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Black Queer Times at Riis:

Making Place in a Queer Afrofuturist Tense

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ABSTRACT

This paper posits a queer Afrofuturist mode of spatiotemporal production in queer and trans Black, indigenous and people of color's navigation to and making of a queer beach to honor Black queer and trans histories and build Black queer and trans futures in opposition to multiple forms of displacement.

Okay, so you know in the beginning of *The Twilight Zone*, it'd be like <do-DO-do-do, do-DO-do-do> and then it's, like, a spiral? It's like I'm *in* that spiral. And then I'm just seeing random shit[...] things Black people would be scared of. I was like, "Oh my gosh! It's a white pastor!" and "Oh my god, it's schoolchildren!" So yeah, it feels like I'm invading their space on the way to navigate myself to my own space[...]

It feels almost like someone's plotting to make it so hard to get to this one place that's like a dream vacation, but you have to do this *Hunger-Games-ass-shit* before you get there.

Is that specific enough?¹²

The above narrative—opening with the theme music to an often-unsettling television series variously inflected by horror, absurdity, and suspense and closing with reference to a fictional dystopic death match televised for grotesquely wealthy oligarchs—was Jach's description of her typical trip to Riis. Jach is a Black as fuck, queer, gender non-conforming/ non-binary/ femmeboiant/ multi-gender person.¹³ Riis refers to a popular gathering place for queer and trans Black and indigenous people of color (QTBIPOC) throughout the summer months, but especially on Pride Sunday, a day of near-holiday status marked most publicly by the NYC Pride parade. Pride, notably, has a place-based history, and in its commemoration of the 1969 Stonewall Riots, the NYC Pride parade's route revolves around the riots' namesake and site, the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, Manhattan.¹⁴ Riis, meanwhile, is located on the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens and is about as far as one can get from the Stonewall Inn without leaving NYC or boarding a ferry, and Jach's description of her journey, replete with science-fictional imagery and affects of alienation and even danger, compounds this distance.¹⁵ Yet, many QTBIPOC locate Stonewall legacies on Riis's sands, their descriptions of both Pride and Riis reflecting an orientation toward space

¹² Excerpt from an approximately two-hour in-person interview with Jach, 2018

¹³ Self-description based on write-in responses to race/ethnicity, sexuality, and gender identity; Jach was 30 years old at the time of interview.

¹⁴ Throughout, "NYC Pride parade" refers to the organized event while "Pride" refers to the day itself.

¹⁵ See Appendix A.

and time warranting science-fictional references as they described the space of Riis as “outside of the everyday outside” and a site of “transform[ation].”

At Riis, QTBIPOC dynamically navigated a NYC Pride parade structured by racial capitalism and homonormativity by respatializing historical displacements at the site of encounter between a disjointed landscape of segregation, abandonment, and unbelonging and a vast oceanic horizon emplaced at Riis’s shoreline. As QTBIPOC turned multidirectional exclusions into radical openness and constituted QTBIPOC socialities with the fluid movement of particular Black queer and trans histories, they made place in what I identify as a queer Afrofuturist tense. These methods of making place and time share grounds with an ever-shifting queer Afrofuturist landscape composed of scholarship, organizing, poetics, and performances of Black and queer geographies and temporalities. Locating Riis on a queer Afrofuturist landscape lends a clarifying analytical lens to local political decisions, Riis’s historical relationship with its surroundings, and an interview and surveys with QTBIPOC beachgoers. While disruptions and counter-protests of Pride parades—like sit-ins by Black Lives Matter Toronto in 2016 and NYC’s No Justice, No Pride in 2017 or the unpermitted countermarch by the Reclaim Pride Coalition in 2019 and 2020—achieve more salient media visibility, gathering at Riis is also a political expression as beachgoers enact both embodied refusal of the parade and harness a queer Afrofuturist temporality to assert liberatory and abolitionist possibilities at and beyond Riis. This queer Afrofuturist temporality challenges the approaches to commemoration and preservation that structure it and insists instead on the active practice of “seeking a now that can breed futures” (Lorde, 1978).

Queer Afrofuturism: A Genre Enacted

The term “Afrofuturism” was first defined in print as a subgenre of speculative fiction and “African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced futures” (Dery, 1994, p. 180). Afrofuturist artists and scholars have complicated and problematized this definition since. Importantly, while Afrofuturism is closely related to science fiction, it “has developed[...] both within and without the science fiction tradition” (Yaszek, 2006, p. 43). Alondra Nelson has played a pivotal role in shaping the rise of Afrofuturist scholarship that this development includes and describes the task of Afrofuturist scholarship as being in part to “explore futurist themes in black cultural production” (Nelson and Miller, 2006, in Yaszek, 2006). Afrofuturist scholarship provides critique and readings of fictional and artistic production—novels, music, visual art—while more recently taking up explicitly Afrofuturist themes in non-fictional historical analysis and cultural critique (Maynard, 2018; Snorton, 2017; van Veen & Anderson, 2018). I identify Afrofuturism in the spatiotemporal orientations and practices of QTBIPOC in real time by using ethnographic methods concentrated on a specific timeframe of gathering at Riis.

Afrofuturism, as it “imagines and attempts to call into being futures in which black folks exist and thrive” (Allen, 2012, p. 223) and in its “imagin[ation of] less constrained black subjectivity in the future” (English & Kim, 2013, p. 217) already holds abundant space for Black queer and trans people. Blackness and queerness are irreducible in the historical construction of normativity and distribution of power as well as in enduring and emergent resistance to racial capitalism (Muñoz, 2009; Snorton, 2017), and Black queer and queer of color critiques operate from within cultural fields, which compose the historicity of Black queer subjects (Ferguson, 2004, p.

4). Blackness and queerness are also irreducible in the lives of Black queer people as intersecting racialized, sexualized, and gendered oppressions work together and as Black queer people participate in the collective meaning-making of Blackness and queerness. I use “queer Afrofuturism” in this study, then, not with an additive logic, but to emphasize this irreducibility and think with a flood of cross-currents spilling out of the geographies and temporalities of Black queer life.

These crosscurrents come primarily from an Afrofuturism that reorients Black Atlantic temporality toward both the production of futures and development of countermemory (Eshun, 2003); as well as a queer futurity developed by Muñoz through which desires for the future and nostalgia for the past are performed as an active critique of the present oppressions of queer people of color (Muñoz, 2009). As Gilroy argues, modernity was founded on the trans-Atlantic slave trade, he identifies a counterculture to modernity located in hybridity and exchange amongst displaced and dispersed Afro-diasporic people; he calls this counterculture the Black Atlantic. Experiences of forced displacement and border-defying hybridity produce a temporality that is likewise ruptured and non-linear. Muñoz’s *Cruising Utopia* responds to the unacceptably oppressive present of queer people of color and the failures of homonormative and assimilationist politics and instead invokes a collective-oriented queerness emerging from an expansive version of temporality termed *ecstatic* (Muñoz, 2009). As such, both Black Atlantic temporality and queer futurity are skeptical of chronically unrealized promises of progress. Gilroy employs ships on the Atlantic Ocean as his central metaphor and Muñoz draws often on the metaphor of the horizon. Tinsley in “Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic” criticizes Gilroy for his reduction of the Atlantic to masculine-centered metaphor despite material histories of Afro-diasporic women on its wa-

ters (Tinsley, 2008). Following her heed to “return to the materiality of water to make its metaphors mean more complexly,” I situate queer Afrofuturism on the shoreline of Riis where QTBIPOC face both the Atlantic and horizon, and I return often to descriptions of the spatiality and temporality offered by a host of QTBIPOC beachgoers (ibid., p. 212).

