Chapter 7
Thinking Queer About the Space of School Safety: Violence and Dis/Placement of LGBTQ Youth of Color

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In the last 20 years, public discourses regarding sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) underscore a progress narrative in terms of the general status, and popular cultural attitudes toward LGBTQ (herein referred to as queer and trans) youth (Brown 2017). For example, survey results from the Pew Research Institute indicate that "Americans are becoming more accepting of LGBTQ people" and that "more people identify as LGBT," in part, because of this growing acceptance (Brown 2017: n.p.). More specifically, a report from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found a dramatic increase (72%) from 2010 to 2014 in the number of middle and high schools that offer "safe spaces" for LGBTQ youth (Rappaport 2018). However, data from the same study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* contextualized their findings by concluding that "many states have seen no significant change in the implementation of school practices associated with LGBTQ youth's health and well-being" (Demissie et al. 2018: 557).

Similarly, some educational scholars point to the addition of anti-bullying initiatives within schools as further evidence of the improved climate for queer and trans youth. Though aimed at enhancing the educational landscape, some school-based initiatives regarding sexual orientation and gender identity have resulted in the category of LGBTQ becoming "a placeholder for worries about bullying" (Gilbert et al. 2018: 171). As such, the emphasis on anti-bullying merely solidifies one-dimensional constructions of both queer and trans youth, as well as the praxis of school safety. Moreover, casting our attention on anti-bullying policies in schools fundamentally misses the mark in understanding the systemic marginalization and violence against queer and trans youth in schools and society within a social justice framework (Quinn and Meiners 2013; Payne and Smith 2013).

First, we can see a familiar (and one might argue formulaic) narrative about schools, diversity, adversity, and redemption. In this narrative, LGBTQ students

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(and educators) may be somewhat ambivalent, but are generally hopeful about the opportunities afforded within safe spaces in schools and schooling in general. This rhetoric imagines that safe spaces (or brave spaces) allow queer and trans students to "be themselves" to express their diversity. As Cris Mayo (2017) has so eloquently elaborated, Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) (and other forms of school-sanctioned safe spaces) represent places of identification and difference ripe with dynamics of desire and connection as well as exclusions and omissions. While some youth (queer, trans, and "straight") find refuge in GSAs as islands of hope and pleasure, the mitigating factors of hetero/sexism, transphobia and racism remain difficult to navigate (both inside and outside spaces deemed to be safe). Second, issues related to sexuality are merely "attributes" of individuals rather than embedded in the institutional practices of the school and education more generally. Democratic ideals of diversity and equity in schools are expressed through hollow platitudes like "No Child Left Behind" or explicitly written out of curriculum and pedagogy if perceived as "special rights" for minoritized "Others." Thus, one of the central aims of this chapter is to investigate discourses of violence and safe space in schools through the lens of transnational sexuality studies (Gopinath 2006; Puar 2007; Mizzi 2008).

Educational researchers have begun to address the ways in which class, race, and gender further compound the specificities of violence, and especially sexual violence against queer and trans youth (McCready 2010; Weems 2014; Kosciw et al. 2018). Furthermore, some of these authors suggest that epistemological bias operates in framing issues of "violence against gay youth" especially in the context of urban education in the United States (Pritchard 2013; Quinn and Meiners 2013). Yet to be fully explored is the relationship between white supremacy and colonial capitalisms in the framing (and shaming) of violence against queer and trans youth of color.[1] For example, Namaste (2009) argues that Anglo-American feminist theory fails to analyze the role of labor and global capitalism violence against youth of color and/or LGBTQ youth of color, in that the theory erases the realities of prostitution among transsexual and/or transgender youth of color (p. 21).

Grounded in Gayatri Spivak's framework of transnational literacy (1992, 1999, 2000), I question how issues of neocolonial knowledge production might be at work in the contemporary framing of issues of violence, sexuality, and education for the nation. According to Schagerl:

> To be literate under globalization requires more than mastery of reading and writing as traditionally constituted. Following from Spivak's original deployment of the term, transnational literacy has come to be used as an extension of critical literacy, which pays particular attention to the intersections of knowledge and power in pedagogical practices. (quoted in Brydon 2004)

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[1] There are several fabulous examples of organizations and/or grassroots movements that foreground praxis and advocacy for Black, Indigenous and People of Color that are critical of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, colonial capitalisms, the school to prison pipeline, immigrant/citizenship rights and abolition politics. Two concrete examples include the #Black Lives Movement founded by three queer Black women, Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi and the Native Youth Sexual Health Network co-founded by Jessica Yee. To my knowledge, neither of these movements specifically focus on the intersections of violence against queer and trans youth especially in the context of schooling and education.

