UCLA
UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title
The Collective Come-Up: Black Queer Placemaking in Subprime Baltimore

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7gx6v7s1

Author
Whitley, Melissa

Publication Date
2020

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Collective Come-Up:

Black Queer Placemaking in Subprime Baltimore

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Gender Studies

by

Sa Whitley

2020

© Copyright by

Sa Whitley

2020

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Collective Come-Up: Black Queer Placemaking in Subprime Baltimore

by

Sa Whitley

Doctor of Philosophy in Gender Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Juliet A. Williams, Chair

The Collective Come-Up: Black Queer Placemaking in Subprime Baltimore engages the experiences, community organizing, and alternative economic frameworks of black queer and transgender women in the age of "credit-led accumulation" and neoliberal urban planning projects that stimulate the gentrification of black neighborhoods.[1] This black feminist ethnography, situated within the overlapping geographies of urban renewal programs, subprime foreclosure, and speculative urbanism, foregrounds the contested place in black queer spatial imaginaries of private property in a city with 30,000 vacant properties and lots.[2] Specifically, I examine Brioxy's black land movement in West Baltimore – an effort that seeks to forestall gentrification and "keep the hood black." From black placemaking to "putting a stake in the ground" against gentrification, I consider how black queer organizers figure the post-crisis financial and real estate markets as sites of both subjection and possibility. Provocatively, the collective puts forth a collectivized model of black private

[1] Susanne Soederberg, "The US Debtfare State and the Credit Card Industry: Forging Spaces of Dispossession," *Antipode* 45, no. 2 (2013), 495, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2012.01004.x.

[2] The City of Baltimore has 16,000 vacant buildings and 14,000 vacant lots. See "Frequently Asked Questions," *Vacants to Value*, http://www.vacantstovalue.org/vtov_faq.

property ownership as opposition to structural processes of gentrification and black displacement. At the same time, they engage in what I call *speculative social reproduction* across black queer households to confront the antiblackness of speculative finance capitalism.

As a critical intervention, this dissertation discloses the ongoing violence of liberal property and propertied citizenship by contesting contemporary constructions of the subprime foreclosure crisis itself. This project centers archives of effects overlooked in standard accounts, including the life and death of a black transgender woman killed in a vacant residential property. In dialogue with queer of color analyses of capitalism's contradictions, I characterize Baltimore's landscapes of *subprime architectures* and consider the ways that decades of urban renewal and foreclosure policies regulate black trans life and produce untimely death. Case studies of black queer and trans placemaking compel us to consider the ways that black queer and trans folx aim to variously appropriate, disassemble, refuse, or "disidentify" with property and "propertied citizenship."[3]

---

[3] See José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) and Ananya Roy, "Paradigms of Propertied Citizenship: Transnational Techniques of Analysis," *Urban Affairs Review* 38, no. 4 (2003): 463-491.

The dissertation of Sa Whitley is approved.

Sherene H. Razack

Robin D. G. Kelley

Uri McMillan

Hannah Appel

Juliet A Williams, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures:		vi
Acknowledgements:		vii
Curriculum Vitae:		x
Introduction:		1
Chapter One:	"We Call Them Bandos": Black Trans Fugitivity & Performance in Geographies of Foreclosure	40
Chapter Two:	"Won't Be Gentrified Out of Our Space": Financial Pedagogies with Black Queer Properties	87
Chapter Three:	"A Rainbow at Midnight": Queering Juneteenth and Claiming Black Land	118
Chapter Four:	Foreclosing White Property: The Politics of Black Queer Home, Garden & Real Estate Tours	148
Coda:		187
Bibliography:		198

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. "#BuyBuild#Stay" (2018). 87
Image by Brioxy

Figure 2. "Be Like Nia" (2018). 102
Photograph by B. Cole

Figure 3. "Walker Marsh is Fighting Baltimore is Fighting Blight with Flowers" (2018). 107
Image by @themedicine.show

Figure 4. Dovecote on the Map (2019). 128
Photograph by Sa Whitley

Figure 5. Ejay with Civil Wrongs Juneteenth Tee (2018). 132
Image by Brioxy

Figure 6. Rich Rocket of the Vintage Thrivals (2019). 146
Photograph by Sa Whitley

Figure 7. Black Home on Juneteenth "Res Hill" Garden & Home Tour (2019) 148
Photograph by Sa Whitley

Figure 8. "Property Brothers" and African Masks (2019) 149
Photograph by Sa Whitley

Figure 9. "Defend the Hood! Stop Gentrification" (2018) 167
Image by Brioxy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge so many extraordinary people and communities that have supported me during the Gender Studies PhD program. My dissertation committee members – Juliet A. Williams, Sherene H. Razack, Robin D. G. Kelley, Hannah Appel, and Uri McMillan – have been tremendously inspiring and supportive. Thank you all for your stirring provocations and the groundbreaking work that you do. I appreciate the time you all spent with my chapter drafts and your meticulous engagement with my work. Juliet, my exceptional dissertation advisor, has been an anchor and a friend. Thank you for your mentorship, intellectual rigor, and generosity. I would also like to acknowledge my professor and comrade, Hannah, for inviting me to collaborate with her on a white paper commissioned by the Debt Collective and published by the Institute on Democracy & Inequality entitled, "The Power of Debt: Identity and Collective Action in the Age of Finance." It was incredibly moving to have you as a friend and conspirator at the Undercommons Freedom School and in the Financial Futures Working Group at the aforementioned Institute. I am profoundly moved by all of the Gender Studies faculty – in seminars, at events and workshops, in archives, at protests, and in cafes. A Special thanks to Purnima Mankekar, Sarah Haley, Angela Y. Davis, and Mishuana Goeman. I thank you all for your affective and intellectual labor and your respective examples of feminist pedagogy. I also have warm appreciation for the Gender Studies staff – Samantha Hogan, Richard Medrano, Van Do-Nguyen, and Jenna Miller-Von Ah – who go above and beyond. Each of you make the ship sail smoother in your own remarkable and ardently dedicated ways. During the seven years of the PhD program, I am sincerely appreciative for financial support from the UC Consortium for Black Studies, Center for the Study of Women, and the Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship through UCLA Graduate Division. I would also like to thank the UCLA custodial workers of Rolfe Hall and AFSCME 3299 for their labor and their inspiring

labor organizing, and I am delighted to acknowledge my health care providers and community healing spaces.

To the brilliant Gender Studies PhD students – past and present – your dedication to that *werk*, your support at conferences (on panels & the dancefloor), and the feminist and queer lifeways that you embody/practice fiercely inform my relationship to the academy and community building. Special thanks to Lina Chhun, Savannah Kilner, Bianca Beauchemin, Shondrea Thornton, Azza Basharudin, Preeti Sharma, Jacob Lau, Amanda Apgar, Sarah Montoya, Esha Momeni, Dalal Alfares, Nazneen Diwal, Jaimie D. Crumley, Taryn Marcelino, Angela Robison, Marika Cifor, and Freda Fair. My Gender Studies writing group with Mary Robbins and Rahel S. Woldegaber was not merely or principally *productive*. We made a virtual feminist home-space that was truly magical and affirming each morning. I have infinite gratitude to you both for sharing your brilliance, hours, recipes, laughter, and love with me throughout the pandemic. Across campus, I want to extend gratitude to other sweet, gifted, and grounding PhD students, who together formed a radical and inviting UCLA community: Natalie Bradford, Aditi Anand Halbe, Mary Senyonga, Nichole Garcia, Rose Simons, Kendy D. Rivera, Thabisile Griffin, Marques Vestal, LeighAnna Hidalgo, and many others. I was also deeply moved by the collaboration and fervent political community that I found in the Black Feminist Initiative Working Group, the Undercommons Freedom School, UAW 2865, and the team at College Academic Counseling including Brian Henry and the 2019-20 College Academic Mentors.

In Baltimore, thank you to my fierce comrades, who have been meaningful collaborators and the best of friends to think and dream with. Special thanks to B. Cole, Aisha Pew, Dr. Shaeeda Mensah, Chesska O'Neal, Safa Batniji, Marcel Purnell, Rahma Haji, S Rasheem, P.J. Jerome, Jessica Sadler, Unique Robinson, Mo Speller, Andy Hines, Isabelle Brace, Marios Falaris, Anna Wherry, Sarah Roth, Heba Islam, Ryan Warwick, Andy Hines, Georgia McCandlish, Ava Pipitone, and Jamie Grace Alexander.

I also want to express appreciation to departments in two academic institutions in Baltimore, Maryland. Thank you to the faculty, staff, and students of in the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, who welcomed me as a Visiting Grad Scholar. The department's weekly colloquium series, seminars with Professors Veena Das, Jane Bennett, and Anand Pandian, and the 2018 conference with the Program in Race, Immigration, and Citizenship (RIC) were all generative and exciting spaces of intellectual community and critical knowledge production. I am truly grateful for faculty and students at the Maryland Institute College of Art, particularly in the Department of Humanistic Studies. Thank you for inspiring me to bring art and cultural production into my feminist pedagogy.

I have the widest river and the highest mountain of appreciation for my empowering and loving family including Linda & Raymond Whitley, my brothers, Derek, Ray-Ray, and Jon, and my grandmothers, Dorothy Whitley and Minnie Johnson. Thank you for your prayers, your daily encouragement, and your steadfast belief in me. Other life-long friends have offered incredible affirmation and inspiration: Asmara Carbado, Mae Miller, Lan Pham, Malcolm Shanks, Akan Udoh, Jessica Sadler, Steven Roy, Nichole Garcia, and B. Cole. I cannot thank you all enough.

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

2013-2020	**University of California, Los Angeles** *PhD Candidate in Gender Studies*
2011-2013	**University of California, Los Angeles** *M.A., African American Studies*
2004-2008	**Princeton University** A.B. in English

PROFESSIONAL WORK HISTORY

AY 2019-20	**UCLA College Academic Counseling (CAC)** *College Academic Mentor*
AY 2019-20	**Gender Neutrality Research Project** *Research Assistant for UCLA Professor Juliet Williams & Professor Abigail Saguy*
2008-2011	**W. W. Norton & Company** *Associate Book Publicist*

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

April 2019	"The Power of Debt: Identity & Collective Action in the Age of Finance" by Hannah Appel, Sa Whitley, & Caitlin Kline

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

Spring 2019	**LIT433: Freak Lit: Representing Difference in Literature & U.S. History** *Adjunct Professor*, Department of Humanistic Studies Maryland Institute College of Art
Fall 2018	**LIT330: Conversations in Trans/Feminism: Theories, Cultures, and Politics** *Adjunct Professor*, Department of Humanistic Studies Maryland Institute College of Art

Teaching Assistant

Spring 2017	**GS103: Knowledge**
Summer 2015	**GS M111: Women and Film**
Summer 2015	**GS M149: Media: Gender, Race, Class and Sexuality**
2014-15	**GS10: Introduction to Gender Studies (3 courses)**
Spring 2013	**SOC M165: The Sociology of Race and Labor**
Winter 2013	**SOC M5: The Social Organization of African American Communities**
Fall 2012	**LGBT M114: Introduction to LGBT Studies**

ROUNDTABLES & LECUTURES

March 28, 2016	**"What is Black Studies?: A Black Radical Roundtable"** *Panelist with Professors Robin D.G. Kelley, Scot Brown, Marcus Hunter, Jemima Pierre, and Gaye Teresa Johnson*
March 8, 2017	**Gender Studies 103: Knowledge (UCLA)** *"Transfeminist Readings of Violence in Neoliberal Times"*

CONFERENCES

November 14-17, 2019	**National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)** *"Black Trans Fugitivity across Landscapes of Subprime Foreclosure and Settler Colonialism in West Baltimore"*
November 8-11, 2018	**National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)** Conference Attendee
June 21-24, 2018	**Critical Ethnic Studies Association (CESA)** *"Subprime Convergences with Settler Colonialism and Black Trans Women in Transit across West Baltimore"*
April 3-7, 2018	**Society for Applied Anthropology (SFAA)** "*Subprime Foreclosure as Gendered Racial Violence: Black Women's Community Organizing against Housing Displacement in Baltimore"*
April 13-14, 2018	**(Re)conceptualizing Displacement (Johns Hopkins)** **The Program in Race, Immigration & Justice (RIC)** *"The Gendered Cost of Displacement: Locating Black Trans Women in Baltimore's Subprime Foreclosure Crisis"*
April 27-28, 2018	**Precarity/Promises:** **2018 Stanford Anthropology Graduate Conference** *"'My House…it's like a Tornado:' Black Women Mobilizing against Subprime Foreclosure in Baltimore"*
Nov. 29-Dec. 3, 2017	**American Anthropological Association (AAA)** *"Black Women Against Subprime Foreclosure: Speculative Social Reproduction Through and Beyond the Home"*
Nov. 16-19, 2017	**National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)** *"Black Queer Femininity, Organizing, and Social Reproduction in Baltimore's Subprime Foreclosure Crisis"*
Feb. 9-10, 2017	**Thinking Gender: Imagining Reparations (UCLA)** *Freedom School with The Undercommons, Facilitator, "Let's Get Free: Centering Blackness" Workshop*
Oct. 8-11, 2015	**American Studies Association (ASA)** *"The Loan Forgiveness of Widows of Color: Anti-Black Financial Violence during the Subprime Foreclosure Crisis"*
Nov. 13-16, 2014	**National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)** *"Demolished in the Domestic: Finance Capital and the Subprime Queering of Black Women"*

ACADEMIC WORKING GROUPS

AY 2019-20	**Black Feminist Initiative**, *Center for the Study of Women*, UCLA
AY 2019-20	**Financial Futures: High Education & Reparative Goods** *Institute on Democracy & Inequality*, UCLA
AY 2015-16	**Academic Abolitionism**, *UC Humanities Research Institute*

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

2019	UCLA Gender Studies Travel Award 2019-20
2018	UCLA Gender Studies Travel Award 2017-18
2016	Center for the Study of Women Travel Grant
2015-16	UC Consortium for Black Studies Research Grant
2015-16	Graduate Research Mentorship
2015	Galway Kinnell Memorial Scholarship
2014	Graduate Summer Research Mentorship
2014	UCLA Gender Studies Travel Award 2013-14
2014	Paula Stone Legal Research Fellowship
2013-18	Eugene Cota Robles Diversity Fellowship
2012-13	Gold Shield Alumni Fellowship

INTRODUCTION

The Collective Come-Up: Black Queer Placemaking in Subprime Baltimore considers the place of property in black spatial imaginaries and black queer urban planning strategies to "keep the hood black" in Baltimore, Maryland. Through black feminist ethnographic research in West Baltimore, I portray alternative ways of conceptualizing and responding to the effects of the subprime mortgage crisis by centering black queer and trans women's community organizing and placemaking in relation to available residential property and vacant lots for sale in the local real estate market. I examine local examples in the decade after the 2008 mortgage crisis amid "geographies of foreclosure" in disproportionately black urban neighborhoods.[4]

The black feminist inquiries in *The Collective Come-Up* center black women's collectivist approaches to private property that are not wholly capitalist or anti-capitalist yet have radical potential for building an archive of black queer urban planning and "putting a stake in the ground" against early-stage gentrification in black neighborhoods. I situate black queer and trans lives and community organizing in Baltimore in relation to various social movements and political discourses including the "buy back the block" movement, black freedom and land struggles, the historic preservation movement, discourses of black capitalism/neoliberalism and homonormativity, and the politics and praxis of "disidentification."[5] While my project maps the "intersectionality of indebtedness"[6] amid violent processes of foreclosure and gentrification in the "afterlife" of the

---

[4] Alex Schafran, "Origins of an Urban Crisis: The Restructuring of the San Francisco Bay Area and the Geography of Foreclosure," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 2 (2013): 663-688.

[5] See José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) and Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

[6] Hannah Appel, Sa Whitley, Caitlin Kline, "The Power of Debt: Identity & Collective Action in the Age of Finance," 2019, *The Institute on Democracy and Inequality*, accessed on June 7, 2020, https://challengeinequality.luskin.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2019/03/Appel-Hannah-THE-POWER-OF-DEBT.pdf.

financial crisis, it also conveys black women's creative modes of mobilization, or what I call *speculative social reproduction*. Through speculative social reproduction, black women negotiate their approaches to neoliberal "technologies of power" to organize financial subjectivity across households, to carve out ephemeral black arts and performance geographies, and engender the social reproduction of black life and black place in the urban contexts of speculative urbanism, real estate development, and gentrification. Black queer and trans organizers perceive of financial markets as sites of racialized, gendered, and sexualized contestation in which they can wrest power and land. Through my black feminist ethnographic research, I convey the transformative intervention of black queer and trans theory and urban planning in the aftermath of the subprime foreclosure crisis.

Importantly, the ethnographic research is framed by the survival of neoliberal ideology and urban planning progress after the 2008 foreclosure crisis, in which black people and black neighborhoods disproportionately experienced the effects of Wall Street speculation and racially predatory lending. *The Collective Come-Up* asks, "how and why do black queer and trans women negotiate their relationship to private property (ownership) in the afterlife of the foreclosure crisis?" From a black feminist epistemological critique of housing financialization, I unravel the contradictions of the neoliberal state's (recuperated) discourse of "the democratization of finance." Black women know that the neoliberal housing market is "a trap door" – an invitation into the promises of "propertied citizenship" and a precarious threshold of racial and gender violence, underwriting black dispossession.[7]

With disparate approaches to and appropriations of private property, black women navigate their communities and make plans to rebuild their communities and in so doing convey unique contestations with processes of urban neoliberalization. In "Neoliberal Urbanism: Cities and the

---

[7] Ananya Roy, "Paradigms of Propertied Citizenship: Transnational Techniques of Analysis," *Urban Affairs Review* 38, no. 4 (2003): 463-491.

Rules of Markets," economic geographers, Nik Theodore, Jamie Peck, and Neil Brenner explain the basic premise of neoliberal ideology and then shift to an analysis of the "contextual embeddedness" and unevenness of neoliberal urbanization at the local level:

> Neoliberal ideology rests on the belief that open, competitive, and "unregulated" markets, liberated from state interference and the actions of social collectivities, represent the optimal mechanism for socioeconomic development. Neoliberalism first gained prominence during the late 1970s as a strategic political response to the declining profitability of mass production industries and the crisis of Keynesian welfarism.[8]

Interdisciplinary scholars in Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies, and American Studies forefront the way in which "the neoliberal turn" emerged as a political knowledge project and government response to the post-World War II liberation movements worldwide and the social movements of the 1960s and 70s.[9] The punitive and economic response, beginning in the Regan and Thatcher years, pointed to the civil rights gains as sufficient proof of market liberalization and a so-called leveling the playing field within a "free market."[10] The Reagan administration began the decades long, yet fervently contested, attack on the hallmarks of Keynesian welfarism such as labor unions and public housing and set the stage for a steep decline of jobs with a living wage amid deindustrialization and emergent financial policy shifts that amounted to the deregulation of finance.

Several scholars point to the ways that the neoliberal state's reproduction of racial, gender, and sexual deviance is a mode of regulation that continues, but with a twist. For example, feminist

---

[8] Nik Theodore, Jamie Peck, and Neil Brenner, "Neoliberal Urbanism: Cities and the Rule of Markets," in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd, 2011), 15.

[9] Grace Kyungwon. *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 77.

[10] See Michael C. Dawson and Megan Ming Francis, "Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial Order," *Public Culture* 28, no. 1 (78) (2016): 23-6; Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Clarence Lang, *Black America in the Shadow of the Sixties: Notes on the Civil Rights Movement, neoliberalism, and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015); Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011);

scholar Grace Kyungwon Hong describes the "ideological and epistemological shifts" that underwrite "neoliberal power" leading to new contradictions between the state and capitalism that emerged in the neoliberal era. In her book *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference*, Hong argues that the neoliberal state manages difference (racial, gender, sexual, etc.) in a fundamentally new way by including some people from formerly excluded populations who adhere to values and norms of white heteronormative citizenship. Alternatively, the neoliberal state needs to produce non-conforming members of race, gender, and sexual populations as "disposable and devalue[d]," she explains, "not only through the process by which capital recruits cheap and vulnerable labor but also through its need for populations that are essentially devalued." Hong points to the neoliberal state's mobilization of "affective technologies of abandonment" that contradict neoliberal state's discourse of a liberal democracy.[11] In the neoliberal era, the state and indeed, neoliberal urban planning projects as *The Collective Come-Up* illustrates, affectively produce some lives – as worth of inclusion and renders other populations as "disposable and devalued." Hong frames neoliberalism categorically as a "structure of disavowal" that is predicated on process of speculation, of whose lives are valuable and whose are "existentially surplus."[12]

The subprime mortgage crisis is a paradigmatic example of the ways in which neoliberalism differentially marks black women's bodies and properties as selectively valued or devalued. A *New York Times* headline says it all, "Baltimore Finds Subprime Crisis Snags Women."[13] From the mid-1990s to the 2008 subprime market crash, banks and mortgage companies disproportionately issued black women predatory subprime mortgages. As a mode of predatory inclusion, the crisis conveyed

---

[11] Ibid.

[12] Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death Beyond Disavowal*, 97.

[13] John Leland, "Baltimore Finds Subprime Crisis Snags Women," *New York Times*, 15 January 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/15/us/15mortgage.html.

the ways in which black women's gained inclusion into the real estate market while also steered into "high-cost, high risk" subprime mortgage contracts. For black women, the real estate market was a trap door, which as Keeanga-Yahmatta Taylor's research in *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* meticulously conveys, was not a new phenomenon with the financial construction of the subprime or secondary mortgage market.[14]

I begin here with this black feminist epistemology of the subprime mortgage and foreclosure crises because it colors the black spatial imaginaries, the revised financial subjectivities, and economic placemaking performances and praxes that arise among black queer and transgender women in *The Collective Come-Up*. Black queer urban planning models have the capacity to mirror (assimilationist/homonormative), diverge from (radical), or remix (disidentification) the ways that neoliberal urban planning projects value and define property ownership, family and kinship, and black history and culture. My ethnographic research demonstrates a given urban planning model organized around difference – that is race, gender, sexual non-normative—may include politically multivalent strategies for place- and citymaking. As makeshift urban planning praxes rooted within black communities rather than merely sampling black community members in focus groups, collectives of black queer and trans women respond to the very localized and "path-dependent" modes of neoliberalization and cycles of speculative urbanism in their communities.[15]

In the recent anthology, *Transformative Planning: Radical Alternatives to Neoliberal Urbanism* Tom Angotti establishes the features of neoliberal urban planning projects to set the stage for the contributors' articulation of "transformative planning." His careful delineation informs *The Collective*

---

[14] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2019).

[15] Nik Theodore, Jamie Peck, and Neil Brenner, "Neoliberal Urbanism: Cities and the Rule of Markets," in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd, 2011), 18.

Come-Up, as I portray crucial examples black queer and trans women placemaking in Baltimore.

Angotti writes,

> The function of social control is still at the forefront of modern urban planning today. The "unruly" working class – African Americans, Latinx people, immigrants, women and others who are the foundation of the reserve army of labor – are still being displaced when their communities happen to be in the way of grand civic projects and, as cities became targets for global capital investment, speculative real estate deals. City planners are trained to systematically organize this process and lend it the veneer of being in the public interest. They evolved what came to be known as *rational-comprehensive planning.*[16]

I consider the class-based mode of social control that is levied by neoliberal urban planning projects as always already imbricated with urban planners' reproduction of the white middle-class cis-heteronormative household. This veneer of propertied domesticity and "propertied citizenship" as is a core rationale for capitalist urbanization.[17] This is a central analytic espoused by interdisciplinary scholars, such as Roderick A. Ferguson, who articulates a "queer of color critique" of Karl Marx's historical materialism thesis.[18] *The Collective Come-Up* interrogates the ways that neoliberal urban planning reports and initiatives propagate damaging representations, or what Patricia Hill Collins calls the "controlling images" of black women as pathological, criminal, deviant and, as such, deleteriously "high-risk" in the domestic sphere.[19] They reproduce black women as always already in or at "the margins" by formulating white elite heteronormativity as a primary "rational-comprehensive" infrastructure of city planning and redevelopment.[20]

---

[16] Tom Angotti, ed., *Transformative Planning: Radical Alternatives to Neoliberal Urbanism* (Chicago: Black Rose Books, 2020), 5.

[17] Ananya Roy, 2003.

[18] Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 5.

[19] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 114.

[20] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Rev.* 43 (1990): 1241-1300.

The Collective Come-Up is situated within critical interdisciplinary examinations of speculative urbanism in the neoliberal era and the ways that black women navigate, theorize, and re-make black place amidst the uneven redevelopment of Baltimore City in the wake of the subprime foreclosure crisis. In their article, "Predatory Value: Economies of Dispossession and Disturbed Relationalities," Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy define "economies of dispossession" as "those multiple and intertwined genealogies of racialized property, subjection, and expropriation through which capitalism and colonialism take shape historically and change over time."[21]

A Black Feminist Methodology in Urban Geographies of Foreclosure:

The Collective Come-Up is predicated on a mode of black feminist ethnographic and community-organizing practice common in community based participatory research (CBPR). I examine the homes and properties that black queer and trans women possess and/or own on the one hand and foreclosed homes and "vacants" that apprehend and discipline them on the other. Ethnography affords me the invitation to move beyond the often reductive and binaristic categorizations of social movements and urban planning praxes as capitalist: anti-capitalist, liberal: conservative, assimilationist: revolutionary, abolitionist: reformist. The experiences and theories of black women at the site of the *home* undergird black feminist critiques of racial capitalism, black dispossession, and Western conceptualizations of the human. Black women's homes are sites of radical potential, spatial imaginaries, and freedom dreams. As an ethnographic approach, black

[21] Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy. "Predatory Value: Economies of Dispossession and Disturbed Relationalities." *Social Text* 36, no. 2 (135) (2018), 2, accessed June 7, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-4362325.

feminist home touring moves through black women's home spaces, which in the African Diaspora, that they appraise with personal, community, and economic value while neoliberal regimes of uneven development, private property, and predatory finance situate black women in nexus of "flexible accumulation" mark black women's homes and bodies as variously valuable or disposable depending on the needs of capital and the liberal state. As a methodology then, a black feminist practice of visitation involves for me – a black non-binary person assigned female at birth (afab) with a middle-class familial background and class instability as a graduate student - movement through thresholds of shared identities and different positionalities; thresholds of gender and racial violence; and thresholds of activism and research.

As a scholar in the Gender Studies and African American Studies fields, I conduct research and analysis from the standpoint of several intersecting identities that shed light on the positionality from which I write and engage in the feminist praxis of reflexivity. I identify with Kai M. Green's articulation of his own ethnographic reflexivity his 2015 article, "The Essential I/Eye in We: A Black TransFeminist Approach to Ethnographic Film:"

> What makes native anthropology so useful for me is that it forces an engagement with the Black radical feminist we/the, making it impossible for me to think of my study in a detached manner, because in many ways what I say about the people I study, is also what I say and believe about myself."

I wanted to participate and help fashion black queer and trans women's placemaking within the spatial context of the post-crisis neoliberal property regime in Baltimore, because I am situated similarly as a black queer non-binary person from Maryland. I briefly recount aspects of my own and my familial background in relation to housing as a reflexive practice. I identify as a black, queer, non-binary with fluctuating class statuses. I participate and cultivate friendships in urban queer communities and community organizing groups that I have belonged to in Baltimore, New York City, and Los Angeles. While living and working in Baltimore as an ethnographer, a barista, and adjunct faculty, I lived in an apartment in Charles Village and ultimately had to take my landlord to

rent court. I filed for rent escrow after the landlord refused to carry out repairs that my lease guaranteed – broken water system, broken air conditioning, stripped and exposed walls in the hallway left unfinished for over 6 months.

I grew up in a black middle-class and evangelical Christian family in Silver Spring, Maryland. My parents graduated from HBCUs and began professional careers in the 1970s. They purchased our house in a suburban enclave in the Washington, DC Metro area that is demographically comprised of predominantly white Jewish families. My mother worked for several insurance companies, including one with an office just north of Baltimore City, and my father had a government job at NASA right off the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Before their recent retirement, they each had salaries in the $200,000 range. When my older brother lost his single-family house in Baltimore County during the foreclosure crisis, he and his wife, a Latina woman, moved into my parents' house in Silver Spring. My parents used equity from that house to buy a house in North Carolina where they currently live. My other brother died while "housed" in the Maryland State Correctional system. I have conducted this research while providing support for my younger brother, who has experienced cycles of being unhoused and incarcerated as a differently-abled black man. I point to these to family examples as they point to the ways that as Ophelia O. Cuevas argues, housing and prisons are in a perpetual dialectic in the Unites States.[22] As a reflexive praxis, I want to be up front with my own black middle- class family's relationship to property ownership and the 13th Amendment, which provided a way for slavery and the reproduction of black people as property of the carceral state in the present.

Significant to my research in *The Collective Come-Up*, I have participated in various modes of anti-debt activism. At workshops and panels organized by the Debt Collective and while writing and

[22] Ofelia O. Cuevas, "Welcome to My Cell: Housing and Race in the Mirror of American Democracy," *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2012): 605-624.

researching collaboratively with Dr. Hannah Appel – a member and an Assistant Professor at UCLA – I became aware of the collective power of organized debtors. Workshops invite participants to fill out and wear "HELLO MY DEBT IS" tags instead of name tags. At the culmination of my graduate-level education at UCLA, I have $58,323 of household debt to my name, which includes $35,955 of student loan debt (graduate school), $4667 of credit card debt, $17,700 of auto loan debt. As I demonstrated with Hannah Appel and Caitlin Kline in a report published by the Institute on Democracy and Inequality entitled, "The Power of Debt: Identity and Collective Action in the Age of Finance," black women have the highest rates of almost every mode of household debt.[23] By using Kimberly Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, we examined "the intersectionality of indebtedness," meaning that the financial industry and the state distributes debt as a mode of social control unevenly across geographic, racial, gender, sexual, and class lines. At UCLA, I organized with the university's contingent of the Occupy Movement, which we called "Occupy UCLA." I also co-founded an ongoing freedom school and collective called "The Undercommons," so named for the book by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten.[24]

My ethnographic fieldwork spanned 26 months in Baltimore (May 2017 – June 2019), during which time, I used participant-observation as a method through my role of a Brioxy organizer, had a 12-month Visiting Grad Scholar position in the Department of Anthropology at the Johns Hopkins University, and taught at the Maryland Institute College of Art (2018-19). In the organizer role, I actively participated in planning meetings, events, and Dovecote Café regularly during the fieldwork period. I also took and distributed meeting minutes at the planning meetings for Juneteenth festivals,

[23] Hannah Appel, Sa Whitley, Caitlin Kline, "The Power of Debt."

[24] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013), https://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/undercommons-web.pdf.

home & garden tours. I draw on Brioxy and Dovecote's social media posts and other publicity materials produced by Brioxy organizers and the Dovecote owners. I also draw on several news articles about Dovecote Café and the annual Juneteenth festivals. social media materials. Lastly, I draw on semi-structured interviews that I conducted with B. Cole. For Chapter 1, "We Call Them Bandos: Black Trans Fugitivity and Performance in Geographies of Foreclosure in West Baltimore" in which I examine the life and death of Tyra Trent in West Baltimore's geographies of foreclosure, I closely read the Park Heights Master Plan 2006 (revised in 2008) and the available public information about the Vacants 2 Value Program. I also examine news articles that cover Tyra Trent's murder. Lastly, I carefully view the mission statements and performances of Jono Vaughan's Project 42, which "honor[s] the lives of transgender and gender non-conforming murder victims" through "the creation of garments and diverse collaborative memorial actions."[25] Project 42 fiercely memorializes Tyra Trent's life through two-fold art installation.

During my fieldwork years in Baltimore, I also volunteered with UNITE HERE Local 7's campaign to Stop Wall Street Foreclosures by a private equity firm that acquired pools of mortgages through HUD's Distressed Asset Sales Program (DASP). While I do not include my ethnographic work with the UNITE HERE local in this dissertation, my experience theoretically informed my organizing with Brioxy; my analysis of new modes of gendered and racialized financial violence in geographies of foreclosure in the post-crisis era; and my examination of the elongated temporality of the foreclosure crisis in black urban neighborhoods. I attended City Council and Circuit Court hearings with UNITE HERE to stop predatory practices of housing dispossession and debt servicing. I also participated in Brioxy's black only real estate tours with groups of predominantly queer artsy, mixed-class black folx who are prospective mortgagors and homebuyers. During these

[25] Jono Vaughan, "Project 42," *Fine Art Vaughan*, 2012, http://www.fineartvaughan.com/project-42-.html.

real estate tours with other black queer and trans women, I imagined black queer futures in relation to private property and what Zenele Isoke calls a "politics of black feminist homemaking."[26] These correlative ethnographic case studies brought Brioxy's black queer urban planning praxis with private property into dialectic with UNITE HERE's analysis of private property as the violent fulcrum of gendered racial capitalism.

As part of my black feminist methodology, I used a reflexive praxis of "visitation" throughout my fieldwork years and moved through black neighborhoods in West Baltimore that black residents characterize as predominately black demographically and black in a proprietary sense, as in that black women own as homes and community spaces, an "abandoned" property in which the anti-black and transmisogynist murder of a black transgender woman took place, and black women's places and properties in spatial imaginaries where speculative urbanism is abolished and dispossession is not a condition that gives blackness meaning as a racial category. To visit is to engage in the "deep hanging out" described by Anthropologists and moving through black places/properties with comfort and disorientation in what Katherine McKittrick delineates as spaces "with" and spaces "without" and attending to the ways that multiple layers of black geographies and placemaking and multiple modalities of *coming up* on and through space can entail both within the square feet of a particular property.[27] Brioxy's black land movement and urban planning strategies aim to render black women's ownership/possession of *black property* immune to the violence of housing financialization. As Cole remarked in our interview, the state and the financial industry structurally reproduce black women's property as always already "a precarious place to be."[28]

---

[26] Zenzele Isoke, *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[27] Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, no. 8 (2011), 948.

[28] B. Cole (Co-Founder of Brioxy, Co-Owner of Dovecote Café) in discussion with the author, October 2017.

Before Dovecote Cafe became a central place in my research project as a "field site," I wanted to *visit* the black-owned café to meet other black, queer, and artistic people in this small, but major city in Maryland. B. Cole and Aisha Pew are the owners of the café, which serves the community space out of which a black queer collective, Brioxy, organizes a black land movement in West Baltimore. From financial literacy workshops, Juneteenth Festivals, garden and home tours, *black-only* real estate tours, Afro-Futurist Halloween Parties and Black Art Bazaars, Dovecote brings together an eclectic mix of black creatives from across "Charm City." I will describe the café's ambiance and interior so that the reader can imagine the black queer space out of which Brioxy's black land movement flows. The décor accomplishes a festive "black is beautiful" vibe by an eclectic curation of black artists who celebrated black culture, black joy, and black femininity and gender variance. With this interior design, Dovecote always feels like the living room of a black artist, a home place in which other black folx are welcomed and inspired. The sweet, the boisterous, and jubilant chatter of black painters, jewelry makers, entrepreneurs, comedians, college students, leatherworkers, activists, educators, and others – fills the café and remixes into the backdrop of contemporary R&B music and Motown hits. Cole and Aisha designed the café through an artistic practice of black placemaking. While "harmony" is not a fixed condition in any place and black culture and identity are not monolithic, aspects of Dovecote's interior design function to set the scene for black joviality and comradery. At Dovecote, black artists – many of them queer and of various aesthetic styles, ages, and education levels –get their first taste of #brioxylife: Young black adults perch on the hip modern chairs, "birds of a feather," at the long wooden tables or the dark copper ones on the other side of the small room. The southern interior wall has a colorful floral wallpaper with pinks and yellows and reds in bloom alongside pears and peppers on rich green vines. The northern interior wall is blackboard black with African-descendant people depicted both in colonial-era dress across the wall above the café tables, and all white coloration.

Painted portraits of black women with brown hues in head wraps decorate the wall directly beside the register and on the front walls and nooks of the café – a black-woman yogi, naked and sitting with her legs crossed in a grassy knoll – a large red flower covering her pelvic region, and her arms above her head formed a meditative parenthesis around her Afro. My first day at Dovecote, I felt immediately uplifted with a tangible warmth inside from the black bodies together. Even though I did not know anyone yet, it felt like I was supposed to be there – black queer poet and student, single and ready to mingle, and Maryland born & raised.

In many ways I consider Chapter 1 as an ethnography of a *black property* / parcel of land that is a murder site that threatens black trans feminine life chances within West Baltimore geographies of foreclosure. The site is also a radical site of black trans memorialization and placemaking by artist collective, Project 42. The black feminist "politics of homemaking," which Zenzele Isoke describes in her ethnography, *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance*, about black women's "geographies of resistance" in Newark, New Jersey inspire my own methodology in *The Collective Come Up*.[29] My own reflexive participation and observation within and dedicated organized within Brioxy's black queer urban planning and black land movement involved building a scaffolding of intentional community in which black queer and trans women could make homes for themselves and homes as neighborhoods and homes in the city of Baltimore. To critically engage the place of property in black queer spatial imaginaries in the midst of structural gentrification and the long foreclosure crisis, I analyze the ethnographic material in the form of visits to Dovecote café event for planning meetings, study sessions, and meetings that solidify community partnerships with black vendors and artists throughout the city for the Juneteenth festival. I also rely on social media, news media, publicity materials, and meeting minutes from planning sessions as primary sources. Throughout *The Collective Come-Up*, I also draw on other examples of other black urban housing and land movements

[29] Zenzele Isoke, *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 11, 2.

in Baltimore and other major cities in order to carefully and constructively delineate Brioxy and Project 42's respective urban models in relation.

Brioxy is a for-profit organization with numerous functions and political projects that reflect the hybridity of its approach to black land and housing, and to borrow from Kemi Adeyemi, a "black queer right to the city."[30] As a network or collective, Brioxy is a "social innovation lab" for people of color, a training ground for executive directors of social-justice nonprofits, and an organization with community economic development models that it situates as against gentrification (fieldnotes, May 30, 2017). In Baltimore, among some of these functions, Brioxy serves as housing-justice collective that develops an ongoing "black land movement" that centralizes property and land ownership as a tactical and collective method for black queer placemaking and community economic development. In tandem, Brioxy's black organizers in Baltimore facilitate property ownership by young black artists, social entrepreneurs, craftspeople, musicians, urban farmers, and among others as a collective methodology against speculative real estate development and neighborhood gentrification. As an urban planning praxis, "the collective come-up" is twofold: a movement through which more black people can ascertain "financial freedom" and middle-class status; and a movement against the economic effects of racial capitalism on black urban places and housing, black queer and trans women, and black life chances. For Brioxy, "to come up" as a verb or "the come-up" as a noun enact upward mobility in the collective sense – up from bondage, from poverty, from indebtedness, from state violence, from gender, sexual, and domestic norms, and "geographies of black dispossession" in the past and present.[31] As a knowledge and economic project, Brioxy's black

[30] Kemi Adeyemi, "The Practice of Slowness: Black Queer Women and the Right to the City," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 25, no. 4 (2019): 549, https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-7767767.

[31] I use Katherine McKittrick's phrase, "geographies of black dispossession" through the dissertation, as it aptly spatializes anti-black racism and violence. Such a framework is critical in relation to the black spatial imaginaries and contestations in *The Collective Come Up*. See Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 44.

land movement draws on the historical and ongoing relationships between settler-colonialism, chattel slavery, and Indigenous genocide and land expropriation, and racial capitalism. However, as a political and black placemaking strategy disidentifies with private property and rearticulates *black property* in a collective methodology at the neighborhood level to "keep communities together" in defiance of the onslaught of gentrification.

By examining Brioxy's oppositional politics to neoliberal modes of urban planning and urban revitalization, I delve into the provocative aspects of the group's black queer urban planning praxis and discourses to "keeping the hood black," "buying up the block," and "put a stake in the ground." Brioxy is a for-profit organization led predominately by queer people of color and is a self-described "social innovation network for people of color."[32] This work takes the form of various political organizing efforts and social-justice campaigns for the #readygeneration, black millennials who are eager to contest the logics of racial capitalism and black dispossession. The Brioxy mission statement appears on the organization's website:

> Brioxy is a community of innovators of color committed to building power for and with other people of color. We host workshops, life hacks and tools to help you build transformative organizations that help communities to become sovereign and self-sustainable. We know that for leaders of color the bar is higher while the resources fewer. Joining our community gives you the support you need to smash the glass ceiling.[33]

In Baltimore, Brioxy has a "racial-justice housing justice program" with queer praxis that boasts black first-time homebuyer workshops (Chapter 2), annual Juneteenth Independence Day festivals (Chapter 3), and real estate tours and home and garden tours with black queer political imperatives. I interrogate how collectivism functions in models that are not actually mobilized through official

---

[32] Tom Hall, Rob Sivak, Kathleen Cahill, and Bridget Armstrong, "2016 Maryland Primary Results; Brioxy and Dovecote Brew Hope For Post-Uprising Baltimore," *WYPR 88.1 FM: The World*, April 27, 2016, https://www.wypr.org/post/2016-maryland-primary-results-brioxy-and-dovecote-brew-hope-post-uprising-baltimore, accessed on June 10, 2020.

[33] "Brioxy," 2020, accessed on June 10, 2020. https://www.brioxy.com/.

forms collective ownership such as community land trusts or housing co-ops, which attract with a bit more ease, the hallmark of radical housing justice organizing

"The Black Creative Class"

The Collective Come-Up examines Baltimore's "economies of dispossession" that are enacted *through* urban revitalization or what is commonly called "creative placemaking."[34] In the city, arts-based urban revitalization planning projects are a major gateway for gentrification and the displacement of black working-class and underemployed folx including black artists and creatives. Importantly, *The Collective Come-Up* considers the ways that both offer oppositional political possibilities in communities marked for real estate capital investment and early stage gentrification in the post-crisis era. black artistic performances and urban planning in major cities across the United States, neoliberal urban planners in major cities have sought the creative capital of artists to lure real estate capital and redevelopment, which ultimate has led to a trend of arts-based gentrification. Planning theorist Richard Florida contends that US society will transform itself into a better liberal democracy, "into a fully creative society, one that is more just, more equitable, more sustainable, and more prosperous,"[35] by harnessing the innovation and "creativity" of a burgeoning socio-economic class, he has seminally called "the creative class." For Florida, the Creative Class are "the mobilizing force today - the leading force at the beachhead of social, cultural, and economic change," but they need to be organized into a self-conscious social group that cultivates a sense of solidarity.[36] The

---

[34] For an example of a creative placemaking approach in Baltimore's landscape of urban redevelopment, see Mark Treskon, "Measuring Creative Placemaking: Measuring Livability in the Station North Arts & Entertainment District, Baltimore," *Urban Institute*, 2015, https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/100998/measuring_creative_placemaking_0.pdf, accessed on June 10, 2020.

[35] Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), xiv.

[36] Ibid., xv.

Creative Class in Florida's treatise are professional workers with "the higher-skilled, higher-wage creative" jobs who set new norms that diverge from those of "traditional society."[37]

The term, "black creative class" is a key analytic framework within Brioxy's black land movement (Chapter 2-4) and urban planning projects. Brioxy appropriates the "creative class" term by adding "black," which describes the racial demographic of the creatives and signals a cohort with shared interests and black political machinations. public-private initiatives harness "the arts" and "creativity" as loci of redevelopment and "creatives" as the cadre of economic regeneration and innovation, as Richard Florida argues in *The Rise of the Creative Class: Revisited Revised and Expanded* (2014) and earlier books, however, in doing so, they center and distribute power to young white artists and creatives while simultaneously reproducing the displacement black artists and creatives, not to mention other black folx or "legacy residents" who are not or not as clearly demarcated as artsy.[38]

In his new book, *Capital City: Gentrification and the Real Estate* State, Samuel Stein considers the ways that planners use art and artists as a social capital to lure real estate capital but explains that "appeals to creativity do not automatically constitute gentrification. Floridian language aside, creativity is not actually a class trait and working-class neighborhoods are always home to working class artists."[39] Planners position artists and arts institutions to "recapture value" of postindustrial and disinvested areas of the city, particularly sections adjacent to business districts.[40] Stein also contends that gentrification is planned by the state through the strategic changes to city zoning, the

---

[37] Ibid., xiv.

[38] Meghan Ashlin Rich and William Tsitsos. "Avoiding the 'SoHo Effect' in Baltimore: Neighborhood Revitalization and Arts and Entertainment Districts," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40, no. 4 (2016): 736-756.

[39] Samuel Stein, *Capital City: Gentrification and the Real Estate State* (New York: Verso Books, 2019).

[40] Ibid., 66.

creation of strong linkages between the police and property value, and the "privatization of urban space" through the demolition of public housing and the removal of rent controls."[41]

> Another way urban planners carve out a competitive advantage is by luring the so-called creative class. This is a slippery category that can mean anything from artists to tech workers and tends to focus more on high-end consumption habits than actual creative output.[42]

Florida glorifies the emergence of a Creative Economy that seeks out diversity and difference. Contrastingly, American Studies scholars critique neoliberal multiculturalism.[43] Critical theorists of racial capitalism trace the ways that capitalism is an economic system that requires "hierarchies of difference" across the population that are indispensable to what Karl Marx called "primitive accumulation" through the expropriation of land and the exploitation of labor.[44] Indeed, capitalist economies have always been "creative economies."[45]

Throughout *The Collective Come-Up*, Brioxy's notion of a "black creative class" weaves throughout the analyses of processes of arts-based urban revitalization and gentrification in West Baltimore. The redevelopment of the Station North Arts & Entertainment District (SNAED) in central Baltimore is a case study that several scholars have discussed in recent years. SNAED is the first arts & entertainment district in the state of Maryland. It features subsidized artist housing such as the Copycat Building - the one major large (and legal) rental complex offering live/work studios, though City Arts I & II are nearby in the adjacent, rebranded, and gentrifying neighborhood of Greenmount West. Across the central-city Baltimore neighborhoods, post-industrial and "century-

---

[41] Ibid., 62-69.

[42] Ibid.,

[43] For analysis of neoliberal multiculturalism, see Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

[44] Robinson 2000, Kelley, Lang

[45] Richard Florida, *The Rise of The Creative Class, Revisited*, 35.

old mills and warehouses are repurposed into market-rate apartments, restaurants, and offices."[46] "At the same time, the influx of arts-themed development helps raise property values and spurs re-colonization of the neighborhood's large industrial buildings, making it difficult for artists to find legal, affordable live/workspaces in the district."[47] The sudden closure of the Bell Foundry immediately after the 2016 Ghost Ship fire killed 36 resident-artists in Oakland, CA led to the mass eviction of young working-class Baltimore artists who relied on it for affordable and hybrid live-in studio units. Abdu Ali, a popular Baltimore-based black queer music artist offers an intersectional analysis of the Bell Foundry closure:

> "As the Bell Foundry became a safe haven for many self-identified queer black artists, the scrutiny intensifies on spaces associated with marginalized communities." … "Thus, even if that building was condemned in response to political pressure and the Ghost Ship warehouse tragedy, the perception and reality is that black artists in Baltimore are less likely to have the cultural and financial connections that white artists do, many of whom are MICA or other college graduates.[48]

Ali's critical analysis of the Bell Foundry closure/eviction presents the financial, institutional, and housing inequality that black queer artists in Baltimore encounter and experience, situating the urban landscape as predicated on what the Combahee River Collective called "the simultaneity" of race, class, and sexual modes of power and subjection. Brioxy's black queer urban planning praxis is one approach that offers a material and speculative rejoinder to these overlapping crises for black queer artists and creatives in gentrifying sections of Baltimore.

