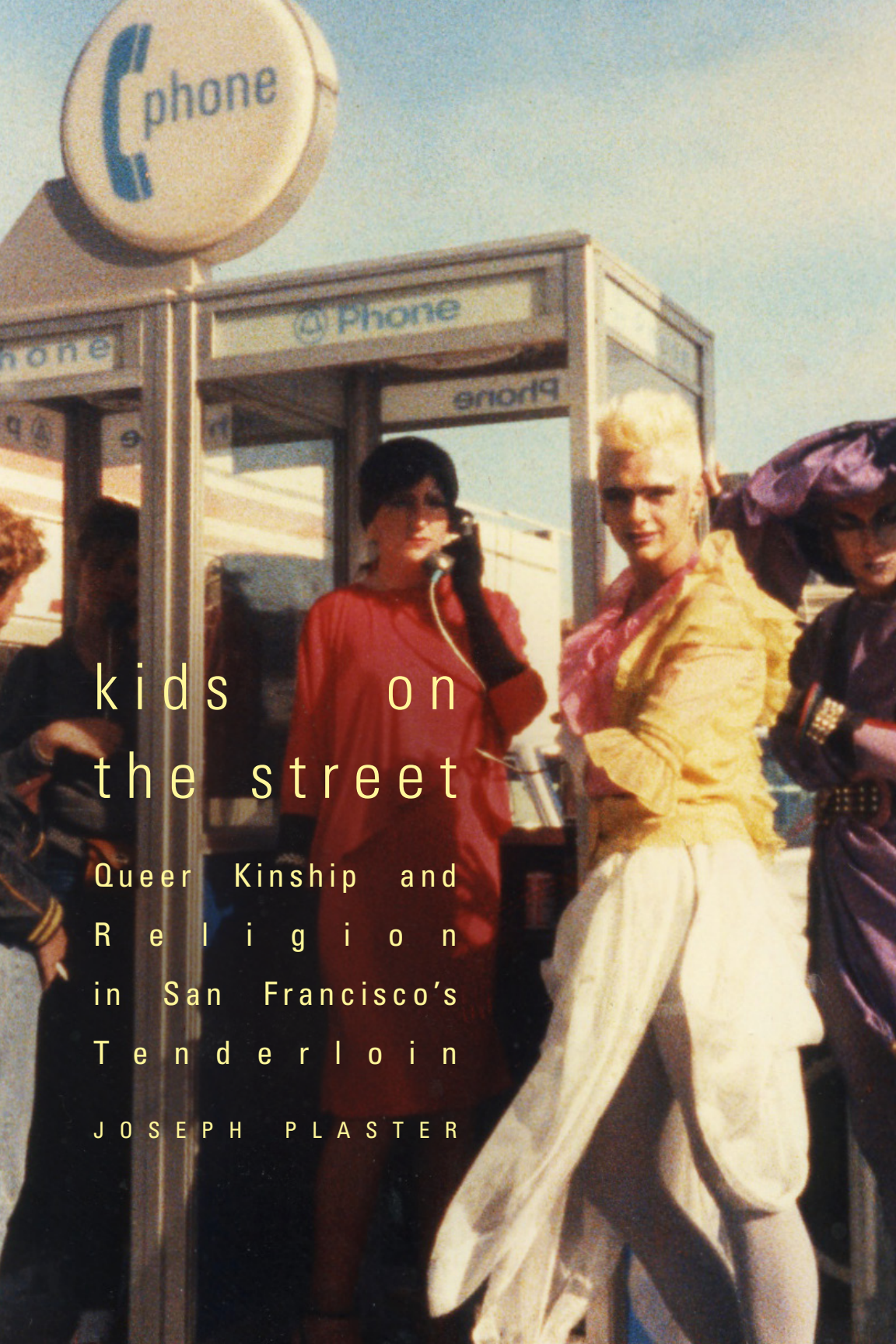

kids on the street

Queer Kinship and Religion in San Francisco's Tenderloin

JOSEPH PLASTER

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Cover art: Rob Bennett and friends at a phone booth
at Polk and Geary, San Francisco, ca. early 1980s.
Photograph courtesy of Rob Bennett.

C O N T E N T S

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Introduction

SAN FRANCISCO'S POLK STREET was a whole world to itself: about ten blocks of old-stock rooming houses, dive bars, coffeehouses, and nightclubs sandwiched between the downtown Tenderloin "vice" district, City Hall, and the affluent, residential Nob Hill. The city's premiere gay business corridor in the 1960s and 1970s, Polk Street later became a national destination for runaway and "throwaway" youth, many surviving through sex work, and an older, paternal social world of survivors, caregivers, and clients. When I started hanging out there in 2007, a diverse group of trans women, johns, social workers, drag queens, and tourists cruised and caroused on the heavily trafficked thoroughfare.

One of the first people I met there was the Reverend River Sims, a squat, queer man in his fifties. The self-described "punk priest of Polk Street" worked independently, his ministerial garb a leather jacket festooned with Misfits patches. I got to know River over the course of a year, serving free dinners together in an alleyway during a weekly needle exchange and handing out condoms and insulin syringes to his congregation of the previous fifteen years: the "kids" on Polk Street, many of them runaways, most of them hustlers and addicts. I recorded oral histories with the kids in River's single-room occupancy (SRO) apartment, a tiny space saturated with reli-

gious statues and icons. One wall featured a motley collection of handmade crucifixes and a painting of a nude man, pocked with Kaposi's sarcoma, titled *Man of Sorrows: Christ with AIDS*. Another showcased a painting of hypodermic syringes in the shape of a skull and crossbones. Most strikingly, the wall near River's door was covered with more than fifty framed photos of boys he had known—most of them, he said, long since dead.

When we first met, the Reverend was playful—even flirty. "i'll have to watch you," he emailed in 2007, "because the johns will be trying to steal you from me, which they can for the right price. Ha." Introducing me to another queer independent minister on the street, River laughed and said I was "just like one of the boys," probably referring to my age and appearance. A skinny, white queer kid in my late twenties, I may have sometimes passed as one of the boys. (One day, as I was crossing the street, a wiry, middle-aged man shouted out: "I'll give you two hundred dollars!") River may have also sensed other similarities. For decades, Polk Street had been a destination for runaways seeking sanctuary in the "gay mecca." While I enjoyed much greater educational and economic privilege as a recent college graduate, I also came to San Francisco in search of a home and family. If outsiders maligned the corridor as a dangerous marketplace—the *Wall Street Journal* called it "San Francisco's worst neighborhood" in 2006, a "gathering point for pimps, drug addicts and transvestites"—I romanticized it as a refuge for castaways.[1] "I think I'm interested in Polk Street," I told an informant during an oral history, "because it's a place where people who don't fit in in other parts of the country can find a home."

This was all changing in the late 2000s, as the infusion of Silicon Valley capital drove up rental prices and radically reshaped the corridor. Luxury condos and upscale "mixed" bars began replacing SRO hotels and gay taverns. New business associations pressured the police to sweep away the homeless. People said gentrification was pricing queer people out of the neighborhood—and the city—as business interests ate away at the downtown. The conflicts were often dramatic. When a new business association strong-armed a hustler bar off the street, activists plastered the district with "wanted" posters featuring a photograph of the association president. Queer activists held anti-gentrification protests, holding signs that read "Don't Erase Our Past." Drag queens led "Take Back the Polk" marches. The press chimed in: some called gentrification a death, some a renaissance.

It felt to me like an enormous loss. Gentrification was erasing a history I had come to San Francisco to claim and become a part of. I became ob-

sessed with "saving" the street's history before it was swept away. As an independent public historian, I partnered with San Francisco's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) Historical Society—a nonprofit hub of queer academics, artists, and activists—and began recording oral histories in the SRO hotels, churches, bars, and alleyways.

River agreed to record his story and connect me with informants because he was excited about documenting a history being erased by the "white, upper-middle-class older people" new to the street, but our relationship was also highly transactional. River told me he'd arrange oral histories with the boys in exchange for my volunteer work with his ministry. We established a routine: River said I should be at his apartment at 3 p.m. every Thursday, at which time I would record an hour-long interview with him. We would then prepare a meal and drive it to Hemlock Alley, where I would help him unload his car and serve a meal to the kids. River would ask one of the boys to give an interview, which I would conduct after unloading the meal at his apartment. "I am counting on your help," River said, "not having other people who help." River insisted that I pay the boys ten dollars per interview. He would give the kids clean socks before they left his apartment.

River also warned me to not be "taken in" by the boys. They sometimes threatened him when he refused to give them cash or didn't let them stay at his apartment overnight. Some of the kids assaulted and robbed a former volunteer. "These guys look for every angle," River said, "and so know that beneath the sweetness and the niceness there is the possibility for violence and anger. They are trying to survive, and so to survive for them means to get what they can." Finally, River warned me that the interviews would be emotionally draining. "It is obvious that you feel for people," he said, "and this will tear you up. The suffering you will hear will tear your heart out."

One Thursday night, after pouring cups of Kool-Aid in Hemlock Alley, River introduced me to Richard, a boyish twenty-one-year-old sporting a pink mohawk and goofy smile.[2] We packed River's car and drove a few blocks to his apartment. After unloading the meal, Richard and I sat on River's futon and I began recording. Richard told me he'd been on Polk Street since he was fifteen. "I was molested when I was a child by my stepfather," he said. "When my parents kicked me out, it was one of the reasons why I came up here. Because I figure that if I'm up here then he can't get to me anymore." A friend dropped him off in front of a trans club called Divas. Trans women quickly took him into their hotel rooms and shared food and money. "They all just reached out to me," Richard said. "Maybe it was just because I was

really, really young, but they just felt the need to take me under their wing and show me what they thought was the right way."