Thus, transnational literacy can be a way to think through concepts of the nation (in both symbolic and material terms) as well as "a retelling of histories and stories, from different vantage points" (Schagerl n.d.).

My aim in this chapter is to deploy a transnational literacy toward the purpose and practice of decolonizing queer pedagogies that may reproduce epistemological bias by foregrounding the realities of "violence, schooling, and gay youth" within the material realities of white, middle-class youth. A crucial component in doing so is to propose a rethinking of the imagery of "safe space" used in social justice educational reform efforts. In contrast, I argue for a more productive metaphor of "camp," in that it foregrounds the politicized nature of the classroom, school, and education more broadly.

At the end of this chapter, I will return to an explicit discussion of how some queer and trans youth have organized for gender justice and queer activism both inside and outside schooling. But for now, I want to suggest that part of what shapes a person's response to anti-queer and trans bullying policies (as a primary intervention of "safety") is his or her embodied and ideological relationship to the institution of education and the physical space of schooling. As Barb Stengel (2010) notes:

> To study emotions like fear and feeling safe requires that we attend to processes of movement and attachment of the objects of fearfulness and security, but also attend to the "past histories of association" that caused these affects to be attached to a particular object. (p. 523)

Specifically, I want to interrogate the spatial metaphors used in discourses on diversity, social justice, and "safety" for queer youth. Moreover, I aim to illustrate the paradox of creating praxis of safe space for many LGBTQ and/or youth of color, whose relationship to schooling is often constituted by material and symbolic forms of violence.

In this chapter, I explore the second term in the construct of "safe space" to consider how perceptions of space (conscious or unconscious) play a role in our feelings about safety in educational encounters. Mobilizing insights from contemporary queer, feminist, and transnational discourses on the relations between time, space, and affect, I argue that "safe *space*" itself may be one of the particular "objects" around which emotions, feelings, and attachments are oriented. Furthermore, in the case of educational spaces that are presumed or designed to promote equity, inclusion, and/or social justice, the space of the classroom is itself a contested object. Historical legacies of inequality, exclusion, and education for social and economic reproduction (hegemony) not only haunt the walls of particular classrooms but also circulate through classroom dialogue in ways that condense "past histories of association" and "generate effects" (Ahmed 2004: 13). Working within the problematic of what Sara Ahmed terms the "cultural politics of emotion," I would like to "spatialize" Ahmed's argument by suggesting that "structures of feeling" (Williams 1977) saturate classrooms with specific regard to heteronormativity and racialization given the multiple and differential "past histories of associations" to schooling and education in general. In other words, part of what embodies dialogue and debate (whether implicit or explicit) in classrooms are the affective responses and imagined

aims of the educational encounter bound within a particular place and space.[2] Put simply, if school is imagined to feel like home, one may approach the classroom space quite differently than if school is imagined to feel like prison. Whereas the former conjures emotions such as care and openness toward others, the latter invokes feelings of fear, anger, or perhaps resentment. However, what emotions might be invoked if we substitute the metaphors of home and prison to make way for the image of classroom space as camp?

To explore this question, I first discuss how the space of the classroom is a contested object constituted by historical, cultural, political, social, psychological, and discursive practices (Lefebvre 1991). I then employ Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "assemblage" to characterize the ways in which educational spaces cohere "content and affect" (quoted in Puar 2007: 193) into discursive figures of the heteronormative and racialized national "family." Finally, I argue that to advance contemporary theorizing on safe space we might consider shifting the metaphor of the classroom (and/or schooling) as a situation of home (in loco parentis) to that of a metaphor of camp. As a discursive practice, "camp" is like "home" in that it has multiple associations of past histories. However, the advantage of the metaphor of classroom as camp allows for a more capacious range of histories of association: from recreational activity to performative subterfuge; from forced relocation to temporary inhabitation. Though each of the preceding manifestations of camp signal a multiplicity of affective dimensions, they all possess political implications of theorizing space. Moreover, the metaphor of camp implies transience (whether real or imaginary) while keeping in mind the partial and situated nature of particular places and spaces. Foregrounding the transient component/feature of safe space allows us to make visible and explore the possibilities and limitations of conceptualizing relations of power as circuitous, contested, and performative through competing claims to particular places as objects of safety. In other words, how is the contextual nature of safety intimately tied to the contextual nature of space and the contingent safety of space?

