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“Enslaved”: Critical Discourses of the U.S. Prison Industrial Complex and Asian Migrant Labor

This paper examines how a discourse of slavery is currently mobilized within popular discourse and cultural production to produce critical distance from existing political economic relationships characteristic of the new enclosures of late capitalism. The figuring of contemporary Asian immigrant slave labor emerges in Hollywood films, critical documentary, dominant media, and critical discourse. I analyze the conflicted relationship between representations of this global trade in human trafficking in relation to the U.S. “domestic” discourse of the Prison Industrial Complex and the Prison Abolition movement.