as sacrosanct alongside and as material realization of racial mores for proper behavior and organizational forms that fostered or impeded these emotions and judgments.

Iyko Day offers a revelatory case study of a decisive conjuncture in which West Coast industrialists scrambled for racial scapegoats to reformat settler colonial frontiers into oceanic imperial boundaries. For Day, the racialization of "Asianness" serves as a foil to resolve persistent popular unease with the functions of accumulation. She describes how "The racial signifiers of inscrutability, perpetual foreignness, transnational mobility, and flexibility […]

register the abstract features of Asian racialization that [...] aligns with the evolution of settler colonial capitalism in North America." (Day). Day describes racial characterizations that displace the characteristics of global financial sprawl, particularly the mechanisms of speculative imperial capital. This sleight of hand shifts blame from very real exploitative arrangements to a racialist caricature of a misaligned and imbalanced culture and embodiment.

Tenuous inhabitance on colonial frontiers produces irreducible anxieties, especially around the delicate fraud of marketization once primitive accumulation has ceased reaping easy rewards. This emotional state incentivizes blame to be cast towards the racialized "indispensable enemy" (Saxton) at the same time further militaristic expansion is made inevitable by othering an emigrant population and their land of origin as potentially malignant cancers for global trade. This exegesis of Asian racialization elucidates how Western societies primarily and consistently comprehend, express, and negotiate economic logics by recourse to embodied racialized features and affects rather than ledgers, charts, and reports. Racist scapegoating rationalizes capitalist excesses and transfers its contradictions. Corporate conglomerates in Sacramento operationalized this principle with unparalleled fervor to quell dual parallel fears. Demanding remedy from ecological anxieties about a transitional biome mediating between mountain runoff and tidal incursions echoed, mirrored, inspired, and took motivation from an exigency to soothe concerns about maintaining previously implemented American racial discourses given an imperial workforce straddling the Pacific.

In accordance with Karuka's annotation of the infrastructural lynchpin for capitalist crisis mitigation, Day's analysis concludes with an epilogue in which she grapples with the "Iron Chink." This ubiquitous apparatus gained renown as a fish butchering mechanism "named for the Chinese butchery crews it replaced in salmon canneries along the Pacific coast, a machine capable of gutting salmon at a rate of sixty to seventy-five fish per minute with a crew of only three laborers." (Day, 190). Day concludes that the machine acts "[a]s a personification of the simultaneous efficiency and disposability of the Chinese laborer" (Day, 195). The device gestures towards the entwinement of infrastructural advancement and perpetually revised but stubbornly consistent racial scripts of domestic propriety as twin engines for capital's acceleration whenever it uncovers a viable source of extraction. I conclude my theoretical framwork by reiterating the interdependence of racial comfort, geographic recognizability, and infrastructural linkage as salves for capitalism's inherent chaos.

Tulare Temporality: Infrastructure as the Spatial Narration of Race

To naturalize emergent settler-imperial racial orders, capitalism weaves racial forms into machinic, productive processes and unfettered exchange protocols. California capitalists engaged 'innovation' in technological infrastructure early and rapidly in California agribusiness history. These machines and systems raised productivity rates and constituted an indispensable racial fix meant to balance globalizing markets with the requirement to project sovereignty over recently "settled" land. The engineering development of the levees that cradled the nascent cornucopia of Sacramento demonstrates an early test case. For both cost-saving and geographic determinist arguments (Dillon), initially landowners deemed the laborious, mucky, and treacherous work of erecting "earlier, primitive levees built in California in the 1850s" to hold back rivers annually surging from snowpack as only appropriate for the "using [of] Chinese, Kanaka (indigenous Hawaiians) and Indian laborers." ("Sacramento Delta Blues"). The economic calculus was clear for speculative reclaimers, most vividly illustrated by "[o]ne of the largest landowners in the Delta […] George D. Roberts, president of the Title Land Reclamation Company, established by

San Francisco and Oakland capitalists." Relying on his "close ties to California legislators" to amass "tens of thousands" of swampland acres,

> He hired 3,000 to 4,000 Chinese laborers and paid them about a dollar a day. The total cost of reclaiming an acre of land came to seven dollars per acre, and Roberts was allowed to buy the land from the state for two to three dollars an acre. In total, it cost him about 10 dollars an acre to reclaim the land, and he sold tracts for between 20 and 100 dollars an acre. ("Sacramento Delta Blues")

To achieve his fortune, Roberts engaged the social logics and technological fetishism of whiteness to yield and apply stress to multiple inflection points. The social fraternity of the statehouse, a consensus on the disposability of Chinese labor, the cost-cutting technological advancements in reclamation spurred by "progress" ideology, the eagerness of prospective buyers lured by booster publication networks, and an ideological mandate to rejuvenate the nation on virgin soil each had an undeniable link to geographical whiteness. Racialization facilitated an engineering and financial operation that netted Roberts this wealth.

Scholars must seriously consider often overlooked background infrastructural players like Roberts as inheritors and innovators of whiteness as a critical geographical and capitalist fix. As such, the two primary concerns of my study are whiteness and infrastructure. This pairing inspired one of the first Anglo assessments of the Sacramento Valley as overrun with unruly and dastardly tule, or bulrush. This wetland grass has a storied and prominent place in the Valley among Nisenan and Miwok residents who crafted it to construct watercraft. The anxiety around tule evident in 19th-century travelogues and agricultural guides elucidates my conceptualization of the two themes of race and infrastructure. While not nearly as omnipresent a flora as accounts would suggest, the initial settler obsession with conquering tule divulges an intense fear of and uncertainty around the productivity of Indigenous landscapes reclaimed for agriculture by Asian labor. Tule remains so prominent in regional consciousness that even a historiographical reconstruction of "the Delta of 1800" had to cut through the mass of tule.

As the San Francisco Estuary Institute's historical ecology investigation surmises, "the terms tule, tulare, bulrush, and rushes are ubiquitous descriptors in early accounts and in maps." In his reflection, one "of the earliest written accounts of the Delta, Spanish explorer Ramón Abella reported that the banks of what was likely the False River were 'covered with nothing but tule, and so high that one sees nothing but sky, water, and tule'" (Whipple, Grossinger, Rankin, Stanford, Askevold, 171). Tule inhibited settlers on two accounts: they couldn't commodify it and they couldn't navigate through its indeterminate geomorphology. The reclamation of Sacramento into productive agricultural hinterland required Western "civilized" cultivation inseparable from and only profitable because of low wholesale transportation costs. These costs demanded unbridling from the hindrance of wetland variability with clear delineations between field and river. This economic blueprint for whiteness melds an affective, domestic regional interiority with market exchangeability and exteriority and informs my theoretical focus on race across scales. Whiteness both conditions particular market interventions (in the desire to commodify a wild nature and facilitate a definite border between whiteness and Indianness) and interpersonal intimate interaction (in aesthetic proclivities like the arrangement of a ship cabin's interior architecture).

A singular and profound aspect whiteness is its myopia. This racial form endemically misjudges violated communities' resistance and oversells the potential for regenerative life

contained in the supposed whitening of land 'conquered' under its banner. Explorers evince this overconfidence in their consistently dismal assessments of Sacramento's potential without technological intervention. As the 1853-1854 Exploration to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad spearheaded by the Corps of Topographical Engineers cataloged in its journal regarding the journey from "*Mokelumne Hill to Sacramento*," "After crossing the alluvial plain bordering the stream, we rise up to the level of the wide and regular slope, which is without trees, and, at this season, appears perfectly barren and desert-like." (Blake, 261).

Despite unintended introspection meagerly questioning the veracity of mere appearance, the antithetical description of tule swamps regularly inundated with water as arid and desolate is baffling considering the region's long maritime tradition. Yet white observers' equation of a swamp unusable to and thus threatening for colonial settlers with a climate found in other Southwestern fronts of imperial invasion demonstrates the cruel geographical flattening of the world. Varied lands are destined to be carved up into interlocking territories with capacity for either resource accumulation or waste disposal. Whiteness particularly perverse purchase can be understood as infrastructural. Race links these operations narratively as commodifiable lands need sinks for their excesses. Technological intervention revives value amid capitalist runoff.

Firm Geographies: Methods and Cases to Analyze Whiteness as Racial Capitalist Risk Mitigation

The study considers agribusiness development in the Sacramento Valley from roughly 1850 to 1949 to elucidate the function of whiteness as a crisis mitigator for racial capitalist resource frontiers. As an imperial project, the reclamation of tule lands led to the distribution of specialty crops, the thorough commodification of water, real estate speculation, and profitable navigation and transportation endeavors. Each of these initiatives relied upon transforming an unpredictable, unrenewable resource frontier into a quantifiable and marketable entity. Nevertheless, this alchemy was prone to crises of both the ecological and economic varieties. To regulate and equilibrate the settlement of the Valley, developers continually made recourse to whiteness as a civilizational ideal and a practical manual for success. This racial form sought to inspire continued investment through the affective alignment of settlers and financiers alike and to segregate and maintain a racialized value sink associated with Blackness. This sink was financial and frequently literal—encompassing bottomlands—and allowed capital to relocate money and racial promises once a particular scheme soured.

Concern for infrastructural crisis necessitates methods that acknowledge replicable technological systems' purpose: continuity, consistency, and alternating deliverance of goods and demand. However, Marxian crisis theory acknowledges inevitable leakage and the subsequent unpredictable downstream impacts. My approach melds historical geography with cultural studies inflected foci on the material impacts of narrativity—especially the productive consequences of disjunction and unease in emplotment and setting's elaboration. As such, I approach the archival materials that serve as my base of empirical evidence fundamentally informed by Hayden White's contention that "every fully realized story, however we define that familiar but conceptually elusive entity, is a kind of allegory, points to a moral, or endows events, whether real or imaginary, with a significance that they do not possess as a mere sequence, then […] every historical narrative has as its latent or manifest purpose the desire to moralize the events of which it treats." (White, 14). The task of historiographical inquiry entails collating the material traces of environmental or subjective transformation, twinned with a critical assessment of how the linkages between these phenomena—the very situation of their

consideration as interrelated facts—reveal the ideological precepts allocating resources and assessment of value throughout a society.

To dissect whiteness, I critique one of the principal vehicles for its dissemination throughout Anglo-California: the corporation. While this was not the sole progenitor of whiteness in the region—earlier designations of Californian Indians as *sin razón* in the Catholic Church's Mission System certainly qualify as violent groundwork that subsequent settlers activated—the corporate form epitomizes and defines White's 'morality' of whiteness in California as territory rationally organized, hierarchically managed, and infinitely profitable. Much of my archive consists of corporate correspondence, booster tracts, internal journals and training manuals, and accounting records. However, Michel-Rolph Trouillot's seminal investigation of the racial and colonial acts of intentional forgetting inherent to history's internal form diagrams the danger of a tight focus on corporate history that excludes exploited communities' labor or even celebrates an "inevitable" capitalism.

Trouillot bluntly proclaims that in the writing of any history, "One engages in the practice of silencing. Mentions and silences are thus active, dialectical counterparts of which history is the synthesis. Almost every mention of Sans Souci, the palace, their very resilience of the physical structure itself, effectively silences Sans Souci, the man, his political goals, his military genius." (Trouillot, 48). The latter half of Trouillot's assessment concerns the eponymous palace of Sans Souci-Milot in Haiti, named for a purposefully expunged colonel betrayed during the Haitian revolution by the palace's eventual architect, King Henry Christophe. By extending Trouillot's case study, the recalcitrance of both narratives and physical remnants of behemoth corporations—whether through the very survivance of records or their designation of neighborhoods like Natomas in North Sacramento— belies their foundational reliance on Indigenous knowledge, primitive accumulation of Native resources, the denigration of racialized labor, and their imbrication as a beneficiary of largesse from federal and state governments. While I organize my chapters around the heft of particular Sacramentan hydraulic firms, I remain guided by Trouillot to elevate archives of silences as indelibly constitutive of any incisive history.

I turn to moments of affective slippage in ephemeral archival materials to find those silences. Reading affect among quotidian, sensational materials entails retracing linkages between a catastrophic reorganization, or its failure, and enduring aftereffects. Anthropologist Susan Lepselter defines particular affect's operation by recording how "Guilt and confusion and injury sometimes survive the fading of their overt material referents, become uncanny emotional tropes, float into varied patterns of discourse and experience, and give impact and weight to other stories about inscrutable power, and loss." (Lepselter, 52). A historian seriously concerned with affect encounters a charge to illuminate the narrative recurrence of these affective tropes. Scholars must connect their circulation back to foundational political-economic, material referents, whether a disastrous event or a previously resonate celebration. These eruptions originally forcefully imbued affects into regional geographical imaginaries and continually serve as a reliable grammar to reestablish developmental priorities.

American Studies and feminist theory have a long history of turning to the unintentional utterances of minor records to tease out ideological motivations otherwise obscured by technocratic or bureaucratic protocols. Instructive is Kathy Peiss's groundbreaking foregrounding of leisure in *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. Peiss highlighted sites seen as fanciful or superficial for their associations with femininity and consumption to establish how "Many young women, particularly the daughters of

immigrants, came to identify 'cheap amusements'," which Peiss elaborates as "dance halls excursions and amusement parks, and the movies" "as the embodiment of American urban culture, particularly its individualism, ideology of consumption, and affirmation of dating and courtship outside parental control." (Peiss, 6-10). Guided by Peiss, I consider the emotional charge of leisure as a rich site for salacious fantasy construction within otherwise staid company histories.

Booster tracts, land auction brochures, menus, and even gossip columns are direct itineraries of recreational endeavors. At the same time, travelogues directly represent the allure of leisure and thus instill its precepts, including its racial and settler logics. Furthermore, as iconic landscape historian J.B. Jackson explained, while quarterly reports or account books may not explicitly describe racialist motivations in corporate or market formation, the physical imprint on landscapes indexes both the traces of their constitutive ideologies and the silences those necessitate. Jackson elaborates on a former Western frontier: "the spirit of the Midwestern landscape and of the society which created it was not opportunism and greed but unquestioning acceptance of the authority of a revealed truth: the truth of the Bible, the truth of mathematical formulas and rational philosophy." (Jackson, 162). For Jackson, the omnipresent grid system of the Midwest served to proclaim Newtonian ideals through their imposition on the countryside in orderly, quantifiable plots and alleviate the fear of Indigenous encounter by clearing and ordering the brush. The arrangement of dirt, roads, and fields thus recalls a colonizing worldview of a transcendent Enlightenment logic. It also alludes to Indigenous stewardship of the land that may not emerge straightforwardly from the grid but serves as its constitutive absence. Black Geographic inquiry requires that this constitutive absence is the crucial avenue for critique and reformulation. Geographers must seek out minoritized records and theories to critically and comprehensively assess a place's historical trajectory.

When corporations construct infrastructure or avail themselves of state-sponsored improvements, they construct both landscapes and particular technical processes. To approach infrastructure solely as a landscape, whether aesthetic or functional, ignores a perspective from Science and Technology Studies linking technical impacts and innovations' scale from the laboratory to the body to entire global ecological systems. Through an STS lens advising a transscalar perspective, infrastructure merges disparate rhetorical expressions (aesthetics, quantification) to suggest their co-constitution. Their interoperation establishes the unique ideological grasp scientific discourse maintains within modernity because of its unique ability to pervade and saturate across scales. Scientists definitively affirm this hegemonic encompassment.

As the "Father of Plastics," Leo Baekeland, preached in a May 1910 speech entitled "'Science and Industry,' his presidential address to the American Electrochemical Society," "temporarily put[ting] aside the 'modesty' that he and many others attributed to scientists and engineers," "'the last hundred years, under the influence of the modern engineer and scientist, have done more for the betterment of the race than all art, all the civilizing efforts, all the so-called classical literature of past ages" (Mercelis, 124). J. Ogden Armour, convinced by arguments like Baekeland's, bet a fortune on the plastics industry's developing need for petroleum. Like Armour, I want to consider Baekeland seriously as a cultural geographer. If the engineer and not the poet primarily fueled the ravages of settler colonialism and racial capitalism, how did the racial discourse of whiteness motivating their endeavor mold the forms still defining the shape of Sacramento's waterways, and how did the city turn to white feelings and concrete infrastructure when cracks in retaining walls emerged?

Through three case studies, I analyze this recourse to whiteness as exemplified in Sacramento but typical of all extractive commodification preceded by imperial warfare. Each consists of diversified firms that commodified one aspect of hydrological intervention within the Sacramento and American River watershed. These firms found value in selling specialty crops easily irrigated with sluice gates and pumps and fertilized by combusted wetland grass, the preservation potential of frozen water from nearby tributaries, the bucolic bliss associated with Jeffersonian independence enabled by alluvial soil, and the markets opened up by traversing underutilized hinterlands or by hawking the water itself as an implement for further riches. While the through lines linking the firms were sometimes quite material—two were railroad corporation subsidiaries, an unsurprising arrangement given the outsize impact of freight and passenger logistics in contributing to the Valley's prominence—the businesses' responses to both real and imagined disasters consistently foreground the transcendent allure of civilizational whiteness as their common resource for risk mitigation and absorption. The firms defined whiteness's sublimity through its capacity to forge ironclad linkages across geographies, penetration into even the most intimate subjective affects, and an almost ethereal ability to avoid the ravages of time. Not incidentally, all these firms emphasized hydrologic infrastructure as the physical manifestation of and bulwark for these values.

Chapter two considers the Natomas Water and Mining Company. This Gold Rush-era consolidated firm initially established a regional foothold through its brash accumulation of water rights to sell to other prospective miners. Natomas evolved to encompass nearly all genres of industrial and commercial extractive operations wresting riches from Sacramento's waterways. Natomas Consolidated especially demonstrates the racialization of modernity as a tactic to aggregate and circulate wealth across cycles of flushness and aridity, both environmental and financial. Their major stake in the Folsom Powerhouse is a consequential and relevant touchstone for the region's white developmental imaginary. As the first long-transmission hydroelectric dam in the West, it served as a precursor of the still dominant California utility PG&E.

The Powerhouse directly merged concerns for scientific and technological "PROGRESS," explicitly spelled out and broadcasted in a lighted archway during the Electric Carnival celebrating its first electrical transmission, with novel legal forms analogizing the morality of convict labor with property value and vertical integration. Specifically, Natomas convinced the state of California to offer the labor of unpaid incarcerated individuals for land to ease overcrowding in San Quentin—the birth of the infamous Folsom Prison. They understood punitive racialist labor exploitation as networked with water's appealing capacity to elevate Westerners' lifestyles through irrigated grapes from European wine stock and the marvels of electric light. These domestic and civic developments both sought to whiten the Valley indelibly.

After whiteness withstood successive boom-and-bust cycles to mold the Valley's infrastructure irreversibly, Natomas sold this racial paradise as profitable real estate with the assurance of civility despite any given industry's fluctuations. Ultimately, Natomas recirculated and revived longstanding tropes of white benevolence from earlier settler profit schemes to explain the diversification of their interests across multiple sectors and to mitigate risk through a shared racial appeal to progress. In this manner, they could not only siphon profit to stabilize risky bets or unsustainable speculation. Through this financial maneuver, Natomas concretized an interlinked infrastructural landscape with a forceful current channeling the majority of political-economic or cultural developments towards an imperial whiteness.

The Sutter Basin project, the focus of chapters three and four, similarly strove to cultivate a genteelly regulated whiteness along the banks of the Sacramento River. However, their numerous travails, ranging from accusations of political manipulation during flood control debates in the California Legislature to the sudden death of their primary financier, most strikingly elucidate how race and the behaviors it necessitates serve as the recourse of last resort during racial capitalist market fluctuations. The corporation commenced reclamation efforts intended to wrest agricultural real estate from unwieldy bottomlands during a period of abundance and mania around the profitability of such ventures. Their efforts began after settlers and speculators had already secured the most easily reclaimed land through less sophisticated technological means and local financial arrangements. The outfit secured the majority of its financing through a bond personally guaranteed by the meatpacking fortune of Chicago capitalist J. Ogden Armour to offset drying out the remaining tule marsh's prohibitive cost.

In addition to analyzing the palimpsestic preservation of foodstuffs and wealth, in which California development sought to mimic and streamline the lessons of Midwestern colonialism, this case study considers the role of wartime subsidies in Armour's eventual downfall and indebtedness in death. Armour's stylish California real estate agents perpetually alluded to the potential for a balanced racial harmony throughout this quixotic reclamation foley. In this fantasy, subservience funded leisurely lifestyles but was kept at a properly quarantined distance. Armour and Sutter Basin promised a reinvigorating gentlemanly farmstead where the vicissitudes of the market and its geographical metonym, the urban city, could be avoided. They offered a more concentrated and smaller-scale replication of a global white mastery in the form of an owner-overseer selling crops picked by Chinese and Mexican laborers directly to market.

Distinct from Natomas's example, Armour and Sutter Basin would not leave a mark on the map of the Valley outside the promotional literature and land deeds housed at the former University Farm, UC Davis. However, in a shocking twist ideal for the society gossip pages that breathlessly tracked its developments, Armour's racialized and classed social connections enabled an unexpected and very Californian resolution to his saga. What would redeem Armour in his afterlife and preserve for further investment the intergenerational wealth he previously inherited, along with agribusiness processing techniques, from his father can be conceptualized as infrastructural futures guaranteed by faith in the inevitability of white progress. Mirroring Natomas, Armour's social integration into California society via Sutter Basin allowed his investment in a process stoking an oil boom: cracking, a key technology for early plastics manufacturing. Ultimately, infrastructural linkage facilitated by whiteness presaged a windfall from trust in extractive innovation, even when a distinct yet related (both owed much to the legacies of hard rock mining) infrastructural project imploded spectacularly.

My final case study in chapter five dissects the California Steam Navigation Company. Initially a cartel of steamboat captains and owners, the Central Pacific Railroad eventually subsumed this riverine passenger and freight service under their banner. Following the meandering afterlives of many infrastructural services, the conglomerate (or at least its name and reputation) later found its revival through a former clerks. The consortium is a complicated navigational enterprise whose tenure nearly spanned the lifecycle of the preceding corporations. It offers a helpful bookend as its motivations to make the river static and leisurely ultimately yielded to the Army Corps of Engineers' delineation of agricultural trade as a military enterprise. The CNSC's arc illustrates its purpose as a force for edifying the Sacramento River through vessels' routine travel across its waters. This traffic transformed the ships into a manipulatable infrastructural entity and a cultural beacon for civilized refinement, explicitly imbricating

logistics and travel as prime media for whiteness. The interconnection between the leisurely and entertaining aspects of the steamboats, often purposefully referencing Southern U.S. gentility and mores, and their market function to regulate hinterland freight rates demonstrates whiteness's dual function as an economic regulatory mechanism as well as a subjective behavioral lodestar. Like the calliope, this combination emphasizes that infrastructure is a uniquely situated locale within which racial precepts and market logics intermingle, amalgamate, and cohere.

The steamships suggest the multiscalar value of whiteness for a settler society maintained by racial capitalist accumulation and methodology, offering certain settlers a subjective framework and behavioral model through which they can apprehend and even carry the omnipresence of whiteness's promises. I structure my analysis around several generations of California riverine vistas, from famous landscapes by Albert Bierstadt literally floating up the river to nostalgic cinematic ruminations on infrastructure's lessons by Greta Gerwig in her celebrated 2017 *bildungsroman*, *Lady Bird*. While Bierstadt's oil paintings lured travelers from worldly San Francisco to potentially profitable but uncomfortable hinterlands, *Lady Bird* arrived a year after the 'revitalization' of Sacramento's downtown initiated by the Golden 1 Center, home of the NBA's Sacramento Kings. That year the team began to sport an advertisement for the world's largest almond grower collective, Blue Diamond, on their jerseys (Blue Diamond Growers). The press release announcing the partnership specifically cites this agribusiness cooperative grower infrastructure as stoking global investment by raising awareness of their R&D advancements in commodities like almond milk and encouraging an internalized and corporeal commitment to personal advancement through 'wellness.'

Like the *Chrysopolis* steamer showcasing Bierstadt, local boosters likewise directly capitalized on *Lady Bird's* intimate infrastructural reflections. They materially imprinted the film on the city grid by civically funding a mural and drew cash into regional pockets through a cinematic landmark tour. Inseparable from these financial schemes, their inclusion of landscape perspectives and the analogy of infrastructurally mediated self-discovery instruct specific viewers in a racial pedagogy suggesting that without the trappings of logistical modernity, their own selves and their celebrated countryside will cease to exist.

Through an empirical case study of Western hydrological resource commodification’s identifications, affective orientations, and market strategies, this analysis purports to contour more precisely what role whiteness plays within racial capitalism. In the case of Sacramento, developers invariably invoked whiteness to convince themselves of their Valley's, and thus their own, durable coupling to global imperial networks. Their proximity to natural, wild potential precipitated this interconnection to be reinforced by and reflected in their personal, recognizable domestic stability. Infrastructure geographically crystallizes on the landscape three definitional claims of whiteness: its universality, its fecundity, and its permanence. These affective appeals reinvigorate stalled settler narratives in addition to idled productive or circulative capacity after crisis.

Much like the levees that they piled high around their fields to prevent the migration of a river they consistently demonized—thus foreclosing the immemorial natural sedimentation deposit that made this floodplain so valuable as arable fields—Sacramento's settlers pursued the firming of their geographies as recognizably white. They strove to racialize their reclaimed wetlands and the rails that delivered their comestibles as a beacon for value and the heart of an emergent Pacific empire. The cultural buttressing of financial banks matched the concrete and gravel shoring up riverine banks. Both followed the tempo of capitalist crisis. The displacements and violence of whiteness caused the Valley to overflow at various times with both water and a

glut in real estate. Nevertheless, whiteness would also be the failsafe settlers activated to dispose of their losses onto racialized others and conjure new infrastructural fixes through which their progeny could communicate their resilience and luxuriate with peace of mind guaranteed by a transcendental balance between wilderness and account books.

II. Chemical, Agricultural, Domestic: Consolidating White Feelings Across a Burgeoning Regional Capitalism with the Natomas Company

A single page in the Livermore family scrapbook with a pair of headlines from newspaper clippings summarizes the regional consequences of the family's conglomerate, the Natomas Company. A lengthy profile from the *San Rafael Independent* on January 22, 1949, commemorates the new Folsom Dam groundbreaking and jokes that for attendee Norman B. Livermore, "Folsom Dam Fete Was Family Affair for PGE Officer." An article from the following year in the *Chronicle*, pasted directly below this triumphant hagiography, eulogizes Lim Ti Ark, "beloved friend and servant of the Livermore family for over 75 years." The short profile celebrates the deceased as "probably the last of the fabulous old-country Chinese who once ran many a nabob mansion on San Francisco hills—ran them with tact, devotion, ingenuity and inscrutable, impervious pidgin English; meanwhile operating a bottomless cookie jar for their flourishing generations." (Livermore scrapbook). This juxtaposition captures Livermore's legacy and the imprint of the Natomas Company his grandfather bought out and diversified to control the commodification of the river's waters. Natomas encompassed propulsive power upstream and sodden irrigation downstream. His family's holdings refined cultural subjugation and ridicule alongside modern industrial potential. Their interwoven corporate and domestic organizational strategy flattened both racial difference and water as infinitely circulatable.

The Natomas Company began during the Gold Rush as a scheme to profit off miners' desperation to wrench wealth from dry riverbed gravel. It sold water diverted via flumes to wash miners' diggings. Eventually, under the Livermore's guidance from the late-19th century through the 1920s, the firm projected confidence over both the natural environment and the increasingly diverse social world of Sacramento migrants. They rapidly expanded into mining operations, hydroelectric power, wineries with raisin processing facilities, and real estate subdivisions. This diversification modeled an approach to infrastructure harmonious with contemporaneous dominant national trends. This iconography projected infrastructure, such as the oft-admired Folsom Dam, as a communal bulwark against disaster. While the primary fear necessitating this salve was ecological as capitalism and frontier settlement could not proceed due to alternating inundations and drought, the conspicuous copresence of Livermore's construction endeavors and seemingly sincere yet intensely patronizing mourning Lim Ti Ark's acumen emphasizes that hydrological firms like Natomas comingled the control of wilderness and racialized populations as their endeavors' unique promise.

Publicly, Natomas coerced unpaid labor from convicts imprisoned at California's San Quentin prison in exchange for the land now housing Folsom State Prison to complete the original 1867 Folsom Dam. This construction eventually provided the first long-distance hydroelectricity to a Western city. When the newspaper wistfully commended the resilience of the old Folsom Dam, they participated in an obdurate sanctification process hydrologic historian Donald J. Pisani recounts as a national obsession, as when "In 1909, Newell observed that although the engineers who designed the bureau's dams considered cost, safety, and efficiency, the most important requirement was that the dams *look* durable to the public." These technocrats emphasized "the overall impression such a structure conveyed, especially because photographs of notable dams and canals taken by Reclamation Service publicists appeared in newspapers and magazines across the country." (Pisani, 98). Natomas and other private firms contributed to and previewed this ideological and affective visual appeal in the booster literature they used to secure bonds and government contracts for their initial taming of the West.

However, the haunting eruption of Lim Ti Ark's funerary announcement indicates that Natomas's effort to subdue water and transform it into an infinitely circulatable commodity hinged upon the association of infrastructure as a capitalist fix with whiteness as its unacknowledged engine. Of the former, Natomas's business attempted to avert crisis through an ecological transformation of the specific circumstances and variations of the American and Sacramento Rivers into "modern water," defined by geographer Jamie Linton as "the presumption that any and all waters can and should be considered apart from their social and sociological relations and reduced to an abstract quantity. […] all water is made known as an abstract, isomorphic, measurable quantity that may be reduced to its fundamental unit—a molecule of H2O—and represented as the substance that flows in the hydrologic cycle." (Linton, 14). Natomas's expansion into seemingly every aspect of Sacramentan life through the Valley's waters—whether the security of housing buttressed by Natoma levees, the lights in those houses powered by Natoma machinery, or the wine sipped at a dinner table under those lamps—illustrates how modern water's flexibility as an abstraction allows for crisis mitigation through its every-expanding domains.

As their infrastructure continuously rerouted riverine flows, Natomas's unacknowledged reliance on racialized labor exploitation and domestic racial imaginaries subconsciously reassured the public like the snapshots of their dam's abiding presence. These labor arrangements and representational biases insisted that the dams and powerplants of the Natomas company secured more than capitalist functionality. They allowed for an incessant circulation of racial bodies enabled by a thoroughly concretized whiteness triumphant over naturalized forces. This category included maligned populations. The dam represented water's abstraction to secure circulation. Infrastructure's frontier presence also guaranteed whiteness's abstraction that inexhaustibly secured dominance over cheap Chinese labor and furthered avenues for investment. Tangible engineering supposed that settlers and financiers could rely upon racial dominance. After all, if the Livermores had domestically yoked seemingly insurmountable perpetual "foreignness" to achieve their own regeneration through racial stratification and mockery, would not their edifices and power supply do the same for the entire city?

Charting a Course for Whiteness

Critical Western histories have thoroughly debunked the myth of the enterprising '49er lackadaisically scooping auriferous value from earthen piles while correcting the oversight of others too lazy or uninspired to capitalize on this windfall. This omnipresent racialization of California Indians and Californios suffuses popular rugged individualist fantasy. I thicken this critique to emphasize the racial precepts undergirding corporate structure. While individualist white masculine racial animus certainly inspired many miners, the infusion of racial forms into corporate expansionary priorities served decisively to progressively industrialize the extraction of mineral wealth and parlay that wealth into further capitalist ventures. The regionalization of Sacramento undertaken by middle-class clerks and lawyers as a model for an emergent California capitalism paradoxically begins in both the placer diggings of the Sierra and the boardrooms of the epicenter of Eastern capitalism, New York.

This geographical imbrication is more logical and less tangential than traditional pioneer historiographies suggest. My first case study is of the Natomas Company, which mined, dredged, reclaimed, farmed, and sold land ranging from Sacramento County to Peru from 1851 until 1984 and whose operations were eventually acquired by Valero (Castaneda, Docken, Pitti, Ide; Bloomberg). Natomas suggests an extensive transnational reach similar to many other ventures founded on Californian soil and eventually exchanged among empires and settler colonies.

However, the firm more succinctly portrays the infusion of New York sensibilities and the corporate governance of utilities into formerly Spanish borderlands. Natomas's founder, "Amos Parmalee Catlin was born in Duchess County, New York State, in January 1823." After sailing to California during the height of the Gold Rush, Catlin would conjoin his professional endeavors as a member of the New York State Bar with speculative investment ventures concerning Western ecological transformation to tap natural value.

As an obituary in his papers at the California State Library elaborates, "While continuing his legal practice, he was interested much in mining and canal building. In 1851, he projected and located the course, and determined and fixed the water rights, of the Natoma Canal, the second canal of any importance in the state." ("Hon. A.P. Catlin"). Catlin's personal papers, split between the State Library and the Huntington Library, are balanced between *ad hoc* legal documentation and corporate machinations to turn wilderness profitable. Catlin settled boundary disputes while selling stock in a venture to dam and divert the American River and to secure water rights by initiating proper "use" of the streams (conforming them to Euro-American technological appraisals). The seals of these documents are frequently hand drawn, indicating the sparsity of stationary and the recalcitrance of a legal framework meant to lend creditability and stability. Before we turn to settler colonial rudiments on the Sierra slope, we must examine water's commodification and financialization as the cornerstone of the white geographic appraisal travelling with Catlin.

Culturally, an incredibly remunerative financial scheme in Catlin's home state where profits flowed from natural resources into further capital investment more broadly established Natomas's antecedent structural pattern. The Manhattan Company, chartered in 1799, was one of the first multi-unit corporations in the U.S. that presaged the Northern California model in its commodification of natural resources as a supposed public good and the inseparability of financialization and development from this endeavor. The Company, founded by Aaron Burr, served as his entry point into a banking system dominated by his political rivals. He did so through a public panic over the salubriousness of the city. In examining the Manhattan Company's structure, Gregory S. Hunter explains, "The origins of the Manhattan Company can be traced to a mosquito-spread yellow fever epidemic which swept New York City in the summer of 1798." (Hunter, 37). Worried by this panic, the City of New York arranged for the Manhattan Company, a private entity, to erect a municipal water supply.

Burr, however, made sure the charter approved by the New York State Assembly allowed the Manhattan Company to use any excess capital reserves in any way deemed profitable to ensure returns for the private investors bankrolling the infrastructure. This would lead the Company to severely deemphasize infrastructural development to promote banking—which contemporaneous commentators theorized was Burr's intended purpose throughout the creation. Hunter concludes, "Though the Manhattan Company was chartered to supply New York City with water, there is no doubt that the directors came to view the water works as a distraction from their central interest in banking." (Hunter, 286). This model would prove highly successful; the Manhattan Company's successor is the current Chase Bank. The Manhattan Company's charter radically altered the scope and arrangement of corporate interests in the United States. More important for the development of the Natomas Company, it twinned the health of the industrializing nation with a drive for profitability and capital accumulation. The Company's organization introduced capitalism as a force for social salubriousness but also situated shareholder value as equally essential as corporeal well-being. By analogizing the survival of a white colony as tantamount to the yield of an investment, the Manhattan Company modeled a

racial capitalist logic of development that Catlin would reproduce in an expanded form out West.

Like the foundation of the Manhattan Company, the Natomas Company's catalyst was a dual desire to domesticate unmanaged land and, through that domestication, yield additional capital and progress. A consequential director of Natomas, Horatio G. Livermore, epitomized this anxiety in correspondence back east about an initial pioneer venture of a sawmill on the American River. Livermore marveled, staring down from atop a frame structure sixty feet high, at "How up to my very feet the whole void I had so often looked down upon was filled up with a raging mass of waters. I looked up the river. The whole chasm between the mountains was filled up and it seemed as if a vast avalanche of liquid mud was rolling down towards me." Gates projected confidence in the face of such a sublime natural disaster partly "to show the people I was not afraid of my own handiwork." ("Horatio Gates Livermore to Sons"). While certainly evoking his newfound frontier tenacity, Livermore had explained in an earlier letter that this handiwork was only possible due to his formation of "a company of 5 to work our ground together as a joint interest." ("Horatio Gates Livermore to Sons").

Fascinatingly, Livermore's mention of his partners is slowly elided as he transitions to an atomistic narrative of "his" handiwork conquering the river. This shift indexes an interplay between Western individualistic mythmaking and the intense capitalization to make Californian endeavors profitable or even viable—from mineral extraction to agriculture to utilities and the residences they serve. The diversification of Livermore's holdings over subsequent years showcases an interdependence between the symbolic flourishes of gritty white masculinity with a highly networked, associated, and affiliated circuit of capital in the region.

The values of natural and social conquest predicated on ordering the landscape and its inhabitants saturate self-aggrandizing pioneer stories and diversified vertically integrated corporate forms. The intermingling of these two forces across scales remains crucial for normalizing capitalist infrastructure and land and commodity valuation in the Sacramento Valley. In this chapter, I argue that pairing the appeals to white modernity's fundamental necessity with the profit motive led to a distinct organizational form for the Natomas company. Natomas interwove and co-constituted its mutually reinforcing initiatives and sought to establish wealth through regional development. More crucially, they delineated a capitalist form that used cultural evaluations of landscape and people to establish multiple units that amplified the activities of one another in a feedback loop. What allowed this reinforcement was certainly the money they generated but also civilizational imperatives saturated with colonial, racialist valuations upon which their commodification depended.

DuBois discusses the "wages of whiteness" as one tool to placate working-class whites with racial benefits; the efforts of the Natomas company parallel these wages with a corporate structuration of whiteness—the linkage of various capitalist ventures through their supposed benefits contributing to the white settlement of a given geography. Gray Brechin argues persuasively in *Imperial San Francisco* that technologies such as the cable car were adaptations of technologies developed in the mining fields (Brechin, 66). I argue that this technological exchange was also organizational and never focused solely on mining.

As Natomas demonstrates, while water may have been initially profitable for mineral extraction, agriculture and land speculation operated in tandem as speculative ventures from the earliest days of Anglo settlement. A proliferation of engineering expertise and entrepreneurial settlers' efforts collated these various industries. Each also justified its presence in California with explicit racializing undertones. I argue that the Natomas Company's multi-unit diversified

operations constitute an emergent racial capitalist framework in which development and profit are inseparable as motivations from whiteness's imperative to pervade, order, and rame the landscape. Natomas's various ventures—hydroelectricity, viniculture, and real estate—demonstrate the aspects of a new corporate whiteness emergent in California during Anglo settlement into the interwar period, defined by connectivity, fecundity, and permanence.

While its directors certainly expected capital accumulation and a return for shareholders, the impetus for civilizational progress-- understood as white settlement-- spurred their particular choice of endeavors. Through a dialectical relationship between boosterism's role marketing commodities' civilizational appeal and a distinct developmentalist political-economic philosophy for particular subsidiaries' lucrativeness, the Natomas Company exemplifies how capital in the West sought to replicate whiteness in its accumulative structures. The Natomas Company would rationalize its market participation and situate its endeavors as integrating California into the national and global economy. In Natomas's racial imaginary, this fulfilled untapped "potential" in the landscape and reproduced value and white sociality.

In alignment with feminist geography's theoretical and methodological advancements clarifying spatialization as an inherently embodied process, alongside corporeality as continually geographical, I argue that modern embodiment enmeshes with and functions as an integral feature of capitalist economics. Combining this conclusion with the conceptualizations of racial capitalism yields an invaluable intervention allowing geographers to read across the formation of intimate selves and regional development for the overarching racializing characterizations common to both colonizing projects. Vital for the former point in feminist geographies essential investigation into the mutually constitutive and interactive dynamic between and across geographic scales.

Eminent feminist geographer Doreen Massey specified that global capitalist dynamics like time-space compression remain dominant but seriously uneven processes. They not only impact actors with the economy in almost unrecognizably distinct ways, but their operation depends upon that distinction, as "different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections [of modern capital]. This point concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn't, although that is an important element of it; it is also about power in relation *to* the flows and the movement." Massey elaborates that "Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyways differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it." (Massey, 149). What constitutes globalization and its nascence in colonial trade networks is how it positions people and the landscapes they inhabit as either accumulators or accumulated. However, Massey's sage critique still approaches capitalism as an abstract system *interacting* with human agents. My work seeks to expand this notion and examine how coalescing an epistemologically coherent modern human involves merging racial differentiation, affective disposition, and landscape orientation. Each facet of this human reinforces the others to naturalize notions of competition and inevitability upon which a capitalist ideology rests.

In this regard, my work follows most closely the feminist geographic exegesis of J.K. Gibson-Graham, the pair of feminist economic geographers who more closely interrogated the internal mechanisms of capitalism. Gibson-Graham shifted inquiry towards how the binary oppositions of gender are building blocks for the internal contradictions justifying capitalist exploitation. By specifically seeking to approach the commonsense hegemony of capitalist thought and dismantle its inevitability, they foregrounded how "It is not difficult to see in the

story of Man and his body the interplay of an infinite set of gendered oppositions—a brief list might include mind/body, reason/passion, man/nature, subject/object, transcendence/imminence. […] In this way it becomes possible to understand the bizarre dance of dominance and submission through which Man addresses the economy."

This selection offers the invaluable assertion that capitalism's backgrounding—or its infrastructure—uses the epistemological model of gender to rectify a contradictory stance. Its commonsense resolves a tension whereby economic accumulation and progress serve as the rational law of the universe yet do not allow modern Man to complete a catholic conquest. Gibson-Graham explains how "When Man is positioned as the first term in their binary relation, he is the master of the economy and of its processes; but when Man (perhaps in the guise of 'society') is positioned as the second term, he bows to the economy as his god. Each positioning is informed and constituted by an infinity of binary hierarchalizations." (Gibson-Graham, 102-103). Feminist geography amends political economy by epistemologically dissecting its fundamental irrationality, despite capitalism's extensive efforts to enshrine its mathematics of natural law and almost a divinely-ordained rational order.

Especially pertinent for my study are the implications of the gendered binary's establishment of capitalism as a self-replicating socially reproductive entity. Gibson-Graham describes this as an "organism." By claiming a philosophical totality to the system and naturalizing it as ecological tendency, capitalist political economists write off and absorb crisis as intrinsic to the capitalist lifecycle. Indeed, "Ultimately, however, the life 'narrative' of the economic organism incorporates not only health and stability but illness and death. Thus, a capitalist economy experiences growth punctuated by crises, and may even be susceptible to breakdowns of an ultimate sort." (Gibson-Graham, 100). Crisis is merely the ecological, and thus the unquestionable, mechanism of social natural selection. It essentialized Darwinism to the social sphere without the overt disdain of official Social Darwinism.

Gibson-Graham's work, however admirable, is mired by an over-essentialization of and reliance upon gender. Whereas they consider the binary oppositions constitutive of capitalist totality as emanating solely from the gendered sphere, I approach gender and race as a co-constituted amalgam. Per Black feminist thought, these categories emerge as inseparable for modern European men to justify their outbreaks of violence. Suppose we accede that Gibson-Graham's dichotomies—"mind/body, reason/passion, man/nature, subject/object, transcendence/imminence"—have an equally insidious history concerning Blackness. How can we approach capitalist mechanics as particularly potent, hidden racializing matrices—and the inverse? As the continuity between Chase Bank and Natomas Mining indicates, infrastructure often shoulders the burden of catalyzing racialization’s travels.

That the Sacramento Valley and proximal foothills would inspire a company parallel to the Manhattan Company—an infrastructural project that would diversify to other market functions—indicates similar concerns in their impetus. As Linda Nash notes of the Sacramento Valley's longstanding struggles against malaria—of which the Natomas Company's massive reclamation efforts played a significant role-- "The voluminous writings on 'sickly' and 'salubrious' places suggest a deeply held fear of certain landscapes—swamps, forest edges, tropical climates." (Nash, 5). Lindsey Dillon notes that racialized logics around wastefulness and suitability for Chinese laborers saturated the swamplands of the California Delta in particular. This suitability for degraded landscapes vindicated these same laborers' expulsion once the lands had been 'reclaimed.' (Dillon).

Amos Catlin and his associates peppered the correspondence around his earliest ventures into California with racialist discourse of white bodies' unsuitability for tropical environments. In one of his first letters received from back east, Catlin's brother expresses his worry. He states, "I had seen no letter from you in so long a time that I began to be alarmed knowing that the cholera was so bad in California." ("Catlin, W[ilia]m W to Amos P[armalee] Catlin, 5 letters"). Like the Manhattan Company's argument to the New York State Legislature, Catlin intended to tame a fruitful yet wasteful, unmanaged landscape. As the subsequent iterations of the Natomas Company indicate, settlers accomplished mastery not merely by personal wealth generation but through an integrated system of development in which civilizational imperatives of whiteness could buttress. This trellis enabled each venture to prop itself against each other to stabilize the frontier landscape assiduously. This interoperation was a genuinely racial capitalist endeavor in which the corporation's structure would increase revenues and provide an ever-cascading proper way of life.

For Sacramento Valley elites, the precise engineering of hydrological management tamed an unruly flow of water, from which bloomed infrastructural capability and linkage, the proper use of the earth for proper consumptive habits, and the supposed stability of settled domestication. Crucially, the progenitor of these interlinked efforts was the natural resource turned commodity of the American River. As Norris Hundley recounts in his opus on California Water, *The Great Thirst*, the legal mechanism that allowed the Natomas Company to claim and divert the river also contained a particular behavioral requirement within it. Hundley notes that California water rights' first come, first serve basis echoed the legacy of *terra nullius* that completely erased California Indian presence and technology. He diagrams how "this new right came to be seen as a personal property right that could be accumulated on a stream (or many streams), just as a person might accumulate other forms of property […] The right […] continued only so long as a person exercised 'due diligence' in diverting the water and using it beneficially (the 'use it or lose it' principle)" (Hundley, 74-75). The notion of 'beneficial' use indicates an affective value judgment linked to notions of propriety. There is an implied object here—beneficial to whom and measured by what metric? —which allowed whiteness's goals to fill the void.

The question of the liquidity's moral and practical beneficence, wherein water is valued beyond its movement and rerouting for the directionality of its intended use, gestures towards infrastructural critique's capacity to reveal race's centrality to the judgment of successful capitalist operations. A minor chapter in Natomas's various financial and organizational schemes during one period of rapid ascendance emphasizes infrastructure as an engineering, financial, colonial, and profoundly moral and racial bricolage. The *Wall Street Journal* praised "Natomas Consolidated, [as] a large public utility, irrigation and dredging property in California" ("Committee for Bondholders Buys in the Property at Foreclosure for $3,500,000," 5) before tracking its efforts to lure underwriters and bondholders to inject cash into its overleveraged property and utility holdings. The journalists rationalized this maneuver as fulfilling the civilizational mandate to "use" these properties beneficially. For an agricultural landholding, electrical utility, and hydrological dredging firm, advantageousness meant interconnection and value generation for allied industries by providing productive capacity and geomorphological precision in controlling floodwaters. The shared promise of potential profit from horticultural harvests actualized by land reclamation owed to regional levees dredged up by Natomas from the river bottom.

The underlying engineering feat of evaporating marshlands and putting them to plow matched, mirrored, and validated Natomas aptitude for financial maneuvering to reroute foreign capital into the California market and to redistribute the interest on indebtedness to a consortium of supportive allied parties. As with many corporate restructurings, commentators hailed as a universal societal gain the financial infrastructural strategy of the "Reorganization committee of Natomas Consolidated, one of the big California corporations," proclaiming how "the refinancing of which would do much to relieve the pressure on financial circles in that state."

Natomas's positive outlook belied the multiple classic capitalist crises it weathered at this period, as an overleveraged firm with excessive fixed capital unable to circulate wealth in a California market propped up by its massive debt, during what the *Journal* calls "the European war [that]will doubtless have considerable effect on the progress of the reorganization." Despite these headwinds, "The committee believes that the reorganization, if carried out as planned, will put the company on its feet and enable it to operate profitably the utilities and other properties in California which it controls." ("Says Commissions Do Not Retard Utility Development," 6). This rosy perspective, ultimately validated, functioned by the "Steps to be taken under the plan of reorganization […] include[ing] the sale of all assets of Natomas Consolidated of California, covered by the mortgage liens, at auction to the highest bidder. The committee expects to bid in the properties for the bondholders who have deposited their bonds, and non-depositing bondholders will not share in benefits of the reorganization." ("Says Commissions Do Not Retard Utility Development," 6). In a quintessential feat of business engineering, Natomas essentially swapped its indebtedness to financial institutions for security holders in its bonds. The company sold itself to a selective consortium of bondholders and secured its value through anonymous international financiers abroad. The reorganization committee insisted upon their capacity for broad and mutual benefit by affectively appealing to the regret of a missed opportunity certainly yielded by any lack of faith.