7.1   Space, Assemblage, and Schools as "Home"

In the past three decades, there has been growing attention to theorizing space as it relates to ontological, epistemological, and social issues as well as geographic, political, and cultural dimensions of human and nonhuman life (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Lefebvre 1991; Puar 2007). One effect of recent theorizing is a reconceptualization of the previously held distinctions between space and place.

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[2] As I will explain in more depth in the following section, I make the distinction between *place* and *space*. In the most basic form, the term *place* typically designates a particular geographic or material location, whereas the term *space* typically connotes an abstract concept or phenomena. Central to my argument is a desire to playfully problematize the distinctions, tensions, and slippages between the terms place and space in the educational theory.

Indeed, as feminist geographers Liz Bondi and Joyce Davidson (2005) argue, characterizing space as "abstract geometry" and place as "sites of *shared experience*" "conveniently ignore(s) the ways in which differences of gender, age, class, 'race' and other forms of social differentiation shape peoples' lives" (p. 17). While "asking where" is still a central concern, the emphasis on difference, multiplicity, and power requires a slight movement away from analyses of "place" (Nelson and Seager 2005: 7). What is needed is a "geography of placement" (Pratt and Hanson 1994: 25, quoted in Bondi and Davidson 2005: 19) that moves beyond the "flatness of mapping" (Puar 2007: 152). One such framework comes via Eyal Weizman's concept of "the politics of verticality" that "oscillates from representational space to informational space, from epistemological comprehensions of space to ontological presences and experiences" (Puar 2007: 152). Thus, if historical distinctions between place and space have rested on the epistemological grounds of the "shared experiences" of its inhabitants, the shift toward theorizing the "politics of verticality" foregrounds the movement between material and symbolic, real and imagined bodies, boundaries and borders. Of particular importance, here, are the ways in which the politics of verticality render space as "about networks of contact and control, of circuits that cut through" (Puar 2007: 154). Central to this formulation of space, then, is the emphasis on power and control with attention to symbolic as well as material networks of bodies in contact within particular boundaries that may or may not be "visible" in the current geography of placement. In other words, the boundaries of the place may be sedimented yet the network of contact and control may permeate across time, place, and space.

A useful heuristic tool for analyzing how networks of contact and control permeate across time, place, and space is the term "transnational optic." Yeoh (2005) discusses the transnational optic as "a bifocal lens which brings into view ordinary people on the move and at the same time frames them within contested historical and geographical contexts as socially and spatially situated subjects" (p. 62). According to Yeoh, the transnational optic allows for engagement with the "embeddedness" and "mobility" of "socially and spatially situated subjects" (p. 62). She writes:

> The terrain opened by the transnational "optic," while uneven and fragmented, offers a salient opportunity to rethink key concepts underpinning contemporary social life, from notions which serve to "ground" social life, such as "family," "community," "place," "nation," and "identity," to those which "transgress" or "unmoor" including "mobility," "migrancy," and "transience." (p. 62)

Thus, theorizing space must take into account the ways in which subjects are constituted by processes and practices of "grounding" and "unmooring." Extending this spatialization of "social life," I suggest that safe space must take into account the ways in which "socially and spatially situated subjects" necessarily stabilize and destabilize the progressive assemblage of educational spaces as the model "home" of Republican motherhood and classrooms as microcosms of US democratic "community" (Weems 2004). In other words, appeals to "safe space" must negotiate historical, material and symbolic linkages between education with heteronormative,

racialized, and nationalist agendas, yet recognize discontinuities and slippages within totalizing narratives.

