

Unbearable Fruits

by

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~~Robyn Moran~~

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Dissertation Front Matter

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Author's Declaration

This thesis consists of material all of which I authored or co-authored: see Statement of Contributions included in the thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public

Statement of Contributions

This dissertation is comprised of three manuscripts and surrounding material (media, archives, bits, pieces) to account for the usual chapters otherwise absent (for example, for methodological purposes there is no methodology chapter¹).

This thesis consists in part of three manuscripts written for publication. Exceptions to sole authorship of material are as follows:

I was affiliated with the University of Waterloo while completing my doctoral studies, where I, under the supervision of Dr. Lisbeth Berbary, spent hardly any time at the actual University of Waterloo at all. The research itself is not something that was bound by a typical *research* process, though the entirety of it was done with at least some form of check-in or conversation with Lisbeth. Manuscript #1 (*Placemaking as Unmaking*), was co-authored with Lisbeth, who supervised and shepherded some of my earliest ideas around these topics into form.

Out of the isolation of my comprehensive exams, I wrote Manuscript #2 (*Queerness as/and political attunement*) without supervision and submitted it to publication independently, inevitably always in conversation with people who help me hone my ideas and thinking recursively.

I engaged in delightful conversation with my committee, and also met with Drs. Shana MacDonald and Bryan Grimwood independently, though I wish we had more time coming-and-going and less pre-scripted. Nevertheless, their input has been most relevant to the representational choices I made for Manuscript #3 (*No Rainbows*). We (and including possible

¹ On defending, though only loosely required, I am asked with some emphasis to give ever so slightly more methodology than I have (i.e., I am told *no* that there must be *some* methodology present on the page by name. See Appendix G for my addendum. I want this document to be *teachable* – that is, I know at times as I approached post methodologies and spaces, I felt daunted by the lack of instruction while obviously aware that that was entirely the point. Perhaps I wished someone had made space for my *feeling daunted*. I comply, for these reasons (see p. 90).

others, obviously Lisbeth too) are now working out of this data to plan a fourth manuscript not contained in this dissertation, teasing out the finding related to gentrification as settler colonial affect, and the methodological frameworks that permit these sorts of findings, perhaps...*(hopefully)*.

After my first terms at the University of Waterloo, and after publishing Manuscript #1 and #2, Dr. Bryan Grimwood's SSHRC Insight Development Grant supported this work by providing me with internal funding. Dr. Lisbeth Berbary, my supervisor, is a co-investigator on Dr. Grimwood's grant. This support was immense, generous, and helped me focus on my studies in a way that I cannot repay.

As lead author of the entire dissertation and associated media and manuscripts for publication, I was responsible for contributing to conceptualizing study design (and associated rejections-of-requirements along the way), fieldwork, memory-work, somatic work, gestating work, writing work (torture, but different than gestating), and drafting, and revising, and failing to proof-read, and submitting manuscripts. I received (and still fortunately receive) the most generous care-work and shadow-supervision from (my dear friend - *the K to my L*), mk Stinson (see Moran & Stinson, accepted; Berlant & Stewart, 2019 for the referential nod). I live in conversation, write in isolation, and am learning to find ways to do both congruently, simultaneously.

Abstract

Counter to my bodily instincts, abstract writing demands we make something evident in the interest of time (Loveless, 2019). I've been bound-up-in in state power, settler colonialism, neighbourhood change and/or gentrification, queer politics, homonationalism, mobilities, and placemaking (or place-taking and place un-making). Accordingly, I have situated at the nexus of political economy (i.e., neoliberalism, rainbow capitalism, racial capitalism) and “the cultural politics of emotion” (i.e., affect theory). I've organized the fruits of this labour in three manuscripts (crucially, supported by a handful of addendums, audio-visual, and arts-based components). Across this work, I argue that although "gentrification" lacks consensus definition or measure, as we move towards a more entangled understanding, identification with neighbourhood change processes like 'gentrification' (e.g., an emerging *sense* of loss, *fear* of change, *felt* exclusion, *attuning* to power) may produce an uncomfortably self-aware political dissonance, where Canadian settler colonialism is operates quietly through the (re)production of queer space. This tension is well symbolized by the growing tendency to include Indigenous design motifs (e.g., a medicine wheel, purple symbolizing Two Row Wampum) as part of the now commonplace rainbow crosswalk. In our worried clammer for cultural sustainability, memorialization, and/or to save the gaybourhood and gay bar from its post-gay demise, have we ignored the ways queer placemaking may also be place-taking? With that in mind, I guess I am left wondering: Why would someone ever want to read this document? It's grievous stuff. “Unbearable,” insofar as the relief from one anxiety affords another, resulting in what Berlant

(2022, p. 151) described as “a threat that feels like a threat.” I don’t want to be “*here*”² (Jones et al., 2020, p. 402).

~~*there should not be a document there should not be a document there should not be a document*~~

² See p. 44 for this citation used in text and in context. Until then: Jones et al., 2020 (p. 402) describe “*here*” as “not only a terrible time, but also the end of (lived) time.” I’ve already established this is a dissertation about shame (e.g., twins at 19, dying birds, queer failure). Second to that, this is a dissertation about temporalities (e.g., Freeman, 2010).

Acknowledgements

Comprising:

- (1): Land and Territorial
- (2) Governmental
- (3) Institutional
- (4) Relational
- (5) Alternative Format

Acknowledgements 1: Land and Territorial

My dissertation comprised the committed practice to writing across space and time in a non-linear fashion. This commitment made it difficult to align with a variety of stylistic conventions. Although the convention of a territorial or land acknowledgement itself isn't something I particularly aspire to (Ahmed's 2006; 2019) description of speech acts in the non-performativity of anti-racism are *useful* here as the simple remark that words are sometimes a way of *not doing things*), my own lack of clear attachment³ to land is troubling, at least to me. When I understood myself to be a victim of gentrification⁴, I would have said something about how gentrification encourages transient communities, which are bad, and moved hopefully towards *placemaking* as its antidote. I would have accounted for my entire lack of permanence, or perhaps *fear of permanence*⁵ as a symptom of gentrification-related-grief. Make no mistake, I did love my home for the time when I felt it was possible to sustain it. Writing across space and

³ Berlant et al. (2011) remind that in order to sustain living, you need attachments. There's a problem here, for me.

⁴ This concept is well operationalized in placemaking as unmaking, though always inadequate.

⁵ j, mk, *fear of permanence*, other dreams of collectives, youthful ambition, vim and vigor – an acknowledgement would never be enough. What a stupid way to thank a friend. I put a message in a box on a hike in Manitoba at some place I will never return to. It said: *Fear of Permanence*, obviously, but I used a sharpie on wood. The tension necessary to sustain a trio is immense. We failed in the most beautiful way, and yet, we all continue in some sort of synchrony and tolerance and harmony and care and respect and *want for a better future, or some future...* I have learned so much and love you both for that forever, *incommensurably*, and weirdly, as a trio too. v/r

time is, I would have said, the output of my not wanting to be emplaced lest I be *taken out of place* again. If the sentiment of anti-gentrification is “I won’t go,” I have fashioned my life and associated documents as: “I won’t stay.”

Carpio et al. (2022, p. 179) explained: “The language of settlement in the theorization of settler colonialism is a misnomer, and an ontologically violent one, insofar as it elides and actively disguises the structured mobilities through which settler colonial societies have been and continue to be produced.” It’s important I now say: being *placeless* runs the risk of being violently settler colonial (Carpio et al., 2022). Not wanting my accounting of my settler colonial mobility to read as a *move to innocence* (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 20), I should also note: my mobility is also an affordance of settler / colonial power.

The first land acknowledgement I learned was for Mi'kma'ki, the territory of the Mi'kmaq (what I call often by its settler name, my birthplace of Halifax, Nova Scotia – I won’t do the thing of pretending I call it otherwise on paper). That land acknowledgement said “we are all treaty people” but it took me a long time (probably too long) to understand what a “treaty” was nor how I was meant to enact it. I do not want to make these same mistakes or perpetuate them for unknowing readers. We have to start somewhere. For clarity’s sake, I am writing in alignment with the 94 Calls to Action published in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* report. Learning and enacting these calls is relevant in the context of this research, which has been funded largely by Canada’s federal government, via the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* doctoral fellowships program.

The affront of a word like *placeless* as a research imperative is that it inevitably describes simply what has had little *place-attachment* to me. These are inevitably those same places that have ongoing and embedded Indigenous cultural meaning, history, rights, struggle, and

significance. Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq, was my only land acknowledgement for nearly 30 years. This acknowledgement was written, however, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. Prior to that, I was unexpectedly emplaced through the pandemic in the Niagara Region of Ontario, on the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. I wrote most of my dissertation there and birthed a child who might someday call on those lands, despite only living there six months because of me. Sincerely, I had intended to spend more time moving between the Niagara Region, and (what I thought was) a defacto home in Rochester, New York. But, time on the lands of the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, was constrained due to border closure and a slew of other crises. This is significant where *home* and perhaps *place* might have more to do with a momentary feeling or firing synapse and mis-firing pupil dilating than it does a particular mapped location and principal residence over time. In the end, it's the University of Waterloo where this dissertation will be published in institutional repository, and where I am funded and paid. My *alma matter*, forever and ever now. I moved to Kitchener, Ontario at a time when it was described as having some of the fastest growing rent rates in Canada. Having already said what I did about any “I won't stay” placeless imperative of my gentrification research (Relph, 1976), The University of Waterloo is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples, situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. Because I didn't always know what I meant when I said, “we are all treaty people,” I have lived and worked across these places in while trying to emplace my understanding of gentrification in

a broader settler colonial Canadian context. My efforts are ongoing, local, and academic. Land acknowledgement is but one (always potentially performative) act.

[I drove across the country again, but that's an aside. *Absence as data here too.*]

Acknowledgements 2: Governmental

I am uncomfortable with political dissonance. I am stretching towards my own congruency, ideally. Not unsurprisingly, leisure work is critical of state power because leisure is often seen as dichotomous to work. Even the most conservative leisure scholarship has a liberal feel. I was not interested in studying for a job, which is how I ended up here, on this page, as a leisure researcher. I read and write alongside, through, and with (variably) queer, left, liberatory, abolitionist, anti-capitalist, and/or anarchist politics. I am sympathetic and often in solidarity, but when my fear-of-systems and aversion-to-state-involvement gets outpaced by fear-of-an-abuser, fear-of-a-lover, I start to sniff out some binary (but aspirational) political thinking that has kept me stuck, and unsafe. Funny to acknowledge government, of all things.

In November 2022, from a domestic violence shelter in Winnipeg, Manitoba, I called the 1-800-Domestic-Violence intake line I had just been handed on scrap paper. I had *also* just been assaulted (again). I (was) terrified of police, and aspired way-too-foolishly abolitionist – remember the timing of this work (e.g., we were painting *Black Lives Matter* on the road, for example). Jennifer returned my call, and my road forked. Through my final term and settling in to single parenting, Jennifer used her multiple understandings of power to help me find congruent and trauma-informed ways of participating in systems I thought I was averse to because of the ways I had historically configured self-and-state. Thank you for walking with me to safety.

I write against *all* binaries.

Acknowledgements 3: Institutional

My city flitting has been a supported endeavour. Institutional affiliations have afforded me access to spaces I otherwise would not have lived, worked, or travelled.

First - my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Lisbeth A. Berbary. In December 2020, at review of my proposal documents and before I put together the stop motion film that became entirely (mis-referred) to as my proposal, you asked where or how you appeared in the work. I had wandered off quite a distance at that stage in the work. You didn't appear given the wandering, though. I saw this absence, perhaps indirectly, as a reflection of my good learning and increasing competence reading and writing with theory. But I am not fashioning myself a lone wolf academic. It was a call in to conversation. Because comprehensive exams were over and we knew more about the constraints of working in entire isolation (I hate it), we rolled up sleeves for a moment of focus. (*Laying the track*) One recorded call where we talked through the aspirations we shared for my dissertation work. I listened a lot and worked out from there. I wander again. Read eternally. Read *differently*. This is the space of acknowledging. You could call it the space of *becoming* (see: *Becoming Coalition*). Because of this space, I know now, the purpose was always to take risks.

My time at the University of Waterloo was also robustly supported by other faculty, particularly my committee members Dr. Bryan Grimwood (in RLS) and Dr. Shana MacDonald (in Communication Arts). Because of their care, I've been able to take whatever 'risks' I have in a very stepwise, supported manner. Thank you for the space to do this the way I needed to. There was never any other option. The care is exceptional in the context of the risk taking, but what it does is make the notion of risk much more illusionary than real (mostly). Thank you for making this process safe.

I have also been so incredibly over the course of my doctoral studies to sustain meaningful and valuable collaborations with colleagues at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia – in particular, my former master's supervisor and ongoing collaborator and dear friend, Dr. Karen Gallant, and more recently at the University of Manitoba, where I am scheduled to begin a postdoc with a longstanding un-official mentor and someone I don't mind getting lost with, Dr. Fenton Litwiller. I cannot imagine doing this PhD or writing it up without acknowledging the 'many hands' helping this learning effort (and helping me, as a human) quietly, behind the scenes.

Acknowledgements 4: Relational

[{Listen, Listen, Listen by Wintersleep}](#)⁶.

I wrote acknowledgements in the outputs of my two previous degrees according to normative conventions. Gramsci's *hegemony* shows up here. I gave my head to the leash like an obedient dog unquestioning. I'm ashamed, or I was. Saying less is the safer option. Any glaring omissions in my acknowledgements have been accounted for by Halberstam (2005) in *In a Queer Time and Place*, or have been deliberately omitted. It's about family, in many ways. Without a bad script, what remains is endless theory and this:

my sister got pregnant as a teen with twins and chirps a pet name at her youngest: baby bird
my mother ~~winces when she~~ says she can remember the day we existed independently⁷
nobody held a mirror⁸
that same year when i *existed*, my mother wouldn't let me get hepatitis at a basement tattoo shop
i had some devious ideas with a book⁹ that had a dead bird on the cover
existing took *such* effort and determination
my parents named me ~~robyn~~ with a y, but it was a glaring error in my view
my dad sang *Three Little Birds* and i understood there to be a promise about who I was (am) and
what the future would be (or could be, but is not) – worry free.
it was never about hepatitis prevention really, was it?
mostly, this dissertation swirls around the topic of *shame* and does so by both acknowledging
hierarchies while working tirelessly to undermine them¹⁰



Figure 1: Cover image from Halberstam's (2011) "A Queer Art of Faliure"

⁶ "you're prettier than anything that i'd write"

⁷ I'm talking about a *part off/from* and/or, *apart off/from* (Berbary, 2014).

⁸ Lacan's (1949) *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the 'I' Function* and the associations between the psychoanalytic tradition and queer theory are peppered throughout this work and entangled in my everyday living.

⁹ Not Halberstam

¹⁰ Halberstam (2020)

eilah –

the sound of the ocean in a shell and it's a ruse.

i wanted to name you silas¹¹.

i wrote this with you sitting under the oldest oak tree that hurricane katrina left standing in a park that used to be a plantation.

i will be sorry forever.

¹¹ Thinking about Silas and the broken pot, Ahmed (2016, n.p.) asked: “Could clumsiness provide the basis for a queer ethics?”

Acknowledgements 5: Alternative Format (*On writing together with primary texts*)

Funny to land here, in the place of non-arrivals.

{Glowing Brightly – Florist}

Moran, R., & Stinson, M.J. (accepted). *On writing together with primary texts*. Submitted to Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, & Tourism Education (TEFI Special Issue).

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QSIJR0mpHY2oDPB1onS20p92TaXGKzjl/view?usp=sharing>

Note: this paper is an “excessive” piece of archive writing and theory-home making and is therefore bounded outside the content of this dissertation but included where this would be an irreparably broken archive of my learning, otherwise. This is not ‘part of my dissertation’ (i.e., this is not one of the three required manuscripts), but it would not make sense not to include it as it is without a doubt, part of this archive. It is also, without a doubt, excessive.

**I have now, in dialogue, experienced the crisis of representation (e.g., Loveless, 2019).

Dedication: A note on *absence as data*

An endlessly thought provoking and lingering teaching from my master's supervisor (and now someone I call my friend), Dr. Karen Gallant, is that sometimes 'no data' (i.e., silence, a participant's inability to answer an interview question, the pause before uncomfortable laughter, what isn't mentioned, etc.) *is data*. Mazzei (2007) attends to this in *An Absent Presence: Theorizing Silence* and pulls on Glesne (1999). Karen shepherded me through this learning, where I came to find silence some of the most compelling data, asking participants questions like: "How do you know when gentrification is underway?" *Silence*. Simultaneously, as I transcribed and counted silences, I started saying I hated Critical Discourse Analysis (as I had taken the methodology up, at least. That is, predominately through Gee and Fairclough who had me transcribing silence). I know now these were just growing pains. Oddly, for the methods that made me leave methodology altogether, I can't seem to even omit a section of dissertation without a quick search:

"Discourse analysis + [...]"

In this case: *"Discourse analysis + dedication"* represents my teasing apart the thesis structure, and therefore, aspects of humanist methodology and knowledge production. What sorts of power structures and politics are implicated in the ways we do (or do *not*) acknowledge others along the way? What sorts of teaching lets us get curious about power, to begin with? What sorts of *moves* do (or do not) transpire in writing that allow the reader to glean sincere reflection and appreciation without the words themselves being *uttered*? What *actors* strike you as absent? I use critical discourse analysis to write myself out of a blank dedication page.

And it is because of the care-full way I was taught to approach critical discourse analysis (*what a gift*), that I now know *silence*, like a blank page, represents an unfavourable position (Nikolić, 2016, p. 1).

And so, I keep writing.

Anti-Dedications and/or Counter Discourses

Michael Forward and Gillian Forward:

For shame.

For shame.

For shame.

For shame.

For shame.

For shame.

For shame.

For shame.

For shame.

*But most importantly: **Your** shame.*

Despite you both.

Despite it all.

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The university calls this section “Quotations Etc.”

On trauma, unmanageable content, and ‘unrepresentability’

Because I am a traumatized person (see p. xx), and from a place of sincere care for those who might be similarly (or differently) traumatized, my work swirls around my own trauma because I somewhere thought that I could think my way into relief. Berlant et al., (2011) said: “Optimism and trauma do the same thing. It lights up a part of your brain that makes you non-sovereign.” That is, I thought learning about my trauma might help me make sense of systemic failures and state power, among other things. The purpose of my work and engaging in affect is never to ‘rouse another’s trauma as re-experience. I am not writing trauma porn, and I am against the parading of trauma students (myself included) must do to compete when a transcript is marred by a life that is hard. This is about wanting things to be different, and making creative (queer) ins.

In 2014, queer theorist Jack Halberstam was giving a talk where he considered the (too) frequent use of trigger warnings in American classroom settings. In the talk, he’s not worried about offending students at all. He’s talking about managing “unmanageable content” – things you might call *unbearable* (Berlant, 2022). At the University of Southern Carolina, Halberstam was teaching *ARLT 100g: The Holocaust: The Politics of Representation*, and like most queer analyses, included film, text, and the like. In the course, Halberstam describes screening *Night and Fog* (1956). At the end of the film, students come to the front of the lecture hall and mill as they tend to. They are distressed, as they tend to be. In the talk on YouTube, where I do a lot of learning, Halberstam describes the students as angry because they had not been issued the come-to-be-expected trigger warning. Halberstam (2014) handles it:

“I cannot warn you about content in the Holocaust. There is no warning possible... We’re here for sixteen weeks with this material. There are no words I can put on this syllabus. In fact, most of the material we’re going to be looking at is about the unrepresentability of what I’m trying to teach you”

It is my assumption that this text will affect you.

Depending on your proximity, it may be unbearable. It is for me at times, too.

I am allowed to be traumatized and to write about it, while knowing it may affect you.

I am allowed to be traumatized without warning you – I’m not a pariah. I’m not dangerous.

I write to learn and to feel. This project was necessary to marry the two. To be congruent. I am methodologically indebted to Natalie Loveless’ (2019) book, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*, for getting me started.

To those my writing *affects*¹² – that is the point (Berlant, 2009; Berlant & Stewart, 2019).

¹² Berlant (2017, p. 13) said: “To me, what *affect theory* best helps us see are the contradictions and ambivalences in our projects and attachments. It is a training in paying attention; at its best a way of describing the over-determining forces that make a scene (like the historical present) complicated, overwhelming, and in movement.”

Rest, take a piss, stretch your legs

This passage is short. Consider this a truck-stop along the way, jutting off the freeway for just a moment. I've been to more than a few truck stops. I am driven, most fundamentally, by an instinct of *flight* – I run. Most recently, I visited truck stops while driving home from Winnipeg, Manitoba where I lived for just one year almost exactly to rural Nova Scotia, after my ex was arrested for my assault (again) in the throes of polishing this dissertation. It's another story. [Absence as data]. Of truck stops, The Irving Big Stop is my favourite because it's how I know I'm close to home – I think they may only exist in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. 'Home' of course, is something I can never quite put my finger on. An *original inhabitant* of nowhere, really, but some 1990s suburb outside Halifax, Nova Scotia that my parents moved to impulsively and out of just the same. My transience is of course grossly entangled in gentrification (Giraud, 2019). At the truck stops, my father often got a glass bottle of Coke, popping the lid with his seatbelt¹³ – something I'm quite certain he didn't learn popping Coke bottles at truck stops. There's a picture of me as a baby with a beer bottle, that I think they thought was cute. I don't know how to do this bottle trick. I don't like feeling unsafe. Before I was closer to home and simultaneously more unsafe, the Husky truck stops across Northern Ontario to Ottawa have pay phones at the tables and the perfect placeless ambiance. With my child, Eilah, we make pretend calls on the phones that beep angrily for money while waiting for an order of fries because we are there, *alone*. We're *alone*. Weirdly, it's congruent. This work has been immense for me. I'm ashamed, in some ways, that I tried to write this while going through what I did. But I may not have survived, if not.

¹³ Lisbeth wanted me to say something about racial formations because they are, obviously, very adjacent to both gentrification and settler colonialism but all I can think of are some Buck 65 (Rich Terfry) lyrics {Blood of a Young Wolf – Buck 65}: [*"I ain't got no culture, nothin', dirty words, but that don't count."*](#) Absence as data, Lisbeth. Goddamnit. This is too positional for my liking. We said we would show process. And I wanted risk.

The point is/remains¹⁴: Rest. Take a piss. Stretch your legs. I have not done enough of this.

¹⁴ I was horrified in the first year of my PhD when Lisbeth said to quote in the past tense with consistency. *Consistent tense...* I cannot.

Unbearable Fruits OST

These tracks are hyperlinked throughout the file, and appear in brackets (e.g., “{Glowing Brightly – Florist}” so you may play the song on the streaming service of your choice.