Besides the inevitably racialized makeup of the bondholders and financiers behind this securitized bit of intrigue, the racial character of infrastructure—its appeals to and foundation within whiteness's racialization—rests in the assurances that allowed this scheme to produce real value and ultimately transition the company out of a crisis-prone position of illiquidity. The narrative tracks "the first installment of the $3,000,000 which is to be furnished by the English syndicate"—the only name mentioned throughout the World War I-era corporate reorganization saga of 1913-1914—"to take up the floating indebtedness of the company and to place the reclaimed land in crops. It is said that the company's surplus for 1913 will exceed $300,000." ("Natomas Consolidated," 5). Due to the excessive cost of reclaiming marshland and reengineering ancient geological aquatic flows—an outlay of capital that underscores capitalism's tendency towards increasingly complex infrastructure as the primitive accumulation that initially funds colonial states degrades to a dwindling resource pool for extraction—the civilizational mission ontologically defining farmland in the Western imaginary, orderly cultivation, could not be pursued by Natomas.

As a thoroughly infrastructural entity, Natomas did not profit in this transaction from its agribusiness acumen. It achieved surplus by the narrative promise of its engineered infrastructural activity buoyed by financial infrastructure: a speculative investment owing to the marvel of its technological might to tame an unruly wilderness. Its value surfaces from ontological shifts in land use/tenure and utility capacity for industry. It claimed to marshal both these capacities as a backgrounded and inertial strategy to calcify unquestionably resource

commodification throughout California, securing capitalism's perpetual motion and whiteness's comportment with the state.

The racial precepts of both the potential embedded in the mastery of wilderness, and the facilitation of exchange championed by an elusive investment syndicate's approval of Natomas, resemble the background function definitional to infrastructure by gaining potency not because they modify the landscape through an explicitly white supremacist claim but due to a racialized circumstance which they *prevent*. In this way, they mirror writer and literary theorist Toni Morrison's incisive critique of whiteness and an "Africanist imaginary" as the unmentionable infrastructure upon which U.S. literature relies and to which it responds. Morrison highlights "individualism, masculinity, social engagement versus historical isolation; acute and ambiguous moral problematics; the thematics of innocence coupled with an obsession with figurations of death and hell" as the archetypal characteristics and concerns of U.S. national literature. Intriguingly, these same values and obsessions serve as the bedrock for Natomas's prognostication of future returns on farmland and electric light for the Sacramento Valley. The innocent and pure ventures of agriculture and electrical generation would defeat the primordial danger of the Sacramento Valley's lowlands. They received financial backing not because they have proved this through successfully farming that landscape but because so many fellow settlers had staked their faith in their venture. This trust, in turn, fostered enough value to solicit further investment.

Infrastructure and whiteness serve as the temporally resilient, naturalized, and hidden features of colonialism after the spectacular violence of Manifest Destiny imposes a regional foothold. Akin to literature's role as a superstructural and hegemonic commonsense for capitalist mores, infrastructure ensures that certain avenues for accumulation proceed not just smoothly but unremarkably. Whiteness functions as the civilizational rationale for value's particular directionality. It naturalizes not just social stratification but *landscape* stratification. Whiteness allows for unjust geographical organization and exploitative economic arrangements to proceed for their supposed reflection of a slippery, undefined, hazy, yet nevertheless potent racialized civic virtue. In racialized societies, values such as management, rationality, and growth traditionally remain firmly associated with whiteness.

Infrastructural alignment with positive racialized appraisals shores up an extractive colonial regime. At the same time, it backgrounds these values into the landscape through reliance on whiteness's particular penchant and knack for defining itself as a negative presence: denoting itself as the absence of particular features rather than positively. Morrison argues that not just U.S. society "necessitated coded language and purposeful restriction to deal with the racial disingenuousness and moral frailty at its heart, so too did the literature[…] Through significant and underscored omissions, startling contradictions, heavily nuanced conflicts, through the way writers peopled their work with the signs and bodies of this presence—[…] a real or fabricated Africanist presence was crucial to their sense of Americanness." (Morrison, 5-6). The racial commonsense of white supremacy could remain unchallenged in American literature because it disguised itself as counterposed to the overdetermined Africanist presence.

Morrison records the supreme utility of this sleight of hand for American literature. Projection and appropriation allowed white writers to rely upon a construction of Blackness for any description of the human condition, racialized as humanity's shadow. This figure revealed whichever contours writers wanted to claim for a universal subject suggested but never directly articulated as white. Hence, paradoxically "images of blackness can be evil *and* protective, rebellious *and* forgiving, fearful *and* desirable—all of the self-contradictory features of the self.

Whiteness alone is mute, meaningless, unfathomable, pointless, frozen, veiled, curtained, dreaded, senseless, implacable." (Morrison, 59). By projecting onto racialized others value judgments and contrasting these against white protagonists allowing for a self-definition realized via negation, commentators forged a formidable strategy to naturalize racial orders and hierarchies while avoiding direct scrutiny.

However, as Morrison emphasizes, this misdirection leaves the Africanist presence in the text: a trace critical scholars can follow, dissect, and unravel to comprehend the precepts behind white racialization. Infrastructural engineering might be considered the material referent that both upholds the ideological conceit of whiteness but advances its agenda across spatial and temporal scales and distills its essence into regional characterizations. Not only does infrastructure palpably reassure residents that a landscape remains devoid of a once pervasive, intertwined racial/ecological threatening presence. It also redirects productive and financial capacity towards its own maintenance and growth according to colonial capitalist priorities, making its maturation inevitable. Distilled within an ambiguous whiteness, any deviance from its "noble" goals would return the landscape to the state of static chaos that exists as its reliable and terrifying foil.

To locally guarantee the continual local liquidity that protects against stagnation, the course of the Natomas Company's water rights follows precisely the track Hundley describes. After Catlin and his associates posted notices on Christmas Eve making clear their intention to divert the American River to sell its contents, they bought up other settlers' water rights. They then sold capital stock to fund an eventual network of ditches and dykes costing over $100,000. Of their mission, a corporate history explains that "The Company's stated objectives for incorporating were essentially a recitation of the two previously posted notices: to appropriate water along the South Fork of the American River, build a canal from Rocky Bar to Alder Creek, and convey water in the canal and flumes to all its branches along the River. This had, in fact, already been accomplished." This last piece is essential—like the Manhattan Company, at the time of their incorporation after several reorganizations, Natomas needed to justify their beneficial character to the State of California. Unlike Burr's endeavors, they had been operating in an unregulated developmental environment and thus had already accomplished their initially stated goals. However, this profit motive was insufficient for the state to recognize Natomas's efforts.

While this indeed can be interpreted as an interesting case study of the relative stature of the state and market within the settler colony, I want to emphasize how the state's enforcement of corporate requirements here reflects racialized values of white modernity. Ultimately, the Natomas Company would appeal to the civilizational potential of their endeavors within their articles of incorporation that "unlike the earlier notices, and in keeping with the legislative act, […] specified it was conveying water '…for useing [sic] and selling of said water for manufacturing, mining, chemical, agricultural, or domestic purposes.' Clearly the Natoma Water and Mining Company intended to be a major force in developing the resources along the South Fork of the American River." (Castaneda, Docken, Pitti, Ide, 47-48). The commodification of water, in other words, did not proceed *ipso facto* from the introduction of intense and speculative market economies in the Sacramento Valley and Mother Lode. This process necessitated a particular form of organization that allowed the water to be abstracted from its natural flow and introduced into other financial and racial streams. I now transition to case studies of several Natomas subsidiaries to elucidate their accordance with and supplementation of white

civilizational mandates. Their investments and operations trace the coevolution of whiteness's racial form alongside regional capitalist reorganization responding to ceaseless crisis.

Chemical Purposes: Water, Power, and Connectivity

Amos P. Catlin's career led him to pursue political and juridical power in addition to hydrological control. As a California State Senator and prominent state bar member, the acquisition notice of his papers by the Huntington Library emphasizes his judicial stature and his wrangling to place the state capital at Sacramento. (Friends of the Huntington Library). The firm he was instrumental in founding, acquired by another self-styled pioneering family, the Livermores, would continue to fulfill the legalized social mandate the Natomas Company's articles of incorporation explicitly articulated.

The 1884 Sawyer decision implemented a partial triumph of agricultural interests over mineral concerns, and even hydraulic mining became unprofitable. In response, Natomas would pivot, with the assistance of the state and incarcerated labor, to generating new forms of power with a broader impact on the quotidian operation of Sacramentans' lives. As one of the few historians to thoroughly engage the history of this incredibly significant regional operation explains, "Natomas embodied the full economic evolution from rivers of gold to the conquest of the Sacramento Valley, as the company's mining and irrigation operations in the nineteenth century gave way to the reclamation-driven ventures of agriculture and electricity in the twentieth." (Holmes, 124). As Todd Holmes notes, reclamation efforts were a cornerstone of Natomas's expansion into a conglomerate encompassing the state's largest contemporaneous vineyard and the first commercialized hydroelectric power for a major municipality. From serving primarily capital-intensive mining firms at its inception, Natomas's transition to electrical generation particularly exemplifies how broader dissemination of commodities linked to the racialized project of civilizing and modernizing Western countryside and cities enabled its evolution to a complex corporate entity.

The Folsom Powerhouse No. 1, now owned and operated as a California State Park, commenced its transmission of power to the city of Sacramento from neighboring Folsom at the end of the 19th century, three years before the Spanish American War ushered in an era of overseas imperialist expansion for the United States. Recognized as a 'historic mechanical engineering landmark' by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, that organization commemorates how "Although Folsom was not the first hydroelectric plant in the country, its transmission line was three times as long as the better-known plant at Niagara Falls (1895), and it demonstrated the commercial feasibility of electrical transmission over long distances." (ASME, 62). The ASME dedication indicates how the Folsom Powerhouse was not solely an experimental scientific venture but a business strategy from its inauguration. It allowed for the Livermores to transform the water rights Catlin and associated declared into a form of natural control that would generate profits and stability alongside as advancement of a proper society defined as regulated, industrious, and white.

As narrativized by ASME, its technological reliability and commercial solvency made the Folsom Powerhouse a worthwhile investment. The distance itself was the rationale. Electrical powerlines could seamlessly suture the lauded wilderness of the placer mining region to the burgeoning trade center of Sacramento. Regarding late-19th-century understandings of industrial and engineering innovations, architectural historian Michael Osman notes how observers prized these inventions for their ability to regulate. While Osman focuses on the form of the built environment, his insights broadly apply to a society only one generation removed from the transatlantic Crisis of 1873 and slightly past the cusp of declaring its frontier "closed."

According to Osman, "Modernism did not materialize in buildings as the embodiment of an idea about a new society; rather, it was constructed through intersections of management with technology and physical infrastructure that operated on the environment and the economy to constrain the errors and deviations endemic to a society invested in growth." (Osman, vii). His emphasis on interactions to constrain errors and deviations reflect the conditions applicable to the Folsom Powerhouse's conceptualization and construction. The endeavor allowed for water rights to be rejuvenated via engineering prowess after the initial promise of mining waned. It also facilitated the geography of the Western Sierra, already being memorialized as gritty and lawless, to align itself with regulation for the orderly production of Sacramento's domestic and agricultural spaces.

The rhetorical power of Natomas's Folsom plant matched or exceeded its physical output. While the fixed capital required for the plant included cutting-edge GE generators larger than any yet constructed (ASME), the new technology's promotion would rival the machines in its scope and reach. As Carolyn Thomas explains, the social milieu of the late 19th century lent itself to an exaggerated sense of electricity's revolutionary potential— a potential both technological and cultural. She explains, "Electricity's dramatic energetic properties were the topic of much speculation: in the age of the first electric injuries and electric executions, few people could ignore the fact that electricity dramatically altered the body upon contact." (Thomas, 7). Thomas is concerned with contemporaneous comprehension of corporeal shifts. In the context of Natomas, the festivity surrounding the initiation of the plant evinces dialogue about the beneficial reorganization spurred by electrical current. For Sacramentans, electricity would provide for personal invigoration and a physical, palpable, and alluringly omnipotent connection to other locales and their historical place.

A description of the subsequent Electric Carnival held by the City of Sacramento to celebrate transmission, penned by Rowena Wise Day in 1970 by the Sacramento Historical Society, illustrates Sacramentans' plea for civilizational affiliation and legitimacy: "Across the west entrance to the [State Capitol] building were the names of Morse, Franklin and Edison, outlined in incandescent bulbs. Three names that should be honored above all at an Electric Carnival in an American City—Franklin, who brought the electricity from the clouds; Morse, who gave it a tongue and Edison, who furnished it with eyes to see and ears to hear." (Day, 56). Day's laudatory exposition notes how for the region, electric potential harnessed a nature often at odds with their goals of uninterrupted advancement and growth, expanded human potential beyond embodied limits, but crucially as reiterated in her appellation for Morse and Edison, the ability to communicate. For Day, the electric current powering the carnival amounted to the ability to communicate— to speak and to hear. It served the fundamental social purpose of enabling Sacramento to brag about its taming of California to an audience linked via modernity around the globe.

California historiography has remained consistently intrigued by the particular rhetorical maneuvers of booster propaganda as a discourse. This definable genre lured investors and settlers to California via promises of interconnection, proximity to natural bounty, and progressive values of control and management. The literature on boosterism addresses a pair of distinct motivations for booster promotion. Representative texts—such as historian Phoebe S.K. Young's *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* which traces both the evolution of what Carey McWilliams identified as the "Spanish Fantasy heritage" (especially prevalent in Southern California mythmaking) as well as the particular media that transmitted this messaging—offer a critical corrective for the fantastical claims of boosterism: these were

money-making schemes. Kropp notes these propaganda efforts' long afterlife and contemporary prominence: "The Spanish past offered a good investment of financial and cultural capital in the regional future. Early speculation in the region has largely paid off, as Spanish homes on the Southern California real-estate market today have greater value than their ranch-style counterparts." (Kropp, 5). While California land offered settler value for its climatic conditions and potential use-value as unseasonable farmland or salubrious and relaxing estates, Kropp and similar critics note that the promises and potentialities of a fantasy lifestyle injected monetary worth within California to a surprisingly resilient degree.

This resiliency partly derives from the particular racial and social associations that California fostered within the U.S. during a period of rapid industrialization, urbanization, and imperial expansion. This other crucial purpose of booster literature exists in its insistent white supremacist imaginary. Kropp captures the paradoxical racializing of the Spanish fantasy past, noting how it allows for proximity to empire's racialized exotic Others while "properly" (in the white imagination) subjugating them for their inability to access "foreign" lands' riches due to sloth or ineptitude. These traits become both reprehensible and desirable for their escapism.

Kropp tracks how, after the railroad's arrival accelerated Anglo ingress, "The Southwest was becoming a popular outlet for fast growing interest in exoticism and romance." By heaping former Spanish colonies and their intimacies (hinting at the association of Spanish colonialism with a proclivity for so-called miscegenation versus its British counterpart) in a basket with classic and well-trodden colonial tropes as the "American Orient, the real Indian country or 'our Italy'" boosters narrativized California as a portal to the positive racial traits of Orientalist figurations, such as access to an emotional register or supposedly innate ecological wisdom, counterposed to "the modern era [that] appeared to have few opportunities for the romantic brand of heroism or drama of yore." Nevertheless, infrastructural technologies like the railroad sanitized this access by compressing the time necessary to escape "primitive" lands and ensuring a sterile, white existence. Kropp underscores that "Tourism, as a modern industry, gave travelers a secure way to view exotic peoples and landscapes supposedly trapped in the past without losing their moorings in the present." (Kropp, 75-76). Booster tracts expand upon the timely capture of timelessness. They allow white real estate or agricultural investors to not just approach the drama and allure of the racialized past via a day trip. As proprietors, they can literally own it and recirculate racial exoticism and implied eroticism for their valuable potential toward their bottom line.

I intervene in this scholarly tendency to suggest boosterism accomplished more than just articulating investment strategies securing real estate value and regional transportation funding alongside racializing, historiographical geographic imperatives. Boosterism itself should be considered a novel form of financial infrastructure in its own right. Booster literature promised fantastical and incredulous returns on capital investment while simultaneously articulating the racial rationale for that investment's wisdom. Moreover, it infrastructurally linked and irreversibly imbricated these two functions. Profit could not exist without civilizing trappings, and European culture would remain vulnerable without the centrality of exchange. Boosterism successfully and explicitly merged investment with racialization to define each epistemologically as the indispensable and compositional complement of the other. With booster literature as its fanfare, whiteness amalgamated, as a single dynamic, exchange value's abstract promises of wealth with the racial value of naturalism supposedly cohered in Indigenous and Black lifeways. Kropp hints towards this tendency as intimated by several dissections of booster literature, but never quite articulated, and implies that whiteness and booster literature as its cultural expression

in 19th- and early 20th-century California logically rectified both the ungraspable and the tangible aspects of settler accumulation efforts.

Outlining the goals of San Diego's arch-boosterist and imperialist Panama-California Exposition, Kropp suggests the tethering whiteness accomplishes in the state as a ramp towards trans-Pacific military ambitions, as "Native people of the Southwest were thus visible and key elements of the exposition's overall message. As supposed subjects of domestic dominion over primitives, Indian participants at the fair extended the colonial theme […and] found themselves overwhelmed by a promotional barrage that stitched Southern California, the Spanish past, the Panama Canal, and Anglo-American imperial destiny together *in a comprehensive thematic net*." (Kropp, 104, emphasis added). While undoubtedly valuable to understand the mechanism of boosterism's appeal, Kropp's emphasis on contested memory does not diagram how whiteness serves as an infrastructural net or a web of cohesive ligaments to meld and conjoin the profit motive with Manifest Destiny's civilizational and spiritual edicts. The Natoma Company and associated firms allow us to reconsider booster literature as a manifestation of whiteness's role in California history to consolidate the profit motive with an imperial civilizational demand.

The racial antecedents for this form of interconnection are clear given the models it followed. Contemporaneous and current narratives of the significance of Folsom explicitly equated the project to incipient Anglo mill industrialization as a colonizing force in the early Republic. They assigned the Folsom Powerhouse a place in a lineage with romantic tones, such as how "Not all the adventurers of that period sought gold; some, envisioning industrial complexes like those in New England, sought to exploit the water power." However, these colonizers sought more than just replicating the New England regional model. They would build a "holding area for logs and to furnish water for power and the irrigation of orchards and vineyards," and would strive towards modern rational efficiency, realizing "that water power might be used more efficiently if it was converted to electricity; Folsom power could even be used to operate the Sacramento street railways." (ASME, 62). ASME's homage rhetorically narrativizes the teleological promise of capitalist advancement, analogizing the wit and ingenuity of the Natomas Company. The firm reaches its apex in an embracive utility and transportation empire to literally speed up the citizens of Sacramento's daily lives.

The Natomas Company established this civilizational allegory reliant on resource extraction when they successfully petitioned the state to provide unpaid incarcerated labor to begin the canal that would reroute and harness the river for the streetcars. Their economic calculations referenced regional comparisons while expounding upon the virtues of their engineering might versus primitive coal. They confidently declared that “At Eastern rates the capitalized value of such a Water Power in perpetuity would be four-fold more than the value of all the labor which the Natoma Company seek to obtain in payment for it; yet the superior value of water over steam as a motive power is far greater in California than near the coal mines of the Alleghany slope.” (*A Branch State Prison*, 5). The multiracial society in California—owing to multiple colonialisms and the global scope of the Gold Rush, as well as the exploitation of a segregated labor market in which the Natomas Company paid Chinese laborers half the wages of white labor (Almaguer; Castaneda, Docken, Pitti, Ide)—flourished during an era of intense colonial anxiety (McClintock) and paired with frontier epistemologies of an alluring, tamable yet threatening wilderness (Cronon). Capitalism for Natomas was truly racial capitalism. Its ability to integrate nature and habit would allow profits and propriety to sprout in any undeveloped territory.

Incarcerated labor's primary role in establishing California's utilities deserves a standalone study. Given my broader focus on the Natomas Company's organizational structuring's relationship to the valuation of whiteness's universal potential, I cannot analyze the implications here. The Natomas Company was able to evoke whiteness as a form of economic and social sinew because it activates an abstract space in which whiteness is simultaneously embodied and transcendent. In his art historical examination of whiteness, Richard Dyer dissects how while "Black people can be reduced (in white culture) to their bodies and thus to race, […] white people are something else that is realised in and yet is not reducible to the corporeal, or racial." (Dyer, 14-15). The ability of whiteness to act as a ligament connecting the abstraction of the economy with the materiality of the everyday abounds in Natomas's description of the Powerhouse's potential. Exemplary is the following passage, which describes a developed and connected market whose potency stems from its logistical absence of friction and its embeddedness in table manners:

> Without mentioning many products of labor requiring Power, fabrics of Jute and Hemp in the form of bagging would fill a California need. The Red Spruce and Cedar floated down to the Prison might, with power, be converted into the many forms of ware, but chiefly barrels for flour, casks, and other vessels for wine, and wooden ware for domestic uses. The prosecution of these economies alone, to the extent it might be done, would change the form of our wheat exportation so that instead of the raw article we should export good California flour in cheap California barrels. (*A Branch State Prison*, 5)

In this passage, The Natomas Company raises the specter of wheat speculation that Frank Norris so passionately decried in his muckraking opus *The Octopus* (Henderson). The shift towards commodification not only contains a value judgment—*good* California flour—it also suggests this commodity's potential to transform markets, the natural environment of California, and the domestic habits of settlers with their new wooden wares.

Longstanding racialized policing in California (Lytle Hernández) certainly indexes how this vision of a vertically integrated economy rested atop an underclass counterposed to whiteness. I emphasize, however, the racialization incipient in the infrastructural seamlessness of this utopian schematic. For the Natomas Company, the mastery of nature inevitably led to a particular domestic sociability to make intimate routines proper in an otherwise anarchic place (Warnes). Californian elites could achieve market stability through the downstream processing of agricultural goods (Walker 2004). This arrangement also wove this economic rationale with the durability of alimentary goods through their storage. Linking social well-being with a diversified business model assured not only domestic longevity. It forged a semiotic link to the Mission Myth and its associated celebrated agricultural fecundity (Kryder-Reid).

The Natomas Company's conjoining of *laissez-faire* capitalism as a mechanism for colonization with racialized cultural assessments allowed for the conglomerate, through its numerous mergers, reformations, and subsidiaries, to muddle infrastructural intervention in Sacramento with representations of Anglo supremacy. The elaborate Electric Carnival of 1895 in Sacramento transpired with that dual impact. The event's justification demonstrated the collusion of state power, local boosterism, emergent triumphalist historiography, and industrial and infrastructural might.

As the *Journal of Electricity* explained at the time, the parade and street decorations glorified a "triple jubilee" of the State Fair, the transmission of electric power from the Natomas

affiliated California Gas and Electric Company, and "'Anniversary Day'—the forty-fifth anniversary of the entry of California into the sisterhood of States" that saw "thousands upon thousands of members of the Native Sons of the Golden West, which is the mightiest social organization in California, [gather] to honor the natal day of their beloved state." (Low, 67). The entanglement of corporate actors, industrial capacity, and settler mythmaking realized a literally propulsive event. While organizers festooned streets with illuminated arches and icons, and the state capital building bore the aforementioned temporary designation, the parade consisted of floats constructed by the Southern Pacific Railway pushed by streetcars powered by CG&E.

The streetcar infrastructure served as a substrate to showcase the power of technological advancement to allow capital to bolster the state in the service of civilizational imperatives. The floats' iconography demonstrates that whiteness was the force to link the hydra of capital with political force. Their complex designs accessed racialized epistemologies of progress and promise, insisting that the stable reproduction of society necessitated white cultural forms as the mediator between nature and society.

The Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West—whose appellation succeeds in erasing California Indian presence while defining the region by resource abundance—chose to ride in the streetcar behind a float commending the state's efforts at transforming waste into efficient plenty. They shoved "The Fruit and Flowers' float [that] bore the carnival colors of cherry-red, apple-green and poppy-yellow. It was profusely garlanded and bedded with the choicest of fruits, flowers, evergreens, palms and ferns. Queen Flora's throne was supported on either side by illuminated wreaths mounted on silver lattice work, in front of which was a vase holding ten large California poppies wrought in electric lights." (Low, 68). Symbols of proper use of Mediterranean climate inherited from Spanish intrusion—palms and ferns—mingled with agribusiness products so pervasive they inflected the descriptive terms applied to the very compositional colors of the Electric Carnival. Classical imperial imagery abounds in Sacramento, but the choice to illuminate the native California Poppy indicates the extent to which the parade organizers understood their power to transform the countryside. Whiteness here casts multiple colonial legacies, emergent technologies of industrial agriculture, and the control over hegemonic narratives so forcefully that they pointedly penetrate and elevate the structure of flora itself.

The Southern Pacific Roundhouse and Spring Shop advanced themes of improvement through technology to an even more explicit civilizational allegory. The streetcar physically locomoted its float. However, metaphorically Satan conducted it astride a palm tree, driving two Pegasi to carry a pyramid of young women representing each county in California—with Sacramento atop adorned with a spear and shield. Beyond a mere conquest of the plant life of California, this display tamed evil incarnate and an associated prime Orientalist symbol of aridity. Not only were the demonic impulses of nature— demonstrated through a dense iconography simultaneously racial and ecological— subdued in this tableau—they were put to work in service of white femininity.

In the context of Malthusian political economy (Jonsson) and the improvements extolled by the 'Fruit and Flowers' float, the pyramid of "'pretty little misses'" (Day, 61) symbolizing the growth of California counties (and the ascendance of Sacramento atop the pyramid) suggests the legendary fertility of New World population growth, hinted at by gendered ideologies of youth and fertility. However, the float's title, "Advancement of Light" (fig. 2), evokes both racialized associations of light with white Anglo civilization (most infamously captured in Gast's painting *American Progress*) (Dyer). Its composition implies that this explosive population

growth, and consequent runaway economic gains, could be maintained by agricultural improvement supplemented by the marvels of electrical engineering.

The three angels that adorned the back of the float pointed their golden trumpets at the streetcar pushing the whole agglomeration as if to signal the energy source instigating this astonishing potency. Reliant on but exceeding the state, Natomas's corporate expanse permitted this fundamental infrastructural shift that literally defeated darkness. Like a current running through a circuit, Natomas's endeavors connected infrastructure with mythology and stitched the various aspects of civilizational hallmarks together in a palatable narrative. Electricity would tame demonic nature through time, allowing for unfettered development to ensure the continual reproduction of white women, families, and lifeways.

"Advancement in Light" – Roundhouse and Spring Shop Float
Center for Sacramento History, James N. Whitmore Collection 1980/031/035a

fig. 2

Over a half-century later, Norman B. Livermore, then a member of the board of directors of Pacific Gas and Electric, was present at the groundbreaking ceremony for another hydroelectrical marvel: the Corps of Engineers' new Folsom Dam in October of 1948. By the day's standards, his esteem in the power company was unimpeachable, and his presence at the site of the modern dam was unquestionable. Livermore's pedigree fit the bill as the scion of the powerplant's architect, Horatio P. Livermore, and grandson of Horatio G. Livermore (who slowly acquired Catlin's rights to interminably and beneficially 'improve' the Sierra water). The youngest Livermore merged military infrastructural might with corporate acuity, as "Livermore was employed as a civilian engineer by the United States Engineers early in his career and at the present time is a director of the Natomas Company, successor to the Natoma Water and Mining Company." (Livermore scrapbook). His corporate stature could also have been expected, as his father "succeeded finally [to build the original Folsom Powerhouse] by buying out a street railway firm and a gas company and merging with rival power firms. The combination became known as the California Gas and Electric Company and eventually became the PG&E." (Livermore scrapbook).

The powerlines that ran downstream from Folsom, paralleling the path of the American River to power Sacramento's streetcars, were only made possible by the development of the street railway itself. This network would eventually push forward representations of Sacramento's growth and prominence in the state, nation, and globe. Norman B. Livermore directly embodies the connectedness between various corporate ventures consolidated into capital-intensive firms commodifying infrastructure and utilities, the militarization of Western infrastructure that culminated in his presence as a USACE installation serving the high-modern Central Valley Project, and the bourgeois self-aggrandizement most forcefully represented by the sponsorship of the Electric Carnival by the Sons and Daughters of the Golden West.

Like the firm he would eventually direct, his identity mirrored and hinged upon Sacramento's valuation of whiteness. This racialization cast whiteness as itself an infrastructural

phenomenon within racial capitalism. The linkage between profit generation and civilizational progress foregrounded state presence and management as reliant on a palimpsestic rewriting of settler infrastructure. This infrastructure merged appeals to an advanced, state-of-the-art lifestyle—defined by movement, clarity, and, most crucially, stability—with the hegemonic necessity of multi-unit conglomerates collecting interests in mutually reinforcing businesses. The street car and the power generation its operation required epitomized this integration's unimpeachable rationality and unstoppable inertia.

As reported by a newspaper clipping saved by the Livermores in their family scrapbook, Norman B. undoubtedly favored the federal role in advancing California's water and electrical supply. He remarked to a friend, "I'm glad to see Folsom coming along so well. When I first knew it it was as dead as a doornail, but it's certainly a lively place now." (Livermore scrapbook). His words resonate strongly with Thomas's characterization of cultural understandings of the transformative properties of electrical potential. For Livermore, the successive Folsom dams did not just transmit power from the Powerhouse to Sacramento. The utility was a source of life for the geographic region—a liveliness linked to white modernity and access to capital and markets, which he noted were sorely lacking in his grandfather's day.

Agricultural Purposes: Origins of California Agribusiness

In 1885, an unnamed reporter for the *Sacramento Daily Union* took an eighteen-mile excursion into the countryside. The georgic imagery of this reporter's narrative, which casually notes how "[t]he weather was delightful," belies that this visit was to one of the state's most extensive industrial agricultural production facilities. The vignette is not entirely nostalgic for a bygone lifeway by any means; the reporter notes that one of the vineyard's principal identifying features is that "the railroad runs through its center." Indeed, as the recounting progresses once the reporters' wagon ride concludes, economics seep more prominently into the tale.

The tale slowly transitions to recount the corporate structure of Natoma Water and Mining Company and offer quantitative assessments of the productive wonder of the vineyard. Financials and productive output take center stage, signaling the tract's provenance in a particular lineage of boosterism. This unique but prevalent subgenre merges commercial strategy and the rural idyll cultivated by California agribusiness. Qualitative value judgments of the "strong and healthy" vines, "mellow" ground in the "very best condition," and "pure, clear water" note the fertility of the land. However, the journalist saves the majority of the wonder for these assessments' methodologies derived from precise numerical measurements. "The vines are planted in rows eight feet distant, the vines in the rows eight feet apart, making a square, so no matter which way you look the vines are always in rows." ("The Natoma Vineyard"). While he describes the quality of several hop farms he visited on the way back to Sacramento, for the reporter, what makes Natoma Vineyard so remarkable in comparison is its union of art and nature. The visible geometry of the field denotes its scientific management, which transforms his sightline to be dominated by the wonders of California agriculture.

As the fascination with the accuracy of the planting and its accordance with transcendent mathematical values indicates, the reporter does not simply credit nature's bounty to this development. Indeed, the article starts by comparing the recent endeavors of the Natoma Company to the industry's impact that inspired them to claim the rights to the water that now irrigated their grapes. The description of the venture notes of the Natoma property that "A large acreage is of mining land, while considerable is what is termed waste. Of their improved lands 2,000 acres are in vineyard, 300 acres in orchard, and 800 acres in hay and grain." ("The Natoma Vineyard"). The rhetorical structure of this passage mirrors the corporate shift Natoma undertook

after the depressions of the 1870s led to the downfall of speculation in mining, land, and rail that proliferated during the company's early days. Left with the barren sterility of landscapes and markets, Natoma would lean heavily into a racialized discourse of improvement to raise the value of their holdings and stock.

While their hydropower project would eventually generate significant profits for the firm, operating until replaced by federal infrastructure, to generate the requisite capital for the plant and to clear indebtedness accrued from speculative infrastructural construction in ditches and canals, the Natoma Company consolidated its efforts to sprout value from the soil which would eventually branch into its numerous consolidated enterprises. They sought the significant returns of specialized horticulture enabled by logistical reach and industrial processing. A prominent strand of California historiography has critiqued the drive to "mine the soil," the corporate might it allowed, and the exploitation it required (McWilliams; Igler). I instead want to focus on how the discourse of proper improvement and generation of wastelands, linked here to the "Fall" of hydraulic mining as the apotheosis of the Gold Rush, allowed Natoma to attract capital for the indispensable fixed capital of processing facilities and transportation linkage, as well as restore value to their landholdings engendered by the extent of hydrological interventions characteristic of placer mining.

The effort to improve the land relied on racialized discourses of waste, and redemption made possible by agricultural practices of cultivation discursively positioned the patrimony of a Classical, European, imperial whiteness. As Vittoria Di Palma notes of the nascence of improvement ideologies in seventeenth-century England, pleas for improvement "evoked the descriptive language associated with the biblical wasteland because they produced and harbored the wrong kinds of life—plants, humans, and other animals that resisted domestication and hindered the progress of agriculture. England's wastelands were condemned because they challenged notions of proper use." (Di Palma, 44). As Di Palma emphasizes, ontological shifts in the landscape composition through agricultural techniques and interventions were not merely productive efforts; following ideologies of improvement, this entailed the transition from "savage" lifeways to "proper" civilization. This matrix linked particular forms of scientific landscape management with the abundance of food for population growth and the ability to commodify land and enter its products and parcels into rational markets. Engaging in this form of sustenance meant participating in an economy and, thus, in a righteous and invigorating society. Growers deemed this concatenation proper and, within colonial epistemologies, steadfastly white.

Natomas's efforts at improvement certainly were not piecemeal. Their lands eventually would "claim a host of notable achievements: the state's first raisin operation and the state's largest winery, as well as one of California's most sizeable plants for the drying and shipping of raisins and various types of orchard fruit." Natomas's pioneering of the California raisin originated from necessary infrastructural linkage to distant markets. This facet illustrates that for Natoma, the morality of improvement was tethered to the acculturation of California. The civilizing mission Natoma followed aligned with the mandate to make waste productive. For Natoma, this involved connection with capitalist exchange.

Natoma would become "one of the leaders of specialized agriculture in the valley, as the company sold wine, table grapes, and raisins in eastern markets as far off as Chicago, Saint Louis, and New Orleans." (Holmes, 125). The particular choice of raisins derives from the logistical limitations of fruit cultivation and shipment before cold storage. It also taps into cultural discourses like the Mission Myth's elevation of Mediterranean climate as well as the

previous agrarian impositions of the Spanish. Natoma recycled previous implements and outcomes of imperial improvement with the engineered complexity of the rush of Anglo hydrological and logistical interventions to combine the tenacity of a Spanish Bancroft saw as intrinsically cruel (Haas) with the precision and control of the puritanical Yankee. The raisin signified the inheritance of Spain's attempts with the modern mechanical achievements that could preserve and distribute the benefits of colonialism at the scale of the distributor and the pantry.

While Natoma's design of various interconnected schemes to commodify nature certainly drew from visions of the transcendent capacity of transformative whiteness, given geomorphological limitations and market fluctuations diversified portfolio of assets alone could not ensure the company's success. Even while "Natoma granite was used in the construction of the new State Capitol building in Sacramento," the "quarrying operations, which employed only a small part of Natoma's land, and the diminished scale of water rents, were neither an efficient use of company resources, nor generated a high profit margin." Given the period of intense flux and colonial fervor in which they operated, it is predictable that they geared their operations toward a state and market striving for settler colonial legitimacy. Rather than argue the economic logic of diverse investments amid transition, I want to emphasize Natoma's continual recourse to the trappings of cultivated whiteness as a strategy at once economical and intensely racial.

In this case, whiteness acts as a pool of values, defined via negation by fears and anxieties, maintained by violent enforcement and tantalizing fantasies, from which both societies and markets can withdraw in times of crisis. This emotional promise and iconography explain why "Natoma's trustees once again shifted the focus of operations—this time to their own development of the land's agricultural potential. Part of their thinking at the time may have been that land sales would increase once the company improved the land and proved its agricultural worth." (Castaneda, Docken, Pitti, Ide, 99). As their corporate history explains, given the transatlantic turmoil of imperial development of the 1870s, Natoma repositioned its infrastructure from extraction to cultivation. While the market for specialty agriculture ripened as California climatic conditions collided with efficient and cheap rail transport, Natoma also summoned a perennial discourse of propriety in land use they hoped would appeal to settlers' desire to shore up whiteness out West. The particular avenue of diversification deserves emphasis. What rescued Natoma from indebtedness was the promise attached to harvesting the earth's potential and the positioning of specialty agriculture as an eminently white venture that merged sweetness with durability and restraint.

A close-knit cadre oscillated between the associated ventures of the company. Their pivot to agriculture as improvement seemed the viable fix for the speculative fervor of the 1870s in California. In 1893 the Natoma Vineyard assumed $257,000 of bonded indebtedness from Natoma Water and Mining in addition to its real estate (Castaneda, Docken, Pitti, Ide, 119). By attaching genteel pastoral value to its holdings, Natoma hoped to inject capital into the region's essence by investing in industrial agriculture and subdivided lands. They hoped to generate value by appealing to buyers' ledgers and affective associations of propriety. While a spirit of conquest may have necessitated efficient extraction of minerals, Natoma's booster tracts argue that white settlement did not just generate profit through desolation. Whiteness here is cyclical. An inexorable utilization of otherwise wasted resources excused inherent acts of violence. The waste left in the wake could be retrofitted like Natoma's canals to breed prosperity where only wilderness existed before Anglo colonization. Indeed, the land cleared through Natoma's ditches

not only connected mineral ventures with horticulture. "Productive" countryside established them as complementary. The vineyard existed as an extension of mining and lumbering efforts.

Empirically, the Natomas Company's economic strategy bore dividends; contextualizing these investments within critical race and ethnic studies scholarship on settler colonialism foregrounds the racial dividends that have long outlasted the corporation. Whiteness's burden to transform the earth into valuable property deemed a transition to agribusiness coherent and legible. The result was not an apocalypse when settlers extracted valuable commodities from Californian elements. Pastoral values, consistently racialized since the beginning of European colonialism, would revitalize the landscape. Specialty fruit agriculture, with its requisite processing plants and transportation infrastructure, attracted investment and promised massive returns. It also activated two meanings of cultivation: land brought under plow improved its value and the morality of California society. It placed it in a colonial tradition of land use.

Regarding agricultural development, Brenna Bhandar succinctly notes how the enduring "ideology of improvement is grafted onto emerging ideas of racial difference, providing both the rationale for the perceived inability of particular populations to enter the pale of industrious, civilized life and the justification for the appropriation of their lands." (Bhandar, 46). Natoma's actions advertised the value of whiteness as it attached to horticulture, entrepreneurial masculinity, and the cultural aspects of tilling and, thus, taming the land. It would generate individual wealth for growers inheriting the mastery of orchards and vineyards. However, it would also bring Californian capitalism into the immortal renewal and redevelopment that colonial epistemologies long claimed.

Through their importation of European grape stock to mingle through grafting with previous settler colonial agricultural efforts, the Natoma Vineyard fostered a palimpsest of colonial improvement. Their intention was decidedly industrial: at 2,000 acres, this was the second largest vineyard in the state during that era, surpassed only by Governor and railroad magnate Leland Stanford's aptly named Vina. Through a burgeoning network of promotional broadsides and business sector overviews, the Livermores positioned Natoma Vineyards as a state-of-the-art, technically proficient, well-capitalized step in the march of California's destiny to become a garden for imperial ambition. This blooming of California placed it firmly in a historical lineage. This massive garden literally inherited the fruits of classical and contemporary European empires that could rejuvenate in the unexhausted Western soil.

The industrial vintners explicitly stated their goal of this refresh: to elevate all those within whiteness's purview. An 1888 practical guide to winemaking that doubled as a booster tract for agribusiness conglomerates recounted that "When Gov. Stanford first conceived of the idea of planting such a large vineyard, he declared his object to be to furnish cheap, wholesome wine to the million, so that every laborer could drink it." (Husmann, 226). Stanford activated abiding culinary associations of wine with beneficent revelry, abundance, and European culture. By bringing his wares to "every laborer"—which in the context of the Workingman's Party free labor movement vehemently enforcing racial hierarchies of work at that time meant *white* laborer—Stanford extended the promise of Western empire, inaugurated by centralized, diversified, well-capitalized corporate structures, to the masses in the form of refinement and an elevation—a culturing—of their very tastes and moods.

To achieve this refinement and elevation, amalgamated companies like Natoma needed monetary and logistical resources. Stanford is the most notorious example of monopolistic centralization, both maligned and begrudgingly accepted as an inevitable outgrowth of California's untamable country. Elites like Stanford and the Livermores appealed to whiteness as

a mediator that would benefit their business. They also held fast in their faith that whiteness across the state could propagate itself to the economic benefit of this insular racial category and simultaneously stoke associations with civilizational progress. The winery composed a chronicle in which industrial vineyards inherited an incipient but not fully finessed settler colonial endeavor from the Spanish. Through pure Anglo industriousness and scientific management, these fields could fully flourish.

By accounting for their grape vines' provenance, agribusiness vintners activated the historiographical tradition of Hubert Howe Bancroft. Lisbeth Haas recounts Bancroft's reception of Californios "as beaten men, living symbols of loss," "whose purity of blood has been 'reduced' by racial mixture." (Haas, 172-173). Haas argues that Anglo racial formation relied upon a distinction between Anglo assiduity and diligence and miscegenation's legacy of Spanish and Mexican impurity and cruelty. Nevertheless, the growers would use this supposed savagery for its barbarous tenacity, which they could craft into a civilized business.

Natoma would extend the foundation of this endeavor to position itself as not an extractive drain on California but a carefully cultivated endeavor to saturate whiteness throughout the state. With "a plantation of thrifty Mission grape vines, upwards of ten years old," noticeably located in the legacy Gold Rush town of Folsom, Livermore and associates "decided to graft these into the choicest wine varieties which could be imported. Accordingly, at very considerable expense, there were imported from France, Spain, Italy, and Portugal, the cuttings of the following varieties, and grafted into upwards of twenty thousand old Mission vines" (Husmann, 233). The "considerable expense" is not an understatement. The report clarifies that the vintners sourced seventy-six varietals of grapes from Europe, including specimens familiar to many casual contemporary diners, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah. Not only does this haul indicate the substantial financial reserves of the Natoma Vineyard, but it also bears witness to its connectedness with global exchange routes facilitated by the Transcontinental Railroad.

In this version of events, Natoma recognized the rugged appeal yet underdevelopment of the Mission grapes. Through extensive logistical networks and investment concentration, capital could fully activate the monetary and civilizational potential of the pairing between legacy European cuttings and virgin American soil. Early observers of the California wine industry cast this merger of wild potential and rational expertise as a beacon of economic development and a cultural imperative. In his aforementioned summary of the state of California wineries, George Husmann overviewed how

> Satisfactory success was attained with the most of these varieties, and thus was established a store house of viticultural wealth for the State, which subsequent vineyard planters have largely and profitably availed themselves of. It was fortunate for the State that this work could be undertaken by a corporation wherein those interested were few in number and had ample means, and whose property was so favorable, in all respects, of such experimental test work, and great benefits will undoubtedly result to the State of California therefrom (Husmann, 233).

Husmann opines on the ingeniousness of Natoma's organizational vision. Its rewards will accrue to his fellow winemakers and, tellingly, to the state of California at large. In his equation of agricultural bounty and economic success with social progress, he remarks equally upon the

consolidation and unification of capital and managerial prowess and the natural advantage accorded to the Foothill region of the Sacramento Valley.

According to this developmental vision, the synthesis of a racialized vigorous potential in the soil and a proclivity for reasoned, tempered, calculated agricultural improvement not only buttresses the white settler colonial order for the wealthy. This amalgamation also establishes a storehouse of civilizational knowledge and infrastructure that those with access to whiteness could entrepreneurially rely on to advance their lot. To transition away from the critiques of expensive hydraulic mining and monopolistic railroad construction, which brought competitive furor from downstream landowners and speculative investors without the insider scoop, Natoma Vineyards cited the persistent lore of improvement as accessible to those with the transcendent racialized gifts of monetary abstraction and corporate cooperation. The access to enlightened commodities and the social stability accorded to agricultural domesticity elided that these gifts almost always required private, incestuous networks of financing to be implemented.

Natoma's defined presence in the region illustrates the impact of particular corporate arrangements on the scales at which race operates. The firm cyclically engaged whiteness, racially edifying its architecture and activating that base for its portfolio expansion. Natoma's groundwork—the hydrological legacy of its ditches and canals—facilitated other growers' initial investment in the botanical diversity meant to enculture farm output. A half-decade before its agribusiness complex, the influence of the Water and Mining Company appeared in the name of a significantly less complex operation. The Natoma Vineyard of B.N. Bugbey derived its name from the Valley in which it operated, a nomenclature that, in turn, evinced Catlin's legacy and footprint in the region.

Bugbey availed himself of the infrastructural improvements the Natoma Company marshaled into the region and combined them with a pool of his personal funding. This outlay earned the California State Agricultural Society's applause for "his experiments [as] extensive and made regardless of expense. His vineyard at Natoma Valley, consisting of fifty-six acres of vines, consisted of seventy-two varieties of grapes, among which were to be found the rarest wine grapes of Europe." The trade organization glowingly praised how "The results of these trials has greatly stimulated the propagation of foreign grapes in this district, and many years will not elapse before wines from the foreign grapes grown in California will be seeking market in the cities of the Atlantic Coast." (California State Agricultural Society, 540). The group's language bears remarkable similarities to Husmann's assessments three decades later. Both estimations assigned value to the winemakers' ability to import European stock, knowledge, resources, and cultural cache.

Bugbey's importation depended on the infrastructural improvements at the core of Natoma and associated water company's initial profit model. Their improvements engaged the colonial discourse of taming nature's wilds. From the agricultural intervention inspired by this landscape ideology, the company could glean another culturally infused economic project and further capitalize on another commodity for national markets and audiences. Natoma sought profit and civilization on the frontier through these industrial echoes, yet their scientific management and corporate consolidation also inaugurated a transition in whiteness for the region. Natoma's intentional market positioning—the centrality of the Southern Pacific to the vineyard's architecture was not accidental—and their eventual reach to wholesale markets in significant transportation hubs in the U.S. Midwest and South differed from Bugbey's efforts for regional markets. While Bugbey initiated a discernment and distinction in California wine, Natoma showcased how this vitality could be harnessed and delivered. Natoma's logistical

successes attested to white capitalism's capability to domesticate the West to benefit a rational, interlinked free market. Through mechanical invention and managerial prowess, the alluring potential of unruly land and people could be safely harvested and processed for monetary gain and cultural vitality.

Unsurprisingly, Natoma's pursuits of these aims included the racial management of a segregated labor force. Within their enterprise, Natoma followed a racial capitalist model from their circulation of colonially legible commodities to production systems reliant on racialized labor exploitation suffused with exotic distancing supposedly justifying mistreatment. Accordingly, within corporate records, "Invoices for boarding house furnishings and groceries reveal that Natoma was sensitive to the particular culinary tastes of its laborers. Large quantities of rice, fish, and vegetables were ordered for the 'Chinese kitchen.' The company usually hired local Anglo women to do the cooking for the white labor." (Castaneda, Docken, Pitti, Ide, 110). Even Natoma's self-aggrandizing corporate history plainly cannot discount Chinese laborers' insistence on dignified working conditions as the major factor ensuring culturally relevant cuisine. The institutional tribute notes that Natoma's Chinese employees refused to work on Chinese holidays or in torrential rain.

At the same time, within the vineyard, a disconnect emerged between the factory laboring conditions and the creation of culinary markets and tastes. Detectable in Castaneda et al.'s is a gendered shift when referring to white sustenance. While the Chinese laborers eat from a disembodied "kitchen," the white laborers are not only served by women but by locals of a very particular ethnicity. Their racialized and gendered care ultimately matches the business strategy and civilizational mission of the Natoma Vineyard. Not only would it generate economic growth— that growth would be dialectically funneled into and derive its salience from its capacity to produce commodities for the refined white home.

Domestic Purposes: Naming Settlements as White

Over its institutional lifespan, Natomas would subdivide portions of its massive holdings and offer for sale both individual plots for placid country homes and the lifestyle promise of enhancing profits and personal character at once. While corporate agriculture contributed to the state's vitality, Natomas offered to foster individual health, vigor, refinement, and intelligence in its suburban developments. These promises aligned with larger-scale booster discourse about the unique benefits of hybrid, rural-urban "agriburbs." In his assessment of this phenomenon in the Sacramento Valley, Paul J.P. Sandul relies on this term to underscore how early Sacramentan developers sought to unify the country into the city.

Referencing a booster tract from McClatchy & Company (an influential firm publishing the contemporary newspaper of record for the area, the *Sacramento Bee*), Sandul recounts how "Like boosters through California placating potential migrants, boosters in Sacramento praised the intelligence, modernity, and masculinity of Sacramento's potential future small farmers, particularly within the context of horticulture." (Sandul, 89). Settlement in Sacramento fostered a traditional frontier grit, but tempered it with intellect, supposedly cultivating men who "in addition to being favored by natural conditions, [have] intelligence, judgment, practical experience, energy, executive ability, and business sagacity," engaged in an enterprise that "offers a premium to brains and work. A community of fruit growers is a community of able men—often cultured men". (Sandul, 89-90). Within this formulation, not only were city and country merged in the agriburb, but the resident of these sleepy communities would be able to balance self-sufficiency with connectivity. They would exist simultaneously in a relativistic

state, engaged in a global marketplace while maintaining their Jeffersonian agricultural independence.

