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"For *Your* Gay Brothers and *Your* Gay Sisters in Jail"

Sylvia Rivera's Countercall

> It came down to a brutal battle on the stage that year at Washington Square Park between me and people I considered my comrades and my friends.
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> —Sylvia Rivera, "Queens in Exile: The Forgotten Ones"

On Sunday June 24, 1973, fifteen thousand people marched through New York City to celebrate the fourth annual Christopher Street Liberation Day (CSLD).[1] The commemorative march began at the site of the 1969 Stonewall rebellion and ended with a rally at Washington Square Park.[2] Partway through the rally, trans liberation activist Sylvia Rivera fought her way to the stage to speak. Rivera, a frontline activist in New York City gay liberation organizing, had been cut from the rally program, as had two drag queen performance artists.[3] Rivera, enraged by the racialized, classed, and gendered turn in the parade politics away from trans and street people, and thus from the roots of the Stonewall uprising, would not let such omissions go unchallenged.[4] Once on stage, Rivera faced a cacophony of booing, jeering, and applauding. In her four-minute speech, she excoriated the movement for its growing white middle-class politics of assimilation and reminded the crowd, in no uncertain terms, of the history of the gay liberation movement, of their obligations to their gay brothers and sisters in jail, and of their debts owed.

Rivera's 1973 speech works in her moment and ours as an identificatory appeal and is a part of a larger body of appeals that she issued across multiple decades of political organizing work. As Melvin Rogers explains, political appeals are speech acts that work through the art and language of persuasion. In their conveyance and reception, appeals are discursive, emotional, and

If We Were Kin. Lisa Beard, Oxford University Press. © Oxford University Press 2023.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780197517338.003.0002

relational. An appeal does political work to constitute the claimant, the one to whom the appeal is addressed, and their relationship to each other.[5] Appeals require an audience, and they rely on that audience's judgment—they work as a call and response in a "discursive field of answerability."[6] *Identificatory appeals* in particular are those speech acts meant to summon people into identification. In this chapter, I examine how Rivera's identificatory appeal was staged through an opening framework of intimate obligation and worked through a complex push and pull with her listeners. She called her listeners into belonging through a rubric of kinship and responsibility just as she distanced herself from them and mapped out sharp lines of difference between their positionality and hers.

The primary record of Rivera's speech is a black-and-white four-minute video clip.[7] It is critical to mark—and I will return to this at the end of the chapter—that the contemporary circulation of Rivera's speech and the political life it leads today in LGBTQ+ public discourse is indebted to archival activism by writer, activist, and filmmaker Tourmaline. Much of the archive of Rivera's organizing work, as well as that of Rivera's comrade Marsha P. Johnson, has been gathered, digitized, revitalized, and brought into public discourse through Tourmaline's efforts—often at physical and personal risk to her own body as she has navigated archival institutions and library security as a Black trans woman.[8] Tourmaline's digitized records and film portfolio together constitute a political intervention into the historical erasure and flattening of trans and gender nonconforming people of color who were revolutionaries and who forged life-giving practices of community care. Rivera's 1973 speech in particular has been further amplified by public intellectual and activist Janet Mock.

Rivera's speech sheds light on the interplay between practices of identification and disidentification and the ways political actors attempt to summon people into identification. Her battle to the stage illuminates how access to participating in conflicts over identification—over how people will understand who they are, what their interests are, how they are connected to others, and what politics they are beholden to—is policed, and signals the very differently distributed costs and dangers borne by participants in these struggles. In this chapter, I read Rivera's 1973 speech at the CSLD rally, her 2001 speech at the Latino Gay Men of New York's (LGMNY) Pride celebration, materials from the dispersed archive of Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), oral history accounts of Rivera's organizing work within STAR, and archived interview excerpts in order to examine her account of how people

are connected to each other through constellations of obligation, mutuality, debt, and a concept of boundness.[9] Rivera's identificatory appeals were multivalent and worked both vertically and horizontally. To be clear, they weren't issued primarily or most importantly to white gay middle-class people. Her foundational political project was one that would bind trans and queer people of color to each other, especially people who were drag queens, sex workers, and houseless.

Rivera in Her Time

Sylvia Rivera was a self-described revolutionary who organized in New York City and New Jersey to confront police violence, criminalization, transphobia, economic injustice, gendered/racialized violence, and the conditions of houseless people. Rivera was born in the Bronx and identified as Venezuelan and Puerto Rican.[10] She lived on and off New York City streets beginning when she was ten-and-a-half-years old.[11] She was politicized by her involvement in the late 1960s in the peace movement, the civil rights movement, and the women's movement.[12] Rivera explains that although she participated in the Stonewall rebellion, she did not more fully join the gay liberation movement as a political person until 1970, when she began organizing with the New York City chapter of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and then, in 1971, with the newly formed Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), where she quickly became a frontline activist—participating in sit-ins, soliciting petition signatures, lying in front of traffic during demonstrations, and changing the terms of central political debates.[13] Rivera took the first arrest in the fight to pass the city's first gay rights bill.[14] Her activism exceeded GAA, and, ultimately, Rivera found the organization to be not radical enough for her political commitments.

Rivera's closest friend, Marsha P. Johnson, was a revolutionary Black and disabled trans woman who participated in the Stonewall rebellion and was an artist; a performer and a member of the group the Hot Peaches; a sex worker; and an activist who organized people in jails, prisons, hospitals, psychiatric wards, and at AIDS vigils.[15] Both Rivera and Johnson were well known in New York City gay activist communities in the early 1970s and at the time of the 1973 CSLD march. They inhabited and staked a claim as revolutionary and gender nonconforming people in spaces like GAA and GLF and pushed the politics of those spaces.[16]

In September 1970, Rivera and Johnson cofounded an organization called Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, or STAR.[17] In its founding, STAR articulated a trans and queer politics that centered drag queens, sex workers, houseless trans and queer people, and trans and queer people who were poor. One of STAR's first public appearances included participating in a 10,000-person march organized by the Young Lords from East Harlem to the United Nations to demand an end to police repression.[18] In the coming months, Rivera attended the second People's Revolutionary Convention in Washington, DC, where she met Huey Newton.[19] With GLF and GAA, STAR organized demonstrations against the prison system and helped form an organizing committee on the status of gay people in prisons (STAR was credited on the front page of the February 1971 *Gay Flames* journal for raising awareness in the lesbian, gay, and trans community of the conditions of lesbians, gay men, and trans people held in prisons, hospitals, and juvenile centers in New York City).[20] STAR members traveled to the March 1971 gay liberation mobilization at the Albany State House, organized a demonstration to "stop job discrimination against transvestites," helped run an early gay community center, testified in support of the New York City gay rights bill Intro 475, held fundraising dances and a bake sale, and wrote articles for the gay liberation press.[21]

