The Spatial Logics of Modernity and Gendered Racial Terror in Santa Clarita
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During the era of the mission system in California between 1769-1821 the Spanish Franciscans instituted gendered racial terror in order to divest Native peoples of their land, coerce their labor, and convert them to Catholicism. Many scholars have written about the atrocities of the mission system and the proliferation of sexual and physical torture inscribed on Native bodies under the tutelage of the Catholic church and the Spanish crown. Gendered racial terror was endemic to the missions, which were built and maintained by California Indian people who were literally worked to death. Native peoples were forcibly removed from their villages and relocated to the missions where they were enslaved and incarcerated.

The city of Los Angeles is built on top of two of these sites of gendered racial terror and dispossession, Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana and Mission San Gabriel Arcangel. Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana and the contemporary neighborhood of Santa Clarita are the focus of this paper. According to the mapping project “Million Dollar Hoods” the state spent nearly 22 million dollars on incarceration between 2010 and 2015 in Santa Clarita (Million Dollar Hoods, 2016). Since gendered racial terror is a critical component of incarceration, contemporary Santa Clarita reflects the historical legacy of the Fernandeno Tataviam peoples who were removed from this place, which they call Chaguayanga, and enslaved at Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana (Mapping Indigenous LA, 2016). I argue that both the mission system and the prison industrial complex,
as well as the gendered racial terror endemic to these institutions, are technologies that enable the project of modernity.

Using the work of Mishuana Goeman, Sherene Razack, Kelly Lytle-Hernandez, and Sarah Haley, I argue that the logics of carcerality made evident by both Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana and contemporary Santa Clarita emerge and persist as part of the ongoing project of modernity. This paper is concerned with tracing the definitions of modernity put forward by these authors in order to flesh out the connections between Native dispossession, incarceration and the production of the state and settler citizen subjects. I ultimately argue that a side by side critical reading of the “Million Dollar Hoods” map and the “Mapping Indigenous LA” project reveals the spatial logics of modernity and the gendered racial terror that is endemic to it. By looking specifically at the village site of Chaguyanga and present day Santa Clarita in this paper I seek to make a connection between the violence and dispossession of the mission system that continues to affect the Fernandeno Tataviam peoples and how that dispossession enables the high incarceration rates on that land today.

The project of modernity with the simultaneous project of settler-colonialism does the work of dispossession and border drawing through establishing new grammars of place. In her work, Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place: The Visual Memoir of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, Mishuana Goeman defines a grammar of place as a set of power relations that give rise to the privileging of some grammars, which are the structures and meanings of a place (2014, 237), to the detriment of others (2014, 236). She adds to this definition by asserting that a settler-colonial grammar of place is the product
of the settler imaginary which requires the retelling of colonial narratives about the successful and completed project of conquest (2014, 237-238). The Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana is an example of a settler-colonial grammar of place that establishes new relationships of power on Tataviam land through their enslavement and removal. This example persists in contemporary Santa Clarita which is understood as a site of amusement and leisure (MILA, 2016) and a site of carceral violence (MDH, 2016), but not a site of Native dispossession. Goeman argues that an analysis of a settler-colonial grammar of place is necessary in order to make visible the spatial logics of settler-colonialism (2014, 236). Santa Clarita should then be read as a settler-colonial grammar of place in order to reveal the relationship between the dispossession of the Tataviam and the carceral violence of the state.

The stakes of revealing a settler-colonial grammar of place are high since it names the process of conquest to be necessarily incomplete (2014, 237). The stories of violence and removal that are told in the MILA project, made possible by the Fernandeno Tataviam peoples’ survival, necessarily contests the settler narrative of completed conquest (MILA, 2016). I agree with Goeman’s argument about the importance of focusing on these settler-grammars of place and the “formation of the social” (2014, 238) since it impacts the material realities of everyday life. A critical engagement with the concept of a settler-colonial grammar of place allows for a deeper reading of the incarceration rates in Santa Clarita and reveals that this violence is predicated on the dispossession of the Tataviam.
A settler-colonial grammar of place is made evident by the history of Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana and the perpetuity of the project of modernity via incarceration in Santa Clarita. I am pushing against settler logics of linear time in order to argue that the gendered racial terror that was foundational to the mission system must continue to occur in order for the violence of incarceration in Santa Clarita to exist. Similar to Goeman's argument in her reading of Tsinhajinnie’s photographic memoir, I argue that place is not restrictive and can move through time (2014, 241). The violence of Native dispossession is not located in the past, it is a reoccurring violence that gets remade with each act of erasure.