Polk Street "is like family," Richard said. "Even though the people out here will give you drugs, they'll also give you money for food if you need it. They've always made sure that if I need a place to stay that I'm inside for the night. And that if I need a shower that I can wash myself. Or if I need clean clothes, they'll take me shopping at Goodwill." Richard was "one of the Polk Street kids. I was fifteen when I came here, but I was pretty much raised by Polk Street. All of my adult life I've lived here." When we finished, I gave Richard ten dollars. River handed him a pair of clean socks.

When I started recording, I worried that these transactions—cash for interviews, volunteer work for informants—would cheapen the "authenticity" of the historical narrative I hoped to write. I came in time to realize that these transactions were instead at the heart of the story I needed to tell. As a young researcher, I was becoming another link in the reciprocities and mutual obligations that comprised people's everyday survival on Polk Street. In the process, I was being drawn into the kinship networks my informants called "street families" and the religious formations I call "street churches."

Over the course of five years, from 2007 to 2011, I recorded oral histories with more than seventy people in the Tenderloin's alleyways, hotels, and churches. At the same time, I explored the archives of the GLBT Historical Society. I would go there late at night and sit cross-legged on the carpeted floor between the stacks. Pulling archival boxes, I encountered the traces of figures uncannily similar to River and the kids: people who, as early as the 1960s, established their own congregations in the Tenderloin; ordained street youth, themselves, and others; and banded together in loosely structured street families. I developed a kind of "archive fever": a desire to collapse time, to bring the past closer, to cross what Saidiya Hartman calls the "barricade between *then* and *now*."[3]

This queer desire for history led me to more than a dozen archives across the country as well as the published archive of surveys, sociological studies, reportage, and memoirs. I found that the Tenderloin was once one of many similar red-light districts—often called "tenderloins"—in cities across the United States. By the late nineteenth century, cities constructed these districts as zones of abandonment where the degradation and immorality associated with the poor, sexual and gender deviants, and racialized populations could be contained and cordoned off from respectable white families and homes.[4] These seemingly abject, antidomestic, transactional,

and profane districts were at the same time incubators for rich kinship networks, syncretic religious practices, and oppositional politics. Street kids, sustaining themselves through prostitution and other criminalized economies, created in these districts a counterpublic complete with rituals for renaming new members, conventions for collective housing, and networks for pooling resources to increase the chances of mutual survival. From the early twentieth century through the 2010s, kids traveled from "tenderloin" to "tenderloin," often in sync with festival and seasonal patterns, creating a web of familiar places and kin.

Performative Economies

Kids on the Street is an exploration of the informal networks of economic and social support that enabled street kids to survive in tenderloin districts across the United States, and in San Francisco's Tenderloin in particular, over the past century. I combine archival, ethnographic, oral history, and public humanities research to explore the social trauma inflicted on street youth and the ways they have worked, collectively and creatively, to reframe those brutal realities. This book focuses on four world-making practices: queer kinship networks my informants call "street families," which resemble the moral economies common among people with severely limited resources; syncretic religious formations I call "street churches," which are often based on a streetwise, gothic Catholicism bent toward the redemptive power of abjection; performative storytelling, narrative strategies that enabled youth to secure employment in the district's vice and bar economies and, at times, to reinterpret the abuse from which they were running; and migratory circuits that connected far-flung tenderloin districts across the country and the people who traversed them, all the while fostering alternative socialities, cooperative economies, and novel forms of mutual aid.

These rituals and kinship networks comprise what I call a performative economy: a shared repertoire of creative strategies for managing the affective and economic impacts of abandonment. More precisely, a performative economy references the reciprocities, obligations, and moral norms shared by a population and the ways they are materialized and transmitted intergenerationally via performance, broadly defined to include religious ritual, storytelling, kinship, and gesture—"in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral."[5] Basing my analysis on the concept of moral economy, queer studies of affect, and performance studies, I show that street kids developed

morally inflected conventions around resource sharing, mutual protection, self-policing, and other survival strategies that they instantiated through a variety of ritualizations and performative enactments. They were in turn "taken in" by an older, paternal community of survivors, intermediaries, and long-term caregivers (for example, bartenders, bouncers, ministers, johns, and patrons) for whom the kids remained, after all, the principal draw for the formal vice economies. I experienced the traces of this social world when I recorded stories and walked the streets of San Francisco's Tenderloin.

The kids often referred to their migratory world as "the scene," a phrase that suggests a degree of self-conscious theatricality—of characters playing roles and an urban stage on which to play them. They could recognize the scene in each city by its material environment: the rooming houses, diners, dive bars, theaters, all-night coffee shops, and heavily trafficked boulevards. They could identify it by the stock characters of the queen, the hustler, and the urban cowboy, and the poses and gestures that indicated sexual availability. In his classic 1963 novel *City of Night*, for example, John Rechy instantly recognized "the scene" in downtown Los Angeles by "the vagrant youngmen dotting those places: the motorcyclists without bikes, the cowboys without horses, awol servicemen or on leave."[6] More intangibly, migrants could identify the scene by its affective intensity. "When you cross over into [San Francisco's] Tenderloin," a hustler wrote in 1967, "it's like walking into another room. The change in atmosphere is obvious."[7] My informants indexed this intensity when they referred to the Tenderloin as a "magnet," a "vortex," or a "whirlpool"—metaphors suggesting an attractive, spiraling force. As such, I approach the scene—a phrase I use interchangeably with "performative economy"—as an assemblage that includes humans and their (social, performative, and narrative) constructions as well as the nonhumans that shaped those performances: the "vice and amusement" economies; the material environment; and the districts themselves, in their aggregate form.[8]

My interest in the kids' world-making practices is more than academic; it is for me, as it is for my informants, a matter of survival in spaces widely regarded by outsiders as dirty, dangerous, and duplicitous marketplaces. The stories, the dramas, and the scenes I document played a central role in the development of one of the country's earliest and most visible queer public cultures.

At the heart of this book is also a methodological question: how to best represent the history of a migratory culture that left few archival traces.

Studies of queer affect and urban history have relied heavily on literature, archival evidence, and oral history interviews from settled urban communities. By relying on these forms of evidence, researchers risk privileging the histories of housed populations and occluding the experiences of people living on the economic margins. Particularly for subaltern groups, Dwight Conquergood argues, "texts are often inaccessible, or threatening, charged with the regulatory powers of the state."[9] I instead insist on an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on my own ethnographic research, based on more than seventy oral history interviews, and research at more than a dozen archives throughout the country. I build on methods from performance studies, which ask that researchers rethink our method of analysis from a wholly text-based approach to one that approaches performance as a system for transmitting cultural memory, and rethink the site-bound ways that we have often written urban histories of sexuality by focusing on the reciprocities, moral norms, and performance practices created through migration. These interdisciplinary methods enable me to broaden the queer studies archive and create an alternative mapping of queer life, one in which class, migration, and economy are as central as sexuality.

Centering the experiences of street kids enables me to articulate—indeed excavate—a history of queer sociality that has been overshadowed by major narratives of gay progress and pride. I represent a politics where the marginal position of street youth—the self-defined "kids on the street," hair fairies, hustlers, queens, and "undesirables"—is the basis for a moral economy of reciprocity and mutual aid. Tarnished as criminal and immoral, as undesirable blights on downtowns ripe for reinvestment, street kids developed a flexible and fraternal accumulation of obligations and reciprocities by which they could "watch each other's backs." Many insisted on the value of sociality and sexuality untethered from the nuclear family, reproduction, and the gender binary and dramatized their moral vision on the streets and boulevards in spectacular fashion.

This said, I am not ultimately writing a redemptive narrative. It is important to guard against the impulse to revise or romanticize history—to insist on liberation where there may have been only survival. Where the kids' cooperative relationships worked, they were not always a product of altruism but a necessity for mutual survival.[10] I instead document what Elizabeth Povinelli calls the "immanent dependencies that emerge in actual life."[11] In spaces of abandonment, everyday survival can be a minor miracle and the development of an alternative politics a major achievement.

Scope and Bearings

Because a study of the scene is beyond the scope of this book, I have settled on an exploration of the performative economy as it manifested in San Francisco's Tenderloin and on Polk Street, primarily from the 1960s through the 2020s. Viewed on a map, the Tenderloin is a triangular piece of land in the heart of downtown. It borders Market Street, the city's main thoroughfare, and is situated between some of the wealthiest and most powerful neighborhoods in San Francisco, including the upscale Union Square shopping district to the northeast; the retail corridor of Powell to the east and south; the seat of government at Civic Center to the southwest; the wealthy, residential Nob Hill on one of the sloping hills to the north; and big-name tech offices, including Twitter, on the Mid-Market corridor to the east. West of the Tenderloin is the Western Addition, a historically black neighborhood that is gentrifying and whitening along with the rest of San Francisco.

With roughly thirty thousand people in forty square blocks, the Tenderloin is one of the most densely packed districts in the city; at the time of this writing, it retains its function as a haven and containment zone for migrants and the poor. Located in the flatlands, the "red-light" district is saturated with old-stock housing dating to the early twentieth century; "Rescue Missions"; porn theaters and dive bars; nonprofit organizations that house residents on public assistance, the formerly homeless, people living with AIDS, the elderly, and many low-income queer and gender-variant people.

