

June 2018

Losing home: Housing, displacement, and the American Dream

Jessie Speer
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/etd>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Speer, Jessie, "Losing home: Housing, displacement, and the American Dream" (2018). *Dissertations - ALL*. 899.

<https://surface.syr.edu/etd/899>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the SURFACE at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations - ALL by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, new oral history archives and self-publishing platforms have led to an explosion in the production of memoirs and oral histories of homelessness. This dissertation frames the growing genre of homeless life narratives as a form of urban theory that has been largely displaced from public memory. Based on close readings of hundreds of memoirs and oral histories of homelessness from cities across the United States, this research highlights the violent geographies of the American dream, in which both political economies of urban housing and heteropatriarchal cultures of domesticity produce racialized and gendered cycles of displacement. Further, it enables a radical reimagining of domestic space as a potential site of collective appropriation and mutual care, in resistance to isolated domestic labor and the pressures of rent. In centering displaced voices and analyzing the connections between economic and intimate politics, this work advances a Marxist-feminist and postcolonial approach to the study of contemporary housing and American life.

**LOSING HOME:
HOUSING, DISPLACEMENT, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM**

by

Jessie L. Speer

B.A., University of Arizona, 2004

J.D., New College of California School of Law, 2008

M.A., Syracuse University, 2014

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Geography

Syracuse University

June 2018

Copyright © Jessie Speer, 2018
All Rights Reserved

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe this dissertation to those who have written about their own experiences of homelessness. It takes guts to write and speak honestly about painful memories. But life stories have the power to move people in unseen and surprising ways. Lee Stringer, your memoir—a work of literature that is politically insightful, subtle, tragic, and unsentimental—sparked the beginning of this project. I would not have written this dissertation if you had not written *Grand Central Winter*. Lisa Gray-Garcia, your work as an activist and writer is my greatest ongoing inspiration. I can only hope to work alongside the poverty scholars movement in the future, and support its efforts in any way I can. To those I cite throughout this text who self-published their memoirs or shared their stories with oral historians—countless people who I will likely never meet—if you ever read this, just know that your words lifted me off the page and filled me a desire to listen and engage.

I also owe this work to the oral historians and archivists who devote themselves to the practice of listening. Margaret Miles made a substantial portion of her as-yet-unarchived collection of oral histories available to me before they became part of the public record, a gift which enabled the writing of this dissertation. She continues to give her tireless energy to elevating the voices of those who are so often unheard. Annette March gave me the most generous gift of her time, her ear, and her compassionate feedback. I have never met anyone during my research who was so intellectually generous, and I cannot wait to dive into the recordings of our conversations from two years ago. To Kati Greaney, Peter Rachleff, Martha Bloomfield, Louise Edwards-Simpson, Brent Adams, Zav Hershfield, and Anne Mavity, thank you all for helping me out in “the field.” To the anonymous women who opened their lives to me during our oral history interviews, you soothed my soul during some really rough times. You are

the definition of what it means to be good friends, and unassuming, down-to-earth, badass women. To the person I interviewed who read my mind, you deserve only the good things in life from here on out. I hope you found the stone.

Despite all my reservations about the ritualized elitism of academia, I lucked out in having a group of mentors who modeled another path. Gladys McCormick, your class on oral history was the hardest and best I ever took in graduate school, and inspired me to embark on this project. I love your model of pedagogy—it is challenging but kind. Jamie Winders, I am blown away by your dedication to your students. When I received your hard copy of my dissertation in the mail, marked up and down with comments and suggestions, I felt that my work mattered because you read it so carefully. Matt Huber and Jackie Orr, thank you for always being kind and supportive, and for challenging me in the best ways. Gretchen Purser, your research is an inspiration and I hope to have the opportunity to work together in some way in the future. To my advisor, Don Mitchell, I thought it would be impossible to find this degree of support and patience in an academic mentor. You are the reason I am a geographer, and you have shown me that it is possible to resist the pressures of the neoliberal university. To the incredible staff at the Department of Geography, thank you for making the office feel like home. To Christina Leigh Dietz, thank you for encouraging me to apply to as many grants as possible, and guiding me through the process. You helped me pay the bills on more than one occasion.

To friends in Syracuse, you are by far the greatest factor in having sustained my mental wellbeing throughout the boring, lonely, and exhilarating work of thinking and writing. I want to name everyone but you know who you are. How magic to have had that time together, and hopefully many reunions to come. To the Tucson Aquatic Enthusiast Society, thank you for turning me on to geography. To friends in Bloomington, thanks for showing me that life on the

other side (the professor side) can be a joy and a blessing. I miss our sessions at the Atlas Ballroom (the *real* Center for Dialectical Thought). To old friends from Tucson and Cali, I miss you guys like crazy. But more than anything else, to Mom and Dad and Carmen and Colenso, I just can't tell you how lucky I am to have such a creative, loving and wacky family. And to Majed, how lucky I am to have found you! You complement me in all the best ways. I can't imagine my life without you, Baloo.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Displacement and the search for place.....	8
Homes, cities, and the American dream.....	19
<u>Part I: Losing home</u>	
Chapter I: “They all seem to speak louder than me”	30
Displaced voices and the struggle to be heard.....	31
Methods for listening and speaking.....	49
Chapter II: “Running away from running away”	66
Domesticity and the hidden abode of violence.....	69
Homelessness as a cycle of escape.....	82
Chapter III: “Third-world-in-the-first world”	104
Race and the geographies of American housing displacement.....	105
Property, citizenship, and American empire.....	122
<u>Part II: Imagining home</u>	
Chapter IV: “Trash houses and patchwork families”	145
Collective families and visions for a new home.....	150
Claiming space through squatting.....	167
Chapter V: “A collection of stories, poetry and theories”	187
Finding a home in the archive.....	189
Recentering homelessness through experiential theory.....	203
Conclusion	221
Moving beyond boundaries.....	226
Appendix	235
List of memoirs of homelessness.....	235
List of archives and collections of oral histories of homelessness.....	247
Bibliography	250
Vita	291

Introduction

Eight years ago, I was assigned to write a story about a man who was dying. His name was Johnson, and he was living in an unmarked cement warehouse with a hundred bunk beds arranged in rows like an army barracks. When I came to interview him, he was sitting in a patch of light falling through the only window in the building. He wore a collared flannel shirt and was hooked up to an oxygen tank. As the interview began, I asked about his childhood. He been a street kid in New York City and stole money for a living. I asked how he ended up homeless, assuming he had been on the streets since then. *Stop putting words in my mouth*, he said, his face shaking. He worked for decades changing bulbs at the top of radio towers and did not become homeless until the cancer hit. *Have you ever been 400 feet up off the ground?* When he became too sick to work, Johnson traveled to Malaysia, eating pineapples and soaking up the sun. I asked if things did not work out after his travels, and he corrected me again. *It's real simple*, he said. *I didn't find what I wanted. It's like looking for Shangri La but it's not there. What're you gonna do? Nothing. I came out here when my uncle was dying.* The wind rattled against the door as we talked. I asked him how he coped when he didn't have a home. *You tell me. What do you do?* He gestured to the expanse of beds. *You come here. Or you sleep outside. I don't even know when the doctor put me here. I was asking myself that the other day. How long have I been here?*¹

After more than an hour of stilted questions and answers, a gust of wind blew the back door open. Johnson stood up and steadied himself against the wall, pulling a cigarette from his shirt pocket. I stopped the recorder and we stepped out into the early morning light. A storm had

¹ Johnson, whom I refer to using a pseudonym, lived at the Primavera Shelter in Tucson, Arizona, which sleeps up to a hundred men in a single warehouse situated off the edge of a remote highway. Residents were required to undergo tuberculosis testing and case management. At the time I volunteered writing stories for the shelter newsletter. The dialogue here has been reconstructed from notes and recordings. I have previously written about my interview with Johnson in the methodology section of my master's thesis, *The right to the tent city*.

passed through hours earlier, leaving everything cool and wet. The smell of creosote filled the air, and the cicadas had stopped buzzing in the trees. The wind was blowing and huge puffs of cloud obscured the sun, making the yellow grass seem electric against the sky. Johnson disconnected himself from the oxygen machine and began smoking. He asked what I would write about. I told him the shelter newsletter wanted an essay about how he was living on the streets and how they gave him shelter. He said I should tell a better story. *You listening?* He looked at me hard, and I saw for the first time that his eyes were misted over with cataracts. *Okay*, he said. *It was prom night. Me and these friends, we didn't go to prom. New York City you can drink at 18. So we took off and went to this French restaurant where the walls are made of fish tanks. And all that was in there was kissing fish. And there was someone playing softly on the piano. We just sat there with our nice drinks and watched the fish kiss.* A smile moved across his face. *You ever seen a kissing fish?* he asked, and I could see that his eyes were wet. I shook my head—I had never heard of kissing fish, but I could imagine them vividly, fluttering behind the glass.

When I left that day, Johnson asked me to visit again. But he died only a week later. After the interview, I gave the recording to my supervisor but never wrote the story. I thought his life was too big for a promotional piece about a shelter. Yet I was left with a nagging question: if Johnson were the author of his story, what would he have written? I saw clearly the unequal legacy that brought me to my computer, to write about his life, and him to the shelter, to tell his story. In the years following I would go on to interview many others about their experiences of homelessness and would continue to struggle over how to write about others without reducing the complexity and richness of their lives. I know now that people without housing tell their

stories in countless ways, without the benefit of desks or laptops, and the real question is learning how to listen. As Johnson had asked after he corrected me several times, *are you listening?*

Through Johnson's oral history, I also saw that homelessness is not a stable or permanent condition but something that people slip into and out of over the course of a lifetime. I saw that each life is an epic story and that each story is worth remembering. Yet the grand scope of history condenses the complexity of thousands of lives—each tragic, comic, and intensely relevant—into a single coherent tale. Often, those remembered are metaphors for the unwritten collective, one part of a larger, bustling assembly of people acting together. In the process of selecting who will be written out of the past, sometimes entire groups are forgotten. Stories about the loss and struggle for home, for example, have not taken their place in history, as they are spoken by those who are most often unheard. As Anika Francis (2013, 182) writes in her memoir of homelessness, “The victor dictates the version of the story we believe and our beliefs shape our minds. However there is more than one story to be told. [I wanted] to learn about the stories that were never told.”

Before I began this research, I read a memoir by a man named Lee Stringer. I do not remember how I acquired his book, only that I found it on my shelf and when I began reading, was instantly brought into a world unlike anything I had known. Stringer's writing inspired me to read other memoirs of homelessness and to begin the project of interpreting society's overlooked storytellers. Together, narratives about the loss of housing and the struggle for home tell a larger truth about the patterns of displacement inherent to American housing and the possibility for a different kind of home. Thus, this dissertation is not only about stories, but about the practice of working toward a world where all people have access to a space they can call home. This aspiration is bigger than any story can contain. As Nick Flynn (2004, 59) writes in his memoir,

the project of ending homelessness “feels like an unending play ... so large that it will be impossible to ever stage. It has become nearly the size of air, or water. A map the size of the world.”



Over the last several decades, free self-publishing platforms have enabled an explosion in the production of memoirs of homelessness, many of them written by authors who were living on the streets or in shelters at the time of writing. Yet journalists and social scientists have largely overlooked such texts, as homeless authors are rarely viewed as experts on the subject of homelessness. In recent years, activists across the country have also created homeless oral history archives as forums for homeless voices to be heard and recorded in the wake of the 2008 housing crisis. These oral histories have not yet been studied, and many are still in the process of being officially archived. Together, these texts present a rich body of work that contains the memories, stories, and ideas of a wide range of people who have experienced homelessness. I turn to this literature in seeking to answer two interrelated questions: how can society undo the silencing of homeless voices, and how do homeless voices contribute to our understanding of American housing and domestic life?

During my research, I used multiple library and bookseller databases to compile a collection of 215 memoirs of contemporary homelessness, about a dozen of which were translated, republished, or otherwise widely disseminated. I also visited five oral history archives in California, Minnesota, Indiana, and Washington, DC, as well as several smaller online archives from cities across the nation, and reviewed more than 340 oral histories recorded over the past decade. Many of the oral histories cited here are referred to by first names only, as

archivists sought to preserve participants' anonymity.² In analyzing life narratives, I seek to reverse the tendency to treat housed society as a neutral vantage point and homelessness as the “other” to be commented upon. Instead, I read homeless authors as social critics and housed society as the object of analysis. In examining personal experience as a source of social knowledge and seeking to be transparent in my analysis, I highlight the ways my interpretation of the life narratives is grounded in my own experiences of housing and domesticity. Thus, I weave my own life story into these pages. The paragraphs below outline some of the overarching themes of this dissertation to lay the groundwork for the chapters that follow.

This project is grounded in the basic assertion that homeless life narrators represent some of the broader interests of those who experience homelessness in the US today. In his *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci (1995) highlights the revolutionary importance of such “organic intellectuals”—distinct from the established intelligentsia—who articulate the worldviews of marginalized people. As Lisa Gray-Garcia (2006, 212) writes in her memoir of homelessness, although she had “no formal education or experience,” she became an “organic intellectual” through her work of writing about and advocating for the homeless. Yet it remains unclear who belongs to the collective of “the homeless,” as the concept of homelessness itself is not obvious or transparent. Gramsci (1995) argues that organic intellectuals are crucial for resistance precisely in their ability to articulate a group’s collective identity or “class consciousness.” Thus, to conceptualize homelessness, it is necessary to understand the class consciousness of those who

² Further, in quoting both oral histories and memoirs, I preserved the original syntax and italics. As many life narratives are written in vernacular English, I have chosen to avoid using the insertion “sic” so as not to reinforce the supremacy of certain ways of writing and speaking over others. Where the meaning of the quotation is unclear out of context, I have occasionally used brackets to insert or replace a word for clarity. Finally, as many e-books do not have page numbers, I cite chapter numbers where possible using the abbreviation “c.”

experience homelessness. I read Gray-Garcia’s life narrative—and the broader collection of narratives—as a guide to deepening this understanding.

Historically, the term “homeless” rose to prominence alongside US-based activist movements in the 1980s that sought to undo stigma against “the poor” (Blasi 1994). It was only over time that this initially emancipatory category became integrated into the status quo, such that today, it has become a distinct category of social services, often carrying the implication that individuals without housing are deficient and in need of management (Willse 2015). As identity categories often shift between being claimed by marginalized groups and assimilated into official policy, it matters less what word is used than *how* that word is conceived. Understanding homelessness as a set of shared experiences and interests opens the possibility for solidarity building among people who identify as belonging to distinct national, gendered, and racialized groups (Roy 2003). At the same time, overly homogeneous and pure perceptions of groups often reinforce exclusion and separation and deny the way in which group membership is fluid, ambiguous, and overlapping (Gilroy 1993; Bhaba 1994).³ Rather than thinking in terms of simplistic or individualized behavioral traits, it is necessary to frame homelessness as a social and structural phenomenon that is complex, shifting, and multi-dimensional.

Many life narrators understand homelessness in precisely these terms, as including a remarkably diverse group of people who share a common relationship to property. As Pat McDonough (1996, vii) writes in her memoir of living in a Minneapolis shelter, homelessness encompasses multiple overlapping identities, in contrast to media representations of a singular, unitary group:

³ This is particularly true in relation to homeless women. As I discuss in chapter three, women often seek out invisibility in order to avoid sexual violence and are thus often not “counted” as among the homeless by social service agencies.

Although the media refer to people who are in the shelter system or sleeping on the street as “The Homeless,” the people I encountered referred to themselves as “Street People.” To them, “The Homeless” was a term that included not only Street People, but also “hobos,” “railroad transients,” some of the “river-bank dwellers,” “bums,” “panhandlers,” “people under the highway bridges,” “people who live in vehicles,” and “young people who live in squats.”

Across these differences, McDonough writes that homelessness is marked by the shared experience of being without land, such that the homeless collectively constitute “the unlanded classes” (1996, 202). Academic scholars have similarly argued that homelessness is the material condition of being excluded from property (Waldron 1991; Baron 2004; Blomley 2006). As property includes both the right to occupy space and the right to exclude others, homeless people can be seen as those who experience only the negative aspects of property: the exclusions of others.⁴

Yet as I argue throughout this dissertation, life narratives reveal that homelessness is not simply the result of *exclusion* but also the more active and constitutive process of displacement. Homeless people are not only kept out of spaces but are kicked out of spaces, over and over again. Homelessness is not a discrete or static condition but a cyclical phenomenon that people are thrust into—often multiple times—over the course of their lives. Life narratives further reveal that this displacement is not simply material but is also social and ideological. To lose one’s home, in this sense, is to be displaced from shelter, family, and social memory. Thus, I use

⁴ McDonough’s category further suggests that “the unlanded class” constitutes a fundamental social group under capitalism. Many have analyzed homelessness as a condition of being permanently excluded from the labor market—part of Marx’s “lumpenproletariat”—yet this understanding is unsatisfactory as many homeless people *do* engage in waged labor (see Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). McDonough suggests instead that homeless people’s social position is determined by virtue of their inability to purchase access to land. Although David Harvey (1976) argues that differences in consumption ability do not create fundamental class divisions, the unique commodity of housing—and land, more broadly—can be seen as dividing society into antagonistic groups. Indeed, in *Capital, Volume III*, Marx (1981) expanded his earlier understanding of class—as constituted by workers and capitalists—to include landowners as a third primary social class, which in turn implies the existence of the unlanded classes, as a group antagonistic to landlords.

the word “home” in its broadest sense to encompass physical shelter, domestic social relations, and ideological attachments to place.⁵ As the title of this dissertation suggests, homelessness is the repeated and incremental loss of home. In the section below, I discuss how life narratives of homelessness can contribute to a deeper understanding of this loss, as well as new models of place.

Displacement and the search for place

“A spectre is haunting the world—the spectre of displacement. . . . Those displaced should openly, in the face of the whole world, make their experiences and aims known.”
—Arturo Escobar (2003), paraphrasing *The Communist Manifesto*

Displacement is first and foremost a loss of place. Thus, any examination of displacement must include an analysis of space and place. Geographers have elucidated the infinite complexity of space: how it is actively produced by social relations, is multiple and overlapping, and constitutes patterns of movement, flow, stasis, boundaries and openings. In this sense, as Henri Lefebvre (1991, 90) argues, space is not simply a “passive receptacle” but a process that is continually made and remade, as each new space inherits and reworks the space that preceded it. Lefebvre further highlights how space is produced through embodied movement in the world. Shelled creatures grow home-like containers to protect their bodies, while spiders produce dwellings from self-made silk. In the process of creating boundaries between themselves and the world, such creatures create new kinds of spaces: inside versus outside, here versus there.

People also make protective containers for their bodies. Through the course of human history, the shape and form these structures have taken is vast and diverse. As Bachelard (1994)

⁵ Housing, in this sense, is a category included under the rubric of home. See Dovey (1985) and Blunt and Dowling (2006) for a deeper discussion on the differences between housing and home.

argues, the home can be seen as a work of art and a poetic reimagining of space. It is not only a geometric object that provides refuge from the natural world but is also a site of human intimacy and the creative practice of homemaking. Lefebvre similarly writes, “the dwelling passes everywhere for a special, still sacred, quasi-religious and in fact almost absolute space” (1991, 121). Yet under capitalism, domestic space increasingly becomes a commodity bought and sold on the market (Lefebvre 1991; Harvey 1976). As such, capitalist housing exposes non-owners to the lifelong pressures of rent and the threat of displacement. This dynamic disproportionately affects communities of color in the US who have faced ongoing housing discrimination, and women who perform unpaid domestic labor.

Life narratives of homelessness are rich with discussions of the space of the home. Perhaps more than any other subject, the home is associated with displacement. In the first part of this dissertation, I examine three aspects of displacement—ideological, cultural, and economic—that respectively correspond to displacement from history, shelter, and domestic social relations. This is not to draw bright lines between ideological, material, and cultural phenomena, as such divisions are never clear or absolute. Indeed, spatial thinking is useful precisely in its ability to connect the material world to ideology and culture (Kaplan 1996). While geographers have broadly distinguished space (the material world) from place (the associations and meanings attached to it), both overlap and produce each other, as all material arrangements are filtered through ideology, and all thought refers to something in the physical world (see Tuan 1977). Yet the space/place distinction is helpful for analysis, as it corresponds roughly to the distinction between the physical structure of housing and the cultural practices and ideologies associated with domesticity. As the first part of this dissertation argues, people are

displaced not only by private property but also by unequal social relationships within the home and the ideological terrain of history itself.

This dissertation begins, in chapter one, with an examination of the ideological aspects of displacement, in which homeless people's voices and ideas are consistently removed from public debate and historical memory. Life narratives of homelessness reveal the ways in which homeless people struggle to make their voices heard, even as their efforts are repeatedly obstructed by newspapers, television stations, and other institutions of knowledge. I argue that this process does not simply involve ideological exclusion, but the active and constitutive removal—or displacement—of homeless voices. I further reflect on my own efforts to write about homelessness without displacing homeless voices and the broader question of how elite intermediaries can speak against oppression without speaking over those who are oppressed.

In chapter two, I turn to the intimate sphere of the home to reveal how women and LGBT youth are disproportionately displaced by mainstream domestic norms and practices. Although Chester Hartman and his co-authors (1982, 3) define housing displacement as “what happens when forces outside the household make living there impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable,” I argue that displacement often emerges from dynamics *within* the home. Life narratives reveal that mainstream domestic norms are linked to heteropatriarchal violence and women's unwaged labor, such that women and young people are often left with only two options: homelessness or a violent home. Thus, homelessness, for many, involves cycling between violent homes, in contrast to the masculinist notion of homelessness as life outdoors.

Finally, in chapter three I turn to the question of property and race to examine how displacement has historically operated through racialized American housing. Life narratives of homelessness reveal that housing, like land, is a tool of colonial violence and that the displaced

in the US are part of a global community of economically and racially displaced people. In this chapter I discuss the relationship between citizenship and housing and the ways in which both homeless people and poor people of color in the US have been displaced from the “American dream.”

Together, these three chapters reveal that homelessness is not simply a condition of exclusion, but one of continually asserting one’s place in the world and being repeatedly displaced. As Gray-Garcia (2006, 287) writes in her memoir, to be homeless is to be constantly “in motion.” Rather than a static location outside housing, homelessness can be seen as the condition of having no fixed location and being continually forced to move between sites. As Susan Fraiman (2017, 161) argues, homelessness is not the absence of domesticity, but rather its fragmentation across multiple sites. Life narratives of homelessness reveal that this fragmentation is the result of displacement, as people are continually forced to uproot themselves and seek another place of rest. As Cadillac Man (2009, 157) argues, “If you want to survive out here, you should have several houses.” He continues in another passage, “If you were to ask every homeless person in this country to make a list of the places they slept, you would have volumes filled with safe havens and a few places of sheer desperation” (2009, 278).

The subject of housing displacement has been central to scholarly analyses of gentrification (see Marcuse 1986; Lyons 1996; Smith 1996; Curran 2007; Stabrowsky 2014). For urban geographers, displacement is a broad and diverse phenomenon that operates in multiple ways. Peter Marcuse (1986) distinguished “direct displacement” through eviction from “exclusionary displacement” in which future residents are prevented from occupying a house because it has been abandoned or gentrified. In this situation, the number of available housing units in the community is reduced, such that the residents who would otherwise have moved in

are forced elsewhere. Filip Stabrowsky (2014) similarly argues that displacement is not a one-time occurrence, but a slow social process that affects even those who remain in the neighborhood but are subject to higher rents, deteriorating buildings, and landlord harassment. In this work, rather than seeking to measure displacement as a quantitative phenomenon, I am interested in how those who are displaced theorize their experiences. I do not discuss displacement only as a factor of gentrification but as a process that is intrinsic to capitalist housing structures, hegemonic domestic relations, and collective memory and belonging.

Yet housing displacement is often taken for granted as part of everyday life. In contrast, large-scale displacements that result from sudden natural disaster or warfare are more often viewed as aberrant and thus worthy of greater levels of assistance (Mooney 2005). In his memoir, Nathan Monk (2015, c. 3) argues that such sudden, unexpected homelessness—what he calls “flash homelessness”—is far less common than the slow, incremental homelessness that results from poverty. He writes: “A common misconception concerning homelessness is that it is a sudden occurrence.” He describes how homelessness “sneaks up on you,” beginning with shut-off utilities, until one by one, each piece of domestic comfort is lost. Ron Casanova (1996, 197), in his memoir, critiques the way in which middle-class people displaced by an earthquake in California were privileged above those displaced by poverty: “The new influx of well-to-do homeless in California was being taken care of by relief funds and organizations, while the people who had been homeless all along were still being ignored. The middle-class homeless were getting the support that *all* the homeless should have been getting.” As McDonough (1996, 325) writes, many aid organizations fail to address homelessness “because they are into temporary disaster relief and *the homeless problem is a permanent thing.*”

While displacement caused by eviction and domestic violence are often viewed as inherent to the nature of mainstream domesticity, they are also rooted in violent social relations. Throughout this dissertation, I refer to the “violence” of displacement to emphasize the way in which people are forced out of their homes against their will. This includes the implication of violence as well as the actual use of physical force against the body, as in the case of domestic abuse or physical eviction.⁶ As the oral histories and memoirs further reveal, the violence of housing and domesticity in the US presents a geographic paradox: marginalized communities are simultaneously displaced by housing, at the same time as they are confined by it. Displacement can thus take the dual form of being forcibly removed or escaping confinement. Indeed, geographers have argued that social disadvantage enforces *both* mobility and fixity (Fortier et al. 2003), a dynamic that is exemplified in the case of migrants held in detention or refugees living in camps. As Katherine McKittrick (2011, 959) writes, “Being locked in and locked out are two sides of the same coin.” In chapter three, I show how racist housing schemes both contain and displace communities of color, as residents are both restricted to disinvested urban zones and displaced by gentrification as their houses increase in value. A dialectic between confinement and displacement also appears in chapter two, as those who experience intimate violence are both confined to the space of the home and forced to escape it. Finally, chapter one shows how homeless people’s voices are both displaced altogether and confined to a subordinated position.

In all its complexity, the concept of displacement opens the possibility for building connections across a diverse range of experiences. As I argue in chapter three, to frame

⁶ The physical work of eviction, as Gretchen Purser (2016) describes in a chilling ethnographic account, is often performed by homeless people themselves engaged in low-paid, temporary day labor. Purser thus highlights the circular nature of dispossession as a self-reproducing process in which those who do the physical work of dispossessing others are themselves part of the larger collective of people at risk of dispossession.

homelessness as racialized housing displacement is to understand it as a globally-shared phenomena linked to colonial processes. Ananya Roy (2003) argues that this kind of transnational analysis of homelessness is central to theory building and creating solidarity across contexts. Further, chapter two reveals a new understanding of homelessness as displacement from the social relations of the home and thus connects the experiences of women and young people to current male-centric framings of homelessness. Such a move not only casts a spotlight on a hidden epidemic of domestic violence in the US but also reveals the pervasive nature of American homelessness. And as I argue in chapter one, to understand the ideological displacements of homelessness is to address the fundamental need to develop tools for collective expression.

Together, the chapters in this section reveal the ways in which class, race, and gender overlap and interact through the operations of displacement. Kimberly Crenshaw (1991) argues that gender and race are enmeshed and must be examined together to avoid normalizing masculinity or whiteness. Further, any analysis of oppression must be sensitive to class, to avoid centering the bourgeoisie perspective or seeking advancement only for particular groups (McCall 2011). While chapters two and three speak largely to questions of gender and race, respectively, the question of class is always at the heart of my discussion of homelessness, and race and gender are examined as interactive and interdependent categories. Further, my analysis of race and gender emerge from materialist and anti-colonial feminism, both rooted in historical analyses of the ways in which gender and race were materially reproduced together under capitalism. The chapters in this section represent an attempt to work between all three categories

simultaneously.⁷ Fundamentally, ideological displacement, eviction, and domestic violence in the US all impact poor people, women, and racial minorities in deeply interrelated ways. The dynamics of displacement reveal, in a very concrete sense, that race, class, and gender are all bound up in each other and must be addressed together.⁸

Yet beyond the dynamics of displacement, life narratives of homelessness also envision alternative models of place. As McKittrick (2014) argues in the context of racial oppression, traces of blackness in the archive are overwhelmingly marked by violence and death, and scholarly repetition of these histories erases expressions of black life and freedom. She thus aims to describe a black sense of place that is not grounded in histories of violence. She writes that oppressed people are often “deemed too destroyed or too subjugated or too poor to write, imagine, want, or have a new lease on life” and that “thinking otherwise demands attending to a whole new system of knowledge” (2011, 955). Life narratives of homelessness can be seen as presenting this new system of knowledge in that they collectively describe a sense of place that resists the violence of housed society. Following McKittrick, I seek to trace how life narratives create visions for desirable futures. The chapters that follow include a discussion not only of homeless thinkers’ critiques of violence but also theorizations of emancipatory practices of squatting and collectivity that resist the incredible vulnerability of homeless life. As Eve

⁷ Yet, at the same time, it is vital not to subordinate any one of these categories to another. For example, Gayle Rubin (2009) argues that patriarchy—which lies in the traffic in women, rather than commodities—predates capitalism and thus must be analyzed on its own terms, rather than as secondary or derivative of capitalist exploitation.

⁸ Many life narrators reflect on the interrelated nature of class, race, and gender. As Sirena (2013) states in her oral history about her experience growing up in a poor neighborhood, “On the west side at that time ... there was not really color, there was just everybody is poor. ... At that time, there were no poor white people and if there were ... we didn’t consider them white because they were just like us.” Sirena suggests that whiteness is just as much a class position as it is a physical characteristic. Yet she also acknowledges the impact of phenotype, writing that because she “happened to be brown” she was treated as “less than what an American citizen should be.”

Sedgwick and Adam Frank (2003) argue, the “paranoid” mode of theorizing—that anticipates and catalogs disaster—is just one among many ways of seeing the world, and overlooks certain realities when engaged in isolation. They argue for the importance of including “reparative” modes of knowing that seek to find sustenance and healing amidst the pain of oppressive social structures. Life narratives of homelessness engage such reparative modes of knowing: they are not simply chronicles of trauma but are also rich with aspiration. Thus, I seek to account for the caring practices, small victories, and future visions that the life narratives describe and imagine. In the final part of this dissertation, I turn to the process of imagining home, rather than losing it.

At the same time, I do not want to romanticize homelessness or deny the fact of incredible hardship. Many life narrators—for whom homelessness was escape from confinement—recounted devastating stories of being tortured in front of their own children, strapped to a bed for months in an asylum, or kidnapped and forced into prostitution. Homelessness reveals a deep and profound trauma that is integral to housed society. Yet the absence of housing is also traumatic. Life narratives include multiple accounts of waking up to real-world nightmares: a group of shadowy strangers hovering above, the frozen body of a friend, or being bitten by a swarm of mice. At the same time, to portray homelessness only as a “landscape of despair” is to insist that homeless people are one-dimensional victims (Ruddick 1996, 52, citing Dear and Wolch 1987). As Eighner argues, a fixation on the “dangers and discomforts” of homelessness overshadows an everyday reality marked—more than anything else—by profound boredom:

In spite of the challenges that homelessness presented, the chief characteristic of my experience of homelessness was tedium. ... I do not think I could write a narrative that would quite capture the unrelenting ennui of homelessness.... Any homeless life entails certain dangers and discomforts. I have tried not to make too much of these, for I suppose people who have always lived in comfort will imagine the worst. (2013, xii-xiii)

In recounting their most painful memories, life narrators overwhelmingly avoid sensationalizing their suffering. Testimonies of hardship are most often understated, and many narrators use humor to reinterpret memories of trauma. As Mack Evasion (2001, 27) writes, “when matters turn so hopeless, the clouds so dark the only exit seems death ... the tide will turn *at the exact point it becomes funny.*” For all these reasons, I refrain from dwelling solely on the horrors of homelessness. Yet I also recount these memories here to counter any romantic notions of homelessness as an adventure or revolution. Instead, the experience of displacement is complex and fraught, marked both by pain and disorientation, and the struggle to establish a new sense of place.

The word “place” itself occurs repeatedly throughout the life narratives of homelessness. Many life narrators refer to “places to sleep” or “places to live” and describe a vast array home spaces: campsites, shelters, tents, trailers, motels, abandoned buildings, riversides, vehicles, and shacks. Cadillac Man (2009) describes how refrigerator boxes often become a favored form of shelter for many on the streets, because of their size and endurance. He writes, “thickness alone makes it weather resistant, to keep you dry and the draft out. Add a few blankets and you have a winter home. We call them box Hiltons” (2009, 38). Tina S. (2000, 180) similarly treasured the sturdiness of her refrigerator box, which she called “the Clubhouse.” She writes, “the Clubhouse in Grand Central Station stayed in one piece longer than I did.” Many others describe developing family collectives on the street in which friends mutually take care of each other according to ability and need. In chapter four, I examine how such collective homes resist the isolation and gender inequity of mainstream domesticity and how squatting practices challenge the commodification of space. I argue that life narratives of homelessness present radical visions of home that subvert capitalist property structures as well as the heteropatriarchal nuclear family. In

turn, they rethink insular notions of community by imagining non-biological caring collectives and forms of socio-spatial belonging not mediated by monetary exchange. This is not to say that homeless life narrators are universally radical in their visions of home but that displacement from housing creates the conditions of possibility for new domestic norms.

In chapter five, I argue that the archive of life narratives—both the collection of texts itself and its various repositories—is a metaphoric “home” for displaced voices, as it provides a center where knowledge can be housed. Further, the genre of life narrative itself is a form of experiential theory through which displaced knowledge can be *recentered* in scholarly analysis. This centering of homelessness knowledge provides a starting point from which the collective project of building new kinds of homes can begin. Yet the archive is also an incomplete and fragmented collection of texts that I am only beginning to trace, through the effort of compiling memoirs and consulting oral history archives. Thus, I seek to be transparent about the exclusions and boundaries of the archive as I describe it, by examining specifically what texts I include in the category “memoirs of homelessness” and what archivists, whom I interviewed, sought to accomplish through the work of collecting oral histories of homelessness.

If the first section of this dissertation reveals the ways in which capitalism, patriarchy, and empire all work together to displace those without money, the final section examines how the home can be reclaimed—materially, socially and ideologically—in the absence of property. As the home is both a space and an idea—or a “spatial imaginary”—it exists across scales (Blunt and Dowling 2006). In imagining new homes, homeless life narrators are also imagining new cities and working toward a new vision of the nation.⁹ As Dolores Hayden (1984) argues,

⁹ In 1773, a group of American slaves petitioning for their freedom insisted: “We have no property! We have no wives! No children! We have no city! No country!” (Foner 1998, 34). This notion of not having home, city, or country shows the interconnected nature of claims to home, city, and nation. The proprietary language used to

building a new model of home is not simply about housing design but must involve the larger project of reworking public and private space, industry and services, and the city at large.

Rethinking American domesticity involves “defining ‘home’ at every spatial level—from the house, to the neighborhood, the town, the homeland, and the planet” (1984, 125). For homeless narrators, new visions of home present the possibility for challenging mainstream understandings of America.

Homes, cities, and the American dream

The American dream, in its broadest sense, encompasses the idea that the US promises the unique possibility of material advancement (Hochschild 1996). This ideology traces its roots to colonial fantasies of a “new world” and the possibility of westward expansion. It is a dream inspired by movement, as millions of immigrants came to the US in search of opportunities and millions of others were forcefully displaced in the process. Further, as the American dream was founded on the ideology of success through hard work and virtue, the failure to succeed was equated with moral failure. Thus, it is a dream that overlooks the problem of inequality and the material barriers to achieving prosperity (Hochschild 1996). Yet at the same time, there are multiple American dreams, both overlapping and chronological. Jim Cullen (2003) argues that no American dream has been more popular, resilient, or influential than the dream of suburban housing. As Hayden (1984) writes, the US is unique in that its national vision is not only manifested through urban design projects or national infrastructure, but through the creation of the “dream house.” This entrenched American aspiration for homeownership is deeply rooted in colonial ideologies about land acquisition. As the US began as a frontier state, its basic resource

describe “wives and children” also implicates a patriarchal notion of home in which women and young people are not themselves free.

and currency was land. For much of American history, land was more easily accessible than money, particularly prior to the development of a national currency (Cullen 2003). Not only was land a commodity to be bought and sold, but it was also a space to establish a home. This frontier society was based on the belief that indigenous land was freely available for settlers to claim, use, and profit from. Land became a primary tool of government policy, and states quickly claimed ownership over territory. Over time, access to land represented freedom from poverty. The 1862 Homestead Act enabled citizens who were heads of households to claim 160 acres of public land in the western US, and less than 20 years later, more than 120,000 farms had been freely acquired in Kansas, the Dakotas, and Minnesota alone (Cullen 2003).

Yet the Homestead Act largely failed to achieve the full scope of its vision, as much public land was difficult to cultivate and the western US quickly became the nation's most urbanized region. In the historical imagination of the frontier, Cullen (2003) argues, the wilderness gave way to the farm, which ultimately gave way to towns and cities. In each period, the centrality of land remained ingrained in American consciousness. Cullen (2003) writes that the desire for a rural family homestead was replaced by the desire for a grassy plot of semi-urban land. This quickly led to the rise of the suburb as a particularly American phenomenon: a middle-class hybrid between city and country, in stark contrast to the urban fringes of much of the world that were marked by deprivation rather than bourgeoisie pastoralism. Suburbs were also uniquely American in their dependence on a network of highways, rather than trains. In the US, cars, like houses, were purchased on borrowed money by wide swaths of society, and cities grew to meet the needs and demands of drivers. At the same time, housing developers proved that Fordist models of mass construction highly successful in the automobile industry could also be applied to residential housing. Under this model, one developer could build as many as thirty

houses in a single day, and cheap construction enabled lower costs. The early American vision of a nation of small farmers gave way to the vision of a nation of small stakeholders in land: suburban homeowners. Yet just as the Homestead Act was largely restricted to white men, housing developers during this period overwhelmingly refused to sell to racial minorities. Further, the Protestant domestic ideology that was reproduced in suburban culture—with its attendant gender hierarchies—repeated the historical legacy of women’s exclusion from landownership.

More broadly, the notion of American freedom is rooted in a history of mobility and displacement. Eric Foner (1998) writes that in America’s early history, “liberty” was central to the development of the nation’s self-identity yet was only extended to those who owned property. Indeed, freedom itself began to be viewed as a form of property that could be economically attained. Economic dependence, in turn, was equivalent to political subservience. This ideology profoundly shaped the development of American democracy, as those with voting rights—landowning white men—were also those deemed to be free and autonomous subjects, or full American citizens. During the nation’s early history, rather than a clear dichotomy between slavery and freedom, there existed a continuum of degrees of servitude, ranging from servants to indentured servants to slaves. Yet the notion of free open land for the taking enabled the fiction that America was truly democratic, as property could be “claimed” by non-landowners. Thus, the individual pursuit of material success was deeply linked to territorial expansion and physical mobility (Foner 1998). In this sense, the notion of American freedom itself—the idea perhaps most central to American nationalism—was rooted in the displacement of indigenous people from their lands.

As the American dream is so firmly linked to urban development, it is also a dream about the American city. And, as Grady Clay (1980) argues, understandings of the American city are dependent on perspective. From the perspective of the tourist, for example, the American city becomes a playground, while the environmental activist might view it as a force for ecological destruction. In this dissertation, I seek to identify how the city looks from the perspective of those who have lost their homes. Abby Roach (2017), an unhoused traveler and street musician, describes collecting interviews with people she met on the road: “These are folks that are sitting on the sidewalk. They are looking at America from the ground up. ... A lot of these interviews give a window into America that is kind of hard to see, otherwise.” The larger collection of life narratives I examine here speaks to the particularities of dozens of American cities, viewed “from the ground up.” To place these texts in their context, I interpret them alongside a historical account of the development of the American city at large.

The American city is deeply shaped by the demand for growth and profit. Richard Walker (1981) argues that as commodity production moved out of households and into factories, the division between home and work created the most fundamental characteristic of American urbanism: the residential neighborhood. In the same way, divisions between different kinds of waged labor forged other neighborhoods, including industrial zones, shopping centers, and financial districts. This kind of spatial separation not only was efficient for capital but also prevented the concentration of workers, thereby inhibiting the likelihood of resistance (Walker 1981). The built environment, in turn, can become a coercive force over labor. In this way, the city both enables capitalist social relations and freezes them in the form of the built environment. As Walker writes, “Our cities are literally museums of the past” (1981, 406). If cities are built for driving, for example, workers must purchase cars. Aside from spatial separation, homeownership

also functions as a tool to ensure worker compliance, as it invests the working class in the growth imperative. By the 1980s, two-thirds of Americans were homeowners and therefore property speculators, whose houses were often their greatest assets. To increase the value of their assets, they faced pressure to reinforce social exclusion (Walker 1981). Ownership further supported an ethic of private possession and fragmented the working class into owners and tenants. Both were subject to landlords or creditors, thus supporting the ascendancy of property and finance capital (Harvey 1976).

In the US, access to housing has long been governed by norms of private property. The state plays a crucial role in upholding these norms, as well as regulating what kinds of housing can be built, where it can be built, and its exchange on the market for sale or lease. Historically, boom and bust cycles in the US economy have led to large-scale housing insecurity and homelessness. Government efforts at housing assistance have largely aimed at boosting private development and market growth (Bratt et al. 1986). But housing is not only a commodity sold on the market—it is also a social need. Of all basic needs, housing today takes up the majority of workers’ income and is the most poorly subsidized (Urban Institute 2014).¹⁰ More than any other commodity, it renders people dependent upon the capitalist wage system. As David Harvey (1978) argues, homeownership in particular encourages people to identify with capitalist values of private property, investment, and growth. In addition, the pressures of credit further disempower the laboring class. Thus, the widespread phenomenon of credit-based

¹⁰ In contrast to the widespread housing subsidies of the early and mid-20th century, the government today subsidizes middle and upper-income homeowners in the form of tax breaks. In 2008, homeowner tax breaks cost the US treasury roughly \$144 billion, with 75% of this benefiting homeowners earning more than \$100,000 per year, while total funding for low-income housing assistance was only 46 billion that year (WRAP 2012).

homeownership perpetuates capitalist ideology and undermines the revolutionary potential of the working class.

In addition to the mechanisms of capitalism, the American city has also been forged by the history of US colonialism. Early urban development was bolstered by the vast wealth acquired through the slave trade, while many cities were originally established as military forts or trading posts to support settler expansion (Bridenbaugh 1964). Elizabeth Wilson (1992) writes that early colonialists looked upon rural landscapes not only with nostalgia for pastoral lifestyles but also with fear of unknown wilderness to be conquered, tamed, and urbanized. Further, many white settlers did not rely on subsistence agriculture, but on the kinds of trade and industry that emerged in cities. Thus, the colonial US was a particularly urban phenomenon that depended on the rise of cities. Wilson (1992) further argues that American housing development in particular followed a colonial paradigm. As early slaves were brought to urban centers, they often created dwellings that resembled circular village compounds but were later forced to reside in uniform rows of cabins and to conform to European models of housing. In turn, domestic space itself became a key site for the maintenance of American imperial culture (Domosh 2004).

Finally, the development of the American city was deeply shaped by patriarchal social relations. In the wake of the Great Depression, alongside a period of vastly increased state subsidies for housing, developers and state officials saw single-family homeownership as a way to foster social conservatism. As Hayden writes, “A growing number of employers decided that it would be a good idea to miniaturize and mass-produce the Victorian patriarchal, suburban businessman’s dwelling for the majority of white, male, skilled workers” (1984, 33). Federal subsidies also privileged the Victorian model of housing and discouraged non-traditional designs. Wide-scale urbanization during this period led to city forms across the US that catered

to a very specific kind of family. Hayden argues that such houses can be seen as actively producing gender, as they provide gender-specific settings for women to become desirable sex objects and domestic servants, including vanities, walk-in closets, and kitchens designed for isolated domestic workers. By 1980, nearly two thirds of American homes were single-family detached dwellings (Hayden 1984).

Yet the suburban norm has not been the only form of American housing. In the early history of the nation, much of the population built self-made homes out of raw materials (Harvey 1976). Lisa Goff (2016) argues that such housing was integral to American history, yet largely overlooked, as poor immigrants and freed slaves in the US who lived off the land were seen as an impediment to the beautification of American cities. Further, as privatized housing became more deeply entrenched, collective and informal models of home-making were increasingly marginalized (Dovey 1985; Wardhaugh 1999; Ward 2014). Yet in the early-20th century, new collective housing forms emerged in resistance to individualistic domesticity (Wilson 1992). In multiple cities, women's unions spearheaded the creation of co-housing. As strikers saw the greatest threat to agitation was the prospect of being evicted, they sought to create alternative models of home. Experimental housing also became popular with bohemian and socialist community cooperatives, who developed hotels and boarding houses to suit the needs of those not tied to traditional family units (Wilson 1992). In many of these movements, the suburban ideal was subject to intense criticism (Cullen 2003). As Richard LeMieux (2009, 69) writes, he viewed suburban housing in a new light after becoming homeless—"as a string of little houses, block after block of them, built side by side. ... Little boxes, all the same." In referencing the influential protest song "Little Boxes," LeMieux captures a pervasive sense of the constraints of suburban housing.

In the contemporary era, the rising cost of housing has led to an increase in mobile home ownership as well as the popularity of smaller, cheaper apartment-style units. By 1981, 36% of all new single-family houses were mobile homes (Hayden 1984). As Peter Ward (2014) argues, mobile homes enable low-income communities a shot at the American dream of homeownership.¹¹ Yet it was this same dream of homeownership that resulted in the housing crisis of 2008, as banks took advantage of lax financial regulations to charge exorbitant interest rates on high-risk mortgages for low-income families. Today, US cities remain dominated by privatized housing markets, racialized segregation, and gendered separation between work and home. More broadly, government policy over the past several decades has worked against the right to unionize, lowered taxes on the extremely wealthy, failed to update the minimum wage to match inflation, and drastically slashed welfare spending. This had led to a widening of the income gap since the 1980s, such that the US has the greatest income disparity of any industrialized nation (Massey 2007). And, as elite groups have profound influence in constructing the city—and tend to build spaces to suit their needs—this legacy of inequality is deeply imprinted on the urban landscape. As David Wojnarowicz (1991, 174) writes in his memoir of homelessness, “the physical landscape ... is totally owned by white people with money, power and all methods of communication and control.”

¹¹ Yet while traditional homes increase in value over time, manufactured housing decreases in value (Aman and Yarnal 2010). Mobile home owners have also been disproportionately affected by the housing crisis and suffer from particularly high rates of foreclosure. Because such housing historically navigated the boundary between a home and a vehicle, it is still not awarded the full legal status of a home, and thus foreclosure procedures can take place in as little as 30 days. Further, mobile home owners have not traditionally had access to streams of government housing assistance. Due to this legal precarity and lack of title to land, many residents are unable to move their homes upon eviction or foreclosure and are forced to engage in illegal squatting practices. Aman and Yarnal (2010) write: “land-leasing mobile home owners face unique vulnerabilities related to the ‘gray area’ that they inhabit between housing and automobile ... This landlessness puts many mobile home residents in a state of *quasi-homelessness*” (2010, 93).

One result of this unequal urban landscape is the pervasive presence of homelessness. In the contemporary era, homelessness is often viewed as an integral feature of the American city. As Cadillac Man (2009, 213) attests in his memoir, tourists often treated homelessness like a New York City “attraction.” He writes, “to the tourists we’re part of the city, like Times Square.” On one occasion he returned to his spot on the sidewalk “to find several tourists taking pictures of my wagon, then posing alongside of it” (2009, 35). He writes that the family looked afraid as he approached, so he gave them several of the small American flags that decorated his wagon: “I figured out a way to put them at ease, went over to my wagon, took the flags, handed them to the boys, and said, ‘Welcome to America!’” (2009, 36).



If homelessness is an integral part of the American city, then so too, is the loss and absence of home in the lives of American residents. This loss stands in stark contrast to an American dream that is deeply rooted in the notion of acquiring a permanent place to call one’s own. In challenging housing displacement and reimagining new kinds of homes, homeless life narrators are also reimagining the American dream itself, as a dream not of commodified housing or individualistic domesticity, but of collective homes that are not governed by money or property. Life narratives of homelessness reveal that “solving” homelessness is not as simple as creating more homes. Instead, it is imperative to reexamine the larger dynamics of housing and domestic life and the reproduction of race, gender, and class inequality through the spaces we create in the world. To build more houses is to create more exploited wage laborers, renters, and unwaged domestic workers, and to expose more poor people to the process of displacement. This, in turn, will produce homelessness as an inevitable fact of everyday life in American cities.

In the chapters that follow, I show how homeless life narrators critique current manifestations of home spaces and imagine the possibility for a new home, city, and nation.

**Part I:
Losing home**

Chapter I: “They all seem to speak louder than me”

Lee Stringer began writing about his life almost by accident. At the time, he was living in a tunnel underneath Grand Central Station in New York City, and often cleaned his crack pipe using a pencil. He describes the experience of beginning to write:

One day I'm sitting there in my hole with nothing to smoke and nothing to do and I pull the pencil out just to look at the film of residue stuck to the sides—you do that sort of thing when you don't have any shit—and it dawns on me that it's a pencil. ... I figure maybe I can distract myself for a little while by writing something. ... Pretty soon I forget all about the hustling and getting a hit. I'm scribbling like a maniac; heart pumping, adrenaline rushing, hands trembling. I'm so excited I almost crap on myself. It's just like taking a hit. Before I know it, I have a whole story. (Stringer 1998, 14-15)

This first essay paved the way for Stringer's memoir, *Grand Central Winter* (1998), which chronicles the twelve years he spent on the streets of New York City, and his ongoing efforts to express himself in the face of social indifference.

Beginning in the late 80s, Lars Eighner lived outside for three years in multiple cities across the US Southwest, accompanied by his dog Lizbeth and occasional lovers. He began writing his memoir, *Travels with Lizbeth* (1993), using a computer he found in a dumpster. He writes, “While my companion Clint and I were still living in the abandoned bar in Austin, I found a bunch of software in a Dumpster. Then just before Christmas I found a computer in a Dumpster. ... The way things have worked out with the computer has made it very difficult for me to be quite so skeptical of Providence as I would like to be” (Eighner 1992, 21). Eighner spent his days writing and studying academic texts he salvaged from dumpsters. First published in 1993, his memoir critiques the knowledge of homelessness produced by experts and professionals.

Although Eighner and Stringer ultimately published two of the most widely distributed and anthologized memoirs of homelessness, they faced persistent ideological displacement in the process. Even the implements they used to write their stories—a pencil coated in crack resin and a computer salvaged from the dumpster—are more likely to be denigrated than viewed as tools of conscious self-expression. For life narrators who shared their oral histories or published free memoirs online, the account of being ignored is even starker. Together, homeless life narratives critique society’s failure to listen to homeless voices. In recounting the struggle to be heard, they reveal that ideologically marginalized groups are never truly voiceless, but that voices become displaced both by being forced out of public debate—and replaced with expert knowledge—and by being removed from the center of knowledge to become subordinated to some other story. In turn, attempts to “recover” homeless voices are fraught with the risk of reproducing these same dynamics. In this chapter, I examine the entrenched social tendency to displace homeless voices, as well as methods for listening that resist this tendency.

Displaced voices and the struggle to be heard

Before I became homeless, I never took the time to think about or understand who became homeless. I looked through them. What I did know about the homeless I learned from the rhetoric put out by the media. ... My impression was that their predicament had to be their own fault.

—Bobby Burns (1998), *Shelter: One Man’s Journey from Homelessness to Hope*

Knowledge of homelessness is a complex, contradictory, and shifting terrain marked by competing claims emerging from a wide range of intellectual producers. Yet among this chorus, certain voices speak louder than others. While people without homes are discussed at length in journalistic and academic texts, their own voices are rarely included at the center of debate. Life narratives of homelessness reveal that this exclusion is not passive or benign, as homeless

speakers struggle to insert themselves into the public debate, and are often removed and replaced by elite experts. In this way, homeless voices become actively and repeatedly displaced from public memory.

In large part, *Grand Central Winter* is the story of Lee Stringer's efforts to represent himself in a variety of social and intellectual venues—in the courts, newspapers, on television, and in personal interactions. In each of these venues, he writes, he is rendered invisible.¹² In one anecdote, Stringer recounts his experience of being silenced by mainstream televised media. At the time, he worked as a vendor for *Street News*, New York City's street newspaper which employed homeless writers and vendors. *The Geraldo Rivera Show*—a popular daytime talk show—contacted *Street News* about recruiting three vendors to appear on a segment about homelessness. Stringer writes, “Determined that by two o'clock I be the supremely informed homeless sage of daytime TV, I pull out our clip files and dive into them. Geraldo fever has me completely inflamed” (1998, 124). Yet when he appeared onstage with two other *Street News* distributors, he discovered that their appearance was fodder for an inflammatory discussion of homeless mental illness. Rivera did not ask them any questions, other than to turn to the man next to Stringer and ask why he had not put on a clean shirt. Stringer writes:

We're sitting on the set like so much useless baggage, packed, but no place to go, me thumbing through a handful of crib notes, poised to put fact and figure behind my every sterling observation. Each time Geraldo turns toward the set, I try my best to look bright and eager. But he never calls on me. (1998, 128)

¹² In this chapter, I use the concept of voice rather than visibility, as voice suggests self-expression on an ideological terrain, while visibility is more clearly impacted by the material fact of embodiment. Further, voice here is not simply the biological capacity to speak, but a metaphor for the ability to represent oneself—and one's knowledge—to society.

Instead, Stringer writes, Rivera spent the remainder of the show interviewing a clinical psychiatrist about his “bona fides” and his opinion of people “at risk.” By the end of the show, Stringer writes:

[An assistant] quickly hustles us out of the building as if we all have communicable diseases. I devote my money to enough recreational self-destruction to put the whole experience—and subsequent thoughts on the futility of being a party to the mass-media mill—firmly out of my mind. When the show actually airs, I don’t even bother watching it. (1998, 129)

Although Stringer devoted a great deal of time to preparing for his interview, he was made to appear only as a voiceless object of scrutiny—“useless baggage”—rather than an expert in his own right. His inability to speak resulted directly from his being spoken for—and replaced—by an expert commentator.

The preference for interviewing a psychiatrist about the problems of homelessness, over and above people who actually experience it, is characteristic of society’s bias toward elite forms of knowledge. Televised coverage of homelessness often silences homeless people as actors and agents of their own lives. In reports on homelessness in the UK, for example, commentaries of experts, officials, charity workers, and celebrities take up 68% of overall interview material (Hodgetts et al. 2005). When homeless people are interviewed, they are most often limited to discussing personal stories to be analyzed by experts, and framed as passive objects of analysis rather than speaking subjects who debate the social context of homelessness (Hodgetts et al. 2005). Thus, homeless voices are either displaced altogether or confined to a subordinated position.

After writing his first story using the pencil that cleaned his pipe, Stringer eventually gained employment as a writer and editor for *Street News*. Yet even street newspapers, despite their stated goal of empowering homeless communities, often present limited opportunities for

homeless voices to be heard (Torck 2001). Stringer writes that he was drawn to work at the newspaper because he sought to improve its quality of journalism and grow its distribution, yet his vision was stymied by a media culture that devalued his knowledge. He writes:

I enjoy working with words. That part of the job delivers a certain satisfaction. But as for any of my work making a real difference in the larger scheme of things, as for it having any impact on the growing public resentment toward homeless people, for example, I have had to climb down from my high horse. There are just too many fierce and strident voices out there these days ... and they all seem to speak louder than me. (Stringer 1998, 87)

Stringer's statement that other voices "speak louder" reflects that among various competing claims about homelessness, domiciled speakers have greater ability to disseminate their voices to the wider public. Stringer elucidates this dynamic again in describing a lengthy investigation he conducted into a non-profit homeless shelter that functioned as a front through which to fraudulently solicit donations and avoid taxes while flipping cheap buildings for profit. Stringer spent countless hours working on a report uncovering the shelter and connecting it to larger problems in homelessness management. Yet the story was ignored by the press. He writes: "In the heat of the moment I even imagine that the *Post* or the *News* might pick up the story up and that *Street News* might at last be put on the map as a *real* newspaper. But the story raises not a whisper" (Stringer 1998, 101).

The disregard of Stringer's reporting is part of a wider pattern of inequality embedded in print news media. *The New York Times* and other widely distributed US newspapers are largely owned, published, and edited by elites, such that the wealthy tend to dominate public discourses on homelessness and poverty (Blasi 1994). Notions of expertise further limit homeless self-representation. In journalistic methodologies, primary sources must come from professional political and intellectual institutions, thus precluding the citation of homeless people as experts on homelessness (Schneider 2012). In Canada's most prominent newspapers, for example,

domiciled experts take up more than 70% of quoted material in articles on homelessness, while homeless people are quoted less than 20% of the time (Schneider et al. 2010; Schneider 2012). This, in turn, shapes the narratives that get formulated. In particular, journalistic accounts often construct the deeply political message that homeless people's voices do not matter to society.

David Wojnarowicz, a celebrated photographer and activist who died of AIDS in 1992, wrote in his memoir about his experiences of living on the streets as a teenager. In reflecting on his own inability to make his voice heard, he argues that inequality in news media distorts the kinds of messages that circulate in society. He writes:

If you look at newspapers you rarely see a representation of anything you believe to be the world you inhabit. ... My gestures of communication have less of a reverberation ... because of the amount of copies the newspaper owner can circulate among the population coast to coast. ... [Yet] I can speak with photographs about many different things that the newspaper owner is afraid to address because of agenda or political pressure, or because of the power of advertisers dollars. (Wojnarowicz 1991, 143)

Wojnarowicz highlights not only the unequal dissemination of voices, but the underlying political economic factors that contribute to the prominence of certain stories over others. While established newspapers have greater distribution, they are also subject to greater limitations regarding the kinds of knowledge they can promote. Journalists and academics, in seeking to produce marketable and fundable publications and research projects, must conform to standards of reputability that often preclude the ability to read homeless people as experts or primary sources (Blasi 1994; Cloke et al. 2001; Renedo and Jovchelovitch 2007). Further, homeless voices are often used by domiciled experts in producing knowledge as a commodity. In this way, ideological displacement is fundamentally linked to political economic dynamics of knowledge production, circulation, and distribution.

Eighner (2013) similarly argues that to maintain government funding, professional service agencies denied his own understanding of his homelessness, and instead sought to categorize him as addicted or insane. He writes:

The social worker had programs for alcoholics, programs for drug addicts, and programs for the insane. ... He wanted me to apply for a program that would allow the costs of my hospitalization, including his services in advising me that he had no services to offer me, to be defrayed by the federal government. This is of course is all that social workers exist for: to keep the funds flowing to the institution, thus to preserve their own salaries. (2013, 157)

Although Eighner told the social worker he had become homeless for economic reasons, he writes that this explanation was ignored:

It would have been greatly to my advantage if I could have admitted to being an alcoholic or a drug addict. The social workers have no way of assisting someone who is sane and sober. My interview with the social worker made it clear that only three explanations of homelessness could be considered: drug addiction, alcoholism, and psychiatric disorder. The more successful I was in ruling out one of these explanations, the more certain the others would become. Professional people like to believe this, they like to believe that no misfortune could cause them to lose their own privileged places. They like to believe that homelessness is the fault of the homeless—that the homeless have special flaws not common to the human condition. (2013, 156-157)

In this passage, Eighner reveals that expert knowledge not only tends to displace homeless voices, but also creates “the homeless” as an ideological construct marked by addiction or illness, which further erases the possibility for self-representation. Throughout his memoir, Eighner also describes being misrepresented by doctors. When seeking medical care for leg pain, hospital staff again insisted that he was drug-addicted or mentally ill. The more he resisted these claims, the more his doctors became convinced. Ultimately, he was forced to undergo HIV testing and psychiatric evaluation.