1. Listen Listen Listen – Wintersleep (ctrl+f: *you're prettier than anything*)
2. Glowing Brightly – Florist (ctrl+f: *i said nothing*)
3. Select All Delete – John K. Samson (ctrl+f: *select all delete*)
4. Make My Bed – King Princess (ctrl+f: *now, time*)
5. Circles – Mac Miller (ctrl+f: *I want there to be music*)
6. Valley – Perfume Genius (ctrl+f: *no shape*)
7. Blood Of A Young Wolf – Buck 65 (ctrl+f: *racial formations*)
8. Time is a Dark Feeling – Florist (ctrl+f: *time is a dark feeling*)
9. Ballad of Big Nothing – Julien Baker (Elliott Smith cover) (ctrl+f: *big nothing*)

On the simultaneous urge to claw back everything I have ever written

if i am fortunate enough to complete this degree, i know that i will be utterly mortified within mere moments that this document exists beyond my control. i won't be this person tomorrow. i already hate parts of this. writing itself is unbearable (Berlant, 2022). wanting to make archive (Belcourt, 2018), be witness(ed) (Vuong 2019), to make kin (Tallbear, 2018). trying to represent (Loveless, 2019). failing (Halberstam, 2011), inevitably, at everything.¹⁵

this isn't about me.

and in this moment, it's not always my moment to say something.

but here i am. the cursor is flashing.

*i have to separate **myself** from **how you will consume me in this document.***

{Select, All, Delete – John K. Sampson}¹⁶

¹⁵ The voice gets all bugged if I capitalize some parts of my writing, and so I don't. I use contractions too because I'm working class, mostly. I am ever thankful to Brim's (2020) *Poor queer studies: Confronting elitism in the university*. These are stylistic choices bound up in the unrepresentability of identity, subjectivities, politics, traumas. These are methodological choices, obviously, too.

¹⁶ I cannot possibly predict the pace at which you will read, the distractions you will tend along the way. The timing is inevitably flawed to this whole production.

i just wanted to write something pretty, y'all

And second: I promised there would *not* be a document – for that specific failure, I am sorry. Since making that promise, I have learned a lot about queer theory and its relationship to texts, film, archive, and otherwise. Now that the learning is contained in this document as text, film, archive, and otherwise, it’s clearer to me now: what I meant to say was: “I want there to be risk.”

Epilogue

[now, time...]

{Make my bed – King Princess}

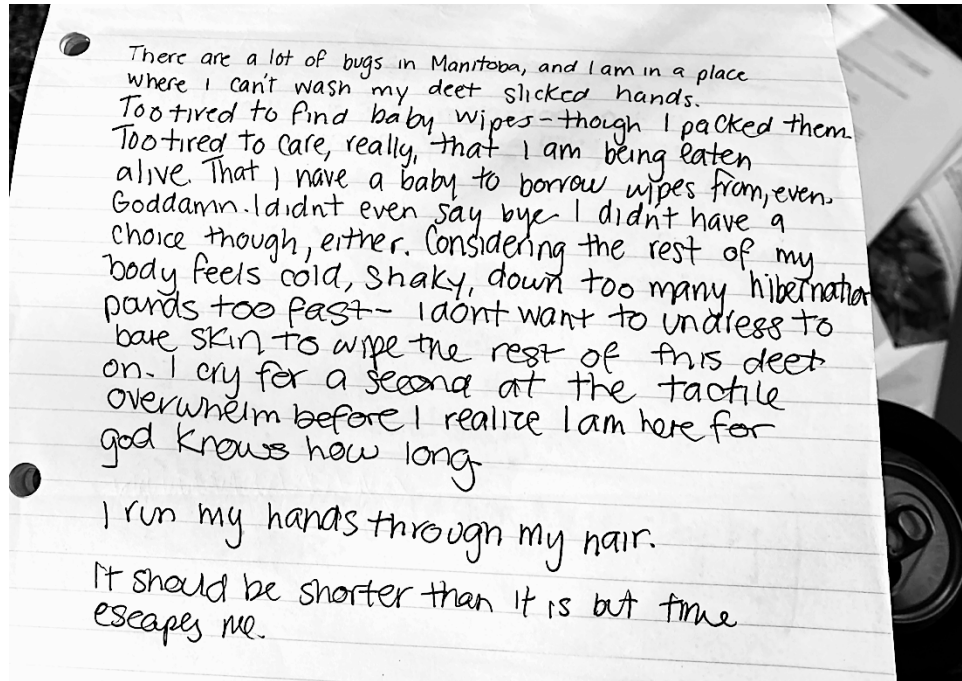


Figure 2: Fieldwork from St. Malo Provincial Park, Manitoba.

Chapter 1: Unfuck the future / love thy neighbour

Moran, R. (2021). *(Un)fuck the future / love thy neighbour: Proposal stop-motion and a series of possible purposes*. [Unpublished dissertation proposal]



Figure 3: Fieldwork. A Japanese Knotweed rhizome I left behind near Montebello Park in St. Catharines, ON. The only consistent of the future is that it seems to be more fucked, so I could not have been more off. There is something like hope here. I was bright eyed.

When does a concept stop having *use*? (Ahmed, 2019). There is no consensus definition or measure of gentrification, the concept itself might be too inadequate for myriad harms it

causes. There are varied attempts at measuring gentrification (e.g., the Statistics Canada *GENUINE Mapping Tool*) and whole hosts of qualitative measures. But across attempts at explaining, relevant disciplines, and social discourses, gentrification remains conceptually imprecise. Despite being contested, or perhaps because it is contested, gentrification is evocative. For those who first identify to power through gentrification in their own neighbourhood, the affect of gentrification is described as profound loss and *threat* (la paperson; 2014; Berlant, 2022). I tend to agree. Loss attunes us to victimhood that attunes us to power. However imprecise, I find gentrification useful for the purpose of bringing about identification with neighbourhood change processes and its definitions allow for the meaning of gentrification to remain somewhat tentative, the question of ‘*original*’ or even ‘*inhabitant*’ both get stirred up. Gentrification is a weighty concept based on some underdeveloped inclusion criteria. In many ways, settler colonialism got bound up in gentrification when Lisbeth and I got curious about the word ‘original’. We talked about Baudrillard, which makes sense, because Lisbeth knows poststructuralism- copies of copies of copies. There can be no original. Subjectivities rampant here. [This isn’t an auto-ethnography for obvious reasons.] Un-prodded and in popular use, gentrification is typically thought of as a linear, staged process through which the socioeconomic elite displace poorer people, assumed to be the originals (Clay, 1979; Lees, 2008). Ruth Glass (1964) defined gentrification as having occurred when *original* inhabitants have been displaced, the character of the area changed entirely. How many generations of *originality* are considered? Most of us are poorer than someone, lots of us have tenure in neighbourhoods that surely aren’t *ours*, originally.

Current conceptualizations of gentrification have retained much of the spirit of Ruth Glass’ seminal definition (1964, p. xvii): “One by one, many of the working-class quarters of

London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed.” However, this linear conceptualization of gentrification is constraining, as Dahmann (2018) explained: “Gentrification did not start in 1960s London. This belated discovery and naming should not obscure the often-explicit continuation of imperial warfare and colonial pacification.” In trying to better tend to gentrification’s entanglements (human and non-human) with settler colonialism, white supremacy, capitalism, and cisheteropatriarchy (among other similarly entangled violences), we come to recognize gentrification as “irreparably broken” (Dahmann, 2018). To be *against* gentrification – both its conceptual brokenness and its lifeworld breaking, is to be against this sort of domineering linearity of place. Place not ever being something available to us all equally, to begin with.

Although, conceptually, gentrification may be irreparably broken, broken things can still have use (Ahmed, 2019). Indeed, “the irreducible complexity of the world is not something that is possible to tidy away for the sake of developing more straightforward ethical solutions.” (Haraway, 2016; Giraud, 2014, p. 42). Working from the text of my proposal (see Appendix A for the written portions), in this video, *Unfuck the future/Love thy neighbour*, I follow Ahmed (2016, p. 3) who said: “When words do not do something, we have to work *on* those words in order to try to *make them do something*. We have work to do because of what they do not do.” In stop-motion form, I tried working on the inadequateness of “gentrification” by working on the intertextual, theoretical, methodological, and personal layering of my dissertation proposal statements that I had previously typed and shared with my committee in advance of the video.

“Dreamings” is what I called them. The video starts with my purpose statements as I first wrote them:

The purpose of my dissertation research is (or better, *might be*) to work through tensions around and entanglements athwart¹⁷ gentrification, settler colonialism, and queerness in urban contexts, where queerness can be taken up as (*not is*) a fluid *politic(s) of incommensurable difference* in opposition to the cisheteropatriarchial and spatial-temporal impositions of settler colonialism and gentrification.

The purpose is to achieve some of these things through destabilizing linear notions of time as they bring us only to fatalistic end points regarding gentrification and displacements. The purpose is to story myself through theory, actively ~~decolonizing~~ my citational repertoire and therefore my methodologies.

The purpose is to produce something that is the result of a (~~non~~?)method/ology of wayfaring/wandering towards sites, points, moments, figments, and fragments of hopeful resistance *and* insurgent affective activism.

The purpose is to resist straightening devices, (including those from the academy) and not treat data collection and representation as separate and distinct, but entangled and enmeshed – to create something beautiful, energetic, affective, and lively. And also, something deeply personal.

¹⁷ The ugly word, *athwart*, comes from Sedgwick’s (1993, p. xii) etymology of *queer*.

The stop-motion predominately features the *mangling* (MacDonald & Wiens, 2019) of this purpose statement, tracing its intertextual commitments out into table form and then crumpling, folding, crossing out, branching-off, repositioning. I had distant interests to connect. MacDonald & Wiens (2019, p. 369) were talking about new materialist methods in public art. I am interested in some of the same things. And the methods are appealing: “they help us better understand the complex, interconnected affective resonances of lived experiences within urban space during moments of ongoing upheaval and their aftermath.” Because I am so green, I cannot start this practice in public, and so I start it with paper, stop-motion, and other rudimentary things. My background is in health inequities not humanities, so I didn’t know that stop motion are also delightfully *queer* with exaggeration of gesture, looking, movement, and time (Wood, 2008). Following Taylor et al., (2011, p. 5), I “grapple head-on with knotty differences – not to minimize or discount them, not to try and assimilate them, not to reduce them to exclusively human concerns, but to let them be ‘irreducible.’” In the process, the brokenness of gentrification becomes an opportunity. The concept itself is visceral, but too contested to be entirely useful. I put the concept to *use* (Ahmed, 2019). Gentrification may not be sufficient to describe neighbourhood change processes (Davidson, 2009), but if mangled and messed with, gentrification is still useful (Ahmed, 2019) to learning about “urban space during moments of ongoing upheaval and their aftermath” (MacDonald & Wiens, 2019).

Stop Motion



[\[Click to watch\]](#)

[“I want there to be music”]
{Circles – Mac Miller}

[\(No Shape\)](#)

[{Valley – Perfume Genius}](#)

“*We write to be in the reverb of word and world*” (Berlant & Stewart, 2019, p. 131)

The issue is, at some point, the writing bears witnessing which is unbearable for those of us who just wanted to write something pretty, reverberate, or otherwise (i.e., I must make a document, even though I did not want to, because I still do not know how to share, no less feel, some of this without the labour of writing it). If I am to exist doing what it is that I both love and suffer by most (i.e., writing), then I have to make evident the work I’ve been doing, even if I’ve come to find the act of doing it (i.e., writing) unbearable. I must write, share, and defend, while making sure not to do anything resemblant of a template. So here:

First, this was a writing project. That’s important because where I work, we do research projects. It’s made up of essentially three manuscripts. If you want a structured and orderly introduction to this work, see the Statement of Contributions on p. 6-7. This section isn’t to orient you to any structure or shape, but to how I actually feel about the work at the present moment (i.e., ending my dissertation). This section is to free my writing from the forced ordering and structure imposed by requirements like a Statement of Contributions (see p. 6). Does it matter to say this? I think it does in case someone after me needs precedent for their work.

[manuscript 3, see chapter 4]

I described writing the third and final publication of this dissertation, *No Rainbows* as a task like rolling 10,000 marbles up a mountain. The amount of integration and synthesis was immense. I wanted to do fieldwork without being prescriptive – like *flaneur* (Sokup, 2013), but not entirely, because some of this wandering was in my mind to places I have not returned. Others, jottings and notes *in situ*. I am, by habit, someone who journals, writes, notes, records, tracks, photographs – particularly the places I move through. I wanted to do what queer theory

does best: something other than gender and sexuality¹⁸. Writing *No Rainbows* truly hurt, not because of the heavy theory-work mixed with various fieldwork approaches, but because of the impossible and entirely fallible task of writing across the two, committed to both but mostly, committed to writing. *No Rainbows* saw me try to work my way out of all sorts of crises, representation among them. That is a writing problem. I've tried to get around it by being artful with an e-book and read-aloud essay, but the problem remains, the work of writing my own work is excruciating but I don't know what else to do or write about. I don't know if I can write anymore. So, this is the end of the road for this project then if nothing else. "When writing fails the relation of word and world, it spins out like car wheels in mud, leaving you stranded and tired of trying." (Berlant & Stewart, 2019, p. 10). This was a writing project and I'm done writing now. I'm embarrassed to say I introduced myself as tired at a conference recently.¹⁹

[manuscript #1, see chapter 2]

Second, I wasn't always so tired (abused). The first pass of this document leaves me smiling like you might over a grown child – *look how far*. A second pass and I am squinting tears – I think when I said I just wanted to write something pretty, I meant that I wanted it to reverberate with some weight of reality. I can't get into working on this document without crying first, these days. I'm heartbroken and I am scared when I look at the world around me and I've found no method/ology that seems to remotely convey this sentiment. The unrepresentability of trauma is here (Halberstam, 2014). So, there's a lot of learning here. A lot of trying. Swing and a miss. Trying again. That's queer failure (Halberstam, 2011). I needed to define *space* and *time* and say why I cared about either, which is immense because I had not done so from a personal

¹⁸ To the extent that I also am expected to operationalize the key concepts of my dissertation, see Appendix B for my operationalization of queerness with respect to gender, sexuality, and politics.

¹⁹ I play with temporality throughout this dissertation, as temporality was a key interest of mine. Writing last, first. First, last. This is congruent.

vantage before. Most methodologies have a way of granting total distance, while auto-ethnography a sort of ethics protocol to prevent from being this kind of undone by your work. I wouldn't do it differently, though. I needed to excavate why place and time meant so much to me to begin with. I needed to write myself *in* before I could be so tired of trying. In *Placemaking as (un)making* (Moran & Berbary, 2021) Manuscript #1, Lisbeth and I grappled with directionality of language (what does the prefix “re-” imply in *revitalize*, *renew*?). We worked through oddities like *Twinks for Trump*, with dialogued questions like “what does “*again*” mean in Make America Great Again?” We needed a common language and space of departure. After all, who were ‘we’ to say (Muñoz, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

[manuscript #2, see chapter 3]

Before I was tired (/abused), I was youthful. I was abused in my youth too, and that gave me a politic that lets light shine in the tiniest of cracks. *Queerness as/and political attunement* (Manuscript #2) is a sandbox (i.e., a place of learning, more swings, and misses). In this particular sandbox *Japanese Knotweed* grows – I took interest in this invasive species during my comprehensive exams, a time of reading and learning, when Japanese Knotweed grew in my landlord's yard out of control. I ordered a book about the plant during comprehensive exams. A picture of its rhizome appears in the stop motion (see page 6 for YouTube link), and is the image associated with the proposal wheat paste (Figure 3). Stinson et al. (2020) led me in this direction. I took up a metaphor through an invasive species at a time when I was busy playing in the yard. It was also the time when I was learning about rhizomes and Deleuze (Shaw, 2015). I took off my shoes and stood on my own t(her)e²⁰.

²⁰ I do not care for a singular, linear, cohesive temporal narrative. I'm a wanderer. I said this included in my mind. In the places where it counts, I promise – you can find the structure you need. Let the rest wash over you. This is a skill I learned in graduate school. Lisbeth reminded me this in the comments in the margins when we were revising this dissertation for broader sharing. She reminded me that reading Deleuze can be a bit drunk and disorienting. No

Queerness as/and political attunement was the thoughtful (but perhaps too youthfully optimistic) effort of trying to connect my most comfortable home (queerness, queer theories) to my most adjacent and fiducially entangled field (leisure studies). I am interested in space, time, identity, and power. I approach these through the historically entangled and ongoing spatio-temporal inequities of gentrification, settler colonialism, and queer placemaking practices. I am concerned that community building exists in a relation of cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011). I wanted conversation. I wanted to see who, in our field, might be interested in a conversation that might be uncomfortable: *Apologies aren't always easy*. Leisure is seemingly corrupt if you are in any way uncomfortable (see: targeted) by the state (Mowatt, 2022).

In *Queerness as/and political attunement* I wanted to lessen my attachment to the gay bar and to the gaybourhood and to homonormative urban space. I hoped, to some extent, to find peers. In attachment theory, attuning is the extent to which our caregiver successfully identifies, labels, organizes, and responds to our emotional state. For example, parents who are uncomfortable with an anxious child may distract them rather than attuning to the full scope of their child's discomfort (Anderson, 2022). From the sandbox, I grieved for the city aloud as Japanese knotweed grabbed up my legs. "Moving to the entangled," Lisbeth said in my proposal stop motion. In *Queerness as/and political attunement*, I'm left waiting. I wrote in hopes of attunement and was not met. I can live with that. Not all attachments work out. Some, in fact, are cruel (Berlant, 2020). That's the point. Some things are unbearable and persistent, still (Berlant, 2022).

kidding. I can't read Deleuze. I feel inept and ashamed at my feeble attempts and think he might've been an asshole and a genius. I think about the poet Charles Bukowski this way too, and a Modest Mouse lyric: "*God, who'd wanna be such an asshole?*" I do not want to lose you too much along the way. Go back to the beginning and look at the structure in numbered form if it brings comfort. Otherwise, you're welcome to let my experience and articulation of this work wash over you. The Modest Mouse song goes on to say: "*God, who'd wanna be such a control freak?*"

Those are the pieces. That's it. (And all this other superfluous writing I can't seem to stop.)

No matter the shapes available to me for this dissertation-gone-off-the-tracks, I don't want to impose one across these (archives, texts, films, and otherwise) after-the-fact, particularly as *shape* also hints at *structure*, which is often expressed through power. I like the way I have arranged things right now, for the moment. So those are the pieces – piecemeal. In the absence of any pre-determined or super-imposed shape guiding these texts, films, archives, and otherwise, you should still be able to discern my own *structured and committed* inquiry into gentrification, settler colonialism, queer politics, and placemaking (or *place-taking* and *place un-making*). I have pieced these things together in a way that makes sense to me, without subjecting this writing project to something as ugly as social science conventions²¹.

There's one way we're supposed to enter (from the top),
and any number of places we *could* enter.

Whichever way you think I should order these components of my work, they render me just the same: disturbed at the potential co-opting of queerness for state power²², as we link queer theory to Foucauldian biopolitics through Puar (2017).

I don't want to be here. [i'm sick with it...]

[\[click here\]](#)

²¹ Sokup's (2013, p. 226) postmodern ethnographic *flaneur* methodologies are useful here. They said to: "(1) embrace the emergent, fleeting moment; (2) think dialectically about culture; (3) represent the postmodern in "writing" culture; (4) conceptualize ethnography as partial, subjective, and self-reflexive; and (5) embrace the semiotic tradition." These approaches are obviously digitally mediated, too (e.g., Aroles & Küpers, 2022)

²² Lisbeth urged me to consider the difference between institutional vs. state power. To that end, the gay assimilationist agenda includes assimilation into institutions that fortify the state (e.g., marriage, real estate).

Chapter 2: Placemaking as unmaking

Moran, R. & Berbary, L.A. (2021). Placemaking as unmaking: Settler colonialism, gentrification, and the myth of “revitalized” urban spaces. *Leisure Sciences*, 43(6), 644-660. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2020.1870592>

Manuscript #1: Placemaking as Unmaking: Settler Colonialism, Gentrification, and the Myth of “Revitalized” Urban Spaces

Abstract

Leisure scholarship that operates within traditional frames celebrates placemaking as an inherently good, participatory, and emancipatory process. In doing so, the bulk of leisure scholarship fails to account for the ways that placemaking is complicit in the historic and pervasive violences of systemic racism, settler colonialism, gentrification, and socioeconomic elitism. Working through the case of Goudies Lane, a recently place-made space in so-called Kitchener, Ontario, we demonstrate how humanist approaches to placemaking predicate erasures and perpetuations of these violences. We argue that thinking differently may allow for a more engaged, equitable scholarship that accounts for the reality that every placemaking is always already an unmaking of something, and that these unmakings perpetuate racialized and socioeconomic injustices under the guise of a collaborative, participatory process of “revitalization” and “progress.”

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2020.1870592>

(No Place)

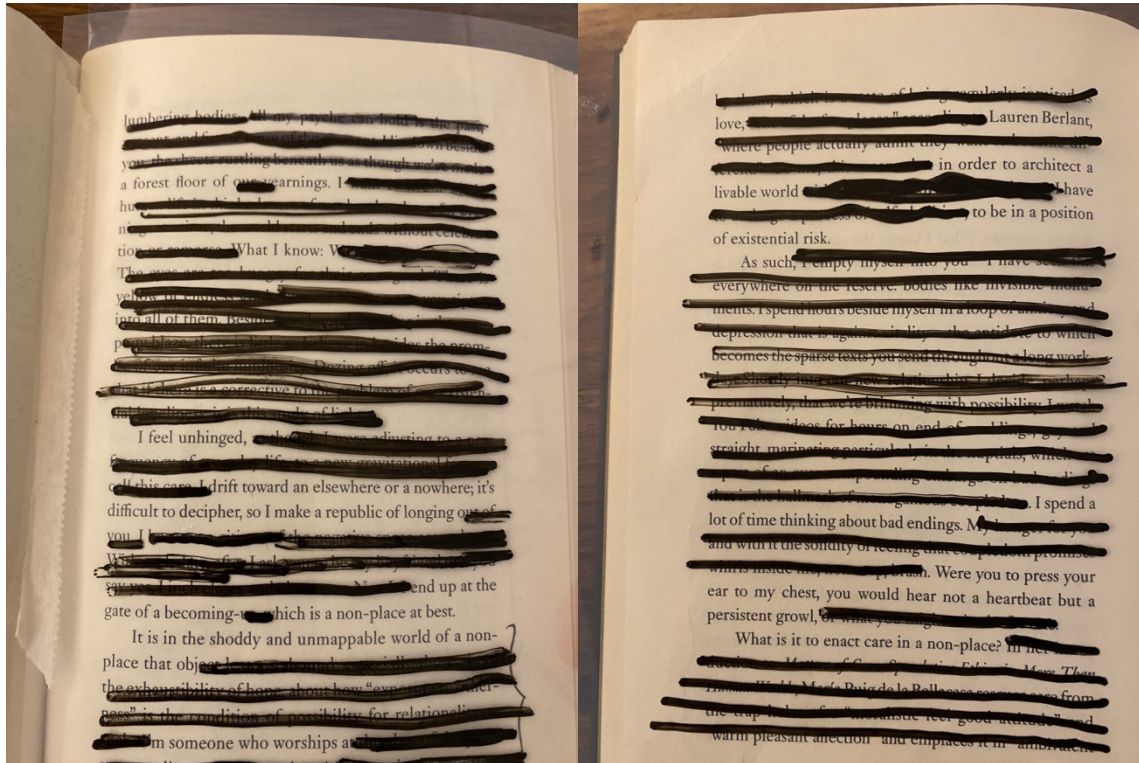


Figure 4: Overlay on Belcourt's (2019) "A History of My Brief Body", p. 115-6.