I open this book with a genealogy of the kids' performative economy, surveying the "main stems"—downtown lodging house districts—through which runaway and "throwaway" youth regularly circulated from the early twentieth century through the 2010s. I then focus on the scene as it took shape in San Francisco's Tenderloin, from the 1950s to the 1960s, concentrating on the ways street kids formalized the performative economy via the street youth organization Vanguard. I follow the scene, after it was displaced by redevelopment and police sweeps in the 1970s, to the nearby Polk Street corridor and outline the forms of masquerade and storytelling that kids developed in the district's alleyways, taverns, and hotels. I then look to the disintegration of the performative economy in the 2010s, as the combined pressures of rising rents, aggressive policing, and the politics of respectability transformed central cities across the country and drove the kids out of the Polk Street corridor in San Francisco. Finally, I examine the ways in which the City of San Francisco, developers, and activists are remembering

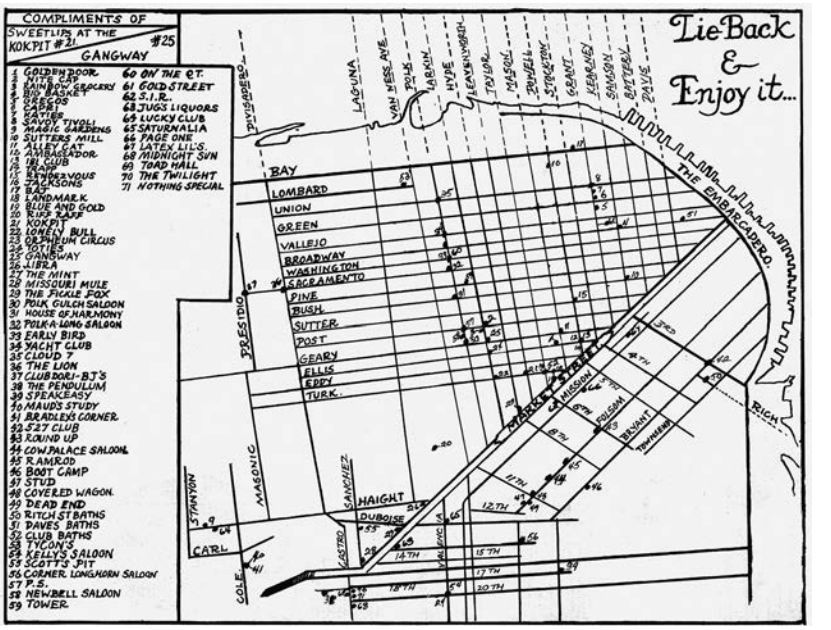

FIGURE I.1. Map of San Francisco gay bars, baths, and hotels compiled by Sweet Lips, a.k.a. Richard Walters, ca. early 1970s. Note especially the businesses along Polk Street and the Market Street meat rack at the intersection of Turk and Market Streets. Courtesy of GLBT Historical Society.

(and forgetting) the performative economy in the 2010s and early 2020s. I interrupt this chronological narrative with two "interventions" that showcase public humanities projects I developed to intervene in debates about gentrification, policing, and displacement.

I focus on performance to show how the kids, their patrons, and their protectors elaborated new social worlds in vice and amusement districts across the country. Tenderloin districts were carnivalesque spaces in which people became, for better or worse, what they ordinarily were not.[12] Through performance, people displaced by social trauma—often severe physical and emotional abuse in their families of birth—could play with new identities, new forms of embodiment and style, and new strategies for survival.[13] I document activities such as religious ordinations, communions, and christenings; kinship terms and practices; collective theatricality and "flaunting" of gender norms; reform work, hustling poses, migration, and my own

oral history encounters and public humanities projects. I position these performances as embodied practices that structured and were structured by material environments: the transient hotels and all-night coffeehouses; the downtown streets and boulevards; and the "vice" districts themselves, in their aggregate form.

Through such performances, street kids collectively reframed and reinterpreted the social trauma many experienced throughout their lives: namely, the experience of being perceived as and experiencing the self as "trash." Woven into the tissue of their performances is a shared moral universe, a common notion of what is just.

Kids on the Street

This interdisciplinary approach enables me to represent social worlds created by self-described "boys," "girls," "kids," and "kids on the street"—phrases people circulated in central city districts as early as the 1920s and continued to circulate when I walked Polk Street in the 2010s.[14] While kids were usually teenagers through their early twenties, the term did not necessarily refer to chronological age. "In common parlance," a gay bar rag clarified in 1966, the phrase "kids on the street" can "mean of any age, from 16 to 60."[15] According to a reporter writing the same year, "'kid' is the generic name for a habitue of the Tenderloin, regardless of age."[16] River Sims told me around 2009 about "thirty-year-old guys [on Polk Street] who call themselves 'kids.'" In other words, people in tenderloin districts approach age identity categories not as fixed but as relational and performative. Instead of chronological age, "kid on the street" refers to a person's role in the tenderloins' intergenerational sexual economies and kinship networks. The kids are those, regardless of chronological age, who perform "youth" to stimulate desire in potential clients and are cared for, materially and emotionally, by people who identify as mothers, fathers, aunts, and uncles.

The term *kid* may have originated in the early twentieth century with the white male wageworkers, known as hoboes, who migrated between the downtown "main stems" in cities across the country.[17] Since the turn of the century, intergenerational same-sex encounters were considered a defining characteristic of the public culture they created in these districts, known as "hobohemia," and the most typical "on-the-road" relationship paired an adult with a youth.[18] Nels Anderson's studies of hoboes in the early 1920s described in detail the relationships between older men known as "wolves"

or "jockers" and younger men or adolescents referred to as "chickens," "punks," "lambs," or "kids."[19] Historians show that the erotic system of wolves and kids was widespread among seamen and prisoners in US cities in the early twentieth century.[20] It also appears to have animated the tenderloin street scene. In 1941 the Times Square john and amateur ethnographer Thomas Painter, in a letter to Alfred Kinsey, claimed that "a great factor in homosexual prostitution" was "the road, by which is meant the vagrant world: hitch-hiking and railroad hoboing." Boys who "hobo it . . . often become hustlers because of their introduction . . . into homosexual practice at the hands of older fellow-tramps."[21] The "punks" who "served their apprenticeship among tramps may later become hustlers to homosexuals and wolves in cities."[22]

The word *kid* also references a person's role in the central city's intergenerational sexual economies. Hustlers often made great efforts to appear or "act" young, regardless of chronological age. Rechy wrote in 1963 that he learned to play a "variety of roles" designed to perform "youth" and thus arouse desire in potential clients: "young man out of a job, the 'drifting' boy, the young man lost in the city 'pleasehelpmesir.'"[23] Joel Roberts, an informant who hustled San Francisco's Tenderloin in the 1960s, told me that "youth was what we were selling." You "saw yourself as younger and you made more money if you were younger, so the word *kid* works." Tamara Ching, a trans woman of color who hustled the Tenderloin in the late 1960s, told me she adapted her performance of age and gender to the needs of potential clients. "I could go ahead and morph from male to female, [and] back to male," she said. "I could morph my age, and I could be a little child, or I could be a teenager. Or I could be a full-grown adult going into bars and picking up men." The term *kid* also references a person's role in the central city's intergenerational kinship systems. The kids are those who were cared for and initiated by an older, paternal community of survivors who identified as mothers, fathers, uncles, brothers, sisters, and "social workers," which a 1964 "Lavender Lexicon" dictionary defined as a "homosexual who cruises among the unemployed and destitute. Can be a slightly mocking term applied to those who assume a fatherly or motherly role."[24]

Being a "kid on the street" references behavior associated with the "storm and stress" of adolescence. From its construction in the late nineteenth century, adolescence has been understood as "a sexually tempestuous period," Jeffrey Moran argues, marked by an emotional rebelliousness that "demanded careful and sustained external control."[25] The kids on the

street were known for drug use, sexual experimentation, "flaunting" of gender conventions, and a "wanderlust" figuratively connected with unrestrained sexuality.[26] In his 1963 account of a peripatetic hustler, Rechy wrote about "the frantic running that, for me, was Youth."[27] Many kids "flaunted" nonnormative gender identities on the downtown streets and were known, during different historical periods, as belles, street queens, or hair fairies. "When I am in the group," a Chicago street queen told a sociologist in the 1930s, "I holler and scream to have people look at me and make remarks. I do it because the rest of the kids do it."[28] A psychologist wrote in 1957 about young "gays" who "submerge themselves in a herd," adopt "common jargon like teenagers' . . . 'jive' talk," and "find a welcome outlet for their resentments and hostilities toward a world which rejects them." These street kids, the psychologist felt, should be considered "homosexuals in adolescent rebellion."[29]

Street kids often identified as "butch," "femme," or "trade," sexual regimes that historians associate with working-class queer publics in the early and mid-twentieth century.[30] While second-wave feminists often derided these formations as recapitulating patriarchal divisions or imitating heterosexuality, queer theorists argue that butch/femme "both drew on and transformed the dominant society's male supremacist and heterosexual uses of gender."[31] Men known as "trade"—usually conventionally masculine adolescents from working-class backgrounds—could engage in homosexual acts without assuming the identity of a homosexual, so long as they maintained a masculine demeanor and limited themselves, at least in principle, to a penetrative role.[32] While historians often assumed that a homosexual/heterosexual binary constituted the dominant way people in the United States thought about sex by the mid-twentieth century, scholars such as Regina Kunzel show that this binary was "remarkably uneven and considerably less hegemonic and less coherent than historians have often assumed."[33] Multiple understandings of sex and gender overlapped in time and space and continue to do so.[34] Indeed, a Polk Street hustler told me around 2009 that he identified as straight and had sex with men only for cash. Street kids' declaration of sexual identity—then and now—was often performative, depending on the perceived desires of a potential client.

