

Women on the Move:
From the Ghost Dance to Urban Parks

By

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Abstract

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Comprised of historical and empirical research, this dissertation addresses conceptions of health, movement, and behavioral norms in public spaces. While dance and rhythmic activities are vital to social cohesion, communication, and cultural reproduction in human societies worldwide, they have been subject to many forms of suppression—as is the case of American Indians on reservations in the 20th century. The Ghost Dance among the Lakota in 1890, along with other examples, together reveal the role of dance and music in offering resilience and hope for renewal. The experiences of women in America in the late-19th through mid-20th centuries is also discussed: The interactions of race and gender pertinent to women’s experiences in public, American Indian assimilation, dance, city parks movement, physical education, and physical culture are highlighted.

The historical context is complemented by contemporary observations of municipal parks in the San Francisco East Bay. Municipal parks with similar design features are found in cities and towns throughout the United States. As public commons, they reveal a great deal about social values, norms, and power. This study utilizes an environmental justice framework and a modified System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities method to evaluate park conditions and usage. Forty-seven parks, most less than seven acres in size, located in census tracts reporting populations at or above the California averages for Asian, African American, or American Indian residents in the cities of Richmond, Berkeley, and Oakland, California were visited at various times throughout the day and week.

Observations confirmed previous studies that found predominantly sedentary uses with limited variety. Among adult and teen park users, there were fewer women than men, which also corresponded with previous studies in other cities. Most parks had low levels of use considering the population density of the surrounding neighborhood. Access to sanitary infrastructure and drinking water was limited, as was equipment for adults. Facilities for competitive sports were common, while alternative outdoor facilities for group rhythmic, creative, or coordinated movement were rare.

It is recommended that municipalities could address environmental inequalities and increase park usage by providing free or very low-cost programming that incorporates creativity, expression, and cooperation. Access to equipment such as hoops, wheels, musical instruments, ropes, and spaces for community dances or presentations should be explored as additional ways to increase active park use. Enhancing sanitation infrastructure, negotiating sound policies, and facilitating active transportation to and from parks are other suggested ways to increase use of urban municipal parks.

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I am grateful for all those who have contributed to the continued existence of spaces where the public can enjoy movement and experience earth's natural systems. From parks of all sizes, to varied bodies of water, these places serve fundamental needs. Thank you to the past and current residents of the SF Bay Area who have implemented policies or otherwise supported things such as our bike infrastructure, access to local organic foods, cooperative and co-shared housing, waste reduction and diversion programs, independent radio, and support for public parks and the arts, etc. These actions give me hope that we can take steps to live in ways that take into account the causes and effects of our actions on all of humanity. There remains a great deal to be done.

Ch. 1: Introduction

Among streets filled with houses and apartment buildings, you come across a familiar site: A park about the size of a block with a play area for small children, a basketball court, and a small field of grass. A woman watches a child as he explores the play area while two teenage boys stand talking on the court, occasionally shooting the basketball at the hoop. Does it occur to you to wonder why so few of the people who live near this park are present at this moment? Perhaps they are too busy working, doing household duties, enjoying other pursuits, or are afraid of being here. While the reasons for people's absences are numerous and varied, this dissertation brings together previous research from different fields and empirical observation in order to recommend policies aimed at encouraging increased use of municipal parks as sites where environmental ethics founded on respect for the interconnectedness of life may be fostered through a variety of practices.

Municipal parks hold a vast amount of untapped potential to serve as sites for meaningful ecocentric cultural reproduction, but there are several structural and cultural barriers that must be addressed in order to realize this potential. By meaningful cultural reproduction, I specifically refer to the transmission and/or creation of practices that inform participants' worldview, values, and relationships to other humans and the world around them. An ecocentric worldview places humans as just one of many species within a complex and interdependent system of relationships with plants, animals, and elements, which each have value in their own right. Ecocentrism has been critiqued as overlooking disparities among humans due to race, class, gender, place of origin, and systems that create privilege. While believers in ecocentrism may view humans and other species as equally deserving of respect for their place in the ecosystem, they are cautioned against relying on one human narrative of experience.¹

Parks as Moral Spaces – Whose Morals?

Urban parks have a history of being “moral spaces,” where normative behaviors are guided and enforced. Early parks' supporters varied in their intentions—some hoping to improve the quality of life of recent immigrants while others sought to alter the values and behavior of park users out of fear or dislike for their cultures. Parks were created as spaces for quiet contemplation or family recreation. Rowdy behavior was regulated against, and later concessions to continued resistance to these restrictions resulted in the addition of sports fields and play areas, which were intended to guide people into predictable activities. My observation of parks today revealed an enduring influence of these norms where park users are predominantly engaged in sedentary behavior, transit through or around the park, and sports-related or child-centered activities. In order to make public parks as inclusive spaces enjoyed by the diverse American public, we must examine and publicly negotiate the values that guide how these spaces should be developed, maintained, and used.²

Attitudes towards movement and the desirable body have been shaped by the field of physical education, which emerged in America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: It drew heavily on Greek and Roman influences. Greek males (not females) were educated in gymnastics: “Discipline, obedience, indifference to pain, and obsession with victory in competition were the primary values of the education system.” Romans also valued physical training for the sake of military preparedness. Greeks and Romans dedicated their sporting events to their gods. Many of these events were bloody and violent, and were viewed by many

spectators. Roman women, predominantly among the privileged classes, participated in swimming, dancing, and light exercise.³

While conceptions of health vary among and within cultures, in America, the notion of fitness and modes of evaluating the body in the first half of the 20th century took on an “aura of scientific objectivity” that was racially coded. The ‘hidden curriculum’ of physical education provides “implicit training in personal values and social interaction. In subtle and overt ways, physical education teaches us about discipline and spontaneity, cooperation and competition, self-esteem and embarrassment.” These lessons also shape how municipal parks have been designed for particular uses.⁴

Attitudes towards how Americas should pursue physical activities, particularly those in public—from dancing to games—have been challenged and contested in many ways over time. Among American Indians in the 18th and early 19th centuries, dancing and feasting were restricted or prohibited. African slaves were sometimes made to sing to improve their work efficiency, dance for others’ entertainment, or were permitted to dance on Sundays in a public square where their activities could be monitored. In the case of physical education during the 1900s-1940s,

Many female physical educators championed a special vision of exercise and sports. In stark contrast to the ethos of men’s athletics, many women teachers—both prominent and rank-and-file—stressed mass participation, rather than elite sports; play for play’s sake, instead of victory at any price; personal growth and safety, not exploitation and commercialization.

These women critiqued competition and individualism and sought to integrate inclusiveness, egalitarianism, cooperation, and social harmony as values learned through physical means. Male and female were viewed as simultaneously “oppositional, complementary, and overlapping categories.” Today, however, I observed structural facilities in parks catering to sports that predominantly draw male participants compared to facilities or programming for non-sport activities, such as dancing or other rhythmic or expressive movement.⁵

Military thinking is present in today’s conceptions of exercise and fitness as well. The modern term “aerobics” was transformed from the “aerobic” process to a noun, and then popularized by Air Force officer Dr. Kenneth Cooper, beginning with his 1968 book titled *Aerobics*. It reveals an attitude towards physical activity where the purpose is to train the (machine-like) body for certain types of performance. This is in contrast to movement that is carried out for enjoyment, to fulfill some spiritual meaning, or to engage socially with others—among other motivations.⁶

“Muscular Christianity” was a dominant philosophy in early physical education during the Victorian era, and marked a shift from Puritan prohibitions against play and exercise. This Evangelical Protestant philosophy was imbued with particular notions of sport as improving moral behavior, to be used for subduing the earth, controlling the body, and believing one’s self to be superior to others who are weak. The 1861 novel *Tom Brown at Oxford*, includes the passage:

The least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that a man's body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous

causes, and the subduing of the earth...

The first YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in America was founded in Boston in 1861 by a marine missionary as a refuge for sailors and merchants. Membership was seen as an opportunity for newcomers to perhaps move up in class standing. After World War II, muscular Christianity shifted focus and became institutionalized due to a renewed interest in sports for evangelism. The role of the YMCA and sports in acculturating immigrants and enhancing masculinity is a theme in the novel *China Boy*, in which a young Chinese boy living near San Francisco's Golden Gate Park Panhandle area in the 1950's learns to box at the YMCA in order to stand up to neighborhood bullies and overcome his fear of venturing outside in a neighborhood with shifting racial dynamics where people from different backgrounds were increasingly sharing the same spaces.⁷

Physical culture and the desirable body are also racially coded and influenced by Social Darwinism and an emphasis on competition. Public swimming pools contributed to, and reveal a great deal about, racialized and sexualized physical culture in America. In the early 20th century, as women and men shed Victorian modesty and revealed ever greater amounts of skin, indecency shifted from how much skin was exposed to how toned and slim one was as an indicator of decency; i.e., it was acceptable to be revealing if what was revealed was within the norms of whiteness and attractiveness. Fears about racial mixing, particularly of white women coming into contact with men of color (and competing with white males for their attention and affections), contributed to the diminished support for public pools and the proliferation of private pools for whites.⁸

After the Civil War, standardization of numerous sports took place due to increases in communication and transportation technology, industrialization, and urbanization. Previously, games and rules varied by locality, which would entail some negotiation and a greater diversity in activities. With standardization, national governing bodies were responsible for making consistent regulations, reducing players to participants following rules and guidelines. In contrast, a return to a more decentralized model of engagement would encourage participants (perhaps with the aid of a trained facilitator) in the creation and negotiation of games. These interactions would foster communication, understanding, flexibility, and adaptability—skills that are greatly needed in a dynamic world shared among humanity.⁹

Socialization into competitive sports teaches conformity to set rules, suppressing the need for developing skills based on creativity, adaptability, or negotiation. Most competitive sports in America's parks center around speed, strength, and hand-eye coordination to interact with a ball, whereas rhythmic activities can counterbalance activities of daily life, and incorporate many different aspects that meet physical, social, and emotional needs. With a focus on competition, people who do not excel are encouraged to become spectators rather than participants. While performance is linked to competition, survival of the fittest, and exclusion, 'participation discourses center on inclusion, equity, involvement, enjoyment, social justice, caring, cooperation, movement...'¹⁰

Philosophies of Cooperation and Interdependence

Many philosophical lines of thought from cultures around the world hold respect for all life, interdependence, balance, cooperation, or harmony as central to their beliefs; however, these philosophies have not held the same influential roles in the development of public parks as those

philosophies based on competition and difference. In addition to ancient world religions and recently emerged movements such as Deep Ecology, research also suggests that cooperation is beneficial to humans. While team sports may foster in-team cooperation, it still prizes competition over another, rather than emphasizing cooperation as its primary objective.¹¹

One interpretation of American Indian philosophy stresses relatedness, cycles, and circularity as “world-ordering principles.” While Western religions are organized by time, sacred events, and history, American Indian religious traditions center on space, sacred places, and nature. Another common thread is an encompassing concept of spirit that animates and connects humans with the world around them. Another important aspect common to many American Indian philosophies is the “semantic potency of performance,” where speeches, dancing, ceremonies, or other acts utilize symbols and actions to transform participants and construct and recreate their world.¹²

Other environmentalists have written about the need to foster experiences that more fully utilize our senses. David Abram discusses how the development of writing was accompanied by abstract thinking that contributes to a separation from the sensuous experiences of nature. Deep ecologist Joanna Macy provides an optimistic perspective that society is making way towards a radical positive shift, in what she calls “the Great Turning.” McKibben and Mander argue against television, and the warnings against overuse of communication and entertainment technology expands to health and development fields as well. Plotkin provides a model for ecocentric (versus egocentric) personal development, which relies on early interactions with natural processes and initiatory markers between life stages, among many other recommendations.¹³

Adaptation to change, resilience, continuity, and transculturation are important to understand in the context of this research, which draws on a circular view of time that integrates the concept of renewal, rather than a linear model, exemplified by a notion of progress from savagery towards civilization. Changes in worldviews and ways of life—such as the transformation of dance as an important integrated aspect of everyday life to significantly reduced roles for dance in contemporary western society—have been produced by a combination of factors, including forcible restrictions, cultural norms, and environmental conditions. Emphasizing continuity, resilience, and renewal is key to resisting notions that certain groups of peoples have been exterminated. The public parks that are a subject of this research are also spaces that have been transformed, and will continue to be influenced by human intervention: This dissertation encourages a discussion around how we recognize and negotiate our modification, usage, attitudes, and responsibilities towards these spaces.

Transculturation, or “the transformative process undergone by a society in acquiring foreign cultural material – the loss or displacement of a society’s culture due to the acquisition or imposition of foreign material, and the fusion of the indigenous and the foreign to create a new, original cultural product” is a relevant reminder in this discussion of the forced and voluntary ways in which cultures are shaped by interactions with other cultures. I draw on examples from experiences of ethnic minorities in America who have experienced traumatic displacement, relocation, and violence, creating additional challenges to the maintenance of individual and cultural wellness.¹⁴

Another topic concerns our physical environment, namely public spaces and how they are conceptualized, managed, and utilized: Primary attention is paid to the ideal of municipal parks as a public good, to be shared for the benefit of all, but especially for those in society who do not own private property. For people who are in diaspora (or people in movement), groups that have

faced economic and legal barriers to property ownership, and those whose values reject the notion of private space, public spaces such as urban parks represent some of the most potentially accessible physical spaces. Yet, the types of activities carried out in parks are limited by various unspoken mores, as well as tangible regulations. Thus, the theme of public space and its management is significant, and is addressed through an environmental justice framework that encompasses aspects of physical space as well as the soundscape, sense of privacy, or imbuing the space with meaning through ceremony, ritual, or recurring actions.

Positionality

It's not uncommon for me to be questioned by strangers and friends alike about where I am from. Underlying this question about geography is often an inquiry into my genetic and cultural background, and an assumption of foreignness. Despite appearances, I consider my background to be particularly American, having been born and raised in America, exposed to popular media and culture, and having attended public schools. My attachment to the land, geography, and history of this place we call America is facilitated by my experiences traveling by land across great swaths of this continent, meeting relatives from far corners, and seeing earth's beauty as well as degradation.

My family history includes recent immigration, as well as immigration many generations ago, and continuous inhabitation of this land for generations unknown. However, the transmission of these cultures from previous generations has faced many interruptions, including physical distance, and subtle and overt efforts to shame, eradicate, and replace languages, practices, and ways of living. It has been my experience that music has been one essential vehicle through which fundamental worldviews and values are transmitted through time and place. What continues to amaze me is the ability of music from around the world to provide access to values and worldviews that reveal certain commonalities among all of humanity while simultaneously showcasing the great variety in cultures.

Through classical Indian kathak, I have learned about Hinduism and the Lord Shiva, whose dancing creates and permeates the world. Through danza Mexica/Azteca, I have danced prayers and participated in ceremonies in public parks that otherwise have few comparable events. In these dances, as well as Hawaiian hula, Tahitian ori, and Chinese ethnic dances, I have experienced the global commonalities of dance as a tool for honoring the elements of fire, water, earth, air; creating a sacredness of space through purification of burning plant materials, sprinkling of salt water, chanting, singing, or using instruments for sound; and appreciating other life forms through embodiment, emulation, and story-telling. I have come to understand firsthand the various roles that dance can play in human societies, such as social interaction that creates understanding or community, honoring or remembering, transmission of knowledge through story-telling, and spiritual growth.

The power of music and dance can in one way be revealed in the violent response to Lakota Ghost Dancers in 1890. Flamed by newspaper reports about recent events of violence among other tribes in the Indian Wars, dancing was perceived as such a dangerous threat that it instigated a massacre of dancers—young, old, female and male alike—despite evidence that leaders did not advise dancers to pursue confrontation or violence. Meanwhile, what was desired by dancers was a return to a peaceful way of life, where dancers could live with their family and community members, where they could return to a time of freedom described as reliant on

nomadic hunting of bison; dancing, singing, and ceremony as integral expressions of prayer and cosmology; and games.

The research that I share with you here is derived from initial broad-scale concerns about global environmental degradation, including climate change and loss of biodiversity, as well as human and animal suffering. These pressing problems are interrelated, and the proximal causes are numerous; however, the causes that are most striking to me relate to the confluence of narratives, cosmologies, and the destructive effects of materialism and overconsumption.

I eventually narrowed the topic to how the use (or non-use) of municipal parks, as public spaces, reveals insights into prominent cultural norms and values that have been produced and reproduced over time. This focus arose out of my observations and experiences in urban city parks, where I gradually became aware of low use and limited variety of activities in parks. I also noticed that there were few other women in the parks, and those were mostly caregivers of accompanying children. I wondered if this pattern was present in other parks, and what this revealed about our society.

I began my research by turning to examine the historical context related to behavioral norms in areas constructed as public and private, using dance and public parks as a lens through which to examine this topic. I end with empirical observations of current park use in the San Francisco East Bay Area. Throughout this dissertation, I investigate the impacts of changing conceptions and attitudes towards race, gender, and difference, with a particular focus on how these conceptions interact and shape behavior.

Research Questions and Approach

How do people in America relate to our public spaces—particularly municipal parks? What current and historical forces govern the types of activities that are deemed acceptable? Why are the types of activities in urban parks in the San Francisco East Bay limited in variety when the population is diverse in ethnic background and age? Why does there appear to be a gender imbalance in how parks are used? These broad questions have set in motion the research presented in this dissertation, and reflect an underlying interest in how American cultural norms, practices, and policies shape how individuals understand and relate to their own physical bodies, to the people around them, and to the physical and social environments in which we coexist.

These questions led me to investigate the historical development of the parks movement, physical education, and then different types of activities, particularly dance as an alternative to competitive sports. Research into the Ghost Dance reveals how and why certain practices such as dancing evoked such strong reactions from individuals and the government, as well as how the physical environment and changes in communication and transportation technologies affect cultural reproduction. I examine the Progressive Era, the Victorian morals that influenced it, and the Red Scare that followed it in order to contextualize the formative attitudes towards race, gender, and appropriate behavior (especially concerning movement and leisure that arose out of the Industrial Revolution and the ensuing divisions between labor and leisure time, class and privilege).

I also designed a research protocol to observe park use trends in a random sample of municipal parks in census tracts reporting populations above the California averages for people of African American, American Indian, or Asian descent. I was especially concerned about health inequalities and low-income people who are more likely to rely on active or public transportation, which limits their ability to access larger regional parks in the hills (although

there are some large regional parks along the shoreline). This chapter advances our understanding of how parks are utilized today in context of this broader historical and cultural knowledge of factors that influence their use. A more detailed discussion of the methods for this section is found in Chapter 4. My observations of small municipal urban parks also fill a gap in urban parks research, which has focused on use within larger parks. With the rise in development of smaller parks, often less than an acre in size, located in dense residential neighborhoods, it is important to ask how these parks are being used, and by whom.

My inquiries have been motivated by a quest to better understand how our daily physical behaviors shape, and are shaped by, our relationships to the world around us. I take into consideration a broad span of nearly two centuries to set the context: While much discourse of sustainable development encourages people to act in consideration of the future seven generations, I reflect on the experiences and legacies of the past seven generations in order to better comprehend our current situation, and seek to guide decision-making based upon this contextualized knowledge.

In order to better understand how and why we have arrived at these conditions, I employ approaches from environmental history and cultural analysis to present perspectives that are frequently untold or minimized relative to the perspectives of wealthier Americans of European descent, who often gained their wealth and power from exploiting and subjugating humans, animals, and the natural environment. My historical and cultural analysis values the role of language, images, and presentation of material culture. Environmental history examines how humans and the environment interact and influence each other. Through parables (rather than predictions), environmental historians often seek, not only to reveal novel ways of understanding past events, but to influence the course of human society. Environmental ethics are closely bound to environmental history, as they inform the narratives and shape responses.

I utilize a mixture of primary and secondary sources for this analysis. One major challenge in utilizing primary sources from the Ghost Dance and other subaltern narratives of slaves or Chinese immigrants lies in the translation, interpretation, and recording of these narratives. Often, these written records or visual pieces have been filtered and recorded through the perspective of one or more people from other cultures who impose their own understandings onto the content they seek to record. My methods are also informed by Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies*, which outlines twenty-five research projects, which include remembering, reframing, connecting, and envisioning.

My project entails finding a balance between rationality and emotion, spirituality and empiricism, as well as conceiving of time not only as a linear progression, but as circular or open, where, through our minds, words, and actions, we are able to create realities or other worlds that can allow us to heal, overcome painful experiences or legacies inflicted by those who came before us, and thrive as living beings within healthy functioning ecosystems.¹⁵

Narrative and Themes

The idea that narratives are foundational to how we think, construct our reality, and remember is found in several disciplines ranging from environmental history to cognitive psychology, and is fundamental to this study as well. Here, I attempt to retell submerged or declensionist narratives of American history and experience from the point of view of women and certain societies that have been on the receiving end of actions and policies aimed at the eradication or modification of their culture in order to replace it with a Western, capitalist,

mechanistic, and Christian worldview. These perspectives call into question the often taken for granted narratives of progress and civilization that facilitated the subjugation of many peoples throughout American history and up to the present day.

The reason the story must be told as one of hope and renewal is precisely because of the severe legacy of brutality, displacement, inequality, and suffering: A hopeful narrative is important for survival and continuity. It does not ignore the continued social problems faced today, such as high rates of depression, suicide, violence, and substance abuse, coupled with pressing environmental concerns about access to clean water, air, and nutrition; rather, it acknowledges these indicators as exemplifying the need for an understanding that demands a shift in the balance between cultures emphasizing connectedness, continuity, and renewal, and those that seek a linear notion of progress based on commodification, growth, and industrialization as key factors indicating civilization. As reggae artists Bob Marley and Buju Banton sing, in “Get Up, Stand Up” and “Untold Stories,” “half the story has never been told.” Gramsci utilizes the term “subaltern.” Providing these alternative narratives is essential in understanding and addressing many substantial environmental and social problems we humans face today.¹⁶

Metaphors, parables, and proverbs provide means through which messages are communicated in ways that emphasize comparisons and moral lessons, and are connected to rhythm and movement as a component of transmission. In many instances, such as reggae music, kathak, hula, and danza Azteca, connections to animals, places, and elements are pervasive. In this way, dance and music practices reinforce a sense of connectedness to places when they evoke places such as rivers, mountains, and the greater cosmos. The power of the spoken word is also understood to be central to shaping reality. In danza, *palabra*, meaning word, holds many meanings, including an honor, duty, and a process. Word-sound-power is a concept among Rastafari to underscore the power and connection of words to power. In kathak, the story-telling component and spiritual roots also dictate that the dancer’s vocalizations are key to the performance. Dancers and tabla drummers share a specific language of *bols* in order to communicate rhythms to each other for the purpose of improvisation and interaction during performances. By revering the spiritual body and ancestral traditions, believers also embody practices that make sacred the spaces in which they inhabit, which could include urban parks if these spaces were understood as welcoming spaces for these spiritual dance encounters.¹⁷

An overarching theme of this dissertation is an examination of how culture influences human experiences, particularly those aspects of culture and experience that pertain to how we understand and interact with the world around us: places, people, animals, and plants. It is a story of relationships, change, and interconnection written in an interdisciplinary academic format using the English language: This format creates certain limitations in the ability to convey to the reader the experiences and epistemologies of cultures that primarily relied upon oral and physical movement as modes of communication and transmission of culture until the influence of religious missionaries, introduction of written language, or other factors intervened. Despite these limitations, I will seek to provide some insight into a few perspectives of people of American Indian, Asian, and African descent in America, while emphasizing that these categories are themselves problematic and overly simplistic because they mask the wide array of cultural variations that exist within these broad categories.

The theme of *diaspora*, or people in movement, is another important theme. Also central to this story is the role of gender, and how women in particular are affected by and contribute to cultural continuation and change. Renewal of society in the face of deprivation is a shared theme

in both roots reggae and the Ghost Dance. Believers are motivated to express this belief through voice, dance, and action as a way to bring about the desired change and revitalization. Meanwhile, at the initiation of National Parks creation, it was argued that they were needed to serve as spaces for “inspiration and spiritual renewal” for the American public, while they routinely excluded the native populations that utilized these areas for generations. Shiva, Lord of Dance holds a ball of flame that symbolizes destruction and renewal.¹⁸

The concept of *revivalism* in both the Ghost Dance and Rastafari has been linked to the introduction of Christian religious revivalism, which experienced a great wave that moved through the Anglophone world, beginning in Ireland in the 1860s. Danza Azteca (or Mexica) was also described as a modern Ghost Dance “in which we call the spirits of our ancestors to guide us and give us strength in the struggle of life today.” In this instance, Christianity and forced restrictions and transformations of the dance and spiritual practices is also a major part of the danza history, with a separate lineage emerging after the 1930s where there was an effort to distance the dance from the Christian influences and recreate a living practice based on the dance before colonization.¹⁹

Several additional themes are prominent in this dissertation. One is the importance of group rhythmic movement, such as dance, to cultural reproduction of knowledge and as a process for facilitating understanding and cooperation. Another theme centers on the creation of culture (ethnogenesis), ongoing processes of cultural exchange, and transculturation. Certain aspects of culture, such as clothing, transportation and entertainment technology, recreational pursuits, and conceptions of property are pertinent.

Many Meanings of Movement

Movement is fundamental to growth and life among all living beings. Among humans, movement creates sensations that inform how individuals relate to their surroundings and other living beings; therefore, movement and interaction are vital in shaping environmental and social ethics. I focus specifically on defining and exploring the various roles dance has played in human societies over time, contrasting the current limited states of dance in modern western society to the widespread integration of dance and song into daily life of most other societies prior to colonization or industrialization. (Although martial arts, forms of moving meditation, and other forms of movement are also important alternatives that integrate mental, spiritual, and physical practices, I focus primarily on dance for the sake of scope.) The process of instructing, encouraging, and discouraging certain physical activities plays a role in the project of socialization, for example, in seeking to “Americanize” or assimilate immigrants and indigenous populations.

Among nearly all human communities, dance or group rhythmic movement has been an integral form of individual and collective expression: It plays many different roles and has had a variety of meanings in its widespread practice around the world and throughout time. It can be intimately connected with cultural reproduction, i.e., intergenerational transmission of world-views and knowledge, as well as be a powerful medium of communication. It influences social dynamics as well as the physical conditions of participants. Joan Cass differentiates between “tribal communities,” where dance is often associated with various rituals and is accompanied primarily by drums, chanting, or singing; modern Western society, where dance is primarily considered art, entertainment or recreation, and women’s bodies are frequently prominently displayed; and Asian dance, which is more closely linked to religion or spirituality. Cass’s

categories are overly simplistic, and there are several additional metrics that can be used to help differentiate between groups of cultures that are similar or dissimilar. For example, one could differentiate cultures by their social structure as being communal, heavily centered on acknowledging their relationship and reliance on earthly services and elements, and those that are industrialized, capitalistic, and heavily reliant on outward physical appearances, which are intertwined with material items and a certain standard for body composition.²⁰

Dance has been defined in many ways. Anthropologist Joann Kealli'inohomoku defines dance as "...human body moving through space...purposefully selected and controlled rhythmic movements...recognized as dance by...performer and audience." Other common traits of dance include being a healthful physical activity, entertaining or impressing viewers, and creating or mediating belonging and community among the participants and viewers. Joan Cass describes dance as "making of rhythmical steps and movements for their own sake" and points out that it is "present in about every known society. It has been associated with religion, communal activities, courtship, healing, education, war, physical training and more." Mrs. Alfred Webster wrote in 1851 in *Dancing as a Means of Physical Education*, "natural movements of body subjected to rhythmical restraint, as sound becomes music under similar control," while it may also be considered "any choreographic activity performed to musical accompaniment."²¹

Dance serves many interconnected roles, many of which bind people or groups of people together into social units. Some dances serve the purpose of honoring, celebrating, or remembering people or places, and may include storytelling and normative lessons. Other forms of dance, like folk dances, are pursued for social interaction. Some dances serve spiritual or religious purposes, and may include entering a trance or achieving an alternate state of consciousness. Thus, within each society, there may exist a wide array of dances and roles for which dance is pursued. It can be a vehicle for creating connections among people, transforming individuals or relationships, or transporting people mentally and spiritually.

Music and dance can be used in the creation of a collective memory, as is the example with reggae music and danza Mexica (Azteca). Collective memory unites people through a sense of a shared past and present, while also indicating a common path for the future. In these two instances, the music and dance culture specifically acknowledge a history of oppression, cultural suppression by Christianity, and emphasize the music and dance as a path for decolonization and a pursuit of dignity that was degraded through generations of mistreatment. These dance traditions emphasize a reverence for the natural world, and the place of humans within this world, while also communicating moral lessons on how one should live.²²

Music can also play an important role in healing traumas created by the legacies of slavery, segregation, and social exclusion. Social exclusion has been found to activate the same brain centers as physical pain, and can have enduring effects on how one responds to future interactions. Meanwhile, making music, and improvisation have been found to be healing through activation of pleasure and self-expression, which reinforces a sense of value and belonging in self, which social exclusion undermines. This dissertation argues that an overall increase in access to physical activity for the general population is greatly needed; however, there is an imbalance between competitive and elite sports relative to cooperative social activities that provide a creative and expressive outlet.²³

Despite the wide range of important roles dance has served in human societies over time, it is vastly limited in American culture today. "Speaking of Western culture, through the city...there is art everywhere, but there is no sign of dance anywhere, other than in actual dances which have to be located and sought out." What this author is pointing out is not that we do not

have dance, but what Andrew Ward explains, “dance is not strongly codified in the cultural fabric of our institutions or interpolated within public discourse, so that in going about our daily business we do not commonly see (or use) signs of dance.”²⁴

Dance is unusual in that even those weary from a day’s labor can dance for hours, becoming renewed, refreshed, or energized in the process. Anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown described Andaman islanders becoming so “elated” and invigorated by their dance and being “absorbed in the unified community,” that they had enormous energy. In New York City during the Progressive Era, working women who became rejuvenated through rhythmic dance provide one example of people in American culture who exhibited this same outcome.²⁵

Natalie Marie Shepard was a female physical educator who used dance as an example of drawing on historic facts and principles in order to create standards and policies relevant to physical education in 1960. She highlights the concept of “organismic unity.” Her historic facts include: 1) Dance is the oldest form of communication for humans, and 2) dance was an essential skill. She posits the following principles: 1) Rhythm and movement in creative art form in the dance are a part of the social heritage of the race; 2) it is the nature of dance to be a communicative, expressive activity. Thus, she concludes that physical education programs should provide an environment conducive to dance at all levels of education (K-college), that there should be a set of agreed-upon norms, and that they be participatory. One policy derived from this support is that “dance class should provide experience in composition and choreography to allow freedom for the use of dance as a communicative art form.”²⁶ Jonas recounts that dance is an “emblem of cultural identity; an expression of religious worship, social order and power, culture mores; classical art; medium of cultural fusion; creation of individual artists; and an indication of who we are today and where we are headed.”²⁷

Dance has been used around the world for centuries. “Ordinary” people use it to express joy or cope with the pressures of life, and performers have used dance to generate income. Dance takes many forms: Differentiation among folk, court, and theatrical dance reveals its importance for cultural reproduction. Across cultures, celebrations such as weddings commonly feature dancing. For example, dancing is considered a *mitzvah*, so it is customarily always done at Jewish weddings, and contributes to a good future.²⁸

Ritual involves repetition, meaning, and purpose: It shapes the way we think and act. Early dance was part of ritual, not a separate profession (aside from those that were dedicated to the continuation of its practice and the associated transmission of knowledge). Classifying repeated movements and dance as ritual, which is often associated with religion, has been central to Christianity’s legacy of repressing or co-opting movement practices of people around the world in order to impose a Christian world-view and way of life. One simplified conception of ritual consists of actions carried out to change the future, for example, in areas of fertility, initiation, hunting, healing, death, or war. It serves as a tool for social organization. Fertility is important in the areas of children, animals, and agriculture, and acknowledges the connection and dependence on earth’s natural cycles. Cass differentiates between dance in the East and West. One aspect of ritual dance entails the processes through which the space for dance is established, i.e., through purification enacted by burning plants, incense, or use of water. A primary critique of the state of dance in American society today is that it has largely been made devoid of spiritual significance through concerted efforts to suppress and transform dance.²⁹

Extended states of moving together rhythmically can also bring about a state of consciousness where participants feel a loss of separation between self and their surroundings, fostering a connection to their environment. Trance dances occur with or without the presence of

mind-altering substances. Possession trance dances are particularly notable in West Africa, Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica, Trinidad, and Brazil. Generally, older women invite or become (impersonate) a spirit. The Ghost Dance among Native American tribes in the late 1800s was described as creating a state of trance or hypnosis among participants as they experienced visions or visited with the dead.³⁰

Societies produce dancing that suits their own purposes, and generally reflects their “values, aesthetics, and mores;” however, the influences of disassociation, intellectual property, mass media, and other forces that shape today’s society may mask sub-group values. Although they vary by society, dancing generally is governed by some inferred or implicit code of conduct, with consequences for those who defy the norms.

Dance may be a form of transmitting stories important to the substance and maintenance of a culture. In “the East,” dance has been associated with religion and spiritual communication. Characterized by a fluid body stance, the spine undulates; hips, rib cage and head move side to side; and shoulders may ripple and shake. Knees are often bent with feet and legs in fixed positions while dancers lunge, spring, stamp, turn, glide low over ground, and perhaps sink into a seated position on the ground. Knees are often bent modestly close. The arms, hands, fingers, and head are used to express subtle expressive motions while facial gestures are stylized.³¹

Hindu dance is possibly the world’s oldest developed dance form. It expresses sexual love as well as religious devotion (which is quite different from the Christian view of separation between mind and body, with body being associated with earthly and immoral impurities). The Hindu god Shiva is often represented as Nataraja, Lord of the Dance. Shiva is holding a drum that symbolizes the sound of creation and a ball of flame representing destruction and renewal. The right leg is bent at the knee and crushes the demon of ignorance to the ground. Meanwhile, the left leg brought up across the body symbolizes release from worldly cares, one “blessing” of dance. The Mudras are bodily postures or symbolic gestures that create a specific, literal sign language of gestures. While there are 67 hand gestures, 13 of the head and 36 glances, one of the ten most important and well-known hand gestures includes Bhumisparsha Mudra, or gesture of touching the earth, which symbolizes touching the earth as Gautama did to invoke the earth as witness to the truth of his words.³²

In modern Western societies, dance evolved with a particular emphasis on art, entertainment and recreation, with a taste for novelty. European dance generally features a stable spine while hips, shoulders and arms are held “quietly.” The dancer may reach upward, and dance favors high jumps and leaps. The face and hands are left to the dancer or choreographer’s discretion. Women are exhibited on display.³³

Considering Western dance, famous ballet choreographer Balanchine said, “much can be said in movement that cannot be expressed by words. Movement must be self-explanatory. If it isn’t it has failed.” Meanwhile, Eastern dance conveying historical or religious tales draw on oral stories and knowledge shared by the audience. Western theatrical dance carries with it a separation between performer and audience, with audience judging performer. Imitation and faking, and a concern for appearances are additional traits of theatrical dance with roots in France. Western theater and modern dance have exploited Native American and other colonized peoples’ dances commercially. Greek women’s dance reflects influence of two gods. Dionysian is associated with wild, licentious behavior, often involving wine. Demeter inspires reserved actions.³⁴

French and Italian Renaissance courts used dance as a test of status: refined movements must result from hours of practice only available to people with access to resources: time,

instructors, and venues. Dancing among non-aristocratic people was often scorned as animalistic or primitive. Although embodying the traits of another animal has been found among a wide variety of dancing around the world and throughout time, European and Americans who exploited the land and people to hold positions of power used these instances of connection with other life forms as an indication of inferiority, which subsequently contributed to their rationale for subordinating or outlawing dance among American Indians and African Americans.

