Throughout the past two years, rebellious direct actions have emerged across the US, including in Ferguson, New York City, Jacksonville, and here in Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco, and on UC Berkeley’s campus. Throughout these uprisings, activists have demanded an end to the violence of racist policing and the crisis of mass incarceration. #BlackLivesMatter, a refrain created in 2012 by three Oakland and LA-based queer black feminists — Patrice Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi — soared online and in the streets as a political demand and a call to action.

In this climate of insurgency, I joined the intensive national campaign to free Marissa Alexander, a black mother of three in Florida who fired a single warning shot to defend her life from her abusive husband. Alexander was denied “Stand Your Ground” immunity from prosecution at the same time the law was cited by jury members for acquitting George Zimmerman after he killed 17 year old Trayvon Martin. Alexander was prosecuted and sentenced to a mandatory minimum of 20 years in prison for the crime of acting as if her life mattered. After her sentence, Alexander asked the question, “If you do everything to get on the right side of the law, and it is a law that does not apply to you, where do you go from there?”

After spending 3 years of her life behind bars, Alexander won an appeal and accepted a plea deal that permitted her release from prison on January 27th. Shortly after we celebrated Alexander’s release, Yuvette Henderson, a 38-year old black mother of two, was fatally shot by an Emeryville police officer in West Oakland on February 3rd. Witnesses dispute the officer’s account that Henderson had a weapon, and her community is demanding transparency, accountability, and the demilitarization of local police. As the list of lives lost or disappeared by state violence grows longer, we remain haunted and provoked by Alexander’s daring question. A statement from Cal’s African American Studies faculty and students (re-printed in part in this issue of FaultLines) reminds us that, as we grapple with the tragic losses, we must “rise to the challenge of this moment.” The CRG likewise challenges members of our campus community to create and implement administrative, pedagogical, research, artistic, and activist strategies that meaningfully respond to the call, #BlackLivesMatter, so that we may chart the route to where we go from here.

- Alisa Bierria
Congratulations to Center for Race and Gender Director Prof. Evelyn Nakano Glenn for being awarded the 2014 Chancellor’s Award for Advancing Institutional Excellence!

Executive Dean Carla Hesse, Prof. Catherine Choy, Prof. Nakano Glenn, Prof. Michael Omi

Chancellor Nicholas Dirks, Prof. Evelyn Nakano Glenn

Vice Chancellor Gibor Basri (left), Chancellor Dirks (middle), Prof. Nakano Glenn (right)

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Precarity After Rights: On Queer of Color Critique

Prof. Chandan Reddy, University of Washington, delivered the Fall 2014 Center for Race & Gender Distinguished Guest Lecture entitled, “Precarity After Rights: On Queer of Color Critique.” Drawing from insights from his recent volume, Freedom With Violence: Race, Sexuality and the U.S. State and research for his upcoming book, Burials of Globalization: Race, Rights and the Failures of Culture, Prof. Reddy argued that a rights-based approach to addressing violence against LGBT communities in the U.S. ultimately facilitates more dangerous conditions for queer people of color. Prof. Reddy was introduced by Prof. Paola Bacchetta, Gender & Women’s Studies. An excerpt of his talk is below.

“Though Ethnic Studies has often been position by universities and the disciplines as filling in the gaps of knowledge through the study of racial communities and their histories, I would argue that Critical Ethnic Studies does not begin with a presumption of filling in the gaps left by a white supremacist legacy of knowledge production. Rather, it seeks to understand how the epistemologies we use to cultivate knowledge would perforce demand the unknowability or the irrelevance of the material histories of race.

In Freedom With Violence: Race, Sexuality and the U.S. State, I approach sexuality in a variety of ways. The book thinks of 20th century “sexuality” as itself another moment in the longstanding dialectic of nation and race. Queer of color critique engages that dialectic while undoing “sexuality” as a stable category of knowledge. Showing what kinds of shadows or occlusions modern sexuality casts on the premature avowal, celebrations, and subsequent burial of racial histories. Concretely, we might say that precarity, as a contemporary structure of feeling, is precisely the disavowal of the national dependence upon historically insecure communities of color in the age of the welfare state.

Using the recent media spectacle of gay teen suicide and the kind of political responses that issued from institutional gay and lesbian movement in the wake of a spate of reported teens of young, supposedly “gay” teens and college age persons, I hope to show the limits of the practice of rights and citizenship to address contemporary racialized, gendered, and sexual dominations and violence, particularly those that are material conditions of the nation state.

