Title
Pride and Property: Queer Settler Colonialism, Blackness, and the Landed Politics of Accountability

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Publication Date
2021

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Pride and Property:

Queer Settler Colonialism, Blackness, and the Landed Politics of Accountability

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Gender Studies

by

Savannah Jane Kilner

2021

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Pride and Property:

Queer Settler Colonialism, Blackness, and the Landed Politics of Accountability

by

Savannah Jane Kilner

Doctor of Philosophy in Gender Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Mishuana Goeman, Co-Chair

Professor Kyungwon Hong, Co-Chair

This dissertation plumbs the often-eclipsed connections between antiblackness, Indigenous dispossession, sexuality, and urban space. It contributes to an understanding of the racial and gendered sexual economy of settler neoliberalism by examining a variety of (queer) narrations, practices, and imaginaries of space, place, property, and land in San Francisco and Oakland, CA (Ramaytush Ohlone and Lisjan territories), from the late 1970s to the present. "Pride and Property" is not a history; rather, it constellates a series of moments that elucidate how the twin projects of Black surplus and Indigenous disappearance in the settler city create the conditions of possibility—and the *grounds* for—what has long been narrated as a "gay homeland" or "queer mecca." While many queer spatial imaginaries constituting the Bay Area are entrenched in antiblackness and settler colonialism, still others practice, imagine, and bring forth anti-colonial, abolitionist futures. Mobilizing theoretical frameworks from critical ethnic studies and queer of color critique, Black

feminist theories of slavery's afterlife and the carceral state, and critical Indigenous studies, this project joins a growing literature that disrupts the ways scholarly formations are too often thought to be discrete. In utilizing archival methods and textual and visual analysis, it centers the role of *narrative* and *representation* both in naturalizing racialized dispossession and in providing alternate visions of futurity, belonging, and collectivity.

The narrative of the "Great Gay Migration" of the late 1970s and early 1980s relied on the disavowal of settler colonialism and slavery amid the deepening polarizations of neoliberalism and growing carceral state. In the decades that follow, narratives of queer loss during the "dot-com booms" mobilize nostalgia for San Francisco's progressivism in ways that disavow past and present modes of violence and dispossession. With a focus on property relations and attunement to the ways incorporative logics animate but also precede neoliberalism, this project culminates in a theorization of the distinct, yet relational "dispossession by inclusion" of Black and Indigenous peoples in Oakland, CA, and the distinct yet relational refusals—that precisely through reckoning with dispossessive histories of property—invoke other temporalities to craft a politics of accountability.

The dissertation of Savannah Jane Kilner is approved.

Sarah Haley

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University of California, Los Angeles

2021

In memory of Lenn Keller, Elmo "Jim" Hahn, and Ruth Wadkins

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support, engagement, scholarship, and political work of many incredible people. My thanks, first, to my advisors. Mishuana – you have pushed my thinking in such generative ways and really made me think about property! Your warmth, genuineness, and fierce dedication to Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge in all its forms have been a beacon. Grace – you *got* my project from the start. Having that intellectual affinity in a mentor has been such an enduring source of support and I have much gratitude for your deep, rigorous engagement with my work. I could not have asked for more dedicated and supportive advisors. Sarah – thank you for being so encouraging and supportive during my time at UCLA. Each of our conversations over the years pushed my thinking in ways that have deeply shaped this project. Your principled commitment to abolition and Black feminist thought within and beyond the academy inspires. Emily – thank you for your incredibly generous engagement with my work. Your feedback in the final stages of writing has been invaluable and your commitment to anticarceral feminisms within and beyond academia is likewise so admirable.

Beyond my committee, I feel incredibly lucky to have been surrounded by many brilliant scholars at UCLA. Classes and conversations with Robin D.G. Kelley, Angela Y. Davis, Maylei Blackwell, Uri McMillan, and Matt Hooley, among many others, shaped my thinking and made me a better scholar. I also want to acknowledge my undergraduate professors in Ethnic Studies at Mills College. Déborah Berman Santana, Vivian Chin, Brinda Mehta, and especially Chinyere Oparah cracked my world open, made me excited about learning and study, and inspired lifelong commitments to abolition and liberatory movements in me and so many others. I'm grateful to have gotten the opportunity to teach at Mills and acknowledge my colleagues there, especially Priya Kandaswamy and Natalee Kēhaulani Bauer. Many people at conferences and beyond provided

helpful feedback on my work. I thank Jasmine K. Syedullah, who, at one of the very first conferences I presented at, suggested the title "Pride and Property." It stuck!

I am also community-educated. My participation in and learning from campaigns, organizations, conferences, and study groups outside of academia over the years formatively shapes my politics and scholarship. I thank especially current and former members of Critical Resistance, Legal Services for Prisoners With Children, All of Us or None, Stop the Injunctions Coalition, Community United Against Violence, Catalyst Project, California Coalition for Women Prisoners, Indian People Organizing for Change, West Berkeley Shellmound Network, Sogorea Te' Land Trust, POOR Magazine/Homefulness, and Femme Conference, in addition to many organizations, political formations, movement leaders, grassroots intellectuals, and organizers past and present. In particular, I want to acknowledge Corrina Gould, tribal chair of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan. Corrina – I am humbled to work with you and support Ohlone/Lisjan resurgence to protect the West Berkeley Shellmound. Thank you for engaging my work and taking the time to read portions of this dissertation. Your and Fui's support and encouragement has meant everything.

I thank the amazing Gender Studies staff Van Do-Nguyen, Samantha Hogan, Richard Medrano, and Jenna Miller-Von Ah. I acknowledge students past and present, especially Sa Whitley, for their comradeship, collaboration, and support over the many years as a cohort of two! I also thank Angela Robinson, Preeti Sharma, Laura Terrance, and Mae Miller for friendship, laughter, and intellectual camaraderie. I thank Stephanie Lumsden, Dalal Alfares, Naaz Diwan, Amanda Apgar, Shawndeez Jadali, Bianca Beauchemin, and Sarah Montoya for your warmth and generosity.

I have been buoyed by friends, comrades, and family in Huichin and beyond. I thank Tahereh Aghdasifar and Magie Ramírez (now both professors!) for countless writing dates, kvetch sessions, and deep reciprocity. Tahereh – your huge no bullshit femme heart is a blessing in my life. Magie – I'm so glad the Oakland workgroup brought us together and that our intellectual and

political affinities have grown into such fruitful collaborations! Old and new friends and chosen family – including Jenny Weston-Rubianes, Jess St. Louis, Dacia Holliday, Kyisha Williams, Angela Robinson, Sa Whitley, Miyuki Baker, Erika Lyla, Claire Urbanski, Nadine Dixon, Eliana Rubin, and many many others – have kept me going and kept me grounded. I thank Jenny a.k.a. Auntie J, our dear friend and housemate, for many hours of unpaid childcare over the last months. I thank Adz and Red for letting me use their therapy office to write on the weekends. I'm unsure that I would have been able to finish without this quiet space away. I thank Rana Alshalyan of Peaceful Heart Family Daycare for her incredibly loving care of Coral.

Grad school is not easy, and there were times when I was not sure if I would finish. I thank the many friends, beloveds, and therapists who supported me through difficult times, including some tough health challenges, over the last eight years. I thank my in-laws Anne Davis and Bill and Susan Pluss for their love, cheerleading, and childcare. AJ – your love, care, cooking, and commitment have made it all possible. I love you! Our toddler Coral is the light of my life and I marvel everyday at the life we've built together. Lastly, two very important people passed away in the final months of the PhD. Lenn Keller, a Black butch lesbian elder and lifelong activist whose influence and words appear in my dissertation, died in December. My Grandma, Ruth Wadkins—a loving, foul-mouthed, rustbelt woman who I loved very much—died in April. This is for both of them.

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PREFACE

In Marlon Riggs' now-classic 1989 film, *Tongues Untied*, Riggs leaves the "sea of vanilla" that is the white gay enclave of San Francisco's Castro in the Ramaytush Ohlone territory of Yelamu for the Black gay spaces of Oakland's Lake Merritt waterfront in the Ohlone/Lisjan territory of Huichin.[1] At a time when Oakland was popularly characterized as a space of blight, violence, and danger, it was also a site of Black queer possibility. The film opens to throngs of Black gay men gathered to cruise, laugh, and flirt around the Lake as Riggs recites "Brother to brother. Brother to brother. Brother to brother," in rhythmic repetition.[2] *Tongues Untied* beautifully depicts intimacies among Black gay men and includes some representation of Black trans women and femmes. Throughout the film, scenes in Oakland, CA and Brooklyn, NY—though never named as such—contain anti-colonial spaces of Black queer futurity. Though far from utopic, these are spaces of refuge from the racial violence constitutive of the Castro, a place that is named repeatedly throughout the film.

Tongues Untied includes Riggs' narrative of leaving his hometown of Hephzibah, Georgia, a place he characterizes as rife with unrelenting antiblack terror and homophobic violence. He flees to San Francisco, where, "In California I learned the touch and taste of snow."[3] The screen cuts to throngs of white men sauntering down Castro Street. "In this great gay mecca, I was an invisible man. I had no shadow, no substance, no place, no history, no reflection. I was an alien unseen and

[1] Riggs, *Tongues Untied*, VHS (Strand Home Video, 1989). What is now known as San Francisco spans Ramaytush Ohlone land in the territory of Yelamu. In the East Bay, Ohlone people have recently begun to reclaim the Indigenous name of Lisjan, though Chochenyo Ohlone is still widely in use. When referring to Ohlone people who's territories encompass Oakland, I primarily use Ohlone/Lisjan to reflect this shift. See "Lisjan (Ohlone) History and Territory," https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/lisjan-history-and-territory/.

[2] Riggs.

[3] Riggs.

seen. Unwanted. Here as in Hephzibah, I was a nigger. Still."[4] With this, the film flashes antiblack iconography in Castro shop windows and gay publications, including sexualized caricatures of large muscular Black men depicted with Sambo-like features.

Riggs, in his description of having "no place, no history, no reflection," attunes us to the racialized conditionality of personhood in the Castro—a place so emblematic of modern queer life—as an afterlife of slavery that is constitutive of settler colonialism.[5] Riggs' narrative, situated during what has been called the "Great Gay Migration" of gays and lesbians to U.S. cities during the late 1970s and early 1980s, points to the ways antiblackness permeated such urban formations of gay and lesbian life.[6] But Riggs also gestures to the fugitive possibilities that inhere in having "no shadow, no substance, no place." "I quit the Castro. No longer my home, my mecca, and went in search of someplace better." With this, the screen cuts back to Oakland: a Black trans woman strolls along the lake, the water reflecting the moon and streetlights.[7] Liberation is not a place—as in the Castro—but felt, if fleetingly, through a processual and relational engagement with space: through the kinetic relationality of a choreographed dance at the edge of the lake or in the sonic and aesthetic intimacy of "Snap Divas," a group of Black gay men who snap in unison to a visual code known only to each other.

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[4] Riggs.

[5] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 26, no. 3 (2008): 1–14. As I will describe in the introduction, and in more detail in chapters 1 and 3, I join a growing scholarship that seeks to understand imbrications of settler colonialism and Indigenous dispossession with slavery and its afterlife.

[6] Riggs, *Tongues Untied*; Kath Weston, "Get Thee to a Big City: Sexual Imaginary and the Great Gay Migration," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* 2 (1995): 253–77.

[7] While many scholars characterize her as a "drag queen," I read her as a trans woman and/or femme because it seems more accurate and also to combat trans-misogynoir, knowing that we do not know the language she used to describe herself.

Black queer space is "placeless, a space without geographical coordinates."[8] This placelessness requires forging "new spaces and moments of freedom, albeit ephemeral."[9] C. Riley Snorton, in his Spillersian analysis of Blackness, subjectivity, and flesh, writes that, "To suppose that one can identify fugitive moments in the hollow of fungibility's embrace is to focus on modes of escape, of wander, of flight that exist within violent conditions of exchange."[10] Riggs, along with Essex Hemphill and others featured in the film, don't claim "Oakland"—unceded Ohlone/Lisjan land—as inherently liberatory, as in the settler imaginary of the Castro.[11] Indeed, one must recognize the landscape to fix the film in place. While there are spaces of Black queer possibility within it, Oakland is not championed as queer nor is it outside of or apart from the conditions that structure their lives. There is no resolution—pain, loss, and isolation endure, particularly in the context of the racialized HIV/AIDS crisis. But the film does end in possibility: intergenerational groups of Black gay men sing and dance around the water. "Older rhythms sustain me," Riggs states, as portraits of Harriet Tubman, Fredrick Douglass, and Bayard Rustin intersperse with contemporary images of Black gay men marching with banners that read "Black Men Loving Black Men is a Revolutionary Act."[12] These "older rhythms" recall moments "of escape, of wander, of flight," in Snorton's words, away from normative queer spatial formations saturated by antiblackness and settler colonial

[8] Marlon M. Bailey and Rashad Shabazz, "Editorial: Gender and Sexual Geographies of Blackness: Anti-Black Heterotopias (Part 1)," *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 21, no. 3 (April 2014): 318.

[9] Bailey and Shabazz, 318.

[10] C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Transgender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 57.

[11] Indigenous peoples are not mentioned in the film and yet I read this engagement with space as existing outside of normative modes of possession, conditioned as they are by Indigenous dispossession and slavery.

[12] Riggs, *Tongues Untied.*

ontologies of possession.[13]

I begin with *Tongues Untied* because it archives an alternate relationship to the queerness of Ohlone territories, more commonly known as Oakland, San Francisco, and the Bay Area; a relationality that is shaped by but exists outside of the spatial and temporal coordinates of property. At present, the racialized spatial juxtaposition between the Castro and Lake Merritt is far less salient, as the city of Oakland generally, and Lake Merritt specifically, have been sites of relentless gentrification and racialized displacement—even and especially as it has become more normatively legible as a queer destination. Confluences of criminalization and imprisonment, real estate speculation, and neoliberal retrenchment displaced almost 40 percent of Oakland's Black residents between 1990 and 2011.[14]

Figure 1. "Oakland is Pride / No Cruising Zone" (2016)
Photograph by author

Tongues United, juxtaposed with contemporary signage at Lake Merritt announcing "No

[13] Riggs; Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Transgender*, 57.

[14] Causa Justa :: Just Cause, "Development Without Displacement: Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area" (Oakland, 2014), 7.

Cruising" signals complex and contradictory processes of valuation characteristic of what is often called neoliberalism. Part of a decades-long redevelopment scheme, flags that read, "Oakland is Pride, Pride is Oakland," ring the Lake Merritt waterfront every summer. In the above photograph, the pride flag hangs above a permanently affixed sign that reads "No Cruising," a purportedly race-neutral policy that enacts racial—and specifically antiblack—violence along the lake.[15] The irony, of course, is that the lexicon of cruising has long-signaled queer public sexual cultures. In the case of Oakland, the neoliberal recognition, affirmation, and celebration of queerness has depended specifically on antiblackness and resulted in a shrinking of space for queers of color, particularly for Black queers. Thus, the "No Cruising" sign also harkens to Lake Merritt's past (and perhaps fugitive present) as a place for cruising among Black men and others and tellingly evokes a loss of Black queer space under the official sign of "Pride."

The Oakland pride flag signals the contradictory processes of valuation constitutive of racialized urban displacement in the colonial present. I apprehend the pride flag as a settler colonial technology; not as metaphor, but as a discursive tool narrating multicultural progress on occupied and unceded Ohlone/Lisjan territories. As I will argue throughout this dissertation, we cannot fully comprehend racial, spatial, and sexual economies of neoliberalism without a deep engagement with ongoing materialities of contested settler occupation of Indigenous land and polities. The slow and at times rapid violences of neoliberalism in the settler city, so often narrated as *progress*, are never complete or resolved. As *Tongues Untied* suggests, there have always been alternate spatial imaginaries, if illegible to normative queer movements and the state.

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[15] "10.16.140 – Cruising," accessed May 25, 2021, https://library.municode.com/ca/oakland/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT10VETR_CH10.16MITRCORE_10.16.140CR. Oakland municipal code defines "cruising" as driving past the same point more than once in a four-hour period. Implemented in 1995, it has been criticized for targeting young Black people in particular for driving, playing music, and participating in sideshows.

…

I also begin by situating myself within this inquiry, an inquiry that is necessarily fraught, necessarily incomplete, and one that is mediated by its precise conditions of possibility: the ongoing theft of ancestral, traditional, and unceded Lisjan/Ohlone and Ramaytush Ohlone land; the spatialized antiblackness and entangled racialized dispossessions upon which settlement continues to be structured. As Jasmine E. Johnson writes of her hometown and of mine, "San Francisco *is* a history of Black folks having to go."[16]

I began thinking seriously about this project around 2008 or 2009 at the height of the foreclosure crisis in Oakland. I began to notice how, guided by activist impulses, massive numbers of white, liberal arts-educated queers (much like myself) were moving to Oakland as people of color, but particularly Black people (including queers) were navigating criminalization and catapulting rents amid relentlessly violent and escalating displacement. As I began to participate in anti-racist movements, young white queers constantly asked me where I was from. I started to understand how conceptualizations of Oakland as a *frontier* of queer radicalism determined the ways such communities were often unaware of the context of racialized economic violence in which they were enmeshed, even as they participated in movements for racial and economic justice. I observed the ways such narratives rhetorically mapped people in and out of spaces, places, and communities in materially significant ways. It's a much longer story, one that includes the North Oakland gang injunction, and my then-neighbor's arrest and foreclosure, but in 2011, I wrote what was originally circulated as a pamphlet, "Is 'The Bay' An Island? How Fetishizing the Bay Area Hurts Our Movements and Communities," in an attempt to think through some of the contradictions I

[16] Jasmine E. Johnson, "Dear Khary (An Autobiography of Gentrification)," August 13, 2013, accessed September 1, 2015, http://gawker.com/dear-khary-an-autobiography-of-gentrification-1227561902.

observed and situate them within settler colonialism.[17] I received a lot of encouraging feedback and was compelled to pursue the project further in the form of this dissertation.[18] I was raised with fifth generation white settler ties in San Francisco and Oakland, a fact that does not exempt me from complicity in gentrification or other modes of dispossession. Indeed, my paternal family of origin has benefited from Ohlone dispossession, antiblackness, and racialized dispossession there *generationally*. My ties there do mean that I have a long memory, deep sense of place, and investment in its future. All of this is what makes this project possible.

In a 1980 essay in *Top Ranking: A Collection of Articles on Racism and Classism in the Lesbian Community*, Cathy McCandless observed, "White middle class lesbians…have been moving en masse into 3rd World communities, pushing out people who've lived there for years and often showing little or no respect for the neighborhood and its culture. Clearly this is no way to build solidarity."[19] This sentiment reflects conversations that began in the late 1970s and continue to circulate throughout neighborhoods from West Philadelphia to Brooklyn to Oakland. While this narrative tends to conflate queerness with whiteness, it remains true that nothing quite signifies gentrification like a white lesbian with a stroller, a fitting description of myself these days. In some ways, I set out to understand why white queer people—in particular queer women and lesbians—an uneven collectivity I locate myself within, have become (or become figured as) harbingers of gentrification.

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[17] Savannah Kilner, "Is 'The Bay' An Island? How Fetishizing the Bay Area Hurts Our Movements and Communities: A Conversation Starter!," June 21, 2011, accessed May, 21, 2021, "https://thebayisnotanisland.blogspot.com/; Savannah Kilner, "The Safety Zone: Oakland's Plan for Displacement Met With Community Resistance," *The Abolitionist*, Issue #13/ Fall 2010.

[18] I'd released it at the 2011 Allied Media Conference in Detroit and shortly after circulated the writing online.

[19] Cathy McCandless, "Some Thoughts About Racism, Classism, and Separatism," in *Top Ranking: A Collection of Articles on Racism and Classism in the Lesbian Community*, edited by Sara Bennett and Joan Gibbs. (New York: Come! Unity Press, 1980), 9.

It has become a much more complex story, but I think the ways we arrive to our work matter, and for that reason I share some of them here.

INTRODUCTION

> It is a feeling that many equate with the quintessence of freedom; this powerful fancy, the unconditionality of self-will alone. It is as if no others exist and no consequences redound; it is as if the world were like a mirror, silent and infinitely flat, rather than finite and rippled like a pool of water.[1]
>
> —Patricia J. Williams, *Alchemy of Race and Rights*

> For me everything that happens on this territory, whether we're fighting for the Indigenous rights of Palestinians or my brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico or for Black Lives Matter or for the LGBTQ folks that are here with us. Whatever the issue is, we are related because you are on our territory. We share this land now.[2]
>
> —Corrina Gould, Chair of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan

"Pride and Property" plumbs the often-eclipsed connections among and between antiblackness, Indigenous dispossession, sexuality, and urban space and contributes to an understanding of the racial and gendered sexual economy of settler neoliberalism. It does so by examining a variety of (queer) narrations, practices, and imaginaries of space, place, property, and land in San Francisco and Oakland, CA (Ramaytush Ohlone and Ohlone/Lisjan territories), from the late 1970s to the present.[3] Loosely, though not entirely, chronologically organized, "Pride and Property" is not a history; rather, it constellates a series of moments that elucidate how the twin

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[1] Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 102.

[2] Corrina Gould, "Ohlone Geographies," in *Counterpoints: A San Francisco Bay Area Atlas of Displacement & Resistance*, ed. Anti-Eviction Mapping Project Editorial Collective (Oakland: PM Press, 2021), 75.

[3] There are many Ohlone tribes in the region, each with connected but different languages and territories. What is now known as San Francisco spans Ramaytush Ohlone land in the territory of Yelamu. In the East Bay, Ohlone people have recently begun to reclaim the Indigenous name of Lisjan, though Chochenyo Ohlone is still widely in use. When referring to Ohlone people who's territories encompass Oakland, I primarily use Ohlone/Lisjan to reflect this shift. See "Lisjan (Ohlone) History and Territory," https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/lisjan-history-and-territory/.

projects of Black surplus and Indigenous disappearance in the settler city create the conditions of possibility—and the *grounds* for—what has long been narrated as a "gay homeland" or "queer mecca." While many queer spatial imaginaries that constitute the San Francisco Bay Area are entrenched in ongoing spatial orders of Black and Indigenous dispossession, still others practice, imagine, and bring forth anti-colonial, abolitionist futures.

In utilizing archival methods and textual and visual analysis, this dissertation centers the role of *narrative* and *representation* both in naturalizing racialized dispossession and in providing alternate visions of futurity, belonging, and collectivity. To this end, I examine a range of historical and contemporary social movement formations, including Lesbians Against Police Violence, Gay American Indians, Moms 4 Housing, and Sogorea' Te Land Trust; visual art and writing featured in *ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter*; the novel *Valencia*, by Michelle Tea; the short documentary film *Beyond Recognition*, and numerous circuits of mainstream and alternative media. Through readings of such diverse sources, I demonstrate how the "Great Gay Migration" of the late 1970s and early 1980s relied on the disavowal of settler colonialism and slavery amid the deepening polarizations of neoliberalism and expansion of carceral power. In the decades that follow, narratives of queer loss during the "dot-com booms" mobilize nostalgia for San Francisco's progressivism in ways that disavow past and present modes of violence and dispossession. With a focus on property relations and attunement to the ways incorporative logics animate but also precede neoliberalism, this project culminates in a theorization of the distinct, yet relational "dispossession by inclusion" of Black and Indigenous peoples in the Ohlone/Lisjan territory of Huichin and the distinct yet relational refusals —that precisely through reckoning with dispossessive histories of property—invoke other temporalities to craft a politics of accountability.

In addition to the reasons described in the preface, I focus on Ohlone territories rather than multiple regions because I aim to demonstrate how, as epistemological structures of disavowal,

settler colonialism, antiblackness, and neoliberalism *take place* within a particular geography and do so with attention to the specificities of such entangled dispossessions in Ramaytush Ohlone and Lisjan/Ohlone territories.[4] I also examine this location because of its significance to various political imaginaries. As Savannah Shange writes, San Francisco is "a perpetually colonial place that marks the frontier of both the national imagination and the late liberal project."[5] One against which Oakland has long been constructed relationally. While grounded in material conditions, I do not apprehend the Bay Area as a fixed, empirically knowable site, but a *discursive field* that is articulated in numerous ways. My theoretical claims have implications beyond the material site of the San Francisco Bay Area because the queer settler imaginary that animates it is one that perpetually circulates.

(Un)mapping the Scholarly Terrain

Writing of San Francisco, Shange asks: "Who is disposable in a progressive dystopia, the real-life city of mirrors where diversity is king, settlers still settle, and slavery never stopped?"[6] This provocation in many ways frames the analytical and theoretical routes this dissertation takes: the fields I build from most centrally include critical ethnic studies and queer of color critiques of neoliberalism (because "diversity is king"), Black studies, in particular Black feminist theories of slavery's afterlife and the carceral state (because "slavery never stopped"), and critical Indigenous studies (because "settlers still settle"). By centering these scholarly and political frameworks, "Pride and Property" joins a growing literature that disrupts the ways in which scholarly formations are too

[4] Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

[5] Savannah Shange, *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, & Schooling in San Francisco* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 19.

[6] Shange, 2.

often thought to be discrete and invites relational modes of interpretation and inquiry that unsettle long-held epistemological conventions in urban geographic scholarship.

Queer Studies of Race, Space, & Neoliberalism

"Pride and Property" is temporally bracketed by what has been called the neoliberal era while also marking continuities that precede it. While disciplinary and theoretical approaches to the study of neoliberalism vary, it is typically understood as a shift away from the Keynesianism of the mid-twentieth century. A range of scholars agree that neoliberalism has been a wide-ranging, contradictory project that has widened inequality and concentrated power among corporate and political elites in response to global social movement challenges to capitalist dominance in the mid-twentieth century.[7] In the U.S., the limited welfare state was dismantled in what Lisa Duggan describes as "the creation of a new vision of national and world order, a vision of competition, inequality, market 'discipline,' public austerity, and 'law and order.'"[8]

This dissertation builds from critical ethnic studies, women of color feminist, and queer of color critiques of the incorporative, assimilative techniques of neoliberal power. Grace Kyungwon Hong defines neoliberalism "foremost as an epistemological structure of disavowal, a means of claiming that racial and gendered violences are things of the past."[9] "Pride and Property" mobilizes this definition of neoliberalism, understood as the latest phase of racial capitalism, to make the claim that such disavowals are spatialized within the dislocations, displacements, dispossessions, and

[7] Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003); David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment : Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

[8] Duggan, x.

[9] Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal*, 7.

erasures sometimes narrowly invoked under the rubric of "gentrification."[10] Building from canonical women of color feminist thinkers, Hong argues that "a new neoliberal order arose based on the selective protection and proliferation of minoritized life *as the very mechanism* for the brutal exacerbation of minoritized death (emphasis in original)."[11] These contradictions, she argues, continue to structure the contemporary moment as "hauntings." I situate these spatial disavowals in relation to the ongoing disavowals of settler colonialism and slavery's afterlife, which in the Bay Area perpetually naturalize antiblackness and settler possession of Ohlone territories.

"Pride and Property," in part, tells the story of the spatial affirmation of select queer subjects over and against racialized populations deemed regressive, illiberal, surplus, and/or disposable. As such, I draw from scholarship that situates Black feminism, women of color feminism, and queer of color critique as trenchant interventions into of the politics of life, death, value, and difference in the context of neoliberalism. Roderick Ferguson and Hong argue that the comparative analytics modeled in such intellectual and political formations regard race, gender, and sexuality not as fixed categories, but "processes of valuation and devaluation" that create normative categories.[12] Because this comparative method is rendered illegible within dominant epistemological modes of comparison, they situate "culture, defined expansively as being exemplified by works of cultural production, but also inhering in everyday practice of language and relationality, as the site where

[10] For classic Marxist political economic definitions of gentrification, often characterized by the transformation of a working-class neighborhood for middle/upper class residential or commercial use, see David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism* (London; New York, NY: Verso, 2006); Jason R Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996).

[11] Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal*, 7.

[12] Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick A Ferguson, *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization* (Durham [NC]: Duke University Press, 2011), 13.

such alternative comparative modes are imagined and brought into being."[13] As they write: "The comparative method of women of color feminism and queer of color critique is heterotopic insofar as it refuses to maintain that objects of comparison are static, unchanging, and empirically observable, and refuses to render illegible the shifting configurations of power that define such objects in the first place."[14] This comparative method is critical because dominant modes of comparison have tended to position queers as *either* victims or beneficiaries of gentrification. The elisions inherent in such formulations often position Black communities and communities of color as universally—even exceptionally—heterosexual.[15] I follow Ferguson and Hong's provocations theoretically but also methodologically to situate culture as a terrain through which to locate spatial formations that compel, in the words of Ferguson, "identifications with and antagonisms to the normative ideals promoted by state and capital."[16] This project centers the role of *narrative* and *representation* both in naturalizing racialized dispossession and in providing alternative visions of futurity, belonging, and collectivity.

A range of scholars has elaborated on the conferral of legitimacy as a primary strategy of neoliberal governmentality and power. Jodi Melamed elaborates that racializing technologies have been particularly compatible with neoliberalism, often represented as a neutral, administrative system of economic policy. She formulates *neoliberal multiculturalism* as an ideology and racial formation that posits "neoliberal restructuring across the globe to be the key to a postracist world of freedom and

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[13] Hong and Ferguson, 3.

[14] Hong and Ferguson, 9.

[15] For a particularly flagrant example of this, see *Flag Wars*, a documentary film about "white gays" moving into a "Black neighborhood" in Cleveland, OH. Linda Goode and Laura Poitras, *Flag Wars* (PBS, 2003).

[16] Roderick A Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 3.

opportunity."[17] This turn toward an official state policy of anti-racism creates a context in which modes of devaluation and marginalization cannot be explicitly stated in racial terms, but still have a racializing effect. Put another way, neoliberal multiculturalism is compatible with the racialized material effects of neoliberalism including but not limited to mass imprisonment, the subprime mortgage crisis, and other sites of gendered racial terror in the post-Keynesian era. Indeed, as Christina Hanhardt specifies, neoliberalism has reshaped major U.S. cities "in ways that foster hypersegregation and exploitation: the privatization of public services, corporate tax breaks, attacks on tenant protections, the expiration of mandates for low- and middle-income housing, public subsidies for private market-value construction, and the mass expansion of security forces."[18] This study of neoliberal multiculturalism and urban spatial formations culminates in the final chapter in an analysis of what I call the *settler temporality of diversity*, a multicultural settler project that relies on the simultaneous celebration and criminalization of Blackness and elimination of Indigenous peoples. This framework is grounded in the materialities of neoliberalism and incorporates Black feminist theories of slavery's afterlife and Indigenous feminist critiques of the politics of recognition to locate settler multiculturalism within long histories of dispossession by inclusion.

While Melamed focuses on the racial project of neoliberal multiculturalism, Chandan Reddy examines the ways the structural relationship between race and sexuality in the U.S. mediates state violence. Through the allegory of Obama's 2009 National Defense Authorization Act, to which a much-lauded amendment secured hate crimes legislation on the basis of gender and sexuality, Reddy examines the ways the state has fashioned the "ethical" enforcement of what he terms "legitimate

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[17] Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2011), 138.

[18] Christina B Hanhardt, *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 187.

violence." "It is sexual freedom—as the evidence of civilization and progress—that at this moment most powerfully disallows a reckoning with its own condition of possibility, redeeming through its status as an amendment the very state that these global and racial violences have built."[19] Through an analysis of gay marriage, hate crimes legislation, and U.S. immigration and asylum law, Reddy demonstrates how queer of color intellectual and activist formations "critically define the borders of US neoliberalism as mired in a political modernity that can only be described as yielding freedom with violence."[20] For Reddy, sexuality mediates "legitimate" violence. I build upon this formulation to consider the ways queerness mediates "economies of dispossession" constitutive of settler colonialism and slavery's afterlife.[21] In chapter 1, for instance, I highlight white gay real estate speculators' targeting of black renters in San Francisco in the late 1970s and early 1980s to demonstrate how property and possession vis a vis queer gentrification become nodes at which settler colonialism and antiblackness intersect to discursively and materially criminalize Black people while claiming Indigenous land as always already empty: ripe for speculation.

Following, Ferguson, Hong, Melamed, and Reddy, I ask how neoliberal economies of erasure, disavowal, and legitimate violence are spatialized in settler cities. Such an analytic is crucial for understanding the ways de/valuation is demarcated in and through urban neoliberal terrains, particularly given the ways select forms of sexual difference have been incorporated into urban planning agendas. Lisa Duggan has pointed to the ways neoliberalism nurtures "forms of 'identity

[19] Chandan Reddy, *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the US State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 17.

[20] Reddy, 51.

[21] Jodi A Byrd et al., "Predatory Value: Economies of Dispossession and Disturbed Relationalities," *Social Text* 36, no. 2 (2018).

politics' recruitable for policies of upward redistribution."[22] In her widely cited formulation of homonormativity, Duggan describes a gay politics that "does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption."[23] Indeed, space and spatiality are intrinsic to homonormative politics of legibility and legitimacy. In his article in the important 2005 special issue of *Social Text*, "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?" Martin F. Manalansan builds upon Duggan to critically examine "the violent remapping of lives, bodies, and desires of queers of color" through an analysis of the ways various "physical and symbolic topographies are imagined and enabled by homonormative practices."[24] He argues, however, that "police and city government are not the only perpetrators of this form of neoliberal violence; they also include a motley crew of mostly white gay scholars from both sides of the political spectrum."[25] As he attests, queer studies scholars had largely focused on "valiant struggles to claim space," which, lacking in their analyses of race and political economy tended to naturalize emergent forms of neoliberal violence.[26]

"Pride and Property" is particularly indebted to the work of scholars that have attended to such elisions, including Christina Hanhardt, Jin Haritaworn, and Karen Tongson.[27] These scholars

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[22] Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?*, 42.

[23] Duggan, 50.

[24] Martin F. Manalansan, "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City," *SOCIAL TEXT* 84/85 (2005): 141, 144.

[25] Manalansan, 142–43.

[26] Manalansan, 144.

[27] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*; Jin Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others: Regenerating Violent Times and Places* (London: Pluto Press, 2015); Karen Tongson, *Relocations: Queer Suburban Imaginaries* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

elucidate the ways neoliberalism as a logic and technology of legibility, legitimacy, and recognition operate within and across cityscapes. In her wide-ranging study, Hanhardt argues that, "in mooring a dominant understanding of sexual identity to place, the promotion and protection of gay neighborhoods have reinforced the race and class stratification of postwar urban space."[28] In doing so, she charts the enmeshed histories of local and national LGBT activism, constructions of "safety" and "violence," urban development, and a fortified neoliberal carceral state. As she suggests: "two of the primary activist solutions to anti-LGBT violence since the 1970s—the establishment of protected gay territories and the identification of anti-LGBT violence as a designated criminal category—must be paired with two of global capital's own 'spatial fixes': gentrification and mass imprisonment."[29] While Hanhardt provides a detailed study of the spatial and political entanglements of diverse LGBT formations with the carceral state, she also archives social movements, in particular majority feminist/queer of color formations that have for the past four decades challenged the reliance on policing as a tool for achieving LGBT and neighborhood safety. In chapter 1, I build upon Hanhardt's analysis of lesbian organizing against policing and gentrification in San Francisco's Mission District in the late 1970s to examine the gendered settler colonial violence constitutive of the Mission and the *queer settler spatial imaginary* in which it was enmeshed. As Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes argue, we must extend challenges of the LGBT embrace of the carceral state to "ask critical questions about non-Indigenous queer and trans claims for safe space, rights, and belonging," in the context of settler occupation.[30]

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[28] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*.

[29] Hanhardt, 14.

[30] Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes, "Everyday Decolonization: Living a Decolonizing Queer Politics," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 19, no. 2 (April 2015): 155.

Like Hanhardt, this project is attentive to the ways "the claim of injury has structured left and queer politics."[31] I specifically examine the ways that queer claims of injury intersect with narratives of white injury or victimization in the context of gentrification. Lisa Marie Cacho examines the ideology of white injury found in discourses around immigration in California in the mid-1990s, expressed through the figure of the "illegal Mexican" thought to make burdensome, fraudulent claims to the welfare state.[32] While Cacho locates this discourse within a history of anti-immigrant rhetoric in California, Alyosha Goldstein examines Nativist settler narratives of injury in the enmeshed context of settler colonialism, neoliberalism, and "color-blindness."[33] White claims of injury in the neoliberal era—including those that are queer—must be situated within these discursive frames. For instance, through readings of the iconic lesbian novel, *Valencia*, by Michelle Tea, and discourse around the closing of "the last lesbian bar" in San Francisco, I demonstrate how such white queer claims to injury and victimization during the late 1990s and 2000s disavow the histories and present of racialized violence and displacement constitutive of the city and take a decidedly settler form. Of course, such dominant narratives are always contradictory and incomplete. I also chart trajectories that imagine otherwise and invite alternate futures precisely by remaining illegible to memorialization. I read the organizing and cultural production within the pages of Bay Area-based *ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter* as refusals of the glorification of queer space and increasing enmeshment of lesbian feminist sociality with the carceral state.

While many important studies of space, race, and sexuality are situated in the city, I am compelled by Karen Tongson's critique of metronormativity from within queer of color spaces in

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[31] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 8.

[32] Cacho, 399.

[33] Alyosha Goldstein, "Where the Nation Takes Place: Proprietary Regimes, Antistatism, and U.S. Settler Colonialism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107, no. 4 (September 21, 2008): 833–61.

the suburbs of "lesser" Los Angeles. As she attests, "normativity itself is no longer a stable category found in fixed spatial environments."[34] Crucially, Tongson "intervenes in a queer theoretical discourse that relies on these same normative, suburban, white flight narratives to route an opposite trajectory for queer subjects who are—for cultural, political, and stylistic reasons—compelled to leave ostensibly homogenous suburban spaces to find more active (and implicitly activ*ist*) lifestyles in the urban 'gay meccas' of the national imaginary, including San Francisco and New York."[35] I likewise argue that conceptualizations of the Bay Area as a radical queer movement hub (in both senses of the word *movement*), those "residual fantasies about urban queer subcultures and their purported 'radicality'" can become such a structure of disavowal.[36] Indeed, for many queers, San Francisco was no longer sufficiently countercultural in the wake of the 2013 tech boom and many a queer set their sights on Oakland, their narratives of *movement* becoming enmeshed with the city's antiblack appeal to creativity and diversity. Taken together, Hanhardt and Tongson's analyses reveal metronormativity's entanglement with neoliberal and carceral regimes of urban restructuring. While it is not my project, we might also ask after the stakes of so many queer activists *leaving* the places they live for such cities as Oakland, New York, or San Francisco.[37]

[34] Tongson, 10, 11.

[35] Tongson, 3.

[36] Tongson, 6.

[37] In a 2016 interview, veteran white anti-racist organizer Mab Segrest reflects on multi-class, multi-racial, anti-racist lesbian feminist organizing against the Klan in the South in the 70s and 80s: "We were staying in the South and very much looking at race, class—what it meant for us as lesbians not to go to New York, not to go to San Francisco. To understand our own material realities there and the histories that were really imbedded in the landscape and the people," Caitlin Breedlove, "Fortification: Spiritual Sustenance for Movement Leadership," Mab Segrest, n.d., accessed April 18, 2021.

In their study of the contemporary entanglement of Islamophobia, carceral regimes, and queer gentrification in Berlin, Jin Haritaworn figures the queer lover as a "'transitional object' between the welfare and the neoliberal regime, which ushers us into consent with death-making techniques and horizons by queerly regenerating them as progress and love of diversity."[38] Haritaworn pairs the "transitional object" with a theory of "queer regeneration," which marks the spatialized valorization of queer life over and against racialized subjects, including those that are queer(ed).[39] Resonating with Tongson, Haritaworn's analysis, which draws from "queer of colour kitchen-table conversations," importantly attunes us to the ways the "transgressive mobilities" of politically radical queer and trans communities—a far cry from homonormative spatial formations—can also be mobilized to mark racialized communities as exceptionally homophobic.[40] I likewise aim to problematize queer, specifically *settler*, belonging organized around space and place, thus destabilizing the homonormative/transgressive binary that, invoking Cathy Cohen, continues to constrain queer activism and scholarship of many stripes.[41] In chapter 2, for instance, I build from Haritaworn to position queer communities in San Francisco in the 1990s as "transitional objects" that also rely, beyond metaphor, on spatial and temporal orientations of settler colonialism. While Haritaworn's study is located in the colonial metropole of Germany, their analysis of histories of colonialism within gentrifying cityscapes is instructive for work within settler cities: "In the neoliberal city, older colonial notions of degenerate populations that fail to cultivate space and remain themselves uncultivable are mapped onto queerly regenerating spaces, whose recovery

[38] Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others*, 93.

[39] Haritaworn, 3.

[40] Haritaworn, 3–4.

[41] Cathey Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* 3, no. 4 (1997): 437-65.

demands the expulsion of poor racialized bodies."[42] But what if, as in the imperial formation that is the United States, we underscore enduring processes of Indigenous dispossession? How does sexuality mediate this relationship in the colonial present?

"Cartographies of Refusal": Black & Critical Indigenous Studies as Spatial Theory[43]

This project engages emergent conversations about the relationship between antiblackness and settler colonialism.[44] It operates with the assumption that the United States, in addition to various imperial formations outside of its territorial boundaries, was brought into being and is sustained under conditions of slavery and its afterlife and ongoing Indigenous dispossession.[45] Writing of such linkages, Ikyo Day suggests that, "settler colonial racial capitalism is not a thing but a social relation."[46] As Shange likewise attests: "The ongoing settler-colonial genocide of indigenous people and the sublimation of African people into Black objects through chattel slavery are twin structures upholding US sociality."[47] Day and Shange point to how this imbricated, ongoing social relation permeates settler societies. The scene of the settler city in the neoliberal present represents

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[42] Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others*, 32.

[43] Here, I reference Audra Simpson's phrase, "cartography of refusal," in *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 33.

[44] For a discussion of some of the contours of these conversations, see Iyko Day, "Being or Nothingness: Indigeneity, Antiblackness, and Settler Colonial Critique," *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2015): 102–21; Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019); Justin Leroy, "Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (n.d.): 2016.

[45] For a discussion of various forms of U.S. colonialism, including settler colonialism and U.S. empire outside of its territorial boundaries, see Alyosha Goldstein, ed., *Formations of United States Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

[46] Day, "Being or Nothingness: Indigeneity, Antiblackness, and Settler Colonial Critique," 111.

[47] Shange, *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, & Schooling in San Francisco*, 9.

an important site for examining such linkages: while Mishuana Goeman apprehends neoliberal spatial restructuring as a settler colonial process, Clyde Woods describes how the plantation regime "provided neo-liberalism with its core organizing principles."[48]

In many ways, this project responds to provocations from scholars within the fields of queer Indigenous studies and critical Indigenous studies. I pursued graduate school as an organizer unsatisfied with available frameworks for thinking about urban displacement, having observed that an analysis of settler colonialism was often missing from activist conversations in which concepts of space, property, land, and displacement were central. I began doctoral work shortly after the publication of agenda-setting texts in queer Indigenous studies: the 2010 *GLQ* special issue, "Sexuality, Nationality, Indigeneity;" the 2011 anthology *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, and Scott Morgensen's 2011 *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*, among others. Around this time, a number of field-defining works in critical Indigenous studies were also published.[49] The implications of these interventions within and beyond the field of Indigenous studies profoundly shape the contours of this project.

Importantly, queer Indigenous studies scholars build from, with, and in relationship to over forty years of Native queer and Two Spirit organizing in the U.S. and Canada that challenges the

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[48] Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 126; Clyde Woods, "'Sittin' on Top of the World': The Challenges of Blues and Hip Hop Geography," in *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, ed. Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2007), 56.

[49] Jodi A Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, *Theorizing Native Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

heteropatriarchal logics of settler colonialism.[50] In the call for alliance between queer and Native studies, Qwo-Li Driskill suggests that queer studies scholars, including many of those engaged in queer of color critique, have tended to neglect the normativizing logics of settler colonialism. "This un-seeing…perpetuates a master narrative in which Native people are erased from an understanding of racial formations, Native histories are ignored, Native people are thought of as historical rather than contemporary, and our homelands aren't seen as occupied by colonial powers."[51] Building on Jasbir Puar's theory of homonationalism, Morgensen identifies *settler* homonationalism as "the product of a biopolitical relationship between the sexual colonization of Native peoples and the normative settler formation of modern queer projects in the United States."[52] Indigenous studies and queer studies, he writes, "must regard settler colonialism as a key condition of modern sexuality on stolen land."[53] Indigenous scholarly and activist contributions necessarily inform and form crucial elements of my project, but it is not "about" Native or Native queer or Two Spirit people in any ethnographic sense. It does attempt to integrate an analysis of ongoing settler colonialism on Indigenous land in a U.S. queer studies context. It does so by asking questions about the stakes and implications of Indigeneity and settler colonialism for understandings of queer social movements, the city, and carcerality and by posing questions about the gender and sexual processes of Black and Indigenous relationality.

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[50] Qwo-Li Driskill et al., eds., *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011).

[51] Qwo-Li Driskill, "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances Between Native and Queer Studies," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, No. 1-2 (2010): 78.

[52] Morgensen, 106.

[53] Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 2.

Whereas queer studies has tended to elide settler colonialism, many studies of race in the U.S. have acknowledged and even underscored the genocide of Indigenous peoples in North America, wherein colonialism is too often understood as complete, concluded, and resolved.[54] Scholars of critical Indigenous studies reject this temporal closure to address manifold histories and present-day formations of U.S. settler colonialism. "It means imagining an entirely different map and understanding of territory and space," Jodi Byrd writes, "a map constituted by over 565 sovereign indigenous nations, with their own borders and boundaries, that transgress what has been naturalized as contiguous territory divided into 48 states."[55] Byrd argues that Indigenous critical theory has the potential to offer a "transformative accountability," an alternative to multicultural settler logics of inclusion. Following Byrd, in chapter 3 I argue that Black and Indigenous refusals in contemporary Oakland enact a *politics of accountability*, that, rather than a politics of inclusion (itself a mode of dispossession and epistemological structure of disavowal), offer alternate modes of relationality for everyone now residing in Ohlone/Lisjan territories.