Beyond individual experiences of being condescended to by professional experts, the denigration of homeless voices has profound implications for the kinds of knowledge produced about homelessness. In particular, discourses of mental illness and addiction predominate in

professional and media representations of homelessness (Klodawsky et al. 2002; Hodgetts et al. 2005; Renedo and Jovchelovitch 2007; Gowan 2008; Schneider et al. 2010). Academic research on homelessness also overwhelmingly engages in medical and psychiatric approaches that classify homeless people according to their deficits (Blasi 1994; Buck et al. 2004). In the effort to govern homelessness as an identifiable and solvable social problem—rather than an entrenched and endemic one—government funding structures privilege research on the individual deficits of homeless people. A preference for statistical analysis also distorts the nature of homelessness by including only those who sleep visibly in public and more often struggle with addiction or mental illness (Cloke et al. 2001; Farrugia and Gerrard 2016). In 1994, the vast majority of scholarly articles on homelessness were published in medical and psychiatric journals, while only 5% appeared in journals on housing or political economy (Blasi 1994). Complex personal housing histories were often fragmented into a series of individual problems in need of cure and normalization. In turn, the clash between these characterizations leaves homeless people either condemned as social deviants or reduced to victims in need of assistance. In each instance, it is housed society that holds the authority, as either savior or governor, while the problems of housed society itself remain largely unexamined.

Many life narrators rejected the dominance of elite expertise. Daniel (2013) challenged simplistic solutions, and planned to volunteer for a local community radio station to have a platform to voice his ideas. He said in his oral history:

It would be nicer if they understood what was going on with us. ... The City Council has good intentions but they don't have any experience with the problems they're trying to solve. How can you solve a problem you don't understand? You can build a roof to hold off the rain, but you're not stopping the rain. And stop-gap measures and blanket, one-size-fits-all solutions won't work because they don't understand the problems. ... People say, *Oh, well if you're so smart why are you on the street?* Well, I'm smart enough to know what's wrong.

In his oral history, Ed (2010) similarly argued that “not every education worth obtaining is obtained in a classroom.” He advocated for a broad ideological shift through the ongoing practice of social critique, and rejected efforts to quantify homelessness:

What I’m hoping for and praying for is a paradigm shift in those thoughts in this society. ... Don’t accept the status quo all the time.... When society expects everything to be in place and everything to be on a form, they’re not looking realistically. They’re looking at things as an accountant wishes they would be to make the accountant’s job easier. We’re not talking about accountancies of figures or people. We’re talking about accountability as a society. (Ed 2010)

Ed highlights how formulaic solutions to homelessness often ignore the complexity and urgency of social problems. Lee (2010), who had recently obtained housing and volunteered speaking on the topic of homelessness at local churches and schools, similarly rejected the predominance of formal knowledge. He said:

Education is important but you know, I’m not going to say that a college education is important. ... I love educating other people about being homeless. ... Now if we could just get the new government enlightened, which we’re all working on. That’s going to be our next project, to go to the capital.

Lee framed himself as an educator and envisioned a broader political education—“getting the government enlightened”—as essential to social change.

Beyond the displacement perpetuated in journalistic and academic modes of representation, housed society at large often disregards homeless people in everyday life. In the American city, housed people often put on blinders when they encounter the homeless (Kawash 1998). In 2014, a project called *Make Them Visible* filmed middle-class people on the streets of Manhattan, carrying sleeping bags and wearing dirty clothing, in an effort to “appear” homeless. The participants’ family members—oblivious to the ruse—were told to walk past their loved ones who sat on the sidewalk panhandling. On most occasions people looked away without a trace of acknowledgment or recognition as their lovers, children, and grandchildren held signs

asking for help (Gates 2014). As Nick Flynn (2004, 203) writes about the spot on the sidewalk where his father lived in Boston for years, “My father stands in this room, an invisible man in an invisible room in the invisible city.”

Many life narrators described the pain of being forgotten. Jeremy (2013), who had been homeless on and off since he was thirteen, said in his oral history, “People don’t really realize how devastating it is to a person to be forgotten about. That’s what people want to do—make all the homeless gone and forget about them.” Zahira (2013) described his desire for social acknowledgment. He said, “They should show us the same respect that we show them. I’d like them to make eye contact. Come up to us, actually acknowledge us.” Rodney (2010) was asked in his oral history, “If you had a microphone attached to you and the whole world listening attentively, what would be one thing you would want to tell them about homelessness?” In response, he expressed an ironic frustration at society’s failure to listen:

You don’t know. That’s what it is. You take the time to see how it is on the streets. ... If you see more outside the box, maybe you can understand more when you get a chance to make a big decision to help pass a bill for the health care for the homeless or something. So, you know, it takes experience to learn. ... People like me is frustrated that you got a lot of skills and intelligence, but because of your background or because of your housing situation, people don’t want to be bothered with you.

In addressing the listener directly, Rodney highlighted how housed society holds power over homeless people’s lives—the ability to “help pass a bill”—but often fails to listen. Howard (2009), a former journalist, similarly reflected that one of the greatest challenges of homelessness is social indifference:

I think it’s really a scandal that you know, [people] just go by and act like it doesn’t affect them. Heads in the sand. I think homeless people and their advocates need to be organized like they were in the 60s. We need to confront this problem, no longer to continue to allow or be indifferent to this. ... I think that we need to use the media a lot. I think there need to be more advocates and I think people need to listen to more people who are homeless.

Howard advocated a political movement in which advocates and the homeless worked together, using the media, to create a venue for society to listen to the homeless.

As a result of ideological displacement, homeless people in the US are often denied political forms of representation. As Nkechi Feaster (2013) said in her oral history, “I think it’s extremely important that [politicians] hear from the homeless community or the impoverished community in the least because they have no idea what we go through. They have no idea what it takes to get out of this situation. They have no idea how it hurts us when they cut these programs.” Yet voting, as the primary tool through which to “speak” to politicians, is often impossible for homeless people. Eighner describes his inability to vote as one the most disempowering aspects of homelessness. He writes, “One of the things that bothers me most about being homeless is being disenfranchised. ... Tinhorn oligarchies do not fear the poor, but the United States does. I had always registered and voted when I had an address” (2013, 249). Although courts have upheld the right of homeless people to vote in the wake of countless lawsuits, lacking an address still presents an enormous barrier, such that voter turnout among the homeless remains one of the lowest of any demographic group (Zhao 2012). As of 2012, many states still required an address as a prerequisite to voting (NCH 2012). Stringer describes the limits of voting itself as a political mechanism. He writes:

Government attempts to engineer society ... will always produce a degree of injustice. Politics is, after all, a numbers game, and pro forma solutions are, by their very nature, inhuman. Yet without some instrument for expressing our collective hopes for society, we seem to be at a loss. So the government—flawed social mechanism that it is—nonetheless tries to do what it can and, yes, the results are far from satisfactory. (1998, 184)

In calling for an “instrument for expressing collective hopes” that goes above and beyond majoritarian politics, Stringer highlights the importance of creating tools for representation that do not displace the voices of the minority.

Homeless life narrators also critique the way in which well-meaning advocates claiming to represent the interests of homeless people often displace their voices. Eighner describes a group of housed activists in Austin, Texas who attempted to raise the issue of homelessness by squatting in housing that the university planned to demolish. He writes:

Of course the people the university had displaced were all black and the new squatters, to judge from the photographs in the newspaper, were white. Moreover I never saw anyone in the photos whom I recognized from the street. The people I recognized were the usual gang of semi-professional spokespersons who seem always to be in the forefront of whatever issue is hot. ... This knowledge put me off having anything to do with the homeless movement. (2013, 201-202)

Ron Casanova, an influential homeless activist, similarly argues against being spoken for by advocates. He writes, “the time has come to stop letting other people talk for us. Nobody can tell you your problems better than you. ... I don’t want ... any of these [advocates] speaking for me. Because they can’t. They don’t know anything about me” (1996, 151). As Stringer argued, to make claims about others—in the attempt to “save” them—is to mistakenly presume to know their experience. He said in an interview about proposed “solutions” to homelessness, “Man tries to be a sociologist all the time but the truth is, if you look around, we really suck at it. ... It’s kind of presumptuous to try to know how you can save the next person. ... I don’t know what’s right for you. I wouldn’t presume to tell you I know” (Film Archives 2013).

Yet in the US, advocacy groups have been influential in shaping mainstream discourses on homelessness. Gary Blasi (1994) argues that advocates’ insistence on highlighting homelessness as a “solvable” problem distinct from capitalist inequality has often led to depoliticized and objectifying approaches. Further, homelessness management institutions often simplify or erase homeless people’s voices for political or strategic purposes. Eliana Chaya (2014, 30), in her self-published digital memoir, writes about an extreme example of this dynamic: “When United Way or some other organization was scheduled to do a ‘walk-through’

[at the shelter], everyone had to minimize their presence of belongings and self. During those visits, shelter staff did not want ANY homeless people to be seen or heard from in the presence of these great benefactors.” More broadly, workers in the voluntary sector often struggle to portray homeless people as “fully human” to combat the NIMBYism and social stigma that negatively impact homeless shelters and service centers (Renedo and Jovchelovitch 2007). Yet such “humanizing” portrayals of life histories risk reinforcing normativity as a prerequisite to inclusion (Cunningham 2015; Smyth 2015). Further, they often preclude homeless people from discussing the politics of homelessness itself. Janet, who lived in her car in Santa Cruz, California, worked with an educational outreach team on homelessness comprised mostly of housed advocates. She described in her oral history how she became frustrated after participating for a year without having an opportunity to speak:

I went to the next meeting and told them, *I haven't had a chance to talk for almost the whole year I've been here. You're not listening to us homeless people. ...* We decided to start a group of the homeless folks and find out what homeless people want, what they need, what would be a personal solution. We're going out into the streets and interview homeless folks. They'll have different stories and different needs. Only it's not going to be just their story; it's going to be, *What would help you today? What would help for the future?* (Janet 2013)

Janet thus insisted that homeless people maintain control of the dissemination of their own voices. Further, she resisted the tendency to reduce homeless voices to personal anecdotes—“just their story”—instead of larger social desires and visions for the future.

In many ways, ideological displacement is intimately linked to the containment—or “ghettoization”—of certain kinds of knowledge. When homeless voices are included in academic and journalistic accounts, they are often relegated to a subordinate position. Quotes from homeless people in news media focus overwhelmingly on individual stories of failure and redemption rather than the general reality of homelessness (Schneider et al. 2010; Schneider 2012). Such stories tend to frame the homeless as passive beneficiaries of assistance or

receptacles of data for analysis. Even in compassionate reporting, housed commentators often depict homeless people as “pitiful cases” (Hodgetts et al. 2005, 34). Further, academic literature on homelessness often diminishes homeless people’s narratives to discrete “pathways” analyzed as tools for therapeutic intervention (Somerville 2013). This framework obscures the rich complexity of biography behind a series of labels. Barbara Schneider (2012) argues that while experiential knowledge is valued far less than abstract generalizations, homeless people are rarely given opportunity to engage in abstract critique.¹³ Thus homeless people’s voices are filtered and packaged for public consumption such that they express a devalued kind of knowledge. In being prevented from defining homelessness, critiquing housed society, or imagining alternatives to expert solutions, homeless people are displaced from the center of intellectual debate.

In response to this displacement, many life narrators assert the political importance of being heard. Stringer emphasized the pleasure of having an independent platform through which he could be heard without the intermediary of domiciled experts. Describing his work as an editor of *Street News*, he said in an interview: “That was an amazing thing, to be on the streets and not be heard as ‘Joe Homeless’ but just be able to have a place where I can just riff from my own mind. ... It was a wonderful forum for me” (Film Archives 2013). In having an avenue through which to make himself heard beyond the category “homeless,” he was able to take greater control of his own story. Gregory (2010), when asked what he wanted to say to wider society, responded:

All you gotta do is just talk ... sit down and talk, give a person a chance to talk with you—really listening. Some people can talk and play like they’re listening and it’s going through one ear and out the other. Probably can’t even tell you what you just said. But if

¹³ This is not to say that abstract critique *is* more valuable than personal testimony. I address this tension head-on in chapter five.

you just take the time and sit and listen and open up your heart and your mind and your soul and think that—Okay, wow. That was me at one point.

Gregory identified intimate acts of listening as central to social change, in that they build connections and destabilize representations of homeless people as “the other.” Joseph echoed this sentiment, saying: “Sometimes by helping people, it’s just like you’re doing now by just letting me talk. And listening and believing in a person” (Joseph 2010). As McDonough (1996) writes, her recommendations for homelessness services would be given consideration if she were a consultant, but because she is herself homeless, they are viewed as ungrateful complaints. For these reasons, she stresses the importance of social service workers being trained in the practice of listening. She argues that social workers cannot “cure” the myriad structural problems that homeless people confront, “but they could make a difference in some ways. One way was to listen with compassion” (1996, 209). She further writes that the ability to care for others is deeply dependent on the practice of listening: “It seems to me that the core qualities of humanness come down to paying attention, listening and responding respectfully, [and] helping compassionately when appropriate” (1996, 319).

Many life narrators also argued that mutual listening is essential to fostering more egalitarian forms of homelessness advocacy. As Casanova (1996, 230-231) writes, “Most important, you have to talk with the person who has been homeless. Very rarely do people listen to what a homeless person thinks or says. That someone will listen and not put them down, that in itself is empowering.” In another passage, he elaborates on the role of listening in building collective knowledge and power: “As long as homeless and impoverished people keep themselves isolated, we’re in a dilemma. But when we reach out, contact, and embrace people who are struggling for the same dignity, we all gain—in resources, in ideas, in strength” (1996, 244). Wojnarowicz (1991, 156) similarly describes how the process of writing and creating

visual art helped him connect to the experiences of others who were similarly situated: “Making things was like leaving historical records of my existence behind. . . . That object or writing acts as a magnet and draws others with a similar frame of reference out of silence or invisibility.”

Lisa Gray-Garcia, in her memoir of growing up homeless, chronicles her lifelong struggle to promote homeless people’s scholarship. She writes about the first time she published an article in a local newspaper:

There it was in print, my name, my struggle to survive, my solutions, and my words. . . . For folks dealing with extreme poverty, recognition can be a lifeline with life-changing implications. So much about the experience of homelessness and abject poverty is humiliation. . . . Your awareness and knowledge are not considered scholarship, your words are not valued as art or theory, you are talked about, not spoken with, written about, not read. For me, recognition meant that now I had the strength to go on living because . . . people would hear my voice. (2006, 183-184)

Thus, Gray-Garcia attributes her survival, in part, to her experience of being heard. Inspired by this first publication, she and her mother developed a collective of “poverty scholars,” many of whom were homeless, under the umbrella of *POOR Magazine*, a publication written by and for homeless and impoverished people. As Jessica Hoffmann (2013) writes, in their aim to “center the voices and stories of often marginalized people, *POOR* has innovated numerous models of ‘horizontal media production.’” Gray-Garcia explains her inspiration for the project in her memoir: “I knew that everyone who wanted to write, who wanted to make art, who wanted to be heard but who didn’t have the access to education, time and/or resources, should be given that space, that ability, that voice” (2006, 212). Like Stringer, Gray-Garcia shows the importance of having a venue—of everyone being “given that space”—through which to make their experiential insights heard. She further writes about the goal of *POOR*’s work:

In the first year of our organization, we developed the notion of poverty scholarship, which was inducted into *POOR*’s core practices with the clear realization that poor folk had to flip the power of media, voice, and authorship. Poor people are inherently denied a

voice in the media, and they're also denied a voice in the creation of legislation and academic scholarship. Consequently it became *POOR*'s goal to intentionally listen, to conceive of policy and reassign authorship to the folks on the frontline of the experience of poverty and racism. (2006, 229)

Since the first issue was published in 1996, the organization has expanded to include an online magazine, a twice-monthly radio broadcast, video reporting, and an oral history collection (Hoffmann 2013). *POOR* continues to operate to this day, and as I discuss in my concluding chapter, has expanded to include a radical new model of housing for the homeless.

Yet no effort at listening can include all homeless voices or capture all histories of displacement. Perhaps the most profound silencing emerges from the raw fact of mortality. Across the US, people who live outside are terrifyingly vulnerable to the specter of early death. As a report from 2006 states: "For every age group, homeless persons are three times more likely to die than the general population. ... The average age of death of homeless persons is about 50 years, the age at which Americans commonly died in 1900" (NHCHC 2006, 1). In being deprived of shelter, sanitation, medicine, warmth, and privacy, homeless people are also stripped of an equal chance at life. Further, hate crimes result in nearly three times as many deaths of homeless people as all other protected classes combined (NCH 2014).¹⁴ Yet this most absolute and final loss—the loss of life—cannot be spoken. As Agamben (2002) argues in tracing a history of Auschwitz, it is impossible to know the most central truth of the Holocaust—the experience of death in the camps. Even so, he argues, the testimony of survivors is essential to struggling to understand the unknowable. Agamben argues that *all* authorship, in some way, testifies to something outside itself that must be validated. Indeed, the origin of the word "author" has multiple meanings—witness, testimony, advisor—that all suggest an act of

¹⁴ Despite this, homeless people are not themselves a protected class under hate crime legislation (NCH 2014).

representation. Testimony is thus relational: it is the unity of author and material, those who cannot speak and those who can (Agamben 2002).¹⁵ As Frederic Jameson (2013, 35) writes, “history is not a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but ... is inaccessible to us except in textual form.” He argues that most textual sources represent only the hegemonic voices in a broader dialogue, such that meaning cannot be fully understood without “the restoration or artificial reconstruction” of voices that have been “stifled and reduced to silence” (2013, 85).

Five years ago, in Fresno, California, I interviewed people about their experiences of living in homeless encampments. Not long after, Ben, who cried while remembering his father, died of cancer. Peaches, whose ideas greatly influenced my writing, disappeared. In Santa Cruz, seven out of forty people who participated in the oral history archive died within a few years of being interviewed. When I asked the archivist about this, she paused to remember. “It’s terrible to forget people,” she said, and her voice cracked as she struggled to list their names: “Anne Marie is gone, Don is gone, Janet is gone, Grace is gone, Laura is gone....” It is unsettling to write the stories of people who have since died. As Hilary Mantel (2017a) argues in her lectures on the blurred line between history and narrative, writing the past is akin to resurrecting the dead. “We sense the dead have a vital force still,” she said. “They have something to tell us, something we need to understand.” In Santa Cruz, homeless people often visited the grave site of a homeless woman who died on the streets in the late 1800s. Her grave is now a pilgrimage site of sorts, covered in flowers and gifts. I stumbled upon it by accident on my last day in town, and left a gift behind to mark the memory of all those who died before telling their stories.

¹⁵ In theorizing testimony, Agamben also challenges Foucault’s claim that there is no “subject” or free human agent. Foucault (1972) argued that discourse—the imbrication between power, language, and knowledge—determines what a person can say and think, and in this way, creates the individual subject rather than vice versa. In contrast, Agamben (2002) is interested in the *potential to speak*, rather than that which is already spoken. He argues that the very fact that some people do not have the potential to speak makes the subject—who *can* speak—essential to the constitution of language and thought.

By and large, most homeless voices are lost to the record of history. Yet oral histories and memoirs are rare instances in which people who are perhaps most silenced in contemporary society can bear witness to their own lives. And in doing so, they are also bearing witness to the lives of others who died. Many homeless narrators tell the stories of friends who died or disappeared on the streets, and their texts pay tribute to those who are gone. As Cadillac Man (2009, 254) writes, “every year I lose more people” (2009, 254) and “everywhere I went death followed me” (2009, 280). The title of his memoir—*The land of lost souls*—is a theme that repeats throughout the book, as a metaphor for death, the final destination of all of his friends. As Flynn (2004, 31-32) writes in his memoir about the homeless shelter where he worked, “Each year we count a hundred, hundred and fifty, dead from the year before. These are just the ones we can name, the ones we know. In a few years we will begin holding a memorial service for them, reading off the names of those we can remember.” As Flynn struggled with his own precarious housing, he witnessed his father’s life and death on the streets. He describes his own memoir as including his father’s tragically unwritten story:

No one would find the thread that would lead to the particular stories he tells. Only his voice does that, the air moving through him, vibrating out as words. *What is the word made of but breath, breath the stuff of Life?* ... If I could hold my father in my hands, bring him under the light—his stories are all there, each story is inside him. ... The only book ever written about or by him, as far as I can tell, is the book in your hands. (2004, 321-322)

In this sense, the subject of the “homeless author” always includes others who will never make their own voices heard. As Agamben writes, the voices of those who died are not lost to history if they are witnessed. Written down in oral histories and memoirs, their voices can be known beyond a single, vanishing instant in time and space, to create a lasting impression in the public imagination. In turn, my own role of reading this broader collection of life narratives enables a

patchwork testimony across time and place, as I am also a witness to these unsayable and unsaid histories. In the section below, I turn to the question of my own testimony.

Methods for listening and speaking

In attesting to the ongoing struggle to be heard by society, homeless memoirs and oral histories intervene in academic debates about attempts to “retrieve” the voices of others. Such debates—which span postcolonial and feminist theories of knowledge—are marked by a fundamental tension between those who seek to identify methods through which to listen to and disseminate the voices of oppressed people, and those who argue that such efforts are not only impossible, but unethical.¹⁶ Gramsci’s (1971; 1991) work on knowledge as a tool of class power deeply influenced academic understandings of representation. He argues that professional intellectuals who represent elite groups—scientists, writers, and priests, for example—control access to the apparatus of knowledge production and explain inequality in terms of the social inferiority of marginalized groups. Thus, while the “subaltern”—those who are socially subordinated, according to Gramsci—have less ideological influence in society, theorizing from the subaltern position is vital to undoing hegemony. It is politically crucial, he argued, to develop methods for fostering and analyzing subaltern resistance (see Green 2002).

Building on Gramsci’s ideas, postcolonial theorists have since struggled with the question of how to access subaltern voices in the context of imperial domination. The Subaltern Studies Collective sought to retrieve an understanding of subaltern consciousness through analyzing

¹⁶ Richa Nagar (2002) argues that in academic discussions of representation, there is often slippage between questions of ontology and ethics. Ontological questions address the ability to accurately represent the truth, instead of ethical and political aspects of speaking for another person or group. While both questions overlap, I focus in this chapter on the ethical and political aspects of representation. In the final chapter of this dissertation I turn to the ontological status of life narratives, discussing what kind of “truth” can be garnered from self-reflection.

peasant uprisings in colonial India. Ranajit Guha (1983, 46) argues that colonial history treats the peasant rebel as “an empirical person” rather than a conscious subject of his or her own history. In responding to this problem, Guha argued that subaltern consciousness can be understood by reading the colonial archive against the grain and identifying its distortions (1982; 1983). Such work inspired the interventions of the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group (1993), which turned to non-written forms of history, including oral knowledge and personal testimonies, rather than accessing subaltern consciousness only through the elite archive. For those who experience homelessness today in the US, and whose voices are so often used as empirical data to support experts, Guha’s concept of the “empirical person” remains crucial to critiques of representation. Further, as I discuss in greater depth in chapter five, oral testimony is a vital method for listening to homeless voices.

In contrast to seeking to “recover” subaltern voices, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze (1977) argue that elite intellectuals who dominate public discourse should make room for oppressed people to speak for themselves. They insist that the role of elite intellectuals is not to represent but to struggle against those systems of power that make them representatives and prevent others from being heard. This “refusal to speak” has become a popular response for academic intellectuals who view elite representation as inevitably unethical (Varadharajan 1995). Such thinking has also been popularly expressed in the political slogan, “nothing about us without us,” which has been particularly salient in the context of context of disability activism, as the condition of dependency is so often associated with the loss of voice (Charlton 1998). Gray-Garcia (2007, 61), in her memoir, similarly argues that those who have not experienced poverty should not speak for those who have. She writes:

The one thing this poverty scholar must teach you is to re-think your notions of scholarship itself. Who is considered a great scholar? How is scholarship attained? How

is greatness honored? And with what tools do we assess this canon? ... [Poverty] scholarship has a new canon, with new designations for greatness. Survival itself, through extreme poverty and crisis, houselessness, racism, disability, and welfare, to name a few, are what you need to qualify for poverty scholarship. Conversely, a person who is formally educated with a Master's Degree and no poverty scholarship would be considered inexperienced and therefore, should not be writing, lecturing, or legislating for and about communities in poverty.

In this way, Gray-Garcia flips notions of expertise, such that those who have the privilege of formal scholarship are ignorant of poverty, and should not act as representatives.

Yet in a highly influential critique of Foucault, Deleuze, and the Subaltern Studies Collective, Gayatri Spivak (1988) argued against the notion of pure and accessible "subaltern consciousness." Instead, she framed the subaltern as those who *cannot* represent themselves, as their voices are heard only insofar as they conform to the language of power. Spivak draws on the example of widows in colonial India who self-immolated on their husbands' funeral pyres, arguing that between patriarchal and imperial representations of their actions—*she wanted to die* versus *she needed to be saved by white men*—their voices are erased entirely. In this example, it is impossible to retrieve the widow's voice through empirical means, such that any notion of her is only a product of the colonial or patriarchal imagination (Spivak 1988). Spivak's insight reveals that to frame "the homeless" as having a clearer vision of oppression is not only to perpetuate a romanticized stereotype, but to fetishize "the homeless" as an already-constructed object of elite knowledge. As with self-immolated widows, homeless people are overwhelmingly represented as either victims to be saved or problems to be addressed, such that their voices often become displaced entirely in public debate. Further, even when homeless voices *are* included, they are limited to anecdotes that elite experts deem to be palatable and appropriate. As Spivak writes, "the category of the 'homeless', everywhere, fills the place of the earlier definition of the subaltern" (2000, 38).

Spivak further argues against the elite *refusal* to speak, as it assumes that oppressed people are able to make themselves heard in the first place. In rejecting both speaking for the subaltern and refusing to speak, she turns instead to deconstruction, arguing that elite intellectuals must seek to deconstruct the “subaltern other” they have created in their minds. Indeed, for many postcolonial theorists, the most politically salient approach to the unequal politics of knowledge is to deconstruct existing representations of marginalized and colonized groups. For Edward Said (1978), the postcolonial project involves deconstructing orientalism, an ideology that produces a geographical, cultural, and racial “other,” and that comes to predominate in the uneven terrain of knowledge production. In the context of homelessness, such a project would involve deconstructing problematic representations of homeless people, or critiquing the words *transient*, *deviant*, and *addict* that are so often used in mainstream discussions of homelessness.

Yet while such an effort is deeply important, it does not address the raw fact of ideological inequality itself. As homeless life narratives reveal, ideological inequality is a product of structural and material practices in which certain voices are systematically removed from public discourse. Spivak’s discursive intervention—that representations of subjugated consciousness are themselves inherently fraught—ignores Gramsci’s original point that the unequal landscape of knowledge seriously limits the possibility of resistance. Life narratives of homelessness critique housed advocates not for valorizing the oppressed subject, but for failing to listen to homeless voices, and for replacing homeless speakers altogether. Thus, beyond critiquing stigmatizing representations of homelessness, it is crucial to critique the displacement of homeless voices. This is not to say that life narratives of homelessness eschew the work of deconstruction, as many narrators critique words commonly used to describe the homeless. But

in doing so, they also develop new words like *houseless* and *landless*, and reclaim old words with negative connotations like *hobo* and *squatter*. Yet this new knowledge is largely displaced from public debate. Thus, beyond tearing down old categories, it is crucial to listen to the categories that have been historically unheard.

In critiquing subaltern studies, Spivak also risks reinforcing the problem she warned against. Just as valorizations of subjugated consciousness reproduce the “pure other” of the elite imagination, a focus on the voiceless widow fetishizes her as a silent and passive object of analysis, rather than a subject who struggles to be heard. While the example of self-immolation illustrates that some voices *are* lost to history, this loss can be characterized as a *failure to listen*, rather than a failure of speech. As Agamben (2002) so powerfully argued, even the dead leave traces of their self-expression behind for witnesses to piece together. The condition of “locked-in” syndrome provides a useful counterpoint to Spivak’s metaphor. Total physical paralysis represents perhaps the most extreme limitation on human expression. Yet countless people who experience this condition have struggled to express themselves using whatever bodily function remains—in most cases a fluttering eyelid. Whether their voices are heard depends upon the immediate absence or presence of a sensitive listener. The broader question of whether society listens involves structures of representation—what could be called structures of listening—that have enabled some people with locked-in syndrome to publish memoirs and give speeches about their experiences, while other voices remain forever unheard. Thus, what appears as an extreme example of voicelessness is in fact marked by an absence of listening rather than an absence of speech. Indeed, in the field of Latin American Studies, many scholars have argued against

Spivak to insist that the subaltern *do* speak—often in non-written modes of knowledge—but that no one is bothering to listen (Acosta 2014).¹⁷

In reframing ideological inequality as a problem of listening rather than speech, life narratives of homelessness highlight that listening itself is an active, constitutive process rather than the passive absence of language. Gemma Fiumara (2013) argues that contemporary social and linguistic theory overwhelmingly focuses on speech and ignores the fundamental importance of listening as essential to the constitution of language and meaning. An emphasis on listening is important not only in that it highlights the dialectical nature of meaning as the interplay between speaker and listener, but also in that it reframes elite society as the object of analysis, thus enabling a critique of the structural practices of representation. As Gray-Garcia (2006, 229) writes about the need to “flip the power of media, voice, and authorship,” this “flipping” also reverses Spivak’s framing of the subaltern as a mute object of history to instead highlight society as the “unlistening” object of subaltern critique. Through this reversal, critics can examine tendencies within dominant society to produce partial forms of knowledge, and to displace certain voices altogether.

For this dissertation, I read life narratives of homelessness as a way to listen to homeless voices. In the process of research, I read the collection of narratives initially to identify themes and shared arguments. After I found which texts and passages spoke to each other, I re-read them together to more fully “hear” the themes that emerged, and the commonalities and dissonances

¹⁷ Abraham Acosta (2014) argues that such scholarship ignores Spivak’s fundamental insight that the subaltern are not an actual group with shared identity and voice, but rather a construct of elite theorists. For Acosta, the question is not whether marginalized people can make themselves heard, but the way in which academic intellectuals construct “the subaltern” as a concept of the mind, imbued with the paternalistic notion that subjugated people have a clearer understanding of oppression. Yet by narrowly focusing on the discursive realm, Acosta, like Spivak, overlooks the real-world dynamics in which marginalized groups struggle to make themselves heard, and institutions of knowledge displace their voices.

between narrators. I further read the texts as a genre of social theory, to identify life narrators' *ideas*, rather than their statements of fact.¹⁸ Yet much of what I have listened to is, in turn, ineffable. I cannot express in any single text the experience of reading hundreds of life stories over a period of years. I cannot capture being haunted by the memoir of Stephanie Rodriguez, or my failed, desperate efforts to contact her, and my fear that she had not survived.¹⁹ I cannot explain why I cried after reading a seemingly innocuous passage Tina S.'s memoir, in which she describes the flowery dress her mother wore to visit her in jail, the same one she always wore to welfare appointments.

In so many ways, this dissertation—as a work of writing—is not a transparent reflection of the experience of listening. As I sat down each day to write, I removed certain passages, moved others, condensed, expanded, and responded to feedback, all in the name of creating a readable story: something that could be easily understood but also capture the complexity of everything I have read. To write, I was also faced with the task of interpreting, synthesizing, and critiquing homeless scholarship. I not only listened, but built upon and scrutinized the ideas, logics, and conclusions contained in the narratives. I also sought to place the ideas in conversation with academic social theory on housing, home, and homelessness. Thus, I do not read homeless thinkers as somehow having a purer vision of the truth, but rather place their work in the broader field of critical social theory. As Joan Sangster (1994, 12) writes about feminist oral history: “While I had every intention of allowing women to speak about their own

¹⁸ In chapter five, I turn to the discussion of what kind of theory life narratives present.

¹⁹ In the process of writing this dissertation, I reached out to writers about the possibility of discussing their work. In trying to locate Stephanie Rodriguez, I stumbled across an article about a woman with her name and eerily similar life circumstances who had been shot by her husband (Hollister 2003).

perceptions, if my interpretation and theirs diverged, mine would assume precedence in my writing.”

For these reasons, in writing about homeless people’s self-representations, I cannot pretend to erase myself. As Bertell Ollman (2003) writes, what we understand about the world is determined by who we are and how we study, just as much as it is determined by the world itself. Gray-Garcia (2006), in arguing that elite experts are ignorant of the lessons of poverty and should therefore remain silent, reminds me of the danger of speaking about something I have never experienced. This insight suggests that, upon reading life narratives of homelessness, I should remain silent so the original authors can speak their own truths. Yet the refusal to speak for others abandons the political responsibility to speak *out* against oppression (Alcoff 1991). Further, it risks reducing all authors to only speaking about themselves (Sangster 1994). As Said (1978) argues, each representation must be taken on its own terms, and rejected because of its content, not because of who wrote it. He writes that what marks non-orientalist literature is not the author’s identity, but a refusal to subscribe to the orientalist canon, and an ongoing “methodological self-consciousness” (1978, 326). Thus, to critique the expert use of homeless people’s stories is not to undermine the importance of advocacy, but to urge a reexamination of what kinds of stories are heard and who acts as gatekeeper.

The refusal to speak also assumes that the elite theorist “would have said it all” and that her words cannot be challenged or supplemented (Varadharajan 1995, xvii). To remain silent, upon reading homeless memoirs and oral histories, suggests that homeless people are not themselves theorists and teachers whose knowledge can be interpreted, built upon, and disseminated by others. In the genre of social theory, each text is made to be interpreted, and no interpretation is immune to critique or revision. This is true even when authors write from a

marginalized position, as when Gramsci wrote from prison, or Marx from poverty so extreme that only three of his seven children survived into adulthood. When such authors are widely interpreted, no one interpretation comes to stand for their work or silence their voices. This is precisely why the archive of homeless narratives must be made broadly accessible and widely interpreted. In this effort, elite intellectuals committed to democratic representation must challenge unequal systems of knowledge, rather than remaining paralyzed by the ethical problems of representation. They must use their ideological privilege—time, money, access, and training—to expose how systems of knowledge support oppression (Alcoff 1991; Spivak 2005). In turn, they must welcome critique. As Hilary Mantel (2017a; 2017b) argues, to be timid when faced with the task of representing history is to undermine the critical capacities of the reader.

Life narratives of homelessness do not only critique expert knowledge. Many narrators argue that personal experience is not the only path to knowledge, and there is creative value in learning something about which one has no personal experience. Eighner (2013) describes the limitations of both experience and formal investigation, suggesting that knowledge of homelessness must emerge from multiple modes and locations. He writes:

I resist being identified as an expert on homelessness. I am not. I flatter myself that if I had intended a study of homelessness, I would have done a better job of it. Experience, of course, is a valuable part of understanding the problem, but experience is necessarily limited. Charts and graphs cannot answer the questions of experience, but neither can the limited perspective of experience answer the broad questions. (2013, 291)

Eighner highlights the importance of both formal and experiential ways of knowing in creating broader social understandings. Ryan (2013) advocated for dialogue and conversation as a tool of learning, saying, “Why can’t we sit down and converse and help each other? We could learn something from them; they could learn something from us.” In this way, a broader tapestry of

knowledge can be arrived at not only through experience, but through study, investigation, and the mutual practice of listening.

Further, life narratives of homelessness reveal the importance of learning about other people's experiences. In writing that others do not "know" them and therefore should not make claims on their behalf, Casanova and Stringer emphasize that the lack of knowledge of others' lives is a primary barrier to advocacy. This suggests that life narratives themselves—or writings about the self—can be a tool through which people can come to understand the needs and desires of others. As Mantel (2017b) argues in her lectures on historical fiction, "You are always writing out of your own time and your own sensibility, but you educate yourself towards your characters.... You look to your characters to change you.... It's about listening to the past." Thus, I hope to challenge my own sensibilities—and create a more deeply informed account—through the practice of listening to homeless voices.

Life narratives can also be a tool for critical self-reflection. Gray-Garcia writes about her own efforts—in promoting poverty scholarship—to foreground self-reflexivity and life writing. She writes, "*POOR*'s rule from the beginning was to break down the myth of objectivity and the implicit 'other' stance of journalism. We accomplished this through the integration of self, the use of 'I' in every story; no Dickensian positivism here. We were the subjects" (2006, 230). In the writers' workshop that *POOR* hosted, Gray-Garcia writes that participants "were encouraged to write about their truths from a first-person perspective.... [This] required folks to be honest about their personal positions of oppression" (2006, 212). Gray-Garcia suggests that writing about the self can be a method for honest reflection, and challenges the idea of a singular, universal truth.

Other life narrators similarly promote the project of self-reflection, and advocate a critical stance toward all knowledge claims, including their own. As Eighner writes:

I must reveal some attitudes of which I am not proud. I have racist and sexist ideas and other faulty ways of thinking which do not have convenient names. I report these frankly. Not because I think my prejudices are correct, but because ... I think sunlight and fresh air the best treatment of an abscess. I have great faith in the truth. And as a member of an oppressed minority, I know I would rather confront the true opinions of my adversaries. ... Admitting to occasional doubt, I think, is a sign of strength, not of weakness. In any event, so I suppose, doubt has never done harm while unshakable certitude has caused unspeakable suffering. (1991, 5-6).

In uncovering these “faulty ways of thinking,” Eighner admits that his knowledge is limited by his own biases, and asserts that honesty and the admission of self-doubt are “the best treatment” for overcoming these biases. Stringer also takes a critical stance toward truth claims and advocates a “practice of doubt” (1998, 100). He writes:

It’s relatively easy, when writing editorials, to pick a target and start firing away. Or to stand firmly on one side of a hot issue or topic and spout off. But nothing in this imperfect world is beyond dispute. I’m not saying there is no need for a sense of right and wrong. There is. But people’s lives proceed under an infinite variety of circumstances. And I find it perilous to pass judgment. ... Beneath the ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ of issues and the ‘pro’ and ‘con’ of our positions, however, lies the vital matter of our relationship to the events behind them. (1998, 190-191)

Stringer asserts that ideological positions emerge from one’s “relationship to the events” underlying the position. Thus, all knowledge is subject to critical examination of whose interests it promotes.

As with Stringer and Eighner’s insistence on the usefulness of doubt, academic scholars have argued that self-reflexivity—the practice of examining how one’s social position impacts the knowledge one produces—is essential to building knowledge. Linda Alcoff (1991) writes that the academic impetus to speak must be reflexively critiqued with one’s privileged social location in mind, and that speech on behalf of others must be analyzed in terms of its effects in the world. Raymond Williams (1989) similarly argues that writers must become more conscious

of their own alignments and the positions they represent. As Said writes, it is crucial to keep “a space in the mind open for doubt ... to find a way to be consistent with your beliefs and at the same time remain free enough to grow, change your mind, discover new things, or rediscover what you had once put aside” (1994, 120-121). Yet at the same time, it is impossible to accurately and completely assess one’s own failures and biases (Rose 1997). This impossibility reveals the importance not only of self-critique, but openness to critique from others.

The method of life narrative is instructive in this effort. Every knowledge claim is based on countless decisions on what to include and exclude as the object of observation and the mode of analysis. At each stage—research, analysis, and writing—this dissertation is my own idiosyncratic interpretation, grounded in my own experiences of the world. Yet it is also impossible to fully know and disclose all the ways in which my interpretations are limited by my own experiences. For these reasons, I have attempted to lay my experience bare, and ground my analysis throughout this dissertation in the story of my own relationship to housing, so that readers might be able to see my analytic limitations in ways I cannot. I also seek to avoid treating reflexivity as separate from the work itself, by instead weaving self-writing throughout each chapter. If the self can be imagined as an infinitely complex set of memories, perceptions, and proclivities, then writing about one’s memories can be a means of working towards transparency about one’s positionality. In examining myself in relation to the question of housing, I seek to discover provisional answers alongside the reader, through the process of writing. As Bella Brodzki (1998) argues, autobiography itself is a genre in which the author becomes displaced from herself, able to observe herself from the outside.

Yet a practice of self-assessment and reflexivity does not address the problem of unequal knowledge production itself, or the question of how to foster a more democratic social dialogue.

As life narratives of homelessness reveal, ideological marginalization is not simply discursive, but is practiced by powerful institutions, and subject to the pressures of capitalism. Apologies and self-critique are meaningless if they fail in the larger effort of redistributing power and material wealth (Nagar and Geiger 2007; Smith 2012). Thus, resisting ideological displacement must involve striving for equality in the production and dissemination of voices. Life narratives of homelessness reveal that the *social* practice of listening to homeless voices is an important step in this direction. Indeed, feminist and anti-racist scholars have long argued that the practice of listening is crucial to building democratic and inclusive forms of social collectivity (Lorde 1984; Bickford 1996; Chun 1999; Collins 2002; Ratcliffe 2005). By citing homeless scholars and tracing the broad outlines of a vast collection of homeless narratives, I seek to enlarge what has historically been a narrow conversation.

While the intimate task of listening requires a sensitive, open curiosity (Devault and Gross 2012), it is important to also examine how those who are displaced can make their voices heard to a broader collective. Spivak (2005), nearly twenty years after her critique of subaltern studies, revised her early understandings of subalternity, arguing that the subaltern are those unable to form collective agency or represent their material interests to society.²⁰ Most importantly, the subaltern cannot assert their class interests or have their interests recognized because they have no “infrastructural institutions” through which to do so (2005, 477). The goal, then, is to build infrastructures for subaltern expression, which involves “the effort to establish, implement and monitor structures that allow subaltern resistance to be located and heard” (2005, 483). Moving away from deconstruction, this intervention instead echoes Gramsci’s

²⁰ Instead of marking a particular group as subaltern—and creating it as an object of the mind—Spivak writes that subalternity, in this sense, always eludes empirical construction and is irretrievably heterogeneous.

understanding of intellectual production as deeply imbricated in material and political practice. Resisting subalternity thus involves struggling to change unequal systems of knowledge production so that subaltern interests and identities can be heard. In calling for “infrastructures” of knowledge, Spivak echoes Raymond Williams’ (1977) understanding that knowledge operates through vast material networks—or structures—of interrelated forces.

Ideological displacement is not a passive failure to listen, but the active removal of certain voices from public debate. In turn, the struggle to be heard is not simply about agency, but about the kind of knowledge that gains currency in society, and the real-world implications of that knowledge in the lives of those whose voices are displaced. Housed society’s predominant understanding of homelessness—inflected as it is with blame, stigma and pity—often supports systems that dehumanize the homeless and obscure the problems of housed society. As Arturo Escobar (2003, 164) argues, “displacement in representation” is not simply discursive, but is fundamentally linked to actual, material practices of displacement throughout history. The ideological erasure of homelessness, in particular, supports larger political efforts to remove homeless people from public spaces and conceal problems of housing insecurity (Soederberg 2017). As Gray-Garcia argues, being heard is crucial to survival for those who are homeless. The practice of listening to homeless voices is essential not only to creating a more equal landscape of representation, but to challenging housing displacement itself. Although there is never a guarantee that society will listen, the project of building infrastructures for listening cannot be abandoned.²¹ As I explore in the final chapter of this dissertation, publishers and

²¹ Indeed, Eighner writes that many people refused to take his memoir seriously. He describes “a number of odd questions, winks, and nudges I received when I was interviewed or questioned less formally about my book. Apparently many literary people suspect that an outsider memoir is not entirely on the up-and-up” (2013, 291). While this suspicion of Eighner as the writer of his own story reflects a denial of homeless people as intellectual agents, Eighner’s act of self-narration pushes against notions of homeless people as passive, illiterate, and voiceless.

archives that disseminate homeless memoirs and oral histories present one kind of “infrastructure” through which homeless voices might be heard.



Throughout my life, I have encountered homeless people in ways that were transitory and fleeting. When I moved out of my parents’ house at seventeen, I rented a little place in an alley next to a park where homeless people lived. I recently found a poem I wrote during that period. It was called *The Encounter*:

A small woman emerges
from her house, locks the door.
She spends the day lazing in the park
watching a shoelace swing from the branches.
A homeless man approaches,
says he thought she was someone else.
But she hasn’t learned to look him in the face.
She watches him the way she watched
the shoelace, or the branch.

I do not remember that day, or the man, or even writing the poem. But my inability to look another person in the face clearly left a mark. Two years later, on my daily commute to San Francisco from Oakland, I occasionally exchanged hellos with Michael, a middle-aged man who panhandled the same corner each day. We ate lunch together once. One day he disappeared, and when I saw him months later he was wearing a hospital wristband. He seemed terrified, and told me that doctors had put something in his blood. He wanted to draw a picture of it. With all the urgency of youthful indignation, I rifled through my backpack for a pen and paper. Michael drew a cartoon squirrel with a candle growing out of its head, so comical and eerie it is burned into my memory still. I do not remember seeing him again, perhaps because I no longer made the effort.

In Syracuse, where I began working on my dissertation, it snowed almost six months of the year, but people still lived outside in winter. The local newspaper told stories of frustrated businessmen who want the encampments under the highway to disappear. Almost every week, I passed someone panhandling amidst a crowd of students. Once I heard a man yelling *help*. On another occasion, at a free campus event, I met Sally, a woman who wore several layers of stained trench coats and carried a bag full of blankets. We sat down to eat, surrounded by a group of artists in black dresses and high heels. She told me she had studied music at the university, and did not seem to notice when the staff kept glancing in her direction. I thought Sally was homeless, but when I saw her next she told me she had been living for years in a house with no water, heat, or light, and a roof full of holes.

I discovered recently that a friend had been sleeping for weeks on the New York City subway. He didn't recognize my voice over the phone. *Who is this?* he said, and I realized how far we had drifted. I wrote another poem recently about a woman I met in a cafe, not that different from the one I wrote years ago:

In late winter a woman came
into the cafe and we shared a table.
Her irises trembled
like two small earthquakes.
She asked me for a cup of mint tea
and just as her eyes closed
and her fingers closed around the cup,
the manager said *you have to leave*
and she was out the door again,
her body shaking against the rain.

I have read this same refrain—*you have to leave*—over and over in the life narratives of those who experience homelessness. Yet this displacement is often unseen. As I argue in the chapter that follows, the failure to listen to homeless voices is perhaps most profound in the lives of

homeless women, who often experience a kind of displacement that becomes altogether invisible.

Chapter II: “Running away from running away”

The Statue of Liberty, a colossal figure of a woman holding a torch, was originally designed to represent American freedom “enlightening the world.” Yet a now-famous inscription reimagines the statue as a “mother of exiles” who calls out to the world’s dispossessed—“give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.... Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.” The poem, by feminist poet Emma Lazarus, was initially excluded at the statue’s unveiling, and it was not until fifteen years after Lazarus died that her friends succeeded in their campaign to finally have it installed (Khan 2010).²² Through this small triumph, they revolutionized the monument’s meaning. The statue, in speaking out against the wealth of imperial nations—“keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!”—not only frames liberty as freedom from poverty, but also presents a radical vision of America as a homeland for economic exiles. In recent years, members of the Trump administration challenged the poem’s legitimacy in their efforts to reclaim the statue as a symbol of exclusionary nationalism (O’Toole 2017). This history unearths the fraught nature of freedom, as a concept that has long been central to American national identity.

In her memoir of homelessness in New York City, Stephanie Rodriguez presents yet another vision of freedom. For more than a decade, she experienced horrific violence at the hands of an abusive husband. When she finally left, she and her children became homeless. She writes, “*after thirteen years of marriage and eight children, I escaped. With nothing. Not even a plan*” (1994, 100). For a time, they slept in subway stations and overcrowded shelters. She

²² As women were not allowed to attend the unveiling on Ellis Island in 1886, suffragists chartered a boat nearby to protest the statue and call for women’s full citizenship. An African-American newspaper similarly critiqued the statue, writing, “‘Liberty enlightening the world,’ indeed! The expression makes us sick. This government is a howling farce. It can not or rather *does not* protect its citizens within its *own* borders” (Khan 2010, p. 182).

writes of the experience, “One fear crushed under the weight of another. At home, one madman with a fiberglass fishing rod or other weapons I was familiar with; out here, a score of madmen wielding God knows what. I opted for the unknown madmen” (1994, 105). In a pivotal passage, Rodriguez describes a homeless woman who lit a handheld firework for the children. Through imagining her as the Statue of Liberty holding a torch, Rodriguez came to a deeper understanding of freedom. She writes:

She stood there, one arm across her abdomen, the other holding the sparkler high over her head, a ragged and toothless old Miss Liberty poised with dignified satisfaction in the middle of the dirty parking lot. . . . Her face said more to me than any lips ever had. She told me without words the truth about freedom. That its face isn't lovely and that its voice doesn't float lilyingly on sweet breath. She reminded me that freedom does not clean, clothe, feed, or educate, but rather, that it is its own value. By the time the sparkler died out, I knew that I would never go home. (1994, 118-119)

Rodriguez highlights how the cost of freedom, for women without property, is destitution and displacement. In emphasizing that freedom is not “lovely” and does not “clean, clothe, feed, or educate,” she outlines a feminist vision of freedom from domestic labor and patriarchal notions of femininity. In revealing the gendered dimensions of confinement, she challenges masculine, militaristic celebrations of American liberty, and nuances liberal gestures towards freedom from economic exploitation. For her, freedom must address not only the problem of poverty, but gendered struggles for the space of the home.



Life narratives of homelessness reveal that the process of displacement not only occurs through political economies of housing, but through the intimate politics of the home. In the American dream of nuclear domesticity, fathers are designated breadwinners and heads of households, and mothers become unpaid caretakers within the home (Collins 1998). The first

part of this chapter examines how such family structures tend to reproduce violence, at the same time as they render it private, depoliticized, and invisible. I then examine how financial dependence leaves many women and young people trapped in violent homes, and how escape is often followed by ongoing patterns of displacement. Altogether, life narratives of homelessness reveal that the privatized nature of American domesticity obscures the intimate, everyday geographies of confinement, the gendered dynamics of displacement, and the ways in which homelessness, for many, involves cycling between violent homes.

This chapter largely draws on writings and testimonies of women, as such texts more often speak to the violence of domestic life. This is not to say that men do not experience sexual or intimate violence. As Butterfly, who lived in an encampment in Santa Cruz, said in her oral history about her homeless neighbors, “they’ve all been raped, even the boys” (Butterfly 2013). In particular, queer male youth describe in their narratives being targeted for violence because of their sexuality. Further, boys and men are less likely to disclose incidents of sexual or domestic assault, in part because of the stigma attached to male victimization. Yet intimate violence is not gender-neutral: government statistics reveal that domestic violence is overwhelmingly committed by men against women, and male abusers tend to inflict far more serious forms of injury (Truman and Morgan 2015; Swan et al. 2008). As Stacy (2012) said in her oral history, domestic violence “still happens to guys but it makes me more vulnerable because I’m a girl.” In highlighting this dynamic, I do not seek to naturalize gender identities, but to emphasize the way in which masculinity becomes associated with violence and domination in the home. As I argue in the paragraphs that follow, this in turn becomes imbricated with racist and heterosexist visions of women’s proper place in society.

Domesticity and the hidden abode of violence

Domestic and public life have long been viewed as separate spheres of human activity, yet in Europe this separation is rooted in the specific historical rupture of the Industrial Revolution (Wells 2009). Silvia Federici (2004) argues that leading up to the rise of capitalism, peasant uprisings in Europe often promoted women's rights alongside the struggle for economic equality. Beginning in the 16th century, the landed classes responded to the growing crisis of feudalism not only with violent land enclosures, but by imposing severe penalties on women who sought contraception, or engaged in collective forms of women's sociality. Through this process, hundreds of thousands of women were tortured and killed as accused "witches," while an epidemic of virtually legalized rape made it treacherous to leave the home in many places. Over time, Federici argues, working-class women were forced into reproductive labor and reduced to isolated domestic servants. She traces these processes, in turn, to the 19th-century development of the socially subordinated role of the "housewife." Alongside this history, the deeply ingrained ideology of "separate spheres" took root, such that women's domestic and reproductive oppression became viewed as a private, intimate affair separate from the masculine world of political and economic life.

Contemporary American domesticity is also deeply rooted in the history of European colonialism. Alongside the oppression of European peasants, brutal practices of colonial enslavement and land acquisition helped usher in Europe's transition to capitalism. As part of this process, imperial projects across the globe imposed women's subordination onto many societies who previously held radically different sex and gender norms (Lugones 2007). In many communities, Eurocentric colonialism introduced the category of "woman" itself, as a binary opposite to "man." In the US, isolated and gendered domestic norms were imposed onto many

indigenous communities who had previously engaged in collective women's work (Carby 1996). Further, the Victorian "cult of domesticity" was restricted to white women, while black family structures were deeply stigmatized and excluded from the protections of family law (Burnham 1987). In the 20th century, as black women asserted increasing financial independence and forged connections to broader communities rather than retreating into the isolation of the nuclear family, such domestic practices were pathologized in mainstream discourses (Carby 1996; Webster 1998). Today, the idealized suburban dream of individualized and enclosed domestic life remains rooted in white, middle-class ideals (Dowling and Power 2016).

In addition to women's historic oppression, hegemonic domestic norms also constrained expressions of masculinity. During the violence of colonial expansion in Europe, homoerotic sexuality was explicitly under attack (Federici 2004; Lugones 2007). Still today, hegemonic masculinity remains premised on the oppression of gay men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).²³ More broadly, gender socialization often disables expressions of male vulnerability (Real 1998). In the contemporary US, boys are often socialized at an early age to desire and dominate girls, while those who fail to conform are ostracized and reminded that they are not "real" men (Pascoe 2011). Connell (1987) writes that the contemporary patriarchal state—in which women are largely excluded from positions of authority—institutionalizes this kind of aggressive masculinity in the form of police and military forces. As Deleuze and Guattari (1983) argue, the model of family involving a husband, wife, and biological children—often called the oedipal model—mirrors fascist social structures, as young people are taught to love those who

²³ In turn, as Connell (1992) argues, homosexual masculinity both subverts and adopts hegemonic masculinity, thus expressing a crisis of the heteronormative gender order.

abuse and control them and boys are trained to grow into men who will, in turn, be controlling and abusive (Deleuze and Guattari 1983).

In 1963, Betty Friedan framed the phenomenon of the “trapped housewife” as rooted in conventional American domesticity. Friedan describes “the chains” of domesticity as ideological constraints, writing “we can no longer ignore that voice within women that says ‘I want something more than my husband and my children and my home’” (Friedan 1963, 31).

Generations of feminists have since nuanced Friedan’s argument, to show the role that domesticity plays in the lives of working-class women and women of color. Historically, women of color often performed social reproductive labor for a wage in white households, before returning to the “second shift” of work in the home. Further, as the US state historically failed to provide meaningful support for domestic labor, childcare and domestic services became a market for low-paid, gendered, and racialized labor (Hayden 1984). Thus, the isolated and unfulfilling domesticity of middle and upper-income white women can be seen as a mark of race and class privilege (Glenn 1992; Zinn and Dill 1994). Further, as the contemporary patriarchal state both limits women’s ability to control their reproductive capacities and shifts state welfare functions onto women’s private labor, many women are thrust into the unwaged work of raising children (Connell 1987). For women with no means of financial independence, confinement to the home is not simply ideological, as Friedan suggests, but based on the real material need to stay housed.

In addition to restriction to the domestic sphere and punishment of non-conforming domesticities, women have been subject to an “unacknowledged epidemic” of violence in the home (Schafer et al. 1998). Historically, the US state viewed domestic violence as a legal right of a husband over his wife (Siegel 1995; Felner 1997). Tennessee was the first state to outlaw “wife beating” in 1850, but the enforcement of such laws disproportionately targeted black men,

and feminist struggles to provide services for survivors were met by conservative efforts to preserve the institution of the family (Pleck 1989). Until the mid-90s, laws allowing for marital rape had not been fully overturned (Spohn and Horney 2013). In the contemporary era, domestic violence remains the leading cause of injury for young women (Committee on the Judiciary 1992). One study found that one in three women experiences domestic violence in her lifetime (Brown 1993). Even these numbers are likely low, as domestic violence has been found to be one of the most underreported of all crimes (Strong et al. 2010). The phenomenon of domestic violence is further reinforced through the structural inequalities of racism, classism, and heterosexism (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). In particular, racism against women of color who experience domestic violence has created unequal access to services and furthered racist tropes about “cultures of poverty,” while the punitive response to domestic violence has reinforced black men’s victimization at the hands of the police state. Thus, despite the private and hidden nature of domesticity, the politics of the home have deeply social ramifications.

Many memoirs of homelessness describe how the dual operations of state racism and domestic privatization contributed to violence in their own homes. Chris Gardner, in describing his experience of childhood domestic violence, emphasizes a culture of willful ignorance. He writes, “The police and people of our neighborhood couldn’t or wouldn’t intervene. ... What I saw were too many people turning to look the other way” (2012, 80). Not only was the violence in his home tolerated as a “private” matter, it was also subject to the racism of state agencies. After his step-father brutally beat his mother to unconsciousness, Gardner’s immediate response was to clean the house. He writes, “the idea that the white paramedics and policemen will see the blood everywhere and then the dirty stove as well is too shameful to bear. So my job is to clean it up, to prove that decent people live here, not savages” (2006, 37). Over and over again, Gardner

attests to experiences of white animosity and condescension, particularly on those occasions when he and his mother most needed state assistance. As Ruth Hall and her co-authors (1981, 295) write, “black women fear to report Black rapists precisely because it may be used as the occasion for the indiscriminate harassment of their neighbours, family and friends, as well as of themselves. Reporting rape often results in a backlash on the whole of the Black community.”²⁴

Cupcake Brown, in her memoir, traces the connections between racist ideologies of domesticity and her own placement in an abusive foster home. Brown describes how the state, in privileging biological family structures, displaced her from the safe and loving care of the stepfather who raised her. After her mother died suddenly from a seizure, a white judge awarded custody to a man she had never seen before who claimed to be her biological father. The man immediately gave Brown and her brother over to a foster family, and sought to claim the money they received from their mother’s life insurance. In the years that followed, Brown and her stepfather made countless attempts to reunite, but were repeatedly denied, as state law gave biological parents first custodial rights. Yet Brown describes how she grew up in a context in which nuclear families were rare, such that family law disqualified existing family structures in her community. As Patricia Hill Collins (1998) argues, in the US, biological sameness is privileged both in the space of the home and the nation, in the form of ethnic nationalism and hegemonic ideals of domesticity. In their foster home, Brown and her brother were constantly reminded that as foster children, they were not “real” children. She writes that she and her

²⁴ Many homeless youth also attest in their life narratives to the impossibility of reporting rape or intimate violence to the police, for fear of being forced into a foster home against their will. Indeed, although the foster care system was set up to protect children from abuse, children in foster care are shockingly vulnerable to violence, a problem which has only worsened with the privatization of foster services over the past two decades (Committee on Finance 2017). As Regina Louise writes in her memoir about becoming a foster child, “I now belonged to the state of California. I was its property” (2003, 360). Her characterization of foster children as “property” is increasingly true, as more and more for-profit agencies receive government money in exchange for managing foster children.

brother internalized this ideology: “We both started looking at our arms and legs, feeling them as if to check to see whether they were real” (2006, 23). Brown’s experience of being forced into foster care is not unusual. While family social service agencies in the US developed initially to serve white families, by the 1990s, black children were twice as likely as white children to be taken from their families and placed in foster care, despite research showing that child abuse was equally prevalent in both communities (Hill 2004). As Robert Hill (2004) argues, social service agencies tasked with determining family custody discriminate against black family structures that are often based in communal and extended family childcare. In turn, racist notions of what counts as a “good family” lead to higher rates of foster placements in communities of color, thereby displacing existing black family structures and rendering children more vulnerable to adult homelessness.²⁵

Brown’s memoir sheds light on how hegemonic domesticity not only privileges biology, but also enforces a stark division between private and public space that renders intimate violence invisible. She describes how the privatization of domesticity in her foster family’s white, suburban neighborhood made her vulnerable to violence:

Everywhere you looked there were picture-perfect sprawling green lawns and everything was sparkling clean. It looked like a neighborhood straight out of *Leave it to Beaver*. ... There were no children visible or audible. No street football games or little girls on porches playing dolls or jacks. There were no dodge ball games breaking out on the sprawling green lawns. We were definitely *not* in the hood. ... One look down *this* street and you knew that kind of love didn’t live here. Everything looked so sterile, I wasn’t sure that kind of love could move in if it wanted to. (2006, 24-25)

In addition to critiquing white, suburban life as stifling neighborhood sociality, Brown highlights how the isolation of each family unit enabled a hidden culture of domestic violence, such that

²⁵ As Regina Louise (2003) writes in her memoir, restrictions on inter-racial adoption also made it far more difficult for black children in foster care to find permanent homes. She writes, “Why was there always more black kids than white ones left in the shelter?” (2003, 338).