Natomas's spearheading of these early agriburb estates signals a new phase of their proliferation of whiteness in the region. Their electrical and agricultural advancements linked the landscape to modern infrastructure, transforming resources into commodities and attracting financial mechanisms to ensure productivity. Houses could generate a handsome profit on commodified land. However, booster rhetoric testifies that this was not the only benefit for Natomas. They could expand their valuation's purview to include an impact on their new agriburb residents' habits and tastes. Natomas was no longer merely distilling cultured commodities like Cabernet Sauvignon. They would now fertilize the tenacity of "able men" who could also concomitantly showcase the refinement of "cultured men."

Booster tracts such as those analyzed by Sandul crafted a morality tale in which settlers actualized white masculinity through an independent encounter and conflict with the natural world. This classic vision of white masculinity involved individual grit and self-realization. However, as the above passage emphasizes, this was not a brutal awakening in which white masculinity succumbed to savage urges. Whiteness here meant temperament: the ability to be proximal to wilderness but resist its temptations. In the Sacramento version of the colonial voyage of discovery, the horticulturalist's reason and intellect secured his whiteness. Natomas's distinctive blend of corporate whiteness elevated that flattering description to define white masculinity through a domestic peace secured via association. While hard work and resilience were still requisite pieces of the settler equation, Natomas offered a white existence underwritten by their capitalization of the fantasy.

According to the company, by purchasing their lands, "You are bound to succeed because Natomas Consolidated of California cannot afford to let you fail. Our great financial holdings in the Sacramento Valley, aside from Natomas lands, demand the success of every individual purchaser. This Company, a Twenty-five Million Dollar Corporation, wants to sell its 90,000 acres of land in small parcels. As a purchaser, your success is our success." ("Natomas: Lands and Service"). With their impressive array of figures, Natomas here activates and intertwines two scales: the smallholder and the modern corporate behemoth. They entangle their valuation's fate with that of the agriburb composite resident-grower, implying their capitalization can make a purchaser part of something much grander than himself.

Natomas's master ideological narrative of the grand purpose of their venture taps into a reliable strategy for state and market legitimation. The innovation of their colonizing strategy is in its use of scale to forge affiliation between infrastructural might and domestic bliss. The venture's boosters did not attempt to obscure the nepotistic liaisons that allowed speculative ventures to pay out. They explicitly advertised them. Natomas credited its diversified holdings to its incestuousness. They boldly stated, "The great transportation companies of the Valley are owned by the same men who are now offering you this opportunity. Our interest in you does not end with the sale of the land—your success as a producer is vital to our other investments." ("Natomas: Lands and Service"). The company's characterization of its capital exceeded a tendency to accumulate. This capital's circulation knotted together societal levels in a mutually reinforcing web.

While a strategy to unload fixed real capital could have matured to follow a franchise or more widespread shareholder model, the patronage of a suburban residential ideal underscores the reliance on whiteness to forge this bond. The authors paradoxically claim a disengagement from commercial enterprises in favor of prelapsarian tranquility in the same document boasting a valuation of twenty-five million dollars across an acreage more extensive than the current City of Sacramento. Of the many benefits one of their lots offers, "best of all it provides an ideal country home for the man who is ready to retire from the activity of business." ("Natomas: Lands and Service"). An appeal to placidity is a marked divergence from the sentiment comparing a landowner on Natomas territory with the titans of California industry. The firm's contradiction, however, indicates their fastening together of geomorphology and quotidian experience. Landscape transformation and personal wealth remain inextricable, achieved through whiteness's continual transposition between engineered modernity and timeless social forms.

fig. 3

The frontispiece of "Natomas: Lands and Service" visualizes this "ideal country home." (fig. 3). A romanticized American River and an irrigation ditch pop off of the page, highlighted in the same orange ink used to color the fruit trees. Following the river's course is a freight train, its steam engine billowing smoke towards a town it connects to this geometrically perfect horticultural model. While the church's steeple denotes the settlement's reach extending along the rails, the focal point of the graphic is not engine smoke but the plume from a hearth. A gentleman grower in his automobile glides down an impeccably maintained driveway to be greeted by his wife, gesturing in a modest dress towards his open door. The road he is riding extends into the foothills, denoting the limitless reach of the markets for his fruit and, subsequently, his individual potential.

The imagery seamlessly blends eclogical control with the habit and environments of a whiteness defined by gender roles, property, and domain. The images suggest a stable system, as industrial infrastructure is mirrored and thus buttressed by the family unit's reproduction—both produce smoke that frames the scene. Likewise, the ecological order of the river seems as substantial as its parallel in the flawlessly paved driveway. The whole setting conforms to the features Diane Harris identified for its successor, the post-World War II suburban home. Harris denotes the mid-twentieth century obsessive "concerns for domestic privacy, cleanliness, order, and family togetherness" (Harris, 2). While Natomas's representation certainly precedes the mass-produced proliferation of these desires during the baby boom, its status as a mid-century suburban antecedent showcases the deep roots of this racialized construction of an appropriate

home. By centering the home, Natomas visually argues the domecile is the proper unit of social organization—but one that cannot flourish in isolation.

Land is one half of the equation for success that Natomas diagrams in the brochure; the other half, "service," also saturates this image and the extraordinary arguments that follow. While the hearth resting amid properly cultivated acres acts as the fruition of civilizational bliss, the domestic space here links dialectically with infrastructure, manufacturing, and moral institutions. Indeed, the stability of the social order exists in tandem with the security and immutability of little white houses. Service establishes a correspondence across scales, associating the racialized technologies of modernity with white interiority. Both infrastructure and family morality shored up civilizational longevity.

Descriptions of transportation infrastructure in the Sacramento watershed cast logistical linkage as an inevitable apogee, ensuring market stability through interconnection. A detailed history of these roadways notes, "The roads were an integral part of the reclamation achievement, for the most part crowning the levees built through the enterprise of the landowners. The bridges, many of them successors to what originally were locally owned ferries, are symbols of the automobile era" including their "providing the all-weather surfaces which modern methods of agriculture required." (Thompson, 165). The road's position literally rested upon the mounds of peat and silt holding back the river. Agronomy necessitated arable land. Just as crucially, the science demanded technical advancement and commercial coordination. The land's desiccation enabled this transformation. Riverboats and floodplains yielded to private automobile bridges and fields beyond levees.

Natomas did not merely glorify and lionize itself for impacting the countryside. The company positioned these efforts within a predetermined timeline, relying on reproductive language to show how agriculture buoyed righteous communities. They made historical claims for their endeavor through Christian imagery, proclaiming how "The olive tree has a longer life than any other known fruit. There are producing trees in California that are more than a century old and in Palestine trees that date back two thousand years are still bearing fruit." ("Natomas: Lands and Service"). In this direct comparison between the Holy Land and California, Palestine (a nod to Christendom's birthplace) transposes onto a California destined to reign over the west for millennia. The symbolism of olive cultivation on discrete family plots demonstrated the endeavor's righteousness; the watershed's engineering marvels guaranteed an expansive domain where potential would never go wasted.

Natomas Consolidated continued crafting the model of networked whiteness in its serialized update on the progress of river bottom reclamation efforts on land purchased north of the American River—a community still named Natomas in a nod to the developer. The subtitle of a paean to this district, included in the aptly named *Natomas News*, conjoins an idyllic climate, agricultural prowess, and engineering marvels. These three characteristics catalyze a final vague but tantalizing promise. When the authors preview the "Autumn Woods, Farm Scenes, Levee Building and Future Possibilities of Land," they hint at the destiny of the "Natomas Reclaimed Lands." Oddly, the authors mention their route home first, noting they followed the Northern Electric tracks. They foreground the infrastructural linkages between the "Overflowed Lands" and the city before they describe how their journey began with a plan "to see the land along the river, […] especially the portion of it where levee construction was under way." (*Natomas News*, 5). Infrastructure enables the literal ability to reach the reclaimed lands and serves as the bedrock for imbuing capitalist value into supposedly natural functions like the

reproduction of flora and families. For the boosters, these levees and rail lines illogically enhance the wild ecology of the riparian forest.

Their sublime natural portrait also subtly references how Natoma's other celebrated ventures take advantage of and ameliorate the Valley's environment. They recount how "the trees were hung with wild grape vines, all gold and brown and red, and while there were wild roses blooming along the road, the rose pods were more numerous and they were a brilliant red." Through taming this vast lushness, Natomas has perfected even the botanical structure of surrounding plants as a ripple effect of systemic development. The authors then extrapolate what this cornucopia will yield next. Unsurprisingly for real estate moguls, they envision a new category of bloom. The floral abundance portends "the site of many fine country homes. Because of its beauty and accessibility, this land will undoubtedly be the finest suburb of Sacramento, the place where well-to-do people will build spacious dwellings with large and well-kept grounds." (*Natomas News*, 5). The company's vision neatly aligns with Harris's delineation of the white values suburbs were designed to shore up. As a precursor to the post-War vision, the Natomas subdivision's spaciousness allowed for privacy, while cleanliness and order sprouted from the landscape in agriburb gardens. *Natomas News* amends and amplifies the promise of family togetherness to encompass both the "beauty" of the feminine private sphere and the "accessibility" of the public sphere.

The entire format of the article as a travelogue affirms an affiliation across scales, imagining the home as interdependent with the market. The regulatory mechanism ensuring the stability of the neighborhood is an amalgam of whiteness and capital, indicated by an ambiguous but potent modifier: only "well-to-do" people would gain access. Returning to the piece's subtitle mentioned above allows for analysis of the features of the "Future Possibilities of Land." Natomas Consolidated codes the suburban development as white by placing it as the apex of colonial advancement. Beginning with the temperate autumn harvest, they guide the reader into agricultural development and, finally, the hydrological technical mastery materialized in the levee. When the "Future Possibilities" are revealed to be spacious country homes, the previous wealth accumulated by the civilizational imperative of transforming wasteland seems predisposed to realize its value as interconnected nodes of perfected nature. The boosters offer analogizes these white outcroppings with the roses that dot the routes back to the city. They will be numerous and brilliant and will ensure a shared investment in tilling the land and holding back barbaric natural forces.

This shared investment was not solely discursive and cultural. To entice buyers at the first auction of its lands, Natomas directly yoked industrial agriculture and family farming. According to Natomas's logic, the pursuit of the latter could be enhanced by the former. This intermingling allowed their lands to serve as both a commodity and a direct route to preferred status in the labor market. The company vowed that landownership would mitigate the vicissitudes of employment in a booming California. They outlined how "The Company will assist all purchasers of their lands by giving them employment in preference to all others, furnish them water for irrigation at very low rates, assist them by their knowledge of the property in planting the different varieties of fruits and vines on the lands to which they are best adapted, [and] furnish pasture for stock" (Bovee, Toy and Co.) to ensure a profitable investment. The company smoothly consolidates the lure of an elevated, preferred status as a laborer (echoing and amplifying the racial division of its payroll) with the perks of a consortium with the landed elite. Land here means access. Of course, the financial benefit will be the preference in dealings with Natomas as an agricultural wholesaler. Nevertheless, the offer of "knowledge of the property in

planting […] different varieties" suggests entry into a much more exclusive and totalizing fraternity.

Natomas's promise reclassifies a nascent grower within an epistemological lineage of sage colonizers with access. Natomas hawks its land as encompassing a pathway that enters the guild of Western horticulture to propagate whiteness in the region and suffuse it into the individual. The supposed reach of their influence assures the buyer not just of profit. Their tentacles promise access. They straightforwardly state without hesitation that "in fact they will at all times be prepared to render such assistance to all purchasers that will be of benefit to them in cultivating, selling and shipping the products of their purchase." (Bovee, Toy and Co.). Natomas is not just a corporation. They are an infrastructural entity that fuses production, exchange, and circulation. Within the Bovee, Toy, and Co. brochure for their Folsom auction, Natomas muddles the corporate scale (shareholders, massive revenue, and significant capital reserves) with what they cast as a unique figure: the cottage producer still vehemently engaged in the marketplace.

The firm enables this incipient grower's potential transition by claiming to unify capitalistic contradictions. Through consolidation, they propagate widespread wealth. They hype their generous offer of access to value-added manufacturing and transportation facilities—whether drying raisins or shipping them—to attest to the unification of the aspects of capitalist production. Not only does this replace crisis with a veneer of inherent stability, but the continual recourse to lifestyle appeals— "spacious dwellings with large and well-kept grounds"—also codes possibility and value into this unification as it fosters whiteness throughout the Valley.

Ultimately Natomas Consolidated offered the Sacramento Valley longevity bonded by association. The company melded white sociality with landscape transformation. Their activities demonstrate that capitalist primitive accumulation not only coexisted alongside but relied upon promises of civilizational accumulation of white habits and white morals. The Livermores and their associates could parlay the value of hydrological interventions established during one boom market into new ventures emerging from speculative busts. They materially refashioned infrastructure to serve the nascent needs of various mining, agriculture, municipal, and residential enterprises structured by crisis. The value gleaned from the endeavors alternatively inundated or kept dry by Natomas's canals and levees derived from each's contributions to white sociality. Whether through connection to modern spaces and times offered by electrical wires, the propriety of white familial life in a Natomas suburb, or the endurance of reclaimed and settled agricultural land, Natomas navigated and conjoined its ventures through appeals to whiteness's promises. Through whiteness as the organizing principle, they merged the landscape, interpersonal relations, market formation, and statecraft into a coherent social whole.

Corporate directors equated the fundamental components of social reproduction with geological time. This timescale extended even to their familial nomenclature and the titles for lands they reined into California's orbit. The conglomerate formed by the Folsom Powerhouse's construction, eventually directed by Norman B. Livermore, exemplifies the scope of settlers' white hubris. PG&E picnic and campgrounds carry generational claims over the landscape via a Great Western Power reservoir formed by their Feather River dam. The reservoir's name, Lake Almanor, is significant; while "'Lake Almanor,' the name for that lake that now fills the valley, is testament to the linkage between corporate power, landscape transformation, and place. The name Almanor was derived from the three daughters of the vice president of Great Western Power: *Al*ice, *Ma*rtha and Ela*nor*." (Nevins, 50). For this vice president, his progeny equally includes the hydrological reformatting of the Sierra and his three daughters. Their name's amalgamation allowed him to pay tribute to all three but also suggests that solidifying familial

lineage remained identical to taming and circulating aqueous commodities. These goals linked infrastructure across scales. Conventional white familial structure spread its benefits like the irrigation and hydroelectric resources the dams provided.

While PG&E's hybrid recreational resort/storage facility serves as a high-modern realization of the corporate promise to imbue society with white cultural and social forms, this initiative extends back to the act of Natomas's formation. A 2012 *Sacramento Bee* real estate special, continuing the McClatchy legacy of luring residents to the Sacramento Valley, explains the neighborhood name Natomas, borrowed from the company that reclaimed this former river bottom north of the American River. The report recounts how "The early residents named [it] Natomas, which is a Maidu word meaning north place or upstream people." (Davi, 4). To clarify: a local history claims this provenance, not any tribal expert or Maidu linguist.

My argument does not purport to confirm the veracity of the term's origin. Instead, I emphasize that this is the local lore that local authorities officially offer about the designation's provenance. Within this claim, Catlin's adoption of the name Natomas—whether he comprehended its meaning correctly—subsumes both a geographical location in the Sierra *and* a social formation as a prominent early colonial endeavor's property and identifier. Natomas ultimately sought to accomplish this fusion of landscape with an affective orientation privileging white sociality. Through their overarching concerns in Western water’s complete potential, Natomas inundated the landscape with capitalist processes and replaced not just the people that inhabited the land but their relationships to this environment and one another.

III. 'The Land Owns the Water': Abstract Time, the Racial Subsumption of Life, and the Narration of Useful and Mobile Places

The iconography and captions of the 1913 "Natomas Irrigated Lands" map (fig. 4, Natomas Consolidated of California 1913) accomplish plenty. The tableau revels in the corporate landlord's technical might to reclaim and offer 80,000 acres of flood-prone river bottomland for sale. The image simultaneously establishes a regional development model offering observers the limitless ability to replicate this success. The perspective of this bird's-eye panoramic map positions the "Nimbus Experimental Farm" and the 20,000 irrigated acres as significantly more prominent than the much larger "Natomas Properties" (now the suburb of Natomas) adjacent to downtown Sacramento. While the Folsom Road and Northern Electric Railroad crisscross variously across both parcels, the future-oriented promise of the Experimental Farm and the sheer scale of the "Natomas Irrigated Lands" indicates that mere size is not the most secure or viable method to tame this landscape. Instead, careful study of hydrological control, maximizing efficient use of resources, offers the surest path to success. The final words printed at the bottom righthand corner of the page reiterate these values, as much an evocative and hopeful invocation as an advertising slogan about water rights: "THE LAND OWNS THE WATER."

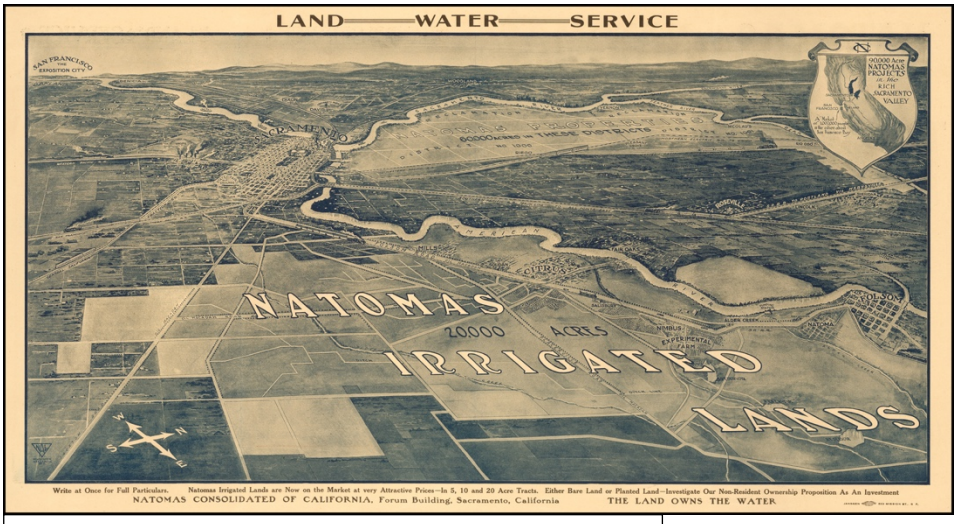

fig. 4

The vision of civilizational viability contingent on hydraulic regularity would inspire an infamous Chicago meatpacker to cast his lot a decade later with a local consortium of speculators. They would attempt to achieve the stability and permanence Natomas flaunted by typographically imprinting their name on the map. The profligate J. Ogden Armour, inheritor of his father's slaughterhouse and refrigeration empire, and his compatriots contrived the Sutter Basin Company to replicate Natomas's model further upstream in the Sacramento Valley at a distance not yet reached by reclamation schemes. They dreamt of fabricating permanent settlements out of swampland at an industrial scale. Armour would personally guarantee Sutter Basin's bondholders with his family fortune, allowing the firm to raise the intensive capital required to reclaim vast expanses of the land so impassable and inconsistent as to be previously cost-prohibitive.

This final attempt to wrest gold from the damp tulelands of the Valley followed generations of increasing consolidation to offset the initial funds such a technologically sophisticated and integrated flood control system demanded. Initially dominated by smallholding homesteaders constructing their own rudimentary levees and channels, "Even before the great flood of 1862, […] swamplanders came to realize that Putah Sink and the surrounding tule lands would never be reclaimed if left in the hands of each individual farmer[.] As they had witnessed

over and over again, even small-scale floods simply overwhelmed the levees and ditches that most property owners could afford to erect." A midwestern investors attempt to quell these flood waters produced this epic saga of a reclamation effort proffering individual ruin amid burgeoning global supply chains, superseded by both familial redemption through faith in modernity as well as regionally ingrained investment in propertied domesticity. Before relaying that narrative, the mechanism underlying infrastructure's racialized valuation, and inspiring this foolhardy endeavor, obliges critique. Perhaps more than its landscape imprint, infrastructure's radical reformulation of temporality carries and ordains the elevation of a white subjectivity that can abstract and subsequently locate any location on a timeline of progress. Through the regulation and regimentation of geography's tempo and historiography, capitalism instills whiteness in the built environment of factory clocks and train timetables while adjudicating a locale's comportment with its temporal agenda. This temporal agenda retains civilizational associations that explicitly racialize a location as "out-of-time" and demands the settler to make every effort towards productive, and historiographical, advancement.

As a political entity, California took advantage of the desire to incorporate its resources into a national economy by devising a mechanism facilitating the rapid reclamation of this aqueous frontier into productive and improved acreage. Through its prioritized establishment of the Board of Swampland Commissioners, the Legislature indicated that "to be effective, flood control works had to be aligned not with property ownership but with natural drainage patterns—which in the Sacramento Valley often meant entire basins encompassing more than 100,000 acres." (Vaught, 119). While initially intended to be a public opportunity for communal enrichment, the particular dynamics of the reclamation districts as a primary funding stream for infrastructural development facilitated a unique speculative form. Armour and his chums excelled as the most grandiose example of that grift.

To benefit from the subsidies offered by the state for the advertising advantage of farm acreage materializing from swamps in a technological marvel, a certain percentage of neighbors had to ally together:

> Upon receiving a petition from one-third of the landowners in any geographic region 'susceptible of one mode or system of reclamation,' the state board proceeded to establish the district, which was designed to essentially pay for itself. Drawing on the money held in the 'swamp land fund' created from the sales of swamp and overflowed lands in the district, the board hired engineers and workers to construct a single system of levees, canals, and drainage ditches to protect all the land in common. (Vaught, 119-120)

Of course, if a particular federation were to purchase vast tracts of land to accrue a third of a particular drainage basin, they would not only receive state largesse but essentially direct the infrastructure development and political boundaries of their reclamation district. Sutter Basin epitomized a corporate firm incentivized to gather capital and game the swamplands. Their engineering prowess maintained their reclamation district as dry, productive land avoiding the fate of the swamplanders during the Great Flood in the winter of 1862. Nevertheless, Armour and associates would discover, much like the wheat speculators who reclaimed large portions of the bogs after the 1862 flood only to find the price of their staple plummet, that the Sacramento Valley suffers not only from ecological variation but intense financial turmoil as well.

By replicating the Natomas model to try and definitively prove that "THE LAND OWNS THE WATER," Armour would suffer intense personal humiliation and monetary ruin. However,

his family would not just be spared his fate after his death; through his attempts to complete the transformation of the Sacramento Valley into an agribusiness powerhouse and suburban oasis, they would profit handsomely. Sutter Basin and Armour's intimate travails propound a cardinal guarantee embedded in racial capitalism and offered to its willing participants. They hold as an article of faith that the domination of landscapes, and the dislocation and subjugation of marginalized racial castes endemic to this endeavor, will resolve any tendency towards capitalist crisis. Sutter Basin's saga suggests that capitalism seeks recourse to whiteness and its linkage to domestic and civilizational futurity by embedding associated and racialized forms of upward distribution into the landscape, a desperate scramble understood by W.E.B. Du Bois "as driven by the myth that 'whiteness is the ownership of the earth, forever and ever, Amen!'" (Van Sant, 700). Infrastructure purportedly ensured continual investment in and profit inequitably accumulated by dominant white investors and the markets they designed. In this imaginary, a capitalized landscape can weather the temporary panics of natural disasters by remaining steadfastly formatted to meet the needs and ideals of a very particular racialized class.

Before considering the specific ascent and downfall of Sutter Basin land speculation, it is crucial to establish how capitalists translate purposefully abstract calculations (meant to appeal to numbers' transcendent truth) into affective, corporeal habits challenging and even displacing competing socialities. Political-economic theory maintains a robust tradition of critiquing the market's inclination to crash alongside its demands for the production and subsequent commodification of nature. Karl Polanyi captures how these predilections feedback into and dictate increasingly drastic regulatory infrastructure and ecological intervention, as consolidated manufacturing needs "elaborate machines [that] are expensive, [and thus] they do not pay unless large amounts of goods are produced. They can be worked without a loss only if the vent of the goods is reasonably assured and if production need not be interrupted for want of the primary goods necessary to feed the machines. […] in an agricultural society such conditions would not naturally be given; they would have to be created." (Polanyi, 43). In this passage, Polanyi leaves vague the essence of how this "vent of the goods" is to be "reasonably assured." However, his affirmation of markets acting "reasonably" is noteworthy for its diction. The choice of "reasonably" indicates perception's import through an inadvertent identification of an ideal affective stance. Like its predecessor Natomas, Sutter Basin reshuffled the dirt and streams of the Valley floor to create real productive capacity for shipping specialty crops to distant urban population centers. However, they also relied on a racial imaginary of civilization bliss of living proximate to but distinctly separate from and firmly in control of racialized populations who buttressed their bucolic idyll.

Geographer Levi Van Sant identifies the twinned dynamic of ecological and racial renewal as a dominant obsession of a contemporary national agronomic effort. He notes how "an episteme of improvement allowed the US cooperative soil survey to move between the governance of soil types" to prevent exhaustion "and racialised populations, in modes of both exclusive and liberal nationalism." (Van Sant, 688). The cooperative soil survey demarcated concerns for civilizational vigor as a matter of adequately calibrated scientific agriculture. In its calculation, this precision is inseparable from the intentional displacement of racialized others to facilitate white self-actualization on the land.

The prospective farmers thumbing through Sutter Basin advertisements read these same surveys' carefully emphasized results. Extending Van Sant's intervention examines how firms such as Sutter Basin materialized epistemological geographical classifications of the soil survey through the development and construction of recalcitrant architecture. These metal and concrete

backstops responded to faulty environmental conditions to secure permanently and represent white reproduction and dominance. The ecological surety afforded by this tactic helped the worries of the 1860s subside. Nevertheless, the strategy achieved resiliency in Sacramento by functioning as an abstract and timeless source of guaranteed value, resting on whiteness's supposed social transcendence and universality. Civilized infrastructure promised returns on the sea of tule first encountered by settlers in the Valley despite the river's vicissitudes and perennially shaky global exchange routes.

Time for the Infrastructural Fix/Temporality as Racial Habit

Plastics and drainage ditches are the unexpected protagonists in the saga of the Sutter Basin. The former would provide for the well-being of a widow, her struggles tragically portrayed in the press only to receive surprise redemption from a bet placed years earlier. The latter had a much more profound impact on making an entire region crisis-proof. We will return to the hydrocarbon *deus ex machina* later. For now, I want to delineate just how a large bypass (essentially an engineered sink for overflowing riverbanks) securitized Sacramento's future. Flooding is a recurrent challenge for the Sacramento Valley. Local historian James Henley traces the inception of Sacramentan civic life to the threat posed by seasonal deluge: "Citizens would call for protection and Sacramento Mayor Hardin Bigelow would win his office in 1850 by promising to build a levee. [...] The city was safe to recover and expand." (Henley, 9). This passage suggests the immediate impact of the levee on Sacramentan futurity. It intricately binds the city's growth and political structure to a mound of dirt, counterposed to an apocalyptic crisis. But were floodwaters the only specters haunting the Valley architect's nightmares?

Ruth Wilson Gilmore relies upon Stuart Hall and Bill Schwarz's "useful definition of crisis" to schematize the geographical imprint of crisis in California: "'Crises occur when the social formation can no longer be reproduced on the basis of the preexisting system of social relations'." Following Gilmore's suggestion that the most consequential factor in crisis is irreproducibility— a lack of recovery and expansion— the levee did more than merely abate floodwaters. It served as foundational for all of Sacramento's urban interactions, from fostering markets to rearing future generations.

Gilmore draws particular attention to the underlying mechanism threatened by the onset of crisis: "The pivotal verb 'to reproduce' signifies the broad array of political, economic, cultural, and biological capacities a society uses to renew itself daily, seasonally, generationally." (Gilmore, 54). While phenomena like inflation or deindustrialization may be symptomatic of capitalist crisis, for Gilmore, the threat is foundationally a temporal inability to stabilize existing exchange patterns. She comprehends these sequences expansively as enabled by economic laws, gendered family relations, commonsense perceptions of dependability in the market, and habits establishing trust between merchants. However, Gilmore additionally offers a much more acute and forceful crisis diagnosis alongside this more diffuse understanding. She decisively asserts that "Systemic failure to disaccumulate constitutes crisis." (Gilmore, 55). Yoked together through the rubric of *stability*, Gilmore's indispensable schematic elides quotidian structures of *social* exchange with abstract laws of *market* exchange. When approached simultaneously, the underlying principle regulating these two functions emerges as proper behavior and sustainable growth. This mixture appeals via civilizational overtures that naturalize particular affective and developmental modes while obfuscating those modes' reach. I contend that whiteness emerges as an indispensable crisis resolution technique under capitalism through a temporal fix, embedding values in the landscape even when friction and resistance—whether human or meteorological—make returns unlikely.

To fully account for Sutter Basin's remarkable decline and unbelievable recovery, whiteness's reliance on temporal order demands an autopsy. Capitalism and whiteness share a goal of transforming places into not just useful (here, extractable and commodifiable) locales, but exchangeable ones. They rely on a geographic flattening to orient any place towards the market and its racial precepts. Capitalism rectifies the 'useful' portion of the equation through infrastructural and productive machinery. However, the imperative for 'exchangeability' melds emplaced landscape's formal transformation with the homogenization of lifeways and sociality through standard time. Essentially, racial capitalism requires not just flattened productive landscapes, but recognizable lifeways in accordance with the clock and the emotional attachments this schedule induces. These hierarchized behavioral regimes remain legible as value assignments (who labors, whose visage is worthy) throughout dislocation any other capitalist location through their accordance with temporal regimes subtly imposing particular racial judgments (regressive, ascendant). This timely order's relentless identification of progressive temporality with civilized and appropriate behavior simultaneously deracializes and rewards white comportment while epidermalizing timelessness onto any body outside of whiteness's radiant—and productive—glow.

Gilmore's elucidation of crisis dynamics pairs two seemingly unrelated functions within racial capitalism: social reproduction and disaccumulation. The interplay between these two mechanisms lubricates the extraction of value. *Golden Gulag* diagrams how capacities in capitalism idle when they are no longer consumable-- leading to surplus, stagnant capital. The failure to consume tangles with the failure of social reproduction. For Gilmore, the state steps in when the consumptive capacities of the worker fail to exceed the productive capacities of industrial output. Due to competition, this imbalance is the tendency of capitalism: toward overaccumulation and thus necessitating spatial fixes. Gilmore critiques these reshufflings, from warfare to imprisonment, that trap and reroute excess commodification (including commercial goods and land) and excess *consumers*. Capitalism's basic capacities—production, circulation, distribution—extend far beyond consumption.

Rather than solely emphasizing the disaccumulation of things commodified within capitalism as the catalyst for crisis, Gilmore highlights the "broad array" of capacities used for renewal under this system. She is describing crisis not merely as an economic trend or an inevitability (though these characteristics apply). Instead, crisis indicates that capitalism is as much a sociality as an economic logic. Capitalism relies on inducing particular forms of behavior, chief among them the necessity of valuation through exchange. Rather than a mere economic problem, a crisis entails a failure in the basic equation for capital: a commodity is no longer exchangeable. It is *stuck*, not in the continual motion necessary for not only profit but, more so, the extraction of value from a regular thing through exchange.

While overaccumulation can undoubtedly arise because of excess supply, the inability to exchange is fundamentally an issue of value. Any phenomenon in this system (whether labor, goods, land, or machinery) exudes worth in direct proportion to its ability to become legible to continuous exchange cycles. Any particular facet can contribute to valuation through its rarity or the human time and effort spent in commodification. Items, or people, can become a repository for value. However, that value rests on their tendency towards engaging in the fundamental action of capitalism: abstracted exchange. This exchange is principally a form of relationship. The market is a matrix for the social to take place.

Moishe Postone posits that *valuation* is unique to capital because it serves as its source of wealth and an overarching social mediation. He analyzes Marxian thought on the principle of

value to note the conditions for value to cohere in a commodity. The commodity must contain both the familiar propensity for use and exchange. However, he emphasizes the latter. Postone underscores that a social relationship of order, hierarchy, and accumulation is truly exchanged and, thus, continually regenerated when a commodity trades hands.

Consequently, exchange is both the mechanism that creates wealth and the medium that reinforces modern regimentation, abstraction, and removal. Whenever an object transforms into a commodity, it not only approaches the market but also instantiates specific social mechanisms. For Postone, the commodity effectuates an equivalence of all matter and the primacy of productive philosophies in which white social mores such as hoarding, efficiency, and exchangeability predominate.

Necessary labor time is the basis for a good's price, and capitalists can exploit this calculation by reducing wages for an equivalent work amount. Nevertheless, for Postone, capitalism's character is more insidious. Postone conceives capitalism as a system of measurement that denigrates labor and land as it turns both into units of exchange. Valuation minimizes the sociality of abstracted labor transported widely, and land not worked under particular developmental patterns trends toward worthlessness and requires redemption. Linking these two forms of valuation for Postone is time—hours spent in *suitable* work, generating items for exchange, or in *proper* cultivation, creating landscapes either with exchangeable resources or upon which the market's operations can unfold. Exchange demands separability and equivalence but also performs the violence of extracting a price from people and places as durational phenomena. This price coerces objects as commodities and the socialities abstracted and hidden in their generation to join a market. The market, alongside exchange's primacy, obscure social reformations, including atomization, disregard for renewal, and negotiation between social and productive temporal orders.

As a medium, value and the exchange *in its very operation* instills in the commodity the basic necessity of a particular worldview. The capitalist perspective compartmentalizes all human activity into diametric categories. Prized sociality facilitates further exchange allowing for reservoirs of human effort, products, and components to travel (often from south to north, from east to west, from black to white). Otherwise, human potential remains disorderly and *wasted*. Objects, tendencies, and even emotions are valuable because of their inclination to reinforce a system defining *worth* itself as a capacity for extraction. Within this design, even the (heavily racialized) potential for movement and alignment with principles of familiarity and unfettered access can generate speculative value. This ability upholds the fundamentally unsustainable operation of exchange's perpetual motion.

Within capitalism, time wields two weapons. Time validates labor exploitation. It also provides the fundamental unit for exchange, thereby eliminating the friction of social transition between various regimes assigning merit and further sanctifying circulation as the most attractive premise of capital. Postone argues that "Value is peculiar in that, thought a form of wealth, it does not express directly the relation of humans to nature but the relations among people as mediated by labor." (Postone, 195). As opposed to a count of tangible goods (what Postone deems 'material wealth'), value's "magnitude […] is a function of the expenditure of abstract labor time" (Postone, 193). The basis for capitalist exchange—value—fundamentally rests not on the commodity itself but on the accumulation of units of work time within the commodity. Temporal reckoning inspires capitalists to exploit workers to purchase time for the smallest outlay. It also reinforces and requires a standard, universal, quantifiable time blanketing all human interaction as necessary for survival.

While Postone uses this postulation to argue for capitalism's immanent contradiction, its broader significance entails comprehending capitalism as a temporally structured social interaction. It requires the epistemological reordering of a fundamental unit of human existence: time. Uniform time mediates all objects to equalize commodities by grading their capture of labor understood through divisible, quantified units of existence. Postone articulates a profound claim. He alleges that for exchange to occur and materials to gain value, modernity must redefine human activity mathematically. Thus, all social relations under capitalism, whether the labor time creating value or the activities of social reproduction, must conform to a new standard of abstracted time.

If time is essential for valuation and saturates activities across scales, from the factory to the bedroom, determining the disfunction of value that induces crisis is a much more complex matter. Any temporally defined activity, from housework to leisure, exists within this temporal matrix and thus contributes to, or impedes, exchange. In either case, sociality is indirectly related to value in that its forms preclude or enhance commodification. Humans "waste time" or make "better use" of a given timeframe. When read in light of Gilmore's accentuation on social reproduction, the resolution of crisis involves recapturing the time of people (in the factory or in a jail that transforms barren agricultural land into state jobs), the time spent improving wasteful lands moving back towards entropy, or the untapped potential of nature that solely needs human attention to reinvigorate. What Postone fails to realize, however, is that this temporal mediation, while omnipresent and potent, is also inflected with racialized logics. Race determines who can offer their time and whom transcendent and selected actors must force into history.

Understanding capitalism's medium of exchange as a fundamentally temporal relation allows Postone to denote the expansive reach of what he deems "abstract time." As crisis proves through exception, an implied and threatening instability if its apparatus ceases allows capitalism's existence in either a colonial or imperialist mode (and often balancing both stages simultaneously) to extract labor and land. The injection of quantified, standardized time into all aspects of daily life equates a commodity's failure with the cessation of all social relations. Postone understands abstract time as an omnipresent saturation, consisting of "'uniform, continuous, homogenous, 'empty' time, […] independent of events. […] Abstract time is an independent variable; it constitutes an independent framework within which motion, events, and action occur. Such time is divisible into equal, constant, nonqualitative units." (Postone, 202). Capitalism's rationale conjoins all functions of life, especially and perhaps most crucially intimacy, as mediated by and thus made possible through exchange. Perpetuity becomes synonymous with exchange in that both ensure the passage of time.

While temporal order's transition manages and disciplines peoples' productive routines, how do specific colonial hierarchies embed in this restructuration? How does capitalist time become embodied? Abstract time attached the social mores of equivalence and order to all interactions. This affixation models how market exchange privileges social paradigms that facilitate its continuation. Mark Rifkin explains the settler state's asynchronous perception of indigeneity as a form of metonymy equating the proper family to true nationhood. He explains settler time as definitionally concerned with forms of "civilized" life, most fundamentally through "The notion of a generic life cycle organized around conjugal union and reproduction [that] functions as perhaps the most prominent way of envisioning the everyday meaning of continuity." (Rifkin, 36). For Rifkin, settler society comprehends continuity as reliant on a white form of familial affiliation. Like abstract time, settlers diagram the family as individuated, exchangeable, and not place-specific. Indigenous people's temporalities extend beyond a linear

sense of a distant past and rely upon particular landed pedagogies uncaptured by teleological time. Thus, their sovereignty threatens the temporal mediation of uninhibited exchange and abstracted human activity (Simpson; LaDuke and Cowen).

For Sharon P. Holland, racialization is fundamentally a process of uplifting those who exchange or make exchangeable. It designates some as timely and others, exchanged on the market or removed from their social and logistical networks, asynchronous. Holland demarcates, "Those who order the world, who are world-making master time—those animals *and* humans who are perceived as having no world-making effects—merely occupy space. […] If the black appears as the antithesis of history (occupies space), the white represents the industry of progressiveness (being in time)." (Holland, 10). Holland elucidates the neglected criteria upon which valuation rests. If value emerges from conformity to temporal regimens and thus reinforces those regimens, it also reflects a racialized temporal logic. Continuity necessitates exchange, but exchange-- like time-- must uphold "rational" behavior. This rationality, as Rifkin indicates, indexes particular familial units, rituals, tools, math— even particular foods.

While all these categories maintain exchange in capitalism, commodities and people associated with *orderly* exchangeability or exuding imminently market mobility remain the most prized. Association with whiteness—cast as resplendent, temporally progressive, ordered, clean, knowable, countable—is incipient in every moment of commodification. I contend that even when capitalism fails and reaches a moment of crisis, the temporality of exchange establishes an infrastructure for potential value. It activates affects reliant on a promised yield and an eventual return by promoting whiteness.

We can approach exchange as both a practical economic solution to the threat of overaccumulation and as the primary romantic trope functional within racial capitalism. In essence, exchange functions as a suture where the tragedy of stasis has inhibited the market. David Scott analyzes romance's antithesis, tragedy, by noting the valence of tragedy in considering postcolonial and anticolonial futures. He foregrounds the contingency of revolutionary action, which simultaneously thwarts paradigmatic societal shifts but also insists on their possibility. He contrasts this with romance, in which a predetermined fate guides all interaction and secures a foreordained destiny. Scott succinctly summarizes how "tragedy sets before us the image of a man or woman obliged to act in a world in which values are unstable and ambiguous. And consequently, for tragedy the relation between past, present, and future is never a Romantic one in which history rides a triumphant and seamlessly progressive rhythm, but a broken series of paradoxes and reversals in which human action is ever open to unaccountable contingencies—and luck." (Scott, 13). Scott links the contingency inherent in tragedy to its "unaccountability."

The psychic trauma of an inability to classify signals the strong correlation between romance and quantifiable certainty. Capitalism seeks to be a paramount social romance that consistently ensures accumulation by absolutely removing contingency. Infrastructure represents an effort to literally concertize the panacea of unblemished market operation into the landscape. This seamlessness includes mitigating accounting errors alongside certifying that the racial tropes that justify accumulation—the undeserving poor versus individual initiative—proceed immaculately.

The saga of Sutter Basin and the millionaire meatpacker whose bonds propped up its levees with an army of dredgers elucidates how the romantic medium of exchange in capitalism operates through racial tropes to correct for the contingencies of luck inherent to speculation. Returning to Gilmore, she defines *crisis* as "instability that can be fixed only through radical

measures, which include developing new relationships and new or renovated institutions out of what already exists." (Gilmore, 26). I suggest that the romance of exchange is a racialized construction that sketches how capitalists understand their ethical affiliations. It interconnects various forms of proper behavior. Adherents liken shared values such as modernization as inherently linked to cleanliness, efficiency, and interoperability of whiteness. This affective melange allows for the renovation Gilmore outlines. Seemingly opposed institutions and business ventures-- tilling the earth and petrochemical plastic manufacturing-- are not only made economically compatible. Their affiliation deemphasizes violent military eruptions caused by imperial accumulation in favor of a triumphant narrative of personal initiative, genius, and a romantic resolution of family security. The overrepresentation of these romantic fantasies in regional Western imaginaries underscores temporality's indispensability in priming landscape's for exchange and cultural 'refinement.'

Western history has long concerned itself with state development, market initiation and evolution, and racial matters as related but not codetermined phenomena. This uneven alignment oftentimes results in the naturalization of race and the overdetermination of the state and the market at the expense of dependency upon personal and intimate performances of white masculinity. A case in point is the classic history of Southern California, *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills*, by Robert Glass Cleland. This midcentury text elevates the state while refusing to analyze its innovations as a *settler* versus a traditional colony. The tome also relies upon racial stereotypes to delineate an inevitable teleology of Western expansion.

Designating the Californios as "native Californians," Glass Cleland mourns and scolds the passing of their dominance at once, noting it as a providential transition point for the region, as "most of the great land holdings in southern California passed from the control of native Californians into the hands of Americans. The change was inevitable. It was brought about by the land act of 1851, whose harmful and confusing effects upon the old Spanish-Mexican titles have already been described" and supposedly "by the prodigality, extravagance, and financial ineptitude of the native Californians," among other factors. In this passage, legislation and facile racial distinctions repeating the assumptions of contemporaneous Anglo chroniclers explicate the initial tendencies of the region. The prominence of these rationales unintentionally illustrates the unique aspects of these social formations within California. It takes for granted the primary function and significance of received narratives of groups like the Sons and Daughters of the Golden West.

Of course, practitioners of Western U.S. history have nuanced the assessments and refuted the biases of initial surveys such as Glass Cleland's. However, while shifting their perspective from celebration to critique, they often still carry over simple historiographical assumptions about the ideological constructions carried by Europeans and resisted by Native peoples and racialized arrivants. Glass Cleland's presaging some anti-imperialist historians' ecological concerns by crediting the force of the market with radically reshaping the West's economy and ecology demonstrates this continuity. He identifies how "the Gold Rush created an enormous and ever-expanding demand for beef, raised the price of cattle to levels never before dreamed of in California, destroyed the simple scale of values to which the ranchers had long been accustomed, and transformed herds of black, slim-bodied cattle into far richer bonanzas than the gold fields of the Sierra yielded to a vast majority of the Argonauts." (Glass Cleland, 102). Subsequent environmental historians have agreed with Glass Cleland yet unmoored his often neutral assessment of the cattle market's inevitable and sometimes even enviable effects.

While I firmly agree with the New Western History and its environmentalist tendencies to remediate the ill effects of colonial encroachment, I find commonality between radical and traditional U.S. Western historiography in how they both assume colonial endeavors rolled Western monolithically, or at best developed as a neat marriage between Anglo and Spanish colonial administrations, biases, and technologies. I emphasize that California did not so much react to colonialism but instead developed novel racial forms that the settler colonial United States could export back to previous world powers during imperialism's 20th-century momentous calamity. This tumultuousness uncoincidentally aligns simultaneously with Glass Cleland's classical composition. This coincidence suggests one motive to obscure the internal machinations of race in early California in the cloak of colonial transition and emergent global markets rather than a nascent racial form.

My research stipulates that Western U.S. history cannot wholesale import a standard colonialism from the Eastern seaboard Anglo mold or, alternatively, Spanish colonial realms. Focusing precisely on whiteness and its inherent and constitutional mutability allows me to reveal how California adopted and consequentially amended prior colonial racial forms. The emergent state obsessed pointedly over the resolution of crisis within racial capitalism. Their apprehension fit the political-economic juncture of the primary imperial form's transfer from colonial holdings by European powers to a nascent *settler colonial* empire. This new domain could claim righteousness by resolving a European geographical inability to absorb the climate and flavors of subjugated people. This theoretical insight both adopts and repositions the definitional significance of ecology within the revisionist New Western History, such as Richard White's focus on the role of the horse:

> The Spanish had unleashed changes of a depth and magnitude that they neither fully comprehended or controlled. The horse can serve as both an example and symbol of these changes. An ecological invader, introduced by the Spanish, the horse became the most valued possession and the identifying mark of the plains nomads who raided Spanish settlements. In the centuries following the conquest of New Mexico, people far from its boundaries had felt the effects of European presence. (White, 26)

White advantageously foregrounds the impact of fauna and flora, specifically regional residents' negotiation of global environmental exchange. More than any other boundary demarcation, these reconfigurations geographically constituted the designation of areas as "Western." I seek to link his and similar scholars' contentions with new racial subjectivity formation. This intervention helps position an emergent subjective whiteness emphasizing balance, modularity, and expansion as perhaps the crucial technological development of California's Anglo industrial boom.

Whereas massive public works to modernize a society before took on explicitly imperialist overtones—amid racist appeals to ameliorate the plights of "little brown brothers"—Sutter Basin shifted hydraulic engineering to become an atomized and intimate concern in which white domesticity's daily routines and international warmongering dialectically reciprocate. J. Ogden Armour's rhetoric exemplified a new role for global whiteness after the reformulation of high imperialism following the First World War. Whiteness would now seek to balance the gains of primitive accumulation, in all its significances and valences, with a prudent, scheduled and tempered interior disposition.

IV. 'Where None Grew Before': Fertilizing Whiteness through Transcontinental Agricultural Real Estate, or, the Proper Way to Lose Millions

J. Ogden Armour's failure and redemption illuminate the timeliness of his comportment with capitalist objectives connecting places and yielding recognizably white, and valuable, rewards. The implausible coincidence of his overleveraging of government contracts *and* his fortuitous bet on a penniless petroleum engineer demonstrate that capitalism's progressive teleology dictates crisis's necessity in order to reaffirm the sanctity of whiteness's penchant for universal market salvation. Capitalism's foregone doomed failure consistently acculturates into commonsense white values as the sole remedy for landscape malfunction. Not only do market's uphold whiteness as a mechanism to differentially value people and places. Whiteness is a constitutive feature of capitalism that translates its economic logics of accumulation into personal affective imperatives during the stress and disorder of crises wrought by its intended operations.

The origins of the Sutter Basin Company as a discrete entity entail several massive temporal and organizational shifts. The project itself involved a transformation of the piecemeal reclamation efforts of the Sacramento Valley, initially undertaken by individual landowners, followed by districts of allied growers on adjoining parcels. This endeavor realized an industrial and financial streamlining. A single capitalist would fund, through millions of dollars of personal wealth, a scientifically managed operation, master-planned in alignment with (through unethical influence) statewide California policy, that would own outright massive infrastructural machinery like dredgers and could claim to both solve flood issues and enrich suburban gentleman growers. Throughout its storied saga, the engine that drove Sutter Basin's development was a temporal promise that modernity's efficiency would so fundamentally improve the natural landscape as to naturalize capitalist exchange but also find a balance to rejuvenate and preserve whiteness through the enforcement of familial and geomorphological propriety.

Sutter Basin's failure is pivotal for assessing its perennial influence on the Sacramento Valley suitably. Through an inability to turn a profit and as a financial boondoggle that sunk an overly eager speculator's fortune during an agricultural real estate bubble, Sutter Basin spotlights how infrastructure serves as a mysterious yet formidable racializing force. Like whiteness, its utility in a comparative racial hierarchy is its disguise that can shift landscape valuation and pattern its future upkeep and land use despite any measurable financial or political impact from the venture's public face. Before bondholders liquidated Sutter Basin's assets to see any return at all on their investment, the scheme achieved its true salience: the literal groundwork it laid to commodify a particular wasteland and make it legible to capital *in perpetuity*.