I center genealogies of critical engagement with settler colonialism from within Indigenous feminist traditions rather than settler colonial studies, a field that sometimes presupposes the phenomenon it seeks to describe: the elimination of Indigenous peoples.[56] As Manu Vimalassery, Alyosha Goldstein, and Juliana Hu Pegues suggest, "To consider settler colonialism as a structure of failure seems a useful starting point…Even where the ongoing nature of colonialism as it structures

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[54] Goldstein, *Formations of United States Colonialism*.

[55] Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*, xxx.

[56] J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "'A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity," *Lateral: Journal of the Cultural Studies Association* 5, no. 1 (2016); Jean O'Brien, "Tracing Settler Colonialism's Eliminatory Logic in Traces of History," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2017): 249–55. For more on the distinctions between settler colonial studies and Indigenous studies, see also King, *The Black Shoals*, 56-59.

the shared present is grasped, colonial unknowing manifests in ways that foreclose upon future possibilities, and decolonization is named as either impossible or unreasonable."[57] This project, in centering abolitionist, anti-colonial epistemologies, practices, and imaginaries, resolutely rejects the horizon of the "reasonable" and the "possible." As Corrina Gould, chair of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan, whose ancestors have lived in what is now Oakland since time immemorial attests, "All of these things that the United States tries to do to squash us have not worked. It's failed. We still know who we are. We still know how to pray in our own way. We still know where our sacred sites are."[58] By continually juxtaposing Ohlone/Lisjan relationships to the land, which have existed since the beginning of time, to that of this "very young country," Gould consistently reminds us of the impermanence of the settler state; that this land "could hold us again."[59] In chapter 3, I discuss the iterative quality of Ohlone/Lisjan sovereignty, which perpetually destabilizes settler arrangements of space by asserting Ohlone/Lisjan spatial knowledge that precedes and will indeed outlast it. In this chapter, I also draw from Black feminist theories of slavery and its afterlife to situate Moms 4 Housing as a movement that refuses housing deprivation in Oakland as a gendered afterlife of slavery to consider the distinct yet relational declarations that "This is Ohlone Land" and "I deserve this home." Each attune us to the ways ongoing histories of dispossession rooted in property logics of settler colonialism and chattel slavery produce conditions of gross inequalities in

[57] Manu Vimalassery, Alyosha Goldstein, and Juliana Hu Pegues, "Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (2016).

[58] Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Lisjan (Ohlone) History and Territory," accessed May 25, 2021, https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/lisjan-history-and-territory/.

[59] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene," Corrina Gould on Settler Responsibility and Reciprocity, n.d., https://forthewild.world/listen/corrina-gould-on-settler-responsibility-and-reciprocity-208.

the Bay Area; to the ways speculation produces "empty" homes and privately enclosed land as they speculate, practice, and invite futures within and beyond these spaces.

Building from Native feminist critiques of the politics of recognition, I situate Ohlone/Lisjan sovereignty within a refusal of the politics of recognition and as a practice that brings forth what Laura Harjo terms Indigenous futurity.[60] Native feminist scholars in particular have examined the numerous ways that the politics of recognition regulates Indigenous belonging and sovereignty, including within the context of neoliberalism.[61] The spatial and temporal construction of recognition—predicated on notions of purity and authenticity—is a regime that effectively eliminates Indigenous peoples whose territories span occupying settler cities. The federal recognition process, Mishuana Goeman argues, is a prime example of what she terms "a settler grammar of place."[62] Within this "theater of apprehension," Audra Simpson writes, recognition is predicated on "hunting with the precise instruments your great grandfather did 150 years ago, in the exact same spot as he did, when witnessed and textualized by a white person."[63] Indeed, throughout California, and particularly within its cities, Indigenous peoples are federally *un*recognized. "It's a process that's about us. It's not by us, for us, or with us," says Gregg Castro (t'rowt'raahl Salinan/rumsien & ramaytush Ohlone). "It has made it virtually impossible for Mission California Indians to be

[60] Laura Harjo, *Spiral to the Stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019).

[61] Goeman, *Mark My Words*; Barker, *Native Acts*; Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*.

[62] Mishuana Goeman, "Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place: The Visual Memoir of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

[63] Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 20.

recognized."[64] I look to the work of Sogorea Te' Land Trust as a refusal of state recognition that practices alternate modes of sovereignty and collectivity.

Indeed, regarding the reservation as legibly Native, authentic, and traditional depends on the erasure of Native people and places in urban space, including both those whose unceded ancestral territories span what are now cities as well as those who move among and between these spaces. As Goeman notes, these spatial logics are made evident in the urban Bay Area that while "not coded in the U.S. imagination as Indian," is continuously re-mapped by Indigenous presence.[65] In the Bay Area, there is a paradox of a large Indigenous presence (both diasporic and within traditional territories) and utter invisibility. While there is increasing visibility of Ohlone/Lisjan people in the East Bay through the work of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust, this is largely true of both Oakland and San Francisco. In chapter 1, for instance, I discuss the stakes of such "colonial unknowing" within anti-carceral lesbian feminist organizing in San Francisco's Mission District around 1980, which created elisions around the connections between colonialism, race, and sexuality in a neighborhood named for Mission San Francisco de Asís.[66]

Taking seriously that the landscape of the neoliberal city scaffolds a settler state occupying Native nations poses profound challenges to urban studies. What does this bring to bear, beyond metaphor, on the relationship between settlement and gentrification? As with historical and ongoing Indigenous land dispossession, the narratives that naturalize urban displacement often rely on tropes of unused, poorly tended, or empty land. Thus, gentrification has been widely analogized to colonization: such renowned scholars as Neil Smith and Mike Davis use colonialism as a metaphor

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[64] *Beyond Recognition*, directed by Michelle Grace Steinberg (2014; Oakland, CA: Underexposed Films, 2014), DVD.

[65] Ibid., 247.

[66] Vimalassery, Goldstein, and Pegues, "Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing."

for gentrification.[67] The use of such metaphors renders urban space essentially *non-Indigenous* and eclipses the *non-metaphorical* relationships between settler colonialism and racialized urban dispossession. Racialized gentrification, like settler colonialism, is predicated on the disavowal and presumed inevitability of dispossession; the utter disregard for what was and the insistence that what (and who) remains disappearing simply as a matter of progress. And yet, *gentrification is not colonialism*. In chapter 2, I draw from Kevin Bruyneel and Angela Robinson to show that the spatial and temporal orientations of settler colonialism are epistemic and material conditions of possibility for the types of dislocations, displacements, and erasures invoked under the rubric of "gentrification."[68] For Bruyneel and Robinson, dissociative disavowal is fundamental for creating and perpetually maintaining settler states. I argue that this is replicated and entrenched in the context of racialized urban gentrification in San Francisco's Mission District—not as metaphor—but as an entangled structure of disavowal materialized in relationship to neoliberal settler cities. Thus, utilizing settler colonialism as an analytic attunes us to the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples in contemporary settler cities as well as the ways settler temporality and epistemologies of space, place, land, and property condition displacements of many kinds.

Apprehending the Bay Area as a *queer* settler spatial imaginary, steeped as it is in narratives of westward migration, is instructive for unpacking queer investments in the settler state and imagining alternate modes of relationality. Sherene Razack writes, "The national mythologies of white settler societies are deeply spatialized stories. Although the spatial story that is told varies from one time to

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[67] Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*; Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London; New York: Verso, 1990).

[68] Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Angela L. Robinson, "Indigenous Performance in Oceania: Affect, Sociality, and Sovereignty" (PhD Dissertation, Los Angeles, UCLA, 2019); Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

another, at each stage the story installs Europeans as entitled to the land."[69] As this dissertation demonstrates, many white settler narratives of place and space characterize San Francisco and Oakland as *inherently* liberatory for queer and trans people. In numerous literary, artistic, and activist representations, the ground, land, streets, sidewalks, and cityscapes are imagined to *possess* transformative power for an imagined collectivity of queer people. Amos Mac, for example, one of the founders of *Original Plumbing*, a transmasculine lifestyle magazine, writes in an article for *Huffington Post* that, "San Francisco was as far west as I could go without drowning in the Pacific Ocean, and I knew it was The Place where my kind of queer could untangle itself, figure out where it fit, and truly live for the first time."[70] Such characterizations of rugged sexual and gender individualism attune us to the formation of modern white queer settler subjectivity. Indeed, the settler city of San Francisco had long been figured as a "wide-open town." In her history of queer San Francisco, Nan Alamilla Boyd writes that in the search to discover why and how this city gained such a queer sensibility, "most people refer to San Francisco's permissiveness and its function as a 'wide-open town'—a town where anything goes…From its earliest days sex and lawlessness have been fundamental to San Francisco's character."[71] This essentially settler character, formed amid the lawful genocidal campaigns waged against Indigenous peoples during the mid-19th century, continues to shape sexual imaginaries of the city.

Though queer migrations to San Francisco have always included Black, Indigenous, and people of color—as Marlon Riggs' *Tongues United* and many other narratives attest—dominant

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[69] Sherene H. Razack, "Introduction: When Place Becomes Race," in *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, ed. Sherene Razack, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 3.

[70] Amos Mac, "What Gwen Araujo Taught Me," *Huffington Post*, November 19, 2011, accessed May 25, 2021, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amos-mac/gwen-araujo-death_b_1101132.html.

[71] Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide-Open Town: A Queer History of San Francisco to 1965.* (Berkeley, CA: UC Press, 2005), 2.

discourse around queer migration and the mythology of a "gay homeland" have long erased Indigenous peoples and taken a normatively white formation. Riggs' narrative of the Castro where, "In this great gay mecca," he "was an invisible man," demonstrates the ways such queer settler socialities are produced through antiblackness.[72] In the late 1970s and early 1980s in San Francisco, as elsewhere, early neoliberal invocations of diversity, including many spatialized expressions of queerness, arose amid the law and order "sociospatial polarizations" of Reaganomics that drew from and generated discursive reservoirs of antiblackness.[73]

Situated in what Ruth Wilson Gilmore calls the "golden gulag," during the largest "prison-building and –filling plan" in world history, this study is attentive to the ways carceral logics shape the settler city.[74] Indeed, a range of Black studies scholars has examined the ways carcerality extends the prison beyond its material edifice through regimes of surveillance, confinement, and punishment.[75] As I describe in chapter 1, in 1980 in San Francisco, some white gay men unflinchingly aligned with capital and the carceral state through their participation in real estate speculation and deliberate evictions of Black tenants they deemed criminal and surplus. But as scholars are beginning to theorize, California's "carceral archipelago" has a predecessor in Spanish

[72] Riggs, *Tongues Untied.*

[73] Davis, *City of Quartz.*

[74] Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 5.

[75] Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Rashad Shabazz, *Spatializing Blackness : Architectures of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago* (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 2015).

missions, which span the coast from what is now San Diego to Sonoma.[76] In this chapter, I follow Gilmore's analysis of criminalization and racial surplus while situating it within an ongoing history of colonial terror in San Francisco's Mission District.

In the U.S. context, property logics are shaped by complexly intertwined histories of conquest and chattel slavery. As legal scholar K-Sue Park remarks: "the value of land and the labor of enslaved people became interdependent in the colonies, since each of these assets became essentially useless without possessing the other."[77] Tiffany Lethabo King argues that within settler colonial studies, labor as a singular analytic "both obscures the issue of Black fungibility and reduces Blackness to a mere tool of settlement rather than a constitutive element of settler colonialism's conceptual order."[78] Fungibility and other frames, she argues, "deserve our attention as we continue to think about anti-Black racism, Native genocide, and the US settler-slave (e)state."[79] Following King, I do not seek to "uncover" or "prove" moments of solidarity, but examine the ways some "aspects of Black and Indigenous life have always already been a site of co-constitution."[80]

Jodi Byrd et al. ask how "it might be possible to think and work for a relationality that is grounded both in place and in movement, which simultaneously address Black geographies,

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[76] Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 297; Stephanie Lumsden, "Reproductive Justice, Sovereignty, and Incarceration: Prison Abolition Politics and California Indians," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 40, no. 1 (2016): 33–46.

[77] K-Sue Park, "Conquest and Slavery in the Property Law Course: Teaching Notes," *Georgetown University Law Center*, July 24, 2020, 1-25.

[78] Tiffany King, "Labor's Aphasia: Toward Antiblackness as Constitutive to Settler Colonialism," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society*, June 10, 2014, accessed May 25, 2021, https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2014/06/10/labors-aphasia-toward-antiblackness-as-constitutive-to-settler-colonialism/.

[79] King, "Labor's Aphasia."

[80] King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*, 28.

dispossessions, and other racialized proprietary violences as incommensurate to yet not apart from Indigenous land and sovereignty."[81] Following such provocations to think relationally—and against analogy—I examine Black and Indigenous dispossession *and refusals* with attunement to the ways incommensurability points to co-constitution. As Manu Vimalassery compellingly writes at the intersection of Black and Native studies, "We need to critically rethink decolonization on the basis of possessive claims, in order to more fully account for the fact of being claimed and controlled, oneself, as someone else's possession."[82] While the first two chapters examine the relational dispossession of Black and Indigenous peoples within queer settler imaginaries of San Francisco, I address it most explicitly in the final chapter, which makes central Black and Indigenous modes of refusal and practices of futurity in Huichin. In this context, I build from understandings of property rooted in settler colonialism and (afterlives) of slavery to consider Black and Indigenous refusals of *dispossession by inclusion* in the subprime mortgage market and regimes of federal recognition. Building from Black studies scholars including Saidiya Hartman, Sarah Haley, Katherine McKittrick, and Patricia Williams, I locate the "gendered racial terror," to use Haley's phrase, that is constituitive of housing deprivation in Huichin within the afterlife of slavery.

Christina Sharpe writes that in the wake of slavery, "the past that is not past reappears, always, to rupture the present."[83] These temporal ruptures are also spatial, in that they mediate racial geographies in the colonial present. Hartman writes: "when declarations of equality announced the end of slavery, the *well-arranged world* sustained itself (emphasis mine)."[84] Indeed, this "well-arranged

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[81] Byrd et al., "Predatory Value: Economies of Dispossession and Disturbed Relationalities."

[82] Manu Vimalassery, "Fugitive Decolonization," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (2016).

[83] Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 9.

[84] Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection : Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 183.

world" has a decidedly spatial afterlife. Katherine McKittrick attunes us to the ways that slavery is animated by a paradox of enforced placelessness that "extends and is given a geographic future."[85] These "untidy historically present geographies," she argues, mediate the contemporary carceral landscapes of cities, including their abstracted locations in prisons.[86] McKittrick regards the destruction of Black homes and Black spaces—through eviction, foreclosure, eminent domain, urban renewal, and other technologies of displacement—as an enduring spatial violence of the plantation.[87] Both Hartman and McKittrick caution against scholarship that naturalizes antiblack violence and "effaces and restricts black sentience."[88] McKittrick in particular intervenes in urban geographic studies of racial violence preoccupied with the "suffering/violated black body and the stubborn denial of a black sense of place."[89] She argues that within urban geography, Black spaces are often "classified as imperiled and dangerous, or spaces 'without'/spaces of exclusion, even as those who have always struggled against racial violence and containment populate them."[90] What would happen, McKittrick asks, if "our analytical questions did not demand answers that replicate racial violence?"[91] I take these cautions seriously. My aim, in contending with the specificity of

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[85] Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, no. 8 (December 2011): 949.

[86] McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 950.

[87] McKittrick, 950.

[88] Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 20.

[89] McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 948.

[90] McKittrick, 951.

[91] McKittrick, 950.

antiblackness, as well as abolitionist practices and imaginaries, is to be accountable to Black thought. I proceed knowing that I will do so imperfectly.

Terms, Categories, Affiliations

Language, terms, collectivities, identifications, and categorizations are complex and fraught: there is no adequate taxonomy, nor perhaps should there be. For this reason, I use a range of terms, many of which have possibilities and limitations, and intentionally refrain from landing on anything. In this project, I use "queer" as both a term of identification and as an analytic, which makes for complexity and contradiction. This represents the messiness and unease inherent in individual and collective identifications and political affiliations, real and imagined, and I ask readers to wade through this ambiguity. In regards to sexual identification, I use the terms lesbian and dyke to discuss specific people, communities, collectivities, and identities in the 1970s and 80s and into the 90s, because those are the terms used by people themselves or were in widest circulation in the times and places I discuss. Following Anne Cvekovich, I alternate between lesbian and queer and transition primarily to the use of queer to reflect shifts in identification in the communities I am discussing.[92] As she writes of her own study: "Its cultural cases and sites can be described as queer, although using that term alone does not account for the ways in which many of them are specifically marked as lesbian. Yet naming as my focus lesbian culture does not quite do justice to what are frequently the queer ways in which they occupy that category."[93] However, this is not always mean that "queer" is necessarily a progression from or more radical than other terms of identification,

[92] Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 10–11.

[93] Cvetkovich, 10–11.

recalling Haritaworn's discussion of the analytic need to dismantle the normative gay/radical queer binary.

I also mobilize *queer* as an analytic that describes political imaginaries, organizing cultures, cultural production, and embodiments that refuse the normativizing logics of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism. For example, while participants in some of the formations I discuss—Lesbians Against Police Violence, Gay American Indians, *ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter*, Moms 4 Housing, and Sogorea' Te Land Trust—don't necessarily or exclusively identify as queer, I regard them as queer projects that are attuned to the ways normativity operates, specifically in the context of neoliberalism, but also ones that practice and imagine alternate modes of relationality. Conversely, I occasionally use LGBT sometimes Q as an "umbrella term," however limiting, when invoking broader local or national imaginaries, particularly in relationship to normativity and legibility.

In their introduction to *Queer Indigenous Studies*, Driskill et al. write, "Indigenous GLBTQ2 identities are deeply complex. The issue of terminology always pushes at the limits of language."[94] In following their lead, I do not attempt to assert an all-inclusive category, any of which "inevitably fails to reflect the complexities of Indigenous constructions of gender and sexual diversity, both historically and as they are used in the present."[95] They do, however, find utility in the use of *queer* and *Two Spirit*. Two Spirit came out of Indigenous organizing in the U.S. and Canada aimed at uniting Indigenous people who identify as LGBTQ, often in relationship to nationally specific Indigenous contexts and languages. "When linked, *queer* and *Two-Spirit* invite critiquing heteronormativity as a colonial project…Our intention in articulating Indigenous queer critiques

[94] Driskill et al., *Queer Indigenous Studies*, 3.

[95] Driskill et al., 3.

and/or Two Spirit critiques is not to create a monolithic analytic lens. Rather, we hope to bring Indigenous–specific critiques of colonial heteropatriarchal gender/sexuality into broader conversations within queer and Indigenous studies."[96] In keeping with this analysis, I utilize these terms to describe interventions of Indigenous organizing and cultural production. While Two Spirit was not in circulation in the 1970s and 80s, for example, and members most often used the terms gay or lesbian, I situate Gay American Indians, as have others, in a genealogy of Two Spirit organizing that articulates a queer Indigenous critique. When addressing broader collectivities, I also use the phrases queer, trans, and/or Two Spirit and LGBTQ2, not as exhaustive or adequate umbrella terms, but in an attempt to reflect the multiplicity of gender and sexual identifications of Indigenous people.

I attempt to be as specific as possible when referring to Black, Indigenous, and/or (specific) people of color as well as when referring to white people. I do use "settler" as an analytical category but do not think that there is utility in attempting to define it. I will say that my use of settler *does not* operate within an exclusively Native/settler binary and I understand that Black descendants of enslaved Africans could never occupy this structural or intimate position in the context of U.S. settler colonialism. In fact, as this dissertation demonstrates, settler formations are definitionally antiblack. Morgensen helpfully writes that, "in a multiracial, transnational white settler society, the relation of 'Native' to 'settler' articulates distinctions of Native from non-Native, but these *two comparisons are neither identical nor parallel* (emphasis original)."[97] Crucially, "settler" is not simply a neutral, descriptive category of people who partake in settlement as a presumed inevitability, as King

[96] Driskill et al., 3.

[97] Morgensen, *Spaces between Us*, 22.

in particular cautions against.[98] Settler projects are imbricated in genocidal logics of Indigenous dispossession, knowingly or not. It is within this formulation that "queer settler" has specific importance to this project. As Morgensen suggests, "Although queer hegemonies may be disrupted by challenging whiteness or nationalism, that alone may not fully disturb their conditioning by settler colonialism, which aims to amalgamate subjects in a settler society as 'non-Native' inheritors, and *not* challengers of the colonization of Native peoples on occupied Native lands (emphasis original)."[99] Though I might occasionally use "settler" to refer to specific people, in this project it is an analytic that more often connotes epistemologies, imaginaries, and political, spatial, and temporal orientations that entrench, naturalize, enact, or otherwise perpetuate Indigenous dispossession. These formations are largely though not exclusively white; thus referring to them as white would be both inaccurate and fail to capture their settler formation.

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) has emerged as a way to address the specificity of Blackness and Indigeneity. I do use this term though tend towards specificity when possible. I think BIPOC has utility and have concerns about the ways its utter neoliberal decontextualization and deflation is well under way. (I recently saw a realtor use the term to boast about Oakland's diversity. I also see the term used in the absence of Black and/or Indigenous people or leadership). I use *BIPOC queer, trans, and Two Spirit*, and, taking inspiration from the San Francisco-based performance collective Still Here, *BIPOC LGBTQ2S+*, both to describe contemporary formations and in reference to contexts in which these terms were not in use because they imperfectly invoke specific collectivities.

Part of what I am arguing is that white lesbians and the larger queer communities in which they are enmeshed, while never actually homogenous in terms of race and class, have repeatedly

[98] King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*.

[99] Morgensen, *Spaces between Us*, ix.

been marshaled *as such* to mark a space's pivot from imagined backwardness, darkness, and danger to one of imagined vibrancy, diversity, and regeneration. Therefore, describing such discursive regimes risks replicating erasures of BIPOC LGBTQ2S+ people, movements, and communities. Following Hanhardt, I often put "white" in parenthesis before "queer"—as in (white) queer/lesbian—to mark that while a universalized queerness is being invoked, white queerness is actually what is being referenced, practiced, or imagined.[100] I try to make this distinction clear and reiterate that this is not a study of BIPOC LGBTQ2S+ movements or communities in Ohlone territories, past or present. I do aim to examine the way queerness has been instrumentalized in ways that disavow such histories. But never fully. Though this study examines some such formations, there remains much scholarly work to be done.

The Chapters

In chapters 1 and 2, I constellate several moments that demonstrate how politically disparate queer narrations of San Francisco, from 1979 through the mid-2010s, are connected through a queer settler spatial imaginary. I also look to those moments, which, like those in *Tongues Untied*, rupture any coherence of liberal narratives of progress and archive alternate spatial formations. In chapter 1, "City on a Hill: San Francisco and the 'Great Gay Migration' in the Carceral-Colonial Present," I suggest that the imaginary animating the "Great Gay Migration" of the late 1970s and early 1980s can best be understood as a *settler* spatial imaginary, an antiblack formation that profoundly shapes the terms of queer organizing in the city and beyond. While the imaginary of San Francisco as a wide-open town refers to a wild west of untamed lasciviousness, it also connotes terra nullius: "wide-open" for the taking, which at this moment was constitutive of narratives of Black surplus. Through an analysis of the enmeshed logics of antiblack criminalization and gay real estate

[100] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*.

speculation alongside lesbian feminist challenges to policing and gentrification, I demonstrate how a range of formations, distinct as they were, had shared settler investments in the city as a "gay homeland." At the same time, Gay American Indians challenged lesbian and gay formations to confront their settler formation, troubling the formulation of gays and lesbians as eager migrants to this city on hill while regarding the space of San Francisco with a generative ambivalence. Each of these historically parallel coordinates illuminate the crystallization of a longstanding, if always incomplete and contradictory queer spatial imaginary conditioned by settler colonialism, but also the cultures and communities that gentrification and emergent homonormativity in San Francisco threatened to erase.

While chapter 1 focuses on the interplay between various social movement imaginaries, chapter 2, "The Queer Nostalgia of Racialized Disavowal: San Francisco's 'Dyke Mecca' and the Anti-Carceral Sociality of Black Lesbian Feminism," turns to spaces of lesbian sociality during the first and second "dot-com booms" to demonstrate how narratives of loss of San Francisco's "dyke mecca" mobilize nostalgia for the city's progressivism in ways that disavow past and present modes of violence and dispossession in the settler city. Through readings of the wildly popular 2000 novel *Valencia*, by Michelle Tea, and public mourning around the 2014 closure of "the last lesbian bar" in San Francisco, I demonstrate how this period ushered in the consolidation of a queer spatial formation compatible with neoliberal multiculturalism while also theorizing racialized gentrification as always conditioned—beyond metaphor—by spatial and temporal orientations of settler colonialism. Lastly, I demonstrate how contributors to *ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter* were keenly aware of the ways lesbian sociality in the Bay Area was increasingly enmeshed in geographies of antiblackness and racial capitalism, often under the rubric of visibility, and envisioned Black queer futurity outside of colonial property logics to offer alternate modes of relationality. I close with a Two Spirit protest at Mission San Francisco de Asís in 2015, that in the tradition of Gay American

Indians, highlights the gendered present tense of colonialism to make connections between multiple, ongoing modes of dispossession that radically revises dominant queer narratives of mourning.

While chapters 1 and 2 examine queer spatial formations that both rupture and enshrine the queer settler spatial imaginary instantiated by narratives of the "Great Gay Migration," "Pride and Property" culminates in the anti-colonial, abolitionist visions of Moms 4 Housing and the Sogorea Te' Land Trust. Titled "Ruptures of Property: Blackness, Indigeneity, and the Landed Politics of Accountability in Huichin," chapter 3 is situated in present-day Oakland in the Ohlone/Lisjan territory of Huichin. It begins by bringing us back to where we started: Oakland's Lake Merritt waterfront, a site of relentless antiblack criminalization and displacement. Indeed, *since writing this introduction*, the city has announced increased policing at the lake. As Oakland-based Anti-Police Terror Project wrote on April 8th, 2021: "The City has decided to appease those who would prefer the lake be their own private oasis, sans Black beauty, by funding increased police presence at the Lake to enforce new rules regulating who can vend, where they can vend, who can park, where they can park, who can make noise, and how much noise they can make."[101] I begin by situating the contemporary moment in Oakland within what I call the *settler temporality of diversity* to consider Black and Indigenous refusals of dispossession by inclusion in the subprime mortgage market and regimes of federal recognition. Moms 4 Housing and Ohlone/Lisjan organizing, in particular the Sogorea Te' Land Trust and call for Shuumi Land Tax, illustrate how the current moment is deeply enmeshed with histories of ongoing settler colonialism and racial capitalist dispossession. In doing so, they reject the propertied rules of colonial engagement to imagine alternate—indeed, queer—futures for the Bay Area and craft a landed politics of accountability. With a focus on property relations, this dissertation culminates in a theorization of the distinct, yet relational "dispossession by

[101] "APTP Call For Mutual Aid and Support at Lake Merritt," April 8, 2021, accessed May 25, 2021, https://www.antipoliceterrorproject.org/blog-entire/mutual-aid-lake-merritt.

inclusion" of Black and Indigenous peoples in the settler city and the distinct yet relational politics – that in their refusals of the settler temporality of diversity – invoke other temporalities to offer a politics of accountability for everyone now residing in Lisjan/Ohlone territories.

CHAPTER ONE City on a Hill: San Francisco and the "Great Gay Migration" in the Carceral-Colonial Present[1]

Introduction

The many spatial imaginaries, political formations, and social histories that comprise San Francisco are complexly referential and intertwined, even when mutually exclusive in popular memory. Juana María Rodríguez, telling of the known death toll of AIDS in San Francisco between 1981 and 1996, writes that San Francisco is a city of 16,072 ghosts. And, as she attests, "These are not the only ghosts that haunt us."[2] What is known as San Francisco spans the traditional, ancestral, stolen, and unceded territories of the Ramaytush Ohlone. Corrina Gould, Ohlone/Lisjan leader and chair for the Confederated Villages of Lisjan often remarks that the Western Gate—the channel now spanned by the Golden Gate Bridge—is where Ohlone spirits transition to ancestors.[3] In doing so, she highlights continuous Indigenous presence in her home territories, while also noting how much that presence is subsumed by settler iconography, the Golden Gate Bridge long signifying the prosperity of the West.

While it is and has always been Ohlone homeland, migrations of many kinds have led to San Francisco. It is a place with deeply layered associations, entangled dispossessions, and possible futures. During WWII, hundreds of thousands of Black workers and families boarded Greyhound

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[1] I am building upon Sarah Haley's formulation of the "carceral present," in "Flesh Work and the Reproduction of Black Culpability," in *Antiblackness*, ed. Moon-Kie Jung and Joao H. Costa Vargas (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021).

[2] Juana María Rodríguez. *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces.* (New York: NYU Press, 2003), 38.

[3] Julian Brave NoiseCat, "'This land was stolen': Behind the fight to recover sacred Indigenous lands in the Bay Area," May 25th, 2021, accessed May 28th, 2021, https://grist.org/fix/sogorea-te-land-trust-ohlone-shellmounds-world-we-need-book/?fbclid=IwAR0cy1-_69p8UbiGcmbQu2Zj0uGGN2uR-0Utx5JeuKzdW-isUB_3nM6NLRM.

buses to flee the racial terror of the Jim Crow South and find work in Bay Area wartime shipyards.[4] The Fillmore, a San Francisco neighborhood targeted for urban renewal in the 1960s (dubbed "negro removal"), was known as the Harlem of the West. But as Black Southerner, Beatrice Johnson, who migrated to the Bay Area in 1942 remarked, "I thought I was going to see a Golden Gate Bridge all in gold, but I soon found it was different. It was just painted."[5] Like Gould, Johnson debunks imaginaries of racial progress, instead gesturing to the persistence of antiblack racism. Across the bay in Oakland, the children of migrants like Johnson would found the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in 1966.[6]

The city and its waters were nodes in geographies of racial-colonial power long before the Panthers arose to contest conditions of racial capitalism in the region. What is now known as Angel Island, long stewarded by Ohlone and Coast Miwok peoples, was the base of Juan Manuel de Ayala, a Spanish navel officer instrumental in the Spanish colonization of what would come to be known as California.[7] From 1863 to1946, this occupied island in the San Francisco Bay was used as a U.S. Army post. "Before the Civil War," according to the CA Department of Parks and Recreation, "Camp Reynolds became an infantry camp, serving as a depot for recruits, and as a staging area for troops serving in campaigns against the Apache, Sioux, Modoc, and other Indian tribes."[8] Long an

[4] Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[5] Geary, Marilyn. *Marin City Memories* (San Rafael: Circle of Life Stories, 2001), 62. The Johnsons in the first two paragraphs are not related.

[6] Murch, *Living for the City*.

[7] Albert Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999).

[8] "US Army on the Island," accessed September 20, 2020, https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1307.

outpost of colonial terror in the west, Angel Island became a carceral space of settler sovereignty following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, used to detain immigrants entering the United States primarily from China, Japan, India, and the Philippines. Racialized anxiety around disease and shifting immigration control on the island reflected the forming settler state's xenophobic and contradictory immigration policies.[9] This densely sedimented history of Angel Island, now a used as a recreational site for biking, hiking, and camping, demonstrates the significance of the San Francisco Bay Area to ongoing U.S. settler colonialism in the region and beyond.

The city of San Francisco has likewise been a hub in transnational circuits of finance capital. Presently, the work of venture capitalists and multinational firms headquartered in the city are felt intimately in the racialized spatial economies of the San Francisco Bay Area. Wells Fargo, for example, was responsible for dispossessing tens of thousands of local households—the majority headed by Black women—during the subprime mortgage crisis.[10] Indeed, the enmeshed carceral-colonial regimes of policing and property have displaced most Black residents from San Francisco through the forced relocations of eviction, foreclosure, and imprisonment. Black communities in the city are currently organizing around their status as "the last 3 percent" to declare that Black Homes Matter.[11] Shortly after the 2016 eviction of the oldest Black bookstore in the United States, Jasmine

[9] Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2001).

[10] Causa Justa :: Just Cause, *Development without Displacement: Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area* (Oakland, 2014).

[11] Finamore, Carl, "Black Homes Matter: San Francisco's Vanishing Black Population," January 11, 2016, accessed July 31, 2017, http://sfbayview.com/2016/01/black-homes-matter-san-franciscos-vanishing-black-population/.

E. Johnson, Africana studies scholar and daughter of the owners of Marcus Books wrote that, "San Francisco *is* a history of Black folks having to go."[12]

Indeed, for Black, Indigenous, and racialized migrants, the promise of dignified jobs and housing often led to bitter disappointment that catalyzed powerful and lasting social movements. In the 1950s and 60s, federal Indian policy relocated thousands of tribal members from rural reservations to urban centers, San Francisco and Oakland among the earliest and most frequent sites of relocation.[13] Though the 1969-1971 occupation of Alcatraz Island is remarked upon frequently in narrations of Bay Area movement history, it is part of a long history of multi-nationed urban Indigenous direct action in the city and region. In 1963, groups of Indigenous people picketed Bureau of Indian Affairs offices in San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose for full employment and housing with signs that read, "White Man Go Home!" and "Who's Vanishing?"[14] Due to its geopolitical location as a colonial frontier, port, military base, and node in transnational flows of people, power, and capital over the last centuries, San Francisco meets empire at its ends and its beginnings.[15] It is constituted by grids of colonial and imperial power on unceded Indigenous lands,

[12] Jasmine E. Johnson, "Dear Khary (An Autobiography of Gentrification)," August 13, 2013, accessed September 1, 2015, http://gawker.com/dear-khary-an-autobiography-of-gentrification-1227561902.

[13] Donald Lee Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

[14] "Uprising in Oakland, Indians Picket U.S. Office," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 14, 1963, page 4. BANC MSS 2008/108. Carton 5, Folder: San Francisco Chronicle, Newspaper Articles and Papers re: Native Americans. Bancroft Library.

[15] Here I reference Jodi Kim's formulation, albeit in a different historical context, in *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

as well as the many peoples who have been caught up in its pushes and pulls. It is a place where sovereignty is contested and the intimacies of empire felt by all.[16]

…

It within this history that San Francisco has been figured as a "gay mecca" or "gay homeland." In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a "Great Gay Migration," in the words of anthropologist Kath Weston, in which tens of thousands of gays and lesbians moved to urban centers across the U.S. "San Francisco was the premier destination," she writes, "for those who desired and could afford to live in 'gay space.'"[17] Writing of her interviews with dozens of people who had made this migration to San Francisco, Weston describes the frequently spatialized tropes of gays and lesbians who "hit the California trail."[18] In describing how sexual identity is forged by an imagined interplay between urban and rural, Weston writes that the "gay imaginary is spatialized, just as the nation is territorialized."[19] Indeed, the settler city of San Francisco had long been figured as a "wide-open town." This essentially settler character, formed amid the lawful genocidal campaigns waged against Indigenous peoples during the mid-19th century, continues to shape sexual imaginaries of the city. Scholars point to the fact that during this time male settlers frequently participated in same-sex, cross-gender dances in the absence of eligible white women.[20] But as Clare Sears points

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[16] I am inspired by Lisa Lowe's formulation in *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

[17] Weston, "Get Thee to a Big City: Sexual Imaginary and the Great Gay Migration," 255.

[18] Weston, 281.

[19] Weston, 262.

[20] Clare Sears, *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Albert Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999); Boyd, *Wide-Open Town: A Queer History of San Francisco to 1965*.

out, "Perceptions of gender imbalance had existed…long before the gold rush, since the Spanish conquest in 1769 instituted colonial ideologies that literally did not count indigenous women as women."[21] Many of these studies, however, in their lack of engagement with Indigenous studies, regard colonialism as a discrete, bygone era. As Scott Morgensen attests, "Modern sexuality comes into existence when the heteropatriarchal advancement of white settlers appears to vanquish sexual primitivity, which white settlers nevertheless adopt as their own history."[22]

In this chapter, I illustrate that the spatial imaginary animating the "Great Gay Migration" of the 1970s and 1980s can best be understood as a *settler* spatial imaginary, a formation that is always antiblack. As I discuss, this analogy to the Great Migration must be situated within the "epistemological structure of disavowal" of neoliberalism.[23] In this moment, the simultaneity of Black dispossession and banishment and Indigenous erasure created the conditions of possibility—the *grounds* for—practices and imaginings of San Francisco as a "gay homeland." Indeed, the popular discourse of gay migrants to this city on a hill invoked familiar tropes of westward migration on "the California trail."[24] But while the imaginary of the wide-open town refers to a wild west of untamed lasciviousness, it also connotes terra nullius: "wide-open" for the taking, which in this moment was also constitutive of Black dispossession. San Francisco's reputation as a gay destination solidified in direct relationship to neoliberal retrenchment and the state's carceral organization of space. As Christina Hanhardt argues, it is "impossible to understand LGBT political history outside of the

[21] Sears, *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco*, 27.

[22] Morgensen, *Spaces between Us*, 1.

[23] Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal.*

[24] Weston, "Get Thee to a Big City: Sexual Imaginary and the Great Gay Migration," 281.

social and spatial restructuring of U.S. cities during this time."[25] Though queer migrations to San Francisco have always included Black, Indigenous, and people of color—as Marlon Riggs' and Barbara Cameron's narratives attest—the mythology of a "gay homeland" has long erased Indigenous peoples and taken a normatively white, specifically antiblack form, something that Riggs and Cameron themselves grappled with in their work.

In this chapter, I examine three distinct yet *interreferential* scenes situated during what has been narrated as the "Great Gay Migration" to Ramaytush Ohlone territories. I contextualize this historical moment through a reading of "Gays vs. Blacks," an NBC special that aired on local late-night television in 1980 to demonstrate the ways property and antiblack policing became increasingly enmeshed with dominant modes of queerness while also building on earlier settler expressions of gay liberation. In doing so, I demonstrate how in this moment relational mobilizations of Indigenous erasure and antiblack criminalization were constitutive of an emergent white gay sense of place. It was within this nexus that select white gays in San Francisco—a formerly criminalized population—were invited into propertied citizenship through real estate speculation.[26]

While my reading of "Gays vs. Blacks" points to an emergent spatial project that requires both Indigenous disappearance and narratives of Black surplus, I also demonstrate the stakes of colonial unknowing within formations of anti-carceral radicalisms of the period.[27] Lesbians Against Police Violence (LAPV) was a radical rejoinder to the emergent formation of homonormativity in "Gays vs. Blacks." With attunement to Indigeneity and the gendered and spatial logics of settler colonialism, I demonstrate how colonial elisions mediated LAPV's work. Following Scott

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[25] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 9.

[26] For a discussion of policing and raids on gay bars in the 1930s through 1950s, see Boyd, *Wide-Open Town: A Queer History of San Francisco to 1965*.

[27] Vimalassery, Goldstein, and Pegues, "Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing."

Morgensen, I examine how "Native and non-Native and queer politics formed in their relationship in the spaces between them produced by settler colonialism."[28] At the same time, Indigenous gays and lesbians forged an anti-colonial queer politics that regarded the space of San Francisco with generative ambivalence. As an often-overlooked formation in histories of queer social movements in the city, Gay American Indians (GAI) troubles the formulation of gays and lesbians as eager migrants to this city on hill by positioning Indigenous gays and lesbian as refugees of U.S. settler colonialism in their home territories. More than a matter of inclusion in the historiography, an analysis of the organization, in particular the work of co-founder Barbara Cameron, engenders alternate understandings of radicalism, sexuality, race, and violence in the settler city. Each of these politically distinct yet historically parallel coordinates—"Gays vs. Blacks," LAPV, and GAI—illuminate the crystallization of a longstanding, if always incomplete and contradictory queer spatial imaginary conditioned by settler colonialism, but also the cultures and communities that such an imaginary threatens to erase.

"Gays vs. Blacks": Settler Ideologies of Discreteness Take Place[29]

In his influential 1969 "Refugees From Amerika: A Gay Manifesto," regarded as one of the earliest writings of gay liberation and widely circulated in the radical and gay press, white anti-war organizer Carl Wittman declared in the opening line: "San Francisco is a refugee camp for homosexuals."[30] As Emily Hobson argues in her study of the gay and lesbian left, "This

[28] Morgensen, *Spaces between Us*, x.

[29] I reference Roderick Ferguson's formulation of "ideologies of discreteness," in *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 5.

[30] Carl Wittman, "A Gay Manifesto," in *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*, ed. Karla Jay and Allen Young (New York: Douglas, 1972), 330-342.

proclamation marked gay geography through both oppression and escape."[31] In this and the following chapter, I am attuned to the ways this settler imaginary reverberates within narratives of queer and LGBT migration in the decades that follow. More than an inability to conceive of overlapping agendas or identities among "blacks," "Chicanos," "women," and "gays," Wittman's writing cast gay liberation in explicitly nationalist, landed terms. San Francisco is "a ghetto rather than a free territory," he writes, "because it is still theirs."[32] "Refugees from Amerika," he declared, gay people could attempt to build liberated territories of their own. Indeed, his longing for "gay territory" did more than simply invoke settler epistemologies of space and place, but incited and materialized them. A year later in 1970, for example, as Hobson has shown, members of the Los Angeles and Bay Area chapters of the Gay Liberation Front proposed building a "gay colony" in Washoe territory in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.[33] Though largely a media spectacle making international headlines, this narrative of a "Gay Homeland" or "Stonewall Nation" reverberated widely and the project secured over $250,000 in financial backing and claimed over 1,100 "Alpioneers" eager to take part.[34] Indeed, the Alpine Project's settler colonial episteme was more than symbolic. If their city on a hill would not be realized in the already-occupied Ohlone and Tongva territories spanning urban neighborhoods of San Francisco and Los Angeles, they would build it elsewhere. As in my discussion of the "Great Gay Migration," the ideological resonances of this strain of gay liberation outlived the Alpine Project itself, articulating (white) gay liberation in

[31] Emily Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* (Oakland: UC Press, 2016), 25.

[32] Wittman, "A Gay Manifesto, 330-342.

[33] For a detailed analysis of this milieu, including GLF and the Alpine Project, see chapter 1, "Beyond the Gay Ghetto: Founding Debates in Gay Liberation," in Emily Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left.* (Oakland: UC Press, 2016).

[34] Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left*, 35.

explicitly settler, spatial, and landed terms made legible through resounding settler narratives and material practices of westward migration. Wittman and the Alpine Project's colonial episteme are transparent. If we are to consider seriously, however, that cities also span unceded Indigenous territories, the terrain of such critiques must span all of Turtle Island, whether in the Sierra Nevada foothills or the streets of San Francisco.

In 1980, NBC aired a local late-night television special entitled, "Gays vs. Blacks." If narratives of gay liberation a decade prior illuminate its settler colonial epistemology, "Gays vs. Blacks" demonstrates the constitutive antiblackness of an emerging white gay sense place and space. During this juncture, some white gays—predominantly men—drew from earlier discourses of gay liberation to unflinchingly align with capital and the carceral state through their participation in real estate speculation. The news segment, symptomatic of neoliberal retrenchment and the emergent prison-industrial complex, demonstrates how local, often intimate racialized and sexualized contestations over urban space were mediated by narratives of Black surplus and a carceral form of forced mobility that is, in part, what established the conditions for the chosen mobility for select white gays. In the following chapter, I return to anti-carceral spatial imaginaries found in *ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter*, published in the Bay Area that from 1982 to 1984.

With melodramatic flair, the news segment, characteristic of dominant epistemological modes of comparison, cautioned viewers about the growing tension and violence between the city's "black" and "gay" residents. The narrator, local anchorman Tom Snyder, depicts a "great gay migration to *the* international gay mecca," dubbing San Francisco "the world's biggest gay party."[35] Saturated with the language of im/migration, gay people are characterized as a monolith essentially *not of this place*. "San Francisco's new immigrants are moving in to low-income neighborhoods,"

[35] "Blacks versus Gays," *NBC Late Night with Tom Snyder*, May 17th, 1980, VHS recording at GLBT Historical Society.

Snyder reports with great seriousness.[36] "The established residents are Blacks or Hispanics. They have very little money. The new people are affluent. They're white. They're male…And they're gay." The news segment paints a wildly sensational picture of white gay "immigrants" flocking to the city in such droves that they are spilling out of the Castro and into heretofore un-gentrified neighborhoods. Snyder remarks that families that once lived in the Castro have had to "make way for the great gay immigration," and estimates that a third of San Francisco residents are "*now homosexual*." He continues: "The homosexual population is growing…So the gays are moving into low-income neighborhoods and the Blacks and Hispanics have to move out."[37]

This formulation of the "great gay migration," positioning gays as both *white* and *immigrant*, signals what Frank B. Wilderson III has called "the ruse of analogy," and is made possible only through the negation of slavery and Indigenous dispossession.[38] At the dawn of the neoliberal era, this analogy to the Great Migration, in which millions of Black people fled economic subjection and racial terror in the South for cities in the North and West, narrates racial violence as historical. In the historiography, this Great Migration is typically narrated as roughly 1915-1970, at the precipice of what (white) gay communities, commentators, and later academics would call the great gay migration.[39] While Black people—both enslaved and free—had journeyed to the San Francisco Bay Area in previous decades, and there were small Black communities in San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, and elsewhere at the turn of the century, WWII prompted mass migrations to the Bay

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Frank B. Wilderson, *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 35–53.

[39] Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992); Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).

Area, including some 64,000 African Americans between 1940 and 1945.[40] Writing of Black displacement in Oakland in 2020, Carroll Fife attests that, "The great migration never ended."[41] We might situate Marlon Riggs' migration from Hephzibah, Georgia, a place he characterizes as rife with unrelenting antiblack terror and homophobic violence within the Great Migration.[42] Riggs' migration is certainly illegible within the discursive frame of "great gay immigration," as it is characterized in "Gays vs. Blacks," not only because gays are represented as white, but also because of the impossibility of the Black immigrant within conditions of slavery and its afterlife. Thus, positioning gays as specifically *white* and *immigrant*—the agentive, willful, mobile lesbian or gay subject—is made possible through both the negation of slavery and Indigenous dispossession. As Jodi Byrd attests, this country's "precious devotion to individual freedom has only ever been formed in relation to those who never counted as human to be free into the first place."[43] It is instead "a nation built through those foreclosed from the teleology of immigration as the path to humanity—descendants of Africans brought to the new world via the slave trade as well as the descendants of those Indigenous peoples who were already here and who survived genocide and the dispossession of their lands."[44]

In the carceral-colonial present of San Francisco in 1980, white gays become the subjects of this "precious devotion" to the teleology of immigration; the rational, self-determined "autological

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[40] Marilynn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush: Oakland and the East Bay in World War II* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1993), 52.