The term assemblage comes from Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to think beyond the "presumed organicity of the body" (Puar 2007: 193) and to articulate how biopolitics fuse image with information, bodies and affect, representation with regulation. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write:

> On a first, horizontal axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both territorial sides, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and cutting edges of deterritorialization, which carry it away. (p. 88)

This philosophical concept of assemblage underscores a poststructural framework of subjectivity that emphasizes how identities get mapped onto particular bodies in particular contexts through (relatively stable) discursive arrangements and relations of power (Foucault 1982). Thus, it is the particular positioning (of identities) within discursive fields that enables and constrains what can and can be stated or enacted. Yet since identities are performative and relational, every enunciation is an interpretation that contains the possibility to re-cite and re-write the very discourses that authorize it (Butler 1993). What is key in Deleuze and Guattari's conception of assemblage is the emphasis on the "intermingling of bodies reacting to one another" and the connectivity of the "actions and passions" that are affixed and unfixed through enunciative events. John Philips (2006) clarifies that for Deleuze and Guattari, the assemblage refers to "the connection between a state of affairs and the statements we can make about it" (p. 108). He uses the example of the wound-assemblage that brings together the knife and the flesh through the act of cutting; in this event, it is impossible to decouple effect from action (this is what is meant by territorialization). Yet statements about the wound contain the possibility of reterritorialization and deterritorialization—such as the current phenomenon of young women's resignification of the practice of "cutting." The assemblage of the wound is overdetermined by discourses on harm, yet statements by young women regarding this practice illustrate an attempt to interrupt, or unfix the coupling of "incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies."

In the case of US formal education, the metaphor of schooling as home has been reified for centuries. This is evident from the creation of nineteenth-century common schools modeled after Pestalozzi's invention of the "pedagogy of love" (Weems 1999) to the sentimentalist tradition of progressive education in the early twentieth century (Weems 2004; Moyer 2009) to Noddings's (1984) prolific construction of the ideal teacher as one who models a (maternal) "ethic of care." This symbolic characterization of the school as home, coupled with the social, economic, and political conditions that drive the aims of modern schooling as democratic education for masses, has crystallized the biopolitics of creating "order" through classification and regulation of bodies, acts, and statements of governmentality or what Popkewitz (1998) has referred to as the "cultivation of the soul."

Part and parcel of the biopolitics of schooling is the figure of the schoolteacher as Republican Mother and construction of progressive education as the site of nation-building through the imagery and institutionalization of practices of "domesticity" (Weems 2004). In doing so, modern US schooling not only reinscribes enunciations of civility (order) through the "incorporeal transformation" of the "uneducated" to civil "student-subjects," but also reinscribes the US imperialist narratives of whitening, rationalizing, and desexualizing the "intermingling of bodies" associated with the "dangerous populations" created in a Western (white/Anglo) colonial imaginary (McClintock 1995; Stoler 1995). Thus, the assemblage of "schooling as home" rests on a semiotic coupling of family and domesticity that has its roots in the particular histories of heteronormative constructions of teaching and motherhood as well as racialized constructions of schools as sites of (colonial) civilization. For these reasons, imagining schools as sites of safe space would appear to be impossible. Yet to be sure, millions of students have found "refuge" in the discursive formation of schooling as home. This point reflects Stengel's point that safety is contingent and contextual and Ahmed's treatment of the cultural politics of emotion. However, if we dislodge the metaphorical association of schools as either a reproduction or extension of "home," we might consider how multiple and competing past histories of association with space always intermingle with feelings of safety.

I turn now to a discussion of the metaphor of school as camp for reimagining the space of education and classrooms with particular attention to the possibilities and constraints of "safe space." Elsewhere, I explore three specific iterations of "camp" that may be useful in reimaging the school assemblage: (a) camp as a space of queer disidentificatory practices, (b) camp as a space of leisure and learning often rooted in pastoral environments, and (c) camp as a temporary space of protection from harm (Weems 2010). Within and among all three of these conceptualizations lie the possibility of multiple epistemologically and sociospatially situated bodies, statements, and ideas to impress, intermingle, and collide. Given the hybridity of such spaces, we may consider camp as a form of "contact zone" (Pratt 2008) in which clear demarcations between social identities and stable relations of power give way to fuzzy identificatory practices that are discursively produced yet subjectively experienced. For this chapter, I focus on the third iteration of camp as a geographically bounded place of physical dwelling, which by design is constructed as a "shelter."