Rivera's work within STAR illuminates the ways identificatory appeals are not only issued through speeches but also through the daily labor of organizing work. At the center of STAR's work was a youth house called STAR House on East Second Street in which Johnson, Rivera, and other STAR members, as Rivera explained, "fed people and clothed people. We kept the building going. We went out and hustled the streets. We paid the rent. We didn't want the kids out in the streets hustling."[22] They wanted to create a "place . . . for all the young runaway future drag queens or transvestites . . . because we knew what it was to be out in the streets at the age of eleven hustling."[23] Rivera herself was only nineteen when she cofounded STAR, and a number of her "kids," she reflected in an interview years later, were a similar age or even older than her.[24] But they were her juniors and they were Johnson's juniors in living on the street, and Rivera and Johnson nurtured them by making sure they did not have to hustle. In an interview later in her life, Rivera cited *this* kind of political care work—caring and sustaining each other against logics of disposability—as what it means to be in community, in contrast to the work of well-funded gay organizations that

did not attend to the basic needs of unhoused and cash poor trans and queer people.[25]

Before opening STAR House, Rivera had secured the promises of professionals within GAA, GLF, and the wider gay community that they would help paint and clean up the building and offer educational programs to teach her "kids" and help them "get a high school diploma so they could get something better in life than what we were doing in selling our bodies out in the streets just to keep surviving."[26] However, no one from GAA or GLF came to help, and while STAR members fixed the building and sustained STAR House, it was ultimately lost in an eviction.[27] STAR had envisioned additional projects—including dance fundraisers, establishing a second STAR house, opening a telephone hotline, creating a recreation center, starting a bail fund for arrested queens, and securing a lawyer for queer and trans people in jail—but without more resources and community support, STAR was unable to implement them.[28] The scope of STAR's political visions forms a critical archive—and although it was short-lived as an organization, activists and scholars recognize the significance of its legacy.[29] A critical part of this legacy is a set of identificatory appeals that were material and that addressed an audience of young trans and queer people around the language of kinship as the context for their survival.[30]

"Ya'll Better Quiet Down"

STAR was at the front of the 1973 CSLD march, along with the popular 82 Club drag performance troupe and the drag queen–led political organization Queens Liberation Front (QLF) (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). This lineup with drag queens at the lead had been secured by CSLD Committee secretary (and QLF and STAR member) Bebe Scarpinato to honor the roots of Stonewall.

The context of the 1973 parade was the final years of the Vietnam War, Nixon's second inauguration earlier that year, and the cumulative effects of COINTELPRO on the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, and other radical movement organizations.[31] The U.S. gay liberation movement was beset by ideological rifts between incremental civil rights approaches (anchored, for example, by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and other national groups); transphobic articulations of white lesbian feminist politics; white and middle-class–dominated gay direct action groups; and radical critiques

Figure 1.1 Sylvia Rivera and Bebe Scarpinato power salute, Christopher Street Liberation Day, 1973. Photograph by Richard C. Wandel. Courtesy of LGBT Community Center National History Archive.

that linked LGBT issues to anti-prison activism, race and gender justice, and class justice politics.[32]

The march ended at Washington Square Park for a two-hour rally, billed as a Gay Pride Gala that almost exclusively featured musical entertainment rather than speeches.[33] The day's events were already marked by a number of trans exclusions.[34] Schedules distributed by the CSLD Committee (CSLDC) warned that anyone besides cis women were unwelcome at Lesbian Pride Week events, which included a separate women's contingent at the march. The group Lesbian Feminist Liberation (LFL) circulated anti-trans flyers among parade participants.[35] As Rivera explained in a later interview, she had been invited by parade organizers in the months prior to give a speech at the rally but was not included in the final program; and Billy and Tiffany, two drag queen performance artists, were nearly cut from the program at the last minute.[36] Refusing to let the unfolding politics go unanswered, Rivera fought her way to the stage, and was "beaten up and punched around by people I thought were my comrades, to get to that microphone. I got to the microphone, and I said my piece."[37]

Figure 1.2 Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, Christopher Street Liberation Day, 1973. Photograph by Leonard Fink. Courtesy of LGBT Community Center National History Archive.

When perhaps it became clear they could not easily contain Rivera, Grand Marshal Jean DeVente and another parade marshal turned to the crowd, asking them whether to let Rivera speak—and once they heard a number of people shouting in the affirmative, the assistant marshal proclaimed, "that's the end of the conversation!" and went to fetch Rivera rather than asking to hear the *no* votes. Emcee Vito Russo, looking dejected as he held onto

Figure 1.3 Sylvia Rivera, Christopher Street Liberation Day, 1973. Bettye Lane Gay Rights Movement Photographs, Manuscripts and Archives Division, the New York Public Library. Courtesy of Gary O'Neil.

the microphone with drooping shoulders, pleaded for unity, and promised dissenters that Jean O'Leary of LFL would also get to speak.

When Rivera arrived on stage she met an onslaught of booing, jeering, and yelling as well as some applause, whistling, and cheering (Figure 1.3). She wore a full-length sparkly jumpsuit fastened in the front by a ring pull zipper down her midline, large bracelets on one wrist, and a necklace, and her hair was dyed a light color. She waved and greeted the crowd, "Hi, Baby!"[38] Her chest was heaving as she breathed. As the booing persisted, Rivera swiveled the microphone stand behind her and then took it in both hands as though to anchor herself while she paused. She surveyed the scene. DeVente reached to take the microphone stand away, but Rivera held onto the microphone. Rivera reprimanded those who were jeering at her, "YA'LL BETTER *QUIET DOWN*," then turned and walked a small lap around the stage as if to regroup. She returned to the front of the stage, leaning forward toward the crowd and amplifying her voice to berate them: "I've been trying to get up here *ALL DAY* for *YOUR* gay brothers and *YOUR* gay sisters *IN JAIL!*[39] *They write me every motherfucking week and ask for your help, and you all don't do a goddamn thing for them!*"

Rivera confronted the people in front of her, asking rhetorically if they had ever been beaten up or raped in jail, and reported that their brothers and sisters have been. "Now *think about it*," she instructed. The crowd became quiet. Rivera continued, telling them that she had been to jail, and she had been beaten and assaulted many times "by men, heterosexual men that do *not belong* in the homosexual shelter!" She blasted them for trying to shame her off the stage: "You all tell me 'go' and hide my tail between my legs. *I will not no longer put up with this shit!*"[40] In this way, Rivera set the terms of engagement with people who, moments before, had refused to hear her and had tried to silence her. She detailed the physical and material costs she had paid for the movement: "I have been beaten. I have had my nose broken. I have been thrown in jail. I have *lost my job*. I have *lost my apartment* for gay liberation—*and you all treat me this way?! What the fuck's wrong with you all!?! THINK ABOUT THAT!*" The crowd erupted in cheers and clapping, which all but eclipsed what had earlier been jeering and booing.