I build on the work of Cathy Cohen and Kwame Holmes to show that the kids on the street deprivilege a binary opposition between queer and nonqueer subjects, a binary that occludes the interplay of race, gender, "economic exploitation," and "class structure."[35] The kids did not always

define group belonging based on a shared sexual or gender identity—for example, a common gay, lesbian, homosexual, or transgender identity—but might identify as trade, queens, heterosexual, straight, butch, femme, transsexual, or any number of other performative identities.[36] Moreover, there were (and continue to be) profound class and cultural differences—and reciprocal hostilities—separating street kids and "respectable," settled homosexuals. The kids instead defined group belonging based on a shared way of life characterized by casual lodging; temporary labor; frequent migration; participation in the "street" economies of prostitution, narcotics, and panhandling; and, perhaps most importantly, what Holmes calls a "disruptive relation to normativity" along lines of racialization, class, and respectability.[37] The struggles street youth waged rarely looked like the activism of the homophile or gay rights movements but instead took the form of mutual aid, kinship, and collective actions such as needle exchanges that, Cohen argues, "challenge dominant constructions of who should be allowed and who deserved care."[38]

An Ethics of Reciprocity and Mutual Aid

While the kids' scene took a number of historically and geographically specific forms, an ethics of reciprocity appears to have crossed the decades and therefore indicates some continuity in the history of the scene. For this reason, we can begin to understand the kids' sense of justice and exploitation by examining the principle of reciprocity, a principle based on the simple idea that people should help those who have helped them. More specifically, according to James Scott, it means "that a gift or service received creates, for the recipient, a reciprocal obligation to return a gift or service of at least comparable value at some future date."[39] Anthropologists argue that the norm of reciprocity is steeped in morality: by giving, receiving, and returning gifts, a moral bond is created between people exchanging them. Reciprocity thus contributes to social cohesion.[40]

As early as the 1920s and well through the 2010s, kids in tenderloin districts developed conventions for collective housing, self-policing mechanisms, and networks for pooling resources. They were motivated to help one another—to pool funds and "watch each other's backs"—because they themselves would need assistance at a later date. In their own interest, they cooperated in order to survive in environments that challenged their existence. The norm of reciprocity also applied to relationships between kids

and those who animated the meat rack "vice" economies, among them bartenders, bouncers, and johns, as well as the management of coffeehouses, pinball arcades, and hotels that benefited from the trade in sex. These actors developed a collective vision of the proper economic functions and performances of those who animated the downtown "vice" economies.

While these informal networks based on reciprocal exchange were vital strategies of survival, they were also critical components of a counterdiscourse that enabled kids to critique the dominant culture and develop an alternative set of values against which the worth of individual lives could be measured. Because the kids existed toward the bottom of the moral and economic structure, they were in a position to see the discrepancies between the ideals of American culture and their actions—between respectable "fronts" and the deviant and exploitative behavior that "front" sometimes covers over.[41] Many developed an irreverent attitude toward society's "morality" and rejected as hypocritical the "respectable" world that condemned them while simultaneously purchasing their sexual services. Through collective performance and ritual, many creatively exploited the epistemological gaps, fractures, and contradictions of the social fabric and, in doing so, subverted the authority that establishes normative assumptions about sexuality, gender, and ability.

Kinship and religion—the very cardinal forms of sociality that are often placed in opposition to queer world making—are common frames through which street kids expressed mutual obligations and reciprocities. The social formations my informants call "street families" resemble the moral economies common among marginalized people with limited resources. People living at bare subsistence create patterns of reciprocity, pool resources, and create extensive networks of kin to ensure mutual survival. Carol Stack showed how African American families living at bare subsistence in central city districts establish "socially recognized kin ties" with people not related by blood to "maintain a stable number of people who share reciprocal obligations."[42] They are adaptive institutions developed for coping with poverty.[43] Street families served a similar function—but with a queer twist. The kids sexualized their kin relations, producing what Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner call "criminal intimacies": relations and narratives "that are only recognized as intimate in queer culture," including "girlfriends, galpals, fuckbuddies, tricks."[44] Drawing on my research, I would add, more incestuously, daddy, uncle, son, and mother—and, not least, the "Holy Father."

People in the scene drew on these relations to elaborate a world of belonging and transformation.

The syncretic religious formations I call "street churches" are essential sources of housing, food, and other material resources for abandoned youth in the central city. As such, they are part of the accumulation of obligations that comprised the performative economy. But religion was not simply a source of economic support or a form of solace in a precarious life. It offered a powerful critique of the moral order that cast street youth as unclean, damaged, and deserving of abandonment. The religions of subordinate classes, Scott argues, can represent "an alternative moral universe in embryo—a dissident subculture, an existentially true and just one, which helps unite its members as a human community and as a community of values."[45] Drawing on Christian scripture and ritual, queer ministers mobilized a gothic Christianity to devalue the rich and powerful and ascribe the greatest worth to the "least of these." They oversaw rituals that reconstituted the street scene and materialized its moral vision. Many ministers used scripture to reinterpret experiences of abandonment as collective sources of power, fueling their pathbreaking activism.

Street kids formalized the performative economy by establishing explicitly activist organizations, including Vanguard, founded in San Francisco's Tenderloin in 1966; Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), founded in Times Square in 1970; and the Lavender Panthers, founded in San Francisco's Tenderloin in 1974. Young organizers worked to meet street kids' needs—pooling resources for food, housing, and medical care—while also building shared political analyses of the structural inequalities that produced those needs in the first place. Organizers built on the preexisting web of reciprocities, kinship networks, and performance practices to forge a politics of mutual aid: a voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit done in conjunction with social movements demanding transformative change.[46] At its best, Dean Spade argues, mutual aid produces "new ways of living" and "systems of care."[47]

While the scene was animated by an ethics of reciprocity, there were as many exploitative dynamics operating within this world as threatening it from without. As a general rule, the kids considered relationships to be exploitative when they violated the norm of reciprocity. Business owners and johns were in a position to supply resources that street kids often desperately needed for their survival. These differences allowed them to poten-

tially take advantage of the needs of street youth and thus violate the norm of reciprocity, leading to situations that the kids considered "exploitative." I show throughout the book that economic and social changes—including the redevelopment and policing of downtown districts in the 1950s and 1960s, the HIV/AIDS and methamphetamine epidemics in the 1980s, and the economic and social transformations associated with urban neoliberalism from the 1990s through the 2020s—could radically undermine the mutual obligations, networks of mutual support, rate structures, and conventions by which the kids "had each other's backs." These changes could permit johns, police, and business owners to violate the performative economy, and often provided the indignation that fueled countless riots and rebellions.

Turn to Affect

My analysis of the scene grows out of my experiences with San Francisco queer politics in the first decade of the twenty-first century, when activists and academics were increasingly dissatisfied with a gay rights movement intent on state recognition, privatized family life, and individual economic interests: a politics often glossed as "homonormativity."[48] I organized with Gay Shame, a direct-action group that "shamed" the city's gay political establishment for its support of consumerism and gentrification. During the annual pride celebrations, we organized alternative events that brought together musical acts, speakers, and food to build an "anti-capitalist" space. I also devoured academic studies animated by longings for utopian queer futures and disappointment with a neoliberal political agenda, as Ann Cvetkovich wrote in her 2003 book *An Archive of Feelings*, based on "assimilation, inclusion, and normalcy."[49]

These political longings animated a "turn to affect" in the academy. Critics argued that affective experience, including the "negative" affects associated with shame and abjection, could serve as the grounds for forging new collectives and the basis for alternative models of queer politics. Queer scholars explored the counterintuitive power of shame (Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Jack Halberstam, Michael Warner); *sinvergüencería* (Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes); abjection (David Halperin, Darieck Scott); trauma (Ann Cvetkovich, Judith Butler); and "backward feelings" (Heather Love).[50] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick coined the evocative phrase *queer performativity* to refer to strategies for refiguring affects associated with shame and developing from them particular structures of creativity, power, and struggle.[51] This

affective turn reoriented the study of queer subjectivity to the conditions of a history marked by injury. Scholars examined "shameful" figures from the pre-Stonewall past, exploring negative affects, David Halperin and Valerie Traub wrote, "that have not totally disappeared from the lives of queer people with the allegedly newfound possibilities of gay pride."[52] Critics were more willing to "investigate the darker aspects of queer representation and experience," Heather Love wrote, "and to attend to the social, psychic, and corporeal effects of homophobia."[53]

These academic and activist currents animated my work on Polk Street and in the Tenderloin. In the 1960s, before a wide range of people began publicly proclaiming their sexual identities during the gay liberation movement, the Tenderloin was the epicenter of San Francisco's public queer life and the kids who gathered there were among the most visible manifestations of gender and sexual dissidence. A 1964 *Life* magazine article described the district as a "bleak agglomeration" of hamburger stands, cheap hotels, pornography shops, and "bottom-of-the-barrel bars" where one found "the stereotypes of effeminate males—the 'queens,' with orange coiffures, plucked eyebrows, [and] silver nail polish." One found "dope pushers and users, male and female hustlers . . . a few Lesbians, some 'gay' prostitutes, drunks and cheap con men."[54] Street kids embodied the stereotypes the gay rights movement would work to scrub clean over the following decades: that is, homosexuals as criminal, mentally ill, degenerate, and incapable of "responsible" participation in public life, their wanderlust figuratively connected with unrestrained sexuality.[55]

Since the 1960s, there has been a dramatic transition in the United States from rhetoric linking homosexuality with vice and criminality to the more recent articulation of the homosexual as a respectable form of sexual nonnormativity, one dissociated from the crime and vice of the city.[56] This transition is reflected in historical narratives that trace a monolithic "gay community" from the ghetto to respectable citizenship; from shame to pride; "from abjection to glorious community."[57]

These progress narratives render retrograde the queer and trans people who continued to make a home in the Tenderloin. In contrast to narratives that circulated widely of dramatic progress in the lives of queer people, I found a remarkably similar social world when I walked the streets of the Tenderloin in the 2010s and 2020s. The vice economies and material infrastructure—lodging houses, cheap restaurants, and coffee shops—continued to call to runaway and "throwaway" youth, trans women, immigrants, and sex workers

and continued to serve as a containment zone for the formerly incarcerated or people suffering from addiction and mental illnesses. Many outsiders saw the kids on the street as anachronisms—vestiges of a shadowy past when homosexuality was associated with poverty, crime, and addiction—to the extent that they were seen at all.

By researching the Tenderloin's history, I sought to join scholars like Love, who asked that "rather than disavowing the history of marginalization and abjection," we "embrace it, exploring the ways it continues to structure queer experience in the present."[58] I set out to explore the transformative impulses that spring from abandonment and document them as political resources.

