GRIEF URBANISM: PLACEMAKING, SURREALISM, AND FREEDOM INSIDE PROTEST CAMPS

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"I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually."

— **James Baldwin**

Thank you

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Notes from a native man (preface)

"Urban planning" first piqued my interest after the death of my high school's star football athlete, D'Shawn Lewis. A driver was speeding down the freeway and fatally hit him. This death shocked the community as many students have to cross this freeway to reach the neighboring apartment complexes and housing. Prior to this death I never realized how dark and unsafe the road was, how the cars, speeding from the airport or highway were a danger to pedestrians until he was fatally hit. The days after friends and I stood on the median at his memorial site with signs and chants demanding more streetlights and something to prevent cars from speeding. We had no idea of planning as a profession or big concepts like road dieting and complete streets, still, we demanded and dreamed that no one should fear crossing the street.

I started undergrad with the killing of Trayvon Martin and returned to graduate school with the murder of George Floyd. Which is to say I know what grief looks like. The discourse surrounding my academic life has always been political; my existence has always been up for consumption. Whether it be from the liberal white who believed sharing a black square on social media was an act of liberation, or the conservative who furled their eyebrows until they were able to respond with some racist retort. I learned all too quickly that I had no right to space; I was robbed of the chance to just exist. I must work to be something more. Whenever I found myself in Black spaces, grief too would appear. From open mics featuring poems about police shootings and spatial inequalities to the Black Student Association prepping for another rally, petition, or list of demands.

Where I'm from people don't know when they are getting their next meal. People are waiting 40- 60 minutes for the next bus, and being held in jail for weed charges as the white liberal opens marijuana dispensaries and rides the BRTs 15 miles away. Friends are dying from gun violence, by enemies and police. The first time a cop pointed a gun at me I was 14, running with my friends to catch the ice cream truck. I cut the corner of my apartment building and there he was, barrel pointed at me. Once, after finishing a 3-mile night run in a neighboring white area that had sidewalks a cop flashed his lights and pulled me over claiming someone was breaking into cars. When I say Black people have no right to space, this is what I mean. The way the public reacts to Black Bodies has robbed us of the chance to just exist. I have no time for my *Eat. Pray. Love.* when I must worry about and form life around the loom conditions of grief. Grief Urbanism, the core of this paper, is about how Black bodies make space and place out of grief. I want to avoid words that denote a sense of anger or frustration. The trope of the angry black person is played out. The people in my life aren't just "angry", they're in an iterative state of grief as death and disparities loom over their neighborhoods, cities, and every day interactions. Like many people I find myself dreaming of a better place, for all people of color.

This paper is a thank you, not to the academics, who sit behind computer screens, but to the activists and bodies that existed in protest with me. Who dares to liberate space, if only for a moment, so they too can dream of something different? A place without grief.

Introduction

The summer of 2020 was hot. The legacies of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Marcus-David Peters, and[1] , were forced to the forefront when Black Lives Matter protests erupted throughout the United States. Tear gas, burning buildings, and grief engulfed the media and people's minds as discourse filled city streetscapes. The protest was a reminder of the relationship many marginalized folks have with the city and the state's apparatus. While daily protest persisted throughout the weeks, a few cities: Minneapolis, Minnesota; Seattle, Washington; and Richmond, Virginia took the daily protest to another degree by developing protest camps. These types of protest acted as spatiotemporal utopias, where the citizens who liberated the zone retain their *autonomy* in both the physical and symbolic matter. The form of freedom you find in protest camps differs from the liberation of daily protest or acts of critical mass as the freedom is continuous, which forces the freedom to constantly evolve and grow as the protest camp and protesters do. In *for Democracy: Planning and Publics without the State*, Mark Purcell asks:

> "What does it mean to be autonomous from the state; moreover, to what extent does this autonomy actually threaten the state? My answer here is that we should think about such spaces not as fully formed totalities, but rather as an ongoing form of experimentation with what Foucault would call 'practices of freedom."(Purcell, 2016, 13)

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[1] While not grammatically correct, I used "and," to hold space and show the continuous nature of those who have died, are dying, and will be, from the hands of police.

Understanding that protest camps exist to practice freedom means we must not only look at these spaces as acts of utopia, but also as spaces that are created out of incarceration. So much so that the protesters are searching for space and freedom outside of the carceral structures.

Protest camps produce a space that's main intent is to dismantle not only the state's apparatus but the current functionality of urban planning, as well. The reorganization of space and land-use inside of protest camps is a clear example of acting outside of the regulatory practices within the profession; with collapsible architecture, everyday practices, and deviant art, protesters are able to make space in sites that would originally not be zoned for it. Urban planning has been a top-down practice for a long time. Where decisions are made for the people with little to no true community engagement. This practice has forced planners to become agents that do not reflect, represent, or address the spatial need of the most marginalized in the community, lack street knowledge, and are forced to write long-range plans and policies without considering the collateral damage (Bell, 2018). This important connection that is missing between the city and its citizens is evident from the ways in which demands arose from inside the protest camps.

I must acknowledge the intersecting roles race and grief have played in the aforementioned protest camps. The most pressing issue is that these prefigurative spaces gave rise due to the murder of George Floyd; however, the sentiments and feelings of grief that embody these spaces do not start or end with his death. Many theorist argue (Wilderson 2020, Weier 2014) Black Americans have always been in a state of collective pessimism and grief due to decades of redlining and unfair housing practices, disenfranchisement through highway development, public transit designs, the bombing and burning of black neighborhoods, police shootings and martyrdom of prominent figures. Therefore, the clarity of the source of grief inside these protest camps is important. It is not just the murders, but the totality of this nearly ubiquitous lived experience that many protestors have, regardless of the city. With this understanding we see how the demands formed inside of these protest camps have been catapulted into ones that not only seek justice for George Floyd's murder and , but also the greater needs for the living. this forced me to consider that while his death did not birth the protest camps, it was another catalyst for African Americans to contest their current relationship to the city.

Pulling together protest demands, Placemaking, and grief inside of protest camps to define how the State's totalitarianism has forced its most marginalized citizens -- in this case Black Americans -- to liberate space and fill it with new political discourse, surrealism, and dreams of a better city is central to the theory of Grief Urbanism. If protest camps are used as a framework for the subservient political, economic, and planning interest, my aim here is to explore how this challenges the state's current apparatus, political system, and planning space through its demands made and placemaking.

Research Question

The research questions are: (A) In what ways do the demands made by the protest camp reflect the wants of African Americans that have been ignored by the city, especially as it relates to urban planning. (B) How does the space and place inside a protest camp exist as its own form of radical urbanism, surrealism, and thought? While this thesis focuses the data on Richmond, Virginia, after the murder of George Floyd and the not guilty verdict after the shooting of Marcus Davis-Peters, it does consider relevant experiences from protest camps in Seattle, Washington and Minneapolis, Minnesota as well.

The project

This research project attempts to understand the emergence of urbanism and freedom that grows from protest camps and how these camps act as a mirror reflecting the problems of the African American population and other marginalized identities. It will investigate the relationship between grief, placemaking, and surrealism through the scope of the protest camps that rose after the murder of George Floyd. Though I feel very uncomfortable turning the murders of George Floyd, Marcus-David Peters, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and . I hope to convey the grief, resiliency, and freedom that are exhibited by the protestors.

Methodology

The goal of this research is to obtain a better understanding of three key issues: The creation of urbanism in the protest spaces; The development of radical thoughts from the protest spaces; the relation protest demands have to the current state of marginalized identities, in particular African Americans.

Urbanism

To better understand the urbanism inside protest camps I will utilize mapping to compare the original land use zoned by the city of Richmond and the way land was used during the protest camp. Compiling photo evidence taken by protestors who attended the protest zone will allow me to visually document and study how protestors of the protest camp interacted and built the environment. To gain more insight into urbanism I will utilize a nonprobability sampling method of a voluntary sample to complete a survey on the Likert scale to test their level of agreement with statements related to the land use and urbanism of the site.

Radical thoughts & Surrealism

Since time has passed from Marcus-Davis Peters Circle (the protest camp in Richmond, Virginia) the space has been being fenced off by the government, my attempts to understand how thoughts surrounding the protest camp, political beliefs, and viability of the demands made will be examined from three key points: how the participants felt before the conceptualization of MDPC, to when MDPC was functioning as a protest camp, and if their thoughts now after MDPC have changed or balanced out. An example of my findings would be if participant A did not believe in defunding the police, then believed in defunding the police, then believed in partial defunding. Documenting this type of change in political thought that correlates with the protest camp will allow me to explore the radical thought that happens during its existence. I will utilize a non-probability sampling method of a voluntary sample to complete a survey on a Likert scale and open-ended questions to test their change in political and social stances through the timeline of the protest camp.

Literature review

This review seeks to evaluate the existing research on the topics of protest camps, grief, and placemaking concerning the theory and concepts of (Black) Radical Imagination, the production of social space, and protest. This section includes a compendium of literature that is used to identify similarities and differences, and to assess the argument of the scholars within the assessment of these theories and concepts to understand the meanings and intersections of work. Since various scholars interpret the theories and concepts differently, I am choosing to highlight certain aspects of the theory, my hope is to triangulate an intersecting framework for grief urbanism, a type of urbanism not yet explored.

Radical (Black) Imagination

This work aims to consider the parallels between the concept of Black Radical Imagination and protest to better under the existence of the protest camps that rose after the murders of Black bodies, and the camps contribution to freedom. Black Radical Imagination at its more contemporary roots can be traced to Robin G. Kelly's seminal work *Freedom to Dream: Black Radical Imagination* (R. D. G. Kelley, 2002). Though this concept has gone under much discourse (Bruce, 2021; Cleaver & Katsiaficas, 2001; McKittrick & Woods, 2007; Ransby, 2003; Robinson, 2021). Kelley's point is that to make a world better, we must first imagine it, and under the current confines of capitalism, that ability to dream is suppressed. For him, this is the only way liberation can exist.