---

[46] Meghan Ashlin Rich, "'Artists are a Tool for Gentrification': Maintaining Artists and Creative Production in Arts Districts," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 25, no. 6 (2019), 728.

[47] Ibid., 729.

[48] Ibid.

The Collective Come-Up

This term, for which the dissertation is titled, is an expression that B. Cole uses to spatialize the black economic placemaking of Brioxy's black land movement in Baltimore, and it also offers the discursive scaffolding for Brioxy's conceptualization of private property in black queer spatial imaginaries. As the title of the dissertation project, *The Collective Come-Up* phrase evinces the contradictions that economic justice movements negotiate as they organize toward the "horizons" of freedom, decolonization, liberation, emancipation, and living otherwise.[49] How do marginalized communities conceptualize and work to bring about the "come up" within an economic system predicated on the violence of settler colonialism, anti-blackness, heteropatriarchy, and racialization? As a project, *The Collective Come-Up* considers black queer urban planning and performative placemaking strategies that define "opportunity" in multivalent ways – financial, speculative, spatial, and with regard to power and life itself. I situate these black queer placemaking modalities as differentially relational to large-scale forces of neoliberal economic and political restructuring that, as Martin F. Manalansan IV argues, insidiously work to de-politicize queer and racial politics and social movements.[50]

Black capitalist discourses "survived" the neoliberal turn from the 1970s onward and the 2008 financial crisis, which is readily discernible in popular usages of "the come up" phrase. In African American Vernacular English (AAVE), it is most pervasively used to refer to the impact of a person's successful realization of a prominent and/or profitable opportunity. The come-up phrase is squarely established in discourses of racial uplift ideology which has permeated black politics from the Reconstruction period to the present. In their article, "Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial

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

[50] Martin F. Manalansan, IV, "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City," *Social Text* 23, no. 3-4 (84-85) (2005), 142.

Order," Political theorists Michael C. Dawson and Megan Ming Francis characterize the ways that black political discourse merges and aligns neoliberal restructuring of the state and the economy. The neoliberal values that Dawson and Francis identify in black politics are the individualist American Dream aspiration and the racial uplift ideology that minimize the impact or existence of institutional racism. Racial uplift ideology, Dawson and Ming remind us, is predicated on the idea that "blacks can do anything if they work hard enough,"[51] which is metaphorized in neoconservative parlance as "pulling yourself up by your bootstraps." Robin D. G. Kelley reminds us that black conservative political pundits, "negrocons" espouse this idea, and in so doing, participate in the neoliberal state's reproduction of black working-class moral and cultural pathology and oppression within a hierarchal labor market.[52] In his book, *Yo' mama's disFUNKtional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*, Robin D. G. Kelley also examines the ways the "self-help" ethos "undergirds racist ideology. Kelley explains that "'success' narratives" within popular culture "let racism off the hook by demonstrating that hard work in the realm of sports or entertainment is all one needs to escape the ghetto."[53]

Michael Dawson and Megan Ming Francis examine a few popular rap music songs to explore the ways "black neoliberal" discourse pervades black political strategies to alleviate black property and bring about black financial success, which sheds light on the "come-up" term. Thinking with them, the example of G-Unit's 2014 song, "Come Up" song is a useful example that illustrates the term's hybrid political entanglement. In the song, the chorus repeats the phrase, "Watch a nigga come up," while the verses herald values like success, independence, revenue,

---

[51] Michael C. Dawson and Megan Ming Francis, "Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial Order," *Public Culture* 28, no. 1 (78) (2016), 26, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-3325004.

[52] Robin D. G. Kelley, *Yo' Mama's disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 91.

[53] Ibid., 46.

wealth, and business savvy alongside luxurious communities from designer cars, jewels, and clothing. In a verse that references the financial industry, Rap Artist and Actor, 50 Cent, claims, "I ain't mentioning what I'm benching / I'm Merrill Lynching in the mall, I'll blow ya pension." Here, G-Unit identifies with one of the predatory investment banks that caused the housing market collapse, the financial crisis, and millions of foreclosures in the United States (disproportionately black homes).[54] The song creates both intraracial class tension and intraracial class paternalism as it shifts from the black elite celebrity at the center to "street niggas" at the margins. 50 Cent's move from the singular I and the plural "we" in the last half of the chorus evinces this class antagonism within black politics: "The street niggas know just what I mean / (Watch a nigga come up) / Born hustler, niggas got to get paid / Shit real from the cradle to the grave /(Watch a nigga come up) / Got to get it, we got, got to get it /Got the bread for the hit, nigga, we with it."[55] In just one song, G-Unit offers the takeover white masculinist financial hustler's mode of capital accumulation through financialization, identifies "street niggas" as a structurally reproduced category of black being, and offers a pedagogy of black class mobility in the midst of racial capitalism – "shit real from cradle to grave." Importantly, this black neoliberal discourse contains structural critique, a sense of black solidarity, and a methodology of hustling the system (or the means of production).

The come-up term proves a clear entryway and a constructive provocation for the dissertation's critical engagement with black urban housing movements in the "post-crisis" neoliberal era that run the gamut with regard to critiques of private property and mortgage debt. While black urban housing and land movements have a lot of overlapping critiques of private property, models of collective black placemaking differ widely in their response to those critiques with regard to blueprints they lay

---

[54] Brandon Goyette, "Cheat Sheet: What's Happened to the Big Players in the Financial Crisis," *ProPublica*, October 26, 2011, https://www.propublica.org/article/cheat-sheet-whats-happened-to-the-big-players-in-the-financial-crisis.

[55] G-Unit, "Come Up," G Unit Records, Inc., 2014

out "on the ground" for speculative futures of black on land and in housing in the urban context. Throughout the dissertation, I will put these social movements in conversation with Brioxy's black land movement against gentrification and Project 42's performative resistance to black trans economies of dispossession and premature death. In other vernacular usages as an action verb, it refers to the act of stealing something valuable.[56]

The contradictory deployments and political knowledge projects that crosscut the multivalent, "come up" are the discursive terrain and spatial imaginary in which Brioxy's black queer formulation of the term, "collective come up," circulates and articulates new meaning. The usages of the term also resonate with my analysis in Chapter 1 of the transmisogynist murder of a black transgender woman in a vacant residential property in West Baltimore's overlapping geographies of urban renewal programs and the subprime foreclosure crisis. What kinds of new housing models do urban planners build on the cyclically razed ground of private property in urban geographies in the neoliberal "afterlife of slavery"?[57]

However, in the dissertation, I demonstrate that black queer movements can incorporate discourses and strategies of "black neoliberalism" while simultaneously espousing radical political theories and critique. The late Jose Esteban Muñoz conveys the radical potential of *disidentification* – a politics that queers of color mobilize within capitalism and liberalism within, while recognizing the violence and inequality that the intertwined systems reproduce. Disidentification is a queer of color politics that complicates black queer and trans economic justice movements,[58] urban planning projects, and spatial imaginaries and refuses the categorizations of either capitalist or anti-capitalist,

---

[56] "Come Up," *Urban Dictionary,* accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=come%20up.

[57] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Macmillan, 2008), 6.

[58] José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 1999.

radical or liberal. In an Urban Dictionary's example of this, a speaker speculates on stealing something from a house party. What possibilities and limitations ensue from attempts to "steal something from" private property for black queer placemaking and running with it? What kinds of black queer spatial imaginaries and built environments do folx erect in the running with/against property resignified?

Both of the queer and trans "collectives" that I examine in *The Collective Come Up* aim to construct oppositional "counterpublics" in post-crisis urban geographies of foreclosure and financial speculation.[59] For Brioxy, "the collective" centers the aforementioned *black creative class* and black people in all of their various and non-heteronormative identities, domesticities, and cultures in Baltimore, a city that invests heavily in urban planning projects that engender arts-based gentrification. What modes of black placemaking enable the black queer and trans working and underclass folx to be impervious to the racial, gender, class and sexual violence of neoliberal finance capital and modalities of black dispossession? For Project 42, "the collective" refers to transgender and gender non-conforming people who live and die in the everyday life of racialized and transmisogynist economies of dispossession. In relation to Project 42's memorialization of trans and gender murder victims, *the come-up* is a trans spatial and aesthetic refusal of the settler-colonial and neoliberal regime of power and production of space (as propertied) that sanction and requires trans people's disposability and premature death. In this sense, *the come-up* stimulates a politics around the insurgency of "afterlives" for trans futurity.[60]

---

[59] Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (Winter, 1998): 547-566, https://doi.org/10.1086/448884.

[60] Ruha Benjamin, "Black Afterlives Matter: Cultivating Kinfulness as Reproductive Justice," *The Boston Review*, 16 July 2018, http://bostonreview.net/race/ruha-benjamin-black-afterlives-matter.

Throughout *The Collective Come-Up*, I situate Brioxy and Project 42's attempts to create black queer and trans women's places and modes of kinship that are impervious to antiblack and (trans)misogynist "economies of dispossession" as *speculative social reproduction*.[61] This describes the practices, performances, and placemaking that black women engage in as collectives to counter the dispossessory violence of the speculative housing market and gentrification in black communities. The normative way that scholars approach social reproduction is through a materialist analysis that assesses the social practices that people engage in (often in the household) to reproduce or refuel themselves as the labor force in a capitalist society. Cindy Katz, for example, reiterates that the activities of social reproduction are fodder for the renewal of the "social and material bases of capitalism." The neoliberal restructuring of capitalism has necessitated the restructuring of social reproduction. Katz writes, "the flip side of the withdrawal of public and corporate support for the social wage is a reliance on private means of social reproduction."[62] While a materialist analysis of social reproduction is critical, people also engage in oppositional practices of social reproduction that refuse the current social and economic inequalities of capitalism and are in fact a mode of labor that is counterproductive to capital's imperatives.

Zenzele Isoke's concept of "home-making," in her book, *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance*, is a reading practice for the "geographies of resistance" that black women in the neoliberalizing urban space of Newark, New Jersey produce and sustain. Isoke writes,

> Many of activists take Newark as their political ground, imagining it as a home that is worth saving and fighting for. Constructing Newark as an intimate political space that can be re-appropriated and reclaimed, these black women activists envision and enact the politics of "home-making," the collective production of oppositional space that nurtures the life-chances of young African-Americans (10-11).[63]

---

[61] Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy. "Predatory Value," 2.

[62] Cindi Katz, "Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction," *Antipode* 33, no. 4 (2001): 709-728.

[63] Zenzele Isoke, *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 10-11.

In *The Collective Come-Up*, I build on Isoke's conceptualization of "the politics of home-making" to describe how black queer and trans women in organize against speculative capitalism in Baltimore through organized modes of *speculative social reproduction* – an organizing toward a futurity in which black people are free from the broad spectrum of violence that capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and structural racism reproduce. Through their organizing, *home* is dislodged from its normative formulation as embodied in the white middle-class propertied individual. Rather, black queer and trans women organizing and placemaking in Baltimore through attempts to collectivize notions of black queer women's financial subjectivity and risk after the housing crisis. They also collectivize black practices of private property ownership in order to forestall gentrification and contest gendered modes of black displacement and disposability within geographies of subprime.

Black Women's Geographies of "Property Plus"[64]

In this section, I examine some key texts that theorize and articulate black feminist conceptualizations of private property within Western settler-colonial geographies of domination. The scholarly interventions of black feminist geography that I draw on remerge from and/or in dialogue with scholarship from (sub)fields such as Black Studies, Gender Studies, History, Economic geography, American Indian Studies, Critical Indigenous Studies, and Black Feminist Anthropology. I begin by drawing on seminal texts of black feminist geographic scholarship include work by Katherine McKittrick (2006; 2013), Hortense Spillers, Tiffany Lethabo King (2016), and Saidiya Hartman (1997; 2019). Central to my ethnographic analysis of the "freedom dreams"[65] for a

[64] Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987), 65, https://www.jstor.org/stable/464747.

[65] Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

collective come-up and the formation of a *black creative class* are what I am calling black women's geographies of "property plus."[66] *The Collective Come-Up* hinges on black women's relationship to property and private property ownership within U.S. racial capitalism. Black women's homemaking and movement building practices in relation to private property in the neoliberal era are predicated on the imbricated histories of chattel slavery and settler-colonialism. In the present, neoliberal "economies of dispossession" operate through the ongoing and overarching processes of settler colonialism, antiblackness, and racialization.[67] As I examine black queer and trans people's relationships to private property in the afterlife of the subprime foreclosure crisis, which overlaps with prior and ongoing geographies of black dispossession, I rely on black feminist critiques of property and analyses of the contradictions of capitalism that have emerged within "queer of color critique" as a subfield.

In the U. S. plantation economy, the logic of "racial-cum-sexual exchange" undergirds liberal property relations;[68] the captive bodies of black females were fungible entities with categorical definition as flesh, capital, and property. Black feminist critic, Hortense Spillers uses the term "property plus" to theorize the ways that the plantation economy, exploited the biological reproduction black female slaves, or what she calls "captive flesh." She writes, "the names by which I am called in the public place render an example of signifying property *plus*."[69] The plantation economy expropriated enslaved black female bodies as interest bearing – personifying interest bearing capital – because the children they birthed also carried the status of slave and thus property.

---

[66] Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 65.

[67] Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy. "Predatory Value," 2.

[68] C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 66.

[69] Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 65.

While black feminist scholars such from Angela Y. Davis to Dorothy Roberts to Alys Eve Weinbaum chart the historical violation and the political entanglements of black women's biological reproduction from slavery to the present, I consider black women's unique "afterlife of property," to use Saidiya Hartman's seminal phrase,[70] in relationship to their own acquisition and reformulation of private property in the post-crisis neoliberal era. The tensions between black women's status of unfreedom through property relations in the antebellum period connect to their striving for place and freedom in the present. I am interested in the ways that black women (re)capture and are captured by property in multivalent ways in the aftermath of the foreclosure crisis. Black feminist theories of private property are foundational to my analysis throughout the chapters of *The Collective Come-Up*.

Black feminist theorists have critically analyzed the space of the garret in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* by Harriet Jacobs [Linda Brent]. Jacobs escaped her abusive slave owner, Dr. Flint, by hiding in her grandmother's tiny attic, or what she calls a "loophole of retreat," for seven years, a liminal space between enslavement and freedom.[71] Katherine McKittrick offers the garret as a seminal analytic for black women's geographies in her book, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggl*e. McKittrick situates the garret as a "paradoxical space" in that it "opens up a different way to observe slavery" and critique it as a "geography of domination" while not discernable by others (white owners, her own children, and other visitors to her grandmother's house).[72] Her gaze, McKittrick argues, is paradoxical in that "she is both inside and outside, captive

---

[70] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008), 13, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/campuspress.yale.edu/dist/1/2296/files/2017/09/Saidiya-Hartman-Venus-in-Two-Acts-1a1v7bq.pdf.

[71] Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written By Herself,*

[72] Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 61 and 42.

and free," and the garret is, at once, a "separation from and a connection to the world outside the attic."[73] Situated as such in a liminal black women's geography, Brent's position in the garret allows her to "undo traditional geographies" and "[offer] a different perspective through which slavery can be mapped." Moreover, McKittrick reiterates that Brent's "oppositional place in the garret remains punishable" if anyone found out about the crawlspace while a fugitive from slavery and its racial-sexual economies of terror.[74] Concluding her analysis of the garret in conversation with Hortense Spillers' analysis in the seminal essay, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book" (1987), McKittrick theorizes the speculative possibility for the garret as a methodology for black placemaking that is opposition to white colonial patriarchal geographies:

> Black women's geographies (post-Jacobs) are garretings—they are still unresolved because of the impact the black female body does and does not have upon traditional geographic arrangements. Black women's geographies still rest on those not-quite spaces and the different stories of displacement—but this is a workable and 'insurgent' geography, which is produced in tandem with practices of domination. While 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe' is not a treatise on garetting per se, Spillers grammatical decision—to transform the garret into a verb—within the context of her essay is important to address, in that it sets up the aforementioned tensions (the conundrums and antagonistic hidden geographies) as genealogical geographic specific to black women. Ultimately, she identifies the meaningfulness of Jacobs's/Brent's garret and opens up the question of symbolic imaginative and/or political geographic work the garret can do beyond the attic. Black women's knowable sense of place is often still found 'in the last place they thought of,' across the logic of white and patriarchal maps."[75]

In relation to McKittrick's foundational reading and analysis of the garret of *Incidents* to articulate the stakes of black women's geographies, I am further compelled by the "demonic ground" of private property, in this case the garret within a private property owned by a Jacobs's/Brent's grandmother, Aunt Marthy in the narrative, who is based on Molly Horniblow, her grandmother's real name. A

---

[73] Ibid., 42.

[74] Ibid., 43.

[75] Ibid., 62.

crucial aspect of the paradoxical nature of this space and the sense of oppositional potential of the garret, that is made possible through a black maternal figure's ownership of the house? Ananya Roy portrays the "uneasily resolvable" paradox of property ownership of black former slaves and their descendants depicted in her article, "Dis/Possessive Collectivism," when she asks,

> What for example, becomes of the logic of possession when dispossession is understood not simply as a process of capital accumulation but also that of racial banishment? For while property may be owned through a subprime loan, through repurchase, and even through occupation of a foreclosed home, what about the personhood that was once itself property?[76]

Building on this latter question, I consider *what about private property ownership for the personhood that was at once property and forced to reproduce property?* In the *Collective Come-Up*, I build on this provocation by McKittrick of the "garetting" of black women's geographies and Hortense Spillers analytic of black women as "property *plus*" while engaging seminal work by Urban Studies scholars like Ananya Roy, by attending to local community-based instantiations of private property ownership in black spatial imaginaries in some of Baltimore's community organizers, fugitives, artists, students, urban farmers, sex workers, and non-profit workers with low to middle incomes (LMI). What is the place of black property in imaginaries and urban plans for black placemaking, for battle against "gentrification as warfare," and for sanctuary, albeit fraught, for black queer and trans women's modes of kinship, domesticity, and social reproduction? As the cornerstone of liberal capitalism, private property is after all, still very much married to its origins in settler colonialism, chattel slavery in the Americas, and global imperialism.

This black feminist ethnography of urban black land movement in Baltimore that centers black women is the springboard for my inquiry on the "fungible" place of private property in black women's black spatial imaginaries in relation to uneven settler colonial and anti-black processes of

---

[76] Ananya Roy, "Dis/possessive Collectivism: Property and Personhood at City's End," *Geoforum* 80 (2017): A1-A11.

uneven capitalism urbanization. Under the regime of neoliberal capitalism, the state and the financial industry *zone* black women for dispossession, displacement, and discipline and tags their homes – owned, mortgaged, and leased – as always already ripe for the taking through foreclosure, eviction, demolition, and/or state-sanctioned police violence. In the post-crisis neoliberal property regime, the state portends that black women's market invitation into the real estate market has been rid of its systematic gendered racism and the promise of the democratization of finance has been realized…again. The dissertation creates a dialectic between the inescapable gendered, racialized, and sexualized violence of the liberal property regime in the aftermath of the subprime foreclosure crisis and an urban black land movement that centers black queer and trans women's placemaking with/across private property to stitch a stronghold against gentrification and safe neighborhoods for black queer and trans lives.

For Spillers, several analyses of property come to bear in her article. With reference to "the captive female body,"[77] Spillers remarks upon the nature and the "boundaries of *proliferating* properties."[78] She uses the verb proliferate as an adjective in its gerund form in her analysis of black women's "genetic" or biological reproduction during slavery in which the offspring of enslaved black females birthed did not belong to them despite the rules of consanguinity that governed the white patriarchal family. Spillers questions whether relationship among the enslaved should be called "kinship," under the hegemonic patrilineal and patriarchal rubric of kinship, "the offspring would then belong to the mother and father."[79] In relation to captive black females forced to give birth to property with life in the plantation economy, Spillers further explains, "I would call this enforced

[77] Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe, 67.

[78] Ibid., 75.

[79] Ibid., 74-75.

state of *breach* another instance of vestibular cultural formation where 'kinship' loses meaning, since it can be invaded at any given and arbitrary moment by the *property relations*" (emphasis mine)[80] For Spillers, this is an invasion and breach of the enslaved female's "reproductive capacity," to use Jennifer Morgan's term.[81] Black mothers or fathers, as an economic rule, cannot possess their offspring. The enslaved black female's birthing of property, despite and through its proliferation, created a vestibule of black dispossession at the collective level that carries over into the ongoing "afterlife of slavery."[82] As black property, the enslaved person was dispossessed of "access to the issue of his/her own body" and any black body it birthed.[83] Further, the co-constitutive nature of "kinlessless" and "the enslaved person as property" is an aspect of the "conditions of enslavement" that *carried over*, as a teleological mathematics equation, into the issue of black people's private property ownership.[84]

With the concept of *speculative social reproduction*, I build on work in the subfield of Feminist Political Economy (FPE) and black feminist theorists. A helpful article in FPE is "Financing Social Reproduction: The Gendered Relations of Debt and Mortgage Finance in Twenty-First-Century America" by Adrienne Roberts. She explains that in the shift to neoliberal capitalism, social reproduction has been re-privatized and "debt has become an increasing important means of financing social reproduction." This post-Keynesian shift disadvantages women because they disproportionately perform and pay for social reproduction in their households. Roberts reiterates

[80] Ibid., 74.

[81] Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 56.

[82] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 6.

[83] Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 73.

[84] Ibid., 74.

that women have disproportionately "accumulated debt" as a function of the neoliberal state's normalization of propertied citizens who reproduce themselves through individual "asset-based welfare." Because of the gendered relations of social reproduction that Roberts describes, "women face higher risk of foreclosure and bankruptcy." trends that are compounded for black women who are single-mothers and who rely on mortgage finance to supplement their wages to make social reproduction in their households possible and of adequate living standards. Roberts reiterates that women have disproportionately "accumulated debt" given that they are disproportionately targeted for subprime mortgages. In the shift from social citizenship to market citizenship, many women, particularly women of color, have had to engage in "asset-based welfare" with toxic assets.[85]

Roberts' article enables me to build my concept of speculative social reproduction, because she portrays the gendered and racialized dimensions of "asset-based welfare" – a neoliberal project doomed to fail. In my research project, black women in Baltimore underscore the precarity and predation in their own experiences "asset-based welfare" – the mode of social reproduction that is normalized by the state and capital. Rather than persisting alone in the Sisyphean task of privatized social reproduction, many of the black women in *Black Feminists Against Foreclosure*, engage in community organizing that counters "the culture of speculation" in Wall Street generally and in the real estate market particularly.[86] Further, their immaterial labor extends beyond their own respective households to transform both an "abstract market" and a propertied citizenship that are actually predicated on racial and gender subordination.

In Baltimore, black women in the subprime mortgage market perform s*peculative social reproduction* to work against subprime foreclosure and the "placelessness" that scholars such as

---

[85] Adrienne Roberts, "Financing Social Reproduction: The Gendered Relations of Debt and Mortgage Finance in Twenty-First-Century America," *New Political Economy* 18, no. 1 (2013): 21–42.

[86] Anette Baldauf, "Betting the House," *Rethinking Marxism* 22, no. 2 (2010): 219-230.

Katherine McKittrick reiterate are fundamental to the ontology and the material conditions and of blackness – a characteristic that gives black racialization meaning through the logic of dispossession.[87] This social reproduction is a spatial and affective practice that comes out of the black feminist tradition (as evident in the historiography listed above), and it counters what Chandan Reddy and Ananya Roy call "banishment" and "racial banishment" respectively.[88] Roy's seminal ethnographic article about the transnational solidarity between the Chicago Anti-Eviction Defense and South Africa's Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, "Dis/Possessive Collectivism: Property and Personhood at City's End." Both collectives carry out 'home liberations' in their communities to counter the modes of "racial banishment" produced by the subprime foreclosure crisis in Chicago and South African banks' predatory eviction strategies that banish black South Africans to the disinvested margins of urban space, what she calls "city's end." Both organizing collectives in "Dis/possessive Collectivism" challenge the violence of liberalism's property regimes in both places by taking up the politics of "emplacement," that is, moving evictees back into their homes, blocking service disconnections and delaying the banks' practices of preemptive evictions in courtrooms and in their poor and black communities.[89] In *The Collective Come-Up*, I use Roy's analysis of collectivism to underscore the ways that black queer and trans women in Baltimore organize through private property ownership or in relation to private property to bring about speculative social reproduction on a community or collectivist scale, despite the organizing locus of private property. The speculative social reproduction that I read among black women organizers in Baltimore is a spatial

---

[87] Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, no. 8 (2011), 948.

[88] See Chandan Reddy, F*reedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the US State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011) and Ananya Roy, "Dis/possessive Collectivism: Property and Personhood at City's End," *Geoforum* 80 (2017): A1-A11.

[89] Ananya Roy, "Dis/possessive Collectivism."

and affective practice that comes out of the black feminist tradition of urban planning "at the kitchen table."

Chapter Abstracts

In Chapter 1, "'We Call Them Bandos: Black Trans Fugitivity and Performance in Geographies of Foreclosure," I theorize the violence of the liberal paradigm of private property from a black transfeminist epistemology of finance capital. Though black feminist analysis of the murder of Tyra Trent, a black transgender woman in a vacant property in the Park Heights neighborhood of West Baltimore, I argue that the subprime foreclosure crisis is a condition of possibility for anti-black and transmisogynist murders that take places in abandoned buildings in Baltimore's geographies of foreclosure. Importantly, I consider geographies of foreclosure as overlapping and not merely contingent about houses that are foreclosed through court filings, but also the other historical and ongoing technologies of black dispossession in the urban context including "capital regression" through and municipal disinvestment in black communities, urban renewal plans and processes, and the prison industrial complex.[90] I put these in dialectic with the ways in which black trans lives specifically are rendered placeless and their life chances, reproduced as foreclosed, in the everyday life of racial capitalism and through the neoliberal state's assemblage of empty space for the prolonged futures of real estate investment capital. I mobilize this analysis to begin conceptualizing the mechanics of black trans "economies of dispossession" within the uneven processes of neoliberal capitalist urbanization in the United States[91]

[90] Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, *The Hero's Fight: African Americans in West Baltimore and the Shadow of the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 109.

[91] Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy. "Predatory Value," 2.

The second half of Chapter 1 critically examines the art and performance of Project 42, one in which transgender and gender variant artists memorialize and celebrate the lives of trans-feminine murder victims. Through dressmaking that incorporates the interests and passions of the deceased and the geo-imaging of landscape in which they were murdered, Project 42 deterritorializes resistance to housing financialization and speculative real estate development projects. Through the performances of living transgender women who invoke the dead in their honorary dresses, Project 42 demonstrates the insurgent and critical capacity of the memorialization of black transgender "afterlives" for resistance to speculative urbanism and the construction of black trans counterpublics.

In Chapter 2, "'Won't Be Gentrified Out of Our Space': Financial Pedagogies with Black Queer Properties, I examine the unique financial literacy workshops that Brioxy cultivates within its black land movement in West Baltimore's geographies of subprime foreclosure, black displacement, and gentrification. I situate this black queer collective's Black First-Time Homebuyer workshops in relation to other financial literacy workshops that have proliferated in the post-crisis era. Brioxy cultivates ephemeral black economic geographies within the workshops, which take place in Brioxy's black-queer owned arts and community building spaces, which they name and theorize as *Thirdspaces*. Within them, the workshops are, at once, spaces of knowledge production about housing financialization, racial capitalism, and its disidentificatory politics of property ownership for intentional community building. As such, Brioxy's workshops serve as impromptu meetings within Brioxy's black queer urban planning praxis in which the organization mobilizes *the black creative class* to buy privately together against speculative real estate development and gentrification. With a collectivist praxis of black private property ownership at the neighborhood level, Brioxy's workshops offer *a shelter* against the risk of predatory finance in the mortgage market by crafting black queer financial subjectivities predicated on financial management across individual households.

In the chapter, I portray the financial pedagogies for black queer placemaking in Brioxy's black land movement against gentrification while also pointing to the model's relationship to black political such as black capitalism, homonormativity, and anti-gentrification.

In Chapter 3, I continue my ethnographic analysis of Brioxy's black land movement to discuss why a black festival that celebrates the abolition of slavery become a radical cornerstone in the struggle against black displacement and gentrification in West Baltimore's Reservoir Hill. Recent celebrations for Juneteenth Independence Day at Dovecote Café, a vital black queer-owned community space on the first floor of a mixed-use historic rowhouse in the Reservoir Hill neighborhood, have been the first in Baltimore, Maryland since the 1990s. By resurrecting key aspects of the Juneteenth chapter from the "black radical tradition", Brioxy aimed to build shared community knowledge about its black land movement in which black Baltimore locals mount a refusal to predatory lending, black dispossession, and gentrification. Brioxy ignites its anti-gentrification organizing with the fire and "jubilee" of the past by creatively and performatively mining the "black radical tradition" of historical Juneteenth Festivals,[92] including its black cultural iconography, festive activities, and implicit and explicit critiques of anti-blackness in the genealogy of the US property.

In Chapter 4, "Foreclosing on White Property: Black Queer Garden & Home Tours," I analyze Brioxy's strategic take-over of a pathway of both speculative urbanism and gentrification in the Reservoir Hill neighborhood. As a covert black queer urban planning strategy during "home tour season," Brioxy centers the very modes of domesticity that the subprime mortgage market targeted at the highest rates in the lead up to the market crash with the categorization of "high risk"

[92] Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

households and properties.[93] While working to foreclose the deleterious ways that whiteness offers white people a currency or an economic advantage within the real estate market, what Critical Race Feminist Cheryl Harris calls "whiteness as property," Brioxy simultaneously organized a plan and a praxis to repurpose that entryway for young black non-heteronormative creatives to purchase residential property within the context of a black land movement or "buy up the block" imperative.[94] Importantly, I situate this black queer urban planning strategy in the home tourism industry in the context of both the historic preservation and restoration movement. I also point to the role of historic home tours in the urban context – overlapping with anti-black histories of urban renewal programs and now in the contexts of lingering geographies of subprime foreclosure. Brioxy aimed to foreclose white real estate speculation in neighborhoods with predominately *black property* in which black residents reside while creating black queer in-home and cross-household encounters that instigated members of the *black creative class* at Juneteenth to consider buying houses in Res Hill before larger speculative real estate development projects underway drastically increased the property values of the neighborhood and enticed white middle-class hipsters and artists to buy homes in the neighborhood.

---

[93] Elvin Wyly and C. S. Ponder, "Gender, Age, and Race in Subprime America," *Housing Policy Debate* 21, no. 4 (2011): 529-564, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2011.615850.

[94] See Cheryl I. Harris, "The Afterlife of Slavery: Markets, Property, Race," *Artists' Space via YouTube*, 19 January 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQQGndN3BvY.

CHAPTER ONE: "We Call Them Bandos": Black Trans Fugitivity and Performance in Geographies of Foreclosure

On February 19, 2011, a black man who had been searching for his runaway dog in the Central Park Heights neighborhood in West Baltimore claimed that he heard barking in the backyard of the vacant house at 3307 Virginia Avenue. He followed the sound and soon learned that the dog was an alarm: the discovery of a dead body. From the backyard, the black man entered an opening to the house with stairs descending to the basement of the vacant house, where he saw the lifeless and naked body of a black person, Tyra Trent, on the ground. He called the police. A news story by *CBS Baltimore* on February 23rd announces, "Transgender Woman Found Dead in a Vacant Home." In the article, Tyra Trent's friends describe her as "bright, loving, and motivated." She was 25 years old when she was murdered and abandoned in the "vacant city-owned house." As the news story grimly recounts, Detective Kevin Brown of the Baltimore City Police Department (BCPD) reported that "preliminary Medical Examiner (ME) reports indicate the victim died of asphyxiation or strangulation."[95]

The Mayor and the City Council of Baltimore owned the cluster of five vacant and derelict rowhouses at the end of the 3300 block of Virginia Avenue were all owned by the Mayor and the City Council of Baltimore, that is, the Baltimore city government. 3307 shared a wall with another rowhouse, and the porches of both homes touched. When I visited the property for the first time on March 19, 2018, the air still had the gray pallor of Maryland's mid-Atlantic winter. The trees between 3307 and 3305, and the duplex of rowhouses next to it did not have leaves, but a few birds chirped anyway. A graffiti artist had tagged some of the wooden boards that covered windows and doors with the name, "HILO" in blue spray paint. Trash littered the yard, and someone had left a child-

[95] Weijia Jiang, "Transgender Woman Found Dead in Vacant House," *CBS Baltimore*, 23 February 2011, https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2011/02/23/transgender-woman-found-dead-in-vacant-home/.

size toy car that I imagined a black child riding. The house looked like it had previously been on fire. Across the street, a "single-family" house with white paint peeling down its outer walls had a blue sign on the door that read, "Vacants 2 Value: Demolition on the Way!" A barren tree in the front yard cast its black shadow onto the unkempt lawn, more dirt than grass. In this chapter, I did not go looking for the killer, the perpetrator, or a criminal. I also did not go looking for Tyra Trent in the initial scope of the research project for this dissertation research. I am a black non-binary community organizer from Maryland and a black feminist ethnographer who researches the organized resistance and community organizing praxes of black women who were/are subprime debtors in the afterlife of the foreclosure crisis in Baltimore, Maryland. The 2011 news story about Tyra Trent's murder "fell through the cracks" of my initial inquiry, a phrase that the director of the Maryland non-profit organization, Trans United, explained of transgender women who move across city streets and spaces when interviewed for the *CBS Baltimore* article. Originally, I sought out black women organizers who mortgage lenders steered into predatory subprime mortgages from the 1990s to 2007, when the housing market crashed. The spatial shifts in the landscape during and "after" the foreclosure crisis created a material assemblage of precarity for Baltimore's black communities – a bio-necropolitical mode of urban planning that manages difference and value along axes of racialized gender and sexuality.[96] The formidable geography of foreclosed and/or vacant properties includes Baltimore City with 16,500 vacant properties as of 2018.[97]

Tyra's murder in the geography of subprime foreclosure explicitly connects the financial crisis and the Great Recession to the heightened pattern of deadly violence and disposability of black

[96] Michael McIntyre and Heidi J. Nast, "Bio(necro)polis: Marx, Surplus Populations, and the Spatial Dialectics of Reproduction and 'Race,'" *Antipode* 43, no. 5 (2011): 1465-1488. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00906.x.

[97] Ian Duncan, "In 2010, Baltimore had 16,800 Vacants. Eight Years and Millions of Dollars Later, the Number is Down to 16,500," *The Baltimore Sun*, 26 April 2018, https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-vacant-demolition-blocks-20180227-story.html.

transgender women in the neoliberal city.[98] The long temporality and visceral materiality of the effects of the foreclosure crisis are significant conditions of possibility for "trans necropolitics," a term developed by Trans Studies theorists, C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn. Drawing on Michel Foucault (1978) and Achille Mbembe (2003), Snorton and Haritaworn articulate trans necropolitics as the state and capital's management of transgender people with "multiple vulnerabilities" as "degenerate and killable" through spectacular violation. [99] In this chapter, I consider the neoliberal state as a "state-financial nexus," to use economic geographer David Harvey's term.[100] The term portrays the neoliberal principle that the "state power should protect financial institutions at all costs." Harvey explains that this relationship between the state and finance capital goes against the typical "non-interventionism that neoliberal theory prescribed, [which] emerged from the New York City fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s." He also points to the same trend in the US government's bail-

[98] I use Tyra Trent's first name to refer to her throughout this chapter with intentionality. Several feminist historians critique the citational differences between references to men and women in publications wherein (cis)women are referred to with the alleged informality of their first names and (cis)men are referred to and honored with the alleged formality and credibility of their last names, as is customary in activist narratives and discourses in social movements such as Black Lives Matter and Trans Lives Matter. Further, black historians and everyday black people in the US critique white historians' and everyday white people's references to black people by their first names during and after slavery in historical texts, public media, and in interpersonal contexts as this connoted inferior, subservient, and dehumanized social status. In present-day activist communities and social movements such as The Movement for Black Lives and Transgender Justice Movements, activists refer to and memorialize black transgender women who have been murdered by fiercely declaring their first names at protests and in public discourse. In doing so these activists and social movements honor the name that transgender person chose during their life, which is often not honored by their biological relatives or consistently in newspaper articles, as was the case in news sources that covered Tyra's murder. In the English language, Tyra's last name is also commonly used as a masculine first name. For these reasons, which are ethical, I have landed on the use her first name - the name that she chose - to consider aspects of her life and death in a socioeconomic and trans justice context in this chapter.

[99] Jin Haritaworn and C. Riley Snorton, "Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death and the Trans of Color Afterlife" in *The Transgender Studies Reader* 2, eds. Susan Styker and Aren Z. Aizura (New York: Routledge, 2013), 66-76.

[100] David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 55-56.

out of Wall Street banks after the subprime mortgage market crashed in 2008,[101] even though the "deregulation of the finance" seems to suggest the government and finance capital are separate. [102]

Simultaneously, trans visibility is at an all-time high in popular media, which has not led to the decrease of deadly violence against trans women of color, as argued by the editors of the 2017 anthology, *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*,[103] Tourmaline Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton. Over a decade after the onset of the subprime mortgage crisis, Tyra and other black trans women in "post-crisis" Baltimore navigate the city's minefield of vacant dwellings as "black trans fugitives" from racial and gender discipline that is enacted by vacant properties in geographies of foreclosure. Through the housing crisis specifically, racial capitalism and settler-colonialism imbue foreclosed properties with the capacity to kill.

The foreclosure crisis *assembled* spaces of precarity, blight, and disinvestment within Baltimore's black communities, which bring about premature death for black trans women and other multiply marginalized people in surplus populations. However, trans cultural production and trans social reproduction *disassemble* normative definitions and discourses of home and property in the age of finance capital. I consider Tyra Trent's transit across geographies of subprime foreclosure in dialectic with black trans art and performance that fiercely memorializes her life. In this chapter, I use mixed methods and seemingly divergent bodies of literature to situate Tyra Trent and her murder in the archive of the subprime foreclosure crisis. As a queer and non-binary identified black

---

101 Ibid., 10-11.

102 To this point, in their chapter, "Neoliberal Urbanism: Cities and the Rule of Markets" (2011), Nik Theodore, Jamie Peck, and Neil Brenner explain that "while neoliberalism aspires to create a utopia of free markets, liberated from all forms of state interference, it has in practice entailed a dramatic intensification of coercive, disciplinary forms of state intervention in order to impose versions of market rule and, thereafter, to manage the consequences and contradictions of marketization" (16).

103 Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton (editors), *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (New York: New Museum, 2017).

feminist ethnographer, I engaged in the affective process of visiting the murder site, a property that felt more like a graveyard than a home. In March 2018 and January 2019, *visiting with* the property and the land at 3307 Virginia Avenue as a black queer ethnographic method, I experienced the affective haunting of the foreclosure crisis,[104] the "planned abandonment" by the Baltimore city Department of Planning urban renewal project for the area, and indeed, the anti-black and transmisogynist domestic violence carried out by the person(s) who killed Tyra. Drawing on theories of capitalist urbanization by economic geographers and black feminist critical theory of property, racial capitalism, and domesticity, I construct an analysis of uneven capitalist development that is rooted in an engagement with the "black trans radical tradition."[105] With these assemblages of theories and ethnographic affects, I examine the foreclosure crisis and the post-crisis urban renewal plan in the West Baltimore neighborhood of Park Heights. Ultimately, I demonstrate that *both* black trans necropolitics and black trans "counterpublics" are dialectical possibilities at these subprime architectural sites.[106]

Throughout the chapter, I refer to vacant properties as *bandos*, which is a term that my black queer friend and colleague from Park Heights, Professor Unique Robinson, shared as a local colloquialism that people use in lieu of the phrase, "abandoned buildings." As we both prepped for our respective classes as Part-Time Faculty members in the Humanistic Studies Department at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), I took a moment to tell her about my research on black women's organized resistance to post-housing crisis foreclosure and gentrification in West Baltimore. "We call them bandos." [107] As a colloquialism with considerable traction across black

---

[104] Avery Gordon, *Ghostly matters: Haunting and the sociological imagination*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

[105] Citation needed

[106] Drawing on Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant's "queer counterpublics" term.

[107] Unique Robinson (Part-Time Faculty, Maryland Institute of Art) in discussion with the author, October 2018.

geographies in West Baltimore, the ubiquity of the term bando signals that of the derelict structures as a familiar and haunting place that warrants a local name. The *we* invoked could reference a way of knowing that is familiar to other black queer folks who grew up and live in West Baltimore, black folx in Baltimore generally, and/or black folx in the neighborhood where Unique grew up "over West" called Park Heights. I think it was a combination of all three. Baltimore has 30,000 vacants altogether, which includes vacant lots and 16,500 vacant properties to date.[108] *Bandos* truncates the term, "abandoned buildings," but I suspect that it's not just for convenience. This locution also signals a collective refusal of the adjective "abandoned." The Department of Planning systematically abandoned vacant dwellings through an actual "plan." The city's planned or state-orchestrated capital and infrastructural abandonment of Park Heights in the years lead up to the subprime mortgage market crash underwrote the "racial calculus"[109] through which Wells Fargo termed black neighborhoods as filled with "mud people" and deserving of "ghetto loans."[110]

I begin the chapter by framing the bando at 3307 Virginia Avenue as an example of *subprime architecture*, a structure produced by the state rather than merely as an "abandoned building," a term that implicates the former tenant or owner as the cause of dereliction. In fact, the Department of Planning abandoned these subprime structures in Park Heights during a prolonged temporality of abandonment – a decade after the onset of the foreclosure crisis. During this time, the Department of Planning completed the planned acquisition and demolition of enough *bandos* to stitch together an assemblage of empty land to market to a real estate developer as a "spatial fix" for private surplus

---

[108] Ian Duncan, "In 2010, Baltimore had 16,800 Vacants. Eight Years and Millions of Dollars Later, the Number is Down to 16,500," *The Baltimore Sun*, 26 April 2018, https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-vacant-demolition-blocks-20180227-story.html.

[109] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 6.

[110] Charlie Savage, "Wells Fargo Will Settle Mortgage Bias Charges." *New York Times*, July 2, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/13/business/wells-fargo-to-settle-mortgage-discrimination-charges.html.

capital.[111] Building on this framing, I locate the house within the Park Heights Master Plan (2006, 2008), which the Baltimore City Department of Planning published in the midst of the subprime mortgage crisis. The plan calls for the construction of an emptied urban frontier in the middle of Park Heights through demolition of derelict *bandos* and the forced displacement of local residents and, ostensibly, *derelicts* or *bandits*. In turn, subprime architecture propels black trans women into a condition of perpetual fugitivity and create *carceral* spaces of the demolition of black people in urban surplus populations. With modes of sociality and kinship that do not conform to the norms of the liberal family to whom future properties will be marketed, the Department of Planning knowingly or unknowingly positions black trans women as co-constitutive with vacants: both marked for removal to entice speculative real estate developers with an assemblage of "empty land."

In the second half of this chapter, I offer my analysis of Project 42's memorialization of Tyra Trent through performance art and stitching an honorary dress for Tyra with a design and labor that deterritorializes the geographies of foreclosure that coalesced to reproduce Tyra and black neighborhoods as surplus and unsalvageable. By disassembling and reassembling the landscape through dressmaking and performance, Project 42 offers a *black trans counterpublic* to the transmisogynist economy of black disavowal upon which geographies of urban renewal and subprime foreclosure are predicated. Specifically, I examine the political possibility enacted by Project 42's memorialization of murdered transgender women through assemblage and art. By visiting 3307 Virginia Avenue, I demonstrate the spatialization of both black trans necropolitics and "black [trans*] women's geographies" as dialectical possibilities at *bandos*.[112] As liminal architectures of the neoliberal era, *bandos* are at times inside and at times outside the scope of state surveillance, at

---

[111] David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital*, 50.

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

times places for the disposability of surplus populations and at other times, places of refuge, shelter, camaraderie; at times places for disinvestment and other times places marked for reinvestment.[113]

Baltimore Histories of Housing Abandonment

The history and maintenance of racial segregation in the housing market underwrites the policies of mid-century urban renewal in major cities like Baltimore, which have ultimately reproduced black communities as surplus and black people as surplus populations. Commonly called the "Baltimore pattern," government and real estate industry practices have planned and implemented predatory practices to engender racial demographic shifts in the city's neighborhoods from white to Jewish to black.[114] As scholars of racial capitalism demonstrate, race is the ground through which land expropriation and uneven processes of capitalist accumulation across urban geographies transpires.[115] Antero Pietila's book, *Not in My Neighborhood,* shows that the racial-geographic patterns in Baltimore housing are underwritten by systematic racism of the state and the real estate industry alongside the racial prejudices of white residents who preferred to create homes and communities as places without "Negro invasion" or proximity to black residents.[116]

Jim Crow policies and Jim Crow capitalism "underdeveloped" black places in cities through various tactics of ghettoization and "predatory commerce."[117] In 1948, the Supreme Court ruled that

---

[113] Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," *Critical inquiry* 24, no. 2 (1998): 547-566.

[114] Antero Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City* (Chicago: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 15.

[115] Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[116] Antero Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 54.

[117] Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, *The Hero's Fight*, 109.

Shelley v. Kraemer "the enforcement of racially restrictive covenants was contrary to public policy."[118] However, upheld the racially restrictive covenants as private contracts did not violate any Fourteenth Amendment Rights. Racially restrictive covenants proliferated in the mid-20th century, and white residents and neighborhood associations in Baltimore barred black city residents from the suburban geographies of investment in the post-World War II period. In the Roland Park neighborhood barred black people from living there unless they worked as live-in servants within white people's homes. The practice of blockbusting also reproduced racial segregation in Baltimore. Pietila writes,

> After World War II when millions of whites fled America's city neighborhoods because they feared blacks. Victims of their own hysteria, they sold their homes below market value to panic-peddling blockbusters, who then flipped them to blacks at extraordinary markup.[119]

Blockbusting, Pietila explains, actually transferred "the astronomical modernization liabilities of substandard housing to unsuspecting black buyers" and ultimately tanked the property values in Baltimore's black communities.[120] In the 1960s, despite efforts by the Baltimore branch of the Urban League and a group called Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc., "the lending industry generally denied mortgages to the few whites who wished to move to changing neighborhoods."[121]

Historian Lawrence Brown maps Baltimore's geography of residential racism with his spatial analytic, the "black butterfly" and the "white L." He visualizes the material imprint of historical redlining in Baltimore's present-day geographies of race, housing, land, and black dispossession. He writes,

> Baltimore is a city that is hyper segregated into two parts. Because of 105 years of racist policies and practices, Baltimore's hyper segregated neighborhoods experience radically different realities. Due to this dynamic, the white neighborhoods on the

---

[118] Antero Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 107.

[119] Ibid., xii.

[120] Ibid., 108.

[121] Ibid., 186-188.