Rivera advised the crowd, "I do not believe in revolution, but you all do. I believe in the gay *power*. I believe in us getting our rights or else I would not be out there fighting for our rights." She warned them not to forget Bambi L'Amour, Andorra Martin, Kenny Messner, "and the other gay people that are

in jail," and, sharing the address of STAR House, invited them to come visit the people at STAR: "The people that are trying to do something for *all* of us and *not men and women that belong to a WHITE MIDDLE CLASS* ***WHITE CLUB!*** *AND THAT'S WHAT YOU ALL BELONG TO!!*" Rivera closed her speech with a call and response and received loud participation, yelling "*REVOLUTION NOW!!!*," and spelling, letter by letter, "GAY POWER!" By the end, she crouched down with her shoulders curved inward, as from overexertion. Her voice became more hoarse and faint in her final words, just as the crowd became louder. She faced downward into her hands, almost as if kneeling in prayer.

Identification and Distance

In her brief speech, Rivera confronts and contests white, middle-class LGB forms of political identification that would not see gay liberation as bound to race, class, and trans justice. Rivera first "disrupts" the gathering to make her appeal.[41] She begins by cataloging how the crowd has failed in their obligations to their trans and gender nonconforming kin in jail. She positions herself, the people before her, and the people in prison as belonging to each other and re-narrates their purpose. She challenges the predominantly white, middle-class, cisgender LGB people standing in the sun in Washington Square Park to understand themselves as connected to people who are socially positioned quite differently—i.e., to gender nonconforming people who are in jail and without political redress or the ability to march in the streets while confined by the state. Rivera stands as an intermediary—triangulating between the park and the prison, the inside and the outside—as someone who that day walks in the "free world" like the other rally participants, but who walks with the embodied knowledge and shared experience of imprisonment, assault, and economic marginalization of her sisters and brothers in jail.[42] By the end of her speech, through a powerful rhetorical and performative act, Rivera has many of those who would have silenced her instead chanting "GAY POWER!" with her in a call and response. She and many of the rally attendees are in opposition to start with: the people jeering do not see that they are connected to Rivera. However, by the end of her speech, she has drawn them through a narrative that calls them out and calls them in, at least in that moment, into reoriented relationships and shared identification.

In part, the political fight in Washington Square Park that day was a fight over what gay forms of identification would mean *politically*—that is, what are the political imperatives and interests of "gay politics"? Gay identity does not describe a simple and stable set of interests, desires, or identities that cohere over the course of the rally or even that decade. Rather, there are multiple emerging, competing, and contested meanings of *gay* at play. Rivera's speech lifts these tensions to the surface, denaturalizing the pull by dominant LGB groups toward white assimilatory politics. Instead, she holds ground for a different possibility for gay identity: one that would prioritize prison abolition, antiracism, class justice, and trans liberation. She calls the movement into STAR's politics.

When Rivera proclaims at the 1973 rally that she does not "believe in revolution like you all do"—she is not rejecting *revolution* (she identified as a revolutionary, and STAR identified as a revolutionary organization) but is rejecting the watered-down terms of white middle-class gay revolution. When Rivera declares that she instead believes in "gay power" she invokes a phrase that, as Roderick Ferguson explains, "could only exist because of the nearness of the black revolution" (a fact that Rivera and Johnson understood) and that enunciates STAR's firmly anticarceral politics.[43] STAR's original name was Street Transvestites for Gay Power and one of their first signed statements, issued in the wake of the 1970 Weinstein Hall occupation at New York University, confronted sit-in participants and the wider gay community with the question: "GAY POWER—WHEN DO WE WANT IT? OR DO WE?"—riffing on a popular protest chant and calling a bluff.[44] In their statement, STAR asks people to take stock—were people looking for just "a few laughs and a little excitement" and did they otherwise intend to keep running? Did people understand that they were going to have to fight? Did they understand that the fight requires a total commitment? STAR explains that they will have to fight until they win or the police will get stronger. This is *gay power* for STAR—it is defined against police power; it sees localized fights for rights as bound to broader struggles across the country; and it sees that abandoning ship in one site endangers the whole.

In ways that resonate with contemporary debates about homonormativity and assimilation, at the rally Rivera raises the critical question of what gay identity means in terms of *with whom* one identifies, with whom one disidentifies, and whose interests are served by those identifications and disidentifications. The stakes of her intervention only intensified in the next

decade with the establishment of a well-funded LGBTQ nonprofit industrial complex and a focus on what Yasmin Nair has called the "holy trinity" of mainstream gay and lesbian politics: gay marriage, gays in the military, and hate crime legislation.[45] Rivera contests the ways mainstream forms of gay identity were being built not only through identifications with whiteness and middle-class values but also powerfully through forms of disidentification with poor LGBTQ people, LGBTQ people of color, and LGBTQ people in prison.

Disidentification and Rivera's Countercall

Rivera refuses these practices of disidentification. Here I mean disidentification as a disavowal—a process in which people turn away from and refuse identification with others (others with whom they could find points of connection or for whom they could be mistaken) through practices that uphold relationships of power. At the rally, Rivera attempts to summon her listeners into identification with a political vision and with other sexual and gender outsiders. The booing that greets her is constituted by the people in the park's middle- and upper-class aspirations, their assimilatory identifications with whiteness, and their disidentification with Rivera and who and what politics she represents.

As Eve Sedgwick explains, identification is not only a positive act—that is, accepting and even appropriating someone else's ways—it is also negative in the sense that, as Natasha Lushetich has puts it, "it clearly marks that which the subject does not want to be in order to arrive at what the subject wants to be."[46] In other words, there is no identification without some kind of disidentification—the grounds of who *we* are is defined in part by who we are not. The booing in Washington Square Park is a performance of demarcation of space and political identity.[47] The crowd refuses, until the end of the speech, to be summoned by Rivera.