The notion of educational space and/or the classroom as a form of contact zone is not new. Indeed, many of the authors of Megan Boler's edited collection *Democratic Dialogues: Troubling Speech, Disturbing Silence* explore the im/possibility of classrooms as a haven for free speech. Boler (2004) claims that "universities in general function as 'white men's clubs' and by default function to empower those who already hold privileged positions within the 'real world'" (p. 5). Thus, she calls for critical educators to create "unreal" spaces that allow students and teachers to dialogue and debate on the grounds of "affirmative action pedagogy" (Boler 2004).

Similarly, Claudia Ruitenberg (following Derrida—as well as Deleuze and Guattari) employs the framework of "nomadism" and the logic of the contact zone to imagine educational spaces and experiences that might inaugurate and sustain the practice of "leaving oneself ajar" to the possibilities of learning (Ruitenberg 2005). In a similar vein, I suggest that the metaphor of camp *may* facilitate the (uncertain and unpredictable) possibilities of connection, cognitive and/or affective transformation, or something we might call learning. However, I would like to take the metaphor of camp in a slightly different direction than Ruitenberg by foregrounding the explicitly politicized "geographies of placement" including those spaces that are by design intended to provide psychological, physical, and/or sociological "relief"— that is, the metaphorical geography or architecture of safe space. In essence, I want to question the im/possibility of creating educational spaces with the freedom to enact affirmative action pedagogy and/or nomadism given the discursive conditions that coalesce and sediment to reproduce the metaphor of teaching as protective mothering and the classroom as idealized home. As I will argue below, spaces of refuge are not outside the historical, political, and social networks of meaning and action governed by asymmetrical relations of power. Furthermore, historical examples illustrate how the very practices of "protection" can undermine sovereignty or empowerment for subaltern populations who are unintelligible as citizen-subjects or as agents of knowledge production (Lomawaima 1994). If the space of schools has operated from/within the assemblage of US heteronormative and racialized constructions of the family, community, and national citizenship, how might a metaphor of camp be deployed to rethink the discursive practices of classrooms as "safe spaces"? Moreover, how might we reterritorialize the assemblage of educational space as home by unfixing its constitutive elements, and how might the metaphor of camp be useful in this project?

7.2 The Schooling as Camp Assemblage

In this iteration, we might think, then, about the possibilities of safe space given the limits of visibility that are not just a result of social location or epistemological viewpoint but that are also an effect of the idealist notion of a camp designed to provide refuge (safe from) the very politics of verticality that produces the map and mapping to begin with. Put simply, if safe spaces are imagined to be free of the discursive practices of heteronormativity and racialization that govern US public institutions (including schools), it does not follow that schools might provide the space of "innocence" or "transparency" if this is where and how we all learned the whitening, rationalizing, and desexualizing processes as "civilized" learning through the assemblage of US schooling. How can those bodies, ideas, and affective states that have been consolidated into "knowledge as data" move beyond the logics of colonization and management from the very institutions that interpellate them as "beyond human rights"? (Agamben 1998).

Quoting Agamben, Seshadri (2008) notes, "When our age tried to grant the unlocalizeable a permanent and visible localization, the result was the concentration camp. The camp-and not the prison-is the space that corresponds to this originary structure of *nomos*" (p. 49). At the base of her analysis, Seshadri challenges the goals of "humanitarianism separated from politics" (Agamben in Seshadri 2008: 49). She concludes:

> in the completely organized world, where there are no more unpenetrated areas left, where sovereignty is global, political agency as such can only be legible within the purview and epistemological framework of the law; it is impossible for us to think or perceive agency that emerges from a place outside the referentiality of the law. (p. 50)

In using Seshadri's framework of how internally displaced persons are unintelligible as human bios as well as citizen-subjects who are granted particular rights (or not) in the seen/scene of global sovereignty, my aim is to highlight the necessity of politicized accounts of theorizing space by purposefully focusing on how particular "camps" designed out of/for humanitarian goals can (and have) become sites of deregulation and reregulation, beholden to a series of political, economic, and juridical arrangements that engender the abjection, silence, and/or expulsion of the "bottom layer of society" from which it claims to protect.