> map that form the shape of an 'L' accumulate structured advantages, while Black neighborhoods, shaped in the form of a butterfly, accumulate structured disadvantages. Baltimore's hyper segregation is the root cause of racial inequity, crime, health inequities/disparities, and civil unrest.[122]

With the practice of redlining, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) distributed neighborhood maps on which black and Latinx neighborhoods were outlined in red. These maps were used by the HOLC and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to advise real estate appraisers to note 'adverse influences' which included 'inharmonious racial groups.'[123]
While scholars often call the mass exodus of white residents from major US cities like Baltimore, "white flight," sociologist Patricia Fernandez-Kelly reframes it as "capital regression."[124] White and capital flight from Baltimore city was timed with the Great Migration of black people to Northern urban centers from the American South, deindustrialization and an "epidemic" of factory closures and the relocation of multiple Baltimore manufacturers to the suburbs. In the context of the "economic breakdown" of inner-cities, the 1980s and 1990s drug trade escalated in Baltimore; however, Fernandez-Kelley explains that " there is no inevitable line of causation between drug consumption and urban decay [and that] most consumers of controlled substances in the United States do not live in Black ghettos."[125]

Landlords, mortgage brokers, and banks rely on and reproduce cultural racism in both the rental market and the property market to peg black people's failure to achieve the "paradigm of

---

[122] Lawrence Brown, "Two Baltimores: The White L vs. the Black Butterfly," *The Baltimore Sun*, 28 June 2016, https://www.baltimoresun.com/citypaper/bcpnews-two-baltimores-the-white-l-vs-the-black-butterfly-20160628-htmlstory.html.

[123] Kevin A. Park and Roberto G. Quercia, "Who Lends Beyond the Red Line? The Community Reinvestment Act and the Legacy of Redlining," *Housing Policy Debate* 30, no. 1 (2020): 4-26, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2019.1665839.

[124] Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, *The Hero's Fight*, 109.

[125] Ibid., 111.

propertied citizenship" on their "individual, moral deficiencies."[126] In her article, "The Circle of Dispossession: Evicting the Urban Poor in Baltimore," Gretchen Purser finds that renters are blamed for their evictions by landlords and the dispossessed workers who engage in the labor of evictions. Geographies of black subprime mortgage dispossession are undeniably imbricated with the "circle of dispossession" that characterizes Baltimore's rental market in which there are "roughly 7500 yearly evictions."[127] In her groundbreaking book, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor reveals the gendered racism of FHA mortgage loans through which black women were hyper-exploited and peddled houses with enticing veneers that lenders used to mask the intensive repairs.[128] This instantiation of racialized and gendered predatory lending, or what she calls "predatory inclusion," began before the official dawn of the subprime mortgage industry. These practices of "predatory inclusion" during the decades of the urban crisis intersected with the fierce modes of tenant activism that black women organized in racially segregated public housing with substandard living conditions and the beginning of the Reagan to Clinton era defunding and pervasive demolition of public housing on a national scale, as Rhonda Y. Williams recounts in her book about Baltimore, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles Against Urban Inequality* that spans 20th-century housing politics.[129] The histories of gendered racism by predatory mortgage lending and the city's maintenance of substandard derelict public housing demonstrate the varied ways in which the state and predatory financial institutions have worked in tandem to demarcate black neighborhoods as surplus, sites of degradation, and

---

[126] Gretchen Purser, "The Circle of Dispossession: Evicting the Urban Poor in Baltimore," *Critical Sociology* 42, no. 3 (2016): 393.

[127] Ibid., 402.

[128] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2019).

[129] Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles Against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

excessive geographies of waste. As neighborhoods around what has been rebranded as the continuous land system of Gwynn Falls-Leakin Park in South Baltimore shifted to black neighborhoods through the practice of blockbusting, as was the case with the Windsor Hills neighborhood, the city's planned "capital regression" [130] from the park rendered it a space of abandonment in which predominantly black women's dead bodies have been dumped amidst the violence of the illicit drug trade in West Baltimore, the War on Drugs, and the post-Keynesian shift to a service-industry labor market. Moreover, Baltimore's present-day landscape of abandoned housing and land arose and arises from the city's urban renewal policies. In Baltimore's history planned demolitions of public housing like Ednor Gardens and Murphy Homes, black middle-class neighborhoods like Rosemont in West Baltimore, and black slums belabor the point that the state coordinates black housing and land through a pendulum of categorization: from spaces of hyper exploitation to spaces of surplus waste. Emily Lieb's chapter, "'White Man's Lane': Hollowing Out the Highway Ghetto in Baltimore," conveys that the plans for east-west highway construction along the Franklin-Mulberry corridor in West Baltimore rendered black middle-class neighborhoods and slums both subject to demolition and the residents therein, planned dispossession and displacement. Lieb explains, highway officials had failed to differentiate between black neighborhoods and blighted ones."[131]

Following the pattern of redlined residential maps, subprime mortgage lenders targeted black communities through the discriminatory practice of *reverse redlining*. Some scholars use the term

---

[130] Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, *The Hero's Fight: African Americans in West Baltimore and the Shadow of the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 109.

[131] Emily Lieb, "'White Man's Lane': Hollowing Out the Highway Ghetto in Baltimore," in *Baltimore'68: Riots and Rebirth in an American City*, ed. by Jessica Elfenbein, Thomas Hollowak, and Elizabeth Nix (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 65.

greenlighting to explain that ways that mortgage lenders flooded neighborhoods of color."[132] From the 1990s onward, mortgage lenders disproportionately focused their attention on the specific redlined neighborhoods that had been denied equal access credit in the post-WWII era. Economic geographer Elvin Wyly et. al explain that "risky, deceptive practices in the 'subprime' mortgage market were particularly effective in replacing the old rigid justifications for exclusionary racism with more flexible, entrepreneurial forms of *inclusionary* discrimination."[133] Unfortunately, Baltimore was not an exception to this neoliberal shift in mortgage finance. Wells Fargo in the lawsuit, *The City of Baltimore v. Wells Fargo*, which was settled in 2012.[134] As the *New York Times* article, "Baltimore Finds Subprime Crisis Snags Women," mortgage brokers systematically and disproportionately bound black women into toxic subprime mortgage loans, and other studies demonstrate the ways that black women are exploited and evicted in the rental market.[135]

The geographies of foreclosure in which I locate Tyra Trent's life and murder are a nexus of geographies of black dispossession that rendered West Baltimore's black neighborhoods as blighted, "abandoned," and littered with "ghost shells." I situate the blighted geographies that plague Baltimore in the present as assemblage of urban renewal policymakers' temporary abandonment of vacant properties and the gendered and racially predatory mortgage lending that begot the subprime foreclosure crisis. In the 21st century, Wells Fargo categorized mortgage loans in neighborhoods like West Baltimore's Central Park Heights as "ghetto loans" and everyone therein as "mud people," the

---

[132] Jesus Hernandez, "Redlining Revisited: Mortgage Lending Patterns in Sacramento 1930–2004," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33, no. 2 (2009): 291-313, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2009.00873.x.

[133] Elvin Wyly, C. S. Ponder, Pierson Nettling, Bosco Ho, Sophie Ellen Fung, Zachary Liebowitz, and Dan Hammel, "New Racial Meanings of Housing in America," *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2012): 571-604.

[134] Charlie Savage, "Wells Fargo Will Settle Mortgage Bias Charges." New York Times, July 2, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/13/business/wells-fargo-to-settle-mortgage-discrimination-charges.html.

[135] John Leland, "Baltimore Finds Subprime Crisis Snags Women," *New York Times*, 15 January 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/15/us/15mortgage.html.

latter a designation that implicates predatory lending practices for all black people in Baltimore, be they pay day loans, criminal justice debt, student loans, or child care.[136] Baltimore's geographies of foreclosure, produced through overlapping vectors of uneven capitalist urbanization, are black places in which the state and the financial industry reproduce as surplus waste and black residents as "mud people" *who are of* or co-constitutive with those allegedly wasted, blighted, and savage landscapes.[137]

The production of gender deviance in Baltimore's overlapping geographies of foreclosure are legion, and black transgender women and femmes are situated at the very bottom of its "matrix of domination."[138] In a 2012 news feature entitled, "Exploring the Lives of Transgender Women on the Street," which was published in *The Baltimore Sun* a little over a year after Tyra Trent's death in 2011, a trans woman named Kasey points to "abandoned buildings" as systematic and repetitive trans necropolitical sites. She explains, "*There's been too many stories about us found in abandoned buildings. It's too dangerous. Too risky.*"[139] In the larger context of the quote, Kasey conjoins the danger of *bandos* to the "danger[s]" or "risk" of sex work. While many women in Baltimore conceive of and find power in sex work, as illustrated in the Sex Worker's Outreach Project's (SWOP) phenomenal advocacy, organizing, and community building[140] the transmisogynist and anti-black discrimination in the labor market and housing markets renders sex work one of the only labor options for black

---

[136] Hannah Appel, Sa Whitley, Caitlin Kline, "The Power of Debt: Identity & Collective Action in the Age of Finance," 2019, *The Institute on Democracy and Inequality*, Accessed on June 7, 2020, https://challengeinequality.luskin.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2019/03/Appel-Hannah-THE-POWER-OF-DEBT.pdf.

[137] Charlie Savage, "Wells Fargo Will Settle Mortgage Bias Charges."

[138] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 18.

[139] Baynard Woods, "Exploring the Lives of Transgender Women on the Street," *The Baltimore Sun*, September 5, 2012, https://www.baltimoresun.com/citypaper/bcp-cms-1-1368203-migrated-story-cp-20120905-featu-20120905-story.html.

[140] "Sex Workers Outreach Project USA," *SWOP*, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://swopusa.org/.

trans women in the city at large and within black neighborhoods always already marked as spaces of surplus waste, underdevelopment, criminalization, and disinvestment. Kasey's invocation of "us" reveals that what happened to Tyra Trent in the *bando* at 3307 Virginia Avenue was both geographically and architecturally specific and systematic within geographies of urban renewal, "trans necropolitics,"[141] and subprime foreclosure. For black transgender women like Tyra, *bandos* are neoliberal architectures of "domestic carcerality" that work to capture them as fugitive, subhuman, and surplus.[142]

In her book, *Dispossessed: How Predatory Bureaucracy Foreclosed on the Middle Class*, Noelle Stout forefronts the violence of property abandonment by corporate mortgage lenders with scores of unoccupied and foreclosed properties under their management throughout the foreclosure crisis. Her analysis correlates to entities such as the Mayor and the City Council of Baltimore that purchased and acquired foreclosed properties during the foreclosure crisis. Stout writes,

> Corporate lenders, unaccustomed to managing so many properties, often allowed homes to fall into disrepair, driving down neighborhood property values and triggering blight. Yet the destruction of properties by banks was rarely, if ever, recognized as a form of violence. These vacant homes amassed city violations for neglected yards, insect and animal infestations, and infrastructural issues, while also attracting vagrants who would strip the houses of copper wire to sell or break into abandoned properties to use drugs. Real estate agents selling bank-owned properties and cleanup crews were often hard-pressed to determine whether damage had been done by spiteful homeowners or simply resulted from lenders' neglect in the years following foreclosure, during which time the homes had languished as vacancies.[143]

These histories, social processes, and urban plans together produce urban geographies of domination, which are indeed, a "deadly track." Writing about neoliberal restructuring in Post-

---

[141] Jin Haritaworn and C. Riley Snorton, "Trans Necropolitics," 2013.

[142] Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2016), 174.

[143] Noelle Stout, *Dispossessed: How Predatory Bureaucracy Foreclosed on the Middle Class* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019): 185-186.

Katrina New Orleans, Clyde Woods frames black poor people's displacement from the city as "planned abandonment," or citing President George W. Bush's approach to tax cuts to defund the welfare state, "'starve the beast' planning."[144] To be sure, these neoliberal modes of urban planning reproduce racism even where local power blocs claim to want a "better future" that is multicultural. Ruth Wilson Gilmore articulates racism as "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death."[145] Tyra's murder occurred in a landscape of precarity, one which the state and capital produced through planned abandonment and mass incarceration.

In 2013, two years after Tyra's murder, Central Park Heights (zip code: 21215) had 641 homes in default or foreclosure, the second highest of any of the "hot spot" areas in the city, with concentrations of mortgages underwater. Park Heights residents with so-called underwater mortgages "owed more than their mortgages were worth." The 2013 HAAS Institute Report explains:

> Working class communities of color are bearing a disproportionate share of the impact of the ongoing crisis. The same communities that were targeted for predatory mortgages in the first place and saw generations of wealth stripped away through foreclosures, are now concentrated in these housing hot spots, where they are more likely to be underwater on their mortgages.[146]

"We call them bandos": Precarious Geographies of Foreclosure

Within a blighted geography of foreclosure in the Park Heights neighborhood, Tyra Trent's murder occurred in a bando, 3307 Virginia Avenue, a vacant red brick rowhouse in the historic Baltimore style. Moving toward an understanding of the local dynamics of neoliberal urbanization

---

[144] Clyde Woods, *Development Drowned and Reborn: The Blues and Bourbon Restorations in Post-Katrina New Orleans* edited by Jordan T. Camp and Laura Pulido (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2017): 264.
[145] Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 247.

[146] "Underwater America: How the So-Called Housing 'Recovery' is Passing Many American Communities, Baltimore, MD," *HAAS Institute* UC Berkeley, 2013. http://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/baltimore_md.pdf.

in this section of Central Park Heights, I analyze the site of the bando at 3307 Virginia Avenue by attending to the "interconnectedness of neoliberal projects" – seemingly disparate but indeed, co-constitutive[147]– that are at work within the place/property of Tyra's murder, the space it occupies in the Department of Planning's urban renewal plan, and the temporality of post-crisis urban restructuring that the plan stimulates. These local projects include that of the Department of Planning's crisis recovery plan as articulated in the Park Heights Master Plan (2006, 2008) and the hyper-policing of black transgender women in Baltimore. What business, figuratively and literally, do these neoliberal projects of post-crisis urbanization have together? I hope to show that these two projects in West Baltimore are not separate projects that happened to be in conversation but major redevelopment projects that cannot function without the other.

According to an ordinance by the Baltimore City Council, the property where Tyra Trent's murder took place is a designated "Renewal Area,"[148] and its particular location in that area has "extremely high concentrations of vacancy."[149] However, the Renewal area still has people in it – the wrong kind of people. The Department of Planning's official gaze is of the area's black poverty, illicit economies, and "abandoned properties" as part of the local neoliberal state. In her book *Race, Class, Power, and Organizing in East Baltimore: Rebuilding Abandoned Communities in America*, Marisela B. Gomez explains the trend of what happens to neighborhoods marked by the state as "urban renewal" areas:

> Once an area is deemed an "urban renewal" area, private and public investment decreases and the local residents are left on their own to stem the flow of continued decay. This continued decay is provoked by abandoned and vacant houses—

[147]Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore, and Neil Brenner, "Neoliberal Urbanism Redux?," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 3 (2013): 1091-1099.

[148] "Urban Renewal - Park Heights - Renewal Area Designation and Urban Renewal Plan," *Baltimore Legistar*, July 21, 2008, https://baltimore.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2176145&GUID=57086C0F-492B-4DB7-9EB2-BC186EA9A058&Options=&Search=&FullText=1.

[149] "Park Heights Master Plan," September 2008, 14.

> sometimes blocks—becoming fire risks and haves for drug trafficking and use, prostitution, crime, trash dumping along with further decrease in public services to address the increasing conditions of decay. Urban renewal became synonymous with "Negro removal" in the 1950s as it resulted in largely poor and African American communities being displaced to other similarly disinvested areas, the land often used for development of private interests or public-assisted housing.[150]

This official narrative of "urban renewal" justifies a new phase of capitalist urbanization that is predicated on "declaring black residential space unsalvageable."[151] The Park Heights Master Plan provides its perception of Park Heights, which is exclusively pathological (emphasis mine):

> Driving along the main streets of Park Heights, the devastation is *plain to see*: half the buildings, both residential and commercial, are vacant and boarded up; throngs of men *can be seen* on street corners at all hours of the day giving *a firsthand glimpse* of the area's economic stagnation; and both men and women *can be observed in plain view* buying, selling and using drugs on the sidewalks or in trash ridden parks and playgrounds. In addition to the *visible* economic deterioration and crime, the widespread drug activity has placed Park Heights on a deadly track.[152]

Whoever is doing the looking does not see the possibility of black lifeways, cultures, community-building and economies that are not "plain to see."[153] Nor does the author, representing a steering committee composed of the city's Department of Planning, Baltimore Development Corporation, and the Department of Transportation led by Goody Clancy & Associates, account for ways that the socio-economic condition of Park Heights is structurally produced and even planned. According to the state, the (black) men on street are somehow the cause of economic stagnation rather than the

---

[150] Marisela B. Gomez, *Race, Class, Power, and Organizing in East Baltimore: Rebuilding Abandoned Communities in America* (Lexington Books, 2012), 3.

[151] Clyde A. Woods, *Development Drowned and Reborn: The Blues and Bourbon Restorations in Post-Katrina New Orleans* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017), 295.

[152] Park Heights Neighborhood Master Plan, adopted February 2006, amended September 2008, online version (Baltimore, MD: Department of Planning, Baltimore Housing, Baltimore Development Corporation, and Goody, Clancy & Associates), http://boldnewheights.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Master-Plan-Final-Amended-Version.pdf, accessed on June 10, 2020, 4.

[153] Ibid.

neoliberal economic restricting from the late 1970s to the present with the shift to Post-Keynesian welfarism, deindustrialization, the prison industrial complex, white flight, and urban renewal policies of slum clearance.

I draw on the specific *bando* where someone murdered Tyra Trent to articulate a spatial story of the foreclosure crisis that includes the intense precarity that it has caused in black transgender women's lives and also extend black feminist theorization of the "afterlife of property."[154] "The Mayor and the City of Baltimore" (MCC) has owned the property since September of 2008, which is an "acquisition" that was part of the Park Heights Master Plan that was adopted in February 2006 and amended in September 2008. The sale price of the house to the Logan family was $78,000; however, given the following stipulations of the Master Plan for their area of Park Heights, this transaction was arguably a repossession. The Master Plan has four strategies for addressing different housing conditions in Park Heights: Historic Preservation, Stabilization Area, Cluster Redevelopment, and Major Redevelopment Area. The different strategies of "post-crisis urban restructuring" outlined in the plan for this West Baltimore neighborhood demonstrate the "variegated geographies of neoliberal hegemony."[155] The bando in which a local black man found Tyra's body was in the Major Redevelopment Area, and the specific block is listed in Appendix A of the Master Plan as "3300-36 Virginia Avenue." As of 2019, all the residential properties that previously stood on these lots have been demolished. The City of Baltimore Department of Planning explains that the strategy for the area mass demarcated as the Major Redevelopment Area is "acquisition and relocation." The Mayor and the City of Baltimore gained "acquisition power" for all of the properties, vacant and occupied in this "major site" in the heart of Park Heights. This land-

[154] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 13.

[155] Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore, and Neil Brenner, "Neoliberal Urbanism Redux?," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 3 (2013): 1092.

use strategy requires all owners of any residential properties in the area to sell their homes to the Mayor and the City of Baltimore and relocate to a comparable dwelling in another part of the city or in Park Heights as described in this summary below:

> Site Assembly: Acquisition and Relocation: Although the redevelopment area was selected based on the dense concentration of abandoned buildings and vacant lots, not all of the properties within the redevelopment area are vacant. Some of the properties are occupied by homeowners or renters. Unfortunately, in order to turn around the blighting forces that are negatively impacting Park Heights and complete the vision of creating a new mixed-income community, it will be necessary for the City to acquire and demolish all of the properties within the redevelopment area, including those that are occupied. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (section 104(d)) and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URA) govern the acquisition and relocation process. The City will have two appraisals done and the higher of the two establishes the Fair Market Value that will be offered to the homeowner for the property. If the homeowner is unsatisfied with the selected appraised value, the homeowner can challenge it in court. When the City has completed the appraisal process and is ready to make an offer, the residents will meet with a relocation officer who will help them through the process. The relocation officer will work with the homeowner to identify the household's housing needs as well as assess the features of the current property in order to find a comparable home.[156]

The language in the section implies an inevitability of the "acquisition and relocation" plan for the Major Redevelopment Plan, which belies the fact that this is a "market-oriented plan" that caters to needs for the "surplus capital" of both land and real estate developers.[157]

Critical to the land speculation and "territorial restructuring" that the Master Plan makes possible is a settler colonial discourse that works to transform historically black communities into urban frontiers. Settler colonialism, rather than an event in the past, is an ongoing process in which U.S. citizenship is predicated on the work of the U.S. government, regional blocs of urban planning,

---

[156] Park Heights Master Plan, September 2008.

[157] David Harvey, "The Right to the City," in *The City Reader: Sixth Edition*, ed. Richard LeGates and Frederic Stout, 270-278 (New York: Routledge, 1996).

and speculative capital to actively dispossess Indigenous nations of their lands and claims to sovereignty and reproduces a multicultural landscape of citizen-settlers through private property rights and racialization of black and non-black people of color. Several critical geographers such as Joanne Barker and Sara Safransky theorize capitalist urbanization and uneven development with a settler colonial analytic. In her article, "Greening the Urban Frontier: Race, Property, and Resettlement in Detroit," Safransky explains, "Property rights and uneven development in the United States are rooted in a racial grammar of citizenship established under settler colonialism. Historically, private property rights were used to extend state power over territory (the frontier) and make responsible and productive subjects who improved the land." She examines the "settler colonial imagery" in urban planning discourses for Detroit Future City (DFC) plan, which reframe Detroit's poor racialized communities that are rife with population decline, myriad vacant properties, and illicit economies of deviance as "urban wilderness," a "dangerous jungle," and empty excess land that is ripe for "market-oriented urban environmental planning."[158]

Likewise, in Baltimore, the Park Heights Master Plan engaged in modern-day "slum clearance" of black residents and the demolition of 400 buildings from the so-called "Major Redevelopment Area" with the neighborhood. The Master Plan strategically uses the term "site assembly" interchangeably with "land assembly" to describe the strategy in place for the Major Redevelopment Area.[159] The stated goal of the City of Baltimore Department of Planning is to "assemble land for major redevelopment (1000-1300 new units)."[160] The plan designates this

---

[158] Sara Safransky, "Greening the Urban Frontier: Race, property, and resettlement in Detroit," *Geoforum* 56 (2014): 238, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.06.003.

[159] Park Heights Master Plan, 45.

[160] Ibid., 14.

particular section of Park Heights as one that needs to be emptied of both properties and people so that it can be transformed into an attractive urban frontier of investment by private developers.

The Park Heights Master Plan prescribed prolonged abandonment for the bando at 3307 Virginia Avenue from 2008 to 2018. With the "acquisition and relocation" method, the Department of Planning aimed to turn Central Park Heights into an urban frontier of "empty land" that could be "assembled" or stitched together into a "major redevelopment area" to entice investors at some unknown future date and time, which was ultimately in September 2019. In the meantime, the current owner of the bando, the Mayor and the City Council of Baltimore, enlisted the Vacants 2 Value (V2V) initiative to mark the boarded up *bandos* on Virginia Avenue for demolition and redevelopment of the plot for assemblage into a site for land speculation. On the facade of the white two-story house at 3300 Virginia Avenue across the street from the *bando* at 3307, a faded sign for the city's Vacants to Value (V2V) initiative hung alongside overgrown ivy, tangles of weeds, and windows re-made of plywood on the front of the building. The sign also says, "Demolition on the way!" I thought the exclamation point was trying too hard to convince the residents in rowhouses down the block that change was coming – change that would be valuable at an unspecified future time. Before I knew which house was which – unsure of the spray paint number system on the plywood windows – I peered down into the open basement, the five or six concrete stairs. I shuddered at the thought of the violence beneath the storm-cellar-like doors that flung open to the overcast sky. Objects in the basement and in the yard suggested that people in the area had found various uses for the house and the land.

Regarding the city's desire to entice wholesale investors, the Vacants2Value fits seamlessly into the Park Heights Master Plan's effort for the Major Redevelopment Area, which is highlighted in red on the map. The sign marks the block as a speculative place, a place earmarked by the city for the future of urban renewal. The 10-year abandonment by the Mayor and the City of Baltimore

(MCC) of the cluster of vacants on the 3300 block that includes the site where Tyra was murdered is rebranded as ephemeral and temporary. The V2V initiative has the stated goal of executing demolitions of foreclosed and otherwise abandoned houses en masse with the goal of making the plots more attractive for sale to private developers. In the Park Heights Master Plan, the Department of Urban Planning offers a detailed description equipped with watercolor renderings of what the area could look after it is cleared with the help of an incentivized private developers: brand new residential properties to sell to homebuyers or rent to city's tenants, a brand new commercial shopping center to bring in business and solidify community. The V2V initiative also markets renovated houses to prospective home buyers directly.

Baltimore's Vacants 2 Value (V2V), much like the Master Plan for Park Heights hails the city's market of prospective homebuyers through a repetitive usage of the term "families," which excludes people like Tyra who have experienced on and off homelessness related to anti-trans discrimination in hiring, the rental market, and homeless shelters alongside transmisogyny from black trans people's biological families. On the website for V2V, the initiative is described as doing the work to bring about Charm City's renaissance that to caters thousands of "families" to move into the city and for post-crisis property values to climb:

> We have made a commitment to grow the city by 10,000 families. Through Vacants to Value, we are spurring growth and reinvestment in Baltimore. When you look around the City, you can see the tremendous impact Vacants to Value is making. Vacant properties are being demolished, rehabilitated or redeveloped, making way for new housing and green space opportunities for families who want to live and work in Baltimore. People are hearing the good news about Vacants to Value and are coming from near and far to be a part of the renaissance.[161]

The initiative markets new or refurbished housing stock in "target areas" to families "who want to live and work." The target areas are neighborhoods and blocks with large swaths of vacant

[161] "About Vacants to Value," Vacants to Value, http://www.vacantstovalue.org/About.aspx.

properties like the one on Virginia Avenue where Tyra was murdered. With this focus on "families," Tyra was not part of V2V's ideal or target. The description of prospective home buyers was not one into which she fit. With reinvestment in target neighborhoods through property ownership, the city government aims to grow the city with the right kind of occupants, those who would perform normative genders, sexualities, families, and domestic lives. To be sure, the single black women and mothers who were disproportionately targeted for predatory subprime mortgages during the housing boom do not fit into V2V's model of an ideal or responsible debtor for Baltimore's renaissance,[162] which is unfortunate given that they would correspondingly be the group to benefit from the initiative and its subsidies after experiencing foreclosure and housing dispossession. Where cis-heteronormative nuclear families are targeted for good loans and reinvestment, black trans women like Tyra are the antithesis of such borrowers. Written out of the plans, the city government did not envision her there for the next growth phase of primitive accumulation after the foreclosure crisis abated.

This is one way that the coalition between finance capital, government institutions, and nonprofits, in this instance of the Park Heights Master Plan, disciplines black trans women through the maintenance of violent landscapes of Subprime foreclosure. Black trans women who transit across geographies of subprime foreclosure are positioned like the foreclosed properties as surplus to capital accumulation before a new phase of primitive accumulation begins through speculative real estate development. Urban planning projects also fail to consider black trans women's lives in their timelines for redevelopment with the long temporality of postponement sustained by the Master Plan and the V2V initiative creating a "trap door" for black trans women.[163] Instead, they

[162] John Leland, "Baltimore Finds Subprime Crisis Snags Women," *New York Times*, 15 January 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/15/us/15mortgage.html.

[163] Eric A. Stanley and Tourmaline, *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017).

assert a speculative promise of "demolition on the way" and a present-day reality of subprime architectures and geographies of precarity. Neoliberal urban planning projects also fail to incorporate community- directed housing plans that include affordable housing *specifically* for black trans women or theorizing "renewal areas" through the lens of what a landscape of social support and social reproduction would like for black trans people in black communities. The "afterlife of property" is alive and sustained through urban redevelopment plans that center "families" rather than the hyper-policed members of surplus populations.[164] Centering families always already disciplines black communities whose households largely do not confirm to the norms of white (settler) domesticity.[165] The assumption is that those people who trespass or participate in illicit economies across geographies of foreclosure or within subprime architectures will be housed in jails and prisons as development and ultimately gentrification take off or disposed of through the maintenance of long-standing *bandos* – trans necropolitical sites of unprotectability, precarity, and carcerality.

Black Trans Economies of Dispossession and Disposability[166]

In tandem with the settler colonial discourse that enables an understanding of the Major Redevelopment Area as an "empty" urban frontier is the Department of Planning's reliance on subprime architectures as sites of capture, or to use Sarah Haley's term, "domestic carcerality." In Haley's seminal book, *No Mercy Here*, she includes a chapter on the state's reliance on black women's

---

[164] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 13.

[165] Cathy J. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Real Radical Potential of Queer Politics?," *GLQ* Vol. 3 (1997): 437-465, https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-24_5c97b826af1e7_Cohen_PBWQ_GLQ.pdf.

[166] Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy. "Predatory Value," 2.

un-paid and un-free labor within Southern white households during the early 20th-century era of Jim Crow capitalism in Georgia.[167] Drawing on black feminist theory, Haley explains black womanhood is constituted through violence to create white womanhood as a wholly separate category that is deserving of protection. Haley's analytic is useful for framing the role of subprime architectures in neoliberal geographies of foreclosure, which are indeed carceral. As sites of "domestic carcerality," vacant subprime architectures correlate to higher levels of police surveillance and violence in neighborhoods with excessive numbers of vacants. Moreover, as architectures with a carceral logic and purpose, they discipline what Treva Ellison calls "black femme embodiment." They dispose of unruly, fugitive bodies in landscapes marked for speculative real estate development – landscapes that need to be completely geographically immobilized.[168] A primary argument of this chapter is that subprime architectures discipline black cis and trans women's genders by violently reproducing them in differential ways as "captive genders"[169] and always already *arrested* from the privileges of normative domesticity and private property. For Tyra and other black trans women and black trans feminine people, the *capture* of subprime architectures as property is the foreclosure of life chances and life expectancy without a subprime mortgage loan.

Several mainstream news publications call Baltimore neighborhoods with myriad *bandos,* "ghost neighborhoods" with "shells" where homes once stood.[170] As vacant and foreclosed properties, *bandos* as ghost shells undergo a process of what planners generally call "urban decay" that parallels the transition of a living person into a specter through death. This begs the question,

---

[167] Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2016), 174.

[168] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (New York: Verso Books, 2012),

[169] *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*

[170] "Ghost Neighborhoods to Blame for Declining Populations in Baltimore," *CBS Baltimore*, December 28, 2018, https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2018/12/29/ghost-neighborhoods-to-blame-for-declining-population-in-baltimore/.

does foreclosure cause death? Physical or social, and for whom? Does a built environment of foreclosed and/or vacant ghost shells engender ghosts? Tyra's premature death through anti-trans and anti-black violence demonstrates this mutually constituted effect between subprime architectures and black trans lives within what Black Transfeminist scholar Kai M. Green calls "the ghosted or surplus population."[171]

Related to Devin Allen's useful concept of "the un-entitled,"[172] Lucas Cassidy Crawford, in his article, "Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture," compares the common transgender narrative of "feeling at home in one's body" with regard to gender identity to a home in the built environment – one that is predicated on ownership within a regime of private property. Linking the construction of gender and architecture and how gender informs architectural theory, Crawford writes,

> Feeling at home in one's body is surely, then, an urgent need that few, if any would deny. However, might the forcefulness of this imperative to feel at home in one's body also derive from the limited and limiting ideas our culture holds about the very idea of *homes*? To what extent is the "home" of trans-embodiment a capitalist, middle-class, and heteronormative home? Is it the very kind of owned home from which so many trans people have been evicted, in which so many have been abused, and within which so many have barricaded themselves? Indeed, the houses and the
> homes we create within them are not necessarily benign. For those who suffer domestic abuse, those who are not yet of age, those whose homeless milieu underlines the classist privatization of sexuality, or those whose homes represent the impossibility of a satisfying public life, this point is obvious.[173]

In this passage, Crawford deploys "the simile of transgender-as-architectural crossing." He questions what it means for a trans* person to feel at home in their body when "home" as a concept is implicated with private property, liberal values, and exclusion.

---

171 Kai M. Green, "The Essential I/Eye in We: A Black TransFeminist Approach to Ethnographic Film," 193.

172 Devin Allen, "Spaces of the Un-Entitled," Art Exhibit, Baltimore, Maryland. February 2019-March 2019.

173 Lucas Cassidy Crawford, "Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture," *Seattle Journal for Social Justice.* 8 (2009): 515.

In the published narratives of black trans women and femmes, coming into trans identities in and around their homes are often fraught and dislocating experiences. These are experiences of "being *disowned"* (emphasis added) by family members and also by residential property. Black feminist scholar Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley curated excerpts of CeCe McDonald's prison letters in *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, CeCe McDonald is a black transgender woman who became internationally renowned as an activist and political prisoner in Minneapolis when she was sentenced to 41 months in prison for defending herself during a racist and transphobic attack in 2012. In a letter on November 5, 2011, she shares a story of violence and scrutiny that took place, as she explained, "in my own household," which at the time, was her grandmother's house. At a family gathering, her uncle rifled through her bag and violently attacked her after finding a romantic letter she had written for a boy at her school. She continues the letter by describing other violent attacks, or what she calls "bashings" that occurred when she was "only a couple of feet from my house" and by the "people in my own neighborhood." The home as property, even when not a foreclosed property, is often constructed with "institutional transmisogyny,"[174] which even when a legal occupant and with heteronormative family members, renders property as a mechanism of disownment. She demands and continues her "pursuit of happiness," a phrase she repeats throughout the letter and indeed the phrase ends the letter. With these geographic coordinates that signal her own home or the homes around them – "in my own neighborhood," "couple of feet from my home," "outside of the home," and "within my own household" – she speaks to the property/home as a violent structure of the built environment because of its centrality as a place/architecture that manages gender and sexuality. Property reproduces black trans dispossession,

[174] Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, "'Go Beyond Our Natural Selves:' The Prison Letters of CeCe McDonald, *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 4 no. 2 (May 2017): 244.

precarity for black trans women in public space, and their propensity to be disowned, derelict, and on the run.[175]

A concept developed by black feminist critics such as Saidiya Hartman and Christina Sharpe, "afterlife of property" that is,[176] the material traces of American slavery in the social relations of property in the present, is significant to understanding subprime architectures as sites of capture and "domestic carcerality" for black trans women's lives.[177] In the plantation economy of slavery, enslaved black people had what Kish and LeRoy call "bonded lives."[178] As property of white plantation owners, enslaved black people could be bought and sold on auction blocks and used as collateral for loans. Within this "mathematics of black life,"[179] the plantation economy operationalized the "reproductive capacity" of black women,[180] who passed on slave status to their offspring. Put another way, the bodies of black female captives produced surplus value through the proceeds of procreation, birthing property that could be cashed in for or exchanged as capital. With the rise of neoliberal capitalism, which entailed a right-wing political attack on labor unions and massive cutbacks to welfare, public housing and other social services, a reserve army or "relative surplus population" of non- and under-employed people became increasingly necessary to force workers to capitulate to stagnating wages in the late 20th and early 21st century. While labor

---

175 CeCe McDonald, "'Go Beyond Our Natural Selves:' The Prison Letters of CeCe McDonald" edited by Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* Vol. 4 no. 2, May 2017 248-250.

176 See Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008), 13, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/campuspress.yale.edu/dist/1/2296/files/2017/09/Saidiya-Hartman-Venus-in-Two-Acts-1a1v7bq.pdf and Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 55.

177 Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here*, 174.

178 Zenia Kish and Justin Leroy, "Bonded Life: Technologies of Racial Finance from Slave Insurance to Philanthrocapital," *Cultural Studies* 29, no. 5-6 (2015): 630-651.

179 Katherine McKittrick, "Mathematics Black Life," *The Black Scholar* 44, no. 2 (2014): 16-28.

180 Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 56.

exploitation continues to be a mechanism by which capitalists extract surplus value, increasingly finance capital and a "credit-led economy"[181] lead to the most surplus value, so much so that scholars have called the early 21st century an "age of finance capital."[182] Ruth Wilson Gilmore explains how the production of surplus populations, surplus land, and surplus capital were integral to the rise of mass incarceration in California (and the US broadly). The state government poured surplus capital into prison expansion on under-utilized land to manage the surplus population through incarceration in prisons. As mass incarceration has been an undeniable variable in the "serial displacement of capital" and people from urban black communities,[183] there are structures in these communities like subprime architectures that serve as carceral sites of discipline and disposal. Together, they produce categories of people who are "essentially surplus" to the capitalist production of value through labor exploitation.[184]

Returning to the place of black women's bodies and the "afterlife of property,"[185] finance capital predominantly exploits the historical place of black women as property and as sites of "reproductive capacity."[186] Rather hailing black women to biologically reproduce the surplus population, finance capital deploys the place/property of black women for the reproduction of

---

[181] Suzanne Soderberg, "The US Debtfare State and the Credit Card Industry: Forging Spaces of Dispossession," *Antipode* 45, no. 2 (2013): 493-512, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2012.01004.x.

[182] See John W. Cioffi, *Public Law and Private Power: Corporate Governance Reform in the Age of Finance Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010) and Greta R. Krippner, *Capitalizing on Crisis: The Political Origins of the Rise of Finance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[183] Susan Saegert, Desiree Fields, and Kimberly Libman, "Mortgage Foreclosure and Health Disparities: Serial Displacement as Asset Extraction in African American Populations," *Journal of Urban Health* 88, no. 3 (2011): 390-402, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-011-9584-3.

[184] 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): 87-106.

[185] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 13.

[186] Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 56.

finance capital - toxic loans with high interest and balloon payments and financial alchemy of residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBSs). For example, during the subprime mortgage crisis, as mortgage brokers and lenders disproportionately issued subprime mortgages to black women, their mortgages were disproportionately bundled in subprime mortgage securities. Banks bet against these securities for profit, knowing that insurance companies like AIG and Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs) like Fannie Mae agreed to take on the risk by guaranteeing coverage when people began to default on their mortgage payments.[187] This was a neoliberal instance in which black women's property signified what Hortense Spillers has called "property plus" in a national economy increasingly reliant on the financialization of housing.[188] Disproportionately, the financial industry utilized black women's mortgages – in the scheme of subprime securitization and the proliferation of derivatives – as the optimal place, and indeed the laboratory, for a new way to reproduce more surplus value. Considering that (cis) black women are also disproportionately the heads of households in black communities and subprime lenders disproportionately targeted black women for subprime mortgages,[189] black women are indeed the backbone, the condition of possibility for mortgage-backed securities. This exploitation of (cis) black women's place/property by the financial industry - black women's place/property as the paradigmatic subprime mortgage origination produced the foreclosed landscape of derelict subprime architectures in which someone murdered Tyra Trent is at once racialized and gendered.

---

[187] Elvin Wyly, C. S. Ponder, Pierson Nettling, Bosco Ho, Sophie Ellen Fung, Zachary Liebowitz, and Dan Hammel, "New Racial Meanings of Housing in America," *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2012), 584-585, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23273535.

[188] Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 65.

[189] See Amy Castro Baker, "Eroding the Wealth of Women: Gender and the Subprime Foreclosure Crisis," *Social Service Review* 88, no. 1 (2014): 59-91, https://doi.org/10.1086/675391.

In the "afterlife of property," *bandos* are structures that inflict the violence of "racial-cum-sexual economies" onto black trans women as they move through neoliberal geographies of foreclosure.[190] Framing in the "scopic regime" of the stroll, Canadian feminist scholar Sherene H. Razack draws Katherine McKittrick's analysis of the auction block within the plantation economy in *Demonic Grounds*.[191] Razack explains that within plantation economy to characterize how "the stroll" inscribes spatialized colonial violence onto Indigenous women's bodies on the outskirts of Canadian cities. She writes,

> The social construction of black femininity as profitable, violable, and sexually available comes together in the moment of the auction block, a moment of display and humiliation of the bare black body. The scopic regime that operates in the auction block is analogous to the everyday dynamics of the prostitution stroll where there is a display of Indigenous bodies, bodies that are available for sexualized violence…. Indigenous women and girls are presumed available for sexualized violence whether or not they are engaged in prostitution. Put another way, wherever they are--the space of the highway or a downtown street--these spaces/zones are imagined as a 'stroll.'[192]

While there are traces of the auction block in the stroll for all racialized and Indigenous women in North American settler cities, black and Indigenous women's positionalities in relation to this genealogy are differential yet relational and contingent on specificities of place. The *bando*, as a subprime architecture, is a place through which neoliberal racialized genders are (re)produced within a spectrum of valuation and devaluation in urban economies. In Baltimore, a subprime architecture, whether located on or adjacent to the official stroll on N. Charles Street, or removed from the center city, such as 3307 Virginia Avenue, can still be operationalized as *property of* the stroll by a cisgender man who operationalizes a *bando* as "structure of disavowal"[193] that enables him to

---

[190] C Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*, 66.

[191] Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, 82.

[192] Sherene H. Razack, "Gendering Disposability," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 28, no. 2 (2016): 294.

[193] Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death Beyond Disavowal*, 97.

"establish his power" and identity in the "racial/patriarchal order."[194] Further, as architectures with a genealogy in the auction block, these neoliberal descendants in the built environment are not incorporated within the formal economy in the way that auction block was central to the plantation economy of early settler-colonial capitalism. Put another way, the state does not benefit from these illicit economic contracts in *bandos* whereas redevelopment projects like the Park Heights Master Plan would yield property taxes for the city's coffers in the foreseeable future.

Razack writes that "the bodies of Indigenous women are the raw material for the settler state's investment in disappearing Indians (and in Indians who are made to disappear), subjects who are considered to be dying from their own incapacity to thrive in modernity and not from state violence. It only makes sense to take the lands of those who are disappearing."[195] With their high rates of murder as a population, Baltimore City government does not use the bodies of black trans women as the "raw material" for their "investment in disappearing" the entire black population, but it does use them as the "raw material"[196] to for their investment in producing black communities that are comprised of two-parent households with heteronormative domesticities and employment in the traditional labor market, and importantly, exploitable consumers of high-interest and high-risk credit in the form of mortgages, credit cards, and auto loans.[197] While finance capital mobilizes cisgender black women's "reproductive capacity"[198] by steering them into toxic mortgages that were designed to fail and structure securities as technologies of surplus value, in the post-crisis era,

---

[194] Sherene H. Razack, "Gendering Disposability," 295.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Susanne Soederberg, "The US Debtfare State and the Credit Card Industry," 495.

[198] Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 56.

subprime architectures are a technology that the state and capital operationalize to remove black trans women from spaces designated for investment as surplus land. For the Park Heights Master Plan, the *bandos* of the subprime crisis essentially function as a mine field and a mechanism to clear the land of "undesirables" to make it empty and ready for assembly as a site of investment. Razack also exposes the spatial and colonial dimensions of sexual violence and the murder of Indigenous women in "Gendering Disposability."[199] Within a settler colonial society, the state sanctions these murders, and Razack contends that in doing so, the state inscribes colonial power onto indigenous women's bodies and reproduces their disposability as "waste." Thinking with Razack and black transfeminist scholars who theorize "black trans fugitivity,"[200] I suggest that the state and finance capital inscribe colonial power onto black trans women's bodies through the production and post-crisis neglect of vacant and foreclosed properties, what I am calling *subprime architectures*.

By early 2019, MCC had arranged for the demolition of the rowhouses, over 10 years after their initial purchase, and it was during this elongated temporality of foreclosure and neighborhood disinvestment without a clear end in sight during which Tyra was murdered and implicitly slated for demolition within the city's speculative real estate development plans. The US settler state and neoliberal racial capitalism require the disposal and removal of black trans women in "surplus

[199] Sherene H. Razack, "Gendering Disposability," 285-307.

[200] For work on "black trans fugitivity," see C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Kara Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Futures* (New York: NYU Press, 2019); Marquis Bey, "Black Fugitivity Un/Gendered," *The Black Scholar* 49, no. 1 (2019): 55-62, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.2019.1548059; Marquis Bey, "The Trans*-ness of Blackness, the Blackness of Trans*-ness," *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (2017): 275-295, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-3815069; Marquis Bey, *Them Goon Rules: Fugitive Essays on Radical Black Feminism*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019); Treva Ellison, Kai M. Green, Matt Richardson, and C. Riley Snorton, "We Got Issues: Toward a Black Trans*/Studies," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (2017): 162-169; Che Gossett, "Blackness and the Trouble of Trans Visibility," in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, ed. Tourmaline Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 183-190; Che Gossett and Julianna Huxtable, "Existing in the World: Blackness at the Edge of Trans Visibility," in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility,* ed. Tourmaline Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 39-55; and forthcoming work by SA Smythe.

populations" for similar reasons that require the demolition of *bandos*. Black trans women who transit across geographies of subprime foreclosure are positioned like the foreclosed properties as surplus to capital accumulation before a new phase of primitive accumulation begins through speculative real estate development.

As a type of architecture produced by "predatory debt" and a "market for bad loans created by a [neoliberal] policy and capital regime,"[201] *subprime architectures* are a perpetual threat in black trans women's lives in Baltimore. She positions the city's 30,000 abandoned buildings and vacant lots within an urban geography of risk and the speculative grounds for black trans necropolitics.[202] In this way, subprime architectures are also propertied sites of capture that reproduce black trans women in Baltimore as black fugitives in a dangerous landscape of gender, race, and class discipline – which is too often in the form of premature death. With these urban revitalization plans in Park Heights, the Department of City Planning positions black women like Tyra and Kasey as "undesirables" with a calculable debt or moral deficit to the norms of white heteropatriarchal domesticity.[203]

The dual disposability of subprime architectures and black trans women like Kasey and Tyra demonstrates that under neoliberalism property is a fulcrum upon which processes of neoliberal valuation and devaluation hinge. In her book, *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference*, Grace Kyungwon Hong argues that neoliberalism is a "structure of disavowal."[204] Under neoliberal capitalism, certain minoritized people who are considerably far from normative identities and

---

[201] Alex Schafran, "Origins of an Urban Crisis," 663-688.

[202] "Frequently Asked Questions: What is the Baltimore Housings Vacants to Value?" http://www.vacantstovalue.org/vtov_faq.

[203] Chandan C. Reddy, "Home, Houses, Nonidentity: Paris is Burning," in *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity*, ed. Rosemary Marangoly George (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 362.

[204] Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death Beyond Disavowal*, 17.

lifeways are valuable to capital because of their lack of value as bodies to exploit through labor exploitation.

The affects of "terror and loathing," as Hong argues,[205] produce particular racialized gendered and sexuality populations of which Tyra Trent is part, as surplus, that is, excessive to labor production and life itself. However, I am arguing here that the affects around black transgender women and the affects produced around *bandos* are dialectic. The feelings that are circulated in popular culture and media and urban renewal plans about surplus black trans feminine people and the feelings around "abandoned properties" intermingle. The affects generated by *bandos* in post-housing crisis subprime geographies of urban renewal produce the disposability of black trans women, marking in red that which is to be razed, erased, from the landscape to recreate and rebuild spaces of white heteronormative domesticity in property. The *bandos* to be demolished represent foreclosed sites of deviant and pathological black familial gender and sexual relations in the domestic sphere in addition to the histories of capital regression and disinvestment, mass incarceration and anti-black policing, welfare state cutbacks and post-industrial economic restructuring. These *bandos* are at once charged relics of black physical and social death and also speculative sites of possibility for white settler life in the city. The *bandos* turn the "logic of elimination" that is so fundamental to so-called primitive accumulation[206] onto black trans women - black people geographically and ontologically *out of place* or what Katherine McKittrick calls "ungeographic."[207] The *bando* produces black trans women in Baltimore as the "un-entitled:"[208] un-entitled to housing, mortgage titles, *the*

---

[205] Ibid., 76-77.

