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Planted: Placemaking as Political Action in Slavery's Wake

Introduction

Afro-pessimism scholars and critical race theorists argue that in spite of the end of formal racial slavery, institutions and structures continue to perpetuate white violence and domination, resulting in Black subjection.¹ The organization and distribution of space is one such institution. Beginning with formal racial slavery, spatial arrangements fortified grossly unequal racial relationships.² For example, enslavers geographically separated enslaved people from their homelands, denying them a sense of spatial permanence. On highly regulated plantation space, owners and overseers violently controlled Black bodily movement. The decadent Big House contrasted with the ramshackle slave quarters in order to reify notions of White and Black worth. Though formal racial slavery in the United States ended in the 19th century, spatial discrimination did not. Rather, dehumanizing spatial arrangements changed form and manifested differently as time progressed. Examples include institutions such as sharecropping farms, Jim Crow laws, redlining, and, today, predatory lending practices, long waits for affordable housing, segregated neighborhoods, and gentrifying city spaces.³ Given the extent to which spatial structures uphold racial injustice, can we shift unequal racial dynamics by resisting or transforming these spatial arrangements?

While scholars generally agree that spatial arrangements perpetuate oppression, they disagree on the extent to which individuals are able to resist the disciplinary mechanisms of these spaces. Some argue that individual spatial defiance, such as occupying unauthorized spaces, is futile because it is unable to counter the regime of anti-Black violence.⁴ Others assert

that spatial experiences matter a great deal. Throughout history, Black people have not only defied anti-Black spatial codes, but have forged their own sense of place and meaningful connections to a multiplicity of sites.⁵ Others, like Saidiya Hartman, take a careful, moderate approach. Hartman argues that everyday spatial practices and small acts of spatial resistance, even during slavery, were of consequence because they momentarily re-humanized; these acts formed spaces where enslaved people could air desires and grievances, provided sites of pleasure, and inconspicuously fractured the dominant structure.⁶ Yet, Hartman maintains that spatial resistance operates more as a form of redress than of social transformation.⁷ This is because these acts were personal, performative, pedestrian, and decidedly outside of the realm of the political contestation.⁸ In fact, Hartman considers it inappropriate to treat these acts as a form of “proper” politics because enslaved people could not bring their needs and claims to the state.⁹ How, she asks, “Does one contest the ideological codification and containment of the bounds of the political” when the political itself keeps a dominated group firmly outside of politics?¹⁰ Casting the political as a limited realm for those who are excluded, Hartman leaves the question of the political behind, instead making a conscious choice to focus on every day, utopian acts of freedom rather than movements for formal equality. While this choice allowed her to complicate the narrative of emancipation, it also left the question she posed unanswered. If making place is an effective tool of everyday resistance, might it be a mechanism through which one can actually contest the bounds of the political? Is it possible for placemaking to begin to recognize and rectify slavery’s breach and its devastating aftermath?

In this paper, I take up these questions. I argue that placemaking can become a form of political action that pushes toward social transformation. Placemaking as political action differs from placemaking as personal resistance in several ways. Placemaking as resistance is often covert, immaterial, and temporary. Those engaging in the everyday practice of placemaking may or may not have a coherent, fortified intent or larger end goal driving the action.

Placemaking as political action is public, material, and seeks to permanently alter spatial understanding. This sort of placemaking is often driven by a larger goal, such as changing the way a space is interpreted or experienced, forcing a public reckoning with current and past spatial injustices, and imagining or implementing a new spatial order. This may include a “dominated” group using new spatial imaginations to insist that the state address their needs and interact with them as political actors, thereby shifting or expanding political boundaries.

In order to ground an otherwise abstract discussion of placemaking and politics, I articulate these concepts through concrete sites and cases. After defining placemaking, I first show how physical spaces can act almost agentially to shape human behavior, relationships, and self-perception. To do so, and to begin to illustrate the link between past and present racial, spatial injustices, I demonstrate the ways in which material spaces played a pivotal role in the fracturing of Black humanity and kinship structures during formal racial slavery. Then, leaning on Hartman, I examine enslaved people’s practice of “stealing away” to further delineate how placemaking can operate as a form of personal resistance. Rather than simply recapitulating Hartman’s argument, this section serves two purposes. First, this section offers an example wherein individual and communal interaction negotiated a dominant, violent, and controlling space.¹¹ The second purpose of this section is to demonstrate how enslaved people

used placemaking as personal resistance to defy their classification as property and challenge slavery's destruction of familial ties. These themes will help draw a distinction between the spatial resistance Hartman delimits and the placemaking as political action I argue is a promising avenue for structural change.

In the third section of the paper, articulate the concept of placemaking as political action through a case study of Moms for Housing. Moms for Housing is a collective of marginally housed and un-housed women in Oakland, California who publicly occupied a vacant property owned by a real estate corporation.¹² Through an analysis of videos, photographs, and social media posts, I show that Moms for Housing moved beyond spatial resistance to the realm of political action. Moms for Housing connected their own spatial struggle to the ways in which space, specifically the institution of private property, played a foundational role in Black dehumanization, marginalization, and family annihilation in the past. Their publicly documented placemaking troubled the dominant understanding of private property and family, forced a reckoning with past spatial injustices, and imagined a new way to organize housing and home ownership in the United States. In doing so, Moms for Housing used placemaking to contest the bounds of the political and to insist they be treated as citizens with legitimate claims to state resources. Finally, I conclude by suggesting that placemaking as political action is a fruitful mechanism for contesting spatial injustices, pursuing social transformation, and altering notions of what it means to be politically included.