Ballet flourished during the Renaissance in Italy and France. Greek and Roman myths provided the original fodder for the dance drama. Ballet later drew on European folk talks (especially supernatural elements), stories set in exotic places (especially foreign royalty), and star-crossed lovers from upper and lower classes. The ballet was a place to be seen for status in society among the primarily upper-class audience. Professionalization led the dance to move more and more towards physically challenging dance that emphasized lightness and effortlessness in defying gravity. 19th Century poet Theophile Gautier, who wrote the libretto for *Giselle*, explained “The dance is nothing more than the art of displaying beautiful shapes in graceful positions and the development from them of lines agreeable to the eye.”³⁵

Court dance may be used to advance personal or political agendas of individuals, while governments have also staged communal ceremonies aimed at advancing their nation’s goals. Court dances embody stories and are an example of dance used an expression of social order, shared beliefs, or power. In Cambodia, thousands of classical court dancers—supported financially by the Royal Treasury--“embodied” the country’s national identity for over 1,000 years. These women were important in fertility rites and ancestor worship important to the Cambodian people. Dancers may stand in place balanced on one leg for long periods of time while their hands move in a slow, rippling, and synchronized wavelike motions.³⁶

In *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers*, Loung Ung’s recounting of her life in Cambodia and a Thai refugee camp until age 10 during the rise of the Khmer Rouge reveals how violence and war affect her daily physical activities. Living as a middle-class urban child, her mind is drawn to hop scotch with her friends. After three of four years of hardship, she finds herself in a children’s labor camp where she experiences the brief and long-absent pleasure of song and dance, and where real happiness and laughter occurred. She viewed boy musicians playing the drum and mandolin accompanying girl dancers:

...depicting farmers at work, the harvesting of rice, nurses helping wounded soldiers, and soldiers winning battles... Though I dislike the songs, it is music nevertheless, and it is something of a respite from the life I have been living. In the nearly two years I lived in Ro Leap, there was no music or dancing. The chief told us the Angkar had banned it. This must be a privilege that we, as child soldiers, had been granted... After the performance, all of us are invited to dance. The girls get up and dance with each other and the boys group tightly together. I have always loved music and dancing. For a few minutes, my feet move to the beat of the drums, my arms sway to the rhythm of the song, and my heart is light and joyful.³⁷

For a short time around 8 years old, she is selected to train as a dancer, which would offer her the opportunity to travel and perform for officials. Her training includes a painful process of tying her hand back each morning for an hour in order to increase the flexibility of her wrist, hand, and arm; however, she quickly becomes sick due to malnutrition, and her dance training

ends. The training she received at the camp is put to use to fight off a soldier attempting to rape her.³⁸

Line and circle dances are common formations among many different societies. It can foster unity and community for participants, while viewers see the group as a whole. Circle dances are common in tribal rituals, Asiatic ceremonies, folk dancing, and artistic dance. Its use is often spiritual. Curt Sachs, however, also describes circles as indicating incorporation or taking possession of that which is encircled. Dancing with one male and female partner in physical contact was rare in most societies; however, it grew far beyond its origins of courtly love popular in late Medieval France. Later, the duet in classical ballet was influential.³⁹

During the Civil War, dancing was a major form of recreation, and was beginning to be recognized as an important source of physical education. It was also seen to provide important community interaction and serve to refine manners and as a marker of social status. Hillgrove described dance as “peculiarly devoted to cheerfulness and joy...grace, ease.”⁴⁰

Community-wide dancing is vital for social bonding, “maintaining everyday routines and all forms of cooperative behavior,” and was fundamental to the evolution of humanity. Moving together creates muscular bonding—social cohesion arising from the emotions created through extended “moving together in time, moving big muscles together and chanting, signing, or shouting rhythmically,” which most participants share. Muscular bonding predates language, and contributed to the creation of small communities as human ancestors cooperated to form societies. McNeill writes:

Words are inadequate to describe the emotion aroused by the prolonged movement in unison that drilling involved. A sense of pervasive well-being is what I recall; more specifically, a strange sense of personal enlargement; a sort of swelling out, becoming bigger than life, thanks to participation in collective ritual.⁴¹

Participants and observers interpret meanings behind movement. Jonas defines “success” in dance as occurring when passive viewers become “active collaborators” as they experience themselves moving in kinesthetic sympathy with the dancers. This connection creates a flow of energy between the dancers and viewers, and may contribute to the rejuvenating aspect of dance. Many dance cultures blur the distinction between observers and participants, as both are needed to fulfill the meaning behind dance.⁴²

Dance is a fundamental expression of an individual and a society: To understand a dance is to have insight into the culture from which it originates, and “to question or belittle other people’s dance is to challenge their right to be themselves.” Due to its power, people seeking to change the beliefs and behaviors of others have placed restrictions on dance--overtly and covertly--for centuries.⁴³

The effects on society are pervasive. Rhythmic moving formed the basis for ritual and religion through the interpretations of “trance” states induced by dance. Efficiency and desirability of labor was improved when workers sang and/or moved rhythmically together. Additionally, the practice of moving together rhythmically in certain ways fostered the creation of subgroups within society.⁴⁴

Roadmap of Dissertation

Chapter 2 focuses on the 19th century, which included waves of immigrants fleeing their home countries due to hunger related to environmental conditions such as floods and droughts; the construction of the transcontinental railroad and communication technologies such as the telegraph; the industrial revolution; and increasing urbanization. The Massacre at Wounded Knee highlights the intersection of the fear and suppression of dance in America, and roughly coincides with the creation of America's first large municipal parks in New York City and San Francisco, and the declaration by Frederick Jackson Turner that the frontier was closed. Movement, in dance and ceremony, as well as in semi-nomadism (following the buffalo), represents freedom, in contrast to praying in Christian churches and farming or ranching in settled homes. This chapter also takes into account the experiences of African Americans and Chinese in America during the 19th century, focusing on how these often-overlooked narratives intersected. Music and movement transmitted values against materialism and for connectedness to natural systems and other living beings.

Chapter 3 is set primarily in the Progressive Era, which is broadly construed here as the period of 1880s-1920s, and shifts the attention to the contributions of women in the movements for settlement, urban parks, physical culture and physical education, utopian communities, material feminism, and the rise of modern dance. A central theme here is around the construction of, and challenges to, norms around behavior, particularly in regards to public and private behavior. In order to understand public behavior, I examine women's efforts to transform the domestic sphere and the cultural perception of women as frail and in need of protection under Victorian ideals. Race and privilege play another key role in determining how some women exerted power and control over other women or ethnic minorities. While some women sought to expand their social role by assuming a protector role for American Indians or Chinese, modern dancers like Ruth St. Denis and her partner Ted Shawn benefitted from performing exoticized Aztec, South Asian Indian, and American Indian dances. The chapter ends with a look at the decline of material feminism and utopian ideals in the face of the Red Scare, increasing consumer culture that both marketed to women and utilized their bodies as marketing tools, and the Hoover Report's support for single family homes and the rise of suburbanization as an important facet in isolating women in the home, people in cars, and increasing barriers between humans and their surroundings.

Chapter 4 reports my findings from observing nearly forty municipal urban parks located in census tracts at or above the California state averages for non-white populations. These parks were stratified by size, randomly selected from all of the qualifying parks in the cities of Richmond, Berkeley, and Oakland, and randomly assigned weekdays or weekends for observation of the gender and level of physical activity of park visitors. Low use and sedentary behavior, with differences by gender, characterized most of the parks visited.

Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation, summarizing key findings and integrating recommendations for policy-makers, organizations, and individuals. I hope that this research highlights the potential of parks to serve as spaces for the continuation, rejuvenation, and creation of practices that will facilitate healing, well-being, and an environmental ethic based on acknowledging the interdependence of all life on earth. Through agreement on a core set of shared values regarding respect for life, we can facilitate a diverse array of activities that unite humans through mass participation. This environmental ethic, combined with an ability to understand and internalize the effects and consequences of our actions, is an important step to having values guide everyday behavior and decision-making.

Movement and space are vital aspects in this process. Music, rhythm, and harmony often accompany these aspects because the creation of music itself is an interactive process in which movement is used to create vibrations. The striking of a drum that recalls a tree and/or animal by virtue of skin for the head and wooden base is one way in which the creation of music is a force for connection. In danza Azteca, the drum represents the wisdom of elders, their knowledge passed on through the beats. They are equally acknowledged to represent the trees from which they are made, and are revered in the center of the circle. The Lakota Ghost dance also would take place around a tree in the center of a circle when possible.⁴⁵

It is my hope that this study contributes to a shift away from hegemonic mass culture focused on individualism, competition, and consumption towards a broader appreciation for cultures that emphasizes acceptance, plurality, and an appreciation of the necessity of, and enjoyment derived from, interactions with the natural world and human social engagement. Underlying many of the environmentally destructive practices in this world is a sense of omnipotence, or the belief that humans can control, and improve upon, the natural systems of this world. Many of the counter-narratives I present hold at their core an opposite foundation: That humans are part of a system that is revered, respected, and not in need of improvement by humans. These world-views emphasize a sense of belonging, harmony, and balance while in many ways valuing both individual uniqueness and universal commonalities.

I seek to understand experiences of previous generations of peoples living on this land, as well as the more contemporary uses of inconspicuous spaces—urban parks—as a lens for examining broader social mores and world-views that underlie many social and environmental problems. Recognizing a sense of disconnection between mind and body, physicality and spirituality or meaning, between individuals and communities, and between actions and their impacts are seen as crucial to understanding these social and ecological challenges.

Chapter 1 Notes

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Ch. 2: Revitalization and Renewal: Ghost Dance and Beyond

This chapter examines the theme of dance, with a particular focus on the role of dance in providing a sense of hope, renewal, resilience, and continuity in the face of extreme threats to the survival of individuals and cultures. The concerted efforts to eliminate, suppress, and transform dance when one group of people seeks to subdue and control another speaks to the power of dance in sustaining cultural viability. This chapter highlights three distinct lineages of dance and music that arose to convey messages of belonging, hope, and guidance for a moral way of living. These distinct lineages have several common features, including an evocation of natural places, beings, or processes; a promise of a return to a homeland and way of life that has been forcibly taken away; and a call to dance as one way through which to achieve this desirable return to a physical and metaphorical homeland or way of living.

The metaphor of moving, stepping, or travelling out of the oppressive Babylon system in order to arrive at the desired place or mindset of Zion is similar to the concept of the spiritual journey achieved through dance that corresponds to a return to Aztlán in *danza Mexica*, and the return to a time of family, community, and lifestyle (buffalo, games, and dance) sought by Lakota Ghost Dancers.¹

Through efforts aimed at assimilation or segregation, the indigenous population, African slaves, and newly arrived immigrants faced a wide variety of formal and informal restrictions on how to live: Dance as a vital source of resilience and cultural reproduction is one aspect of primary concern considered in this chapter. Particular attention is paid to what is called the “Ghost Dance” movements adopted by some members of tribes in the west and mid-west around 1870 and 1890. In this chapter, dominant narratives about racial hierarchy and Christian civilization are contextualized within colonialist and imperialist settings; additionally, I explore alternative narratives. The role of Anglo-Saxon women in assimilation and education of other “primitive” cultures as a way of extending their sphere of influence without challenging the confines of women’s domesticity is also discussed.

The concept of transculturation, or “the transformative process undergone by a society in acquiring foreign cultural material – the loss or displacement of a society’s culture due to the acquisition or imposition of foreign material, and the fusion of the indigenous and the foreign to create a new, original cultural product” is a relevant reminder in this discussion of the forced and voluntary ways in which cultures are shaped by interactions with other cultures. Beginning prior to colonization, and continuing through today, Americans have had to confront issues of how to negotiate use of common space among people with different preferences and values. These interactions have been addressed through various approaches ranging from removal and suppression to acceptance, celebration, or commodification.²

Dance was an integral part of everyday life and ritual among American Indian societies. Part of the goal of the Ghost dance was a return to community and time of games and dancing. Even if surrounded by soldiers, the soldiers and horses will sink into the earth. “We must continue the dance.” Tatankaptecélan, Short Bull, Brulé Sioux, 1890 near Rosebud Agency describing his Ghost Dance vision.

...you must not be afraid of anything. Some of my relatives have no ears so I will have them blown away. Now there will be a true tree sprout up, and then all will be the place where we will see our relatives. But before this time we will have the balance of the moon, at the end of which time the earth will shiver very hard. When ever this thing

occurs I will start the wind to blow. We are the ones who will then see our fathers, mothers, and everybody. We are the tribe of Indians and the ones who are living the sacred life. God, our Father, Himself has told and commanded and show me to do these things. Our Father in heaven has placed a mark at each point of the four winds. First, a clay pipe, which lies at the setting of the sun and represents the Sioux tribe; second, there is a holy arrow lying at the north, which represents the Cheyenne tribe; third, and the rising of the sun there lies hail, representing the Arapaho tribe; and fourth, there lies a pipe and feather at the south, which represents the Crow tribe. My father has shown me these things, therefore we must continue the dance. There may be soldiers to surround you, but pay no attention to them. Continue the dance. If the soldiers surround you four deep, those upon whom I put holy spirits will sing a song, which I have taught you, and some of them will drop dead. Then the rest will start to run, but their horses will sink into the earth. The riders will jump from their horses, but they will sink into the earth and you can do what you desire for them.... We must gather at Pass Creek when the tree is sprouting. Then we will go among our dead relatives. You must not take any earthly things with you.³

In addition to seeking a return to a time where people could be reunited with their deceased family, friends, and community, and a return to a life of dancing, games, and hunting, there was a rejection of materialism and white technology. A statement by Tatanka Yotanka (Sitting Bull, Hunkpapa Sioux), recorded while prisoner of war at Fort Randall between 1881-1883 begins by establishing that he has lived a long, thoughtful life. He holds a place in the community as chief, which was held by his ancestors before him. Because of his existence on earth, he has a purpose and duty to “exercise any influence I possess” [translated]. Tatanka Yotanka explains that his people do not want to farm in one place. He described this as a life of slavery, where people lived as prisoners of towns or farms. His people preferred to follow the buffalo. “The life my people want is a life of freedom. I have seen nothing that a white man has, houses or railways or clothing or food, that is as good as the right to move in the open country, and live in our own fashion.” Drawing a rectangle in the dirt, he recounts restriction to a reservation.

They gave us meat, but took away our liberty. The white men had many things that we wanted, but we could see that they did not have the one thing we liked best—freedom. I would rather live in a tepee and go without meat when game is scarce than give up my privileges as a free Indian, even though I could have all that the white men have.⁴

While many colonial settlers expressed disbelief and disdain at American Indians’ preference for a lifestyle with few material possessions and limited security from the settlers’ point of view, describing them as lazy and willing to go hungry during the winter, American Indians valued mobility, freedom, and had faith that their needs would be met based on their knowledge and practices passed down through generations of experience.⁵

Men, women, and children participated in the Ghost Dance. Although the men were noted as the leaders, Lakota women were the ones who originated the idea of the Ghost Dance shirt, which served as a visual way to distinguish and unify participants. The shirts were adorned with images of the moon, stars, birds, the sun, bows and arrows, and “everything they saw in

nature.” One of the few recorded eyewitness accounts of the Ghost Dance taking place on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1890 is by Mrs. Z. A. Parker.⁶

Race and Naming

Power is exercised through naming, defining, classifying, and assigning meanings to the characteristics and behavior of others. Ethnology, a branch of anthropology, asserted power in this way, particularly as it gained in reputation among scientific and academic communities since the late 1800s. Numerous American middle-class women, “with only the slightest notions of scientific rigor, embraced the study...as early as the 1870s” as an “attentive audience” for the evangelical Protestants’ written descriptions of atrocious conditions experienced by heathen women in other societies around the world. Publications such as *Heathen Woman’s Friend* of the American Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the *Ladies Home Journal* reinforced the notion that Western women were “repositories of civilized culture,” while also extending opportunities for Anglo-Saxon women outside of the closely defined domestic sphere.⁷

Race, as a “socio-historical concept,” shifts with time and context; thus, these labels are insufficient to encompass the experiences of those they seek to represent. Common experiences among those included in this research include: significant barriers to cultural reproduction due to relocation (forcibly or related to pressures such as famine), differentiation as primitive, and concerted efforts to eradicate cultural practices through assimilation or exclusion. Racial categories are simultaneously too simplistic and too broad to fully represent the myriad experiences of women, who have--by force, coercion, or choice--been instrumental in the mixing of people from around the world.⁸

The people living in America prior to colonization were organized into hundreds of groups we call tribes. Over time, American politicians, researchers, missionaries, and settlers increasingly imposed new names, categories, and interpretations of behavior that shape how this nation’s history is understood. For example, many tribes who roughly share a common linguistic origin over a large part of the mid-west were grouped together--in name and on reservations--and called the Sioux despite the fact that each tribe had their own practices and autonomy.⁹

When some members from two tribes in Minnesota resorted to violence, some labeled the confrontation using a more general term: “Sioux Uprising.” Thus, when the Battle/Massacre at Wounded Knee occurred among members of a band within an entirely different Lakota tribe, some observers remarked that the incident marked an end to the battle begun by the Dakota tribes. Likewise, Indian Wars implies widespread involvement when in reality there were selected pockets of resistance. While administrative simplification is achieved this way, inaccurate depictions have many persistent effects. Further simplification reduces all tribes to one race of Indians, Native Americans, or American Indians. The role of English language and Christian names in the assimilation process was dramatically portrayed in the movie “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.” Similarly, Chinese, African, and white categories overlook ethnic differences. In this dissertation, terms used to indicate race are used interchangeably--generally to reflect the names used within the context being discussed. However, specific names of tribes or ethnic groups are used when available in an effort to acknowledge the sovereignty of people to name their own society.

Dance

Dance in America has been greatly influenced by the nation's history and development. Colonization, slavery, and outright bans on dancing severely restricted dance for Native Americans and African slaves. Racial discrimination also spurred dislike for Chinese music and dance. In early theatrical dance, if members of non-white ethnic groups were included, they were commonly portrayed as either 1) exhibitions "of the other" i.e. war dances, 2) to create a particular sense of atmosphere i.e. Bayadere dancers at a Hindu temple, or 3) comedy i.e. minstrel shows that often negatively caricatured blacks.¹⁰

During American colonial times, dancing was one of the few opportunities for men and women to interact together. Dancing was social, and fostered connections as a community. In the English colonies, English country dances were popular, and took place in ballrooms. French-inspired *contradanses* were popular in French colonies such as Montreal and New Orleans, while the fandango and bolero were popular in former Spanish colonies.¹¹

From what can be discerned from anthropological and current knowledge of Native American societies, dance was extremely integrated into most people's daily, communal lives. Combining chants, prayers, music, and ritualistic movement, Native American dance had little or no divide between spectators and participants. It defined the "ebb and flow of their existence," and was fundamental in defining and expressing their relationship with the world around them. Rather than recreation or art, dance was a form of prayer to a "greater power," which was an unfamiliar concept to the arriving Europeans. Many dance-centered cultures emphasize connection to the earth, evidenced in the persistent stamping of the feet on the ground, and core of the body leaning toward the ground with bent knees.¹²

The Mandans were described by Catlin as having a "life of idleness and leisure," with much of their time consumed by a wide array of amusements, with dancing being very prominent. Some of the more than twelve forms within the Upper Missouri area were described as: "buffalo, boasting, begging, scalp." The buffalo dance was continued until hunters were able to find buffalo. It had always been successful because the dance continued until a hunt, even if it lasted for weeks (especially given the decline in the buffalo population due to hunting, facilitated by the transcontinental railroad).¹³

Challenges of Source Bias

Much of the "primary" historical information about early dance in America is recorded through a Eurocentric focus. While many portrayed Indians as savages, by the early 19th Century, many Americans also took up the "romantic cause of vanishing Indians" and made efforts to record them for posterity. A few figures influential in defining and documenting the American Indians are introduced here.¹⁴

Cora Du Bois (19-) provides a discussion of the 1870 Ghost Dance among the Northern California tribes for her dissertation. Born in NY to Swiss parents, she represents a generation of women who were among the first to enter male-dominated spheres of American and global governance and academia. During WWII, she worked for the Office of Strategic Services, as Chief of the Indonesia section. She later carried out "applied anthropology" in positions at the State Department and World Health Organization. She became the first female tenured faculty member of Harvard's Department of Anthropology (as endowed chair funded indirectly through United Fruit Company via Doris Zemurray-Stone). Her later research interest included modal

personality structure, which suggests that certain cultures have a tendency to produce a common type of personality, but that it is not absolute.¹⁵

Leslie Spier also described the 1870 Ghost Dance (aka Prophet Dance). Leslie Spier's career in ethnography was grounded in his "first-hand acquisition" of knowledge extracted from the northern California native peoples. He later turned his attention to Africa. He grew up in New York, and had many other academic anthropologists within his family. He made his career based on research of Native Americans in the plains, southwest, and California. He is noted for his research on the Sun Dance. He inventoried lives, and collected many items belonging to the people in the Klamath area in Southern Oregon.¹⁶

George Catlin (1796-1872) was a European American who observed and painted the Indians. He is noted for having witnessed a Mandan Buffalo Dance in North Dakota shortly before the majority of the tribe of thousands was decimated to a population of about 15 people by smallpox in 1838. He has been described as admiring of the Indian's sense of humor and "highly moral and religious sensibility."¹⁷

While Catlin was artistic, George A. Mooney (1861-1921) was another observer and recorder of Indian life, whose ideal approach was empirical and scientific. He plays an important role in the Ghost Dance events leading up to the incident at Wounded Knee in 1890. He describes having participated in a Ghost Dance, and observing a form of hypnosis. Its story of resurrection or revival of the dead was a blend of "Nativistic" spiritual lore with Christian beliefs. He was sent by the Bureau of American Ethnology to investigate among the Sioux after newspapers and a few reservation agents fueled fears of an uprising. Between 1890 and 1893, he travelled 32,000 miles and visited 20 tribes.¹⁸

American Indian Dance

Available descriptions of Native American dance are likely to portray only a limited view of the entirety of dancing that took place among the many different tribes, (with particular styles for various occasions or purposes). Catlin explained that dance was ubiquitous: practiced more frequently than in "any civilized society." In 1836 he observed so many different varieties of dance that he called the Sioux the "dancing Indians." He concluded that women did not dance [because he never observed it], but described the women as gazing at the men with "infinite amusement." Music and dance were so persistent, that there was a constant drum somewhere in the village. Leading up to the Wounded Knee battle, one Indian was quoted in *The Yankton Press and Dakotan* saying that dance was 'perfectly natural and appropriate,' because dancing was "an Indian custom."¹⁹

Dance was used to evoke laughter, empathy, disgust, and alarm among the audience. It was also used as worship--to appeal to the Great Spirit--as part of their "medicine" and to honor or entertain important visitors. Every dance had a particular step, and each step carried a particular meaning. Often, the entire community was involved. Other dances were separated by gender, and some featured solo or small groups of skilled dancers performing imitations of natural objects or animals in special ways. Dancing could last for hours, and required endurance. It was social and communal, with young learning from observation and participation.²⁰

Accounts of dance in the 20th Century describes dances held with "bodies gently erect," dancers moving in lines or circles. More active dances had dancers with knees flexed and body bent. Dance may have concentrated on the feet, stamping the ground while hands might hold regalia or props. Americans' popular images of dances--especially those among plains Indians--

have been influenced by the performances by Reginald and Gladys Laubin. Despite not being of American Indian heritage, they lived on reservations in North and South Dakota among the Sioux, Crow, Cheyenne and other tribes to learn the dances they performed for audiences between the 1930s-1950s. They characterized Native American dance as having: straight backs and bent knees; arms infrequently used; and lots of head movement. The steps are simple but have sudden yet subtle shifts of weight. Dance may be vigorous, but not chaotic or wild. Movements are relaxed, “dignified and controlled.” They believed that men danced more than women, with men wearing elaborate costumes while women had their own dances and more restrained costumes. It should be noted, however, that the Laubins observed dance after decades of restrictions on dancing had greatly interrupted the practice and transmission of dance, preceded by an even longer legacy of cultural changes brought about by trading and westward expansion.²¹

Catlin describes the music as provided by drums and singing: Beats were usually even and constant. Starts, jumps, yelps and guttural sounds were also present in the music and dance. There were several types of songs. Some songs had very deep meanings that only certain members of the tribe—such as medicine men—knew the detailed meanings. These songs may be “perfectly measured, sung in time with the drum beat, uniform and invariable...sounds and expressions... that clearly indicate sentiments through voice.” Other songs had meanings that were known by all. Often they consisted of poetry that is perfectly metered, but not rhyming.²²

Storytelling and dance were conduits for passing on cultural traditions and knowledge. In 1980, Agnes DeMille, choreographer, summarized that “Indians danced for power and magical assistance, slaves for escape and forgetfulness...Indian...toward spiritual integration, marshaling of his powers for endurance and ordeal; black, for release, abandon and comfort.” Dance for Native Americans and Native Hawaiians provides a way to maintain cultural identity, express love for land (nature), or honor deities, gods, or ancestors. This honoring and worshiping spirits through dance clashed with many of the Europeans’ association of dance with mating and courtship in their own dance, and were threatened by their perceptions of Native American dancing as devil worship, preparation for war, or both.²³

Dance Among Africans in America

African slaves had their dance and music activities restricted by a slave code, which outlawed drums. When dance was allowed, it generally featured movement of the entire body. In New Orleans, slaves were allowed to dance in public, under the watch of whites, on Sundays in Congo Square. Dancers may have moved in a circle for religious purposes, and integrated worldviews learned from their African homeland. The ring shout was a common dance where participants move counterclockwise in a circle, and rhythm provided by clapping, slapping thighs, and stomping feet (aka “juba”). Dance was also used by slave traders who were interested in keeping their “property” in good physical condition for sale. They forced the Africans on the ship to dance for hours on end—at an acceptable pace—in order to avoid being flogged. While creating collective memory and constructing a circular sense of time, the popular song “Rivers of Babylon” recorded by various artists including The Melodians, Bob Marley, and Sublime include “The wicked carried us away captivity, required of us a song. How can we sing King Alpha’s song in a strange land?” Drawn on Psalm 137, the lyrics highlight the connection of song and culture to place: Rastas reinterpret the Bible and identify with the removal from their homeland due to slavery.²⁴

Music was provided by drums or other rhythm instruments, and sometimes had melody instruments as well. Rather than the even and constant beat of the Native American dance music, music of the slaves had complex rhythms that were commonly improvised, repetitive, or without regular form.²⁵

Minstrel shows have been characterized as an American original institution, it's "national opera" or "only true American drama." It was belittled as a popular entertainment among the lower socioeconomic classes; however, during the early 20th century, concerted efforts were made to make minstrel more appropriate for wider audiences, including "cleaning" it up for women in order to open up a new market audience.²⁶

In the 1930's, Marcus Garvey inspired many descendants of African slaves in Jamaica and worldwide to reassert a claim to dignity and sovereignty. Characterized as a religious, liberatory, and political movement, Rastafari inspired and was popularized by the rise of roots reggae music, which emerged amidst the independence of Jamaica from British colonial rule in the 1960's. Roots reggae music reached people around the world with messages of hope and encouragement to live with dignity and respect for unity. Its lyrics often spoke directly of slavery, and created a sense of collective memory among a dispossessed diaspora. Rather than promote vengeance, it encouraged followers to live with dignity, and to take a "high road" or treat others with love. While promoting a non-violent warrior mentality, it also laid out a path of upright living. It values the power of words and language, opposes hierarchy, and condones materialism and greed. Rastafarians have been subjected to many decades of oppression—and more recently commodification and appropriation—due to their beliefs and practices, and this "downpression" is an example of the continued efforts by a powerful moneyed elite to suppress a black liberatory movement that draws strength from music. Chinese in the Caribbean were also influential in the development and growth reggae music. A few of the first sound systems that brought people together to dance in public were owned by a Chinese, while other Chinese were musicians and producers.²⁷

At several different points throughout American history, dances popular among common people, and blacks in particular, have been adapted by white elites after making them more respectable. For example, ragtime dances and cakewalks were popular among black Americans before becoming popular among white colonists. Henry Ford attempted to replace the "vulgar" Charleston with the "refined" minuet. Although often overlooked, there were professional ballet dancers in America between 1790-1840s.²⁸

Narratives, Civilization, and Christianity

Much of how humans understand the world is informed by narratives, which define relationships among people, places, and events. A progressive narrative of advancement or progress towards civilization from savages or barbarism has been very influential in shaping the experience of colonized peoples who were subjected to generations of persistent missionaries seeking to educate and convert them. A declensionist narrative describing a loss of rural values through urbanization and immigration has also played an important role in creating urban parks and settlement houses that provided the foundation of social work. Pursuing Western education, adopting Christianity, owning private property, and living in a nuclear family with the woman confined to the domestic sphere are common themes within these narratives.

Other narratives convey a biological and social belief in racial hierarchy, contrasted with a narrative of one human experience that seeks to overlook differences. Somewhere in the

middle ground is an acceptance of the biological similarities among humans, who have produced a wealth of cultures and experiences that contribute to the vibrancy of the species. Attributing change to fate, inevitability, and other forms of determinism used to describe the demise of cultural practices can be contrasted to narratives integrating agency in which resistance to subjugation—taking many forms—are considered. Additional interrelated dichotomies prevalent in narratives considered here include differentiations between public and private life; male and female; ownership versus belonging; body or mind; hostile or friendly; individual or collective; poverty and wealth in material or spiritual terms; force or free-will; and animal separate from human in relation to consciousness.

Christianity has been instrumental in most British and American Colonial and Imperialist projects. One prominent narrative espouses a progression from barbarism to civilization. Through subtle and overt practices, people acting under the guise of Christianity have suppressed, coopted, and marginalized cultures around the world, justified as “civilizing” or “saving” the souls of “primitive” “savages” or “heathens.” Christianity and education were fundamentally linked in the process of assimilation on American reservations.

Conquest was validated by the assumptions that “civilization” is more enduring than the “barbarism” of the Indians, that Christianity is superior to paganism, industry more valued than idleness, and agriculture superior to hunting, letters superior to hieroglyphics, and truth superior to error. Farming is the pinnacle of civilization, and a “God-given duty.” These assumptions have been ingrained into many American foundations, and should be revealed and inspected as such, since their omnipresence is worthy of reevaluation as the attitudes of society may have changed over time. Radical Republican Francis W. Bird extended his anti-slavery position in his efforts to improve the welfare of Indian concerns by granting citizenship to American Indians in Massachusetts in 1867. He saw citizenship as more effective than “civilizing” or Christian missionizing efforts.²⁹

The spread of Christianity has many implications for how people live, especially regarding attitudes toward the body and appropriate behavior. Asceticism, or the denial of physical and worldly pleasures reigned during the Middle Ages. Education in monasteries and cathedral schools focused on discipline and did not include physical education. Training for chivalry involved physical activity and contests aimed at preparation for military purposes and individual “preservation,” but intellectual studies, personal hygiene, and public sanitation were excluded.³⁰

Monotheistic Christianity has no tolerance for belief in other gods, which is distinct from polytheistic religions, or religions that do not exclude other beliefs, including worship of other divine forces e.g. Tao, Hindu, Buddhism. As the Christian church spread throughout Europe, it attempted to outlaw many dances, but unable to stop people from dancing, folk dances were co-opted and sanitized to reflect Christian beliefs.² Centuries of concerted efforts to control how, why, when, and where people move have many present-day implications. The Bureau of Indian Affairs restricted dances and feasts on reservations for decades. Conversely, slaves were forced to sing and dance for fitness and efficiency at work. Implications of repression and abuse still resonate today.³¹

Progress and Assimilation

The discontinuation of a society’s music and dance was one marker of progress. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agent Henry Schoolcraft commented that dance was among the last

things abandoned in the move towards civilization and Christianity. The “best practical proofs of their advance” is seeing native musical instruments unused and customs abandoned.” Several directives over the course of half a century discouraged dancing on reservations: In 1883, the Office of Indian Affairs prohibited religious ceremonies, and the last sun dances of the period were held that year at Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations. Another source indicates that the Indian Bureau forbid religious dances, “even marriages”—severely interrupting many aspects of cultural reproduction. In 1902 BIA Commissioner W.A. Jones forbid all dances and feasts, explaining that the government’s mission of civilizing the “savages” would be hampered if their culture continued. To reiterate, Charles H. Burke, BIA Commissioner between 1921-1929 also advised superintendents of reservations to ban or discourage rituals in 1923 that all dances, falling into the category of ‘evil or foolish things,’ ‘should be stopped.’³²

John Collier, affiliated with the American Indian Defense Association, became commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933. He instituted the Indian New Deal and sought a more gradual assimilation that allowed for some cultural plurality: He lifted the ban against dancing and feasts, and repression of native languages. By the time the ban was lifted in the 1930s, knowledge of most dances existed primarily in the minds of some elders. His administration is known for the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act, which created tribal governments; however, the act passed by Congress had changed notably from the one he proposed.³³

Efforts to assimilate included a ban on traditional beliefs and ceremonies, including dances and feasts. Medicine men were not allowed to continue their medicine. Appropriate behavior aligned with individual property ownership, farming, and attending church. Hair and clothing were indicators of assimilation: Agents used threats to withhold rations in an attempt to change behavior and punish those who did not comply. How one wears their hair also has meaning among many other cultures. For Rastafarians, growing long dreadlocks is symbolic of their natural lifestyle and connection to the Lion of Judah and thus Emperor Haile Selassie. Traditionally, hula dancers do not cut their hair once they begin a hula practice. *Han* Chinese under *Manchu* rule were required to wear their hair in a queue (consisting of a shaved front and long braid in the back) to indicate submission to *Manchu* rule. Many danzantes (participants of *danza Mexica*) during the 1970s also admired the long hair of American Indian Movement activists as a political reflection of pride in their indigenous identity. In certain eras, such as the 1920s, short hair was evocative of modernism and progress for American women, while bobbed hair among Chinese women was seen as defiant. Efforts to control hairstyle served as an indicator of assimilation or difference in America as well. American Indians on reservations were threatened with the loss of jobs, food rations, and ‘confinement in guardhouse at hard labor’ if they didn’t cut their long braided hair.³⁴

Because of the restrictions on reservation life, when Ghost Dance gatherings (discussed in more detail later) took place in late 1889 on Lakota reservations, Jesuit missionaries decried and considered the Indians as “defying their authority” when they would not return to their individual homes. In South Dakota, the wife of a local postmaster wrote in a letter to the editor that the Ghost Dance rituals were preventing the Indians from becoming white.³⁵

Episcopal Right Reverend Henry B. Whipple, Bishop of Minnesota described Dakota tribes in 1860s as a “hapless race” prime material for becoming civilized--more so than other “heathen races” because of their lack of idolatry, and notable bravery, honesty and virtue. While some, like Whipple, gained converts through “sympathetic” or paternalistic intentions, they operated under coercive conditions. While many Americans’ image of Native Americans is founded on images created in the late 1800s perceived as a traditional lifestyle, tribal ways of life

had been undergoing changes for decades, including the introduction of the horse and guns. Also, between 1820s and 1840s, alcohol was also increasingly available in the West, as white settlers travelled through the plains on the Oregon Trail.³⁶

Friends of the Indians, a purportedly religious and humanitarian group was formed around 1860. This group played an important role in the passing of the Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887, which divided reservation land into individual holdings and marked the transition of policy from an attitude of isolation to one of assimilation. Commissioner Jones reflects the notion of the time, that the Indians faced “inevitable absorption by a stronger race.” Individual property ownership is viewed as progress toward civilization, and reflected the Jeffersonian ideal of a nation of small communities made up of independent, small farmer-landowners. The “Sioux Campaign” between 1876-1890 opened up the territory to unhampered settlement, farming, cattle procurement, mining, and railroad expansion.³⁷

Labeling the dancing that occurred among Indians in the Western US between 1870 and 1890 one monolithic “Ghost Dance” minimizes the influential and pervasive ways that dance fosters cultural reproduction. One must consider the extremely tumultuous conditions in which the visions of reconnection with the dead--humans and animals--occurred. While those particularly threatened by Indians interpreted the dancers’ beliefs as a literal return of the dead or absence of whites, there are many other common ways to interpret the visions expressed by the two primary Ghost Dance leaders.

Decades of struggle with disease, war, altered ecologies, and governmental policies aimed at eradication or assimilation of the indigenous peoples created receptive conditions for many of those living on reservations in California, Oregon, and as far east as Oklahoma, the Dakotas, Wyoming, and Montana to adopt what has been labeled the “Ghost Dance” in hopes of a better life. This “revitalization movement” took place during a period of severe physical and spiritual crisis.³⁸

After California became a state in 1848, and the 1849 Gold Rush was fueling an influx of people from around the world, the ways of life among numerous tribes were drastically changed. When gold was discovered in the Black Hills in 1874, tensions escalated between the tribes and the US government, who now had a new interest in the land they had previously considered barren and left for the Sioux.³⁹

Sitting Bull returned from Canada in 1881, and Sioux were all living on reservations and commodities provided by the US. Tribal police forces, created in 1878, were primarily loyal to white agents. Indians were separated into “friendly” “progressives,” or “hostile” “non-progressives.” The Sioux Act (1889) reduced the size of their reservation, and cut their annual beef allowance in half, which contributed to a famine. In 1890 the Great Sioux Reservation was divided: By early February, white settlers made land grabs as mixed bloods and “squawmen” (white settlers married to Indian women) took land allotments.⁴⁰

The Ghost Dance

A common theme of the visions that prompted the 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance what Thornton describes as one of demographic revitalization: a literal belief in a return of the dead and resurging population. The objective of both Ghost Dance movements was to “restore” the American Indian societies suffering from decades of harsh conditions resulting from European colonization. Interpreting the various songs and teachings literally--suggesting that dancers themselves believed in a literal return of their dead families, animal food sources e.g. buffalo,

and the removal of whites from their land—imposes a view that disregards the spiritual and metaphorical nature of life for many American Indians.

It is believed that the first Ghost Dance originated in Western Nevada, around the same time the transcontinental railroad connected at Promontory Summit in Utah in May 1869. Thornton attributes the origination of this movement to a member of the Paviotso (Northern Paiute) tribe called Wodziwob, who experienced a vision.⁴¹

Historical records reveal different interpretations of this vision among dancers and critics; however, it is important to contextualize the meanings assigned by anthropologists, reporters, and others who contribute to the related scholarly knowledge regarding that period. Less is recorded about this dance than the later movement since there were more missionaries, settlers, reservation agents, scholars, and soldiers in the area. Most do not differentiate between the two distinct waves occurring in 1870 and 1890. Hand written letters and reports, newspapers, and film cameras provide insight into the period; however, it is vital to examine these sources with a broader understanding of the power relations and other contextual factors that influenced the perspectives at that time. Later interpretations by scholars also fall within a narrative of inevitable destruction of Native American culture. One account published in 1968 in *Dance Perspectives*, by Erika Bourguignon, “who did field work among Native American tribes” describes the Ghost Dance as expressing “hopeless optimism,” which is not evidenced by the general messages of a better life described by most other Ghost Dance scholars.⁴²

Another account describes the Ghost Dance as foretelling an earthquake, which would restore the buffalo population; nonbelievers in the dance prophecy would cease to exist. Dancing was believed to bring about the change, and believer/participants would be rewarded with a reunion with their ancestors on a new, plentiful and peaceful earth.⁴³ This explanation sounds especially influenced by Christian stories about judgment and rapture, to which Wovoka was likely exposed when he lived with a white family and through missionary presence on reservations throughout the west. Rapture could translate into the Ghost Dance vision through identification with those who would be saved and transported to heaven, or as this rapture removing the whites from the earth and leaving it for the American Indians to resume their way of life. Wovoka was also to have advised peace rather than fighting, and may have even encouraged Indians to take up farming—perhaps if they complied with the wishes, they could look forward to their return to happiness. Yet another account described the dance as hoping to remove soldiers and weapons.”⁴⁴

The 1870 dance message spread from Western Nevada to the north and west into California and Oregon, where Mormon, Chinese, Irish, and Native cultures were increasingly coming into contact. The influence of Mormon and Christian beliefs on other cultures is likely to be high, since missionaries had been actively promoting their beliefs among generations of Native population, and were to soon turn their focus on newly arrived immigrants as well.⁴⁵

Wodziwob presumably lived on the Walker River Reservation, and was arrested for practicing shamanism a few years before his death in 1918. Thornton describes the dance as likely originating from a common Paviotso round dance found at many special occasions. Men and women would join hands in a circle, and rotate the circle to the left with a shuffling side step. Otherwise, there was no other unique ceremony associated with the 1870 Ghost Dance. The dance and teachings were modified as each tribe adopted them. Kroeber, in 1904, described dance as occurring in many different styles, formats, and contexts i.e. one, two, or ten circles; changing direction, indoors or outdoors, and time of day. Other variations described by Spier include: dancing around a center pole, separating or combining men and women, dress,

ceremonial bathing, use of handkerchiefs or clap rattles. In 1930, Gayton described different colors and styles of face paint.⁴⁶

In addition to many modifications occurring among dances as they were carried out throughout California and Oregon, present understanding of a specific “ghost dance” is also hampered by the vastly different interpretations imposed by the historians of the period, namely Mooney, Spier, and Du Bois. While Cora Du Bois framed it as ‘whites were to burn up and disappear without leaving ashes’ (possibly as result of having learned about the Christian notion of Rapture), other records indicate a philosophy of no distinctions among the races. Another interpretation is that the races would remain eternally separate.