A forest floor of yearnings

What I know:

I feel unhinged

I drift toward an elsewhere or a nowhere, it's difficult to decipher,

So I make a republic of longing.

I end up at the gate of becoming,

which is a non-place at best.

It is in the shoddy and unmappable world of non-place that

I'm someone who worships (love, Lauren Berlant)

I have to be

in a position

of existential risk

As such, I spend a lot of time thinking about bad endings

Were you to press your ear to my chest,

you would not hear a heartbeat but a persistent growl

What is it to enact care into non-place?

(No Time)

I have not figured out a way to teach gentrification that does not ‘rouse students to action and leave me standing awkwardly in front of a hundred people I strung along. This exact thing happened the first time I taught gentrification in Lisbeth’s Leisure as/and Liberation (or Leisure and Social Justice) class in January 2019. I spent days organizing the talk that would work me from my master’s work on gentrification in Halifax to my present place of being interested in constellations of queerness, gentrification, settler colonialism, and state power wherever those things occur (which is everywhere). In edging up on these violences, I wanted to *write as myself*. That is not the same thing as a singular narrative, though.

I wanted to find time in the confines of a PhD to marry an academic voice with something altogether different that I haven’t been able to wield quite right. I still haven’t written fully as myself, but I’m closer. I can feel the fragments of my worlds (identities, politics, identity politics, academia, community, theory, theory, theory [...]) lace together most when I teach, which is weird, because the idea I teach are unformed, and I was expecting to need mastery – a book of solutions. I am learning to say: “I’m sorry, I don’t know what you can do about gentrification.” Now, I know I’m teaching gentrification well when it’s hard for me to get through the lecture without that feeling of threatening, hot tears – I can’t even write about it sometimes. A shepherd with no plan. There are some things we cannot fix with tidy solutions, and some concepts that can’t even be agreed upon at all. The lesson is fundamentally broken²³: we can’t plan our way out of gentrification. We can’t plan *failure*, though loads of developments do fail (Halberstam, 2011). Trying to shape the city deliberately is what got us into this mess in

²³ There is an intertextual nod to Ahmed’s (2019) *What’s the Use*, which questions the concept of *use* and what it means for something or someone to be *useful*. Ahmed’s mug without a handle stands to remind us that broken things still have use. *Queer* use. This is not dissimilar from Halberstam’s (2011) take on *queer failure*. This is in many ways, about trauma.

the first place. I have not devised an anti-gentrification toolkit. I offer no solutions. I certainly don't ask students for them either, despite that being the standard method in the sorts of courses I teach now. I read the writing on the walls obsessively. I don't think there is a single thing that can be done about gentrification. *And* I think there are many reasons why the lesson is still requisite. I push past tears and sit with others' dis-ease.

Have you ever grieved for a place?

[The work of anti-gentrification is about affect and the stories places invite us to play out.]

I wanted to do activist-oriented work because I'm still not sure I belong here (on this page), so there's something easier about imagining enacting care elsewhere and trying (*failing*, here too) to enact it (Halberstam, 2011). I wanted anti-gentrification because I wanted *home*, which like anti-gentrification, is ephemeral in nature and difficult to discern. I wanted to shorten or condense research-to-action cycles because they are eternal. I wanted change. I did an internship with addictions prevention where things moved very slowly and where the lunchroom was filled with hate for addicts. A childhood friend died of a dilaudid overdose that term. I am ashamed at how I've come up short, I'm ashamed of the failures however generative they may be, I'm ashamed of myself for being on this page, in some ways, for existing. I said something unkind to her and never apologized after middle school. I know what it is like to experience others being unkind, and so shame has also attuned me more than any other bodily sensation, to what is *good, right, benevolent, kind*. I don't want to do work that is harmful. I don't want to write something pretty at the expense of others, anymore. The false promise of activist-oriented work is that it might absolve a researcher of their shame. Instead, I have learned that the work of anti-gentrification might be the work of dwelling with shame, learning to evoke shame, and not being so fearful of shame. This is, in many ways, the work of Pride parades and festivities, too.

In my internship with Addictions Prevention and in my undergrad generally, there's a story about children falling in the river in some preventable form, and some equally disturbing rescue efforts trying to save them from drowning. A huge commotion, and nobody noticed simple board was missing from the bridge. I don't know where in this analogy I fit but I care, no less. Caring without knowing what to do gets tiresome. Failing gets tiresome. Grieving gets tiresome. I just want things to be *less bad*. But there is no quick fix for dying communities. Instead, there is just messy human emotion to be felt and leaned into. There is queer theory, affect, and the psychoanalytic tradition.

I assumed my method/ology was the issue (or at least my issue), and that rather than contributing to a larger evidence base for some unarticulated and vague social change, I should start writing myself into action. You can just do the things you want to right now. You don't have to wait for proof or wait to be asked. You can call a rent strike or block an international border any time you please²⁴. But I don't teach: "*How to Start a Rent Strike*" to our students who ask what they can do about gentrification (Berlant & Warner, 1995). I can't teach the playbook by name, but I try to teach around it: the Battle of Seattle or the 1999 WTO protests offered us the gift of decentralized action (i.e., don't plan your protests with a police escort, like we had at the border) (Smith, 2001). Decentralized action is an incubator of always intentional, sometimes autonomous, but often deeply relational power. Some realities demand action before they demand consensus, validity, or replicability. This was a writing project (Berbary, 2011)²⁵. I think I was just trying to understand why the new condos on Harris Street made me feel sad and why

²⁴ Both occurring during the course of this dissertation.

²⁵ In Berbary's (2011) screenplay, she draws on Barthes (1974) who said: "screenplays are model 'writerly texts' — open to being rewritten—as opposed to closed 'readerly texts' which can be read but not written" (p. 4). Queer theory is textual.

disrupting the ribbon cutting did nothing, and that cover went up at the bar the same year one of my friends died from suicide, and then, that there was a gay bashing in the one place that sensibly should be the singular spot that should never happen. Ahmed takes up affect aptly as *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004). Writing is enough, sometimes. Feeling is a lifelong project.

The city is dying and the window to act has been closed for a very long time.

Chapter 3: Queerness as/and political attunement

Moran, R. (2021). Queerness as/and Political Attunement. *Leisure Sciences*. 43(1-2), 125-130.
[10.1080/01490400.2021.1874575](https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2021.1874575)

Manuscript #2: Queerness as/and political attunement

Abstract

This article offers a brief response to Anderson & Knee's (2020) *Queer Isolation or Queering Isolation?* by encouraging readers to embolden themselves with queer theory for its liberatory intent and potential. In particular, this article troubles notions of queer space and time to illuminate the ways queers are not hapless victims to gentrification (amidst COVID-19 or otherwise) and encourages us to continue imagining and enacting more hopeful, equitable futurities.

Chapter 4: No Rainbows

Moran, R. (2021). *No Rainbows Case 1*. <https://norainbows.kotobee.com/#/reader>

Early in this project, I promised there would not be a document. I met with my committee members and spent time looking online. Obsessed with consuming information and learning, I had started watching YouTube videos where I learned most queer theorists situated in the humanities where it was acceptable to show up and read a well-prepared and thoughtfully-honed piece of writing aloud. Working out of the fieldwork of my dissertation (i.e., encounters with a handful of rainbow crosswalks in Canada and the United States), I wrote a handful of cases. *No Rainbows* presents the first.

You can access the book at the above link – click the play button with each text section to have the audio read-aloud. Consider this book in *beta* iteration – there is some polishing yet to do. I am, like I said, a social scientist eager / frustrated with representation and in love with theory (Loveless, 2019). The text of this chapter is included below – though should be accessed using the link above *first* ([or here for convenience](#)). (*Notetaking tools in upper right corner*)

No Rainbows

Robyn Moran

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- Preface: Incommensurables
- Rainbow Crosswalks as/And State Power
- Case #1: Desire
- Conclusion: Only Time

No Rainbows

Figure 1: Burnout on the Rainbow Crosswalk near my home in St. Catharines, Ontario (Photo: Robyn Moran)

Preface: Incommensurables

No Rainbows: Text-only version

I'd like to open by sharing a segment of Vivek Shraya's (2018) book *I'm Afraid of Men* which describes her experience at an everyday crosswalk in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on the event of the World's Largest Trans March. To me, Vivek's words illustrate to me how queerness, gender, and race impinge on our experiences in public space (Muñoz, 1999). But my purpose today isn't to talk about the spatial enactment of inequity decontextualized, as we often do. Queer theory deliberately engages our subjectivities. And so, what's worth saying is the obvious: I'm likely more different than I am the same as Vivek, despite us both being slotted tidily under the label "queer." In particular, my queerness is differently privileged because of my whiteness, and/or because of how my gender expression might, at times, align with other's social expectations. It's these sorts of differences that Shraya's work attunes us to, though. Through her excerpt I'll share, she urges an important pause. In her work, it becomes clear that we don't all move through cities unimpeded. Even in parade, we don't all move the same. Umbrella terms like "queer" are horrible descriptors for variable groups of people, and not just because they are conceptually imprecise. Rather, because hatred is wielded with an exacting precision that makes any umbrella incomprehensible. We are what Muñoz (1999) (among others) called *incommensurable* – our subject positions uncountable, incomparable, mutable, and always moveable. Despite this, daily I see "queer" used as exactly that - as an umbrella term for *all* non-normative genders and sexualities (Moran, 2021). And I empathize, I do the same for ease. But we -- the so-called queers -- are not on even ground. Not with each other, and certainly not yet with others despite the right to marry. I deliberately privilege Vivek Shraya's excerpt by putting it before my own experiences in queer space because she speaks to a precise form of hatred¹ I simply don't know.

Wearing a pale peach dress with a matching lip and bindi, I march down some of Toronto's busiest streets with over ten thousand trans and gender-nonconforming people and allies. I experience an unusual and magnificent shift in my body. For a brief thirty minutes, I am released from fear. I forget about men. As the march dissipates, my mood remains buoyant—until you bump into me at the crosswalk. After passing, you turn around and step in front of me.

“Why did you touch me?” you scream in my face.

“I didn't touch you,” I respond quietly, containing my bewilderment. “You fucking touched me!” Your face propels closer to mine, and your voice swells louder. Although I don't know you, I intimately recognize the sound of hatred..... “Actually, you bumped into me?”

“DON'T FUCKING TOUCH ME!”

Because of the Pride festivities, I am surrounded by queers who witness your verbal assault and eventually defend me. What might have happened had it not been Pride, and had there been no other queers around?

Although this exchange lasts less than a minute, you effectively jolt me back into my trained state of fear, my rightful place. Trans people aren't afforded the luxury of relaxing or being unguarded. Mere steps away from “the world's largest trans march,” trans people are still seen as perverts who touch strangers at crosswalks.

Engaged in my encounters with a handful of rainbow crosswalks in Canada in the US, I write and read to show how queer theory is a useful tool for explaining so much more than desire, identity, and attraction (e.g., Ghaziani, 2012). That is, I'm most excited about queer theory when my conversations have little to do with gender or sexuality. But in order to put queer theory to use, you need to have these conversations at some point. The conversation I'm talking about is the one where we grapple with why we are so-called queer to begin with. So the conversation becomes uncomfortably or delightfully political. Later, I'll use the immense data from this project from Rochester, Kitchener, Vancouver, St. Catharines, Winnipeg. But for now, I want to focus on something that my dissertation isn't fundamentally about: gender and sexuality. I approach this in this recorded talk through my first rainbow crosswalk in Halifax. I want to share more. Weirdly, I am trying to trust that in time that theory might become less lonely and until that time, I want to provide an essential foundation to queer theory. I want to do that as I have learned it, in an applied way. I assumed others were curious about this application

too, given how common the crosswalks have become. But compared to the crosswalks detailed in this presentation and considering the now hundreds¹ of rainbow crosswalks in places where our basic safeties are not guaranteed, I struggle to find much academic literature that shares my concerns about the sincerity of the crosswalk and/or the practicalities of our inclusion in leisure space. It seems odd that we can paint crosswalks in States where we have state-sanctioned erasure (e.g., “less than two hours after being sworn into office, the Trump administration removed all mention of LTBQIA+ issues from the White House webpages.”) (Clark, 2020, p. 1). I’m aspirational here too. Without queer theory, the crosswalk is often said to represent a region’s inclusive stance or somewhere queer people are emplaced into feelings of safety and representation (e.g., Chalana 2016; Bain & Podmore, 2020; Glover, 2020; Knee, 2022; Zebracki, 2020). The state-sanctioned erasure and state-sanctioned crosswalks are often simultaneous. Is it queer to explode something into thumbtacks and red string?

The rainbow crosswalks fit easily into what Berlant and Freeman (1992, p. 167) described thirty years ago as the “‘urban redecoration project’ on behalf of gay visibility” (1992, p. 167). This is the false promise I’m concerned about in particular, that in the years since 1992: gay visibility schemes have produced cities where we are endlessly represented, but fundamentally not included or even safe.

The crosswalks, then, seem to be doing something for someone other than *us*, even with all the money spent on Pride budgets each year. After all, in the years since 1992, many are left wondering (and I quote) “What’s Queer about Queer Studies Now?” (Social Text, 2005). I’m suspicious about how the rainbow crosswalks are participating in this redecoration project, since it sounds a lot like a gentrification project – something I used to consider myself a victim to but have since come to see myself as active and engaged in, where gentrification is an expression of

both white supremacy, classism, revanchism, and settler colonialism (Moran & Berbary, 2021). Queer theory attunes me to the exhausting limits of binary logic, not only with regard to my gender, but other fallible concepts like victim/perpetrator. Eschewing this sort of conceptual clarity, I make a home in the thumbtacks and red string and travel (problematically) around Canada and the US hanging out with rainbow crosswalks.

My obsession with the crosswalks and attachment to the critique of state pandering fake inclusion wasn't always so immense. Get curious. At some point, I internally note that more rainbow crosswalks do not seem to change our variable experiences of hate and hate crimes, so much as they seem to result in a flurry of headlines that rise and fall each year with Pride month festivities and associated budgets at all levels of government. In trying to feel my way through this work in early 2020 I began organizing growing numbers of news articles into three categories, unintentionally beginning another discourse analysis project much like my MA.

I call the first category *birth announcements* (reporting events like the allocation of new Pride-month budgets to the symbolic painting of rainbows, ribbon cuttings at the site)². Of course, these don't conjure the inclusive, participatory images of placemaking we celebrate in our field, but they are celebratory no less.

Second, in *go-public format*, rainbow crosswalks are storied as contested object or space as residents and/or local officials condemn their less-progressive counterparts for disallowing a rainbow crosswalk³. In this case, so-called progressive politics and potentially *performative* inclusion may be variably (in)/--sincere.

And finally third, headlines I cluster under the name *death announcements* (reporting hate crimes as “burnouts”, petty “vandalism”). I still fight off a strong urge to sub-categorize

hate, noting the defacings that get lumped in as “death announcements” in my scheme seem are often more variable (see: creative or politically expressive) than the crosswalks themselves:

- spilled paint
- scribbles
- burnouts
- donuts
- Declarative statements: No homo, mentally ill, there is only two genders...
- And the usual dogma: “Genesis 19:24”, a promise of fire and brimstone.

Amidst the sheer volume of hatred and news coverage that makes our academic disinterest in the phenomena something of an omission, I have still yet to see a thoughtful interrogation of the rainbow crosswalk as a site of queer exclusion.

In their teaching, queer-turned-cultural theorist Lauren Berlant was famous for writing on their arm and unveiling a sneaky prompt to their students. It read: “What would it mean to think that thought?” (Butler et al., 2021). What would it mean for the rainbow crosswalk to be, among other things, something that creates and affirms state power more than it affirms me, or more than it affirms us?

I’m going to spend most of my time detailing one case today, but before I do – this project spanned a 11,000 word improvisational writing-driven fieldwork process, through which I intimately considered the affective and political ramifications of so-called inclusive and placemade rainbow crosswalks not only in Halifax. Halifax is, in some ways, the most boring case in terms of what queer theory can do, because it’s the necessary foundation for queer theory.

[Case #1: Desire \(Before Queer Theory, Halifax’s first rainbow crosswalk\)](#)

I begin with *desire*, before queer theory, storying my first hopeful, identity-centric encounter at a rainbow crosswalk in my hometown of Halifax, Nova Scotia, on the east coast of Canada. About ten years ago, a headline in *The Coast* (one of Halifax's independent, left-leaning newspapers) read: "My parents told me never to go to Gottingen St." Every city has a Gottingen St. I was told the same by my parents – their fear the sort of socially acceptable racist sensationalism and classism that is precisely why white supremacy and capitalist logic are so engrained. We're raised on this garbage, crafting our adulthoods in its very image often. Worried parents made no mention of the gay bars nor gay bashings, though. I move near Gottingen Street unimpeded because rent was cheap at the time. Within a few years, it's on Gottingen Street that I will be *born again* queer. I need theory for this to happen, though.

In this instance, I use *born again* to summarize the affective experience of coming to something much bigger than you are. *Born again*, because I don't know the moment I knew I was queer, but that's not to say it's always been easy or tidily labeled. I do know, however, the first time I felt resonance with other queer bodies, and it was in April 2012 when Gottingen Street was reclaimed as we publicly mourned and emplaced our grief after a prominent local gay activist, Raymond Taavel, was murdered.

A gay bashing, and then a placemaking.

The details of Taavel's murder are sincerely complex and while his life continues to be publicly celebrated in Halifax, the public celebrations and geographically mis-placed memorials obscure the hateful elements of Taavel's murder, however complex they are. Because in April 2012 on Gottingen St., sometime around last call, Raymond Taavel left the gay bar to go home, not making it much more than a block before he was assaulted and beaten to death.

Call it a gay bashing or not, we know Raymond Taavel died to the sound of a slurs, and the cause: his body breaking at the hands of another. It's too much even ten years on. But, because Raymond Taavel was killed, I was born again *queer* on Gottingen St. through the call to grieve collectively along with the first consideration of the political implications of my identity. My new queerness is something notable here because by this time I had already achieved many of the gay "identity milestones" (the sex, the parade, the high school GSA) and been 'out' – at least in many contexts (e.g., Bishop et al., 2020).

That Taavel had to listen to hateful slurs we all know (indeed, some I've surely said) as he was beaten to death is because we have a dictionary of queer hate to begin with. I forget that *queer* still reads as a slur to some of us. It's understandable. *Queer* was hurled at us long before we had the flag. Early inquiry into gay identity pathologized non-straight sexuality as *homosexuality*, eventually entering it into the DSM alongside other personality disorders and neuroses.

For Taavel to have been better treated in his death, would have also meant better treatment in his life, though, and this detail is frequently overlooked. Taavel lived from 1962 to 2012 – a period that saw the criminalization of homosexuality in Canada until 1969, the HIV/AIDS crisis and resultant mass death at the hands of complacent and/or complicit governments, and the more recent fight for marriage equality (notably only achieved in Canada less than seven years before Taavel's death, and in America, not until 2015 - three-years after he died). My desire predates some of my rights, too. And so, I have to ask: Is it any surprise that Taavel is remembered as an activist? Are those not conditions of living that might require some activism to endure? I wonder where we (*where I*) get to exist value neutral. Oppression makes

the act of *breathing* political (Ore & Houdek, 2020). Queer theories are activist-engaged because we have to be. The gay rights agenda is enduring because it needs to be.

The section of Gottingen Street near where Taavel died is filled with mourners. A parade of sorts, trading the YMCA anthem for candles in cups. Rainbow flags just as visible – held in hands, painted on cheeks, one flag so large it is carried by dozens through the road. Along the fence of a derelict lot across the street are flowers, photographs, poems, messages.

For years after Taavel's death, some form of de-facto memorial was maintained on Gottingen St., rarely bearing his name but sustained through the normalized act of someone picking up a piece of litter, arranging some broken up concrete in a heart shape, and memorably sticking a bunch of fake flowers through the chain-link - one for each Roy G. Biv colour. My route takes me past the memorial near daily for years until I leave the city. Why am I so afraid, though?

All I can figure is that somewhere I learned fences were where queers were taken to die – but maybe that was just Mathew Shepherd.

After Taavel's death, we flew rainbows and stuck them to the fence in what Ahmed (2014; 2017) described in a similar sentiment on another death as a kind of queer *refusal to let die*.

It's four years after Taavel's death when Halifax proposes its first rainbow crosswalk.

Admittedly, I am hopeful at any notion of what I assume to be a memorial because I hadn't expected to feel afraid for as long as I did. The unfurled flag called me to grieve queerly for a moment on Gottingen St., and in crosswalk form, grief and fear could be emplaced somewhere beyond my mind. Somewhere shared. I live in a neighbourhood where people make sure development proposals are routinely painted over: "I wish this was a park." But the flowers

are still in the chain link and they're starting to look faded to me. How are we to ever respect our queer elders if they are not recorded as *ours*? If they do not get to breathe, to exist – value-neutral. Ghaziani (2018, p. 212) described queer generational disconnection as “one of the most insidious forms of homophobia,” [...] “The absence of awareness—*who are my people?*—induces collective amnesia about our lives.” Believing the rainbow crosswalk to be a queer monument, I see it as ours and assume it is there to “visibilize, educate, and memorialize our communities in the face of adversity” (Zebracki & Leitner, 2022, p. 1357).

As an assumed monument, I pay little mind when the first rainbow crosswalk appears in near secrecy overnight, a city project at all stages, no mention of Raymond Taavel that I recall by memory or locate in media since despite painting the first crosswalk at the precise intersection closest to his place of death. In the days after, the reporting is almost entirely events-driven (“a crosswalk was painted”) and after the fact, the only exception citing concern over slick paint^v--public safety, a homophobic dog whistle that only seems to legitimize a vocal minority. Despite the glaring absence of Taavel’s name, Halifax’s first crosswalk becomes a 1:1 representation of the flag carried through the road at Taavel’s Gottingen St. vigil, just the same as those we made by arranging other objects (see: the fake flowers) in proper colour sequence, simply because you couldn’t buy pride flags and you couldn’t buy pride as easily in 2012 (Bitterman, 2021; Moran, 2021). How couldn’t it be? This is where he died. The crosswalk is otherwise meaningless, to me, at least. Why *here*? Why not *say something*, then? I am uncomfortable with the limits of gay and lesbian theory here and so I stretch elsewhere for a moment.

