

Racial harassment
→ Great Migration
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DIS/POSSESSIVE COLLECTIVISM: PROPERTY AND PERSONHOOD AT CITY'S END

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• politics of emplacement
• strategic illegality
• category of property
and category of personhood

"Riding down the street, we stop at the preacher's and seat ourselves before the door. It was one of those scenes one cannot soon forget:—a wide, low, little house, whose motherly roof reached over and sheltered a snug little porch. There we sat, after the long hot drive, drinking cool water,— the talkative little storekeeper who is my daily companion; the silent old black woman patching pantaloons and saying never a word; the ragged picture of helpless misfortune who called in just to see the preacher; and finally the neat matronly preacher's wife, plump, yellow, and intelligent. "Own land?" said the wife; "well, only this house." Then she added quietly, "We did buy seven hundred acres up yonder, and paid for it; but they cheated us out of it. Sells was the owner." "Sells!" echoed the ragged misfortune, who was leaning against the balustrade and listening, "he's a regular cheat. I worked for him thirty-seven days this spring, and he paid me in cardboard checks which were to be cashed at the end of the month. But he never cashed them,—kept putting me off. Then the sheriff came and took my mule and corn and furniture—" "Furniture?" I asked; "but furniture is exempt from seizure by law." "Well, he took it just the same," said the hard-faced man."

W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903: 92

Home and Land

On the day that I was to spend with JR in Chicago in April 2015, he asked that we first meet at the Richard J. Daley Center and its courtrooms. There were various court hearings underway for foreclosed properties in Cook County. Willie Fleming who goes by JR, or Just Righteousness, walked from courtroom to courtroom to see if any of the cases involved Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae loans. The Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, of which he is a co-founder, had recently negotiated a mortgage loan modification program for Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae borrowers but he was

worried that judges were not aware of the program or simply not abiding by it. As I kept up with his busy stride, watching him greet various court clerks and police officers, I realized that he was a familiar and frequent presence in these corridors. The courtroom was the first stop in an itinerary, one that was meant to reveal and connect various locations of struggle in the city. Our next stop was the Cabrini Green public housing project, or rather what still exists of it. JR had spent some of his childhood years there, as well as in the Robert Taylor homes, and it was where he first became involved in activism, organising residents facing eviction. He is often photographed amidst the remains of Cabrini Green, the abandoned rowhomes and “blank slate” open space framing his tall figure. For JR, Cabrini Green represents the absurd brutalities of urban transformation: “We were evicted so that the city could have all of this empty land.” In various portals of communication, JR goes by the name “iamcabrinigreen.”

Our discussions at Cabrini Green were abruptly interrupted by an urgent text message to JR’s phone: a family was being evicted in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood of South Side Chicago, they had contacted the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, and he was urged to hurry to the home. We pulled up at the Lee home a few minutes after the sheriff deputies had departed. Nestled among neatly trimmed hedges on a quiet residential street, the house showed few signs – except for a green eviction sticker and an unhinged front door -- of the violence that had unfolded just before our arrival. A distraught Mr. Lee invited us into the home, stumbling over his words as he explained to JR that he and his wife had been at the Richard J. Daley Center that morning contesting a pending eviction by Charter One Bank. The circuit court judge had postponed the hearing but they returned home to find their front door broken and sheriff deputies in their dining room ready to implement an eviction. Since the Lees were able to demonstrate that the court case was ongoing, the eviction

was called off and the deputies departed. But the moratorium was temporary and it was that realization that hung over our presence in the Lee home. In the midst of the negotiations with the sheriff deputies, Mrs. Lee had contacted the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, having heard about the movement from a friend in the neighborhood. JR quickly determined that what the Lees had faced was a “pre-emptive eviction,” noting that this was a new strategy being undertaken by banks seeking to foreclose on homes. As they talked, JR sitting on the couch, Timothy Lee pacing frantically, Eugenia Lee trying to calm their dog who had been caged by the sheriff deputies to be taken to an animal shelter, I could not find words to respond to the moment. This was home – a living room filled with framed diplomas and family photographs, carefully placed crochet doilies, lovingly curated shelves heavy with curios, cream colored lamp shades covered in plastic, a mantelpiece rich with dolls and statues. But this domesticity was now tenuous, forty-five years of habitation on the brink of eviction.



A week later I returned to the Lee home. The Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign had organized a rally to call attention to what they insisted was unlawful eviction and to put pressure on Charter One Bank to call off any subsequent evictions. Indeed, in Cook County, the Sheriff’s office under Tom Dart had for a while refused to enforce court-ordered evictions mainly because so many banks had filed inaccurate eviction orders (Hiller 2013: p. 33). As Hiller notes, the moratorium had strengthened the position of movements such as the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign. That morning, in the crisp sunshine of a cold April day in Chicago, a small band of human right defenders, as they called themselves, rolled out a banner and gave interviews to the lone television reporter and cameraman who were present for the press conference. Timothy Lee spoke eloquently about his hope that a solution could be found with the bank so that he would not lose his family home. As the

reporter asked details about the mortgage, a lilting voice interrupted the discussion of loans and lawyers, foreclosure and fraud. Martha Biggs, perhaps the most famous protagonist of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, whose story anchored Laura Gottesdeiner's book, *A Fight for a Place Called Home*, prompted by JR, broke into song. "This is the people's territory," she sang, her voice drowning out all sounds on the street, "fight, fight, fight, for housing is a human right." The camera pivoted towards her and for a moment that stretch of sidewalk in Auburn Gresham became charged political space. It was that afternoon that I took photographs of the Lee home, seeking to capture the meticulous domesticity that I had tiptoed into on the day of the eviction. Eugenia Lee was keen to have her home photographed and she posed at her front door, where the sheriff deputies had placed the eviction sticker and where she was now taking a stand.

A few days before the rally and press conference, Timothy and Eugenia Lee had attended, for the first time, the weekly meeting of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign. There, in a corner storefront that had once been a coffee shop, the stalwarts of the movement gathered. Itself a site of foreclosure by Citibank, of eviction threats, and ransackings by a property management company, the office was a modest room with a few pieces of furniture and posters. As the skies darkened, homeowners and tenants facing eviction and foreclosure also arrived at the meeting. The Trice family, for example, were tenants in a foreclosed building that had been sold to a new owner who persistently threatened them with eviction. Case law was researched, stories and photographs were posted on the website, press releases were drafted, strategy was forged. "We will fight with you," the group chanted in response to each case of hardship.

In the months that followed, the Lees entered into new negotiations with Charter One Bank, including a possible repurchase of the home with a new mortgage of \$55,000. I asked Toussaint Losier, co-founder of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, what the Lees thought of this offer. They have mixed feelings, he said. On the one hand they did not want to be uprooted; on the other hand they were repurchasing what they already rightfully owned. Indeed, the repurchase negotiations were part of a long effort on the part of the Lees to hold on to the home, a process documented by the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign as part of their mobilization on behalf of the family:

Since 2013, Timothy Lee and his family have been trying to repurchase the home that his elderly mother lost to foreclosure by Charter One Bank. Unlike most home loan foreclosure cases in the Chicagoland region, Mr. Lee's mother had owned her home 'free and clear', except for a \$3,300 home improvement loan she owed when she passed in 2010. After dealing with several attorneys that failed to take their case forward, the Lees had attempted to negotiate with the bank themselves, only to find their offers to hold onto their family home repeatedly dismissed by bank officials who purchased the property at auction in February 2013. Six months ago, the Lees were finally able to arrange to have an appraiser from Charter One view the house, but never received any responses from bank officials, except notices from the bank's lawyers that they were in the process of having them evicted (<http://start2.occupyourhomes.org/petitions/citizens-bank-don-t-take-the-lee-family-home>).

Timothy Lee's own statement on the matter, also publicized by the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign stated, "We are committed to taking action to stay in our home, but would rather work out a resolution with the bank."

In this essay, I explore the following questions: How do poor people's movements stake claims to home and land? Do such claims generate new meanings of property and personhood and thereby reconstitute the urban land question? In

relation to such questions I present the Lee story as a spatio-temporality of struggle, one that is marked by fragility but that is also indicative of various political potentialities. My ongoing engagement with the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, partly research, partly a relationship of collaboration and solidarity, is an effort to understand and foreground such political potentialities. In particular, I am interested in understanding what such political potentialities might entail at city's end. Drawing on the important recent book, *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier*, by Tania Murray Li, I conceptualize city's end as a zone constituted through mundane practices of property transactions and consolidations, in this case loan fraud and mortgage insurance payouts, rather than spectacular processes of primitive accumulation. I also mean city's end in a second sense: that the struggles against evictions and foreclosures at such a location may very well seek "resolution," for example the repurchase of property as in the case of the Lees.

Paying close attention to the ideas and practices of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, I interpret such resolution as a politics of emplacement. Such emplacement can be understood as what Libby Porter (2014) has termed "possessory politics" or as what Greta Krippner (2015) has termed "possessive collectivism." However, I argue that the question of possession must itself be recast at city's end. Taking my cues from the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, as well as the movements to which it is connected, such as the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign and the LA Community Action Network, I analyze dispossession not simply as capital accumulation but rather as racial banishment. Drawing on critical race studies and poststructural feminism, I ask, what is the personhood of property? If Nicholas Blomley (2004: 15) has encouraged us to ask, what is to *count* as property, I ask, who can count as the subject who can claim home and land? Additionally I ask where such a question leads us when we take into account the histories of slavery, colonialism,

and apartheid through which such personhood was negated. On what terms does the dis/possessed subject assert possession – of property and personhood? I present these terms as a political potentiality that I tentatively title “dis/possessive collectivism.” I present this concept as an invitation to critical theory to take up the category of property and the ontology of possession with renewed care. In doing so, I rely on the substantial body of work, notably that led by Elvin Wyly, Kathe Newman, and others, to understand the present historical conjuncture of foreclosures and evictions as the conjoining of predatory financialization and racial capitalism. But

I also rely on postcolonial thought to excavate the categories and ontologies through which exclusion and banishment are enacted. Specifically, I draw on Asher Ghertner’s (2011) analysis of the “propriety of property” as a (post)colonial technique of rule, one activated through the aesthetic and legal reconstitution of social categories of meaning such as civility and order. Tracing the strategies and tactics of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, as well as the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, I ask what might be entailed by an improper politics of property by dis/possessed subjects.

The Politics of Emplacement

After we had spent time with the Lees at their home in Auburn Gresham on the day of the pre-emptive eviction, JR took me to see some of the homes occupied by the movement. Organized around a simple but elegant motto, “homeless people in peopleless homes,” the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign is often seen to be “a radical urban homesteader movement” (Austen 2013). Inhabited by members of the movement and restored through collective labor, these homes are now indistinguishable from those around them. No longer boarded up, they house multiple residents, nodes in a secret geography of activism and occupation.

I want to draw a distinction between these forms of occupation and the vocabulary of occupation popularized by the Occupy movement. Urban homesteading, as practiced by the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, requires a constellation of long-term strategies that enable shelter and inhabitation. In a 2012 interview, JR thus drew a distinction between “occupying and organizing,” noting that the work of the campaign has been to “show the occupiers [of the Occupy movement] how to organize” (Salo 2014). Aware of the illegality of such home occupations – the movement prefers to call them home liberations – they assert moral cause in the face of persistent discrimination. Thus JR states:

There have been way more people willing to risk going to jail, 'cause what we do is illegal. And so we tend to frame it like this: it was illegal for black folks and white folks to be in a room like this back in the '50s and '60s, right? So we say it like this: during the civil rights, they did something ILLEGAL for something that was morally right. They did sit-ins, where in 2011 we're doing something illegally that's MORALLY RIGHT, you know what I'm saying, and we're doing it in forms of livin' in, on live-ins. So we said during civil rights, sit-ins, to human rights live-ins. That housing is a human right and we're gonna enforce it ourselves (Salo 2014: 222).

I read these occupations, this strategic illegality, as a politics of emplacement. In my visits to liberated homes on the South Side, I was struck by the lived experience of domesticity, a meticulous care, a display of sentiment, a curation of beautiful objects. I was reminded of the domesticity that had enveloped me during my visit to the Lee home. In the liberated homes, I had expected to find the desperate bricolage of survival and the careless urgency of occupation. Instead I found patiently polished wood, a piece of quartz reclaimed for a quartz kitchen counter, the favorite painting hung just right, mismatched chairs hugging a salvaged dining table, fireplaces that glowed with warmth while outside the cold winds of April raged noisily. I use

“emplacement” quite deliberately, drawing on at least two meanings associated the term: “the process or state of setting something in place or being set in place,” and “a platform or defended position where a gun is placed for firing.” Home liberations are indeed the frontline of JR calls the enforcement and defense of human rights, of housing live-ins. It is also the intimate practice of constructing domesticity.

possible connection to Phil Gramm and Wayne Lapierre and Aufhauser Scalia?

While the spatiality of emplacement is immediately evident, its temporalities are perhaps less so. Yet, they are vitally important. Relying on a vacant building ordinance (Section 13-12-25 of the Municipal Code of Chicago), the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign demonstrates that home occupiers are good citizens, improving and beautifying otherwise vacant and neglected property. But its claims to these improved properties are tenuous. There is no obvious legal or political pathway to the formalization of these claims and as the movement leaders often note, most home liberators prefer to stay under the radar than to be exposed to formal relations of documentation and ownership. Recognizing the fragility of these claims and the exhausting effects of what the movement calls musical homes – where every one to two years, a family has to occupy and renovate the next round of vacant homes – a new strategy has been to use property takeovers to pressure banks to donate property. The movement hopes to collect these donated properties and create a community land trust.