Defining Placemaking

Before moving on, I want to clarify exactly what I mean by the term “placemaking” in this paper. While places exist all around us, they are not empty material realities where human activity takes place. Rather, places are sites with which we associate certain behaviors and emotions that we come to understand as significant and meaningful in different ways. They ground our memories and encounters, help us forge a sense of belonging, and influence our understanding of ourselves.¹³ We all experience places simply by living, but we can also “make place,” or engage in placemaking, in a variety of interconnected ways. The first of these involves the design of the physical space itself. Designers, planners, and architects craft spaces that incorporate specific sensory codes that organize our spatial experience. These “placemakers” can arrange spaces to solidify and reinforce power structures by disciplining individuals to act in a certain manner or perceive themselves in a certain way.¹⁴

However, these proscriptive spatial codes are only one part of a space’s story. Individuals who encounter spaces also shape them through repeated actions and feelings. Sometimes, these behavioral and emotional responses align with the way the space is designed, producing the space as coherent. However, while a space may be coded in an attempt to order life in a particular way, these codes can also be resisted, ignored, or remade. Thus, individual or collective actors can also engage in placemaking by experiencing the space in ways that are antithetical to the way the space is conceived.¹⁵ Finally, we understand places through cultural signs and symbols that inform our understanding of particular and similar spaces.¹⁶ We make places through perpetuating or negotiating these elements- the design of the physical space, how individuals act in and experience the space, and the cultural signs and symbols of the space- and the relationship between them.¹⁷ We might say that we engage in placemaking

when we alter one of these elements such that it shifts the space's overall meaning for an individual, group, or larger society.

Spatial Violence in Slavery and Its Afterlife

Though we influence place by negotiating its various elements, material spaces do play a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining power structures because spaces shape behavior, relationships, and self-perception.¹⁸ Though this paper's primary concern, placemaking as political action, is more contemporary, I illustrate the power of material space first by returning to the spaces of slavery. The reason for this is two-fold. First, as I argue in this section, modern racial inequality in the United States is materially and historically rooted. While the physical forms of the spaces that subject Black people have changed, many of the mechanisms of spatial control remain the same.¹⁹ Additionally, as I demonstrate in the third section of the paper, placemaking as political action is intimately connected with spatial injustices of the past. In this section, I illustrate some of these injustices and their effects. I combine spatial scholarship that maintains that space is formative to our sense of self and notions of belonging with Afro-pessimism discourse that explores chattel slavery's ontological and dehumanizing consequences. More specifically, I examine the ways in which the hold of the slave ship and the plantation used displacement and control to sever African place-based and familial ties, thereby working to transform enslaved people into property.²⁰

Many Afro-pessimism scholars argue that hold of the slave ship was a site of ontological metamorphosis that erased African humanity. The ship facilitated the severing of place-based and familial roots, resulting in a "socially dead" people that could be remade as property.²¹ Of

course, the slave ship was the vessel that geographically separated people from their homeland and sites of meaning.²² However, the hold was also the site of symbolic displacement. Enslavers brought captured Africans to the ship as people. As they crossed the threshold, enslavers recorded their weights as property values, ignoring their names, places of origin, and familial relationships. This refusal to record an individual's home was a lack of recognition of a place of origin and was intended to erase Black sense of place and facilitate a sense of "placelessness," a feeling that one does not belong.²³ Additionally, the hold was the site of what Hortense Spillers calls familial annihilation.²⁴ Families were spatially separated in the ship's hold, but their kinship networks were also figuratively destroyed, ignored in the ship manifest.²⁵ These erasures of place and family were acts of violence that attempted to remake the enslaved person as placeless, kinless property, a cargo item that could be owned, accumulated, and traded.²⁶

The space of the plantation perpetuated the enslaved person's dehumanization through an ongoing sense of placelessness and legal denial of family. The tight spatial codes of the plantation ceaselessly and often violently managed Black bodily movement. In addition, individuals faced the pervasive threat that one could be bought, sold, or traded away. Together, these mechanisms of control restricted the enslaved person's ability to forge meaningful connections with the spaces in which they lived their lives and discouraged Black people from feeling any sense of belonging. The plantation also denied familial ties to enslaved people by interrupting bonds forged by blood relationships.²⁷ While a White child "belonged" to his mother and father, the Black child born into slavery fully "belonged" neither to his blood parents nor to the slave holder. While his biological mother and father loved and perhaps even raised him, the child could not "belong" to his parents because, as property, they could not

hold their own property. The child could be taken from them at any time. Yet, while the child legally “belonged” to the slave owner, the bond was one of proprietorship rather than human love. For some scholars, these racially differentiated legal applications of “property” and “belonging” meant that on the plantation, the birth of a child represented not the formation of a family, which loses meaning in this space, but the reach of White violence and property under slavery.²⁸

Despite legal emancipation, white violence and domination continue in slavery’s “afterlife,” or the perpetuation of anti-Black violence in the present day, through institutions and structures that facilitate Black subjection.²⁹ In many ways, contemporary spaces, policies, and practices like predatory lending, long waits for affordable housing, the loss of privacy in exchange for shelter, and heavy police presence in predominantly Black neighborhoods continue to make it difficult to create a sense of meaning or belonging in place or to establish a rooted, private family life. For example, the constant threat of dislocation, prevalent on the plantation, prevails for many Black families today. In middle class neighborhoods, banks use legal but predatory lending to divest Black families of their homes. Real estate investors subsequently buy this foreclosed property, driving up housing prices.³⁰ Meanwhile, in poor neighborhoods, some local governments purposefully allow Black spaces to infrastructurally decay, a practice some scholars call a “managed decline” or “urbicide.” This allows governments to cast places and their inhabitants as underdeveloped and disposable so they can justify “revitalization” efforts that drive up real estate prices.³¹ Such structural conditions force families to move constantly in search of affordable, temporary shelter.³² Not only does housing insecurity place people in positions of precarity, but it also breaks bonds of proximity and

extinguishes place-based relationships between extended families and neighbors.³³ Like slavery's spatial order, today's spatial processes orchestrate Black displacement and the breaking of social bonds.