Drawing on Muñoz (2009) if feeling queer is an *affective particularity* of my queer rebirth on Gottingen St. in the wake of Taavel’s murder *feeling queer* is the affective particularity of *feeling fear* (Harris & Holman Jones, 2017). I’m talking about realizing that

merely existing has been an impossibility for so long, but if I can make it so, I might cease to exist. It's excruciating. I'm in the bathroom alone at my parents' house running my hands under cold water at thirteen and *afraid*. First *queer fear* substantially more memorable than any early whiffs of desire or attraction. It's here where I'm born again, eventually. However slippery the crosswalks supposedly are, my fear makes me reactive. I want them to say who died and why and what it all means and whether I'll ever feel safe again, but because they don't, it's important to say that I never knew Raymond. I wasn't even really involved in the community – I was a kid and a scared one to begin with. And somehow despite having no memories of Raymond, I can't forget that the pavement of Gottingen Street was wet for days after his death despite it being unusually non-precipitous that April. I lived a block away and slept soundly.

My attachments are showing here. I wrote the bulk of my comprehensive exams and anchored my theoretical wheelhouse in Lauren Berlant's book *Cruel Optimism* when I did not know they would die abruptly part way through this process. Berlant (2011) wrote about the sorts of dreams and fantasies, like the so-good life, that we know are fated to fail but seem compelled to pursue anyway. This isn't *sense of place*, though, because the crosswalks are everywhere (Relph, 1976). I am gifted an article authored by Ben Anderson (2022), who used actor-network theory to connect attachment theory to cultural geography via Berlant in *Forms and scenes of attachment: A cultural geography of promises*. Anderson (2022, p. 1) integrates Bowlby's (1969) theory with affective, queer, and feminist approaches and describes attachments as: "enduring trajectories that 'bring closer' something which comes to feel necessary to a way of life." I take courses on attachment parenting and give it my all there, too. But at work, I worry I might be *too attached* to the crosswalks, or *too attached* to queer theory. Is the project becoming myopic or too entangled to be discernable? Or was that the point? I had a task to do. Let's come back to it.

In detailing the spatial expression of hatred and violence instead of the *broken promise* (attachment trauma) of inclusion at the rainbow crosswalk, I'm reminded that queerness itself is the affective particularity of feeling fear. But in the wake of that mess, queer theory forces my existence to leak into and across the future. I, of course, have no clue what the future will be, but I can feel its potential to be something otherwise, to be born *again*, otherwise. In my view, gay and lesbian theories don't do right by Taavel's story, but they also don't do right by the crosswalks stories. I want differently for both. I want differently for our cities. Wanting something else, in some ways itself, is the most radical thing in the world.

My last apartment in Winnipeg was meant to be a fresh start, became the most traumatizing place. Winter is endlessly long. It's desolation and tundra. The stroller doesn't work. The car engine doesn't turn if you don't buy a plug – which I assumed meant everyone drove electric vehicles until I got to Winnipeg and realized I was there to catch up with my grief. I don't want to end the project more traumatized but inevitably I do because I haven't been cleaning up after myself. I start the work in the scary place. The sunrises make the starkness of the loft almost womb-like with its warmth. I am terrified, but I am not finished. There is always more time.

Conclusion: Only Time

And it is only one of many, because as I said at the beginning – these crosswalks are proliferative, and this was but my first encounter. I've used a first encounter with a Rainbow Crosswalk to tell you what queer theory is not. In the case of my promise to do the other (that is, teach some queer theory), I cannot trace the entire emergence of queer theory nor all its very broad utilities. Not for lack of interest, but because queer theory knows no singular family tree – it's always plural in that it's *not just* a response to the shortcomings of gay and lesbian theory

which analyzes something as relational as our sexuality at the level of the individual, but rather, queer theory is a cutting across with force of onto-epistemologies, borrowing from feminism and poststructuralism (though *of* neither) to arrive as an at-best loose grouping of ideas, where simultaneously the very notion of grouping around any sameness of ideas, identity, or otherwise is antithetical (Sedgwick, 1993; Sullivan, 2003). This makes static queer identity something of a misappropriation. Because of this, Berlant & Warner (1995) couldn't fathom how queer theory would (or if it *should*) continue to exist in such contradictory institutional settings – queer *theory* was inappropriate, no less queer identity. They said:

In our view, it is not useful to consider queer theory a thing, especially one dignified by capital letters. We wonder whether *queer commentary* might not more accurately describe things linked by the rubric, most of which are not theory. The meta-discourse of “queer theory” intends an academic object, but queer commentary has vital precedents and collaborations in aesthetic genres and journalism. It cannot be assimilated into a single discourse, let alone a propositional program.” (p. 333).

Despite the ways *queer* implies multiples (i.e., queer theories, queer studies, queer identities), when it comes to identity *queer* gets pervasively used as an umbrella term for *all* non-normative genders and sexualities – a way to say all 2SLGBTQI+ people without signalling just how generalized your ideas are across these disparate, unstable identities. Berlant & Warner (1995, p. 344) tried to keep this horse in the stables explicitly: “queer is not an umbrella for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and the transgendered.” Butler (1990) said queer was an identity without an essence. It seems often those most wanting *queer identity* as a stable descriptor whatsoever, are often those with onto-epistemologies that privilege tidy definitions and engage truth(s) in ways

that queerness is oppositional to. The unfortunate thing being that these classifications structure reality, even for those of us whose only claim identity as the refusal of this exact rubric.

After my first encounter on Gottingen Street, I go on to detail the crosswalks in Davie Village, Vancouver, in Rochester, New York, in Toronto, Ontario, in Kitchener, Ontario and the absence of a crosswalk in Lincoln, Ontario, and my experience living next to a crosswalk defaced for most of the year in St. Catharines, Ontario, and entangled in settler colonial placemaking in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In the end, I go home to Halifax (or near). It's unexpected. There is not supposed to be return.

Most things aren't stable. Identity politics are not static. When I send a friend back to take pictures in Kitchener at my pandemic-isolated, cross-country behest, there are new crosswalks painted with orange handprints spreading into the park recognizing that Every Child Matters, while local Indigenous activists have called for that park to be named something other than after a British monarch.

It seems there's only so much queer theory can say about the rainbow crosswalks. I am not trying to be comprehensive, here. Queerness doesn't urge permanence – not permanent bars (Moran, 2020) or permanent rainbow crosswalks, but also no permanent theoretical frame nor discipline. I struggle with permanence too and in response, I pack us all up. Bad things pile up more than they can be cleared. It's trauma. I transplant all of us to Winnipeg, Manitoba in anticipation of starting an upcoming postdoc. It's where I wrote most of this. It takes a long time for my body to believe I've managed to leave Ontario, no less rural Nova Scotia (where I am now back to for a moment to catch my breath). Before I needed to catch my breath, for an entire season I let myself spin out, indulge in feeling compelled to keep moving and to cover ground. Despite its uncountable subject positions, queer theory isn't particularly insightful on the subject

of spinning out. Likewise, there's some other reading that lends to the orange handprints in Kitchener. When this happens, my work pulls me elsewhere and queer theory, by being loose in its groupings, allows me to follow the threads and to roam. I consider that I'm engaged in what Carpio et al., (2022) describe as "the great lie of settler colonialism – that is, the degree to which its claims to permanence and order actually rest on expansive, persistent, often unruly forms of movement" (p. 5). Weaving through the downtown core, I slip onto the University of Winnipeg campus as the lines of public and private blur. In Winnipeg, though, it's not the mashup of queer, trans, Black, and Brown existence implied by the Progress flag that alarms me, but the symbolic erasure of those identities it supposedly represents (Black queer people, for example) and the ease with which a new symbol is introduced – there are medicine wheels on the rainbows in Winnipeg but there isn't enough time for semiotics (i.e., the study of the symbols themselves). I'm bound up already. Within queer theory, *settler homonationalism* explains how queer modernity happens inside "colonial biopolitics" (Morgensen, 2010). The function of this work is to urge what I might call a *queer settler consciousness*. The implication, however, is a problematic othering that continues to position whiteness as an inherent and assumed quality of queerness. In their work on national identity, Berlant seemed to push the question: who are you allegiant to, the *flag* or the *fag*? My work is to reject the scheme which asks. For me, a commitment to queer theory might actually mean *lessening* my attachment to it. Maybe it's not the crosswalk or the gaybourhood that are so cruelly optimistic, but queerness itself, including queer theory (Berlant, 2011). Is gentrification just settler colonial affect? I think it's likely. But I promised to teach queer theory, and know that I have, or can.

Chapter 5: Unbearable Fruits

Fieldwork Methods: Some sharpie and spray paint about town

Encountering these sorts of messages about the city is how I know I am in the right place, at the right time.

i. *God bless this broken city*

2022 – adjacent to the Niagara River, Niagara Falls, Ontario (by michela (mk) stinson)



ii. *I wish this was a park*

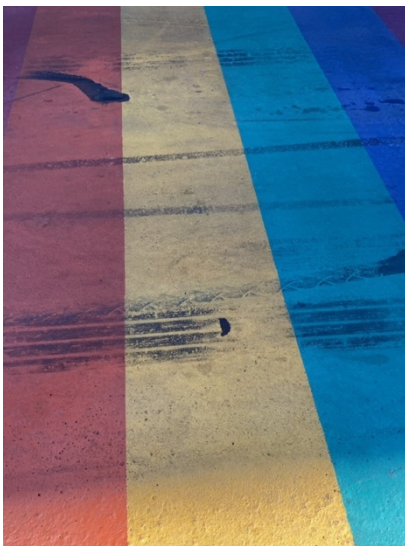
2015 – Gottingen St., Halifax, Nova Scotia (photo by Andre Fenton)



- iii. *Lousy condos coming soon*
2014 – Harris St., Halifax, Nova Scotia (photo by R. Alexander)



- iv. *Burnout*
2021 – St. Catharines, Ontario (photo by R. Alexander)



- v. *Red handprint marking Indigenous genocide at the hands of the Canadian government, followed by a black sharpie note: “No proof” with the Hudson Bay Company flagship store in the background*

2022 – Winnipeg, Manitoba (photo by R. Alexander)



- vi. *I'm sorry // For what?*

2022 – Winnipeg, Manitoba (Photo: R. Alexander)



“We don’t want to be *here*,” Jones et al. said (2020, p. 402).

Is “*here*” where I am?

I could call this whole thing reading the words and works of the city, but if I’m honest, this is just some sharpie and spray paint about town. Only madness. (See p. 92 regarding the absence of *method*).

It probably is relevant that I come from a neighbourhood where people wrote on development proposals: “I wish this was a park,” and then “yuppies out!”²⁶ on brick condos that eventually get built adjacent to The Commons, Canada’s oldest urban park. A block or two away, when my neighbours move from their Harris Street carriage house, they write on the street with sidewalk chalk: “Lousy condos coming soon.” I used to start my story with that picture. God. It’s just that it all happened so fast.

I think I was worried before I lived in St. Catharines throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Although, when I lived in St. Catharines, worry about the crosswalks became fear of the crosswalks. A harbinger, again²⁷. A rainbow crosswalk spent almost the entire year defaced with a burnout, became fodder for local right-wing groups to make homophobic jokes about and so on, before the pride month budget saw its grossly expensive thermal paint repaired. Fear hits differently.

Still without community but in my new home of Winnipeg, Manitoba, there’s a painted red handprint that’s been slapped on a light pole. There are lots of them in the area – near legislature they (we? I can’t say, I was not there) toppled some dead awful queen statue at the Manitoba Legislature on Canada Day in 2021. It’s worth noting that Manitoba has more children in care than any Canadian province – settler colonialism is at work. There is tension in Winnipeg that you cannot feel in other places. *Fear hits differently*. This defacing is done in Sharpie and

²⁶ To the person responsible for the Yuppies Out scrawl on Cunard St, - pls get in touch

²⁷ Nodding to *Placemaking as Unmaking*, where I describe Edison bulbs as harbingers of gentrification.

points at the handprint: “No proof.” It takes a lot to deny a holocaust, but people do. It takes a certain kind of evil to look at abuse and say, “Not so,” but people still do. People want to defend violence and abuse, or protect abusers²⁸ at least, often, because it is protection of power and status quo. Change is terrifying, for some. But a trained eye can see the flagship store of the Hudson Bay Company in the background. Proof of what exactly? We are reading the words and works of the city in context. Winnipeg is heavy.

I back-track to a townhouse rental in Osborne Village that I’ve already moved out of and on from by the time I’m smoothing out this sentence (or stretching it to its representational and still fallible gills). To get to the old house, I walk away from the light pole, past the legislature, and up and over the Osborne Bridge, where the railing over the river reads “I’m sorry.” My memory of arriving in Winnipeg by car (also stretched to gills) is framed by a woman sobbing, tears and snot and hair all freezing to her face, crouched with her arms wrapped around her own knees. She was crouched somewhere near “I’m sorry.” Another person was there. It looked like they were asking her to consider staying. A few feet away from the apology on the railing, there’s a question written in reply: “For what?”

Why would I want to be *here*, either? – now that it’s clear “here” refers to “not only a terrible time, but also the end of (lived) time” (Jones et al., 2020, 387).

These are end times, right? Research-to-action feels a bit regurgitative (Loveless, 2019). There are way too many representational issues amok. *Knowledge translation* too rife. I’m not sure what I’m supposed to do next, but the idea is to find some way to potentiate this work. Which is annoying, because that was the point of *this dissertation work* – to potentiate some of

²⁸ I have a lot to say about the limits of abolition. My victim’s services worker supports people to call the police and while it’s unsexy to say, I think there’s something to it: *Call the cops on your lover*. She went to UC Berkeley when Judith Butler was department head. I only learn this a half-year into our dialogue.

my previous work. I think part of the reason there is nothing ‘to do’ is that I have been doing things all along. Instead, I move slowly now. I prevent myself from making any so-called knowledge mobilization plans because they look too much like promises to *bear evidence* of my commitment to enact these findings, which was how I arrived at this project (i.e., attachment) in the first place. I need to accept my failure. Some willingness to *not* try to fix something. To see that we are headed in a very bad direction, and fast, and there is nothing that can be done. I certainly have no doubt the end is near. I’m slamming my tiny tambourines harder and faster than ever. Whether or not I want to be here, I am. It’s not about what I want.

Now what?

A fitting alternative title to this dissertation section might be *Low Hanging Fruits*. *Fruits* intended as a reclaimed and self-referential and *low hanging*, meaning some self-evident and readily attained actions of this project. I used to be optimistic about these sorts of solutions (Berlant, 2011). We’re taught to look for the lowest hanging fruits of our knowledge mobilization – it takes academics embarrassingly long to effect change, even then. A title like *Low Hanging Fruits* would sing to the action researchers. It might sneak past the policymakers.

But, I’m not trying to sneak anywhere lately. And these days, I’m not protesting. Not because of lockdowns. There are no *more* lockdowns, seemingly, only normalized death. For the first time since Harris Street, I’m not organizing with other tenants. I take pictures of sharpie more than development proposals, backsides only. I don’t take the picture of the condos on Harris St. until 3 months after I move to Kitchener, and I won’t bear it here in perpetuity. My old garbage house where frost came through the floors even has new black vinyl siding. The frost

likely remains because my landlords Kia mini-van does, but the rent is now exorbitantly higher than what I paid even when I lived in Kitchener. It makes no sense. I don't really pay attention to development proposals at all. *Backsides Only*. And even then, there's something that creeps quietly. One day I wake up and I'm not fake homesteading with other queers, and we're not spilling (chicken) blood about the city. My friend Bijoux keeps bees on her roof and my mom jokes when she sees any other bees on her balcony that she is sure they are sure Bij's, which at first is cute and I like alliterations. Later, it becomes disturbing because my mother and Bijoux live on opposite ends of the city so the implication is simple: the planet is imminently dying. Bijoux is the coolest and least popular person I know (other than myself). It's been a long time since we had the cops called on us for pushing the panic alarm on my car many times over at the developers and city officials shaking hands and cutting ribbons for the Harris East Condo Development: "Lousy condos coming soon" should have said "the end is coming." With Bijoux I learn: We don't sneak anywhere. We are not ashamed²⁹. Broken things might be the *only* things that have use.

When I followed Ahmed's (2019) example of a mug without a handle as a queer object and a way of thinking about usefulness, I got caught up being romantic about broken things. It's easy to do when you've been chasing something as grievous as gentrification or as unbearable as queer anti-gentrification (i.e., queer settler colonialism as place-taking, place un-making) (Moran & Berbarry, 2021; e.g., Rouhani, 2012). You might linger on ideas that feel like hope, however complex hope (as a politic, an academy, or otherwise) may be (e.g., Berlant, 2011; Bianchi, 2009).

²⁹ See the acknowledgements section of my dissertation. I am thankful for friends who have taught me to revel and bathe and bask in my shame.

The thing is, gentrification and anti-gentrification are two very different projects, but they seem to be *becoming one* lest the project of un-breaking anti-gentrification not just get so lost in the sauce by way of *more words*. The goal was to make sure we aren't avoiding doing with words (Ahmed, 2016). (Am I?)

I think gentrification surely still exists in the world around me, however difficult it is to ascertain, measure, identify, pinpoint. I think gentrification might just be a *sense*. A feeling. An *affect* spatio-temporally bound up in settler colonialism (Rifkin, 2017; Smith, 2010). At the end of my first year PhD, I presented some of the work about rainbow memorialization in Halifax, and queer cultural preservation as place-taking. I was troubling victim-perpetrator in gentrification. A student asked at the end: "What do we do?" And I probably said something like: you should organize, do mutual aid, collective care, and not move so often. To know that when you move from your shit apartment because it is shit, the landlord is going to hang up an Edison bulb as the harbinger aesthetic of gentrification and double the rent for the next person who will live there. How do you try to convince people about something that isn't going to happen to them but that they are also engaged in? The temporality is truly fucked, so it's impossible to teach well.

Whatever gentrification is, mostly I am worried the concept of queer anti-gentrification is no longer *useful*, as in it's simply settler colonial rebranding for the same thing, which might be how we arrived at this problem in the first place. [*I found an ouroboros*³⁰]. If you're confused, it's not your fault.

³⁰ See Appendix E: "Hells" on the side of Safeway, River Ave., Winnipeg MB, and a note on ouroboros with assistance by C. Phelps

A terrible time, the end of lived time. Nothing can be done. Fruit swells and branches droop with the weight. I stop taking the bait. Instead of being roused to action, I'm trying to sit very still.

Can you smell it ... the rot³¹?

Not yet...?

(Soon.)

These are the unbearable fruits of my dissertation research.

I'm getting close (to a conclusion): *Unbearable Fruits*

Two things that are particularly distressing to me are: (1) sleep, and (2) sitting still. Both are relevant to this work, where (1) not sleeping well will surely alter your sense of internal cohesion and linearity, and (2) Now, I'm supposed to be sitting still, waiting for rot to spread. What does sitting still or waiting look like when you've organized your life and research by some (very problematic) placeless imperative? I am *unable* to wait. Difficulty sitting still is symptomatic. It seems psychoanalytic to me (see: Freud concerns, gay and lesbian theory concerns), *and yet* I wish I had read more into *NeuroQueer* temporalities and worldings but I stop here. Berlant and Stewart (2011) said something wonderful about the importance of allowing asides, not always hacking them back.

I had just sorted out how to write myself back into action at the end of my parental leave (as an aside) when I came to the end of Berlant's (2022) posthumous release *On the inconvenience of other people*. Equal parts true and disturbing, Berlant found some other hallmarks of the end times to be unbearable too. They only came to the term at the end of the book (at the end of their life). I wasn't expecting their company *here*. I re-read the page where

³¹ See *Appendix H: Rotting and rotten*

the word first appears, “*unbearable*” (p. 151). “The unbearable is a threat that feels like a threat.”

Berlant said everything.

Much more than inconvenience or cruelty (Berlant, 2011, 2022, p.152), something *unbearable* “leans toward the literal. It is best defined as any overwhelming affect that feels like it might cause system collapse but must be taken up, even as it may shatter its bearer.” I think Mowatt is quite wise to remind us how spatial the affective condition of an unbearable *threat* is: “Threats obstruct opportunities and assurances – threats to profit, to person, and to property [...] A geography of threat receives the violence that is dispatched with impunity.” (2022, p.11, 37).

I don’t drink gin like I used to, but I should.

“Sometimes, being with oneself is unbearable”

(Berlant, 2022, p. 153).

Berlant traces *unbearable affect* the way only a truly disturbed person could. It’s resonant.

I consider giving a cull to everything I just said

about the outcome or outputs of my work being

unbearable and just starting with Berlant or just going for gin. The unbearable nature of my work leaves me frustrated, sitting idle instead of picking the low hanging fruit all around me. Ideas get to rot especially in a world where Berlant (2022) and I both seem to agree that there is so much to do and entirely nothing that can be done. We are both *here*, after all. Or we were. But to Berlant, that arrangement is unbearable because we must go forth and *do something anyhow*, despite the utter meaninglessness of it all. If there is no anti-gentrification that is not cruelly optimistic, no queer space safe from settler colonial affront, and all the threats are very much

too. But increasingly, it’s become apparent to me that those very things that I optimistically yearn for are the direct obstacle to my own, and our collective flourishing (Berlant, 2011). Cue massive existential anxiety. Berlant (2011, p. 2) explained:

“Optimism is cruel when the object/scene that ignites a sense of possibility actually makes it impossible to attain the expansive transformation for which a person or people risks striving; and, doubly, is cruel insofar as the very pleasures of being inside a relation have become sustaining regardless of the content of the relation, such that a person or a world finds itself bound to a situation of profound threat that is, at the same time, profoundly confirming.”



Figure 1: A drunken scrawl on p. 21 of *Cruel Optimism*.

Indeed, being upwardly mobile is among the top three relations of cruel optimism that Berlant spoke of in a book that made me so uncomfortably anxious that it took over a year (2019) to read 80 pages of. I threw it across the room once, got up, and took a shot of gin. And then a few more shots in short succession. I blacked out, but in my blackout, I must’ve returned to it because there are notes in my writing that I have no memory of making. I can’t be trusted with this book in my house. It’s dangerous. I left it on the passenger seat of my car for weeks, but even when my car was broken into three times that winter, the book and all of the change in my cupholder were left untouched (why?). The rich will come, and they will take everything I liked about a place (and all the other places I have not lived but where there are people like me, gradually shifting the socioeconomic milieu of a community), but the poor won’t even take my change (or the cursed book). Worse, I’m likely among the rich who pillage not-yet-fully-gentrified areas. I stop locking my car doors in protest. I return to Berlant, like a sick form of self-harm, telling myself: Things are already shitty

threats (Berlant, 2022), (See page 44 for a note about settler foreclosed futures and agency). I will still track onward into the future.

This is one of many possible unbearable fruits of my dissertation research.

Prologue

Lumentecture interruptions pilot project framework

Alternative Title: Dissertation Knowledge Mobilization Activities and Plans

Alternative Title: A flirt

Lumentecture interruptions brings lumen from light, and -tecture from architecture to take up the momentary affectives of image production (i.e., a projection) with the monumental materiality of the projection site and context (i.e., the building) in ways that consider the projections as potential sites of material-discursive disruption (Brown, 2016; Pezzulo, 2020).