Such strategies raise the question of postponement. What is the relationship between the politics of emplacement and postponement? As I will demonstrate later in this paper, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign on which the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign is modeled, relied on postponement as a way of slowing down the law, of clogging up the courts. Home liberations on the South Side of Chicago seem to belong to the same repertoire of postponement: the deferral of eviction, the stalling

of displacement. In this way, occupation – whether of the law, the courtroom, the foreclosed home – becomes a postponement of sorts, a rescheduling of debt and dispossession. (As Hannah Appel notes, debt relations in general are always a question of time, be it the thresholds of payment due dates or serial thresholds such as bond maturity dates. But “while this extended temporality is designed to control, it is also capacious ground for manipulation, deferral, and disobedience” (personal communication).

time is rescheduled on a planetary scale and Roy's analysis shows how this plays out inside homes

TIME is redefined by LOW INTEREST RATES asset bubble goes with re-valuation of the ideology

The poignant domesticity of liberated homes makes evident what Lauren Berlant (2006: 35) calls the “impassé of living.” Following Berlant (2005: 21), I interpret the politics of emplacement as a “cruel optimism,” “a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility.” Particularly useful is Berlant’s emphasis on loss: “Cruel optimism is the condition of maintaining an attachment to a problematic object *in advance* of its loss” (emphasis in the original). It allows us to make note of the inevitability of loss, in this case, home liberations that cannot be converted into housing rights. But the politics of emplacement also allows us to extend Berlant’s framing. Here, **cruel optimism** is perhaps more precisely an **attachment to a problematic object in the process of its loss.** In other words, emplacement is necessarily postponement and thereby **the lived process of loss.** It is a **politics waged for a future that cannot arrive.** It is a politics where the *advance* of loss cannot be lived.

Of course, there is another, more familiar, way of thinking about occupation and emplacement and that is via the category of property. In previous work, I have analyzed the homesteading tactics of poor people’s movements as both disrupting and consolidating paradigms of propertied citizenship (Roy 2003). Most recently, I have suggested that the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign can be read in this vein, as **simultaneously contesting and deploying notions of property** (Roy 2015a). But, in this

Time Frame of HUMAN LIFE ↓ Addie Polk

but also between the racial state from the Global South to the Belly of the beast.

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happens on an individual scale through FLCO scores
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Racial harassment as DISPARATE IMPACT

essay, I seek to advance an auto-critique, noting that in previous conceptualizations, I failed to pay adequate attention to which notions of property are being advanced or dismantled by such movements. In reconstituting my argument about anti-eviction struggles and the category of property, I now draw on three lines of inquiry. First, following Blomley (2004: xvi), I pay attention to different “enactments of property.” Blomley (2004: 15) notes that “the question is not so much “what is property?” as “what is to *count* as property?”” and it is this question that I carry over into my analysis of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign and its politics of emplacement. I ask whether such struggles remake the meaning and practice of property. Second, in exploring this question, I turn to a growing body of work on what Porter (2014: 3) calls “possessory politics,” how “struggles against dispossession too easily become struggles for possession” often through the assertion of rights (emphasis in the original). Following Krippner (2015), I ask whether such struggles can be read as an example of “possessive collectivism,” “the embedding of possessive claims typically associated with individual rights in what are in effect communal relationships.” Finally, I argue that the category of property must be understood in relation to personhood. Turning to debates in poststructuralist thought, especially in the humanities, I follow Butler and Athanasiou (2013) in their efforts to rethink dispossession. If “self-authoring personhood” (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 6) has been foreclosed for certain subjects, if these subjects are always necessarily dispossessed, or constituted as property owned by others, how do we read their claims to possession? Taking seriously the imperative of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign to defend human rights – and thus to emplace – I ask, as do Butler and Athanasiou (2013: 32): “Who or what holds the place of the human?” Through such analytical work, I arrive at the possibility of dis/possessive collectivism, arguing that certain inscriptions of struggle, such as humanity or the poors, may indeed present robust political potentialities. This may also be the case with emplacement and indeed

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even with possession. Porter thus notes that “the specifically placed and relational nature of emplacement...has the potential to unsettle the dissociative nature of property” and can be read as a “direct critique of the placelessness of property” (personal communication). Or, Krippner (2016) notes that the concept of ownership can be “more capacious” than possessive individualism associated with private property rights. The rest of this essay is devoted to such inquiry.

The Belly of the Beast

The Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign was catalyzed by the visit, in 2009, of Ashraf Cassiem to the United States. For a while, Cassiem was a legend in Cape Town. A key figure in the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, he faced and fought police brutality in the Cape Flats, resisting evictions, foreclosures, and service disconnections. Badly beaten by the police, most of his teeth knocked out, mauled by police dogs, Cassiem became the face of shackdweller resistance to state violence and housing privatization. Well before the American subprime crisis, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign came into political being by challenging foreclosures by banks in bond housing, state-developed bank-bonded houses, as well as eviction orders issued by the city council for defaults in council house rents or in service payments (Miraftab 2006: 197). Refusing representation by vanguardist NGOs, the campaign moved evictees back into their homes, blocked service disconnections, and made frequent appearances in courtrooms, not only invoking the constitutional right to housing but also using the tactics of delay, of “clogging up” the courts. Cassiem developed a reputation for being able to wear a suit and talk the law as much as he did for a body broken by police beatings. And the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign developed a reputation for legal strategy. Mike Murphy, a lawyer who set up the Legal Coordinating Committee of the movement, explains the strategy thus:

If you looked at the courts, like Goodwood or Kuils River, so many people are being evicted everyday. It [the court] is being used as a debt collection system: just queues and queues of people and all that would happen is that, if they had a lawyer then they would negotiate their date to leave [the house]. More often than not they never had a lawyer – or the lawyer would never arrive – and they [families] were being evicted hand over fist. The very bulk of it gave me the idea for our sole aim to delay and frustrate, to clog the courts up . . . So I tried to show them [LCC activists] how to delay and frustrate in ridiculous ways (Oldfield and Stokke 2006: 152).

It is possible to read these evictions by private banks and local governments in Cape Town, which gained momentum in the late 1990s, as a moment of brutal neoliberalization. And indeed it was. But as the detailed accounts by Miraftab and Wills (2005) show, racialized histories are entangled with such forms of privatization. Council houses, as they note, are “rental units built by the apartheid state during the 1950s through the 1970s to accommodate the population categorized as “colored” who were forcefully removed from their vibrant urban neighborhoods to desolate, controlled areas” (Miraftab and Wills 2005: 203). To borrow the language I have used in the case of South Side Chicago, neighborhoods such as Mitchells Plain in the Cape Flats, with large concentrations of council housing, can be understood as zones of racial banishment. Many of the defaults on housing rents for which the urban poor, especially the elderly were being evicted in the late 1990s, were arrears “accumulated during the apartheid-era rent boycotts” (Miraftab and Wills 2005: 203). Similarly, bond housing emerged in the late apartheid era, “during a period in which the state and commercial banks together offered poor working-class black families a first-time opportunity to own affordable homes” (Miraftab and Wills 2005: 203). The trajectory of bond housing departs from and yet bears striking resonance with subprime America. I quote at length from the vitally important history recovered by Miraftab and Wills (see also Oldfield and Stokke 2006) to make this point:

Shortly after the houses were delivered, many units' walls and foundations began to crumble and collapse. Because the banks failed to respond to their complaints, some of the new homeowners conducted repairs at their own expense and boycotted mortgage payments. Others were simply unable to make their bond payments, as the majority had no jobs, and many households consisted of multiple generations completely dependent on a single pension or grant. Following the 1994 political transition, those banks that sponsored the construction of these units continued to ignore the reported structural problems and yielded to SERVCON for assistance with defaulters. SERVCON, a parastatal institution jointly established by the government and private banks to minimize the risks involved in administering housing loans to low-income groups through a guaranteed mortgage, proved useful as a tool to collect payments or expropriate housing for "nonperforming" housing loans. The seized units are resold for twice their original price, while the owners, unable to pay their debts, are relocated to more remote and smaller accommodations referred to as "right-sized" homes, which are in substantially poorer condition than are the bond houses (Miraftab and Wills 2005: 203).

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When I met Ashraf Cassiem in Cape Town in June 2015, over tea and sandwiches at a quiet cafe in the Woodstock neighborhood of Cape Town, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign had dissipated. But Cassiem was still fighting foreclosures with a keen eye for the law and a keen sense of the courtroom as a terrain of struggle. I had already read the interview with him conducted by Oldfield and Stokke in which he had explained the importance of the courtroom thus:

In the court the magistrate asked: but *who are you?* They belittle you; make you feel like a nothing. I say: I am here to represent a poor family, to save these people from being evicted . . . Just by standing, I am a spanner in the works...We're not there to win. We know we'll lose (in most cases). So I laugh at the process – I laugh at them, they don't know how to deal with that . . . In the high court you're not allowed to speak until you're recognised by the judge. To be recognised by the judge, to even be heard, you have to speak; you have to be rude and loud so they

know that you are there. One time the judge towered over me and shouted: *Who are you? What are you doing here?* I just talked until he stopped and saw that he must let me talk. So I talked really loud and really fast (Oldfield and Stokke 2006: 152).

During our long and rambling conversation, unprompted, Cassiem repeatedly returned to the tactics of presence and recognition in relation to the state and its “papers.” “When we were dealing with evictions,” he argued, “we didn’t understand the papers. We struggled to understand it until we developed a legal strategy. We then understood that the law can be used by poor people for poor people. And that strategy is postponement” Indeed, he had come to our meeting with a stack of legal papers, each a foreclosure case, and he took great pleasure in pointing out the minor loopholes, the slips of legal language which might make possible a postponement, a delay, a deferral. This type of postponement has a resonance with the politics of emplacement and its fractured temporalities.

But I was there to ask Cassiem a different set of questions. Intrigued by the relationship between the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign and the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, I wanted to understand these global interconnections. Were these indeed the horizontally networked relations of solidarity across poor people’s movements celebrated by Appadurai (2002) as “deep democracy”? In Chicago, JR had told me that it was activists from South Africa, notably Cassiem, who had taught them how to fight evictions and foreclosures. “We were resisting displacement from Cabrini-Green but it’s our brothers from South Africa who told us what we should do next. Of course we cannot do it how they do it over there. Imagine black people burning tires on the freeways of Chicago. That can’t happen. But they showed us the way.” In particular, the 2009 visit to Chicago by Ashraf Cassiem was pivotal in the formation of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign and its efforts to “escalate and elevate” struggles against displacement. This specific phrase is often sounded by JR

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and shows up prominently in an interview with him conducted by Ken Salo as part of conversations with Chicago and South Africa activists. JR explains the impact of Cassiem's visit thus:

Ashraf visited Cabrini Green . . . which is a very well organized community...In that meeting he looked at me and said "I heard you went to United Nation. Oh that's nothing." And I'm like "Whaat? You ever heard about Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, they talked about it, we did it!" And he's like, "Yeah, you guys talked to 'em [the UN], right? And what happened?" I was like, "Nothing" [and Ashraf said] "Yeah right, thought so . . . Okay, what's your next step? "Like, it's like you know you reached the mountaintop, what is your next step? He went on and asked us "OK, you went to the UN, you gotta switch up now JR, do something else." So we then decided that we wanted to change the ways in which we fought (Salo 2014: 220).

In his discussions with me, JR had already noted both the importance and limitations of his engagement with the UN and global frameworks of human rights. Instrumental in organizing a 2009 mission visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Raquel Rolnik, JR knew that while the UN report indicted the U.S. for racial discrimination in housing, "no blue helmets were going to embark on the streets of Chicago to defend human rights" or to stall the demolition of Cabrini Green. As Touissant Losier (2015), co-founder of the Chicago Anti-Eviction campaign reflects, "With the U.N. able to do little to forestall threat of mass eviction, Fleming listened to Cassiem and wondered how the WCAEC might serve as an example of how the poor could successfully mobilise to secure their own interests... Refusing to tow the line of polite, legal protest, [Cassiem] emphasized, had served the WCAEC well." A "South Africa-style eviction blockade" followed days later (Losier 2015).

Cassiem echoed JR's account, noting that in visiting Cabrini Green, he was struck by the similarity of the situations across Chicago and Cape Town but also by

the “chilling limits” of American politics. “I told them that they had to take down the boards, take back their homes, and take back their community,” he said. “If there are homeless people on the streets of Chicago, why are there empty, boarded-up homes? But they were scared. It was as if Homeland Security had taken over their bodies and minds.” Losier (2015) argues that the “political resonance” of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, in Chicago and elsewhere in the world, lies in the latter’s “attempts to place non-collaboration at the center of its struggles” against “regimes of neoliberal governance.” This “militant ethos,” Losier notes, has a long history in South Africa itself, with “a political line running from the mid-1930s” and recovered “through the numerous student groups, community programmes, workers’ organisations, and popular assemblies that would make up the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970s and 80s.”

→ Black Lives Matter today ---- ←

But for Cassiem, the activation of an urban politics of resistance and occupation in Chicago also had particular import for struggles in Cape Town. “The visit to America had a purpose for me,” he emphasized. “The problem, you see, is not in South Africa. It’s in America. I wanted to go to the root of it, to the root of neoliberal capitalism, to the University of Chicago where the policy was born. It was created in Chicago and so it was there that it had to be dismantled. Evictions were not really the point. It was about the monetization that had made us separate individuals. And so it was in Chicago that I wanted to show up. It was there that we had to kill neoliberalism, rescind it, burn it. That’s where we had to shut down the Milton Friedman project. I thought that if we won in Chicago, we would automatically win in South Africa, we would win all over the world. This is why winning in Chicago mattered for us.” It is thus that from the shacks of Cape Flats there emerged an imagination for occupying what Ashraf Cassiem calls the belly of the beast. But the practice of occupation requires confrontation, and even negotiation, with the apparatus of property.

now!