Brown was subject to horrific and unacknowledged abuse by her foster family. Describing how her foster cousin moved into the house because the neighborhood was considered safe, Brown writes ironically, “Surrounded by a bunch of white folks, what trouble could he possibly get into?” (2006, 26). Yet the young man ultimately raped Brown when she was twelve years old, sparking her repeated attempts to run away from home, and her eventual homelessness.

Brown further describes how her experience of violence was constantly ignored not only by neighbors, but by “the white folks who ran the system” (Brown 2006, 30). When the social worker visited, she complimented Brown’s foster mother on how beautiful and clean her home was. Each time Brown ran away as a child, she was found by white police officers who returned her to her foster mother, without asking after her welfare or inquiring as to why she ran away in the first place. This experience again shows how the white social service agencies silenced the problem of domestic violence. Brown writes:

I felt like the system had never asked any damn questions—or at least *the right ones*—when they were supposed to. When I was getting raped, molested, beaten, mistreated, shifted from home to home, no one ever said a fuckin’ thing. No one ever asked me *why* I ran! They simply labeled me “hard to place” *because* I ran. (2006, 229)

The state, in casting Brown as “hard to place,” forced her into a condition of virtual placelessness, cycling between the streets and violent homes. As a young adult, Brown again experienced the silencing of domestic violence. When her husband physically abused her, Brown writes, “The police never did anything. ... [They] would just calm us down ... warning us to ‘keep it quiet’” (2006, 269). In this way, the police officers tasked with assisting her instead sought to render her abuse quieter, and less public.²⁶ As Dannette said in her oral history:

²⁶ Brown’s experience also connects the invisibility of domestic politics to the invisibility of homelessness itself, as a non-conforming expression of domestic life. As a young adult, Brown was forced to hide her experiences of homelessness from white society to obtain employment. She writes: “White folks loathe street people. If you tell them about your homeless days, sleeping in parks and eating out of trash cans, they’ll think you’re crazy” (2006, p.

“Growing up was a façade. Because the people from the outside saw one thing and what was really going on in the home was another. . . . So anybody I tried to tell what was going on in the home considered me a liar” (Dannette and Wallace, date unknown).

Wojnarowicz, who traces his youth homelessness to childhood abuse, similarly connects domestic violence to the isolation of suburbia. He writes:

I grew up in a tiny version of hell called the suburbs and experienced the Universe of the Neatly Clipped Lawn. This is a place where . . . torture, starvation, humiliation, physical and psychic of violence can take place uncontested by others, as long as it doesn't stray across the boundaries and borders as formed by the deed-holder inhabiting the house on the neatly clipped lawn. If the violence is contained within the borders of the lawn and does not mess up the real estate in any way that would cause the surrounding properties devaluation, anything is possible and everything permissible. (1991, 151-152)

In associating private property—deeds, boundaries, and borders—with a tolerance towards spatially contained violence, Wojnarowicz draws connections between capitalist political economies of land and the depoliticization of domestic violence. In another passage, he advocates for a politics of dismantling the illusion of private, separate lives:

To make the *private* into something *public* is an action that has terrific repercussions. . . . Each public disclosure of a fragment of private reality serves as a dismantling tool against the illusion of the one tribe nation; it lifts the curtains for a brief peek and reveals the probable existence of literally millions of tribes. (1991, 121)

For Wojnarowicz, the public disclosure of private life challenges the illusion that there is only one kind of American family—or one American nation—and reveals instead the multiplicity of homes and domesticities.²⁷ He further suggests that housing itself is a tool through which people can ignore the suffering of others. He writes that most people are oblivious to the terrors of homelessness and other social tragedies “simply because they go to sleep every night in a house

216). Cadillac Man (2009), in his memoir, similarly argues that working-class people more easily accepted his homelessness, whereas middle and upper-income people often responded to him negatively.

²⁷ Wojnarowicz, who was also a renowned artist and activist, famously protested the silencing of homosexuality and the state's failure to address the AIDS epidemic by sewing his lips shut with red thread. As Sliwinska (2016) writes, such lip-sewing performances have also been used in feminist protests against the silencing of women's voices.

or apartment or dormitory whose clean rooms or smooth walls ... provide them with a feeling of safety that never gets intruded upon by the events outside” (1991, 151).

Wojnarowicz further links patterns of abuse to heteronormative notions of family life. He writes, “I grew up living a schizophrenic existence in the family and in a social structure where every ad and every newspaper, tv and magazine was a promotion for heterosexual coupling sunlit muscleheads and beach bunnies” (1991, 105). Beyond highlighting heteronormative visions of men as strong “muscleheads” and women as soft “bunnies,” Wojnarowicz expresses doubt that “heterosexuals really love each other” (1991, 225). He writes, “Everyone I know has come from a childhood where they suffered some element of abuse at the hands of their parents. They watched the marriages of their parents turn into ugly battlegrounds whose parameters were defined by the four sides of the house” (1991, 255). For Wojnarowicz, domestic violence is built into the structure of heteronormativity, as expressed within the claustrophobic confines of the home. He writes, “I tried to understand something about my father. And I understood that he hated women. He hated children. ... Obviously, he hated himself” (1991, 267). Indeed, studies have shown that violence in the home often emerges from both misogyny and insecurities about failed masculinity (Gelles 1997). Wojnarowicz further acknowledges that his father was likely himself abused: “I give my parents humanity, and deference to their victimization at the hands of their parents” (Wojnarowicz 1991, 273). He does not blame his abuser, but highlights the heteropatriarchal norms that reproduce domestic violence. He again explicitly politicizes domestic life, writing that inside the home “instead of Heads of State or Politicians, there were Heads of Family” (1991, 149).

In his self-published digital memoir, Michel McDonald (2012) similarly frames his experience of childhood abuse in light of his step-father’s performance of masculinity. He writes,

“I think (and this is just my opinion) that he was showing off to my family. I hadn’t done anything, but he wanted to show them that he was the alpha male in this relationship” (2012, c. 1). In addition to violence against women, patriarchal family norms often support extreme levels of corporal punishment. As Michele Barrett (1980) argues, patriarchy is not simply about the oppression of women, but also includes a father’s oppression of young men. McDonald writes about his stepfather, “[He thought] the only way to raise a child was with brutal force. He told me many horror stories of his abusive childhood.... If he had to be treated the way he was treated, then it was only appropriate that he passed it on” (2012, c. 1). Studies have further shown that domestic violence is not spontaneous aggression, but a calculated and dispassionate tool to reinforce subordination (Bartlett et al. 2013). As McDonald writes, this extends to homophobic expressions of violence. McDonald’s stepfather often engaged in “rants about how all the ‘faggots’ are taking over the world and they should be taken to an island and shot on sight” (2012, c. 10). He punished McDonald for being feminine, calling him a “sissy” for walking on his toes or wanting to have “a girl’s doll” (2012, c. 1). McDonald writes, “I wasn’t allowed to cook or even do dishes because according to my step-dad, that was a woman’s job. It was sexist, but what could I do? It was still the 1950’s in his own little world” (2012, c. 10).

Just as Wojnarowicz draws parallels between family patriarchs and “heads of state,” many homeless writers connect domestic norms of masculinity to larger structures of American militarism and patriarchy. Eddy Joe Cotton (2002), in his memoir of homelessness and train-hopping, writes of violence in the home as a form of everyday warfare:

I know men who would be happy as hell to have land mines in their own backyards, just for the thrill of it. To them every day is a war. They get a kick out of it. Some of these men are riding trains, but even more of them are watching football games and eating potato chips and molesting their oldest daughter. It’s in the living room of every town and city across the land, a dangerous, frustrated man waiting to kill. (Cotton 2002, 56)

In linking domestic and sexual violence to militaristic expressions of masculinity, Cotton shows how “warfare” can become normalized when it is performed in the privacy of the home. Daniel, in his oral history, also reflected on the connection between nationalism and intimate violence. He said about running away from an abusive home: “people told me that a strong person never looks away from adversity, but a weak person will run. And it’s OK to run, it’s OK to be weak. But our society doesn’t want to see weakness; it wants only strong. It’s ‘America the Brave! The Strong!’” Thus, mainstream American patriotism is deeply linked to masculine conceptions of physical strength, such that men who “run away” from violence are cast as un-American.

Just as masculinity can become associated with violence, many homeless narrators highlight how notions of femininity reproduce oppression. Rodriguez writes, “I came from a long line of battered women, and like each of them, I grew into my mother’s warped sense of identity, confusing vulnerability with femininity” (Rodriguez 1994, 6). She further asserts that this was not simply a private dynamic: “my husband didn’t do what he did to me by himself. He had plenty of help. His parents, my parents, our society all worked together. They set us up, from the start, to become the abuser and the abused” (Rodriguez 1994, 9). Regina Louise (2003) also attributes her experiences of domestic violence to gender norms. She describes in her memoir being raped as a foster child, after which she ran away from more than thirty foster placements, terrified of being in the custody of an unknown man. She writes, “I believe it was then that I first felt the hate of being a girl. I hated being a thing that folks called pretty and that gave mens the notion that pretty much they could do and say whatever they wanted and nobody would do anything to ‘em. ... All I could think of was what it must be like to be a boy, or a man” (2003, 189). For her, being feminine meant being deprived of bodily autonomy. Helen, in describing her father’s abusive behavior, similarly said in her oral history interview, “I never blamed [my mom]

but she just never knew how to stop it. She loved him and she believes in the man always being the head of the house; you have to obey.”

Just as domestic violence is hidden by the private nature of domesticity, women who escape violent homes are often made invisible themselves. Despite the fact that women experience poverty at higher rates than men, homelessness has been historically viewed as a masculine phenomenon. Todd DePastino (2003) describes a unique subculture of homeless white men in the early 20th century US who resisted the stifling world of working-class America. In the mid-20th century, the public face of homelessness transformed from romanticized “tramps” into the more contemporary vision of older, alcohol men living in skid row neighborhoods (Schneider 1986). Yet the lives of homeless women are largely absent from studies of homelessness during these periods. Further, the masculine “hobohemia” subculture left a permanent mark on the American imagination. As Eliana Chaya writes in her memoir, “Living rough is more of an adventure for [homeless men]. Vagabonds, hobos, frontiersmen, and explorers: these types have it in themselves to want a life with less than the bare minimum and hard living.”

Many life narrators describe the experience of being made invisible. In her oral history, Sirena recounted attending an event at which her local representative claimed there were no homeless people in his district. She said, “I just felt like ‘you’re looking at one right here.’” She attributed her invisibility in part to social assumptions about her ability to depend on men for housing:

Homelessness sometimes doesn’t—it doesn’t show on the outside. ... There’s no one set face for housing insecurity, there is no one person that is walking around with a homeless badge. ... I’ve had people say “Well it is kind of your choice, you could go on and live with your husband wherever he lives and whatever.” (Sirena 2013)

Helen similarly reflected in her oral history that she did not fit masculine visions of homelessness. She said that most people “don’t understand that poverty and homelessness isn’t that one picture of some drunken old guy on the street” (Helen 2012).

Today, official census data on homelessness include only those who reside in public spaces or shelters. Yet homeless women tend to avoid streets and shelters in order to escape the risk of violence, and experience longer periods living in overcrowded housing (Institute of Medicine 1988; May et al. 2007; Barrow and Laborde 2008; DeWard and Moe 2010). Further, women staying in domestic violence shelters are not considered homeless, despite their lack of housing (Williams 1998). Scholars have argued that women more often fall into the population of “the hidden homeless” who are left out of current survey methodologies (Crossroads 2011). Indeed, official survey data do not track rates of homelessness among women, who are instead counted under the category of “homeless families.” The same is true for homeless children. In 2013, the Department of Education identified 1.2 million homeless children in its system (Perlman et al. 2014) while HUD only counted 610,042 homeless people in total that year (Henry et al. 2013).²⁸ This discrepancy indicates that hundreds of thousands of homeless children are overlooked in official counts.

These oversights have dramatic implications for the provision of housing. In particular, “housing first”—the federal government’s contemporary approach to housing the “chronically homeless”—excludes people who are not visible on city streets (Willse 2010; Stanhope and Dunn 2011). These “invisible homeless” populations further shed light on how socially

²⁸ Despite these methodological oversights, official counts have traced a rise in homelessness among families over the past several years (Hunter et al. 2014). Many cities have found that local homelessness among women has exploded during the same period. Thus, while women comprised only 10% of the visible homeless population in the 1980s, by the 2000s, reports estimated that anywhere from 35% to nearly half of all visibly homeless adults were women (HUD 2007). Nonetheless, shelter capacity has not sped up to account for this growth (Crossroads 2011).

constructed definitions of homelessness are rooted in a hard and fast binary between housing and homelessness, and male-centric understandings of housing displacement. Yet academic scholars have critiqued either/or understandings of homelessness and housing, to highlight instead a wide spectrum of experiences in between (Wardhaugh 1999; Gowan 2002). This reframing suggests an overwhelming and unaccounted for scope of homelessness. As Nick Flynn (2004, 185) writes in his memoir:

Homelessness seems more and more to be a fluid state.... 80% of the homeless are invisible, like the proverbial iceberg, that when I walk through the city now every other person I see is someone I know from the shelter, but if you didn't know you'd think they were on their lunch break, and enjoying a little sun.

As the following section argues, beyond those living in shelters, homelessness among women and young people is more often experienced as a condition of cycling between confinement and displacement, rather than living outside for extended periods. More importantly, this geography is fundamentally linked to the economic inequalities inherent in patriarchal domesticity.

Homelessness as a cycle of escape

Historically, women have made up the majority of the nation's poor, with more than one in seven women living in poverty in the US (Entmacher et al. 2014). Much of this inequality is rooted in the hierarchies of American domestic life, premised on women's isolated and unpaid domestic labor. In 1970, nearly half of all mothers were homemakers. By 2012, although this number had decreased to less than 30%, rates of poverty among homemakers had risen dramatically (Cohn et al. 2014). Further, the waged work most often done by women—"feminized" domestic and caring labor—is often the most poorly-paid kind of work. As a corollary to wage inequality, women have historically had little access to home ownership. In the early part of the 20th century, women were effectively excluded from massive federal subsidies

for housing, which deepened a lasting legacy of women's housing dependence. In 1973 it became illegal for mortgage lenders to discriminate against women, yet the gender income gap made homeownership difficult for single women, and such legal protections largely benefited women who were partnered with men. Further, at the same time as women were finally able to attain homeownership, they encountered higher housing costs than ever before (Hayden 1984). Today, gender wage disparities have produced a gender "housing gap," such that homes owned by single women are less valuable than those owned by single men, and appreciate less over time (Close 2016).

Marxist-feminist thinkers have long highlighted the problem of women's economic oppression. In the late 19th century, Frederic Engels (1978), building on Marx's unpublished notes on anthropological theories of the family, examined the rise of monogamous family structures as deeply linked to the development of private property, as well as women's subordination. He highlighted the role of property ownership in reinforcing gender inequality. In this sense, the unwaged domestic worker confronts not only the capitalist who indirectly exploits her labor, but also the man who owns the space of the home and the means of social reproduction. A more lasting strand of Marxist feminism has focused on women's domestic labor. Alexandra Kollontai (1977) framed women's liberation as an anti-capitalist project, and advocated for state-run organizations through which the social collective assumes responsibility for cooking, cleaning, and childcare. In the 1970s, scholars took up what have been called the "domestic labor debates" in feminist theory. While Marx delved into the "hidden abode" of manufacture, where wage workers are subjected to dangerous, low-paid labor, Marxist feminists took this project further to examine the home as a hidden abode of unwaged labor (Secombe

1973; Dalla Costa and James 1975; Fortunati and Fleming 1995; James 2012). Such thinkers highlighted the reproductive labor of women who birth, feed, wash, and shelter waged laborers.

In the early 1980s, American men performed less than 15% of total household labor (Hayden 1984). By 2014, although the situation had improved, mothers still spent twice as much time on childcare as did fathers. In addition to childcare, elder care demands an incredible amount of human labor. In 2009, 66% of unpaid elder caregivers were women (NAC 2009). This unequal division of labor persists regardless of whether women engage in full-time employment outside the house (Covert 2014). For Marx, the enormous benefit to capitalism that domestic labor provides does not affect the fluctuations of value, because capitalism takes these benefits as a free gift. Indeed, it seems impossible to accurately account for all these benefits, as every waged laborer is supported by an intricate web of reproductive work stretching across space and time. Thus, in struggling for wages for housework, Marxist feminists were not seeking inclusion in an exploitative system, but simply seeking to make their exploitation visible. Yet as Hayden (1984) argues, campaigns for wages for housework failed to address the home itself as an isolated sphere in which women's domestic work becomes ghettoized.

Another strand of feminist thought has focused on women's lack of freedom in relation to the family.²⁹ Gayle Rubin (2009) famously theorized women's oppression as part of a sex/gender system according to which women were historically exchanged as property of men. Rubin's understanding highlights the ways in which women are dominated by family structures, rather than only capitalist structures. In her discussion of the "traffic in women," she echoes Lenin's

²⁹ Some feminists seeking to foreground women's agency have rejected characterizations of women as "trapped" or "victimized" by patriarchy. Yet as Rahila Gupta (2014, p. 2) argues, the effort to frame violence against women through the language of choice and empowerment "celebrates the individual" rather than "recognizing the enormity of the system we are up against, and its brutality."

(1971) characterization of women as “domestic slaves” subjected to forced labor. As a corollary to women’s lack of freedom, the home itself has been theorized as a space of confinement. In the early 20th Century, Voltairine De Cleyre (1914) connected women’s confinement to domestic violence, arguing that the home can become a prison “with so many cells, that none may count them” where “adultery and rape stalk freely and at ease.” Yet as Herman (1992, 74) writes, whereas “political captivity” is widely recognized and critiqued, “the domestic captivity of women and children is often unseen” as it is reinforced by the “invisible” barriers of economic dependence and subordination.³⁰ As with unwaged labor, women’s confinement is also made invisible through the isolation of domestic life. This confinement, in turn, must be understood as both a product of patriarchal family structures and wage inequality. For women whose labor is unwaged, domestic spaces can become the ultimate “sites of entrapment and violence,” as they do not have the resources to secure another home (Fraiman 2017, 156). At the same time, the unequal division of unpaid domestic labor makes it difficult for mothers to obtain financial independence. Conservative legislators in the US have historically refused to finance public daycare. Low-income parents are thus left between a rock and a hard place: if they remain employed, their income will go entirely to daycare expenses; if they care for their children fulltime, they are forced to apply for welfare and prove they are undertaking efforts to gain employment (Hayden 1984).

For these reasons, domestic violence and unwaged labor must be analyzed together in understanding women’s homelessness in the US. Fewer than half of all states provide relocation

³⁰ Indeed, the secrecy surrounding domestic violence has had lasting implications in the treatment of trauma. Early in his career, Freud argued that the pervasive condition known as “hysteria” was rooted in women’s experiences of childhood sexual abuse. After his theory was poorly received, he went on to renounce his early findings linking psychosis to sexual exploitation. Herman (1992) argues that this repudiation must be examined in the social context of Freud’s time, in which familial sexual violence was an unspeakable subject.

assistance or the right to emergency shelter to women escaping domestic violence, and landlord opposition often results in weak state protections for abused women (NLCHP 2012b). In a 2007 study, domestic violence was the most common reason women gave for their homelessness (NLCHP2012a). The phrase “runaway wife” itself, historically used to describe homeless women, reveals how women’s homelessness is intrinsically tied to domestic confinement. As Janice Haaken and Nan Yragui (2003, 53) write:

Just as early narratives of escaped slaves offered romantic illusions about the freedoms of the North, stories of runaway wives often downplayed the constraints women faced once they escaped. Without women’s centers to protect refugees from the patriarchal family, women were drawn back into the pernicious fold of male abuse.

The term “runaway” is also used to describe homeless youth, suggesting a profound connection between young people’s homelessness and escape from the home. Between 20-40% of all homeless youth identify as LGBT, constituting what has been called an “epidemic” of youth homelessness in the queer community (Ray 2007). Further, half of all queer teens report having experienced family conflict because of their sexuality (Ray 2007).³¹ Children in foster care are also much more likely to experience homelessness as adults, and tend to become homeless at an earlier age. Many people “graduate” from being housed in the foster care system to being housed in shelters or sleeping on the streets (Roman and Wolfe 1995). Children, with no access to economic independence, are overwhelmingly vulnerable to the risk of violence in the home.

Yet feminist theories of domesticity contain a fundamental tension (Barbagallo 2017; Fraiman 2017). On the one hand, critiques of domesticity often center the experiences of white, middle-class women who are alienated and unfulfilled by the limitations of their role as

³¹ While public attitudes toward sexuality in the US have changed dramatically since the 1980s, the writings of homeless queer youth reveal the limits of American inclusivity. As Plaster (2012) argues, the mainstream LGBT movement in the US stressed a rhetoric of inclusion and normalization—struggling for rights to marriage equality and military service, for example—such that the issues of queer homeless youth were largely sidelined.

“housewife.” In contrast, women of color feminists have framed the home as a site of possible resistance and refuge from a racist public sphere.³² Yet homeless narrators push beyond both narratives to show how domesticity is not simply ideologically dissatisfying or liberating. For many precariously housed women, confinement in the home is not a product of conformity to bourgeoisie ideology, but a very real material need to maintain a roof over one’s head.³³ Oral histories and memoirs of homelessness further describe displacement as a complex combination of the inability to pay rent and the lack of a family home to return to. They show that, for many, homelessness involves both the lack of physical and psychic shelter. In this section, I show how homeless life narrators theorize their experiences of familial displacement as deeply entwined with the economic dependence that results from the patriarchal devaluation of domestic labor.

Ressurrection Graves (2001), in her self-published digital memoir, argues that homelessness is fundamentally rooted in both economic and familial factors. She writes:

The correlation between child sexual abuse and homelessness in my life is profound. ... The correlation has to do with extended childhood emotional and economic poverty. ... I was only homeless because I had nowhere to live. I had nowhere to go because my family is so greatly affected by the abuse that took place in our home.... My theory and personal belief is that at the core of the correlation is a lack of strong, reliable, healthy relationships.

In referencing “emotional and economic poverty,” Graves connects the seemingly disparate social phenomena—familial and economic oppression—that shaped her experience of

³² In slave families, domestic labor was often the only site where women were not subject to the control of the oppressor. As Angela Davis (1983) argues, domestic labor thus became an opportunity for fostering resistance and meaning, creating a lasting legacy in which domesticity was not a site of debasement for black women.

³³ Indeed, confinement is often the cost of finding shelter. As Chris Gardner writes, the public bathroom where he often took refuge with his son was both confining and protective: “That small, cell-like, windowless tiled box ... represented both my worst nightmare of being confined, locked up, and excluded and, at the same time, a true godsend of protection where I could lock the door and keep the wolves out. It was ... my version of a pit stop on the underground railroad, ‘80s style” (2006, 6). Gardner not only captures the ambivalent nature of confining spaces, but also frames homelessness itself as journey towards a more emancipatory model of shelter.

homelessness. She also recounts how, after escaping childhood abuse, she was unable to support herself: “I did not understand the concept of not having a place to live if you don’t have enough money to pay the bills.” This experience reveals that the family as a site of power cannot be disentangled from economic factors that reinforce inequality. As Shaleen said in her oral history, the ability to attain housing is made tenuous because of the dual threat of poverty and violence: “You can stress about how you’re going to make the rent this month but you [don’t] know that you’re not just going to be out in a couple days or that someone isn’t going to terrorize you out if it” (Shaleen 2012).

Life narratives of homelessness also reveal that homes can become prison-like spaces for those who are financially dependent, and that escape from confinement often leads to cyclical patterns of homelessness and abuse. Christina, from Minneapolis, described her abusive relationship in her oral history interview:

I kinda felt trapped by him. ... ‘Cause I had nowhere to take my stuff, he was like “Move into my place, you can put your stuff at my house. You can store your things there.” But once I got into his apartment he got really abusive.... It was a blessing to go to prison. I mean there was no other way to end that violence with him. (Christina 2010)

Indeed, surveys of incarcerated women indicate that many women who have experienced interpersonal violence frame prison as the safest place they have ever lived (Bradley and Davino 2002). Further, those who reside in unsafe housing situations often experience a form of psychic homelessness despite having a roof over their heads. As McDonald (2012, c. 7) attests, his childhood abuse was “torture” that left him “a nervous wreck.” He writes, “I hated everything about living in that house” (2012, c. 8). The experience left him haunted as a child by nightmares of his stepfather eating children. On one occasion, when he visited a “haunted house” for Halloween, he began sobbing in terror. He describes how the various scenes of men

dismembering and consuming women and babies—designed to frighten and entertain—were, for him, an exaggerated and horrific reenactment of the domestic violence he experienced at home.

Beyond exposure to violence, the experience of being an unwanted member of a home can become a form of homelessness itself. Evelyn, from Minneapolis, said in her oral history, “You don’t feel comfortable in anybody else’s home.... Always got that feeling that you don’t belong there, that you have no place to go.... You have to depend on somebody, you know for a home” (Evelyn 2008). In this way, many homeless women experience a condition of being “homeless at home” (Watson and Austerberry 1986; Wardhaugh 1999; Robertson 2007). As Rahima Wachuku (2014) writes in her memoir, “Just because you have a roof over your head does not mean that you are not homeless. For example, when you arrive at your place of residence, and nobody is happy to see you or greets you with love and affection, you are homeless. You may not be on the street, but you are homeless just the same.” Liz Murray (2010, 86) writes about returning to her drug-addicted mother after living in a group home: “I was afraid—to the point of certainty—that far from ‘going home,’ I was just being shuttled to another place I didn’t want to be.” As Nanette Rayman-Rivera writes, “home is somewhere they have to take you in” (2010, 142). Rayman-Rivera further describes the rooming houses where she intermittently resided as her “eviction-room” and “apartment cell” (2010, 29) indicating that, even when she was housed, she remained haunted by the dual threat of displacement and confinement. As Peter Somerville (2013) writes, being at home in the world is just as social as it is material, such that homelessness can be understood as the absence of homelike relations of care. Further, homes marked by domestic violence are akin to “non-places” that mirror the sites of refuge and asylum to which domestic violence survivors escape (Burman and Chantler 2004).

For women who experience domestic violence, homelessness can occur both inside and outside the home.³⁴

The condition of being “homeless at home” is also deeply tied to unpaid domestic labor. Aynoit Ashor (2015) describes how her abusive partner, in enforcing a strict gendered division of labor, rendered her financially dependent. Her abuser demanded her “to be the perfect wife, mother, lover.... She is supposed to take care of everything emotionally and in the home. ... I did most of the housework, even when I worked.” At the same time, Ashor was determined to represent a different model for her children. She writes, “My daughter told me moms can’t go to school, but I’m going to show her moms can do that too. I need to show her a good life so maybe her life will be good. ... My daughter doesn’t need to be a victim.” Yet when Ashor secured paid employment, she was forced to quit after her assigned hours conflicted with her children’s daycare schedule. Her childcare obligations left her unable to earn a wage, and the fact that her domestic labor was unpaid left her without income to cover rent. As Hall, et al. (1981, 43-44) write, violence against women is “inseparable from the unwaged work that women are expected to do. Doing work without remuneration, firstly, makes women financially dependent, and, secondly, it encourages men in the expectation that women must be at their disposal.”³⁵ Ashor ultimately became homeless after escaping her abuser, and found shelter at a transitional housing facility that imposed a rigid set of rules and regulations. She writes that while many residents

³⁴ Indeed, many narrators describe feeling safer on the streets than in an abusive home. Pat McDonough (2010) writes in her memoir that her husband vowed on multiple occasions to kill her, and she felt far safer on the street than living with him. Liz Murray describes how her own mother had been homeless after escaping an abusive home. As Murray writes, “Being under a bridge was better, and safer, than being there” (Murray 2010, p. 4).

³⁵ Narratives of homelessness also attest to the reality that children are often forced to perform domestic labor in the home. As Daniels (2013) said in his oral history interview, “I was abused there. Forced to be the cleaning boy fed grilled cheese sandwiches on the floor daily while they ate very well, and slept in a closet.” Brown also writes that in her foster home, she was forced to do backbreaking labor each day.

complained about the rules, “they are fine with me because I do not have to live by [his] rules.” In this sense, her life at home—under the surveillance of an intimate partner—was more constricting than life in a highly governed transitional housing environment.

Many women described waged labor as a source of escape from domestic confinement. Maria Fabian became homeless after her stepfather abused her. Yet prior to running away, she writes that, “Work was my safe haven. I was still in high-school and looked forward to working weekends and holiday breaks. It was a break from the oppression of home. I loved my job. But, I really loved being my own person” (Fabian 2012). Not only did the workplace represent escape from the violence of home, but the possibility of establishing a modicum of independence from family ties. Yet the experience of abuse can deepen financial dependence in the lives of women who are working for a wage. As Celestine said in her oral history interview, “I became homeless because of domestic violence, and it started over ten years ago, off and on, and due to injuries, embarrassing, I lost time at work so out a lot of income” (Patrick and Cece 2010). Indeed, nearly 8 million days of paid work are lost each year in the US because of domestic violence, the equivalent of more than 32,000 full-time jobs (CDC 2003). Once women lose housing, they face additional barriers to securing their own source of income. Panhandling in particular poses the risk of sexual assault for homeless women (Rowe and Wolch 1990). In her memoir of being homeless in New York City, Tina S. describes being constantly viewed as “merchandise” when she panhandled. Further, Fraiman (2017) argues that the kinds of low-waged, casual and temporary labor that are often available to homeless men are not similarly available to homeless women.

Many women, in their memoirs, describe financial dependence as the crux of their confinement and eventual homelessness. As Chaya writes, “Homeless women should seek out

their own stability because for many, being too dependent on others is what got them into the role of a homeless woman to begin with. Anyone with an attitude that infers a woman wouldn't be homeless if she settled with a good man is the most infuriating to a homeless woman" (2014, c. 6). Yet, she writes that often homeless women are expected to depend on men for housing:

The sexist hypocrisy of thought, that a woman who looks presentable should just go find a man to couple up with or have more friends, is maddening. To have that those inferences made to you by female workers in the system or shelters is unthinkable, yet it happened. (2014, c. 44)

Chaya further writes that many homeless women are forced to rely on men for financial assistance, as state assistance is so limited: "Literally, on a financial level, some of us needed a man in a supporting role or at least a second paycheck because we were in a state with no state taxes and no programs that helped single women" (2014, c. 41). For these reasons, she writes, "Many women would rather stay housed in abusive relationships than to go through the stress, humiliation and degradation that goes with homelessness" (2014, c. 50). And as Gray-Garcia argues, women not only risk violence against themselves, but against their children. She writes that women are often forced to "'look the other way' when the abuse does occur if it helps the mother's chances of being fed and housed" (2006, p. 84).

Financial dependence for women is not simply a matter of unpaid labor, but also of unequal access to property. Nora, in her oral history, describes her experience of financial independence as well as her abuser's control over the leasing arrangements. She said:

I thought I was lucky that my daughter's father let me stay with him but that is when the domestic violence started ... and I knew I needed to get out of the situation but I didn't have the credit, the down payment, the resources in order to make that happen.... It was his name on the lease, he had the keys he would just not let me in, he would lock me out with all my stuff in there. ... I would have to go to school not showered wearing the same things I had worn the day before pregnant, hungry, looking crazy. (Nora 2012)

In highlighting that “his name is on the lease,” Nora identifies her lack of a legal right to the space of her own home, which was only deepened by society’s failure to respond. As Nora said, the “police and everybody else ... brush it off as my problem.” Ashor (2015) writes, instead of having been forced to leave, “I wish he would have left then. My life would have been so different. I would still be in that apartment.” Yet even when they are legally entitled to stay, women overwhelmingly escape violent homes, rather than kicking out abusive partners, which reveals that control over property—at its most basic and intimate level—is often determined by gender violence. Even territory *within* the home is often unevenly distributed along lines of gender, as women less often have access to spaces of their own that are not defined by domestic labor (Hayden 1984). As life narratives of homelessness reveal, domestic abuse is often a tactic to control use and enjoyment of the space of the home. Brown writes that she was not allowed to spend time in most rooms of the house, and “quickly learned that to be found outside of a designated spot guaranteed a punch, kick, or worse” (Brown 2006, 26).

Women’s housing dependence is further reinforced by gender violence *outside* the home. Homeless women who reside in public are highly vulnerable to physical attack (Rowe and Wolch 1990; Snow et al. 1994). The ability to seek private space is thus especially important to homeless women. Often, women choose to endure “predictable patterns of abuse from their partner rather than face the unpredictable dangers of the streets alone” (Rowe and Wolch 1990, 194). As Iris (2010) said in her oral history, “Last night I stayed at a stranger’s house. Scary but warm. ... Different places every night. About 3 years. Scary, I’ve been raped, I been through a lot of things. ... Finding my own stable place would be a very huge step for me.” In describing a lifetime of sexual violence, Iris reveals that being housed is not simply a matter of finding shelter, but having the ability to assert control over her domestic and bodily autonomy. This

contradiction between needing to escape the home—and alternately needing to escape the street—reveals the incredible bind that many homeless women are in, and the way in which homelessness can become a form of *constant escape*.

In addition to the risks of sleeping outdoors, homeless women often have more limited opportunities for shelter spaces (Rowe and Wolch 1990). As Serena (2010) said in her oral history, “I don’t have any children. So it’s really hard for me to find shelter. So I stay with a friend—like the one last night—but I have to do sexual favors to stay there. And I’m—when he gets tired he tells me to get the F out and I have to leave and there’s not much I can do” (Serena and Linda 2010).³⁶ In reflecting on this dynamic, Chaya writes that the lack of services for single homeless women makes it such that many women are forced to “be coupled for the sake of survival.” She further writes, “thank Goodness, homeless shelters or the government can’t force homeless people into arranged marriages ‘for their own good’” (2014, c. 23). Chaya describes the difficulties that single mothers face in particular, as few shelters can accommodate families or childcare schedules. She writes, “shelter rules, attitudes and recovery plans were originally put into place with the homeless man in mind” (2014, c. 50).

Children, too, also face difficulties finding shelter. As Kristina Gibson (2011, 8) writes, “street kids” often seek out invisibility as a tool of survival, which in turn renders the problem of youth homelessness invisible, and leads to the “grossly inadequate” provision of youth shelter.

³⁶ Life narratives indicate that single women in particular face difficulties accessing shelter. Pamela said in her interview, “I’m coming into the barriers of being a single homeless woman without children. There’s not a lot of help for me” (Pamela 2009). Monica said that women with children “tend to get help right away. But to be a single person, they don’t have too many resources for us” (Monica 2009). This dynamic indicates that homeless women’s lives are more valued when they are committed to their domestic roles of wife and mother. At the same time, many local and state governments privilege homeless women and families as more deserving of aid, as dependence is so deeply stigmatized among men (Passaro 2014).

Shaleen, who ran away from home as a teenager and lived with a group of homeless youth, said she couldn't stay at shelters because they required young people to contact their parents:

A lot of the [youth] shelters, they would absolutely insist that you have to call home and that you have to go there. So like the Bridge for Runaway Youth, they wouldn't even let me in the doors unless I was willing to call my mom. I was like pffff, I'll go sleep under the Washington Avenue Bridge again tonight. (Shaleen 2012)

Heteronormativity in the shelter system often forces queer youth to seek out other options, including selling sex for shelter. In his earliest attempt to run away from his abusive family, McDonald (2012) realized that he had no way of accessing shelter on his own. He writes: "I don't know what possessed me to do such a stupid thing because I didn't know where I was going.... Where was I supposed to sleep? I had nowhere to go. What was I doing?" (2012, c. 11). Nonetheless, as a teenager he preferred being homeless to living with his family: "If I had a sleeping bag and a pillow, I would have slept out there instead of having to sleep next to my parents" (2012, c. 17). After his mother kicked him out of the house because she discovered his sexuality, he stayed at a church shelter. He writes: "I didn't want to come out of the closet to anyone in the church because I knew that if *any* of them knew that I was gay, they would kick me out of the program" (2012, c. 28). Ultimately, he found housing in exchange for sex, but was repeatedly exposed to sexual coercion and violence. As he writes about one roommate, "He didn't want to *just* be my roommate. I wasn't attracted to him at all, but I also didn't want to live in a motel room so I went with it" (2012, c. 36).

McDonald's experience is not unusual for homeless women and young people. To maintain housing, many people undertake dangerous and low-paid sex work, or informally trade sexual favors for a place to crash.³⁷ As Wojnarowicz (1991, 32) writes:

³⁷ Cadillac Man (2009) devotes an entire chapter to describing the young women and girls he knew who sold sex on the streets of New York City. He writes that many of the girls' lives were marked by incredible danger: "They are

There were times in my teens when I was living on the streets and selling my body to anyone interested. ... Whereas I could at least spread my legs and gain a roof over my head, all those people down in those streets had reached the point where the commodity of their bodies and souls meant nothing more to anyone but themselves.

Chaya argues that it was often assumed that her sexuality was for sale simply because she was homeless. She writes, “Some men who know a woman is homeless see instant opportunity for taking advantage of the situation. ... Homeless women (most homeless women) appreciated the opportunity” (2014, c. 21). Brown describes the experience of being introduced to sex work as a child. When she first ran away from her foster home, she met a young sex worker who told her, “Nothing in this world is free. ... You might as well start charging for what your foster father is taking” (Brown 2006, 34). After the woman pressured Brown into selling sex for the first time, she was initially excited. She writes, “I loved that I’d found a way to take care of myself” (Brown 2006, 37). But when a pimp demanded Brown’s earnings in exchange for a place to stay and threatened to beat her if she did not comply, Brown was forced to run away again. After that, “Whenever I crashed or was put in a home with men or boys in the house, it meant I’d have to have some type of sexual activity with them” (2006, 99). She writes, “The lessons were clear: men want you only for sex; sex makes you money; money bought necessities” (2006, 52). Brown’s experience is not unusual, as studies have found that in the US, about one in three homeless youth has engaged in survival sex in exchange for housing (Greene et al. 1999).

In exchanging sex for shelter, women and youth are often exposed, once again, to domestic violence. Nanette Rayman-Rivera (2010), who became homeless after her family kicked her out, was unable to secure housing except through relationships with men, many of

everywhere—runaways, girls trying to make it... [The pimps] wine them, dine them, then rape and beat them until they agree to work... There are pimps who have a number of girls and are willing to sell one if the price is right. She has no say in the matter, and once the transaction is a done deal, she belongs to someone else. Like a piece of property, bought and sold” (2009, 117).

whom were abusive. She writes, “I have nowhere to live. I traipse from man-couch to man-couch and hope I don’t have to fuck them” (2010, 230).³⁸ She writes about seeing middle-class men in suits, “Thoughts keep crossing my mind: throw my body down in front of [them] and plead for a home. *I’ll fuck you all night long*, is what I’ll say” (2010, 50-51). Rayman-Rivera (2010) describes longing for a vision of middle-class, domestic femininity: “I could be ... a woman married to a nice man. I could live in a nice pink house and lean over the white picket fence” (2010, 393). Yet because of her homelessness, she frames herself instead as a non-woman: “You’re not a real girl.... You’re a girl without family which is worse than without country” (2010, 101). In this sense, Rayman-Rivera characterizes women displaced by family as domestic refugees, and noncitizens. Julia Wardhaugh (1999) similarly argues that homeless women are often viewed as gender renegades in that they defy traditional norms of femininity associated with the domestic sphere. Joanne Passaro (2014, 2), in contrast, argues that homeless women are viewed as “the apotheosis of Woman—dependent, vulnerable, frightened.” At the same time, she highlights the paradoxical way in which homeless men are viewed as hyper-masculine, dangerous and aggressive, at the same time as they are emasculated by virtue of their dependence. This tension, she argues, reveals that homelessness expresses a crisis of gender. As placeless people, Rayman-Rivera argues, homeless women are profoundly vulnerable to violence. She writes of one abuser in particular, “He knows that a girl sent back to him by a father, is a girl he can kick in the head, or keep her locked in a room, starving and waiting” (2010, 198). For these reasons, Rayman-Rivera writes that homeless women have to display a

³⁸ Rayman-Rivera (2010) also describes how the manager at an SRO sexually assaulted her on one occasion. Wachuku (2014) writes that when she reported being sexually harassed by a guard at a shelter, he retaliated by imposing additional supervision. Staff told her that “inappropriate touch was merely the consequence of being in the street.” These experiences reveal that even when homeless women find shelter through formal channels, they remain targets for abuse.

greater degree of feminine subservience: “One thing I’ve learned about being without roots: you always have to be more polite, prettier, less smart” (2010, 163).

For many women and young people, homelessness becomes a cyclical condition of near-constant movement between violent intimate spaces. Zooney Rita Chin, after running away from childhood abuse, often slept with men to stay housed. Once, after getting out of a drug rehabilitation clinic, she had sex with a man in exchange for a place to stay. She writes, “I remind myself that the sex is better than any institution, that at least now I can have fresh air whenever I want. Only, I never get outside much. ... Soon everything begins to blur together ... and I feel trapped in that blur, indistinct, shrinking” (2014, 184). In describing being trapped in the “blur” between institutional and sexual confinement, Chin reveals that women’s confinement often takes place across multiple sites, both intimate and formal. Amanda similarly described the experience of shuttling back and forth between the multiple unhomelike spaces after having escaped her violent home. She said in her oral history:

I became homeless because I didn’t have the best life at home. ... The day I turned 18 I left home and was sleeping in parks and all those places, and then I’d pick up a boyfriend and go live there. After things went sour with that, I was still in the same predicament back out on the streets. (Amanda, date unknown)

This movement from one form of violent and precarious shelter to another is precisely how many women and young people experience homelessness. As Tina S. writes about her homelessness as a teenager, “It’s like I’m running away from running away” (Tina S. and Bolnick 2000, 7). In this way, life narratives challenge normative framings of homelessness as a static or masculine phenomenon. Instead, they reveal the intimate forces that constantly push women and young people between situations of confinement and displacement.³⁹ In turn, their work highlights how

³⁹ Indeed, feminist Josette Féral (1981) argues that prominent psychological theories of the development of human subjectivity—beginning with the infant fixated on the mother—have no place for a fully developed and autonomous

patriarchy is not only ideological or economic, but also functions directly through control over territory, space, and labor.



In a 1923 lecture, writer and literary critic Lu Xun argued that women’s freedom must involve both economic and familial equality. He pointed to the example of the “housewife” who escapes her home and is faced with two options: either to return to domestic confinement or experience abject poverty. Yet he argued that resisting such oppression cannot happen in the absence of social memory: “The ability to forget allows people to leave behind step by step the suffering they once knew; but the ability to forget also leads people to repeat the mistakes of their predecessors” (Xun 2017, 259-260). Thus, change must begin with remembering. In the past several months, as I have written this chapter, thousands of women—enabled by the new forms of dissemination through online social media—have come forward with an avalanche of memories to confront the problem of sexual violence. At the same time, much of the American public supports a president who openly boasts of assaulting women and faces multiple charges of sexual abuse (Graham 2017). This contradiction reveals the centrality of struggles over voice, and the need for more women’s voices to be heard and valued.

I began this project with the aim of conducting oral history interviews while visiting archives. All but one of the people I interviewed were women, and they all told stories of abuse. Slowly, I opened myself to one man who told me he had been born a girl. His father raped him regularly, and when he was 17, nearly stabbed him to death. As a young person, he surgically

female subjectivity. The female subject’s desire, a world of her own making not influenced by patriarchal visions of herself, is constantly moving between sites, alternately denying one and the other. Féral thus argues that feminine subjectivity is marked by “perpetual displacement” (1981, 63).

transitioned to become a man, he said, so that “no-one could ever hurt me again.” In my academic training I learned to ignore the tug of personal questions. Yet interviews with him were intimate, personal, and painful; on one occasion he broke down crying. On another, he threatened to kill himself if I did not reciprocate his sexual affections. I did not find out until later that he was following me. When I saw him one evening at a protest, he told me he knew where I lived and he had a gun. He joked about tying me down and raping me. I looked around and was surrounded by men, several of whom had flirted with me uncomfortably or demanded hugs. I have always thought of myself as masculine, sturdy and strong, but in that moment, I was feminine and diminished.

In projecting a strange reenactment of his own horrific memories, the man I interviewed also broke loose a nest of memories inside me. At the time, I lived in an attic with windows that opened out onto a roof that was accessible to the street by stairs. Each evening, as I lay in bed trying to discern if the sounds on the roof were a man’s footsteps, memories flooded to the surface of my mind like waves of nausea. During that period, I became fully conscious of a story I did not want to write, a story that leaves me startled and uncomfortable in the presence of others. I debated for more than a year over whether to include it, and omitted the most intimate pieces. But I can no longer write about women’s memories of violence without recounting my own. As Wojnarowicz writes, “To speak about the once unspeakable can make the invisible familiar if repeated often enough and clear and loud tones. ... Bottom line, if people don’t say what they believe, those ideas and feelings get lost” (Wojnarowicz 1991, 153).

When I was four, my parents hung around a guy who had big square glasses and a round face. He was later sent to prison for molesting my friend. I was touched once, too, when my sister and I were in the ocean. There were no waves that day and we were diving under the

ripples like mermaids. A group of men surrounded us and my sister swam towards the shore. One of them held me in his arms, floating on my belly. I tried to squirm away but he put his hands under my swimsuit and touched me all over my body and between my legs. The other men touched me too, with nervous laughter. By the age of ten, I wanted to be a boy. But the awkwardness of adolescence came too early. I learned that I was an ugly girl, with a red face and yellow eyelashes. A boy once told me I was the ugliest girl in class. I began to hate princesses and Barbies and laughed at all the jokes—*how do you kill a blond? Put a mirror at the bottom of a pool*. When I was eleven, I began dying my hair blue with Kool-Aid and learned how to conceal my face with makeup. My sister and I eventually dropped out of school and made friends with strange men. One man, in his forties, gave us mushrooms and took us skinny dipping. Another time he took us to a hotel room. Our parents were relieved when we enrolled in classes at the community college, and I got a job on campus. I took an hour bus back and forth each day, and was groped on the bus, when I was fourteen years old.

When I was sixteen, I became involved in a bad relationship—perhaps because it was safer than dating—and slowly accustomed myself social isolation and name-calling: *slut; stupid; princess*. At 22, I was accosted again, this time on the subway. It was so crowded at rush hour that bodies were packed tightly against each other. The man facing me pressed his erection into my body and moved until he came, face inches from mine. After that, I shaved my head and often found myself judging women who wore tight skirts or long nails. Years later, while waiting at the bus stop on the first week of a new job, a man pulled up in his truck, moving his hands up and down an erection, and staring. I was angry at my own reaction: such a feminine gesture, mouth open in shock, hand lifted to cover it. The next time a stranger unzipped in public, it was

an old man who followed me around with a small, soft penis lying in his hands like a desperate offering.

But throughout my life—and in the background of each experience—I was buoyed up by a network of protections: money, citizenship, skin, housing, family. I have never been assaulted by someone I loved, and when I finally left my failing relationship, I had a family home to return to. I tell these memories not because they are unique—assault is a familiar experience for many women—but because they reveal an intimate geography of gender. In each instance, I was trapped for a brief moment, unable to govern my movements. In each instance, I wanted to go home. Yet for many women, violence invades even this last bastion of safe space, so there is *nowhere* to go. Stuck between the home and the street, the specter of gender violence becomes ever-present. In turn, it confines a person’s voice and memory. For myself, there are many stories that remain unsayable. Thus, silencing results not only from a social failure to listen, but from the deeply forbidden nature of certain expressions. The archive of homeless voices reveals a desperate need for society to listen to uncomfortable stories, and to the struggles that take place in private.

Although Stephanie Rodriguez describes the freedom of escaping abuse and ultimately finding a home, she writes in her conclusion that she cannot help but imagine the world from her abuser’s perspective: “How tough it must be to deny the sound of one’s own humanity ringing in the cries of another” (1994, 166). As a reader, I was left with a sense that her story with him was not over. In this way, freedom is never as simple as bodily control or autonomy, but is also a deeply psychic phenomenon. While the concepts of freedom and domesticity are central to the American dream, the gendered dynamics of freedom from domestic violence are often left unexamined. As Foner (1998) writes, the notion of separate spheres frames freedom as

something that does not extend into the private realm. In early American history, while free men were property owners imagined as masters of their homes, the freedom of other household members was entirely overlooked. As life narratives of homelessness reveal, freedom for women must begin with a reexamination of the gendered dynamics of domesticity, family, and sexuality. And as I argue in the following chapter, the question of freedom extends beyond intimate social relations to encompass the racialized property systems that determine who is allowed access to housing.

Chapter III: “Third-world-in-the-first world”

Every life reveals something about the long history of social inequality. For most of my childhood, I slept in a house with wood floors and glass windows that opened and closed. On special nights, my father served ice cream out of giant discount tubs. When one of us complained about getting the smaller scoop, he said *life isn't fair*. At some point, I realized we had all gotten the bigger and better portion. Years earlier, my parents were in-between jobs and all five of us lived for six months in a Volkswagen van and cheap hostels in Mexico. The van broke down often, and my siblings remember staying once in a shack with dirt floors. My earliest memories are in the blazing heat with the windows open and the sun in my face. Eventually Dad got a job teaching at a community college in a small city near the border. Although at first my parents were unable to secure a mortgage, the bank eventually offered a low-interest loan on a house that would rapidly increase in value over the next ten years. It was their ticket to stability. Over time, our family profited from the same housing bubble that would go on to push millions of others—mostly poor people of color—out of their homes.



In the 1970s, John Sibley painted an image of Malcolm X with his palm raised skyward, silhouetted by pink, blue, and purple light. His title—“Third World Man”—frames the American struggle for racial liberation in a global context. In his memoir, which he wrote while living at an SRO outside Chicago, Sibley engages a global perspective to examine his own experience of homelessness. As an artist in a city dominated by white cultural gatekeepers, he writes, “I was relegated to selling my art on the street level not because I lacked talent but because I was shunned.... [by] the white establishment” (2011, 49-50). In California, Lisa Gray-Garcia also

survived by selling her art on the streets. As a child, she had been “introduced to the third-world-in-the-first-world reality of street vending” (Gray-Garcia 2006, 81). The theme of belonging to the US “third world” runs throughout her memoir, which she wrote on a salvaged typewriter while squatting in an abandoned building in Oakland. Together, Sibley, Gray-Garcia and other life narrators position US housing displacement in a global context and frame homelessness as a “Third World” condition of being excluded from the American Dream of property ownership. By discussing their reflexive theories of US housing displacement, this chapter draws connections between contemporary geographies of racial oppression and colonial histories of land dispossession. It further argues that displacement is inherent to the production of race.

Race and the geographies of American housing displacement

For years, Sibley’s painting “Third World Man” was exhibited at the South Side Community Art Center in Chicago. At one time, South Chicago was a mecca for black art, music and literature, yet decades of racist housing schemes plunged the area into poverty. The museum was periodically subject to theft, and in 1978, Sibley’s painting was stolen along with sixteen others. The \$11,000 loss was unacknowledged by major Chicago newspapers (Baker 2012).⁴⁰ Thus, the same geographies of racism that made South Chicago so precarious also threatened the existence of the nation’s oldest black art museum. In his memoir, Sibley describes Chicago’s “ghettos” as arising from policies that denied people of color access to one of the greatest generators of American wealth: the subsidized suburban home. He writes:

I remember how I used to watch the noonday sun cast the gloomy shadow of the Tribune Tower’s Gothic medieval cathedral architecture on a sea of white faces. White faces with good jobs. White faces whose parents benefited from the pre-1960 government white-

⁴⁰ At the urging of the museum, the *Sun-Times* eventually covered the theft, which led to the recovery of many of the paintings. Sibley ultimately donated his painting to the museum (Baker 2012).

affirmative-action programs while my parents were systematically discriminated against. (Sibley 2011, 40)

In describing his family's historical exclusion from mortgage assistance, Sibley refers to a series of federal programs rolled out in the wake of the Great Depression, designed to stimulate the housing industry and pave the way for mortgaging to become the middle-class norm (Bratt et al. 1986). Such interventions reinforced redlining practices that precluded African-American and other minority neighborhoods from accessing mortgages. Redlining, along with racial covenants, zoning, and a mixture of public subsidies and private market transactions, ultimately contributed to the decline of the economic African American inner city (Gordon 2009). Black communities in cities across the US were restricted to neighborhoods where white landlords charged exorbitant rents for dilapidated and under-maintained housing. In this way, housing played a key role in enabling the exploitation and spatial containment of black communities. As Sibley suggests, Chicago is a paradigmatic example of this history.

While inner cities were targeted for disinvestment and exploitation, suburbs received the lion's share of public resources for residential areas, and residents worked to build local political power to exclude non-whites. Thomas Sugrue (2014, xxi-xxii) argues that "to a great extent in postwar America, geography is destiny. Access to goods and resources—public services, education, and jobs—depends upon place of residence." As racial ideologies were mapped onto the geography of the city, the idea of race itself was constructed through housing, such that—for immigrant populations in particular—becoming suburban meant becoming white (Roediger 2006). Such connections between race and housing trace back to the colonial era settlement of indigenous land and establishment of property as a fundamental right to exclude others. As Cheryl Harris (1993) argues, whiteness became more than just a racial identity: it became a form

of property. Homeless life narratives further suggest that whiteness-as-property is not only grounded in the ability to exclude, but in the ability to displace.

In 1949, the American Housing Act initiated an era of large-scale urban housing projects accompanied by slum clearance efforts that often displaced minority communities. It was not until 1968—more than thirty years after mortgage assistance programs lifted millions of white Americans out of poverty—that the federal government prohibited housing discrimination. Yet by the time public housing was finally integrated, the newly created Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had largely ended the mortgage financing programs of its predecessors. While mortgage assistance for whites had been viewed as neutral fiscal policy, public housing was subject to ongoing social stigma (Roy 2003). Partly as a result of racialized stigma, funding for public housing was chronically under attack. From 1978 to 1983, the HUD budget shrank from \$83 to \$18 billion (WRAP 2012). In the mid-1980s, at a time when 60% of public housing tenants were minorities and the majority were female-headed households (Hayden 1984), the Reagan Administration began systematically dismantling almost a century of antipoverty programs, leading to an era of deeper and more entrenched housing insecurity (Peck and Tickel 2002; Gowan 2008). Urban homelessness exploded during this period, in particular among African-American communities (Kasinitz 1984). By 2009, African Americans were nearly seven times more likely than whites to become homeless (NCH 2009). In turn, anti-homeless politics became deeply bound up with racist portrayals of the “unworthy homeless” (Blasi 1994; Willse 2015).

At the same time, cuts to public housing in the US that were catastrophic for the nation’s poor were also accompanied by new institutional and carceral forms of housing. From 1978 to 1983, the HUD budget shrank from \$83 to \$18 billion. The overwhelming loss of funding for

public housing was accompanied by the rapid growth of the shelter system (WRAP 2012). Similarly, the loss of subsidized housing units between 1995 and 2011—more than 650,000 in total—was replaced with an even greater number of new jail and prison cells. As Loic Wacquant (2009) argues, the politics of neoliberalism in the US during this period involved dramatic cuts to social welfare spending accompanied by greater funding for the punitive state apparatus. In his oral history, Howard (2009) highlights the relationship between the growth of the US military state and the decline of social welfare: “In a country like this, with all this money, to have these many homeless people ... is just a scandal.... That is why the war on poverty is so important. A lot of that money was taken from that and put into the war.” Indeed, policing efforts within the US have long operated in tandem with military occupation abroad (Blaut 1974; Davis 1990; Seigel 2018). American punitive structures are further deeply tied to entrenched ideologies that equate innocence with whiteness (Chaco 2012).

Sibley, reflecting on the racialization of homelessness, observes a stark contrast between residents and managers during a prayer session at the shelter where he resided:

A scene of mostly *black* faces with despair and anguish chiseled into them gazed at me as if they knew I was a new member of the homeless *tribe*. ... A group of white suburbanites walked up to the podium. They all looked as if they were clones of Sears and Roebucks models. They looked so clean, so secure, so white. They represented the antithesis of the audience. (2011, 105-106)

In italicizing the words *black* and homeless *tribe*, Sibley suggests an overlap between racial identity and housing status, such that other shelter residents “knew” he was homeless because of his race. In describing white staff in terms of their relationship to suburban homes—“suburbanites”—Sibley again connects racialization to the urban geographies of housing. In another passage, he reflects on the connection between homelessness and public housing when

describing a chance encounter in a fast-food restaurant with a friend from art school who had become homeless and mentally ill. He writes:

I first saw Maurice Wilson's molecular drawings years ago. In that small room in the now abolished concrete and steel Stateway Garden Public Housing Complex on South State Street. It's the largest public housing complex in America. To think that a young prodigy—a budding African-American genius who had created astonishingly gifted drawings in one of the United States most infamous and diabolical housing projects—was now sitting in a restaurant seemingly *mad*. (2011, 81-82)

In this passage, Sibley implicitly connects the tragedy of Wilson's life to the social and material context of public housing, and the intense hardship of growing up in Stateway Gardens.

As Sibley suggests, government underfunding often does have dramatic implications in the lives of public-housing residents. Nicole Colson (2002) writes about Stateway Gardens, "For decades, city officials ignored not only routine building maintenance, but severe problems such as burst pipes, faulty electrical wiring, broken heating systems and even fire damage." By 1995, Chicago's public housing system had fallen into such disrepair that the federal government stepped in to take over. The following year, the Clinton Administration promoted dispersed government housing—according to a "scattered site" model—as a geographic solution to the problem of poverty (Goetz 2013). The federal government passed legislation mandating the demolition of any public housing not seen as fit for rehabilitation. This included nearly 60% of Chicago units, comprising 18,000 homes. The law also overturned previous regulations that required a new unit to be provided for every unit demolished. This trend displaced thousands and opened vast swathes of valuable land for developers (Colson 2002).

As a direct result of concentrated disinvestment, poor neighborhoods become opportunities for capital (Smith 1996). After the industrial era of large-scale factories dwindled in the 20th century, cities began selling the urban landscape to stimulate economic growth. Beginning in the 1980s, local governments sought to attract capital by actively advertising the

city as a prized commodity (Hall and Hubbard 1996; Theodore et al. 2011). With the ability to charge higher rents, landlords across the US began renovating dilapidated structures for lease to higher income tenants. Many low-income residents were forced to move to costlier and less adequate housing. Combined, these factors paved the way for an era of gentrification and widespread eviction that rendered affordable housing a scarce resource (Smith 1996; Lees et al. 2010). And, as Matthew Desmond (2016) argues, eviction not only results from poverty, but reproduces it, as a single eviction proceeding can result in a spiraling process of housing insecurity that impacts every area of a person's life.