Kroeber was instrumental in directing the early scholarship on the issue when he interpreted the primary focus as a ‘belief in the return of the dead’ in 1904, which informed Du Bois in 1939. Kroeber also emphasized a destruction of the whites: He cited Powers (1877) who claimed that northern California’s Indians ‘believed that their ‘dead would return...and would sweep the whites from the earth.’” The dance later became differentiated into the Earth Lodge Cult, plus the *Bole-Marú*, and its spin-off, Big Head Cult, which persisted until the late 1880s. While Thornton described the *Bole-Marú* as continuing into the 1980s at least, practice of these dances diminished greatly due to suppression by whites and reservation agents, and possibly also because people no longer believed in their efficacy.⁴⁷

Twenty years later in late 1880s, the second “movement” spread north, east, and south to Idaho, Montana, Utah, the Dakotas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona.” In 1889, while a young Paviotso named Wovoka was sick and witnessed a solar eclipse, he claimed to have had a vision from God. Described as the Ghost Dance prophet or messiah, Wovoka--named Jake Wilson—was the son of a follower of the 1870 dance movement, and later worked on a white farm as a young man and learned about Christianity. He may have encouraged Indians to farm and attend school. Thornton describes the idea behind the dance as belief in the Indian dead returning and “change the earth into a paradise for Indians,” eternal life, and the “disappearance of all whites.” Dee Brown provides includes an excerpt attributed to Wovoka, Paiute Messiah:

All Indians must dance, everywhere, keep on dancing. Pretty soon in next spring Great Spirit come. He brings back all game of every kind. The game be thick everywhere. All dead Indians come back and live again. They all be strong just like young men, be young again. Old blind Indian see again and get young and have fine time. When Great Spirit comes this way, then all the Indians go to mountains, high up away from whites. Whites can’t hurt Indians then. Then while Indians way up high, big flood comes like water and all white people die, get drowned. After that, water go away and then nobody but Indians everywhere and game all kinds thick. Then medicine man tell Indians to send word to all Indians to keep up dancing and the good time will come. Indians who don’t dance, who don’t believe in this word, will grow little, just about a foot high, and stay that way. Some of them will be turned into wood and be burned in fire.

Other Ghost Dance song lyrics include: “Father, have pity on me...I am crying for thirst...All is gone---I have nothing to eat” from the Arapaho and “We shall live again” of the Comanche.⁴⁸

James Mooney described the ghost dance as consisting of hypnotism. Dancers, in a general order of young women, followed by older women, and then men would dance until they entered a trance. Mooney stated that “temperament” was more important than “physique” in determining when one was affected. Other dancers would fan the affected dancers with a feather

or handkerchief. Mooney estimated that people from thirty to thirty-five tribes with a total population of 60,000 participated. About half (13,000) of the 26,000 Sioux participated. After Wounded Knee, the Ghost Dance in Oklahoma became adopted into a “Christian hope of a reunion with departed friends in a happier world...in the future.”⁴⁹

Dancers were described in the *NYT* by postmaster James Finley’s wife at Pine Ridge Reservation as barbaric, the dancers having “lost all senses” during the dance, “believing they were animals.” General Miles speculated that the 1890 Ghost Dance originated from a Mormon messiah disguising himself as an Indian, since the Mormons also ‘believed in prophets and spiritual manifestations.’ Mormon leaders Joseph Smith and Brigham Young also supported dance as recreation and theater, as long as participants could still “enjoy the Spirit of the Lord” wherever they sought their entertainment. The Salt Lake Theater in Utah between 1849-1869 was primarily created and supported by Mormons, who produced theatrical performances featuring plots showing the triumph of Good over Evil. Their reign on stage, however, was minimized when the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869 and brought other performance companies to the stage.⁵⁰

Lt. Marion P. Maus, described the Ghost Dance as a version of Christianity after visiting a camp at Pine Ridge. A Medieval folk dance, *danse macabre*, may have laid some roots in the Ghost Dance. Peasants hold hands together in a circle for hours until they collapse and commune with the dead. The dance mania may have been prompted by tragic events, such as the Bubonic plague or the Crusades war.⁵¹

During 1888-1889, the word of a messiah preaching a better future for Indians reached the Sioux. Short Bull and Kicking Bear, both instrumental in the 1876 war and clearly “non-progressive,” became the leaders of the Sioux’s adoption of the Ghost Dance. They travelled by train to Nevada to visit Wovoka. Reservation agents forbid the dance, but drought and crop failure made the Indians extremely desperate. By September 1890, it was recorded that dancing was interfering with daily routines expected on the reservations, such as attending, school, church and farming. The dance camp, as an alternative, was more similar to the Indian’s “old way of life.” By late October, it had spread to all four reservations.⁵²

Variations and Forms: Circle, Games, and Attire

One consistent aspect of the Ghost Dance was its circle form. Andersson describes the circle as being “sacred.” The Sioux adoption of the ceremony included their own variations, and also revived traditional games. For instance, the ceremony began with a man shooting an arrow through a hoop. The purifying sweat lodge and “dancing around a sacred tree under the protection of the sacred pipe” were other additions the Sioux made to the basic concept explained by Wovoka. The Ghost Dance did not rely on musical instruments—possibly more of matter of force than choice in a climate where dance and music were suppressed. Despite the lack of instruments, Ghost Dances were accompanied by many songs, which were sung by participants.⁵³

The Sioux also wore a particular shirt that was said to protect them from bullets. This belief may have been literal or figurative, in which one’s belief and participation would ensure their survival in some form, which could include individually, spiritually, or collectively as a culture. On a practical level, this may have helped unify and identify Ghost Dance participants, particularly when the dress of the time was so varied and dependent upon the availability.⁵⁴

Father Digman, of the St. Francis mission on the Rosebud Reservation cited the cut in rations, a dismal harvest, loss of land, and resulting hunger and disease as creating the condition for “disaffected” Indians to fall prey to the messiah’s preaching rather than adopt farming and Christianity. Amidst starvation, *The Washington Post* published an article prioritizing money for education of Indians over money for food.⁵⁵

Competition Among Missionaries

Competition among the different religious denominations among the missions played a crucial role in heightening the nation’s sensitivity to the Ghost Dance. White missionaries were fairly common by 1870s on reservations in South Dakota. Many missionaries even spoke Lakota: By 1930 Rev. Eugene Buechel and Rev. Paul Manhardt, who worked at mission schools, are credited with recording a form of written Lakota language. Since the 1880’s, any Christian denomination had permission to create a mission at any Lakota agency. By the end of the 1880’s, Lakotas were split between Christians and those wishing to continue living and practicing their traditional worldview. Missionaries were very persistent in their effort to save souls: Leading up to the mass execution of Dakotas following the “Dakota Uprising,” Father Ravoux preached to the prisoners and sought converts through the night, continuing until their hanging.⁵⁶

Mary C. Collins, a religious provocateur, used newspapers to enflame the situation, and called the Lakota “savages,” although others noted at the time that the newspapers were exaggerating. In many ways, the Ghost Dance was actually a blend of Christianity with traditional practices. However, critics decried it as “demoralizing,” representing a backwards step, or return to “barbarism,” in the missionaries’ efforts to further the Indian’s progress. The *Word Carrier* emphasized the need for education to civilize the “heathens” or “savages.”⁵⁷

Different interpretations of the meaning behind the dance prompted repression from missionaries and reservation agents. The extent to which any particular interpretation influenced the participation among dancers is unknown, since some presumably were attracted by other aspects of the dance culture, such as a feeling of return to a way of life prior to life on the reservations.

Much confusion about the situation on the reservations ensued because of lack of information and indecisive reporting on the part of far-distant newspapers east of the Dakotas. Many articles contradicted themselves, with alarming and reassuring news included. The *Chicago Tribune* created a stir when it estimated the number warriors to be between 15,000-27,000; yet, the census at the time recorded only about 5,000 Lakota men¹⁵. In another article, the *Tribune* criticized the government for poor treatment of the Indians, and blamed local settlers for selling them weapons and liquor. Prior to the November 20 arrival of federal troops into the area, the *Omaha Daily Bee* and *NYT* and other papers reported that whites in the area were evacuating because the army could not protect them against the armed and excited Indians. The *Yankton Press and Dakotan* further added to the confusion by reporting that Indians were heavily armed and swarming around settlers, while also including Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger’s reassurance that there was no danger of war.¹⁵ The *NYT* reported that the Indians had a plentiful supply of food and weapons, and the *Chicago Tribune* reported that the Indians were terrorizing the agency and nearby areas. Red Cloud was quoted in the *Tribune* saying, “I don’t want to fight and I don’t want my people to fight. We have lots of old women and...lots of old men. We’ve got no guns and we can’t fight, for we have nothing to eat, and are too poor to do anything,” yet

they still considered him as a dance leader despite his denial of participation. Sitting Bull was reportedly expected to lead 200 warriors to meet with even more dancers, who were lively and had guns strapped to their backs. Yet, on November 22, the *NYT* followed the *Omaha Bee* in reporting that the Indian Office stated the stories of uprising were very exaggerated.⁵⁸

Little Wound, after much upset at not being able to express their point of view in the media (to balance the inflammatory press coverage), explained in *The Washington Post* the dance was a religious dance and a way of expressing emotions and needs. In his letter to Agent Royer, he explained that the dancers wanted only to dance until spring, at which point they hoped the Christ would appear. If he did not, they would stop dancing. He also explained that he no longer cared much for the rations being withheld or not, since they did not amount to anything substantive anyways. Others described the dance a prayer for peace for all nations.⁵⁹

Not all whites wanted to suppress the dance: One officer wrote in the *Washington Post* they should be allowed to continue to dance, and humanized the Indians. He felt it was natural for them to dance because they were religious people, and it was part of their response to crop failure and lack of anything to do. He observed that repeated years of disappointing crops led them to believe the land was not suitable for farming, himself believing that it is “impossible in that country.” General Miles, in *The New York Times* heeded against a ‘national disgrace of starving our dependents into rebellion and then killing them for rebelling’—preferring instead to treat them as dependents in need of civilization. On Dec. 3, General Miles was quoted in several newspapers that ‘We have overwhelming evidence from officers, inspectors, and testimony of agents as well, and also from Indians themselves, that they have been suffering for the want of food, more or less, for two years past, and one of the principal causes of disaffection is this very matter.’⁶⁰

It should be noted that fear among the white population also existed within a certain context and memory of what is labeled as the Dakota Uprising. Violence erupted in August of 1862 in Minnesota between two bands of Dakotas who, after four years of frustration were still awaiting funds meant to compensate them for the “sale” of their lands to arrive so that they could buy food and necessary supplies. Called the Dakota Uprising, Dakota War, or Sioux Uprising, the events that took place resulted in the largest mass hanging in US history when 38 men were hanged on Dec. 26 1862.

During June and July of 1862, some members of the two southernmost Dakota tribes, the Mdewakantons and Wahpekutes killed hundreds of settlers over the course of several days. The conflict was spurred by hunger, frustration, and uncertainty about the future. While Dakotas remained at the agency awaiting their supplies, with information being spread that they would not receive the money because some had been allocated to government administrative costs, and the rest would be given to the store owner who had provided them credit for food and supplies—all sold at extremely marked up rates. During this period, Rev. Whipple describes the Dakotas as extremely restless: “Every day some heathen dance took place—a monkey dance, a begging dance, or a scalp dance.” He took the occasional refusal by someone to shake his hand as a bad sign of danger. A narrative of US victory and Indian demise uses this uprising as a starting point, and marks the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 an ending to this battle.⁶¹

In early Dec. 1890, the *New York Times* faulted Sitting Bull for keeping children out of school, claiming he was breaking Indian Department policy. When agents attempted to arrest him [under suspicion of preparing to leave the reservation], he was shot and killed. While Sitting Bull had previously led a band of people to Canada in resistance of confinement to a reservation, he was apparently not very active in the Ghost Dance, and was certainly not a leader. However,

the *Chicago Tribune* confused the Lakota Sitting Bull with an Arapaho Ghost Dance leader in Nevada, also called Sitting Bull. Andersson describes Sitting Bull's death--and to a greater extent--Wounded Knee as marking a shift in the "Eastern" newspapers from hostile to sympathetic.⁶²

Confined to reservations, Native Americans experienced physical and spiritual hardship as their interrelated cultural practices around food, dance, medicine, land, and language were restricted. The story of the Ghost Dance movements reflect America's early search for religious freedom, and an inevitable mixing and interplay of cultures amongst immigrants (newly-arrived and "native" American-born) and American Indians. Originating in Nevada, the Ghost Dance movements were influenced by interactions with Mormons in the area, and its widespread adoption was aided by massive dislocation and cultural change experienced by generations of Native American peoples. Additionally, increased access to transportation (railroads) and communication among tribes aided the spread of the Ghost Dance in an effort to revitalize spiritual hope and cultural practices. Newspapers utilized telegraph and printing press technology to reach a national audience; however, with limited information, newspaper reporting fueled fear of widespread American Indian uprisings brought on by the Ghost Dance, and likely contributed to the US government's massacre of Lakota Sioux at Wounded Knee in 1891.

Interrelated Narratives

There are countless stories that could be told about America in the 19th and 20th Centuries. One commonly accepted story features a vast frontier in the central and western part of the continent that was scarcely inhabited by a diminishing nomadic race of primitive peoples overcome by disease, warfare, or assimilation. Another re-tells these events as challenges and resilience among generations of indigenous people from North and Central America and Africans brought to America as slaves.

Narratives of racial difference and hierarchy are pervasive in modern global society, influencing many generations of people in a variety of ways and circumstances. Narratives of racial superiority utilized by missionaries and science-in the form of eugenics- have been used to justify the domination of certain groups of people over another. These narratives can be overt or masked under the guise of environmental determinism, e.g. widespread disease indicates a natural course of doom for an inferior race (overlooking European epidemics and the targeted actions to destroy foundations of life needed to maintain health i.e. food supply). Anglo-Saxon Christian women have been active participants in maintaining narratives of racial difference and threat as well. This chapter focuses primarily on the role of narratives of racial superiority during the 19th Century; eugenics will be addressed in the following chapter.

Blending religious conviction (Christian evangelical benevolence), science (social evolutionary theories), and political ideology (progressivism) white proponents of women's rights helped create new roles for themselves that explicitly maintained the racial hierarchies based on the presumption that Anglo-American Protestants were culturally, as well as biologically, superior to other peoples. Paradoxically, Anglo-Saxon Christian women's efforts included imposing patriarchy on "heathen" women in order to liberate them.⁶³

Harrell defines racism as:

A system of dominance, power, and privilege based on racial-group designations: rooted in the historical oppression of a group defined or perceived by dominant groups as inferior, deviant, or undesirable; and occurring in circumstances where members of the dominant group create or accept their social privilege by maintaining structures, ideologies, values, and behavior that have the effect or intent of leaving non-dominant group members relatively excluded from power, esteem, status, and/or equal access to societal resources.

Racism persists through stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. It exists in the realms of: individual (inferiority of racial group), institutional (systemic oppression), or cultural (ethnocentrism and maintenance of status quo). At least six types of racism-related stress: racism-related life events, vicarious experiences, daily racism micro-stressors, chronic contextual stress, collective experiences of racism, and trans-generational transmission of group traumas. Effects on health in these domains: physical, psychological, social, functional, and spiritual. “Social well-being includes consideration of one’s ability and willingness to trust, have close relationships, and be part of a social group.”⁶⁴

Gender Imbalance

A huge gender imbalance in the west created a particularly exploitative and restrictive environment for women. All faced conditions that challenged women’s traditional roles as conveyors of cultural stories, knowledge, and practices passed on through generations via everyday and special event practices--many involving food and shared movement. Prostitution laws made women in public or dance venues vulnerable to arrest on suspicion of immoral behavior: They then faced a racist and sexist criminal justice system.

The experiences of women varied greatly based on race and economic standing. There were few Chinese women in America at the time, but they were degraded as prostitutes and associated with disease, while community life in China was disrupted by the absence of fathers and sons. Indigenous women experienced enormous cultural disruption due to dislocation, hunger, and missionary zeal. Women from the African diaspora were dehumanized in numerous ways as slaves taken from their homeland; their choices restricted by property owners. Meanwhile, Anglo Saxon women with access to money made important contributions to society in many areas, e.g. physical education, social welfare, sanitation, and urban parks; however, their efforts often reinforced racial divisions that penalized women not of European descent.

Prior to industrialization, Colonial women were involved in agriculture, animal care, and making many important items, including clothes, soap and candles. After industrialization, many women were exploited as factory workers and servants while wealthy women were expected to be idle--forbidden to work. Early feminist Melusina Fay Pierce argued that this state of having nearly half of the population not contribute to labor was unnatural. She argued that because men had already established themselves in the areas of agriculture and industry, women should lead in the areas of distribution and service industries and create “cooperative housekeeping.”⁶⁵

Industrialization and the quest for gold fueled both Westward expansion and the growth of urban cities, which transformed the US during the latter part of the 19th Century. The construction of a transcontinental railroad, which hastened the dramatic decline in population for those living on the plains--human and bison—provided demanding but plentiful work for

Chinese and Irish immigrants seeking escape from famine and conflict. Famine is often the result of challenging ecological conditions plus societal errors.

Chinese Immigrants

Despite being present among the first large waves of newcomers to California, Asians were excluded from US citizenship until the mid 20th Century, and was subject to the only US law barring immigration on the basis of race. White miners, threatened by competition with Chinese labor used additional mining taxes, violence, and policies to discourage immigration. For decades, the “Mongolian race” or “Orientals” faced continued exclusionary policies (e.g. 1862, 1888, 1892, 1902).⁶⁶

Some of this may be exclusionary tendency may be related to the fact that most Chinese *Punti* themselves left Guangdong (Kwangtung province) with the intention of going to *Gam Saan* “Gold Mountain” dreaming of prosperity, but returning home to their families within five years. Chinese women, on the other hand, generally had little choice in their emigration to California. Husbands decided the fates of wives, and others were sold or deceived into forced prostitution. In Chinese language, home and family share the same character. Between 1849-1930, approximately 380,000 Chinese entered California (another 46,000 to Hawaii, *Tan Hueng Shan*, “Fragrant Sandalwood Hills”).⁶⁷

Several factors drove many from Guangdong Province to emigrate: The British Opium Wars 1839-1842 and 1856-1860; peasant rebellions, particularly the Red Turban Rebellion between 1854-1860; ethnic conflict between the *Punti* and *Hakkas* (1856-1868); local conflicts over land; and natural disasters combined to create social instability, extreme hunger, and epidemics. Following the loss of the Opium Wars, China became a semi-colonial country: Foreign military and political pressures encouraged an end to China’s isolationist policies. Their traditional economy based on small-owner cultivation and household handicrafts deteriorated as foreign competition within the industrial sector depressed the domestic industries. To finance the trade conflicts known as the Opium Wars, the Qing government’s taxes on peasants led many to lose their land when they were unable to pay.⁶⁸

Hakka means “guest people” or “stranger families,” from the point of view of southern *Punti*. *Hakka* ancestors are believed to have originated in north central China: The migration thought to have occurred before or during the 4th Century. They are officially considered by the People’s Republic of China as *Han*, descendants of the *Han* Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). Self-identified as a strong, energetic society of farmers struggling with poor soil (since the longer inhabitant *Punti* occupied the fertile delta and plain land), they did not bind women’s feet, and had fewer restrictions between men and women in domestic life. *Hakka* women had reputations for their “independence,” “diligence,” and vital economic contributions to their households. They participated in agriculture, and had greater freedom than *Punti* and other non-*Han* minorities. This population made up the group that immigrated to Hawaii: Since they did not practice foot binding, women were more capable of travelling with their husbands. Plantation owners encouraged local families in hopes that it would make the labor force more controllable.⁶⁹

Natural disasters also played an important role in the motivation for people in China (and around the world) to leave their homelands for America. Cheng et. al indicates that between 1851-1908, incomplete records show fourteen major floods, seven typhoons, four earthquakes,

two severe droughts, four epidemics, and five great famines, which resulted in numerous deaths.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, success stories of men returning from California inspired hope in the young, married men who comprised most of the men travelling to California. Approximately eighty percent of the travellers were from Toisan county, southwest of the Pearl River Delta. For comparison, a railroad worker made about \$30 a month (minus board) while in China, a laborer would earn \$3-5 a month. Returning home with even \$300 saved could elevate a peasant greatly.⁷¹

While the policy towards the American Indian population was shifting towards assimilation, Chinese immigrants were considered “unassimilable.” These policies are reflected in property trends. By 1866, after decades of raids on houses suspected of Chinese prostitution, landlords were legally enabled to deny housing to Chinese under the premise that the property could be used for “ill-fame.” As American Indians in the mid-west were isolated onto privately owned small farms following the Dawes Act of 1887), Alien Land Laws in California and Oregon (1913 and 1923 respectively), prohibited property ownership among Asians due to their status as aliens ineligible for citizenship. Policies that allowed merchants, students and teachers to enter also created sub-groups within Chinese population with different resources and power.⁷²

Chinese were subject to many episodes of violence near mines, towns, and in cities. A Denver riot in 1880 left hundreds of Chinese wounded, at least one dead, and many homes burnt to the ground. Throughout the west, Chinese clustered into communities where they could share language and culture with other men from their homeland. While many of the immigrants to America originated from same region in Guangdong Province, there were other ethnic minorities with distinct dialects and customs within the population as well.⁷³

Another stereotype that informs the narrative of racial hierarchy is that of the industrious, slave-like, emasculated Chinese worker prevalent in the US beginning in the mid 19th Century. This stereotype continues to fuel exploitation of Chinese labor and disguises the desperate circumstances under which Chinese seek work, while overlooking their forms of resistance.⁷⁴

Contrary to the popular image of docile workers, Chinese workers for the Central Pacific Railroad staged several strikes, the largest occurring in 1867: European workers, regardless of skill, received better wages and board while Chinese workers--some of whom did more skilled and dangerous work—were charged for their board. These workers also demanded no more than 10 hours of work a day (8 hours if inside a tunnel), no corporal punishment. They were forced back to work after a week because the railroad company withheld their food. Other forms of resistance took place in court cases and efforts to improve conditions in China.⁷⁵

The connections between America and Guangdong are evident today in the economic development of the province, particularly along the Pearl River Delta in special economic zones that represent the epicenter of China’s import/export economy. In addition to knowledge gained from experience constructing the Central Pacific Railroad, funding from Chinese in America who were eager to express nationalistic pride helped create the Sunning Railroad in Toisan. This railroad was built on the principles of no foreign ownership or engineers, and with the intention of bringing food in order to reduce the threat of hunger. After construction was completed in 1920, the railroad was primarily supported by passenger fares of the emigrant Toisanese society. Freight fees related to the importation of food, textiles, sundries, and construction materials made up only a quarter of the railroad’s income. This import economy was fueled by the buying power created by overseas laborers’ wages.⁷⁶

Orientalism has a particular thread influenced by the experiences of the American West in the 19th Century. Edward Said characterizes Oriental character as associated with sensuality, depravity, aberrant mentality, lying and cheating, and backwardness. A fascination with the curious--which allowed for some wealthy New England homes in the 18th Century to adopt Chinese style gardens and porcelain--evolved into a taste for the exotic, which should be observed from a distance and not imitated.

While Chinese were displayed as curiosities on the East Coast, the stereotypes regarding prostitutes on the West Coast contributed to exclusionary rhetoric. The first recorded Chinese woman in the US was displayed sitting among Chinese paraphernalia at museums and other venues—primarily in the Eastern US--between 1834-47. In 1850, Barnum's Chinese Museum in New York City displayed a purportedly upper class woman and her maidservant: Their bound feet featured prominently in advertising.⁷⁷

In 1851, Frank Soule's *Annals of San Francisco* described the city's residents as 'generally orderly, obedient and useful,' he disparaged the Chinese specifically. Despite there only being seven recorded Chinese women in the city at the time, at least two of whom performed domestic work, he warned that the Chinese were 'bringing with them a number of their women who were among the filthiest and most abandoned of their sex.' Meanwhile, there was over a thousand prostitutes of other nationalities that escaped his criticism. By 1870, population census manuscripts listed 61% (2,157) of the 3,536 Chinese women in California as having the profession of prostitute.⁷⁸

Mazumdar marks the integration of the "exotic" and "erotic" stereotypes with a drawing in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of Ah Toy, a well-known Chinese prostitute in the city, in which she wears tight clothes and looks at the observer of the image directly. Aligned with the notion of all Chinese women in America being prostitutes, is the association with disease. In 1876, the president of the American Medical Association proclaimed Chinese syphilis as being more deadly than any other form.⁷⁹

Throughout the western states, Chinese were associated with prostitution, despite the fact that women from other nationalities vastly outnumbered them. Historical research about Denver around the 1870's indicates: 204 white, 44 black, 2 Mexican, 3 "Oriental" prostitutes, and another 107 who may have been French, but who were not recorded as such at the time. The Page Act (introduced in California in 1870 and passed by Congress in 1875) reflected attitudes of the time by assuming that all "Mongolian, Chinese, and Japanese" women entered the country for the sole purpose of prostitution. While its name implies protection of these women against kidnapping and being brought to the US by force, it subjected them to detention, close scrutiny, and interrogation.⁸⁰

Critics, sympathetic reformers, and missionaries played a role in furthering the narrative of racial inferiority by emphasizing the worst conditions experienced by Chinese women while degrading conditions for Anglo-Saxon women were overlooked. The notion that Chinese society was perceived as further down the evolutionary scale than Western society was supported by an interpretation of John Stuart Mill--who argued from a utilitarian standpoint--that a civilization could be judged on the condition of women within that society.⁸¹

The Chinese-British Opium Wars created an image in American minds of the lazy, addicted Chinese despite the fact that the British were fighting to continue importation of the drug while the Chinese government sought to outlaw it. White women in the Christian Temperance Union promulgated warnings against opium, and fed anti-Chinese sentiment.⁸²

Women's Missionary Efforts

The “cult of womanhood” facilitated white Victorian and missionary women’s political activity under the guise of moral superiority and imperative to right injustices towards other women and children. American women, as missionaries or wives of missionaries, became increasingly common in China after the 1850s, e.g. the Foreign Mission Crusade 1868-1873. “Evangelical ethnography” appeared in ladies journals criticizing polygamy, concubines, harems, female infanticide, foot binding, illiteracy, seclusion, and child marriages.⁸³

Between 1869-1871, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Baptist denominations each formed female missionary societies that produced their own monthly publications. China and India were the primary focus of the *Heathen Woman's Friend* between 1869-1873. Auxiliary and supportive missionary work was a way of mentally and socially extending or “enlarging” women’s current domestic sphere; meanwhile, it was work that they could physically conduct from home. Catharine Beecher advised women in the 1840s of their duty to educate and civilize other women and children, since (Christian) women had superior morals and manners by nature. However, some missionary work was conceived of as less dependent on women as “repositories” of culture, and more as active agents working in a global sphere to improve their own conditions as well as that of their “heathen sisters.”⁸⁴

During the 19th Century, and in to the 20th, Chinese in the West were often degraded and excluded through comparisons to African slaves in the South. This took the form of physical caricatures of Chinese with “negro” features or overweight body type indicating lax morals as well as verbal descriptions of their lowly status. While there was a system of slave-like conditions facing many Chinese “coolies” during this period, the Chinese arriving in America from discrete districts in Guangdong Province (alternately spelled Kwangtung in English) in Southern China were migrating more or less by choice, although these peasants were under great economic and social pressures to do so. Another factor that fueled the misconception of Chinese slaves in America was the matter of a bride price.⁸⁵

Some emigrants to America and Australia seeking gold may have been required to work under an unfair contract to pay for their passage (which cost around \$50), but they were not part of the “coolie” system between 1845-1875. Under the credit-ticket system, for instance, a loan of \$60 loan for passage required a \$120 repayment. Despite this differentiation, Chinese in the American west were perceived as slaves residing on the lowest rung of the social ladder--sometimes their existence being more “vile” than the slaves’ in the South. This differentiation fed into notion that Chinese were unable or undesirable for assimilation.⁸⁶

Shared Histories of Slavery

The coolie trade arose when the British and American governments sought to restrict the African slave trade in 1814 through the Treaty of Ghent. American and English ship owners then turned to China to import forced workers for guano mines in Peru and sugar plantations in Cuba. The *Hakka-Punti* ethnic conflict and semi-colonial conditions also fed the trade when *Puntis* kidnapped and sold *Hakkas* into indentured servitude. Many of the kidnapped were transported through the Portuguese province of Macao, transported in crowded slave ships, and made to work until their death under conditions of brutal labor and beatings. These indentured laborers, called “coolies,” gained their name from a British term for the cheapest form of labor.⁸⁷

Again, Chinese resistance (contrary to the stereotype of docility) was evident: Many ships transporting the kidnapped laborers had uprisings and mutiny, which met various levels of success. Although the history of Asian labor in the Pacific, particularly Hawaii, is of importance, it is not included in this discussion of the American west.⁸⁸

While anti-miscegenation laws in America prevented many generations of Chinese male immigrants to remain single and childless in this country, Chinese men under the “coolie” system started families with Black and Latina women in Cuba and Latin America.

In San Francisco’s Chinatown, they were described as “spectral,” like ghosts. Hollywood’s portrayal of the Chinese beginning in the 1920s reinforced many of these stereotypes in the American mind. Dr. Fu Manchu was evil in a suspect Chinatown.⁸⁹

The construction of the first transcontinental railroad completed in 1863, had significant and lasting consequences on the economic and social structure of the US. Famine in Ireland and China, as well as trade wars between the United Kingdom and China stimulated the movement of people who were primarily responsible for the physical construction labor—dangerous, demanding jobs that segregated the men from their communities. The Lakota Sioux and other people living there faced hunger and deprivation because of the decimation of the buffalo population. Disease caused enormous loss of life during this turbulent period. Irish immigrants (who were fleeing a famine caused by potato blight) built the Eastern route, while the route originating in the east was built by thousands of Chinese male immigrants, also facing seeking a better life. Most intended to make some wages and return to China and their families. [

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways in which many people living in America have had their access to dance restricted legally or culturally or disrupted due to displacement resulting from ecological, social, and political conditions. Therefore, societies are in need of concerted recreation of dance practices, which are so fundamental to human cooperation and survival. Examples of how social classes are forgotten when moving together abound: Utilizing the social benefits of moving together to practice participatory decision-making and governance can improve how we relate to each other in many other interactions—a necessary skill as people with different world-views come to share common space.⁹⁰

Chapter 2 Notes

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Ch. 3: Women and Progressive Era Reform

This chapter explores the intersections of public space, physical movement, leisure, and women's struggles for freedom and improved quality of life for themselves and others during a broadly defined Progressive Era in America. Although many women's efforts would be considered environmental activism in contemporary terms, their contributions to improving the human condition through changes in their environments and social structures during the 19th and early 20th centuries are largely overlooked. This chapter also explores how conceptions of race and class shifted over time: A religious perspective was accompanied by an additional reliance on scientific theories and research. The biological and social sciences greatly shaped women's beliefs, and women contributed greatly to anthropology and an emerging arena of social welfare. A more nuanced conception of gender and sex beyond male or female will be addressed in later chapters.

While historians define the Progressive Era window in different terms, my argument draws on historian Elizabeth Perry's extended timeframe of 1870-1950, when progressive reforms, centered on the interconnections between home and community, were evident. Aspects of the earlier part of the century related to the dichotomy between public and private spheres are included for context. The 1870s are used to mark the beginning of the Progressive timeframe in order to reflect the work of women active in settlements, temperance, and suffrage during the 1880s. These women "laid the foundations of progressivism by building public opinion in favor of change."¹

The period of 1870-1920 also featured vigilante justice, increased visibility of women in public, and Pacific imperialism. After the Civil War, the number of participants in the "woman's movement" seeking "personal autonomy, self-government, and economic independence" increased greatly.²

The "cult of domesticity" that incorporated Christian and Victorian ideals, sought to define women's sphere as solely concerning private, domestic life in which their main duty was to impart religious morality, education, and nourishment within the family. Entering into the Progressive Era, upper and middle class women drew upon concepts of Social Darwinism and their biological superiority to justify an expansion of their sphere of influence by directing their efforts at American Indians and those considered "primitives" from other countries.

Abolitionists and suffragists sought freedom and political engagement. Seeking social change, many participated in various utopian and communitarian efforts as well, e.g., desiring to alleviate isolation through socialized domestic work or creation of settlements. Women challenged the confines of marriage and sought increased access to education: They soon became active members of the intellectual elite informing Progressive-era reform relying on a belief in science and professionalization to inform social policy.

Urban working class women—primarily recent immigrants and African Americans—labored long hours and were subject to intense scrutiny in public, where they could be punished for prostitution or indecent behavior (with little recourse). Their children were targeted by middle and upper class religious or charity organizations as a conduit for instigating moral reform and a class-based hierarchical social order. Leisure activities were also closely scrutinized as foreign or immoral; thus, reformers sought either to restrict access to certain activities, or provide desirable alternatives. Yet, dance was a pervasive activity among all classes. Bishop asserts, "dance was truly at the center of Progressive Era life...[Working class] women embodied a sexual freedom while exploring issues of urbanity, industrialism, modernity,

and other Progressive reforms.” Spaces such as urban parks and playgrounds gained importance as a belief in the power of the environmental conditions to shape behavior became more popular among academics and well-off elites, marking a shift from the prior emphasis on individual moral flaws as the primary agent behind urban vice. For example, dancehalls with alcohol were seen as threatening the moral order as they were closely linked with promiscuity, prostitution, and crime: An effort by a Chicagoan mayor to provide supervised dances in a public facility was seen as a success when it drew crowds and dancehalls were abandoned for that time.³

From within this American context of the late 1800’s to early 1900’s emerged a few notable young women who danced for personal motivations, but pursued performance because of economic necessity. Dance and performance provided them the ability to make a living amid the burgeoning opportunities for solo acts available during the heyday of vaudeville: Their legacy is American modern dance. Lacking a shared American dance tradition that reflected their experiences, these women popularized individual styles through innovation, interpretations of other societies’ style and aesthetics, as well as a desire for self-expression. In many ways, their dancing reflected their connections with nature and humanity. These, and other women explorers and reformers, contributed to a range of women’s movements in areas such as dress reform and physical culture.⁴

By the 1920’s, the Red Scare, advertising, and mass communication and entertainment such as women’s journals, magazines, radio shows, movies, and large-scale dance productions such as the Ziegfeld Follies were extremely influential in downplaying women’s physical and intellectual capabilities as well as their social contributions. Their role as that of consumer and physical object of beauty and sexuality (particularly beneficial for marketing purposes) became emphasized as the federal government and commercial interests promoted suburbanization and individual home ownership that isolated women in their respective homes, where they focus on filling it with appliances and manage for the comfort of their nuclear family.

After the 1920’s, many women’s networks shifted into city clubs and female professional organizations while others became submerged or disbanded due to intense scrutiny as communist or socialist sympathizers. Although the Great Depression accompanied a decline in the temperance and anti-prostitution Progressive movements, progressive reform persisted until the 1940s and 50s, when federal agencies created as products of settlement work and women’s reform efforts (e.g. Children’s Bureau into Health, Education, and Welfare) began to be co-opted into governmental agencies, which often modified their actions and influence. In the early 1950s, notable institutions such as the Women’s Trade Union League, *Survey Magazine*, and the National Consumer’s League “closed their doors or were forced to shift direction... Postwar consumerism was turning women’s interests more toward material than social agendas.”⁵

Class and Morality

During much of the 1800’s, American discourse dominated by elites (native-born Anglo-Saxon Protestants) included a strong emphasis on morality, which employed a spatial metaphor i.e. high and low. Rapid immigration, urbanization, (and sometimes Westward expansion) were perceived as threatening to rural morals, which were monitored and perpetuated through close ties to others through church, family, and community. Indeed, great anonymity, social unrest, crime, and poverty existed within urban slums and tenements, polluted by neighboring industries, and lacking sanitation infrastructure.⁶

The elites' moral concerns about city life also employed the space metaphor, evidenced in the description of upper, middle, and lower classes. While the language of reformers sought to convey a desire for unity and homogeneity among the urban masses, class distinctions remained prominent. Upper class elites guided and funded the efforts, while middle class volunteers and later, paid staff carried out most of the work engaging the lower class people whom they sought to uplift.⁷

As a note on class designations, class indicated occupation and wealth, as well as shared morality and behavior. Thus, some newly arrived emigrants from rural towns to the urban metropolises may have had few economic resources and worked similar jobs as the "lower" or "working" class, they may be grouped together with the "middle" class because they sought association and therefore acted in socially acceptable ways among middle class ranks e.g. the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Class in America at this time was seen as something one could transition among rapidly; therefore, aspirations, connections, and acceptable behavior could allow one temporary entry into the middle class.