“The Apparatus of Property”

In *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political*, Butler and Athanasiou (2013) ask a question that is central to the purpose of this essay: “How might claims for the recognition of rights to land and resources, necessarily inscribed as they are in colonially embedded epistemologies of sovereignty, territory, and property ownership, simultaneously work to decolonize the apparatus of property and to unsettle the colonial conceit of proper and propertied human subjectivity?” In previous work (Roy 2013, 2015a), I have suggested that poor people’s movements disrupt but also maintain the apparatus of property. From slumdweller mobilizations in the global South to homesteading on the American urban frontier, such movements present claims of rightful occupation and legitimate ownership. In doing so, they often shed light on the inherent illegality of assured, state-sanctioned property relations, but they also assert rights to those very same property relations. It is this dilemma that Porter (2014) dubs “possessory politics,” noting that the “frame of possession” dominates struggles to challenge dispossession and claim restitution. Similarly, Krippner (2015) examines how the discourse of ownership has come to dominate the politics of economic citizenship in late 20th century America. For example, she argues that “the most salient reaction to the foreclosure crisis has been framed in terms of the violation of *individual property rights* committed by banks that did not conduct due diligence in initiating foreclosure proceedings” rather than in terms of “housing as a basic entitlement of citizenship” (emphasis in the original). These dilemmas are amply evident in the politics of emplacement undertaken by the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign as it wages a home-by-home defense of domesticity, ownership, and inhabitation. The herculean efforts by Timothy and Eugenia Lee to repurchase their foreclosed home is a poignant example of such emplacement, one where

What
property
delivers

dispossession is countered only through repeated sacrifice and where secure possession is always in a process of loss.

Porter's critique of possessory politics is not simply a concern about the assertion of property rights or other forms of individual rights. Instead it is about personhood. She asks: "For what is to become of those who cannot prove their worth across the thresholds of recognition?" (Porter 2014: 12) thereby returning us to the subject who is always less than human, whose personhood, not just property is always in a process of loss. I will take up Porter's question in the concluding section of this essay. Here I want to briefly explore an additional argument presented by her: that despite the logic of possession that haunts resistance or restitution politics, it might be possible to craft a "different language of property" (Porter 2014: 17).

Porter's call invokes the long-standing work of Blomley on the meanings and practices of property. While it is commonplace to associate property with "possessive individualism," C.B. Macpherson's (1962) influential term, Blomley (2004: 9) insists that the "ownership model" is only one of many "modalities" of property. Struggles against dispossession, he notes, often rely upon and create alternative modalities, including those that are "made in the names of communities, whether of interest or place." I follow Blomley's provocation to think about property as "an important political vocabulary" rather than an established category of rule to return to the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, and specifically to home liberations and their politics of emplacement. What is at work is indisputably a logic of possession but it is not necessarily an enactment of possessive individualism. Instead, collective labor, and to some extent collective inhabitation of liberated homes, remain key, albeit tenuous, components of emplacement. As these homes are always in the process of loss, so there is also an ongoing process of rehabilitation and reclamation. There are

no property rights of alienation or transfer here, a situation similar to the instances of homesteading analyzed by Blomley. But there are those of “use, occupation, domicile, and inherent need” (Blomley 2008: 316). Most important, these rights are predicated on the deployment of labor, leading to an irony highlighted by Blomley (2004: 22): “thus it is, for example, that squatting activists and neoliberals alike can cite John Locke.”

Locke.”

There are at least two ways in which we can consider the collective aspects of the politics of emplacement. The first is to take account of how property *rights* come into being, which as Blomley (2004: 11) argues, requires “state enforcement.” This of course is the paradox at the very heart of liberalism: that if possessive individualism as an ontological claim to freedom rests on the tenet of property then property itself rests on state power. In discussing this logic of possession, Macpherson (1962: 256) thus eschews the divide between individualism and collectivism. “Locke’s individualism,” he argues, “does not exclude but on the contrary demands the supremacy of the state over the individual.” It is precisely this relationship between property and state that renders the politics of emplacement fragile, for it is unlikely, in the U.S., that home liberations will be a viable pathway to housing rights.

We are then left with the second aspect of collectivism, which following Krippner (2015), I call possessive collectivism. Krippner’s interest is in how the discourses of ownership invoking individual rights can assert collective ownership or embed claims in collectivities. Using the example of the community reinvestment moment, she notes that while the claims were of ownership, rather than of distribution, these possessive claims were embedded in the frames of neighborhood and community. “Individuals who claimed a right to credit did so not on the basis of their *individual* ownership of financial assets, but by virtue of their *relationship* to a

§

community of individuals who were in the aggregate property owners” (emphasis in the original). The challenge of possessive collectivism, she concludes, is that “the collective political project [can be] concealed by a highly individualized form of claims-making, with recipients asserting a contractual right over property they appear to have accrued through personal toil and thrift rather than requesting a form of redistribution from the state” (emphasis in the original).

(all because of the state
and William Proxmire!)

I am interested in what the politics of emplacement, interpreted as possessive collectivism, might entail at city’s end, that edge at which dispossession is mundane and at which the resolution of property and home are imperative. In her careful ethnography of land relations, Li (2014) locates her analysis in a context where the enclosure of land did not take place through land grabs or evictions or a large development project. Instead, she examines how indigenous highlanders in Sulawesi, Indonesia, privatized their common land to plant boom crops and how in doing so they set into motion processes of prosperity and impoverishment. She means land’s end in a dual sense: as the end of land as a commonly held resource as well as a dead end where the promise of development was scarcely fulfilled through the private ownership and use of land. Li (2014: 91, 95, 97) notes that “work changed the landscape”; it became the work of “generating socially legitimate property rights” and even “acts of enclosure.” Drawing on such analysis, I ask of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign: do the home liberations create new ownership rights based on sweat equity? Do they enact enclosure even while they enact community and collectivity? In fact, is the work of generating property rights the only way to build community at city’s end?

profit
vs.
protection

I do not think it is the task of social analysis and critical theory to formulate decisive answers to such questions. Movements are keenly aware of such dilemmas

and wrestle with them quite elegantly. I pose these questions as an invitation to critical theory to take up the category of property and the ontology of possession with renewed care. And as I have stated earlier in this essay, this is also an auto-critique of my rather blunt handling of “propertied citizenship” in previous work. The Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign is an example of how the logic of possession, crafted through labor, collective or otherwise, can be articulated with militant activism, in this case inspired by South African shackdwellers as well as by persistent struggles against racial banishment in the American city. Here emplacement sutures possessory politics with anti-colonial struggle, reframing the history and obligations of property. Thus in 2009, a few months before Cassiem’s visit to Chicago, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign published an open letter in *The Nation* addressed to “all poor Americans and their communities in resistance.” In it, South African activists addressed the “privatization of land” but also noted the racialized history of such dispossession: “Colonialism and apartheid dispossessed us of our land and gave it to whites to be bought and sold for profit.” The letter clarified the purpose of the movement: “While our actions may seem like a demand for welfare couched in a demand for houses, social grants and water, they are actually a demand to end the commodification of things that cannot be commodified: land, labour and money” (<http://www.thenation.com/article/fighting-foreclosure-south-africa/>).

But I return persistently to the question: what form do such struggles take at city’s end? Neither Cabrini Green nor Mitchells Plain, how does that quiet residential street in Auburn Gresham on which the Lee home is emplaced figure in the globally interconnected struggles against the “commodification of things that cannot be commodified”? Put another way, what is the relationship between person and personhood when mediated by proprietorship? In the concluding sections of this essay, I explore whether a different politics of possession is possible when proprietorship is itself always in the process of loss, always subject to racial

banishment from the city.

Racial Banishment

The case of the Lee eviction is a classic example of what Wyly and Ponder (2011) have termed “subprime America.” While the systematic production of the subprime crisis, and its distinctively racialized instruments of predation and profit, are well known, and I will thus not rehearse them here, Wyly and Ponder (2011: 529) draw our attention to how “predatory practices in the subprime market were especially harmful for elderly African American women, many of them widows.” Especially striking in their analysis are the many examples of elderly African American women “living on fixed incomes in older homes, often entirely paid off, and in need of cash and credit for home repairs and other needs” and who were disproportionately targeted as subprime customers (Wyly and Ponder 2011: 539, 559). Such seems to be the story of Timothy Lee’s mother and the fateful \$3,300 home improvement loan she took out in 2010.

ANITA HILL !!

“Subprime America” came sharply into view as a crisis during the Great Recession and its devastating aftermath. But a growing body of work documents the persistence of evictions and foreclosures well after the crisis has supposedly abated, noting that they are perhaps more coercive than ever before. Thus Desmond (2016) argues that evictions have become a key feature of American urban life. Specifically, Hiller (2013: 31) notes that in Chicago, tenants, despite paying rent, are being forced out of foreclosed buildings by banks through “coercive methods such as turning off utilities, neglecting maintenance, and giving tenants misleading information.” He estimates that since 2009, “over 50,000 rental units in Chicago have gone into foreclosure, predominantly in low-income, minority neighborhoods.” Despite federal and state legislation and city ordinances protecting tenants from such evictions, these

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Wall Street
Shun landlords!

“extralegal practices” continue. Not surprisingly, movements such as the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign seek to enforce tenant protection legislation. At times they are successful, as in the case of the Trice family whose eviction was blocked by a court ruling. It is also now becoming evident that the market in “troubled home mortgages” is being restructured through the influx of private equity and hedge funds that are “emerging as aggressive liquidators” (Goldstein 2015). This particular *New York Times* report draws attention to private equity firms such as Lone Star that are capturing the market for distressed mortgages and that are now facing complaints that they are “too quick to push homes into foreclosure and are even less helpful than the banks had been in negotiating loan modifications with borrowers.”

The Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign is keenly aware of such frontiers of risk, speculation, and profit, but it also deploys an analysis of racial dispossession. Its history precedes the subprime crisis and is instead rooted in the organizing by Cabrini-Green residents against displacement. Taking my cues from the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, as well from related movements, such as the LA Community Action Network (LA CAN), I conceptualize such displacement as racial banishment. Pete White, co-founder of LA CAN, insists that the concept of gentrification is not sufficient to explain the forms of displacement that are now underway in cities such as Los Angeles. JR presents a global historical analysis of displacement, situating current evictions on the South Side of Chicago as one of numerous, worldwide iterations of apartheid and racial cleansing. Patricia Hill of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign frames evictions, including her own, as an instantiation of white supremacy. Such narratives co-exist with, and are also somewhat divergent from Cassiem’s focus on the “beast,” the globalization of a project of neoliberalization authored by Milton Friedman and enabled by American imperialism.

To explore the idea of racial banishment, I return to the case of the Lees. The

① upfront fee-based income
② protection of the institutions of financialized property
③ marketing

attempted eviction by Charter One Bank can be understood as an instance of speeded-up extralegal forms of foreclosure. But the financial gains to be made from such a pre-emptive eviction are petty, at best the collection of mortgage insurance. The Lee home, like others that have been foreclosed in this part of the South Side, would most likely lie vacant, boarded up, and quickly looted and stripped. Nor is Auburn Gresham in the crosshair of new plans and projects for urban growth and expansion that might require a blank slate strategy of emptying out homes. The taxi driver who reluctantly dropped me off at the eviction rally, locking the car doors and trying to convince me to return to downtown Chicago, saying "Sister, you will get killed here today, this is not a neighborhood you should be in, even in broad daylight," emphasized that even if a house were given to him at zero cost he would not live in Auburn Gresham. Put bluntly, the Lees are not in the way. Their home is city's end, its neatly trimmed hedges and quiet streetscape transformed by mundane practices of loan fraud and mortgage insurance payouts rather than spectacular processes of primitive accumulation. The Lee home also marks city's end in a second sense of the term: that the struggles against evictions and foreclosures at this location seek "resolution," for example the repurchase of property. As I have noted earlier in this essay, I interpret such resolution as a politics of emplacement. But I also wish to extend this argument by suggesting that city's end is not a frontier of gentrification but instead a zone of racial banishment. To do so requires asking: What is enabled in the reading of evictions, and anti-eviction politics, via banishment? In the remainder of this essay, I explore this question by outlining some key aspects of banishment.

Banishment is not new. Historically, it has been a form of criminal punishment as well as of political discipline (Badat 2013). What is of interest to me is the renewal of banishment at the urban scale. For example, Smith (2000) draws attention to gang free zones that enact "civil banishment," exiling gang members through ordinance. Particularly useful is an analysis of banishment as "legally imposed spatial exclusion"

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why the distributable?

old race + place based legacies of civil rights movement

how race is valorized and de-valorized...

legally imposed spatial exclusion

by Beckett and Herbert (2010). They argue that “new urban control tools” aim to “banish their targets from contested urban spaces for extended periods of time and rest on an innovative blend of civil, criminal, and administrative law (Beckett and Herbert 2010: 3). These practices, they note, are experienced as punishment, even imprisonment, and also prefigure and enable traditional punishment, such as criminal justice sanction. Further, the logic of banishment is “expansionary” – “many citizens are subjected to multiple exclusion orders, such that much of the city becomes a ‘no go’ area for them (Beckett and Herbert 2010). Finally, Beckett and Herbert (2010) emphasize “the central role of the state’s coercive power” in such forms of “spatial ostracism.”

