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Toward 'Fugitivity as Method' An Introduction to the Special Issue

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Article abstract

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Toward 'Fugitivity as Method': An Introduction to the Special Issue

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Abstract

Recent studies on fugitivity, marronage, and other forms of flight from racial violence and dehumanization have mapped a historical and spatial archipelago of Black and Indigenous freedom struggles across the Caribbean and the Americas. Narratives of fugitivity recuperate the diverse and widespread practices of resistance and refusal that have always accompanied racial violence in these geographies. While scholars have demonstrated the ongoing-ness of racial violence from the plantation to the present, studies on fugitivity remain largely confined to the historical period of chattel slavery, having the unintended effect of rendering plantation futures hegemonic in the present. In addition, the majority of studies have confined analysis to the "New World" despite the prevalence of fugitive practices in other spaces of colonial and racial capitalist domination. Rooted in Black geographies, this special issue asks what fugitivity—as a historical phenomenon, analytical category, and political practice—adds to our understanding of the production of space and subjects today. As a method, fugitivity travels across disciplinary boundaries and multiple

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Keywords

Antiracist geographies, Black geographies, collective resistance, freedom, mobility, place-making

Introduction

On August 6, 1784 a woman named Ann Clark took out a paid advertisement in the *Cornwall Chronicle* in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The advertisement read:

Run away, from Clifton Hill, near this Bay, on Wednesday last, the following Negroes, viz., Ruth, Silver, Nelly, Bess, Sampson, Dick, Nancy, Mary, Humphrey, and Nelly a young girl. Ruth is middle aged, likely wench; she is well known about Lacovia and Black River in St. Elizabeth, and is supposed to be gone to the Maroon-town in that parish, where she has a Maroon for a husband named Martin, by trade a tailor. Silver is a likely wench, has two sambo children (Nancy and Mary) which she took with her; she is supposed to be harboured at Cornwall, near Lacovia. Nelly is a likely young wench, has child sucking (Humprey); she is supposed to be harboured at or near Thomas Chambers's settlement at Santa Croix [sic], St. Elizabeth. Sampson is a middle aged, stout fellow, and supposed to be harboured at the same place with Nelly. All others are supposed to be harboured near Lacovia. Whoever takes them up and will bring them to the subscriber, shall receive a Guineas for each; and whoever can prove by whom they are harboured, shall, on conviction of the offender, receive ten pounds. (Chambers, 2013: 95)

The advertisement calls for the apprehension and return of ten runaways: three women, their children, and a middle-aged man. Like thousands of other enslaved African, African-descended and Taino people in Jamaica, and like enslaved African and Indigenous people across the Atlantic World, they had stolen themselves away. The ten being sought by Clark refused the logics of commodification and dehumanization through flight. Unlike many iconic stories of marronage and flight from slavery that focus on exceptional individuals such as Harriet Tubman and Jamaican maroon leader Nanny, this is an instance of collective, multi-gendered, multi-racial (e.g., children identified as "sambo"), and multi-generational escape. One of the fugitives, Ruth, was presumed to have absconded to a maroon settlement to join her husband, where she was being sheltered in spite of 1738 treaties obliging maroons to

return runways to their owners or colonial authorities. Despite deliberate efforts to fracture communities, new and old bonds of filiation are evident in Sampson, Nelly, and her nursing baby taking refuge together in a Black community at St. Elizabeth, and the others in a settlement near Lacovia.

The actions of this group of mostly women and children, together with their maroon collaborators, remind us of the wide repertoire of Black resistance, political agency, and mobility in the Atlantic world (Gilroy, 1993; Wynter, *Unpublished*). Their movements refused the logics and laws of colonialism and the plantation, making themselves "unavailable for servitude" (Toni Cade Bambara, in Gordon, 2004: 204). The presence of this group in the colonial archive also provides an early history of the construction of Black criminality and its relationship to racial regimes of property. Their unauthorized movement made them contraband. Having stolen themselves and their loved ones away, they steeled themselves for the uncertainty and tremendous danger that accompany fugitives long after escape (Hartman, 1999). Ruth and the others' flight is defined by unauthorized movement and subversive settling, underscoring the nature of fugitivity as a relational, iterative practice of mobility and place-making rather than a linear escape from the enclosures of the plantation to the freedom of the Maroon-town.