Let's return to the earlier point that biopolitics fuse image with information, bodies, and affect. In the case of LGBTQ persons, consider how the dominant image of the "unhappy queer" provides a causal logic to explain why and how individuals "should" (and "should want to") submit to a heteronormative lifestyle as an ideal. Sara Ahmed (2010) characterizes this biopolitical directive "the promise of happiness." Furthermore, using Weizman's concept of the "politics of verticality" requires us to attend to the ways in which stratification exists within epistemological "groundings." In other words, relations of power shape how and when "knowledge can be made data" (Spivak 2000: 332). We can then ask why and how do *some* queer youth become "legible" as unhappy and, moreover, worthy of school efforts to provide protection within a safe space. To consider these questions, theorizing the space of safety must take as its object of investigation what Gayatri Spivak (2000) terms "the bottom layer of society, not necessarily put together by capital logic alone" (p. 324). For Spivak, the bottom layer of society does not necessarily include (only) those in poverty; rather, "subaltern" population(s) are rendered powerless as invisible and disposable by mechanisms of elite knowledge and knowledge production. Within the context of US education, I suggest that LGBTQ youth of color constitute a subaltern population largely because of the exponential power of many forms of violence that occur in the contact zone of the school.

However, like postcolonial ethnographers, we can argue for a type of pedagogical transience that operates from the assumption of spaces as contested territory in which boundary-maintenance is concomitant with knowledge production and cultural practices. In other words, if the pedagogical space is viewed as a contact zone (as I have argued above), it involves multiple and competing claims to knowledge about the particular place, its historical and physical contours, the perilous terrain, and the dangerous markers of intelligibility and life itself.

7.3   Dis/Placement and LGBTQ Youth of Color

In the context of US framing of safe space, GSAs are posited as an idealized space where sexual minority students can congregate, rally, and mobilize a collective identity of students who oppose heteronormative practices (Macintosh 2007). These heteronormative practices, however, are often described as bullying and/or violence based on gender and/or sexual non-normativity. Yet within these spaces, other forms of epistemic violence or biopolitics occur such as the prevalence of white supremacy, homonormativity (through a collective focus on marriage rights and/or other assimilationist projects), or a depoliticized understanding of sex/gender/desire as a locus of social control. What is at stake in these constructions of GSAs as idealized safe spaces is the extent to which multiple and competing orientations to the place of the GSA are allowed to be articulated, secured, and transgressed by persons who are interpellated as "beyond human rights"—the persons who are under the radar as the future citizen-subjects in the community-to-be. As many queer theorists argue, the politics of visibility reproduces the tensions of inhabiting the position(s) of Otherness: to gain legitimacy requires recognition through liberal political discourses that normalize whiteness and heterosexuality as the basis for full citizenship (Eng 2007). And the very discourses of political agency and citizenship classify, discipline, and regulate bodies in the public sphere of schooling and even GSAs (Macintosh 2007: 38). Thus, the "freedom to create 'unreal' spaces" (Boler 2004: 5) is somewhat of an oxymoron, for it requires a recognition or authorization by the school or the classroom that one has the right to not only inhabit, participate, and/or produce a (safe) educational space.

7.4   Beyond the Rhetoric of Schools as Safe Spaces: Responses from LGBTQ Youth of Color

Schools are sites of contestation in real and imagined terms. As I have argued above, the assemblage of schools as home rests on the semiotic coupling of family-home-maternal-care, which has had the effect of creating a visible population of students "to be cared for" and "protected from harm." I have suggested that, although efforts have been made to create schools and classrooms that might resemble a safe space, the care and protection may be conditional on the ability to be considered a "citizen-to-be" who possesses a life worthy of living (Butler 2003). In this purview, LGBTQ youth are rendered invisible, in part, because of the ways in which citizenship is aligned with whiteness, heteronormativity, and aspirations of social mobility. In this section, I present two examples of how queer and trans youth of color have challenged their status as displaced and disposable subjects in schools and society (Mitchum and Moodie-Mills 2014; Sykes 2016; Giroux 2012).