[206] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409.

[207] Katherine McKittrick, "Plantation Futures," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 17, no. 3 (42) (2013): 1-15.

[208] Devin Allen, "Spaces of the Un-Entitled," Art Exhibit, Baltimore, Maryland. February 2019-March 2019.

protectability afforded to white cis-womanhood,[209] and also life itself. In Baltimore, all black people in transit across the city have dangerous color lines to cross and discriminatory "red-lined" borders to cross.[210] Yet black trans women, black transfeminine people, and black non-binary femmes must carefully cross the infinite grid of transversal lines of gender with ONE WAY and DO NOT ENTER signs in black communities in which some black people with cis-hetero-"normative strivings" police transness as incongruent rather than co-constitutive with blackness.[211]

Tyra's murder in bando in West Baltimore's geographies of subprime foreclosure in West Baltimore points to the ways in which speculative real estate development, as planned in the Park Heights Master Plan, necessitates black trans women's elimination from "investment zones." Urban revitalization initiatives punish black trans women (where the punishment is often premature death) for not being as financially exploitable as black cisgender women with regard to residential property and subprime finance. Kasey offers a geographic and affective correlation between disposable buildings and disposable black bodies. *Ghost shells engender ghosts*. The wasteland of the foreclosure crisis and dispossession by property taxes - in West Baltimore often entire blocks of boarded up rowhouses - are sites of transmisogynist murder and disposal. Unpayable subprime mortgage loans disciplined black homes as sites of high-risk, pathological black feminine genders, and moral disorder. While the feminist literature on the housing crisis centers owners and former owners and residents and former residents, Kasey's analysis and Tyra's murder reveal that subprime residential properties disciplined *black fugitives* from gender normativity who identified as trans, rather than

---

209 Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here*, 5.

210 I draw on C. Riley Snorton's analysis of the "transitivity of blackness and transness" in this paragraph. See C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*: *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2017),14.

211 Roderick A. Ferguson, "Of Our Normative Strivings: African American Studies and the History of Sexuality," *Social Text* 23, no. 3-4 (84-85) (2005): 85-100.

strictly cisgender (and mostly straight) black women who were *queered* by predatory subprime mortgage finance as mortgage holders.

The Urban Planning of Black Trans Placelessness

Understanding the *bando* as an architectural and settler-colonial site that fosters black trans necropolitics in Baltimore, I want to spend a moment describing a section of N. Charles Street that is actually the city's most recognizable geography of black trans labor and living. North Charles Street is the major artery of the city that is the dividing line between east and west Baltimore. The 6-or-7 block section of Charles that runs through the Old Goucher neighborhood is locally known as *the stroll*. It is the street on and around which sex workers are approached by clients and negotiate financial deals. *The stroll* is on a working-class gentrifying *but not totally* gentrified section of N. Charles Street. I only recently learned that some people refer to the stroll as the so-called "meat rack" from a white woman friend who told me that her white co-worker, a white cisgender man, used that appellation as a derogatory address.

While I do not know if Tyra Trent ever went or moved in transit through this section of N. Charles Street, it is an urban geography upon which anti-black transmisogynist violence is predicated.[212] In Baltimore, the geographic appellation of "meat rack" is one through which black trans women's bodies are objectified, commodified, misgendered and prefigured by anti-black and transmisogynist residents as always already dead. In the white upper-middle class gay subculture of New York's Fire Island, "meat rack" is an intragroup designation. On Baltimore's North Charles Street, the geo-locating appellation for the stroll as "the meat rack" carries transmisogynist

---

[212] Steven Emmanuel-Martinez, "Formerly Homeless, an HIV-Positive Black Gay Activist Is Building a New Faith Movement," *The Body: The HIV/AIDS Resource*, September 19, 2019, https://www.thebody.com/article/formerly-homeless-an-hiv-positive-black-gay-activist-is-building-a-new-faith-movement.

undertones. Offering a "transgender poetics of the High Line Park," Lucas Crawford considers the modes of displacement and gentrification in a historical Westside neighborhood in Manhattan called, "the meatpacking district." To open his epilogue, Crawford reads Lonely Planet's *Discover New York* guide in which the 21st century High Line Park disturbingly pairs "trannies and slaughterhouses" in its description of the meatpacking district's pre-gentrification reputation as "dingy" and "unsavory district." Crawford explains that the phrase "pairs the (racialized, class-specific, labouring) trans sex worker with death, meat, and outmoded commerce" and ultimately produces the "trans history of the meatpacking district as the very antithesis of urban vitality."[213] In Baltimore, the unofficial name of this section of North Charles Street as "meat rack" sustains a pervasive knowledge project about black trans women that defines them as objects, commodities, less than human and, as in Crawford's reading of the present-day discourse about the history of the meatpacking district in NYC, always in relation to death. This unofficial yet pervasive naming of this section of the main thoroughfare of Baltimore City, which bifurcates it into East and West, *makes visible and knowable* transgender people's presence in the city while simultaneously normalizing and sanctioning the "markedly increased instances of physical violence" against them across the city, against black transgender women like Tyra Trent.[214]

The stroll is on a working-class gentrifying but not totally gentrified section of N. Charles Street that is north of North Avenue and South of 25th street, the latter of which are the cross streets of my apartment while living as and being a black queer non-binary Marylander born-and-raised person and also conducting two years of ethnographic fieldwork in Baltimore. I would walk down the stroll to go to a bar/club called the Crown where there was a monthly queer dance party

[213] Lucas Crawford, *Transgender Architectonics: The Shape of Change in Modernist Space* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015): 149.

[214] Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton, eds., *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017): xvi.

hosted and DJ-ed by black queer folx. The southern end of the stroll at North Ave includes a vacant lot called the YNOT Lot, where too frequently, vigils for black trans and trans of color women, are often organized by the Baltimore Transgender Alliance. The Crown and the YNOT Lot are both located in the Station North Arts District, a network of neighborhoods that the State of Maryland redeveloped, rebranded and renamed as an Arts & Entertainment district, which, according to the incorporation's website, includes Charles North, Greenmount West, and Barclay. Some news sources have identified "the stroll" as extending down North Charles Street below North Avenue toward the train station after which the Art & Entertainment District derives half of its name, Pennsylvania Station.[215] With Station North Arts & Entertainment, Inc. at the helm, the official urban revitalization efforts in central Baltimore look hip, creative, and artistic:

> Station North Arts & Entertainment, Inc. employs an arts-based revitalization and placemaking strategy by managing quality public art projects, providing thought-provoking programming, and forging strong supportive relationships with local artists, designers, residents, businesses, and institutions to guide development in the Station North Arts & Entertainment District.[216]

Even within this small central district, which can't be more than 2 miles in area, capital development is uneven. The website describes Station North as a national model for arts & entertainment districts with its "diverse collection of artist live-work spaces, galleries, rowhomes, and businesses," however several scholars have pointed to the ways that urban revitalization as a neoliberal brand of urban renewal is predicated on white gentrification and black displacement in major US cities. The economies of displacement include the rental and property markets in which working-class black residents are increasingly priced out as private development and speculative real estate development invest heavily in the area. Anti-black and anti-transgender policing by the Baltimore Police Department also displaces residents into jails and prisons. Twice the size of the now post-demolition

---

[215] "Station North Arts District," accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.stationnorth.org/.

[216] "Our Vision, Our Mission," accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.stationnorth.org/vision-and-mission.

vacant lot where Tyra Trent's murder took place, the Station North Arts & Entertainment District, Inc. YNOT Lot transformed from an empty and unproductive space into one that has renewed use value as a place for community events and festivals like the annual Artscape, political rallies around election season, and vigils for transgender murder victims like Tyra.

Several miles west of the stroll that runs through Station North and the YNOT Lot – past Baltimore City Community College and Coppin State University, black-owned business and storefronts devoted to black working-class culture, the bando in West Baltimore where the murder of Tyra Trent transpired is also an "investment zone," but one in which the Department of Urban Planning and private developers postponed actual investment for over a decade. Despite the 2006 Park Heights Master Plan, the city directed investment capital to the center city first, changing the name of a once seedy or unsavory cluster of neighborhoods to Station North. While flagged for redevelopment, it was deferred, leaving 3307 Virginia Avenue as a site of speculation that no one seemed to be looking at, a place earmarked by the state for an unspecified and unaccountable future time.

Project 42

Tyra Trent is one of the transgender women memorialized by *Project 42*, which is "a series of works dedicated to memorializing the lives of murdered transgender and gender non-conforming people."[217] Artist Jono Vaughn collaborates with other artists to make garments and memorial events. The design and creation of a garment for Tyra is particularly moving because Tyra's body was found without clothing on the basement level of the *bando* except for a diamond-stud earring. While anyone of any gender can wear a diamond-stud earring, Tyra's wearing was an expression and

---

[217] Jono Vaughn and Project 42, "Memorializing Transgender Murder Victims through Art and Performance" *TEDx Seattle*, https://tedxseattle.com/talks/memorializing-transgender-murder-victims-through-art-and-performance/.

affirmation of her black femininity that *werq-ed* around and worked past, to use Treva Ellison's term, the anti-black and anti-trans economies of the foreclosure crisis and the anti-black gender violence of the person who killed her. Gayle Salamon's chapter, "objects," in which she examines the affective resonance of clothing that Latisha King wore at the California high school in which she was murdered for being a black transfeminine person,[218] situates my own interpretation of the diamond earring that was found near Tyra Trent's body - and the way it sparkled in that basement. As an act of what Hortense Spillers calls "ungendering,"[219] Tyra's murderer aimed to dispossess her black body of all clothing gendered as conventionally feminine. It was a method of transmisogynist punishment and gender violence all too common in the murders of transgender women and transfeminine people. However, where the murderer tried to repatriate Tyra's body back into the hegemonic gender order in which biology is destiny and sex is gender, the murderer failed. The diamond earring remained in the basement. It was there when the dog found her. It was there when the police came and misgendered her in their report as "MB" or "black male."

For Project 42, Vaughan describes the critical trans* and *deterritorializing* process of making a fabulous dress for Tyra:

> What you see on stage is the pattern that I created for Tyra. In addition to the hand printing and all of the work that we do by hand we also incorporate technology. The patterns begin with a google earth screen shot of the murder location. On top of that screenshot, I then incorporate photographic documentation that I take from google street view of the location itself. Sometimes I will look at an individual's photographs online and incorporate colors from clothing they are wearing. I've even made patterns that incorporate people's skin color and hair color on top of this imagery.

Through the remixing of place, blackness, body, and gender, the dress, as a garment of trans cultural production, is also what Marquis Bey calls "traniflesh" in his article, "Black Fugitivity

---

218 Gayle Salamon, *The Life and Death of Latisha King: A Critical Phenomenology of Transphobia* (New York: NYU Press, 2018).

219 Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 72.

Un/Gendered." Bey linguistically adds a forward slash between "un" and "gendering" to reposition the term as one in which black folx purposefully and expressively flee from the white gender order instituted through US settler colonialism and Trans- Atlantic Slavery. He writes,

> Moving with flesh is a generative abolition of normative regimes insofar as it, and more specifically, what I call below *traniflesh*, enacts a subjectivity that definitionally instantiates the impossibility of (gendered) normativity. And this, reader, might be a fugitive un/gendering."[220]

Tyra's memorial dress remixes images of the vacant lot, the cluster of *bandos* on the 3300 block of Virginia Ave, including 3307, aesthetic aspects of Tyra's gender, and her skin color, the phenotypic aspect of her black embodiment. Project 42's dress for Tyra melds blackness, fugitive gender expression, and the subprime architecture in the geography of foreclosure in Park Heights, thereby refusing the *bando* as a totalizing site of capture.

Through a critical trans* art praxis predicated on what Snorton calls the "transversal" and what jasbir k. puar calls "assemblage,"[221] Project 42 enables both a material and immaterial kinship between Tyra and ongoing trans liberation movements. Consider this model of artistic assemblage relation to the land assemblage carried out for the Major Redevelopment Area, the Master Plan's stitching together land plots into an enticing site of cohesive surplus land for private investors. The dress that Project 42 built for Tyra also stands as a spectacular example of what Jack Halberstam's concept of "trans anarchitecture,"[222] which merges architecture and anarchy to think about the radical possibilities of transgender and the deterritorialization of space. Tyra's posthumous dress is a

---

[220] Marquis Bey, "Black Fugitivity Un/Gendered," *The Black Scholar* 49, no. 1 (2019): 55-62, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.2019.1548059.

[221] See C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2017) and jasbir k. puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

[222] Jack Halberstam, "Unbuilding Gender: Trans* Anarchitecture In and Beyond the Work of Gordon Matta-Clark," *Places Journal*, October 2018, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://placesjournal.org/article/unbuilding-gender/.

rebuilding of a black trans architecture that is not tethered to occupation or settlement of land or black people capturing or being captured by property.

Randy Watson's performance as a memorial event for Tyra Trent is incredibly stirring and aesthetically beautiful, while eliciting what Ruha Benjamin calls "an insurgent nostalgia" by Project 42 collaborators and engaged members of the audience.[223] Randy-as-Tyra in the dress is a manifestation of radical black transitivity that is uncapturable by the hailing of white domesticated gender regimes, debt collectors, or Baltimore police in the age of finance. Through the performance, Tyra's afterlife through Randy-as-Tyra persists. Randy-as-Tyra does not die. Her transitory performance continues across the stage, the toll of the bells, the forceful swish of her dress and the recitation of her name. Ruha Benjamin offers a powerful explanation of her assertion that "Black Afterlives Matter." She writes,

> In the broadest sense, what is at stake in the idea that Black Afterlives Matter is the practice of making kin, not only *beyond* biological relatives, but also with the materially dead/spiritually alive ancestors in our midst. Black afterlives are animated by a stubborn refusal to forget and to be forgotten. Hartmann explains that one of the main gatherings for which the enslaved would 'steal away' was the praise meeting where the evocation of the ancestors was central to imagining freedom. Here they would enact 'ancestral landscapes.'[224]

Randy-as-Tyra wears and performs the *realness* of the disinvested landscape and the boarded-up economic geography of the *bando* but eludes their capture.[225] The audience is reminded of processes

---

[223] Ruha Benjamin, "Black Afterlives Matter: Cultivating Kinfulness as Reproductive Justice," *The Boston Review*, 16 July 2018, http://bostonreview.net/race/ruha-benjamin-black-afterlives-matter.

[224] Ibid.

[225] I am invoking the usage of the term, "realness" that is deployed in black queer ballroom subculture. From the classic, yet contentious documentary film, *Paris is Burning* to the current TV show, *Pose* directed by Janet Mock, realness. For academic publications that provide analysis of the term as used in the ballroom scene, see Chandan C. Reddy, "Home, Houses, Nonidentity: Paris is Burning," in *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity*, ed. by Rosemary Marangoly George(Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 362 and Marlon M. Bailey, *Butch Queens Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance, and Ballroom Culture in Detroit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013).

of settler-colonial finance, foreclosure-cum-elimination, and the displacement of black and/or indigenous peoples from settler cities.

Thinking about black cisgender women, who were 256.1% more likely to be issued subprime mortgages than white men, and also black transgender women like Tyra who were never issued mortgages at all,[226] I conclude by considering Saidiya Hartman's question about black women and the general strike against slavery and the settler-plantation economy is quite provocative:

> Where does the *impossible domestic* fit into the general strike? What is the text of her insurgency and the genre of her refusal? What visions of the future world encourage her to run, or propel her flight? Or is she, as Spillers observes, a subject still awaiting her verb?[227]

What if the *impossible domestic* is rerouted to Tyra Trent in the *bando* and the basement of subprime foreclosure? For Harvey, it is important to consider resistance to the financial industry from the bottom up, a major unbalance of power and treatment by the state of "those living in the basement against the financial industry." In Harvey's treatise, the basement includes the class of people that the media castigated as "irresponsible and feckless homeowners who bit off more than they could chew." However, considering Tyra as the "impossible domestic" in the era of the subprime foreclosure crisis, as this chapter has done, foreshadows a rebellion of a different order of people who were not homeowners and could not be accused of biting off more than they could chew since they were never offered the "feckless" manna of the subprime mortgage market in the first place. She was situated in Baltimore's discursive and material geography of the so-called "meat rack" in the center city as always already unhoused and derelict, always already dead or dying, and always available for consumption instead of participation as consumer. As Kemi Adeyemi has argued, the

---

[226] Allen J. Fishbein and Patrick Woodall, "Women are Prime Targets for Subprime Lending," *Consumer Federation of America* (2006), https://consumerfed.org/elements/www.consumerfed.org/file/housing/WomenPrimeTargetsStudy120606.pdf.
[227] Saidiya Hartman, "The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labors," *Souls* 18, no. 1 (2016): 166-173, https://doi.org/10.1080/10999949.2016.1162596.

proletariat class revolt in the Neo-Marxist Harveyian imaginary, rarely encapsulates people like Tyra, because their inclusion fundamentally changes the terms of the revolt and the urban city that single-axis class-based struggles vehemently stake a right to *occupy* and shape.

By carving out a place for black trans-identified women in the archive of the foreclosure crisis, the reach of subprime financial violence and the meaning of subprime dispossession are brought into sharper relief. Black (cis) women were queered and discipline by subprime mortgage finance and the post-crisis "recovery" and urban renewal projects in the decade after the market crash. The crisis and neoliberal urban planning projects in its aftermath created "zones of non-being" like the bando for black trans women, dislocating them from the housing market and working to foreclose their already precarious life chances. Mya Hall was another black trans woman from Baltimore who was murdered by NSA security guards at Fort Meade while in transit in an SUV down the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. She lived in Baltimore with other black transgender women on the 2200 block of N. Charles Street in an abandoned building called, "The Bando." Project 42's creative labor of disassembly and reassembly for Tyra's memorial dress using the geolocation and map of 3307 Virginia Avenue and Randy Watson's reassembly of Tyra's presence through performance speak back to both the disassembly and reassembly of neoliberal capitalist urbanization - both creating spaces in which black trans women's lives fail to be accounted or valued. The Park Heights Master Plan and the Mayor and the City Council of Baltimore reproduce black trans economies of dispossession at both ends of this process of uneven development in West Baltimore. While the bando is at once a site of danger in the age of finance and in geographies of foreclosure, the bando is a place where another world is possible and one that is fugitive to propertied-settler citizenship and urban planning in which black queer and trans lives and lifeways are repeatedly foreclosed. For GS scholar, Che Gossett, "black trans fugitive spaces [are] temporary

fabulous zones that are at once precarious while also full of desire and electricity."[228] *The bando* as home and *the bando* torn asunder through Project 42's memorial dress-in-motion invite us to consider what and where *trans counterpublics* are – everywhere and nowhere. In the next chapter, I consider a counter public that may seem initially antithetical to the counterpublic of Project 42.

[228] Che Gossett, "Atlantic is a Sea of Bones: Black Trans aesthetics and the Cinematic Imaginary of Reina Gossett," *Visual AIDS blog*, March 27, 2018.

CHAPTER TWO **"We Won't Be Gentrified Out of Our Space": Financial Pedagogies with Black Queer Properties**

Figure 1. "#BuyBuildStay" (2018)
Image by Brioxy

In a Brioxy Instagram Post directly after a workshop on May 19, 2018, the hashtags say it all: #buybuildstay, #brioxylife, #readygeneration, and #blackbaltimorerising. These hashtags convey Brioxy's goals for black financial education workshops: black people should *buy* properties and land, *build* community, and *stay* in black communities despite the structural forces and markets that maneuver to push them out. In the workshop Cole, a black "masculine of center" gay woman and former subprime mortgage debtor,[229] declared to the black participants pictured above, "I want racial-justice framed home-buying education and resources." Cole offered this declaration while wearing her "Respect the Locals" t-shirt that reflected the words she shared out loud. She stood in front of a full room of young black people with hip style, artistic inclinations and professions, and a desire to learn how to buy housing and land in "the last predominantly black city in the Northeast:"

[229] Cole coined the term, "masculine of center," within and as the co-founder of the Brown Boi Project - a series of retreats for queer and trans masculine folx within black, Indigenous, people of color's black and trans communities.

Baltimore, Maryland (fieldnotes, May 19, 2018). The Instagram post implies that these black homebuyer workshops are a crucial method of simultaneous black economic placemaking and revolt. With the hashtag #blackbaltimorerising, the sense of black revolt alludes to the 2015 Baltimore Uprising, which erupted after Baltimore police officers murdered 25-year old Freddie Gray, a black man from the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of West Baltimore and ultimately faced no federal charges.[230] In *Chocolate Cities: The Black Map of American Life*, which co-owners Aisha Pew and B. Cole feature as a book for sale in Dovecote Cafe, Sociologists Marcus Anthony Hunter and Zandria F. Robinson offer the conceptual framework of "chocolate cities" and "chocolate maps" to characterize the various ways in which African descendant people carve out black geographies and engage in black placemaking throughout racially predatory and precious US histories and landscapes. About the making of black geographies in 1960s, they write,

> But rather than being an separate and segregated space, Greenwich Village, like villages of all kinds Up South and Out South, consisted of a patchwork of safe places, and as Black gay, lesbian, and trans people moved in and out of the Village, they queered the chocolate map, creating places where they could be Black and free in all ways. For Marsha P. Johnson, those places consisted of streets, rooms, hotels, apartment buildings, and churches of all sorts, from St. Mary's to the Stonewall Inn. No place lasted . . .[231]

Black queer folx have participated in social justice organizing for housing of all kinds - whether through tenant organizing, the occupy movement, community land trusts, and other efforts to "keep the hood black." Brioxy's strategies of black placemaking through black first-time homeownership workshops resonate with Hunter and Robinson's analysis here that black queer and trans folks "queer the chocolate map" in ways that are essential to people with marginalized race, gender, sexual, and class identities for whom many types of housing and existing in place are criminalized

---

[230] Rebecca R. Ruiz, "Baltimore Officers Will Face No Federal Charges in Death of Freddie Gray," *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/us/freddie-gray-baltimore-police-federal-charges.html.

[231] Marcus Anthony Hunter and Zandria Robinson, *Chocolate Cities*, 68.

and foreclosed.[232] In their article, "Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry," Marcus Anthony Hunter, Mary Pattillo, Zandria F. Robinson, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor use the concept of black-placemaking to "refer to the ways that urban black Americans create sites of endurance, belonging, and resistance."[233] They define black placemaking in relation to the conditions of "racialized and racist structuring of (urban) space, but importantly note that "this reality does not wholly consume the energies of the black community." As a spatial framework, the concept foregrounds the creative practices and modalities of black lifeways and community-based organizing of "deeply disadvantaged, stigmatized, and often segregated groups."[234]

In this chapter, I situate Brioxy's Black First-Time Homebuyer workshops for black creatives in Baltimore as an instantiation of black placemaking, specifically black economic placemaking and black arts placemaking in the hyper-visible and material "shadow" of the foreclosure crisis and in the context of anti-black gentrification. Over the past four years, Brioxy has curated black financial education programing as a black collective and spatial methodology to counter speculative real estate development in historically black communities. These communities contain a large percentage of vacant residential properties and vacant lot, which are a felt and visible residue of the racialization of urban space that the foreclosure crisis engendered in West Baltimore neighborhoods like Reservoir Hill, which are adjacent to districts with a significant amount of arts-based investment capital and redevelopment pouring in. Brioxy's workshops mobilize an artsy cadre of low- to moderate income (LMI) Baltimoreans that the collective calls the *black creative class*, as I

---

232 Ibid.

233 Marcus Anthony Hunter and Zandria Robinson, *Chocolate Cities*, 32.

234 Marcus Anthony Hunter, Mary Pattillo, Zandria F. Robinson, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry," *Theory, Culture & Society* 33, no. 7-8 (2016): 32, https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416635259.

explained in the Introduction, to purchase rowhouses and land in Baltimore as active participants in a black land movement against structural and everyday processes of gentrification and post-crisis urban revitalization initiatives that actively engender black displacement and dispossession. Some of the participants are workers in arts institutions amidst what the city has strategically branded through arts-based redevelopment urban planning projects as a "Baltimore Renaissance."[235] Other participants are young freelance artists, craft-makers, musicians, students, entrepreneurs or small business owners, and urban farmers. By cultivating congregations of the city's young mixed-class black creatives into *black-only*, and indeed, Afrocentric spaces of financial and homeownership education, Brioxy effectively curates the workshops as places for the cultivation of black conscious and queer financial subjectivity in an age of "mass indebtedness"[236] that disproportionately saddles black people in the US with ballooning levels of household debt (Appel, Whitley, Kline 2019).

Brioxy's goal to increase the individual black property ownership in West Baltimore's Reservoir Hill neighborhood is co-constitutive of the group's collective and spatial methodology with the expressed goal of "keeping [black]communities together."[237] Brioxy also methodologically accounts for real estate and land purchased by *us versus them*. Through consciousness raising in Brioxy's black financial education workshops, black creatives express identification with buying black property as a strategic way to exert black counter-mapping of white geographic and propertied violence through gentrification and housing financialization. As of 2017, 63 black residents, many of whom are queer, purchased properties through Brioxy's program, which rose into the 80s in 2019. Brioxy accounts for *black property* through collective black map-making and placemaking in West

---

[235] Martin L. Millspaugh, "Baltimore's Renaissance," *The Baltimore Sun*, September 23, 2014, https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/op-ed/bs-ed-baltimore-renaissance-20140923-story.html.

[236] Hannah Appel, "There is Power in a Debtors' Union," *Dissent*, July 12, 2019, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/there-is-power-in-a-debtors-union.

[237] B. Cole (Co-Founder of Brioxy and Co-Owner of Dovecote Café) in discussion with the author, October 2017.

Baltimore's black neighborhoods. In this chapter, I examine the pedagogical strategies of black queer placemaking through financial education in relation to political discourses of homonormativity and black capitalism, arguing that Brioxy's model does not fit neatly into either and offers significant glimpses of community organizing against gentrification through the collective making of black queer place through property. With this overarching framework, Brioxy offers a model of black financial education for a black land movement against gentrification and toward building communal power through property ownership.

While Brioxy's social justice pedagogies contribute to the development of black queer financial subjectivities, I end the chapter by discussing several productive political tensions at the heart of Brioxy's black land movement, which this ethnography of the black first-time homebuyer workshops elicits. I include these tensions here as questions: (1) Does Brioxy's pedagogy of black queer financial subjectivity run the risk of being subsumed into the hegemonic neoliberal financial subjectivity of "self-help" and individualized market citizenship that policy makers reproduced after the foreclosure crisis? (2) How does Brioxy's sense of black private property as a collective imperative overlap and diverge from other collectivized and black-centered models that appropriate property without the call for black private property ownership such as the East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative in Oakland, CA or VOLAR in East Baltimore? The next section offers a cursory map of the geography of financial literacy workshops in the post-crisis era of which Brioxy's black first-time homebuyer workshops are situated.

Financial Literacy Workshops in the Post-Crisis Era

In the decade since the global financial crisis that began with the collapse of the subprime mortgage market, an emergent landscape of financial literacy workshops and training specifically for black people have proliferated across the United States. While most financial literacy workshops

exclusively position individuals as clients and capable market citizens for their own prospective contracts for an American Dream or portfolio of investment properties, Brioxy's financial education workshops in Baltimore are designed through a creative strategy and politics of "black-placemaking" and black community building. I briefly map out the post-crisis landscape of financial literacy education in this section to clearly portray the provocative work for Brioxy's black first-time homebuyer workshops in the following section.

Several economic geographers and economic anthropologists reveal that financial literacy workshops during the foreclosure crisis reproduce the hegemonic discourse that "individual financial illiteracy" caused the subprime mortgage crisis and as such, "the remedy to both household and municipal financial insecurity."[238] For example, in her recent *Economic Anthropology* article, "'You are the Architect of Your Own Success': Selling Financial Freedom Through Real Estate Investment after the Foreclosure Crisis," Elizabeth Youngling offers critical ethnographic analysis of real estate investment seminars in 2014 and 2015 in Chicago, showing that "the housing market's recent collapse was being repackaged into a space for ordinary people to seize financial freedom and find opportunity in the wake of crisis."[239] These seminars encouraged attendees to "seize the kinds of financial subjectivity that elite investors are assumed to already have."[240] Youngling observed how these real estate investment seminars reproduced the "commonsensical value of property ownership as a path to wealth and stability." Seminar facilitators shared their own entrepreneurial success stories and that of Wall Street firms now buying up a bunch of distressed or devalued properties, like the one on Virginia Avenue in which Tyra Trent was murdered, and "doing minimal repairs, and

---

[238] Jessa M. Loomis, "Rescaling and Reframing Poverty: Financial Coaching and the Pedagogical Spaces of Financial Inclusion in Boston, Massachusetts," *Geoforum* 95, (2018), 145, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.06.014.

[239] E. Youngling, "You are the Architect of your Own Success": Selling Financial Freedom through real Estate Investment After the Foreclosure Crisis of 2008," *Economic Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (2020),108, https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/sea2.12159.

[240] Ibid.,110.

then collecting rents until the housing market peaked again. At that point, they could sell of their portfolios for astronomical profits" – a "post-crisis" phenomenon that economic geographer Denise Fields interrogates in her work. Both Fields and Youngling point to the rise of a "new asset class," which is rising like a phoenix from the ashes of geographies of subprime foreclosure. Other than the race of the seminar leaders and their connections to house flipping TV and celebrities, Youngling does not analyze the reproduction of black financial subjectivities in the wake of the crisis.

Economic geographer Jessa M. Loomis also carried out a critical ethnographic analysis of financial education workshops in the post-crisis era. She demonstrates quite clearly that the "active growth of the financial sector is contingent upon making previously unfit market actors into viable debtors in the pedagogical spaces of financial inclusion."[241] Importantly, she observes that this pedagogical labor of making *good debtors* out of low to moderate income (LMI) is shifted to financial coaches within nonprofits, which Loomis argues are the new "benevolent" intermediaries between the government and the financial industry.[242] Rather than raising critiques of the egregious state-orchestrated imbalance of power between the financial industry and everyday people, non-profit coaches focus on teaching their LMI clients' good financial behaviors and practices.

While these scholarly interventions are important, the current literature on financial literacy workshops and coaching fails to account for workshops specifically designed *by and for* black people from communities where the foreclosure crisis has yet to release its grip. In her article, "Financial Coaching and the Nude: Examining Local Spaces of Market Agencement," Comparative Studies scholar Miranda J. Martinez interrogates the ways that the neoliberal state aims to reproduce disciplined financial subjectivities through a behaviorist economics model often with tropes such as "financial capability." After the crisis, the neoliberal state preferred and funded "low-cost" methods

[241] Loomis, Jessa M. "Rescaling and Reframing Poverty," 144.

[242] Ibid., 150.

of education oriented to individual financial consumers in lieu of a comprehensive restructuring of the economy that reproduces widespread poverty and mass indebtedness. Within the models of financial coaching and financial literacy, Martinez briefly speaks to the ways African American financial subjectivities are also contested in workshops that approach people in racially marginalized and impoverished communities as financially illiterate and irresponsible. The cultural production of black queer financial pedagogies and subjectivities in Brioxy's workshops adds to this literature.

Several scholars have noted that the programs instituted by the federal government such the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) during the foreclosure crisis did not in any great measure enable masses of Americans, particularly black and latinx mortgagors, to avoid foreclosure or keep their homes (Stout 2019). Further still, while distributed among the equivalent handful of city residents, legal settlements from civil suits that indicted banks, such as Wells Fargo in Baltimore, for racially predatory lending, did not ameliorate the geographies of foreclosure in Baltimore that were built on the house that redlining built. These geographies of foreclosure are structured by the histories of disinvestment, slum clearance and black displacement, employment discrimination, anti-black policing, and exploitation in the rental market by slum lords.

In the next section, I describe Brioxy's black first-time homebuyer workshops, which are fundamentally divergent from mainstream financial literacy coaching workshops, while situating them as a black and queer conscious methodology of rearticulating and reworlding black financial subjectivity through property ownership for the purpose of black placemaking. This is not the only model for post-crisis black reconceptualization and re-spatialization of financial knowledge. However, through Brioxy's financial education workshops, the group aims to cultivate a contingent of black tenants, former subprime debtors, and young black creatives across the city to gain spatial and financial power before the swelling tidal wave of gentrification crashes down on Reservoir Hill.

Third Spaces for Black Intentional Community Building

"*People see real estate in a very speculative way as opposed to a community-building way.*" - B. Cole[243]

The use of a black queer-owned meeting place for predominantly young black creative clientele as the location of what is commonly called a "financial literacy workshop" is a geopolitical distinction that sets these workshops apart from other "financial freedom" or post-crisis "financial literacy" workshops after the subprime foreclosure crisis. Brioxy strategically hosts the workshops in black artistic community spaces in buildings coded as residential rowhouses that Brioxy members bought, renovated, designed, and operated, or alternatively, Thirdspaces owned by black folx with similar visions. Arguably, Brioxy's Thirdspaces within remodeled or redesigned residential spaces "orient" the participants toward a shared sense of black home and in so doing,[244] Brioxy produces "the capture of affect" during workshops with prospective black buyers. Rather than individualism, the end goal was for members of the *black creative class* to practice real estate consumerism with politics of collectivism.[245]

Brioxy's strategy to host the black first-time homebuyer workshops in black Thirdspaces provided the atmospheric context for the circulation of black affects of belonging and camaraderie, which mirror those present on street blocks in black neighborhoods across Baltimore where many of the workshop attendees grew up and live in as tenants. By constructing this black microcosm in the space of the workshops, Brioxy organizers aim to make the workshops perform a different function than other home-buying workshops across the city. A central question that Cole asked in the first black "homebuyer fair" that I attended on March 25, 2017 at a new black-owned co-

---

243 B. Cole (Co-Founder of Brioxy, Co-Owner of Dovecote Café) in discussion with the author, October 2017.

244 Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 24.

245 Joe Deville, "Regenerating Market Attachments: Consumer Credit Debt Collection and the Capture of Affect," *Journal of Cultural Economy* 5, no. 4 (2012): 423-439, https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2012.703145.

working space in the Pigtown neighborhood of South Baltimore was one at the crux of the Movement for Black Lives, "how do we prevent black communities from being economically displaced?" (fieldnotes, March 25, 2017). Brioxy raised this question as a provocation in all its black first-time homeownership workshops in subsequent years. In these workshops and in our qualitative interview, Cole put forth Brioxy's "Thirdspaces" model as mutually imbricated with the stitching together of emergent black private properties of movement joiners, providing a black counter-map to gentrification in Reservoir Hill.

In our 2017 interview, Cole characterized third spaces within Brioxy's spatial imaginary and present-day built environment for the black land movement in Baltimore:

> Cole: Thirdspaces are super important. they are in between home and work, and they are community building spaces. Not every space that is not home or work is naturally a Thirdspace, but Thirdspaces are intentional community spaces. They are very organic; bring together a community. In a way, any space can be a third space…you could have a wash house be a third space. Cafes naturally lend themselves to it, but anything really could be a third space. And Dovecote is a great example of space that is culturally and unapologetically black in the space that it holds so that everyone feels welcome, and I think that's really what's important is that anyone can come through our doors and everyone feel like family and feel welcome and connected to the space and the neighborhood and part of the community. And ultimately, as a result of it, it has become space and place where people know they can get good information. They can be invested in the work. They can be transformed, and as a result, we've had a lot of our homebuyer education and our community building work has happened at Dovecote around our homeownership. The first session we did we had 63 people in the café.
>
> Sa: What?!
>
> Cole: Mm hmm! There were people sitting on the floor, everywhere. How do we, how do we build third spaces and support other black folx in the city to own and control third spaces that are transformative and really powerful? So, my goal is to make sure we do that well and with intentionality, and Dovecote is the greatest example of what that looks like.[246]

For Brioxy, Thirdspaces are "unapologetically black" spaces that "lend themselves" to community building and are not at one's home or workplace. Cole characterizes Thirdspaces as crucial for black

[246] B. Cole (Co-Founder of Brioxy, Co-Owner of Dovecote Café) in discussion with the author, October 2017.

communities to feel connected and cultivate transformative, or thinking with Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, "fugitive plan[s]."[247] Paramount to Brioxy's idiosyncratic financial literacy workshops, Dovecote Café as Thirdspace sets the affective groundwork for a kind of "trust" capital in their first function as café-community space, which underwrites black residents sense that it is a "space and place where people know they can get good information" right alongside free farm produce on Thursdays, coffee and evaporated milk, and Ma's peach upside-down cake. In 2019, Brioxy shifted from the name "black first-time homebuyer workshops" (2016-2018) to "financial freedom" workshops.

In the workshop on that overcast day in May, Cole also offered participants the theoretical framework of "possibility models," a term popularized by two black transgender women in popular culture and trans justice advocacy work, Laverne Cox and Janet Mock (fieldnotes, ma In her second interview with Katie Couric after *TIME Magazine* featured her on the cover with the title, "Transgender Tipping Point," Lavergne Cox explains, "What helps me deal with it is all the people out there who will see that cover and believe that things are possible for them." Lavergne Cox and Janet Mock also prefer the term "possibility model" to the conventional term, "role model." At the workshop in May, Cole used the phrase to signal the black land movement's "freedom dream" of black queer futurity through property ownership.[248]

As Thirdspaces with black queer aesthetic and intentional community and black queer owners, Cole contended that Dovecote Café and the Fray served as "possibility models." The Fray was a "homespace for black artists" around the corner from Dovecote Cafe on Brookfield Avenue

---

[247] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons*."

[248] See Jake Fanagin, "Creating a 'Living Image' of a Transgender Woman," *The Atlantic*, 28 February 2014, https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/02/creating-a-living-image-of-a-transgender-woman/284131/ and Mey, "Flawless Trans Women Carmen Carrera and Laverne Cox Respond Flawlessly To Katie Couric's Invasive Questions," *Autostraddle*, 7 January 2014, https://www.autostraddle.com/flawless-trans-women-carmen-carrera-and-laverne-cox-respond-flawlessly-to-katie-courics-invasive-questions-215855/.

on the second and third floor of a rowhouse that Cole and Aisha purchased and renovated. Dovecote and the Fray are new models of black arts institutions that every person in the city's the *black creative class* had the potential to design and bring to life through Brioxy's financial education workshops rooted in collectivism. Through Brioxy's financial education workshops and post-workshop financial and social design coaching, the organization aims to demonstrate for young black folks the vibrancy of these black third spaces as "possibility models" and support them *with* a step-by-step process to *build their own* black-centered art collectives, organizations, storefronts, and institutions. Brioxy aims for these future black arts spaces to be institutions that cannot be forcibly moved, given the vital need for them in a city where white mainstream institutions exclude the majority of Baltimore's black artists and other black arts professionals. Cole asserted that possibility models like the Fray, where we huddled together for the black first-time homebuyer workshop, are a primary means of building collective power across households and sustaining communities as black rather than "up and coming" as white.

For Brioxy, these possibility models show black creatives the how and the why of gaining access to urban land and "reinvest[ing] in community for us" (fieldnotes, May 19, 2018). The possibility model centers community-directed revitalization hell-bent on making the neighborhood a home-space for black folks as a counter public directly at odds with the "up & coming neighborhood" marketing discourse that entices and circulates among white families and white artists. Cole and Aisha purchased, renovated, and designed Thirdspaces and repackaged this experiential knowledge into Brioxy's financial education workshops for young black creatives who also want to invest in "the collective come up" and engage in social reproduction at the scales of black neighborhood and black city. At the scale of the city, Brioxy's black land movement, of which the financial education workshops are a part, is also a possibility model for black placemaking during post-crisis structural gentrification.

In his 1996 book, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Places*, Edward W. Soja reiterates that scholars and cultural critics use the term "Thirdspace" in various ways, signaling its "strategic flexibility" to theorize the "spatiality of human experience." In his introduction, Soja breaks down the traditional conceptualization of Firstspace and Secondspace perspectives to open up his inquiry to the possibilities wrought by Thirdspaces and Thirdspace perspectives. "Firstspace perspective," Soja explains, is "focused on the 'real' material world or the "concrete materiality of spatial forms."[249] Secondspace perspectives are those that interpret "reality through 'imagined' representations of spatiality." Put another way, Secondspace perspectives are "conceived in ideas about space in thoughtful re-presentations of human spatiality in mental or cognitive forms." Soja crafts a critical literature review of Thirdspace theoretical models that move beyond the dualism of the First and second places, models that reveal the "multiplicity of real-and-imagined places." He examines "Thirdspace" spatial theories from Geography, Post-Colonial Studies, Black Studies, and Women of Color Feminisms.

While Soja's articulation of Thirdspaces sheds light on Brioxy's usage, Brioxy delineates the first and second place as home and work respectively within its black land movement. Dovecote Café and the Fray, which Brioxy characterizes as "a home space for black artists in Baltimore" (whether in its former incarnation as the Fray or its present incarnation as House of Sedulō), are Thirdspaces that also refuse the binary of home place and workplace. Given that black queer, transgender, and gender variant folx are reproduced by the state and within the market as "surplus" to the gender, race, and sexual ideals of white cis-heteronormativity, mortgagors/homebuyers/tenants have developed a spatialized sociality in Brioxy's Thirdspaces. Within them, rather than positioning the labor of social reproduction as a dialectic between home

---

[249] Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Place* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 10.

and work, Thirdspaces in Brioxy's lexicon reroute the imaginative and spatialized labor of social reproduction onto the black collective imagination generated inside black financial literacy workshops. While the workshops are ephemeral convenings within the Thirdspaces, black queer and trans folx cultivate financial subjectivities rooted in *speculative social reproduction* to "keep the hood black" and "freedom dream" about black futurity across households. Through these locales within Baltimore's black arts geographies and within geographies of foreclosure, the workshops offer a pedagogy of collectivism rooted in *coming up on*, that is breaking into or stealing something from, property and capitalism, and with a Thirdspace perspective, reworlding them for something else. I return to Brioxy's Thirdspace concept in Chapter 3 on Brioxy's Juneteenth festivals.

Brioxy's Black First-Time Homebuyer Workshops

In my first planning meeting as a Brioxy organizer on May 2, 2017, Cole romantically recalled that so many people came to the early Black First-Time Homeownership Workshops, that is, so many *black* people come, that many had to sit on cafe floor, which was the square feet of a rowhouse living room (its original spatial function). In a personal interview later, she told me that the first workshop included 62 black people as participants.[250] Brioxy's workshops suppose that gentrifying black neighborhoods are "occupied communities." When Cole told me about the first workshops at the cafe, the popular and oft-quoted mantra from a film that my father and I used to watch *The Field of Dreams*, immediately popped into my mind: "if you build it they will come."[251] Hosted at black queer places like Dovecote Cafe, Brioxy invites an emergent mixed-class group of black creatives. In these workshops, Cole lifts up two central resources within Baltimore: the city's

[250] B. Cole (Co-founder of Brioxy and Co-owner of Dovecote Café) in discussion with the author, October 2017.

[251] *Field of Dreams*, directed by Phil Alden Robinson (1989; Universal City, CA: Universal Home Video, 1998), DVD.

"incredible housing stock" and one of the largest concentrations of young black artists and innovators in the Northeast. Tapping into both toward the purpose of a "collective come-up" underwrites Brioxy's black land movement and a collective methodology to both build and protect black communities (fieldnotes, May 19, 2018). This section illustrates the political function and significance of *black-only* financial education workshops in the aftermath of the foreclosure crisis.

Pedagogically, these financial workshops routinely begin with Cole's public testimony about her own experience of predatory finance and foreclosure during the Great Recession. Her public testimony as a masculine-of-center black woman foregrounds the financial education workshops with a political genealogy of black feminist critique that begins with a "teach out" on the gendered racism and spatial dislocation of finance capital generally and during the lead up to the mortgage meltdown specifically. These aren't your average financial literacy workshops. While an ephemeral occasion of black economic placemaking, the workshops wield a gendered critique of racial capitalism and enact pivotal spaces of black financial knowledge production. Centering the experiences of black queer women, Brioxy's workshops are also geographies of black "queer home-making" where home extends beyond the red brick walls, stoops, and fences of any individual home.[252]

At the scale of a community event, Brioxy's Black First-Time Homebuyer Workshops are at once, an ephemeral mode of "in real life" black-placing and also a speculative mode of "black-placemaking" and queer urban planning for the future. In an Instagram post to promote a "Black Homebuyer workshop" on May 19, 2018, Brioxy co-founder, B. Cole, is pictured with Nia, a black queer woman with an epic afro in front of the rowhouse she purchased and renovated. Nia's rowhouse is literally across the street from Dovecote Cafe and serves as a daily reference point for

---

252 Zenzele Isoke, *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

what is possible through Brioxy's program. Cole, Aisha, or Ma would be able to tell and show for black public visual consumption and pedagogical example any black person who visited the cafe and inquired about the black land movement that the house across the street was owned by the black queer single mother and PhD student at a local HBCU. The Instagram post performs this pedagogy in Brioxy and Dovecote's virtual black queer space and offers financial advice, "Be like Nia. Join the #blacklandmovement & get your ticket to our Black Homebuyer workshop May 19th." The black first-time homeowner workshops always sold out. With the hashtags, #buybuildstay, #brioxylife, and #blackhomebuyers, a black person in Baltimore might see the post and believe it is possible for

them to do the same thing as Nia: get prepared, trained, and politicized to buy a rowhome on the

Figure 2: "Be Like Nia" (2018) by Brioxy
Image by Brioxy

market; use Brioxy's program to go over mortgage contract terms and schedule home inspections; build a #brioxylife, a lifestyle that affirms black single motherhood and black women as heads of households in the black queer dating and arts scenes; stay in one's black neighborhood or another in Baltimore Black; and resist gentrification.