Black Radical imagination, under Robin Kelley, explores how protesters have developed a utopian society. Much of the text highlights sociopolitical leaders and activists who have made significant accomplishments in producing new thoughts, surrealism, and physical change. From the marron poets who turn police brutality into a full-fledged revolution rooted in love to the liberated zones of North America's ghettos formed into a cooperative world without wages or money(R. D. G. Kelley, 2002). He makes an important distinction that these freedom dreams involve the disruption of the current world; it is far more than gazing off during class about riches, rather about changing the lived conditions of so many, this act is more communal. At the same time, dreaming is nothing if we do not have the space to realize the totality of the humanity that could come from it. Without this space, Kelley believes that the protest and demonstrations would not bring liberation in it's totality (R. D. G. Kelley, 2002).

One of Kelley's most pressing sentiments is the importance of surrealism in establishing the utopian. If one is to be serious about moving toward freedom, then it must start in the mind. He explains that surrealism is the combination of Freedom, revolt, imagination, and love. This amalgamation is what is used to emancipate and transform society. Kelley considers the imagination that comes from surrealism and becomes an effort to see the future in the present "poetic Knowledge" (R. D. G. Kelley, 2002).

> "In the poetics of struggle and lived experience, in the utterances of ordinary folk, in the cultural products of social movements, in the reflections of activists, we discover the many different cognitive maps of the future, of the world not yet born."(R. D. G. Kelley, 2002, 9)

It is *this* revolutionary act that creates freedom. One that he defines as being most at our disposal and, that we should be using to create political and analytical change. Yet, as he frames it, intellectuals are failing at that. While Kelley defines the power that imagination has, he also emphasizes that the daily struggles of life have snuffed this ability to imagine and that for many Black people searching for surrealism is difficult when their lives are already surreal.

> "Sometimes I think the conditions of daily life, of everyday oppressions, of survival, not to mention the temporary pleasures accessible to most of us, render much of our imagination inert. We are constantly putting out fires, responding to emergencies, finding temporary refuge, all of which make it difficult to see anything other than the present (Kelley, 2001, 11)."

Still, he contends that's surrealism is what creates the perseverance of people. Throughout this work, Kelley reinforces this notion that surrealism appears in two spaces: the first as a poetic expression that can also be found inside the work of blues and jazz artists and writers. Here the works of Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Memphis Minnie, and others feature new visions of love and a relentless critique of wage labor (Kelley, 2002, 164). He argues that these artists had utopians that were free of work, not because they hated labor, but rather it was unfulfilling; this desire to do things more fulfilling and freer from the toil of everyday life is expressed in their art. The space where we see surrealism show up is in social movements. Though, Important to note that the two spaces tend to work in conjunction with surrealism. Kelley finds one of the groups to consider surrealism was the Martinique students sojourning in Paris.

> "In 1932 Etienne Léro, René Menil, J. M. Monnerot, Pierre Yoyotte, his sister Simone Yoyotte, and a few others published one issue of a journal they called Légitime Défense (Self-Defense). In it, they declared their commitment to surrealism and the communist revolution, critiqued the French-speaking black bourgeoisie, celebrated several black American writers like Langston Hughes and Claude McKay, and published poetry and automatic writing by several members of the group. (Kelley, 2002, 166)"

But they are not alone, as Kelley details several social movements where surrealism became a tool that help strengthen the movements and poet knowledge inside the movements. Activists and surrealists like Richard Wright and Jayne Cortez discovered surrealism with dreams of anti-imperialism. Kelley makes sure to critique the modern-day young person who treats surrealism as an aesthetic or hip style void of its revolutionary commitment that many classics held near and dear to the Black Radical Imagination. He fears that people are too quick to box surrealism into this avant-garde aesthetic, and not being able to link it back to tangible spaces like the social movements he observes.

A matter that is repeated throughout Kelley's work, and those who he cites, is that the focus of dreaming inspired by surrealism is not only on the destruction of what is oppressing them but also on the creation of new thought. "Human freedom depends not only on the destruction and restructuring of the economic system but on the restructuring of the mind" (Kelley, 2002, 192). This creation of liberation happens not only inside academic discourse, but also is embedded in and on the streets, where the everyday life is transformed into a marvelous triumph. He contends then that the new reconstructed mind can break the previous constraints of realism and bring us to thoughts of Marxism, anarchism, socialism, and other isms he believes that developed inside of social movements and ventured into new thoughts.

Critical Perspectives

Kelley's work on Black radical imagination can be broken up into two main schools of thought: How Radical Imagination appears in everyday life and protest, and how the city (consequently capitalism) has forced many people that exist on the margins with the inability to see beyond the confines (Kelley 2002). While Kelley's analysis of these thoughts and their amalgamation are not new, his work has brought much attention to the ideas presented. Still, the study of protest camps is limited and spread out across several different academic spaces (Frenzel, Feigenbaum, McCurdy 2014). As such the language and naming of these spaces vary with no ubiquitous term. Some Academics and protesters perceive these spaces as convergence spaces (Routledge 2000), Temporary Autonomous Zones (Bey 1991), protest encampments (Journal of civil war), counter-summits (Frenzel et al., 2014), Liberated Spaces, and so forth. For consistency and clarity through this work, I will use the terminology protest camps to define these spaces.

Kelley is not the first to develop work that looks at the interconnectedness of Imagination and surrealism from a racialized perspective. This examination has gained broad agreement in contemporary and classic writings. Saidiya Hartman (2019), too, sees connectedness. Her work *"Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals"* looks at imagination at the intersection of race, gender and sexuality. To understand the surrealism that many Black women have gone through to find possibilities and visions of a different kind of life, Hartman defines this as waywardness. Both Hartman and Kelley agree that the need for imagination stems from the lived conditions that have marginalized people. These conditions force people to find freedom and space through experimentation and dreaming. Theorists such as David Graeber (2006) have explored how the imagination that is created while existing on the margins is not only geared toward, but is inevitably created by the pillars of inequality, or structures of violence as he positions (Graeber 2006). Many writers (Graeber, 2012; R. D. G. Kelley, 2002; Khasnabish & Haiven, 2012; Newman, 2011) recognize that protest camps best illustrate the impact imagination has because the space inside promotes a dialogic process. This can only happen, as Judith Butler (2011) shares, when bodies appear. These dialogic processes in turn make protest camps prefigurative spaces that become the change they want to see through constant conversation and experimentation (Jeffrey & Dyson, 2021).

There is a broad agreement that the conditions of most Black people and marginalized folks have forced them to create a space out of the imagination, one that is both symbolic and physical, these spatial imaginaries that are created aren't necessarily invested in the *big*, but rather the everyday practices that make the big change. Throughout Kelley and Hartman's work, they constantly explore, through historical and narrative accounts how people were able to find new ways of living and being alive surrounding the city. Kelley, Hartman, and other writers (Bruce, 2021; Cleaver & Katsiaficas, 2001; McKittrick & Woods, 2007; Ransby, 2003; Robinson, 2021) have constantly wrestled with the concept of not having a right to the city. Much of the discourse surrounding the Right to the city is framed by professionals who do not exist on the margins of society and as such miss the racialized element. One of the most cited in this field is Lefebvre's study on right to the city and his contribution to the spatial triad. If we chose to deepen our understanding of the urban socio-spatial processes of the U.S. then Lefebvre's work must be contextualized into the racialized geography of the U.S. (McCann 1999). Both Kelley and McCann agree that there is an important element of race that comes central to this act of imagination and the way it plays out in spaces that we hold. McCann attempts to make these connections, right to the city and race, in his work,

> “His work provides a conceptual framework through which the spatial practices of everyday life, including violence and protest, can be understood as central to the production and maintenance of physical space” (McCann 1999).

By placing Lefebvre’s spatial triad under a lens of protest and race, McCann reinforces these elements that are forcefully at the intersection of radical dreaming and space. McCann contends that the production of space is heavily influenced by race, and as such space is a tool that is used to exercise and express dominance and marginalization through homogeneity and maintain the representation of such.

In its contemporary form Right to The City can be connected to geographer David Harvey. Similar to McCann, Harvey (2008) shares sentiments that there is an element of radical change that must take place inside urban spaces. To Harvey, claiming a right to the city is in many ways to shape the power over the processes of urbanization. As to which, “cities can be made and re-made fundamentally and radically” (Harvey 2008). Harvey denotes that Right to The City is less about the individual’s proximity to resources and materials that dominate and maintain the hegemonic structure, but more to change the current spatial imaginary that has divided and caused conflict within the city.

While I do not intend to discredit theorists and writers like Harvey, especially as he and Kelley seem to share a complex understanding of space. It is important to note that discourse like Black Radical Imagination, Afro-pessimism, and other emerging fields of Black thought and space are positioned from both lived experience and academia. Here, concepts are theorized through the middle passage of life itself. To Harvey, McCann, and other writers post-Lefebvre (and Marx) the individual still maintains some sense of connection to the city, no matter how poor or marginalized. To writers such as Christian Sharpe, there is no true sense of connection.

> "I want In the Wake to declare that we are Black peoples in the wake with no state or nation to protect us, with no citizenship bound to be respected, and to position us in the modalities of Black life lived in, as, under, despite Black death: to think and be and act from there." (Sharpe 2016, 23)"

This distinction, of the (dis)connection to the city, is why I believe my thought surrounding "*Grief Urbanism*" as an examination of space, place, and political life inside of select protest camps must be racialized. To practice freedom with surrealism and imagination as tools for change as it concerns the city, you must not have any sense of collective attachment to it.