To come to a working definition of queer Afrofuturism, I turn to Du Bois’s double-consciousness thesis, which drives theorizing of the Black Atlantic as Gilroy expands the irreconcilable plurality of double-consciousness into a countercultural social formation across the African diaspora. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois terms double-consciousness as the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” experienced by Black Americans striving toward self-consciousness in a context of anti-Black oppression and devaluation and white-supremacist domination (Du Bois, 1903, p. 3). Double-consciousness includes a temporal element as Du Bois criticizes narratives of progress. One unrealized striving in *Souls* reads: “A people thus handicapped ought not to be asked to race with the world, but rather allowed to give all its time and thought to its own social problems. But Alas!” (Du Bois, 1903, p. 9). If we follow Black Atlantic temporality’s ruptures and non-linearity and queer futurity’s ecstatic temporality and queer collectivity, Du Bois’s temporal striving takes the form of an imperative to recognize *all* our time—past, present, and future—in a temporal unity bursting with not-yet-realized potentiality for Black queer and trans life. I define queer Afrofuturism, then, as spatiotemporal in(ter)ventions (for what is an invention but an intervention in what is?) that disrupt the dead-end temporalities of anti-Blackness, anti-queerness and anti-transness by giving all our time—in an ecstatic unity of past, present, and future—to Black and queer and trans life. As QTBIPOC at Riis demonstrate, queer Afrofuturism is not an escape

from but rather a strategic maneuver through present space-times using the life-giving possibilities of histories and futures.

Context

QTBIPOC gathering at Riis during Pride is structured by the NYC Pride parade's commemoration of the 1969 Stonewall Riots and an immediate physical geography made up of a historically preserved park, white segregationist suburb, and abandoned hospital. The 1969 Stonewall Riots maintain an "almost mythic stature" in NYC and internationally (Armstrong & Crago, 2006, p. 725). They began on June 28, 1969, and were an approximately weeklong series of demonstrations protesting a relatively routine police raid at the LGBTQ-frequented Stonewall Inn ("4 Policemen Hurt in 'Village' Raid: Melee Near Sheridan Square Follows Action at Bar," 1969; Chauncey, 1995; Manalansan, 2005). While rumors abound as to who threw the first punch or brick or heel, many first-hand accounts point to Stormé DeLarverie, a Black mixed race butch lesbian turning the raid riotous when she punched a police officer; DeLarverie was later known to "walk the streets of downtown Manhattan like a gay superhero" (Carter, 2004; Yardley, 2014). First-hand accounts also place Black trans activist and co-founder of Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (S.T.A.R.) Marsha P. Johnson as a primary leader of the rebellion as it continued into the week (Carter, 2004). By 1970, primarily white gay men connected with the Mattachine Society of New York formed a committee to hold a commemorative Christopher Street Liberation Day and encourage other groups in the U.S. and Europe to do the same (Armstrong & Crago, 2006). Christopher Street Liberation Day was held annually in NYC until 1984, when the committee handed event production over to Heritage of Pride, Inc. (HOP), the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

that does business as “NYC Pride” and currently produces the parade and other NYC Pride events. The parade occurs annually on the fourth Sunday of June to commemorate the Stonewall Riots and is backed by HOP’s multi-million-dollar budget (*Heritage of Pride Inc Form 990*, 2019).

Riis is, annually, exceptionally crowded on the day of the parade, indicating that many people choose Riis as an alternative location to observe the day the parade marks. Most beachgoers refer to the area of this study as “Riis,” reflecting the name of the park of which it is part, Jacob Riis Park. The beach is called People’s Beach and divided by jetties into fourteen “bays,” the easternmost of which, Bays 1 and 2, compose “Riis.” Archival investigations establish the presence of mostly white gay men using Riis in the 1940s and white lesbians gathering by the 1950s (Chauncey, 1995, p. 184; NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, 2017). 1974 National Park Service (NPS)-sponsored fieldwork describes Bays 1 and 2’s population as predominantly white with a notable contingent of Black and Latinx beachgoers, while NPS fieldwork from 2000 reports a demographic shift to “a predominance of blacks and Hispanics” (Kornblum & Williams, 1975, pp. 11–12; Taplin, 2005, p. 111).

In the first decades of queer gathering on Bays 1 and 2, the extents of Jacob Riis Park did not reach these bays. Bays 1 and 2 were the beachfront for a tuberculosis sanatorium, the temporary closure of which from 1941 to 1943 and permanent closure in 1955 provided an unsanctioned alternative to Jacob Riis Park’s popular beachfront (Bennett, 1956; “Neponsit Hospital War Casualty; Fuel Shortage Is Critical,” 1943). Land use disputes resulted in the addition of Bays 1 and 2 to the park in 1958 and the reopening of the hospital as a nursing home in 1961 (*ibid.*). The park was transferred to NPS’s portfolio in 1974 (Taplin, 2005; Unrau, 1981). The hospital was abandoned yet again in 1998 and remains owned by NYC

Health + Hospitals and is out-of-use today. Riis is bordered at its eastern edge by Neponsit, a 98% white and white Latino and 0% Black or multiracial neighborhood (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2018). In contrast to Neponsit and more reflective of Jacob Riis Park's overall diversity, Riis's home borough of Queens is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse¹⁶ counties in the United States (Gamio, 2019).¹⁷

Methods

In retrospect, this study began before I knew it was study. I started going to Riis, without any research agenda, in 2015 and quickly found a sense of community there. I began spending any free time I could at Riis, the space of the beach consistently affording me fuller embodiment of my Blackness, queerness, transmasculinity, femme-ininity, and genderfluidity than I've been able to access in any other public space. Riis became a site of self-research as this fuller embodiment uncovered new pleasures, desires, and self-knowledge. Casual conversations on the beach and the occasional "Hey! I think I saw you at Riis this weekend!" turned to shared reflections on relationships with the site, and I found a desire to pursue further research.

While my personal history with and fieldnotes from Riis extend beyond the time of the 2018 NYC Pride parade and I am currently engaged in an ongoing participatory project with QTBIPOC beachgoers, the qualitative data presented in this article is bound by relation to the 2018 parade and consists of the open-ended survey responses of sixty-five QTBIPOC who chose to be at Riis during the parade and a nearly two-hour follow-up interview with one of those

¹⁶Diversity here is based on the Simpson index for diversity.

¹⁷Appendix B

respondents, Jach. I maintained regular discussion with other QTBIPOC users of Riis while designing the survey, which asked open-ended questions about respondents' relationships with Riis and the parade.¹⁸ Surveys were completed in-person and on-site, by convenience sampling. I intended to undertake data collection alone, but the course of the research changed when Jach, whom I have known through community organizing since 2015, organized a beach potluck with other QTBIPOC—all of us queer and/or trans people of color and most of us friends. We gathered in the tent meant to provide shade for people completing the survey, and my lone data collection emerged as participatory as people gathered for the potluck began asking to help distribute surveys. Their participation in data collection supported a high response rate (difficult to document, but estimated at nearly 90%), a majority-BIPOC sample (64%), and enabled the collection of 101 surveys in less than three hours, which ensured that no respondents had attended the parade prior to filling out the survey. Our conversations throughout the day deeply informed my decision to focus analysis on BIPOC respondents only. In addition to organizing the potluck, Jach was one of four who played a particularly significant role in collecting surveys. When I interviewed Jach ten weeks later, I followed an interview guide developed from the initial coding of survey responses to inquire about Jach's relationship with Riis for one hour and then transitioned to a more conversational style for a second hour, during which we reflected on the data collection process together.

On-site, multiple data collection participants shared that they felt invested in making sure BIPOC beachgoers received surveys. Then, in initial coding of the 101 survey responses we collected, Riis emerged amongst BIPOC respondents as a place specifically sought

¹⁸ Appendix C

out for the presence of and sense of belonging amongst other QTBIPOC while responses like “very white” (*Black queer woman, age 30*), “too white” (*Pinoy and Black [AA], pansexual, genderfluid person, age 23*), and “only for white gays” (*Blackity Black queer/gender-queer person, age 32*) typified descriptions of the parade. As data collection participants ensured that QTBIPOC’s situated knowledge informed research outcomes and BIPOC respondents documented the importance of sharing space with other QTBIPOC, a specifically QTBIPOC sense of place at Riis emerged. Data collection participants demonstrated a commitment to standpoint theory that resonates through my analysis as this study “pivot[s] the center” of previously race-neutral studies of Riis as a race-neutral gay and lesbian beach toward situated knowledge of QTBIPOC navigating intersectional oppressions and displacements to make place together at Riis (Collins, 2009, p. 289).