Desmond further argues that eviction is not only a racialized phenomenon, but one that is deeply gendered. In poor urban neighborhoods in which men are more often incarcerated, women—who do the labor of caring for the home—tend to experience high rates of eviction. In turn, an eviction record functions for women as a criminal record does for men, reducing chances at future housing and reproducing the cycle of urban poverty. Desmond (2012, 121) writes, “These twinned processes, eviction and incarceration, work together—black men are locked up while black women are locked out—to propagate economic disadvantage and social suffering in America's urban centers.” While Desmond traces the intertwined nature of exclusion and containment, the concept of exclusion falls short of capturing the dynamic that life narratives of homelessness describe: a dizzying movement between containment and displacement. Rather than simply being excluded from housing, people *do* find sites of spatial belonging—however inadequate and confining—and lose them, over and over again, to the violence of property.

The Pacific Garden Mission, where Sibley stayed, was located a mile away from new high-rise developments in the South Loop, one of the fastest-growing residential areas of

Chicago. Sibley writes about reflecting on the encroachment of luxury housing while standing in line at the mission:

As we stood in two lines, like packed cattle, I stared up at the newly built, luxury condominiums along South State Street, only a block south of the mission, as their windows emitted faint ghostly lights. A large red drop of sun cast its flickering rays on the buildings, giving them a fiery glow as their shadows cast darkness on the subterranean world of the homeless. As my stomach growled, I could not help but wrestle with the contradictions of America. Here I am, a reasonably intelligent black man, standing in line, waiting for someone to take care of one of my most basic human needs. A sense of dread seized every cell of my being. ... It seemed that the disparity between the haves and have-nots was growing in America. (2011, 129-130)

These “luxury condominiums” represent, for Sibley, the physical manifestation of wealth in the built urban environment, situated adjacent to housing so destitute that it is occupied by hundreds of men waiting for a donated meal. The juxtaposition of these two extremes also presents the threat of rising land values and the ongoing cycle of displacement.

Sibley again analyzes displacement through the story of his family’s ties to a historic black neighborhood in Chicago. He writes that his uncle moved from rural Mississippi to Chicago during the 1920s, along with “120,000 other black Southern immigrants seeking racial justice” (2011, 157). Those who came to Chicago as part of the Second Great Migration formed a vibrant community marked by the proliferation of music and art. The Maxwell Street area in particular became famous for its outdoor blues music. Southern artists began amplifying their instruments, which led to the creation of electric, urban blues—the Chicago blues. Sibley writes, “When I was a boy, Uncle Miles would take me to Maxwell Street with him every Sunday.... [He] viewed Maxwell Street as a modern Blues Capital of the World” (2011, 160). Yet beginning in the 1990s, the University of Illinois at Chicago expanded student housing in the neighborhood. Residents protested the expansion, yet by 2000, it had resulted in the wide-scale demolition of historic buildings and the destruction of the once-vibrant street music scene

(Brookstein 2000). Sibley meditates on this history while passing a construction site on the street he used to visit every Sunday as a child:

I saw parked bulldozers, bobcats, cranes, scrapers and excavators that reminded me of Sherman Tanks in “Nam”.... Graffiti on one of the buildings read: *Maxwell Street is doomed by the three C's: Capital, Christianity, and Color!* The wind gusted and beer cans, plastic bags, napkins snaked across the sidewalk. Were the mayor and city power brokers destroying the site of the world's most brilliant blues culture in order to drive a wedge between the blues, and the concrete and steel of modernity? (2011, 164-165)

The graffiti references James Baldwin, who argues that the invention of America by European colonialists was also the invention of whiteness, more accurately defined as a combination of “Capital, Christianity, and Color” (1985, 30). For Sibley, the blues represents one of the greatest musical contributions of US culture, yet is valued less than the profits of housing development. In citing the graffiti, Sibley attributes this dynamic to a combination of capitalist development, Christian ideology, and the racist devaluation of black life. In comparing the demolition to war in Vietnam, he places the violence of gentrification—in which black communities are disproportionately displaced and made homeless—in the larger global context of US imperialism. As McKittrick (2011, 949) writes, legacies of racism “situate black people and places outside modernity” and mark black cultures as fundamentally “placeless.” This placelessness emerges out of colonial spatial logics and the ongoing destruction of urban space, what McKittrick (2011) calls “urbicide.” Thus, the demolition of Maxwell Street exemplifies a larger dynamic of racism as enforced placelessness and place-boundedness.

The dynamics of demolition also reveals a tension between confinement and displacement that is produced through capitalist housing markets. As Marx (1967) argues, high rents drive low-income waged laborers and their families into urban neighborhoods which have the fewest amenities, and force them to occupy smaller and smaller spaces to survive. He writes that the more capital becomes concentrated in the hands of the few, “the greater is the

corresponding heaping together of the labourers, within a given space” (1967, 615). The more capital concentrates and shrinks the neighborhoods and living quarters of the poor, the more it is likely that their housing will be destroyed. Marx writes that housing demolition in turn decreases the stock of affordable housing, and contributes to the very problem that concentrated people in poor neighborhoods in the first place. Thus, the spatial dynamics of confinement and displacement operate in an ever-spiraling cycle.

Like Sibley, Gray-Garcia also analyzes her homelessness in the context of her family’s generational struggles with race and class oppression. She describes her mother as “a mixed-race child surrendered to foster care” (2006, xv). After a childhood marked by abuse, her mother suffered from trauma so severe she was often unable to perform waged work. Gray-Garcia spent much of her childhood and youth living in abandoned buildings and sleeping in her car with her mother in cities across California. Their art collaborations spoke to their experience of being unable to earn a wage or pay for housing. She writes, “We installed the storefront with a highly conceptual piece: ‘Fear of the Marketplace,’ a literal and metaphorical translation of my mother’s disability. ... [It] spoke of hundreds of evictions, years of homelessness and ongoing chaos” (2006, 159-160). As a result of their poverty, gentrification was a constant threat. Gray-Garcia describes her neighborhood in Venice, California:

It was the pre-gentrification Venice ghetto, filled with African-American, Latino and Laotian families living in cheap houses with tiny yards full of lowrider, souped-up cars, pit bulls and young brown and black gangstas fighting the undeclared war against displacement. We moved into this battleground ... but eventually we had to close it down because we didn’t make enough money to pay the exorbitant increases of the quickly gentrifying Venice Beach rent. (2006, 82)

In naming the “undeclared war against displacement,” Gray-Garcia alludes to a connection between neighborhood violence and the ongoing struggle against displacement.

Gray-Garcia also associates the punitive state apparatus with housing systems that punish and exclude poor people of color for what she calls “crimes of poverty.” She writes:

Crimes of poverty could include violations for the act of being homeless and/or very low income in America, such as camping on public property, blocking the sidewalk, recycling, loitering (which can include sitting while homeless), and in my family’s case, sleeping in a vehicle.... These and other crimes of poverty and homelessness are increasingly common all over the United States, especially in cities like San Francisco with its scarcity of affordable housing and high-speed gentrification, redevelopment and subsequent destruction of low-income communities. (2006, xviii)

Such laws are part of a long history of the US state engaging punitive approaches to homelessness. Crimes targeting people for not owning property skyrocketed during the 1990s, while the war on drugs was in full swing and gentrification was on the rise. During that period, cities across the country began outlawing homeless sitting, sleeping, and camping in public spaces. In San Francisco, officers heavily enforced the “Matrix”—a complex of almost two-dozen city ordinances aimed at removing homeless people from the streets. As Mitchell (1997) argues, such anti-homeless policing “annihilates” public spaces where homeless people can exist in the city. Gray-Garcia links this process to gentrification and racialized displacement. She writes about the perceived need to “clean up” poor neighborhoods:

When we hear those hygiene metaphors we need to be conscious that the human beings who are being “cleaned up” and “cleaned out” are people of color, poor, homeless, abused, elders. ... These people, if they happen to be dwelling, sitting, sleeping, and/or working in the neighborhood that’s undergoing gentrification/redevelopment, will be targeted by the police for harassment, abuse, arrest, and eventually incarceration. ... Homeless people, poor intergenerational families, youth of color, migrant workers, these are always the first to be “cleaned out.” (2006, xvi-xvii)

Gray-Garcia sheds light on the way in which gentrification both strips people of their housing and labels them “criminal” by virtue of their homelessness. In highlighting the connections between the displacement of both housed and homeless neighborhood residents, she reveals that space is not only annihilated through policing, but through the political economy of housing

itself which destroys both private homes and public dwelling spaces in the name of profit. As Susan Soederberg (2017) argues, housing insecurity is reproduced not only through evictions, but through efforts to render displaced people invisible by policing their use of public spaces.

In Venice, Oakland, Berkeley, and San Francisco, Gray-Garcia experienced gentrification and criminalization on a near-constant basis. She and her mother lived for a time at an SRO, until a landlord kicked them out to prevent them from becoming legally protected tenants. When they ended up sleeping in their car, they were cited by the police so many times that Gray-Garcia was ultimately arrested for failure to pay \$2,700 in tickets—a penalty that the judge refused to reduce. Whenever they could get enough money together for a small space to stay, they lived with roaches, crumbling floors, no plumbing, and the threat of rent increases and eviction. During the chaos of constant displacement, Gray-Garcia observed that housing costs in the Bay Area began increasing at an unprecedented rate. She writes:

[It was] a modern-day gold rush unlike anyone had seen for many years before or since, a movement that spurned a new form of urgent colonization. It was 1999 and as the dot.com gold rush hit with full force, everyone who owned any slab of property, commercial or residential, was ready to cash in. No neighborhood was safe, no renter was exempt from the fear of gentrification and eviction. One of the largest struggles was played out in the Mission District of San Francisco, where elders, youth and families, many of them immigrant, mostly Latino, were being evicted from their apartments right and left. Entire neighborhoods were being decimated. (2006, 257)

In comparing gentrification to a “gold rush” and “a new form of colonization” that targets immigrant communities, Gray-Garcia evokes a connection between contemporary housing markets and the historical expansion of American imperialism as white settlers struck out across the country to establish new sources of wealth. Historians have described the Gold Rush as the “California Indian Holocaust,” as more than 100,000 indigenous people were killed in just over a decade (Trafzer and Hyer 1999). While the everyday violence of gentrification cannot compare

to the brutality of mass settlement and killing, Gray-Garcia alludes to an ongoing historical dynamic in which whites displace people of color to profit from their land.

In the wake of gentrification, a new technology of housing exploitation developed in the late 1990s that continues to shape the character of American politics in the contemporary era. This was the predatory loan. As deregulation of the financial sector insulated banks from many of the risks of lending, credit-based housing proliferated once more and lenders took on the role of housing provision in many low-income communities. Communities of color, who had been denied access to mortgages in first two-thirds of the century, were finally included among those who could achieve the American dream. Yet lenders imposed higher interest rates and weaker protections in neighborhoods that were previously redlined, heightening housing precarity among minority communities (Wyly et al. 2006). Poor people of color, instead of receiving government mortgage assistance, were targeted for private market-based mortgage exploitation. The proliferation of high-risk loans led to a growing housing bubble that ultimately burst in 2008, creating the deepest economic crisis in the US since the Great Depression, a steep decline in overall home values, and 8.2 million foreclosures by 2011 (Stiglitz 2012). The crisis involved an incredible dispossession of black wealth, with some conservative estimates citing a loss of \$194 billion (Bocian et al. 2010). After the housing crisis threatened to destabilize the US economy, the government strategy of bailing out banks cost taxpayers over \$800 billion. As a 2012 report on HUD funding indicates, this sum surpassed the total amount of funding provided for low-income housing and homelessness assistance over the prior three decades (WRAP 2012).

Predatory lending today is the result of a long history of poor people of color being denied access to property. David Edwards, who recorded his oral history in 2012, recounts how his grandmother, a sharecropper with a fourth-grade education, fled rural Georgia to find better

work in Washington, DC. Like Sibley's parents, Edwards' grandmother was among the thousands who saw urban life as an escape from the ravages of racial violence in the South. Yet cities were unwelcoming to new arrivals. As a child, Edwards helped his grandmother clean houses. He remembers being forced to sit on the back of the bus with her on the way to work. As an adult, he tried to join the electric worker's union but wasn't allowed—"They weren't ready for the surge of African Americans looking for work" (Edwards 2012). Edwards argued that being denied access to property, as a black man in the US, presented the ultimate barrier to his financial wellbeing. He said, "To finance, to capitalize a business, it's an extremely political, overburdened, marginalized, disenfranchised, dysfunctional thing. And I think it has a lot to do with the color of my skin. But, nevertheless, I didn't own any property. ... That is the big spoiler and hell, it's holding a whole lot of people back" (Edwards 2012). He recalls a moment when he realized the different opportunities available to whites in the US:

These two white guys are talking about ... how they were going to refinance their homes to get a new truck. ... And I'm listening to this, and I can't even get an apartment. (Laughs) And these guys, I don't know how they flipped their homes and things to finance their life. So, the culture, and what supported them to be abreast of that sort of economic advantage was there for them. But my parents didn't have that. (Edwards 2012)

Because he didn't own property, Edwards could not secure a loan to start his own business. His experience reveals that predatory lending must be placed in the historical context in which people of color in the US were disproportionately denied access to the credit necessary to obtain property.

These dynamics further contribute to place-based inequalities, which present a whole host of barriers to social advancement. Gardner, whose memoir is deeply grounded in his personal vision of achieving the American dream, writes about his difficulty finding high-paid employment:

Racism wasn't the main issue, although it was a part of it. My understanding eventually about why I kept getting turned down was that it was 'place-ism.' The questions boiled down to connection, placement. ... What was my connection to my peers, since I never went to college? ... Who's going to do business with you? What's your connection to the money? Place-ism. (2006, 198)

Gardner highlights how building social connections—through shared experiences of place—is integral to moving into more highly paid employment. Yet his own experience of having lived his whole life in poor neighborhoods left him cut off from the places where money is made. Indeed, Wacquant's (2008) concept of "territorial stigmatization" captures the ways in which entire urban neighborhoods become associated with deeply-held, racialized, place-based stigma.

At the same time, suburban homeownership has been framed as a solution to the problems of poverty and racism, and as a ticket to becoming the ideal American citizen. Yet as mortgage assistance became available to poor people of color, it came with new methods of racial exploitation. Growing up, Jazz often did not have gas or electricity in her home for days at a time. She was the first person in her family to go to college, and ultimately graduated to become a nurse. Yet on her way to achieving homeownership, she was unexpectedly foreclosed on. She said in her oral history:

I purchased a home and that was a really predatory loan situation, and I got stuck with this crazy mortgage. ... It was just immediate. I paid \$800 for rent maybe three months and then it was \$1000 and then it was \$1200 and then it was \$1450. ... And I do believe that as a young African American woman, I was definitely exploited. Being the first person in my family to even own a home, I was just excited to be a homeowner. ... I accumulated a large amount of debt extremely fast. ... I see that was a pattern, they were targeting people, I was the perfect victim for that. (Jazz 2012)

After losing her home, she moved back in with her mother, who was being foreclosed from her first home at the same time. They stayed in the house together without hot water until the sheriff came to kick them out. Afterwards, Jazz spent some time living in her car and crashing with friends, with her two small children in tow. She reflected:

I think my race influenced my experiences ... especially with my housing experience and I think just the disparity that African Americans have faced historically in housing and in other social service programs, I think it kind of—it goes from one generation to the next because it's like my parents never—we kind of got our first homes at the same time.

Ressurrection Graves (2011), in her self-published memoir of homelessness, similarly writes of an experience in which a lending agent falsely promised that her mortgage would be refinanced in the future to make her monthly payments much lower. She writes:

I lost my home to foreclosure. As the first person in my family to outright buy a home, I was lied to before I purchased the house. ... When calls to my realtor and lender went cold because neither had answers, I was left with the reality to that we had a mortgage that was astronomical. I felt stifled, and lied to. I also felt vulnerable because this was my first experience with purchasing a home, and I [had] believed what was being shared with me.

Like Gray-Garcia, housing precarity continued to follow Jazz and Graves, and they characterized the tragedy and chaos of constant displacement as a deeply racial phenomenon.

James Shabazz also lost his home to a predatory lender, and in his oral history he connects this experience to his family's historically precarious relationship to property. His mother was a sharecropper from North Carolina with a second-grade education. His father's family, in contrast—"they were free I guess you could say. They didn't have that shackle on them—they owned their own property" (Shabazz 2013). In this statement, Shabazz suggests that to be without property is to be unfree. Because his father owned property, he was able to purchase a home in DC in the 1950s, at a time when there were only two black families in the neighborhood. Yet over the course of a decade, white flight and segregation plunged their neighborhood into poverty. In the 1980s, the area became ripe for gentrification as rising property values left working-class homeowners unable to pay their property taxes. Shabazz eventually succeeded in acquiring property of his own from the sale of his parents' home. "But I got caught in the subprime mess and lost everything," he said. "[I] was forced to go back on a

shoestring budget as a vendor” (Shabazz 2013). As a street vendor, he was subject to ongoing attacks against his business. He describes the way in which street vendors in DC at the time—most of whom were black—were forced out of business by neighborhood associations who characterized them as criminal. “In Washington, DC,” Shabazz said, “the face of homelessness is black” (Shabazz 2013).

In referencing the lack of property as “shackles,” Shabazz evokes deep historical connections between property and freedom in the US. Indeed, Waldron (1991, 299) argues that homelessness—the condition of having no property—is fundamentally an issue of freedom, as homeless people are “utterly and at all times at the mercy of others.” This is particularly true with the increasing criminalization of homeless people’s use of public spaces. Waldron argues that those who are not free to *be* in any place are “comprehensively unfree.” He writes, “for them the rules of private property are a series of fences that stand between them and somewhere to be, somewhere to act” (1991, 302). While the freedom to perform everyday, banal activities is often viewed as insignificant in light of more lofty understandings of liberty, without any place to sleep, sit, cook, or urinate, people are unable to sustain themselves. As Waldron writes, “we can see the system of property for what it is: rules that provide freedom and prosperity for some by imposing restrictions on others” (1991, 324).



Growing up, I went to public school in a pastel fortress in the heart of a low-income, Latino/a neighborhood. The school was pastel pink, and its entrances were manned by uniformed security guards. We called it the Pink Pepto-Bismol Prison. When we were late to class, they would make us stand for an hour facing the wall. Other kids in school used to call me *white girl*

and *Casper*, and by the time I was eleven, I started smoking weed and cigarettes. When I was twelve, I stopped going to class. Every morning, I would leave home in my school uniform and wander the streets looking for a place to avoid getting caught. Once I got lost in a neighborhood with tin-roofed shanties. Another day I sat reading in a stranger's garage. By the age of fourteen, I had dropped out of school entirely. Looking back, I had a small glimpse of the way in which schools in poor neighborhoods of color so often treat children like criminals. As Dan-El Padilla Peralta (2015, 82) asks in his memoir about growing up homeless in Harlem: "Why did the white kids get such nice schools?" Yet throughout my life, my skin—that ghostly barrier between myself and the world—has protected me time and again. Although I was ultimately arrested more than once for drug possession and convicted of two misdemeanors, I never went to jail. I was never evicted, priced out my home, or targeted by predatory lenders and was eventually able to attend community college and go on to higher education.

I moved to the Bay Area around the same time that Gray-Garcia was being pushed from one slumlord to another. Rents in San Francisco were too high, so I got a basement studio in Oakland. It was a low-income neighborhood, mostly black and Latino/a families. The first time I witnessed the starkness of segregation was biking north into Berkeley. In the span of a mile, neighborhoods became mostly white, houses were well-maintained, and streets were lined with trees, cafes, and multiple transit stops instead of liquor stores and boarded up windows. In Oakland, I was part of a wave of new gentrifiers. I watched as other middle-class whites like myself moved into the area, but did not realize then that there must have been others who were forced to move away. Since then, every city I have lived in has been on the path of displacement.

Property, citizenship, and American empire

In addition to describing the racial character of housing displacement, life narratives of homelessness place American displacement in the context of global and historical geographies of colonialism. Sibley's memoir is rich with descriptions of the neighborhoods where homeless and precariously housed people of color live in Chicago, contrasted against landscapes of white wealth. He writes, "Prior to the civil rights movement in the 1960s, downtown Chicago was like Johannesburg, South Africa, during apartheid. It still is one of the most racially segregated cities in America" (Sibley 2011, 86). As Sibley suggests, colonialism in South Africa not only produced rural Bantustans but also restricted black South Africans to exploited and impoverished neighborhoods within cities (Davies 1981; Western 1996). In this way, the urban dynamics of South African segregation mirrored the redlining practices in the US that forced black communities to rent in "black belt" neighborhoods. In the wake of apartheid, middle and upper-income whites in Johannesburg lived mostly in semi-detached homes or sprawling suburban estates, much as in the US (Murray 2008). Sibley's comparison of the US to South Africa draws out the real-world similarities between the urban landscapes of colonialism across distinct national contexts.

Beyond colonial South Africa, Sibley evokes comparisons to informal squatter settlements in contemporary cities across the Global South. Every Sunday, the shelter where Sibley resided transported residents to a church across town for dinner. He describes the images he saw on the journey:

The ride to the church down the Madison Corridor changed from new modern lofts with balconies, small condos, town homes, clean streets.... As the car drove further west, it slowly changed into a surreal Third World Culture. The poverty was abominable. The church was located in the North Lawndale-Garfield Park Community, a black community that is one of the most poor and wretched in Chicago. ... What I saw out the van window reminded me of images I had seen on television of impoverished Third World

Communities: ragged children, skeletal stray dogs, garbage littered streets, vast stretches of empty lots, homeless people who look like refugees.... Looking out the van window was like looking at the slums of Calcutta, the *favelas* in Brazil, the *barrios* in Mexico and Peru, and the E-waste dumps in Africa. (2011, 139-140)

Sibley suggests that Garfield Park was so excluded from US material prosperity that it existed outside the space of the nation. In emphasizing the “modern lofts, small condos, and town homes” of wealthy neighborhoods, he grounds his analysis in the material reality of housing. As Richard LeMieux (2009, 339) similarly writes about living in his van in Bremerton, Washington: “I had seen homeless men sitting by a campfire as if they were in a third-world country. ... I turned right and passed the construction site of the million-dollar condos and the new convention center. In that block and a half, I had traveled from one world to an entirely different one—and I didn’t feel as if I understood either of them.” Ananya Roy (2003) recounts how squatters in Calcutta described themselves to her as “better off” than homeless Americans because they were able to collectively claim a right to land. She argues that these characterizations “unsettled the conventional wisdom of development studies and urban theory, which have ... defined the Third World as a lack, as backwardness, as needing cure” (2003, 470). Rather than imposing imperialist representations of the “Third World” onto poor neighborhoods in the US, Sibley and LeMieux push against notions of US superiority and call attention to the deep inequalities that manifest at the scale of the city in the heart of American empire.

As with the contemporary exclusion and racialization of communities from “elsewhere,” the notion of the “Third World” itself flows from colonial representations of faraway places. Blaut (1969) argues that imperial geography designated the “First World” as the normative default, and the “Third World” as a uniform, inferior landscape elsewhere. Postcolonial theorists have sought to deconstruct hard boundaries between North and South, and move away from a characterization of the North as a bounded entity that is the center of all power and domination

(Bell 2002). In describing Philadelphia gentrification as a form of imperialism, Koptiuch (1991) writes, “the third world can no longer be geographically mapped off as a space separate from a seigneurial first world” (1991, 88). She cites the shockingly low life spans of African-American men living in Harlem (see Maykuth 1990) and the 1985 government bombing of a black anarchist group in Philadelphia as examples of state repression that “increasingly evokes apt comparisons with America’s imperial outposts: Vietnam, Lebanon, South Africa, Central America” (1991, 92). At the same time, the notion of the “third-world-in-the-first-world”—as Gray-Garcia describes it—risks perpetuating imperial discourses of otherness in the study of US poverty (see Wacquant 1997). Indeed, the process of demarcating the “Third World” itself spatializes the idea of “otherness” (Spivak 1985). Thus, it is crucial to deconstruct bounded notions of a spatialized other. As Chandra Mohanty (2003) argues, identifying a transnational solidarity between “third world women” and “women of color” in the US can destabilize colonial discourses of third-world victimhood and first-world saviors.⁴¹ Similarly, life narratives of homelessness can destabilize notions of the US as divorced, cut off, or superior to the world.

In their memoirs and oral histories, homeless writers and thinkers defy imperialist regionalizations by describing their neighborhoods and communities as “Third World,” and unsettling cognitive geographies of “Third World” locations. This challenge to the imperial first world/third world dichotomy is reminiscent of earlier movements of people of color in the US. In the 1960s, students of color formed Third World Liberation Fronts in universities across the US, calling for the creation and funding of Ethnic Studies programs and greater student diversity

⁴¹ Yet at the same time, characterizations of a global sisterhood with shared experiences often deny the ways that people who are differently located experience womanhood differently (Mohanty 1995). As Adrienne Rich (1994) argues, to deny the specificity of one’s own location in the effort to claim a shared sisterhood is to place oneself at the center of the world. Thus, I do not seek to place the American experience of poverty at the center of a global conversation, but instead to destabilize the binary that elevates the “First World” above the “Third World.”

(Ferriera 2003). In the 90s, feminists of color developed “U.S. third world feminism” as a platform for global racial solidarity that challenges nation-state boundaries (Sandoval 2000). Beyond calling for global racial solidarity, life narratives of homelessness push further to trace the outlines of a “US third world” formed by geography and ideology. They suggest that an analysis of racial formations must take displacement into account as a mechanism that disproportionately impacts poor people of color, such that race itself has become a geographic condition marked by displacement and the ability to displace others.

In addition to describing Garfield Park in Chicago as part of the “Third World,” Sibley places racism in the US in the context of global colonial histories. He writes, “The salient fact is that black Americans are still reeling from the dehumanizing effects of the former slave trading nations of England, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal and the US” (2011, 223-224). He further highlights how European colonial projects impacted indigenous cultures, writing, “Have Christians forgotten that contact with Europeans destroyed the culture of the Native Americans and Africans?” (2011, 108). In a passage describing former President Barack Obama, he traces the connections between the colonial history of slavery and contemporary housing:

Obama’s world is not the one of American slaves like my ancestors. His father was from the Lou Tribe in Africa and his mother was a white American. ... He was never handcuffed, fingerprinted, and locked-up like a runaway slave in America’s Draconian and barbaric, racist penal system. Obama escaped racist cops. He escaped prison. He escaped the “rite of passage” of most black men in America. ... His face does not reflect the topography of a black man who was born, weaned and nurtured in the diabolical, segregated housing in urban cities. (2011, 231-232).

Rather than reading Sibley as forming a fixed and narrow definition of African-American identity, this passage must be placed in the larger context of his memoir, which seeks instead to expose the historical intersection of class and race oppression in the US. Most striking in this regard is the link that Sibley suggests between the colonial history of slavery and contemporary

housing systems. While scholars have analyzed the confluence between slavery and prison systems (see Alexander 2012), the relationship between housing and US colonialism warrants further examination. Like Sibley, Edwards places contemporary race relations into the historical context of colonialism. While living at shelter in DC, he wrote a science fiction novel set in a world in which colonialism had never happened. He described the premise in his oral history:

Now, what if there were no African Americans at all and slavery never happened. What would America be like? ... Africa would be the United States of Africa. (Laughs) Because it wasn't torn up by the slave trade, okay? And, the American Indians would still be the dominate culture here. So, that's a whole new genre of constructs. (Edwards 2012)

In developing this “new genre of constructs,” Edwards imagined a world in which race, as a product of the global history of colonialism, does not exist.

While many narrators describe family experiences of slavery and sharecropping, Denver Moore details his own memories of working as a sharecropper in rural Louisiana until the 1960s. He writes in his memoir:

I worked them fields for nearly thirty years, like a slave, even though slavery had supposedly ended when my grandma was just a girl. ... I worked them fields, plantin and plowin and pickin and givin all the cotton to the Man that owned the land, and without no paycheck. I didn't even know what a paycheck was. (Hall and Moore 2006, 3)

During this time, Moore lived in a wooden shack with no glass windows, running water, or electricity. He compares his experience to a de facto form of slavery, writing, “the Man didn't just own the land. He owned *you*” (2006, 12). In sharecropping systems, non-landowning farmers yielded a portion of their harvest as a form of rent. Such systems were integral to European imperial expansion, as well as to the plantation economies of the US South during the Reconstruction era. As Susan Mann (1984) writes, the US slave economy transitioned to sharecropping because it enabled white landowners to extract both rent and labor without paying wages, while indebting sharecroppers so they were unable to quit working. This shift from

slavery to property-based exploitation suggests a historic connection between land, housing, and the geographic control of black mobility. As Moore writes, most sharecroppers on the plantation where he worked were ultimately pushed out of their homes:

Around the time I was three or four, white planters started buyin up tractors, which meant they didn't need so many colored hands to make their crops no more. That's when they started forcin em off their land. Whole families with little children. ... No money. No place to live. No job. No way to get one. (2006, 63)

In this way, geographies of displacement were also fundamental to sharecropping economies.

Ultimately, Moore left Louisiana in the 1960s and began riding the rails as a self-described “hobo.” Yet even living on the streets, he faced displacement. He writes, “the Fort Worth police put up no-loiterin signs all over the place and made me have to move my sleepin spot. I found out later some rich white folks was ‘revitalizin’ downtown. Raggedy black fellas sleepin on the sidewalks wadn’t part of the plan” (2006, 80). Moore’s account of his life attests to the relationship between colonial histories of slavery, contemporary exploitation through land, and the constant cycle of displacement that is so fundamental to racial oppression.

In their oral histories, many indigenous life narrators also described their homelessness in relation to experiences of colonial subjugation. Solomon grew up on the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota and attributed his homelessness to being placed in a boarding school from the ages of five to sixteen. He said in his oral history:

[My homelessness] was because of anxiety disorder. What my therapist told was that occurred when I first [went to] the Catholic government boarding school when I was around five years old. I didn't speak no English neither and they were run by nuns and priests who didn't speak the Native language. And I had a hard time there. That's the first time I experienced homelessness, I mean homesick and alone feelings and all that kind of things. I think I carried that since, then so it was kind of easy for me to just kind of go out and use alcohol to cover it, being homeless. Seems too like it's kind of hard to go out and take care of a place. ... At that time they had a policy on the reservations that—my parents were mainly traditional Natives, they didn't believe in electric for inside the house, they didn't believe in that kind of thing. And speaking our language too, Native American. And it's like, at that time reservation was run by white social workers and of

course they didn't understand. So then what they done was they took everyone that didn't have no electric inside their house and they placed those in the boarding schools.
(Solomon, date unknown)

From the late 1800s through the early 1900s, the federal government subsidized religious boarding schools as part of their broader aim to assimilate indigenous children. Children were forbidden from speaking their home language and were forced to adopt Euro-American names. Such schools are now notorious for having inflicted sexual, physical, and emotional abuse on students. In many cases, children were barred from attending local public schools (Jacobs 2009). Although most of these schools were shut down in the early-20th century, the Saint Francis Indian School on the Rosebud Reservation—where Solomon grew up—continues to operate to this day (Douville 2017). Solomon reveals that his childhood experience of being placed in a boarding school because his parents did not have “electric in the house” was a form of forced homelessness, a rupture so profound that he “carried” it with him throughout his life.

In addition to being forced into boarding schools, many indigenous children were stripped from their homes and given over to the custody of white foster families. Such practices happened even in cases where families wanted to care for their children, but government social workers deemed their homes substandard because they lacked indoor plumbing or some other mandated amenity (Jacobs 2009). The foster care system, in turn, often placed children in shelter-like conditions or cycled them in and out of private homes, leading to a higher risk of adult homelessness (Roman and Wolfe 1995). Thus, colonial notions of what constitutes a “home” operated to push indigenous families into homelessness. As Marilyn said in her oral history interview, running away from her white foster family marked the beginning of her homelessness: “I was in a white foster home but they didn't have me up by the reservation. The Indians didn't like me because I was in a white foster home and the white kids didn't like me

because I was Indian. So I had a tough time, growing up in the foster homes. And then so I started getting rebellious and I started drinking and stuff and I ran away” (Marilyn 2010). Both Marilyn and Solomon trace their homelessness to a childhood in which they were removed from their homes and forced into white society by government intervention. Today, the rate of homelessness among indigenous communities in the US is fifteen times the rate of homelessness for whites (NCH 2009).

Gray-Garcia also traces connections between colonialism, the disruption of indigenous livelihoods, and contemporary housing displacement. She writes:

As poor folks worldwide, from China to Los Angeles, get pushed out of their housing, we must resist and relearn how to house and educate ourselves. As economic apartheid deepens everywhere, our families, our elders, our children and our communities remain confused, in motion and under attack. And to survive and thrive we must take back our strength, reclaim our indigenous cultures and practices and ... stop allowing ourselves to be separated, colonized and incarcerated. And above all we must actively resist the increasing destabilization, gentrification and criminalization of poor folks and poor communities everywhere. (2006, 286-287)

In this passage, Gray-Garcia frames housing struggles in the US as a form of resistance to colonialism, and a reclamation of communal belonging. In describing poor people as “destabilized” and “in motion,” she reframes the notion of placelessness to highlight instead the more fluid condition of being continually displaced. She further connects this displacement to criminalization and places them both in a global context, drawing connections between herself, as an informal street vendor and her mother’s unwaged caretaker, and people living and working outside property systems across the globe. She writes, “Like many of my sisters and brothers in the third world, it is necessary that I work to support my family ... and like poor children all over the world, I am aware that without my help, she would not have made it” (2006, xviii). Gray-Garcia describes the moment she became aware of the broader context of her own experience:

I began to recognize the larger context of my mother's and my impossible life, seeing us against the backdrop of a global poverty struggle. How the criminalizing effects of poverty reach across borders and oceans. How in many ways my family shares a struggle with poor families in Mexico, Africa and India. How our fears of day-to-day living, surviving in the underground economy, our micro-business, illegal street vending, intense work ethic, lack of property ownership, lack of credit and our endless position of struggle were shared by unseen brothers and sisters at home and around the world. (2006, 196)

Thus, Gray-Garcia's position of informal labor and lack property ownership is part of a broader globally shared experience.

Analyses of US racism as colonialism are not new. With regard to indigenous American history, understandings of racial oppression are fundamentally linked to settler colonialism (Wolfe 1999; Churchill 2002). In the context of black struggles, W.E.B. Du Bois (1985) was one of the earliest thinkers to connect US racism to colonial development across the globe. In the 1960s and 1970s, radical race theorists again argued that US racism was a form of "internal colonialism." Such scholarship represented a break from previous understandings of racism as a psychic and individualized fear of "others," and framed race struggles in terms of territoriality and control over space (Blauner 1969; Allen 1970). These theories developed out of and alongside radical activist movements.⁴² While the literature on colonialism in the US overwhelmingly focuses on the economic domination of racialized populations, narratives of homelessness foreground the special role that geographic displacement plays in colonial development, and frame internal colonialism as marked by ongoing cycles of displacement. Indeed, as dispossession of indigenous and black communities in the US historically functioned through the colonial development of land and the creation of settler homes (Mar and Edmonds

⁴² Ramón Gutiérrez (2004) argues that as such movements were notorious for upholding patriarchal, heteronormative forms of exclusion, these failures led in part to the decline in popularity of theories of internal colonialism.

2010), displacement can be seen as inherent to the nature of mainstream American housing, and the loss of home as inherent to the postcolonial condition.

In urban studies, scholars have drawn connections between the operations of colonialism at the urban and global scales (Davis 1990; Jacobs 1996; Marcuse 1997). James Blaut (1974) argues that neo-colonialism designates the “Third World” as a territory ripe for “super-exploitation,” which in turn forces people to migrate to “First World” countries where they are once again geographically constrained and exploited. Similarly, in his analysis of US gentrification, Neil Smith (1996) argues that the gentrification frontier is also the global frontier of empire. For Smith, the discourse of the “urban frontier” smacks of fantasies of colonialism, in which not yet gentrified neighborhoods are portrayed as violent threats to sane and rational elite spaces. As capitalism moves into previously disinvested sites and dispossesses people, it fuels international migration, and in a tragic irony creates the low-income workforce that is needed in US cities, and that will again face displacement with the onslaught of gentrification. Today, gentrification is also expanding in cities outside the Global North, as a phenomenon often spurred on by US-led market discipline that enforces the rapid privatization of housing (Atkinson and Bridge 2004). Thus, the spatial logic of capitalism plays out on intimate, urban and global scales in similar ways: through patterns of uneven development, investment, and disinvestment, and the horrific life conditions produced through this movement.

In drawing connections between racially oppressed people in the US and elsewhere, memoirs and oral histories of homeless do not downplay the extent and depth of poverty in the Global South, but instead draw parallels between racialized poverty in the US and Global South as both emerging from a precarious relationship to property. Sirena, in her oral history, described the shanty town where she grew up without running water in northern Mexico, and how after her

family arrived in Texas, they still did not have a kitchen in the home. She said, “Yeah that was kind of the American side of poverty, where it’s like you weren’t living in a shack and your toilet flushed [but] there was like six people living in a studio apartment with one bed and then the kids slept on the floor with the roaches and the mice and whatever else was on the floor with you” (Sirena 2013). During that period, her mother supported the family by selling tamales on the street. In this sense, there was a continuity between her family’s experience of Mexican and US poverty: on both sides of the border they remained in substandard housing and working in informal economies. As Ward (1999) shows in his analysis of informal settlements in the US and Mexico, residents on both sides of the border often experience similar material conditions, although the Mexican state supplies public services and limited land rights to informal homes, while US building codes preclude the provision of infrastructure. Although many in the US experience the “Third World” reality of informal occupation of land, national visions of the US as a “First World” country preclude the state from meeting the needs of its own residents.

Lahens described in his oral history growing up in an orphanage in Haiti, awed by displays of abundance he saw on American television. He was eventually adopted by nuns who lived in Detroit. He recounted the experience of having the utilities cut off one winter:

I move here to the US and started learning and it’s really not that far away from Haiti. ... There is no water, there is no lights. I almost feel like I’m back in Haiti again; there is no electricity, I’m cold. ... It’s not the world that television perceived it to be. ... I never really saw the negative part of the United States so it was very hard. (Lahens 2013)

Like Lahens, Ibrahim Abubakari describes his experience of coming to grips with the reality of US poverty and reassessing his idealized notions of American life. Before coming to New York City from rural Ghana, he believed that “America meant freedom, success, peace, joy and prosperity” (2015, 14). Yet when he arrived, the only work he found was pumping gas in Harlem and as an informal, cash-only taxi driver subjected to constant police harassment. In both jobs, he

was repeatedly mugged, and twice he was stabbed. After his only relative in the US was murdered during his first year in the country, Abubakari spiraled into crack addiction. He describes “the prevalence of crack cocaine on every corner in the African American neighborhoods” at the time (2015, 125). Abubakari would ultimately spend twenty years on the streets of New York City. During this period, he wrote the journals that would eventually become his memoir, *The dark side of the American dream*. On his first visit home to Ghana after gaining housing, he met with other expats who shared his experience. He writes: “One guy made the statement that he felt safe to be home in Ghana. No one worried about being mugged here, no one gave a thought that a gang would attack us, or that we would be held at gunpoint and robbed” (2015, 31). This is not to suggest that life in Ghana is uniformly safer than in the US, but that the neighborhood where Abubakari lived in New York City was disproportionately subject to gang violence as a result of an ongoing legacy of race and class oppression.

Yet memoirs and oral histories of homelessness are not only marked by aspirations for global solidarity, and many narratives belie an underlying anti-immigrant sentiment. For example, Sibley writes:

Since the white-flight in the 50s and the “riots” in the 1960s, foreign business owners, mostly Chinese and Mid-Easterners, have enriched themselves off the backs of a disenfranchised black majority on the Near Westside. It is a classic example of Chicago’s wealthy, educated, market-driven dominant *whites* maintaining their historical stranglehold on both politics and the economy by using *new* immigrants to *chisel* away at black, economic empowerment. (2011, 140)

Sibley’s reference to “Chinese and Mid-Easterners” indicates an anti-immigrant politics that is not uncommon in the life narratives of homelessness. Yet this resentment must be placed into the context of the hierarchies produced by American racial oppression. Antrone, in his oral history, described growing up surrounded by violence. He dropped out of the seventh grade to take care of his younger siblings, and as a young adult he was shot and nearly killed. He said, “I grew up

around drugs, violence and you know what I'm saying, since I was a little boy. Since I was a little boy that's all I seen, that's how I survived, the streets or whatever." Antrone resented refugees who received housing, while homeless people were lucky to receive a bed in an overcrowded shelter. "They never seen a Salvation Army," he said. After the interviewer interrupted to say that refugees have seen far worse than the Salvation Army, Antrone responded, "Man, we seen worse. They probably didn't seen half what I seen" (Antrone 2010). While Antrone's statements reveals a lack of understanding of the experiences of refugees coming to the US, his words also reflect his own incredible precarity, having grown up in an impoverished, oppressed neighborhood in the US. When asked about his dreams in life, he said he wanted to "do the normal thing that U.S. citizens do I guess," indicating that he felt like a non-citizen himself.

Like Antrone, many life narrators attest to the experience of being excluded from citizenship by virtue of homelessness. Although she formally held citizenship, Nkechi Feaster said she dreamed of "moving to become a citizen" through attaining housing (Feaster 2013). In his memoir of being homeless in New York City during the 1980s, Maxfield Harding compares gaining entry into a shelter to immigrating to the US. He writes:

I imagined that we all had just arrived from Poland after an Atlantic merchant ship had brought us into the New York harbor. The hats and ill-fitting coats of the other men in the room reminded me of what the great halls of Ellis Island had held, as people went through the routines of entering the country. Not everyone was allowed to enter, I reminded myself. (Harding 2014)

Harding's metaphor suggests that to be homeless is to be an immigrant on the exclusionary path toward full citizenship. Indeed, the word "foreign" itself traces its origins to the meaning "outside home," while domestication is viewed as a process of taming and civilizing outsiders (Fraiman 2017).

As Pat McDonough argues in her memoir, state governments also place incredible barriers on the movement of homeless people within the US:

Frequently when I mentioned that I was here temporarily from Pennsylvania, people would make a snide remark such as: ... “*We ought to cut off in-migration. If you’re not from here (Minnesota), don’t come here—that would be the end of it. All these Street People came here from somewhere else just to bleed us dry.*” ... It seems as if a growing number of states are moving towards establishment of border-crossings and by piecemeal legislation creating such indirect domestic immigration laws, as if each were a separate nation. Soon the unlanded class may need social services visas to be able to cross state lines. (McDonough 1996, 201-202)

Homeless people in the US—as indicated by the terms “vagrant” and “vagabond”—have long been characterized as strangers from elsewhere, despite research showing that most homeless people are long-time residents of the regions where they live (Rahimian et al. 1992; Parker and Dykema 2013). Today, social service agencies often perpetuate the “magnet myth” that homeless people are outsiders who flock to locations where services are well-provided (Tsai et al. 2015). In a very literal sense, homeless people are treated as people from *elsewhere*. As Roy argues, “In the American context, as the paradigm of citizenship has come to be tied to property ownership, so the homeless have been seen as trespassers in the space of the nation-state” (2003, 476). Indeed, in early American history, citizenship was explicitly tied to property ownership (Foner 1998). As McDonough (1996, 93) writes, “You don’t count, if you are not landed gentry or at least have a leasehold interest. [But] it seems to me that the constitution declared citizenship as apart from land-ownership.”

Memoirs and oral histories of homelessness also highlight the ways in which the “American dream” is predicated on having a home. Sibley describes himself as being outside the American dream by virtue of being homeless. He writes: “I am a constant reminder of not adhering to the American dream: job, house, family, dog and a white picket fence. You stare at

me because I am the antithesis of that dream. I am a nightmare that reminds you of your own vulnerability” (2006, 13). Gray-Garcia Similarly writes:

[Our artwork] was a very serious representation of the trauma of otherness and outsidership experienced by poor, disenfranchised families who are never able to attain the so-called American Dream. Informed by media, propaganda, corporations and government bodies that everyone has/should have a home, a family, a car and new clothes, we're told that we have to consume ... and start another consuming unit with more cars, more homes, more clothes. We're saturated with this “reality” every day in every way, and the desire for all that poor families could not be, could not attain, was to us as hilarious, as ironic, as it was tragic. (2011, 161)

Similarly, in her oral history, Helen described being homeless as a child after her parents came to Los Angeles from Mexico. She said of her experience, “There is the American dream: if you work hard you will be prosperous, but that’s fictional. ... I always just assume that the reason we were in our situation is because my parents are immigrants” (Helen 2012). Helen connects her exclusion from the American dream to anti-immigrant racism, as well as her relationship to property. Indeed, American citizenship has long been a racialized phenomenon. As Foner (1998, 39) writes, the first legal act to define American nationality in the late 1700s explicitly limited it to “free white persons.” Further, long after slavery’s official end, hostile whites often framed Americans as noncitizens. As the life narratives suggest, the American dream is predicated not only on obtaining housing, but on conforming to a suburban, white, vision of home. In this way, the space of the nation—and national identity—is produced at the scale of the home (Fortier et al. 2003). Home, in turn, is not only a place of comfort, but also a mode of belonging that is often exclusionary and xenophobic (Martin and Mohanty 1997).

In many ways, property itself functions like a border on every doorstep of every home in America. Just as Wojnarowicz (1991) described property lines as “borders” in his critique of suburbia, Edwards (2012) said in his oral history, “[it’s] access to capital that makes more capital. That’s a formula, but for some reason there is always this bridge, this wall that says,

‘Hey, no no, you don’t qualify.’” Rayman-Rivera describes this wall as “the glass partition.” She writes about becoming homeless—again—and seeing herself reflected in other people’s windows: “This is my fate come full circle. . . . Peering at my silhouette in the glass partition, lit by fingerprints, the barrier between the housed and the homeless” (2010, 25). Murray (2010, 181) similarly writes about walking through a wealthy neighborhood:

For years, maybe for my whole life, it felt as though there was a brick wall down the middle of everything. Standing outside those buildings, I could almost picture it. On one side of the wall there was society, and on the other side there was me, us, the people in the place I come from. Separate. Standing [there] was like touching the wall, running my hands along its rough edges, questioning its authority.

Mack Evasion argues that private property “borders” are an illusion made real only by social habit. He writes that defying the rules of property exposes “small boundaries around possibility gone unnoticed for a lifetime.” Through squatting, “physical points of impasse [become] revealed as mere psychological boundaries. ‘The gate,’—an ominous, guarded thing—stripped of its might, laid bare” (2001, 80).

Yet the borders erected by property structures are not unique to contemporary US cities. Unlike Desmond’s (2016) analysis of the eviction epidemic as a fundamentally American problem, Soederberg (2018) argues that evictions are a global historical phenomenon rooted in capitalist processes. She writes that a political-economic approach to eviction enables an account of its structural and endemic nature, rather than only its specific, cultural manifestations. Yet land is often a poorly understood commodity, as it is not a thing, but a relation of power, according to which those who own land wield power over those who do not. This class relationship—and the attendant phenomenon of evictions—is central to contemporary global capitalism (Soederberg 2018). Indeed, Loretta Lees (2012, 163) describes the urban “mega-displacement” currently taking place in cities across the Global South, as city beautification

projects have destroyed countless homes and displaced millions of people. In Shanghai alone, nearly one million people were displaced from the city center through housing demolition in just over a decade (He 2007).⁴³

The long historical trajectory of homelessness is also fundamentally linked to capitalist displacement. For Marx (1967), capitalist industrialization was necessarily predicated on the process of primitive accumulation, in which peasants were violently stripped of their land. In England leading up to the industrial revolution, this was accompanied by harsh laws against vagabondage. As the feudal system crumbled and thousands were turned “*en masse* into beggars, robbers, vagabonds” (1867, 686), the state passed laws against begging and “idling” punishable by various degrees of public torture and forced labor. These conditions—the lack of land on which to reproduce oneself and state punishment of non-work—forced people into waged labor in the industrial centers. Within cities, waged workers and their families were again subject to loss of shelter and land (Marx 1967). Workers could only afford housing in districts that were so dilapidated and unsanitary that they were often rendered unprofitable to landlords and subject to demolition. As Frederic Engels (1935) argues, worker housing under capitalism often occupies land with high value potential, at the same time as poor-quality dwellings lower land values. The bourgeoisie solution to this problem is the constant relocation of worker housing, which creates an inevitable cycle of housing displacement.⁴⁴ In colonial America, those without housing were

⁴³ Yet, as Lees (2012) also highlights, gentrification studies have been overwhelmingly influenced by studies of the Global North, which has led to a reification of colonial understandings of global processes of urban displacement. In highlighting the globally shared condition of displacement, I do not seek to export American models of gentrification to the Global South, but rather to highlight a shared experience that crosses national boundaries.

⁴⁴ As Jeff Crump (2002) argues, the contemporary American solution to what is now termed “concentrated poverty” is not simply relocation, but fragmentation and dispersal, in the form of “scattered site” models of public housing. Crump argues that such policies fetishize spatial relations, as they reduce the complex problems of poverty and inequality to the simplified question of spatial concentration.

punished and controlled under the auspices of vagrancy laws that resembled the harsh punishments against vagabondage in England (Irwin 2013).

Engels further argues that housing is integral to the growth of capitalism, as it is necessary for the reproduction of laborers themselves. Cindi Katz (2001) similarly highlights the paradoxical phenomenon in which workers needing to reproduce themselves inadvertently reproduce capitalism. People need living spaces in order to care for themselves and their communities, yet in purchasing homes on the market, they contribute to the same system that threatens them with displacement. Just as capitalism must maintain a class of unemployed people to keep wages low and provide new sources of labor when necessary,⁴⁵ capitalist housing *must* displace people in order to function, which points to the existence of what might be termed a “capitalist mode of displacement.” This, in turn, is why the creation of homes outside of the political economy of housing is so important: in claiming spatial belonging and enabling privacy in abandoned buildings and public city spaces, the homeless are reproducing themselves without displacing others.

The capitalist mode of displacement is also deeply racialized. In the US, the violence of capitalist property mapped on to raw fact of slavery and genocide (Blaut 1976; Gilroy 1993). Ania Loomba describes colonialism most broadly as “the conquest and control of other people’s lands and goods” (2015, 20). The expropriation of land is particularly marked in the case of settler colonialism (Wolfe 1999; Churchill 2002). Indeed, the word colony itself stems from the Roman word for the settlement of land. Escobar (2003) writes that colonial displacement is

⁴⁵ This, for Marx (1967), is the industrial reserve army, a pool of unemployed laborers that swells and shrinks according to market fluctuations, but which is always necessary to provide an immediate influx of labor when needed. As Shabazz (2013) states in his oral history, “The capitalist system requires a certain level of unemployment to exist. ... We’re talking about living breathing human beings that have dreams, goals and aspirations, who want to work and want to do business, who want to raise families, but can’t or fail because the system says it needs a certain level of unemployment in order to be healthy.”

integral to modernity—not as a failure to be redressed, but a platform upon which it modernity is based:

From the displacement of indigenous peoples and Africans associated with the conquest and colonisation of the New World, to the waves of massive displacement of peasants, workers, and poor people worldwide in modernity’s later phases, the trends towards displacement have alternately augmented and been contained. ... In some ways, resettlement projects and refugee camps are just the tip of the iceberg of a much more complex phenomenon. (2003, 163)

Outside the US, the postcolonial condition of diaspora became a form of homelessness at the global scale, as those who were stripped from their land at the scale of the home and the nation shared the common experience of geographic displacement (Fortier et al. 2003; Le Espiritu 2003). As Yen Le Espiritu (2003) argues, colonialism often produces the condition of diaspora as a sort of global “homelessness.”

Homelessness, in this sense, is not a specific geographic condition, but a process that strips particular social groups of power over their relationship to space. In writing against displacement, Escobar (2003) argues for the importance of struggles for place. Using the same endearing suffix that describes ducklings and fledglings, Escobar (2003) writes that humans, more than anything else, are “*placelings*.” All human activity *takes place* in relationship to a particular spatial setting, and such ties to place are central to wellbeing. Thus, the struggle for home is also a struggle against the ongoing imperial processes of racialized displacement. Yet unlike many refugee and diasporic communities, those displaced from housing cannot collectively reclaim their former homes, as the very nature of American housing is fragmented, privatized, and isolated from wider social relations. This, in turn, indicates the need to imagine new kinds of homes.



Growing up, strangers occasionally dropped into my parents' lives needing a place to stay. June arrived from Trinidad and stayed with us for a while. She drove a big white van and handed out sandwiches and rides to homeless people. Her license plate said JESUS♥U in big red letters. Lucky had been kicked out by her stepfather. She lived with us for a few months before hopping trains across the country. When I was nine years old, a man named Frank slept in our garage. I did not know then that our home was on Tohono O'odham land, or that Frank's O'odham community experienced the historical trauma of displacement. I remember his rumpled bed on the cement floor and the bandana he wore each day. Once, someone broke a bottle over his head just outside our house. Each day for months on my walk to school I would stare into the black splotches of blood trailing down the sidewalk, wondering what it felt like to bleed that much. I remember hearing the news that Frank died of alcoholism and heat stroke. His body was found in front of a supermarket nearby. Years later, my father woke in the middle of the night to the sound of the doorbell. It was Frank's brother, who was also homeless. My father wrote a poem about their conversation:

He tells me
he has come from Texas
and asks, do you
remember my brother
Frank, he used to live
in the back
in your garage. ...
Where did they find
him, anyways?
At Safeway?
In the day?
That's a funny
place to die
he said.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Excerpted from the poem "The Doorbell" (Speer 1997).

Frank, and my father's poem, are my earliest memory of homelessness. Since excavating my relationship to housing, I have found my own part in the long history of displacement. As a child, while I complained about receiving a smaller scoop of ice cream, Frank was dying outside of a supermarket in the desert heat.

As I write this chapter two weeks after president Donald Trump was inaugurated, structural racism looms over the US like phantasmal scaffolding on the architecture of society, the summation of thousands of relationships—some marked by special favors, handshakes, winks, and smiles, and others marked by silences, closed doors, eviction notices, and arrests. In his campaign for presidency, Trump famously described the US as “a third-world country” (Strutner 2016). In contrast to calling for global solidarity, he sought to appeal to white Americans' fear of a loss in global status. His racist discourses more broadly bolstered white nationalism and US competitive isolationism. In this climate, notions of transnational allegiances become increasingly important in struggles against racism. Yet Trump's discourse must also be placed in the context of his rise to power through property. First and foremost, Trump is a real estate capitalist, and his administration has been described as America's first “real estate presidency” (Shafer 2016). One of the earliest bills proposed under his administration promised to dismantle groundbreaking Obama-era legislation that required cities to combat racial inequality in housing. Trump's economic advisor described the legislation as an “assault” designed to “prevent the rich from enjoying the suburbs” (McCaughey 2015). Her words speak to those whites in the US—and across the globe—who are turning to xenophobia in a desperate collective attempt to hang onto the power they derive from displacing other groups.

Memoirs and oral histories of homelessness reveal that people without property have been resisting real-estate capital for decades. Ron Casanova was a homeless activist in New

York City during the 1980s, and his work inspired a movement of squatters. In his memoir, he condemns gentrified neighborhoods as “Trumped-up, yuppified” (1996, 208) and calls on squatters to defeat the process of gentrification by collectively taking over housing in the city. He writes:

Instead of being puppets of Donald Trump and the real estate tycoons, and the landlords, we would be our own landlords. ... Every time the rich and powerful throw somebody out of a building and tear it down, the price of real estate goes up. To the tycoons and landlords, our success would mean there was property they couldn't charge outrageous prices for. (Casanova 1996, 186-187)

Casanova argues that by reclaiming space, homeless squatters can combat processes of displacement and disrupt those who profit from the violence of property. This reclamation of space—and the development of new social relations—is a subject I turn to in the following chapter.

Part II:
Imagining home

Chapter IV: “Trash houses and patchwork families”

Growing up in a dusty Southwest city, I used to play in the *arroyos* as a child. They are the dry riverbeds that crisscross the city, highways for coyotes and rabbits, stretches of desert that cannot be paved over. At the end of each summer, the clouds darkened like bruises and dumped buckets of warm water over the city. The dirt softened and the arroyos swelled and settled again. Once, playing hide and seek, I found a tunnel carved out of a creosote bush, just big enough to sleep in. I remember seeing the remnants of a person’s life there and imagining what it felt like to live outside. As a teenager ditching school, I used to crawl down the steep banks of the arroyo near my house and sit on a dilapidated orange couch underneath the shade of slender arching trees until the heat of the day began to wane. Other people hung out down there too, but I only ever saw the objects they left behind. Used condoms, old clothes, tiny plastic bottles of Jim Beam. The couch was part of a makeshift living room, next to a metal drainage pipe that went underneath the roads. The mouth of the pipe was almost two meters high, and once I walked into its yawning entrance so deep that all the light disappeared. It was the late 90s, a time of aggressive anti-homeless policing. While I was hiding to avoid school, other people who hung out there were probably avoiding the police.

More than a decade after I left Arizona, I once again stumbled upon a living room outside. Just off the Pacific Coast Highway in southern California, the shoulder tapers off and the cars barrel past so close you can touch them. On a whim one day, I descended the steep incline alongside the road. At the bottom, a sycamore stood in the center of a clearing and triangles of sky shone through the leaves, creating patches of light below. There was a small stream, and on the opposite bank, a red wagon parked next to a tent. The tent flap was open and there was a novel resting on a sleeping bag. Headed in the opposite direction, I groped through low hanging

branches until I came to a series of shelters made out of palm trees. They looked out at a dense wall of cattails stacked several feet high with boxes covered in blue tarp. A narrow opening led to a trail that zig-zagged into the distance like a ragged hallway, with a bicycle propped against one side. It seemed that the pathways stretched on into the marshes like veins. I realized in that moment that I was in a neighborhood entirely unlike anything I had ever known, in which the urban forest was also a series of private, intimate homes. With sudden urgency, I scrambled back up to the highway, and to my house with light switches, water pipes, and doors that locked.



The US has a long history of poor people's struggles for home. In the era leading up to the Great Depression, homeless migratory workers sought shelter in encampments known as "jungles," where residents often practiced mutual aid and planned collective actions to demand state services. In 1894, thousands of homeless workers hopped trains, rode rivers, and tramped across the country to petition Congress for unemployment relief. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was founded eleven years later. Thousands of homeless men joined the "One Big Union," and the song "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" became its unofficial anthem (Depastino 2003). As the "hobo" became a compelling political figure, homeless jungles were essential sites of resistance. Yet during World War I, they were increasingly eliminated as the state sought to bring tramping workers into more visible city spaces (Mitchell 2012).

Large-scale squatter communities arose again in the 1930s, as millions of people became unemployed during the Great Depression (Hopper 2003; Gowan 2010; Mitchell 2012). Villages comprised of tents and shacks took over large swathes of urban America, including riverbeds, parks, and canal banks. Such "Hooverilles"—named to call attention to President Herbert

Hoover's failure to provide social relief—exhibited the same radical potential as the jungles. Widespread social unrest, in turn, helped usher in an era of government housing assistance. While such assistance temporarily helped quell social unrest, squatter movements reemerged again in the 80s after welfare cuts contributed to a marked rise in homelessness. In the early 90s, homeless campers and squatters in cities across the US formed the National Union of the Homeless (NUH). At its largest, the Union included twenty local chapters and 15,000 members. Although typical unions assert power through collectively withholding labor, many life narrators characterize homelessness as a political refusal to work, akin to a permanent strike. As Mack Evasion (2011, 27) writes in his memoir, squatters are part of “the collective work-free movement.” Such anti-work politics—in its various manifestations—moves beyond a critique of exploitation to challenge the primacy of work itself (Weeks 2011). In many NUH chapters, dues-paying members helped financially support national meetings to plan strategy (McNeill and Hall 2011). In 1989, several hundred homeless people walked a 400-mile “Exodus March” to attend a housing protest in Washington, DC and secure a meeting with the head of HUD, Jack Kemp. In his memoir, Ron Casanova (1996) describes how the Exodus March was a grueling journey in which the assistance promised by aid organizations fell through. On the way, several pregnant women had miscarriages, one person was hit by a car, and countless others were forced to detox without medical care. When Kemp failed to follow through on his promise to provide low-income housing units for the homeless, NUH launched a coordinated takeover of hundreds of abandoned HUD buildings in cities across the US (McNeill and Hall 2011). Many of these actions developed a lasting legacy of local housing activism, as well as legally recognized collectives and self-managed housing projects for the homeless (Dobbz 2012).