In wider Atlantic historiography, marronage and other forms of fugitive mobilities highlight the social and spatial dynamics of resistance and refashioning that African, African-descended, and Indigenous people enacted wherever chattel slavery existed. As Adam Bledsoe has argued, marronage therefore "entails not only critiquing dominant spatial arrangements, but also creating entirely new spatial relations that do not draw on modern spatial praxes as the norm" (2017: 34). In the Americas, maroon communities constituted an archipelago of freedom that spanned the settlements of Miskito Sambu in Central America, *quilombos* and *palenques* in South America, Garifuna in the eastern Caribbean, and the Great Dismal Swamp in the United States (Agorsah, 1994; Diouf, 2014; Price, 1979; Thompson, 2006). Living in forests and caves on the edge of the proliferating plantations of the colonial Americas, maroons established counter-hegemonic communities. These communities spatialized, and in some cases continue to spatialize, resistance through the transformation of landscapes deemed pestilential into places of Black refuge (Hosbey & Roane, 2021; Moulton, 2022; Winston, 2021). Not limiting the focus to terrestrial geographies of fugitivity and marronage, Black ecologies scholars have reminded us of the importance of seascapes and waterscapes as places of action and movement (Dunnavant, 2021; Roane, 2022). Understandably, given their reputation and representation as *Black avengers* and *Black rebels* of the Atlantic world (Zips, 1999; Pierrot, 2019) the maroons have been at the focus of many studies on resistance to slavery. But other forms of fugitivity, such as temporary escape (petit marronage) and flight across borders to putatively "free" states, were even more widespread (Camp, 2005; Nevius, 2020a). What all these all have in common is the subversive use of movement and geography as tactics to enable individual and collective survival within geographies of in/security (Cummings, 2018; Noxolo, 2018b).

Thus, studies uncovering the histories and geographies of fugitivity recuperate the rich, diverse, and widespread practices of resistance and refusal that have always accompanied racial violence in the 'New World' (Bledsoe, 2018). But it is precisely this historical and geographical focus that expose two openings that the special issue explores. While scholars have demonstrated the ongoing-ness of racial violence from the Middle Passage and plantation economy to the present, studies on fugitivity remain largely confined to the historical period of chattel slavery or to the abstract realm of political theory (Roberts, 2015; Walcott, 2018). Confining fugitive practices and relations to the past can have the unintended effect of rendering "plantation futures" hegemonic in late capitalism, foreclosing lines of flight (McKittrick, 2013; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Second, geographies of marronage and fugitivity remain primarily centered on slave plantations, remote 'natural' environments, and 'New World' geographies, despite the prevalence of fugitive place-making in other spaces of colonial and racial capitalist domination (Nevius, 2020b; Scott, 2010; Wright, 2020).

The possibilities suggested by thinking about fugitivity in relation to, but in excess of, the specific histories and geographies of marronage motivated two panels organized at the American Association of Geographers' (AAG) Annual Meeting in 2021. The panels, entitled "Fugitivity as Method," sought to explore the analytical and actionable potential of thinking with the fugitive within global systems of racial domination. We read fugitivity as not just a historical phenomenon or political theory, but a practice—a method—for apprehending and imagining the world otherwise. It rejects the property relation and refuses a spatial sensibility based on racialized exclusion or partial inclusion. The articles in this special issue demonstrate three primary ways that fugitivity operates as a method: as knowledge-making, kin-making, and place-making. From new archeological techniques that demonstrate the ubiquity of marronage in plantation geographies to urban uprisings against British state pursuit of immigrant and ethnic minority Britons and literary exploration of urban rooftops as "upperground" insurgent spaces for Black youth, the articles in this special issue are unified by a concern for the way fugitive practices elude the enclosure of traditional politics and how collective, rather than individual, resistance forges alternative subjectivities and spaces in excess but never fully outside of dominant geographies (Harney and Moten, 2013; McKittrick, 2006). The articles also chart a course for engaging with movement—especially subaltern, racialized, and gendered flight—as an important project of place-making and social survivance within and beyond the traditional time-spaces of marronage. Finally, the articles examine how fugitive methods disclose Black political, ecological, and spatial epistemologies that understand "freedom as a place" (Gilmore, 2017).