The point of this thesis is not to find a city within the protest camps that emerged after the murder of George Floyd, and – though one could – but it is to see the ways life exists and plans inside of them. Political discourse and physical design of space that comes from the surrealism and imagination inside the protest camps is a (Black) spatial imaginary. Planning-theorist Saul Newman has brought forth a perspective on Space, Planning, and imaginaries that has welded the gap between Planning and the political space inside Protest camps, though he positions these spatial imaginaries as spaces of (post) anarchism and not spaces out of the middle-passage of life he and Kelley, both conclude that these spaces are as much concerned with construction and creation as they are with the destruction (Newman 2011, Kelly 2002). Newman considers the possibility and role radical politics play in utopian fantasies and planning. He utilizes a Lacanian analysis on these spatial imaginaries, as I do not intend to apply the Lacanian framework, I hope to connect the ways discourse and practice that exist in these spaces of grief urbanism attempt to reveal its desires, and failures of the city and Planning. Newman is not alone in the linkage; planning theorists have made a great deal surrounding Planning, anarchism, and the public (Purcell 2016, Newman 2011, Friedmann 2003, Lawrence 2014). Though again, I am not sure how much interest anarchism has in grief urbanism. Perhaps, in a game of semantics, it has all to do with anarchism. But still, I am weary of the ways in which anarchism (and the likes of tactical, guerilla) planning has created a space of discourse, theory, and elitism that does not consider race explicitly. The literature surrounding these acts of urbanism and planning tends to not discuss race, while all too often grabbing thought and imagination from the implementation of race. The key disconnect is the absence of death and grief. Here grief speaks to the conditions that loom over marginalized people, forcing them into a constant stake

> "Living in the wake means living the history and present of terror, from slavery to the present, as the ground of our everyday Black existence; living the historically and geographically dis/continuous but always present and endlessly reinvigorated brutality in, and on, our bodies while even as that terror is visited on our bodies the realities of that terror are erased." (Sharpe 2016)

Sharpe explores the conditions that loom and present in the wake, and I argue It is this *wake* or *waywardness* that forces people to find a home in (Black) radical imagination or afropessimism. These spaces of resistance are integral to the ways Black people appear and dream of the city. Kelley illustrates the ability to dream not only as a reminder of the power it has but as an act that intervenes in the oppressive structures that exist. Leonard details this critical assessment in his review of Kelley's work:

> "In this age of cynicism and the increasing presence of the state, the potential to imagine, much less carry out change, an alternative to the status quo is becoming increasingly difficult. The power of hegemonic forces in a post-civil rights America has systematically eroded the basis of radical social movements, but has not, despite the belief otherwise, completely silenced the visions and dreams that presently develop within popular cultural spaces. Within this present condition, Robin Kelley intervenes with a historical project reminding us of the visions, dreams, hopes, and possibilities that have emanated from black social movements during the last four hundred (Leonard, 2002).

It is Kelley's ability to approach surrealism as a practice that invites dreaming; and its usage of dreaming to dislocate racial inequality from its oppressive and capitalist patriarchal roots. The radical black Imagination that Kelley focuses on, is defined as "a collective imagination engaged in an actual movement for liberation" (Kelley, 2002). The literature I gathered for this paper comes from multiple professions all of which explore these topics but seem to miss the mark of either connecting them or viewing them under a racialized lens. Together my understanding and own waywardness will potentially begin the marriage of these thoughts.

Chapter 2: Placemaking

This chapter seeks to examine the ways in which physical space inside of Marcus-David Peters Circle is the protester's way of placemaking. In this regard, protest camps maintain two forms of space, both physical and social. In the physical art and architecture are used to disrupt the state's regulatory practices and its representation of space. Through this disruption the liberation of the protesters comes together and practice and dream of a new world through the everyday life of waywardness.

This ain't yo mama's art gallery

After the liberation of MDPC the physical space of the site had become wholly unrecognizable from when it was still subjugated by the city. One of the dominant forces of reimagination inside the protest camp was how the protesters used art to disrupt the current zoning and design of the site and use it as a vessel to express grief and freedom.

It's easy to witness how the physical space of Marcus-David Peters Circle has become a site for the public mourning of the lives lost at the hands of police: from the namesake green sign that greets you upon entering the site, George Floyd's face projected against the Robert E Lee monument, and a memorial gravesite for countless victims. The space inside this protest camp invites grief to be integral, and this site is not alone. Over in George Floyd Square in Minneapolis, Minnesota you can see effigies of George Floyd painted inside the protest camp, and similar sightings in the Capital Hill Occupied Protest in Seattle, Washington. Here protest camps create a place for the emotional underpinning of the injustice to fuel the development of the space. Framing the physical space as one that embodies injustice and grief is one of the most important connections to mobilizing the protesters (Jasper, 1998). To better understand how physical space becomes one that responds to and expresses grief we have to examine what the protesters use to do.

Art has played a big role in the reimagination of the physical space and activism. Covering the site with slogans such as "*No Just No Peace*", "*Black Lives Matter*", and '*Who's streets our streets*", makes these acts of art not only an element of placemaking but also a vehicle to express grief. This, I argue, is one of the overarching responses of Grief Urbanism. The way grief has forced those who live on the margins of society to reorganize space in an attempt to see themselves.

Using art as a form of protest and disruption to practice radical imagination and freedom is something that can be traced long before the liberation of Marcus-David Peters Circle. Artist such as Nina Simone, Jean-Michael Basquiat, Gil Scott-Heron, and James Baldwin have all used their professional mediums of art to reflect the grief and life of their times. As such, art is often a mirror that speaks to a sense of "Black Belonging" or Black spatial imaginaries that are wrapped in a space of surrealism. Kelley talks about defining this surrealism:

> "Surrealism is the exaltation of freedom, revolt, imagination, and love. . .. [It] is above all a revolutionary movement. Its basic aim is to lessen and eventually to completely resolve the contradiction between everyday life and our wildest dreams. By definition subversive, surrealist

> thought and action are intended not only to discredit and destroy the forces of repression but also to emancipate desire and supply it with new poetic weapons. . .. Beginning with the abolition of imaginative slavery, it advances to the creation of a free society in which everyone will be a poet—a society in which everyone will be able to develop his or her potentialities fully and freely"(R. D. G. Kelley, 2002, p. 158)

While an artist like the aforementioned played a big part in black surrealism, it is important to understand that surrealism is not concerned with or married to artistic movements in a professional or a sense. Instead, it is concerned with everyday practices and change. Practices that develop a vision of freedom, and a movement that encourages dreaming and imagination as the main weapon (R. D. G. Kelley, 2002). It is this surrealism that propelled the protesters to occupy and liberate spaces throughout the country in the wake of the murders.

The primary source of art that contributed to this notion of surrealism and freedom of dreaming inside the protest camp was the usage of graffiti to cover the physical structures that existed in the space and the neighboring areas. The Robert E. Lee monument, once a towering reminder of the confederacy, became a centerpiece for graffiti at MDPC; where people were able to observe, photograph, graffiti, and gather around it. The protesters were forced to change the physical design and use of the monument to match the everyday practices that they adopted while the space was liberated. In this regard, we can reconcile that placemaking is an iterative process that not only transforms the material element of space but also brings people and their emotions with it (Sweeney et al., 2018, p. 579). Here art becomes a tool protester can use for imagination and placemaking through participatory means. Where any person can grab a can of spray paint and add something to the monument. Graffiti is one element inside of protest camps that is ubiquitous across all three sites, other protest camps, and throughout cities. In most cases, graffiti is viewed as a deviant act done by a gang of folks who are living out their anarchic dreams and not a real medium of art though, as Kelley insists, acts of surrealism are not esoterically dense thoughts stuck in Academia or anarchism, they are living practices like graffiti, that continue to live as long as we dream (R. D. G. Kelley, 2002, p. 193), and it is these living practices that can only come from the middle passage of life.

With the liberation of Marcus-David Peters Circle, the space had to go under several surreal alterations to make place for the protesters. One of the most substantial changes came with the barricade that was constructed from concrete blocks. This barrier was used to not only create a barrier from police [violence] but also to physically define what *is and isn't* the liberated space. Figure 1 above shows the barricade at Marcus-David Peters Circles. Urban material has long been used to create space inside protest camps and helped aid in the new identity of the place (Kozak, 2017, p. 10). Gregory Cowan explores the ephemeral nature and role that architecture plays inside protest camps as one that is collapsible (Cowan 2004). These easily transportable structures such as tents, tires, basketball hoops, tables, and cement blocks aid in the placemaking of liberated spaces by allowing the protesters to create space. The DIY art and architecture we find constructed inside of these protest camps is an act to maintain surrealism, but also to find autonomy. Following Heinonen (2019) and Cowan (2004) the collapsible architecture, borders, and protest art are all integral to the continuous occupation, and as such is an extension of the bodies and their grief and political ideals.

The reorganization of space inside protest camps comes without the need of any professionally trained planners or city shows us that these practices are limiting the ways in which people can use public space. This forces planners into a position that is less imaginative and transformative, and more patriarchal through permits, ordinances, and land use. Heinonen (2019) found that inside protest camps, without any form of a comprehensive plan, the built environment was left open to initiatives. I wish to expand upon that. What I argue is that the initiatives that become the built environment are a response to the middle passage of life. Marcus Henderson, a participant in the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (Seattle, Washington) talks more about subverting the patriarchal regulations and forming a garden:

> "I've been really fascinated with the idea of land ownership: collective land ownership, taking back property and really making it work for the people, using the land, growing food on the land, becoming self-sufficient. It's something that I think is really important for us as a people. Because Black people have always lived on less money — and learning how to do it in a way that allows us to live healthy, sustainable lifestyles is important for Black people in particular…The whole point of this is to rethink how we utilize public land, and also [consider] who is controlling that public land: Is it public if the public doesn't have direct access to control over it?" (Weinberger, 2020).

While Henderson spoke from his experience with the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, his sentiments we can assume are shared throughout the other protest camps as they all formed a community garden. We can deduce that the initiatives are taken up by the protesters are informed by this middle passage or waywardness. These lived conditions, in this case, lack land ownership and access to fresh food informed how Henderson imagined the utility of the liberated zone. As such, the reorganization of space inside protest camps subverts the patriarchal planning profession and city by creating a practice that deconstructs land use from

Its horizontal decision making, into a more accessible vertical equal access process (Heinonen, 2007). The art and architecture inside protest camps suggest that even in spaces of resistance the protesters can dream of a new way to share and create the environment.