Religious evangelical leaders, merchants, bankers, editors, and other upper-class native-born professional elites attributed urban dwellers' poor conditions to lax morals: They perceived gambling, alcoholism, and prostitution as flourishing because individuals lacked self-discipline and industriousness. Lyman Beecher widely promoted volunteer moral societies as a route to moral reform for wayward urbanites. His influential position as a well-known clergyman in New England during the early 1800's also provided access to audiences for female members of his family, including his daughters Catharine Esther Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, and granddaughter Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Their continuation of his legacy is explored later in this chapter.⁸

Moral reform societies were led and supported financially by the upper class. Women contributed greatly to these efforts as volunteers carrying out "friendly" home-visits and many of the organizational duties needed to sustain the organizational efforts. These efforts took the form of tract societies, Sunday schools, and revivals. For example, in 1874, religious volunteers created the Chinese Mission Home in San Francisco as a "refuge for Chinese prostitutes."⁹ Sunday schools were aimed at instilling order and acceptance of a hierarchical society among children of the working class. While sitting still in the classroom was vital, marching together in frequent parades and rallies was one enjoyable aspect that kept children involved. In 1829, nearly 12,000 youth "scholars" and 8,000 teachers entertained thousands of observers as they marched through the streets to an assembly in Battery Park in New York City. Despite massive social change during 1825-1850, Ryan describes these years as the "most fertile period in the growth of public ceremony," in which the number and variety of celebrations flourished.¹⁰ Civic ceremonies during the 1800's generally entailed vigorous activity by men, with women serving as a docile audience. Despite widely held concerns about the dangers of the heterogeneous cities during this period, highly planned celebrations were created for civic improvements, the Fourth of July gained in prominence, and St. Patrick's Day illustrated acceptable celebration of pride of national origin. In the early part of this period, "especially ornate and festive celebrations" took place. Festival-like gatherings took place in the 1820s and 30s in response to even "relatively routine annual anniversaries."¹¹

Women and Public Celebrations

The parades taking place between 1825-1850 exemplified the most democratic and participatory instances of public celebration during the 19th Century. Many new holidays and celebrations were instigated during the “Jacksonian era” (1829-1837) by the “popular classes.” Parades thrived around 1850, after America had gained some experience producing elaborate celebrations. “Filing through the streets with banners and a band was an everyday occurrence in the antebellum years, a mode of celebration enjoyed by hundreds of militia units, trade associations, fire companies, political parties, reform associations, ethnic brotherhoods, and simple revelers.” Parades could number up to 50,000 participants, in which social differences were acknowledged and accepted as part of a larger diverse whole coordinated into one single entity: The public was “diverse, exuberant, and well-ordered.”¹²

Historian Mary Ryan argues “by equating women with sexuality, American Republicans justified their exclusion from the political citadel of rationality and virtue.” In public events during the 1820s and 30s, representations of women portrayed as “virgin pure” were displayed as icons of “civic virtues” such as Liberty, Justice, Wisdom, and Prosperity. After 1840, women’s presence as spectators at public events was included in reports of events more frequently: They often had spaces reserved for them in the audience, and their waving of handkerchiefs was a reassurance of their civilizing presence. While images of women as symbols were occasionally integrated into celebrations, the participation of living women in a parade or public ceremony was virtually unheard of before 1880. (In creating images for public symbols and ceremonies, men drew on the appeal of the attractive female form as a tool for carrying a message—much like a “canvas,” Ryan describes. Women were also categorized as pure, motherly, and virginal, in contrast to harlot, undeserving, helpless.) Nativists portrayed Protestant women as pure, reinforcing a contrast to immigrant women. Civilization-work “elevated lower races,” which Newman describes as “converting ‘savages to Christianity, ‘Americanizing’ immigrants in settlement houses, ‘uplifting’ Negroes for the Freedmen’s bureau, and ‘bringing civilization’ to...reservations.”¹³

Otis T. Mason was the curator of the US Bureau of Ethnology from 1870s until his death in 1908. He guided the Women’s Anthropology Society’s initial research agenda in 1885, shortly after its creation. In his book *Woman’s Share in Primitive Culture*, he advised that assimilation of the nation’s Native Americans should be directed at Native American women, whom he suggested had the same “capacity for morality, sexual purity, and religious devotion...and ‘influence’ over their husbands that civilized women were presumed to exercise over their men.” However, using the accessibility of citizenship in 1924 as a marker, Newman indicates that Indians were seen as “even more resistant to civilization.”¹⁴ Chinese faced anti-miscegenation laws and exclusionary policy against laborers. In 1900, sex ratio of Chinese nationwide was 19:1; for foreign-born Chinese the ratio was greater than 36:1.¹⁵

Industrial factories in the north and the Union government employed more women during the Civil War. In 1860, 270,000 women were employed in the textile, shoe, clothing, and printing industries. The Civil War created 100,000 new industrial jobs for women as men served as soldiers or were injured or killed. Approximately 500 women worked for the Union Government in 1865; meanwhile, around 3,000 served as army nurses. The Red Cross, originally named the Sanitary Commission, is described by Newman as the “most important woman’s organization to come out of the war.”¹⁶

Decline in marriageable men and experiences from wartime work attributed by Newman to a rise in women's employment following the war. In the 1880's, two out of three public school teachers were women. In 1892, five out of six teachers were women. White middle class women also accounted for seventy-five percent of office workers in 1900—a notable increase from three percent in 1870.¹⁷

Women opposing women's suffrage argued that involvement with the political sphere did not correspond with "true womanly virtues" of "selflessness, subservience, humility, piety, cooperation, obedience, altruism." Mrs. Herbert Lyman called for "equal opportunity to men and women for expression along their different lines...women...work out a national ideal of domestic life and juvenile training." Protestant evangelical anti-suffragists Catharine Beecher (1800-1878) and political journalist Mary Abigail Dodge (1833-1896), who wrote as Gail Hamilton, argued that women's non-involvement in the flawed political system gave them moral leverage as "outsiders as a form of moral leverage, to exercise their 'influence' with male elites to achieve the reforms they supported." Both received private education, never married, had familial/social connections to wealth, and sought to maintain or limit the power of non-white Americans as they also eased men's fears of women's power grab by emphasizing distinct power sectors for men and women—women bargaining for control over domestic affairs. Their opinions were amplified through publications, speaking engagements, and petitions, combined with resources available to them because of their family's wealth or connections. White women reformers benefited from their activism in this sphere because it allowed them to exercise political influence and increase public visibility in a realm they claimed authority over because of their feminine role as nurturers of culture—they expanded their arena in such a way that did not threaten the perception of them as primarily homemakers and mothers.¹⁸

Women with Influential Connections

Catharine Beecher (1800-1878) was an Anglo-Saxon Protestant with influential family connections through her father, Congregationalist minister Lyman Beecher. She wrote and lectured that women should have full control over domestic life, conceiving of the family as a state-like unit: Woman's primary duties to society were to act as a positive influence on her children, while providing reprieve from the aggressive and competitive "world of urban work" for her husband. However, her fiancée died, and she never married or experienced married life as a wife first-hand. She sought increased power and influence for women as well as physical changes in home life, including architecture and technology. Beecher espoused an influential gender stereotype regarding women's ability for self-sacrifice and therefore moral superiority to men. Women were to have two roles: "home minister" and skilled "professional." She supported material consumption of goods for economic vitality—In *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841), she argued the Christian woman was "a professional consumer promoting 'industry, virtue, and religion.'"¹⁹

Beecher authored specific domestic standards and guidelines. She wrote *The American Woman's Home* with her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1869, which espoused authority on woman's roles, housing design, and organization within the household. However, contrary to her espousal of women as solely capable of household management, some labor (such as laundry or cooked food service), would ideally be minimized through the employment of a few women whose sole dedication to that task would be more efficient than individual housewives each

doing their own. (Her views, although not specified, relied on some external source of domestic labor—most likely women of color.)²⁰

In *Educational Reminiscences and Suggestions*, Beecher idealized women's actions as guided by principles that are "kindly, generous, peaceful and benevolent." She sought respect for professionalized roles of teacher and mother, with homemaking guided by scientific knowledge and training (domestic science). Rather than cooperative distribution of this work, women of color lacking the respectable home were to primarily fulfill domestic duties while Protestants like herself would have opportunities for certain professional careers, within limited sectors.²¹

Mrs. A. J. Graves also espoused woman's duties to God and home. She was among one of many wealthy women who believed that women's moral character was superior to men's moral character, [whose strengths lie in business and politics]. Men and women should act together as helpmates within a family, with the woman providing guidance and governance in the home, where man and child found refuge and growth. She warned against "organized associations," which were in her mind so widespread that she described their "universality" as "one of the most striking characteristics of the times." Graves critiqued the effects of association as inefficient compared to the effects of home-life on individual behavior as well as and social change. Also, association could lead to irrational group thought and action, which could spread, "as if by contagion." She encouraged the "philanthropist, patriot, and Christian" to achieve "beautiful systems of harmony, order, and just proportion."²²

Alternative Views of Women's Roles

Mary Abigail Dodge (1833-1896) encouraged women to "hire servants to care for their children so that they could continue to read, ride, play music, and cultivate themselves." Additionally, women should be accorded certain benefits because, as a whole, they are vital for reproduction of future generations. Children had the right to a "strong and vigorous childhood," which was influenced by the quality of life of women as mothers.²³

Lucretia Mott (1793-1880), Quaker abolitionist expressed in 1850 that women should be allowed by opportunities to develop her abilities: Those physical and mental limitations described as "God-given" or "natural" were the result of "neglect and mismanagement."²⁴ Frances Willard (1839-1898) helped form the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1874, became president in 1879, and was an active suffragist. Rather than egalitarian arguments, she emphasized the elevated status of Christian women and her contribution to civilization as arguments for suffrage. "For sexual equality to become possible...all men must adopt 'a white life,'" which included a "lifelong abstinence from alcohol, sexual chastity before marriage, and sexual monogamy within marriage." In her view, the United States and Great Britain were superior because of their Evangelical Protestant bases. "The fire of woman's ballot will burn out the haunt of infamy [houses of prostitution] and burn in the single strand of a white life for two." Education was particularly important to improve the morals of 'inferior races,' particularly in light of general male enfranchisement. She contributed to widespread fear of illiterate and alcoholic black men as particularly threatening to women.²⁵

Women and American Indian Affairs

In response to the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890, Frances Willard suggested that bloodshed would have been averted if the Indian Reform movement, led by women, had been in charge. Recorded in *Transactions of the National Council in the United States*, 1891, she described “our bewildered Indians of the plains” as a “pitiful remnant of a race cut down as ruthlessly as the forests of the Adirondacks.”²⁶

Willard sought to alter Indian women’s role—believing that their many labor-intensive roles were an indicator of their subjugation and therefore the slower evolution and barbaric state of their race. Additionally, she and other reformers sought to induce practices of individual property and home ownership, as well as monogamous relationships among America’s Indian populations. In order to assimilate Indians successfully, their women must be “emancipated.” “Squaws” were perceived as “overworked, prematurely aged,” and no longer valued sexually by their husbands.²⁷

Organizations with strong female influences—including the Women’s National Indian Association (WNIA) founded in 1879, and smaller organizations such as the Woman’s Union Missionary Society of America for Heathen Lands—believed white women had the moral and social responsibility to impose their vision of home life, duties, and education on Indians for their own improvement in quality of life, until men were assumed their rightful role as protectors. The WNIA was created in the wake of ongoing violent resistance to assimilation, of which they were not proud: They believed they could take over assimilation in a less violent and confrontational manner by educating and aiming policies at women and children. In doing so, they reinforced the notion that women, regardless of race, were primarily responsible for cultural reproduction; therefore, change in cultural practices must involve them. Indian women were sent to boarding schools—notably Hampton in Virginia and Carlisle in Pennsylvania—to be trained as homemakers, teachers, and missionaries. Meanwhile, males were taught “agriculture, cattle raising, and mechanical skills.”²⁸

Amelia Quinton, Alice Cunningham Fletcher (1838-1923), and Sara Kinney were active in WNIA, and were instrumental in the division of reservation lands into individual allotments for nuclear families—a blow to community life and extended family structures. They were instrumental in circulating petitions that would eventually lead to the Dawes Act (1887), introduced by a Massachusetts Senator in 1882. Their goals included adoption of whites’: log cabin homes, farming, English language, Christianity, women’s domestic roles, and dress and grooming. A short haircut symbolized assimilation. Women acknowledged that previous efforts at assimilation struggled because they were aimed at changing men’s behaviors. For example, men were resistant to farming because the hoe was considered a woman’s tool in many Indian societies.²⁹

Alice Fletcher, who lived among the Omahas for many years, contributed to the newly-developing field of anthropology, and was also instrumental in the “severalty policy” that granted citizenship to Indians allotted private land holdings: Many of whom, including a group of twelve Omaha families called ‘the Council Fire’ resisted and were forced to sign a mark indicating acceptance. Mark (in Newman) suggests that around a quarter of the population supported allotment, another third actively opposed, and the remaining followed suit. Her policy resulted in massive reduction in land previously set aside as reservations, transferring excess land to white settlers. In the case of Omaha reservation, 50,000 of the 181,400 acres (28%) of the land was sold to the government and made available to white settlers. Wives did not receive

land. The Omaha and Nez Perce allotments specified that heads of families receive 160 acres, single men and women over age 18 receive 80 acres, while children under the age of 18 were reserved 40 acres. Fletcher rationalized that excess land and isolated lifestyles inhibited progress towards industriousness and civilization.³⁰

Fletcher was active not only in women's organizations and Indian reform organizations (WNIA, Indian Rights Association, Lake Mohonk Conferences of Friends of the Indian): She exerted influence through the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, and federal entities including the Bureau of Ethnology, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, and Congress. During the economic depression of the mid 1870's, while she was in her late 30's and early 40's, she supported herself financially by lecturing about Indians. In 1885, she wrote lengthy report on US policies, *Indian Education and Civilization* for the Senate, and was a special agent in charge of allotment among the Winnebago of Nebraska (1887-1889) and Nez Perces in Idaho (1889-1893). Upon receiving a lifelong fellowship at the Peabody Museum in 1890, Newman describes her as the "foremost woman scientist in the nation" due to her writing and research involving the plains Indians (especially Omaha and Nez Perces).³¹

While she saw collective property and tribal policies as restricting individual initiative, she noted that Indian women performed a great share of work, controlled their own property, and were instrumental in the "economic well-being of the family." Despite Indian women's influential roles, she sought to modify them to emulate white women's domestic roles, believing this would advance the Indian "race" towards civilization. She recorded and interpreted Sitting Bull (around 1881), in which she alluded to the particular loss for women of their traditional roles. Women had been "the tillers of the soil and now the men must take their work in the change of life."³²

Effects of Urbanization

Around 1850, nearly half of the people living in New York City, New Orleans, and San Francisco were either non-white or born in another country. San Francisco had a small but visible group of African Americans, while nearly 8% of its population in 1870 was made up of thousands of Chinese, many seeking relief from the British Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860), peasant rebellions such as the Red Turban rebellion (1854-64), and class and family feuds within villages. Women were very uncommon in California during the Gold Rush: By 1870, there were still three males for every two females. In contrast, Tera Hunter found that the black populations of most American cities (not including the West) in the late 1800's consisted of more females than males. In Philadelphia, almost half of the black female population was employed, and nearly a quarter of the city's black women were the "heads" of their households, which often included multiple generations.³³

A third of San Francisco's jobs in 1870 were in manufacturing, and labor struggles during the ensuing decade contributed to an oppositional and contested public sphere. By 1880, trade and transportation made up 30% of the jobs in San Francisco.³⁴

Urbanization and growth of immigrant populations in 1870s and 1880s created new spaces where people from different backgrounds increasingly came into contact and white elites sought to create social order through creation of "urban bureaucracies, police forces, and social welfare organizations."³⁵

Prior to the institution of zoning laws, different types of land uses (shops, factories, and residences) could be found next to each other. Between 1825 and 1880, cities had few of the

political and physical boundaries to create “separate spatial zones” that flourished after automobiles, suburbs, and electronic communication became more common. However, residential segregation based on ethnicity did exist in San Francisco: Chinese, blacks, and Italians lived in their own respective neighborhoods. By the 1880s, the people Ryan describes as “flaneurs cum journalists” were “imposing cognitive patterns on the heterogeneous spaces of the city.” Journalists, editors, and a few reformers were active in creating narratives of difference and danger.³⁶

Fear and Proper Public Behavior

Beginning around 1840, more prominent 50s, “professional cartographers” warned men and women of threats from beggars, vagrants, skilled thieves, and prostitutes. Papers included “dire warnings” about females: Numerous bodies of men found floating in the water were reported to have been in the company of females in either “hells of the metropolis or in the dance-halls” prior to their death. Girls and women with few economic resources—making up the poor and working classes—were distrusted for attempting to victimize respectable men. These women (like many non-Anglo Protestant populations including American Indians) were described as “savage,” and frequently associated with disease and contamination: “She infested, polluted, defiled, repelled, and sickened.” Vigilante groups raided and burned suspected Chinese brothels in San Francisco in the 1860s and 1870’s.³⁷

The reports of when and what people should fear were not necessarily accurate reflections of threats. While stories of men experiencing violence in the streets abounded, women were more likely to experience violence and crimes inside the tenements. The most commonly perceived threat to middle and upper class women on the streets was a “violation of their delicate sensibilities.” Ryan cites an extreme example that occurred in 1855 in San Francisco: An organ grinder was arrested and fined a significant \$50 for frightening women and children by displaying “a monster in the shape of a deformed indian [sic].” Laws were created to punish insulting a woman in the streets. These warnings about crime reveal the divergent experiences of women of different classes: dangerous harlots and thieves of the poor and working classes threatened the endangered, innocent, and vulnerable lady from the middle and upper classes. Black and Chinese women garnered particular contempt. The lack of distinct gender differences in behavior and appearance among lower classes and racial minorities (e.g. Chinese in San Francisco) also offended journalists rooted in Victorian standards.³⁸

Municipal police forces were created in San Francisco, New York, and New Orleans by the middle of the 1800s. Their main function was to control public behavior: Most arrests were related to undesirable public behavior including drunkenness and “boisterousness or indecent behavior.” Women’s behaviors were also closely monitored for signs of prostitution, or otherwise acting outside the bounds of acceptable behavior for women in public. Gambling, solicitation, and “circus acts” were criminal acts of disorderly conduct in New York City in the early 1800s. Needham recounts a 1926 *New York Times* headline that reported a “woman who danced the Charleston on public streets was arrested.”³⁹

Regardless of status, Ryan suggests that women in public in the 19th century were “subject to intense male scrutiny” and “sexual objectification.” They were compelled to dress in certain ways, and shopping was one acceptable reason for them to be out in public. These two aspects combined to increase women’s commodity consumption.⁴⁰

In nineteenth century New York City, white middle and upper class women carried out an early urban renewal project when they converted an old brewery into an evangelical mission. “Benevolent women” built many other related institutions to improve the plight of poor residents: orphan asylums, industrial schools, and “homes for the friendless.” Thanksgiving increasingly spurred charitable acts from the middle and upper classes towards immigrant “hapless” children; however, in order to receive their free meal, they had to conform to their Christian benefactors’ standards of cleanliness and behavior. As part of the ceremonial celebration marking the superiority of those donating their time and money to the charitable reform of children, the children were often made to sing and present themselves to a wealthy audience of financial supporters in order to be deemed worthy. Unworthy poor were excluded or included in such a manner as to highlight the differences between those reformed and those who had little hope of adopting the civilized Christian life promoted by the Protestant middle-class actors.⁴¹

Caroline Dall saw middle-class women’s volunteer work as further undermining working-class women’s struggle for higher wages. She argued that equal wages would be achieved when men “respect women as human beings, consequently as laborers.”⁴² Female abolitionists of this period often compared women’s status to those of slaves. The institution of marriage was also compared that of slavery, particularly when women were not able to own property nor seek divorce. Anti-prostitution proponents referred to prostitution as “white-slavery,” while interviews with some women found that payment for sexual activities allowed them more freedom and a better quality of life than their other alternatives.⁴³

Construction of Public v. Private Spaces

Mary P. Ryan explains that the modern Western gender system presumes that social space is either public or private: Men are allocated public space while women are restricted to private space. However, women have been instrumental in the evolution of urban public space in America. While wealthy and connected native-born Anglo Saxon Protestant women faced their own barriers to engagement, working-class women of other nationalities were extremely marginalized—their influence is more subtle, or evidenced in the restrictive responses their behaviors evoked in those holding political and economic power at the time.

During the first quarter of the 19th Century, America experienced a “spirit of publicness” after endorsing “popular sovereignty, demand[ing] public accountability, and adopt[ing] ‘universal’ white manhood suffrage.” Public meetings and a strong, growing press contributed to the communication of “urban culture” via lectures, entertainment (“amusements”), and elaborate public ceremonies. However, the public sphere was challenged to integrate the diverse populations in places such as New Orleans, New York City, and San Francisco between 1825-1880. Between 1825-40, semi-public and public institutions were restricted primarily to men: Women who utilized public restaurants, cafes, coffeehouses or amusements such as theaters were labeled “harlots,” or “public women.” Although being labeled “public” was an honor for men, it was degrading for women.⁴⁴

Foreign male visitors were astonished by women’s very public presence in the streets of Boston and San Francisco (contrary to the dominant narratives of American women being confined to the home). Women were visible on urban streets as consumers of products and services, workers, and about half of the vagrant population. Around 1860, one middle-class woman living in San Francisco recorded her frequent travels throughout the city. Sometimes she

traveled by herself; other times, friends, an aunt, or brothers accompanied her. Working class “girls” were described as happily traveling to or from work, gardens, picnics, theaters, or dance halls. Female reformers could also be found traveling alone through the early urban environment pursuing charitable undertakings. However, marriage and motherhood usually brought about a more restricted social circle and reduced public outings for women.⁴⁵

Based on a visit to America in 1830-31, French nobleman Alexis de Tocqueville perceived American women as being more independent when single, and more restricted when married than European women: “Long before an American girl arrives at the age of marriage, her emancipation from maternal control begins; she has scarcely ceased to be a child when she already thinks for herself, speaks with freedom, and acts on her own impulse.” He described the American girl as aware of worldly dangers, but moving about without fear because she believes herself strong and self-reliant. She has been “armed” with religion and reason to “defend [her] virtue.” Yet, after marriage, public opinion restricts women to a “narrow circle” of domestic life, and “forbids” otherwise. De Tocqueville attributes this confining view of marriage to Americans being “puritanical people” and a “commercial nation.” Women “voluntarily” shift from freedom to restriction because an acceptance of public opinion regarding a wife’s proper role and expected self-sacrifice. De Tocqueville then describes America as having taken the most concerted effort to delineate separate roles for men and women:

American women never manage the outward concerns of the family, or conduct a business, or take a part in political life; nor are they...ever compelled to perform the rough labor of the fields, or...any of those laborious exertions which demand...physical strength.⁴⁶

During his visit, this nobleman must have travelled among the wealthy, and disregarded the experiences of working-class women, or those non-white women whose lives were filled with strenuous and vigorous activity demanding physical strength and endurance. During the fifty years between 1870 and 1920, there was a five-fold growth of the urban population (10 million to 54 million). City centers were “dominated” by factories, surrounded by large unsanitary tenement districts “housing workers, many of them recent immigrants.” Despite harsh conditions, there was a vibrant street life. Meanwhile, downtown areas also saw the rise of “lavish” shopping districts and “exclusive” hotels and apartments that were frequented by the growing middle and upper classes.⁴⁷

Women’s Labor

Prior to industrialization, women, men and children contributed their labor to subsistence-oriented farming: spinning wool and flax to make clothes; grinding grain into flour for bread; cooking; making soap and candles; raising animals; and gardening. Physically-demanding tasks requiring strength, endurance, balance, and coordination included: drawing water from a well and carrying it to the home, chopping firewood, cooking over an open fire with heavy iron cookware, maneuvering heavy blocks of ice, draining an icebox, doing laundry by hand, and handling buckets of scraps or slop. Prior to 1840, the household often served as a place for production, retail sales, professional practice, and open socializing beyond the immediate family.⁴⁸

The division of labor (especially the broad array of tasks described as “domestic”) by gender, race, and class were prominent issues debated during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and will be elaborated throughout this chapter. The issue of labor division informed how women sought change within the physical home as well as seeking alternatives through cooperative housekeeping. In Philadelphia and Atlanta (and likely throughout the US East of the Mississippi in the mid-to late 1800s), in addition to agricultural labor, black women performed strenuous domestic work, which included live-in and live-out general housework, many tasks associated with meals or laundering, child care, and cleaning, as well as similar tasks provided for business entities such as restaurants, etc. In the West, the shortage of women created an opening for Chinese men to pursue laundry and food-related services from farming to restaurant work and cooking. Although Chinese men likely did not share a view of their work as “domestic” women’s work, hostile gold miners and settlers simultaneously employed and condemned Chinese men as effeminate for carrying out these tasks.⁴⁹

Historian Dolores Hayden describes two major effects of industrialization on housewives during the 19th and early 20th centuries: While many tasks remained, some household labor was replaced through purchase of manufactured goods; meanwhile, women were more acutely aware of their inability to participate in a market economy when they lacked financial resources. Money replaced the ability to barter for goods and services. With industrialization, women began to purchase rather than make items, especially fabric, soap, candles, and canned food. Women earned wages in textile mills and commercial laundries, shops, or other people’s homes providing domestic services.¹⁹ In 1870 women made up a third of the work force in New York and New Orleans. In San Francisco, they constituted one sixth of the work force.³² Eventually, suburban homes would come to allot more space for the “consumption and display of manufactured goods.”⁵⁰

Azel Ames wrote *Sex in Industry: A Plea for the Working-Girl* in 1875, in which he described factories in Massachusetts where women worked extremely long hours in poorly ventilated rooms, with loud noise and heat. Access to restrooms was insufficient and breaks were restricted. In addition, their wages were very low, even below those of male industrial laborers. He argued for increased men’s wages so that women would not be exposed to de-civilizing conditions that could be detrimental to fertility while also creating animal sexual appetites, such as those seen in the tropical climates.⁵¹

The transition from rural to urban living resulted in women becoming more isolated as men entered the labor market, children attended school, and rural social networks and connections to extended family members were disrupted. The woman’s sphere was confined to the physical boundaries of the private home, buffered from the cash economy. Sarah Josepha Hale wrote in 1832: “Our men are sufficiently money-making. Let us keep our women and children from the contagion as long as possible.”⁵²

In 1890, less than five percent of married women worked outside of the home; however, it is difficult to discern if her sources account for non-white women. In 1900, seventy percent of housewives did all of their own household work (with industrialism, fewer women chose domestic work and more entered industrial occupations). In *Seven Days a Week* David Katzman describes oppressive conditions to which housewives subjected their domestic servants between 1870-1930. The “servant question” highlights issues of race in the context of early material feminist reformers. In response to objectionable behavior by their employers, servants often quit unexpectedly or would perform other small acts of rebellion, prompting women such as Catharine Beecher to seek professionalization and live-out solutions to the “servant problem”

discussed by Catharine Beecher and other wealthy female writers of the era. Referring to odious housework, Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote in 1903: ‘By what art, what charm, what miracle has the twentieth century preserved *alive* the prehistoric squaw.’⁵³

Socialized Domestic Work and Cooperatives

Efforts to create socialized domestic work took several forms between 1834 and 1926. Producers’ and consumers’ cooperatives, business and non-profit ventures, and nationalized industry were proposed for neighborhoods, industrial workplaces, or at the city or national level. Producers’ cooperatives were geared towards housewives while consumers’ cooperatives (community dining clubs, settlement houses) attracted “professional women and political activists.”⁵⁴

Between 1830 and 1860, consumer cooperatives spread throughout New England and the Midwest. Following the Civil War, women formed many cooperatives. Protective unions provided benefits in case of sickness, old age insurance, cooperative grocery stores, and also supported combined housing. They saw formation of producer’s cooperatives, along with regional trade and transportation, as pathways to social reorganization and an alternative system to capitalism. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were middle-class feminists involved with the Working Women’s Association in New York. Melusina Fay Peirce drew on cooperative efforts for both production and consumption, where women would be able to choose which work they would like to help produce, and what items or services she would consume from other women’s cooperative labor.⁵⁵

Increased Public Visibility and Reform Efforts

The final decades of the 19th century were marked by women’s increased public visibility, academic participation, and social reform efforts. Women’s increased engagement in public life was intimately influenced by the “laissez-faire principles of social Darwinism” promoted by “politicians, businessmen, educators, and scientists” during that time. Designating other races as inferior created space for women to expand their sphere of opportunities at the same time corporate and monopolistic capitalism created huge disparities in wealth²⁹—much of which allowed the white women supported by capitalist wealth and/or family connections (e.g. Catharine Beecher and Charlotte Perkins Gilman) to pursue their efforts.⁵⁶

Prior to the Civil War, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, along with other suffragists (Lydia Maria Child, Angelina and Sarah Grimke, Susan B. Anthony, Julia Ward Howe, etc.) compared woman’s state of bondage in patriarchal marriage to that of slaves: “treated as property rather than individuals...denied personal and political rights...experienced conditions of subjection, sustained through physical coercion.” The passage and ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments,⁵⁷ which granted citizenship to all former slaves and the right to vote to any (male), regardless of his race, color, or previous slave status marked a transition in women’s activism for involvement in decision-making. After the Civil War, as these same women saw black men enfranchised and granted citizenship while they remained excluded, several-as suffragists-sought to differentiate themselves based on white racial superiority.⁵⁸

As an abolitionist, Lydia Maria Child wrote *Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* published in 1836. In it, she blamed blacks’ ignorance as a result of “their unnatural situation,” which could be reversed by freedom. She went on to explain that even if

inferior differences were inherent, this did not justify ‘oppression’ or ‘contempt’ towards them. Lydia Maria Child welcomed Chinese during Exclusion debates: ‘Their industry and patience will prove a blessing to this country.’ She wrote primarily about economical cooking (some on housekeeping) in *The Frugal Housewife* in 1829, and eschewed consumer consumption in the 1840’s. “She took pains to describe the commodities within in natural and immaterial terms...’the stars and the forests, without the slightest wish to appropriate them, and with the feeling that every human being out to enjoy the fairest creations of art, as freely as the sunlight and the star glory, which our Father gives to all.”⁵⁹

Experiments in Domestic Alternatives

Charles Fourier (like John Stuart Mill) believed that women’s emancipation indicated the emancipation of society, saying, “the extension of the privileges of women is the fundamental cause of all social progress.” He saw the private home as a major barrier to enhancing women’s social position; therefore, housing design incorporating collective facilities was fundamental for progress. The phalanstery, or ‘unitary dwelling’—wisely using economic and social resources—would break down barriers between rural and urban; rich and poor; men and women. Residents of a phalanstery would experience an enhanced sense of privacy and independence. “Utopian socialists and feminists celebrated” his vision between 1840-1900.⁶⁰

In response to a visit with Associationists at Brook Farm in 1840, Elizabeth Cady Stanton restated their view that isolated households created barriers to the “best development of human sociability, talent, and culture,” although, she added that part of this stunted development could be attributed to spending time primarily with children and servants. She argued for women’s right to own property and earnings, “self sovereignty,” in relation to divorce and maternity.⁶¹

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony headed the National Woman Suffrage Association; Lucy Stone, the rival American Women Suffrage Society; Aurora H. C. Phelps organized the Order of Equality and Justice, which “welcomed to its secret meetings women reformers of all kinds, including spiritualists and social utopians” and was aimed at working women through involvement with the Labor Reform party. In 1872, Stanton, Anthony, and Phelps sought to create a new national political suffrage party. Stone did not join them.⁶²

After the Civil War and black men were granted the right to vote, the egalitarian struggle for equal rights put forth by female abolitionists and suffragists transitioned to an emphasis on gender differences that relied on a structure of social hierarchy. Stanton addressed the National Woman Suffrage Convention and characterized the “male element as a destructive force, stern, selfish, aggrandizing, loving war, violence, conquest, acquisition, breeding in the material and world alike discord, disorder, disease and death.” In response to suffrage for black male former slaves but not women, she also implored ‘American women of wealth, education, virtue and refinement, if you do not wish the lower orders of Chinese, Africans, Germans and Irish, with their low ideas of womanhood, to make laws for you and your daughters...awake to the danger of your present position and demand that woman, too, shall be represented in the government!’ However, the context of this bitter condemnation of those they previously considered allies after black men were granted the vote and women remained excluded should be noted. She wrote in *Revolution* in 1869 ‘philosophy and science alike point to [white] woman, as the new power destined to redeem the world.’⁶³

Eleven years later, in 1890, her writing presented a greater emphasis on a need for balance in “What Woman Suffrage Means” published in the *Woman’s Tribune*:

Our civilization today is strictly masculine, everything is carried by force and violence and war, and will be until the feminine element is fully recognized, and has equal power in the regulation of human affairs. Then we shall substitute co-operation for competition, persuasion for coercion, and individual sovereignty for absolute authority.⁶⁴

Marie Howland sought development of a “Social Palace,” and was involved with the Topolobampo project. She maintained that isolated families left insufficient “time for leisure and freedom from care.” Additionally, children would not achieve development as a whole person, or “integral growth,” because of a lack of socialization.⁶⁵

An additional benefit of communitarian socialist efforts was the specialization and division of household labor. Within the domestic industries, one was taught many skills: “gardening, preserving, cleaning, baking, cooking, ironing, gathering herbs, and caring for children.” Domestic work was valued equally with agricultural and industrial duties. All men and women were expected to contribute a certain number of hours of labor each day (with rotation expected). Commonly agreed upon standards were established for each work area. Oneida girls, for example, were instructed to stop playing with their dolls: A girl should learn to be a person before learning to be a mother.⁶⁶

By pooling resources, they were able to invest in or create more “sophisticated labor-saving devices” such as heating, lighting, and sanitation technology that would improve quality of life through good health and lightened domestic labor. Communitarian communities created or improved upon numerous laborsaving devices. Shakers created the clothespin, an improved washing machine, double rolling pin, conical stove, flat broom, removable window sash and window-sash balance, round oven, rotating oven shelf, cheese press, apple peeler, etc. The Oneida Community also created many new devices, and encouraged innovation through the rotation of jobs every few months so skills and knowledge could more easily spread and be useful in new areas. Improved efficiency, resources, and skills allowed some communities to generate revenue by providing their services to non-community members i.e. a communal kitchen serving as a restaurant, a sewing room selling clothes, taking in laundry, or even living in and running a hotel.⁶⁷

During the last two decades of the 19th Century, other socialists and feminists such as Edward Bellamy, August Bebel, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels—who drew on different theoretical bases—also predicted socialized domestic work arising from industrialization and collective technology. Material feminists foresaw collectivization of household work and childcare would shape living environments and correspond with physical changes to the urban environment. They saw the drudgery of household labor, and believed that collectivized domestic labor would clearly outperform the inefficiency of individual women working alone in their homes. They sought pay for housewives’ domestic work.⁶⁸

Growing Gaps in Education and Public Celebrations

Following the Civil War, middle-class women began accessing higher education at a growing rate. Between 1870 and 1880, their presence quadrupled to forty thousand. Whereas in 1870, less than five percent of female students attended school with males, by 1880, nearly a quarter attended mixed-gender institutions.⁶⁹

Postbellum middle class involvement in public celebrations declined, with the rise in private holiday activities. Parades became more focused on “spectacle than communal rite.” Participation was less inclusive: Now parades were primarily made up of the military, Irish, and

working classes: The remaining people were expected to observe passively rather than participate. The withdrawal of the Protestant middle class “nativists” from public ceremonies after 1850 reduced support for public events. This shift from participant to spectacle watched by a passive audience was also seen in theater audiences. Beginning in the 1870’s, women contributed their point of view by creating banners that included their own messages and symbols, which they presented—sometimes accompanied by a speech—to marching bands or other male groups participating in the public events.⁷⁰

Semi-Public Spaces and Large Parks

Starting in the 1870s, “semi-public” spaces including urban parks, theaters, department stores, and sanitized “places of commercial amusement” offered additional spaces for women and men outside of the home. These spaces carried with them norms of use and behavior, thus making them more acceptable for women to enjoy. Department stores, hotels, food establishments, and theaters undertook special efforts to attract women. Around the mid-1800’s, public institutions including libraries, transportation services, and post offices added separate facilities for women. A major impetus for the creation of the first large urban parks in New York City and San Francisco, which Ryan describes as “the boldest public intervention in the private use and allocation of city space,” was to “accommodate ladies.”⁷¹

Frederick Law Olmstead, landscape architect and urban planner during the mid- to late 1800’s, saw industrial capitalism as a way to transition from ‘barbarism’ to “municipal socialism.” ‘Sewers, gutters, pavement, crossing, sidewalks, public conveyances, and gas and water works’ were technological innovations that Olmstead attributed to a more appealing urban environment that would liberate the household (from the demands previously experienced by isolated rural homes): Public sidewalks and public kitchens were both included in this vision. Fourier, a communitarian socialist, influenced Olmstead.⁷²

Communitarian socialists sought to “end the isolation of the individual farmer, industrial worker, and housewife, improving efficiency through some division of labor while keeping all individuals involved with all three areas of work. They promoted the idea of equality in wages and better work environments, although women—in practice—earned fewer wages and worked primarily (most seemingly by choice in most communities) in “domestic industries.” However, the shift from isolated housework to social labor may have been a benefit: Shaker women sang jokingly about their duties as they worked, and kitchens became social centers for information within communities. Associationists identified isolated households as inefficient, wasteful, and ‘untrue to the human heart.’ They emphasized gaining additional benefits of “privileges and privacy’ through Association.⁷³

A Patrician wariness of the rapidly arising “immoral cities” fueled by industrialization and migration prompted the creation of urban scenic parks between 1850s-1880s. They clamored to create urban scenic parks to assimilate and instill virtuous morals of rural life among the working-class European immigrants rapidly populating cities. The same year as the Massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890, bison were brought to the newly constructed Golden Gate Park in San Francisco as a living memorial to the demise of the Western frontier.⁷⁴

Large urban scenic parks were also seen as ways to improve health through improved air and water quality. San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park was created partly in response to a desire to reduce the sand and dust blowing from the western part of the city. Six and a half million

public dollars were used to create Golden Gate Park: Trees and other greenery transformed sand dunes into an area featuring lakes and lawns (meadows).⁷⁵

Reformers later looked to smaller, more dispersed district parks, playgrounds and community centers to create unity, consensus, and promote social stability. These parks and community centers as “moral spaces” sought to either reform or enhance the quality of life for the changing urban population of immigrants and the industrial working-class, which were components of the “immoral” city.⁷⁶

Historian Robert Weyeneth describes urban parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers originally conceived of as “contrived environments with didactic purposes.” Immigrants’ forms of recreation were rejected; moral spaces were created to substitute unfamiliar recreation and activities for those preferred by Reformers. Sobriety, sexual restraint, and “industrious pursuit of self-improvement” were desired (to replace frivolous entertainment and gambling). The concern over undesirable urban values also contributed to the removal of 90,000 urban youth from New York to Midwestern farms between the 1850s and the end of the century by Charles Loring Brace through the Children’s Aid Society.⁷⁷

Ten years after its completion, designer Olmstead was satisfied that New York City’s Central Park was fulfilling its goal of ‘harmonizing and refining’ crude immigrants: It made people more courteous and self-controlled. Many parks supporters sought to design parks so as to shape values and behavior: reduce “working-class drinking, assimilate immigrants, and control crime.”⁷⁸

The San Francisco Park Commissioners described intended park users as “respectable and well-behaved adult[s],” “ladies and children, ‘who wish to enjoy themselves in a home-like manner,’ the “poorer classes...[living] adjacent to the park,” and “gentlemen who wish to speed their horses.” By providing spaces with restricted behaviors deemed “boisterous” or “indecent,” Golden Gate and Central Park were viewed as suitable for women. Special areas, including playgrounds and lawns, were designated—via signage—as places for women, or children and “parents and guardians” only. Meanwhile, the presence of women and children was viewed as a way to temper men’s otherwise boisterous behavior. Initially, these parks were difficult to reach for many lower and working class families that did not happen to live nearby; therefore, those with wealth and access to horses (and later, cars) were the primary users. Family picnics, quiet walks, and respectable concerts were desired uses.⁷⁹

After Central Park opened in 1858, thousands of women took advantage of the space for exercise and social interaction, even in the cold winter weather. While ice skating was segregated by sex for the first few years, women quickly left the confines of the ‘ladies pond’ and joined boys and men in the public rinks. The Yankee benevolent associations and German gymnastic societies hosted athletic competitions among urban women in the late 19th Century. Pedestrian and horse races included women grouped into categories by age or marital status.⁸⁰

Shifting Narratives of Progress: Social Darwinism

By the 1890’s, a shift in the discourse concerning cities began to take place with the rise of Progressivism. The emphasis on individual responsibility guided by common morality shifted to a concern about the environmental influences on behavior, which was guided by “objective” scientific data. Narratives of progress, science, nature, and evolution influenced women’s actions as they struggled with questions pertaining to the nature of relationships among living beings, power, and purpose. The outcomes of their efforts are evidenced in their notable

presence in shaping the academic disciplines of social work, anthropology, home economics, and physical education. Sociologists, economists, and other academic “experts” drew on statistical evidence or research to validate their calls for legislation and social order. For example, advances in knowledge about venereal diseases dominated the discourse seeking to end prostitution; previous moral exhortations, even those including “disease” were laden with references to the soul. As science and expertise came to dominate the discourse, understandings of evolution, progress, and civilization shaped how Americans perceived race, assimilation, interracial parenting (miscegenation), and human nature in gendered terms.