In our personal interview, Cole explained that the black first-time homebuyer workshop is

geared toward encouraging black tenants and black residents across the city to buy residential and commercial properties in Reservoir Hill specifically. As part of Brioxy's black land movement, Res Hill was to be the epicenter in Baltimore, and most workshops *take place* in the organization's Thirdspaces in the neighborhood in order to entice black attendees to buy into black placemaking in the neighborhood. As the final portion, workshops culminate in a black real estate tour throughout Reservoir Hill. Cole describes the black homebuyer workshops in the context of the black land movement in our interview:

> The goal is just how do we ensure …we already know and the reason we picked this neighborhood is because we knew it was at the very early stages of being gentrified and so the question was could we slow that down? Could we create incentive for black families to stay and buy into the neighborhood who are not from here to kind of coalesce together, so over the past two years we've worked with about 360 homebuyers, some of whom have bought but who've gotten educated. A lot of prospective buyers and *62 of them have actually bought and all but 5 of them have bought in the immediate neighborhood*. And so it's really just exciting to think about putting a generation of young black people in the city into their homes for the first time and it's really important, because Baltimore has the highest rental to ownership ratio of any city in the country where ultimately people pay more to rent here than they would to own and black people have been renting here for generations because of institutional racism, because of lack of information and knowledge and because folx haven't realized what it takes to save and be ready to own…houses they've been renting houses for 10, 20 years that they could have owned outright by now. So, our goal is just how do we put more families in a position to be able to do this is really important to us.[253]

Before the workshop began, I arrived at The Fray, a new "Thirdspace" in a mixed-use rowhouse that Cole and Aisha had purchased and renovated on Brookfield Avenue around the corner from Dovecote Café. Curated by Diamon Fisher, a former barista at Dovecote, the Fray was a "private black arts club [for] young and emerging black artists." At the time the Fray had not had its official launch, which took place a month later at an unforgettably magical after party for the annual Juneteenth Festival that Brioxy produces on the grounds of Dovecote each year. My friend Rasheem, at the time a PhD Candidate in Morgan State University's Department of Social Work,

[253] B. Cole, email correspondence with the author, May 17, 2020.

painted the murals that adorned the ceilings of the porches on the second and third floors. From the street, you could see the colorful scenes of black femme goddesses with florescent purples, pinks and blues as you walked up to the building on foot. I arrived around 8:00 am before the event started at 9:00 am to help Cole set up the space for the workshop. We moved chic vintage benches and chairs into the first common space you enter after you go up the flight of stairs to the second-floor unit of the rowhouse on Brookfield Avenue in Reservoir Hill. In the kitchen, I cut and neatly displayed bagels for breakfast and brewed coffee in a French press that I would return to throughout the event to make more coffee for workshop participants. I put out granola cereal with soy and dairy milk options and wicker baskets of colorful breakfast bars. I set up plastic utensils and paper plates on the metal kitchen cart. That day for the workshop, the bundles of dried flowers that Cole arranged and hung from the ceiling near tall windows got new life in the light from the morning sun on the second floor of a rowhouse on Brookfield Avenue in Reservoir Hill. The African-print couch pillows on the vintage couches and sheets of Shanti fabrics dropped across the walls where they were hung over desks, small tables, and seating. The décor of The Fray made it feel as if we were all listening to Cole and Tomeka – a savvy local realtor Brioxy partners with – while in the warm glow of a good black friend's living room. A month later, black partygoers would fill the room for the afterparty to Brioxy's first Juneteenth Festival in Baltimore. A freestyle rap cipher of black queer women would erupt spontaneously as the mic passed between their hands and the living room of young black artists – some present for the black first-time homebuyer workshop.

Cole began to introduce Brioxy's black land movement in detail after the black attendees all arrived and got their breakfast. She intentionally used the plural in her opening remarks to frame the movement and the workshop itself in relation to the anti-blackness of the subprime foreclosure crisis. "Ten years ago, we didn't own anything," she exclaimed, referring to the tidal wave of subprime foreclosures in black communities across the United States. "As the last predominantly

black city in the Northeast," she continued, "there is an incredible stock of housing all for black people to come home," that is, to the predominantly black city and to black communities. Brioxy's first-time homebuyer workshop aimed to "spark people to think about it differently," referring to property and homeownership (fieldnote, May 19, 2018). With this opening, Cole situated the workshop as a site of collective black economic placemaking." If you happened to be seated in one of the vintage couches from the black queer women owned vintage furniture shop in West Baltimore on Pulaski Street, you were indeed sitting in a black queer urban planning session. By acknowledging the violence of "predatory inclusion" of black folx into the subprime mortgage market and the foreclosure crisis of black dispossession.[254] Cole situated black homeownership within Brioxy's black land movement as a way for "young and emerging black artists" to bring about *black sovereignty* through a collective spatial and economic praxis: "because of land, we can move to a place and do this - reinvest in community for us." With "pedagogies of the moment" and of the *black* built environment,[255] Brioxy facilitates black first-time homebuyer workshops in the shadow of the subprime mortgage crisis and in the mire of overlapping and persistent geographies of black dispossession in Baltimore.

One of the generative modes of exchange in a Brioxy's workshop are the participant introductions. When you hear from everyone, themes and critiques stick out across people's responses. Many of the critiques of the real estate market underline racially predatory lending and gentrification as major threats to black communities, the black communities of which workshop participants are a part. Suddenly, the room of black strangers starts to feel like a room fit for a "family reunion." When shared aloud and all together, the participants produced a makeshift urban

---

[254] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit*, 253.

[255] Lina Chhun, "Walking with the Ghost: Contested Silences, Memory-Making, and Cambodian/American Histories of Violence," PhD Dissertation., UCLA, 2019.

planning meeting with the hopes and dreams for themselves, their families, their communities, and the city. The makeshift urban planning meeting put their respective critiques of structural black displacement through predatory lending and gentrification into conversation and a collective archive of black urban dispossession. Lastly, the sharing of public testimonies by participants creates comradery and builds a collective approach to engaging, learning about, and wresting power from financial markets for their plans of livable black futures. The participants develop a growing sense of the need for an organized praxis of speculative black social reproduction both in spite of and through financial markets.

A common theme that arose after several participants introduced themselves and their gender pronouns was a reference to gentrification in nearby Washington, DC. In a 2018 Instagram post on the official Juneteenth Independence Day (June 19th) - a few days after the Juneteenth Reservoir Hill Garden and Home tour that year, Brioxy posted a screenshot of an article by Natalie Delgadillo entitled, "D. C. is Being Sued for Gentrifying. Here's What to Know about the Case?" next to a couple sentences connected to Brioxy's black land movement: "#Juneteenth is about reclaiming the right to our lives, community and joy. We stand on the shoulders of so many. #enoughisenough #readygeneration #buybuildstay."[256] At the Black Homebuyer Workshop in May 2019, Russell's comparative political remarks were very motivating: "I see what D. C. is becoming - white - and I don't want that to happen to Bmore." Russell used she/her gender pronouns and was a light-skinned black masculine of center queer woman with long neat dreadlocks and a button-up shirt with light, red, green, and blue plaid buttoned up to her chin. In her mind, a dangerous factor making this a possibility were the presence of "too many abandoned properties," a statement that speaks to my analysis about Park Heights in Chapter 1. Russell's solution was clear: "We gotta keep

---

[256] Brioxy, "Juneteenth is about Reclaiming the Right …," *Instagram*, June 19, 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BkNpv2sAcBb/.

it within us." Her statement seemed to metaphorize respective black neighborhoods in Baltimore as a single body. Alternatively, Russell's words point to the possibility of a spiritual well that underwrites black collectivity and urban spatial imaginaries. We could be a force to be reckoned with. Jamaal (he/him) shared that he was originally from D. C. and that he has "seen first-hand what's going on with gentrification." He remarked that what Brioxy was mobilizing was a "great idea," and he drew on the black militant phrase that came up again and again in this workshop and others, "stake in the ground." A major rationale for Jamaal's migration and investment in Baltimore was to be part of a movement that is saying, "this is a stake in the ground. This is it. We're staying!" Alluding to the spike in property values that developed in D. C. compared to Baltimore, Jamaal added, "I don't wanna be a slave to a mortgage." He believed that, "[Baltimore] is the best place to ease ourselves of that burden." Walker Marsh, pictured in the 2018 Instagram post to the right, shared that he grew up in Baltimore, and he spoke about DC like a lost battle. He declared, "what they did to DC…it's not gonna be the same at all - they can't do this to bmore." Walter added that he's not "letting colonizers come through and rape it." He came to the workshop to share his experience about working with Brioxy to buy his rowhouse, which is across the street from the vacant lot he purchased for his small business, Tha Flower Factory.

Figure 3: "Walker Marsh is Fighting Baltimore Blight with Flowers!" (2018)

Image by @themedicine.show

Other people's introductions directly marked whiteness as a spatial condition in processes of gentrification. Walker's introduction invoked the spatialized violence of white supremacy that is tied up with gentrification through the term, "colonizers." Russell had disdain for the whiteness of DC. Another participant, Charlotte, was a mixed-race, light-skinned, and big-boned black woman who "grew up in Philly." She had loose curly hair and aviator-style glasses. She also brought a critique of whiteness and property into the room with her comments. She began her remarks with a statement about the stark difference in class privilege between the white side of her family and the black side, saying, "I grew up in a split family. The white side had economic success and owned property," whereas, her first-generation black immigrant side of the family contended with decades of "economic struggle." She continued, explaining that her "pop couldn't afford to buy a house" in the United States. In terms of financial stability, Charlotte expressed a desire to "pull strength that the white side has and pull it over to the black side." Reflecting aloud on her young adult life, she shared that she has moved eight times as a tenant in Baltimore since 2010 and is sick and tired of "crappy landlords - black and white." She concluded by telling us all, "I want a house that's mine." Another participant offered the matter of fact statement: "I'm tired of white people," which an all-black financial education workshop had the capacity to affirm through both head nods and shakes. When Shamir identified her gender pronouns as "she, her, and 'cool nerd,'" the black living room laughed, and she beamed with pride. Cool nerd worked for the Department of Defense and bought her first home – "a great first home" – in 2012 after building "great credit." Responding to the question of her motivation for being at the workshop, she said that she met Cole and Aisha at Dovecote Cafe and her "initial thought is to purchase a duplex and rent it out to black folks." Like Shamir, James also began his remarks by expressing that he was "tired of white folks," and that he was not interested in "giving any money to white folks." Alternatively, he wanted to "support communities

of melanin," a phrase that will always stick with me, and he said that he lived by the requirement to keep resources in black communities." James also shared that he "grew up near an Indian Reservation," which added to his understanding that "the larger system was not built to help us prosper." For "communities of melanin," he wanted "prosperity not just survival" (fieldnotes, May 19, 2018).

Cole created the space for participants to share their motivations for attending the workshop after introducing her own motivation for designing and facilitating them. She led with vulnerability as she came out to everyone as a person who had a subprime mortgage and lost her home in the foreclosure crisis after mortgage default. While she would go on to share the financial knowledge of someone with master's degree from the London School of Economics that she earned after losing her home and the experiential knowledge of being steered into the subprime mortgage market disrupts the narrative of the financially illiterate homebuyer of color. Most mainstream financial education workshops in the post-crisis decade reproduce this narrative, as Noelle Stout's book, *Dispossessed*: How Predatory Bureaucracy Foreclosed on the American Middle Class (2019), thoroughly details. Cole had attended several credit counseling and financial literacy workshops before she purchased her home in Oakland with a subprime mortgage loan, and she drew on these educational spaces to build good credit before initiating her housing search. However, this education did not prepare buyers like her to ward off the covert and subversive predatory *steering* by mortgage lenders and brokers, which was literally unfolding as the new secondary mortgage market came into being. It is doubtful that the leaders of pre-crisis financial literacy workshops had institutional knowledge of the kinds of "pop-up" mortgage companies or predatory practices that Cole described of the company she worked with, which was recommended by a family friend:

> I bought the house, should have had an A paper loan, but instead had a pretty rapidly accelerating interest rate on the loan. Doubled my payment in 18 months. You know, it was a family friend who worked for the mortgage brokerage that sold me the loan. And it was a crazy time – like no paperwork, "no doc" loans. Like it

> was like really crazy the loans that people were receiving. There was so much happening. So, I subsequently lost the home, couldn't hold onto it. It was a pretty traumatic and sad experience. And after I lost the house, I set about rebuilding my credit and that was in 2002 that I bought that house, and 7 years later I rebuilt my credit. I was a "First-Time Homebuyer" again and ended up buying another house.[257]

Alarmingly, Cole also shared that her mortgage broker at the company shared her identities as a black woman.

Saddled with predatory subprime debt, Cole ultimately lost her home and explained the long process of working to rebuild her credit before purchasing houses again in Baltimore for her family and for Brioxy's black land movement. In the workshops, Cole's public testimony as the gendered, racialized, sexualized and paradigmatic target for predatory financial violence in the mortgage market functions as a mode of what Joe Deville describes as "the capture of affect."[258] The story about black gendered dispossession interpolates each of the black participants – all black, some also black and masculine of center, some black and queer and assigned female at birth, some black straight or queer men. If participants shared some of her same identities, we were all moving targets for financial exploitation in the real estate market. Cole shared with me in a one-on-one meeting that some of the black prospective homebuyers experienced foreclosure and dispossession as well. Cole's public testimony circulates the feeling, or rather constructs the feeling of black solidarity in the room as all black people with our gendered, sexual and class difference, were not immune to the catastrophic effects of the subprime crisis, though the impact was distributed unevenly across black folx and black communities, as I portrayed in Chapter 1 .

Cole's subprime story as a black queer and masculine-of-center woman also served as a cultural performance in the black financial literacy workshops that revealed the contradictions of a

---

[257] B. Cole (Co-founder and Co-owner of Dovecote Café) in discussion with the author, October 2017.

[258] Joe Deville, "Regenerating Market Attachments," 2012.

liberal capitalist ideology in which the U.S. nation state professes the democratization of finance in the abstract sense in the post-civil rights era and yet, finance capital particularizes the value and risk of people with non-normative identities and zip codes.[259] Scholars in the queer of color critique tradition, particularly Roderick A. Ferguson, argue that queer of color cultures are important "site[s] of material" struggle that expose the contradictions of capital, property, and nation.[260] After doing everything right, so to speak – seeking credit counseling and financial literacy education much like the participants at Brioxy's workshops, developing a credit history and a credit score with a prime rating, the mortgage company did not issue Cole the "A Paper loan" to which she was entitled. One of the most generative provocations of Brioxy's financial literacy workshops is this context of contradiction – a multicultural liberal democracy, liberal property rights, and the democratization of finance which operates through the labor and financial exploitation of difference.

Thinking Brioxy with Other Models: A Brief Conclusion

Brioxy's Black First-Time Homebuyer Workshops accomplish several interrelated goals that distinguish them from other financial education models that have emerged in the aftermath of the housing crisis: (1) a knowledge project about black queer financial subjectivity; (2) black queer urban planning praxis that opposes speculative real estate development; (3) black placemaking in the midst of gentrification.

Brioxy's financial literacy workshops are a knowledge project for black creatives that encourage a collectivist approach to private property ownership. As ephemeral black economic geographies, the workshops offer participants a community and a shelter from which to ward off the incredibly high risk associated with taking out a mortgage as a black person, particularly a black

---

[259] Miranda Joseph, *Debt to Society: Accounting for Life under Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

[260] Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 3.

woman, after the subprime mortgage crisis. Through Cole's public testimony in the workshops, Brioxy critiques finance capitalism as gendered, racialized, and sexualized by design, a system that intended to snare or entrap black folx, and in particular, black non-heteronormative or queer-identified women. Given this, Brioxy encourages participants to *come up on* mortgage finance as a group, or even, as a "dovecote," rather than as black individuals or black individual households. Black queer financial subjectivity in the post-crisis era, Brioxy contends, should be decidedly collective and thereby refuse the notion of a "free market."

As a knowledge project for black creatives, Cole also prompted attendees to consider private property acquisition with "a poetics of 'how do we keep land in black communities?'" With this articulation of *blackness as proprietary* to historically and predominantly black urban communities, private property is connected, at least on one level, to what J. T. Roane has called a "black commons."[261] In the workshops, Brioxy underscores that black collective contestation over the black neighborhood as black land "is not just about buying" (fieldnotes, May 19, 2018) It is a collective good and a defensive strategy in relation to the onslaught of speculative real estate development and structural gentrification in black neighborhood's adjacent to business districts and the newly rebranded Station North Arts & Entertainment District. The tidal wave of gentrification and the effect of black displacement is a formidable threat that multiple participants pointed to with trepidation. Importantly, other organizations in Baltimore and elsewhere recognize this threat and respond with a different oppositional politics than Brioxy.

For example, the Village of Love and Resistance (VOLAR) in East Baltimore uses "a community investment trust fund model to assure investment by legacy residents within several zip codes of our community center," which they call "the hub." VOLAR is a black and brown-led

[261] J. T. Roane, "Plotting the Black Commons," *Souls* 20, no. 3 (2018): 239-266.

collective, reflecting the racial demographic of East Baltimore. Brioxy's model relies on black private property ownership that it hopes to connect into a power grid for communal power and spatial opposition to gentrification. With a community land trust model, the VOLAR potentially incorporates "investment opportunity" for a wider range of neighborhood residents. However, both models are subject to the prerogatives of racialized and gendered financial markets. I learned about VOLAR when the collective started a petition and fundraiser on Change.org. VOLAR submitted an offer to buy a church on East Monument Street that would serve as the organization's central hub and community building space. However, shortly thereafter, the seller refused the offer. As VOLAR explains in the petition,

> However, over the last month we have encountered major roadblocks in the buying process which has included a lack of transparency and communication regarding the status of our offer/LOI for the East Monument properties. Most recently, we were informed by the seller's agent that we are in danger of losing the opportunity to purchase the properties because another buyer has made the same offer as VOLAR but has presented a lower economic risk to the seller.
>
> To refuse our offer to purchase the East Monument properties would be a missed opportunity to grow love, justice, community wealth, and grassroots power in a city with deep racial and economic inequality. This particular area of the city has and is currently undergoing processes of gentrification or exclusionary and speculative development practices, led by local institutions such the Baltimore Development Corporation and John's Hopkins University. To date such development practices have largely not benefited the health and well-being of historical residents.[262]

The seller's agent relayed that the real estate capital of a typical private developer seemed less "high-risk" than that of VOLAR's community investment trust model – a judgement that reproduces the pathologizing discourse that mortgage companies and banks use to calculate black and brown communities and the people therein as "high-risk" in the "risk-based pricing model" that arose

[262] Village of Love and Resistance (VOLAR), "Support Baltimore Residents in Taking Back the Land," *Change.org*, December 16, 2019, https://www.change.org/p/baltimomre-washington-conference-of-the-united-methodist-board-of-trustees-support-baltimore-residents-in-taking-back-the-land?use_react=false.

during the late 20th-cenury shift to the financialization of housing.[263] Brioxy's network of vetted black real estate professionals (many of which attend and present at the workshops) and a collaboration with black-owned Harbor Bank, aims to work around the ways in which racism, heteropatriarchy, and classism pervade the real estate market in its appropriation of private property for black placemaking, even as the onslaught of gentrification through speculative real estate development is persistently foreboding in both sections of the city.

As a black queer urban planning praxis, Brioxy also invites black participants to engage in a collective mode of accounting for property at the neighborhood level. Particularly, Brioxy shares the strategy of keeping a tally of how many property acquisitions in the neighborhood are carried out by "us versus them," which I characterize throughout the chapter as *black economic placemaking* (fieldnotes, June 3, 2017). By "us," Brioxy signals black low- to moderate income (LMI) folx generally and the black creatives who attend Brioxy's workshops in Baltimore. By "us," Brioxy means people who do not want Baltimore's black neighborhoods to shift to a neoliberal multicultural landscape of predominately white people who love black culture, yet "replace black people with black lives matter signs."[264] This black collective mode of accounting conveys Brioxy's guiding motivation to facilitate workshops that double as urban planning meetings, a function that distinguishes them from other financial literacy workshops in lingering geographies of subprime foreclosure and neighborhoods that have endured decades of state and capital abandonment.

Importantly, by sharing this tally-keeping strategy at the scale of the neighborhood, Brioxy cultivates an urgency in black queers and other members of the *black creative class* in Baltimore.

---

[263] Amy Castro Baker, "Eroding the Wealth of Women: Gender and the Subprime Foreclosure Crisis," *Social Service Review* 88, no. 1 (2014), 81.

[264] Jewels (@BlackBlocBoi), *Brioxy Instagram Page* (re-post), December 20, 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BrnR2BKHsym/.

Gentrification of select black neighborhoods is advancing, further along in some neighborhoods than others. All the neighborhoods in which Brioxy has hosted workshops – Reservoir Hill in Northwest Baltimore and Pigtown in Southwest Baltimore are in the crosshairs of gentrification-oriented urban restructuring. They are neighborhoods in which neoliberal private-public partnerships have enacted large-scale redevelopment projects that threaten the stability of black working-class residents as tenants in future years. Black residents have already been displaced through forced relocation-cum-displacement of urban renewal plans, as we saw with the Park Heights Master Plan. As an urban planning strategy, Brioxy assembles black creatives together to build power, kinship, and networks of care across households. Cole explained to workshop participants that the question about land that Brioxy aims to answer is "a poetic of 'how do we keep land in black communities?'" and added the caveat, "which is not just about buying" (fieldnotes, May 19, 2019).

To be sure, Brioxy's black queer feminist epistemology at the beginning of the black financial literacy workshops can set in motion various other alternative black placemaking strategies with differing relationships to, critiques of, or renunciations of private property. Several movements with prime scholarly ratings of "radical" would do well to incorporate such an epistemology, for example, Ferguson's queer of critique of the presumed universality of class struggle and revolt in the Marxist mode of critique called historical materialism.[265] In her groundbreaking monograph, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War*, Historian Dayo F. Gore examines the political theory and praxis of black women in Community-Party affiliated organization

[265] Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 5.

in the mid-20th century who must frequently involve both "the race question" and "the woman question."[266]

Brioxy's workshops do not resolve this crisis; much like black organizing models that incorporate or rework black capitalist discourses, I witnessed and consider the workshops to be a distinctive collective praxis and an instantiation of black economic placemaking. They portend to offer *a shelter* from black individualized risk in the real estate markets of gendered racial capitalism. According to feminist scholar Miranda Joseph, the neoliberal state disciplines households to perform financial management as individual heteronormative dyads that are not dependent on social welfare from the state.[267] Through the workshops, Brioxy's black creatives, many of whom are unmarried, disrupt the rubric of neoliberal financial kinship by managing finances across disparate households and while congregated in the living room of one of Brioxy's Thirdspaces. The Fray, as a "home space for black artists in Baltimore," took on the function of financial accounting and reworlding black queer financial subjectivities beyond the rubrics of the neoliberal white heteropatriarchal household. With this non-heteropatriarchal pedagogy and queer domestic setting, Brioxy develops the homebuyer workshops as ephemeral and pedagogical black economic geographies that *foreclose* racialized, gendered, and sexualized predatory mortgage lending for participants that go on to purchase homes through Brioxy's industry partners or other channels.

Brioxy's workshops are ephemeral black economic geographies, serving as sites for black queer urban planning that aims to forestall and blunt the severity of the gentrification of black Baltimore neighborhoods through the collective accounting of property transactions in the local real estate market. Brioxy drafts participants from the city's *black creative class* in the black land movement

---

266 Dayo F. Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War* (New York: NYU Press, 2012).

267 Miranda Joseph, *Debt to Society*.

with a specific methodology: keeping a tally of which houses on the market go to *us* versus those that are bought up by *them*, a "tally" of black spatial and communal possibilities for black living in *and despite* property. As previously mentioned, Brioxy's accounting is both a politics of refusal with regards to the particularizing racial and gender imperatives of "predatory accumulation"[268] and also a politics of black preservation deployed against an asset class of speculative real estate developers with the latest "green light" from the Department of Planning.[269] For example, Cole recounted the story of a white woman realtor in the neighborhood with no shame to speak of, who frequents Dovecote Café and announces that she wants to gentrify the neighborhood. That is her political and business model. Through the black queer urban planning model of which the workshops are part, Brioxy mobilizes young black creatives to "put a stake in the ground" that delineates the speculative urbanism of the pro-gentrification white woman realtor,[270] the white man developer who owned and redeveloped multi-unit rowhouse next door to Dovecote Café, and the neighborhood associations, which I examine in Chapter 4, that organized the Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour from 1994-2016 before Brioxy joined the planning committee and produced the tours from 2017-2019.

---

[268] Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy. "Predatory Value," 2.

[269] I use the idea of "green-lighting" here to play on the term greenlining, which scholars have used to describe the predatory lending in minoritized communities that were excluded from mortgage capital and property ownership for most of the 20th century through the practice of *redlining*. In the post-crisis era, urban neoliberal states at the city level green-light speculative real estate development in sections of the city decimated by the subprime foreclosure crisis.

[270] fieldnote

CHAPTER THREE "A Rainbow at Midnight:" Queering Juneteenth and Claiming Black Land

In the "Juneteenth" episode of the FX show, *Atlanta* that aired in 2016, Van - a working-class black single mother in her late 20s or early 30s pulls up to the address of an apartment complex to pick up her daughter's father, Earn for the Juneteenth celebration hosted by her wealthy black "friend" Monique with her white husband in, presumably, the black elite Buckhead neighborhood. While "Earn" – short for Earnest – and "Van" – short for Vanessa – are not married, Van corrals Earn to accompany her to the party with the strategic pretense that they are. Monique, the black hostess, is impressed that Earn went to Princeton University, and Van does not mention that he dropped out to become a rap manager, though toward the end of the episode, the black valets in red jackets recognize and unintentionally "out" him. Van explained to Earn on the car ride over that they would need to carry out a believable performance of young black middle-class aspiration to gain access to the black elite resources and institutions of people at Juneteenth for their daughter, Lonny. Showing up as their black working-class and non-heteronormative selves would leave them susceptible to the damaging stereotypes about "ratchet" culture and sexual immorality – judgements that Black Feminist historians characterize as the "politics of respectability."[271]. Without the fastidious role-playing, Van implied, Monique and her ilk would likely foreclose access to their social and economic capital. An initially successful performance, Monique appraises, "You did good! You married right!" Later Monique assesses her own marriage with the admission, "I like Craig, but I love his money." Throughout the evening, the black preacher of a nearby mega church with his

[271] For black feminist analysis of the "politics of respectability," see Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Kali N. Gross, "Examining the Politics of Respectability in African American Studies." *Almanac* 43, no. 28 (1997). Cheryl D. Hicks, *Talk with You like a Woman: African American Women, Justice, and Reform in New York, 1890-1935* (Chapel Hill: Univ of North Carolina Press, 2010); among others.

devoted wife silent and smiling beside him offers to give Earn advice about money management in the future. A black middle-class woman who identifies as a playwright shares the ludicrous plot of her next play that represents the very classed disconnect of the black elite and middle-class. Earn bemoans his inability to get a vodka cranberry from the server who refers him to a list of Juneteenth-themed fancy cocktails. It is only in the Afro-centric man cave of Monique's white black-culture-loving and appropriation husband that Earn is offered, stereotypically, a Hennessy. And then another black man at the party directs him to the proverbial "back of the house" to get a beer (sic) from the black catering staff. A chorus of black men sing slavery-era gospel hymns on a curved stairwell that you might expect to see in Tara, the plantation house in the film, *Gone with the Wind*.[272] Earn satirically asks if the men "will be auctioned off after the performance." Another descent into the inferno - white Craig's slam poetry performance to an audience of black elite celebrants who keep their faces fixed while side-eyeing each other subtly at their sense of his absurdity cum minstrelsy. "So weird, so weird. This is a weird place," Earn exclaims a little tipsy, as he and Van leave the mansion after Earn blows up in a rant about the Juneteenth celebration. On the way toward their side of town, where many center-city adjacent and historically black neighborhoods face are being gentrified, and toward their respective single-parent apartments, Van pulls over so she and Earn can fuck in the car, as Sam Cooke's smooth voice crones, "That's the sound of the men working on the chain gang."[273]

In the post-financial crisis phase of the neoliberal era, popular media representations of Juneteenth Independence Day – from *Atlanta* to *Black-ish* at B*lack AF* characterize its celebration in

---

[272] David O. Selznick, Sidney Coe Howard, Victor Fleming, Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, Leslie Howard, Olivia De Havilland, Max Steiner, and Margaret Mitchell, 2009, *Gone with the Wind*, Burbank, CA: Distributed by Warner Home Video.

[273] *Atlanta*, episode 9, "Juneteenth," directed by Janicza Bravo, written by Donald Glover and Stefani Robinson, created by Donald Glover, aired on October 25, 2016, on FX on Hulu, https://www.hulu.com/watch/248f3d1b-9a4e-4793-87c0-06e3b63e4182.

the present as a distinctly "bougie" black elite affair. *Black-ish* and *#BlackAF* feature black upper middle-class families (black heterosexual dyads with children).[274] Writer and Director of *Atlanta*, Donald Glover also offers Jack and Jill, a social society for the black bourgeois, in the Juneteenth episode as a classed black signpost of who it is the black community that has the leisure time and privilege to dive into the collective memory of Juneteenth. Everyone else, the script seems to suggest, is precariously living or prematurely dying in the "afterlife of slavery," not celebrating its abolition or the farce of black first-class citizenship[275] Black McMansion owners, in Glover's depiction of the celebration, can look back to at the history of the peculiar institution and seal it there, as if a locked door that is permeable to collective memory, but no longer the material realities of race and black dispossession. Staging a window for mainstream public culture into Southern *black propertied cultures* as an analytic and setting for story telling about Juneteenth, Glover created a compelling satire about "black neoliberals" as a social group and a propertied class.[276] Put another way, in *Atlanta*, we learn that these Juneteenth-observing niggas have fallen all the way into the organic Kool-Aid of neoliberal values – property ownership, corporate elitism, a Protestant work ethic, marriage and heteronormativity, and fiscal responsibility.

Historically, Juneteenth Independence Day honors the declaration of the abolition of slavery that transpired over a year and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863. General Gordon Granger of the Union Army under President Andrew Jackson, occupied Texas and issued "Order No. 3" on June 19, 1865 to a crowd of onlookers in the coastal city of Galveston, Texas. In it, he declared that "all slaves are free," and that

---

[274] Shamira Ibrahim, "What Kenya Barris Doesn't Understand About *#BlackAF*," *The Atlantic*, 26 April 2020, https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2020/04/blackaf-fails-to-break-new-ground/610678/.

[275] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose your Mother*, 6.

[276] Michael C. Dawson and Megan Ming Francis, "Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial Order," 27.

this freedom "involves an absolute equality of personal rights and the rights of property between former masters and slaves," and that "the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor." Of course, similar moments of "grand jubilee" transpired from Southern state to state in the Confederacy as the Civil War raged on from 1863-1865. Historian Eric Foner calls these Union Army victories (made possible by scores of black soldiers) and moments of celebratory insurrection that crushed the Confederacy "rehearsals in reconstruction."[277] In his essay, "What is Juneteenth?" published on PBS.org, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. details the Civil War history of Juneteenth:

> When Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger issued the above order, he had no idea that, in establishing the Union Army's authority over the people of Texas, he was also establishing the basis for a holiday, "Juneteenth" ("June" plus "nineteenth"), today the most popular annual celebration of emancipation from slavery in the United States. After all, by the time Granger assumed command of the Department of Texas, the Confederate capital in Richmond had fallen; the "Executive" to whom he referred, President Lincoln, was dead; and the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery was well on its way to ratification…
>
> It would be easy to think so in our world of immediate communication, but as Granger and the 1,800 bluecoats under him soon found out, news traveled slowly in Texas. Whatever Gen. Robert E. Lee had surrendered in Virginia, the Army of the Trans-Mississippi had held out until late May, and even with its formal surrender on June 2, a number of ex-rebels in the region took to bushwhacking and plunder.[278]

Juneteenth festivals remix aspects of Juneteenth tradition into overt political statements to develop a collective black land ethic and a black cultural nationalist approach to urban private property ownership.

"On the ground" in the Reservoir Hill neighborhood of West Baltimore, Brioxy's Juneteenth festivals tender a fascinating case study in the mutable and constructive nature of black collective

---

[277] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 35.

[278]Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "What is Juneteenth?" *PBS.org*, https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/what-is-juneteenth/.

and historical memory as an entry point for black social movements in the neoliberal era. In this chapter, I continue my ethnographic analysis of Brioxy's black land movement to demonstrate the creative ways that Brioxy conjures the public memory of Juneteenth as a black queer performative exercise of speculative social reproduction: What would a black collective come-up look like in space, what would it feel like in the air around us? As a participant-observer in a community organizing role in the planning meetings, at the festivals, and in email correspondence with Juneteenth collaborators, I noticed a critical and historical pedagogy of black placemaking in the context of speculative urbanism. For the past three years during the celebratory weekend that falls a day or so before the official federal holiday of June 19th, black community organizers honor and "turn up" about the abolition of slavery while recognizing the ongoing black freedom struggle and the systematically deferred quest for black land in the United States. This chapter portrays the inner-workings, discourses, and cultural signposts of a Brioxy's Emancipation Day festival that celebrates the abolition of slavery by performing black queer place and imagining horizons of black *speculative social reproduction* the neighborhood. Brioxy's Juneteenth is an Afrofuturist performance in which the stages of gentrification do not progress and one in which black displacement does not come to pass. In this future, the spatiality and ethos of "the village" that the festival cultivates in Reservoir Hill materializes in a way that has overcome the structurally imposed ephemerality of black placemaking. Brioxy's Juneteenth praxis and discourses *throw shade* on white gentrification in "afterlife of slavery" and property by pressing the two horizons in dialectic: the horizon of Juneteenth,[279] which is stitched into the Juneteenth Flag" and the horizon of black queer futures that Kara Keeling theorizes in her recent book, *Queer Times, Black Futures*.[280] Moreover, I argue that the black queer

[279] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 6.

[280] Kara Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Futures* (New York: NYU Press, 2019).

aesthetics and performative placemaking modalities in Brioxy's Juneteenth festivals offer a critical entry point for black tenants in Baltimore to find collective power through ephemeral modes of black emplacement in gentrifying sections of Baltimore or alternatively, black land and property ownership within an economy of collectivism and movement-building.

Playing at the Past: A Blueprint for Juneteenth

To set up for the 2019 festival, Cole balanced herself on a 6-runged metal ladder with sky-blue high-tops and an all-black t-shirt, the ladder positioned on the left side of Dovecote Café's façade. Before the event began, a Juneteenth volunteer – a college-aged South Asian man with thin-framed black glasses held the ladder as she raised the flag on the morning of the 2019 festival on Saturday, June 15th. The star, I would later find out from the information sheet that Cole taped to the sign-in table for the garden and home tour, represented a horizon. The raising of the Juneteenth flag is a historical aspect of celebrations across the country, and this was the first year we had the flag on site at Dovecote. It waved throughout the celebratory day against the red brick-backdrop of the historic building. Designed by Brioxy organizers, Dovecote staff, and Juneteenth volunteers the cafe with the flag hanging in front of us – a banner for black freedom (pictured to the left). According to the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation (NJOF), Ben Faith designed the Juneteenth flag in 1997 with the same colors as the America flag with a star in the middle that "represents a star of Texas bursting with new freedom throughout the land, over a new horizon."[281] Brioxy draws on the history of Juneteenth as what George Lipsitz calls a "rainbow at midnight." While Lipsitz refers to the glimpse of possibility for the working-class labor movement after World

---

[281] Ben Faith founded the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation and served as the State Director of NJOF's Massachusetts chapter. Revisions to the flag have happened in 2000 and 2007. See "Juneteenth Flag," *National Juneteenth Observance Foundation*, accessed on June 10, 2020, http://nationaljuneteenth.com/Juneteenth_Flag.html.

War II during the emergence of the Cold War in his book, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s*.[282] He explains that "their struggle was itself a rainbow at midnight—an inspiring symbol of great hopes in the midst of a dark period."

Historians also draw on the term, "rainbow at midnight," to refer to the Reconstruction period after the American Civil War, in which Juneteenth's genealogy lies.[283] Brioxy uses and reproduces black collective memory of Juneteenth that affectively compresses the time two Reconstruction periods: the period after the Civil War before the rise of Jim Crow modernity and in the long reconstruction period in the aftermath of the 2008 Financial Crisis and the Great Recession. Writing about the post-slavery Reconstruction period in *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, Robert Allen writes, "the Emancipation Proclamation formally ended slavery, and black people were officially granted citizenship. Hopes were high among blacks that equality and the good life were just over the horizon."[284] However, Brioxy's struggle for black communal land within geographies of black dispossession facing structural gentrification is but one example in a long list that demonstrates the ways the horizon has not been reached.

For queer of color theorists like Jose Esteban Muñoz and Kara Keeling, "the horizon" is a radical theorization of queerness that refuses its existence or actualization in the present. In Muñoz's words, "queerness is primarily about futurity and hope. That is to say that queerness is always in the horizon. I contend that if queerness is to have any value whatsoever, it must be viewed as being

---

[282] George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (University of Illinois Press, 1994), 65.

[283] For example, Robin D. G. Kelley uses phrase, "a rainbow at might" and references Lipsitz's book to characterize the vantage point from which W. E. B. Du Bois analyzed and looked back at the Reconstruction period in the 1930s "when things could have gone another way. Things could have gone another way," he writes, "precisely because there was an interracial vision—which was essentially a proletarian rural to urban vision—in which the role of the state was to distribute wealth, eliminate the color line, abolish state violence and racial violence and create a peace economy build on sustaining the entire population as opposed to the wealthy." See Jordan T. Camp and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Black Radicalism, Marxism, and Collective Memory: An Interview with Robin D. G. Kelley," *American Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2013): 218, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41809558.

[284] Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1990), 91.

visible only in the horizon."[285] Further, he explains, "I think queerness as a temporal arrangement in which the past is a field of possibility in which subjects can act in the present in the service of a new futurity."[286] Kara Keeling explains that "'queer' can be understood as a force coursing through the veins of modernity and its socioeconomic logic." Distinct from the scholars of queer temporality with whom she is in dialogue, she articulates a theory of *black queer futurity* that is generative for thinking with black queer and trans community organizing models and social movements like Brioxy's. By critically engaging texts in the historical and theoretical archive of both Queer Studies and Black/Anti-Colonial Studies including Muñoz's *Cruising Utopia*, Lee Edelman's *No Future*, and Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, and Robin D. G. Kelley's *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* among others, Keeling critically reads three black queer documentaries in her book chapter entitled, "Yet Still: Queer Temporality, Black Political Possibilities and Poetry from the Future (of Speculative Pasts)." Drawing on Fanon's theorization of "the black" as "the corrosive element" within colonial regimes of power and Edelman's argument about the "no future" of homosexuality in relation to the biological reproductive imperatives of capitalism, Keeling writes,

> These two theories mark the shared historical interest of both queer and Black liberation projects in thinking a radical rupture from within the extant theoretical structures informing the temporalities of Black existence and homosexuality and queerness. In identifying a figure of radical alterity, and therefore potent danger to the existing structures of signification and the inequities and violence they rationalize, both the antirelational mode of Queer Theory and anticolonial theories that target for destruction and rebirth the ontological construction of 'the Human' in Western though and civilization share a utopian vision that the world as we know it can absolutely destroyed through the mobilization of an agent produced within it."[287]

While Brioxy's black land movement hinges upon the *black creative class*'s investment in private property for black placemaking – a goal that is not readily dissimilar to historical black capitalist

[285] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 11.

[286] Ibid., 14.

[287] Kara Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Futures*, 89.

discourses and movements – there is a "surplus" within their black spatial imaginary that defies containment by or categorization as black capitalism or black bourgeois class formation, the likes of which we have already seen..[288] Within the various overlapping modes of placemaking that are performed through Brioxy's Juneteenth festival are something else.

Brioxy organizes made visible and re-memorable "the time of slavery" in several ways,[289] the most explicit of which was the circulation of the historical fact that the first owners of the property and lot on which Dovecote now resides owned black slaves. This shared knowledge encouraged black folx at the festival to make connections between black enslavement and black status as property on the ground beneath them – the café, the sidewalk, and the side yard where little black kids ran "bey-bey" style with balloon animals and colorfully painted faces by a black woman artist named Tasha; an array of Baltimore's talented young black artists displaying and selling their artwork on sidewalks on both sides of the cafe under the canopy of green trees that line Madison Avenue, a black queer DJ pumping intergenerational of black music and people twerking and hula-hooping to it; black people circled around a black Baltimore woman's homemade trivia game called *Say It Loud!* after the James Brown song and boisterous players shaking maracas and yelling out the right and the wrong answers; a black man, who was among the city's historical arabbers, gave horse and carriage to give rides down Reservoir Hill's neighborhood streets, and his daughter Nay-Nay held the reign as black kids rode a pony around the square perimeter of the vacant lot across the street from the café while their parents took selfies.

Historically, the Dovecote building was formerly the Henry Phelps Brooks estate. A white family, the Brooks politically aligned with the Confederacy and owned black slaves. As a mnemonic

---

[288] Ibid., 88.

[289] Saidiya V. Hartman, "The Time of Slavery." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 757–777, muse.jhu.edu/article/39111.

device, the public story-telling of the property's history within what Walter Johnson calls "slave-racial capitalism" brings the long history of black dispossession, with regards to both land and personhood,[290] to Brioxy's Juneteenth in the Reservoir Hill section of Baltimore. On the Dovecote property, the telling of white familial slave ownership, unspeakable thresholds of physical, psychic, and sexual violence against the black captives with the status of property is a provocative and affective template from which to consider first-time homeownership as a black person in a gentrifying neighborhood.[291] In her article, "Plantation Futures," Katherine McKittrick draws the ways that New York African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan – discovered in 1991 by the U. S. General Services Administration – in which 20,000 black slaves were interned. She explains the concept of "plantation futures" in the following passage:

> The burial ground tells us that the legacy of slavery and the labor of the unfree both shape and are part of the environment we presently inhabit. It also points to the plot of land where the slaves are buried and provides an opening for what I am calling here "plantation futures": a conceptualization of time-space that tracks the plantation toward the prison and the impoverished and destroyed city sectors and, consequently, brings into sharp focus the ways the plantation is an ongoing locus of anti-black violence and death than can no longer analytically sustain this violence.[292]

While the estate was not a plantation, the Brooks family relied on slave labor for its social reproduction and identity formation as white and middle-class. Through historical storytelling, Brioxy organizers expose the violent genealogy of private property – as reified in the built environment and as cohered in black bodies. The garden and home tour begins with this racial encounter with the history of property's undying imbrication with slavery: an encounter staged between black Juneteenth volunteers and festival/tour goers who are black, Indigenous, white (non-

---

[290] Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 282.

[291] B. Cole, email correspondence with the author, May 17, 2020.

[292] Katherine McKittrick, "Plantation Futures," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 17, no. 3 (42) (2013): 2-3, https://doi.org/10.1215/07990537-2378892.

Jewish), white Jewish people, and people of color. Taped to the table, "E. Sachse, & Co.'s Bird's Eye View of the City of Baltimore, 1869" is a prop that brings additional "intensity" for the encounter where black Juneteenth volunteers could point and locate where we were standing on the map that is post-slavery and before the late 19th-century urbanization of what is now the northern section of Baltimore City.[293] "Plantation Time" confronts the market transaction, the exchange of cash or the Apple Square swipe of debit and credit cards for the pleasure of entering somebody else's crib, gaining access to white and black people's private property.

In this photograph, Cole points to the house and land a few years after the War and during Reconstruction in the South. Multiplied across many encounters during the festival, attendees learn about Brioxy's urban black land movement through promotional materials and speeches throughout the day, and they connect the public memory of slavery during which

Figure 4: Dovecote on the Map (2019)
Photograph by Sa Whitley

[293] E. Sashse, & Co., "Map: E. Sachse, & Co.'s Bird's Eye View of the City of Baltimore, 1869," *Library of Congress*, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844b.pm002540/.

blackness was co-constitutive with property with the violence of black dispossession committed through property in neoliberal regimes of speculative urbanism and gentrification.

To purchase the Dovecote building, Cole and Aisha began crowdsourcing the down payment for the mortgage to buy the building and the land while planning and launching the café's first Juneteenth celebration in 2017.[294] The couple exceeded their campaign goal of $30,000 via Indiegogo and raised $35, 684 from 424 "backers" including black queer folx and other members the b*lack creative class* in Baltimore.[295] On the café's Facebook page, the owners write, "Please help SUPPORT or INDIEGOGO to help us BUY it and *secure our future*" (emphasis mine), a request that illustrates my argument about speculative social reproduction throughout *The Collective Come-Up*. Cole and Aisha declare, "We could be out here ERRRYDAY!!"[296] In these quotes, "we" and "our" have double meanings, referencing the prospective black queer café owners and the *black creative class* that relies on and enjoys the café as one of Brioxy's Thirdspaces. Similarly, the first recorded Juneteenth celebration took place in 1872 when four black ministers, who were former slaves, pooled together $800 to buy 10 acres of land in the Third Ward of Houston, TX, which they named Emancipation Park. The land purchase became necessary after they were "unable to secure a place" through other means.[297] While "Dovecote LLC" owns the mixed-use rowhouse, the financial contributions possibly demonstrate a collectivist s*ense* of ownership that black queers and/or creatives feel as

---

[294] B. Cole, "Help Us Buy Our Building," *Indiegogo*, August 1, 2017, https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/help-dovecote-buy-our-building#/.

[295] B. Cole (Co-Founder of Brioxy, Co-Owner of Dovecote Café) in discussion with the author, October 2017.

[296] Dovecote Cafe, "We could be out here ERRRYDAY!!," *Facebook.com*, July 7, 2017, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/dovecotecafe/photos/pb.317044054176.-2207520000.1499478785./10155058101149177/?type=3.

[297] Sergio Chapa, "Juneteenth Celebration Draws Thousands to Historic Houston Park," *The Houston Chronicle*, June 19, 2019, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Juneteenth-celebration-drawn-thousands-to-14000793.php.

patrons/visitors.[298] Importantly, Cole was previously a subprime mortgage debtor, who lost her first home during the foreclosure crisis and then crowdsourced the down payment for the mortgage. In this case, members of the *black creative class* who donated to Cole and Aisha's crowdsourced mortgage down payment enacted a black economic geography in the post-crisis era that unmoored mortgage capital from the sexual and gender prerogatives of white heteropatriarchal normativity. Undoubtedly, if the black queer café owners ever become at risk of mortgage default, members of the *black creative class*, black queers in particular, would collectivize the café's household debt and enact an ephemeral black economic geography across the city, underwritten by black queer kinship across tenant and owner households in Baltimore.

Within Dovecote café, the wallpaper designed by Sheila Bridges conjures up the black collective memory of post-bellum jubilee and Juneteenth on a daily basis. On Dovecote's wall, African-descendant people are depicted in jubilant scenes and set the stage that this is a black café – European people imagined elsewhere, and black people in the white relief of the black background and elite Victorian style, are depicted with luxury, leisure, power, joy, and privilege, and freedom. The wallpaper within the café flips the historical script of settler colonialism, in which European peoples stole and enslaved African peoples during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, bought, sold, and mortgaged as property, and forced them (through "gendered racial terror") to labor as so-called chattel.[299] The wallpaper of the café appropriates and rewrites this history of American slavery and Reconstruction, and in a similar vein, the black queer café owners attempt to appropriate and rewrite

[298] Suzanne Scott, "The Moral Economy of Crowdfunding and the Transformative Capacity of Fan-ancing," *New Media & Society* 17, no. 2 (2015): 172, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814558908.

[299] I use Historian Sarah Haley's term, "gendered racial terror," from her book, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 3.

the social and economic relations of private property for black queer placemaking in the post-crisis neoliberal era on a local level.