The most visible exemplars of contemporary queer and trans youth activism include the proliferation of movement-building activities in response to police

brutality, militarization within communities of color, and the criminalization of Black and Brown bodies. The agenda and platform of #BlackLivesMatter puts Black women, femmes, trans and queers front and center.[3] Though primarily located in the United States, the Black Lives Matter Global Network and its focus on a transnational beloved community, aims to "disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family," that includes a "queer-affirming," "intergenerational and communal network free from ageism."[4] Its founders are clear that #BlackLivesMatter is both a response to state-sanctioned violence and anti-Black racism as well as a visionary model of coalitional politics based on principles of "freedom and justice for Black people, and by extension all people" (Khan-Cullors et al. n.d.).[5]

A local manifestation of a #BlackLivesMatter related event took place in the 2017 Columbus Gay Pride Parade. A group of four Black queer and trans youth (Deondre Miles-Hercules, Wriply Bennet, Ashton Braxton, and Kendall Denton) staged a protest during the Columbus Gay Pride Parade on June 17, 2017 sponsored by Stonewall Columbus. These youth (who came to be known as the Black Pride 4) stepped into the street to block the path of the parade for 7 min to "protest the acquittal of Jeronimo Yanez, the Minneapolis police officer who killed Philando Castile as well as shed light on the lack of safe spaces for Black and Brown people in the LGBTQIA+ community" (Shakur 2018: n.p.). Unfortunately, the four were arrested that day and cited for impeding the First Amendment Rights of Stonewall Columbus. Two things are particularly interesting about this example. First, the immediate response by some White parade goers ranged from unwelcoming to downright hostile. A video from that day shows two White women spitting on one of the protesters. The second and equally troubling response is from the lack of support (financial, legal, or otherwise) from the leadership of Stonewall Columbus in dropping the charges against the Black Pride 4, facilitating reflexive dialogue, or even acknowledging any complicity.[6] The situation regarding the Black Pride 4 illuminates the impossibility of safe space through normative (White/Western) understanding of social justice and safety. Remember that the whole point of the seven-minute demonstration was to protest the lack of safe spaces for Black and Brown people (especially youth) in the LGBTQIA+ community. The State (police) established clear boundaries that rendered certain bodies disposable/displaced by the fundamental rights of the Free Speech of Stonewall Columbus. Thus, as the State established the biopolitical structure of the situation (e.g., who has the right to have rights), the response (or lack thereof) by Stonewall Columbus (as a metaphorical safe space) reinforced its allegiance to the cultural politics of homonationalism and respectability. In other words, Stonewall Columbus retained its place and space in the center of the GLBTQ community and further displaced queer and trans youth of color. Yet, rather than total erasure this local gesture articulated the possibility

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[3] https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/what-we-believe/

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] One of the board members, Lori Gum, did resign in an effort to amplify the voices of the Black Pride 4.

and power of reclaiming space. And, thanks to the mass circulation possible by social media, a seven-minute protest by a small group of people catalyzed national conversations and organizing among queer and trans youth of color. The case of the Black Pride 4 suggests how displacement can become a site of reterritorialization and affinity-based organizing.

The second example is a group called Gender JUST from Chicago, Illinois that illustrates how queer and trans youth of color identify and mobilize as a subaltern group to collectively articulate their platform on the status of "safety" and schools. In doing so, Gender JUST represents how LGBTQ students of color are individually and collectively displaced within the schooling system, as well as how they imagine themselves to be an ideological "camp" from which to articulate their concerns and issues.

> First off, we would like to note that what we have seen of late is an increase in the reporting and discussion of school violence—not an increase in the violence itself. Young people of color face violence consistently. As queer and transgender youth of color in public schools, violence is a reality we live daily in our schools, on our streets, in our communities, and in our lives. Whether the violence is self-inflicted, gang-based, based on pure hate and ignorance, or the systemic violence perpetrated by the state and our institutions such as our schools, police, welfare system, non-profits, and hospitals, we need to have an ongoing analysis of violence that lasts longer than our brief memory of the deaths of a select grouping of queer youth.