Subsequently, suffragists employed metaphors of time (backward, forward, progress). In doing so, they created hierarchies and priorities for aspects considered “high,” “up,” “forward,” and “progressing.” Scientific discourse around the natural evolution of humanity in the form of Social Darwinism and eugenics, rationalized dehumanization of people based on their culture, place of origin, or physical features. Thus some feminist writers used the term “women” when they implicitly refer to women of their similar social and economic standing, while others mention “race” to imply the entirety of humanity, the human race.⁸¹

Sexual differentiation indicated higher racial evolution. In the late 19th century, race could be considered biological and cultural: It was fairly stable, but had the potential to change. Contemporary distinctions of ethnic, national, or religious designations (including the conflation of “race, class, culture, religion, and geographic origin”) were, in the 1890s, considered racial descriptors. Thus, Anglo-Saxon Protestants deemed Irish and Italian Catholics, and Jewish people from Eastern Europe as separate races until they were reclassified as “Caucasian” in mid-1900s. Herbert Spencer’s *The Principles of Biology* (1864) and *Social Statistics* (1865) described evolution as producing “social and racial progress,” which would create more advanced civilizations and races. This theory saw gender differences as fundamental to the view of the white race as having the most advanced civilization.⁸²

Social scientists and Social Darwinists contributed to beliefs about “civilized” women’s abilities that influenced their access to education, employment, and physical pursuits. For example, William I. Thomas, a social scientist at the Univ. of Chicago in 1897 utilized biological theories of inheritance and evolution to suggest that civilization brought about more physical differentiation between men and women; thus, “civilized” females were physically more distinct (i.e. weaker) than “civilized” males than “savage” females from “savage” males.²⁹ Some Christians claimed that Christian civilization’s superior treatment of women had led to them being more highly evolved: “more delicate, intelligent, moral, chaste, and refined than women of ‘lower races.’” However, another aspect of this discourse compared women (meaning Anglo-Saxon Protestants) to “primitives,” in that they shared traits of “irrational and slow thinking, intuitive or instinctual approaches to knowledge, religiosity, emotionality, and so forth.” Another popular view posited that women, who had limited “vital power,” risked fulfillment of their primary role as mothers (i.e. reproducers) if they drained their limited vital energy as a young woman by attending college and growing intellectually.⁸³

Civilized women were expected to be “pious, virtuous, genteel, refined, soft-spoken, well-dressed.” Carl Schurz was against colonization of Cuba, Guam, and Philippines because he worried the climate and soldiers’ miscegenation could diminish positive white racial traits rooted in a Protestant work ethic, democracy, and “bourgeois Victorian sexual morality and gender relations.” The “cult of true womanhood,” named by historian Barbara Welter, defined women’s natural character as: pure, pious, domestic, and submissive. Empathy and spirituality were additional traits assigned to white women, who were supposed to maintain their moral

superiority by being sheltered from the public political world by white men. (White) women missionaries seeking to civilize “primitive women” aimed to make them “more delicate, more passive, more subservient, and more feminine.” Meanwhile, men were viewed as “too violently sexualized, and still lacking advanced forms of male intelligence and emotional restraint.”⁸⁴

Ora Brashere (1902) provides an example of a feminist argument integrating the theory of social evolution: traits and duties of white middle-class women should be elevated from their current devalued state, and be appreciated for their fundamental contribution to civilization. Thus, these women’s “emotionalism, intuition, moral sensitivity, selflessness, altruism” as well as contributions to “childrearing, homemaking, [and] school-teaching” were re-conceptualized as positive assets that expanded America’s civilizing power.⁸⁵

This belief in Social Darwinism and the superior moral development of primarily “native-born” Protestant women fed the discourse accompanying women’s significant involvement in missionary work following the Civil War—their involvement deeply intertwined with American imperialism. Newman asserts that women could colonize peacefully where men used violence. Also, imperialism provided an important discourse for white women who developed new identities for themselves as missionaries, explorers, educators, and ethnographers as they staked out new realms of possibility and political power against the tight constraints of Victorian gender norms.⁸⁶

Most women’s rights advocates before the Civil War were evangelical Protestants or Quakers. Their religious beliefs also greatly influenced their actions. After the Civil War, each major Protestant denomination added auxiliary missionary organizations—created and run by women. The rapid proliferation is illustrated by the Presbyterian denomination alone: Over the course of four decades following 1870, the number rose from 100 to nearly 11,000 women’s auxiliary groups. Women involved in “civilizing work” became “part of the ruling class of the progressive era.” More than 3 million women were involved with the foreign mission movement by 1915—“the largest movement of white women in the US.”⁸⁷

“For the ruling elite of the United States in the late nineteenth century, sexual difference, race, and national power were all causally connected.” White women judged their own “moral status, social progress, and racial development” against what they imagined the lives of the “Indian squaw, and Oriental harem girl, or an African savage” were like. Differences in wealth and resources were attributed to racial superiority or inferiority, and ignored the (often) exploitative actions that created the disparity in material and cultural wealth.⁸⁸

Francis Galton, Charles Darwin’s cousin, wrote about eugenics around 1860-1920s. Supporters of eugenics sought to produce a superior race through restrictions on miscegenation, immigration, and birth control/family planning. Perceptions about the assimilability of Africans, American Indians, and Chinese shifted over time, and are reflected in many aspects of American life, including governmental policy and popular press.⁸⁹

Newman cites questions regarding Africans’ supposedly slow adaptability to changes in climate, geography, and environment. Nathaniel Southgate Shaler (1841-1906) was a social scientist that influenced this discussion when he argued that blacks in America had a slow evolutionary response—an indication of inferiority. He supported separation of the races, and government non-intervention, except to distribute the black population throughout the US.⁹⁰

Lester Ward (1841-1913) theorized about white women’s role as “central, conserving role in the preservation of civilization” since women had less variability and passed down “race traits.” He challenged dominant discourses of the time that held women as slower to evolve, and were thus held responsible for slowing the evolution of the race; his theories would be

popularized by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and play an influential role in different aspects of the “feminist movement.” He thought racial intermixing was inevitable, and condoned males of the superior race reproducing with more primitive females, but warned against white women reproducing with primitive males.⁹¹

The interplay of fears and insecurities based on gender and sex influenced racial segregation, miscegenation, and broad aspects of life in America. This is evidenced in the history of America’s public pools. Here racial integration was a significant factor in the decline of America’s urban public pools. Fear of black men interacting with white women greatly shaped segregation of municipal pools in America. The first municipal baths were segregated by gender; when “family” recreation was promoted at the next generation of leisure resort-type outdoor pools, it created pools racially segregated through policy or violence. Sanitation and fear of disease also fueled racial segregation and the rise of private pools.⁹²

Two female fiction writers around 1860-1880, Mary Lowe Dickinson and Lydia Marie Child, explored the boundaries of race and heritability as they and critiqued racial discrimination based solely on parental race without consideration of appearance and behavior: Those with behavior deemed “civilized” and who appear white should be accepted into society rather than spurned.²⁹ Julia Ward Howe attributed physical racial changes to climate: America’s climate could assimilate Celtic, Saxon, French, and Italian features within two generations.⁹³

May French-Sheldon (1847-1936) inspired many women to envision themselves as explorers and scientists, while she relied on her husband’s wealth to finance elaborate expeditions, including one costing \$50,000 to East Africa in 1891. She emphasized her white femininity by dressing up as a ‘White Queen’ to contrast the inferiority of both male and female Africans—a display also intended for white men to acknowledge women’s power. Little mention was made of the nearly two hundred people she relied on during the three-month trip (except to highlight her management skills). She hired people to carry her and her extensive belongings, as well as soldiers, headmen, and interpreters. Most in her employ were men; however, she did hire several female attendants to indicate her peaceful intentions. With a few exceptions, she described the women as generally a ‘perpetual nuisance.’ She described them as causing disturbances as they desired more food and other items. Porters were paid in cloth and disciplined with flogging.⁹⁴

French-Sheldon’s source of power derived not only from her husband’s wealth, but that of her family. Her father, relying on slave labor, accumulated wealth through sugar, cotton, and tobacco plantations. Prior to her African excursion at age forty-three, she painted, wrote fiction, spent time outdoors, and was physically active. Not too dissimilar from her family’s plantation heritage, she would later attempt to ‘repatriate’ former African slaves in America to work logging timber in Liberia.⁹⁵

In the early 1920s, French-Sheldon lectured primarily in the South, New York and California to “women’s clubs, schools, universities, art galleries, bookstores, and amateur societies.” Her audiences included the Daughters of the American Revolution, Women’s Athletic Club, and Woman’s Press Club. Newman describes “young white college women in the 1920s” as looking up to her as a role model. Although she disparaged harems, she pointed out that African women had economic independence, which white women sought but did not have. Through interactions with “primitive” societies, French-Sheldon, and other self-proclaimed scientists or explorers, experienced different concepts of freedom, power, personal independence, and control over others during a crucial growth period of American Imperialistic discourse.⁹⁶

Professional Women

Between 1890 and 1910, a “new generation of professional women” pursuing home economics and social settlement efforts expanded the concept of cooperative housekeeping put forth by material feminists and utopian writers. They applied principles of democracy and science—marveling at technology—to the management of both home and urban spaces. They were particularly concerned about the rapidly growing immigrant populations living in new dense cities that lacked infrastructure. Frances Willard guided them to ‘make the whole world homelike.’ In regard to suffrage, Newman describes Willard as believing womanly virtues would be particularly beneficial in “solving urban problems of poverty, crime, the assimilation of foreigners, urban mismanagement...”⁹⁷

Social feminists were professional, educated, and considered themselves specialists in nutrition, sanitation, and social welfare. They also addressed issues of housing, health, temperance, and social purity. They sought to create municipal services that would function within a capitalistic society. This was in contrast to the cooperative alternatives to capitalism. Additionally, lay cooperators not trained in business or home economics posed a threat to the successful image of the professional woman’s scientific approaches. Failed efforts cooperation among housewives was attributed to a lack of uniform standards, physical isolation, and inadequate education. Hayden notes that successful cooperative experiments that did not utilize the scientific approaches of social feminists upset professional women more than unsuccessful ones that could did not follow their standards. Professional women oversaw “large-scale institutional kitchens, bakeries, and laundries” in concert with “colleges, hospitals, asylums, prisons, and hotels.” They traded “socialist ideology” for “efficiency” and “professional status” for “sisterhood.”⁹⁸

Ellen Swallow Richards, Instructor of Sanitary Chemistry at MIT was a notable “social feminist.” She was concerned with purity of air, water, and food. She coined the term “oekology” in 1892 as “the science of normal family life,” or “science which teaches the principles on which to found healthy and happy homes.” This later became known as “home economics” and “euthenics,” or the “science of controllable environment.” She promoted public kitchens serving “plain, nutritious Yankee food” utilizing scientific principles and new, industrial technologies.⁹⁹

Although public kitchens struggled through the late 1800’s because of the different food preferences of immigrants, settlement houses were successful at creating urban cooperative housekeeping through the early 1900s. Day care centers, public kitchens, and cooperative housing for industrial workers, servants, and professionals were common features of urban settlement houses.¹⁰⁰

Settlement Movement

Jane Addams (1860-1935) cofounded one settlement: Hull House in Chicago around 1889-1890, when three-fourths of the city’s one million inhabitants were immigrants living in tenements. Addams is one of the few women who are frequently included in books of American urban history of this period, such as Boyer’s. Living conditions in tenements were crowded, dark, with poor air quality and lacking sanitation. Hull House provided housing and services for working women. As the daughter of a banker and politician, she came from a privileged background. Katharine Coman, Wellesley professor, published in the *Southern Workman* (1900)

an article called “The College Settlement,” which critically described a settlement as a “colony planted in a strange land by immigrants from a superior civilization.... Hull House has become a potent force in civilizing of the great city wilderness where it was planted.”¹⁰¹

Hull House offered dance and drama classes, drawing on Delsarte to its residents, but notably for the benefit of the working-class immigrants in the neighborhood. Their kindergarten school was widely used by working mothers who had few childcare options. Youth programming also extended to clubs for young adults. Hull House created a library, gym, and an urban playground, and sought to encourage the City of Chicago to continue to expand access to amenities by transferring ownership and management to the city. They provided housing for men and women, and supported women’s labor union efforts. While their public kitchen utilizing the “scientific” and efficient approaches to nutrition pioneering at the time were thwarted by their immigrant neighbors’ preference for familiar food, their overall success at providing services to their immigrant neighbors informed and inspired many other settlement efforts throughout the country. Hull House residents, combined with the Chicago School of Sociology, contributed a great deal of knowledge and changes in Chicago. They inadvertently contributed to the professionalization of Social Welfare, although one long-time Hull House resident was saddened by this development, stating that at Hull House they believed themselves to be neighbors helping neighbors, not professionals helping “cases.”¹⁰²

Hayden describes Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman as charismatic, witty, and the “most original feminist the United States has ever produced.” She was noted for her integration of suffragist, home economic, and utopian thinking of the time. Hayden describes Gilman’s point of view as a “somewhat conservative” take on material feminism combined with theories of social evolution. She was a popular speaker, particularly among Nationalist Clubs and “other idealistic political groups.” Gilman was proud of her physical strength in response to the Victorian ideal of frailty and dependency. She had a rigorous physical program, got lots of fresh air, and took cold baths in order to enhance her “physical endurance and self-discipline.” As a patient of S. Weir Mitchell diagnosed with neurasthenia, she had first-hand experiences with prescribed rest that would lead her to critique the system in “The Yellow Wallpaper” written in 1891. She attributed middle-class women’s afflictions and weaknesses to restriction within the domestic sphere and lack of contribution outside of the home. She practiced dress reform by forgoing corsets and uncomfortable shows.¹⁰³

Gilman’s father left her mother shortly after her birth, causing them to move nineteen times over the next eighteen years, relying on financial support from friends and family. Among her experiences was one crowded cooperative house that made her particularly skeptical of cooperative living and efforts throughout her life. She would later promote household design that would better suit children’s needs, and enhance privacy. Despite her father’s absence, his Beecher family was influential in her life. She carried on her aunts’ values of spirituality, efficiency, and motherhood despite disagreeing with Catharine Beecher’s emphasis on gender differences. She also benefited from her uncle’s coaching and opportunities arising from his position as a Unitarian minister. Gilman was a boardinghouse keeper in Oakland and settlement worker in the Unity or “Little Hell” Settlement in Chicago in 1895-96. She wrote about a utopian town called Orchardina in California, where there was no private housework. She also envisioned Herland, an Amazonian country ruled by women who socialized their domestic work.¹⁰⁴

Gilman wrote *Women and Economics* in 1898, which was the first of many writings that envisioned women working outside of the home for economic independence while also enjoying

social family lives that did not require full domestic duties i.e. in private kitchen-less homes or apartments serviced by central kitchens, dining rooms, and day care. She envisioned collective gathering places such as libraries, parlors, baths, gyms, workrooms, and playrooms. (This model relies on servants or others to perform domestic work). She was mentored by Helen Campbell, journalist and home economist twenty-one years her senior. Together they organized the Chicago branch of the National Household Economics Association (NHEA). The NHEA was particularly concerned with the “servant problem.” Gilman and Campbell proposed industrial training classes, and sought ways to connect employers, employees, speakers, and teachers. Additionally, they sought to create public kitchen buildings in poor neighborhoods. She rejected Marx’s position on class struggle and identified herself as a “humanitarian socialist,” influenced by Owen and Fourier. “My main interest then was in the position of women, and the need for more scientific care for children.” She also believed that women should focus on the far more important issue of economic independence before worrying about suffrage. She touted the vast business opportunities available in the professionalization of cooking, cleaning, and childcare. Her utopian vision included benevolent capitalism, with entrepreneurs funded by inherited wealth and acting on behalf of the employee’s best interests. She opposed cooperatives created by untrained housewives. She saw domestic industry as a phase, rather than type of labor—all labor was once performed at home, but evolved into labor done elsewhere or by trained professionals. Middle-class women were to enjoy careers as single women or as mothers with jobs that were compatible with motherhood—as managers, entrepreneurs, or chefs. High school graduates, presumably mostly non-white Protestant women, should become trained in domestic science and serve as dishwashers, cleaners, maids, and child care aids: The unpleasant aspects of these duties middle-class women sought to avoid would not be offensive to these trained domestic professionals.¹⁰⁵

Gilman was deeply influenced by Lester Ward’s ideas. She was a proponent of forced menial labor in “industrial armies” for blacks who did not show sufficient signs of civilization; those who adopted Christianity, worked to support a family, and lived a temperate life should be treated as citizens. Similarly to the designation of friendly or hostile among Native Americans, blacks after the Civil War adapted to the situation to varying degrees of satisfaction among White. Gilman’s construction of race included aspects of behavior, so physical traits such as skin color could be transcended if one was educated and acted appropriately. She and Mary Roberts Smith Coolidge were heartened by successful instances of assimilation i.e. “Heathen Chinees,” and used this as a basis for the potential for women to overcome weaknesses attributed to gender at the time: emotionality, inferior reasoning skills, physical weakness. Patriarchy was a remnant of primitive society, which should be eliminated in order to advance the race further. Women needed to be economically independent in order to select the best mate. Gilman and Coolidge saw the home as restricting women’s full development. Gilman was skeptical of “womanly virtues,” and believed in a return to human virtues that did not differ based on inherited gender. As an alternative to housewives responsible for the home, she envisioned other people performing domestic services through public dining halls, and maid and childcare services.¹⁰⁶

Ethel Puffer Howes (1872-1950) was born in Framingham, MA, and earned her doctorate from Radcliff (psychology). Howes (following in Melusina Fay Peirce’s vision) promoted women’s cooperative home service clubs through a specific campaign in 1923 in conjunction with the *Woman’s Home Companion* journal. Between 1926-1931, she spearheaded the Institute for the Coordination of Women’s Interests to advance the campaign for socialized domestic

work, which included a Cooperative Nursery School and Dinner Kitchen. Robert Owen, founder of the first infant school in 1800, who sought to encourage “mutual kindness”, inspired the nursery’s guiding principle.¹⁰⁷

Howes also promoted part-time work opportunities for women to accommodate a balance of work and family responsibilities, supplemented by cooperative efforts to simplify and reduce domestic tasks. Women were especially encouraged to pursue creative careers in writing, landscape architecture, or design—which could be done from home; however, two years of full-time work was recommended before pursuing free-lance work. Emphasis for women should be on “continuity,” as compared to the existing competitive pace for career advancement.¹⁰⁸

Technology and mutual aid were Howes’ suggestions for simplifying the “household mechanism.” In response to a request for letters about their “everyday problems,” housewives identified “isolation, overwork, and depression.” Contrary to advertisements touting household appliances as solving housewives’ problems, Howes noted that labor-saving devices alone would not take care of the entire task e.g. washing dishes or clothes with a machine still required sorting, loading, etc.¹⁰⁹

Howes was later integrated into Hoover’s administration, which was dedicated to single-family homes. While she contributed her thoughts on the importance of child care centers and prepared food services, the Hoover Report of 1931 carried a much different tone than that of Howe’s support of cooperative ventures. The report also identified consumption as a necessary responsibility—placing the role of consumer above the role of citizen.¹¹⁰

Leisure, Dance, and Sexuality

Weyeneth argues that “leisure expressed, and then transcended, the deepening social schisms of the modern city.” Mass urban culture and an “inability of reformers to impose their versions of morality, ultimately undermined the attempt at reform.” Commercial alternatives for recreation proved to be a strong competing force in behavioral standards. Much of the impetus behind urban parks was to provide municipally sponsored and monitored alternatives to commercial entertainment that was viewed as producing undesirable behavior. Parks and their programming were seen as providing a pathway for immigrants to become more American through the adoption of appropriate recreational activities and accompanying values. Among the attractions they sought to replace were the saloon and dance hall.¹¹¹

Women explorers, dancers, and naturalists served as role models, revealing the strength and vigor possible among women, while re-shaping the discourse around nature and human biology. Physical culture arose amidst a deep concern (informed by social evolution theories) for the survival of future generations: The physical ability of both men and women to perform gendered duties (as protectors/providers and mothers of the race) was threatened by industrial production and urbanization.

Dancing in America has a long history of being connected to sexual promiscuity and prostitution. The concern for women’s protection is evident in “unsavory” dance halls, which—along with brothels—were subject to attack by groups of “private citizens” in New York City and San Francisco who sought to rid their cities of sexual vice in the 1870s. In the West in the 1860s, a typical mining town might contain a few general stores, a hotel, a theater, and several saloons and “Hurdy-Gurdy” dance houses. In a Hurdy-Gurdy, gambling, dancing, and alcohol were available, accompanied by live music from a piano, fiddle, or other instruments. Male patrons—predominantly cowboys or miners—paid very handsomely to dance with a woman, or

“Calico Queen.” Each dance cost one dollar, with half going to the woman and half to the proprietor. Due to the acute gender imbalance, the opportunity to interact with a female—“tender and sacred”—was worth the high cost of relaxation and fun. Overall, the dance houses, although rowdy or boisterous, were not overly unruly within the Western context, as some level of decorum was generally maintained. Giordano asserts that within the Hurdy-Gurdys and saloons, some women were both dance partners and prostitutes, but there were also Calico Queens who were strictly dance partners.¹¹²

Interracial mixing also contributed to perceptions of dance halls as particularly unsavory. Establishments where blacks, Indians, new European immigrants, and other working class people danced, ate, drank, and socialized together existed as early as the Colonial Period. Along with the concern about sexual promiscuity was the concern over the forms of dancing that occurred in many dance halls. As opposed to refined waltzes, and acceptable minuets, working class people danced in styles seen as having African influences, or were primitive and animal-like: wiggling the shoulders, shaking the hips, twisting the body, and waving the elbows. Interracial dancing also took place on holidays in “informal and nonjudgmental settings such as an outdoor market square” during the late 18th and early 19th Centuries in cities such as New York and New Orleans. Jigs, Clogs, and the Breakdown were popular; however, an observer describes a circle dance with women slowly moving and waving handkerchiefs at one point at Congo Square in New Orleans, where as many as 600 African Americans gathered to dance on Sundays and holidays.¹¹³

As the middle and upper classes came to acknowledge the importance of leisure (as reflected in Florence Kelly’s essay “The Right to Leisure” published in 1905) dance halls came to be seen as one necessary outlet for working women to counteract the many challenges associated with their daily lives as servants or factory workers. Bishop describes both social and theatrical dance as enabling these “modern” women to “construct a world filled with sexuality and liberation...they redefined the new, liberated woman in connection with leisure and conspicuous consumption.” Working class women in New York City also rode bicycles, attended nickelodeon theater shows, visited Coney Island, and read magazines and novels in their leisure time. Accompanying these forms of leisure were shifts in other such, as dress reform i.e. in order to ride the popular bike, women became more aware and willing to modify their long dresses that would get dirty and possibly cause an accident if it got caught in the bike’s moving components. Ladies’ journals and magazines advertised items such as a “safety skirt fastener” or graphite for the bike chain.¹¹⁴

Swimming in pools, also became a venue for challenging social norms around sexuality and dress. Spectators came to see flesh that had previously been covered extensively in previous generations. A particular image of an American physical beauty (e.g. Gibson Girls) became popularized and commercialized as women’s roles became increasingly associated with that of commercial consumer. Women were put on display to sell products: Ziegfeld’s Follies entertained and complemented the beauty of elaborate costumes and theatrical displays.¹¹⁵

Entertainment: Variety Shows

In the 1850s and 1860’s, variety shows in America were a popular form of entertainment for men; however, the content was not considered appropriate for women or children. Ballet performances were grouped with “leg shows” (often hired for club events or bachelor dinners), where women were assumed to “be at the disposal” of the guests. Thus, becoming a dancer

indicated questionable behavior: Possibilities of future employment in a home or business were thereby limited.¹¹⁶

In 1881, a performer created a show that was considered suitable for a family, and variety shows for the entire family fueled the popularity of vaudeville over the next fifty years. By 1928, it was a prominent form of popular entertainment, attracting an estimated two million people a day to performances across America. As radio and films grew in prominence, demand for live performances diminished as theaters played more films, and some former vaudeville performers transferred their acts to other mediums (such as radio, TV, and movies). The popularity of vaudeville created many opportunities for performers. Acts included music (singing, playing instruments), physical feats (acrobats, tumbling, dancing), magic, and comedy. Skirt dancing was popular for solo female dancers: It combined jigs, clogs, and “formal pseudo-ballet steps.” Ruth Denis, influential in American modern dance origins, began her dance career as a performer and skirt dancer on vaudeville stages. She is known for her interpretations of images and settings from the Ancient Egypt, Hindu, and what was considered the “Orient.”¹¹⁷

Kendall asserts that strong-minded, original female solo dancers (who abjured ballet) became a “prime symbol” of the Modern American Woman at the turn of the century. This New Woman came about “after decades of reformers’ and feminists’ trying to free women’s bodies and minds through spiritual and physical panaceas: dress reform, open air, aesthetic exercise, artistic pursuits.”¹¹⁸

Beginning in the 1890’s, physical culture gained prominence at the same time as an interest in art. Middle class and wealthy women in America had the time, money, and leeway to express individuality: Dancing integrated physical culture with art, and was a vehicle for self-expression. Many “high-spirited modern girls came of age in the 1880s and 90s.”¹¹⁹

Within a few decades, numerous women found employment as chorines in choruses and musical comedies (e.g. Ziegfeld Follies). Most dancers at this period had few financial resources, but came from a “genteel background.” Kendall attributes their entrance into dance performance as primarily out of economic necessity (many were raised by a widowed or deserted mother), and secondly for adventure.¹²⁰

By 1912, concern about the linkage between dance halls and prostitution resulted in the book *From Dance Hall to White Slavery: The World’s Greatest Tragedy* by H.W. Lytle and John Dillon. The book seeks to protect girls and boys through its “thrilling stories of actual accounts” of unsuspecting girls in Chicago who are excited by passions, tricked, or lured into prostitution due to the influence of alcohol and “low dance halls.” The accounts and investigation were overseen by a committee of women, appointed by the mayor of Chicago. While this connection is warranted in many cases, the book acknowledges that dancing in itself need not be an evil; rather, proper settings without alcohol and where moral behavior can be conducted should be sought.¹²¹

Belle Lindner Israels and the New York section of National Council of Jewish Women advocated for dance venues without alcohol in the early 1900s as well. Questionable saloon/dance halls provided three minutes of dancing followed by fifteen to twenty minutes to drink; meanwhile, the owner and employees make those who don’t drink unwelcome. She argued that socially acceptable amusement should be provided for young adults as “modern preventive work...[an] integral part of any social program.” Although she did not foresee the rising popularity of movies with sound, she built upon the playground movement’s concern for sand-piles and spaces for young children, when she stated “...girls...are entitled to innocent relaxation. The moving picture show is on the wane. The skating rink had its day long ago. The

dance is destined to be the next feature in popular amusement. Let us provide it plentifully, safely, and inexpensively.”¹²²

Modern Dance

Near the end of the end of the 19th and early part of the 20th Century, a handful of women gained prominence for their distinctive dance performance styles that reflected important aspects the nation’s history and contributing to American culture in the realms of modern dance, dress reform, physical culture, and self-expression. America’s early modern dancers eschewed ballet as “sterile, restrictive” and irrelevant: Modern dance emphasized individual expression. In creating new lineages of style, many drew on notions of ‘primitive’ cultures for inspiration. Cass attributes women’s dominance in performing and watching modern dance to its emphasis on expression and emotion. Dance was an outlet for the “connections between ideas and their emotions and physical sensations.” During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, American modern dance integrated middle-class values with artistic ideals. Yet, modern dance reflects a trend towards performance aspects of dance, rather than participation in a social activity or ritual. While the modern dance pioneers here certainly were motivated by their emotions and imbued their dance with meaning, their solo careers reflected a gap in cultural reproduction in dance continuity. They did not, for example, grow up into a culture that featured regular group performance of circle or ritual dances, as they would have if they had lived during a previous generation, or within another society.¹²³

Francois Delsarte (1811-1871), a French performer and educator, established a value system for categorizing gestures, which were important reflections of spirituality and expression. His system (intended primarily for stage performance) divided the body into three zones, and was influenced by the Christian notion of the Trinity: The head and neck were valued for their connection to the mind; the heart and torso represented expression of the soul or emotions, and lower limbs were associated with life or vitality (which was mortal and subject to impurity). In addition to designating particular body parts (such as the forehead) as locations for particular types of expression, he proposed meanings for the relationship of movements between body parts (e.g. two body parts moving in opposition was vital, while parts moving in parallel was mental). His exercises and guidelines for pantomime and the use of the torso and upper extremities for expression became widely adopted in Europe and the United States. Therefore, Delsarte’s theories reached many Americans who participated in early modern dance, physical education, entertainment, and public presentation (e.g. preachers). Ruth St. Denis and Isadora Duncan—while not formally trained at a Delsarte school—were greatly influenced by its use of the torso and limbs for dramatic expression.¹²⁴

Loie Fuller (1862-1928) created and patented colorful electrical lights, which shined from above and below onto yards of colorful, moving material worn as skirts, sleeves, and sometimes attached to sticks—all put into motion via her expressive movements of the arms, legs, and an opening and arching chest. Her dance also built upon progressions of movement e.g. begin “undulating the arms,” then continuing with the arms, she would add twirling, dipping backwards, etc. She found great popularity among Europe audiences, and remained there for much of her career after age 30.¹²⁵

Her performances were filled with visual motion: She evoked a powerful, destructive natural force in *Fire Dance*, and in *The Butterfly* embodied another living creature, gifted for the

power of flight and widely recognized for its beauty. The *Lily Dance* entailed a white spiral of silk. Kendall asserts

Everyone said she had captured Nature by technical means—its plantlike and flame like curls and spirals, its tendrily [sic] lines that united everything and wrapped around everything and linked everything in endless growth and decay....They never tired of watching her demonstrate over and over the mysterious, self-renewing, glorious, and terrible *motion* so essential to their modern aesthetic.²⁶

Prior to her lighting innovations, Fuller explored the play of light on silk outdoors in sunlight. Fuller grew up in a small town in Illinois, spoke on temperance as a child using color images of the liver, and performed “through the whole spectrum of nineteenth-century American theater.” Cass describes Fuller as being more concerned about theatrical presence and innovations rather than ritual meaning of her dances, despite describing Fuller as believing herself to be “reviving a primitive dance art that could be traced back thousands of years.” Her dance evokes Tibetan folk dancing that engages long colorful sleeves or skirt dances.¹²⁶

Fuller moved to Paris in 1892 and found highly receptive audiences. She remained in Europe for many years, performing in America thereafter primarily only on tours. Her success and style were witnessed by two young women, who would themselves become well-known for their American dance contributions within a few years: Ruth St. Dennis and Isadora Duncan. All three women sought dress reform, and often danced barefoot or in sandals.¹²⁷

Ruth Dennis (better known by performance name Ruth St. Denis) was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1877 or 1880. As a young girl, she was free to dance outdoors—in fields and near water. Her parents met and lived at Raritan Bay Union during its existence between 1853-56. It was a community comprised of well-known abolitionist and feminist (Quaker) Grimke sisters, Angelina and Sarah, who fled their father’s slave-holding plantation to teach at this utopian community. The school at Raritan Bay Union (Eaglewood) was perhaps the first in the country to include physical education for girls. They participated in indoor calisthenics as well as boating and diving in the bay. Bloomers were adopted here in the 1850’s, when they were first created, an indication of the radical and “freethinking” nature of the community and its members. Raritan Bay Union was one of several utopian communities created in America in the mid-1800’s: Brook Farm (MA), Oneida (NY), New Harmony (IN), North American Phalanx (NJ), Raritan Bay Union (NJ), Mormon towns in the West, Shaker communities in East and Midwest.¹²⁸

Women’s Health: Frail or Robust

While most early American female dancers were Catholic, Ruth St. Denis was Protestant. Her mother’s aesthetic trainings were imbued with spiritual and health (hygienic) intent. Reformers, lecturers, Delsarte “priestesses,” and female pioneer doctors who viewed human physical condition as an expression of spiritual health informed St. Denis’ worldview.¹²⁹ St. Denis’ mother, Ruth Emma Hull, suffered poor health, but was one of five women to graduate from the University of Michigan’s Medical School in 1872. She practiced as a doctor for one year before failing health led her to pursue the “water cure” treatment at Battle Creek, Michigan. Here, women with “nervous prostration” underwent sitz baths, douches, enemas, and cold abdominal presses. Hull was among the wave of numerous women “who aspired to a life of

the mind beyond their frontier mothers' life of toil" suffered poor health according to active spokeswomen. The water cure was created as an alternative to Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's "rest cure." Based in Philadelphia, Mitchell was the most regarded doctor for "women's nervous conditions." He prescribed bed rest, restricted mental exertion (writing, reading), and a bland diet of milk and starchy food. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, excoriated the effects of the rest cure in her novella *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892). As a patient, Gilman followed the instructions to 'live as domestic a life as far as possible, have but two hours' intellectual life a day, and never to touch pen, brush, or pencil again' for three months before coming "so near the borderline of utter mental ruin that [she] could see over." *The Yellow Wallpaper* features a woman restricted to a former nursery located in the attic of a rented home for the summer, where she is to submit to the rest cure, overseen by a well-intentioned husband. The woman becomes obsessed with the pattern of old wallpaper, and eventually tears at it to release a "creeping" woman she believes trapped behind the paper. When confronted, she speaks as if she were the woman released from behind the wallpaper.¹³⁰

Catharine Esther Beecher was one prominent writer about an epidemic of poor health among women in the second half of the nineteenth century. She found that the generation of adult married women in 1850's was in extremely poor health. These women were notably less healthy than the preceding generation, and the decline was increasing at an alarming rate. She asked women from across the country to submit to her the initials of ten married women they knew well enough to surmise their health, and submit to her their initials and condition. Based on her own personal knowledge, and these submissions from two hundred locations, she surmised that most married women were "sickly, delicate, feeble," or invalid.¹³¹

In 1871, Beecher's *Statistics of Female Health* highlighted widespread suffering among women, which affected their families and society. Frailty was associated with cultured life of leisure or higher education. Women reported conditions such as being "delicate, sickly, bilious" and "pelvic disorders, sick-headaches," and "dropsy." While some opposed to women's higher education sought to correlate poor health with unnatural pursuit of mental stimulation, Catharine Beecher and Ruth Hull advocated for physical activity, time outdoors (fresh air and sunlight), nutritious food, and dress reform to improve women's health and vigor.¹³²

Kendall asserts that American women during the 19th century were well known in Europe for "their mindless devotion to [European] fashion" and their ill health. By the 1870's, women's dress often consisted of sixteen layers of clothing over their stomach (drawers, underskirt, balmoral petticoat, dress-skirt, over-skirt, dress-waist, belt). Corsets were made for girls as young as three years old: A girl may wear fifteen to twenty different corsets by the time she reached adulthood. Clothing greatly affected and restricted women's physical activity. Female doctors of the time concluded that corsets and heavy, restrictive clothing could lead to atrophied internal organs and stunted growth from pressure on the solar plexus and glands. Meanwhile, long heavy skirts dragged the ground and picked up mud and germs, particularly threatening before sanitation systems. Wigs contributed to additional heat. Dress reformers argued for clothing that was more in line with women's "natural" shapes and needs. By the 1890's, however, popular styles of dress had changed enough to allow numerous women to exercise and ride bicycles. A fashion revolution from 1910-20s would follow. Amelia Bloomer, well-known for her creation of "bloomers" also spent time at Seneca Falls, New York, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In addition to her innovation of bloomers as an alternative to long dresses that restricted a woman's activities, she sought alternatives to individual homes, proposed a common playroom.¹³³