Out of my doctoral work comes the finding that while gentrification may be conceptually imprecise or limited, identification with gentrification processes is one way that white queer settlers can come to see settler colonialism as active and ongoing (la paperson, 2014; Moran & Berbary, 2021). Lacking this awareness of self-in-relation-to-land, fallacies of a settler-centric futurity falsely assume that we can “green” our way out of anthropogenic crises – those same crises often simultaneously rendering cities the first victim (Erickson, 2019; la paperson, 2014; Whyte et al., 2018). We write a lot of cities as dead and dying already. If we are to be against these very sorts of settler fallacies where we save ourselves from a foreclosed future of own making, maybe first, we could become settler identified (Grimwood et al., 2019; Simpson, 2016; Underhill et al., 2022, n.p.). If queer placemaking (taking, un-making, etc.) practices are any indicator, settler colonialism is not always obvious to people in cities. I’m curious if gentrification is just settler colonial affect. The end seems unbelievable when we can build higher and higher – it feels like we might wriggle through. Who will be spared in these schemes of dispossession, displacement, and death?

For all the “Progress Flags” and household nature of Crenshaw’s (2017) *intersectionality*, we are still doing the thing (i.e., being domineering about land and time) in

ways that are likely to harm those with the most “intersectional” identities first, having established that things like rainbow crosswalks contribute to gentrification by *Making Communities Vibrant Again*. In our worried clammer to save the gaybourhood from its post-gay demise, we are writing the city as *ours* and demanding it persists gayly, or in our image, into the future. (Can you smell rot?) I share la paperson’s (2014) concern that we have few good tools to engage settler colonialism in urban contexts. Importantly, they can’t be the tools we already have for anti-gentrification. That’s because increasingly, I see *Das Kapital* Queers brandishing a particular *we won’t go* anti-gentrification politic (i.e., brand) that enacts settler colonialism and configures queer space in ways that reify normative state power too explicitly. This played out fabulously at Hanlan’s Point – a popular gay beach in Toronto that recently needed saving (Micallef, 2023). Place-saving sounds a lot to me like Canadian Peace Keeping – up to no good. It’s clear settler colonialism takes affront to queerness (e.g., Morgensen, 2012; Lenc, 2020), but it seems queerness is not yet there with respect to admonishing settler colonialism in act.

I know we are all getting tired of the (non)performativity of land acknowledgements here in Canada where I work, *but* the (non)performativity might still *do something* with words (Ahmed, 2006). We queers *are* dangerously committed cultural sustainability – to ensuring that what we have earned (be it a bar, a name, a flag) stays *ours*. We’re protective. The (non)performativity of queer placemaking *plus land acknowledgement* is a form of settler colonialism where we acknowledge that the land is arguably not rightfully or historically ours, and then simply go on doing things that paint our symbols on that same land and call it quite literally “ours,” even if we include some other cultural symbolism in the process. Placemaking is not just about inclusivity, but about what and who get to persist into the future. Placemaking

is about who the city is made in the very image of. Queer placemaking practices are violent place (un)makings. Queer placemaking is place-taking. Knowing what we do about things that are unbearable (Berlant, 2022), it seems I'm waiting for rot while working for a queer settler consciousness.

[The images that will typically appear in this section will be shared at my defence]

Caption: Lumentecture interruptions brings lumen from light, and -tecture from architecture to take up the momentary affectives of image production (i.e., a projection) with the monumental materiality of the projection site and context (i.e., the building) in ways that consider the projections as potential sites of material-discursive disruption. This is something like projection mapping, (Pezzulo, 2020), plus politics, plus performance (i.e., *lumentecture* is carefully and theoretically developed in Brown's 2016 dissertation research, where I learned of the method. [REDACTED]).

I only tolerate calling it research-creation because that makes this an introductory paragraph.

[REDACTED]. Lacking the technology, I projected [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. At a time when many queers I know are supporting Indigenous calls for #LandBack and engaging in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation in their own lives and work, I am curious at the potential for this method to foster queer settler consciousness in momentary, interruptive ways.

I'm curious // Can you smell it? [Not rot, but the smell of wet pavement.]

{time is a dark feeling. – Florist}

³² When I worked as a court reporter briefly in the year between my undergrad and master's, I learned this kind of black-out strike-through was called redaction. In this case, I'm not intending to keep it absent forever. Just, *for now*. Until we meet

Dissertation Back Matter

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Appendix A: Dissertation Dreams (i.e., a proposal of sorts)

2

How do you write a script for what is intended to have “no essence, no existence, no presence, no stability, no structure” (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 9)? How do you write a script for what is intended to be creative, experimental, and playful (Vannini, 2015)? I suppose the answer is, quite simply: You don’t.

So, for fear that you will read looking for something that is not here, I will instead tell you upfront all that is: These are my dreamings. These are my compulsions. These are the ideas that come like welcome strangers (and literally, welcome strangers), and those ideas that I can’t shake despite the trying. These are my attempts at engaging in what Ulmer (2017, p. 139) described as “the uncertain messiness of knowledge production as an ongoing opportunity in a politics of hope, creativity, and imagination.” These are my attempts at doing so within the context of my doctoral work.

These are the sorts of prioritizations of “creative experimentation over the delivery of definitive answers” that Whitehead (1929) and Deleuze and Guattari (1994) called for (as cited in Ulmer, 2017, p. 837). Accordingly, I offer no stability or structure. I make few promises. I offer instead:

1. a series of possible purposes, each one imbued with theory.
2. some demanding dreamings of possible methodological directions.
3. and an invitation to share in the dreamings through a series of unknowns (and almost certainly unknowables) imposed by considering the tending these demanding dreamings.

I follow Belcourt (2020), among others (e.g., Stewart, 2011) in valuing ambiguity over veracity. In valuing ambiguity, the dreamings in this document comprise a methodology of “not-yetness”, where I work (queerly) to *unfuck the future*¹, to “bring into being that which does not yet exist” through creative engagement (Deleuze, 1994, p. 147; St. Pierre, 2019) as an ongoing practice of hopeful resistance and insurgent affective activism.

¹ And of course, only small parts of possible futures.

1. A series of possible purposes

The purpose is (or better, *might be*) to work through tensions around and entanglements athwart² gentrification, settler colonialism, and queerness in urban contexts, where queerness can be taken up as (*not is*) a fluid *politic(s) of difference* in opposition to the cisheteropatriarchial and spatial-temporal impositions of settler colonialism and gentrification. The purpose is to achieve some of these things through destabilizing linear notions of time as they bring us only to fatalistic end points regarding gentrification and displacements. The purpose is to story myself through theory, actively decolonizing my citational repertoire and therefore my methodologies. The purpose is to produce something that is the result of a (non?)methodology of wayfaring/wandering towards sites, points, moments, figments, and fragments of hopeful resistance *and* insurgent affective activism. The purpose is to resist straightening devices, (including those from the academy) and not treat data collection and representation as separate and distinct, but entangled and enmeshed – to create something beautiful, energetic, affective, and lively. And also something deeply personal.

² Of course, the ugly word, *athwart* implies multiple directions. This comes from Sedgwick's (1993, p. xii) etymology of *queer*.

1. A series of possible purposes, annotated

Possible Purposes	An incomplete listing of cornerstone concepts	Demands and Impositions
Working through tensions around and entanglements between/across/athwart gentrification, settler colonialism, and queerness	Entanglement: "Narratives of entanglement have, in such contexts, proven important in implicating human activities in ecologically damaging situations and calling for more responsible relations to be forged with other species, environments, and communities. Actually meeting these responsibilities, however, is not a straightforward task. Irreducibly complex situations – where human and animal lives, ecological processes, and technical arrangements are impossible to meaningfully separate – cannot be settled by neat solutions that focus on one factor alone." (Giraud, 2014, p. 1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was never <i>just</i> (about housing). • Gentrification as an "at best, inadequate concept" (Burns & Barbary, accepted), and perhaps one that is "irreparably broken" (Dahmann, 2018). So, following Ahmed (2016, p. 3), "When words do not do something, we have to work on these words in order to try to <i>make them do something</i>. We have work to do because of what they do not do."
... in urban contexts	<p>Urbanity as a queer "oasis of freedom" (Lauria & Knopp, 1985, p. 161)</p> <p>Urbs nullius: Moving beyond gentrification as a <i>project</i> of settler colonialism, as this treatment "risks anchoring anti-gentrification efforts to a decontextualized notion of "the commons" which threatens to inadvertently treat settler-colonial cities as <i>urbs nullius</i> – urban space void of Indigenous sovereign presence and land rights." (Clouthard, 2015; Dahmann, 2018).</p> <p>Queer space-time: "We naturalize space by subordinating it to time [. . .] A 'queer' adjustment in the way in which we think about time, in fact, requires and produces new conceptions of space." (Halberstam, 2005, p. 6).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsettling narratives of queer victimhood in gentrification. • Re-politicizing queer urban space • Unsettling narratives of urban Indigenous erasure • Unsettling narratives of urbanity as settler colonial space-time
... where queerness can be (not <i>is</i>) taken up as a fluid politics of difference in opposition to the cisheteropatriarchial	Queer politics of difference: "The queer "politics of difference" seminally explained by Berlant and Freeman (1993) and Slagle (1995, p. 92) argued that rather than notions of sameness and assimilation invoked by gay and lesbian identity politics, a politics of difference is one that displaces binaries of sameness/difference and instead, "mobilizes under a collective identity based on the uniqueness of individuals." In focusing on difference, "the very concept of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-claiming queerness, re-politicizing, queerness, re-queering queerness. • Tending the tensions of queer theory as classist (Brim, 2020) and not sufficiently

and spatial-temporal impositions of settler colonialism and gentrification	<p>identity is problematized" (Slagle, 1995, p. 92). The work of a queer politics of difference is "to constantly denaturalize and deconstruct the identities in question, with a political goal of their subversion rather than accommodation" (Heyes, 2018, p. 8; Butler, 2014)." (Burns, 2020, p. 11).</p> <p>Against the regime of Normal: A queer insurrection is one that rejects and resists a totalizing normalcy, where a totalizing normalcy is the "interconnection and overlapping of all oppression and misery. The Totality is the state. It is capitalism. It is civilization and empire. The totality is a fence-post crucifixion. It is rape and murder at the hands of police. It is "Str8 Acting" and "No Fatties of Femmes". It is Queer Eye for the Straight Guy. It is the brutal lessons taught to those who can't achieve Normal. It is every way we've limited ourselves and learned to hate our bodies." (Nardini Gang, 2014)</p>	<p>accountable to its rootings in Black liberatory thought (Cohen, 2005)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing engagement in queer resistance to gentrification and settler colonialism • Joining Ahmed (2019, p. 198) in her worry and consolation: "There are risks in taking up 'queer use' in the way I am doing. I know I could be asking 'queer use' to do too much work; that I could be sliding over too many histories. A risk is also a potential: queer use provides me with a way of making connections between histories that might otherwise be assumed to be apart. This is how I understand it: queer use is just a start."
The purpose is to achieve these things through destabilizing linear notions of time as they bring us only to fatalistic endpoints regarding gentrification and displacements	<p>Entangled temporalities (queer temporalities, settler temporalities, Indigenous temporalities): "We can recognize that the impositions of capitalism, systemic and environmental racism, bigotry, homophobia, transphobia, and settler colonialism configure space in political and often oppressive ways. The same understandings should be applied to time as Rifkin (2017, p. viii) asked: "Why would the concept of shared time be more liberatory?"" (Burns, 2020, p. 16).</p> <p>As TallBear (201, p. 153) said: "Present-past-future: [] resist a lineal, progressive representation of movement forward to something better, or movement back to something purer. I bring voices and practices into conversation from across what is called, in English, time. There are many lively conversationalists at my table-both embodied and no longer embodied."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resisting linear thought, resisting linear structure, resisting linear representation • Deconstructing linear texts, theories. And not writing them in the first place. • Disrupting notions of the field(s). Lisbeth reads a snippet of Winterson's <i>Written On The Body</i> (1993, p. 149) to me: "I don't know if this is a happy ending but here we are let loose in open fields."
The purpose is to diffract through onto-epistemological literacies, actively decolonizing my citational repertoire and	<p>Citational Justice: What Berbarry (2020, p. 2) described as "working to commit to be more inclusive of scholars with identities that are often marginalized and/or silenced by academic scholarship in order to make a deliberate indexing and shift towards citational justice— or "at minimum, the adoption of an inclusive politics of citation" that recognizes displacement, colonization, and erasure due to Eurocentrism and its tenets (Rosiek, Snyder, & Pratt, p. 4.)."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tending the tensions between citational justice and identity politics • Pluriversal scholarship towards a more equitable and accountable academia

(perhaps) therefore aspects of my methodologies	<p>Beyond reflexivity, towards diffraction: Avoiding what Smith (2014, p. 215) calls "confessions of privilege" that "rarely [lead] to political projects that actually dismantle the structures of domination that enable this white/settler privilege. Rather, the confessions become the political project themselves."</p> <p>Instead, working towards "multi-epistemic literacy" for a "pluriversal world" (Kuokkanen, as cited in Sundberg, 2014, p. 34).</p>		
The purpose is to produce something that is the result of a (non?) methodology of wayfaring/wandering towards sites, points, moments, figments, and fragments of hopeful resistance and insurgent affective activism	<p>Research-Creation: Canadian-context (SSHRC terminology): research-as-art/art-as-research (Loveless, 2019). Loveless (2019, p. 44) explained: "Research-creation, in important ways, resists the illustrative frameworks in which a thesis or dissertation explains, justifies, or describes an artistic practice (and-vice versa), exploding the inherent binary between the artist-object and the theorist-subject, and offering something that, while using the tools, literacies, and skills of both artistic practice and art history, does something different to, with, and from these 'homes.'"</p>	<p>Resistance and Insurgency: Remembering that Walsh and Mignolo (2018) distinguish between an oppositional, defensive resistance and a decolonial, insurgent, offensive, <i>for</i>.</p> <p>Liberatory archiving: Considering what parts of this work are archival, and/or queer archival practice with a liberatory intent. Caswell (2014, p. 51) explained: "through the lens of liberatory archival imaginaries, our work as community-based archivists does not end with the limits of our collection policies, but rather, it is an ongoing process of conceptualizing what we want the future to look like."</p> <p>Queer Moments: Dafydd (2011, p. 2) defined queer moments as "utopian instances [...] paradoxical truths produced by live performance, which survive the ephemeral event."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning to Warner's (1991, p. vii) question: "What do queers want?" • Stoops as sites of affective activism. • The continued work of living my commitments, of expanding this list of demands, of theorypracticing (Berbary, 2020).
The purpose is to resist straightening devices (including those from the academy), and not treat data collection and representation as separate and distinct,	<p>Post-Qualitative Inquiry: As St. Pierre (2019, p. 9) said: "Post qualitative inquiry never is. It has no substance, no essence, no existence, no presence, no stability, no structure. Its time is the time of</p>	<p>Straightening Devices: "The normative dimension can be redescribed in terms of the straight body, a body that appears in line. Things seem straight (on the vertical axis) when they are in line, which means when they are aligned with other lines. Rather than presuming the vertical line is simply given, we would see the vertical line as an effect of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A non-methodology could be defined by the boundaries it pushes and those things it butts up against which are (or at first appear) immovable. • And because this work is a practice in insurgent hope, a non-methodology is inevitably

but entangled and enmeshed	Aeon—the not-yet, the yet-to-come.”	<p>this process of alignment. Think of tracing paper. Its lines disappear when they are aligned with the lines of the paper that has been traced: you simply see one set of lines. If all lines are traces of other lines, then this alignment depends on straightening devices, which keep things in line, in part by holding things in place. Lines disappear through such alignments, so when things come out of line with each other the effect is “wonky.” In other words, for things to line up, queer or wonky moments are corrected.” (Ahmed, 2006, p. 562).</p> <p>Institutional Walls: “The diversity worker in becoming an institutional killjoy is not heard; when she speaks of walls, walls come up. A wall comes up in this reframing of walls as <i>immaterial</i>, as phantoms, as how we <i>stop ourselves</i> from doing something, from being something.” (Ahmed, 2016, p. 9)</p> <p>Staying With The Trouble: “Who renders whom capable of what, and at what price, and borne by whom?” (Haraway, 2017, p. 23)</p>	<p>also informed by that which enables (or better, those who do not straighten, those who will <i>torque with</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tending the tensions between post-qualitative inquiry in “an ontology of immanence” (the very Deleuzian work of St. Pierre, 2019) and Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing (Martin & Miraboopa, 2009). • <i>Why am I writing this table?</i> • <i>Why am I still working in Microsoft Word?</i>
... to create something beautiful, energetic, affective, and lively. And also something deeply personal.		<p>Grief: Butler (2014) asked: “Why are you full of rage? Because you are full of grief.”</p> <p>Affective Activism: Activism that accounts for the ways that “affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon” (Siegworth & Gregg, 2010 as cited in Harris & Holman Jones, 2019, p. 563)</p> <p>Fictocriticism: writing that mixes compositional writing with theory and “animates the ordinary” (Stewart, 2017).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ongoing commitment to “the act of writing as a survival instinct” (Belcourt, 2020, preface).

2. Demanding dreamings of possible methodological directions

***On the importance of doing nothing intentionally,
and also, of being very intentional***

Dead Flowers and Jamaican Rum:

Everything I know about Newfoundland is (was) from a woman named Joanne who I've long since fallen out of touch with. We worked together at what was possibly my worst (and shortest) job as an assistant in the infant room of a public daycare, working as a team of two (sometimes three) adults with a near dozen infants aged 8-18 months. I wrote about cleaning up dog shit in comps, so I'll tell you: It was *unbelievable*. Joanne took it in maternal stride, though. Easily fifteen years my senior, Joanne came to Halifax from Fogo Island with a story that maps well onto Berlant's (2011) *Cruel Optimism* trajectory of the quest for the good life being our very damnation. Joanne had accrued a massive debt in an Early Childhood Education program trying to secure a profession to support herself and two kids. Two years of schooling later, she made only a few dollars more than my \$1.00 per hour above the then \$10.50 minimum wage. At some point when we worked together a cop served her collection papers on her student loans. I was too broke to even have debt at the time, so it was the first I learned of the process. I lasted only about six months in the position. My birthday came in those six months, and when it did Joanne surprised me with a gift: *Fat-Back and Molasses* (a Newfoundland cookbook that was most assuredly photocopied from local's type-written recipe cards, molasses splotches obscuring the ink in sections) and a bottle of Newfoundland Screech (a dark rum that could be easily purchased at the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission, though I'd never bothered trying it). In the book were instructions (a recipe?) for a *Screech In*, a ceremony Joanne promised she would show me in better detail if I ever came to visit Fogo when she was home to her family: "Until then, this'll do."



The premise was this: Any "come-from-away" is not a proper Newfoundlander until they've been ceremonially *Screeched In*, a process that involves (a) an officiant (my book said: "a natural-born Newfoundlander"); (b) "a real fish" – clarified with: "traditionally a cod, but, since these are hard to find, any whole fish will do"; (c) a sou'wester (yellow hat of raincoat material), and (d) a bottle of Screech. Joanne spared me all of the embarrassing parts: Wearing the hat, kissing the dead fish, and even the shanty tunes. But the rum was central, and so we drank it that night, sitting on the hatch of her car, high up



on Devonshire Ave., the sun setting behind us before splitting a cab in the direction of home. I called in sick the next morning.

There's no way I could've anticipated writing about my botched *Screeching In* as part of my attempt at convincing you all, my esteemed committee, to let me go on and unearth similar, seemingly superfluous stories in my methodology of not-yetness. But there's also no way I could've anticipated meeting Richard. (I mean, there's also no way I could've anticipated living in St. Catharines, but that's *at least* one or more other stories). Richard is one of a host of locals who I've stopped and stood with in the liminal space between the sidewalk and my stoop since moving into this house "at the height of the pandemic"³, doing what Rosenfeld (2017, p. 652) described as: "the politicality of standing, and holding out—as a refusal to move and as a space for something to emerge." Of course, this insurgent standing of mine is massively enabled by my partner, E, who is gifted with a remarkable ability to have (and sustain) conversation with practically anyone. The day Richard first appears is no exception. We've just returned home as he turned back from the corner to greet us. As he draws nearer I give an awkward wave and can see that he's smiling with the entirety of his face, shining in the sun. As he settles well within earshot, I can see a line of sweat from his temple down over his chin leaving a trail across his Black skin, even though the days are growing darker and colder. He came by to see if he could have (what I wrongly assumed) to be our permanently dead mums. I'd been stalling on tossing them, thinking: "They still give a bit of colour, and soon everything will become engulfed in gray-dark." But Richard tells me they're not dead at all. Like us, they're "holding out," like us, "holding space for something to emerge" (Rosenfeld, 2017, p. 652). He'll plant them on his property and in the spring they will reanimate.

Now that I know he reanimates plants, the object in his hands that was before obscure becomes self-evident: a potted plant with a reusable Sobey's bag crumpled in the top, hiding dead leaves of unknown variety. He says, "Everybody did this in Jamaica. We knew what plants you could bring back and when. When I moved to my house twenty-two years ago, I started gathering them when they went to the curb." He takes a step back for the first time, upping-and-downing us both: "Where are you from?" he asks, flicking up his head at me first. He's surely gotten used to introducing himself to our sort - the transient tenants of downtown St. Catharines. It's "becoming a quiet neighbourhood," a nameless neighbour we refer to only as "the white lady with dreads" said earlier in the summer. Richard lived in the same house for twenty-two years, and we won't be here more than two (*if two*). He becomes visibly excited when I tell him I'd moved to Ontario from Nova Scotia. He's been there more than a few times, he explains, having done rotational work in Newfoundland for the last decade. He turns to E for her turn, "Your accent. Are you from Newfoundland?"

I don't wait for her to respond. I'm laughing and answering for her: "No, no. She's from Rochester... New York." (There's a small pride here for me, as in: "Look ma! She doesn't know a single soul who worked on the boats. Her hands are soft." Or perhaps it

³ Of course, it would prove not be the height at all.

is a small shame in wanting to depart from the have-notness of Nova Scotia in the first place – I can't be quite sure which it is). Although her Rochester accent is hardly noticeable to me (and *not nearly as bad as they come*⁴), it's regularly pointed out as out-of-place in Southern Ontario. I'm laughing alone, so E furthers the otherwise stalled conversation with Richard by offering up her limited knowledge on Newfoundland as a consolation of sorts for her come-from-awayness too: "I'm not *from* Newfoundland, but Robyn showed me a video once about the rum and fish ceremony. A screech? *Screeching?*"

Richard draws a long breath, the type that only leads into story. He says: "You know, all of this Newfoundland rum is just Jamaican rum. It came on the ships with the slaves. The slaves fished the cod too." *Rupture*. What *is* the origin of the *screeching in?* The stupid yellow hat. I can't forget the stupid yellow, waterproof hat. It's is the same hat (*hood*) that is donning the heads of the white settler fishers burning boats and destroying lobster traps in a flagrant denial of treaty rights in Mi'kma'ki. Have I been unknowingly baptized in racist ceremony? It's unsettling (Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Corntassel, 2014). Richard tells us about the centrality of cod to the transatlantic slave trade, and the conversation keeps feeling like it ought to end but it doesn't. Another neighbour comes and goes in the time that we are talking – she almost always waves or says hi, but she doesn't today (curious – but then again, white women are *hardly* innocuous). Despite a big fenced back yard, I sit out front daily. Despite sitting out front daily, another Black man I've never seen before drives by with his windows down, playing what sounds (to an uninformed and ignorant ear) like reggae music, sticks out a lazy hand and waves to Richard, honking his horn twice while rolling past to the end of the street.