The spatial logics of modernity and settler-colonialism are made evident through the Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana and contemporary Santa Clarita. In both of these sites there exists particular forms of ordering the Native subject with their captivity at the mission on the one hand and their urban erasure on the other (2014, 240). As Goeman argues, “This spatial restructuring of bodies coincides with the spatial construction of the nation-state” (2014, 240). The erasure of Native bodies and the violence of the mission system is evident in both the tourist appeal of the theme park on this land (MILA, 2016) and by the mapping of Santa Clarita (MDH, 2016) as divorced from the history of missionization. The separation of the contemporary crisis of state investment in incarceration in Santa Clarita from the history of colonization is a settler-colonial grammar which imagines that conquest is complete and that Native people have either disappeared or been completely removed to the reservation. The utilization of settler-colonial grammar as Goeman defines it disrupts a settler temporality that claims colonization is
over and asserts that the contemporary violence of incarceration in Santa Clarita is an extension of the production of the modern state which requires reoccurring acts of Native dispossession.

Goeman’s focus on the spatiality of settler-colonialism and the settler grammar of civilized and non-civilized spaces works well in conversation with Sherene Razack’s work, *Dying From Improvement: Inquests and Inquiries Into Indigenous Deaths in Custody*, where she argues that the project of modernity requires the designation of such spaces (2015, 33). For Razack the definition of modernity is “a cultural paradigm that has produced and required the death of Indigenous and racialized peoples and, simultaneously, the destruction of the land” (2015, 27-28). The method of policing the borders of civilized and non-civilized places is the repeated eviction of the Native body from settler society (2015, 24). This constant eviction is accomplished in a variety of ways be it either physical gender and racial violence or the psychic violence of erasure. Whichever form the eviction of the Native body takes it must always mark the Native as surplus needing to be expelled from settler society (2015, 24). The expulsion of the Tataviam from their ancestral territory in Santa Clarita not only makes the development of the modern city possible, the act of expulsion continues to produce the modern subject of the settler (Razack 2015, 27).

Using Razack’s argument about the function of formal inquests into Indigenous deaths in custody, I argue that the erasure of Native bodies also takes place in the “Million Dollar Hood” mapping of Santa Clarita. This mapping project is a productive settler narrative (Razack 2015, 5) that articulates incarceration as though it is separate from Na-
tive dispossession. This mapping represents a colonial cartography (Razack 2015, 15) which mirrors the historical attempt at wiping Native peoples from their lands (MILA, 2016) in the service of establishing settler ownership of land as legitimate (Razack 2015, 15). The absence of Native peoples from the mapping project “Million Dollar Hoods” accomplishes what Razack calls “the most enduring colonial truth: the land belongs to the settler, and Indigenous people who are in the city are not of the city” (2015, 24). Ironically this settler act of erasure comes from the same logics of modernity that make the gendered racial terror of incarceration possible.

The erasure of Native peoples from urban spaces via technologies such as mapping is an example of the ways that the Indigenous body is marked as surplus and evicted from settler society (2015, 24). The erasure accomplished through the mapping of “Million Dollar Hoods” is an example of scattered forms of dominance-in-hegemony that upholds the spatial dominance of settler-colonial grammars of place (Goeman 2014, 251). The recreation of the Native body as placeless (2015, 45) is also evident in the “Million Dollar Hood” map even as the reproduction of Native placelessness is what facilitates the intense policing and incarceration that the map makes visible.

I am reading the erasure of settler-colonialism in the “Million Dollar Hoods” map as an interaction between a settler grammar of place and a Native grammar of place. To make this argument I rely on Razack’s statement about the necessity of the interaction between the settler state and the Native body as an essential component of the ongoing production of the settler subject as well as the modern state (2015, 53). The colonial or civilized city must be made over and over again (2015, 55) because the project of moder-
nity is never complete. Razack states that, “aboriginality continues to provoke a crisis. As untamed nature, Indigenous peoples must be subdued in the name of civilization” (2015, 61). The necessity of subduing the Native body is clear in the processes of gendered racial terror in the California mission system but it is also present through a settler-colonial grammar of place that disappears Native peoples from Santa Clarita even as the existence of that place is dependent on their ongoing dispossession and expulsion from the city. These are the insidious and layered spatial logics of modernity.