While moving through the festival on a former slaveowner's property that was now *black property*, the t-shirts that Brioxy commissioned or selected for Juneteenth volunteers engaged African American public memory – the unfulfilled promises of black emancipation and black land as "a place where they can be free and develop their own culture without interference."[300] In 2017, Ejay designed the t-shirts for Juneteenth volunteers who wore them on the two-day event that year and sold them to festival attendees. Ejay is a black masculine-of-center queer woman who is the founder of the clothing brand Civil Wrongs and also hosts a monthly dance battle in West Baltimore called, "Be Civil Battles." We also had them available for sale inside Dovecote Café during the weekend and for a few months afterward. Pictured below with the designer, the T-black Shirts include the capitalized name of the black holiday in white lettering. JUNETEENTH is also framed by two white lines to steady the eye on this holiday as the focal point instead of the national holiday beneath it. Featured in smaller capitalized letters beneath "JUNETEENTH," the date of American Independence Day, JULY FOURTH, is featured but crossed out with a diagonal of descending lines in red, black, and green to cancel the mainstream Independence Day. These colors in this order depict the Pan-African Flag (also referred to as the Black Liberation Flag) that Marcus Garvey of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) designed in 1920.[301] The flag echoes historical

[300] See Robin D. G. Kelley, "'A Day of Reckoning': Dreams of Reparations" (Chapter 5) in *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 126. Kelley invokes a pivotal way that black folx in the United states have understood land, which is as "free space" or territory (125). Here, he specifically writes about the spatial imaginary of MOVE, the black nationalist group in Philadelphia created an alternative society. The Philadelphia mayor gave the order for the PPD to bomb the MOVE compound in 1985 and let it and an entire city block burn after neighbors tried and failed to get the group evicted. J. T. Roane writes about MOVE and compares the group to the Mothers 4 Housing who took over and squatted in vacant property own by real estate speculators in Oakland, CA. See J. T. Roane, "Mothers 4 Housing and Black Anti-Growth Politics," *Black Perspectives*, January 15, 2020, https://www.aaihs.org/mothers-4-housing-and-the-legacy-of-black-anti-growth-politics/, accessed on June 10, 2020.

[301]Leah Donnella, "On Flag Day, Remembering the Red, Black, and Green," *NPR.org*, June 14, 2017, https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/06/14/532667081/on-flag-day-remembering-the-red-black-and-

Baltimore resident Frederick Douglass' incisive question, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" in his speech of the same name in which he indicts US democracy as a "sham."[302] Ejay and other black folx wearing her t-shirts at Brioxy's Juneteenth festival mount a black collective refusal of 1776 as a year that warrants celebration for present-day African descendants of enslaved people in the American colonies. As a black non-heteronormative woman, Ejay is marginalized by multiple modes

Figure 5: Ejay with Civil Wrongs Juneteenth Tee (2018)
Image by Brioxy

of inequality that reproduce people with her identities as devalued and exploitable. As a person who does not conform to the mandates and gender roles of the white heteronormative family, she is excluded from full benefits of neoliberal citizenship and the so-called "free market." The Juneteenth t-shirt's refusal to celebrate American Independence Day in the present, speaks to incompatibility of black freedom with U.S. liberal democracy and never brought about "black sovereignty" or equal

---

green#:~:text=The%20Pan%2DAfrican%20flag%2C%20(,%22black%20freedom%2C%20simple.%22&text=Sheet%20music%20for%20%22Every%20Race%20Has%20a%20Flag%20But,Coon%2C%22%20published%20in%201900.

[302] Frederick Douglass, "The Meaning of Fourth of July for the Negro" (1852), *PBS*, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2927t.html.

citizenship (fieldnotes, June 14, 2019). It conveys a determination to define "independence and freedom in black political terms, which contradict those of what Ananya Roy calls "propertied citizenship."[303] As "afterlife of property," black descendants of slaves in the American context carry the baggage of a history in which they were bought, sold, mortgaged, and inherited, continues to serve as a condition of possibility for racism, which Ruth Wilson Gilmore defines as "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death."[304] Gilmore and McKittrick convey that "the afterlife of property" is the 13th Amendment's caveat for the survival of slavery in the prison system. With her conceptualization of "plantation futures," McKittrick also underscores that plantation geographies are the ground on which the urbanization transpires, which is always at the expense of black place or black geographies.[305]

For the annual Juneteenth Festivals that Brioxy has vivified on the side yards of a small cafe in West Baltimore, the common features of the events run together in my mind: In 2017, the black collective, Fix Baltimore, led farm demonstrations for kids with planting seedlings in paper cups they filled with dirt with their little black fingers wrapped around a children's gardening shovel and in 2019, a black man from the Bronx who lives in Baltimore brought a cart of produce from the neighborhood's black-run farm named Whitelock, after the street it is nestled beside. With these and several other festivities Brioxy's Juneteenth Festivals in Reservoir Hill felt like "Black Thanksgiving" or "Black Christmas." While a passersby might assume the festivities at Dovecote Café were a run of the mill day party, Brioxy effectively incorporates some of the historical traditions of the holiday to

---

[303] Ananya Roy, "Paradigms of Propertied Citizenship," 463-491.

[304] Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 28.

[305] Katherine McKittrick, "Plantation Futures," 1-15.

set the stage for aspects of the event that would explicitly mark the Baltimore-based festival as part of a black land and anti-gentrification movement. Black people in the early 20th century referred to the Juneteenth as a 2nd Christmas or a Black Thanksgiving. Sometimes, there was even a religious component or sermon, which mixed the realization of emancipation with the goal of deliverance espoused by black churches in the South. Brioxy's Juneteenth afterparty – that year a weekend-long event – was called "Sunday Deliverance." In historical celebrations, long picnic tables filled with a cornucopia of free black soul food including barbecue chicken, potato salad, collard greens, and cornbread were common on Juneteenth. Bootleg whiskey and other home-made alcoholic drinks in mason jars were typically on sale throughout the celebration day. In true Juneteenth fashion, Dovecote chefs sold barbecue chicken sandwiches, fried fish, macaroni & cheese, and other classic soul food samplings. Mariama, an irreplaceable Brioxy and Juneteenth organizer made cocktails with fresh herb garnishes for attendees. Where holiday celebrations also included live upbeat music and dancing, cabarets to showcase black talent in the community and decadent parades, and a "Negro Hall of Culture."[306] Brioxy's Juneteenth festivals in Res Hill feature a black queer DJ each year and that person spins classics like "Poison" by Bell Biv DeVoe, "Signed, Sealed, Delivered (I'm Yours) by Stevie Wonder, and hit songs such as Beyoncé's hit song, "Before I Let Go," – a remix of the classic song of the same name by Maze, featuring Frankie Beverly. The Juneteenth celebrations in Baltimore also assemble a black ephemeral marketplace for "Charm City's" talented array of young black artists and social entrepreneurs for an art bazaar amidst a party a dirt bike clinic, a lemonade stand constructed by black neighborhood youth from St. Francis Center with the mentorship of a local black minister, and black DJs pumping 90s, early 2000s and present-day hip hop and R&B for crowd favorite sing-alongs. The jubilee amid a gentrifying black neighborhood also characterized by

306 William H. Williams, Jr., "Juneteenth: A Red Spot Day on the Texas Calendar" in *Juneteenth Texas: Essays in African-American Folklore*, ed. Francis Edward Abernethy, 237-253 (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1996).

multiple geographies of foreclosure celebrated a liberation and an infrastructure for black queer futurity in place that is on the horizon but being worked out in the present. Unlike the delicious chicken barbeque sandwiches that the Dovecote chefs whipped up in 2017, the recipe for black future is not set in stone or in place, but Brioxy's celebration of Juneteenth aims to create the confrontations with speculative real estate capital, white heteronormativity, and that underwrite black dispossession.

Black Cotton and Black Queer Placemaking

Black queer placemaking at Juneteenth circulated and festively displayed cotton stems alongside verbal encounters that evoked the collective memory of the black violence and subjection that the paramount crop in the history of chattel slavery and the rise of global capitalism that the beautiful and full white plumes elicited among black folx. By displaying and offering cotton, an extremely loaded and deeply symbolic commodity as an ephemera of "transatlantic iconography" (Brooks) and the county's legacy of slavery, Brioxy's Juneteenth Festivals brought what Saidiya Hartman has called "the time of slavery" into close proximity with the "time of gentrification."[307] As W.E..B Du Bois in *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935) wrote the central role of cotton as a cash crop produced US chattel slavery made possible the rise of modern global capitalism.[308] At Juneteenth, cotton stems reify the violence of property, debt, and "the afterlife of property."[309]

At Juneteenth 2018, black folks curiously approached the sign-in table to see the long elegant stems of cotton. Mariama Bramble, a Brioxy organizer and owner of life-style brand, Brownbelle,

---

[307] See Saidiya Hartman, "The Time of Slavery." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 757–777, accessed on June 10, 2020, muse.jhu.edu/article/39111 and Suleiman Osman, "What Time is Gentrification?" *City & Community* 15, no. 3 (2016), 216.

[308] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880* (New York: The Free Press, 1998).

[309] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 13.

chose long stems for a blue vase in the middle of the table. She has an eye for decor and interior design, and these skills are many assets that she brings to the Brioxy team. Each stem had three or four cotton blooms with thick white puffs enclosed and propped up by the thorny calyx. The dried calyx are the original buds that blossom on the plant from which the cotton balls break open. Throughout the festival, black people came up to the table with awe in their eyes, wanting to touch it and take some home. I remember sitting at the sign-up table for the home & garden tour and reaching my long brown arm into the cardboard box to pick a stem to the liking of black people who stood in both awe and pain as I handed them the relic of black enslavement and the Cotton Kingdom.

Brioxy purchased "Black Cotton" from a black North Carolina cotton grower on a farm that his family had owned for generations. For Kwanzaa in December 2017, Cole received an "Ujamaa Box," which is a subscription-service gift box that includes an assortment of black-owned business and products" in honor of the "cooperative economics" model that the black cultural nationalist holiday promotes in the "buy black" ethos. She and Aisha decided to infuse the 2018 and 2019 Juneteenth festivals with cotton as signifier that resonates with affective power and collective memory. Black Cotton is the home decor brand of North Carolina black entrepreneur and first-generation black farmer, Julius Tillery. He grew up in the cotton business and worked on the farm that his family has owned for generations. A few years ago, he had the idea to use a few acres of his family's large-scale farm to market and sell bouquets of cotton to black people across the country. He wasn't lying when he said, "when you open those boxes of cotton, *it's going to feel special*. You should *record yourselves* when you open them. Everyone has a *special response* when they see cotton for the first time and *feel it*."[310] Here, whether as marketing strategy or genuine connection or both, Tillery points to the affective capacity of cotton. It is not merely a plant or a commodity – a violent

[310] Julius Tillery, email to the author, February 15, 2018.

history of "primitive accumulation," racial terror and violence, and exploitation give the "black cotton" elicit a wave of emotions and sensations to anyone near the open box. History hits you and hits you hard. Tillery repeats the words "special" and the word "feel" twice respectively to explain what happens to a black body as the affects circulate during the act of looking back (or black) in time and considering the "black excellence" of black farmer who owns the land and tries to recapture black pleasure from an affectively plant that cannot be severed from historical violence of slavery and post-slavery racial-economic constructions such as sharecropping, the state violence against interracial sharecropper unionization,[311] and convict leasing. At Juneteenth in the present, black cotton's affects push black people into collective critiques of racial capitalism and black dispossession in the urban context. Specifically, people at Brioxy's Juneteenth felt affects from the Black Cotton pushed black participants. For many of the white people, the cotton was white cotton and it was just "beautiful" and "how beautiful!" – remarks that delinked the cotton from its slavery and post-slavery geographies of anti-black violence. Through black cotton affects, a black political knowledge project rooted in collective memory *activated* black festival goers unbeknownst to white festivalgoers, creating a hidden transcript. Additionally, white people in attendance, who did not know about Brioxy's strategic and "anti-gentrification" takeover of the Reservoir Hill Garden & Home tour must have seen the cotton as merely decoration, performing the neoliberal logic that forecloses an analysis of the impact of racism on the spatio-social conditions of the present. White festival participants approached the sign-up table to ask for a complimentary piece or stem to take with them as an added emblem of hip and chic home decor.

Cole introduced Brioxy's black land movement as the anti-gentrification work that organizers mobilized out of and through the cafe. She would invite the runners to connect the dots:

[311] Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2015).

the cotton blooms in her hand and the black land that they came from and the black-owned land/property we were standing on with the cotton – Dovecote Café that was purchased through predominately black and brown crowdsourcing. For Juneteenth 2018 and 2019, Brioxy displayed stems of cotton from a black-owned farm in North Carolina to pay homage to black formerly enslaved ancestors, who were forced to toil and bleed on cotton plantations of the U.S. South. Tillery points to a renewed pride in cotton that hails from a black-owned cotton farm. With this racial shift of land ownership from the white ruling plantation class to black family-owned farmland, Black Cotton is a success story of a black geography that survived within a post-bellum white geographic order predominately characterized by black dispossession – from the Compromise of 1877 to the racially discriminatory lending practices by the US Department of Agriculture,[312] The allure of "Black Cotton" as a conceptual framework, much like that of *black property* in Brioxy's black land movement, is a powerful provocation for Juneteenth festival attendees. In this case something that holds, like a rain cloud, the collective intergenerational trauma - pain, anger, and grief - can be reclaimed and recapitulated as something black people have the capacity to own, profit from, feel pride in, and look upon as aesthetically pleasing in one's home. Moreover, a success story, one in which a black family keeps the land, one in which a black family thrived despite the modes of expropriation of black land in the 20th century. At the festival, the sense of collective black trauma of enslavement and dispossession in black history is a force that politicizes festival goers *through feeling* and prompts connections between black dispossession and economic disenfranchisement historically and in the present.

[312] Alyosha Goldstein, "Finance and Foreclosure in the Colonial Present," *Radical History Review* 2014, no. 118 (2014): 42–63.

As it is circulated throughout the black queer spaces of Juneteenth, Brioxy demonstrates the ways that capitalist markets are what Katherine McKittrick calls, "Plantation Futures."[313] The land on which cotton was grown and the black enslaved people that grew it shared legal status as property in the plantation economy. Just as the racial and gender ideologies that were worked out during slavery continue to reproduce themselves in the neoliberal popular culture, they also saturate markets.[314] Black dispossession, in regard to both land and body, is central to the reproduction of white life or white social reproduction, an argument that Ruha Benjamin elaborates brilliantly.[315] In the commercial market of home décor from Michael's to Hobby Lobby, long elegant cotton stems represent rustic style more than historical or racial meaning. In the artificial and dried flower aisles of these big-box arts and crafts chains, the beauty of the stems and their merger with other decorative flowers for festive occasions or interior decoration obscure the violence of the commodity in the colonial past and neoliberal-colonial present across the globe. However, as a fixture that circulates throughout Brioxy's Juneteenth festival, cotton is not merely decorative, though it may have *passed* as such to white festival attendees. "Black Cotton" brought the terrain of historical black land struggles, black dispossession, and racial capitalism into the anti-gentrification discourses that circulated at Juneteenth. This cultural and affective illegibility enabled Brioxy to plan and produce a festival that worked as a black knowledge project and politicization for the black land movement against gentrification.

---

313 Katherine McKittrick, "Plantation Futures," 1-15.

314 Cheryl I. Harris, "The Afterlife of Slavery: Markets, Property, Race."

315 Ruha Benjamin, "Black Afterlives Matter."

Queering Jubilee & Spatializing Black Fabulousness

What kinds of black urban placemaking should we activate in the present that dives into the "horizons" of black trans and queer futurity and freedom? Black queer and trans organizers and artists in Baltimore have been answering and remapping the city in a variety of radical ways – from Baltimore jail support to SWOP to the Baltimore Transgender Alliance events, protests, vigils, and fundraisers to Trans Day of Resilience (TDOR) protests up North Avenue to "Version," a monthly queer dance party hosted by Jess and Kyle at the Crown and more. Through the annual Juneteenth festivals in Res Hill, Brioxy offers a performative and material response to this question, setting the stage quite literally for a black land movement that co-opts private property for a collectivist and spatial aim. I hope to convey the radical potential of urban planning that proliferates from black queer and trans spaces of fabulousness and what Marlon M. Bailey and Rashad Shabazz call "anti-black heterotopias."[316] Brioxy's spatial performances offer a "disorienting effect" to white heteronormativity and the white family as the idealized mode of domesticity.[317] Black queer and trans performativity and placemaking amid the Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour poses a challenge to white settler-colonial and speculative claims on black urban space.
through and capitalize on as property interest in the housing market and real estate developers and urban planners reproduce as valuable and the standard through which other modes of domesticity, sexuality, and kinship are regulated as "high risk," deviant, and exploitable.

In their 2018 book, *Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric*, Madison Moore theorizes the spatial movement of black and brown queer, trans, and gender variant people who dare to be

---

[316] Marlon M. Bailey and Rashad Shabazz, "Gender and Sexual Geographies of Blackness: Anti-Black Heterotopias (Part 1)," (2014): 316-321, https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.781305.

[317] Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 24.

fabulous – "eccentric style, fashion, and creativity" that distort and subvert gender and sexual binaries – in public spaces designed for white cisgender heterosexual people and normativity. They write that "perhaps one of the greatest creative gifts of marginalized people and social outcasts is that power of abstraction—the ability to see through the here and now and to live dangerously through radical style, art, music, and ideas."[318] Brioxy's Juneteenth creates "gender and sexual geographies of blackness" (that invite black queers and other "social outcasts" to be themselves in the eclectic fashion, their healing practices, their farm goods, their gender and sexual identities in public, and in their artwork, often seeped in black political critique from queer and trans perspectives. Madison posits that "fabulous creative renegades" demonstrate the "power of abstraction," which in the statement above is a function of thwarting and remixing social conventions – gender and sexual normativity generally and in their fashionable embodiments. Much like Keeling and Muñoz, Moore also conveys the ways that queer folx act, dress, move in accordance to how the world should be, in accordance with a future sense of liberation and a future place/space that does not deem their styles and lifeways "dangerous." This mode of abstraction seems to offer a countermapping to the modes of abstraction levied by the financial industry and speculative urbanism. In an era of financialization, the complex algorithms of risk-based pricing and mortgage backed securities epitomize abstraction of finance capital that enables its exploitation of particularities such as race, gender, sexuality, age, and class, as Miranda Joseph argues.[319] Conversely, the creative abstraction of "the fabulous" rewrite the rules of order for normative identities and embodiments that have advantage in the market.

Before the 2019 Juneteenth festival began, Aisha walked along the sidewalk on Dovecote Cafe's block of Madison Avenue, slowly shaking a smoldering bundle of sage about three to four

[318] Madison Moore, *Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 5.
[319] Joseph, Miranda. *Debt to Society*.

rowhouses up the block on both sides of her cafe. I didn't ask her, but given the Juneteenth event's place in Brioxy's black land movement in Baltimore, I wondered if she was clearing the stretch of sidewalk that extended north toward Druid Hill Park and south toward Whitelock Avenue of toxic energy - the quotidian violence of "[white] invasion" – to make way for the jubilee. Throughout the Juneteenth celebration, Baltimore's best artists, *black only*, unfolded folding tables and chairs, hauled out of the trunk of vans and cars. The black owners of local bottled drink brands such as Veganology set up tents with fresh mixed-berry juices and fruits. Juneteenth celebrants carried bottles of water filtered and refined by a Baltimore-based black-owned company that were on sale at Dovecote Café. Black artists and black craft and food vendors began backing their cars into the diagonal parking spots to set up for the Black Art Bazaar. They popped their trunks filled with colorfully painted canvases and illustrated prints and political posters, black hand-poured soaps and scented candles, wire-wrapped healing crystals, essential oil blends, and jewelry. Screen-printed shirts for sale boasted "black genius" and posters with gold spray-painted effect read in capitalized letters, "LOVE MORE BMORE."[320] This scene of black artists coming out for Juneteenth, made the sidewalk a dazzling moving picture, like a red carpet, of black fabulousness. In a fieldnote from the 2018 Juneteenth festival, I describe a similar scene:

> The craft vendors set up under a big tent that Cole ordered in the lot beside the café. Sarah Juanita with her 3D-printed wood earrings that she laser cut in a lab at Baltimore Community College in Catonsville, Maryland, Quetta with her spinning home-made game wheel to play & sell pre-orders for her black pop-culture and history trivia game with people who attended the festival, Alisa from Drama Mama Bookshop with her inspirational journals, among others. A few artists within the Art Bazaar set up under the tent like Jon Brick with his painting of black fists in many shades of brown all raised with a Black Power ethos, and Matice Moore, with their wavy neon shapes merging & curving together on canvases like flowing colored water, their screen printed tank tops in technicolor that read "Black Lives Matter" or "Non-Binary" … People looked and bought prints and jewelry. Black artists, some

---

[320] See B. Robinson, "The Black Genius Art Show," 2020, https://theblackgeniusartshow.com/ and Ashley Huff, Jr., "Love More Bmore," *Facebook*, https://www.facebook.com/Love-MORE-BMORE-1174690292557043/photos/?ref=page_internal, Accessed on June 7, 2020.

of whom had never met, connected and shared ideas, shot the breeze, and planned future collaborations throughout the day (fieldnotes, July 9, 2018).

Fast forward again to 2019, I directed arriving artists to Aisha and marveled as she directed vendors where to set up by referring to her hand-drawn map of the sidewalk and side-yards around Dovecote with artists names inside black rows of squares to represent their booths. Aisha's map and the foresight of map-making reminded me of architectural blueprints and urban planning documents and the ways in which she and Cole as co-owners of Dovecote and Brioxy leaders engaged in a black queer urban planning praxis for black queers and creatives in the neighborhood's rowhouses.

Under the tent, the brick-laid section of the side-yard was alive with the black Variety Show produced and emceed by Kasaun, a black queer woman with blonde-highlighted dread locks and the best style. Local black musicians – many queer-identified as well – positioned themselves in the corner by the wrought iron gate entrance to the side yard, which was wide open. Black spoken word artists spit spoken word poetry about the social problems in Baltimore from racist policing to gentrification. Such ephemeral performances and embodiments culturally celebrate and affirm blackness in the afterlife of slavery and uphold a sense that black lives with non-normative and beautifully variant sexualities, genders, postures, political expressions, and ways of being black and in motion.

In the ephemeral black marketplace or economic geography at Juneteenth, members of the city's *black creative class* take up space and vend for free – a notable difference from the high-cost vending fees at the annual Artscape festival and the post-industrial new-age commercial spaces popping up in other gentrifying neighborhoods like RHOUSE in Remington. The Remington neighborhood is adjacent to Res Hill, but I-83 highway construction in the mid-20th era of urban renewal spatialized racialization through "the promise of infrastructure" – a promise that shielded the white working-class neighborhood from the predominately black neighborhood (Anand, Appel, Gupta 2018). While this Juneteenth and rent-free black urban commons was ephemeral, black art

bazaars at Dovecote also happen throughout the year and offered a makeshift black marketplace for black artists in center city neighborhoods that foreclose black artists inclusion in art institutions and affordability in the rental market. In 2018, a white man with a black van showed up as the black artists and craft vendors readied their stations for the jubilee.

Moore's conceptualization of fabulous calls to mind Treva Ellison's formulation of "werqing it" as an "act of making power" in their book chapter, "The Labor of Werqing It: The Performance and Protest Strategies of Sir Lady Java" from the anthology, *Trap: Door Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*. They write,

> In the house and ball scene, the declarative "Werq!" asserts the sartorial, the expressive, the performed, and the embodied over the biologic, the state record, the birth certificate, the checkbox; it affirms the potential and creativity in being surplus and the potential of reworking and repurposing the signs, symbols, and accoutrements of Western modernity. Werqing it is a relational gesture of world-making at the spatial scale of the body and the community that aligns sender and receiver in a momentary network of fleshy recognition . . . To werq is to exercise power through the position of being rendered excessive to the project of the human and its dis/organizing social categories: race, gender, sexuality, and class. Werqing it deforms, denatures, and reforms the very categories in which werqers can find no stable home.[321]

I bring Ellison's "werq" in conversation with Moore's "fabulousness," because they both point to the "potential and creativity" in "being surplus" and "excessive" to the normative categories of the human and the citizen in Western nation-states in the era of neoliberal racial capitalism. The neoliberal state uses normative identities as regulatory mechanisms to determine which citizens will be recognized as worthy or undeserving of rights, "stable homes," or public space. Both Moore and Ellison's texts shed light on the aesthetic and cultural politics and placemaking of black queer and trans people at Brioxy's Juneteenth Festival. With both non-normative ways of moving through

[321] Treva Ellison, "The Labor of Werqing It: The Performance and Protest of Sir Lady Java," in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* edited by Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 1.

public space – "werqing it" and being fabulous, the artists and fashionistas move through Juneteenth at Dovecote Café with what Stephano Harney and Fred Moten call "black debt" and "queer debt."[322] Whether they actually have credit card debt, pay day loans, or subprime mortgage debt, they move creatively through the world with the audacity to be "surplus" or indebted to the norms of white cis-heteronormativity, binaristic gender expression, identity, or fashion, and even the imperatives of entrepreneurial citizenship – modes of debt resistance in "fugitive publics."[323]

Black queer and trans aesthetics rule the day throughout Brioxy's 21st century Juneteenth festivals in Baltimore. At the turn of the 20th century, black celebrants would get dressed up in fancy suits and dresses, responding to department store ads that exclaimed, "DRESS AS YOU SHOULD BE FOR JUNETEENTH" or "Be Among the best dressed on 'JUNETEENTH.'" These ads portray a collective black American understanding that full citizenship was classed. Black people celebrating Juneteenth wanted to demonstrate and exude black excellence and their status as free "ladies and gentlemen."[324] With fancy suits and dresses, they projected their deservingness of full citizenship rights and their capacity to conform to *or perform* white middle-class dress codes and respectability politics, even when the masses of black people in the Post-Reconstruction era were working-class and often sharecroppers, washerwomen, domestics, and servants. With a growing network of young black people in what Cole calls the *black creative class*, black festival attendees in Baltimore from 2017-2019 flaunted black countercultural and queer urban aesthetics. For the third year in a row, a black non-binary clothing-designer named Rich Rocket had their portable rack of

---

[322] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons*," 61.

[323] Ibid., 67.

[324] William H. Wiggins Jr., "Juneteenth: A Red Spot Day on the Texas Calendar," in *Juneteenth Texas: Essays in African-American Folklore*, ed. by Francis Edward Abernethy, 237-253 (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1996).

Figure 6: Rich Rocket of the Vintage Thrivals (2019)
Photograph by Sa Whitley

uniquely tailored threads that combine vintage clothing with their own additions of flamboyant flair. They commuted to Baltimore from Annapolis, Maryland to attend Juneteenth at Dovecote Café.

Conclusion

By making, taking up, and resignifying place at and through the Juneteenth festival, Brioxy strategically positions the Juneteenth arm of its black land movement in what McKittrick calls a "time-space continuum" with post-slavery geographies of black dispossession and neoliberal processes of gentrification. Brioxy resignifies the collective memory of Juneteenth as resonant with radical possibility, mobilizing its cultural iconography in a story about the persistence of systematic

black land dispossession in the US and a black queer and trans story about the politics and praxis of homemaking in geographies of foreclosure. Attuned to the long-term effects of the subprime foreclosure crisis and historical and ongoing modes of black urban dispossession in Baltimore, Brioxy draws on the cultural and political histories of Juneteenth Independence Day, also known as "Emancipation Day" and "Freedom Day,"[325] to map out an economic and housing vision for "reconstruction" at the local scale of a black neighborhood. In doing so, Brioxy organizers point to the unfinished project of American Democracy and showcase a new and unprecedented organizing blueprint by black queer organizers. This chapter situates Brioxy's black placemaking modalities through Juneteenth as a key comment of the group's black queer urban praxis that I have identified in this dissertation as the crucial provocation of their housing-justice organizing.

[325] Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR **Foreclosing White Property: The Politics of Black Queer Home, Garden & Real Estate Tours**

"*THIS LAND IS OUR LAND*

Are you ready for Juneteenth?! There is so much in store starting with Home and Garden Tours. Take a tour of over 20 homes and gardens, many of which were built in the early 1800s. Learn the unique history of our neighborhood as a Black and Jewish center of life in Baltimore. Get inspiration for your current and future homes.

This year's tour features an expanded footprint with NEW gardens and homes to explore, from fanciful Victorian gardens to sleek contemporary row homes, from Mt. Royal Terrace to Madison Avenue."[326]

Figure 7: Black Home on Juneteenth
"Res Hill" Garden & Home Tour (2019)
Photograph by Sa Whitley

By far, the most popular house on Brioxy's home and garden tour was Andrea and Verlea's house on Madison Avenue a few houses down from Dovecote Cafe in the Reservoir Hill neighborhood of West Baltimore. Verlea and Andrea are a black middle-aged lesbian couple residing in a rowhouse with three floors. Entering the front yard with the push of their black wrought iron waist-high gate, visitors climb the stairs to their stoop and cross the threshold of the door with the Juneteenth flag waving above them. As you step into the living room, you are greeted by large exotic

[326] Brioxy, email newsletter to the author, June 11, 2018.

plants and African Diasporic art on the walls such as colorful African masks, hand-made vases and other ceramics on coffee tables, the fireplace mantle, and chic rugs. The couple invites tour-goers to their kitchen island at the other end of the first floor with its open floor plan. Every year, they serve a variety of cookies and sodas, cheese platter, crackers, and wine in translucent plastic cups. Guests explore the first floor, the basement level, and the wooden deck and the backyard with awe. Perhaps, with a hint of satire, a big flat-screen TV downstairs in the basement framed by African masks and mounted to the wall on both sides plays reruns of the hit show, "Property Brothers" from the network, *Home and Garden Television* network (HGTV)[327] – in which two white cisgender men who

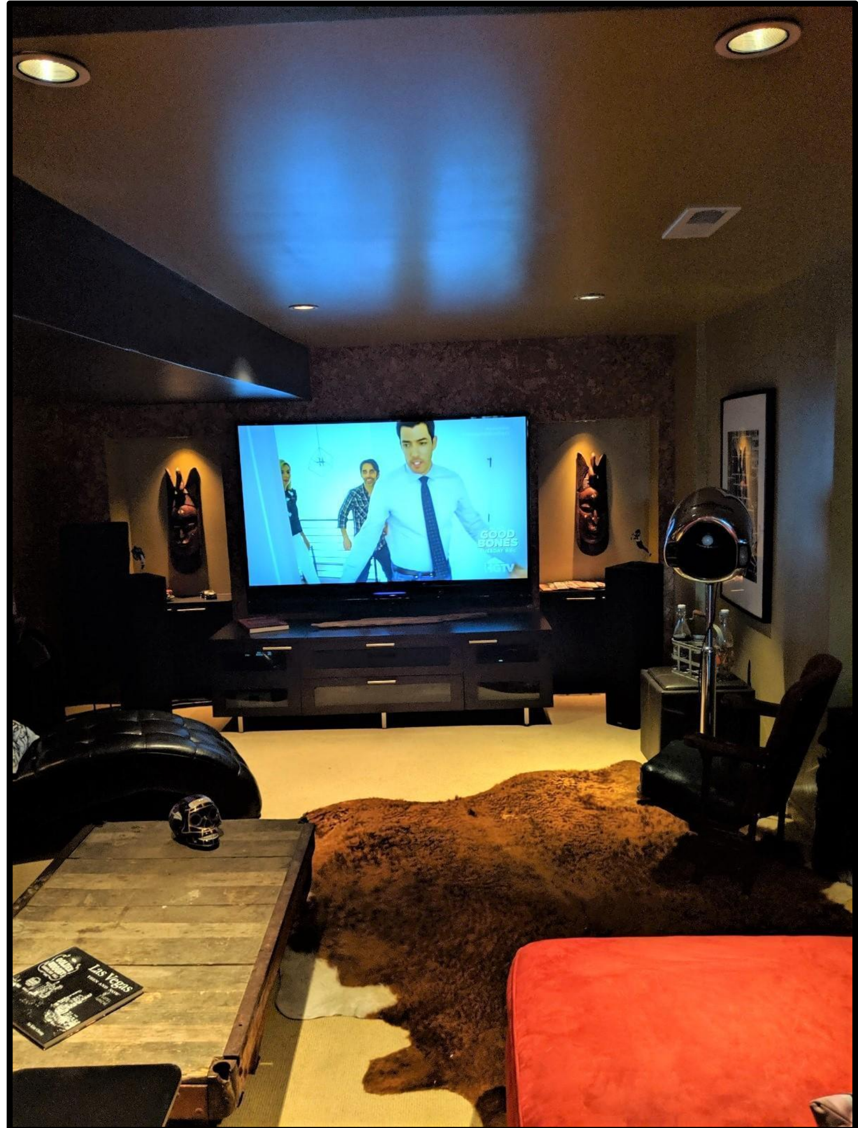

Figure 8: "Property Brothers" and African Masks (2019)
Photograph by Sa Whitley

[327] "Property Brother," *HGTV*, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.hgtv.com/shows/property-brothers.

are biological twins renovate and flip houses on the real estate market. Reminiscent of a so-called "man cave," it felt to me, a masculine-of-center and non-binary black person, more like a "butch cave" with its pool table, a big brown bear rug, a full bar with glass bottles—vintage labels on display—, the lamp that reminded me of an over-head hair dryer from a black beauty salon or my mother's kitchen (and often the hot comb to follow). The latter in my own future home, I thought as I explored the home and property of a black lesbian couple, would be a nod to my own gendered black hair journey. Framed Hard Rock Café esque photographs decorated the walls of the narrow hallway leading to the guest bathroom. Beyond the curtained glass door to the backyard, I would later discover a motorcycle. The interior and exterior design seemed "straight outta [*Essence Magazine*]."

During the home tour in 2019, after Traka visited Andrea and Verlea's rowhouse, she approached me at the ongoing Juneteenth festival at Dovecote Café and exclaimed, "That's my future right there!" When I visited the house later that day curious to see if there had been any additions to the Afrocentric interior design from last year, a young black woman I didn't know jokingly said, "This my new auntie," and we both laughed as I exclaimed, "I know, right?!" Being adopted as an aunt or becoming a niece took on two meanings. The black woman tourgoer insinuated her desire to inherit something – the black chic style, the middle-class trappings, or the idiosyncratically renovated rowhouse itself – or maybe a desire to continue to have delightful access to the hospitality offered within the black gay women's home space. For myself as a black queer non-binary person who was assigned female at birth (afab) the thought of that kind of financial security for a couple that was not straight or white felt particularly inspiring. Maybe my fellow visitor wanted to learn a thing or two from these non-biological aunties that could be gained through black

queer kinship. When Traka referred to the black queer women's home as "my future right there." She referred to a home that would not be swindled away by some travelling mortgage broker or foreclosed during a crisis, a comfortable place to be in a predominately black community with an African Diasporic aesthetic. Traka, the other black women, and I – we *dreamed* aloud to each other during and after the tour of the black queer women's home and garden model and speculated about fully housed futures in Black Baltimore. We speculated on the possibility of housed black futures that circumvent white heteronormative domestic norms through which the real estate market and the neoliberal state continue to discipline and economically dispossess black women.[328]

After Cedrika, one of the black Juneteenth volunteers visited Andrea and Verlea's house, she came to chat with Cole and I in front of Dovecote as the black queer DJ played music, black children played over-sized Connect 4 on the sidewalk, and we looked across the street at a house that a young black PhD student and mother at Morgan State University had purchased the year before through Brioxy's homebuying resources. Although Cedrika lives in a different city in Maryland, she expressed awe at the palatable sense of black solidarity and connectedness at Dovecote and in black people's homes, which literally clung together in their very architecture as rowhouses. She marveled at the black joy of the Juneteenth festival with all of the black art, the variety show, the children in face paint and taking turns riding the pony and black people riding around the neighborhood to view houses via a historical black arabber's horse and buddy,[329] and

[328] For work on the relationship between discipline and debt, see Tayyab Mahmud, "Debt and Discipline," *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2012): 469-494 and Genevieve LeBaron and Adrienne Roberts, "Toward a Feminist Political Economy of Capitalism and Carcerality," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36, no. 1 (2010): 19-44.

[329] The Baltimore arabbers are black street vendors who sell fruit and vegetable produce on carts pulled by horses across the city. They are a historical African American folk tradition and mode of apprenticeship in Baltimore. During the COVID-19 pandemic, arabbers partner with the University of Maryland to deliver free produce, bread, and chicken to poor and working-class West Baltimore neighborhoods in food deserts. See Jena Frick, "UMB Partners with arabbers to Distribute Food in Community," *University of Maryland, Baltimore*, May 6, 2020, https://www.umaryland.edu/news/archived-news/may-2020/umb-partners-with-arabbers-to-distribute-food-in-community.php, accessed on June 10, 2020 and "Arabber Preservation Society," *Arabber Preservation Society*, http://www.arabbers.com/.

Juneteenth iconography like the bouquet of cotton, and our Juneteenth t-shirts. After she finished sharing her words with us, Cole responded, "*We could all be living at the village like this. This is a whole village life.*"

In this chapter, I examine the ways that Brioxy's black queer urban planning praxis intervenes in Reservoir Hill's economy of historic house tourism. Brioxy took over the Reservoir Hill Garden and Home with the logic that it was one of the primary "path dependencies" for neoliberal gentrification of the predominantly black working-class neighborhood.[330] When planned by a predominantly white middle-class neighborhood association in the homes of white residents from 1994 to 2016, Brioxy claimed that white tourists developed white spatial imaginaries of their own future home-buying and homemaking in Reservoir Hill. The 1994-2016 tours were a compelling threshold through which white tourists entered the West Baltimore neighborhood's real estate market. Brioxy's takeover of the planning of the tour aimed to foreclose new transactions of white property ownership and resettlement in the neighborhood. At the same time, Brioxy implemented their plan to remap the home tour in such a way that re-routed black tenants in the neighborhood and young folx in Baltimore's *black creative class* into home and land ownership. Another tactic of the black land movement's goal to expand the neighborhood's "chocolate map" of black property ownership, Brioxy expected their urban plan for black queer placemaking through

---

[330] For an analysis of the "path-dependent" nature of neoliberalization, see Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore, and Neil Brenner. "Neoliberal Urbanism: Models, Moments, Mutations." *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 29, no. 1 (2009): 44-66. They characterize path-dependency as follows, "The evolution of any politico-institutional configuration, following the imposition of neoliberal policy reforms, is likely to demonstrate strong properties of path-dependency in which established institutional arrangements significantly shape the scope and trajectory of reform. In this context, pre- or non-neoliberal institutions should not be seen simply as anachronistic institutional residues, for their interpenetration with neoliberal forms of restructuring will shape pathways and outcomes in distinctive, generative, and contradictory ways. It follows that each hybrid form of neoliberalization—each actually existing neoliberalized formation—can be expected to be associated with its own, distinctive emergent properties. Varieties of neoliberalism, then, are more than contingently variable; they represent contextually specific, yet globally interconnected, conjunctural formations" (54).

Juneteenth versions of the home tour and a concurrent *black-only* real estate tour to also moonlight as a formidable defense against gentrification.[331]

Throughout the chapter, I situate Brioxy's annual "urban practice cum performance" to plan and enact Juneteenth editions of the garden and home tour event as a radical model of "transformative planning"[332] that hinges upon the provocation of black queer kinship practices and collective feelings among black tourgoers, opening up black queer domestic spaces for black strangers, many queer identified as well. As an urban planning strategy during "home tour season," Brioxy centers the very modes of domesticity that the subprime mortgage market targeted at the highest rates in the lead up to the market crash with the categorization of "high risk" households and properties.[333] Working to foreclose the currency of "whiteness as property" within the real estate market,[334] Brioxy simultaneously worked to construct an entryway for young black non-heteronormative creatives to purchase residential property and land. Importantly, I situate this black queer urban planning strategy in the home tourism industry in the context of both the historic preservation and restoration movement and the Buy Back the Block movement. I conclude by discussing the political stakes of planning for black queer(ed) property ownership in the context of uneven capitalist urbanization and geographies of black dispossession and displacement.

---

[331] Marcus Anthony Hunter and Zandria F. Robinson, *Chocolate Cities*, 118.

[332] Tom Angotti, ed., *Transformative Planning.*

[333] Elvin Wyly, C. S. Ponder, Pierson Nettling, Bosco Ho, Sophie Ellen Fung, Zachary Liebowitz, and Dan Hammel, "New Racial Meanings of Housing in America."

[334] See Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* (1993): 1707-1791. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1341787 and Cheryl I. Harris, "The Afterlife of Slavery: Markets, Property, Race," *Artists' Space via YouTube*, 19 January 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQQGndN3BvY.

Government Sponsored Historic and Architectural Preservation in Reservoir Hill

In his recent book, *Capital City: Gentrification and the Real Estate State*, Samuel Stein explains that urban politicians in the 1960s and 1970s welcomed gentrification amid "shrinking municipal budgets" and heightened and racialized urban poverty. He writes that

> To their relief, the face of early gentrification was a group of middle class, mostly White liberals looking to add value to the city's building stock . . . In many cities, these newcomers took over neighborhood associations, asserted their power within party clubs, and steered the work of local government and planning bodies that had been created in response to urban civil rights struggles of the 1960s[335]

From 1994 to 2016, the neighborhood residents from Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) and the Friends of Reservoir Hill (FoRH) publicized the Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour without naming it as a racial-spatial project, whereas Brioxy's Juneteenth editions of the tour highlighted Reservoir Hill's black and Jewish heritage and demographic makeup in outreach materials from 2017-2019. Indeed, the US urban landscape of historic residential and architectural preservation and renovation, of which the Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour is part, has intersected with federal urban renewal programs from the 1960s to the present that have flagged black poor inner-city neighborhoods as dangerous and culturally deviant slums in dire need of cleansing. This neoliberal urban planning rhetoric in the historic preservation movement often reifies the substandard and blighted property conditions in black urban geographies as caused by the individual moral failings, cultural and behavioral practices of poor black people in US major cities. Urban planners categorized black people and their urban geographies as of an inherent "culture of pathology." When the Res Hill garden and home tour began in 1994, housing conditions in the neighborhood reflected property and neighborhood deterioration from Jim Crow segregation policies and race-based housing discrimination, white flight, commercial and residential property destruction of the 1960s riots in the context of the mid-century black freedom struggle and Civil

---

[335] Samuel Stein, *Capital City,* 56.

Rights Movement, the War on Drugs and the rise of mass incarceration, and economic disinvestment by the city government of a neighborhood that had become a predominantly low-income black community like much of West Baltimore. A HUD report by Rutgers University's Center for Urban Policy characterizes the notorious Whitelock Street in Reservoir Hill as an illustration of "the problem of commercial decline on the side streets of West Baltimore. During the riots of the 1960s, many of the stores burned, and the street became a notorious haven before the city demolished half of the buildings. The city now has a contract to demolish the other half."[336]

From 1994 to 2016, FoRH and RHIC produced and hosted the 1st Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour in a landscape of planned deterioration and demolition of black property, a process that Katherine McKittrick calls "black urbicide."[337] According to the 1990 census, one fifth of Reservoir Hill's properties were vacant.[338] When capital abandoned black neighborhoods in the city, what Patricia Fernandez-Kelly calls white flight or "capital regression," black poverty increased exponentially in a post-industrial landscape in which the illicit drug economy replaced unionized jobs with livable incomes.[339] In the 1990s, the city razed blocks of properties to the ground in Reservoir Hill's Whitelock Street, which some scholars refer to as an "open-air drug market" that was rife with gang violence. Colloquially, the entire neighborhood was dubbed "Whitelock City," and coded as a space of degeneracy.[340] Stein characterizes white return to major cities in the late 20th century,

---

336 David Varady, Carole C. Walker, Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR),"Case Studies of Voucher-ed Out Assisted Properties," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, May 1998, https://www.huduser.gov/Publications/pdf/voucher_I.pdf.

337 Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place." *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, no. 8 (2011): 947–963.

338 David Varady, Carole C. Walker, Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR), "Case Studies of Voucher-ed Out Assisted Properties."

339 Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, *The Hero's Fight*, 109.

340 Sean Yoes, "W. Baltimore Native Excels as Leader of BWI Marshall," *Afro*, October 19, 2017, https://www.afro.com/w-baltimore-native-smith-excels-leader-bwi-marshall/.

explaining that many of the "young urbanites" who seized the opportunity to buy cheap properties to restore them to former glory positioned themselves as "architectural preservationists." He notes, however, that "few paid much attention to preserving their neighborhood's social character"[341]

In this context of the neoliberal turn in the 1990s and early 2000s, FoRH and RHIC showcased an assortment of rowhomes, predominantly owned by white residents, for a home tour that situated historic preservation as a method for urban revitalization.[342] Since 2004, the Reservoir Hill section of Baltimore has also been listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP). The commission offers the following appraisal and mapping of Reservoir Hill neighborhood and its housing stock in the economy of historic residential preservation and restoration:

> Reservoir Hill is an urban neighborhood just south of Druid Hill Park. Most of the properties are late-nineteenth to early twentieth century row houses, but the district includes other historic building types from grand mansions to multi-story apartment buildings, a handful of religious and commercial buildings, and a few public monuments. Six to fourteen-story tall early-twentieth century apartment houses front on Druid Hill Park at the northern edge of the district. Individual mansions built in a variety of styles, two older synagogues and one church, and a few commercial buildings provide a break from the neighborhood's row house character.[343]

The Reservoir Hill Improvement Council's website explains that the Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program, categorizes all the Reservoir Hill neighborhood's properties as "certified heritage structures." The program is administered by the Maryland Historical Trust, a state agency within the Department of Planning and one of the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) that the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 mandates for every state.

---

341 Samuel Stein, *Capital City*, 47.

342 Jennifer Kitson, "Home Touring as Hospitable Urbanism," *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 10, no. 1 (2017), 77.

343 "Historical and Architectural Preservation: Reservoir Hill," *City of Baltimore*, accessed June 10, 2020, https://chap.baltimorecity.gov/reservoir-hill.

Owner-residents who took advantage of the state subsidies and tax credits aimed to restore residential properties to their original architectural and historical value, what Cameron Logan calls "historic capital," in his recent book of the same title.[344] Property owners in the neighborhood qualify for "Maryland income tax credits equal to 20% of the qualified costs expended in the rehabilitation" of their heritage properties. The Eventbrite description of the 21st Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour in 2016, invited readers to "Come tour the gardens and homes of historic Reservoir Hill in Baltimore, just south of the largest park in the city. Home interiors range from historic to contemporary."[345] Similarly, *The Baltimore Times* publicized the 2016 home tour, which took place on Saturday, June 11th and Sunday, June 12th:

> Tour more than 20 gardens and homes of historic Reservoir Hill in Baltimore, just south of the largest park in the city. This year's tour features an expanded footprint with NEW gardens and homes to explore, from fanciful Victorian gardens to sleek contemporary row homes, from Mt. Royal Terrace to Madison Avenue.
> Tour starts at 2405 Linden Avenue in Baltimore 11 a.m.-4p.m. rain or shine!
> $15 ticket includes tour map and can be used both days. Purchase online at bit.ly/ResHill2016 or the day of the tour at the St. Francis Neighborhood Center: 2405 Linden Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21217.

The event description and the home tour event itself function as financial invitation for non-black and predominantly white home tourists from the Great Baltimore area and Maryland suburbs.