I documented a local past rich in street-level queer solidarities and kinship networks, but instead of recording a simple story of home lost and found, I archived alliances that were far more ambivalent, contradictory, and ultimately more breathtakingly creative than I could have originally imagined. On the one hand, my informants described Polk Street and the larger Tenderloin as a space of abandonment in which low-income, immigrant, and "throwaway" populations—particularly queer and transgender youth—are corralled, policed out of other parts of the city, and left to die. At the same time, they described it as offering a space where they could form queer solidarities, share resources, and develop a sense of "self-worth" they did not find in their families of birth.[59]

I hung out at the trans nightclub Divas and talked with the club's manager and self-described female impersonator Alexis Miranda. Polk Street "will make or break you," she told me. "I've seen a lot die on Polk Street, chased down by a car and hit, get into fights and just bash their head and die right there." It "can be the worst place. But if you know all of those things and you overcome it, that creates a strength and a power for you—and it did exactly that for me." I recorded stories with Cecilia Chung, who told me she began fashioning a transgender identity in the early 1990s while dancing at a Tenderloin dive bar called the Motherlode. "It was one of the seediest bars in the city," she said. "You know that there was a lot of wheeling and dealing in and outside of the bar. And I felt that I found paradise." The Motherlode "would come to life at night, when the girls start to show up and their followers and their admirers show up. There was a little stage at the corner of the club where the girls would just go up and parade themselves, dancing as if they were angelfish in a fishbowl." Cecilia transformed herself through these performative encounters. "I was able to see my true self," she said, "through other people's eyes." There was an "element of extreme free-

dom and extreme despair, and definitely violence," Cecilia told me. "That's how to define Polk Street. It's a big paradox. And at the same time, people find validation, people find their connection to their own sexuality, to their own self-discovery, and to a community that's forgotten by most people outside."

This paradoxical dynamic has long defined San Francisco's queer Tenderloin. One of the most common stories I heard on the street and read in the archive was the story of the young person sapped of life and vitality. To enter the Tenderloin is to be "immediately caught up in its whirlpool," a hustler wrote in 1967. "Once they get caught, they become too weak to fight and are drawn down to the bottom." Their eyes are "cloudy" and their bodies "emaciated."[60] My informants told similar stories. "The world and the lifestyle, the culture—it tries to kill you," a genderqueer informant named Lala Yantes told me of Polk Street in the 1990s. "People in general love youth and vitality, but it gets sucked out of you so quickly." I focus on a less well-known story—one that relies on but creatively reframes the first—about street kids who metabolized social trauma into novel public cultures and collective action. They drew on the counterintuitive power of abjection through a variety of performative vernaculars and approached the streets and boulevards as "sites for nurturing counter-hegemonic affects, emotions, and norms about emotional display."[61] The subversive possibilities of repetition with a difference, via butch/femme, drag, street families, and religious ritual, provided the basis for restorative rituals and new forms of solidarity and kinship.

Moral Economy

While queer studies of affect show how people reinterpret the affective impacts of abandonment, they have little to say about how people manage the economic impacts of abandonment—an issue that was critically important to the kids on the street. For example, in one of the SRO hotels that lined Polk Street, I talked with Shane Gibson, also known as Yoyo, who told me they ran away from a sexually abusive home in the 1980s. "Back when I was first here, we watched each other's backs," Yoyo told me. "Like somebody needed to get well, we helped out with that. A couple would go to a needle exchange or get carryout back for us from different places to eat. Make sure our blankets and gear was watched. . . . We were a big family. We'd share expenses, camping and watching out for each other." Yoyo felt that an increas-

ingly affluent and respectable gay community, working to construct a proud heritage, would rather leave this history behind. "Like it or not," Yoyo said, "Polk Street is a part of our history. When we usually hear about Polk Street, we think of male prostitution and gay sex and . . . all those stereotypes and labeling." Yoyo instead highlighted histories of kinship and mutual support. "It was about family and friends—not so much as what *you* can do for *me* as to what *we* can do for each other. . . . That's what Polk Street taught me: it's not all about just *me* all the time."

I analyze the kids' strategies for managing the economic consequences of abandonment by building on the concept of moral economy, which shows that people living at bare subsistence often create patterns of reciprocity, pool resources, and create extensive networks of kin in order to increase the chances of survival. Without mutual support, fluctuations in the flow of available goods could destroy a community's ability to survive.[62] A moral economy references two related concepts: (1) a set of moral or values-based beliefs concerning economic agents, practices, or structures that are shared by a population; and (2) the actualization of these attitudes in specific social practices.[63] The advantage of the concept of moral economy is that it allows researchers to fold cultural values into political economy and thereby dramatize the moral debates over social change.

I borrow the concept from E. P. Thompson, who originated the term *moral economy* to refer to norms governing economic exchange among English peasants in the eighteenth century, and James Scott, who brought the concept to the attention of anthropology with his analyses of rural resistance to exploitation in Southeast Asia during the 1930s.[64] Instead of seeing food riots as irrational and instinctive reactions to hunger, Thompson argued that they "operated within a popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices in marketing, milling, [and] baking," and "a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community." This "delicate tissue of social norms and reciprocities" constituted the "moral economy of the poor."[65] An emerging capitalist market economy violated these norms and practices, leading to violent outbreaks of class conflict.[66] James Scott similarly argued that the economic and political transformations of the colonial era systematically violated the peasantry's vision of social equity, sparking major riots and rebellions. If we can understand the "indignation and rage" that prompted these actions, he argued, we can grasp what he calls their moral economy: "their notion of economic justice and their work-

ing definition of exploitation—their view of which claims on their product were tolerable and which intolerable."[67]

Anthropologists have more recently built on the moral economy literature to explore the ways market forces shape seemingly private relationships and kinship practices. In her study of contemporary commerce in Bangkok, Ara Wilson proposes the term *intimate economies* to denote interactions between economic systems and social life, particularly gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Global economies interact with local systems to create new social identities, including "tomboys," corporate tycoons, and sex workers.[68] Noelle Stout, in her research on male sex workers in Cuba as the island opened to foreign tourism, proposes the phrase *affective kin economies* to illuminate connections between the economic realm and the arena of familial bonds. Queer kinship terms offered a common frame through which gay male foreigners and Cuban sexual laborers solicit ongoing forms of affection, mutual obligation, and care. These kinship practices, while subverting dominant notions of biological kin, are "inextricably tied to forms of market capitalism."[69]

I show that the kids' performative economy developed through racialized sex tourism economies. In the late nineteenth century, for example, San Francisco located its vice zones in the racialized districts of Chinatown and the Barbary Coast. Social arrangements in these spaces opened up opportunities for life outside the norms of respectable Anglo-Saxon, middle-class, heterosexual marriage, producing what historian Nyan Shah calls "queer domesticity": female-dominated households, groups of Chinese "bachelors" cohabiting, and interracial relationships.[70] In the early 1900s, San Francisco's business and shopping districts expanded westward, cutting into the southern part of the red-light districts, and the city passed new laws that forced sex workers and venues for entertainment southward to the Tenderloin. By the 1920s, the Tenderloin had become San Francisco's de facto red-light district and the epicenter of queer life.[71] Nan Alamilla Boyd shows that the city's material interests in promoting sex tourism in the early twentieth century were a primary factor in the emergence of queer public cultures in districts like the Tenderloin. "As sexualized entertainments became part of San Francisco's allure," Boyd argues, "tourist industry dollars cast a thin veneer of protection around the city's queer entertainments."[72] By the late 1960s, redevelopment and police sweeps again forced the scene from the Tenderloin to the Polk Street corridor. My informants described Polk Street in the 1980s and '90s as a sexual marketplace in which clients—primarily white men—could fulfill sexual and often racialized fantasies.

My informants presented commercialized sex not as inevitably exploitative but as an often dangerous means of survival that enabled them to escape even worse dangers in their families of birth. Tamara Ching told me that sex work enabled her to develop a sense of self-worth. "Out of sex work I got esteem," she said. "I knew that people couldn't make fun of me because they couldn't *afford* me. Being one of the few Asian and Pacific Islander hookers back in the sixties and seventies, I was at a premium." Commercialized sex, in an ideal situation, is one component of the kids' performative economy, one that operates according to different values than those enforced by the dominant culture but which nonetheless serves to shore up the self-worth of the kids on the street.

Street kids often took pride in the fact that they were at the center of local vice economies. A twenty-five-year-old named Mathew, who made money by cleaning apartments and turning tricks on Polk Street when I met him around 2009, told me merchants might not always like him and other hustlers on the street, "but I think some of them are smart enough to know that a lot of the lure of Polk Street is *that*," he said. "That's why a lot of people come to Polk Street. So, you know, I mean a lot of them, if they feel like they want to keep their business, and make as much money as they do, then they tend to leave us alone." The cruel paradox for young sex workers was that the very qualities for which they were shunned and sometimes punished—the danger and abjection that was supposed to attend them—were also part of their allure. This paradox, too, became part of their performances.

Materials and Methods

My interdisciplinary approach cuts across disciplinary boundaries and the periodizations within them. As such, I must be explicit about the materials and methods I have employed.

My methods grow in large part out of my political and ethical commitments. I was not motivated by a need to "extract" information from informants or act as a dispassionate, academic observer. I felt an ethical responsibility to respond to the dehumanization and displacement of the people whose stories I was recording. Before writing up my oral history and archival research, I interpreted it through two public humanities projects designed to intervene in debates about gentrification, public safety, and the criminalization of homelessness. In collaboration with my informants

on Polk Street and the Tenderloin, I developed what Cvetkovich calls "an engaged public history that connects the past with the present to create a history of the present."[73]

From 2007 to 2009, "Polk Street: Lives in Transition" challenged gentrifiers' claims to be promoting "safety" and "family" by circulating alternative understandings of both concepts, alternatives drawn from oral histories I conducted with queer and trans people on Polk Street. I broadcast these stories through "listening parties," neighborhood dialogues, a multimedia exhibit, and radio documentaries. The project enabled my informants to assert their identities and insist on the existence of a collective history, fostered dialogue among groups competing for urban space, and forced developers and public officials to acknowledge the history of those people they were displacing. From 2010 to 2011, I directed "Vanguard Revisited," a historical reenactment project that introduced the history of Vanguard, a direct-action organization founded by Tenderloin street youth in 1966, to marginally housed youth in the Tenderloin. The project enlisted contemporary youth in interpreting the Tenderloin's history in relation to their own lives—to enter into conversation with and position themselves as part of a historical lineage. They drew genealogical connections between themselves and original Vanguard organizers, illuminating continuities and discontinuities in the lives of street kids over the previous fifty years. Contemporary youth ultimately staged a reenactment of the Vanguard rebellion that turned a street-level countermemory of trauma and resistance into a call for economic justice against the forces of gentrification and homonormativity.