[41] Carroll Fife, "The Great Migration Never Ended," November 10, 2020, accessed May 7, 2021, https://www.humansandnature.org/the-great-migration-never-ended.

[42] Riggs, *Tongues Untied.*

[43] Jodi A Byrd, "Not Yet: Indigeneity, Antiblackness, and Anticolonial Liberation," in *Antiblackness*, ed. Joao H. Costa Vargas and Moon-Kie Jung (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 314.

[44] Byrd, 314.

subject" of the future over and against the "genealogical society," which bounds others to various regressive inheritances, in the terms of Elizabeth Povinelli.[45] The white gay men interviewed in "Gays vs. Blacks," express that Blacks and Latinos feel "threatened and hostile," and that anti-gay violence has increased. In a narrative that dovetails with Wittman's formulation of gay refugees, Snyder reports that, "Many homosexuals consider themselves a minority and believe they have the right to *live where they want*."[46] While the newscaster repeatedly aims to incite and confirm homophobic sentiment among the ostensibly straight Black and Latino men he interviews, the residents—save for a resentful Latino teenager in the Mission—never express homophobia themselves. And yet, couched in cultural pathology, the news anchor repeatedly cites "traditional" Black and Latino intolerance of homosexuality. While the anchorman does interview "Blacks and Hispanics," the title's focus on Blackness is worth considering, as it is not the first time Black cultural pathology vis-à-vis homophobia would be invoked by the state or LGBT movements.[47] As Hanhardt demonstrates, *the urban* is meaningful not only because of the dominant LGBT movement's connection to cities, "but also because of whom this movement has defined itself against…The assumption that people of color of all economic classes are more *homophobic* than whites has been durable within mainstream LGBT politics...these ideas are linked to how LGBT organizations imagined their relationship to low-income people of color in the early years of the

[45] Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*.

[46] "Blacks versus Gays," *NBC Late Night with Tom Snyder*, May 17th, 1980, VHS recording at GLBT Historical Society.

[47] More recently, "Black homophobia" was invoked to justify the passage of Proposition 8 in 2008, which Chandan Reddy argues must be understood in the context of the state's attempt to reorganize sexuality within the political economy of California. As Reddy observes, the passage of Prop 8 alongside Obama's election unfurled claims of "Black homophobia" on the one hand, and widespread political analogy between *Loving vs. Virginia* and Prop 8 on the other, which narrated struggles for racial justice as historical.

consolidation of the LGBT rights movement."[48] Beyond social movement or organizational formations, white gay sociality was also constructed in and through these terms, which I discuss significantly in the next chapter. Both drew from longstanding invocations of Black cultural pathology, that—as scholars including Cynthia Blaire, Hazel Carby, Ange-Marie Hancock, and Saidiya Hartman have shown—have mediated numerous urban crises.[49] Since at least the 1970s, however, such dominant LGBT discourses have repeatedly cleaved queerness from Blackness, even as Black sexuality is constructed as deviant, excessive, or pathological.[50] In 1980, Blackness represents the regressive homophobia of the past, while queerness – in its mobility and modernity – brings forth the city's future.

A close reading of "Gays vs. Blacks" upends its own premise. Only in response to much prodding, Arnold Townsend, a Black community organizer in the Fillmore, does state that some long-time Black residents feel "resentful." But, as he makes clear, "It's not just gays, it's white gays with money."[51] Referencing the impact of urban renewal projects of previous decades and

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[48] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 13.

[49] Hazel V Carby, "Policing the Black Woman's Body in an Urban Context," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 4 (1992): 738–55; Cynthia M. Blair, *I've Got to Make My Livin': Black Women's Sex Work in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen* (New York: NYU Press, 2004); Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals* (New York, New York: Norton, 2019).

[50] There is a wide range of literature on the construction of Black sexuality through discourses of anthropology (see Wekker, Gloria, *The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), colonialism (see Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*, Pittsburgh: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) slavery and its afterlife (see Christina Sharpe, *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010) and contemporary neoliberal technologies of control (see Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen, New York: NYU Press, 2004).*

[51] "Gays vs. blacks," *NBC Late Night with Tom Snyder*, May 17th, 1980, VHS recording, GBLT Historical Society.

contemporary racialized displacement, Townsend states, "It used to be community and commercial interests…Variety stores, places where you could run in and grab your toothpaste, places where you could run in and grab film for your camera. Those kinds of places are beginning to disappear."[52] Townsend points out several nightclubs that used to be Black establishments. "The list is endless. On the one hand you look at a building like this and say, how nice, it's been fixed up. But on the other hand, you ask what happened to the people who used to be here before. You fix it up, somebody's got to leave. Now I think places can be fixed up but I don't understand this concept of every time you fix something up the people who suffered with it when it was run down have got to go."[53] Townsend contradicts the narrative arc of the news report by noting the specificity of white gays with money, but perhaps more importantly by exposing the structural causes of displacement: real estate speculation, lack of tenants' protections, and state withdrawal. He questions the very premise of shelter as commodity within racial capitalism while locating a historical moment, as Mike Davis so aptly assesses, when "the purpose of housing units came to be perceived more as investment and speculation than as shelter…[and] house trading became a mass mania."[54]

It was in this nexus that select white gays in San Francisco—a formerly criminalized population—were invited into propertied citizenship through real estate speculation. The screen cuts from the interview to rows of hillside Victorians as the faceless voiceover interjects: "They [Black people] have to move out because they don't stand a chance in the wave of real estate speculation and renovation that send prices skyrocketing. Block by block, hundreds of the city's beautiful but neglected old homes have been bought up, stripped down, and restored." Of course, these *beautiful*

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Davis, *City of Quartz*, 181.

but neglected homes are lived in and perhaps loved by the Black people who's lives and labor such statements disavow. Black interiority—in the somatic, corporeal sense and in the physical interiority of homes—is rendered bare. While the barriers to capital, home loans, and generational wealth produce chipped paint, weathered siding, rickety porches—perhaps a broken window or unsightly curtains—the invocation of *neglect* tugs at a century-old popular repertoire and sociological discourse of Black urban disorder. Out of order. Unkempt. Untidy. Broken family, broken home. *Beautiful but neglected.*

Saidiya Hartman writes of the birth of the Black ghetto and the sociological and "charitable" fixation with Black urban disorder in the decades following the formal end of chattel slavery. The visual, and in particular the photographic, "coerced the black poor into visibility as a condition of policing and charity…Individual persons were forced to stand in for sweeping historical narratives about the progress or failure of the Negro, serve as representatives of a race or class, embody and inhabit social problems, and evidence failure or improvement."[55] This moving picture, set in San Francisco a century later, functions much like the sociological images of the past: a purportedly objective, transparent documentation, yet one that conjures this visual archive of the slum and of Black neglect. As the narrator speaks, white hands holding tools are shown stripping the siding from an old house and applying fresh paint, which fades into a montage of the sparkling, renovated, candy-colored Victorians—built through extractive frontier wealth—so iconic of San Francisco. "They again become the grand homes of another era…Some people call it gentrification; the return of the gentry to the old neighborhoods. Others call it urban renaissance. For the renters, it is unfair

[55] Saidiya Hartman. Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals (New York: Norton, 2019), 21.

eviction by gays."[56] The Johnsons, a Black elder and his adult son who were interviewed after being displaced from their home of 20 years in the Fillmore, and then again from their next residence, never specify eviction "by gays." The elder Johnson explained that their rent had nearly tripled from $135 to $375 a month after the new owner renovated. "When you've been paying the same rent for 20 years and are on a fixed income, what do you do? You move."[57] In 2007, their home on Waller Street sold for $1.8 million; according to one site its current value is over three million dollars.[58]

Though not representative of all white gay men buying homes in the San Francisco in 1980, the interview with a notorious white gay real estate speculator, Donald Lipper, demonstrates precisely the ways white gay relationships to property are, in this moment, articulated through antiblackness. In an interview on a street corner Donald Lipper told the newscaster that he was "liberating the neighborhood" from its residents. As Lipper is speaks, he gestures around to the groups of young Black people on the sidewalks. He points to a house, lackluster with white paint chipped, and to the house next door, remodeled with freshly flipped paint in loud colors and new landscaping. Though distinct from Wittman and contemporaries who wrote in supposed solidarity with Black liberation, the desire to "liberate" space for (white) gays—whether in San Francisco or the Sierra Nevada foothills—is deeply resonant. "Why the hell should this gem of a city be given over to Blacks on welfare," Lipper admonished. "Everyone in the U.S. wants to live here, why should it be filled with unproductive people who are essentially the crime problem? Send them to

[56] "Gays vs. blacks," *NBC Late Night with Tom Snyder*, May 17th, 1980, VHS recording, GBLT Historical Society.

[57] Ibid.

[58] "563 Waller St.," accessed September 20, 2020, https://www.redfin.com/CA/San-Francisco/563-Waller-St-94117/home/1090163.

Idaho, or at least Oakland."[59] For Lipper, San Francisco is a coveted "gem," compatible with "gay" tastes, sensibilities, and an aesthetic of renewal exemplified by the transformation of "neglected" homes to "grand homes of another era." As with "New England," the corner of Indigenous land invoked by John Winthrop 350 years prior, this city on a hill is a beacon—a model—of refinement to be liberated from inhabitants in the name of progress; a homeland for the "great gay migration."[60]

For Lipper, Blackness in San Francisco in 1980 is synonymous with criminality, but also *non*productivity: surplus.[61] When Snyder challenges Lipper on blatant racial discrimination, he revises: "What I mean is productive people. We have a very unique geographic location in the United States. Everybody, almost, in the United States would like to live here. Now why the hell should it be filled with basically nonproductive people? Who do not contribute, who are essentially the crime problem."[62] This narrative undergirds the orchestrated shift to law-and-order policing and the neoliberal rhetoric of an undeserving poor emblematized by gendered and racialized accusations of fraudulent claims to the welfare state.[63] He boasts that he specializes in displacing the "dopers, pimps, and the welfare crowd," and that one of his proudest accomplishments is turning a "rough and tumble" Black bar into a "gay quiche and coffee house." Following Grace Hong, "Gays v. Blacks" demonstrates precisely "the ways in which neoliberal capitalist economies profit from

[59] Hartman, *Wayward Lives*, 21.

[60] Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Christopher Leise, *The Story upon a Hill: The Puritan Myth in Contemporary American Fiction* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2017).

[61] Gilmore, *Golden Gulag.*

[62] "Gays vs. blacks," *NBC Late Night with Tom Snyder*, May 17th, 1980, VHS recording, GBLT Historical Society.

[63] Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen*; Nadasen, *Rethinking the Welfare Rights Movement*; Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens."

deploying affect as a way of creating surplus, devalued, reviled populations."[64] The white gay real estate speculator—muscular, thin, and normatively masculine in aviator sunglasses and a leather jacket—emerges as a "productive" neoliberal subject over and against the gender and sexual deviance of racialized surplus. For it was at this juncture, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore argues, that the state of California embarked on the largest prison-building project in world history, marking a shift from a system reliant on labor to one reliant on captivity itself: "extensively and repeatedly removing people from disordered, deindustrialized milieus and depositing them somewhere else."[65] By this time, Gilmore argues, for more than a decade the state had been "'individualizing disorder' into singular instances of criminality."[66] The project of producing criminalized populations relied on a deepening cleavage between the deserving and undeserving: "As a class," Gilmore attests, "convicts are deindustrialized cities' working and workless poor."[67] Or as Lipper would have it, "*essentially* the crime problem." An adverb, "essentially" is used to "identify or stress the basic or essential character or nature of a person or thing," but also colloquially used to suggest "more or less."[68] The Black residents of the Fillmore are fungible in their nonproductivity: more or less, essentially, the crime problem.

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[64] Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 64.

[65] Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 14.

[66] Ibid., 25.

[67] Ibid., 7.

[68] "Essentially," Miriam Webster Dictionary, accessed September 20, 2020, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/essentially.

But Black residents aren't pushed out, Lipper again rebuffs. "That simply isn't true. They're priced out. The pushing out that happens to them is economic."[69] While Lipper's antiblack neoliberal ideology of unfettered free market equality may not typify white gay narratives of this historical moment, its staying power and circulation is our queer inheritance. As we shall see in chapter 2, neoliberal urban developers and policy-makers took note of the perceived capacity of white gay communities to "rehabilitate" the pathology of racialized urban disorder. The news spot reiteratively naturalizes and affirms white gays' entitlement to space as the presence of Black gays and lesbians, impacted by racialized gentrification *and* anti-gay violence is a rhetorical paradox. Predictably, the construction of white vulnerability affirms a "spatial fix" to homophobia and anti-gay violence; one that is reliant on, in the words of Hanhardt, "two of global capital's own 'spatial fixes': gentrification and mass imprisonment."[70] Indeed, San Francisco was a proving ground for early, so-called LGBT-friendly carceral reforms, such as the recruitment of gay and lesbian police offers and institutionalization of sensitivity trainings, an expression of what Savannah Shange terms carceral progressivism.[71]

While racialized urban displacement and Indigenous land dispossession are often understood as distinct or unrelated, Lipper's narrative reveals them to be mutually imbricated projects. How does the *investment* of space, place, and property with *liberatory* potential—if across disparate contexts of the Black Fillmore and Sierra Nevada foothills— mediate racialized dispossession, particularly when coupled with white queer narratives of injury? As with the Alpine Project, Lipper's narrative

[69] "Gays vs. blacks," *NBC Late Night with Tom Snyder*, May 17th, 1980, VHS recording, GBLT Historical Society.

[70] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 14.

[71] Christina B Hanhardt, *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 104; Savannah Shange, *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, & Schooling in San Francisco* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 14.

relies on the discursive and material practices of settlement, both of which are construed as inevitabilities that rely on shared spatial logics of extraction, terra nullius, and civilizing discourses. In this moment, property and possession vis a vis queer gentrification become nodes at which settler colonialism, antiblackness, and neoliberalism intersect to discursively and materially criminalize and banish Black people while claiming Indigenous land as always already empty: ripe for speculation. As Eve Tuck, Hannah Sultan, and Alison Guess attest, "Policing tactics, gentrification, vigilantism, and political isolation find justification in the settler colonial truism that Black people should not be where white settlers want to be."[72] Aileen Moreton-Robinson likewise builds on Cheryl Harris' foundational theory of whiteness as property to examine the ways settler states are continuously maintained as white property.[73] The reiterative performativity of white possession is required, as Goeman attests, in the "repetitive practices of everyday life that give settler place meaning and structure."[74] In San Francisco in 1980, a queer kind of whiteness as property emerged, demonstrating how this field of power can operate through social and spatial projects predicated on liberation.

At the dawn of Reagan's presidency, the predicament is cast in cultural terms: (straight) Blacks who "neglected" their homes are faced with (white) gay "migrants," whom they resent due to a "traditional" antagonism towards homosexuality.[75] In the 1970s and 1980s, some LGBT

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[72] Eve Tuck, Allison Guess, and Hannah Sultan, "Not Nowhere: Collaborating on Selfsame Land," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society*, June 26, 2014, accessed September 20, 2020, https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2014/06/26/not-nowhere-collaborating-on-selfsame-land/.

[73] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), xi.

[74] Goeman, "Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place: The Visual Memoir of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie," 236–37.

[75] There were social movement alternatives to this representation. Hanhardt details the work of the Third World Gay Coalition, who sought to intervene in discussions around gentrification that cast

formations arose amid, aligned with, and perhaps even exacerbated conditions of devaluation for poor, racialized, and gender or sexually-deviant subjects. "This new form of (bio)power," as Hong has argues, "is marked by the rampant proliferation of carceral and deadly regimes enabled by the limited incorporation and affirmation of certain forms of racialized, gendered, and sexualized difference."[76] And yet, these are also precisely the conditions in which multi-racial, multi-issue queer organizing took shape in San Francisco and beyond. As scholars including Hanhardt and Hobson have shown, Reagan's election represented a moment when rifts among gay-focused, rights-based agendas and intersectional, multi-issue political strategies would grow.[77] Across the city, in San Francisco's Mission District, Lesbians Against Police Violence (LAPV) formed to challenge such queer collusion with the police and racialized displacement while Gay American Indians navigated complex terrains of such organizing, conditioned as it was by Indigenous erasure.

"Count the Contradictions":
Colonial Unknowing in the Mission's Colonial Present

> The issue of freedom began in this country when the pilgrims arrived. Indian people, men and women began the very first battle for freedom. It was a bloody battle and it still continues to be…Indian people have been fighting the very same forces that are now called the moral majority, or the new right for hundreds of years. We are still alive, we are still fighting…As we begin this new battle under the Reagan Regime, we must not forget those who have already been silenced, either by being imprisoned, or by being institutionalized or by out and out murder.[78]

"gays" and "Blacks" in mutually exclusive terms. See chapter 3, "'Count the Contradictions: Challenges to Gay Gentrification at the Start of the Reagan Era," in *Safe Space*, especially pages 131-134.

[76] Grace Kyungwon Hong, "Existentially Surplus: Women of Color Feminism and the New Crises of Capitalism," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18, no. 1 (2012): 91.

[77] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*; Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left.*

[78] "Freedom of Women," Box 1, Folder 20. Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

> -- Barbara Cameron (Hunkpapa Lakota of the Fort Yates Band), San Francisco, circa 1980

In 1984, staff at the Women's Building, a hub of lesbian and feminist organizing in San Francisco's Mission District, interviewed Lakota lesbian activist Barbara Cameron, who had been active in social movements in the city for a decade, for a profile on her life and work. The interviewer, after asking about her current activities and how she got involved in politics, queried, "What's it like being a lesbian in the American Indian community and being an Indian in the Lesbian/Gay community?"[79] Cameron responds that as she gets older (then only 30), she finds that it is "like a graceful but studied ballet." She goes onto describe that, just as in any community, there is homophobia in Native communities and mentions that she was a co-founder of Gay American Indians. "In the Lesbian/Gay community," she states, "I have been the only Indian political activist for many years. I bring up issues important to Indians so that others will learn and perhaps begin to get a different understanding of this country they are living in. Usually they ask if I'm from Central America, South America, or Spain. I say, 'No, I'm really from here!'"[80] In remarking on the normative whiteness of lesbian spaces in San Francisco, including her experience being one of the few Indigenous women—"'No! I'm really from here!'"—Cameron highlights the absurdity of the erasure of people Indigenous to Turtle Island. Made just after the height of the "Great Gay Migration," her comments illustrate how modes of lesbian sociality and movement-building were (if not uniquely so) conditioned by settler colonialism while inviting non-Native gays and lesbians into "a different understanding of this country they are living in."

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[79] Women's Building Interview, page 2, Box 1, Folder 2. Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[80] Women's Building Interview, page 2, Box 1, Folder 2. Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

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In San Francisco's Mission District, a largely working-class Latino but also significantly Indigenous neighborhood quickly gaining a reputation as San Francisco's dyke enclave, white lesbians mobilized to confront the virulent conjuncture of policing and gay gentrification featured in "Gays vs. Blacks." The Mission borders the Castro to the east, which made it appealing to gays and lesbians seeking investment opportunities or cheaper rents outside of what was becoming an increasingly costly gay enclave. In addition to white gay real estate speculators, far from the only investors in the neighborhood, a growing number of lesbian and gay renters also began moving into communal apartments in neighborhoods with cheap rents. In the Mission, white lesbians in particular owned and/or operated several bookstores, bars, cafes, and a bathhouse in the neighborhood, significantly saturating the cultural landscape. Hanhardt observes that while these new residents included people of color and/or those who considered themselves working class, "the businesses and cultural institutions that appeared to serve new lesbian and gay communities heightened the visibility of the middle-class white people who often owned them."[81] As in the Fillmore, reports of violence and harassment targeting gays and lesbians in the Mission increased, often framed in polarizing, implicitly racist terms that pit presumably white lesbians and straight communities of color against each other. Anti-racist lesbians feared this would lead to heighted policing under the guise of protection.[82]

Hanhardt situates the work of Lesbians Against Police Violence (LAPV), a relatively small, short-lived organization active in the Mission from 1979 to 1981, within a nexus of small, multi-issue, often neighborhood-based organizations united by a critique of Reaganomics and dominant

[81] Hanhardt, *Safe Space,* 129.

[82] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 128–40.

gay political agendas. "These activists argued that the coalition of interests in the Religious and New Right not only represented a moralistic assault on sexual freedom but also stood for a regime of law and order and economic entrenchment that would cut stark lines of inequality not easily reduced to sexuality alone. And they believed that the growing apparatus of state punishment, in the form of new crime control strategies and the restructuring of urban neighborhoods, provided particular opportunities for lesbian and gay activists to pursue multi-issue political organizing."[83] Hanhardt importantly emphasizes LAPV's critiques of state violence and creative use of cultural production, including skits and plays, to express solidarity with "Third World" struggles and demonstrate a shared, if uneven victimization by police. While their work was attentive to interlocking categories of difference, particularly as they were being complexly rearranged in the context of emergent neoliberalism, they "nonetheless sometimes replicated the popular diagnosis of gay gentrification."[84] Within their analysis, lesbians and people of color were sometimes positioned as distinct categories, but more often "the organization's formulation of *lesbian* hewed rather closely to a specific subculture of (mostly) white lesbian life."[85]

This study positions LAPV's analysis within the specificities of settler colonialism in San Francisco and the colonial unknowing animating the disavowal of the mission system as a site of gendered colonial terror. To be sure, LAPV organized in explicit opposition to emergent normative gay formations not only accommodating—but inclusive—of developers and police. One of many radical rejoinders to the emergent homonormative formation exemplified by "Gays vs. Blacks," LAPV's analysis illuminated many of the broader structural conditions that were disavowed by the

[83] Hanhardt, 119.

[84] Hanhardt, 139.

[85] Hanhardt, 139.

solidifying spatial imaginary of San Francisco as a gay mecca. At the same time, they also overlapped with such formations in their characterization of (white) lesbians as immigrants. While such colonial elisions were not unique to this organization, its historical context, or the social movement milieu in which it was enmeshed, the settler imaginary undergirding LAPV's organizing and analysis repudiated the colonial origins of policing and heteropatriarchy on Indigenous land. I take cue from Morgensen, who studies the formation of activisms "in relation to the spaces they elided."[86] As he attests: "If queer subjects align with whiteness or homonationalism, their settler colonial roots may seem clear. But even multiracial and transnational queer critiques of racism and imperialism can erase Native people and naturalize settler colonialism in ways that indirectly or directly define queer modernity as not Native."[87] I am attuned to the silences in LAPV's work while also imagining how *listening* to Barbara Cameron—"'No, I'm really from here!'"—and the work of Gay American Indians, an organization active in the same time and place, might have informed LAPV's understanding of policing, place, gender, and violence.[88] As I demonstrate in the next chapter, these disavowals continue to shape discussions around queer gentrification in the Mission and beyond.

LAPV's work was multi-issue and apprehended the ways emergent neoliberal formations deepened existing inequalities in interlocking ways. In describing who the police in the Mission serve, for example, LAPV members wrote: "The same people who brought us BART, housing speculation, the downtown high rises, Prop. 13 and Jarvis II [the spatial concentration of wealth via property taxes], the death penalty, and who deny abortions to poor women and impose forced

[86] Morgensen, *Spaces between Us*, 13.

[87] Morgensen, 3.

[88] Box 1, Folder 2. Women's Building Interview, page 2, Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

sterilization on poor and Third World women."[89] In relationship to Black and women of color feminist analyses, they forged analytical connections between the reproductive regulation of (heterosexual) women of color, the racialized politics of private property and development, and deliberate shrinking of social services. For LAPV's members, each of these vectors—and its enforcement through policing—represented a specific, yet intersecting form of state violence serving a growing financial elite. In the early 1960s, under the pretense of eminent domain, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) construction had infamously bulldozed Black homes and businesses—most notably in the historic Black business district of West Oakland—to connect white-collar suburban workers to San Francisco capital, displacing more than 10,000 West Oakland residents.[90] "Lesbians and Third World peoples have a common enemy in the police, and we of LAPV will make this connection and form alliances wherever possible…police do not protect gay people unless it is an excuse to crack down on other minorities."[91] LAPV developed a significant critique of neoliberalism as Hong defines it—the "selective protection" of minoritized life by the carceral state—if at the same time sometimes elided the ways Black, Indigenous, and gays and lesbians of color were criminalized, policed, and subject to state violence in specific ways.[92]

What interests me is the specific colonial geography of the Mission District in the context of the occasion for LAPV's emergence. LAPV formed in response to the 1979 assault and arrest of two lesbian activists, Sue Davis and Shirley Wilson, who were apprehended, beaten, strip-searched,

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[89] LAPV flyers, folder 5, Coll. 1989-05, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians against Police Violence Records, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco CA.

[90] Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 149-155.

[91] "Points of Unity, 1979," Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians against Police Violence Records.

[92] Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal*, 7.

and detained at a police station and city jail after leaving a local lesbian bar, Amelia's.[93] Within LAPV's writing and various ephemera, Shirley Wilson is alternately identified as "a Native American, a mother and a grandmother" and a "lesbian."[94] Sue Davis is presented as white, as she remains racially unmarked in the materials produced in the flurry of activism surrounding their case. It remains unclear whether members of LAPV had direct contact with Sue Davis or Shirley Wilson. Minutes from a meeting early in the group's history, before they'd held their first workshop or decided on a name, ranged in discussion from workshop planning (which in lesbian fashion would include such sections as "Orientation to the Group," "History of the Mission," and "Space for People to deal with their Emotions"), organizational structure, a discussion about violence between "Third World People and lesbians," and updates about incidents involving police in the city. Under a section of the meeting called "RUMOR CONTROL," a member's question regarding Sue Davis and Shirley Wilson was described this way: "Adrian raised the question – do Sue and Shirley know about these meetings? Joan says we may not have to do the kind of defense we had originally thought of even though fundraisers may still be needed. It was felt that Sue and Shirley should still know what's going on with this meeting. Claudia will talk to Sue, tell her of next meeting."[95] I ask, what of Shirley? Though the "S & S Committee" was active throughout LAPV's existence, there was continued discussion about how to best pursue this work and whether it should continue.

I regard the disavowal of Wilson's *lesbian Indigeneity* and of colonial violence as animated by what Manu Vimalassery, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein term "colonial unknowing,"

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[93] "Sue and Shirley Rummage Sale," Folder 5, Coll. 1989-05, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians against Police Violence Records, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco CA.

[94] "Who Are Sue and Shirley? Why Were They Attacked by the Cops?" Folder 5, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians Against Police Violence Records 1989-05, GLBTHS.

[95] Minutes, Feb-Apr 1979, Folder 6, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians Against Police Violence Records 1989-05, GLBTHS.

which renders "unintelligible the entanglements of racialization and colonization, occluding the mutable historicity of colonial structures and attributing finality to conquest and dispossession."[96] Colonial unknowing, more than producing omissions, is an epistemological regime that is "aggressively made and reproduced."[97] Following Jodi Byrd, they posit colonial agnosia as a mode of colonial unknowing that "conveys how colonialism remains pervasive but not comprehended as an extensive and constitutive living formation by those situated in complicity with colonial occupation."[98] LAPV, apprehending the police as an "occupying force within 3rd world communities," as was the parlance of the time, was unable to apprehend Mission San Francisco de Asís as an ongoing site of colonial violence for California Indians and other Native peoples.[99]

While in the most immediate sense, LAPV formed in response to the police assault and capture of Shirley Wilson, a lesbian identified as "Native American," along with a white lesbian, there was never a subsequent discussion of the meaning of her Indigeneity or what it might mean in a neighborhood named for and *still occupied* by the material edifice of Mission San Francisco de Asís. In LAPV's analysis, the police violence targeting both Shirley Wilson and Sue Davis is predicated on their identities as lesbians. A 1980 flyer for a fundraiser features a photograph of a protester with a

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[96] Vimalassery, Goldstein, and Pegues, "Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing."

[97] Vimalassery, Goldstein, and Pegues.

[98] Vimalassery, Goldstein, and Pegues. Authors elaborate on agnosia this way, attuned to and cautious of the tendency to analogize disability: "Colonial agnosia provides a means of theorizing this condition and its practices, not to analogize its operations as a disability, but to indicate the particular ways in which these practices are cathected as unintelligible and rendered as discrete objects or instances without an identifiable relationship. We use agnosia to describe what in the colonial context is both resolutely 'normal' and normative, rather than as an ascription of pathology, anomaly, or disorder. The apperceptive subset of agnosia is a neurological condition that entails trouble assembling elements of an image into an understandable whole, and difficulty in grasping the relationship of objects to one another."

[99] "Points of Unity," 1979, Folder 1, Coll. 1989-05, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians against Police Violence Records, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco CA.

sign that reads, "STOP POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST LESBIANS." As the flyer describes, "Sue Davis and Shirley Wilson are two lesbians who were attacked by the S.F. police as they were leaving a wimmin's [sic] bar in 1979."[100] Throughout LAPV's materials, the descriptor of "Native American" is never paired with "lesbian," echoing the epistemological formation, that if politically distinct, animated "Gays vs. Blacks." Such disavowals represent the stakes of the colonial elisions Cameron perpetually raised.

In framing Davis and Wilson's assault and arrest in terms of sexism and homophobia, the racial/colonial violation of Shirley Wilson as an Indigenous lesbian is disavowed, marking disparate formations among lesbian feminism and Black, Indigenous, and women of color feminisms of the period. LAPV was likely influenced by Black and women of color feminist analysis, perhaps including the Combahee River Collective's widely-circulated 1979 pamphlet titled "~~Six~~…~~7~~…~~8~~…Eleven Black Women: Why Did They Die?," which situated the murders of 12 Black women in the Boston area as complexly racialized *and* gendered.[101] Though LAPV shared Combahee's rejection of state protection, in the case of Shirley Wilson, the organization failed to account for the ways her assault might have been understood as an entanglement of gendered and racial/colonial violence, the "synthesis of oppressions," as described in Combahee's influential "Black feminist Statement."[102] Importantly, as Emily Thuma has shown, there were emergent formations of "anticarceral feminism" throughout the 1970s, many of which were honed in

[100] "Sue and Shirley Rummage Sale," Folder 5, Coll. 1989-05, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians against Police Violence Records, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco CA.

[101] For a detailed analysis of the pamphlet and Combahee River Collective, see Thuma, *All Our Trials: Prisons, Policing, and the Feminist Fight to End Violence*, 125–30; Terrion Williamson, "'Why Did They Die?': On the Serialization of Black Death," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 19, no. 3 (2017): 328–41.

[102] Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Latham, NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1981).

coalitional spaces inclusive of lesbians and radical white women and that responded to the entangled specificities of state and interpersonal violence targeting Black women and women of color, and to some extent Indigenous women.[103]

In the case of LAPV, the organization's epistemic, political, and geographic investments in dominant understandings of the "Great Gay Migration," conditioned its Indigenous erasure. LAPV records contain a history of the Mission District spanning from "contact" to 1979 on two-and-a-half typewritten pages, likely used in workshops that included a history of the neighborhood.[104] While LAPV states that the mission established through the labor of Indigenous people, Native people are characterized as "original inhabitants" without connection to ongoing struggles around place, space, or land in contemporary San Francisco, and certainly without connection to modern gay and lesbian organizing in the Mission. And yet, Shirley Wilson was there. The mission still stood. As Vimalassery, Pegues, and Goldstein explain, colonial agnosia indexes "the disjuncture between colonialism as simultaneously *everywhere and nowhere*."[105] The document goes on to describe various waves of immigration to the Mission, stating that in 1979, Latinos comprised over half of Mission residents and lists 28 other racial or ethnic immigrant groups that also resided in the neighborhood. LAPV narrates the Mission District as a *destination*: for immigrants, migrant labor, "the settling place for the poor left without a home from the quake and the fire [the 1906 earthquake]," and finally,

[103] For a discussion of participatory defense campaigns in the 1970s, see chapter 1, "Lessons in Self-Defense: From 'Free Joan Little' to 'Free Them All,'" 15-54, and a discussion of Black feminist-led neighborhood-based organizing in the late 1970s and early 1980s, see chapter 4, "Intersecting Indictments: Coalition for Women's Safety, Racial Justice, and the Right to the City," 123-157, in Thuma, *All Our Trials: Prisons, Policing, and the Feminist Fight to End Violence*.

[104] History of the Mission document, 1979, Folder 1, Coll. 1989-05, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians against Police Violence Records, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco CA.

[105] Vimalassery, Goldstein, and Pegues, "Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing."

since the early 1970s, "for gays."[106] The neighborhood's embrace of "those without a home," from "white lesbians who cannot afford rents elsewhere," to racialized immigrants and survivors of the 1906 earthquake, traffics in longstanding settler imaginaries of the city. It positions (white) lesbians as one type of immigrant among many, illuminating the elasticity of such settler modes of place-making, from the racist and reactionary rhetoric of "liberating the neighborhood" found in "Gays vs. Blacks" to the anti-racist, anti-carceral cultural work of LAPV. Because dykes are figured as "immigrants" *to* and never *of* this largely working-class Mexican but significantly Indigenous neighborhood, Latina and Indigenous lesbians become a spatial paradox. Archival materials suggest that there was never formal collaboration with Third World Gay Coalition, Gay American Indians, or Gay Latino Alliance, the later two of which were both active in the Mission during the same period.[107] Indeed, white gay and lesbian investments in visibility may not have been accessible or desirable to Black, Latina, or Indigenous dykes in the Mission or Fillmore. Thus, the fashioning of (white) gays and lesbians as immigrants disavows settler colonialism as its condition of possibility but also calcifies the conflation of queerness with whiteness.

In 1980, LAPV wrote and performed an elaborate skit, "Count the Contradictions: A Musical Comedy About Living in the Mission." Performed at actions, on street corners, and in lesbian bars, "Count the Contradictions," they wrote, "grew out of our lives and discussions about Sue & Shirley, the role of the police in 3rd world neighborhoods, and the contradictions that arise as

[106] History of the Mission document, 1979, Folder 1, Coll. 1989-05, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians against Police Violence Records, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco CA.

[107] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*; Horacio N Roque Ramirez, "'That's My Place!': Negotiating Racial, Sexual, and Gender Politics in San Francisco's Gay Latino Alliance, 1975-1983," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12, no. 2 (2002): 224–58.

more and more lesbians are moving into the Mission."[108] In a game show-style parody, various scenarios are presented: "Okay, contestants, you have 40 seconds to write down your analysis and COUNT THE CONTRADICTIONS!"[109] LAPV's humorous, imaginative repertoire drew from histories of camp, drag, and other queer performance genres in San Francisco and beyond, but also trafficked in Marxist and Maoist thought: the organization's emphasis on "contradiction" reflected this influence, as was true of many U.S.-based left groups of the period.[110] LAPV's most extravagant cultural production, "Count the Contradictions," exemplifies this dual influence of queer histories of camp and materialist analyses of capitalism and the state.

In one of the skits, a dyke, a fag, and Mrs. Martinez, a single Latina mother, compete for an apartment at the fictional Landshark Realty. The prospective lesbian tenant understands herself to be discriminated against because she is unmarried and lives with another woman. To this, Mrs. Martinez retorts, "Well, the landlords I've applied to seem to be just waiting for a white womon (sic) with no kids like you. And you only have to pay half the rent I do cause you're sharing the apartment." Mrs. Martinez, presumably also unmarried, recognizes the dyke's whiteness as value in relation to the racialized economy of the rental market. Just then, the fag walks up and humorously exclaims, "What, it's gone? What a drag!" The dyke turns to him and says callously, "I'm surprised you didn't put in a bid to buy the place. What's the matter, did you run out of houses in the Fillmore?" The fag explains that his landlord, who is also a gay man, just raised the rent. "It's true that there are a lot of gay men speculating, but so are a hell of a lot of straight people." In response to the fag's appeal to shared struggle, Mrs. Martinez snidely retorts, "Well we all got problems." The

[108] "Count the Contradictions," Folder 6, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians Against Police Violence Records 1989-05, GLBTHS.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 139.

dyke, looking pensive, declares, "But none of us have an apartment to have problems in." The dyke gestures towards their shared victimization, as well as the ways they've been pit against each other. They all break out in song to the tune of the 1956 *My Fair Lady* hit, "Wouldn't it be Loverly?"

MRS. M: Laundromat and a nearby store
Decent school, busstop at my door
Landlord I could ignore
Oh, wouldn't it be loverly?

DYKE: Lots of sunlight and lots of space
Wimmin's (sic) Building right near my place
Mice, roaches, not a trace,
Oh, wouldn't it be loverly?"

FAG: Favorite bars that are very near
Yard to garden throughout the year
Where I can show I'm queer
Oh, wouldn't it be loverly?"

Each character's response exemplifies the seemingly discrete investments of gays, lesbians, and (straight) Latinos seeking housing. Mrs. Martinez, a presumably straight single mother, has practical longings for decent schools, amenities, and public transportation. The dyke seeks not only decent housing ("Mice, roaches, not a trace"), but a spacious, sun-filled apartment where she can live amid the budding lesbian feminist community in the neighborhood. The Women's Building had moved into its central Mission location near the corner of 18th Street and Valencia a year earlier in 1979. The four-story building had been a former Sons of Norway meeting hall and neighborhood bar, and was transformed into the first woman-owned and operated community center in the country.[111] The fag, who represents spillover from the Castro, seeks to live near his favorite bars, is

[111] "History and Mission," accessed September 20, 2020, https://womensbuilding.org/about/mission-history/.

invested in visibility ("Where I can show I'm queer,") but also afford space to garden year round. Each feels victimized by realtors and developers, and sees the other as competition.[112]

Meanwhile, the realtor shakes a developer's hand enthusiastically. "Congratulations, I'm so pleased you got this property! It's good to know we're going to have some condominiums going up on this block." To the tune of the 1964 Motown hit, "My Guy," the realtor and developer, Nelson Exxon III, reveal their plan to displace Mission residents:

> No group for tenants' rights
> Gonna give us sleepless nights
> With our plan
>
> Gonna change the face of this neighborhood
> Gonna evict the poor for our own good
> We know the way today to make speculation pay
> With our plan.
>
> Our scheme is really great,
> We've succeeded in the Height
> With our plan.
>
> Now we got BART through
> Gonna hit the Mission too
> With our plan
>
> Gonna move the Latins out, gonna move the dykes in
> Turn them on each other,
> Raise the rents again
> And then we'll renovate with folks
> RICH WHITE AND STRAIGHT
> That's..our..plan!

Following Cathy Cohen, I understand LAPV to be highlighting Mrs. Martinez, the dyke, and the fag's shared queerness—that is, their relationship to normativity in the context of what would come to be known as Reaganomics. LAPV intervened decisively in the dominant narrative of gay gentrification by illuminating the structural conditions that led to rising rents, gentrification, and

[112] "Count the Contradictions," Folder 6, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians Against Police Violence Records 1989-05, GLBTHS.

displacement. They articulated an analysis of the ways (white) lesbians are used to mediate the displacement of people of color and entice "folks rich, white, and straight." Yet, while the skit suggests shared victimization and potential solidarity among gays, lesbians, and Latinos as renters, it tends to replicate the narrative of gentrification exemplified by "Gays vs. blacks." If perhaps self-consciously, LAPV contradictorily constructs "dyke" against, if in imagined coalition with, "Third World" communities. By narrating dykes, writ large, as both white *and* victims of the housing crisis (if sometimes temporarily valuable to speculators), they do highlight their shared queerness vis a vis normativity, but miss critical opportunities for diagnosing the ways Black and Indigenous lesbians and dykes of color were distinctly positioned in relationship to racial capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and the lived, on-the-ground race, class, gender, and sexual dynamics of urban space. Perhaps more importantly, though, this elision represents missed opportunities for coalition, collaboration, and solidarity within and across the category of "dyke" itself.

As numerous personal accounts have shown, women of color and mothers, but especially those who were both, were often suspect in majority white lesbian feminist communities, particularly those with separatist leanings.[113] Nadine Dixon, a Black lesbian born and raised in San Francisco's Noe Valley (located between the Mission and the Castro), who became pregnant at 19, was denied housing in majority-white lesbian collectives in the 1980s due to having a daughter.[114] On a 1987 panel at the Women's Building, Cameron, a Lakota lesbian and parent, likewise reflected with much humor, about the normative whiteness of lesbian spaces: "About a year or so after moving to San Francisco in 1973, one of my roommates told me there was this woman I just had to meet. She was

[113] A reason Audre Lorde famously announced, "Black lesbian feminist socialist and mother of two, including one boy," in "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984), 114.

[114] Dixon, Nadine, in discussion with the author. December 2017.

Third World, dynamic, wonderful and a lesbian mother. (I thought to myself what's a lesbian mother?) At that time, it was lesbian vogue to change your first or last name into something like salad, sage, thyme etc. So I was trying to imagine what this dynamic Third World lesbian's name was going to be. (salsa, fry bread, corn?)"[115] Taken together, Dixon and Cameron's narratives illustrate the often-dominant whiteness of lesbian spaces in San Francisco, that while explicitly anti-racist, LAPV as an organization was invariably enmeshed, represented by the impossibility of Mrs. Martinez being a dyke or Shirley Wilson being a "Native American, a mother and grandmother" while *also being* a lesbian.

…

We might consider that the police assault and capture of Shirley Wilson was connected to an ongoing history of gendered colonial terror in the Mission. Mission San Francisco de Asís stands at the corner of what is now 16th St. and Dolores St., two blocks from Dolores Park, where Gay Freedom Day took place (and later Dyke March and Trans March, which continue to take place there annually), and two blocks from Amelia's, the lesbian bar where Shirley Wilson and Sue Davis were assaulted and arrested. Known colloquially as Mission Dolores, it is one of twenty-one Missions that dot the California landscape, the disavowal of racial-colonial terror dispersed through California's cityscapes. Lauded for their beautiful architecture, which much of the built settler environment in California and the west nostalgically imitates, missions welcome students, tourists, and history buffs daily to walk atop mass graves of the Indigenous captives who built and sustained them. We have no knowledge of Shirley Wilson's tribal background and it would be careless to suggest that the 1979 police assault and capture of this Native lesbian bears any equivalence to the deliberate targeting of "third-gender people," in the words of Deborah Miranda, by priests and

[115] Box 1, Folder 2. "United Ourselves-Bridging Our Differences," 13 June, 1987, Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

soldiers two hundred years prior. And yet, we can't assume they do not. "Colonial unknowing establishes what can count as evidence, proof, or possibility—aiming to secure the terms of reason and reasonableness—as much as it works to dissociate and ignore."[116]

Of course, the cure for colonial unknowing is not *knowing* in any positivist sense. Yet, turning to the work of Gay American Indians and the knowledge members were producing *in the very time and place* of LAPV helps elucidate the colonial present *of that very time and place*. In the speech quoted in the epigraph, delivered at a feminist march and rally in San Francisco in protest of Ronald Reagan's successful bid for president, possibly on International Women's Day, Cameron offers an alternate reading of racialized and sexualized state violence in the Mission and beyond, locating "the issue of freedom" in an uninterrupted trajectory from the inception of European colonialism in North America to the dawn of the Reagan Regime:

> The issue of freedom began in this country when the pilgrims arrived. Indian people, men and women began the very first battle for freedom. It was a bloody battle and it still continues to be…Indian people have been fighting the very same forces that are now called the moral majority, or the new right for hundreds of years. We are still alive, we are still fighting…As we begin this new battle under the Reagan Regime, we must not forget those who have already been silenced, either by being imprisoned, or by being institutionalized or by out and out murder.[117]

The forces buttressing the "new" right were in fact centuries old, as was the protracted struggle for freedom in the face of silencing, imprisonment, institutionalization, and "out and out murder." Cameron destabilizes any taken for granted history of a modern feminist or lesbian and gay movement, while inviting the crowd into the hundreds-year battle for "freedom." Cameron's analysis of racialized and sexualized state violence at the dawn of the Reagan era, along with the interventions of Indigenous queer and feminist scholarship that it anticipates make central critiques

[116] Vimalassery, Goldstein, and Pegues, "Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing."

[117] "Freedom of Women," Box 1, Folder 20. Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

of settler colonialism to any project of feminist or queer liberation on Indigenous land, while at the same time importantly elucidating the elisions of LAPV. I provide some history of Indigenous San Francisco and, guided by Cameron's analysis, stage an alternate reading of the 1979 assault and capture of Shirley Wilson that occasioned the emergence of LAPV.

While non-Native people do not oft-imagine San Francisco as an Indigenous space, Native people have continuously inhabited Ramaytush Ohlone territories, the land that spans so-called San Francisco. In addition to Ohlone peoples, who have inhabited what is now known as the Bay Area since time immemorial, Oakland, San Francisco, and neighboring cities have also been home to large Native communities for decades. Urban Indigenous communities in the Bay Area and elsewhere have been largely unthinkable to non-Native people due to the pervasive settler imaginary of the (perpetually disappearing) rural reservation Indian. Writing of this settler colonial "grammar of place," Mishuana Goeman explains that while there has always been interconnection among Indigenous peoples, Native cultures are seen as "separately closed systems of neatly defined cultural territories." The construction of the reservation as properly Native depends on the erasure of Indigenous people in urban spaces–-including those whose unceded ancestral territories span what are now settler cities. As Goeman argues, these spatial logics are made evident in the urban Bay Area that, while "not coded in the U.S. imagination as Indian," is continuously re-mapped by Indigenous presence.[118]

The Mission District in particular was known as the "Little Reservation" through at least the 1970s, one of the hubs of Indigenous organizing around the Alcatraz occupation of 1969 and location of the first urban Indian community center.[119] Donald Fixico situates termination and

[118] Ibid., 247.