When the national broadcast media began to construct its latest virtualized panic, gay teen suicide in the late summer and fall in 2010, I had just completed the introduction to my book, Freedom from Violence in which I studied the passage of the first “anti-homophobic” and “anti-transphobic” federal hate crimes legislation. This legislation, titled the Matthew Shepherd / James Byrd Hate Crimes Act, was ultimately able to pass and become federal law (modifying the Civil Rights Act of 1965) only by becoming an amendment to the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, or the NDA, which appropriated the largest defense budget in the history of the United States. It was ultimately signed into law by the very first black president in the history of the U.S. The hate crimes law is a clear example of what some might call “homonationalism.” … But what I see as more broadly as the development of the distinct neoliberal racial state, tying anti-homophobic hate crimes legislation to the Defense Authorization Act, while the US actively erodes the sovereignty of many South Asian and oil-rich Middle Eastern nation states, with the consequence of unimaginable loss of life for the populations of the communities of those areas. The hate crimes law starkly reveals what Lisa Lowe powerfully terms the “economy of affirmation and forgetting” that organizes the Western subject’s account of and claim to a freedom from violence. Homosexual citizenship is “haunted,” in Lowe’s words, by the premature burial of the racialized and undifferentiated deaths of non-Western people, undocumented workers, and the incarcerated who cannot be faced as U.S. political society grieves the loss of premature deaths to the recently enfranchised gay youth.”

Video of this talk is at: http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/precarity
On October 17, 2014, the Center for Race & Gender, the Multicultural Resource Center, and the Center for Latino Policy Research celebrated the launch of the student-produced multimedia anthology, *It Was All A Dream: Writings by Undocumented Youth at UC Berkeley*. The culmination of a long-term research and arts project, the anthology includes essays, poetry, visual art, and findings from a research report on the campus climate for undocumented students. We convened student authors for a reading of their work and curated a gallery exhibit of visual art published in the anthology. Below is an excerpt from the preface, written by graduate student, Marco Flores (Ethnic Studies), a lead organizer of the project and the anthology.

**Excerpt from the preface of It Was All A Dream: Writings by Undocumented Youth at UC Berkeley**

The dream goes beyond undocumented students. Who is left out of this undocumented student narrative? Who are the unwanted? Who are those labeled as the undeserving pests to American society? The “dream” goes beyond ourselves. We seek justice for our parents who have worked under cruel conditions, our familias, those that are send back to their “home country” without a single recollection of it, those that remain missing at the border or overseas, all those who are seen as a “burden” to this country. We are all witness to America’s imagination of Gringolandia, we are all victims of the well sold “American Dream.”

Hence the title, “It Was All a Dream” — a reference to the opening line in The Notorious B.I.G.’s classic 1994 hip-hop record, “Juicy,” a song that resonated with many of us. It was all a dream — a testament to our ongoing haters that we learned to hustle despite great odds, to conjure a future despite the haze of racist contempt, to embrace our rebelliousness.

We have dared to sense dreams beyond the simple use of rhetoric. We’ve learned to create meaning through our vivid imagination because, at times of despair, our dreams gave us purpose. We dared to see a dream beyond the well-constructed and sanitized narrative of undocumented students pursuing an education. And in a more profound sense, we dare to dream beyond the white man’s fictitious story of the “American Dream.”

Since the start, dreams have been our daily dose of medicine. Dreams have given us hope during moments of fear. They have been a profound awakening within ourselves, a body felt knowing that has arrived to us during late night writings and while we sleep. They have served as reminders to make sense of this unjust country. They taught us that there is always a way to hold each other even when we are most afraid of telling. Because, as Audre Lorde beautifully puts it, “The white fathers told us, I think therefore I am; and the black mothers in each of us — the poet — whispers in our dreams, I feel therefore I can be free.”

I am a firm believer of words and their magic. I am a firm believer of the dreams that sparked images and words in this collection. Our stories will set us free.

Always Califas dreamin’, somos corazón.

—Marco Flores, Ethnic Studies, anthology editor
The Fall 2014 CRG Thursday Forum Series considered the racialization of space, including sonic space, the crossing of national boundaries, and the mapping of violence.

The series began with “Queer Rhythms: The Makings of Race & Rehearsal,” a forum led by three participants of the Spring 2014 Center for the Study of Sexual Cultures / Center for Race & Gender Dissertation Workshop Retreat. In her talk, “Ordinary Failures: Reciting Diaspora,” Ianna Hawkins Owens (African American Studies) considered the possibilities for theorizing black failure as a kind of diasporic ethics, revealing the racial dimensions of the concepts of success and failure. Ivan Ramos’s (Performance Studies) discussion, “A Lover’s Scream: Latina Lesbian Desire, Queer Ethics, and the Mariachi-Punk of Las Cucas,” explored the work of mariachi-punk band, Las Cucas, as a site of lesbian desire and queer ethics formulated through the combination of the bolero and the punk scream. In her discussion, “Movement from the Underground: Rerouting the Birth of Waacking/Punking,” Naomi Bragin (Performance Studies) argued that waacking and punking, dance styles developed in gay underground disco clubs of 1970’s Los Angeles, shape and racialize the ideas of “woman” and “feminine” through the dance floor production of black masculinity.