Importantly, the financial invitation of the 1994-2016 home tours performed a mode of what Jennifer Kitson names and celebrates as "hospitable urbanism." Her article defines hospitable urbanism as a type of city-making that incorporates the values of feminist hospitality. Writing about the Coronado home tour in Phoenix, Arizona, Kitson draws on her ethnographic fieldwork as a "house sitter" on annual tours for multiple years to tease out the ways that urban home tours

---

[344] Cameron Logan, *Historic Capital: Preservation, Race, and Real Estate in Washington* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

[345] Friends of Reservoir Hill, "21st Annual Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour," *Eventbrite*, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.eventbrite.com/e/21st-annual-reservoir-hill-garden-and-home-tour-tickets-25147575074#.

perform hospitality to destabilize boundaries between the private and the public, the familiar and the stranger, and conceptual frameworks of ownership and possession. Kitson's analysis of the Coronado tour however, obscures the ways that the urban home tour industry has a "heritage" steeped in histories of Indigenous, black, Latinx, and Asian dispossession of land and property that is particular Phoenix and Arizona. These Indigenous nations point to the land left and genocide that underwrite property and the state's willingness to preserve "certified historic structures" while failing to honor its treaties, Indigenous sovereignty, and instituting acts like General Allotment Act that functions to further dispossess Indigenous land claims by converting land into to private property.[346] At the same time, Kitson's article is useful for the concept of "hospitable urbanism" in home tours as preservation activities, as the values of good will, diversity, and generosity between neighbors that she argues happen on the tours between host and tourist, mirror the ideals of white liberal propertied citizenship.

Brioxy contends that the Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tours by RHIC and FoRH from 1994-2016 in Baltimore extended white intra-racial financial invitations into the urban planning practice of saving heritage properties like theirs that had succumbed to, again, a black "culture of pathology,"[347] the gang violence for which Baltimore is codified in the American popular and political imagination and black tenant and owner failures to perform what Daniel Patrick Moynihan idealized as the white family structure within "heritage structures." Ultimately, Brioxy argues that white home tourists from 1994-2014 generated very urban-planned white spatial imaginaries of property ownership that invoked shared feelings of both "whiteness as property"[348] and a shared

346

347

348 Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property."

racial heritage of white settlement as Manifest Destiny, bringing order, value, and ideals of liberal civilization to frontiers of land and real estate.[349]

Planning Under the Kitchen Table

For black feminist theorists inside and outside of academia, the "kitchen table" is an enduring trope of black women's political organizing in places that are often occluded from view and intelligibility in relation to white hegemonic and masculinist black nationalist political discourses. In *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, originally published in 1983 and reprinted in 2000, the kitchen table represents a central place for the production of knowledge, solidarity, and coalition in black women's geographies of home. As a new resident of Baltimore in my home state of Maryland, I attended the first planning of Brioxy's covert operation in the black queer kitchen-like space of Dovecote Cafe on May 2, 2017 after my long cross-country drive from Los Angeles. Sitting across the garnished farmhouse-style wooden table, I learned that key aspects of Brioxy's urban planning strategy for the Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour were set in motion long before my arrival/return. Cole and I *chopped it up*, so to speak, for the first of many occasions at the garnished wooden table in Dovecote Café. Cole did not mince words when she described the first phase of Brioxy involvement in home tour planning: "We are not working with them so much as taking their shit over" (fieldnotes, May 2, 2017). At the proverbial kitchen table of Dovecote Café, Cole flagged a localized pathway that opened access to the real estate market in ways that privileged whiteness, white culture, and white resettlement of the black neighborhoods white people had historically abandoned to avoid living with Jewish or black people.[350] Here, Brioxy conveys the desire to eliminate the capacity for whiteness to have what Critical Race Feminist Cheryl Harris calls a

---

[349] (Goldstein 2014; Safransky 2014)
[350] Antero Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City* (Chicago: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

"property interest" She characterizes whiteness as a type of property that a person can possess that affords them privilege in American society, which is predicated on racial capitalism.[351] "Taking their shit over" here, as this chapter will go on to show, refers to the local entry point to the real estate market that was hitherto fore reserved for people with "whiteness as property."[352] Such an endeavor entailed the taking over of a local "neoliberal urban planning project" that had been in operation for the past two decades.[353] Moreover, as I suggest in other chapters, Brioxy intends to *take over* or *come up on* liberal property itself, with the intent of making property do different work than reproducing whiteness and black working-class displacement – a political goal I unpack throughout the chapter.

With regards to the planning of the Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour, the "we" in Cole's declaration that "we are taking their shit over," meant a group of five or six black and predominantly queer identified organizers, including myself, and a group of black and non-black people of color serving as Juneteenth volunteers each year. The Brioxy organizers were: Kevin, a light-skinned black man in his late twenties who owned and operated Johnson Property Management with his father; Michelle, a black queer woman who directed programming and events at co-working space in Station North Arts & Entertainment District and founded a fitness and wellness company called Brown & Healthy; Mariama, who started a black lifestyle and interior design brand called Brownbelle; and in 2018, Sophia, a black and Palestinian woman who, at the time, worked as a graphic designer for a local real estate developer; Jane, a black single mother who was a tenant on the second floor of the Dovecote building; and I was the ethnographer, PhD Student in Gender Studies, and former Associate Book Publicist. While we had different political

[351] Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property."

[352] Ibid.

[353] Tom Angotti, ed., *Transformative Planning*.

backgrounds and skill sets, we overlapped at the kitchen table around the ideas of organizing sustainable black neighborhoods and countering gentrification.

When Cole and Aisha moved to and opened the café in the neighborhood, the two black queer women joined the Friends of Reservoir Hill (FoRH), a predominately white home association that has organized the neighborhood's garden & home tour each year for over 20 years. As FoRH board members and new committee members for the tour, Cole and Aisha convinced other FoRH members to host the upcoming "Res Hill" garden & tour concurrently with a celebration for Juneteenth Independence Day. Cole did not tell all members of the newly minted planning committee about the underlying political impetus behind their joining of the FoRH board and the planning committee, nor their political motivations for subsuming the tour within a Juneteenth Festival. FoRH would contribute the funds for budget items specifically related to the tour and Brioxy would front the money for the cultural festivities for Juneteenth. The separate capital streams for these two concurrent events occluded a political vision and operation that was "hidden in plain sight": the powerful linkage of the political legacy and black politics of Juneteenth, discussed in Chapter 3, to an otherwise white-serving home and garden tour. In the same way that the deregulated circulation of capital in financial markets and the labor market are described as "under the table," the knowledge production and the articulation of Brioxy's anti-racist oppositional strategy was "under the table. Far from a one to one analogy, Brioxy's "under the table," circulation and praxis of the black "covert operation" with all of its subterfuge was a method of black community economic development and arguably a modality of coalition building. Brioxy's black "under the table" hidden transcript worked against the grain of the FoRH planners' vision while enabling Brioxy to continue working with them.[354]

[354] Brioxy Instagram on May 8, 2018

Sometimes the illegibility of Brioxy's tactics for the home and garden tour takeover revealed other tensions in relation to public-private and speculative neoliberal urban planning projects. For example, in 2018 while the group planning meeting for the Juneteenth volunteers had only black participants, the meeting continued to lack intelligibility as an urban planning meeting to white people in institutions that were organized around the neighborhood's housing stock. A warm day in early June, the Juneteenth volunteers, Cole and I sat at one of Dovecote's outdoor tables under the green leaves of the trees that draped the sidewalk along Madison Avenue. We pulled chairs to the small table for everyone to have a place. I had my customary Wild Kombucha in hand with a pen in the other. Not long after we began going over details of the 2nd Brioxy produced and Dovecote-hosted Juneteenth Res Hill Garden and Home Tour, a white man in a business suit appeared from the building next to Dovecote's side yard, thankfully not connected to the same set of rowhouses in Dovecote's cluster. He interrupted our conversation to ask Cole some questions before going into the café to get some coffee. Cole quickly *squashed* the man's attempt to interrupt, to come up on our meeting, which delighted me to no end. She assertively told him that it was just that, black women coming together at a cafe could be an important meeting. Undoubtedly, the developer had met with clients, prospective renters, planning officials in the same outdoor seating. Cole explained that he was on the constant hunt to add investment properties to his portfolio, break rowhouses into multiple apartments, and hike up the prices of rentals for excessive profits and as such, for predominantly white tenants.

Separated by more than the narrow side-yard between them, I consider the economic development models of the Brioxy and the Dovecote LLC as significantly divergent from the various developers that have flipped the rowhouse next door. There is a wide gulf between their underlying motivations and spatial-economic visions. While our planning meeting about black property in the context of a black queer community economic development model in the

predominantly black neighborhood, ours race and gender rendered the visibility of our planning meeting illegible in relation to those of his development company. To outsiders, Brioxy's black placemaking model, which envisions a "collective come-up" through black private property ownership, may not have looked drastically different than that of a conventional real estate developer, which I discuss further in the next section.[355]

Blackness as Property of Place: Urban Historic and Architectural Preservation

Distinct from the hegemonic order of the historic and architectural preservation state funded at the federal, state, and local levels, Brioxy asserts that the blackness of the place, Reservoir Hill, is the preservation priority in what Christina Sharpe calls, "the afterlife of property" in post-slavery black geographies.[356] Blackness is the preservation priority, is paramount. From an idiosyncratic black preservationist perspective that diverges from that of the neoliberal branch of the restoration and preservation movement, Brioxy asserts that black people's material and cultural access to the neighborhood is what needs to be *preserved*. Brioxy subverts hegemonic preservationist politics to enact a collectivist mode of residential property and land ownership that is staged with the Juneteenth editions of the home tour. The black and joyous festival offers a spatial performance in the present that simultaneously imagines black emplaced futurity by generating collective feelings of black solidarity in relation to the properties in the neighborhood and the legacies of black land struggles and black dispossession in the "afterlife of slavery."[357] Moreover, Brioxy's black land movement uses the platform of the historic preservation movement in Baltimore to declare that "blackness as property" as a value takes precedence over yet also incorporates the state-financial

[355] B. Cole,

[356]

[357] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 6.

economy of historic preservation in order to divert the subsidies for mortgage capital and renovation to black residents.

Brioxy's performance of the cultural nationalist ethos of Juneteenth enabled organizers to forefront the history of post-slavery rural and urban black land struggles into their present-day black queer urban planning project to preserve the land mass and the neighborhood known as Reservoir Hill place in which black folx – in all of their non-heteronormative glory – hold proprietary rights to its conditionality as black. Brioxy's attempt to *foreclose* white real estate speculation through the Reservoir Hill garden and home tour ostensibly prevents white in-migration even if most black people in the neighborhood continue to leave rowhouses and apartment units therein as tenants. Black ownership of any rowhouses that open up in the market, particularly if bought and resold at market by Brioxy, would counter price hikes by upwards of $200,000-$300,000 that exclude black working-class or low middle-class buyers, increasing the property value of the neighborhood which would increase rents. Overtime, this would push black tenants – creatives and otherwise – out of the neighborhood.

What if all of these subsidies were redistributed to the historic homes of black residents and future residents who have historically been excluded from property ownership? In the context of Brioxy's black land movement, which is rooted in political discourse from the national Buy Back the Block movement, Brioxy aims to redistribute the subsidy to black residents - those coded, disciplined, or identifying as non-heteronormative - and a movement for black housing security and black intentional community.

> If by "Black Mecca," we mean a place to which Black people will always feel the cultural and sometimes political security of large populations and concentrations of other Black people, then Atlanta will endure as a Black Mecca. But if a Black Mecca is made possible by most Back people being able to be economically and socially successful in a place, then, Atlanta, like other places across the ever-evolving chocolate maps, is in danger of losing that designation.[358]

[358] Marcus Anthony Hunter and Zandria Robinson, *Chocolate Cities: The Black Map of American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 181.

About Atlanta, Hunter and Robinson also make a correlation between the socio-economic rise of black middle-class residents of a city and the decline of masses of poor black folx.

> But we also know that the gains Black populations made in Atlanta and other chocolate cities were uneven and staggered at best. As soon as Black wealth, business acumen, cultural production, and population concentration rendered the city's status as Black Mecca a self-fulfilling prophecy, the marginalization of poorer Black people accelerated.[359]

At one meeting, Paul and I were on different sides of the table regarding whether to book a police officer on horseback for the first 2017 edition of Juneteenth. One of the white men from FoRH had introduced the idea. It was a hard moment. It was one of the moments that made me realize that I was not just researching this prong of Brioxy's Black Land Movement, I was part of the planning, the decision making. I brought and added my spices to the pot that other people added ingredients to and felt them trying to figure out how to meld in the ultimate product of the Juneteenth Festival despite our differences. "I don't think that most black folx at the festival will feel safe by the presence of Baltimore police. This will be a predominately black festival, and the last thing we would want is for the presence of BPD to deter particularly working-class black folx in attendance." Cole backed me up. It may have been the first time I said something against the grain of several other planners. I recognized that several people at the table – even other black folx – were middle-class homeowners in the neighborhood. This was something of a class antagonism between black people on the planning committee.

Preserving **the Block: Brioxy's** ***Black-Only*** **Real Estate Tour**

[359] Ibid., 180.

Brioxy's black queer urban planning praxis through the Reservoir Hill Garden & Home tour also consistently demonstrates the challenges and limitations of black capitalism discourses and tactics within movements that aim to preserve "the block" as black. I point to several drawbacks by drawing on a few clashes in this part of my ethnography. Importantly, Brioxy's reproduction of black capitalist discourse to preserve the blackness of the neighborhood is also a mode of disidentification with capitalism in which the collective works within and against the grain of racial capitalism and the construct of private property.

With the goal of shifting the racial demographic of the home tour (hosts and tourists) and adding the secret all-black real estate tours, Brioxy aimed to box out white speculative capital of prospective homebuyers. However, several classed and racialized encounters with local speculative real estate developers cast a pallor onto the question of whether this goal was fully realizable. Afterall, Brioxy aims to steward/shepherd the "regeneration of the neighborhood without pushing up prices and displacing folks" as Cole passionately explained in our meeting at Dovecote Café with members of the City Planning office and Department of Housing's INSPIRE project on October 19, 2017.[360] Brioxy preservation work is two-fold: to box out white prospective home buying and increase black home buying in Reservoir Hill and block entrance to the real estate market by taking over the tour. With social media hashtags such as #buybuildstay and #blackhomebuyers, Brioxy's community economic development prioritizes the preservation of black people buying homes and land, building intentional community, and not getting displaced – physically or culturally – from Reservoir Hill.

The publicity for Brioxy's home tour and urban planning project brought about collective black queer financial speculation in relation to black property, as discernible in the opening vignette

[360] Author Fieldnote on 10/20/17

Figure 9: "Defend the Hood! Stop Gentrification" (2018)
Image by Brioxy

of this chapter about black queer women's spatial imaginaries, expressions of black queer kinship across households through a praxis of home visitation during the Juneteenth editions of the annual tour from 2017-2019. In the Brioxy Instagram Post below,[361] they promote the Home and Garden tour with this discourse, writing, "The only way to stop #gentrification is to buy our hoods first. Get your tickets to the Juneteenth Garden and Home Tour (link in bio). Join the #blacklandmovement." With this statement, Brioxy presents the home and garden tour as a method of "buy[ing] our hoods first." Brioxy also frames the garden and home tour in relation to anti-gentrification and anti-racist local organizing. Adjacent to the image of the words spray-painted on the sidewalk, Brioxy portrays the Juneteenth editions of the garden and home tour as a method to take up and make black place

361 "Defend the Hood! Stop Gentrification, Brioxy, *Instagram*, May 29, 2018, accessed on June 10, 2020,

by getting black folks to connect to a new kind of black spatial imaginary of owning "homes and gardens" with the communal end goal of preserving a long-standing black geography under attack by white gentrification through micro and macro level processes. Given Brioxy's network of black people who also identify as queer, this Instagram post implicitly situates black queers as among those who can "buy our hoods first" and take part in the growing black land movement.

I remember feeling those slanted rays of sunlight as we turned street corners on a new block toward the next house on the list. In my on-the-fly notebook I quoted Sean, another participant of Brioxy's Juneteenth *black-only* real estate tour, as saying "black people need good loans." Such a succinct and seemingly unnecessary statement. Nevertheless, black people across the country and indeed, the African Diaspora, must say it at different scales and registers of governance and markets. We were in between rowhouses, passing old carriage houses for horses and Baltimore alley ways, along which black urban slaves and then black servants had lived in behind white people's houses. We passed Whitelock farm in full bloom, and young black kids were doing a farming program selling vegetables and herbs in the little park across the street. Maybe *this* was the way for us to get the "good loans," walking with the group of black folx together in stride, different ages and life places, professions and hustles, the affects of black solidarity and pride coalescing in the air between us. If this felt *this* 'got damn' safe and good, maybe the next steps – mortgage lending & home-buying – would be that way too. Kevin led the tour and shared some of his philosophies with the group of 10 or 15 black folx in between houses and before opening the lock boxes attached to the metal railings alongside the stoop stairs up to the rowhouse on the market we would enter. I heard Kevin telling someone that the kind of black collaboration between realtors, Brioxy organizers, and Dovecote Café – a "black homeownership initiative" that changed in name to a "black land movement" – was indispensable "so *our people* can capitalize" (emphasis added). I loved the double-entendre in his usage of "capitalize:" to gain an advantage and/or to expand economic value. What would it take for

us to capitalize on opportunities related to housing and land? What would it take to literally capitalize on assets and investments that do not blow up in our faces? Specifically, Kevin was talking about the importance of black realtors and agents in the game, the real estate game, particularly ones who were not strictly out to make a gargantuan profit or scam their clients, which unfortunately happened to many black people *by* black people during the subprime mortgage boom and subsequent foreclosure crisis, becoming institutionalized in marketing tactics such as Wells Fargo's "African American Affinity" tactic in Maryland.[362] This is what happened to Cole in Oakland. The goal of Brioxy's organizing team was to foster black people's access to good homes and "good loans" and thriving black neighborhoods rooted in communalism. Brioxy created and presented what it deemed as a trustworthy network of black real estate professionals and put black Baltimoreans in community spaces like the Juneteenth Festival with its celebratory black cultural activities that sparked camaraderie, vouching for these professionals and expressing their trust and confidence in them to black attendees. An underlying goal, which Sean and Kevin's comments demonstrate, was to develop and spread the idea that black property and land ownership and black people's choices in the housing market could co-exist with intentional community building and a genealogy of black mutual-aid societies and collectives.

The exclusively *black-only* real estate tours during the annual Juneteenth Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tours at Dovecote Café are a crucial demonstration of Brioxy's resistance to the influx of new waves of white urban settlers in the predominantly black West Baltimore neighborhood and the organization's overt participation in the "Buy Back the Block" or "Keep the Hood Black" movement. This aspect of the Juneteenth Festival connected the black abolitionist goal of "economic emancipation" during the post-bellum Reconstruction era and its Jim Crow aftermath to the present-day foreclosure *and* ongoing struggle for what Cole and other Brioxy organizers refer

[362] Charlie Savage, "Wells Fargo Will Settle Mortgage," *New York Times*, July 2, 2012.

to as black sovereignty in the neoliberal city and in the gentrifying West Baltimore neighborhood of Reservoir Hill. Cole strategically did not mention the *black-only* real estate tour in her quotes for the *Baltimore Sun* article entitled, "Dovecote Café Plans Juneteenth Celebration with Games, Trivia, Demonstrations, and More:"

> We really see Juneteenth as an opportunity to not only honor the history and the legacy but for us to think about what our current investment is in the black economic infrastructure of our community. So that's about supporting black businesses, it's also about asking the question of how do we do that year-round? What is our commitment to supporting black leadership? And it's an opportunity for our community to think really intentionally about how to build our core capacity as folks who are stewarding and shepherding the economic opportunity that reaches everybody in our neighborhoods and communities.[363]

Speaking in the article as one of the co-owners of Dovecote Café rather than as cofounder of Brioxy, Cole situates the goals of "current investment in black economic infrastructure" and "stewarding and shepherding economic opportunity that reaches everybody in our neighborhoods and communities" in a firm continuum with Juneteenth and economic emancipation for African descendent peoples that has yet to be fully realized since that time, June 19, 1865. The insistence on a black racial affinity for the real estate tours brings both the ongoing racialization of property relations in the neoliberal era and Brioxy's commitment to black sovereignty into sharp relief. While not vehemently anti-capitalist, the group's decision for a *black-only* real estate tour for black Juneteenth festival goers who were or were not lured by the home and garden tour, demonstrates a critique of racial capitalism and its centuries-long reproduction of black dispossession – the subprime foreclosure but the latest wave. The "*black-only*" moniker of the real estate tour conveys a collectivist view of property, ownership, and access – a black queer affective politics of property ownership and its kinship relations portrayed at the beginning of this chapter with black women

---

[363] Lisa Snowden-McCrae, "Dovecote Café Plans Juneteenth Celebration with Games, Trivia, Demonstrations, and More," *The Baltimore Sun*, 16 June 2017, https://www.baltimoresun.com/citypaper/bcpnews-dovecote-cafe-plans-juneteenth-celebration-with-games-trivia-demonstrations-and-more-20170616-story.html?.

expressing statements about Andrea and Verlea's Afrocentric and queer household, "This my new auntie," and "That's my future right there!" These sentiments reflect the Dovecote owners' political desire for a Reservoir Hill that is both black and "community owned."[364]

In 2018, some of the participants of this secret black tour arrived with pre-purchased tickets for a separate & multiracial garden and home tour of currently lived-in homes, and other black real estate tour-goers came to Dovecote specifically for the Juneteenth festival. Brioxy organizers promoted the Juneteenth Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour on Dovecote and Brioxy's respective Instagram and Facebook accounts, WEAA-FM, through flyer drops at local black-owned restaurants and cafes, and by word of mouth. Brioxy also sent email blasts through its email listserv where they promoted the "black real estate tour."[365] Throughout the day, the designated day of the real-estate tour on Saturday of the 2018 Juneteenth festival, the other black Juneteenth volunteers and I covertly approached black folx to invite them on this exclusive walking tour. If there weren't white people around at the garden & home tour sign-in table, we told black folx then and there. All of these conversations took place amid the commotion of the festival – black kids running around or hula-hooping with painted faces by a local artist named Tashia, black vendors telling potential customers about their wares, and the black queer DJ each year playing R&B, hip hop, Motown classics, and black pop music as black people's summer-time shoes and sandals clicked and clanked against the white-cement sidewalk in front of Dovecote's entrance. We looked around first before we spoke about it, and we switched to whispered tones. What would "the whites" say if there was something available, a feature available for others, but not for them, and the others were black like us? We thought there would be no limit to the privilege and the audacity if the secret got out.

---

[364] Brioxy Instagram post

[365] To join the Brioxy listserv/network, new members subscribe to o give automatic monthly payments to Brioxy on a credit card or debit card.

The necessity of the addition of the *black-only* real estate tour at the festival with the garden and home tour became apparent during my fieldwork as I encountered and spoke with young white creatives – those certainly fitting the characterization of the "creative class" in Richard Florida's treatise.[366] Another racialized interaction transpired during the first Juneteenth Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour in 2017. While Kevin, Tomeka, and I were working at the sign-in table to check customers in for the garden and home tour, giving them a "passport" for the tour, and explaining any modifications to the home list for the day, a white elderly woman told us about her feelings during the event. She told us that this was the "safest" that she had ever felt in the neighborhood, and I recounted the interaction in the following fieldnote:

> As she came to the registration table after completing her tour, an old white woman expressively described how much she enjoyed the tour, divulging, "This is actually the first time I've felt safe in this neighborhood." She must have been in her early 70s. She was speaking directly to Kevin, a thin-framed light-skinned black man with freckles and blue eyes, and Tomeka, a curvy black woman with neat braids and big beautiful eyes. As the white elderly woman was carrying on about the tour. I was standing up in front of the table to hand people ice-cold waters and greet them as they returned. As she said the word "safe," Kevin and I linked eyes furtively as we both were appalled by her statement, but she was looking at him directly, so it had to be a quick moment of recognition between us. After she left, both of us remarked our surprise that she had the audacity to tell us how safe she felt. We also questioned whether she knew that her comment was racialized and ignorant. She seemed so relaxed as she told us about her sense of comfort and security. Maybe she thought that we would be flattered as black organizers putting on an event that made a white woman feel welcome and safe to take her time and enjoy herself in public space. As a white woman, did she feel a certain pride at being able to take up space in a predominantly black neighborhood and even our celebratory Juneteenth space by the café – our black vendors and music, black youth and the white-washed & wooden lemonade stand that they built and raucously ran. Across the street, a middle-aged black man set up his horse and carriage and gave people - black and white – rides throughout the neighborhood – while who I assumed was his teenage daughter held the rope for the pony rides in the vacant lot across from Dovecote (fieldnotes, June 20, 2017).

In my field notebook, I wrote down Kevin's exact words which he spoke after the white elderly woman was out of earshot: "We didn't make this tour for white people to come here and feel safe."

[366] Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited.*

We specifically made it for black people to "come here" and "feel safe" participating in an event, which was previously a largely white event with white home spaces and gardens. Kevin's remarks allude to how discourses of safety underwrite gentrification and white return to the city. White prospective buyers who think about buying in largely black communities like Reservoir Hill are invested in safety, a metric that is tracked on real estate sites such as Zillow.com through colorful spectrums of crime in particular neighborhoods and through the chatter of neighborhood cell-phone apps. As organizers invested in black placemaking, we were confronted with the fact that our black celebration could be mobilized in these discourses of safety, which are important groundwork for white resettlement. We hoped that this unintended and certainly undesired effect would be significantly less than that of black tenants in Reservoir Hill and members of the *black creative class* buying vacant lots and houses on the market in their neighborhood (fieldnotes, June 14, 2019).

Even with Brioxy's black takeover of the garden and home tour, young white tour goers demonstrated that the event had the capacity (although diminishing) of *restoring* some white ownership in Reservoir Hill and *preserving* the original (although undeclared) function of the garden and home tour to funnel white in-migration and gentrification. Brioxy intended for the *black-only* real estate tour to counteract and foreshadow white real estate speculation on the garden and home tour with direct connections of black festival attendees to real estate agents and rowhouses on the market. Even though I never went on a full garden & home tour because I was the lead organizer and point person at the Juneteenth Festival (the beginning and end of the tour), each year I witnessed what I came to interpret as the *eureka moment* of white tour goers. These were moments of discovery about Reservoir Hill as a community and its unique assortment of housing stock. These white *eureka moments* were instances in which I heard white visitors exclaim a desire to move into the neighborhood as they toured homes, porches, and gardens: this speculative desire for resettlement in a place that was new for them and increasingly enticing.

A young white couple, a cisgender man and woman, toured Cole and Aisha's house while I was there. They told me that it was their third year at the garden & home tour and that, "Every time we come up here, we think, dang we should move here! Everyone is so friendly! And the houses are beautiful" (fieldnotes, June 14, 2019). When we headed toward the narrow foyer in front of Cole, Aisha, and Ma's screen door to put on our shoes, I noticed that the white couple had matching "granola" hiking sandals for this early summer day of exploring the neighborhood and its houses. With an average of 15 houses and gardens on the tour each year in the 200-acre neighborhood of Reservoir Hill, the event each year was indeed a trek and a day of exploration (fieldnotes, June 14, 2019).

The white couple's *eureka moment* may have been re-inspired by the newly purchased home of a white resident who volunteered as a host on the tour just after he moved into the neighborhood. For the home and garden tour passport, this new resident described his home and how he wanted it to be accessed by tour goers as follows in an email on June 12, 2017:

> Let's do a back gate entry.
>
> Re: description, I don't know too much about it, feel free to embellish as you see fit. The house was built in 1880. The first floor remains largely original, with the exception of the kitchen. The patio/garden is mostly shaded by a crepe myrtle. There is a wisteria, a hydrangea, and some other flowers here and there.
>
> Even though we are only showing the garden and first floor on Sunday, can we have some flowers delivered to spruce up the place? The first floor is basically empty as we just moved in. [367]

While not a home on the market, tour goers would get to view this white resident's home and experience the energy and visual aesthetic of a house in the early stages of nesting directly after purchase. A guest would get to envision moving their own belongings in, experimenting with the latest interior design fabs, and getting settled in the house and in the neighborhood as a new Res Hill

[367] Host for Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour, Email Message to the author, June 12, 2017.

resident. The sparse first floor of this white host's home may have provided the space and inspiration for some of the young, white, heteronormative, and middle-class or middle-class aspiring creatives and professionals to generate white settler fantasies of interior design, property ownership, and settlement in the predominantly black neighborhood. By shifting the racial, gender, class and sexual demographics of the tour, Brioxy's black queer urban planning method of home tour takeover aimed to foreclose these white spatial imaginaries that are co-constitutive with a real estate market in a settler colonial society under racial capitalism.

In white people's Baltimore rowhouses, Brioxy aimed to eliminate the ways that white eureka moments grew out of what Economic Anthropologist Hannah Appel calls "white racial sorority" in the rowhomes of white Reservoir Hill residents. In her recent book, *The Licit Life of Capitalism: US Oil in Equatorial Guinea*, Appel characterizes "white racial sorority" in relation to her own subject position as an white woman identified ethnographer in the homes of upper management in the US oil and gas industries, who were white Americans, white British people, and white South Africans. She spent time with "the wives" in their households on the residential compounds for the respective companies such as the Endurance Corporation. About "white racial sorority," Appel offers the following characterization:

> My own whiteness and (at that time) young womanhood produced a form of white racial sorority, fictive kinship where these women looked at me and often said or seemed to think, "You could be my daughter." This raced and gendered kinship opened their homes to me and got me through the considerable layers of security with which the compound is guarded.[368]

Appel demonstrates the ways that white fictive kinship produces access to white households that are situated in "the everyday life of capitalism" and neocolonial regimes of the U.S. gas industry. Brioxy's Juneteenth editions of the tour pointed to the ways the Reservoir Hill Improvement

[368] Hannah Appel, *The Licit Life of Capitalism: US Oil in Equatorial Guinea* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

Council and the Friends of Reservoir Hill neighborhood associations previously drew predominantly white middle-class tour goers through white racial publicity and intra-racial sorority and fraternity. As modes of financial speculation on property and social reproduction, the white eureka moments made the home tours that transpired before Brioxy's takeover what Cole believed to be "the single greatest vehicle of the gentrification the neighborhood" (fieldnotes, May 2, 2017).

Importantly, the white eureka moments of tourgoers in black people's home - particularly those of black queer owners - during the Juneteenth editions of the tour in 2017, 2018, and 2019 entailed a different kind of financial speculation. In her book about the H Street Corridor in Washington, D.C., *Black in Place: The Spatial Aesthetics of Race in a Post-Chocolate City*, Sociologist and Black Geographer, Brandi Thompson Summers underscores the "aesthetics of gentrification" and the ways in which blackness - an indicator of diversity - is marketed to sell a progressive, 'cool,' and authentic experience of being and moving through the city."[369] In the following 2017 field note, I describe my encounter with another young white couple – a man and a woman – who were doing the garden and home tour with their baby and their bikes in tow. That year, the tour coincided with a major change in the Baltimore City bus lines, which would enhance white access to the city from suburbs of "the county," while restricting the movement of black residents to major areas for work in service and tourist industries downtown I wrote about the encounter on Ma's porch (Aisha's mother) during her first "sip and sit" for the garden and home tour:

> My first drink on a Baltimore stoop! It felt warming – not just the fresh ginger martini or the spicy margarita – but the act of sitting and sipping with predominantly black folks across generations. gathered together with drinks and finger foods to cool down when the humidity wouldn't let up before the rain came. The white couple …. that was there with their newborn – gave me tips about biking from my house in Charles village to reservoir hill…. The white man knew the lanes like the back of his hand, it seemed. They were nice and jovial. I noticed, too, how comfortable they were on Gilda's porch—Gilda is Cole's mother-in-law and Aisha's mom, and they all

[369] Brandi Thompson Summers, *Black in Place: The Spatial Aesthetics of Race in a Post-Chocolate City* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2019): 4.

> live together in the rowhouse. She makes everyone feel welcome, but I have been thinking about the propensity of white people to feel welcome with or without such hospitality. It begs the question of the level to which black property and homeownership translates as a category that is the same as property in its "objective" sense. Connection to gentrification (fieldnotes, June 20, 2017).

Some feminist urban scholars such as Jennifer Kitson in her article, "Home Touring as Hospitable Urbanism," suggest that the hospitality that homeowners perform as hosts make home tours a critical activity "in the making of ethnical urban communities."[370] However, an aspect of "whiteness as property" in the neoliberal era is the reproduction of the feeling of entitlement to hospitality in public and private spaces.[371] White entitlement to black spaces like Reservoir Hill in the era of neoliberal multiculturalism obscures the power dynamics of white spatial and economic mobility and underwrites their subjectivity – always in the making – as urban pioneers. Interestingly, Kitson explains that "urbanism *is* the social relations among strangers," that the hospitality and even simply, the opening of black homes for white voyeurism on the tour, I worried that black "domestic hospitality"[372] would unintentionally *buy into* white affective and economic speculation on the housing stock in the neighborhood, as in the statement, "Every time we come up here we think, dang we should move here! Everyone is so friendly! And the houses are beautiful" (fieldnotes, June 14, 2019). This unintended fallout suggests that for future and less "covert" home and garden tours situated in a politics of black neighborhood and housing preservation and a redistribution of power to black residents should make white participation conditional on, for example, the pledge and the solidarity as anti-racist allies to *not purchase* housing in the neighborhood.

---

[370] Jennifer Kitson, "Home Touring as Hospitable Urbanism," *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 10, no. 1 (2017), 78.

[371] Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 1707-1791.

[372] Jennifer Kitson, "Home Touring as Hospitable Urbanism." *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 10, no. 1 (2017), 80.

The invitations for the *black-only* real estate tour demonstrated the inverse of this politics of white affective and financial speculation. White people were not welcome in the more explicit financial speculation of houses listed for sale in the real estate market. For an interracial and multicultural mix of prospective Juneteenth garden and home tourgoers, Brioxy organized a 2017 Save-the-Date postcard with a politically neutral but aesthetically pleasing background for an Every Door Direct Mailing (EDDM) for the Reservoir Hill zip code (21217). Organizers debated this decision. Mariama turned her laptop around to show Cole and I the various mock-ups, and we discussed the chosen backdrop of an African fabric print. I wondered if the African print design would entice more black working-class residents to attend the festival and as such, the garden and home tour and the *black-only* real estate tour, particularly given that the neutral floral image matched cultural expectations of white elite garden and home tours. The information about the *black-only* real estate tour was delivered to black people at the Juneteenth Festival by word of mouth. During the first two years of Brioxy's Juneteenth festival in Baltimore (2018 and 2019), the *black-only* real estate tour gave black organizers the sense that we were doing something on the sly. Not only had Cole and Aisha executed a strategic takeover of the planning of the Friends of Reservoir Hill's annual home & garden tour – the *black-only* real estate tour operation was equally cunning. We were sneaking around. The secret real estate tours were open to any black people at the Juneteenth festival interested in walk-throughs and future home purchases of Baltimore's historic row-houses on the market in the West Baltimore neighborhood of Reservoir Hill. The impetus behind producing a Juneteenth Festival merger with the previously white and white-organized home & garden tour was to create a celebratory neighborhood gathering that drew young people in Baltimore's *black creative class* into the fold of Brioxy's intentional-community building movement.

Of pivotal importance and strategy, the *black-only* real estate tours at the annual Juneteenth Festivals were not listed on the ornate maps for the regular home & garden tour. Black volunteers

subtly approached black attendees to sign them up for the *black-only* real estate tour and told them where to go to meet the tour-leader(s). In this sense, the black only real estate tour was *hidden in plain sight*.[373] It crosscut the visible and distributed map for the home and garden tour but was not accessible or discernible to white attendees. This was particularly significant during the 2017 Juneteenth festival. That year, Cole described the takeover of the planning and the event itself as "covert." The planning committee still had a few white people from the homeowners' association who had been on the committee in previous years. The black organizers had the radical understanding that so-called "reverse-racism" does not exist in national and local geographies structured by the ongoing persistence of racial hierarchy, "whiteness as property," to use Cheryl Harris's seminal concept, and whiteness as privilege and power.[374] "Black Only," then, is a post-Civil-Rights era reparative rejoinder that signals the need for *black-only* places, routes, geographies, resources, and community economic development amidst the prevalence of racial discrimination, inequality, and systemic oppression.

Brioxy's Juneteenth *black-only* or "Afrocentric" real-estate tours cross-cut the official tour map that traversed the neighborhood but was rendered with invisible ink. A mass of black people moved from street to street as if a swarm assembled to protect the hive. Each iteration – 2017 and 2018 – was a coordinated movement, a geography of black performance and resistance to the onslaught of white invasion to the Reservoir Hill neighborhood. Cole told black tour-goers that their purchases would be an investment for themselves as individuals or couples, their children or future

---

[373]Historians of black working-class resistance and oppositional cultures use the term, "hidden in plain sight." See Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*, James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1990), Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (1998), Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013), https://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/undercommons-web.pdf. Michael Dawson, "Hidden in Plain Sight: A Note on Legitimation Crises and Racial Order;" and J. T Roane, "Plotting the Black Commons," *Souls* 20, no. 3 (2018): 239-266.

[374] Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 1707-1791.

children, and most heavily emphasized, for their community, for black Baltimore. They would be taking a vital part in the defensive strategy by engaging in a *black offensive* or *black full-court press* of the neighborhood through their home purchase. They may be positioned to buy homes in other neighborhoods across the city, including previously redlined communities that are still predominantly white such as nearby Roland Park, but this *black-only* tour was about buying black and the collective goal of keeping the neighborhood black. In an email to returning and new Juneteenth organizers and collaborators, Cole expanded on the joint purpose of the black takeover of the garden & home tour and the *black-only* real estate tour: "Our hope is to engage a large cross section of Baltimore's *black creative class* to invest in this city as part of our fight against gentrification."[375] The Juneteenth Festivals aimed to usher in a delectable method and a provocative ethos with which to meet your future black neighbors.

In June 2017, the first year of the *black-only* real estate tour and the Juneteenth festival takeover of the Res Hill garden & home tour at large, Kevin Johnson, with Johnson Management – a company his father started to manage rental properties in Baltimore City – and local black realtor, Tomeka Givens, led the tour for an intergenerational group of black people. Kevin, who I mentioned earlier as a Brioxy organizer in 2017 and 2019, is a "family man" in his early 30s with a deep-seated love of the Baltimore Ravens and Black Baltimore. Tomeka is a successful Realtor in Baltimore and a black single-mother with a contagious smile. At one of our planning meetings before Juneteenth 2017, Kevin and Tomeka revealed that it had been much harder than they expected to schedule entry into houses on the market in the neighborhood. I captured some of this conversation in my fieldnotes:

> While slyly transitioning the organizing of the "garden and home tour," had the purpose of adding diversity to that tour and challenging it as a historical method of white gentrification over the last two decades, the separate real estate tour aimed to get black people excited about available homes and inform them about Brioxy's

[375] B. Cole, email message to author, January 20th, 2018.

> homeownership summit, which Cole decided to move to September. The plan for the Afrocentric real estate tour felt like a covert operation, and the mission was to fill the available homes with black people – keep the neighborhood "ours." In the week leading up to Juneteenth, Kevin and Tomeka reached out to realtors with properties on the market in Res Hill. They ran into barriers. Several realtors – white and Asian didn't want to let Kevin have access to the properties. Even though Kevin didn't get into the political mission of the tour in his phone conversations with the realtors, he could feel their aloof demeanor, their unreasonable exclusion. Afterall, if one of the attendees of the tour liked a house and wanted to buy [it], that would benefit the realtor. I wondered if maybe the realtors could hear blackness – black masculinity - in his voice and black femininity in Tomeka's voice. It made me realize too how racial housing exclusion could work in any number of minute ways behind the scenes and with all the players & institutions a prospective homebuyer must interact with to get the house (fieldnotes June 30, 2019).

Maybe the agents thought that *we* would not leave the property as we found it, that we would cause property damage and could not be trusted. The challenge that Tomeka and Kevin faced made clear the ways that, as Cheryl Harris contends, "the market is rather constructed through and as a racialized apparatus."[376] Tomeka and Kevin critiqued the ways in which white and Asian listing agents in the neighborhood worked to explicitly exclude black realtors and buyers from accessing the interiority of the properties or the neighborhood. These moments over the phone rang as similar to the occurrences that Traka, a Juneteenth organizer in 2019, described as she recounted delivering the signs to hosts for the home tour before the event, "we didn't come here to case the place at 9:00am" (fieldnotes, June 14, 2019). White and non-black listing agents and neighbors viewed black realtors and residents with suspicion.

For Brioxy, the *black-only* real estate tour served as a means to put Black Baltimoreans in touch with trustworthy and proficient black realtors who Cole carefully vetted. Through her vetting, she aimed to find not only someone proficient at their real-estate profession, but someone with the shared black political ethics and aspirations of *Brioxy's black homeownership initiative*, which morphed in both name and strategy to *Brioxy's Black Land Movement* in 2018. These realtors and agents needed to

[376] Cheryl I. Harris, "The Afterlife of Slavery: Markets, Property, Race."

know *the stakes* of showing these houses to black folks only as a tactic of housing-justice activism - one that aimed to keenly vocalize anti-blackness in the real estate market on the one hand and fight for black (financial) freedom and black land sovereignty through the real estate market at the same time. Tomeka and Kevin are also the young black realtors that give presentations at Brioxy's First-Time Homebuyer Workshops. Undoubtedly, Cole's vetting process was very calculated and meticulous, since she had previously worked with a black-woman identified realtor in Oakland who sold her the subprime mortgage that precipitated the foreclosure of her first purchased home during the housing crisis.[377] Many of the black homebuyers that Brioxy worked with in Baltimore bought homes though Tomeka Givens.

"Something More Than [Property]"

"While we typically associate aspirations for sovereignty with Indigenous peoples, and the quest for citizenship with Blacks, history suggests a more complicated reality in which Blacks sought something more than citizenship." - Cheryl I. Harris [378]

Brioxy's black takeover of the Reservoir Hill Garden and Home tour is black queer urban planning strategy that merges two urban economic movements related to housing: the preservation and restoration movement of the 20th century and the buy back the block movement that is gaining popularity in gentrifying black urban neighborhoods in neoliberal cities. The impetus to merge both movements raises questions regarding which aspects of a neighborhood need preservation and restoration. The branch of the restoration and preservation market that intersects with the real estate market involves municipal and private investment in historic homes and architectures. Brioxy joins

[377]B. Cole (Co-Founder of Brioxy, Co-Owner of Dovecote Café) in discussion with the author, October 2017.

[378] Cheryl I. Harris, "Of Blackness and Indigeneity: Comments on Jodi A. Byrd's "Weather with You: Settler Colonialism, Antiblackness, and the Grounded Relationalities of Resistance," *Critical Ethnic Studies* 5, no. 1-2 (2019): 215-228.

the historic and architectural preservation movement during its neoliberal period however, to demand that the black condition of the neighborhood is *proprietary* to the black people living in Res Hill, Baltimore, and in the world at large. The home tour component of Brioxy's urban planning strategy evinces an understanding that black people and African diasporic people at large have an interest in the proprietary sense of black place. Brioxy's political expression of a proprietary sense of black place is not an expression of a right to privacy or possession that should be granted or upheld by the (neo)liberal state. Alternatively, Brioxy posits that only black folx can unite to solidify the proprietary sense of black place. They express a right to *black property* in places where majority black people live and have experienced economic domination and exploitation. Within the context of the Buy Back the Block Movement, Brioxy's expression of the right to *black property* is not one that is arbitrated by the neoliberal state or financial markets. Brioxy's methodology for black placemaking portrays the belief that black people can only grant themselves a "right to the city" through the collective subversion of liberal property in its black queer urban planning movement.[379] That is, Brioxy senses that the US state arbitrates the right to possession and privacy through property ownership in ways that privilege white people and whiteness, as Cheryl Harris argues, while actively disavowing that the blackness of an urban neighborhood is the *property* par excellence that must be preserved and restored. I carefully unpack how this merger of movements strategically works to foreclose neoliberal urban planning objectives in Reservoir Hill by preserving blackness (queerly defined) and black property, the neighborhood as a black place, and the value of black non-heteronormative or queer domesticity culturally and economically rather than its "disavowal" by the state and the real estate market.[380]

---

[379] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 136.

[380] Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death Beyond Disavowal*, 17.

Situated within Brioxy's black land movement, Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tours and the *black-only* real estate tours both aim to foreclose the white heteronormative urban resettlement that the previous version of the garden and home tours reproduced. In doing so, Brioxy merges the "Buy Back the Block" and the historic preservation and restoration movements in order to preserve the neighborhood as a black place, a black community. During the home tour, Brioxy showcased black queer homes and porches specifically for the purview of Dovecote Cafe's network of local black creatives and black queers in Baltimore. The earlier versions of the garden and home tour organized by Friends of Reservoir Hill and the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council functioned as a feeder system for white heteronormative middle-class families into the local real estate market; Brioxy's Juneteenth editions of the tour challenged the liberal guise of race and gender neutrality of these previous versions, contesting the notion that this local access point to the real estate market functioned in neutralized or post-racial ways. Cheryl Harris points to the ways that the market is enmeshed and produced by racial hierarchies, discourses, and biases. She writes,

> In mapping out the intricate web in which the market and the state are entwined, the dominant representation of the market, particularly in law, is as separate from and functioning properly only in the absence of state control. But what we can quickly see is that this is mythological. The market is rather constructed through and as a racialized apparatus. Technologies of race making occur in zones both close by and far away as well as in the virtual space where we are famously told that the market functions without borders, but it's in that borderless space that the market itself is constructed as a space in which *white normativity is constantly made and protected*, and the modern racial state constructs liberal racial reform within and through market rhetoric" (emphasis added).[381]

The underside of the white normativity [that] is "constantly made and protected" are black women as heads of households, black single mothers, and black queer and trans women. Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned the 20% Maryland income tax subsidy that the Maryland Historical Trust

[381] Cheryl I. Harris, "The Afterlife of Slavery: Markets, Property, Race," *Artists' Space via YouTube*, 19 January 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQQGndN3BvY.

promises for owners of heritage properties that they intend to renovate. The state's tax subsidy for owners of heritage properties produces an incentive for the preservation of historic rowhouses, and "the white racial sorority" of the pre-2017 garden and home tours positioned white heteronormative prospective buyers to incur less cost and less debt for residential properties in Reservoir Hill.[382] This served as a way in which "racial hierarchy is continually replenished through the market."[383]

Earlier in the chapter, I also asked, *what if all of these subsidies were redistributed to the historic homes of black residents and future residents who have historically been excluded from property ownership?* The answer to this question is that black people with property would be able to stake a claim in their neighborhood that aims to thwart the ways that capitalist urbanization repeatedly seeks black place – propertied or otherwise – to reproduce cycles of "accumulation by dispossession."[384] However, as Ananya Roy reminds us, the state's management of the "propertyless" most often continues.[385] As the property values, "cultural capital," and infrastructure in a previously disinvested black neighborhood go up, more and more white artists might flock to the neighborhood's rental and real estate markets to have their own *come-up*. Brioxy's strategy as a "pedagogy of the moment" before the hammers of speculative real estate development and gentrification come down hard, is a collective attempt to get as many black working-class or underclass freelance artist-residents into the collectivist mapping of black placemaking through private property in Reservoir Hill. The black land movement cultivates a place for black landlords, black folx who buy or renovate rowhouses with multiple units who also plan to live in the neighborhood. This strategy conveys a desire to engage in intentional community with a black financial consciousness in which black people are prioritized over profits. This black

---

[382] Hannah Appel, *The Licit Life of Capitalism*.