I thus focus analysis on the responses of BIPOC only (n=65), inclusion determined by a checkbox-based response to “Do you identify as a person of color?”¹⁹ With some resistance to condensing write-in responses to set categories of race and ethnicity, I report here racial and ethnic demographics of BIPOC respondents adapting census categories and include specific write-in identifiers when quoting individuals (as demonstrated in the preceding paragraph). 68% of BIPOC respondents explicitly identified as Black, African American, or “Afro-.” 23% named racial or ethnic identities widely

¹⁹Four respondents who self-described as “Black,” one respondent who self-described as “Afrolatinx,” one respondent who self-described as “pinoy and Black (African American),” and one respondent who self-described as “Asian” did not select “person of color” on their survey responses. This may have been an oversight or may indicate particular orientations toward or analyses of POC as an identity category. My decision to use BIPOC instead of POC is guided by a recognition of most of the Black identities listed by respondents who did not indicate identifying as a person of color.

considered Latinx. Twenty percent reported Asian or Pacific Islander. Appendix C depicts the contents of and overlaps between categories. Of the 65 BIPOC respondents, 64 identified as queer. 40% of BIPOC respondents were trans, gender non-conforming, or non-binary. The average age: 27, with a range of 19-40 years old. 69% of BIPOC respondents came from Brooklyn, 11% from Manhattan, 6% from Queens, the remaining respondents coming from The Bronx, Staten Island, or out of state. Appendix E depicts home borough locations of QTBIPOC respondents, the two bus routes that go to Riis, and the only two subway routes with direct connections to these bus routes.

NYC Pride: Displaced histories and restricted movements

Respondents most commonly described the parade as capitalist or corporate (55%; $n=36$), white, whitewashed, or white supremacist (37%; $n=25$), and policed (25%, $n=16$). These descriptions were frequently intertwined, with seven respondents describing the parade as simultaneously white, capitalist, and policed and twelve critiquing the capitalist nature of the parade in tandem with its whiteness. For respondents, these intertwined factors shape sense of un/belonging at the parade such that the parade is portrayed as *for* or *centering* or *dominated by* certain groups of people—“cis,” “white,” “male,” “gay,” “capitalist,” “politician” all circulate here—than others—i.e. “QTPOC,” “people of color,” “trans and gender non-conforming community,” “people who need it.” These expressions of un/belonging reflect an intersectional analysis on the part of respondents, by which they are attentive to overlapping and irreducible oppressions that the parade’s structure exacerbates. QTBIPOC experience these structural exclusions individually through discomfort, anxiety, fear, vulnerabil-

ity, and danger and ultimately describe the impacts of whiteness, capitalism, and policing on the parade as influencing both physical and political possibilities.

When gay politics ignore intersectional experiences of queerness and rely on a racial capitalist power structure to attain validity they typically align liberation with privacy, domesticity, superficial visibility, and consumption; this political alignment constitutes homonormativity (Duggan, 2002, 2003; Manalansan, 2005). At the parade, homonormative politics welcome a long list of corporate sponsors—including banks implicated in the 2008 foreclosure crisis and companies identified as particularly exploitative of workers—that superficially depict their existences and practices as somehow aligned with gay liberation (David Dayen, 2017; Erik Ortiz, 2020; NYC Pride, 2020). Meanwhile, NYPD officers and their seasonally rainbow-clad cars line the streets, march as a contingent in the parade, and are charged with keeping order and maintaining safety at NYC Pride events despite their historical and ongoing disproportionate violence against Black queer people and institutions (Hanhardt, 2013, 2016). Homonormative tactics employed at the gayborhood level have disproportionately priced, policed, or otherwise pushed out BIPOC, and survey responses attest to similar patterns of displacement from the space of the parade (Doan & Higgins, 2011; Giesecking, 2013; Hanhardt, 2013, 2016; Manalansan, 2005).

One respondent described how policing at the parade impacted their emotional well-being and threatened their sense of safety while also restricting their physical movement:

I try to avoid Manhattan on Pride because the volume of police presence, physical vulnerability, physical barricading, and police control of the space gives me intense

anxiety. The dominant narrative of NYC Pride—especially in the years anticipating marriage equality—embody the invisibility of QTPOC—especially trans POC—that makes the event more violent than celebratory. -East Asian queer femme, a cricket-like thing, age 28

This respondent joined others who described the parade as “physically confining” and “enclose[d],” bringing awareness to spatial restrictions on their movement via barricades and other methods of police control. They pointed, too, to another kind of movement—social and political movements—when they described the invisibility of QTBIPOC in the dominant narrative of NYC Pride being especially evident “in the years anticipating marriage equality.” Homonormativity’s narratives of pragmatism and progress, perhaps epitomized by campaigns for gay marriage and gay and transgender military inclusion, are functionally temporal. Their conscriptions to normative social structures undercut radical futurist imaginations by “dwell[ing] in” and reproducing “a broken-down present” (Muñoz, 2009, p. 30). While police barricades obstruct physical movement, a “broken-down present” that locates safety and liberation in racial capitalist structures enacts violence on and invisibilizes the political movements of people who cannot rely on those structures for liberation.

The characteristics of the parade and their impacts on belonging and possibilities at the parade, for many respondents, invalidated the parade as a commemorative vehicle for the Stonewall Riots. One identified the three most common descriptors of the parade, connected them to the safety of QTBIPOC, and wrote:

I only go [to the parade] to do Copwatch²⁰ and to help try to keep my people safe. Pride is not a safe space for QT-POC. Pride is capitalist and corporate and in that has lost its purpose and lineage. Stonewall was a riot, Pride was an abolitionist protest. Now it is an exploiting, whitewashed advertisement for corporations and oppressive systems. -Black queer cis person (pronouns: she/ her and they/ them), age 28

Here, we see the dissonance between what “was” and what “is” such that in the present iteration of the parade, policing threatens the safety of queer and trans people of color, and capitalism exploits and whitewashes to maintain oppressive systems. However, the respondent identifies a purpose and lineage of the parade emphasizing the riotous nature of Stonewall and abolitionist protest. While police threaten QTBIPOC safety, this respondent identifies the possibility of locating safety outside of the parade’s broken-down present, even at the parade, and in the work of Copwatch through which people keep each other safe from the police.

In the midst of refusals of and displacements from the parade, respondents communicated a set of histories and values that they felt should be represented in a Pride celebration. When a 30-year-old mixed race (Afrocaribbean and white) nonbinary genderqueer person described the parade as “a heavily policed space, dominated by white cis people and shaped by capitalist values,” they reinforce that homonormative politics have a spatial expression. They write of the resultant shape of the parade as inhibiting a feeling of celebration, but they also describe the possibility of reaching beyond the broken-down commemorative vehicle of the parade and into the history of Stonewall to animate new possibilities:

²⁰ Copwatch is an informal network of localized groups and organizations that observe police interactions in order to prevent and/or document police brutality.

The parade no longer feels like the celebration that it used to seem to me. Coming to this beach in particular and being amongst a sea of Black and brown queer folk being open with their bodies and sharing space seems like much more of a protest, the boldly claiming space, that is at the heart of Pride.

Another respondent writes:

I didn't go to the parade because I don't feel like it represents my Pride. It's not rooted in resistance; it's not led by Black trans women, trans women of color, or anyone else who should be. It's not rooted in liberation. I came to Riis to be with the homies, folx I feel know what Pride is as well as that celebrate each other every day. -Black as fuck, queer as fuck, non-binary person, age 24

In these responses, “my Pride” and “the heart of Pride” indicate personal and still-beating possibilities for Pride—“protest,” “boldly claiming space,” “rooted in resistance,” “rooted in liberation,” “led by Black trans women [and] trans women of color”—that have been displaced from the space of the parade. Even as these and other respondents criticize the NYC Pride parade, they maintain something of Pride as an ideality and make clear that, though displaced, these possibilities are present, still geographic. These respondents describe keeping Stonewall’s possibilities in motion specifically by “be[ing] with the homies,” “being amongst a seas of Black and brown queer folk,” and “celebrating each other every day.” The history these respondents describe is both present and socially enacted as QTBIPOC, distant from the barricades of the parade, move less encumbered by racial capitalism to animate the spaces amongst each other with the liberatory potentialities of QTBIPOC sociality

they glean from Stonewall's history. Through these maneuvers, these respondents reflect Muñoz's sense of queer futurity as a modality that critiques the present and draws forth historical potentialities to enact them socially, collectively (2009).