[119] Donald Fixico. *The Urban Indian Experience in America.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 81.

relocation policies of the middle twentieth century, which brought thousands of Indigenous people to U.S. cities, in a legacy of federal Indian policy that removed Native peoples from their land.[120] By 1956, 6,200 Native people had been relocated to the Bay Area.[121] Intended to assimilate Indigenous peoples out of existence *as Indigenous peoples*, these programs created the conditions for multi-nationed solidarities among urban Indian communities that led to movements for Indigenous self-determination.[122] Urban Native people organized for tribal sovereignty and self-determination most famously with AIM (American Indian Movement), but also Women of All Red Nations and International Indian Treaty Council, among others, all of which were active in the Bay Area.[123] By the mid-1970s, there were fifty-eight off-reservation Indian centers around the so-called U.S. Supported, in part, by federal dollars, they were jeopardized by Reagan-era cutbacks and many shut their doors in the 80s and 90s.[124]

If narrations of San Francisco in general and the Mission in particular disavow this multi-nationed urban Indigenous presence, they also reproduce (if unknowingly) genocidal erasures of Ohlone people, founded as the neighborhood was at the site of the first of twenty-one Missions along the "carceral archipelago" of California's coast.[125] In the U.S., the historical development of

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[120] Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), x.

[121] Ibid., 137-138.

[122] Renya K. Ramirez, *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 51.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Janeen Antoine, "Carrying on That Way," in *Urban Voices: The Bay Area American Indian Community*, ed. Susan Lobo. (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2002), 93.

[125] Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 297.

policing and imprisonment is rooted in Indigenous dispossession and slavery and its afterlife, what Khalil Gibran Muhammad terms "the condemnation of blackness."[126] In California, the Missions specifically were an antecedent to later modes of captivity, including prisons. As Stephanie Lumsden attests, "The Catholic mission system was the first carceral regime in California and it facilitated the displacement of Indigenous sovereignty as well as the dispossession of Native land."[127] Beginning in 1769, Spanish soldiers hunted and captured Indigenous people and forced them to labor in captivity to build Catholic missions and sustain Spanish settler life. Regimes of torture, forced labor, and sexual violence characterized Mission life for Indigenous people. As Lumsden writes, "The mission system ushered in an era of apocalyptic violence wherein Spanish missionaries decimated the lives of Indigenous peoples."[128] But, as she also attests, California Indians resisted and refused their captivity with "rebellions, runaways, abortion, suicide, and poor efforts at labor."[129]

One way the Franciscans attempted to destroy Indigenous communities and polities was through the targeting and strategic disciplining of genders and sexualities. Writing of the genocidal campaign of the Spanish crown and Catholic priests, Deborah Miranda explains, "Part of this massive loss was third-gender people, who were not lost by 'passive' colonizing collateral damage such as disease or starvation, but through active, conscious, violent extermination."[130] The targeting

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[126] Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness : Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 2010).

[127] Stephanie Lumsden, "Missionization, Incarceration, and Ohlone Resistance," in *Counterpoints: A San Francisco Bay Area Atlas of Displacement and Resistance*, ed. Anti-Eviction Mapping Project Editorial Collective (Oakland: PM Press, 2021), 84.

[128] Stephanie Lumsden, "Missionization, Incarceration, and Ohlone Resistance," 84.

[129] Stephanie Lumsden, "Missionization, Incarceration, and Ohlone Resistance," 84.

[130] Deborah A Miranda, "Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* 16, no. 1/2 (2010): 256.

of "third-gender people," in Miranda's words, was particularly devastating because of their roles as undertakers in death, burial, and mourning rituals. "The threshold of death was the realm of the '*aqi*,' and no California Indian community was safe or complete without that mediator."[131] Thus, Miranda points to the vital role of Two Spirit people in the resurgence and sovereignty of California Indian peoples, which I return to in the final chapter.

One way the violent legacy of the California Mission system is expressed is through policing and imprisonment in the colonial present. "In California," Lumsden attests, the threat of incarceration is commonplace in the lives of Native people. This has been the case since the first years of statehood, when Indians were routinely arrested so that their labor could be auctioned to white settlers."[132] As Barbara Cameron likewise remarked in 1990, "Native people [are] locked away in prisons for lifetimes because of a justice system that performs like the cavalry of the 1800's."[133] As Sherene Razack has demonstrated, settler colonialism endures in the production and policing of contemporary racialized urban space. Bringing together Ruth Gilmore's and Razack's spatial analyses attune us to the ways political economic conditions of neoliberalism—and its disavowals—are indeed one expression of the ongoing colonial violence of settlement. As Razack argues, Indigenous bodies "must be repeatedly evicted from the civilized spaces of the settler. The colonial city is endlessly engaged in cleansing itself of bodies considered unfit for modern life."[134]

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[131] Ibid., 266.

[132] Stephanie Lumsden, "Reproductive Justice, Sovereignty, and Incarceration: Prison Abolition Politics and California Indians," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2016): 33.

[133] Box 1, Folder 19. "Family" undated, page 1, Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[134] Sherene Razack, *Dying From Improvement: Inquests and Inquiries into Indigenous Deaths in Custody* (University of Toronto Press, 2015), 33.

As LAPV's work now makes clear, the *movement*—in both senses of the word—of (white) lesbians in San Francisco in the late 1970s and early 1980s, was both enmeshed in and resistant to the disavowals of neoliberalism and the carceral organization of space while at the same time reproducing disavowals of settler colonialism. Put another way, we can understand this formation of lesbian feminism, as both anticarceral and settler in its formation while the work of Gay American Indians offers an anti-colonial queer vision that rejects the disavowals of settler colonialism. Indeed, Indigenous peoples on this continent had been resisting the gender and sexual logics of colonialism for centuries. Turning to the work of GAI troubles the formulation of gays and lesbians as eager migrants to this city on hill and invites us to consider illiberal modes of belonging in the settler city.

"I know I have a place in the world": Queer Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism

In 1975 in San Francisco, Cameron (Hunkpapa Lakota of the Fort Yates Band) and Randy Burns (Northern Paiute) founded Gay American Indians, a group active in the Bay Area for more than two decades and the predecessor of the contemporary organization, Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits. Cameron and Burns' writing, speeches, and interviews contain generative counterpoints to the queer as enthusiastic migrant trope that animated both radical and homonormative politics of the time and invited non-Native queers to consider the effects of ongoing U.S. colonialism *where they stood*. While, to varying degrees, white gays and lesbians claimed San Francisco as a "homeland," Indigenous gay and lesbians navigated isolation and precarity and expressed deep ambivalence about the settler city of San Francisco itself. Reflecting on the impetus to found GAI, Cameron wrote, "I was not prepared for the cultural shock I experienced during my first years of living in San Francisco…I co-founded in 1975, a group for Gay American Indians, in order to share experiences, provide support for one another and to help make visible third world leadership in the lesbian/gay

community."[135] The first Indigenous gay and lesbian organization in North America, GAI built ground for decades of Indigenous queer and Two Spirit activism to follow. Scott Morgensen, situating GAI within genealogies of queer and Two Spirit organizing, focuses on the GAI History Project, which culminated in the landmark 1988 collection *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology*. Morgensen examines the ways GAI, in particular the work of its anthology, displaced the anthropological formation of "berdache" and strategically engaged with non-Native writers, including white lesbian feminist poet Judy Grahn who sought to claim a "primordial queer Indigeneity."[136] As Morgensen argues, "GAI adapted the interests of interlocutors such as Grahn and Roscoe to announce the contrasting epistemologies and politics of Native queer activists, which defined their lives on terms that non-Natives were not invited to follow."[137] In this study, I am attuned to GAI members' understanding of the space of the settler city and the context for Indigenous gay and lesbian migrations to San Francisco, which importantly recast narratives of the "Great Gay Migration."

Despite gay settler efforts, GAI refused to be portrayed as gay group *for* Native people, but rather positioned itself as an Indigenous organization with anti-colonial commitments toward decolonization, which necessarily included challenging heteronormativity in Native communities.[138] As Cameron explained: "We were first and foremost a group for each other…Bringing together gay

[135] Box 1, Folder 2. Biographical information, page 2, undated, Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[136] Morgensen, *Spaces between Us*, 79.

[137] Morgensen, 81.

[138] Morgensen, 97.

Indians is our most important current task."[139] In interviews and speeches, particularly to non-Native or mixed audiences, she repeatedly asserted her primary identity and politicization as an Indigenous person: "I believe that my political activism is largely due to the fact that I am an Indian. That I grew up on a reservation and I was raised by my grandparents. The combination has given me a perspective of the U.S. government which allows me to see its fallacies…Whatever I do or wherever I go, I am absolutely certain and secure in my identity and foundation as an Indian."[140] Burns likewise located the influx of Indigenous gays and lesbians to San Francisco among migrations of Native people, rather than part of the "Great Gay Migration." During the 1970s, he remarked, there was a "second migration" of Indigenous people to urban areas. "It was our way out. It wasn't because of the BIA relocating people. It was to escape homophobia and terror."[141] In fact, he situated the migration of Native gays and lesbians within a history of colonial displacements. Burns' analysis speaks to the structural and intimate positions of BIPOC queer and trans migrants in relationship to U.S. settler colonialism and racial capitalism, a relationship that is often subsumed under the category of "queer." Following Burns, we might consider Indigenous gays and lesbians refugees of the gender and sexual violence of U.S. settler colonialism, as GAI clearly "traced stigma associated with gender, sexuality, and AIDS to colonization."[142] As Deborah Miranda writes of the legacy of the brutal gender and sexual regime of Mission colonization: "This tragic

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[139] Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A., A Documentary and Pioneering Collection of Turbulent Chronicles - A Startling New Perspective on the Nation's Past* (New York: Crowell, 1976), 333.

[140] Biographical information. Profile regarding the Women's Building, 1984, Box 1, Folder 3, Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[141] Interview with Randy Burns, page 8, Box 1, Folder 1, Will Roscoe papers and Gay American Indians records, 1987-04, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

[142] Morgensen, *Spaces between Us*, 203.

pattern…continues to fester in many contemporary Native communities where people with same-sex orientation are no longer part of cultural legacy but feared, discriminated against, and locked out of tribal and familial homes."[143] Rather than reject their home communities, tribal nations, or broader Indigenous struggles, GAI was committed challenging colonial heteronormativity. "In the Indian community," Burns said, "we are trying to realign ourselves with the trampled traditions of our people. Gay people were respected parts of the tribes. Some were artists and medicine people. So we supply speakers from the group to appear at Indian gatherings. Sometimes we are booed or jeered, but it doesn't last long."[144]

GAI made history as North America's (if not world's) first organization explicitly by and for Indigenous lesbians and gays. And yet, despite over two decades of organizing, I suspicion that it may have been dismissed as a cultural "support group" or social service organization by non-Native contemporaries, rather than a movement organization that made incisive political interventions and whose influence is evidenced in generations of activists, artists, and scholars. In an interview, Burns explains the ways non-Natives often principally saw their work as "spiritual." "Back when our organization first started we did invite a lot of 'pioneers'—we consider them pioneers now—to our organization. They would want to say, 'Well, you should do this you should do that…,'— very opinionated…A lot of white people are well-intentioned but their view of Indians is not very realistic in the sense that what it seems they focus on is Indian spirituality."[145] Burns' sarcastic invocation of "pioneers" emphasizes settler fascination with so-called "Native American spirituality," desiring access to Native "culture" while deflating the politicized nature of the group.

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[143] Miranda, "Extermination of the Joyas," 259–60.

[144] Katz, Gay American History, 333.

[145] Interview with Randy Burns, page 6-7, Box 1, Folder 1, Will Roscoe papers and Gay American Indians records, 1987-04, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Writing of the Bay Area women's community, Cameron wrote, "Lesbians, in particular, are some of the worst perpetrators of this contemporary theft of our culture."[146] As Morgensen has shown, there is a tradition of white lesbian and gay men who looked to "ancient" or Indigenous cultures for affirmation. In her 1984 *Another Mother Tongue*, lesbian feminist writer and poet Judy Grahn, also based in San Francisco, "describes white U.S. gay men and lesbians as needing Native cultural authenticity to learn to speak in their own 'mother tongue.'"[147] Burns also emphasized the ways queer "pioneers" who, in the long tradition of paternalism towards Indigenous peoples, presumed that they knew what was best for Native gays and lesbians, which highlights the ways settler colonialism conditioned Native and non-Native relations, despite shared gender or sexual alterity.

Providing material support and services for GIA members was critical, yet is possibly a conceptual rubric under which GIA was marginalized within San Francisco's social movement landscape. GAI had a clothes closet and referred members to city agencies for food stamps, Medi-Cal, and Medicare. Shelter has been largely inaccessible for Indigenous people in settler cities, and this was no less true for GAI members.[148] In a 1985 interview, Burns stated, "Housing is a problem…Housing always is a problem. Myself, I've put people up on numerous occasions and people in our organization have done that."[149] New members often used the GAI phone and mailing address until they secured housing and a job. As lesbian feminist households harbored underground radicals, GAI's ethics of care reflected a commitment to sheltering Indigenous gays and lesbians

[146] Native Lesbians, undated, Box 1, Folder 24, Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[147] Morgensen, *Spaces between Us*, 5.

[148] Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America*.

[149] Interview with Randy Burns, page 6, Box 1, Folder 1, Will Roscoe papers and Gay American Indians records, 1987-04, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

who we might consider refugees of the gender and sexual violence of U.S. settler colonialism. For queer Native people in the settler city in the 1980s, colonial displacement from home territories intersected with racialized neoliberal retrenchment. And yet, belonging, kinship, and home-making as practices of mutual recognition among Indigenous gays and lesbians brought together by shared experiences of queerness under settler occupation is excessive of these displacements. I do not, however, wish to romanticize GAI. As in their home territories, members navigated extreme poverty, loss, and trauma. While critical of assimilationist gay and lesbian activism "under the guise of the democratic party [sic]," members engaged with San Francisco city politics in response to the material deprivations of its racialized membership. "We cannot ignore mainstream politics," Cameron commented in an interview with Women's Building staff. "After all, look what it has done to our lives."[150]

The migration of Native gays and lesbians to San Francisco (and other cities) overlapped with another crisis in queer Indian country: HIV/AIDS. With a membership in the hundreds by the 1980s, HIV/AIDS quickly became GAI's primary focus. Over the years, GAI members and leaders worked on city AIDS commissions and participated national and international organizing around HIV/AIDS in Indigenous communities. Crucially, they located the impact of state neglect within an ongoing history of colonial violence. In her 1991 speech at the memorial of Phil Tingley, a community leader in San Francisco and gay Kiowa man from Oklahoma, Cameron declared that, "Once again Indian people are fighting a terrible illness. It's not that we've ever stopped fighting illness but somehow this virus is more difficult for me to comprehend. It has taken many Indian lives in San Francisco. And I don't want any Indian person to die alone, unaccepted by their own

[150] Biographical information. Profile regarding the Women's Building, 1984, Box 1, Folder 3, Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

because of a disease or because of sexual orientation."[151] Native HIV/AIDs organizations came out of Two Spirit organizing and as such, "many local AIDS programs became key spaces for linking Native queer people in community."[152] Cameron in particular became a leader in transnational HIV/AIDs activism; her work with Indigenous communities took her to Berlin, Nicaragua, Hawai'i, and Native nations all over Turtle Island.

Building from Renya Ramirez' work on "Native hubs," Morgensen illustrates the ways GAI tended to define home "as a site of movement for Native people traversing settler colonial diasporas, where they reasserted national identities while also forming broader solidarities."[153] In an interview, Burns explains that many GAI members had never lived in cities, and that "our dream was to return someday to our reservations and help our people—and many of us have returned."[154] It is important to note that GAI's members themselves sometimes participated in erasure of Ohlone peoples by locating Native homelands as distinctly tied to rural reservation communities, reflective of widespread erasures of Indigenous peoples in California, particularly those who are federally unrecognized and have no state-sanctioned land base. If home is invoked as an ancestral tribal location, it is also found in Native gay community, "a border-crossing activity that recalls the many landed traditions of Native nations wherever Native gay people may go."[155] Cameron described her

[151] At the Memorial for Phil Tingley, 1991, Box 1, Folder 17, Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[152] Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us*, 203.

[153] Ibid., 8.

[154] Interview with Randy Burns, Box 1, Folder 1, Will Roscoe papers and Gay American Indians records, 1987-04, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

[155] Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us*, 10.

queer urban Indian activism as a commitment to her people that, if mediated by time or distance, inspired her activism on behalf of Native gays and lesbians:

> My contribution to the Indian community is different than what my grandparents envisioned but it is true to what they instilled in me…I've learned a great deal about myself over the years how I live as a Lakota in a large city. I always try my best to bring the prairie to my city home. I know when I really miss my home and it isn't enough to be around other Indians, but when I miss Lakota people, our potato salad, our soup, our fry bread I pray as best as I can in Lakota. I ask Tunkasila to help me through those times, I ask my grandmother and my grandfather to help me. Sometimes when I'm in meetings with people or elected officials or think they're really important and I feel disconnected from them or invisible, I remember that I am not a simple Indian woman who is sometimes reserved, sometimes stoic. I know I sit with the history of my people, the strength of culture as it has survived. I sit with my grandparents, their grandparents, and their grandparents and then I know I have a place in this world. I know that I am working to make a place for other Indian people who are like me.[156]

For Cameron, home and belonging are practices anchored in resilience and mutual recognition. Home is processual, rooted in Lakota people and land yet deeply sedimented; unfixed in space and time. Departing from settler narratives of a queer "homeland," there is nothing inherently liberatory about San Francisco. Rather than "finding" herself as queer in the city, she as much as possible brings her "prairie" home to San Francisco, navigating displacement by recalling her grandparents and their traditions. Her connections to her ancestors give her "a place in this world" and fortify her to keep making a place for other queer Native people. In this way, she honors what her grandparents instilled in her while queering generational and reproductive kinship: as an ancestor, Cameron has created space for so many queer Indigenous people—including long after her death in 2002—to "know they have a place in the world."

And yet, home is not easy or simple. On a 1987 panel at the Women's Building, "Uniting Ourselves – Bridging Our Differences," Cameron stated that, "My home is my base, my support network, the people who make me feel loved." Speaking of herself and the two other panelists, she

[156] At the Memorial for Phil Tingley, 1991, Box 1, Folder 17, Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

continues: "The three of us have worked for many years now in a variety of organizations, groups, communities, and collectives. We've been out as lesbians of color in all the political work that we do. We have done the coming out: It's the coming home that we are working toward, a home to come to." Cameron weaved threads of various movements during her decades of organizing in San Francisco, bridging feminist anti-violence, Indigenous, queer, electoral, and HIV/AIDS work. Whether referring to Lakota homelands and people, or a sense of internal wholeness, the *coming home* she speaks of is not achieved by being an "out" lesbian. It isn't found by moving to San Francisco, but in the processual, relational work of finding one's place in the world.

CHAPTER TWO The Queer Nostalgia of Racialized Disavowal: San Francisco's "Dyke Mecca" and the Anti-Carceral Sociality of Black Lesbian Feminism

> Everyone talks about the transformation of the city, and almost every tenant talks about fear of losing his or her perch here. It's in the news every day. It is the main news here, and has been for the last few years. It's a crisis, a boom, and an obsession.[1]

Beginning anew in 2013, there was relentless reportage of San Francisco's skyrocketing rents, unscrupulous landlords, and the infamous Google Bus, a private service shuttling tech employees from hip San Francisco neighborhoods to the Google campus in Silicon Valley. The current "dot-com bubble," or "Tech 2.0," began in distinctively in 2013, with tech employment in San Francisco proper growing 90% between 2010 and 2014.[2] During this time, the rental market in San Francisco made international headlines: between 2011 and 2012, the average apartment in the Mission and the Fillmore/Western Addition, two of the city's Latinx and Black neighborhoods, increased by 40 and 53 percent, respectively.[3] Condo conversions, Air B&B units, and Ellis Act evictions displaced thousands of renters as overall evictions increased by 175 percent in 2013 from the year before.[4]

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[1] Rebecca Solnit and Susan Schwartzenberg, *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism* (London; New York: Verso, 2000), 29.

[2] Stehlin, J. (2016). "The Post-Industrial 'Shop Floor': Emerging Forms of Gentrification in San Francisco's Innovation Economy." *Antipode*, 48(2), 474-493.

[3] George McIntire, "San Francisco's Rightward Turn: Why It May No Longer Be America's Iconic Liberal City," *Salon*, February 16, 2014, accessed July 20, 2020. http://www.salon.com/2014/02/16/san_franciscos_rightward_turn_why_it_may_no_longer_be_americas_iconic_liberal_city/.

[4] Ellis Act evictions allow landlords to evict tenants and raise rents after newly purchasing a property. Joe Kloc, "Tech Boom Forces a Ruthless Gentrification in San Francisco," Newsweek, April 15, 2014, accessed July 20, 2020. http://www.newsweek.com/2014/04/25/tech-boom-forces-ruthless-gentrificationsan-francisco-248135.html.

Daily infographics, articles, and reports conveyed the enormity of the crisis; big tech heralding what was called "hyper-gentrification," or "Apartheid San Francisco."[5]

Wildly popular public historian and creative-nonfiction writer Rebecca Solnit perhaps best exemplifies the distraught anxiety around the housing crisis and tech boom in the city. The passage quoted in the epigraph, however, was written in the 1990s, part of her 2000 *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*, which mourned the loss of this iconic liberal city in the context of the "first" dot-com boom. Indeed, the more recent statistics virtually mirror those of the late 1990s: between 1996 and 2000, the rents in San Francisco rose by more than 225%, with a two-bedroom apartment in the city renting at a rate three times what it had in 1993.[6] And yet, dominant anti-gentrification discourse, including that of Solnit, continues to represent the recent "tech takeover" as an *unprecedented* incursion on the *goodness* of this iconic and beloved city.

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In 2014, Marcus Books, the nation's oldest Black bookstore, the Lexington Club, San Francisco's last-surviving lesbian bar, and Esta Noche, a long-time queer Latinx bar, each closed their doors. Community responses to each implicated gentrification. Yet, these unnatural disasters have uneven genealogies in a city that, like all settler cities, has a wildly varied, sedimented landscape. In this chapter, I aim to make sense of such losses within the long, contradictory, and uneven scene of dispossession that is San Francisco, examining the ways memory, nostalgia, and disavowal circulate to produce divergent narratives of community, loss, belonging, and futurity. The anti-gentrification discourses of elected officials, residents, artists, and activists of many stripes mobilize nostalgia for San Francisco's supposedly inherent progressivism in ways that disavow past and

[5] Justin DeFreitas, "Introducing Apartheid San Francisco Style," SF Examiner, March 27, 2015, accessed September 1, 2020. http://archives.sfexaminer.com/sanfrancisco/introducing-apartheid-san-francisco-style/Content?oid=2924845.

[6] Beitel, "Transforming San Francisco," 2003.

present modes of violence and dispossession in the settler city. This nostalgic temporality of disavowal is structured by, and further enshrines, settler colonial epistemologies of time and space and the ongoing, simultaneous displacements of Indigenous, Black and people of color in San Francisco, including BIPOC LGBTQ2S+ communities. Displacement within and across the heterogeneous spaces known as San Francisco is nothing new, but apiece with settler geographies of racial capitalism. In her 2013 article, "Dear Khary (An Autobiography of Gentrification)," Africana studies scholar Jasmine E. Johnson and daughter of the owners of Marcus Books writes, "San Francisco is a history of black folks having to go. We know the difference between eviction and travel."[7] Though there is longing and loss and perhaps even nostalgia for the Fillmore of her childhood, for Johnson San Francisco cannot be redeemed. Displacement is nothing new, an imbedded feature of the settler city itself. "San Francisco *is* a history of Black folks having to go" (emphasis mine).[8]

Nonetheless, various anti-gentrification discourses have sought to rescue, recover, or recuperate San Francisco's radical, exceptional past. In 2014, Solnit writes that despite being a boom and bust city, "Something was constant, the sense of the city as separate from the rest of the country, a sanctuary for nonconformists, exiles, war resisters, sex rebels, eccentrics."[9] The very tenets of dissent, autonomy, and transgression that Solnit and others champion have lent discursive fodder to the many forms of displacement constituting San Francisco's past. Indeed, the gold rush, various countercultural movements, and tech booms have shared a valorization of individualism and

[7] Jasmine E. Johnson, "Dear Khary (An Autobiography of Gentrification)," August 13, 2013, accessed September 1, 2017, http://gawker.com/dear-khary-an-autobiography-of-gentrification-1227561902.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Rebecca Solnit, "Diary," London Review of Books, February 20, 2014, accessed September 1, 2017. http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n04/rebecca-solnit/diary.

entrepreneurial fervor. As Scott Morgensen likewise observes, "counterculturalisms of many kinds augmented the city's founding myth of Gold Rush frontier bohemianism that let it lead settler modernity by incorporating and managing the wild edge of civilization."[10] As I discussed in chapter 1, it was in the name of progressivism—liberation, even—that white gay real estate speculators in San Francisco in the 1980s unflinchingly aligned with capital and the carceral state. Their widespread, deliberate evictions of Black tenants in the Fillmore—the neighborhood of Johnson's childhood—was a flashpoint of racialized displacement in a community in the throes of Reaganomics.[11]

The myth of the common and equally felt injury of "gentrification," at times trafficking in universalist rhetoric ("almost every tenant talks about fear of losing his or her perch here"), rests on a precarious disavowal of those who have not properly inhabited this multicultural city, and the ongoing histories of violence that constitute what "was once a great city of refuge."[12] The housing crisis of 2013-2015, often narrated as *new* and *exceptional*, is built on and through ongoing, albeit shifting, modes of displacement and dispossession endemic to racial capitalism in settler societies. While Solnit positions San Francisco as exceptional, racialized violence, exclusion, and segregation in this city aren't exceptional at all. If the mid-2010s were acute (and increasingly felt by middle-class residents), there's been a housing crisis for low-income people in the city for decades. Or, depending on whom you ask, for centuries. The settler city of San Francisco, including Mission San Francisco de Asís, is made possible and perpetually sustained by Raymaytush Ohlone dispossession.

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[10] Scott Morgensen. *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 171.

[11] "Gays vs. Blacks," *NBC Late Night with Tom Snyder*, May 17th, 1980, VHS recording, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, San Francisco, CA.

[12] Rebecca Solnit, "Diary," London Review of Books, February 7, 2013, accessed September 1, 2017. http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n04/rebecca-solnit/diary.

Dominant queer narratives in particular have fallen under the discursive rubric of nostalgia for San Francisco's glorious past. In this chapter, I examine expressions of loss circulated by white queer artists in the 1990s and early 2000s. Through readings of public mourning around the closure of "the last lesbian bar in San Francisco," in addition to the 2000 memoir, *Valencia*, by Michelle Tea, I demonstrate how the 1990s and early 2000s ushered in the consolidation of a queer spatial formation compatible with neoliberal multiculturalism, one dependent on the ongoing disavowals of settler colonialism.[13] While many expressions of loss replicate the erasures of the longue durée of racialized and colonial displacement and dispossession, others, such as Johnson's, imagine alternate futures precisely by bringing these longer temporalities to the fore. Though the most visible, legible, extant formation of grief and loss persists, possibilities that nevertheless inhere demand a different relationship to space. During the early 1980s, contributors to *ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter*, made powerful interventions around the construction of queer space in the San Francisco Bay Area. More than lament exclusion from normatively white lesbian spaces, though they did do that, and powerfully so, they were keenly aware of the ways white queer sociality was increasingly enmeshed in geographies of antiblackness and racial capitalism, often under the rubric of visibility. I close by looking to current and emergent formations in the Mission that resist recuperation and nostalgia to offer alternate modes of remembering. Two Spirit protest at Mission San Francisco de Asís in 2015, continuing the work of Gay American Indians, highlights the gendered present tense of colonialism to make connections between multiple, ongoing modes of dispossession that radically revises dominant queer narratives of mourning.

[13] Though each are representative of specific white lesbian communities in the Mission District, I am not positioning Lesbians Against Police Violence, as discussed in chapter 1, and *Valencia* as equivalent or even comparable political formations. While the description of liberal communities discussed in *Valencia* takes place a decade after LAPV, there continued to be radical, anti-racist formations, if not specifically marked as lesbian.

Transitional Objects:
White Dykes and Subcultural Capital in Michelle Tea's *Valencia*

By the 1990s, San Francisco's Mission District was known as a haven for dykes. Associated with edgy counterculturalism attractive to queers, particularly lesbians, it became seen as a counterpoint to the Castro and its "clones." The Valencia corridor in particular had become the city's most visible lesbian geography. Numerous bookstores and bars joined the Women's Building, in addition to Osento, a famed women's bathhouse located in a large Victorian on Valencia Street from 1980 to 2008. The Dyke March, which gathers yearly at the edge of Mission San Francisco de Asís in Dolores Park, began in 1993. The twin processes of lesbian gentrification and increased real estate speculation in the Mission, as highlighted by LAPV in the previous chapter, were deeply enmeshed, relational, and at times interdependent, if not necessarily causal.

White lesbians and the larger queer communities in which they are enmeshed, while never actually homogenous in terms of race and class, have repeatedly been marshaled *as such* to mark a space's pivot from imagined backwardness, darkness, and danger to one of imagined vibrancy, diversity, and regeneration. This is one of the primary mechanisms through which (neo)liberal multiculturalism has been spatialized in U.S. cities, and is one that relies on and produces settler colonial epistemologies of time and space. In their analysis of the entanglement of Islamophobia, carceral regimes, and queer gentrification in Berlin, Jin Haritaworn repurposes psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott's theory of the transitional object to account for the queer lover as a "'transitional object' between the welfare and the neoliberal regime, which ushers us into consent with death-making techniques and horizons by queerly regenerating them as progress and love of diversity."[14] Haritaworn pairs the "transitional object" with a theory of "queer regeneration," which marks the

[14] Jin Haritaworn. *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others: Regenerating Violent Times and Places* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), 93.

spatialized valorization of queer life over and against racialized subjects, including those that are queer(ed).[15] Indeed, the "subcultural capital" of such subjects and socialities, particularly those of white queers, become valuable to the spatial processes of racial capitalism in ways that discursively and materially displace racialized people, including BIPOC LGBTQ2S+ communities.[16]

I read *Valencia*, Michelle Tea's autobiographical novel/memoir, published in 2000, as perhaps one of the clearest and most-circulated distillations of the role white lesbians have played in structural processes of racialized gentrification.[17] The iconic dyke memoir depicts a "gritty" lesbian social topography set to the backdrop of the Mission District in the 1990s, a racialized San Francisco neighborhood in the throes of War on Drugs and War on Gangs. The significance of the book cannot be overstated: it was met with critical acclaim, won the Lambda Literary Award for Best Lesbian Fiction, and has been translated into Slovenian, Japanese, and German. A cult favorite with a second edition printed in 2008, *Valencia* has become something of a cultural touchstone for many (white) lesbians. In 2013, it was made into a collaborative feature-length film, *Valencia: The Movie/s*, with a different director for each chapter of the book, and toured globally after a sold-out premiere at San Francisco's Castro Theater. Tea herself is wildly successful: she is the author of ten books, toured nationally with feminist spoken word collective Sister Spit, which she co-founded in 1994 (now in its twenty-fourth year) and also founded Radar Productions in 2003, a queer literary arts organization in San Francisco.[18]

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[15] Haritaworn*, Queer Lovers and Hateful Others*, 3.

[16] Richard L. Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 115.

[17] When using "Tea," I am referring to the author. "Michelle" refers to the largely autobiographical character in *Valencia*.

[18] "Program," accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.radarproductions.org/programs.html.

Valencia tells the story "one girl's search for love and high times in the drama-filled dyke world of San Francisco's Mission District."[19] It's the early 1990s and Michelle is a white twenty-something lesbian from Massachusetts newly planted in the Mission. She explores her sexuality, writes poetry, and pays as little rent as possible. Her friend group of similarly young white lesbians are (intentionally) minimally employed, party hard, and when not embroiled in young dyke drama, spend their time scoring drugs, drinking forties on the front stoop, or coming up with ways to scheme Social Security. Like many queer coming-of-age memoirs, *Valencia* is stylistically angsty and sneering, a disgruntled *one-queer-against-the-world* tirade. It is punchy, fast-paced, and deeply sardonic.

For Michelle and her circle of friends, the Mission is a veritable terra nullius, a "wide-open town" for young dykes seeking adventure, experimentation, sex, thrills, and cheap rents.[20] Michelle, unfortunately, given the book's immense popularity, fulfills nearly every trope of the oblivious gentrifier. She frequents dimly lit dive bars that "no one had discovered yet."[21] One of which, she laments, "Is gone now. Swallowed up by the yuppies who are swiftly ruining my neighborhood."[22] While there may be a self-conscious, tongue and cheek quality to Michelle's commentary, any intended humor falls flat. Throughout the book, racialized figures crop up as props or simply part of the landscape. Amazingly, in one of the most historic and culturally significant Chicanx neighborhoods in the country, references to Latinidad are caricatures at best. One of Michelle's friends, for example, wants to do her hair "like the cholla [sic] girls do, with evil-edged razors slid in

[19] Cover Copy. Michelle Tea. *Valencia* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008).

[20] Boyd, *Wide-Open Town: A Queer History of San Francisco to 1965*.

[21] Tea, *Valencia*, 177.

[22] Tea, 103.

like bobby-pins," pandering to racialized fantasies of the dangers of the "inner city."[23] In another scene, Michelle dresses up as a "mariachi dancer" to a bull-themed Taurus birthday party only to find that, "Some other girls showed up dressed like a mariachi band, carrying a shitty acoustic guitar stuffed with candy like a piñata."[24] They had presumably confused Mexican Mariachi musicians, who play and perform throughout the Mission, with Spanish matadors.

Geneva Gano writes that, "*Valencia* presents the readers with a Mission conspicuously cleansed of the racialized struggles of Latinos and people of color more broadly who were, in this very time and place, being pushed out of the neighborhood."[25] Gano positions Michelle's exploits in relationship to Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 "Frontier Thesis," situating her characterization of the Mission as an "urban frontier zone" that "replicates some of the more distinctive, troubling aspects of Turnerian frontier nostalgia."[26] While Gano importantly complicates the ways *Valencia* has been championed for its "queer, feminist act of placemaking," I take pause at analogizing the frontier without also situating it within ongoing Indigenous dispossession and genocide in a neighborhood named for Mission San Francisco de Asís.[27] While Gano focuses on the racialized inflections of Michelle's sexual practices and fantasies, I situate Michelle's geographic and temporal narrative within the structural contexts of racial criminalization and settler colonialism in the neighborhood.

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[23] Tea, 248.

[24] Tea, 193.

[25] Geneva M. Gano, "Michelle Tea's Mission District Frontier: Nostalgia, Gentrification, Valencia," *Studies in the Novel* 49, no. 3 (2017): 363.

[26] Gano, 380, 381.

[27] Gano, 363.

Indeed, racialized gentrification, like settler colonialism, is predicated on both the disavowal and presumed inevitability of dispossession; the utter disregard for what was and the insistence that what (and who) remains disappearing simply as a matter of progress. As yet, as I discussed in the Introduction, *gentrification is not colonialism*. I do argue that the spatial and temporal orientations of settler colonialism are epistemic and material conditions of possibility for the dislocations, displacements, and erasures of "gentrification." Kevin Bruyneel argues that settler memory refers to "the capacity both *to know and disavow* the history and contemporary implications of genocidal violence toward Indigenous peoples and the accompanying land dispossession that serve as the fundamental basis for creating settler colonial nation-states (emphasis mine)."[28] As Angela L. Robinson explains, "This erasure asks Indigenous people and settlers to not simply forget colonial histories, but rather to actively dissociate from them."[29] This dissociation is a condition of possibility for ongoing settler colonial violence, which is both everywhere and nowhere in the Mission, a neighborhood that is named for and glorifies the genocidal terror against Indigenous peoples in California. For Bruyneel and Robinson, this dissociation and disavowal is fundamental for creating and perpetually maintaining the US as a settler state. As I will demonstrate, this dissociative disavowal is replicated and further entrenched in the context of racialized urban gentrification—not as metaphor—but as an entangled structure of disavowal materialized in relationship to neoliberal settler cities.

[28] Kevin Bruyneel, "Creolizing Collective Memory: Refusing the Settler Memory of the Reconstruction Era," *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* 25, no. 2 (2017): 37.

[29] Robinson, "Indigenous Performance in Oceania: Affect, Sociality, and Sovereignty," 117.

Mark Rifkin suggests that settler time is a "particular way of narrating, conceptualizing, and experiencing temporality."[30] For Michelle and her friends (not unlike members of Lesbians Against Police Violence or Carl Whitman in decades prior), queer sociality in *Valencia* is temporally (and spatially) oriented around *having just arrived*, drawing from decades of queer narratives of migration to San Francisco in the colonial present. Rifkin continues: "Being temporally oriented suggests that one's experiences, sensations, and possibilities for action are shaped by the existing inclinations, itineraries, and networks in which one is immersed, turning towards some things and away from others. More than a question of relations in space, orientation involves reiterated and nonconscious tendencies, suggesting ways of inhabiting time that shape how the past moves toward the present and future."[31] Michelle's temporal orientation mediates the way she experiences the Mission: what is turned toward and what is turned away from, what is seen and what is not seen, what is seen and simultaneously disavowed. This dissociative orientation is an ontological condition of possibility for ongoing settler occupation, one that simultaneously enables racialized urban dispossession. Crucially though, "Such compulsory interpellation of Natives into U.S. life is never fully accomplished nor fully able to displace Indigenous temporal orientations."[32] In the following chapter, I discuss Ohlone/Lisjan temporal sovereignty and what it brings to bear on understandings of racialized urban displacement.

On her way to a party at a friend's wealthy parents' house in another part of the city, Michelle remarks that the friend is the "only San Francisco girl I knew who was a native."[33] While

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[30] Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty And Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), viii.

[31] Rifkin, 2.

[32] Rifkin, 2.

[33] Michelle Tea, *Valencia*, 140.

her comment clearly erases Ramaytush Ohlone people—and all Natives in San Francisco—it also reveals the way her temporal and spatial orientation is so deeply circumscribed; how removed she is from the large, visible (if shrinking) Black, Latinx, Pacific Islander, and Asian communities that surround her—queer or otherwise. Communities that haven't "just arrived," but are fighting to stay. All that was present before her arrival—and the grief of its loss—is immaterial to Michelle and her friends, even as their experiences are built upon it. "How long have you been here now?" a knowing older dyke asks of Michelle. "You've really grown up."[34] Indeed, her experiences had fortified her. Michelle soon meets a new lover, Iris. "She was new to San Francisco. Of course. Everyone was."[35] On their first date, Michelle takes her through "dark streets of the city I had owned first as we sucked from glass bottles, hands twisting the sacks around the necks into paper flowers. We fucked in bathrooms and alleys bold as boys, bent over porcelain sinks that creaked from the wall with the weight of her hand inside me. The rustle of clothes and rats, clink of belt buckles and feet on broken glass."[36] Michelle herself initiates a new arrival to the city she had "owned first," their public queer sex given a sensational grit and transgressive edge amid the "dark streets" and decay of the city.

Just as the violences of neoliberalism, what Grace Hong usefully names an "epistemological structure of disavowal," are built on and through older, if enduring, modes of dispossession, Tea's narrative coheres with a history of slumming. Cheryl D. Hicks, for example, argues that in contrast to the ways white New Yorkers imagined and experienced Harlem to be "one of the most sexually liberated urban spaces in the city," Black working-class women, including those who were gender nonconforming and/or queer, found themselves under the watch of police, white and Black

[34] Tea, *Valencia*, 120.

[35] Tea, 64.

[36] Tea, 245.

reformers, and family and community members.[37] She highlights how one's relationship to the state, im/mobility, and proximity to family and communities of origin influence the ability to exhibit—or necessity to withhold—gender and sexual non-normativity. If in the 1920s, Harlem was imagined to be a site of unbridled sexuality, the Mission is likewise imagined to be a landscape rife with *potential* for experimentation. In both historical contexts, however, this potential is not universally available. Indeed, in both contexts, moral panic and pathologizing discourses around urban women of color's sexualities, and Black women's sexualities in particular, undergirded the growth of carceral techniques of policing and surveillance of urban space, both public and private.[38]

Sherene Razack's discussion of white settlers moving through racialized space as an act of transgression is likewise resonant with white queer spatial practices in *Valencia*.[39] Tea and her friends inhabit "degenerate" space as transgression only to come out changed or fortified by their encounters. This is precisely what Haritaworn terms "queer regeneration," which we can understand as a temporal and spatial practice of extraction with a layered, ongoing history. While Razack discusses the ways white heteronormative genders are fortified by such encounters, we must also attend to the ways gender and sexually nonnormative whiteness is fortified—regenerated—through such acts of spatial transgression. Of course, where one lives is a primary expression of class. In San Francisco in the 1990s, there were numerous conversations around the tendency among white middle-class lesbians to "play poor." In a scathing October 1992 letter to *Ladyslipper*, a women's

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[37] Cheryl D. Hicks, "'Bright and Good Looking Colored Girl': Black Women's Sexuality and 'Harmful Intimacy' in Early-Twentieth-Century New York," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18, No. 3 (2009): 418.

[38] Carby, "Policing the Black Woman's Body in an Urban Context"; Beth Richie, *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens."

[39] Sherene H. Razack, "Introduction: When Place Becomes Race," in *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, ed. Sherene H. Razack, (Between the Lines, 2003), 3.

music publication, Chrystos, a Menominee lesbian poet based in the city, urged editors to print an apology for rampant anti-Indigenous racism. "As long as euroimmigrant women are more comfortable listening to each other discuss us, we are living colonization inside so-called feminism."[40] In her moving account of the disavowed violences of settler colonialism in lesbian and feminist communities, she urges white women to "understand their own histories OR herstories of racism & genocide. Whose grave is your house built on?" She goes on to write: "Most of us are more poverty-stricken than any feminist pretending to be poor because it's 'hip'…Why doesn't anybody want our shacks, our hunger, horrible health care, hopelessness or our pollution-caused illnesses?"[41] Nadine Dixon, a Black lesbian born and raised in San Francisco and participant in lesbian feminist cultures in the Mission in the 1980s and 90s, reflected that after the publication of white working-class lesbian author Dorothy Allison's 1992 debut novel *Bastard Out of Carolina*, "*everyone*, including middle-class lesbians, were suddenly identifying as working-class."[42] Chrystos and Dixon, speaking of the precise time and place *Valencia* is situated, raise the contradiction of white lesbians, many of whom were middle-class and formally educated, identifying with poverty.

While it is important to note that Michelle Tea herself was raised working-class, her widely consumed narrative is nonetheless entrenched within such queer tendencies to figure oneself as the most marginalized, which disavows the experience of racialized queer communities, but also the context of state violence and displacement that characterized the Mission in the 1990s. While other San Francisco neighborhoods are invoked, the majority of the 250-page memoir is firmly situated in the Mission. The book itself is named for Valencia, the large thoroughfare that dyke culture

[40] Box 1, Folder 6, "Dear Ladyslipper women," Chrystos, October 16, 1992. Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[41] Box 1, Folder 6, "Dear Ladyslipper women," Chrystos, October 16, 1992. Barbara Cameron Papers (GLC 63), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[42] Nadine Dixon, in discussion with the author, December 2016.

coalesced around in the 90s and now the most gentrified part of the Mission. Tea constantly places Michelle within the geography of the neighborhood: 16th Street, Mission Street, Valencia Street, and Capp Street, the alley between Mission and South Van Ness known then for the criminalized labor of drug sales and street-based sex work. Tea creates a world of intrigue, dark corners, and the ever-present threat of danger. Describing her home on Capp Street, Michelle boasts, "We sat out on the front stoop, a great place to sit, maybe the best in the city. You were connected to the absolute hub of 16th Street, but you sat in a dark corridor, apart, quieter, like 16th Street was this incredible secret and my street was the moment before you told it. You had the sense that something was building, sitting in the subtle glow of the streetlights facing the bottlebrush tree."[43]

The Mission, then a disinvested Latinx neighborhood rife with state violence, turf wars, housing insecurity, and a bustling drug trade provides the edgy backdrop for Michelle's escapades. This intrigue of danger, decay, and grit "provides the grain" and the *ground* for Michelle and her friends' wild, no-holds-barred antics.[44] Michelle continues to describe her beloved stoop on Capp Street, where, rather than miss any of the action in the alleyway, she and her friends squat to pee below the bottlebrush tree. "The tree also served as a kind of toilet bowl when you were out on the stoop drinking 40s and smoking and felt too sluggish and congested to climb the stairs to the bathroom. Or maybe you didn't want to miss anything, so you pulled down your pants and squatted over the patch of dirt the tree grew out of."[45] Throughout the book, Michelle claims unambivalent ownership of the street and neighborhood, invoking the classic metaphor of marking one's territory. This choice is, of course, symptomatic of her relationship to criminalization: she *can* urinate in the

[43] Tea, *Valencia*, 76-77.

[44] Tongson, *Relocations*, 205.

[45] Tea, *Valencia*, 77.

street without penalty. For those without access to shelter in San Francisco, sitting, sleeping, grooming, urinating, and/or defecating in public is routinely criminalized.[46]

Describing the view from another stoop in the Mission, Tea writes, "I loved sitting on her back porch, on the peeling grey stairs that looked on to the weedy empty lot where homeless people sleep on damp mattresses. A fat, magnificent palm tree grew in the middle, its top a burst of heavy leaves like an ancient jungle. I would sit and look at the tree and smoke and think about how great my life was."[47] While Michelle is perhaps being ironic or blasé, celebrating her life while looking out at "homeless people sleep on damp mattresses," she eerily evokes the tolerance of widening inequalities characteristic of neoliberalism. Since 1981, San Francisco has passed more local anti-homeless measures than any other city in the state of California.[48] The criminalization of unsheltered populations during this time—and their production as surplus—occurred during the largest expansion of jails and prisons in history.[49] For Michelle, the unsheltered individuals sleeping on mattresses in the lot next door become literal features of the landscape. Tea constantly characterizes "homeless people" as part of the scenery and casually mentions immigrant families piled into neighboring apartments who "slept close on pushed-together cots."[50] Where in the context of "Gays v. blacks" in the previous chapter, the gay real estate speculator sought to rid the neighborhood of such surplus populations, for Michelle, they add to its charm. As Jin Haritaworn writes, "If earlier

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[46] Coalition on Homelessness, "Punishing the Poorest: How the Criminalization of Homelessness Perpetuates Poverty in San Francisco" (San Francisco, 2015).

[47] Tea, *Valencia*, 135.