In what ways are such forms of urban banishment also *racial* banishment? Beckett and Herbert (2010: 34) note that these punitive techniques “are sometimes used to limit the mobility and rights of those whose principal ‘offense’ consists of being poor, homeless, and/or of color.” But racial banishment also entails a more persistent racialization of space. If banishment is enacted to uphold the norms of “order” and “civility,” then it is necessary to recognize the social meanings associated with these norms. Thus Ghertner (2011: 1168), in demonstrating how slums in Delhi are designated as “zones of incivility and nuisance,” draws on the work of Kristeva and McClintock to show how the desire to expunge the abject becomes “political processes of abjection — in this case the large-scale removal of slums as abject objects/outsidiers.

It is rather straightforward to apply the concept of banishment to the expulsion of the homeless from American cities, or to park exclusion orders, or civil gang injunctions. Can evictions, such as that of the Lees, also be understood as racial banishment? I argue that such a conceptual framework is indeed useful, especially at city’s end where a hidden blank slate strategy of gentrification or the predation of a

reactivated market in troubled home mortgages are not necessarily at work. Of course, it is possible to attribute the Lee eviction to sheer bureaucratic violence, the apathy of the machinery at Charter One Bank that churns out evictions. But the conceptual lens of racial banishment requires an examination of the public means by which such evictions are undertaken. For example, JR and other members of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign note that while the sheriff's office has been reluctant to implement evictions, especially pre-emptive ones, the District Attorney's office ~~that~~ has placed considerable pressure on the sheriff to execute evictions.

Racial banishment also allows us to pose more fundamental questions about personhood and property. What 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? It is this foundational dispossession that leads me to suggest a consideration of dis/possessive collectivism, a political potentiality that might not be easily contained within liberalism's compass of property and personhood. That compass is too often read as possessive individualism when it also needs to be read as what Cheryl Harris (1993) has called the "whiteness as property." She means by this not only "racially contingent forms of property and property rights" (1993: 1714) but also "the evolution of whiteness from color to race to status to property." I argue that the whiteness of property is starkly evident at city's end. Not a frontier of primitive accumulation, city's end may very well be a zone of repeated racial banishment, one in which a politics of emplacement must be enacted in order to make claims on property and personhood. Harris (1993: 1780) insists that challenging the whiteness of property requires affirmative action that is not just corrective but rather distributive. For such an impulse she turns to South Africa where "affirmative action" has been a "strategic measure to address directly the

*this is entirely consistent with
Turner's evolutionary theories !!*

distribution of property and power, with particular regard to the maldistribution of land and the need for housing (Harris 1993: 1790).” For the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, an important inspiration has been the militancy of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign. This militancy, as I have already noted, is rooted in a long lineage of black consciousness, a global imagination of anti-privatization struggle, and the postcolonial assertion of the constitutional right to housing.

Dis/Possessive Collectivism

“My sense is that language may fail us here.”

Athena Athanasiou in Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*, 2013: 5

Radical urban homesteader movement, inheritor of a South African politics of non-cooperation, the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign is steeped in rights-talk. Eviction blockades and home liberations are waged in the name of defending human rights; JR presents himself as the enforcer of human rights; members of the campaign enthusiastically endorse the human rights and global goals frameworks of the United Nations. Yet, as I have already outlined, the movement is no simple expression of global liberalism. Hoover (2015: 1092) argues that the invocation of human rights by the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign must be seen as having “radical potential” because it “uses the ambiguous but universal identity of ‘humanity’ to make claims on the established terms of legitimate authority.” He sees this as related to, but distinct from, human rights as a project of global liberal governance. I am interested in how the work of establishing (collective) property rights through emplacement is entangled with the work of asserting human rights as a radical project of spatial justice. Both types of work pivot on what Butler and Athanasiou (2013: xi) pinpoint as the

“sovereign self.” Whether it be possessive individualism or a universal humanity, the sovereign self is often a precondition for the claiming of rights, be it property rights or human rights. But who is authorized to be this sovereign self? Who has the historical permission for such sovereignty? And what are the stable locations from which such a sovereign self can be deployed, represented, and performed?

I ask these questions not to contrast the sovereign self with figures of unfreedom, such as the slave, although that is indeed possible and important. Instead, in keeping with poststructuralist and postcolonial thought, I want to draw attention to the *constitution* of freedom through unfreedom. In other words, contrast and constitutiveness are quite different relationalities. Butler thus asks: “...What do we make of the idea that we have property in our own persons? Are persons forms of property, and would we be able to understand this legal formulation at all if it were not for the historical conditions of slavery and those forms of possessive individualism that belong to capitalism?” (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 7). The resonances with Harris’s work and its explication of the entangled genealogies of personhood and property should be evident. Butler’s questions matter greatly for how we understand the category of property and more broadly processes of dispossession. It provokes us to consider what dispossession might mean when certain subjects are always already in the process of loss. It thereby compels us to ask what types of politics against dispossession are possible outside the grid of possession.

Reflecting on the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, I take up these provocations in two ways. First, I recast city’s end as a zone of (unceasing) racial banishment. Following Mbembe and McKittrick, I analyze such territory as “plantation,” arguing that how dispossessed subjects, those whose freedom has never been guaranteed, claim emplacement marks both the significance and the limits of the

entanglement
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Skip Gates
origins

① racial banishment

Zuckerberg?

logic of possession. Second, I argue that the politics of emplacement entails various modes of collectivization but perhaps most importantly it can be read as the politics of the dis/possessive subject rather than that of one able to securely claim possession. This is a subject always in the process of loss, whose guaranteed subjectivation is always in postponement. In keeping with discussions in comparative literature on the ethics of reading, I suggest that such a dis/possessive subjectivity might be a way of addressing the dilemmas of possession raised by Porter and Krippner.

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois (1903: 27) draws attention to a key aspect of Reconstruction: “the work of establishing the Negroes as peasant proprietors.” The promise of land to “freedmen,” he notes was a “bitter disappointment” but it was also “the righteous and reasonable ambition to become a landholder.” Du Bois (1903: 116) goes on to analyze the numerous ways in which black farmers were to be entrapped by debt and lose their land, their farms stripped of “every single marketable article,—mules, ploughs, stored crops, tools, furniture, bedding, clocks, looking-glass,—and all this without a warrant, without process of law, without a sheriff or officer, in the face of the law for homestead exemptions, and without rendering to a single responsible person any account or reckoning.” Du Bois (1903: 116) concludes that the only explanation and “remedy” for such processes was that “we must accept some of the race prejudice in the South as a fact.” I take Du Bois’s analysis of the “Black Belt” to signal what Mbembe (2003) and McKittrick (2013) designate as plantation.

For Mbembe (2003: 21), the plantation is a “political-juridical structure” defined by “the slave condition” which in turn “results from a triple loss: loss of a “home,” loss of rights over his or her body, and loss of political status.” The slave has value as property but otherwise suffers “social death” or “expulsion from

Connect to Stanley O'Neil --
grandfather grew as a slave...

humanity altogether.” Must we not recalibrate our theories of dispossession when we start with the figure of the slave rather than that of the fully possessed and free human? And can this dis/possessed subject ever assert ownership – of property and personhood – or must such ownership always be in a state of postponement? If so, how do we understand the politics of emplacement? The ongoing work of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign leads me to suggest that it might be worthwhile to consider a second meaning of plantation. Building on, and yet departing from Mbembe’s analysis, McKittrick conceptualizes the plantation as a place of exploitation as well as of rootedness.

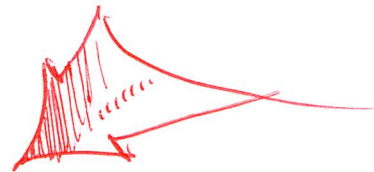
plantation as presential spatial fix...

In particular, McKittrick (2013: 2) is interested in a “decolonial thinking that is predicated on human life.” This insistence on humanness, on humanity, is worth noting, for it also resonates with the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign’s insistence on asserting and defending human rights. If it is not the figure of the slave, expunged and expelled from humanity, then what ontological claim can emplace a politics of ownership? Here I return to the roots of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign. The the ontological claim, iamcabinigreen, insists upon a collectivized experience of racial banishment. Similarly the home liberations, predicated as they are on collective labor, recast property as possessive collectivism, Krippner’s felicitous phrase. Collectivity and collectivization are fragile, unstable and tenuous. Nor can collectivism, as Porter notes, be unambiguously distinguished from individualism (personal communication). Yet they are persistent maps in critical thought, especially in those attentive to the histories of racial banishment. Take for example Mbembe’s (2011) call to think about democracy as a “community of life,” a project that takes “the form of a conscious attempt to retrieve life and “the human” from a history of waste” (emphasis in the original). I thus interpret collectivism not as the antonym of individualism but instead in McKittrick’s (2011: 948) sense of a “collective history of encounter,” what she describes as a “a difficult interrelatedness— that promises an ethical analytics of race

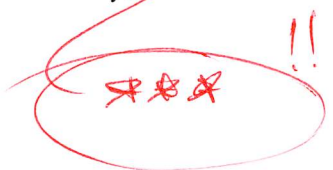
subversive SPIRITUALITY *

based not on suffering, but on human life.” This, I suggest, is what poor people’s movements necessarily do, for they must work with the ethics of human life rather than with the persistence of social death. Further, I suggest that such collectivism is dis/possessive.

I borrow the concept of dis/possessive collectivism from debates about world literature, or more specifically about the worlding of languages and literatures. In *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, Emily Apter (2014), argues that World Literature “affirms a psychopolitical structure of possessive collectivism.” She likens the canon – and commodity – that is World Literature to “the world-class museum or art collection,” or perhaps what in urban studies we can designate as the “world-class city”. Possessive collectivism, for her, is nothing more than possessive individualism – “with its self-regarding notion of personhood (of “self” as self-ownership) and happy fit with neoliberalism” – “scaled up to the proportions of the World.” The uncanny resonance with Krippner’s conceptualization of possessive collectivism is apparent. But Apter puts forward the possibility of dis/possessive collectivism. Drawing on Bruce Robbins’s idea of a dispossessive ethics of reading she argues that such a stance casts “World Literatures as an unknowable state, a literature over which no one asserts proprietary prerogative and which lends itself to a critical turn that puts the problem of property possession front and center.” I suggest that we carry over such a conceptual framework to critical urban theory and its analysis of dispossession. For example, when read as dis/possessive collectivism, home liberations, because they foreground ongoing loss and persistent postponement, may very well challenge the “proprietary prerogative” at stake in the idea and ideology of home. More broadly, I am interested in the political potentiality engendered when the dis/possessed subject calls out the collective history of encounter as apartheid and colonialism, and in that utterance, claims ownership of land and homeland.



It is my hope that this essay opens up ways of understanding modes of dis/possessive collectivism as a politics of our time as well as a politics waged against the secure categories of personhood and property through which liberalism is constituted. I end with the provocation that as iamcabinigreen might be an ontological claim to dis/possessive collectivism so too might be the “poors.” During its iconic mobilizations, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction was organized as a movement of the “poor...not working class people” (Losier 2015). Richard Pithouse argues that in South African poorness has been an important category of identification and mobilization for urban subalterns, a way of being out of place with proper politics, be it the proper politics dictated by trade unions or by black consciousness (personal communication). The poor then signal not a collectivity or even a collectivized political experience but rather a collective history of encounter. That the subject of this history is always dispossessed, always lost to history, should not inhibit us from tracing its politics.



Postcolonial Postscripts

I conclude with two postcolonial postscripts. First, in a provocative essay, Wyly (2015: 2534) draws attention to “gentrification as a dimension of planetary urbanization” and notes the pervasive “upward class transformation of urban space.” Equally important, he argues that recent iterations of critical urban theory have disavowed the analysis of gentrification as a worldwide process. Wyly (2015: 2531) writes: “At precisely the moment when gentrification is becoming truly transnational and powerfully planetary, we are asked to liquidate the intellectual and political investments of generations of critical inquiry in favour of evolving theories of ‘globalized contingency’ that have now even attacked postcolonial theory itself as

‘hegemonic’ (Ong, 2011: 3, 8).” I am sympathetic to Wyly’s interest in a generalizable theory of urban transformations. But as I have noted in reflections on urban theory, generalization must not be confused with universalization (Roy 2015b). I interpret the conceptual and political shift from gentrification to racial banishment enacted by movements such as LA CAN and the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign as an effort to call into question universal (read: liberal) categories of property and personhood. This, I would argue, is the significance of postcolonial thought: to demonstrate how seemingly universal categories have been forged through historical difference. In recent work I turn to early writings by postcolonial theorists such as Guha (1996) to foreground how the “rule of property” was “bent backwards” in the matrix of colonial administration, quickly reaching epistemic and political limits (Kumar and Roy 2016). In this particular case, that of the Permanent Settlement of 1793 in Bengal, the settlement of land and the bureaucratization of revenue required the construction of a category of personhood: native proprietors. This in turn yielded an enduring paradox: Physiocratic thought – defined as a critique of feudalism within the context of Europe – produced and reinforced neo-feudal relations in colonial India. The urban land question in India today is indelibly shaped by this paradox.

Second, as postcolonial theory enlists me in the task of a political economy attentive to historical difference, so it requires me to foreground the politics of representation associated with all projects of knowledge. In this essay, I have not found the appropriate vocabulary to describe my research methodology. Ethnographic in intention and affect, my engagement with the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, LA CAN, and the vestiges of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign is neither that of distance nor that of belonging. I started studying these movements with the specific research questions I stated at the outset of this essay: How do poor people’s movements stake claims to home and land? Do such claims generate new

meanings of property and personhood and thereby reconstitute the urban land question? But in my role as director of the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin, I have also convened these movements and participated in amplifying their narratives of struggle. Such work defies the familiar formats of academic-community engagement such as co-production. The institute takes its conceptual cues from poor people's movements, relying on their vocabulary for the analytical scaffolding of research and pedagogy. Yet it is not necessarily a direct participant in the collective action that animates these movements. I would like to think of this as the unstable terrain of solidarity but postcolonial critique makes me wary of such a claim. This too is part of the collective history of encounter, the "difficult interrelatedness" of the global university to poor people's movements.