> It is critical to remember that we face violence as youth, as people of color, as people living in poverty, as queers, as trans and gender non conforming young people. We can't separate our identities and any approach to preventing violence must be holistic and incorporate our whole selves. We have seen an overly simplistic and unnuanced reaction to the recent violence; from Dan Savage telling young people to wait it out until "it gets better" and from Kathy Griffin declaring that passing Gay Marriage and overturning Don't Ask Don't Tell would somehow stop the violence in our lives, we have found this response to be as misguided, irrelevant, and offensive as the conservative LGBT Movement itself.

> While youth violence is a very serious issue in our schools, the real bullies we face in our schools take the form of systemic violence perpetrated by the school system itself: a sex education that ignores queer youth and a curriculum that denies our history, a militarized school district with cops in our schools, a process of privatization which displaces us, increasing class sizes which undermine our education and safety. The national calls to end the violence against queer youth completely ignore the most violent nature of our educational experience.

> Our greatest concern is that there is a resounding demand for increased violence as a reaction, in the form of Hate Crime penalties which bolster the Prison-Industrial-Complex and Anti-bullying measures which open the door to zero-tolerance policies and reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline. At Gender JUST, we call for a transformative and restorative response that seeks solutions to the underlying issues, takes into account the circumstances surrounding violence, and works to change the very culture of our schools and communities.[7]

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[7] http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Gender-JUST-News%2D%2DResponse-to-Recent-Suicides.html?soid=1103464106540&aid=YqPPAJt0NS8

The statement by Gender JUST exemplifies the assemblage of school as camp generally, and in particular, the characterization of camp as a space constituted by violence rather than safety. In contrast to the school as home assemblage, this group describes how LGBTQ youth are not only unprotected as part of the educational family but also displaced within the mainstream LGBTQ movement. Gender JUST notes that schools, pedagogy, and curriculum are not politically neutral, and instead suggests that LGBTQ and gender nonconforming youth of color are targets of a larger national agenda of a school-to-prison pipeline. Their statement locates schools as part of the prison industrial complex in the United States. Although schools may claim to provide refuge or shelter, the students of Gender JUST connect the systemic violence of/within schools to the violence on the streets, prisons, nonprofits, hospitals, and welfare system. Remember that for Spivak (and Foucault), part of the subaltern condition is being subject to the embodied management, control, and surveillance by elite knowledge and the institutions that authorize it. Thus, for LGBTQ youth of color, schools may be one of the various camps created through the violent "humanitarianism" and biopolitics of the State and the prison-industrial complex.

Yet even though Gender JUST is highly critical of schools and the police, this does not prevent the organization from engaging in multiple campaigns targeted at "educating teachers, administrators, students, cops, and others on *the root causes* of racial, economic and gender justice." One of the most active components of the organization is the Safe and Affirming Education campaign that seeks to "smash the system" of oppression reproduced in schooling:

> Queer and gender-non-conforming young people experience a great deal of oppression at the hands of educational institutions, which often leads to homelessness, poverty, and disempowerment. Gender JUST seeks to smash this system of violence by organizing for safe and affirming education, struggling against the privatization of education, and fighting militarization in schools.[8]

Using their subject positions as students who are displaced, members of Gender JUST speak back and to the agents of elite knowledge production by insisting on the question, "safety for whom?" In this way, we can see that LGBTQ youth of color are staking out new boundaries of safety and justice within and outside of classroom and school walls.

In this chapter, my aim has been to introduce the metaphor of "camp" as a way of theorizing the politics of verticality, geographies of placement, and biopolitics of the assemblage of safe space. I argue that camp is a useful metaphor, not because it holds the promise of a "pure" or "pristine" history of past associations or a model for a community-to-be. Rather, I argue that camp, precisely because it signals a wide range of ontological and epistemological orientations (ranging from subversive performativity to the political economic formulations of the limits of liberalist juridical notions of subjectivity and citizenship) allows us to interrogate the real and imagined space of safety. The metaphor of safe space as "camp" certainly provokes

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[8] Ibid.

the embodied past histories of association with schooling, education, and pedagogy depending on how one is socially-spatially situated in terms of normative bourgeois biopolitics and/or regulation. The task that lies before us is to successfully stake out and navigate the markers of knowledge and cultural production that create and sustain normative views of schooling, violence, and safe space.

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