Today, homeless encampments provide poor people a space to build informal shelters and communities.⁴⁷ In resistance to bulldozing and policing, homeless activists have continually struggled for their right to camp (Hunter et al. 2014; Mitchell 2012; NCH 2010).⁴⁸ Several camps have been officially tolerated, such that residents have been able to develop lasting neighborhood structures and ongoing patterns of shared domestic life (Herring 2014). Life narratives of homelessness reveal a continuity between encampments and the jungles of the early 20th century. Self-described hobos continue to meet each year at the National Hobo Convention in Iowa, a gathering that many claim has existed since the early 1900s (Gaynor 2014). Denver Moore, in his co-authored memoir, describes the collective ethic of the camps where he resided in the late 60s:

Now, believe it or not, there used to be what you might call a “code of honor,” or unity, in the hobo jungle. Down there, if a fella got hisself a can of Vienna Sausages and there was five other fellas around, then he gon’ give each one of em a sausage. ... ‘Cause who knows whether somebody else might have something he wants a piece of the very next day? (Hall and Moore 2006, 76)

As Eddy Joe Cotton (2002, 253) writes in his memoir of contemporary tramping, “The hobo has been living the same way for over a hundred years. He still ties up his bedroom with old belts and he still picks up odd jobs in odd towns. ... You can look in the eye of a young train rider and still see the frustration of a Wobbly.”

This history of self-made homes reveals another aspect of the American search for freedom. As I have argued over the course of this dissertation, the struggle for freedom must defy patriarchal domestic relations and the racialized patterns of displacement inherent to

⁴⁷ Informal housing today also takes the form of squatter communities residing in mobile homes, particularly along the US-Mexico border and in peri-urban areas across the US. In some communities, thousands of people live in mobile homes with inadequate access to infrastructural amenities (Ward 2014).

⁴⁸ My master’s research examined the politics of homeless encampments in Fresno, California (see Speer 2016; 2017; 2018). It was through this work that I became interested in the struggle for home.

capitalist property. Freedom and equality are fundamentally interrelated, as factors of domination and exploitation (Weeks 2011). Freedom is not simply the absence of oppression achieved through resistance and denial, but a positive and productive force in its own right. Weeks (2011) argues that freedom is not something that an individual possesses, but a creative and relational practice of shaping a new world, rather than only being shaped by the world as it exists. She writes, “freedom in this sense demands not the absence of power but its democratization” (2011, 23). As I argue in this chapter, homeless life narratives describe the project of building new forms of domestic sociality in which power, space, and labor are shared. Thus, the existence of squatter collectives reveals not only the patterns of displacement inherent to mainstream housing, but the possibility for creating another kind of place, and a more liberating practice of place-making.

Geographers have argued for the importance of looking beyond formal homes to those without doors, locks, walls, and roofs (Meth 2003; Brickell 2012b). People displaced from housing often construct a sense of home in a diverse range of spaces: libraries, shelters, public parks, taverns, and shanties (Veness 1992; 1993; 1994; Datta 2005; Hodgetts et. al. 2008; Herbert and Beckett 2010; Daya and Wilkins 2013). The public city center itself often functions as a home for displaced people, in that it is a site to return to, to meet friends, and from which to venture forth (Sheehan 2010). The genre of homeless life narratives reveals that home is both a social and physical space. In the first part of this chapter, I examine how life narrators seek to create collective communities of care, and in so doing, imagine radically different domestic social relations that challenge the isolating and patriarchal model of the nuclear family. I then turn to a discussion of the material practice of squatting as a way in which homeless narrators imagine non-propertied models of home and challenge the exploitations of rent. These visions

illuminate the home as a process which can be produced in multiple places and forms, in contrast to the narrow conception of American housing as commodified access to single-family dwellings.

Collective families and visions for a new home

Geographers have analyzed the home as a place of intimacy, meaning, agency, and creativity (Tuan 1971; Relph 1976; Cloke et al. 1991). Psychoanalysts often frame the home as a symbol of the self, and homemaking as a process of self-authorship (see Hayden 1984). Yet feminists have critiqued these understandings, arguing that the home is also a site of oppression and confinement (see also Rose 1993; Blunt 2005; Brickell 2012a; Dowling and Power 2013). Susan Fraiman (2017) seeks to reconcile both romanticized visions and feminist critiques, arguing that the positive aspects of domesticity—safety, privacy, intimacy, routine, stability, quiet, and coziness, for example—are important for both men and women, and that contempt for the home also stems from bias against spaces associated with women. As life narratives of homelessness reveal, the aspiration for home can challenge, rather than reinforce, patriarchal domesticity.

Socially, the home is unique in that it functions through coordination and solidarity. Mary Douglas (1991) argues that the opposite of the home, in this sense, is the hotel, in that shared living space is mediated by monetary arrangements rather than collective ideals. Yet the home can also reproduce exclusionary dynamics. Together, the chapters preceding this one revealed the problems of insular notions of community. The home community, when isolated from wider society, perpetuates the problems of intimate violence and escape. The national community, when tied to racialized property ownership, reinforces the violence of displacement. In this way,

imagining home is just as political as imagining the nation, but also risks perpetuating notions of authenticity, status, and patriarchal modes of social organization (Le Espiritu 2003). Thus, it is crucial to build home spaces—and more broadly, collective ties to place—that can be flexible and inclusive. Doreen Massey (1992) argues that in a world in which people are often rendered placeless—and the search for place is often associated with stasis, exclusion, and nostalgia—it is crucial to work towards a more dynamic and inclusive understanding of place.⁴⁹ Place does not have to be defined by exclusion of the “other,” but can be viewed as interconnected and interdependent.

Beyond collective ties to place, the home is also the primary site of social care. The work of nurturing that takes place in the home—most often performed by women—is complex, highly skilled, and socially necessary. Yet such labor, when governed by the familial structures of the patriarchal home, not only becomes alienated, but rendered invisible. Nancy Folbre (2001) argues that women’s care work is the foundation of all market activity, as people would not be able to sustain themselves without it. She calls for the state-funded provision of care work, for all people, so that the burden no longer rests on women alone, and so that care can be prioritized above the uncaring and competitive mechanisms of the market. Yet with the rise of neoliberal capitalism in the US, care work instead has become largely privatized and marginalized, such that waged care workers—who are disproportionately women of color—often occupy the lowest-paid positions in society (Bakker 2003; Bezanson 2006; Lawson 2007). In the contemporary US,

⁴⁹ Massey also responds to Harvey (1989), who argued that globalizing markets and increasing ease of movement under capitalism have resulted in the loss of place-based specificity, coupled by reactionary forms of place-based identity, nationalism, and enclosure. Massey (1992) writes that placelessness is not new, as colonialism and patriarchy have historically displaced countless people.

as the state does not subsidize most forms of social reproduction, people are forced to pay for care. In turn, those who cannot afford care are often deprived of their basic human needs.

Housing struggles themselves can be seen as a form of unpaid caring labor. In contrast to traditional strikes, household-based struggles—including tenants unions—are often led by women who demand the provision of services (Weinbaum and Bridges 1976).⁵⁰ Historically, women’s housing struggles have also pushed to collectivize caring labor itself. In the US in the early 20th century, feminists organized against the suburban home and created new kinds of homes with public kitchens, daycare centers, and communal backyards to enable shared childcare and domestic labor. Such visions were premised on the belief that full equality for women required the creation of new kinds of domestic spaces, and by extension, new kinds of cities (Hayden 1984). As Hayden writes, feminists challenged their seclusion in the home “by demanding a homelike city” (1984, 32). Alexandra Kollontai (1977) similarly pushed to redesign domestic and family life, and viewed family as a key site of ideological training. Instead of biological families—which she viewed as inherently conservative and insular—she envisioned state-funded collective playgrounds, gardens, nurseries, and maternity homes. Such collectivity, she argued, would foster solidarity and end women’s financial dependence on men.

Yet as Hayden (1984) writes, such efforts in the US were stymied by development and financial industries that sought to institutionalize the single-family suburban home. As such, obtaining appropriate housing has become harder and harder for a new demographic of contemporary Americans. By 1980, only a small portion of the American public followed the

⁵⁰ While many Marxists have tended to focus on struggles over production, Weinbaum and Bridges (1976) note that struggles over consumption—boycott movements and tenants’ unions, for example—bring the critique of capitalism into everyday life outside the factory. Consumption workers, mostly women, confront power along multiple lines—the lender, the landlord, the state, and the supermarket, as well as the factory.

traditional domestic model. In most families, women were wage-workers, and a growing number of women were single working mothers. Yet the mismatch between contemporary family forms and existing housing stock has remained unchallenged, forcing women into a position of traveling great distances back and forth between domestic work and paid work outside the home.

⁵¹ Existing housing options also stifle collectively in general. Communal life becomes difficult as very few neighborhoods can accommodate elders, extended families, and singles—each with distinct housing needs—in close proximity. Yet while feminist movements of the 70s critiqued gender identity, they largely failed to critique the spaces that reproduce gender (Hayden 1984). Instead, feminists often championed making the single-family home within the reach of all women. For many, the idea that housing might take another form seemed almost an impossible dream. Hayden argues that the US is locked into an intractable housing crisis that can only be solved by re-examining the space of the home to better accommodate a more collective and less secluded practice of care.

As life narratives of homelessness reveal, displacement from housing often results in the loss of the social care previously provided in the home. For those who are displaced, care often becomes the purview of bureaucratic institutions—shelters, group homes, or housing facilities—many of which strip people of their autonomy (Stark 1994; Dordick 1996; DeWard and Moe 2010). The humiliation of being dependent on shelters and social workers is a common theme throughout life narratives of homelessness. Bobby Burns (1998, 110) writes about one particular

⁵¹ Low-income single parents in particular face unique housing challenges, as landlords are reluctant to rent small apartments to large families (Hayden 1984). Michelle Kennedy (2005), who lived in her car with her three children, writes about the difficulty of finding an apartment: “[Landlords] keep telling me that their apartment is just too small or that they won’t ‘allow’ me to set my sights so low. It’s a real catch-22. I can afford a small apartment, but no one will let us live in it. But my car, for some reason, is just fine, even though it’s smaller!” (2005, 83). Rita H. (2009) similarly said in her oral history, “The housing market is more difficult to find places when you have children because there are a lot of restrictions. ... The one-bedroom apartment if that’s all you can afford and they won’t allow that many children, it makes it very difficult.”

aid worker, “He acts like I’m at his mercy, and I suppose I am.” As Robyn (2013) reflected in her oral history, “Home is what you make it, and home for me is something that resonates peace, that even under the worst of circumstances, people want to be there, not have to be there.” For her, home is bound up in the *desire* to be in a particular place, such that institutionally enforced housing loses its homelike quality. As Stringer argues, shelters often fail because they emerge not from spontaneous relations of care, but institutional obligation and dependence. He writes:

The failure of these shelters should teach volumes about the efficacy of compelling people—as opposed to inspiring them—to fulfill what is our natural impulse to take part in the social contract. It may sound corny to say that in order to make a difference we have to care, but it has been duly demonstrated that if we don’t care, nothing we try will quite work. (1998, 185)

Ron Casanova (1996) similarly argued that his fundamental need for care was denied by the institutional settings he grew up in. He writes, “I needed persistent and caring counseling. It wasn’t there, so I lived a real hard, nasty life. ... While I believe in self-reliance, I also recognize there are people out there who cannot help themselves without first being brought into the fold of a caring community” (1996, 256). Casanova writes that for him, care is motivated from a basic feeling for others: “I don’t think I help people out of any abstract political ideal, any religious tenet or even a spiritual feeling. To me it’s more basic: when I see somebody hungry, I feel pain, and therefore, the need to help that person” (1996, 260).

But for those displaced from their homes, shelters and supportive housing delimit what kinds of caring collectives are appropriate or allowable. While housing subsidies often accommodate only singles, couples, or nuclear families, Fran Klodawsky (2009) argues that many homeless women would prefer collective living arrangements. Mark described in his oral history how he was evicted from his subsidized apartment for allowing friends to stay there. He said, “I’m gonna get me an apartment. I’m gonna keep it this time! One thing: keep people out of

your house! You have people in your house and then you have too much traffic and that will help you lose your apartment. That's what happened to my last one" (Mark 2009). Archie (2010) similarly lost his apartment—which he described as a “cell”—because he had overnight guests. Indeed, a primary difficulty of transitioning from homelessness into housed society is the loss of lasting and cohesive street collectives (Ravenhill 2008). As Tina S. (2000, 58) writes about a friend who returned to the streets after having been hospitalized, she immediately began “running around and hugging everybody hollering ‘I’m home!’ ‘I’m home!’” Today, a growing number of homeless activists reject the word “homeless” and instead describe themselves as “houseless,” emphasizing that people without housing do create and maintain homes on the streets (Williams 2005). In this sense, to be placed in isolated apartments or shelters is also to be displaced from one’s family on the street.

Further, shelters and low-income housing often prevent people from being able to fulfill their familial obligations, particularly when family structures do not conform to hegemonic models of domesticity. Rita H. described in her oral history how she spent four hours each day taking care of her grandchildren. Yet when she lost her home, it became difficult for her to continue to raise them in the senior living facility where she was relocated. She said:

I’m used to extended families and it’s hard to picture being in a place where no children are allowed. I don’t want to be segregated into a set type of housing, that’s just not the way that I’ve been raised. ... My own mother, she raised 8 children, like during that time there was a more sense of community and she had a lot of people in her community that were very supportive of helping her, it was kind of a shared responsibility. ... We’re seniors taking care of our grandchildren, trying to help our extended family survive. We have to be seen in the larger context of a larger family, an extended family.... It’s difficult for seniors to get aid for their family unless you know they have guardianship of the children. (Rita H. 2009)

Rita H. highlighted how non-traditional family forms—in which grandparents or non-biological parents are equal caretakers—are denied aid from the state. Indeed, kinship caregivers in the

US—who are disproportionately women of color—face significant barriers to receiving public services (Schwartz 2002), while gay and lesbian families have historically been denied family status altogether (Black et al. 2007). Although a groundbreaking 2015 Supreme Court decision legalized same-sex marriage and adoption, there remains a deep-seated, state-sanctioned bias toward a narrow and conservative model of home and family.

Families who live together are often separated as soon as they lose their housing. As Alex said in his oral history, after his family was foreclosed on they could no longer stay together:

Matter of fact, there's no place for [my family]. They suggest I split up. I send my daughter and grandson to Interfaith, right? For 30 days. I go to Dorothy Day for 15 days. There is no place for my paraplegic son. "So this is what we suggest: we'll put him in a foster home and let a foster home deal with him." ... He doesn't want to do that. ... We're all pretty much a unit. (Alex, date unknown)

At the same time, homeless families are also separated if they refuse to accept shelter residence (Kozol 2006). As Casanova (1996, 129) writes in his memoir, unsheltered homeless parents "have to dodge the law so they can keep their kids with them." Kristen, who lived with her partner in an abandoned building, said in her oral history, "I have a three-year-old son that I WANT to get back and I can't get him back. Because they are going to have to look at the house and if there is no running water, no heat. Can't flush the toilets. You're not supposed to be there" (Brian and Kristen 2008). In this way, losing home, for many, is losing family.

To make matters more difficult, families with greater caring obligations are more likely to face the prospect of homelessness, as unpaid caring labor cuts into the time needed to earn a wage. McDonough argues that in mainstream American society, "the time schedule, the production schedule based on deadlines, all take priority over the needs of people" (1996, 256).⁵²

⁵² Indeed, McDonough reflects at length on the nature of time, writing that it depends on which "domestic culture" a person occupies (1996, 255). She writes, "People who are professionals or employees generally believe time is a limited commodity. They believe that if I give you some of this time, I have to give up some of that time. ... For

She writes that the loss of financial support for caregivers has resulted in the displacement of people who need greater care:

The necessity of needing two wage-earners to maintain a household financially and thus losing a fulltime homemaker and caregiver, has displaced from family life those with chronic physical or mental illness. There is no longer anyone at home to provide care. The phrase “There is no place like home” has a different meaning for them. There is no place. There is no place. (1996, 239)

Caretakers themselves are also at risk of displacement. McDonough (1996, 52-53) writes about a man at the shelter where she resided, who became homeless because he had to care for his wife:

Allen’s story was typical of many families I encountered.... The healthy one needed more help in order to stay afloat economically, emotionally, physically, and socially and to be able to continue to care for the disabled partner. Many men and women [at the shelter] had a totally disabled spouse.... In some cases providing needed loving care can also lead to homelessness.

Brian, who had been homeless for six years, said in his oral history, “I took care of my mom for twenty-four years in a wheelchair, seven days a week. Yep, did that for twenty-four years. After she passed wasn’t able to stay at the place where, you know, where she stayed. So I had to pack up and leave. And so I became homeless” (Brian 2008). In her oral history, Rita H. (2009) similarly said, “I had one child with autism and that’s placed an extra challenge on me. ... It was so time-consuming that there were a number of times where I almost lost my job.” Thus, homelessness can be seen as both a symptom—and proof—of the way in which American domesticity reinforces the social failure to care.

Yet in contrast to the individual and single-family models supported by social services, many people maintain collective families on the street. Such social networks are often not defined by biology but by shared material reality. Often in street encampments, community members take turns providing security and protection for each other (Rowe and Wolch 1990). In

street people, time was a liability. ... What you had to do was ‘wait’ and ‘stand in a line’ for each and every basic human need, or to ‘kill time’” (1996, 256-257).

Los Angeles, California, residents of “Love City” created a community that was vital to their survival. Jackson Underwood (1993, 156) documents how another community of homeless people in Los Angeles shared collective food. One resident he spoke with insisted no-one could “own” food, as it was always shared. The group collectively cared for each other to the degree that one man indicated a preference for living with his friends in the encampment over the isolation of a voucher hotel.

Again and again, life narratives of homelessness describe the support provided by street communities. As Rita C. said in her oral history about the encampment where she was lived:

Everybody puts their little money together or something like that you know for something to drink and for some toilet paper or whatever you know. And everybody stays together so that nobody will be assaulted or you know get hurt.... So we all watch each other. All watch each other and make sure that you know have some food to eat. (Rita C. 2009)

Daniel (2013) proposed a model of housing that would enable residents to work together at the same time as they shared collective living arrangements. He said:

I propose building a model community and organization that can be replicated, with a national network where we can share ideas to design and evolve similar communities.... It would be an economically self-reliant eco-village with two hundred fifty to three hundred portable dwellings that could rent for one hundred dollars each per month, with another twenty-five dollars a month for off-the-grid utility maintenance.

Daniel’s model not only involved collective living in small housing on shared land, but also combined a philosophy of shared labor and low-cost housing. Daniel, who cared for his autistic adult son, described the community that already existed among homeless people in his city:

“There are people who have communities, who take care of each other and watch out for each other. ... There are groups of homeless people that consider themselves family. They call each other brother and sister, even though they’re not related at all. There’s a community in this spot where we’re at. People look after each other.”

Many life narrators described the particular kinds of care they provided for others on the street, and the care they received. Cadillac Man writes in painful detail about how he and his friends cared for a friend who was dying, which included washing him when he could no longer control his bowels. He writes, “Now that he’s too weak to go canning, we feed him as much as possible, keep him well supplied with juice and smokes. . . . The love for my friends keeps me warm. And I know they love me too” (2009, 37). In describing a group of adult men taking care of each other, Cadillac Man reveals a model of care that is not rooted in biology or gender, but ability and need. His vision of collective care challenges mainstream domestic norms that leave women overburdened with caring obligations and financially dependent on men. In part because of his family on the street, Cadillac Man rejected the isolation of subsidized housing. He writes, “I could have got with the public housing, but some of the areas where they want to put me I don’t want to go. . . . This is what I want right here. I want to be with my family. I want to be around the people I love, not someplace else that I would feel uncomfortable” (2009, 250).

Many homeless life narrators, as part of their descriptions of care, advocated a politics of sharing. As Casa (2009) said in her oral history, “I hope people just try and help each other and do good for one person every day without expecting anything in return.” LeMieux, a formerly wealthy publisher, found himself living in his car and panhandling to survive after he experienced a psychiatric breakdown and could no longer work. He writes that when he became homeless, he had to adapt to a new ethic of sharing: “Time after time, I saw the poor give to the poor. If you had twenty and someone asked you for ten, you *gave* it to them. It was difficult, but I learned how to practice this kind of giving” (2009, 401). He describes how one friend, in particular, introduced him to a way of being that was entirely alien to his worldview:

[He] taught me that you have to give half of what you have to help a fellow human being—and sometimes more. . . . And he taught me that this is the ultimate gift—not only

to the receiver, but also to the one who gives. Responding to a need is a leap of faith. And when you take that leap ... it makes you trust that—somehow, somewhere, sometime—the things you need will come to you. (LeMieux 2009, 423)

Indeed, the experience of extreme material deprivation makes sharing necessary for survival, such that personal gain becomes less important than fostering collective bonds. Daniel (2013), in his oral history, extended this vision of sharing to a larger hope for social egalitarianism. He said, “I don’t want to be paid any more than anybody else, in the present or future, because I want to set the example that everybody is necessary. ... You’ve earned the right, as a human being. ... Wealth should be distributed.”

Many life narrators further critiqued the alienation of American society and called for a greater cultural valuation of collectivity. As Jennifer Hochschild (1996) argues, perhaps the greatest flaw of the American dream is its radical individualism, as it highlights individual behaviors rather than collective structures in explaining—and addressing—social inequality. Eliana Chaya, who lived in a shelter in San Antonio, reflects at length on the failures of American collectivity. She argues that the historic loss of the extended family was part of the process of “Americanization.” She writes, “It used to be that most people had bigger families. ... Being interdependent with one another was safer and there was more stability. It was a good thing for children and elders in the family who needed care. ... [America] became a ‘civilization’ with upwardly mobile people, living a ‘rat-race’” (2014, c. 46). Chaya rejects the American pursuit of independence through material gain, writing, “The common rules of modern American society tell us co-dependency, as it’s now termed in its expanded and somewhat distorted definition, is a wrong thing” (2014, c. 17). She writes that many of the women she lived with in the shelter “fervently believed in the basic elements of socialism,” and continues, “I would rather live in a country where everyone lives in a home” (Chaya 2014, c. 51). In contrast to many

socialist feminists, Chaya resists the idea of institutional care. She writes, “It’s true that it takes a village to raise a child. However, that village is supposed to be our own extended family, our collective, our tribe, and not so much strangers. Daycare workers, babysitters, teachers, government officials, shrinks and school counselors have relevant purpose, but they are not the ones who are supposed to teach the most important living skills and morals” (2014, c. 52). Instead, Chaya argues for the development of caring collectives from the bottom up, by identifying and fostering communities that coalesce around mutual trust, rather than depersonalized monetary exchange.

Gray-Garcia (2006) similarly reflects on the American failure to support what she calls “togetherness.” She describes her memoir as “a condemnation of a system that values independence and separation—children from elders, mothers from children, parents from school systems—rather than interdependence, community, support and care giving” (2006, xv). She writes that in the US, “aloneness, ‘independence,’ is valued as a virtue, a strength, a form of normalcy, a barometer for sanity” (2006, 197). Indeed, the notion of freedom as independence through property ownership is deeply entrenched in American history, accompanied by a profound denigration of dependence and a celebration of personal property as means to achieving autonomy (Foner 1998). In particular, reliance on others for care is often seen as acceptable only for children (Fraser and Gordon 1994). Mack Evasion (2001, 1) uses sarcasm to critique this idea, writing, “Money means freedom? It was an interesting theory.” In her memoir, Brown (2006) argues that adults sometimes need more care than children: “There’s an old saying: ‘it takes a village to raise a child.’ That is so true. Unfortunately, by the time I’d decided to try and turn my life around, I was no longer a child. I was an adult. It takes a community to change an adult” (Brown 2006, 459).

While Chaya and Gray-Garcia seem to romanticize a lost past of extended family structures, they also advocate for a model of home not rooted in biology. Chaya writes, “People make the home. ... We should form new stronger relationships, making our own pseudo families with the friends we can trust” (2014, c. 41). She continues:

This is where our pseudo families come into being so highly valuable. ... It is healthier, more economical and more socially functional for a group of people to live together, sharing responsibilities and living space than for people to live alone. ... In a big house there is also the possibility of more than one kitchen. ... A person’s state of mind can be greatly improved if they can cohabit with a group of trustworthy people that also value this kind of living situation. (2014, c. 46).

Liz Murray (2010) similarly describes the importance of pseudo families in her memoir. She writes, “There are countless ways in which people appeared out of nowhere and supported me. When it first started happening, I didn't trust it. I didn't believe that anyone who wasn't my family or my close tribe of friends would be willing to help.... I stood there and took them in, my patchwork family, and I loved each of them.” In describing her “patchwork family,” Murray acknowledges the way in which alternative family forms can coalesce around diverse and spontaneous collectives, rather than the typically homogenous biological family.

Chaya imagines an inclusive collectivity that is not without its frictions and disagreements, but in which solidarity is a social priority. She writes, “Not everybody had to be the same. People don't need to agree all of the time” (2014, c. 26). She argues that addressing disagreement, in turn, is related to a politics of care:

We need this level of fearsome caring energy, now. In the future, I hope people here in this country will find a way to regain the formal or informal structure and protectiveness of strong family collectives, whether it is with blood relatives or peers. Whether we are related by birth, belief systems or loving, caring relationships, the support, stability and unity is what we all need so much more than what a government can provide. We need people who we can feel that when we are among them, we are at home. (2014, c. 46)

In advocating for “fearsome caring” as something not provided by the state, Chaya highlights her own position as someone who had fallen through the cracks of American social welfare. She further argues that women’s empowerment is the ultimate means to achieving cultures of care: “In families, women are predominantly the caregivers and nurturers.... The mothers and the matriarchs of families are the ones responsible for the formations of education, morals, values, family relationships and many other things” (2014, c. 26). She continues, “To cut down on this rampant growth of homelessness (and many other problems), families need to teach, enforce and show love, honor and respect. ... We [women] need to regain strength, taking back our womanly backbone, rebuilding our families and community collectives” (2014, c. 52). In contrast to redistributing caring labor equally between men and women, Chaya argues instead that caring laborers—who are overwhelmingly women—need to be empowered and supported first.

To enable care, Chaya also stresses the importance of alternative housing structures, for example, a house with “more than one kitchen.” She continues:

One day, it is my hope to own a house big enough to have rooms and facilities available for some elderly senior women who still want to be reasonably independent, don’t want to live alone and don’t want to live in a high rise or any kind of institutional living. ... I don’t want to have lived so long and be pushed up into a cubbyhole cookie-cutter apartment up in the sky. (2014, c. 46)

In writing about single women living collectively, Chaya taps into a long tradition of single women—particularly women of color—bucking mainstream domesticity by choosing to live together (Williams 2017). In another passage, she continues, “Instead of this trend of so many single living units and compartmental living, lonely individuals, people feeling helpless, more people being there for each other is essential for humanity to continue” (2014, c. 52).

Beyond the US, life narratives connect the alienation of American life to the pressures of capitalism. Gray-Garcia writes:

Capitalism does not support eldership, since people aren't as free to be good capitalists when they're worried about being good daughters and good sons. They aren't as likely to go out and rent their own apartments to live separately from their families; they aren't buying their own furniture, their own cars, their own food. In effect, the intact, multi-generational group sharing of resources, goods and land just isn't good for business. (2006, 200-201)

In another passage, Gray-Garcia continues, “For very low income, at-risk families like ours, barely making it in a capitalist society, we felt that intentionally adopting these non-capitalist principles of interdependence, connectivity and cohabitation was a key element of our survival” (2006, 227). She critiques the notion that family is “made up of individuals whose personal advancement and fulfillment are considered paramount” as well as the macroeconomic structures that fail to “provide childcare, housing, health care or a good public education.” Instead, she argues that her life story reveals “that first and foremost all people deserve whatever help they need” (2006, xvi-xix). Her writing challenges the popular ideology that dependence—particularly the dependence resulting from poverty—is a negative moral and psychological trait. She promotes instead a model of care in which everyone is deeply interdependent and people are not expected to lower themselves to their benefactors.

Many women argued that the home is not only a physical shelter, but a community of caring relationships. Rita H. said:

That permanent home is real important to me because not only is it a physical place, but it's also a spiritual place, a place where you can feel connected with your family. 'Cause they know where they can come, they're always welcome, they can return there. So it's always a place where they can come together and be the family that we always wanted to be. (Rita H. 2009)

For many, an ideal homelike atmosphere includes the experience of sharing space with others and enjoying the comfort of bodily contact (Fraiman 2017). The home is both a social unit and a space to which people can return and congregate. As Chaya writes, “People disconnected from family members trust nursing homes and such to take care of the people who should be most

honored in the family.... In the most basic definition, these elders are also without homes” (2014, c. 46). In writing that people in nursing homes are “without homes,” Chaya argues that to be without social relations of care is a kind of homelessness in and of itself. As Marie James (1998) writes in her coauthored memoir, no amount of money could make up for the fact of having lost her family. James grew up in rural Nebraska, in poverty so extreme that her family went without food and was forced to give her to state custody. After a lifetime of unimaginable violence, hardship, and homelessness, James was living alone in a residential hotel when she received an unexpected amount of money from a pension. She writes, “Plenty of money was something I wanted all my life and now that I had it, it didn’t mean anything to me. I had no one to share it with. All my riches did for me was to remind me that not one of those fifty-dollar bills could put its arms around me and say, ‘Marie, I love you’” (1998, 198).

It is important to acknowledge that the kinds of sociality developed out of displacement are not necessarily less violent than hegemonic norms. The raw fact of material need—and the shared experience of seeking out a place to sleep—are often the impetus to create fast and deep bonds. Yet such relationships can reproduce patriarchal hierarchies (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). As Willett (2015) writes, “In this subculture, when kids meet someone they like, they instantaneously join lives in an intimate way. We squat together, fly together, eat together, sleep together, survive together. ... [It’s] this raw union that mimics real life marriage.” Willett writes that rape was “a real and present threat” of life on the road, and sarcastically refers to her own experiences of rape as “aggressive cuddling” and “the struggle cuddle.” Until this passage, Willett’s memoir is a romanticized account of what she describes as the “dirty kid” lifestyle, yet after recounting her experience of rape she switches to another register of devastating and opaque poetry, as though in a real-time, metaphoric expression of her traumatic memories. While

patchwork families help people cope with the experience of material deprivation, homeless people also remain alienated from society at large. An overarching theme of the collection of life narratives is the great loneliness that comes with being displaced from housed society. As Stringer (1998, 182) writes, “isolation, alienation, and disenfranchisement ... take the greatest toll on people living on the streets.” Yet despite these hardships, life narratives of homelessness reflect longing for another a community not grounded in hierarchy or exclusion, and present visions for a new kind of home.

Finally, while collective care is crucial for survival, privacy is also centrally important for those displaced from housing (Sparks 2010). As Daniel (2013) stated in his oral history about being homeless: “You don’t have privacy when you sleep, when you eat, when you go to the bathroom; you don’t have privacy for ... intimacy with someone.” Jane Jacobs (1961) argues that enabling greater privacy actually enriches—rather than diminishes—the possibility of public life, as people are not forced to retreat into isolation to reclaim a sense of personal space. As Hayden (1984) writes, a primary failure of American housing is its inability to accommodate a balance between privacy and community. Life narratives of homelessness reveal that the encampment, with multiple dwelling spaces on shared land, can represent a model of home in which private space is firmly embedded in public social relations.

Yet the need for privacy also presents the possibility of conflict. Eighner (2013, 267) writes about finding privacy in an abandoned building: “This privacy was not the sort of privacy one misses while in a dormitory or a barracks, but was a kind of privacy that is more to do with having a right to be somewhere. And, I will have to admit, it had something to do with my having some ability to exclude others.” For Eighner, privacy did not necessitate ownership or property, but the ability to be free from interference and surveillance from others. The desire to

exclude reveals the fundamentally contentious nature of claims to space. As McDonough writes: “I was constantly amazed at the turf wars among those who had nothing. I think when a Street Person gets a little smidgen of opportunity to establish a physical space boundary, it can take on an inflated value” (1996, 24). Stringer similarly reflects, “Confrontation is the currency of the pavement. If you want your space, you have to declare it in no uncertain terms” (1998, 83). In this way, homelessness lays bare the fundamental violence of property, a violence that is typically obscured by the rational exchange of capitalism (see Blomley 2003). While Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1876) argues that theft is the origin of all property, the concept of theft suggests a pre-existing property right. Thus, instead of theft, perhaps the origin of property lies in the forcible and bodily act of displacement. As Waldron (1991, 297) writes, “if a person is in a place where he is not allowed to be, not only may he be physically removed, but there is a social rule to the effect that his removal may be facilitated and aided by the forces of the state.” This, in turn, implicates the need to imagine models of privacy that do not reproduce the displacement of others. As I argue in the section below, the practice of squatting represents one such possibility.

Claiming space through squatting

Private property being abolished, all the laws and all the legal ‘crimes’ which it had manufactured of course [will come] to an end.

—William Morris (2002), *News from nowhere*

In many ways, the home can be seen as the opposite of travel.⁵³ It is the destination at the end of the journey and the resting point beforehand—a site of departure and return. Yi-Fu Tuan (1971) argues that people do not “return” to the factory, the office, the market, or other city

⁵³ This, of course, functions differently in the case of nomadic cultures for whom home is defined by movement, and arguably, for self-described hobo communities who distinguish themselves from the homeless by virtue of their migratory, train-hopping lifestyle (Gaynor 2014).

spaces, because they travel there for specific needs. In contrast, he writes, the home is “that special place to which one withdraws and from which one ventures forth” (1971, 189). Yet for the homeless who are often forced to move from one tenuous shelter to another—in what Cadillac Man (2009, 243) describes as a “nomadic” existence—there are only spaces of departure. In this sense, displacement can be seen as a condition of departure without return. For the displaced, the sense of home must be created through other means. Often the body itself becomes home. The stereotype of the “bag lady” reflects a woman who carries her home with her as a collection of objects and possessions (Wardhaugh 1999). As Kevin (2013) said in his oral history, “This backpack is my house!” But the body itself is a vulnerable and fragile container for human life, and without housing, can be exposed to snow, rain, or the violence of strangers. Thus, physical shelter is necessary for protection and privacy (Daya and Wilkins 2013). For many homeless people, the struggle for shelter involves harnessing control over some geographic area. In this sense, home is appropriated territory, a space that is taken, occupied, and developed. In contrast to market housing, the appropriated home does not have to be purchased or commodified (Dovey 1985). The process of appropriating homes—through camping and squatting in abandoned buildings—is a subject that reemerges again and again in life narratives of homelessness. Yet as April Veness (1992) argues, the American dream of suburban housing has condemned many who occupy alternative domesticities to the category of homelessness, thus subjecting them to government management and control. In the US, the criminalization of self-help housing has only further marginalized those who are informally housed (Ward 2014). Life narratives of homelessness reveal how people struggle for their right to squat despite the threat of eviction and incarceration.

Most often, it is the commodification of housing that forces people to squat to survive. More than any single expense, rental and mortgage payments impose the pressure to maintain a wage. As Wojnarowicz writes, he was compelled to perform “an activity that I cared nothing about but one that I would repeat endlessly until the day my teeth fell out, all in order to be able to eat and sleep inside a tiny wood and plaster structure [called] home” (1991, 170). This statement captures the anguish of working low-wage, dead-end, exhausting jobs simply to have access to a cramped apartment. As Butterfly (2013) said in her oral history, “We don’t want to be stuck down with all y’all’s problems. There’s enough of you guys worried about your problems. Your guys’ world is tight and tense.” Andrew (2013) similarly described the stress of working to maintain rent: “When you sleep outdoors you hear the freeway coming back to life at 4:30 am, you can hear the rat race starting. They’re scrambling to get over that hill and make their money. I respect them for their tenacity, but I don’t really want to endorse everything they go through to keep the status quo going. I don’t want to be any part of that mechanism, getting the rubber and insurance.”

Many life narrators stress the impossibility of maintaining housing on a low income. As Cadillac Man (2009, 144) writes, “There are some organizations that want to change my life. They say, well, we’ll get you a job. Okay, you’ll get me a job—minimum wage, right? How am I going to survive on that? If I get a job tomorrow paying six-fifty an hour, where am I going to live with the rents the way they are? Nowhere.” Bernice (2010) similarly said in her oral history, “If I had to pay my own rent, there’s no way I could survive. ... We just can’t get [those] kind of jobs.” Crystal described how she had recently obtained housing, but only had \$64 left over each month after paying the rent. She said, “I’ve had my lights shut off on me but as long as I have a roof over my head I mean it works.... I just basically go month by month. ... It’s like jumping

from lily pad to lily pad and figuring out which one is gonna be the one that's actually going to tumble you in" (Crystal 2010). Even after gaining housing, the threat of "tumbling in" to homelessness constantly presents itself. Casanova highlights how squatters and low-income share the common threat of eviction. He writes, "As far as I was concerned, even a person who was paying rent was a squatter. Anytime the rent goes up and you can't afford it, you are going to get kicked out" (1996, 194). As Archie (2010) said in his oral history, "housing is too strict. If I had a job and say that I lost my job, well you ain't gonna let me stay there for free" (Archie 2010). He wanted to live in a society that has "jobs for everybody, housing for everybody. No one should be struggling, you know" (Archie 2010).

These statements reflect the fundamental reality that the rented home, as Marx (1980, 100) argued, is "a dwelling which remains an alien power" over the poor—it remains "the house of a stranger who always watches him and throws him out if he does not pay his rent." Further, although the American dream frames homeownership as the pinnacle of stability, mortgaging itself is also insecure, as the 2008 housing crisis so profoundly revealed. As Troy (date unknown) said about his dreams for the future: "Well, it wouldn't be owning a house or a brand-new car. ... That would be a complete nightmare. Because, think about it, you spend most of your adult life paying the bank. You virtually are renting the place. But if something screws up, it's your ass, it's not theirs. So. That's the reason why I don't want a house." For Troy, mortgaging is akin to "virtually renting" from a bank.

Beyond imposing waged labor and threatening displacement, capitalist housing often forces low-income people to endure uninhabitable and cramped housing conditions (Engels 1935). Constantly subject to eviction, Marx argued that the urban proletariat turn to "improvised dwellings" and extreme overcrowding (1967, 619). Life narratives of homelessness are a

testament not only to the degrading forms of labor many people tolerate in order to keep their housing, but the horrible conditions they are exposed to inside the home. Indeed, many people described poor quality housing as one of the driving forces behind their homelessness. As Lillie (2008) said in her oral history:

I had landlords that would not keep upkeep of their buildings.... It was so nasty and weren't livable.... The plumbing was so bad—[toilet water] would fall back out on the floor. ... The wire, the lights would come on without flipping the switch. Is this a ghost or are the lights bad or something? ... Then the next landlord—oh boy, his house was really bad—I just walked away from them houses and became homeless because I could not live in them.

Barry (2010), in his oral history, similarly attributed his homelessness to poor housing. He said, “it was just conditions wasn't up to date, up to standards, like roaches. They didn't really want to do nothing and I complained about it. Evictions came into play.” As Padilla Peralta (2015, 59-60) writes, “Every couple of weeks or so, the electricity in our building would go out in the evenings and I'd have to do my homework by candlelight. Or the tap would spew brown water, or the stove would refuse to turn on.” Such narratives reveal that slum conditions—a lack of functioning infrastructure, for example—are not that dissimilar from the conditions of those who squat in abandoned buildings, with tenuous access to utilities. Life narratives reveal that even those who rent sometimes endure housing so inadequate that it borders on homelessness.

As housing constitutes the single greatest expense in most people's lives, being homeless frees up a huge portion of personal income. The theme of homelessness as a release from rental obligations is found again and again in life narratives of homelessness. As Stringer writes in his memoir, his eviction initially provoked a feeling of freedom: “*I have just been released, I realize, from all earthly claims upon me. There is nothing, anymore, that I am obliged to do. ... Off to the freedom of the streets!*” (1998, 30-31). Cadillac Man (2009, 144) similarly writes, addressing the housed reader, “There in your world, you've got a lot of restrictions. You need a job to stay

inside.... Not that I'm trying to glamorize homelessness, because it does have its bad points, but to me the beauty is there was no pressures." Willett (2015), addressing the reader in second person, similarly writes that eviction can free someone not only from rent, but from domestic labor: "Consider how many problems you will no longer have, such as paying bills, living with difficult people, and working a full-time, nine-to-five job, plus commute. No more housework or dishes."

Yet people unable to pay the rent are confronted with a new set of problems entirely, the most pressing of which is the desperate need for shelter. Life narratives of homelessness reveal the grueling effort involved in finding a safe place to sleep. Murray (2010) writes in her memoir that surviving homelessness was like a marathon. The work of survival was utterly exhausting and demanded an incredible amount of energy and persistence. Even people living in shelters have to seek out places to be during the day. McDonough (1996, 262) writes about her daily search for place, "After a while, on the street, I began to need defenses against feeling homeless and placeless. I purposefully began a few rituals, to provide a semblance of routine and security. Since street people have no place like home, I decided I need to create a sense of place for myself." She sought out a sunny corner in the library and in the back pew of a church and incorporated these visits into her daily routine. As Mary Douglas (1991) argues, the practice of creating spatial-temporal cycles of everyday life is part of the process of making a home.

Many life narrators framed the city itself as their home. Stringer (1998, 176-177) describes New York's subway system as collectively owned—"Every New Yorker is a shareholder.... And seeing it from that perspective, I sometimes feel the kind of pride that, say, a co-op apartment owners feels in having a piece of a major building." For Stringer, the subway and its network of stations functioned as a place to seek shelter. He writes, "what more

appropriate use of a public space than to shelter those who had become, in essence, public people?” (1998, 51). Yet he describes how wealthy residents’ flight to the suburbs reduced funding for such collective urban resources:

Naturally, the flight of upper-middle-class New Yorkers will erode the city’s tax base and all that. But their stake in our public and social institutions has been steadfastly diminishing anyway. More and more, they send their kids to private schools, hire their own security forces, go to private-sector hospitals.... They don’t really need our institutions. But the rest of us do. ... *Our* schools. *Our* hospitals. *Our* subways. (1998, 178)

In a chapter called “the city is now your apartment,” Rahima Wachuku (2014) describes city spaces as various “rooms” of her apartment. She writes that the homeless shelter is her bedroom, her storage facility is her closet—“sometimes my pantry”—and the library is her office. The claim to city spaces, in turn, also implicates a claim to the nation. Padilla Peralta (2015), who was doubly displaced by being homeless and undocumented, argues that anyone who resides in a city or nation has a fundamental right to belong there. He writes:

Every time I walk around New York, I think of how it is mine not only because I was raised there but also because my traces are all over its landscape. ... The streets, *my* streets: I’ve walked practically every street in Manhattan. ... And from New York, I expand to America and to the entire scope of my wanderings across it.... I am embedded, productively, in an American Web of relations.... Immigrant brothers and sisters: ... Together we must fight to ensure that America remains not the dream of the chauvinistically minded few but the fulfillment of hopes for many. (2015, 298-299)

Padilla Peralta’s claim to both the city and the nation highlights the way in which property and citizenship both are ultimately about the right to belong in the place where one resides.

Beyond the city at large, public parks, in particular, are important sites for making appropriated homes. Janet (2013), after she was laid off from her job at a homeless resource center, alternately camped in parks or slept in her van. At 59, she was unable to work fulltime because of severe anxiety attacks. She said in her oral history:

One need isn't going to fit all. ... Personally, I want the no camping and no parking laws to change, so I can do what I'm doing and not worry that I'll get a ticket or arrested or roughed up by somebody. Maybe a parking lot for vehicles and mix it up with tents. Something like Dignity Village up in Portland.

Portland's Dignity Village is often cited as an example of a successful officially sanctioned homeless settlement. The community began with donated tents under a bridge. In the beginning, like most tent cities, it was pushed from place to place. Yet by 2002 it had evolved into a community of cottages with a town hall, non-profit status, and a website (Gragg 2002). In saying that "one need isn't going to fit all," Janet argued that the solution must involve multiple kinds of housing, including camper communities. She further argued that the encampment model enables both community and privacy in a way that apartments do not:

I've accepted this lifestyle, but it seems like our society cannot accept this. ... If the general public could just lower their standards and realize that we all don't want apartments. I would really like to see a camp with cars and tents and yurts and storage sheds and whatever we could afford or get donated. It wouldn't be just a place to sleep. You could stay there all day. ... To have a ten-by-ten tent and maybe a little walkway for a few plants would be heaven for a lot of people. ... We could grow our own food. I've raised chickens to get eggs. I'd like to see camps all over town from here to Watsonville, with 50 to 100 people per camp.... To be with my peers in a community within this community would solve a whole lot of problems. ... Safety, warmth, and privacy are really nice.

Janet challenges the ways in which informal housing is denigrated as substandard. As Goff (2016) argues, middle and upper-income bohemians in the US have historically been praised for building self-made homes, in contrast to widely held bias against poor people's self-made housing.

Mary lived in a community that existed under the auspices of the Homeless Garden Project, a non-profit agricultural job training program for homeless residents in Santa Cruz. The program provided informal housing to employees and sought to represent a model for other cities. Such non-profit sponsored collectives for the homeless have grown in cities across the US

in recent years, and often fall under the rubric of the “tiny house movement” (Heben 2014), a housing trend that also includes middle-class communities who seek to lower their ecological footprint or reduce their living costs by miniaturizing the suburban housing model (Anson 2014).

Mary (2013) said in her oral history interview:

Now I am at a really cool place. I live in a yurt on this four-acre property with a bunch of other really cool people. There’s a family that lives in a dome, and a family that lives in a cabin, and then a house that we’re working on; it needs a lot of work. The kitchen is really cool; I do a lot of cooking. ... I think there would be less homeless people if there was more community. I think that if we helped each other out it wouldn’t be like this.

Mary’s living situation—in a yurt on a farm with others who worked together on the land—was a far cry from the city’s vision of segregated shelters or public housing in isolated apartment units. In this way, the harsh deprivation of homelessness inspired diverse efforts to find alternative forms of housing, rather than defaulting to mainstream models. As Mary (2013) said about the city’s efforts to remove homeless camps, “They don’t realize, ‘This is someone’s house that I’m trashing.’”

Many narrators stressed the importance of living outside and rejected traditional housing as a hermetically sealed interior separated from the natural world. As Butterfly (2013) said of her home in an encampment:

I would still take my chances on nature any day before I get in that other world. ... This is our house. Over here is our bedroom. ... This is our kitchen. ... I’ve got just as much as people in houses. I just push my house around. ... Got me all the ducks and the wind and the breeze. And my front yard and backyard is a million dollar view and it’s free. I get to see the moon and watch the stars go by at night. ... If we could just get a piece of land and do a tent city. It’s working in other places. ... We need to start investing in another something.

Butterfly characterized life outside as enabling her to have a “million dollar view” for free. As she said about camping, “It’s not called ‘homelessness. It’s called ‘pioneering’” (Butterfly 2013). Willett (2015) similarly describes the possibility of creating non-commodified homes in parks

and wilderness spaces: “Home is in the forest or any gathering of trees. Mother Nature provides a space for anyone and everyone to reside, and she does not discriminate nor charge any hidden fees. There is no fine print. All are welcome.” Eighner (2013) also survived by living in an urban forest. He had a rainwater catchment system, solar-powered radio, shelving, bedding, and an oil-burning stove and lamps, all objects he had retrieved from dumpsters. He writes, “Why shouldn’t I try to make us as comfortable as I could, wherever I could?” (2013, 263). Yet many life narrators also highlighted the policing of public parks as an insurmountable obstacle to homemaking. As Cadillac Man writes about a local park, “this used to be a public space, so why is there a sign posted with the hours from dawn to dusk?” (2009, 227).⁵⁴

In addition to parks, abandoned buildings are another crucial site for people to develop appropriated homes. Yet empty buildings, like parks, are also subject to intense policing. Eva (2009) described how she lived in abandoned houses, often outfitted with furniture and bedding. But her situation was always tenuous. She said, “if I would have got caught ... I would have been incarcerated for sleeping in abandoned houses. So it’s been a struggle.” Homeless life narrators also critiqued the criminalization of squatting as a “First World” phenomenon. As Jennifer (2017) stated in her oral history, “Oddly enough in a First World country you can’t build yourself a home. In a Third World country, you can build a shanty and no-one will bother you. Here they come and tell you to take it down, or they’ll take it down for you, which kind of leaves you no good options.” McDonough (1996, 231) similarly engages in an ironic reflection on how the contemporary American state might respond to the Biblical story of seeking shelter in a stable:

⁵⁴ Flynn similarly highlights the irony of anti-sleeping laws on the Boston Commons, a historically protected public land for shepherds to graze: “If the shepherd falls asleep he can be arrested. The sheep may all be asleep but the man must watch them sleep” (2004, 249).

The stable, however, does not meet Section 8 Guidelines for a ‘decent, safe, and sanitary’ dwelling unit. It is an illegal conversion of non-residential space to residential use, without Plan and Zoning Reviews, and without a Certificate of Occupancy. Now that we know about the stable arrangement, we will have to have you all evicted. It’s in the best interest of the child, you know. It will be up to you to find suitable housing. We can’t help with that. As you know, there is a shortage of rental property for low income families in Bethlehem.

As Ananya Roy (2003) argues, the formalization of housing in the US has prevented many people from accessing housing at all.

Beyond engaging in squatting to survive, many life narrators critique the fact that millions of livable housing units sit vacant every year—or are demolished entirely—while so many people struggle to survive without shelter. A 2007 report by Picture the Homeless—an advocacy organization run by people without housing—found that the total number of abandoned housing units in New York City vastly exceeded the number of local homeless residents (Picture the Homeless 2007).⁵⁵ Nationwide, nearly 19 million housing units in the US were left vacant in 2010 (Bronson 2010). At the same time, more than half a million were lost to demolition or disaster between 2009 and 2011 alone (Eggers and Moumen 2015). Despite this, very little has been done to close the gap between homelessness and vacant housing. Although 91 federally-owned vacant properties were awarded to homeless service facilities under the McKinney Vento Act (Erickson 2012), no American policy has addressed the problem of privately owned empty units.

In highlighting the possibility of converting abandoned homes into free housing, homeless life narrators challenge conceptions of housing as a commodity, and frame squatting as

⁵⁵ In addition, squatting often enables greater autonomy than shelters, many of which require conformity to a host of enforced daily rituals. As Brian stated in his oral history, “I don’t understand why there are so many empty houses and why won’t they open them up? They would rather stick us all in one big house, I guess so that we can be monitored?” (Brian and Kristin 2008). Squatting thus not only challenges exploitative rents, but the domination that so often exists in homelessness management systems.

a practice of taking back stolen land. Tanya (2009) said in her oral history, “They turned [the Armory Building] into a parking lot. I think they should have had turned it into a place for homeless people to sleep. Like they’re tearing down the 410 building.... I think they should have built that for homeless people and not charge to them” (Tanya 2009).⁵⁶ Antoine similarly argued, “I don’t understand why all these big buildings are boarded up—why not open them up for shelters for homeless people to come live in them? Affordable housing. I don’t understand. ... Kind of hard to swallow” (Ranelle and Antoine 2008). As Nora (2012) said in her oral history, “I would always think about that, like how many rooms are there in the world that I could be in right now. ... It’s not a lack of resources, it’s a lack of access to them.” In a poem he recited, Edwards (2012) imagined a future of “free space labeled not an infestation” and said about capitalism, “ending homelessness is lacking inside their infrastructure.” The term “infestation” evokes revitalization discourses that frame concentrated poverty as unclean and dangerous. In highlighting the inevitability of homelessness under capitalism, Edwards suggests that the struggle for “free space” is a challenge to capitalism itself. As Larry (2009) said in his oral history, “[Homelessness] has nothing to do with poor people. It has to do with people who have it and they don’t want to give it to you.”

Life narratives also reveal the ways in which squatting can help maintain a city’s housing stock. Brian and Kristen were a young couple whose previous house had been condemned as unsafe for habitation. They lived in the building for months without running water, until they were eventually kicked out. Kristin said in her oral history:

What needs to be done is all these condemned houses that are out there needs to be opened up to homeless people who have nowhere to go—rent free so they can get back

⁵⁶ The Armory Building, the largest Public Works Association building in Minnesota, was adapted into a parking lot in 1998 after a failed controversial plan to tear it down and build a local jail (Millett 2007).

on their feet... If there is something wrong with the house the people that want to move in, they can fix it up. (Brian and Kristin 2008)

In contrast to popular representations of squatters as vandals, Kristin highlighted how squatters can “fix up” abandoned buildings. Indeed, Anders Corr (1991) argues that squatters often obtain utility services and conduct ongoing repairs, thus improving a city’s housing stock rather than contributing to its deterioration. As Michael (2009) said in his oral history:

We have enough houses to house every man, woman and child in the United States [but] the cities get tired of seeing the blighted houses. So, they spend even more money to tear it down than it would to put a family in it for a year. And, houses are like living creatures, without the pipes which [are the] bloodlines, without the hot water heater, which is like the regulator of temperature, without the lights being the eyes ... then the house dies. ... A house is a living entity and if you take a human entity out of the house, it goes away and the house goes away.

Michael’s analogy captures how unoccupied housing slowly deteriorates, as pipes freeze and wood warps and unlit rooms—with no “eyes”—are vulnerable to infestation or vandalism. Thus, even the material existence of housing is dependent upon human occupants, making the tragedy of thousands of units of vacant housing even starker.

Casanova, who was the onetime Vice President of the National Union of the Homeless, co-authored a memoir detailing his life experiences. After his mother died when he was an infant, Casanova spent his youth running away from children’s homes until he was ultimately institutionalized in a mental hospital and subjected to torturous disciplinary methods over a period of years. After a string of low-wage, temporary jobs and multiple stints in prison, he ended up living with a community of people in Tompkins Square Park in the late 80s. His memoir describes this period—and the movement that coalesced around it—as having saved his life. He writes:

We had an influx of people coming in, pitching tents and building shacks. The park became a sanctuary. ... We were getting a lot of clothes donations, which we hung up on fences for anybody who needed them and could use them. Beside each one of the tents

we had campfires, and there was one communal campfire where we fed any people who were hungry. People in the neighborhood would go out and buy or collect food and bring it for our kitchen. People began to get the word that we were feeding the homeless and anybody was welcome. (1996, 123)

Casanova describes the encampment—called simply “Tent City”—as an inclusive community of people brought together by their common need for survival and rejection of the shelter system. He writes, “It was people of like mind, comfortable with each other, sharing their space in the park. Tent City was open to anyone and everyone who rejected the city’s so-called solutions to homelessness. ... We were not going to allow ourselves to be quietly put out of sight and mind in jails and dangerous shelters” (1996, 127).

Yet this period of unpoliced camping was short-lived, as local authorities soon sought to evict the campers. Casanova describes in detail his memory of police officers and park officials entering the park at night with garbage trucks to tear down the encampment. He writes that they ripped apart people’s tents and belongings, completely dismantling the makeshift neighborhood. Many people lost their identification cards, which Casanova describes as having devastating ramifications, including the inability to apply for aid and the increased likelihood of arrest.⁵⁷ He writes about the eviction: “I see flames coming out of a tent, people running. I see smoke in the sky, helicopters and helmeted police on horseback riding in among my friends who were trying to hold on to what little they possessed” (1996, 2). This, he writes, was “the moment I became an activist” (1996, 134).

As Casanova’s activism deepened, he traveled to attend a conference in Philadelphia hosted by the National Union of the Homeless. He writes of his shock at realizing the scope of

⁵⁷ Indeed, many US states allow arrest simply for the failure to carry identification (Riggs 2014). And as McDonough (1996, 93) writes, it is nearly impossible for people to obtain identification cards without an address: “It appeared the system didn’t want to identify those people who were living beneath the safety net.”

the problem: “It was as if we were all living the same life, but in different places. It almost freaked me out. It sure woke me up” (1996, 142). The meeting highlighted the shared experience of anti-homelessness in the US: “what’s happening in New York is happening in Detroit and in Philadelphia, in San Francisco and in Los Angeles” (1996, 244). To capture this common reality, NUH “came up with the slogan ‘Tompkins Square everywhere,’ which was both pointing out the widespread crisis of homelessness and poverty, and also calling for the homeless everywhere to resist being disposed of” (1996, 152). Smith (1996), who wrote extensively on the encampments in Tompkins Square Park, characterizes the city’s brutal eviction of campers as part of a larger effort to bolster revitalization in the neighborhood. As Casanova (1996, 137) writes, “An example of this problem of gentrification was the Christodora House, a 16-storey settlement house building ... [that] was yuppified, renovated into expensive condominiums for rich people.” The Christodora House became a “symbol of antigentrification struggle” in the Tompkins Square neighborhood, as it had once been a community center and hostel, but was sold to a developer in 1983 for \$1.3 million, and quickly transformed into more than 80 luxury condominiums, one of which sold five years later for \$1.2 million (Smith 1996, 20).

After Tent City was destroyed, former residents and other squatters took over a nearby abandoned school and transformed it into a collective housing and living space called “the ABC Community.” In collaboration with other community organizations, they provided services on the building’s first floor, including a medical clinic and detox center, tenants’ assistance, arts and fitness programs, and high school equivalency classes (Mele 2000). Casanova writes, “The next flight up was the residents’ area. That floor was our floor, for the people living there. We had a big communal kitchen. Our community center was open to people in the neighborhood” (1996, 185). He explains the organization’s vision and the city’s opposition, “If once we could get legal

control of [the building], then we could consolidate and continue to branch out. And this strategy would spread. ... Unfortunately, the bureaucrats didn't see it that way" (1996, 186). While the ABC Community sought to ultimately gain legal ownership of the property, those seeking to obtain legal ownership through residence must show documented proof of lengthy and continuous occupation, such that homeless squatters, who are subject to heightened policing and property destruction, face great barriers to gaining ownership. Indeed, in US history, squatters' rights have worked more to the benefit of private capital than the public at large, as millions of acres of land were given to railroad and canal companies in particular. Individuals and families who did gain land rights through homesteading were largely part of the colonial-era military strategy of displacing indigenous residents (Allen 1991). At the ABC Community, riot police ultimately came to remove squatters from the building late one evening. Casanova writes that they arrested more than forty people and tore down the walls that squatters had built.

In the years following, Casanova worked with NUH to coordinate the takeover of abandoned HUD housing, and ultimately moved to Kansas City to found a local branch of the union and a new squatter collective. He writes about the shared living space there: "Each resident was expected to pay \$70 a month, which was simply to cover utilities. Some were working; some were going to school. In order for people to even get into our program, they had to come in to the house and work. If they wanted a room they had to agree to work on improving that room, and also help fix up the other houses of the Union" (1996, 234). Casanova writes about other homeless collectives in Kansas City at the time, including encampments along the riverside:

Those camps were *communities* of people helping themselves help each other. That's how Tent City started out. That's how it is all across the country. No longer can a thinking person accept the claim or the theory that homeless people are not doing anything for themselves. Homeless people *are* feeding themselves and clothing themselves. ... Living in the streets is not the most desirable way to exist, but for many ... offers more dignity than life in an institution. (1996, 241-242)

In highlighting how homeless squatter communities make collective homes from almost nothing, Casanova presents the possibility for a new vision of American housing not grounded in conspicuous consumption or inflated rental payments. As he writes in the opening passage of his memoir, “I have been homeless for most of my life, but today I believe it is not coincidental that my name is Casanova. The English translation of Casanova is ‘new house.’ And that is what we are fighting for” (1996, 2).