Dis/possessive collectivism is thus also an effort to rethink the "proprietary prerogative" of critical urban theory. | Alongside the questions, "What is to *count* as property?" and "Who can count as the subject who can claim home and land?" is this question: "Who is the authoritative interlocutor of politics?" In my first encounter with the legendary Pete White of LA CAN, I asked how the institute can make itself useful. He answered: "Do your work. Theory. History. We are telling you that what we are experiencing cannot any longer be explained as gentrification. | We are experiencing banishment. Give us a theory of banishment. Give us the history of banishment." | This essay is the first step in a response to the task outlined by Pete White.

- banished by the bell curve ??
- banished by country, by statistics, by rationing, by competition

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Repositioning and Capitalist Dispossession

Commentary on Ananya Roy's "Dis/Possessive Collectivism: Property and Personhood at City's End."

Professor Roy has given us a challenging, fresh perspective on the urban land question at city's end, at the razor's edge between the intimate domesticity of home and the planetary plunder that Cindi Katz (2001) has diagnosed as a "vagabond capitalism" of "unsettled, irresponsible, and disreputable" predation that constantly threatens the rhythms and meanings of social reproduction and non-monetized family life. Roy traces what Don Mitchell (2002) once called the "pedagogy of the streets" that connects Ashram Cassiem of Cape Town, and the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, to the 'belly of the beast' of coercive neoliberal theory at the University of Chicago. She connects a South African 'militant ethos' to the "homeless people in peopleless homes" of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign. Working the streets of the South Side and the corridors and courtrooms of the Richard J. Daley Center, ~~Just Righteousness~~ is far more knowledgeable than anyone in Washington, DC ever was about the embodied intimacies and transnational domains of power of institutions like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. When Roy (2016, p. 9) interprets the work of Just Righteousness as "emplacement," in an explicit engagement with the meaning of "a platform or defended position where a gun is placed for firing," together they construct an architecture of theory and praxis that places home liberations literally on the front lines of increasingly militant encounters that involve capital and law, guns and bodies, and the choice that Malcolm X once framed as 'the ballot or the bullet.' If the gospel of America's manifest destiny involves a holy trinity, there is a strong theological case that the hypostases are the American dream of borrowed-money homeownership, the enduring American dilemma (Myrdal, 1944) of White privilege maintained through White versus Black and Brown racial inequality, and the ready-to-wear, right-to-carry culture of the gun. Recent revisions have added Islamophobia and Latino-bashing to the American catechism, but the trinity endures.

And so race, homeownership, and guns have been central to America's role in the booms and busts of planetary vagabond capitalism over the past generation. As Chair of the Senate Banking Committee at a crucial moment at the turn of the century, Phil Gramm was among the strategically-situated actors who helped to stop every regulatory effort to deal with the massive expansion of racist predatory mortgage lending in the 1990s; part of the reason this self-described "footsoldier in the Reagan Revolution" was in that position was because of the electoral coalition power from his solemn promises to the membership of the National Rifle Association (NRA) that he would remain a diehard defender of their Second Amendment rights (Gramm, 1995). ~~As a result~~, a worsening financial crisis as the predatory lending binge finally reached its limits in the Summer of 2008 forced Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson ~~to use a vivid gun metaphor to persuade Congress to grant unlimited authority to bail out Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac~~ "If you've got a squirt gun in your pocket, you may have to take it out. If you've got a bazooka, and people know you have it, then you may not have to take it out." (quoted in Labaton and Herszenhorn, 2008). Paulson's metaphor made headlines around the world, and Paulson got his bazooka only a few weeks after Antonin Scalia had written for a narrow Supreme Court majority in the *Heller* case, striking down a D.C. gun control law and finding in the Second Amendment an unambiguous *individual* right, reversing more than a century of jurisprudence on a *collective* right invested in a 'well-regulated militia.' Scalia's opinion offered a panoramic history of firearms, and approvingly cited antislavery advocates' support for the

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right to bear arms, before concluding: "...handguns are the most popular weapon chosen by Americans for self-defense in the home" -- "where the need for defense of self, family, and property is most acute," and thus "a complete prohibition of their use is invalid." (Scalia, 2008, pp. 57-58).

Defense of self, family, and property in the revanchist racism of American urbanism draws horrible post-neo-colonial connections. A Catholic altar boy, the son of a Peruvian mother and a father who was an Army intelligence veteran of the Vietnam War, graduates from high school and ends up as a mortgage broker who makes \$10,000 a month by his early twenties. Then the ~~market collapses~~ and he bounces through a series of service-sector jobs before working for Digital Risk, a "fraud detection company" hired by Freddie Mac and Bank of America to sift through borrowers' files to find pretexts for denying ~~the~~ desperate requests for mortgage modifications, as the financial giants scramble ~~to~~ to clean up their balance sheets. ~~And he~~ ^{are} coordinates the neighborhood watch in a gated community where property values ~~were~~ chopped in half, where a wave of foreclosures hit hard, and where investors snap ~~up~~ up the foreclosures and rent ~~ed~~ them out to ... renters! "There's a real suspicious guy," George Zimmerman tells a 911 operator, and a few minutes later the Digital Risk of Bank of America and Freddie Mac connects with Hank Paulson's bazooka, Antonin Scalia's strict-constructionist Second Amendment jurisprudence, and the bullet that kills the body of seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin. And of course Trayvon was not the first, and not the last; the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (2014) documents that a Black man, woman, or child is summarily executed by police, security guards, or self-appointed vigilantes every twenty-eight hours. As Hilda Kurtz (2013) observes, ~~the~~ state-level Second Amendment laws -- two dozen states passing 'Stand Your Ground' statutes pushed by the NRA -- ~~interact with~~ ^{are} the production of gated communities as fearful, racially-coded spaces of 'us' versus 'them' guarded by threat of force. "You must never look away from this, Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015, p. 10) ~~writes to his fifteen-year-old son after~~ ^{writes to his fifteen-year-old son after} ~~he announced that there would be no indictments after the murder of Michael Brown,~~ "You must always remember that the sociology, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land with great violence upon the body."

Why am I telling you these stories about guns? Let me be clear. I offer no *criticisms* of Professor Roy's extraordinary analysis. What I have is respect and reverence for her theorization, and for the organic intellectuals we meet through her work. I offer a few thoughts on where her leadership might take us, along multiple paths and research agendas for identifying what she describes as sites of "strategic illegality." Roy's analysis inspires us to build a well-regulated militia -- armed not with guns but with our analytical arsenal -- to take aim at the infrastructures of law, regulation, and corporate organization that have embedded the violence of commodified possessive individualism into the everyday practices and discourses of American urbanism. This is what Bourdieu (2002) had in mind, as I understand him, in one of his last books: *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market*. When Roy draws on Cheryl Harris's (1993) analysis of "the evolution of whiteness from color to race to status to property," we need to remember the historical context of America's racial state during the years when American 'whiteness' -- the fabrication of a distinctively 'modern' blend ~~of European-origin peoples~~ into a shared identity of 'White' -- was most pure, during the massive economic boom and suburbanization wave from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. This was also the period when America's "foreign born" population fell to its lowest levels. It is universally recalled by

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mainstream progressives as the 'Golden Age' of a Fordist-Keynesian compromise between workers and capital. It is also regarded as an era when a carefully-regulated banking system helped to build the largest national cohort of middle- and working-class homeowners the world had ever seen. We must never forget, however, that the ownership landscapes of this Golden Age were financed by violence and subjugation. The familiar face of this subjugation was domestic: mortgage redlining, and *de facto* and *de jure* segregation vigilantly guarded by ~~the Southern racists controlling the Democratic Party and the Northern racists controlling the city political machines of industrial Fordism.~~ But there has always been another side of this subjugation, now easily forgotten by Americans -- the imperial spatial divisions of labor of America's military-industrial global plantation. White picket fences on the crabgrass frontier (Jackson, 1985) ~~were protected by the financial architecture of Bretton Woods, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.~~ They were ~~also protected~~ by the global manufacturing monopoly of the world's only industrial power whose mass popular consciousness of corporatism (Graeber, 2015) had been strengthened rather than destroyed by the War.¹ ~~They were also protected~~ by the speedy globalization of the "military industrial complex" that Eisenhower had feared. ~~And so the white picket fences of America's white suburban homeownership boom~~ were paid for in no small part by the forward operating bases, B-52s, carpet bombing, Agent Orange, My Lai, and everything else ~~that paid for Johnson's War on Poverty, with his Vietnam genocide and the modernist machinery of postwar Fordism.~~ It is no accident that Robert McNamara's reinvention of the Ford Motor Company led Barry Goldwater to praise him as an "IBM machine with legs," (UPI, 1962) ~~before McNamara was tapped for Secretary of Defense.~~ The "dream" of homeownership that has shaped American racial banishment was itself mortgaged against a planetary history of guns and colonial empire. This has implications that are, quite literally, unsettling for new, upwardly mobile generations of 'non-White' peoples who ~~gain~~ access to an institution created and valorized through a history of complexly-scaled racial dispossessions.

The dispossessions go even deeper in time and space. Not long ago, the ~~Indigenous~~ theorist Ward Churchill was subjected to a McCarthyite purge from a tenured faculty position at the University of Colorado. The pretext was a long essay Churchill wrote the day after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which he began by reflecting on Malcolm X's initial response ~~to the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963;~~ this seemed to be a case of "chickens coming home to roost." Churchill (2011) placed the September 11 attacks in the context of the 500,000 children killed in Iraq in the decade since the 1991 invasion -- this was twenty-five percent of an entire generation of children -- ~~and then questioned the way the discourse of 'innocent victims' had been instantly applied to~~ all the financial traders and strategists who had been working in the most powerful financial center of American empire (see also Yeates, 2009). Many, perhaps most, of those workers may have been "unaware of the costs and consequences to others" of Wall Street's role in America's planetary ~~war machine~~, Churchill ~~argued,~~ but nevertheless the ruthless violence of the attacks had to be understood ~~as an effective way~~ "of visiting some penalty ... upon the little Eichmanns inhabiting the sterile sanctuary of the twin towers."

¹ Graeber (2015, p. 19) notes that the European variants of twentieth-century corporatism involved a cross-class alliance of blue- and white-collar workers that had been, among other things, "the philosophical basis of fascism." Even the more 'benign' social-democratic forms of corporatism, however, are also "tinged with chauvinism" (p. 19).

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I would not have used those words. But anyone who reads the entirety of Churchill's analysis of September 12, 2001² is forced to acknowledge that it is no less compelling than Malcolm X's brutally honest assessment in the 'Ballot or the Bullet,' delivered in Detroit in April, 1964, and focused on ~~the Presidential campaign~~ amidst the rising ~~militance~~ of a distinctively American Black nationalism.³ Hence, in order to understand the full significance of Roy's ~~analysis~~ of 'emplacement,' a White colonial settler who went through years of denial before middle-age enrollment into the ongoing dispossession of the Coast Salish peoples of Turtle Island⁴ is inspired *and has the responsibility* to commit what is now defined in the U.K. as "nonviolent extremism."⁵

analysis

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~~My extremism~~ does not involve Eichmann, but a rather more obscure figure: the economist/geographer Walter Christaller. A shy, diminutive analyst whose "central place theory" ~~on the~~ "spatial effects of economic laws and rules on the geography of settlements" guided the Quantitative Revolution that remade so much of geography and planning in the 1950s and 1960s (see Berry and Harris, 1970), Christaller is now being understood in new ways thanks to the lost histories excavated by Trevor Barnes and Claudio Minca (2013). Christaller had dreams of becoming an economist, but World War I intervened (he fought in the trenches) and it took him 17 years to complete an undergraduate diploma. Plans for a doctorate in economics were thwarted by the refusal of any economist to supervise his research, so he settled for geography and completed a dissertation at the University of Erlangen in 1932. Few noticed his dissertation at the time. Even worse, Germany in the 1930s was ~~not the best time or place to find a position in the academic job market~~. Christaller had been a Socialist in the 1920s, and then a member of the Social Democratic Party, and when the SDP was outlawed he was fearful enough to flee to France on a bicycle. But he desperately wanted to prove himself as a scholar, as a professional, as a *scientist*. This meant putting politics aside, being pragmatic, and making the best of the situation. Christaller eventually returned and accepted a job in the "Office of Planning and Soil" established by Heinrich Himmler and run by an agronomist named Konrad Meyer. 'Planning and soil,' and 'agronomy' seem neutral, harmless. But 'soil' had very special

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² As well as anyone who gives serious reflection to the "violent" reactions and the "civil war ... launched among intellectuals in the United States and in Europe" ~~over~~ the appearance of Hannah Arendt's articles on Eichmann in the *New Yorker* in 1963; see Elon (2006).

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³ This speech came only a few weeks after Malcolm X had briefly met Martin Luther King, Jr., at a U.S. Senate debate on pending civil rights legislation, and shortly before Malcolm X's *hajj* put him on a path to a more global view of ~~Black Africanism and Black self-determination~~ (Marable, 2011).

⁴ At age 40 I became a reluctant, ambivalent homeowner in a city premised on escalating property values built on stolen, unceded Coast Salish territory -- a neo-colonial real-estate growth machine masquerading as a sustainable metropolis of cosmopolitan post-colonial immigrant inclusion.