[48] Coalition on Homelessness, "Punishing the Poorest: How the Criminalization of Homelessness Perpetuates Poverty in San Francisco."

[49] Craig Willse, *The Value of Homelessness: Managing Surplus Life in the United States* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2015); Gilmore, *Golden Gulag.*

[50] Tea, *Valencia*, 249.

generations of queer cosmopolitans have looked to the gayborhood...the revitalizing 'ghetto,' crumbling but painfully, dangerously, and romantically alive, has a particular hold on current queer imaginations."[51] Indeed, *Valencia* as a cultural artifact belabors this point. Michelle finds the "grittiness" of the neighborhood thrilling: the peeling paint, the empty lot. In doing so, she surveys her surroundings with an exotifying and perhaps racializing gaze, remarking on the heavy leaves "like an ancient jungle" on the palm tree in the vacant lot. Like the "incredible secret" that was 16th Street, Michelle reveled in her hidden treasure.

Space and spatiality have been intrinsic to homonormative politics of legibility and legitimacy, causing many scholars to situate analyses of homonormativity across terrains of the neoliberal city. In the case of the Mission, however, it was often downwardly-mobile lesbians and queers, culturally and politically distinct from homonormative gays, who made this neighborhood appear safe, if alluringly edgy, to creative capital. As Haritaworn also notes, this has led to the "the analytic need to collapse the binary radical/transgressive frame of most scholarship on queer space, which relies on "'assimilationist' gay gentrifiers on the one hand and 'transgressive' queer victims of gentrification on the other."[52] In the context of *Valencia*, Michelle and her friends aren't "'assimilationist' gay gentrifiers": some come from working-class backgrounds, some do sex work, and all are enmeshed "alternative" punk and artists scenes. And yet, they aren't "'transgressive' queer victims" of gentrification either, as is often lamented in the context of San Francisco. "The younger and more 'radical' queer and trans scenes," as Haritaworn writes, "have been hailed as early-wave gentrifiers who break into areas considered ungentrifiable. This renders it important to critically map

[51] Jin Haritaworn, "Colorful Bodies in the Multikulti Metropolis: Vitality, Victimology and Transgressive Citizenship in Berlin," in *Transgender Migrations: The Bodies, Borders, and Politics of Transition,* ed. Trystan Cotten (Chicago: Routledge, 2011), 17.

[52] Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others*, 2.

transgressive alongside homonormative geographies, as intersecting rather than contradictory sites of queer placemaking in the neoliberal city."[53]

If Michelle and her friends are taken by the rough-and-tumble romance of the inner city, urban planners, city officials, developers, and real estate speculators also took note. During this precise period, (neo)liberal multicultural urban planning agendas championed such narratives, an ethos perhaps best reflected in neoliberal renaissance man and "urbanist" Richard Florida's corpus. We can read Tea's 2000 *Valencia* as a narrative counterpart to Florida's 2002 *Rise of the Creative Class*, a manual of sorts for racialized urban gentrification. As he argues, "The ideal is to live a more creative life, packed with more intense, high-quality, multidimensional experiences."[54] In his 2002 national bestseller Florida reports that creative classers "need" to live in places that offer stimulating, creative environments. His now-infamous "Gay Index" indicates such neighborhoods' readiness for speculative investment aimed at enticing members of the "creative class." Michelle and her friends are the "queer canaries" Florida champions, the transitional objects whose subcultural capital ushers in opportunities for creative class development. As Karen Tongson argues, only contact with acceptable forms of diversity enriches the experience of creative classers in spaces otherwise deemed unsafe or undesirable. "Diversity becomes an 'urban amenity,' a crucial component of what provides the grain for, and an experiential quality to, the creative class urban lifestyle."[55] In the Mission District in the 1990s, white dykes, as transitional objects, became an (often unwitting) urban amenity that readied the wheels of displacement during the dot-com boom of the late 90s. Tongson

[53] Hairworm, 31.

[54] Richard L Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 134-135.

[55] Tongson, *Relocations*, 205.

continues: "The racialized and working-class communities inhabiting the 'distressed neighborhoods'…serve literally as local color, if they are not immediately displaced and relocated."[56]

While giving each other homemade tattoos with a needle and ink, Michelle ponders a friend's face tattoo. "Supposedly if you have a tattoo on your face you are legally recognized as unemployable and it's really easy to collect SSI from the government."[57] At another party, she remarks, "The girl who lived there was super-deluxe political, she'd been on SSI for years because she convinced the State that she was incapable of working with men."[58] Even if Michelle and some of her friends—including, importantly, Tea herself—are from working-class backgrounds, in order to choose not to work they must make themselves *look* "unemployable." They scheme up creative (if bogus and likely failed) ways to secure SSI benefits at a time and place when the creativity of those deemed unemployable—members of street organizations, undocumented people, unhoused people—was being increasingly criminalized and policed in old and new ways.

Richard Florida's formulation—among its many epistemic violences—has led to research on gay gentrification that obscures the way working-class queers of color are displaced by the very processes Florida champions. For Latinx communities in the Mission, including queers, the 90s is remembered as a time of heightened criminalization that destabilized families, communities, and neighborhood networks in the context of gentrification. In contrast to the narrative of a dyke heyday celebrated in *Valencia*, Natalia Vigil, co-founder of Still Here SF, an intergenerational cultural project amplifying the creativity of LGBTQ2S+ BIPOC raised in San Francisco, remembers family members rounded up and "consumed by the system" in the "quiet devastation" of the 1990s

[56] Tongson, *Relocations*, 205.

[57] Michelle Tea, *Valencia*, 97.

[58] Tea, 145.

"cleanup" of the Mission.[59] Since *Valencia* was published, two civil gang injunctions have been filed in the neighborhood, a mechanism that enables sweeping criminalization within a specified "safety zone" with alleged gang activity. Indeed, tattoos are one basis upon which gang members, real or imagined, are criminalized. From Los Angeles to San Francisco to Oakland, gang injunctions have consistently been filed in or on the border of gentrifying neighborhoods in an orchestrated effort to rid particular neighborhoods of undesirable populations.[60] Michelle's—and presumably by extension Tea's—experience of the Mission is so markedly different than that of criminalized communities. As scholars such as Lisa Marie Cacho writes, "value is made intelligible relationally…The negative, the expended, the excessive invariably form the ground of possibilities for value."[61] Once devalued, disinvested neighborhoods and their inhabitants are precisely the "grounds of possibility" for the (sometimes temporary) affirmation and protection of queer subjects over and against devalued others.

Nativist, anti-immigrant rhetoric, also marks the structural context mediating Michelle and her friends' enmeshment in the Mission. If the 1990s was characterized by hysteria around so-called gang violence, there was also racist and xenophobic foment around undocumented communities accessing social services. In 1993, as the state of California embarked on the largest prison-building project in world history, it also slashed $6 billion from education, welfare, and health services.[62] As Lisa Marie Cacho argues, a "key element to blame for California's economic woes and shrinking

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[59] Natalia Vigil, "Sabor a M*í*: Still Here 5," Brava Theater, June 4, 2017.

[60] Ana Muniz, "Maintaining Racial Boundaries: Criminalization, Neighborhood Context, and the Origins of Gang Injunctions," *Social Problems* 61, no. 2 (2014): 216–36.

[61] Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 13.

[62] Lisa Marie Cacho, "'The People of California Are Suffering': The Ideology of White Injury in Discourses of Immigration," *Journal for Cultural Research* 4, no. 4 (2000): 391.

welfare resources was the pathological and parasitic Mexican family."[63] Like the Black welfare queen/queer, the figure of the illegal Mexican family undergirded the racialized and gendered rhetoric of burdensome, fraudulent claims to the welfare state.[64]

Given Michelle's decidedly white settler spatial and temporal orientation, it is perhaps unsurprising that Tea doesn't cross paths with the BIPOC LGBTQ2S+ communities who call the Mission, or any part of San Francisco, home. During the 1990s, the Mission continued to be a center for queer Latinx organizing, particularly among trans Latinas, including both those born and raised in the Mission and immigrants and refugees from all over Latin America and the Caribbean.[65] It was also rapidly gentrifying. In her discussion of queer Latinidad and the "discursive spaces, cultural labor, and identity practices" forged in the context of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the Mission in the 1990s, Juana María Rodríguez remarks that the intersection of 16th and Mission, the "street corner and its vectors, have a long history as a magnet for queer Latinos."[66] She focuses on the work of Proyecto ContraSIDA Por Vida (Proyecto), a multi-gender, sex-positive, harm reductionist, Latinx-centered HIV/AIDS organization founded in 1993, and highlights modes of belonging organized around multiple categories of identity, or "affiliations." Located in a storefront on a busy intersection in the Mission District, Proyecto's activism and cultural production responded to shifting political and economic contours of the Mission: "The dynamism of its organizing practices continually seeks to respond to the state of emergency that constitutes survival and resistance in the

[63] Cacho, 399.

[64] Cacho, 399.

[65] Juliana Delgado Lopera, *¡Cuéntamelo! Oral Histories by LGBT Latino Immigrants* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2014).

[66] Juana María Rodríguez. *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces.* (New York: NYU Press, 2003), 49.

postmodern wreckage of a metropolis crumbling under the weight of capitalist gentrification, racialized dis-ease, and social inequity."[67] While Proyecto centered queer Latinx people, community members of all racial backgrounds, genders, and sexualities utilized services, reflecting the racial and sexual diversity of the neighborhood and also "the complexities of social and biological families."[68]

Rodríguez reflects that, "Most recently the financial challenges faced by Proyecto...have been exacerbated by skyrocketing rents in San Francisco…These economic currents have resulted in the unrestrained gentrification of the Mission District and resulting displacement and poverty faced by the lower-income sectors of the city."[69] While the hauntings Rodríguez engages most explicitly refer to the racialized impact of HIV/AIDS, we can also understand Proyecto's work around grief to engage the hauntings of spatial displacements from homelands wrought by colonialism and neoliberal free trade policies, or displacement from within neighborhoods impacted by neoliberal spatial restructuring. A selection of their visionary and poetic mission statement reads: "Queremos romper el silenco y represion among our pueblos who for 500 years have been colonized/catholicized/de-eroticized…*Neighborhood-based* means we work within the barrio most identified with Latina lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, y vestidas—the Mission."[70]

In a contrasting characterization of the Mission, promotional materials for the 2013 film *Valencia* write that the film adaptation of Tea's "underground classic memoir" is

> a kaleidoscopic vision of San Francisco's vibrant Mission District in the early 1990s, before the dot-com apocalypse, when the neighborhood functioned as a low-rent playground for a generation of punk lesbians who came of age during the birth of the Queer Nation. Valencia documents the rise of a punk lesbian diaspora through

[67] Rodríguez, 46.

[68] Rodríguez, 50.

[69] Rodríguez, 82.

[70] Rodríguez, 51.

> the experience of Michelle, a single rootless twenty-something searching for sex and love, drugs and adventure.[71]

The dissonance between this nostalgic account of the Mission as a "low-rent playground" for punk lesbians and Proyecto's members' experiences of gentrification, racialized state violence, and HIV/AIDS, is reflective of the spatialization of neoliberalism's disavowals.[72] While it's expected that Tea's narrative would differ substantially from that of Proyecto's membership, and I would be remiss to assume that Proyecto's membership and this "punk lesbian diaspora" didn't overlap, Tea's account has had a life of its own.[73] With such broad circulation, the memoir, and later the film, have become significant artifacts in the construction of (white) lesbian public cultures, marshaled in nostalgic accounts of a lesbian heyday devoid of contestations over race and space.

This Time Around:
Queer Narratives of Injury in Tech 2.0

Within two decades, the "low-rent playground" of a "punk lesbian diaspora" popularized by Michelle Tea's *Valencia* would become the symbolic epicenter of displacement entrenched by the second dot-com boom, or "tech 2.0." The Valencia corridor in particular has been remade into an upscale walking district. High-end restaurants and boutiques and specialty coffee roasters punctuate remaining low-income housing and Latinx-owned markets and taquerías. *SF Gate* writes: "Not so long ago, Valencia Street was a funky mix of Latino-owned car-repair shops, seedy dives and women-owned stores and bars. Though a number of these businesses still thrive, this area has

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[71] *Valencia: The Movie/s* (2013; San Francisco: Radar Productions), https://vimeo.com/ondemand/valencia, accessed November 1, 2017.

[72] Here I reference Grace Hong's understanding of neoliberalism as an "epistemological structure of disavowal."

[73] For a memoir that does address some of this overlap, see Meliza Bañales, *Life is Wonderful, People are Terrific* (Asheville: Ladybox Book, 2015).

become quickly gentrified."[74] Though organizing around evictions and displacement has been ongoing, in 2013 in particular there were a number of spectacular direct actions, including "die-ins" and road blockades that stopped Google buses in their tracks. Many, though certainly not all of these actions were visibly organized by queers, evoking Queer Nation and ACT UP-style direct action tactics.

Figure 2. "Tech=Death" (2014)
Photograph by Kyle Russell/Business Insider

The dominant queer narrative that emerged in the wake of the 2013 tech boom was one of unmistakable misery and victimization. From many corners, the narrative circulated that San Francisco's LGBT *community*—a defining feature of this remarkable city's charm, edge, and character—was unilaterally threatened by the ravages of tech-driven gentrification. Queer communities were (again) discursively positioned as a monolithic group in ways that stitched queerness to whiteness and flattened queer communities' multiple, complex, and contradictory relationships to the ongoing economies of dispossession that constitute the city. It was in this

[74] "Mission: Dolores and Valencia Corridor," *SF Gate*, accessed November 5, 2017, http://www.sfgate.com/neighborhoods/sf/mission_dolores/.

context that The Lexington Club, known colloquially as "the Lex," announced its impending closure in 2014. The collective wail was heard all over mainstream and alternative media and the queer blogosphere. An endless slew of think pieces emerged to declare that with the loss of The Lex, San Francisco had indeed *lost its soul*. Exactly three and a half decades after LAPV's prescient analysis of "the contradictions that arise as more and more lesbians are moving into the Mission," the city was mourning the loss of what was billed as its last lesbian-owned bar.[75] Many venues continue to host queer events, and the lesbian-owned though not lesbian-specific Wildside West that opened in Oakland in 1962 and been in its current location in Bernal Heights since 1976, is still open.[76]

Throughout 2014 and beyond, narratives around the closure of the Lex demonstrate the ways such (white) queer claims to the city can unwittingly embolden neo/liberal violence and naturalize settler possession of Ramaytush Ohlone land. Spanning six months of 2014 and 2015, for example, the GLBT Historical Society collaborated with San Francisco State University to organize a public series called "The G-Spot: Gentrification, Transformation, and Queer San Francisco." The series comprised of lectures, artist talks, film screenings, and "The Pop-Up Gay Bar: Ghosts of Gentrification Pub Crawl," which toured a handful of long or immanently gone San Francisco gay bars. The pub crawl stopped at The Lexington Club in its last months.[77] Owner Lila Thirkield had recently sold the The Lex to the PlumpJack group, a multi-million dollar firm of dozens of

[75] "Count the Contradictions," 1979, Folder 6, Skits and lyrics, Meg Barnett collection of Lesbians Against Police Violence records, 1989-05, The GLBT Historical Society.

[76] "Wild Side West," accessed November 10, 2017, https://www.wildsidewest.com/.

[77] The G Spot: Gentrification, Transformation, and Queer San Francisco's *Facebook* page, accessed September 1, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/events/1518799841669724/.

restaurants, bars, hotels, and wineries across California founded by former San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom. The Lex is now an upscale craft cocktail bar, Wildhawk.[78]

Recalling *Valencia*, the curators of the pub crawl state that during The Lex's heyday, the late 90s and early 2000s, "Residential and commercial rents in the area were still affordable, and many queer people, artists, immigrants, and longtime Mission residents lived side by side."[79] Echoing Solnit, these communities are narrated as at once discrete and in equal relationship to processes of displacement. The curators continue, "During the tidal wave of change that came during and after the first dot-com boom, though, Valencia started to become…a key battleground of gentrification. Still, we had the Lex, a space of lesbian and trans possibility."[80] Importantly, Valencia had been a "key battleground" of gentrification since at least the 1970s, and the Lex opened in 1997 when the first tech boom was gaining traction and widespread evictions were taking place. The Infamous Ellis Act, which allows landlords to evict entire buildings, passed in 1994. While Ellis Act evictions have gotten increased news coverage since 2011, they actually peaked in 1999.[81] The Lex opened at the onset of a severe housing crisis, what curators curiously narrate as a "heyday" when "immigrants, queers, and artists," lived side by side.

"And now," the Pub Crawl curators write, "as the latest wave of tech *colonization* has pushed most of its clientele out of the neighborhood—and the city—we toast to its glorious place in San

[78] "History," accessed November 10, 2017, http://www.plumpjack.com/company/.

[79] "The G Spot: Gentrification, Transformation, and Queer San Francisco," *Facebook* page, accessed September 1, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/events/1518799841669724/.

[80] "The G Spot: Gentrification, Transformation, and Queer San Francisco."

[81] Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, "Ellis Act Evictions," accessed November 4, 2017, https://www.antievictionmap.com/evictions#/ellis-act-evictions/.

Francisco's queer history" (emphasis mine).[82] The Lex is narrated as "historic" and memorialized as a space of queer possibility even before it is gone. A reviewer of this chapter, shocked to learn that it had only opened in 1997, commented, "Wow it already felt like an old and legendary spot in 2001."[83] Indeed, the bar inherited its divey feel from the previous tenant, a Latino bar called The Sunset, a pointed metaphor for one of the arguments this dissertation aims to make: white queers have long sought to occupy *as they've erased or displaced* racial alterity as a way to narrate themselves possessing authentic belonging.

In her 2013 article for *The Bold Italic*, "Gay (and Not So Gay) Moments in San Francisco History: Michelle Tea presents a timeline of SF milestones," Tea herself stated that The Lex had been an "old Mexican bar." In the entry celebrating the opening of The Lex, she writes: "San Francisco finally gets a full-time lesbo bar, located in the Mission on the site of an old Mexican bar, The Sunset. A grand opening so packed that many attendees never get inside foretells the future of this popular bar, where queers cram themselves in for art openings, bingo games, pool, and the pleasure of one another's company."[84] What we don't learn, is that by 1997, there was only one remaining Latino bar on 16th street. As Haritaworn also observed, in the context of what they term queer regeneration, "The rapid contraction of the environment for racialised, including queer of color, bodies contrasts with the ways in which spaces, affects, and visualities marked as queer and transgender are expanding."[85]

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[82] "The G Spot: Gentrification, Transformation, and Queer San Francisco."

[83] Brooke Lober, in discussion with the author, December 2016.

[84] Michelle Tea, "Gay (and Not So Gay) Moments in San Francisco History: Michelle Tea presents a timeline of SF milestones," *The Bold Italic*, June 25th, 2013, accessed November 10, 2017, http://www.theboldditalic.rip/articles/3364-gay-and-not-so-gay-moments-in-san-francisco-history.

[85] Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others*, 32.

The Lex's owner, Lila Thirkield, opened the "homey, punkish" Lexington Club when she was 25, after having moved to the Mission in 1994 at the age of 23. "She had tattoos and spiky black hair, and she played the drums. She never even considered another neighborhood. 'All the dykes lived in the Mission,' she says."[86] When she found the bar on the corner of 19th and Lexington, the rent was cheaper than what she was paying for her apartment.[87] *SF Gate* journalist Ryan Kost writes, "The Lex, as it's known, is more than a bar, though. For queer women and, as times changed, trans men, it's been a community center, a living room, a clubhouse, a refuge. For many people, it's been the only place in the city they can call their own."[88] Again, nostalgia is mobilized in ways that disavow the contradictions of creating a refuge in a neighborhood in the throes of racialized displacement. He continues: "it was a revolutionary time and place for queer people. Artists, musicians and writers had come to the area. People felt energized."[89] Kost interviewed a handful of local queer celebs, including Michelle Tea and white trans man Lynn Breedlove, the lead singer of the homocore band Tribe 8, and author of *Valencia*-esque memoir *Godspeed*, about the high times of the 90s dyke days in San Francisco. "'I always compared the '90s in San Francisco for dykes and trans guys to being like Paris in the '20s,' says Lynn Breedlove…At the time, we were popping out all over Valencia. It was mohawks and spikes in our face, and everybody's name was Spike.'"[90] As I argued in my discussion of *Valencia*, it is precisely this edgy countercultural grist of (white) lesbian pubic cultures that became valuable as subcultural capital, positioning white lesbians as transitional

[86] Ryan Kost, "Last Call for City's Last Lesbian Bar," *SF Gate*, April 18, 2015, accessed November 10, 2017, http://www.sfgate.com/education/article/Last-call-for-city-s-last-lesbian-bar-6209121.php#photo-7816696.

[87] Kost.

[88] Kost.

[89] Kost.

[90] Kost.

objects within the racialized spatial economies of neighborhoods in the midst of neoliberal restructuring.

Eventually, though, the transitional object is no longer needed, as in the Mission, and narratives of injury and nostalgia obscure ongoing racialized displacement. Indeed, sexism is often cited as a justification for the loss of lesbian bars and endurance of gay men's bars. In a popular piece written for the *Huffington Post* in 2016, "On the Closing of the Last Lesbian Bar in San Francisco: What the Demise of the Lex Tells Us About Gentrification," scholar Jen Jack Gieseking argues, "In the end, what the Lex's closing and the gender pay gap make clear are that not only lesbians but all women bear the greater brunt of gentrification today, alongside people of color and the poor."[91] In this formulation, a universalized category of "women" make less money than a universalized category of "men," and thus lesbian bars and establishments suffer. "Dual-income lesbian couples earn less than dual-income straight couples, who in turn earn less than dual-income gay couples…Lesbians not only do not maintain large numbers of bars but are less able to secure property ownership and therefore form long-term neighborhoods."[92] While in some cases this may be true, race is again invoked as a category of comparison (and people of color as a category exclusive of queers), rather than as logic foundational to racial capitalism.

A fine-toothed reading of conditions surrounding The Lex and a neighboring queer Latino bar's closing, however, upends Gieseking's argument. Though the rent was cheap, we can presume that Lila Thirkield, the young lesbian who at the age of 25 opened the Lex, was granted loans to start the business or had access to generationally inherited wealth, which in the U.S. overwhelmingly

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[91] Jen Jack Gieseking, "On the Closing of the Last Lesbian Bar in San Francisco: What the Demise of the Lex Tells Us About Gentrification," *Huffpost*, October 28, 2014, accessed November 10, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jen-jack-gieseking/on-the-closing-of-the-las_b_6057122.html.

[92] Gieseking.

reproduces property in whiteness, often regardless of gender.[93] Esta Noche, one of the city's few and longest surviving queer Latinx bars, opened in 1979 and shut its doors a year before the Lex in 2014. It was the last Latinx bar standing on 16th street by 1997 and an early meeting place for Gay American Indians and the Gay Latino Alliance.[94] The bar was owned by two gay Latino men, Anthony Lopez and Manuel Quijano and frequented largely by gay Latino men and trans Latinas. Unlike the Lex, it fought to stay open and hosted numerous fundraisers to pay inflated property taxes, but in the end was forced to close. In 2016, El Tin Tan, the "last old school Latino bar" west of Mission Street also closed.[95] As one *SF Weekly* reporter wrote, "Something about the end of a gay Latino bar in a once predominantly Latino neighborhood seems twisted…But unless you've been living under a rock you know how San Francisco real estate works."[96] Thirkield, on the other hand, chose to sell the Lex a year after having opened Virgil's Sea Room in 2013, an upscale cocktail bar in the Mission. Though not a queer bar, it still hosts parties under the brand of the Lexington Club. "I still love the Mission and will still work and live here. I plan to continue community building and to continue to help keep the queer Mecca that is SF alive."[97]

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[93] Cheryl I Harris, "Whiteness as Property.," *Harvard Law Review.* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1707.

[94] *Ramírez, Horacio N. Roque* "That's My Place!": Negotiating Racial, Sexual, and Gender Politics in San Francisco's Gay Latino Alliance, 1975-1983," *Journal of the History of Sexuality, 12 (2): 224–258*.

[95] "Bar Done: El Tin Tan is Closed," February 11, 2016, accessed November 10, 2017. http://www.cappstreetcrap.com/bar-done-el-tin-tan-is-closed/.

[96] Laura Jayne Cramer, "Drag Queens Say Farewell to Mission Institution Esta Noche," *SF Weekly*, March 18, 2014, accessed November 10, 2017, https://archives.sfweekly.com/exhibitionist/2014/03/18/drag-queens-say-farewell-to-mission-institution-esta-noche.

[97] Tim Redmond, "Why SF's iconic dyke bar, the Lexington Club, is closing" October 23, 2014, accessed November 12, 2017, https://48hills.org/2014/10/lexington-club-closing-owner-says-higher-rent-gentrification-gender-inequality-hurt-iconic-lesbian-bar/.

A commemorative film about the Lex was completed and screened before the year was up. In 2016, a commemorative plaque was placed at the site of the Lex, the ceremony attended by community members and city officials including progressive San Francisco supervisors David Campos and Jane Kim.[98] As Susan L.T. Ashley suggests, "memorial culture operates as an "organizational process that constitutes and validates cultural significance."[99] What does it mean that the Lex, as a "historical" site, was memorialized within a year of its closing? What of the Sunset? In this context, memorialization naturalizes racialized dispossession, the plaque outside the former Lexington Club quite literally enshrining (queer) settler temporality. Monumental Ohlone erasure, disavowal of racialized displacement, and the romanticization of the dyke heyday so wildly popularized by Tea's novel converge in liberal longing for San Francisco's past. As Angela L. Robinson argues, "memorialization within settler states is a form of settler memory, which creates and maintains a national settler affect that makes colonial relations of power *feel right* (emphasis mine)."[100] While The Lex is remembered as a "space of lesbian and trans possibility," for many others it is remembered as a white, scenester, and at times a distinctively transphobic and/or transmisogynist and antiblack space. Alongside a 2014 photograph that was part of a photography exhibit, *Femme Space,* Dulce Garcia, a self-described "Queer Xicana Femme," wrote of her choice to be photographed in front of The Lex:

> My first initial visits to The Lexington Club as a new comer to San Francisco back in 2006 were incredibly femmephobic and racist. Not only was I stared at as soon as I walked in with a look of "This is a lesbian bar, are you in the right place?" but was

[98] Brock Keeling, "Sidewalk outside former lesbian space the Lexington gets commemorative plaque," *Curbed San Francisco*, September 20, 2016, accessed November 12, 2017, https://sf.curbed.com/2016/9/20/12993002/lesbian-bar-sf-lexington.

[99] Susan L.T. Ashley, "Re-Colonizing Spaces of Memorializing: The Case of the Chattri Indian Memorial, UK," *Organization* 23, no. 1 (2016): 30.

[100] Robinson, "Indigenous Performance in Oceania: Affect, Sociality, and Sovereignty," 115.

> refused service several times, although the bar was not busy. These initial visits were acts of erasure as a femme of color. These experiences are examples of how deeply rooted femmephobia is in the Queer community. To me, The Lex was where the white lesbians hanged out, and if you were not part of their clique, or a thin-white-able bodied femme for them to hit on, you were not welcome. And they made sure you felt it and knew it. Interestingly enough, on Valentine's Day 2011, after dinner with friends, I ended up with my friends (mostly of color) at The Lex. Besides my friends and I, there was one other person of color in the bar, a Black Transman…The Lex, the space where my East Los Angeles "too much" femme expression was deliberately erased by white queers was also the same place where the only other person of color there would recognize my gender expression as high femme--and not only honor it, but desire it. Why I chose The Lex isn't so much about reclaiming as it is about taking up space as a queer fat femme of color.[101]

Garcia was clear that the choice about where to be photographed by white queer femme photographer Amanda Harris was not as much about "reclaiming" The Lex as it was about disrupting a space that at once invisibilized and deemed her "too much."[102] Garcia's red nails, lipstick, and iconic red rose distinctively position her within a legacy of Chicana *and* queer femme identity and aesthetics, yet her stance of defiance rejects and refuses inclusion within white dyke histories and presents that depend on her erasure as a Queer Xicana Femme in a Chicanx neighborhood.

[101] Dulce Garcia, "Dulce aka Fierce Femme, San Francisco," in *Femme Space: A Reclamation Project*, Amanda Arkansassy Harris, *Betti Ono Gallery,* Oakland, CA, June 17th, 2016.

[102] Dulce Garcia, "Dulce aka Fierce Femme, San Francisco."

Figure 3. "Dulce aka Fierce Femme, San Francisco" (2016) by Amanda Arkansassy Harris
Courtesy of Dulce Garcia and Alysia Angel

At a moment when the The Lex was being mourned as a liberatory space, Garcia's narrative reflects deep ambivalence. Her portrait for *Femme Space* refuses dominant narratives of nostalgia for a revered institution reflective of San Francisco's embrace of diversity and tolerance threatened by "Tech 2.0," or as Tongson puts it, those "residual fantasies about urban queer subcultures and their purported 'radicality' in the sphere of queer aesthetics and politics."[103] Of course, the very queer spaces and socialities that, in part, made the Mission appealing for creative finance capital don't survive either. As members of Lesbians Against Police Violence so presciently appraised in their 1980 parody of a real estate developer building condos in the Mission: "Gonna move the Latins out, gonna move the dykes in/Turn them on each other/Raise the rents again."[104]

How do we hold that spaces of possibility can also be sites of death? Haritaworn asks what it would take for queer and trans people to refuse to become the "warm and fuzzy" transitional

[103] Tongson, *Queer Relocations*, 6.

[104] "Count the Contradictions," 1979, Folder 5, Coll. 1989-05, Meg Barnett Collection of Lesbians against Police Violence Records, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco CA.

objects of racial capitalism. "What would it take to enter into kinship with the failed masculinities, femininities, and heterosexualities that have become the raw material of queer and transgender ascendancies? How do we explore our genders and sexualities…in ways that refuse murderous inclusions?"[105] Even as San Francisco's reputation as a bastion of tolerance calcified, LGBTQ2S+ BIPOC continuously challenged white supremacy and its classed norms within white lesbian communities, businesses, bars, and other institutions. An important yet overlooked example of this challenge is found in the early 1980s boycott of a white lesbian-owned bar organized by Black lesbians critical of "women's capitalism" and its enmeshment with a growing carceral state. I close this chapter by charting trajectories that imagine otherwise and invite alternate futures precisely by remaining illegible to memorialization.

ONYX: Blackness, Policing, and Lesbian Space

> When a dyke goes into a town, she looks for a dyke bar to find her kind…The bar is to queers what the church is to Christians, the mosque to Muslims, the synagogue to Jews…The bar has traditionally been a great equalizer among us. If you are queer, you are welcome. Even if you are considered a little weird, you are welcome, as long as you behave. If you don't, you're 86ed.[106]

This chapter began by describing mainstream (if subcultural) narratives that have been invoked both in nostalgic discussions of an imagined pre-gentrification Mission District and embraced as transitional objects that mark the neighborhood's pivot from imagined backwardness, darkness, and danger to one of imagined vibrancy. To conclude this chapter, I return to the 1980s to examine the pre-history of the "lesbian punk diaspora" that such narratives champion. As the first chapter demonstrated, what anthropologist Kath Weston termed the "Great Gay Migration" to San

[105] Haritaworn*, Queer Lovers and Hateful Others*, 163.

[106] Barbara Hoke, "Lesbian Bars in the San Francisco East Bay," accessed November 15, 2017, http://soulstudioarts.com/tellherstory/Bars.htm.

Francisco in the 1970s and early 1980s was deeply fraught around confluences of race, class, colonialism, and uneven conditions of migration. While that chapter examined the political interventions of Lesbians Against Police Violence and Gay American Indians, I turn to Black lesbian challenges to lesbian sociality in the San Francisco Bay Area, as characterized by contributors to *ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter*. *ONYX* contributors foretold the spatial affirmation of white queers exemplified by *Valencia* and narratives around the loss of The Lex, keenly aware of the ways white queer sociality was increasingly enmeshed in geographies of antiblackness and racial capitalism, often under the rubric of visibility. I offer a counter-history of Bay Area lesbian bars, both to demonstrate the necessity of complicating narratives of nostalgia and practices of memorialization around such spaces, but also because they offer alternative temporal and spatial relations that challenge racialized disavowals of neoliberalism.

ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter, originally *Black Lesbian Newsletter*, which to the editorial collective's knowledge was the only exclusively Black lesbian publication in the country, began in San Francisco in the summer of 1982. It eventually moved to Berkeley, and continued through the winter of 1984. In 1982, *ONYX* initiated a campaign to boycott a white lesbian owned bar in Oakland. Contributors to *ONYX* recognized how the intensifying carceral state and criminalization of Black women was linked to the spatial affirmation of white queer subjects. In the first anniversary issue, the editors reflect, "This past year has opened our eyes wider than we thought they would have to be opened. We have seen the overwhelming racism in almost every aspect of the women's/lesbian/gay community… Racism is as thick in the Bay Area as it is every place else."[107] They rejected the romanticization of the Bay Area or of any community built around a singular shared identity. During its two and a half year run, *ONYX* reported on unrelenting white supremacy

[107] Folder 9, Volume 2, number 6, December [1983]/January [19]84, page 3. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

in lesbian communities, including within white women-owned establishments, what one contributor called "women's capitalism." In a February 1983 letter to the editor, Storme Webber, a Two Spirit Sugpiaq/Black/Choctaw writer and artist living in Oakland, wrote of racist incidents at numerous women-owned bars and other establishments in San Francisco and the East Bay.[108] "How can we justify lining the pockets of these women with our hard-earned dollars?" she asked. "Let's continue to build together and leave these types of *quote* 'women's businesses' alone."[109]

ONYX featured news, event listings, personal ads, creative writing, and political commentary, and included numerous perspectives on racism and tokenism in lesbian communities, which coalesced around a campaign to boycott Ollie's, a lesbian bar at 42nd and Telegraph in North Oakland owned by a white lesbian, Ollie Oliveira. The December 1982 issue featured "Encounter at Ollie's," an essay by Marlene Bonner that described the incident in detail.[110] The *ONYX* editorial collective, a group of six Black women, went to Ollie's to play Bingo and sign a contract for the *ONYX* holiday party to take place at the venue. Once already inside, the group was stopped by the white lesbian bouncer, who repeatedly asked for identification. The situation quickly escalated and the bouncer told them to leave and banned them from the bar for a week. "Why not make it a lifetime?" Bonner replied, at which point the bouncer threatened to call the police.[111] The group appealed to the bartender, who they knew, who only repeated the policy to ask for ID, shortly after

[108] Webber is now a well-known artist based Seattle. "Storme Webber: Writer. Performer. Curator. Interdisciplinary Artist," accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.stormewebber.com/.

[109] Folder 6, volume 2, number 2, April/May [19]83, pages 8/10. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[110] Folder 4, Volume 1, Number 6, December 1982, page 4. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[111] Folder 4, Volume 1, Number 6, December 1982, page 3. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

which they were informed that two police cars were waiting outside. Bonner wrote that the bouncer had "jeopardized our futures and our lives by calling the O.P.D." and reported that the racism exhibited by the bouncer and bartender "was repeated by Ollie herself," freely acknowledging the bar's policy to call in the police on undesirable customers.[112] "Further, Ollie told us that we (black women), are her 'best customers' because (are you ready for this?), we dress so nicely and behave well. If we rate the Oakland police, what do her less than 'best customers' get?"[113] In describing the incident, Bonner demonstrated the very different relationship to policing and criminalization among white and Black lesbians during this historical moment.

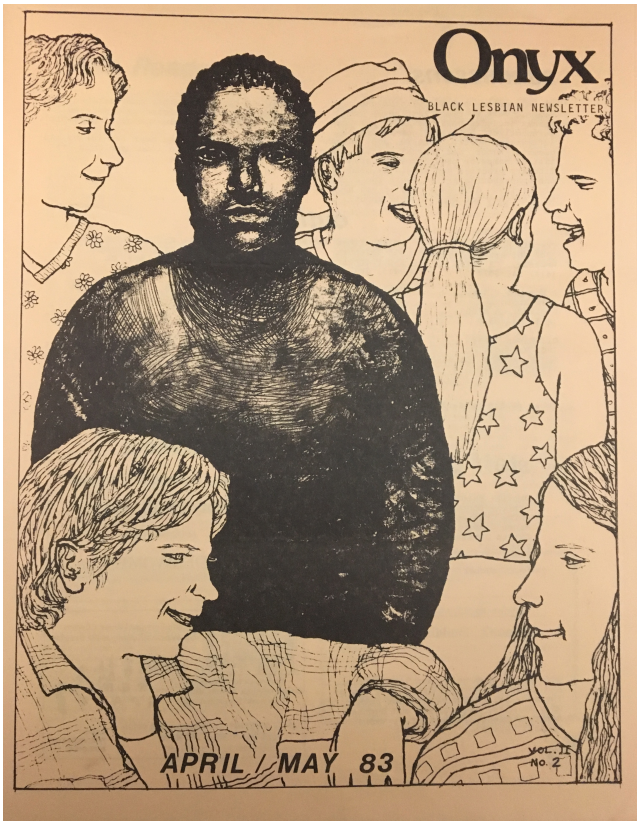
The piece listed six demands and concluded by stating that if not all demands were fully met, they would organize a boycott of the bar by women of color and supporters. "What happened on 11 November was nothing new. We've all been there before. Racism is as thick in the Bay Area as it is every place else. What is different is that we didn't just shut up and let this one slide by…we don't have to pay money for such treatment. We can find it for free any day." Bonner gave a detailed public account of what occurred because "this same type of harassment has happened many times before to women of colour at Ollie's, and it has never been documented." She went on:

> In the gay community, we are often too reticent to call an incident that is clearly racist exactly that. We are making no bones about it here and now! The bouncer who felt she was justified in demeaning black women was racist. The bartender who had two years seniority and did nothing to stop the bouncer's irrational behavior in calling the police was racist. The management of the bar who did not deem the situation important enough to come and mediate was racist. And finally, the other clientele of the bar who were not concerned about the harassment of six black women in their midst were racist.

[112] Folder 4, Volume 1, Number 6, December 1982, page 4. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[113] Folder 4, Volume 1, Number 6, December 1982, page 5. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

By April 1983, *ONYX* officially announced a boycott and called on "all women who want to show their support against racism to participate."[114] The cover of the issue featured the work of Sarita Johnson, whose illustration depicts a gender nonconforming Black dyke in a sea of smiling, jovial white lesbians. The white lesbians are all oriented toward each other, unaware of the figure standing in middle of their gathering. She is at once hypervisible—heavily shaded against the outlines of white figures—yet imperceptible and illegible to those that surround her. As Garcia said of the Lex in 2014: "To me, The Lex was where the white lesbians hung out, and if you were not part of their clique, or a thin-white-able bodied femme for them to hit on, you were not welcome. And they made sure you felt it and knew it."[115]



[114] Folder 6, volume 2, number 2, April/May [19]83, page 3. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[115] Dulce Garcia, "Dulce aka Fierce Femme, San Francisco."

Figure 4. "*ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter*: April/May 83" (1983)
Illustration by Sarita Johnson
Courtesy of San Francisco Public Library

The issue includes a scathing critique of tokenism, also by Johnson, called "Occupation: Ornament (or) How to Be Used at Your Own Expense." The piece is written as a satirical nine-step instructional for "how to behave on the job" as the token Black lesbian white spaces. "Step 1—First, you befriend a white woman who is trying too hard not to be racist."[116] The instructions go on to describe how to perform the duties of "ornament" at a lesbian potluck: "Step 7—The most difficult part of the brunch will be the pre-meal discussion…Lean forward and try to appear interested. Although they enjoy dominating the conversation, your Hostess and her friends will ensure to ask for your opinion whenever the words Lesbian of Color, BLACK and AFFIRMATIVE ACTION magically appear…I suggest you respond with 'The oppression of black people is an unfortunate thing, yes indeed' in all instances. Your Hostess will be pleased. Don't forget to smile."[117] Johnson is attuned to the deep entrenchment of white supremacy in (white) queer spaces in the Bay Area, and the toll on Black women and women of color is made plain: "If you feel you cannot bear another one of these statements without inflicting violence, I recommend the following emergency procedures: a) excuse yourself immediately but gracefully to the bathroom; b) once securely locked inside, sit on the bathtub; c) cover your face with your hands and say twice: 'I am too sensitive for my own good.' When your tolerance if fully restored, flush the toilet, run water in the sink for one minute; d) leave bathroom. Resume smiling."[118] Written just ten years before the setting of *Valencia* and the "punk lesbian diaspora" it championed, Johnson's narrative attunes us to the lingering

[116] Folder 6, volume 2, number 2, April/May [19]83, Occupation: Ornament," page 5. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid., 6.

material and affective regimes of white supremacy in queer spaces. As Garcia said of the Lex in 2014: "if you were not part of their clique… you were not welcome. And they made sure you *felt* it and knew it" (emphasis mine).[119]

Though not explicitly stated, "Occupation: Ornament" may have in part been responding to a piece written by a Black lesbian, Bea Morris, that defended Ollie's and blamed the group of Black women that were victimized by the white bouncer, bar staff, and police. Morris's piece was reprinted in a national lesbian publication and local lesbian newspaper. "Occupation: Ornament" ends by stating, "Due to some flaw in my character, I guess, I've never been able to get past Step 4 without doing or saying something to make my Hostess extremely uneasy around me…For me, it wasn't a job I could live comfortably with, but maybe for you it could be the start of a great career!"[120] In a letter responding to Morris' piece, *ONYX* editors write: "How do we deal with the sad truth that there are Black lesbians who have learned the lesson of 'the man' all too well? And that sometimes 'the man' is a woman (i.e., Ollie in this particular situation)? How do we identify as lesbians without being fooled by the white lesbians who are 'the man' in drag?"[121] *ONYX* contributors' characterization of "women's capitalism," in which sometimes *"the man" is a woman*, illustrates a keen awareness of the limits of resistance rooted in participation in racial capitalism and provides a vocabulary for understanding the racialized harms of queer visibility in the decades that followed. Echoing queer of color critiques of neoliberal inclusion, they understood that relationships to the

[119] Dulce Garcia, "Dulce aka Fierce Femme, San Francisco."

[120] Folder 6, volume 2, number 2, April/May [19]83, Occupation: Ornament," page 6. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[121] Folder 6, volume 2, number 2, April/May [19]83, "Dear Readers," page 3. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

state and capital do not cohere neatly to categories of identity and that such structures can be participated in by white women.[122]

Contributors also remarked on the uptick in racism in lesbian communities in the early 1980s, citing a "backlash" against identity politics. "Over the last few years, I have noticed a definite reactionary shift in attitudes and in priorities of the women's (i.e. white) political/cultural community in the Bay Area."[123] Despite the efforts of *ONYX*, Bay Area Black Lesbians & Gays (BAYBLAG), and numerous organizations, "the visibility and self-determination of Black lesbians (and all women of color) seems to be diminishing."[124] As editors also wrote, "A year ago we exposed a racist incident in a women's bar in Oakland, CA, an attempt was made to discredit both our paper and the individual Black women involved. We were attacked for documenting just one of a long line of racist occurrences in this community."[125] *ONYX* repeatedly called for the creation of Black lesbian spaces, events, and gatherings, noting however that "we do not have the same readily available economic resources that white lesbians have—trust funds or affluent relatives to borrow from, etc."[126] Such an appraisal of gendered racial capitalism exposes the contradictions of the all too common argument that lesbian spaces suffer because a universalized category of "women" do not have as much access to capital as the universalized category of "men," as in Gieseking's 2016 argument about The Lex's closing.

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[122] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*; Hong and Ferguson, *Strange Affinities*; Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*.

[123] Folder 14 volume 3, number 5, October/November [19]84, "Open Letter To The Black Lesbian Community" by Helen L. Keller, Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Folder 9, Volume 2, number 6, December [1983]/January [19]84, page 3. Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[126] Ibid.

The racialized property relations of white women-owned businesses that *ONYX* highlighted supported both the social lives and movement infrastructure of lesbian feminists during the 1970s and 80s. As Emily Thuma has shown, lesbians of color in particular demonstrated an awareness of the growing collusion between the carceral state and the feminist anti-violence movement.[127] *ONYX* contributors were also keenly aware of the ways spaces of lesbian and gay sociality were enmeshed in a growing carceral state because of the precise spatial and temporal overlap with the real estate speculation that followed processes indexed as white flight and urban disinvestment. Ollie's was located in North Oakland, then a disinvested, majority Black neighborhood. We can recall the gay San Francisco real estate speculator featured in "Gays v. blacks," who in 1980, the same year Ollie's opened, said that his proudest accomplishment was turning a "rough and tumble" Black bar into a "gay quiche and coffee house."[128] While not the sentiment of every white lesbian or gay business owner, it signals the historical context in which the emergence of such spaces lesbian and gay sociality were enmeshed—one marked by increased policing, imprisonment, displacement, real estate speculation, and anti-poor policies. Neighborhoods that had been abandoned by the state—though never empty—were imbued with "life" that made them increasingly valuable to the forces that sought to revitalize such spaces.

A website documenting the history of "Lesbian Bars in the San Francisco East Bay – Owned by Women for Women," tellingly demonstrates this contradictory position. "Ollie's was everyone's bar. All sorts of dykes went there. It was centrally located, had great parking and a huge building. Ollie and a stream of other savory Lesbians held court bartending."[129] This memorialization

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[127] Thuma, *All Our Trials: Prisons, Policing, and the Feminist Fight to End Violence*.

[128] "Gays vs. blacks," *NBC Late Night with Tom Snyder*, May 17th, 1980, VHS recording, GBLT Historical Society.