Rivera's appeal is a countercall. If interpellation is the process through which subjects are summoned by dominant ideologies through different forms of address, and if *misinterpellation* is, as James Martel explains, the process through which those not intended for a call show up for it, then *counterinterpellation* names the process of issuing alternative calls that go against the grain of dominant calls.[48] These are rival calls. They work to defy, invert, or subvert the roles and lines of relationship mapped by dominant

calls. They claim alternative possibilities. Countercalls are always already in circulation, but dominant calls often drown them out or simply interfere with their transmission and uptake. Countercallers may use the very same technology or airwaves as dominant calls, repurposing these tools for a different project—as in Fanon's account of Algerian revolutionaries' appropriation of the radio, or as in Rivera seizing the microphone and the stage from an antipolitical gala.[49] Rivera calls upon the crowd as people who are socially and politically indebted to her and who are related to her as political kin. Rivera's interventions thus lay out a particular form of counterinterpellation in which actors make appeals or bids that would cast as *horizontal* the relationships of power that those being bid upon have inhabited as vertical. Mainstream gays shun her, but she claims them against their retreat. Here, Rivera is not simply positioning horizontal kinship against vertical assimilation but rather positioning one form of kinship (a queer kinship that is anti-assimilationist) against another that is in process (in which homonormativity is privileged over other forms of kinship). This second kind of kinship appeal—one that appeals to the heteronormative family—has grounded the very kind of gay white assimilationist politics that Rivera is challenging.[50]

The tension between Rivera's appeal and the people's booing lies in the fact that many of the rally attendees were busy identifying with an assimilationist white gay politics that must, to exist, expel Rivera. The booing can be read as an attempt not only to shame her off the stage but also to flood the aural field and render her message incomprehensible. Rivera herself represents an obstacle to their aspiring identification with white middle-class political community—thus the hissing and booing. Their performed separation from her, as well as from the political meaning signified by her presence, is not very secure—otherwise, the rally may have worked through a *different* kind of violence that would tokenize and incorporate Rivera rather than try to expel and eject her. The emcee's and many of the audience's disidentifications with Rivera form a trail, archived on video, of their anxieties about their connection and boundness to Rivera and the larger frame of who and what politics she signifies. These disidentificatory acts and refusals would not be necessary if white liberal gay people's own identificatory longings and aspirations were not threatened by the figure of Rivera and her disruptive rescripting of gay politics and history.

In this way, the dominant LGB movement actually needed Rivera as an *other* in order to consolidate itself. The crowd was in the midst of a

disidentification/identification entanglement, and this was what manifested at Washington Square Park. Some of Rivera's first words were an attempt to quiet the crowd, and she waited and walked around the stage when they would not stop. When she returned to the front of the stage, she amplified her voice to speak above the booing. In her speech, Rivera confronts the crowd's repudiations along multiple and mutually constituted axes of transphobia, class hostility, the criminalization and incarceration of poor people of color, and white supremacy. Rivera tutors her listeners—teaching them that their kin are not white straight people, but queer and trans people of color like her who spent time in jail to get everyone free.[51]

Rivera already had a substantial record of claiming the place of trans people within the gay liberation movement, especially through her activism within GAA and GLF. In her 1973 speech, Rivera also claims trans women's place in—and as being in fact the vanguard of—the women's movement, explaining that the sisters who are in jail fighting to get bail and fighting "for their sex changes or to become women *are* the women's liberation." She explained that the gay brothers and sisters in jail don't write to women's or men's groups; "they write to STAR, because *we're* trying to do something for them."[52] Here, as Susan Stryker and Talia Bettcher trace, Rivera was in conversation with and pulled on tenets of the women's movement, chastising her listeners for their antagonism toward and neglect of trans people who have experienced forms of gender and sexual violence that feminists typically decried.[53] She calls out white middle-class cisgender feminists and homonormative elites on their empty claims of kinship and community and instead testifies to a kinship with those who are criminalized and those who are compelled to disrupt.

At the rally, disidentifications with trans women and other gender nonconforming people were led most vociferously and earnestly by a group of white lesbian feminists and their gay male supporters like Russo. Their efforts to expel Rivera and performers Tiffany and Billy should be understood as connected to events at the West Coast Lesbian Feminist Conference held in Los Angeles two months prior, where keynote speaker Robin Morgan and other participants verbally attacked lesbian and trans songwriter and activist Beth Elliott. Morgan's accusation that Elliott was invading women's space constituted, as activist Jeanne Córdova attests, a deeply formative incident for transphobic lesbian feminist politics that would endure in the months and decades ahead.[54] LFL president Jean O'Leary had attended the West Coast conference, and the night before the CSLD parade, she and

other members of LFL drew upon Morgan's remarks to fashion their statement against trans women.[55] At the CSLD parade, Rivera and other queens were told by LFL members that they were a "threat" and "an embarrassment to women."[56] In an interview two decades later, Rivera reflected wryly that this was a time when drag queens weren't needed anymore by the movement and a time when the LFL was militant in demanding the expulsion of trans women from the movement.[57] In her speech at the 1973 rally, O'Leary misgendered Rivera, defended the LFL's "rational" approach of "negotiat[ing] for a week and a half" to try to get a spot on the program against Rivera's "interruption," then read a statement that attacked transfeminine people for "impersonat[ing] women for reasons of entertainment or profit."[58] Here, O'Leary marshals an Enlightenment narrative in which LFL stands in as a white and masculinized subject, who is virtuous and reasonable in political approach, against Rivera—who is figured as an excessively emotional and impatient racialized and feminized *other* who is unable to follow codes of procedure and therefore unfit for group-level citizenship and even dangerous to the movement itself. O'Leary reads Rivera's and other queens' gender performance through a framework of cisgender authenticity (in which gender is imagined not to be a performance) defined in contrast to what LFL described as a kind of extractive gender nonconformity (in which gender is performed for "entertainment and profit"), and ultimately poses cis women, particularly cis lesbians, as victims of theft and parody.

In addition to confronting disidentifications with trans people, Rivera also condemns disidentifications with people who are incarcerated and confronts gay elites for pursuing a vision of freedom complicit with the prison state. In doing so, Rivera enunciates an anticarceral politics that was already being articulated across racial justice, feminist, and gay liberation activism. The early 1970s was in fact a peak time in anticarceral organizing—from international defense campaigns to prison rebellions. It was a time when police and carceral violence became sharpened as a central issue for the Left, and the walls separating radical social movements from the country's prisons became more permeable.[59] As Regina Kunzel explains, in the 1970s, gay activists joined others on the radical Left in theorizing connections between the inside and the outside of prisons. They initiated a wide range of projects on behalf of imprisoned people they called "brothers" and "sisters"—publishing newsletters, investigating and publicizing prison conditions, offering legal counsel, assisting people on parole, and sponsoring pen-pal projects. Out of these powerfully imagined connections

emerged a rhetoric and politics of unity based on an assumed kinship between gay people in prison and gay activists on the outside. The language of brotherhood and sisterhood "infused the rhetoric and ideology of gay prison advocacy," inspiring strong commitments to a range of activist efforts on behalf of people in prison.[60]

It is worth repeating that the political roots of the CSLD rally itself lay in the Stonewall rebellion, and that the Stonewall rebellion was an interracial uprising primarily by drag queens, gender-nonconforming people, lesbians, and gay men against the police—a fact eclipsed in the 1980s and 1990s with the rise of assimilationist gay politics and which recent activism and scholarship has worked to restore. The first commemorative march, held one year after the 1969 rebellion, maintained a strong critique of the carceral state and included on its route a visit to the New York Women's House of Detention.[61] Historically, the Women's House of Detention had imprisoned many renowned activists, including Dorothy Day, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Ethel Rosenburg, and Angela Davis, and at the time of the 1970 march, it was holding Joan Bird and Afeni Shakur, two of the defendants in the Panther 21 conspiracy case. In the early 1970s, numerous radical grassroots organizations were involved in organizing protests in front of the "House of D" to amplify the conditions and demands of prisoners.[62] When the 1970 march arrived at the jail, the protest chants changed from "Whose streets? Our streets!" to "Free our sisters! Free ourselves!,"[63] with Johnson, Rivera, and thousands of others forging "a politics of solidarity that argued trans and queer liberation were coterminous with the struggle against the prison industrial complex."[64] The demonstration should also be understood as a trans-feminist articulation of anticarceral politics, linked to work by groups like the Third World Women's Alliance who organized around Shakur's and Bird's cases.