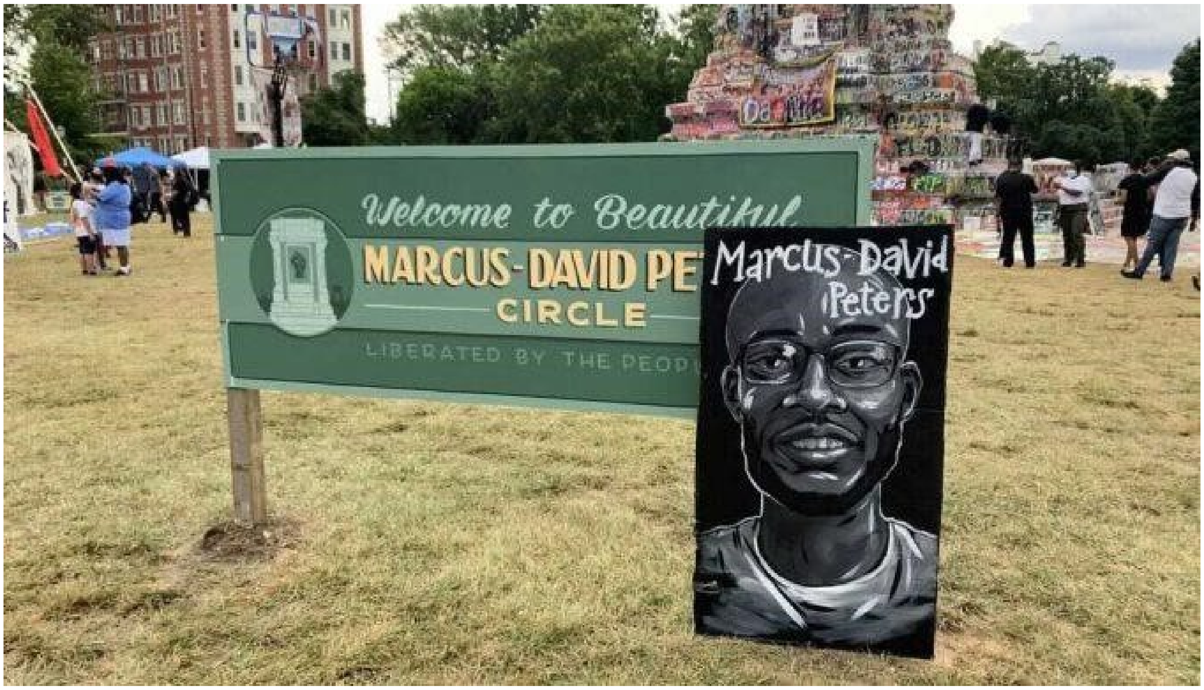
Welcome to Beautiful
MARCUS-DAVID PE
CIRCLE
LIBERATED BY THE PEOP
Marcus-David Peters

Figure 1 Welcome sign at Marcus David Peters Circle

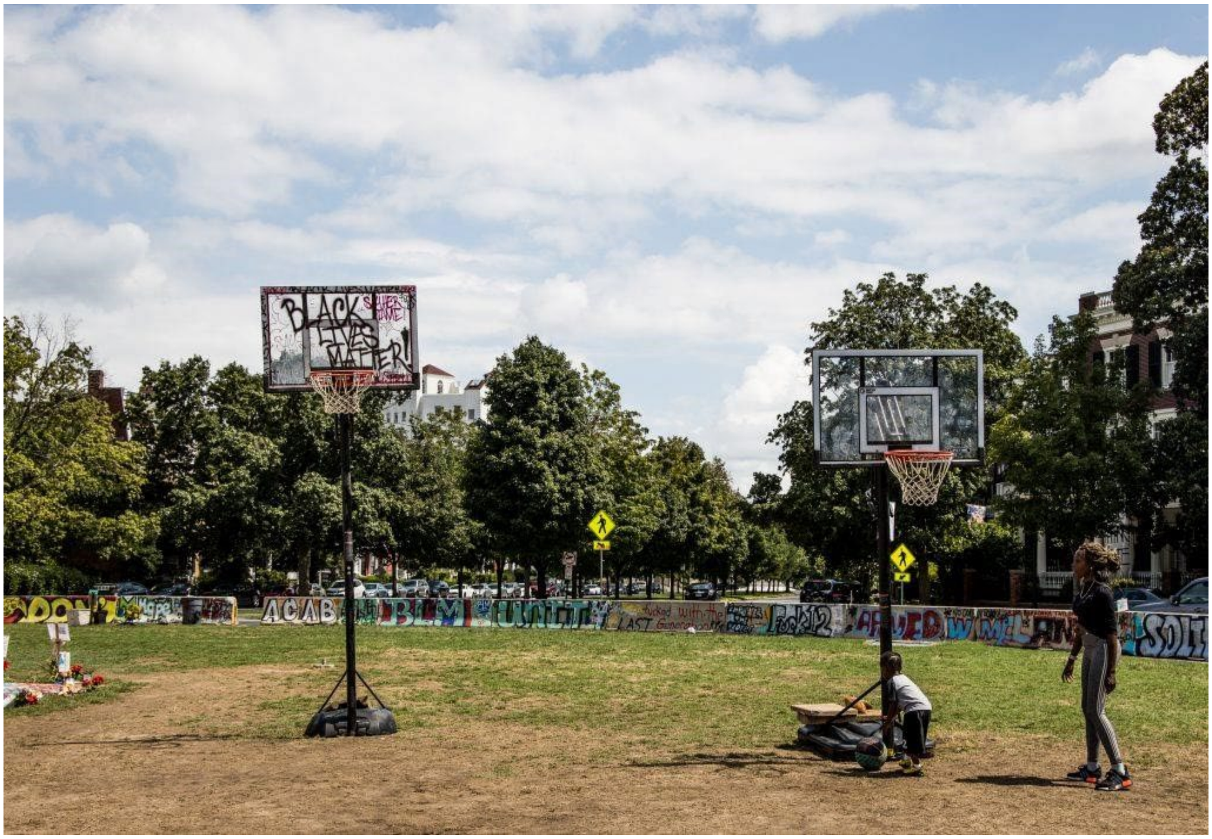
BLACK LIVES MATTER!
ACAB
BLM
UNITY

Figure 2 Basketball courts at the Marcus David Peters Circle site

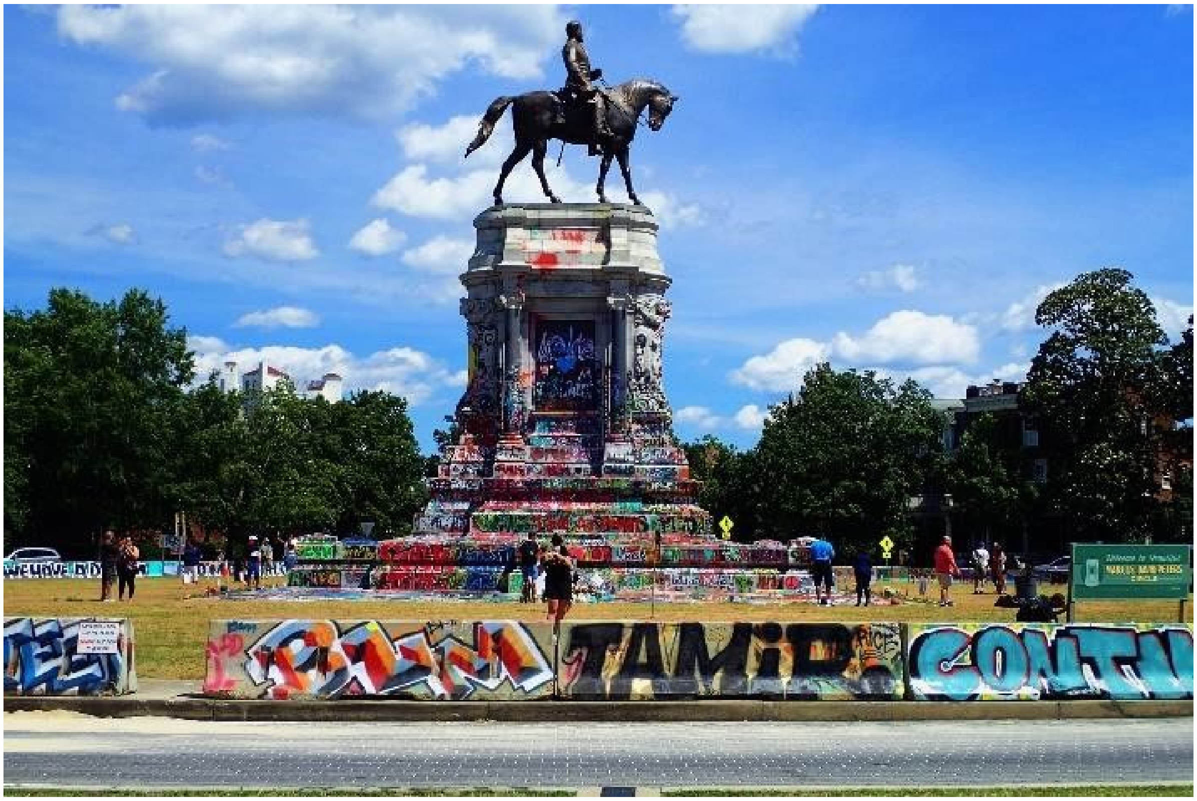

Figure 3 Barrier and graffiti covered Robert E. Lee monument at Marcus David Peters Circle

If I can dream it, we can speak it

Consider the concept of grief urbanism as a space that allows for reimagination through discourse. This ability, to converse about something other than is rooted not only in the erasure of the current hegemonic space but also in the creation of a new space. In *Freedom to Dream: The Black Radical Imagination* Robin Kelley explores why the two, erasure and creation, must be a done together for true reimagination:

> “Without new visions, we don’t know what to build, only what to knockdown. We not only end up confused, rudderless, and cynical, but we forget that making a revolution is not a series of clever maneuvers and tactics, but a process that can and must transform us”(R. D. G. Kelley, 2002).