Placemaking as Resistance

How does one resist this racialized, spatialized violence? If spaces of slavery and its afterlife facilitate Black subjection, then altering these spaces is one way to resist this violence. In the story I have told so far, I focused on the ways in which spatial design solidifies and reinforces power structures by disciplining individuals to act in a certain manner or perceive themselves in certain ways. In particular, I argued that anti-Black spaces severed place-based and family relationships in an effort to produce enslaved people as property and to perpetuate racial structural inequality today. However, a space's design and its proscriptive codes, while powerful elements of place, are not deterministic. Rather, individuals and groups can experience a space in ways that may or may not align with these codes. Individuals and groups make place through repeatedly living the space differently. Therefore, placemaking is one way to resist spatialized violence because placemaking can subvert and change the spaces that facilitate this violence.

Yet, there is a difference between subverting space and changing it. There needs to be an important distinction between defying spatial norms to seize a moment of freedom and using spatial transgression as a way to demand a political paradigm shift. I articulate this difference through a reading of Hartman's take on "stealing away." Stealing away refers to instances where enslaved people defied the plantation's rules in order to gather together at night.³⁴ Stealing away was a form of placemaking. Enslaved people acted antithetically to the

plantation's proscribed codes, secretly altering the plantation space by challenging its ability to strip them of place and kinship and construct them as property. As I demonstrate, this is an example of placemaking as resistance³⁵ rather than placemaking as political action because enslaved people did not engage in a public reimagining of the spatial conditions or use placemaking to expand the bounds of politics.

Through stealing away, enslaved people defied spatial codes and challenged the notion that they were property.³⁶ Spatial norms on the plantation were highly regulatory, often proscribing when enslaved people could occupy different spaces. The plantation as a coherent space depended upon enslaved people feeling that these norms were binding and obeying accordingly. An enslaved person's decision to steal away did two things. First, it complicated the meaning of plantation space because the enslaved person's actions were antithetical to the plantation's spatial codes. Second, stealing away as a *willful* refusal of the spatial norms played on the paradox of the enslaved person's identity as property. The decision to steal away and the act of doing so reconstituted the enslaved person as a willful self and falsified the premise that she had been re-made into a thing.³⁷ Furthermore, the moment of spatial contestation revealed the original theft. If the enslaved person could steal herself from her master, then it followed that he had once stolen her.³⁸ Stealing away, then, was more than a mere refusal of spatial norms. It carried ontological significance. Through the act of spatial defiance, enslaved people could emerge and recognize one another as a self rather than a thing and forge relationships with others on the basis of that humanity.

Stealing away began as an act of spatial defiance but culminated in an act of placemaking wherein enslaved people ascribed new feelings to the plantation space. When

enslaved people stole away, they gathered with others to discuss issues of concern, sing, speak, love, or argue.³⁹ These actions temporarily transformed the spaces where they met from sites of drudgery, violence, and regulation to spaces of community. In this newly made place, enslaved people could negotiate human connections that existed outside of the normative white family and hidden from their view. I want to be clear that I am not claiming that the community forged through stealing away is an example of a “family” that triumphed over slavery’s destruction of biological ties. As Spillers notes, this forced kinship system could not replicate family relations prior to slavery, nor were these connections socially or legally recognized as families.⁴⁰ Rather, I am arguing that through the act of placemaking, enslaved people created a space of connection and community antithetical to plantation codes. This space of social energy and kinship produced the plantation as what Gillian Rose calls paradoxical space. That is, the space becomes understood through dual meanings that are simultaneously occupied.⁴¹ The words, actions, relations, and imaginations during those instances of stealing away generated new memories of the plantation that came to exist alongside the everyday work and violence. In the light of day, the places of stealing away became sites of violence, joy, fear, and love at the same time. As such, the shift in the meaning of plantation space continued after the act of stealing away had ended. By shifting the space that designated them property, enslaved people both reasserted human agency and connection with others.

For Hartman, spatial defiance and placemaking in a totalizing system like slavery are important for the possibilities they create and the pleasures they bring. However, they are unable to enact meaningful structural change. Hartman contends that stealing away was a

fleeting moment that was rendered powerless by its impermanence. At the end of the gathering, the communal space dispersed and was subsumed under the domination of the plantation. Furthermore, Hartman argues that any form of defiance was circumscribed by slavery's violence. To resist the plantation's violent order, enslaved people risked punishment. Therefore, fear overshadowed the positive emotions and agential decisions generated by stealing away.⁴² In the end, Hartman rules these small resistances inadequate, not because they failed, but because the terror and transience of the placemaking rendered it futile for any meaningful sort of social transformation.

What Hartman is pointing to is that placemaking was important as an act of *resistance* under slavery; however, slavery's violent reality circumscribed enslaved people's ability to use placemaking as a *political action*. In stealing away, we see enslaved people engaging in placemaking as resistance by momentarily refusing spatial control by acting or feeling in ways that resist the dominant plantation codes. At a minimum, enslaved people acted willfully in defying spatial norms, asserting a sense of agency that in and of itself refused the premise that an enslaved person was property. In addition to this ontological importance, engaging in placemaking as resistance allowed enslaved people to forge the sense of place and community that the plantation sought to deny them, thereby changing the ways that they understood and experienced these spaces. But enslaved people engaged in placemaking secretly in order to avoid detection and punishment. This meant that no one else, such as White enslavers, were forced to reckon with the ways in which this placemaking challenged the notion of the enslaved person as placeless, kinless, property. Thus, while placemaking as resistance was undeniably important, it was limited in its power to permanently alter anti-Black structural spaces, to

change the way others understood these spaces, or to make these spaces an issue of politics. Put in terms of spatial theory, this sort of placemaking shifted a space's meaning for those individuals who engaged in the resistance but did not change the cultural signs and symbols of the space or dismantle the space's design in a way that altered the overall structural conditions.

The distinction I draw is not intended to discount personal everyday resistances as trivial or inconsequential. There is a rich body of literature, including Hartman's work, that details the potency and effectiveness in veiled, pedestrian acts of defiance.⁴³ Nor is it to assert that the line between placemaking as personal resistance and placemaking as political action is stark and fixed. Certainly, an act of resistance can morph into or set the stage for political action. Yet, resistance in and of itself is not inherently political. While resistance is often a negotiation of power, however miniscule, power alone is not sufficient criterion to treat something as political.⁴⁴ Instead, what I argue here is that acts of placemaking as political action are political specifically because they are connected to the way we order our collective life and they use place to raise fundamental questions about equal membership in a collective, access, and freedom.⁴⁵

Placemaking as Political Action in Slavery's Wake

I want to turn now from placemaking as resistance to what I am calling placemaking as political action. Placemaking as political action is public, material, and seeks to address injustices embedded in spatial norms by altering the dominant understandings of a given space. I will take each component in turn in order to explain how this form of placemaking differs from the placemaking as personal resistance discussed in the previous section. First, unlike

placemaking as resistance, which can occur clandestinely, placemaking as political action is public facing. Groups or individuals document and disseminate the way they act, feel, and experience a space and may articulate why that place carries importance. This public expression suggests to others that there is more than one way to understand the space. Placemaking as political action is typically material. Often, a group or individuals will occupy, take residence in, or otherwise change the physical reality of the built environment. This element of placemaking as political action is important because it forces a public reckoning with the space itself and the way the individuals or group experience the space. The materiality of the act makes it difficult to ignore. Finally, placemaking as political action seeks to draw attention to legacies of spatial injustice and how those legacies manifest in contemporary space. The action may be designed to underscore to the ways that spatial norms perpetuate other inequalities, such as who is regarded as a citizen or who has a legitimate claim to state resources. It is clear that placemaking as political action seeks not just to defy spatial codes but works to shift each of the three elements that constitute place-design, lived experience, and cultural representation. In so doing, placemaking as political action produces a space that is incoherent vis-à-vis dominant spatial codes. From this incoherence, groups can offer a new and transformed understandings of the space that addresses spatial and political injustice and exclusion.

I articulate placemaking as political action through a case study of Moms for Housing. Moms for Housing is a collective of marginally housed and unhoused women in Oakland, CA who moved into a vacant home to protest the lack of affordable housing in the area. I show that Moms for Housing's activism is an example of placemaking as political action because "The

Moms” publicly occupied a home in order to force a reckoning of past and present racial, spatial injustices. In particular, Moms for Housing explicitly links the system of chattel slavery with contemporary housing precarity that predominantly affects the Black community in Oakland. Furthermore, they articulate the ways in which the system of private property, once used to designate enslaved people as property themselves, continues as an anti-Black structural condition that threatens Black people’s ability to establish place-based roots and shelter their families. Moms for Housing documents their lived experience in ways that both uncover and challenge these spatial norms and their consequences. Finally, Moms for Housing uses the publicity they gained from their material occupation of the Magnolia Street House to insist that they be treated as state actors whose new approach to housing deserves fair consideration in the political arena.

In addition, Moms for Housing demonstrates that placemaking as a political action offers a way forward in the debate about resistance to overwhelming structural injustice. Rather than celebrate defiance or insist on the ubiquitous nature of violent social structures, placemaking as political action’s transformative potential lies in its acknowledgement of and reckoning with, rather than erasure of, structural anti-Blackness. This approach is closely aligned with what Christina Sharpe calls “the wake.” Sharpe uses “the wake” to describe slavery’s legacy as one that encompasses *both* the denial of Black humanity as well as “other dimensions of Black non/being” such as love, life, and resistance.⁴⁶ The wake recognizes the effects of violence and vulnerability on Black being but also insists that this is not the only way that Black individuals recognize themselves or one another.⁴⁷ These elements of life and death are conflicting and paradoxical in nature, but, for Sharpe, recognizing this paradox is an honest

reflection of the ongoing presence of subjection and resistance.⁴⁸ The wake is integral to understanding Moms for Housing, who simultaneously present their struggle as shaped by anti-Black spatial violence while refusing to define themselves solely by the experience of this struggle. Instead, they showcase the ways in which anti-Black structural conditions intermingle with other pieces of their lives and represent both elements through their placemaking.

Property and Theft

Moms for Housing's placemaking as political action began with a public and material occupation, what they called a "re-possession," of private property. In November of 2019, Dominique and Sameerah, co-founders of Moms for Housing, moved with their children and other marginally housed mothers into the vacant "Magnolia Street" home owned by Wedgewood properties. This was not a covert act. The Moms released a press statement declaring their intent to live in the home until it was returned to the community. Then, they marched to the home with a large group of supporters and held a press conference in the front yard.⁴⁹ Moms for Housing proceeded to live with their children in the Magnolia Street home, frequently describing their experience on their social media pages and through mainstream media interviews. Moms for Housing's public documentation of their material seizure of space and the placemaking in which they engaged did several important things. First, The Moms used a public facing narrative to transform what might have been a personal act of spatial transgression- "squatting" in private property-into a more complex story about the racially uneven property system and its connections to slavery's past. This narrative suggested that there was more than one way to understand Moms for Housing's actions and, relatedly, more

than one way to understand the Wedgewood property. Second, the material element of Moms for Housing's placemaking drew public attention. Wedgewood, who could not very well ignore the fact that women and children were living in their property, sought to evict the group. The ensuing legal battle drew media attention, bringing Mom's for Housing's message about the racially driven definitions of property, theft, and criminality to a wide audience.

Moms for Housing embodies the third element of placemaking as political action in linking their own experiences with housing precarity to spatial injustices of the past and present and challenging the typical political response to these inequalities. When posting on social media or speaking about their experience, Moms for Housing frequently details how their personal housing struggle connects with the larger, structural property system. The private property system protects big bank lenders and real estate developers rather than the interests of the Black community.⁵⁰ For example, banks use predatory lending to divest Black families and communities of their homes. Companies, like Wedgewood, which owned the Magnolia Street House, purchase foreclosed properties. Then they "flip" them in order to rent or sell them at exorbitant prices. Alternatively, the companies may choose to keep the properties vacant in order to "tighten the market" by depleting the housing supply. Both strategies increase housing prices in the surrounding area, resulting in a severe shortage of affordable housing.⁵¹ Real estate profit strategies create a housing crisis that tends to dispossess the original neighborhood community of safe and secure places to live. The result is an increase in housing precarity. Many former residents find themselves forced to move frequently in search of affordable housing, facing long waits and bureaucratic red tape to access government assistance.⁵² Inevitably, some families end up sleeping in shelters or on the street. These are

marginal spaces where individuals face physical and dehumanizing violence that strips them of worth, respect, and self-esteem.⁵³

The structural conditions that constrain access to affordable housing limit the ability of some to grow and thrive as human beings; however, they also perpetuate dominant understandings of ownership and theft rooted in slavery. Moms for Housing used their spatial transgression to confuse these dominant understandings and to show how the “move from being property to not being able to have property” upheld a similar narrative about Black placelessness and lack of belonging.⁵⁴ Under dominant understandings of property, theft, and criminality, the women of Moms for Housing would be perceived as criminal. By “squatting” in a home they did not own or rent, The Moms were trespassing, violating the law, and stealing the house from Wedgewood. However, Moms for Housing argued that this was a false narrative designed to uphold a racially uneven property system. Instead, the Moms countered with a three-point narrative of their own. First, the Moms maintained that they were the rightful owners of the home. Wedgewood had stolen the home from the community when they foreclosed on the property and the women had merely “re-claimed” possession.⁵⁵ Moms for Housing argued that if the legal system upheld Wedgewood’s right to the home, they would not be protecting property rights, but the right of White real estate companies to steal from Black families. Second, Moms for Housing historicized this claim by pointedly linking the Black community’s housing precarity with the original act of White theft during slavery. As community organizer and supporter of Moms for Housing, Carroll Fife declared from the Magnolia Street Steps, “They can’t tell us, ‘You stole a house.’ *You stole Us.*”⁵⁶ Here and in subsequent speeches, Fife argued that a system that bars Black women from property

ownership and denies them spaces in which they can grow and thrive is rooted in the chattel slavery plantation, which served similar functions.⁵⁷ Finally, The Moms rejected normative understandings of criminality. Why, they asked, were they being criminalized for providing shelter for their families and demanding affordable housing?⁵⁸ The real crime, they argued, was not their spatial transgression, but the structural conditions of violence and anti-Blackness that led them to the Magnolia Street house.

Anagrammatical Home and Family

Like with the notion of property and theft, Moms for Housing connects contemporary spatial inequalities and the barriers these erect for Black families to broader historical legacies. One such legacy is the way in which space has been used as a mechanism to sever and undermine Black biological relationships while idealizing White familial relationships. During formal slavery, the space of the slave ship erased Black family ties while the plantation used the threat of separation and the denial of parentage to subvert Black kinship. Today, the system of private ownership that protects White property rights over the interests of the Black community continues to separate minority families. This system particularly disadvantages Black women, who are evicted at a higher rate than any other demographic group.⁵⁹ For Black women, the loss of one's home often leads to the loss of one's family. Once a mother cannot shelter her child, she morphs from her child's protector to someone from whom the child must be protected.⁶⁰ Although it is arguably the state which upholds the racially uneven spatial conditions that limits the woman's ability to shelter her child in the first place, it is this very

entity that purports itself as the child's protector. The state uses the very injustices it has perpetrated to justify the negation of the Black mother's parental rights.

This threat of familial annihilation, encoded in space, has discursive consequences. The terms "family," "mother," and "child" carry different connotations alongside Whiteness and Blackness. Families alongside of Whiteness are biological units of belonging with the mother as its nurturing keeper. However, Sharpe argues that alongside Blackness, these terms become "anagrammatical." For Sharpe, the anagrammatical is twofold in meaning. Literally, it means the creation of a new word through the rearranging of the old, while figuratively it refers to the disconnect between the grammatical meaning of the word and the way it is understood in a given context.⁶¹ The Black family and the Black mother are anagrammatical terms whose meanings fall apart in a world rife with anti-Black violence that constantly threatens the viability of the family unit and the mother's ability to protect her child. Yet, Sharpe points out that Black mothers are also at the heart of what makes life livable and joyful in a world full of anti-Black violence.⁶² We can see Sharpe's description of the anagrammatical Black mother and child as part of the "wake" that characterizes the world and Black identity after slavery. Structural conditions make these identities difficult to inhabit cleanly, while, simultaneously, Black people can and do take on these identities.

I argue that part of what Moms for Housing does when engaging in placemaking as political action is to use the space of the Magnolia Street House to bring the existence of anagrammatical family to bare and force the public to grapple with its meaning. They do this using two distinct sets of images and videos which combine to confuse the dominant understanding of the space of the single-family home. First, Moms for Housing emphasizes

their familial identities in the spatial experience they craft and portray on their social media pages. As demonstrated by the group's name, the collective defines their struggle with housing precarity through their identity as mothers. Numerous photos and videos depict the women and children in the throes of domestic life at the Magnolia Street House: a child says his first words;⁶³ a woman waves from the front porch as children walk to school; three girls read a book together on the bottom bunk bed;⁶⁴ a girl describes the satisfaction of completing her homework at a quiet spot in the kitchen.⁶⁵ This narrative emphasizes that Moms for Housing created a home for their children at the Magnolia Street house. However, it also suggests that they used the communal space of the home to expand the notion of family beyond the biological and recognized other ways of bonding with one another. In all of the images of familial love where mothers cradle young children and older children read to younger children, it is difficult to discern which child "belongs" to each mother and which children are biological siblings. Instead of falling apart, the notion of family at the Magnolia Street House expands. Misty, one of the moms, spoke to supporters on the steps of the home in December of 2019. Collapsing the newly created space of the home, the community, and all the Moms families, she remarked:

This was just a building. We made it a home when we occupied it...we gotta make this a movement. You see how it's bringing people out and bringing us together...I didn't know this lady [Dominique] before. We built a bond. Our kids play together.⁶⁶

As Misty implies, there are other ways to name one another as relations outside of the biological family.⁶⁷ The creation of communal, loving space inside the site of the home, opened the idea of what home and family could be.⁶⁸

However, intermingled with these images of care are those that speak to the anagrammatical nature of the Black mother and child. Videos and photos of Magnolia Street's children reinforce their young age alongside the impossibility of innocent, pure childhood. In one video, Destiny, the narrator, skips down the street to school with her sister in one frame, her small body weighed down by a full backpack. In the next frame, Destiny tells us that she is worried that her sister, "just a kid," will lose her home. She peers out the window at the crowd of supporters gathered. Too short to see out easily, she grips the sill to pull her eyes to the level of the opening.⁶⁹ The shot reminds the viewer that Destiny, just a child herself, should not have to worry about losing her home. Moms for Housing also shines light on the challenges Black women face when trying to nurture and guard their children. Rather than be able to fill this role easily, the Moms must take the radical step of directly challenging structural anti-Black violence and the housing system maintained by the dominant racial economy.⁷⁰ In this case, this meant re-possessing a house, facing arrest, and experiencing a violent eviction. On January 14, 2020, the Oakland County sheriff's department arrived in armored vehicles, entered the home using a battering ram, drew their guns on the women, and arrested Misty and Tolani, two of the moms.⁷¹ These images of state force and women in handcuffs juxtaposed against the many photos and videos of worry-free familial joy, demonstrate the anagrammatical nature of the Black family home. The Mom's House was both a respite from conflict and violence and a manifestation of it. It was a home born out of direct contestation with and in defiance of anti-Black property relations and the state structures that uphold them.

Placemaking at Magnolia Street as Political Action

Recall that when enslaved people stole away, reasserting their agency by refusing to abide by slavery's spatial controls, they did so secretly in order to avoid detection. Placemaking in this instance largely consisted of a fleeting moment of lived experience in space that did not alter a space's materiality or its symbolic representation. This sort of placemaking remains a powerful tool today. People experiencing housing precarity often covertly refuse spatial norms around private property by resting or gathering in spaces they do not own, taking care not to get caught in a space they did not "belong." Through placemaking as resistance, individuals may find agency, friendship, and even a sense of impermanent belonging. It is immediately clear that Mom's for Housing's use of placemaking diverges from these more clandestine forms. By openly living at the Magnolia Street house, Moms for Housing not only defied property norms, but used the material aspect of their activism to draw public attention to the racially biased dominant understandings of the space of the privately owned single-family home. Then, Moms for Housing used their social media presence to document the historical anti-Black roots of the current housing crisis and to publicly assert their right to place and family.

One additional aspect sets Moms for Housing's placemaking apart from personal acts of resistance. Moms for Housing questioned the foundations of our political and spatial paradigm. Their actions raise questions that transform the spatial paradigm, such as, what does it mean to own something? How do we decide who or what is criminal and culpable? How does Black access to property influence familial identities? How does slavery's legacy influence the ways in which we answer these questions? Rather than seek inclusion into the system of property ownership that has long facilitated Black subjection, Moms for Housing proposes that a new approach to housing and shelter, or a new way to think about familial spaces, is a first step

toward repairing the past and present violence stemming from racial capitalism. Instead of the current cycle of buying and selling, The Moms propose that land trust organizations hold property to ensure that it remains affordable and rooted in the community.⁷² Rooting property in the community would devastate the private property system while reimagining who can live and build a life together in a dwelling. Thus, we can use the way we think about space to expand and change how we view kinship and family, in addition to what constitutes a public or private space. Through placemaking as political action, Moms for Housing begun the work of forcing others to reckon with slavery's ongoing devastation while imagining spatial institutions that might end the perpetuation of that loss.

Conclusion:

Hartman argues that enslaved people's placemaking was a form of everyday resistance, defiance, or perhaps even a subaltern politics of manipulation. For Hartman, though, these actions were outside of the "political proper." White closure of formal politics to enslaved people required her to look at other ways dominated people expressed their needs.⁷³ Hartman may well be correct that examining everyday practices is an essential method for understanding the lives and needs of those excluded from politics. However, her elaboration of extra-political placemaking does not preclude the fact that placemaking can be a political act. Following Wendy Brown, I define politics as the way we order our collective life and, relatedly, how we define equal membership, access to, and freedom in that collective life.⁷⁴ Our built environment is often a material manifestation of our collective ordering. It is a visible representation of who matters, who has access to different types of spaces, and who has the

freedom that comes from having a safe and secure space of one's own. In my view, placemaking becomes political action when it challenges these assumptions about our collective life by unveiling and contesting the ways in which they are spatially embedded. Placemaking as political action can, then, challenge our political assumptions, including assumptions about political bounds, by challenging material spaces and their cultural representations.

In this paper, slavery's spatial conditions and contemporary anti-Black property practices provided important context for theorizing placemaking as resistance and political action. However, this is not the only instance where space has been used to systematically subjugate and dehumanize groups of people. Nor is Moms for Housing a lone example of placemaking as political action. One could easily point to other examples of movements engaged in placemaking as political action, especially those that occupied material space, succeeded in garnering public attention, put forward a spatial experience that challenges what we think we know about a given space, and brought attention to past and present spatial injustices. For example, the United States government has a long history of stealing land from Indigenous peoples, frequently and forcibly uprooting and dividing these communities, and abusing land agreements intended to protect Indigenous sovereignty. The Standing Rock protests, which challenged assumptions about land ownership and proffered alternative understandings about the connection between the self and the land, may be another case where a material, public form of placemaking challenged dominant spatial understandings. I suspect that many readers will think of additional examples from histories and movements

related to their own work. One aim of this paper is to provide a useful framework for thinking about these examples.

My further hope is that the ideas presented here will shed light on the possibilities of placemaking as a form of politics. The design and allocation of spaces, and often, their sordid history, emphasize and can reinforce inequalities in membership, access to, and freedom in collective life. Placemaking as political action is uniquely poised to change these spaces and, in doing so, shift and re-shape our collective ordering. As a public endeavor, placemaking as political action can use lived experiences in a space to insist that there are multiple ways to relate to the material world. These narratives can highlight discrepancies in spatial access, confuse dominant and taken for granted understandings of a space, and lend important history to the organization of our contemporary built environment. When material, placemaking can force a public response, allowing us to take stock of where we, our neighbors, and our representatives stand with respect to uneven spatial access and the effects that stem from this reality. Finally, when successful, placemaking as political action can use new spatial imaginings to suggest that we rethink the way we organize and order ourselves collectively and reconsider the sorts of spatial arrangements that can lead to equality, freedom, and a sense of belonging.

In a video on the Moms for Housing website, Destiny narrates her family's struggle to find permanent housing. She weaves her family's personal experience with a description of two trees- one tall and strong and one scrawny- in the front yard of the Magnolia Street home. Destiny wants to be the tall tree. As she runs her hands up the bark of the enormous tree, she muses about its deep roots, saying "It's been on this block, it's been at this house, it's been planted in this community forever." But, Destiny explains, she's really like the small tree

that bears an old axe mark. It does not have deep roots, but the tree survived.⁷⁵ Though Destiny describes herself as the tree that survived, this is not a celebratory narrative. Rather, the viewer of the video understands Destiny's survival and her newfound sense of home alongside a history of spatial control rooted in slavey and anti-Black property practices that continue to deny her place-based roots. Moms for Housing's placemaking exposed this history, decried the damaging effects of placelessness on Black familial life, and proposed community land trusts as one way to approach housing differently. Their hope, more broadly, was that this material reorganization would lead to equal access to shelter and space, resulting in greater freedom for more people and ultimately changing the way we think about our collective life. At its heart, this is a story about placemaking, but it is also one of what Hartman calls "proper politics." Placemaking as a political action, then, is a mechanism that can help us to contest the inequalities that lie at our political core and to begin to rectify the harms they have wrought.

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¹ Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Jared Sexton, "People-of-Color-Blindness: Notes on the Afterlife of Slavery," *Social Text* 28, no. 2 (103) (2010): 31–56; Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

² I use the term formal racial slavery to designate the practice of kidnapping, buying, selling, and owning human beings in the United States beginning around 1619 and concluding with the ratification of the 13th Amendment, prohibiting slavery, in 1865. Following many Afro-pessimism scholars, I do not claim that all elements of racial slavery ended in 1865.

³ Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, no. 8 (2011): 947–63; Clarissa Hayward, *How Americans Make Race: Stories, Institutions, Spaces* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

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⁵ Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006): xii-xviii.

⁶ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America.*, 66.

⁷ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 66–67.

⁸ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America.*, 13.

⁹ Hartman., *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 64-5.

¹⁰ Hartman. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 69.

¹¹ For the idea that place is constantly negotiated, even from below, see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford Blackwell, 1991); Christopher Tilly, "Space, Place, Landscape, and Perception: Phenomenological Perspectives," in *Phenomenology of Landscape* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); Edward Soja, *Discovering Thirdspace* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004).

¹² Moms 4 Housing, Moms 4 Housing, 2020, <https://moms4housing.org/>.

¹³ Tilly, "Space, Place, Landscape, and Perception: Phenomenological Perspectives.", 12-14.

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, ed. Arnold Davidson, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 143; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 26.

¹⁵ Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, 37; Doreen Massey, *For Space* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2005), 151.

¹⁶ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 40.

¹⁷ I loosely follow Lefebvre's "Spatial Triadectics" in my conception of place. Lefebvre contends that "social space" is crafted through the interrelated elements of conceived space, perceived space, and lived space. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. See also Soja, *Discovering Thirdspace*. Those familiar with spatial theory may note that in spite of the distinction between space and place that is fairly conventional in this body of work (for example, most use the term "place" to describe sites of meaning and "space" to refer to material reality (Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction.*), I use the terms synonymously here.

¹⁸ It may strike some readers as strange or even incorrect to refer to material space as the actor here. In doing so, I am not suggesting that there were no agents involved in creating these spaces. Rather, I am implying that the anti-Black spatial, structural systems in the past and present United States are better characterized as embedded and protean rather than created and maintained by any one individual or group. Clarissa Hayward, "What Is Structural Power?" (Van Ek Speaker Series, University of Colorado Boulder, January 22, 2021).

¹⁹ Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 12.

- ²⁰ McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 948–49; Frank B. Wilderson, *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 28.
- ²¹ Wilderson, *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms*, 14; Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 21.
- ²² McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 948; Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 157.
- ²³ McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*, x.
- ²⁴ Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 73–75.
- ²⁵ Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 74.
- ²⁶ Wilderson, *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms*, 14. On at least one occasion, a captain and crew threw individuals overboard when they ran low on water and subsequently filed an insurance claim for "property loss." Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 35.
- ²⁷ Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 74.
- ²⁸ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 98; Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 74.
- ²⁹ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*; Sexton, "People-of-Color-Blindness: Notes on the Afterlife of Slavery"; Wilderson, "Afro Pessimism and the End of Redemption."
- ³⁰ Moms 4 Housing.
- ³¹ McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 952.
- ³² Moms 4 Housing.
- ³³ McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 953; Tiffany Lethabo King, "Black 'Feminisms' and Pessimism: Abolishing Moynihan's Negro Family," *Theory & Event* 21, no. 1 (2018): 72.
- ³⁴ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 65.
- ³⁵ Hartman follows theorist Michel de Certeau in her terminology. She uses the terms "practice" and "tactics" to describe the "character of resistance" during slavery, which she casts as precarious, clandestine, and fragmentary acts of resistance that challenge or manipulate the dominant order Hartman, 50. See also Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
- ³⁶ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 65.
- ³⁷ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 65.
- ³⁸ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 65–66.
- ³⁹ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 70.
- ⁴⁰ Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 74–75.
- ⁴¹ Gillian Rose, *Feminism & Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (U of Minnesota Press, 1993), 140; McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*, 42. I am indebted to McKittrick's application of Rose in her analysis of Linda Brent's story.
- ⁴² Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 61.
- ⁴³ See also James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).
- ⁴⁴ I am following Wendy Brown's conception of the political here. Wendy Brown, "At the Edge," *Political Theory* 30, no. 4 (2002): 570.
- ⁴⁵ Brown, "At the Edge," 569.
- ⁴⁶ Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 14.
- ⁴⁷ Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 134.
- ⁴⁸ Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 116.

⁴⁹ Moms 4 Housing.

⁵⁰ Moms 4 Housing.

⁵¹ As Moms for Housing notes, housing costs in Oakland are astronomical. The average apartment costs 2,500 per month and the housing wage, or the amount one needs to earn to be able to pay this rent and other living expenses, is \$40.88 per hour. See @moms4housing, “If Wedgewood Wants to Help They Should #SellTheHouse for What They Paid for It,” Twitter, January 13, 2020. A report by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research details the housing crisis in Oakland. See U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Office of Policy Development and Research, “Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis: Oakland-Hayward-Berkeley, California,” May 1, 2019, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/OaklandCA-CHMA-19.pdf>. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019).

⁵² Moms 4 Housing.

⁵³ Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 53, 97; Moms 4 Housing.

⁵⁴ Carroll Fife, “The Public Stake in Vacant Property” (Futures of Social Housing, UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy, 2021).

⁵⁵ moms4housing, “We Are Reclaiming This Vacant, Investor-Owned Home on Behalf of Working Moms and Kids without Shelter in Oakland.,” Instagram, November 18, 2019.

⁵⁶ @moms4housing, “Thank You All. This Movement Is Just the Beginning.,” Twitter, January 14, 2020.

⁵⁷ Fife, “The Public Stake in Vacant Property.” Moms for Housing also frequently made this link on their social media accounts, detailing the anti-Black history of the Real Estate Industry. For example, see moms4housing, “Our Struggle Grows out of Over a Century of Abuse,” Instagram, January 9, 2020.

⁵⁸ moms4housing, “An Actual Army Descended on Moms House,” Instagram, January 14, 2020; moms4housing, “They Brought Tanks and AR-15s to ‘Protect’ a Billion Dollar Corporation from Mothers & Babies,” Instagram, January 15, 2020; @moms4housing, “Thank You All. This Movement Is Just the Beginning.”

⁵⁹ Fife, “The Public Stake in Vacant Property.”

⁶⁰ King, “Black’Feminisms’ and Pessimism,” 68–69.

⁶¹ Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 78.

⁶² Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 4.

⁶³ moms4housing, “In Addition to Our Legal Victory - Today Amir Said His First Words!!!,” Instagram, December 16, 2019, 4.

⁶⁴ Moms for Housing, *Destiny’s Home Part 1: Staying Planted*, Short Documentary, Destiny’s Home, accessed March 1, 2020, <https://moms4housing.org/>. Moms for Housing has since replaced this video on their home page with a preview for Moms 4 Housing: The Movie.

⁶⁵ John Slatterly, *Moms4Housing: The Movie- Shelter in the Palace- Housing Is a Human Right*, Short Documentary (Zween Works and Moms for Housing, 2020), <https://vimeo.com/381460346?fbclid=IwAR0hiAjePRFZM7T-sW8mLr9avjjMJ208NVv8kbKd3X7BTWljkgfsjHAT3E>.

⁶⁶ moms4housing, “Moms Do What Real Estate Speculators Can’t- Turn a Building Into Home.,” Instagram, December 27, 2019.

⁶⁷ King, “Black’Feminisms’ and Pessimism,” 84.

⁶⁸ moms4housing, “Moms Do What Real Estate Speculators Can’t- Turn a Building Into Home.”

⁶⁹ Moms for Housing and Zween Works, *Destiny’s Home Part 2: The House*, Short Documentary, Destiny’s Home, 2, accessed March 1, 2020, <https://moms4housing.org/>. Moms for Housing has since replaced this video on their home page with a preview for Moms 4 Housing: The Movie. The link to the original film can still be found on their twitter page. See @moms4housing, “28% of Alameda County’s Homeless Population Are Children,” Twitter, January 6, 2020.

⁷⁰ King, “Black’Feminisms’ and Pessimism,” 80.

⁷¹ @moms4housing, “The Armed Sherriff’s Deputies in Military Fatigues with a TANK Arrested #Moms4Housing Leaders Misty and Tolani,” Twitter, January 14, 2020.

⁷² @moms4housing, “If Wedgewood Wants to Help They Should #SellTheHouse for What They Paid for It.” The moms won a personal victory in late February of 2020 when Wedgewood, unable to recover its public image, sold the house to the moms through a land trust organization. The space now provides transitional housing for homeless mothers. They have since inspired other groups of mothers in Los Angeles and San Francisco to begin similar local movements. For full coverage of Moms4Housing’s continued influence, see Erin Baldassari and Molly Solomon, “How Moms 4 Housing Changed Laws and Inspired a Movement,” *Sold Out*, n.d., <https://www.kqed.org/news/11842392/how-moms-4-housing-changed-laws-and-inspired-a-movement>.

⁷³ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 64–65.

⁷⁴ Brown, “At the Edge,” 569.

⁷⁵ Moms for Housing, *Staying Planted*.