These projects—which nurtured performative connections between past and present, the archive and the street, historical research and social activism—shaped my approach to this book, which often registers flashes of resemblance across temporalities. It is less an account of "how it really was" than it is an exploration of the social trauma and survival strategies that span the decades and therefore suggest some historical continuity in what my informants called the scene. I structure the book as a dialogue between the archive and the street—between ethnographic and historical methods—rather than a strict account of change over time. The historian who takes up this approach, Walter Benjamin argues, "stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary" and instead "grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one."[74]

I also draw on methods from performance historiography, as developed by Joseph Roach, Shannon Jackson, and Rebecca Bernstein, which broad-

ens the scope of historical inquiry by approaching embodied memory, gestures, and ritual as systems for learning, storing, and transmitting cultural knowledge.[75] A powerful current in performance studies contrasts "archival" memory—written and material texts that can be housed in an archive—with what Diana Taylor calls the "repertoire"—embodied memory and traditions of performance, including "gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral."[76]

An overreliance on "archival" memory can devalue the memory practices of marginalized publics. For Taylor, the political implications of this argument are clear. "If performance did not transmit knowledge," she argues, "only the literate and powerful could claim social memory and identity."[77] This does not mean we should align texts with domination and performance with subversion.[78] The "pursuit of performance," Roach argues, "doesn't require that historians abandon the archive" but does encourage them to "spend more time in the streets."[79]

Scholars show that cultural memory does not need to be actively written or archived. It can be remembered every day by those who practice ritualized traditions. Many street kids had a keen sense that they were performing roles that existed before they themselves came onto the scene. Rechy's fictional character in *City of Night* migrated through Times Square, New Orleans, Hollywood Boulevard, and the Tenderloin, all the while learning from other kids "the stance, the jivetalk—a mixture of jazz, joint, junk sounds—the almost-disdainful, disinterested, but, at the same time, inviting look; the casual way of dress."[80] He learned to play a role. "Certainly the hustler knows he hasnt created the legend of what he is in our world. Like other legends, it's already there, made by the world, waiting for him to fit it. And he tries to live up to what hes supposed to be."[81] The kids created and re-created the scene through attempts to "live up to" what came before them.

In this passage, Rechy succinctly expresses the concepts of "surrogation" and "effigies," as developed by performance studies theorist Joseph Roach. Roach argues that common definitions of performance—"repetition with a difference" or "restored behavior"—assume that it offers a substitute for something that preexists it. The rituals we perform—whether a religious sacrament, an everyday habit like tying one's shoes, or the rituals that constitute "gender"—have already been structured and given meaning by a culture. A performing body stands in for something it is not but must vainly aspire to replace. This practice of standing-in defines what Roach calls "surrogation." A performer's body is an "effigy" as it bears and

brings forth collectively remembered, meaningful gestures and surrogates for that which a community has lost, providing communities with a method of perpetuating themselves.[82] Street kids often had a self-consciousness about surrogation that could sometimes pass for reflexivity. Many embraced "role-playing," theatricality, and camp—the notion of "life as theater." By performatively blurring the lines between artifice and "reality," they called into question the moral order that cast them as damaged, deviant, and deserving of abandonment.

At the intersection of commerce and vice, tenderloin districts are examples of what Roach calls "vortices of behavior," spaces whose function "is to canalize specified needs, desires, and habits in order to reproduce them." Roach shows how architectural invention and social organization create spaces whose gravitational pull brings audiences together and produces candidates for surrogation.[83] Performers develop effigies by improvising within a scenario provided by the "behavioral vortex" of the setting itself.[84]

Street kids improvised within the scenario or on the "stage" of the central city. They adapted cultural forms specific to these districts—theater, advertising, and celebrity culture, especially—and developed from them three primary effigies: the queen, the hustler, and the minister. The street queen or hair fairy modeled their personas on the movie star and female prostitute, cultivating forms of inverted glamour through collective theatricality on the streets and boulevards. The hustler promoted himself as part of the central city's advertising culture, transmitting a masculine glamour by embodying three homoerotic icons of working-class American masculinity: the cowboy, the soldier, and the sailor. The minister forged kinship through reference to a suffering Christ, staging religious rituals that revalued the abject and the sacred. The kids created and re-created the scene through these archetypal queer figures that continue to exert influence on the queer cultural imaginary.

I ultimately produce a performance genealogy of the kids' scene—an exploration of what Roach calls "the transmission and dissemination of cultural practices through collective representations."[85] In constructing genealogies, the task is to note patterns in the transmission of these practices through time and to show how contemporary practices emerged out of specific struggles and exercises of power. It is not always motivated by a historical concern to understand the past—though any historical claims must be valid—but by a critical concern to understand the present.[86] I show how people in motion, with few material resources, developed a public culture and transmitted it intergenerationally via performance.

Performance genealogies can leave their traces in a variety of places, including archives, the streets, literature, and the rituals practiced by contemporary actors. Accordingly, I draw on and juxtapose a diverse set of sources to represent the performative economy: oral histories and archival research; newspaper and magazine articles; pulp novels, memoirs, and fiction; pornography and homophile newspapers; and the published archive of surveys and sociological studies. I draw on materials from LGBTQ-specific archives as well as labor, church, and theater archives; records held by social service organizations; and personal collections compiled by bartenders, johns, street kids, and sociologists. I ultimately built my own queer archive by collecting materials from my informants in the Tenderloin, most of which I donated to the GLBT Historical Society.[87]

Finally, I approach San Francisco's Tenderloin itself as an archive of performance and storytelling practices. Most cities have demolished or radically transformed their rooming-house districts. San Francisco's Tenderloin is one of the few central city rooming-house districts that remains largely intact, if under threat from gentrification.[88] I approach the district as one port on a migratory circuit that once connected tenderloin districts across the country. I show how the memories of particular times and places are embodied in the performances of people I met in the Tenderloin.[89] My encounters in the hotels and bars may not tell us what queer actors did in the past or in other tenderloin districts, but they do help clarify what kind of survival strategies these spaces of abandonment encouraged and what kind of challenges to normative thought they made possible.

Oral History and Performative Storytelling

The people I encountered in the Tenderloin were masterful storytellers. I met informants by hanging out at the bars, clubs, social service agencies, and churches, and through word of mouth. I conducted most interviews in apartment buildings, bars, churches, and some at the GLBT Historical Society, where the recordings and transcripts are currently archived. The people whose stories appear in this book range in age from their early twenties through their early eighties, though a preponderance were in their early forties to their early fifties. Roughly eight were from people who identified, at the time of the interview, as "street youth" or street hustlers. Many of the people I interviewed entered the Tenderloin as young runaways—surviving through prostitution or under-the-table work—and later climbed employ-

ment ladders to become bartenders, bouncers, hotel managers, social workers, ministers, and caregivers. They joined others to form the backbone of a distinct counterpublic with its own history, mythology, moral values, and economic norms.

My experiences in the Tenderloin transformed my approach to oral history methods. I came to the district devoted to social history, which assumes that researchers can produce a history "from below" by gathering data from the "underside," inserting it into a chronological narrative, and making "visible" that which had been hidden.[90] I found that this approach was not well suited to representing the subversive and performative aspects of Tenderloin narratives. My informants related intense stories—vivid accounts of childhood abuse and mystical experiences—that seemed to exceed historical analysis. When I opened the door of the GLBT Historical Society to greet one informant, he literally danced his way into the archive, contorting his body into the angular shapes characteristic of modern dance. Another responded to my request for data with poetic language that seemed designed to deliberately obfuscate. Others seemed to creatively stretch the truth. I talked with hustlers who told fantastic tales that strained credulity. I met bartenders who spun yarns about secret tunnels that once ran under Tenderloin bars—stories they likely knew were untrue.

I found that researchers before me recorded stories they felt were intentionally deceptive. In 1964, reporters writing about Toronto's "Trade Beat" listened to a group of street kids tell "remarkable" stories "of easy pickings and good times" before realizing that none of them actually "believed a word of these wild and wonderful stories."[91] Thomas Painter wrote in 1941 that sociologists visiting Times Square, plying their subjects with cash, may record stories, but they will be as "false" as the confidence men and "clip-artists" who populated the central city. "The man who buys 'French pictures' from a furtive sidewalk peddler," Painter wrote, "probably deserves to find, as he will, that he has purchased a small packet of neatly folded toilet paper." The stories hustlers tell are just as "phony." If one is looking for "color and allure," Painter wrote, "one will get color and information for one's book or to shock and delight one's pretty lady companion, but it will be adapted to the informant's or inquirer's mood, and by no chance will a syllable of it be true."[92]

I came in time to understand that stories in tenderloin districts are not so much "phony" as they are "performative": they construct or affect reality rather than merely describing it.[93] The function of a story in tenderloin

districts is not always to describe an objective reality but to act on it—to call forth and create a social world of fantasy and belonging. My informants told stories to reinvent themselves and manage the emotional impact of abandonment. Like the working-class lesbians interviewed by Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis, street kids were "constantly creating their lives" and developing "new guidelines for living" through the process of storytelling.[94] The stories they told were more than individual life preservers; they were distinctively communicative devices in the creation and re-creation of a shared performative economy.