In Kelly Lytle-Hernandez’s article, *Hobos in Heaven: Race, Incarceration, and the Rise of Los Angeles 1880-1910*, she argues that the development of modern Los Angeles was accomplished through the criminalization of so-called “tramps” and the appropriation of their labor. Lytle-Hernandez argues that the desire to create an “Anglo American paradise” in Los Angeles (2014, 427) for white, middle class, heteronormative families led to the criminalization and incarceration of white transient men (2014, 430). The public discourse around these men likened them to vermin by describing their inhabitation in the city as an infestation (2014, 428). Here it is important to discuss the use of these men’s labor to beautify the city (2014, 441) because of how it emphasizes the importance of desirability and consumption in modern spaces. This language of beauty stands in stark contrast to the depiction of these men as vermin. The language of infestation mirrors the process of making the Native body into a “thing” that Razack discusses. She argues that once the Native body is made into a thing then it can be understood as debris needing to be cleared from settler society (2015, 17). This makes an important intervention in Lytle-Hernandez’s work possible because it demonstrates the close ideological relationship be-
between the exclusion of transient white men from the city and the removal of Native people from their land and settler society.

A major component of the moral panic concerning the itinerant white men was their depiction as a threat to respectable white families and the normative category of whiteness itself (2014, 414). The white elite of Los Angeles sought to manage this population of unemployed vagrants with incarceration (2014, 413). Lytle-Hernandez points out that criminality strips an individual of the right to be in the city (2014, 438) and how non-normative bodies are marked as criminal. It is terribly ironic that the prison labor of these non-normative white subjects built the foundations of the modern city of Los Angeles but are themselves excluded from access to it (2014, 438). However, this exclusion is necessary for the project of modernity to work, as I argue above, the material borders of the city as well as the ideological borders of whiteness must be constantly defended. Lytle-Hernandez’s discussion about how the law strips non-normative white transient men of the right to be in the city (2014, 438) reflects Goeman’s argument that “the liberal state relies on categories of race and gender to set up a settler grammar of place that maintains state power over space, bodies, and time” (2014, 257). I argue that this process is demonstrated repeatedly in Lytle-Hernandez’s piece to both the non-normative white prisoners that she focuses on as well as the California Indian peoples who are absent from her analysis.

While Lytle-Hernandez’s piece is exceptionally useful for discussing the specificities of the development of modern Los Angeles, California Indian people and their dispossession are largely erased. The history of missionization and removal of Native bodies
from settler society is relegated to a couple lines which hint at this history (2014, 434). Using Goeman’s settler-colonial grammar of place I argue that this erasure of Native peoples, like their erasure in the mapping of Santa Clarita, facilitates the project of modernity and its mode of gendered racial terror. Gendered racial terror is an important component of modernity because it reproduces its spatial logics by maintaining borders through violent exclusion and simultaneously reproduces the modern settler citizen subject.

The relationship between the spatial logics of modernity and gendered racial terror is made clear in Sarah Haley’s work. In her book, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*, Haley documents the institutionalized gendered racial terror of the convict-leasing regime in Georgia after the end of chattel slavery. Haley’s main argument is that the criminalization of black women and the coercion of their labor through the convict-leasing system enabled the development of Jim Crow modernity (2016, 3). Haley argues that “modernity refers less to a specific geopolitical location or historical period than to a contested and complex process of becoming that is linked to an imagined social and political future” (2016, 11). She uses this definition to argue that the shifting social and economic structures of the south post-emancipation were inextricably linked to the process of modernity (2016, 11).

Haley argues that Jim Crow modernity existed to organize specific gendered and racialized bodies into appropriate places and for black women one such place was the convict camp (2016, 11). This narrative is reminiscent of the criminalization of so-called “tramps” and the appropriation of their labor which built modern Los Angeles. In fact
both Lytle-Hernandez and Haley are interested in how carceral regimes produce the modern city and uphold white supremacist ideologies of normative citizenship. However, Haley’s attention to the gendered racial terror of the convict leasing system makes her analysis of modernity much more useful for making connections between the dispossession of the Fernandeno Tataviam peoples and the crisis of incarceration in Santa Clarita. There is a historical connection between the gendered racial terror enacted against Native peoples and other racialized bodies that Haley’s work makes visible.