[129] Barbara Hoke, "Lesbian Bars in the San Francisco East Bay."

disavows the history of racism *ONYX* documented, while concluding with a celebration of Ollie Oliveira's inclusion in the neighborhood's business association. "Ollie was the first openly gay businessperson to be invited to join the venerable Temescal Business Association," which like most business associations, has a history of collaborating with police to control racialized spatial boundaries and displace undesirable people and forms of labor to raise property values.[130] Illuminating such queer investments in the carceral during a period championed as the "Great Gay Migration" is critical to any understanding of historical and present racial geographies. Now called the Temescal Business Improvement District, its tagline reads: "Temescal: Vibrant, Gritty, Eclectic."[131]

The majority of ONYX covers featured the stunning visual art of Sarita Johnson, who also wrote "Occupation: Ornament," among other pieces. And though *ONYX* was written by and for Black lesbians in the San Francisco Bay Area, the only image to depict a public urban space or cityscape depicts a white cop mounted on a horse, galloping away after having struck a young Black woman with a club. A Black gender conforming lesbian attends to the girl lying on cement, while two other Black women yell and shake their fists after the cop. In the background, another mounted officer approaches from behind. We might understand "public space," for *ONYX*, as one increasingly marked by violence and enclosure. While many white queer subjects were invested in visibility spatialized against gentrifying cityscapes, *ONYX* contributors recognized a gendered urban architecture of antiblackness and created their own spaces outside of "women's capitalism," in which they sought recognition from each other in intimate spaces of relationality that were not necessarily separatist.

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[130] Ibid.

[131] Webpage copy, accessed November 20, 2017, https://temescaldistrict.org/.

ONYX contributors, many of whom were mothers, felt the toll of Reaganomics and attack on Black women's livelihoods and sexualities.[132] In 1984, Lucille Hunt wrote about taking the bus with her daughter from the Mission to the Social Services Administration in San Francisco, telling of their reliance on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which would be cut within the decade. She overheard a white couple on the bus whispering about how "some people shouldn't be allowed to raise children."[133] The couple continued: "The proper authorities should develop an application to weed out women who wouldn't qualify as good mothers even before they consider getting pregnant."[134] The man joked that there should be such an application for potential fathers as well. Hunt was clear that as a Black lesbian mother on welfare, she wouldn't have made the cut:

> I walked into the waiting room with all its orange and yellow plastic chairs welded together and all the dark-headed womyn [sic] and men and congested children—all worn from having their morning routines interrupted by a ridiculous and humiliating interview. It became clear to me that these people were the ones 'Barbie' would eliminate from parenthood…And if my mom had filled out a parenthood application, I know I wouldn't be here writing this stuff; and if I had completed an application, Alexa wouldn't be making me laugh with her mimicking.[135]

Hunt's moving rebuke of the eugenicist, antiblack rhetoric of the white couple on the bus, the assertion of Black sociality and generational reproduction in the face of utter dehumanization, and analysis of the regulation of Black women's sexualities and reproduction, inclusive of herself as a lesbian, importantly intervened in the dominant lesbian culture of the time, which, in the disavowal

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[132] Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen*; João Helion Costa Vargas, *Catching Hell in the City of Angels: Life and Meanings of Blackness in South Central Los Angeles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Rhonda Y Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[133] Folder 10, volume 3, number 1, February/March [19]84, "Journal Entry: Reminders," by Lucille Hunt, Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

of lesbian mothers, often reproduced raced and classed normativities within lesbian communities. Hunt's piece ends with the defiant declaration that "even though I was recertified for AFDC, my lover and I are happily planning our second child!"[136] Hong, building on Black feminist scholars including Hazel Carby, Angela Y. Davis, Sarah Haley, and Candice Jenkins notes the "queerness of Black reproduction and kinship…the conditions of simultaneously forced and foreclosed reproduction."[137] As such, the lesbian feminist mandate to "opt out" of normative heteropatriarchal reproduction was not an option for Black women, whether identified as lesbians or not.

ONYX contributors consistently intervened in normativities within the *culture* of white lesbian feminism with beautiful, intergenerational depictions of Black women, including Black children and elders, in their home-spaces at a time when Black women, families, and homes were being surveilled and subject to violence in old and new ways. They did so without recuperating a supposedly imperiled heteronormative family, the perceived absence of which was discursive fodder for Moynihan's much-quoted "tangle of pathology."[138] White lesbian communities during this time, as discussed in *ONYX* and reflected in the previous chapter, could be extremely anti-child. Lesbian separatist spaces in particular, including those in the Mission, regarded children as evidence of patriarchy, and many sought to ban children and mothers, particularly male children, from participation in lesbian life.[139]

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[136] Folder 10, volume 3, number 1, February/March [19]84, "Journal Entry: Reminders," by Lucille Hunt, Black Lesbian Newsletter/Onyx Collection (GLC 102), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[137] Grace Hong, *Death and Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 96.

[138] Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy Planning and Research, U.S. Department of Labor, 1965.

[139] For a discussion of this ideology within lesbian separatism, see chapter 6, "The Cultural of Lesbian Feminist Households with Children in the 1970s," in Daniel Winunwe Rivers, *Radical*

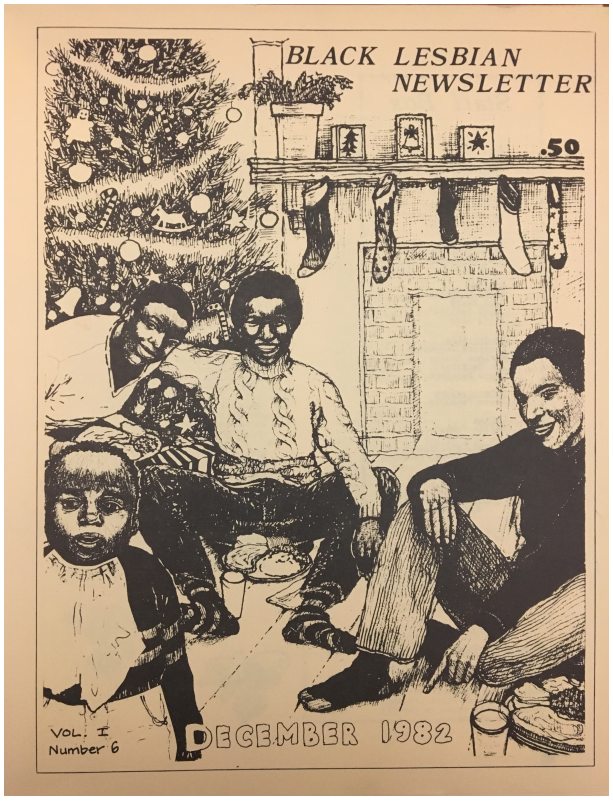

Figure 5. "*Black Lesbian Newsletter* cover: December 1982" (1982)
Illustration by Sarita Johnson
Courtesy of San Francisco Public Library

Figure 6. "*ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter* cover: April/May 84" (1984)
Illustration by Sarita Johnson
Courtesy of San Francisco Public Library

The majority of *ONYX* covers, illustrated by Sarita Johnson, depicted Black lesbians and their communities, children, and families in Black home-spaces. The presence of children, including Black boys, reflects an ideological rejection of lesbian separatism, which disavowed histories of racialized reproductive violence in communities of color, and celebrates Black lesbian mothering. The covers of the newsletter are moving yet mundane images of Black people in their homes, such as the group of Black lesbians and a young child gathered for a family photo in front of the

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Relations: Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers, & Their Children in the United States since WW II (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

Christmas tree, or what we might imagine to be a grandmother and her daughter and grandchild looking at family photos. Another cover depicts a Black lesbian with short hair and glasses curled up on a sofa, pausing to look up from a book while reading alone in an apartment filled with houseplants. We might imagine that these home-spaces, imperiled by gentrification, reflect losses that are not legible to normative modes of grieving or memorialization in the way the Lex was.

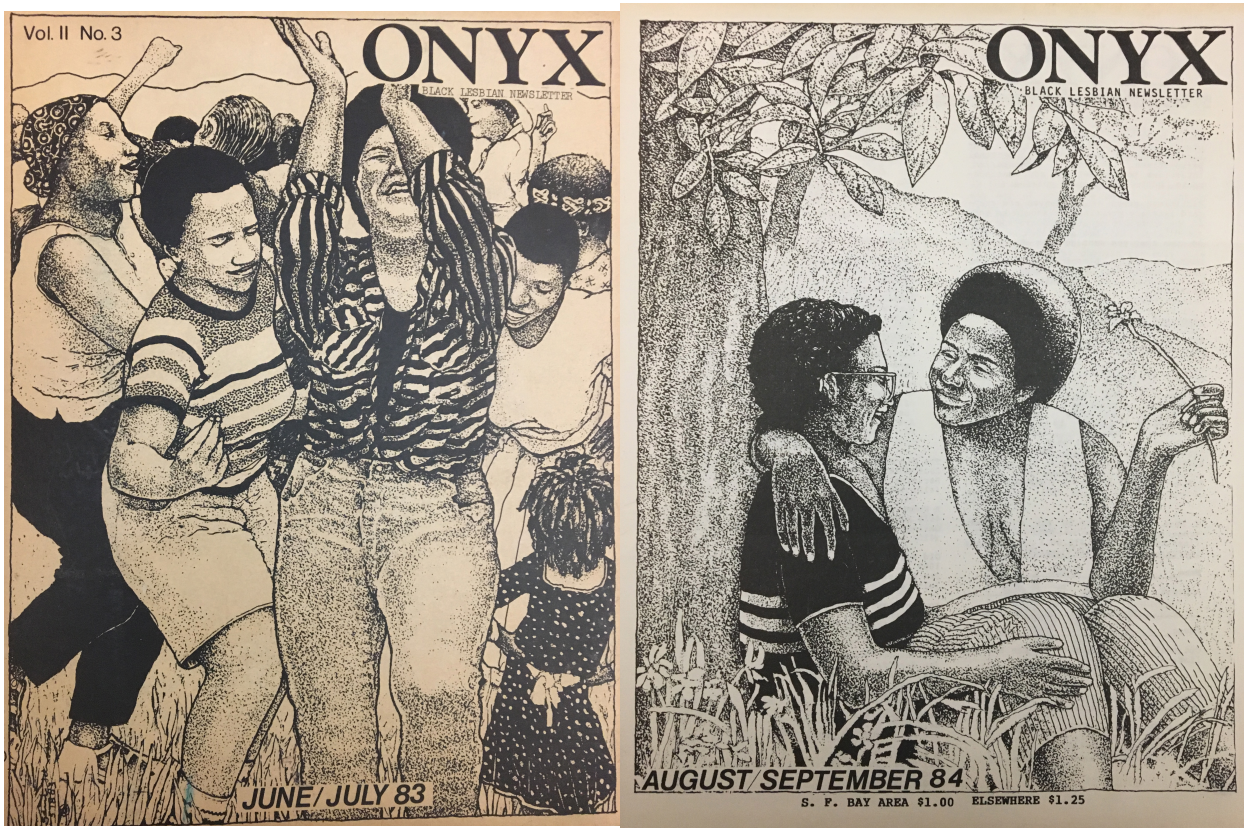

Figure 7. "*ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter* cover: June/July 83" (1983)
Illustration by Sarita Johnson
Courtesy of San Francisco Public Library

Figure 8. "*ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter* cover: August/September 84" (1984)
Illustration by Sarita Johnson
Courtesy of San Francisco Public Library

Two of the illustrations depict the outdoors. On one cover, a group of Black lesbians and a Black child joyfully dance and clap in a grassy meadow with a mountain range visible in the distance. Another depicts two lovers sitting in the grass. One leans against a tree while the other sits on her

lover's lap and playfully twirls a flower in her hand. Taken together, I read these images as depictions Black queer futurity, and following Katherine McKittrick, the insistence of Black lesbians as "geographic subjects," who incite "new, or different, and perhaps more just, geographic stories."[140] These renderings are so very different from the exploitative settler gaze depicting bottlebrush and palm trees in Tea's *Valencia*. In this abolitionist vision of Black queer futurity, the tree provides shade, the grass a soft landing to rest or dance, the flower beauty and sustenance. The images do not suggest ownership or extraction but relationality and reverence. And they insist on Black life in the face of the Reagan-era assault on Black kinship, sexuality, neighborhoods, families, and homes.

If many Black lesbians in the 1980s rejected prescriptive norms around gender, sexuality, and family, they also resisted the property relations sustained by normative patrilineal reproduction, as in their boycott of Ollie's and indictment of "women's capitalism." In 1980, Black lesbian activist Joan Gibbs asked, "Why would I, a Black woman, even be interested in buying land in the first place, when Third World people, Black, Native, and Hispanic peoples - within the current borders of the U.S. are fighting for liberation, for land?"[141] McKittrick likewise suggests "the radical affirmation of black life be sought and claimed outside colonial—land-settling and land-claiming and land-exploiting and genocidal—paradigms. It follows that the reinvention of black life, and the challenge to our collective consciousness, must be engendered outside the logics of accumulation, land ownership, and profit generation."[142] *ONYX* contributors and coconspirators such as Joan Gibbs, who put quotation marks around the "United States" to "draw attention to the fact that contrary to

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[140] Katherine McKittrick. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xix.

[141] Sara Bennett and Joan Gibbs, "Racism and Classism in the Lesbian Community: Towards the Building of a Radical Autonomous Lesbian Movement," in *Top Ranking: A Collection of Articles on Racism and Classism in the Lesbian Community* ed. Joan Gibbs and Sara Bennett (New York: Come! Unity Press, 1980), 2-3.

[142] McKittrick, K. (2016). "Rebellion/Invention/Groove." *Small Axe*, 20 (149), 79-91.

what we're constantly bombarded with, we're not living in a country made up of 50 voluntary states," articulated a vision of freedom illegible to modes of visibility so often bound up in logics of property rooted in racial capitalism and settler colonialism.

Conclusion:
Alternate Modes of Memory & Mourning

I close this chapter by looking to Two Spirit protest at Mission San Francisco de Asís in 2015 that highlighted the gendered present tense of colonialism and made connections between multiple, ongoing modes of dispossession and displacement that radically revised dominant queer narratives of mourning. In 2015, the same year the Lex closed, Ohlone leaders in the Bay Area and Indigenous peoples throughout California – including many Two Spirit activists – protested the Pope's canonization of Junipero Serra de Asís, namesake of Mission San Francisco de Asís in the Mission District and founder of 21 missions.[143] On September 25th, 2015, some 200 people gathered for an International Day of Mourning at the site of the Mission where over 5,000 Indigenous remains are buried in an unmarked grave.[144] One of the signs read, "Indigenous Two-Spirits Pissing off Patriarchy & Priests Since 1492!"[145] As I discussed in Chapter 1, Missions were sites where

[143] Tim Gaynor, "Sainthood for founder of California missions angers Native American groups," May 28, 2015, accessed September 1, 2017, http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/5/28/sainthood-for-california-missions-founder-angers-native-american-groups.html.

[144] "Serra Is No Saint Day of Mourning in San Francisco," accessed October 23, 2017. https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/history/events/serra-is-no-saint-day-of-mourning-in-san-francisco/

[145] Protest of Canonization of Junipero Serra, San Francisco, CA, September 23, 2015.

Indigenous peoples were tortured and enslaved, but also where Indigenous genders and sexualities, and thus forms of governance, were targets of assimilation and discipline into the 19th century.[146]

The Mission District itself is named for Mission San Francisco de Asís, located half a mile from the former location of The Lex, which that same year had been narrated as a victim of "tech colonization." On what kinds of disavowals do these narratives depend? Most glaringly, the curators' characterization of The Lex as a victim of "colonization" elides the context settler colonialism in which it is enmeshed. I ask what kind of possibilities may have opened up if the energy around mourning the Lex, an 18-year old bar, had been harnessed in support of Indigenous sovereignty and more specifically this fight led by queer Indigenous activists? I want to suggest that modes of dispossession that are often characterized as distinct are deeply interwoven. What does disrupting the periodization and temporal frames of colonization, urban renewal, gentrification, the first dot-com bubble, current tech boom, etc., allow for? What modes of affiliation become possible?

Aileen Moreton-Robinson argues that the continued presence of the settler state and coterminous modes of racialized dispossession on these lands are constituted through logics of white possession. Approaching spatiality and temporality with an anti-colonial lens disallows the kind of nostalgia that makes an originary claim to possession, what anti-gentrification discourses so often rely on. How can the cycle of each wave of residents claiming authenticity or an originary stake be interrupted? How can we create new stories that hold historical memory, elide nostalgia, and make connections among multiple and simultaneous displacements beyond metaphor? In this chapter, one of my aims has been to disrupt the trope of white injury, not to suggest that white settlers should not fight gentrification. I do want to suggest that we (I am locating myself here) do so

[146] Deborah A Miranda, "Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California.," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* 16, no. 1/2 (2010): 263.

in ways that don't center our own misery, even when we do experience loss, pain, or longing for what was.

Lisa Marie Cacho compels us toward an "unthinkable politics" that rejects recuperation, powerfully exploring such a politic through a rejection of the normative modes available for grieving. Rather than be concerned with what is politically practical or logistically possible, this practice invites unthinkable possibilities.[147] Other emergent formations, including *Still Here SF*, a yearly performance featuring queer and trans artists of color born and raised in San Francisco, resists recuperation and nostalgia to offer alternate modes of remembering. "We believe that as storytellers, poets, multimedia artists, singers, and dancers we can contribute profound re-understanding of time and place."[148] The Last Three Percent, a network of Black activists in San Francisco is organizing to prevent displacement of San Francisco's remaining Black communities, now just three percent. *Still Here SF*, the Last Three Percent, and Two Spirit organizing against Sera don't ask us to remember, they demand that we not forget.

And, crucially, there's no justice on stolen land. But there are through-lines. Displacement is constitutive of San Francisco and other settler geographies, not something new. I return to Jasmine E. Johnson's piece, "Dear Khary (An Autobiography of Gentrification)," in which she writes, "I think of just how very mean San Francisco can be…San Francisco is a history of black folks having to go. We know the difference between eviction and travel."[149] Though there is longing and loss and perhaps even nostalgia for the neighborhood of her childhood, for Johnson San Francisco cannot

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[147] Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (New York: NYU Press, 2012).

[148] Webpage copy, accessed November 20, 2017, https://www.stillheresf.org/what-we-do/.

[149] Jasmine E. Johnson, "Dear Khary (An Autobiography of Gentrification)," August 13, 2013, accessed September 1, 2017, http://gawker.com/dear-khary-an-autobiography-of-gentrification-1227561902.

be redeemed. "San Francisco is a history of Black folks having to go."[150] Memory, longing, nostalgia, and other affects aren't all bad. San Francisco has been a meaningful site of community-making and resistance for many, many communities, from Black socialist feminists to Trans Latinas to disability communities and movements rooted there to access services. How can our memories hold all of this and more?

[150] Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE Ruptures of Property: Blackness, Indigeneity, and the Landed Politics of Accountability in Huichin

> The projects of slavery and colonialism have never been concerned with which came first, or which is more elemental—they have in fact thrived on the slippages and ambiguities of their relationship to one another.
>
> —Justin Leroy, "Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism"[1]
>
> The present must be known in relation to the alternative spatial and temporal maps provided by a perception of past and future affective worlds.
>
> —José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*[2]

Introduction

As early as the mid-nineteenth century, speculators hoped to cash in on Oakland's proximity to San Francisco's commercial center, advertising it as "a city of homes."[3] Due to Oakland's spatial proximity to San Francisco, the two cities have long been constructed and sustained relationally in both discursive and material ways. This settler imaginary of "a city of homes" reverberated over the centuries that followed, including in what was narrated as a mass "exodus" of queers from San Francisco to Oakland as San Francisco reached the peak of its 2013-2015 housing crisis. And again in 2020-2021 when finance and tech workers in San Francisco bought Oakland homes in droves, initiated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a desire for bigger homes and backyards in which to *shelter*

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[1] Leroy, "Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism."

[2] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 27.

[3] Nathan McClintock, "From Industrial Garden to Food Desert: Demarcated Devaluation in the Flatlands of Oakland, California," in *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*, ed. Alison Hope Alkon and Julian Agyeman (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), 96.

in place.[4] As I will demonstrate, such shelter is made possible in and through property relations that produce the *deprivation of shelter* as a gendered afterlife of slavery in occupied Ohlone/Lisjan territories.

The city of Oakland spans occupied, unceded, traditional, and ancestral Ohlone/Lisjan land in the territory of Huichin. As in San Francisco, the U.S. occupation persists and the ongoing elimination and erasure of Indigenous peoples is part and parcel of settler geographies of Oakland. In the present moment, the violence and dehumanization of racialized displacement can be felt all over the city: in the dozens of cranes that on any given day peck at old buildings to assemble luxury condos (many of which sit empty); in the swelling, majority-Black encampments of Oakland's unsheltered populations that mushroom below; in the experience of homes and businesses flipped so quickly one struggles to remember *what was ever there before*. But also in the "hardly discerned" ways such development terrorizes Indigenous peoples.[5] "It's a horrific thing to have to deal with every day," states Corrina Gould, Chair of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan, "To know with all of this development that's going on with the five or six different 26 story buildings right here in downtown Oakland. To know that they may hit some of our burial sites at any time and not think about having to do anything but continue to build."[6] In this statement, Gould points to the horror of colonial unknowing that undergirds urban life in settler cities.[7] Such colonial unknowing is linked to the

[4] In March 2021, the number of home sales in Oakland had increased 107% from the year prior, and the median sale price had increased 23%. Source: Red Oak Realty, "Oak Notes from Hannah Kerns and Tim Kerns, April, 20201, accessed May 2, 2021, https://homes.redoakrealty.com/newsletter/newsletter.php?NID=12446.

[5] I am referencing Saidiya Hartman's impulse to turn to the "scenes of terror that can hardly be discerned" in the context of chattel slavery. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 4.

[6] Gould, "Ohlone Geographies," 75.

[7] Vimalassery, Goldstein, and Pegues, "Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing."

"legacy of slavery and the labor of the unfree," which as Katherine McKittrick attests, "both shape and are part of the environment we presently inhabit."[8]

This chapter examines the complexly intertwined histories and present of settler colonialism and slavery's afterlife in one settler city at Turtle Island's edge—imbricated as it is in global movements of people, power, and capital. It also points to ruptures—that precisely through reckoning with these histories—become the basis for generating alternate modes of relationality and accountability. I begin by situating the contemporary moment in Oakland within what I call the *settler temporality of diversity*. I then turn to two emergent formations that rupture any coherence of racial capitalist settler colonialism in the territory of Huichin: Moms 4 Housing, a housing justice movement led by Black unsheltered mothers from Oakland, and Ohlone/Lisjan resurgence, in particular the Sogorea Te' Land Trust and Shuumi Land Tax. Writing of the implications of these movements for the field of urban geography, Margaret Marietta Ramírez writes: "Conceptually, these movements push us to think about cities beyond the propertied regimes that urban scholars are too often confined to and therein reproduce in their scholarship…Envisioning Oakland beyond colonial temporalities and spatial orders, beyond racial capitalist logics of property – these movements are struggling not just for homes and land but for full personhood and sovereignty for Black and Indigenous peoples."[9] In dialogue with Ramírez, I frame these movements within a politics of refusal that practices and imagines alternate—indeed, queer—futures by crafting a landed politics of accountability.[10]

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[8] Katherine McKittrick, "Plantation Futures," *Small Axe* 17, no. 3 (2013): 2.

[9] Margaret Marietta Ramírez, "Take the Houses Back/Take the Land Back: Black and Indigenous Urban Futures in Oakland.," *Urban Geography* 41, no. 5 (2020): 689.

[10] Margaret Marietta Ramírez, Assistant Professor of geography at Simon Frasier University, and I co-edited the "Indigenous Geographies of Resistance" section of *Counterpoints: A San Francisco Bay Area Atlas of Displacement & Resistance*, Anti-Eviction Mapping Project Editorial Collective, ed.

The generative refusals of Moms 4 Housing and Sogorea Te' Land Trust offer a distinct, yet relational queer politics of accountability: rematriate the land, house the Moms. As both culmination of this dissertation, and blueprints found within it for futures beyond it, this chapter most explicitly enters conversations on the relationality of Blackness and Indigeneity. While the first chapters examined the relational dispossession of Black and Indigenous people(s) within queer settler imaginaries of San Francisco, this chapter draws from Black feminist theorizations of slavery's afterlife and Indigenous feminist critiques of the politics of recognition to situate the settler temporality of diversity within long histories of dispossession by inclusion. Writing of Indigenous genocide and transatlantic slavery, Tiffany Lethabo King writes that, "While the force of their haunt has distinct feelings at the stress points and instantiations of Black fungibility and Native genocide, the violence moves as one."[11] She cautions, however, against the impulse to "uncover" or "prove" contact, alliance, or solidarities among Black and Indigenous people.[12] This gesture, she argues, tends to formulate Black and Indigenous communities as necessarily bounded or discrete. I follow King's caution against the move to "uncover" these solidarities and likewise eschew the theoretical perspective that the politics of Blackness and Indigeneity represent an antagonism.[13] King's own project offers "alternative grammar and vocabularies, and new analytical sites that reveal the ways

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(Oakland: PM Press, 2021) and she has been a collaborator and thought partner in much of this work.

[11] Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), x.

[12] King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*, 28.

[13] For overviews of the contours of these conversations, see Leroy, "Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism"; Day, "Being or Nothingness: Indigeneity, Antiblackness, and Settler Colonial Critique."

that some aspects of Black and Indigenous life have always already been a site of co-constitution."[14] I imperfectly follow King's methodological pathway towards the "unthought terrain from which to reconsider the relational and ethical spaces of Black and Indigenous scholarship and the liberatory practices of abolition and decolonization."[15] It is with this imperative in mind that I attempt to respond substantively and accountably to Black and Indigenous thought.

The Arithmetic of Black Oakland:
Carcerality and the Settler Temporality of Diversity[16]

As I argued in the previous chapter, racialized urban displacement, like settler colonialism, is predicated on both the *disavowal and presumed inevitability* of dispossession; the utter disregard for what was and the insistence on what (and who) remains disappearing as simply a matter of progress. I argued that the spatial and temporal orientations of settler colonialism are epistemic and material conditions of possibility for the types of dislocations, displacements, and erasures invoked under the rubric of "gentrification," which in San Francisco are constitutive of narratives of Black surplus. In Oakland, these material and epistemic modalities of Indigenous erasure are coupled with extractive antiblackness: while Indigenous people(s) contend with erasure and elimination, Blackness is at once celebrated and criminalized, desired and disparaged.

"What insights might emerge," Justin Leroy asks, "from thinking of settler colonialism as a logic of indigenous erasure that has sustained its coherence party through the language of anti-

[14] King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*, 28.

[15] Ibid., 31.

[16] This title is in reference to Katherine McKittrick's article, "Mathematics Black Life," *The Black Scholar* 44, no. 2 (2014): 16–28. In it, she suggest that we can read the archive "not as a *measure* of what happened, but as indicators of what else happened," 22.

blackness?"[17] I bring Leroy's query to bear on Jodi Melamed's formulation of neoliberal multiculturalism and Elizabeth Povinelli's formulation of liberal settler multiculturalism to suggest that attention to the settler temporality of diversity—rooted in property logics that long predate the neoliberal era—helps illuminate the relationality of Black and Indigenous dispossession *and of Black and Indigenous refusals*.[18] Writing of the U.S. colonial and imperial relationship to Hawai'i, Dean Itsuji Saranillio compellingly argues that white settler colonialism articulates with neoliberal multiculturalism to naturalize conquest and settlement and secure the "virtues" of liberal democracy.[19] But while in the Hawaiian context, Kanaka 'Ōiwi are recognized within the dispossessive patchwork of neoliberal multiculturalism, it is through the politics of recognition that Ohlone/Lisjan people in Huichin are erased from any such official renderings of the city of Oakland.[20] In her discussion of the ways narratives of progress cohere with antiblackness in The City, Savannah Shange writes: "Black flesh is always in excess, uncivil, and marked by its incongruity with the progressive project, to which we [Black people] remain narratively central, and yet materially surplus."[21] This contradiction is spatialized in Oakland's colonial present of settler multiculturalism: Blackness "remains narratively central" as Black people themselves are rendered

[17] Leroy, "Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism."

[18] Elizabeth A Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2002); Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*.

[19] Dean Itsuji Saranillio, "The Kēpaniwai (Damming of the Water) Heritage Gardens: Alternative Futures beyond the Settler State," in *Formations of United States Colonialism*, ed. Alyosha Goldstein (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 236.

[20] There is some recognition of Ohlone people in the neighboring settler city of Berkeley due to the current struggle around the West Berkeley Shellmound.

[21] Savannah Shange, *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, & Schooling in San Francisco* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 4.

surplus: criminalized, imprisoned, displaced, and deprived of shelter in vastly disproportionate numbers.[22] Settler multiculturalism, then, is a relational analytic, that when understood in the context of the dispossessive histories of property I return to in my discussion of Moms 4 Housing, attunes us to long histories of dispossession by inclusion.[23]

…

Donna Murch observes that from 1940 to 1950, Oakland's Black population increased by over 500 percent.[24] In her study of the Black Panthers' emergence in the city, she writes, "If Texas and Louisiana served as the ancestral homeland for many East Bay migrants, West Oakland represented the historical bridge to black California."[25] This increase in Black Oakland residents between 1940 and 1950 mirrors another enumeration: Ruth Wilson Gilmore points to the nearly 500 percent increase in the number of people imprisoned in the state of California between 1982 and 2000.[26] In 1980, Oakland was over fifty percent Black, after which point the number of Black Oakland residents rapidly declined; to 26 percent by 2011.[27] While the correlation between the rapid departure of Black Oaklanders and growth of prisons may not be empirically sound or legible in any positivist sense, it haunts any discussion of the disappearance of Black people from Oakland and San Francisco. As Ofelia O. Cuevas argues, "secure housing" would be offered in prison cells: in

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[22] Causa Justa :: Just Cause, "Development Without Displacement: Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area."

[23] I am referencing David Harvey's formulation of Accumulation by Dispossession, "The 'New' Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession," *The Socialist Register* 40 (2004): 63–87.

[24] Murch, *Living for the City*, 16.

[25] Murch, 21; Causa Justa :: Just Cause, "Development Without Displacement," 7.

[26] Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 7.

[27] Murch, *Living for the City*, 16.

2002 white people in the U.S. were as likely to own a home as African Americans or Latinx people were to be "housed" in a prison, jail, or detention center. This is not a coincidence, she argues, but revealing of a "material reality rooted in the confluence of what home, housing, and race have come to mean in the contemporary markets of neoliberal securities."[28] This confluence is illuminated with striking clarity in post-foreclosure Oakland.

Murch situates the Panthers as a "struggle of migrant youth against police brutality and the new technologies of incarceration that the Golden State pioneered," adding that, "California led the nation in the scale and infrastructure of youth detention as well as the militarization of domestic policing."[29] By 1964, the federal government declared deindustrializing Oakland a "depressed area."[30] As Gilmore suggests, Black communities who had migrated to California during WWII were poorer in real terms in 1969 than they had been in 1945.[31] Industry continued to leave Oakland, and between 1979 and 1985 more than 122 factories left Alameda County, eliminating 24,000 jobs that sustained Black workers.[32] Though property values skyrocketed in the late 1970s and 1980s, deindustrialization and structural disinvestment entrenched poverty in Oakland as the state's orchestrated shift to criminalization, policing, and imprisonment funneled thousands of mostly Black and Brown young people into California's rapidly growing prison system.

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[28] Ofelia O. Cuevas, "Welcome to My Cell: Housing and Race in the Mirror of American Democracy," *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (September 2012): 607.

[29] Murch, *Living for the City*, 121.

[30] Murch, 17.

[31] Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 7.

[32] Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, *Abiding Courage: African American Migrant Women and the East Bay Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 357.

By the 1990s, the discourse of gang violence had become synonymous with Oakland, nearly any national or regional media coverage of the city depicting gang violence, drugs, crime, and the murder rate. In many ways, Oakland has been constructed as San Francisco's shadow, a specter where racialized violence and crime occur. We can recall Donald Lipper, the white gay real estate speculator in the Fillmore, who in 1980 proclaimed that Black people should be banished from San Francisco: "Send them to Idaho. Or at least Oakland."[33] In a 1991 *New York Times* article, Oakland is characterized as "a sorry stepsister to San Francisco, a dingy place best known for cocaine, crime, and the cackle of assault rifles."[34] In the context of the state's investment in carceral systems and withdraw of social provisions, communities were criminalized for the very modes of social reproduction—including informal economies and gangs—engaged in to survive. As Gilmore explains, "gangs constitute territorially bounded rule-making bodies for a mosaic filling in vast regions that the legal state has abandoned except in the form of militarized occupation and social-services based surveillance."[35] Mike Davis examines the pervasive culture of fear and surveillance, security, and policing that emerged during this period as a response of the sociospatial polarization of Reaganomics and the War on Drugs. The highly militarized, antiblack police warfare relied on widely popularized and consumed discourses that linked Blackness, crime, drugs, and violence.[36] In Oakland, the hysteria around gang violence, what Davis describes as a "terrain of pseudo-knowledge

[33] Riggs, *Tongues Untied.*

[34] Jane Gross. "Oakland Journal; City Finds Its Newspaper." N*ew York Times*, August 16, 1991, page A00010.

[35] Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 274.

[36] Davis, *City of Quartz.*

and fantasy production," became a part of a racialized regime of representation that was instrumentalized to attract creative capital a mere two decades later.[37]

Within the settler temporality of diversity, it is precisely this antiblack criminalization, policing, and speculative development that makes Oakland "the most diverse" settler city in the U.S.[38] If progressive temporality and modernity is achieved through diversity, in contemporary Oakland it is dependent on the criminalization and simultaneous celebration of Blackness. Put another way, if settler temporality in Oakland takes an antiblack expression, one way this is materialized is through *criminalization as the enforcement of diversity*. Over the last few decades, popular representations of Oakland have shifted from that of an imagined site of racialized crime to a multicultural spatial imaginary of creativity and vitality. Such narratives have hinged on an imagined shift from Black disorder to white (if multicultural, if queer) creativity.

Indeed, the post-recession subprime crisis created a perfect storm of gentrification in Oakland, landing it the number five spot on the *New York Times*' international list of "45 Places to Go in 2012." According to the *Times*, "New restaurants and bars beckon amid the grit."[39] In 1991, the *Times* characterized Oakland as "a dingy place," unromantically destitute and dangerous. Two decades later, it is the appeal of Oakland's "grit"—its toughness and resolve—that made for an international travel destination. At the onset of the post-recession housing bubble, investors and real estate relentlessly marketed Oakland as a vibrant, exciting, diverse, and affordable place to live in ways that simultaneously celebrated and disparaged Blackness. Targeted advertisements on social

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[37] Davis, 270.

[38] Anna Pulley, "Oakland Named the Most Diverse City in America," December, 17th, 2014, accessed May 1, 2021, https://eastbayexpress.com/oakland-named-the-most-diverse-city-in-america-1/.

[39] *New York Times*, "45 Places to Go in 2012." Accessed October 10, 2020. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/08/travel/45-places-to-go-in-2012.html.

media and all manner of blogs, online weeklies, and websites from moving and storage companies to *Huffington Post* featured pithy lists about why Oakland was the hottest place to be: "Let's face it, Oakland has found its place in the sun."[40] While some of the pieces encouraging relocation or travel to Oakland mention "lingering pockets of crime," they all highlight Oakland's "diversity" as an urban amenity, that in the tradition of Richard Florida, would enhance one's quality of life.[41]

Thirty years after the fugitive intimacies archived by *Tongues United*, Oakland's Lake Merritt continues to be a fraught site of racial criminalization and focal point for the specificity of antiblack violence and displacement in the city following the lake's decade-long "revitalization," a $122 million project completed in 2013, just a year before Oakland was named "the most diverse city in America."[42] In May 2018, a white woman called the police to report a Black man preparing to use a charcoal grill on a public patch of grass on the east side of the Lake, the very stretch where the "Pride" and "No Cruising" signs hang. Kenzie Smith, who had frequented the lakeside park since he was a child, was setting up for a barbecue when Jennifer Shulte called 911 to report his use of a charcoal grill because it was "illegal."[43] While by no means an isolated or exceptional event, the video

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[40] "Oakland, Calif., Has Never Been Better: Here are Ten Reasons Why, June 11, 2013, accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/11/oakland-california_n_3424055.html; "12 Reasons to Live In Oakland Instead of San Francisco, accessed June 2, 2019, http://blog.extraspace.com/2017/05/12/reasons-to-live-in-oakland-instead-of-san-francisco/; "11 Reasons Why Everyone is Moving to Oakland," 2017, accessed May 26, 2021, http://www.unpakt.com/blog/11-reasons-why-everyone-is-moving-to-oakland/; "35 Reasons You Need to Move to Oakland," accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.movoto.com/guide/oakland-ca/moving-to-oakland/.

[41] Gretchen Holm, "Choosing an Oakland Area Neighborhood to Live In," January 7, 2019, accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.tripsavvy.com/oakland-neighborhoods-250932.

[42] Anna Pulley, "Oakland Named the Most Diverse City in America."

[43] Sam Levin, "'We're Being Pushed Out'": The Displacement of Black Oakland, June 1st, 2018, accessed May 1, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jun/01/from-black-panthers-to-bbq-becky-the-displacement-of-black-oakland.

of went viral, and Shulte was soon nicknamed BBQ Becky, gracing hundreds of memes and parodied on Saturday Night Live. Despite the trend-worthy humor that circulated in the weeks that followed, in a June 2018 interview, Smith shared that he was haunted by Shulte's voice. "I honestly thought that I was going to die."[44] That month, several hundred Black people attended "BBQ'n While Black."[45] Organizers describe not having seen that many Black people at Lake Merritt since the 1990s, when the annual Festival at the Lake was shut down due to supposed crime in the surrounding neighborhood.[46]

And yet, the aesthetics of "New Oakland" celebrate a static and commodified form of Blackness. An ad campaign for Oakland's tourism site, for example, presently rings the lake. Upon visiting the website, one is greeted with a montage of moving and still images enticing those from neighboring cities to visit Oakland. The montage opens with the text: "Going Somewhere?," and features an image of the eastbound lanes of the Bay Bridge, specifically inviting visitors from San Francisco. "Choose Somewhere Close. Close to Redwoods. Close to Water [against an image of Lake Merritt]. Visit Oakland. Choose somewhere you feel like yourself. Somewhere you can just *be*. Be creative. Be inspired. Be proud. Be your most genuine self. Welcome to somewhere that welcomes you for being you. Where You Belong. Visit Oakland."[47] Through invocations of Blackness, visitors are invited to come be "genuine," "be creative," "just be," as Black creativity and Black *being* is criminalized. As I noted in the introduction, the city of Oakland has announced

[44] Sam Levin, "'We're Being Pushed Out.'"

[45] Pendarvis Harshaw, "'We're Still Here: 'BBQ'n While Black Draws Oakland Out in Force, May 21, 2018, accessed May 1, 2021, https://www.kqed.org/arts/13832886/were-still-here-bbqn-while-black-draws-out-oaklanders-in-force.

[46] Pendarvis Harshaw, "'We're Still Here."

[47] "Visit Oakland," accessed May 1, 2021. https://www.visitoakland.com/.

increasing policing at Lake Merritt *since initially having drafted this chapter.* As Oakland-based Anti-Police Terror Project wrote on April 8th, 2021: "The City has decided to appease those who would prefer the lake be their own private oasis, sans Black beauty, by funding increased police presence at the Lake to enforce new rules regulating who can vend, where they can vend, who can park, where they can park, who can make noise, and how much noise they can make."[48]

Dominant queer narratives, too, have adhered to this racialized regime of representation. In 2014, the year that Oakland was named the "most diverse city in America," *San Francisco Magazine*, a bourgeoisie lifestyle magazine of Modern Luxury Publications, named Oakland a "modern lesbian dreamscape."[49] Like those who bemoaned the closure of The Lexington Club in San Francisco a year earlier, Anna Pulley writes that Oakland is appealing to lesbians because they make less money: "Oakland's status as a lesbian mecca may come down to something more prosaic: housing prices. With women still making around 77 cents to every dollar earned by men, female-headed households are generally less wealthy than those headed by straight couples or two men—and in a tight housing market, lesbians may be getting squeezed out of San Francisco (even more than everyone else)."[50] Despite the endless reportage on racialized and specifically Black displacement in both cities, (white) lesbians are again positioned as universalized victims of the housing crisis. She goes on to write:

> Oakland has only a fraction of the population—and the LGBT cachet—of San Francisco. But what it does have is a long history of radical identity politics, plenty of single-family homes for lesbian couples hoping to start a family, a palpable outsider ethos, and a community that's accepting of not only gay and straight but all the many shades of sexual

[48] "APTP Call For Mutual Aid and Support at Lake Merritt," April 8, 2021, accessed May 25, 2021, https://www.antipoliceterrorproject.org/blog-entire/mutual-aid-lake-merritt.

[49] Anna Pulley, "Where the Girls Are: The City As modern Lesbian Dreamscape," *San Francisco Magazine*, "The Oakland Issue," February 3, 2015, accessed May 26, 2021, https://sanfran.com/the-oakland-issue.

[50] Pulley.

and gender fluidity.[51]

Indeed, there *were* plenty of single-family homes: over ten thousand had been foreclosed on between 2007 and 2012, the settler colonial logic of antiblackness imagined through vacancy and absence: "A city of homes."[52]

As I examined in the previous chapter, the narrative that San Francisco was losing its supposed authenticity circulated feverishly among queer communities, the very rubric under which "New Oakland" was being marketed. Reports repeatedly claim that lesbians are drawn to Oakland by the "diversity" and "affordability."[53] Perhaps unsurprisingly, this formulation precisely mirrors the way Oakland was being marketed by developers. Oakland was named the "most diverse city in America" at a time when nearly half of the city's Black residents had been displaced. The "least diverse" city in the country was majority-Black Detroit.[54] Indeed, this diversity was achieved by three decades of neoliberalism and the confluence of criminalization and imprisonment, speculative lending and investment, and stripping of social services that displaced almost 40 percent of Oakland's Black residents between 1990 and 2011.[55] Black disorder is narrated as a thing of the past, a residue that gives the city its authenticity and charm. This spatial imaginary is part and parcel of a settler multicultural project that simultaneously capitalizes on and disparages Blackness. It is within

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[51] Pulley.

[52] Urban Strategies Council, *Who Owns Your Neighborhood? The Role of Investors in Post-Foreclosure Oakland*. Oakland, CA: Urban Strategies Council, 2012.

[53] Alexia Underwood, "Oakland—A City Many Women Call Home," June 24, 2009, accessed June 2, 2021, https://oaklandnorth.net/2009/06/24/oakland-%E2%80%93-a-city-many-women-call-home/

[54] Anna Pulley, "Oakland Named the Most Diverse City in America."

[55] Justa :: Just Cause, "Development Without Displacement: Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area" (Oakland, 2014), 7.

this context that in November 2019, amid ever-escalating rents, a group of unsheltered Black women from Oakland occupied a vacant, speculator owned house in the disinvested, historically significant Black neighborhood of West Oakland, the "historical bridge to black California."[56]

Moms 4 Housing: Evict the Speculators, House the Moms

> People are refusing to pay their rent and mortgages. They're asking why landlords and banks should get paid when workers aren't. People are tearing down monuments to colonialism and white supremacy because it's in our power to do so. We want to see a different reality—one that is equitable and nurturing…the abolition, not reform, of many systems: from policing to the commodification of housing…
>
> I dream of what will come after we tear down those systems. I dream of what will rise in their place. I dream of a day when Black people in this country can age in place. When we can put down roots and grow, generation to generation. When we can call a place home, without fear of being displaced ever again.
>
> -- Carroll Fife, "The Great Migration Never Ended," November 2020[57]

In *Alchemy of Race and Rights*, Patricia J. Williams writes that homelessness is "interwoven with the legacy of slavery."[58] This interweaving is evidenced by the vastly disproportionate number of Black people deprived of shelter, but also "in its psychology of denial, in the notions of worth and unworthiness that go into the laws dealing with the homeless, in the ranking of 'legitimate' needy and 'illegitimate' homeless—these are the familiar, cruel, blind games that make bastards and beggars of those who are in fact our family."[59] In considering the "limbo of disownedness" in the wake of emancipation, Williams argues that Black people "went from being owned by others to having

[56] Murch, *Living for the City*, 21.

[57] Carroll Fife, "The Great Migration Never Ended," November 10, 2020, May 26, 2021, https://www.humansandnature.org/the-great-migration-never-ended.

[58] Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor*, 24.

[59] Williams, 24.

everything around them owned by others."[60] "Is not homelessness a metaphor for, as well of a manifestation of, collective disownership?"[61] Though not the central concern of her work, Williams' remarks pose incisive questions about the racialized relations of property and discursive regimes of value undergirding housing deprivation. I elaborate on Williams' provocation to argue that the gendered antiblack terror constitutive of Oakland's "housing crisis" must be understood in relationship to slavery's afterlife. In it, I center the intellectual contributions of Moms 4 Housing members in their strategic takeover of a speculator-owned house in West Oakland, a historically significant Black neighborhood and epicenter of real estate speculation. Situated in relationship to Black feminist theorists including Saidiya Hartman, Sarah Haley, and Katherine McKittrick, I read Moms 4 Housing's 2019/2020 occupation as an act of refusal that ruptures meanings of home, shelter, and property in occupied and unceded Ohlone/Lisjan territories. Moms 4 Housing unravels the racial capitalist present of dispossession through inclusion and invites a future for Black women in Oakland because they "deserve it." Such refusals rupture the afterlife of slavery in its spatial form, including at the scale of subjectivity, in the repeated declaration that, "I deserve this home."

"For me," Saidiya Hartman writes, "narrating counter-histories of slavery has always been inseparable from writing a history of the present, by which I mean the incomplete project of freedom, and the precarious life of the ex-slave, a condition defined by the vulnerability to premature death and to gratuitous acts of violence."[62] This afterlife is temporal, in the sense of slavery's long reach. As Christina Sharpe writes, "In the wake, the past that is not past reappears,

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[60] Williams, 71.

[61] Williams, 24.

[62] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 26, no. 3 (2008): 4.

always, to rupture the present."[63] These temporal ruptures are also spatial, in that they mediate racial geographies in the colonial present. Hartman writes: "when declarations of equality announced the end of slavery, the *well-arranged world* sustained itself (emphasis mine)."[64] This "well-arranged world" has a decidedly spatial afterlife. Katherine McKittrick attunes us to the ways that slavery is animated by a paradox of enforced placelessness that "extends and is given a geographic future."[65] These "untidy historically present geographies," she argues, mediate the contemporary carceral landscapes of cities, including their abstracted locations in prisons.[66] Indeed, McKittrick regards the destruction of Black homes and Black spaces—through eviction, foreclosure, eminent domain, urban renewal, and other technologies of displacement—as an enduring spatial violence of the plantation.[67]

In November 2019, a group of unhoused Black women born and raised in what is now Oakland entered and occupied a vacant three-bedroom house in West Oakland. The house on Magnolia Street was not chosen at random. Dominique Walker, spokesperson for the group and organizer with the Black Tenants' Union, had researched houses that were foreclosed, bought by real estate speculators, and left to sit vacant. The choice to occupy the property was both practical and strategic: the Moms housed themselves and their children while exposing the gendered racial terror of housing deprivation and the fallacy of the so-called "housing crisis" in the city of their

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[63] Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 9.