The remainder of this essay first reviews the ways that historical fugitivity exposed the limits of the slave system through constant contestation, and how fugitivity manifests in ongoing resistance and counter-spatial struggles of Black and other devalued life in the present. We then discuss how fugitivity, as method, is expressed through multi-valent practices that counter the violent, dominant geographies of racial capitalism in the colonial

present. Turning to the contributions in the special issue, we show how each article, despite different time-frames, subjects, and spaces, expands the repertoire of fugitive methods, linking the movements and place-making of other oppressed people within geographies of precarity, revealing or revitalizing narratives of solidarity, care, and entanglement across local and global space (Noxolo, 2018; Sharpe, 2018; Winston, 2021).

Fugitive (Im)possibilities: Flight, freedom, and the Black Radical Tradition

History shows that slavery is incomplete and struggle against enslavement and capture is constant. The historical traces of fugitive mobility in the Atlantic world suggest a more complicated and contested vision of the plantation system than is represented in colonial and national archives or in cartographic renderings of the landscape. Closer reading of the archives, as we do in analysis of Ann Clark's advertisement above, reveals that absconding—to visit a lover or family member, escape punishment, or attempt to permanently leave the condition of enslavement—was widespread. As Dunnvant et al. (this issue) show, plantocratic map-makers often misrendered territories under settler control to downplay the presence of maroons at the plantation's borders. Flight was one of many modes of resistance scholars have documented: in the western and eastern Atlantic worlds, people rose up against their captors in West African barracoons, mutinied or jumped ship, revolted against plantation masters and colonial governments. Attention to *both* sides of the Atlantic is particularly important because the "Atlantic world" has tended to signify the Americas and Caribbean, a framing that elides the histories of resistance across the African continent and linkages between "Old World" and "New World" geographies.

The will to fugitivity in the face of systems of enslavement informs what Cedric Robinson names the Black Radical Tradition, a tradition very much alive in fugitive geographies today. Robinson argues that a central tenet of the Black Radical Tradition is a sense of history and political agency, a "collective consciousness informed by the historical struggles for liberation and the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality" (1983: 170-171). As George Lipsitz explains, this collective consciousness "reminds us not to confuse the grandiose aspirations and illusions of the powerful with the actual lived experiences of those they control. Slavery did mandate legally and militarily supported social death, but slaves worked assiduously and effectively each day, every day, each year, and every year to create a rich social life... Domination produces resistance, and resistance plants the seeds of a new society within the shell of the old" (Lipsitz, 2017: 109). The "ontological totality" at the heart of the Black Radical Tradition consists of innumerable instances of actually-existing social life where projects of social death have sought to render it impossible.