It is important to emphasize that the convict-leasing regime and appropriation black women’s labor were essential to reestablishing white supremacy, normative gender identity, and developing the industrial economy of the New South (2016,12, 28). While of course the experiences of the Tataviam peoples in the mission and black women prisoners in Georgia were very different, they both endured gendered racial terror for the purpose of establishing modern cities and modern subjects. The labor of the Tataviam was coerced by the Franciscans in the Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana for the purpose of developing both the physical structures of colonial California as well as the settler economy. In the context Haley writes about, the use of racial violence against black women worked to legitimize white supremacy and normative gender while also limiting the spaces where their bodies were acceptable; either laboring in white homes or in the prison (2016, 35). The terrible violence that was perpetrated by the state on the bodies of black women also served to produce a white supremacist ideology of humanity and citizenship (2016, 57). The suffering of black women was essential to the reiteration of white supremacy but also to the economic and social development of the south (2016, 67). The dehumanization and
brutal treatment of black women was the foundation upon which the modern economy of the south was built.

The dehumanization of black women accomplished in part with the rhetoric of ugliness, stupidity and deformity was a way in which normative white femininity was constructed (2016, 20). If black women were ugly and ignorant in the popular imagination, then white women were dichotomously depicted as beautiful and virtuous (2016, 24). The importance of beauty and desirability being reserved for white women recalls the beautification project of Los Angeles that prisoners were made to labor over that is discussed by Lytle-Hernandez (2014, 441). Lytle-Hernandez does not provide a gender analysis of the beautification of modern Los Angeles. However, a critical reading of the apparent necessity of beauty in a white supremacist and patriarchal settler state and the sexual violence inherent in settler-colonialism indicates an aesthetic of modernity which reproduces white womanhood.

The aesthetics of white supremacy and modernity are also present in Haley’s analysis. Haley discusses the discovery of the unmarked graves of almshouse prisoners during the development of a golf course. She states that, “none of the reports mentioned the prisoners who labored at the almshouse or the possibility that they, too, might now lay in the potter’s field of scattered graves that bordered this site of play, delineating a terrain of poverty, exclusion, and violence bordering wealth, stability, and amusement” (2016, 250). This moment in Haley's work is reminiscent of the theme park that was developed on Tataviam land in Santa Clarita. The development of this theme park not only displaces Tataviam peoples and defiles the sacred sites in and around the village of Chaguyanga
it also draws the borders between amusement and leisure and sites of violence and incarceration. As Goeman argues in her work, settler-colonial grammars of place must be recreated through the constant retelling of colonial narratives but that these narrative are contested by the presence of Native peoples (2014, 242). Razack similarly argues that settlers are haunted by Native bodies and confronted with their own acts of theft (2015, 32). I argue that the survivance of the Tataviam haunts the theme park built on top of Chaguyanga and seeks to unmap this settler-colonial grammar of place.

A side by side critical reading of the “Million Dollar Hoods” map and the “Mapping Indigenous LA” project reveals the spatial logics of modernity and the gendered racial terror that is endemic to it. By looking specifically at the village site of Chaguyanga and present day Santa Clarita in this paper I have sought to make connections between the violence and dispossession of the mission system that continue to affect the Tataviam and how that dispossession enables the high incarceration rates on that land today. I used Mishuana Goeman’s work to flesh out the relationship between settler-colonial grammars of place and the project of modernity. I engaged with Sherene Razack’s argument about the need for the constant eviction of the Native body from the modern settler city in order to protect its boundaries as well as the boundaries of the settler subject. I also engaged with the work of Kelly Lytle-Hernandez in order to argue that the modern city of Los Angeles was literally structured by carceral logics and prison labor while critiquing her lack of engagement with settler-colonialism. Finally, I used Sarah Haley’s analysis of the gendered racial terror of the convict-leasing regime in Georgia in order to argue that the spatial logics of modernity require specific forms of exclusion and brutality. Through my
engagement with these two mapping projects and the work of these authors I hope to have made the spatial logics of modernity and its reliance on gendered racial terror clear.

Works Cited