Sutter Basin and the romance of Armour's debt elucidate the whiteness's potent multiscalar promise. Through infrastructural interconnection that dismantles any landscape to discover value in its spare parts, geographies across the globe can be thrust into the current of the global market. Once settlers fabricate physical and financial infrastructures of selection and circulation, despite any variation or crisis implicating particular states or corporate firms, the inertia of proximate and identically-designed regional hubs seeking to regulate investment provides a bulwark against nascent anticapitalist architecture. Infrastructure patterns investment palimpsestically: capacity orients productive activities towards translatable utilization of existing transportation and energy facilities. Furthermore, infrastructure instructs attachments to modernity, technological optimism and fetishism, and faith in market rationality: values attributed to whiteness within racial capitalism. Fidelity to fecundity, interconnection, and

technological prowess would confirm intergenerational wealth for Armour's clan through his personal investment, and for the Sacramento region through a sink of commodifiable land with which to extract rents from fantasies of domestic frontier bliss.

As a well-connected and ambitious plan hatched by the capitalist class, Sutter Basin, its primary financier Armour, and his cadre of lawyers and agents convinced the state to reassess the meaning of this landscape with even the mere suggestion of infrastructural engagement. Milton Whitney, Chief of the USDA's Bureau of Soils, admitted in Circular No. 79 that elite influences pushed that publication which revised a previously derided tract of land. He demurred, "Subsequently, however, a proposed engineering project of considerable magnitude, involving protection of the lands of the basin by an extensive system of levees and artificial overflow channels and the draining of the lands by installation of pumping plants, has led to a request for further study of the soil conditions within the basin. A revision of the central and southern portion of the basin covered by the project has therefore been undertaken." (Whitney, 2). The selectivity of this reassessment—covering only Sutter Basin Improvement Company lands—and the passive admission that the tentative impression of infrastructural investment pinpoints the vitality of infrastructure's presence. Engineering, embroiled in financing and technological advancement, successfully shifts the bureaucratic gaze of the state to reconsider the physical substrate of civilization itself: dirt. Crucially, the *soil* has been reassessed, not just any superficial real estate valuation subject to market whims. An official appraisal that injects mundane significance into a plot imposes cultural values far more permanently than any ephemeral booster tract.

Sutter Basin could lobby for such a dramatic swing in its regional reputation because it actually had the financial might and technical experts to effect enduring geomorphological transformations. In an application "TO APPROPRIATE UNAPPROPRIATED WATERS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA For Agricultural Purposes," the "SUTTER BASIN IMPROVEMENT COMPANY" expressed to the state its intention to handle an "amount of water which the applicant intends to apply to beneficial use [of] 42 Forty-two cubic feet for second. […] The use to which the water is to be applied is Irrigation […] The Main Canal to be 1 MILES IN length." (Maddock). This construction permit reveals the scope of infrastructural intervention in the Basin, describing as "Diversion Works" a "Pumping Plant, located at the left bank of the Sacramento River being that pumping plant now being constructed under Permit #418, which will be sufficiently enlarged in capacity to pump the additional amount applied for. […] Estimated Cost of proposed works, $65,000" (or roughly $1.1 million in 2022 dollars). This single yet essential collection of machinery provided indispensable water at a rate of 314 gallons a second for cropland useless without hydration.

The facility totaled less than 1% of Armour's investment but would noticeably improve—or make legible, tangible, and commodifiable—otherwise "UNAPPROPRIATED" water claimed by settler colonial authorities. Simple and otherwise unremarkable transactions such as the permitting process for rights to divert a stream simultaneously affirmed capital's forceful capacity to impact the landscape *as well as* a colonizing regime that sees naturalized elements of a geography as pleading for domination. Elements subject to this hydrocracy's control ultimately include racialized people associated with that geography.

Cultural geographers have incisively analyzed racial dynamics in landscape creation and curation, highlighting in their scholarship the imposition of racial hierarchies through representational strategies particularly impactful as they seem to become indelible, congenital, and innate geographical features. Infrastructure slyly accomplishes the same goal for

civilizational values racialized as "white," such as modern, efficient improvement and valuable advancement over "backward" relations with landscape. Engineering augments this effort by aligning racialized values not solely with personal preference. Race corporealizes and teaches object lessons in economic productivity's elevation under capitalism.

Geographer Richard Schein admirably outlines the backgrounding of racial values within landscapes, diagramming how "Historic preservation[…] generally appeals to a broad segment of the population through its reliance on a landscape or architectural *aesthetic*, which is usually invoked as something beyond assail, as a cultural value that is not somehow tainted by the political. But the aesthetic is never simply common sense, and it is a learned appreciation that privileges particular ways of looking at, knowing, and valuing landscapes and architecture." Schein continues, remarking that "Invoking the aesthetic[…] always uses the cultural landscape in ways that have consequences, including racialized ones, beyond the intent of those involved in any particular preservation effort." (Schein, 10). Schein's cogent summary of aesthetic hegemony perpetuating certain cultural mores in the landscape could easily be extended in my case by replacing the instances of "historic preservation" with "infrastructural development" and "aesthetic" with "function" or "task."

Schein and his colleagues analyze cultural representation and valuation's impact on everyday landscapes and how these symbols and iconographies instill racial hierarchies in particularly vigorous manners. They accomplish this *precisely because* they seem to blend in as natural or preordained landscape features—undesigned and essential characteristics. Infrastructure undertakes the same aesthetic strategy concerning productive capitalist capacity. Engineering serves as a crucial locus that solidifies racializing logics not just in individual preference and taste (although the fetishization of the "American technological sublime" certainly amplifies this effort) but inserts white supremacist hierarchies into the very *use* and *functionality* of a given landscape. Topographically backgrounding race, by extension, naturalizes human differentiation and denigration as core tenets of exchange value on the market. Sutter Basin is a remarkably concentrated case study of this subdued regularization of racist accumulatory patterns. Its chief propagator sought to influence the everyday aesthetic experience of infrastructural might by elevating beef as the quintessential cornerstone of a modern American diet. As indicated by his subtle hand in reassessing soil quality to activate the Sacramento River's higher purpose, he also aimed to transform a regional California landscape into an earthly Eden spouting agrarian virtue.

The man behind the millions in bonds that would ensure Sutter Basin's success was the scion of a proper Chicago family involved in preserving both meat and capitalist appetites, J. Ogden Armour. His predecessors had made a fortune by aligning infrastructural innovation with domestic culinary habits. The company that bore his name, and sourced his fortune, had triumphed generations before through a reimagination of transportation technology that radically rethought the logistics of a primary regenerative activity: mealtime. While the Chicago stockyards that birthed Armour Company provided a blueprint for the Taylorist model's application to perishable consumables, the industrial food system more elementally relied upon shifting the timescale of slaughter. A biography of Armour Company's heir recounts how "The most rapid growth of the business dates from 1884, when Armour was the first to utilize refrigerator cars. Up to this time the expensive plan of carrying cattle alive to the Eastern centers had been in operation. With the use of refrigerator cars, the cattle were killed in the various Western centers where they were grown, and transported cheaply and quickly to the centers of consumption." ("J. Ogden Armour"). Armour Company intervened in the messy business of

keeping livestock alive, substituting a network of cattle drives and hay stores for industrial might and engineering innovation.

After all, Armour helped reconfigure the geography of the cow on myriad levels. His family's firm and the other Big Six meatpackers constitutionally altered the food system's mileage extent. They cooperated and integrated facilities (including reclaiming the swamp that became the Union Stock Yard). This consolidation allowed for comingled fixed capital investment in branch plants alongside efficient rail transportation enabled through ownership of refrigerated cars and associated icing stations. William Cronon, in his authoritative exegesis of these efforts' import for the West's integration through natural resource extraction, forcefully declares with his chapter title about the phenomenon of the triumph of Chicago meatpackers to collect livestock from across the country (and eventually the continent) and distribute flesh to major global markets. He characterizes this equivocal achievement as "Annihilating Space."

To support this bold claim, he outlines a process through which meatpackers "established intricate new connections among grain farmers, stock raisers, and butchers, thereby creating a new corporate network that gradually seized responsibility for moving and processing animal flesh in all parts of North America," signaling "a growing interpenetration of city and country. With it, seemingly, came an increasing corporate control over landscape, space, and the natural world," as well as "a basic change in the American diet" (Cronon, 212). Essentially, Cronon indicates that Chicago meatpacking dominance was facilitated as much, if not more so, through infrastructural maneuvering and corporate structural innovations as scientifically managed slaughter. Armour and his peers ushered in a market formation that transformed a constitutional function of human sustenance—nutrition and satiation—into a conveyor belt that extracted livestock from the periphery, fed it with rural grain, and profited from the dinner tables of major metropolises.

The regional and national reconfiguration achieved by this massive swelling of cattle slaughtering's geographical scope was not Armour's only advancement in the configuration of cattle. While Cronon elucidates precisely how spatial annihilation strove for the modernization of both countryside and life's basic functions—most bombastically represented by the evolution of the Union Stock Yard into a tourist attraction to celebrate progress—the industry also redefined commodification at interior, microscopic scales. In pursuing ever-expanding profits, the Big Six transformed the peripheral pieces of a carcass, once deemed waste or runoff, into indispensable elements of modern living. Historian and former stockyard worker Dominic Pacyga elaborates on offal's remarkable metamorphosis, noting that "Increasingly, these by-products came to be seen as moneymaking parts of the industry, providing the larger meatpackers with yet another economic scale advantage. […] In 1905, Armour and Company produced sandpaper—a means of utilizing some of the glue manufactured—and numerous chemical preparations, such as pepsin." (Pacyga, 108-109). While Armour & Co. assimilated Western ranching outposts into a national food supply chain, they also provisioned settlers with manual construction tools to shape houses' wood beams. Armour proved capitalism could metabolize its own waste.

This novel manufacture impacted processes as minute as industrial chemistry and as grand as fashion trends. Its rigorous income generation contributed mightily to Armour & Co.'s financial standing, to the extent that in an explanation of the validity of bonds underwritten by J. Ogden Armour, his team of attorneys reference as a profit stream "the general utilization of byproducts into the manufacture of glue, beef extract, pepsin, the tanning of leather, etc." ("J. Ogden Armour"). This offal reclamation indicates that aside from a revolution in manufacturing

and margins, Armour also contributed to an emergent epistemological valuation of modernity: the ability to reclaim waste at existence's most fundamental level.

Based on the lore of his lauded family and their ability to reshape consumption habits and rangelands alike, perhaps it was inevitable that the younger Armour could not resist the allure of recasting temporality once again in the Sacramento Valley. While the Sutter Basin project supposedly enacted a larger-scale iteration of a proven concept—the reclamation of annually flooded tule lands—it also claimed to be the first nationally financed reclamation effort that upheld statewide disaster planning. The Bureau of Reclamation's history of the Central Valley Project notes how "California created the State Reclamation Board in 1911, and authorized it to spend $33 million on a flood control project in the Central Valley." (Stene). Sutter Basin incorporated just two years after, on the heels of the Reclamation Board, and its advertising consistently reminded purchasers of its merger of private capital with state building. While the financier never removed personal enrichment from the equation, Sutter Basin cast Armour as a stalwart of local flood mitigation and a benefactor of civilizational progress:

> Certain parties obtained options representing the holdings of various owners which were placed before Mr. J. Ogden Armour, of Chicago, with the explanation that the project could only be handled in a large way and that the reclamation as proposed would be of great benefit to California and particularly to the Sacramento Valley. He decided to underwrite the project, expecting to derive some benefit from the venture, but *mainly with the idea that it would be a great work to cause blades of grass to grow on a large scale where none grew before*. (Sutter Basin Company, 3, emphasis added)

The promotional materials' intimate insight into Armour's motivations alludes to several familiar colonial botanical and agricultural tropes. The association of blades of grass with reserves for advanced animal husbandry (Fischer) contrasts with a primordial antecedent of lifelessness and ruin, "where none grew before." Armour, however, initiated a particularly Californian spin towards an abiding colonial model of state-sanctioned private investment. The architects distinguished Sutter Basin through its industrial acumen, suggested by "grow[ing] on a large scale" and its contestation of the temporality of crisis.

Reclamation District 1500 replicated a durable Anglo model of hinterland ecological transformation and violence rooted in the earliest British endeavors overseas, in various incipient pockets of dominion from the British Isles to the "New" World. Comparative historical archaeologist Audrey Horning notes the imbrication of investment and imperial development in that "Funding for the official Ulster Plantation, designed to supplant native Irish with loyal English and Scottish settlers—came from the same source as the Jamestown colony—the coffers of the London Companies and individual investors" with the expectation of "execut[ing] idealized plans and ensur[ing] profitable commodities for the crown and for private investors." These settlers' struggles, however, consciously emulated a disaster.

They obstinately embraced the Roanoke colony blueprint, despite "knowledge of the failings of the all-male colonial model" and "the financial risks associated with reliance upon private investment." (Horning, 4). Firms like the Virginia Company instigated a precarious speculative venture archetype that mitigated uncertainty through broad, networked elite endorsement. These gambles remained obsessed with the most significant remaining obstacle—permanence and endurance that Horning implies could find resolution in the social reproduction inherent to the settler colonial model. Sutter Basin intervened in this legacy to suggest that its

mathematical precision, rational decision-making, and moral virtues would finally foreclose the ferocious promise of undomesticated lands to realize colonial strivings perpetually. This landscape would actualize "idealized plans" through efficient management, seamless integration into a modern economy, and a multiscalar whiteness that would merge the concerns of the hearth and trading floor.

The multiscalar ambitions of early California entrepreneurs repeatedly appear in a discursive assemblage they consistently funded and disseminated: the booster tract. This multifaceted genre that ranged from plays on Mission history to railroad magazines to rural advice columns is inseparable from an innovative California iteration of whiteness. This racial form, most presciently delineated in boosterism as a genre, lauded a mythical California Anglo who settled adjacent to a racialized wilderness and the people onto whom settlers projected this constricting fable. However, maintaining such resilient ties to colonial civilization materialized on the printed page and via photographic evidence distinguished the white Californian. This unique attribution of California whiteness in booster literature--proximate to Southwest Indigeneity yet immediately tethered to Eastern capital--figures prominently even during the medium's birth.

In addition to his duties as University of California lecturer of dairy husbandry, the pioneering and preeminent agricultural booster in the state, Edward James Wickson, circulated numerous editions of agricultural field guides and led the flagship agricultural booster *Pacific Rural Press* for decades. He disseminated a corpus that "constituted a promotional, developmental georgic of great importance to California's evolving rural society. Student of the classics, Wickson sought what Hesiod and Vergil had sought before him: the promotion of rural virtue and civility based upon an ethos of steady work and prudent use." Former California State Librarian Kevin Starr's characterization of Wickson's ideological aims is not reprobatory. However, it captures the zealotry with which Wickson penned his odes to a supposed colonial civilizational advancement. Referencing classical pastoral poetry, Wickson situates regional agricultural economic development as a transcendent virtue at the bedrock of an imagined Western imperial dominant lineage. Wickson spread this patronizing and genocidal ideal not primarily through elevated literature but through the popular press and practical tomes akin to accessible textbooks.

Starr recounts a dream of gentlemanly mastery of nature and culture at once, as "Wickson believed that with the proper attention to detail Californians might flourish as an educated yeomanry on the land, self-supporting, living amidst beauty, having the means to enjoy the amenities of life as well as to turn the earth and make it yield its welcomed and necessary harvest." (Starr, 139). Critically, these gentleman growers did not just cultivate beauty. The budding agronomists fertilized cultural literacy to appreciate that sublimity. Indeed, Wickson attracted an audience that recognized his allusions and composed "journalism aimed at a largely middle-class, literate clientele, many of whom had turned to the land after urban careers in the East and were hence accustomed to taking advice from the printed page." (Starr, 137). Booster literature attracts wealth and ensures that wealth remains imbricated with specific social patterns and infrastructural behaviors.

The booster promises of an idyllic, recreational, leisurely life premised on the efficiency of scientific horticultural networks allow whiteness to include the traditional notion of masculine self-sufficiency shared by colonizers of the Americas for generations. However, the breathless praise for the yeoman farmer's educational stature to appreciate the wisdom of his privileged access shifts this racialization to strive for a transgenerational and immediate network of

transmission that resists the interruption of revolt or unprecedented climatic conditions. Booster literature seduces with this particular promise: a racial paradise that melds timeless georgic beauty with advanced technological and industrial acumen. This alchemy creates not just a poetic ideal. It forges a reinforcing feedback loop where self-sufficient and dominant white men can instantaneously perfect that ideal down to the minutia of fertilizer selection and grafting technique.

By no means did an ideological focus on civilizational progress exhaust the extent of boosterism's preoccupations or serve as its exclusive and sole concern. This genre extensively innovated because it could articulate that the capital's movement cannot advance without complementary overtures to racial habits and affects. Consequently, booster literature that exalts the ease of California prosperity establishes a precedent that the crisis of non-circulating capital must always seek resolution through racial appeals.

Historian William Deverell highlights this dynamic with his scrutiny of the significant turn-of-the-20th-century booster event, La Fiesta de Los Angeles. This parade encapsulates several influential features of emergent Anglo racialization: the profit motive and martial order. Conceived as a strategy through which "The city, the city's merchants, and the city's goods could all be boosted through the vehicle of pageantry and spectacle, with a healthy dollop of history tossed into the mix" (Deverell, 53) the parades, floats, and associated advertising blitz proceeded with military order. Deverell proceeds, "From [organizer] Meyberg's title of 'Director General,' down to the slips of paper—'circular orders' from headquarters—detailing directions to various Fiesta planners (slips which looked and read like battlefield dispatches), the Fiesta had very much the overtones of a military reenactment" (Derverell, 54). Outside the violent enforcement of racial hierarchies, in which Anglos could demand the presentation and spectacle of the city's various ethnic enclaves (frequently misrepresenting or fabricating aesthetics and traditions) and discursively solidify their supremacy as marshals and managers exploiting difference for increased financial investment, the Fiesta remains revelatory for its modeling of whiteness as a heuristic that collapsed capitalism and civilization until the two concepts became indistinguishable.

Considering La Fiesta, and the countless copycat publications that leveraged its aesthetic preoccupations into tourist and real estate booms, scholars can grasp how emergent California whiteness attempted a tripartite justificatory maneuver. This incipient racial reformulation performed racial mastery through the regulated adoption of racial Otherness, disseminating this supposedly reviving naturalism through industrial communication technologies and finally codifying the insurance of capitalist value via constant racial intrusions reaccumulating primitivism shielded and made palatable by the ligaments of engineering and transmission mechanisms. This emphasis on both racial innovation and popular accounting glaringly appears in infamous regional promoter Charles Fletcher Lummis's rhetoric and publishing prowess, as for Lummis "The Fiesta marked an important racial and cultural transition […] in that it showed that Anglo Saxons could take recreational advantage of the open space and warm weather of the Southwest. As Lummis had stated before, by utilizing the cultural traditions of the region's Mexicans, Anglos could move racially forward themselves by displaying an uncharacteristic playfulness in the out-of-doors." (Deverell, 79). Deverell sagely suggests that Lummis articulates a regionally distinct—and critically, more evolved and advanced—racial form for whiteness.

Anglos most palpably defined their position atop the eugenic pyramid through an idiosyncratic constellation of media: booster celebration and the subsequent publications that tether this pageantry to the quotidian expression of South California Anglo life. Lummis suggests

that the unique opportunity of California as an American state remains its proximity to *and simultaneous* barrier against the affective pleasantries of an idyllic "natural" and "primitive" (that is, thoroughly racialized) existence to increase salubriousness in moderation. While Deverell outlines the racial precepts so thoroughly and obtusely contained in booster literature, his remarks prefigure a requirement to approach booster literature and its constant emphasis on white pleasure as a novel infrastructural and mediated form of white racialization.

Booster literature should be reconceived not merely as a white supremacist advertising campaign but as a locus for an emergent imperial whiteness. This nascent racial form appealed to proximity, saturation, and above all, purity through selective communication and movement networks. Strategic denigration and surveillance of marginalized communities (meant to guarantee their subservience) stoked the reenactment, selective and often anachronistic appropriation, and projection of racialized virtues and vices by white bodies that appealed to resonate cultural fantasies. The boosters in parades and publications could thus clarify whiteness as intimate with wilderness yet assuredly inoculated. They imagined a new racialization through not just its pervasive domination able to mimic racialized Others, but also the requirement to establish preferred networks to share, commiserate, and thus legitimate this parody.

The specifically California booster vision of Sutter Basin reveals whiteness's obsession with vanquishing crisis and how concern for fluctuation, both seasonally and intergenerationally, is a paramount anxiety for this racialization. The Company's hawkers associate their efforts at inexhaustible boosterism with the elusive fortitude the Basin would foster: "It would be possible to continue indefinitely about Sutter Basin. Agricultural writers have found it productive in news as well as in food for mankind. The meat of the story, however, is in our slogan: 'THE LAST OF THE FAMOUS RIVER BOTTOM LANDS' for Sutter Basin if the last great body of alluvial soil, complete with irrigation, in the Sacramento Valley to be prepared for the settler." ("'The Last of the Famous River Bottom Lands' Complete With Irrigation Are Ready for the Settler"). The Basin's backers offer a vague temporal promise through their embellished promotional materials. Unsurprisingly, the advertisers characterize their offer as 'meaty,' evoking Armour's credentials, a suitably masculine white Western diet, and animal husbandry mastery in one evocative figurative phrase.

The pitch begins with a firm reminder to the potential homesteader that this is their "LAST," ultimate, and final chance to engage in Manifest Destiny. They have carved out a special pocket where the settler pioneer dreams of seventy years prior can still be realized. However, they also equate the grandiose horticultural potency of the alluvial soil—rich enough for "mankind" -- with the proliferation of enthusiastic portrayals of this land. The boosters analogize the two; Sutter Basin breeds crops simultaneously with invigorating discussion. The sociality of the latter, although prompted mainly by personal accounts, is "possible to continue indefinitely" and is definitively "productive in news." The temporal shift takes the scarcity of limited agricultural property to lure in the settler. However, it then guarantees that the community will produce indefinitely because its abundance and quality have been "prepared"—properly managed to instill capitalist values—thus ceaselessly generating proper, welcoming, and celebrated sociality.

The form this sociality will take is decidedly white. Indeed, this publicity relies on circular logic. Only respectable decorum can activate soil fertility, which paradoxically will naturally issue forth from the rich earth's innate, universal potential. This dynamic illustrates a critical and confounding feature of whiteness. Whiteness relies on proximity to untapped nature to realize its growth—an untapped nature racialized as primitive and savage and mediated

through Blackness (Asaka). Despite this encounter catalyzing civilizational propriety, whiteness needs to expunge the savage influence from its midst to survive. Thus, like capital itself, whiteness is prone to crisis. It must continually find a balance between the wildness of the land, including the people induced to work it, and an ascetic purity achieved by isolation and separation.

Sutter Basin attempted equilibrium through a desire to balance globalized modernity with a mythical agrarian heritage. They righteously proclaim, "The owners of Sutter Basin wish their property to become a region of homes. They believe the soil is too rich and fertile to farm on a big scale. The individual farmer, owning his place, can get so much more out of the soil." ("'The Last of the Famous River Bottom Lands' Complete With Irrigation Are Ready for the Settler"). As this passage reveals with the aside "owning his place," gendered self-possession is vital to this endeavor. White forms of social organization—a heteronormative patriarchal unit founded on private property and industriousness—emerge as the elixir that can approach the wilderness to extract and reap its energetic fervor but continue to maintain the control associated with modernity and progress.

Sutter Basin's clear allocation of a massive budget to lure viewers through media maximizing fantastic projection—photography and the landscape visual field more broadly—demands particular attention. According to Sutter Basin's promotional brochures, the alluring prospects of the crop grasped from "out of the soil" are not limited to fruits, nuts, or grain. In a display that comes directly before the conglomerate confidently pronounces that "Sutter Basin Co. Believes in Scientific Agriculture and Co-Operation," a euphemism here for subdivision and property management, the venture winds capitalism's promises with the reassurance of white reproduction's ability to forestall economic cataclysm. Rather than solely pledging high returns through plentiful nutrients and an ideal climate, infrastructurally scaled to revitalize population centers, the publicists symbolize the seductiveness of agribusiness commodities as akin to primal urges of sexual gratification.

fig. 5

In particular, they figure the peach as both financial boon and feminine fecundity. They pair intricately posed glamorous scenes of young white women directly after relaying a statistic about quantity and transportation, extolling how "About 70,000 tons of canning peaches are produced annually. Nearly all of these are used in canneries located at Marysville, Sacramento, San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose, all within easy reach by rail, river, and motor truck." ("California Gold," 8). The authors seek to establish the bona fides that the market demands and the factory capacity and logistical acumen to fulfill potential customers with tremendous rewards. However, they then immediately conflate peaches with women's bodies in an attempt to show that

not only will family farming provide for the grower, the processing sector, and ultimately the land speculator and improver, but that these business pursuits also stimulate white reproduction and potency.

Initially, the suggestiveness of the images is facetious. Staged portrayals slyly incorporate feminine farmhands who carefully look straight into the camera, unlike the male laborers. The captions on these portraits on the same page as the above accounting leave a slight ambiguity about where the viewer should direct their gaze: “All Sutter County peaches are fine.” Revealingly, the appellation of the women as “peaches” is consistent in the text, indexing femininity even after worktime has ceased and leisurely canoe recreation on the river has commenced transforming the farmhands into “Sutter County peaches on Feather River.” (figs. 5 & 6).

The woman descending a ladder after harvesting peaches holds two bushels, and an illustrated grapevine graphically encircles and supports her weight in a unique bit of classical allusion. The graphic designers muddle desire over the harvest and desire for patriarchal dominance. They suggest that this mode of agricultural production, predicated on modern engineering and speculative investment, offers the comforts and reassurance of “traditional” family values. The visuals, however, display the unbridled vigor of the new settlement through subtle reconfigurations of gendered patterns and costume, yet consistently tamper any carnality through a continual recourse to home, family, and tranquil white community.

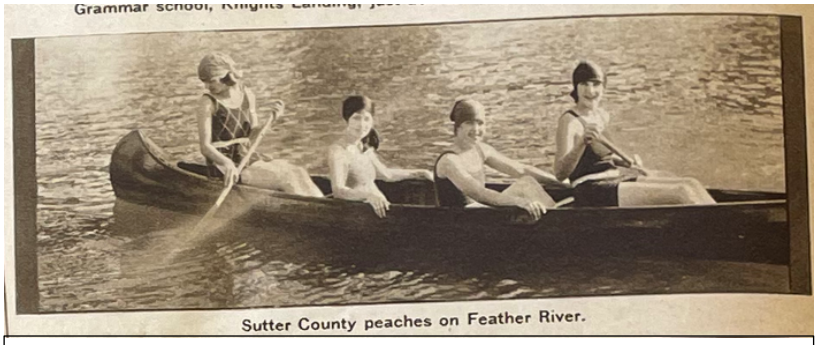

fig. 6

While she dons work boots and slacks, she has tied her hair back with a lustrous silk scarf, merging delicacy with frontier grit. Ultimately, like the farmhand suspended on a grapevine, the photographer and graphic designer of the booster tract attempt to carefully balance the vowed prospects of Sutter Basin. They celebrate women settlers for their scintillating buoyancy and gritty tenacity, collapsing their existence to that of a culinary indulgence. The publishers also knit white masculinity to technocratic and financial prudence and precision, ensuring that uninhibited vigor could provide energy for renewal while submitting to temperance and management.

In the stylized tableau "Loading peaches in Sutter County" (fig. 7), infrastructure and circulation serve as the bulwark that captures and maintains vitality to spur growth and avoid catastrophe. The central focus of the scene once again features the fusing of womanhood with fresh comestibles. This time, a flatbed truck dominates the viewer's sightline, loaded with fruits packaged neatly in crates and women perched atop packaged in "proper" dresses and shoes. Both have been curbed and made presentable by the operations of the market. The principal designation of the action of the portrait, "Loading," would be fundamentally *disrupted* by these figures unless they were intentionally placed there as a marketing demonstration. Surrounding the cadre is a buzz of activity: a mule team, wagons, and trailers laden with nearly uncountable boxes all are drawn into the distance out of frame by the extended striation of the railroad. The

seemingly boundless promise of infinite boxcars emerging from the left of the image stops at a railroad crossing sign directly to the women's rear, denoting that the presence of the latter is encouraged by the reach of the former. Following sequentially to the viewer's right, a row of oaks evoking natural abundance forms a chevron with the boxcars, culminating in the pleasant pitch of a house's roof.

Although the objectifying equation of young white women's bodies with ripe fruit is conspicuous, this baseness is technically (if implausibly) deniable in the pages on crop yields. Any delicacy around this allusion is cast aside and made explicit in an ensuing pictorial spread of Sacramento Valley recreation. Returning to this transparent amalgamation that parallels the commodification of water, agricultural fecundity, and sexual desire, a canoe full of four women in bathing suits, all donning silk head scarves identical to the picker a few pages previous, float along above the caption "Sutter County peaches on Feather River." ("California Gold," 14). This time literal feminine buoyancy can promote a harvest when no fields, crops, or orchards are visible. This image's entire field of vision, outside the women grinning toward the camera, is the aqueous expanse of the Feather River.

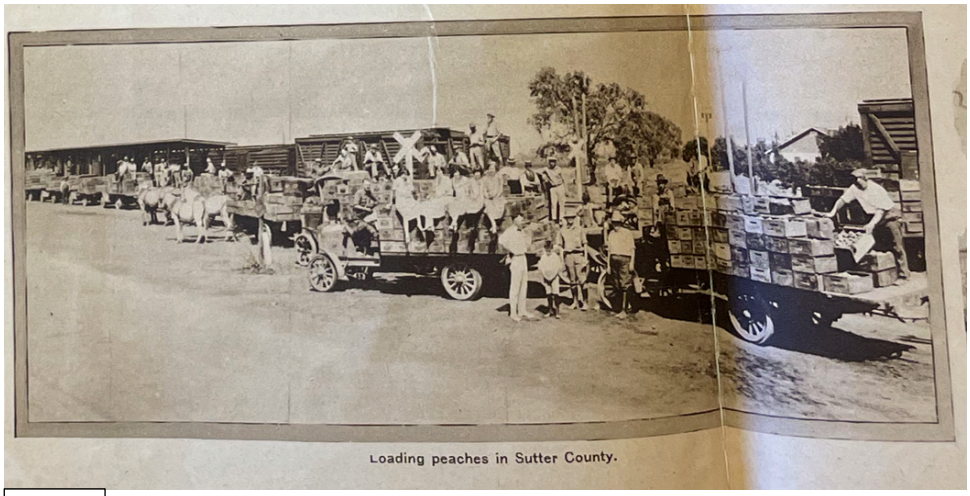
Loading peaches in Sutter County.

fig. 7

In addition to the obvious appropriative allusions to tamed indigeneity through their choice of pleasure watercraft, the snapshot of friends cast as fruit reveals the mechanics of Armour's promise. For the financier, this land would bear viable commodities and, more significantly, a ceaselessly renewable mode of white social reproduction. Produce and domesticity coincide in their tantalizing capacity and submission to technical might. The substance that supports both of these endeavors is the tight control of unregulated and temperamental California water. This effort promises to make this most tempestuous of resources behave according to Western civilization's desires—both at home and abroad.

Hydrological control and management in Sutter Basin were functions of technical innovation, appropriate communication, and impressive punctuality. The company fantasized about a water cycle that proceeded like clockwork and inspired modern methods of clear settler dialogue. Describing the project's scope, Armour boasted of the tract's size and modern machinery alongside its well-lubricated and prompt administration. Sutter Basin's apparatus tended to crops and organizational fluidity founded on routine and unambiguous scientific speech. Armour enthused how "'It's really a miracle agricultural section. Wonderful crops are grown. The tract is 20 miles long and 7 miles wide. […] There will be no scarcity of water for irrigating the land, and ditches have been arranged so that the land is thoroughly drained. One of the largest pumping and storage plants for water has been installed. All one has to do is phone for water and it will be turned on at once." ("Sutter Basin Land Wins Support of J. Ogden Armour").

Sutter Basin envisioned a countryside in which the infallibility of electrical current compressed seasonal vicissitude and uncertain fluctuation into a function as uniform as the turning of gears. Armour enlarges the scale of the telephone beyond a social utility or business tool; a phone call is now a method of regulating natural processes. The farmer's home will be a site of domestic bliss and the command center of a new nervous system for the Valley's waterways.

The firm's promotional materials serve additional duty as a pedagogical tool to normalize and provide a proof of concept for a multiscalar whiteness buoyed by modern telecommunications and scientific management. Before the project's establishment, the international import of a purportedly tranquil agriburb manifested in the reputation and resumes of the engineering department Armour and his associates assembled. The file of job inquiries collected by former City Engineer of Sacramento George N. Randle, his presence as the chief designer a testament to Sutter Basin's self-aware positioning as inheritor of a colonial legacy refurbished with advanced methods, is awash with prospects eager to apply.

The prospects all salivate at the chance to refine imperial infrastructural experience gleaned from across a burgeoning Pacific domain. W.J. Martin bases his reputation on fieldwork of "seven years with the U.S. Government, resigning in July of this year. For four years I was chief assistant to District Engineer W.B. Clapp in charge of water-supply work in California, then was transferred to Hawaii where I was in charge for three years." ([Letter to Mr. Geo. N. Randle, Sacramento, Cal. from W.J. Martin]). The interplay between California as a port complex and maritime outposts for fuel, commodities, and markets is well documented by Martin's oscillation between the mainland and Kingdom deposed two decades earlier. Hopeful Charles Bradshaw, drafting his manuscript on letterhead while aboard the S.S. Shinyo Maru, derived his credentials from an even more recent imperial endeavor, as he wrote "enroute [sic] home from the Philippines where I have been in the gov't. service for nearly four years on irrigation works." ([Letter to Mr. Geo. N. Randle, Sacramento, Cal. from Chas. Bradshaw]).

Both of these men considered their experience in colonial administration not only tangentially relevant to reclamation for homesteads in the Sacramento Valley but implicitly understood its direct relevance. Jessica B. Teisch fastidiously characterizes this class of international engineering contractors, among whom a stint in California was standard. She defines them as inspired by "the idea of universal progress [that] took on different permutations around the world." This ideology enabled "the Age of the Engineer" with "unparalleled opportunities for itinerant engineers, who traded variations of this dream. Expertise that began in one region moved to others via modern transportation and communication systems." (Teisch, 9). Sutter Basin was not as lauded an engineering project as the Panama Canal and received no major world exhibition to flex its accomplishment. What this project elucidates, however, is that the "Age of the Engineer" accomplished a technocratic rescaling of capitalist risk and state development to the domestic sphere. Whiteness as engineering could perfect both of these concerns through a well-regulated, infinitely predictable market. To keep this commerce steady and farmers content, experts could simulate rainfall with the push of a few buttons.

Crisis: Bonded Permanence through Saintly Debt

Despite the blusterous hubris claiming a divine mantle for its international cadre of engineer's capability to accurately and decidedly command nature, Sutter Basin came to contend with a market as capricious as the Sierra weather. Armour leveraged his personal wealth due to his firm commitment to speculative financing's capacity to civilize backwaters through a dispersed network of engineers equipped with knowledge from elite outposts of reasoned and

empirical technical expertise. Unlike previous settlers like the Livermores, who grappled with arbitrary torrents of melting snowpack and torrential downpours, Armour wrestled with a fluid and transitional imperial order capitalizing on one global crisis while breeding another massive restructuring.

Fittingly, Armour's biographers relied on a folkloric meteorological symbol to criticize his unwavering credence in private funding's potency. Akin to a beguiled treasure hunter, "in 1913, J.O. Armour organized the Sutter Basin Company, with $6,000,000 capital stock. In 1922, the gold still was just beyond the rainbow, and it issued $7,500,000 bonds which as an act of faith, J.O. Armour signed. […] He guaranteed those bonds, principal and interest. During the life of the project, it cost him about $17,000,000." (Leech and Carroll 353). The financier's reputation matched the massive capital reserves in the form of his stock in a wildly successful meatpacking enterprise. His land office solicited interest with photographs of Hilgard Hall at UC Berkeley (the contemporaneous Agricultural Department of the state university) flanked by a neat and symmetrical vineyard and assurances that "Experimental work is being carried on in nearly every division. The results of these investigations are extended to the people of the State through the Extension Division [the University Farm, now UC Davis] and by members of the staff." ("California Gold," Ten). While the stature of sanctioned state educational institutions promised stability and early direction of variance for the crops, Armour's word would prove far less reliable an indicator of the winds of economic change.

Sutter Basin's course drifted significantly from its intended, quite tempting reckoning. Initially, Armour's lands claimed a unique virtuousness. The exaggerated booster tracts and placid lithographs oriented Sutter Basin as an exceptional inheritor to California's hydrological ingenuity and agricultural fecundity. However, Armour's venture fully transmogrified horticultural splendor into a firmly and nationally financialized spectacle. While Leland Stanford's Vina or Natomas Consolidated's Nimbus vineyards represented massive capitalization gleaned from stockholders and bond issues, they still involved Californian owners contracting labor to work their land at an industrial scale. Sutter Basin further abstracted this arrangement. Armour desired alfalfa sprouting from former swampy inundations, but he planned to achieve this through speculative investment alone. He divorced the capital from the countryside and, in the process, ironically emphasized the dynamic interaction within California agribusiness between the fertility of the land and the gentility of the investment financing plowing.

"California Gold," the most resplendent and sleek of Sutter Basin's advertising literature, adeptly conjoined these two desires in its panegyric on Armour's motivation. Its prose seamlessly threads between wasteland transformation ("where none grew before") and capital accumulation ("derive some benefit from the venture"). Michael Ralph, expanding William Pietz's notion of the "forensics of capital," explains that this merger is a hollowed tradition in colonial financialization. He recounts how "Since at least the seventeenth century, governance in North Atlantic polities has in large measure been predicated on techniques for discerning the character of a person, or nation, based on forensic evidence and with translating consensus on these assessments into supposedly value-neutral genres of social standing (for individuals)" (Ralph, 36). In Sutter Basin's case, the forensics would include crop yields and Armour's individual stake. This stake was not merely financial backing. In its appeals to investors, the company muddled the money of the bond's private guarantee with the reputation of Armour himself. This admixture concurs with the dynamic Ralph showcases. Recursively, investors could only derive or confirm the source of Armour's wealth through his legitimacy, and the presence of reserves

proved that legitimacy. I now transition to a discursive analysis of Sutter's shifting economic fortunes, and analyze this narrative for its reaffirmation of whiteness's bulwark against disaster.

In assessing Armour's credibility, Multiple dynamics increasingly drift closer together until they are nearly substitutable. His character, social standing, and fortune vacillate and reinforce one another. His financial might also bleeds into the foundational faith in the market to materially transform the order of nature. The Sutter Basin Company, when appealing for the sanctity of its bonds, symbolized the bonds as tokens of Armour's integrity. They did so by recounting Armour's risk in resolving crisis, intoning how "One instance which shows the broad-gauged character of the man occurred in 1914 when […] The Chicago Board of Trade was on the verge of a panic, and threatened to close. Armour stepped into the breach, said to keep the exchange open at any cost, and any firm whose solvency was threatened by inability to realize on its assets would be taken care of through personal loans from himself." ("J. Ogden Armour"). Value here operates in two distinct registers. His bookkeepers can assess Armour's value quantitatively, but he attests his allegiance to the market by ceaselessly lending it his riches and his belief. By stepping "into the breach," Armour's faith extended the legitimacy of the Board while simultaneously justifying and legitimizing Armour's wealth. He furthered its reach through his commitment to exchange and thus proved he deserved to master circulation's dynamics through the purity of his moral pledge to capital.

The consecration of steadfast commitment to exchange as the source of plenty was not new when Armour deployed it to rationalize Sutter Basin bonds' value. Ralph explains that practitioners have long imbued the very mechanics of capital exchange with a saintly aura. He emphasizes the forensic technologies that elevate themselves to supposedly universally rational and applicable status. Bookkeepers justified one of the fundamental capitalist technologies, the ledger, as an indispensable character witness and a holy expression of capitalism's divinity. He explains, "More than a mere method of keeping exchange in order, double-entry bookkeeping was a tactic for demonstrating the virtue of the merchant who prepared the books. A diligent account was equated with an earnest, noble merchant during a time when commerce was conceived as a secular version of divine grace. Here numbers spoke a divine truth rendered into numerals by God's most diligent earthly scribes." (Ralph, 40).

This analysis resonates with other interventions, like Amy Kaplan's, arguing that critics must apprehend Western settlement across scales. Kaplan's formative contention that the "rhetorics of Manifest Destiny and domesticity share a vocabulary that turns imperial conquest into spiritual regeneration in order to efface internal conflict or external resistance in visions of geopolitical domination as global harmony" (Kaplan, 588) melds supposedly pious territorial ambition with the rituals and chores of quotidian concerns to emphasize the profundity of colonialism's impact on the U.S. psyche. While her invaluable contribution focuses on women's construction of the domestic sphere as a traveling beacon of purity sutured to military campaigning, considering this insight alongside Ralph's description of accounting's elevation foregrounds the necessity of canonizing particular modes of trade, investment, and financial maneuvering within racial capitalism. A subject's adherence to prescribed behavioral modes can crucially extend influence past their death by modeling rectitude and establishing a legacy.

Like many hagiographies, J. Ogden Armour's demise was swift and, by standards of avariciousness, totally tragic. A sensational tome that blends a celebratory biography of founder Philip Danforth Armour with somewhat scandalous corporate melodrama, *Armour and His Times*, merges the fate of the younger Armour with the obstinance and intransigence of the

California interior. The cautionary tale suggests the cyclical recurrence of the allure of untapped potential:

> That land which had taken the best years of the life of John Sutter and paid him a net result of despair, still carried its mirage of riches. After it received water enough, at infrequent times, the richness of its vegetation gave promise that it had reformed and would be a mine of green wealth. In the parching heat of its droughts it became a dry hell. Once that land had water, Ogden Armour was told, through irrigation, it was to blossom as the rose, and bear fruit in dividends. (Leech and Carroll 353)

The authors define pain and pleasure, plenty and destitution, through hydrological imagery and reliable Western mythology. Akin to the spectral forty-niner transforming into the respectable gentleman horticulturalist on the cover of "California Gold," the "mirage" of roses and fruits directly compares to the equivalent "promise" of the legendary mineral frenzy harvesting and catalyzing Pacific seaboard imperial outposts.

Like the warning in the Biblical account of Eden, this devious paradise also contained an internal path to downfall: the hell of drought's unreliable water flow. The rhetorical form of this dire, ominous portent maintains the necessity of balance as the cornerstone of whiteness. Latent potential for return, the hallmark of underdevelopment, cast an alluring trance over Armour. The reference to financial assets and figures—Sutter's being "paid a net result of despair" and the possibility of extensive "dividends"—as well as the assurance purportedly to be found "through irrigation" indicate the criteria that may have redeemed the venture. Through the virtue of restrained management and careful surveillance, perhaps the land could be regulated. However, the authors' immediate shift between "a mine of green wealth" and "a dry hell" decries the Sacramento Valley for its most sinful defect: irregularity.

Akin to the uniformity of abstract time, the Sacramento River would need to find measured predictability for Armour to triumph. Instead, the waterway's fickleness would constitute Armour's existence unconditionally and thus become a corporeal concern. The draw of reclaimed acres "was to become his worst headache. With great resources, he was persuaded that he could conquer the Sutter Basin in California." (Leech and Carroll 353). The takeaway from Leech and Carroll's exposé relies upon this amalgamation of man and landscape within the rubric of conquest. Armour's resources would be necessary for the managerial expertise and heavy equipment appropriate for a modern venture. By mingling his destiny (and cranial health) with the bottomlands, Armour's tribulations morph into another version of the Chicago Board of Trade anecdote. While he may not have weathered a personal crisis brought on by inadvisable investment, his ordeal contradictorily demonstrates whiteness's ability to rescue systematic exchange through obdurate infrastructure's concretization of civilizational value.

Key to this redemption tale is the temporal context of Armour's venture accruing unpayable debt, which submerged its levees under figurative water. Fittingly, this stockman who pioneered slaughter's industrialization overleveraged his finances due to previously unknown levels of human death enabled by industrialized warfare. Initially, during World War I, government contracts for meat to serve soldiers fighting in Europe fattened Armour's enterprise. This geopolitical crisis instigated by a faltering system of imperialism beset by increasing hinterland friction revealed the logistical acumen of the American military as reliant on corporate alliances. Business campaigns and technologies to rein in the frontier and transform, elongate,

and vault Chicago cattle's purview across the countryside via transcontinental railroads forged the strategies and supply lines for the United States' successful transnational military campaign.

Much like his unwavering faith in scientific agronomy and the mythic lush resplendence of California soil, Armour pledged himself too staunchly to the boon of nascent U.S. imperial wartime capacity. He overestimated the scale of the war and, in the fashion of many previous speculators, found himself swapping a bellicose crisis for an economic conundrum: overaccumulation. His biographers solemnly recount how "The wartime demand faded. Governments cancelled contracts and threw their surplus stocks on the market for whatever they would bring. Prices of live stock and meat dropped." ("Armour a Leader in Vast Growth of Meat Packing"). While an imperialist war solved one accumulatory crisis, forging a regime of "first world" cooperation and sea neutrality to stabilize exchange, state withdrawal bred another. Not only did Armour expect the state to continue to funnel funds from its coffers toward his factories to satiate foreign intervention. The federal government became a direct competitor when it flooded the market to rid itself of surplus and transition back to a peacetime economy.

The First World War ushered in the "American Century" by revealing the fault lines in an imperial system of domination and extraction that had reigned for the previous long century, inheriting colonial capacities as its foundation. Much like that earlier epochal shift, the initial states of the U.S. rise as a premier world power proved extremely volatile not just for businesses engaged in trade colliding with a market reeling from the government manipulation of offloading redundant military equipment, including rations. This shock resonated into fundamental propertied structures whose value accrued due to their liminal interlinkage with the transit of commodities. The promise of California sunshine was not immune from these downstream effects. While seamless integration into transit networks and resource caches enabled Armour to compress the time necessary to dismantle cows, widen the scope of their eventual delivery, and thus maximize return, this same diversification proved his undoing when the global conflict greased up its gears.

The extent of his loss is still staggering, as "J.O. Armour, once the American who made the most money in the least time, is known in Chicago's LaSalle Street now as the 'man who lost a million dollars a day'—and it is believed that there were 150 of those days. The Sutter Basin project went sour. The value of unprecedented inventories shrunk." (Leech and Carroll 355). While his misfortunes' primary cause remained the 'unprecedented inventories,' rapidly depreciating land-- only viable due to costly technological fixes-- catalyzed Armour's descent into the muck spewed from this burst bubble. A solution based on fixed capital withdrawal was impossible. That capital remained interleaved with firm state infrastructural interventions only rationalized by their public safety appeal.

Armour could no longer ride the allure of potential return to sell portions of reclaimed land to finance the dehydration of other sectors, as "With the depression in farm lands, the millions invested in his California reclamation project were frozen and still the project called for more money." ("Armour's Body to Arrive Friday at New York"). The streamlining of homesteading and its modernization with industrial appliances seemed inevitable before the war's outbreak. The downturn in farm plots indicates that this fundamentally settler colonial endeavor, albeit one overhauled with precise and predictable measurement, now balked in the face of an emergent reality. The United States no longer needed to extract solely from its hinterland. It could now rely on stable, secure oceangoing vessels to advance whiteness with raw materials from abroad (Cowen), secured in automated suburban enclaves back home.

The balanced whiteness Sutter Basin's mechanically enhanced gentleman growers propounded now seemed more astutely ensured by interoperable global infrastructure codified by military and commercial might. Armour was left unable to sell mortgages, bogged down by overproduced meat, overleveraged stock, and overpromised domesticity. However, a fascinating contrast emerges from this crisis and reorganizational model. Suppose decidedly settler colonial rule modified its tenets to find more resilient surety in an equilibrated imperial dominion founded on logistical infrastructure securitizing exchange. Would regional infrastructure, a patently less significant but still vital node in these systems, retain its contributions to whiteness's concrete value in local supply chains? In other words, could Armour's promise of locally establishing a racial outpost realize a return (albeit a more modest one_ through its alignment with and as a blueprint for the massive ordering project of a global civilization oriented towards constant commodification and ceaseless flow?

The family biography *Armour and His Times* authors named the chapter recounting Sutter Basin's bust "He Lost a Million a Day." Besides a sensational cautionary tale, this title indicates the rhetorical field that prompted Armour to grow his fortunes alongside alfalfa in reclaimed river bottom lands. As an agricultural settlement meant to divert a river and subvert a natural floodplain, Sutter Basin relied on both temporal and monetary promises. Mechanized reclamation was an endeavor to secure a future for the individual grower, Armour and his allied capitalists, and California through a controlled hydrological lifeline. Of course, this would not come to fruition. The predicate of the verb clause demonstrates the dramatic reversal of fortune that would define Armour's death, but the object and manner of that loss also suggest the stakes of the venture: "a million a day" is a rate of loss. Not only is value evaporating, but the emphasis on a rate supposes an ongoing catastrophe. This statement is a singular value judgment. We realize the ineptitude of the venture due to its shocking inability to accumulate wealth to ensure circulation, but also how it collapses future exchange pathways. The turning of the calendar serves as the medium that communicates Armour's ineptitude. Ultimately, time's slow betrayal of his valuation makes J. Ogden Armour such a remarkable failure. Sutter Basin was not a single crash. An ongoing quagmire drained his worth and limited his avenues for escape.