[383] Cheryl Harris, "The Afterlife of Slavery: Markets, Property, Race."

[384] David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital*, 48.

[385] Ananya Roy, "Propertied Citizenship," 470.

spatial imaginary of the *black creative class* as an asset class is exemplified through Dovecote Café's model, "CommUNITY first, café second." However, such affective speculation for black placemaking often proves too contradictory for private property owners, whose home asset value aggrandizes as the neighborhood's property value increases. Put another way, this would require a commitment of *black creative class* members with private property to go against, quite literally, *their interests*. Community land trust (CLT) investment models for "buying up" or preserving the block, avoid this crisis that private property ownership creates for the black-conscious property owner even when buying in the context of a black land movement.

Brioxy's Juneteenth Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tours and black-only real estate tours evince a black queer urban planning strategy at the neighborhood level for *black property* through a collective endeavor that incorporates individual to collective spatial imaginaries for black queer, non-heteronormative, transgender, and creative folx. While Brioxy's movement harkens to "buy-back" campaigns of the mid-20th century,[386] Brioxy's black land movement to preserve Reservoir Hill as a black place is a dialectical placemaking endeavor that aims to operate with an intersectional praxis and an attention to a collective come-up that incorporates all black people in Reservoir Hill and black folx around the city who want to migrate to the neighborhood. By contesting the neoliberal models of urban planning like the former Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tours that issue unofficial financial invites to white residents and creatives, Brioxy works to foreclose white normative possibilities and resettlement within black places while opening up #brioxylife futures and preserving black place in ways that center black queer and trans folx and working-class or underclass black creatives.

[386] Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 158.

CODA

"Ah, Momma,
Did the house ever know the nighttime of your spirit, the flash and flame of you, who once when we crouched in what you called 'the little room,' where your dresses hung in the pallid colorings – an uninteresting row of uniforms – and where there were dusty, sweet-smelling boxes of costume jewelry that, nevertheless, shone like rubies, gold, and diamonds, once in that place without windows, with doors instead of walls, so that your small-space most resembled a large and rather haphazard closet, once, in there, you told me, whispering, that once, you wanted to become an artist: someone, you explained, who could just boldly go and sit near the top of a hill and watch the setting of the sun."
– June Jordan, from "Notes of a Barnard Dropout," 1975

In this passage from the 1975 essay, "Notes of a Barnard Dropout," black feminist theorist June Jordan personifies her mother's house as a place that could possibly "know the nighttime of her spirit"— presumably, her dreams and her aspirations. Within the house, and specifically, "the little room," Jordan theorizes a speculative place of possibility where one could transform into a person who "could just boldly go" toward a version of emancipated version of themselves and sit somewhere in peace to watch the world without fear - possibly fear of racial violence as Jordan mediated her reason for participating in the Freedom Rides during the black freedom struggle - the hope that her own son would be able to drive throughout the American South without fear of a white supremacist attack, lynching, or police violence. In the little room, the archives of Jordan's mother's costume jewelry transcended the logic of capitalist value. While the costume jewelry in "the little room" did not have the exorbitant exchange value of rubies, gold, and diamonds, for Jordan, the costumes - her mother's jewelry and her mother's unassuming and pallid dresses – possessed greater value, and they shined as their own precious thing. The "small-space" also functions between mother and daughter as a place from which to imagine and make possible through their whispered intimacy, a different way to be in the world.[387]

[387] June Jordan, "Notes from a Barnard Dropout, 1975," in *Moving Towards Home: Political Essays*, 55-60 (London: Virago, 1989).

I conclude *The Collective Come-Up* with June Jordan's black feminist theorization of her mother's "small-space," "little room," and house, because it portrays the spatial and speculative imaginary of home as it connects to the feeling and experience of freedom for black women: to be able to leave a black home and feel bold, to be artistic, to be safe in public space around black homes. Whether Jordan's mother owned the home or not, she speculated that the "small-space," was a place that could engender black women's self-possession, spiritual transformation, and social reproduction. This is the black feminist sense of home and placemaking that I hoped to capture throughout this dissertation, how this black queer and trans women attempt to capture and create this sense of black place through community organizing, urban planning, and art and performance in the long decade after the 2008 subprime mortgage crisis.

As I have completed this dissertation, the world is in the middle of a global health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, which in the US has disproportionately taken black lives. Media coverage in Baltimore pathologizes black people in West Baltimore where Brioxy organizes its black land movement and Tyra Trent was killed in a vacant residential property in a black neighborhood's geographies of foreclosure.[388] In fact, the Park Heights zip code has had the highest rate of transmission of the virus. Without a doubt, there is a connection between the decades of white flight and "capital regression,"[389] the slum clearance and urban renewal programs, and anti-black policing and mass incarceration, and the subprime foreclosure crisis coalesced into a geography of foreclosure: a space of "co-morbidities" in the built environment – subprime architectures – the neighborhood's socio-economic infrastructure, and the black bodies therein. In the vein of the Park

---

388 Tim Prudente, "Coronavirus Fight Shifts to Baltimore's Poor Neighborhoods as City Leaders Battle Mistrust," *The Baltimore Sun*, April 11, 2020, https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-coronavirus-baltimore-african-americans-20200411-hrnrm4li5nd2tcnx73pxi4ziui-story.html.

389 Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, *The Hero's Fight*, 109.

Heights Master Plan (2006, 2008) that I analyzed in Chapter 1, recently, *The Baltimore Sun* pathologized black residents in West Baltimore as the public embodiment of "high-risk" behavior and ignorant or recklessly resistant to the city-wide "shelter in place" order. To the contrary, several scholars, journalists, and research studies have shown that during the COVID-19 crisis, poor and working-class black folx in Baltimore disproportionately have (or lost) jobs in the service industry and in the informal economy and had to leave home for economic livelihood unlike many middle-class workers. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the ways that the ability to *shelter in place* while black is always already fraught with inequality and the risk of systematic dispossession.

A *Baltimore Sun* article lauded the historical arabbers that I discussed in Chapter 3 for partnering with the University of Maryland Baltimore to distribute produce, bread, and chicken on the horse-drawn carts. Entitled "'A Rainbow at Midnight': Queering Juneteenth and Claiming Black Land," in Chapter 3, I presented the arabbers at Dovecote Café while giving black children pony rides, over the course of three annual festivals, transporting more and more black residents along the route for the Juneteenth Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour and the *Black-Only* Real Estate Tour. Along this route, Brioxy booked and relied on the arabbers to geographically move black tenants in the neighborhood's and the city's *black creative class* into the homes and gardens of black homeowners, creating the connection and the intentional community across black households, many of them each year queer and/or non-heteronormative. During the COVID pandemic, the Baltimore Sun reported that importance of arabbers to ameliorate the structural impact of food desserts in West Baltimore. A journalist mentioned more as narrative flourish than a cause for alarm that arabbers had to use a makeshift hand sanitizer of bleach and water during their delivery routes,[390] despite institutional partnership with the UMB. The university and the city government convey a reckless abandonment with black life at the same time that it conditionally valorizes black culture

[390] Tim Prudente, "Coronavirus Fight Shifts to Baltimore's Poor."

and history for a veneer of diversity in one instance and group of black people. This contradiction calls to mind Grace Hong's argument, which I discussed in Chapter 1, that neoliberalism is a "technology of power" that selectively includes minoritized difference while simultaneously disavowing racialized, gendered, and sexualized others.[391]

After the nation – and indeed, the world – watched in horror as a white police officer Derek Chauvin killed George Floyd, a black man, by kneeling on his neck for nearly nine minutes while he was not resisting arrest and on the ground in handcuffs. With the gendered racial terror of police violence in the national spotlight again yet in the midst of the racial inequality of contraction and death from COVID-19, an unprecedented social movement, a multiracial and cross-class rebellion has erupted as millions of people from US major cities to small towns have flooded the streets and social media led by the Black Lives Matter Network. Police murdered Breonna Taylor, a black woman in her home in Louisville, KY on March 13, 2020, calling to mind the police murder of Koryn Gaines in Baltimore, Maryland.[392] Neither public space nor private property (owned or leased) are safe havens for black people amid systematic police violence, terror, and brutality in the United States.

In this moment, protestors, journalists, news anchors, and scholars have pointed to the contradictions between black life and private property – some of which I discussed in Chapter 1: "We Call Them Bandos: Black Trans Fugitivity and Performance in Geographies of Foreclosure." In news media, social media, and around kitchen tables, debates about the rationale and ethics of "looting" by protestors have captured national attention. With excessive displays of militarized force

---

391 Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death Beyond Disavowal*, 13.

392 Errin Haines, "Family Seeks Answers in Fatal Police Shooting of Louisville Woman in Her Apartment," *The Washington Post*, May 11, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/05/11/family-seeks-answers-fatal-police-shooting-louisville-woman-her-apartment/.

through beatings, rubber bullets, tear gas, and mass arrests of protestors, it is abundantly clear that the police across the nation have an imbalanced sense of duty to and protection of private property and white life above and at the expense of black lives – a contradiction that "looting" exposes. Trevor Noah argues that looting is collective response to the ways in which "the social contract" between black Americans and the neoliberal state is persistently not upheld by the latter.[393] I briefly point to these national conversations, because of the ways I have considered, on the one hand, private property as a mechanism that relies on differential exclusion at the thresholds of domestic place and citizenship, and on the other, fervent calls within urban black communities across the country to "buy up the block" to defend black place from speculative real estate development and gentrification while simultaneously building black communal power. While I have not attempted to fully resolve this paradox throughout *The Collective Come-Up*, deteriorate of the housing market and new cycles of black dispossession and displacement in the urban context after COVID-19 will bring me back to these questions as black queer and trans folx dream up black spatial imaginaries, black sovereignty, and enact black queer urban planning strategies and movements for black placemaking. Within the Movement for Black Lives and mass uprisings in the present, a local collective called Reclaim the Block attends to black placemaking in Minneapolis by calling for and organizing to "defund the police." For them, "reclaim" overrides "buy," as the collective prioritizes black intentional community, community control, and black placemaking as delinked from block or private property ownership.[394] After all, it is the police that commit systematic gendered racial terror against black folx, their homes, and their places and the police that act with a central imperative to protect private property and asset classes.

---

[393] Trevor Noah, "George Floyd, Minneapolis Protests, Ahmaud Arbery & Amy Cooper," May 29, 2020, *The Daily Social Distancing Show*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4amCfVbA_c&feature=emb_title.

[394] "Reclaim the Block," accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.reclaimtheblock.org/home.

Within Brioxy's vision for a collectivized remapping of *black* private property ownership for black creatives and black queer and trans-identified women. The anti-black and transmisogynist murder of Tyra Trent exposed the contradictions of "the social contract" that Trevor Noah discusses.[395] Regardless of who murdered Tyra in the bando at 3307 Virginia Avenue in Park Heights, the neoliberal urban planning model of the Park Heights Master Plan prioritized clearing the urban land of *bandos* and laying waste to the people that the state categorizes as social bandits or outlaws, thinking with Faye V. Harrison,[396] on urban land marked for "renewal" and new influxes of "real estate capital." The production of discipline through lingering subprime architecture sin geographies of foreclosure is predicated on black cis and trans women's differential fugitivity from white cis-heteropatriarchal normativity. Put another way, urban renewal plans with mass demolitions or slum clearance make way for heteronormative families with normative genders, sexuality, labor in Baltimore's post-industrial urban economy. Tyra Trent's murder demonstrates the gender and racially specific danger and "trans necropolitics" of subprime architectures.[397]

I have demonstrated the promise and the limitations of Brioxy's methodology of *coming up on* private property to make it do different work while disidentifying with it. I have conveyed that Brioxy's articulation of a black community economic development model and a spatial imaginary of black sovereignty in the face urban restructuring through gentrification both relies on black property and also black queer commons like the Juneteenth festivals at Dovecote Café. Queering Juneteenth, Brioxy organizers, black artists and craftspeople, black queer, gender variant, non-binary, and transgender young black folx make and take up a space that neoliberal public-private partnerships

---

[395] Trevor Noah, "George Floyd, Minneapolis Protests."

[396] Faye V. Harrison, "Everyday Neoliberalism, Diminishing Subsistence Security, and the Criminalization of Survival: Gendered Urban Poverty in Three African Diaspora Contexts," in *IUAES Inter Congress on Mega-Urbanization, Multi-Ethnic Society, Human Rights and Development: Volume 1*, 82-103 (New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 2007).

[397] Jin Haritaworn and C. Riley Snorton, "Trans Necropolitics."

are actively marking for white heteronormative domesticities and resettlement entrance. By queering Juneteenth and claiming black urban land through performance, art, music, and collective memory, black queer and trans women claim, as Adeyemi articulated, "a black queer right to the city."[398]

Throughout *The Collective Come-Up*, I also discussed the ways that Brioxy's black land movement hinges upon the coordinated individual investment in private property for black placemaking – a goal that is not always (or to everyone) readily dissimilar to historical black capitalist discourses and movements. Yet, there is a "surplus" within Brioxy's black spatial imaginary that defies binaristic categorization as black capitalism or black bourgeois class formation.[399] I find this to be the same surplus, which is a longing toward a horizon of what black home can be, in Brioxy's spatial imaginary that centers black queer and trans women – black folx who disproportionately experience "placelessness,"[400] or rather whom the neoliberal state disavows as placeless or "existentially surplus."[401] I remain intrigued that Brioxy's black land movement in West Baltimore has at its helm, a black queer masculine-of-center woman who was targeted by a subprime mortgage broker for a predatory loan and lost her house to foreclosure. Within the various overlapping modes of placemaking that are performed through Brioxy's Juneteenth festival, black first-time homebuyer workshops, and home & garden tours, there is *something else*. Through this dissertation, I have pointed to Brioxy's mode of collective, affective, and material speculation on black queer futures and social reproduction that is squarely situated in the perpetual horizon of the long black freedom struggle for land, home, and power in the African Diaspora. These #brioxylife futures are categorically different from those futures that the state and the real estate market promote in the

---

[398] Kemi Adeyemi, "The Practice of Slowness," 549.

[399] Kara Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Futures*, 88.

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

[401] Grace Kyungwon Hong, "Existentially Surplus."

American Dream discourse – the latter, one that is readily available as an ideology of neoliberal "propertied citizenship" that is perpetually "deferred" for black people in the US. These #brioxylife futures are the same futures (as derivatives) that were disproportionately bet against on Wall Street.

Brioxy's speculative model of black economic placemaking takes up and "disidentifies" with private property to foster a black land movement against gentrification in black Baltimore neighborhoods.[402] Black property ownership will not wholesale stop gentrification and "will not save us," which the 2008 *New York Times* article, "Baltimore Finds Subprime Crisis Snags Women," clearly relays.[403] However, black queer people in Baltimore attempt to reorient the violent geographies of black dispossession by *coming up* on private property, maybe as if to steal something from it and make it do different work. They simultaneously center the vision of a "black [queer] commons" and speculative social reproduction through black placemaking despite neoliberal public-private projects and gentrification.[404]

I taught, during the 2018-19 academic year, at the Maryland Institute College of Art, an institution located Southeast of Reservoir Hill by no more than a mile or two. While teaching there, a black professor colleague shared that he and some of his black friends suspected that the Dovecote Café owners are "black gentrifiers." The black first-time homebuyer workshops present an altogether different vision of property than that of other black heteronormative, middle-class, and individual framings of property ownership and indeed, a drastically different understanding than that of neoliberal white heteronormative middle-class owners. In the preceding, I have discussed the ways that Brioxy's black conscious discourse on property incorporates some of the tenets of black

---

[402] José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 1999.

[403] John Leland, "Baltimore Finds Subprime Crisis Snags Women," *New York Times*.

[404] J. T. Roane, "Plotting the Black Commons," *Souls* 20, no. 3 (2018): 239-266.

capitalist or black neoliberal discourse, but my ethnographic research has also brought forth the possibility that community groups, particularly black and queer folx, resignify the meaning and potential of collectivized approaches to private property through disidentification and black placemaking. To counteract some of the unavoidable exclusions that private property engenders, I suggested that models for black queer placemaking include Brioxy's approach in tandem with a group like the Bay Area Permanent Real Estate Cooperative. I questioned if multiple models working in coordination by community groups might keep the property values and the classed black displacement from transpiring. Where Brioxy mounted a black queer political takeover of home and garden tours run by white middle class property owners in Reservoir Hill, I have envisioned home and garden tours as a community organizing pedagogy through which tenant organizing collectives, community land trusts, and models like Brioxy's "tour" and critically engage the relationship of their respective approaches against gentrification. The Baltimore Housing Roundtable accomplishes some of this cross-movement, cross-organization, and cross-neighborhood coalition work at the city level.

Both of the black queer spatial imaginaries that I have presented in *The Collective Come-Up* negotiate the politics of place for black queer and trans women in relationship to property in post-crisis geographies of foreclosure. Jono Vaughan and Randy Watson's collaboration in Project 42 disassembled the violent landscape of subprime architectures that positioned Tyra Trent's life as "existentially surplus" before she was murdered.[405] I explained that such deterritorializing disassembly through the Jono Vaughan's dress-making did not actually try to resolve or find a fixed place or home for black trans women like Tyra other than on the impermanence of the stage during Randy Watson's memorializing dance for Tyra. In this way, Project 42 disassembled the "Major Renewal Area" that the Park Heights Master Plan demarcated and practiced an "insurgent

[405] 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): 87-106.

nostalgia"[406] that refuses to try to fit black trans feminine lifeways into the violent order of white heteronormative and settler domesticity. Project 42's insurgent nostalgia for Tyra's life and "The Bando" as an illegal home for several black transgender women in Baltimore offer us black trans "counterpublics" that refuse to fit inside the walls or the box of "the white home."[407] "The Bando" as black trans feminine home-space parallels the contemporary Moms4Housing movement in Oakland, CA in which black mothers squatted in vacant property in a city with an exorbitant cost of living, rampant cycles of black displacement, and a homelessness crisis. New community-based mobilizations of BIPOC transgender and gender-variant peoples in neoliberal cities and gentrifying neighborhoods incorporate private property into their spatial imaginaries, but for collective and temporary use.

As I conclude this dissertation, Gays and Lesbians Living in a Transgender Society, Inc. (G.L.I.T.S), "[has] been providing temporary housing to Black trans people recently released from Rikers Island" in Manhattan, NY. With an ongoing fundraiser, G.I.L.T.S with Ceyenne Doroshow, the Founder & Executive Director, aims to raise one million dollars to sign two leases for housing and "buy two buildings to create a permanent place to house and support Black trans people in New York City."[408] In *The Collective Come-Up*: Black Queer Placemaking in Subprime Baltimore, I have examined two collectives that provocatively enact models of black queer and trans placemaking in Baltimore's geographies of subprime foreclosure and urban revitalization-cum-renewal. It has been my hope to put queer models and black spatial imaginaries with their divergent and overlapping relationships to private property and black political discourses in creative dialectic in order to

[406] Ruha Benjamin, "Black Afterlives Matter."

[407] Chandan C. Reddy, "Home, Houses, Nonidentity," 362.

[408] Río Sofia, "Ceyenne Brought In The Camera Crew," *Instagram*, https://www.instagram.com/p/CBTtt5xDKiY/.

complicate collective resistance and placemaking in the age of finance. My forthcoming manuscript and peer-reviewed publications will continue to explore modes of black queer and trans urban planning, financial subjectivity, and housing within predominantly black neighborhoods in Baltimore.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"About Vacants to Value." Vacants to Value. Accessed on June 10, 2020. http://www.vacantstovalue.org/About.aspx.

Adeyemi, Kemi. "The Practice of Slowness: Black Queer Women and the Right to the City." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 25, no. 4 (2019): 545-567. https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-7767767..

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Allen, Devin. "Spaces of the Un-Entitled." Art Exhibit, Baltimore, Maryland. February 2019-March 2019

Allen, Robert L. *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990.

Tom Angotti, ed., *Transformative Planning: Radical Alternatives to Neoliberal Urbanism*. Chicago: Black Rose Books, 2020.

Appel, Hannah C., Sa Whitley, and Caitlin Kline. 2019. "The Power of Debt: Identity and Collective Action in the Age of Finance." *Institute on Democracy and Inequality*. https://challengeinequality.luskin.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2019/03/Appel -Hannah-THE-POWER-OF-DEBT.pdf.

Appel, Hannah. *The Licit Life of Capitalism: US Oil in Equatorial Guinea*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.

Appel, Hannah. "There is Power in a Debtors' Union," *Dissent*, July 12, 2019, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/there-is-power-in-a-debtors-union.

"Arabber Preservation Society." *Arabber Preservation Society*. Accessed on June 10, 2020. http://www.arabbers.com/.

Bailey, Marlon M. and Rashad Shabazz. "Gender and Sexual Geographies of Blackness: Anti-Black Heterotopias (Part 1)." (2014): 316-321. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.781305.

Bailey, Marlon M. *Butch Queens Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance, and Ballroom Culture in Detroit.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013.

Baker, Amy Castro. "Eroding the Wealth of Women: Gender and the Subprime Foreclosure Crisis." *Social Service Review* 88, no. 1 (2014): 59-91. https://doi.org/10.1086/675391.

Baldauf, Anette. "Betting the House." *Rethinking Marxism* 22, no. 2 (2010): 219-230.

Benjamin, Ruha. "Black Afterlives Matter: Cultivating Kinfulness as Reproductive Justice," *The Boston Review*. 16 July 2018. http://bostonreview.net/race/ruha-benjamin-black-afterlives-matter.

Berlant, Lauren, and Michael Warner. "Sex in Public." *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (1998): 547–566. https://doi.org/10.1086/448884.

Bey, Marquis. "Black Fugitivity Un/Gendered." *The Black Scholar* 49, no. 1 (2019): 55–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.2019.1548059.

Bey, Marquis. *Them Goon Rules: Fugitive Essays on Radical Black Feminism*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019.

Marquis Bey, "The Trans*-ness of Blackness, the Blackness of Trans*-ness," *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (2017): 275-295, accessed on June 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-3815069.

Bravo, Janicza, dir. *Atlanta*. Season 1. episode 9. "Juneteenth." Aired on October 25, 2016, on FX on Hulu. https://www.hulu.com/watch/248f3d1b-9a4e-4793-87c0-06e3b63e4182.

"Brioxy." 2020. https://www.brioxy.com/. Accessed on June 10, 2020.

Brioxy. "Juneteenth is about Reclaiming the Right …," *Instagram*. June 19, 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BkNpv2sAcBb/.

Brown, Lawrence. "Two Baltimores: The White L vs. the Black Butterfly," *The Baltimore Sun*, 28June 2016, https://www.baltimoresun.com/citypaper/bcpnews-two-baltimores-the-white-l-vs-the-black-butterfly-20160628-htmlstory.html.

Byrd, Jodi A., Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy. "Predatory Value: Economies of Dispossession and Disturbed Relationalities." *Social Text* 36, no. 2 (135) (June 1, 2018): 1 18.

Camp, Jordan T. and Robin D. G. Kelley. "Black Radicalism, Marxism, and Collective Memory: An Interview with Robin D. G. Kelley." *American Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2013): 215-230. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41809558.

Carby, Hazel V. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Chapa, Sergio. "Juneteenth Celebration Draws Thousands to Historic Houston Park," *The Houston Chronicle*, 15 June 2019, https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Juneteenth-celebration-drawn-thousands-to-14000793.php.

Chhun, Lina. "Walking with the Ghost: Contested Silences, Memory-Making, and Cambodian/American Histories of Violence," PhD Dissertation., UCLA, 2019.

Cioffi, John W. *Public Law and Private Power: Corporate Governance Reform in the Age of Finance Capitalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010.

Cohen, Cathy J. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Real Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ* Vol. 3 (1997): 437-465. 1

Cole, B. (Co-Founder of Brioxy, Co-Owner of Dovecote Café). Personal Interview with the Author, October 13, 2017.

Cole, B. "Help Us Buy Our Building." *Indiegogo*. August 1, 2017. Accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/help-dovecote-buy-our-building#/.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* New York: Routledge, 2002.

"Come Up," *Urban Dictionary,* accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=come%20up.

Crawford, Lucas Cassidy. "Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture." *Seattle J. Soc. Just.* 8 (2009): 515.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Rev.* 43 (1990): 1241-1300.

Cuevas, Ofelia O. "Welcome to My Cell: Housing and Race in the Mirror of American Democracy," *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2012): 605-624.

Dawson, Michael C. "Hidden in Plain Sight: A Note on Legitimation Crises and the Racial Order," Critical Historical Studies 3, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 143-161.

Dawson, Michael C., and Megan Ming Francis. "Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial Order." *Public Culture* 28, no. 1 (78) (2016): 23-62.

Deville, Joe. "Regenerating Market Attachments: Consumer Credit Debt Collection and the Capture of Affect." *Journal of Cultural Economy* 5, no. 4 (2012): 423-439. A https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2012.703145.

Donnella, Leah. "On Flag Day, Remembering the Red, Black, and Green." *NPR.org*. June 14, 2017. https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/06/14/532667081/on-flag-day-remembering-the-red-black-and-green#:~:text=The%20Pan%2DAfrican%20flag%2C%20(,%22black%20freedom%2C%20simple.%22&text=Sheet%20music%20for%20%22Every%20Race%20Has%20a%20Flag%20But,Coo.

Dovecote Café. "We could be out here ERRRYDAY!!" *Facebook.com*, July 7, 2017. https://www.facebook.com/dovecotecafe/photos/pb.317044054176.-2207520000.1499478785./10155058101149177/?type=3.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880*. New York: The Free Press, 1998.

Duncan, Ian. "In 2010, Baltimore had 16,800 Vacants. Eight Years and Millions of Dollars Later, the Number is Down to 16,500," *The Baltimore Sun*, 26 April 2018, https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-vacant-demolition-blocks-20180227-story.html.

Douglass, Frederick. "The Meaning of Fourth of July for the Negro" (1852). *PBS*. Accessed on June 10, 2020. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2927t.html.

E. Sashse, & Co., "Map: E. Sachse, & Co.'s Bird's Eye View of the City of Baltimore, 1869," *Library of Congress*, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844b.pm002540/.

Ellison, Treva. "The Labor of Werqing It: The Performance and Protest of Sir Lady Java." In *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* edited by Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton. 1-21. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017.

Ellison, Treva, Kai M. Green, Matt Richardson, and C. Riley Snorton. "We Got Issues: Toward a Black Trans*/Studies." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (2017): 162-169.

Ferguson, Roderick A. *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

Ferguson, Roderick A. "Of Our Normative Strivings: African American Studies and the History of Sexuality." *Social Text* 23, no. 3-4 (84-85) (2005): 85-100.

Ferguson, Roderick A. *The Reorder of Things: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*. University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Fernandez-Kelly, Patricia. *The Hero's Fight: African Americans in West Baltimore and the Shadow of the State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Fishbein, Allen J. and Patrick Woodall, "Women are Prime Targets for Subprime Lending," *Consumer Federation of America*, 2006. https://consumerfed.org/elements/www.consumerfed.org/file/housing/WomenPrimeTargetsStudy120606.pdf.

Field of Dreams. Directed by Phil Alden Robinson. 1989; Universal City, CA: Universal Home Video, 1998. DVD.

Florida. Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited.* New York: Basic Books, 2012.

Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

"Frequently Asked Questions," *Vacants to Value*, http://www.vacantstovalue.org/vtov_faq.

Frick, Jena. "UMB Partners with Arabbers to Distribute Food in Community." *University of Maryland, Baltimore*, May 6, 2020. https://www.umaryland.edu/news/archived-news/may-2020/umb-partners-with-arabbers-to-distribute-food-in-community.php.

Friends of Reservoir Hill. "21st Annual Reservoir Hill Garden and Home Tour." *Eventbrite*. Accessed on June 10, 2020. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/21st-annual-reservoir-hill-garden-and-home-tour-tickets-25147575074#.

Gates, Henry Louis Jr., "What is Juneteenth?" *PBS.org*, https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/what-is-juneteenth/.

Gomez, Marisela B., *Race, Class, Power, and Organizing in East Baltimore: Rebuilding Abandoned Communities in America*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012.

Gossett, Che. "Atlantic is a Sea of Bones: Black Trans aesthetics and the Cinematic Imaginary of Reina Gossett," *Visual AIDS blog,* Tuesday March 27, 2018.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Goldstein, Alyosha. "Finance and Foreclosure in the Colonial Present." *Radical History Review* 2014, no. 118 (2014): 42–63. https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-2349095.

Gore, Dayo F. *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War*. New York: NYU Press, 2012.

Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Gossett, Che and Julianna Huxtable. "Existing in the World: Blackness at the Edge of Trans Visibility." In *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, edited by Tourmaline Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton, 39-55. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017.

Gossett, Che. "Atlantic is a Sea of Bones: Black Trans aesthetics and the Cinematic Imaginary of Reina Gossett." *Visual AIDS blog*. March 27, 2018. http://visualaids.org/blog/detail/atlantic-is-a-sea-of-bones-black-trans-in-aesthetics-and-the-cinematic-imag.

Gossett, Che. "Blackness and the Trouble of Trans Visibility." In *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, edited by Tourmaline Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton, 183-190. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017.

Green, Kai M. "*The Essential I/Eye in We*: A Black TransFeminist Approach to Ethnographic Film." *Black Camera* 6, no. 2 (2015): 187-200. https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/583181.

Gross, Kali N. "Examining the Politics of Respectability in African American Studies." *Almanac* 43, no. 28 (1997).

Haines, Errin, "Family Seeks Answers in Fatal Police Shooting of Louisville Woman in Her Apartment," *The Washington Post*, May 11, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/05/11/family-seeks-answers-fatal-police-shooting-louisville-woman-her-apartment/.

Halberstam, Jack. "Unbuilding Gender: Trans* Anarchitecture In and Beyond the Work of Gordon Matta-Clark." *Places Journal*, October 2018, https://placesjournal.org/article/unbuilding-gender/.

Haley, Sarah. *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2016.

Hall, Tom, Rob Sivak, Kathleen Cahill, and Bridget Armstrong, "2016 Maryland Primary Results; Brioxy and Dovecote Brew Hope For Post-Uprising Baltimore," *WYPR 88.1 FM: The World*, April 27, 2016, https://www.wypr.org/post/2016-maryland-primary-results-brioxy-and-dovecote-brew-hope-post-uprising-baltimore.

Haritaworn, Jin and C. Riley Snorton. "Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death and the Trans of Color Afterlife" in *The Transgender Studies Reader* 2, edited by Susan Styker and Aren Z. Aizura, 66-76. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Harney, Stefano and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. New York: Minor Compositions, 2013. https://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/undercommons-web.pdf.

Harris, Cheryl I. "Of Blackness and Indigeneity: Comments on Jodi A. Byrd's 'Weather with You: Settler Colonialism, Antiblackness, and the Grounded Relationalities of Resistance,'" *Critical Ethnic Studies* 5, no. 1-2 (2019): 215-228. Accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/jcritethnstud.5.1-2.0215.

Harris, Cheryl I. "The Afterlife of Slavery: Markets, Property, Race." *Artists' Space* via YouTube. January 19, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQQGndN3BvY.

Harris, Cheryl I. "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* (1993): 1707-1791. Accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1341787.

Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route*. Macmillan, 2008.

________. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

_________. "The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labors." *Souls* 18, no. 1 (2016): 166-173. https://doi.org/10.1080/10999949.2016.1162596.

_________. "The Time of Slavery." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 757–777. muse.jhu.edu/article/39111.

__________. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008), 1-14. https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/campuspress.yale.edu/dist/1/2296/files/2017/09/Saidiya-Hartman-Venus-in-Two-Acts-1a1v7bq.pdf.

Harrison, Faye V. "Everyday Neoliberalism, Diminishing Subsistence Security, and the Criminalization of Survival: Gendered Urban Poverty in Three African Diaspora Contexts," in *IUAES Inter Congress on Mega-Urbanization, Multi-Ethnic Society, Human Rights and Development: Volume 1*, 82-103. New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 2007.

Harvey, David. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. New York: Verso books, 2012.

________. *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Hicks, Cheryl D. *Talk with You like a Woman: African American Women, Justice, and Reform in New York, 1890-1935*. Chapel Hill: Univ of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

"Historical and Architectural Preservation: Reservoir Hill." *City of Baltimore*. Accessed June 10, 2020, https://chap.baltimorecity.gov/reservoir-hill.

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

Hong, Grace Kyungwon. "Existentially Surplus: Women of Color Feminism and the New Crises of Capitalism." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18, no. 1 (2012): 87-106. Accessed on June 10, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-1422152.

Hunter, Marcus Anthony, and Zandria F. Robinson. *Chocolate Cities: The Black Map of American Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018.

Hunter, Marcus Anthony, Mary Pattillo, Zandria F. Robinson, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. "Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry." *Theory, Culture & Society, 33*, no. 7-8 (2016): 31-56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416635259.

Hunter, Tera W. *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* . Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998

Ibrahim, Shamira. "What Kenya Barris Doesn't Understand About #*BlackAF*," *The Atlantic*, 26 April 2020, https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2020/04/blackaf-fails-to-break-new-ground/610678/.

Isoke, Zenzele. *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Jacobs, Harriet A. (Harriet Ann), 1813-1897. "Incidents In the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself." Edited by L. Maria Child. London: Hodson and Son, 22, Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn, 1862.

Jiang, Weijia. "Transgender Woman Found Dead in Vacant House," *CBS Baltimore*, February 23,2011, https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2011/02/23/transgender-woman-found-dead-in-vacant-home/.

Johnson, Walter. *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Jordan, June. "Notes from a Barnard Dropout, 1975." In *Moving Towards Home: Political Essays*, 55-60. London: Virago, 1989.

Joseph, Miranda. *Debt to Society: Accounting for Life Under Capitalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

"Juneteenth Flag." *National Juneteenth Observance Foundation*. Accessed on June 10, 2020. http://nationaljuneteenth.com/Juneteenth_Flag.html.

Katz, Cindi. "Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction." *Antipode* 33, no. 4 (2001): 709-728. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00207.

Keeling, Kara. *Queer Times, Black futures*. New York: NYU Press, 2019.

Kelley, Robin D. G. *Freedom Dreams: The black radical imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

_______. *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2015.

_______. *Yo' Mama's disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.

______. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: The Free Press, 1994

Kitson, Jennifer. "Home Touring as Hospitable Urbanism." *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 10, no. 1 (2017): 77-97. https://doi.org/10.1080/17549175.2015.1111924.

Kish, Zenia and Justin Leroy. "Bonded Life: Technologies of Racial Finance from Slave Insurance to Philanthrocapital." *Cultural Studies* 29 (2015): 630-651. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2015.1017137.

Krippner, Greta R. *Capitalizing on Crisis: The Political Origins of the Rise of Finance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.

LeBaron, Genevieve, and Adrienne Roberts. "Toward a Feminist Political Economy of Capitalism and Carcerality." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36, no. 1 (2010): 19-44.

Leland, John. "Baltimore Finds Subprime Crisis Snags Women." *New York Times*, January 15, 2008. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/15/us/15mortgage.html.

Lieb, Emily. "'White Man's Lane': Hollowing Out the Highway Ghetto in Baltimore." In *Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth in an American City*, edited by Jessica Elfenbein, Thomas Hollowak, and Elizabeth Nix, 51-69. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011.

Lipsitz, George. *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s*. University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Logan, Cameron. *Historic Capital: Preservation, Race, and Real Estate in Washington*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Loomis, Jessa M. "Rescaling and reframing poverty: Financial coaching and the pedagogical spaces of financial inclusion in Boston, Massachusetts." *Geoforum* 95, (2018): 143-152.

Mahmud, Tayyab. "Debt and Discipline." *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2012): 469-494.

Martinez, Steven-Emmanuel. "Formerly Homeless, an HIV-Positive Black Gay Activist Is Building a New Faith Movement," *The Body: The HIV/AIDS Resource*, 19 September 2019,

https://www.thebody.com/article/formerly-homeless-an-hiv-positive-black-gay-activist-is-building-a-new-faith-movement.

Manalansan, IV, Martin F. "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City," *Social Text* 23, no. 3-4 (2005): 84-85.

McDonald, CeCe. "'Go Beyond Our Natural Selves:' The Prison Letters of CeCe McDonald" edited by Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* Vol. 4 (May 2017): 2.

Michael McIntyre and Heidi J. Nast, "Bio(necro)polis: Marx, Surplus Populations, and the Spatial Dialectics of Reproduction and 'Race,'" *Antipode* 43, no. 5 (2011): 1465-1488. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00906.x.

McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

______. "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place." *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, no. 8 (2011): 947–963.

———. "Plantation Futures." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 17, no. 3 (42) (2013): 1–15.

Melamed, Jodi. *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Millspaugh, Martin L. "Baltimore's Renaissance." *The Baltimore Sun*. September 23, 2014. https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/op-ed/bs-ed-baltimore-renaissance-20140923-story.html.

Moore, Madison. *Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.

Morgan, Jennifer L. *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Moten, Fred. "The Subprime and the Beautiful." *African Identities* 11, no. 2 (2013): 237–245.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The There and Then of Queer Theory*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Noah, Trevor. "George Floyd, Minneapolis Protests, Ahmaud Arbery & Amy Cooper," *The Daily Social Distancing Show*, May 29, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4amCfVbA_c&feature=emb_title.

Osman, Suleiman. "What Time is Gentrification?" *City & Community* 15, no. 3 (2016): 215-219.

Park Heights Neighborhood Urban Renewal Plan. Adopted February 2006, Amended September 2008. Online version (Baltimore, MD: Department of Planning, Baltimore Housing, Baltimore Development Corporation, and Goody, Clancy & Associates). Accessed on June 10, 2020. http://boldnewheights.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Master-Plan-Final-AmendedVersion.pdf.

"Our Vision, Our Mission," accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.stationnorth.org/vision-and-mission.

Park, Kevin A. and Roberto G. Quercia. "Who Lends Beyond the Red Line? The Community Reinvestment Act and the Legacy of Redlining." *Housing Policy Debate* 30, no. 1 (2020): 4-26. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2019.1665839.

Peck, Jamie, Nik Theodore, and Neil Brenner. "Neoliberal Urbanism: Models, Moments, Mutations." *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 29, no. 1 (2009): 49-66.

Pietila, Antero, *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City*. Chicago: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

"Property Brothers." *HGTV*. Accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.hgtv.com/shows/property-brothers.

Prudente, Tim. "Coronavirus Fight Shifts to Baltimore's Poor Neighborhoods as City Leaders Battle Mistrust," *The Baltimore Sun*, April 11, 2020, https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-coronavirus-baltimore-african-americans-20200411-hrnrm4li5nd2tcnx73pxi4ziui-story.html.

puar, jasbir k. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Purser, Gretchen. "The Circle of Dispossession: Evicting the Urban Poor in Baltimore." *Critical Sociology* 42, no. 3 (2016)..

Razack, Sherene. "Gendering Disposability," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 28, no. 2 (2016).

"Reclaim the Block," accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.reclaimtheblock.org/home.

Reddy, Chandan C. *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the US State*. Durham, NC: Duke \ University Press, 2011.

Reddy, Chandan C. "Home, Houses, Nonidentity: Paris is Burning." In *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity*, edited by Rosemary Marangoly George, 355-379. Boulder: Westview Press, 1998.

Rich, Meghan Ashlin and William Tsitsos. "Avoiding the 'SoHo Effect' in Baltimore: Neighborhood Revitalization and Arts and Entertainment Districts." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40, no. 4 (2016): 736-756.

Rich, Meghan Ashlin. "'Artists are a Tool for Gentrification': Maintaining Artists and Creative Production in Arts Districts." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 25, no. 6 (2019): 727-742.

Roane, J. T. "Mothers 4 Housing and Black Anti-Growth Politics." *Black Perspectives*. January 15, 2020. https://www.aaihs.org/mothers-4-housing-and-the-legacy-of-black-anti-growth-politics/.

________. "Plotting the Black Commons." *Souls* 20, no. 3 (2018): 239-266.

Roberts, Adrienne. "Financing Social Reproduction: The Gendered Relations of Debt and Mortgage Finance in Twenty-First-Century America." *New Political Economy* 18, no. 1 (2013): 21–42.

Robinson, B. "The Black Genius Art Show," 2020, https://theblackgeniusartshow.com/.
Huff, Jr., Ashley. "Love More Bmore," *Facebook*, Accessed on June 7, 2020. https://www.facebook.com/Love-MORE-BMORE1174690292557043/photos/?ref=page_internal.

Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Robinson, Phil Alden . *Field of Dreams*, 1989; Universal City, CA: 1998 Universal Home Video, = DVD.

Roy, Ananya. "Dis/possessive collectivism: Property and Personhood at City's End." *Geoforum* 80 (2017): A1-A11.

Roy, Ananya. "Paradigms of Propertied Citizenship: Transnational Techniques of Analysis." *Urban Affairs Review* 38, no. 4 (2003): 463-491.

Benjamin, Ruha. "Black Afterlives Matter." *Boston Review: A Political and Literary Forum,* July 16, 2018. http://bostonreview.net/race/ruha-benjamin-black-afterlives-matter.

Ruiz, Rebecca R. "Baltimore Officers Will Face No Federal Charges in Death of Freddie Gray," *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/us/freddie-gray-baltimore-police-federal-charges.html.

Saegert, Susan, Desiree Fields, and Kimberly Libman. "Mortgage Foreclosure and Health Disparities: Serial Displacement as Asset Extraction in African American Populations." *Journal of Urban Health* 88, (2011): 390-402. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-011-9584-3.

Safransky, Sara. "Greening the Urban Frontier: Race, Property, and Resettlement in Detroit." *Geoforum* 56 (2014): 237–248. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.06.003.

Salamon, Gayle. *The Life and Death of Latisha King: A Critical Phenomenology of Transphobia.* New York: NYU Press, 2018.

Savage, Charlie. "Wells Fargo Will Settle Mortgage Bias Charges." *New York Times*, July 2, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/13/business/wells-fargo-to-settle-mortgage-discrimination-charges.html.

Schafran, Alex. "Origins of an Urban Crisis: The Restructuring of the San Francisco Bay Area and the Geography of Foreclosure." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 2 (2013): 663-688.

Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Scott, Suzanne. "The Moral Economy of Crowdfunding and the Transformative Capacity of Fan ancing." *New Media & Society* 17, no. 2 (2015): 167-182. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814558908.

Selznick, David O., Sidney Coe Howard, Victor Fleming, Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, Leslie Howard, Olivia De Havilland, Max Steiner, and Margaret Mitchell. 2009. *Gone with the Wind*. Burbank, CA: Distributed by Warner Home Video.

"Sex Workers Outreach Project USA." SWOP. Accessed on June 10, 2020. https://swopusa.org/.

Snorton, C. Riley. *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Snowden-McCrae, Lisa. "Dovecote Café Plans Juneteenth Celebration with Games, Trivia, Demonstrations, and More." *The Baltimore Sun*. 16 June 2017.

https://www.baltimoresun.com/citypaper/bcpnews-dovecote-cafe-plans-juneteenth-celebration-with-games-trivia-demonstrations-and-more-20170616-story.html?.

Spillers, Hortense J. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar book," *diacritics* 17, no. 2 1987.

Stanley, Eric A. and Tourmaline Gossett. *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017.

"Station North Arts District." Accessed on June 10, 2020, https://www.stationnorth.org/.

Stout, Noelle. *Dispossessed: How Predatory Bureaucracy Foreclosed on the American Middle Class*. Berkeley: = University of California Press, 2019.

Soederberg, Susanne. "The US Debtfare State and the Credit Card Industry: Forging Spaces of Dispossession." *Antipode* 45, no. 2 (2013): 493-512. Accessed on June 10, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2012.01004.x.

Soja, Edward W. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Place*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

Stein, Samuel. *Capital City: Gentrification and the Real Estate State*. New York: Verso Books, 2019.

Summers, Brandi Thompson, *Black in Place: The Spatial Aesthetics of Race in a Post-Chocolate City*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2019.

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2019.

Theodore, Nik, Jamie Peck, and Neil Brenner. "Neoliberal Urbanism: Cities and the Rule of Markets" in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City* edited by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd, 2011.

Treskon, Mark. "Measuring Creative Placemaking: Measuring Livability in the Station North Arts & Entertainment District, Baltimore." *Urban Institute*. 2015. Accessed on June 10, 2020.

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/100998/measuring_creative_placemaking_0.pdf.

"Urban Renewal - Park Heights - Renewal Area Designation and Urban Renewal Plan." *Baltimore Legistar*. July 21, 2008. Accessed on June 10, 2020. https://baltimore.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2176145&GUID=57086C0F-492B-4DB7-9EB2-BC186EA9A058&Options=&Search=&FullText=1.

"Ujamaa Box," https://ujamaabox.com/.

Varady, David, Carole C. Walker, and Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR). "Case Studies of Voucher-ed Out Assisted Properties." *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*. May 1998. https://www.huduser.gov/Publications/pdf/voucher_I.pdf.

Vaughan, Jono. "Project 42," *Fine Art Vaughan*, 2012, http://www.fineartvaughan.com/project-42-.html.

Village of Love and Resistance (VOLAR). "Support Baltimore Residents in Taking Back the Land." *Change.org*. December 16, 2019. https://www.change.org/p/baltimomre-washington-conference-of-the-united-methodist-board-of-trustees-support-baltimore-residents-in-taking-back-the-land?use_react=false.

Wiggins, William H. Jr., "Juneteenth: A Red Spot Day on the Texas Calendar." In *Juneteenth Texas: Essays in African-American Folklore*, edited by Francis Edward Abernethy, 237-253. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1996.

Williams, Rhonda Y. *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles Against Urban Inequality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409.

Woods, Baynard. "Exploring the Lives of Transgender Women on the Street." *The Baltimore Sun*, September 5, 2012. https://www.baltimoresun.com/citypaper/bcp-cms-1-1368203-migrated-story-cp-20120905-featu-20120905-story.html.

Woods, Clyde. *Development Drowned and Reborn: The Blues and Bourbon Restorations in Post-Katrina New Orleans* edited by Jordan T. Camp and Laura Pulido. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2017.

Wyly, Elvin, and C. S. Ponder. "Gender, Age, and Race in Subprime America." *Housing Policy Debate* 21, no. 4 (2011): 529-564. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2011.615850.

Wyly, Elvin, C. S. Ponder, Pierson Nettling, Bosco Ho, Sophie Ellen Fung, Zachary Liebowitz, and Dan Hammel. "New Racial Meanings of Housing in America." *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2012): 529-564. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23273535.

Yoes, "W. Baltimore Native Excels as Leader of BWI Marshall," *Afro*, October 19, 2017, https://www.afro.com/w-baltimore-native-smith-excels-leader-bwi-marshall/.

Youngling, E. "You are the Architect of Your Own Success": Selling Financial Freedom through Real Estate Investment After the Foreclosure Crisis of 2008. *Economic Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (2020): 108-119. https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/sea2.12159.

City of Baltimore. "Historical and Architectural Preservation: Reservoir Hill." https://chap.baltimorecity.gov/reservoir-hill.