But we continue. We continue the politicality of standing. Richard is maybe a better conversationalist than E, and he's set his plant down and leaned against the side of the house, changing topics again: "Listen, this Black Lives Matter sign on your window. I walked past it all summer and wanted to thank you." Richard isn't the first person to stop and comment, nor is he the first to thank⁵. "A lot of the men out east," he continues, "they tell me *All Lives Matter*." Pausing, a mischievous smile grows across his face and he says quietly, as if telling me a secret: "*I know it isn't true*." Jesus assures him in this. He talks about Jesus unsolicited for a few minutes, and I can feel the conversation drift away from me (or me from it). I bristled at *Jesus*. Why? I said in comps: "My upbringing wasn't religious." But I didn't (and don't) say: "My mom's dad was an Anglican priest. She abandoned the church and him and took some pride in it. His funeral was a multi-day affair, run by the presiding archbishop (the Primate⁶)." Another spiral: I wonder if he

⁴ Of course, I'm somewhat smarmily invoking accents here as they are one of the ways class is invoked in Maritime provinces (Dialect Atlas, n.d.).

⁵ Of course, the thank yous are particularly surprising because I became fixated with a Tweet in the summer that said: "White people replace the black people with Black Lives Matter signs." When the sign became sun-faded in September, we updated it freshly alongside a list of *keeping-up-with* tasks: weeding, sweeping the stoop.

⁶ Of course, you would only know this archbishop is called the Primate if you *did*, in fact, have a religious upbringing.

knows E and I are married⁷? After all, Jesus might have something to say about it - or so I've been told.

"It's been too long," Richard says, jolting me back to the conversation. He had stopped talking about Jesus some time ago, but I remained elsewhere until he reminded me of the possibility of "too longness". Hundreds of years and people are "just waking up." I'm uncomfortably aware that this is exactly the sort of fodder I write about, and so I tell him: "Look, I write about how places like this change. Twenty-two hours is a long time. Has it changed here much?" My question marks the end of our conversation, though. He says: "Drop off your ~~dead~~ mums to my address tomorrow. Give me your phone number. Then, you get me a rum, and we can sit and have this conversation." I go inside and try to look Joanne up on Facebook without success, so then I look up the connection between *screeching* and enslavement. I pause later on this: Why the need for more? Was Richard's conversation not "enough"?

"Spaces of Encounter" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 17)

It's become abundantly clear that no amount of scripted methodology will leave me open and attuned to welcoming someone at my doorstep looking to reanimate for my ~~dead~~ plants. I can't plan which conversations will require organizing "recruitment" through a shared rum drink, or which will require a formalized invitation, though I expect some hybrid, and I expect lots of other things as well. Doing what TallBear (2017, p. 8) described as "bringing voices and practices into conversation," in the context of this project, is a process of "attunement to the emergent, the unfolding, but yet to come" (Stewart, 2017).

Should "being in the wind; being blown about, more or less, depending on what I encountered" fail to yield the emergent in these "spaces of encounter" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 17), intentionality remains. I suppose I would find the people doing what I love and engage in conversation with them. To prepare specific questions for each person. Maybe to write questions together. I might video record them. Embed audio and video in the final digital product. Forget full transcription. Maybe the odd quote, but I don't like this chunking. Peoples voices matter, their *literal voices*. And their names, their actual names. The point is, I know I need to have conversations and I'm having them already. Like I've said recently, "waiting feels like wasting."

⁷ Of course, when I say I wonder if he knows we're married, I also wonder if he knows we fuck. Ahmed resonates here too: "Is that your sister or your husband?", she was asked in a similar situation, slipping into the house and out of view – not without leaving the problematic assumption extensively theorized (2006, p. 562)

Storying “Hybrid Genres for Hybrid Worlds” (Vannini, 2015, p. 4)

“Lingering on the edge of the not-yet is not uncommon for those who acknowledge that writing is thinking that writing is, after all, another method of inquiry.” (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 3).

Using a digital e-book interface to demonstrate the layering of storying with theory (i.e., fictocriticism, fictotheory), the layering of story through space and time. Playing with the lives of stories, with attention to temporalities, with attention to settler coloniality, with attention to gentrification and its entanglements with racial capitalism and neoliberalism, and of course, with attention to queerness, as they continue to exceed representation. Using storying, through an interactive e-book, to show storying as tentative. Using storying, through an interactive e-book, to play with temporalities.

On possible ways to avoid the miserable descent into theoretical solipsism

b. The Stoop Does Something

It’s Sunday morning and I’m actively working on this document, and so I’m actively caught up in my dreamings. I’m allowed to talk to my friends about ideas again, and so things spill out into conversation.

!!!

Constructing stoops. Making way for stoops.

Something about how condos don't have stoops.

You're right

I feel like the universe is fucking with me

Like all of these people showing up, quite literally, on my doorstep

The stoop is central and needs to be addressed.

The stoop does something.

I don’t know that MK was being literal: “Constructing stoops”, but I trust she was and I become obsessed with this idea, yelling out to E: “Do we have the tools to build a stoop? Could we build a portable stoop?” She built two desks for me in the ten days between moving into this house and starting comps. E is tentative at first, so I stay with MK. The idea grows and we dream about building a stoop on wheels, a physical stoop-as-object that we could cart around together.

E eventually comes into my office – my excitement and the ding of the Message app signaling something was happening. Sparks flew. She’s not really sure what it is I want to do, or why, but we look at pictures of front stoops and how they are built, we look at the cost of portable metal stairs for trailers and quickly move on from the impractical, and then we look at stage sets. We talk about wheels. We talk about putting it in the back of the trunk of my likely too-small hatchback (have I mentioned I regret this car

near daily despite it being in perfect working order? I bought it hastily. Nobody asked: “Do you anticipate needing to transport a portable stoop? If so, the hatch might be a little small.”)

E eventually clarifies: “This is a performance piece, right?”

Of course it is.

So, within minutes we have Nessa on the phone - she works for Geva Theatre Company in Rochester.

We become, for a moment, collectively fixated on building a portable stoop, for me to push around town or drive as far as I’m able and introduce the stoop, as an object, as a performance, as disruption, as a way of doing insurgent, affective activist anti-gentrification work, as a site for standing still. I could push it up to the GM site, MK suggests, knowing I’ve been fixated on the spot. This might be a way to weave in the idea of environmental gentrification, I think. I imagine we could drink beer together there. I’d need a little table. If I had one, I might even do all my work there. It works in a pandemic.

My wife is certain I’ve gone off the deep end: “Are you allowed to do stuff like this?” I just keep planning, not admitting to her my deepest discomfort: “I have no clue.”

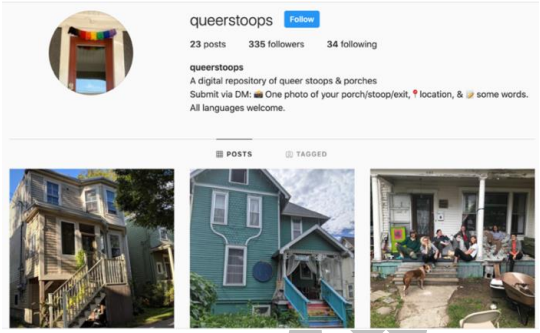
On building a stoop

There’s something *deeply* settler colonial about wanting to build an anywhere-I-want-it stoop. There’s something *deeply* queer about the ways stoops are, in essence, sex in public (Warner & Berlant, 1998). There’s also something queer in that the stoop I build will not try to replicate the experience of stooping, nor try to implement stoops as even a temporary animation or placemaking feature. The stoop might be the vehicle (a literal vehicle?) for the conversations and storying. Stoops are, after all, an important site for what Delany (1999) described as inter-class mingling, as stoops are liminal space between public/private. They are at once the placeless site: gentrified stoops are rotating doors, and the definitively emplaced (i.e., what Barnes (2018) describes as “the sacred stoop” in Black culture, shape-shifting to “a classroom, a barbershop, a small library, a laundromat,” based on community need.

A sampling of aspects of continuing to live (my commitments)

- Continued engagement in the creative, imaginative, threatening, and sometimes menacing worlds of queer resistance to gentrification and settler colonialism through involvement with, for example:

- Niagara Tenants Union and associated outreach work
- @QueerStoops Instagram account (340 followers). Grew from a personal archive to a digital repository of queer stoops. Viable place to continue some of the work. Currently static – not sufficiently “*fucked with*”
- Possible “Gentrification In Progress” sticker-drops with links to resources.
- If travel were to become safe, make visits to queer communal houses that I am in contact with (Toronto, Halifax, Montreal, Rochester, Missoula). Alternatively, possibly video conversations.



c. Towards some final products

“Alternate (research) stories create alternate (research) worlds. Conversely, different storytelling strategies (methods and practices) emerge from different worldviews and commitments. If we understand our research in the university as the production of a set of interlocking stories that are, indeed and ideally, world-changing fictions (Haraway [1985] 1991, 149) – interventions, micro though any one intervention might be, into the givens that organize our social and material⁸ worlds – the next logical, research-creational, pedagogical, step is this: to open the university up not only to different *writerly vocalities*, as decades of feminist, literary, Indigenous, critical race, deconstructive, and performance studies (the list goes on) scholars have done, but also to different *tangible forms* (for example, a song, beadwork, a performance, or a video installation) as valid modes of rendering research public.”
(Loveless, 2019, p. 24)

I want to make a book rich with fictocritical writing that stories gentrification and settler colonialism for the ways they are resisted and even moreso, for the types of insurgence that does not treat them as immovable and inevitable (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). I want to show this resistance as something hopeful, queer, decentralized, and bound by space-time (rather than place). I want to cut out the step where I gather things for some predetermined amount of time before doing anything with them. I want no story to stay with me too long. I need to *do* things. Accordingly, I want this book to live online, so it can *do* things like, like burn itself after reading. Many aspects may originate and be manipulated on paper, in tangible ways (drawings, markups, transparencies, projections, overlays) but then will be digitized. I want it to be something interactive and creative. To share stories, and then work with them in a public space: To show overlays

⁸ And of course, temporal.

and juxtapositions with theory, to mark up the stories I've already written, and make more, and do more with them. I want to embed videos, and all sorts of photos – bits and pieces, together making something that attends to the possible purposes outlined in this document. Bits and pieces, together making something that attends to my demanding dreamings.

DREAMINGS

3. Invitations to the unknown

- **How does a project like this end?**

When I asked Lisbeth this question, she said that I started writing this paper twenty years ago, so there's no way of knowing how or when this project will end. Of course, there are practical considerations (funding durations loom, economic precarity is an uncomfortable dance). But there are all of the other possible reasons I might reach a state of "doneness" – are they worthy of discussion? Are they a needless constraint?

- **How much might it cost?**

- **Building e-Book Website:** How long should outputs from this project be preserved? These numbers feel arbitrary. One year feels impossibly short. Does something happen *to time* when you commit to five years instead of one-at-a-time?

- Domain Name Registration and Fees (5 years): \$150
- Hosting (5 years): \$600
- Can also investigate costs for shorter durations, these are rough figures.
- If needed, possibly secure money to hire a web designer to help with some of the more technical / media rich parts (~\$1500)

- **Potential Project Costs:**

- Honoraria (a little bit *gesellschaft*). In some situations, appropriate.
- Building a stoop
- Digital or transparencies projector . available on loan through the university? Otherwise, somewhere from ~\$200-\$350
- IPEVO Do Cam <https://www.ipevo.com/products/do-cam> ~\$200

- **Funding sources:**

- The always out-of-pocket aspects of being creatively inclined, offset partially by being generally resourceful.
- UWaterloo PhD Research Support Funding (\$350)
- Possible support from Grimwood et al.'s SSHRC grant
- Could consider applying to Antipode's *Right to the Discipline* grant

- **Am I allowed to work with people?**

What aspects of doctoral dissertation work are allowed to be collaborative? We're supposed to share excitement and ideas with our friends and then...go off on our own to do them? That can't be it.

- **What other sorts of ideas might become demanding?**

- Where are the archivists rupturing time? What becomes of archival work when we resist collapsing temporality into a linear and Eurocentric past-present-future?
- I want to do work about the feeling of things being "the last" about the loss and grief and how it moves us to action or not. I want to talk about trauma

Appendix B: Will queerness exist meaningfully in the future? (i.e., a theory section, of course)

This section exists for those of you who thought this was a project about gay people.

“Can straight people be queer?”, we ask ourselves nervously. The question seems benign, but the effect is catastrophic. Mowatt (2022) explained the conceptual structure for geographies of threat as starting with “1. *The identification of populations.*” My work orients to queerness as a political project, rather than an identity category that can ever be stably held since it exists only exists in the future as an ideality (Muñoz, 2009).

Queerness is tentative and open as a political project of anti-normative imperative and binary refusal. More importantly, queerness also operates as an in-group life-saving mechanism, those who cannot reside comfortably elsewhere may operate under the term “queer” which makes it inherently meaningful to a whole host of incommensurables (Muñoz, 2009; Moran & Stinson, accepted; Tuck & Yang, 2012). *And* yet in trying to make queerness inclusive and unspecified, we have to contend with the world where it’s not just rainbow crosswalks that can generate power for the state, but queerness that can generate power through access. Have we reached a place where we now *disidentify* with our empowered identities for the covert acquisition of a different kind of power through access. The threat is violent and deceptive, like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, at this point. There’s abundant homophobia in this play, but it’s distorted and projected and impossible to excise without excising identity altogether. It’s fucked.

I’m more concerned, personally, with something that I find meaningful being rendered obsolete. I’m someone who likes concepts, generally. And, for whatever reason, I still seem to wake up every morning wanting to exist and wanting more of this world. There’s abundance here. Queers are perhaps concerned about our openness becoming our obliteration. If queerness is identity emplaced, queers seem to be concerned with our own identities being rendered to the

past by domination of a new normative (see straight, or mostly externally legible as straight) queerness that appropriates conventions of our likeness (poor simulacra) for their social clout and capital. Worse even still would be a kind of queerness that believes itself to be anti-normative while simultaneously doing a great deal to support normative power, perhaps only being claimed for the acquisition of the same. There's also a huge potential for biphobia here and I just got over that mess – first sex at thirteen with a girl. Straightening devices aplenty (Ahmed, 2014). And in the end, confusion. Queerness as a non-arrival. I don't want to be *here*. So why be queer?

Queer theories are tools for power analysis. I feel my queerness as “the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality.” That is because configurations of power in the present moment are oppressive – there has to be something *more*, something *warmer*. While I am regularly encouraged not to compare *isms*, I'm called elsewhere comforted. In commenting on the phenomenon of race-shifting academics and the violent non-utility of blood quantum as a determiner of Indigeneity, Tallbear (2016, n.p.) said: “It's not just a matter of what you claim, but it's a matter of who claims you.” No opt-in. No coming-out, but an invitation in. It sounds ideal to me because presently, queer identity is self-determinable (i.e., if you feel queer, you are queer), but it is also primarily relational – we are an identity category defined by our relations (and orientations) with and to others (Berlant & Warner, 1998). *Homo = Same*. Being held, and claimed, in queer relational order gives us the power to define who is queer and gives us the permission to let go the boundaries of both identity and politics and space. Claiming is queer *attunement* (see p. 11).

In the absence of a relational queerness, we are stuck vying to keep some things meaningful for ourselves. Queer cultural sustainability might be a kind of gentrification that does

not spare devouring its own gaybourhood once it has momentum. “We just wanted to exist...” I am not entirely unconcerned with our existing in the future, either. If not the bar (i.e., our physical space), and if *No Rainbows*, then what of queerness should be kept? My interest in queerness is of course deeply personal, but secondary here to my interest in the city and that keeps re-appearing. I can’t theorize the two separately now, though.

What I see in my work and world around me is that in the name of allyship and political queerness, email signatures are becoming full of she/they and he/they pronouns, profile photos with opaque rainbows laid overtop Employee of the Month. I of course do these things because they are my culture first, but then to sustain my existence, I must continually move in opposition. And while I don’t dispute that many people who pronoun he/they or she/they share a similarly well-informed disdain for the impositions of binary gender (as a product of settler colonialism, by the way), I can’t help but note that many of these individuals are not claimed in any legible regard, by myself or others, as queer. I also come to note that these same allies often slip in their performances of “not cis” gender, becoming some of the most laterally violent by listing new pronouns but never doing the labour of invoking them socially, or worse, in failing to commit others’ identity markers (names, pronouns, honorifics) to memory and thus claiming identity that one has no relation to, and inhibiting the potential for good queer relations through such ignorance, dissonance, disrespect, and appropriation. It’s no wonder things got a bit territorial. My dissertation argues it is this very self-sustaining concern that keeps white queer settlers bound to an inherently inequitable urban narrative and process. Queers are self-interested, by definition: the ultimate ouroboros, we struggle to get out of formation. Who is queer though?

In the face of this mess, when asked to define what I mean by queerness, *or* to avoid answering that question myself, I offer some combination of the following:

Appendix C: A few referential and tolerable definitions of queerness

i. Queerness	<p>Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been queer, yet queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future. The future is queerness's domain. (p. 1) Muñoz José Esteban. (2009). <i>Cruising utopia: the then and there of queer futurity</i>. New York University Press.</p>
	<p>Sedgwick (1993) traces the etymology of the word queer: "... it means across—it comes from the Indo-European root—<i>twerkw</i>, which also yields the German <i>quer</i> (traverse), Latin <i>torquere</i> (to twist), English <i>athwart</i>... <i>Keenly, it is relational and strange</i>" (p. xii).</p>
	<p>Queerness is "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically." Sedgwick E. K. (1993). <i>Tendencies</i>. Duke University Press.</p>
ii. Static queer identity	<p>Gays and lesbians are a hidden population, and thus they are impossible to randomly sample. You can address this problem in three ways. First, remember that sexual orientation is a composite concept; what you learn depends on what you ask. Your options include questions about attraction or arousal (the desire to have sex or be in a romantic relationship with one or both sexes); about behavior, acts, and contact (any mutual and voluntary activity that involves genital or bodily contact, even if an orgasm does not occur); or about identity (socially and historically meaningful labels that guide how we think about sexuality). Here's why measurement matters: if you define homosexuality by same-sex behavior, then you will omit gay virgins while including self-identified straight men who have sex with other men. If instead you define homosexuality by an identity label like gay or lesbian, you will exclude those people who experience same-sex arousal or behavior but do not identify as such. You'll also overlook those who identify as bisexual or queer, along with individuals who use language not tied to mainstream terms (e.g., "aggressive," "in the life," or "samegender loving"). Did you know that in the biological and health sciences, a single instance of same-sex behavior automatically places an individual in the "homosexual" category regardless of the frequency of sex and whether the person enjoyed it (Savin-Williams 2006)? If we follow queer theoretic commitments to misalignments, the corresponding principle of queer methods is to be</p>

	<p>mindful of the components of sexual orientation—do not ignore, conflate, or reify them—and to draw conclusions based on the type of data you gather.</p> <p>Ghaziani, A. (2018). Chapter 12: Queer Spatial Analysis. <i>Other, please specify: queer methods in sociology.</i></p>
iii. Queer theories	
	<p>The critical mass of queer work is more a matter of perception than of volume. Queer is hot. This perception arises partly from the distortions of the star system which allows a small number of Ne standing for involving culture most practitioners of the new queer commentary are not faculty members but graduate students. The association with the star system and with graduate students makes this work the objective end me resentment and suspicion. As often, what makes some queasy other call sexy.</p> <p>Berlant, L. & Warner, M., 1995, p. 348</p>
	<p>I’m still after queer theory. This might mean: even while queer theory has been pronounced over (can I get a refund?), I’m embarrassingly here. And it might mean: invited to the wake of queer theory, I’m still, as in somewhat paralyzed, with nothing to say. And it might mean: evidencing my usual incapacity to let go once I attach, I’m still after it; I haven’t stopped desiring queer theory.</p> <p>Freeman, E., 2011, p. 33</p>

Appendix D: Gentrification-Related Research-Activism / Research Activities 2018-2023

1. Spectrum Safe and Affordable 2SLGBTQ+ Housing Committee (Kitchener-Waterloo)
2. Rent Strike Niagara org member
3. Blocking Niagara Falls USA-Canada Rainbow Bridge in Solidarity with Wet'suwet'en
4. Stoops for days, and days, and days [*absence as data, here*]
5. Becoming coalition
6. Niagara Tenants' Union co-founding member
7. Rainbow Crosswalk Fieldwork + Media Analysis
8. Moving from Kitchener, ON to Thorold, ON to St. Catharines, ON to Winnipeg, MB (and once since arriving in Winnipeg, from Osborne Village to where the Exchange District meets the edge of China Town)
9. A stint in a domestic violence shelter run by and for Indigenous women because the supposedly queer-inclusive shelter was full, anyhow.
10. [*Absence, beyond measure*³³]

³³ I said “ah, ow, *ouch*” aloud recently at the ‘whelm of it all.

[you can do what you want to whenever you want to // you can do what you want to there's no one to stop you // now you can do what you want to whenever you want to // do what you want to whenever you want to // do what you want to whenever you want to, though it doesn't mean a thing](#)

[Big Nothing](#)

[{Ballad of Big Nothing – Julien Baker}](#)

Appendix E: Nod to the ouroboros

Politics, theory, polarized issues often feel concentric, to me, or seem to collapse in on themselves. I am talking about toeing the tensions between libertarianism and anarchism, for example. I am somewhat comfortable not knowing whether I am at the start or end of something.



Figure 5 Ouroboros

*"Hells" on the side of Safeway, River Ave., Winnipeg, MB.
Overlay from favpng*

An Ouroboros

By Christopher Phelps

Printed in *Pank Magazine* (October 2010)

Together, n queer men can form an ouroboros.

Cases³⁴

$n > 2$:

More common in cities. A segmented circle of feedback: a circuit so excited it shorts, but no one is shorted. Everyone desires the milk of his fellow man, and everyone shares his own. A model of queer utopia not yet established.

$n = 2$:

Also known as the sixty-nine. Our numerals cooperate for the purpose of illustration: 69. A garden variety of the greater case, but no less great. Exactly two: yang and yang, giving and taking, source and sink, warmth receiving warmth, a pole in a round hole. And still, for unknown reasons, some question the fit.