By 1973, Rivera sensed a moment of danger as an antiviolence analysis dropped out of gay and gender activist politics. (Indeed, the first keynote speaker at the gala—activist Barbara Gittings—led the crowd in cheers at the prospect of gay professional associations, including cheers for gay police officers). When Rivera warns people in Washington Square Park not to forget Bambi L'Amour, Andorra Martin, Kenny Messner, and the other gay people in jail, and invites them to visit STAR House to learn more "about the people that are in jail," she labors against the mounting mechanisms of disappearance, disposability, and forgetting that surround and enable the carceral state. Furthermore, in her interventions, Rivera anticipates contemporary analyses

that map the expansion of liberation struggles on the U.S. Left within a context of state violence and nation-building—as in the case of the backdrop of the Vietnam War harboring the civil rights movement, or U.S. militarism in the Middle East harboring the expansion of sexual freedom in the U.S., increasing the capacity for inclusion of queer subjects within the context of U.S. nationalism and militarism.[65]

Rivera attacks whiteness and middle-class investments in the same breath, describing them as bound together in the figure of a "club." She attacks the crowd's racialized class aspirations—their reaching not for the end of criminalization and police violence broadly but instead for state protection of their own personal safety—safety that encases a specific racialized class of gay people from the criminal justice system and from being criminalized while condemning others to social death by that same system.

There is a way in which the speech can be misread as an individualized moral dispute between Rivera and those who taunted her, bypassing the scope of Rivera's political intervention and overlooking the material context of white gay people's incorporation. Rivera's call is a bid into STAR's expansive and formidable political vision—ranging from the community control of hospitals to the transformation of mental health services to universal access to healthcare to the end of job discrimination. It is a vision that centers mutual care and refuses a politics of disposability. An oversimplified reading of the moment can also overlook the structural recruitment of white middle-class gays and lesbians toward a politics of incorporation, in ways that obscure how we understand our own political moment. Rivera bears witness to liberalism's fixation on differentiating between "good" and "bad" subjects, and its incorporation of those perceived to be more valuable. Rivera intervenes against these lethal sortings, not to *add* trans representation to the coattails of white middle-class gay and lesbian incorporation but to hold out for a vision in which no one is left behind. Hers is a vision incompatible with liberalism. At the CSLD gala, Rivera confronts those who are being sorted differently than her and drawn toward the pursuit of equality through a single-axis framework rooted in the claim that "but for my sexual orientation, I, too, could be a full member." Rivera sounds an alarm, warning white and middle-class LGB people that their celebration is in fact a profound narrowing of a political vision, one that forfeits genealogies of multi-issue queer and trans liberation struggles.

Prophecy, Sacrifice, and Debt

Rivera's identificatory appeal works through the literary and political genre of prophecy. She bears witness, poses fateful collective choices, and speaks to the power of those choices. She announces truths that her audience is invested in denying, names the dangers of incorporation, and to tries to forestall those dangers. She dramatizes loss and hopes of redemption.[66] Prophecy is important in studying practices of identification because prophets invoke a *we* as a given and charge that *we* with ethical, moral, and affectively charged responsibilities. This is a realm that works through discourses of truth-telling rather than making proposals, through direct warnings rather than tentative bids.

As George Shulman has explained, prophecy is a powerful register through which actors fighting to end racism and white supremacy can announce disavowed realities that must be acknowledged.[67] But as Jasmine Syedullah observes, prophecy works differently in the hands of different people and in different kinds of projects.[68] Unlike the prophetic appeals of Martin Luther King Jr., Frederick Douglass, or James Baldwin, Sylvia Rivera's prophecy does not rely upon or seek to rebuild the nation-state. Hers is an anti-police politics that refuses the state; it refuses the bond of identification between the individual and the nation. Without the nation as a form of binding or as a dream for redemption, Rivera must find something else to work with.

Rivera constructs a web of responsibility, partly through a kinship trope and, relatedly, through her account of sacrifice and debt. She stages her accusations within an opening framework of intimate obligation. She leads with intimate appeals ("Hi, Baby") and maps out a constellation of relationships and political obligation through queering and trans-ing familial language (a language that charts horizontal webs of responsibility rather than orienting toward the state and invoking individual rights as "gay citizens"). She thus begins with intimacy, then moves into reciting a litany of the crowd's failures: their active drifting away toward incorporation, their disidentification not only with Rivera but also with other street queens, trans people, sex workers, people in jail, and people who live on the streets.

Although Rivera starts with intimacy, her speech is ultimately charged by a push-pull—pulling her audience together by invoking forms of binding *and* pushing them away by demarcating the lines dividing the group. She

both invokes familial ties and confronts her listeners as a distinctively *non*-familial other. Not only are the people at the rally "brothers and sisters" with gay people in jail, but they are also strangers, even enemies. She rebuffs the crowd as "you people," in an ironic reversal that turns racist language against the racist. Her embodied gestures amplify her criticism—she points at the crowd to emphasize (or, as Ruth Osorio puts it, to "punctuate") the *you* and *your* of each accusation.[69] She holds on to the people in the park rather than discarding them (disidentifying with them in the Muñozian sense), and she holds onto rather than discards the movement that they together constitute. She interrogates and confronts the crowd's and the movement's transphobia, classism, and racism. This kind of disidentification, as José Esteban Muñoz has put it, "enables politics"—Rivera exposes the movement's encoded political messages and their "universalizing and exclusionary machinations" and she "recircuits their workings" to account for trans and queer people of color, poor people, and sex workers, and to make possible a more capacious politics.[70]