Huma Dar (Ethnic Studies) and Johanna Rothe (UC Santa Cruz) considered the sexual dimensions of events driven by anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in “Racial-Sexual Ontologies of the Other.” Analyzing the treatment of Kashmir Muslims in India, Dar advanced the concept of “queerphilic imperialism” as an imperial strategy to accuse colonized/occupied people of hyper-queer phobia, which situates imperial occupations as benign or even “progressive” with regards to human rights. Rothe considered how the politics of “sexual perversion” drove the high-profile murder trial of Leopold Hilsner in 1899 then-Austria, and shaped the development of anti-Semitism.

In their forum, “Negotiating ‘Feminisms’ through Time & Space: A Comparative Analysis of the Problematic Legacy of Feminism in Egypt & the United States,” Sara Salem (Ethnic Studies) and Rekia Jibrin, (Social & Cultural Studies, Graduate School of Education) explored how the legacy of feminism has played a crucial role in the apparent rejection of the term and/or movement in the Global South. They argued that this rejection should not be understood as a rejection of notions of gender justice itself but instead should be contextualized in light of the problematic construction of feminism along the lines of a Eurocentric liberalism. In their respective talks, “Postcolonial Feminism and the Egyptian Context” and “State Violence and...
the Quest for Race-Conscious Feminist Praxis,” Salem and Jibrin focused on historical US and contemporary Egyptian case studies.

The forum, “Family Routes: Transnational Adoption & the Production of Nationhood,” spotlighted recent publications on race, nation, and adoption. With a focus on American adoption of Asian children in her book, Global Families: A History of Asian International Adoption in America, Professor Catherine Ceniza Choy (Ethnic Studies) argued for a more complex political analysis that reflects how transnational adoption has the potential to both unite individuals and families across divides and also reinforce racial and cultural hierarchies. In a discussion of his book, Claiming Others: Transracial Adoption and National Belonging, Prof. Mark Jerng (UC Davis) contended that transracial and transnational adoption played a key role in shaping race politics in the US, impacting major historical events such as Native American removal and slavery, as well as the contemporary global market in children.

Tahrir Square & Cape Town.” El-Husseiny’s discussion, “The Disciplining of Space: Tahrir Square and the Gated Communities,” analyzed the meaning of the concrete walls erected around Tahrir Square by interim military rulers in post-uprising Egypt. He contended that the walls and checkpoints are not just objects of division, but act as a de-mobilizing force that epitomizes the death of public space. In her talk, “Re-scripting the City: Race, Gender and Architecture in Cape Town’s Migrant Labour Hostels,” Tomer examined how the post-apartheid project of converting single-sex migrant labour hostels into permanent family accommodation forced families to live apart and created spatially compromised arrangements, which prompted hostel dwellers to turn to the domestic sphere as a site of political action.

In “Retracing, Repurposing, and Reimagining: Critiquing Contemporary Engagements with Colonial Expeditions,” Jen Smith (Ethnic Studies) and Ashton Wesner (Environmental Science, Policy and Management) examined how the practice of retracing historical colonial journeys can potentially help critique narratives of environmental ethic and its link to race, nation, and other forms of difference. In their respective talks, “(Re)imagining Race, Nature, and the Colonial Frontier in Northern Spaces through the Harriman Alaska Expedition and the Harriman Retraced” and “(Re)presenting Race and Land: Constructions of Nature, Culture, and Ecology in The Confluence Project in the Columbia River Gorge,” Smith and Wesner consider how contemporary engagements with histories of colonial exploration can continue to solidify and naturalize settler colonial violence.

Visit the CRG blog to listen to audio from the forums: http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/blog
On Dec 4, 2014, the Black Student Union of UC Berkeley held the first of three protests. Students occupied The Golden Bear Cafe for 4.5 hours, the amount of time Michael Brown’s body lay in the street in Ferguson, Mo. Photo: Genesis

The following is an excerpt from a statement written by faculty and graduate students from African American Studies. It was originally published in a special issue of The Diaspora entitled, Insurgency: The Black Matter(s) Issue. Read the full statement and other included writings here: http://www.thediasporablackmattersissue.com/

Black Lives Matter at UC Berkeley
A Statement from the African American Studies Faculty and Graduate Students

In the wake of the killing of Mike Brown in Ferguson, MO, and Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York, and standing in the shadow of Oakland’s history of summary executions of unarmed black people – this is a time when we ask: What is our responsibility as intellectuals? What is our responsibility as scholars? What is our responsibility as members of the campus community?