Thus, fugitivity is a spatial method of contesting geographies of domination through mobility, collective struggle, and what Katherine McKittrick calls "Black livingness" (McKittrick 2021). Fugitivity is a method rooted in the experiences of African, African-descended, and Indigenous peoples as they struggle(d) against dispossession and dehumanization wrought by colonial and capitalist enclosures and foreclosures. The

plantation is only one instantiation of racist spatial and economic ordering (McKittrick 2011: 949). And while there is not an unbroken line from the plantation's emergence in the colonial commodity market system to the neoliberal present, its afterlives reverberate through diverse racial-spatial projects today, including underdevelopment, mass incarceration, urban abandonment, ecological destruction, resource extraction, and border proliferation. At the same time, following Cedric Robinson, resistance to slavery "gave lie to its own conceit: one could not create a perfect system of oppression and exploitation" (1997: 11). The ongoingness of fugitive practices exposes the lie of uncontested and uncontestable systems of oppression past and present. This insight—that fugitivity disrupts the stability of racial domination—has implications for how we study geography. As McKittrick cautions, work that maps only racial violence can elide or erode a Black sense of place, whereby "life, violence, encounter, and coloniality, together, point to practical strategies of resistance" in spaces shaped by struggle (2011: 953). Fugitivity as method offers alternative cartographic sensibilities that are attuned to the spatial practices of Black and other marginalized people within and against mainstream geography.

Finally, if fugitivity challenges essentialist narratives and cartographies of oppression (Madera, 2015), it also challenges the liberal concept of freedom that defines it as a metaphysical state. As Orlando Patterson argued decades ago, if the slave has the most precise understanding of freedom, her fugitive movements point toward its contingency. This insight is central to Neil Roberts's analysis of "freedom as marronage." Roberts reads marronage beyond the historical geography of the maroons and suggests how marronage as a will to freedom instantiates a challenge to liberal political thought and practice. Crucially, if for Roberts flight sometimes means freedom and sometimes means the movement toward freedom, for us such a distinction is precisely the motivation to understand fugitivity as method. For the fugitive person, escape did not bring about the end of commodification and oppression. Rather, as a "crime against property," fugitivity rendered the person who stole herself away a criminal, looking over her shoulder as one both under the law and beyond its protection. This contradiction is at the heart of Rinaldo Walcott's (2018) critique of recent political theorizations that represent fugitivity as a signifier of freedom. For Walcott, the conditions of unfreedom that give rise to flight means that fugitivity can never be synonymous with freedom, but rather with "freedom's violence" (Walcott 2018: 156). As freedom's violence, fugitivity gestures to the not-yet status of freedom, a status that persisted even after the formal abolition of slavery. While Walcott reads this as the failure of fugitivity to constitute meaningful political practice in the face of totalizing racial violence, we take a different tack. Fugitivity is not a discrete, linear movement from unfreedom to freedom—an impossibility for those positioned outside of dominant human geographies. Instead, fugitivity performs freedom as "a constant struggle," one in which Black, Indigenous, and other racialized, gendered, and poor people have, in the words of the Civil Rights hymn, cried, moaned, sought, and died for "so long/ we must be free, we must be free" (attributed to R. Slavitt, cited in Davis, 2016).

Fugitive Methods: Making Knowledge, Kin, and Freedom

The historical and present-day practices of fugitivity by Black and other racialized people should not be read as reactions to socio-spatial domination but as place-making otherwise. Fugitivity is generative: it enacts or rehearses alternative politics, social relations, and forms of cultural expression to project Black lives and Black spaces beyond the necropolitical logics of dominant geography. In this special issue, we offer three ways that fugitivity as method constitutes alternative, and potentially affirmative, social, spatial, and temporal relations.

Knowledge-making

Fugitivity as method brings an explicitly spatial analytic to Harney and Moten's (2013) imperative for "Black study." Where historical fugitivity assembled communities to work against containment in the plantation or colony, Black study invites collectives to work against the disciplinary enclosures of the university or formal centers of knowledge-production. It refuses "becoming disciplined" and rejects the offer of recognition from "an institution incapable of loving them" (R. Kelley, 2018: 154). In fact, Black study is about becoming *undisciplined*: crossing boundaries to think more capaciously about life and death in the wake of colonialism and enslavement and to mobilize tools to enact freedom.