"We're in a new dimension now...": The spatiality of Riis

The specific space that QTBIPOC are "boldly claiming" away from the parade's barricades is what Jach calls "a new dimension" and "a new zone of life," and so we turn now to the spatiality of the site claimed by QTBIPOC in the social and collective respatialization of Pride. In 1974 fieldwork at Riis, its location on the eastern edge of Jacob Riis Park and in front of a nursing home (abandoned since 1998) is noted as offering relative spatial seclusion to Riis's users through which beachgoers meet a need for "places and times set apart from other places and times" in order to foster gay social identities elsewhere stigmatized (Canavan, 1984, pp. 68–69). In both 1974 and 2000 NPS fieldwork, this seclusion enables Riis to offer a site of "sexual freedom" (Kornblum & Williams, 1975, p. 11) and "a space of freedom and liberation" (Taplin, 2005, p. 111). Though not recognized in the published discussion of Riis's spatiality, this spatial seclusion is also supported by the relationship the beach shares with neighboring suburban Neponsit, a place Jach describes in the introductory quote of this article as "some *Hunger-Games*-ass shit" and something out of *The Twilight Zone*. The combination of these references suggests danger, disorientation, class difference, absurdity, and eeriness in Jach's real-life travel, in which she feels like she is "invading [Neponsit residents'] space" as she "navigate[s her]self to [her] own space" via the Q35 bus. That Jach feels like she is "invading" while in the neighborhood is the affective impact of a built environment emplacing the clash between si-

multaneous promises made in 1937 of wide-open development at Jacob Riis Park and impenetrable stability in Neponsit.

In 1937, a recently consolidated NYC Parks Department led by “master builder” Robert Moses and emboldened by an infusion of resources from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) unveiled \$5 million of new construction at Jacob Riis Park, stretching across the entirety of the park’s then-extents (Unrau, 1981). Meanwhile, the Homeowners’ Lending Corporation (HOLC) was producing neighborhood assessments that, upon their release in 1938, would deepen residential segregation and disinvestment in Black neighborhoods for decades to come, through practices commonly referred to as redlining (Aaronson et al., 2019). Both programs of the Great Depression-Era New Deal, the local expression of the WPA as carried out by the NYC Parks Department promised to both stimulate economic activity and bring 250,000 visitors to the beachfront park (Unrau, 1981, p. 152); and HOLC promised a “still desirable” and “stable” future for Neponsit, free from “infiltration” (elsewhere a threat posed by “Negros”) and “non-residential influx.”^{21, 22} Between contradicting promises lay a buffer: a beachfront tuberculosis hospital. When the hospital closed in 1955, though, competing futurities came into direct conflict, making visible dynamic strategies of exclusion preserved in Neponsit’s public spaces today.

The hospital’s closure left behind two fences built about ten years prior, one of these fences dividing the beachfront between Bay 1 and Neponsit and the other near the opposite edge of Bay 1. It was the western fence, furthest from the neighborhood, that Neponsit residents worked diligently to maintain in hospital staffs’ absence (“Neponsit Owners Fight Extension Of Riis Park,” 1955). When

²¹ “Non-residential influx” sourced from a description of “detrimental influences” on Neponsit’s neighboring tract’s (C100) lower-graded assessment.

²² Appendix F

the NYC Parks Department proposed conversion of the property to recreational use, homeowners argued that the destruction of the west fence would leave their neighborhood “overrun” and nullify the effects of single-family residential zoning, threatening the “great deal of money” invested by residents in their properties (*ibid.*). The location of homeowners’ defense, two hundred yards west of the extent of the neighborhood’s (public) beach, constituted a territorial claim not for the use of the beach by residents but for the preservation of public disuse, guarding property owners’ bets against Black and queer presence.

While Bays 1 and 2 were ultimately added to the park and the western fence removed, the battle against park expansion preserved the hospital building and its east fence.²³ Development promised in 1937 pushed against a boundary promising stability in the same year, and the residents’ fight for disuse and the parks department’s fight for expansion offered a tender balance of liminality and opening to the ephemeral loopholes of retreat cut through chainlink and ultimately opened Riis to less fleeting queer socialities.

Neponsit continues to enforce barriers even as the second fence, this one at the border of Neponsit and Riis, was swallowed by a 2011 hurricane. While city and federal park officials denied residents’ and representatives’ pleas for its replacement, a total ban on street parking mid-May through September and an absence of bathrooms or other facilities on the neighborhood beach throws non-residential presence in Neponsit public spaces into question (Colangelo, 2012; Harris, 2012; Schwach, 2012). In the context of a 0% Black and 98% white residential population and zoning restrictions allowing only detached single-family homes and no commercial structures that might attract non-residents, the answers to

²³ Appendix G

questions about who belongs in Neponsit's public spaces are easily racial, working to ensure the 1937 promise of stability and non-infiltration at a glance (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2018). In the park, a historic district was instated in 1981 to assist with the preservation of its built environment from the 1930s but does not encompass Bays 1 and 2. Appendix H depicts the confluence of exclusionary forces acting on Riis's geography.

Though each particular exclusionary force might not be visible from Jach's seat on the Q35 bus, they appear in the dissolution of distance between Neponsit and other exclusionary spaces as she contextualizes Neponsit in a larger assemblage of geographies. Her Black queer bus-seat analysis of Neponsit asks "Am I in Connecticut?" and names the neighborhood "suburban," "strange," and "their space" calling out features like "a white pastor" and "schoolchildren" as "things Black people would be scared of." In this place where "apparently people can afford boats," Jach reads markers of wealth, whiteness, and heterosexuality, sees the absence of kin and restricted possibilities for Black/queer/working class inhabitation, and perceives and experiences unbelonging substantiated through history and policy both in Neponsit and other spaces finding their contours on the other side of redlining, like Connecticut suburbs (Nelson et al., 2016).

In McKittrick's reading of Octavia Butler's 1979 Afrofuturist novel, *Kindred*, Butler's use of time travel "allows [*Kindred's* protagonist] to confront and produce several landscapes" to detail continuities between past and present experiences of Black womanhood and "respatialize the potential of Black femininity and black subjectivity in general" (McKittrick, 2006, p. 1). McKittrick posits that the supernatural's nonconformity to traditional geographic rationalities highlights the intensely experiential, uneven, and psychic nature of the material landscape and that the expansive potential of Black

subjectivities is emphasized by a break from fixed temporal and geographic understandings. As Afrofuturism functions in *Demonic Grounds* to disturb fixed and dominant notions of spatiotemporal production and illuminate potentialities within Black subjectivities, so Jach employs Afrofuturist storytelling to make sense of her own travels through Neponsit. She makes navigable the horror and absurdity of white segregation and opens space for a fantastic counter conception of Riis as a “dream vacation” worth braving a trip through Neponsit because “once you go through the step-off point from the stairs to the sand it’s like, ‘Oh, we’re in a new dimension now, we’re in a new zone of life.’”

Jach’s Afrofuturist sense-making also helps illustrate the relationship between Neponsit and Riis and gestures toward why Riis has become a collective site of respatializing Pride celebration. Jach described this “new zone of life” as “this one space for ourselves” where QTBIPOC beachgoers turn the spatial isolation of Riis on its head to break other forms of isolation usually experienced individually; she described this as “the plan”:

The plan is to break isolation, to not be questioned about the shit that you have been going through for your whole life, and to have fun and play and be distracted; honestly, distracted from my fucking life because once you go through that step-off point from the stairs to the sand it’s like, “Oh, we’re in a new dimension now, we’re in a new zone of life.” And then as soon as you step back on that step, you’re like, aw, fuck, we’re going back outside, back to the real-world outside.

Jach further described “the plan[...] to break isolation” as expressed in the feeling of “the sun coming down on your skin,” “hold[ing] hands with someone,” “trying to be intimate,” and

“meet[ing] people who are like you and aren’t going to give you some fuckshit about how y’all are different.” If we recall the previously quoted respondents describing Stonewall’s potentialities kept in motion by “be[ing] with the homies,” “being amongst a seas of Black and brown queer folk being open with their bodies and sharing space,” and “celebrating each other every day,” their actions also reflect this collective plan of “breaking isolation.” The material landscape of Riis, structured by conditions of isolation from multiple directions, offers seclusion that respondents identified as making possible trust that the people at the beach “aren’t going to give you some fuckshit” (Jach), “won’t fuck with you” (Black, Latinx, queer, GNC person, age 25), and “know what Pride is” (Black as fuck, queer as fuck, nonbinary person, age 24). While Riis is surrounded on land by a geography turning away from it, it opens onto the Atlantic, and this is the direction toward which most beachgoers orient themselves.