$n = 1$:

This has been dubbed the self-suck. The virtues of case $n = 2$ reapply, to unify a man. The luster connected to his lust, his shining self self-sufficient, Shaker-like. Aristotle's God-like.

$n = 0$:

The ultimate configuration, death says. Not even a self can intrude on zero's noself-sufficient circle.

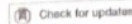
³⁴ See: No Rainbows, Case 1 of ? for example.

Appendix F: Notes in the margins of placemaking as unmaking

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Placemaking as Unmaking: Settler Colonialism, Gentrification, and the Myth of "Revitalized" Urban Spaces

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ABSTRACT

Leisure scholarship that operates within traditional frames celebrates placemaking as an inherently good, participatory, and emancipatory process. In doing so, the bulk of leisure scholarship fails to account for the ways that placemaking is complicit in the historic and pervasive violences of systemic racism, settler colonialism, gentrification, and socioeconomic elitism. Working through the case of Goudies Lane, a recently place-made space in so-called Kitchener, Ontario, we demonstrate how humanist approaches to placemaking predicate erasures and perpetuations of these violences. We argue that thinking differently may allow for a more engaged, equitable scholarship that accounts for the reality that every placemaking is always already an unmaking of something, and that these unmakings perpetuate racialized and socioeconomic injustices under the guise of a collaborative, participatory process of "revitalization" and "progress."

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thinking differently
vs.
representing
same old boring format

Learn own voice
write w support
get corralled
back.

The voice
in this
is a
MESS

Failed representations

A colorful mural, flowers in bloom, and strings of warm-hued lighting would suggest this place, Goudies Lane, means something to someone. Looking for clues, my eyes scan the space - the red light of a security camera glows just above the warmth of an Edison bulb, people walk past without a moment's pause, a man pushing a cart sits on the curb just meters away from picnic tables, and the bus grinds to a stop, though nobody gets off to join me. I could be anywhere. This is not beautification as the colorful mural might suggest. A generic geography of gentrification. A denial of Indigenous sovereignty. And while this place could be anyplace, it no longer is for anyone. Instead, its newly enacted facade makes clear who is no longer welcome. This is not belonging. I'm alone in a place made new for the few - but not for all. Rather, this is sanitization. Sanitization encoded through myths of placemaking, community building, and revitalization in order to make itself palatable. In order to disguise itself, as to not evoke violent historic trajectories of colonial progress.

The myth of placemaking is one that often evokes sentiments of beautification and inclusion. Blooming community gardens, traffic-slowed intersections being painted by children, and underused railways revamped into idyllic corridors for neighborhood gatherings. The feel-good story of placemaking as a "collaborative process by which we

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sufficiently addressed more disruptive narratives that illuminate the simultaneous potentials of placemaking to inflict harm AND perpetuate historic violences? What might become of our field if we began with and centered our complicity in these violences, rather than treating these effects as cautionary afterthoughts?

In considering these questions, we are compelled to explore ways of thinking differently (Berbary, 2020) about placemaking in leisure studies that work to complicate current allegiances to those more positive aspects of community development and progress that heed the neoliberal, capitalist imperatives of cities. We argue that the necessary work of destabilizing the myth of placemaking as an inherent good may be best facilitated by thinking through ways to re-story, dismantle, and center complexities, juxtapositions, and subversive readings of hegemonic placemaking literatures. We use the (partial) case of the recently place-made Goudies Lane in so-called Kitchener, Ontario, Canada - land that was promised to the Six Nations of the Grand River peoples, and within the traditional territories of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples, to show the ways we might think differently about the complexities of urban leisure spaces, placemaking, revitalization, gentrification, and settler colonialism in leisure studies.

AND
own voice.
All caps
enthusiasm
Lisbeth low
cases when
tired, miffed,
or informal

The partial case of goudies lane

What does it mean to articulate a piece of land that is perpetually unhistoried, to write a history of something still in process? To write a case of a particular land is often to position that narration through the frame of settler colonialism. Determining which details matter also reinforces which aspects are worthy of being perpetuated in systems that create hierarchies of worth based on oppressive histories and presents. Any settler storying, from our position, is always already a colonizing mechanism. Does public or private matter within attempts toward decolonizing? Is it relevant to include the longitudes and latitudes of settler sanctioned borders where perhaps there should be none? So, we instead "write to you from the middle of something. It may not really be the middle, but it is not the end and it is not the beginning." (Tuck et al., 2014) and it only tells what needs to be told for its partial history to lend itself to activating change. And so we begin with the present, with the somber recognition that this case too is rife with silences and erasures. At best, this is a partial case of Goudies Lane.

In a space
of open
critique,
the ^Dscrapes
isn't a
threat.
When someone
tells me a
new way
of doing or
thinking?
That is
hot.

Represent
represent
critique

In its current placemake form (after hundreds of years of settler colonial violence, still ongoing), Goudies Lane (in the heart of so-called downtown Kitchener, Ontario, Canada) is a pedestrian-only alleyway, with bright murals, inviting picnic tables, flowers, and strings of Edison bulbs. Like most of Kitchener, Goudies Lane looks vastly different than it did only years ago. As was the case in many (post-industrial) cities, the Lane saw a "trough of decline" in which thousands of Kitchener residents suddenly found themselves unemployed as local industry collapsed and spurred out-migration from the downtown core in favor of newly desirable suburbs (Allemang, 2018;

⁷We refer to the names of these places as "so-called" to subvert their colonial namings, recognizing that the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabe, and Neutral / Attawandaron peoples (among others) lived on, cared for, and have deep histories and claims to these lands since time immemorial, and that their "borders," formations, and names varied. Though some accomplish this by referring to so-called Canada (and North America more generally) as "Turtle Island," we are leery of the ways that this may impose a pan-Indigeneity that erases localized cultures and land use, as "Turtle Island" is not an agreed upon naming across all Indigenous peoples.

→ I don't do this anymore
now. I say "Canadian
violence"
Canada itself is a beast of my making
Fake Disidentification

Borovilos, 2002)⁸. This phenomenon was not isolated to Kitchener, as *white flight* and rapid suburbanization ushered-in economic collapse in many mid-sized North American cities. Goudies Lane suffered during this period and although it was once a loading dock for a mid-size department store, through Kitchener's economic decline, local business suffered, and the lane became derelict, earning a reputation for being dangerous and unsavory, largely as it was an area where people who were precariously housed could gather and rest throughout the day⁹. From the 1990s to early 2000s, a handful of largely unsuccessful municipal government strategies were developed to revitalize the empty factories, boarded up store fronts, and substandard low-income housing (Borovilos, 2002). Technology and startup industries were among the early investors in Downtown Kitchener, ushering in a wave of revitalization through the 2010s. By 2017, Kitchener saw over a billion dollars in proposals for commercial and residential real estate developments, and by 2019 Kitchener had the fastest growing rental rates in Canada (Eppel, 2019). Between 2017 and 2019 are when most of the revitalization "opportunities" appeared in documents, like the 2017 Queen Street Placemaking Plan. As rent continues to balloon alongside placemaking initiatives, even those who now are thoroughly engrained in and benefitting from the tech startup boom are having to look elsewhere for housing, as they became priced out of a city that had just recently revitalized to meet their needs (Wark, 2019).

indeed gentrification is as much about housing as it is about the upscaling of business and leisure spaces (Hyra, 2017; Mullenbach & Baker, 2018). Like many mid-size Canadian cities, interest in the revitalization and beautification of underused spaces follows economic revitalization and, in this case, lead to the desire to place-make Goudies Lane into something more aesthetically and functionally venerable. Though Goudies Lane is now beautified, one must wonder what becomes of the people who found safety, refuge, and social capital in its previously underused form. One must wonder what other histories are now even further concealed from view through centuries of settler colonialism. The praise of placemaking like Goudies Lane, for its new aesthetic and venerable social qualities, fails to account for the reality that placemaking is always already an unmaking of something, and that these unmakings erase histories of violence (i.e., colonization and displacement) that deem(ed) some people as less worthy of forming place-based attachments than others. The case, as we have (partially) storied it, positions Goudies Lane in the context of gentrification. We must also then recognize that gentrification is an at best inadequate concept, "itself dependent on the racialized, eliminatory telos of settler colonialism." (Dahmann, 2018). This is then a partial case, an irreparably broken story of gentrification, and in its partial and broken storying we, too, are complicit in re-telling aspects of a colonial narrative (Dahmann, 2018).

Similar to why my methodology chapter cannot exist.
At best a bad re-presentation.

Placemaking: establishing the myth
Yet, who gets to define and give value to a space, (un)making it into a valuable place for community? How are these decisions embedded in larger neoliberal capitalist and settler

⁸Out-migration from urban areas and suburban sprawl are racially motivated processes engrained in systemic racism, Jim Crow era segregation laws, red lining, and *white flight* (Slater, 2006).

⁹Notions of chaotic, dangerous, and unsavory places are often rooted in prejudiced and unwarranted socioeconomic elitism, racism, and an ill-formed opinion of addiction as a moral failure.

stop

Update on KW gentrification stats.

BORING Linear

Is this for teaching?

Credibility

Why?

Pub'd 2018 10/17

Feed Prov Man

I situate very very locally settler colonialism on 1 sq. mile projects. Notes seller colonialism as a municipal notice the eviction for #75+ and signs

colonial processes of gentrification? Who is to say that a location is simply an empty space, a clean slate, ready to be made into a place with new worth and meaning? And who is displaced in the process? Who was displaced before these questions even came to bear? What must we demand of our scholarships to hold space for the versions of places past and yet-to-come?

Leisure scholarship on placemaking tends to draw on humanist geography (e.g., Smolicz, 2006) and defaults to leading with an unspoken and uncritical acceptance of the myth of placemaking as inherently desirable and good. As a result, the ways placemaking practices play-out and are subsequently taken up and described in leisure literature often (a) establishes and maintains a binary between space and place that perpetuates gentrification; (b) promotes sanctioned expressions of agency through collaborative placemaking processes that operate within and uphold an inequitable status quo, and (c) perpetuates notions of linear progress that erase violent and ongoing legacies of Indigenous land dispossession and displacement. To argue the value of thinking differently about placemaking practice, we draw on the case of Goudies Lane as an example of the violences of placemaking practice. We illuminate these violences in placemaking practices to argue, in an urgent way, that leisure scholars need to become more attuned and accountable to these violences in their scholarly retellings of placemaking practice. This paper is an invitation to begin (or fortify) this attunement and work toward wording more equitable worlds into existence (Berbary, 2017), as "to write is to unsettle old assumptions, to hint at the unexpected, to form trajectories to the effaced and inappropriate, and to make room for radically new embodiments of justice" (Akomolafe & Ladha, 2017, p. 819).

b/c place valuation



cheek smile

humanist geog.

Space v place

"Placemaking spaces"

Attunement
attachment.

Placemaking as displacement: space-place binaries of erasure

Binary structures uphold place "as A", and space as "not A", such that place is rational, logical, transcendent, rich, clean, and beautiful, while space is subsumed as irrational, unevolved, impoverished, dangerous, and ugly (Relph, 1976). The existence of this binary formulation is necessary in certain frames in order to legitimize place as a distinct concept, as the "ontologically valorized term A actually depends for its meaning on the simultaneous subsumption and exclusion of term B" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 10). In this binary structure, space is subordinated to place. Leisure scholars interested in placemaking pursue built-environments that support social inclusion and belonging, and in doing so, spaces that are vacant, underused, or derelict are seen as having the potential to become more, to do more (e.g., Glover, 2018; Kruger, 2006; Yuen & Johnson, 2017). This view subsumes spaces that fail to yield these venerable, instrumental benefits, and contributes to the establishment of a space-place binary. Places then are given more worth in community development and progress than their spatial counterparts because they have been made and imbued with acceptable dominant meanings - oftentimes those imposed by recreation practitioners (Dubnewick, 2020). In this binary, spaces can be taken, dispossessed and transformed, signifying what and who fits within discriminatory templates of displacement inherent to neoliberal, capitalist cities. We argue in solidarity with Dubnewick (2020, p. 15), who urged our field to foster "interruptions to the dominant meanings we ascribe to place(s) that may move us from imposing a vision of a place on a community."

RACE, GOD

DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY



So many

entangled oppressions

Brutal to have written w/o Lefebvre's production of space, but how was I to know? SANDBOX.

As we argue for placemaking to be opened up to non-dominant, subversive, anti-oppressive meaning-makings, we also argue that there is never really a space to depart from to begin with, but that places are always already made, and that any claim of their making is always an *unmaking*, *erased* (Hickey, 2020). Such claims of original or new placemakings can only be understood as such because they call already made places into newly sanctioned expressions of meaning that align with current hegemonic powers. In other words, the concept of placemaking within hegemonic systems must ignore that the place was already made through other perhaps unsanctioned constantly accumulated twists and turns toward/away from makings/unmakings across time - where every making becomes an unmaking of what has been, will come, and may be returned.

We advocate for leisure scholarship to, at minimum, be upfront in acknowledging the implications of this binary, and accordingly, to help resist it (by foregrounding matters of liberation, displacement, and exclusion in scholarly writings on place). What might happen if we were to commit to centering notions of unmakings in leisure? How might our narration of the placemaking of Goudies Lane do something differently? We would instead have to center our story on the ways that the beautification of Goudies Lane contributed to the dehumanization of underwaged people for whom that place provided community and respite. We would have to illuminate the neoliberal processes that label spaces as underused and undesirable and illuminate the ways that such processes of dehumanization also reify processes of settler colonial gentrification under the capitalist guise of revitalization. It would have to tell a different story, from a different vantage - one that might reposition leisure, not as important for its abilities to build/create/re-create community, but in its abilities to move so-called communities toward more equitable modes of engaging with place (e.g., decolonial placekeeping¹⁰) and toward more equitable futurities (Chung-Tiam-Fook, 2020; Hickey, 2020; Tuck & Yang, 2018).

Moving our frame toward accountability and liberation enables us to think of how most placemaking is always already *place unmaking* - a dehumanizing process that amplifies how humanist hierarchies of worth cast some as less-human. Ignoring the ways placemaking practice (and therefore some of its reflections in leisure scholarship) is complicit in these dehumanizing processes of settler colonial gentrification erases the reality that the places we consider our own for (un)making are just reconfigurations of stolen places that meet the unquenchable capitalist needs of settlers (Dubnewick, 2020; Hickey, 2020). Similar to placemaking narratives, many inquiries into gentrification start from the point where its effects manifest in settler cities in the current now (Lees et al., 2008), rather than exploring the historic dehumanizations that led to land dispossession and the need for revitalization in the first place. When approached this way, placemaking and gentrification are inextricable and complicit in perpetuating settler colonialism and displacements. Although placemaking attempts to create distance from problematic aspects of its formation, it fails to do so because it celebrates those it dehumanizes only by including them when they can transcend their assigned less-human conditions and successfully assimilate and integrate into the neoliberal capitalist and settler colonial template for beautified urban spaces (Braidotti, 2013). We suspect that inclusivity in placemaking, as a

¹⁰The emerging literature on Indigenous and decolonial placekeeping (e.g., Chung-Tiam-Fook, 2020; Hickey, 2020) is an encouraging starting place to those interested in re-thinking their engagement with placemaking as a form of settler colonialism.

Filler b/w this chap. needs to mention binaries as not queer theory but power analysis
This is a writing project FIRST AND SEEMINGLY my only fixed interest is state power not gender sexuality so

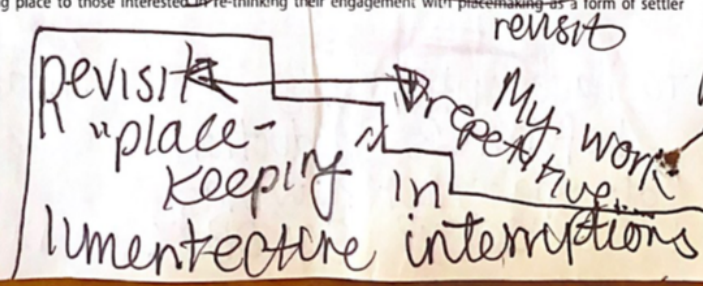




Figure 2. What is the difference? As part of a pilot project, Kitchener residents painted murals with community symbolism the intersections of their streets to calm traffic. As part of a civil uprising in response to police brutality, Toronto residents painted "Defund the Police" in front of the police station. Which is placemaking? (Source: CTV Kitchener (Freeman, 2020), CTV Toronto).

hierarchical process, only occurs when those with power extend invitations to others to participate in sanctioned placemaking processes that meet the capitalist needs of the city.

Sanctioned expressions of agency and the injustices of the status quo

The myth of placemaking as an inherent good is upheld through celebrations of placemaking processes (e.g., Glover, 2018; Yuen & Johnson, 2017) that, while claiming novel redistributions of power, do not fully commit to reimaginings of power that lead to actual redistribution versus simple inclusive representation. For example, too often by inviting (some) citizens to exert their agency (in prescribed ways) over an underused space, placemaking initiatives ignore that these expressions of inclusivity, by virtue of being sanctioned, maintain the socioeconomic and racialized violences of the neoliberal capitalist and settler colonial status quo and do very little to address built-in structural inequities (Gilchrist & Ravenscroft, 2013). And even when representation is given, how that representation manifests must still fit within notions of apolitical sanctioned placemaking, such as when traffic calming symbols painted on city streets welcome and encourage sanctioned "diversity" (CTV, 2015) such as, "diverse" handprints, local settler histories, and hearts (as was the case on Wilhelm and Ahrens Streets near Goudies Lane), yet reject acknowledging the same value in residents painting "Black Lives Matter" or "Defund the Police" (as occurred in many cities recently (e.g., Wilson, 2020) deeming them disruptive, despite those symbols doing the work of striving for even more action-oriented, inclusive, and liberatory community goals (See Figure 2).

We are concerned that these inequitable tensions within placemaking practices seem underrepresented in leisure scholarship due to what feels like an over-celebration of placemaking where harms are considered only as an after-thought or limitation (e.g., Glover, 2019). We are not alone in this concern about unchecked leisure scholarship or practices reproducing harm. Henderson (2006, p. 394) agreed, stating that "Although leisure has the potential to transform social inequities, it can also reproduce them." So we ask, what else do we need to interrogate in the evaluation of the use of place, even within those proposals that engage in "equity-informed" bottom-up processes that we celebrate in many community-affirming placemaking initiatives? Lashua (2013, p. 123) argued that placemaking through pop-up events "can help to envision opportunities

OR perhaps
not b/c
envi just
b/c hard
to represent

NOT my
voice. I love
contractions

The representation
challenge
plays out
here on the
road.

} See
No
Rainbow
case in
KW re

Orange
Handprint

and enact possibilities of reimagining and promoting different kinds of urban spaces." Yet, which of these projects would likely be treated as a venerable placemaking project to be highlighted as community development in leisure textbooks - sanctioned diversity walkways or "Defund the Police" graffiti? Which would (will) be taken up in our scholarly inquiries as community building? Which would (will) be taught in our traditional classes about justice¹¹? The myth of placemaking as an inherent good is one that celebrates (and documents) only sanctioned expressions of resistance - it invites some (not all) community members to implement designs over place, but only when they are engaged in reinscribing¹² the very power structures that restrict novel, anti-capitalist, radical place-(un)makings from the outset.

Anti-capitalist place-(un)makings (i.e., unsanctioned placemaking), like activist encampments, tent cities, guerilla placemaking, and vandalism are vilified and criminalized (CrimethInc, 2014; Williams & Walker, 2006). Society is largely content with sanctioned (un)makings of place when they serve the inalienable capitalist imperatives for "revitalization" or are praised as "gentle activism" (Coombs (2012) as cited in Glover, 2019, p. 147) against the increasingly privatized and commercialized city. Yet, both simply function in maintaining status quo, including gentrification and settler colonialism, at its deepest level (Calvo et al., 2017). However, unsanctioned placemaking that threatens these imperatives receives relatively minimal attention in our field or is vilified, despite the likelihood that it too can yield venerable aesthetic and more just social outcomes (e.g., a recent Land Back camp at Victoria Park (just minutes from Goudies Lane) being referred to as a "tent city" rather than an assertion of Indigenous rights¹³). The processes that determine the worth of (un)makings seem determined by the same powers that might necessitate their (un)makings of resistance in the first place.

Yet, whether sanctioned or not, place is always already politically active. While some unsanctioned placemaking may be intentionally radical or disruptive, this cannot be taken as a universal truth because at times unsanctioned use may do nothing that is recognized as challenging status quo. However, when the outcomes of unsanctioned placemaking do not serve dominant optics or the capitalist imperatives of sanctioned revitalization, this unsanctioned, emplaced activism is seen as radical and disruptive of status quo, troublesome, "criminal", and unwanted (e.g., Gilchrist & Ravenscroft, 2013; Williams & Walker, Williams & Walker, 2006). Perhaps these stories of rupture in placemaking are rarely centered in our literature because unsanctioned placemaking is often fleeting, unstable, and momentary. Both the criminalization and erasure of unsanctioned resistances within (un)makings of place are convenient for those with power, because radical and disruptive placemaking often arises in response to injustices and displacement and is enacted by people experiencing the precarity of urban life - the juxtaposed opposite beneficiaries from those meant to benefit from sanctioned placemaking in communities. As CrimethInc (2014) explained:

¹¹We ask these questions as we reflect on how the topic of "placemaking" and "place" have been tended to in our combined 22 years of leisure education and scholarship.

¹²As authors, we are also likely complicit in reinscribing hegemonic ways of thinking about placemaking in our critique of them rather than simply dismissing them, and demonstrating how we might work differently towards more equitable scholarship.

¹³Doan (2020)

13b. Rainbow crosswalk

orange Handprint JUSTICE

"STATUS QUO"
"SANCTIONING"

Affect of power ! Define status quo as state power Affect AT TALS

Rasul asked In Cop/Fear city who teaches

these issues so few hands AND some.

Rasul asked! Move next year. (We didn't talk as much 4 yrs ago)

Pedagogy teaching IS NOT gentle activism? Apped teach phil.

type

!!

We have become accustomed to ceaseless, dramatic disruptions of the environments we live in – so long as it is capitalists and police driving them, not poor people. This normalizes an alienated relation to the urban landscape, so whole neighborhoods can be leveled and replaced without anyone batting an eyelid. It normalizes a social system that itself has only been imposed on the earth over the past couple centuries, making the most unsustainable way of life ever practiced seem timeless and eternal. Vandalism demonstrates that both the current disposition of urban space and the social system that determines it are contingent and temporary – that it is possible, even with limited resources, to transform space according to a different logic (p. 4).