The collective nature of Black study clashes with the competitive, proprietary individualism of the university. By becoming undisciplined together, Black study returns education to its etymological roots: "ex + ducere, or leading out of or away from... the university's dehumanist perspectives" (Snaza & Singh, 2021: 3). The special issue exemplifies an effort at engaging with Black study. As a group of sociologists, geographers, archeologists, migration, and literature scholars, we practiced being undisciplined in order to share what we know about the operations and failures of the plantation and the colony, the neoliberal carceral state, and the border regime. Plotting together, we assembled an archive of ways that people evade(d) dominant spatial patterns through flight and fight, cooperation and refusal, and through material (socio-ecological) and imaginative work. This fugitive archive represents the heritage of Black life in geographies of violence, preserving and proposing lively possibilities for/in/of the future.

Kin-making

Neither wholly outside nor wholly inside the university, Black study exemplifies the extent to which fugitivity is praxiological rather than ideological. Put differently, fugitivity is not a pure, ethical stance. Instead, it is a method by which real people refuse the logics of their own dehumanization and aspire to freedom despite tremendous legal, material, and social constraints. Maroon communities in Jamaica, for example, agreed to refuse safe harbor to future runaways in exchange for British recognition of their autonomy. On the ground, though, as we see in the advertisement above, those communities (or individual members of those communities) sometimes pursued or facilitated fugitive relations against the very colonial state with which they had entered treaties. Rather than embrace the "ruse

of freedom,” whereby the offer of sovereignty is predicated on the subjection of others, they maneuvered strategically to create porous spaces of refuge and improvisational arrangements of belonging (Lloyd, 2020: 79). Sometimes the practical strategies of the fugitive took martial and spectacular forms, as in the case of the Kisama armies of Portuguese Angola or Akulu warriors of Suriname (among many others).

At other times there were less visible responses to “insistent unhumaning” enacted through intimacy and kin-work (Sharpe, 2018: 171). In her history of African and African descended women in 18th century West Africa and New Orleans, Jessica Marie Johnson (2020) argues that both enslaved and free status women understood freedom in excess of legal status and practiced freedom through the cultivation of kinship within a context of commodification, familial rupture, and intimate violence. On both sides of the Atlantic, their practical strategies of resistance to bondage sometimes included seeking legal recognition or manumission, exploiting (other) enslaved labor, but also involved pursuing fugitive pleasures and intimacies with loved ones across boundaries of legal status, colonial and plantation territories, and gendered and sexual norms: “They created intimate and kinship ties that generated means and subsistence for themselves and their kin. They showed up in defense of themselves and each other. They sought joy, pleasure, gave birth, mothered spaces of care and celebration, and cultivated expressive and embodied aesthetic practices to heal from the everyday toil of their laboring lives” (Johnson, 2020: 7). As both Kelley and Adscheid (this issue) demonstrate, intimacy, kin-making, and care work are central to contemporary fugitive practices of freedom for racialized, sexualized people struggling to survive within the carceral geographies of the neoliberal city. Further, Favini (this issue) shows how, in the case of present-day Jamaican maroons, fugitive intimacies exceed the human-nonhuman boundary and disrupt paradigms of place-making predicated on mastery or control.

Place-making as Freedom-making

Finally, fugitive struggles toward freedom do not happen in abstract space. Rather, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore argues, “freedom is a place,” and thus, the practice of freedom is a practice of place-making. As Gilmore observes (2017: 227) “place-making is normal human activity: we figure out how to combine people, and land, and other resources with our social capacity to organize ourselves in a variety of ways, whether to stay put or to go wandering. Each of these factors—people, land, other resources, social capacity—comes in a number of types, all of which determine but do not define what can or should be done.” In this way, place-making is necessary to prefigurative politics, a means of rehearsing and enacting emancipatory futures.