The basis of Rivera's appeals to identification are the relationships that have been betrayed and which must be made right. The audience has failed in their obligations to their brothers and sisters who are in jail. Rivera charges her listeners with abandonment and neglect. And they have failed in their obligations to Rivera and to other trans activists. They owe their liberation to her (and to her sisters). They are bound to her through what she has given them—and yet they have failed to abide by the terms of this relationship. What binds the *we* for Rivera is *what people's liberation and dignity is made of*—upon whose labor has their freedom been built? For Rivera, the basis of shared identification is not a gay nationalism. Rather, her interlocutors are bound to her because of her sacrifice for their freedom. She chronicles the material sacrifices she has made for gay liberation—being beaten up, having her nose broken, losing her job, and losing her apartment—and she tutors her listeners on her proximity to violence in a way that works as a particular kind of authentication. She refuses white GAA members' claims upon the movement, figured through accounts of their own sacrifice of putting in time into meetings and coordination.[71] These are not the sacrifices Rivera is talking about. Instead, her ledger of debt and dues is about her and other street queens being frontliners who have physically met and absorbed state violence.[72] What freedom and dignity white middle-class gay people have tasted is constituted by her labor and her sisters' labor and their confrontations with the police. These dues cannot be repaid in a way that would neatly balance

accounts and absolve, nullify, or unbind the connection—and this is because the sacrifices of the past constitute the present. The interest on the debt can only be paid by coming into STAR's politics.

Rivera uses shame to move her listeners politically. But as Juliet Hooker and Christopher Lebron clarify, shame is only salient within some kind of web of responsibility.[73] People will not feel shame about an unmet responsibility if they do not feel that responsibility in the first place. When Rivera shames the people in the park, she shames them *as kin*, as bound to her and to their brothers and sisters in jail. In leading with queer intimate forms of address, like "Baby," she establishes the rubric within which the listeners' failures mean anything politically.

Rivera patently flips people's attempt to silence her, expel her from the stage, and shame her out of her rightful place in the movement. She refuses the script. When she confronts the people in the park for telling her to "go and hide my tail between my legs" and announces that she will "no longer put up with this shit," she returns their shaming back to them and admonishes them for failing to remember their obligations and debts. She shames the crowd for their attempts to silence her and for their hostile conduct: "I have *lost my job*. I have *lost my apartment* for gay liberation—*and you all treat me this way?!*" Then she orders them to reflect upon these incredible failures by flipping back their condemnation: "*What the fuck's wrong with you all!?! THINK ABOUT THAT!*"

As James Baldwin tells us, every accusation contains a plea.[74] Rivera's plea is a call into identification and reoriented ethical political action. Rivera does not try to persuade her listeners into a kind of coalitional politics, but instead summons them into a thick identification rooted in an ethic of community care. Rivera's listeners would redeem themselves through a renewed commitment to their relationship with her and with their kin in prison and through their changed conduct going forward.

"I *gave them their pride* but they have not given me mine."

Three decades later, the tension between belonging/demarcation and sacrifice/debt structured Rivera's intervention in her 2001 keynote address for Latino Gay Men of New York's (LGMNY) monthly meeting at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in New York City.[75] Partway through telling the story of the Stonewall rebellion, Rivera recounted that:

> We were determined that evening that we were going to be a liberated, free community, which we did acquire that. Actually, I'll change the "we": *You* have acquired your liberation, your freedom, from that night. Myself, I've got shit, just like I had back then. But I still struggle, I still continue the struggle. I will struggle til the day I die and my main struggle right now is that my community will see the rights that are justly ours.[76]

Here, Rivera enunciates and then *rescinds* a *we,* splintering it into a sharply demarcated *you* and *I*, a *you* who has freedom, while "I've got shit, just like I had back then." Next, she pivots to claim her audience right in the midst of critiquing their elite gay politics: "I am tired of seeing my children—I call everybody, including yous in this room, you are all my children—I am tired of seeing homeless transgender children, young, gay, youth children. I am tired of seeing the lack of interest that this rich community has." Here, in a trans and queer kinship practice, Rivera locates her hearers in a lineage of ancestors and youth; she furnishes them with new terms for LGBTQ adulthood and a mandate for future conduct. Rivera went on to critique the resources going into remodeling the Center, confronting her audience for being able to "rerenovate a building for millions and millions of dollars and buy another building across the street and still not worry about your homeless children from your community, and I know this for a fact, because the reason that I have to get clearance every time to come into this building is because I saw many of the kids before the building was being renovated up the street, many of the children are sleeping on the steps of that church." Rivera recounts her own attempt to intervene, explaining that "I went in there with an attitude. I raised hell. Yes, maybe I did try to destroy the front desk, but I did not attack anybody."[77]

At this point in her life, Rivera was a movement elder, and she figures her relationship to her audience in maternal/parental terms. She charts an intergenerational constellation of kinship relationships layered upon the sibling relationships of her 1973 speech. Rivera confronts her audience about what happened when she raised hell at the Center: "My thanks for everything I have done for this freakin' community? Had me arrested and put in Bellevue!" She reprimands them for not showing up a month earlier to support Intro 475 at New York City Council—a proposal to add a definition of gender to New York City's Human Rights Law. "Where," she demands, "were my sisters and brothers? Where were my children that I liberated?"[78] They did not go to the City Council for this long-awaited day to support a

bill made necessary by back-room dealings in 1973. Her children have not, as James Baldwin puts it, been "paying their dues."[79] There is a debt that has not been paid, and she insists that everyone know about it. In Rivera's appeal, the basis of their identification is rooted in what she gave them.[80] Her more privileged children are bound to her even as they turn away. Their self-absorption and assimilation are failures in their responsibilities to her. Even as her listeners are her "children," Rivera also hails them as the parents of homeless youth, criticizing their choice to pour resources into renovations and "still not worry about *your homeless children from your community*" (italics added), youth sleeping on the streets nearby the Center.[81]

Weeks later, in an interview by Kristianna Tho'mas, Rivera names the betrayal and unfulfilled reciprocity surrounding Pride itself and what mainstream gays and lesbians owe, explaining, "This is no longer my Pride. I *gave them their pride* but they have not given me mine."[82] Pride carries multiple meanings here: as the annual gathering/event, as material safety from being jailed or detained in a mental institution, as material change and organized revolt, and as a sense of self in political community.

Her demarcation that "this is *their* pride," or that "*you* have acquired your liberation" while "I've got shit" has resonances with the juxtapositions in Frederick Douglass' 1852 jeremiad, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" In his speech, Douglass creates rhetorical and political distance from his audience—he tells his audience that this is "*your* National Independence," "*your* political freedom," that what has brought "light and healing to you has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is *yours*, not *mine*. *You* may rejoice, *I* must mourn" (italics added).[83] Douglass performs both identifications and disidentifications in his speech, and he sharply underscores the uneven life of such a national holiday as the Fourth of July or, in modern queer national parlance, Pride. Douglass and Rivera claim mutual connection and distance from their listeners in order to build identification within a freedom politics that would keep matters of racialized (for Douglass and Rivera) and also gendered (for Rivera) violence and difference at the fore.