[64] Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection : Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Race and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 183.

[65] Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, no. 8 (December 2011): 949.

[66] Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 950.

[67] McKittrick, 950.

birth.[68] "This is where my family found refuge from sharecropping and the KKK," Walker stated. "We've been here ever since."[69] In this assertion, Walker locates her family's migration to Oakland in the spatial and temporal afterlife of slavery, stretching "back" in both senses of the word: back in time and back to the South in the continued commitment to the freedom of movement and the freedom to not-be-moved. As I will show, Moms 4 Housing claim Oakland as a Black place in ways that rupture and refuse settler logics of property.

The Moms 4 Housing occupation was both materially practical and deeply visionary. For 57 days, Moms 4 Housing members, including Walker and her two children, and Misty Cross, Tolani King, Sharina Thomas, and each of their children, stole shelter from what they called "a displacement machine."[70] In doing so, they drew a clear line between the actions of real estate speculators and the gendered, specifically antiblack violence of the deepening crisis of housing deprivation in Oakland. A year earlier, in January 2018, as Oakland was relentlessly championed as "up-and-coming," full of creativity and vitality, the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing visited Oakland's vast shantytowns to find that, "Third world countries with crumbling infrastructure, deep seated corruption, and scarce resources have far better infrastructure, services and resources for their unsheltered than the city of Oakland."[71] In just two years, between 2017 and

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[68] I am mobilizing Sarah Haley's use of "gendered racial terror" in *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

[69] Julian Brave NoiseCat, "The House on Magnolia Street: How a Group of Homeless Mothers Took on a Housing Crisis, March 19, 2020, accessed May 26, 2021, https://story.californiasunday.com/moms-4-housing-oakland.

[70] "Moms 4 Housing Occupy Vacant Home to Send Message About the Homeless Crisis," Crosscurrents, KALW, December 11, 2019, accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.kalw.org/show/crosscurrents/2019-12-11/moms-4-housing-occupy-vacant-oakland-home-to-send-message-about-the-homeless-crisis#stream/0.

[71] Massar, JP. "UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing Visits Bay Area Homeless: 'It's Just So... Cruel,'" *Daily Kos*, January 22, 2018, accessed January 5, 2021.

2019, Oakland's unsheltered population had grown by nearly 50 percent.[72] As in other cities like Los Angeles, where Black communities make up nine percent of the total population and almost half of the unsheltered population, housing deprivation in Oakland takes a distinctly antiblack shape.[73] In Oakland, where Black communities make up less than a quarter of the city's residents, 70 percent of those deprived of shelter are Black.[74] It is within this context that Moms 4 Housing members and their children needed immediate shelter and declared every day inside the house a win. During the 57-day occupation, they announced their daily victory to communities and supporters on social media and at the doorstep of Moms' House: "Everyday inside is a win!"

The Gendered Afterlife of Slavery & the Production of Housing Deprivation

Moms 4 Housing's messaging refused the common sense notion that the Bay Area suffers from a housing crisis. As Walker stated, "There is no reason that people shouldn't have housing in Oakland. There are 4 vacant homes for every unsheltered person in this city."[75] Indeed, they reframed the housing crisis as a "greed crisis" by continuously amplifying the fact that there are 4 vacant properties in Oakland per houseless adult or child.[76] Through the illegal occupation of one such property, they revealed the fallacy of a scarcity of housing in Oakland in the call to "evict the

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https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/1/22/1735143/-UN-Special-Rapporteur-on-Adequate-Housing-Visits-Bay-Area-Homeless-It-s-Just-So-Cruel.

[72] Carroll Fife, "The Great Migration Never Ended."

[73] S.E. Williams, "Black is the Face of Homeless," March 23, 2016, accessed May 26, 2021, http://www.blackvoicenews.com/2016/03/23/black-is-the-face-of-homelessness/.

[74] Carroll Fife, "The Great Migration Never Ended."

[75] Dominique Walker, Oakland City Council Meeting, December 4, 2019.

[76] Bryan Schatz, "California's Housing Crisis Is So Bad, Families Are Squatting Abandoned Homes Just to Survive," *Mother Jones*, March/April 2018 issue, accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.motherjones.com/crime-justice/2018/04/retake-the-house/.

speculators." "We're seeing speculation displace our people," Walker said in May 2020. "It was the perfect way to highlight that and to also house ourselves at the same time."[77] The house on Magnolia Street had been vacant since 2017, a decade after having been foreclosed on Betty Mack, a Black woman who had moved from Texas to Oakland as a child in 1959.[78] In July 2019, the house was purchased by a Southern California-based real estate corporation, Wedgewood Inc., known for buying, flipping, and selling houses, but also "acting as a mass evictor, initiating hundreds of unlawful detainer lawsuits to aggressively clear out the foreclosed homes of their tenants."[79] In 2015, four years before purchasing the house on Magnolia Street, Wedgewood CEO Gregory Geiser described distressed housing markets as "hot and sexy."[80]

In the colonial present of the foreclosure crisis, "recursive" histories of Black and Indigenous dispossession are deeply intertwined: if foreclosure and housing deprivation in the wake of the subprime mortgage crisis are "possessed" by slavery's afterlife, they are also mediated by settler colonialism.[81] As K-Sue Park has shown, the mortgage—as a financial instrument that has been central to Indigenous dispossession—was exactly the mechanism of dispossession by inclusion that devastated Oakland's Black communities in the aftermath of 2008, but also long before. As Park writes: "Land acquired a legal status akin to that of chattel when foreclosure upon a mortgage

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[77] Rachel Hahn, "These Moms Fought For a Home—And Started a Movement," May 12, 2020, accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.vogue.com/article/moms-4-housing/amp? __twitter_ impression=true.

[78] Katie Ferrari, "The House on Magnolia Street," April 29th, 2020, May 26, 2021, https://sf.curbed.com/2020/4/29/21240456/moms-4-housing-oakland-house-history.

[79] Ramírez, 684.

[80] Julian Brave NoiseCat, "The House on Magnolia Street."

[81] Robert Nichols, *Theft Is Property! Dispossession and Critical Theory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020); Stephen Dillon, "Possessed by Death: The Neoliberal-Carceral State, Black Feminism, and the Afterlife of Slavery," *Radical History Review*, no. 112 (Winter 2012): 113–26.

became relatively unconstrained by law. This colonial history tethers present experiences of dispossession by foreclosure to the past."[82] White colonists and settlers adapted English legal tools into an instrument for the colonial project: the mortgage. "Indigenous debt crated through colonial lending practices, often predatory in nature, enabled the seizure of indigenous land. Land therefore became a money equivalent not through a positive sale, but through debt and loss: foreclosure was a tool of indigenous dispossession."[83] Following Robert Nichols, we can understand the ways Indigenous land dispossession is accomplished through inclusion into property regimes: "The imposition of a proprietary interest that can only be actualized through its simultaneous negation."[84] In other words, transforming land into the status of "property" is the very mechanism for its theft. After all, Indigenous peoples, even if misrecognized as "original owners," never had proprietary interest in land. As Moreton-Robinson clarifies, "Indigenous ontological relations to land are incommensurate with those developed through capitalism."[85]

During what has come to be known as the subprime foreclosure crisis, banks evicted more than 10 million people from their homes.[86] Between 2005 and 2009, there was 53 percent loss of Black wealth, the largest in U.S. history.[87] While many non-Black people lost their homes, working, middle, and upper class African Americans were evicted at roughly the same rate, illuminating

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[82] K-Sue Park, "Money, Mortgages, and the Conquest of America," 1006.

[83] Park, "Money, Mortgages, and the Conquest of America," 1009.

[84] Robert Nichols, *Theft Is Property! Dispossession and Critical Theory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 9, 133.

[85] Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive*, xxi.

[86] Laura Gottesdiener, *A Dream Foreclosed: Black America and the Fight For a Place to Call Home* (New York: Zuccotti Park Press 2013), 6.

[87] Laura Gottesdiener, *A Dream Foreclosed*, xiv.

predatory inclusions in the market. In Oakland, over ten thousand homes were foreclosed on between 2007 and 2012 alone.[88] In their discussion of the subprime crisis, Paula Chakravartty and Denise Ferreira da Silva demonstrate how the targeting of "*places and persons* produced as unsuitable economic subjects" exposes "a political-economic architecture that has always thrived on the construction of modern subjects who lack mental (moral and intellectual) capacities (emphasis in original)."[89] They highlight, for example, the discursive continuities "between the 'welfare queen' and the prototypical subprime borrower as the 'single African American woman.'"[90] Indeed, in Oakland and elsewhere, Black homeowners—in particular women—were targeted for subprime loans.[91] Justifications for exclusionary racism were supplanted, as geographers Wyly et al. write, by "more flexible, entrepreneurial forms of inclusionary discrimination that promised opportunity and access to the wonders of the market."[92]

If disciplining the individual through exposure to the market is a principle of neoliberalism, inclusion in propertied personhood can also be understood as an afterlife of slavery that constitutive of the ongoing territorial thefts of settler colonialism. Nichols builds from Saidiya Hartman and Patricia Williams to suggest that, "to be dispossessed of oneself is to have a certain propriety claim ascribed to one's personhood (a claim of self-ownership) under conditions that demand its

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[88] Urban Strategies Council, *Who Owns Your Neighborhood? The Role of Investors in Post-Foreclosure Oakland*. Oakland, CA: Urban Strategies Council, 2012.

[89] Paula Chakravarty and Denise Ferreira Da Silva, "Accumulation, Dispossession, and Debt: The Racial Logic of Global Capitalism--An Introduction," *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (September 2012): 371.

[90] Chakravartty and Da Silva, 372.

[91] Urban Strategies Council, *Who Owns Your Neighborhood?*

[92] Elvin Wyly et al., "New Racial Meanings of Housing in America," *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (September 2012): 572.

simultaneous negation. It is, again, to come to 'have' something in such a manner that this possession cannot be actualized except through alienation."[93] Indeed, writing of emancipation, Saidiya Hartman resolutely states: "In short, to be free was to be a debtor."[94] The indebtedness of this "burdened individuality," this "encumbrance of freedom," was forged through calculus of responsibility.[95] While the subprime crisis and its predatory inclusions also dispossessed Indigenous, Latinx, and other poor and/or racialized people, the mass predation of Black women in particular illuminates a continuity in which dispossession by inclusion *creates* the spaces for the speculation that Moms 4 Housing so generatively refused.[96]

A range of Black feminist thinkers including Hazel Carby, Angela Y. Davis, Jennifer Morgan, Christina Sharpe, and Hortense Spillers, have illuminated the ways the enslaved Black female body was a fulcrum at which property, ownership, and the contradictory functions of consanguinity and inheritance were reproduced within the plantation economy and its afterlife.[97] The enslaved Black woman's "reproductive destiny," Hazel Carby writes, "was bound to capital accumulation: Black women gave birth to property and, directly, to capital itself, in the form of slaves, and all slaves

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[93] Nichols, *Theft is Property!*, 141.

[94] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection,* 131.

[95] Hartman, 131.

[96] I am referencing Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's use of "generative refusal," which builds on Audra Simpson's formulation of refusal, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resurgence* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2017), 177.

[97] Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Angela Y. Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *Black Scholar* 3, no. 4 (1971): 2–15; Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); Hortense J Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 65–81.

inherited their status from their mothers."[98] Following the work of these scholars, the enslaved mother is, in a sense, as someone who passes down their status as property, "included" in processes of generational bequeathment. But the status being passed down is that of *being property*. It is essential to consider this history in any discussion of property, including Black women's relationships to property and the speculative housing market within U.S. racial capitalism.[99]

Predatory loans, of course, are not the only mechanism that deprives Black women of housing in Oakland. As Sa Whitley writes, "Under the regime of neoliberal capitalism, the state and the financial industry zone black women for dispossession, displacement, and discipline and tag their homes—owned, mortgaged, and leased—as always already ripe for the taking through foreclosure, eviction, demolition, and/or state-sanctioned police violence."[100] These processes coalesce such that, following Craig Willse, mass homelessness is "the immediate condition of possibility for neoliberal life in the United States," drawing our attention to the ways housing deprivation is produced "to make *literal room* for the speculative urban consumer economies of neoliberal capital (emphasis in original)."[101] Building on Ruth Gilmore, he argues that those who are deemed "homeless" become economically productive as "surplus" life. Indeed, companies like Wedgewood both produce and profit from housing deprivation.

This is the precise contradiction that Moms 4 Housing raises: the thousands of vacant dwellings—four for every unsheltered person in Oakland—make life for some possible at the

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[98] Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood*, 24-25.

[99] For a discussion of the "afterlife of property" in neoliberal housing markets, see Sa Whitley, "The Collective Come-Up: Black Queer Placemaking in Subprime Baltimore" (PhD Dissertation, Los Angeles, UCLA, 2020).

[100] Whitley, 32.

[101] Willse, 10-11.

expense of others. But there is another form of profit derived from the production of housing deprivation. For weeks, the Moms had been withstanding threats of eviction from Wedgewood. Finally, under pressure, Wedgewood announced that they wanted to sell the property to a homeless services nonprofit. "Throughout the process, Wedgewood did the right thing…Wedgewood is sympathetic to the plight of the homeless and is a major contributor to shelter programs, inner-city youth, and the disadvantaged. The company hears what the individuals who were illegally squatting at the Magnolia Street home are saying—but it does not respect nor does it condone the theft of its property."[102] As Willse explains, the last three decades have also given rise to an industry to manage "homelessness" as a naturalized, permanent feature of society. "How can we make sense of the fact that the size of the homeless population has expanded alongside the spread of housing services?[103] As he deftly demonstrates, for these industries the goal is not an end to homelessness, but the "economic management of its continuation."[104] In neoliberal fashion, housing services are not only mechanisms through which abandonment takes place, but coded as help or care: "rescued into abandonment becomes the mode of housing insecurity today."[105] Thus, the "value" of unsheltered populations is in their production as a population that needs to be governed—for a profit.

During one of Moms 4 Housing's daily address to supporters gathered at Moms' House, Misty Cross explained, "Y'all don't understand. This was just a building. We made it a home when we occupied it. While we're doing this they're trying to put us out and put a nonprofit in the way.

[102] Julian Brave NoiseCat, "The House on Magnolia Street."

[103] Willse, 9.

[104] Willse, 12.

[105] Willse, 11.

We've already cleaned it, we've already fixed it."[106] Indeed, each of the Moms had already been funneled through Oakland's homelessness industry. And as they pointed out, they'd already pressure washed the house, installed a hot water heater, and patched the roof. There was no need for a nonprofit other than to "put them out." The day prior, Cross had addressed hundreds of supporters gathered outside Mom's house after a court victory delayed their eviction. "You don't know the value of yourself until you've been to the bottom…When you have nothing, and then people try to attack you when you have nothing, that shows you your value."[107] At first glance, her comment can be read as a rallying cry for the crowd of supporters gathered to realize their individual and collective power. And it likely was. I also read her comment as a trenchant critique of *the value* of her despair and deprivation, the *investment* in her exclusion from shelter and propertied citizenship; in knowing the lengths that Wedgewood and its carceral accomplices would go to expel her and her children from seeking shelter in a vacant house. But I also think Cross comments on the possibilities inherent in this structural position. In her discussion of slavery's "wake"—in the word's multiple registers—Sharpe reflects that, "For, if we are lucky, we live in the knowledge that the wake has positioned us as 'no-citizen.' If we are lucky, the knowledge of this positioning avails us particular ways of re/seeing, re/inhabiting, and re/imagining the world."[108] I do not wish to romanticize Cross's suffering. And I understand her words and those of the Moms to gesture to a heretofore unimagined stratagem of value, one that does not depend on their own or others' suffering: one that requires theft.

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[106] Moms 4 Housing (@Moms4Housing). Video of Misty Cross, *Instagram*, December 27th, 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/B6ljZBCBmSu/.

[107] Moms 4 Housing (@Moms4Housing). Video of Misty Cross, *Instagram*, Dec. 26th 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/B6jXPrfB3y8/.

[108] Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, 22.

"I Deserve This Home": Black Mothering & Theft

The selective recognition of humanity rendered enslaved people to the status of flesh—fungible—in ways that make white subjectivity possible.[109] This status of "negative personhood," except in the case of assigning criminal culpability, shapes the materialities and discursive regimes of housing deprivation in the present.[110] As McKittrick argues, slavery and its afterlife depend on "erasing a black sense of place."[111] Crucially, however, this does not foreclose a Black sense of place but incites alternate geographic knowledges and modes of subjectivity "produced outside the official tenets of cartography," and, I would argue, logics of self-possession.[112]

On December 30th, 2019, Tolani King addressed her community, supporters, and members of the media gathered outside of Moms' House:

> I am someone, I deserve a house. This is not something I want, something I desire. This is something I deserve. I deserve to have a place to rest my head, to lay down and to rest my soul. I deserve this, we all deserve this. I am a human being…I have lived in this world for over 40 years. I have lived in this community, I have walked up and down these streets. I grew up here, I deserve to live in Oakland…We had to do this to show you who we are.[113]

Throughout the occupation, Moms 4 Housing members continuously declared that they "deserve this home." In doing so, they engage but in the same instance refuse regimes of value that render unsheltered people—and in particular unsheltered Black women—as fungible and disposable. At

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[109] Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts"; Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe."

[110] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection.*

[111] Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 948.

[112] Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 949.

[113] Quoted in Ramírez, "Take the Houses Back/Take the Land Back: Black and Indigenous Urban Futures in Oakland."

first glance, one might assume that this invocation of "deservedness" exists within the discursive regime of deserving/undeserving, legitimate/illegitimate, worthy/unworthy. As I discussed in the context of Reaganomics four decades prior, producing criminalized, reviled, and devalued populations relied on a deepened and calcifying cleavage between the so-called deserving and undeserving. At the dawn of the Reagan era, this rhetoric was emblematized by gendered and racialized accusations of fraudulent claims to the welfare state that positioned poor Black women as perennially *undeserving*, but also lecherous, repugnant, and parasitic.[114] Importantly, however, this rhetoric was reliant on older discursive modalities of gendered antiblackness, as Sarah Haley demonstrates in her discussion turn-of-century carceral constructions of Black female deviance.[115] Simultaneously, as Willse argues, this period of emergent neoliberalism marked the consolidation of "the homeless" as an "independent and permanent feature of the national population, one explained in terms of the racialized impact of neoliberalism."[116] The intersecting narrative archives of "homelessness" and racialized and gendered neoliberal value, which Patricia Williams understands as "interwoven" with the legacy of slavery, shape the gendered racial terror constitutive of housing deprivation in Oakland (and elsewhere) in the colonial present. In Williams' discussion of "black antiwill," she writes, "one of the things passed on from slavery…is a belief structure rooted in a concept of black (or brown or red) antiwill, the antithetical embodiment of pure will. We live in a society where the closest equivalent of nobility is the display of unremittingly controlled willfulness.

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[114] Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen* (New York: NYU Press, 2004); Premilla Nadasen, *Rethinking the Welfare Rights Movement* (Routledge, 2011); Cathy J Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3, no. 4 (1997): 437–65.

[115] Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*.

[116] Willse, 21.

To be perceived as unremittingly without will is to be imbued with an almost lethal trait."[117] Indeed, the status of being unsheltered is perceived as a result of a lack of will in ways that cohere in racialized and gendered ways.

In the Indigenous context of Kahnawà:ke, Audra Simpson theorizes the ways Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke reject the "gifts" of multicultural citizenship. "There is a political alternative to 'recognition,'" she writes, "the much sought-after and presumed 'good' of multicultural politics. This alternative is 'refusal.'"[118] Savannah Shange builds from Simpson's theorization of refusal to describe a "mode of Black refusal that rejects the terms of the progressive promise."[119] Moms 4 Housing refuses dispossession by inclusion: the settler temporality of diversity that in Huichin relies on the celebration of a commodified and static understanding of Blackness. King's proclamation that she deserves this house references—but in the same instance refuses—the very terms of such affective and discursive regimes that render King and her fellow Moms undeserving. Following Hong's discussion of Audre Lorde, I argue that Moms 4 Housing members refuse the uneven "dispersals of death and devaluation" in ways that refuse a politics that can "threaten to render others precarious."[120] Or as Alexis Pauline Gumbs queries, "What becomes possible when we are immersed in the queerness of forms of life that dominate systems cannot chart, reward, or even

[117] Patricia J Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 219.

[118] Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 11.

[119] Shange, *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, & Schooling in San Francisco*, 140.

[120] Roderick Ferguson and Grace Hong, "The Sexual and Racial Contradictions of Neoliberalism," Journal of Homosexuality 59, no. 7 (2012): 1057; Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal*, 6.

understand?"[121] While some of the Moms were formally employed, the declaration that they "deserve this house" didn't depend on being hardworking (though of course, being deprived of shelter is an immense labor). It didn't include appeals to clean records, graduations, normative family formations, or sobriety. Rather, as Black women, as Black women from Oakland, they simply deserved it. King's comment that "we all deserve this" wasn't a universalizing gesture. When she made that statement, standing on the front steps of Moms House, she gestured to the Moms standing beside her. *They* all deserved it. All Black women from Oakland deserve it. "We had to do this to show you who we are." Moms 4 Housing pushes toward an unthinkable, (im)possible, and unabashedly impractical politics: evict the speculators, house the Moms. At the same time, it is a politics that is supremely rational. This is the urgent brilliance of abolition: at once commonsense and wildly imaginative. As Moms 4 Housing tweeted in the first weeks of the occupation, "The housing market must be abolished. Just like American chattel slavery was abolished. WE WILL END IT."[122] Moms 4 Housing refuses property logics that are both rooted in slavery and a linchpin of settler colonialism.

In the face of the criminalizing rhetoric of their "illegal" occupation, the Moms refused to position themselves as model citizens. In a press release, Wedgewood Spokesperson Sam Singer warned, "Thou shall not steal. They broke into this home. They're attempting to steal from this home. And the court will evict them."[123] Indeed, their occupation was "illegal" — and that is

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[121] Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals* (Chico: AK Press, 2020), 109.

[122] Moms 4 Housing (@Moms4Housing). "The housing market must be abolished." Twitter, December 3, 2020, https://twitter.com/moms4housing/status/1334700769405063168.

[123] Molly Solomon, "Moms Who Occupied Vacant House in West Oakland Fight Eviction in Court," December 16, 2019, accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.kqed.org/news/11791573/moms-4-housing-fights-eviction-in-court?fbclid=IwAR1dK-lB6e5tH1ACr4mGXNlRaU5N1sQdohq4P3umiGrVeU-3bEPP075B_IU.

precisely why they "deserve" it. A reporter from a local public radio station asked Walker how she would respond to people who say their occupation is illegal. "This home isn't owned by a person, it's owned by a corporation. So nobody owns this home. A corporation owns this home… Wedgewood—they're a displacement machine. And they don't deserve this house. I deserve to be here. And we're going to stay here, and we're not leaving."[124] Hartman writes that stealing away involved an appropriation of the self and "a disruption of the spatial organization of dominance."[125] Such everyday practices "that occur below the threshold of formal equality and rights gesture toward an unrealized freedom."[126] McKittrick likewise envisions the possibilities of what she terms "plantation futures," that rather than "transparent and completed spaces of racism and racist violence, hold in them useful anti-colonial practices and narratives."[127] In *stealing property*, in "attempting to steal from this home," in the words of Singer, the Moms wrested shelter from a system of property rooted in their dehumanization. And, as with the mortgage, wrested shelter from a system of property rooted in the ongoing theft of Indigenous land to invite futures beyond it.

While the choice to organize as "Moms" or share humanizing stories about their children playing at Moms' House could be read as normativizing gestures, I read this theft as generatively queer. The criminalization of Moms 4 Housing exists within a long history of criminalizing Black modes of survival and mothering.[128] Haley writes of the "construed relationship between Black

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[124] "Moms 4 Housing Occupy Vacant Home to Send Message About the Homeless Crisis."

[125] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 69.

[126] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 14.

[127] McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 952.

[128] Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*; Richie, *Arrested Justice*; Vargas, *Catching Hell in the City of Angels*.

maternal abjection and carceral state building…Such enforcement of criminal law deemed Black women's own social reproduction as theft."[129] It is within this ongoing history that the Moms and thousands of unsheltered Black women in Oakland and beyond are *deprived* of the space—this "enforced placelessness"—that makes social reproduction possible.[130] As Moms 4 Housing demonstrates, the queerness of Black motherhood demands theft. It ruptures and rearranges commonsense temporalities and spatialities of deservedness, property, home, and shelter. This attunes us to shifting constellations of value/lessness inherent to neoliberalism while also demonstrating the ways these shifting constellations are never forged apart from or outside of the crucible of slavery's afterlife. They deserve this house because they are rendered disposable. They deserve this house because they are Black.

In the context of white supremacy, normative womanhood is an essentially *sheltered* category—in the multiple valences of the word. Thus, the gendered racial terror constitutive of housing deprivation is undergirded by complex, contradictory gender regimes.[131] But while studies of the effects of neoliberalism often invoke the racialized *feminization* of poverty, we might consider the ways that housing deprivation relies on older—if persistent—modalities of racialized *ungendering*.[132] Situated in a distinct if connected spatial and temporal context, Haley argues that the "violent reproduction of racially specific gender categories" marked one of the continuities between slavery and ensuing convict labor regimes.[133] In this context, the *absence* of a gendered subject position for

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[129] Haley, "Flesh Work and the Reproduction of Black Culpability," 132, 135.

[130] McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place."

[131] Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*.

[132] Hortense J Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book."

[133] Sarah Haley, "'Like I Was a Man': Chain Gangs, Gender, and the Domestic Carceral Sphere in Jim Crow Georgia," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 39, no. 1 (September 2013): 55.

Black women replicated slavery's gendered economic logic: "The black female subject was defined by the unbearable flexibility of nonbeing."[134] This "unbearable flexibility" persists in the contemporary landscape of housing deprivation. While in the colonial present, unsheltered Black women's labor is not being used to build roadways, as in turn of the century Georgia, unsheltered Black women themselves become economically productive as "surplus" life; as *resource* for speculative neoliberal economies and the populations that flourish with them. Indeed, the white (if multicultural, if queer) creativity of "New Oakland" depends on it. "The afterlife of slavery in the carceral present is animated by the specificities of ungendering," Haley writes, "that is, slavery's inauguration of the forced social reproduction of white life and capital by Black women cast out of normative gender; the carceral formation of gendered racial capitalism has been executed through the rendering of Black female bodies as flesh."[135] As King likewise argues, "Black fungibility—rather than labor—defines and organizes Black value within relations of conquest."[136] In the carceral-colonial present, housing deprivation emerges as a site—the state of being unsheltered both criminalized and economically productive—in which the gendered afterlife of slavery *takes place*.

As in my discussion of the settler temporality of diversity, this white creativity and self-making of "New Oakland" depends on an affectively extractive relationship to Blackness. Hartman discusses the significance of the obsession with "black enjoyment" and "orchestrated amusements as part of a larger effort to dissimulate the extreme violence of the institution and disavow the pain of captivity."[137] As such, she examines "scenes of terror that can hardly be discerned."[138] Hartman's

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[134] Sarah Haley, "'Like I Was a Man, "'55.

[135] Haley, "Flesh Work and the Reproduction of Black Culpability," 140.

[136] King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*, 23.

[137] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 23.

discussion of affect, inclusion, and political economy has much to bear on the colonial present. How might extractive relationships to Blackness (as sentimental resource, as enjoyment) mediate dispossession within the settler temporality of diversity?[139] (Of course, Black enjoyment exceeds this relationship. Recalling *Tongues United*, Hartman asks, "In this context, might not a rendezvous at an unauthorized dance…or sneaking off to visit your companion suddenly come to appear as insurgent?"[140]). The Moms, including Cross and King, refuse the affective extraction of Blackness in Oakland by centering their pain and their personhood in ways that render the very systems of value upon which their dehumanization depends obsolete.

Writing of the analysis of Hattie Johnson, a Black woman imprisoned in Georgia in 1912, Haley concludes that, "She asserted her identity as a woman but directed her moral outrage at the state rather than internalizing it through an assertion of innocence or a repudiation of her status as criminal."[141] A century later in Oakland, the Moms asserted their identities as women and mothers without appeals to propriety. When asked what it's like to be homeless as a woman and mother, Walker stated, "Being homeless is very violent…We know that on the streets of Oakland, 28% of the homeless population are children under 18. So it's effecting their brain development. And the same thing for my one year old, he didn't walk until we had a house. So I can only imagine the children sleeping in tents, babies, they're not able to develop because they don't have the freedom to move around."[142] Walker and the Moms contest the property right in normative womanhood and

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[138] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 4.

[139] Hartman, 21.

[140] Hartman, 63.

[141] Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*, 72.

[142] "Moms 4 Housing Occupy Vacant Home to Send Message About the Homeless Crisis."

indict the system that deprives them of the conditions—and space—necessary for generational nurture and caring labor in ways that literally thwarted their children's development.

I read the Moms' illegal occupation as an act of refusal that ruptures colonial relations of property in occupied Ohlone/Lisjan territories and prefigures futures in which Black women access the dignified housing of their dreams. Because they deserve it. As Fife writes:

> When half a dozen Black mothers approached me last year because they lacked safe and dignified housing for their families, I heard this same old story. But when we organized and called ourselves Moms for Housing, and reclaimed a home on stolen Ohlone land—that was a new story. That was self-determination. That was a rejection of the capitalist notion that the housing market should determine whether children have a place to sleep at night.[143]

This thwarting and disruption of housing speculation recalls Haley's discussion of the practice of sabotage—material and ideological—among criminalized Black women at the turn-of-the century, placing the occupation within a history of what Haley names radical Black feminist refusal. We might consider that Moms 4 Housing sabotaged new and old forms of finance capital, of gendered racial capitalism, of confinement, of displacement, of "enforced placelessness."[144] Like Carrie Williams, Hattie Bishop, and Gladis Trumbick, three Black girls in Albany, Georgia, who in 1918 allegedly stole flowers and lobbed the planter box through the window of a white home, Moms 4 Housing interrupts the spatial, affective, material, and property relations that constitute the settler city in the afterlife.[145] "Black girls' criminal practices of breaking windows and stealing flowers are part of the black radical tradition."[146] Such radical Black feminist sabotage, Haley argues, is "toward the creation of a Black girl commons that obliterated existing relations of household and property;

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[143] Carroll Fife, "The Great Migration Never Ended."

[144] McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 949.

[145] Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*, 195.

[146] Haley, 200.

that is to say the enclosures of white supremacy."[147] As Moms 4 Housing demonstrates: Black mothering requires theft.

Eviction

On January 13th, 2019, I gathered with hundreds of supporters to participate in round the clock eviction defense at Moms' House. Nearly two months into the occupation, the court had ruled against the Moms and rumor was that Alameda County Sheriff would be there to evict them any day. I was there with my 6-month old child and we headed home around dusk where we would be sheltered through the cold January night. The first thing the next morning, I learned that the Sheriff had carried out a violent, militarized eviction before dawn. Situated in a long legacy of violent state intrusion into Black home-spaces, the City of Oakland had deployed an armored vehicle and 30 officers, including half a dozen armed in tactical gear, who broke down the door, weapons drawn, with a battering ram.[148] As a threshold, Hartman writes, "the domestic was the ultimate scene of surveillance," noting the "perviousness of the family to the incursions to capital and the state."[149] Before daylight, Wedgewood had boarded up the windows with plywood and thrown the Moms' and their children's belongings into the street.

Indeed, the eviction revealed what the Moms already knew. As Ramírez writes, "It rattled the community that morning, and yet it seemed to only to confirm what Moms 4 Housing had been revealing all along through their direct action: that ultimately the state would protect private property

[147] Haley, 198.

[148] For a discussion of state violation of Black women through the intrusion into home spaces, see Richie, *Arrested Justice.*

[149] Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Race and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 160, 157.

over the lives of unhoused Black women and children seeking a safe and stable home."[150] As Fife asserted, "Our housing conditions are not cases of individual failures. They're predictable outcomes in an unregulated market-based system where theft+insatiable greed rule. Violent, rampant inequality requires militarized police forces to serve & protect the WEALTH(Y)."[151] Fife clarifies that such a system of shelter requires policing to maintain it. In doing so, she points to the ways that within the colonial present, policing and property are always enmeshed. As Manu Vimalassery attests, "Colonial possession is predicated on police powers."[152]

After the arrests of Misty Cross, Tolani King, and two supporters, Wedgewood released a statement stating that they were pleased the occupation "ended peacefully." They also assured the public that they planned to work with a Los Angeles-based nonprofit to renovate the home for "at-risk Oakland youths and split the profits with the nonprofit."[153] Despite Wedgewood and the city's best efforts, the Moms had, in the words of journalist Maximillian Alvarez, "marshaled a fierce moral vocabulary around how to define and measure justice, value, need, and even what it means to be a 'good mother.'"[154] As news of the violent eviction stormed airwaves and social media channels, the Moms forced Wedgewood to negotiate. In an unequivocal win for Moms 4 Housing, California

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[150] Ramírez, "Take the Houses Back/Take the Land Back: Black and Indigenous Urban Futures in Oakland.," 686.

[151] Carroll Fife (@Carroll_Fife). "Our housing conditions are not cases of individual failures." *Twitter*, December 10, 2020. https://twitter.com/carroll_fife/status/1337077252303908867.

[152] Vimalassery, "Fugitive Decolonization."

[153] Molly Solomon, "Moms Who Occupied Vacant House in West Oakland Fight Eviction in Court."

[154] Maximillian Alvarez, "Mothers Against Vampire Real Estate," January 22, 2020, accessed May 26, 2021, https://newrepublic.com/article/156278/mothers-vampire-real-estate?utm_content=buffered16c&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer.

governor Gavin Newsom and Oakland mayor Libby Schaaf, motivated as they may have been by bad publicity, helped facilitate the purchase of Moms House through the Oakland Community Land trust. In a January 2021 update, Moms 4 Housing stated that Moms' House is being renovated and transformed "into a refuge for moms and babies without homes. But this one house is just the beginning. We won't rest until everyone in our community has safe and dignified housing."[155] While it's been taken out of the speculative market, there are contradictions inherent in the ownership of property. With the support of the Land Trust, Moms 4 Housing had to purchase the house at near market value. The Moms had to buy back the house they deserved. These are the conditions of settler colonial racial capitalism. And yet, the Moms won. Because everyday inside is a win. As Haley continues: "Sabotage is not about success or triumph against systematic violence and dispossession. Instead it is about the practice of life, living, disruption, rupture, and imagined futures; it is about the development of epistemologies of justice and collectivity…The will to break and transform rather than to tweak."[156]

In an essay commissioned by Julian Brave NoiseCat (Canim Lake Band Tsq'escen and descendant of the Lil'Wat Nation of Mount Currie), an Indigenous journalist also born and raised in Oakland, Fife connects the commodification of housing to the legacy of slavery and settler colonialism: "Our entire nation is founded on the theft of bodies and land…That's why our current system of neoliberal capitalism can't be disentangled from racism and systems of inequity in this country…That's why Black people account for less than 25 percent of Oakland's population, but 70 percent of its homeless."[157] For Black people in Oakland, Fife writes, "The great migration never

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[155] Moms 4 Housing (@Moms4Housing). Update on Moms 4 Housing, *Instagram*, January 18, 2021, https://www.instagram.com/p/CKNulffBvXP/.

[156] Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*, 200.

[157] Carroll Fife, "The Great Migration Never Ended."

ended."[158] Black people in the Ohlone/Lisjan territory of Huichin are perpetually uprooted by the needs of racial capital. And yet, the actions of Moms 4 Housing—in stealing away property from an empty house owned by a speculative real estate corporation—speculate their own futures in ways that contest settler sovereignty on occupied Ohlone/Lisjan land.

The Landed Politics of Accountability: Geographies of Ohlone/Lisjan Futurity

No one was homeless on this land before 1492
—Tag in East Oakland

Corrina Gould, Chair of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan, often states that prior to colonization, everyone in her territories had shelter. "We see thousands of people without homes. And we see hunger. 250 years ago it was not even a concept – hunger or people without a home. I imagine that the land could still hold us and sustain us in a way that we would not see homelessness. We would not see hunger in the Bay Area."[159] Gould's comments speak to the ways Indigenous dispossession and settler property regimes intersect with slavery's afterlife in what is now known as Oakland, CA. Ongoing Ohlone/Lisjan dispossession is the ground of possibility for housing deprivation in Oakland. It is where slavery's afterlife takes hold. Crucially, though, Gould's statement that "the land could still hold us," speaks to the ways Indigenous sovereignty, relationality, and landed relationships can bring forth futures in which there is no such thing as homelessness—for anyone. Where resources needed to live are not hoarded or withheld, but abundant. Indeed, Gould often states that there has always been abundance in her ancestral territories. This understanding of Huichin as abundant, able to "hold us," highlights the impermanence of settler

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[158] Carroll Fife, "The Great Migration Never Ended."

[159] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

economies, governance, and regimes of property that rely on and produce grotesque inequality in the Bay Area— a "greed crisis," in the words of the Moms. Like Moms 4 Housing, Gould points to the ways scarcity in her territories is far from the natural order of things. The generative refusals of Moms 4 Housing and Sogorea Te' Land Trust, each in their own ways, offer a queer politics of accountability: rematriate the land, house the Moms.

Regimes of housing, shelter, and property have been central to the "domestication" of Native peoples and lands, producing many forms of homelessness, including overrepresentation in the unsheltered population in Huichin. The context of housing speculation has likewise displaced urban Native communities: between 2000 and 2010, the urban Native population in the Bay Area decreased by 19 percent.[160] NoiseCat, in his profile of unsheltered Indigenous community members in Oakland writes of one elder, "He is an urban Indian—a demographic that has no place in the public imagination. Native people are generally relegated to history books or remote reservations, not row houses and apartment complexes. They fight cowboys and pipelines, not landlords and rents."[161] NoiseCat speaks to the invisibility of Native people within settler urban imaginaries, but also the very material reality of housing deprivation for Indigenous people.

Contemporary Ohlone/Lisjan resurgence, including practices and imaginings of sovereignty and futurity, refuse the colonial politics of recognition while boldly inviting anti-colonial modes of accountability. The insistence on Indigenous presence in Huichin—past, present, and future — brings forth modes of relationally and accountability that enact alternate futures for all people living in Huichin. As Gould states, "for me everything that happens on this territory, whether we're

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[160] Julian Brave NoiseCat, "The Indigenous and the Displaced," in *Counterpoints: A San Francisco Bay Area Atlas of Displacement & Resistance*, ed. Anti-Eviction Mapping Project Editorial Collective (Oakland: PM Press, 2021), 79.

[161] NoiseCat, 79.

fighting for the Indigenous rights of Palestinians or my brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico or for Black Lives Matter or for the LGBTQ folks that are here with us. Whatever the issue is, we are related because you are on our territory. We share this land now."[162]

The Sogorea Te' Land Trust, through its practices of Indigenous futurity, enacts a sovereignty that refuses erasure while at the same time refusing the politics of recognition. There are numerous ways Ohlone/Lisjan and other Indigenous people in Huichin practice enact futurity and sovereignty. I am not aware of many of them. I do not intend to speak for Ohlone people, nor represent all Sogorea Te' Land Trust's work, but instead assemble my own observations about the transformative power of this work as a non-Native scholar trained in Indigenous studies and participant in a network of non-Native people responsive to and aligned with Ohlone/Lisjan leadership. As in my discussion of Moms 4 Housing, I intentionally draw from public-facing material that already exists in the public sphere in the form of a short film, interviews, articles, and recorded events, in addition to materials produced by Sogorea Te' Land Trust. The reasons for this are both practical and political. I recognize a long history of extractive and extortive relationships between researchers and their "subjects," particularly in Indigenous communities. And as with Moms 4 Housing's masterful media presence, there is already a large archive documenting Ohlone/Lisjan resurgence. As the Chair of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan, co-director of Sogorea Te' Land Trust, and decades-long organizer in her home territory of Huichin, there is a vast archive of Corrina Gould's talks and interviews. When such materials, which frame the issues for a public audience already exist, there is no reason for me to take time from Indigenous leaders working to protect ancestral remains under active threat of desecration, in addition to the myriad community labor they undertake daily.

[162] Gould, "Ohlone Geographies," 75.

"This is Ohlone Land": Iterative Sovereignty in Ohlone Territories

> When I look at the Bay Area, it's always home. And when I say home that means I was originally planted there, my ancestors have been there since the beginning of time.[163]
>
> — Corrina Gould

In Oakland, Indigenous presence ruptures white possession as/of diversity, the ultimate fiction of settler multiculturalism. All over the city, tags that announce "Ohlone Land" or "This is Ohlone Land" interrupt and punctuate the visual field of settler futurity.[164] A sign at the entrance to a playground in Mosswood Park in the center of North Oakland, where a large encampment of unsheltered people was forcibly evicted by the City and police in February 2020, is tagged "Ohlone Land."[165] An East Bay Park District plaque at a hiking trail in Redwood Regional Park is revised in sharpie: this region ~~was~~ home to Ohlone people: "It *is* home." Such assertions, made by both Ohlone and non-Ohlone people, are in recognition of and inherence to Ohlone sovereignty. It is in these iterative gestures, unregistered by state recognition, that practices of Ohlone/Lisjan futurity is found.

[163] *Beyond Recognition*, directed by Michelle Grace Steinberg (2014; Oakland, CA: Underexposed Films, 2014), DVD.

[164] Laura Harjo uses the term settler futurity to describe "how settler colonialism operates to ensure that its own time-space continuum continues into the future without breaking." Quoted in Laura Harjo, *Spiral to the Stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019), 26.

[165] Zack Haber, "Lack of Shelter After Mosswood Eviction Causes Tension in North Oakland, July 9, 2020, accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.postnewsgroup.com/lack-of-shelter-after-mosswood-eviction-causes-tension-in-north-oakland/.

Figure 9. "Ohlone Land on Vacant House" (2021)
Photograph by the author

Ohlone/Lisjan and other Indigenous people's continuous assertion that Oakland and the East Bay is Ohlone land is a spatial and temporal rejection of the occupying U.S. nation-state and the logics of property that serve to dispossess so many now residing in Ohlone territories. These assertions do not seek recognition or affirmation from the state, though sometimes it is strategically necessary to do so, but recognize and affirm the inherent relationship that Ohlone/Lisjan people have had to this land since time immemorial. In her discussion of Indigenous futurity, Laura Harjo posits a praxis of sovereignty that does not require permission or recognition from normative governance structures, whether settler or tribal. "This is a type of action and freedom realized in everyday and vernacular spaces against the grain of settler colonial elimination."[166] As she attests of her own community, the Mvskoke, "Community-grounded sovereignty is illustrated in these practices of appropriating space…in the interstices of everyday life."[167] Harjo argues that the nation-

[166] Laura Harjo, *Spiral to the Stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019), 39.

[167] Harjo, *Spiral to the Starts*, 49.

state puts Indigenous peoples in a perpetual state of waiting: waiting for recognition, waiting for grievances to be addressed, waiting for concessions to be made. Iterative, inherent sovereignty refuses to wait because it has always been.[168] It is adaptive as it anticipates and puts imagined futures into practice. Indigenous futurity, which could also be used to describe the prefigurative visions of Moms 4 Housing, sustains spaces to "dream, imagine, speculate, and activate the wishes of our ancestors, contemporary kin, and future relatives —all in a present temporality, which is Indigenous futurity."[169] This futurity challenges normative conceptions of time and "pushes us to create right now—in the present moment—that which our ancestors, we, and future relatives desire."[170] Harjo draws from Clyde Woods' use of scale to understand how spatial arrangements of colonialism persist, but also how a blues epistemology is "a means by which Black people sustain their worldview, history, and futurity."[171] Ohlone/Lisjan practices of futurity in Huichin and the insistence on Indigenous presence —past, present, and future— brings forth new futures and modes of relationality and accountability for everyone in Ohlone territories. As Gould states, "We need to actualize what we want to see, not just dream of it anymore."[172]

Such iterative gestures are necessarily spatial, Mishuana Goeman reminds us, as settler colonialism continues to depend on naturalizing settler spatial orders and geographic concepts as stable, permanent, unchanging, and unchallenged. "In relationship to settler colonialism, imposing colonial geographies must be understood *as yet another method to eliminate or eradicate or absorb that which*

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[168] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resurgence.*

[169] Harjo, *Spiral to the Stars*, 4.

[170] Harjo, *Spiral to the Stars*, 4.

[171] Harjo, 44.

[172] Carroll Fife and Corrina Gould, "We're Not Leaving Without a Fight," April 9th, 2020, University of California, Berkeley.

is Native (emphasis in original)."[173] The iterative quality of Ohlone/Lisjan sovereignty and futurity necessarily destabilizes settler arrangements of space by asserting Ohlone/Lisjan spatial knowledge that precedes and will indeed outlast them. In doing so, it combats the erasure and elimination of Ohlone people on which settler colonialism depends. In Huichin, one can put "West Berkley Shellmound" into Google Maps and be taken to the first place Ohlone ancestors were planted along the Bay by the Creator. "It was the first place that my ancestors put a fishing line into the bay. The very first place that babies cried along the bay. The very first place that there was a burial site created."[174] At this "location" on a smart phone, one will see a photograph of a large gathering, dancers in regalia, and banners that read "Protect Sacred Sites," and "Save West Berkeley Shellmound." Another image depicts protocol among Indigenous leaders gathered at the Shellmound: Corrina Gould, Pua Case (Kanaka Maoli), Wounded Knee DeOcampo (Tuolumne Miwok), and Chief Caleen Sisk (Winnemem Wintu). I read this digital gesture as an assertion of sovereignty; a (re)mapping that enacts, in the words of Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson, a "cartography of refusal."[175] "All of these things that the United States tries to do to squash us have not worked," Gould states. "It's failed. We still know who we are. We still know how to pray in our own way. We still know where our sacred sites are."[176]

The use of such ubiquitous settler spatial technologies (Google Maps) appropriates an available technology to instantiate a political order in a place where protocol among Indigenous nations has been practiced since the beginning of time. This is not incidental. As Simpson writes, the

[173] Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 30.