Novel, anti-capitalist land use imposed by the various forms of unsanctioned placemaking arguably use the same collaborative processes that make sanctioned placemaking so appealing to leisure scholars – they are *citizen-led, bottom-up, collaborative processes* that infuse both aesthetic and functional features that promote use and foster place-based emotional attachments (Project for Public Spaces, 2010). Yet, the grassroots, unsanctioned placemaking that epitomizes these values (e.g., Land Back camps reclaiming urban parks as an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty and treaty rights, as happened recently just minutes away from Goudies Lane¹⁴) receives scarce attention in the leisure literature perhaps because of the political juxtapositions to dominant culture. Carnahan et al. (2020, p. 2) explained, for example, that placemaking that occurs in parks in “low-income, predominately African American neighbourhood[s]” may work to “foster a sense of ownership and belonging” (p. 11) through both the process of collaboratively arriving at and implementing a design, and through the resultant installation. *When the same processes are used outside of a park, when they occur through unsanctioned channels or in response to social and political uprising, do they yield the same praise and attention in our scholarship? Do our students immediately think of leisure toward justice, or of social movements and radical activism as aspects of leisure formations? (Hint: Based on our undergraduate teaching, they often don't until explicitly taught to do so).*

If we connect back to our case of Goudies Lane, unlike the painted Kitchener intersection above, the lane was hardly a citizen-led initiative. Instead, it grew from outside notions of underuse amidst Kitchener's tech startup boom and did not draw on established and existing place-based connections as placemaking processes intend (Carnahan et al., 2020). Rather, the placemaking of Goudies Lane reinscribed oppressive structures already at play in the policing and politics of downtown Kitchener by reinstating closures of the place from particular kinds of bodies (deemed by those in power) of lesser worth through dominant ideals. Specifically, the city deemed Goudies Lane “underused,” invited (some¹⁵) citizens to participate in its revitalization, and in turn, resultant placemaking reinforced and upheld the very power structures that would limit the uses of Goudies Lane – not making it more useful to the community, but rather instilling stronger policing around use of a place so to acceptably force it to adhere to appropriate practices by certain people. The place is not made by/for the people, but made to reflect the values sanctioned by status quo.

¹⁴See Areguy (2020) regarding Land Back camps in Kitchener.

¹⁵The consultation process for Goudies Lane involved an online survey that elicited community member's responses to photographs (EngageWR, n.d.). This method of consultation is inherently ableist, classist, and exclusionary, as it is premised on the assumption that all people whose perspectives should be captured in the consultation process have access to a computer / the internet, and are able to view images and type responses to them.

See:
Taavel
Roy G.
Biv.
example

WRONG.
Maybe UW.
UM brilliant,
caring
WISE!
should not have
assumed.

Talk about
power



Figure 3. Downtown Kitchener Business Association branding (retrieved from <https://www.downtown-kitchener.ca/en/pages/OWNIT-2018.asp>).

Consider the marketing of the lane and how it is embedded in these discourses. The mural on the walls of Goudies Lane (as seen in Figure 1) adheres to the brightly colored schematic and geometric patterns found on the materials from the Downtown Kitchener Business Initiative (Figure 3). Does this make the place more useful? A more meaningful part of the community? Or does it simply brand it as belonging to power? A reminder that this place too is under surveillance. We could argue that the mural is just one part of Kitchener's recently attempted rebranding, and that Goudies Lane is one example of placemaking processes that have been co-opted as part of a larger project of urban capital accumulation and economic stimulus. Although placemaking has the potential to rethink land use outside of the means of production that characterize capitalist relations¹⁶, such liberatory potentials are often sidestepped in practice as sanctioned (un)making often must gain approval from structures of status quo and can only strive for a more reformed distribution of power within dominant culture, rather than a dismantling of such structures altogether through their abolition.

We must ask, then, if placemaking is only legitimized as placemaking and welcomed when it fits within a revitalizing plan? If revitalization is theoretically distinct from gentrification insofar as revitalization is supposedly by the people/for the people (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2019), then we must ask which people revitalization is for? And if it isn't for all people, isn't it just a more palatable term for gentrification?

Regardless of the label of revitalization or gentrification, extant leisure scholarship scarcely takes up these more critical lines of inquiry as the main or leading narrative (though notable recent exceptions include Dubnewick, 2020). At best, sanctioned placemaking is considered a strategy of "appropriate class-radicalism" (Kroker, 1978) that can appease desires for activism without inflaming dominant powers. In thinking differently about such power and agency outside of this imposed hierarchical, structural form, both revitalization and gentrification can become less about ownership (in the way people invited to participate in sanctioned placemaking are considered stakeholders) and more about the ways power is relational, unstable, and "performed, something more like a strategy than a possession" (Mills, 2003, p. 35). Therefore, in thinking differently about placemaking and its relation to maintaining an oppressive

¹⁶Following Gibson-Graham (1996) argument that referring to capitalism as a totalizing economic system makes the task of resisting it dauntingly tremendous, we refer instead to "capitalist relations" recognizing that these relations exist alongside plentiful other sorts of economic relations that offer more hopeful alternatives.

No. NOT MY VOICE. When I teach this today, I say:
City stole the mural, made it an ad representative of Kitch DT core, and then said OWN IT

HOPEFUL appendix.



Figure 1. Images of Goudies Lane, including professionally-painted murals (retrieved from <https://communityedition.ca/if-streets-could-talk-goudies-lane/>).

can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value" is appealing (Project for Public Spaces, 2018). However, our recent experiences in place-made urban spaces suggest that in the context of settler colonial cities experiencing gentrification¹, Edison bulbs and blooming flowers conceal much grislier acts of sanitization and exclusion (e.g., Gilchrist & Ravenscroft, 2013). Acts that we (the authors) have a complicated complicity in due to our race, class positions, and settler identities – we are the supposed templates of the "types of people" for which gentrified place-making spaces are precisely designed. So even as we work against, we² must also grapple from within our roles as gentrifiers on stolen lands. *If placemaking is meant to encapsulate a community-driven process of collaboration that "incorporates the perceptions and voices of residents" in design processes, what becomes of the perceptions and voices who have long been displaced and dispossessed of their lands (Carnahan et al., 2020, p. 3; Johnson et al., 2014)? What is forced to be (un)made to facilitate this new "making?"*

Words like *revitalization*³ and *renewal*, are rampant in placemaking literature and municipal governance documents (e.g., the Downtown Kitchener Community Improvement Plan). Yet revitalization and renewal suggest a progressive upscaling and improvement that conceals legacies of displacement. Revitalization is, in many instances, a friendlier way of describing *gentrification in progress*. By critiquing these masks of positivity in the literature and in our communities, we can also be called to see all placemaking as the *unmaking of something*. We can then situate these unmakings in the

¹We are reluctant to provide concrete definitions for complex issues like "gentrification" and associated terminology like "revitalization" which references the effects of gentrification from the perspective of those who are positioned to benefit from them. Our reluctance stems from the fact that gentrification is an inadequate, and at best partial concept, as Dahmann (2018) explained: "Gentrification did not start in 1960s London. This belated discovery and naming should not obscure the often-explicit-continuation of imperial warfare and colonial pacification."

²Writing as "we" to convey our shared experiences and referring to "our" field are stylistic choices rife with political ramifications. As Sundberg (2014) explains: "Who constitutes this 'we' is never located. Instead, the coordinates of this particular 'we' are to be found in relation to the geopolitical location of the sources cited and examples given, which are all Anglo-European." (p. 36) We use "we" and "our" in the absence of alternatives, while looking for alternative ways that might resist the very erasures imposed by them.

³Although "revitalization" is intended to be a gentler way of upscaling the settler colonial city, "revitalization" is sometimes treated as separate from gentrification as it is intended as a more participatory, bottom-up upscaling (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2019). "Revitalization," cannot occur outside of systemic oppressions. In as much as "revitalizing" a façade of a "derelict" building may seem innocuous, it exists in histories, networks, and chains of relation to settler colonialism, anti-Black racism, and gentrification, as the benefits of "revitalization" are not equitably distributed (Jackson, 2017).

To Intro

context of *terra nullius*, a legal term which treats land as "nobody's land" (Haritaworn et al., 2018). Just as *terra nullius* was used to deny Indigenous land ownership and sovereignty around what was deemed "unoccupied nature," the notion of urban space as underused and in need of "revitalization" (i.e., *urbs nullius*) treats places as empty and void of meaning, ready to be made more meaningful through placemaking, rendering placemaking inextricable from the historical and pervasive violence of settler colonialism and gentrification (Clouthard, 2015; Haritaworn et al., 2018)⁴. Specifically, placemaking often engages in settler colonial practices that ignore opportunities for the re-Indigenization of urban spaces, and instead simply encourages "opportunities"⁵ that further the progress of the settler colonial city (Haritaworn et al., 2018; Jackson, 2017).

Whether intended or not, perpetuating these myths of placemaking as an inherent positive (a) inappropriately celebrates the coming-together of diverse stakeholders without scrutinizing the power dynamics involved in holding a stake in the first place, (b) knowingly or unknowingly reinforces notions of *social mix*⁶, which effectively praise Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples when they assimilate to areas from which they have been displaced (i.e., from those areas that have become increasingly white), and (c) fails to comment on how placemaking generates economic capital for those who already have wealth, and how processes of generating urban economic capital are complicit in historic and ongoing economic marginalization, systemic racism, racialized capitalism, and settler colonialism (Addie & Fraser, 2019; Ulmer, 2017). Placemaking can be theorized as a cog in the wheel of racialized and socioeconomic violence that hides within acceptable processes of development and progress in most urban areas. Because these concerns are increasingly voiced in other fields (e.g., human geography, critical tourism, cultural studies), we are encouraged to bring more of these disruptive narratives about placemaking to leisure studies to continue exposing placemaking's complicated complicity in problematic processes of erasure, displacement, destruction, and targeting of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and under-waged peoples.

It is these reflections on sanitization, exclusion, and perpetuated marginalization that have illuminated how many of our field's contributions to placemaking (e.g., Glover, 2015; Johnson et al., 2014; Kruger, 2006; Stewart, 2006) often begin with and center the positive possibilities of placemaking, such as those associated with such venerable meta-values of wellbeing, belonging, and revitalization for the upwardly mobile – even if eventually they conclude with aspects of more cautionary considerations. Yet, what might happen if we were to invoke completely different starting places when speaking of placemaking? What if we started with the cautionary tales? Different starting points would compel us to ask questions such as: How might disruptive lines of inquiry create different entries into our explorations of placemaking? What do we choose to center moving forward and how might that force different readings of placemaking? Has our field

⁴Although we deliberately write of colonialism and gentrification as entangled processes of displacement, we caution that the processes and outcomes of these violences warrant individual attention and remediation. In writing of them together, we caution against the use of colonialism as a metaphor for gentrification (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

⁵The City of Kitchener *Queen Street Placemaking Plan (2017)* refers to places like Goudies Lane as "opportunities": "façade improvement opportunities," "green wall opportunities," "mural opportunities."

⁶"Social mix" is the enacting of rhetoric that promotes revitalization and integration of under-waged and Black, Brown, and Indigenous bodies, while eschewing that the strategies promoting "social mix" (e.g., mixed-income housing) are inherently "inequitable and revanchist process of class transition" (Addie & Fraser, 2019, p. 1373).

→ Is this a disidentif
Cruz-
ref is in;
No Ramb

EXPOSING

Just b/c I
dont
like the
starting
place does
not mean
it is wrong,
but a
different
"orientation"


Caution
is not
condemnation
and most of
associated
charges
representat

unmakings. This provides valuable entry points for considering and recentring politically disruptive narratives of placemaking in the context of gentrification, settler colonialism, and displacement, and allows us to act upon our productive discomfort as we make choices to resist the warm glow of strategically hung Edison bulbs.

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Why do I care what my colleagues think of an issue?

I'm done writing to attempt to convince.

Appendix G: On the impossibility of methodology

In some respects, the only instruction to post qualitative inquiry is that there should be no instructions for post qualitative inquiry.

In my proposal stop motion (see link on page 6), I was freshly out of comprehensive exams, and terrified at the idea of stepping away from the incredibly useful *scaffolding for humanist qualitative research* (Berbary & Boles, 2014) that I came to the University of Waterloo to learn.

In the stop-motion, I am playing with an audio recorded phone call with my doctoral supervisor, Lisbeth, as she responded to what I had put forth as my proposal, *A Series of Possible Purposes* (see p. 55). I laughed that I ever hoped to be, like her, a *methodologist*, because I would be useless when it came time to teach. She was willing to wade through some rubble here with me, as we sussed out for the purposes of a thesis that would satisfy institutional requirements, how we would both *do the thing* sufficiently (i.e., produce a thesis), without *doing the thing* sufficiently as to entirely reinscribe that same structure. Nevertheless, we had no clue what to do about the issue of a requisite Methodology chapter (i.e., Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Methods, Findings/Results, Discussion, Knowledge Mobilization, Gaps for Future Research...).

It seems asinine to love methodology so much and not give it a section. *Why not?* (I'm asked to explain myself, write more methodology, stultify it, kill it, maim it, dissect it, and label it in the museum, and so I feel a bit dizzy writing an appendix on methodology at this stage in the game.)

The risk is, that while I do very much hope to make space for academic freakshows and to encourage those learning methodology (or learning *through* methodology) to be improvisational, consumed or fully obsessive, fundamentally curious, self-critical, and a little bit irresponsible; I can, in no way, write a recipe for post-qualitative methodologies that might assist someone who is not *already* fundamentally a bit irresponsible in writing a risky dissertation because the risks cannot be replicable (see my dedication to my supervisor, Dr. Lisbeth Berbary, on p. iii). It seems likely to me that the very notion of *risk* is ever-shifting, and adjacent to our incommensurabilities³⁵ (Muñoz, 1999).

At the outset of this document, I apologized for there being a document to begin with, because my fear is that a document invites convention, and risks being an invitation to replicability. Every time I read Berlant and Freeman's (2011) *The Hundreds*, I want to write in jest. For myriad reasons (mostly because I know I would never come close), I am never trying to organize my work to be more *like theirs*.

There should be no word document, because there should be no methodology that is remotely directive. At the end of reading *The Hundreds*, the only feeling I'm left with is that I need to make something completely different (different from it, and from my own previous work).

³⁵ My approach to this inquiry is deeply subjectivist. Writing from what I know most of all, and therefore through myself.

In my proposal stop motion, I had gone forth with instruction from Lisbeth who moved quickly from questioning whether I ought to use the word methodology (as in: what about “anti-methodology”), to a clear instruction:

“I want you to stop using methodology.”

The music Lisbeth asked for (“I want there to be music,”) and the music that I’ve set the video (Mac Miller’s *Circles*) to cuts to scratch. No record spins, but you can pretend.

“That’s a terrifying ask,” I reply, as I pour the entirety of a bottle of Clonazepam, a benzodiazepine anxiolytic I had been prescribed, at the time, out over my proposal and the table. *scratching.*

‘*The time*’ is worth mentioning. The incommensurability of risk becomes relevant here: Your sense of risk in social science inquiry would surely be affected in the throes of this mess, too. *scratching.*

The bottle, of course, is not empty, suggesting that I was not particularly free-from-anxiety, nor particularly sedate, nor particularly comfortable, throughout the process of writing this dissertation. I do methodology similarly: Wide-eyed, and horrified. But if there was a time to dull the senses, December 2020 would have be the time.

On November 28, 2020 the province of Ontario where I attended university and lived, announced the first two cases of the Omicron variant arrived (Paas-Lang, 2021). Something about normalizing (or sanctioning) mass death, and something about representing mass death as statistics read aloud to us incrementally by politicians, makes dissociating from fear entirely too possible. Among other crises parallel to the Covid-19 panedmic, one of them is an alarming increase in domestic violence. I am not spared, nor is my child who comes to exist shortly after I defended my proposal stop-motion and was green-lighted to produce a dissertation without having written a chapter on methodology, necessarily. *scratching. push all but two pills, or one milligram, away.*

start the track again. go forth, through the discomfort.

I’m alone in my house, endlessly. I return to my stop motion proposal to try to back-track to what I said my methodology would be in an attempt to satisfy the consensus demand for ever-more methodology. This is how we are taught to write up research – re-read and re-purpose your proposal before you re-write. There should be good alignment between the two, anyhow. And then suddenly I realize that even my most useful writing strategies are fairly useless because they all angle towards certain scientific notions of truth, reality, objectivity, and so on. How do I learn to write anew when the cursor flashes just the same? I would love to attend to this in conversation, and do, when I can.

In the place of recipes³⁶ and horrified in the too-expansive absence of any directives relative to your very-early-career-stage, you will lower yourself into a bath that is too-hot and open the page of a book.

Amidst the impossibility of methodology, you are never alone, because you are always reading.

It won't feel like social science, but it is if you want it to be.

From the too-hot bath that you are slowly acclimatizing to, you pull your steaming hand out of the water, except now, it is the air that feels too cold. With a trail of visible steam behind your hot, swollen hand, you go dripping over the side of the tub to grab Fleischmann's (2019) *Time Is The Thing A Body Moves Through*³⁷. Note taking is an impossibility, in this state. For me, these methodological choices settle like my trashed mother's even-more-trashed and festering copy of *The Joy of Cooking* – it opens reliably to the same places. Because my scholarship afforded me time (and money, frankly) to read, the more I learned to read productively and toward methodological and theoretical complexity on the fly. I took my job seriously. I learn to read more and worry less, and therefore think. In the process, I allow some things to “slough off” – a kind of willingness to let things *rot*. I store my books immaculately, but I don't worry much if the pages curl so long as they remain legible, to me.

You'll be able to re-trace your sloppy steps back to the pages that wrinkle most with water (or whatever suits you to mess them with).

Like *The Joy of Cooking*, you'll probably wrinkle the same, favourite pages, more than once. In my childhood home, the pancake recipe was frequented, although the end result itself was horribly inconsistent and flavoured with whatever neuroses my mother was trying to ward off nutritionally, at the time. The pancakes sucked, consistently, but differently, but the page always fell just the same – with three others stuck to it.

In the case of my methodology, it's pertinent that my copy of Fleischmann's book always seems to bring me to the same well-worn place (specifically, p. 59-60).

Benjy and I make pictures because it's fun and we want to, so we work at a very slow pace, punctuated by beer and cigarettes. These digressions, we decide early on, are the most important part of our process. Today, we read from our list of phrases, academic and technical terms we plan to misuse, ideas like “object orientation” that we will interpret for our personal meanings rather than the meanings everyone else finds in them.³⁸ I have no skills when it comes to making art, no training and no eye. This is one

³⁶ During my graduate studies, I took a course from Dr. Corey Johnson, who ironically teaches students about research methods by (according to my memory) reminds us that we don't bake a cake by memory the first time we make one. There are boxed cakes before there are monstrosities and improvisations. Post-qualitative work cannot become a side-step to teaching and learning methodology.

³⁷ This citation appears, importantly, in *Primary Texts* (see p. 92) – coauthored with my friend, mk.

³⁸ I did not want a word document because I wanted to find a way to *show* that my book is as dog-eared as it is, here, without another picture of a book page. It gets old trying to represent and falling short.

of my favourite parts of our collaboration, the idea that someone can just make something anyway, away from institutions.

We're investigating the language of the present from the perspective of the utopic, which is an exploration of all difference, and the only way we can find to this language takes us through each other. If the utopic is a post-queer moment, I think that the friendship I share with Benjy can be a part of that. If we have a shared identity, it is that we identify with how lovely it is this morning, and the way we talk about our politics is by trying to make something for our friends to enjoy.
[...]

Benjy and I use maybe one hundred pills³⁹. Post-Scarcity, they spell out⁴⁰. The word is multihued and large. I hold the ladder while Bernjy positions the camera above, and as the clouds pass in their own game of arrangements, he snaps a picture, waits, snaps a picture. The images show only pills and sky, and it appears as though the world is floating above us. *Post-Scarcity*, it says, composed of more than one body like all bodies are⁴¹. I use the crook of my elbow to sweep the pills into a bag and we return to the house, sorting them from one another again, putting them back into bottles. Categorization isn't how we acknowledge difference, but rather it's enforcement, difference leveraged to keep things apart that could well be together."

I am still *after* methodology – in the same way Elizabeth Freeman was “*still after* queer theory” (see p. 74). *Desiring*.

To stop *using* methodology as a term, does not mean I should stop being entirely consumed.

We don't always name what we desire most. Sometimes, we cannot.

I've made jabs at communicating these ideas further here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXrsO5HEAa0>
Unbearable Fruits – PhD Defence (approx. 20 minutes)

³⁹ Relevant, that most of the pills are synthetic hormones.

⁴⁰ Mine might spell *post-pandemic*.

⁴¹ I have returned more than once to the concept of *intertextuality*.

Appendix H: *Rotting and rotten*

When I defend my dissertation, there was some articulated concern that the way I have taken up “rot” implies a sort of shirking, do-nothing attitude in the face of gross inequity.

A bit frustrated, I veer my car onto the shoulder, flinging gravel and dust up behind me. I three-point turn and circle back to the orchards. I’m wasting gas – you all are a thirsty lot.

I want to clap my hands in front of your face: “Pay attention!”

You’re driving, after all, about 60 km/h or faster along farm perimeter of orchard after orchard. It’s so alien, no wonder your eyes can hardly adjust to the sight. The limbs of every pruned and perfectly spaced peach tree sag and droop, some touching the now over-grown grass below. On the branches, are peaches that almost seem in motion if you look closely. (*Are they?*) Indeed, if you look closely, they *are* in motion. Being consumed – wriggling with insects and horror and rot. I avert my eyes, forgetting that just last weekend I stole a peach and ate it, hoping to stave off this mess. Which of these outcomes is more active, I wonder? Which of my actions impotent?

Onto the road ahead of us pulls a low, white pick-up truck. Other than its noxious plume, this companion on the otherwise deserted road is distinct because it lacks doors and is piled with workers.⁴² They are driving from orchard to orchard, but not picking a thing. Are they wasting gas too?

The tension here is that I want to pick and eat it all and feel uncomfortable that they are not picking anything, but driving around empty baskets. *Who is going to eat all these peaches?* The assumption at my defence was that by restraining myself and letting the fruit go to rot that I have become impotent, inactive, de-agentic, and demoralized. I should clarify, then:

Decay delivers to queer theory a different kind of negativity that always provides a future and always produces, if not reproduces. This is the “infinite calculus of rot,” forever toward zero; a future that even queer theory cannot deny. There is a rotting relationality that is not anti-social during sex, and there is a productive future of decay that degenerates all futures, whether those of heteronormative reproduction, Edelman’s queer death drive, or Halberstam’s punk queer future. While queer theory would certainly respond favorably to a process that builds “without creation,”²⁰ this “without creation” cannot be qualified only by queer refusal and imaginaries. Decay, Negarestani tells us, “ungrounds the very ground upon which power is conducted.” The fulcrum point of power that queer theory relies on here--the same queer-heteronormative dualism--is softened, exteriorized, changed. Decay “exteriorizes all interiorities in unimaginable ways.” Queer theory must engage with decay because it is always there inescapable, ungrounding how it plans for its futures and no-futures.

(Blas, 2012, p. 109-110)

⁴² Please see and support the [Niagara Migrant Workers Interest Group](#).

Like the rest of this work, being amidst the rot is being non-linear, tensely destructive *and* generative, wholly agentic, and entirely queer.

“Shit on your whole mortifying, imaginary, and symbolic theater!”
— Gilles Deleuze