Rivera understands her siblings' and her children's failures to honor their relationship with her as nothing less than a betrayal. People have failed in their commitments and bonds—and she registers this failure as heartbreaking. In reflecting on the continued marginalization of trans people within LGBTQ politics, Rivera explains that

> I'm hurt and get depressed a lot about it. But I will not give up because I won't give the mainstream gay organizations the satisfaction of keeping us down. If we give up, they win. And we can't allow them to win. . . . We allowed them to speak for us for so many damn years, and we bought everything they said to us: "Oh, let us pass our bill, then we'll come for you." Yeah, come for me. Thirty-two years later and they're still coming for me.[84]

Rivera references the fight in the 1970s and 1980s to pass a New York City gay rights bill and the removal of trans people from its protections in December 1973.[85] Upon joining GAA in 1970, Rivera was a frontline activist in the effort to pass the bill. Rivera took one of the very first arrests for the campaign while collecting petitions and later, at a meeting of Village Independent Democrats, whacked city councilwoman Carol Greitzer over the head with a clipboard of petitions when Greitzer would not accept them (Greitzer went on to become the first sponsor of the bill).[86] She also infamously kicked off her heels and scaled the walls of City Hall in bell bottoms and a crop top in an attempt to gain access to the closed-door votes on the original bill.[87] Despite the blood and sweat that Rivera and her sisters poured into the bill, a closed circle of representatives from gay organizations (including GAA and the National Gay Task Force) conceded to an amendment that would remove antidiscrimination protections for trans and gender nonconforming people.[88] As Bebe Scarpinato and Rusty Moore note, Rivera's "first major deception at the hands of the gay movement occurred when drag rights were specifically excluded from the bill to make it more palatable to 'straight' people, and reflect the assimilationist attitude of the Gay Rights movement at the time." Scarpinato and Moore explain that "this betrayal was a lesson [Rivera] carried with her in all her future activism"—it anticipated and came to haunt a larger pattern of the treatment of trans inclusions within gay rights legislation, as in the (contested) 2007 decision of Democratic leaders in the House of Representatives to amend the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act by stripping protections for transgender people.[89] The New York Gay Rights Bill, passed in 1986, did not include trans people in its protections. Here and elsewhere, the liberal gay rights movement failed in its political obligations to trans people, incarcerated LGBTQ people, and houseless LGBTQ people, and Rivera testifies as a witness to these betrayals. In her 2001 keynote, she explains that every time the bill came up for a vote, she hoped it wouldn't pass "because of what they did to me. As badly as I knew

this community needed that bill, I didn't feel it was justified for them to have it on my sweat and tears, or from my back."[90]

Although at the 1973 rally Rivera drew her listeners into identification in the course of four minutes, her appeal came at great personal cost, and she did not see those identifications take hold in the years that followed. Her reflections years later indicate that she did not think the movement came into a substantive, politically meaningful identification with STAR's politics that year or in the long run. Most of the people at the park may not have cared for very long after her speech about what they owed or how they may be bound to a wider vision of freedom. Rivera thus presents us with the long-term failures of the movement to hear or heed her calls. She testifies to the great expense, the danger, and the difficulty of political struggles to bid upon and shape forms of identification. She testifies that identificatory claims, especially those issued by more subaltern voices, may not take hold.

Violence and Access

The struggle at the rally between accessing and policing access to the stage illuminates the differently borne hazards and risks of participation in the struggle over identification and the questions of *who* gets to make appeals, through what venues, with what reach, and with what costs. As Ruth Osorio, drawing on Lindal Buchanan, explains, rhetorical "delivery does not begin with the speech itself but with the act of getting onto the podium—a more difficult—even perilous—task for marginalized rhetors speaking to a resistant audience."[91] Indeed, Rivera's delivery was marked by violence and confrontation before she even arrived on the stage.[92] She explained that people she had called her "comrades in the movement literally beat the shit out of me" and that "that's where it all began, to really silence us."[93] Even though people forcibly tried to stop her from taking the stage, Rivera got past the barricade—she recounts, "They beat me, I kicked their asses. I did get to speak. I got my points across."[94] She claimed them as belonging to her even as she condemned their actions: "I don't let too many people keep me down. Especially my own, especially my own. My own cannot keep me down."[95]

The political significance of the attempt to remove Rivera was unambiguously clear to her. She explains that for four years drag queens had "been at the vanguard of the gay movement and all of a sudden it was being taken away. We were being pushed out of something that we helped create."[96]

Queens Liberation Front (QLF) founder Lee Brewster also intervened at the gala, stepping onto the stage in a long gown as O'Leary finished her tirade. Brewster proclaimed, "I cannot sit and let my people be insulted," and, above the din of applause and the yells of "fuck you!," reminded the audience that what they were celebrating "was a result of what the drag queens did at the Stonewall," that "*we gave you your pride!*" Brewster spurned the audience ("Gay liberation: *SCREW YOU!*") and threw his tiara into the crowd, vowed to continue to bring people out of the closet through his magazine readership, then bid the movement farewell ("Goodbye. Good luck, my *sometimes friends!*") with a final throw of his coat into the crowd.[97] Rivera understood the attempt to block her and understood the attempted removal of drag queen performers from the program as practices in excising the figures who were at the center of the very event that the parade sought to commemorate.[98] These erasures reverberate with broader processes through which trans women of color's activism has been and continues to be erased from racial justice, feminist, and gay liberation politics. Tourmaline has described this as a process of "exile and isolation of trans folks from movements that trans folks had actually helped start."[99]

In the speech itself, Rivera testifies to the physical costs that she sustained for gay liberation—including violence upon her body and heightened economic and housing precarity. But her reflections years later also shed light on the physical and emotional costs of making the intervention at the CSLD rally. The experience had serious long-term emotional and political repercussions. She marks that STAR died that year, and she went into a deep depression. Rivera attempted suicide and was found by Johnson who sent her to the hospital where she received sixty stitches in her arm. She reflects that she was deeply "hurt and I felt that the movement had completely betrayed the drag queens and the street people and I felt that . . . the years that I had already given them had been wasted."[100] Although some people stood in solidarity with Rivera's intervention, including Lee Brewster's declaration as well as his withdrawing funding from the CSLDC, many people continued to blame her in later years for "ruining" the rally.[101] She explained in a 1994 interview that "still to this day, I have people come up to me from the old days and say, 'Well, you trashed us on the 4th anniversary.' I said, 'No, I just stood up for me.' "[102]