Casanova’s “new house” was also a vision for a new nation. In an interview he gave for a documentary film on homeless squatters, he discussed the tragedy of homelessness in relation to American material abundance:

We’ve got more money in the United States than anybody in the world ... [but] we’re dying in the streets.... If I’ve gotta die this time, I’m gonna die ripping the boards down from these buildings. I’m gonna die trying to make a home for myself. ... I’m gonna die because I want to live. (Yates and Kinoy 1990)

Casanova continued to struggle for squatters rights—and “rip the boards” from abandoned buildings—for the rest of his life, even as he battled HIV. After he died in 2011, homeless people continued to take over abandoned buildings. Homes Not Jails has taken over more than 500 houses in the San Francisco area and continues to fight for squatters’ rights (Corr 1999; Tracy 2014). Such movements have collectively challenged the American dream of privatized homeownership.

Beyond a surplus of housing, squatting also reveals the incredible surplus that results from middle-class, suburban cultures of hyper-consumption. As Sibley writes in his memoir:

America’s prosperity, ironically enough, could very well be our undoing. The global demand for American *things* has created a techno-monster that needs lots and lots of energy, food, electrons, land, coal, water, oil, greenhouse gases and that monster will defecate waste into US and global garbage dumps (2011, 43-44).

Eighner (2013, 131-132) describes the abundance of discarded objects he was able to find in dumpsters, and argues that scavenging gave him a new sense of the value of things:

I have come to think that there is no value in the abstract. A thing I cannot use or make useful, perhaps by trading, has no value however rare or fine it may be. ... Almost everything I have now has already been cast out at least once, proving that what I own is valueless to someone. Anyway, I find my desire to grab for the gaudy bauble has been largely sated.

The notion of only possessing that which is useful challenges the consumption and waste of the American dream. LeMieux captures how the struggle for upward mobility and consumption can become perpetual and unending. After he was “chasing the American dream” for more than forty years, he experienced a “frustration that accompanies a problem that cannot be solved” (2009, 383). Mack Evasion (2001, 2) argues that in chasing the American dream, housed people in the US “throw away so much—food, books, whole *buildings*.” He describes his own squat as “Trash House,” and characterizes his squatting as an “absurd antithesis of the ‘American Dream,’ and the actualization of a dream more relevant—mine!” (2001, 59).⁵⁸ For him, squatting is part of a “long-running campaign to steal back ‘private’ space” (2001, 67). Like Eighner, he argues against ownership without use, writing that if an abandoned building is “owned by an abstract corporate entity, no one notices it’s missing, and it’s in *my* town, is it really theirs?”



Life narratives of homelessness do not universally reject the model of American homeownership, and many narratives express a deep desire for the suburban dream. Yet the collection of narratives reveals an underground and underreported movement to decriminalize

⁵⁸ Casa (2009) similarly said in her oral history, “I want to know who [people] are and not what they have.... My dream is to define who I am.”

squatting and develop networks of mutual support. Instead of seeking aid from non-profit intermediaries, which often displace people from existing street communities, this movement seeks to legitimize currently existing homeless collectives. Such visions present the possibility for redistributing caring labor and enabling spatial belonging in the absence of property. They further present a model of privacy without displacement and challenge not only unfair rental prices, but the labor exploitation that is at the heart of both capitalism and patriarchy. As waged labor rests upon the violent displacement of people from their lands and the confinement of women to isolated and unpaid domestic labor, resistance requires establishing a common space for people to support themselves collectively. As Casanova argues, resistance requires a new home.

Like most who are fully ensconced in the comforts of housing, I have also experienced alienation and the pressure to maintain a wage. And I have also dreamed of other kinds of domesticity. Yet I do not reflect on my dreams and experiences in this chapter, as it seems fitting that homeless life narrators should have the last word. Their narratives cut to the core problems of housing and cast a spotlight on the possibility of claiming collective space. They also present a powerful lesson on the importance of ideology. Casanova writes about the unprecedented and coordinated homeless takeover of HUD buildings in the 80s, “the whole operation was scarcely noted by the press” (1996, 211). Indeed, after studying homelessness for six years, I only recently discovered the full history of the NUH. This historical lacuna illustrates the extreme degree to which poor people’s voices are ignored in wider debates on housing insecurity and homelessness. Since the decline of the union in the 90s, current organizing efforts have focused on preserving its otherwise displaced history (McNeill and Hall 2011). Even in public demonstrations, NUH members were often ignored. At a pivotal housing protest in Washington,

DC, homeless protesters were initially not allowed to speak. As Casanova (1996, 159) writes about the rally, “all those who talked that day were politicians or establishment organizers.” He continues, “we realized they had no intention of letting us speak. Well we had marched all the way to Washington, not to listen to movie stars or politicians, but to speak out ourselves.... In the background you could hear the homeless people [chanting].” (1996, 179). Homeless protesters ultimately forced themselves onto the stage, shouting in unison “the homeless speak for themselves!” (Yates and Kinoy 1990).

As homeless activist Willie Baptist (2011) said in an interview, the ability to be heard is central to the ability to organize. He described how housed allies often focus on abstract issues, while homeless people themselves want to address the everyday problems they face, like the basic indignity of being woken by shelter staff at six o’clock in the morning “to get in line to get five sheets of toilet paper.” He emphasized the crucial importance of listening to homeless people “to find out what issues agitated them that they were prepared to move around.” Unlike housed advocates, homeless people have a direct stake in the matter; it is *their* lives that are most impacted by the problems of housing and homelessness management. The struggle for a new kind of home is thus deeply bound up with the struggle to be heard. As I argue in the following chapter, the archive of homeless life narratives presents an opportunity for homeless voices to be located at the center of knowledge. In other words, it creates a “home” for displaced voices.

**Chapter V:
“A collection of stories, poetry and theories”**

A people do not throw their geniuses away. ... If they are thrown away, it is our duty as artists, scholars, and witnesses for the future to collect them again.

—Alice Walker (1982), *The color purple*

As I sit down to write about voices archived for history to remember, in the public library where I work I can hear another, ephemeral archive. People without houses type at computers or chat in groups. Often when I arrive someone is being kicked out or awoken by security, exhausted and unsettled. Just now the woman next to me carries two backpacks and a pillowcase stuffed with clothes. She has long dark hair and is talking to herself, distressed, in a language I do not recognize. English occasionally drifts through her speech. I hear the words *rape*, *enemy*, *execution*, and cannot imagine what she carries with her, or what brought her here. Her voice rises and becomes more rapid until a library worker forces her to leave.

I read recently about a brain disorder called *akathisia*, from the Greek for “without sitting,” marked by constant and acute restlessness. Sufferers describe it as a harrowing condition of being trapped in a body that must continuously pace. Homelessness can be seen as a socially compelled *akathisia*, in which the law prevents people from ever finding rest. George Orwell described it in his memoir of being homeless in 1920s London:

It is queer that a tribe of men, tens of thousands in number, should be marching up and down England.... It is a curious thing, but very few people know what makes a tramp take to the road. ... A tramp tramps, not because he likes it, but ... because there happens to be a law compelling him to do so. (1961, 200-201)

As I write from Bloomington, Indiana—a small college town on the edge of Appalachia a world away from Orwell’s London—hundreds of my neighbors are perpetually unsettled. The public library is the only indoor space to take refuge during the icy, wet winters, yet even here, people are often forced to leave.

The library's window looks out onto People's Park, a former social space for people without housing. The site used to belong to a black social center until several KKK members drove by on Christmas evening in 1968 and hurled Molotov cocktails through the windows (Enzinna 2017). With the building destroyed, the land was donated to the city as a public park, in homage to People's Park in Berkeley, California, famous for its history of activist struggle (Mitchell 1992). In 2011, during the height of the Occupy Movement, local activists camped out and created a communal kitchen and library. Last year, the city installed surveillance cameras in the park and more than two dozen signs discouraging donations to the homeless. Activists organized a protest in response, and homeless people took turns speaking to the crowd. One man compared the signs to warnings against feeding the animals and insisted that drunk students at the crowded bar across the street were more dangerous than any gathering of homeless people. A woman, on the verge of tears, said that People's Park was her home. Her two sons—who looked to be eight and ten years old—stood before the gathered crowd and described the park as a safe place where they were surrounded by friends. Towards the end of the evening, police officers arrested a homeless man and people grew increasingly agitated. Just before I left someone pulled off his shirt and began calling for a riot.

In the last few weeks, the city succeeded in driving homeless residents from the park entirely. It formed a taskforce on “Safety, Civility, and Justice” and employed officers to constantly surveil the park. Now, dozens of people are lined up on the main street, with all their belongings stacked up along the sidewalk. Local laws prohibit them from making anyone feel “compelled” to give money, from sleeping in many of the city's lawn spaces, or from camping (Indiana Code 2016; WFHB 2015). The Police Chief, the local newspaper, and many well-meaning people repeat the same words in describing the problem: transient, criminal, addict. Yet

beyond these words, there are thousands of stories that recount the excruciating and involuntary loss of home. Every person who is outside has a profound reason for being there, and those reasons reflect something about housed society. I have seen the same dynamics in every city I have lived: an overwhelming focus on what Orwell termed the imaginary “tramp monster,” and a ghostly absence of stories about the failures of American housing.



This dissertation began by examining the displacement of homeless voices. At the end of chapter one, I highlighted the importance of methods for collective listening and the need for structures that capture the curious attention of a broader community. In this final chapter, I argue that the archive of homeless life narratives itself—as a repository of knowledge—can be seen as one such structure for listening, with its own boundaries and exclusions. Further, I show how the genre of life narratives engages a form of experience-based theory that recenters the intellectual authority of homeless thinkers. Thus, the archive of homeless life narratives is one part of the larger project of building a “home” for displaced voices: a center to return to and venture forth from in the effort of creating, circulating, and preserving displaced knowledge.

Finding a home in the archive

Over the past several decades, memoirs have risen in prominence to become a dominant literary form (Watson and Smith 2001). The recent availability of free digital publishing platforms has enabled a boom in the publications of memoirs of homelessness. Currently, more than 200 memoirs of contemporary US homelessness are available online and in public libraries, constituting a new genre of literature in which formerly and currently homeless writers reflect on

their experiences. Alongside the rise of memoirs, the methodology of oral history has exploded in popularity (Thompson 2017). In responding to the silencing of homeless voices, oral historians in the US have developed at least two dozen archives and edited collections of homeless oral histories. Together, these memoirs and oral histories belong to a wider genre of life narratives (Watson and Smith 2001). In this section, I show how life narratives of homelessness constitute an archive of homeless voices, with its own particular limitations and possibilities.

In the broadest sense, an archive is a system of knowledge that determines what can and cannot be said (Foucault 1972). Yet in a more concrete sense, it is a material, public repository of knowledge preserved for posterity, and a tool through which a powerful institution proffers evidence of its narratives (Agamben 2002). The word “archive” stems from a Latin root that means both commencement and commandment: the place where things begin and where authority is exercised (Derrida 1996). In Greek, the archive was the house of a public authority whose private residence contained official documents. It is the location of such documents—their permanent dwelling—that gives them official status. Thus, an archive can be seen as the combination of power and place, residence and authority (Derrida 1996). It provides a center for textual knowledge. The concept of the home itself similarly designates a place that is at the center of life (Desmond 2016). In a very real sense, then, an archive becomes a home for knowledge—a physical site that contains and protects it, and a foundation or center from which knowledge begins. Thus, the project of recentering displaced knowledge is akin to the project of seeking an ideological home.

Yet a home for knowledge does not have to be singularly located in space, as a genre of literature can itself function as an archive that represents society to itself (Echevarría 1998). An

archive is both material—the documents and repositories that validate knowledge—and a metaphor “for any corpus of selective forgettings and collections” (Stoler 2002, 94). Archives are not innocent sources or wellsprings of real meaning, but sites where knowledge is produced and consumed through social practice (Stoler 2002). Thus, it is crucial to examine who determines the archival boundaries and characteristics, and for what purposes. In tracing the as-yet-unnamed archive of homeless life narratives, I aim to be sensitive and transparent about the exclusions I perpetuate. In this chapter, I critically examine the oral history archives as well as the broader genre of memoirs of homelessness.

A primary intervention of oral history is its ability to uncover “histories from below” that have been historically excluded from official archives (Ritchie 2014). Although social sciences also treat orality as a source of knowledge, researchers often develop targeted questions and interpret interviews as data to support or contest their own suppositions. In contrast, oral historians tend to engage open-ended questions to encourage speakers to tell their own truth, and make interviews available to the broader public as part of an archived record to be widely interpreted (Ward 2012). As such, oral history is a unique tool for challenging the subordination of marginalized knowledge (Benson and Nagar 2006). Further, oral history resists the authority of the written word. While written documentation is upheld as the benchmark of historical truth, behind much written history lies some spoken story, as most official reports trace back to an original oral source. As such, oral history moves beyond the search for a single truth and instead reveals how different truths emerge from different voices (Portelli 2008; 2010). Oral historians frame biography not as a source of empirical data, but as a window onto history and a source of social knowledge about the conditions and ideologies that shape an individual’s subjective memory (see James 2000; Stern 2004). Sidney Mintz (1974), for example, tells the remarkable

story of cane worker resistance in Puerto Rico through listening to the life story of a single cane worker over a period of years. While the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group (1993, 115) characterized oral testimony as a concrete, personal form of knowledge, or “small history,” homeless life narrators attest to the ways in which oral histories can also shed light on larger social dynamics.

In my efforts to understand the multiple and distinct archives of homeless oral histories, I visited archivists and interviewed them about their visions and practices. Despite having emerged independently, the oral history archives I analyze all began around the same period and are grounded in similar goals and methods. One of the earliest homeless oral history projects began in Cleveland, Ohio in 1999, founded by historian Daniel Kerr to foster knowledge sharing and activist organizing among homeless communities (Kerr 2008). While these oral histories are not publicly available today, Kerr founded a digital archive in 2012 that documents oral histories of homelessness in Washington, D.C. The following year, former literature professor Annette March developed a collaborative digital oral history archive of homelessness in Santa Cruz, California, and made video footage of interviews publicly available online. Finally, after working in Minneapolis homelessness services for years, Margaret Miles recruited a team of volunteer interviewers and photographers to collect oral histories across the state, with the goal of creating an official archive.⁵⁹ Notably, the names of the archives—Downtown DC from the *Perspective of the Unhoused*; *Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness*; and *Homelessness Is My Address, Not My Name*—all suggest that homelessness

⁵⁹ Aside from the archives described here, 23 other homeless oral history collections have been developed in the US over the last two decades. Some of these are available as published texts, and others as digital archives. I draw upon these to a lesser degree, as they largely include short edited recordings or life narrative summaries, rather than full interview transcripts. However, all projects are listed and described in a bibliography of life narratives attached as an appendix to this work.

is an experience rather than a population. Above all, the archivists and oral historians aimed to access the knowledge that emerges from the experience of homelessness.

In this effort, interviewers sought to give power to participants to tell their own narratives. As Miles told me in a personal interview, she wanted people to be able to “tell their story the way they wanted it to be heard, in the first person, not me telling the story for them. ... I don’t want it to feel like somebody’s getting a questionnaire at the Social Science Office.” She argued that the very act of listening worked to undo the invisibility that many people feel in their everyday lives, and framed her primary political project as giving voice to those who have been otherwise silenced. She said:

I am certainly interested in working on issues of economic injustice, but this particular project is interesting to me, and compelling to me, because of autobiography injustice. The idea that we would have assumptions about people who have no way of being heard ... for me that’s a justice issue. I am not an expert on ending homelessness, or economics, or politics, but I do understand the power of people feeling heard, and feeling that they have been known, and that’s why this has become my life’s work.

For Miles, the very act of telling one’s story can be a political project against what she termed “autobiography injustice.” Kerr (2003, 34) also stresses the importance of avoiding invasive questions to make room for participants to actively create their own narratives and analyses. He writes about his early oral history efforts:

Avoiding direct life history questions provided a means for each of the narrators to be more flexible in their presentation of their experiences and avoid being in a position where they felt they had to provide a confessional. One man, Levi Israel, specifically stated that he would like to see a world where we do not have to probe into the lives of the oppressed. Moving away from personalized life history questions and asking what the interviewee believes to be the causes of homelessness explicitly brings the interviewee into the process of analysis.

Kerr argued that homeless participants must not only take control of their own narratives, but be able to critically analyze the situation of homelessness. March also emphasized in a personal

interview that she developed a “loose interview protocol” and worked alongside homeless interviewers in a collaborative and informal process to portray each participant as “full of their humanity.” In each archive, homeless life narratives carried the potential not only to create political change, but for people to take control of their own histories.

Beyond recording oral histories, the archives provide a venue for homeless narratives to gain historical legitimacy and circulation, thus giving a home to voices that have been previously displaced from of history. In this sense, they belong in the broader category of activist and grassroots archives that aim not only at presenting history, but at changing some aspect of social life and the popular imagination (see Cvetkovich 2003; Wakimoto et al. 2013). In engaging multiple forms and methods—including theater, photography, museum exhibitions, radio coverage, and collaborative interview techniques—they also challenged the paradigm of official archives that reflect particular institutional and governmental histories (see Kurtz 2001). Yet many of the archivists faced difficulties in their efforts to gain official status. When March sought to donate her archive to a university, she found that her release forms did not meet the guidelines that required participants to navigate multiple pages of legal jargon. The university archive excluded precisely the voices that March aimed to include: those who were outside of the world of written history, many of whom were unable to write. Similarly, Miles sought to donate her transcripts and recordings to the Minnesota Historical Society, and ultimately, to the Library of Congress. Her vision from the beginning was for the project to become part of an official archive that would preserve the oral histories over the long term and lend them greater historical legitimacy. Yet when I met with her in 2016, the local historical society had backed out of its promise to take the project, and the Library of Congress had become a seemingly untenable archival goal. As Steve Stern (2004) writes, for new collective memories to gain traction, they

must be widely disseminated in the public domain and promoted by convincing institutions. The struggle to archive the oral histories, then, is part of a broader struggle to legitimize homeless voices in the aim of creating new collective understandings of housing and homelessness.

Beyond being excluded from the official archive, the homeless oral history archive also has exclusions of its own. As Echevarría (1998) argues, archives are constituted by their gaps as much as by their contents. Indeed, the archive's function is not simply to produce certain knowledges, but also to erase or disqualify others (Foucault 1972; Derrida 1996). Even activist archives risk distorting marginalized voices in the aim of producing knowledges of resistance (Stoler 2014). The homeless oral history archives I analyze are situated in three distinct and idiosyncratic urban contexts: a small wealthy town in coastal California with one of the highest rates of homelessness and housing costs in the nation (Applied Survey 2013); a large national capital marked by racialized poverty and brutal gentrification (Williams 1999); and a Midwestern city famous for harsh winters and well-funded affordable housing schemes (Thompson 2015). As such, they cannot be read as speaking for all who experience urban homelessness in the US.⁶⁰ In Santa Cruz and DC, interviews were obtained through personal connections and conducted on the street or in private offices, while in Minneapolis they were largely conducted at a large, open event designed to consolidate homeless services. As such, participants were almost always part of the "visible" homeless population. As homeless women and young people often seek invisibility as a means for survival, the majority of those interviewed were adult men. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, oral histories involve a conversation between people and reflect just as much about that interaction as they do the

⁶⁰ The situation of rural homelessness remains even more opaque, and is largely understudied in academic research (Clope et al. 2000). While the Minneapolis archive included interviews from rural Minnesota and these oral histories contain important insights, the vast majority of interviews took place in urban locations.

memories and ideas of homeless participants. With these limitations in mind, the archive cannot be read as a representative example or unadulterated account of the experience of homelessness. Yet it can be read as an interactive mode of self-narration through which hundreds of people who have lost housing are able to recount a wide range of personal experiences, insights, and reflections.

In contrast to oral histories, memoirs are not impacted by an interviewer's questions or the brevity of the interview form. The book-length format enables in-depth and uninterrupted reflections on the experience of homelessness. Yet at the same time, no one institution exists to house the collection of memoirs of homelessness. Instead, they are stored in countless libraries, bookstores, homes, streets, and digital repositories. Further, many memoirs of homeless are written from the perspective of housed comfort, and recall homelessness as a distant memory. For such formerly homeless writers, memory can become distorted by judgmental distance and can reinforce tropes about the "recovered" homeless person who "battled the odds" to overcome the personal failure (see Hodgetts et al. 2005, 33). Indeed, the genre of autobiography more broadly often promotes conservative stories of individual triumph over adversity (Beverly 1993). More importantly, most people currently struggling with homelessness do not have the resources to write, let alone publish, their stories. As Gray-Garcia (2006, 181) writes about the difficulty of writing, "I did not have the paper, I did not have a computer and further, like all low income and homeless folks I did not even have the privilege of an organized life, knowing what I would be doing from one moment to the next. I couldn't count on the fact that my wobbly desk made of boxes would even be here after this week." Oral history is thus a necessary intervention that enables people without time or resources to testify to the ongoing experience of homelessness. For these reasons, memoirs and oral histories complement each other as two crucial sources

through which to listen to homeless voices: the former allowing for book-length, first person reflection, and the latter enabling a wider range of speakers to tell their stories.

The line between oral history and memoir is also blurred, as the genre of life narrative often engages in collective modes of narration and challenges the universality of the individual “I” narrator (Chung 2001). Anika and Sakeenah Francis (2013) wrote a “mother daughter memoir” as a series of letters to each other describing their memories of homelessness and mental illness. Gray-Garcia writes about her decision to list her mother as a co-author in her writings:

I had decided to give co-authorship credit to my mother, believing that even though it was me writing the essay, it was her life as well as mine, her struggle as well as mine and her tenacity even more than mine that informed the writing. She deserved to be recognized along with me. With that essay and countless more later on, I always gave her credit, along with the other poverty scholars to follow. (2006, 184)

In addition to co-authorship, many homeless life narrators describe their story as encompassing the stories of others. As Gardner (2006, 11) writes about his mother, “my story is hers.” Raymond Williams (1989) questions the notion of the great and solitary artist or writer who breaks through into new areas of thought. He writes, “Anyone who has carefully observed his own practice of writing eventually finds that ... what is being written, while not separate from him, is not only him either” (Williams 1989, 86). The nature of “individuality” itself is determined by society, such that it is impossible to separate social relations from the constitution of the individual author.

Through collaboration, thinkers who were previously only represented by outsiders can also access the powerful world of literacy, while challenging its hegemonic status (Beverly 1993). In speaking against the elite tradition of textuality, anti-colonial *testimonios*—like the famous *I, Rigoberta Menchú*—have often made claims to represent a collective experience, and

engaged co-authorship between speakers and writers. As with anti-colonial testimonies, many memoirs of homelessness are transcribed from oral testimonies by an intermediary who is sometimes listed as coauthor.⁶¹ In her memoir, Gray-Garcia discusses how *POOR Magazine* made use of testimony as a methodology. She writes that those interested in contributing to the magazine who were unable to write, “were assigned a writer/facilitator who would listen and transcribe their stories, struggles and concepts into a piece of prose or journalism” (2006, 229). She emphasizes that those who spoke their stories should retain authorship of the written product: “if you have lived through an experience and are, therefore, the subject of a story, you should get authorial credit. ... It was a collective, non-individualistic way of thinking and acting” (2006, 229). Gray-Garcia further writes, “In the ultimate act of ...equity sharing by the facilitator, the name of the facilitator would be completely absent from the byline” (Hoffman 2013). In this way, *POOR* sought to work toward “byline equity” between poverty scholars and people with educational or language privilege (Hoffmann 2013).

Beyond engaging modes of coauthorship, the genre of autobiography has also been used as a tool of critique. In 19th-century Britain, autobiography was central to the expression of working-class consciousness (Williams 1989). The trend emerged out of religious and judicial traditions of confession and testimony made available to working-class people, under which narrators were bound by an implicit pledge of honesty. As Williams (1989, 86) writes, “These oral forms were more accessible, forms centered on ‘I,’ on the single person. The novel with its quite different narrative forms was virtually impenetrable to working-class writers for three or four generations.” During the same period, anti-colonial thinkers similarly turned to personal testimonies. John Beverly (1993, 70-71) writes that such texts “have been around for a long time,

⁶¹ See generally Casanova (1996), James (1998), Tina S. (2000), Hall and Moore (2006), Gardner (2008), Hall, et al. (2009), Hannah and Soper (2011), Oher (2011), Fabian (2012), and Johnson and Bauer (2013).

centered on the ‘I’ and personal experience, and serving those subjects—the child, the ‘native,’ the woman, the insane, the criminal, the worker—for whom it was a matter of speaking or writing for themselves rather than being ‘spoken for.’” Such writing led to the development of an “outlaw genre” of anticolonial autobiography in which life narrative became a means of social critique (Watson and Smith 2001). Beyond testifying to oppression, such autobiographies became forums for political dissent, or “recollections with a motive” (Poitevin 2002). This tradition is reflected in the collection of memoirs of homelessness, as Eighner (2013, 291) describes his own book as an “outsider memoir.”

Yet the genre of homelessness memoirs is itself displaced from the broader literary canon. Of all memoirs of homelessness I identified, more than half were unavailable at any library with an online database. Many were only available for sale as digital files, a trend that reflects a self-publishing boom in the last two decades. Three times as many memoirs of homelessness were published after 2010 than before, with 68% of these being self-published.⁶² The genre’s astronomical growth must be examined alongside both the rise of memoir as a literary form, as well as the availability of free digital publishing platforms. As open source publisher Richard Nash argues, digital platforms have revolutionized the way in which capitalist publishing industries historically limited authorship to a select few: “It’s a model where anyone can create, as it was before the Industrial Revolution. Anyone could create a song, tell a story” (Rossetti 2015). Yet despite the publishing industry’s dramatic democratization, digital memoirs of homelessness remain absent from the mainstream physical repositories of textuality: libraries and bookstores. Further, many homeless authors used non-digital publishers notorious for their

⁶² Only a handful of memoirs were published prior to the 1980s, most of them from the era of tramping in the early 20th century. These texts present an excellent resource through which to compare historical and contemporary “hobo” writings.

exploitative practices, including Tate Publishing and PublishAmerica, both of which were involved in multiple scandals for overcharging authors and providing inadequate services (Zeitchik 2004; Byle 2017). This marginality of memoirs of homelessness mirrors that of the homeless oral histories that have not yet found a “home” in the official archive. Yet both forms are nonetheless central to the larger project of identifying methods through which society can listen to homeless voices.

To draw boundaries around the archive of homeless memoirs is to draw a boundary around the notion of “home” itself, yet as I have argued throughout this dissertation, there is no bright or clear line between home and homelessness. In identifying the genre, I limited myself to texts by authors who explicitly self-identify as having experienced homelessness. Yet in doing so, I excluded several important groups of people who suffer from a lack of “home,” perhaps most notably those in group homes or domestic violence shelters who have been displaced by family and fall into separate categories of social need, as wards of the state and domestic violence survivors. Memoirs of homelessness also overlap with memoirs of prison, forced migration, prostitution, child abuse, mental illness, and addiction. While many theorists of life narratives view identity as performative (Watson and Smith 2001), homelessness is also the material and geographic position of being displaced from adequate housing, such that not all people who experience displacement will perform the identity of “homeless” in their memoirs.⁶³ Thus, the collection I identify here is far from complete, yet it traces the beginnings of a rough outline from which to begin analysis.

⁶³ As I discussed in chapter one, this is not to say that homelessness is not also an ideological position, as ideology and material practice are interdependent, and the material condition of homelessness is deeply imbricated with the condition of being ideologically disregarded by society.

Beyond excluding those who do not self-identify as “homeless,” I also exclude memoirs by authors who purposefully adopted homelessness. Those who willingly leave safe, stable homes for a brief period are in a substantially different material position from those thrust into homelessness by lack of a better option. Yet intention is also complex. In her memoir, Megan Bishop-Scott (2007) recounts her choice to become homeless as a social experiment, followed by a longer period of involuntary homelessness. Many memoirs frame homelessness as a “choice” between paying unaffordable rents and saving money while living in a car. Becky Blanton recounts:

I quit my job as a newspaper editor after my father died.... I decided that living in a van for a year to do this would be like one long camping trip. ... I had time to relax and to grieve. But then ... I couldn't afford to find an apartment.... And I don't know when or how it happened, but the speed at which I went from being a talented writer and journalist to being a homeless woman, living in a van, took my breath away. (Blanton 2009)

Many people have been without stable housing at various points in their lives; after arriving in a new town or between jobs, they crash on friends' couches or stay at cheap hotels. Recently, when my brother was between jobs, he embarked on a year-long road trip. But as the winter set in and he began sleeping in his car in Walmart parking lots, he was driven more by lack of choice than a sense of adventure. For some, this vulnerable period lasts a lifetime or worsens to the point of sleeping on sidewalks. It is difficult to arrive at an accurate definition of the experience called “homelessness.” As I searched for memoirs of homelessness, I discovered countless writers who have been between houses at one point or another. For these reasons, I limited the genre to authors who both described themselves as homeless and were displaced from their homes.

In addition to limiting the scope of the archive, I limited my analysis to a subset of homeless life narratives in order to engage a more in-depth reading of each text. While I

reviewed all of the oral history transcripts I had access to (340 in total), I only subjected a third of the memoirs (74) to a closer reading.⁶⁴ In choosing which memoirs to analyze, I sought to remedy the unequal representation in the overall collection by selecting from authors in underrepresented groups. Although roughly a third of the texts were authored by women and writers of color, around half of my selection are women writers, as well as authors of color. I chose not to isolate any single identity as the sole object of my examination, as the condition of homelessness embodies oppression along multiple axes. Yet I made efforts to include texts that shed light on crucial sub-questions of homelessness, including LGBT identity, undocumented status, motherhood, mental illness, domestic violence, foster care, and drug addiction. I also analyzed an equal number of texts published by established presses as self-published texts. Finally, although nearly half of the memoirs were set in only eight cities—New York, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, and Boston—I made efforts to include as wide a range of cities as possible to get a better sense of a diversity of urban experiences. In the section below I examine how these texts recenter the vantage point of homelessness.

⁶⁴ Further, through the process of reading this selection of memoirs, I identified a smaller set of authors whose work became most central to my dissertation. These include Lisa Gray-Garcia, Lee Stringer, Cadillac Man, Eliana Chaya, John Sibley, David Wojnarowicz, Pat McDonough, Cupcake Brown, Ron Casanova, and Lars Eighner.

Recentring homelessness through experiential theory

Maybe one day I will have a PhD in Homeless Life Experience.
—Eliana Chaya, author of *Fashion Tips for the Homeless Woman*⁶⁵

A central role of the traditional archive is to organize knowledge according to distinct categories and forms, such that sources become either primary or secondary, textual or oral, political or personal, etc., with the lines between each clearly drawn (see Sekula 1986; Derrida 1996). In seeking emancipatory forms of knowledge, it is crucial to identify new kinds of sources that challenge previous classifications of knowledge (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). Ann Cvetkovich (2003) argues that many queer and activist archives—which privilege personal, intimate, emotional objects and texts—challenge the rationalized knowledge production that emerges out of bureaucratic and official archives. Homeless life narratives also challenge official archives, as they do not fall clearly into any single category. Homeless narrators not only describe their experiences and memories, but also subject them to critical reflection and aspiration for change. In many narratives, homeless writers and speakers transition continually between storytelling and theorizing. As Eliana Chaya writes about her memoir:

My book is described as a collection of stories, poetry and theories. ... I understand I broke a rule (not the first or last time I will do something unconventional) by combining a sort of memoir form with education and theories.... I will not change the format, which was planned very much on purpose.

Many other narrators also interspersed prose and poetry with stories and ideas. As I argue in this section, life narratives of homelessness challenge the divide between theory and narrative, abstraction and intimacy, critique and imagination, and cannot be read only according to partitioned methods of scientific or literary inquiry. Instead, they present a kind of self-reflective

⁶⁵ From her Facebook page, *The Unknown Homeless Woman*.

social theory that challenges the boundaries of the academic canon and recenters previously displaced modes of knowing.

In feminist theory, experience has long been viewed as a source of social knowledge and authority (Hartsock 1983; Mackinnon 1989; hooks 2000). The lived and felt experiences of the working classes have also been central to understanding the broader mechanisms of capitalism and resistance (see Thompson 1966; Williams 1977). Yet Joan Wallach Scott (1991) argues that experience cannot be treated as innocent or transparent: it is filtered by language, and often reinforces problematic ideologies and understandings of identity. As Sandra Harding (2016, 286) writes, “experience lies to us.” Today, many theorists informed by these critiques seek to recover accounts of marginalized experiences not as a form of naïve empiricism—not to arrive at a “truer” version of reality—but as one part of a larger conversation about history and society (Moya 2002; Stone-Mediatore 2002).

Many homeless life narrators argue that knowledge derived from experience presents the possibility for a more holistic critique of social inequality. While working at *Street News*, Stringer developed an advice column called *Ask Homey*. He writes, “Homey was the quintessential homeless person, and he responded to readers’ questions about the streets and the people who lived on them” (1998, 181). Through the tongue-in-cheek pseudonym “Homey,” Stringer personifies the experience of homelessness and echoes an earlier description of himself as “the genuine article, a living, breathing, creature of the streets” (1998, 86). His emphasis on being “quintessential” and “genuine” suggests that the authenticity of his experience lends him authority to speak on the subject. In the preface to his memoir, he explicitly frames his identity as enabling him to represent a larger marginalized collective. He writes:

The grand exploits of the high-and-mightiest—headlining the news as they had—were well documented and since have been amply dissected. But for the low and the lost, less

is understood about their sprees of abandon. I was among them. This, in part, is our story. (1998, 9)

In emphasizing that his memoir is “in part” the collective story of marginalized people, Stringer consciously contributes his voice to a larger canon of stories. In positioning himself in the plural, he claims to represent the community of “the low and the lost” and recount its collective story.

In another *Ask Homey* column, Stringer responds to a question about his credentials by describing the experience of homelessness as a form of expertise. He writes:

Last things first. I have no qualifications whatsoever (isn't this a great country?) except for the fact that for the last eight years I have lived with less inconvenience than you might imagine on the streets of this city. ... The fact that I do not have a degree on my wall does not imply any opposition on my part toward higher education. Perhaps readers could benefit from a more lettered author. So I have decided to start the *Send Homey to College* fund drive. I assure you that any money collected will be put to good, scholarly use—such as reeducating myself to apartment living through life experience. ... Of course I might lose my authority as a bona fide street person. (1998, 181)

In reflecting on the meaning of expertise, Stringer uses humor to destabilize the idea of institutional education as the only source of knowledge. He identifies his lived material reality of homelessness as lending him greater authority on the subject, and writes that were he to become “educated” into a housed lifestyle, he would lose the authority of experience. In another passage, he reflects on the knowledge of criminal justice institutions:

Personally I would like to see all judges and district attorneys made to do time. Not for the crimes they commit from the bench. For they commit those out of ignorance. Which is precisely why time in prison should be part of their qualifications. So that they might come to know what they don't know they don't know. (1998, 71-72)

Again, Stringer asserts the importance of knowledge that emerges from the experience of marginalization. As John Sibley writes in his memoir, the experience of homelessness sharpened his critique of the structural poverty and racism: “Once you are stripped of your dignity and humanity—even your *right* to exist—your sense of being-in-the-world changes. Your cultural

lenses become sharper, more critical. You start to focus on the greed, racism and corporate swindles caused by *homo economicus*” (Sibley 2011, 31).

Eighner similarly frames experience of homelessness as a source of knowledge, and critiques professional knowledge as limited by inexperience. He writes:

I thought it a shame to be well situated to learn of other homeless people and to neglect to try to do so. Besides being intellectually curious, I thought I might acquire some practical skills.... I had discovered I could learn nothing of value from social workers. Social workers, after all, never try to use the systems they establish and operate. (2013, 202)

Commenting on writers who “masqueraded” as homeless, Eighner states, “Whether those writers thought of themselves as journalists or participant observers, or something else, they certainly had the right approach for learning something about homeless people” (2013, 289). Yet unlike Stringer, Eighner denies that anyone can adequately represent “the homeless” as a group. He writes, “I do not pretend to speak for the homeless. I think no one could speak for all the various people who have in common the condition of being homeless. ... But of the condition of being homeless I know something, and that is part of what I have written about” (2013, xii). Rather than representing a group by virtue of his identity, Eighner represents the condition of homelessness by virtue of his experience.

Many other narrators described the specific kinds of knowledge they gained from the experience of homelessness. Christopher (2010) described homelessness as a lesson in the failures of government intervention. He expressed a desire to attain formal education to challenge the systems that govern homeless people’s lives:

[Homelessness is] a pretty good learning experience about how human nature is and about how the government is. ... I would like to study; I suppose it would be towards social work. ... I seen people out there misusing those funds for their own purposes ... so eventually I’m going back to hopefully help in that field.

Darrell (2013) similarly described the collective suffering of homelessness as a lesson on compassion that can be instructive to movements for social change. He said in his oral history:

I think the homeless understand a lot about love, because when you suffer together, you go through changes together. ... Once these memes get put into practice and circulated, people will say, *This is worth my support. This is better than all the political discourse. Those guys have ruined the country. We can do better with homeless people than we can with the current crop of leaders.* We need other people with talent to come and join this vision, not just the usual people. We need new visionaries.

In advocating for homeless “visionaries,” Darrell acknowledge the power of ideology to interrupt dominant political practices and provide a new theoretical vision for society.

As Gray-Garcia (2006, 184) argues, homeless people’s knowledge is not limited to story and memory, but must also be “valued as art or theory.” She frames poverty scholarship as a new “canon” with its own methodologies for assessing expertise (2006, 61). In this way, she urges a reimagining of what counts as theory. Historically, social theory developed in the 19th century as a new, mixed genre that combined literature, history, philosophy, and economics. As Jonathan Culler (2011, 3) writes, this genre included “works that succeed in challenging and reorienting thinking in fields other than those to which they apparently belong.” Thus, social theory is an argument or vision that becomes useful in a wide range of intellectual disciplines. Yet at the same time, what gets understood as social theory is a highly uneven process. The canon of academic social theory historically included a limited number of thinkers whose uniquely situated interests and perspectives were viewed as rational and universal knowledge. It privileged bourgeois, European, and masculine social perspectives, while excluding and subordinating other kinds of knowledge (Connell 1997; 2007).

Scholars have since argued for an expansion of what constitutes theory (Gordon 2008; Nagar 2014). Yet it remains difficult to ascertain exactly what to include in the genre. For the historian or autobiographer, the line between description and theory is indistinct, as both

evidence and assertion are organized in the form of story. Often, experience itself cannot be disentangled from narrative (Carr 1991). To tell what happened in the world is to select what facts to include and how to present them—in short, to create a story—and to theorize is to create a “master narrative” according to which other stories are judged (Riessman 1993). As Richa Nagar (2013, 4) argues, “If one recognizes all theorizing as an exercise in storytelling, then it is also possible that the epistemic violence of existing paradigms and frameworks can be resisted, mitigated, or confronted by telling stories differently.”

Yet social theory is a unique kind of storytelling, in that it has the power to explain phenomena in the world. As Jonathan Culler (2011, 2) argues, theory is speculative, uncertain, and claims “to offer an explanation that is not obvious.” Empirical data, in contrast, can be seen as an uncontroversial account of fact that plays a supportive role to the bolder assertions of theory (Gorelick 2011). Theory is a product of intellectual curiosity rather than knowing observation; it seeks to answer nagging and unresolved questions about something that otherwise defies description. Theory, like testimony, represents the unknown. The word theory itself comes from the Greek for “speculation.” In this way, theory asserts a socially meaningful idea, rather than a flat or prosaic account only used to support other ideas, elsewhere. As Avery Gordon (2008, xviii) argues, “the right to theorize ... entails the capacity to be something other than a local knowledge governed or interpreted by a putative superior.” In forming a supposition about society at large, homeless life narrators stake a claim in the unequal terrain of ideas. The search for a truth beyond themselves is also a claim to ideological authority, and the power to influence knowledge.

Like theory, the form of life narrative itself is rooted in the claim to authority. As Hayden White (1980, 20) argues, the narrative form cannot exist without an accompanying claim to

authority, or “the right to narrate.” Across multiple oral and written forms, life narrators draw from their own experiences as their primary source material and make an implicit promise to recount their experiences truthfully. This is particularly marked in the case of testimony by members of oppressed communities, for whom identity is often seen to confer credibility (Watson and Smith 2001). The experience of homelessness, as Stringer and others argue, is itself a source of authority. As such, the life narrative is a key genre through which to access knowledge that derives from the experience of homelessness. At the same time, life narratives are not accounts of universal truth, but of “the previously uncharted truths of particular lives” (Watson and Smith 2001 16). Beyond asserting these subjective truths, life narratives operate on multiple rhetorical, literary, and political registers, including performing identity, and imagining the future.

Yet the truth-telling pact of life narrative is often broken, as multiple scandals have been unearthed around autobiographies found to be fraudulent (Watson and Smith 2001). John Allen (2004) argues that the memoir *My Life on the Street* by Joe Homeless recounts violence and hostility so extreme that it lacks credibility. For these reasons, I do not read life narratives as straightforward accounts of truth, but as ideas about the world interwoven with stories of the self. Indeed, recalling memories accurately is particularly challenging for those who experience constant displacement. As Nathan Monk (2015, c. 4) writes, “I’ve attempted to accurately chronicle the timeline of events between houses and motels to no avail. I have estimated that we lived in some forty different locations, maybe more.... I will not try to force this madness into a neat chronological series of events. It would be nearly impossible.” As memory is so often fallible, where I cite life narratives in reference to historical occurrences, I cross-reference them

with secondary sources. Thus, I do not analyze life narratives as transparent sources of historical fact, but as theoretical reflections on experience.

As life narratives reveal, the project of theorizing does not necessarily require abstraction. Homeless women, in telling their narratives, often analyzed intimate accounts of their experience, while men more often made claims about social collectives. Thus, to view theory as necessarily impersonal is to exclude homeless women's ideas about their lives. As Nagar (2014, 96) writes, it is crucial to widen academic notions of what constitutes theory to include concrete forms of knowledge, particularly "at a time when our students and colleagues are increasingly drawn to the elegance of 'high' theory and the headiness of the abstract." At the same time, idiosyncratic stories risk reinforcing dominant understandings of homelessness as an attribute of individuals, rather than a condition of society. To challenge anti-homeless politics, it is crucial to examine the structural underpinnings of homelessness (Mitchell 1997). Yet studies of homelessness often fall into an either/or approach to personal and political questions (Renedo and Jovchelovitch 2007). Blasi (1994, 582) argues that studies of homelessness "lack a coherent set of methods for bridging the gap between the micro/individual and the macro/structural." Life narratives are thus useful in their ability to connect social phenomena to the scale of everyday, lived experience. Life narrative challenges the depersonalized aspirations of theory, while also reaching beyond place and time to shed light on broader social realities. It reveals how abstraction is linked to intimate worlds, and conversely how memory is laden with theoretical implications. As Said (1994, 12) argues, the intellectual is always both a private person and a public figure, such that "it is the intellectual as a representative figure that matters: someone who visibly represents a standpoint of some kind." Life narratives in particular capture how intellectual inquiry is both rooted in the personal life of the intellectual, at the same time as it

represents something beyond the self. When narrators reach beyond themselves to connect with an audience—and their truth resonates with others—they move beyond personal accounts.⁶⁶ In this way, people can build systemic critique through connections and conversations, without flattening differences between their experiences.

In addition to intimate forms of theory, life narratives also reveal connections between theory and feeling. At a conference on motherhood, the memoirist Regina Louise (2015) read an excerpt of her work describing experiences of childhood homelessness. In listening to the emotion in her voice, I experienced physical sensations—shallow breathing, tight throat—that invoked an embodied, emotional understanding of the story she told. As Rebecca Solnit said in an interview about her own memoir:

Stories are kind of these emotion-generating machines. ... We tend to talk as though the self were this very simple thing: my boundaries are my skin. But I think, in an emotional and ethical sense, those boundaries are much more complex. The people you care about are somehow included in your sense of self. We enter into each other's lives when we hear each other's stories. (Kimmey 2013)

While it is important to connect disparate phenomena in the process of building knowledge, this task has often been left to abstraction. Yet the emotional power of storytelling also does the work of connecting across difference, without erasing it. Stories reveal how collective and individual meaning are co-constituted (Narayan and George 2002). Further, as Bondi (2005) argues, emotion is a social phenomenon that exists in relationships between people. In contrast to

⁶⁶ As Spivak (2005) argues in her later writings—moving beyond the notion of subalternity as voicelessness—subalternity is the inability to know and express oneself as part of a broader collective; it is individual suffering stripped of the social context of oppression. In this sense, subalternity can be seen as the inability to theorize. Yet, as I argued in chapter one, just as no group is truly voiceless, no group is unable to theorize.

abstract forms of theory, memoir and oral history help readers experience an emotional kind of knowing that is both deeply social and personal.⁶⁷

In grounding theory in biography and emotion, life narratives also highlight the ways in which knowledge is located in space. Traditionally, social theory was abstracted from the specific context of theorists' lives. Yet many feminist scholars reject this "godlike" and depersonalized approach to knowing, and instead highlight how knowledge always emerges from a particular standpoint. They argue that masculinist notions of objectivity and claims to a singular, universal truth are based in the pretense that intellectuals are not influenced by their position in the world. As Nancy Hartsock (1983) argues, women's material conditions produce a unique standpoint that sheds light on the gendered oppressions of capitalism. bell hooks (2000) similarly argues that the viewpoint of marginalized groups enables greater understanding of social conditions that are otherwise unobservable, and the very fact of being marginalized affords one an oppositional worldview. Indeed, the feminist focus on embodiment highlights how all theory emerges from the social location of a body in space (Rich 1984; Alcoff 1991; Haraway 1998, Collins 2002; Rose 2003).

Postcolonial theorists have similarly argued for the importance of grounding knowledge in its location. Walter D. Mignolo (1994) argued for greater reflection on the locations being studied in relation to the sites where knowledge is produced, as knowledge from the Global North often claims to capture the reality of life in the Global South. Tariq Jazeel (2011) seeks to unveil the ways in which theory develops in spatially uneven ways marked by colonialism. The "West" has

⁶⁷ Further, for people who have experienced the hardships of homelessness, the act of narrating one's own life story can be personally empowering (Ravenhill 2016). As Stringer argued, the process of writing his story was personally more meaningful than having it published. He said in an interview, "By the end of writing this book, I had answered a whole bunch of questions, and it was a very wonderful thing" (Film Archives 2013).

long been positioned as the site of theory, while the rest of the world was the “field” to research and through which to revise theory. Jazeel (2011, 169) argues for the importance of reading texts “unfamiliar to western theory” in a way that honors their difference. In this way, knowledge can open new possibilities, instead of repetitions, and highlight the erasures embedded in dominant epistemologies. With regards to homelessness, life narrators are not simply reflecting on their location outside formal housing or mainstream domesticity, but on the unstable geography of being continually displaced. Homeless life narrators can be said to speak from the location of displacement, and capture a view with no fixed position, in contrast to the “godlike” view from everywhere claimed in universalizing theory.⁶⁸

Yet the idea that subjugated locations produce more “critical” knowledge has been subject to multiple, trenchant critiques in academic literature. Gramsci (1971; 1991) argued that elite society maintains its dominance by manufacturing the consent of the people through ideological “hegemony.” In turn, the subaltern often contribute to the reproduction of hegemony by accepting their own subordination. In this way, the subaltern perform the particular social function of consenting to their oppression—or accepting “false consciousness”—such that their own material interests often remain unspoken. Spivak (1988), building on Marx and Gramsci, argues that material interest does not necessarily align with class consciousness, such that the oppressed may not advocate their own interests. Indeed, a cursory analysis of US history reveals that the experience of poverty does not always inspire a critique of inequality. Hochschild (1996) argues that the pervasive power of the American dream is evidenced by the fact that poor people in the US overwhelmingly blame their inability to accumulate wealth on their own personal

⁶⁸ Further, while the metaphor of displacement is often used to describe social oppression and marginalization at large (see Kaplan 1996), homeless life narratives contain knowledge that emerges from the actual, material condition of displacement as well as metaphorical displacement from the center of power.

failures. This is also true for many who have experienced homelessness (Gowan 2010; Purser 2016). Vincent Lyon-Callo (1999, 126) argues that to receive assistance, many homeless people articulate hegemonic visions of homelessness as deviance and failure to conform, and internalize discourses of “self-blame and self-reform.” Many memoirs and oral histories of homelessness similarly reiterate predominant representations of homelessness or aspire to conservative visions of homeownership. Thus, homelessness cannot be seen as a total or pure location on which to ground an oppositional knowledge.

At the same time, many homeless life narrators engage in work of building critical social theory, a project which involves disputing common sense notions and being skeptical towards easy doctrines. As Culler (2011, 16) writes, “the nature of theory is to undo, through a contesting of premises and postulates, what you thought you knew.” Said (1994, 23) argues that the intellectual’s role is to challenge “ready-made clichés, or the smooth, ever-so-accommodating confirmations of what the powerful or conventional have to say.” In addition to challenging hegemonic knowledge, critical social theory ultimately seeks to bring about social change (Habermas 1971; Horkheimer 1976). As Marx (1976) writes, “the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” For these reasons, as Jameson (2013) argues, all texts should be read politically, to examine how they contribute to the grand human narrative of struggle between oppressor and oppressed.⁶⁹

Yet Spivak (1988) eschews the difficult question of how to assess knowledge—what counts as resistance or compliance?—by arguing instead that all efforts to listen to subaltern voices are misguided from the start. As I described in chapter one, I assess life narratives of

⁶⁹ Jameson (2013) resists the poststructuralist impulse to deconstruct texts to identify their underlying master narratives, rather than read them as sources of transparent meaning. Instead, he argues that interpretation is part of the fabric of collective social thought, and to deny interpretation is to deny collective political consciousness.

homelessness by placing them in conversation with academic social theory on homelessness, housing, and home. I aim to be sensitive to the dangers of romanticizing or appropriating subjugated consciousness, while also acknowledging that the project of theorizing must be expanded to include previously displaced voices. As Donna Haraway (1988) argues, the claim to “insider representation” is impossible, as the boundary demarcating who counts as an “insider” is itself a social construct. Yet at the same time, she writes that *all* knowledge is situated, and each location is integral to the larger tapestry of knowledge. Patricia Hill Collins (2002) similarly rejects the notion that the most oppressed groups have the clearest understanding of oppression, as it is impossible to quantify or rank human suffering. Yet she argues that previously ignored ways of knowing can help challenge mainstream ideologies to contribute to a fuller and richer collective understanding.

Dialogue and conversation are fundamental to the process of building theory. Textual meaning is not only produced by an author: it comes to life through context, dissemination, and analysis. Texts are open to multiple interpretations, and their meaning lies somewhere in the interplay between the author and audience, text and context (Riessman 1993). Texts are also firmly grounded in the inequalities of the world, as the ability to read is based on time, access, and the prominence of some works over others (Said 1983). Jack Halberstam (2011) argues that any text can be read as theory, including seemingly superficial texts that belong to the archives of “low theory.” Theory itself is a fluid and interpretive process, constantly remade through telling and retelling. In my academic training, I learned to read theory first and foremost by placing different texts in conversation with each other. This process of dialogue has long been viewed as central to the creation of emancipatory knowledge. Marxist methodologies are based in the understanding that knowledge is produced through social practice (Negri 1991; Hall

2003). For oral historians, knowledge emerges from the relationship between interviewer and participant (Portelli 2008; 2010). In feminist thought, it is developed through connection and partiality, as each subjective insight offers one piece to a larger tapestry of truth (Haraway 1988; Collins 2002). Knowledge is thus based on a model of translation, connection, critique, and unexpected openings, rather than closure. In academic practice, citation is central to acknowledging authority while also creating knowledge as a dialogue between written works. Citing theory is a cornerstone of academic writing, while empirics, in contrast, are uncited bits of data used to support or contest an existing theoretical paradigm. Nagar (2002) advocates a politics that challenges scholarly cultures in which only academics are cited. She writes that to cite other kinds of texts is to challenge elite forms of knowledge production. Thus, to cite homeless authors and speakers challenges the paradigm that has traditionally relegated homeless people's voices to the status of empirics.

If knowledge is a conversation, there is no "truth" in isolation, as understanding grows deeper the more nuances and perspectives it includes. For Marx (1973), reality is dialectical—everything is reflected in everything else—such that analysis is always partial. It is the *starting point* of analysis that determines how an object is conceived (Resnick and Wolff 1989). Life narratives of homelessness frame displacement itself as the starting point—and center—of knowledge. To treat homeless knowledge as central is to begin from that knowledge, and to return to it, in the process of investigation and study. As Lisa Vandemark (2007) argues, those displaced from housing lose a sense of place in the world—something intrinsically tied to being and belonging—which in turn, can be reasserted through the process of narrating one's life story. But theory is also a collective social activity, rather than the work of an individual author, so there is no single starting point for theorization, but a series of mutually reciprocal

conversations with multiple overlapping and fluid starting points. Through this conversation, it is important to move beyond categories that freeze and solidify the world of flux and contradiction, and instead develop new categories as provisional tools (Charnock 2010). As Katz (1996) argues, “minor theory” is important precisely in that it does not make claims to mastery or completion. For Lefebvre (1991), the concept of “the real” fetishizes the present and forecloses the possibility of a different world. If the aim of theory is to change the world, then it is crucial to focus instead on “the possible.” For these reasons, in the chapter that follows, I conclude with a few final thoughts on the possibility of a world without displacement.



By and large, representations of homelessness not only overlook the question of “the possible,” but also fail to critique the rigid ideologies embedded in mainstream housing and domesticity. Instead, structural problems endemic to capitalism are reduced to isolated and technical anomalies to be solved by therapy or coercion (Cloke et al. 2001; Farrugia and Gerrard 2015). Among the overabundance of reports on homeless people, little research has examined how elite society contributes to the problems of homelessness (Blasi 1994). Instead, reports on homelessness often implicitly accept the American dream of private property ownership and suggest that homelessness is a failure to conform (Huckin 2002). The category “homeless” itself often reproduces normative assumptions about what it means to be properly housed and fetishizes homelessness as a fixed and static group of people, rather than a transitory condition. Just as imperialism produces colonial categories, welfare structures in the US carve out the homeless as a homogenous and debilitated population distinct from the precariously housed or

impoverished. Studies of homelessness run the risk of reinforcing these categories and assuming the homogeneity of those who are labeled homeless.

In seeking to address these problems, academic scholars have sought ways to represent homelessness that challenge dominant narratives (Cloke et al. 2001; Klodawsky et al. 2002). Farrugia and Gerrard (2015, 280) call for a method that “aims to unsettle the objectifying lens so often applied to those whom academics take as their research objects.” In a similar vein, Schneider (2012, 84) argues that “homeless people be given the opportunity to comment on us, just as we experts and domiciled people comment on them.” This effort requires framing homelessness as ordinary, rather than aberrant, to examine how it sheds light on the failures and deficiencies of wider society. In this way, homelessness becomes a location from which social criticism emerges, rather than an object of analysis. Such framings align with the postcolonial project that seeks to “decenter the center” of knowledge so that traditionally marginalized locations become the starting point from which theorizing begins (Narayan and Harding 2000). The collection of homeless narratives is crucial to this project, as it enables homeless thinkers to be cited as scholars in their own right, and provides a home for voices that are otherwise permanently displaced.

In becoming the center of knowledge, life narratives reverse the object of analysis, such that housing—rather than the homeless—becomes that which is subject to scrutiny. This, in turn, presents the possibility for challenging the structural and intimate violence embedded in contemporary American housing and domesticity. While life narratives of homelessness are not sources of pure, oppositional consciousness, they nonetheless frame homeless people as subjects rather than objects of knowledge. They reverse Spivak’s (1988) framing—that subaltern groups fail *to know* their material conditions—to instead describe how elite society fails to *make itself*

known. This reversal focuses on how housed society's deficiencies and injustices become obfuscated, and how critiques are illegitimated or unrecognized. Thus, listening to the ways in which homeless people represent the housed—or “housies,” as many life narrators write—is part of the project of understanding housing more fully.⁷⁰

Life narratives of homelessness reveal that housing is in crisis in cities across the US. At the protest I attended in People's Park in Bloomington, the conversation did not center on the problems of homeless people, but on the problems of housing. Bloomington is the most expensive city in the state (Stockdale 2017), with the university driving up costs and placing locals at a greater risk of eviction. In 2009, more than 550 people were on a waiting list for public housing (Kane 2009). As I wrote this chapter, nearly 120 foreclosures were underway in a city with fewer than 32,000 non-student residents (Bloomington 2017). Yet in ignoring the voices of homeless residents, the city failed to wrestle with the systemic issues of poverty and unaffordable housing. Such oversights reveal that homeless people must be valued as authorities in the collective conversation about homelessness. Their perspectives must be placed in conversation with each other, applied to contexts beyond their original place and time, and used as a guiding compass in building knowledge. In drawing the outlines of the archive of homeless narratives, I have attempted to listen to multiple stories and theories from across the US, and retell them in relation to each other, to shed new light on their broader social implications. Beyond critiquing housing, life narratives of homelessness point to what Lefebvre describes as

⁷⁰ The term *housie* appears throughout the collection of life narratives to describe housed people who are antagonistic toward the homeless (see Delores 2012; Cece 2013) and to capture the ways in which housed people are constrained by the demands of housing and domestic life. Brooke Willett (2015) challenges the notion of American housed society as an unexamined default, and describes the stress of being “stuck runnin’ this housie gig and doin’ the American thing.” Similarly, Cadillac Man (2009) decenters housed society by referring to housed people as “outsiders” throughout the course of his memoir.

“the possible.” They show that new models of home—and new visions of geographic belonging—can work to undo the violence of displacement.

Conclusion

My mother grew up in a two-bedroom house in a small mining village in Wales, at a time when it was one of the poorest countries in Europe. Her father had been a teacher, and his salary supported seven children, one of whom died at the age of two. My grandfather was forbidden from speaking Welsh in school when he was a boy, and his own father, like many coal miners, died of the black lung. Yet my mother—enabled by a social welfare state that supported free higher education—earned a bachelor’s degree and moved to London as a young woman. In her early thirties, she spent years traveling and doing odd jobs, sometimes camping or sleeping on park benches, working as a grape-picker or a cook on a fishing boat. She met my father during her travels. It was 1981, just after Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher came to power and promised to dismantle the institution of social welfare.

My father came from a solidly middle-class American family—his father sold insurance and his mother was a homemaker. Yet the family was also impacted by illness and addiction in ways I have chosen not to write about. When my father was a teenager, his mother set herself on fire in a suicide attempt. He told me he remembers her flaming nightgown, and his father’s burned hands after trying desperately to put the fire out. Despite my parents’ unconventional career paths—bouncing from one odd job to another—they were both able to enter into well-paid professions in their late thirties. My father taught English in Saudi Arabia for ten years, and my siblings have early recollections of our lives there. Back in the US, my mother worked as a bus driver, but the pay only covered the cost of daycare so she quit after a year. She later worked at a domestic violence shelter and would come home exhausted, with terrible stories to share. But she would also tell us of her time traveling, and her adventures. And she would go on to earn her master’s degree and land a steady job as a school counselor, and my father would teach fulltime

at a community college after years of adjuncting. They both eventually inherited a sum of money, and now live in a beautiful house on an acre of land outside the city. Although our family has memories of instability, we are the beneficiaries of a great and unearned fortune, the legacy of something as arbitrary as race, citizenship, and money.