Imprint: Propriety Everlasting

However, this story decidedly does *not* end in a tragic mode. It concludes as more of a farce. The Sutter Basin debacle initially existed as a spectacle in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, luridly documenting how the widowed Lolita Sheldon Armour and her daughter faced millions worth of claims against the family fortune. The final entries, however, dramatically swing to a redemption arc for the deceased magnate. J. Ogden Armour's quixotic quest for Central Valley farmland would finally provide for his family. The *Tribune* exclaimed with some astonishment how the widow was to receive a "Windfall from Packer's Venture in Oil." The tycoon had chased a tip about a previously worthless oil extraction technique that had now come to the attention of Standard Oil. Initiated due to his intense debts, Lolita Sheldon Armour made a loan to her husband that he secured with this speculative venture. She sympathetically accepted this speculative shot in the dark in return for crucial bridge capital, which now paid significant dividends: over seven million dollars' worth.

The *Tribune* calculated just how wise an investment this was: "In 1926, Mrs. Armour loaned her husband $1,000,000 which he needed to fulfill an obligation in connection with his Sutter basin project in the west and he gave her the stock as security. Her loan has thus yielded more than 800 per cent in four years." ("$8,216,000 to Mrs. Armour"). Of course, J. Ogden Armour's proclivity for risky investment had already cost Lolita dearly. The *Wall Street*

Journal recounted several years before how she forfeited collateral, including "about 70% of the Armour common stock, which consists of 2,000,000 shares of A stock and 2,000,000 shares of B stock (both issues of $25 par value)" alongside "$6,165,000 (including interest) of unencumbered reclamation assessment warrants" owned by the Sutter Basin Co. ("Armour Settlement Finally In Sight"). This extreme profligacy transformed radically into a moralizing tale about a wife's commitment to her troubled husband and her shrewd instinct to retain faith in the West's technologically fetishistic capitalist insiders: regarding "Mrs. Armour's purchase from her husband of Universal Oil Products stock" of which she "indicates […] no present intention of turning this stock over to the estate to satisfy creditors, and also that its present rated value is not as high as has been estimated in some quarters." ("Armour Settlement Finally In Sight"). This latter statement is either an exceptionally fortuitous underestimate or a keen misdirection owing to private, privileged access.

This anecdote squarely fits in the U.S. archetype of a risky venture capitalist seeming misguided or even loony, only to be redeemed by unbelievable visionary foresight. However, I want to consider the mogul's morality tale alongside his previous inspiration "to cause blades of grass to grow on a large scale where none grew before." The ironic case that Armour's diversified interest in an extractive mining process, causing increased pollution and degradation, would salvage his cultivation of idealized georgic farmsteads aligns with the fate of the landscape under development. While Sutter Basin would not succeed as a real estate venture, it would emerge from crisis as the infrastructure of transportation, commodification, and privatization would allow a civilizational doctrine of whiteness to flourish despite the vicissitudes of capital.

Armour's efforts demonstrate that capitalism's territorializing efforts are determinedly temporal. A framework like sovereignty encapsulates this dynamic quite well. A settler colony appeals to Western juridical frameworks to control resources; it also appeals to a transcendent permanence to justify its intrusions. Settlers seek to remake temporal regimes, from everyday habits to geological trends, as much as they desire to map and delineate sovereignty's boundaries. Capitalism's relation to time, to return to Postone's intervention, involves abstracting commodities from the natural rhythms of their generative processes. This particular political economy also involves marshaling personal accumulation in the service of a perennial timekeeping order, distinguished by its ability to exist alongside but independent of any particular epoch.

This system promises returns only when ventures propagate its underlying segmentation and hierarchization of human' progress.' Manu Karuka examines this dynamic in a case study of a primary agent of transformation of temporal revolution in the Western U.S. He charges, "Investors on colonial railroads invested in more than the futures of railroad corporations. They invested in the futures of colonialism." (Karuka, 42). The designation of "futures" here explicitly links the tendency towards insatiable growth and the promise of civilizational imperishability. The only guarantee for the future of the former is the certainty of the endurance of colonialism and its many offspring.

While Sutter Basin would fade into ignominy, unable to deliver the first portion of Karuka's equation, their infrastructural model of efficiently taming underlying natural processes allowed for the legacy of the Basin to blossom long after its capital had dehydrated. The subjugation of the Sacramento River achieved by private dredgers allowed "blades of grass to grow" on these river bottoms, despite the personnel shift in the realtors from whom growers

purchased plots. The capitalist crisis of Armour's fortune did not detract from a paternalistic reining in of a river characterized by racial tropes of ineffectualness, indigence, and indolence.

The state plans specifically maligned the waterway, suggesting incarceration to alleviate its shortcomings. The California Debris Commission boasted, "By this plan the river was to be confined between high levees, and relief channels were to be built to accommodate the excess of flood waters that the rivers would not carry." (California Debris Commission). The odd phrase "would not carry" seems to impart a motive of either sloth or impotence towards the river. This deceit would require that military might be overcome, so "In 1910, the California Debris Commission, composed of United States Army Engineers, recommended a plan of flood control. This plan aims to maintain in the Sacramento and Feather rivers a constant flow of water for the purpose of navigation, and also to secure an established flood plane in these and other streams." (California Debris Commission). The Army Corps of Engineers and the Debris Commission disclose their temporal aims in this passage. They intent to "establish" and more crucially "maintain" a "constant flow of water." They directly equate this with security.

We see here the dual desires of racial capitalism. Navigation certainly stimulates commerce. However, a regulated and fathomable stream flow extends beyond any single journey. It allows citizens, companies, and even empires to transfer and exchange this landscape, transcending crisis and transitory overaccumulation. Infrastructure acts like an oil can, embedding specific, accountable, regular temporality into the gears of both private accumulation and state sovereignty whenever they begin to parch.

The Reclamation Board became mired in a controversy that obliquely attests to the tight union between state legitimation and distant market capitalization. These complimentary forces dovetailed under the banner of white civilizational uplift. Aligned with the mandate of the California Debris Commission and eventually backed by federal funding, the Reclamation Board commenced construction on a series of bypasses into which engineers could divert overflow during high water. Sutter Basin owed its existence and any potential profitability to this dramatic and comprehensive overhaul of state policy. The bypasses promised the certainty of a regulated river flow. Predictability allowed dredgers to enclose what was once seasonally inundated overflow tule lands within serviceable levees to farm their alluvial soils profitably. The riskiest and most variable sections of river bottom land (low-laying tracts fed by multiple tributaries subject to flood due to any additional rainfall or diversions further upstream) were also the most fruitful. They provided deep wells of organic matter to burn into potash fertilizer and an impossibly tantalizing market rate.

The initial investment of the consortium underwritten by Armour in the Sutter Basin tract relied upon their highly close and familiar collaboration with the state entity tasked with achieving flood prevention for the Valley. Eventually, a dispute over the Sutter Bypass's course would shed intense light on this unscrupulous level of intimacy. Essentially, the debate erupted when the State Reclamation Board announced plans to shift the location of the bypass.

A bypass consists of two levees restricting the river's flow and overflow lands surrounding those levees to handle inundation during catastrophic deluges. Initially, the Bypass's proposed route would follow the floor of the Sutter Basin itself. This itinerary thus mirrored preexisting topography and proceeded like a giant bowl, sinking to its lowest point centrally. State Flood Control Engineer E.A. Bailey explained the modification when he took credit for and defended the Board's decision: "'The suggestion that Gerber or the Chicago capitalists or any other person connected with the Sutter Basin company suggested the change of the by-pass from the center to the eastern location is not true. It was the other way. I myself suggested the change

in route from the trough of the basin to the eastern rim as the only feasible location." (McClatchy, Ellis, and Bailey). As his refutation indicates, the choice of an eastern course for the bypass—at an elevation up to six feet higher (a crucial concern for parallel levee construction)—was met with jeers and heavy protestations from current landowners on the tule lands encircling the Basin. They charged that Armour not only inappropriately influenced V.S. McClatchy, State Reclamation Board president, but that he was bankrolling legislation to increase his lackey McClatchy's powers.

The consortium of growers, landowners, and their cadre of allied civil engineers traveled to the State Legislature. This squad then made numerous appeals regarding the unscientific and potentially hazardous operations unduly impacted by Armour's cash. They also insinuated much more malevolent and self-interested motives for the parties involved. In a front-page editorialized report on a State Senate Committee on Overflowed and Swamp Lands meeting, *The Tri-Weekly Colusa Sun* accused McClatchy of avaricious motives for the new artery, condemning how "McClathcy [sic] did not state that his reasons for voting as a member of the state reclamation board for the change of the central location to that of the eastern location of the Sutter by-pass, because if the canal or by-pass were located in the center of the reclamation district 1500, it would cut up his land in two parts." The paper elaborated that McClatchy's landholdings remained inextricable from Sutter Basin Company's margins. They elucidated of the now scrapped central location "also that it would cause the promoters of this scheme," denigrated by the *Sun's* editorial board as "the Armour people," "to build one more levee, because they think the land more valuable in the center than on the rim of their holdings" ("Citizens Meet With Senate").

McClatchy responded to the editor's character assassination with a heated correction. His rectification of the record, however, was rather odd and ineffectual. After outlining his landholdings of 6,100, he notes that his interests only include "400 acres in the upper part of the basin lying partly in District 70 and partly to the east of it." ("State Reclamation Board…"). While the imprecision of this final plat is suspicious, I do not intend to prove that McClatchy was engaged in a backroom deal with Armour. Instead, I underscore that regardless of the nature of their dealings, McClatchy maintained massive regional influence and property holdings in a locale that Sutter was sinking a significant expenditure into at personal risk.

Whether the engineering data truly supported a diversion of the bypass's original path or resulted from an obfuscated elite conspiracy, the complaints of local landowners versus outside capital betray just how chummy the eventual alignment of state policy and corporate real estate ventures remained throughout reclamation work. While this may not have been an intentional swindle, state interests coincided with Armour's cadre; the Reclamation Board considered exhaustive capitalization through vertical integration the most efficient and surefire manner to instill white civilization patterns, mores, habits, and customs in what was once the most intractable land in California. They publicly stated as much in their thoroughly circulated rebuttal of any undue sway over the Sacramento River's course.

Interestingly, the Board's self-assured and confident refutation invoked the threat's temporality to deny situated accusations. They referred to a persistent societal issue to supersede any squabbling over the particulars of a given deal. This sleight of hand allowed them to minimize their involvement in the name of an overarching paean to progress. They contrasted the claims of the impacted independent growers with the cultural significance of their endeavor, thus belittling the former as inconsequential versus the inevitable teleology of settlement: "They have been particularly insistent in charging that those who are now engaged in reclaiming the Sutter

Basin, so as to covert a body of waste land into fertile acres, induced the Reclamation Board to change the location of the Sutter by-pass." (McClatchy, Ellis, and Bailey). By denigrating the land in question as "waste"—itself a temporal designation that indicates a lack of sustained attention, in that once cultivated land always risks reversion without vigilance—the Board implicitly accuses its adversaries of negligence. The experts cast this negligence as thoroughly racialized: Californian Indians substituted in the model for a slovenly and 'savage' "state of nature." While this relied on a complete misrecognition and deprecation of their stewardship, the equation of these white settlements with waste demonstrates that the Board viewed centralized, rationalized, and capitalized technocracy as the prerequisite for futurity in the Valley.

The Reclamation Board's defense fabricated a timescale that legitimized their venture through a menacing timescale. Not only could benchmarks for progress be missed—the landscape could regress into chaos without suitable management. The language of Board Member W.T. Ellis during the debate underscores Armour sympathizers' categorization of the fracas as a dispute over the proper form of regenerative whiteness. Ellis made overtures to legal frameworks to establish that the Board, and by association corporate reclamation efforts, instituted and achieved dominion and guardianship over the river.

The cherry-picked reclamation district was an extended enterprise that modeled white custody of incapable, 'developing' peoples. Ellis proclaimed that "trouble was coming long before the Board was inaugurated, and [...] it was organized to take care of the trouble that was coming. This Board of Reclamation is misunderstood. We should have been called a Board to look out for the rights and interests of the Sacramento River and its tributaries. The Sacramento River demands that because it is physically unable to take care of its own rights." (McClatchy, Ellis, and Bailey). He sets the scene by consistently referencing a vague but inevitable future temporality of crisis. The continued recourse to the past progressive tense, "trouble was coming," hints at a primordial issue with the Valley's landscape.

This inherent flaw can only be remedied, by Ellis's estimation, by looking out for a River unable to access its rights. By casting the waterway as juvenile, a consistently racialized category of ineptitude associated with a "childlike" savagery, Ellis vindicates the Board by inferring that if the Sacramento River cannot take care of its rights, it cannot handle its own being. By suggesting that the Board is merely guarding the watershed's interests, he also implies that only bureaucratic custody, rather than piecemeal landownership, can achieve the proper modality of efficient white stewardship.

Ultimately, this argument reshapes whiteness as an atomistic, self-sufficient proprietorship that sustains structurally coherence and interchangeability with other forms of possession. This whiteness upholds ownership as sacrosanct but reconfigures ownership to include the willingness and ability to exchange through infrastructural cohesion. In a boastful vanity brochure masquerading as unbiased engineering reportage, humbly and inconspicuously titled *The Description of a California Reclamation Project*, the company alludes to the California Debris Commission and its successor with whom it had a dubious relationship. One key feature of their synopsis of the project's worth is its precise fit with State initiatives meant to curb volatility. Under the heading "SYSTEM," the handsomely bound volume illuminated with Craftsman-style illustrations of agricultural production and levee construction condemns how "Heretofore the reclamation of the entire Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys was carried out by private land owners, without control, system or regulation, and without any regard for the rights of other and adjacent land owners, without any definite plan or what might become of waters in subsequent seasons after the reclamation of any particular area." (The Sutter Basin Company, 6).

This complex claim, extending across the horizon beyond "any particular area" and "subsequent seasons," is most assuredly not a socialist diatribe aching for more market regulation by the state. Instead, it appeals to a transformed whiteness that reactivates and reinforces self-possessed initiative through centralized capital and careful, militaristic state management. The consequential impact of the "SYSTEM" is to regulate behavior through the benevolent template of Armour himself, instilling capitalist values concurrently in commodity exchanges and interpersonal relations. The state sanctions the transmission of whiteness across scales, from the imperial mutation of the countryside to the salubriousness of rural living, to rein in behavioral crisis and establish a constant necessity for its bellicose presence.

In the final tally, this social vision strives for a blueprint of balance that endures due to its persistent funneling of capital into speculative locales, interlinked by public transportation mechanisms and private mores recognizable and consistent with colonial aims. Sutter Basin's verbiage detailing its congruence with comprehensive flood control showcases that whiteness here does not just maintain worth within capitalism. It serves as the underlying communicative tissue, a medium through which exchange between violence wielded by the state and the massive accumulation by speculative barons can mutually reinforce and derive legitimacy plus resources from the other.

The company chronicles how its reclamation coheres institutions into a settler social whole, from federal to state to local actors, realizing a proposal derived from "a response to an appeal from all interested." Based on the civilizational merit of reclamation, "the United States government, after thorough examination, presented a general flood control plan which the State of California, through the State Reclamation Board recently created by an act of legislature, is carefully following out." (The Sutter Basin Company, 6-7). Sutter Basin suggests that besides resolving crises of inefficiency and conflicting interest, concerted agglomeration and corporate management united all appeals and resolved communal strife. Their plan not only pacified the populous across class lines— it also promoted professionalization, entrepreneurship, and control. In short, it promoted whiteness.

Sutter Basin aligned itself with increasing specialization among state employees to legitimize the ideal of California governance and demonstrate how behaviors molded by capitalist values reinsured the permanence of the state and market. These behaviors included careful observation, reasoned sharing of detailed data, and above all, precision. Sutter Basin claimed that financialization was congruent with these values and, what is more, that Western empiricism would flounder without the promised rewards of investment. Their elaboration on the methodical labor of engineering instructs the viewer on how "This plan was thought out and recommended by the most eminent engineers after several years of investigation, after gathering the maximum river and stream flow data, and in fact after general and prolonged study of conditions affecting this work. […] all future reclamation districts will not only be more secure but will, when finally completed, insure absolute efficiency." (The Sutter Basin Company, 7). Civilizational tenacity and longevity demand individual attentiveness and ways of seeing particularly relevant natural features. Emotionally attuning white subjects requires an epistemological intervention highlighting peculiar details as unstable and needing monitoring.

Surveyors, ranging from professional hydraulic engineers to family growers escaping to the agriburbs, adopted this form of this surveillance after instruction about nature's *specific features* requiring an eye kept on them—vigilantly. The portions of nature that tend to crisis—here, exaggerated stream flow—leave traces for the initiated. These traces only become valuable when spoken, collated, and shared. Efficiency—mitigating uncertainty and friction—will require

attentiveness across scales. Sutter Basin's capitalization furnishes the foundation that affiliates state, investors, infrastructural engineers, and settlers to this sole purpose. While one of these pillars may fall, ultimately, Sutter Basin suggested that its intervention would accrue civilizational benefits to all affiliates aligned with the project of making blades of grass grow in foreign soil.

Of course, this scrutiny of nature's whims cited recalcitrant ideologies of the "natural" that classified geological phenomena alongside human phenotypes and culture. The vaunted mathematical accuracy of levees and maps coincided frictionlessly with toponyms that reinforced demonized racialized characteristics of people and the racialized solutions required for remediation. Situated on the "Map of Reclamation District No. 1500 Compiled by Sutter Basin Company Engineering Department" (Sutter Basin Engineering Department, figs. 8 & 9) just below Racetrack Bend and Poker Bend is Rough & Ready Landing. Abutting land owned by "F. Claus & Geo. J. Bryte," the surveyors legitimized a denomination embedded deeply in frontier lore. "Rough and Ready" derives from President Zachary Taylor, plantation owner and commander of U.S. forces in expansionist wars against the Seminole people and Mexico. The jingoistic fervor of this title matches the spirit of the ascendant region emerging triumphant from the First World War—the same spirit of optimism that mesmerized Armour. However, its proximity to geographical features named after popular diversions and games of chance among liberated Westerners, as well as its intermingling with ambiguous ethnic and racialized monikers like "Wild Irishman Bend" further south of "Portugese [sic] Bend" showcases how the endeavor of solidifying the basin also shored up, added coherence to, and resolved ambivalent facets of whiteness by literally traversing them.

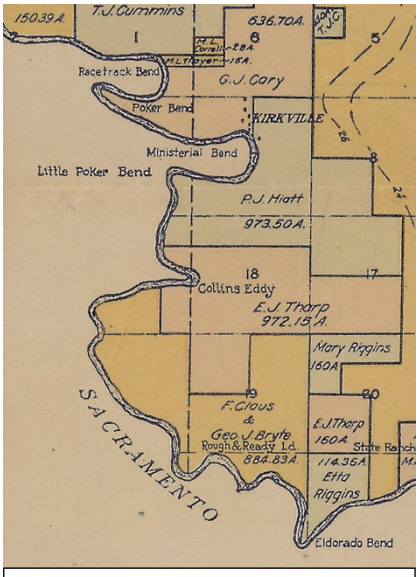

fig. 8

Violence, leisure, and allusion to racial hierarchy and potential uplift amalgamate to schematize the process of white racial formation emerging from the river's navigation. Whereas floodwaters would cloud the dynamics of settler racialization, the emplacement of bodies among these twists and turns showcased how reclamation set the ground for the negotiation of whiteness. Importantly, unlike during the earlier era of Natomas, Native Californian names do not appear on this map. Even though Armour's investment would lead to financial ruin for the unprofitable project, the name that the Engineering Department codified did not just place whiteness on the map—it visualized the *elements* of whiteness in the West. These elements encompassed the lifestyle appeals of "California Gold," the military might of the Corps retaining the overflow of the Sacramento, and the playful negotiation and accommodation of

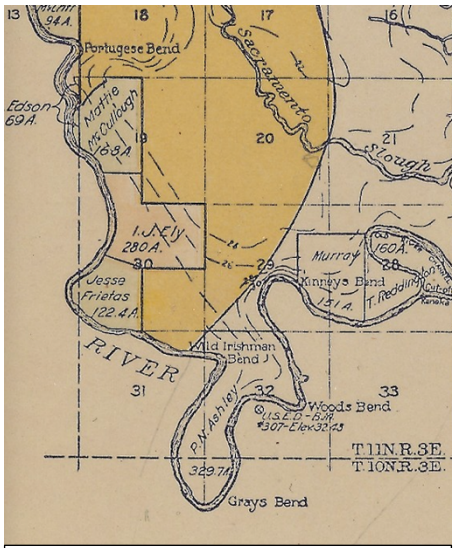

fig. 9

whiteness by those who could access it at a distance—and the erasure of those deemed incapable of leaving a mark on California.

When race does erupt in Sutter Basin materials, it most prominently features as a temporary hiccup, which may be instructive as a negative example but ultimately remains inconsequential, rendered moot by the magnificence of the engineering works. Some of the most direct citations of race relations derive from a publication, "Sutter Basin Progress," meant to provide talking points, facts and figures, and humorous asides to real estate brokers peddling Sutter Basin lots. Besides confirming the steadfast segregation of the intended purchasers and limiting opportunities solely to whites, the association of race with processes such as digestion underscores racial upheaval as a benign and fleeting transitory concern.

One intensely ugly example, entitled "A Change of Diet," elicits laughs from labor exploitation. It begins with "A Negro farm hand, employed by an Arizona cotton grower, was told to make his bed in the barn, where the farmer's pet bull-dog also slept at night." After mockingly portraying the hesitancy of the farm hand, the comedian brackets his resistance as perhaps containing simplistic reason, all the more jocular for its expression in a structure so thoroughly dominated by the farmer as to remain inconsequential and unresolved. The joke concludes, "'But,' argued the farmer, 'that dog is perfectly harmless—it was brought up on milk.'/'So was I brung up on milk,' retorted the darky, 'but I eats meat now.'" ("Sutter Basin Progress, No. 60, March 11, 1922"). The virulently racist anecdote intimates a conundrum of Blackness. The folk wisdom expressed in the tale comes from its Black caricature. However, this legitimate and reasonable fear (and subtle act of protest against cruel treatment) meets with ridicule from the assumed audience for its attempt to disrupt a seemingly natural order equating Blackness with animality. Ultimately, what matters and makes the joke appreciable for a white audience reared on racist sentiments is *the telling*. Humorous transmission indicates an ability to observe the conundrum of nature as both imminently wise and ultimately feeble and deserving of ridicule. In its recounting, the joke showcases the audience's ability to master the potentiality and promises of nature through cultivating both wisdom and cash crops.

An implied projection from the potential buyer to the anecdote's farmer accrues to the former the direction of the scene and recognition of the dialogue's supposed humor. The tale subconsciously insists that the positionality of the grower/overseer constitutionally reassures the stability of the farmer's profitability as the owner of land, facilities, and labor. Furthermore, this imbrication of settler and soil assertively positions him as a smooth negotiator and navigator of an emergent imperial racial order (a burden borne by the omnipresent American minstrel imaginary). Sutter Basin agents made continual recourse to this ability to synthesize information. While casually racist witticisms offer explicit discourses of difference to fortify the civilizational credentials of the venture, their self-proclaimed technical analysis also relied on synthesizing information for the viewer into digestible tidbits regurgitating cultural values of longevity alongside proper recognition and utilization.

While the life experience of a minstrel caricature provided a temporal punchline lampooning the contact zones of rural life, the resplendence of the landscape claimed a timelessness that transcended the individual. The boosters made claims to an immortal lineage, describing how "The soil is an alluvial deposit, commonly known as 'river bottom,' the result of centuries of silt wash from the Sacramento and Feather Rivers. Its richness is proverbial." ("'The Last of the Famous River Bottom Lands' Complete With Irrigation Are Ready for the Settler"). This assertion accomplishes two maneuvers to shore up Sutter Basin's legitimacy. The first is purely economic, describing the geologic process leading to a concentration of resources now on

the auction block. The second credential is historiographical. It places Sutter Basin in a communal heritage. The pitch metonymizes Sutter Basin as condensed Biblical wisdom. The development showcases the inheritance of a shared and transcendent patrimony attested to by those with ample settler bona fides—to be enhanced and refined by Sutter Basin's adoption of advanced progressive methods to a proclaimed ancestral civilizational tradition.

The engraved stationary on which the Land Department delivered sales pitches to fellow land brokers gestures toward the centrality of timeliness to Sutter Basin's *raison d'être*. (fig. 10) Captioned with a statement of Sutter Basin's advantages— "Deep Rich Soil – Irrigation – Drainage – Transportation"—the etching pairs livestock husbandry in the central foreground with a vanishing point that frames Sutter Buttes. Emanating from the pasture are, progressively, fruit orchards, pump stations, warehouses, piers, and eventually, transportation infrastructure. To the left of the image, the Sacramento River winds, tamed by a truss bridge and buoying smoking steamships.

This smoke is mirrored by a train barreling toward the viewer on the right, hauling countless box cars from behind the hills and paralleled by one of the numerous roads that zigzag the scene as cars drive into and out of the fields. One particular letter of February 25, 1927, in a packet fronted by an address sheet of "Sutter Basin Brokers," finds J.W. Cline, Field Manager, Land Department relaying the aspiration for these amenities, namely that Armour "is very much interested in securing good responsible farmers to settle in Sutter Basin." ("Sales '26 Real Estate"). The specification of "responsible" growers matches the aims of the orderly facsimile. The image evokes intermodal infrastructural development along multiple routes as the literal frame that upholds productivity.

Sutter Basin is exceptional for its numerous avenues for exchange, whether aqueous, mechanical— or both. Including warehouses and boxcars aims to placate any temporal concerns of spoilage or overproduction that consistently plague agricultural endeavors. Sutter Basin has included multiple sinks, capturing the complete water cycle from "Irrigation" to the "Drainage" attested to by the pump house. However, the piers and the freight train also guarantee a market in natural goods regulated and made reliable by technical intervention. All of this scenery, from cows, fences, and cars, to the pumps, visually culminates in directing attention to the focal point of the scene, the remarkable Sutter Buttes.

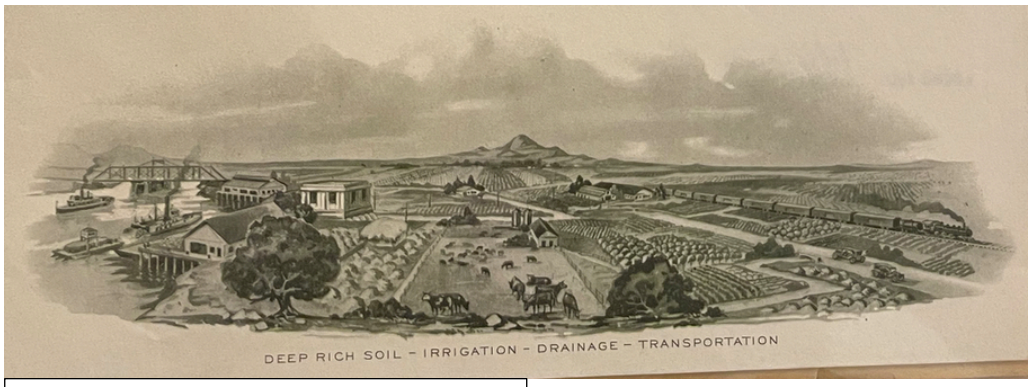

fig. 10

The remnants of an ancient volcano, the Histum Yani mountains in Maidu, have an intense significance for the Valley's Native residents. Histum Yani translates from Maidu to English as either "Middle Mountains of the Valley" or "Spirit Mountain," the latter signifying that "after death, the spirits of their people rest in the Buttes before the journey to the afterlife." ("Sutter Buttes"). The settlers of the Basin attempted to expropriate this legacy, bastardizing

Indigenous ancestral connections to pantomime an everlasting capitalism. Ultimately, the circularity of exchange and a constant tempo of undeviating development claim to supersede California Indian traditional land tenure as it floods the horizon. The anxious rhythm of exchange strains and grasps to inherit geological time itself, analogizing its agricultural might to the force of tectonic plates. Circulation thus claims a capacity to mold and jurisdiction over the earth's surface.

Sutter Basin would attempt to capture not just the igneous pillars of the earth but ephemeral and immaterial ideational traces. This epistemological intervention included efforts as intangible as insider knowledge and as engineered as electronic transmissions. Among the offerings promised to the settler was the unquantifiable added value of sage advice. The firm attested to expertise as the apogee of an optimized itinerary leading to growers' success. They reassured buyers that "the Sutter Basin Company is anxious to do everything possible for every settler. After selling a farmer land, they will rent his additional land and furnish his water free, and give him all the necessary advice as to how to make the most out of his labor, free." ("Sales '26 Real Estate"). While property and ingress into precise hydrological infrastructure form the base of Sutter Basin's business model, to realize the value continually revered in the California settler mythos—free white labor—the indefinable quality which will elevate the grower to proper existence is a vast network of technical exchange with a singular mission. Aligned with Karuka's model, what the growers were investing in was undoubtedly a bet on land and soaring specialty crop prices. However, they also bought into a system of civilizing agriculture, industrially engineered to predetermine the future of Western landscapes as hospitable and avert any deviation from that ideal.

The boosters' use of a savvy and emergent marketing strategy—a radio program dedicated to their exploits—displays the massive corporate operation extending into departments well beyond engineering and horticulture. In an updated and technological fashion, this design also satisfied the steady settler requirement to intervene in the landscape, narrativize that intervention as gospel, and rationalize settlement as holy or evolutionarily inevitable. Situated in the tradition of print travelogues (Pratt), the radio program was hyped by a lead real estate agent, imploring intrigued parties to "Please note that we are putting on a broadcasting program which will go on the air every evening at 6:55, in which we are planning to give some stories about the Sacramento Valley, and especially Sutter Basin. This will be broadcasted over KFON at the Long Beach Broadcasting Station." ("Sales '26 Real Estate").

The location of the broadcast in an emerging entertainment hub and population center, itself an outgrowth of branch plants funded by Chicago capital (Davis 2001), merges the magnanimity of collegial and social dialogue among the initiated with the scope of militarized technologies to inform those encircled by modernity of any impending challenges to their supremacy that extended atmospherically. The omnipresence of radio waves, enabled by electric might and intruding even into the sanctity of domestic space to demonstrate their potency and indispensability, aligned Sutter Basin's material transformation of reclamation to claim a moral cause. Not only would this completion of Manifest Destiny shore up white families against the instability of modernity. This 'inevitable' conclusion would also do so by permeating across the public and the private, the traditional and the futuristic, to instill fidelity in stable whiteness through universally legible interconnection and immanent, benevolent exchangeability. Sutter sent white promises through the atmosphere. As these promises saturated domestic ritual, they also reverberated back to Armour’s family and offered personal salvation.

The celestial intervention that rectified capitalism's contradictions ultimately gifted Sutter Basin a fairytale conclusion, entirely credited to the connectivity and shared values of whiteness delivering unexpected windfalls. Indeed, gossip columnists flabbergastedly describe this turn of events as erudite but also as pious. They chronicle how "A number of years ago, when Mr. Armour was at his financial height, he invested from $3,000,000 to $4,000,000 in the oil cracking process. He always had faith that the process would yield a profit, but he died in London on August 16, 1927, before his judgment was vindicated." ("$8,216,000 to Mrs. Armour"). While the vindication of judgment insistently underscores Armour's rationality, his enduring faith would settle his debts and maintain his wife's elite standing.

This belief to which Armour pledged his fortune, and in turn delivered him from crisis, was in the teleological destiny of industrial acumen to transform the raw elements of the earth—in this case, crude oil—into a sleek and malleable synthetic substance to physically shape the element future of commodities and their transportation. The oil cracking process, which fascinated Armour, is a fundamental industrial petrochemical reaction through which "Oil can be cracked to give ethylene and propylene which are then subsequently separated by low temperature liquefaction." (Swallow, 372). These compounds are the basic building blocks of modern plastics and other chemical applications. As a bonus, cracking also produced gasoline at four time the rate of conventional refining (Honeywell OUP).

While British chemists had experimented with cracking since the early 19th century (Fullmer), what distinguishes these particular stocks, besides the remarkable 800 percent return Mrs. Armour received for her initial million-dollar loan to appease her husband's appetite for oil cracking, is the distinctly California characteristic of the bonanza. A familiar cast of characters emerges from the rubble of Sutter Basin through this side deal of Armour, including a mining, agriculture, energy, and reclamation giant, gleefully footnoted as "Others to share were […] the Natoma corporation, who get[s] $3, 219,411" ("$8,216,000 to Mrs. Armour"). Armour's intimate instinct on the value of the process does not definitively prove congresses with the Livermores or other Californian elites. Indeed, the gravity of his hunch would be much more profound if this were not the case.

The saga of cracking's invention, refinement, and commodification epitomizes the redemptive appeals, patriarchal inheritance, and unwavering technofetishism fundamental to whiteness's capitalist modulation. Armour's collaborator in the endeavor, inventor Jesse A Dubbs, also sought redemption in the technical realization of natural resource potential after failed sojourns across global oil fields. The elder "Dubbs moved to California, went bankrupt, then bounced back with new inventions, including one in 1909 for demulsifying oil to produce asphalt." The father teamed with his son C.P. Dubbs and arranged a meeting with the owner of Standard Asphalt and Rubber Company-- J. Ogden Armour. Dubbs's patent would eventually rescue Armour's widow; initially, the profligate financier's cosmopolitan and corporate-savvy staff redeemed Dubbs. While the inventor and his progeny fixated on asphalt, "one of [Armour's] lawyers, Frank Belknap, who avidly read everything written on the developing oil industry, realized that the process might prove even more valuable for cracking oil into gasoline." (American Chemical Society). Armour's fortune could not purchase discernment, but it did command social networks of privilege and access.

California's unbridled proselytization of technocratic progress and propensity for financial busts that ruined its denizens equally prompted Dubbs's breakthrough. Nevertheless, the inventor could have languished as an inconsequential footnote without the affective attitudes and protocols that triggered Armour's largesse and promotional aptitude. Both men in the

equation, inventor and financier, shared a techno-optimism they modeled after racial scripts. Armour ascribed to a connoisseurial tradition whereby encultured white barons assessed the civilizational standing of ancient and modern artifice. Indeed, “Armour acquired new investments, especially those involving technology, like a collector acquiring antiques.” (American Chemical Society). Without access to a Gilded Age inheritance, Dubbs broadcasted his enthusiasm for petrochemicals by associating his bloodline’s continuation with the oil business’s transcendent growth.

A biographical sketch recounts his extraordinary efforts to prove his fealty to petroleum: “Jesse Dubbs was enamored with the oil business. He even named his son Carbon after one of the elemental constituents of oil. Later, Carbon added the P. to make his name ‘euphonious,’ he said. People started calling him ‘Petroleum’ for fun, and the name stuck. C.P.’s son and grandson were also named Carbon, but each had a different middle initial.” (American Chemical Society). I will not claim that the younger Dubbs’ exceptionally unordinary and sycophantic appellation endeared his father’s endeavor to Armour’s aficionado tendencies. However, whiteness undeniably dictated both men’s fealty to colonial modernity and the optimized and engineered free market. That bond governed the conditions by which their alliance germinated, across which their scientific and commercial interventions could entwine. Ultimately, their peculiar shared racialization fostered shared tastes that would absolve their numerous financial catastrophes and fortify their family’s wealth for generations.

Within infrastructure’s multiscalar potency under whiteness, familial redemption always upholds, mirrors, and amplifies countryside homogenization interoperating smoothly with imperial trade networks. Going back full circle back to California, Dow Chemical Company eventually acquired Dubbs’s Armour-backed firm Universal Oil Products; Dow gained infamy among members of the United Farm Workers for bailing out the boycotted industrial grower Bud Antle (Honeywell OUP). Like significant aspects of the Californian model of integrated corporate farming, the Antle family entered agribusiness as cheap Okie labor harvesting produce along the Sacramento River (Tanimura and Antle).

Returning to the triumphant news dispatches about his posthumous vindication, the articles underscore Armour's total immersion into a regional bourgeois enclave in which progress and engineering were so affectively palpable as to convince a millionaire to beg his spouse for a loan. The turn of the twentieth century mighty California oil boom’s competitive, speculative structure spurred knowledge exchange both legitimate and surreptitious. It also fostered such an absolute belief in its transformative capability to transfigure Armour from a wild, uninhibited debtor to mystic prognosticator even in the absence of a documented insider trading tip. While reclamation’s fading returns lured Armour's pocketbook to an overinflated business plan feeding an already glutted market, his association with the Golden State was redeemed. The crisis that threatened to destroy the fundamental social unit of the family was reversed by his unshakeable belief in incidental contact with networked, well-mannered, and keenly informed whiteness.

The message of Armour's tale as a racial capitalist fable to soothe apprehensive investors is simple. J. Ogden Armour became paradigmatic for his collegial belief in cordoned information exchange among the decorous and enlightened. Suppose capitalism becomes wrought with overaccumulation due to the uneasy truce between use and exchange. When this inevitability arises, whiteness serves as a balance that arbitrates an object's material limitations for particular purposes and the desire to make all things equivalent in a market, transferring abstract things to those that designate them as such. By entering the affective fold and buying into its presuppositions, misinformed business mistakes can transmogrify into sage oracles sanctifying

the ceaseless maximization of redolent environments and those that refuse to behave appropriately.

V. The Mundane Intimacy of Infrastructure: Feeling Empire with the California Steam Navigation Company

A floating palace proclaims settler sovereignty, but also testifies to the centrality of fashion and courtliness out West. The California Steam Navigation Company formed in 1854 during the Gold Rush's wake as a cartel of riverboat owners intent on fixing the price to reach inland resource stores. While profit motivated their infrastructural foray, they mainly advertised their delivery of class and distinction to the frontier. Eventually, the CSNC's main overland competitor for hauling freight, the Central Pacific Railroad, would purchase the conglomerate. It thus met an initial downfall due to railroad competition in 1871 (Vancouver Maritime Museum) only to be revived and rechristened to continue regional transport service into the 20th century's beginning.

The CNSC allows for a streamlined examination of infrastructure's potent affective alignment of whiteness and capitalist landscapes. Through its merger of colonial design aesthetics with global trade routes, it discreetly elevated its impulsive arousal of colonial ecological value judgments into moral and social principles. Steamship travel purported to offer a unique glimpse into a landscape's suitability for not only economic development but also perpetual reuse and self-actualization. The CNSC demonstrated Sacramento's capability to harness imperial detritus from previous crises and disasters and recirculate and revalue the assets of the Sacramento Valley perpetually, and personally. This chapter examines how infrastructure's political-economic logic, intense abstraction, and incomprehensible scale force it to be felt instead of known, elevating exchange as not only a societal necessity but as a precarious, intimate, and racialized inheritance demanding protection at any cost.

Colonial crossroads and intermodal transport maintain a purpose beyond service as logistical hubs. These sites also reconfigure whiteness through a close association and comfort with infrastructural formations that balance an ability to impact and subdue faraway hinterlands while insulating the settler colonial heartland. The cartel's winding travails exemplify how an infrastructural focus can expand racial capitalist critique by considering racial capitalism as an affective state enabling continual inequitable extraction. I approach Sacramento's logistical empires as congealed processes engaged in iterations of market formation and racial commonsense. Specifically, for the CSNC, infrastructural intimacy allowed Sacramentans, and by extension, Western agricultural colonization aimed at eventual Pacific domination, to imagine and feel personally entitled to the pleasures and bounty of imperial expansion. They perceived their expeditious mobility as a birthright attesting to their supreme rationality and prudence simultaneously at ease with (even underwhelmed by) the violent upheaval of their own and distant countrysides. They didn't displace landscapes. They made them navigable, known, and exchangeable. They realized inert potential and thus validated the sanctity of their economies and themselves in the process.

Navigability as a heuristic emphasizes infrastructure's indispensable role in forging white familiarity and habit with and within landscapes primarily concerned not with establishing a unique locality but an orientation towards interminable expansion and imperial accumulation. Whiteness internalizes this dynamic as a naturalized and hence unrecognized mechanism that orients individuals towards accumulation despite its irrationality. This racial dynamic establishes an oxymoronic white capitalist relationship to place in which intimacy with any particular landscape emerges from its potential to reach the next violent horizon communally. The steamships of the Sacramento luxurious accommodations indicate the fascinating feature of whiteness in which pleasure and comfort only are available via proximity to disaster, wilderness,

and untapped potential. The very existence of refinement depends upon constant maneuvering toward disorder. Colonialism can't generate value without uneven development and thus untapped potential. But this unevenness contains hidden racial risks—contamination, rebellion, stagnation. Navigability as a model insists that technological innovation, consistently coded as whiteness' providence, can transfer wholesale without interruption or degradation to any wild environment yearning for 'civilization.' Its luggage is the colonizers' hearts.

This racial calculus emphasizes how delineating Sacramento's affective attachment to infrastructure requires more than a political-economic development schematic. Whiteness and capitalism triumphantly injected their values and behavioral judgments into regional economies alongside harmonious internal manufacturing designs. A "successful," reproducible white subjectivity judges landscape productivity by the capability to rectify racial attachments with circulation's continual advancement, especially for peripheral locations on frontiers or vertices. Whether from the viewpoint of a ship's deck or amid a wharf's pilings, infrastructure builds landscapes associated with particular and coherent racial feelings. These affects preclude other attachments to place based on seasonality or reciprocity, and instead appraise landscapes for their facilitation of the social reproduction of property, familial orders, and racial attitudes that canonize commodification.

Along with its steamboats, many sentimental tributes and accolades circulated about the California Steam Navigation Company. These often take the format of nostalgic surveys of the simple yet elegant pioneer spirit of California. A *San Francisco Call* pictorial and illustrated essay exemplifies this congratulatory style about the firm's most celebrated vessel, which also serves to index its prominence in securing maritime industry capital and talent during its heyday:

> Along came Mr. Wingard, a southerner who knew all about the Mississippi, and put in the joiner work. Such a toothpick deck had never been seen, such a grand cabin had never been known; the large glass windows, the splendid appointments of the staterooms, the "bridal chamber" elegance. The great cabin ran the full length of the boat and was adorned with noble pictures, painted by artists who have since been crowned with the laurels of fame by European critics. These were landscapes from the brushes of Thomas Hill, William Keith, and Bierstadt; Spanish scenes from Arthur and Charles Nahl; Mexican and Indian scenes from Ariola, the only artist of that time (it was said) who dared to put the color of moonlight and firelight in the same pictures. (North-Whitcomb).

This passage exemplifies several recurrent characterizations of the CNSC: the exploitation of former maritime shipping expertise from racialized economies, a seemingly innate magnificence and civility of steamboat travel, and a reliance on tropes of proto-Spanish fantasy past and Southwest Indian fetishization that could balance the racial humors of the time.

The aesthetic strategies of gilded age opulence paired with stereotypical racial nostalgia indicate maritime infrastructure's unique appeal for the region. It became the premier venture to import former business strategies *and* rhetorical regimes. It even amalgamated multiple racial logics of the time, melding Yankee public works prowess with the romance of the Southern plantocracy's excess and leisurely lifestyle (transposing Indians for a facility with Southern Blacks' supposedly "simple" lifeways). The *Call's* jubilant celebration of the ship's launching vividly portrays infrastructure's merged representational and economic influence importing racial regimes wholesale.

The triumph is remarked upon in wonderous dialogue, analogizing the *Chrysopolis* as "'Just like the Hudson river boats,' said little Mrs. Whitney. The vessel was a picture, and the time came for the launching." (North-Whitcomb). Mrs. Whitney, wife of Captain Whitney and supposed inspiration for his desire to fund such a magnificent vessel due to her nostalgic longing for her home of New York, swoons over the technical and artisanal skill crystallized in the *Chrysopolis*. She suggests that this particular engineering marvel cannot merely mimic the grandeur of the East but tame the West's rivers to become almost synonymous with famous American hydrological exploits and alchemically transform the Sacramento into the Hudson.

Furthermore, the *Call* pairs a technical description of a Southern shipwright's colonial technological expertise with an assertion that the *Chrysopolis* partially successfully functioned as a literal picture. This suggestion recurs as another Captain gazes on the craft, "Proud 'young man, North.' On that same evening his first born arrived, and neither the plaudits of the people nor the magnificent gold watch, made by John W. Tucker of California gold and engraved with the scene of his exploit, presented by the C.S. navigation company, counted alongside the steadfast gaze of the two bright brown eyes of his baby girl." (North-Whitcomb).

The detail of the gold watch reminds the reader of the historicity of the ship, refashioning the jubilant resource of 1849 into a technical object to track the colonial endeavor through aesthetic advancement. It demonstrates the continual impact of this bygone technology, as it could import the colonial forms so crucial to Southern and Northeastern colonial implementation: regularity, (human) measurement, and progress. The literal representation of the ship on the gold watch parallels the gaze of a subsequent settler generation. This concurrence sentimentally argues to the reader that maritime navigation and regulation enabled by technical proficiency alongside the proper white, patriarchal family (these models are co-constituted in the settler imaginary) both lay the infrastructural groundwork for integrating colonial outposts into a promising valuation of regular and predictable accumulation—and the racial subjugation inherently associated with that ethic.

The gold timepiece transmits infrastructure and whiteness as conjoined ligaments, connective tissues that define one another. Whiteness justifies a particular notion of progressive infrastructure. It serves as a form of cultural infrastructure by braiding various iterations of self-serving European human differentiation frameworks that reinforce each other discursively and ideologically: divine ordinances, Manifest Destiny, colonialism, and secular rationality. Infrastructure seeks to alter geomorphological patterns directly, and whiteness successively reiterates the particular social organization of disunity, inequitable resource allocation, and personal propriety.

Both thus succeed in backgrounding exploitative capital and making it cohesive, reassuring settler colonists that ecological and human natures tend together towards one particular outcome: white capitalism. My assertion here retools Natalia Molina's notion of racial scripts, in which technologies used to misrepresent and subjugate a particular racialized group can be reactivated and recycled for subsequent efforts at marginalization. Molina forcefully contends, "Despite the passage of time and changes in social and cultural norms, what once served to marginalize and disenfranchise one group can be revived and recycled to marginalize other groups." (Molina, 7). My goal in elucidating the subjectifying allure of the CSNC for white Sacramentans involves recognizing infrastructure as a particularly insidious racial script. Initially justified to quell racial fears and unrest, it can then lay dormant and unquestioned until a distinct racial anxiety requires some revision or reassertion. I contend that whiteness acts as a viable

infrastructural storehouse for racial scripts: it serves as the unstated referent that grants cohesion to racial scripts as the central character against which all other racializations remain adjudicated.

Whiteness allows particular access to leverage racial scripts to condemn others and elevate their own stock and for settlers to self-actualize through appeals to verisimilitude with former iterations of whiteness. Former CSNC Vice President Domingo Marcucci's egocentric, Bancroft-housed memoir assuredly aligns with this description, trafficking in numerous associations with former successful infrastructural maritime ventures—the Caribbean trade and Latin American vessel routes—to certify a seal of colonial approval. Marcucci relayed his involvement in a detailed autobiographical sketch seeking to establish his credentials as a pioneer master shipwright who (according to his personally-held regard) singlehandedly shaped maritime navigation on the incipient U.S. west coast. His tale is as full of reversals, random asides, and nonsequiturs as the muddled corporate chronicle of the CSNC.

Under a subsection titled "CALIFORNIA STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY," Marcucci diverges from the rest of his biographical sketch consisting mainly of inventories of vessels constructed and his intimate travelogue. However, his company history contains no references to steam navigation whatsoever and markedly ignores California's geographic minutia. This snippet instead focuses on the intrigue and machinations of stockholders and the consortium's directorate. He outlines the dramatic swing of his fortunes during these maneuverings, stating that

> T.C. Walker was President at the time, and W.T. Garratt had been Vice-President. Garratt, having a great deal of other business to look after, resigned the Vice-Presidency, and wishing Mr. Marcucci to look after his interest, he was made Vice-President, continuing in that position several years. Jealousies arose, however, among the Directors, and some of them formed a pool against Mr. Marcucci, and ousted him from the office of Vice-President; though they could not oust him as director, they made it very unpleasant for him, and finally [he] resigned.

Perhaps the riches at stake in ferrying hopeful settlers out to the hinterlands and shuttling their haul of timber, wheat, and precious metals back to cosmopolitan centers would inevitably breed these "jealousies." The contenders named in the above drama showcase the power and prominence of maritime infrastructural actors.