Rivera largely left the movement for twenty years, moving to Tarrytown, New York, where she worked as a food services manager, organized drag shows, participated in AIDS walkathons and the annual Pride march, and

maintained limited contact with the New York City gay political movement.[103] In 1995 she lived with other houseless people at the Christopher Street Piers, and in 1997 she moved into the Transy House Collective in Brooklyn.[104] Upon more publicly reentering movement work in the late 1990s, Rivera organized numerous demonstrations, including a political funeral for Amanda Milan, and helped plan the first Brooklyn Pride March. She took arrest at an Amadou Diallo demonstration, at a political funeral for Matthew Shepard, and on behalf of multiple activist organizations.[105] In 1999, she was invited by the Italian Transgender Organization to address the World Pride rally in Rome. She worked in and then became a manager of a kitchen providing food for houseless people, now named the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry. In January 2001, she revived STAR as Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries.[106] In 2002, she summoned leaders from the Empire State Pride Agenda Committee to her deathbed, where she delivered a series of demands, negotiated to include a transgender person on their board, and urged them to ensure transgender protections in the Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act (SONDA).[107]

Speaking Forward and Contemporary Containment

Today, Rivera's 1973 speech has a political life that evidences both the continued reach of identificatory appeals from the past and the mechanisms of their ongoing containment. On the one hand, the footage of the speech is a critical record in its circulation and revival by Tourmaline, and today inhabits an important place in public discourses within trans and queer of color abolitionist politics. In an intergenerational prophecy, Rivera's speech moves through public presentations, essays and books, Twitter, YouTube, performance art, and classrooms.[108] It is called upon as a political mandate from a movement elder, as a resource for navigating a paradoxical moment of increasing trans visibility and heightened violence against trans women of color.[109] It is called upon as a resource for resisting trans assimilation into mainstream LGBTQ politics, respectability politics, and liberal state-sanctioned representation.

On the other hand, even as Rivera's speech circulates widely, public access to the footage carries its own story of containment. The primary copy of Rivera's speech was filmed by the lesbian feminist L.O.V.E. Collective (Lesbians Organizing for Video Experience), a group that in the 1970s

and 1980s documented lesbian life and politics in New York, including demonstrations by LFL.[110] Members of the L.O.V.E. Collective were at the 1973 CSLD events in order to film lesbian performers, but when Rivera took the stage, the collective kept their camera rolling.[111] In this way, it is miraculous that the footage exists because the camera was not there for Rivera or STAR's freedom dreams. It was there to bear witness to the parade events in service of political projects that so often excluded Rivera. The footage is an example of radical trans histories being "accidentally archived," as Tourmaline has put it—including within, as Jeannine Tang explains, the records of people who were in fact antagonistic to trans people and their politics.[112]

Ultimately, the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn acquired the footage. Tourmaline uploaded a recording of the film to Vimeo in 2012, clarifying that she "stole it and uploaded it . . . as a form of direct action against assimilation and historical erasure of trans life."[113] The post is part of her practice of restitching political relationships and imaginaries across generational lines, against the disjunctures produced through legacies of HIV/AIDS, poverty, criminalization, trans pushout from the LGB movement, and premature death.[114] In these ways, Tourmaline's posting—and the broader scope of her archival activism—can itself be understood as an identificatory appeal, one that calls trans and queer people into identification with STAR's politics and into right relationship with radical elders. Five years later, Tourmaline's posting was removed under the auspices of copyright protection, and the footage reappeared elsewhere on YouTube, titled as the "original authorized" copy and bearing the watermark "LoveTapesCollective." Alternative postings and re-postings of the footage flourish, but as Tourmaline and others have noted, the fact that the recording continues to be legally claimed by a collective that was historically more aligned with O'Leary's LFL rather than with Rivera raises critical questions about who "owns" trans of color history.[115]

Multivalence, Presence, and Absence

Rivera's appeals are multivalent and multi-sited. She summons both her antagonists in the gay movement and her sister queens, through different but sometimes overlapping tonalities and registers. None of STAR's identificatory projects were automatic or seamless. With Johnson, Rivera called to other street queens and homeless gay youth in conversations on sidewalks and in

city parks, at the piers, in hotel rooms (where Johnson and Rivera provided shelter), and at STAR house. They issued appeals through practices of mutual aid, teaching their children that they didn't have to hustle, but if they did, "you have to put back into helping *all* of us."[116] Johnson and Rivera issued these appeals at material registers (e.g., housing, food, physical safety) as well as relational ones (e.g., through practices of mothering and accompaniment).[117] Temporally, these appeals concretely faced the conditions of the present and practiced political imagination for the future against forms of violence and disposability. The appeals summoned their sisters as "STAR people." Many of the traces of these appeals are ephemeral but live on in the stories and lives of their children and sisters.[118]

Rivera and Johnson also organized people in GAA and GLF, many of whom were antagonistic to STAR people and STAR's politics. Rivera's and Johnson's political appeals to white middle-class gay people constituted a different kind of reach, toward those who would disavow them. Rivera structured her CSLD appeal around shared history, which is not a fabrication: when Rivera took the stage it was not as an outsider; she had already inhabited a place in meeting spaces and in frontline activism. She also structured her appeal around having shared siblings, around her conviction about the necessity to unite against straight society itself, and around visions for a shared future. She and Johnson had issued these horizontal appeals vertically not only at CSLD events but also at protests, in meeting rooms, and at sit-ins. The context of the dominant gay movement in 1973 included demonological accounts of gay people, and, for some gay people, siren calls to homonormative whiteness as a way out of criminalization and state-sanctioned death. Seizing the microphone, Rivera broke into that din with her countercall. She knew that this brief encounter would not be sufficient for her identificatory project, and so she calls people at the gala to visit STAR House to learn more about their brothers and sisters. She calls them into identification as a process.

Rivera invoked the first-person plural at only one point in her speech: when she said she believes in "us getting our rights or else I would not be out there fighting for our rights." Rivera did not—and, given the hostile political conditions she faced at the rally, perhaps could not—rely on a preexisting *we* to invoke shared identification. Her accusations, however, indirectly invoked a *we*: she tried to draw the people in the park into identification with people in prison, and *back* into identification with her and with a wider vision for gay liberation. Ultimately, however, her substantive political and

ethical challenge to the *we* may be so great that it breaks rather than bends the connection.[119]

Rivera's identificatory appeal works through a push-pull of belonging and distance, of friend and enemy, mapped within and across the same crowd in ways that tie that crowd to those who Rivera makes present in their absence: trans and queer people in prison. While for Rivera, identification is made up of ethical and political responsibilities to those who have less political power, she confronts and attempts to summon a crowd for whom those responsibilities are increasingly hollowed out. Rivera's call at the park does not just seek to interpellate her listeners *as they are* into horizontal relationships, but to show that this counterinterpellation must be *transformative* in order to be redemptive—transformative in the sense that they reorient themselves toward STAR's politics and toward their kin in jail and who live in the streets. They can only be redeemed if they are "Baby" instead of "you people.[120]