For QTBIPOC beachgoers, the Atlantic is very much material, opening the disjointed landscape of Riis to a set of complex meanings that shake off rigid structures of the NYC Pride parade and borders maintained by Neponsit homeowners. We see the materiality of the ocean imbued with the historical as one respondent puts forth a sense of queer futurity enlivened by both sociality and the material environment:

I came to Riis because my Black and brown queer and transgender clusters, sluts, weirdofamily would be here and I wouldn’t be anywhere else but with them. Riis is a gathering place for us to breathe in the ocean, soak up the sun, and be together. It’s ancestral, profound because of what we’ve made it. -**multiracial gender variant/expansive queer brat, age 25**

While the parade has “lost its [...] lineage”²⁴ to policing, white-washing, and capitalism, the “ancestral” here breaks from the linearity suggested by the term lineage. The ancestral also offers a material continuity between Riis and Greenwich Village despite a landscape fractured by rainbow capitalism as one respondent writes, “[The parade is] a #masc4masc Rainbow Capitalist Nightmare [that] makes Marsha turn in her wave. Completely detached from the movement that sparked it” (*Black queer/pan/bi nb male, age 24*), referring to Stonewall veteran Marsha P. Johnson who, after decades of fierce Black queer and trans life and advocacy, was found dead in the Hudson River shortly after Pride in 1992. The image of her occupying her own wave insists on her continued presence and movement in the water and returns watery metaphor to Black Atlantic materiality. As we imagine the flow of the Hudson’s waters through New York Harbor and into Riis’s Atlantic, Marsha’s life and legacy exceed the fixedness of NYC Pride’s geography and find the shores of Riis, mist the air, and fill the lungs of beachgoers as endless waves roll on the horizon.²⁵ As the ancestral fills ocean air and the sun’s light to occupy the space both between and within QTBIPOC bodies, we see a break from straight time that reflects queer futurity’s ecstatic time—a temporality of *queerness as horizon* that feels like ecstasy, feels like all time at once, feels like the break of the stranglehold of straight time; it is a “request to stand outside of time with me” (Muñoz, 2009, pp. 32, 186-187). For QTBIPOC at Riis, this ancestral ecstasy acts as an invitation into an active placemaking force and a “we” that makes kin outside of any one time or place, breaking isolation across multiple scales: socially, historically, environmentally.

²⁴ Black queer cis person (pronouns: she/her and they/them), age: 28; quoted previously

²⁵ For a gorgeous, moving, and binary-bending exploration of the spill between the Hudson and the Atlantic, see Tourmaline’s short film *The Atlantic is a Sea of Bones* (2017).

This breaking of isolation, in “the sun coming down on your skin,” “Black and brown queer and trans people being open with their bodies,” and collective “breath[ing] in the ocean [and] soak[ing] up the sun,” occurs most visibly at the site of the body. Riis was a *de facto* nude beach until 1983, but NYC law permits people of all genders to show bare chests in public (“Nude Sunbathing at Riis Park Is Banned by New State Law,” 1983). This allowance is embraced at Riis more so than at most other NYC beaches, and beachgoers often remove bottoms while in the ocean, evidenced by the Riis-specific style of bottoms worn around the neck or wrist. Respondents described choosing Riis in part to “have [their] titties out” and because of body diversity, acceptance, or positivity found at Riis. While Neponsit residents assert visible nudity at Riis as a reason for rebuilding the fence between Riis and Neponsit (Schwach, 2012), the potentially surface-deep bodily openness exceeds sight and guides an erotic subjectivity that “expands beyond being mere euphemism for sexual desire and reaches simultaneously toward a political attentiveness and a spiritual consciousness” (Gil, 2012, p. 279). It is this erotic subjectivity that breaks isolation, pushing exposed skin toward a sensuality beyond the superficial.

This erotic subjectivity and the centrality of skin recovers skin from racist readings limited to the visual and remaps it as a deep and connective terrain. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois connects visibility with spatial production by describing “two worlds within and without the Veil” (Du Bois, 1903, p. v). The veil, shaped by the anti-Blackness of the white gaze, prevents Black people from experiencing “true self-consciousness” as an anti-Black social world impacts Black self-perception and produces double-consciousness instead. For Du Bois, Black self-perception, even when glimpsed, is seen “darkly as through a veil” (Du Bois, 1903, p. 8). Navigating Neponsit, Jach employed science-fictional imagery to communicate

the intensity of the veil in a white segregationist neighborhood, but as QTBIPOC relished the opportunity to exist “with less layers on our physical bodies and how we show up” we might imagine the individual veil becoming collective at the juncture of sand and stairs. With the gaze thrown off, skin becomes not the fixed object of gaze but a way of feeling around the darkness behind the veil to collectively shape social, political, and spiritual connections, to feel the ancestral histories of the Atlantic and warmth of futures on the horizon.

Conclusion: A now that can breed futures

Erotic subjectivity at Riis is a placemaking force both within and without the beach. Audre Lorde writes about going to Riis on summer Sundays but doesn't discuss her time at the beach beyond “split[ting...] early” (Lorde, 1982, p. 222). Instead, she writes of its traces sticking to her skin: long after the ocean water dried from their bodies, Lorde and her partner were “full of sun and sand” and they “loved with the salt still on [their] skins” (ibid.). She writes that her time at the beach graced her with a certain “raunchy(ness) and restless(ness),” how she knew—more consciously and pridefully now than before—that she was “fat and Black and very fine,” and on that same day she accessed a furiousness that propelled her to challenge an expression of anti-Blackness that she would typically “let[...] go” (ibid.) The Atlantic's impact on the rest of her day: it was subtle, poetic, and full of oceanic residue. When beachgoers offer responses like, “Coming to Riis has transformed my relationship to the city since moving here 6 years ago. It is among the few places I can come and consistently access freedom in my body” (East Asian, mixed race queer femme, a cricket-like thing, age 28), this viscosity sticks through time and moves through the body, through the whole city. QTBIPOC don't only claim a right

to Riis, we develop a practice that strengthens our capacity to claim a right to the city as a whole.

However, Tinsley reminds us that the Black Atlantic is much more than hope, for “as Africans became diasporic[... t]he first sight of the ocean was often a vision of fear” (Tinsley, 2008, p. 197). Hope and fear are both affective expressions of “that dimension of time that produces risk,” or queer temporality, and operate dynamically at Riis (Keeling, 2019, p. 9). As much as Jach names Riis “a new zone of life,” she also “fear[s] for Riis[...]” and annually questions, “is this the summer it’s going to be gone?” This fear, like the potentiality breathed in through the Atlantic, is ancestral for Jach:

It’s fucking scary to have such a close relationship to a place knowing that my ancestry is literally like, that’s how that goes: we live, we make something beautiful, someone burns it down, and they take that land from us or they make sure that we can never use that land for ourselves again.

She referred to the 1921 Tulsa race massacre and burning of Black Wall Street and the ongoing gentrification of her home borough, the Bronx, as evidence for this ancestral dispossession. But this recognition also drives her to recognize threat and still choose an abundance of time and life:

The anxiety in me and the scarcity in me is like “I have to go to Riis Beach as much as possible because this could be the last time I’m going,” because it could be gone. And also in this formation of myself right now there is so much abundance in my memories of Riis Beach. And like the ways that I know that we created this space, we can create other places.

Like respondents transformed Marsha's death into collective futurity, Jach transforms the fear of displacement into an enduring futurist survival in which the memories of "creat[ing] this space" mean "we can create other places."