[174] Gould, "Ohlone Geographies," 75.

[175] Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 33.

[176] "Lisjan (Ohlone) History and Territory," accessed May 26, 2021, https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/lisjan-history-and-territory/.

state has a "death drive to eliminate, contain, hide and in other ways 'disappear' what fundamentally challenges its legitimacy: Indigenous political orders…[that] continue to point, in their persistence and vigor, the failure of the settler project to eliminate them, and yet are subjects of dispossession, of removal, but their polities serve as alternative forms of legitimacy and sovereignties to that of the settler state."[177] Such everyday practices of sovereignty, Harjo writes, generate "emergence geographies," Indigenous spatialities instantiated in concrete, ephemeral, metaphysical, and/or virtual ways. As she argues, virtual emergence geographies, including but not limited to the use of social media, are meaningful and substantive iterations of (re)mapping, relationality, and sovereignty that meet present conditions with available tools. When posting on Facebook or Instagram, for example, one can display their current location as "Occupied Huichin Ohlone Territory," or as is often done by the Sogorea Te' Land Trust, mark oneself on "Stolen Lands." These iterative virtual assertions, particularly when made by Indigenous people, are generative refusals that at once denaturalize settler colonialism and enact emergence geographies.

Iterative sovereignty is also necessarily temporal. The assertion that "This is Ohlone Land" disrupts settler temporality on multiple registers. Mark Rifkin suggests that the idea of a "shared present" is not neutral but indeed "defined by settler institutions, interests, and imperatives."[178] Dominant settler time, which always disavows the afterlife of slavery, as well as what he terms "temporal sovereignty" have profound implications for the coherence of the U.S. nation-state. "The temporal trick whereby Indians are edited out of the current moment—or cast as inherently anachronistic—emerges out of the refusal to accept the (geo)political implications of persistent

[177] Audra Simpson, "The State Is a Man; Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (n.d.).

[178] Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), viii.

Indigenous becoming, the ways that the presentness of Native peoples challenges settler claims to possession now and for the future."[179] Alongside Moms 4 Housing, practices of Ohlone/Lisjan futurity rupture settler time and possession and importantly recast our understanding of racialized dispossession in the settler city.

"Beyond Recognition": Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition in Huichin

> Now genocide is not just about outright killing people. It is about erasing them in your history books…We're not a federally recognized tribe. That means the government does not see us as Native people. I'm a figment of your imagination and I do not exist.[180]
>
> I always knew who I was because my mother always told us who we were. So growing up I've already known that I was Ohlone. That I was an Indian woman on my own land. No matter what the federal government said.[181]
>
> — Corrina Gould, Chair of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan

In the 2014 short film, "Beyond Recognition," Gould and collaborators resolutely reject the goal of federal recognition and set forth a vision for creating an Indigenous women-led land trust in the East Bay. "I really acknowledge people that are doing the recognition process and the hard work that that must entail. But that is not my dream. My life's work is to do the work of the ancestors, to recreate a place for them to come back to. To ensure that the culture and the practices continue on for the next seven generations."[182] Set to the visual landscape of Huichin in the urban East Bay, Ohlone leaders and allied scholars and supporters explain why the federal recognition process not

[179] Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time*, 5.

[180] Gould, "Ohlone Geographies," 74.

[181] *Beyond Recognition*, directed by Michelle Grace Steinberg (2014; Oakland, CA: Underexposed Films, 2014), DVD.

[182] *Beyond Recognition*.

only falls short of this vision but also works to constrain the sovereignty of Native peoples. "It's a process that's about us. It's not by us, for us, or with us," says Gregg Castro (t'rowt'raahl Salinan/rumsien & ramaytush Ohlone). "It has made it virtually impossible for Mission California Indians to be recognized."[183] As of 2014, there were 374 tribes awaiting rulings from the Office of Federal Acknowledgement, 81 of which were located in California.[184] As the film explains, "Applying for federal recognition is a protracted bureaucratic process that can last over 30 years. The onus is on tribes to establish their historical continuity, cultural unity, and authenticity. They must provide extensive documentation, much of which has been destroyed through colonization."[185]

Lenape scholar Joanne Barker likewise situates the federal recognition process within legal structures that "serve the national interests of the United States in maintaining colonial and imperial relations with Native peoples."[186] Federal recognition, more than a costly, onerous task, is structured by settler epistemologies of space, place, and nationhood. As Barker argues, the juridically-mediated "Indian tribe" is made to occupy a pre-colonial, pre-history of cultural authenticity that allows the settler state "not only to locate its colonialism and imperialism in the past but to make it a kind of ideological precursor to being recognized in the present."[187] Indigenous peoples have long apprehended within a schema of cultural difference and purity. Within this "theater of apprehension," Audra Simpson writes, recognition is predicated on "hunting with the precise

[183] *Beyond Recognition*.

[184] *Beyond Recognition*.

[185] *Beyond Recognition*.

[186] Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 6.

[187] Barker, 35.

instruments your great grandfather did 150 years ago, in the exact same spot as he did, when witnessed and textualized by a white person.[188]

This spatial and temporal construction of recognition effectively eliminates Indigenous peoples whose territories span occupying settler cities. The construction of the reservation as legibly Native, authentic, and traditional depends on the erasure of Native people and places in urban spaces. The federal recognition process, Goeman argues, is a prime example of what she terms a settler grammar of place. "The spatial policies and disciplined ordering of the Native subject by the nation-state through governmental techniques of containment, reservations, urban erasure, federal Indian Law, and a multitude of other policies that seek to 'eliminate' the Native all function to make the acquisition of space achievable."[189] As Gould says of her home territories, there is a "romantic idea of Indigeneity a long time ago, and of a primitive people, but never talked about in a present form. And so again, paper genocide. We're thought about as we're extinct. Even in Huichin, which covers six Bay Area cities, many people don't know that Ohlone people exist. It's really been the last 25 years of us pushing the envelope, standing up for sacred sites."[190]

Gould speaks precisely to the violence of colonial (mis)recognition in her discussion of shellmounds, large funerary sites sacred to Ohlone people, all of which have been desecrated by settler development. But that nevertheless remain. West Berkeley Shellmound, located along a freeway overpass at the top of an upscale shopping district known as Fourth Street, was the first of the 425 Shellmounds to ring the bay: "I know people's eyes might see a parking lot. But for us this is part of our cosmology. It is the place where our ancestors first lived along the bay...We know from

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[188] Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 20.

[189] Goeman, "Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place: The Visual Memoir of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie," 240.

[190] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

experience that these shellmounds – even though they're covered by railroad tracks and bars and apartment buildings and schools and parking lots - that underneath them still remains our sacred places and still remain many of our ancestors buried. And so it's our responsibility to go to those places and to pray at them. And to acknowledge that our ancestors are there just like we have done for thousands and thousands of years."[191] For settlers, the state, and real estate speculators, it is precisely this brutal history and present tense of Mission colonization and genocide that make this place—or any of the urban East Bay—*unrecognizable as Indigenous*. "For non-federally recognized tribes," Gould states, "and really I think people should know that missionized Indians in California from the bottom from San Diego all the way up to Sonoma are not federally recognized along the coast of California. And so that means multiple tribes are landless Indians. You're landless in your own territory."[192]

Of crucial importance are the ways Native scholars, activists, and artists practice and imagine forms of affiliation, belonging, and governance that are antagonistic to state regimes of recognition. As Simpson writes of an albeit very different context, there are "alternative citizenships to the state that are structured in the present space of intracommunity recognition, affection, and care, outside of the logics of colonial and imperial rule."[193] As Gould powerfully attests, without or without recognition, these are "our sacred places," and Ohlone people and their guests will continue to gather and pray there as they have done for thousands of years. In the rejection of the pursuit of federal recognition, Ohlone/Lisjan people have begun to restore land to Indigenous stewardship in a process of "rematriation" through the Sogorea Te' Land Trust. The land trust gets its name from

[191] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

[192] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

[193] Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 109.

the 2011 spiritual encampment at Sogorea Te', a sacred site on Karkin Ohlone land in what is now Vallejo, CA. After a decade long fight to protect this land from desecration from redevelopment by the parks and recreation department, Indigenous leaders including Corrina Gould, Wounded Knee DeOcampo, and Johnella LaRose (Shoshone Bannock/Carrizo) initiated a spiritual encampment for 109 days. "The village of Sogorea Te' was, in a sense, reawakened…Every person had a valuable role to play. The space that was created was deeply healing and the ancestors' voices were listened to. 'We went to save the land at Sogorea Te', but really, the land saved us,' camp organizer Johnella LaRose reflected. 'We didn't truly understand we needed the land so much until then.'"[194] In 2012, after the occupation ended, promises made between the federally recognized Patwin/Wintu and the City of Vallejo were violated as the recreation district proceeded to build a parking lot and grade a section of the land that likely contained ancestral remains. Transformed by their experience at the Sogorea Te' village site, Gould and LaRose began had a bold vision to restore land to Indigenous stewardship in the East Bay, beyond recognition.

Himmetka: Urban Indigenous Futurity

> Futurity is a space, place, and temporality produced socially by people including relatives located in the past, present, and future. It invokes many other temporalities, other spaces, and yet-to-be-imagined possibilities: it is a practice of conceiving imaginaries.
>
> — Laura Harjo[195]

In Deep East Oakland, there is a quarter acre of sovereign Ohlone/Lisjan land. "Even if it's a postage stamp, it doesn't matter," Gould states. "We are getting the land back."[196] Under the

[194] "Our History," Sogorea Te' Land Trust, accessed May 26, 2021, https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/history/.

[195] Harjo, *Spiral to the Starts*, 30.

[196] Julian Brave NoiseCat, "'This land was stolen': Behind the fight to recover sacred Indigenous lands in the Bay Area," May 25th, 2021, accessed May 28th, 2021, https://grist.org/fix/sogorea-te-

leadership of the Ohlone/Lisjan people, Lisjan is stewarded by an intertribal, multi-gendered collective of Indigenous people. For Ohlone/Lisjan people, the land trust has become a tool that subverts the colonial history of land preservation; one rooted in paternalism and settler imaginaries of wilderness that separates Indigenous people from their land. "It is a tool, a mechanism for us," Gould states, "to get land back in our traditional territory…Especially for those of us that are non-federally recognized that want to have access to land for ceremony, for reburial, for a way for us to grow our traditional foods again, for us to have places to just be. That's different than a park, you know, it's really talking about what does it look like to be on sovereign Indigenous land in the middle of a city."[197] It is through the strategic use of this tool that Ohlone/Lisjan people enact modes of sovereignty "beyond recognition": Sogorea Te' is Ohlone/Lisjan-led while intertribal, women-led while multi-gendered, and practices relationality grounded in a politics of accountability rather than inclusion.

Sogorea Te', founded by Gould and LaRose, is explicitly trans-Indigenous and intertribal.[198] While there has always been interconnection among Indigenous peoples, within the purview of state recognition Indigenous cultures are regarded as "separately closed systems of neatly defined cultural territories."[199] In the context of recognition, Goeman writes, "Government pressure to define ourselves by state definitions of purity…leads not only to externally imposed colonial logics but also

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land-trust-ohlone-shellmounds-world-we-need-book/?fbclid=IwAR0cy1-_69p8UbiGcmbQu2Zj0uGGN2uR-0Utx5JeuKzdW-isUB_3nM6NLRM.

[197] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

[198] Chadwick Allen, *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

[199] Mishuana Goeman, "Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place: The Visual Memoir of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 235.

an internal closing of physical and cultural borders as nationals and people make themselves readable to the state."[200] Sogorea Te' disrupts this "settler colonial grammar of place" in its practice of relationality among Indigenous people in Ohlone territories.[201] While unequivocally situated on Ohlone/Lisjan land under leadership of Ohlone/Lisjan women, Sogorea Te' rejects any notion of fixity or purity, refusing spatial and relational boundaries in the service of state legibility. In the recognition that "The Bay Area is home to a diverse diaspora of Indigenous people who, over the years, either moved by choice to the Bay Area or were pushed off their traditional lands," members of Sogorea Te' include Indigenous people from all over Turtle Island and Oceania.[202] "It's important also for us to talk about that this is an intertribal women-led land trust. And the reason is because of the policies of the United States government of forced relocation into cities that we decided that we're working with women that have been here for three and four generations now…Grandchildren that have never been back home to their own territories and what does it mean for us, as the Indigenous people of this land, to take care of the guests in our territory."[203] In this way, Ohlone/Lisjan people enact an inherent sovereignty, instantiating a political order in which it is their responsibility to take care of guests on their territories, even when the result of federal Indian policy. Among Native Nations in California, Gould specifically highlights the importance of creating a ceremonial arbor, the first arbor in Ohlone territories in two hundred years: "A place where we have ceremony, a place where California Native people dance together, where we are able to welcome people onto our lands. This place was created here on our territory so that it would be a center of

[200] Goeman, 235-236.

[201] Goeman, 235-236.

[202] "Purpose and Vision," Sogorea Te' Land Trust, accessed May 26, 2021, https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/purpose-and-vision/.

[203] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

bringing people to that fire again."[204] Through practices of trans-Indigenous relationality, Ohlone/Lisjan people refuse being frozen in time, but practice an emergent, adaptive sovereignty: Indigenous futurity.

Heteropatriarchy, as a colonial project, has also been a mechanism through which Indigenous peoples are spatialized into settler terrains by "putting Indian bodies and polities in place."[205] Sogorea Te' Land Trust's work of "rematriation" offers a way, in the words of Sogorea Te' member and Tongan scholar Fuifuilupe Niumeitolu, "To remember ourselves outside of heteropatriarchal narratives that have been told of us."[206] Scholars of Indigenous queer and feminist studies point to myriad ways heteropatriarchy has dispossessed Native peoples. Mark Rifkin, for example, situates federal Indian policy as a tool that disciplines and interferes with Indigenous family organization and kinship, decision-making, resource distribution, residency, land tenure, eroticism, and divisions of labor in the name of nuclear heterosexuality and the privatized single-family household.[207] As I discussed in the previous chapter, in California the Mission system was a site of gendered colonial terror that disciplined Indigenous genders and sexualities, and thus polities. As Nishnaabeg scholar and artist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson explains: "2SQ bodies the knowledge and practices those bodies house as Indigenous political orders were seen as an extreme threat to settler society…The powerful relationships queer bodies house—consent, diversity, variance, spiritual power, community, respect, reciprocity, love, attachment—were the very first thing

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[204] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

[205] Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 144.

[206] Fuifuilupe Niumeitolu, "Rematriation and Indigenous Feminisms: Creative Visions From Oceania to Hitching," Sogorea Te' Land Trust Speaker Series, March 8, 2021. Video of Lecture, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=522545495397022&ref=watch_permalink.

[207] Mark Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

colonizers sought to eliminate, and they began celebrating what they thought was the genocide of 2SQ people in my nation long before colonization reached nations on the West Coast or in the north."[208] Therefore, the call for rematriation, "to restore a people to their rightful place in sacred relationship with their ancestral land," in the words of Sogorea Te' Land Trust, is far from an essentialized view of (cisgender) women as inherently connected to the land.[209] In March 2021, as part of Sogorea Te's speaker series, Niumeitolu hosted a panel, "Rematriation and Indigenous Feminisms: Creative Visions From Oceania to Huichin." I quote Niumeitolu at length, as she points to the "pivotal and significant role that Indigenous women play in rematriation":

> Rematriation is to consider the histories of settler colonial violence, especially its preoccupation with the violence against Indigenous women's bodies and the bodies of Indigenous girls. That this violence, this unrelenting settler colonial violence in the past and that has continued…is directly correlated with the expropriation and violence on our Mother Earth, or as we all know as Indigenous people is the sacred… Rematriation is not just Indigenous women's work…it's a feminist work. It's an Indigenous, Native feminist work. And why that is important is because what it does is it proposes and it shows us new alternatives to settler colonial violence. This is not only for Indigenous women and inclusive of our Indigenous brothers, but also what is beautiful about this definition is it includes our Indigenous gender nonbinary relatives.[210]

In its practice of rematriation, the land trust is importantly women-led, and also necessarily multi-gendered, affirming of Two Spirit, trans, and gender nonconforming members, in addition to (cisgender) Indigenous boys and men. As Gould states, "Rematriation is really about maintaining and passing on to every new generation the languages, ceremonies, customs, and laws of our people and maintaining the sacred ties to our ancestral lands in keeping with the original instructions given to us by the creator."[211] This practice of futurity, Goeman writes in the context of Native literature,

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[208] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resurgence*, 126.

[209] Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Purpose and Vision."

[210] Fuifuilupe Niumeitolu, "Rematriation and Indigenous Feminisms."

[211] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

"Puts forth sets of social relations that leads in directions beyond a settler heteropatriarchal mapping of space."[212] Sogorea Te' Land Trust is likewise imagining ways of practicing relationships to territory, land, and sovereignty that invite and envision futures for all beyond settler colonialism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy. "It is not a remythologizing of space that is occurring…but a (re)mapping that addresses the violent atrocities while defining Native futures."[213] Speakers, including members of Sogorea Te', self-identified as queer, lesbian, and/or Two Spirit leaders and emphasized that for them, rematriation entails restoring not just the land, but *relationships* to the land, emphasizing the centrality of relationality and reciprocity, and "recognizing the ways white supremacy and heteropatriarchy go hand in hand." As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson attests, "The opposite of dispossession is not possession, it is deep, reciprocal, consensual *attachment*…We relate to land through connection—generative, affirmative, complex, overlapping, and nonlinear *relationship*."[214]

It is in these practices of relationality and reciprocity, that Sogorea Te' joins Moms 4 Housing to assert a politics of accountability that practices and imagines futures for all people living in Huichin. As such, Ohlone/Lisjan sovereignty refuses the settler temporality that dispossesses Black and Indigenous people in Oakland through regimes of diversity and multiculturalism. But while Black communities contend with what I describe as simultaneous celebration and criminalization, Ohlone people confront near-complete erasure in their traditional territories, illuminating the disparate, yet relational processes of racialization for Black and Indigenous people in the space of the settler city. For this reason, Gould states, "Having people realize that Ohlone

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[212] Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 15.

[213] Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 13.

[214] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resurgence*, 43.

people still exist has created a different way of looking at recognition."[215] Inspired by the Honor Tax that Wiyot people started in Humboldt County in California, and in collaboration with non-Native allies, Ohlone/Lisjan people launched the Shuumi Land Tax in 2016.[216] The land tax, a voluntary tax paid by non-Native people living in Lisjan/Ohlone territories, financially supports the work of Sogorea Te' while inviting non-Native people into a relationship of accountability with Ohlone/Lisjan people. "We're responsible for everyone who lives in our territory. How do we do that? In a traditional way everyone who lived in the territory would give something so that we're all taken care of…How do we do that as good hosts if we don't have good guests also participating in the reciprocal relationship? And so I think that's what Shuumi does: it helps us to have a reciprocal relationship on this territory."[217]

On the Sogorea Te' Land Trust's website, visitors calculate their own Shuumi based on the amount of rent they pay or size of residential or commercial real estate they own. As Sogorea Te' explains:

> This land has a deep history and a community of people who have lived here for thousands of years. Living here, you are inadvertently benefitting from the genocide waged against the Ohlone people and the theft of their land. Whether you know it or not, however you feel about it, this is an inescapable fact. The civic infrastructure, the economic system, the private development and the consumption of natural resources in our society are all connected to and in different ways built upon the colonial occupation of this land and the violent displacement of the Ohlone. Paying the Shuumi Land Tax is a small way to acknowledge this history and contribute to its healing, to support the Ohlone community's current work to create a vibrant future.[218]

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[215] *Beyond Recognition*, directed by Michelle Grace Steinberg (2014; Oakland, CA: Underexposed Films, 2014), DVD.

[216] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

[217] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

[218] Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Shuumi Land Tax," accessed May 26, 2021, https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/shuumi-land-tax/.

Shuumi, which means gift in the Chochenyo language, is not a donation. Rather, it is an invitation —that through this *recognition* of the structural relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples —refuses the colonial politics of recognition to invite anti-colonial accountability. They are clear, however, that, "No amount of money will undo the damage that's been done, will bring back the lost lives or erase the suffering of the people. But this is a step in a long-term process of healing, a small way you can, right now, participate in a movement to support the self determination and sovereignty of the local Indigenous community."[219] In this invocation of the "right now," Sogorea Te' Land Trust refuses to wait, but reckons with the past to invite "vibrant futures," reimagining the "now" of Indigenous futurity. "Shuumi invites you to do the work our ancestors and future generations are calling us all to do; think about what you can offer, find out what is useful, and make it happen…"[220]

Crucially, Sogorea Te' clarifies that the Shuumi Land Tax is not a donation, but in recognition of Ohlone sovereignty:

> The Shuumi Land Tax is not a donation.* It is a financial contribution that recognizes and respects the sovereignty of Native Nations and acknowledges the historic relationship the Ohlone have with their traditional territories. It is a voluntary annual contribution paid to the Sogorea Te' Land Trust by non-Native people who live on unceded Lisjan Ohlone land.

As Sogorea Te' describes, Shuumi invites non-Native people into a relationship of accountability that recognizes the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. In doing so, this reiterative sovereignty displaces the sovereignty of the occupying settler state. I read the presence of the asterisk, which states, "However, it is tax-deductible, see below," as an example of what Audra Simpson terms "nested sovereignty."[221] This nested sovereignty calls the coherence of the U.S. nation-state into

[219] Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Shuumi Land Tax."

[220] Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Shuumi Land Tax."

[221] Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 11.

question by recognizing a political order than preexists it. Crucially, however, "multiple sovereignties cannot proliferate robustly or equally…In situations in which sovereignties are nested and imbedded, one proliferates at the other's expense; the United States and Canada can only come into political being because of Indigenous dispossession."[222] This is the precise reason that inclusion into settler multiculturalism only serves to shore up settler sovereignty. Moreton-Robinson demonstrates the ways this nested sovereignty operates in the settler city: "These cities signify with every building and every street that this land is now possessed by others; signs of white possession are embedded everywhere in the landscape. The omnipresence of Indigenous sovereignties exists here too, but it is disavowed through the materiality of these significations, which are perceived as evidence of ownership by those who have taken possession."[223] In Oakland, sovereignty is contested, yet settler sovereignty can only exist through the continued disavowal of Ohlone sovereignty. Why, returning to the words of Gould, we must "take the whole goddamn thing [the U.S. government] down."[224] As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson reminds us, "nation-based grounded normativities," including practices that I have been calling iterative sovereignty, "destroy the structures of colonialism because they perpetually shift *power* back."[225]

One of the most significant ways settlers and non-Native people divest from settler sovereignty is by rematriating land, as Ohlone peoples' "traditional territory is now one of the most

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[222] Simpson, 12.

[223] Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive*, xiii.

[224] Corrina Gould, "Reparations: Solidarity With Ohlone People," in *Counterpoints: A San Francisco Bay Area Atlas of Displacement & Resistance*, ed. Anti-Eviction Mapping Project Editorial Collective (Oakland: PM Press, 2021), 103.

[225] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resurgence*, 46.

inflated real estate markets on Turtle Island."[226] Lisjan, where the arbor now stands, was rematriated by an organization called Planting Justice, a food justice, farm, and prison re-entry program in the Sobrante Park neighborhood of Deep East Oakland. The founders of the organization were transformed by their experience of traveling to Dakota territories and participating in the Oceti Sakowin Camp just north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2016. As Gavin Raders reflects, "We were so deeply impacted by everything that was happening there, the spirit of resistance and the recognition that the struggle is everywhere. It's here and everywhere. That all land is sacred, that all land in the United States is stolen. That the land in the Bay Area where we work and live, is all unceded land. And so what is our responsibility as people who have an organization that has the title to land?"[227] LaRose reflects on how she and Diane Williams, Indigenous elders who have been organizing in the Bay Area for decades, had been drawn to Planting Justice's integration of prison-reentry and land-based work: "Diane and I visited Native women incarcerated at Dublin Federal Correctional Institute for many years. We were able to participate in talking circles, sweat lodge ceremonies as well as providing resources for the women when they were released from prison. I think the most important thing we did at Dublin was build relationships with our Native sisters and let them know they were not forgotten. We understand the deep connection between incarceration and the taking of our land."[228] Formal negotiations began in 2016 and, as Raders reflects: "I think we went into that meeting just curious and open to what was going to be suggested

[226] Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Shuumi Land Tax."

[227] Johnella LaRose and Gavin Raders, "Sogorea Te' and Planting Justice: A Conversation on Land Rematriation," in *Counterpoints: A San Francisco Bay Area Atlas of Displacement & Resistance*, ed. Anti-Eviction Mapping Project Editorial Collective (Oakland: PM Press, 2021), 107.

[228] LaRose and Raders, 106.

and willing to find some way to give the land back."[229] This collaboration was beautifully realized another way. Gould, who lives in Deep East Oakland, notes that the land sits along what the Ohlone/Lisjan people know as Lisjan Creek: "The way these ancestors are amaze me, because this piece of land sits along the Lisjan Creek, where our tribe is named for and it's a half-mile walk from my own home."[230]

When Sogorea Te' began its emergency preparedness work in Deep East Oakland, in the disinvested low-income Black, Latinx, and Indigenous neighborhood of Sobrante Park, they had no knowledge of the coming catastrophe of COVID-19. In the Bay Area, as elsewhere, the impacts have been deeply racialized and in 2020 were coupled with months of hazardous air from the climate chaos of wildfires. Sogorea Te' Land Trust, under the leadership of co-founder LaRose, has been building community resiliency centers called "Himmetka," which in the Chochenyo language means "in one place, together." Recognizing the increasing effects of climate chaos, Sogorea Te' is preparing for "natural and human-made emergencies and mitigate the impacts of climate change."[231] More specifically, recognizing the abandonment of racialized communities, whether in the context of pandemics or natural disasters, La Rose states, "They're not coming for us. We want to be the place that people can go."[232] As she attests:

> In Deep East Oakland many people are left to fend for themselves…these systems are beginning to crumble and we must be ready. Last week we had a group of high school students volunteer at Planting Justice. We talked about the Sobrante Park neighborhood being hemmed in by the freeway and the railroad tracks in this conversation. We also talked

[229] LaRose and Raders, 107.

[230] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

[231] Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Himmetka: In One Place, Together," accessed May 26, 2021, https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/himmetka/.

[232] Ramírez, "Take the Houses Back/Take the Land Back: Black and Indigenous Urban Futures in Oakland," 688.

> about how there were no grocery stores nearby to buy vegetables or fruit—this is a problem. I think we landed in the right place. Making sure that we provide something, that we're not stranded in the event of a disaster like what happened after Hurricane Katrina.[233]

The crew at Sogorea Te' has built an outdoor kitchen with propane stoves, installed water catchment, filtration, and storage, built a tool and seed saving library, planted food and medicine gardens, and is planning first aid classes in English and Spanish.[234] "Making sure that we provide something, that we're not stuck out there like in Katrina. It's going to get wild and wooly out there."[235] In the wake of COVID-19 specifically, Sogorea Te' has been distributing fresh food to local Indigenous, Black, and immigrant low-income families. Through Himmetka, Ohlone/Lisjan people are asserting sovereignty illegible to the settler state by collaborating with Black farmers and land-based project to care for those—specifically low-to-no income Black and im/migrant communities—that the state perpetually abandons. As Ramirez writes, these "visions are attentive to the layered geographies of these places. LaRose notes that in times of crisis, the disaster relief crews aren't coming for the poor Black, Latinx, and Indigenous residents of Deep East Oakland, and so Sogorea Te' envisions a site where neighborhood residents can build something in relation with one another."[236]

In his study of how tribal, Black, and Jewish organizations, including Sogorea Te' Land Trust, are responding to the pandemic, Abel Gomez writes, "As frightening as it has been to live through the COVID-19 outbreak, some communities have already experienced the end of their

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[233] LaRose and Raders, "Sogorea Te' and Planting Justice: A Conversation on Land Rematriation," 110.

[234] Ramírez, 688; Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Himmetka: In One Place, Together."

[235] Ramírez, 688.

[236] Ramírez, 688.

world and survived."[237] Sogorea Te's emergency preparedness and disaster response practices are a form of Indigenous sovereignty that is attentive to and contests the ways white supremacy, settler colonialism, and racial capitalism dispossess Indigenous, Black, and other racialized people in Ohlone territories. Following the work of Katherine McKittrick and other scholars within the Black radical tradition, Leanne Simpson poses a number of important questions within the context of her own Nation: "How am I accountable to the struggle of Black peoples?…How do I ensure my nationhood and relationship to land…do not replicate systems that restrict Black spatialities or replicate geographies of domination?"[238] The work of Sogorea Te' Land Trust is an emergent, iterative response to these questions, located within the specific racial geographies that now exist in Ohlone territories. The vision of Sogorea Te' Land Trust, Gould states, is "To not just remember for Indigenous people the connection to our land, but for all people that are now living on our territory…What does it mean for us to have a reciprocity with the land again? How do we be good guests and good hosts while we're taking care of this land and what does that mean *together,* to dream of being on this territory?"[239]

Conclusion

In the space of the settler city, Indigenous sovereignty contests racialized displacement by interrupting the settler temporality that is its condition of possibility. Corrina Gould consistently reminds people of the recentness, the newness, of colonization and the ongoing settler occupation in her territories: "This new country—it's a very young country—has done horrific things and they

[237] Abel R. Gomez, "Postapocalyptic Communities: Tribal and Religious Organizations Respond to COVID-19," March 9, 2021, accessed May 26, 2021, https://therevealer.org/postapocalyptic-communities-tribal-and-religious-organizations-respond-to-covid-19/.

[238] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resurgence*, 230.

[239] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

owe both Indigenous people and African American people a huge debt. And so unless we begin to have conversations about it, unless we're very honest about it, we're not going to move forward."[240] On the west coast of the so-called U.S., the horrific yet incomplete devastation of colonialism is quite new, within the span of a couple hundred years. Continually juxtaposing Ohlone relationships to the land, which have existed since the beginning of time, to that of this "very young country" reminds us of the impermanence of the settler state. That this land "could hold us again."[241] In emphasizing the harms settler colonialism and this new country has caused Indigenous people and descendants of enslaved Africans, Gould states: "We're at this pivotal point in history where we need to begin to really speak the truth about what happened on these lands. And to further examine how it is this country that was built on the stolen lands of people and the stolen bodies of others."[242] In Gould's view, "moving forward" beyond the settler state requires reckoning with the Black and Indigenous dispossession that is its condition of possibility. And though settler colonialism is new, it is nevertheless a theft that is ongoing, and as we have seen, this ongoingness of colonialism is entangled with the thefts of slavery's afterlife in Huichin. Gould's assertion, together with Moms 4 Housing's attunement to the afterlife of slavery in relations of property, markets, and housing is incredibly generative. Taken together, in reckoning with the "huge debt" owed to Black and Indigenous people, these movements provide this "way forward" in the distinct yet relational declarations that "This is Ohlone Land" and "I deserve this home."

Manu Karuka asks: "What work can we do to articulate the disassembly of settler colonialism alongside the dismantling of racial capitalism, to make distinct living traditions of self-determination against invasion, occupation, and social death accountable to each other? Can we

[240] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

[241] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

[242] "For the Wild: An Anthology of the Anthropocene."

imagine Indigenous and Black futures (not the same, but distinct) together?" In this chapter, and as the culmination of this project, I have suggested that the generative refusals of Moms 4 Housing and Sogorea Te' Land Trust, each in their own distinct ways, offer a queer politics of accountability: rematriate the land, house the Moms. Each attune us to the ways ongoing histories of dispossession rooted in property logics of U.S. settler colonialism and chattel slavery produce conditions of gross inequalities in the Bay Area, to the ways speculation produces "empty" homes and privately enclosed land as they speculate, practice, and invite futures within and beyond these spaces.

Figure 10. "Two Spirits for Black Lives" (2021)
Photograph by the author

Figure 11. "Black Life Matters / Native Land Forever" (2021)
Photograph by the author

In the wake of the 2020 uprisings against antiblack terror and state (sanctioned) violence, expressions of Black and Indigenous solidarity adorn the city of Oakland. A 2020 mural by Two Spirit artist and Sogorea Te' Land Trust leader, Victoria (Vick) Montaño (Yaqui/Mexikah), reads "Two Spirits For Black Lives," in large bold lettering with the same words in Spanish, "Dos Espiritus Por Las Vidas Negras," in smaller lettering below. At the bottom reads "Stolen Land" and "Stolen Lives." Another 2020 mural outside of a Chicano-owned coffee shop in East Oakland proclaims "BLACK LIFE MATTERS / NATIVE LAND FOREVER." I notice the way the words "LIFE" and "LAND" are positioned next to one another, the stylistic flourish like an equal sign or infinity loop. Land = Life. Each declaration is contained, stands alone. And yet they are suspended in mutual recognition, a joint invocation of Black and Indigenous futurity that is deeply relational.

CONCLUSION #FreeThemAll #AllColonizersMustFall: Pandemic, Uprising, and Anti-Colonial Struggle in California's Carceral-Colonial Present

> We understand the deep connection between incarceration and the taking of our land.
>
> —Johnella LaRose, Shoshone Bannock/Carrizo elder & co-founder of Sogorea Te' Land Trust[1]

> The carceral, presented as a natural fact of modern political and social life, has required and continues to depend upon the reproductive labor of antiblackness.
>
> —Sarah Haley, "Flesh Work and the Reproduction of Black Culpability"[2]

San Quentin State Prison is perched at the edge of the San Francisco Bay, north of San Francisco just outside the city of San Rafael. It is significant for several reasons. The state's first prison, it was founded on Coast Miwok territory in 1852, just two years after California's statehood was achieved amid brutal, federally endorsed campaigns of Indigenous genocide in the new state.[3] Long a site of prisoner-led uprising and rebellion, it is also where, in 1971, prison guards murdered George Jackson, an imprisoned intellectual, revolutionary, Black Panther Party member, and founder of Black Guerilla Family amid systematic attacks on Black freedom struggles.[4]

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[1] LaRose and Raders, "Sogorea Te' and Planting Justice: A Conversation on Land Rematriation," 106.

[2] Haley, "Flesh Work and the Reproduction of Black Culpability," 134.

[3] Angela Y Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 12; Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

[4] Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 73; "Black Radical Prisoner Organizing Didn't Die With George Jackson: An Interview with Brittany Friedman", *Jacobin Magazine*, August 21, 2020.

Drastically over state-designated capacity, at its height in 2020, over 4,000 people were imprisoned in San Quentin.[5] When COVID-19 swept the globe, those imprisoned in sites of "death by institutional design," in the words of Brittany Friedman, were forcibly exposed to the virus amid already-deathly conditions.[6] In July 2020, prisoners, along with organizers and family members on the outside, mobilized across prison walls to #FreeThemAll and confront such deathly conditions in San Quentin, where 2,200 people had tested positive for COVID-19.[7] Twenty-one people died in San Quentin that month alone.[8] Organizers wrote:

> A majority of the people who have died from COVID-19 in San Quentin State Prison were on Death Row. Although Governor Newsom issued a moratorium on executions in 2019, he has allowed for the preventable deaths of people previously sentenced to death by refusing to adequately respond to the COVID-19 outbreak and decarcerate the prison population. In just two weeks, more people have died by forced crowding and cruel negligence during the COVID-19 outbreak than were executed by the death penalty in California in the last 18 years.[9]

…

Three months later, on Indigenous Peoples' Day in October of 2020, a group of five Indigenous women and Two Spirit people known as the Indigenous Peoples' Day 5 (IP5) were arrested in relationship to the toppling of a statue of Junípero Serra outside Mission San Rafael

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[5] "Statistical Report (SB601) for 2020: San Quentin State Prison," accessed May 19, 2021, https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/reports-and-statistics-sq/.

[6] Brittany Friedman, "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Prison Order in the Wake of COVID-19 and Its Afterlives: When Disaster Collides with Institutional Death by Design," *Sociological Perspectives* 00, no. 0 (2021): 1–17.

[7] "[Toolkit] #StopSanQuentinOutbreak Day of Action," accessed May 17, 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Vlmt_cp_fwJAM9pTQ3pJLvuwHBLTtbbDiV40_Lu9YIM/edit#heading=h.golx01u82wvb.

[8] "Statistical Report (SB601) for 2020: San Quentin State Prison."

[9] "[Demands] #StopSanQuentinOutbreak," accessed May 17, 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1R9EOkvBT_CtNiRrpQHry2spdfmZyY2KnAXrPFVge_3M/edit?fbclid=IwAR3YyqgUouWI7rYFIa8OQyNi7JbhSzldVFK0ax4Pc7-I4fHJvuMP-Cy8ZuM.

Arcángel. As of this writing, District Attorney Lori Frugoli continues to press felony charges.[10] While dozens of people took part in the action, local Indigenous leaders were targeted for arrest. The temporal and spatial relationship between San Quentin and Mission San Rafael is not happenstance. Located less than four miles from San Quentin, the mission was built in 1817, the second to last of California's twenty-one missions, and abandoned two years before statehood—four years before San Quentin opened—when California's carceral regime was refashioned in the name of secular settler sovereignty.[11] As I described in chapter 1, missions, like the prison, were likewise sites of "death by institutional design."[12]

Along with statues of Christopher Columbus and various Confederate monuments, statues of Serra, as a key architect of California's brutal mission system, were targets of mass uprisings against state-sanctioned violence in 2020, because #AllColonizersMustFall. In response to calls for solidarity with IP5 in February 2021, I co-authored a statement of solidarity with fellow PhD candidate Claire Urbanski and Black studies scholar Erin Gray on behalf of the West Berkeley Shellmound Network (WBS Network).[13] As members of WBS Network, a coalitional space of anti-colonial solidarity with Ohlone/Lisjan leadership to protect the West Berkeley Shellmound, an Ohlone/Lisjan sacred site currently encircled by the property owner's chain link fences, barbed wire, and surveillance cameras, we sought to illuminate how ongoing colonial violence of the missions

[10] "IP5 Solidarity," accessed May 17, 2021, https://ip5solidarity.org/.

[11] "San Rafael Arcángel," accessed May 17, 2021, https://californiamissionsfoundation.org/mission-san-rafael/.

[12] Friedman, "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Prison Order in the Wake of COVID-19 and Its Afterlives: When Disaster Collides with Institutional Death by Design."

[13] West Berkeley Shellmound Network, "West Berkeley Shellmound Network Statement in Solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples' Day 5," February 20, 2021, accessed May 19th, 2021, https://wbsnetwork.medium.com/west-berkeley-shellmound-network-statement-in-solidarity-with-the-indigenous-peoples-day-5-680b2cf15b8d.

enables the continued desecration of Indigenous sacred sites in the Bay Area, while situating the toppling of Serra's statue within uprisings against antiblack terror. It must be noted that City of San Rafael, home to both San Quentin Prison and Mission San Rafael Arcángel *officially recognizes Indigenous Peoples' Day*. As we wrote:

> The removal of the Serra statue in San Rafael occurred as part of growing international resistance to statues and monuments depicting key figures and symbols of white supremacy, conquest, and genocide. Over the last several years, activists have sacked monuments to racial slavery and colonial land theft across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, England, and beyond.
>
> The toppling of the Serra statue outside Mission San Rafael was also part of the groundswell of mass political action against antiblack racism following the police lynchings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd in 2020. That BIPOC communities are simultaneously taking aim at monumental representations of Spanish sovereignty, Catholic authority, white supremacy, Anglo-Saxon rule, and the Confederate presence in national politics is cause for celebration…
>
> Perhaps it's not surprising that a DA in the prison capital of the world is threatening Indigenous survivors of genocide with incarceration for refusing to look any longer at the man who started the state's first prisons in the form of mission charnel houses.[14]

Revisiting this writing with the state's "forced crowding and cruel negligence" in San Quentin in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic at mind, I am even more struck by the continuities between the carceral regimes of Spanish missions and California state prisons.[15] Mortality rates in the missions reached over 70 percent, attests that disease was largely to blame due to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, malnutrition, and codified regimes of physical torture and abuse.[16]

[14] West Berkeley Shellmound Network, "West Berkeley Shellmound Network Statement in Solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples' Day 5."

[15] "[Demands] #StopSanQuentinOutbreak."

[16] Lumsden, "Missionization, Incarceration, and Ohlone Resistance," 84.

As of September 2020, over 121,000 people imprisoned in the U.S. had tested positive for COVID-19.[17] San Quentin had the second highest number of COVID-19 cases of any prison in the United Sates, just after Avenal State Prison, located 60 miles inland from Mission San Miguel Arcángel.[18] Friedman, in her study of prisons, antiblackness, and the "wake of COVID-19 and its afterlives," examines how "incarceration and prison order structure how all Black communities live and die in the wake of COVID-19."[19] In *Dying From Improvement*, Sherene Razack demonstrates the ways Native people are constructed as always already on the brink of death.[20] Within this settler imaginary, necropolitical violence is naturalized, as prisons warehouse the already dying. Such analyses point to the ways confinement, carcerality, and the specific interplay between "social abandon and social control" have long characterized the state's relationship to Black and Indigenous peoples, and points to vital direction for future research.[21]

…

I set out to finish this dissertation at the precipice of the COVID-19 pandemic and global uprisings against policing, antiblack racism, and state violence, which, following Tiffany Lethabo King and Robin D. G. Kelley, we might also position as uprisings against "conquest," or "a global

[17] Friedman, "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Prison Order in the Wake of COVID-19 and Its Afterlives: When Disaster Collides with Institutional Death by Design," 10.

[18] Friedman, 11.

[19] Friedman, 2.

[20] Razack, *Dying from Improvement*.

[21] Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 5.

assault on settler rule," respectively.[22] Thus, I conclude this dissertation with attunement to present conditions in the geography from which I write, and to point to the urgency and import of the need to think Blackness and Indigeneity, settler colonialism, slavery and its afterlives, and carceral regimes past and present, relationally. In the resounding calls for #LandBack and #DefundPolice (or #LandBackFuckCops), from occupied Ohlone/Lisjan territories to occupied Palestine, movements and communities have long made these connections and there is much scholarly work to be done.

My hope is that *Pride and Property* makes a small contribution to such scholarly and activist formations by contributing to an understanding of the racial and gendered sexual economy of settler neoliberalism. In this dissertation, I sought to plumb the often-eclipsed connections among and between antiblackness, Indigenous dispossession, and sexuality in the settler city. With a focus on the specifies of Ohlone territories, commonly known as the San Francisco Bay Area, I have argued that the twin projects of Black surplus and Indigenous disappearance in the settler city create the conditions of possibility—and the *grounds* for—what has long been narrated as a "gay homeland" or "queer mecca." Situated in San Francisco, chapter 1 argued that the imaginary animating the "Great Gay Migration" of the late 1970s and early 1980s can best be understood as a *settler* spatial imaginary, an antiblack formation that has profoundly shaped the terms of queer organizing in the city and beyond. Through an analysis of the enmeshed logics of antiblack criminalization and gay real estate speculation alongside lesbian feminist challenges to policing and gay gentrification at the site of Mission San Francisco de Asís, founded by Junípero Serra in 1776, I demonstrated how a range of formations, distinct as they were, had shared settler investments in the city as a "gay homeland." At the same time, Gay American Indians challenged lesbian and gay formations to confront their settler

[22] Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019); Robin D. G Kelley, "The Rest of Us: Rethinking Settler and Native," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2017): 274.

formation, troubling the formulation of gays and lesbians as eager migrants to this city on hill while regarding the space of San Francisco with a generative ambivalence.

Chapter 2 turned to spaces of lesbian sociality during what have been narrated as the first and second "dot-com booms" to demonstrate how narratives of loss of San Francisco's "dyke mecca" mobilized nostalgia for the city's progressivism in ways that disavowed past and present modes of violence and dispossession in the settler city. Through readings of the wildly popular 2000 memoir *Valencia*, by Michelle Tea, and public mourning around the 2014 closure of "the last lesbian bar," I demonstrated how this period ushered in the consolidation of a queer spatial formation compatible with neoliberal multiculturalism while also theorizing racialized gentrification as always conditioned—beyond metaphor—by spatial and temporal orientations of settler colonialism. Lastly, my reading of *ONYX: Black Lesbian Newsletter*, whose contributors were keenly aware of the ways white queer sociality was increasingly enmeshed in geographies of antiblackness and racial capitalism, demonstrated alternate modes of relationality.

While chapters 1 and 2 examined queer spatial formations that both rupture and enshrine the queer settler spatial imaginary instantiated by narratives of the "Great Gay Migration," *Pride and Property* culminated in the anti-colonial, abolitionist visions of Moms 4 Housing, a housing justice movement led by Black unsheltered mothers from Oakland, and Sogorea Te' Land Trust. Situated in present-day Oakland in the Ohlone/Lisjan territory of Huichin within what I called the *settler temporality of diversity*, these movements reject the propertied rules of colonial engagement to imagine alternate—indeed, queer—futures for the Bay Area and craft a landed politics of accountability. With a focus on property relations, "Pride and Property" culminated in a theorization of the distinct, yet relational "dispossession by inclusion" of Black and Indigenous peoples in the settler city and the distinct yet relational politics—that in their refusals of the settler temporality of diversity—invoke

other temporalities to offer a politics of accountability for everyone now residing in Lisjan/Ohlone territories.

Throughout this dissertation, I have been attuned to the ways notions of property, place, space, and land have circulated among various queer formations, both in ways that entrench property logics rooted in settler colonialism and slavery and in ways that rupture and refuse them. There is much work to be done. One of my contentions is that queers—a heterogeneous group I locate myself within—must reckon with the ways such property logics, enmeshed as they are with the carceral state, shape longings for safety, space, and community. Doing so requires, as Sogorea Te' Land Trust and Moms 4 Housing members so profoundly demonstrate, attunement to the specificities of such logics in the territories in which we organize. This "transformative accountability," in the words of Jodi Byrd, "is a process that restores life" and allows us all "to apprehend and grieve together the violences of U.S. empire."[23]

[23] Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*, 229.

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