It was not enough for the protestors to liberate Marcus-David Peters Circle and other protest camps, true placemaking happened when there was a vision for the place. One that not only redefined the physical landscape but also the spatial (every day) practices and thoughts inside of it. Meaning, while they were able to change the appearance of the camp that alone made it just a place. It did not become a space until bodies filled the protest camp. This concept of space and place is not exclusive to protest camps though, as it is important for planners and city officials to know that no matter the big dollar investments into a place, it will never become a space unless bodies are attracted to it, and once the bodies have left so does the space that they have created. Any act of placemaking or urbanism must have the marriage of the two, as with the bodies come conversation. Judith Butler explores this need for people to appear in place to produce space in *Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street,* “True space then lies between the people which means that as much as any action takes place somewhere located it also establishes a space which belongs properly to alliance itself” (Butler, 2011). How people show up in place, even in the most unconventional or disruptive way, impacts how space is established. This establishment can be examined from two different categories: *the body as it relates to spatial practices* and *the body as it relates to politics*.

When bodies appear so do politics. Being in a space with others must mean that there is an established perspective that we display, the space of appearance as Arendt phrases it in *The Human Condition* (Butler, 2011) stresses the spatial quality that comes with politics. As one cannot engage with politics in privacy, thus you must be present in the public. This public activity forces you to commune in the discourse. During the liberation of the Marcus-David Peters Circle, we could hypothesize how the public space was seized through discourse by those who felt no right to the city. They used the site as meeting grounds to discuss political gains, demands and speak to this sense of "othering". In essence, the appearance of bodies inside the protest camp created an opposing spatial imaginary, one that reveals the utopian dream that could be through its discourse and infringement of the city (Newman, 2011). The bodies inside the protest camp, still grieving and processing the death of Marcus David Peters, George Floyd, and. Managed to develop an identity with a sense of political agency. Considering this was the only time that many of them were able to feel heard or a part of a system that wasn't based on bureaucratic parties, but instead active civil engagement from the citizens, by citizens, truly for the citizens.

The political discourse that happens inside protest camps is a direct threat to the current hegemonic structure at the state and federal levels. The power that Marcus-David Peters Circle, CHAZ/CHOP, and George Floyd Plaza ultimately retained forced the city into political contestation. Many theorists have argued that the city, in particular downtowns, exists in this apolitical space and the emergence of these protest camps disrupts the suppose ubiquitous relationship that the body has with the city. However, I find that assessment attempts to protect the hegemonic structure and its representation of space. If I were to believe that downtowns were uncommitted to politics, then the introduction to protest art and discourse would not be *"disrupting"* anything. Eugene McCann explores this disruption with the protest that happened after the killing of Tony Sullivan, an eighteen-year-old Black Man.

> "In contrast to this racialized image of the city, the dominant view of Lexington before the demonstration saw the city as a single, happy community where everyone worked together for a common future. In the wake of the demonstration, two things became clear: first, large numbers of the population did not feel part of this imagined community; and second, the city's physical and social barriers which defined the boundaries of "safe" public space could easily be transgressed by groups of people who are usually excluded from those places." (McCann, 1999, 197)

As evident in McCann's experience in Lexington, the city cannot be apolitical if there is a large number of people who do not feel apart, as it has made decisions that are negatively impacting the relationship, they have with it. This work can further be explored in the discourse surrounding the right to the City. Furthermore, If I agree with Butler (2011) that bodies merely existing are political then the downtown is a place whose space is dominated by the frequency at which people transverse it and as such, surely their everyday politics must follow suit. Therefore, the bodies and art that come with the protest camp embody representational space, and that spatial imagination's only goal is to go against the representations of space.

There is another pressing issue with this notion that downtowns are apolitical. They exist as the epicenter of government buildings. The symbolic and political presence of these buildings is akin to the American Flag, a reminder of loyalty and patriotism. Expanding on McCann's finding, these buildings reinforce this notion of a "Happy community, where everyone worked together for a common future" (McCann, 1999, 197). Both spaces: protest camps, and buildings hold a sort of visibility and power. Earlier, I mentioned that the iterative and continuous nature of protest camps is what sets them aside from other forms of protest. And just like the government buildings, they allow for others who are not existing in the space to peer into them and see the actions and bodies in motion. The protest camp acts as a space of appearance where the identity has emerged among equals, and the government buildings -- and in many regards the Robert E. Lee monument ---- act as spaces of surveillance that emerge identity through surveillance and punishment (Marquez, 2012), the city, in this case, is a Panopticon, in which the downtown and CBD is the looming watchmen. The political totalitarianism that bodies have experienced at the hands of the government just for having thoughts that were considered "too radical" or socialist can be linked to when these political movements or figures became too visible and obtained too much power through mobilization. Safe to say, any modern protest movement or encampment can trace its practices and dreams to the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Rainbow Coalition, in which both movements and their leaders were victim to the totalitarianism of the State. "Purpose of counterintelligence action is to disrupt the Black Panther Party and it is immaterial whether facts exist to substantiate the charge" (Ward, 1990, 88). This is why when we witnessed the police in riot gear tear gas protestors before curfew in Richmond, Virginia (NBC Newsroom, 2020) what we witnessed was not only an attack on the place they made, but the space they were creating with their bodies, "To attack the body is to attack the right itself since the right is precisely what is exercised by the body"(Butler, 2011), the tear gas was never about the graffiti, but the fear of mobilization, or at the end, autonomy.

Fair, then, to say the politics that come out of protest camps are the true totality of practicing freedom. Where freedom, in this case, comes not at the hands of two possible alternatives but from the ability to start something or do the unexpected (Butler, 2011). These prefigurative practices that aim to disrupt the current state of capitalism, police force, and Planning are typically done, through a more cooperative or "Marxist-Leninist" practice. Perhaps some of the most stunning examples of practices of freedom within this form of grief urbanism could have been seen at Marcus-David Peters Circle. Nested at the western end of the protest camp was a two-tent food vendor who grilled and prepared food for the protestors, while the vendor did take donations, and people were allowed to pay, the food was free on a first come first serve basis. Community members began a series of skill shares and programs. Most notably, after the video footage of Elijah McClain's death was released, many folks turned their grief into art by teaching violin[2] lessons and holding small violin concerts at Marcus-David Peters Circle. The spatial practices extended to concerts, yoga classes, childcare, gardening, and basketball games. Still maintained itself as a space of ground zero for marches. A solidarity march was planned after the shooting death of Jacob Blake by the Kenosha police department in Kenosha, Wisconsin and Ernie Serrano fatally killed by the Los Angelo's Police Department. From this, we can understand that what the bodies are doing when they are demonstrating or existing on Marcus David Peters Circle is communicating between each other and the outside space of the protest camp. Butler Builds on this "it matters that it is public spaces that are filled to the brim, that people eat and sleep there, sing and refuse to cede that space" (Butler, 2011, p. 8). Where Marcus-David Peters Circle serves as a base for collective action and political convergence

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[2] Elijah McClain was a self-taught violinist and guitarist

(Butler, 2011, p. 6) and the convergence center is the Robert E. Lee monument, the protest camp becomes a space to practice freedom. We then can conclude, from Butler, that freedom cannot come from the singular person, as alone one cannot be human. It is a relationship between and among us. Where bodies appear together, where they bring the space of appearance into being; and this space maintains the relationship. How then, do we come to understand the body as a political signifier? the racialized body (Black body) is forced to exercise freedom within the protest camp not only through the physical landscape but by making the demands and expressing the grief of space and dreaming of change.

The Black experience with the city has been one that existed so far on the margins that the Black radical imagination and surrealism that comes from the protest is one of the few ways that folks can dream of a collective right to the city. Where the city and the state apparatus have maintained their spatial imaginary through structural means like discriminatory housing markets, intentional harmful zoning, and land-use practices. George Lipsitz details the outcome of these oppression structures "…has produced a powerful black spatial imaginary, a socially shared understanding of the importance of public space and its power to shape opportunities and life chances" (Lipsitz, 2007, p. 17). In theory, the black spatial imaginary does not only "refer to an understanding of how we come to know what we know about space; and recognizes that to talk about society, politics, economics, culture, race, gender, the environment and so forth" (Pedraza, 2019., p. 3) but it also can refer to the dream and surrealism of these spaces. Here, Black Spatial Imaginary is both the present conditions that exist out of oppression and the freedom that is conceived.

While the protest camp was a space that opposed the outside forces, and an expressionistic act of grief, I guide the reader to be wary of viewing this space, and other spaces that are contested as just some force of misguided anger, but as sites of resistance. For hooks (1990) and built upon by Jeff Juris (2008) these sites are home places, where something, that is not there structurally is made and the space becomes filled with bodies that make a home. “Homeplace is where we are grown and raised into social beings, where we receive our earliest definitions of humanity, where we first learn to recognize happiness, violence, justice and pain” (hooks 1990). This is important, the nuance of the protest camp being a homeplace, where happiness can exist, too. The happiness was exhibited during youth basketball games, nighttime dancing, and laughing. Protesters create the camp with freedom and liberation in mind, and with it the extension of happiness. This duality of using liberated space as a place of protest and creation is why I argue for the classification of grief as a form of urbanism. It is the totality of the experience inside the protest camp. It is both the emotional response to the murder of Black people at the hands of police forces and the living conditions of inequality that bring forth the desire for something new out of this urbanism. Out of death and grief, a radical fantasy.

Chapter 3: Urbanism by another name

No room at the tactical table

During one of my last nights in Richmond before returning to college I invited a then friend and fellow planner to visit Marcus-David Peters Circle one last time with me. He had never been and proclaimed it's a good example of tactical urbanism. I refused that assessment and still do, as we must consider the grief.