As we saw in Marsha's rolling in the waves, even death invites life in Black queer times. Shortly after this project's 2018 data collection, Ms. Colombia, a gender non-conforming person known to many as the "Queen of Queens" died at Riis. A memorial was soon built and consists of a fence installation of paper flowers, printed poems, photo collages, frequent visits, collaborative upkeep.²⁶ In the time since Ms. Colombia's passing, the memorial bears the marks of time, weather, and massive community participation—all reminders of the persistence of ephemera and the force of these particular waters. At its corner, a poem was briefly tied up in the winter of 2018, bringing Audre Lorde back to Riis: Lorde's "A Litany for Survival." Lorde's poem communicates the tie between QTBIPOC life and persistent ephemera as she writes of "we [who] were never meant to survive" and yet are surviving. It is in Lorde's tense of "shoreline[s]," "doorways," "at once before and after," and "a now that can breed futures" that Riis spills into queer Afrofuturist waters with futures full of risk and potential (Lorde, 1978). At Riis, it's not the isolating preservation of a location or moment that breeds futures; it's the embodied practices of collectivity and connectivity that we return to and carry back into the world. As Lorde writes of standing at the shoreline and seeing the sun set, "afraid/ it might not rise in the morning," she writes of an uncertain horizon and concludes: "it is better to speak/ remembering/ we were never meant to survive" (ibid.). We hear echoes of this remembering in Jach's fear of Riis being taken away:

²⁶Appendix I

I know regardless of any of that shit from the other side that we can still do this every time[...] the idea of us coming together to take care of ourselves is not limited to Riis Beach and I just have to be abundant and remember that[...] I have to learn how to remember that and I have to learn how to make other people remember that.

The queer Afrofuturist rememberings of Riis shared in Jach's interview and in survey responses throughout this article are not presentist descriptions of what Riis offers now, nor are they a closed archive depicting a QTBIPOC moment at Riis in the event of displacement. Rather, let them serve as insistent ephemera remembering that the particularities of Riis are not limited to Riis, "that we can still do this every time."

Jach and Lorde and Ms. Colombia's memorial promise a fugitive survival defying any one place or time. As QTBIPOC reject homonormativity and the reproductive temporalities the parade offers, we find fugitivity in respondents' insistence of not belonging to the parade and self-situation within a lineage lost by and thus outside the grasp of the parade. As respondents reclaimed Pride's history at Riis and promise to "do this every time," they suggest a Black Atlantic repossession of displacement and segregation that might be "affirmed and reconstructed as the basis of a privileged standpoint" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 111). This reconstruction of displacement and segregation makes way for spatiotemporal in(ter)ventions that disrupt anti-Blackness, anti-queerness and anti-transness and give the potentiality of *all our time* towards Black queer and trans life. As the Atlantic flows outside of, through, around, and between borders, continents, nations, and islands, and carries with it traces of history transfigured into salt water breathed into lungs and sticking to skin; queer Afrofuturist placemaking moves outside of, through,

around, and between fixed notions of place and transfigures histories of displacement into practices of forceful and particular fluidity. Queer Afrofuturist placemaking exceeds place or planning; it is the practice of life, a mode of rehearsal as if we will survive.

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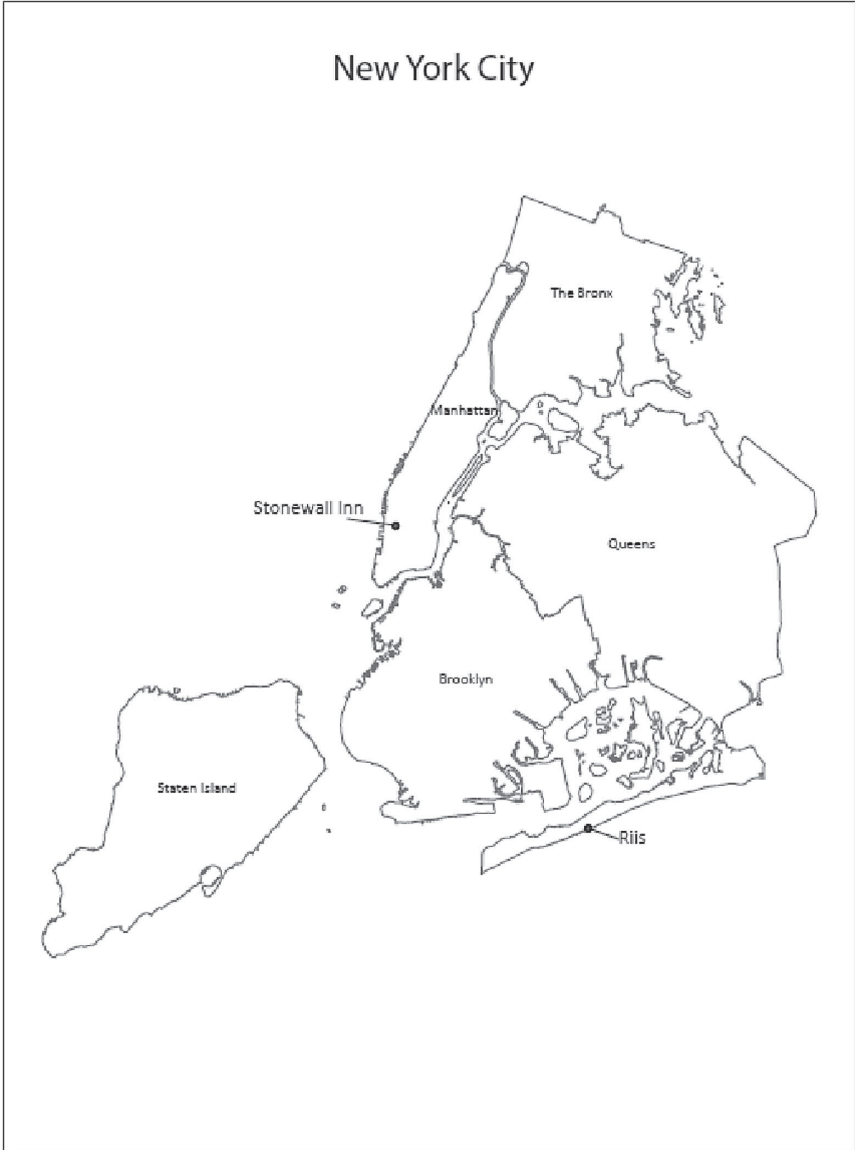
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Appendix A



Appendix B

NYC – Queen – Neponsit comparative racial and ethnic demographics

RACE	NYC	Queens	Neponsit
Total population	8443713	2298513	2025
White	42.7	39	98
Black or African American	24.3	18.3	0
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.4	0.4	0.3
Asian	13.9	25.3	1.7
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1	0	0
Some other race	15.1	13.5	0
Two or more races	3.5	3.5	0

HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE			
Total population	8443713	2298513	2025
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	29.1	28	4.8
Not Hispanic or Latino	70.9	72	95.2
White alone	32.1	25.3	93.4
Black or African American alone	21.9	17.2	0
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.2	0.2	0
Asian alone	13.8	25.1	1.7
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0	0
Some other race alone	0.8	2	0
Two or more races	1.9	2.2	0

It is worth noting that while 51% of Latinos in Queens identified themselves as racially white, 39% as other, 4% as Black, and .5% as Native American; Latino residents of Neponsit identified themselves racially as 87.7% white, 12.2% Native American, 0% Black, and 0% other.

Source: 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles

Appendix C

Survey- administered June 28, 2018

1. Age: _____
 2. Do you identify as (check all that apply):
 - Queer?
 - Trans?
 - Non-binary or gender non-conforming?
 - A person of color?
 3. Describe your race/ethnicity: _____
 4. Describe your sexuality: _____
 5. Describe your gender identity: _____
 6. What is your ZIP code? _____ *
- *We are interested in the variety of places that people come from. Please provide your ZIP code unless you are concerned that it will allow you to be personally identified.
7. Did you attend the NYC Pride Parade today? Yes / No
 8. How many times have you ever attended the NYC Pride Parade (check one)?
 - 0
 - 1-3
 - 4-6
 - 7-9
 - 10+
 9. Approximately, when was the last time you attended the NYC Pride Parade?
 - _____ years ago; or in _____ (year)
 - Never attended