Not coincidentally, Marcucci was drawn into the business piloting and constructing two (always feminized) vessels named for his business ally's female relatives, Alice and Mary Garratt. W.T. Garratt. Alongside Marcucci's technical ability imported from the East Coast, this nomenclature proclaimed through navigation that Garratt's progeny and namesake not only tamed the unpredictable river (that overflowed its banks twice in the timespan of Marcucci's account to drown the city of Sacramento) but brought it under the civilizing influence of white womanhood. Their feminine grace, enabled by machinery and mechanical expertise fostered from transnational imperial advancement, would enrichen Garratt and, by extension, Marcucci and beyond to the whole of the Valley. The assured movement and calming presence of the ship mimicked the certainty of inheritance, critically allowing the agricultural and mineralogical value trapped in the inland soil to fulfill its destiny and circulate.

Marcucci emphasized the gendered aspect of mechanized navigation as crucial, centering the suspense in his account around the shady dealings of business partners too proximal to the wilderness upstream to engage in ethical business practices. The T.C. Walker drama would

resolve-- at least temporarily-- due to Garratt's gracefulness, suggested by his approach to infrastructure as a paternalistic family affair. After some financial wrangling, "The majority of the stock was now in the hands of Garratt and his adherents, and Walker and the others who had before carried things with a high hand, fearing that they would be treated as they had treated the other party, sold their stock, giving bonds that they would not go into the business again, but no sooner did they get the money for their stock, than they started an opposition boat" (Marcucci, 12). One of the recurring themes in Marcucci's vignette is a tension between unbridled competition—a lust for wealth, power, or indulgence—and his appeal to the strictures of carefully calibrated and measured Enlightenment behavior.

For Marcucci, infrastructure serves to strike this balance. It can mediate between the rash rumblings of captains stoking a new flood—adverse competition with far too many vessels clogging the river. Not only did this lower freight rates, it also destabilized the whole system by instigating ferry boat races that could end explosively. As a cautionary capitalist tale, Marcucci emphasizes that navigation is a restrained and deliberate technology whose movement brings the hierarchical gendered relations and architectures necessary for social reproduction.

This realm, and the stability and surefire trajectory it allows for, is a decidedly white arena. Marcucci explicitly credits his skills as a shipwright to the path he pursued because of Enlightenment philosophy that made him reflect upon the circumstances of his birthland. Significantly, Marcucci deems this a corporeal shift, an irresistible urge and a sincere obligation only viable via the flows of finance and technocratic expertise: "ideas he had imbibed of freedom and enlightenment prevented, for he did not wish to live in a country where there were constant revolutions, as there were in Venezuela, in common with most of the Spanish American republics. He then thought of going to California, but having no means to pay his passage, he, with a number of others, came under contract with the Navigation Company" (Marcucci, 1). Before the action of his retrospective commences, the autobiographer establishes his motivations as aligning with the benevolent cause of American colonization. He equates freedom and enlightenment with stability and notes this as a condition of *internal* balance rather than the impact of regional geopolitical unevenness imposed by centuries of warfare and plunder.

By establishing his claim for the characteristics seemingly inherent to whiteness, Marcucci's saga begins with the self-interested benevolence of a wealthy network of chummy forty-niners. These individuals established a nepotistic network that fulfilled fantasies of frontier regeneration while they handsomely lined their pockets. Like Marcucci's biography, these individuals cut their teeth in the hemispheric exchange of technologies meant to facilitate trade and industrial resource extraction. "George W. Aspinwall, of Philadelphia," funded the artisan's trip; the executive "was at the head of this transportation company, he was a brother of William H. Aspinwall, of New York, one of the company who built the Panama railway, and head of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company." (Marcucci, 1). This infrastructural alluvium illustrates the accretion of capital achieved through interrelated efforts at making hinterlands, whether terrestrial or aqueous, accessible and known to financiers. Reflecting an Anglo reinvigoration of California as a cradle of civilization due to its Mediterranean climate carefully imported by Franciscan colonizers, Marcucci claims to have initiated the mechanical revolution underpinning the first successful extractive ventures of Sacramento—gold from the placer deposits and the first extensive wheat farms of the Valley.

Uncoincidentally, the craft chosen for this baptism bore a title associated with the birth of agriculture and commerce: "the ship Levant brought from Philadelphia the frame of a steamer, which was the first one put together here," claiming for himself the distinction of having

"constructed the first steam vessel on the Pacific Coast" (Marcucci, 2). The pattern of reconfiguring and recycling architectural frames, where shipbuilders retrofitted proven seaworthy hulls with advanced engines and propulsion mechanisms, helped establish the Pacific shipbuilding industry as a viable and profitable venture. The rehashing of ships and techniques from previous colonial frontiers, especially the Mississippi, established known technological and cultural landscapes that were mobile, efficient, and refined.

Crescendoing allusions to the marriage of engineering and aesthetics within the form of these vessels instilled faith in the settler that wild wetlands would not corrupt them and that the riches of the Pacific conformed to a geographical language familiar to Anglos. Initially draining into a boggy and swampy Delta, transforming the Sacramento River into a navigable river meant fecund agricultural landscapes and the efficient shipping of extractable ore and timber to ensure profits despite human malaise or ecological turmoil. Marcucci's biography replicates the sense of evolutionary progress tractable at the individual scale, as "Marcucci built the El Dorado steamer; she came out of Philadelphia as a three masted schooner, and he took out her masts, and converted her into a sidewheel steamboat; the machinery was already in her. She ran first to Sacramento for awhile, then to Stockton, and at one time ran on the Sacramento as Marysville." Infrastructure here is recursive, palimpsestic, and self-referential. It encompasses more of a lifestyle and a philosophy— including one of constant redevelopment and recycling of both engines and aims— than any given piece of technological innovation.

The technical specifications Marcucci continually catalogs linguistically belie, through their overwhelming mundanity, the mission that links a Philadelphian sailing ship to a boiler-driven iteration with a Spanish-language appellation referencing the West's first mythical colonial speculative venture. Despite the *El Dorado* being wind-powered, as the masts attest, Marcucci contemplates how "the machinery was already in her." This strange evocation of impregnation most likely alludes to the transitional character of the ship; it fulfilled its motive needs primarily through quickly ebbing age-of-sail techniques supplemented by impressive, but not yet quite dominantly proficient, engines. However, this preexisting capacity "already in her" is imprecise enough to evoke an inherent adeptness at fulfilling the needs of domesticating the spoils of expansion and exploration.

Marcucci reveals this transcendent motive in verbose passages that subconsciously and sentimentally erupt to hint at the overarching source of shipbuilding's pleasure. Of another vessel constructed immediately prior to the *El Dorado*, Marcucci exclaimed, "It was a great sight to see her when she landed at the Commercial street wharf, loaded with bags of golddust, and crowded with passengers, some fortunate and successful, other going back, discouraged, without anything." (Marcucci, 2). Like the theatrical intrigue of Marcucci and Garratt versus Walker's rival river line, infrastructure does not exist as a backdrop for an inevitable settler ascendance (which will only be assured by clean living and proper motivations). More pivotally, it fundamentally enables the full range of settler dramatics themselves. Now that we have heard one's man approbation of frontier navigation, we should situate these plaudits within infrastructure's general emotional gravity.

Infrastructure may cause a particular emotion; more crucially, it permits and restricts beforehand the field of legible and justified emotions. The backdrop of the ship's deck and the machinery boiling beneath it conjures the grammar of a colonial drama prior to the "bags of golddust" or empty pockets. While the "bootstraps" homily reassures settlers, the narrative's reliance on a tangible colonial geography (the ship) indicates infrastructure's quintessential role as the grounds of possibility for colonial feelings, and thus the self, to cohere and remain stable

on the frontier. The fable needs the building blocks of infrastructures to translate its lessons into gospels of prosperity and individual will versus a chaotic and contingent immoral landscape.

Marcucci certifies the imbrication between white personhood and infrastructure in an even more graphic anecdote that unexpectedly emerges in his tale to denote the extreme stakes of colonial transformation. His aside evinces the thorough entwining of civilizational fate, technological mastery, and a setter sense of self along the Sacramento. He recounts the horrific fate of the *Sagamore*: "This explosion Mr. Marcucci witnessed from the shipyard; the steamer was just backing out of the dock when she exploded her boilers, and the air was filled with the fragments of human bodies, lumber, and other portions of the vessel." (Marcucci, 6-7). This shocking aside denotes the extreme risk of the haphazard infrastructural bricolage cobbled together on the frontier. It also evinces the entanglement of infrastructure and human fate as understood by these maritime trailblazers, akin to Garratt's proclivity to christen his ships after his female relatives and his rival T.C. Walker's eventual transformation into an eponymous anthropomorphized vessel himself.

In Marcucci's retelling, while the disaster's primary victims were the innocent passengers and crew, the elegy for their corpses is quickly followed by a lament for the previous raw materials and even more valuable specialized components lost in the explosion. The entire atmosphere became saturated with an indistinguishable mix of "fragments of human bodies, lumber, and other portions of the vessel," showcasing that both the individual gumption and corporeal tenacity of settlers constituted life out West alongside *the machines and knowledge* they carry resolutely on their backs and in their wagons. The loss here is impersonal; the *Sagamore's* sinking is a social, settler colonial tragedy for the potential of whiteness itself rather than a cautionary tale for any individual traveler.

The illogical narrative arc or total lack of any semblance of unity threaded throughout Marcucci's contribution to Bancroft's nascent attempt at a Western history reflects not a triumphalist panegyric but an attempt to foreground the essentiality of a diffuse yet omnipresent infrastructural identification. This association with machines projects a sense of intimacy, or even boredom, with the mechanics of imperial warfare and resource commodification as a cornerstone of whiteness. The memoir intricately enmeshes daily and intimate comfort with the ideals of comforting engineering. Marcucci confirms this association through proof by contradiction. Following Marcucci's reasoning about his rivals in the CSNC, we can remain assured of the validity of the shipbuilder's assessment that they had "before carried things with a high hand" because of their relationship with their vessels—namely the use of entrepreneurial proceeds to enter into competition despite their word and bond immediately.

This competition cut the going freight rates and dramatically incentivized speed and thus the infamous Sacramento riverboat races. The latter, of which the primary chronicler and champion of California steamships Jerry MacMullen expends considerable ink, led to the crashes, disasters, and general negligence so vividly illustrated in the case of the *Sagamore*. The ousted corporate officers' behavior is reflected in and modeled by their ships. The entanglement of limbs and decking proves the entwined fate of the savvy, resilient frontiersman and the machines upon which his violence and extraction were carried away from the metropole alongside mainly middle-class adventurers also embarking (Roberts).

Muddling limbs and machine parts symbolizes the multiscalar purchase of whiteness for colonialism's endeavors. Whiteness for settler colonists functioned as a technology to allow for a sense of totality in an entirely unsecured landscape using profoundly temperamental mechanical inventions. This intractable racialization distinguishes itself within colonialism as a medium of

interscalar exchange to form not just cohesion among dominant state actors or civil society but a unifying scaffolding seeping down to individuals and offering to place their unique California biographies in an arcing colonial saga. If colonial justifications for violent intrusion gestured towards civilizational lineages to form some mechanical automaton, race would be the individual cogs and gears ushering the machine's movement in interrupted, uneven, and frictional ways along its intended pathways. The unevenness of racial hegemony, its corporeal dimensions, and its reliance on spectacular and eruptive violence elucidate for scholars of colonialism some of its indispensable characteristics: instability and insecurity.

How did colonialism claim stability within radically divergent regional contexts with unique ecological environments and economic travails? Infrastructure represents the concretization of racial ideals within a landscape to suggest the permanence of racial hierarchies. With that in mind, its imposition on the landscape and tendency towards failure paradoxically showcase the ideological sleight of hand at the heart of colonialism: its failed attempts at totality. This totality in the supposed California frontier evoked previous racial specters of chaotic savagery but organized these threats, and whiteness's redemptive promises, under a technological, engineered, and infrastructural interconnection and seamlessness. Californians could supposedly not just manufacture but scientifically manage and regulate racial harmony—an infrastructural task cohering formerly piecemeal racial enforcement.

The conflation between proper behavior ensuring civility and well-maintained and technically proficient machinery suggests that intimacy between settler selves and settler infrastructure made apparent abstract whiteness. This racialization's imposing obscurity crucially motivated attempts at conquest just as momentously as the profit motive or need for new markets. Lisa Lowe outlines a peculiar fact of intimacy within the colonial encounter. Considering celebrated anticolonial and Marxist intellectual C.L.R. James's obsession with a British text laden with, indeed obsessed with, commodity circulation, Lowe contends that James's interest stems from the way William Thackeray's masterpiece satirizes British society while revealing a subcurrent of the global subjugation upon which even a critique of superficiality rested.

Lowe discusses how, among scholars of this text, "Less noted are the ways in which [*Vanity Fair's*] representations of goods and commodities simultaneously recognize, *and* ingeniously suppress, the histories and geographies of production." Of the former ideological operation of *Vanity Fair*, Lowe schematized how "the novel mediates the 'political unconscious' of the age and, particularly through colonial commodification, portrays the 'intimacy' of the bourgeois home in relation to the occluded 'intimacies' of slavery, colonialism, and the imperial trade in goods and people that constituted an unacknowledged social formation of the era." (Lowe, 82). Through the example of a commonplace 19th-century domestic British ritual, Lowe inventories the massive imperial networks traceable through tea drinking. Caribbean sugar, Chinese tea, and porcelain comingle with Indian cotton dresses, the proper attire for the ritual.

Nevertheless, this intimacy, despite its seeming revelation through a satire of the British middle class, is immediately displaced onto stereotypical stock characters who can be pilloried and critiqued. In the tea service, this became greedy South Asian officials or creolized slaveholders. By acknowledging the imbrication of various colonial outposts through localized figures of impropriety, the technologies of empire itself (especially transportation networks collating all these goods) and proliferating bourgeois practices evade detection, hidden in plain sight. Colonial administrators displace them onto 'improper' racial intimacy and feeling.

Comfortable, sophisticatedly-engineered vessels immediately profess their stated goals of civilizing unmapped wilds while shifting blame from whiteness's habits and preferences (with all the associated contradictions) onto the intermingling of cultures' inevitable impacts. This intimacy allows settlers to understand their endeavor as a sanctimonious mandate while at the same time denying the requisite acts of violence enabling their fashions, tastes, and consumptive patterns. The lurid details of monopolies, vicious competition, and impoverished victims seem to squarely direct blame toward the technological imposition of circulation—the pillaging of a landscape's lifeways. Nevertheless, the intense affective bond forged between individual motivation and infrastructure surreptitiously reassigns guilt for any infrastructural fallout to a failure at achieving a racial ideal. Infrastructure isn't the culprit of capitalist crisis. Rather, straying from white values of comfort, propriety, connection and critically, regulation, establishes liability.

Infrastructure thus codifies financial racializations while internalizing affective attachments ignoring or misrecognizing capitalist crisis. Indeed, imperial infrastructure demands engagement on its own emotional terms to realize the displacement Lowe analyzes. Schematizing the impact of another ascendant empire's expansive global reach upon its internal reorientation, Mary Favret urges scholars to "take wartime less as an object of condition bounded by dates—a period—and more as an affecting experience." Favret's entreaty mimics British Romantic sensibility that struggled to make palpable distant war and subsequently justify martial excursions.

From a political-economic standpoint, an affecting experience leaves unexamined imperial manufacturing's inbred dependance on primitive accumulation and the ensuing total societal subjugation and militarization. Infrastructure's abstraction leaves subjects and victims to navigate capitalism's affective waters with its racial scripts as their only aid. Favret indexes this historical shift in emotional registers, noting, "How time and knowledge were registered in daily life became newly uncertain. And with that uncertainty came a set of disturbing affective responses, including numbness, dizziness, anxiety, or a sense of being overwhelmed." (Favret). Infrastructure's claimed limitlessness, unbounded by physical restraints like time, purposefully ushers responses into emotional identifications with its impacts rather than its substance. As Lowe reminds us through her tea service, that substance is the racial division of the world's people and ecosystems into accumulators and accumulated. Infrastructure thus slyly reinforces whiteness through positive affective analogies with universal exchangeability. Whiteness praises itself as emotionally reflecting infrastructural capaciousness and universal geographic relevance, a commendation all the more formidable and commonsensical because infrastructure's scalar bias prioritizing the affective medium.

Within infrastructure's role as exchange's precondition, whiteness flourishes as commonsensical behavioral and corporeal attitudes and mores, demanding fidelity to exchange and the presentation of conformity with exchange's universal ideal. At its root, infrastructure's obscure subjective ideal remains exchangeability: abstraction from the vagaries of the material world, aggression against racialized foils that establish the cleanliness and immediate perceptibility of whiteness, and orderly alignment with principles of discernment, classification, and propriety. Consider the infrastructure mentioned by newspaperman and sailor in the U.S. Navy Jerry MacMullen's account of the CSNC's founding, where "the shipping tycoons put on their collars and ties and sat down at a peace table, from which emerged the California Steam Navigation Company—a name which has been of some importance in California river history." (MacMullen, 20). Rather than charts or blueprints for dredgers, the permitting groundwork is a

gentlemanly agreement of rational discourse between suitably dressed and manicured white men. These behavioral patterns, just as much as boilers, stern paddle-wheels, and clam-shell dredgers, allow for settler temporality to indelibly influence the river's course.

A brief trace of the California Steam Navigation Company's bookends—its foundation and subsumption into a more ample corporate transportation network—illustrates infrastructure's capacity for progressive but repetitive iteration and how racialization provides the fodder for this palimpsestic legacy purportedly defined by "innovation." Eventually, the monopolistic infrastructural development that established California's long-distance commercial agribusiness thoroughly ingrained the steamship lines of the Sacramento River. Naval officer MacMullen recounts the acquisition of the cooperative venture by its main competitor in freight rates, as "in 1871, they sold out to the California Pacific Railroad, for $620,000" and in a naturalistic plea to the virtue of pioneer individualism versus corporate conglomeration, cannot help but lament the loss of the former's sophisticating influence, as "many of the 'floating palaces' of those colorful days were converted into ferryboats, broken up, or hauled up on the river bank and left to rot." (MacMullen, 23). To be clear, this military-affiliated maritime historian is not bemoaning consolidation from any anti-capitalist, socialist perspective. He squares the circle by suggesting that whiteness allowed for the absorption of knowledge derived from biophysical proximity to wilderness, quarantined its vulnerabilities, and finally activated its proper infrastructural form akin to a sovereign space—a "floating palace."

This transformation, perhaps too extreme in the form of the California Pacific Railroad and needing slight modulation, was mythologized from the earliest days of mass Anglo immigration to the state. In one of the origin stories of Sacramento Delta maritime networks, both flora and landscape geomorphology must be tamed-- through access to an undefined and occult "Indian" knowledge-- to allow for the fundamentals of trade to take place. Yuba County promoted this narrative, emphasizing how "Illustrative of the difficulties attending early navigation and transportation the following may be mentioned. In 1848, a man living in this vicinity, by the aid of an Indian, felled a sycamore tree and with axes fashioned it into the form of a canoe. In this frail and clumsy vessel, he made the voyage to San Francisco, taking with him a barrel of corn-beef, a present from Michael Nye to his brother-in-law, William Foster." (*History*, 107). Navigation, principally enabled by the expertise of an Indigenous California only mentioned offhand, is crucial for literally tying together social bonds of intermarried families through the exchange of an overtly identified foodstuff.

Critically, the alimentation is a cured, preserved cattle product, lashing domestic patterns of food and a particular Spanish and British penchant for cattle requiring grazing lands with the ability to comprehend and master waterways. The two are inseparable—without food preservation, the journey would be useless. Without the designated infrastructural route that followed, the beef would not require salting in the European tradition and could not enable larger-scale ranching for profit. Merging these two initiatives are the protocols of white familiarity and decorum.

Despite Sacramentan river travel's rude elementariness associated with Indigeneity and homestyle food preservation, its boosters consistently claimed an almost mystical potential for steamboats to impact the landscape. In their imagination, riverboats modernized the waterway to pass muster, conforming to engineering and behavioral expertise as well as tradition. Continuing its figuration of riverboats' privileged liaison with Indigeneity, the Yuba County *History* rehearses how "When the Indians along the river saw this strange object ascending the stream, propelled by an unseen power, and heard it puff, they thought an evil spirit

was pursuing them and fled to the woods. After seeing it land at the bank, and perceiving that the *whites were not at all afraid*, they came out and expressed themselves much pleased with the new and strange kind of boat." (*History*, 108, emphasis added). Obviously, this approbatory account traffics in racist tropes to place whiteness at the vanguard of human advancement.

The hagiographers malign the unnamed Native observers for their superstitious animism and irrational spiritual framework. This stereotypical dismissal, however, also betrays the potency the white settlers feel about the machine, projecting it onto a convenient Indigenous other. Their designation of the ship as "propelled by an unseen power" is nonsensical, as captains propelled the sailing barges transporting grain during the wheat boom with the unseen force of wind. While a sail fills with a breeze, mushrooming to indicate its presence, the narrators of Yuba's history also showcase how the boilers puffed with smoke and, much like a full sail, left a visible trace of energy generation. They note an "unseen power" that is very much observable and thus reveal their artificial assignment of this power to the machinery.

However, while they beatify the mystic elements of industrial technology taming raging waters, they affirm to the reader (through the assumed perspective of the Indigenous audience) that there were "not at all afraid." Their self-assuredness does not square with the extreme danger of steam travel—as Marcucci's vivid depiction of the body parts blasted to bits in the *Sagamore's* gruesome demise. Despite the inherent risk of hastily assembled ships competing for maximum speed and capacity, plunging into territory still not practically under settler dominion, they feel no trepidation.

Exemplary of the steamship era, which would decline precipitously once the Army Corps of Engineers affirmed riverine docility, treacherous vessels undertaking exploratory ventures without reliable navigational tools like a chart and depth soundings compensated for technical incompetency (without proficiency almost always funded, studied, and implemented by the federal government) with elaborate and sophisticated amenities and elaborate furnishings. Refinement and infrastructural prowess display this dialectical relationship, demonstrating the entwinement and necessity of each to foster the experience of whiteness. The remedy of appeals to luxury reassured travelers that despite inadequate logistical facilities and an unpredictable market not yet fully integrated into global networks, the navigability and hence the knowability of the California countryside was as inevitable and timeless as the infinite sophistication and gentility assigned to whiteness in the Euro-American imagination. Having earlier outlined the economic rationale for and corporate structuration of steamship service, I next consider its underlying civilizational appeals through the colonial aesthetics and architecture it so desperately chased.

The purveyors of steam travel would go to extreme lengths to convince their passengers of the inevitability of a metropolitan Sacramento. Of an admittedly extravagant example, but one that still represented an overall trend in decoration, MacMullen swoons over a steamboat, cataloging how "Her cabins were the picture of Victorian elegance—elaborately turned moldings, plate-glass mirrors, marble-topped tables, red plush upholstery, and glistening brass lamps. […] Leading artists of the times were engaged to set off her interior with murals of California scenes—and all this for $200,000." (MacMullen, 35). The ornamental materials included in this description are compelling on several levels. The first is the reach of the commodity networks required to import fine raw materials and manufactured goods worldwide, including plate-glass and marble. The brass itself is significant for the intense upkeep required to keep it polished and avoid tarnishing while at sea, representing continued investment that would insist upon the immortality of colonial occupation. Finally, the murals capture the natural wonder

of a fabled land and turn infrastructure into theater stage dressing which, like a map, can encompass the entirety of a geographic region for control and perusal at the wealthy guests' leisure.

Interlocuters consistently cast the fleet, composed of ships adorned mainly with either feminine monikers or geographical designators lauding the state's remarkable places, as amenable and acquiescent servants to the whims and desires of guests. Note how MacMullen recapitulates the running of a given boat, classifying how "The rest of her life on the river was one of *gracious service*, of comfortable speed, of meals which will go down in history." (MacMullen, 37, emphasis added). Curiously for MacMullen, these sumptuous meals join the other emphases of his analysis—namely, an appendix of ships' lengths and other technical specifications and enamored descriptions of record-breaking speed and disaster. While the appendices offer great detail for the maritime enthusiast, the meals themselves are not explicitly recounted—they do not go down in his history. They remain suspended as a recurrently noteworthy aspect of riverboat operation that vaguely evokes a feeling of renown rather than concrete evidence. They plainly were significant, but the author cannot quite pinpoint the rationale for this intensity.

Laudators of steamship travel almost without fail highlight how luxurious the cuisine was onboard these vessels, yet never outline specifics. Instead, they are more of an affective state, an aspirational index of the stature of the guests. Historian and public history advocate A.C.W. Bethel captioned a photograph of *Yosemite's* departure from Sacramento's Broadway wharf by extolling the steamship's virtuous refinement with similarly emotional appeals. Bethel asserts, "Steamboats not only provided a swift and reliable mode of transportation for passengers and freight, but also offered an agreeable way of seeing the California countryside. After an excursion from San Francisco to the state capital in the spring of 1859, the publisher of *Hutchings' California Magazine* declared he 'could not recommend a tour which can be made with so much ease, and is so generally calculated to please every variety of tastes, as a trip on the bay and river.'" (Bethel, 257) While *Yosemite* would meet an ignoble end, described later in this chapter, the publisher's assessment that steamboats could "please every variety of tastes" once again encapsulates the riverboat as a microcosm for Western civilization, ferrying a variable but still well-policed whiteness across the globe. While the hinterlands might diverge slightly from metropolitan capitals, the exaggerated emphasis on infrastructure's furnishings ensured the essence of taste.

One particular steamship epitomized how the aesthetic goals of logistics matched their practical transportation aims. In a typical description of the *Chrysopolis*, a vessel so famous as to be featured on souvenir plates of the city of Sacramento alongside the state capitol building, also known as the "Queen of the Sacramento," each opulent feature is itemized, from the hull and engine room inwards: "[Builder John] North personally selected the timbers, purchased the finest engine from New York rated at over 1300 horsepower. Painted white on the outside, with an interior color scheme of white and gold, hung with paintings by Bierstadt, Hill and other California artists, with cabins and public rooms filled with costly 'appointments' (furnishings), the *Chrysopolis* was as fine a steamboat as ever sailed an American river." (Land Location and Boundary Section, 12).

The *Chrysopolis*'s décor and amenities metonymically mimic a 19th-century white conception of California's fate. It distills rapport with ecological bounty, refining John North's appreciation of wood. However, this rapport does not become too attached to nature. It maintains connections with technically and commercially savvy merchants and engineers: chroniclers

specify the provenance and mechanical output of the engine geographically and numerically. The engineering and industrial proficiency immediately yields to the aesthetic achievement of the ship, which marries myths and realities of resource caches catalyzing Sacramento's growth with the purity of its cause.

Bierstadt's few composed scenes addressing the slope up the Sierra from Sacramento diverge from his more celebrated Yosemite vistas devoid of human presence. They reinforce this infrastructural blend of terrestrial potential and rational ingenuity. "[Lake Tahoe, CA]" (fig. 11) contains a nebulous figure below its horizon line, ambiguously Indigenous or Anglo. The racial indeterminacy provides an equilibrium between wild splendor and mechanical advancement materialized in the canoe. Whiteness ushers the former into the latter.

fig. 11

Unsurprisingly, the paddler directs their energy toward a streak of light on the lake, invoking progress, advancement, and wisdom. A flock of birds mirrors their movement: the fluid navigation of the frontier causes natural order to fall in line with white settler destiny. Elsewhere Bierstadt boosted California as an untouched Eden for the reaping; here, like in the cabins of the *Chrysopolis*, he underscores that Californian "Cities of Gold" will activate the full racial potential of a paradise yearning to find a master through artifice and navigational aptitude. In Bierstadt's estimation, the waters feeding the Sacramento Valley seem destined for infrastructural innovation.

The *Chrysopolis* is a white ship framed by gold. This classification references both its paint job and its character. The deck surveys a nature so timid that not only are the heights of Victorian fashion found in the cabins, but paintings enable the passengers to capture wilderness in a frame. The convention of cataloging the increasingly prominent artisans of idealized 'wilderness' whose vistas model a nature free of labor and yearning for management manifests the lineage and grammar of Western art history. It also equates the steamboat itself to a floating museum and a resort. The ship does not just bring culture into the hinterlands—it consolidates aesthetic sensibilities into the kernel of travel. Propriety does not just depart down a gangway, shipped from San Francisco. Connectivity both maintains and amplifies the leisures and pleasures of whiteness; it reaffirms the presence of a privileged vantage point through the artwork and juxtaposes that vantage point with every stop along an itinerary.

The *Chrysopolis* does not just project ideology from the metropole to the periphery. As a riverboat, it mimics and thus exemplifies the righteousness of projection as an epistemology that takes for granted the inevitability of material landscape transformation after an encounter with white rationality. The ship manifests that rationality through a fusion of travel, taste, and experiential empirics. Infrastructure ensures the view never fades despite temporal variance or ecological, let alone economic, catastrophe. The anxieties of a particular place like Sacramento becoming inundated, whether with water or with Asian migrants, are perpetually assuaged by the regular timetable of infrastructural arrival. This advent brings both material goods to reproduce whiteness socially and the blueprint of the elemental process of separating whiteness from nature. Whiteness positions itself as infrastructural to establish an elevated vantage point to be reflected upon and reproduced by every passenger and thus made ubiquitous and commonsensical no matter their race. The ship, and thus the river, is the only route making headway toward that vision in an aqueous environment.

Routinely, the revitalization of whiteness from the husk of previous colonial efforts was direct and literal. The California Steam Navigation Company was never a single firm, vertically integrated under the watchful eye of an exacting executive. Aside from its origins as a consortium of individual owner-operators and its affiliation with the Central Pacific Railroad, the nomenclature of the firm itself eventually referred to an entirely distinct firm that would carry the legacy of the CNSC and expand through mergers with related concerns. Spanning these two individual initiatives was the enterprise of one riverboat captain stationed at a pivotal southern hub of river traffic, as "The business of the C.S.N.CO. at Stockton was such that there were two agents to handle it, one Arthur Cormwall, who ran a coal yard as a side issue, looked after the lower river boats, the other was T.C. WALKER. Captain Walker found that his end of the business had no further use for him so he organized a new company and reserected [sic] the name of the defunct C.S.N.CO. and took it for his own." (Carleton, 3). The use of the term "resurrected" indicates the potency in the river to reinvigorate idled capacities. The new firm would inherit some vessels, a prominent trademark, and a tendency to engage in monopolization understood as the natural benefit of the river in regulating trade.

Ultimately, Walker's nascent firm would ally with operators on the San Joaquin River to create a Delta-wide conglomerate to maintain stability in freight shipment rates. "The rival river steamer companies have consolidated and there will be no rate-war for many a long day to come. A final meeting of the San Joaquin Improvement Company and the California Steam Navigation Company, was held at the offices of the latter [and] It was there decided that the name of the newly consolidated company should be the California Steam Navigation and Improvement Company and articles of incorporation under that name were drawn up." ("Afloat and Ashore"). The title of the emergent river travel behemoth encapsulates its dual concerns that transcend a shift in management, operators, or regional focus: navigation and improvement as ideals that can traverse the vicissitudes of markets or barren landscapes to transport whiteness globally.

The imagery of this magisterial command of nature flourished in the most fantasy-prone, dream-infused locales aboard the ship, where captains and crew attempted to recreate urban luxuries as mobile technologies capable of refining all waters plied by their craft. A prime example is found in the menu featured for the steamer *T.C. Walker* (fig. 12). The steamer, eponymously christened for the businessman responsible for the California Steam Navigation Company's resurrection and eventual merger with downriver concerns, is engraved cutting through waves that oddly emanate from the shore rather than flowing downstream or upstream as would be expected in a tidal river.

Even gale force winds cannot account for the chop: in a typical contemporaneous jingoistic nationalism, the steamship flies two American flags both fore at the bow and aft at the stern, as well as an oversized banner that appears to extend about a third of the length of the ship, all three of which billow against the direction of travel seemingly undisturbed by any crosswinds. Thus, the waves in the otherwise naturalistic image evoke an otherworldly geography defiant of all hydrological laws. A mysterious force emanates from the banks of the river to attempt to disorient and set the *T.C. Walker* off course. The ship proudly refuses to do so, buttressed by two smokestacks whose plume also floats towards the ship's wake. The steady course indicates that mechanical ingenuity has subdued the unnatural undulation. Triumph is confirmed by the emblem of the ship's name superimposed on a ship's wheel, showing the fundamental promise of navigators' ability and proficiency.

fig. 12

Returning to the exaggerated banner allows for comprehension of a correction to a rhetorical strategy solely focused on engineering capacity and machinic advantage. The banner emblazoned with the ship's, and thus the founder's, name insinuates that this vessel captures the essence of the individual that financed its voyages. While the engraver certainly accentuates the size of the pendant to allow the viewer to read the honorific, it is so large that given the ship's stated length of 200 feet (MacMullen, 141), its length would reach an estimated sixty-six feet. Given the impracticality of towing such a large piece of cloth, like the peculiar waves, this otherwise faithful metonymic representation deviates in order to highlight the vessel's name and allow for a recognizably Anglo name to rechristen the river. The banner flies at the exact height of the smokestacks. The mechanical might of U.S. engineering is matched only by celestial clouds and, significantly, by the splendor of gentlemanly corporate organization.

The menu that serves as a canvas for this scene matches the technical reformulation of brute nature with a self-possessed settler individuality transcending the body and becoming synonymous with infrastructural mastery. The banner elevates individual acumen and notoriety to vaunted scientific prowess. This discourse helps contextualize the images oriented laterally around the steamer itself. On the left, a wild bloom of California poppies transforms into a bouquet tied tightly with string directly below. Symbolically, the premier symbol of the enchantment of Californian natural splendor, conspicuously overgrown to intrude onto and perhaps undergird the company's stylized title above, remains reassuringly bound and constrained. While still evoking wistful beauty, the bouquet runs no danger of superseding its place on the page. To emphasize the power of constraining nature with tactful artifice, a bow hovers on the right side of the page, nearly as large as the ship itself. While the fires of the boiler power the steamship, its destination and wake are a gentile, and even feminized, refinement.

The menu's contents reflect solidly Californian source material polished into a sensibility aligned with imperial propriety. The courses are elaborate and feature a wide array of culinary techniques, emphasizing the chefs' skill despite their maritime constrictions. The ship offers "Soups./Fish./Boiled./Entrees./Roasts./Vegetables./Pudding and Pastry." complimented with sweets and snacks plucked from Central Valley fields yet elevated into a cornucopia among other colonial staples. These include a dessert of "Fruit. Nuts. Raisins. Crackers. Cheese. Tea and Coffee." The first three reflect the inheritance of endeavors such as the Natoma vineyard, and the last two represent the integration of local economies with trade networks stretching across the Pacific.

Throughout, the menu strikes a careful balance. While the hosts offer discernment and vivacity to take advantage of the allure of naval travel—the "Best Brands of Beer and Wine can be had by applying to the steward."—they always temper this indulgence with genteel and demure acquiescence to social protocols. The rules of the craft insist that "Gambling of all kinds is strictly prohibited," with a tone that belies the racialized stereotypical associations between gambling and Chinese migrants rampant in California three years after the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act. The final regulation for passengers echoes the gendered vow symbolized by the bow on the front cover. By declaring that "The Ladies' Cabin is for the use of ladies and their escorts only" (California Navigation and Improvement Company), the company boasts that this floating restaurant and fine hotel not only satisfies civilized customers on their journey inland. It also hauls the cargo of civility up this wild river, weaving its unique output into a matrix of propriety and taste imported from around the Horn.

The gentility of the nourishment aboard the *T.C. Walker* not only brought the agricultural output of Sacramento Valley fields in alignment with white mores and attitudes. Refreshments also secured *the routes* over which imperial commodities flowed within the imperial orbit. As a realization of technical maritime innovation, the steamship and the navigation expertise fostered among ship captains and quartermasters allowed an imagined colonial sovereignty to impose itself despite an otherwise divergent and threatening specificity along the frontier. Legal historian Lauren Benton articulates how naval explorers sought to tame the discrepancies within colonial geography through both a lexicon and material intervention that replicated familiar marine sea and riverscapes:

> Both in sojourners' experiences of space and in the production of knowledge about distant geographies, Europeans adapted old strategies and created new ways of describing territory as differentiated, fragmented, and uneven. The experience of travel as movement along passages to discrete locations[…, i]n contract to the rationalization of space through progressively accurate mapping, […] emphasized a set of repeating geographic features and, within this grammar, attention to distinctive qualities, the oddities or singularities of the specific case. (Benton, 16)

Benton articulates how a grammar of geographic tropes—harbors, rivers, forts, ports—enabled colonists to ideate passages. These passages were essential, as ships' conformity to their rational and geometric courses bestowed a traveling sovereignty for European ships due to navigation's semblance through mimicry of divine order. Thus, like painted scenery on a rotating drum, the repetition of geographic tropes both posited the metropole as the archetypical origin of civilization and ideal types of geographies, as well as confirmed a ship's alignment with the stars and maritime knowledge and thus the superiority of colonial seafarers.

Adherence to navigability was vital to vindicate Sacramento's affiliation with the imperial dominion of the Pacific. The colonial grammar of "repeating geographic features," many of which, like harbors, would transform in subsequent years through engineering feats like dredging into an infrastructural lexicon, also oriented racialized subjectivities alongside state-sanctioned exploratory expeditions. It reassured the vanguard of colonial expansion that despite their contact with menacing barbarous customs, an infrastructure of connectivity and propriety would allow synchronized voyeuristic comprehension of foreign exoticism and bizarre oddities at a reliably safe distance.

A sensational account of "picturesque" logistical arrangements for a marriage ceremony within the Delta's Chinese community heartily evokes this fascination and simultaneous distance from Orientalist fantasy. *The Washington Post* reprinted this breathless narrative from across the country initially composed by *The Stockton Herald*, titillating readers by expressively depicting "Yesterday afternoon [when] a strange procession of hacks with gay colors flying, with a scent of burning spice about them, drew up at the shed of the California Steam Navigation company, where the steamer Mary Garratt was loading." ("A Chinese Bride," 2). While the account does not name the observer, they are immediately racialized as white as counterposed to the 'strange' procession, which punctuates the natural landscape with their "gay colors." The chronicle establishes the audience's commensurability with this positionality, as the account offers no details of the *Mary Garratt*, assuming a familiarity with the particular exchange routes between Sacramento and San Francisco.

The audience's acquaintanceship with steamboats perhaps even extended to the knowledge that the epithet "Mary Garratt" celebrated the domestic propagation of the line's owner's household. The article establishes parallels between the normality of designating a ship after a female relative as a standard courtship procedure mirrored, yet warped, by the unfamiliar carriages pulling up to stage another romantic ritual. Another pantomime where prim whiteness collides with a recognizable but distorted parody emerges from technologies themselves. We are made aware of the activities of the "steamer," which in popular iconography invokes the billowing smokestack while its boilers heated up. The "scent of burning spice about" the procession mimics this mechanical combustion. In the Anglo fantasy, the latter evokes an archaic, ancient, and much less potent conflagration that nevertheless can influence the atmosphere to make it sensorily uncanny and bizarre. The reporter's enticed description evinces a notable tension, where the scene is sensual and alluring yet potentially disastrous for its illegibility.

After establishing this initial suspense, however, the observer reassures the reader that imperial vision's omnipotent can maintain distance while still extracting encyclopedic comprehension and vicarious erotic enjoyment. Crucially, this vision into otherwise categorically obscured, unknowable spaces depends upon the reach of the logistical transportation and exchange site: the riverboat landing. An otherwise shrouded and dark interaction so comprehensively relies on infrastructure to function that a proper white observer can capture it at the moment of transit. The access afforded by infrastructure commodifies movement and guarantees supervision for efficiency and sufficient accordance with cultural mores. The author notes the ability of the riverboat to stop the grandiose and eye-catching spectacle and demystify the intricately intimate details of what the newspaper suggests as its fundamental and enigmatic purpose.

In a passage on the preparations for the bride's arrival, the portrayal quantifies time and counterposes "foreign" itineraries to the speed and efficiency of river travel as represented by

precise timetables. The diegesis links racialized atemporality to China Slough, explicitly extending the reach of the riverboat into an environment cast as unnavigable, filthy, and immutably foreign: "She had been kept over by the slough, her attendants said, for thirty days blindfolded the whole time, and was to be allowed to see no one till given to her future husband. She was allowed two female attendants, who were her eyes for her, and during the thirty days had been wrought upon by certain ceremonies intended to render her especially conducive to the happiness of her husband in the future." ("A Chinese Bride," 2).

Much like the relationship between a riverboat menu and its timetable, this sensationalized vignette comingles temporality and domestic rituals of refinement. However, the exposé titillatingly mutates both aspects: rather than a carefully outlined meal, "certain ceremonies" are performed "conducive to the happiness of her husband in the future." The alluring vagueness invites the reader to project fantasies onto this ritual. It alludes to a shared affinity for patriarchal control but denigrates a racial outlier as out-of-time and too archaic to function correctly.

The thirty days' wait and the entanglement of the bride with her attendants, who are so involved in her every bodily function they "were her eyes," hints at this racialized gendered pattern's recognizable dominion that nevertheless could never exist in a modernized and efficiently arranged white world. Abstract white racialization acknowledges natural instinct but reins it in—neither hypersexualized like those in a "state of nature" nor, as is this case, agonizingly constrained and obsessed with procedure. The possibility of perceiving a courtly, quite sophisticated procession threatens to cast doubt upon the supremacy of Chinese culture as instantiating orderly patriarchal romance. The reporter appreciates patriarchy but maligns an unexportable form of control. The universal accessibility of whiteness, exemplified by the tireless modern steamship, accedes to this challenge.

Ultimately the procession cannot remain in the slough—white bystanders gratefully figure with relief that even Asian social reproduction in a society dispersed due to exchange's impact on immigration makes travel necessary for the bride. The narrative seems to suggest that the wait inherent to this ritual makes the ease and efficiency of the riverboat all the more valuable. An improperly racialized temporality is brought up to speed by the riverboat to be corrected and comprehended. Logistics captures even the most mundane and private details of racialized people, bringing them into the world of publication to reassure white readers of the riverboat's balance between proximity and subjugation through encyclopedic awareness of habit and desire.

The bride's lack of vision, whereby she amalgamates into her attendants, most significantly delineates the racializing matrix of timelessness and improper corporeality. A thread from Raymond Williams's iconic *The Country and the City* clarifies how Anglo observers would perceive the significance of the unnamed bride's sightlessness due to her blindfold. Whether this is an accurate depiction, a willful Orientalist misreading, or a complete fabulation, Williams notes that appreciation of the *view* of a picturesque landscape, such as the bustling riverfront serving as fodder for numerous scenic depictions, establishes "The self-conscious observer: the man who is not only looking at land" -- and here, people evoking distant and unknowable terrain— "but who is conscious that he is doing so, as an experience in itself." Williams further notes the inextricability of this subjectivity and its preferred vistas as didactic tools normalizing capitalist classifications.

The observer analogizes his sight to his gendered ownership of property. Through the self-conscious view, he differentiates between "in the one case [where] the land is being

organized for production, where tenants and laborers will work, [versus in] the other case it is being organized for consumption—the view, the ordered proprietary repose, the prospect." (Williams, 124). Vision for Williams is a multifaceted process, at once material and subjective. It reinforces a white understanding of agency and demands concrete interventions in the landscape to rectify environmental threats and personal indignations. As significantly, colonial landscape viewpoint heuristics derive material and symbolic potency by linking privileged subjectivities to a survey or panorama of the orderly market. The observer placates themself through a clear designation distinguishing production from consumption and circulation, thus indicating proper capitalist functionality. The omniscient view elides the very nature of the commodity as simultaneously exchangeable and useful, suggesting that commodification does not instill contradiction in consumer goods. Instead, the view splits those that commodify—who understand the division through visual perception—and those commodified—who cannot distinguish the systematicity of capital.

The biased account above certainly does not faithfully represent the lived experience of a Chinese woman living in Sacramento in the mid-19th century. This text is a discourse that anonymously figures a blindfolded Asian woman to discuss and situate riverine travel. Following Williams, through the vantage of the riverboat landing, the reader encounters a racialized and visionless woman-- hypersexualized beyond expression through obscure fashions-- who thus exists utterly detached from the concerns of the market.

This figure marshals gender and racial stereotypes as an embodied icon for the infinitely exploitable resources of a sufficiently organized people and landscape who nevertheless lack vitality and natural earthly bonds. Without innate ecological potential, they cannot efficiently and instinctually recognize and extract any prospects (a metaphor for picturesque views and mineral wealth claims). When the passage expresses the ceremony's absence of timeliness, it acknowledges that racialized social reproduction may still be contained and regulated within that moment. It already has come to rely on the riverboat as Asian masculinity conforms to the demands of capitalist time-space compression (Cosgrove) and finds China Slough dependent on merchant activity centered elsewhere, enabled solely by the river line.

Once infrastructure disperses marriage and familial units amid the modern landscape, the riverboat is inescapable in its passengers' lives. Its contradistinction to the mythological, pastoral California iconography espoused and distributed by the Bierstadt works onboard reinforces the balance of whiteness: the riverboat forces modern life while still housing the abstract promise of nature. While the bride's destination is her husband, while on board, white guests can fully appraise her mannerisms and dress can, as "The affair was an especially aristocratic one, judging from the fancy dresses of the females of the party. No Chinamen were permitted to participate in the send-off." ("A Chinese Bride," 2). The riverboat has enabled comprehension of an Asian figure meant to evoke exaggerated domesticity, improperly calibrated to a ruthless and quick market.

Improper calibration in an industrial setting had extremely deleterious consequences—both for market exchange rates and human lives as a secondary concern. The saga of a distorted foil to the majesty of the *Chrysopolis*, notably and horrifically racialized in its depiction of its sinking, serves as a warning that even the mighty conglomerate was maneuvering along a precarious precipice. The legendary "California Steam was itself not immune from disaster. Shortly after six o'clock on the evening of October 12, 1865, the big *Yosemite*, running-mate of the *Chrysopolis*, was leaving Rio Vista, bound down river. […] Her huge wheels had made less than half a turn when there was a rumbling roar, mingled with the crash of splintering wood and

the yells of horrified humanity." The order of calamity indicates what was threatened without properly secured infrastructure, as the first casualty enumerated is "nearly a ton of gold and silver from the mines." The disaster narrative highlights the risks of riverine travel noting "the precious cargo dropped into the hold," inverting the mining process that reclaimed it from the depths of dry riverbeds and blasted hillsides.

Despite his situatedness as a mid-century white writer, MacMullen could not gloss over the gross indifference of contemporaneous reporters. He recounts, "Typical of the racial prejudices of the time was the *Alta's* account the following day; it listed the names of thirteen American dead, and then added—just to keep the record straight— 'There were twenty-nine Chinamen killed by the explosion, all of whom were buried at Rio Vista.'" (MacMullen, 30). The twenty-nine unnamed Chinese victims of the *Yosemite* disaster, interred at the mouth of the Delta, are not only the last sufferers included as a historical afterthought for posterity. Their anonymous quantification deploys a gross equivalence to the precious metals featured as the primary exposure for Sacramento paddle wheelers. The *Alta* betrays a colonial anxiety towards extractive development and racially segregated hierarchical workforces. The remarkable failure of the *Yosemite* to contain, cordon off, and containerize both conversely indicates infrastructure's indispensability for ensuring capitalist development and racial comportment.

The discourse of imprecise boiler calibration or reckless piloting spurred by excessive competition unearths how whiteness functioned as a regulator of both natural and economic processes. As an interface between 'nature' and the market, infrastructure affirmed whiteness's paradoxical quarantined intimacy with wilderness. The rhetoric of the California Anti-Debris Association—presaging and advocating for the consequential Sawyer decision effectively outlawing hydraulic mining—typifies how infrastructure deputized nature to interfere with improper market logic.

As a remedy to railroad monopoly, "No one in California appreciated the advantages conferred by river competition more than farm leader George Ohleyer of Yuba City. A founder of the Anti-Debris Association in 1878, Ohleyer had successfully championed the cause of the rivers against hydraulic mining" (Magliari, 462). Ohleyer campaigned "to lobby for increased state and federal expenditures to improve navigation and flood control on the rivers. Noting the almost total ineffectiveness of the state railroad commission, Ohleyer observed that 'in the Sacramento valley the best freight regulators are the rivers, and the same can be said of the San Joaquin.'" (Magliari, 462). By anthropomorphizing the river, Ohleyer claims a unique position for maritime infrastructure: riverboats transform the earth into an agential champion against ineffective politicians. Once again, like Michael Nye's barrel of corn beef, logistical expansion secures balanced and civilized social relationships and capitalism at once. Infrastructure's unique access to ecological processes preserves an etiquette firmly welded to whiteness far better than rational discourse among 'important men.'

My focused critique of distinct corporate entities aims somewhat paradoxically to underscore the inconsequentiality of a particular firm's investments and portfolio versus their reification of an affective regime of accumulation that concretizes racial values in the landscape. That solidification ensures behavioral aspirations and market legibility through recalcitrant, and quite material, infrastructure. Even in planned development's absence, settler colonial imperialism's racial and accumulatory precepts achieve an afterlife through infrastructure's imposition of proper and malignant subjectivities and feelings. Engineering gears both towards market participation, commodification, and an extractive approach to valuation.