On the Berkeley campus the Black Student Union has taken the lead in organizing protests, including taking over the Golden Bear Cafe on December 4th in a peaceful statement of solidarity with the national youth-led Black Lives Matter movement. At this protest, students spoke of the pain of being in a country where case after case of Black people of all gender identities are murdered by police officers and self-proclaimed vigilantes without consequence …

Their occupation on Dec. 4, has been the catalyst for conversation, [as well as] a call to action for faculty, staff, and grad students. We, the Faculty and Graduate Students of the African American Studies Department, stand in solidarity with the Black Student Union, and the Black undergraduate students on our campus in expressing anger and outrage at the recent events in Ferguson, MO, and in Staten Island, NY, as well as countless other places where Black lives are taken consistently, senselessly, and without punishment, including and especially Oakland, where many of us live.

We stand with our students in the streets at local protest actions, in our lectures, discussion sections, as parents of black children in K-12, in administrative meetings, and in other spaces. We continue to work in opposition to anti-blackness at the university level, and we suffer with them when we continue to see the evidence of it on our campus.

We challenge our university, and all universities, to rise to the challenge of this moment, and to acknowledge and attend to the pain and rage our students are expressing. Not only that, we challenge the university to do better by Black students, to redouble recruitment efforts to achieve a critical mass, to take action to attend to anti-blackness and improve the racial climate on campus, and to put our money and policy where our mouth is when it comes to supporting Black students. We as a university must be committed to providing an environment that equips college-educated people to engage in critical race work, to have the tools to recognize injustice.

On September 19th, the CRG hosted a symposium entitled, “Black Lives Matter: Police Violence, Prisons, and Freedom Visions.” The lively discussion was led by Prof. Nikki Jones, UC Berkeley African American Studies; Prof. Chinyere Oparah (formerly Julia Sudbury), Mills College; and Prof. Ashon Crawley, UC Riverside. Reflecting on the grassroots uprisings responding to the deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown by police in their communities, speakers considered the gendered, spatial, embodied, and spiritual dimensions of #BlackLivesMatter as a political call to action. The event was co-sponsored by the Multicultural Community Center, the Carceral Geographies Course Thread, and African American Studies. Audio of the discussion is posted on CRG’s website: http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/black-lives-matter

*Racial Formation in the United States* was first published in 1986. What was the incentive back then to write it?
The initial incentive was our frustrations with the ways in which the concept of “race” itself was thought about in mainstream social science research and political movements that tended to reduce race to issues of class, and how class relations were used to explain and account for social conflict around stratification without giving enough thought and weight to an independent national dialogue on racism. On the mainstream social sciences side, it was the ways in which the concept of race was seen as an objective given fact, that people just assumed what one is based on what one’s race is, without correlating race with incarceration, residential segregation, notions of inequality on the different kinds of social domain. All of this [analysis was done] without interrogating what race is, and how it may change and transform the way we think about it and the way it is deployed in the various kinds of arenas.

Three decades later this book remains a key text and relevant to the issues of racism, what were the major turning points of race over this time period?
In many respects over the past thirty years, notions of continuity and discontinuity with respect to the race concept are still persistent. So we see racist systems of inequality along institutional lines being generated. I think what changed for us was a couple of things. We saw a kind of deepening of an ideology of colorblindness in which it was often claimed that the most effective anti-racist gesture of policy and practice was simply to ignore race — somehow that race didn’t matter. This was particularly true at the moment of Obama’s victory, in which people were claiming that the election of Obama represented a kind of ushering in of a post-racial era that somehow we were beyond the debate over race. Yet we are constantly reminded of race in the events of Ferguson; issues of race are in the center of police violence.

I always think of the ways in which race is a slippery concept. It is one in which a debate is continuously reproduced in the different arenas such as the race-based classification issues in the United States census. It is also witnessed in the wake of the genomic human general project, a kind of biologization of race particularly in the biomedical sciences research, and the debate of whether race has a validity as an indicator of human variation. So there is nothing settled in fact. [There are] new debates, new claims are made, but in many respects the concept of race itself remains unstable in itself. It is an ambiguous category.