10. What is your opinion of the NYC Pride Parade?

11. When was the first time you came to Riis?

Year: _____ Age: _____

12. How frequently do you come to Riis each summer?

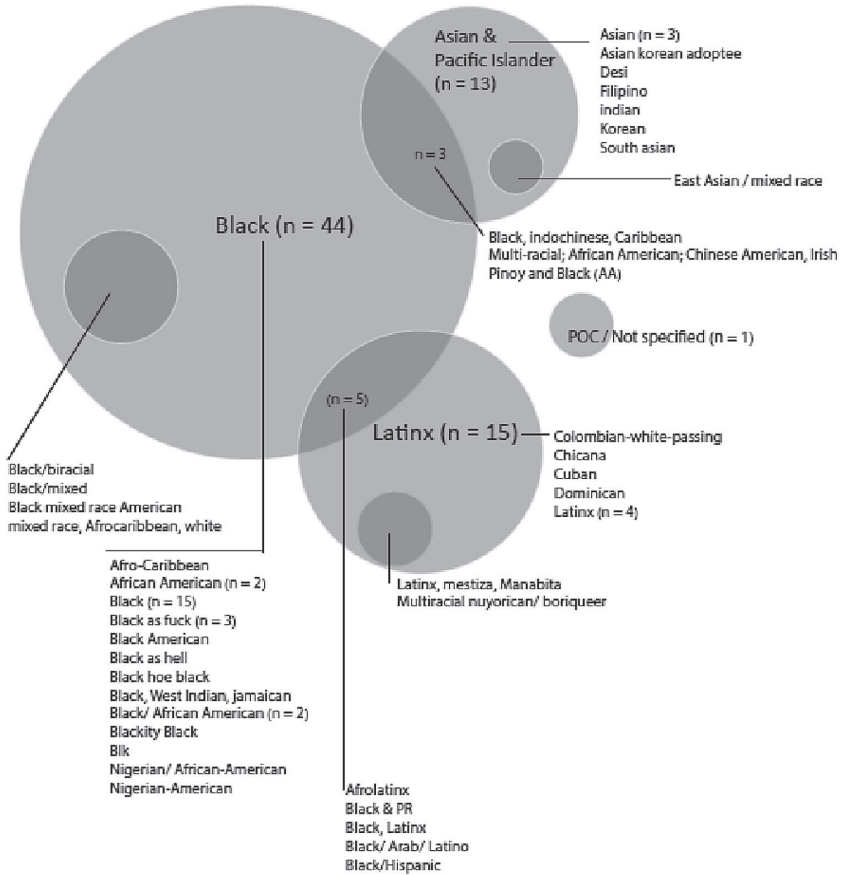
- This is my 1st time ever
- About once a summer
- About 1-3 times per month
- About once per week
- More than once per week

13. Some people are at the NYC Pride Parade or celebrating Pride at bars, clubs, and parties around the city today. Why did you choose to come to Riis today? If you did not go to the parade, why not?

14. How were you first introduced to Riis Beach?

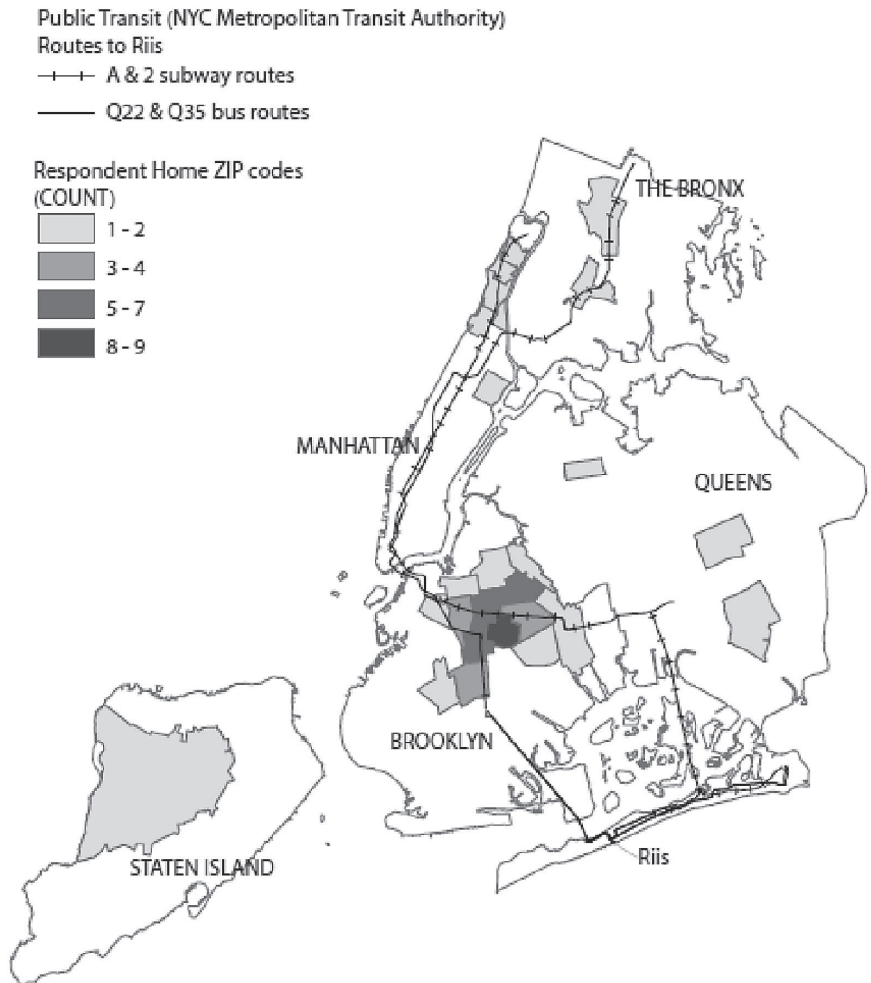
Appendix D

Racial and ethnic demographics of QTBIPOC survey respondents



Appendix E

Home ZIP codes of QTBIPOC respondents & most direct public transit routes



Appendix F

HOLC assessments for Neponsit (two parts- B16 & B17)

FORM 8
10-1-37

AREA DESCRIPTION - SECURITY MAP OF New York City, N.Y.

1. AREA CHARACTERISTICS:

a. Description of Terrain.

b. Favorable Influences. Paved and graded 96% - water and sewers 100%.
Recreational property

c. Detrimental Influences.

d. Percentage of land improved 85 %; e. Trend of desirability next 10-15 yrs. Static

2. INHABITANTS:

a. Occupation Business men; b. Estimated annual family income \$900-10,000

c. Foreign-born families 27 %; Russian predominating; d. Negro No %; %

e. Infiltration of None; f. Relief families Few
1934 Population 2100 - acre density 28

g. Population is increasing Yes; decreasing _____; static _____

3. BUILDINGS:

	PREDOMINATING	<u>75</u> %	OTHER TYPE	<u>25</u> %	OTHER TYPE	_____ %
a. Type	<u>Single-family</u>		<u>Multi-family</u>			
b. Construction	<u>Brick, frame, stucco</u>		<u>Probably brick predominates.</u>			
c. Average Age	<u>20</u> Years		_____ Years		_____ Years	
d. Repair	<u>Fair to good</u>		_____		_____	
e. Occupancy	<u>30% winter</u> <u>100% summer</u> %		_____ %		_____ %	
f. Home ownership	<u>90</u> %		_____ %		_____ %	
g. Constructed past yr.	<u>None</u>		_____		_____	
h. 1929 Price range	<u>\$11,000-36,000</u> <u>100</u> %		\$ _____ <u>100</u> %		\$ _____ <u>100</u> %	
i. 1935 Price range	<u>\$ 7,000-25,000</u> <u>66</u> %		\$ _____ %		\$ _____ %	
j. 1938 Price range	<u>\$ 7,000-25,000</u> <u>66</u> %		\$ _____ %		\$ _____ %	
k. Sales demand	<u>\$ 8,000-12,000</u>		\$ _____		\$ _____	
l. Activity	<u>Slow</u>		_____		_____	
m. 1929 Rent range	<u>\$1000-1800</u> <u>100</u> %		\$ _____ <u>100</u> %		\$ _____ <u>100</u> %	
n. 1934 Rent ^{avg.} range	<u>\$ 500 -900</u> <u>50</u> %		\$ _____ %		\$ _____ %	
o. 1938 Rent range	<u>\$ 700-1200</u> <u>70</u> %		\$ _____ %		\$ _____ %	
p. Rental demand	<u>\$800-1000</u> " "		\$ _____		\$ _____	
q. Activity	<u>Good in summer</u>		_____		_____	

4. AVAILABILITY OF MORTGAGE FUNDS: a. Home purchase Ample; b. Home building Ample

5. CLARIFYING REMARKS: Main business streets; Rockaway Beach Blvd., Beach 116th St. Zoned for 96% residential, 2% business. Same as B-16 except developed property is 20% higher and undeveloped lots 100% higher.