I recently returned to the land of my mother's youth, after my partner found work in London. It feels at times as though we have entered into a strange and vicious housing market, the mark of a growing metropolitan city. London-based sociologist Ruth Glass first coined the term "gentrification" based on observations of her own changing neighborhood. As she wrote in 1964, "Competition for space has become more and more intense in London. ... In such circumstances, any district in or near London, however dingy or unfashionable before, is likely to become expensive" (2010, 23). The areas that Glass described as gentrifying are now some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the city. Alongside periodic housing crises, the city is known for its squatters' movements. In the 70s, it was home to an estimated 30,000 squatters. But as rents have skyrocketed in recent years, alongside rates of homelessness, so have the punishments imposed on squatters (Gilmour 2015).

I write this final chapter from a flat in Brixton, a rapidly gentrifying area south of the river, famous for the 1981 Brixton Uprising in which thousands of black residents clashed with police after decades of racist policing. Brixton was the only neighborhood we could afford in commuting distance of my partner's work, and the flat was the only one we looked at without mold or outdated infrastructure. Yet we discovered after moving in that the building has a volatile history. The local residents' association objected to its construction, as it looks down upon the row houses in the surrounding area (Outline 2006). Local activists projected an anti-gentrification film onto its façade as it was being developed (Urban 2014). Yet it was built

nonetheless, and as a result, the local pub immediately opposite—a treasured place that hosted free, nightly live music—was forced to shut down. A brochure for the building states, “This part of London is the focus of a major redevelopment scheme. Surrounding streets are being transformed to build a thriving community for 21st century Londoners” (Redmayne 2015, 6). I have heard stories of multiple squats evicted nearby over the past several years. One nearby housing estate was demolished, along with a radical, outdoor community art space (Urban 2015a; 2015b). Both sites were developed by Network Homes, the same corporate landlord that owns our building, one of the largest landlords in the UK. To protest the rapid change that occurred immediately prior to our arrival, activists staged a massive anti-gentrification protest in the neighborhood. Although our flat is tiny, the rent is still over budget and we may be forced to move soon to the edges of the city, the next “frontier” of gentrification. As the *Guardian* recently wrote about Brixton, “those priced out by gentrification become gentrifiers themselves. Controlling gentrification means facing and grappling with a range of tensions, paradoxes and dilemmas” (Hill 2015).

Alongside an overinflated housing market, the UK also has a rich history of social housing. At one time social housing was envisioned not as a handout for the poor, but as a universal right to which all people were entitled, regardless of income. This legacy can be seen in the city itself, in the pervasive presence of old housing estates. Yet the UK has followed the American trajectory of welfare cutbacks, so that today housing benefits are few and far between, and many council flats are in extreme disrepair. I recently received a letter in the mail from my local council stating that local funding from the national government has been cut in half this year. Their website claims, in no uncertain terms, “most people applying today will never be offered housing, and those that are will have to wait many years” (Lambeth 2018). As I write in a

café in the Brixton Village—an indoor market in which low-cost hairdressers, fried chicken shops, and cell phone stores are being replaced by luxury outlets—I see a sign hanging from the ceiling. It is one among many, describing words that have no English equivalent. It reads, “SAUDADE. Portuguese. *The presence of an absence. A profound melancholic longing for something gone or lost.*” I think of the way in which homes—and entire neighborhoods—can come to haunt those who have lost them, absences so big they have a presence of their own. I think of the Brixton that no longer exists, and the people who have been pushed elsewhere, carrying that loss with them like baggage they cannot leave behind.

I recently visited another homeless oral history archive, housed at the London School of Economics. I listened to the oral history of Casey Brown (2010), whose traumatic memories were so big they seemed to take up the whole space of the interview, leaving no room for her to reflect on the politics of housing or domesticity. The interviewer seemed shaken by her account of childhood sexual abuse and her description of holding her dead mother’s body in her arms. Brown’s goal, simply to survive and stay afloat, dwarfed any other desires or projects. She described the availability of job seekers’ and housing assistance, but said she did not know if or how she could go about the effort of requesting aid. Her oral history highlights that homelessness is not simply the inability to pay for housing. Homelessness, particularly in societies like the UK that provide a degree of social welfare, is often the product of trauma so deep and profound that people simply cannot cope.

I recently received an email from a journalist writing an article on homelessness for the *Guardian*. He asked me to comment based on my “expertise.” I wanted to tell him I was not an expert by any means—that I was still learning like anyone else. But I also wanted to add a line to my resume—and improve my chances of getting a job, however slightly—so I gave him my

opinion. I recently applied for a position at a homelessness research center in the UK, again marketing myself as an “expert” on homelessness. It was a long shot—the organization analyzed homelessness using quantitative data. But I made a case in my application for the importance of qualitative approaches. The organization also asked if I had ever been homeless. I wanted to write about how most people are displaced for fleeting moments and in varying degrees—like the time I crashed with a friend for months to escape a volatile roommate—and that “the homeless” are not a separate category of people, but just people who are displaced more often, and in more serious ways. Of course, I did not write this. I also did not get the offer.

The novelist China Mieville (2012) published a photo essay several years ago on the politics of poverty in London. Alongside images of urban decay, he wrote, “Everyone knows there’s a catastrophe unfolding, that few can afford to live in their own city. It was not always so.” Mieville (2009), who is also a science fiction writer, published the novel *A city and a city* about an urban landscape in which two cities—in two different countries—occupy the same geographical space. The residents of both cities have learned to “unsee” the other, and through this process have created a border between two nations. Mieville’s fictional city strikes at something very real and human: the power of indifference to create barriers. As Stringer (1998, 54) writes, just as the housed unsee the homeless, so do homeless people unsee the housed: “We had receded into that part of the landscape that refused to support the American Dream. And which few are wont to see. Non-people in a no-man’s world. Of course indifference grows both ways. We, the wretched, had become just as adept at relegating the passing public to the periphery of *our* consciousness.” Stringer suggests that the dual nature of the American city creates a rift in the American dream itself. This dissertation is a product of that separation, and of a society that assigns people to different worlds based on their relationship to housing.

The writing of this dissertation has spanned three cities—Syracuse, where I attended school, Bloomington, where I joined my partner, and London, where we moved together. In each city, I have walked past people panhandling on my daily journeys. The experience often reminds me of the famous “drowning child” thought experiment proposed by the ethicist Peter Singer. Singer (1972) found that when he asked his students if they were morally obligated to help a child drowning in front of them, they overwhelmingly said yes. Yet when asked if they had the same obligation towards children dying every day in distant locations, the answer became less clear. Singer argued that distance conceals the moral imperative to assist others in need. But what kind of geography compels people to ignore those in our immediate presence—on the city sidewalk—who are asking for help? Perhaps poverty creates a kind of social distance that defies proximity; perhaps it becomes more palatable when it is distant and mute.

Moving beyond boundaries

Throughout this dissertation, I have not only written about the dual dynamics of displacement and confinement, but about the boundaries that make them possible. The barriers that delineate who belongs where also dislocate and unsettle, so that entire communities lose their sense of place and belonging in the world. The border between public and private space, in turn, renders intimate kinds of injustice and exploitation invisible. A society based in these separations will always be fraught. As Catherine Liu argues, “capital has worked from the beginning as a process that separates subjects from the commune, that separates subjects from [public land], that separates subjects from the clan and the tribe, from the means of self-reproduction, from politics itself, from embodied forms of labor, from use-values, from violence, and from satisfaction” (Cutrone et al. 2017). She argues that the contemporary rise of

conservative populism in the US—as evidenced by Donald Trump’s election—seeks to restore a false of sense of belonging “in the face of these cascading separations.” The capitalist mode of displacement is also a mode of separation and enclosure, such that belonging itself becomes confined to its narrowest possibilities.

Yet life narratives of homelessness envision other projects for moving beyond separation. In challenging property lines, Ron Casanova sought to “rip down boards” on abandoned houses, and Mack Evasion (2001, 80) used squatting as tool through to “lay bare” false borders. As Wojnarowicz writes, losing attachments to place can open up new ways of thinking beyond boundaries:

I came to understand that to give up one’s environment was also to give up biography and all the encoded daily movements: those false reassurances of the railing outside the door. This was the beginning of the definition of the world for me. ... The place where movement was comfortable, where boundaries were stretched or obliterated: no walls, borders, language or fear. (1991, 108)

In this way, displacement itself presents the possibility for challenging the walls constructed by social pattern, habit, identity, and memory. Wojnarowicz argues that when those who are displaced speak about themselves, they challenge the notion of a singular, unitary nation to which they do not belong. He writes, “To speak of ourselves—while living in a country that considers us or our thoughts taboo—is to shake the boundaries of the illusion of the one tribe nation” (Wojnarowicz 1991, 153).

Breaking down boundaries, perhaps more than anything else, is a social project. Murray (2010, 181) writes that after her early awareness of the “brick wall” between herself and housed society, things began to change when housed people offered care and kindness:

I most certainly did not think that “those people,” the people I had judged as “separate” from myself, would want to help someone like me. But they did. They just gave and asked for nothing back. And in doing this, they knocked every brick out of my wall. For the first time I could really see there was no difference between myself and others; we

were all just people. ... Much more than the differences between people, what was so clear to me in that moment, instead, were our similarities: the tendency for people to make meaning of their experiences. ... Whatever your background may be, the same holds true for each of us: life takes on the meaning that you give it. (2010, 187)

In this way, the practice of care dismantled the social separation Murray felt so keenly as a homeless teenager and revealed a common humanity in the creative process of making meaning from experience. Indeed, life narratives of homelessness stress, over and over again, the crucial importance of even the most seemingly insignificant gestures of care.

Throughout his memoir, Stringer (1998) argues for a broader politics of care and belonging. While vulnerability and fear can compel people to separate, exclude, and displace others, Stringer highlights how vulnerability is also a shared condition that can unite rather than divide. He describes a particular incident in which he witnessed a young black man being murdered—“five shots to the head at close range” (1998, 133-134). Deeply distressed and dwelling on the vulnerability of being black in America, he writes, “now I’m stalking toward downtown in a white heat ... every nerve in my body screaming for a hit” (1998, 136). In this state of mind, in one of New York’s wealthiest neighborhoods, he encounters a man whose apparent misery illuminates something of the shared nature of vulnerability. He writes:

I see a guy come staggering down the sidewalk, turning down the side street now, so drunk he can barely stay erect. I tag along behind him. He blunders his way into a four-story building. When I peer in, I see him in the vestibule, leaning against the wall and digging for his keys. But he’s really blitzed. He can’t even find his pockets. ... Just then he looks up, notices me standing outside, and blinks dumbly out at me.... I can *smell* the money in his pockets. Money he’ll never miss the morning after. (1998, 137)

Stringer offers to help the man find his keys, and as he is fumbling through his pocket, discovers a thick wad of bills, more money than he has seen in a long time. But something in the man’s expression stops Stringer from taking it. He writes, “One look at the guy’s face up close and all I can see is the sodden, vague misery there” (1998, 138). Stringer’s insight is not a moral lesson

about theft, but about how connection can happen between two people from completely different worlds. In his own desperation, Stinger saw himself in the “vague, sodden misery” of another man, despite the vast economic gulf between them.

In another passage, Stringer discusses a tragic incident in which a young mentally ill homeless man attacked an infant in his mother’s arms, and housed residents, in turn, sought to kick homeless people out of the neighborhood. He writes:

Here we get to the crux of what block associations are essentially about. They are about turf. *Close the center*, their logic runs, *and at least those people won’t be in our neighborhood*. But however reasonable may be the desire to feel safe around one’s home, the turf approach to the problem is, in essence, self-defeating. . . . In our anguish over a city that seems on the verge of crumbling around us, reason tells us that closing ranks only represents that much more fragmentation. Reason cautions that we fail in our impulse to protect our own unless we seek to protect all. (1998, 202-203)

In seeking to “protect all,” Stringer suggests a politics of care that is also deeply rational, combining the impulse to protect one’s own circle of belonging with the recognition that *all* people belong. In this way, fragmentation does not necessarily lead to displacement and exclusion. For Denver Moore, the feeling of being separated from society is itself part of the shared condition of being human. He writes, “I used to spend a lotta time worryin that I was different from other people. . . . But I found out everybody’s different—the same kind of different as me.” Moore further frames homelessness as the existential condition of *all people*, as life itself is an impermanent home. He writes, “Whether we is rich or poor or somethin in between, this earth ain’t no final restin place. So in a way, we is all homeless—just workin our way towards home” (Hall and Moore 2006, 235).

Academic scholars have argued that a focus on vulnerability can foster solipsism and defeat, and lead to the internalization of collective and political problems (Furedi 2013). Indeed, contemporary American capitalism is bound up with a particular therapeutic culture that often

supports patterns of consumption, mainstream domesticity, and complacency in the workplace (Illouz 2007). But as life narratives of homelessness reveal, shared vulnerability can also be a site for resistance. Sara Ahmed (2013) argues that emotions actually *do* things in the world: they bind groups together, and move groups apart. Emotion is not an individual psychic trait, but a force that circulates between people and shapes collective behaviors. Emotions attach to certain ideas and groups, such that some people are labeled as “belonging” to the nation, while others are deemed “outsiders.” As Ahmed writes, “those who are ‘without home’ [are constructed] as sources of ‘our fear’ and as reasons for new forms of border policing” (2013, 136). By highlighting the shared nature of vulnerability—and the need for a more expansive practice of care—life narratives of homelessness challenge the emotional impulses that reinforce boundaries and insular notions of home.

I hope, through tracing life narratives of homelessness alongside my own memories, to highlight not only the structural dynamics of privilege and inequality, but the shared vulnerability that exists across difference. As a person who has profoundly benefited from housing injustice, I am also inevitably subject to the pressures and limitations of domesticity. Ruth Behar (1996) argues that writing about the self is a kind of “vulnerable writing” through which to connect across difference and challenge the boundaries of social scientific observation. A personal voice, rather than shrinking the object of analysis, can open the conversation to reveal connections between intimate and social phenomenon. It can break down the myth of objectivity and the barrier between researchers and subjects. More broadly, it can enable social scientists to express passion in their work, rather than detachment or neutrality, in a way that more accurately captures the emotional experience of doing research.

Gray-Garcia (2006, 215) similarly connects the project of moving beyond boundaries to her own practice of scholarship and media advocacy. She writes:

The only way we could accomplish some of our media resistance goals ... would be by reaching across the race and class divide, informing, raising awareness and making change happen through a collaborative effort of wealthy and poor, white and non-white, youth and elders. My belief is that all of these forms of separation are like national borders, false and inhuman. Discrimination based on class, race, age and culture feeds into a capitalist system of separation.

Like Wojnarowicz, Gray-Garcia argues that self-expression and “media resistance” are tools for working against the boundaries inherent to capitalism. This insight—alongside Behar’s arguments about vulnerable writing—reveals that ways of speaking and listening are integral to the dynamics of separation and displacement. Gray-Garcia highlights how the expression of homeless voices is deeply linked to the creation of new kinds of collective belonging. She writes about the development of *POOR Magazine*:

Once people were given the space and empowerment, the ideas and scholarship flowed. It wasn’t just writing that we were doing, it was visionary problem solving: How do you solve homelessness in a capitalist society where the housing and land are owned by people with no accountability to their community? ... Our solution to homelessness was Homefulness. (2006, 212)

In enacting its vision of “homefulness,” *POOR Magazine* developed a co-housing project where residents shared childcare, education, gardening, and space. It was a model designed to offer a permanent sense of place, regardless of income, and a balance between community and privacy (Hoffmann 2013). Years earlier, Gray-Garcia and her mother, along with several other mothers, lived in collective homes they called “Mamahouses.” They shared childcare and mutual support, but were continually displaced by eviction. Thus, Gray-Garcia sought to purchase a piece of land, under the auspices of *POOR Magazine*. In 2011, after collective efforts and donations from housed neighbors and supporters—“the *POOR* Solidarity Family”—they purchased a plot of land in Oakland. As Hoffmann (2013) writes:

The creation of multifamily housing might seem an ambitious direction for a media organization—something people schooled in the typical ways of the nonprofit world might call “scope creep.” But ... it makes perfect sense that a poor people–led media organization would be building housing. ... The project is proudly anchored in a legacy of landless people’s self-determination efforts.

Hoffmann, a member of the *POOR* Solidarity Family, interviewed Gray-Garcia about the project in 2013. Gray-Garcia said:

Poor people actually hold solutions to ending poverty if you understand and recognize that our agency is already there, then make space for the solutions that we have already.... We talk about deep solutions like moving off the grid, our own food production, healing that has to do with people-to-people care, and system-wide change. Maybe it will never happen in the US, but it’s worth a conversation. (Hoffmann 2013)

It was only through coming together and sharing their visions for the future that members of the *POOR Magazine* collective were able to achieve their vision of homefulness. The homefulness project thus reveals the deep connection between working towards collective expression and the possibility of changing material and social relations in the world.



Displacement is not a uniquely American phenomenon. I have seen this viscerally in my short time in London. On the global scale, entire nations are displaced by poverty and violence. I do not want, in writing about the American dream, to place America at the center of global experiences. Instead, I seek to challenge the notion of America as a nation that promises the unique possibility of belonging to anyone who puts in enough effort. This notion is not only grounded in American exceptionalism, but also suggests that those who do not belong—those displaced from the American dream—have simply not tried hard enough. This dissertation has examined how the ideological displacement of homeless people limits society’s ability to understand the loss of housing that people confront on an everyday basis. If society views

homelessness as a problem of homeless individuals and fails to listen to their experiences, it risks losing sight of the larger dynamics in which housing markets and domestic norms routinely displace poor people, women, and people of color. Although the American dream is deeply fraught, the dream for a collective space of belonging is also at the heart of movements for resistance. Together, the project of highlighting shared vulnerability, and of listening and sharing, can help challenge the boundaries that enable displacement, and provide a starting point from which to build a new “global dream.”

A friend recently recommended a book to me. It was a book about dreams. When I began reading, I discovered it was also a political manifesto and a memoir of homelessness.⁷¹ In the book, Toko-pa Turner (2017) describes her family’s poverty and mental illness, and her homelessness as a teenager. She crashed on friends’ couches, panhandled on sidewalks, and eventually ended up in “the system” as a foster child. She frames this experience of homelessness as a kind of exile, and as a metaphor for the social rejection and fragmentation perpetuated by “racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other systemic forms of ‘othering’” (2017, 15). Turner argues that this feeling of being “outcast,” in turn, fuels the desire for a false sense of belonging rooted in chauvinism, complacency, and the erasure of difference. In this way, people erect boundaries around their own capacity to speak. Turner writes:

We learn to live with a limited pallet of colors considered acceptable for public expression, while the darker, more vivid gradients of the human condition are stricken from the conversation. Driven into isolation, our secret grief, hidden failings, shameful desires, and vulnerabilities can survive the whole length of a life in concealment, refugees even from our own view. (2017, 46-47)

⁷¹ As it was only published recently, it eluded the collection of memoirs I compiled while doing research for this dissertation. Indeed, the genre of homeless life narratives is growing every month, such that many newly published texts will fall beyond the scope of this work.

Thus, Turner argues, speaking about vulnerability and difference—and listening to others—can become a method through which to imagine a new and dynamic sense of belonging that embraces conflict, dissonance, and imperfection. As Turner (2017, 18) writes, “only from such a place of loss and longing can we begin remembering ourselves home.”

Appendix

List of memoirs of homelessness

- Abubakari, Ibrahim. (2015). *The dark side of the American dream: A memoir*. Ibrahim Abubakari.
- Anderson, Gerald. (2015). *Still standing: How an ex-con found salvation in the floodwaters of Katrina*. Washington, D.C.: Jambalaya Press.
- Armour, Telisha. (2009). *The life of a healthcare professional, interior decorator and published author who became homeless*. Frederick, MD: PublishAmerica.
- Ashor, Aynoit. (2015). *Battered broken unbowed: A homeless mom's confessions and inner thoughts*. Chester, VA: Mocha Girl Publishing.
- Baize, Gwen. (2013). *The journey of being homeless: The untold story*. Frederick, MD: America Star Books.
- Barnes, Darryl. (2014). *The book of D. Barnes: As I walked through the streets of Los Angeles homelessness was the springboard to my destiny: A memoir*. Los Angeles, CA: Milligan Books.
- Barnes, Jack. (2014). *Dirt poor*. Jack Barnes.
- Barrett, Don. (2010). *A day without a yesterday: A story of disaster - tragedy - triumph*. Frederick, MD: America Star Books.
- Berry, Anna. (2014). *Unhinged: A memoir of enduring, surviving, and overcoming family mental illness*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Blasini, Luis. (2009). *Just for kicks: A story of travel and mayhem*. Luis Blasini.
- Blasini, Luis. (2015). *Borrowed flesh*. Luis Blasini.
- Bonds, Mario Arnauz. (2012). *Without sight but full of vision: The journey begins*. Mario Arnauz Bonds.
- Brandt, Gregory. (2016). *Homeless college student: A memoir*. Gregory Brandt.
- Brown, Cupcake. (2006). *A piece of cake: A memoir*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Brummett, Garvar. (2015). *The scent of jasmine cools the rage*. Garvar Brummett.
- Bryant, Aaron. (2012). *A synchronous memoir of addiction & recovery*. Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing.

- Burns, Bobby. (1998). *Shelter: One man's journey from homelessness to hope*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Cabbito, Rob. (2011). *The fractured life of 3743 - A journey to redemption*. Edina, MN: Beaver's Pond Press.
- Cadillac Man. (2009). *Land of the lost souls: My life on the streets*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Calcaterra, Regina. (2013). *Etched in sand: A true story of five siblings who survived an unspeakable childhood on Long Island*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Canada, Quianna. (2016). *Running from empty shoes*. Quianna Canada.
- Carpenter, Nichole Anne. (2016). *A heart without a home: A memoir about homelessness through the eyes of a child*. Orange, CA: Intrabellus, Inc.
- Casanova, R. (as told to S. Blackburn). (1996). *Each one teach one: Up and out of poverty: Memoirs of a street activist*. Willimantic: Curbstone Press.
- Chaya, Eliana. (2014). *Fashion tips for the homeless woman: The unknown homeless woman*. Eliana Chaya.
- Chin, Rita Zoey. (2014). *Let the tornado come: A memoir*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Clark, Charles. (2010). *I know how it feels*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris.
- Cory, Richard. (2016). *The great American tramp*. Richard Cory.
- Cotton, Eddy Joe. (2002). *Hobo: A young man's thoughts on trains and tramping in America*. New York: Harmony Books.
- Crimethinc Ex-Workers' Collective. (2001). *Evasion*. Atlanta, GA: CrimethInk.
- Daliessio, Craig. (2016). *A dad never quits: Abandoned in Obama's America*. Craig Daliessio.
- Davidson, Matthew. (2015). *I am Matthew*. Matthew Davidson.
- Dillard, Brian Thomas. (2013). *Thirty-something years in the life of Brian: An autobiography*. Brian Thomas Dillard.
- Dolinger, R. (2014). *Epilogue: A homeless diary*. R. Dolinger.
- Donohue, Timothy. (1996). *In the open: Diary of a homeless alcoholic*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Dreiling, Christy. (2014). *LOL: From homeless to multimillion-dollar global business leader*. Holes in My Socks Publishing.
- Driver, Donald. (2013). *Driven: From homeless to hero, my journeys on and off Lambeau Field*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Early, Justin Reed. (2013). *Street child: A memoir*. Street Team.
- Eighner, Lars. (2013). *Travels with Lizbeth: Three years on the road and on the street*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. (First published in 1993).
- El, Ikahn. (2015). *Look me up and down: Living my life like it's golden*. Ikahn El.
- Ensign, Josephine. (2016). *Catching homelessness: A nurse's story of falling through the safety net*. Berkeley, CA: She Writes Press.
- Erlbaum, Janice. (2006). *Girlbomb: A halfway homeless memoir*. New York, NY: Villard Books.
- Everett, Mik. (2013). *Self-published kindling: The memoirs of a homeless bookstore owner*. Mik Everett.
- Fabian, Maria. (with Fred Smith). (2012). *Invisible innocence: My story as a homeless youth*. Maria Fabian.
- Fionn, Stefan Magi. (2014). *Watershed: A memoir (homeless teen's true story)*. Stefan Magi Fionn.
- Flynn, Nick. (2004). *Another bullshit night in suck city*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Fobbs, Ollie. (2015). *Seemingly rejected: The reality of the wilderness experience*. Ollie Fobbs.
- Frame, John Christopher. (2013). *Homeless at Harvard: Finding faith and friendship on the streets of Harvard Square*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Francis, Sakeenah, and Francis, Anika. (2013). *Love's all that makes sense: A mother daughter memoir*. Dundas, ON: Bridgeross Communications.
- Fries Wade, Valerie. (2014). *Memoirs of dakini: True confessions of a former flower child*. Valerie Fries Wade.
- Fritzen, John. (2016). *Homeless is not hopeless*. John Fritzen.
- Gardner, Chris (with Quincy Troupe and Mim Eichler Rivas). (2006). *The pursuit of happiness*. New York, NY: Amistad.

- Gilstrap, Damon. (2014). *From tragedy to homeless to triumph: A true story of one man's journey on how he beat all odds after being shot stabbed beaten but never broken*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.
- Gin, Tony. (2010). *My blessed demons*. Raleigh, NC: Lulu Press.
- Glynn, Marlayna. (2014). *Overlay: A tale of one girl's life in 1970s Las Vegas*. Marlayna Glynn.
- Gomes, Colin. (2011). *I wrote this in an hour*. Colin Gomes.
- Graves, Ressurrection. (2011). *Identity crisis, identity Christ is: A journey to love*. Ressurrection Graves.
- Gray, Lawrence. (2010). *3 pennies: From hell to heaven*. Lawrence Gray.
- Gray-Garcia, Lisa. (2006). *Criminal of poverty: Growing up homeless in America*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.
- Grundman, Marnie. (2016). *Missing: A true story of a childhood lost*. Toronto, ON: Meraki House Publishing.
- Hall, Ron, and Moore, Denver. (2006). *Same kind of different as me*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Hall, Ron, Moore, Denver, and Vincent, Lynn. (2009). *What difference do it make?: Stories of hope and healing*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Hannah, Rufus, and Soper, Barry. (2011). *A bum deal: An unlikely journey from hopeless to humanitarian*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.
- Harding, Maxfield. (2014). *Casualty: Crazy and homeless in New York City*. Maxfield Harding.
- Hepzipig, Zoltan. (2012). *Portrait of a homeless art history student*. Zoltan Hepzipig.
- Hinton-Brown, Marilyn. (2012). *Homeless but determined: My faith brought me out*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.
- Hitchcock, Leo. (2014). *The concrete brotherhood*. Leo Hitchcock.
- Hobbs, Michael. (1997). *Outcast: my journey from the Whitehouse to homelessness*. Los Angeles, CA: Middle Passage Press.
- hooks, bell. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. London, UK: Pluto Press.
- Hooks, Ulyses B., and Persaud, Narayan. (2006). *Guardian angels along my homeless path*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.

- Horton, Randall. (2015). *Hook: A memoir*. New York, NY: Augury Books.
- Hull, Charlie. (2012). *Steps in the dark of light*. Raleigh, NC: Lulu Press.
- Jackson, Ben. (2015). *Working from homeless: Selected short works*. Ben Jackson.
- James, Marie (as told to Jane Hertenstein). (1998). *Orphan girl: The memoir of a Chicago bag lady*. Chicago, IL: Cornerstone Press.
- Joe Homeless. (1992). *My life on the street: Memoirs of a faceless man*. Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press.
- Johnson, Karl, and Bauer, Samantha. (2013). *Rebound: An inspiring comeback story that explores the mystery of the human spirit*. Karl Johnson.
- Kanyak, Rebecca. (2014). *That was yesterday*. Rebecca Kanyak.
- Karp, Brianna. (2011). *The girl's guide to homelessness: A memoir*. Toronto, ON: Harlequin.
- Keith, Michael. (2004). *The next better place: Memories of my misspent youth*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.
- Kennebrew, Versandra Jewel. (2013). *Thank God for the shelter: Memoirs of a homeless healer*. College Park, GA: VKI Personal Development.
- Kennedy, Michelle. (2005). *Without a net: Middle class and homeless (with kids) in America*. New York, NY: Viking.
- Kiser, Roger Dean. (2007). *Runaway: Life on the streets: The lessons learned*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.
- Knight, Dan Edward. (2014a). *Every night I sleep on steps of the archdiocese: I need a million people to buy my story worldwide (homeless and hungry college student chronicles daily trials)*. Dan Edward Knight.
- Knight, Dan Edward. (2014b). *Homeless man runs for mayor and USA president: Can this be possible and will he succeed (with God all things are possible have faith)*. Dan Edward Knight.
- Knight, Dan Edward. (2015). *Thank God for the street wise to businesspeople: From in the house foolish to homeless and streetwise (full appreciation for all opportunities set before you)*. Dan Edward Knight.
- Knight, Joseph. (2015). *Pentecostals, pokeberries, and possum stew*. Kernersville, NC: Alabaster Books.

- LaFontaine, Melissa. (2016). *The lightworkers guide to homelessness: A memoir*. Melissa LaFontaine.
- Lake, Kevin. (2008). *Homeless across America*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.
- Landowne, Youme, and Horton, Anthony. (2008). *Pitch black*. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press.
- Lanning, Richard. (2005). *The invisible fog*. Victoria, B.C.: Trafford Publishing.
- LeMieux, Richard. (2009). *Breakfast at Sally's: One homeless man's inspirational journey*. New York City: Skyhorse Publishing.
- Lindsey, Tammy. (2014). *Based on a true story: From homelessness and welfare to earning \$250,000 per year*. Tammy Lindsey.
- Ljusic, Sanja. (2009). *Homeless in Saint Louis and sleeping in churches*. Raleigh, NC: Lulu Press.
- Loffert, David Todd. (2016). *From Hopkins to homeless: My true story of prescription drug addiction*. Denver, CO: Loffert Publishing.
- Lough, James. (2015). *A homeless panic: The homeless experience in America*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.
- Louise, Regina. (2003). *Somebody's someone: A memoir*. New York, NY: Warner Books.
- Lowe, Nicole. (2016). *Never let me go: A memoir*. Ogden, UT: Glass Spider Publishing.
- Lowrey, Sassafras (Ed.). (2010). *Kicked Out*. Ypsilanti, MI: Homofactus Press. [Edited volume of writing by homeless LGBT youth at shelters across the US].
- Lowry, Kailyn (with Adrienne Wenner). (2014). *Pride over pity*. Franklin, TN: Post Hill Press.
- Lyman, Marcus Edwin. (2010). *Homeless: An American story*. Marcus Edwin Lyman.
- Lynn, Jerry. (2009). *Memoirs of a homeless man*. Jerry Lynn.
- Mahoney, C. (2016). *Surviving the winter: Battling the weather and loneliness*. C. Mahoney.
- Marsh, Laura. (2010). *Living in the shadows of Milwaukee*. Milwaukee, WI: BASICS.
- Marsh, Laura. (2014). *On the trail*. Laura Marsh.
- Martin, Daniel. (2008). *Who lied and said we left the Garden of Eden? Memoirs of a homeless man*. Denver, CO: Outskirts Press.

- McDonald, Christine Clarity. (2016). *The same kind of human: Seeing the marginalized and exploited through eyes of grace*. Christine Clarity McDonald.
- McDonald, Michel. (2012). *Diary of a gay nerd: Life after child abuse, it gets better!* Michel McDonald.
- McDonough, Pat. (1996). *Without keys: My 16 weeks with the street people*. Melbourne, FL: Terra Sancta Press.
- McDowell, Christina. (2015). *After perfect: A daughter's memoir*. New York, NY: Gallery Books.
- Meek, Louise. (2012). *Blessed are the meek: From challenge to choice*. Louise Meek.
- Monette, Lisa Marie. (2014). *Homeless: Surviving a life in constant transition*. Lisa Marie Monette.
- Monk, Nathan. (2015). *Chasing the mouse: A memoir about childhood homelessness*. Nathan Monk.
- Moore, Joye. (2015). *Hopefully beautiful: "I more than survived ... I thrived."* Richmond, VA: Joyebells, LLC.
- Morais, Nelson. (2015). *From homeless to heaven*. Nelson Morais.
- Mullins, Desiree. (2014). *Almost homeless: A memoir*. Desiree Mullins.
- Murphy, Cate. (2013). *Suddenly homeless: One woman's journey*. Cate Murphy.
- Murray, Lance. (2013). *50 K chapter 1 (50k story of a heroin, book 2)*. Murray Lance.
- Murray, Liz. (2010). *Breaking night: A memoir of forgiveness, survival, and my journey from homeless to Harvard*. New York, NY: Hyperion.
- Natale, Philip. (2015). *The I of hurricane me: Stories & poems from the homeless shelters and soup kitchens on the road to recovery*. Philip Natale.
- Neal, Ta Trina. (2015). *He gave me shelter: A year of grace*. La Trina Neal.
- Nelson, Stormi. (2012). *Through the core*. Stormi Nelson.
- Neth, Scott. (2004). *Where shadows scream*. Frederick, MD: PublishAmerica.
- O'Connor, Michael. (2011). *"Kind Mike": My life on the street*. Michael O'Connor.
- Ochoa, Rich. (2011). *One way ticket to anywhere*. Richard Ochoa.

Oher, Michael (with Don Yaeger). (2011). *I beat the odds: From homelessness to the blind side and beyond*. New York, NY: Gotham Books.

Orks, Josie. (2013). *None of us*. Josie Orks.

Osteen, Lucy. (2012). *Homeless tears: Just when you thought it couldn't get worse!* Lucy Osteen.

Osteen, Lucy. (2013) *Homeless tears: Part II* (stove on the road). Lucy Osteen.

Padilla Peralta, Dan-El. (2015). *Undocumented: A Dominican boy's odyssey from a homeless shelter to the ivy league*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

Page, Dave. (1989). *I was homeless: I know the feeling*. Blue Bird Publishing.

Panesi, Louis. (2007). *121 University Place: The true story of a homeless, tortured boy and the psychiatrist who saved his life*. Pineville, NC: Pass It On Publishing.

Patrick, Gregory. (2015). *Madmanknitting -or- slip, slip, knit*. Savannah, GA: Orotund Multimedia Publishing.

Peavy, Kenny. (2014). *Young homeless professional*. Sarasota, FL: First Edition Design Publishing.

Pennington, Jerry. (2015). *Free falling: Living on the streets of America*. Jerry Pennington.

Phelps, Carissa. (2012). *Runaway girl: Escaping life on the streets*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Phill, Stanley. (2012). *Provisions unlimited*. Humble, TX: Phill Family, LLC.

Phipps, Charles. (2013). *Nearly there*. Charles Phipps.

Platinum Mike. (2016). *The hobo who couldn't catch a train*. Michael Jones.

Poduska, Bernard. (2013). *Hitchhikers*. American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications.

Porter-Truax, Mary. (2006). *Pawn on a chessboard*. Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing.

Pugh, Deborah, and Tietjen, Jeanie. (1997). *I have arrived before my words: The autobiographical writings of homeless women*. Alexandria, VA: Charles River Press.

Prendergast, John, and Mattocks, Michael. (2011). *Unlikely brothers: Our story of adventure, loss, and redemption*. New York, NY: Broadway Paperbacks.

Ramsdell, Guy. (2005). *A license to live*. West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Publishing.

- Rao, Cheeni. (2009). *In Hanuman's hands: A memoir*. New York, NY: HarperOne.
- Rashford, Robert. (2012). *Yelling into the wind*. Robert Rashford.
- Rayman-Rivera, Nanette. (2010). *To live on the wind*. Scattered Light Publications.
- Resto, Jessica. (2016). *The highway in her eyes*. Jessica Resto.
- Reynolds, Jeremy. (2013). *A sheltered life: Take it to the streets*. Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press.
- Reynolds, Jeremy. (2014). *From destitute to Ph.D.: My homeless journey*. Enumclaw, WA: Redemption Press.
- Rice, Jim Alexander. (2014). *Homeless in Hollywood*. Jim Alexander Rice.
- Rieck-Rush, Rhonda. (2015). *In my tracks: A memoir*. Lincoln, NE: Merci Lane Press.
- Rightmer, Shari. (2010). *Bunk #11: From Beverly Hills to homeless shelter*. Tulsa, OK: Blooming Twigs Books.
- Rodriguez, Daniel. (2013). *"Angels over me."* Daniel Rodriguez.
- Rodriguez, Stephanie. (1994). *Time to stop pretending: A mother's story of domestic violence, homelessness, poverty and escape*. Middlebury, VT: Paul S. Eriksson.
- Ross, Anthony Devonta. (2014). *Homeless at age 13 to a college graduate: An autobiography*. Raleigh, NC: Step One Publishing.
- Rossie, Walter, and Reisman, David. (2016). *Embracing my light*. Sherman Oaks, CA: Bright Shadow Productions.
- Rotger, Eugene. (2015). *Living under a bridge: My five years of living homeless on the streets of Miami*. Eugene Rotger.
- Ryan, Kory. (2015). *Determined: An American success story*. Kory Ryan.
- Ryder, Cass. (2016). *I just kept walking: 20 years homeless*. Titiana Publishing.
- S., Tina, and Bolnick, Jamie. (2000). *Living at the edge of the world: How I survived in the tunnels of Grand Central Station*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Sanders, Kevin Dale. (2014). *Where did my life go? A towering experience*. Kevin Dale Sanders.
- Schiller, Lori, and Bennett, Amanda. (2008). *The quiet room: A journey out of the torment of madness*. New York, NY: Grand Central Publishing.

- Sibley, John. (2011). *Being and homelessness: Notes from an underground artist*. Greenwich, CT: Wordsworth Greenwich Press.
- Simone, Arian. (2015). *My fabulous and fearless journey: From homeless to Hollywood*. Arian Simone.
- Skylar, Amber. (2013). *Colors of amber: A memoir*. Roots Publications.
- Smith, David Walter. (2011a). *...In a van down by the ocean: A homeless memoir, part 1*. Frederick, MD: America Star Books.
- Smith, David Walter. (2011b). *Street music and other love stories: A homeless memoir, part 2*. Frederick, MD: America Star Books.
- Snider, Noah. (1991). *When there's no place like home: An autobiography of the homeless*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Speaker, Carol. (2016). *Diary of a teen mother: From homelessness to homeowner in eighteen months*. Carol Speaker.
- Spider. (2013). *Hippie trippin' in the woods*. Spider.
- Stamper, Mary. (2014). *Homeless, but politically correct!* Mary Stamper. [Stamper has authored multiple other self-published e-books that contain largely identical text].
- Steele, Derek. (2010). *Addict at 10: How I overcame addiction, poverty, and homelessness to become a millionaire by 35*. Austin, TX: Synergy Books.
- Stilson, EC. (2012) *Homeless in Hawaii*. Clearfield, UT: Wayman Publishing.
- Stockes, Gwen. (1999). *Homeless and beyond: A true story*. Augusta, GA: Morris Publishing.
- Stokes, Denise. (2012). *From the crack house to the White House: Turning obstacles into opportunities*. Morrow, GA: Life's Work Publishing Company.
- Stox, Argile. (2004). *Computer-end program*. Frederick, MD: PublishAmerica.
- Stringer, Lee. (1998). *Grand Central winter: Stories from the street*. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press.
- Summers, Lauralee. (2003). *Learning from dogs without collars: A memoir*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Sumpter, Geraldine. (2017). *The memoirs of a wanderer*. Geraldine Sumpter.

- Taylor, Samantha. (2014). *A memoir: Poverty, depression, triumph*. Samantha Taylor.
- Telles, M. Lee. (2012). *Homeless in the promised land: A memoir*. M. Lee Telles.
- Thimmesch-Gill, Zane. (2015). *Hiding in plain sight*. Riverdale, NY: Riverdale Avenue Books.
- Tibbs, Gary. (2004). *I don't want to be homeless*. Maitland, FL: Xulon Press.
- Todd, Georgette. (2013). *Foster girl: A memoir*. Alala Books.
- Toncray, Kirk. (2012). *Behind the signs: A journey through homelessness*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.
- Townsend, Douglas. (2011). *Homeless in Houston*. Douglas Townsend.
- Trimiar, Aramith. (2016). *Homeless 2 homeowner: Growing from pain and failure in your pursuit of happiness*. Aramith Triamar.
- Tripp, Richard. (2007). *Please underestimate me: The blood, guts, and soul of Richard G Tripp*. Lincoln: NE: iUniverse.
- Tripp, Shailey. (2011). *Looking for inspiration*. Shailey Tripp.
- Vance, Sal. (2014). *Say no more*. Sal Vance.
- Van Kool, Mike. (2012). *Homelessness: Homeless guide*. Contento de Semrik.
- Van Valkenburgh, Marianne. (2014). *Homelessness: An adventure, a learning experience, a gift from God*. Sarasota, FL: First Edition Design Publishing.
- Wachuku, Rahima. (2014). *Homeless girls: Essays on survival*. New York, NY: McNally Jackson Publishing.
- Waghorne, James. (2007). *Silent genocide*. Dallas, TX: Dallas Homeless Neighborhood Association.
- Walker. (2015). *Train song*. Walker.
- Walls, Jeannette. (2005). *The glass castle: A memoir*. New York, NY: Scribner.
- Wambaugh, David. (2012). *The last call*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.
- Watson, Shane. (2013). *Homeless to hall of fame: An inspirational autobiography from one of America's top fishing guides*. Abbotsford, WI: Life Sentence Publishing.
- Waugh, Elisha. (2011). *Is there hope for homeless in America?* Elisha Waugh.

- Wayfaring Traveler. (2013a). *Whale rider of the tide*. Wayfaring Traveler.
- Wayfaring Traveler. (2013b). *Call to adventure*. Wayfaring Traveler.
- Wayne, Jimmy. (2014). *The walk to beautiful: The power of love & a homeless kid who found the way*. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group.
- Weigold, Jaye. (2015). *His: A memoir of abuse, forgiveness, and discovering God's love*. Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press.
- Willett, Brooke. (2015). *How to be a hobo*. Huntsville, TX: Free Press Publications.
- Williams, B.T. (2013). *Living is a full-time job: A homeless memoir*. Pittsburgh, PA: Dorrance Publishing.
- Williams, Jim. (2015). *All my friends were me: Recovery for a street bound schizophrenic*. Raleigh, NC: Lulu Press.
- Williams, Ted. (2012). *A golden voice: How faith, hard work, and humility brought me from the streets to salvation*. New York, NY: Gotham Books.
- Williamson, Bob. (2010). *Miracle on Luckie Street*. Bob Williamson.
- Wilson, Chella Xai. (2014). *How do you pack a life into a trunk?: The journal*. Plymouth, MI: Zoe Life Publishing.
- Wise, James. (2010). *My life and journey from homelessness and beyond: There is hope*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris.
- Wojnarowicz, David. (1991). *Close to the knives: A memoir of disintegration*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Xue, Elva. (2012). *The life of a homeless person*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.
- Yeiser, Bethany. (2014). *Mind estranged: My journey from schizophrenia and homelessness to recovery*. Bethany Yeiser.
- Young, Carlton. (2008). *From home to homeless to success*. Atlanta, GA: Allwrite Publishing.
- Young, Russell James. (2012). *Homeless American veteran*. Russell James Young.
- Youngreen, Thomas. (2003). *Seven months as a transient on the streets*. Victoria, B.C.: Trafford Publishing.

Zarben, Marzak. (2014). *The trees ARE growing: An Americana singer-songwriter's struggle through homelessness*. ZMZ ENT.

List of archives and collections of oral histories of homelessness

Bard, Marjorie. (1990). *Shadow women: Homeless women's survival stories*. Lanham, MD: Sheed and Ward. [Includes excerpts and narratives of hundreds of oral histories taken over decades, largely in California].

Bloomfield, Martha. (2013). *My eyes feel they need to cry: Stories from the formerly homeless*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press. [Includes life history narratives taken from an art and interview project with homeless shelter residents in East Lansing, Michigan].

Cleveland homeless oral history project. (2005). Cleveland, Ohio. [Includes hundreds of oral history recordings currently in the process of being formally archived].

DowntownDC from the Perspective of the Unhoused. (2013). Washington, DC. American University. Available at <https://downtowndc.wordpress.com/oral-histories/> [Includes 11 audio recordings and transcripts of oral histories].

Everyone Deserves a Home. (2014). San Francisco, California. Available at <https://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=1020944601> [Library exhibit includes 40 life narrative summaries].

Exploring Homelessness and Citizenship. (2016). Indiana University. Bloomington, Indiana. Available at <https://libraries.indiana.edu/exhibit-exploring-homelessness-and-citizenship> [Library exhibit includes excerpts and narratives from nine oral histories].

Facing Homelessness in Fort Wayne: A Storytelling Project to Increase Awareness. (2013). Fort Wayne, Indiana. Available from http://fortwaynehomelessness.facingproject.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2013/08/Facing-Homelessness-Full-Book-Final_IndPgs-1.pdf [Published report includes 18 life narrative summaries].

Finding Our Way: Puget Sound Stories About Family Homelessness. (2014). Seattle, Washington. Seattle University and Storycorps. Available at <http://www.firesteelwa.org/storycorps/> [Recorded nearly 100 oral histories, of which 28 edited recordings and 40 full-length interviews are part of a public digital archive].

Forgotten Fight Oral History Project. (2016). Richmond, Virginia. Available at <https://theforgottenfight.com/veteran-biographies/> [Includes nine transcribed oral histories with veterans].

Gerson, Jill. (2007). *Hope springs maternal: Homeless mothers talk about making sense of adversity*. New York, NY: Gordian Knot Books. [Includes excerpts and life history narratives based on 24 interviews with mothers of color living in New York City shelters].

Hellegers, Desiree. (2011). *No room of her own: Women's stories of homelessness, life, death, and resistance*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. [Includes narrative accounts of the life stories of fifteen homeless women, based on oral histories taken in Seattle, Washington from the 1990s through 2000s].

Invisible People. (2008-2017). Multiple locations. Available at <http://invisiblepeople.tv/blog/> [Digital archive includes more than 100 short video recordings].

Latino Homelessness Collection. (2015). Chicago, IL. DePaul University Center for Latino Research. Available at <https://las.depaul.edu/centers-and-institutes/center-for-latino-research/research/Pages/oral-histories-projects.aspx> [Includes transcribed and recorded oral histories available at the University Archive].

Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness. (2013). Santa Cruz, CA. Available at https://www.facebook.com/pg/oralhistoriesprojectsc/photos/?tab=album&album_id=235412249987618 [Digital archive includes 40 video-recorded interviews and transcripts, currently in the process of being formally archived].

Rhode Island StoryCorps: Stories from Homeless Rhode Islanders. (2014). Providence, Rhode Island. Available at <http://ripr.org/topic/rhode-island-storycorps-stories-homeless-rhode-islanders> [Includes seven audio recordings of short life history interviews].

St. Catherine University Voices of Homelessness Project. (2012). St. Paul, Minnesota. Available at http://sophia.stkate.edu/scuvoh_audio/ [Includes seven transcribed oral histories with university students].

Starecheski, Amy. (2007). *Ours to lose: When squatters became homeowners in New York City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. [Includes narratives and excerpts from oral histories with former squatters in New York City].

Stigmatized Hearts. (2014). *My journey through homelessness: The real story*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse. [Includes life narrative summaries based on oral history interviewed conducted by a graduate student collective based in San Antonio, Texas].

The Oral History of Homelessness Project. (2008-2017). Minneapolis, Minnesota. Available at <https://ststephensmpls.org/oralhistory/> [Includes more than 500 audio recordings and transcripts of oral histories, currently in the process of being formally archived].

The Seniors of St. Mary's Center. (2005). San Francisco, California. Street Spirit Newspaper. Available at <http://www.thestreetspirit.org/August2005/stmarys.htm> [Newspaper report includes seven life narrative summaries of seniors].

United Housing Connections Oral History Library. (2014). Greenville, South Carolina. Available at <http://unitedhousingconnections.org/oral-history-library/> [Includes five video-recorded interviews and 16 life narrative summaries of shelter residents].

VanderStaay, Steven. (1992). *Street lives: An oral history of homeless Americans*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers. [Includes excerpts of life history interviews with homeless people from across the US].

Veterans History Project. (2016). Seaside, California. Information available at <http://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2016/09/stand-down-recording-homeless-veterans-stories/> [Recorded more than 40 oral histories with veterans, currently being transcribed and archived].

William Lynwood Montell Oral Histories. (1985). Notre Dame University. South Bend, Indiana. Available at <http://archives.nd.edu/findaids/ead/xml/mon.xml> [Includes transcripts and recordings of oral history interviews].

Bibliography

- Abubakari, Ibrahim. (2015). *The dark side of the American Dream*. New York, NY: Ibrahim Abubakari.
- Acosta, Abraham. (2014). *Thresholds of illiteracy: Theory, Latin America, and the crisis of resistance*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Agamben, Giorgio. (2002). *Remnants of Auschwitz: The witness and the archive*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ahmed, Sara. (2013). *The cultural politics of emotion*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Alcoff, Linda. (1991). The problem of speaking for others. *Cultural Critique*, (20): 5-32.
- Alex. (Date unknown). Transcript of oral history interview. Rochester, MN. The oral history of homelessness.
- Alexander, Michelle. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Allen, Douglas. (1991). Homesteading and property rights; or, “how the West was really won.” *The Journal of Law and Economics*, 34(1): 1-23.
- Allen, John. (2004). *Homelessness in American literature: Romanticism, realism, and testimony*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Allen, Robert. (1970). *Black awakening in capitalist America: An analytic history*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Amanda. (date unknown). Transcript of oral history interview. Crookston, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Andrew. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.
- Anson, April. (2014). “The world is my backyard”: Romanticization, Thoreauvian rhetoric, and constructive confrontation in the Tiny House Movement. In William Holt (Ed.) *From sustainable to resilient cities: Global concerns and urban efforts* (pp. 289-313). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Antrone. (2012). Transcript of oral history interview. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Applied Survey Research. (2013). Santa Cruz County homeless census and survey. Watsonville, CA.

Archie. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Arnold. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, March. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Ashor, Aynoit. (2015). *Battered broken unbowed: A homeless mom's confessions and inner thoughts*. Chester, VA: Mocha Girl Publishing.

Atkinson, Rowland, and Bridge, Gary. (2004). Introduction. In Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge (Eds.) *Gentrification in a global context: The new urban colonialism* (pp. 1-17). London, UK: Routledge.

Bachelard, Gaston. (1994). *The poetics of space*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Baker, Marissa. (2012). 1978 art theft at the South Side Community Art Center. Art of a Community Speaks [blog]. Accessed from <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/artofacommunityspeaks/>

Bakker, Isabella. (2003). Neo-liberal governance and the reprivatization of social reproduction: Social provisioning and shifting gender orders. In Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill (Eds.) *Power, production, and social reproduction: Human in/security in the global political economy* (pp. 66-82). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baldwin, James. (1985). *The evidence of things not seen*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Baptist, Willie. (2011). Mohammad and the mountain. Recorded interview. Homeless Union History Project. Accessed from <http://homelessunion.wikidot.com/willie-baptist>

Baptist, Willie, and Rehmann, Jan. (2011). *Pedagogy of the poor: Building the movement to end poverty*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Barbagallo, Camille. (2017). Leaving home: Slavery and the politics of reproduction. *Viewpoint Magazine*, 5.

Baron, Jane. (2004). Homelessness as a property problem. *The Urban Lawyer*, 36(2): 273-288.

- Barrett, Michele. (1980). *Women's oppression today: The Marxist/feminist encounter*. London, UK: *Verso Books*.
- Barry. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, March. Minneapolis, MN. *The Oral History of Homelessness*.
- Bartlett, Katherine, Rhode, Deborah, and Grossman, Joanna. (2013). *Gender and law: Theory, doctrine, commentary*. New York, NY: Aspen Publishers.
- Behar, Ruth. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Bell, Morag. (2002). Inquiring minds and postcolonial devices: Examining poverty at a distance. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 92(3): 507-523.
- Benson, Konie, and Nagar, Richa. (2006). Collaboration as resistance? Reconsidering the processes, products, and possibilities of feminist oral history and ethnography. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 13(5): 581-592.
- Bernice. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, March. Minneapolis, MN. *The Oral History of Homelessness*.
- Beverly, John. (1993). *Against literature*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bezanson, Kate. (2006). *Gender, the state, and social reproduction: Household insecurity in neo-liberal times*. Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press.
- Bhabha, Homi. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Bickford, Susan. (1996). *The dissonance of democracy: Listening, conflict, and citizenship*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Bishop-Scott, Megan. (2007). *Inside the wall*. Megan Bishop-Scott.
- Black, Dan, Sanders, Seth, and Taylor, Lowell. (2007). The economics of lesbian and gay families. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 21(2): 53-70.
- Blanton, Becky. (2009). The year I was homeless. Talk presented at the TedGlobal conference in Oxford, UK.

- Blasi, Gary. (1994). "And we are not seen": Ideological and political barriers to understanding homelessness. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 37(4): 563-586.
- Blauner, Robert. (1969). Internal colonialism and ghetto revolt. *Social Problems*, 16(4): 393-408.
- Blaut, James. (1969). Jingo geography (part I). *Antipode*, 1(1): 10-15.
- Blaut, James. (1974). The ghetto as an internal neo-colony. *Antipode*, 6(1): 37-41.
- Blaut, James. (1976). Where was capitalism born? *Antipode*, 8(2): 1-11.
- Blomley, Nicholas. (2003). Law, property, and the geography of violence: The frontier, the survey, and the grid. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93(1): 121-141.
- Blomley, Nicholas. (2006). Editorial: Homelessness and the delusions of property. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31(1): 3-5.
- Bloomington Real Estate Statistics and Foreclosure Trends Summary. (2017). RealtyTrac. Accessed from <http://www.realtytrac.com/statsandtrends/in/monroe-county/bloomington>
- Blunt, Alison. (2005). Cultural geography: Cultural geographies of home. *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(4): 505-515.
- Blunt, Alison, and Dowling, Robyn. (2006): Setting up home: An introduction. In Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling (Eds.) *Home (key ideas in geography)* (pp. 1-31). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Bondi, Liz. (2005). Making connections and thinking through emotions: Between geography and psychotherapy. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30(4): 433-448.
- Bourgois, Philippe, and Schonberg, Jeffrey. (2009). *Righteous dopefiend*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bradley, Rebekah, and Davino, Katrina. (2002). Women's perceptions of the prison environment: When prison is "the safest place I've ever been". *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 26(4): 351-359.
- Bratt, Rachel, Hartman, Chester, and Meyerson, Ann. (Eds.). (1986). Introduction. From Critical perspectives on housing (pp. xi-xxi). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Brian. (2008). Transcript of oral history interview, April. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Brian and Kristin. (2008). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Brickell, Katherine. (2012a). 'Mapping' and 'doing' critical geographies of home. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(2): 225-244.

Brickell, Katherine. (2012b). Geopolitics of home. *Geography Compass*, 6(10): 575-588.

Bridenbaugh, Carl. (1964). *Cities in the wilderness: The first century of urban life in America 1625-1742*. Oakville, ON: Capricorn Books.

Brodzki, Bella. (1998). Mothers, displacement, and language. In Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Eds.) *Women, autobiography, theory: A reader* (pp. 156-160). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Bronson, Richard. (2010). Homelessness and empty homes—An American travesty. August 24, *Huffington Post*.

Brookstein, Mark. (2000). When history is history: Maxwell Street, integrity, and the failure of historic preservation law. *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, 76(3): 1847-1885.

Brown, Casey. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, November 3. St. Mungo's Oral History Project. London, UK: London School of Economics Archives.

Browne, Angela. (1993). Violence against women by male partners. *American Psychologist*, 48(10): 1077-1087.

Brown, Cupcake. (2006). *A piece of cake: A memoir*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

Buck, Philip, Toro, Paul, and Ramos, Melanie. (2004) Media and professional interest in homelessness over 30 years (1974–2003). *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 4(1): 151-171.

Burman, Erica, and Chantler, Khatidja. (2004). There's no place like home: Emotional geographies of researching 'race' and refuge provision in Britain. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 11(3): 375-397.

Burnham, Margaret. (1987). An impossible marriage: Slave law and family law. *Law and Inequality*, 5(2): 187-225.

- Burns, Bobby. (1998). *Shelter: One man's journey from homelessness to hope*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Butterfly. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.
- Byle, Anne. (2017). Tate Publishing closes its doors. *Publishers Weekly*.
- Cacho, Lisa Marie. (2012). *Social death: Racialized rightlessness and the criminalization of the unprotected*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Cadillac Man. (2009). *Land of the lost souls: My life on the streets*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Carby, Hazel. (1996). White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood. In Houston Baker, Manthia Diawara, and Ruth Lindeborg (Eds.) *Black British cultural studies: A reader* (pp. 61-86). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Carr, David. (1991). *Time, narrative, and history*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Casa. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Casanova, Ron. (as told to Stephen Blackburn). (1996). *Each one teach one: Up and out of poverty: Memoirs of a street activist*. Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press.
- CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). (2003). Costs of intimate partner violence against women in the United States. Washington, DC.
- Cece. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.
- Charlton, James. (1998). *Nothing about us without us: Disability oppression and empowerment*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Charnock, Grieg. (2010). Challenging new state spatialities: The open Marxism of Henri Lefebvre. *Antipode*, 42(5): 1279-1303.
- Chaya, Eliana. (2014). *Fashion tips for the homeless woman: The unknown homeless woman*. Eliana Chaya.
- Chin, Rita Zoey. (2014). *Let the tornado come: A memoir*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

- Christina. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, March. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Christopher. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong. (1999). Unbearable witness: Toward a politics of listening. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 11(1): 112-149.
- Chung, Hye Seung. (2001). Korean comfort women trilogy as subaltern autobiography. *Selected Papers in Asian Studies: Western Conference of the Association for Asian Studies*, 64(1): 1-24.
- Churchill, Ward. (2002). *Struggle for the land: Native North American resistance to genocide, ecocide, and colonization*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.
- Clay, Grady. (1980). *Close-up: How to read the American city*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Clegg, Sue, and Rowland, Stephen. (2010). Kindness in pedagogical practice and academic life. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 31(6), 719-735.
- Cloke, Paul, Milbourne, Paul, and Widdowfield, Rebekah. (2001). Making the homeless count? Enumerating rough sleepers and the distortion of homelessness. *Policy and Politics*, 29(3): 259-279.
- Cloke, Paul, Philo, Chris, and Sadler, David. (1991). *Approaching human geography: An introduction to contemporary theoretical debates*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Cloke, Paul, Widdowfield, Rebekah, and Milbourne, Paul. (2000). The hidden and emerging spaces of rural homelessness. *Environment and Planning A*, 32(1): 77-90.
- Close, Kerry. (2016). The depressing reason that homeownership is more profitable for men. *Time Magazine*.
- Cochran, Bryan, Stewart, Angela, Ginzler, Joshua, and Cauce, Ana Marie. (2002). Challenges faced by homeless sexual minorities: Comparison of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender homeless adolescents with their heterosexual counterparts. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(5): 773-777.
- Cohn, D'vera, Livingstone, Gretchen, Wang, Wendy. (2014). After decades of decline, a rise in stay-at-home mothers. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

- Collins, Patricia Hill. (1998). It's all in the family: Intersections of gender, race, and nation. *Hypatia*, 13(3): 62-82.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. (2002). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Colson, Nicole. (2002). Chicago's public housing residents: Kicked out. *The Socialist Worker*, June 7.
- Comaroff, Jean, and Comaroff, John. (1992). *Ethnography and the historical imagination*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Committee on Finance. (2017). An examination of foster care in the United States and the use of privatization. United States Senate, 115th Congress.
- Committee on the Judiciary. (1992). Violence against women, a majority staff report. United States Senate, 102nd Congress.
- Connell, Raewyn. (1987). *Gender and power: Society, the person and sexual politics*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Connell, Raewyn. (1992). A very straight gay: Masculinity, homosexual experience, and the dynamics of gender. *American Sociological Review*, 57(6): 735-751.
- Connell, Raewyn. (1997). Why is classical theory classical? *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6): 1511-1557.
- Connell, Raewyn. (2007). *Southern theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social science*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Connell, Raewyn, and Messerschmidt, James. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the Concept. *Gender and Society*, 19(6): 829-859.
- Corr, Anders. (1999). *No trespassing! Squatting, rent strikes, and land struggles worldwide*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Cotton, Eddy Joe. (2002). *Hobo: A young man's thoughts on trains and tramping in America*. New York, NY: Harmony Books.
- Covert, Bryce. (2014). Why it matters that women do most of the housework. *The Nation*, April 30.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6): 1241-1299.