To better grasp the concept of Grief Urbanism, I must dispel the notion that these protest camps lend themselves to tactical Urbanism. Tactical urbanism is "a city and citizen-led approach to neighborhood building using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions intended to create long-term change" (*Tactical Urbanism*, n.d.). The key distinction that forces me into this dichotomic framework between the two is that tactical urbanism —at most its contemporary roots— lacks the abolitionist nature that we must acknowledge outcomes with protest camps; furthermore, it is not a space that is truly occupied by those most subservient to the state apparatus. Amina Yasin, an urban planner out of Vancouver explores this by explaining the ways in which Black people could never actually do tactical urbanism "I, as a planner, cannot loiter. I can't exist in public space in the same way that a white planner can"(Walker, 2020). What I argue she is getting at here is that there is an understanding that white people have with the state that other individuals, especially Black people do not. This understanding between [white] people and the state means that any form of urbanism acts not in abolition or direct opposition, but under. Candidly, white urbanist has found a way to turn an act of anarchism into one that refuses to push real boundaries or any radical framework. The state in this sense still produces, enforces, and regulates space. Therefore, the freedom and surrealism that we examined and defined within protest camps can rarely be seen in projects that are acts of tactical urbanism.

More broadly, the western world and planning profession have masqueraded tactical urbanism as an act of practicing freedom. Where bike lanes and closed-off streets are integral to this lighter, Quicker, Cheaper framework (*Tactical Urbanism*, 2001). The city then is supposed to become a DIY playground for bottom-up placemaking. However, If the role of tactical urbanism is to dismantle the intellectual division of labor and hierarchical structures associated with the planning process (Purcell, 2016), how can that role be fulfilled with the state looming over through federally funded grants like the Indiana Department of Health's *"For Tactical Urbanism Demonstration Projects".* What I'm flirting with is that tactical urbanism's willingness to embrace the state is a move that absolves it from its anarchic nature. Nothing can work in direct collaboration with the state and be an act of anarchism because the conflict between the two is central to any anarchic theory (Newman, 2011). More importantly, if there is no conflict or lack of opposing spatial imaginaries then the marriage of the two entities means one's spatial and socio-political practice must be suppressed and become subservient. The current state of tactical urbanism can't be a true act of practicing freedom because the current structure that has created regulations and policies that urbanist is trying to disrupt have embraced them. Black feminist Audre Lorde said "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (Lorde, 2018). The shift of acceptance with tactical urbanism has depoliticized it with rose-colored glasses. Now there are DIY bike lanes in neighborhoods with low bike ownership. While it is not my intent to throw the baby out with the bathwater here, as there *might* be merit and good to tactical urbanism, it is touted as something that is supposed to subvert the top-down decision-making that comes, and instead turns the decision-making process outside-in. When San Diego relators decided to hold Barrio Logan, a block party for residents to build a better block for them they were met with opposition. Shop owners did not understand how relators could assume they knew better than them. Out of protest, storefronts closed for the block party (Hurley, 2016). How can something be community-led if the community isn't given a seat at the table? Marginalized identities have never been included in the DIY adventures of tactical urbanism. Because of this, the type of direct action and anarchism we examine if we were to compare grief urbanism and tactical urbanism would be different. As grief urbanism is interested in autonomy and a new world, the same cannot be said with tactical urbanism.

Chapter 4: Protest Demands

Us living as we do, upside down

By exploring this concept of grief urbanism as one that attempts to practice freedom, by seeing beyond the current regulation and limitations of the state, I must try to define the reality these protest camps hope to create and erase from the city. First, though, I feel it is important to address a pressing issue with the demands made by all protest camps. While all of them call for justice in the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Marcus-David Peters, Ahmaud Aubrey and; the demands also expand to the present lived conditions & waywardness of protestors and onlookers. While this is the core of Grief Urbanism: *"the way collective grief, surrealism, and placemaking are expressed and maintained inside of a citizen-led protest and used to promote material change",* writing this paper brings me a bit of uneasiness. How death has been turned into the only sense of social capital that Black Americans have. Where the dead body is in a state of matter that produces protest, and voices for the unheard. I am not above this critique of uneasiness. Much can be said about a master's candidate trying to pioneer a new sense of urbanism using someone's death as the driving force.

The demands that develop out of protest camps are the results of the political discourse, surrealism, and everyday practices, I consider this the "*The Poetic's Triad*". Poetic stemming from the poetic knowledge that Kelley discovered in the protesters during his time writing "Freedom to Dream". Without one of the three elements in The Poetic Triad, I argue

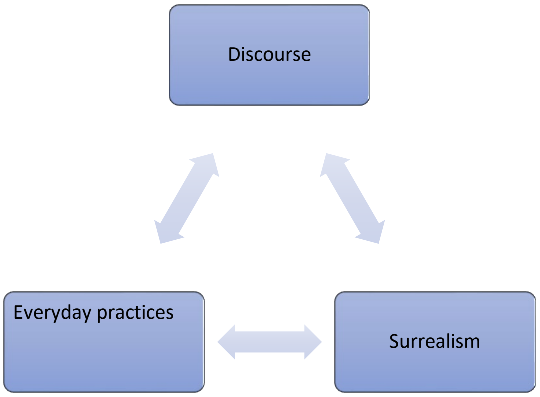

Figure 1 Poetic triad

that the stability of the protest demands would not manifest into its full potential. New ways of living take experimentation, likewise, without surrealism and discourse, you'll never know what to experiment with or how it will operate. The Poetic Triad is the unraveling of the most creative and suppressed section of the mind that dares to consider what change might be. This unraveling doesn't mean that the protest camps invented the concepts, for example people have been talking about the abolition of the police force and prison systems for a long time, but It does mean that the current protesters were able to (finally) demand a new way for themselves through the Poetic Triad.

During one of the many nights inside the Seattle Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (CHAZ), gunfire erupted. Normally, police and emergency units would be the first to the scene. Not this time, not there. The space inside CHAZ was a police-free zone, considering what life would look like without police the protest camp had an armed force, group mediators, and medics who were first to respond before the Seattle PD. This would not have happened if I had not been for protestors being able to vision a world without police, consider what systems should replace it, and what the new system would look like in everyday life. This experimentation of every life inside of the protest camp in turn helped create the demands for change made by CHAZ.

I think what a lot of surrealists, afro-pessimist, and academics get wrong about protest camps, is that these camps are supposed to be spatiotemporal, existing only for its time as a phenomenon. While on the extreme these spaces can fight for autonomy, the new world they dream of exists right outside the brick barrier, if the city would allow it. Is it possible to be so far in surrealism, that you stay in the abstraction of dreaming? Possible. However, there is no material hope there. Grief Urbanism shows us that even in the darkest of moments, hope is still alive. Hope in the regards that change is possible, that people have not given up, fully.

No one and nothing go unchanged

To better understand the demands made by the protesters I performed two analyses as it relates to the *"The Poetic Triad".* My aim here is to shine a light on the similar and contrasting themes that are faced by the most marginalized. To understand this, for the first analysis I divided the demands into two different themes: *State Apparatus.* The state apparatus is considered to include "the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc." (Althusser, Lenin 96). Urban Design, Economics & Planning considers the demands that reflect the city and financial funding. After establishing themes, I developed different categories that each demand would fall under based on the over goal of the demand. In total, I outlined 16 categories that encompass the goals outlined by the protesters.

State Apparatus

The table below shows that all protest camps included demands surrounding police reform/abolition, new federal & State investigation, development of new public safety systems, and justice. While these categories were covered by all the protest camps, come categories like the school to prison pipeline, and reparations only found their way to one protest camp's official list of demands.

Urban Design, Economics, & Planning

The table below shows that all protest camps included demands surrounding housing & city funding. Unlike the previous theme, there is much more stratification in what the protest camps are demanding as it relates to the urban design, financing, and planning of the respective city. Perhaps there is room for a deeper study of the demands made by protesters. What I find interesting is the attention the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (CHAZ) put on the State Apparatus compared to George Floyd Plaza's attention on the Urban Design, economics, & Planning as it relates to their demands. I wonder what this says about dreaming. While I have reservations about loosely naming things as "radical" (as it can make things seem unobtainable). The stark contrast on what is important to the protesters says about what they need and dream of.

Table 1 Content analysis of protest demands

Protest demands category	**Seattle CHAZ**	**George Floyd Plaza**	**Marcus-David Peters Circle**
State Apparatus			
Police reform / abolition	5	5	1
School to prison pipeline	1	0	0
Federal & state investigations	1	2	4
Reparations	2	0	0
Criminal Justice reform	4	3	1
new public safety systems	2	4	2
Police violence, charges, and justice	2	4	1
Prison reform / abolition	1	0	0
Urban Design, economics, & Planning			
Housing	2	2	1
Gentrification	1	0	1
City Funding &investments	1	6	1
Election	1	0	0
Statues	1	1	1
City design	0	3	1

Black-own business	2	2	0
real estate and development	0	5	0[3]

The second analysis was to place each demand into a singular category depending on the impact it would have on the city. The three categories are creation, change, and removal (abolition). I consider these three categories to embody the core themes that arise from the demands. classification for each category assumes the following:

Creation: Does the Demand add something new to the city. This can be a new policy, program, organization, entity, physical structure, or space. OR does the demand ask for the city to bring forth charges for people

Change: Does the Demand seek to reform an existing structure, organization, program, entity, or space that currently exists in the city. OR does the demand ask for the city officials to reconsider the decision(s), the verdict(s), or judicial findings for the people.