6. NAME AND LOCATION Neponsit & Bello Harbor, Queens SECURITY GRADE B AREA NO. 17

ASSESSED VALUE: Variable at from 90% to 150% of market value.

FORM B
10-1-37

AREA DESCRIPTION - SECURITY MAP New York City, N.Y.

1. AREA CHARACTERISTICS:

a. Description of Terrain Flat - sea level or little above.

b. Favorable Influences. Paved or graded 99% - water and sewers 100% - Near Parks. Very good neighborhood. Heavily populated in summer. Possibly 65% vacant in winter.

c. Detrimental Influences Only Long Island R.R. transportation to the city.

d. Percentage of land improved 2 %; e. Trend of desirability next 10-15 yrs Static
Non-ros 1 %

2. INHABITANTS:

a. Occupation Business men - middle class; b. Estimated annual family income \$300-7000

c. Foreign-born families 2 %; Irish - Russian predominating; d. Negro No %; %

e. Infiltration of None; f. Relief families Few
1934 Population 4870 - acre density 13

g. Population is increasing Yes; decreasing _____; static _____

3. BUILDINGS:

	PREDOMINATING <u>76</u> %	OTHER TYPE <u>24</u> %	OTHER TYPE _____ %
a. Type	<u>Single-family</u>	<u>Multi-family</u>	_____
	<u>Brick 1/3,</u>	_____	_____
b. Construction	<u>Frame 1/3, stucco 1/3</u>	_____	_____
c. Average Age	<u>15</u> Years	_____ Years	_____ Years
d. Repair	<u>West of Adirondack - good</u>	_____	_____
	<u>East - fair to good</u>	_____	_____
	<u>35% winter</u>	_____	_____
e. Occupancy	<u>100% summer</u> %	_____ %	_____ %
f. Home ownership	<u>90</u> %	_____ %	_____ %
g. Constructed past yr	<u>30 (\$10,000)</u>	_____	_____
h. 1939 Price range	<u>\$300-30,000</u> _____ 100% \$	_____ 100% \$	_____ 100% \$
i. 1935 Price range	<u>\$500-20,000</u> _____ 66 % \$	_____ % \$	_____ % \$
j. 1938 Price range	<u>\$500-20,000</u> _____ 66 % \$	_____ % \$	_____ % \$
k. Sales demand	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
l. Activity	<u>Fair in spring & summer</u>	_____	_____
m. 1929 Rent range	<u>\$5 - 150</u> _____ 100% \$	_____ 100% \$	_____ 100% \$
n. 1934 Rent ^{avg.} range	<u>\$2 - 75</u> _____ 50 % \$	_____ % \$	_____ % \$
o. 1938 Rent range	<u>\$0 - 100</u> _____ 66-77 % \$	_____ % \$	_____ % \$
p. Rental demand	<u>\$00-1000 for summer season</u>	\$ _____	\$ _____
q. Activity	<u>Very heavy in summer months</u>	_____	_____

4. AVAILABILITY OF MORTGAGE FUNDS: a. Home purchase Ample; b. Home building Ample

5. CLARIFYING REMARKS: Main business street is Rockway Beach Blvd. Zoned for 95% residential and 5% business. Between 118th and 124th there has been a large amount of conversion to rooming houses. Rentals are by the summer season at the above average for 12 months.

6. NAME AND LOCATION Ballo Harbor & Neponsit, Queens SECURITY GRADE _____ B AREA NO. 16

ASSESSED VALUE: From 90-150% of market value.

Appendix G

Fence detail between Neponsit and Riis



Original image by Peter Shugert. 1999. "Aerial view of Neponsit near Jacob Riis Park". U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Source: "Neponsit, Queens". Wikipedia. Accessed 2020.

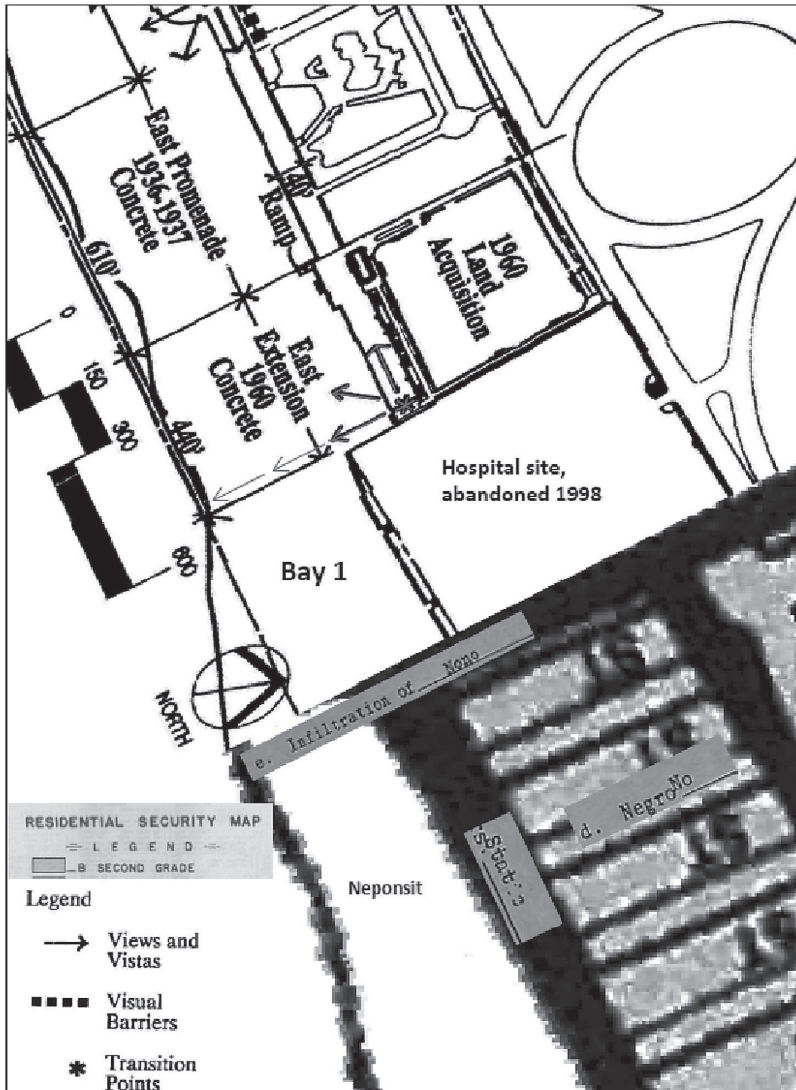
Cropped for fence detail by author.



2010 photograph taken from the Neponsit Beach side of the fence between Neponsit and Bay 1. Date confirmed via email from the photographer.

Source: Stefan Falke. 2010. "Jacob Riis Park". StefanFalk.com. Accessed 2020.

Appendix H



Collage by author depicting Neponsit's HOLC assessment and Jacob Riis Park construction periods and sightlines; sightlines highlighted in red

Sources: Nelson, et al., 2020; Lane, Frenchman, and Associates, 1992

Appendix I

Ms. Colombia memorial at Riis



Ms. Colombia memorial. 2018. Photo by author.



“A Litany for Survival” tied to the Ms. Colombia memorial. 2018. Photo by author.

A Litany for Survival, by Audre Lorde

For those of us who live at the shoreline
standing upon the constant edges of decision
crucial and alone
for those of us who cannot indulge
the passing dreams of choice
who love in doorways coming and going
in the hours between dawns
looking inward and outward
at once before and after
seeking a now that can breed
futures
like bread in our children's mouths
so their dreams will not reflect
the death of ours;

For those of us
who were imprinted with fear
like a faint line in the center of our foreheads
learning to be afraid with our mother's milk
for by this weapon
this illusion of some safety to be found
the heavy-footed hoped to silence us
For all of us
this instant and this triumph
We were never meant to survive.

And when the sun rises we are afraid
it might not remain
when the sun sets we are afraid
it might not rise in the morning
when our stomachs are full we are afraid
of indigestion
when our stomachs are empty we are afraid
we may never eat again
when we are loved we are afraid
love will vanish
when we are alone we are afraid
love will never return
and when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid

So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive.