TWO

Environmental Justice Encounters

> Why should there be hunger and privation in any land, in any city, at any table when we have the resources and the scientific know-how to provide all humankind with the basic necessities of life?
>
> Martin Luther King Jr.

Flint, Michigan, made national and international news in 2015 when government-facilitated lead poisoning of residents through the city water supply was exposed by doctors, scientists, and parents. Lead exposure causes major physiological and neurological damage, with broad impacts on individuals and communities.[1] Government officials knowingly lied after the unelected emergency manager demanded that the city's water be drawn from the Flint River, contaminated from decades of industrial pollution. The water corroded pipes and lead flowed as a result. Thousands of Flint residents, in 2019, a full four years after the crisis broke, still face foreclosure for nonpayment of water bills for lead-contaminated water. What happened in Flint was both singular and not unique. For more than a century, lead poisoning has devastated low-income and particularly African

American children, who suffer from disproportionate exposures and unequal protection from the state. Lead poisoning is the story of the intentional failure of government in service of industry. What happened was a double punch of privation and predation. Privation is the act of depriving or taking away the necessities of life. Predation is theft, plundering, or predatory behavior.

Thousands of miles away lies another landscape. California's Central Valley is the most productive industrial agricultural region in the world. It is particularly vulnerable to pollution, with 2 percent of the nation's farmland and 25 percent of its pesticides. Ninety percent of the pesticides are vulnerable to drift, when the chemicals move off the fields, with disastrous health consequences for farm labor, their families, and local communities. An estimated 160,000 residents in the Valley do not have regular access to clean water. The Valley has some of the highest rates of air pollution in the nation, poisoned groundwater, overconcentration of prisons, high rates of poverty and residential foreclosure rates, and low educational attainment.

Flint and the Central Valley are related, although they are quite different (the former is urban and majority African American; the latter very rural, with many Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Central Americans). The encounters between the Central Valley and Flint are manyfold.[2] After the mass lead poisoning was exposed, Flint residents were given bottled water for household uses such as bathing and cooking. In the Valley, contaminated tap water contains high levels of nitrates from harmful fertilizers, megadairy cow manure, and dibromochloropropane, a pesticide banned in 1977.[3] A subset of Valley residents permanently purchase all their water for household use, a devastatingly high financial burden on a poor populace (up to 10 per-

cent of household income).[4] One article called Central Valley "the Flint of California," although one could also argue that Flint is the Central Valley of Michigan.[5]

Historian Andrew Highsmith suggests that "America is a thousand Flints."[6] What does that mean? Both Flint and the Central Valley are sites of environmental racism, a result of government policy based on active neglect and of concentration of corporate and business power at the expense of democracy or justice.[7] In *Flint Fights Back,* political scientist Benjamin Pauli distinguishes between formal and institutional representative democracy and a grassroots, more radical democratic vision. Lead poisoning in Flint was a result of a direct attack on representative democracy, to which Flint residents and organizations responded with a radical democratic vision. Activists sought "to introduce democracy where it had never existed, to defend it, or to make it more real."[8] This chapter argues that both Flint and the Central Valley are sites of environmental racism, while at the same time they are linked by a collective resistance to neoliberalism and the politics of privatization, privation, and predation. Social theorists Stuart Hall, Doreen Massey, and Michael Rustin describe the hero of neoliberalism as the free possessive individual engaging with others through market transactions. Neoliberalism's ideological project is, they write, "a reassertion of capital's historical imperative to profit through financialization, globalization and yet further commodification."[9] Neoliberalism's principal policy levers are deregulation (reducing the power of government to regulate business) and privatization (private companies doing work in return for public resources, or the selling off of public assets to private companies).

Environmental justice activists argue that pollution exposure, toxic contamination, and environmental destruction are

not accidental, but embedded into systems that devalue some lives over others, whether by race, class, immigration status, or some other measure of difference and hierarchy. Activists thus categorically reject the politics of marketization. Deregulation/privatization, disposability, and invisibility work together for environmental racism to thrive. This chapter examines how premature death, through lead poisoning in particular and toxic exposures in general, is woven into the economic and literal landscapes of the postindustrial city and the agricultural "factories in the field."[10] Pollution and the marginalization of place combine to actively create conditions of premature death for racially marked and politically disenfranchised peoples and places. The expansion of privatization and deregulation and the erosion of formal democracy enable the expansion of capital to control discursive and material landscapes. The workings of, in sociologist Jill Harrison's words, "raw power" shift the burden of pollution to the bodies of the most vulnerable.[11] Racialized and already vulnerable residents are made to bear the risk of environmental violence.[12] Postwar U.S. racialized space limits the life chances and economic security of some, to the benefit of others, in the areas of wealth accumulation and housing through mortgage discrimination and redlining by banks.

Water justice activists foreground a radical democratic view of water *against* neoliberalism and what literary scholar Rob Nixon calls slow violence. Slow violence is "a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scale."[13] It contrasts with explosive and spectacular—or fast—violence, such as the militarized standoff at Standing Rock or repressive responses by the state to uprisings and protests of violent African American and other deaths at the hands

of police.[14] Anthropologist Chloe Ahmann writes, "Slow violence [is] primed for interpretive debate, even new imaginings of accountability.... Protracted harm can at times condition apathy. [However] it can also inspire *manipulations* of time and creative rearrangements of history."[15] In contrast to the slow violence in Flint and Central Valley over time, the mass lead poisoning in Flint is a media "event," with an identifiable agent of the environmental crime. These inspirations, encounters, manipulations, and creative rearrangements of history in Flint and the Central Valley are multifold. Linked through lead, water contamination, and (slow and fast) violence, social movements stage encounters that are critically and historically aligned around water justice and the human right to water.

Tribal, cultural, and justice conceptualizations of water—as a source of life, a gift, and a human right[16]—are diametrically opposed to a privatized water market defined by consumer shutoffs and punishment for inability to pay.[17] Water is not a condition of property and/or wealth, and access to it should not be framed by debt or citizenship. In 2012, California became the first U.S. state to legally declare that every human being has the right to "safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking and sanitary purposes."[18] Water justice advocates frame water as a human and community need, rather than a natural resource to be extracted, sold, or shut off (when bills go unpaid). What are the stakes in constructing water against neoliberalism? What happens when we connect water pollution with other forms of contamination? Lead poisoning and toxic exposures are unfettered expressions of raw power in a neoliberal landscape. Water has transformed from a source of life to a product that, in its worst iteration, leads to premature death.

Within these conditions of invisibility (Central Valley), hypervisibility (Flint) and premature death (both), social movements contribute counterhegemonic discourses for sustaining life, art, and community. Storytelling is a frequently undertaken by community members and justice advocates. Often poorly understood and much maligned, storytelling is seen as an emotional or unempirical, subjective (and weak) approach versus the muscular truth of data and science. But storytelling is a key component of environmental justice activism because it foregrounds narratives and experiences.[19] Social movements in Flint and the Central Valley advance a radical democratic vision that reaches beyond formal and institutional democracy. They potentially provide a road map for global struggles for justice in the face of catastrophic impacts of drought exacerbated by climate change.

PRIVATION, PREDATION, AND LEAD POISONING

What happened in Flint, Michigan? Simply put, the timeline included austerity, emergency management, state cover-up of environmental and health data, further delays of information, and public-relations stunts (elected officials drinking lead-tainted water). All the while, residents reported "rashes, hair loss, vision loss" and were treated with contempt along with doctors, scientists, and whistle-blower regulators, who were also "dismissed, impugned, and rebuked by state and local authorities."[20]

How and why did Flint's lead poisoning come about in the way it did? Since 1967, Flint had been buying clean water from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) as a wholesale customer. Flint was cut off from this source of water to simultaneously save and make money (through the newly

formed Karegnondi Water Authority, or KWA, which sought to build a pipeline to bring water from Lake Huron).[21] Thousands of Flint residents, including vulnerable children, were exposed to high levels of lead and told everything was fine by agencies that were supposed to protect their environment and health. Each of the following crucial elements merit description: the emergency manager laws, the history of industrial contamination of the Flint River, the contempt directed at the city of Flint by the state of Michigan, the deception by state and local agencies, and the vitriol directed at the "irrational" and "hysterical" public.[22] What frames these factors is encapsulated in these words from the head of Oakland County, a primarily wealthier and whiter suburban county near Detroit, in advance of the emergency manager system: "What we are going to do is turn Detroit into an Indian Reservation where we herd all the Indians into the city, build a fence and then throw in the blankets and corn."[23] The comparisons are clear: African Americans, like their Native brethren, are incapable of civilization. They need to be rounded up, enclosed and treated like animals. Broken places and people of color go hand in hand.

The cross-racial comparison of African Americans and Native Americans is surprising only in its explicit articulation of racist ideologies of anti-blackness and settler colonialism. This cross-racial comparison can also be mobilized from a historical, tribal, and social justice perspective. Kyle Mays, a black/Saginaw Anishinaabe scholar argues that "the #FlintWater Crisis is not just a Black issue, but also a Native issue."[24] Dylan Miner (Wiisaakodewinini/Métis) recounts the Indigenous history of Flint in which he describes how "Indigenous people used riverways, lakes, and trails as a way to travel" using what is known as the Saginaw Trail. Miner describes the 1807 Treaty of

Detroit, which set the template for the next century, specifically for both the erosion of tribal access to traditional land and outright land theft.[25]

In comparing #NoDAPL and Flint, scholars Christopher Petrella and Ameer Loggins ask. "What is the color of democracy? Who is presumed to be capable of self-governance? And which types of communities have the right to avoid public health and increased vulnerability to premature death?"[26] Cross-cultural and cross-racial connections become part of the repertoire of resistance and the making of solidarity. Mays writes,

> Indigenous people from Detroit went to Flint. Artists like SouFy and Sacramento Knoxx, both Anishinaabe and from southwest Detroit, made protest songs to bring awareness to the #FlintWaterCrisis. They also donated water and supplies to the residents of Flint. At the #HipHop4Flint block party and filter give-away … SouFy stated, "all this water here ain from the people that's supposed to be helping us, ain from the people who messed up the problem in the first place; it's from people that are from different collectives and organizations throughout the country. It's not the government. But that's why we here, #HipHop4Flint, to do it our own way."[27]

In understanding that justice *comes out of* solidarity, Flint and #NoDAPL activists are threading their struggles together.

STATE, CAPITAL, AND CRISIS

Artists who focus on "doing it their own way" are responding to policy choices that have systematically decimated their communities, especially black neighborhoods throughout the urban United States, from Flint and Detroit to New Orleans, Baltimore, and beyond. Historians have documented how federal urban renewal policy and highway development, redlining by

banks, and discrimination in government programs (e.g., the GI Bill) converged to produce suburbs and to facilitate white intergenerational household wealth, while actively subverting black homeownership and wealth accumulation. This racial and spatial history plays itself out in the present. Geographer Jamie Peck outlines how states and governments responded to the 2008 financial crisis (precipitated by risk-taking by financial firms) with "austerity urbanism," characterized by deficit politics and devolved risk. These "scorched earth policies" led to a "*financial crisis* [that] has been transformed into a *state crisis* and now that state crisis is being transformed into an *urban crisis*."[28] The outcome in the form of Flint's lead poisoning is thus an effective illustration of privatization, deregulation, and austerity and these forces' actual impact on cities, communities, and bodies.

Flint is an iconic industrial city, emblematic of the fortunes of U.S. industrial power in the mid-twentieth century. It was home to General Motors (whose CEO famously said in 1952, "What was good for our country was good for General Motors, and vice versa") and site of a major sit-down labor strike against GM that ushered in the golden age of organized labor. Despite the strength of unions, specifically the United Auto Workers, there were major environmental costs, which "unspooled over the next half century."[29] Industrial poisoning, with lead as one of many toxins, has thus been central to Flint for eighty years.[30]

Flint is a demographically shrinking city whose population has declined by more than half from 1960 to today, in large part due to the decline of the American auto industry.[31] Flint is now a majority African American city, with 57 percent black and 38 percent white populations. By 2016, it was more than 40 percent poor, one of the highest poverty rates in the country.[32] Government policies and institutions such as banks and charitable

foundations created and maintained racial and economic inequalities through spatial segregation/redlining and deindustrialization of the city in favor of the growth of the suburban region.[33] Suburbanizing majority white counties surrounding Flint and Detroit gained financial resources and political attention. GM was responsible for half of the Flint's annual water consumption but received heavily discounted rates far lower than residential water users. This tiered rate subsidized corporate large-scale users and was unique compared to other major cities where all users (residential and corporate) purchased water at the same rates.[34] These histories are why Flint still has the highest water bills of any large U.S. water system, even after the lead-poisoning debacle.[35] Structural and historical factors make the payment of water bills a nearly impossible burden, particularly for poor people. More than 17,000 Detroiters and 8,000 Flint residents have faced shutoff and/or foreclosure bills related to nonpayment for lead-poisoned water.[36]

ANTI-DEMOCRACY AND WATER POLITICS

What does democracy have to do with Flint? The lead poisoning is a direct result of the emergency manager (EM) system, which became law in 2011.[37] The emergency manager is by definition insulated from formal representative democracy.[38] The Michigan Civil Rights Commission documented the racial disparities of the EM system.[39] As sociologist David Fasenfest argues, the EM system is a neoliberal response to fiscal "crisis" and is anti-democratic because the decision-maker (the EM) is appointed by the governor and unaccountable to voters.[40] Emergency management displaced democratic institutions, marginalized citizen participation. and weakened civil society. Accord-

ing to Fasenfest, "A city made vulnerable as a result of structural racism was made even more vulnerable through Emergency Management and fiscal austerity."[41]

What cities were put under emergency management and why? Cities subject to emergency management suffered for many reasons, including historical mismanagement by officials and "severe structural economic and social problems." These included ballot initiatives that created legislation restricting the ability of local governments to capture tax revenues from increases in property taxes and extreme population loss due to deindustrialization.[42] Reduced revenue sharing from the state was sudden and drastic, a 33 percent drop between 2006 and 2012. Thus "the State of Michigan helped create the very financial distress in Flint and other cities that it then used to justify the need for Emergency Managers."[43]

The cities under emergency management were majority black and portrayed as broken and lacking fiscal discipline.[44] One scholar writes, "The insertion of an EM appears to be the antidote to perceived (Black) mismanagement, in which the (White) state steps in, replacing old, corrupt, inefficient structures (including union contracts) with new, efficient, sometimes market-driven structures."[45] From August 2012 to October 2013, Emergency Manager Ed Kurtz championed Flint's switch from Detroit water to the Flint River.[46] Because the water was not properly treated, pipes corroded, leaching lead into households. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality used flawed sampling techniques, manipulated test results, and refused to respond to complaints, whether from regular residents or experts at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.[47] In April 2013, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department offered Flint a substantial reduction in wholesale water rates. The EM rejected the offer and

Flint's joining of the new Karegnondi Water Authority pipeline was announced in May 2013. Construction of the KWA pipeline began in June 2013. A year later, nine feet of water transmission pipe, used to connect Flint to Detroit's water pipeline, was sold to Genesee County for $3.9 million (Flint later leased back that conduit that it had previously owned after it was ordered to reconnect to Detroit water). The collusion and deception continued even after the KWA pipeline approval.[48] Flint residents drank unproperly treated, lead-poisoned water for many months. Only after the crisis exploded into public view were (some) Flint residents given bottled water to drink until April 2018, when the water program ceased operation (even though the lead pipes were not yet completely fixed).[49]

The particular sequence of events in Flint are disturbing and criminal, but they are not unique.[50] In California's Central Valley, hundreds of unincorporated communities have been "mapped out of democracy," in legal scholar Michelle Anderson's words.[51] The agricultural regions in the Valley, particularly in its southern reaches, import water hundreds of miles from the water-rich parts of Northern California. Clean water from the north bypasses poor, farmworker communities through the California Aqueduct. The water that does exist in the Valley is often heavily polluted by agriculture.

Legal scholar Camille Pannu argues that anti-democracy defines water politics in the Central Valley. One example is the Valley's quasi-public water governance districts. These include irrigation, reclamation, and improvement districts, which outpace the number of public water districts. While these districts technically allow electoral participation, they limit voting rights to individuals (not residents) who own title to land within the district's area of focus. Most districts determine votes in relation to the

value of a landowner's property: the larger a person's property holdings (in acres) or the greater the value of the holding, the more votes are allocated to that owner. Those who own more land have more political power, and those who do not own land (or who own small plots) are ineligible to vote.[52] Water governance is heavily tilted toward industrial agriculture interests and Southern California cities. In this context, local groups and networks, such as the Community Water Center based in Visalia, work to transform these conditions, institutions, and political structures through organizing, formal representation on water boards, and foregrounding the interests and voices of those not normally part of the water governance system, particularly low-income agricultural, labor, and local communities.[53]

PIPING AND PRIVATIZATION AS POISON

In historian Christopher Sellers's account "Piping as Poison," he documents the long history of Flint's lead poisoning.[54] The ubiquity of lead poisoning is a result of the lead industry and its century-long campaign first *for* its products (like paint) and then, with landlords and other business interests, *against* regulation and mandatory cleanup, despite broad scientific, environmental, and public health consensus about the health impacts of lead poisoning, particularly for children. In 2012, more that 250,000 children nationally still suffered from lead poisoning, despite major gains in lead reduction (lead was taken out of gasoline and paint in the latter half of the twentieth century, but it still enters the environment from insecticides, smelting, and fabricating processes). The problems are heartbreaking in their impacts on individuals and whole communities. African Americans and renters are often the most vulnerable.

There has also been a rich history of fighting against environmentally influenced diseases through community-based activism. During the 1960s and in the context of the civil rights movement, activism around childhood lead poisoning by health groups and radical organizations was prominent. Groups like the Harlem Park Neighborhood Organization in Baltimore, the Young Lords, and the Black Panthers directly took on their communities' higher rates of lead poisoning and lack of garbage collection. They pushed and some responded. Public health advocates and doctors conducted important research, wrote reports, and sounded clarion calls about the problems of low-level lead exposure.[55]

Other scholars followed. Nathan Hare developed the concept of "black ecology" in 1970, in which he suggests that "the concept of ecology in American life is potentially of momentous relevance to the ultimate liberation of black people." He draws connections between the built environment and black health outcomes and argues that the problems of the urban "ghetto" constitute an ecological crisis. According to Hare, the black urban ecological crisis requires a fundamental change in economics as well as a spatial analysis. He concludes that black ecology challenges "the very foundations of American society" and that "the real solution to the environmental crisis is the decolonization of the black race."[56]

LIVES, KNOWLEDGE, AND BODIES MATTER(S)

Whatever it is called—black ecology, environmental justice, or community-based common sense—Flint residents knew the very instant that the water switched to the Flint River that something was wrong. Sociologist Zoe Hammer writes, "This

knowledge was real and visceral, flowing from the color, smell, taste and detrimental effects of the water on exposed skin."[57] Flint residents were at first ignored, then lied to by the agencies charged with protecting their health and environment. As one mother described, "We were going into city council meetings and being told we were liars, we were stupid."[58]

Public agencies eventually (and reluctantly) tested the water. By August 2014, *E. coli* bacteria results led to boil-water advisories. In October 2014, General Motors announced it would stop using Flint River water due to corrosion concerns. Even the governor's executive staff, which had pushed hard for privatization and the emergency manager system, called for a switch back to Detroit water. In February 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notified the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) of high levels of lead in the home of Lee-Anne Walters, who had repeatedly contacted the EPA with concerns for her children's health (her water had lead levels nearly seven times greater than the EPA limit).[59]

Yet even then, Flint residents were still not told the full story. Meanwhile, those working in state agencies were provided with bottled water to drink for their safety. DEQ rigged water test results to hide high levels of lead.[60] The story did not truly explode onto the national stage until August 2015, when environmental scientist Marc Edwards released his first set of findings showing elevated lead levels in Flint. A month later, local pediatrician Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha presented the findings of her analysis, reporting that the proportion of children with elevated blood lead levels had doubled since the switch to the Flint River.[61] Only in October 2015 did Flint stop using the Flint River for drinking water and change back to using Detroit's water system, as the story hit the national and international news.

Until scientific and health testing revealed what Flint residents already knew, locals were actively ignored. Cultural and theoretical lenses (to complement sociological and geographical ones) can help explain why. Water is both "matter" (or material) and "metaphor" (meaning). Some lives—whiter and wealthier—"matter" more and deserve more protection than those (poorer and black) exposed and made vulnerable. Water regulation/deregulation and privatization always "violently racializes."[62] Environmental risk and representation are already racialized, because some voices and bodies and knowledges matter while others don't.[63] For some, the horrors of the Flint lead poisoning were the public exposure and rupture of the "normalized" legacies of race and racism on the bodies of people of color. What was unusual was only the ways in which lead poisoning was made visible and sudden, rather than invisible and endemic.

To those denied access to clean water in the Central Valley as a normalized condition of life, Flint was completely understandable, even expected. It is "normal," even if it is not "right." In the Valley, water and other pollution and contamination happens because water injustice is literally and ideologically built into the political-economic system (which means that unincorporated communities have no water system by design). Not one water justice activist in the Valley would be surprised, for instance, to learn what Art Reyes, an organizer with the Center for Popular Democracy, found in Michigan. Reyes documented that 95 percent of the Spanish-speaking community in Flint did not know about the lead in the water (some heard it from relatives overseas when the lead poisoning hit the international news). Spanish-speaking residents in Flint were also wary of the bottled water program, fearing deportation or immigration enforcement entrapment.[64]

For water justice activists, mainstream discourses of "concern" can be frustrating, a viewpoint that ignores how history shapes policy and environmental violence. But concern can also become a strategic lever for structural change, insofar as it dovetails with activists' own organizing for a more radical democratic vision. This vision is not exclusively based on property, capital, and ownership but on expansive notions of environmental justice and radical democracy. In these historical and ideological contexts, storytelling holds particular political meaning in making voices that are supposed to not matter at all be heard, believed, and seen.

RADICAL DEMOCRACY, STORYTELLING, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Social movement actors use the connection between polluted places and populations to combat a stigmatizing feature of degradation. Population and pollution in unjust environments are tightly wound together as a result of politics (racism, migration, capitalism, militarism, colonialism, land theft, and gender violence) and history, not biology. This rejection of stigmatization and the claiming of particular places as a "home," despite clear evidence of their extreme pollution, is a driving force for environmental justice activism.

What is home in the context of water injustice and environmental racism? Environmental scientists Carolina Balazs and Isha Ray developed the Drinking Water Disparities Framework. They focus on a case study of Alpaugh and Tooleville, small agricultural towns in the Central Valley with important histories as labor camps, now seen as marginal and "nonviable." They quote a resident who is asked, "Why don't you move" away from

the water contamination? That person answered, "Why would you want me to move? That's my house, that's my town, I was born and raised there. Do you think by moving its going to get solved?"[65] This sense of home and belonging is what similarly motivates many Flint residents to stay in their city, despite the lead poisoning and political neglect. Some communities exposed to risk and pollution seek relocation, as in the case of African American communities adjacent to oil refineries or Indigenous villages flooded due to climate change. However, many communities frame their demands for cleanup as pollution reduction or mitigation in their home. They do so through public policy (e.g., responding to environmental impact statements and commenting at public hearings), through the law, and also, significantly, through storytelling.

Stories and how they are told matter. Storytelling is a deeply political act that brings a radical democratic vision to an issue often seen as largely scientific, based in engineering or the realm of policy-making. Community stories "contribute to undermining the legitimacy of state officials and their policies and to shifting public consciousness around the human right to water." Storytelling is a communal and ideological performance that involves both the telling and the act of listening. It "counters individualism and internalization" so that people's individual experiences are transformed into a collective narrative.[66]

Take, for instance, the family and migration story of Susana De Anda, codirector of the Community Water Center in Visalia, California. De Anda details her family's journey from Mexico to California and her own journey to the field of environmental advocacy. She explains that, for her, environmentalism was connected to "my uncles, all farm workers, with leathered skin.... I realized that the yellow planes that flew over us at

recess were spraying poison." The body, for the farm laborer, becomes a toxic site. As an organizer for the Rural Poverty Water Project at the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment, De Anda traveled to low-income, unincorporated communities where she and her codirector, Laurel Firestone, "saw horrific evidence of the health consequences of drinking water with high concentrations of nitrates, arsenic and other toxins." They began organizing leaders, the majority of them women, to start La Asociación de Gente Unida por el Agua (AGUA), a coalition of communities and nonprofits. De Anda says, "Families who had buried too many stillborn infants and who drove long distances to purchase bottled water they could ill afford rather than drink black tap water that smelled like sewage were galvanized into action."[67]

The Community Water Center is not alone in its fight and its use of storytelling. Sociologist Tracy Perkins's Voices from the Valley is a public, online campus/community collaborative research and outreach project that highlights the photos and narratives of female environmental justice activists in the region.[68] Water, its pollution, and the health impacts on vulnerable populations are one major theme. One photo of the gleaming California Aqueduct and the caption explaining the paradox of water pollution in small farmworker communities is a stark visual reminder of "raw power." Another photo shows Sandra Meraz purchasing water. She led the fight to get a new water system for her community. Meraz, Native American and Latina, was the first woman of color to have a seat on the Central Valley Water Quality Control Board.[69]

Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) techniques have been a key component of Voices of the Valley. TO is based on Augusto Boal, a Brazilian activist and theater practitioner committed to radical

popular education principles. TO techniques are an important tool to promote the involvement of citizens, scientists, and health professional in deconstructing toxic exposures, risk factors, and cumulative stressors that impact communities.[70] TO involves knowing the body, making the body expressive, theater as language (and way of inquiry and knowing), and theater as discourse. While not unique to environmental racism, TO has been used to illustrate pollution exposure and public health.[71] Perkins describes a powerful moment (at a public event for Valley activists) and asks, "What did it mean to the women who saw their lives reenacted on stage or honored through photographs in a gallery space? What might everyone else have learned from being witness to their struggles?"[72] When Teresa De Anda spoke, recounting a pesticide poisoning event in Earlimart, a powerful moment was created. She described the incident almost clinically.[73] TO physical reenactment of this poisoning then created a visceral response and an intense, communal painful experience. More than two hundred people in the audience gasped, sobbed, and felt the poisoning in a way that her oral recounting alone did not trigger.

What stories about water and justice are being told in Flint and how? Storytelling is strategic. It widens the circle in the story of the "us," the "how," and the "now."[74] Previously marginalized voices gain center stage. Archives of published material, broadcasted films, recorded reports, statements, conversations, and events, and participant observations about organizing efforts reveal how activists created spaces to share and connect their experiences and stories about water.

In Flint, justice activists centered "the voices and experiences of people whose knowledge has not mattered."[75] "Flint Healing Stories" was a series of events beginning in 2014 in which residents recounted their relationship to water. Because residents

were painted as "incompetent, corrupt, and incapable of self-governance," personal stories were "central to efforts to build and expand networks of solidarity, identify and process shared trauma, forge a sense of collective identity, and work collaboratively toward political transformation."[76] At a March 2015 event, Detroit community leaders served as designated listeners for storytellers from Flint. The people on the stage would say in unison, "You have the right to remain silent" before each speaker. The storyteller would then respond, "I waive that right."[77] This dramatic phrase, drawn from courtroom cases, highlighted the ways in which a crime was taking place and silence was a weapon, even though that crime had not yet exploded into public view.

Storytelling included performances and took place through the body itself. In July 2015, activists organized a seventy-mile, eight-day walk from Detroit to Flint, called the Detroit to Flint Water Justice Journey for Clean and Affordable Water. The group walked ten miles a day for one week. What they did was multifold:

> Much of what the Water Justice Journey did—by prioritizing face-to-face conversations, collectively occupying public spaces, and creating venues where everyone's voices and experiences could be heard—was forcefully insist that those lives *did* matter, building relationships and strengthening existing ones to prevent those lives from being discarded. As Detroiter Valerie Jean Blakely said during the first day of the walk: "Everything we do, we are planting seeds for people to feel ready to stand together to ignite something in their heart to say, "Hey, I love my neighbors enough to make sure they have water."[78]

These acts—conversation, physical occupation and bodily movement and motion, and highly participatory venues for voice and experience—make black brown and poor lives and

knowledges matter. Storytelling and walking collectively foreground water politics as a space of generation, relationship, and creativity rather than arising from privation, scarcity, and fear.

Flint and Detroit residents organized their own research projects in the face of government neglect and criminal behavior. Like the Flint residents' working with doctors and scientists, community groups in Detroit organized as We the People of Detroit Community Research Collective. In 2016, the project released a collaboratively researched manuscript called *Mapping the Water Crisis: The Dismantling of African-American Neighborhoods in Detroit, Volume One.* The statistical evidence gathered helped set the stage for the unveiling of the Water Is a Human Right Bill in Michigan.[79] Although the legislation did not pass, it remains an active campaign by organizers. This report was followed by the People's Tribunal for Violations of the Human Right to Water, a social justice theater project developed by activists to inform the general public about the mass water shutoffs in Detroit and the criminal negligence that led to the poisoning of Flint's water supply.[80] At the People's Tribunal, the trial proceedings were orchestrated as a moral drama featuring testimony from people who had faced shutoffs and lead exposure through contaminated water.

Such storytelling moments are powerful ruptures in the technoscientific façade of normalized and slow violence. Done with a political stance based on collective power and the democratizing impulses of art, performance, storytelling, and knowledge-making, these collaborations—scientific and artistic—can be incredibly impactful. But in order to feel nonextractive, or to avoid a performance of pain for outsiders, certain principles are paramount. These collaborations must be grounded in environmental justice principles; namely, the idea that "we speak for our-

selves." Thus, the dictum of "not using the master's tools to dismantle the master's house" demands a different approach to environmental racism and lead contamination, one with power at its root. Some broke publicly with Marc Edwards, the scientific expert who legitimized early concerns, for many reasons, but at least in part because of his arrogance (he later sued some activists for defamation).[81] As Benjamin Pauli recounts of the dispute, what is at stake is a set of complex questions: "Who decides what deserves to be known? Who gets to speak authoritatively about what is known? Who decides who gets to know what is known? Who produces the knowledges that is known?[82]

Thus, science and art can be *about* a place/community /environmental problem, or it can be *with and by*. This difference (about/with) is not mere semantics. Art *by* Flint residents and art *about* Flint are distinct in terms of who is involved, why, and who is the intended audience. Two high-profile Flint-related art concept pieces illustrate the potential pitfalls in artistic engagement with environmental problems. One, by African American conceptual artist Pope.L, involved signing and selling bottles with Flint River lead-contaminated water.[83] The other is a collaboration between conceptual artist Mel Chin and fashion designer Tracy Reese in which the water bottles given to Flint residents were remade into high-fashion design.[84] In these cases, the artist is from outside Flint, and the audience is primarily art insiders.

Contrast these with the projects of Flint-based artists and art educators.[85] Natasha Thomas-Jackson, Executive Director of Raise it Up!, a youth-centered intersectional arts organization, argues that positionality matters, against an extractive mode.[86] They "use song, poetry, dance, and visual imagery to tie the water crisis in Flint to water struggles all over the globe and to the psychospiritual connection that African and indigenous

people have to land and bodies of water."[87] Art, pedagogy, freedom, and liberation are intricately connected.

Flint became a national and international story, then largely disappeared from the mainstream media. Central Valley's water, air, and pesticide pollution remain, as they have for over half a century. Philosophically and pragmatically, both cases raise the questions, who gets to live and who is made to die?

Privation and predation under neoliberalism are the undergirding ideologies that shape the commonsense assumptions of policymakers and corporations. Hegemonic ideologies see the lumpen living in their midst as both essential (farm labor) and/or disposable (auto workers). Capitalism extracts from land and labor, leaving polluted landscapes in its wake. Dehumanization and a distorted "blame the victim" mentality are linked. Social movements, in contrast, focus on fundamentally different sources of politics at their root, based on need, capacity and love, reciprocity, and community.

Flint's resonance extended far beyond Michigan and became a salient symbol. In suggesting that the "World Is Flint," Robin Kelley focuses on the histories and ongoing policies that exacerbate racism, principally neoliberalism and privatization. Environmental injustice and violence "work" because they are embedded in the prevailing economic and political structures that produce some places and bodies as pollutable. David Pellow calls this status "expendability," and this allows the status quo based on racism, profit, extraction, and violence to remain. Environmental justice activists disrupt these conditions through storytelling and the body to reclaim the right—separate from income and debt—to drink and breathe.

The World Is Flint thus can also refer to the possibilities of complex solidarities. In the ways that Black Lives Matter allied with the #NoDAPL movement, the crossings between Indigenous, Chicano, and black communities embody what solidarity looks like across and between highly polluted spaces and across time. Central Valley activists like Sandra Meraz and Susana De Anda and activists in Flint and Detroit de-normalize existing environmental and social conditions of slow and fast violence and pollution. They act to bend power from the raw power of exploitation, environmental and otherwise, into new social and material realities.

Art and activism are key components in that ongoing effort. Sharing stories is a powerful attempt to correct the "flood" of neoliberalism in a world where global warming and water shortages loom large. People's stories, artistic practices, knowledge-making, and coproduction of scientific knowledge are deeply political acts. In these acts, environmental justice activists in Flint and the Central Valley seeks to recenter the lives and voices not meant to matter, indeed, those primed to die, as central protagonists in pitched battles for radical democracy.

THREE

Restoring Environmental Justice

This chapter examines environmental and social disasters to show where and how radical hope is generated in dark times. Music, websites, films, and graphic novels compose a counterhegemonic soundtrack for a restorative environmental justice politics grounded in solidarity. These cultural productions differ in genre, content, and context. What they all share is a belief that culture matters in environmental and social struggle. They critique marketization and consumerism, oil and gas cultures, and at times, gesture to anti-capitalism. To say culture matters is not to move focus away from the state.[1] Resource allocation and regulation matter greatly, especially in the neoliberal context where the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has effectively dismantled clean air, climate change, and environmental justice programs.[2] Culture is not mere prescription or a road map for policy, but it can spark a fire, especially linked to movements on the ground. Boots Riley, musician and director of *Sorry to Bother You* (a 2018 radical anti-capitalist film), describes how "rebellion is edited out of the worlds we have built. . . .

We put those rebellions back into the stories we create and consume."[3]

Environmental disasters are not new, although they may feel new to those insulated from the impacts of colonialism and racial capitalism. Thus, the responses of the environmental justice movement to environmental disasters illustrate how communities respond from a justice standpoint. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina set the template for how race and class sharpen the negative impacts of environmental disasters, both in disaster planning and in the racialized aftermath of privatized "recovery." After Katrina, research identified how race, toxicity, and rampant wetland destruction and suburban development in the context of privatization and deregulation magnified the already devastating impacts on the backs of the poorest and most vulnerable victims in New Orleans and beyond. Hurricane Maria in 2017 was the most recent devastating illustration of the dangers of our age, with formal state-centered politics closely aligned with oil and gas industries and other corporate interests. Many other hurricanes have involved these same dynamics (Sandy, Florence), but these two are particularly important culturally. Katrina opens the era; Maria mirrors and exemplifies it. For both, justice activists argue that the destruction was shaped strongly by racism, colonialism, and history, in sharp contrast to the neoliberal individualized market view of problems such as natural disasters and their purported solutions.

The urgency of the political moment generates a radical momentum, created and reflected through culture. In both post-Katrina and post-Maria are glimmers of how peoples and communities hit hardest by natural and social disaster respond when brutalized by oil extraction, environmental racism, and colonialism. Environmental justice perspectives are critical in the

terrain of consciousness, through restorative environmental justice. Here, I draw from world systems sociologist Jason Moore's "reparations ecologies," examples of which include the food sovereignty and climate justice movements. He defines reparations ecologies as politics that is "fundamental to remembering the violence and inequality of modernity and coming to terms with a way of organizing life—not just between humans, but between humans and the rest of nature—in a way that is emancipatory." Reparations ecologies is "a rethinking of what nature, and humanity, and justice means," insofar as it demands a "taking of key domains of life (education, healthcare, housing) out of the market. What's coming into focus is a politics that is revolutionary in a new way—which questions capitalism's very basis, through especially the nature-society binary."[4] Environmental justice movements have long argued for this rethinking, removing the market and making connections that collapse and exceed binaries and dualisms. This chapter places environmental justice at the center of this revolutionary politics by adding important missing dimensions and histories to reparations ecologies. Specifically, restorative environmental justice widens the scope to centralize Indigenous and black perspectives and, crucially, culture and community.

Restorative environmental justice is an analytic based on environmental justice practices, principles, and worldviews. It draws from restorative justice (criminal justice) and restoration ecology (ecology). In environmental science, the opposite of extraction can be thought of as accretion, accumulation, restoration, or conservation. Restoration ecology is the scientific practice and "process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed."[5] Restoration ecol-

ogy and restorative criminal justice begin with similar premises, although they are vulnerable to the same critiques that they are too individualized and reformist.[6] A few social scientists have raised the links between restorative justice and environmental justice.[7] One area of significant overlap between the two domains (although not named as such) has been in Native environmental sciences, from both Native and non-Native scholars working on Indigenous land stewardship and comanagement issues.[8]

Restorative environmental justice is explicitly decolonial and integrative, including humans as animals and imagining humans and nonhuman nature in a nonextractive modes. Iñupiaq leader Colleen Swan, talking about Kivalina, Alaska (one of hundreds of Indigenous villages in the Arctic that will be destroyed as sea ice melts and rates of coastal erosion increase), illustrates the concept succinctly:

> If we want justice in Kivalina, *restorative justice,* we have to lead. We have to take the lead, because we know what needs to be restored. One of the important things that I see is getting that *self-determination kind of thing* that we used to have a long time ago, to where we never depended on anyone outside the village for anything. Our people have, well I wouldn't say that we lost it, but I would say that it was stolen from us. A lot of things need to be restored.[9]

Critical consciousness and a focus on histories and storytelling are the environmental justice movement's major contribution to fighting during and through this moment of danger. The environmental justice movement links politically disenfranchised peoples and communities across time and space. Social movements imagine different ways of relating—between peoples and between people and the natural world. In a brutalizing era focused on death and resource extraction, characterized by

apocalyptic forecasts and emotions such as despair and nihilism, environmental justice movements contribute their cultural imaginaries and share their histories and worldviews.

Environmental justice activists and scholars reject despair as they always have. Their communicative modes are principled resistance, life affirmation (against capital accumulation and economic growth), and solidarities based on radical empathy, humor, grace, and transformation. Rebellion and resistance stories are part and parcel of restorative environmental justice, grounded in *more*. Abundance, life, and affirmation are counterposed against fear, deprivation, and chaos. Anishinaabe cultural theorist Gerald Vizenor's notion of "survivance" articulates how Indigenous struggle involves more than reaction to tragedy. Survivance is "an active sense of presence," continuation, and creativity.[10] According to Indigenous philosopher Kyle Whyte (Potawatomi), collective continuance for Native peoples is the "community's capacity to be adaptive in ways sufficient for the livelihoods of its members to flourish into the future."[11] Native presence is not based simply on the past, but on the past that shapes the present and future in historically and culturally specific ways. Restorative environmental justice thus disrupts dominant modes of engagement with climate change and politics.

Radical visions for art, beauty, practice, and revolution already exist in many places if we look—from Oakland, to New Orleans, Puerto Rico, and throughout the Americas. Theorist Macarena Gómez-Barris describes social ecologies, which "challenge frames of knowledge" that seek to "bury the subtlety and complexity of the life force in the worlds that lie within the extractive zone." These include the body in the realm of the nonhuman world, beyond "mere resistance to the more layered terrain of potential, moving within and beyond the extractive

zone."[12] Environmental justice scholar Giovanna Di Chiro articulates a "living environmentalism" framework that highlights intersectional, feminist, and global coalition politics forged by activists in environmental justice and women's rights organizations.[13] Living environmentalism, social ecologies, and restorative environmental justice are radical acts for those whose lives, labors, and homes are abused and extracted. Sometimes, survival itself is a radical act.

TROUBLING CAPITALISM/CARBON

One of the central contributions of environmental and climate justice activists is to make clear how the prevailing status quo targets their lands and bodies. Environmental justice activists trouble the notion that the capitalism and the carbon-based economy that drives it are mostly fine. Rather, capitalism and carbon live out and through systematic dispossession, production, extraction, and disposability—in short, death and violence. Environmental justice perspectives eschew the market, force a reckoning with history, and otherwise disrupt American exceptionalist, technophilic, and teleological narratives. To do so is to disrupt the holy grail of capitalism as the natural state of being, particularly in the United States, and thus begin to answer the question, what comes next?

The connection between imagination and capitalism is a fundamental component of revolutionary change. In his influential 1979 essay on science fiction writer J. G. Ballard, Marxist literary critic H. Bruce Franklin observes that because of Ballard's psychological investments in imperialism, white supremacy, and capitalism, the author is predisposed to "mistaking the end of capitalism for the end of the world."[14] This observation has been

oft-reworked by cultural critic Fredric Jameson as "It is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism."[15] Franklin's actual question was, "What could Ballard create if he were able to envision the end of capitalism as not the *end,* but the *beginning,* of a human world?"[16] In asking this question, he points to the limits of imagination under late capitalism that are oriented almost entirely toward death and decay.

This provocation—to imagine the end of capitalism as we know it as different from the end of the world—is the starting point here for restorative environmental justice. The question of what is being restored and for whom is a central one for people of color, postcolonial and neocolonial subjects, and Indigenous peoples. To remain hopeful in the face of catastrophic histories, including the end of a way of life, is essential. As environmental scholar Janet Fiskio writes, the dominant affective mode for her students in a privileged liberal arts environmental studies context is of despair and nihilism about the scale and scope of climate change.[17] Thus, affect and emotion related to climate change and cultural destruction are often (unsurprisingly) shaped by lived realities of class, nation, and community.

This observation is not to say that despair is unwarranted. The world is facing hothouse earth (a chain of self-reinforcing changes leading to very large climate warming and sea-level rise), and those with the least culpability are hardest hit (e.g., global climate change refugees such as those from the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean).[18] Several reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have found that global warming is unequivocal, that it is mostly human-caused, and that the impacts are severe. The 2014 documentary *The Wisdom to Survive: Climate Change, Capitalism, and Community* elaborates how the impacts of climate change will be, as what one expert

says, "a crime against humanity." These crimes include intensifying conditions of drought, flooding, and wildfires as well as water acidification and the wide-scale death of ocean life, including coral reefs. The human and social impacts are massive, leading to global movement of populations and increased violence and war. In addition to elaborate detail on the human consequences of climate change, this film emphasizes the role of art, beauty, witness, and suffering in the face of pain. These, suffused with righteous anger, are what characterize climate justice and restorative environmental justice worldviews and practices.

Restorative environmental justice is based on praxis, history, and relationships, and examples abound. One related to climate justice is Re-Locate Kivalina, a transdisciplinary global collective working with local delegates to initiate a community-led and culturally specific relocation, using social arts methods and online media.[19] The project is founded on "solidarity and engagement" and a long-term dialogue in which a global partners travel to the village on a recurrent basis to develop shared priorities. As one of the codirectors of the organization says, "Re-Locate recognizes the roots of structural inequality in Kivalina's displacement and seeks to frame prospects looking forward that renegotiate power structures and realize material change in the village. These material changes and political retooling efforts are one and the same."[20]

Re-Locate is focused on politics, "beyond recognition, capacitating Kivalina's own comprehensive set of actionable strategies is our goal."[21] Re-Locate is grounded in the limits of recognition, to develop what the group calls "transformational empathy." As the chairman of the Kivalina Relocation Planning Committee explains, sympathy and empathy are distinct:

> We get a lot of sympathy from a lot of people … but we need more than sympathy, we need empathy.… To empathize with another you've got to really put yourself in their shoes for an extended period of time. Empathy is going to take time … it's more than feeling sorry for someone. To really empathize with someone in our situation you really have to experience what we experience; eat our food; face our seemingly compounded dilemma. We know that there are solutions to our situation. We know that there are ways that our problem can be resolved.[22]

Kivalina's Colleen Swan explicitly rejects the affective realm of paralyzing despair. Janet Fiskio writes on the "unbearable grief" in teaching on climate change, and she teaches to push against current ideologies of sustainability solutionism, to bear witness and avoid despair. To do so means to work with the students in "causing problems, asking questions, causing *trouble*."[23] Trouble means both difficulty and unrest, and through these dual terms we can understand environmental justice as a cultural and historical analytic. Environmental justice is also embodied as a form of solidarity. Instead of relying solely on conventional or neoliberal forms of combating climate change, new discourses arise out of feelings, opinions, desires, and bodily forms of making solidarity through protest—in other words, imagining a "vocabulary for talking about climate change," which includes mourning, solidarity, hospitality, and love.[24]

Troubles, mourning, hospitality, and love are precisely the modes of engagement that people of color, particularly Native peoples and African Americans, have relied on as generative spaces of hope in the face of ongoing structural death and violence. Life through and after horror have been recurrent features in Native and black stories in the United States since the "original sins" of genocide and slavery. Horrific violence and the

return of the repressed are central features in those natural disasters where social and racial inequalities magnify the pain for those hardest hit.

We can see this cultural mode of representation, suffused with satire and humor, in 2018's *Sorry to Bother You*. In it, director and musician Boots Riley rejects individualism as a failed response to the death-oriented political economy under capitalism. Historian Robin Kelley argues that the film "is not a vision of a dystopian future; it is a commentary on five hundred years of human history."[25] This film lightly exaggerates situations that are already ubiquitous, such as debt and precarity, to paint a landscape of racialized economic exploitation. The protagonist, Cash, excellently puts on his "white voice" to sell lifelong labor contracts of the desperate to a company called WorryFree. He battles his conscience, his radical artist girlfriend, and a labor organizer friend. He then discovers a plot by an amoral CEO to secretly (and without consent) turn the company's workers into horse-human hybrids called equi-sapiens, more powerful and profitable as hybrids than humans.

Geographer Aidan Davison describes human practice as the "drawing toward and into ourselves of worldly things: things living and nonliving, artefactual and ecological, human and nonhuman, earthly and heavenly."[26] The equi-sapiens are a dark version of human and corporate practice, a fusion of things living (human bodies) and nonliving, human and nonhuman, earthly and a synthetic hell created out of our culture's desire to engineer (improve?) the natural through the technological for the sake of profit. The film's main character exposes the corporate malfeasance. Rather than leading to WorryFree's demise, the stock soars as this technological miracle streamlines labor costs to maximize efficiency, as if "to emphasize … how the

endgame of capitalism is terrifyingly bleak, and how the government (and frankly, consensus public opinion) will forever side with moneymaking conglomerates."[27]

This bleak ending has edges of optimism. Cultural critic Franscesca Royster identifies what she calls a black post-soul eccentricity of musicians and artists. Sound and performance in particular performers are eccentric and slippery; they shift "and make strange the body of the performer . . . to transform the listener's and collective audience's relationship to their bodies," to reclaim imaginative and corporeal freedom from the social death of slavery and legacies of racism. She writes that "eccentric sound" (and in the case of film, images) "flips the switch, splits the tongue. It highlights dissonance in terms of the relationship between body and expected pitch."[28]

Cash, now an equi-sapien, leads his fellow equi-sapiens in knocking on the door of the CEO who made them horrific. The repressed return through revolution: what ensues is arguably a form of rebellion. This sentiment is repeated in the song "The Guillotine" in the film's soundtrack. The song opens, in an insistent and urgent voice, as the last scene of the movie visually ends with Cash and the equi-sapiens. Through its title, its call ("hey you"), and its invocation of "your" war, the song offers a revolutionary challenge against injustice laid bare at "your door."

The film (and soundtrack) is not optimistic in a traditional sense, but rather points to the possibilities of redemption through the horrors and humor. A film invested in reconciliation and sympathy would end with Cash's body intact, a new emotional growth, and a successful romance. But Riley is not interested in individualized redemption. His vision is of rebellion and revolution coming out of community and exploitation.

What justice means in the film is not altogether clear, but at the very least there is a sense of just desserts. That Cash is altered genetically is a crime, but in his solidarity knocking at the door he is arguably freer than when we first encounter him as a passive, precarious worker. Restoring environmental justice is not about a return to a prelapsarian state of nature or of perfect balance. These states of nature and balance have historically been denied to people of color. Rather, restorative environmental justice is a call for solidarity focused on accountability, art, and the continued search for freedom in a body or bodies shaped by the forces of racism, capitalism, and technology.

TROUBLING HURRICANE KATRINA

One of the most important "events" that set the stage for our current moment of danger was Hurricane Katrina. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. It brought massive winds and covered a large landmass, but its true devastation was in the aftermath, when the levees broke, which led to massive flooding. During the first week after the hurricane, 80 percent of New Orleans was submerged, which sent thousands to the Superdome and the Convention Center, last resorts for people who had little means to evacuate the city.[29] Almost two thousand people died, hundreds of thousands were displaced, and there was more than $100 billion in property damage. Race and class were key factors that shaped the failures in evacuation planning and in the storm's aftermath. After the flood, links between development and forced displacement of African Americans have been well documented by social scientists, who talk about "green gentrification" and how disaster planning exacerbated rather than mitigated class and racial inequality.[30]

Even before Katrina, environmental justice activists were anticipating the racially disproportionate effects of climate change—for example, in coastal flooding and the health effects of heat waves—through the Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative (EJCC).[31] The EJCC predicted all that unfurled during the hurricane, an analysis that has since been taken up by hundreds of climate justice groups in the United States and around the world.[32] According to a consultant on the Louisiana's evacuation plan, "Little attention was paid to moving out New Orleans's 'low-mobility' population—the elderly, the infirm and the poor without cars or other means of fleeing the city, about 100,000 people" (these were the exact populations stranded in the Superdome in terrible conditions after the levees broke). When explicitly asked at planning meetings about what to do with those populations, "the answer [of government officials and disaster planners] was often silence."[33] The silence of technocrats and disaster planners results from a lack of recognition of extreme social, class, and racial difference.[34]

This silence about powerless people is not surprising from the standpoint of the powerful. In sharp contrast, Ethnic Studies scholar Curtis Marez asks, "How might scholars of American studies and related disciplines approach the problem of disposable people in Katrina's wake?"[35] The answer: through culture in its myriad forms. He cites Johari Jabir's analysis of Mahalia Jackson's performance in the film *Imitation of Life* (1959), specifically her performance of the spiritual "Trouble of the World." Jabir argues that she evokes black New Orleans funeral rites within a broader culture "aggressively indifferent" to African American life and death. This insistence is striking given a broader culture invested in black silence. Jabir writes,

> When Mahalia enters the film with her New Orleans dirge interpretation of 'Troubles of the World' … we are reminded that at any moment, centuries of historically repressed crying, 'weeping and wailing' buried deep in the souls of black folk, could erupt and consume all the elements … [of] whiteness, wealth, and status.[36]

The moment is always now, and art is the truth about the complex ""troubles of the world."[37] Troubles in New Orleans transcend time. To counter the state-sanctioned silence and environmental racism that preceded and followed Katrina, the 2009 documentary *Trouble the Water* is invaluable as a cultural text about the hurricane. The tagline for the film is "It's not about a hurricane. It's about America." But how? The protagonists of the film are Kim Rivers-Roberts and her husband, among the 100,000 "low-mobility population" left behind during the hurricane. These people are those unable to leave because they are too poor, too ill, or too unfree (Kim's brother was trapped in a jail that flooded and was abandoned by guards). The film includes twenty minutes of footage that Kim shot during the storm, as well as her journey afterward—literal, bureaucratic (struggles with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA), and metaphoric. Kim embodies those unseen and unheard by bureaucrats and disaster planners before the storm and in its chaotic aftermath. By focusing on the hurricane through Kim's eyes (through first her video footage and then her post-Katrina travels and travails), the film centralizes her troubles, her perspective, and experiences.

Put simply, like Mahalia Jackson, Kim Rivers-Roberts troubles the narratives of American exceptionalism and capitalism. The threads between Jackson and Rivers-Roberts are multifold. Their lives as black women are central to their worldview, and

their struggles exemplify more than their individual identities and problems (whether in a funeral dirge or in physically surviving the hurricane and returning to New Orleans). Where they differ is in their musical genres. Rivers-Roberts is a performer-rapper known as Queen Koldmadina, and her song "Amazing" focuses on her pain and strength as two sides of a coin. She narrates her life throughout the film, including gun and state violence and her time in foster care. Her song elaborates her experience, including the death of her beloved mom from AIDS and drug addiction. The song builds to a powerful aural climax, her sonic and personal power complete, in a culture invested in the pain and weakness of the powerless. The message of the song, and the film is simple: *We exist. We live. We survive. We matter.*

Troubles and unfreedom are in part about the dead and the haunted in the wake of legacies of slavery. Black unfreedom and lack of control over their own bodies, both during and after Katrina, were made painfully clear in the racist media representation of "looting." In the immediate aftermath of the hurricane, Rivers-Roberts and other survivors go to the military base that sits on higher ground for protection and relief. They are met with guns of the U.S. military. The National Guard and other militarized responders (some just back from tours of duty in Iraq) overstated the threats of black violence. One account of the hurricane's aftermath noted,

> At the time, fear of looting led to the formation of quasi-militia groups, primarily made up of white residents or local police, who guarded areas in and around New Orleans, leading to racially motivated violence that would take years to prosecute. Encountering dead bodies in the water became common.... If the water was moving fast, they would be forced to tie the body to a permanent object.[38]

The racialized language of violence and the active repression of the histories of race and class that shape these states of unfreedom echo the notion of the "repressed," or what some call zombie or undead environmentalism. Zombies, in their American incarnation, strip Earth back down to its essential parts: mankind, nature, survival. The original zombies emerged when humans were denied control of their own bodies and sought death as an escape. One scholar argues that the zombie has come to serve as the primary symbol of escapism itself—where "the fictional enslavement of some provides a perverse kind of freedom for everyone else."[39] Zombies return. They don't die because the past doesn't die. Violence that is never reckoned with can never be forgotten.

Hurricane Katrina and the return of the dead is a central theme of *Come Hell or High Water*. The 2013 documentary focuses on Derrick Evans, a teacher

> who returns to his native coastal Mississippi when the graves of his ancestors are bulldozed to make way for the sprawling city of Gulfport. Derrick is consumed by the effort to protect Turkey Creek, which his great grandfather's grandfather settled as a former slave. He is on the verge of a breakthrough when Hurricane Katrina strikes the Gulf Coast.[40]

Evans works to restore the river, but he refuses to characterize his work as a "conservation" story.[41] Like the Indigenous water protectors who reject Standing Rock as an "environmental" conflict, Evans's framing of what is being protected and how matters. What makes the story of Turkey Creek a *restorative* environmental justice story is the foregrounding of the violence of history and racialized economic and land-use development. Hurricanes like Katrina and social and economic disasters like

top-down economic development and gentrification in black communities are explicitly linked by local residents, particularly those who are being displaced.

Kim Rivers-Roberts connects Hurricane Katrina with past and continuing state violence and the privatization of development in postdisaster "recovery." She focuses on a juvenile detention center built across from a high school and people using the works of local African American artists without permission. Katrina is still "alive and well" for the poor and black.[42] Rivers-Roberts says, "The Lower Ninth Ward didn't get enough help or money to rebuild. That's why so many didn't come back—that's Katrina in another form." She links violence and trauma and retells her story in different forms. Despite government and private development efforts to make New Orleans less poor and less black, she makes her story the centerpiece of trauma *and* creativity.[43] To do so is to expand the affective and emotional terrain of climate change, privatized land use and economic development, and racial terror.[44] Those most vulnerable are least responsible, hence the injustice. But those most vulnerable are also, arguably, the most prepared for the postcarbon, postcapitalist future, in part because they have survived in the face of socially and politically sanctioned death.

This survival in the face of death is what philosopher Jonathan Lear calls radical hope. He renarrates the story of Plenty Coups, the last great chief of the Crow Nation, who said, "When the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground … and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened." Lear asks, "How ought we to live this possibility of collapse" and vulnerability?[45] Although Lear is not talking about climate change, his questions illustrate contemporary philosophical and ethical dilemmas. How do people maintain the ability to hope

and believe in renewal that survives destruction? Indigenous scholars and activists argue, in Nick Estes's words, that Indigenous history is the future. Similarly, Kyle Whyte argues that Indigenous perspectives on climate change situate the present time as "already dystopian," situated through dialogic narratives with descendants and ancestors. Taken together, these writings suggest that discourses on hope, crisis, and survival must take Indigenous histories, presents, and futures seriously to enable solidarities.[46]

HURRICANE MARIA AND JUST TRANSITION

This question of how to maintain hope and believe in renewal in the face of social and environmental violence, death, and destruction is being asked and answered on a daily basis in Puerto Rico. Between September 16 and 30, 2017, Hurricane Maria devastated the Caribbean.[47] Maria has a special infamy in the annals of disaster and environmental racism.[48] More than 3.5 million U.S. citizens, including residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, faced catastrophically slow disaster recovery. Equally disastrous was a fully dysfunctional mainland political climate that dwarfed the FEMA ineptitude after Hurricane Katrina. Six weeks after Hurricane Maria, more than 70 percent of Puerto Rico lacked electricity and running water. Eighty percent of agricultural crops were destroyed. Full power restoration did not occur until August 2018, almost a year later. This blackout in Puerto Rico was the longest in U.S. history.[49] The U.S. government counted the hurricane's death toll at 64. This number was challenged repeatedly, culminating in officials in Puerto Rico accepting the findings of an independent investigation that put the death toll at 2,975 people, nearly fifty times the official

estimate.[50] The President Trump disputed the higher number and boasted, "We did a fantastic job."[51] Reports directly compared disaster relief after Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. The disparities are devastating—in financial resources (helicopters, food and water, tarps), personnel, timeliness of response, and financial relief for victims.[52]

Many historical, political, and technological issues shape the question of why and how hurricane recovery was disastrously slow in U.S. territories. One is debt. Hurricane Maria and its aftermath cannot be separated from the debt and austerity politics that preceded it. The origins of Puerto Rico's $72 billion debt include mismanagement and the colonial economic system's sanctioning of predatory "vulture" hedge funds. The Financial Oversight and Management Board runs the island's economy, and their determinations cannot be challenged by the Puerto Rican government. This structure is reminiscent of the antidemocratic practices in Flint under emergency management.[53]

Rather than accept a discourse that poses austerity as the answer to a problem of its own creation, those who advocate debt cancellation connect debt to historical development and the economic exploitation baked into the history of Puerto Rico.[54] The struggle against Puerto Rico's debt echoes earlier debates about debt cancellation and historical carbon debt (HCD). Climate debt is "a special case of environmental injustice where industrialized countries have over-exploited their 'environmental space' in the past, having to borrow from developing countries in order to accumulate wealth, and accruing ecological debts as a result of this historic over-consumption."[55] Rectifying inequality requires countries that have, in the past, emitted levels of greenhouse gases in excess of an equal per capita allocation to receive less than their equal per capita alloca-

tion in the future. This also works in reverse for countries that have, in the past, emitted levels lower than their equal per capita contribution. Countries with a positive HCD are considered debtors, while those with a negative HCD are considered creditors. Historical carbon debt is a powerful conceptual tool for assigning emissions restrictions and costs to those who have benefited the most from past development.

The reframing of debt is connected conceptually to calls for a "just" recovery, rather than a market-based one. Using the frames of just transition and just power, a coalition of local, community-based organizations in Puerto Rico and on the mainland has called for such a just recovery, one that includes debt relief, transparency in distribution of resources, and attention to environmental justice issues, principles, and policies. These grassroots groups are actively resisting the top-down desire of economic and political elites to literally and socially reshape the island through high-end development, debt bondage, and privatization of public services, including education. Thus, in Puerto Rico as in Flint, social movements are advancing radical and participatory democracy in the face of anti-democratic restructuring. Resistance and organizing are strong in Puerto Rico, even as residents remain traumatized by the hurricane and its aftermath. The debates parallel those post–Hurricane Katrina, in which political and economic elites used the disaster as a pretext to rebuild the education and housing system, advancing privatization and charter school agendas. In response, and in line with environmental justice movements in the United States and around the world, hundreds of organizations and major coalitions that have emerged post-Maria. These groups and networks advance climate and environmental justice frames in their search for solutions post-Maria, including advocating renewable energy and a people's platform.[56]

Puerto Ricans in the diaspora joined with those on-island in creating art for organizing. A number of groups and initiatives popped up in response to state failure post-Maria.[57] Cultural productions show the energies of musicians and artists in centralizing Puerto Rican voices. *Hamilton* creator Lin-Manuel Miranda donated portions of the proceeds from his blockbuster musical and brought together many famous Puerto Rican artists to create a benefit song.[58] In visual culture, artists illustrated their accounts of life after Maria.[59] Graphic artists created two major compilations, *Puerto Rico Strong* and *Ricanstruction,* produced by Edgardo Miranda-Rodriguez. *Ricanstruction* stars La Borinqueña, the Puerto Rican heroine, fighting alongside Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, and other DC Comics characters.[60]

In Puerto Rico, culture becomes a resource in a context where climate injustice grows as a direct consequence of continuing coloniality, privatization, and policy racism. Justice activists in climate, environmental, and anti-austerity movements struggle to reframe the "official" story of debt and social failure. Rather, justice activists draw upon a longer timeline of history, politics, and movements to combat the state and capital interests that seek to remake the island as a natural and economic resource to be further exploited. In situating their struggles against marketization with those in New Orleans and Flint, justice activists in Puerto Rico add their threads to the counter-hegemonic struggle for restorative environmental justice on an island long defined by its beauty and natural resources to be plumbed, and by bodies in pain.

Violence and trauma kill and create. They disrupt at the same time that they can generate new orders. Some of what is created can seem monstrous, while other responses are utopian. Restor-

ing environmental justice means taking the standpoint of African American and Indigenous lives as the starting point. It means taking fact, fiction, and narrative approaches more broadly in the accounts of why and how we (at many scales) got here and how we might survive. Examples include fictionalized equi-sapiens or solar panels after a devastating hurricane. Restoring environmental justice takes history into culture (and vice versa) and centers life beyond extractive capitalism and its affiliations with carbon and hierarchy.[61]

Radical freedom activists have long known how revolutionary politics is performative and cultural. Benjamin Lay, an eighteenth-century Quaker abolitionist, knew rebellion well. As historian Marcus Rediker recounts,

> He was a dwarf, barely four feet tall, but from his small body came a thunderous voice. God, he intoned, respects all people equally, be they rich or poor, man or woman, white or black. Throwing his overcoat aside, he spoke his prophecy: "Thus shall God shed the blood of those persons who enslave their fellow creatures." He raised the book above his head and plunged the sword through it. As the "blood" [bright red pokeberry juice] gushed down his arm, several members of the congregation swooned. He then splattered it on the heads and bodies of the slave keepers. His message was clear: Anyone who failed to heed his call must expect death—of body and soul.... He knew he would be disowned by his beloved community for his performance, but he had made his point. As long as Quakers owned slaves, he would use his body and his words to disrupt their hypocritical routines.[62]

Performative disruption can sway, even if not suddenly. Quakers became staunch abolitionists, in part because of Lay's provocations and challenges to the common sense of his age. Environmental justice activists create a completely different structure of feeling than that proposed by venture capitalists, charter school

proponents, and developers. The equi-sapiens, the zombies and dead bodies *are* us and we are them.

What we do, how we treat political and natural others, and how we think matters. When we bother to look, we see things that disturb us. At the same time, we see rebellion all around. We should be troubled by the world, and we should seek to trouble it. Scientists, artists, and thinkers are "staying with" the trouble we live in. Feminist technoscience scholar Donna Haraway writes, "It matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories."[63]

Environmental justice movements write and rewrite stories of freedom under violence and hope after destruction. The question of solidarity is what to do about what troubles us. People seeking to expand freedom have always questioned the common sense of their (and our) day. We cannot look away. Radical and feminist historians of labor and social movements look to spontaneous protests of evictions, to wildcat strikes outside of formal unions, and within and beyond the body. We can see glimpses of solidarities all around us. Some are old, as Rediker writes of Lay's visions: "Against the common sense of the day, when slavery seemed to most people as immutable as the stars in the heavens, Lay imagined a new world in which people would live simply, make their own food and clothes, and respect nature."[64] Restorative environmental justice is one such lens for an optic of freedom and solidarity.

To live beyond terror, to feel joy and radical hope, is to be free—just not WorryFree.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER ONE. THIS MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS

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36. NoiseCat and Spice, "A History and Future of Resistance"; Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.

37. Dhillon and Estes, "Introduction: Standing Rock, #NoDAPL, and Mni Wiconi."

38. Ibid.

39. The Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 (which allowed individual tribesmen to own land) and the creation of five smaller reservations further factionalized the Oceti Sakowin. See Dhillon and Estes, "Introduction: Standing Rock, #NoDAPL, and Mni Wiconi."

40. Followers of the Ghost Dance danced in circles until they collapsed into trances. The U.S. Army killed more than 200 Lakota Sioux at Wounded Knee Creek in 1890 (officially, 146 went into the mass grave, but many others died later from wounds and/or exposure). The Ghost Dance has been viewed as an effort by Indian militants to resist American conquest and return to traditional ways. Recent scholarship suggests that the followers of the Ghost Dance were also engaged deeply with modernity. See also Louis Warren, *God's Red Son: The Ghost Dance Religion and the Making of Modern America* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

41. Maria Streshinsky, "Saying No to $1 Billion," *Atlantic,* March 2011, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/03/saying-no-to-1-billion/308380.

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47. Sacred Stone Camp zine, n.d., https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/honorearth/pages/2267/attachments/original/1470612897/ND_ZINE_updated.pdf?1470612897.

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88. Julie Sze and Elizabeth Yeampierre, "Towards a Just Transition: Climate Justice, Development and Community Resilience," in

Just Green Enough: Urban Development and Environmental Gentrification, ed. Winifred Curren and Trina Hamilton (New York: Routledge, 2018), 61–67.

89. "Indigenous Principles of Just Transition," Indigenous Environmental Network, accessed May 12, 2019, www.ienearth.org/justtransition. Additional principles, especially important in light of Standing Rock and other pipeline battles, read:

> A Just Transition acknowledges the Earth is a living female organism—our Mother. Water is her lifeblood. The Earth and Father Sky, with its air and atmosphere, are the source of life to be protected, not merely a resource to be exploited, degraded, privatized and commodified.
>
> A Just Transition recognizes that strategies were first forged by labor unions and environmental justice groups, rooted in people of color and low-income communities as well as Indigenous lands; who jointly saw the need to phase out industries that were polluting workers, community and Mother Earth; and at the same time provide just pathways for workers to transition to other jobs. It was rooted in workers defining a transition away from toxic polluting industries in alliances with fence line and frontline communities.

90. Long Soldier et al., "Women and Standing Rock."

91. Sarain Fox describes the Art Action camp in Weisenstein, "How Art Immortalized #NoDAPL Protests at Standing Rock":

> The Art Action Camp was made up of four components: the artists who are creating, the legal team who is there to consult and inform people of risks before they go out, the media team—which I was a part of—who helps navigate press releases and how to communicate with the media, and then the action team who actually plans and strategizes.

92. See Justseeds Artists' Cooperative statement, accessed April 19, 2019, https://justseeds.org/about.

93. Quoted in Bubacz, "What Happened after Standing Rock."

94. Neil deMause, "As Industry City Promises a New Sunset Park, Some Residents Fight to Maintain the Old One," *City Limits,* October 27, 2015, https://citylimits.org/2015/10/27/as-industry-city-promises-a-new-sunset-park-some-residents-fight-to-maintain-the-old-one.

95. "Climate Justice Center," UPROSE, accessed September 10, 2018, https://www.uprose.org/climate-justice.

96. Sze and Yeampierre, "Towards a Just Transition."

97. "Youth Organizing," UPROSE, accessed September 10, 2018, https://www.uprose.org/youth-summit-2017.

98. Ellie Shechet, "At a Climate Justice Fashion Show, the Kids Prove They're Gonna Be All Right, Jezebel," last modified August 4, 2017,https://themuse.jezebel.com/at-a-climate-justice-fashion-show-the-kids-prove-theyr-1797517543.

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CHAPTER TWO. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ENCOUNTERS

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3. Carolina Balazs, Rachel Morello-Frosch, Alan Hubbard, and Isha Ray, "Social Disparities in Nitrate Contaminated Drinking Water in the San Joaquin Valley," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 119, no. 9 (2011): 1272–78; Carolina Balazs and Isha Ray, "The Drinking

Water Disparities Framework: On the Origins and Persistence of Inequities in Exposure," *American Journal of Public Health*104, no. 4 (2014): 603–11.

4. *The Human Costs of Nitrate-Contaminated Drinking Water in the San Joaquin Valley* (Oakland: Pacific Institute, 2011), retrievable at http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/communitywatercenter/pages/36/attachments/original/1394234487/PacInst_Human-Costs-of-Nitrate_2011.pdf?1394234487.

5. Patricia Leigh Brown, "The Flint of California," *Politico,* May 25, 2016,https://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2016/05/is-clean-drinking-water-a-right-000129.

6. Andrew R. Highsmith, *Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the Fate of the American Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 1.

7. John Eligon, "A Question of Environmental Racism in Flint," *New York Times,* January 21, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/22/us/a-question-of-environmental-racism-in-flint.html.

8. Pauli, *Flint Fights Back,* 102.

9. Stuart Hall, Doreen Massey, and Michael Rustin, eds., *After Neoliberalism? The Kilburn Manifesto* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2015), 14–15.

10. Lawyer and journalist Carey McWilliams's 1939 classic study, *Factories in the Field,* described a landscape that differs from today's agricultural industry only in the demographics of the migratory farm labor population.

11. Jill Harrison studies contemporary pesticide drift activism, policy, and science. Pesticide poisoning is both pervasive and invisible, similar to how lead poisoning persists in the United States. See her *Pesticide Drift and the Pursuit of Environmental Justice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

12. Chelsea Grimmer, "Racial Microbiopolitics: Flint Lead Poisoning, Detroit Water Shut Offs, and the 'Matter' of Enfleshment," *Comparitist* 41 (2017): 23–24, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/675731.

13. Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2.

14. In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor,* Nixon writes that "violence is customarily conceived as an event that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility" (2).

15. Chloe Ahmann, "'It's exhausting to create an event out of nothing': Slow Violence and the Manipulation of Time," *Cultural Anthropology* 33, no. 1 (2018): 142–71, quote on 164–65. Ahmann further writes that "slow violence is a condition that seems to invite incoherence. It takes too long, it's hard to notice, and it casts a wide chasm between effects and the various forces to which we might attribute cause. But it is, in fact, an object" (164).

16. The Little River Band of Ottawa donated $10,000 to Flint, based on their conception of water as a gift. "Little River Band of Ottawa Give $10K to Assist in Flint Water Crisis," *Native News Online,* January 19, 2016, http://nativenewsonline.net/currents/23974.