Removal: Does the demand call for the complete abolition, eradication, or elimination of physical structure, government entities, agencies, or spaces. The following charts allow us to

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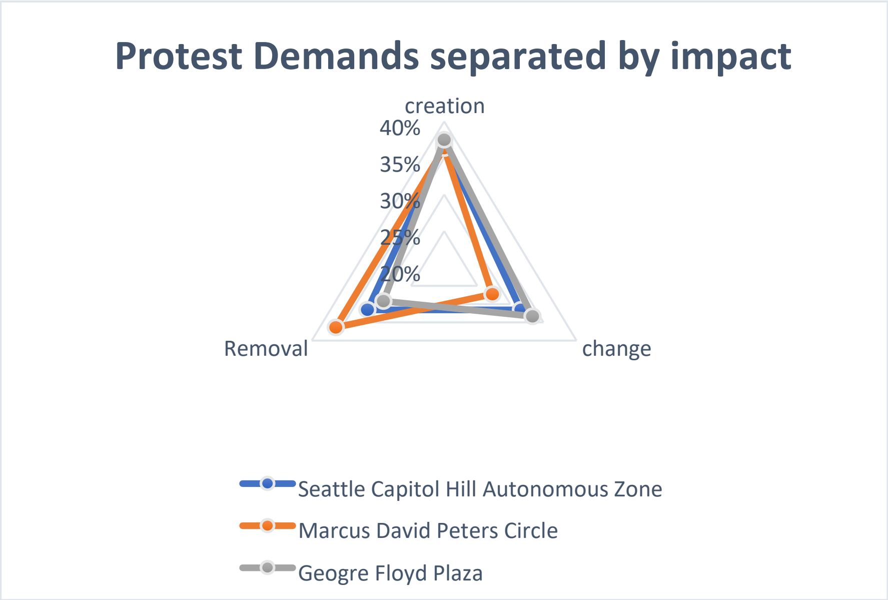
[3] This analysis does not equally distribute demands, as such some demands might fit into more than one code.



analyze what category the demands of the protest camp lean toward. I would assume, based on the findings, that George Floyd Plaza's demands lean more toward creation and change; Marcus David Peters Circle leans more toward removal, and the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone seems to be balanced with a little more influence on creation. If the point of surrealism inside protest camps is to dream of a new world (Kelley, 2003) and the demands reflect the world that the protesters want to create, then it is safe to assume that the demands that lean toward creation and removal is a far stronger example of surrealism and dreaming than change.

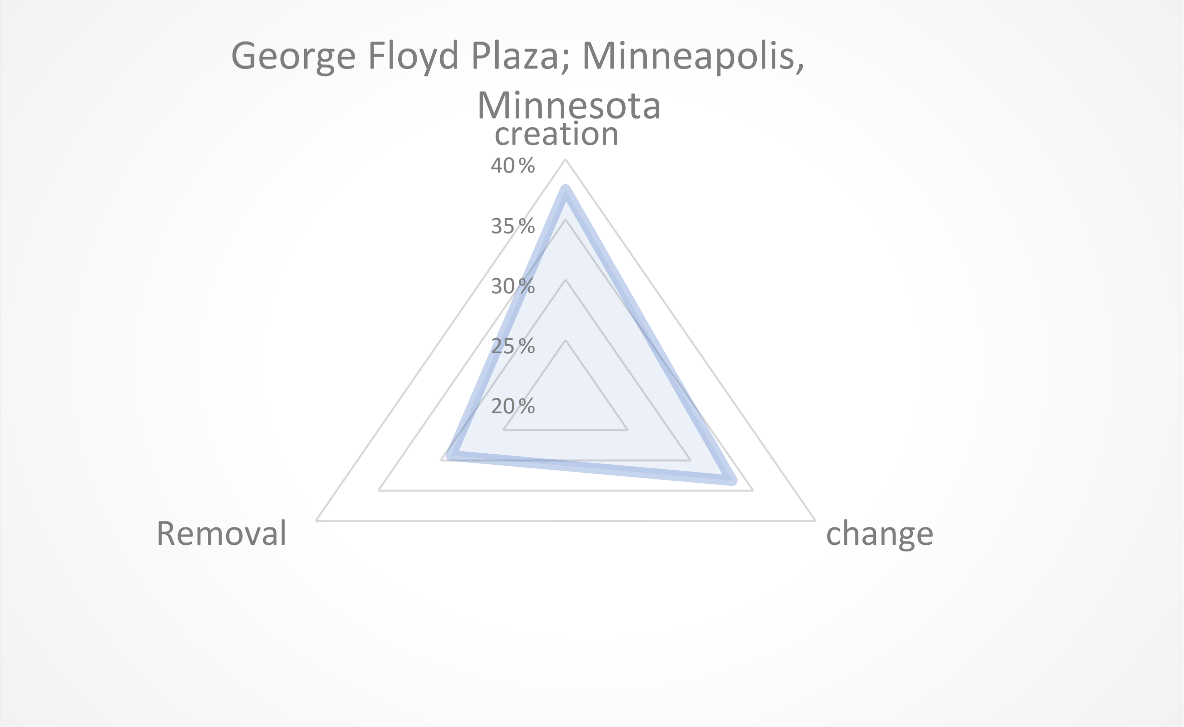


Figure 6 George Floyd Plaza demands separated by impact

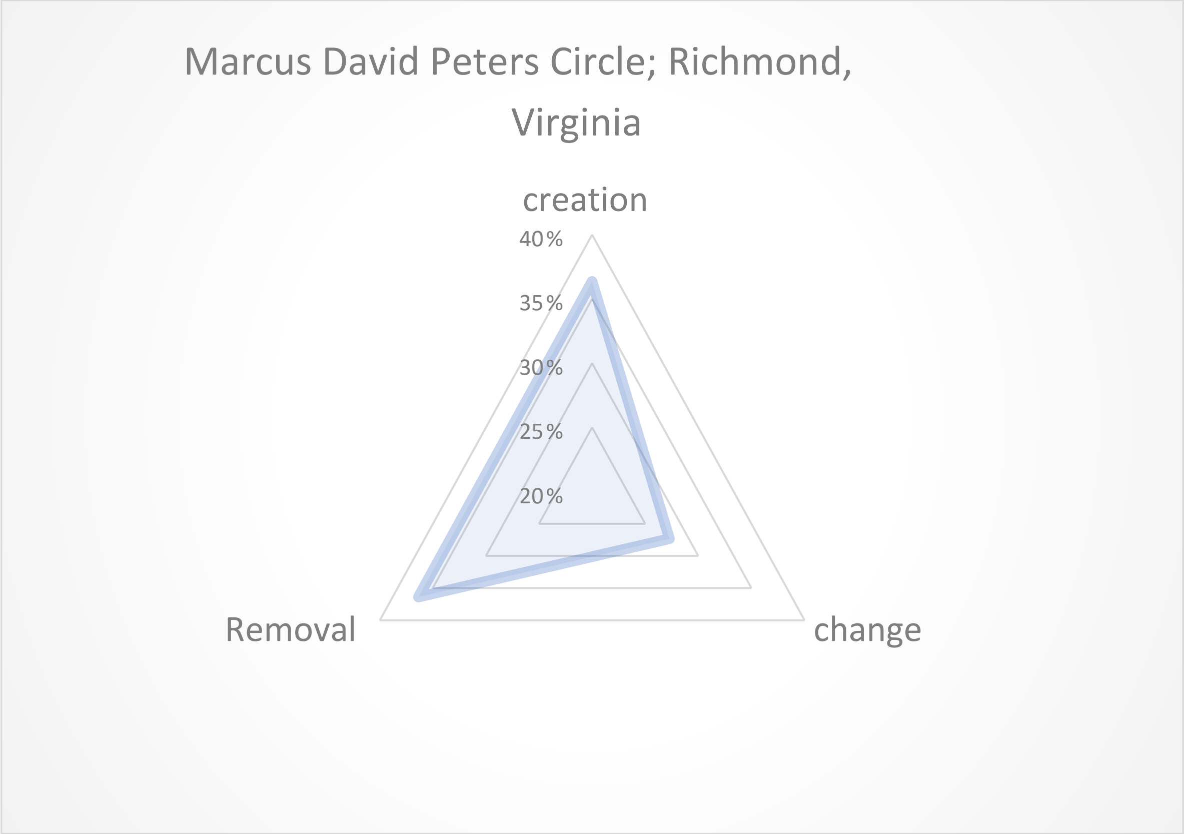


Figure 7 MDPC demands separated by impact

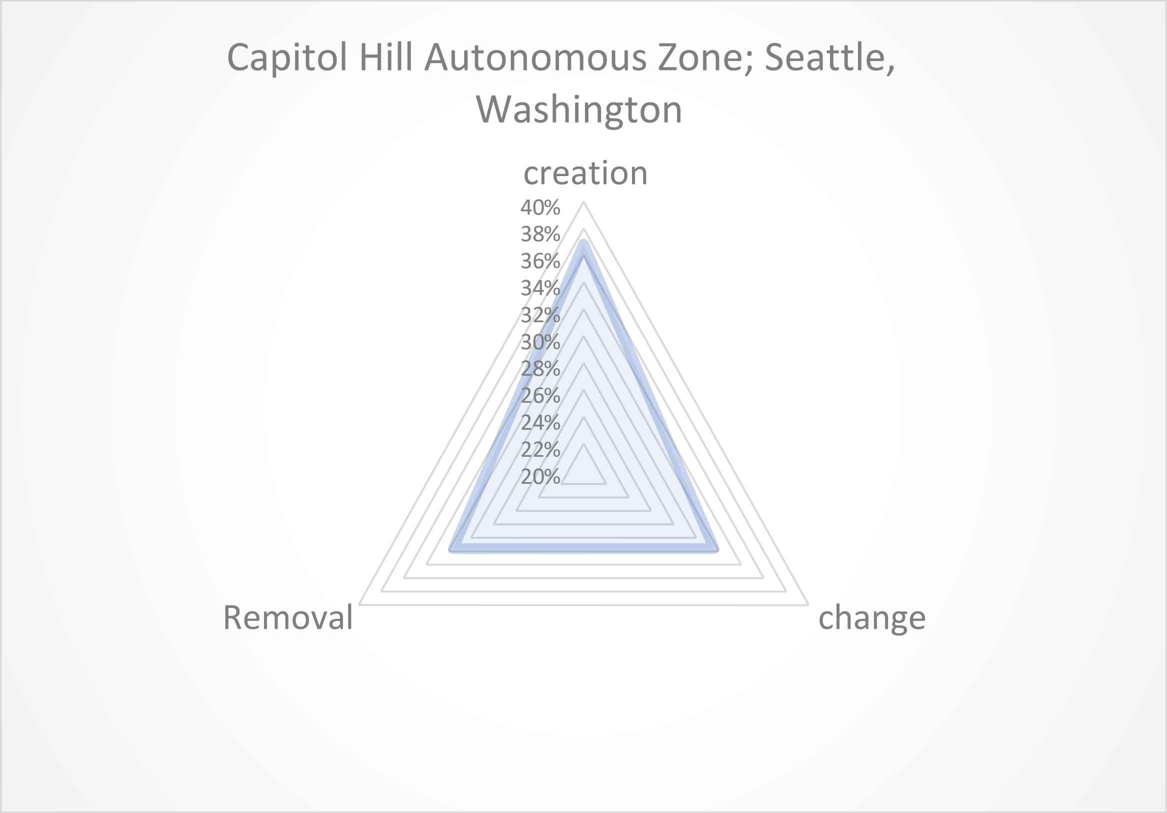


Figure 7 Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone demands separated by impact

How much time do you want for your progress?

The Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (CHAZ) inside Seattle, Washington released a list of 30 demands that were aimed at changing policies for the cultural and historic advancement of Seattle and the struggles of its people ("Capitol Hill," 2020). The majority of the demands called for the abolition of the police force and acts of restorative justice.

> "The Seattle Police Department and attached court system are beyond reform. We do not request reform, we demand abolition. We demand that the Seattle Council and the Mayor defund and abolish the Seattle Police Department and the attached Criminal Justice Apparatus. This means 100% of funding, including existing pensions for Seattle Police. At an equal level of priority, we also demand that the city disallow the operations of ICE in the city of Seattle"("Capitol Hill," 2020).

For a lot of people, they can't dream of a world without the police. Perhaps it is because people call the police for everything: a gas leak, a random person walking too close to our property line, a young boy playing with a toy bb gun. My family hardly called the police. My neighborhood never called the police. Allegedly, my family came home to our apartment robbed one day and decided to handle it our way. CHAZ had a massive undertaking getting the concept of abolishing the police accepted by the majority in and outside its protest camp. With 67% of Seattle's population identifying as white (*U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts*, n.d.), appealing to their moral compass was going to be difficult as the relationship white America has with the police is generally different than that of marginalized identities.

> “Both policing and punishment are firmly rooted in racism — attempts to control indigenous, Black, and Latino populations following colonization and slavery as well as Asian populations after the Chinese Exclusion Act and the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans”(Davis, 2020).

This privilege, the way white bodies appear in space, is one that many do not want to rid themselves of. Many people cannot see beyond the current systems, whether it be because of ambivalence or security, their allegiance to the current hegemonic consolidation of space hinders them from practicing freedom in full its totality. This is why we saw the narrative change from abolishing the police, an act that calls for the complete doing away of the whole police force to defunding the police, an act that calls for the reallocation of funding to other resources that are aimed at preventing crime. The latter is more palatable to the mass. As such, the radical fantasy that was being dreamed in the minds of protestors became contested and altered, too. Though not all was lost, the impact of mobilization and protesting from the protesters did end up getting the Minneapolis government to put the existence of the Minneapolis police department to a vote (Ballotpedia 2021).

While the opportunity for the political thought to gain more traction from the protest camps and leading organizations was important, the vote did not succeed, with 43.83% (62,813) in favor and 56.17% (80,506) against (Ballotpedia 2021). This was not the only time political thought transcended the barriers of the protest camp and the internal discourse of its organizers. The relationship between transportation planning and policing was also put up to question. First implemented in the 1990s, the strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and injuries known as Vision Zero was forced under extreme scrutiny with the ways in which it promotes preventable traffic death. The strategy introduces an approach to traffic safety with a litany of actionable words one of which being Enforcement.

> “The Es – a focus primarily on Engineering, Education, and Enforcement – is a century old approach to traffic safety that has been – and still is – used by most U.S. communities. Transportation planning embedded the Es long before Vision Zero became popular. While the individual Es have a role to play, they need to be better evaluated for shortcomings and held to higher standards, especially in terms of effectiveness and equity. (Leah, 2022)”

What I find most interesting about the *revelation* is that it came about after the murder of George Floyd, yet people have been dying under the surveillance that comes from enforcement for a long. This is to say, planning professionals and theorists are coming up with these acronyms and policies and not considering how they would impact those most marginalized, until after death. Death shouldn’t be the knock at the door that forces Planners to consider if something is equitable. Instead, we must do the work that is required of us.

When exploring the demands made at George Floyd Square (GFS) as acts of practicing freedom that unpin the current design and planning of the city two demands spoke to the inequality faced specifically by Black, Indigenous, and other folks living within the Margins:

> “#16. Allocate A Façade Grant to GFS to improve the Aesthetics of the Business Corridor, #17. Establish and distribute contingency fund for BIPOC Businesses located in GFS zone according to the needs of each business owner (not the landlord) to ensure the preservation of Black-Owned Businesses + promote racial equity”(Coffman, 2021).

Both demands aim at decreasing the inequality faced by Black-owned businesses by creating funding for them, these demands point to a very important point. Radical thought that comes from these protest camps can still be grounded in very tangible creations. What does it say about a city and its planners when the people have to protest for something as small as façade improvements done on their buildings? While Minneapolis is touted as having a comparable cost of living, it is home to a massive racial disparity with one of the lowest black home and business owners in the United States. Historically Black neighborhoods in this city have been devastated by interstate 94, where one in every 8 African Americans lost a home (Ingraham, 2020). The city did release an official response to all the demands made by the protestors. To improve the aesthetics of the business corridor the city issued a new funding opportunity with emphasized priority areas including the cultural district that will include finances to improve the interior of commercial buildings. For demand #17 *"Establish and distribute contingency fund for BIPOC Businesses located in GFS zone"* The city has created a fund for non-profits up to $50,000 in forgivable loans ranging from 75,000 to 5 million with no interest long-term forgivable loan. The city has detailed the loans to give priority to:

> Priority will be given to properties affected by the civil unrest in the spring and summer of 2020.
>
> - Priority will be given to projects in census tracts with distressed communities or areas of concentrated poverty.
> - Priority will be given to projects sponsored by smaller developers/owners.
> - Priority will be given to projects sponsored by developers/owners with a smaller net worth that would make obtaining market-rate financing more difficult.
> - Priority will be given to projects and businesses that would have difficulty proceeding without a CPDF loan.
> - Projects that leverage a greater percentage of non-CPDF dollars will be given higher Priority

The city gave an official response to all 24 demands. Explaining that some demands were beyond their police power. Out of the three protest camps explored in this thesis, Minneapolis was the only one to find "success" in getting the attention of the city government and a lengthy response from them.

Out of the three protest camps, the Marcus-David Peters circle has the fewest demands, with the main demand being the creation of The Marcus Alert System, intending to provide a behavioral health response to behavioral health emergencies. This demand was adopted and developed in all five regions of Virginia. This alert removes police as the first respondents to these crises; Virginia is not the only one to implement this transformative change. Aurora Colorado has also developed two response teams for crises involving mental health; one with a police officer and mental health professional and the other pairing being a paramedic and mental health professional (Pegues, 2021). Even though the city found that the police officer who shot and killed Marcus-David Peters was acting “lawfully”, they adopted the Marcus Alert. There is little literature on protest demands and how they form. There is work on the political inner-workings of protest camps, and how political thought is maintained, but the impact protest demands have on the dominant structures of the city has not been explored. These demands, while given another name or deeper thought are nothing new. These demands existed after the murders of Latasha Harling, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, and, yet still what was different now is the way in which protesters mobilization tuned into protest camps, and it seemed for once, the demands and protesters weren’t going to budge.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

"And if it's an illusion, I don't want to wake up I'm gonna hang on to it
Because the alternative is an abyss, is just a hole, a darkness, a nothingness"

– SZA (2019)

Will the United States see another surge in protest camps soon? I believe so. As long as grief and death loom over people who exist on the margins of society there is always going to be another call for mobilization, and I hope it happens. When I first conceived this idea, Grief Urbanism, I didn't know where it would take me. But I knew there was something here, my comrades and I weren't spending nights at Marcus-David Peters Circle playing pretend. We were dreaming, as we always do. Except for this time, there were more of us, dreaming of a world better for Black people. And while I spent a great deal talking about these protest camps, surrealism with undertones of the Black experience and pain, I imagine others' dream: indigenous, Latino, queer, women, Appalachian, all of whom have collective grief and their own middle passage and wayward experience with the city. I hope more than anything this concept lives beyond the paper and breaths life and thought for others on the margins.

Grief Urbanism is about protest camps, surrealism, and making a home out of a city that never wanted you to have such a thing. Generations of trauma that begins with the transatlantic slave trade and has caught up to us in the form of police violence, and racial inequalities have forced protesters to seek surrealism to escape the ever-present spaces of surveillance and necropolitics. Where death, the visual replaying of it from the media, regulates the attachment they have with the city and its apparatus.

The protest camp is a homeplace they have made, through art and architecture at their disposal. One that is filled with everyday life and activities just like downtown, except the protesters, can do as they want with the land. Showing the city and the planning profession that the regulatory practices and zoning of green space are exclusionary practices that force citizens to feel they have no true right to the city. The home they build is filled with bodies that appear with their politics and through the discourse created they not only dream of new systems, policies, and practices they put them to test practicing this newfound freedom.

Protest camps are ephemeral, unlike the grief and death that forced them to mobilize. Protesters know that which is why I find the discourse surrounding autonomy and protest camps misguided. While there are camps that gained longevity and independence as such the Zapatista uprising or the Arab springs, I do not believe that is the end goal of many protest camps. In the film *Space is The Place* (1974) Sun Ra takes all the Black people on earth to another; But unlike Sun Ra we do not have another planet. perhaps that is the limitation of my surrealism, maybe a new territory or long-term protest camp that is amputated from the patriarchal state is what *is* needed, and the protest demands that come from the poetic triad is those who dream settling for political change.

I have, intentionally, tried to avoid talks of political classifications and ideology inside of protest camps as much as I can throughout this paper. I find the obsession over communism and socialism and its depth inside of protest camps is trivial to the fact that people are demanding things that should be applicable regardless of political thought. If the protest is the voice of the unheard, then protest camps are the lives of those too.

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