⁵ *The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, 2015* (HM Government, 2015) defines extremism to include "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values," (p. 16) and repeatedly refers to "non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularize views which terrorists exploit" (p. 14, p. 17, *passim*). The *Act* places detailed, affirmative obligations on local authorities, healthcare providers, and educational institutions to prevent people from being 'radicalised'; for the higher education sector, these requirements involve, *inter alia*, the "management of external speakers and events" and staff training to recognize "changes in behaviour and outlook" of students radicalized "through personal contact with fellow students and through their social media activity" (p. 21). Ian Cram, Professor of Comparative Constitutional Law at Leeds, draws attention to the fatal legal ambiguity of "fundamental British values," and wonders: "Should a visiting speaker talking about Plato's views on the desirability of rule by elite guardians be banned? ... I recently spoke in support of a student atheism society in London. In hindsight, I wonder how I was ever permitted to be let loose upon impressionable young minds." (Cram, 2016).

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meanings in national-socialist philosophies of modernism, achievement, science, progress, and superiority. Meyer's mandate was to oversee the plans for 'deterritorialization' and 'reterritorialization' of the nation's new frontiers of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and parts of the Soviet Union. Christaller joined the National Socialist German Workers' Party on 1 July, 1940, and worked on the top-secret *Generalplan Ost*.⁶ After the War, Christaller escaped prosecution, joined the Communist Party, and lived out the rest of his life in obscurity, studying travel and tourism; but the obscurity was never complete, thanks to the Quantitative Revolution geographers and planners who had become inspired by his dissertation. The Association of American Geographers planned to honor him with its Outstanding Achievement Award at the annual meetings in Syracuse in 1964 (two weeks before Malcolm X's Detroit speech), but Christaller "was forced to receive it in absentia, because of visa difficulties" in the anti-Communist America of McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover (Berry and Harris, 1970, p. 116).

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Christaller never became as widely recognized as Milton Friedman, the neoliberal economist architect of the "monetization that had made us separate individuals," in Ashram Cassiem's powerful words. Yet Christaller's framework for ~~understanding (and modifying)~~ hierarchies in human settlement did, in fact, shape theory in the "belly of the beast" -- in particular, theories of urban structure and national urban systems (see Berry, 1993). Policy was another matter, given America's 'exceptionalist' blend of decentralized federalism and anti-urban, anti-government populist consciousness. The most enthusiastic *implementation* of Christaller's central place theory ~~has been outside the US among nearly all policy elites and functionaries working in positions of significant state power~~. Stripped of its historical context, Christaller's power-geometry has been used in national settlement planning in Cuba, Tanzania, the Soviet Union, ~~Eastern Europe, and the P.R.C.~~ It has been used to plan Israeli settlements near the Gaza Strip ~~(Berry, 2009, pp. 128-130)~~. It was also used in the regime of a strong "spatial and industrial planning" ethos of "social engineering" under the National Party to shape the settlement fabric where Cassiem now mobilizes with the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign; the "orthodox planning theory" of the apartheid era "was the default discourse with the works of Christaller on central place theory being among the most popular" (Haines, 2014, p. 151).

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~~Here's the provocation of nonviolent extremism~~ all the armies of bankers, mainstream analysts, and well-intentioned policy elites who have worked for so many years to refine and reinforce the 'apparatus of property' and the institutions of 'possessive individualism' through debt-mortgaged homeownership are, ultimately, working in the tradition of Walter Christaller. They are refining a political technology that, like Christaller's central place theory, is politically adaptable to all sorts of Party affiliations -- Socialist, Social Democrat, Communist, National Socialist -- and yet always fundamentally built on Proudhon-style, property-as-theft dispossession. When the goal of optimizing the 'economic laws and rules of settlements' is paramount, even those with the best intentions wind up supporting an increasingly vagabond capitalism that is built on power, hierarchy, and subjugations of race and class. For Christaller in 1940, the paramount goal involved putting into practice a theory of the fundamental hierarchies in human settlements (in the manner of scientific 'laws' of urbanism that still excite prominent physicists; see O'Sullivan and Manson, 2015). For today's bankers, economists, and policy elites, the paramount goal has

⁶"Our task will be to create in a short time all the spatial units, large and small, that normally develop slowly by themselves," Christaller wrote in 1940, "so that they will be functioning as vital parts of the German empire as soon as possible." (cited in Barnes and Minca, 2013).

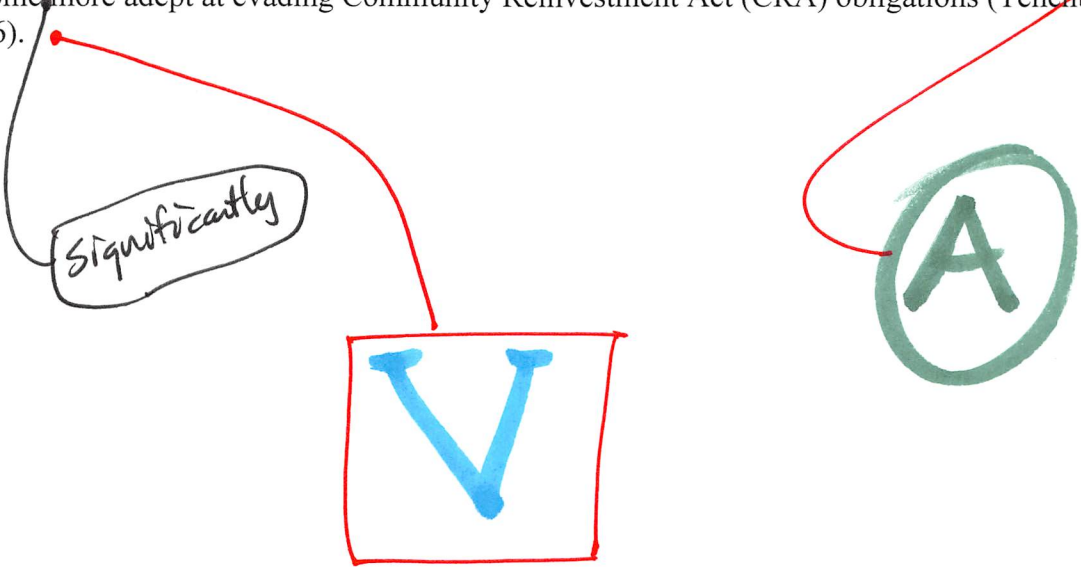
been to save the “economic laws and rules” of homeownership, home mortgage lending, and banking in the long aftermath of the worst capitalist crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. And in the first few decades of the twenty-first century of a calendar imposed by a colonial West that is now forced to learn the rhythms of others on a supra-Western, cosmopolitan planet, critical and radical analysts and activists are continuing the long-running struggle to deal with America’s entrenched colonial Euro-Anglo Whiteness of property. Too often, it seems that the only viable path for this struggle involves measures to tamper with the socio-spatial configuration of property markets -- to make them more ‘fair’ or ‘inclusive,’ without disturbing the fundamental meanings and powers invested in property. The structures of law that denigrate renters and non-market housing in America force us all into the role of Christaller, trying to re-draw maps of an underlying inequality in what Roy describes as “a politics waged for a future that cannot arrive.”

Roy’s theory of dis/possessive collectivism is the anti-Christaller. It’s a powerful postcolonial cartographic vision for a new way of moving beyond racial banishment. She helps us to see the history of the 1970s community reinvestment movement as, in part, as redefinition of the categories of personhood and property in the age of exclusionary discrimination and redlining, a “possessive collectivism” of organization and solidarity. Today, what do the “persistent maps in critical thought” look like? American homeownership has evolved from a binary violence of simple exclusion (Whites given credit, Blacks and Hispanics denied) to a more complex and unstable anxiety of stratified inclusion (high-cost, risky subprime credit actively pushed to Blacks and Hispanics, as well as to low-income Whites). In turn, the long-running gains of housing asset bubbles of the 1990s and the 2001-2007 crescendo made it seem as if home equity was the only way to find security amidst a collapsing welfare state. American housing values seemed to offer shelter from the storm of a planetary capitalism that is increasingly vagabond -- and yet increasingly cosmopolitan. And so when Roy reminds me that generalization must not be confused with universalization, I am inspired to try to map the mundane, obscure infrastructures of law that reproduce the violence of property as possessive individualism in the plantation machine. Today, this violence is concealed behind a veneer of opportunity and inclusion, in the heavily marketed promises of cosmopolitan capital. Dis/possessive collectivism needs to build strategic, geographically contextual movements to mobilize against the structured class and race exclusions of property. When Pete White tells Professor Roy, “give us the history of banishment,” ~~a careful scrutiny of three aspects of recent history may help us recognize sites of strategic illegality in the next mortgage crisis.~~



Not long after Antonin Scalia died in February, 2016, a Gallup poll reveals that for the first time, an outright majority of Americans now believe what Phil Gramm declared to the NRA twenty years ago -- ‘law-abiding citizens carrying guns make America safer’ -- and in the few short years since the *Heller* decision the number of Americans with permits to carry concealed handguns has nearly tripled (to almost 13 million) despite a decades-long trend of declines in FBI measures of both ‘violent’ and ‘property’ crime rates (NPR, 2016). At the same time, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2016) issues the latest update on housing market conditions: single-family construction starts are at their highest levels since the fourth quarter of 2007, sales of existing single-family homes have rebounded 28 percent from their

recession lows of 2008, and foreclosure starts have fallen to the lowest annual total since the private data firm RealtyTrac® began recording national figures in 2006. CoreLogic, another private firm, reports that rebounding house price appreciation has reduced the number of “underwater” homeowners (those with outstanding mortgage balances that exceed the home’s market value) to “only” 4.1 million homes, or 8.1 percent of mortgaged residential properties. The sunny language of housing recovery is back, and finance capital has emerged from the crisis escaping any serious structural reform, and with a more consolidated banking structure that has become more adept at evading Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) obligations (Tenerbaum, 2016).



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Finding sites of strategic illegality and places to challenge racial banishment

1

Non-Euclidian, Non-Cartesian Spaces of American Federalism

- subsidiary structure evade CRA, Fair Housing legislation
- obscure provisions of corporate law continue to allow evasion of DODD FRANK

2

The accounting -- and increasingly algorithmic

rather -- of DISPARATE IMPACT in lending, credit scores

control of American marketplace infrastructure

- target marketing
- municipal bonds and cities of color -- Sage Pender's work
- social reform or investment industry -- Emily Rosencrans work
- disparate impact in the class -- Jae Daniels work

3

emerging through securitization Don Kowitzberg

The transformation of ownership as rental. Home "owners" were never owners -- renters, capital is the landlord

these landlords are increasingly cosmopolitan and yet the black and brown tenement landlord tenets of the tenement landlord are still banished in widening planetary rent gaps.

transnationalism from "above" Cleveland - Hong Kong, stay!!!

when Mona Atia was first developing her theory of the pieces of the

economics of Islamic charity as 'pious neoliberalism' she helped me theorize capital as the landlord (see also Ben Teresa 2015 2016)

Atia, 2015

the old white real estate landlords Trump looks down right pathetic next to Anwar, Li Ka-shing, Carlos Slim...

unsorted notes

Property is theft and the entire history of colonialism, of the West, involves guns to take and defend property and this is what I can see from the edge of empire of British Columbia

✓ Roy's theory of dispossessive collectivism is a powerful postcolonial vision for a new way of moving beyond racial banishment

Stokely Carmichael used to say "constitu" because he could only say three fifths of it because constitutionally he was only three fifths of a person

my point is this. when Roy emphasizes that generalization must not be universalization, she highlights the nexus by which persons and properties are defined, categorized, and protected.

this nexus is American constitution and the parallax portal of time-space of strict constructionism versus evolutionary neoliberalism

this nexus is multi-scalar -- the US is a global empire, yes, but the US is also a fractal of spaces and bodies defined by law --

**municipal police (connect to Blomley)
state legislative power
federal struggles -- federal power versus state's rights**

this means that we have a constantly changing, constantly contingent axis between the structural violence of capitalist dispossession and the contingent experiences of individuals, families, communities

✓
✓
✓ **this is why we constantly need to be doing forensic analysis to find the points of "strategic illegality" that can slow the speed of dispossession, the speed of loss, the speed through which the exploitations of colonialism and capital translate life into liquidity**

Donald Trump is praising Joe Arpaio just like Phil Gramm did twenty years ago in his speech to the NRA

Phil Gramm -- his eighty-two year old momma has a thirty-eight special and she knows how to use it

TYPE

~~These~~

~~Eugene Scalia, Antonia~~

The lawyer Eugene Scalia, son of the recently departed Antonin, wins a major court case ~~challenging~~ challenging the designation of the giant insurer MetLife as 'too big to fail' under the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation.



Quicken Loans is now aggressively marketing its easy-credit loan 'Rocket Mortgage' ("press button. Get mortgage") even as judges in Florida are ~~beginning~~ ~~to~~ ~~lead~~

~~to~~ to clear the ~~docket~~ ~~of~~ a massive ~~the~~ backlog of foreclosures

in what lawyers ~~are~~ ~~calling~~ the 'Rocket Docket.'

under pressure

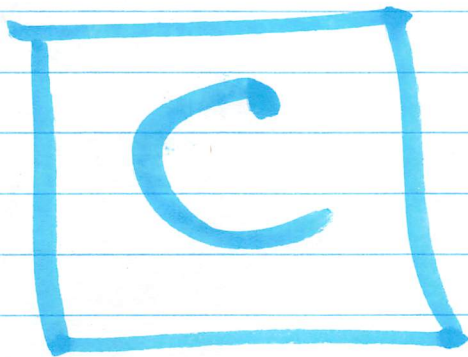
call

move faster

and the uneven geographies
of property values
come to reflect
the uneven geographies
of exploitation and violence.

B

and Eastern Europe (Paciorek, 2009). It was used implicitly in various forms of 'macro geography' in the P.R.C. after 1949 (Cartier, 2002), and then much more explicitly in the 'reform,' 'opening up' period ~~after 1978~~ of CCP-driven capitalist urbanization since 1978.