For example, I spent months hanging out and recording stories with Coy Ellison, a bartender on Polk Street. Coy told me he fled an abusive home as a teenager in the 1970s and hitchhiked to Polk Street, where he changed his name, affected an Irish accent, and began passing himself off, more or less convincingly, as an "illegal Irish immigrant." The persona, as I show in chapter 4, endeared him to bartenders and business owners who secured him under-the-table work. It was also part of the labor that won him entrance into a street family composed of runaways, hustlers, and "lost kids." Most importantly, the masquerade—which Coy developed over twenty years, first as a street kid and later as a bouncer, bartender, and caretaker—enabled him to creatively reinterpret the abuse from which he was running. This drama took on meaning within a scene that embraced the paradox of masquerade: a social "truth" told through the form of deception.

I am ultimately less interested in whether a particular story is "true" than I am in what that story does in the world, how it ushers in a new state of affairs—how, in other words, it is a communicative device in the creation and re-creation of the performative economy. I build on the work of E. Patrick Johnson to approach life stories as "narrative performances" that offer insight into identity formation. Framing oral history as a "co-performance" between narrator and researcher "destabilizes notions of the truth and focuses more on 'truth' as experienced in the moment of the storytelling event." This not only means acknowledging that "both the researcher and the narrators are performing for one another" but also entails "paying attention" in a way that "engages the bodily presence of both the researcher and the researched in the moment of the narrative event."[95] Oral history "creates its own space of play in which we meet the other, and in which we see ourselves in the other." It is "a valuable tool for engaging the lives of the other, the self, and the self and other in each other's eyes."[96] I test oral

history against the documentary record with the knowledge that both can mislead and that each works best in critical dialogue with the other.

I build on Cvetkovich's work by showing how oral history can produce "a vast archive of feelings, the many forms of love, rage, intimacy, grief, shame, and more that are part of the vibrancy of queer cultures."[97] After we conducted oral histories, many about his history of sexual abuse, Coy Ellison could probably tell I was agitated and tense. He would tell me to "breathe." Oral history encounters often brought back to emotional life the feelings associated with abuse and abandonment. They also traumatized me in listening. Crucially, oral history encounters taught me that the affects associated with abandonment are at the heart of street families and street churches.

Because affective experience does not always take the form of language but is also expressed through the life of the body, I find meaning in nonverbal forms of expression, including dance, poetic language, and body language. Attention to the embodied, performative nature of oral history encounters is key to representing queer cultures. Oral history can produce a version of history "but also an archive of the emotions, which is one of trauma's most important, but most difficult to preserve, legacies."[98]

Finally, I follow oral historian Marie-Françoise Chanfrault-Duchet by showing that the most crucial information in an oral history is not always the answers to specific questions but "the narrative organization itself."[99] I pay close attention to the structure of my informants' oral narratives, which dramatize their sense of self and the shared politics of a public culture.

The structures of the narratives I recorded were strikingly different from those that generally mark gay and lesbian life stories. Narrators participating in queer oral history projects often justify their historical value by mapping their memories onto what Boyd calls the "intelligible gay/lesbian narrative structure" of the coming-out story.[100] The coming-out narrative, developed by gay liberation organizers in the late 1960s, seeks to resolve the conflict of stigmatized sexual identity by narrating a movement from the "closet" to awareness, from shame to pride, "from abjection to glorious community."[101] Actors who have taken this stereotypical trajectory are those most likely to tell their stories to historians, who in turn aggregate these narratives to construct what John Howard calls "history's 'coming out' narrative writ large": a story of invisible, isolated, and abject individuals transforming—usually after the 1969 Stonewall riots—into a visible, politicized, and "proud" community.[102] This movement from abjection to

glorious community—the structure of the coming-out story—continues to inform both personal and collective histories of liberation.

The stories I recorded trouble the hegemonic status of "coming out" as the primary framework through which we narrate queer history. Almost all the personal stories I recorded open with a recollection of abuse, rejection, and banishment by the families into which they had been born. Many sought sanctuary in tenderloin districts, but in these spaces of abandonment, scenes of childhood violence were restaged through social scenes that reenacted the "moral drama" of familial abuse: police violence, exclusion from sites of consumption, and, perhaps perceived as self-inflicted, slow deaths through drug abuse and diseases of poverty. While there are critical differences across space and time, the social trauma many experienced lay in the ongoing experience of a specific kind of social scene: throughout their lives, figures who stood in for the moral order—parents, police, psychiatrists, business owners, and juvenile detention authorities—made them feel that they were worthless and undesirable, unworthy of care and deserving of abandonment.[103] This dynamic continued to manifest in the 2010s, with the transformation of the Tenderloin from a queer working-class district to a gentrified entertainment destination. The most vulnerable and fugitive members of street families, such as homeless and transgender people of color, fought a losing battle against the neoliberal, homonormative neighborhood boosters who wanted them gone, "sweeping the streets clean" of trash.

The underlying structure of my informants' narratives was not the linear movement from abjection to liberation that defines the coming-out story. It was most often a cyclical return to scenes of childhood violence, reframing and reinterpreting those scenes to produce particular "structures of expression, creativity, [and] pleasure."[104] This narrative structure took many performative forms: florid, often gothic Christianity, especially Catholic narratives of a suffering Christ; allusion to the white masculinist Beat poets, who found the highest spirituality among the dispossessed; and collective theatricality on the streets and boulevards. My informants' primal memories of betrayal, abandonment, and abjection became in one way or another the touchstone—at once the password and magic armor—in the reconstitution of family via street families. Performativity is a matter of a different kind of reiteration of the norms by which one is constituted. I show throughout this book that street kids developed a shared repertoire of creative strategies for refiguring the affects and economics associated with social trauma into particular structures of power and kinship.

A final note on terminology: in most cases I depend on my informants to designate their own identifiers, which include historically specific terms such as female impersonator, transsexual, hair fairy, homosexual, kids, and kids on the street. In some cases, I take the liberty to use the categories "transgender" and "queer" for groups of people as a shorthand for a wide range of gender and sexual identities specific to historical periods before these words were popularized. Scholars show that the term *transgender* is a category of identity popularized in the 1990s that incorporates a diverse array of gender-variant people who had previously been understood as, and understood themselves to be, distinct kinds of people—including transsexuals, drag queens, butches, hermaphrodites, cross-dressers, and hair fairies.[105] I use the term to refer broadly to people who move away from the gender they were assigned at birth. I use the term *queer* in two somewhat contradictory ways: as a term that approaches sexual identity categories (such as "gay" and "heterosexual") as socially and historically constructed, and as a cross-historical umbrella term that encompasses a number of people who might identify as gay, lesbian, transgender, butch, femme, and otherwise sexually dissident.[106] I sometimes use the anachronistic term *they* to refer to people who are no longer living and whose gender identity is unknown. I use the terms *meat rack*, *the scene*, and *performative economy* throughout the book to reference the same concept: the kids' flexible and fraternal view of social norms and the proper economic functions of actors in the vice and amusement economies.

Organization and Chapter Outlines

Chapters 1 and 2 examine the kids' performative economy in central city districts across the United States, from the late nineteenth century through the 2010s. In chapter 1, "A Performance Genealogy of US Tenderloins," I draw on oral histories, archival research, and the published archive of surveys, sociological studies, and memoirs to survey the central city "stems" and amusement districts in and through which runaway and "throwaway" kids regularly circulated, usually in sync with the seasons or the local political climates. In chapter 2, "Street Churches," I juxtapose archival and ethnographic research to outline the crucial role that extra-ecclesiastic "street churches" have played within the networks of mutual obligation that comprise the kids' performative economy, exploring the ministries of River Sims (Polk Street, 2000s), Raymond Broshears (San Francisco's Ten-

derloin, 1960s–1980s), Michael Itkin (Times Square and the Tenderloin, 1960s–1980s), and Sylvia Rivera (Times Square, 1960s–1970s).

The remaining chapters focus on San Francisco's Tenderloin and Polk Street, from the 1960s through the 2020s. Chapter 3, "Urban Reformers and Vanguard's Mutual Aid," examines the history of Vanguard, a direct-action organization founded in 1966 by street kids, hustlers, and young adults in the Tenderloin. I turn to original oral histories and archival research to show how Vanguard formalized the web of reciprocities, obligations, and religious practices I refer to as the kids' performative economy. In a brief "intervention" after chapter 3, I analyze Vanguard Revisited, a historical reenactment project I launched in 2010. In chapter 4, "The Urban Cowboy and the Irish Immigrant," I tell the stories of two migrants who fled abusive homes for Polk Street in the 1970s and 1980s. I first give an account of Coy Ellison, who reinvented himself on Polk Street as an "illegal Irish immigrant." I then tell the story of Corey Longseeker, a once iconic "urban cowboy" of the Tenderloin in the 1980s who, by the time I met him, was a destitute thirty-nine-year SRO resident. Their performances dramatize the promises and perils of the kids' performative economy.

In chapter 5, "Polk Street's Moral Economies," I draw on ethnographic and archival research to focus on the transformation of Polk Street from a working-class queer commercial corridor to a gentrified entertainment destination in the first decade of the twenty-first century. I show that the economic and social transformations associated with urban neoliberalism radically undermined the social patterns that constituted the street kids' performative economy. A second "intervention" reflects on my experience as director of "Polk Street Stories," which drew on life stories to shape debates about gentrification and displacement in this highly polarized setting. A conclusion examines efforts in the 2010s and early 2020s to memorialize queer and trans histories on Polk Street and the Tenderloin Mid-Market corridor, two sites where the kids' performative economy took shape.

Throughout the book, I center the kids on the street—those who live at the intersections of economic precarity, racialized surveillance, and sexual respectability politics—to highlight an ethics of reciprocity and mutual aid. Enacting dramas of survival on the margins of mainstream life, street kids received and provided care to survive in environments that challenged their very existence.

NOTES

Introduction

1 Bobby White, "San Francisco's Red-Light Denizens Fight to Stay Seedy," *Wall Street Journal*, October 24, 2006.

2 Throughout the book, I refer to narrators using the names that they themselves used when they interacted with me. These may have been "given" birth names, street names, or pseudonyms. In some cases, I use multiple names to refer to the same person.