With Ruth St. Denis, modern American dance grew out of this context and her (somewhat narrow) concern for improving women's condition. Fuller, Duncan, and St. Denis found approving audiences in Europe, while some Americans found their dress too revealing. Cass includes similarities between Denis and Duncan: brief experience with ballet (which did not appeal to them), appreciation of Delsarte, and inspired by both "worldly, sensuous passions" as well as "spiritual visions." Cass describes St. Denis as disciplined (in contrast to Duncan), as evidenced by her early career in commercial theater, begun as a young girl, and lasting ten years. Duncan was inspired by artists and ballerinas; whereas, St. Denis found inspiration in health and spirituality.¹³⁴

Upon seeing a poster advertising cigarettes with an image of Isis, an ancient Egyptian goddess, Denis became infatuated with the "exotic Orient." She sought to evoke the senses and serenity associated with ancient Egypt and Hindu: She created dance works based on her basic knowledge of these cultures gained through images, and limited research at public libraries. By 1906, she had created three well-known pieces: *The Incense*, *The Cobras*, and *Radha*. In the first two, her body emulated the movement of smoke and snakes. In *Radha*, her first piece in this theme, she painted her body brown and portrayed a goddess, who danced "the lesson of physical pleasure and renunciation."¹³⁵

When her solo career waned, she partnered with Ted Shawn and created Denishawn school in Los Angeles. Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey danced with Denishawn. Humphrey had a leading role in *Xochitl*, based on their interpretation of an Aztec legend. Facing financial troubles, Denis and Shawn toured with the Ziegfeld Follies and performed vaudeville shows. Ted Shawn later formed an all-male dance troupe that performed pieces with themes of Native Americans, European workers, Japanese coolies, warriors, and negro spirituals.¹³⁶

St. Denis saw dance as a form of worship, and later in life (1964), at a lecture given at a church in New England, she noted that dance allows one to become in harmony with the universe. The East recognized this, and she extolled Christianity to do the same: Her vision for the future is the transformation of the parking lots of all denominations into "dance floors for rhythmic choirs."¹³⁷

Isadora Duncan's experience was grounded in westward expansion. She grew up hearing stories about her Irish grandmother, who crossed the plains as a young woman, and gave birth in a wagon. Duncan (1878-1927) was born in California in the San Francisco Bay Area circa 1877. Cass describes her lifestyle as "naïve, idealistic, and undisciplined." She advocated for dress reform (adopting gauzy tunics), education of children to "build a free society," human dignity, admiration for the newly-formed Soviet state, and free love. In the early 1900's, Duncan took the stage barefooted, wearing a flowing tunic, which exposed one breast: She rebelled against corsets and ballet technique, and sought to bring relief to "downtrodden workers."¹³⁸

She references Walt Whitman in her "Vision of America dancing," which would be more proper than jazz which evoked sensual convulsions of the "primitive savage." Her vision emphasized upward lift: She envisioned an upward pull representing the "soul striving upward, through labour to harmonious life...the living leap of a child springing toward the heights,...future accomplishment,...a new great vision of life that would express America." She disparaged the "ape-like convulsions of the Charleston," and the "inane coquetry of the ballet," as well as Swedish gymnastics and bodily culture taught in schools. "America Dancing" was represented as a woman standing on one leg on top of the Rockies, with both hands stretched from ocean to ocean and head back... "forehead shining with a Crown of a million stars." She spoke out against Henry Ford's preference for the "old-fashioned" Waltz, Mazurka, and Minuet

over modern dance, where dancers would take “great strides, leaps, and bounds, with lifted forehead and far-spread arms, to dance the language of our Pioneers, the Fortitude of our heroes, the Justice, Kindness, Purity of our statesmen, and all the inspired love and tenderness of our Mothers.” Cass quotes Duncan’s *My Life*, in which she described her “voluminous, vast, swelling like sails in the wind” movements as carrying her “onward and upward” in response to the music.¹³⁹

Duncan was raised solely by her mother since birth (along with two brothers and a sister). She came to share her mother’s love of music and humanistic atheism. Her early dance was directly inspired by nature: emulating trees moving in the wind and rolling waves. She performed to famous classical music, such as Chopin’s piano compositions or Beethoven’s symphonies. She also found inspiration in ancient Greek art. Irma Duncan, one of her adopted dancers, wrote “The dancer of the future will be one whose body and soul have grown so harmoniously together that the natural language of that soul will have become the music of the body. The dancer will not belong to a nation but to all humanity.” Her style consisted of “rhythmic sequences of simple natural movements” such as running, walking, skipping, rising, falling, and twirling. She also integrated waltz, polka, pantomime, and facial expression. She established dancing schools in Germany and Moscow (Soviet Russia), which did not survive very long.¹⁴⁰

Duncan’s two children died in a car accident, and she later was killed in a car when her long scarf got caught in the rear wheel and strangled her as she started to drive off. Her last words to her friends were (translated from French) “Farewell, friends, I go to glory.”¹⁴¹

Martha Graham (1894-1991) performed on stage and taught students for much longer than Duncan or St. Denis. Cass, a student of Graham, named the chapter on Graham, “Towering Genius of Psychodrama.” She was raised in a stern Presbyterian family. Born in Pennsylvania, her family moved to Santa Barbara, California when she was fourteen, where she adapted to a more “free” and “open” culture. At age 17, she saw Ruth St. Denis perform: Three years later, she enrolled at Denishawn school in Los Angeles. Cass describes her as “plain-looking, serious, determined.” Graham toured with the Follies from 1923-1925. By 1928, she had begun developing her own dramatic style, which was a stark contrast to the “airy lightness” of ballet. Dancers worked low to the floor, had angular shapes, and had sharp, strong, percussive dynamics and wore costumes of dark, substantial material. Her pieces included *Revolt*, *Immigrants*, and *Resurrection*. Cass describes Graham’s “first great work,” *Primitive Mysteries* (1831), as “Christianity grafted onto tribal religion.” The music alluded to Spanish Native Americans in the Southwest.¹⁴²

Graham included in a dance program in the 1930’s the observation that American dance was not trivial decoration or imitation: it was a form of “affirmation...” a way to reveal the “vigor, the human and the variety of life.” In *American Document* (1938), Graham addressed assimilation, emphasizing the Americanization of immigrants who were previously Spanish, Russian, German, and English. Omitted from this script were Chinese, Africans, and Italians. In this piece, she played a Puritan maid opposite a bare-chested male dancer. In *American Document*, the second act, the “Indian episode” featured people dressed as Native Americans with “happy nostalgia” for the land, followed by a portrayal of whites arriving and Indians losing the land. A speaker says “I do not remember the flocks of pigeons in the virgin forest, before these states were. But my blood remembers, my heart remembers.”¹⁴³

Doris Humphrey’s dance program from the 1930s stated that her dance is “an art concerned with human values,” namely those related to harmony and balance. Her dance was

mainly an expression of her view of American life at that time: The action informed by Americans' experiences "subdue[ing] a continent, mak[ing] a thousand paths through forest and plain, conquer[ing] the mountains and ... rais[ing] up towers of steel and glass." Some of the movements were also "used for decoration, entertainment, emotional release, or technical display." In her view, temporal and spatial context was vital: Dance expressed the experiences of the dancer. She emphasized "natural movements of the body," notably visible in flat, barefoot dancing (in contrast to ballet toe dancing) as a way to express "immediate human values" and the interaction with "gravity and reality." "I wish my dance to reflect some experience of my own in relationship to the outside world; to be based on reality illuminated by imagination; to be organic rather than synthetic; to call forth a definite reaction from my audience; and to make its contribution toward the drama of life."¹⁴⁴

Industrial Capitalism: Effects on Domestic Life and Consumption

The feminist movement of the turn of the nineteenth century responded to the split between domestic life and public life created by the rise of industrial capitalism.¹⁹ Material feminists (1890-1920) sought ways to create economic "remuneration" for women's unpaid housework as well as ways to completely transform the "spatial design and material culture of American homes, neighborhoods and cities." Between 1920 and 1970, industrial corporations—which divided corporate management from sites of production—"overwhelmed" cooperative movements, and were aided by red-baiting between 1920-1931. Finally, the Hoover Commission Report in 1931 advocated single-family home ownership built by private market in order to promote economic growth. This marked a strong marketing campaign geared towards women in particular, which promoted consumption as a necessity, and a means for to achieve women's liberation.¹⁴⁵

Historian Anne McClintock, describes "commodity racism" as the use of "advertising, photography, national expositions, and museums" to turn "narratives of imperial Progress into mass-produced *consumer spectacles*." Thoughts on evolution, women's rights, and civilizing missions were passed on through commodity racism. Examples include Chicago Exposition 1893, and trade cards disseminating information about household items such as "soap, cereal, and sewing machines."¹⁴⁶

Since 1920, advertising and marketing have played a major role in shaping content of women's magazines. While *Woman's Home Companion* encouraged producer's cooperatives and were skeptical about unnecessary appliances in the late 1920's, it would soon modify its content to suit advertisers' push to sell as many products as possible. In 1920, a billion dollars were spent to advertise items related to private homes and mass consumption. This was more than a 1,000 fold increase "in annual volume" since 1890. Women's liberation was tied to the purchase of household appliances. As Hayden describes it: "vacuum cleaners gave women new life, toasters made them 'free.'" As advertisers became more influential, women's magazines no longer suggested that women cooperate or share appliances.¹⁴⁷

Christine Frederick and Lillian Gilbreth are "key ideologues of the antifeminist, pro-consumption, suburban home." In *Selling Mrs. Consumer* (1929), Christine Frederick [in Hayden] writes, "Consumptionism... the greatest idea that America has to give to the world." Frederick recommended advertising techniques that assumed women's "suggestibility, passivity, and 'inferiority complexes.'" She also promoted consumer credit, mortgages for young potential homeowners, and "progressive obsolescence" among industrial products. In *Woman Citizen*, she

advised readers to employ domestic servants if possible. For wealthy homes, she advised paying \$16 for forty-eight hours of work a week (not live-in), two weeks of paid vacation a year, a medical check-up, and uniforms.¹⁴⁸

The early 1920s saw women in the labor force, and suffrage. Soon, however, an anti-socialist (communist) atmosphere, combined with consumer-driven capitalist marketing suppressed many women's cooperative efforts. Hayden describes the Red Scare as including "the worst right-wing attempt to smear the feminist movement in American history." By the time the next wave of feminism arose after the forties and fifties, there was very little known about the previous efforts to socialize domestic work and live cooperatively or in alternatives to single-family homes.¹⁴⁹

Despite material feminists' efforts to collectivize housework between 1890-1920, monopoly capitalism became a powerful force shaping American domestic and urban space between 1920-1970. Capital became more consolidated due to corporate mergers. Additionally, the trend of urbanization was reversed as corporations began in the years leading up to 1920 to support suburban home ownership for skilled white men so they would achieve a "stable and conservative political habit." President Hoover, bankers, builders, and manufacturers all promoted single-family housing: Homes replicated Victorian morals regarding respectability, consumption, and female domesticity. Following WWII, additional incentives were provided through government-sponsored mortgages and tax credits. The "basic support" for the Hoover Report "came from manufacturers concerned with selling cars and consumer goods, real estate speculators, and housing developers." Henry Ford's wife and Lillian Gilbreth also participated in the planning committee. Appliance manufacturers benefited doubly from producing inefficient energy products for homes because they also sold electricity-generating equipment to cities. From the 1920s (through the 1940s and 50s), the advertising industry became very prominent in America—selling appliances, automobiles, and a variety of other items to fill the suburban "dream house."¹⁵⁰

By the 1970s, seventy percent of American households lived in single-family homes: There were fifty million small homes and twice as many automobiles. Policies incentivizing male home ownership created barriers for women to own homes; additionally, their access to employment outside of the home was limited by their suburban location, limited transportation options, and challenges of securing childcare in neighborhoods that lacked community facilities. Mass media "glorified" the image of the homemaker happily employing time-saving appliances and technology; however, time budget studies indicated that women spent more time on housework than women before the 1920s. Meanwhile, they continued to labor individually in their own homes—relying on fast food franchises for quick and cheap meals and television to keep children quiet and passive. Betty Friedan described an overwhelming sense of dissatisfaction among housewives expected to confine their aspirations to solely maternal and domestic roles in *The Feminine Mystique*. Consumption of psychiatric services and drugs grew among women: In 1978, doctors prescribed Valium and Librium over 47 million times.¹⁵¹

From 1919-1930, the War Department made concerted efforts to delegitimize women's groups as "destroying America through pacifism and socialism." Hayden describes the groups publicly condoned in a spider web chart propaganda as "moderate," civic, religious, and political organizations. They included the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Young Women's Christian Association, the American Home Economics Association, the American Association of University Women, and the League of Women Voters. Henry Ford's publication, the *Dearborn Independent* specifically targeted women's groups: It printed the spider web chart as well as

included articles criticizing women organizing as workers and seeking maternity leave—falsely linking American feminists to Bolshevik feminist Alexandra Kollontai. The National Association of Manufacturers also warned of this Soviet influence. Yet, Hayden describes American material feminist's ideas as “indigenous,” and separate from Soviet influence. Another group called the Woman Patriots published a journal that pitted the “defense of the Family and the State AGAINST Feminism and Socialism.”¹⁵²

Thanksgiving and Christmas became closely associated with middle class ideals of domestic life. In the 1840's, the *New York Tribune* promoted the infusion of Christianity into the holidays; additionally, focus on private home life and satisfying children (and child-like attributes in adults) through the purchase of gifts were emphasized. This allowed the paper and advertisers to encourage consumption, particularly of dolls and toys. Women were expected to orchestrate the Christmas holiday celebrations within the home.¹⁵³

Conclusion

Women were active participants in reform that sought broad social change through many avenues. Reformers who addressed concerns for public space (access and quality), sanitation, labor laws, food and drug quality, health, and education referred to their efforts as “social,” “municipal,” or “civic housekeeping” in order to expand their sphere of influence without directly challenging the dominant discourses at the period which relegated women's concerns to the domestic sphere. However, Perry argues that several male Progressive Era historians diminish women reformer's relevance by compartmentalizing their efforts and omitting vital components of their actions and intentions that extended beyond considerations of maternal roles to benefit all of humanity. White women expanded their influence through the creation of institutions such as “voluntary and charitable societies, church groups, self-improvement clubs, settlement houses, and organizations focused on “municipal housekeeping.” They employed “demonstrations, petitions, boycotts, lobbying, and pamphlets.” Efforts to gain suffrage were intricately tied to notions of racial difference and threat. Cooperative and utopian efforts also flourished among men and women in the 1800s. Several women contributed to efforts to socialize domestic work through the form of cooperatives or business ventures (professionalization). The importance of women's engagement in public life can be expressed by Hannah Arendt's concept of “polis,” where “humanity is most fully present and perfectly exercised, where some semblance of immortality is achievable.”¹⁵⁴

Jurgen Habermas conceived of the public sphere as the area in which public opinion is formed, and acts as an intermediary between people [men] and the state. “Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion...about matters of general interest.” Habermas viewed the American public press as degenerating from the “mainstay of public discourse” to a “mere commercial enterprise” by the 1830s. The result was “a bastard form” called “mass democracy,” in which private interest groups (corporate capitalists and trade unions) scramble to secure benefits for themselves from the state: Arriving at consensus through deliberation was in decline.¹⁵⁵

“Moral” reforms such as dance hall regulation, motion picture censorship, and prize-fighting control are relevant to decision-making around the questions of social acceptability versus personal freedom in pursuing personal recreation or entertainment; yet, they are often omitted by historians because the efforts waned shortly after their initiation, and could be considered “outdated.” Remnants of efforts in contemporary terms are often framed as health or

social issues i.e. temperance, anti-prostitution, cigarette bans. Moral reforms faced resistance (primarily from men) because “protection” also indicated “control.”¹⁵⁶

In addition to the quest for suffrage, Progressive Era female reformers sought to make politics more cooperative: To extend beyond the realm of electoral and party politics, their political engagement was expressed through actions to improve sanitation and factory conditions, regulate working hours and food and drug purity, and more. They challenged elected officials at city, state, and federal levels. They utilized scientific research from the social sciences as one of their tools.¹⁵⁷

American women have actively participated throughout the past two centuries in areas considered “environmental issues” today, although few of their early contributions are considered within this context. The history of the environmentalism is often traced from Conservation or Preservation during the Romantic Period, the modern environmental movement prompted by Rachel Carson in the 1960s, and the environmental justice movement in the late 1980s. Less regard is given to the wide array of women’s activities that took place in the 1800 and 1900s related to issues that fall within the realm of each of these categorizations.¹⁵⁸

Many of these women were advocates alongside male preservationist John Muir, whose legacy is more broadly recalled; others served as role models for women seeking to pursue outdoor activities despite perceived limitations of women’s physical abilities. They were forerunners in efforts to secure clean water and air through sewage and smoke control amid urban tenements and slums. Women were prominent leaders in the 19th Century recreation movements, which resulted in playground and park construction in municipalities across the nation. Several female pioneers and explorers enjoyed vigorous excursions to America’s earliest National Parks and mountain peaks. Women also contributed greatly to the National Park Services’ inclusion of historical sites and naturalist interpretations for visitors. To increase their mobility as well as for recreation, women heartily embraced the technology of the bicycle. Through dress reform, physical culture, home economics, and physical education, and many other efforts to create broad social change, they sought to improve health and wellbeing by affecting their environment and social conditions.¹⁵⁹

Chapter 3 Notes

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Ch. 4: Municipal Parks: Minority Women and San Francisco's East Bay

In the morning, a small pocket park nestled among houses and apartment buildings is alive with residents who live within a few blocks of the park. Four people are practicing qigong,¹ while young children are busy in a play area nearby that features natural wood and stone materials. At mid-day, another loosely-knit intergenerational group of people meets drop-in style for ethnic dance, accompanied by acoustic music or hand drums. A bulletin board posts announcements of regularly scheduled events, and a comment box collects feedback from park users and nearby residents for the city's park manager. The park includes a water fountain, a composting toilet and a hand-washing sink that is stocked with biodegradable soap and chlorine-free paper towels that are thrown into a compost bin. Small trash and recycling bins are nearby.

At another medium-sized park nearby, a park steward loans out jump ropes, balls, roller skates and other equipment to pre-registered residents or non-residents who leave a deposit. Skaters—most with knee, elbow, and wrist guards—glide around converted tennis courts that were previously unused by park visitors. A group of people of mixed age, gender, and background are negotiating terms to create a new game under the guidance of park staff, who are trained and accustomed to facilitating cooperation among park visitors. Park users are encouraged to communicate with park staff and administration about facilities, spaces, or equipment needed for traditional games and diversions from around the world.

These two scenarios represent my visions of urban parks. After having spent a great deal of time in parks—large and small—in a variety of different locales around the world, I gradually came to wonder why there seemed to be so few women in our urban parks who were physically active. My question led me to design a research protocol that would allow me to visit a random selection of parks during different times of the day in order to see if this observation was indeed consistent throughout different parks in neighborhoods where there were significant populations of people of African, American Indian, and Asian heritage.²

When I observed municipal parks in the San Francisco East Bay area in 2012, I indeed found a different reality from the two hypothetical scenarios presented above. For the most part, parks had surprisingly low numbers of users relative to the population density of the surrounding neighborhoods. There was very little variety in the types of activities taking place in the parks, and few users were physically active. Men were more active than women. Staffing was present only at sites where there were recreation centers and, with one exception for a teen program, staff remained inside the recreational center building rather than engaging with park users outside.

In this chapter, I shift from a historical perspective that provides a context for examining how parks are used today. I first present a brief literature review that encompasses both an overview of the history of municipal parks in America and a discussion of the potential of municipal parks for shaping cultural norms and improving health and wellbeing. I then introduce my theoretical framework of environmental justice. Next, I turn to my methods and findings. Although my empirical research is focused primarily on the current conditions and usage of urban parks, this research is meant to contribute to a broader understanding of how use of these public spaces relates to contemporary and historical cultural norms, processes, and practices. The goal of this research is to highlight the need for park managers, community members, and advocates to utilize a comprehensive framework for understanding why public parks, which are intended to benefit the entire population, are attracting only a small segment of the population for a limited number of activities.

Park Design and History

Municipal parks vary in size and type; yet, overwhelmingly, in small towns and large cities across the country, these parks share many common and predictable features in design and use. The reasons for this homogeneity are complex and originate in the urban parks movement that began in the mid 1800's with large parks (i.e. Central Park in New York City) and expanded to include smaller neighborhood parks during the Progressive Era through today. Public parks and pools were created with both compassionate and manipulative intentions to improve the wellbeing of the urban poor and working classes, to assimilate recent immigrants, and to control and reform deviants. Weyeneth describes parks as “moral spaces,” transmitting values and norms that shape how we interact with each other and our environment³ while Byrne and Wolch state that parks “exist for specific ecological, social, political, and economic reasons—reasons that shape how people perceive and use parks.”⁴

Throughout the course of the last century, norms around which behaviors are acceptable in municipal parks have been created, enforced, and reproduced in such a way as to make many of them invisible—yet still influential—in America today. For example, early park creators sought to provide urban working class people with places for wholesome, family recreation that was fairly passive, such as picnicking. They struggled to control and reign in behavior when park users sought to run and play on the grass rather than stay on walkways or picnic. Tickets were regularly meted out for rowdy and undesirable behavior during the first few decades of urban park creation. The distribution of political and economic power has been a major factor in shaping the landscape of America and the cultural practices that are valued or suppressed. These notions of acceptable behavior have been particularly powerful in restricting the activities of women and people whose cultures were marginalized through efforts at assimilation, suppression, or substitution to promote a narrow Euro-centric vision of American culture.⁵

Much of the literature on park use is dominated by leisure studies research, where socio-demographic variables of individuals take precedence over examinations that encompass historical, political-economic, and geographic factors. Byrne and Wolch therefore propose a conceptual framework that moves away from an emphasis on user characteristics, while integrating environmental justice, cultural landscape, and political ecology paradigms for understanding urban nature-society relations exemplified by use or non-use of urban parks.⁶ A brief history of parks follows. I will then discuss the literature examining different preferences in park design and use, associated health benefits of parks and physical activity, as well as environmental justice concerns regarding park access, use, and quality.⁷

Byrne and Wolch (2009) trace a history of parks in the 19th Century as “medical technologies,” where both human bodies and landscapes were seen as objects for improvement and modification. In the 1930s, parks advocates in the recreation movement shifted the previous emphases on preventing crime and enhancing democracy to competition and physical fitness, which had racial connotations and was influenced by Social Darwinism. While parks discourse often espoused the democratic benefits of social class mixing promoted in parks, in reality, park use was often highly segregated through various means. Race riots in Chicago and Los Angeles highlighted the tensions created by unequal facilities, unfavorable conditions and locations, and mistreatment by park staff or police. In addition to the social control exerted through parks, they also radically transformed physical ecologies, often creating a pastoral-inspired landscape with foreign plants and animals replacing the native flora and fauna. While Byrne and Wolch describe park uses as having a great variety, with differences in preferences found among

different user groups, I suggest that activities taking place in municipal parks are quite limited when considering the potential possibilities of what could take place. In order to increase park usage, we need to reevaluate Euro-centric norms for desirable behavior (rooted in parks' history of social control and assimilation) when determining the design and regulation of parks.⁸

Park Use, Park Features, and Social Location

Park use and preferences have been found to vary by gender and/or ethnicity. Among the limited number of studies available, data indicate that women visit and use parks for physical activity less than men. Shores et al. (2007) found that low-income women from ethnic minority groups reported the most barriers to outdoor recreation, while young white males reported the least. These findings are consistent with other research that indicates that barriers to leisure are greater among people in “non-dominant” groups, and that young adults, males, whites, and people with high SES are conferred highest status among a normative hierarchical model within the US. A review of four studies identified common barriers in regards to participation in outdoor recreation: lack of information, crowding, distance to recreational area, family commitments, poor health of family members, cost, and lack of a companion. Additional moderate barriers included fear of crime, lack of equipment, high admission costs, and poor maintenance of facilities and equipment. Older adults were more likely to list poor health, lack of companion and fear of crime, while women were constrained by lack of time for one's self. Lack of leisure time among women is explained by women's continued shouldering of most household responsibilities, regardless of their employment status outside of the home. A study of high-minority neighborhoods in Los Angeles revealed that playgrounds and track areas were the only locations where approximately equal numbers of men and women were present: In all other park areas, men outnumbered women.⁹

Payne et al. also found that race and age correlate with park use, with older adults and African Americans visiting parks less than younger white adults. In this study, African Americans surveyed near Cleveland, Ohio preferred parks that offered active recreational facilities for active activities such as sports over a “conservation design” that would encourage passive activities such as picnicking and fishing; however, the methodology and results from this study highlight common simplifications that present challenges to comprehensive understanding of the causes and consequences of park use i.e. it frames conservation as non-use and recreation as use and forces respondents to select one over the other even when they may desire both.¹⁰

Design features interact with user preferences to encourage or discourage particular types of activity. Research in Southern California found gyms and baseball fields attracted the most users, while sidewalks, lawns, and play areas drew the next highest numbers of users. Park areas were used differently based on gender: Females were more likely to utilize dance studios, sidewalks, and play areas while men were most frequently seen at baseball fields, gyms, and lawns. Additionally, men were predominant at basketball courts, soccer fields, and tennis courts. Park features attract different users based on characteristics such as gender, with men more likely to be present and physically active in courts or fields designed for sports—prominent features of many municipal parks; meanwhile, women are often found in playground areas accompanying children. These child-centered areas generally lack adult-sized equipment or facilities that could encourage physical activity among adults. In Mozingo's research of downtown office workers, men found derelicts in the parks and plazas more unappealing than women.¹¹

Historical experiences of African Americans in America may contribute to preferences for open spaces (as opposed to heavily wooded areas) with built design features (which reinforce a sense of human presence over isolation) due to fear of other humans (lynching and violence) and animals, that can be based on a collective memory of fear and danger present in wooded areas.¹²

While there is a great deal of variation among people, and there is variation within an individual over the course of life, there are also many commonalities. All life on this Earth has certain fundamental needs. Within our species, we have certain needs for air, water, nutrition, ways to adapt to or mitigate conditions such as heat or cold to maintain a certain range of body temperature, sleep, bodily elimination of waste, sense interaction, sexual development and interaction, and movement. Movement is fundamental to growth and life and creates sensations that inform how individuals relate to their surroundings and other living beings. Thus, movement and interaction are vital in shaping environmental and social ethics. Urban parks certainly have no responsibility to meet all of these needs, but they can send strong messages to park users through how they acknowledge or deny certain basic needs. For example, by providing space for recreation without accommodating the need for elimination, they convey to users that they are either not intended to use the park for longer than the period between elimination, assume users otherwise have access to restrooms (e.g. return home or to a neighbor's), or do not recognize their humanity by denying access. Extreme examples of racial inequality and implicit dehumanization occurred in urban mini-pools built in the 1960's that became notorious for the number of people, especially youth, who urinated in them; yet, these pools were built with no restroom facilities, leaving users with no choice but to dress and return home or use the pool.¹³

Parks as public spaces may be particularly important for people for whom a connection to place is culturally important, yet who have experienced relocation or dislocation due to environmental and social conditions such as drought or colonization. This paper seeks to examine the reality of current parks and the potential of parks to serve a broad constituency that is reflective of America's cultural diversity. In order to do so, one must take into account the historical and cultural factors surrounding park use when considering the results of the empirical research presented later in this paper.

Significance of Parks and their Benefits

Parks can serve as important places for free or low-cost physical activity and recreation, and provide vital outlets for physical activity, social interaction, and development of community cohesion. In addition to enhancing quality of life through improved wellbeing, parks can also be important sites for learning about one's relationship to the environment and social structures, as well as shape the development of an environmental ethic. Fleming suggests that good public discourse and good public space are interrelated and interdependent. Other features offered by parks include a sense of rejuvenation, where one can breathe and dream.¹⁴

As an example of the broad array of benefits that parks could provide to society, consider the Oakland Parks and Recreation Department's tagline: "expose, enlighten, empower, and encourage educational excellence through recreational experiences." Their website also explains:

We offer critical quality of life programming in areas of enrichment, cultural arts, prevention and intervention, sports and physical activities, health and wellness, youth

violence abatement, and other leisure activities for adults, youth, and children. Programs and Camps at recreation centers, pools and parks are part of the efforts to promote health, stem obesity, and encourage civic participation, personal development, and empowerment. We preserve the best of Oakland and connect communities.

Since parks can serve as sites for recreation and rejuvenation that enhance wellbeing through physical movement and cultural reproduction of knowledge related to how one relates to self, other people, and the world around them, it is especially important that they are accessible and appealing to disenfranchised populations that otherwise have limited opportunities for physical recreation.¹⁵

There are many ways in which parks can also benefit human health through the promotion of physical activity, social interaction, and overall wellbeing. Improved physical health could reduce diseases related to obesity, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and osteoporosis, which are among the leading causes of premature death and reduced quality of life in the US and worldwide. Ho et al. conclude that “for all ethnicities, the availability of parks and open spaces represent desirable amenities, and underscore[s] the importance of making these facilities accessible and desirable for all citizens.”¹⁶

Park activities and programming may be effective alternatives to sedentary activities such as watching TV and playing video games. Researchers have found that youth physical activity was correlated with access, quality, and location of physical activity resources, parental involvement, enjoyment of the physical activity or physical education, and self-efficacy. Organized activities were effective in increasing physical activity among African American youth, while Alaskan Natives and Native Americans experienced reduced passive TV viewing and video game use as a result of the various interventions attempted. Based on an analysis of existing studies, Whitt-Glover et al. recommend that interventions aimed at eliminating disparities in youth physical activity should 1) focus on girls, 2) maintain involvement in physical activities as youth grow older, 3) improve safety and access to recreational facilities.¹⁷

Programming has been found to be an effective way of increasing park use, especially among underrepresented groups such as teen African American girls and teens of both genders; Organized activity was found to be the only correlate to increasing physical activity among African American teens and adolescents. My research does take into consideration observations of programming provided by municipal parks; however, future research should more closely examine the patterns of activities offered and demographics of participants in order to ascertain to what extent they serve the surrounding community. Since most programming available is fee-based, this may be a significant barrier to participation among low-income residents. A study of low-income mothers in Canada did find reveal that fees were a barrier to their participation, even when there were ways in which to receive reduced or free programming when one could demonstrate economic need.¹⁸

Despite their numerous potential benefits to users, many parks today attract few users, and not all populations benefit from their presence. Conceptions of, and practices related to health and wellbeing vary by culture and context. In order to create parks that attract female users of American Indian, African, and Asian heritage regularly, the norms guiding desired park behavior must be exposed and re-created in an inclusive manner. Implicit Euro-centric, rational, and instrumental values are dominant in American conceptions of exercise and the desired physical body. We must examine and redefine these values and open opportunities for alternative values to guide the desire for movement and wellbeing among American populations most adversely affected by a broad range of interconnected conditions affecting the cardiovascular and

respiratory systems, diabetes, injuries, as well as depression, anxiety, and stress. The exercise industry acknowledges that low socioeconomic status is associated with low adherence to exercise programming and attributes high success to individuals who have high levels of self-efficacy, who have prior experience with exercise (or related activities, especially as youth or young adults), and who enjoy these activities. They fail to acknowledge the moral values, as well as societal inequalities, that limit exposure to activities as major factors in creating this disparity. Like leisure study research, the exercise industry focuses more on individual traits rather than social, historical, and physical factors that inhibit or encourage physical activity. One goal of this paper is to advance a discussion on how and why society will benefit from women actively reclaiming these public spaces as sites for a variety of activities that allow them to interact with others and/or their surroundings. With this study, I am not seeking to find deficiencies within individual park systems' management; rather, I highlight the cultural hegemony embedded within municipal parks and suggest ways in which park systems can break out of these limitations to provide numerous interrelated benefits to individuals, humanity, and the broader ecosystem.¹⁹

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice has come to mean many things to many people since it became popularized in the late 1980s as people became increasingly aware and mobilized around the fact that communities of color were being disproportionately exposed to hazardous wastes. Race, controlling for class, was found to be the primary indicator for inequality. Since then, environmental justice activism and scholarship have broadened their scope significantly to include prevention, as well as acknowledging the intersections of race, class, gender, and geography in creating inequality in exposure to harm as well as access to “environmental goods” such as clean air, open space, and recreational facilities. I conceive of environmental justice as a framework for identifying and modifying the root and proximate causes of structural inequalities that are based on narratives of difference encompassed in the shifting and problematic notion of “race.” It acknowledges the intersections of additional forms of social divisions such as gender, place of origin, income, and age in reinforcing and amplifying notions of difference set within a worldview that emphasizes competition rooted in lines of thought such as social Darwinism. The environmental justice framework is rooted in the principles of precaution, prevention, and participation.

As an introduction to some environmental justice perspectives, I draw on excerpts from a document called the Principles of Environmental Justice, composed at The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held in 1991. The principles demand “mutual respect” in creating public policies and restate the rights to self-determination and participation in decision-making. The principles call for “ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources” as well as “urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and providing fair access for all to the full range of resources.” The “destructive operations of multinational corporations,” and “repression and exploitation of lands, peoples, and cultures, and other life forms” are directly opposed. Education should integrate experiential knowledge as well as an appreciation of “diverse cultural perspectives.” Finally, those who ascribe to the principles are directed to make life-style decisions that are meant to “insure the

health of the natural world for present and future generations,” which includes consuming the least amount of resources and producing as little waste as possible.²⁰

Municipal parks are resources created under the guise of providing benefits to the entire population and are particularly relevant to the principles demanding “fair access for all to the full range of resources” and education (which is not limited to formal educational settings) that values “diverse cultural perspectives.” I will revisit these principles as they have influenced my research questions and recommendations. In some instances, the principles facilitate selection of concrete policy recommendations, while in other instances they provide an ideal goal toward which to strive even though there is no clear path as revealed by current research.

There are noticeable differences in the quality of park maintenance and facilities within park systems, as well as inequitable distribution and access to parks; however, these inequalities do not take place within a vacuum. These disparities expose larger structural inequalities that have been the focus of much environmental justice discourse. Recent scholarship has focused on inequities in access to urban parks and recreational facilities based on income, race, or ethnicity, or gender and ethnicity in various US cities. These inequalities stem in part from conditions outside the parks.²¹

Freeways, roads, railroad tracks, contamination related to industrial uses, and indigent populations that reveal America’s vast social and economic disparity are some features associated with the most underutilized parks in this study. Studies examining the effects of noise exposure and traffic sounds indicate linkages between exposure to these sounds and responses varying from annoyance to increased stress responses, which may influence cardiovascular diseases and contribute to other health conditions. In Curitiba, Brazil, park users identified vehicular traffic and other sounds from birds and humans: Sound from vehicular traffic was noted as unpleasant where birds and other “natural” and human sounds were generally described as pleasant; meanwhile, a study in Los Angeles that points to poor air quality in urban parks with enhanced exposure to ozone, Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) raises concerns about inequitable health hazards associated with increased physical activity, making otherwise health-promoting activities detrimental to the health of low socioeconomic status park users.²²

Transportation as a barrier to accessing parks has been noted among different ethnic groups. Lack of transportation was a significant constraint among African Americans visiting regional parks in Detroit, and distance and transportation were identified as barriers for Latinos and Asians in accessing well-maintained parks in Chicago. In contrast to these studies that look at regional parks, I focus on municipal parks that are intentionally distributed throughout residential neighborhoods in order to be in close proximity to residences; therefore, transportation barriers are different, but still remain a vital issue to consider for smaller local parks due to the impacts of vehicular traffic on air and sound quality, parking space, and research that found that the most regular female users of one park reported walking and biking as their main modes of transportation to the park. Park visitors who drove to the park were less likely to visit the park frequently and regularly, compared to those for whom active transportation (walking or biking) was a convenient and preferred option. Working class people’s access to Golden Gate Park in San Francisco in the early 20th century was increased through the provision of streetcars and the widespread availability of bicycles.²³

I hope that this research contributes to broader efforts aimed at reducing environmental injustices and social inequalities related to both poor park conditions and low community use. The causes and consequences of park neglect are related to similar root causes and consequences

of other environmental injustices. To implement improvements, an integrated approach that addresses these interrelated conditions from multiple vantage points is needed. The slogan “if you build it (or renovate it), they will come” is unlikely to work in all neighborhoods; conversely, in other situations, it may not always be the case that if the community presence and demand is strong, that physical improvements will result from community efforts alone. In my recommendations, I provide a multi-layered approach to guide improvements in park physical conditions as well as the social cohesion and engagement needed for long-term successful utilization of municipal parks to benefit diverse communities.²⁴

Methods

Although presence and distribution of parks is one way of considering equitable access to municipal parks, my study does not analyze park acreage relative to population; rather, it seeks to understand how small and medium-sized municipal parks are utilized. I focus on municipal parks located in census tracts at or above California averages for Asian, African American, or American Indian populations in three cities in the San Francisco East Bay area (Richmond, Berkeley, and Oakland). Are parks in these areas frequented by park users, or are they often empty? Do men and women visit municipal parks equally? When teens and adults visit the parks, are they sedentary, moderately active, or engaged in vigorous activity? What is the status of sanitation infrastructure (toilets, sinks, water fountains, trash cans) and soundscape in these urban parks?