* Some of Christaller's enduring influence is discursive and rhetorical, ~~as~~ as in the case of an ~~essay~~ ~~in the case of an~~ opinion piece in the Jerusalem Post reacting ~~to~~ reacting ~~to~~ to the news of ~~the~~ changes to China's one-child policy.

: "The concepts of mass human planning connected to German planners such as Walter Christaller's Central Place Theory were used from the Soviet Union to fascist Europe and beyond." (Fritzson, 2015).

D

1) First, Roy's conceptualization of "city's end" as something beyond gentrification -- as a zone of repeated, increasing racial banishment --

highlights ~~the intricate spatialities~~ ~~of the way of~~

complex and changing relations between local neighborhoods and the wider geographies of ^{neoliberal} capitalism.

~~local neighborhoods and transnational capital circuits.~~ Since the early 1980s, ~~deregulated~~ deregulation and

~~and financial sector~~ competitive shifts in the financial sector exploited

contradictions in American federalism, ~~especially~~

~~obscure obscure obscure interactions between state and federal law made it~~

Interactions between obscure provisions of state and federal law made it

easy for financial institutions to create complex subsidiary structures

to ~~extract~~ extract profits from ~~racist~~ racist business practices,

while ~~evading~~

legally evading ~~the~~ provisions of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)

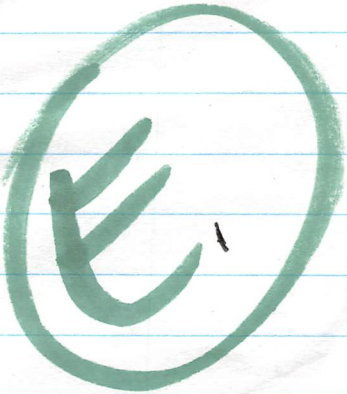
and other fair housing legislation. ~~As a result~~

financial institutions and subsidiaries became

~~the~~ the financial sector became more decentralized and the market for newspaper, ~~and~~ and other

expanded local markets of ~~the~~ the racialized urban

~~markets~~ were selectively ~~invested~~ invested in



As

Consolidation and competitive restructuring of the financial sector, combined with

massive expansion of the

market for mortgage-backed

securities and

other derivatives

amidst a

amidst massive expansion in the market for

mortgage-backed securities and other derivatives,

local elements of America's racialized

urban geographies were enmeshed

into transnational circuits of credit,

debt, risk, and

speculative leverage. It is possible

to measure certain aspects of these

racialized commodity chains with

chilling precision. Roy develops

theories of racial barishment

of the racial barishment at city's end

as "plantation" and du Bois'

in relation to du Bois'

analysis of the

Reconstruction-era debt

stripping in the Black

Belt, it is possible

to measure certain aspects of these

racialized commodity chains

with chilling precision. Multivariate

analysis of racialized credit amongst hundreds

of metropolitan areas across the U.S. highlights



When Roy develops a powerful theorization

the endurance of the debt bondage
de Bois described a century ago, in
a statistically distinctive

network of metropolitan ~~area~~ of the Confederacy
from the eastern piedmont ~~to the northern~~
to the Mississippi delta ~~to~~ Detroit.

regions

to the
northern
metropolis
of

connecting
a vast
arc
of

spanning

and

One way to advance Roy's
support ~~for~~ project ~~is to~~
~~invest in~~
aid to support

of dis/possessive collectivization

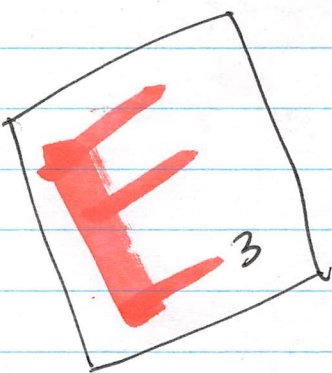
is to parcel these detested

forensic analysis of the ~~existing~~

step of strategic

existing species of ideology
practice related to these
existing
Christianity
literatures
of capital

intertakes



~~Christianity~~
~~literatures~~
as a the case of ~~Christianity~~
literature that ~~Christianity~~ has been
used by some entrepreneurs
attempts to determine if correlation
of mortgages (Ketchum, 2012).

~~catop the old-fashioned exclusionary discrimination~~

~~catop the old-fashioned ex~~

~~world featured exclusion persists in~~
~~offices~~

undertake

more detailed forensic analysis to locate
spaces of strategic illegality within the
intricate, evolving Christallerian hierarchies
etched by racialized capital --

E 3A

a critical version of the
'quiet title' litigation used by
some entrepreneurial attorneys to
obtain a right invalidation of certain
kinds of mortgages (Ketchum, 2012).

Congress for what one ^{sympathetic} Republican called a "public flogging" was E. Stanley O'Neil, the first African American C.E.O. of a major Wall Street firm -- Merrill Lynch, the street's largest brokerage house. O'Neil had led Merrill into the lucrative subprime market at the absolute worst time -- warning Congress several

times of his \$162 million exit package as the losses mounted -- but only a few years earlier Fortune had called him a "tomorrow's giant" and the most powerful African American in corporate America. When Merrill was riding high on what Ben Bernanke called the "global savings glut," Merrill's top-tier management, ~~looked~~

~~was the future of cosmopolitan~~

once

included the best of the best

cosmopolitan capitalists as vice-chairman (Egyptian), co-head of global markets (Korean), head of fixed income (Turkish), ~~the~~ head of equities (Indian), and head of market risk (Japanese);

"Whatever I have achieved in life has been the result of the unique combination of luck, hard work, and opportunity that can only exist in this country," O'Neil began his testimony; "my grandfather, James ~~O'Neil~~ O'Neal, was born into slavery in 1861." (quoted in Cassidy, 2008).

E (5)

Implications of Roy's analysis

¶ Cosmopolitan capital ~~also~~ alters the ~~directions~~ ~~the~~ hidden infrastructures of ~~the~~ American racial landscape. This is the second key ~~note~~. 'Disparate impact,' ~~is~~ the central precedent ~~the legal/regulatory precedent - with~~ ~~built into~~ ~~the~~

F1

anti-discrimination

built into law during the Civil Rights movement, deals with the ways that seemingly neutral business practices can have deleterious outcomes for ~~members~~ protected classes; ~~the~~ Roy

F1x

it has been weakened in recent years but ~~is~~ barely survived a recent challenge at the Supreme Court.

Roy's ~~analysis~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ example of the Lee family ~~of~~ the evidence of the Lee family ~~is~~ "sheer bureaucratic" evidence ~~the~~ could be seen as the

of a bull's "machinery... that churns out evictions." ~~is~~ presents just one vivid portrait of the trillions of commercial relations through which disparate impacts are reproduced. This is where ~~we~~ we can see the full implications

capital accumulation ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~simply~~ ~~a~~ ~~process~~ ~~of~~ ~~capital~~ ~~accumulation~~ ~~but~~ ~~also~~ ~~of~~ ~~racial~~ ~~banishment~~

of Roy's reminder that dis possession is ~~not~~ ~~just~~ ~~about~~ ~~capital~~ ~~accumulation~~ ~~process~~ ~~of~~ ~~capital~~ ~~accumulation~~ ~~but~~ ~~also~~

"not simply a process of capital accumulation but also ... of racial banishment," ~~the~~ ~~two~~ ~~are~~ ~~combined~~ ~~in~~

because the two have coalesced in new ways with the Global Financial crisis. Stan O'Neal's Merrill Lynch and ~~all~~ all the other Wall Street investment houses

F3x

~~the~~ ~~last~~ ~~few~~ ~~years~~ ~~the~~ ~~most~~ ~~important~~ ~~legislation~~ ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~enacted~~

white

~~the~~ ~~source~~ ~~code~~ ~~of~~ ~~Big~~ ~~Data~~ ~~target~~ ~~marketing~~, ~~across~~ ~~the~~ ~~credit~~ ~~ratings~~ ~~industry~~ ~~avoided~~ ~~even~~ ~~the~~ ~~slightest~~ ~~regulatory~~ ~~consequences~~ ~~for~~ ~~its~~ ~~role~~ ~~in~~ ~~discriminating~~

~~its~~ ~~role~~ ~~in~~ ~~discriminating~~ ~~the~~

role in translating discriminatory predation into ~~retaliatory~~

lucrative ~~AAA~~ AAA-rated investment vehicles. New forms of disparate impact

are evolving through the contradictory interactions between bond-market austerity ~~and~~ imposed upon majority-Black municipalities and ~~the~~ legal-regulatory ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~environmental~~ responses to the history of environmental

long delayed

~~struggling~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~long~~ ~~past~~ ~~and~~ ~~present~~ ~~history~~ ~~of~~ ~~environmental~~ ~~injustice~~

(Pauker, 2016), the securitization of good intentions ~~and~~ amidst further destruction of the welfare state in the

Social Return on Investment (SROI) sector (Roseman, 2016), and the evolving infrastructures of crowdsourced real estate investment circuits (Daniels, 2016).

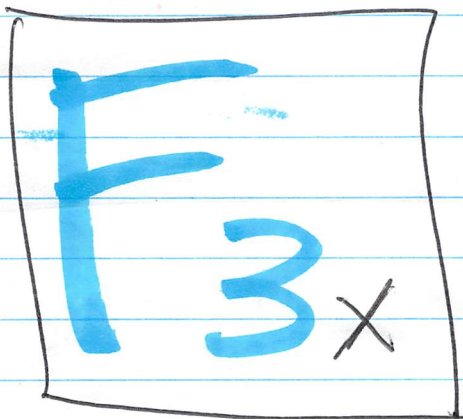
F3

pursued with no discriminatory intent

F1x

Whereas disparate impacts on the downside
~~degraded the household balance~~

~~involved~~ ~~open~~ involved special devistations
of the household balance
sheets of Black and Latino
homeowners, the 'recovery'
involves more subtle but far-reaching
disparate impacts embedded
in the



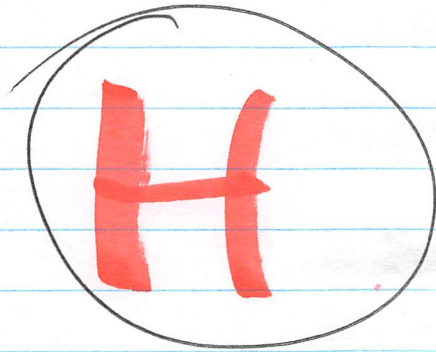
F3x

A few years after Gramm
left the Senate to
accept a job with the
multinational bank
UBS,

①

writes

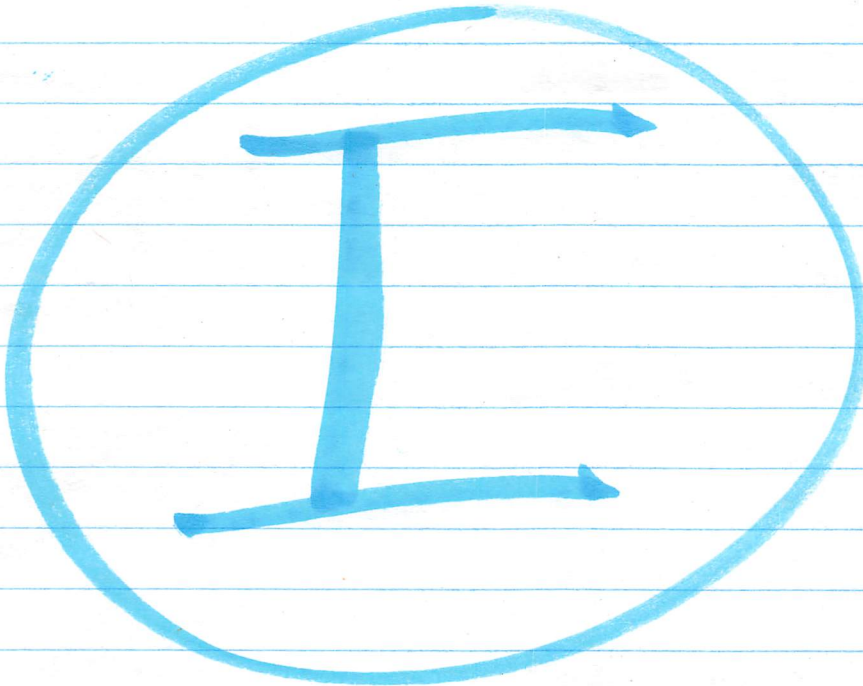
after his teenage son goes to his room to
cry after the announcement
that there would be
no indictments for the
murder of Michael
Brown;



LBJ's

that connected the ~~assembly-line~~
~~Great Society~~ affirmative action assembly-line liberalism
of ~~the~~ Great Society.

War on Poverty
with the ~~modern~~ global
Fordist mechanistics
of genocidal violence
in Vietnam.



~~of Pan-Africanism~~

~~of the varied forms of Islamic consciousness~~

Pan-Africanism and Black self-determination
amongst varied forms of Islamic consciousness

J

of systematic, structured hierarchies
produced by

K

the activist who goes by the
names of #iancabrighreen and
Just Righteousness



~~to use a military~~

to use a militarized gun ~~met~~ metaphor to persuade Congress to grant unlimited authority

to fight the ~~banks~~

global armies of investors who were shorting the markets

~~in~~ in anticipation of a collapse of ~~the~~

~~the~~ ~~Special~~ ~~Ed~~ ~~Spencer~~

Faude Mae and Freddie Mac.