Part of the project of Black geographies is examining the ways that “people, and land, and other resources” have been organized by Black and other racialized people to forge spaces “in the break” between the past of unfreedom and the coming of freedom (Moten, 2003). Black geographic analyses train our attention on “the ways in which Black struggle took place in a double sense (and continues to take place): through insurgent appropriation

of space that disrupts hegemonic or governmental geographies; and the actual everyday practices of socio-ecological reproduction that are rooted in place" (Moulton, 2021: 2). The slave burial plot, provisions ground, maroon territories, homeplaces, undergrounds, and (under)commons of the university all evince Black geographies as spaces that are material, social, and ecological sites of fugitive practices and freedom dreaming.

As the migration stories narrated to Gross-Wyrtzen and Vázquez López demonstrate (this issue), subversive mobility transforms borderscapes into fugitive landscapes. Such fugitive movements are never just about transit through material borders and infrastructures of capture. Subversive mobilities are modes of place-making that delegitimize national territories and refuse racial regimes of exclusion. Thus, fugitivity is a transgression of the material and the symbolic, and the aesthetic is as much a site of fugitive praxis as physical or political space. As the young narrator of *Tar Beach* shows, flight is often necessary to reimagine relations of belonging and "ownership" beyond property (E. Kelley, this issue). The expansion and un-bounding of place and belonging through imagination, through knowledge production and theorization, through intimate affiliations and collective action are all part of the practice of "fugitive repair" that Jovan Scott Lewis envisions in the Afterword, a practice that seeks to "remake the world of Blackness" beyond freedom's deferrals in antiblack geographies.

Articles in Special Issue

The articles in this special issue demonstrate the range of ways that fugitivity has been deployed as a method of research and analysis, community and place-making. They forward fugitivity as political practice that incites a certain orientation to freedom and the future while remaining rooted in the past and present. The first two articles begin with the traditional geographies and subjects of fugitivity, maroon communities in Jamaica and St. Croix. In his contribution, Johnathan Favini lays out the past and present of colonial and capitalist projects in Jamaica through ethnographic analysis of debates over bamboo as an alien species or a new, sustainable commodity. Both conservationists and industry actors remain oriented around the same "grammar of mastery" that settlers operated under when importing bamboo to "stabilize" the soil and mark the boundaries of plantation properties centuries ago. Against narratives of landscape control and assignments of exchange value, maroons understand bamboo as a "co-conspirator" within plantation ecologies; its unauthorized flight from the plantation into the hinterlands mirrored that of runaway African, African-descended and Taino people. Cohabiting with maroons for centuries, bamboo has served as an important material and spiritual resource for collective survival and cultural formation. To many maroons, the present-day encroachment of bamboo in abandoned agricultural lands is a marker not of an "alien invasion" but of the dispossessions that global capitalism and state power continue to wreak upon the maroons.

In a similar way, Justin Dunnivant, Steven Wernke, and Lauren Kohut take what we might call the "cartography of mastery" as an object of analysis, exposing how Danish map-makers of St. Croix deployed a "sleight of hand" to make the colonial landscapes appear as

fixed and uncontested, erasing the presence of maroon geographies and concealing the instability of plantation territoriality. Using LiDAR data and critical GIS, Dunnivant et al. produce counter-maps that bring into focus the multiple, alternative uses of lands formerly reduced to colonial-capitalist logics of cultivability, showing how the unruly ecologies that made sustaining cash crop cultivation unlikely afforded possibilities for marronage. Their study demonstrates how critical GIS in archeology can offer a method for “speculatively mapping a counter-cartography of Black life,” reinserting the presence of marronage and maroon sense of place into and against plantation geographies and colonial archives.

The three other articles show how fugitive practices travel across time and space while remaining in relation to these historical geographies. Toni Adscheid’s article on the “riotous geographies” of greater London examines how Black Britons collectively refused attempts by the state to render them ungeographic or out-of-place within British national and urban geographies. Reading the 2018 Windrush scandal through three urban uprisings that marked turning points in British race relations since the mid-20th century, Adscheid documents how violent incursions by white British citizens and police against Afro-Caribbean or West Indian, South Asian, and other Black British citizens precipitated new undergrounds of organized resistance, mutual aid, and multi-ethnic and multi-racial solidarity. The article traces the emergence and partial resurgence of Political Blackness as a mobile and capacious political imaginary, rooted in the African diaspora and extending to other racialized urban subjects whose presence is contested within the imperial geographies of British whiteness. In this way, Blackness itself becomes a fugitive method of claims-making, escaping enclosure within an essentialized diasporic identity, while remaining in relation with the historical realities of anti-Blackness and Black resistance.