Crossroads Rhode Island. (2011). A report on women and homelessness. Providence, RI.

Crump, Jeff. (2002). Deconcentration by demolition: public housing, poverty, and urban policy. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 20(5): 581-596.

Crystal. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, March. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Cullen, Jim. (2003). *The American dream: A short history of an idea that shaped a nation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Culler, Jonathan. (2011). *Literary theory: A very short introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Cunningham, Vinson. (2015). Humans of New York and the cavalier consumption of others. *The New Yorker*, November 3.

Curran, Winifred. (2007). 'From the frying pan to the oven': Gentrification and the experience of industrial displacement in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. *Urban Studies*, 44(8), 1427-1440.

Cutrone, Chris, Liu, Catherine, and Lucero, Greg. (2017). Marxism in the age of Trump. *Platypus Review*, 98.

Cvetkovich, Ann. (2003). *An archive of feelings: Trauma, sexuality, and lesbian public cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Dalla Costa, Mariarosa, and James, Selma. (1975). *The power of women and the subversion of the community*. Bristol, UK: Falling Wall Press.

Daniel. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.

Dannette and Wallace. (date unknown). Transcript of oral history interview. Duluth, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Darrell. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.

- Datta, Ayona. (2005). "Homed" in Arizona: The architecture of emergency shelters. *Urban geography*, 26(6): 536-557.
- Davies, R. J. (1981). The spatial formation of the South African city. *GeoJournal*, 2(2): 59-72.
- Davis, Angela. (1983). *Women, race and class*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Davis, Mike. (1990). *City of quartz: Excavating the future in Los Angeles*. London, UK: Verso.
- Daya, Shari, and Wilkins, Nicola. (2013). The body, the shelter, and the shebeen: An affective geography of homelessness in South Africa. *Cultural geographies*, 20(3): 357-378.
- Dear, Michael, and Wolch, Jennifer. (1987). *Landscapes of despair: From deinstitutionalization to homelessness*. Newark, NY: Princeton University Press.
- De Cleyre, Voltairine. (1914). Alexander Berkman (Ed.) *Selected works of Voltairine de Cleyre*. New York, NY: Mother Earth Publishing Association.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Felix. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. London, UK: Continuum.
- Delores. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.
- DePastino, Todd. (2003). *Citizen hobo: How a century of homelessness shaped America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, Jacques. (1996). *Archive fever: A Freudian impression*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Desmond, Matthew. (2012). Eviction and the reproduction of urban poverty. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(1): 88-133.
- Desmond, Matthew. (2016). *Evicted: Poverty and profit in the American city*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.
- Devault, Marjorie, and Gross, Glenda. (2012). Feminist qualitative interviewing: Experience, talk, and knowledge. In Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (Ed.) *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (pp. 206-236). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

- DeWard, Sarah, and Moe, Angela. (2010). Like a prison: Homeless women's narratives of surviving shelter. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 37(1): 115-135.
- Dobbz, Hannah. (2012). *Nine-tenths of the law: Property and resistance in the United States*. Oakland, CA: AK Press.
- Domosh, Mona. (2004). Postcolonialism and the American city. *Urban Geography*, 25(8): 742-754.
- Dordick, Gwendolyn. (1996). More than refuge: The social world of a homeless shelter. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 24(4): 373-404.
- Douglas, Mary. (1991). The idea of a home: A kind of space. *Social Research*, 58 (1): 287-307.
- Douville, Victor. (2017). Excerpt from History of St. Francis Mission—St. Francis Indian School Education from 1850's to 1993.
- Dovey, Kim. (1985). Homes and homelessness. In Irwin Altman and Carol Werner (Eds.) *Home environments* (pp. 33-64). New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Dowling, Robyn, and Power, Emma. (2013). Domesticities. In Nuala Johnson, Richard Schein, and Jamie Winders (Eds.) *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Cultural Geography* (pp. 290-303). Malden, MA: John Wiley and Sons.
- Dubois, W. E. B. (1985). Colonialism, democracy, and peace after the war. In Herbert Aptheker (Ed.) *Against racism: Unpublished essays, papers, addresses, 1887-1961 by W.E.B. Du Bois* (pp. 229-244). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Echevarría, Roberto González. (1998). *Myth and archive: A theory of Latin American narrative*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ed. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Edwards, David. (2012). Transcript of oral history interview, November 1. Washington, DC. American University Washington, DC Oral History Project.
- Eggers, Frederick, and Moumen, Fouad. (2015). American housing survey: Components of inventory change 2009-2011. United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Eighner, Lars. (1991). Travels with Lizbeth. *The Threepenny Review*, 44: 5-9.

Eighner, Lars. (1992). Eighner on-line. *The Threepenny Review*, 50: 21-21.

Eighner, Lars. (2013). *Travels with Lizbeth: Three years on the road and on the street*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Engels, Frederic. (1935). *The housing question*. New York, NY: International publishers.

Engels, Frederic. (1978). *The origin of the family, private property and the state* (trans. Lewis Morgan). Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Entmacher, Joan, Robbins, Katherine, Vogtman, Julie, and Morrison, Anne. (2014). *Insecure and unequal: Poverty and income among women and families, 2000-2013*. Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center.

Enzina, Wes. (2017). The rise and fall of a violent anti-racist group provides a glimpse into an underground movement that's poised to explode in the Trump era. May/June issue, *Mother Jones Magazine*.

Erickson, Amanda. (2012). Why can't we just convert vacant buildings into housing for the homeless? June 28, *CityLab*.

Escobar, Arturo. (2003). Displacement, development, and modernity in the Colombian Pacific. *International Social Science Journal*, 55(175): 157-167.

Eva. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Evelyn. (2008). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Fabian, Maria (with Fred Smith). (2012). *Invisible innocence: My story as a homeless youth*. Maria Fabian.

Farrugia, David, and Gerrard, Jessica. (2016). Academic knowledge and contemporary poverty: The politics of homelessness research. *Sociology*, 50(2): 267-284.

Feaster, Nkechi. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Washington, DC. American University Washington, DC Oral History Project.

Federici, Silvia. (2004). *Caliban and the witch: Women, the body and primitive accumulation*. New York, NY: Autonomedia.

Felter, Elizabeth. (1997). A history of the state's response to domestic violence. In Cynthia Daniels (Ed.) *Feminists negotiate the state: The politics of domestic violence* (pp. 5-10). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Féral, Josette. (1981). Towards a theory of displacement (trans. Kristina Dragaitis). *Substance*, 10(3): 52-64.

Ferreira, Jason Michael. (2003). *All power to the people: A comparative history of Third World radicalism in San Francisco, 1968-1974*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Fiumara, Gemma Corradi. (2013). *The other side of language: A philosophy of listening*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Flynn, Nick. (2004). *Another bullshit night in suck city*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company.

Folbre, Nancy. (2001). *The invisible heart: Economics and family values*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Foner, Eric. (1998). *The story of American freedom*. New York, NY: WW Norton and Company.

Fortier, Anne-Marie, Ahmed, Sara, Castañeda, Claudia, and Sheller, Mimi. (2003). Introduction. In Sara Ahmed, Claudia Castañeda, Annie-Marie Fortier, and Mimi Sheller (Eds). *Uprootings/regroundings: Questions of home and migration* (pp. 1-22). Oxford, UK: Berg.

Fortunati, Leopoldina. (1995). *The arcane of reproduction: Housework, prostitution, labor and capital* (trans. Hilary Creek). New York, NY: Autonomedia.

Foucault, Michel. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. New York. NY: Tavistock Publications.

Fraiman, Susan. (2017). *Extreme domesticity: A view from the margins*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Francis, Sakeenah, and Francis, Anika. (2013). *Love's all that makes sense: A mother daughter memoir*. Dundas, ON: Bridgeross Communications.

Fraser, Nancy, and Gordon, Linda. (1994). A genealogy of dependency: Tracing a key word of the U.S. welfare state. *Signs*, 19(2): 309-336.

- Friedan, Betty. (1963). *The feminine mystique*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Co.
- Furedi, Frank. (2013). *Therapy culture: Cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gardiner, Brian. (1997). Squatters' rights and adverse possession: A search for equitable application of property laws. *Indian International and Comparative Law Review*, 8: 119-157.
- Gardner, Chris (with Quincy Troupe and Mim Eichler Rivas). (2006). *The pursuit of happiness*. New York, NY: Amistad.
- Gates, Sara. (2014). People disguised as homeless ignored by loved ones on street in stunning social experiment. April 23, *The Huffington Post*.
- Gaynor, Tim. (2014). New school riders follow in tracks of the American hobo. *Aljazeera America*.
- Gelles, Richard. (1997). Theories that explain intimate violence. In Richard Gelles (Ed.) *Intimate violence in families* (pp. 126-127). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gibson, Kristina. (2011). *Street kids: Homeless youth, outreach, and policing New York's streets*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Gilmour, Charlie. (2015). New photography exhibition shows the tough reality of the now barely legal squatting movement. October 15, *The Independent*.
- Gilroy, Paul. (1993). *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ginny. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.
- Glass, Ruth. (2010). Aspects of change. In Japonica Brown-Saracino (Ed.) *The gentrification debate* (pp. 19-29). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Goetz, Edward. (2013). The audacity of HOPE VI: Discourse and the dismantling of public housing. *Cities*, 35: 342-348.
- Goff, Lisa. (2016). *Shantytown, USA*. Somerville, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gordon, Avery. (2008). *Ghostly matters: Haunting and the sociological imagination*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

- Gordon, Colin. (2009). *Mapping decline: St. Louis and the fate of the American city*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gorelick, Root. (2011). What is theory? *Ideas in Ecology and Evolution*, 4: 1-10.
- Gowan, Teresa. (2002). The exclusion/punishment nexus: How imprisonment leads to homelessness and back again. *Ethnography*, 3(4): 500-535.
- Gowan, Teresa. (2010). *Hobos, hustlers, and backsliders: Homeless in San Francisco*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gragg, Randy. (2002). Guerrilla city: A homeless settlement in Portland has its own government, urban plan, and skyline. *Architecture*, 91: 47-51.
- Graham, David. (2017). The many scandals of Donald Trump: A cheat sheet. *The Atlantic*, January 23.
- Gramsci, Antonio. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith). New York, NY. International Publishers.
- Gramsci, Antonio. (1991). Selections from the cultural writings. William Boelhower (Trans.), David Forgacs, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Eds.). Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press.
- Gray-Garcia, Lisa. (2006). *Criminal of poverty: Growing up homeless in America*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.
- Gray-Garcia, Lisa. (2007). Poverty scholarship. *Race, Poverty and the Environment*, 14(2): 61-63.
- Green, Marcus. (2002). Gramsci cannot speak: Presentations and interpretations of Gramsci's concept of the subaltern. *Rethinking Marxism*, 14(3): 1-24.
- Greene, Jody, Ennett, Susan, and Ringwalt, Christopher. (1999). Prevalence and correlates of survival sex among runaway and homeless youth. *American journal of public health*, 89(9): 1406-1409.
- Gregory. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Guha, Ranajit. (1982). On some aspects of the historiography of colonial India. In Ranajit Guha (Ed.) *Subaltern studies I: Writings on South Asian history and society* (pp. 1-7). Delhi, IN: Oxford University Press.

Guha, Ranajit. (1983). The prose of counterinsurgency. In Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak (Eds.) *Selected subaltern studies* (pp. 47-88). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Gupta, Rahila. (2014). 'Victim' vs. 'survivor': Feminism and language. *Open Democracy*, June 16.

Gutiérrez, Ramón. (2004). Internal colonialism: The history of a theory. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 1: 281-296.

Haaken, Janice, and Yragui, Nan. (2003). Going underground: Conflicting perspectives on domestic violence shelter practices. *Feminism and Psychology*, 13(1): 49-71.

Habermas, Jürgen. (1971). *Knowledge and human interests*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Halberstam, Jack. (2011) *The queer art of failure*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hall, Ron, and Moore, Denver. (2006). *Same kind of different as me*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Hall, Ruth, James, Selma, and Kertesz, Judit. (1981). *The rapist who pays the rent: Women's case for changing the law on rape*. Bristol, UK: Falling Wall Press.

Hall, Stuart. (2003). Marx's notes on method: A 'reading' of the '1857 introduction.' *Cultural Studies*, 17(2): 113-149.

Hall, Tim, and Hubbard, Phil. (1996). The entrepreneurial city: New urban politics, new urban geographies? *Progress in Human Geography*, 20(2): 153-174.

Haraway, Donna. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3): 575-599.

Haraway, Donna. (1990). A manifesto for cyborgs: Science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s. In Linda Nicholson (Ed.) *Feminism/postmodernism* (pp. 190-233). New York, NY: Routledge.

Harding, Maxwell. (2014). *Casualty: Crazy and homeless in New York City: A memoir*. North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Harding, Sandra. (2016). *Whose science? Whose knowledge?: Thinking from women's lives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Harris, Cheryl. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106(8): 1707-1791.

Hartman, Chester, Keating, Dennis, and LeGates, Richard. (1982). *Displacement: How to fight it*. Washington, DC: National Housing Law Project.

Hayden, Dolores. (1982). *The grand domestic revolution: A history of feminist designs for American homes, neighborhoods, and cities*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hayden, Dolores. (1984). *Redesigning the American dream: The future of housing, work, and family life*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company.

Hartsock, Nancy. (1983). The feminist standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism. In Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka (Eds.) *Discovering reality: Feminist perspectives on epistemology* (pp. 283-310). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Harvey, David. (1976). Labor, capital, and class struggle around the built environment in advanced capitalist societies. *Politics and Society*, 6(3): 265-295.

Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Heben, Andrew. (2014). *Tent city urbanism: from self-organized camps to tiny house villages*. Village Collaborative.

He, Shenjing. (2007). State-sponsored gentrification under market transition: The case of Shanghai. *Urban Affairs Review*, 43(2): 171-198.

Helen. (2012). Transcript of oral history interview. Book 9. St. Paul, MN. St. Catherine University Voices of Homelessness Oral History Project. Accessed from http://sophia.stkate.edu/scuvoh_audio/9

Herbert, Steve, and Beckett, Katherine. (2010). 'This is home for us': Questioning banishment from the ground up. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 11(3): 231-245.

Herman, Judith. (1992). *From trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence—from domestic abuse to political terror*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Herring, Christopher. (2014). The new logics of homeless seclusion: Homeless encampments in America's west coast cities. *City and Community*, 13(4): 285-309.

Hill, Alisa. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview, March 3. Washington, DC. American University Washington, DC Oral History Project.

Hill, Dave. (2015). Brixton's anti-gentrification protest: Identifying the problems is one thing, fixing them is another. April 28, *The Guardian*.

Hill, Robert. (2004). Institutional racism in child welfare. *Race and Society*, 7(1): 17-33.

Hirschfield, Paul. (2008). Preparing for prison? The criminalization of school discipline in the USA. *Theoretical Criminology*, 12(1): 79-101.

Hochschild, Jennifer. (1996). *Facing up to the American dream: Race, class, and the soul of the nation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hodgetts, Darrin, Cullen, Andrea and Radley, Alan. (2005). Television characterizations of homeless people in the United Kingdom. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 5(1): 29-48.

Hodgetts, Darrin, Stolte, Otilie, Chamberlain, Kerry, Radley, Alan, Nikora, Linda, Nabalarua, Eci, and Groot, Shiloh. (2008). A trip to the library: Homelessness and social inclusion. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 9(8): 933-953.

Hoffmann, Jessica. (2013). The audacity of home: Poor Magazine's new paradigm of place. *Bitch Magazine*, 57.

Hollister Free Lance. (2003). Trail of abuse preceded murder. September 30, *Hollister Free Lance*.

Hopper, Kim. (2003). *Reckoning with homelessness*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Horkheimer, Max. (1976). Traditional and critical theory. In Paul Connerton (Ed.) *Critical sociology: Selected readings*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

Hostetter, Ellen. (2010). The emotions of racialization: Examining the intersection of emotion, race, and landscape through public housing in the United States. *GeoJournal*, 75(3): 283-298.

Howard. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Huckin, Thomas. (2002). Textual silence and the discourse of homelessness. *Discourse and Society*, 13(3): 347-372.

HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development). (2007). The annual homeless assessment report to congress. Washington, DC.

Hunter, Julie, Linden-Retek, Paul, Shebaya, Sirine, and Halpert, Samuel. (2014). Welcome home: The rise of tent cities in the United States. *National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty; Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, Yale Law School*.

Illouz, Eva. (2007). *Cold intimacies: The making of emotional capitalism*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Indiana Code. (2016). Title 35, Section 45-17: Panhandling.

Institute of Medicine. (1988). Homelessness, health, and human needs. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Iris. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Irwin, John. (2013). *The jail: Managing the underclass in American society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Jacobs, Jane. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York, NY: Vintage.

Jacobs, Jane. (1996). *Edge of empire: Postcolonialism and the city*. London, UK: Routledge.

Jacobs, Margaret. (2009). *White mother to a dark race: Settler colonialism, maternalism, and the removal of indigenous children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

James, Daniel. (2000). *Doña María's story: Life history, memory, and political identity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

James, Marie (as told to Jane Hertenstein). (1998). *Orphan girl: The memoir of a Chicago bag lady*. Chicago, IL: Cornerstone Press.

James, Selma. (2012). *Sex, race and class, the perspective of winning: A selection of writings 1952-2011*. Oakland, CA: PM Press.

Jameson, Frederic. (2013). *The political unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Janet. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.

Jazeel, Tariq. (2011). The geography of theory: Knowledge, politics, and the postcolonial present. In Andrew Teverson and Sara Upstone (Eds.) *Postcolonial spaces: The politics of place in contemporary culture* (pp. 164-184). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jazz. (2012). Transcript of oral history interview. Book 6. St. Paul, MN. St. Catherine University Voices of Homelessness Oral History Project. Accessed from http://sophia.stkate.edu/scuvoh_audio/6

Jennifer. (2017). Invisible people. Toronto, Canada. Interviewed by Mark Horvath. Available at <https://invisiblepeople.tv/2017/06/jennifer-disabled-homeless-woman-toronto/>

Jeremy. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.

Joseph. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Kane, Stephanie. (2009). Homelessness in Bloomington, Indiana: A preliminary ethnographic study of Martha's House. Bloomington, IN: The Criminal Justice Methods Working Group.

Kaplan, Amy. (1998). Manifest domesticity. *American Literature*, 70(3): 581-606.

Kaplan, Caren. (1996). *Questions of travel: Postmodern discourses of displacement*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Kasinitz, Philip. (1984). Gentrification and homelessness: The single room occupant and the inner city revival. *Urban and Social Change Review*, 17(1): 9-14.

Katz, Cindi. (1996). Towards minor theory. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 14(4): 487-499.

Katz, Cindi. (2001). Vagabond capitalism and the necessity of social reproduction. *Antipode*, 33(4): 709-728.

Kawash, Samira. (1998). The homeless body. *Public Culture*, 10(2): 319-339.

Kennedy, Michelle. (2005). *Without a net: Middle class and homeless (with kids) in America*. New York, NY: Viking.

Kenyatta. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness

Kerr, Daniel. (2003). "We know what the problem is": Using oral history to develop a collaborative analysis of homelessness from the bottom up. *Oral History Review*, 30(1): 27-45.

Kerr, Daniel. (2008). Countering corporate narratives from the streets: The Cleveland Homeless Oral History Project. In Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes (Eds.) *Oral history and public memories* (pp. 231-251). Philadelphia, PN: Temple University Press.

Kevin. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.

Khan, Yasmin Sabina. (2010). *Enlightening the world: The creation of the statue of liberty*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Kimmey, Samantha. (2013). Rebecca Solnit: The self as story. *Point Reyes Light*, June 20.

Klodawsky, Fran. (2009). Home spaces and rights to the city: Thinking social justice for chronically homeless women. *Urban Geography*, 30(6): 591-610.

Klodawsky, Fran, Farrell, Susan, and D'aubry, Tim. (2002). Images of homelessness in Ottawa: Implications for local politics. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien*, 46(2): 126-143.

Kollontaï, Alexandra. (1977). *Selected writings of Alexandra Kollontai*. Toronto: George McLeod.

Koptiuch, Kristin. (1991). Third-worlding at home. *Social Text*, 28: 87-99.

Kozol, Jonathan. (1991). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York, NY: Crown Publishers.

Kozol, Jonathan. (2006). *Rachel and her children: Homeless families in America*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

Kurtz, Matthew. (2001). Situating practice: The archive and the filing cabinet. *Historical Geography*, 29: 26-37.

- Lahens. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Book 10. St. Paul, MN. St. Catherine University Voices of Homelessness Oral History Project. Accessed from http://sophia.stkate.edu/scuvoh_audio/10
- Lambeth. (2018). Apply for social housing. Retrieved from <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/housing-and-regeneration/finding-a-home/apply-for-social-housing>
- Larry. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Latin American Subaltern Studies Group. (1993). Founding statement. *Boundary*, 20(3): 110-121.
- Lawson, Victoria. (2007). Geographies of care and responsibility. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97(1): 1-11.
- Lee. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Lees, Loretta. (2012). The geography of gentrification: Thinking through comparative urbanism. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(2), 155-171.
- Lees, Loretta, Slater, Tom, and Wyly, Elvin. (2010). Introduction. In Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly (Eds.) *The gentrification reader* (pp. xi-xxiii). New York: Routledge.
- Le Espiritu, Yen. (2003). *Home bound: Filipino American lives across cultures, communities, and countries*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lefebvre, Henri. (1991). *The production of space*. Blackwell, UK: Oxford.
- LeMieux, Richard. (2009). *Breakfast at Sally's: One homeless man's inspirational journey*. New York, NY: Skyhorse Publishing.
- Lenin, Vladimir. (1971). *Lenin collected works*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Lewis, Terry. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview, March 21. Washington, DC. American University Washington, DC Oral History Project.
- Lillie. (2008). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

- Logan, John, and Molotch, Harvey. (1987). *Urban fortunes: The political economy of place*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Loomba, Ania. (2015). *Colonialism/postcolonialism*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lorde, Audrey. (2012). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.
- LouAnn. (Date unknown). Transcript of oral history interview. Willmar, MN. The oral history of homelessness.
- Louise, Regina. (2003). *Somebody's someone: A memoir*. New York, NY: Warner Books.
- Louise, Regina. (2015) Regina Louise reading "She Was All I Ever Wanted" [video file]. Listen to your Mother. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eonaXxVAAAY>
- Lugones, Maria. (2007). Heterosexualism and the colonial/modern gender system. *Hypatia*, 22: 186–209.
- Lyon-Callo, Vincent. (1999). Review. *Rethinking Marxism*, 11(3): 124-126.
- Lyons, Michal. (1996). Gentrification, socioeconomic change, and the geography of displacement. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 18(1): 39–62.
- Mack Evasion. (2001). *Evasion*. Atlanta, GA: Crimethinc Ex-Workers' Collective.
- MacKinnon, Catherine. (1989). *Toward a feminist theory of the state*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mann, Susan. (1984). Sharecropping in the cotton South: A case of uneven development in agriculture. *Rural Sociology*, 49(3): 412-429.
- Mantel, Hilary. (2017a). The day is for the living. Part one of the 2017 Reith Lectures, June 17.
- Mantel, Hilary. (2017b). Adaption. Part five of the 2017 Reith Lectures, July 15.
- Marcuse, Peter. (1986). Abandonment, gentrification, and displacement: The linkages in New York City. In Neil Smith and Peter Williams (Eds.) *Gentrification of the city* (pp. 153–177). London, UK: Unwin Hyman.
- Marcuse, Peter. (1997). The enclave, the citadel, and the ghetto: What has changed in the post-Fordist US city. *Urban affairs Review*, 33(2): 228-264.

- Marilyn. (2012). Transcript of oral history interview. City unknown, MN. The oral history of homelessness.
- Mark. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Marx, Karl. (1967). *Capital volume one: The process of production of capital*. New York, NY: International Publishers.
- Marx, Karl. (1973). *Grundrisse*. London, UK: Penguin.
- Marx, Karl. (1976). *The German ideology, including theses on Feuerbach and introduction to the critique of political economy*. New York, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Marx, Karl. (1980). Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844. (D. J. Struik, Ed.). New York, NY: International.
- Marx, Karl. (1981). *Capital: Volume three*. London, UK: Penguin.
- Mary. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.
- Massey, Doreen. (1992). A place called home. *New formations*, 17(7): 12.
- Massey, Douglas. (2007). *Categorically unequal: The American stratification system*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- May, Jon, Cloke, Paul, and Johnsen, Sara. (2007). Alternative cartographies of homelessness: Rendering visible British women's experiences of 'visible' homelessness. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 14(2): 121-140.
- Maykuth, Andrew. (1990). Doctors find a bit of the Third World in Harlem. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 22.
- McCall, Leslie. (2011). *Complex inequality: Gender, class, and race in the new economy*. New York, NY: Routledge
- McCaughey, Betsy. (2015). HUD's war against the suburbs. *The Washington Times*, June 17.
- McDonald, Michel. (2012). *Diary of a gay nerd: Life after child abuse, it gets better!* Michel McDonald.

- McDonough, Pat. (1996). *Without keys: My 15 weeks with the street people*. Melbourne, FL: Terra Sancta Press.
- McKittrick, Katherine. (2014). Mathematics black life. *The Black Scholar*, 44(2): 16-28.
- McNeill, Emily, and Hall, Crystal. (2011). The National Union of the Homeless: A brief history. The Homeless Union History Project of the Poverty Scholars Program.
- Mele, Christopher. (2000). Selling the lower east side: Culture, real estate, and resistance in New York City. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Meth, Paula. (2003). Rethinking the ‘domus’ in domestic violence: Homelessness, space and domestic violence in South Africa. *Geoforum*, 34(3): 317–28.
- Michael. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Michael. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Mieville, China. (2009). *The city and the city*. New York, NY: Random House Publishing.
- Mieville, China. (2012). “Oh London, you drama queen.” March 1, *The New York Times Magazine*.
- Mignolo, Walter. (1994). Are subaltern studies postmodern or postcolonial? The politics and sensibilities of geo-cultural locations. *Dispositio*, 19(46): 45-73.
- Millett, Larry. (2007). *AIA guide to the Twin Cities: The essential source on the architecture of Minneapolis and St. Paul*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press.
- Mintz, Sydney. (1974). *Worker in the cane: A Puerto Rican life history*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Mitchell, Don. (1992). Iconography and locational conflict from the underside: Free speech, People’s Park, and the politics of homelessness in Berkeley, California. *Political Geography*, 11(2): 152-169.
- Mitchell, Don. (1995). The end of public space? People’s Park, definitions of the public, and democracy. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 85(1): 108-133.

- Mitchell, Don. (1997). The annihilation of space by law: The roots and implications of anti-homeless laws in the United States. *Antipode*, 29(3): 303-335.
- Mitchell, Don. (2012). Tent city: Spaces of homeless survival and organizing in the American city. In Andrea Phillips and Fulya Erdemci (Eds.) *Social Housing –Housing the Social: Art, Property, and Spatial Justice* (pp. 277-306). Amsterdam, Netherlands: SKOR and Sternberg Press.
- Mohanty, Chandra. (1995). Feminist encounters: Locating the politics of experience. In Linda Nicholson and Steven Seidman (Eds.) *Social postmodernism: Beyond identity politics* (pp. 68-86). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mohanty, Chandra. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Monica. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Monk, Nathan. (2015). *Chasing the mouse: A memoir about childhood homelessness*. Nathan Monk.
- Mooney, Erin. (2005). The concept of internal displacement and the case for internally displaced persons as a category of concern. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 24(3): 9-26.
- Morris, William. (2002). *News from nowhere*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.
- Moss, Pamela (2001). Writing one's life. In Pamela Mass (Ed.) *Placing autobiography in geography* (pp. 1-21). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Moya, Paula. (2002). *Learning from experience: Minority identities, multicultural struggles*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Murray, Liz. (2010). *Breaking night: A memoir of forgiveness, survival, and my journey from homeless to Harvard*. New York, NY: Hyperion.
- Murray, Martin. (2008). *Taming the disorderly city: The spatial landscape of Johannesburg after apartheid*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- NAC (National Alliance for Caregiving). (2009). *Caregiving in the U.S.* Produced in collaboration with AARP (American Association of Retired Persons). *Washington, D.C.*

Nagar, Richa. (2002). Footloose researchers, 'traveling' theories, and the politics of transnational feminist praxis. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 9(2): 179-186.

Nagar, Richa. (2013). Storytelling and co-authorship in feminist alliance work: reflections from a journey. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 20(1): 1-18.

Nagar, Richa. (2014). *Muddying the waters: Coauthoring feminisms across scholarship and activism*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Nagar, Richa, and Geiger, Susan. (2007). Reflexivity and positionality in feminist fieldwork: Beyond the impasse. In Adam Tickell, Trevor Barnes, Jamie Peck, and Eric Sheppard (Eds.), *Politics and practice in economic geography* (pp. 267-78). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Narayan, Kirin, and George, Kenneth. (2002). Personal and folk narrative as cultural representation. In Jaber Gubrium and James Holstein (Eds.) *Handbook of interview research* (pp. 815-832). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Narayan, Uma, and Harding, Sandra. (2000). Introduction. In Uma Narayan and Sandra Harding (Eds.) *Decentering the center: Philosophy for a multicultural, postcolonial, and feminist world* (pp. vii-xvi). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

NCH (National Coalition for the Homeless). (2009). *Minorities and homelessness*. Washington, DC.

NCH (National Coalition for the Homeless). (2010). *Tent cities in America: A Pacific Coast report*. Washington, DC.

NCH (National Coalition for the Homeless). (2012). *Voting rights: Registration manual. You don't need a home to vote*. Washington, DC.

NCH (National Coalition for the Homeless). (2014). *Vulnerable to crime: A survey of hate crimes and violence committed against homeless people in 2013*. Washington, DC.

Negri, Antonio. (1991). *Marx beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse*. London, UK: Pluto Press.

NHCHC (National Health Care for the Homeless Council). (2006). *The hard, cold facts about the deaths of homeless people*. Nashville, TN.

NHLP (National Housing Law Project). (2012). *Maintaining safe and stable housing for domestic violence survivors*. San Francisco, CA.

NLCHP (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty). (2012a). *Facts on homelessness, housing, and violence against women*. Washington, DC.

NLCHP (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty). (2012b). *There's no place like home: State laws that protect housing rights for survivors of domestic and sexual violence*. Washington, DC.

Nora. (2012). Transcript of oral history interview. Book 5. St. Paul, MN. St. Catherine University Voices of Homelessness Oral History Project. Accessed from http://sophia.stkate.edu/scuvoh_audio/5

Ollman, Bertell. (2003). *Dance of the dialectic: Steps in Marx's method*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Orwell, George. (1961). *Down and out in Paris and London*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

O'Toole, Fintan. (2017). Is nothing sacred? Now Trump's White House is targeting the Statue of Liberty. *The Guardian*, August 3.

Outline Planning Permission (2006). Stockwell Park Community Trust and Network Housing Group. May 26, London, UK.

Padilla Peralta, Dan-El. (2015). *Undocumented: A Dominican boy's odyssey from a homeless shelter to the ivy league*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

Parker, David, and Dykema, Shana. (2013). The reality of homeless mobility and implications for improving care. *Journal of Community Health*, 38(4):685-89.

Pamela. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Pascoe, Cheri Jo. (2011). *Dude, you're a fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Passaro, Joanne. (2014). *The unequal homeless: Men on the streets, women in their place*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Patrick and Cece. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Peck, Jamie, and Tickell, Adam. (2002). Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode*, 34(3): 380-404.

Rahimian, Afsaneh, Wolch, Jennifer, and Koegel, Paul. (1992). A model of homeless migration: Homeless men in Skid Row, Los Angeles. *Environment and Planning A*, 24: 1317-1336.

Picture the Homeless. (2007). Homeless people count: Vacant properties in Manhattan. New York, NY.

Plaster, Joey. (2012). Imagined Conversations and Activist Lineages Public Histories of Queer Homeless Youth Organizing and the Policing of Public Space in San Francisco's Tenderloin, 1960s and Present. *Radical History Review*, 2012(113): 99-109.

Pleck, Elizabeth. (1989). Criminal approaches to family violence, 1640-1980. *Crime and Justice*, 11: 19-57.

Poitevin, Guy. (2002). Dalit autobiographical narratives: Figures of subaltern consciousness, assertion and identity. Pune, India: Centre for Cooperative Research in Social Sciences. Retrieved from <http://www.ccrss.org/dalitautobio.htm>

Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph. (1876). *What is property?: An inquiry into the principle of right and of government*. Princeton, MA: Benjamin R. Tucker.

Purser, Gretchen. (2016). The circle of dispossession: Evicting the urban poor in Baltimore. *Critical Sociology*, 42(3): 393-415.

Ranelle and Antoine. (2008). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Ratcliffe, Krista. (2005). *Rhetorical listening: Identification, gender, whiteness*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Ravenhill, Megan. (2016). *The culture of homelessness*. New York, NY. Routledge.

Ray, Nicholas. (2007). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and National Coalition for the Homeless.

Rayman-Rivera, Nanette. (2010). *To live on the wind*. Scattered Light Publications.

Real, Terrence. (1998). *I don't want to talk about it: Overcoming the secret legacy of male depression*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Redmayne Apartments. (2015). Brochure. London, UK. Retrieved from https://site-sales.co.uk/pdf/15_3873%20SS%20Redmayne%20Brochure.pdf

Relph, Edward. (1976). *Place and placelessness*. London, UK: Pion.

Renedo, Alicia, and Jovchelovitch, Sandra. (2007). Expert knowledge, cognitive polyphasia and health: A study on social representations of homelessness among professionals working in the voluntary sector in London. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 12(5): 779-790.

Resnick, Stephen, and Wolff, Richard. (1989). *Knowledge and class: A Marxian critique of political economy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Rich, Adrienne. (1984). Notes towards a politics of location. In Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (Eds.) *Feminist postcolonial theory: A reader* (pp. 29-42). New York, NY: Routledge.

Riessman, Catherine. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Riggs, Mike. (2014). Yes, police can arrest you for failing to identify yourself. *Citylab*, February 25.

Riley, Mark, and Harvey, David. (2007). Talking geography: On oral history and the practice of geography. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 8(3): 345-351.

Rita C. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Rita H. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Ritchie, Donald. (2014). *Doing oral history*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Roach, Abby. (2017). Why 'The Spoon Lady' Abby Roach is recording America's buskers [interview with Tom Powers]. *CBS Listen*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/q/segment/11385452>

Robertson, Leslie. (2007). Taming space: Drug use, HIV, and homemaking in Downtown Eastside Vancouver. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 14(5): 527-549.

- Robyn. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.
- Rodney. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- Rodriguez, Stephanie. (1994). *Time to stop pretending: A mother's story of domestic violence, homelessness, poverty and escape*. Middlebury, VT: Paul S. Eriksson.
- Roediger, David. (2006). *Working toward whiteness: How America's immigrants became white: The strange journey from Ellis Island to the suburbs*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Roman, Nan, and Wolfe, Phyllis. (1995). Web of failure: The relationship between foster care and homelessness. Washington, DC: National Alliance to End Homelessness.
- Rose, Gillian. (1993). *Feminism and geography: The limits of geographical knowledge*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rose, Gillian. (1997). Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3): 305-320.
- Rossetti, Chip. (2015). Richard Nash on the democratization of publishing. *Publishing Perspectives*.
- Rowe, Stacy, and Wolch, Jennifer. (1990). Social networks in time and space: Homeless women in Skid Row, Los Angeles. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 80: 184-204.
- Roy, Ananya. (2003). Paradigms of propertied citizenship: Transnational techniques of analysis. *Urban Affairs Review*, 38(4): 463-491.
- Rubin, Gayle. (2009). The traffic in women: Notes on the political economy of sex. In Ellen Lewin (Ed.) *Feminist anthropology: A reader* (pp. 87-106). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Ruddick, Susan. (1996). *Young and homeless in Hollywood: Mapping the social imaginary*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ryan. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Santa Cruz, CA. Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness.
- S., Tina, and Bolnick, Jamie. (2000). *Living at the edge of the world: How I survived in the tunnels of Grand Central Station*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.

- Said, Edward. (1978). *Orientalism: Western conceptions of the orient*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Said, Edward. (1983). *The world, the text, and the critic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Said, Edward. (1994). *Representations of the intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Sandoval, Chela. (2000). *Methodology of the oppressed*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Sangster, Joan. (1994). Telling our stories: Feminist debates and the use of oral history. *Women's History Review*, 3(1): 5-28.
- Schafer, John, Caetano, Raul, and Clark, Catherine. (1998). Rates of intimate partner violence in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88(11): 1702-1704.
- Schneider, Barbara, Chamberlain, Kerry, and Hodgetts, Darrin. (2010). Representations of homelessness in four Canadian newspapers: Regulation, control, and social order. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 37(4): 147-172.
- Schneider, Barbara. (2012). Sourcing homelessness: How journalists use sources to frame homelessness. *Journalism*, 13(1): 71-86.
- Schwartz, Ann. (2002). Societal value and the funding of kinship care. *Social Service Review*, 76(3): 430-459.
- Scott, Joan Wallach. (1991). The evidence of experience. *Critical inquiry*, 17(4): 773-797.
- Secombe, Wally. (1973). The housewife and her labor under capitalism. *New Left Review*, 83: 3-24.
- Sedgwick, Eve, and Frank, Adam. (2003). *Touching feeling: Affect, pedagogy, performativity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Seigel, Micol. (2018). Violence work: Policing and power. *Race and Class*, DOI: 0306396817752617.
- Sekula, Allan. (1986). The body and the archive. *October*, 39: 3-64.

Serena and Linda. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, March. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

Shabazz, James. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Washington, DC. American University Washington, DC Oral History Project.

Shafer, Jack. (2016). America's first real estate presidency. *Politico Magazine*, December 7.

Shaleen. (2012). Transcript of oral history interview. Book 2. St. Paul, MN. St. Catherine University Voices of Homelessness Oral History Project. Accessed from http://sophia.stkate.edu/scuvoh_audio/2

Sheehan, Rebecca. (2010). 'I'm protective of this yard': Long-term homeless persons' construction of home place and workplace in a historical public space. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 11(6): 539-558.

Shopes, Linda. (2014). "Insights and oversights": Reflections on the documentary tradition and the theoretical turn in oral history. *Oral History Review*, 41(2): 257-268.

Sibley, John. (2011). *Being and homelessness: Notes from an underground artist*. Greenwich, CT: Wordsworth Greenwich Press.

Siegel, Reva. (1995). The rule of love: Wife beating as prerogative and privacy. *Yale Law Journal*, 105: 2117.

Simons, Ronald, and Johnson, Christine. (1998). An examination of competing explanations for the intergenerational transmission of domestic violence. In Yael Danieli (Ed.) *International handbook of multigenerational legacies of trauma* (pp. 553-570). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Singer, Peter. (1972). Famine, affluence, and morality. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1(3): 229-243.

Sirena. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. Book 7. St. Paul, MN. St. Catherine University Voices of Homelessness Oral History Project. Accessed from http://sophia.stkate.edu/scuvoh_audio/7

Sliwinska, Basia. (2016). *The female body in the looking-glass: Contemporary art, aesthetics and genderland*. London, UK: I.B. Tauris.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. (2012). Imperialism, history, writing, and theory. In Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ed.) *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (pp. 20-43). London, UK: Zed Books.

- Smith, Neil. (1996). *The new urban frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Smith, Neil. (2016). The housing question revisited. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 15(3): 679-683.
- Smyth, Melissa. (2015). On sentimentality: A critique of Humans of New York. *Warscapes*.
- Snow, David, Anderson, Leon, and Koegel, Paul. (1994), Distorting tendencies in research on the homeless. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 37: 461-475.
- Soederberg, Susanne. (2017). The rental housing question: Exploitation, eviction and erasures. *Geoforum*, 89: 114-123.
- Soederberg, Susanne. (2018). Evictions: A global capitalist phenomenon. *Development and Change*, 0(0): 1-16. DOI: 10.1111/dech.12383
- Sokoloff, Natalie, and Dupont, Ida. (2005). Domestic violence: Examining the intersections of race, class, and gender. In Natalie Sokoloff and Christina Pratt (Eds.) *Domestic violence at the margins: Readings on race, class, gender, and culture* (pp. 1-14). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Solomon. (Date unknown). Transcript of oral history interview. Crookston, MN. The oral history of homelessness.
- Somerville, Peter. (2013). Understanding homelessness. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 30(4): 384-415.
- Sparks, Tony. (2010). Broke not broken: Rights, privacy, and homelessness in Seattle. *Urban Geography*, 31(6): 842-862.
- Speer, Jessie. (2016). The right to infrastructure: A struggle for sanitation in Fresno, California homeless encampments. *Urban Geography*, 37(7): 1049-1069.
- Speer, Jessie. (2017). "It's not like your home": Homeless encampments, housing projects, and the struggle over domestic space. *Antipode*, 49(2): 517-535.
- Speer, Jessie. (2018). The rise of the tent ward: Homeless camps in the era of mass incarceration. *Political Geography*, 62: 160-169.
- Speer, Thomas. (1997). *My father's shoes*. Tucson, AZ: Pima Press.

- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. (1985). The Rani of Sirmur. *History and Theory*, 24(3): 247-272.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Eds.) *Marxism and interpretation of culture* (pp. 271-313). London, UK: Macmillan.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. (2000). From Haverstock Hill Flat to US classroom, what's left of theory? In Judith Butler, John Guillory, and Kendall Thomas (Eds.) *What's left of theory?: New work on the politics of literary theory* (pp. 1-39). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. (2005). Scattered speculations on the subaltern and the popular. *Postcolonial Studies*, 8(4): 475-48.
- Spohn, Cassia, and Horney, Julia. (2013). *Rape law reform: A grassroots revolution and its impact*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Stabrowski, Filip. (2014). New-build gentrification and the everyday displacement of Polish immigrant tenants in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. *Antipode*, 46: 794-815.
- Stacy. (2012). Transcript of oral history interview. Book 4. St. Paul, MN. St. Catherine University Voices of Homelessness Oral History Project. Accessed from http://sophia.stkate.edu/scuvoh_audio/4
- Stark, Louisa. (1994). The shelter as “total institution”: An organizational barrier to remedying homelessness. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 37(4): 553-562.
- Stern, Steve. (2004). *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the eve of London 1998*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Stiglitz, Joseph. (2012). *The price of inequality: How today's divided society endangers our future*. New York, NY: WW Norton and Company.
- Stockdale, Charles. (2017). The most expensive city in every state. *24/7 Wall Street*, July 7.
- Stoler, Anne. (2002). Colonial archives and the arts of governance. *Archival Science*, 2(1-2), 87-109.
- Stoler, Anne. (2014) Archiving Palestine: The conceptual power of dissensus. Keynote address, Birzeit University Conference, March 24–25.
- Stone-Mediatore, Shari. (2016). *Reading across borders: Storytelling and knowledges of resistance*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Stringer, Lee. (1998). *Grand central winter: Stories from the street*. New York, NY. Seven Stories Press.
- Strong, Bryan, DeVault, Christine, and Cohen, Theodore. (2010). *The marriage and family experience: Intimate relationships in a changing society*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Strutner, Suzy. (2016). Donald Trump said U.S. airports are ‘Third World.’ Here are 11 reasons he’s wrong. *The Huffington Post*, September 28.
- Sugrue, Thomas. (2014). *The origins of the urban crisis: Race and inequality in postwar Detroit*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Swan, Suzanne, Gambone, Laura, Caldwell, Jennifer, Sullivan, Tami, and Snow, David. (2008). A review of research on women’s use of violence with male intimate partners. *Violence and Victims*, 23(3): 301.
- Tanya. (2009). Transcript of oral history interview, May. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.
- The Film Archives. (2013). Lee Stringer and Kurt Vonnegut on Grand Central Winter: Stories from the Street (1998) [video file]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gc8MIHsZRY>
- Theodore, Nik, Peck, Jamie, and Brenner, Neil. (2011). Neoliberal urbanism: Cities and the rule of markets. In Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Eds.) *The new Blackwell companion to the city* (pp. 15-25). Oxford, UK: John Wiley and Sons.
- The Unknown Homeless Woman. (2014). In Facebook [fan page]. Retrieved October 26, 2016, from <https://www.facebook.com/The-Unknown-Homeless-Woman-1418619248428321>
- Thompson, Derek. (2015). The miracle of Minneapolis. *The Atlantic Magazine*, March issue.
- Thompson, E. P. (1966). *The making of the English working class*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Thompson, Paul. (2017). *The voice of the past: Oral history*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Timothy. (2010). Transcript of oral history interview, December. Minneapolis, MN. The Oral History of Homelessness.

- Tolia-Kelly, Divya. (2004). Materializing post-colonial geographies: examining the textural landscapes of migration in the South Asian home. *Geoforum*, 35(6): 675-688.
- Torck, Daniele. (2001). Voices of homeless people in street newspapers: A cross-cultural exploration. *Discourse and Society*, 12(3): 371–392.
- Tracy, James. (2014). *Dispatches against displacement: Field notes from San Francisco's housing wars*. Oakland, CA: AK Press.
- Trafzer, Clifford, and Hyer, Joel. (1999). *Exterminate them: Written accounts of the murder, rape, and enslavement of Native Americans during the California Gold Rush*. Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.
- Troy. (Date unknown). Transcript of oral history interview. Rochester, MN. The oral history of homelessness.
- Truman, Jennifer, and Morgan, Rachel. (2015). Nonfatal domestic violence, 2003-2012. *Journal of Current Issues in Crime, Law and Law Enforcement*, 8(4).
- Tsai, Jack, Ramaswamy, Sriram, Bhatia, Shubhash, and Rosenheck, Robert. (2015). A comparison of homeless male veterans in metropolitan and micropolitan areas in Nebraska: A methodological caveat. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 48: 341-51.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1971). Geography, phenomenology, and the study of human nature. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, 15(3): 181-192.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Turner, Toko-pa. (2017). *Belonging: Remembering ourselves home*. Toko-pa Turner.
- Underwood, Jackson. (1993). *The bridge people: Daily life in a camp of the homeless*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Urban, Mike. (2014). Anti-gentrification movies beamed onto the luxury development that is going to kill the Stockwell Grosvenor. March 21, *Brixton Buzz*.
- Urban, Mike. (2015a). Brixton evictions and regeneration—The story of the Guinness Trust Estate in Loughborough Park, Brixton. April 21, *Brixton Buzz*.
- Urban, Mike. (2015b). ‘Berlin comes to Brixton’—A look around Brixton Bloc next to the Stockwell Skatepark. November 12, *Brixton Buzz*.

Vandemark, Lisa. (2007). Promoting the sense of self, place, and belonging in displaced persons: The example of homelessness. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 21(5): 241-248.

Varadharajan, Asha. (1995). *Exotic parodies: Subjectivity in Adorno, Said, and Spivak*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Veness, April. (1992). Home and homelessness in the United States: Changing ideals and realities. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 10(4): 445-468.

Veness, April. (1993). Neither homed nor homeless: Contested definitions and the personal worlds of the poor. *Political Geography*, 12(4): 319-340.

Veness, April. (1994). Designer shelters as models and makers of home: New responses to homelessness in urban America. *Urban Geography*, 15(2): 150-167

Vlasopoulos, Michael, and Phokaides, Petros. (2010). The domestication of the prison or the demonization of the house. *Thresholds*, 38: 66-69.

Wachuku, Rahima. (2014). *Homeless girls: Essays on survival*. New York, NY: McNally Jackson Publishing.

Wacquant, Loic. (1997). Three pernicious premises in the study of the American ghetto. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 21(2): 341-353.

Wacquant, Loic. (2008). *Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Wacquant, Loic. (2009). *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity*. London, UK: Duke University Press.

Wakimoto, Diana, Bruce, Christine, and Partridge, Helen. (2013). Archivist as activist: Lessons from three queer community archives in California. *Archival Science*, 13(4): 293-316.

Waldron, Jeremy. (1991). Homelessness and the issue of freedom. *University of California Los Angeles Law Review*, 39: 295-324.

Walker, Alice. (1982). *The color purple*. New York, NY: Pocket.

Walker, Richard. (1981). Theory of suburbanization: Capitalism and the construction of the urban space in the United States. In Michael Dear and Allen Scott (Eds.) *Urbanization and urban planning in capitalist society* (pp. 383-429). London, UK: Methuen.

- Ward, Ashley. (2012). Reclaiming place through remembrance: Using oral histories in geographic research. *Historical Geography*, 40: 133-145.
- Ward, Peter. (2014). The reproduction of informality in low-income self-help housing communities. In Vinit Mukhija and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (Eds.) *The informal American city: Beyond taco trucks and day labor* (pp. 59-77). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wardhaugh, Julia. (1999). The unaccommodated woman: Home, homelessness and identity. *The Sociological Review*, 47(1): 91-109.
- Watson, Julia, and Smith, Sidonie. (2001). *Reading autobiography: A guide for interpreting life narratives*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Watson, Sophie, and Austerberry, Helen. (1986). *Housing and homelessness: A feminist perspective*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Webster, Wendy. (1998). *Imagining home: Gender, "race," and national identity, 1945-64*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Weeks, Kathi. (2011). *The problem with work: Feminism, Marxism, antiwork politics, and postwork imaginaries*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Weinbaum, Batya, and Bridges, Amy. (1976). The other side of the paycheck: Monopoly capital and the structure of consumption. *Monthly Review*, 28(3): 88-103.
- Wells, Christopher. (2009). "Separate Spheres." In Kowaleski-Wallace, Elizabeth (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of feminist literary theory* (p. 519). London, UK: Routledge.
- Western, John. (1996). *Outcast Cape Town*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- WFHB News. (2015). "Disrespecting the area": The changing legality of public sleeping, in Bloomington and beyond. Retrieved from <http://wfhb.org/news/disrespecting-the-area-the-changing-legality-of-public-sleeping-in-bloomington-and-beyond/>
- White, Hayden. (1980). The value of narrativity in the representation of reality. *Critical inquiry*, 7(1): 5-27.
- Wilder Research. (2009). *Homeless children and their families*. St. Paul, MN: Amherst Wilder Foundation.
- Willett, Brooke. (2015). *How to be a hobo*. Huntsville, TX: Free Press Publications.

- Williams, Andrea. (2017). The house that Jane built: Domesticity and the single girl. Talk presented at the conference of the National Women's Studies Association, November 18.
- Williams, Brett. (1999). "There goes the neighborhood": Gentrification, displacement, and homelessness in Washington, DC. In Anna Dehavenon (Ed.) *There's no place like home: Anthropological perspectives on housing and homelessness in the United States* (pp. 145-63). Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Williams, Jean. (1998). Domestic violence and poverty: The narratives of homeless women. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 19(2): 143-165.
- Williams, Jean. (2005). The politics of homelessness: Shelter Now and political protest. *Political Research Quarterly*, 58(3): 497-509.
- Williams, Raymond. (1977). *Marxism and literature*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Paperbacks.
- Williams, Raymond. (1989). *Resources of hope: Culture, democracy, socialism* (Ed. Robin Gable). New York, NY: Verso.
- Willse, Craig. (2015). *The value of homelessness: Managing surplus life in the United States*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Wilson, Elizabeth. (1992). *The sphinx in the city: Urban life, the control of disorder, and women*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Wojnarowicz, David. (1991). *Close to the knives: A memoir of disintegration*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Wolfe, Patrick. (1999). *Settler colonialism and the transformation of anthropology: The poetics and politics of an ethnographic event*. London, UK: Cassell.
- WRAP (Western Regional Advocacy Project). (2012). History of slashing HUD budget. San Francisco, CA.
- Wyly, Elvin, Atia, Mona, Foxcroft, Holly, Hammel, Daniel, and Phillips-Watts, Kelly. (2006). American home: Predatory mortgage capital and neighborhood spaces of race and class exploitation in the United States. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 88(1): 105-132.
- Xun, Lu. (2017). *Jottings under lamplight*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Yates, Pamela, and Kinoy, Peter. (1990). *Takeover*. New York, NY: Skylight Pictures.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. (2012). Dialogical epistemology—An intersectional resistance to the “oppression olympics”. *Gender and Society*, 26(1): 46-54.

Zahira. (2013). Transcript of oral history interview. *Not the Other: Oral Histories of People Experiencing Homelessness*. Santa Cruz, CA.

Zeitchik, Stephen. (2004). Authors allege publisher deception. *Publishers Weekly*.

Zhao, Jin. (2012). Why we should care about the homeless vote. *Alternet*.

Zinn, Maxine Baca. (1994). Feminist rethinking from racial-ethnic families. In Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill (Eds.) *Women of color in US society* (pp. 303-314). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press

Vita

EDUCATION

- PhD Geography, Syracuse University, 2018
Dissertation: Losing home: Housing, displacement, and the American dream
Summa cum laude, with distinction
- MA Geography, Syracuse University, 2014
Thesis: Right to the tent city: The struggle over urban space in Fresno, California
Summa cum laude, with distinction
- JD New College of California School of Law, 2008
- BA Philosophy and Creative Writing, University of Arizona, 2004
Honours Thesis: Thirty poems of recollection
Summa cum laude, with honours

RESEARCH

PEER REVIEWED JOURNALS

Published/In Press/Accepted

Speer, J. (2018). Urban makeovers and the aesthetic of anti-homeless politics. Accepted at *Social and Cultural Geography*.

Hennigan, B. and Speer, J. (2018). Compassionate revanchism: The blurry geography of homelessness in the USA. *Urban Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018762012>

Speer, J. (2018). The rise of the tent ward: Homeless camps in the era of mass incarceration. *Political Geography*. 62: 160-169.

Speer, J. (2017). "It's not like your home": Homeless encampments, housing projects, and the struggle over domestic space. *Antipode*. 49(2): 517-535.

Speer, J. (2016). The right to infrastructure: A struggle for sanitation in Fresno, California homeless encampments. *Urban Geography*. 37(7): 1049-1069.

Review Articles and Commentaries

Hamlin, M. and Speer, J. (2017). The politics of conceptualizing the carceral: A commentary on Moran et al. (2017). *Progress in Human Geography*.

Speer, J. (2016). Book review: Renewing Europe's Housing (edited by R. Turkington and C. Watson, 2014, Policy Press). *People, Place and Policy*. 10(2): 188-190.

Speer, J. (2016). Film review: The Homestretch (by A. de Mare and K. Kelly, 2014, Kartemquin Films). *H-Net Reviews*.

Speer, J. (2015). Book review: Henri Lefebvre: Spatial Politics, Everyday Life and the Right to the City (by C. Butler, 2013, Routledge). *The AAG Review of Books*. 3(1): 4-5.

Speer, J. (2015). Book review: Urban Interstices: The Aesthetics and the Politics of the In-between (edited by A. M. Brighenti, 2013, Ashgate). *Emotion, Space and Society*. 14: 43-44.

PUBLIC GEOGRAPHY

Speer, J. (2017). Guest column on the politics of homelessness. *The Herald-Times*. Aug 1.

Speer, J. (2013). City of Fresno declares war on the poor. *The Community Alliance*. Sep 1.

Scott, S. and Speer, J. (2010). Righting wrongful convictions. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Fall: 59-60.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2017-2018	ACLS/Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowship
2016	Roscoe Martin Award, Syracuse University
2015	Sopher Memorial Award, Syracuse University
2012, 2014	Syracuse University Graduate Fellowship
2013-2017	Maxwell School Dean's Research Award, Syracuse University
2013	Graduate Assistantship, Syracuse University
2006-2008	New College of California Public Interest Scholarship

INVITED TALKS AND WORKSHOPS

Speer, J. (2016). Reading race and housing through narratives of homelessness. Sponsored talk, Critical Ethnic Studies Symposium, Indiana University–Bloomington. Mar 30.

Speer, J. (2016). “They all seem to speak louder than me:” Homelessness, subalternity, and the struggle to be heard. Workshop on Race, Place, and Capital, Department of Political Science, Ohio State University. Nov 18-19.

Speer, J. (2016). Homeless encampments, capitalist aesthetics, and urban resistance. Sponsored talk, American Studies Department, Indiana University–Bloomington. Oct 5.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Speer, J. (2017). Race, gender and homelessness: Memoirs of contemporary displacement. Paper presented at the National Women’s Studies Association Annual Conference. Nov 15-19.

Speer, J. (2017). Analytical use of autobiography and autoethnography. Panellist at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Apr 5-9.

Speer, J. (2016). Memoirs of the street: Interrogating subalternity through Lee Stringer’s Grand Central Winter. Paper presented at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Mar 29-Apr 2.

Speer, J. (2015). Stigma, space, and the capitalist aesthetic: Representations of homeless encampments in Fresno, California. Paper presented at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Apr 21-25.

Speer, J. (2015). Ethnography and critical Human Geography. Invited panellist at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Apr 21-25.

Speer, J. (2014). “Crazy and homeless”: Mental illness as a category of control. Paper presented at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Apr 8-12.

Speer, J. (2014). Doing Marxist geography: The relevance of Volume I. Invited panellist at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Apr 8-12.

Speer, J. (2014). Right to infrastructure: The struggle for sanitation in Fresno, California homeless encampments. Paper presented at the Dimensions of Political Ecology: Conference on Nature/Society. Feb 27-Mar 1.

Speer, J. (2013). Writing the illegible: Pre-ethnographies on homeless encampments. Paper presented at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Apr 9-13.

Speer, J. (2012). Right to the (tent) city: Homeless encampments in Fresno, California. Paper presented at the Conference on Critical Geography. Nov 2-4.

TEACHING

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

2014	GEO 273: Global Political Economy, Syracuse University
2013	GEO 103: Environment and Society, Syracuse University
2007-2008	Legal Research and Writing, New College of California School of Law

SERVICE

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

Media Engagements

2016 Interview on the politics of homelessness. WTIU Public Television and WFIU Public Radio, affiliates of PBS and NPR. Bloomington, IN. Oct 5.

2013 Interview on the politics of homelessness. KFCF Free Speech Radio, affiliate of Pacifica Radio. Fresno, CA. Sep 4.

Scholarly Referee

Urban Geography, 2016, 2018

Literary Geographies, 2016

Theory, Culture, and Society, 2015

Journal of Housing and the Built Environment, 2014

Panels Organized

Rodríguez-Argüelles Riva, S. and Speer, J. (2017). On the fringes in an age of Trump: Transnational approaches to contemporary colonial violence against women of color. National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference. Nov 15-19.

Aijaz, A. and Speer, J. (2016). Geography and literature: Sessions I-IV. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Mar 29-Apr 2.

Goldfischer, E. and Speer, J. (2016). Life on the margins of home: Sessions I-III. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Mar 29-Apr 2.

Speer, J. and Stein, S. (2015). Urban homelessness: Perception, representation, and theory. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Apr 21-25.

Sertzen, P. and Speer, J. (2015). Geoslam. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Apr 21-25.

Hennigan, B. and Speer, J. (2014). Integrating the geographies of homelessness. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Apr 8-12.

Professional Associations

National Women's Studies Association
Association of American Geographers
California Bar Association
Phi Beta Kappa International Honor Society

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2014-2015	Member. Graduate Students United, Syracuse University
2014-2015	Member. Feminist Pedagogy Working Group, Syracuse University
2015	Guest lecturer. Cultural Geography, Syracuse University
2012-2015	Member. Future Professoriate Program, Syracuse University
2012-2015	Member. Graduate Student Organization, Syracuse University
2007	Articles editor. New College of California Public Interest Law Journal