The Ajax and Backgrounding Whiteness for Economic Immortality

What was the role of race in mitigating capitalism's unique, privileged, unfettered ingress into the gifts of nature? Another major proponent of subsidies for navigation and commercial maritime trade mirrors the folksy yet connected positionality of Ohleyer-- the farmer turned political operator. In "twenty-five letters to the Sacramento *Daily Union*" commissioned as a report on the potential for Hawai'i as a Pacific imperial outpost and realized as "a mélange of tourism, chauvinism, easy ridicule of the remnants of native culture, and exhortations to California capitalists" (Anderson, Frank, and Sanderson, 99), Mark Twain appears as one of the California Steam Navigation Company's most prominent passengers.

I now shift to personal narrative as the corporeal instantiation of capitalist logic through race stokes imaginary returns through a civilizational teleology. Financial embodiment that enshrines white mobility and mutability and condemns the rest of the world to fixity consistently promotes the inevitability of white dominion over the natural world despite, or perhaps especially, when colonialism's particular political champions are in flux or even danger. This is the case in California, where the Spanish Fantasy Past defined Spain as a harbinger of later Anglo glory established through measured accounting. Despite the continual deferral of the promise of a corporate networked whiteness, this sense of racial destiny allowed nineteenth-century California capital to instantiate elaborate infrastructural networks. Privately owned but often state-subsidized, these irrigation ditches, levees, canals, and rail lines constituted the critical tools that bridge temporary imperial setbacks and market turbulence to maintain white landscapes in perpetuity. Their cohesion depended upon civilizational mythologists and personal allegiance.

Twain's reflections comprise both. His imperial travelogue reports are bombastic and thoroughly racist. He composed them during a crucial moment in his transition from journalist to a wry, canonical observer of the 19th-century American vernacular. Twain's secured his legacy through his celebrated commentary on U.S. folkways and the race relations that underwrote them. However, the development of his prose owes much to his travels to locales ambitiously poised as territorial peripherals of U.S. empire—and the emergent Pacific racial hierarchies catalyzing in the trade outposts of the Hawai'ian islands. This travel was only made possible by a commission out of Sacramento and a steamer line capitalized by a fluvial monopoly attempting to profit from a legislative squabble over trans-Pacific trade. Twain would board the California Steam Navigation Company's *Ajax*, commencing underway

> In January 1866, while controversy raged over the possible elimination of the Honolulu stop [from the itinerary of the federally subsidized Pacific Mail Steamship Company's San Francisco-China route], the California Steam Navigation Company inaugurated its *Ajax* service between San Francisco and Honolulu. As a result of the Hawaiian government's refusal to subsidize any steamer service as long as Honolulu's inclusion in the San Francisco-China run remained possible, the local operation was abandoned in the spring of 1866. In his Sacramento *Daily Union* letters of 17 and 18 April, Mark Twain appealed for federal subsidy of direct service between San Francisco and Honolulu that would allow elimination of the Honolulu stop from the China run. (Anderson, Frank, and Sanderson, 123)

Less than thirty years from the overthrow of the Hawai'ian state, this overview of the geopolitical uproar around global trade route positioning indicates just how prominent a transformation the young state of California was poised to accomplish as a logistical and

propagandistic collect pond for U.S. imperial ambitions in the Pacific. Twain resoundingly participated in both efforts—relying on racialized characterizations always mediated through infrastructural comparison and experience.

In the notebooks where he logged his passage, Twain directly advocated for the Hawai'ian Islands as an output for the productive energies of U.S.—particularly Californian—capital. He bluntly declares that "Congress ought see that steamer line runs to Hawaii." Editors of and commentators on Twain's observations, including his eventual reportage about the islands in the *Daily Union*, catalog imperialist contestation and rivalry as the series' chief motivation. They analyze Twain's pleas entreaties for infrastructural development as essentially making the case that "California capitalists would have the means of carrying on rapid commerce with Hawaii, a necessity if they were to wrest economic control of the islands from the English and French." (Anderson, Frank, and Sanderson, 123). While taken as a corpus, the twenty-five editorials certainly make the case that Californian business interests' positionality offers unique access for increasing the U.S. sphere of influence through soft commercial imperialism.

However, Twain's voyage logs do not explicitly document his reasoning through any medium associated with geopolitics. Twain seems to think through the import of the *Ajax* with twinned discourses focused on comfort and efficiency. Of the ship, Twain extolls how "That Ajax is the finest Ocean Steamer in America, & one of the fastest. She will make this trip to the Sandwich Islands & back in a month, & it generally take a sailing vessel three months. She had invited 52 guests aboard—the cream of the town—gentleman & ladies both, & a splendid brass band." (Anderson, Frank, and Sanderson, 94) The *Ajax's* speed is Remarkable for Twain. He matches and oddly intermingles its pace with the refinement of the onboard guests as if to suggest a causal relationship. The *Ajax*, or a similar steamship, *aims* to establish a base of commercial, and thus cultural, operations in Hawai'i. The mechanism for development is a finely tuned engine and a gentlemanly and sophisticated company enjoying polite entertainment. The extravagant inclusion of the extensive equipment and training required for a brass band attests to their appreciable connoisseurial capacity.

Twain would suspend most of his trip throughout the Kingdom due to a corporeal logistical hiccup: saddle boils precluded travel throughout the archipelago's agricultural regions. The *Ajax's* tenure in Hawai'i was also relatively short-lived. Less than half a year after its advent, "The *Ajax* proved unprofitable, and service was discontinued after its return to San Francisco on 15 April." (Anderson, Frank, and Sanderson, 111). The editorials in the *Daily Union* would prove to join a chorus of efforts successfully advocating to bring Hawai'i deeper into the fold of whiteness, a campaign initiated by the missionaries to the islands whose descendants plotted against the monarchy. While the fantasy of imperialist travelogues remains a well-documented auxiliary to militaristic territorial expansion (Pratt), the infrastructural failures of Twain's journey contribute an undertheorized component to racial capitalist critique. The fiasco reveals how this system churns through economic frontiers for constantly accelerating accumulation not despite logistical catastrophes. Instead, racial capitalism assumes their inevitability as a cultural background. Despite either success or blunder, disaster penetrates infrastructure's morality into wilderness as a racial and circulatory largesse.

While the steamer line may have faltered, as did Twain's reportage efforts, both instituted a cultural milieu with a particular economic rationale that could be transposed to other contexts as commonsense ideology, despite the particular foibles of any individual firm. Twain's detailed observations of the *Ajax's* luxurious accouterments cast infrastructure as the canvas upon which white sociality realizes its true purpose—to enforce civilization in the most inhospitable places.

Twain associates transportation regimes, praiseworthy manners and social standing, and mass communication. This skeleton of this triad is articulated not through the individual efforts of a brilliant novel writer (indeed, he is pursuing a mere journalism commission) or through the notable achievements of the California Steam Navigation Company but through an appeal to whiteness as connective tissue.

Ultimately, Twain's voyage aboard the *Ajax* and sojourn through the Hawai'ian Islands relied upon aesthetic and affective appreciation to appeal to his audience's sense of expansion's economic viability into Pacific archipelago markets. Moreover, his infrastructural framing device associates commercial feasibility as contingent on the re-instantiation of previous domestic and frontier racializations adapted to a new geopolitical climate. Literary theorist Hsuan Hsu offers a detailed analysis of the political-economic import of Twain's racial observations in his lesser-known travel writing, mentioning how during this particular journey, "Writing just a year after the Civil War, as business leaders throughout the nation were concerned with how to source cheap labor and commodities in the wake of Emancipation, Twain advocates Chinese 'Coolies' as a promising and inexhaustible source of plantation labor."

Much like the *Ajax* can recontextualize the brass band as a marker of the gentility of an entire urban gentry floating towards new economic opportunities, Twain relies upon longstanding characterizations of Indigeneity and Blackness but tames the latter through a new imperial possibility owing to the incipient transoceanic trade across the Pacific. Hsu notes that "After identifying Kanaka plantation workers with the past […], Twain turns to Chinese contract laborers as the key not only to Hawai'i's productivity, but also to California's future prominence in the global economy." (Hsu, 10-11). Scholars should correctly situate Twain's steamship journey in capitalist historiography, not as a sojourn into Oceania from the Pacific Coast. Instead, he journeys *from* the East into California. Hsu's incisive analysis catalogs the impact of comparative racialization, set in a decidedly frontier mélange of cultures and empires, on Twain's subsequent (and most renowned) Southern fiction.

This jaunt not only indicates how white culture globally reconfigured postbellum Blackness as excessively animate through direct contrast with a white supremacist stereotype of Asian productivity and inhumanity. It also shows how settlers cast the West as a continuation of the Southern U.S. experience, categorized by intense intimacy with denigrated yet potentially vibrant racialized communities. However, the California frontier remained a concomitant entry point for the exploitation and paramount control "Far East." This maneuver establishes a unique racialized benefit for California. This land mirrors the primordial, inherently "American" potential of untouched wilderness yet also allows for the subservience of mythical, Orientalist fantasies that have fallen too far off the other end of the racialized spectrum to become essentially mechanistic.

However, the merger and coexistence of racial regimes can only partially exhaust the promise of California. Roping these racializations together atop the continual comparison between domestic warfare against California Indians and an inevitable Pacific conflict bestows the Golden State the inimitable distinction of scientific, proficient, and global racial management. California projects a site wherein domestic others—epitomized by Blackness in the South and Indigeneity on the East Coast—could finally be tamed through a balance achieved by Western whiteness.

In her astute analysis of the figuration of the South as domestic other, Jennifer Rae Greeson tracks how "writers posit the South as premodern and undeveloped," an assertion that allows the region "to serve a forward-looking function as well, emerging as a domestic site upon

which the racialist, civilizing power of U.S. continental expansion and empire abroad may be rehearsed and projected." (Greeson, 4). The celebrated American humorist's journey to Hawai'i, reliant on a technology perfected on the deep Southern plantocracy's main trade thoroughfare, demonstrates the transmissibility of this "forward-looking function." Its adaptability permits the West to enter a lineage of racialist projection accompanying the frontier that refuses to cease once it subsumes a locale (the South itself continually reminds cultural observers of its segregationist bona fides). While Hsu thoroughly explicates the racialist content of Twain's journey expressed to eager audiences in the Sacramento *Daily Union*, I want to emphasize the logistical details of the *Ajax* and the letter's intended destination in Sacramento. The technical specifications and geographical tether establish the capital city and, just as crucially, the transportation networks essential to its development as both recipient and enabler of the East's entry to the West Coast.

The aside in the letters to the decline of the Kanaka population offers Chinese contract labor as a tripartite solution, assisting in Indian removal, assuring peace through the removal of the question of Blackness, and allowing for a (falsely characterized) "demonstrably" malleable workforce. The steamer *Ajax* brought news of this island experiment. With increased capacity, the flagship's steamer line could bring the willing arms of timid Asian laborers, imitating Sutter's corralling of Kanaka Maoli laborers to construct his fort's foundation. Suppose California recapitulates a capacious metaphor for the imperial ability to properly segregate and subjugate races worldwide (including within U.S. borders). In that case, the steamer serves as a microcosm of this potential only achievable by the speed of information and reliability of infrastructural reconfiguration and linkage.

The biographies of California Steam Navigation Company executives materially attest to this Western South. Secretary William Norris as "but a lad […] had left home for what was then the Far West, going to St. Louis, and being employed as a purser of a Mississippi River steamboat when he was 18 years of age. Until his 30th year, Mr. Norris followed the river, being captain of a steamer running between New Orleans and St. Louis for two or three years before he came to California[for] The prospect of more stirring adventures" (Norris, 10). During Norris lifetime, as he remembers, the West's reliance on the South transcends the actual coordinates of the West itself. Crucial here, is that California as West offers "more stirring adventures," which in the language of racial animacy in which whiteness achieves vitality through proximity to other racialized classifications reflects California's potential for (what seems like an initially paradoxical) multiracial white supremacy.

An ideology that casts frontiers as inherently expanding lashes white civilizational 'duty' to the functionality of the spatial fix within capitalism. The Western relationship to the South recurs in the evolution of Mississippian and Gulf maritime networks expanding hemispherically to the entire Pacific or labor market recalibration through contract "coolie" labor from freshly subjugated regions as a solution to Black emancipation. This convergence highlights how infrastructure consistently bridges disparate racial regimes and calamitous inflection points within capitalism under the banner of whiteness. Furthermore, the geographic tethering of South to West relies not just broadly on infrastructural similarities but specifically on wartime militaristic development. Norris recounts the company's inception, when "In November, 1849, the propeller McKim, which has been used as a transport during the war, arrived from New Orleans, and was the first steamer that went to Sacramento" (Norris, 7). Several pieces of figurative language contrive a profound interrelationship between regional frontiers for Norris.

First, he crafts an analogy between his firsthand navigation of the Mississippi and a captain's embodied knowledge he transported to the physical manifestation of mechanical expertise stored in the ship's hull and boilers. He also insists the lingo "propeller" captures the whole essence of the ship itself and, by extension, his pioneering settler self. This metonymy underscores that the entire enterprise of civilizing wild places boils down to technological innovations allowing tenacious experts to comprehend obscure geographical secrets. The conflation of warfare, technological development, and territorial expansion suggests that it is not just the triumph of mechanical innovation driving westward expansion. Indeed, conflict and failure are propulsive elements in this process, as a blast furnace that forges more mobile technologies of whiteness and financialization. Within this context of disruption and disaggregation, the ability of racialization to merge disparate efforts at accumulation remains an essential avenue for capitalism's continued viability. The CNSC's rhetorical slippage amongst colonial frontiers is borne out by scholarly critique of racialization spanning imperial moments.

Jovan Scott Lewis has argued, in the context of postcolonial structural readjustment as the remains or reconfiguration of plantation capitalism, that debt is a central operative principle in the constitution of whiteness. Whether literal or figurative, tracing this debt is vital for comprehending how colonial regimes maintain their operation during moments of crisis, upheaval, or regime change. Through his reading of Jamaican lotto scammers' philosophy, Lewis recounts how the crew's efforts functioned based on their astute reading of the role of debt in U.S. sociality as a primary engine for daily social reproduction. The crew also elucidates how present conditions of touristic extraction and geopolitical indebtedness maintaining underdevelopment enable them to insist upon the "fungibility of Whiteness." Lewis explicates, "In this configuration, race—and Whiteness in particular—serves as a mode, or function, of inequality and thus offers a steady marker of blame across its permutations and exchanges." The "scammers taking from sources connected to the original debt by a symbolic set of relations specifically illustrates the transferability of debt through Whiteness, manipulating the totalizing logic of race that often flattens minority subjects into singular entities." (Lewis, 158-159).

Contemporary postcolonial repair in Jamaica may seem quite remote from the 19th-century development of a Western U.S. transportation metropolis. However, Whiteness's fungibility, according to the crew's comprehension, delineates an otherwise obfuscated aspect of white racialization. Following the logic of transferring the moral debts of colonization across imperial regimes through whiteness indicates the consequential continuity of whiteness regardless of which colonizing nation controls a particular territory during any given era. I suggest that the fungibility of Whiteness reveals that infrastructure serves as the inverse of debt transfer accomplished through whiteness: the continuity of racial promise and order through its material reconfiguration of any landscape's functionality to serve white capital's desires for connection, stability, and predictability.

I conclude my case studies with critiques of intimate infrastructural attachment to foreground the myriad ramifications of circulation's built environment, spanning from resources' geomorphological reallocation and commodification to the assessment of everyday life's financialization. The steamships of the CNSC charted the waters for the container ships and U.S. Navy destroyers that followed their wake in the Pacific. Their cargo also included an affective allure that married American futurity to white familiarity, and presupposed crisis if that familiarity disconnected from commercial circuits. I end on white subjectivity's interpolation and introspection through infrastructure. Even after a military base is decommissioned or a dam collapses, the behavioral imperatives of whiteness to convert ecologies into properties, to

segregate racialized communities as atemporal sinks for excess, and to assess landscapes for their regulated accordance with abstract exchange, permeate the air unacknowledged like the fumes of a smokestack.

"All those bends I've known my whole life, and stores, and the whole thing": Imperial Maturity through Mundane Attachment in *Lady Bird*

Sacramento's unique iteration of racial capitalism relies on a scalar operation that paradoxically conjoins logistical linkage with the true sense of local essence. That this hybrid urban depot for rural resources primarily serves as a waypoint for imperial ambitions and the stores necessary to fuel them is a situation specifically referenced in efforts to increase navigability to the city. This returns us to the most extensive project to geomorphologically cordon the area's waterways for commercial and military suitability. Despite the overwhelming logbook of regional disaster, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers oddly still extensively justified their Deep Water Ship Channel project. Alongside interstate highway development, this waterway would signal the demise of the era of ferryboat travel inherited from steamship lines like California Steam Navigation Company and its siblings.

Under the heading "Accomplishments," the agency broadcasted how "The water distance from Sacramento to San Francisco Bay points will be shortened by about 15 miles" through the dredged channel meant to accomplish oceangoing cargo ships with a deep draft. The Corps' pride rests upon an aqueous tightening of the admixture and association between Sacramento and San Francisco. The channel's value derives from its ability to circumvent spatial concerns, shorten the path between the cities, and logistically and commercially bring them closer together. Of course, this briefer journey matters more than just symbolically. Economically, the Corps promised that "Shippers and receivers of offshore commerce in the Sacramento tributary trade area will save on transportation costs." (USACE, 25). The Deep Water Ship Channel benefits Sacramento by realizing its potential as a hinterland trade hub. This appeal showcases how the city always defined itself by its conjuration of elsewhere.

At the turn of the 20th century, the trope of Sacramento as valuable for its orientation towards horizons had not diminished. In July 2003, the cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento—the latter owing much of its economic and physical levee infrastructure to the Corps' channel dredging—commissioned a report that, like the Deep Water Ship Channel "Definite Project Report" stared straight into the future. The municipalities refused to abandon the ideal of the river as an exchange locus. They committed to revitalizing decaying wharves as a greenbelt that could lure real estate development contemporaneously booming with the report's imagining. Rather than attracting affordable shipping rates to export the area's natural potential, this exchange entailed luring investors and residents *towards* a wild splendor of a revitalized waterfront.

In pursuit of this goal, it foreseeably made appeals that linked Sacramento to a supposedly universal hydrologic appreciation and thus elevating the connectivity of the city through reputation, as "The power and drama of the river is a source of awe, and therefore has the potential to serve as a magnet within the Sacramento metropolitan area. The flows of the river offer recreational opportunity as well as the natural human attraction to dynamic water—the centerpiece for successful urban public space in great cities throughout the world." ("Celebrating Our River," 13). Referencing magnetism as a natural process aligns with the notion that the river's ecology and topography define the city. However, the last aside also indicates that it is not merely ecological gifts that stoke success and renown. It is the proper orientation to the control and regulation of those spaces—in other words, an infrastructural

stance that harnesses this innate hypnotic fascination and adequately shares it. In my first full year after relocating to Sacramento for graduate study, a film debuted that broadcast more assertively than ever this personal engineered infrastructural trance. I conclude my case studies with this movie to demonstrate how deeply infrastructural fascination permeates the settler psyche.

The retrieval of Sacramento's charm through its waterfront meant to take advantage of the rhetorical and material allure of previous capacities for commercial exchange reconfigured as a unique characteristic glamour, did not occur solely through urban planning and public works construction. An overlooked yet indispensable portion of this effort was a poetic reconsideration of Sacramento's alignment towards the frontier that also intended to strike the seemingly at-odds balance in which an identity foundationally logistical and transformational—as a liminal space—counterintuitively allows for a local settler society to flourish and persevere. Like the economic benefits of a channel whose soundings are maintained and engineered as carefully as the white family unit, Greta Gerwig's 2017 independent hit film *Lady Bird* suggests that the urban background of economic turmoil and military quagmires due to foreign intervention can be overcome through white familial bonds as maintained by the romance of infrastructure.

Initially, the film advocates through its titular main character that the only path for self-development under late capitalism is a flight from forestalled and diminished productive capacity, away from the ruinous pilings dotting the bottom of the riverbed. The movie's "heroine, Christine, aka Lady Bird (Saoirse Ronan) dreams of flying away from Sacramento—' the Midwest of California'—and landing at some East Coast liberal arts college. The film takes place in 2002 and 2003," the exact moment the City published its Sacramento Riverfront Master Plan, "and the era specifics embroider the details on the tapestry of time and place that Gerwig has woven—the invasion of Iraq on the news, ska music, puka shell necklaces, Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, flared jeans." (Walsh, 52). The warp and weft of this geographical, cultural tapestry follow a very particular pattern. It is almost entirely composed of period-appropriate hip music—notably both representative of or appropriated from Black sonic traditions—with the material culture of teenage commodities, alternatively either nostalgic for an era of mid-century youthful rebellion or the leisure associated with tropical climates.

This authentic recapitulation of dissent's commodification and appreciation of whiteness's access to foreign markets after the globalization of the 1990s also faithfully follows the actions enabling this widespread commodity cosmopolitanism—militarization and imperial border and trade route securitization. That the invasion of Iraq (notably only perceptible through "the news") prefigures the material culture of empire is not a novel development; scholars have carefully traced the domestic influences of colonization throughout its long arc (Anderson). *Lady Bird* offers a more expansive illustration of how commodities rely on geographic whiteness, inextricably tied to the reference and comportment of logistical infrastructure.

This material culture collapses geographical distinction and scale, equating this river city into an entire national subregion as California's "Midwest." The piece's drama is not due to any particularly Sacramentan story or neighborhood. Indeed, in a fawning exegesis of the film's accuracy in representing not just Sacramentan geography or its built environment but the feeling of a localized, racialized, gendered subjectivity during this specific wartime era, writer and celebrity scion E.A. Hanks explains how "Gerwig, on the other hand, does not have anything she wants to say about Sacramento, or its people. She has things she feels about Sacramento." (Hanks, 197). Hanks identifies that *Lady Bird* is fundamentally disinterested in qualitative

descriptions of social dynamics or markers of belonging. She indexes how Sacramento *feels* like the Midwest, not how it directly resembles it.

Rebellious teens' material culture hints at this feeling, emphasizing that the transmissibility of mass production and white cultural interests aligns the two places. What Hanks and similar critics praise elides, however, is how this mass market popular culture, even when it relies on subversive or inappropriate subcultural habits, allows for whiteness to transcend regional political-economic variations not just due to the intense connections forged between race and objects, but because these objects reflect the ubiquity, and thus the inevitability, of the Midwest and Sacramento's shared status as ports and transit stations linking outposts of empire. Greta Gerwig smoothly blends these elements in her screenplay for the film.

In a scene of renewed friendship presaging the climatic realization by Lady Bird of her Sacramentan roots, Gerwig wistfully details how a pair of best friends, central to the film's evocation of intragender relations, relax "In their prom dresses. They watch the sun come up over Capital Bridge on the Sacramento River. Their small-town version of the sunrise scene over the Brooklyn Bridge in 'Manhattan.'" (Gerwig, 86). The director's use of the designator "small-town" for California's sixth-largest city is odd but seemingly resonates with artistically literate commentators. The movie makes familiar overtures to the intrinsic truth of film as a medium, whether depicting metropolitan or more rural life. However, its method of achieving this is analogizing a mechanism of interborough conglomeration in New York City, aimed toward more efficient manufacturing and port complexes, with the Depression-era landmark bridge that allowed West Sacramento to become more fully a hinterland of the capital city (including its nascent rice shipment port complex) (fig. 13) (IMDb). Oddly, the Sacramento native Gerwig mistitles Tower Bridge, a civic icon, as "Capital Bridge," demonstrating an insider's intimacy in a localized nickname and a profound misrecognition and unfamiliarity with the bridge's legacy and intended symbolism.

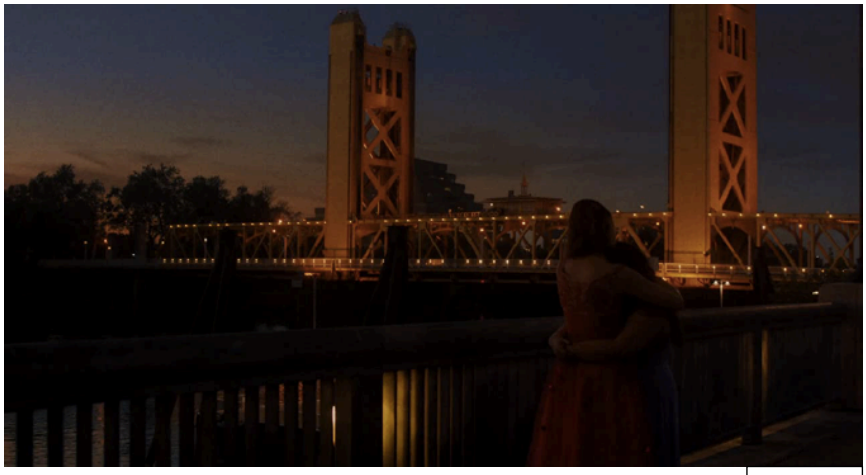

fig. 13

This slippery infrastructural linkage allows for a gendered white subjectivity based upon the experience of gazing at the mouth of an ambivalent imperial transit network and feeling its palpable presence while being unaware of its extent—even at the far reaches of empire where powerbrokers of rice substitute for the infamous denizens of Wall Street. The forced equivalence between New York cosmopolitan urbanism and a quaint Sacramentan parody demonstrates that even the backwaters of the frontier can conjure the potency of capitalism, where the style provided for its properly racialized participants must be purchased secondhand but still allows for a somewhat tense, but ultimately wholesome and coherent, familial relationship based on particular geographic and racial signifiers.

During a pivotal and highly celebrated earlier plot point, the celebrated Thrift Town of Sacramento serves as the setting for Lady Bird's struggle to appear conventionally civilized in the wake of riverboat glamour abandoning the city. Her mother's surreptitious nighttime alterations to her dress after their fraught relationship frays seemingly beyond repair remains the only recourse establishing her propriety. The commodity and its repair and refashioning, like the riverfront's renewal as a leisurely tourist attraction, form the basis for Lady Bird's identity. Her gendered and racialized performance exists as inseparable from her genealogical linkages. However, the only feature that can make her realize and enact those linkages and the white settler inheritance of the "small town" she embodies is a reflection on her corporeal and narrative parallel to the always repurposed Sacramento and American Rivers. These waterways, like Lady Bird, draw settler attention because of their simultaneous mundanity and notoriety, places where imperial action can be watched and tamed as a backdrop for the vaunted drama of self-making.

To return to the stress given to flared jeans and puka shell necklaces in critical celebrations of the film's authenticity and relevance, the interplay between geographical influence and commodities' role in the unfurling of this *bildungsroman* muddles the distinction between the two. This jewelry referencing an idealized image of Hawai'i corresponds with a fraught reception of Sacramento as both provincial and peripheral enough to mainstream cultural trends. The kitschy jewelry also represents Sacramento's positionality as a faded, once illustrious but now forgotten California city. Puka shells are so attractive to Lady Bird because the dialectic between the charm of a place and nostalgic reminiscing of adolescent fads accentuates how exchange—especially its racial connotations—inextricably links placemaking with consumption, serving as the medium for both with infrastructure hovering conveniently to distill and concretize the weight of this process for individual definition.

When theorizing the allure of particular commodities, Sara Ahmed uses geographical, navigational language to delineate this impact, describing how "happiness is an orientation toward the objects we come into contact with. We move toward and away from objects through how we are affected by them. After all, note the doubling of positive affect in [John] Locke's example: we *love* the grapes if they taste *delightful*. To say we love what tastes delightful is not to say that delight causes our love, but that the experience of delight involves a loving orientation toward the object" (Ahmed, 32). For Ahmed, commodification, and attendant nostalgia, are always a spatial practice—moving "towards" and "away."

Our interaction with the products of global capital, enabled by a racialist differentiation of labor, occurs in the locales we associate with establishing proximity to emotional balance and well-being or repulsing us from stability. Infrastructural sites most bluntly couple the regeneration of a personal sense of agency with the requirements of capitalist circulation. A functional whiteness, symbolized in the film by a functional gendered family, tightly matches the scope of a regulated infrastructural regime and the aspirations of white youth. Ladybird sympathetically wants to venture into the unknown, but in a manner reassuringly and constantly tethered to the family, and the levees, that cradled her.

Ahmed's insights pair provocatively with Arjun Appadurai's commentary on the biographical nature of value cohered in a commodity. Ahmed suggests that an orientation towards a good fosters delight within that object and thus abuts its social value or exchangeability within capitalism. Her emphasis on 'orientation' suggests a degree of familiarity with, if not the already palpable everyday presence of, the commodity as a preferred destination among those in its orbit. Appadurai amends this consideration or orientation by injecting uncertainty into the destination as a potent source of allure towards an object. He muses,

"Culturally constructed stories and ideologies about commodity flows are commonplace in all societies. But such stories acquire especially intense, new, and striking qualities when the spatial, cognitive, or institutional distances between production, distribution, and consumption are great." Through his emphasis on the mystique of *distance*, Appadurai demonstrates that the ideological construct of the commodity flow, which is intensely geographically referential, can also induce valuation in its very opacity.

Appadurai concludes that "The institutionalized divorce (in knowledge, interest, and role) between persons involved in various aspects of the flow of commodities generates specialized mythologies." (Appadurai, 48). In the case of Sacramento river travel from the California Steam Navigation Company to the Deep Water Ship Channel, one of these specialized mythologies is the power of whiteness to obliquely and unassumingly ensure, often through racialized militarism, the flow of stuff. Wares float along routes publicly perceptible enough to be appreciated for their stable presence and assumed impact, yet with operations so hidden and shrouded as to evoke reverence and elevate those with direct contact with their features like engineers or soldiers.

In a sense, infrastructure merges the desires described by both Ahmed and Appadurai. It allows for a consistent, familiar intimacy with aqueducts that run along major interstates, like the California Aqueduct along Interstate 5 through the Central Valley, buttressed by a captivating charm fostered by chain link fences and no trespassing signs along the corridors where pumps and gauges are stored. *Lady Bird* displaces explicit propagandistic justifications for infrastructural might, instead establishing the potency of logistics through its orientational capacity. While circulation orders the landscape, its ability to foster innocent attachments to militarized places can be carried by subjects and constantly reinforced by their sense of self.

Whiteness functions in *Lady Bird* as an affective infrastructure transcending any particular regime of imperial capital accumulation, muddling the necessity of exchange with personal motivation and reflection. In establishing a place's feeling as an inevitable background for self-fashioning, the force of affect naturalizes infrastructural circulation as not just a rational taming of the landscape but a requisite organizational principle for white people's very existence and reproduction in the family unit. Infrastructure makes the market and the family and imbues a transscalar sense of a tentative and permanently looming threat to white bodily integrity.

The omnipresent, disastrous reminder of circulation's lack threatens disorder not just for the settler nation-state. Inserting infrastructural alignment as a domestic principle makes its collapse entirely unthinkable. Our heroine finds herself through acceptance of her role in a family unit, only made possible by the experience of disorientation in New York. However, if we critically reorient our analysis to consider the affective infrastructure that makes the movie, instead of an explicit narrative, a feeling in which informed Sacramentans (or those longing for the city as exemplary of a transcendent geographical whiteness characteristic of empire's margins) can revel, the gendered reproduction of the family unit shifts to epiphenomenon. Lady Bird's relationship with her mother does not solely deliver the film's emotional impact. Instead, it is a trace of hydrological and transportation infrastructure's intimate potential to structure and direct not just the river banks but also white emotional registers. For Lady Bird, situating oneself within the white family is only viable and thus subordinate to realizing white integrity's reliance on infrastructure and submitting to its sublimity (Nye).

The threat of genealogical continuity's disruption that haunts white settlers since contact with Indigenous peoples in the Americas (Lepselter) resonates forcefully in Lady Bird. This anxiety most immediately surfaces through the drama with her mother, Marion but effectively

lingers due to peripheral and unstated hazards to circulatory cohesion. *Lady Bird* achieves this internalization of capitalist infrastructure through the comingling of personal drama with national trauma. Affect links the scales: a numbness and ignorant denial that just cannot quite shake unease.

The film's undercurrent is a melancholy attachment to militarism and warfare, akin to a recent rehearsal of Favret's emphasis on the feeling of war, allowing for a structuring and innocent distance. Lady Bird's youthful travails reveal perhaps one source of her anxiety. After getting caught in a scheme to improve her grades, we find "Lady Bird lounges – watching television. Life during suspension. All these reports about the lead-up to the Iraq war. It's simultaneously terrifying and boring." (Gerwig, 72). While her mother certainly fumes at the suspension, the terror of wayward adolescent femininity spouts from Lady Bird's refusal to find her way through submission to the institutional authority of her Catholic school, both scholarly and religious. This rebellion rehashes longstanding patriarchal Western fears over deviant procreative capacity, demanding control due to terrifying associations with miscegenation.

This disorder is her battle, yet in this scene, we find her beginning to delineate her emotions through a self-reflective affective state enabled by imperial chaos and attempts to make coherent an unspoken empire. The uncertainty of teenage years—both "terrifying" and "boring"—finds expression in the instability of American military campaigns. They are parallels in the film. Nevertheless, the viewer and Christine find a resolution. She only finds her place in society after she fosters an appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of Sacramento bridges. A dramatically ironic scene in which the viewer recognizes that Lady Bird and her mother share a quirky and wholesome appreciation of driving in Sacramento offers reassurance and rectifies this momentary violent outburst of imperial instability.

Marion is initially unable to deliver a satisfactory name—a sense of self—for her child. However, the transcendence of an affective state catalyzed by riverine management--by infrastructure-- allows whiteness to continue, exerting its self-fashioning potential intergenerationally. The movie is an individualized, atomized, explicitly gendered recapitulation of the dialectically omnipresent interlinkages between the danger of youth (memorably symbolized in the film by the titular character's cast received after jumping out of a moving car during an adolescent quarrel with her mother) and the comfort of recognition within habitual landscapes. This racial cognizance obligates infrastructural meditation, whether of a hometown or the inherently palpable whiteness of Victorian colonial commodities' grandiose sumptuousness and fashion.

Mimicking Mark Twain's importation of fantastic benefits of Asian and Pacific Islander contract labor into a multiethnic California aboard the *Ajax*, *Lady Bird* reimagines this dynamic as an Eastern, or perhaps reverse Western, migration. Along this trail, the tribulations of the pioneer spirit correct the exaggerated opulence of settler colonialism's civilizing drive. Whether following Berkeley's "Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way" (Leutze) to shed light on the dark wilderness of the West or affectively inverting the trope to showcase the authenticity and sage naturalistic wisdom of rural California, both directionalities comprehend the white 'American experience' as fundamentally mediated through the affective appeal of infrastructure. *Lady Bird's* status as an icon of Sacramentan cinema underscores the city's pedagogical lesson: infrastructure's integral role as the interface between animated, racialized wilderness and proper, familial social reproduction.

The danger of the former polluting the latter and how the river endows a potential antidote to this poison recurrently features in conversations about the film's impact. Essayist

E.A. Hanks imagines how Lady Bird's lounging and the mingling affects of disinterest and terror are merely an updated, networked, and televisual version of famous Sacramentan observer Joan Didion's preferred pastime—river swimming. Hanks extrapolates from Didion's paradoxical appreciation of rivers (which elate her yet also contain her most detested attributes) a historical resurfacing of an always uneasy and unacknowledged appreciation of proximity to colonization's myriad violences:

> Before New York's charms had long faded and California started calling her home. Joan, with her fear of snakes and horror of chaos, was a swimmer of rivers. 'The same rivers we had swum for a century: the Sacramento, so rich with silt that we could barely see our hands a few inches beneath the surface; the American, running clean and fast with melted Sierra snow until July, when it would slow down and rattle-snakes would sun themselves on its newly exposed rocks.' Rattlesnakes, and stoned girls getting their first sunburns of the summer, waving off Donner Party nightmares. (Hanks, 191)

For Hanks, the idyllic teenage innocence of smoking pot by the river simultaneously engages with Didion's worse fears but also makes this fear seem irrational and misplaced. Nothing genuinely horrible will happen to a crisis-ridden teenager or the economy she exists in that is setting up the conditions to spiral into recession during her senior year of college.

Hanks's allusion to the Donner Party immediately appending her appreciation of Joan Didion may seem like some psychoanalytical eruption of suppressed fears and does essentially emerge from nowhere out of the background of her essay. The fear of the frontier reimposing savagery seems to be the omnipresent subtext inexpressible for those mindful Sacramentans claiming the city's significance. Hank remains unable to articulate colonization's horrors, unconcerned with Native Californians. She agonizes over a megalomaniacal concern for the white body politic. An incoherent apprehension disturbs the process of self-realization along the lazy banks of the Delta, reminiscent of the chimeric (un)ease of Southern living.

Nevertheless, the river is also the focal point of the interpersonal relationships that will allow youth to "wave off" these "nightmares." Too forcefully approaching the impactful legacy of the Donner Party on Sacramentan identity involves declarative ruminations on the city's character. The film unambiguously engages with a narrative structured around Sacramentan *feelings*, just as unsayable as purposefully ignored horrors.

A reliance on affect does not disqualify the successive emotional tableaus Gerwig walks the audience through from achieving a rationale or message. Reviewers seem to have reached a consensus interpretation that "we come to realize the film is truly about the women in her life […] especially her mother, Marion (Laurie Metcalf)." (Walsh, 52). While the feminist politics behind this heartwarming solidarity offer applaudable models, they bring the errant Lady Bird in line. This conformity allows her to inherit her mother's appreciation of Sacramento and, by extension, her symbolic legacy. The reproduction of whiteness, in doubt due to the dangerous poison of puka shells drawing Lady Bird too close to a wilderness where white folks eat one another, is salvaged by the reinvigoration of this bond. Uncoincidentally, it is the force of the river bracketed by and experienced through infrastructural interventions, so boasted about by the River Master Plan, that rescues the floundering daughter.

The film's final scene recalls an earlier montage in which Marion, usually stressed with wrinkles framing her visage as she corrects her wayward daughter, is framed in respite and peace while she cruises around Sacramento. Lady Bird's relationship with her mother is restored

through this infrastructural experience of moving through Sacramento by car, as she mirrors her mother's action—literally in the driver's seat formerly occupied by her mother in a comedic scene that opens the film when Lady Bird breaks her arm after jumping out of the car. She asks, "Hey Mom: did you feel emotional the first time that you drove in Sacramento?" (Gerwig, 96), followed quickly by "I love you" and "thank you." The viewer knows that mother and daughter share this sentiment through dramatic irony and parallel visual structure.

To try and grasp this feeling, Lady Bird, now identified by her given name Christine noting her proper orientation in familial lineage, references the features mentioned in this chapter section's title. Conjoining the intergenerational experience of racialized gender are two aspects: the river's "bends" viewed from the heights of highway bridges that rendered ferry service obsolete, and the "stores" where Lady Bird presumably shopped for ska and puka shell necklaces. Commodification and its enabling infrastructure foundationally evoke the "whole thing." Ultimately, these feelings encompass and commission this totality: emotions that make coherent both a racial positioning and a sense of place that can access multifaceted settlement features—both metropolis and frontier fort.

VI. 'Infinitely Soothing to the Western Eye': Leveeing and Leveraging Whiteness to Soothe Capitalist Crisis

The course of the 19th century radically impacted rice's reputation in the Sacramento Valley. Describing the Jacksonian era attitude towards rice as a staple, food studies scholar Kyla Wazana Tompkins recounts 1839's domestic manual *Good Housekeeper*, wherein Sarah Josepha Hale extolled how "Seventy thousand of the beef-fed British govern and control ninety millions of the rice eating natives of India." Hale attributed imperial domination to a particular carnivorous diet, reliant on a specific agro-industrial model, to justify and naturalize racial violence and extortion. Inequity for Hale is simply a matter of habit, as she relies "on notions of climate and environment to make claims about civilizational supremacy." While Hale praises the efficient British bloodlust powered by their affinity for beef, she also desires to refine the model through proto-home economics rationality. Wazana Tompkins summarizes Hale's quest "to improve on the imperial lust of the mother country. She links the omnivorous diet—which embodies a republican virtue of balance not found among the British—to racial and imperial superiority." (Wazana Tompkins, 61). Hale praises temperance and efficiency, rather than pure muscular might, as the true inheritance of the satiated white settler.

While it took until the publication of the 1949 report on the "Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel Project," the U.S. Army, with ample urging from emergent grain interests cultivating rice in the Yolo Bypass's manipulated hollow, eventually heeded Hale's advice. They describe the apogee of navigability in the Sacramento Valley (the Deep Water Ship Channel provides a consistent 30 feet of water for 42.8 miles in a nearly straight channel marked by Coast Guard aids to navigation) as not just benefitting the rice industry with regular access to cargo ships with massive drafts. The precise flume provides for the strategic health of the nation through rice as a staple of national defense. The Army Corps of Engineers extolls the virtues of how "e. An additional route will be made available for transportation of military supplies and personnel; additional water frontage, storage, dockage, and wharfage facilities for industries having a potential national defense value will be made available." (Sacramento District, Corps of Engineers, 25). While the national defense value of a reliable store of grain is only potential, hedging this crop's worth much like Hale's balancing of rice with beef, the U.S. Army draws a direct throughline between the survival of the country and regular, predictable, and precise access not just to agribusiness markets but to the way of life they evoke.

The consistency of the Deep Water Ship Channel, regularly dredged to maintain its exact depth, finally allowed the state to fulfill the promises of connectivity, dependability, and capturability promoted (often opportunistically and facetiously) by the corporate firms detailed above. To be clear, I make no claims about the primacy of capital or the state in finally conquering the weather of the Sacramento Valley. The recurrent floods in the region well after the Deep Water Ship Channel's construction or the failure of the State Water Project's Oroville Dam upstream indicate that conquest is a myth and a delusion. I bookend my study with the Deep Water Ship Channel to suggest that for these brokers whiteness's role in fixing capitalism's contradictions involved fabricating a foundation of racialized affect that still seeks to rationalize and justify ongoing commodification of the region's countryside. I conclude with white infrastructure's afterlives conditioning factories and houses for exchange long after occupying troops are a distant memory.

Joan Didion, the most famous chronicler of Sacramentan life, still gushed in awed reverence thirty-nine years after the initial proposal for the Deep Water Ship Channel at the fear and trembling that structured quotidian life in Sacramento. Didion insists she "grew up in a

dangerous landscape. I think people are more affected than they know by landscapes and weather. Sacramento was a very extreme place. It was very flat, flatter than most people can imagine[…]. The weather in Sacramento was as extreme as the landscape. There were two rivers, and these rivers would flood in the winter and run dry in the summer. Winter was cold rain and tulle [sic] fog. Summer was 100 degrees, 105 degrees, 110 degrees." (Didion 2018, 49). Despite the state's reassurances about the satisfactory remediation of the Sacramento River environment, Didion turns to the ethereality of fog, the persistence of tule, and the measurable meteorological extremes to underscore that ecological variability and financial turmoil incessantly blamed on that lousy weather still requires constant vigilance.

Didion suggests that while infrastructure may effectively regulate the environment for survival, only fools would ever ignore its upkeep or leave it to rot. Her emphasis on summer temperatures' mechanical, slow, inevitable climb suggests the threat to social reproduction is inherent and constantly spreading. Returning to Hale's advice on culinary and environmental balance as the crucial strategy for imperial salubriousness, Didion does seem to revel in her ability to watch the weather and recognize its troubles. By salaciously detailing the particularities of the weather, she inadvertently implies her intimate mastery of a landscape that made her that much grittier and more resilient. Indeed, that mastery inspires her to stand watch and never slip.

Earlier in this interview, she offers an anecdote in which she achieves special access and control over the state's water to affirm a mythical control. Didion describes how "Last night I finished a piece for *Esquire* about the California Water Project. I had always wanted to see the room where they control the water, where they turn it on and off all over the state, and I also wanted to see my mother and father. *The water and my mother and father were all in Sacramento*, so I went to Sacramento." (Didion 2018, 45, emphasis added). In the same sentence, Didion merges her family history with the waters of the American and Sacramento. The infrastructural control room of the California Water Department does not just enable her multigenerational settler family's lineage. Their continuation is fully imbricated in, essentially identical with, and entirely dependent on the gauges and meter readings and weirs down the Valley. The balancing of extremes crucial for Hale's imperial prognosis is not achieved for Didion, but its suggestion is displayed for her in this control room.

The essay that came from Didion's foray into hydrology, "Holy Water," provides the title for this dissertation. Didion's desire for and delight in the apotheosis of riverine control, however ultimately unsuccessful, demonstrates critical strategies for capital's reinvigoration despite crisis. The technocratic control room's impressive built environment attests to the centrality of performative mastery of unruly landscapes through infrastructural intervention and subsequent affective attachments. As the tactics of the corporate actors that initially instilled these values in the Valley showcase, these are not neutral celebrations of wilderness subjugation. The racialized valuation of these efforts is not just incidental to their success; they rely on racialist associations to rationalize their outbreaks of violence as natural law and the sole civilizational route. They lay the foundation for contemporary logistical thinking, which links productivity to interconnection and the differentiation of consumers from laborers along intensely racialized lines.

The affective allure of logistical circulation derives not from the essence of the commodities offered but from the actual systems of exchange that commence the commodification process. As geographer Juan De Lara explains, "Culture and aesthetics have been key retail strategies precisely because they can establish lifestyle practices that effectively link individual identity to particular commodity types and social status. For example, certain products are marked as aspirational purchases: the value of buying the thing extends beyond

function and need." (De Lara, 35). De Lara impactfully schematizes how manufacturing and distribution under capitalism are not perceptible as separate spheres, with one casually initiating the other. However, De Lara does not plumb the depths of the dynamics facilitating communication between these spheres. Without a universal and multiscalar transmission mechanism, they cannot develop in tandem despite their myriad dislocations and failures. I suggest that racial affect aligns the disparate goals of production and circulation, which then finds reinforcement in the landscape through its infrastructural materialization.

This materialization and constant interaction with infrastructure further legitimizes and disciplines private racial affective responses to goods and the development strategies these commodities allude to indeterminately. As the shifting discourse on rice above illuminates, the fantasies and desires offered by the commodity rely heavily on cultural representations of race. These appetites compartmentalize cultures and phenotypes as consonant with alternately futurity or degradation. While exaggeratedly varied in outcomes, both classifications background and deem inevitable the intense webs of manufacturing and market exchange behind consumer goods. Infrastructure fulfills customer orders; its networks also order acceptable geographical engagements and feelings for a singularly defined productive world. As De Lara indicates, "Ad agencies became more important in the consumption process only after producers developed the logistical infrastructure that allowed them to brand and distribute mass-produced goods." (Da Lara, 29). In other words, capitalists do not chase down consumer affect. They help produce it to offset the sunk costs in their fixed facilities.

However, they cannot write entirely new racial scripts wholesale. Even logistics merely digitizes and integrates the technologies of the colonial cartographic imaginary, as "logisticians used scientific rationalism and new technologies to create an abstract and ordered vision of space that enabled them to expand the territorial possibilities for capital investment." (De Lara, 26). The "abstract and ordered vision of space," best exemplified in Sacramento by a nearly forty-mile long, 200-foot wide, 30-foot deep watery line through the Valley for container ship access, is an updated version of the fantasy inspiring the Mexican state to grant title to the initial Swiss settler of New Helvetia, John Sutter.

Fantasy, money, race, and natural order intermingle to make capitalism coherent and its architectures seemingly preordained. Theologian and critical race scholar Willie James Jennings astutely dissects the account of Jesuit José de Acosta, whose travels in Peru in the 1570s neatly encompassed these tendencies. To explicate his encounter with a fantastically unfamiliar environment, de Acosta found solace in the relatability of exchange. Jennings interprets his belief that "Money is one (material) thing, but it is actually all things. […] Money holds an imperial position similar to God in facilitating growth and life by moving things from their potentiality to their actuality, that is, their full utilization in producing goods and services. Money is the invention that facilitates invention, and the inner logic of money is metal." For de Acosta, ore's transmogrification into currency exemplifies the honorable activation of natural resources and a divinely ordained technological teleology.

Rather than deriving mere comfort in the monetary logic's applicability for a colonial outpost, de Acosta augments money's universality by suggesting that particular mineralogical deposits confirm European invasion's sanctity. In other words, the temptation of ore confirms the chivalry of white expansion after the fact. For de Acosta, "God has placed metals, these crucial seeds of growth, in remote parts of the world in order to draw God's servants (in this case the Spanish) to places and peoples beyond their imagination—but not beyond their possession." (James Jennings, 210). De Acosta's epistemology succinctly encapsulates the racial precepts of

whiteness: a capacity and indeed a duty to move all "degraded" landscapes and peoples to abstract elevation in the marketplace.