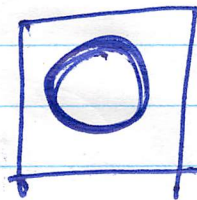
M

~~ancestral~~

of the descendants of
European-origin colonizers

N

- and then questioned how the real-time press coverage had instantly applied the 'innocent victims' label to



This is a violent extremism

P

not the best place and time to
break into the academic
job market

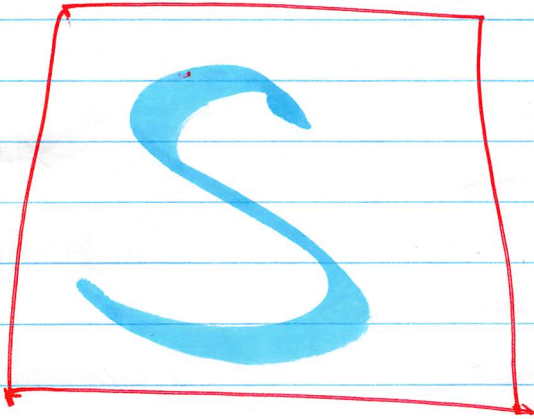


~~There~~ has taken place in any setting. ~~There~~
~~There~~ addresses

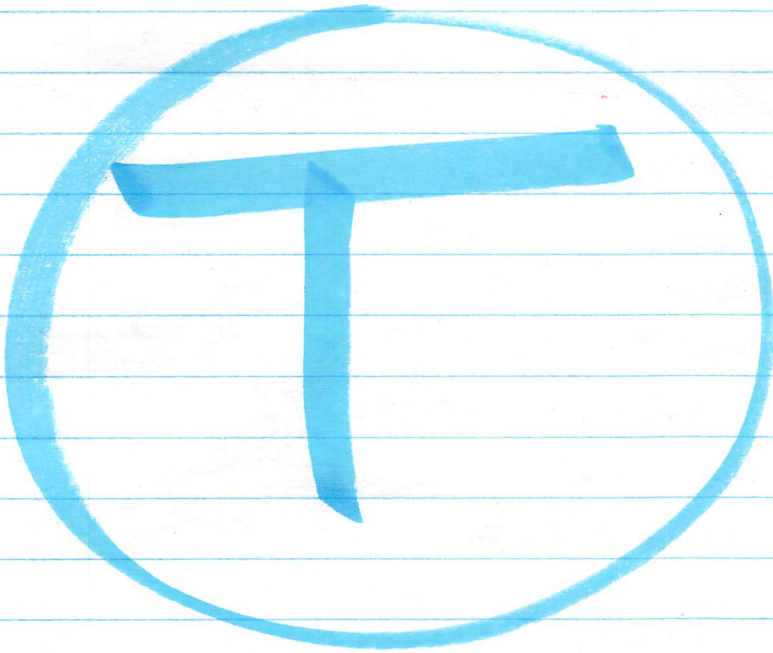
that combines an interest
in hierarchical market
processes with ~~market~~
significant planning powers:
in the private
retail and marketing industries in the
U.S., and then in
governmental policies outside the
U.S. -- anywhere
policy elites and technocrats
work in systems of significant
state powers over ~~state~~
~~land~~ land and settlement.

R

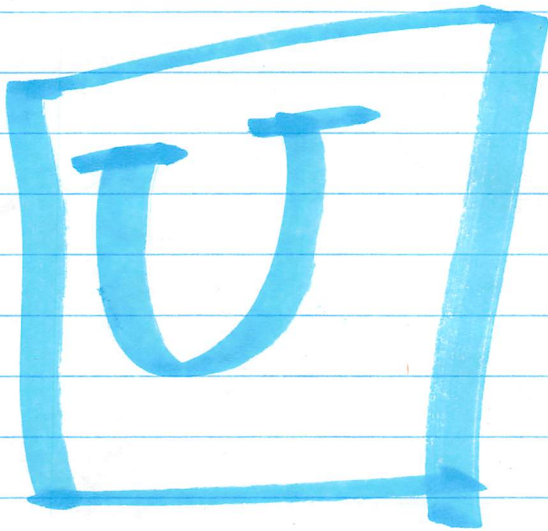
They ~~are~~ were ~~financed~~ subsidized at home
by the cheap credit of the GI Bill
~~and guaranteed~~ and guaranteed abroad



were financed by the
international exchange-rate
architecture of Bretton Woods
and the transactional
credit networks of the
World Bank and the
International Monetary Fund.



a few months
before John F. Kennedy recruited
McNamara ~~for Sec~~
to serve as Secretary of Defense.



And yet, as Roy reminds us,
~~the violence not measured~~
~~by the FBI~~

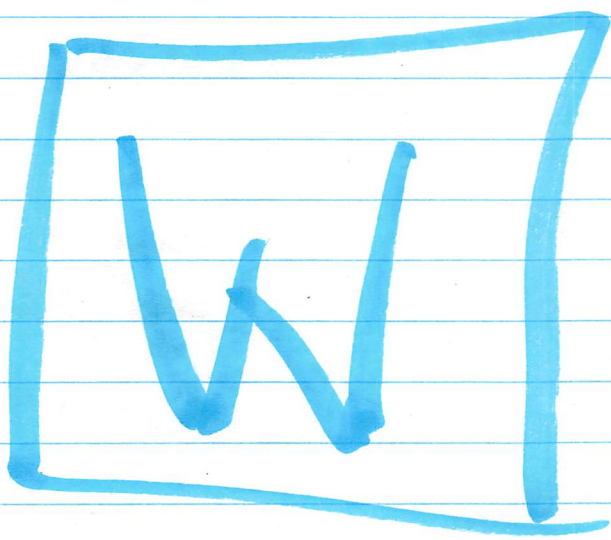
the market is defined by an increasingly
~~excessively~~ coercive
geography of evictions driven ~~by~~
~~force~~

in part by the ~~group~~
aggressive maneuvers of
hedge funds and
~~private~~ private equity firms
competing to extract
~~profit~~ profits
from the maddening urban systems of
~~of property crimes never measure~~
the ~~of~~ violent property crimes
never captured in FBI statistics.

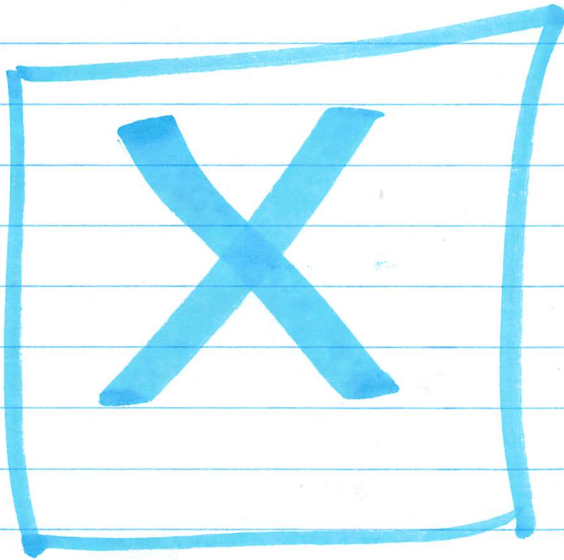


rural

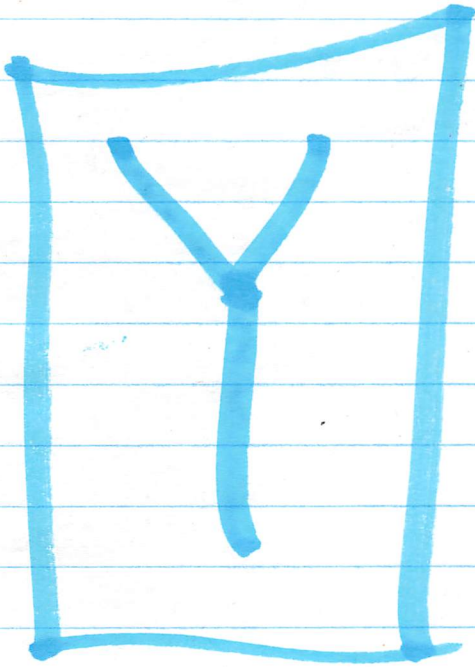
the Southern racists of Lyndon B. Johnson's
Dixiecrat Democrats in the U.S. Senate
and the Northern racists
(like Richard J. Daley) controlling the
city political machines
of industrial Fordism.



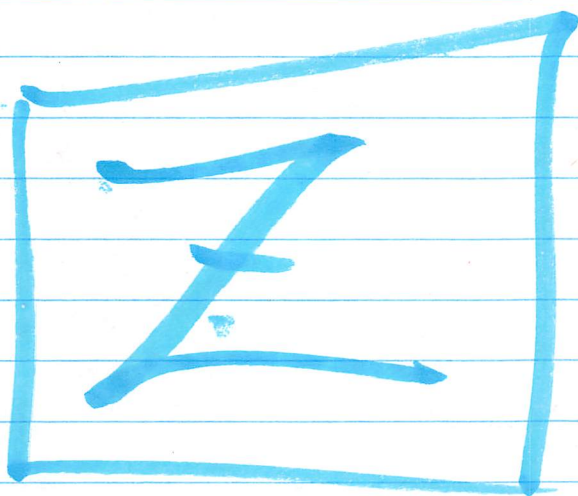
~~not~~
not as blind, irrational rage but
rather as an
effective tactic



LBJ and the 'Dixiecrats' campaign



militant consciousness



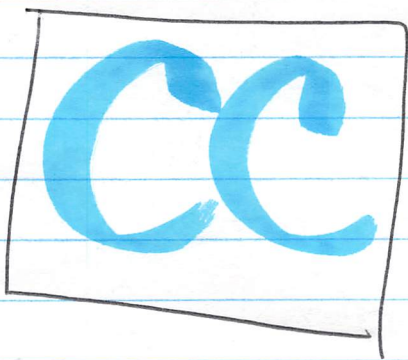
measuring, monitoring, and managing

AA

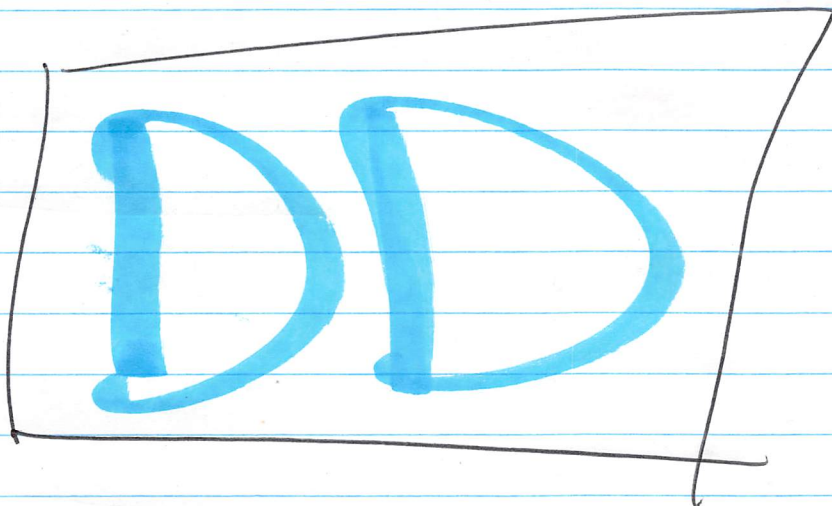
Here's the nonviolent extremist provocation:

BB

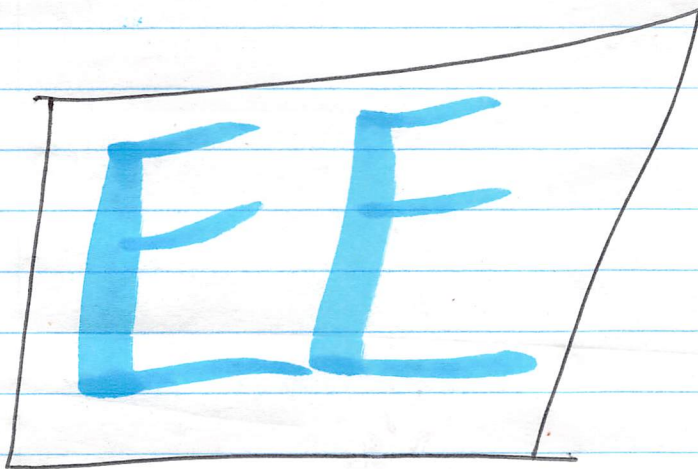
And so the amortized ~~cost~~
Whiteness of home equity gains
of America's suburban
spatial fix



~~1963~~ when Kennedy was assassinated in
1963



a critical reading of three aspects of recent history may help us ~~to~~ locate sites of strategic illegality in the next crisis of capitalism.



This takes us to the third aspect of Roy's theory of dis/possessive collectivism at city's end. At the end of the last century, the property planning and property theorist Dan Knechtberg wrote a ~~very~~ sweeping critique of the bipartisan, debt-driven homeownership policy that had become so popular in Washington, D.C.: when the mortgage cannot be paid, the ~~line~~

line between owners and renters quickly dissolve, and all can be evicted. Similarly, as Mona Atia was formulating her

theorization of the economics of Islamic charity as pious neoliberalism, she (Atia, 2014) summed up the essence of

America's policy consensus on ~~the~~ the role of low- and moderate-income homeownership: ~~to resolve the~~

~~the urban crisis of the~~

the inner-city tenement landlords of the 1960s had been replaced by ~~Wall Street~~

the Wall Street landlords of the 1990s (see also Teresa, 2015). Capital is the landlord.

(Sternlieb, 1969)

FF

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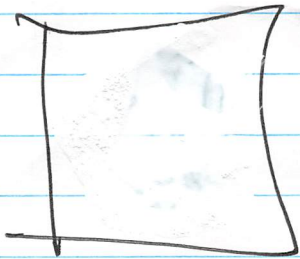
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Sternlieb, George (1969). The Tenement Landlord.



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