These cities are located in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, which have a moderate Mediterranean climate with numerous micro-climates, an ethnically diverse population with a notable disparity in wealth, multiple public transit agencies, and many municipal and regional parks. The cities of Richmond, Berkeley, and Oakland listed a combined total of approximately 226 municipal parks.²⁵

In order to focus on parks in neighborhoods with notable non-white populations, 65 parks were excluded because they were located in census tracts with white populations above the California state average (57.6%) based on the 2010 census. Other parks that had white populations at or above the state average were, however, included in the research population when the census data revealed that these areas also *exceeded* the state averages for Black, Asian, or American Indian populations (6.6%, 14%, and 1.7% respectively).²⁶

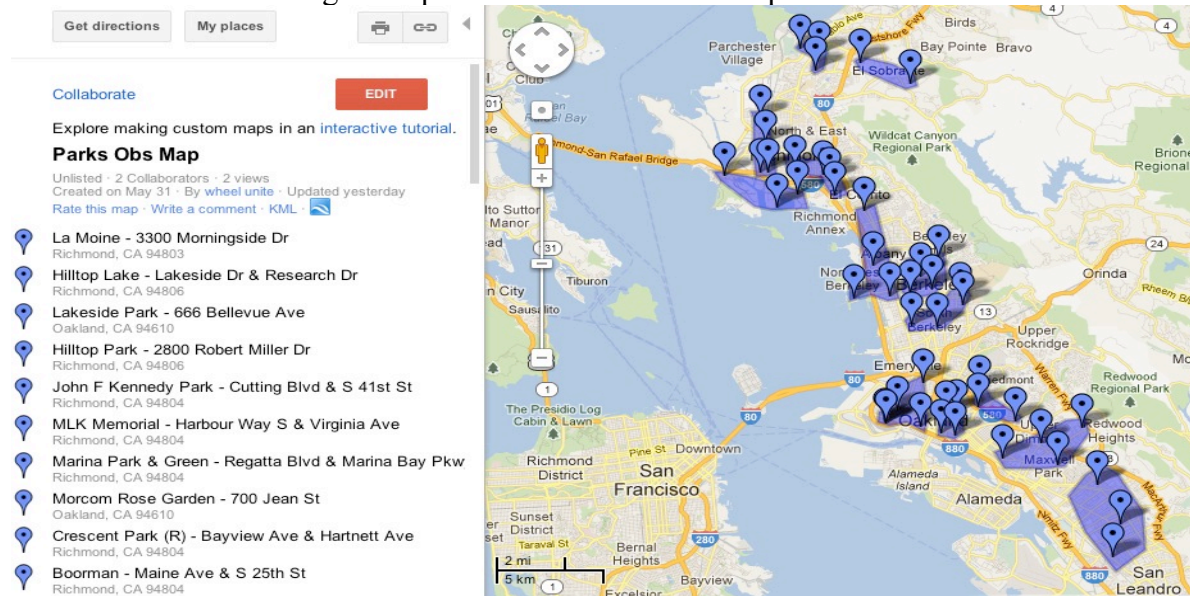
Municipal parks follow “well-known prescriptions of park design,” where predictable features are common among parks of certain sizes or types. From the total research population of 161 parks, a random sample of 47 parks was selected for observation based on stratification by approximate size. Table 1 below demonstrates that most parks fell within the smallest size categories, and there were fewer large and very large parks. In order to ensure sampling of parks of all size categories, approximately 25-36% of parks within each category were selected for inclusion in the study sample.²⁷

Table 1 Distribution of Park Population and Random Sample by Size

Size Category	# Parks in Research Population	# Parks Included in Random Sample	% of Parks Observed Relative to Size Category	Approx. Distribution of All Parks by Size Category (%)*
Mini	56	14	25	36
Small	45	14	31	27
Medium	36	11	31	20
Large	14	5	36	8
Very Large	10	3	30	6
Total	161	47	--	--

Parks were grouped into geographic clusters to facilitate sampling. Clusters were assigned numbers, and numbers generated by the Research Randomizer determined whether the cluster would be sampled on a weekday or weekend. Seven clusters were selected for weekday observation and five clusters for weekends: three Sundays and two Saturdays. Weekday clusters were assigned a day Monday through Friday for observation. Weekdays and weekends are treated slightly differently in their sampling to reflect a more generally constrained (shared) work schedule on weekdays and generally more unstructured time on weekends. Each park in the weekday sample was visited two to four times: between 7:30a-11:30a, midday between 11:35a-1:30p, afternoon between 1:35p-5:30p, and evening between 5:35p-sunset (approximately 8:45p). One to three observations were recorded on weekends during three time periods: morning (7:30a-noon), afternoon (12:05-5pm), or evening (5:05p-sunset). Visits to mini, small, and some medium sized parks each lasted approximately 20-30 minutes while larger parks observed at multiple vantage points were visited for longer durations. A map of the selected parks and the clusters (represented by the shaded areas) is presented in Fig. 1 below.

Fig. 1 Map of Park Observation Sample and Clusters



A few parks that were listed on the city websites were not accessible to the public at all, or had incorrect listings of hours of operation. Joint-use parks (Oakland) that are shared with schools were not clearly indicated, so web users were not informed that the parks were not available to the public during school hours.

The park was checked for the presence and status of restrooms, water fountains, trashcans, parking, and other amenities. Other conditions, such as temperature, humidity, types of sounds, and average and peak decibel readings were recorded. For 15 minutes, park users were observed (from primarily one vantage point generally less than 20 feet in diameter) and their level of physical activity as sedentary, moderate, or vigorous was recorded on a modified System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) method.²⁸ The form is included as Appendix A.²⁹

The temperature, humidity, and decibel readings are to provide a general idea of the temperature and humidity, and are consistent with the climate of the area; however, it should be noted that the data collection for this project was geared towards being replicable as “citizen science.”³⁰

I chose to do an observational approach rather than interview or survey users as a way to increase my sample size of parks given my research resources available. This approach also had the benefit of having the least amount of interference with park users, allowing me to observe normal use patterns. Future research would benefit from seeking input from park users regarding their backgrounds and the factors that influence their use of parks.

One challenge posed by the observational approach to data collection is in regards to how accurately I could record park visitors’ race, ethnicity, age, and gender. My notation of age was approximate, and therefore I do not go into detailed analysis of age except broad categories of teen and adult, even though my field notes do make an effort to group users by more specific age categories. I noted one instance in which a park visitor appeared to be transgender; however, I also must also stress that there may be a few other instances in which my categorization of gender may be incorrect due to the clothing and distance of park users from my observational vantage point.

Race is a social construct, rather than a biological category that can be determined by genotype. While physical appearances may in many cases reveal a great deal about a person’s ancestry, culture, and experiences, they are often not useful in understanding a person’s culture or experiences, particularly in an American multi-racial society composed of many generations of people from around the world. Due to this challenge, I based my research area in census tracts that had the desired demographics, with an understanding from existing literature that most municipal park users live in close proximity i.e. within a half of a mile, to the parks that they visit. In my field notes, I attempted to note race, but was limited to occasions where there were only a few users nearby, and I had both the time and clear sight from which to do so. Although I did note racially diverse park visitors, I cannot determine the extent to which their demographics are directly representative of the surrounding demographics. I did note that many park users did appear to be of African, Asian, and American Indian descent. I do not present those data in this paper since they are subjective.

As a multi-racial person, I have become experienced at both blending in and standing out among groups of people who may or may not be of similar physical appearances. This ability facilitated my research to a notable extent. Visiting parks in census tracts at or below the state average for non-white populations took me to some familiar, and some unfamiliar and threatening neighborhoods. My extensive experiences travelling alone and spending many hours

in parks have taught me to develop a keen awareness of my surroundings, partnered with a sense of defensible space, and body language that seeks to convey that I am neither a threat nor prey. Without this ability to have self-confidence in unfamiliar circumstances, I would not have pursued this research approach. I found that my fifteen minute observation period was often just enough time to collect the required data before other park users engaging in illicit behaviors began to take more notice of my presence, and become somewhat wary or threatened by me. In one instance at a mini park surrounded by streets, one a state highway, near a liquor store, I was approached and warned that unfamiliar faces make park regulars nervous, and are not particularly welcome. I heeded that advice, and was back on my way on my bicycle, having only to put my binder in my bag and mount. By staying near my bike, using defensible space i.e. awareness of exit routes in relation to possible encounters, and my best judgment, I carried out my park visits with no incidents.

Results

Park visits were conducted primarily during the summer (June), with a few occurring in early fall (October) of 2012. Overall, the weather conditions were comfortable for outdoor activity, and although there are numerous microclimates in the SF East Bay the temperate weather experienced during the sample period is common throughout much of the year aside from a wetter winter season. This study does not reveal variations in park usage during inclement weather, when usage is expected to be lower.³¹

There were very few people in the parks in light of the population density of the area (see Figs. 2 and 3 below). According to the 2010 Census, most of the study area is included in the two highest density categories in California that range from 1,000 to 162,000 people per square mile, while approximately less than a third of the study area had a population density of 200 to 999 people per square mile. Despite being located in densely populated areas, the average number of teen and adult park users at all times in all parks was 11.1 per observation period. When young children are included, the average number of park users per observation period was 13. Excluding counts gathered from four special events (concert, adjacent farmer's market, fair/festival, and free meal distribution by Food Not Bombs), the average number of teen and adult park visitors during each observation period drops to 6.2 for parks of all sizes. Children estimated to be under the age of twelve made up about 15% of all park users.

Fig. 2 Population Density of SF Bay Area

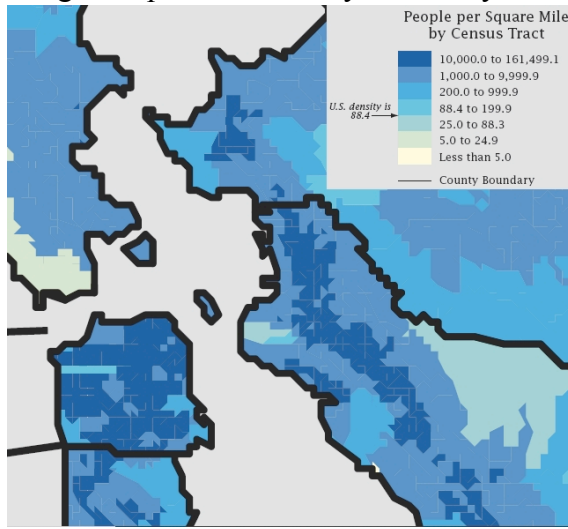
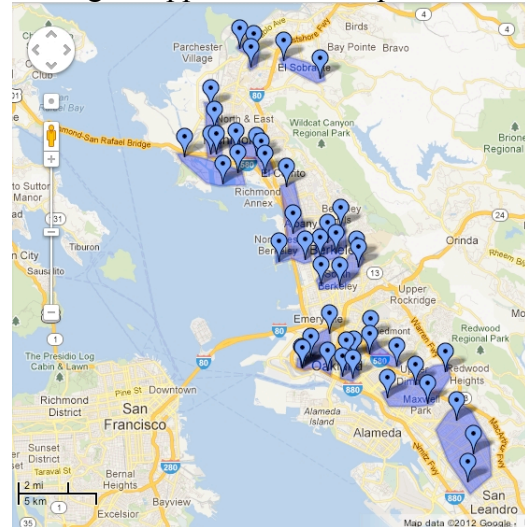


Fig. 3 Approximate Sample Area



As stated above, most parks had few users considering the population densities of the surrounding areas. Sixteen parks that had lower than the study average of 6.2 visitors per observation period (the average excluding special events) varied by size, neighborhood, and municipality; however, all lacked restrooms. Water fountains were also rare. The most underutilized parks were all located in tracts well above state average for African Americans. Most parks also had higher than average populations reporting themselves as “other,” and six of the most under-utilized parks were in neighborhoods exceeding state averages for Asians.

One hundred and eight observation periods of park users in Richmond, Berkeley, and Oakland, California revealed a tendency toward sedentary uses (Fig. 4); however, moderate or vigorous activity was present, but was generally restricted to males or teenagers (children under around 12 years old were not included in analysis). Women were slightly more likely to be moderately active (walking) in large and extra-large parks than smaller parks (Fig. 5), but in all size parks, men were much more likely to be engaged in vigorous activity. Also, recall that the sample size of large and extra large parks visited was fewer than the number of smaller parks despite each sampled size of park representing approximately 30% of the entire population of parks (Table 1). Since the number of large and very large parks sampled was very small, I focus my analysis on the smaller and medium-sized parks. Generally, however, the larger parks (especially with water features) did have more women present: They were often walking, and sometimes biking or running. Parks near large bodies of water with continuous pathways did tend to attract a wide array of individuals and groups of people spanning age, background, and gender engaged in walking, running, and biking. Overall, many park visitors were accompanying children or dogs.

Fig. 4 Level of Physical Activity for Mini, Small, & Medium Sized Parks

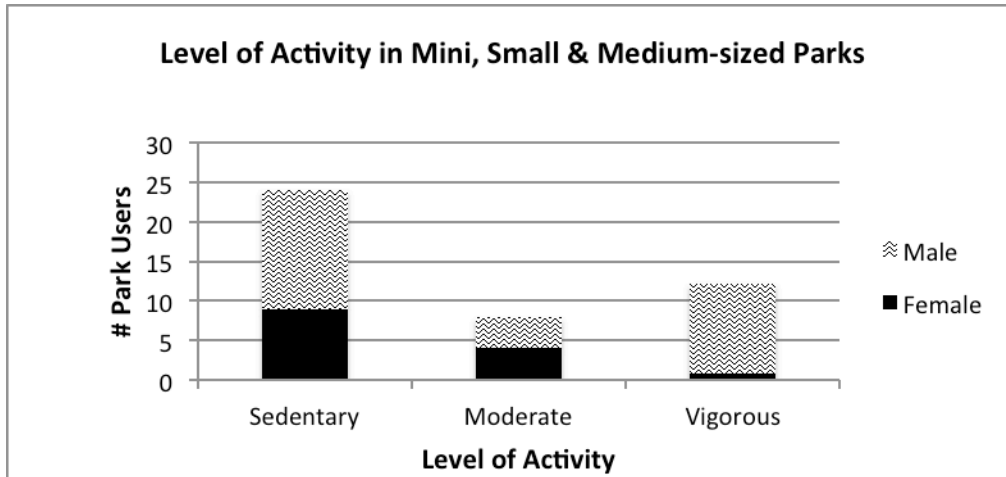
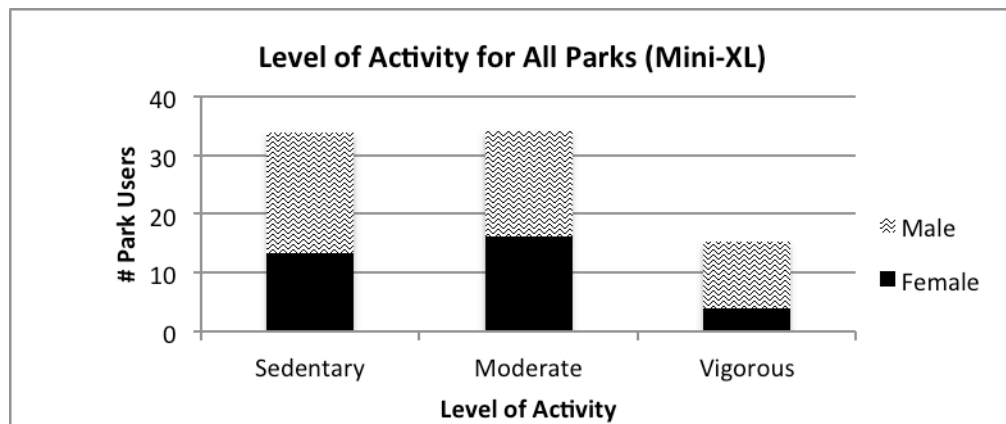


Fig. 5 Physical Activity for All Parks (Mini-XL)



Observations of municipal parks in the urban San Francisco East Bay revealed that there was actually very little diversity in the types of activities that take place in these spaces. (This finding also aligns with Cohen et al.'s 2007 study in Los Angeles.) Frequent activities observed in parks included sitting, eating, sleeping, supervising or interacting with children and dogs, and walking. Running, biking, and sports such as basketball, soccer, and tennis were observed in fewer instances. There were only isolated observations of activities such as throwing a frisbee, running with a football, hula hooping, and jumping rope.³²

Sitting was very common, and is not surprising when one considers that the first urban parks were primarily intended by their creators as places for quiet contemplation to escape the noise and congestion of industrial urban centers. Christian values also emphasized parks as spaces for wholesome family recreation, with gender and class influencing who should participate in certain activities.

Progressive Era reformers saw urban parks as sites for improving the quality of life of recent urban immigrants, and/or as important spaces through which urban immigrants could be integrated as Americans sharing common values and pursuits; meanwhile, urban elites utilized

the first large parks as sites for their horses and carriages. Today, it is common to find women in playground areas where their primary activity is related to overseeing children in facilities designed specifically for children only.

During the first few decades after urban parks were created, cities struggled to control rowdy behavior. It was conceded that vigorous activity could also be another valuable park activity (primarily for children and males). In response, sports fields and playgrounds were built in order to encourage certain activities. Current observations also reveal continuing effects of this design: Sports facilities (such as courts and fields) are common features of urban parks, and were primarily utilized by males. Walking or promenading were socially acceptable behaviors among initial parks proponents, and these appear to remain a predominant example of an acceptable use of parks; however, the smaller size of many municipal parks does raise the question of their desirability for such activities that emphasize locomotion. Walking and jogging were most frequently observed in the larger parks that were near large bodies of water. Bike riding was a vital source of transportation that increased working class access to San Francisco's Golden Gate Park after it was built, but biking is restricted in one municipality in this study, which prohibits all bike riding in city parks. These results are similar to findings in research involving other cities.³³

My results revealed that adults were more frequently observed than teens. There were only about five parks where there was a higher teen presence, and most of these parks had organized activities or had a specialized purpose, such as a skateboard park. For comparison, Cohen et al. found that in Los Angeles a third of park users were categorized as children, a fifth were adolescents, forty percent adults, and less than five percent seniors: Relative to census data on population distribution, adolescents were overrepresented and seniors over 60 years old were underrepresented.^{34, 35}

The lack of variety in activities taking place in parks provides many opportunities to consider what types of activities are not being pursued, especially in reference to pursuits that occurred in previous times or other places in municipal parks. Dancing, creation of community pageants, and regular informal gatherings for political speech, for example, are some activities that have been recorded as occurring in other municipal parks that were not observed in local municipal parks in this study. While some of these activities do occur in parks, they were not widespread, nor common enough to be captured. Certainly, the Occupy Movement during 2011-2012 encouraged many people to camp out and utilize parks for gathering places for political activities, but these activities were generally an exception to widely held notions of acceptable park usage. It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate this topic properly, but the subject of municipal parks as vital sites for political speech and organizing, for example the Black Panther Party and Black Student Movement activities in DeFremery Park in Oakland during the late 1960s-70s remains an important topic for future consideration.

Despite research that has shown programming to be the most effective way to increase park usage among African American teen females in San Francisco, I did not observe any programming offered by the city for park participants outside of recreational centers, with the possible exception of one park and recreational center, where there was a BBQ for teens taking place. During this event, most participants were sedentary or moderately active, with a few hitting balls in a tennis court, and a few others throwing water balloons. City programming brochures reveal that activities such as dance, stretching, and martial arts are offered; however, these activities are usually held inside of buildings and require registration and a fee from activity participants.

Public spaces, including parks, are both hailed and condemned as places where people from different economic and class backgrounds may intermingle. Park users in the East Bay area frequently encounter other park users who are apparently indigent and who utilize the park as a refuge. The size and presence of other park users may also be important factors for perceptions of safety among park users who encounter indigent people in parks. One or more indigents were present in parks during thirty-three observations, and of these, there were eight observations where the park had numerous (more than five or six) indigents present at one time (primarily in two parks in Berkeley). Most indigents were seen sitting or lying. Some were seen collecting recycling in the park, or passing through with recycling collected elsewhere. Several others were observed socializing in pairs or groups, with or without the presence of beverages concealed in bags. As an exception, during one morning observation, one indigent in a park with an extremely high presence of indigents was seen jumping rope, which lasted about one minute.

The overwhelming presence of sound from vehicles significantly alters the experiences in urban parks. It is an aspect of the environment that calls for reasonable and equitable management that is directly related to use; however, sound has been largely neglected as an area for participatory negotiation in America. Although regulations exist to limit the amplification of sound and music in parks, and event planning in urban parks is restricted in part due to concerns over sound affecting nearby neighbors, I propose that an environmental justice approach to park management calls for a reevaluation of how we acknowledge and manage sound in urban parks as they facilitate or inhibit certain uses.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, parks have been conceived of as a space for quiet contemplation since their inception. As early urban park managers realized that park visitors wanted to use these spaces for more physical or social behavior playgrounds, sports fields and other amenities were added. Today, parks are frequently categorized as “passive” or “active” parks based upon their intended purposes. Many small pocket parks tend to be categorized as passive spaces where one can enjoy the park quietly as they sit. Yet, these conceptions of parks do not reflect the current soundscape and experience of park users today. It is extremely uncommon to find a location where the sound of vehicular traffic is not a noticeable and regular feature of the soundscape, which can influence park visitor’s experiences.

My observations revealed that the sounds most commonly heard in urban parks included the steady hum of traffic as well as the sound from individual cars, trucks, motorcycles, or buses. The vast majority of observation locations featured sounds from individual cars or the hum of vehicular traffic on a busy road or highway. Other transportation-related sounds included those from freight and passenger trains, planes, and helicopters.³⁶

Sound may be a proxy indicator for impaired air quality due to mobile sources, and the soundscape can also influence users’ experiences positively or negatively. Park users in Curitiba, Brazil frequently mentioned noise from vehicular traffic as present in parks, and this sound was identified as unpleasant. Meanwhile, sounds interpreted as undesirable noise generates physiological responses that can be detrimental to health, particularly raising blood pressure and stressing the cardiovascular system.³⁷

Similar to park users in Curitiba, I noted the sound of birds, although with less frequency than the sound of traffic. Birds (mostly crows, seagulls, pigeons, and some small songbirds) were heard during 56% of the visits, with about 16% of this percentage (10 observations) having notable, constant, or a variety of birdsongs clearly heard throughout the observation period. The remainder of bird sounds were background or intermittent. The moderate and strong bird sounds were located in five different parks. Voices of park users, sounds associated with sports or

activities, and music were noted with less frequency and reflect the low rates of park use and limited variety of park activities.³⁸

Maintenance varied among parks, with a few notable parks that were particularly poorly maintained in census tracts with high African American populations. One park that was recently refurbished by non-resident volunteers with a new play structure and basketball court was directly adjacent to a large industrial facility (Figs. 6 and 7 below); meanwhile, a sprinkler at this same park was broken leading to water pooling near the sprinkler and grass further away turning yellow (Fig. 8). A large police van is visible and regularly parked near this park.

Fig. 6 New Play Structure at Park Adjacent to Industrial Facility

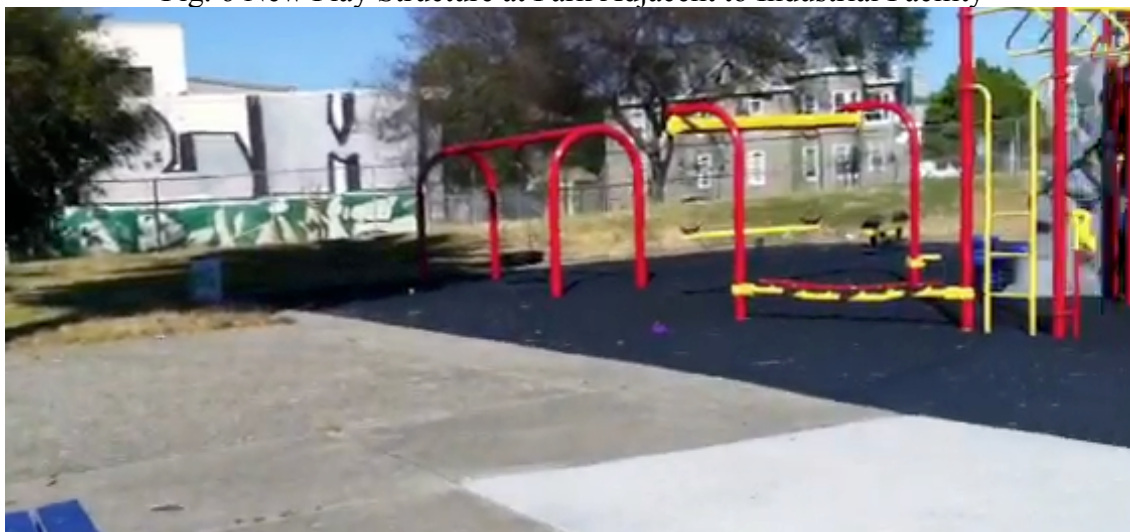


Fig. 7 Park Adjacent to Industrial Facility



Fig. 8 Broken Sprinklers at Same Park



Availability of running water—drinking fountains, toilets, and hand-washing facilities—varied by city, size of park, hours (time of day), and neighborhood characteristics. See Table 2 for details on sanitation facilities. Fewer than half of the parks provided drinking fountains: In a few instances, the bowls were clogged with sand or decaying organic (food) matter, and one fountain was not working at all. Just over half of the parks had toilets available, less than a third had toilet paper stocked, and less than a sixth provided soap for hand washing. In Oakland, the municipal code inhibits permitting for bathrooms in mini-parks.

Table 2. State of Sanitation Facilities in Parks

<i>Size Category</i>	<i>Parks Visited</i>	<i>Drinking Fountain</i>	<i>Presence of Fountain (%)</i>	<i>Toilet</i>	<i>Toilet %</i>	<i>Soap</i>	<i>Soap %</i>	<i>TP</i>	<i>TP %</i>
Mini	14	7 (1c)	50	4	29	2	14	2	14
Small	14	5	36	8 (3P, 1lh)	57	1	7	4	29
Medium	11	5 (1c, 1nw)	45	7 (1C)	64	2	18	3	27
Large	5	3	60	5 (2P)	100	3*	60	4	80
Very Large	3	2	67	2 (1P)	67	1	33	2	67
Total	47	22	47	27 (6P)	57	8	17	13	28

c – clogged; nw – not working; P – portable; lh – limited hours; C – closed during observation; *2 cases soap and 1 presence of sanitizer

The availability of sanitation infrastructure is important for men and women, but may be particularly influential in constraining women’s use of parks, affecting their choice to visit a park

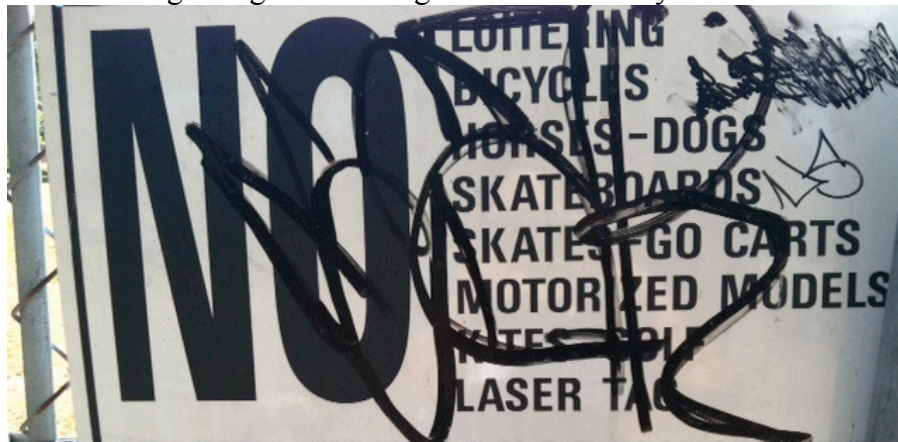
or the duration of their stay. Although public urination is legally restricted among men and women, it is socially more acceptable for a man to urinate in public if there is a tree or semi-private space. The lack of restrooms in public parks limits park use by causing people to leave the park in search of facilities. I observed in one mini park a family that had to leave in order to walk home for one small child to use the restroom--interrupting the play of the other children and accompanying adult. Even when the home is nearby, this interruption has the potential to cut short many visits. Meanwhile, public health is greatly improved through the provision of drinking water and hand-washing facilities as they promote hydration and reduction in the spread of disease, which is particularly relevant where you have children, seniors, and indigent populations touching the same surfaces.

Based on the environmental justice principles of “ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things,” “urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and providing fair access for all to the full range of resources,” and “insure[ing] the health of the natural world for present and future generations,” it is recommended that municipal parks investigate the affordability of composting toilets and portable hand-washing facilities in parks where no restroom facilities exist, or where there are currently chemical-based portable toilets constructed of plastic.³⁹

Based on the one hundred and eight observation periods, there is little to no system for enforcing park policy, aside from city police responding to a complaint. (I did not make visits during hours during which the park was closed, so I did not attempt to observe the extent to which park hour regulations are enforced). Only parks with recreation centers were staffed, and in these instances, the staff was primarily inside the recreation center rather than outside in the park. A few maintenance workers were seen in a few parks, but they were occupied with their maintenance duties. Where park staff was present in a specific-use park that had particular safety gear requirements, staff did not enforce use of this safety gear among park users.

Although it was common to see violations of policy, particularly dogs in Oakland parks that are not designated dog-parks, dogs off-leash in Berkeley parks that require leash, or people drinking alcohol or smoking, there was no instance of enforcement of these policies. Based on non-study observations of parks, especially ones known to have a constant, high number of indigents present, city or other local police agents may issue citations for infractions such as drug or alcohol use or possession, but these cases are the exception rather than the rule. Based on my observations, there is little to no regular enforcement of rules in most parks. The one exception occurred in a park with an extremely and unusually high presence of indigent users. Further research into enforcement of park rules, particularly equity issues related to selective enforcement, is needed. This non-enforcement of rules that probably don't make much sense to most park users in the first place facilitates a disregard for the creation and enforcement of necessary and relevant policy. Rules may be interpreted as irrelevant and unmonitored. If enforced, the potential problem of selective enforcement based on the deviant and powerless status of certain park users should be examined. Some violation of policy is facilitated by a lack on the part of the city to provide adequate signage. Oakland parks rarely had “No Smoking” signs, despite policy outlining that smoking is restricted and that signs should be placed indicating as such. Additionally, signs prohibiting dogs in Oakland parks were prominent in only a few instances, even though they are not allowed except in designated dog park areas.

Fig. 9 Sign Restricting Uses Obscured by Marker



Conclusion

What makes a good park? What roles do we want parks to serve? Municipal parks represent one of the few public commons available on a daily basis for many Americans, making them of vital importance for the wellbeing of humanity. Parks reveal a great deal about how we manage public resources and how people in positions of economic and political power have promoted cultural values in both overt and subtle ways. Parks can also be sites where we engage our senses and further our understanding of our relationships within the world in which we live.

Municipal parks are currently underutilized in the number and variety of users, as well as in the limited types of activities that are encouraged and acceptable due to decades of formal regulation as well as informal norms. These parks hold significant potential for enhancing health and wellbeing of humans and the ecosystems upon which we depend. They can serve as sites for activities that further social cohesion necessary for advancing a participatory society in which members negotiate and have influence over decision-making regarding community norms. They may also facilitate physical activity in which individuals interact with the environment, enhancing a sense of connection to other life, and shaping environmental ethics.

Based on observations, I found that there were overall very few users of parks in the East Bay study area, particularly when one considers the number of people residing in the surrounding neighborhoods. Excluding special events, the average number of teen and adult visitors observed each park visit for all size parks was just over six people. Park visitors consisted of more men than women. Additionally, park activities were lacking in diversity. Most people were sedentary or participating in a limited number of moderate or vigorous activities such as walking or running. Men were more physically active than women.

Based on the principles of environmental justice, in an acknowledgement of historical and contemporary disparities, which have particularly adverse affects on women of color, and for the promotion of wellbeing for these women as well as the general population, I recommend three general areas for action to guide individuals, organizations, and governmental agencies.

First, municipal parks should provide additional free or sliding scale programming that integrates a wide array of activities, skills, and cultural perspectives. Existing programming in municipal parks departments focuses largely on indoor activities utilizing recreation centers rather than the outdoor parks. Programming for adults exists, but is fee-based. Additional programs should emphasize alternatives to current competitive sports options (such as dance and

cooperative games). Staffing parks will create jobs and increase use among underrepresented groups. Additionally, parks should evaluate their current equipment infrastructure and provide equipment that appeals to adults as well as children, such as swings for larger bodies. This may include creatively repurposing existing underutilized equipment, or seeking simple equipment made from natural (low processing, chemical input) materials. Since time constraints have been found by previous research to be a major barrier to outdoor recreation among women, providing equipment and encouragement for moderate to vigorous activities (such as jumping rope, hula hooping, certain types of dance), which can be done in small parks located near places of residence, could assist women in achieving health benefits associated with physical activity in shorter amounts of time. An array of activities or variations within activities allows people with different interests and abilities to participate and continue to participate over time as their abilities and interests change.

Space for these types of activities can be created in mini parks in areas that are not solely dedicated to children's play or picnicking. Patches of lawn and/or smooth, flat surfaces of an area 10' by 10' could accommodate a small group of people moving together. Placement of these areas should take into account women's preferences for space that is defensible and away from noisy streets with high-traffic volumes. Signage, equipment, processes for demarcating and acknowledging a group's use of the space in a way that will allow them to avoid intrusive or disrespectful passersby who seek to record or interfere, and programming that encourage women to try these activities in public parks are other ways to facilitate changes in park usage norms. Community pageants once served to celebrate local history and bring people together to envision desires for a shared future. Although pageants that flourished before WWII faced challenges in living up to their rhetoric of social inclusion, their goal was to advance social cooperation and acceptance. Parks should provide spaces for, and facilitate participatory creation of community celebrations that value variety as well as an acknowledgement of interdependence. Providing creative outlets will allow residents to return to the creation of culture rather than sedentary consumption of mass entertainment. The US government is responsible for direct and indirect suppression of the cultures of minority groups, and municipal parks may serve as one way to facilitate a return to health-promoting practice of cultural activities such as games and dancing.

The status of park infrastructure and level of maintenance send strong messages to park users regarding concern for the public's needs and desires. My second recommendation is that parks must address the lack of sanitation infrastructure available to their users and provide adequate facilities and drinking water. The City of Oakland zoning code expressly prohibits restrooms in mini-parks and requires special use permits to build them in other small parks. Water fountains were uncommon in Richmond City parks. Overall, facilities in all cities were scarce and often lacking hand-washing facilities that could reduce spread of disease and improve public health. Shade structures and other seasonal infrastructure that block rain will allow park users to enjoy the facilities during rain or intense sunshine. Roll-up canopies and other structures may also increase the longevity of surfaces and equipment that age more rapidly due to exposure to rain and sunshine. Maintaining these facilities also creates additional staffing needs and provides jobs.

Finally, parks should actively participate in efforts to increase active transportation (e.g. walking or biking) to and from parks. In light of the sound and air pollution that arises from vehicular traffic, alternative modes of transportation, particularly active transportation, should be considered as viable ways to both reduce these environmental burdens and increase health benefits. To improve air quality, pedestrian and cyclist safety, and user experience of the

soundscape, parks advocates must also seek to reduce vehicular traffic near parks where people are encouraged to engage in physical activity. Active transportation and public transportation are also much less costly than ownership and maintenance of individual vehicles, making these transportation options more accessible and sustainable for low-income populations, as long as there are infrastructure and policies to facilitate, support, and encourage their use. These policies may range from municipal provision of bike and pedestrian infrastructure; financial resources to increase affordability, efficiency, and knowledge of active transportation; providing forums for education of all road and trail users to improve communication; and reform of traffic codes to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle right of way. Increasing physical activity and active transportation creates a positive feedback loop in that both can become more efficient and enjoyable as people engage in these activities on a regular basis.⁴⁰

Action in the areas of programming, infrastructure, and active transport can greatly improve human and ecosystem health, as well as enhance societal cohesion in a way that values diversity. Municipal parks have great potential for improving quality of life including health and social cohesion, as well as creating ecological benefits that will further produce additional health benefits among humans and other species. Environmental justice principles demand that we engage in participatory processes that will allow current residents to have input into creating the regulations and norms that apply to public parks so that they benefit the entire populations, and women of African, Asian, and American Indian descent in particular. These groups have been significantly impacted by social and legislative actions intentionally aimed at modifying and restricting their physical activity and creative, cultural expression. Goals and paths to health and wellbeing vary by culture, and facilitating these goals for diverse populations requires that we bring to light and reconsider the underlying values that guide park design, programming, and maintenance. Emphasis on gender roles and the family unit must be acknowledged and revisited to suit today's multicultural desires so that facilities are not predominantly used for sports and playgrounds that serve primarily men and children. Inequality in health outcomes provides one glimpse into the effects of this disparity. Benefits gained among these women will also create benefits for their families and society as a whole.

Chapter 4 Notes

¹ “An ancient Chinese healing art involving meditation, controlled breathing, and movement exercises designed to improve physical and mental well-being and prevent disease.” Meriam Webster, “Qi Gong.”

² I use the terms municipal and urban to describe the parks throughout this paper. These terms have many things in common, but are not necessarily interchangeable. When I use the term municipal park, I refer to parks that are owned and maintained by a town or city regardless of its population size or density. The parks that I observed in this research are both urban and municipal parks. I excluded regional parks that are located in the urban setting, but are not owned and maintained by a city. The rationale for the different uses of these terms is to impress upon the reader that common space is an important asset for urban and rural settings, and they share many commonalities; however, urban parks also carry a slightly different connotation and history. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to delve into this topic, the rationale for selecting a focus on women of Asian, African, and American Indian heritage is directly related to the history of cultural suppression and attempts at assimilation of traditional oral cultures that integrated physical and musical forms of communication and spirituality into daily life. While people from Latin America and other parts of the world have also been affected, current research does indicate that in many ways, Hispanics are more likely to utilize public parks. These findings raise the possibility for future research seeking to understand what factors encourage park use among different cultures, but because of these indications, as well as to narrow the scope of this project, I focus on parks located in neighborhoods where Asian, African American, and American Indian populations are at or above the California average for each respective population. I use the term heritage to encompass the role of cultural influences as well as physical (biological) inheritance. (I maintain use of category labels such as “Black” as used by the source—eg US Census, which reflect contemporary understandings of the terms).

³ Various types of learning occur in urban parks. Visibly posted signs that describe permitted or restricted activities officially govern behavior in parks; however, unwritten rules and norms also prevail. These norms, primarily established through legal and social enforcement during the first few decades of the parks movement during the late 1800s and early 1900s, have persisted and been transmitted through time as acceptable public behaviors. For example, municipal parks, and the activities most commonly taking place within them, are very influential in shaping how Americans interact with each other and relate to other organisms.