Subversive mobility and criminalization are central to Leslie Gross-Wyrtzen and Alondra Vázquez López’s comparative essay on human migrations from south to north in the Americas and between Africa and Europe. Through the personal migration narratives of two young im/migrants, one from Guatemala and the other from Cameroon, they demonstrate how border enforcement expanded beyond nation-state territory, mobilizing rough terrain and diverse actors to contain and exploit the racialized poor. Criminalization persists even after they stop moving, expanding the racialized borderscape across “Global North,” as well as “Global South” countries. Migrant people’s sense of place in these borderscapes, however, is fugitive. Remote landscapes become undergrounds, smugglers are co-conspirators, and the tactics of criminalization that border enforcement deploys transforms mobility but does not contain it.

The last contribution by Elleza Kelley turns to “novel” sites of fugitivity: literature and rooftops. Kelley analyzes three autobiographical novels narrated by young Black New Yorkers in which tenement rooftops offer refuge in between enclosures of private property and carceral control that characterize these urban geographies. Rooftops are spaces of “fugitive praxis” in which young people of all genders experiment with alternative relationships to gender, property, and community beyond those imaginable at street level.

The modes of flight demonstrated across the texts reorient our understanding of fugitive geographies, which are not only underground but up above. In two of the texts, the young Black men protagonists flee over-ground, taking to the rooftops to rehearse various possibilities for Black masculinity and to evade the surveillance of the "bulb-lit world below." For Cassie, the young Black protagonist of the third text, the rooftop enables imaginative flight, taking her up, up into the air. From high over-ground, New York's vertical topography is flattened, revealing a patchwork quilt of color, shape and texture that evokes Cassie's sense of place within the physical, familial, and imaginative geographies of her New York. Cassie's flight also changes the direction of fugitivity—she takes flight not to leave but to return, affirming her sense of place in her community and within broader urban geography.

In the Afterword, Jovan Scott Lewis turns us to the question of how fugitivity constitutes a method and process of repair for Black communities grappling with the "compromised freedom" on offer in the post-abolition era. He asks whether fugitivity might escape its liminal status "between abolition and freedom" to instead cultivate places through which "Black individuals and communities can experiment with alternative forms of living, governance, and new economies." Lewis is pushing us to move beyond understandings of freedom and repair as either status or teleology. Instead, fugitive repair signifies a framework for enacting freedom, and freedom is itself a process of individual and collective repair.

Conclusion

The collection in this special issue adds to recent scholarship across a range of disciplines identifying fugitivity as a widespread method for refusing the logics of containment, dehumanization, and capitalist dispossessions or expropriations. But while others have mostly explored fugitivity in the history of Caribbean plantations or the US South, the articles in this collection map more expansive time-spaces: ones that contain aerial escapes, more-than-human collaborations, multi-racial uprisings, and undergrounds of mobility and mutual aid. These fugitive methods are productive and entail work "with our difference, across geohistories, to pursue freedom" (K. Macharia, quoted in Sharpe, 2018: 176). Black, Indigenous, colonized, illegalized, and otherwise racialized, gendered, or sexualized people produce(d) alternative knowledges of history and geography, create(d) subversive communities and grammars of belonging, and transforme(d) spaces of violence into ephemeral or durable places of refuge. At their most capacious, fugitive methods are not about escape from the world but a practice of making the world otherwise. In the words of Saidiya Hartman, "the fugitive's dream exceeded the borders of the continent; it was the dream of the world house" (2007: 233).

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