The challenge for capitalism, and its state servant, is to maintain whiteness as a universal and followable behavioral model and landscape paradigm. Once divorced from particular emplaced relations, whiteness strives for an attitude and developmental ethos that designates any deviation from extractive circulation as a void. It cultivates a transmissible disregard for any lifeway or placemaking not maniacally concerned with valuation; this abstract racialization asserts that verifiable worth exudes only from any resource's capacity to enter and perpetually thrive in a crescendoing catholic market. Any given era's particular commodities and disasters seem surmountable as long as the previously excavated chutes of habit and taste abide to maintain spatial and personal connective tissue-- in other words, ports-- with homogenizing exchange. Indeed, the racial promises of regional development can even seem delightful, as Didion herself would recount.

Circling the Drain: Infrastructure and Affect as Paradoxical Circulatory Sinks

Canned anchovies seem an odd source of adventure, let alone feelings of ecstasy. Nevertheless, this mundane commodity features prominently in lauded Sacramentan Joan Didion's brief narrative of a journey down the American River in her youth. In an essay revealingly titled "Holy Water," Didion emphasizes a rapturous encounter with hydrological engineering while traversing one of the two rivers whose confluence forms the heart of this capital city. Sacramento's most famous 20th-century literary figure captures the physical imprint and emotional resonance of contentedness as an affective state through which to comprehend otherwise ungraspably grand infrastructural systems.

With a short anecdote, she muses on the California State Water Project by "replay[ing] a morning when I was seventeen years old and caught, in a military-surplus life raft, in the construction of the Nimbus Afterbay Dam on the American River near Sacramento. I remember at the moment it happened I was trying to open a tin of anchovies with capers." Reminiscent of Mary Favret's evocation of affective dizziness emerging after perpetual war tectonically shifted "[h]ow time and knowledge were registered in daily life [as] newly uncertain," Didion continues: "I recall the raft spinning into the narrow chute through which the river had been temporarily diverted. I recall being deliriously happy." (Didion 1979). Didion begins with military detritus ("military-surplus life raft") hosting the specialized commodity chains logistics enables ("a tin of anchovies with capers") to subsequently trace sentimental associations with these objects. These objects and the personal touchstones to which she clings orient herself within her geography—one defined by persistent resource extraction defended by incessant military intervention.

As Didion's recollection exemplifies, Sacramento's affective infrastructure suggests that emotional registers have a constitutional, disciplinary impact on particular racial, class, and gendered identifications with place. After all, Didion's reaction may be 'delirious'—an elusive feeling by definition—but this delirium does force her to recall resting on the Army surplus raft. This detail reintroduces the institutional, the political, and the colonial into her sense of self *through* affect, not despite it or as a precursor. To comprehend this militarized commodity's sudden eruption, first we must dissect the political-economic logics of emotion and, specifically, how race communicates and modulates these feelings.

Geographic whiteness is a critical affective fix for racial capitalist contradiction. Infrastructure, as a primary indicator of geographic whiteness within modernity, stores capacity for circulation as a spatial fix alongside racial anxiety-- and promises-- as the experiential, intimate, cultural modality of this process. Circulation, in this case, is both developmental and

corporeal, mirroring the dual nature of the capitalist commodity. Marxist geographers and critical ethnic studies scholars have diagrammed extensively the mechanisms of exchange-value for racial capitalism, especially the need to devalue certain places and processes allowing for profitable accumulation of their remains. However, Didion's story suggests the potency of this operation is not solely derived from warfare profits stimulated by government contracts eventually funneled into suburban schemes enabled by hydraulic infrastructure.

Didion's final recollection is her delirium and joy, scaffolded upon all the aforementioned processes:

> +the Nimbus dam
> +the centralization of capital in the region for internment concentration camps and advanced radio development
> +the extended reach of downstream agribusiness preservation plants

While exchange-value by design follows racial precepts to accumulate capital via differentiation and devaluation, use-value also traffics in racial tastes, preferences, reactions, and feelings to not just make a settler landscape economically or ecologically viable, but intimately necessary for joy to bubble forth uninhibitedly like a diverted river chute.

By deliberately considering Didion's diverted river chute, scholars of California development, racial capitalism's theoretical and geographical underpinnings, and the multiple scales of racialization can glimpse an indispensable dynamic of Western regional development. Diverted water, especially when a course change is completed superficially imperceptibly or disguised with alternative motivations, serves as a fruitful metaphor for infrastructure and affect's mirrored role in racial capitalism. These embroiled categorizations, experiences, and architectures are themselves a form of infrastructure: capital's plumbing and sewer lines.

Due to capital's inherent instability as the profit rate falls, captured investment in fixed capital stagnates and deteriorates, and workers resists and exhume regimes of racial violence, an idealized surging flow of investment transforms into a stagnant, putrid trickle. Infrastructure and affective attachment to growth, generally conjoined in the form of public works appreciated as "civilizational" totems, are both methods to hide capital's stagnation through promises of purification and futurity. Infrastructural engineering and white racial satisfaction with market economics amplify each other by finding justification and solace within these necessarily racialized values in colonial and settler colonial contexts.

Fundamentally, infrastructure and emotion provide convenient dumping grounds or sinks for non-functional capital. They excuse disaster as either due to a lack of speculative faith in collectively shared landscape transformation or improper racial attitudes towards development. Californios faced criticism along both these avenues. Anglos represented this caste artistically as too romantic and sultry for productivity, lacking infrastructural routes to capitalize cattle ranching efficiently. The new elites of the State of California resolved Californios' troubling ambiguous racial amalgam through infrastructural chastisement. An inability to evolve their cattle raising beyond hide and tallow trading toward efficient and extensible industrial butchery with derivative chemical manufacturing confirmed their 'appropriate' inferior status (Glass Cleland). Geomorphologically, major earthworks more visibly reorder the landscape to serve crisis-ridden markets, offering emergent and technologically-facilitated speculative pathways.

These transportation technologies mimic and dialogue with whiteness's racialized affects. Infrastructure conjoins quantifiable productive and logistical capacity with personal security and

familial endurance. It exhorts regional and intimate cultivation as coeval requirements, counterposed to racialized and naturalized disorder. These emotions differentiate landscape states as either crisis-prone by levying charges of chaos and noncooperation inspired by a comingling of demonized communities and natural disorder or teleologically developmentally arranged via infrastructure as the tangible, geographic realization of an ideal of a spiritual calm afforded to colonizers by a transcendental whiteness that, like capital, never ceases in its capacity to transform, and dominate, the globe. Like the drain lines underneath a sink that shuttle away wastewater with minimal visibility, affective, individualistic associations with progress, universality, and reason reassure and recirculate capital while maintaining a fictitious political-economic neutral rationality.

Capitalist crisis is innately a failure to circulate. This assertion proceeds logically from the very structure of Marx's general formula for capital—money cannot accrue the surplus value of labor unless it can transform into the commodity form and subsequently reenter the realm of mobile capital while offering its accumulated valorization. I have undertaken a comprehensive case study of firms reformatting the Sacramento Valley's topography alongside the promulgation of racialized civilization appeals. These affective clarion calls emit through representation strategies and direct efforts at resource commodification, whether subdivided vineyards or the Sacramento River's current. My study outlined how whiteness's compositional racial anxieties and promises contain in common an infrastructural role repurposing capital towards civilizational fantasies to guarantee an 'inevitable' future.

Infrastructure and racial projects together reformulate capitalism's form by attracting capital gravitationally during times of perceived stagnation. Through concrete and affective projections of security, they continually reallocate momentum towards investments in improvements to preclude market participants' hopes from wandering off narrow pathways of permissible expansion. Both racial appeals and technological panaceas pool collective risk, dispose of directionless energy, and seek to reinvigorate faith in the market form when inevitable contradictions become unignorable. The scope of my argument purposefully narrows from the corporation, an incomprehensibly abstract and fractal entity, to personal subjectivities to underscore infrastructure's pervasive affective and material impregnation of white domestic, regulatory, and interchangeable values upon landscapes. Meant to quell anxiety and panic, these imperatives betray the fundamental violence and unsustainability of capital. I conclude and reflect upon the necessity of this balm for capital by deliberately shifting scales from corporate narratives to a careful consideration of two tangible infrastructural technologies exemplifying this dynamic: the clamshell dredger and the calliope. Both machines demand attention as they interface white values between abstract crisis resolution and settlers' love for their machines.

Whiteness as Imperial Geographic Ligament: Themes of Propriety and Connectivity

Speculative fever could only primitively accumulate capital for those landowners with enough funds to accrue vast tracts and the savvy (covert social networks) to time their purchases felicitously via insider statehouse knowledge. Devaluing racialized workers was necessary to keep labor costs down and truly profit from sweetheart land deals, but this labor regime could not sustain multiple crises. Speculative fervor and real estate bubbles popping after land proved less fertile or during gluts in the market, limited *petit bourgeois* success amid rugged individual gentleman farmers, and elites funneled populist outrage against monopolistic capital (succinctly captured in Norris's *The Octopus*, the first progressive muckraking novel) further onto racialized workers, stoking widespread violence and displacement of specifically Asian laborers. Capitalists resolved this racial accumulation crisis by appealing to infrastructure's

specifically *communal* geographic whiteness. They purposefully characterized industrial clamshell dredgers, automated ships that scooped hydraulic mining runoff from the riverbeds and engaged a spring to unload the silt to shore up levees, as a racial solution to maintain both profitability and racial order.

Part of the strategy justifying their concentration of land through their interpersonal connections was an outright denial of greed, transformed into a form of benevolence. Bernard Marks admitted to "a gush" in his capacity as a booster goading potential real estate purchasers to emulate a man he classifies as meritorious, who through his "enterprise" as "the soul of the Tide Lands Reclamation Company" occasioned "the tule lands of California [to] have already reached so satisfactory a degree of appreciation"—G.D. Roberts. Writing a report to the *California Immigrant Union*, Marks sardonically condemns "A few heartless capitalists and brutal corruptionists" that "acquired possession of and reclaimed these lands in large masses, at their own expense and risk," with a motivation he facetiously characterizes as "the diabolical object […] of making money by the operation." (Marks). However, centralization of capital and integrated reclamation had another, less immediately profitable benefit—the civilizational advantage of technologically advanced whiteness.

The prohibitive costs of reclamation could lead to Chinese settlement, albeit in an extremely extractive tenant farming system, in which "Sometimes Chinese farmers got land to work from small white farmowners in exchange for building levees." ("Sacramento Delta Blues"). However, the conglomerates funded through mining gains circulating through San Francisco could purify this need for a racially heterogeneous workforce. Rather than a foreign and recalcitrant contract laborer, they could afford "The dredger [then fast becoming] an indispensable factor in reclaiming the tule swamps. A first-class dredger costs about $50,000." The cost of the machine was offset by how "No miner with pick and shovel could be so exact. About two hundred cubic yards are handled every hour." More importantly, they praised the machine's *temperament*: "The machine runs steadily day and night. This is the servant of a corporation that never strikes for shorter hours or an increase in wages; nor does it quarrel with scabs." (Tenney). While the temporal scope of the indefatigable machine is praiseworthy for commentators (although inaccurate, as the dredger was never an automaton without a crew), it is the dredger's disposition towards servitude and quiet compliance which reaps economic dividends. In this description, accounting rationale merges with behavioral correction as the potential found at the nexus of race and infrastructure.

In an exotified journalistic account of the marvels of Western engineering, the eventual pacification of discord flamed by racialized labor impropriety through the ascendance of infrastructure covertly outlines a definitional feature claimed by 19th-century whiteness: an ability to mediate between and transition among geographic distances of embodied intimacy with nature's manners and the cognizance required to diagram its fundamentals coolly. Writers claim these qualities by contrasting whiteness's considerate approach to the river versus an incessant Asian mob. With characteristic and belittling racist dismissal, Peatfield deadpans how

> John Chinaman was the first to attempt the construction of levees in this State. With wheelbarrow and shovel, and with indefatigable toil, he threw up around elevated spots on the margins of the Sacramento River, embankments high enough to keep out inflow during such periods as the high-water mark did not extend above the ordinary limit reached in the rainy seasons. In these small plots of ground John raised vegetables and all

> kinds of garden truck in great abundance, the extraordinary fertility of the soil insuring him prodigious crops and lucrative profit. (Peatfield)

While seeming to applaud the industry evinced by Chinese migrants' efforts, their tendency towards ceaseless toil could not achieve the sanctity of white technical mastery of natural processes. Echoing the fish-gutting mechanism's trajectory that Day excoriated, any admirable trait stereotyped as typical efficiency sours due to an inability to distance oneself from toil and thereby reason away the vicissitudes of nature.

Nevertheless, disaster and crisis precluded Chinese mastery: "When the floods rose, however, his fragile levee was swept away, and the waters claimed their own again." The author then purposefully rhetorically inverts this recursion to nature to advance his thesis that dredging as a "mechanical art […] has now reached so high a degree toward perfection in the work of controlling tides and fluvial floods, expanding the limits of navigation, and converting useless swamps and arid deserts into fertile fields and fruit-producing lands." (Peatfield). In direct opposition to rudimentary garden levees, agribusiness teleologically matured the process of reclamation by claiming the river's own through mechanical might when "The enterprising firm of Williams & Bixler […] pioneer[ed…] the employment of dredging machines for utilizing material taken from the beds of the rivers in the construction of levees." (Peatfield) Several shifts occur in the narrativization of this advancement. The writers replace the individual effort of anonymous laborers (patronizingly referred to by a generic first name) with the proper names of a corporate firm not linked through a predicate clause to any direct labor. The account displaces this work onto the machine. The dredger can scrape the very foundations of the riverbed and displace them almost alchemically to impede the river's overflow rather than direct its course.

The dredger rebalanced a potential crisis for Western whiteness by foreclosing the need for Chinese labors contribution to infrastructural security ensuring speculative landgrab profits. The exploitation of Chinese workers garnered large profits. However, with diminishing swampland the community emerged as a large reserve of surplus labor. Their excess led white Sacramentans to define Chinese Americans as figurative of the dwindling promise of Jeffersonian agrarianism. The proposed white remedy, mechanical infrastructural solutions racialized as an antidote to excessive Chinese productivity and inhuman work ethic, would denigrate both their labor and their literal habitations. China Slough, the nexus of Sacramento's Chinatown, would eventually cede its aqueous depths to solid ground that now houses the Amtrak station and federal court for the capital. The Southern Pacific Railroad literally moved the earth itself to make this land viable, as "Not relying on contract work, the Southern Pacific put George Dixon, superintendent of the company's dredgers, in charge. The Sacramento Star estimated the cost of filling the slough would be more than $55,000. Dixon brought in a 1000 horse power suction dredger with a capacity of 8,000 cubic yards a day […] Then Dixon anchored the dredger northwest of the Slough in the Sacramento River." (Yee, 16). While proponents of the solid ground in 1906 appreciated the burgeoning opportunities for additional development, the main impetus for filling the slough was always the removal of blight defined by the correlation between noxious odors and Chinese presence. The financial justification for removing a competitive and excess labor pool melded smoothly with ecological racist dispersions of filthiness.

Whereas after the reclamation efforts started, "A Sacramento Union reporter said that the western edge of the slough looked like a seaside with its wide alluvial stretch of sand on a sloping beach," the descendants of railroad and levee workers, and more recently arrived

immigrants, had been deplored as inhabiting a neighborhood another *Union* reporter sarcastically described as composed of "architectural beauties which line the south bank of the slough, [where a visitor's] nostrils will receive odoriferous whiffs of the volatile perfumes which rise to delight the sense of smell from the graceful banks of the Lake of Como, where the accumulated filth of Chinatown and a good part of the rubbish of the rest of the city is daily dumped." (Lee, 6). The infill of China Slough effectively displaced noxious aromas—many of which owed their presence not to Chinese settlement but to the proximity of the Southern Pacific's machine shops that dumped their waste into the slough—and the economic anxiety geographically materialized by disposable laborers residing on the margins of the city. An appeal to infrastructural ingenuity was a racialized valve that regulated the spigot of transnational labor fused with profitable and rapidly developed land markets. This mechanism activated the civilizational prowess of whiteness whenever public fervor or ecological shifts seemed to destabilize the venture's promise.

Settlers' concerted effort to diverge from their reliance on racialized labor replaced by a perfect mechanical proficiency muddied the racialist overtones of the appeal to whiteness that united these efforts, melding a notion of Asianness with particular technical arrangements. Much like their romanticization of steamboat travel, Sacramentans shared a merger between (and indeed the coconstitution of) infrastructural development and specific racial hierarchies with their white Southern forebears. Regarding this social and scientific' innovation,' historian Caitlin Rosenthal describes how ecological management and racial calculation of labor efficiency developed in tandem in the Plantocracy. She delineates how through the "keeping [of] careful records, planters could compare different seeds, select the best varieties, and recalibrate expectations for how much they could require workers to pick. [...] Focusing too narrowly on either biological innovation or coercion overlooks the complex ways planters wove these tools together to expand production. New strains of cotton resulted in higher yields only because planters could calculate and enforce a faster rate of picking." (Rosenthal, 102). While Rosenthal's case emphasizes how intervention in ecological processes coerced a greater reliance on racialized labor, whereas Sacramentans sought to purge themselves of Chinese workers, the feedback between racial characterization and infrastructural development permeates both agricultural endeavors.

For Sacramento Valley and Delta growers, toil—whether muscular or mechanic—represented racially inferior labor improper for a leisurely and blessed whiteness. In their temptation of prospective pioneers, the precise details of who or what accomplishes value generation in the tule lands are inconsequential. Instead, the tracts rely on mystical fantasy, describing "a land where Fairies plow and harrow. While the farmer sleeps." Nature itself is complicit in this perfect racial schema that aligns menial drudgery with an untouchable but appreciated foreign realm—vaguely racial in its fantastical description and displacement yet thoroughly infrastructural with its scientific agriculture—while whiteness remains a path towards gentility.

In this depiction of Eden, the tules themselves yield immediately to the grower, engaging in what seems a preordained destiny to immediately transform themselves into fertilizer given the slightest implementation of modern reclamation: "As soon as the land is reclaimed the tules become so many tinder boxes, and the least contact with fire sets them all ablaze, Whenever this occurs at a time when the turf is dry, it will burn with a slow smouldering [sic] fire, which becomes extinguished when it reaches the moist ground below." (Marks). The gentleman farmers reversion to the passive voice in the last clause—the fire "becomes extinguished"—underscores

that the tule farmer recognizes the inherent advantage of this natural system, and can extract value with minimal effort.

While this polemic is a booster advertisement (made more evident by its continued insistence that it will avoid the temptation to fawn over tule lands as the author is self-aware of his affection) directed towards a specific, wealthy upper middle-class potential emigrant audience with spare capital to invest, it takes pains to distance itself from any romantic vision urging Easterners to return to a primordial state. Instead, the argument emphatically avows the character of the tule community, rife with "all the amenities of metropolitan life. and [sic] the polish of cultured minds shine through blue overalls, surmount muddy boots and peep through the hole of work-day hats." (Marks). While the trappings of frontier independence and ruggedness adorn the tule farmer, this is merely a veneer camouflaging his deep and abiding ties to a metropolitan sensibility. Settlers' activation of this supposed yearning for the tules to be dried out and converted to 'productive' land makes obvious the previously ambiguous allusions to uncanny 'Fairies' wielding the plow.

Whether crews of Chinese construction workers unrecognized for their engineering expertise or massive maritime cranes dredging the river bottom, the *process* of materializing arable land was a racial endeavor in which to make arid was to make stable, acceptable, or even holy, as "The conversion of wetlands for agriculture, whether as a direct result of reclamation projects or as a consequence of flood control measures, was clearly intended to domesticate the landscape and create a productive garden in the Central Valley." (Garone 2011). An obdurate equation between reclamation and domestication contextualizes why boosters would need to dispel fears of unintentional proximity to toil, referring to the polished mind shining through the trappings of a dirty job. While a grower may associate with wild infrastructure and people that operate or lose their employment to these machines, this is a source of vitality for the settler. The reader is urged to remember that while this figure may don overalls and waders, his restful sleep ultimately distinguishes the tule farmer.

The contradiction of a muddy and gritty farmer who does not accomplish any work indicates infrastructure's contours in the Sacramento Valley. These are at once entirely mechanical but also extremely affect-laden. In his concise and incisive intellectual history of the term, Ashley Carse hints at the potential of infrastructure to encompass certain engineering feats *and* the modes of life these feats require and demand. Carse explains regarding the term's origin that "infrastructure was initially an organizational and accounting term used to distinguish the construction work that was literally conducted *beneath* unlaid tracks (roadbeds) or was otherwise organizationally *prior* to them (surveys, plans, bridges, tunnels, embankments) from the *superstructure* or roads, train stations, and workshops that was situated *above* or constructed *after* the tracks." (Carse, 29). While his description is replete with architectural structures—bridges, tunnels, embankments, and roadbeds—the particularities of infrastructural thinking as an organizational and accounting term particular to state-funded railway ventures divulges the epistemological import of infrastructure. Engineering remains a peculiar societal organizing principle as much as the ontological imprint of modern technology.

According to Manu Karuka, the emergence of the modern corporate form through the financial exploits and arrangements of railroad companies reveals a behavioral appeal. Environmental media studies (Ruiz) indicates that infrastructures mold subjectivities and lifeways as much as coastlines and roadways. In his elaboration on infrastructure's unique contribution to imperial society, Carse notes the more ethereal attributes that infrastructure shares with systems, but also the terms inherent dynamic of control, as "the constituent parts of a

system could be immaterial (ideas, doctrines, principles) or material (biological, geological, technological). […] the word infrastructure, unlike system or network, suggested a relationship of depth or hierarchy, a form of calculative reasoning that was (and remains) useful for institutions seeking to demarcate responsibility and investment." (Carse, 30). While Carse refers to the state contouring its distinct relationship with private firms enabling its centralization and growth, Sacramento suggests that infrastructural hierarchy extends into the intimate habits governing categorization and segmentation of an inherently inequitable system built on efficient extraction and accumulation of a resource frontier. In the U.S. context (as in perhaps the entire Western imperialist realm), infrastructural alignment of access and responsibility rested upon and further calcified violently imposed racial castes.

Reclamation as an industrial effort to reshape and tame the countryside exists in a manufacturing lineage that alloyed connectivity and replaceability with bellicose posturing to achieve state stability. The regularity and predictability of desiccated wetlands, secured by precise technical measures and machinery, extended the American System of manufacturing within an agribusiness context. While not a direct descendant of the American System, this categorization usefully underscores how manufacturing's prominent features—particularly mechanization and interchangeability—applied to the initiative to transform marshland into fields. Ecologically, this involved the essentially unique ecology of an inland tidal river in an arid valley fed by melting snowpack forced to resemble the fertile reformed prairies of the Mid-West. It also involved a hydrological system that prided itself on its redundancy: any one feature could fail—a towering levee, a particular pump, an individual dredger—and be replaced by another just as proficient innovative instrument. Sacramento pioneered and refined this manufacturing ethos by firmly embedding a racial element to link its fields to a broader, technologically enabled market. Developers conceived Chinese laborers as just another interchangeable cog mechanizable with a more tractable element—the clamshell dredger.

This amenability to the American System also extended to the militarized logistical rationale that had saturated the system since its inception. As technologist Merritt Roe Smith elaborates in his exegesis on knowledge exchange and industrial development at the United States Armory and Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, "Originally established in 1812 as an agency for the inspection and distribution of military supplies," the Ordinance Department proved critical in the development of what would come to be known as the "American System" of manufacturing. This system, fascinated by the necessity of uniformity, had an "immediate concern [of] the production of cheaper, more uniform weapons that could be repaired in the field by substituting new parts for broken ones." (Roe Smith, 106). The Armory's charge cast manufacturing as a scientific process that ultimately integrated a restless frontier through more precise and reliable fundamental military operations. Interchangeable rifle components guaranteed that the state's indelible presence extended even into weaponry components, reaffirming its authority and reach to soldiers tasked with maintaining their capacity to kill.

Again, the American System as an infrastructural mission required both material apparatuses and invention, as well as a recalibration of warfighting itself—armament shifted from the concerns of a garrison to a mobile practice of repair in the field. Indeed, from its bellicose purpose, the Armory's interchangeable pieces would extend to an industrial logic prefiguring scientific Taylorist management, as "Uniformity would require not only the painstaking preparation of many patterns, but also the construction of precision gauges and special-purpose machinery. Moreover, once built, these implements would have to be integrated with other units, constantly checked and rechecked for accuracy, and coordinated with the total

production process." (Roe Smith, 108). Akin to the Harpers Ferry Armory, Sacramento's specialty-crop fields also aspired towards total integration with local flood management systems, international engineering expertise, and purpose-built component manufacturing extending to San Francisco machine shops and beyond. River managers and the growers they served tapped into fabrication expertise from multiple imperial locales grappling with unruly waters, such as the Corps with its Mississippian levees.

Like the battlefield infrastructure it emulated, the Valley's hydrological system committed itself not just to an architectural plan for certifiable and predictable landscape maintenance but a social network that allowed for the grower's refinement into a gentleman of leisure simply relocated to the country. The National Armory was a self-sufficient manufacturing plant and a gear in a more considerable research and development mechanism. Roe Smith explains the organizational priorities of the overarching Department of War entity, relaying that "While promoting its cherished goal of uniformity, the Ordinance Department repeatedly stressed the importance of maintaining strong administrative ties and close technical collaboration between the national armories." (Roe Smith, 110). The industrial knowledge stoked in the fires of the armory was only finally activated when serving as a component of the more extensive system of exchange and collaboration.

This collaboration in Sacramento self-consciously modeled itself on previous military initiatives to rein in recalcitrant rivers while also touting its cultural and technical proficiency. Both these endeavors relied on whiteness to convince settlers of the ecological and social benefits and value of their direction of other people's labor, as well as to preclude other forms of development once they patterned the landscape as another node in an imperial web lacing largescale reclamation of the tule lands to the cans and iceboxes of East Coast cupboards and far-flung Pacific forts. A singular source of infrastructure and whiteness's influence under capitalism is their promise to return, and reinvest. The calliope sounds this arrival technically and culturally.

"Unique but not all that Unfamiliar": Themes of Race as Geographic Alignment

The sound of steam whistles in Sacramento has transformed from a practical matter signaling dockworkers or railyard workers of a shipment's arrival to a nostalgic lure beaconing visitors to experience the marvel of Californian technological and commercial development firsthand. The shrill notes still figure prominently in Old Sacramento, a recreation of the Gold Rush-era city constructed over the supposedly "blighted" West End, a former Japantown that evolved into a multiracial and class-diverse neighborhood on the risk-prone banks of the river (California Museum). Amid the donut shops, tattoo parlors, and bb-gun carnival games that delight tourists and consume their cash, Old Sacramento upholds itself as a historic district through State Park status and an impressive State Railroad Museum with extensive holdings. The veneer of authenticity offered by the Railroad Museum's locomotion restorations that offer informative, pedagogical excursions—including the sound of steam whistles signaling departure—is critical to this valuation of the district as a cultural and urban resource. However, Sacramento's association of the steam whistle with leisure in place of labor is not novel.

Artist Kara Walker elucidates through her piece, *The Katastwóf Karavan,* how entrepreneurs reformulated this sonic infrastructure meant to warn and discipline workers into a diversion shortly after its appearance in the mid-nineteenth century. Walker's installation is a mobile calliope on a car, surrounded by her signature silhouette cutouts depicting exaggerated and horrific scenes of enslavement that reference Jim Crow aesthetics to denote the continual imprint of slavery's violence in the U.S. South. She explicitly artistically denotes the connection between labor, mechanization, and stereotypical Southern jubilance and hedonism, selecting an

instrument with a legacy of reinvention: "In fact, the steam whistle was developed into a musical instrument called a calliope, which operated on the same principle as a pipe organ. Thus, the locomotive literally crossed into the realm of art: the call of a whistle at night is haunting because it is the sound of music." (Keirce, 16-17). Marvelously, the calliope attracts astonishment by reformatting the most mundane sounds of efficient industrial progress into a sublime experience. As a palimpsest, it attests to the power of the railroad to bring forth such a recognizable signifier. It reinforces the power of the mechanical to evoke not just the rational pleasure of efficient business operations but the emotional register of beauty itself.

The Katastwóf Karavan toys with the insidiousness of automated workplace appliances interjecting their logics into affecting experience. Walker further emphasizes that the mechanistic and progressive hopes that the steam whistle incites were simultaneous economic and cultural within 19th-century racial capitalism. The calliope reminds viewers of the pervasiveness of racial understanding and infrastructural wonder within markets, factories, and fields. Walker introduces "her Unique (but not all that *Unfamiliar*) **CALLIOPE!**" with two contradictory modifiers—unique *and* unfamiliar. Part of this is materially literal, as her collaborator "Jonathan King cast and machined the bronze whistles from the propellers, rudders, and shafts of old Chesapeake Bay workboats" (Walker). Through this designation, the artist signifies how technological recurrence *and* racialization's cyclical and self-referential nature remain just as critical to U.S. capitalist functionality as any machinic cog or engine piston. Through critical recontextualization, Walker documents the similar adaptability of automated technologies—maritime navigation essentials like rudders and whistles—*and* the racial scripts that accompany, explicate, and sometimes inspire racialization, casting specific racialized workforces as either insufficiently industrious or excessively productive. These value judgments explain her recourse to an aesthetic and emotional classification parodying the commodification of everyday life and the racial scripts that direct this action in the U.S.

Walker's evocative depiction of her calliope as unique and unfamiliar squarely aligns it with Sianne Ngai's categorization of "the interesting" as a crucial yet relatively unremarkable and slippery affect crucial for capitalism's operations. Specifically, Ngai registers 'the interesting' as a commentary on circulation within capitalism. Ngai emphasizes, "Always connected to the relatively small surprise of information and variation from an existing norm, the interesting marks a tension between the unknown and the already known and is generally bound up with a desire to know and document reality." (Ngai, 5). Thus, this affect mirrors circulation in that it attempts to quell fears of an unruly market by obsessive attention to deviation from seamless—and maximized—distribution.

Nevertheless, this pathological surveillance also marks the interesting as, like Walker's calliope, neurotically focused on the minute, quotidian, and unremarkable. For Ngai, "What we find interesting is typically something we compulsively come back to, as if to verify to ourselves that it is still interesting and thus potentially to find it interesting again—a dynamic that makes the interesting not just about the unexpected but also about the familiar, not just about difference but about repetition." (Ngai, 133). This dual impulse leads to a condition similar to Walker's paradox. Like the infrastructural instrument of the calliope, 'the interesting' as a field both obsesses over the most remarkable deviation (whether patterned information transmitted on teletype or the emergence of popular music from hinterland riverine shores) and establishes the conditions for what is normal, regular, and should go unnoticed *precisely because* of its pervasiveness and omnipresence.

Much like feelings towards infrastructure, then, "regardless of the particular objects and situations to which it is ascribed, the judgment always seems underpinned by a calm, if not necessarily weak, affective intensity whose minimalism is somehow understood to secure its link to ratiocinative cognition and to facilitate the formation of social ties." (Ngai, 113). Ngai's insightful definition of the interesting's intrinsic characteristics —recurrent forensic attention, cycles of mundanity punctuated by deviance, and saturation as a relatively minor emotion— apply quite neatly to Walker's calliope and the mechanized racial violence it laments. The instrument and the racialized trade system that birthed it rely on prosaic, commonplace technologies—mechanical whistles and epidermalization (Fanon). Their adaptation across diverse affective states—the anxiety of work, the allure of leisure—discloses how infrastructure serves, like 'the interesting'—as the background logic of both capital and race: ready to erupt instantaneously into violence or passion, and through that ubiquitous threat, securing the low hum of everyday racial feeling fueling differentiation and classification and securing racialism through postures, attitudes, and desires. The alchemical transformation of circulation's clarion calls into a source of unexpected and delightful exuberance activates infrastructure's capacity for emotional weight. This activation, in turn, reinforces the presence of ordinary, rational, and calm machines attached to this technological realm to insist upon its mechanical certainty extending from markets to individual behavior.

As Walker explores, infrastructure's interesting affect mirrors the functionality of race in capitalism. Like the steam whistle that, when aggregated, composes the calliope, racial understanding, classification, and sorting (Bowker and Star) propel accumulation by devaluing certain people and communities, thus serving as a benchmark for valued resources. However, like the whistle's release meant to prevent a collision or announce a docking, this devaluation also serves as a sink of reserve value during moments of crisis and transition (Bledsoe & Wright). Racialism and infrastructure both conform to Carse's definition of infrastructure: these formulations serve a foundational, hierarchical, and furtive role in the drama of capitalism. Infrastructure as a racial project crucially bridges transitory moments of collapse within the inherently contradictory impulse of contestation and ever-escalating productivity. Much like Ngai's emphasis on 'interesting' aesthetics, the eruption of racialization as a crisis resolution strategy further underscores the ubiquity of whiteness as an organizing principle of capitalism and its lifeways. In other words, race is how capitalism is felt. Sharon Patricia Holland makes a similar argument, noting how "Racism can be defined as the emotional lifeblood of race; it is the 'feeling' that articulates and keeps the flawed logic of race in its place. […] We focus on race, but rarely on the *everyday* system of terror and pleasure that in varying proportions makes race so useful a category of difference." (Holland, 6). The focus on the calamitous oscillations of Sacramento's fortunes showcases how "*everyday* system[s] of terror and pleasure" are also fundamental aspects of schemes to expand capital's reach. The passions of capital only become more enflamed when that expansion is explicitly and aggressively militarized. As Walker notes, one of the primary media for racialized military campaign's transplantation was infrastructural technologies.

Walker first conceived her project after a quotidian, serendipitous encounter with the peculiar instrument still enthralling travelers with fantasies of racial and geographic frontiers in the everyday built environment: "The steam calliope is no less peculiar. Walker conceived of the *Karavan* after hearing the keen of a calliope emanating from a nearby riverboat, the Natchez—a morbid replica of nineteenth century vessels and a popular tourist attraction." Quoting a conversation between Walker and jazz musician Jason Moran (Art21), an analysis of

the piece recalls how "The sound, in Walker's words, conveyed the 'wistfulness that some southern white would regard slavery or those bygone days, not just for the control or the power but the intimacy of what those enslaved people's bodies meant to theirs—mind, body, soul.' She describes the feeling as 'so unsavory you can't speak it.'" (Gamso). Walker's explicitly multisensory and affective analysis—the calliope's force allows it to echo across the vast Mississippi, and its fanciful and wistful Jim Crow era melodies evoke a corporeal, gustatory response of "unsavoriness"—contextualizes Holland's comments on the force of racism as an embodied experience that reinforces exploitation and hierarchy. For Walker, one of the most impactful and visceral techniques for soliciting that response is infrastructural—background settings that can conjure an entire economic system predicated on violence with a few shrill tones.

Through *The Katastwóf Karavan*, the first word of the title derived from Haitian creole translating to "catastrophe," Walker challenges the permanence of monumentalizing meant to cordon off both the impact and the temporality of the past in commemorations that praise disruption, accumulation, displacement, and murder—and thus even bracket condemnation on slaveholders' terms. Rather than memorializing enslavement as a finished, knowable event, *The Katastwóf Karavan* confronts, parodies, and revels in the continual and very contemporary refusal to delight in chattel slavery. Walker's piece theorizes the afterlives of slavery (Hartman). However, the calliope and its case also critique infrastructure for its role in maintaining particular affective stances towards former regimes of accumulation which are still salient for contemporary capitalism. Thus, when Walker poses herself the question "What does it all Mean?" to anticipate the reaction of an overwhelmed audience, she consciously explains how her recalibration of a machine— historically entertaining river passengers as they traversed the Cotton Kingdom, reliant upon a technology that soon enough found its way to the California goldfields— is meant to spotlight "unrelenting, nihilistic 'Progress' and how its regarded as a monument in American History etc. But also thinking about how the Industrial Revolution, the Steam Engine and Cotton 'Gin were pivotal in usurping and grinding up the bodies of laborers and how much of that action, John Henry style, occurs today" (Walker).

Again, in a direct address on the salience of her calliope, Walker conjoins the relentlessness of technological fetishism with its predisposition to solving problems at once racial and labor specific. The steam engine in the U.S. is inseparable from a relentless march westward, and the cotton gin made the product of chattel slavery more economically viable in proportion to its efficiency. Both facilitated capitalism's spread and cemented its brutality. Walker concludes by citing the mythical John Henry, possibly a Virginian convict laborer who perished after blasting shale for a rail line, inhaling carcinogenic dust (Nelson). Figuratively, Henry testifies to the morbid collusion of infrastructure and racialization as the background noise of capitalism, a reliable sink for its manifold disasters.

Perhaps inevitably, like the Corps of Engineer levees and the efficient riverboat freight that benefitted from their slopes, the calliope found its way to the Sacramento River. In predictable Sacramentan fashion, a failure presaged its arrival upon a steamship forced to ply backwaters after an administrative debacle: "The steamer *Defiance* was refused a license for carrying passengers over the Bay of San Francisco, but made her first trip to Sacramento on July 29, 1860, with seventy-five passengers. […] She was the first steamer on the bay to be provided with a calliope for the amusement, comfort and quiet enjoyment of her passengers." (de Long and Wheat, 297). While the calliope, which in its second act featured as a staple of circus tents, was long associated with amusement, it seems odd that an instrument so unruly that Walker

handed out earplugs at her exhibition to protect visitors' hearing would either offer comfort or retain any affiliation with 'quiet.' However, considering the calliope as affective regimentation underscores how the very intensity of the instrument tames both wilderness and the comportment of the guests.

The calliope's insistent tumult drowns and blankets their hinterland surroundings with recognizably white cultural forms. It makes the unknown fringes of empire comfortable, using tunes almost certainly derived at this time from a burgeoning minstrel tradition. The passengers derive their quiet enjoyment from familiar racial scripts relayed using the very same machinery that drove the racialized economy to their benefit. As scholars of the Corps of Engineers remark, this affective attunement counteracts rivers understood by the U.S. military through emotional registers:

> In vivid prose, unexpected in a bureaucratic document, the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division describes the focus of its work as the 'contumacious' Mississippi River. Explaining the difficulty of its task, the Corps refers to the river as both 'beast' and 'benefactor': 'This Janus-faced colossus periodically seeks to challenge the flood control system imposed upon it, while its opposite profile is a vital waterway network that extends into the heart of the nation—a true cornerstone of our economy.' […] The Army does not mince words—or tread lightly—when it comes to battle with what it perceives as the stubborn and willfully disobedient river. (Klein and Zellmer, 4)

While the Corps battles a recalcitrant river, the calliope melds infrastructural ubiquity with racial comforts to at least secure the comportment of settlers in a wild and unpredictable geography. For many decades surrounding the turn of the 20th century, the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce employed as its trademarked logo the same circulatory symbol that the Corps sought to protect: the riverway as a pump powering the venous system and oxygenating the economy (fig. 14). The symbolism expectedly traveled across these fields of expertise. During this era, the Corps increasingly turned its attention West (O'Neill). However, the dual nature of this metaphor emanates more prominently in the Chamber of Commerce's iconography. The Corps reclassifies the river from "beast" to "benefactor" as a contrary servant reined into properly motherly duty, with an initial behavioral assessment of "contumacious." The Chamber claims for Sacramento the circulatory function for the whole rapidly expanding state and contextualizes this feature in an idealized heart reminiscent of a valentine. The river may stoke the engine of California's development, but it may also make you feel something. The viewer is left to interpret whether one goal is superior or if the two are as interdependent as the circulatory system: essentially unified.

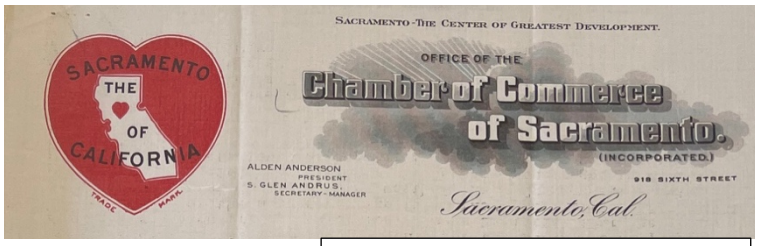

Fig. 14: Sacramento Chamber of Commerce

The vitality of the racialized white household—the heart of the settler empire—ensures the permanence of the larger industrialized commodity market and serves as a perennial recourse for racial capitalism. Cedric Robinson, in his foundational outline of the racialism undergirding capital, explains of early European trade of enslaved people that from the 13th to 15th century (when differentiation between owners and exploited was still malleable and in flux) "the primary

function of […] predominantly European slaves in the economies of southern Europe was domestic service. Nevertheless, in Spain (Catalan and Castile) and in the Italian colonies on Cyprus, Crete, and in Asian Minor (Phocaea) and Palestine, Genoese and Venetian masters used both European and African slaves in agriculture on sugar plantations, in industry, and for work in mines." (Robinson, 16). The shift from residences to sugar and mining—hallmarks of the 16th- and 17th-century colonial economies of the Americas—showcases how differentiated labor exploitation that guaranteed the fortification of the household provided the literal market infrastructure for trafficking people upon which the plantation and the mine as extractive zones would come to rely. Taking advantage of the chaotic wilderness figured by mineral deposits, fertile soil, and improperly 'civilized' human beings realized a supposedly natural order that began in the home. This maneuver also accomplishes a temporal parallelism across scales. It merges the routine regeneration of the household, achieved not through reciprocity and relation but subjugation, with the reproduction of the social order managed by similar means of deracination.

Critical infrastructural studies thoroughly documents the racial calculus behind settler claims for ecological or cultural supremacy. Toponyms and travelogues of the Western U.S. replete with biblical imagery attest to the civilizational associations saturating geomorphological assessment and engineered infrastructural intervention. In her representative study of the unquenchable drive to tame the Brazos River despite almost perennial setbacks, environmental historian Kenna Archer assesses how "From the capture of waterpower at early textile mills to the construction of a transcontinental railroad, Americans have consistently sought technological tools with which to tame a landscape alternately described as wilderness or frontier or Eden." (Lang Archer, xix). Archer's analysis acknowledges the palimpsestic reclamation of infrastructural tools and concepts but also traces an underlying rationale of civilizational potential or degradation that inspires, motivates, serves as a barometer for, and elevates the motivation beyond the mere greed of these initiatives.

The case of Sacramento, a crossroads for a state long positioned as a borderland between temporally and geographically bounded empires, demands a deeper investigation of the specific grammars of civilizational potential or threat evolving alongside the city's riverbanks. My study has interrogated how infrastructure feels and emphasized how that feeling drives not solely infrastructure's initial production. Often as much as steam or a locomotive coupling rod, emotion directs infrastructure's adaptation to emergent racializations and accumulative strategies. American Studies scholar Sharon P. Holland proficiently summarizes how situating a body on the land, and suggesting (or precluding) the capacity to shape and thus narrate that land, is a basic racial project: "Those who order the world, who are world-making master time—those animals *and* humans who are perceived as having no world-making effects—merely occupy space. […] If the black appears as the antithesis of history (occupies space), the white represents the industry of progressiveness (being in time)." (Holland, 10). Perceiving Holland's assessment through an infrastructural lens, largescale, functional landscape interventions concretize (often quite literally) whiteness as "progressive." Their presence offers empirical evidence of white potency and guides and prescribes priorities across scales.

Infrastructure ideally directs water, people, and capital flows but also disciplines emotional responses to landscape. These affective attachments then demand allegiance to certain social solutions bound up in intimate, corporeal decisions. This tendency is exaggerated during moments of shock. It is also relational. Racialized affective states mirror infrastructural priorities, hopes, and failures but also assist in marshaling resources for their construction as

bulwarks against personal tumultuousness. Archer schematizes this recursive operation succinctly, citing the Brazos as her guide, as "Cultural production along this river, in other words, speaks to the priorities that shaped the process of development and to the ties that bound a frustrated people to a destructive land." (Lang Archer, xxv). The emotional appeal fueled by reflection on infrastructural sublimity (Nye) responds to crisis by bracketing options during transitory periods, making inevitable a state that finds expression in creative media rehearsing the drama of colonial encounter and the endless potential (or necessary recourse to) racial formation as a sole, reliable, navigable path to redemption.

Sacramento Valley settlers made the priorities that bound them to their unstable watershed quite clear; they found romance in the tules. The multiple confluences of rivers and trade routes not only made available infrastructural processes but demanded their implementation. Moreover, boosters would link infrastructural development to the continuance of white social reproduction. For the champions of the tules, infrastructure modeled proper racial balance through its capacity to siphon the vigor of racialized wilderness and transpose it into a regulated system of white heterodomesticity. While the tules initially inspired rugged shanties, the flames of their transformation into fertilized soil witnessed artificial shade and European classical music: "Kentucky is sending specimens of her beautiful daughters here, and already the old-time tule shanty is giving place to the elegant and elegantly-furnished cottage, the shabby skiff to the trim, awning-covered boat, and the merry laugh of the maidens and their beaux rings out above the music of the guitar, as the pleasure boats glide past each other on the smooth water, transformed into silver for the time by the bright full moon." (Marks). The early speculative tule entrepreneur, an associate of tule magnate George D. Roberts, invokes alchemy to suggest that settlers will not genuinely fulfill 49er ambition in spectacular finds like the Comstock Lode but find recourse through the intimacy of a tamed tule marsh spawning romantic white courtship.

The managed river can rejuvenate the mines of the Sierra's value in the once swampy labyrinth and, more so, capture and revitalize the magic and grandeur of the staggering plantation South. For Marks, social cohesion and continuity, most arrestingly symbolized by a conjugal union, spouted from another synthesis. Infrastructure could offer the fusion of leisure and ecological tameness. The infrastructural matrix of the Delta served settlers as the apogee of civilization. This indispensable shorthand melded environmental challenges with labor shortages and materialized a racial model reassuringly stamping out both problems. The evidence of infrastructure's almost mystical capacity for metamorphosis is musical. Like the calliope following the guitar and the steamship replacing the awning-covered boat, evidence of white permanence in the Delta is affective, experiential, and aesthetic. The emotional lure of the receding tules and the nostalgia of a formerly feral landscape now tamed transplant the management ethos of colonial infrastructure at fundamental corporeal levels. For settlers, flood management is literally in their bones.

Dissipating the Crisis: Circulating Whiteness in the *Longue Durée*

As the bones travel, whiteness travels. It is not solely a symbolic strategy or iconography to enshrine particular familial arrangements, linguistic patterns, or aesthetic sensibilities. As a dynamic vector in capitalism facilitating the abstraction of the commodity through its association with the balance of fixity and motion, it is an economic force that allocates and, especially, redirects resources for both primitive accumulation and crisis resolution.

Infrastructure created white subjective archetypes as crisis resolution strategies throughout the empire (Hall et al.). The weights of primitive accumulation, indebted servitude, and unsustainable wage labor always offered an “out” through frontier service, whether as an

unmoored sailor or expeditionary soldier. Just as critically, infrastructure also calcified an economic rationale for unabated economic expansion. While wartime industrial capacity at home inevitably secured the further domestic production of associated extractive activity and transportation capacities, it also stimulated similar schemes abroad when capital accumulated in domestic capacity to a worrisome degree.

Sacramento is a city with a particularly obvious reliance on infrastructure. A historiography entirely composed of ecological and economic disasters continually reinforces the prominence of basic riverine engineering and technical capacity, such as power generation, otherwise relegated as *pre*development in many other urban sites. The vividness of infrastructure allows for analysis of infrastructural complexity as an economic fix to funnel financing into speculative resource stockpiles and untapped markets. Its palpability also lends credence to infrastructure as a racial fix assessing the value of operations as a civilizational balancing act, either reining in intractable natural chaos or rejuvenating staid and risk-averse traditionalists who cannot grasp circulation's unfathomable promises. The multiple objectives and aspirations of infrastructure elucidate how typical corporate operation in the Valley compelled intervention in advanced scientific development and everyday household chores.

Ultimately, infrastructural financiers and operators in the Valley attempted to make Sacramento a white geography, fundamentally understood as a stable, predictable, crisis-averse environment buttressed by interconnection with circulatory networks, a permanence through regenerative capacities, and unrivaled proximity to racialized labor and leisure masquerading as natural fecundity. Their efforts are exceptional for the degree to which Sacramento's infrastructural precarity accentuates the recourse to whiteness as a crisis resolution strategy for racial capitalism more generally. The allure of whiteness guarantees both a standardized life at home and geographic knowledge to expand vision across landscapes and into the murky machinations of the market.

Both rewards owe their cogency to Sacramentan hydrologic infrastructures attempting to tame a river or at least offload its vagaries into ditches, neighborhoods, and cultures submergible enough to bear the floodwaters. This deluge consisted of disastrous weather, paired with unsound, deluded speculative schemes and tireless attempts to enculturate wasted potential. Threats of metrological and racial storms often blew unceremoniously into town, and either could upset the careful balance of the market. In Sacramento, sometimes certainty against crisis involved the military fortifications of grain silos. Other times, infrastructure took the mundane, intimate, and less extravagant form of military surplus and agribusiness booster literature, transmogrifying a dull concrete dam meant to beguile floodwaters into a tangible, joyful picnic ground asserting settler belonging through youthful laughter echoing against quarried cliffs. Once mined for minerals, elite Sacramentans still excavate this channel for visions of Western aqueous abundance and interminably white leisure.

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