⁴ Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, “Urban Form and Social Context: Cultural Differentiation in the Uses of Urban Parks,” *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 14(2) (1995): 89-102; Robert R. Weyeneth, *Moral Spaces: Reforming the Landscape of Leisure in Urban America, 1850-1920* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1984); Jason Byrne and Jennifer Wolch, “Nature, Race, and Parks: Past Research and Future Directions for Geographic Research,” *Progress in Human Geography* 33(6) (2009): 743-765, quote on p. 745; Jeff Wiltse, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2007)

⁵ Jason Byrne and Jennifer Wolch, “Nature, Race, and Parks,” also provide a concise overview of the history and political-economy related to American parks; Weyeneth, *Moral Spaces*.

⁶ This foundational article should be seen as providing a comprehensive accompaniment to the research presented here. While my research examines who is using parks, and how, the results and discussion will be best understood and useful for action when considered in light of Byrne and Wolch’s article.

⁷ Byrne and Wolch, *Nature, Race, and Parks*.

⁸ Byrne and Wolch, *Nature, Race, and Parks*.

⁹ Ching-Hua Ho et al., “Gender and Ethnic Variations in Urban Park Preferences, Visitation, and Perceived Benefits,” *Journal of Leisure Research* 37(3) (2005): 281; Paul H. Gobster, “Managing Urban Parks for a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Clientele,” *Leisure Sciences* 24 (2002): 143-159; Karen G. Mumford et al., “Neighborhood Parks and Active Living: A Descriptive Study of Use Patterns and Physical Activity in Neighborhood Parks in Atlanta, Georgia,” (presented at the American Public Health Association 133rd Annual Meeting & Exposition, Philadelphia, PA. December 10-14, 2005); Kira Krenichyn, “Women and Physical Activity in an Urban Park: Enrichment and Support through an Ethic of Care,” *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 24(1) (2004): 117-130; Deborah A. Cohen et al., “Parks and Physical Activity: Why Are Some Parks Used More Than Others?” *Preventive Medicine* 50(Supplement) (2010): S9-S12; Myron F. Floyd et al., “Park-Based Physical Activity in Diverse Communities of Two US Cities: An Observational Study,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 34(4) (2008): 299-305; Kindal A. Shores et al., “Constraints to Outdoor Recreation: A Multiple Hierarchy Stratification Perspective,” *Leisure Sciences* 29(3) (2007): 227-246.

¹⁰ Laura L. Payne et al., “An Examination of Park Preferences and Behaviors among Urban Residents: The Role of Residential Location, Race, and Age,” *Leisure Sciences* 24(2) (2002): 181-198.

¹¹ Floyd et al., “Park-Based Physical Activity”; Cohen et al., “Parks and Physical Activity”; Louise Mazingo, “Women and Downtown Open Spaces,” *Places* 6(1) (1989): 39-47.

¹² Randy J. Virden and Gordon J. Walker, “Ethnic/Racial and Gender Variations Among Meanings Given to, and Preferences for, the Natural Environment,” *Leisure Sciences* 21(1999): 219-239.

¹³ S.K. Mangal, *An Introduction To Psychology* (New Delhi, India: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1995); John T. Cacioppo and William Patrick, *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection* (NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008); Wiltse, *Contested Waters*.

¹⁴ David Fleming, “The Space of Argumentation: Urban Design, Civic Discourse, and the Dream of the Good City,” *Argumentation* 12(2) (1998): 147-66; Colin Fisher, “African Americans, Outdoor Recreation, and the 1919 Chicago Race Riot,” In *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*, eds. Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll, Chap. 6. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

¹⁵ “Parks and Recreation,” City of Oakland; Wendell C. Taylor et al., “Environmental Justice: A Framework for Collaboration between the Public Health and Parks and Recreation Fields to Study Disparities in Physical Activity,” *Journal of Physical Activity & Health* 4(Suppl 1) (2007): S50-S63; Nicholas Dahmann et al., “The Active City? Disparities in Provision of Urban Public Recreation Resources,” *Health & Place* 16(3)(2010): 431-445; June Tester and Rachel Baker, “Making the Playfields Even: Evaluating the Impact of an Environmental Intervention on Park Use and Physical Activity,” *Preventive Medicine* 48(4) (2009): 316-20.

¹⁶ Ariane L. Bedimo-Rung et al., “The Significance of Parks to Physical Activity and Public Health: A Conceptual Model,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 28(2) (2005): 159-168; Deborah A. Cohen et al., “Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity,” *American Journal of Public Health* 97(3) (2007): 509-514; Elizabeth Orsega-Smith et al., “The Interaction of Stress and Park Use on Psycho-Physiological Health in Older Adults,” *Journal of Leisure Research* 36(2) (2004): 232-256; S. Kumanyikaa et al., “Obesity Prevention: The Case for Action,” *International Journal of Obesity* 26(3) (2002): 425-436; Ho et al. “Gender and Ethnic Variations,” 302.

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- ¹⁸ Janna Taylor, "Improving Access to Municipal Recreation Programs: What Mothers on Low Income Have to Say" (Master's Thesis, University of British Columbia, 2006).
- ¹⁹ Malcolm MacLachlan, *Culture and Health: A Critical Perspective Towards Global Health* (West Sussex, England: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd. 2006); Cedric X. Bryant et al., eds. *Ace Group Fitness Manual: A Guide for Fitness Professionals 2nd Edition* (US: American Council on Exercise, 2007).
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- ²¹ L. M., Powell et al., "The Relationship between Community Physical Activity Settings and Race, Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status," *Evidence-based Preventive Medicine* 1(2004): 135-144; Dahmann et al., "Active City"; Taylor et al., "Environmental Justice"; Lauren C. Abercrombie et al., "Income and Racial Disparities in Access to Public Parks and Private Recreation Facilities," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 34(1) (2008): 9–15; Robert Garcia et al., "'Pushing' Physical Activity, and Justice," *Preventive Medicine* 49(4) (2009): 330–333; Ho et al., "Gender and Ethnic Variations.," Cohen et al., "Contribution of Public Parks."
- ²² W. Babischa et al., "Increased Catecholamine Levels in Urine in Subjects Exposed to Road Traffic Noise: The Role of Stress Hormones in Noise Research," *Environment International* 26(7-8) (2001): 475–81; D. Ouis, "Annoyance From Road Traffic Noise: A Review," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 21(1) (2001): 101-20; R. Rylander, "Physiological Aspects Of Noise-Induced Stress and Annoyance," *Journal of Sound and Vibration* 277(3) (2004): 471–78; Bani Szeremeta et al., "Analysis and Evaluation of Soundscapes in Public Parks through Interviews and Measurement of Noise," *Science of The Total Environment* 407(24) (2009): 6143–6149; Jason G. Su et al., "Does Exposure to Air Pollution in Urban Parks Have Socioeconomic, Racial or Ethnic Gradients?" *Environmental Research* 111(3) (2011): 319-28.
- ²³ Ho et al. "Gender and Ethnic Variations"; Patrick C. West, "Urban Region Parks And Black Minorities: Subculture, Marginality, and Interracial Relations in Park Use in the Detroit Metropolitan Area," *Leisure Sciences* 11(1) (1989): 11; Paul H. Gobster, "Managing Urban Parks"; Mumford et al. *Neighborhood Parks*; Weyeneth, *Moral Spaces*.
- ²⁴ National and local studies have found inequitable distributions of parks and other facilities for recreation and physical activity based on socioeconomic status (SES) or race. Nationally, areas with higher percentages of African Americans were associated with a decreased likelihood of finding parks, open spaces, public pools, and bike paths. Increasing poverty within an area revealed fewer sports areas, parks, and bike paths. Taylor et al. cite a study in Los Angeles published in 2005, which found park acreage varied immensely when comparing census tracts where more than three quarters of the population was Latino, African American, or white: The presence of acres per 1000 residents was 0.6, 1.7, and 32 respectively. In another national study, block groups with higher SES were more likely to have facilities for recreation and physical activity than block groups with lower SES; additionally, presence of these facilities was associated with lower rates of overweight and increased reporting of moderate-vigorous physical activity (Taylor et al. 2007).
- ²⁵ Parks listed on official city websites for Berkeley (pop. 112,580), Oakland (pop. 390,724), and Richmond (pop. 103,701) were included in a database containing information such as address, size, and features of the parks (as available). The cities and towns located adjacent to Berkeley, Oakland, and Richmond with fewer than 100,000 residents in the 2010 census are not included (e.g. El Cerrito pop. 22,363; Albany pop. 16,145; Alameda pop. 73,812; Emeryville pop. 9,866). Parks identified for the city of Berkeley included 53 parks, Oakland 121, and Richmond 52, although these listings were not necessarily accurate representations of parks currently accessible to the public (or restricted to after school use).
- ²⁶ Addresses for each park were entered into the US Census Bureau's website American Fact Finder to determine which census block group and census tract included the park address. The 2010 census data question regarding "Race, Combinations of two Races, and Not Hispanic or Latino" (QT-P4) for the block group (roughly consisting of approximately 1,000 residents) was used to identify percentages of the population reporting to be White, Black, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Other for each census block group.
- ²⁷ While Berkeley and Richmond provide acreage of their city parks online, acreage for Oakland's parks is not listed on a city website; however, much of this information is available on <http://www.seecalifornia.com/parks/oakland-parks.html>. Twenty-one of Oakland's 121 parks do not have acreage listed; therefore, their size was estimated by comparing satellite images or first-hand experience to other parks where acreage was known. Fifty-six parks included in the population are categorized as "mini" because they consist of less than an acre. These mini parks often include play areas for toddlers and/or youth and places for sitting (benches and picnic tables), and may include grassy areas or developed plazas. Forty-five parks are 1-3 acres in size and are labeled "small." Small parks are often roughly the area of a few city blocks. They often include a few courts (e.g. tennis, basketball), a play area for small children, a grassy lawn, and a few areas for sitting or eating. Medium parks generally include the same amenities as small parks, but to a larger extent i.e. four courts instead of one or two. Thirty-six parks of 3.1-7 acres are classified as "medium" while 14 parks exceeding 7 acres make up the "large" category. Large parks generally include larger grassy areas, more sports fields, or an increased number of amenities (yet of similar type) than their smaller counterparts. Finally, 10 parks made up of more than 14 acres are identified as "very large." Parks were selected using numbers generated by the Research Randomizer website, which "is a free service offered to students and researchers interested in conducting random assignment and random sampling." The total number of large and very large parks may be underestimated because size was not estimated after parks were initially identified as one of the sixty-five parks to be excluded from the research population based on census data. Many of these parks were located in the affluent hills of Oakland. Loukaitou-Sideris, "Urban Form"; G. C. Urbaniak and S. Plous, "Research Randomizer," Available online <http://www.randomizer.org/>. Accessed 2011.
- ²⁸ Thomas L. McKenzie et al., "System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC): Reliability and Feasibility Measures," *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* 3(Suppl 1) (2006): S208–S22.
- ²⁹ Based on the SOPARC categories, slightly less stringent definitions of moderate and vigorous activity than those within the fitness industry are used. Sedentary activities consist of sitting, lying, or standing. Moderate activity includes aerobic activities such as walking or playing with a child or dog when it entails some walking, bending, or throwing. These activities are associated with only mildly elevated heart rates, but contribute to muscular strength, endurance, coordination, and/or flexibility. Vigorous activity includes activities that elevate the heart rate and challenge the cardiovascular, respiratory, and/or muscular systems. The researcher approximated the age and gender to the extent possible without interfering with the park users' experiences.
- ³⁰ A basic outdoor thermometer purchased at a hardware store for less than \$10 was used to gauge temperature and humidity. Although the researcher attempted to place the thermometer in the best discreet and shaded location during the 15-minute observation periods, in some instances it was difficult to find a suitable place without disturbing park users or drawing attention to the researcher. Decibel readings were obtained using a free iPhone application called dB Meter Pro. The main benefits of using this method to ascertain sound levels were its relatively innocuous presence during use, as well as the broader public's access to this type of tool; however, its main drawback is limited reliability in

readings based on iPhone microphone and proximity to sound. Thus, decibel recordings are more useful when comparing sound across parks, rather than taking reading levels at face value, since the decibel reader was not calibrated against a standard decibel reader. I found that sounds within a foot of the microphone (such as writing on the observation forms) interfered with readings of the ambient sound, and therefore sound results are presented qualitatively rather than quantitatively.

³¹ Temperatures ranged from 60-87 degrees F, with the average temperature being 70 degrees F, and the median temperature 69 degrees F. Humidity ranged from 22-74% humidity, with the average being 57% and the mean 59%. The vast majority of observations took place during clear weather, with the most inclement weather being thick low fog preceded by a light drizzle. A light breeze was common, and wind-from moderate to strong and steady-was also present in approximately a third of the observations.

³² Cohen et al., "Contribution of Public Parks."

³³ For a review of the literature, see K. Krenichyn, "Women and Physical Activity."

³⁴ It should be noted that age results are rough approximates since park users were not asked to self-identify; rather, I recorded ages based on my observations, which ranged from nearby to twenty or more feet away, and were influenced by attire, body language, and activity to some extent. Since there may be people who were miscategorized, it is more accurate to say that there were more adults present than youth or seniors. Cohen et. al used the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) method for observing users in eight large public parks with recreation centers in low-income, high-minority neighborhoods (relative to national averages) in the City of Los Angeles. Although Deborah A. Cohen et al., "Contribution of Public Parks" does not categorize the parks by size, their average park had twenty observation sites, indicating that they do not focus on the smaller parks that are the focus of this present study, which includes mini parks of less than an acre, or other small and medium-sized parks of up to seven acres. Cohen et. al found that about two-thirds of park users were sedentary. Males made up the majority of park users (62% compared to 38% females), and they were twice as likely to be engaged in vigorous activity than females (19% compared to 10%; 16% for males and females).

³⁵ Cohen et al., "Contribution of Public Parks."

³⁶ The sound of cars nearby was noted during sixty-four observations (two being very loud), and the hum of traffic was also noted forty-two times (eight being moderately loud and four very loud); however, the distinction between the sound of a nearby, individual vehicle and the constant hum of traffic on a busy road or freeway was not consistently noted during the early observations. During 30% of the observation periods, the sound of planes was present. Freight or passenger (Amtrak) trains were heard during 10% of the observations. In an additional 6% of observations, train whistles were heard, and another 5% of observations featured sounds of a distant train. During 8% of observations periods, the sound of BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) trains were noted. Helicopters were heard during 4% of the observations periods.

³⁷ Szeremeta et al., "Analysis and Evaluation"; Rylander, "Physiological Aspects."

³⁸ The sound of dogs barking in or near the park was recorded during 10% of the observations. Wind blowing (alone and in trees or dropped leaves) was also heard. Adult voices were noted during 44% of observations, kids' voices while playing during 20%, and angry shouting in or near the park heard from 4% of observation locations. Sounds associated with sports were present in 17% of the observations: The majority of sports-related sounds were associated with basketball (10), with two instances recorded for each baseball, soccer, tennis, and skateboards. Music from inside the park was noted during 9% of observations, and consisted of acoustic guitars, a portable boom box stereo, church bells, and live bands or djs amplified for special events requiring a permit. In an additional 7% of visits, music from near the park was noted, and primarily consisted of amplified music or radio (sports broadcasting) from a neighboring house or commercial venue. In one instance, there appeared to be a dance lesson or practice for young Latina/o adults (for something along the lines of a quinceañera) taking place in a driveway directly across from a medium-sized park. Music heard from a passing vehicle was noted during 4% of the visits, and includes a few instances of ice cream trucks in the area.

³⁹ C. Anand and D.S. Apul, "Economic and Environmental Analysis of Standard, High Efficiency, Rainwater Flushed, and Composting Toilets," *Journal of Environmental Management* 92(3) (2011): 419–28.

⁴⁰ To read more about health benefits associated with active transportation and physical activity, as well as factors that inhibit or encourage physical activity, see James F. Sallis, "Active Transportation" and Richard Killingsworth and Thomas Schmid, "Community Design."

Ch. 5: Conclusion

Oral, audible, physical, and visual forms of communication are fundamental to the human species; however, western society emphasizes linear, written communications to the detriment of oral cultures. Christianity has influenced American formal education significantly, where youth are separated from their families and taught to value bodily discipline (foundationally instituted in the form of sitting still and being quiet) and to communicate in English. It promotes the narrative that cultures with written languages are superior to those with oral cultures, and that the transition from oral to written cultures is a positive evolution in the advance towards “civilization.”

Throughout the course of humanity, some humans have sought to suppress and replace the songs, dance, and ceremonial practices of other people. Despite these efforts to eradicate these practices, there have been examples of resistance and concerted efforts to continue practicing these oral and physical traditions in order to maintain cultures for future generations. In Hawaii, hula was outlawed and condemned by missionaries, then commodified and commercialized by the tourism and entertainment industries; however, people continue to seek it as a source of spiritual connection to ancestors, knowledge, and the land. Reggae music arose from descendants of slaves in Jamaica and elsewhere, with the influence of music from America and other islands. Original roots or foundation music has a strong anti-colonialist base and was shaped by Jamaica’s independence from British colonization. It upholds a return to a more natural state of living (diet, clothing, etc.) that is reflective of its rural origins and desire to maintain a distinction from modern industrial and materialistic society. It espouses non-violence and spirituality is a source of resilience.

In addition to physical dislocation from access to natural resources, colonization and imperialism has profoundly affected humanity’s myriad relationships to our environment through concerted (and inadvertent) disruption of cultural reproduction through oral and physical means. Women are particularly affected, as previous generations of women were especially important in reproducing cultural knowledge and practices through oral and physical means. Removal or creation of fear of forested areas contributes to a lack of spaces to dance or carry out ceremonies.

Meanwhile, humanity suffers as a whole when individuality and isolation prevail culturally. American culture (also influential in global popular culture) highly emphasizes individualism in many forms. In public education, children are taught through physical education (which increasingly focuses on sports whereas originally included expressive and cooperative areas of dance and gymnastics) that their peers are competitors rather than collaborators. Due to the competitive environment for many sports, participation is more likely to be restricted to those who excel in the associated skills, relegating others who remain interested in the sport as spectators. Specialization and professionalization in many aspects of Western culture can impact how people interact in other arenas, such as policy decision-making.

Through dance and ceremony, people often emulate and embody animals or other components of their environments, which reinforced connections to all life, as well as contributed to certain ethical frameworks that respect and value life aside from one’s own. Likewise, the spirit and craving for aesthetic stimulation were fed by song, dance, and ceremony. With the removal and commodification of these practices, humans were vulnerable to substituted forms of entertainment and education: media such as newspapers, Hollywood, and TV, and the associated advertising (commercialization) play key roles in furthering this transition from participant to spectator, from meaning derived from action and integration into everyday life versus performing for outward appearances and competition. Colonizers and those seeking to

exploit both human and natural resources recognized the power of song, dance, and ceremonies among colonized people; therefore, they took concerted efforts to suppress and replace these practices in order to exterminate certain worldviews and ways of life that had drew upon knowledge and experiences from many, many generations.

A confluence of factors have contributed to a limited scope of physical activities that are deemed acceptable in public, which has a strong influence on our ability to connect to, and therefore act in the interest of other humans, species, and our abiotic environment. Greek philosophers reinforced a hierarchical divide between mind and body, and actively eschewed physical experiences as being of importance in people's higher development. Christianity also had a role in shunning many types of physical experiences as immoral, particularly among non-Christians, whose savagery was deemed in need of reformation in order to achieve social progress. Victorian attitudes defined strict gender roles and restrictions for appropriate behavior, while "scientific" understandings of race and evolution in the form of eugenics highlighted a strong emphasis on competition and judgment of fitness based upon physical features. Behaviors and physical features that enhance social desirability were normalized based upon racialized ideals. This way of thinking further exacerbated the divide between body and mind, a relationship that is often representative of spirituality or cultural meaning.

The professionalization and transformation of mass participation to the realm of elite art performances, to be practiced by only a few for a consuming audience, are more recent factors that have contributed to a narrow realm of acceptable behaviors in public parks. Sexualization and commodification also accompanied this shift. Industrial labor conditions and limited access to forests and other desired settings have also contributed to reduced ability to carry on numerous practices involving music, movement, and cultural production. These forces have occurred over many generations, and with varying degrees of importance. In order to have a more holistic understanding of some root causes of complex environmental and social problems society faces today, I present these myriad practices, beliefs, and attitudes. (There may, nevertheless, be other factors that are not presented here.)

Some of the health issues pertinent to this research include chronic and acute diseases related to sedentary lifestyles; for example, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and mental health disorders like depression and anxiety. Other health-related concerns stem more directly from environmental conditions, such as air quality degraded by fossil fuel and plant (forest) combustion or mineral extraction, and corresponding respiratory ailments. Exposure to toxic substances is another result of consumptive lifestyles that utilize harmful substances in product manufacturing, use, and/or disposal. My recommendations address some of these health inequities directly, while others are more indirect; however, all recommendations are guided by a fundamental appreciation for the Precautionary Principle, which seeks to avoid or reduce harm.

Social exclusion can lead to anxiety, depression, helplessness, violence, defensiveness, and questioning the purpose of one's existence. For peoples whose societies were centered on close-knit communities, being thrust into American competitive and materialistic society is particularly challenging. While generations have endured slavery, boarding schools, and mistreatment meant to undermine cultural pride among African Americans and American Indians, social exclusion, even today, continues to be normalized. Numerous reality TV shows emphasize "voting off" undesirable people each week, in contrast to Pueblo cultural stories and sharing practices which served the role of making each person feel included as part of the community, regardless of their mistakes, unless it was particularly harmful or egregious. By

enculturating youth into a world where they feel a precarious sense of belonging, we incur emotional distress that has serious impacts on health and behavior.

The impetus and framework for this research is informed by my own personal experiences: It does not claim universality, but is a grounded perspective that can still be relevant to understanding numerous perspectives and experiences that are less frequently included in academic knowledge production. While this situated knowledge is limited and partial in many ways, its subject matter—movement and public spaces—do pertain to a broad swath of society. In producing this document, I have had to reflect and overcome my own hesitation to participate in the power and privilege afforded to written and academic documents while I have personally travelled a path towards a connection to oral and embodied knowledge transmission. To lock words in writing to be reserved and reproduced electronically for an indeterminate time felt antithetical to oral, dynamic, and interactive communication; therefore, I hope that readers will be reminded that the words presented here represent a snapshot of thoughts captured in time, which is not necessarily complete or timeless.

In chapter two, I explored the interconnected experiences of American Indians, African slave descendants and Chinese immigrants in America during the 19th Century. Also incorporated into this narrative are the roles of women, environmental conditions, and effects of communication and transportation technology. This chapter highlighted the commonalities among seemingly disparate experiences, as well as sought to reveal the shifting sphere of influence among American women.

While American Indians, African descendants, and Chinese immigrants comprised many distinct tribal or ethnic units with different languages, practices, and beliefs, their oral traditions and group norms were transmitted through daily integration of song, dance, or games among most societies prior to European colonial contact. This reliance on song and dance to bind together a society is held to be common among most human cultures, particularly prior to industrialization or the interceding experiences of colonization by a foreign entity. Yet, over the course of the past few centuries, many efforts at assimilation, religious conversion, or eradication of a culture have severely hampered the continuation of these practices and knowledge transmission between generations. Despite forced relocations, migration based on environmental and economic necessity, outright bans and restrictions on these practices, and brutal violence in response to dance and celebratory gatherings, these practices continue to provide a sense of hope, resilience, belonging, community, and purpose for those who are able to access and participate in continuing the surviving traditions, or contributing to the re-creation or transculturation of existing and new practices. Through song, many people are brought together to understand a collective memory, and project a shared hope for the future.

Learning through song and dance are distinct experiences from reading written language: The physical experiences of the vibrations, sensations of movement produced through interactions with one's environment, and social interactions that accompany most forms of dance were seen as degrading and animalistic among early Western philosophers and religious leaders. Even popular dances in the early 20th century were condoned for their animal-inspired names such as the turkey trot and bunny hug. Many of the efforts to restrict dance and physical movements were aimed at civilizing peoples deemed as savage, inferior, or primitive. . Dancing that met the approval of European elites was refined, and required access to dance teachers and many hours of practice in order to make apparent one's social status. Progress, civilization, and advancement could be measured by the idleness of a "savage" society's musical instruments and dancing grounds.

The massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 reflects a fear of the power of dance. While Lakota Ghost Dancers sought the dance as a beacon of hope that they could return to a life of sovereignty where they could determine their daily movements and places to live, sources of food, and life sustained by spiritual practices in the presence of family and community, newspapers spread fear of an uprising and compared the dancing to a wildfire. This fear of an uncontrollable force, where the emphasis was on the destruction (rather than revitalizing aspects), reveals a larger attitude towards nature: That one seeks to control it, and when it is not controllable, it should be feared or halted when possible.

In contrast, many of the embodied practices of American Indians, Asian, and African descendants revered and respected natural creative and destructive forces. Humans are one component within larger systems or communities, and the role of humans is to understand and appreciate this place and the uncertainties that come with this humble position. Meanwhile, some trajectories of Western thinking, rooted in Greek philosophy and Christianity, view humans as superior beings above the other animals and natural elements. In addition, the experiences of the body were degraded in contrast to the capacity of the mind, which could be elevated through disconnecting it from the physical sensations of the body. Accompanying this worldview arose a notion that particular races of people are superior to others.

The belief in racial superiority and quest for economic gain contributed to the subjugation and exploitation of people as property in the form of slavery. The African slave trade flourished in America, but American Indians and Chinese people also have experiences with slavery. After the Trans-Atlantic African slave trade was ended, slave ship owners turned to Macau and other ports to transport kidnapped Chinese “coolies” to Latin America. After Emancipation in America, the continued sharecropping system and disparity in wealth led many people of Asian and African descent in America to labor under harsh conditions for little or no pay on Southern plantations, and eventually in industrial and commercial labor as well. In the 19th Century American west, prior to significant migrations of African Americans to the area, Chinese were subjected to vigilante violence and intended degradation in the media through comparisons of their physical features to those of African slaves.

In addition to forced labor for little to no wages, slavery, subjugation, and relocation had the effects of monitoring and controlling peoples’ social and spiritual activities. American Indians had dances and feasts banned on reservations, while African slaves had their opportunities restricted to Sunday, if they were maintained at all. Christianity was significantly imposed upon existing cultural practices, resulting in modification and adoption of Christian practices into or in place of ancient traditions.

Yet, a major theme of this dissertation is that despite significant challenges to cultural reproduction, people continued to recreate and create music and dance that served to celebrate life, pass on worldviews, and create a sense of community, identity, or belonging. The Ghost Dance, which has been characterized as a revitalization movement, is an example from the 19th Century, while the rise of Rastafarianism and reggae music is an example from the 20th Century. The 1890 Ghost Dance movement was brought, for the most part, to an abrupt halt with the massacre at Wounded Knee, while Rastafarianism has managed to persist for a quarter of a century, despite persecution by the Jamaican government, in part because of the global support of the movement through the widespread popular support of reggae music.

Common features of the music traditions featured here include a recognition of and reverence for natural spaces, such as rivers and mountains, use of metaphors, and parables or narratives that evoke shared worldviews, lessons, or visions for the future. Through music and

dance, societies can create a sense of shared or collective memory: In these instances, the collective memories acknowledge and frame suffering in a way as to provide comfort and offer hope to participants.

In addition to the lyrical content and language around the movements, the outcomes of the physical experiences of the accompanying dance and embodiment practices are important aspects to consider. By accompanying these messages of resilience with movement and social interaction, an actual physical transformation occurs: sadness and stress-related hormones are transformed into those related to happiness. Dancing also provides an opportunity to counterbalance physically demanding activities of daily life in order to achieve more physical comfort.

The environmental conditions of drought and flooding, as well as changes in ecosystems due to human interventions, such as the near extermination of the American bison played important roles in the shaping of how, when, and where people from different places came to interact and influence each other's lives. The discovery of mineral deposits, namely gold and silver, brought influxes of people from all over the world to the western US, with severe consequences for the indigenous populations who were subject to bounties, restrictions on where they could live and gather resources, restrictions and assaults on spiritual beliefs and practices, and ensuing diseases which were exacerbated by changing ecosystems and resources bases. Chinese immigrants from a small region in China sought opportunities in America largely because of famine related to environmental conditions, in conjunction with political instability related to ethnic tensions and opium wars. Their contributions to the labor of building the western portion of the first transcontinental railroad brought drastic changes to the lives of American Indians in the plains and western states.

Transportation technologies are important to consider in these interconnected narratives as well. The railroad also served a key role in spreading the 1890 Ghost Dance from its origins in Nevada to the plains and throughout the Western US, as delegates from the Lakota tribes travelled by train to visit and learn from Wovoka in order to bring it back to their people. Increased transportation speed and ease due to railroads, steam ships, and canals also facilitated the spread of popular images and conceptions of American Indians through shows such as Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which in turn opened up opportunities for American Indians to escape reservation life and experience other places and cultures. The romanticized and dramatized images and depictions of American Indians were particularly influential in the eastern United States, where many influential reform organizations, such as the Indian Rights Association, which focused on shaping American Indian policy and experiences, originated.

Communication technology, i.e., the telegraph and printing press, enflamed the public's fear of the Ghost Dance, which facilitated a mass military gathering in South Dakota. The conclusion of the Civil War allowed for more troops to be assigned to tasks associated with the Indian Wars. The 9th Cavalry, comprised of African Americans, made up one group of soldiers nicknamed "Buffalo Soldiers" by American Indians. While some soldiers were sent to protect Indian lands from white settlers illegally encroaching on reserved land, they were also sent to find and retrieve the fleeing band that was eventually murdered at Wounded Knee by another battalion, a mission that the Buffalo Soldiers did not successfully fulfill.

As the frontier was declared closed, much attention shifted to the growing urban centers, where immigrants gathered for industrial job opportunities. The rising number of people inhabiting cities in what was seen as crowded, unsanitary, and dangerous conditions caused alarm among middle- and elite classes. Newspaper reporting that instilled fear and exaggerated

racial stereotypes contributed to scapegoating and political reactions to the Ghost Dance as well, by influencing Congress and their support of troops sent to the plains to quell the perceived unrest.

Chapter three analyzed Progressive Era responses to the rapid urbanization and industrialization of the nation including the settlement and urban parks movements. Parks proponents varied in their motives: Some sincerely sought to improve the lives of the downtrodden urban masses, while others wanted to modify the behavior of the working classes out of contempt. Behaviors and types of visitors deemed as acceptable in parks were enforced officially by police officers, as well as through more covert and violent means. In Chicago, riots ensued after increasingly common clashes among park users who opposed African American visitors to certain parks or swimming facilities. Police and park staff were actively involved in this segregation and violence. Modern dance in America grew out of the efforts of women and men of European descent who benefitted from the opportunities for live performances offered in vaudeville and the large-scale dance productions that took place prior to the rise of motion pictures. Modern dance integrated themes of American expansion, nature, and inspiration (or appropriation) of “exotic” cultures. While Denishawn enacted portrayals of Native American dances, dancing was severely restricted or banned on reservations. Utopian community projects, material feminists, and even some modern dance pioneers were labeled as communists and were scrutinized by capitalist forces.

With this historical context in mind, chapter four investigated current park use, or non-use, and can be interpreted in a more comprehensive way. Despite urban parks being located in densely populated neighborhoods, many of these spaces are empty or have only a few visitors at a time. When there are visitors, the types of activities that they pursue are quite limited to sitting, eating, reclining, walking, running, or engaging in a small range of ball-oriented sports activities. Women were less likely than men to visit and were also less likely to be physically active than men in the urban municipal parks observed in neighborhoods reporting at or above California’s state average for African American, American Indian, or Asian populations.

This dissertation has explored the current implications of public access to meaningful movement in urban public spaces in light of the historical legacy of cultural suppression and assimilation associated with colonization, imperialism, and industrial modernization. I have not provided a direct causal connection; rather, the unique aspects of this research is to provide a holistic look at the current public health problems associated with sedentary lifestyles and environmental and social degradation stemming largely from this disconnection between body and mind.

Recommendations

In seeking a just, equitable, and diverse public education system, physical activity emphasizing expression and cooperation through oral and physical communication are paramount. Stratification in society by race, class, and gender is exemplified by contrasting the detrimental effects of many forms of physical labor, with little access to recreation to counterbalance these effects, to the commodification and consumption of leisure activities among privileged elites. With historical roots in eugenics, the notion of racial superiority as evidenced by physiology must be addressed. Likewise, the Western (Greek) ideals of human form and beauty imbedded in the early development of physical education in America need to be revealed, and then expanded to reflect the whole spectrum of humanity present in America.

Through the writing of this dissertation, I have sought to highlight the importance of movement and embodiment of belief as an avenue for connecting humans to each other and to our surrounding environments in response to a concern for several interrelated and pressing problems associated with environmental degradation and health inequalities. Public parks in an urban center serve as a venue for examining the implications of past and current values and norms that govern public behavior and reflect several important facets of modern life in America. In light of current federal efforts to reduce obesity, such as First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign, I hope that this research focuses attention on the need for a renewed and more inclusive vision of how health, fitness, and recreation are understood and encouraged. In order to do this, I presented a multi-disciplinary argument, integrating historical perspectives on physical recreation, parks, and subaltern narratives in relation to empirical observations of current park usage.

To balance the current emphasis on competition and elitism, activities can be encouraged that emphasize belonging, cooperation, and mass participation. In the face of severe and seemingly minor injustices, music has been a format through which messages of resistance, renewal, and possibility have persisted despite severe suppression. Improvisation, drumming, and music, meanwhile have been found to activate parts of the brain that promote self-expression, and assist in healing from pain or trauma. In many instances, music, and the accompanying dance and culture, has been a conduit for liberatory mindsets aimed at acknowledging oppression, and as a pathway for reclaiming and revitalizing a world-view and practices interrupted by colonization and imperialism. These practices are not presented as artifacts of the past, but as living and changing practices intended to honor ancestors, nurture current participants, and provide guidance for future generations.

Related concerns for environmental problems center on consumption, and how material consumption and providing alternative narratives and activities that value physical and social engagement rather than materialism as a way to achieve happiness and enjoyment can reduce its ensuing environmental degradations. The Lakota and Rastafarians spoke against materialism, seeking spiritual fulfillment in daily life through prayer and community as expressed through music and dance. In addition to cultural shifts away from advertisers seeking to sell happiness through material items or commodified services, physical activities and social connections that can facilitate ease and enjoyment of active transportation will impact air, water, and soil quality when used as alternatives to fossil-fuel driven transportation.

In order to work towards this possibility, change is needed on different fronts. Parks managers and city councils may need to address issues such as sound regulations and group permitting processes in conjunction with nearby residents, as well as addressing how the presence or absence of particular facilities such as restrooms or flat open spaces appropriate for activities aside from a limited range of competitive sports affects how parks are utilized. Staff and volunteer leaders are needed to initiate local programming, while a shift in public opinion around acceptable and desirable activities for parks is also necessary. Federal, state, and county financial and regulatory support would also be in line with acknowledging and seeking to redress the role these agencies have had in suppressing and limiting the range of acceptable behaviors in the past, which have been detrimental to cultural reproduction and the vitality of many cultures.

Public spaces and programs are needed to reintegrate opportunities for people to participate in cooperative activities aimed at inclusion, regardless of performance abilities. Early female physical education proponents stressed mass participation, and actively opposed elite competitive sports, such as the Olympics. Today, competitive sports are frequently sponsored by

alcohol, soda, and junk or fast food companies, which send a mixed message about healthy lifestyle choices. In many states, the top paid public employees are football or basketball coaches, while scandals about professional athletes using performance-enhancing drugs are the topics of Congressional hearings as well as the mainstream media.

Creating a sense of belonging and enjoyment from social and physical activity is one vital step towards addressing a historical legacy that emphasized a differentiation between mind and body, and between meaningful, ritualized movement and commercialized recreation. This divide contributes to many environmental and social problems we face today, and is related to a separation between our actions and the impacts of those actions. In order to facilitate this change, there are several cost-effective solutions that can be implemented by local governments, with the support of federal funding. In the area of policies and management, residents and local municipalities must have participatory discussions around sound pollution, and what types of sounds are allowable at certain times. Part of this decision-making should include a discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of allowing certain types of sounds, particularly balancing who benefits, and who is burdened. Today, the sound from vehicular traffic, construction, or gas-powered lawn care equipment is virtually omnipresent in our cities; meanwhile, drumming and live music in public parks is subject to sound ordinances, which were not observed to be tested in the parks observed.

First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign highlights federal support for initiatives to improve health through diet and physical activity. In order to serve the populations most impacted by health inequalities related to sedentary lifestyles, it is vital to understand the contexts in which movement, physical culture, and conceptions of health vary by culture and have been radically influenced by colonial, governmental, and capitalist forces aimed at promoting Euro-centric ideals and standards. While body composition, particularly percentage of body fat, is the center of focus and discourse around obesity or overweight and related health conditions, the emphasis on body composition should be drastically put into perspective by considering many other factors related to health such as strength, endurance, flexibility, mental, physical, and spiritual fulfillment, and the ability to live life while minimizing pain, discomfort, and suffering.

By re-centering the focus of movement on spiritual or social meaning as opposed to as a means to an end, (e.g., physical appearances or winning at a sport support) for creative, expressive, cooperative, and coordinated rhythmic movement will mark a return to a commonly shared aspect of human cultural life that persisted for thousands of years throughout most of human history. Through movement and reclaiming of public spaces, Americans can advance efforts to reconnect to our selves, cultures, communities, and surroundings. These changes will set us on a path towards addressing the root causes of pervasive and pressing global environmental problems and corresponding health inequalities.

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Appendix A: System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (Modified) Form

Date _____ *M T W Th F Sa Su* AM Mid PM Eve Time _____

Park _____

Obs. Location _____

Temp _____ Weather _____ Dec (Av/Mx) _____

Sounds _____

Restrooms: Y N Cond: (soap/TP) _____ Parking: L S B _____

Staffed: Y N Organized Event: Y N

Fountain: Y N Cond _____ Trash Cans: Y N

Comments _____

	Activity	Age					Activity Level			
		0-3	4-11	12-17	18-24	25-54	55+	S	M	V
1':										
F										
M										
2':										
F										
M										
3':										
F										
M										
Notes										