3 S. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 15.

4 Heap, *Slumming*, 19.

5 D. Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, 89.

6 Rechy, *City of Night*, 88.

7 Larry Littlejohn et al., "Drugs in the Tenderloin: A Publication of the Central City Target Area Board," January 1967, box 14, folder 13, Lucas (Donald Stewart) Papers, GLBTHS.

8 On assemblages, see Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

9 Conquergood, *Cultural Struggles*, 35.

10 For this formulation, see J. Scott, *Moral Economy*, 6.

11 Povinelli, *Empire of Love*, 128.

12 Schechner, *Future of Ritual*, 1.

13 Conquergood, *Cultural Struggles*, 127–69.

14 On the term *kids* in the 1920s and 1930s, see D. Johnson, "Kids of Fairytown," 98.
15 Guy Strait, "Young Rejects Form Organization," *Cruise News & World Report* 2, no. 7 (July 1966). See also Guy Strait, "The Tenderloin Report Rejected," *Cruise News & World Report* 2, no. 5 (May 1966). Guy Strait published several "bar rags" from 1961 to 1967, including *L.C.E. News*, *The News*, *Citizens News*, *Bar Rag*, and *Cruise News & World Report*.
16 Laurence Tate, "Exiles of Sin, Incorporated," *Berkeley Barb*, November 11, 1966.
17 DePastino, *Citizen Hobo*, 72–75.
18 Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs*, 17; Canaday, *Straight State*.
19 Anderson, *On Hobos and Homelessness*.
20 Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy*, 66–67; Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 89; Canaday, *Straight State*, 99.
21 Thomas Painter, "Male Homosexuals Vol 2: The Prostitute," ca. 1941, p. 135, series II, D. 1, vol. 10, Painter Collection (hereafter Painter, "Prostitute").
22 Painter, "Prostitute," 71.
23 Rechy, *City of Night*, 32.
24 Guy Strait, "The Lavender Lexicon, Dictionary of Gay Words and Phrases," Strait and Associates, June 1, 1964, GLBTHS.
25 Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 20.
26 Canaday, *Straight State*, 99.
27 Rechy, *City of Night*, 132.
28 Untitled document ca. 1930s, p. 8, box 128, folder 7, Ernest Watson Burgess Papers, 1886–1966, SCRC.
29 Baker, "Introduction," 8–9.
30 Nestle, "Flamboyance and Fortitude," 18; Newton, "'Drag Queens,'" 132.
31 Kennedy and Davis, *Boots of Leather*, 379.
32 Reay, *New York Hustlers*, 16.
33 Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy*, 109.
34 Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy*, 237.
35 C. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," 444.
36 DePastino, *Citizen Hobo*, xvii.
37 Holmes, "End of Queer Urban History?," 161.
38 C. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," 480.
39 J. Scott, *Moral Economy*, 168.
40 On reciprocity, see Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*; Mauss, *Gift*; Belshaw, *Traditional Exchange and Modern Markets*.
41 For this formulation, I am indebted to Newton, *Mother Camp*.
42 Stack, *All Our Kin*, 29.
43 Stack, *All Our Kin*, 25.
44 Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public," 558.
45 J. Scott, *Moral Economy*, 240.
46 Spade, *Mutual Aid*, 11.

47 Spade, *Mutual Aid*, 1.

48 Lisa Duggan defines "homonormativity" as a politics that does not contest heteronormative assumptions and instead embraces "a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption." See Duggan, *Twilight of Equality*, 50. Sara Warner defines "homoliberalism" as the "quest for acceptance, legitimacy, and formal equality through a program animated by individual economic interests, a privatized sexual politics, and a constricted notion of national-public life." See Warner, *Acts of Gaiety*, 2.

49 Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 11.

50 On queer studies of affect, see Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*; Love, *Feeling Backward*; Halperin, *What Do Gay Men Want?*; Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*; Darieck Scott, *Extravagant Abjection*; La Fountain-Stokes, "Gay Shame, Latina- and Latino-Style"; Halberstam, "Shame and White Gay Masculinity."

51 Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 63–65.

52 Halperin and Traub, *Gay Shame*, 10.

53 Love, *Feeling Backward*, 2.

54 Paul Welch, "Homosexuality in America," *Life*, June 26, 1964, 68.

55 Canaday, *Straight State*, 99.

56 Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 49.

57 Love, *Feeling Backward*, 28.

58 Love, *Feeling Backward*, 29.

59 Chris Roebuck makes a similar observation in his study of Polk Street. See Roebuck, "'Workin' It.'"

60 Littlejohn et al., "Drugs in the Tenderloin."

61 Gould, *Moving Politics*, 41.

62 J. Scott, *Moral Economy*, 3; Stack, *All Our Kin*, 25.

63 Sandberg, "Moral Economy and Normative Ethics," 177.

64 E. P. Thompson, "Moral Economy of the English Crowd"; J. Scott, *Moral Economy*.

65 E. P. Thompson, "Moral Economy of the English Crowd," 79.

66 E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common*, 271.

67 J. Scott, *Moral Economy*, 3.

68 Wilson, *Intimate Economies of Bangkok*.

69 Stout, "When a Yuma Meets Mama," 668.

70 Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 77–104.

71 Sides, "Excavating the Postwar Sex District," 359; Symanski, *Immoral Landscape*, 134; Shumsky and Springer, "San Francisco's Zone of Prostitution."

72 Boyd, *Wide-Open Town*, 15.

73 Arondekar et al., "Queering Archives," 222.

74 W. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 263.

75 D. Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, 89. On performance historiography, see Roach, *Cities of the Dead*; Jackson, *Lines of Activity*; Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*.

76 D. Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, 20.
77 D. Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, xvii.
78 Conquergood, *Cultural Struggles*, 40.
79 Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, xii.
80 Rechy, *City of Night*, 32.
81 Rechy, *City of Night*, 360.
82 Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 36.
83 Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 28.
84 Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 89–90.
85 Roach, "Mardi Gras Indians and Others," 462.
86 Garland, "What Is a 'History of the Present'?"
87 The bartender James Beales collected materials from his aging patrons and stored them in his Polk Street apartment. He donated these materials to me, and I, in turn, donated them to the GLBT Historical Society. Similarly, Dan Diez gave me a series of letters that Corey Longseeker wrote him in the 1990s. Beales's and Diez's materials are now archived as part of the Polk Street Project Collection. Additionally, I traveled to Tucson, Arizona, and accessioned the Toby Marotta collection of Prospero Project records, which is now stored at the GLBT Historical Society.
88 Groth, *Living Downtown*, 133–37.
89 Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, xi.
90 On social history methods, see Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 153; P. Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, 8.
91 "The Hu$tler," *Two: The Homosexual Viewpoint in Canada*, 1964, 24.
92 Thomas Painter, "Homosexuality: An Introduction," 1941, p. 29, series II, D. 1, vol. 8, Painter Collection.
93 Scholars trace the term *performative* to J. L. Austin's 1962 "How to Do Things with Words." Austin attacked the philosophical view that utterances chiefly serve to state facts and thus can be deemed true or false according to the truth or falsity of the facts they state. He introduced the "performative" as a category of utterance that has no truth value since it does not describe the world but acts on it—it is a way of "doing things with words." See Austin, "How to Do Things with Words"; Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution"; Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 5.
94 Kennedy, "Telling Tales," 61.
95 E. P. Johnson, *Sweet Tea*, 8.
96 E. P. Johnson, *Sweet Tea*, 9.
97 Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 7.
98 Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 167.
99 Chanfrault-Duchet, "Narrative Structures," 81–82.
100 Boyd, "Who Is the Subject?," 188.
101 Love, *Feeling Backward*, 28.
102 Howard, *Men Like That*, 13.

103 I borrow the phrase *social trauma* from Judith Butler, who defines it as an "extended experience" that takes the form "of an ongoing subjugation, the restaging of injury through signs that occlude and reenact the scene." See Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 36. I borrow the phrase *moral drama* from Kathryn Dudley. See Dudley, *Debt and Dispossession*, 139.
104 Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity," 13.
105 On the development of transgender as an identity category, see Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges"; Valentine, *Imagining Transgender*.
106 Somerville, "Queer."

1. A Performance Genealogy of US Tenderloins

1 On migration and queer publics, see Tompkins, "Intersections of Race, Gender, and Sexuality"; Povinelli and Chauncey, "Thinking Sex Transnationally."
2 S. Hartman, *Wayward Lives*, xiv.
3 Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, 13.
4 Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 61.
5 Heap, *Slumming*, 20.
6 Keire, *For Business and Pleasure*, 3.
7 Keire, *For Business and Pleasure*, 9.
8 On the construction of tenderloin districts, see Heap, *Slumming*; Keire, *For Business and Pleasure*; Sears, *Arresting Dress*; Capó, *Welcome to Fairyland*; LaFleur, *Natural History of Sexuality in Early America*; Wild, "Red Light Kaleidoscope."
9 See Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*; Keire, *For Business and Pleasure*, 7.
10 Keire, *For Business and Pleasure*, 11.
11 W. Taylor, *In Pursuit of Gotham*, 95.
12 Gilfoyle, "Policing of Sexuality," 297.
13 Newspaper articles from the late nineteenth century note that areas with vice economies offered "prime cuts" for madams and graft opportunities for politicians and police officers. See Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*.
14 Keire, *For Business and Pleasure*, 3; Rosen, *Lost Sisterhood*, xii.
15 Keire, *For Business and Pleasure*, 138.
16 Symanski, *Immoral Landscape*, 129.
17 Califia, "City of Desire."
18 On the construction of whiteness, see Roediger and Barrett, "In Between Peoples"; Roediger, *Working toward Whiteness*.
19 Painter, "Prostitute," 121.
20 See Roediger, *Working toward Whiteness*; Holmes, "End of Queer Urban History?"
21 Holmes, "End of Queer Urban History?"
22 "Dear Cornelia," letter from Thomas Painter, January 18, 1966, p. 1, Painter Collection.