17. In 2014, forty-six thousand shutoff notices were sent to Detroit households for nonpayment of bills. For residents and activists, it is a serious issue when the city's poorest, including children, are made to live without running water in their homes. A group of United Nations experts called it a violation of human rights. Kate Abbey-Lambertz, "How Detroit's Water Crisis Is Part of a Much Bigger Problem," *Huffington Post,* August 19, 2014, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/19/detroit-water-shutoffs_n_5690980.html.

18. The California declaration is largely symbolic, intended as a moral compass for water policy. It does contain a key provision requiring state agencies to consider the human right to water when establishing new regulations and grant programs. Brown, "The Flint of California."

19. Mona Hanna-Attisha, *What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City* (New York: Random House, 2018).

20. William Finnegan, "Flint and the Long Struggle against Lead Poisoning," *New Yorker,* February 4, 2016, https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/flint-and-the-long-struggle-against-lead-poisoning. Experts who raised alarms included Miguel Del Toral from the Environmental Protection Agency; Hanna-Attisha, a young Flint pediatrician, who documented the rise in childhood lead

poisoning; and Marc Edwards, a civil-engineering professor at Virginia Tech.

21. KWA was incorporated in 2010 and began its first fiscal year on October 1, 2010. See Peter J. Hammer, "The Flint Water Crisis, the Karegnondi Water Authority and Strategic-Structural Racism," *Critical Sociology* 45, no. 1 (2019): 103–19.

22. Amy Davidson Sorkin, "The Contempt That Poisoned Flint's Water," *New Yorker,* January 22, 2016, https://www.newyorker.com/news/amy-davidson/the-contempt-that-poisoned-flints-water.

23. Quoted in Graham Cassano and Teressa A. Benz, "Introduction: Flint and the Racialized Geography of Indifference," *Critical Sociology* 45, no. 1 (2019): 25–32.

24. Kyle T. Mays, "Flint: Not Just a Black Issue," *Indian Country Today,* January 25, 2016, https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/opinions/flint-not-just-a-black-issue.

25. The 1819 Treaty of Saginaw ceded more than six million acres of land when the first white settler in Flint, Jacob Smith, signed away the land in return for a cash payment and land for his children. His descendants used the court system to further deterritorialize the Anishinaabeg, who lost more than seven thousand acres along the Flint River. Dylan Miner, *Tikibiing Booskikamigaag: An Indigenous History and Ecology of Flint,* 24-page limited edition artist's book (N.p.: Dylan Miner, 2013).

26. Christopher F. Petrella and Ameer Loggins, "Standing Rock, Flint, and the Color of Water," *Black Perspectives,* November 2, 2016, https://www.aaihs.org/standing-rock-flint-and-the-color-of-water.

27. Kyle T. Mays, "From Flint to Standing Rock: The Aligned Struggles of Black and Indigenous People," *Cultural Anthropology,* December 22, 2016,https://culanth.org/fieldsights/from-flint-to-standing-rock-the-aligned-struggles-of-black-and-indigenous-people.

28. Jamie Peck, "Austerity Urbanism," *City* 16, no. 6 (2012): 626–55, https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2012.734071 (emphasis added).

29. "GM tried not only to defeat workers but also the environment in which they, and all of us, live … linked by roads, rivers and streams.… Flint and the area around it had become an industrially polluted landscape (dependent on lead)." Gerald Rosner, "Flint, Mich-

igan: A Century of Environmental Injustice," *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 2 (February 2016): 200–201.

30. Emily L. Dawson, "Lessons Learned from Flint, Michigan: Managing Multiple Source Pollution in Urban Communities," *William and Mary Environmental Law and Policy Review* 26, no. 2 (2001): 367–405, http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmelpr/vol26/iss2/5; Brandon Ward, "The Promise of Jobs: Blackmail and Environmental Justice in Flint, Michigan, 1991–1995," *Environmental Justice* 6, no. 5 (2013): 163–68, https://doi.org/10.1089/env.2013.0030.

31. The percentage of the population of Flint relative to the population of its county, Genesee, has fallen dramatically from just more than half to less than a quarter in the past fifty years. The population of Genesee County is not just whiter than the city of Flint; it is also wealthier. See Hammer, "The Flint Water Crisis."

32. In 1990, 30.6 percent of Flint residents lived below the poverty line. Ibid., 5.

33. Andrew R. Highsmith, "Beyond Corporate Abandonment: General Motors and the Politics of Metropolitan Capitalism in Flint, Michigan," *Journal of Urban History* 40, no. 1 (2014): 31–47, https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144213508080.

34. Highsmith, *Demolition Means Progress,* 130.

35. John Wisely, "Flint Residents Paid America's Highest Water Rates," *Detroit Free Press,* February 16, 2016, https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/flint-water-crisis/2016/02/16/study-flint-paid-highest-rate-us-water/80461288.

36. Katrease Stafford, "Controversial Water Shutoffs Could Hit 17,461 Detroit Households," *Detroit Free Press,* March 26, 2018, https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2018/03/26/more-than-17–000-detroit-households-risk-water-shutoffs/452801002; Jacey Fortin, "In Flint, Overdue Bills for Unsafe Water Could Lead to Foreclosures," *New York Times,* May 4, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/04/us/flint-water-home-foreclosure.html.

37. Michigan's Public Act 4 (PA 4) of 2011 significantly expanded the powers of the emergency manager, granting control over all aspects of a city's operations. Carolyn G. Loh, "The Everyday Emergency: Planning

and Democracy under Austerity Regimes," *Urban Affairs Review* 52, no. 5 (2015): 832–63, https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087415577639.

38. The emergency manager assumes authority over all of a jurisdiction's elected and appointed officials, such as hiring and firing, spending money, and making strategic decisions. Additionally, the EM may break union contracts or enter into new ones, sell public assets, and privatize public functions. The EM may prohibit a city council from holding meetings, and if the council nevertheless continues to meet, its actions carry no authority.

39. Fasenfest writes that "if you live in Michigan there is a 10% chance that you have lived under emergency management since 2009. But if you are a black Michigander, the odds are 50/50." David Fasenfest, "A Neoliberal Response to an Urban Crisis: Emergency Management in Flint, MI," *Critical Sociology* 45, no. 1 (2019): 33–47. See also David Fasenfest, *Unelected, Unaccountable: The Impact of Emergency Managers on Key Michigan Cities* (Detroit: ACLU of Michigan, 2017).

40. "Emergency Manager laws reflect a singular approach; specifically, the application of austerity policies that privilege financial rather than a social solution to a community's ills." Fasenfest, "A Neoliberal Response to an Urban Crisis."

41. Ibid.

42. Loh, "The Everyday Emergency," 836–37.

43. Between 2006 and 2012, state revenue sharing and property tax revenue fell 33 percent and income tax revenue by 39 percent. Hammer, "The Flint Water Crisis."

44. Fasenfest, *Unelected, Unaccountable.* This language is part of the playbook of austerity urbanism; see Peck, "Austerity Urbanism."

45. Loh, "The Everyday Emergency," 839; Hammer, "The Flint Water Crisis."

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63. Grimmer writes:

> Cities' and business' justification of shut offs or lack of clean water through a rhetoric of uncontainable contagion and/or unworthy debtors makes some lives culturally 'matter' more than others by cutting off or making poisonous the literal matter necessary for those lives to continue. Such a denial regulates literal matter (shut offs) or codes it as unpredictable (lead poisoning), which merges violence at the biological level with a historically material process of producing and expanding capital in post-industrial, neoliberal landscapes. (Ibid., 23)

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CHAPTER THREE. RESTORING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

1. In Pellow's conception of critical environmental justice (CEJ), he suggests that "social movements can strategically harness the power of states to produce positive outcomes, but should always be cautious about doing so and work to limit a reliance on the state." David Pellow, "Critical Environmental Justice Studies," in *What Is Critical Environmental Justice?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), 151.

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CONCLUSION

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GLOSSARY

ANTI-CAPITALISM A broad set of beliefs and policies that range from taming the worst excesses of capitalism to radically reimagining the fundamental tenets of how economies function and are organized, such as in socialism.

CLIMATE JUSTICE A global movement for justice in addressing the historical dimensions, current policies (or lack of) regarding sea-level rise, ocean acidification, increasing intensities related to drought and wildfires, etc., and future implications of massive carbon emissions and their interrelated impacts on ecological systems and human communities.

DISPOSSESSION A term most often used in relation to the process of settler colonial expansion or the movement of Native peoples from their ancestral lands. Dispossession also applies in broader contexts, such as in urban displacement and gentrification.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ) A social movement to further policy and cultural changes that support social justice and environmentalism, broadly defined, connecting issues of race, class, indigeneity, gender, citizenship/nation-state, and sexuality with environmental equity.

EXTRACTION The unsustainable use of natural resources (oil, mining, etc.), often shaped by race/racism and colonial histories/neocolonial policies.

GENDERED ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLENCE The both visible and invisible ways in which environmental changes or policies have a gendered component.

INTERSECTIONALITY A framework in which axes of identity and difference, such as race, gender, sexuality, national origin, and ability/disability, are interconnected. The concept emerged out of black feminist thought.

LIBERALISM Historically, a set of universalist beliefs that prioritize the individual and freedom, particularly the freedom to own property. Under liberalism, individuals are free to safeguard themselves and their property from the excesses of the state.

NEOLIBERALISM A set of policies and worldviews that favors private markets and corporate power. Elements of neoliberal policy include tax cuts, privatization of public services, and deregulation.

RACIAL CAPITALISM The argument that capitalism and racism depended on one another as coevolving philosophical, political, and economic systems during the transition from Western feudal societies to modernity, which relied on colonialism, slavery, violence, and genocide.

SETTLER COLONIALISM A system that was and remains a particular form of colonialism in which Indigenous inhabitants of a specific place were and are replaced by settlers. Settler colonialism is both historical and ongoing as well as cultural and political in its character and practices.

SLOW VIOLENCE The idea that violence has a temporal character, which manifests how the impacts of violence are often rendered invisible for those impacted by it, as well as made difficult to see for those not directly impacted. These impacts often take a long period of time, in contrast to fast violence, which is sudden, obvious, and explosive.

SOLIDARITY The sense of community or group connection around a set of shared values. Solidarity is most often manifested through labor politics, social movements, and cultural expression.

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