What is the role of the university as an institution in the making and unmaking of race?
The university has programs that reveal the limits of the simple kinds of diversity intervention that targets underrepresented students. This does not dismiss those things, but in many ways these [programs] neglect how the university itself is a representative of, a reflection of, and complicit in the kinds and ways in which race and racism circulate. It is not a domain that is above it, although it often likes to see itself as an exemplar above that in many respects. And this is beyond the simple social composition of who teaches, or who the
administrators are, and so-forth. Here at Berkeley, we have a whole unit around equity and inclusion, which is a tempting kind of initiative and program to do that very thing. But in many ways, there is still a pervasive kind of colorblindness within the institution itself that only tends to respond to spectacular incidents of race — somebody drawing Swastikas or having a noose in a dorm room or something like that — that tends to galvanize such conversations around these things. But again, in the normal operation of the university itself, much less attention is given to what takes place on the level of the curriculum and what takes place at the level of the classroom, which often goes unacknowledged with respect to how that impacts the reproduction of certain ideologies of race and of racism.

This is a tough question — how to sustain that? How to make this topic front and center constantly as opposed to waiting for those dramatic episodes? These episodes are still seen as something abnormal. They are seen as something that disrupts the prevailing scheme of things as opposed to seeing them constantly in the prevailing scheme of things. And that these perceived abnormal things are in fact the surface manifestations of more deeper underlying representations, understandings, and practices that undergird in many respects what goes on.

UPCOMING EVENTS - Spring 2015
Details at CRG’s website: crg.berkeley.edu

March 6:
Censoring Palestine at the University

March 7:
30th Annual Empowering Women of Color Conference

March 9-13:
Week of Cultural Resistance

April 6:
Graduate Student Research Grant Application Deadline

April 6:
Call for Papers - LIVING ARCHIVES: Third World, Indigenous and Anti-Colonial Queer and Feminist International Solidarities

April 10:
Yoga (R)evolution: Interrogating Practices and Possibilities

April 13:
CRG Symposium
Foundational Violence: Settler Colonial Articulations

April 22-25:
Annual Islamophobia Conference
Munira Lokhandwala  
Department of Film and Media  
*Afterimages of History: Encountering the Archive in Contemporary Global Film and Video*

Kathryn Benjamin  
African Diaspora Studies  
*The Impact of Marronage in the Great Dismal Swamp*  
*In History and Memory*

Bianca Ayanna Suarez  
Graduate School of Education  
*Educational Ideas in the Movement Era: A Narrative History of the Politics of Race, Class and Knowledge in the Detroit Public Schools, 1954-1976*

Jennifer Tucker  
Department of City and Regional Planning  
*On the frontiers of governance: Affect, race and illicit trade in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay*

Beezer de Martelly  
Music  
*Grunge’s Racial Imagination: Whitewashing the Seattle Sound and Body*

Katrina C. L. Eichner  
Anthropology  
*Queer Perspectives on Racialized Sexuality in 19th Century Fort Davis, Texas: Navigating Nervous Landscapes*

Patrick Johnson  
Education  
*Negotiating Past Black Media*

Jocyl Sacramento  
Education  
*Critical Race Dialogue and Curriculum: Teacher Collaboration and the Implementation of Ethnic Studies in High School Classrooms*

Sarah Cowan  
History of Art  
*Harlem Dwelling: Roy DeCarava’s Fine Art Photographs, New York City, 1948-1996*

Charisses Burden-Stelly  
African Diaspora Studies  
*What’s Left of African Diaspora Theory?: (Re)Turning to Political Economy and Articulating Culturalism to Economic Realities*

Melina M. Packer  
Environmental Science, Policy, and Management  
*The Politics of Pop: Soda Tax Policies and Social Anxieties*

Learn more details about these graduate & undergraduate student research projects:  
[http://crg.berkeley.edu/grantwinners](http://crg.berkeley.edu/grantwinners)

Jinho Ryu (Kahn)  
Gender and Women’s Studies & Interdisciplinary Studies  
*Transnational Feminist Approaches to the Identities and Experiences of Asian TCK Women at Cal*

Naphtalie Jeanty  
Anthropology  
*Queerness is for White People: The Effects of the Idea of African American Sexual Deviancy among 19th Century Buffalo Soldiers*
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CRG provides much-needed grants to students for research projects for racial & gender justice. Recent budget cuts have made it imperative to protect this important resource. Your generous contribution will sustain promising undergraduate and graduate students to pursue groundbreaking research, strategic community connections, and the development of social justice projects of local and international scope.

All contributions make a difference!
To donate online, please visit [http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/donate-crg](http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/donate-crg)

Thank you for contributing to the Center for Race and Gender, UC Berkeley
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